



# Contents of an Argumentative Essay

When writing an argumentative essay, you should try to persuade your reader. To do this you will need to incorporate specific tools to your essay such as evidence, opposition, background information, and occasionally, definitions.

## **Evidence:**

Among the many tools you can use in your essay, evidence is arguably the most important. When you make claims about any subject matter, you can expect to find opposition from readers who disagree with you. The key to dispelling these opposers is bringing factual (peer-reviewed) information into your essay. The evidence could be used to structure the outline of your essay, or it could be used as a supplementary resource. For information on judging internet sources and how to incorporate them into your essay, refer to in-text citations and internet sources handouts from the Writing Center.

## **Background Information:**

Chronologically, you may want to provide background information before you dive into the body of your essay. The background information could be a summary or paraphrasing of what you are talking about, or it could be a historical context for your subject matter; either way, the background information's main objective is to let the reader know what you are talking about (because they may not be an expert on the subject you are talking about in your essay). Providing background information is vital when trying to argue a specific point.

## **Definitions:**

Definitions could be used in your background information section, or they could be used whenever they appear in your essay; however, it is typically not a good idea to put definitions in your introduction. Aside from that limitation, any definitions you use could potentially appear anywhere throughout the body of your essay; letting the reader know what certain words or jargon mean can be extremely beneficial to persuading them.

## **Opposition:**

There are many interchangeable words in argumentative essays such as refutations, counter arguments, rebuttals, confutations, disconfirmations, etc. However, they all mean the same thing; they all refer to some form of opposition, and it is extremely important (unless specifically limited by your instructor) to provide opposition to your argument. By providing opposition to your own argument, you are acknowledging the merit of others' disagreeing thoughts; doing this makes you appear more open and empathetic. Additionally, providing this tool in your essay will make you seem more proficient in the subject you are addressing; already, this tool develops your credibility and pathos. The final part of listing the opposition is addressing it; you must dispel the oppositions to your argument to show that you are, more or less, correct (or at the very least, more correct) than your opponents.