



## Creating an Outline for a Classic Argument

### I. Introduction

- a. Choose a strategy for catching a reader's attention.
  - i. A surprising statistic.
  - ii. An illustrative story.
  - iii. A challenging statement.
  - iv. A quote that is fully explained and integrated into the essay.
  - v. A rhetorical question that asks the reader to ponder the topic of your essay.
- b. Provide background for the reader, so they can understand the essay they are about to read. This might include two sides of a controversy, the history of an issue, or explanation of a problem.
- c. Present your thesis. Remember, a thesis clearly states your opinion. It should be written in a complex sentence—and usually it is positioned at the end of your introduction. (Remember, an introduction can contain as many paragraphs as you need. Some students think it must all be stuffed into a single paragraph.)
- d. If you provide a brief overview of your support points, it will help your reader follow your argument more clearly.

### II. Body of Essay

- a. Support point 1. The first piece of evidence to support your thesis. This section (once again it might contain multiple paragraphs) should be introduced with a clear topic sentence.
- b. Second support point.
- c. Third support point (with an optional fourth support point).
- d. Optional: provide a counter argument that considers opposing viewpoints. Include how you might refute the proposed counter argument.

### III. Conclusion

- a. A brief summary is useful, and it can flow naturally from your response to the counter argument.
- b. An effective argument must have an ending. Forget the strategy you learned in junior high of ending with a summary or restatement of your thesis. Among the choices for an effective ending:
  - i. A story that illustrates the significance of your argument.
  - ii. A call to action. If you have convinced your reader to accept your position, inspire him to do something about it.
  - iii. A quote that sums up your argument and its significance. Warning: this will only work if the quote is sufficiently explained, so it doesn't appear to be tacked on to your ending.
  - iv. A call for additional research on your topic.
  - v. An explanation of why your position is crucial for the survival of humanity.
  - vi. A prediction that explains the consequences of your position. If society does not take action... If we do take action...