

# General Organization of Persuasive/Argument Papers

## Introduction

The introduction should present the topic of your paper. In academic writing, the introduction most often begins with a general reference to the topic and narrows down to your *thesis statement*, or *proposition*. You introduce your paper within four to six sentences. The *thesis statement*, or *proposition* (your topic, attitude about the topic, and, possibly, audience) is usually found as a single sentence toward the end of the introduction and should be clear, concise, well-stated, and identifiable. This statement should clearly define and detail the scope of the essay, but it should also be a debatable statement.

Example: Latino county officials must show their support of bilingual education programs because...

## Statement of the Case or Facts

This section presents all pertinent information for your argument. The statement of the facts may contain circumstances, details, summaries, and narration. It is a non-argumentative presentation of the facts concerning the situation or problem under discussion. In other words, you simply discuss the problem objectively without trying to persuade the reader. This section also informs readers about facts of the case, reminds readers of certain events or details (often through the use of summary), establishes a reason why you have the authority to speak on the topic, or provides a vivid illustration, real or fictional, showing the significance of the topic. It should be clear, brief, and vivid. If you obscure the facts, you are defeating the purpose. Delete irrelevant information and information which contributes little to the reader's understanding.

## Confirmation

During the confirmation section of the essay, you will reinforce the elements of your argument. The confirmation is where you provide your arguments. This is the central part of the essay and often the longest section. With the audience rendered attentive after you've introduced your proposition and informed them in your statement of facts, you show why your position concerning the facts should be accepted and believed.

## Refutation

In the refutation section of the essay, you will have the opportunity to refute any claims made against your argument. It is imperative that you research your audience and their views opposing the elements of your argument. This section will make your argument that much stronger if you can show that opposing ideas have been considered and disproved. All three sections, the proposition, the refutation, and the confirmation, should be parallel in tense.

## Conclusion

You must remember that this is your last chance to state your case. Think of the conclusion as the summation in a court case; you have to be convincing. In a conclusion you must: refresh the memory of the audience by summarizing the main points of the argument; render the audience well-disposed to

your argument and ill-disposed toward your opponent's; magnify your points and minimize the opposition; and put the audience in the proper mood to ultimately agree with you.

### **Key Words and Transitional Phrases for Persuasive/Argument Papers**

After you begin writing, you may run into difficulties when trying to make transitions between paragraphs or ideas. These are some useful transition words that will be helpful: accordingly, granted, of course, admittedly, however, on the one hand, because, in conclusion, on the other hand, but, indeed, since, certainly, in fact, therefore, consequently, in summary, thus, despite, moreover, to be sure, even so, nevertheless, truly.

Other important things to remember...

### **Be well informed about your topic.**

To add to your knowledge of a topic, read thoroughly about it, using legitimate sources. Take notes.

### **Test your claim.**

Your thesis or *claim*, i.e., argument or proposition, must be part of a larger issue that has at least two opposing points. It must be debatable. If you can write down a claim that directly opposes your own, you will ensure that your own argument is debatable.

### **Disprove the opposing claim (REFUTATION).**

Understand the opposite viewpoint of your position and then counter it by providing contrasting evidence or by finding mistakes and inconsistencies in the logic of the opposing argument.

**Support your position with evidence.** Remember that your evidence must appeal to reason.

### **Persuasive/Argument Paper Checklist**

- Does my introduction present the issue I will discuss, and does it clearly state my position?
- Is my topic debatable? Are there two sides to the topic?
- Does my proposition statement clearly state my position on the issue?
- Have I given enough information on the topic so that my audience can easily follow my argument?
- Are there any definitions or ideas that need to be clarified for my audience?
- Have I addressed the major arguments against my position?
- Did I refute the arguments against my position using researched, well-documented facts and statistics?