



Writing an Argument

WHAT IS AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY?

Argument is expressing a position on a subject that is in disagreement with another's position. An argumentative essay, then, is the written expression of the writer's position on a subject. In order for the position to rise to the level of argument, the position taken must be disagreeable.

WHEN WRITING...

When writing an argumentative essay, you will use research to support your position. This requires that you begin your paper with research. The sources you use must be credible, but they do not have to be academic, unless specified by the assignment instructions.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR REVISION

- Ensure that the information you use to support your position is factual.
- Check for logical fallacies as you revise. Fallacies are errors in reasoning, like illegitimate arguments or irrelevant points. Lists of fallacies can be found on the internet. Common fallacies include:
 - Strawman
 - Appeal to ignorance
 - Slippery slope
 - Hasty generalization
 - Tu quoque (appeal to hypocrisy)
 - Appeal to authority
 - Ad hominem
 - False dilemma
 - Circular argument
 - Red herring
 - Causal fallacy
 - Bandwagon
- Argumentative essays often include **counterarguments**, which is when the writer considers other points of view. This is not to immediately disqualify them, but to consider them against their own point of view in an ethical and honest manner. Opposing points of view might be just as valid as the writer's, which can be pointed out, or they might not be as strong, which can also be pointed out.
- Argumentative essays closely resemble **exemplification essays**, but they are longer and the research is more in depth. Writers sometimes use empirical research, which is research they have done themselves rather than research someone else has done that they are borrowing.
- Despite their name, argumentative essays should take a **neutral tone** so that readers with opposing points of view will continue reading and consider the writer's perspective. Biased or subjective language can offend readers. Consider using objective impartial language, even though you have made your position clear.
- Your thesis statement, which should make your position clear, should be near the end of the introductory paragraph.
- The body paragraphs should each cover one topic supporting the thesis with one or two paragraphs devoted to exploring the counterargument(s).
- **The conclusion should not restate the thesis**, but reflect on it in light of the information presented in the paper. It should not bring up new topics. You might mention that further research is needed on the subject, which you discovered while doing your own research.