

- **Engaging Sources & Developing a Working Hypothesis**
- **First thoughts about Argument**

Your third symposium paper, as well as your term paper, will have an argument component. The degree and intensity of your argument will depend on the subject that you take up and your approach to your audience.

Classic Argumentative Essay—Refutation Emphasis, with Credible Research

You have a strong opinion on a topic that is itself polarized, which has passionate folks on both sides. Your job here is to persuade the folks on the other side that your position at least merits their consideration and respect, if not a change in their views. An argumentative thesis takes a clear stand: *All freshmen should subscribe to the meal plan*. Your approach here: Find out everything you can about how those students think who are adamantly opposed to buying the meal plan and shape a researched and respectful *acknowledgement and response* in your essay. The emphasis here will tend to be on a thorough and convincing *refutation* (acknowledgement and response) of the opposing side's view.

Say that you learn that many students object to being forced to buy the meal plan because the food is reputed to be not very nutritious, even if it tastes good, and, more seriously, rumor has it that it is far more expensive than eating tastier fast food at local restaurants. You respond by *acknowledging* their concerns are legitimate, even important—and you take especial care in showing that you understand and respect your “opponents” views. You then go on to *respond* presenting your researched evidence that explains how the university meal plan is beneficial in ways your opponents may not have considered.

Advocacy Essay—Research Emphasis, with an Gentler Argumentative Edge

In this case, you have a more subtle, nuanced opinion about an issue that you have heavily researched. Your job here is to share what you have learned in an informative and respectful way, educating your readers about what you establish is an important issue and *advocating* a position, as you also acknowledge and respond *as necessary* to those who may have objections to your position. An *advocacy* thesis explains and educates, as it argues its position:

Say that you are environmentally conscious with a particular interest in food waste. You decide to research the subject of food waste in institutional kitchens thoroughly before heading over to the university kitchen to find out from some first-hand interviews and observation what the kitchen does about food waste. You learn that the chef developed a program years ago to send leftovers to the city food pantry every day and that she has seen to it that thousands have been fed this way. You are surprised and check out food waste in other local colleges and universities and find that leftovers go in the dumpster, where homeless folks congregate at night, picking out edible scraps. Your paper, then, will work to highlight your research in such a way that your *advocacy* for using your university chef's program as a model will work to convince others of its merit, and maybe even to adopt it.

• **Template for the Argument Symposium Paper**

This one-page paper is a mini version of the six-page term paper (1,500 words), due Dec. 7, the last day of class.

Heading.

In bulleted points:

- State your audience.
- State your claim.
- State whether this is an argumentative essay or advocacy essay and *why*.
- For the argumentative essay, state a brief list of what objections you will be acknowledging and responding to. For the advocacy essay, list the objections, reservations or blindspots that you will be addressing as you advocate and/or educate your reader.
- State why your argument is important and relevant.

Title.

Assert a descriptive title that either provokes interest in reading your essay or that simply previews your argument. p

Body.

Quickly introduce your topic and state your thesis. The introduction moves directly to the point at hand. Do not write a generalized *Since-ancient-times* introduction. Build the essay around *answers* to objections that “opponents” would raise. Use parenthetical citation whenever you need to source your material. For instance, if you have five New York Times articles that helped you understand your opposition, cite all of them. Do not “pad” your citations, but cite everything that you need to. Example: *Obama’s second term would be his so-called first term, Romney supporters say, because he has done little in the last four years (Kristof, Bruni, Dowd, Friedman)*. All of the parenthetically cited sources are then cited in your Works Cited, using a hanging indent.

Conclude the essay in one sentence, driving home your point succinctly and effectively. Don’t simply restate your thesis.

Be your own editor

Proofread.

Look for ways to combine two, three, sometimes even four sentences into one more succinct sentence. Wordiness is *always* the enemy.

Check for coherence. That is, did you begin the essay asserting one thing and end asserting another, even a slight variation of the beginning? If so, revise so that your argument is *coherent*.

Check for comma-splices, compound-modifier errors, comma faults, semi-colon faults, quoting mechanics faults and Works Cited page faults. These errors will now be factored into the grade. Be on the look out for sentences that begin *This is, There is, It is*: They lead you into a wordy sentence.

Do not use the word *prove* in your argument. You aren’t proving; you are arguing.

Do not use contractions in formal academic work.

Format the paper in 12-point Courier, double-spaced.

Finally, read your paper aloud and make adjustments as necessary.