

Argumentative Essays

In an argumentative essay, the writer attempts to prove that his or her opinion about a controversial topic is correct. The main purpose is to convince readers to accept this point of view. To achieve this purpose, the writer should state the main idea clearly, should support it with logical arguments, and should consider the opposing views.

1. Pro or Con Arguments

In the thesis statement of an argumentative essay, the writer should state the topic and his or her claim. The topic must have two sides, and the writer should choose either **pro arguments (arguing for)** or **con arguments (arguing against)**. Consider the following thesis statements.

e.g. 1 : Physical education classes should be required for all public school students in all grades.

Here, the writer **argues for** having physical education in all public schools. To back up the main idea, the writer should choose at least three strong **pro arguments**. Each argument is to be developed in a single body paragraph, using different types of supporting details (facts, statistics, examples, experts' citations... etc.)

e.g.2: Children under the age of four should not be sent to daycare centres.

Here, the writer **argues against** sending children under the age of four to daycare centres. To defend this idea, the writer should choose at least three convincing **con arguments** and explain each one of them in a separate body paragraph.

2. Considering the Opposing Views

To convince readers to agree with their opinion, writers should take into consideration the arguments that go against the thesis statement (**counter-argument**). Then, they should refute the opposing view; that is, they prove that the opponents' statement is weak (**Folse, Muchmore-Vokon, & Vestri Solomon, 2010**).

For example, a writer argues for music education. The **couter-argument** (the sentences which are written in bold) and the refutation (the sentences which are underlined) are presented in the following paragraph.

Many school boards are removing music education from the curriculum. They argue that music is not a necessary or useful course.
However, the benefits conveyed by music education are tremendous. By

developing a child's brain, body, and feelings, music gives a better chance to be confident in life. (Gaetz& Phadke, 2011, p.228)

3. Organising an Argumentative Essay

One of the most common methods for organising an argumentative essay is the one where writers mention their reasons before the opponents' views. Using this method, writers include at least six paragraphs: the introduction, four body paragraphs, and the conclusion. The first three body paragraphs explain the main idea stated in the thesis statement. In the fourth paragraph, the writer considers the other side's views (counter-argument) and disapproves them (refutation)(Nazario, Borchers, & Lewis, 2012)

Task 1: Read the Sample Essay carefully and answer the following questions concisely and precisely.

1. What is the essay about ?
2. Does the writer use pro or con arguments ?
3. Identify the thesis statement and the topic sentences.
4. Identify the counter-argument and the refutation.

5. Suggest a title for the essay.
6. Do you agree or disagree with the writer ? why ?

Sample Essay

How would you feel if a loved one were murdered? Would you want retribution, or would sending the killer to prison be enough? This question has been asked many times, but people are not in agreement about the ultimate punishment. We all know that it is wrong to take a human life, but if our government does the killing, is it still a crime ? Some people say that the government does not have the right to end someone's life, but the following reasons will show why capital punishment should be preserved.

The first reason for allowing the death penalty is for the sake of punishment itself. Most people agree that criminals who commit serious crimes should be separated from society. The punishment will depend on the degree of the crime. Capital punishment, the most severe form of punishment, ends

criminals' lives. It seems reasonable that this severe punishment be reserved for those who commit the most serious of crimes.

The second reason to preserve capital punishment is financial. The government will not have to spend a lot of money on criminals. Next to capital punishment, the most severe punishment, is a life sentence in prison, where the government has to take care of criminals until they die naturally. These criminals do not work, but they receive free housing and food. It is unfair to use tax dollars for such a purpose.

The last reason for continuing the use of death penalty is based on the purpose of government. If the government has legitimate power to make, judge, and carry out the laws, it should also have the power to decide if criminals should die. Capital punishment is like any other sentence. If one believes that the government has to charge a fine or put criminals into

jails ; then, the government must also have the same power to decide the fate of a prisoner's life.

The opponents of capital punishment might say that nobody has the right to decide who should die, including the government. However, when the government sends soldiers into war, in some way, it is deciding those soldiers' fate ; some will live and some will be killed. As long as the government has the right to send its citizens to the battlefield, it has a right to put criminals to death.

There are many good reasons to preserve capital punishment. Certainly not every criminal should be put to death. Capital punishment will be viewed as the harshest form of punishment. If no punishment can reform a murderer ; then, capital punishment is the best thing that can be done for that person and for society.

(Folse, Muchmore-Vokon, & Vestri Solomon, 2010, p.119-120)

Task 2 : Write a six-paragraph essay on **one** of the following topics.

- Children under the age of four should not be sent to daycare centres.
Do you agree or disagree with this statement ? why ?
- Do you think that parents have the right to decide who their children should marry?

Notes

- ✓ You should send your essays and your answers to task1 (using the **word**, not the pdf) to the following email address:
mszerrouki.class2020@gmail.com.
- ✓ The deadline is **April 16, 2020**.
- ✓ You should contact me **as soon as possible** via this email to provide you with information on **the Moodle platform**.
- ✓ You should make sure that you provide your own answers and you write your **own essays**.
- ✓ Do not forget to write your names. Good Luck!