



The Argument Based Research Paper

Writing for Assignments

What is an argument based research paper?

An argument paper does several things

- informs and explains a position
- prompts reason rather than emotion — it may be persuasive, but that is not its whole purpose
- shows the strength and validity to a side of an argument while presenting the other point of view fairly
- guides the reader to logical and informed conclusions about an issue
- presents a logical claim based on evidence
- looks at the other side of the argument and counters those arguments
- demonstrates the ability to argue a certain position using valid points with credible sources

The Key Components of the Argument Based Research Paper

Main Claim — Introduction

The introduction of your argument based research paper should be like any other paper introduction. It should include

- any information that would be helpful for your reader to understand the content of the paper
- a thesis statement that takes a stand on the issue and refutes the opposition

You may consider writing a brief history of the issue in the introduction, or it can be in a paragraph that follows the introduction.

Evidence — The Argument

The argument is credible, clear, insightful, and compelling evidence from your research that supports the thesis, demonstrates that there is a problem, and explores various solutions. The evidence needs to be strong and can include statistics, facts, examples, and expert testimony.

This section is usually three to four paragraphs long with each paragraph focusing on a separate main point that supports your position.

Counterarguments — The Rebuttal

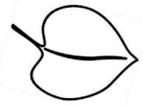
This will include a number of different views from the opposing side of the argument. Make sure that the counterarguments have plenty of evidence to support them just as the main arguments do.

Typically, this section is about three to four paragraphs long as well. There are three separate arguments that support your position.

When introducing these arguments let the reader know that these are points of view from the other side of the argument so that your opinions in the paper do not seem indecisive. You can do this by using phrases like “Those opposed to...” or “The other side of the argument says that...”.

Counter

Often, instructors will ask you to follow the rebuttal with a paragraph that addresses these oppositions and tells why your side of the argument is strongest.



Planning An Argument Essay

Select a Topic

If you are having trouble coming up with a topic, look into current issues that people seem to have strong feelings about. Also, keep these tips in mind when choosing a topic:

- Make sure that the topic you choose is one that people have both a favorable and unfavorable view of. For example, no reasonably moral person would disagree that child abuse is immoral, people shouldn't murder, or racism is wrong. There must be two valid sides to the argument.
- Choose a topic that you know something about or can easily get an understanding of. This will make understanding the debate easier.
- Make sure that you can write objectively on the topic and examine both sides. Students often have trouble doing the rebuttal for subjects they feel passionate about.
- Some topics may be off limits for your particular class, so talk to your instructor about your topic choice, and refer to the assignment guidelines.

Take a Position

Once you decide on what you would like to write about, then consider your initial position and opinion about the issue. Write down any reasons why you feel this way and reasons that others would think this way as well. Create a position statement, or thesis statement, that clearly states the issue and at least three main points that support your position.

Refine a Position

Do some research about the issue and what other people's opinions are about the issue. Figure out which ideas give the most compelling argument. Determine whether your initial opinion needs to change based on the evidence that you find to support it. If necessary, rewrite or refine your position statement to reflect what you have researched.

Gather Details

You must gather supporting evidence to support your position and defend it. Supporting evidence can take many forms: facts, statistics, testimonies, and predictions. It is important to evaluate the sources and make sure that it can be checked, backed up, and relied upon.

Arrange Details

It is important to lay out your argument and evidence in a way that will make the most sense to the reader and be the most convincing. Some writers choose to lay out their evidence from most important to least, and others feel that it is best to lay it out from least important to most. Either way, make sure that all points of view have ample support. When making arguments, it is important to avoid fallacies in logic.

Opposing Points of View

It is just as important to have solid facts and evidence for the opposing side as it is your side. This shows that you have taken into consideration the other opinion. After presenting the other side of the argument, you may want to point out why your position has the stronger argument.