

Position Paper Outline

A Position Paper presents one side of an arguable position on a topic. You must present it in a manner that is easy for your audience to understand and is well supported through your research and academic citations.

You will develop an outline for your Position Paper using this generic template.

Introduction

Introduce the topic and provide background on the topic to explain why it is important. Then give your thesis which is your view of the issue. You want to arouse your reader's interest in your position; you can do this by placing it in context with background information.

Pro Position / Argument

Assert the first point of your claims that support your thesis, giving your logical and informed opinion. Provide support for your argument by using more than one academic source (preferably three). Present each argument fairly and objectively without appealing to emotion. This will be several paragraphs in length.

You will then prove your next point in the same way. Followed by the third point and so on. You may have more than 3 overall points to your argument, but you should not have fewer.

Counter Argument

Summarize the counterclaims and provide supporting information for them. Refute the counterclaims with evidence. One way to generate counterarguments is by asking yourself what someone who disagrees with you might say about each of the points you've made or about your position as a whole. Once you have identified some counterarguments, consider how you will respond to them. Will you concede that your opponent has a point but explain why your audience should nonetheless accept your argument? Will you reject the counterargument and explain why it is mistaken? Either way, you will want to leave your reader with a sense that your argument is stronger than opposing arguments.

When you are summarizing opposing arguments, avoid trying to make it look foolish as that reflect back on you. Seriously consider the many sides of the issue, and do not simply attack or mock your opponents. It is usually better to consider one or two serious counterarguments in some depth, rather than to give a long but superficial list of many different counterarguments and replies.

Be sure that your reply is consistent with your original argument. If considering a counterargument changes your position, you will need to go back and revise your original argument accordingly.

Conclusion

Restate your position but do not introduce new information. You may elaborate on a suggested plan of action. The simplest and most basic conclusion is one that restates the thesis in different words and then discusses its implications.

References

Cite all of your sources in the appropriate format.

Adapted from: <https://www.sfu.ca/cmns/130d1/WritingaPositionPaper.htm> & <http://www.studygs.net/wrtstr9.htm>