Argumentative/Persuasive Papers Study Sheet

In an argumentative essay it is your job to try to convince the reader to accept the argument you make. Through writing facts that back up your opinion or stance, you attempt to get readers to agree with your thinking. It often involves answering a question by taking one position over another.

Writing an argumentative or persuasive essay is about selecting a topic that has two clear sides or positions. You approach the topic by investigating it and collecting, generating and evaluating supporting evidence. The actual essay lays out your position concisely.

Things to Focus on when Writing

- Well-established facts supported through research when necessary
- Values that are both relevant and clarified to give your readers perspective
- An argument that is sequenced by the priority of facts and the level of importance
- Conclusions formed throughout the paper and stated at the end
- Persuasion that establishes facts your readers agree with and values they share
- Confidence to communicate effectively with persuasion

The Introduction Paragraph

The introduction of the argumentative essay should do several things:

- Provide background information and introduce your topic
- Explain your point of view to readers by highlighting the importance of the topic or the reason readers should care
- Include a well-defined, concise and clear thesis that highlights at least two main points, with three preferable
- Stay engaging to make readers want to continue reading your essay
• Contain a transition into the body paragraphs
• Create an attention-grabbing lead into the argument

The Body Paragraphs

The body paragraphs contain the supporting evidence that backs up your position. The opposing positions should also be clearly stated and defined. Keep the following guidelines in mind when writing your body paragraphs:

• Stick to one main point per paragraph.
• Make sure to establish a logical connection to the thesis statement in each paragraph.
• Explain the connections to the thesis with respect to how and why.
• Devote at least one paragraph to the opposing viewpoint.
• Use evidence to support your points.
• Keep in mind that sources provide authority to your position, and cite any sources used.
• Avoid summarizing information because body paragraphs develop the ideas, not conclude them.

Your Evidence

The evidence that supports your thesis statement might include facts, personal anecdotes, statistics or logic. The conclusion re-introduces the thesis, but it is more than a simple rewording. Instead, it involves synthesizing the evidence from the body paragraphs with the thesis statement. Never add new information in your conclusion. Review the essay as a whole while clearly concluding the argument persuasively. This is your last chance to convince someone of your position, so make it count by using sound logic.

From the Writing Center
at the Academic Resource Center

John Tyler Community College
Including the opposing view in the argumentative or persuasive essay is necessary. You want readers to draw the same conclusions you do, but you cannot in good conscience expect someone to take a position without at least some understanding of the opposing viewpoint. When including this information, shy away from simply stating that the position is wrong. Instead, explain why the position does not align with your thesis. Maybe the basis of the viewpoint is outdated. Maybe it is a viewpoint that is based on misinformation.

Whatever it is, present the opposing viewpoint fairly, objectively and accurately. Let readers draw their own conclusions; if you write a strong and convincing argument that is well-written and easy to follow logically, you can persuade your readers with open minds to see your viewpoint.

**Logical Fallacies**

Logical fallacies are errors in reasoning that can undermine the logic of an argument. Fallacies should be avoided in this type of assignments. Fallacies can manifest themselves as illogical arguments or as irrelevant points. They can be identified because they lack any evidence to support the claims they are making. Some common fallacies are slippery slope, hasty generalization, and red herring. A simple and reliable way to avoid fallacies is to make sure any point you make is supported by cited evidence.

You can also use fallacies when refuting a counter argument. If you find a source that you wish to use to highlight the counter arguments that are against the side you are arguing, you can look to see if they use any fallacies, and highlights those as one of the reasons why said counter argument is faulty.

**The Conclusion Paragraph**

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as a whole while clearly concluding the argument persuasively. This is your last chance to convince someone of your position, so make it count by using sound logic.

**Source Referenced**

