

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade English Argument Essay

- **Writing a Thesis Statement**

**Ask Yourself:**

- Which points have the best supporting information?
- For which points can I make the best case?
- In which points am I most interested?

**Examples with TWO main ideas:**

*Due to his **tireless determination** and his **selflessness**, Justin Lebo truly deserves to be called a hero.*

*Teenagers should be able to stay out as late as they want without a curfew because **this opportunity allows them to develop real-world responsibilities and improves their relationship with their parents.***

*Due to the fact that reading banned **books broadens students' minds and gives them insight into the real world**, students should be able to choose their own reading materials.*

*Dancing should be considered a sport because it is an activity that **enhances students' overall health and provides an outlet for creative expression.***

## General Guidelines for Formal Writing

- **Point of View:** Write formal essays in the third person point of view. This means that you may not use any of the following words:

*you, I, me, we, us, our, your, yourself, my, myself, ourselves.*

Basically, take yourself out of the writing and allow the facts to speak for themselves. It's perfectly acceptable to use third-person pronouns: *he, she, them, they*, etc. Try to limit your use of the word "one." There is usually a better way to write the sentence without a pronoun.

- **Verb Tense:**

Maintain a consistent verb tense.

**Past tense:** *was, went, ate, asked, talked, did, spent*

**Present tense:** *is, goes, eats, asks, talks, does, spends*

- **Avoid Slang and Texting Lingo:** Use elevated word choices in formal writing.

Avoid words such as *cool, awesome, dude, guy, kid, mom, dad, gotta, wanna, etc.*

*Avoid texting lingo such as u, ur, cuz, til, etc.*

- **Avoid Contractions:** Write out all contractions.

- **Formatting:** Please follow the rules below.

**Font** – 12 point, Calibri, Cambria, Times, Helvetica, or Verdana *only*

**Spacing** – double space; *do not* leave larger spaces between paragraphs

**Margins** – 1 "

**Header** – name, date, and period in upper right hand corner of *first page only*

**Title** – centered just above first paragraph; 12 point, no bold, no underline

## **Writing an Introduction to the Argument Essay**

### **What should be accomplished in the introduction?**

a. **Gain your reader's attention** and make him/her want to read your essay. This opening is sometimes called the "attention-getter" or "hook."

b. **Introduce the topic.** Don't say, "I'm going to write about ..." Instead, work the topic into the introduction naturally, following the attention getter.

c. **Provide any necessary background information** for your reader to understand the essay.

d. Finish the introduction with the **thesis**, your statement of purpose for

### **How can I write an attention getter?**

a. Remember that the goal of an attention getter is to interest your reader. So start with a few sentences that will make your reader want to continue reading.

b. You may begin your essay with a variety of techniques.

1) **A striking statement or fact.** Ex: "Every year over 16 million unwanted cats and dogs are euthanized across the United States because they are unwanted and have no home."

2) **An anecdote or story.** Ex: "Late one night, Janet Smith heard a weak cry in her backyard. When she explored her yard with a flashlight, she found a tiny ball of matted gray fur huddled in the corner of her yard. Smith took the tiny kitten into the house, fed it, and it. That cat lived a long and happy life as Janet Smith's much loved pet."

3) **A thought provoking quotation.** Ex: " 'This is a matter purely of conscience. It has no perplexing side issues. ... it is a moral question in all its aspects,' " explained Henry Bergh, founder of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals when he campaigned for laws to make it illegal to beat and otherwise harm animals."

4) **A question or two that involves the reader and makes him/her think.** For an essay, be careful not to ask questions that use the word "you." Write the questions in third person. Ex: "Why do people have pets? Why are pets such an important part of so many people's lives?"

5) **Some interesting or important details about your topic.** Ex: "According to the Humane Society, a pair of breeding cats can have two or more litters per year. If this pair continues to produce kittens twice a year, and their kittens all also are allowed to breed and produce more kittens, that original pair of cats will produce up to 420,000 kittens over seven-years."

## **Introduction to Your Argument**

## **Guidelines for Writing Argument Essay Body Paragraphs**

- The **CLAIM or topic sentence** will determine the focus of each body paragraph and will state one reason to agree with the thesis.
  - The first claim/topic sentence and paragraph will focus on the first reason to agree with your thesis.
  - The second claim/topic sentence and body paragraph will focus on the second reason to agree with your thesis.
- The **evidence** backs up your argument. Making a claim without anything to support it isn't convincing. Evidence may come in different forms: stories about actual events, statistics, statements of fact, anecdotes, direct quotations, etc. Cite your sources when necessary. The stronger your evidence, the stronger your argument. When using a direct quotation (any words you copy directly from another source), use the format below:

Lead in, "quotation" (citation).

Example:

According to a study conducted at Duke University in 2011, "there is very little correlation between the amount of homework and achievement in elementary school and only a moderate correlation in middle school" (Cooper 259).

Use a logical transitional word or phrase to introduce your claim and/or evidence

TO INTRODUCE	TO ADD	TO SHOW SEQUENCE	TO CONTRAST
For example, As a matter of fact, To begin,	Additionally, Similarly, Moreover, In addition, Furthermore	Firstly, Secondly, Thirdly, Lastly, Next,	However, On the other hand, Although, Nonetheless, In contrast,

- **Commentary** is meant to *explain* the importance of the evidence. It answers the question, "So what?" Go beneath the surface to explore the depths of meaning. Tell how the evidence proves your CLAIM. If you're stuck on commentary, consider using one of the following sentence starters:

*This quotation clearly demonstrates that ...*

*This fact illustrates the importance of ...*

*This statistic shows that ...*

*\_\_\_\_\_ 's words prove that ...*

*These words reveal ...*

*It is clear to see that ...*

*Obviously, ...*

*In order to clarify this statement*

- Don't neglect the **concluding sentence** for the body paragraph. It is needed to pull all of your thinking together and to make the connections for your reader. It should be more than a simple restatement of the topic sentence; instead it should use new words and offer new insight.

### **Argument/Persuasive Vocabulary**

Remember, your purpose is to convince the reader that your position is true. Consider using some of the following vocabulary words to make your argument stronger.

**emphasize:** to stress; to highlight  
*In order to emphasize the point that ...*

**condemn:** to indicate strong disapproval of  
*Mr. Smith condemns this idea because ...*

**adamantly:** utterly unyielding in opinion or attitude; stubbornly  
*The experts adamantly refuse to accept...*

**vehemently:** strongly emotional; intense or passionate  
*John vehemently denies this fact because ...*

**fundamentally:** in a central or primitive way; basically  
*This argument is fundamentally wrong because ...*

**essentially:** in essence; most importantly  
*Essentially, this law does more harm than good because ...*

**unquestionably:** in a way that cannot be disputed or argued  
*This statistic unquestionably demonstrates that importance of...*

**obviously:** easily perceived or understood; clear; self-evident  
*Obviously, those who disagree with this argument are misguided because ...*

**surely:** without a doubt  
*Surely, teenagers will not accept this policy ...*

## Writing a Counterargument and Rebuttal Paragraph

### Why does an argument essay need a counterargument/opposition paragraph?

- \*\* The counterargument paragraph shows that you recognize that not everyone will agree with you, and that you understand why.
- \*\* It gives you a chance to frame the counterargument from your point of view and to argue against it in your rebuttal.
- \*\* By anticipating disagreement and persuasively arguing against it in your rebuttal, you convince your reader to trust you and your point of view.

### What should be included in the counterargument/opposition paragraph?

- \*\* It should state your understanding of the counterargument. For your essay, choose a counterargument that you feel you can effectively argue against.
- \*\* The paragraph should also include your rebuttal to the counterargument. The rebuttal is where you state your point of view and prove why the counterargument/opposition is wrong.
- \*\* The paragraph should begin with a **CLAIM** that states the counterargument.
- \*\* It should end with a **CONCLUDING STATEMENT** (CS) that reinforces your point of view with powerful, persuasive language.
- \*\* If there is more than one counterargument, you may either present them together followed by your entire rebuttal, or you may present the counterarguments one at a time, following each with your rebuttal.

### Where should I put the counterargument/opposition paragraph?

- \*\* This is up to you. You should put it at the spot in your essay body where you feel it will be the most effective.
- \*\* You may decide to place it at the beginning of the body. This allows you to eliminate any counterarguments right away.
- \*\* Or you may decide to place it at the end of the body. If you have a very powerful rebuttal, this can be effective placement. However, you run the risk of having the last thing your reader reads being the counterargument/opposition. This may not be as effective unless you have a powerful rebuttal.

\*\* You may decide to place the counterargument in the middle of the body. This can work well, and it sort of “buries” the counterargument. However, you must pay careful attention to transitions and flow in order to make this placement work.

\*\* Remember that you want to place the counterargument paragraph at the spot in the body where you think it will be most effective and supportive of your entire persuasive argument.

### **Making Concessions**

\*\* It can be helpful to make concessions related to the counterargument. A concession is when you admit that a conflicting opinion or argument is true. When you do this, you acknowledge and identify other valid opinions about your subject.

\*\* Making concessions often makes your overall argument more convincing.

\*\* Some phrases you can use when making a concession include:

**--even though**

**--I agree that**

**--I cannot argue with**

**--while it is true that**

**--admittedly**

**--granted**

## **Writing a Conclusion**

Since the conclusion is the last paragraph your readers will read, it should be a paragraph that powerfully sums up your thinking. The conclusion creates a feeling of completeness for your essay. It does not have to be long (3-6 sentences), but it should accomplish three things:

- Link back to your opener. Think of this as a link between your hook and the end of your essay. It can be a continuation of the opening hook.
- Summarize your main points and restate your thesis, but be sure to use different words. Remind us of the important things you’ve said without being repetitive.
- End with a twist. This is the wrap-up statement. It causes the reader to nod in approval or smile in agreement. (Sometimes this final thought is a call to action, asking for the readers to get involved in supporting your point of view.)