

Historical background – To more effectively communicate an argument, writers must provide the audience with the context for that argument through historical facts of the issue.

Common ground – These are points related to the issue and on which both sides agree; identifying them generates good will between the writer and reader and helps avoid arguing points on which both sides already agree.

Definitions – Writers must define the common or technical terms they use in an essay for the average reader to understand. A term can be defined by stipulating a definition, by using a synonym, or by offering an example.

Arguments

Arguments that oppose the thesis should be stated and explained in a way that opponents (the readers for whom the argument is intended) would accept. Generally, the writer should respond to arguments that oppose the writer’s thesis in one of three ways: by conceding, refuting, or clarifying. Arguments that support the thesis must include reasons (for supporting the thesis) and evidence to substantiate those reasons. The most convincing and best-developed arguments should generally be saved for the end.

Structuring an Argumentative Essay

Introduction Catches the reader’s attention
Introduces the issue
States the thesis

**See also “Methods for Developing Introductions” handout.*

Body Contains two or more well-developed paragraphs that provide reasons and evidence for the argument. These paragraphs include the following:

- ✓ Topic Sentence (reason)
- ✓ Evidence
- ✓ Linking Sentence
- ✓ Second piece of evidence
- ✓ Linking Sentence
- ✓ Third piece of evidence (if necessary)
- ✓ Linking Sentence
- ✓ Concluding Sentence

**See also “Developing Body Paragraphs” handout.*

What are the five types of evidence*?

- **Real life examples** - an actual event observed or experienced
 - **Statistics** - numbers
 - **Authorities** - experts identified by name & with credentials
 - **Analogies** - comparisons
 - **Hypothetical situations** - imagined or created situations
- (*See also the “Providing Evidence” handout.)*

Conclusion Provides the audience with a resolution (e.g. refer to the introduction, call for action, issue a warning, etc.)

Restates but **does not repeat** the thesis

**See also “Methods for Developing Conclusions” handout.*