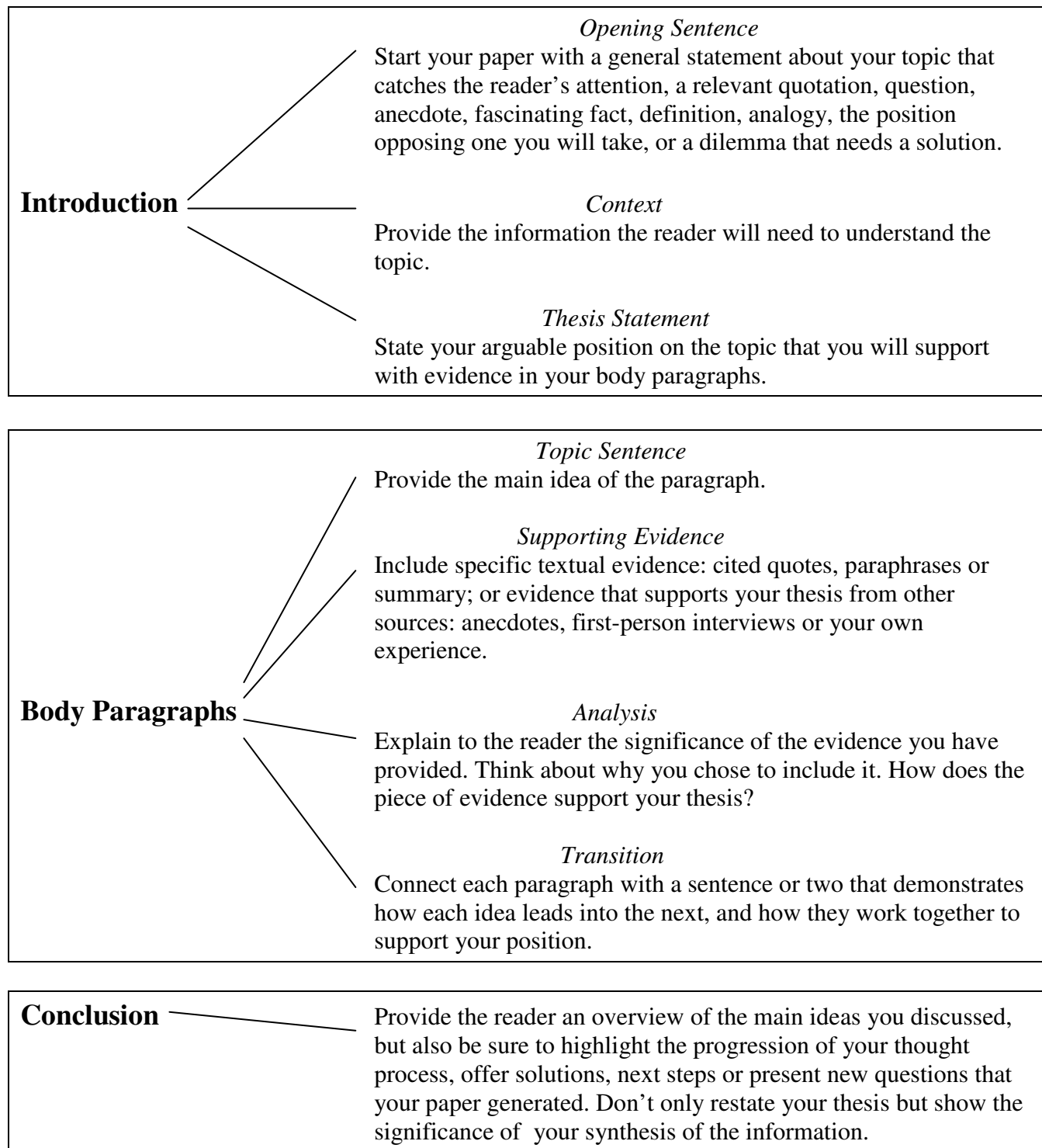


Structure of a General Expository Essay

The following maps a commonly used structure for many academic essays. Use this outline to guide you as you compose your own argument, research or even descriptive essay.



My Outline

Try applying this structure to your own writing: write sentences for the corresponding elements of your introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion in the space provided below.

Introduction:

Begin your paper with a opening sentence or “ hook ” about your topic that catches the reader’s attention. Reference the list on the front for ideas.	
Include context : provide the information the reader will need to understand the topic.	
State your thesis , your arguable position on the topic. <i>What side will you take? What will you prove in your paper? What are you going to explore?</i>	

One Practice Body paragraph:

Write a general topic sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph for your first body paragraph, or for one you are having difficulty organizing.	
Write down the specific textual evidence or evidence from other sources that you are using to support your thesis.	
Analyze your evidence: tell the reader what is significant or important about this evidence. <i>How does the piece of evidence support your thesis? Why did you choose to include it?</i>	
Don’t forget a transition sentence : Connect each paragraph with a sentence or two that demonstrates how each idea leads into the next.	

Conclusion:

Make connections for the reader in your conclusion . You should refer back to your thesis, but don’t simply restate it. Use some of the following questions to guide you: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Did you propose any solutions? Are there solutions yet to be discovered?</i>• <i>What questions still need to be answered?</i>• <i>What is the larger significance of the topic you chose to write about?</i>• <i>What should the reader do or think after reading your paper?</i>	
---	--

Descriptive Essay

Structuring a Descriptive Essay

A descriptive essay simply describes something or someone by appealing to the reader's senses: sight, sound, touch, smell and taste. Here are the basic steps to writing an effective descriptive essay:

1. Select a subject

Observation is the key to writing a good description. For example, if you are writing about a place, go there and take notes on the sights, sounds, and smells. A descriptive essay paints a picture for the reader, using descriptive devices and the senses. Create a thesis statement that informs the reader who or what you are describing. Examples: "The wooden roller coaster in Coney Island is a work of art." "My bedroom is an ocean sanctuary."

2. Select dominant details

Select only the details that support the dominant impression (your thesis statement).

3. Organize details

The paragraphs in a descriptive essay can be structured spatially (from top to bottom or from near to far) or chronologically (time order) or from general to specific. Descriptive essays can also use other patterns of organization such as narrative or exemplification.

4. Use descriptive words

Do not use vague words or generalities (such as good, nice, bad, or beautiful). Be specific and use sensory, descriptive words (adjectives). For example:

I ate a good dinner. OR I devoured a steaming hot, cheese-filled pepperoni pizza for dinner.

Provide sensory details:

- Smells that are in the air (the aroma of freshly brewed coffee)
- Sounds (traffic, honking horns)
- Sights ("The sun scattered tiny diamonds across dew-covered grass as it peeked out from beyond the horizon.")
- Touch ("The texture of the adobe hut's walls resembled coarse sandpaper.")
- Taste: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, tart ("Giant goose bumps formed on my tongue when I accidentally bit into a sliver of lemon.")

5. Draw a logical conclusion

The conclusion may also use descriptive words; however, make certain the conclusion is logical and relevant.

Create images for the reader!

Figurative Language

Figures of speech are imaginative comparisons between two basically dissimilar things. A figure of speech may enliven a description by making the essay more visual or forceful.

Here are some of the more common figures of speech that could prove effective in writing descriptive essays:

Simile

Using the words such as “like” or “as” when comparing.

Example: A ride to North Hutchinson Island is like a flight to a Caribbean getaway.

Metaphor

Implying a comparison between two things that are essentially different.

Example: Stalking their prey, the deputies remained hidden in the bushes and ready to spring on speeding motorists.

Personification

Giving human characteristics to inanimate objects.

Example: The truck, covered with mud and love bugs, cried out for a wash.

Overstatement or Hyperbole

Using a figure of speech in which exaggeration is used for emphasis or effect.

Example: I’ll die if I don’t pass this exam.

Understatement

Writing something opposite to what is expected or says something less than expected.

Example: Yesterday was a little cool. The high temperature was zero degrees.

Sound words or Onomatopoeia

Using words that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions to which they refer.

Example: “Plop, plop, fizz, fizz, oh what a relief it is.” (slogan of Alka Seltzer)

Symbol

A person, place, or thing that represents an abstract idea or concept.

Example: A rock is a symbol of strength

Description Sample

Summer Escape

Title:

Note how creative title relates to essay.

Introductory paragraph:

First paragraph sets the stage: where the action happened, when it happened, and to whom it happened. Note descriptive words.

First body paragraph:

Note how writer provides details, translating an experience into written words that permit the reader to visualize the situation. Note descriptive details.

Tense:

This essay is written in the present tense; most narratives, however, will be written in the past tense. Either tense can be effective.

Second body paragraph:

Note use of details, especially adjectives. Writer makes use of figurative language (personification - flowers "waving hello").

Third body paragraph:

Writer continues to appeal to readers' senses with visually descriptive words. Figurative language is again used with the simile "like a carriage created by nature."

Imagery:

Note how the writer creates images for the reader (bold type) by appealing to the senses.

Conclusion:

Writer alludes to another sense (smell) and uses words to indicate closing ("final crest"). Essay ends with strong concluding sentence.

My family has always looked forward to leaving Florida during the **torrid** summer months. It is a tremendous relief to get out of the **heated hustle and bustle** of summer living in Florida. Each summer, we follow the yellow brick road to our hometown in upstate New York.

As we drive through state after state, it becomes apparent that the world around us is changing. In South Carolina, we already begin to notice changes. The trees appear to be touchable, offering **soft, plush** leaves which **sway in the breeze**, and the grass actually invites us to share its place rather than scaring us away with **mounds of intruding fire ants**. As each state brings new surroundings, our anticipation builds, and home seems closer all the time.

Leaving the **flatlands** and entering an area where we are suddenly **surrounded by hills of purple and blue** are by far the most awakening moments. Virginia and Pennsylvania offer brilliant scenery with **majestic hills and checkerboard farmlands**. As we descend through the **curves and winds** of the northern region of the United States, home is now very close: we are almost there. Suddenly, we have driven from **wide-open flatlands** to a **narrow, winding road surrounded by hillsides of stone and trees**. **Around every curve, orange and black tiger lilies claim their place in the world as they push themselves out toward the car, waving hello and flashing their mysterious black spots toward us as we drive by.**

The journey home is almost complete. **As we begin our final descent** through the state of Pennsylvania into upstate New York, the surroundings become comfortably familiar. Before long, we are welcomed by **a sign that reads "Waverly, 18 miles"** and the familiar fields of **grazing cattle**. Through the last stretch of Pennsylvania, the **bursting foliage** seems to **envelop us and carry us over the hills like a carriage created by nature**.

It is at this point that our family, even the youngest member, knows that our vacation in New York is about to begin. Our eldest son has joked for years that he can **"smell" Grandma's apple pie** already. Approximately fifteen minutes pass and as our vehicle takes us over the final crest, we see **the smoke stack from the local factory** as we cross the border of Pennsylvania and New York and are aware of our surroundings. A couple of turns later, we are there. We have reached our destination; we are home.

- Arin B. Terrilliger

Writing a Compare/Contrast Essay

As always, the instructor and the assignment sheet provide the definitive expectations and requirements for any essay. Here is some general information about the organization for this type of essay:

- A **comparison** essay notes either *similarities*, or *similarities and differences*.
- A **contrast** essay notes only *differences*.
- The comparison or contrast should **make a point** or **serve a purpose**. Often such essays do one of the following:
 - **Clarify** something unknown or not well understood.
 - Lead to a fresh **insight** or new way of viewing something.
 - Bring one or both of the subjects into sharper **focus**.
 - Show that one subject is **better** than the other.
- The **thesis** can present the subjects and indicate whether they will be compared, contrasted, or both.
- The **same points** should be discussed for both subjects; it is not necessary, however to give both subjects the same degree of development.
- Some common **organizational** structures include: (see note below)
 - Block method (subject by subject)
 - Point by point
 - Comparisons followed by contrasts (or the reverse)
- Use detailed topic sentences and the following connecting words to make the relationship between your subjects clear to your reader:

Connectors That Show Comparison (Similarities)

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| ▪ <i>In addition</i> | ▪ <i>Correspondingly</i> | ▪ <i>Compared to</i> |
| ▪ <i>Similarly</i> | ▪ <i>Just as</i> | ▪ <i>As well as</i> |
| ▪ <i>Likewise</i> | ▪ <i>Same as</i> | ▪ <i>At the same time</i> |

Connectors That Show Contrast (Differences)

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| ▪ <i>However</i> | ▪ <i>On the contrary</i> | ▪ <i>On the other hand</i> |
| ▪ <i>Even though</i> | ▪ <i>In contrast</i> | ▪ <i>Although</i> |
| ▪ <i>Unlike</i> | ▪ <i>Conversely</i> | ▪ <i>Meanwhile</i> |



See the other side of this page of a detailed example for both the Block Method and the Point-by-Point method. For a blank chart to organize your own essay, use the Compare/Contrast Essay Worksheet

Writing a Compare/Contrast Essay

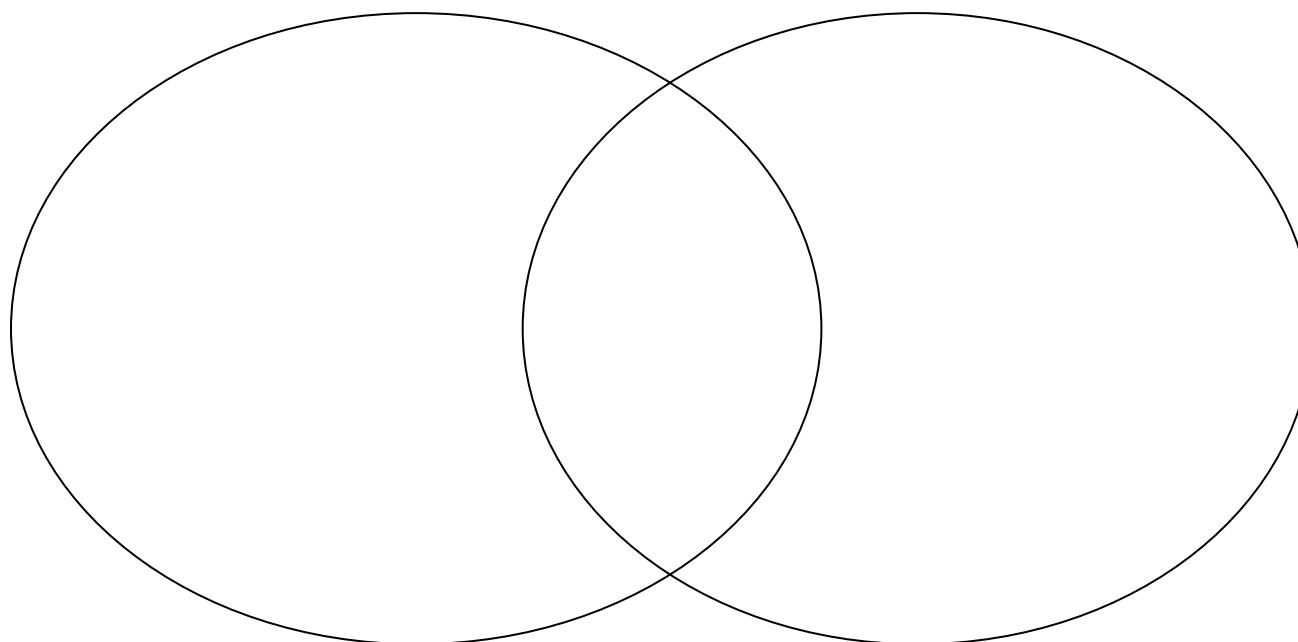
The following example contains an element of the author's opinion, but not all compare/contrast assignments allow for that. Always check your assignment sheet and ask your instructor for clarification about including your opinion.

	Point-by-Point Method	Block Method
Intro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of general topic Specific topic Thesis = areas to be covered in this essay: <i>Both cats and dogs make excellent pets, but an appropriate choice depends on the pet owner's lifestyle, finances, and household accommodations.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of general topic Specific topic Thesis = areas to be covered in this essay: <i>Both cats and dogs make excellent pets, but an appropriate choice depends on the pet owner's lifestyle, finances, and household accommodations.</i>
Body Paragraph 1	<p>Topic Sentence - Aspect 1 <i>Cats make less of an impact on an owner's lifestyle.</i></p> <p>Topic 1 - Aspect 1: Cats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail: Don't have to be watched during the day Detail: Easier to get care if owner travels <p>Topic 2 - Aspect 1: Dogs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail: Pack animals shouldn't be left alone Detail: Harder to get care when away <p>Transition Sentence</p>	<p>Topic Sentence – Topic 1 <i>Cats are easier and less expensive to care for.</i></p> <p>Aspect 1: Lifestyle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail: Don't have to be watched during the day Detail: Easier to get care if owner travels <p>Aspect 2: Cost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail: Food and health care are usually less expensive Detail: Less likely to cause property damage <p>Aspect 3: House accommodations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail: Don't take up much space Detail: Less intrusive <p>Transition Sentence</p>
Body Paragraph 2	<p>Topic Sentence - Aspect 2 <i>Cats are less expensive to own and care for.</i></p> <p>Topic 1 - Aspect 2: Cats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail: Food and health care are usually less expensive Detail: Less likely to cause property damage <p>Topic 2 - Aspect 2: Dogs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail: Food is more expensive Detail: Over-breeding causes some health problems <p>Transition Sentence</p>	<p>Topic Sentence – Topic 2 <i>Dogs are active and loyally engaging pets.</i></p> <p>Aspect 1 – Lifestyle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail: Pack animals shouldn't be left alone Detail: Harder to get care when away Need more living space <p>Aspect 2 – Cost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail: Food is more expensive Detail: Over-breeding causes some health problems <p>Aspect 3 – House accommodations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail: Often need yard and fence Detail: Require more safety and protective measures <p>Transition Sentence</p>
Body Paragraph 3	<p>Topic Sentence - Aspect 3 <i>Cats need few special house accommodation.</i></p> <p>Topic 1 - Aspect 3: Cats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail: Don't take up much space Detail: Less intrusive <p>Topic 2 - Aspect 3: Dogs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail: Often need yard and fence Detail: Require more safety and protective measures <p>Transition Sentence</p>	<p>Optional: develop a paragraph to evaluate the comparison made in the essay: <i>Last summer, I was considering adopting a pet, so I visited the SPCA to gather more information about cats and dogs. I am a full time student and work part time in the evenings, so my lifestyle and schedule didn't seem conducive to owning a dog like I had originally planned. Now that I've had my cat Cookie for a few months, I see that she's the perfect fit and a great companion for me.</i></p>
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of main points Evaluation and/or possible future developments Significance of topic to author: <i>When considering adopting a pet, a prospective owner must consider the lifestyle, finances, and household accommodations that the pet would require. Owners who neglect to compare these aspects will often not care for their pet in a safe manner.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of main points Evaluation and/or possible future developments Significance of topic to author: <i>When considering adopting a pet, a prospective owner must consider the lifestyle, finances, and household accommodations that the pet would require. Owners who neglect to compare these aspects will often not care for their pet in a safe manner.</i>



Brainstorming for a Compare/Contrast Essay

1. Write each topic name above one of the circles. List attributes or qualities of that topic in the circle, placing any shared qualities in the overlapping section. Be specific and use details. (*Example: details of living in SB might include high cost of living, beach community, good schools, etc. Less effective qualities: not nice place, cool hangouts.*)
2. Circle the most important qualities in each list and match at least three opposites from one circle to another.



After completing steps 1-3, list the three categories or aspects that both items share:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

3. Review the lists and identify three *categories* or *aspects* that describe these details. (*Example: "beach community" detail for one topic and "big city" detail for the other = environment or setting as a category.*) List the categories in the box above.
4. Then choose one option (point by point or block method) to structure your essay. See examples in this handout.
5. Use the chart on the next page to organize your paragraphs as indicated. Add more ideas and details for each category as you think of them.

**Compare and Contrast Essay Structure: Block Method**

In the Block Method, each paragraph addresses ONE TOPIC ONLY from your pair of topics and includes the SHARED ASPECTS you have chosen to Compare to topic 2. Use the following chart to organize your ideas for your essay. (See Venn diagram steps 1 – 5 for examples on topics, aspects, and details.)

Block Method	My Essay
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Introduction</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ introduction of general topic○ specific topic○ areas to be covered in this essay	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Topic 1</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <u>Aspect 1</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Detail▪ Detail○ <u>Aspect 2</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Detail▪ Detail○ <u>Aspect 3</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Detail▪ Detail	<u>Topic Sentence:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Topic 2</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <u>Aspect 1</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Detail▪ Detail○ <u>Aspect 2</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Detail▪ Detail○ <u>Aspect 3</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Detail▪ Detail	<u>Topic Sentence:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Conclusion</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Summary of main points○ Evaluation and/or possible future developments	

**Compare and Contrast Essay Structure: Point by Point Method**

In the Point-by-Point Method, each paragraph contains details on ONE ASPECT of BOTH TOPICS organized in the same order. Use the following chart to organize your ideas for your essay. (See Venn diagram steps 1 – 5 for examples on topics, aspects, and details.)

Point by Point Method	My Essay
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <u>Introduction</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ introduction of general topic○ specific topic○ areas to be covered in this essay	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <u>Topic 1 - Aspect 1</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Detail▪ Detail○ <u>Topic 2 - Aspect 1</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Detail▪ Detail	<u>Topic Sentence:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <u>Topic 1 - Aspect 2</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Detail▪ Detail○ <u>Topic 2 - Aspect 2</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Detail▪ Detail	<u>Topic Sentence:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <u>Topic 1 - Aspect 3</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Detail▪ Detail○ <u>Topic 2 - Aspect 3</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Detail▪ Detail	<u>Topic Sentence:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <u>Conclusion</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">Summary of main points▪ Evaluation and/or possible future developments	

Source referenced: <http://www.efl.arts.gla.ac.uk/CampusOnly/essays/15web.htm>

Writing the Persuasive Essay

What is a persuasive/argument essay?

In persuasive writing, a writer takes a position FOR or AGAINST an issue and writes to convince the reader to believe or do something

Persuasive writing, also known as the argument essay, utilizes logic and reason to show that one idea is more legitimate than another idea. It attempts to persuade a reader to adopt a certain point of view or to take a particular action. The argument must always use sound reasoning and solid evidence by stating facts, giving logical reasons, using examples, and quoting experts.

When planning a persuasive essay, follow these steps

1. Choose your position. Which side of the issue or problem are you going to write about, and what solution will you offer? Know the purpose of your essay.
2. Analyze your audience. Decide if your audience agrees with you, is neutral, or disagrees with your position.
3. Research your topic. A persuasive essay must provide specific and convincing evidence. Often it is necessary to go beyond your own knowledge and experience. You might need to go to the library or interview people who are experts on your topic.
4. Structure your essay. Figure out what evidence you will include and in what order you will present the evidence. Remember to consider your purpose, your audience, and your topic.

The following criteria are essential to produce an effective argument

- Be well informed about your topic. To add to your knowledge of a topic, read thoroughly about it, using legitimate sources. Take notes.
- Test your thesis. Your thesis, i.e., argument, must have two sides. It must be debatable. If you can write down a thesis statement directly opposing your own, you will ensure that your own argument is debatable.
- Disprove the opposing argument. Understand the opposite viewpoint of your position and then counter it by providing contrasting evidence or by finding mistakes and inconsistencies in the logic of the opposing argument.
- Support your position with evidence. Remember that your evidence must appeal to reason.

Parts of the Persuasive Essay

1. The Introduction

The introduction has a "hook or grabber" to catch the reader's attention. Some "grabbers" include:

1. Opening with an unusual detail: (Manitoba, because of its cold climate, is not thought of as a great place to be a reptile. Actually, it has the largest seasonal congregation of garter snakes in the world!)
2. Opening with a strong statement: (Cigarettes are the number one cause of lighter sales in Canada!)
3. Opening with a Quotation: (Elbert Hubbard once said , "Truth is stronger than fiction.")
4. Opening with an Anecdote: An anecdote can provide an amusing and attention-getting opening if it is short and to the point.
5. Opening with a Statistic or Fact: Sometimes a statistic or fact will add emphasis or interest to your topic. It may be wise to include the item's authoritative source.
6. Opening with a Question. (Have you ever considered how many books we'd read if it were not for television?)
7. Opening with an Exaggeration or Outrageous Statement. (The whole world watched as the comet flew overhead.)

The introduction should also include a thesis or focus statement.

The Thesis/Hypothesis is your statement of purpose. The thesis/hypothesis should be one sentence in length. This is the foundation of your essay and it will serve to guide you in writing the entire paper.

There are three objectives of a thesis statement:

1. It tells the reader the specific topic of your essay.
2. It imposes manageable limits on that topic.
3. It suggests the organization of your paper.

Through the thesis, you should say to the reader:

"I've thought about this topic, I know what I believe about it, and I know how to organize it."

2. The Body

The writer then provides evidence to support the opinion offered in the thesis statement in the introduction. The body should consist of at least three paragraphs. Each paragraph is based on a solid reason to back your thesis statement. Since almost all issues have sound arguments on both sides of the question, **a good persuasive writer tries to anticipate opposing viewpoints and provide counter-arguments along with the main points in the essay**. One of the three paragraphs should be used to discuss opposing viewpoints and your counter-argument.

The following are different ways to support your argument:

Facts - A powerful means of convincing, facts can come from your reading, observation, or personal experience.

Note: Do not confuse facts with truths. A "truth" is an idea believed by many people, but it cannot be proven.

Statistics - These can provide excellent support. Be sure your statistics come from responsible sources. Always cite your sources.

Quotes - Direct quotes from leading experts that support your position are invaluable.

Examples - Examples enhance your meaning and make your ideas concrete. They are the proof.

Hints for successful body paragraphs:

1. Clarify your position in your topic sentence – state your argument or reason that supports your position (thesis), think about what needs to be explained, and then think about how you can elaborate.
2. Include Concession Statements (address opposing viewpoints!) :

concession: If you're writing a persuasive piece, you might consider beginning with a concession--that is, by beginning with an acknowledgement of part of your opponent's argument as being valid. Remember that a concession is not a form of weakness. In fact a concession is a strength as it finds common ground with your opponent and establishes your ethical appeal: you are a reasonable person willing to listen to/acknowledge that there are more sides to an issue than yours.

****You can't ignore compelling opposing evidence. You must address strong arguments on the other side; if you don't, it looks like you are not well prepared and have not looked at the issue you are writing about from all perspectives.****

example: *"True, gun control legislation in Canada needs to be tightened to prevent the United States from becoming as violent as its neighbors to the south. The proposal that has been submitted, however, does not go far enough. Instead,...*[now writer begins building his side of argument, showing how it is stronger than the opposing side's!]

3. Use transitions between sentences to serve as cues for the reader (first, second, then, however, consequently, therefore, thus, still, nevertheless, notwithstanding, furthermore, in fact, in contrast, similarly, instead)

3. The Conclusion

A piece of persuasive writing usually ends by summarizing the most important details of the argument and stating once again what the reader is to believe or do.

1. Restate your thesis or focus statement.
2. Summarize the main points: The conclusion enables your reader to recall the main points of your position. In order to do this you can paraphrase the main points of your argument.
3. Write a personal comment or call for action. You can do this:
 - With a Prediction: This can be used with a narrative or a cause and effect discussion. The conclusion may suggest or predict what the results may or may not be in the situation discussed or in similar situations.
 - With a Question: Closing with a question lets your readers make their own predictions, draw their own conclusions.
 - With Recommendations: A recommendations closing is one that stresses the actions or remedies that should be taken.
 - With a Quotation: Since a quotation may summarize, predict, question, or call for action, you may use a quotation within a conclusion for nearly any kind of paper.

As a general guideline, when writing a persuasive essay:

- 1. Have a firm opinion that you want your reader to accept.**
- 2. Begin with a grabber or hook to get the reader's attention.**
- 3. Offer evidence to support your opinion.**
- 4. Conclude with a restatement of what you want the reader to do or believe.**

Persuasive Essay Outline

Introduction:

- A. Get the readers attention by using a "hook."
- B. Give some background information if necessary.
- C. Thesis or focus statement.

I. First argument or reason to support your position:

- A. Topic sentence explaining your point and reason
- B. Possible concession toward opposing argument
- C. Elaboration to back your point.
- D. Clincher

II. Second argument or reason to support your position:

- A. Topic sentence explaining your point and reason
- B. Possible concession toward opposing argument
- C. Elaboration to back your point.
- D. Clincher

III. Third argument or reason to support your position:

- A. Topic sentence explaining your point and reason
- B. Possible concession toward opposing argument
- C. Elaboration to back your point.
- D. Clincher

IV. Opposing Viewpoint: (This is optional, however highly recommended, so that the reader will know you have considered another point of view and have a rebuttal to it.)

- A. Opposing point to your argument.
- B. Your rebuttal to the opposing point.
- C. Elaboration to back your rebuttal.

Conclusion:

- A. Summary of main points or reasons
 - B. Restate thesis statement.
 - C. Personal comment or a call to action.
-

Transition Signals:

Transitions are words and phrases that connect ideas and show how they are related.

To repeat an idea just stated:

In other words,
That is,
To repeat,
Again,

To illustrate an idea:

For example,
For instance,
In particular,
To illustrate,
In this manner,
Thus

To announce a contrast, a change in direction:

Yet,
However,
Still,
Nevertheless,
On the other hand,
In contrast,
Instead of,
On the contrary,
Conversely,
Notwithstanding,
In spite of this,

Time:

At once,
In the interim,
At length,
Immediately,
At last,
Meanwhile,
In the meantime,

Presently,
At the same time,
Shortly,
In the end,
Temporarily,
Thereafter,

To restate an idea more precisely:

To be exact,
To be specific,
To be precise,
More specifically,
More precisely,

To mark a new idea as an addition to what has been said:

Similarly,
Also,
Too,
Besides,
Furthermore,
Further,
Moreover,
In addition,

To show cause and effect:

As a result,
For this reason,
Therefore,
Hence,
Consequently,
Accordingly,

Conclusion:

In short,
To conclude,
In brief,
On the whole,
In summary,
To sum up,

Conferencing with a Peer

Ask someone to read your rough draft to see if they understand and can follow your argument. Ask them to consider the following questions. Their answers should show you that your argument makes sense.

What is the thesis statement?

How is the thesis explained?

What are the main points of the argument? (3)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How did the author back up each point?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are the opposing point(s)?

What is the writer's solution?

How to Write an Argumentative Essay

An argumentative essay uses reasoning and evidence—not emotion—to take a definitive stand on a controversial or debatable issue. The essay explores two sides of a topic and proves why one side or position is the best.

The First Steps

Choose a specific issue to discuss. Some debatable issues cover a wide range of topics. For example, “legalizing drugs” is too broad a subject because topics within that issue include legalizing marijuana, the effectiveness of the FDA, or whether a painkiller made in Europe should be allowed into the US. Any of these could be the sole focus of an argumentative paper.

Research both sides of the topic thoroughly. Even if you know which side you want to argue, research can give you ideas for counterarguments and help your paper show balance rather than bias.

Develop a working thesis. State your position on the issue and summarize your argument’s main reasons in one sentence. Your body paragraphs should explain your reasons fully.

Body Paragraphs

Option #1: Present both sides of the issue, then state your opinion and explain why you chose that side. This option is useful if you did not have an opinion on the issue prior to research, or your audience is not very familiar with your topic.

- One half to two-thirds of your paper explains the issue, shows the two opposing sides, and gives an assessment of each. This demonstrates that you have indeed conducted research and are an expert on the subject.
- Next, when you state your position, readers might be more inclined to agree with you.
- Last, explain your reasons for choosing that side without repeating ideas from previous paragraphs.

Option #2: State your opinion at the beginning. List and explain the reasons for your choice. Acknowledge the other side's arguments; then, disprove/refute those arguments. This option is useful when your audience already has some knowledge of the issue. It allows you to be more assertive, thus making a stronger argument.

- Select the strongest evidence from your research and present your points—usually one point per body paragraph.
- Next, explain one or two of the opposing side's points to show how readers might object to your argument. Then, show how these arguments are not reasonable, not logical, or not effective. Be sure to reassert your own viewpoint and why it is the best choice.

Final Steps: Revise and Edit

- Pretend that your readers are a skeptical panel or jurors. You can best convince them of your arguments by avoiding emotional or aggressive language and by using a mix of evidence types—facts, statistics, examples, expert opinions, or even personal experience.
- Cite your sources!
- To increase the chances that your audience will agree with you, start body paragraphs with ideas that both sides agree upon before arguing your point.
- Know the other side's strongest arguments to defend against challenges from other students or your instructor.
- In your conclusion, emphasize why your topic is important, summarize your arguments, and re-state your position as the most sensible choice. Do not include new evidence or arguments.

Bibliography

"Argumentative Essay." *Essay Start.com*. n.d. Web. 17 February 2012.

Fleming, Grace. "How to Write an Argument Essay." *About.com*. The New York Times Company, n.d. Web. 17 February 2012.

The following is a sample argumentative essay that follows option 2. The guiding ideas of the paper are highlighted in gray and explained in footnotes. The essay has been edited for educational purposes. The original piece can be found at <http://spot.pcc.edu/~dramirez/GreatEssays/argumentessay.html>

"Fixing" What Isn't Broken

Every pet owner knows that there are enormous responsibilities that go along with having a cat or dog. It must be fed and exercised, and it must be given love, attention, and protection. There's another responsibility that not all pet owners think about, however: spaying or neutering, or "fixing." What does "fixing" a pet mean? Simply put, it means a quick, cheap surgery that will prevent a pet from ever becoming a mother or father. This surgery solves problems that pet owners know about, and some that they might not have considered before. In fact, all pet owners should be required to have their pets fixed because failure to do so overburdens shelters, causes pain and suffering to unwanted pets, and increases the health risks of pets and owners alike.¹

Everybody loves a cute new puppy or kitten.² But those cute babies soon get bigger, and right now, there simply aren't enough homes for them all. Some unwanted animals go to shelters, but these shelters have limited funds and limited space, and they cannot keep all the animals they collect³ (Esmonde).⁴ If a cat or dog is not adopted within a certain time period, that animal is euthanized. Besides, not all unwanted animals go to a shelter. What happens to a homeless animal left out on the street? Pets aren't wild animals. They cannot find fresh water or hunt their own food, especially in a city. They cannot understand traffic laws, so they often get struck by cars. They are susceptible to common illnesses—which can then spread to other animals, including pets. They are not tame, so they may attack other animals or people. In either case, the life of most unwanted animals is not long, but it is full of misery and pain, and it's also dangerous to other animals or people who they meet. By not "fixing" one's own animal, a pet owner will almost certainly be adding to this problem.

Another thing to consider is the health of the pet itself.⁵ Animals, especially those who eat processed foods, are prone to the same illnesses as humans, like heart disease and cancer. A spayed or neutered animal is at less risk from certain kinds of cancer.

¹ A strong thesis states its position and main arguments.

² The writer establishes common ground with readers.

³ This paragraph explains the first two points of the writer's argument: shelters are overburdened, and unwanted pets suffer. It uses specific examples that explain these arguments.

⁴ Sources are cited.

⁵ Main argument #3 is explained.

Furthermore, animals who are not fixed can sometimes behave aggressively when trying to find mates. They can injure themselves trying to escape from their homes, or they may fight with other animals. Additionally, while running free, they are in danger from cars. And finally, for females who become mothers, giving birth is not a safe process. For the ordinary pet owner, all these reasons should be strong enough to convince them to “fix” their dear pet.

Of course, some people will not agree.⁶ “I don’t want to give my animal an unnecessary surgery,” they will say. “Surgery is risky, too, and it’s certainly expensive.” That idea shows ignorance. Spaying or neutering should be done as soon as you get your pet—when he or she is young and healthy—and it is almost 100% safe. Your animal is in much more danger if not fixed,⁷ for the urge to run away from home will put your pet in extremely dangerous situations. And almost all cities have a fund to help pay for the surgery. Just ask at a vet or the local Humane Society. The cost can be as low as fifteen dollars (“I have an animal”).

Others might feel that this surgery will change their pet’s personality.⁸ They might think that a “fixed” dog might not be a good watchdog, for example. Or they may simply say “I like my pet the way he/she is” (Rita_alabama). This shows a basic misunderstanding of what the effects of spaying or neutering are.⁹ A pet’s personality, like a human’s personality, is his or her own, and it won’t change after a “fixing.” It’s true that some behaviors will change. A pet won’t want to mark objects with urine as much, and females won’t go into heat every few months (“I have an animal”). A watchdog will still be vigilant, but it probably won’t want to fight with other dogs as much. This simple surgery solves many behavior problems that can frustrate pet owners.¹⁰ The best solution is simply to get your pet “fixed” as soon as you get it home, as young as possible. That way, fewer bad habits will form.

There’s really no valid reason not to spay or neuter your pet. Whether considering the potential suffering of unborn animals, the health and comfort of one’s own pet, or the convenience as a pet owner, the facts all show that spaying or neutering is the way to go. It’s not only the convenient choice, but also the morally right choice, and one that all pet owners should make.

⁶ One opposing viewpoint is acknowledged.

⁷ The rest of the paragraph thoroughly explains why the opposing viewpoint is flawed.

⁸ A second opposing viewpoint is acknowledged and then thoroughly refuted.

⁹ The writer demonstrates assertive passion about the subject, but not aggressive or emotional judgment.

¹⁰ The writer establishes common ground with readers.

Works Cited

Esmonde, Donn. "Getting Pets 'fixed' Can End Slaughter." *Buffalo News.com*. Buffalo News, 6 Feb. 2012. Web. 13 Feb 2009.

"I have an animal: spaying and neutering." *Seattlehumane.org*. Seattle Humane Society of King County, n.d. Web. 13 Feb. 2012.

Rita_alabama. "Should I neuter my dog?" *Yahoo Answers*. Yahoo Groups, 15 Sep. 2007. Web. 13 Feb. 2012.