# Argumentation 2

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| **Student focused learning outcomes**  By the end of this session, you should be better able to:   * identify the functions of different sentences within a paragraph * notice how arguments are built within a paragraph |

Academic writers need to create a line of argument running through their essays. They do this by expressing their position in the introduction, then developing an argument which supports that position throughout the essay. Every sentence performs a function in creating the overall argument.

## Task 1

Discuss these questions:

1. What do you understand by ‘argument’?
2. Is the meaning of the word ‘argument’ the same in everyday language as it is in the academic world?
3. What do you think the role of argument is in academic work?

## Task 2

In *Argumentation 1, y*ou prepared for this lesson by reading an essay about multi-generational living.

1. What are your personal feelings about multi-generational living? Are they similar or different to the author’s feelings? Did you find the author’s argument easy to follow?
2. Discuss the two sets of questions below with your group. Refer to the essay and your notes that you prepared before class.

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| **Author’s stance** |
| What is the writer’s position?  *This is a dangerous policy that could lead to a variety of social problems*  Where in the text does the author make this clear?  *First paragraph, last sentence / Last paragraph first sentence*  Does the author make a strong argument or a tentative argument? What language indicates this?  *Strong, not only … but also … comes with both problems but not benefits*  *It is clear that…* |
| **Presenting issues** |
| What problems does the author raise in the essay?  *Lose their independence, no place for residence, lose income and self-respect*  Where do the problems appear in the essay?  *Body paragraphs*  What type of information follows the problems?  *Giving examples* |

### The stages of an introduction

In *Argumentation 1,* you looked at how the example introduction related to a series of stages.

**Introduction stages**

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| **Stage** | **Purpose** | **Example from the essay** |
| General statement | To introduce the reader to the subject of the essay | There has been some talk in political circles that some responsibility for social welfare should be shifted from governments to families.  This would involve a reversal of the current trend towards increasingly smaller families and would encourage several generations to live together in extended families. |
| Definition(s) | To explain any important terms to the reader | *This introduction does not include a definition of a term; however, the 2nd general statement explains the effect/result of the first general statement.* |
| Position | To present the writer’s position on the topic | However, this is a dangerous policy that could lead to a variety of social problems, … |
| Preview/scope/overview of essay | To explain to the reader what aspects of the topic will be included in the essay | …not only for the elderly people themselves, but also for the families that would have to look after them. |

## Task 3

Discuss these questions.

1. The sentences do not necessarily fit within a single stage in this introduction. For example, the final sentence shows the writer’s position and indicates the scope of the essay. How does this affect the reader?
2. Do you think writers vary the sequence of information in their introductions? Why/why not?
3. Does the writer present a strong or a tentative opinion in the introduction?
4. How might the writer make their position stronger/more tentative?

### Body paragraphs and functions used to present an argument

In *Writing a paragraph effectively,* you learned how to structure a paragraph so that your arguments are clear and well supported. Remember that the purpose of the main body paragraphs is to present the arguments that support the writer’s position as stated in the introduction. To develop and deliver their overall arguments, writers use a variety of the following functions within paragraphs and throughout essays.

* identify problems / solutions
* show cause / effect
* compare / contrast ideas
* define information
* give examples
* explain reasons
* present evidence
* question / refute / rebut ideas
* support / corroborate ideas
* show their position

## Task 4

The table below contains the sentences / clauses from paragraph 2 of the essay (the first main body paragraph). Each one performs a function within the paragraph.

1. Decide what each sentence /clause does. You may feel that a sentence/clause can perform more than one function at the same time. Use the list of functions above to help you.
2. What is the overall function/purpose of this paragraph?

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| Often, it is the elderly people themselves who are reluctant to live with their children. | **Identifies a problem with the policy/why the policy might not work.** |
| There are a number of possible reasons for this. |  |
| The first is that many want to retain their independence. | reason |
| They want to be able to come and go as they please, and to be able to live their lives in their own way and not have to fit in with other people, even if they are family. | Explain Reason |
| If they live with their family, they may feel they have lost some control over their lives, | Effect? |
| even if the alternative is to rely on support services such as visits from nurses or people to cook their meals. | Evidence(debate?) |
| Secondly, many elderly people are proud of being able to look after themselves, | reason |
| and would feel shame to be looked after by anyone else, even close family members. | effect |
| In other cases, the children may have moved to a distant city for work or other reasons, | examples |
| And their parents might not want to leave the place, neighbours and friends they know well to join their children in a city or town where they have no roots. | Explain, support? |

Unhealthy lives could means always stay up late, lack of exercise and live without a routine diet.