

Purpose: Make a case about a specific issue or point of view, providing explicit examples and quotes to defend your point.

Although this essay is argumentative, it should carefully analyze the issue at hand by not only illustrating support for your point of view but refuting the other side's point of view. It should not disregard other perspectives on the issue.

Introduction: The introduction includes a hook, general information to give your reader the main ideas of your topic, and your thesis.

Your thesis is the last sentence of your introduction, and it shows the main idea of your essay. Make sure that your topic is debatable and not too broad or narrow.

Ex.: While some students attend college immediately after high school, it can be more beneficial for some to delay this step.

Body paragraphs: Each body paragraph should support your argument.

Ex.: After students graduate from high school, they should wait a year before attending college because that will give them more experience in the real world.

This claim would be your topic sentence, and the rest of the paragraph would have evidence that supports that claim. Some paragraphs might also have counterclaims that disagree with your point of view, which you would refute.

Types of evidence: Facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, expert opinions.

Quoting material: Quotes can provide evidence for your body paragraphs. You can use a summary, paraphrase, or direct quote of the material.

Ex.: Associate Professor of English Tara Lockhart states that scholars can connect past practices into the present educational system: "Historical research is useful not only in unearthing unexplored remnants of the past, however, but for the powerful ways it helps us to rethink and revise our contemporary pedagogies, whether guided by textbooks or not" (37).

Logical Fallacies: Fallacies are errors in your logic that should be avoided within your paper. The best way to avoid these is to provide strong support for your argument and not to use information out of context. Here are a few common logical fallacies to avoid:

Slippery slope: If A happens, other events will occur too: B thru Z.

Hasty generalization: The conclusion is made rashly, without providing clear support or using subjective evidence.

Post hoc: Since B came after A, A caused B.

Genetic fallacy: The origins of a person or idea determine its makeup.

Begging the claim: The conclusion is stated in the premise.

Circular reasoning: Instead of making a claim about your thesis, this fallacy reiterates the argument.

Either/or: This fallacy condenses your argument to only two points of view.

Ad hominem: The statement criticizes the person rather than his or her views.

Ad populum: This fallacy calls attention to the emotions of the audience, whether doing so negatively or positively.

Red herring: The opposing claims are avoided rather than stated.

Straw man: This fallacy shows the opposing viewpoint as simple and then refutes that perspective.

Conclusion: The conclusion should restate the thesis of your essay, using different words than in your introduction. Also, the conclusion should offer further insight into your issue and maybe a solution or further implications for your issue.

Sample Outline

- I. Introduction
 - a. Thesis: Since the disadvantages of legalizing meth outweigh its health benefits, state governments should pass laws that prohibit its use.
- II. Body Paragraph 1: Discuss disadvantages
- III. Body Paragraph 2: Discuss advantages and refute them
- IV. Body Paragraph 3: Discuss additional reasons why laws should be passed
- V. Conclusion