


Writing Argumentative Essays (discussing advantages and disadvantages / expressing an opinion)



ас. Десислава Зарева

Three questions to consider before you start writing the essay:

- **AUDIENCE:**

- Who is going to read my essay? (e.g. your teacher(s), examiners, fellow students, readers of a journal, etc.)

- **PURPOSE:**

- Why am I writing this essay? (e.g. I want to say something new, I want a better mark for the course, because I have to, I want to show how well I know the subject, I want to show how well I know English etc.)

- **TYPE:**

- What kind of essay am I writing? (e.g. I am describing a picture, I am telling a story, I am giving my personal opinion, I am analyzing advantages and disadvantages, I am discussing a problem and provide solutions, etc)

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU WRITE YOUR ESSAY

The title of your essay suggests **the type of essay** you need to write (e.g. "*Stray dogs should be killed. State and justify your opinion*" – asks for your opinion; "*Advantages and disadvantages of studying abroad*" – encourages you to discuss the issue, "*How can we reduce water pollution*" – invites you to offer solutions to a problem, etc.

Step 1 – understanding the topic of your essay is in this sense vital because....

The introduction makes references to the title and gives out the **aims** of your essay (WHY) and WHAT will do in order to achieve them, i.e **the procedure**.

Depending on your essay length you may have ONE or SEVERAL aims. Three (for longer pieces) is more than enough.

The introduction should be informative – this is the way your reader will get an idea about the content of your essay. E.g. the aims of "*Stray dogs should be killed. State and justify your opinion*" is

- 1) **to state your opinion** – yes, they should be killed, because.....; no they should not be killed because
- 2) **to provide the means by which you will prove your stand point** – I will use examples in order to prove that killing is not a solution, I will refer to world practice, I will quote books on this issue, etc.

Step 2 – formulating your aims and how you plan to achieve them – ONE paragraph

The body

makes references to the introduction and title. It follows the layout of your introduction – your ways and how you justify your standpoint. Each **paragraph** is organised around ONE argument. Your argument can be supported by a number of examples. Make sure your arguments are relevant to **the topic** (e.g. if you discuss stray dogs, do not speak about dogs in general or pets) and **aims** (e.g. if you promise to offer reasons why they should be killed, stick to those) You can have as many paragraphs as you wish. The same rule applies to examples you use.

Do not forget to quote your references appropriately (e.g. when you quote a book, an article, a chart, a site, Tv show, etc.) There are [quoting references](http://www.apastyle.org/) Do not forget to quote your references appropriately (e.g. when you quote a book, an article, a chart, a site, Tv show, etc.) There are quoting references <http://www.apastyle.org/> covering all types of sources).

Step 3 - The body of your essay shows your ability to follow your aims stated in the introduction and defend your viewpoint and to employ the academic skills you have developed – e.g. research skills, linguistic skills, etc)

The conclusion

refers to the title and the introduction and SUMMARIZES the content of the body. Usually it repeats the aims stated in the introduction and relates them to the main arguments and maybe some of the examples in the body. **e.g.** "*Stray dogs should be killed. State and justify your opinion*" - my aim was to prove that yes, stray dogs are dangerous because they cause diseases. In order to prove this view I referred to some evidence from the TV news, some scientific research and statistics showing numbers of bitten people who developed diseases. That is why I can firmly state that yes they should be killed.

Step 4 – bringing together aims and arguments from your essay

Step 5 – writing bibliography of all the references if you have used any in your essay

A Successful Opinion Essay Consists of:

- ❑ An introduction where the topic and the author's opinion are stated clearly
- ❑ A main body where viewpoints supported by reasons are presented in several paragraphs. This section has also the opposing viewpoint which is proved to be unconvincing
- ❑ A conclusion where the main points of the essay are summarized and the author's opinion is restated in other words

<http://custom-writing.org/blog/writing-tips/free-essay-writing-tips/231.html>

Some useful phrases include:

- ▣ **As far as I am concerned, ...**
- ▣ **I am (not) convinced that ...**
- ▣ **In my opinion/view ...**
- ▣ **My opinion is that ...**
- ▣ **I (firmly)believe ...**
- ▣ **I (definitely) feel/think that ...**
- ▣ **I am inclined to believe that ...**

To read more about the opinion essays and see some good examples click here:

<http://www.writefix.com/argument/essaylist.htm>

Now it is your turn to write your own
essays

GOOD LUCK!