**How to write an argumentative essay**

**Planning Stage**

For an argument essay to be effective, it must contain certain elements. For this reason, you must take a few minutes to plan and prepare before you jump into writing an argument essay.

**Consider Both Sides of Your Topic and Take a Position**

Once you know what the topic is, you should make a list of points for both sides of the argument and [pick a side](http://homeworktips.about.com/od/satwritingsection/a/stance.htm). One of your first objectives in your essay will be to present both sides of your issue with an assessment of each. Of course, you will conclude that one side (your side) is the best conclusion.

In the planning stage you will need to consider strong arguments for the "other" side. Then you'll shoot them down!

**Gather Evidence**

When we think of arguments we might picture two red-faced people speaking quite loudly and making dramatic gestures. But that's because face-to-face arguments often become emotional. In fact, the act of arguing involves providing proof to support your claim, with or without emotions.

In an argument essay you will have to provide evidence without providing too much drama. You'll explore two sides of a topic (briefly) and provide proof as to why one side or position is the best one.

* Prepare an outline or diagram of your ideas.
* Think of arguments
* Decide on which arguments you will use and
  + Cluster them in pros and cons
  + Use paragraphs in your essay to make the division clear.

**Writing Stage**

Once you've given yourself a solid foundation to work with, you can begin to craft your essay. An argument essay should contain three parts: the [introduction](http://homeworktips.about.com/od/paperassignments/a/introsentence.htm), the body, and the conclusion. The length of these parts (number of paragraphs) will vary, depending on the length of your essay assignment.

**The introduction: introduce your topic and assert your side**

As in any essay, the [first paragraph](http://homeworktips.about.com/od/paperassignments/a/introsentence.htm) of your argument essay should contain a brief explanation of your topic, some background information, and a [thesis statement](http://homeworktips.about.com/od/thesissentence/a/fuss.htm)

Your thesis statement will be

* a statement of [your position](http://homeworktips.about.com/od/satwritingsection/a/stance.htm) on a particular controversial topic.
* It can only be one sentence long and

### it can’t be a question.

### The thesis statement or main claim must be debatable

An argumentative or persuasive piece of writing must begin with a debatable thesis or claim. In other words, the thesis must be something that people could reasonably have differing opinions on. If your thesis is something that is generally agreed upon or accepted as fact then there is no reason to try to persuade people.

Example of a non-debatable thesis statement: Pollution is bad for the environment.

This thesis statement is not debatable. First, the word *pollution* means that something is bad or negative in some way. Further, all studies agree that pollution is a problem; they simply disagree on the impact it will have or the scope of the problem. No one could reasonably argue that pollution is good.

Example of a debatable thesis statement:

At least 25 percent of the federal budget should be spent on limiting pollution.

**The main body: present both sides of the controversy**

The body of your essay will contain the meat of your argument. You should go into more detail about the two sides of your controversy. Describe your own viewpoint as well as the strongest points of the counter-side of your issue. Then provide evidence to show why your position is the correct one:

* Topic sentence + elaboration + example(s)
* Topic sentence + elaboration + example(s)
* Etcetera

A topic sentence is a sentence that indicates in a general way what idea the paragraph is going to deal with. Select your strongest evidence and present your points one by one. Use a mix of evidence types, from statistics, to other studies and anecdotal stories.

**Supporting our ideas:** This is the most important part when persuading others. We are asking some people to change their beliefs or actions. We should be supporting our ideas with such facts, statistics and/or authorities that there should not be room for any doubts. Here are some *faulty* supports we should avoid:

*Thesis: Leaving the university and starting to work is good for the adolescent because …*

* Feelings, emotional arguments (… it makes one feel much better.)
* Irrelevant examples (wandering off the topic) (… he would then be able to take his girlfriend to expensive restaurants.)
* Oversimplification (… only then would he understand what it means to be an adult.)
* Hasty generalizations (... it is a widely known fact that all adolescents look forward to earning money.)
* Unreliable, even false outside sources (… according to www.doubtme.com, 80% of working men wish they quit school when they were at university and started working at an earlier age.)

**Language:** Signposts gain importance in the argumentative essay. They enable the readers to follow our arguments easily.

When pointing out opposing arguments (CONs):

Opponents of this idea claim / maintain that …

Those who disagree / are against these ideas may say / assert that …

Some people may disagree with this idea.

When stating specifically why they think like that:

The put forward this idea because …

They claim that … since …

Reaching the turning point:

However,

but

On the other hand,

When refuting the opposing idea, we may use the following strategies:

* *compromise* but prove that their argument is not powerful enough:

They have a point in thinking like that.

To a certain extent they are right.

* completely *disagree*:

After seeing this evidence, there is no way one can agree with what is said.

* say that their argument is *irrelevant* to the topic:

**The conclusion**: **summarize, then conclude, your argument**

Refer to the first paragraph/opening statement as well as the main points and re-state your position as the most sensible one in your summary paragraphs. Don’t copy sentences from your main body: repeat the main ideas, don’t repeat the words!

Check: does the conclusion

* + restate the main ideas?
  + reflect the succession and importance of the arguments ?
  + logically conclude their development?

**Check grammar, spelling and punctuation**