

Course: Written expression

Level: 2nd year LMD.

Instructor: Zeghdoud. M

The argumentative paragraph

- *Definition*

Argumentative paragraph which is called also opinion/or persuasive paragraph indicates the writer's opinion about a given topic. The writer attempts while writing this type of paragraphs to convince the readers about his/her opinion/claim using arguments "which represent his/her opinion supported by facts (evidences)". Thus, the argument helps the reader to convince someone of your point of view, persuade someone to do something, and so on. Effective arguments does not simply express "what you feel" but also convince readers to accept your views based on reasons and facts. Moreover, they should be for or against something. Your goal is not simply to provide information, but directs the readers to accept your point of view about a controversial topic, not a common one.

Opinion: is an idea or belief about a particular subject: Smoking should not be allowed anywhere.

Fact: is a piece of information that is true and it is supported by evidence: Thirty thousand people died in the United States and Canada last year because of lung cancer-a known result of smoking.

In argumentative writing, an effective technique is to include at least one sentence with an opposing opinion (an opinion that disagrees with your point of view). This is called a **counterargument**. One way to do this is to use weak words, such as *some, may, and might*. This counterargument is then followed by a statement that refutes the counterargument. This is called the **refutation**.

- **The topic Sentence**

The **topic sentence** states the writer’s point of view about a particular topic. The writer’s opinion can be for or against (pro or con) the idea concerning the topic. Therefore, the topic sentence is the key to a successful persuasive paragraph. The verbs used in a persuasive topic sentence are most often *should/should not* or *must/must not*.

Examples

- Employers should provide day care for their employees.

This paragraph will argue for (pro) companies providing day care for the children of their employees.

- Athletics should not receive more funding than academics.

This paragraph will argue against (con) sports receiving more money than academics.

Topic sentence →

The **topic+ controlling idea** (opinion for/against)

You can start the topic sentence by stating the counterargument (opposite view), then introducing your main point of view. Besides, the writer can start directly stating his/her point of view without referring to the opposite view.

Example:

- Many people think that social networks are useful, but I think their harm exceeds their usefulness.

- Write topic sentences for the following topics:

1. **Topic:** can social media destroy real-life communication?

Topic sentence:

.....

2. **Topic:** Can smoking be prevented by making tobacco illegal?

Topic sentence:

- **While writing your argumentative paragraph**

- ✓ State your argument precisely; avoid vague generalized statements.
- ✓ Avoid emotionally charged, insulting, or exaggerated arguments.

- ✓ Create topic sentences that can be supported with specific facts, examples, statistics and other evidence.

.....

- **Supporting sentences**

Once you have decided on the topic, it is vital that you know the major argument points on either side of the issue, regardless of whether you know which side you are going to take. For example, if the topic is nuclear energy, list as many points for either side that you can think of. Once you have listed as many points as you can think of, consider the points on both sides of the argument, and choose the side you wish to argue for (either for or against). Decide which points you will use in your paragraph to support your topic.

Supporting sentences = *supporting ideas + supporting details*
 = *Arguments (facts/opinions) + examples/explanations*

Practice: Choose one of the topic sentences from the previous task. Then list the arguments for it.

Topic sentence:

Supports:

- **Concluding sentence**

Finally, the concluding sentence usually restates the topic sentence “what is being argued for or against and why”.

Write a paragraph plan

Refer to previous exercises' information you generated, construct a paragraph plan. If you are considering new details which will clarify your arguments more effectively, add them here.

Topic sentence

.....

Support1:

.....
.....

Details

.....
.....

Support 2:

.....
.....

Details

.....
.....

Support3:

.....
.....

Details

.....
.....

Concluding sentence

.....

The first draft

You are ready to write your first draft after outlining your ideas in a plan. Remember to write complete sentences. You can include transitional phrases to help your ideas flow smoothly.

- **Transitional Signals**

Use transitional expressions to help better writing your paragraph such as the following:

First, second, another, also, next, because, since, however, of course, nevertheless, despite, besides, furthermore, thus, as a result, in conclusion

Model Paragraph

Driving and cell phones

Because cell phones and driving are a deadly mix, I am in favor of a ban on cell phone use by drivers. The most obvious reason for this ban is to save lives. Every year, thousands of drivers are killed because they are talking on cell phones instead of watching the road while they are driving. The first reason should be enough to support a ban on cell phones when driving, but I have two other reasons. My second reason is that these drivers cause accidents that kill other people. Sometimes these drivers kill other drivers; sometimes they kill passengers or even pedestrians. Finally, even in cases where there are no injuries or deaths, damage to cars from these accidents costs us millions of dollars as well as countless hours of lost work. To me, banning cell phones while driving is common sense. In fact, a wide range of countries has already put this ban into effect, including Australia, Brazil, Japan, Russia, and Turkey. Driving car is a privilege, not a right. We must all be careful drivers, and talking on a cell phone when driving is not safe.

Assignment

Choose a topic of your own and develop a paragraph based on argumentation.