

EMBEDDED COMMUNICATING ENGINEERING
WORKSHOP 3 for COMPUTER ENGINEERING (EPP1)

ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY



CENTRE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE



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Copuriant 2013

Argumentative Essays

1. PURPOSE



Argumentative Essay: is used to defend a debatable position on an issue to persuade readers to accept the argument. Although the goal is to convince readers to accept the argument, the readers' response will either be: agree completely, agree with reservations, or disagree.

Stay focused: do not focus on so many arguments (no more than 2-3 arguments)

2. STRENGTHENING CLAIMS

- **2.1. Thesis Statement:** The thesis statement for an argumentative essay clearly states:
 - (a) the theme/subject (topic) of the essay, and
 - (b) the debatable point of view the writer is claiming (argument).

Example: Singapore's anti-pollution efforts should focus on privately owned cars (argument) because it would allow most citizens to contribute to national efforts (reason 1: main idea 1) and care about the outcome (reason 2: main idea 2).

This thesis statement informs readers of the argument and the main reasons.

2.2. Identifying and Using Supporting Details

In an argumentative essay, a persuasive argument has supporting details that are aided by credibility (ethos), logic (logos), and emotion (pathos).

- Credibility refers to the believability of the sources and their ethical implications e.g. quotations from authorities and valid sources cited in the Bibliography or Works Cited page of the essay. Do the sources have the credentials to be considered valid in persuasion?
- **Logic** refers to reason, rationality, and analysis e.g. facts, quantitative data, statistics, research studies, and logical flow in the essay.
- **Emotion** refers to appealing to the heart and feelings of the reader e.g. narrative, testimony, and personal experience. Although the appeal to emotion is used sparingly in academics, it can be a powerful tool in persuasion.

3. STRUCTURING INFORMATION IN THE ESSAY

An argumentative essay can be structured in more than one way, the most common of which are given below.

Option 1: Write one counter-argument and one own argument per paragraph

Use this to write an outline. You should make sure you can find credible sources to help you explain and support your points before you start writing.

INTRODUCTION:

- 1. OPENING: One sentence to describe the general theme of the topic.
- 2. BACKGROUND: Briefly describe both sides of the argument
- 3. THESIS: Main claim—state clearly the topic and own argument, and list key reasons.

BODY PARAGRAPH 1 (...then body paragraphs 2 and 3): ONE MAIN POINT PER PARAGRAPH (e.g. one COUNTER-ARGUMENT and one OWN ARGUMENT). **Add on more body paragraphs for more ideas...**

- 1. TOPIC SENTENCE (main idea of body paragraph)
- Counter-argument (opposing view and brief evidence) + Rebuttal (briefly explain reasons and provide brief evidence for refuting opposing view) (you may discuss relevant theory/concept).
- 3. Own argument: Explain own argument + evidence. EVIDENCE: statistics, data, case studies, and illustrations
- 4. EXPLANATION OF EVIDENCE
 - → How should we read or interpret the evidence you are providing us? How does this evidence prove the point you are trying to make in this paragraph? Can be opinion based and is often at least 1-3 sentences
 - → How does evidence support/explain the THEORY/CONCEPT
- 5. CONCLUDING SENTENCE

REMEMBER: Good essays = in-depth discussion of main idea; not how many ideas.

ONE MAIN POINT PER PARAGRAPH (i.e. one COUNTER-ARGUMENT or one OWN ARGUMENT). Next point should go into the next paragraph.

...More body paragraphs if you have other main ideas. In a first-year essay, you would not be given essays longer than approximately 1000 words. You should not include more than 3 key points (i.e. 3 body paragraphs in your essay about cause or effect).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. SUMMARY (LINK BACK TO THESIS)
- 2. CALL FOR ACTION (E.g. what must be done immediately / consequences of not taking action)

Option 2: List the counter-argument(s) and then provide one own argument per paragraph

Use this to write an outline. You should make sure you can find credible sources to help you explain and support your points before you start writing.

INTRODUCTION:

- 1. OPENING: One sentence to describe the general theme of the topic.
- 2. BACKGROUND: Briefly describe both sides of the argument
- 3. THESIS: Main claim—state clearly the topic and own argument, and list key reasons.

BODY PARAGRAPH 1:

Provide counter-argument(s) (opposing view and brief evidence) + Rebuttal (briefly explain reasons and provide brief evidence for refuting opposing view)

BODY PARAGRAPH 2 (...then body paragraphs 2 and 3): ONE MAIN POINT PER PARAGRAPH (i.e. one OWN ARGUMENT per paragraph). **Add on more body paragraphs for more ideas...**

- 1. TOPIC SENTENCE (main idea of body paragraph)
- Counter-argument (opposing view and brief evidence) + Rebuttal (briefly explain reasons and provide brief evidence for refuting opposing view) (you may discuss relevant theory/concept).
- 3. Own argument: Explain own argument + evidence. EVIDENCE: statistics, data, case studies, and illustrations
- 4. EXPLANATION OF EVIDENCE
 - → How should we read or interpret the evidence you are providing us? How does this evidence prove the point you are trying to make in this paragraph? Can be opinion based and is often at least 1-3 sentences
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...More body paragraphs if you have other main ideas. In a first-year essay, you would not be given essays longer than approximately 1000 words. You should not include more than 3 key points (i.e. 3 body paragraphs in your essay about cause or effect).

BODY PARAGRAPH x: CONCESSION: One or more strong counter-argument + Rebuttal

CONCLUSION:

- 1. SUMMARY (LINK BACK TO THESIS)
- 2. CALL FOR ACTION (E.g. what must be done immediately / consequences of not taking action)

Option 1 Example essay: Structure and content are reasonably good with relevant citations, but no theoretical explanations are given.

ADVERTISING MANIPULATES VIEWERS

Introduction:

In the simplest form, advertising can be defined as a kind of message or message transmission that is designed to promote a product, service, or an idea. Today this basic marketing strategy has become a natural part of our daily life. Considering that the \$ 20 billion spent on advertisements in 1979 had drastically risen to \$120 billion in 1999 and that in the course of a lifetime, one will see about three years worth of advertisements on television and approximately 3,000 ads per day, a person may easily acknowledge the impact of advertising (DiChiara, 2008). Nonetheless, as Giselle Touzard (2008) explains, advertising, which originally intended to be a source of information for people on the availability of products has developed into an industry that shapes people's identity. Advertisements not only bombard audience with their messages, but they also sell the ideas of who we are and what we should do or be. What do you think the writer's thesis should be? Thus, advertisements do have negative impact on people's perceptions despite their benefits.

Body paragraph 1: What is the purpose of this paragraph?

What are the elements of this paragraph?

Though advertisements can inform consumers, the messages they send can negatively influence people's perceptions of image. It is the contention of these supporters that advertisements are essential in keeping the market alive and rivalry hot. They believe that it is thanks to advertisements that companies working on the same line can display their products on the market equally and fairly. However, this idea cannot go further than being an immature claim because this rivalry is unfair. It is only the companies who can "afford" broadcasting strong propaganda of their product that can actually survive in this competitive environment. In that sense, small companies are destined to be wiped out from the market. Some may also point out that advertisements may also assert that consumers become more "aware" and "conscious". This position goes on to say that advertisements help the undecided customers come to a decision seeing all the available products on the media. This point has merits on the surface and could be acceptable to an extent. It is true that advertisements inform the consumers on the availability and variety of goods. Yet, serious doubts can be raised against this view when one considers the shortcomings of the messages the viewers are exposed to. The target audience, that is the consumers, are forced to believe in illusions about the product rather than realities. When an advertiser focuses merely on the advantages of a product, it creates a false impression. Or when a commodity is equated with positive feelings such as happiness and self-confidence, this image builds up a false hope that once you buy it, you will be happy and self-confident. Eventually, when these illusions are not realized – as they have been lies of the advertiser all along -, the consumer is disappointed. The advertiser achieves the ultimate end and turns a gear in the consumer society, but it is a deception that is ethically unacceptable. The advertiser not only pushes the public deeper into consumption, but also disillusions it with false messages. Thus it is important to be aware that advertisements are detrimental.

It is clear that advertisements manipulate viewers as they destroy societal balance as they draw on gender stereotypes. Frequently advertisements make use of archetypes and myths for the sake of making the message striking and memorable. Thus, it is a common practice to represent women as decorative objects at home who are submissive to men. Studies have identified that in advertising women are less often used in work representations compared with men (as cited in Jacobson & Mazur, 2007, p. 217). In the advertisements of house appliances, especially, women are typically equated with housewives and mothers. Even when women are portrayed in professional environments, they are often in subordinate positions, receiving instructions. Hence, professional women are reduced to order-takers. Men, on the other hand, are commonly associated with power, leadership, and efficiency. It is especially in car advertisements that these features are paired with masculinity. Also, professional men are shown in powerful and influential positions, giving orders. It is mostly men who solve the problems, lead a company or pursue professional goals. This double standard in the illustration of genders not only reveals the mainstream view but also affirms it because when consumers buy the advertised products, one indirectly approves of the advertisements, and therefore contributes to keeping and reproducing certain representations. Hence, advertisements destroy the possibility of a society where both genders are equal.

Secondly, advertisements present unattainable body images both for men and women, and thus create an insecure society. Everywhere advertisements tell the audience what it means to be a desirable man or woman, just as directly as the advertisement that claims, "Image is everything". For a man, the message is: You need to be athletic. It seems that whether a man is twenty or forty, whether he has brown or silver hair, an athletic body is indispensable for a strong, powerful, and confident man. The opposite is a caricature, just like the poor man, the anti-Mr. Muscle in the detergent advertisement. For a woman, too, the message is parallel: You need to be beautiful and skinny. Women are constantly exposed to gorgeous looking women who have the perfect hair or skin, and a body like that of a model. Although all these images are simple illusions, created by skillful makeup artists, photographers, or photo re-touchers who work on these meticulously, women unfortunately ignore this and delve into endless self-scrutiny. As Susan Brownmiller states, a woman is "forced to concentrate on the minutiae of her bodily parts, [and consequently she] is never free of self-consciousness. She is never quite satisfied, and never secure, for desperate, unending absorption in the drive for perfect appearance" (as cited in Jacobson & Mazur, 2007,

p. 213). Due to this lack of self-satisfaction, today 25 per cent of women are dieting and another 50 per cent has recently started or quitted a diet (Jacobson & Mazur, 2007, p. 214). Some women take even more dangerous steps to be like the women they see in advertisements. They develop an eating disorder such as anorexia or bulimia. It is quite striking that today approximately one in five women have an eating disorder (p. 214). Hence, advertisements perpetuate disappointment as well as dissatisfaction in both genders.

All in all, attempts trying to justify the benignity of advertisements are destined to being feeble because advertisements cause apparent harms on public. These written, audio or visual messages reinstate stereotypes and consequently annihilate gender equality. They also portray impossible body images for men and women, which eventually manipulates the public and shakes self-esteem. Finally, advertisements exploit the future generations for their own end and cause irreversible impairment on their health and psychology. As Sarah Bernhardt (n.d, para. 3) remarks, "The monster of advertisement... is a sort of octopus with innumerable tentacles. It throws out to right and left, in front and behind its clammy arms, and gathers in, through its thousand little suckers, all the gossip and slander and praise afloat, to spit out again at the public." Therefore, we need to save ourselves from the evil tentacles of this monster and learn to make our own free choices, before it is too late.

References have been omitted.

Note that for your essays, you are expected to use the IEEE citation style, notes of which can be found below.

USEFUL RESOURCES:

https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/counter-argument

https://www.mesacc.edu/~paoih30491/Refutationpgphs.html

CITING USING IEEE

For citing in your work (written text and presentations):

Whttp://libguides.murdoch.edu.au/IEEE/text

For the Reference list: http://libguides.murdoch.edu.au/lEEE/entries

Option 2 Example essay:

Read this essay and try to identify the different elements in the structure. Can you locate the thesis, writer's arguments with supporting evidence, and counter-arguments with rebuttal?

IS GLOBAL WARMING REAL?

In the past 1,300 years, the earth has not experienced such a warming trend as we are having now (NASA, 2016). In fact, the World Meteorological Organisation has stated that the global temperature is 1.2C above pre-industrial levels and for three years in a row, it has been the hottest year on record (Carrington, 2016). Though the scientific evidence seems overwhelming in favor of global warming, there are those, for various reasons, who believe that global warming is a hoax or not empirically verified. This is disappointing, as the future of our planet is at stake, and the last thing we should do in this critical time is argue whether or not our world is being destroyed. In order to enlighten those who believe global warming is not currently happening, I will present evidence that will show that global warming is real due to sea levels rising, global temperatures rising, warming oceans, shrinking ice sheets, declining Arctic sea ice, glacial retreat, extreme temperature events, ocean acidification, and decreased snow cover. In turn, I will also discuss counterarguments and their refutations.

The world over, sea levels are rising at an unprecedented rate. Two reasons why sea levels are rising is because of the warming of sea water (water expands when it warms) and the melting of land-based ice, such as glaciers and ice sheets. According to scientists John Church and Neil White, the global sea level rose 17 centimeters (6.7 inches) in the last century. Furthermore, the rate in this last decade has been nearly double compared to the last century (Church & White, 2006). So, if we compare the sea levels from this century to the last, it is obvious that sea levels are taking an unexpected turn—and the global rise in temperature has much to do with this.

A global rise in temperature has been obvious for some years now. T.C. Peterson et.al., in their analysis for the Special Supplement to the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society, found most of the warming happened in the past 35 years, with 15 of the 16 warmest years on record occurring from 2001. In addition, 2015 was the first time the global average temperatures were 1 degree Celsius or more above the 1880-1899 average (T.C. Peterson et.al, 2016). This clearly demonstrates that global warming is a recent phenomenon, and should be considered especially dangerous if it continues at its current rate.

Like sea levels rising from warming, the oceans are also shown to be warming. According to geophysical research by Levitus, et. al., the oceans have absorbed the increasing global heat, with the topmost 700 meters (about 2,300 feet) of oceans demonstrating a warming of 0.302 degrees Fahrenheit since 1969 (Levitus, et. al., 2009). Even on the surface of oceans, something that is easy to record scientifically, global warming is more than noticeable.

Another happening that is also easy to detect is the shrinking of ice sheets. Specifically, the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets are decreasing in mass at an accelerated rate. Information from NASA's Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment point to Greenland, which lost 150 to 250 cubic kilometers (36 to 60 cubic miles) of ice per year between 2002 and 2006, and to Antarctica, which lost about 152 cubic kilometers (36 cubic miles) of ice between 2002 and 2005 (NASA, 2016). This is not normal by any means, and shows there is an uncertain future for animals that inhabit those ice sheets and for us as a species, as higher ocean water levels means certain masses of land will be covered by water.

Along with ice sheets, Arctic sea ice is declining rapidly. The National Ice & Snow Data Center show that the extent and thickness of Arctic sea ice has dissipated quickly over the past several decades (National Snow and Ice Data Center, 2016). This is a telltale sign that global warming is at work.

Glaciers are also being attacked by global warming, like other frozen bodies of water. The National Ice & Snow Data Center presents evidence that glaciers are retreating globally. This includes areas such as the Alps, the Himalayas, the Andes, the Rockies, Alaska, and Africa (National Snow and Ice Data Center, 2016). It is not a rarity or a strange, local phenomenon: it is a global catastrophe that needs to be addressed.

Extreme events come hand in hand with catastrophes. According to the National Centers for Environmental Information, the amount of record-high temperature events in the United States has been increasing, while the amount of record-low temperature events has been decreasing, since 1950. In addition, the U.S. has seen increasing amounts of intense rainfall events (Gleason, 2016). There is no doubt we still have cold winters, but the extreme high temperatures we continue to experience worldwide are becoming more and more harsh, which can kill more people and ravish crop lands.

Another dangerous result of global warming that is present is ocean acidification. The PMEL Carbon Group states that since the start of the Industrial Revolution, the acidity of surface ocean waters has grown by approximately 30 percent (PMEL Carbon Group, 2016). To put this conundrum into greater perspective, C. L Sabine, in his article, "The Oceanic Sink for Anthropogenic CO2," noted that the amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by the upper layer of the oceans is growing by near to 2 billion tons per year (Sabine, 2004). This leaves coral reefs and many other species living in the oceans vulnerable to adverse effects and points to our own demise as a species in the near future.

Now let us rise to the mountains from the oceans. Spring snow, that beautiful sight we have while driving through the mountains, is in danger. Gleaned from the research done by the National Snow and Ice Data Center, we get to know that satellite observations demonstrate that the amount of spring snow cover in the Northern Hemisphere has decreased over the past five decades. In addition, the snow is melting earlier than usual (National Snow and Ice

Data Center, 2016). Not only does this mean less of a chance to do winter sports, but it also endangers the habitats that these mountains maintain.

Despite all these factors involved and the evidence shown from highly-credible sources (mostly governmental), there are critics of global warming as a scientific fact. One such criticism is that there is no real consensus that it is real, and that it is something up for discussion. However, the fact is that according to the authors of seven major climate consensus studies, about 97% of climate scientists believe in global warming (Skeptical Science, 2016). The critics who try to debase these results point to minor studies funded by far-right politicians and lobbyists.

Another significant criticism of global warming as a true phenomenon is that what is happening now is a part of Earth's geophysical processes. Every 1500 years, approximately, the heat distribution of Earth switches between hemispheres, though total heat globally remains the same. However, this is a much different happening than human-produced global warming, which has been created by emissions of CO2 in the atmosphere within the last 200 years. Unlike natural heat variations, the present temperature increase made by CO2 is being recorded globally—on the ground, in the air, and in the oceans (Skeptical Science, 2016). So, it is not a natural heat distribution issue that happens precisely at the same time (the 1500 year hemisphere seesaw), but rather an issue of global heat increase that has been happening since the Industrial Revolution.

Though this was only a glimpse at the mountains of evidence pointing to the fact of global warming, it is difficult to dismiss. From frozen bodies of water melting more rapidly, to water levels rising and having more acidity, to global temperatures rising to increasingly-common events of extreme heat, global warming is showing its signs in a variety ways. However, there are those that are against global warming as a fact, citing counter arguments, though most of them are illogical when faced with the growing mounds of empirical evidence that demonstrate global warming as a real phenomenon and the strong consensus in favor of it being a fact within the scientific community. And if you still do not believe in global warming after reading this essay and after seeing the data proving it, you have to admit that emitting CO2 in the atmosphere cannot be healthy for Earth in the long run, and that we should do whatever we can to change the way we treat our planet and ultimately ourselves.

References have been omitted.

Source: https://academichelp.net/samples/academics/essays/persuasive/global-warming-is-real.html