
WRITING ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS



Presentation adapted from Keesee & the Purdue OWL

What is an Argument?

- * An argument involves the process of establishing a claim and then proving it with the use of logical reasoning, examples, and research.

IN OTHER WORDS:

An argument presents logical reasons and evidence to support a viewpoint.

Parts of an Argument

- * **Issue** - the problem or controversy about which people disagree
- * **Claim** - the position on the issue (thesis)
- * **Support** - reasons and evidence that the claim is reasonable and should be accepted
- * **Counterargument** - opposing viewpoint
- * **Rebuttal/Refutation** - rejection of the opposing viewpoint

Thesis Statements

* Topic - *Issue*

* Controlling Idea - *Claim*

* Supporting Details

* Your thesis statement must be concise and straight to the point

Organizing Your Argument

Why is organization important in building an argument?

- * It guides an audience through your reasoning process
- * It offers a clear explanation of each argued point
- * It demonstrates the credibility of the writer

Organizing Your Argument

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- * Title

- * Introduction

 - Thesis statement

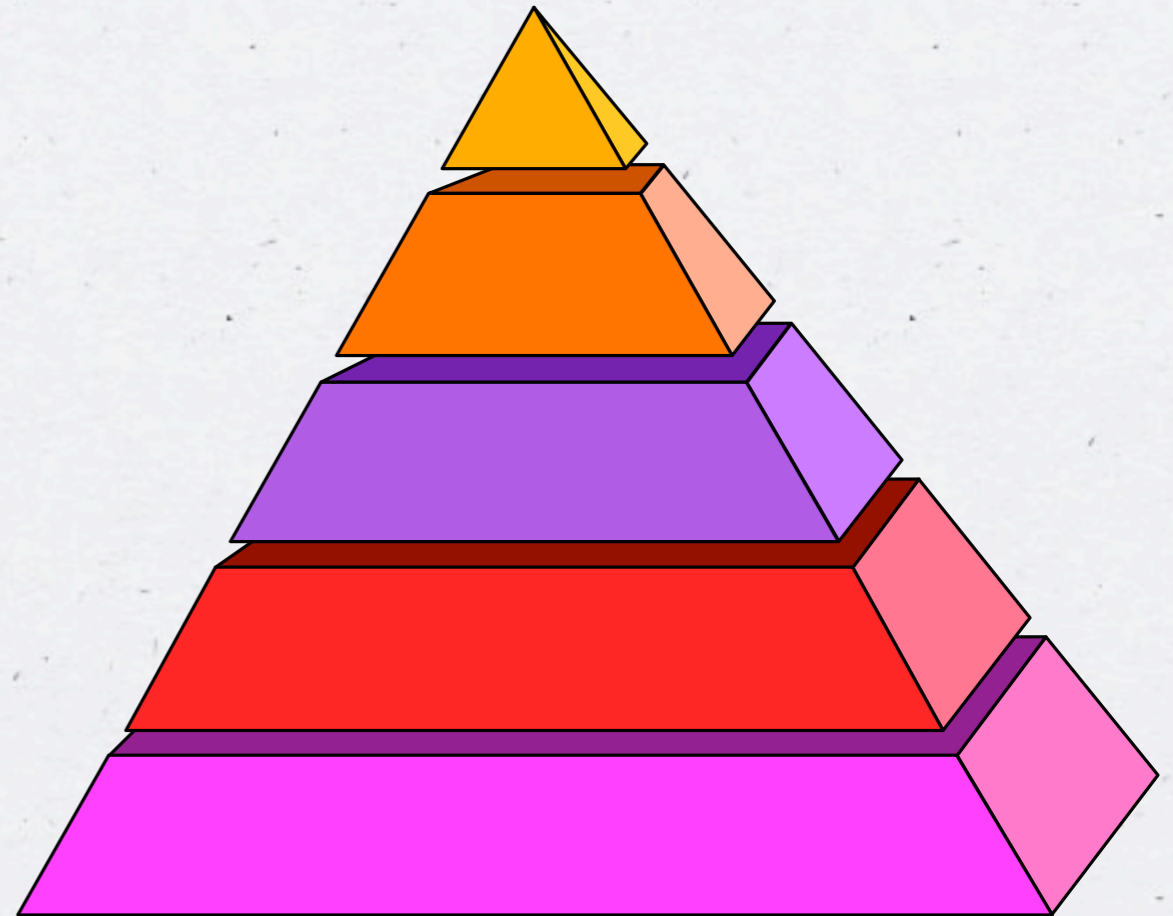
- * Body Paragraphs

 - Constructing topic sentences

 - Building main points

 - Countering the opposition

- * Conclusion



The Title- Why Do You Need One?

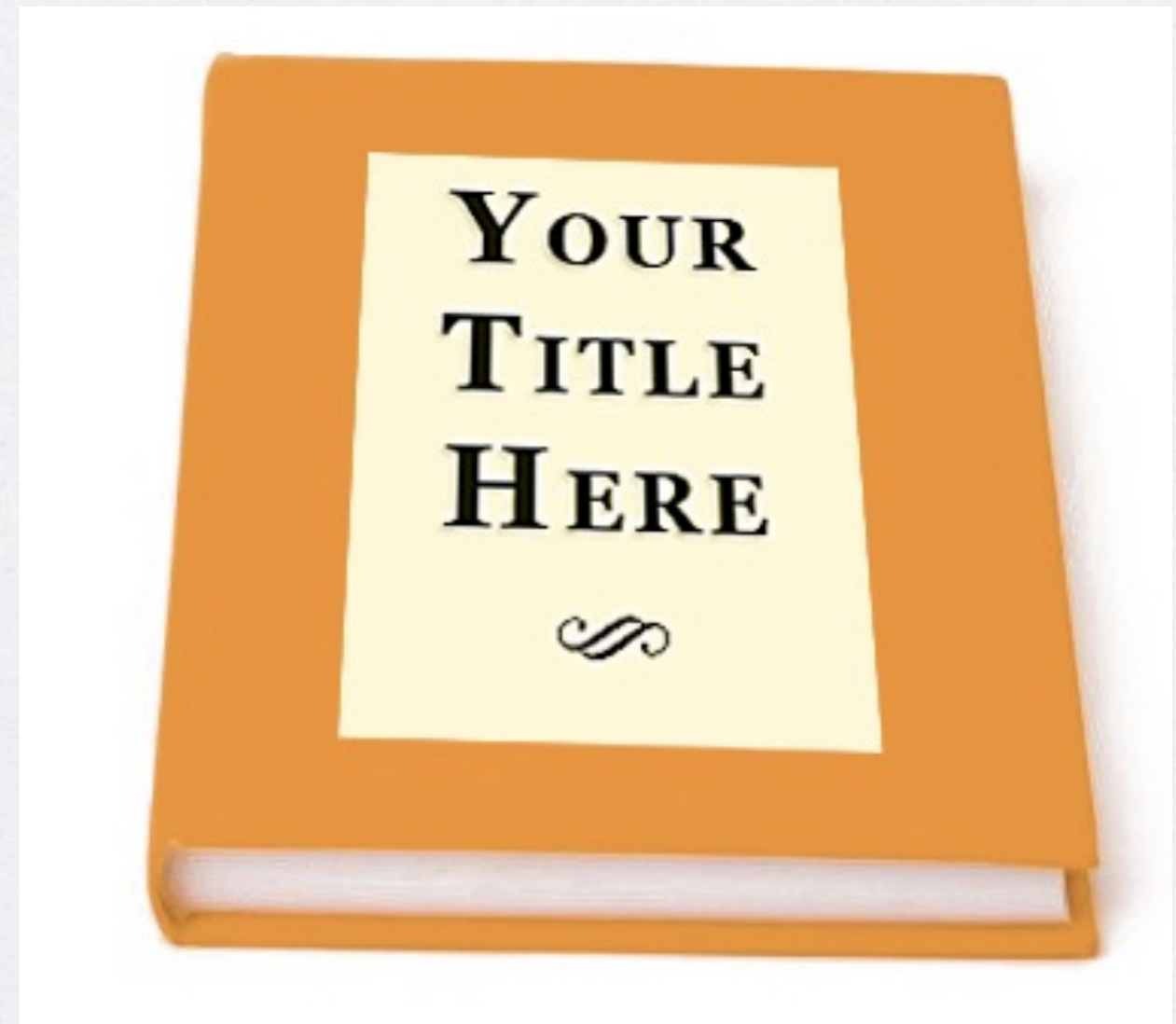
- * It introduces the topic of discussion to the audience
- * It generates reader interest in the argument

Creating a Title

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* Try to grab the reader's attention by:

- offering a provocative image
- picking up on words or examples offered in the body or conclusion of your essay
- asking a question

* Avoid titles that are too general or lack character



The Introduction

- * It acquaints the reader with the topic and purpose of the essay
- * It generates the audience's interest in the topic
- * It offers a plan for the ensuing argument

Methods for Constructing an Introduction

- * Personal anecdote
- * Example- real or hypothetical
- * Question
- * Quotation
- * Shocking statistics
- * Striking image

The Thesis Statement

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

The Thesis: *An Example*

- * Marine parks are unnecessary and cruel institutions and should be prohibited by the Australian government.

Body Paragraphs

Paragraphs may be ordered in several ways, depending on the topic and purpose of your argument:

- * General to specific information
- * Most important point to least important point
- * Weakest claim to strongest claim

Counterarguments & Rebuttals

- * Addressing the claims of the opposition is an important component in building a convincing argument
- * It demonstrates your credibility as a writer -- it shows you have researched multiple sides of the argument and have come to an informed decision

Offering a Counterargument

- * Counterarguments may be presented at various locations within your body paragraphs
- * You may choose to
 - build each of your main points as a contrast to oppositional claims
 - offer a counterargument after you have articulated your main claims

Counterarguments

- * Consider your audience
- * 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

Refuting Opposing Viewpoints

- * Address opposing viewpoints clearly and fairly
- * Refute the opposing viewpoint with logic and relevant evidence
- * Question the accuracy, relevance or sufficiency of the opponent's evidence

Refutations: An Example

It has been argued that dolphin parks provide the only opportunity for much of the public to see marine mammals (Smith, 1992). Most Australians, so this argument goes, live in cities and never get to see these animals. It is claimed that marine parks allow the average Australian to appreciate our marine wildlife. However, as Smith states, dolphins, whales and seals can be viewed in the wild at a number of places on the Australian coast. In fact, there are more places where they can be seen in the wild than places where they can be seen in captivity. Moreover, most Australians would have to travel less to get to these locations than they would to get to the marine parks on the Gold Coast. In addition, places where there are wild marine mammals do not charge an exorbitant entry fee - they are free.

Incorporating research into the body paragraphs

- * Researched material can aid you in proving the claims of your argument and disproving oppositional claims
- * Be sure to use your research to support the claims made in your topic sentences--make your research work to prove your argument!

Your Conclusion: The Big Finale!

- * 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.