

Argumentative Writing

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ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

The argumentative essay
is a genre of writing that requires
you to:

1. investigate a topic;
2. collect, generate, and evaluate evidence; and
3. establish a position on the topic in a concise manner.



Everyday Life Example

Claim

When we argue:

Bob: That was a lame movie!

Suzy: Why?

Evidence

Bob: The special effects were bad. The monsters were obviously fake.

Counterclaim

Suzy: I thought the movie was good because the acting was believable.

Bob's bad response: You are an idiot.

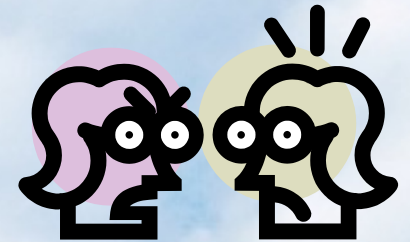
Refutation

Bob's good response: Yes the acting was good but the horrible special effects were too distracting and caused some awkward moments.



PERSUASION versus ARGUMENTATION

Persuasion: The action or fact of persuading someone or of being persuaded to do or believe something.



Argumentation: The process of establishing a claim and then **proving** it with the use of logical reasoning, examples, and research.

Difference between Persuasive and Argumentative Essay

A persuasive essay

- May make a claim based on opinion
- May not take opposing ideas into account
- Persuades by appealing to the audience's emotion or by relying on the character or credentials of the writer
- Emotion-based

An argumentative essay

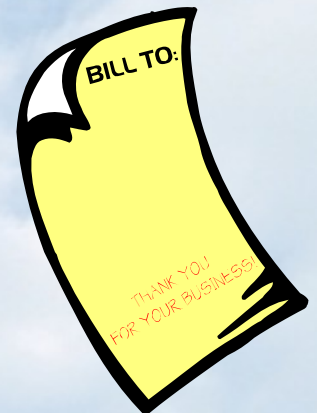
- Makes claims based on factual evidence (research)
- Makes counterclaims – the author takes opposing views into account.
- Neutralizes or “defeats” serious opposing ideas
- Convinces audience through the merit and rationality of the claim and proofs offered
- Logic-based

Elements of Argumentation

Argument/Claim

An **argument** states a **claim** and supports it with reasons and evidence from sources.

Arguing your side makes you the **proponent**.



Elements of Argumentation

Counterargument/Counterclaim

An argument that stands in opposition to your argument/claim. The counterargument is your **opponent's** (the other side's) argument that tries to explain why you are wrong.



Elements of Argumentation

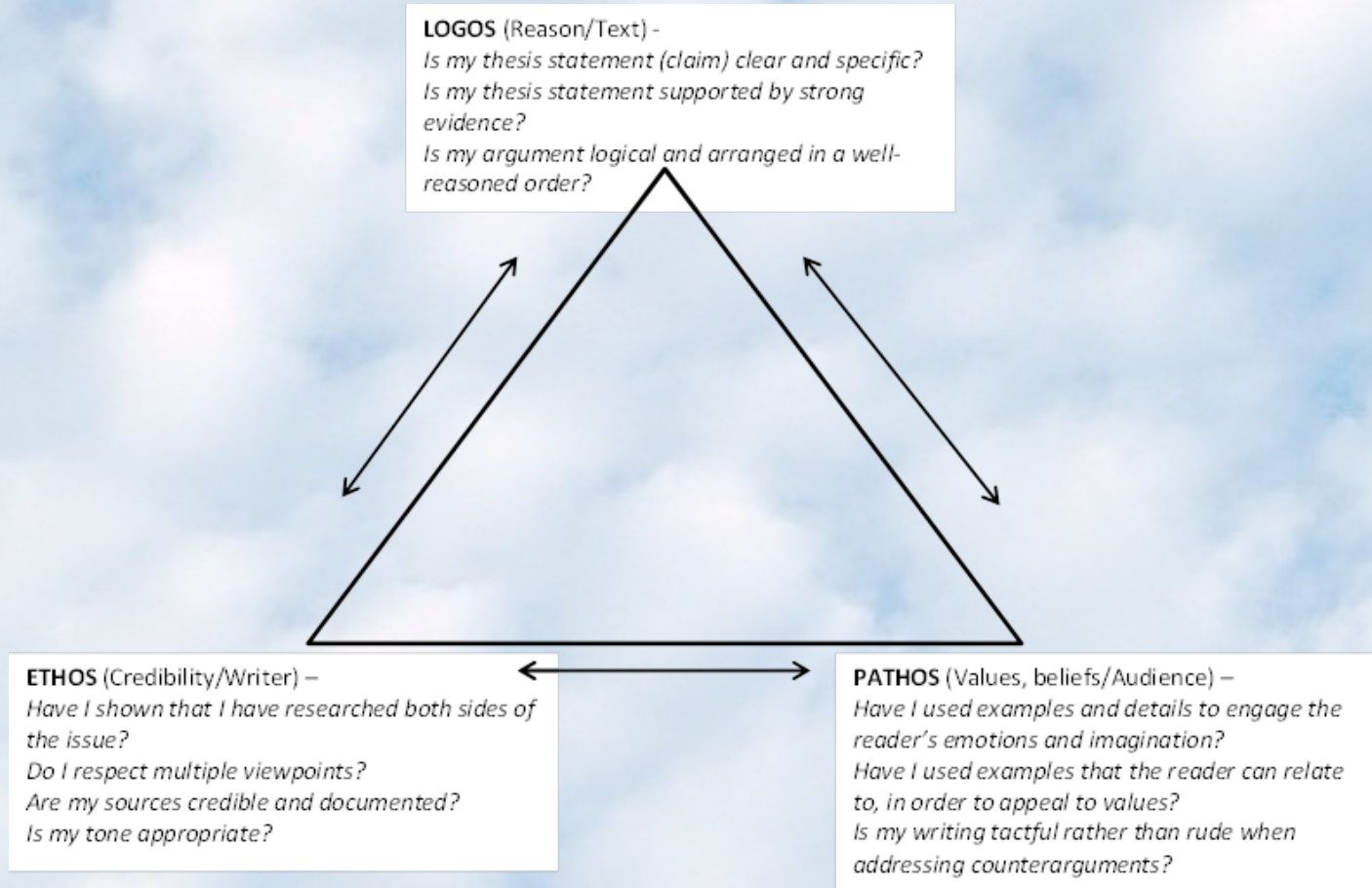
Refutation

Simply disproving an opposing argument. It is an important skill because it is how a writer successfully convinces the audience of the validity of his/her own argument.



The Rhetorical Triangle – remember me?

Don't forget to incorporate elements of ethos, pathos, and logos.



IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Effective arguments consider all three points on this triangle. They are interrelated - they help each other.
- All three of the corners of the Rhetorical Triangle overlap. You can do one or all of them in a single paragraph.

Why is Organization Important in Argument Writing?

➤ Guides an audience through your reasoning process

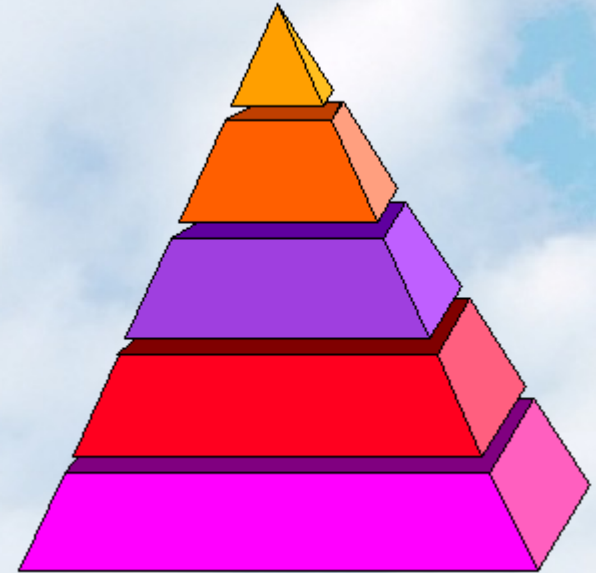


➤ Offers a clear explanation of each argued point

➤ Demonstrates the credibility of the writer

Organizing Your Argument

- Introduction
 - Thesis statement
- Body Paragraphs
 - Constructing Topic Sentences
 - Building Main Points
 - Countering the Opposition
- Conclusion



What is an Introduction?

- Acquaints the reader with the topic and purpose of the paper
- Generates the audience's interest in the topic
- Offers a plan for the ensuing argument:
 - Introduction:** Tell them what you're going to tell them
 - Body:** Tell them
 - Conclusion:** Tell them what you told them

Methods for Constructing an Introduction

- personal anecdote
- example-real or hypothetical
- question
- quotation
- shocking statistics
- striking image



What is a Thesis Statement?

- The MOST IMPORTANT SENTENCE in your paper
- Lets the reader know the main idea of the paper
- Answers the question: “What am I trying to prove?”
- Not a factual statement, but a claim that has to be proven throughout the paper

Thesis Practice

Which thesis statement is the most effective for an argument about the need for V-chips in television sets?

- Parents, often too busy to watch television shows with their families, can monitor their children's viewing habits with the aid of the V-chip.
- To help parents monitor their children's viewing habits, the V-chip should be a required feature for television sets sold in the U.S.
- This paper will describe a V-chip and examine the uses of the V-chip in American-made television sets.

Body Paragraphs and Topic Sentences

- Body paragraphs build upon the claims made in the introductory paragraph(s).
- Organize with the use of topic sentences that illustrate the main idea of each paragraph.
- Offering a brief explanation of the history or recent developments of topic within the early body paragraphs can help the audience to become familiarized with your topic and the complexity of the issue.

Citing Text Evidence

- You **MUST** provide actual text evidence – quotes from the articles – to back up your supporting points
- You **MUST** identify the article you're quoting from (otherwise, it's plagiarism)

Citing Text Evidence – Example

- **NO:** Francois convinced Elie to tell the world about his experience later Elie eventually wrote a book called Night.
- **YES:** According to *American Magazine*, it was Francois Mauriac who helped Wiesel to finish and publish his book. “Encouraged by Mauriac, Wiesel revised and radically abbreviated his Yiddish work. He brought the French version to Mauriac, who helped him find a publisher and contributed the foreword...” (Boys 2016)

Citing Text Evidence – Example

- **NO:** He then later met Eddie Cantor who helped him get booked into New York's La Vie En Rose night club.
- **YES:** According to an interview in the *Los Angeles Times*, Clary's relationship with Eddie Cantor changed his life. Clary recounts, "He put me on the 'Colgate Comedy Hour' and then he took me to New York to the La Vie en Rose club."
(King 2013)

Offering a Counterargument

- Addressing the claims of the opposition is an important component in building a convincing argument.
- It demonstrates your credibility as a writer – you have researched multiple sides of the argument and have come to an informed decision.
- It shows you have considered other points of view – that other points of view are valid and reasonable.

Effective Counterarguments

- Consider your audience when you address the counterargument.
- Conceding to some of your opposition's concerns can demonstrate respect for their opinions.
- Remain tactful yet firm.
 - Using rude or deprecating language can cause your audience to reject your position without carefully considering your claims.

Conclusion

- Your conclusion should reemphasize the main points made in your paper.
- You may choose to reiterate a call to action or speculate on the future of your topic, when appropriate.
- Avoid raising new claims in your conclusion.

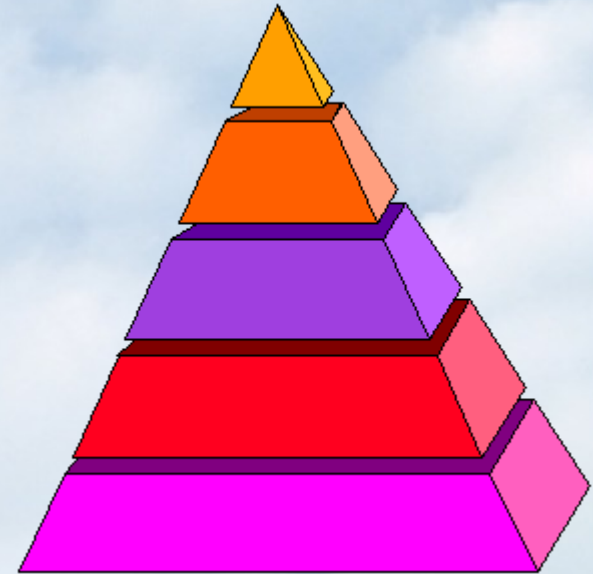
Introduction: Tell them what you're going to tell them

Body: Tell them

Conclusion: Tell them what you told them

Recap: Organizing Your Argument

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for further info.**