

# *Organizing Your Argument*

This presentation will cover :

## *Argument Organization*

- 1 What is an argument?
- 2 Why is organization important?
- 3 Why do you need a title?
- 4 What is an introduction?
- 5 What is a thesis statement?
- 6 What do body paragraphs involve?
- 7 What to write an conclusion?

# *What is an Argument?*

*An argument is a process of inquiry and persuasion that involves a claim backed by reasons and evidence in order to influence an audience.*

## **An argument involves ...**

- 1. Rhetorical situation:** consideration of purpose, audience, genre, constraints.
- 2. Stasis:** definition of the issue.
- 3. Claim:** statement of a specific, arguable, scoped thesis.
- 4. Reasons:** key lines of argument.
- 5. Evidence:** credible data, examples, testimony; cite it (logos).
- 6. Warrants:** Explicit “why this proves it” statements.
- 7. Counter + rebuttal:** anticipation of strongest objections; answer them.
- 8. Appeals & timing:** ethos (credibility), pathos (values), logos (proof), and kairos (fit the moment).

# *Why is Organization Important?*

The organization of an argument is important because ...

**Guides** an audience through your reasoning process.

**Offers** a clear explanation of each argued point.

**Demonstrates** the credibility of the writer.

# Organizing Your Argument: Outline



Title



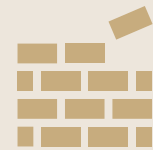
Introduction



Thesis statement



Body Paragraphs



Constructing topic sentences  
Building main points  
Countering the opposition



Conclusion

# *Why You Need a Title ?*

1. Introduces the topic of discussion to the audience.
  2. Generates reader interest in the argument. It can be helpful to use active verbs in titles.
- Example titles:

Cleaning Up Campus With Recycling Bins

Reducing Rubbish: Recycling on Campus

# *Considering Titles*

1. Imagine you just wrote a paper offering solutions to the problem of road rage.
2. Which do you consider to be the best title?
  - Road Rage
  - Can't Drive 55

Road Rage: Curing our Highway Epidemic

# *What is an Introduction?*

1. The introduction acquaints the reader with the topic and purpose of the paper.
2. An introduction offers a plan for the ensuing argument.
3. Consider the following.

**Introduction:** Tell them what you're going to tell them

**Body:** Tell them.

**Conclusion:** Tell them what you told them.

# *Methods for Constructing an Introduction*

1. Start with a story or anecdote	A short narrative that illustrates the issue.
2. Use a striking fact or statistic	evidence that shows urgency or importance.
3. Ask a question	A link between your audience and the problem
4. Offer a quotation	An authoritative voice to frame the topic.
5. Define a key term or concept	Clarification of important ideas
6. Describe a scene or situation	Setting of the context
7. State the problem	The issue moving toward your thesis
8. Preview your main points	A roadmap of how the argument will unfold

# *What is a Thesis Statement?*



Most important sentence in your paper.



*The central claim or controlling idea of a text.*



*Your position on a topic and gives readers a sense of direction.*



It lets the reader know **the main idea** of the paper.



It answers the question: **“What am I trying to prove?”**



Not a factual statement, but a **claim** that has to be proven.



A claim that needs **reasons and evidence** to be supported.

# *Role of a Thesis Statement*



The **thesis statement** should guide your reader through your argument.



It is **generally located** in the introduction of the paper.



A thesis statement may also be located within the body of the paper or in the conclusion, depending upon the purpose or argument of the paper.

# *Thesis Practice*

Choose a thesis for an argument about the need for V-chips in television sets:

- Parents, often too busy to watch television shows with their families, can monitor their children's viewing habits with the aid of the V-chip.
- To help parents monitor their children's viewing habits, the V-chip should be a required feature for television sets sold in the U.S.
- This paper will describe a V-chip and examine the uses of the V-chip in American-made television sets.

# *Body Paragraphs and Topic Sentences*

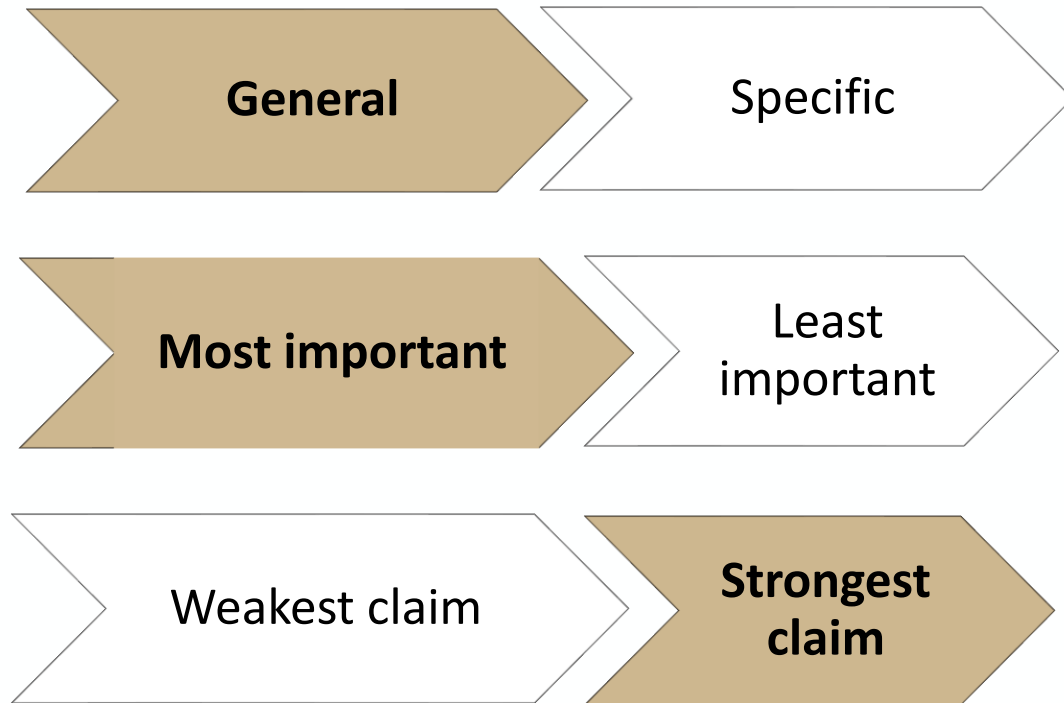
## Features of Body Paragraphs

- Build up on the claims made in the introductory paragraph(s)
- Are organized with the use of topic sentences that illustrate the main idea of each paragraph

**Tip:** Offering a brief explanation of the history or recent developments of a topic within the early body paragraphs can help the audience become familiarized with your topic and the complexity of the issue.

# *Body Paragraphs*

Paragraphs may be ordered in several ways, depending upon the topic and purpose of your argument.



# *Research in Body Paragraphs*



Researched material can aid you in proving the claims of your argument and disproving oppositional claims.



Be sure to **use your research to support the claims** made in your topic sentences—make your research work to prove your argument.

# *Offering a Counterargument*

Addressing the claims of the opposition is an important component in building a convincing argument.

- It **demonstrates your credibility** as a writer—you have researched multiple sides of the argument and have come to an informed decision.
- It **shows you have considered other points of view** - that other points of view are valid and reasonable.

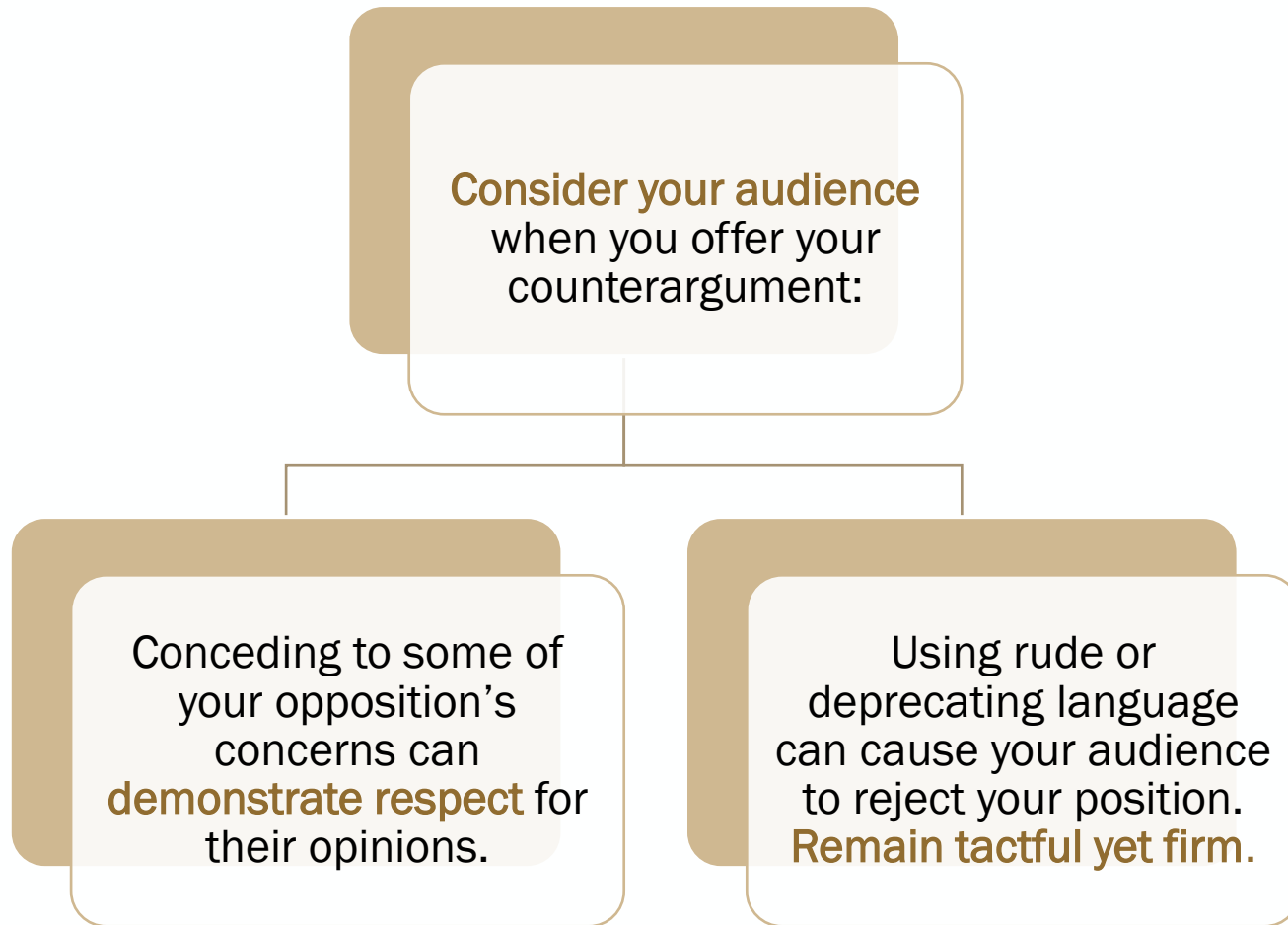
# Locating a Counterargument

Counterarguments may be located at **various locations** within your body paragraphs. You may choose to:

Integrated	Sequential
Build each of your <b>main points as a contrast</b> to oppositional claims.	Offer a counterargument <b>after you have articulated your main claims.</b>

Placing counterarguments **strategically** Builds ethos (fairness), logos (logic), pathos (respect for concerns)

# *Effective Counterarguments*



# *What to write an effective conclusion?*

1

**Reemphasize main points** → remind readers of your thesis and key arguments.

2

**Call to action / future speculation** → when appropriate, encourage next steps or reflection.

3

**Avoid new claims** → conclusions should synthesize, not introduce new arguments.

4

**Echo introduction** → create a sense of closure by linking back to your opening

# *References*

Aristotle. (2007). *On rhetoric: A theory of civic discourse* (G. A. Kennedy, Trans., 2nd ed.). Oxford University Press. (Original work published ca. 4th century BCE)

Johnson-Sheehan, R., & Paine, C. (2018). *Argument today* (3rd ed.). Pearson.

Johnson-Sheehan, R., & Paine, C. (2022). *Writing today* (5th ed.). Pearson.

# *Thank You*

Purdue OWL

Krach Leadership Center

Web: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>

Phone: (765) 494-3723

Email: [writing.lab@purdue.edu](mailto:writing.lab@purdue.edu)



Purdue OWL<sup>®</sup>