

Model of Formal Argument

All formal writing should follow a basic pattern of organization, whether the topic is expository or argumentative in nature.

I. Introduction

- A. **Narration.** This section sets forth background facts in a general way and prepares readers for the main argument. The narration, if it is at all lengthy, should be orderly. Time-order, space-order, and order-of-climax are all likely patterns. The narration answers the question, “What is the topic?”
- B. **Thesis.** This crucial element states exactly what is to be proved and clarifies what is at stake. The thesis statement answers the question, “What is asserted about this topic?” The thesis should NOT be self-reflexive, as in “I will show that...”

II. Confirmation

- A. **Definition.** Any key terms in your discussion should be clarified in this section. At this point, key words are named and defined by the use of synonyms, stipulation (meaning the author’s own definition, not from Webster or another bland dictionary source), by classification, and/or by negation (what the term does NOT mean).
- B. **Proof.** This section sets forth the evidence and provides supporting matter through the use of quotations, illustrations, analogies, statistics, authorities, and/or anecdotes wisely gathered and cited from other sources. Each piece of evidence should clearly and directly support the original thesis somehow, and each illustration should contain clear transitions between points. This evidence should be arranged in the order of climax, usually starting with a powerful piece of evidence and ending with the most convincing example.
- C. **Refutation.** This section allows the author to acknowledge any form of opposition. It maturely and intelligently takes an opposing side into consideration without pointing fingers or belittling the opposing point of view.

III. Conclusion

- A. **Solutions.** The final portion of the paper attempts to rouse the reader’s intellectual curiosity by offering solutions to the main points of the paper’s logic in a fairly succinct, memorable manner, and it should show a confident control of the topic without sounding arrogant.
- B. **Significance.** Address why your topic is important in the world. This part should answer the question, “So what?”