

The Argumentative Essay: Three Patterns

Adapted from Annette T. Rottenberg's *Elements of Argument*, 7th ed.

1. Defending the Main Idea

- Use introductory paragraph to introduce or explain your topic--or to "hook" or even entertain the reader.
- Present thesis early in essay: last sentence of introductory paragraph(s) is a good place.
- Support thesis with facts, statistics, examples, personal experience, interpretation, opinion of experts in body paragraphs.
- Perhaps spend a paragraph addressing the opposition: try to refute, but it may be necessary to concede some points, too.
- End with a concluding paragraph that calls the reader to action, makes a prediction, or summarizes your major points.

Intro.
Thesis: What are you trying to prove?

Body Paragraphs: Why should we believe you?
One paragraph for each of your major points, probably 3-5

(Optional) Paragraph that addresses the opposition:
Here or before your supporting body paragraphs

Conclusion: What do you want reader to think or do?

2. Refuting the Opposition

- Your thesis argues against an opposing view in order to weaken it, invalidate it, or make it less credible to the reader.
- This pattern can be combined with Defending the Main Idea: present opposing view and your refutation of it before (or, sometimes, after) the body paragraphs that support your own thesis.

Intro.
Thesis

Body Paragraphs:
One for each point or argument that you refute

Conclusion

3. Presenting the Stock Issues

- The stock issues are need, plan, and advantages.
- Usually, your plan will be your thesis.
- Essentially, you will state the problem before the solution.

Need:
Establish existence of a problem

Plan:
Propose your solution to the problem

Advantages:
Explain reasons for adopting your plan
and benefits that will follow