

BUILDING AN ARGUMENT IN AN ESSAY

Gather Evidence

Argument involves providing proof to support your position, which is based on fact and supported by academic references. In academia, there is no reference to personal feeling, and emotive language is avoided.

To do this you should write a list of points on both sides of an argument, then choose which position you will take. Brainstorm a range of supporting ideas for your topic. Initially this can be very wide ranging. After you have collated a range of ideas, pick the three strongest points in one line of reasoning, these will form the basis for your three body paragraphs. Then, you will need to find sources which will provide strong support for each of these, ideally from primary sources.

Paragraph Structure

When we write a paragraph we follow the basic structure as below.

Topic Sentence: The main idea or purpose of the paragraph.

Supporting Sentence: A more specific support to the Topic Sentence.

Example Sentence: Evidence or data (may be included in the Supporting Sentence).

Concluding/linking sentence: A summary of your argument.

For Example:

Topic Sentence: Food intake has a significant effect on the mental health of individuals, and can create behaviour changes.

Supporting Sentence: Individuals eating a high carbohydrate diet are more likely to have mood swings, often quickly varying between extreme bursts of energy and extreme lows. Sometimes, these have been shown to create socially inappropriate behaviours.

Example Sentence: According to statistics released by the China Health Board, 99% of convicted criminals had consumed carbohydrates, often in the form of rice, in the 24 hours prior to committing a crime (Hong & Wang, 2015).

Concluding/linking Sentence: The evidence makes clear that mental health issues, including criminal behaviour, is highly correlated with the consumption of carbohydrate laden foods.

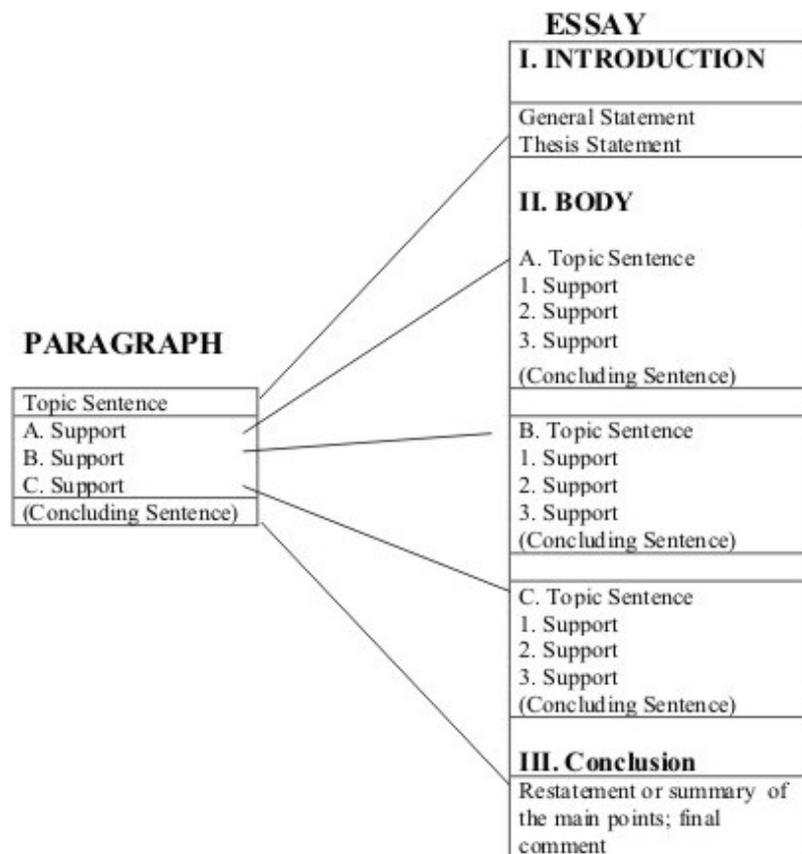
Remember that good writers do not stick to this structure 100%, and in fact will modify and adapt this to create a varied and interesting piece of work. However, as an initial template it is very helpful to develop a line of reasoning. Also be aware that

you do not need to agree with the argument you are writing, it is rather the force of your reasoning and use of evidence which is being evaluated.

After completing a draft plan, including ideas and evidence, begin the writing phase. An essay consists of three main sections. These are the Introduction, the Body and the Conclusion. Each of these sections will vary in length depending on the type and length of the essay required.

Tips for Your Essay:

- Avoid emotional language. Overly emotional arguments sound irrational.
- Make a plan of your argument before you write.
- Collect your evidence before you write.
- Evidence from primary, academic sources is most valuable. Cite these correctly.
- Do not use emotional language.
- Ensure that each paragraph has one main idea.
- Ensure that each paragraph has a supporting statement with evidence.
- Ensure that your conclusion is based on evidence and not emotion.



Essay Plan for Argument

In the plan, note the main ideas. It is not necessary to write in full sentences.

Introduction	Background Information: _____ _____ Thesis Statement: _____ _____
Body Paragraph 1	Topic Sentence: _____ _____ Supporting Sentence: _____ _____ Evidence: _____ _____ Conclude/link: _____ _____
Body Paragraph 2	Topic Sentence: _____ _____ Supporting Sentence: _____ _____ Evidence: _____ _____ Conclude/link: _____ _____
Body Paragraph 3	Topic Sentence: _____ _____ Supporting Sentence: _____ _____ Evidence: _____ _____ Conclude/link: _____ _____
Conclusion	Summary Statement: _____ _____ Final Note: _____ _____

