

How to write an argumentative essay

What is an argumentative essay?

In an argumentative essay, you want to convince your reader to agree with your idea or opinion, using research-based evidence. Writing an argumentative essay is a skill that any student needs to know, though it can be useful outside of the classroom, as well.

How to Start an Argumentative Essay (Introduction)

The argumentative essay introduction is where you present your topic and your thesis. It should include a **hook** in the first few sentences. A hook will grab the reader's attention and keep them reading.

Once you've laid the basis of the argumentative essay topic out for the reader, give them a short account of the issue or topic you are going to treat in your essay. Cover things like: What is the issue you're addressing? Why should anyone care? Where is the issue prevalent? What is your opinion on the topic and why do you feel that way? (Refrain from referring to your own personal opinion and phrases like "I think" or "In my opinion") The answer to this final question will be your **thesis statement**, or what you will try to convince the reader of throughout your essay.

As you state your thesis, make sure it is concise and use confident language to write it out. You should summarize your supporting arguments here. Keep in mind that the opening paragraph should only be a few sentences long in most cases, so keep it concise.

Develop Your Argument (Body)

By this point in the argumentative essay, it's obvious what the point of the essay is, but you have not yet convinced the reader. You need to develop your argument. Each body paragraph should contain a **topic sentence** introducing a claim, which should support your **thesis statement**. You may have as few as one claim, but it's a good idea to aim for at least three or four **supporting arguments**.

Just stating something doesn't make it fact, so you also need to present evidence in favour of your opinion. Your own personal experience does **not** stand as a reputable source, so this is where you make references to the sources you have been asked to base your essay on. Scientific studies, quotes from experts, statistics and specific data can be helpful as you argue your main point.

Look at the Opposing Viewpoint (Refutation)

In order to truly convince readers of your point of view, the argumentative essay must also look at the opposing views. What do those on the other side of the issue have to say? Acknowledge these views and refute them with facts, quotes, statistics or logic. The more evidence you have, the better your essay will be. The source material should come in handy when you shoot down the opposing views.

Write a Conclusion

Finally, every argumentative essay finishes with a conclusion. Yours will do the same. Restate your main points and cover the basics of the supporting evidence once more. This is essentially a summary of your entire argument. How has the argument evolved throughout the paper? Give the reader a brief look back over everything.

Before you sign off on your essay, restate your topic and stress the importance of your opinion. Keep this part to one or two paragraphs at the most, since it is simply a recap of the previous points.

If you have done your job and written a convincing argumentative essay, your reader will now either be completely on your side or thinking seriously about their views on your topic. This is the end goal, to shake up those beliefs and help others see your point of view. Doing this in a calm, professional manner will work far better than being too passionate. Use reputable sources to give solid evidence for your side of things and you'll see good results.

An argumentative essay could have the below structure:

Headline

Introduction

- An account of the topic/issue
- Thesis statement

Body

- 3-4 supporting arguments (at least one paragraph each)
- Shoot down opposing viewpoints

Conclusion

In the exam paper, you are asked to write 700-1000 words and to make references to the source material. When you refer to or quote a source, make sure to insert a footnote that contains information about your source, e.g. *BBC website, 12-08-2015: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33893386>*.

The information has been adapted from <https://writewellapp.com/how-to-write-an-argumentative-essay>

- A video about structuring an argumentative essay: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSgj9TqxaHg>