



Argument Essay Notes

General

- Choose the qualified response—it will make your argument sound more nuanced and sophisticated
- Use “Naysayers” (see below)
- ADDRESS THE PROMPT. Show that you understand it.
- Address the opposition; be willing to concede
- Tone and diction build ethos: don’t be arrogant, sarcastic, or use loaded language.
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Three Part Intro:

- Anecdote/STAMP
 - Shock with a stat
 - Tell a story/establish a scenario
 - Analogize
 - Misdirect (OR make a GOOD question with no easy answer)
 - Personalize with an anecdote*
- Bridge
- Thesis

Intro and Thesis

- **NO:** Generalizations about human nature or “society,” Filler with no purpose, obviously false statements, weak questions, quotations, truisms.
- **YES:** Instead, use STAMP. Anecdotes are easiest and are recommended—just make sure it blends well with the bridge and thesis and ADDS to the essay. It should never distract from your argument.

Naysayers

Naysayers are an effective strategy to add depth to paragraphs by engaging with and responding to an alternative point of view in your piece. Remember to always raise a fair objection (not a straw-person) and answer it fully.

- **GENERAL NAYSAYER:** Some may challenge the assertion that _____.
- **NAMED NAYSAYER:** Many feminists would probably object that _____ or Social Darwinists would certainly take issue with the argument that _____.

Topic Sentences

- Clear sub-arguments that prove the thesis
- CLAIMS→ Acts like a mini-thesis for the paragraph
- May include a tension word (Although, while, despite...)
- DO NOT...
 - a. Include facts, quotations, or questions
 - b. Limit the focus of the paragraph by being too narrowly focused
 - c. Fail to define the focus of the paragraph by being too broad

Misc Advice:

- Remember Taylor! Your audience is educated, but needs context to understand you.
- All evidence must be logical, credible
- ROE: Utilize your own reading, observation, or experience
- ANSWER THE PROMPT
- Keep focused; never contradict yourself or argue for an opposing viewpoint
- Organization: 5 paragraphs not necessary, but a structure is essential