

1. HOW TO WRITE AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY (FOR/AGAINST, OPINION ESSAY). BASIC STRUCTURE CHECKLIST.

***You need to organize whatever you write in paragraphs. Paragraphs should be either indented or visibly separate from each other.**

TITLE

INTRODUCTION: One or more paragraphs where you state:

1. The significance of the argument.
2. The background of the issue.
3. The statement of your thesis.¹

BODY: All of the assertions² related to the thesis, each developed in one or more paragraphs with the evidence³ for the assertion. If the argument consists of a string of supporting assertions, they are usually best arranged in order of increasing importance or persuasiveness.

REFUTATION OF OPPOSITE VIEWS with evidence. Demonstrate your argument's greater strength in one or more paragraphs.

CONCLUSION: Re-statement of the thesis; summary of the argument; last appeal to readers. May be one or more paragraphs depending on the complexity and the length of the argument.

2. ERRORS IN ARGUMENT (FALLACIES) CHECKLIST

a. **Fallacies** that evade the issue:

1. **Begging the question** (treating an opinion that is open to question as if it were already proved or disproved).
2. **Non sequitur** (drawing a conclusion from irrelevant evidence).
3. **Red herring** (introducing an irrelevant issue to distract the readers).
4. **Inappropriate appeals**
 - a. appealing to the readers' **fear or pity**.
 - b. **snob** appeal (appealing to readers' wish to be like those who are more intelligent, rich, famous, and so on).
 - c. **bandwagon** appeal (appealing to readers' wish to be part of the group).
 - d. **flattery** appeal (appealing to readers' intelligence, taste, and so on).
 - e. argument **ad populum** (appealing to readers' general values, such as patriotism or love of family).
 - f. argument **ad hominem** (attacking the opponent rather than the opponent's argument).

b. **Fallacies** that treat the argument as if it were simpler than it is:

1. **Hasty generalization or stereotype**.
2. **Reductive fallacy** (oversimplifying causes and effects).
3. **Post hoc fallacy** (assuming A was the cause of B because A preceded B).
4. **Either/Or fallacy** (reducing a complicated question to two alternatives).
5. **False analogy** (Exaggerating similarities or ignoring differences)

¹ A **thesis statement** states the assertion that you want your readers to accept or act on.

² An **assertion** is the conclusion to an assumption, proved by new information or evidence (assumption or fact→evidence (new information)→assertion (conclusion)).

³ The **evidence** you can use for arguments may be **facts, statistics, examples, experts' opinions or appeals to readers' beliefs or needs**. Whatever source of evidence you use, it needs to be **accurate** (exact, undistorted), **relevant** (authoritative, pertinent, current), **representative** (true to context) and **adequate** (plentiful, specific).