

Argumentative Paper Format

**Please note that this is only a sample format. There are multiple ways to organize an argumentative paper*

- **INTRODUCTION**
 - 1-2 paragraphs tops
 - **PURPOSE:** To set up and state one's claim
 - **OPTIONAL ELEMENTS**
 - Make your introductory paragraph **interesting**. How can you draw your readers in?
 - What **background information**, if any, do we need to know in order to understand your claim? If you don't follow this paragraph with a background information paragraph, please insert that info here.
 - **REQUIRED ELEMENTS**
 - If you're arguing about a literary work—state author + title
 - If you're arguing about an issue or theory – provide brief explanation or your of issue/theory.
 - If you're arguing about a film—state director, year + title
 - STATE your claim at the end of your introductory paragraph

- **BACKGROUND PARAGRAPH**
 - 1-2 paragraphs tops; Optional (can omit for some papers). Also, sometimes this info is incorporated into the introduction paragraph (see above).
 - **PURPOSE:** Lays the foundation for proving your argument.
 - Will often include:
 - Summary of works being discussed
 - Definition of key terms
 - Explanation of key theories

- **SUPPORTING EVIDENCE PARAGRAPH #1**
 - **PURPOSE:** To prove your argument. Usually is one paragraph but it can be longer.
 - **Topic Sentence:** What is one item, fact, detail, or example you can tell your readers that will help them better understand your claim/paper topic? Your answer should be the topic sentence for this paragraph.
 - **Explain Topic Sentence:** Do you need to explain your topic sentence? If so, do so here.
 - **Introduce Evidence:** Introduce your evidence either in a few words (As Dr. Brown states "...") or in a full sentence ("To understand this issue we first need to look at statistics").
 - **State Evidence:** What supporting evidence (reasons, examples, facts, statistics, and/or quotations) can you include to prove/support/explain your topic sentence?
 - **Explain Evidence:** How should we read or interpret the evidence you are providing us? How does this evidence prove the point you are trying to make in this paragraph? Can be opinion based and is often at least 1-3 sentences.
 - **Concluding Sentence:** End your paragraph with a concluding sentence that reasserts how the topic sentence of this paragraph helps up better understand and/or prove your paper's overall claim.