

Argumentative Writing: Learning the Structure

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 — Write arguments to support claims using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

PART 1: READ THE MODEL PARAGRAPH

Topic: Should 18-year-olds be allowed to vote?

Whether 18-year-olds should be allowed to vote is a debate with valid arguments on both sides. Supporters argue that 18-year-olds should have the right to vote because they are considered adults and can make important decisions, such as joining the military, signing contracts, and paying taxes. In fact, the 26th Amendment lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 in 1971, partly because 18-year-olds were being drafted to fight in the Vietnam War. Opponents argue that teenagers may not have enough life experience or political knowledge to make informed decisions. They point to research showing that the brain continues developing into the mid-20s, particularly areas involved in planning and decision-making. However, maturity and political knowledge vary among individuals of every age. Because 18-year-olds are legally recognized as adults and are given many other adult responsibilities, they should also have the opportunity to participate in elections and have a voice in decisions that affect their lives.

PART 2: USE THE ORGANIZER

Use the model paragraph above to fill in each part of the organizer. Look back at the paragraph for evidence and explanations. Do not copy the paragraph word-for-word; identify what each part is doing.

1. Introduce the Issue — What question or issue is the paragraph discussing?

2. Argument FOR — What reason supports allowing 18-year-olds to vote?

Evidence — What fact, law, historical example, statistic, or other evidence supports this argument?

Explain — How does this evidence support the argument?

3. Argument AGAINST — What reason supports not allowing 18-year-olds to vote?

Evidence — What evidence supports the opposing argument?

Explain — How does this evidence support the opposing argument?

4. Conclusion — What conclusion does the writer draw after considering both sides?

Notice the structure: Issue → Argument FOR + Evidence + Explanation → Argument AGAINST + Evidence + Explanation → Conclusion

Argumentative Writing: Your Turn

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PART 3: PLAN YOUR OWN ARGUMENTATIVE PARAGRAPH

New Topic: “High school students in the United States need at least two hours of homework every week night and four hours on weekends.”

Do you agree, disagree, or see both sides? Use the same organizer to plan your own paragraph.

1. Introduce the Issue — What question or issue will your paragraph discuss?

2. Argument FOR — What is one reason someone might support this amount of homework?

Evidence — What fact, example, statistic, research finding, or expert information supports this argument?

Explain — How does your evidence support the argument?

3. Argument AGAINST — What is one reason someone might oppose this amount of homework?

Evidence — What fact, example, statistic, research finding, or expert information supports the opposing argument?

Explain — How does your evidence support the opposing argument?

4. Your Conclusion — After considering both sides, what conclusion will you draw?

Why? What is the strongest reason for your conclusion?

Before you write: ■ I addressed both sides. ■ I included evidence. ■ I explained my evidence. ■ I reached a clear conclusion.

■ Did I use formal language? ■ Is my tone objective?