

Sample Argument Outline

The following is a basic outline of an argument essay. Keep in mind that this is only one kind of possible organization; there are several ways to structure an effective argument. Outlines can also vary in the amount of detail. Always check with your instructor if you are unsure about the organization of your essay. (Disclaimer: the following argument is used as an example and is not intended to represent the views of the UWC.)

Introductory Section

Thesis (claim and reason): The American government should lift economic sanctions against Iraq, because this policy does more harm than good for both countries.

Body Sections

Section I

Claim: The sanctions have not accomplished their goal.

Evidence: logical appeal (facts, expert authority)

- Saddam Hussein is still in power
- other dictators have withstood sanctions (Fidel Castro)

Section II

Claim: Rather than hurting Saddam, the sanctions only make life worse for the common people of Iraq

Evidence: logical appeal (statistics), ethical appeal (fair, humane), emotional appeal

- goes against American ideals of helping other people
- thousands of Iraqi children die each month sanctions continue
- restrictions on medicine and food hurt the poorest people first

Section III

Claim: Lifting sanctions would benefit the American economy by increasing oil production

Evidence: logical appeal (facts), emotional appeal

- would cut down on gas and oil prices

Section IV -- Dealing with the Opposition

1st Opposing View: Sanctions are necessary to prevent Iraq from supporting terrorists and becoming a regional problem again

Strategy for Response: Concede that we want to prevent more conflict and stop terrorism...but we should lift sanctions gradually, and maintain a military presence in the area (compromise)

2nd Opposing View: Lifting sanctions would make the U.S. look weak

Strategy for Response: It is the humane and fair action to take; also, sanctions contribute to hatred of the United States and encourage terrorist sentiment (rebuttal)

Conclusion

End with a conclusion that suggests the larger importance of this issue, and why we should care. Create a final statement that is powerful and memorable.