

# Argumentative Essay Writing A Step-by-Step Guide



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Hour: \_\_\_\_\_ Table #: \_\_\_\_\_



## ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY TERMS TO KNOW

TERM	DEFINITION
argument	Making a claim and supporting it using logic.
persuasion	Making a claim and supporting it using feelings and emotions.
claim	The position that you are trying to get your readers to accept.
evidence	Facts that support your claim.
bridge or warrant	Statement that explains how the evidence supports and connects to the claim.
counterclaim or counterargument	Challenging the argument by addressing the position of someone who may not agree with the argument.
turn-back or refutation	Demonstrating why the counter-argument is wrong.
audience	Who will be affected by the topic? Who will read the essay?



This argumentative essay was written by a student.

### **Should Metal Bats be Banned in Youth Baseball?**

On March 11, 2010, a high school pitcher in California was facing a player using a metal bat, when he was hit in the temple by a line drive traveling 100 mph. His skull was crushed, and he spent weeks in a coma. Fortunately, after surgery and months of rehabilitation, he survived. The accident brought to the forefront an issue that has been a safety concern ever since the 1970s when metal bats began being used instead of wooden bats. Metal bats are dangerous and should be banned by youth sport leagues for several reasons.

Baseballs hit with metal bats travel at a higher rate of speed than those hit with wooden bats. Researcher J.J. Crisco studied aluminum bats and found that they produced a “trampoline” effect, which means the baseball springs off of the bat at a high rate of speed. This happens so fast that pitchers and infielders don’t have time to react, which places them in danger. *The New York Times* reported that baseballs hit with metal bats travel almost 20 mph faster than baseballs hit with wooden bats. This is a huge difference to a player trying to make a play on a line drive in time. Consequently, the high rate of speed makes using a metal bat dangerous.

In addition, there have been many instances of players getting hurt by baseballs hit with metal bats. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, between 1991 and 2001, 18 players were killed by batted balls, and only two involved wooden bats. This proves that wood bats are safer than metal. Also, *The New York Times* reports that several lawsuits have been won by parents who sued metal bat makers after their child had been hurt. After being presented with evidence about the dangers of aluminum bats, judges and juries agreed they are responsible for injuries. Therefore, the high rate of injuries proves that metal bats are unsafe.

Some people claim that wooden bats are too expensive to supply to youth leagues because they are not as long lasting. This is true. Even so, a higher cost should not matter when safety is concerned.

Metal bats endanger the lives of young baseball players. First, they make the baseball travel at a high rate of speed, making it difficult to catch. Secondly, they have resulted in many injuries. Banning metal bats is necessary in order to save the lives of young players.

**What is the author’s purpose?**

**What do you notice about the evidence?**

**What observations can you make about the organization of an argumentative essay?**

## ORGANIZING THE ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

For an argument essay to be effective, you must organize your ideas, provide solid supporting evidence, and present the information clearly.

### Introduction

The first paragraph is where you will hook the reader and state your claim. The **hook** is sometimes called a **lead**. The claim is the **thesis statement**.



### Body Paragraph #1

This paragraph introduces the first reason that your claim is valid. Support it with evidence, such as facts, examples, and data.



### Body Paragraph #2

This paragraph introduces the second reason that your claim is valid. Support it with evidence, such as facts, examples, and data.



### Body Paragraph #3

This paragraph introduces the third reason that your claim is valid. Support it with evidence, such as fact, examples, and data



### Body Paragraph #4

The paragraph should introduce an opposing claim, which is the counterargument. It also includes the turn-back, which takes the reader back to your claim and position.



### Conclusion

The last paragraph restates the thesis statement and summarizes the main idea of the argument. It also contains a strong concluding statement.

# WRITING THE INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

THE INTRODUCTION TO YOUR ESSAY HAS THREE PARTS AND PURPOSES.

- ① Lead: The lead “hooks” readers and encourages them to keep reading. Try one of the following:

I'll get your interest and convince you!

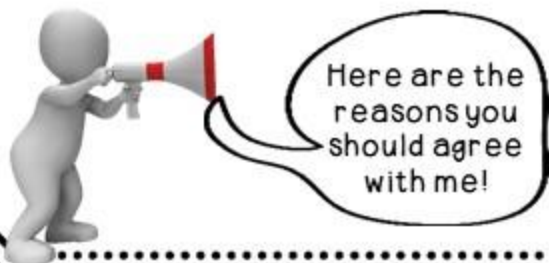
LEAD	EXAMPLE
Quote (Spoken by a famous person.)	President Obama once said, “ During the summer, students are losing a lot of what they learn. A longer school year makes sense.”
Unusual Detail	According to historians, American farm children once attended school from December to March and mid-May to August.
Statistic or Fact	Experts say that during the summer, students lose approximately 22 percent of what they learned during the school year.
Strong Statement	Students must attend school; a shorter school year is comparable to child neglect.
Question (Best if it also includes one of the other strategies.)	Are most Americans satisfied that compared to their peers in Europe and Asia, American students score lower on achievement tests?
Anecdote	There was a time when summer vacation meant endless lazy days, sitting on the porch, and watching the bees pollinate the flowers.

- ② Introduce the issue: Briefly explain the issue and the controversy surrounding the argument. Give background information.

**Ex.** Much to the public’s dismay, summer vacations are in jeopardy in America, as the Secretary of Education pushes forward with a movement to extend the school year.

- ③ State your claim: This is the thesis statement. It is a promise to the reader that the essay will address the argument and prove the claim. Use one of these key words to form the thesis:

\*Reasons   \*Benefits   \*Advantages or Disadvantages



**Ex.** There are definite advantages associated with switching to a year round school schedule in the United States.

## WRITING THE SUPPORTING BODY PARAGRAPHS

Body paragraphs #1 -3: Support the thesis statement/claim.

- ⇒ Start with a topic sentence that introduces a reason people should be convinced by the argument.

**Ex.** In order for students to improve academically, and avoid “summer slide,” American students should attend school year round.

- ⇒ Then include specific evidence to support the thesis statement (the claim). Use facts, examples, and statistics to back up the claim. Include at least 2-3 pieces of evidence.

**Ex.** For example, Balsz, a district in Arizona, saw reading test scores go up from 51 percent to 65 percent after extending the school year by 20 days.

- ⇒ Follow each piece of evidence with a bridge to explain how the evidence supports the claim. The bridge connects the evidence with the argument’s claim.

**Ex.** This significant improvement in reading scores proves that students benefit by having more time in school.

- ⇒ Close with a concluding sentence.

**Ex.** It is possible to improve student test scores by requiring more days in school.



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Text-reference and transition words and phrases to use in the body paragraphs:

First,  
For example,  
Furthermore,  
Therefore,

Also,  
Above all,  
Additionally,  
Consequently,

Finally,  
Particularly,  
Specifically,

According to  
For instance,  
Due to

## Writing the Counterclaim/Counterargument Body Paragraph

### Body paragraph #4: Writing the opposing argument.

- 1) The opposing argument, called the counterclaim or counterargument, proves that you fully understand the topic and that you have considered the opposition.

Transition words and phrases to use in the counterargument:

It might seem that	It's true that	Admittedly,
Of course,	One might object	While
Certainly	At first glance,	Some people claim



- 2) The turn-back is a return to the original argument. It gives you an opportunity to prove why the opposing argument is invalid. Be sure to refute the opposing claim.

Transition words and phrases to use in the turn-back:

Yet,	Despite	However,	Nevertheless,
Still	Except	Conversely,	Even so,



**Ex.** Some critics of year round school say that the real results of studies that seem to show score increases in year round schools are inconclusive, and it is difficult to pinpoint the real reason for the increases. However, there is no doubt that students in Europe, where there is year round school, outperform American students on achievement tests.

Be sure to use the counterclaim transition words and phrases in pairs.  
Use one to introduce the counterclaim and another to introduce the turn-back.

It might seem that \_\_\_\_\_ counterargument ... except \_\_\_\_\_ turn-back

It is true that \_\_\_\_\_ counterargument ... nevertheless \_\_\_\_\_ turn-back

Some people claim \_\_\_\_\_ counterargument ... however \_\_\_\_\_ turn-back

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Try pairing counterclaim transitions with this imaginary argument:\*

\_\_\_\_\_ there is no photographic evidence that Bigfoot exists;  
\_\_\_\_\_ people who have seen him up close say their eyewitness accounts  
should be proof enough.

\*What was the original  
claim?

## WRITING THE CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH

The concluding paragraph is important, as it must close the issue by showing that the topic has been covered thoroughly. It can also include a call to action, which is an idea about what people can do about the topic, how people can be warned about the topic, or how they can benefit from the position argued.

- ① Begin by restating the thesis statement or claim.

**Ex.** Year round school is the answer to the economic and educational problems in the United States.

- ② Then, present one or two sentences that summarize the reasons and evidence.

**Ex.** A year round schedule will prevent students from losing the hard earned knowledge gained during the school year.

- ③ Finally, provide a benefit that will result from complying with or heeding the argument. Or provide a call to action to move the audience into wanting to make a change.

**Ex.** The nation's future depends upon having intelligent citizens. Schools must be year round in order to graduate such citizens.



### General Tips

DO	DO NOT
Use strong, convincing language.	Weaken your argument by using "I believe" or "I think."
Use reliable websites for research.	Make up "facts" or statistics.
Use 2-3 facts, examples, and/or statistics per body paragraph.	Rely on personal experiences.
Be respectful of those who disagree with your position.	Insult those who disagree.

## ARGUMENT ESSAY EXAMPLE

Directions: Read this argument essay that was written by a student. Draw arrows and label the following parts in the right-hand margin:

▪ Hook/Lead	▪ Thesis Statement/Claim	▪ 4 Examples of Evidence	▪ 2 Reasons	▪ Background information
▪ 4 Bridges	▪ Counterargument	▪ Turn-Back	• Restating Claim	

### Should Metal Bats be Banned in Youth Baseball?

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In addition, there have been many instances of players getting hurt by baseballs hit with metal bats. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, between 1991 and 2001, 18 players were killed by batted balls, and only two involved wooden bats. This proves that wood bats are safer than metal. Also, *The New York Times* reports that several lawsuits have been won by parents who sued metal bat makers after their child had been hurt. After being presented with evidence about the dangers of aluminum bats, judges and juries agreed they are responsible for injuries. Therefore, the high rate of injuries proves that metal bats are unsafe.

Some people claim that wooden bats are too expensive to supply to youth leagues because they are not as long lasting. This is true. Even so, a higher cost should not matter when safety is concerned.

Metal bats endanger the lives of young baseball players. First, they make the baseball travel at a high rate of speed, making it difficult to catch. Secondly, they have resulted in many injuries. Banning metal bats is necessary in order to save the lives of young players, and everyone concerned should contact their local lawmakers.

## GATHERING INFORMATION

### Podcast

#	Publisher	Episode #	Episode Name	Time	Date Viewed	URL

Notes:

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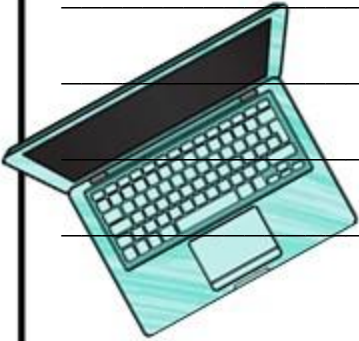
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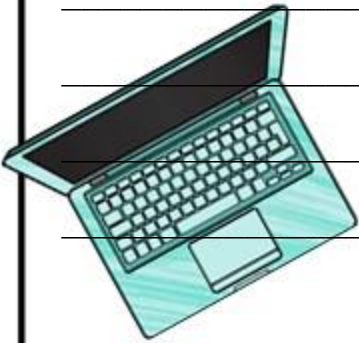
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## ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING

### Introduction

Hook: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Background Information: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Claim: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Body Paragraph 1

Topic Sentence- Reason:

\_\_\_\_\_

Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Bridge: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Bridge: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING

### Body Paragraph 2

Topic Sentence- Reason:

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Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

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Bridge: \_\_\_\_\_

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Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

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Bridge:

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Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING

### Body Paragraph 3

Topic Sentence- Reason:

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Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

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Bridge: \_\_\_\_\_

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Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

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Bridge:

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Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING

### Body Paragraph #4

Counterargument: \_\_\_\_\_

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Turn-Back: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Conclusion

Restate Claim/ Thesis Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

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Summarize the Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

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Final Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

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# ARGUMENT WRITING Student Revision Checklist

Criteria	Absolutely	Mostly	Partially	Not Really
<b>Introduction</b>				
➤ Have you provided an interesting hook?				
➤ Have you given background information?				
➤ Have you stated a claim in the thesis statement?				
<b>Body Paragraphs</b>				
➤ Have you used statistics or facts to provide evidence?				
➤ Have you analyzed and explained your evidence by using bridges?				
➤ Have you included a counterargument and a turn-back?				
<b>Conclusion</b>				
➤ Have you restated the claim, summarized, and ended strongly				
<b>Organization &amp; Style</b>				
➤ Have you organized the response and used transitions?				
➤ Have you written for your audience?				
➤ Have you included a Works Cited page and used correct citations.				
<b>Mechanics:</b>				
➤ Have you reviewed for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors?				

## ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY RUBRIC

Criteria	4	3	2	1
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Clear, interesting introduction of topic.</li> <li>➤ Demonstrates understanding of topic and claim.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Clear introduction of topic.</li> <li>➤ Demonstrates grade level understanding of topic and claim.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Introduction of topic is unclear.</li> <li>➤ Demonstrates limited understanding of topic and claim.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Introduction does not address task.</li> <li>➤ Demonstrates little understanding of topic and claim.</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Facts are well-chosen and support argument.</li> <li>➤ Evidence is fully explained by use of a bridge.</li> <li>➤ Counterargument and turn-back are convincing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Facts are relevant to argument.</li> <li>➤ Evidence is explained by use of a bridge.</li> <li>➤ Counterargument and turn-back are included.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Partial use of evidence.</li> <li>➤ Use of evidence that may not be accurate</li> <li>➤ Counterargument and turn-back are incomplete.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No evidence is provided, or evidence is irrelevant.</li> <li>➤ Counter-argument and turn-back are missing or irrelevant.</li> </ul>
<b>Organization, Clarity, and Style</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Skillful organization and use of transitions enhance meaning.</li> <li>➤ Includes style, sophisticated vocabulary, and voice.</li> <li>➤ Interesting concluding statement that clearly stems from the topic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Clear organization and use of transitions.</li> <li>➤ Includes style and grade-level vocabulary.</li> <li>➤ Concluding statement relates to topic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Partially organized, with little use of transitions.</li> <li>➤ Some attempt at style, with basic vocabulary.</li> <li>➤ Some attempt is made to conclude.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Little attempt at organization.</li> <li>➤ No use of transitions.</li> <li>➤ Lacks style.</li> <li>➤ Conclusion is missing or irrelevant.</li> </ul>
<b>Mechanics: grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is clear evidence that the response has been reviewed, revised and edited.</li> <li>➤ There are few errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is some evidence that the response has been reviewed, revised, and edited.</li> <li>➤ There are some errors, but they do not interfere with understanding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is little evidence that the response has been reviewed, revised, and edited.</li> <li>➤ Frequent errors interfere with understanding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is no evidence that the response has been reviewed, revised, and edited.</li> <li>➤ Frequent errors hinder understanding.</li> </ul>



**Total:**