



OWLS Writing Guides: ARGUMENT ESSAY

Title your essay using an interesting and original title (centered)

INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH (general-to-specific pattern)

Engage the reader's interest: Begin with a 'hook'—an opening that introduces your topic in a creative and interesting way—such as an anecdote or scenario that draws the reader in.

Introduce your topic: Explain or define the issue or policy in question, and provide some context and background information to help readers better understand the issue and your argument that follows.

Close with your thesis: State your position on the issue. You may also wish to forecast your major supporting claims—the several reasons why you hold your position. Although a forecasting thesis statement may be several sentences long, its logical structure should be that of a *because* sentence, with the main clause (or first sentence) stating your position and the subsequent clauses (or sentences) stating your reasons. E.g. "The U.S. should institute a National ID card [*because*] . . ." (Your several reasons follow here).

SUPPORTING PARAGRAPHS (ARGUMENTS AND REFUTATIONS)

- Develop your argument in several body paragraphs, each one making an argument in support of your position or refuting an opposing argument.
- Organize your arguments logically, depending upon your topic and purpose. For example:
 - Present arguments in order of increasing importance, so that you build up to your strongest argument.
 - For a problem-solution argument, present the problem (its nature, importance, and need for a solution) before proposing and arguing your solution to it.
 - Refute opposing arguments before or after presenting arguments for your position, depending on strength of the opposing points. Very strong or obvious opposing points are normally early in the paper rather than later.
 - An argument that is primarily against a policy rather than for its own may be structured as a point-for-point refutation of opposing arguments.
- Begin each body paragraph with a clear topic sentence. Include a bridging idea if you are transitioning from one body paragraph to another.
- Support each of your arguments with cogent reasoning and relevant evidence. Remember that you are not writing a report, but an argument; so do not simply report what others have said on the point. Rather, argue your point and demonstrate your reasoning, weaving source material into your arguments without allowing it to overwhelm or obscure your own thoughts and words.

Quoting and paraphrasing from sources

- When you include source material, quote when it is important to relate the exact words of the source, such as in the following cases:
 - to express a point in a particularly memorable way by capturing the exact phrasing
 - to add the voice of an authority to your argument
 - to allow an author to speak for or against your position in his or her own words
- In most other cases, you should paraphrase the source idea.

CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH (this should be the briefest paragraph in your paper)

Repeat your claim briefly, and close your argument with a call to action, a last appeal to the reader. Consider returning to the idea or example that began your paper, as a way of framing your argument.

WORKS CITED LIST (on separate page at end of paper)

Your list of works cited list should include every source you cite in your paper.