



Argument Paper: Evidence and Structure

The strength of an argument depends upon the strength of its evidence. The evidence should be:

- Specific—*examples, statistics, illustrations, case studies, personal experience, expert testimonies*
- Persuasive
- Relevant
- Representative
- Sufficient

Structuring an Essay

- An argumentation essay should have an introduction, body, and conclusion, just like any other essay.

Introduction

- Grab the reader's attention.
- Introduce the issue that will be discussed. Within this section, the author must convince the audience that he or she knows the topic and that his or her position deserves consideration.
- State the thesis and position concisely and confidently.

Body

- The body should convince the audience of the paper's integrity and authority on the subject at hand.
- The body of the essay contains the evidence to use to argue the thesis.
- A refutation of opposing arguments also builds the argument.
- Present the evidence logically and convincingly.
- Use different forms of reasoning.

Conclusion

- Sum up the argument.
- Restate thesis in different words.
- Make a strong closing statement.

Refuting the Opposition

It is important to anticipate opposing arguments and to answer these objections in the paper.

- Try to identify any objections to the position that is being made in the paper.
- Decide which of these arguments should be refuted in the paper.
- Try to refute the *strongest* and *most compelling* opposing arguments.

Points to remember in refuting opponents

- Try to demonstrate that opposing arguments are weak, unsound, or unfair. Look for the following when refuting others' arguments:
 - Faulty reasoning or logical fallacies
 - Invalid conclusions drawn from certain assumptions
 - Negative effects of the position
 - Misinterpretation of facts
 - Inadequate evidence

- Define the opposing position and then present contrasting evidence to show its weaknesses. This goes after the paper's position on the subject. That way, the reader can understand the proposed position, followed by the opposing position, and then the contrasting of the two.
- If an opponent has a very strong case, acknowledge a point well taken and then try to point out the limitations of the position.
- Be careful not to distort the opponents' arguments—this could backfire and turn the audience against the proposed argument.