Classic Model for an Argument

*No one structure fits all written arguments. However, most college courses require arguments that consist of the following elements. Below is a basic outline for an argumentative or persuasive essay.*

I. **Background Information.**

* This section gives the reader the basic information he or she needs to understand your position.
* Your background info sentence should set the stage or the context for the position you are arguing for.
* The next sentence after background should be your thesis or claim (what you are arguing for) ***and*** the reasons for your position on an issue.

II. **Your thesis/Claim:**

* states what your position on an issue is
* usually appears at the end of the introduction in a short essay
* should be clearly stated and often contains emphatic language (should, ought, must)

Sample Argumentative Thesis:

***Year-round school improves students’ academic achievement***

III. **Reasons or Evidence to Support your Claim**

All evidence you present in this section should support your position. This is the heart of your argument.

**Types of evidence include:**

|  |
| --- |
| *personal experience, reasons, confirmed facts, statistics, expert research* |
| * **#1 Personal experience** – any actual experience with the topic that you, your family and friends have had.   **EXAMPLE:** I forgot fewer of my math skills over the summer because my summer break was so short thanks to year-round school. |
| * **#2 Reasons** – logical reasons that support the opinions made in the claim.   **EXAMPLE**: Because students have multiple breaks throughout the year, they experience less academic burnout. They have frequent opportunities to refresh and restart their learning experience. |
| * **#3 Confirmed facts –** facts that have been found in reliable/credible sources.   **EXAMPLE**: A review of 39 studies confirmed summertime learning loss: test scores drop over summer vacation (Cooper, et al., 1996)> *This is the name of the expert who did the review and the year it was done*. |
| * **#4 Statistics** – numbers and percentages that are relevant to the topic and come from reliable/credible sources.     **EXAMPLE**: Year-round schools have lower drop-out rates (2%) than traditional schools (5%) (StatisticBrain.com). |
| * **#5 Research by experts** – research that is done by professors, researchers, or doctors who have a deep knowledge of the topic; always found in credible/reliable sources.   **EXAMPLE**: One study of six elementary schools, three on traditional calendars and three on year-round schedules, found positive effects of year-round education. The sample of students in the year-round schools posted overall test-scores that were higher than students at the schools with traditional calendars (*Education Week*). |

III. **Addressing the Opposite Side**

* Any well-written argument must anticipate and address positions in opposition to the one being argued.
* Pointing out what your opposition is likely to say in response to your argument shows that you have thought critically about your topic. Addressing the opposite side actually makes your argument stronger!
* Generally, this takes the form of a sentence or two that can be placed before the conclusion.

A**. Opposing View**

***Year-Round School doesn’t allow kids to spend as much time with their families during the summer***

* **\*\*\*Refutation (must address the opposing view specifically):** 
  + Many children still attend childcare services and camps during the summer and parents still work, so year round school wouldn’t change those realities.
  + Year-round school provides as much time off as traditional school just more intermittently. Vacations and family time can be planned throughout the year and not just during the summer.
  + Year Round school can also prevent kids from having “summer amnesia” where they forget all that was learned during the school year.

**IV. Conclusion**

The conclusion should bring the argument to a logical end. It should explain what the importance of your issue is in a larger context.

\*\*Show your reader what would happen if your argument is or is not believed or true!

Argument Template