Outline of an Argumentative Essay-Classical Pattern

I. Introduction
   A. Background Information: basic information about the issue and the position being argued.
   B. Thesis Statement: states the position to be argued in the essay

II. Reasons that Support the Thesis Statement
   A. Reason/Argument 1 (main point #1)
      1. Supporting evidence
      2. Supporting evidence
   B. Reason/Argument 2 (main point #2)
      1. Supporting evidence
      2. Supporting evidence
   C. Reason/Argument 3 (main point #3)
      1. Supporting evidence
      2. Supporting evidence

III. Counter Arguments and Responses to Them
   A. Mention the arguments from the other side of the issue if there could be an opposing interpretation.
   B. Briefly refute the other side's arguments

IV. Conclusion

Thesis Statements (courtesy of the History Writing Center)

A short essay should contain a thesis statement in its first paragraph. The thesis statement informs the reader, as soon as possible, what argument the paper will make. A thesis statement may require more than one sentence. In deciding where to place the thesis statement and how to introduce it, consider what a typical UW student would need to know to understand your thesis.

A good thesis statement will probably have these characteristics:

- It is clearly and forcefully supported by the rest of the paper, and all of the evidence pertains to it.
- It is precise, and can be understood on its own, before one has read the essay.
- It is precise, and not so general and vague that it does not express an arguable position.
A List of Dos and Don’ts for Paper Writing

Do
italicize or underline book titles, including abbreviated titles
put quotes that are four lines or longer in block quote format (CMS: single space the quote and indent evenly on both sides)
cite your sources using parenthetical citations or footnotes/endnotes [see below]
use first person plural (we) or third person (he/she/one)

Don’t
use contractions (don’t, won’t, would’ve, it’s, he’s, etc.)
use its’ (no apostrophe is necessary when indicating a possessive—so just “its”
use second person (you) or first person singular (I)
use “I believe” or “I feel”—as this is your paper, there is no need to state that this is your personal opinion
split infinitive verb forms—ex. “to accurately judge” should be “to judge accurately”

A good, and inexpensive, text to refer to for grammatical questions is Strunk and White, Elements of Style.

Citation Guidelines
CMS-Chicago Manual of Style—is the style manual used by historians. You may also want to refer to Kate Turabian’s A Manual For Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. The following are guidelines for citations as per CMS/Turabian.

Footnotes/Endnotes:
Julius Caesar, The Gallic War, trans. by H. J. Edwards, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 106. Note: In the case of some sources, you may cite by book/chapter and paragraph/line number instead of page number. This allows the reader to track down the passage you’re citing without having to find the particular edition.

Subsequent footnotes/endnotes should read as follows: Caesar, 106.

Bibliography:

Parenthetical Citations:
This is another way to cite sources, based on the MLA-Modern Language Association-style guide: (Caesar, p. 106)

Here you must include a bibliography, as this is where the full information on the source will appear.