

## Classical Argument Structure:

- I. Introduction to general topic which leads to a clear thesis
- II. A moment of definition, background, and/or precedence (this is a section which clarifies and gives history on the topic or your stance on it).
- III. Support 1: This is typically the most logical reason why one should support your claim.
  - a. Evidence
  - b. Backing for evidence
- IV. Support 2: This is typically a side of the argument most don't think about. Perhaps it is a little known effect of the issue that interests and compels your reader to continue with you while you argue your point.
  - a. Evidence
  - b. Backing for evidence
- V. Support 3: This is typically the strongest support of your claim. It is generally positioned last to deliver the most impact. It may include a staggering fact, testimony, or statistic. It also might include a very emotional appeal that the audience can relate to. You want this to build into a very strong, winning conclusion.
  - a. Evidence
  - b. Backing for evidence
- VI. Concession: One way ethos (ethical appeal) is maintained is through presenting yourself as a fair and knowledgeable writer. In order to most effectively illustrate this, writers will give a nod or concession to opposing viewpoints. For example, if you were arguing against the death penalty, this may be a place where you recognize legitimate reasons for why one might consider the death penalty. It is also a good idea to cite outside sources in this section. This does not weaken your argument. Rather, it shows you are aware of multi-perspectives on this issue and aren't afraid or apprehensive to note them because you will also refute them. \*Concession does not have to follow in this order. Some writers include concession after the "definition" section so that they can dedicate their supports 1 – 3 to the refutation.
  - a. Consider evidence and backing for evidence
- VII. Refutation: In this section, you refute the concession. Even though you conceded to an outside perspective, you remind your readers that either a.) there may be some kind of logical error in the other perspective or b.)

that, even though this outside perspective may be valid, the harm or benefits do not outweigh those of your perspective.

- a. Evidence
- b. Backing for evidence

VIII. Conclusion: Unlike the traditional “summary” conclusion this is the space wherein you want to really drive home your claim. You may recap your essay here, but the last note needs to strongly appeal to your audience to consider your perspective. Think of it as a moment of “grand standing” or the rallying end of a speech.

Additional Notes:

You can have more than three supports.

Your support sections do not have to be each one paragraph. Perhaps the first support is two paragraphs, the second is one, and the third is three. Try to vary the support paragraphs so that they do not feel formulaic.

You can use first person, but AVOID 2<sup>ND</sup> PERSON: NO YOU, YOUR.

Your paper does not have to strictly follow this guide – this simply touches on the elements of a classical argument.