



WRITER'S ALLEY

Classical Argument

In Classical Argument, you are supporting a position based on reasoned arguments. This means positions are supported rather than being merely assertions. In other words, you choose a side and use a number of claims, each supported with evidence, to prove your side is correct. Arguments generally deal with matters of opinion and judgment rather than cases of absolute fact. They are given the weight of fact because of the evidence provided in support of a position. In assessing the success of an argument, readers consider the factual evidence you provide and weigh it against their personal experience, values, principles, assumptions and preconceptions, along with opinions of others they trust.

Because of the complex reactions of readers, you must analyze your audience and consider their current views and experiences with your topic. You must consider what they already know and what they need to know to understand and agree with you. The more informed you are, the better you will be able to provide information and to anticipate readers' range of views. Success will often depend on being aware of other perspectives on your topic in order to discuss and refute them. In doing so, you must avoid blatant personal attacks, outright aggression, sugar-coated language, empty phrases and clichés. Even if you may not be able to change a reader's mind, you should still try to garner respect for your differing opinion.

The goal in Classical Argument is to present your arguments on an issue in order to affect how people understand it, how they think, their views and policies and behavior. You need more than your personal beliefs to accomplish this. You should strive to present a new way of thinking about your topic, create a new position on a familiar topic, respond to a particular situation or respond critically to another's argument. Finally, you should add another level of detail designated with lower case letters.

- I. Introduction
 - A. Compelling hook

- B. Explanation of controversy
- C. Background information and key terms
- D. Thesis statement
- II. First Point of Argument (least controversial)
 - A. Explanation
 - 1. First point of support
 - 2. Second point of support
 - 3. Strongest point of support
 - B. Statement to tie support together and reinforce first argument
- III. Second Argument
 - A. Explanation
 - 1. First point of support
 - 2. Second point of support
 - 3. Strongest point of support
 - B. Statement to tie support together and reinforce argument
- IV. Third Argument
 - A. Explanation
 - 1. First point of support
 - 2. Second point of support
 - 1. Strongest point of support
 - B. Statement to tie support together and reinforce argument
- V. Fourth Argument—CONTINUE WITH EACH POINT BUILDING TO STRONGEST ARGUMENT
 - A. Explanation
 - 1. First point of support
 - 2. Second point of support
 - 3. Strongest point of support
 - B. Statement to tie support together and reinforce argument
- VI. Opposing View
 - A. First point of opposing view--Strongest
 - 1. Explanation of point highlighting weaknesses

2. Refutation of opposing point with evidence
 3. Reinforcement of your position
 - B. Second point of opposing view—Weakest
 1. Explanation of point highlighting weaknesses
 2. Refutation of opposing point with evidence
 3. Reinforcement of your position
- VII. Conclusion
- A. Reinforce your argument
 - B. Thought-provoking ending
 - C. Call to action—not advice

Alternative Outline for Refuting Opposing View

- I. Introduction
 - A. Compelling hook
 - B. Explanation of controversy
 - C. Background information and key terms
 - D. Thesis statement
- II. First point of opposing view
 - A. Explanation of point highlighting weaknesses
 - B. Refutation of opposing point with evidence
 - C. Advancement of your argument
 1. Explanation
 2. First point of support
 3. Second point of support
 4. Strongest point of support
 5. Statement to tie support together and reinforce argument
- III. Second point of opposing view
 - A. Explanation of point highlighting weaknesses
 - B. Refutation of opposing point with evidence

C. Advancement of your argument

1. Explanation
2. First point of support
3. Second point of support
4. Strongest point of support
5. Statement to tie support together and reinforce argument

IV. Third point of opposing view

A. Explanation of point highlighting weaknesses

B. Refutation of opposing point with evidence

C. Advancement of your argument

1. Explanation
2. First point of support
3. Second point of support
4. Strongest point of support
5. Statement to tie support together and reinforce argument

V. Fourth point of opposing view

A. Explanation of point highlighting weaknesses

B. Refutation of opposing point with evidence

C. Advancement of your argument

1. Explanation
2. First point of support
3. Second point of support
4. Strongest point of support
5. Statement to tie support together and reinforce argument

VI. Conclusion

A. Reinforce your argument

B. Thought-provoking ending

C. Call to action—not advice