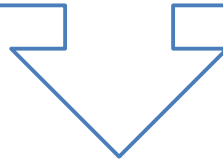




Constructing an Academic Argument

Introduction

Create the context of your paper/argument; set the stage. This might include a history of the issue, a miniature literature review, or an anecdote that introduces the issue at hand. (Avoid, “Since the beginning of time” and “The Webster Dictionary defines --- as...”)



Thesis Statement

This one sentence is the claim you are making – the focus of your paper. It must be direct, concise, and debatable.

Body

This section takes up the bulk of your paper. It is filled with evidence that supports your thesis. What constitutes evidence varies between fields but often takes the form of first-hand experiences, experiments, and studies; segments of scholarly articles; lectures by experts; and interviews. You might use paraphrasing and summarizing at times, and you might also use direct quotations. Cite your sources and avoid plagiarism. Remember to engage with your sources; don't think the original author's words stand on their own. How do their words and ideas further your argument?

Conclusion

This paragraph ends your argument. Usually writers re-state their main claim, but conclusions are more than just repetition; they provide closure to your writing while (sometimes) opening up the issue to a bigger picture. Answer the “So what?” question. What is at stake if people don't agree/act on your thesis? Why should people care?

