W-36

rev: 2-16-17

Argument Essay Structure & Checklist1

The Writing & Learning Studio Room 4301 Shoreline Community College

Title

Issue

***Introduction*** Background information

Definition of terms

***Claim*** Thesis Statement**\***

Reason 1 *Types of Evidence*

Reasons &

Evidence Reason 2 *Types of Evidence*

Reason 3 *Types of Evidence*

Need or Value 1

***Body*** Emotional Need or Value 2

***Paragraphs*** Appeals

Need or Value 3

Opposing View 1 *Acknowledgment,*

*accommodation, or*

Opposing *refutation*

Viewpoints

Opposing View 2 *Acknowledgment,*

*accommodation, or*

*refutation*

Restatement of claim

***Conclusion*** Final appeal to needs or

values

Urge readers to take action

**\*** The thesis statement may appear anywhere within the argument, but three common choices are these:

(1) in the beginning

(2) after you respond to counterarguments, but before you give reasons for your own position

(3) at the end, after explaining the reasons for accepting your position

**Not every element in this essay structure will appear in every argument.**

**1** Primary Source: McWhorter, Kathleen T. *Successful College Writing*, Third Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2006. Print.

**(For a CHECKLIST to analyze arguments, see the back.)**

Analyzing an Argument Checklist1

**You could use these questions to help you prepare an argument, to analyze your own argumentative paper, or to analyze another’s argument.**

1. What is your claim?

2. What are the exceptions to your claim?

3. What’s one **reason** to support your claim?

a. What makes this reason relevant?

b. What makes this reason effective?

c. What evidence supports this reason?

d. Is this evidence sufficient?

e. Is this evidence credible?

f. Is this evidence accurate?

4. What’s another **reason** to support your claim?

a. What makes this reason relevant?

b. What makes this reason effective?

c. What evidence supports this reason?

d. Is this evidence sufficient?

e. Is this evidence credible?

f. Is this evidence accurate?

5. What’s a third **reason** to support your claim?

a. What makes this reason relevant?

b. What makes this reason effective?

c. What evidence supports this reason?

d. Is this evidence sufficient?

e. Is this evidence credible?

f. Is this evidence accurate?

6. How will your **order/organize** your reasons? (e.g., least to most important, most to least important,

etc.)

**Counterarguments**

7. What’s one objection to your claim?

8. What’s your rebuttal to that objection?

9. What’s another objection to your claim?

10. What’s your rebuttal to that objection?

11. What’s a third objection to your claim?

12. What’s your rebuttal to that objection?

13. How will you **order** the objections/rebuttals?