

Argumentative Essay Introduction

The introduction to an argumentative essay should have three parts: the hook, an explanation of the issue, and a clearly stated thesis.

HOOK

Grab the reader's attention in a thought provoking and meaningful way with an anecdote, a rhetorical question, or a quotation. Read the following examples to help you form your own:

❖ **Anecdote – a short story**

Example: "One sunny afternoon while walking Blanca, my very sociable bullterrier, I decided to introduce her to Phillip, the mailman. At first, she was friendly, but as Phillip turned to leave, Blanca treacherously leaped for his buttocks and ripped off the back of Phillip's blue and gray trousers. Fortunately, Phillip was not injured. Nevertheless, I was very concerned about my dog's behavior, so I took Blanca to my veterinarian to find out why she had acted so aggressively. Dr. Rios, Blanca's veterinarian, explained that there were three factors which could trigger an aggressive response from almost any dog."

❖ **Rhetorical Question – a question with an answer**

Example: "Africa is rich. Why then are Africans poor?"

❖ **Quotation – a line from a story, poem, or song**

Example: "'To be or not to be?' When a despondent Prince Hamlet asked this question he was contemplating death and suicide. The question is relevant to the challenges Western civilization faces. Do we give in to extremism or do we stand up to the murderous jihadists who killed 12 innocent people in Paris?"

EXPLAIN THE ISSUE

Introduce the issue that your essay will be about before you state your thesis. Why is it an issue? Why is it a problem or controversy?

The following are sentence starters or frames that you can start with, although it should be longer than 1 sentence:

- ❖ *The issue of _____ is a complex one. What it is about is _____.*
- ❖ *The question everyone's asking is, _____?*
- ❖ *Here's the controversy: _____.*
- ❖ *We all need to consider _____.*
- ❖ *The debate is about _____.*
- ❖ *The issue to grapple with is _____.*
- ❖ *The problem is _____.*
- ❖ *We need to determine if _____ because _____.*
- ❖ *It will be important to decide _____ because _____.*

Argumentative Essay Introduction

Thesis

The thesis of an argumentative essay is the author's main claim. It should be the answer or solution to the issue that is being discussed or debated.

Read the following examples, the thesis statement is underlined and bolded.

❖ ***The One Sentence Main Claim THESIS STATEMENT***

*Do you think students should be forced to wear pants when it is over 100 degrees? The answer is – of course not. It is common sense to most individuals, that we should wear clothes that are appropriate to the weather. We all need to consider whether or not students should also be allowed to wear clothes that match their unique identity. In many schools today, students are required to wear uniforms. The same color, the same style of pants, and even the same style of shirt are often required of students at certain schools. Students are all forced to be the same, even when it is obvious that they are not. **Students should not have to wear uniforms.***

❖ ***The Main Claim with Three Supporting Arguments THESIS STATEMENT***

*Imagine you are taking a math test, but you just cannot concentrate. What you really need is a piece of gum to chew so that you can chew on that difficult problem involving the slope equation that you cannot possibly remember. Everyone wants that refreshing piece of gum in his or her mouth during school. The controversy in schools today however is that students are not allowed this luxury. Students face punishment and are accused of creating a dirty school environment because of gum chewing. **Schools should allow students to chew gum because it can help students perform better on tests, it increases student concentration, and it increases student participation in class.***

Argumentative Essay Body Paragraphs

Each body paragraph of an argumentative essay should have four parts – a topic sentence that states an argument; an introduction to the evidence; the evidence; and then an explanation of how this supports your argument and also proves your thesis.

The following are sentence starters or frames that you can use for each part of the body paragraph:

Stating your Argument

- ❖ *A reason why ...main claim... is true is because ...state your argument...*
- ❖ *...State your argument... demonstrates that ...main claim... is true.*

Introducing your Evidence

- ❖ *What readers should understand is that ...explain the context (who, what, where, & when)...*
- ❖ *To better understand the situation ...explain the context (who, what, where, & when)...*

Stating the Evidence

- ❖ *In the article ..."title of the article" by (name of the author)... it states that, " _____".*
- ❖ *In the historical document ..."title of the article" by (name of the author)... it states that, " _____".*
- ❖ *Let's look at one example, what happens is ...explain the experience that shows how your argument is true...*

Connect Evidence to Thesis

- ❖ *This evidence illustrates that ...restate main claim in a different way... is true because _____.*
- ❖ *This experience illustrates that ...restate main claim in a different way... is true because _____.*
- ❖ *This historical document illustrates that...restate main claim in a different way... is true because _____.*

Argumentative Essay Body Paragraphs

❖ Example of a Body Paragraph (sentence starters are underlined)

Students are not all equal just because they are wearing the same thing, which demonstrates that students should not have to wear uniforms. What readers need to understand is that in schools, students know who is rich and who is not with or without uniforms. Let's look at one example, what happens is one student will come to school wearing very fancy earrings, arrive in school in an expensive car, and have the newest running shoe on their feet. Despite their uniform looking like everyone else, someone is going to figure out their status. This experience illustrates that students should not have to wear uniforms because even if you force kids to conform in one area, they will only try to be different in some other areas.

❖ Example of a Body Paragraph (sentence starters are underlined)

A reason why we must allow students to chew gum at school is because it helps in keeping students awake. To better understand the situation we can take a look at what happens during school hours. There are many students in classes who look like they haven't had a good night's rest and are very tired. They may want to fully participate in class but need to have some gum to keep them awake. According to a scientific study by Kathleen Melanson from University of Rhode Island, "when students chewed gum in our studies, their metabolism increased by 20 percent". When someone's metabolism is raised, they are more likely to stay awake. This evidence illustrates that gum needs to be allowed at school because it is scientifically proven that it helps students stay awake in class.

Argumentative Essay Counterargument Paragraph

The counterargument paragraph is the author's opportunity to address the other side of the issue and further strengthen their own claim and arguments. This paragraph should have four parts that: states the opposing side's position, state the opposite side's argument, explains why their argument is strong, and then provides a rebuttal that explains why their argument is false or weak.

The following are sentence starters or frames that you can use for each part of the body paragraph:

Opposing Side's Position

- ❖ *People who disagree may claim that ..."state the opposing side's position"...*
- ❖ *Critics may claim that ..."state the opposing side's position"...*

Opposing Side's Argument

- ❖ *Some people may argue that _____.*
- ❖ *A possible concern they may raise is that _____.*

Explain Why Their Argument is Strong

- ❖ *This could be possible because _____.*
- ❖ *They may be a strong argument because _____.*

Rebuttal – Explain Why Their Argument is Weak

- ❖ *This argument is wrong because_____.*
- ❖ *The evidence, however, overwhelmingly supports my argument that _____.*
- ❖ *On the contrary _____.*

Argumentative Essay Counterargument Paragraph

❖ Example of a Counter Argument Paragraph (sentence starters are underlined)

People who disagree may claim that students should be required to wear uniforms at school. Some people may argue that students have higher self-esteem when they see themselves looking like all of their peers and that incidences of bullying are lower because of it. This may be a strong argument because students usually bully others who are very different from themselves. This argument is wrong because there are many schools who have lessened issues of bullying without implementing a school-wide uniform policy. They encourage students to communicate with each other and teach how students can speak up and not allow their classmates to be bullied. It is clear that we can reduce bullying using other actions while protecting a student's ability to wear the clothes they want to wear.

❖ Example of a Counter Argument Paragraph (sentence starters are underlined)

Critics may claim that schools should not allow students to chew gum in schools. A possible concern they may raise is that gum is unhealthy for young people and that it is not very good for them. This could be possible since there are studies that students often have cavities and frequent the dentist's office. On the contrary, gum is pretty healthy and actually lots of different types of gum are sugar-free and have xylitol. Some evidence explains that xylitol reduces cavities by 70 percent. Clearly, you should be able to chew gum at school, because you can get healthier and stronger teeth.

Argumentative Essay Conclusion

The conclusion of an argumentative essay should have two parts: a restatement of your thesis and sentences that leave the reader with something to think about or question or do.

Restate Your Thesis

- ❖ *When considering the issue of ____ it is clear that ...restate your thesis...*
- ❖ *Many people may believe that ____ but it's important to realize that ...restate your thesis...*

❖ Example of a Conclusion

When considering the issue of gum in schools it is clear that schools should allow students to chew gum. It is essential to recognize that chewing gum includes many great benefits, such as improving students' test scores, concentration, and metabolism. Before one sees the research, gum-chewing might sound like a horrific idea. In fact, chewing gum really is a great thing to allow at schools. So, if people want to improve students' ability to do better in school, gum-chewing should be allowed at schools.

❖ Example of a Conclusion

Edgy artists perform an invaluable public service. They deserve our fullest support and protection. Their voices must be heard, no matter how offensive an opinion might seem or the discomfort it might cause. However, for courageous artists to continue their work when threats are visceral and clear they deserve three things: 1.) equally courageous publishers; 2.) national security leadership that is willing to proactively and rigorously engage jihadists who endanger the very essence of society; and 3.) a public that emphatically demonstrates violence is an unacceptable response to the voicing of differing opinions and the exercise of democratic values will not be discarded in response to fear. Otherwise, the most precious values of our society will "not be."