

Essay of Argumentation



Level 10

Writing Aids includes helpful companion sections to this one: “Analytical Essays” and “Persuasive Writing.”

Introduction

An essay of argumentation, or an argumentative essay (as some teachers in academic settings call it), is a form of persuasive writing that is especially helpful to students learning logic or undertaking formal debate for the first time. Basically, in the essay of argumentation, you introduce the reader to a proposition (a thesis). You then relate arguments and evidence on both sides of the issue. Conclude by demonstrating why your stance on the proposition represents the correct side of the issue.

Prewriting

You will write this assignment on either a current events topic or a historical topic. If your thesis is based on a historical topic, you can find supporting arguments from the events of history itself, from the Bible, and from common sense or human experiences of all generations. Evidence will be more easily obtained for a thesis based on current events.

Whichever you choose, this is the basic outline for your paper (put your thoughts down in your preferred prewriting method¹):

Introduction

- * State the proposition (thesis) clearly.
- * Define any fuzzy terms involved.
- * Next, summarize (or indicate) the general positions on both sides of the argument.
- * Finally, you should indicate your stance on the proposition.

Body of the Paper

- * Typically, this paper is arranged in two long body paragraphs that expand the evidence and the arguments on both sides of the proposition.
- * The first paragraph presents arguments and evidence in favor of the proposition.
- * The second paragraph counters with arguments and evidence against the proposition.

Conclusion

- * You should return to the original proposition (thesis), restating it in slightly different words if necessary, to remind the reader of the question at hand.
- * You should restate your position concerning the thesis.
- * End the paper by stating why you believe that your position on the question is the correct one.

Drafting

Once you have your thoughts on paper, drafting involves putting them into lively and interesting persuasive prose. As we have taught in the “Persuasive Writing” section of *Writing Aids*, there are accepted types of evidence to present and arguments to use. You might benefit from a review of this section if it has been awhile since your last persuasive writing assignment.

Editing

- * Self proof your work for grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors.
- * Ask yourself these questions when you’re working on your draft:
 - Have you stated the proposition (thesis) clearly?
 - Have you defined all fuzzy terms adequately?

¹ Students and teachers who are experienced with *Tapestry* writing assignments will know that they can choose clustering, outlining, notes, or any other effective method for brainstorming and ordering their thoughts before they begin to write.



- Can you follow the thread of your argument all the way through, or do you need to improve your transition words or sentences?
- Are your arguments for and against the proposition fully expressed in a balanced way?
- Do you have evidence on both sides of the proposition?
- Have you stated your opinion in the introduction?
- Have you stated your reasons for your position in your conclusion and persuaded the reader to agree with you?

Polishing and Presenting

After you have entered your changes and made appropriate edits, you should print a clean copy. If your paper is based on historical topics, it may have a narrower appeal than if it is based on current events. You can, at the very least, show your paper to family members who can appreciate it. Also, online publications for homeschoolers may be interested in it, and there are always the *Tapestry* Gallery web pages. For a current-events paper, we suggest that you seek publication in one or more of these places:

- * Your local paper's editorial page
- * Online newsletters
- * Published journals in the field
- * Homeschool journals/magazines—digital and print