

Elements of an Argument Essay & Worksheets

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Part. I Terminology

In order to avoid confusion in discussing argumentation, the following terms will be used throughout this workshop:

1. **Claim:** A statement that focuses on an issue within a broad topic. It is general belief or assertion about this issue and is expressed without support, warrants, or proof of its validity.

Example:

Topic: baseball

Claim: Good pitching is essential for winning the pennant.

Topic: Baseball

Claim: Athletes' use of steroids adversely affects Baseball.

Topic: Education

Claim: Homework is a crucial part of students' education.

Topic: Education

Claim: Good teachers don't give much homework.

2. **Point of view/ stance/position:** An argumentative opinion within a document. It reflects the complex personal background of the author and expresses where the speaker stands on a topic at a given time.

Example:

Point of view: the Yankees will win the pennant this year.

Point of view: Players who use steroids should be banned for baseball.

Point of view: Students should not take after- school jobs.

Point of view: Mr. X is a really poor teacher.

3. **Thesis statement:** A premise that an author hopes to prove. It is a proposition to be developed and defend in the presentation of the argument.

Example:

Thesis statement: The Yankee will win the pennant this year because they have the best starting pitching staff in baseball.

Thesis statement: Players who use steroids should be banned from baseball because these drugs damage the players' health and give them an advantage over those who do not use steroids.

Thesis statement: After- school jobs reduce the amount of time students can spend on homework, thereby reducing the quality of their academic performance.

Thesis statement: Mr. X is really poor teacher because he gives so much homework that students get discouraged.

4. **Supporting evidence:** information that leads the reader to accept the author's thesis. This information is gathered from a variety of sources and, along with its sources, is provided within the text.
5. **Rebuttal evidence.** Information that challenges the author's thesis. This information offers an opposing view on the premise and should be addressed in the argument because of its contradictory.
6. **Analytical argument:** An examination and critique of other texts. This type of argument is most common in academic examinations, such as AP, where students have to illustrate their skills in using texts as a basis for response to prompt.
7. **Persuasive argument:** An argument designed to move an audience. This type of argument reflects most "real life" presentations, where the author wants an audience to respond in some manner.
8. **Conclusion:** A summary of the author's point of view. After the evidence has been weighed and evaluated. This is the author's final statement on the claim.

PART II: Identifying the Elements of an Argument in a Text

After reading the assigned (sample) argument essay(professional model), answer the following questions:

- 1. What claim (assertion) does the author make?

- 2. What point of view (argumentative opinions) does the author adopt about this claim?

- 3. What is the author’s thesis?

- 4. Give two or three examples of evidence from the text that support the thesis?

- 5. Is it possible to cite evidence from the text that challenges the author’s position?

- 6. At whom is the argument directed, and what does this choice of audience suggest about its purpose?

- 7. What conclusion does the author establish?

- 8. Is the argument convincing? Why or why not?

Part III Dissecting a Text

Comparing and Contrasting Two Sources

1. What is the general topics of the two articles you read?

2. What claim (assertion) does each author make about the topic?

Article 1	Article 2

3. What Point of view (argumentative opinion) is expressed in each article?

Article 1	Article 2

4. What evidence is cited to support each author's point of view?

Article 1	Article 2

5. Is there opposing evidence cited in the texts? If so, give some examples.

Article 1	Article 2

6. After comparing the two articles, note the issues they raise.

Part IV: Working the Dialectical Notebook (Annotate the Text)

Topic: _____

Title: _____

Text	Response
<p>In this column, record important information or ideas as they appear in the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Relevant info in support of the argument- Summary of material- Key points of reading	<p>In the column, record your thoughts about or reactions to any of the material in the Text column (question, thoughts, themes, connections, idea).</p>

Part V Annotating a Text

Topic: _____

Article: _____

Methods of Annotating a Text	My Annotations
Ask questions of the text	
Connect the subject matter to your knowledge and experience	
Make connections to other texts (articles about the same topic)	
Define important or unfamiliar terms or concepts	
List the major examples or parts of the argument the writer is making	
Summarize a paragraph or interpret a difficult sentence	
Find alternative perspectives to the writer's point of view or assumptions (reading a text as an argument) from a different article	
Extend the meaning of the text by considering how it relates to or explains big issues	

Part VI Constructing a Written Argument

What is the major point of this text?

Organize the material from the Text column by grouping it in categories that you have chosen and named

Category title: _____

Category title: _____

Category title: _____

Category title: _____

What is your general opinion of the idea(s) presented in this text?

Part VII: Creating an Outline of an Argument

Once you have grouped the evidence and ideas, you need to decide on the topic for your paper and determine your point of view. Here is one possible way to organize your thoughts.

Outline of my Argument

Issues raised by the texts (context):

The issue I have chosen to address (Why does it matter?):

My question about the issue (for further research)

My **preliminary belief** about the question:

Evidence and source(s) related to my belief about this issue:

Pro	cons

Based on the evidence, this is **my position** on the question:

In the **Introduction**, did I include (✓ items you have included in your essay)

- _____ 2-3 sentences to contextualize the topic (Why does it matter?)
- _____ 1-2 sentences of a major counter claim
- _____ 1 sentence to show your position
- _____ 1-2 sentences to show your claim

Body Paragraphs- Did I include-(✓ items you have included in your essay)

Body Paragraph 1:

- _____ Topic sentence (claim #1)
- _____ Explain the reason
- _____ example A that supports your claim(facts, examples from the **articles**)
- _____ example B that supports your claim
- _____ conclusion

Body Paragraph 2:

- _____ Topic sentence ((claim #2)
- _____ Explain the reason
- _____ example A that supports your claim(facts, examples from the **articles**)
- _____ example B that supports your claim
- _____ conclusion

Body Paragraph 3:

- _____ Topic sentence ((claim #3)
- _____ Explain the reason
- _____ example A that supports your claim(facts, examples from the **articles**)
- _____ example B that supports your claim
- _____ conclusion

Paragraph 4

- _____ Topic sentence (**a counter claim**)
- _____ Reasons of the counter claim
- _____ examples(2 examples from the **articles**) to refute why the counter claim is wrong
- _____ conclusion

Conclusion- Did I include- (✓ items you have included in your essay)

- _____ Restate your position.
- _____ suggestions of solutions to the issue

Part X Argument Essay Scoring Guide Student Name _____

Teacher _____

Criterion and Score Points	0	1	2	3	4	Evidence	Instructional next step: to meet CCR standards this student needs to:
Reading For Meaning							
Read and comprehend						The student identifies _____ points from the sources and uses these to build an argument. The student also raises questions about the claims the authors make.	The student could take the analysis of source texts further using full quotes and examining the point of view or purpose of the authors on both sides of the question.
Cite strong evidence							
Determine pt. of view							
Evaluate argument							
Total							
EVIDENCE +REASONING						The student makes a _____ claim that is developed through the use of illustrations from personal experience as well as _____ citations of sources. The conclusion summarizes the major points.	The students could make _____ use of source texts as evidence and also to examine the arguments in defense of media as a positive force.
Introduce precise claim							
Develop claims fairly							
Provide conclusion							
Total							
ORGANIZATION+ CLARITY							
Create cohesion						The student has words and phrases that create sentence, paragraph, and essay level cohesion , with _____ apses.	Through proof reading would help the students to identify the _____ places where the organization and clarity of the writing breaks down.
Produce clear writing							
Total							
Language + Conventions	0	1	2	3	4		
Est. a formal + Objective style						Throughout the essay, the student _____ a formal style with the inclusion of number of illustrations from personal experience	For the most formal types of academic writing, these illustrations could be _____ (e.g., citing the results of the poll that student took, quoting from the less than effective essays her peer writes).

Use Conventions of English					The student controls _____ of the conventions of English (spelling, punctuation)making only occasional errors that do not interfere with meaning	The student needs to work on proofreading to catch these errors, particularly for sentence fragments, consistent spelling of terms like Internet.
USE vocabulary + structure of topic and discipline					The student's vocabulary is _____ appropriate to the topic (vocabulary from media and technology, terms for referring to sources, introducing personal examples).	The student needs to learn the vocabulary for making logical relations between idea, as well as the forms for citation and references
Total						

Total score:

Overall Level: