

Guide: How to Organize a Written Argument

Here are templates or outlines for the three types of arguments: decision, evaluation, and diagnosis. They are starting points for writing. You can modify them as necessary for a specific situation.

For instance, when an audience already knows the criteria you will use to recommend a decision, you do not need to state them at the beginning of the argument; however, in your argument, the criteria have to be obvious.

Decision Argument

1. **Statement of Decision:** The decision that needs to be made.
2. **Statement of Decision Options:** How many different options the decision has.
3. **Statement of Recommendation:** The option you believe is best.
4. **Statement of Criteria:** The criteria you use to make the decision.
5. **Proof of Decision:** The evidence supporting the decision.

Criterion 1

Support of the proposed decision with evidence based on the first criterion.

Criterion 2

Support of the proposed decision with evidence based on the second criterion.

Criterion 3, criterion 4, and so on

Continue proof on the remaining criteria.

6. **Rebuttal of Other Options:** Show why the other options are not as good as the recommended one.

Evaluation Argument

1. **Subject of Evaluation:** What or who is being evaluated and on what terms.
2. **Statement of Criteria:** The criteria you use for the evaluation.
3. **Statement of Overall Evaluation:** Your bottom-line evaluation of the subject.
4. **Proof of the Evaluation**

Criterion A

Evaluation of the subject on the first criterion and relevant evidence.

May find negatives, positives, or both.

Criterion B

Evaluation of the subject on the next criterion and relevant evidence.

May find negatives, positives, or both.

Criterion C, criterion D, and so on

Continue proof on the remaining criteria.

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Template: **How to Organize a Written Argument** (Continued)

Diagnosis Argument

1. **Definition of the Problem:** Description of the major symptoms of the problem.
2. **Summary of the Causes:** Brief description of each of the major causes.
3. **Proof of the Causes**

Cause A

Evidence-backed explanation of how the first cause contributes to the problem.

Cause B

Evidence-backed explanation of how the next cause contributes to the problem.

Cause C, cause D, and so on

Continue proof of the remaining causes.