

Six Paragraph Argument Essay Outline

This argument essay outline can be used across disciplines, whenever students are asked to defend a position with multiple arguments and to engage with multiple counter-arguments.

Paragraph 1: Opening

Introduce the issue and set up the controversy or debate

State your position and summarize your arguments either by condensing your claims and refutation (a somewhat more formulaic but a reliable approach) or by finding a common thread that is woven through your argumentation (a more advanced but potentially unclear approach)

Paragraph 2: Argument 1

State your first argumentative claim

Supply a piece of evidence

Use reasoning to analyze the way in which the evidence proves the claim is true

Supply a second piece of evidence

Use reasoning to both analyze the way in which the evidence proves the claim is true, and the importance of the argument overall in proving that your position is valid and compelling.

Paragraph 3: Counter-Argument 1

State a counter-claim – either a critique of Argument 1’s evidence or reasoning, or an independent argument opposing in some way Argument 1

Supply evidence and/or reasoning to support the counter-argument



Refute the counter-argument by (a) directly contradicting it, (b) conceding a portion of it but contradicting another portion of it, or (c) agreeing with it but explaining that it is irrelevant because it doesn't undermine your argument.

Provide backing evidence and reasoning to support the refutation

Paragraph 4: Argument 2

State your second argumentative claim

Supply a piece of evidence

Use reasoning to analyze the way in which the evidence proves the claim is true

Supply a second piece of evidence

Use reasoning to both analyze the way in which the evidence proves the claim is true, and the importance of the argument overall in proving that your position is valid and compelling.

Paragraph 5: Counter-Argument 2

State a counter-claim – either a critique of Argument 2's evidence or reasoning, or an independent argument opposing in some way Argument 2

Supply evidence and/or reasoning to support the counter-argument

Refute the counter-argument by (a) directly contradicting it, (b) conceding a portion of it but contradicting another portion of it, or (c) agreeing with it but explaining that it is irrelevant because it doesn't undermine your argument.

Provide backing evidence and reasoning to support the refutation

Paragraph 6: Closing

Re-state in a concise summary the issue and the controversy surrounding it

Re-state your position and summarize your argumentation (including refutation), and reflect on the significance of the issue and your position and argumentation