Gathering Evidence to Support Your Position

The strength of an argument depends upon the strength of its evidence. Your evidence should be:
- Specific—examples, statistics, illustrations, case studies, personal experience, expert testimonies
- Persuasive
- Relevant
- Representative
- Sufficient

Structuring Your Essay

- An argumentation essay should have an introduction, body, and conclusion, just like any other essay.
  
  **Introduction**
  - Gain the reader’s attention.
  - Introduce the issue you will be discussing.
  - State your thesis/position concisely and confidently.
  - Convince your audience that you know what you are talking about and that your position deserves consideration.

  **Body**
  - The body of your essay contains the evidence you will use to argue your thesis.
  - You may also refute your opponents’ arguments.
  - Present your evidence logically and convincingly.
  - Use deductive and inductive reasoning.

  **Conclusion**
  - Sum up your argument.
  - Restate thesis in different words.
  - Make a strong closing statement.

Refuting the Opposition

It is important to anticipate opposing arguments and to answer these objections in your paper.

- As you plan your essay, identify possible objections to your position.
- Decide which of these arguments you want to refute in your paper.
- Try to refute the *most compelling* of your opponents’ arguments.

Points to remember in refuting your opponents

- Try to demonstrate that opposing arguments are weak, unsound, or unfair. Look for the following in refuting others’ arguments:
  - Faulty reasoning or logical fallacies
  - Invalid conclusions drawn from certain assumptions
  - Negative effects of the position
  - Misinterpretation of facts
  - Inadequate evidence
• Define the case against your position and then present contrasting evidence to show its weaknesses.

• If an opponent has a very strong case, acknowledge a point well taken and then try to point out the limitations of the position.

• Be careful not to distort your opponents’ arguments—this could backfire and turn your audience against you.