**SAGES Basic Paper Writing Outline**

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**1. Know and clearly articulate the purpose and goal of the paper and determine your audience.** Many students actually become “lost” in their writing because they are either not clear themselves about the paper’s purpose, or at least they never clearly state that goal to their readers, who are therefore also “lost.” So the first thing you should do is actually write out the purpose and goal of the paper in one sentence in your own words. Also determine your audience so you know how you should write the paper and what you should include.

***1. What do you understand about the assignment? Write out the purpose of the assignment in a sentence or two, in your own words.***

Should the people contributing donations to the nonprofit sector continue to be allowed to receive tax deductions for their charitable contributions? How does the charitable organization and the person contributing donations affect this situation?

***2. What do you not understand about the assignment? Write down what confuses you.***

This essay barely differs from our last. There is sure to be overlapping support and reasoning from the last essay to this one. Is it okay to draw information and sources form our last essay to support the conclusion of this essay?

***3. Formulate what you need to know into a clear sentence that your “boss” can understand and answer.***

This essay barely differs from our last. There is sure to be overlapping support and reasoning from the last essay to this one. Is it okay to draw information and sources form our last essay to support the conclusion of this essay?

**2. Determine the possible positions or approaches you could use in writing this paper.** If your paper is requires you to take and support an opinion, what are the various opinions people may have, and likely have had, concerning this topic? These are the “They Says” of the conversation you are entering. If your paper is more descriptive or informative, how can you frame the topic in such a way so that you are addressing a problem, answering a question, or presenting an opinion? Readers are more interested in reading papers that present and solve puzzles of some kind.

People will have many opinions as to who can and cannot receive tax deductions based off of their personal or moral experiences. These opinions will vary along the lines of what person is donating, mostly based off of income, and what organization is receiving the donation.

What are the extreme views? Describe them under the arrow. Remember there may be several aspects of your topic you should consider in this way.



Tax Bracket Aspect

Tax deductions for any person donating under any circumstances.

No tax deductions for any person under any circumstance.

Then briefly list the more moderate views along the continuum.

1. People within a certain income tax bracket can receive tax deductions to all NPOs.
2. People within all income tax bracket can receive tax deductions to certain NPOs.

What are the extreme views, if there is more than one aspect of your topic that you should consider in this way?



Charity whom Receives Donation Aspect

Tax deductions for any person donating under any circumstances.

No tax deductions for any person under any circumstance.

Then briefly list the more moderate views along the continuum.

1. People within a certain income tax bracket can receive tax deductions to all NPOs.
2. People within all income tax bracket can receive tax deductions to certain NPOs.

**3. Write out the factors you need to consider in covering the paper’s topic.** These factors will differ somewhat based on the type of paper you are being asked to write. I usually give you the factors you should consider in both the assignment and grading rubric, however as you advance in your academic career, most professors will not provide you with that specific information, and you will need to determine those factors for yourself.

I will need to focus strongly on answering both aspects of the question. These are key to answering the question in full. It will also give a large dynamic to my conclusion that will separate my conclusion from others. It will be very important to talk about how being just under an income threshold will separate those who will get deductions and those who won’t based off what is fair. Which group can still give and support themselves with deductions and which groups can’t without the deductions. Talk about how deductions shouldn’t even matter though because it is honorable to give in return. But you are still giving back with more taxes.

**4. Determine your sources and record your notes as you read, along with appropriate references, for each of these factors.** Doing this as you read, as opposed to trying to go back to readings and “find” evidence, or simply looking at random resources to support what you want to say, will help you collect all the appropriate information, opinions and evidence you will need to write your paper, and enable you to begin to assemble your thoughts as you read. You will also begin to see patterns in your notes. This is the most efficient (time-saving) and effective (gives the best results) way to prepare to write your paper, as you will have most of your information before you begin your composition.

List the sources you should consider:

I found the sources listed under blackboards needed reading to be very informative. In fact, I found a large portion of my reasons against tax deduction for donating individuals in the first listed article alone. I will consider the sources listed because they were provided to us by our professor and should therefore be considered scholarly.

How should you organize your notes and evidence as you read? Biographical background? According to the various opinions? Other means?

I should organize my evidence into which conclusion it supports, for or against tax deductions of individuals donating to charitable organizations. From there, there should be additional separation to distinguish which piece of evidence correlates to each reason for or against a conclusion.

**5. Clearly articulate your preliminary position, or thesis, concerning the topic.** Based on all the information you have gathered, what is your opinion concerning the topic, and what are the primary supports for your position? You should state this in one clear, concise sentence. At this point, you are not presenting ALL the nuances and evidence concerning your opinion, which will be presented in the paper itself. But in one sentence you should clearly articulate your thesis so that you – and your reader – know right from the start your position on the topic.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What is your basic position in your paper? | Tax Deductions should be kept for all people regardless of the organization they are giving to. |
| What is the evidence supporting your argument? | **Support**  1. Spurs investment into communities  - critical incentive that upholds cash flow to charities  - schools  - charitable aids (homeless shelters, scholarships)  - employment  2. Non discriminatory  - relieves burden on low-income families who want to give  - does not make rich pay more because they can, already the purpose of  income tax |
| Rewrite your statement including that specific evidence. | Regardless of the charitable organization they donate to, all 501(c)3 donors should be supported with tax-deductions, as it often encourages cash flow to charities and investment into communities, while relieving burden on low-income donating families. |
| What evidence exists that would support them making a different decision? | **Naysayer**  Point: Favors a small segment of the public who can afford extra payment  Rebuttal: These people don’t actually save money and often times pay more after  large donations. This is the purpose of income tax anyways. To level the  playing field. |
| Rewrite your thesis statement to include references to that counter-evidence. | Regardless of the charitable organization they donate to, all 501(c)3 donors should be supported with tax-deductions, as it often encourages cash flow to charities and investment into communities, while relieving burden on low-income donating families. |
| Rewrite your thesis statement, now, for clarity and conciseness, making sure there is a clear subject doing the action. | Regardless of the charitable organization they donate to, all 501(c)3 donors should be supported with tax-deductions. These deductions often encourage investment into local communities while avoiding further disconnect between the rich and poor. |

**6. Create a general paper outline.** Go back to #1: What is the point, or goal, of this paper? Based on that, how should you present your information so that your readers may most easily understand your topic? Again, this will vary depending on the type of paper you are writing. This outline will be brief, simply containing the major points, to access if your thoughts meet the paper’s goal and present your information in the most logical and understandable way.

Sample:

* Introduction
* Your Opinion / Thesis
* Supporting Argument #1, placing your strongest argument first
* Supporting Argument #2
* Supporting Argument #3
* Strongest Naysayer Argument Again Your Opinion, and Your Rebuttal
* Conclusion

Should the people contributing donations to the nonprofit sector continue to be allowed to receive tax deductions for their charitable contributions? How does the charitable organization and the person contributing donations affect this situation?

Start by grabbing readers attention.

Present unbiased information that will clear confusion about NPO’s, then give 3 reasons supporting my conclusion while providing a rebuttal to one opposing reason.

End with telling the readers where to go from there.

**7. Create a specific paper outline, including your evidence**. Use your general paper outline, as well as your factors list and notes, with special emphasis on your evidence, and organize them in a way that will help the reader follow your writing and understand your topic. You will use these to expand the general paper outline to write a specific, more detailed paper outline which will enable you to easily and clearly write your body paragraphs.

Sample:

* Your Opinion / Thesis
* Supporting Argument #1, placing your strongest argument first
  + Evidence #1 supporting this argument
    - What the evidence is
    - What the evidence means
    - Why the evidence supports this argument
  + Evidence #2 supporting this argument with sub-points
  + Evidence #3 supporting this argument with sub-points
* Supporting Argument #2
  + Evidence #1 supporting this argument with sub-points
  + Evidence #2 supporting this argument with sub-points
* Supporting Argument #3
  + Evidence #1 supporting this argument with sub-points
  + Evidence #2 supporting this argument with sub-points
* Strongest Naysayer Argument Again Your Opinion, and Your Rebuttal
  + Naysayer Argument
  + Naysayer Strongest Evidence supporting their argument, with sub-points
  + Your rebuttal against this argument
* Your evidence supporting your rebuttal, with sub-points

Intro discussing problem

* what is the topic / what problems arise from the topic

1. In 2012, “Private charitable giving represented 12.9% of [public charities’] total revenue” (4-5) <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/413277-The-Nonprofit-Sector-in-Brief--.PDF>

* what is a good solution / thesis / mapping statement

Discuss how the system currently is an incentive to invest in the community.

* critical incentive that upholds cash flow to charities which creates employment

1. In 2010, 11.6% of Ohio employment was in the nonprofit sector. “While Ohio accounts for less than 4.5 percent of the country’s nonprofit workers, nonprofit workers account for nearly 11.6 percent of Ohio’s private workforce, well above the 10.1 percent U.S. average. Of note, in half of the states, nonprofit employment exceeds that in manufacturing, the industry that is often perceived as the “engine” of economic strength.” (3).

<http://ccss.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/01/NED_National_2012.pdf>

1. 56% of nonprofits surveyed were unable to meet demand in 2013. More than half of nonprofits (55%) have 3 months or less cash-on-hand.28% ended their 2013 fiscal year with a deficit. <http://www.nonprofitfinancefund.org/announcements/2014/state-of-the-nonprofit-sector-survey>
2. <http://media.advisorone.com/advisorone/files/ckeditor/BofA%20HNW2010%2011%2005%2010.pdf>

* local charitable aids (homeless shelters / food banks / animal shelters, scholarship funds)

1. Lebron James’s pledge of 42 million dollars will invest in the Akron community. Just one in five Ak­ron res­id­ents holds a bach­el­or’s de­gree or high­er, and the high school gradu­ation rate is be­low 85 per­cent. More than 27 per­cent of the city’s pop­u­la­tion lives [be­low the poverty level](http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/39/3901000.html), 11 points high­er than the state’s 16 per­cent poverty rate.

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/39/3901000.html>

1. 34% of the people The Greater Cleveland Food Bank serves are under 18 years old.

<http://www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/files/resources/gcfbbrochurefinal.pdf>

1. The Cleveland Metropolitan School District’s program, Project ACT, reached out to 1,944 homeless school children for 2009. Of those, 50.9% had not yet completed 5th grade.

<http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/988136/17883648/1335463488147/StateofHomelessness2009.pdf?token=oWbGLm%2BNr63odXkOnWATRhAtffk%3D>

Discuss how this is unbiased and does not further the disconnect:

* The burden will be relieved on the poor who want to give

1. Of those nationally who made under $50,000 income in 2008, they donated over 2% of their adjusted gross income on average. That’s $1,000, a sizeable amount of money. The same tax filer’s as a group contributed nearly $37 billion dollars to charitable organizations in 2008. <http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/ftpdocs/121xx/doc12167/charitablecontributions.pdf>
2. For every dollar spent, a person is able to save their tax rate in cents on their annual taxes. In the 10% tax bracket, for every dollar spent, 10 cents will be deducted from your taxes, up until the total saved reaches half of your adjusted gross income. [https://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=content.view&cpid=40#.VfoYvRFVhBc](https://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=content.view&cpid=40%23.VfoYvRFVhBc)
3. In general, cash donations to charitable organizations may be deducted up to 50 percent of adjusted gross income. <http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations/Charitable-Contribution-Deductions>

* Naysayer argument intro about how the system favors rich, but counter with they aren’t saving any money this way

1. Some may even go to say the rich deserve this tax deduction.  Although only 3% of tax filers have annual incomes over $200,000, those households contribute 36% of the money that individuals give to charity every year—a total of $73 billion in 2008.

<http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/ftpdocs/121xx/doc12167/charitablecontributions.pdf>

1. For example, someone in the 25 percent tax bracket faces an after-tax price of only 75 cents when giving a dollar to charity. In other words, a person in that bracket who donates $1 to charity has his or her taxes reduced by 25 cents, so his or her consumption and savings decline by just 75 cents. In general, the deduction lowers the after-tax price per dollar of charitable contributions from $1 to $1 multiplied by the difference between one and the marginal tax rate. (2)

**This means that they spend more than they save!** <http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/ftpdocs/121xx/doc12167/charitablecontributions.pdf>

Conclude with a touch back onto my thesis and then to the main focuses of the article. Make a call to action for the people to protect the current system.

**8. Write your mapping statement.** Write out a statement, to go right after your thesis statement, that will explain exactly what your paper will accomplish and in what order, based on the your thesis and supporting arguments.

This paper will first examine the vulnerability of the benefiting charitable organizations and their impact to the community and then move on to discuss the equality of tax deductions on the nation’s citizens.

**9. Write the body of your paper.** Use your specific paper outline and your notes. For the purposes of brief beginning SAGES papers, write approximately one to four paragraphs on each major topic. Most, although not all topics, will require multiple paragraphs.

**You may use this worksheet to help you write each body paragraph:**

**\*Purpose,** or What are you trying to say to develop your position, in your own words?

Then we will follow these specific strategies for writing a strong paragraph:

1. A clear **statement** of the point you wish to use the quote or evidence to support. (This may also function as your topic sentence for that paragraph.)
2. An **introduction** to the quote or evidence that gives any information your reader will need to understand the quote or evidence (context, where it comes from, who or what it is about.)
3. The **quotation or evidence** itself
4. An **analysis** of the quotation or evidence that shows how it supports what you think it supports. If you are using a quote, often it will be effective here to draw attention to certain words in the quote or to restate the quote in your own words.
5. The **take-away**: How what the quote or evidence supports is related to your overall argument (your thesis statement).

**10. Think about and then write your introduction, conclusion, and title**. These are the aspects of your paper that will attract readers’ attention and leave them with something to think about. They will answer these questions for your readers: Why is this topic interesting? Why is this important? Why should I care?

What is the most important aspect of your topic that you want your readers to remember? This will help guide these elements of your paper.

What aspects of your topic will attract your readers’ attention and may be good ideas for your introduction?

What do you want readers to think or do as a result of reading your paper? Why is your paper important? Answer the question “So What?”

What are some ways you may capture your main idea in your title? Remember, your title should peak your readers’ interest, inform them of your topic, and let them know your basic position. It should also tie in with your paper, especially your introduction and conclusion.

**11. Make basic revisions to your first draft.** Print out your first draft and set aside for at least a few hours. Then come back to it and first check it over for obvious errors, and then analyze it for higher order errors. This includes reviewing the claims, logic and evidence of your paper, as well as its organization, to make sure that it clearly makes sense and convincingly supports your thesis.

**12. Make basic revisions to your second draft.** Print out your second draft with the above revisions and analyze it for lower order errors. This includes making sure that your verb tenses are correct and consistent; that you are writing correctly in the singular or plural; that your words are specific and clear; and that your transitions make sense so that the paper’s thoughts flow naturally. Also make sure your citations and references are accurate and complete.

**13. Ask someone else to review and revise your third draft**. Print out your third draft and give it to a friend to read out loud to you. Ask them if they understood what you wrote about and if they have any suggestions for improving the paper. Make revisions based on their input.

**14. Print your fourth draft and make a final review of your paper.** Print out your “final” draft with the above revisions, put it aside for at least a few hours, and then, before you read it out loud one last time, first look at #1: the goal and purpose of the paper. Read that, and then read your paper. Does your paper achieve the assignment’s goal? If so, turn it in. If not, revise it until it does.

**This version of your paper should be what you turn in as your first draft. This paper should be the very best you can produce.**

**We will then learn additional writing techniques in our workshops, and you will make your paper even better by enhancing your writing skills.**

**That improved paper – better than you could write before additional training – will be the final draft of your paper which you will turn in with your revision self-analysis.**

**After I have graded this paper, you will be again revising it based on my comments, for your final First Seminar Writing Folder, which is part of your final; and/or for your SAGES Writing Portfolio, which you need to compile and turn in before you can graduate.**