## How to Write an Argumentative Essay

* When deciding on a topic for your argumentative essay, you should feel strongly about your opinion. Start by writing one sentence—not a question—which states your opinion. For example: “The Star Spangled Banner should be replaced by a new national anthem for the United States.” (Not: Should the Star Spangled Banner be replaced?) This sentence is called your thesis statement.
* Once you have decided on your thesis statement, you need to decide on several reasons (typically three to five) why you believe your thesis to be correct. For example, using the Star Spangled Banner example, your reasons might include the following: --The Star Spangled Banner should be replaced because it glorifies war. --The Star Spangled Banner should be replaced because it does not recognize the strength of the diversity in the United States. --The Star Spangled Banner should be replaced because almost no one except professional musicians can actually sing it. --The Star Spangled Banner should be replaced because many Americans do not understand the meaning of the lyrics.
* Next, write one paragraph for each of the above reasons. Each of those paragraphs should start with one clearly stated reason. Then back up that reason in five to seven sentences. To back up that reason, you might do any of the following: --Explain your own reasoning on the subject. --Find something in a book or magazine article to back up your thinking. Note: Be sure to cite your source; that is, tell the reader exactly where you got the information. --Ask appropriate individuals for a quote. For example, ask a musician to explain why the song is difficult to sing. --Take a small survey among various individuals to get a group opinion. For example, “Fifteen out of twenty adults surveyed do not believe the national anthem should glorify war." Note: These paragraphs form what is called the body of your essay.
* Now you are ready to write the introduction. Three to four sentences are usually adequate to accomplish the following: --Start with an attention-getting statement. --State your thesis. --Give the reader a preview of what your arguments will be.
* Finally, in the conclusion, wrap up what you have said in a couple of sentences. Arrange your essay in the following order: ***--Introduction --Body, with reasons arranged from weakest to most compelling last. --Conclusion***

**All argumentative topics have PROs and CONs. Before you start writing, it is imperative to make a list of these ideas and choose the most suitable ones among them for supporting and refuting.**

**There are three possible organization patterns:**

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| **PATTERN 1** |
| Introduction |
| PRO point 1 |
| PRO point 2 |
| CON(s) + refutation (s) |
| Conclusion |

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| **PATTERN 2** |
| Introduction |
| CON(s) + refutation (s) |
| PRO point 1 |
| PRO point 2 |
| Conclusion |

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| **PATTERN 3** |
| Introduction |
| CON point 1 |
| CON point 2 |
| CON point 3 |
| Conclusion |