

## TEMPLATE FOR AN ARGUMENT TO WHICH WRITER BRINGS ALL THE DATA

### Introduction

Discuss what you know about the topic. Go into lots of detail to show your reader that you are knowledgeable on the topic.

End the paragraph with a thoughtful, well-developed thesis statement that makes clear what you are going to argue. As a roadmap for the reader, you may want to state the major points you will use to make your argument. (*Sample: All students in the Oakland Unified School District should be required to take four years of PE. Or: All students in the Oakland Unified School District should be required to take four years of PE because PE classes are a good vehicle for mixing students and creating a unified student body, PE classes provide important physical activity many students do not get on a regular basis, and PE classes teach important information about health and diet students need to learn and practice for healthy lives as adults.*)

### Body paragraphs

Begin each paragraph in the body section of your essay with a strong topic sentence that directly connects to your thesis statement. (*Sample topic sentence: Wearing uniforms would cut down on the money that high school students spend on school clothes.*) Then develop that idea with knowledge gained in the source documents, history classes, reading, and personal experience.

If your thesis statement in the opening paragraph does not include a roadmap—a list of the points you are going to cover—the body paragraphs can come in any order, but it is always best to put your strongest point last—just before the conclusion. If your thesis statement in the opening paragraph does include a roadmap, you should write your paragraphs according to the order you put them in the roadmap. (*To use the example about PE, the point about a unified student body should be dealt with before the point about health.*)

### Conclusion

Begin your conclusion with a restatement of your thesis statement; make the same point but with different words. (*Sample: Clearly the time has come for the OUSD to implement a four-year PE program.*) Never start with the phrase “in conclusion.” In the conclusion, address the “So What” of the issue. So what is important about the point you are making? What do you want to convince your reader to think as a result of reading your essay? What do you want to persuade your reader to do? Perhaps think about how you want your reader to apply what happened in history to today’s world.

## CONCESSIONS—SEEING THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ARGUMENT

All good arguments make clear that the writer knows that there are clear-thinking, good-hearted people who have different opinions on the topic. Acknowledging the other side or sides of an argument actually strengthens your argument because it shows that you are respectful of different opinions and see the issue as complex.

Two ways to concede points to the other side:

1. In the body paragraphs section of the essay, you can have a separate paragraph that deals with all the points you want to concede—give over—to the other side. This paragraph should come as the first body paragraph. Why? It immediately indicates you are open-minded and fair. After that paragraph, you can get on with the points you want to make. The topic sentence of this paragraph needs to make clear that you are aware that not all people share the view you state in your thesis statement. (*Sample topic sentence: There are, however, those who do not like the idea of school uniforms in public schools.*) Be sure to develop this paragraph fully so it’s clear you take different opinions seriously.
2. In the body paragraph section, you can blend concessions into the paragraphs in which you argue for your side. In a paragraph defending the idea that requiring students to wear uniforms builds school spirit, for example, you might concede that there are other ways to build school spirit—such as through athletic teams, class activities, rallies, etc.

## STRUCTURE FOR A THREE-PART ARGUMENT (Introduction, Body, Conclusion)

**Introduction:** this part presents the argument to be made.  
Begin with a general statement about the topic that contextualizes the issue for the reader.

End with a thoughtful, well developed thesis that clearly identifies the major reasons you will use in developing a clear and informed position on the topic. These specific reasons should guide the organization of the essay.

**Body:** this—the longest—part of your essay provides a) a concession part that identifies opposing arguments and b) a pro part that give strong points in support of your thesis and detailed evidence in support of it.

Begin the concession with a statement that clearly indicates to the reader that you understand that there is another side to the argument. Then use evidence—from the source documents and from what you have learned in class—to make specific references to points on the other side. Be sure to explain and analyze this evidence to show that you understand why a reasonable and intelligent person might take the other side. In your concession, you can either list and explain all the points you are willing to concede OR you can concede points individually and rebut them individually. None of the points you use in the rebuttals, however, can be used in the pro paragraphs.

In each pro paragraph supporting of your thesis, begin with a clear topic sentence that offers one strong point in support of your thesis statement.

In using evidence from one or several of the source documents as well as specific and relevant information learned in class, explain in detail how the source document and the information you provide connect to and strengthen your position. That is, analyze the source material and explain its relevance to the point you are making in the paragraph. Do not merely summarize the source material or quote from it; show how it relates to and furthers the point you make in the topic sentence of this paragraph.

When you use ideas and words from a source document, be sure to attribute the words and ideas to the writer of the document by using quotation marks around the words you use from the document, by identifying the writer of the document or the name of the document (e.g. "Francois-Rene Chateaubriand claims that" or "according to the Declaration of the Right of Man and of the Citizen" or "according to Source 2") or by putting into parenthesis the number of the source (e.g. Source 4).

The last paragraph in the body part of the essay should offer the strongest point in support of your thesis claim. Perhaps begin this sentence with a word or phrase (e.g., *finally, most important, lastly*) that indicates that in this paragraph you will offer your strongest point.

**Conclusion:** this part brings the essay to a close and addresses the "so what" of the issue. Begin this paragraph with a restatement of your thesis statement. (Hint: never use the expression "in conclusion" in your conclusion. Perhaps start with the word "Clearly" and then restate the thesis statement.)

Then address the "so what" question. So what is important about your argument? What do you want to persuade your reader to believe after reading the essay? Or, what action do you want your reader to take based on what you have written? Perhaps think about how you want your reader to apply what happened in history to today's world.

## LETTER TO PARENTS ARGUMENT

### INTRODUCTION:

- Do you begin the paragraph mentioning the topic but without making a request?
- Do you set up your request so that your parent is involved in your situation?
- In the sentence **before** the last sentence, do you lead up to your request? *There is something I need to ask of you.*
- Do you end the paragraph with a thesis statement? *Mom, could you buy my a new dress for the senior ball?*

### CONCESSION:

- Do you start this paragraph with a sentence that indicates that you understand that your parent might have objections to or reservations about giving you what you ask? *I know you might have concerns about buying me a new dress.*
- Do you then give all the objections your parent might offer for not wanting to go along with your request? Do you go into detail about each objection?

### FIRST PRO:

- Do you start this sentence in a way that connect this paragraph with the last one but also states **one reason** you want or need what you are asking? *I understand your reservations/ concerns, but \_\_\_\_\_.*
- Do you focus on that one reason throughout the whole paragraph?
- Do you explain this reason?

### SECOND AND STRONGER PRO:

- Do you start this paragraph in a way that states that the next reason is even more important than the reason in the last paragraph?
- Do you focus on this reason throughout the whole paragraph?
- Do you go into detail on this reason?

### CONCLUSION

- Do you start this paragraph off by restating your thesis—only using differing words?
- Then do you make a statement that clearly hands over the request to your parent in a way that makes it easy for him or her to say yes?

### FINAL STEPS:

- Did you spell check your work?
- Did you ask someone to read it and check it before you hand it in?
-

A

**Organizing an argument that compares/ contrasts.**

Name the two people/ places/ issues/whatever that you are going to discuss. Name a similarity and explain it. Name a similarity and explain it. Name a similarity and explain it. Name a similarity and explain it. Then say something to the effect that despite their many similarities, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are significantly different.

One big difference is \_\_\_\_\_.  
Explain.

Another big difference is \_\_\_\_\_.  
Explain.

Restatement of thesis statement.  
Then figure out the SO WHAT of your argument. Why is your point so important? What do you want to leave your reader with? What do you want him or her to be convinced of or be persuaded to do?

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Restatement of thesis statement.  
Then figure out the SO WHAT of your argument. Why is your point so important? What do you want to leave your reader with? What do you want him or her to be convinced of or be persuaded to do?

## NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION ARGUMENT

### INTRODUCTION:

- Do you begin this paragraph mentioning your friend and his/her problem? *My friend Michelle is not in great physical condition.*
- Do you explain the problem?
- Do you end the paragraph with a thesis statement? *Michelle needs to get daily exercise.*

### CONCESSION:

- Do you start this paragraph with a sentence that indicates your friend will have various objections to your resolution for him/her? *I know Michelle will have many objections to exercising daily. Or: I know Michelle will not want to go along with this idea.*
- Do you then give all the objections your friend might offer for not wanting to go along with your resolution for him or her OR do you give the reasons your friend might offer to explain his/her reasons for acting the way he/she does? *She will say she doesn't have time for exercise. She maintains that her life is already so busy she couldn't possible add another thing to her day. She will also say . . . .*

### FIRST PRO

- Do you start this sentence in a way that connects this new paragraph with the last one but also states **one benefit** for your friend if he/she follows your advice? *I understand all of Michelle's objections, but I still believe that daily exercise will benefit Michelle because it will help her lose weight.*
- Then do you explain how your friend's life will be improved **in this one way**?

### SECOND AND STRONGER PRO

- Do you start this paragraph in a way that states that the **next** reason you are giving for your friend's following your advice will result in an even bigger benefit to him/her? *More important, exercising daily will improve Michelle's overall health.*
- Then do you go into detail to explain how your friend's life will be improved dramatically by following your advice?

### CONCLUSION

- Do you start this paragraph off by restating your thesis? *Michelle needs to make daily exercise a part of her life.*
- Then do you tell why you want your friend to follow your advice AND/OR how you will help him/her follow your advice?

### FINAL STEPS

- Did you spell check your work?
- Did you ask someone to read your work before printing it?

### **Argument about a friend's resolution**

What's a resolution your friend should make?

- **Introduction:** Describe the situation. End with your thesis statement.
- **Concession:** All the reasons your friend will give for why his/her actions and reasons for why he/she will resist your idea.
- **Pro number 1:** One big reason why your friend should make and keep the resolution
- **Pro number 2:** The more important reason why your friend should make and keep the resolution.
- **Conclusion:** Start with a restatement of your thesis. Then give the SO WHAT.

Make sure that all of your paragraphs deal with one issue. Make sure that all your paragraphs have strong topic sentences. Make sure that all your paragraphs are fully developed with lots of details.

## **STRUCTURE FOR A THREE-PART ARGUMENT ON AN ARGUMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Name the article and author and state the author's claim. Then discuss various points the writer makes, using such words as *maintains*, *argues*, *contends*, and *states*. Be sure you use quotation marks when you use the writer's exact words. Refer to the writer by his or her last name. At the end of the introductory paragraph, take a stand on the topic—agree or disagree. In the opening part of your thesis statement you might want to acknowledge that there are valid points on the other side, but end with the position you intend to build your essay on.

### **BODY PARAGRAPHS OF SIMPLE AGREE OR DISAGREE ESSAY.**

Develop your ideas on the topic using what you know from your reading and life's experiences. You may divide this part of your essay into as many paragraphs as you need to fully present your ideas on the topic. Be sure that you rank your points so that the stronger or strongest points come last.

### **CONCLUSION**

The point of the conclusion is to bring both the writer's argument and your argument into focus and then make the reader see the SO WHAT of your essay. What do you want your reader to do with what you have written? What do you want to leave your reader with—a new idea, a proposal for action, an idea or practice to rethink and change?

TEMPLATE FOR A THREE-PART ARGUMENT ON AN ARGUMENT  
THAT AGREES AND DISAGREES WITH THE WRITER'S THESIS

INTRODUCTION

Name the article and writer and state the writer's claim. Then discuss various points the writer makes, using such words as *maintains*, *argues*, *contends*, and *states*. Be sure you use quotation marks when you use the writer's exact words. Refer to the writer by his or her last name. At the end of the introductory paragraph, make a statement to the effect that the issue is complex and thus you cannot fully agree or disagree with the claim the writer is making or the points he or she uses to support or illustrate the claim.

BODY PARAGRAPHS OF SIMPLE AGREE AND DISAGREE ARGUMENT

Divide this part of your essay into as many paragraphs as you need to fully present the complexities of the argument. Develop your ideas on the topic by using what you know from your reading and life's experiences. Be sure to be absolutely clear about your stand on the argument as it is presented. If you disagree with the writer's claim, for example, but see the logic and worth of his or her supporting ideas, make that clear. If you agree with the claim but disagree with the writer's illustrations or supporting points, make that clear. If you are ambivalent in your feelings about the claim or supporting points, explain your ambivalence. Whatever you do, be clear—do not sound wishy-washy, do not sit on the fence. Also, be sure that you rank your points so that your stronger or strongest points come last in this part of the essay.

CONCLUSION

The point of the conclusion is to bring both the writer's argument and your argument into focus and then make the reader see the SO WHAT of your essay. What do you want your reader to do with what you have written? What do you want to leave your reader with—a new idea, a proposal for action, an idea or practice to rethink and change?