

## Argumentative Essays

The argumentative essay is a genre of writing that requires the student to investigate and discuss a usually debatable topic, then establish a stance on the topic in a concise manner, while collecting, generating and evaluating supporting arguments and evidences to convince the reader of the writer's viewpoint.

### Five-paragraph formula

A common method for writing an argumentative essay is the five-paragraph approach. The method consists of (a) an introductory paragraph, (b) three body paragraphs that may include discussion of opposing views, and (c) a conclusion.

The three body paragraphs may all be in agreement with the writer's viewpoint (3+0), or a combination of two supporting and one opposing view (2+1).

### Useful pointers in writing a good argumentative essay

1. Introduction: A clear, concise, and defined **thesis statement** that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay.
  - Start the essay by providing **context** of the topic under discussion. A common way is by giving a **general review** about the subject. Useful techniques: definition of terminologies, rhetorical questions.
  - Explain the **importance (exigence)** of the topic, or why the reader should care about the issue.
  - End the paragraph with a **thesis statement**. A thesis statement should be appropriately narrowed to follow the guidelines set forth in the assignment (on topic), and/or include a **concise description of all the main points** that will be presented in the body paragraphs.
2. Body: Body paragraphs should include evidential support (whether factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal).
  - Each paragraph should be **limited to** the discussion of **one general idea**.
  - Each paragraph in the body of the essay **must have some logical connection** to the thesis statement in the introductory paragraph.
  - For paragraphs with supporting views, they should directly **support** the thesis statement **with evidences**. It is also important to explain how and why the evidence supports the thesis.
  - **Rebuttal**: A successful and well-rounded argumentative essay will also discuss differing or opposing opinions. However, it is not the student's job to point out how other positions are wrong outright, but rather to **explain how other positions may not be well informed, fallaciously supported or out of date on the topic**. Afterwards, **refute** the opposing views with a sound **counterargument**, supported with evidences.
3. Conclusion: A conclusion should not simply restate the thesis, but readdresses it in light of the evidence provided.
  - **DO NOT** introduce any new information into the conclusion!
  - Instead, synthesise (rephrase) the information presented in the body paragraphs.
  - **Restate why the topic is important, review the main points, and review your thesis.**
  - Bonus: You may also want to include a short discussion of opportunities of future research/actions regarding the topic.

4. **Clear and logical transitions** between the introduction, body, and conclusion.

Useful connectors (linking words):

To start the first body paragraph	First of all, first and foremost
To provide an overview/background of a situation/topic	In the context of, against the backdrop of, in view of, in light of
To introduce a new main point or related argument	Besides, on top of that, furthermore, in addition, meanwhile, in the meantime, additionally, likewise, similarly
To elaborate an existing main point	Furthermore, moreover
To introduce contrasting viewpoints	However, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the other hand, from another perspective
To provide reason/purpose	Due to, in order to, in view of
To describe the effect/result of a main point	As a result, consequently, therefore, thus, hence
To describe chronological progression	Subsequently
To provide examples or clarification	For example, such as, for instance, to illustrate, in particular
To provide an alternative explanation of the same argument	In other words
To start a concluding sentence or paragraph	All in all, in a nutshell, to sum up, in conclusion, therefore, thus, hence

Body Paragraph Guidelines (TREC)

1. **Topic sentence:** introduce the main point discussed in the paragraph. Keep this focused on only **one** point!
2. **Reason/Cause:** provide justifications of the main point. Ask yourself: **why** do you think this way?
3. **Example/Evidence:** provide **specific** and **detailed** examples or evidences to support your justifications.
4. **Concluding sentence:** **restate** your main point with a summarisation of your arguments.

References:

Argumentative Essays - Purdue Online Writing Lab

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/academic\\_writing/essay\\_writing/argumentative\\_essays.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/essay_writing/argumentative_essays.html)

Rebuttal Section – Purdue Online Writing Lab

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/common\\_writing\\_assignments/argument\\_papers/rebuttal\\_sections.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/argument_papers/rebuttal_sections.html)

Body Paragraphs – Purdue Online Writing Lab

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/common\\_writing\\_assignments/argument\\_papers/body\\_paragraphs.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/argument_papers/body_paragraphs.html)

Model essay

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**Internet chat is a waste of time. Do you agree?**

Internet chat involves the exchange of instant text messages between two or more parties. Nowadays, the use of online messaging platforms has replaced short message service (commonly known as SMS) to become a ubiquity in Singaporeans' daily lives. Some popular examples include Facebook, WhatsApp and Telegram, to name a few. Meanwhile, reports about the issue of online addiction have caused the general public to ponder the potential impacts of internet chat, and whether it is a waste of time. In this essay, I contend that internet chat is definitely not a waste of time due to the mental and social benefits it can provide.

First and foremost, Internet chat can help to entertain and keep one engaged. With the rising trend of one-child families these days and both parents out at work, the latchkey child will not be bored at home if he or she is given the opportunity to chat with his friends online. There are even group chats and internet forums set up by online communities that share a common interest that facilitate communication and meaningful discussion among friends and like-minded individuals, whilst disseminating information across the globe.

On top of that, Internet chat enables people to stay connected with their loved ones regardless of physical distance. As globalisation becomes more widespread, more and more people study and work overseas. When the use of Internet was still not a norm, family members would be worried about the safety and well-being of their loved ones who are far away from them. Most kept in touch through letters and phone calls back then costed an arm and a leg. Today, thanks to the Internet, it is more convenient for people to stay connected with their loved ones via Internet chat, no matter their whereabouts.

Nevertheless, it is highlighted that Internet chat distracts people from more important tasks at hand, thereby encouraging procrastination. It is also argued that some students can chat online for hours, leaving them little or no time to complete their assignments. However, it is actually students' self-discipline and time management skills that deserve attention and improvement. Any form of distraction, not just Internet chat, can aggravate time wastage if one is unable to manage priorities properly. Therefore, Internet chat is not the main cause of the issue.

In conclusion, Internet chat has indeed brought about an ease in people's lifestyles. People are now able to stay connected with friends and loved ones, making them feel close at all times. While there may be concerns such as distraction, if we learn how to manage our time wisely, Internet chat can still bring about more good than harm.