

Building an Argumentative Research Paper

1. INTRODUCE PROBLEM OR RESEARCH QUESTION THAT IS PAPER'S FOCUS

- Provide factual background.
- Dramatize with an anecdote.
- Establish significance as a problem citing experts or observers.
- Explain your purpose: to change audience attitudes or behavior? To inform?

2. REVIEW THE LITERATURE

What have others already said and how is that relevant to the problem or question?

- Cite published studies, interviews, comments, experiments, etc.
- Address the problem or question.
- Address popular assumptions.

3. INTRODUCE YOUR ARGUMENT BASED ON EVIDENCE

- What does your understanding of others' arguments about the problem or question lead you to believe?
- State your argument or claim explicitly.

4. PRESENT THE EVIDENCE FOR YOUR ARGUMENT

What are your reasons for believing what you believe? For each reason, what specific evidence did you find that convinced you?

- Consider what kind of evidence your audience will find most persuasive.
- Include varied types of evidence.
- Address counter-arguments.

5. EXPLAIN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUR ARGUMENT

Why does this matter? What's at stake for your audience? What might be other avenues for research?

- What might happen if the audience doesn't act?
- What questions remain?
- How does your argument resolve some part of the problem? What part remains unresolved?

