



Level 10

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

Essay of Argumentation

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, the student introduces the reader to a proposition (his thesis). He then relates arguments and evidence on both sides of the issue. He concludes by demonstrating why his proposition is the correct one.

This is an advanced writing assignment. If you are new to the *Tapestry of Grace* writing program, be sure your student understands basics about persuasive writing before assigning this paper.

Prewriting

Students can write this assignment on either current events or historical topics. *Tapestry* charts suggest a proposition that the student can take based on historical studies. If the student uses one of these, he can find supporting arguments from the events of history itself, from the Bible, and from common sense or human experiences of all generations. In general, writing from current events will be easier than writing from historical topics since there will probably be evidence that is more easily obtained.

Whatever the subject, teach your student to follow the basic outline below, and to jot down his thoughts in his preferred prewriting method¹ accordingly.

Introduction

- * The student should state the proposition (thesis) clearly.
- * He should then define any fuzzy terms involved.
- * Next, he can summarize (or indicate) the general positions on both sides of the argument.
- * Finally, he should indicate his position on the thesis.

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.

Note: An alternate treatment is to use a three-paragraph structure and arrange arguments and evidence on both sides of the question on three subcategories. For instance, in arguing about free will and God’s sovereignty, one might choose to use three paragraphs: one on free will (arguments for and against its expression in the Bible), the second on God’s sovereignty (again, from a biblical perspective) and finally, the third in discussing the interplay of man’s free will and God’s sovereignty as expressed in Scripture.

Conclusion

- * The student should return to the original proposition (thesis), restating it in slightly different words if necessary, to remind the reader of the question at hand.
- * He should restate his position concerning the thesis.

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 then ordering their thoughts before they begin to compose their prose. See our WA Disc Supplements section.



- * The student should end the paper by stating why he believes that his position on the question is the correct one.

Drafting

Once the student has gathered his 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. Students would probably benefit from a review of this section if it has been a while since their last persuasive writing assignment.

Editing

- * Students should first self proof their work for grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors.
- * After they have handed their draft to you, read it and look for these same kinds of errors.
- * Also correct for any weaknesses in the student’s handling of the content.
 - Has he stated the proposition (thesis) clearly?
 - Has he defined all fuzzy terms adequately?
 - Can you follow his thread all the way through, or does he need some help improving transition words or sentences?
 - Are his arguments for and against the proposition fully expressed in a balanced way?
 - Does he have evidence on both sides of the proposition?
 - Has he stated his opinion in the introduction?
 - Has he stated his reasons for his position in his conclusion and persuaded you to agree with him?

Polishing and Presenting

After your student has entered your changes and made appropriate edits, he should print a clean copy. If your student’s 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, have him show his 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 the current events-based paper, we suggest that you might seek one or more of these avenues:

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

Another helpful related section in *Writing Aids* is our section on “Transition Words and Sentences.”