

Paragraph types: Argument

An **argument** paragraph presents a point of view and provides evidence for the point of view taken.

An argument is an opinion supported by facts. Writers refer to opinions as claims and facts as evidence. The claim clearly states a stance on a topic or issue. Evidence to prove this claim can include reasons, personal experience, statistics, confirmed facts, and expert research

For the claim to be persuasive, an argument writer must support it with the most effective evidence that comes from a variety of credible sources. Credible sources are websites, reports, and articles developed by experts and journalists.

Topic Sentence identifies what is being argued for or against.

Support Sentences include facts, examples, appeals to authority or counter-argument to back up your point of view. Present your reasons in order of importance: from most important to least important.

Concluding Sentence restates what is being argued for or against and why.

Useful transitional words and phrases

For giving reasons

first, second, third, another, next, last, finally, because, since, for

For counter-argument

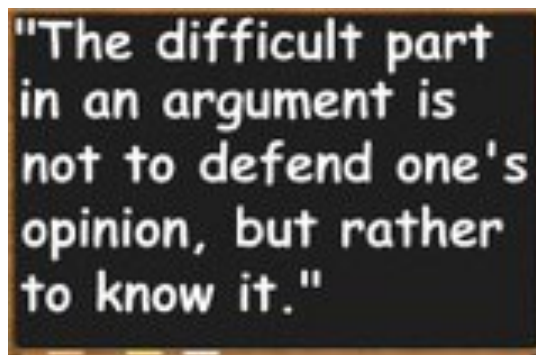
but, however, of course, nevertheless, although, despite

For concluding

therefore, as a result, in conclusion, thus

Examples of questions requiring an argument paragraph

1. Are career discussions between supervisors and employees important?
2. 'UV intensity is the most important factor in skin cancer fatalities.' Do you agree?
3. Do epidemiological studies have limitations? *The difficult part in an argument is not to defend one's opinion, but rather to know it.*



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(Andre Maurois, quoted in Frederic B. Wilcox, *A Little Book of Aphorisms* 1947)
<http://grammar.about.com/od/ab/g/argmterm.htm>)

Sample paragraph 1

‘UV intensity is the most important factor in skin cancer fatalities.’ Do you agree?

UV intensity is not the most important factor in skin cancer fatalities. While residents of Colorado (mean elevation of 2.1 km) have always been subjected to the highest UV intensities in the United States, Colorado has one of the lowest skin cancer fatality rates of all the states. In contrast, New England, which has much lower UV intensities has a death rate from skin cancer 25% higher than it is in Colorado. In addition, although equatorial regions have higher UV intensities, the lowest reported skin cancer death rates in the world come from Mauritius (0.2 per 100,000) and Nicaragua (0.2 per 100,000). On the other hand, Ireland (2.64 per 100,000) has the world’s third highest rate. Evidence is strong that UV intensity is not the principal factor in determining the skin cancer death rate. Genetic factors, skin pigmentation, behavioural characteristics, medical facilities, broad straw hats, and sun screen lotion all have some influence on skin cancer fatalities.

Sample paragraph 2

Do epidemiological studies have limitations?

Epidemiological studies have severe limitations. Firstly, such studies can seldom be made in adherence to all the requirements of experimental science since the ‘objects’ being studied are people and they come with a variety of behaviours and appetites. Secondly, the study can take place only in the conditions that have occurred, and not in a laboratory re-creation of them where certain factors can be varied systematically to determine their influence and effect. Most seriously, epidemiological studies can take decades to be completed, so that by the time a positive result becomes evident, large numbers of workers may have been damaged or injured irreversibly. Hence, the identification of occupational disease cannot be allowed to rest on epidemiology alone — in effect, to a policy of ‘counting the victims’. It must be backed by experimentation and other methods of predicting the likely health impact on workers of new chemicals, processes or technologies.

