

CHAPTER ONE: ARGUMENTATION

UNDERSTANDING AND EVALUATING ARGUMENTS

What is an argument and what is not?

An argument is a set of claims in which one or more of them—the premises—are put forward so as to offer reasons for another claim, the conclusion. An argument may have several premises, or it may have only one. In our example about legalizing marijuana there are two premises. When we present arguments in speaking or writing, we try to persuade by giving reasons or citing evidence to back up our claims. We may also construct and consider arguments as a means of reflecting on how we could justify a claim that we already believe.

Sometimes the word argument is used to mean dispute or fight, as in the sentence “The parents got into so many arguments over the mortgage that finally they stopped in this book, however, the word argument is not used to refer to a fight or dispute. Rather, an argument is a reasoned attempt to justify a claim on the basis of other claims. Both kinds of argument—rational arguments and fights—have some connection with disagreements between people. When we use arguments in the sense of offering reasons for our beliefs, we are responding to controversies by attempting rational persuasion. If we engage in an argument in the sense of a fight, we shift to other tactics, often including the resort to physical force. It’s important to keep the two senses of the word argument distinguished from each other.

What isn’t an argument?

Even the most rational speakers and writers do not offer arguments all the time. Sometimes they simply make statements that are neither premises nor conclusions. Sometimes they make exclamations, expressing feelings. Or they raise questions, describe events and problems, explain occurrences, tell jokes, and so on. In none of these cases are they trying to justify conclusions as true on the basis of supporting reasons. Consider the following:

✚ Forty-nine divided by seven equals seven.

✚ I can’t stand broccoli!

✚ What are the causes of juvenile delinquency?

✚ It was a crisp and frosty September morning, but so many problems occupied their minds that the beauty of the day went unappreciated.

None of these sentences express arguments. Example (a) is simply a statement of mathematical fact. Example (b) expresses a feeling of distaste. Example (c) raises a question rather than stating or claiming anything. Example (d) offers no argument; it merely describes a situation, saying how it was on that morning in September. In none of these sentences do we find an attempt to persuade people of a conclusion; therefore, none of them express an argument. The sentences serve other purposes: expressing, questioning, and describing.

Let us look at several longer passages that do not contain arguments and see just why they do not. The following excerpt is taken from a newspaper editorial:

It's not the sort of chatter you hear at cocktail parties, but the muscle fibers of the cockroach are almost human. Really, that's why biologists at Atlanta's Emory University are teaching cockroaches to jog. They attach little weights to the roaches' legs and send them racing along the treadmill.

Frankly, we're leery about doing anything that might give the insects an edge. It's hard enough trying to catch the little sprinters without having to listen to them wheezing behind the walls after a five-meter workout. But we shouldn't carp; there's always a chance the roaches will adopt not only the jogging, but the jogger's healthy lifestyle and scrupulous diet. If they start by keeping decent hours and giving up greasy foods, we'll be satisfied.

This passage does not contain an argument. It first gives a humorous report of some research at Emory University and then expresses, in jocular terms, some possible risks and benefits of the research—to the insects and us. The writer obviously regarded the research as rather silly, and the style and tone of his editorial express that view. But he did not argue for any claim that the research is silly. (Probably the writer thought the point was too widely agreed-on to bother arguing about.) He did not try to persuade us by reasons of the truth of any conclusion. Thus the passage does not contain an argument.

It is important to distinguish between **conditional statements** and **arguments**. A conditional statement is one that describes and links several conditions, specifying that if one condition holds another will as well. Consider, for instance:

e.g. *If Arctic ice melts, ocean levels around the world will be higher.*

This example is an if/then statement, stating the implications of one condition (Arctic ice melting) for another (ocean levels around the world). Looking carefully at (e), we can see that it does not claim that Arctic ice is melting. Rather it spells out a consequence that would follow if the Arctic ice were to melt. To think of the example as an argument with a premise and conclusion would be mistake; it is not an argument but rather a conditional claim.

Summary

Arguments are fascinating, and getting the knack of identifying and criticizing other people's arguments can be entertaining and fun. In fact, it is easy to get so carried away by the feeling of intellectual power gained through this activity that you start to see arguments everywhere—even where there aren't any. Although arguments are important and common in ordinary life, politics, work, and academic studies, we have to remember that much of what is written and said is not argument at all. Rather, it is pure statement, description, conditional statement, explanation, exclamation, questioning, storytelling, gentle ridicule, or any of a number of other things. Passages with these functions can be perfectly respectable, intellectually and rationally, without containing any arguments.

Arguments are typically needed when views are controversial and rational persuasion is attempted. If Kevin Jardine were debating the safety of oil and gas development in Russia with representatives of multinational corporations, they might ask him to prove that there had been serious oil spills in Russia. He would then have to document the point, and he might use his own experiences in the republic of Komi as part of a larger argument about environmental conditions in Russia. The passage in Greenlink, however, was not an argument. To say this is not to point out any fault; it is just another kind of passage. We do not need to identify a conclusion and premises here, because there is no argument.

The fundamental first step in evaluating arguments is to distinguish between discourse that contains arguments and discourse that does not. When we have found an argument and seek to understand it further, the next step is to identify its conclusion and premises. If there is no argument, then it makes no sense to speak of a good argument or a poor one. In this book, we refer to speeches or texts that do not contain argument as non-arguments. There are many types of non-argument, including descriptions, stories, jokes, exclamations, questions, and explanations. Because in some contexts explanations may be confused with arguments, they are discussed in more detail below.

EXERCISE 1: For each of the following passages, determine whether it does or does not contain an argument, and give reasons for your judgment. If the passage does contain an argument, indicate the conclusion.

1. People normally believe what others tell them unless there is reason to be suspicious. This reliance on other people is called depending on testimony.
2. The sun was setting on the hillside when he left. The air had a peculiar smoky aroma, the leaves were beginning to fall, and he sensed all around him the faintly melancholy atmosphere that comes when summer and summer romances are about to end.
3. To know any claim with certainty, you have to know you are awake. To know you are awake, you have to prove you are awake. Nobody can prove that he is awake. Therefore, no one can know any claim with certainty.
4. If a diet does not work, then that is a problem. But if a diet does work, there is still a problem, because the diet will have altered the dieter's metabolism. An altered metabolism as a result of dieting means a person will need less food. Needing less food, the person will gain weight more easily. Therefore, dieting to lose weight is futile.

Techniques for understanding and Evaluating Arguments

Where and how do you find arguments?

Indicator words can often help you to find arguments, because they show that one claim is being given rational support by others. Consider the following examples:

(a) Human beings are neither naturally good nor naturally evil. The reason is clear to see: human beings become either good or evil because of the lives they lead, which in turn are

the result of choices they make in this world. (Here the first statement is the conclusion. An indicator phrase follows, indicating the supporting premise.)

(b) Since the meaning of a word must be understood by all the people who use that word, the meaning of a word cannot be a mental image in only one person's head. (Here a premise is introduced by the indicator word since and then a conclusion is drawn.)

(c) There must be life somewhere in the universe as well as here on earth, for the universe is infinite and it can't be true that in an infinite universe only one place has the special features needed for life. (A conclusion is stated; the indicator word for introduces two premises.)

It is not always as straightforward as this to find the premises and conclusions of arguments. One problem is that some arguments do not contain indicator words. It is possible to offer reasons for a claim without inserting indicator words pointing to the conclusion and premises. You can see this by changing example (c) only slightly. Consider example (d), which puts forth the same argument as (c) in the context of a dialogue.

(d) John: I think the earth is the only place in the universe where life has developed and can flourish.

Mary: I doubt that. The universe is infinite. It can't be that in an infinite universe only one place has special features needed for life. There must be life somewhere else in the universe as well as on earth.

In example (d) Mary offers an argument in response to John. She asserts all the claims asserted in example (c). We can understand which claim is her conclusion because of the context: John makes a claim; Mary says she doubts it; she then tells John why she doubts it, in an effort to persuade him of her position. Example (d) illustrates the fact that arguments do not necessarily contain indicator words. Mary gives reasons for her view and offers an argument, which is clearly stated in the dialogue even though there are no indicator words.

Another complicating factor about arguments and indicator words is that many of them can also occur in contexts outside arguments. That happens with the words so, since, because,

for, thus, and therefore. These terms are not always found in the context of arguments. They may serve other linguistic functions.

Consider, for instance, the following examples:

(e) Since 2005, tornadoes have occurred in the Canadian province of Manitoba.

(f) Allan mowed the lawn for Deborah.

(g) He got three cavities because he ate so much candy.

In example (e), the word since serves to introduce a time factor; it is not a logical indicator for a premise. In example (f), the word for is a preposition referring to the person for whom Allan's worked; it is not a premise indicator. In example (g) the word because refers to a causal relationship and does not introduce a premise. Although the words listed above as premise and conclusion indicators frequently serve that role, they have other functions as well, and for that reason their presence does not always indicate that an argument is being offered.

To spot arguments, you need to develop your sense of context, tone, and logical structure. You need to see what people are claiming, and what claims they are putting forward in support of their main points. To understand whether a written passage contains an argument and which claims are premises and conclusions, you may need background knowledge about the context in which the passage was written. One frequent clue to the presence of argument is an indication that a claim put forward has been disputed and is thus in need of support. Suppose someone says, "Maria has long insisted that Edwards would be an efficient president, but I disagree." He disagrees. Why? On what basis does he disagree? The claim that Maria's view is incorrect should be followed by reasons in support of his own position. In other words, he should offer an argument at this point. Disagreement is a common context for argument.

Arguments may also be given in contexts of little controversy when there is an interest in whether a good justification could be given for some claim. For instance, philosophers have constructed complicated arguments for conclusions such as "events have an order in time" or "the physical world is independent of human minds." It is not that people actually disagree about these matters. Rather, there is an interest in the theoretical question of

whether and how these basic beliefs can be justified. The construction and examination of arguments in support of them is part of fundamental inquiry into these topics.

When you are considering whether a speech or a passage contains an argument, you should begin by asking yourself

- What would be its conclusion if it were to contain an argument?
- What is the speaker or writer claiming?
- What is his or her fundamental point?
- Is some claim actually, or potentially, being disputed?
- Are questions of justification being considered?

Reflecting on what is at issue in the context—what is being disputed or supported— should guide you to the conclusion, and you should then ask what reasons are put forward in support of that conclusion. There are many contexts in which arguments occur. These include conversations about practical problems or public issues, courts of law, scientific research papers, meetings, political speeches and lectures, letters to the editor, academic writings, and advertisements.

Evaluating Arguments

To evaluate an argument we have to ask:

1. Are the premises *reasonable*? That is, is it *likely* that they are *true*?
2. Do the premises *support* the conclusion? That is, is the argument either *valid* or *strong*?

A person must be able to *understand* an argument before he or she can evaluate it.

2.8.2 Making the Case/Forwarding Cases

When making your case, it is a very good idea to think about the overall structure. When you are in a debate, this may take two parts: the positive case for your argument and also the negative case against any alternative positions.

Supporting Your Argument (The positive case)

Clarification

Before you build your case, make sure you know what you want, what you want others to

believe what is outside the scope of the case. Then be ready to put this and more into words so you can say, simply and clearly what you want.

Clarification may include definition of a problem that needs to be solved and definition of criteria you can apply to determine whether the problem has been solved.

Solution

The actual solution of what you want to implement needs to be made clear. Who is affected and the detail of how they are affected should also be clear.

If you are seeking to create some change, then the question of *how* it will be implemented also may need to be considered, as well as *what* will be achieved.

Justification

The case that you are putting must have both just cause and acceptable rationale if you want other people to agree with it. The justification may, for example, make use of Toulmin's argument model to construct a well-supported argument.

Evidence is a very powerful way of persuasion. Data and testimonials can provide very convincing way of making a case.

Solvency is a term used to describe how the solution offered will solve a defined problem. Many solutions, particularly for complex problems, do not promise full answers. There is always a cost-benefit decision. There may be several solutions, each with a different cost, timescale, risks, etc. as well as different degrees of solvency.

Solutions can also have adverse consequences and any undesirable side-effects may need to be addressed. It may also be necessary to prove that the solution integrates and aligns with other activities that are occurring.

The justification needs to speak with all relevant stakeholders. This may include a number of different people and groups, each with different interests. Where their interests are conflicting and not all interests can be met, a fair consideration may need to be shown.

Refuting an Argument (The negative case)

The negative case in an argument is that which is said in order to neutralize or destroy the opposing arguments. There are a number of things you can attack in the other person's argument. Just a few of these are given here, to give you the idea. You can also, of course, use fallacies as well, although this does open you to attack also:

Question legitimacy

Question whether the case, or any element of it, is permissible. Compare it against legislation, regulations and standards. You can also compare it against ethics and morals, challenging whether the case would pass basic social tests such as 'common decency'.

I think you'll find that what you are proposing is against Article 39.

You put a good case, but I don't think a court of law would allow it.

I challenge you to go out in the streets and ask anyone --I can't imagine any decent citizen wanting to do what you are proposing.

Question authority

Any case may be based on the authority of a person or source. If you can challenge the authority, then the validity of the argument on which it is based is tarred with the same brush.

Are you the right person to be putting this case?

You say customers need this product. Have you asked them?

Question premises

A syllogistic argument (as well as other form) is based on premises from which conclusions are drawn. The premises are assumed to be true and hence may be questioned.

You say all customers want low prices. I'm not so sure of that.

Question grounds

You can question the truth of data, warrants and other supporting elements such as described in Toulmin's argument model. Again, this is tugging at the carpet beneath their proposals.

This report you are using, did it use statistically sound methods?

Attack fallacies

If the other person is using fallacies of any kind, these are points of weakness that you can attack. You can expose these or just help the other person dig a bigger hole. With luck they will bury themselves.

Sorry, that is an Ad Hominem attack and I cannot accept it.

Attack causality

Look for causal attributions, where A causes B. People will tend either to make bold assertions of causality or, more often, will take two items that are correlated in some way, such as being near each other in time or space, and then assuming that one causes another.

Yes, I know that traffic is greatest at 8 o'clock, but that is not the cause of the accidents.

Summary of Refutation: How to refute an argument?

Step 1: Understand the argument.

In order to refute an argument, you first have to understand it. Otherwise, you're going to look pretty foolish, when the other side stands up and explains how you've totally missed the point. That's why we've been practicing "argument analysis" since the beginning of the semester. Listen to the argument carefully. Identify the position its taking. Identify the reasons it offers for that position. Note what sources it's relying on.

Step 2: Find the weak points.

The first thing beginning arguers do when refuting is to focus on the argument's conclusion and argue the opposite. For example, if one side argues that national service will increase patriotism, the other side says that national service will *not* increase patriotism. If one side argues that violent video games cause young people to become violent, the other side argues that violent video games will *not* cause violence.

This is an important and often effective strategy. But I want to encourage you to try something more advanced, and often more effective. In refuting, don't just look at the conclusion. Look beyond the conclusion and examine the *reasons* the other side is giving. See if they really hold up under questioning. **For example:**

- Is the source the other side is relying on *biased*?
- Is the correlation the other side is asserting really explained by *another cause*?
- Is the analogy the other side is making really *similar*?
- Are the statistics the other side is using *misleading*?
- Is the evidence the other side is citing really *relevant*?

Attacking the other side's reasons is harder than attacking their conclusion, because you have to listen much, much harder and really understand what the other side is saying. But attacking the other side's reasons is also often more effective. If all you do is attack their conclusion, then the whole debate just turns into a shoving match. They push against you, you push back. Probably you just get stuck in the middle. But if you attack their reasons, it's like digging a hole under their argument, or sawing the legs off of their argument. Instead of *pushing* it over, it just *falls down*. Cool! What kinds of attacks can you make on the other side's evidence? Use all the lists of questions we have been building all semester to locate weaknesses.

Step 3: Build arguments against the argument.

Here's the most important rule:

To refute an argument, you must argue against it. Asking questions is not enough. You must present good reasons why its conclusions or reasons are wrong.

Here's one way to think of this rule: If you ask questions, it's likely that your opponent will answer them. That will make their argument better! But you want to show how it's *bad*. You need to go beyond just asking questions, to present reasons of your own.

For example, if someone says that "going to class will lead to success," you might *question* this argument by asking "how do you know that?" But to *refute* the argument, you need to generate evidence that, in fact, going to class does *not* lead to success. Just asking the question is not enough. So: If you are attacking the other side's *conclusion*, give reasons why that conclusion is wrong. If you are attacking the other side's *reasons*, give reasons

why those reasons are wrong. And if you are saying that the other side committed a *fallacy*, explain why what they said is fallacious.

Step 4: Make your refutation.

As you've repeatedly experienced in this class, it is *very* hard to understand others' arguments. That's why when you argue yourself; you know it's vital to be CLEAR. Refutations are even harder for audiences to understand. Your audience needs both to understand the argument you're refuting, *and* to understand your problem with it. So it's even more vital to be CLEAR. Here are the basic steps you should take when presenting your refutation:

1. **Name:** Identify the argument you are refuting; otherwise no one will know what you are talking about. But do it briefly, since you don't want to be making your opponents arguments for her.
2. **Explain.** State in one sentence what your main objection to the argument is.
3. **Support.** Support what you said in #2. Make clear precisely why the argument is weak, or lay out in full form your counterargument. This is where the real work of refutation is done.
4. **Conclude.** Restate your main point, to make sure it sticks in your audience's mind. Tie this refutation back into the refutation of the opponent's whole case.

For example, a good refutation might look like this:

[Name:] The other side said that Dr. Smith's study clearly shows that video games do not lead to violence. [Explain:] But Dr. Smith is biased. [Support:] His research is entirely funded by the video game industry. That's what the 2001 investigation by the Parent's Defense League demonstrates. [Conclude:] So you can see that the other side has no credible evidence linking video games to violence, and they haven't established any need for their proposal.

ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

Introduction

Argue: v. - to persuade someone to do or not do something

- to give the reasons for your opinion, idea, belief, etc.

Argumentative: adj. someone who is argumentative often argues or likes arguing

Argument: n. a set of reasons that show that something is true or untrue, right or wrong, etc.

When you have an opinion and try to convince your listener or reader to accept your opinion, you are agreeing with or disagreeing with something. For example: In an everyday situation, you may try to convince a friend to go somewhere or in a composition or speech class, the instructor may make an assignment in which you must support or oppose the use of nuclear energy to produce electricity. If you agree or disagree on an issue, you will want your reader or listener to accept your point of view.

Purpose of Argumentative Essays

- An argument follows when two groups disagree about something.
- People can have different opinions and can offer reasons in support of their arguments. However, sometimes it might be difficult to convince the other group because the argument could be based on a matter of preference, or religious faith.
- Therefore, arguments of preference, belief or faith are NOT the type of arguments. The kind of argument that can be argued logically is one based on an opinion that can be supported by evidence such as facts.
- An argumentative essay is also one that attempts/tries to change the reader's mind, to convince the reader to agree with the point of view of the writer.
- For that reason, the argumentative essay attempts to be highly persuasive and logical. For example, a thesis such as "My first experiences with Americans were shocking" has a central idea 'shocking' but it is *not* really strongly persuasive, and it is certainly not argumentative.
- When you write an argumentative essay, assume that the reader disagrees with you. But please remember that your reader *is no less* intelligent than you.

- So, write objectively, logically and respectfully. Try to understand your opponent's point of view. If you do not, you are not likely to convince the reader.

As a result:

- An important point to recall is that when writing to an argumentative essay, your reader may not agree with you.
- Writing to persuade is, therefore, more challenging and more imposing than many other types of writing.
- Your goal may be to change your readers' minds or move them to action.
- Your goal may be to sell a program, defend an idea, or disprove an opponent.
- In all these instances, you should consider writing to persuade as an important method for shaping your environment toward **your** vision of reality.

Thesis Statement in Argumentative Essays

- The argumentative thesis takes a side of an issue; frequently it proposes an approach of action which is often expressed with the modal *should*.
- In the argument concerning the nuclear power plant, the thesis for a paper on this topic might be: "Governments should ban further construction of nuclear power plants."
- Someone else might argue: "The U.S should continue building nuclear power plants."

Task: Thesis Statement

Study the following thesis statements. Put "A" in the blank if the statement is argumentative. Be careful! A statement having "should" as part of the verb is not automatically argumentative.

1. The earthquake in Gölcük, Turkey, was one of the most destructive in history.
2. Prospective parents should be required to get licenses in order to have children.
(*Prospective*: future, expected.)
3. The building codes in Las Vegas, Nevada, are inadequate*. (*Inadequate*: not enough)
4. Some of the Americans I have met are quite hospitable.
5. Students should have a say in the hiring and firing of teachers.
6. Pornographic books ought to be banned from the library.
7. State University should not have a football team.
8. The citizens of this state should be allowed to carry guns.
9. The United States ought to allow more immigrants into this country.

Planning/Organizing the Argumentative Essay

When you are **planning the argumentative essay**, be aware that the essay should contain the following characteristics:

1. The argumentative essay should introduce and explain the issue or case. The reader needs to understand what the issue is going to be argued.
2. The essay should offer reasons and support for those reasons. In other words, the essay should prove its point.
3. The essay should refute opposing arguments. (refute: to prove wrong by argument or to show that something is invalid/untrue/illogical)

Organization of an Argumentative Essay

1. **Introduction.** You can first introduce the problem and give background information necessary for the argument and the thesis
2. **Reasons.** It is usually a good idea to spend one paragraph for each reason. Two or three reasons are typical.
3. **Refutation.** Depending on the points the writer wants to make, one or two paragraphs are typical.
4. **Conclusion.**

Outline of an Argumentative Essay

INTRODUCTION

Background about the topic

Thesis statement:

body

I. Pro(for/in support of) argument: (*weakest* argument that supports your opinion)

II. Pro(for/in support of) argument: (*stronger* argument that supports your opinion)

III. Pro(for/in support of) argument: (*strongest* argument that supports your opinion)

IV. Con (against/negative): (Counter/oppose arguments and your refutation)

CONCLUSION

Summary, solution, prediction, or recommendation

Useful Tips for Argumentative Essays

To write well developed paragraphs:

- Avoid strong feelings (don't say: nobody does this, or it is impossible to disagree with me)
- Use generalizations (e.g. people say/believe/consider)
- Do not use generalization (e.g. everybody believes that.....)
- Do not use strong personal expressions (e.g. I think)
- Use linking words (e.g. therefore, although, however etc.)
- Use sequencing (e.g. firstly, secondly, lastly)
- Make reference to other sources (e.g. The government claims that...)
- Give examples – not personal thoughts (e.g. products such as sprayer can destroy the environment)
- Give up banal introductions. Write something more original (Don't write: This topic has been important since ancient times. When? Too vague = unclear)

Task: Read the following essay and pay attention to method of introduction, thesis statement, transitions, topic sentences, method of organization, type of argumentation, and method of conclusion.

Why Women Should Not Have an Abortion

Many women in the entire world have abortions. Women believe there are many reasons to abort such as fear of having or raising a child, rape, or not having enough money. But whatever the situation, there is never an acceptable reason to get an abortion. Some important reasons why women should not abort have to do with human values, religious values, and values of conscience.

The first reason why women should not have an abortion is related to basic human values. Women need to think about their unborn babies who are not responsible for this situation. These unborn babies should have the privilege to live and grow into a normal person. Women need to be more humanitarian and less egoistic with these babies. On the other hand, the baby doesn't know how or why he is here. It is not necessary to kill a life; there are many other solutions to resolve this problem short of abortion.

The second reason why women should not abort has to do with religious values. In almost all religions, a woman is not permitted to have an abortion. If they do, their religions will punish them. In some religions, for example, a woman cannot take communion after having an abortion, and before taking communion again, she must do many things as a form of penitence. In whatever religion, abortion is punished and for this reason, women should not abort.

The most important reason why women should not abort is related to her conscience. When a woman has an abortion, she will always think about the baby she might have had. She will always believe about the future that could have happened with her baby which will always remind her that she killed it. Because she has had an abortion, she will never have a good life, and her conscience will remind her of what she had done. Because a woman who has an abortion can't forget about what she has done, these thoughts will always be with her, and the results can be calamitous.

There are many reasons why women should not have an abortion. The truth is that women need to think about the consequences that can occur before having sexual relations. I think that the effects of an abortion can be very sad for everyone involved, both for the woman who has the abortion and for the family who lives with her.

Task: Read the following essay and:

- a) Underline the thesis statement
- b) Transitions
- c) Modals

3.5 Types of Argumentative Compositions

There are a few types of argumentative compositions such as:

- 1. Expressing arguments **for and against** a topic
- 2. Compare and contrast something or somebody
- 3. Expressing opinions/providing **solutions to problems**
- 4. Advantages and disadvantages

3.5.1 Argumentative Essays: Expressing Arguments For and Against Topic

When you are giving arguments for and against a topic you should present both views in a fair way. Discuss them in equal details and show no bias (=prejudice).

Outline:

Introduction: Introduce the subject of the essay. State why it is an important

Main body:

Paragraph 1: Give the arguments in favor of the statement.

Paragraph 2: Give the arguments against the statement.

Conclusion: Conclude by giving a well-balanced consideration.

TASK 7: Read the model essay and: Underline the transition words; try to replace them with other similar words which are given; and make an outline.

Necessity of Technological and Scientific Advancement

Moving towards the 21st century, technological advancement has become a focus of today's society. Technology has entered the lives of even the poorest members of society, and it is very rare to find anyone who does not have some form of modern technology such as a TV or a food processor, in their home.

There are many things to be said in favor of technological advancement, the most obvious being that it undoubtedly makes people's lives easier. Without the benefits that technology brings, the world would be a much harder place to live in. For example, how would any business operate without faxes, photocopiers or telephones?

On the other hand, technology also has the potential to destroy everything at the touch of a button – a point made by Quentin Reynolds when he said, "The scientists split the atom; now the atom is splitting us." The danger of technological advancement is that machines will completely replace humans, leaving fewer jobs and reducing human contact in everyday life, which cannot be a good thing for society.

In conclusion, although technology has the potential to provide a better quality of life for everyone, it is also capable of destroying everything within a very short space of time. As such it should be developed with caution and should never be allowed to take the place of human contact, because this is what ultimately holds a society together. (241 words) *Focus: center*

Transition Signals

A. Introduction Paragraph

This question/matter/subject can be looked at from several points of view.

This problem should be considered in relation to

State a strong, firm opinion

e.g.: **There is no doubt that women are more intelligent than men ...**

I believe that by the year 2000, every home will have a computer ...

Address the reader directly e.g.

Have you ever considered ...?

Has it ever occurred to you that computers will one day organize your life?

Start with the problem that needs a solution e.g.:

More and more species are becoming extinct ...

As time passes, our lives will be controlled by computers.

B. Body – Paragraphs 1,2,3

To list point:

The first reason is

First of all,

The second reason is

To start with,

The third reason is

Secondly,

The third and most important reason is

Thirdly,

Finally,

Another reason is

On the other hand,

On the contrary...

The final reason is ...

One major advantage of,

One major

disadvantage of,

A further advantage

One point of view in favor

against

One point of view in favor of

In the first place

Last but not least

White it's true to say that

To add more points to the same topic:

What is more	Furthermore	Also
In addition to	Besides	Apart from this
Apart from that`		

To make contrasting point

On the other hand	However	In spite of
While	Nevertheless	Despite
Even though argued that	Although	It can be
One can argue that	Yet	But

C. Conclusion Paragraph

To sum up,	To conclude ...
On balance,	In conclusion
It seems that	In my view ...
All in all,....	I believe ...
All things considered,	On the whole,
Taking everything into account,	Above all,
As was previously stated	

Argumentative Essays: Expressing Contrast In Arguments

Task: Contrast points in an argument

Look at the box below. Notice how we use the words in italics to contrast points in an argument.

Although/In spite of the fact that/ While life in the countryside is very peaceful, it can also be lonely.

Life in the countryside is very peaceful. *On the other hand/Nevertheless/However/In spite of this* it can also be lonely.

Now complete the sentences:

1. Keeping animals in zoos can be cruel. *In spite of this*, If you have a car you can get around easily.
On the other hand, _____
2. *Although* learning a foreign language is hard
work, _____
3. *While* camping holidays can be great
fun, _____

Special Note:

What is important is to keep learning, to enjoy challenge, to tolerate ambiguity. In the end, there are no certain answers. Martina Horner

Argumentative Essays: Expressing/ Giving Opinions**Outline**

I. Introduction: State your opinion clearly without using too many personal opinion words.

Main body:

Give the first point supporting your opinion.

Give the second point supporting your opinion.

Give the last point supporting your opinion.

Conclusion: Re – state your opinion, using different word.

Task: Read the following model, circle the linking words, and underline the examples given to support each point raised.

Animal Testing should not be banned

Each year about five million dogs, cats, rabbits, rats, monkeys, and other animals die in deadly dose tests which are performed in the U.S. The subject of animal testing is very open to question. In my opinion, animal testing should not be banned for a number of reasons.

The first reason for supporting animal testing is that many products must be tested on animals to ensure* that they are safe for use by humans. For example, diabetics would not be able to inject insulin to control their diabetes if it had not been developed by testing it on animals.

Moreover, the effects of certain chemicals such as insecticides can be observed on animals and their offspring and results are achieved faster since animals have shorter life duration than humans and the ability to multiply easily.

The final and most important point in favor* of animal testing is that it is aimed at finding cures for diseases such as cancer. Most of these tests cannot be done in any other way. Forty years ago polio was a common tragedy amongst children. Animal testing led to the discovery of a vaccine and now this disease is very rare in developed countries. While some animals undoubtedly suffer, the end justifies* the means.

Contrary to popular belief, laboratory animals are not ill-treated and their suffering is kept to a minimum. As already stated, I am in favor of* animal testing, provided that is conducted under strict conditions and that there is no alternative.

Task: Read the following article and answer the questions.

Genetic Science (TV star Pat Kennedy gives her opinion)

Scientists have made amazing discoveries over the last twenty years, especially in the field of genetics. Already they can create strange new species of plants and animals. They may soon be able to design new kinds of human beings. Do scientists really know what they are doing, and should we let them go on?

I think genetic engineering should be very carefully controlled. To begin with, life on our planet has evolved slowly, over thousands of years. If we change that process too quickly by tampering with genes, which are the building blocks of nature, we may cause terrible damage. I worry, furthermore, where scientist will stop if we allow them to 'play God' with our world, and whether they will be able to control the changes they are unleashing*. Lastly, we should consider how some governments could use genetics. They might try to create 'the perfect baby' or design a 'master-race'. This is a nightmare scenario, of course, but it could happen.

It is true that genetic engineering can be used for the good, to detect or even cure disease. Biotechnology can be commercially profitable, too, in farming and in agriculture. To my mind, however, these factors still do not outweigh the dangers.

In the wrong hands, genetic engineering can be used as a way of playing with nature. Nobody knows what the effects will be if we allow this to go on without strict controls. I think all of us should stop and think before we allow scientists to develop these techniques any further – our survival could depend on it!

1. Underline the topic sentence in each paragraph.

2. Which paragraph in the model essay:

a. Gives the writer's **opinion** and **reasons** for it?

b. Restates the problem and the writer's opinion?

c. Sets out the problem in general and states why it is controversial (=debatable, discussible)?

d. Gives the other side of the argument and the reasons why the writer isn't convinced by them?

Task: Read the model essay and underline the opposite points of view.

The Role of the Free Press

Newspaper and magazines play an important role in today's society and are capable of influencing people's lives in many ways. However, does the free press offer a valuable service, or is it, as American journalist, Edward Egglestone said, "organized gossip"?

On a personal level, the media can be very entertaining and informative. Reading about the lifestyles of the rich and famous is amusing and can help us forget our own problems. However, journalists frequently intrude on the privacy of celebrities, following them and photographing them in their most intimate* moments. This is surely an unacceptable interpretation of the word "free".

As far as politics are concerned, the free press is important as it often reveals the truth behind all the speeches and accusations. Unfortunately, most newspapers tend to favor a particular political party, meaning that their articles are not objective.

From an educational point of view, newspapers and magazines are an important source of up-to-date information and in-depth articles, reporting on both local and international events. They can be an invaluable part of a child's education and often expand an adult's knowledge as well. Opponents of this view say that newspapers do not always give correct information and facts are often falsely reported. Thus, they are not always appropriate learning material for students.

On the whole, I believe that the existence of the free press is valuable to our society, as long as its power is used wisely and objectively in an effort to inform the public, rather than mislead it.

Task: The paragraphs in the sample essay are in the wrong order. Match them to the following headings which are in the correct order. Write the essay in your notebook.

- a. Introduction and illustration of the argument
- b. Analysis of the causes of the problem
- c. Suggestions for solutions based on the analysis
- d. Conclusion, including comments on the feasibility of the suggested solutions

More Argumentative Essay Samples

Why People Should Read for Pleasure

In the past years the use of the television and the internet has increased; this situation has caused many people to change their likes and the way that they enjoy their free time. Because of television and the internet, many people spend less time reading, so the purpose for this essay is to present reasons why people should read just for pleasure. The reasons that I give you are quite simple: to improve your knowledge, to expand your general culture, to have more fun, to make your imagination fly, to find new ways to express your ideas, and finally to expand your vocabulary.

The first reason that I give you to enjoy reading is that when you read, you can expand your knowledge and also your culture. There are a lot of good books in which you can find history, novels, tragedies, comedies and a variety of other themes. You can see that people who read more often frequently have a bigger knowledge of life and also a bigger perspective of their environment. I think that fact gives them an advantage over all others who do not read frequently.

The second reason to read more often is that through books you can have fun and even travel in your imagination. Children have not yet lost the ability of getting into their dreams, and because of this, in their first years the parents read a lot of tales in which they use their imagination. Adults should try to keep this ability, so we do not forget the importance of the use of the imagination. The imagination also represents a tool that could help you to develop your professional career in a creative way.

Finally, the third and the most important feature that reading offers you is that it does not matter the age that you have, you always could expand your vocabulary and the ways to express your ideas to the others in a simple and correct form. By the time you can improve the kind of books that you read, there are a lot of categories, so you will never stop learning from the pleasure of reading. People who know how to choose a book generally have the capability of choosing a formal book in which they can find formal grammatical structures and obviously a formal vocabulary. All these things allow them to gain greater fluency in their communication.

In conclusion, I recommend that you enjoy reading more often. There are excellent reasons for doing it; you just have to want to expand your knowledge and your culture, to improve

your imagination and also your vocabulary. I know that we should evolve with the technology; that is, it is good to know how to navigate in the internet, but we must also not forget the books. Try to choose good books at the beginning, and then I ensure you that you never will stop reading.

Argumentative Essay Topics

Task: Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

1. Technology has made the world a better place to live.
2. Grades (marks) encourage students to learn.
3. Telephones and email have made communication between people less personal.
4. People behave differently when they wear different clothes. Do you agree that different clothes influence the way people behave?
5. Reading fiction (such as novels and short stories) is more enjoyable than watching movies.
6. A person's childhood years (the time from birth to twelve years of age) are the most important years of a person's life.
7. The country should only be run by women.
8. Divorce is sometimes a solution to marital problems.
9. Women, not the government, have the right to make their own decisions about abortion.
10. Make a list of some of the major social or political arguments currently in the newspapers on T.V.
11. Animals should not be used as laboratory tools.

DETECTING FALLACIES IN ARGUMENTATION

Types of Logical Fallacies

Fallacies are statements that might sound reasonable or superficially true but are actually flawed or dishonest. When readers detect them, these logical fallacies backfire by making the audience think the writer is (a) unintelligent or (b) deceptive. It is important to avoid them in your own arguments, and it is also important to be able to spot them in others' arguments so a false line of reasoning won't fool you. Think of this as intellectual kung-fu: the art of self-defense in a debate. For extra impact, learn both the Latin terms and the English equivalents.

In general, one useful way to organize fallacies is by category. We have below **fallacies of relevance**, **component fallacies**, **fallacies of ambiguity**, and **fallacies**

of omission. We will discuss each type in turn. The last point to discuss is **Occam's Razor**.

Exercises on fallacies

Identify any fallacy in each of these passages. If no fallacy is committed, select "no fallacy involved".

1. Mr. Lee's views on Japanese culture are not to be trusted, because his parents were both killed by the Japanese army during World War II and that made him anti-Japanese all his life.
2. Every part of this chair is light. Therefore, this chair is light.
3. Smoking causes cancer because my father was a smoker and he died of lung cancer.
4. Feminism is wrong because it claims that all women are saints and all men are rapists.
5. Professor Lewis, the world authority on logic, claims that all wives cook for their husbands. But the fact is that his own wife does not cook for him. Therefore, his claim is false.
6. If Catholicism is right, then no women should be allowed to be priests. Catholicism is wrong. Therefore, some women should be allowed to be priests.
7. God does not exist because every argument for the existence of God has been shown to be unsound.
8. The last three times I have had a cold I took large doses of vitamin C. On each occasion, the cold cleared up within a few days. So vitamin C helped me recover from colds.
9. The union's case for more funding for higher education can be ignored. For it is put forward by the very people - university staff - who would benefit from the increased money.
10. Children become able to solve complex problems and think of physical objects objectively at the same time that they learn language. Therefore, these abilities are caused by learning a language.
11. If cheap things are no good then this cheap watch is no good. But this watch is actually quite good. So some good things are cheap.