

Considering Persuasive/Argument Essay Structure

The number of paragraphs in an essay depends on the nature and complexity of the argument. Here are some additional hints you might want to give students to help them organize their thoughts:

Introduction

- You might want to include the following in your introductory paragraph:
 - A “hook” to get the reader’s attention
 - Background information the audience may need
 - A thesis statement along with some indication of how the essay will be developed (“forecasting”). *Note:* The thesis states the topic of the essay and the writer’s position on that topic. You may choose to sharpen or narrow your thesis at this point.

Body

- Paragraphs that present support for the thesis statement, usually in topic sentences supported with evidence (Refer to “Getting Ready to Write.”)
- Paragraphs that include different points of view or address counterarguments
- Paragraphs or sentences in which you address those points of view by doing the following:
 - Refuting them
 - Acknowledging them but showing how your argument is better
 - Granting them altogether but showing they are irrelevant
- Evidence proving you have considered the values, beliefs, and assumptions of the audience; your own values, beliefs, and assumptions; and some common ground that appeals to the various points of view

Conclusion

- A final paragraph (or paragraphs) that includes a solid argument to support the thesis and indicates the significance of the argument—the “so what?” factor

One strategy to help you mark the separate voices in an essay that you write is to use clear introductory language, such as the following templates or frames, to express how you feel about an author’s assertions. Fill in the blanks with the author’s name.

To express **agreement**:

- _____ is right about . . . because . . .
- I agree with _____ that . . .
- _____ and I both believe that . . .

To express **disagreement**:

- I think _____ is mistaken about . . . because . . .
- _____’s assumption that . . . is not accurate because . . .
- _____ overlooks the fact that . . .

To express **partial agreement**:

- Although I agree with _____ that . . . ; I disagree that . . .
- Although I disagree with _____ that . . . ; I fully agree that . . .
- _____ is right that . . . ; however, she fails to see that . . .

Agree: *Deborah King and I both see that some celebrities have a positive effect on us by being good role models.*

Disagree: *Deborah King’s assumption that we are all obsessed with celebrities is not accurate because I know too many people, especially older people, who don’t even know much about them.*

Partially agree: *Deborah King is right that celebrities can serve a good purpose in our lives; however, she fails to see that the bad effects will outweigh any of the positive ones for the fans who are truly obsessed.*