



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.