

Organizational Structure of Argumentative Writing

Opinion pieces:

In this type of essay, the author proposes his opinion on an issue, and backs it up with solid facts and reasoning. This type of essay would be organized as follows:

- **Background**- why is this issue important?
- **Claim**- what is the author trying to convince the reader of?
- **Arguments for**-clear reasons and facts that support the claim
- **Reader concerns/counterarguments**-the author anticipates objections and refutes them
- **Conclusion**- A recap of the most important points, and may include a final appeal to do something about the issue.

Problem/Solution structure

- **Background**- why is this issue important?
- **Problem**- a clear statement of what needs to be fixed
- **Proposals/solutions**-the author proposes solutions to address the problem
- **Reader concerns/counterarguments**-the author anticipates objections and refutes them
- **Conclusion**- the author may explain why this issue is so important, and may include a final appeal to do something about the issue.

Note: Not all essays fall neatly into one of these categories. Some have elements of both. When you read an opinion piece, first try to determine what the general organizational scheme is, based on the author's purpose. Then start identifying the elements listed.

Finally, any type of argumentative writing should contain one or more of the following rhetorical devices:

- Appeal to emotion (pathos)
- Appeal to logic (logos)
- Appeal to ethics (ethos)

Avoid rhetorical fallacies, or false logic.