

Revision checklist for argument or position papers

In argument or position papers, writers take stands on debatable issues, such as requiring comprehensive examinations for graduation, imposing curfews for teenagers, or changing the electoral college. Such papers aim to get readers to think differently about a certain issue or to persuade them to take a certain stance. Writers of argument or position papers should envision skeptical audiences and build arguments that are strong enough to stand up to opponents' views. As they write, they should anticipate readers' objections, refuting them or conceding points while indicating, for example, that there are more important issues to be considered.

- Is the claim or proposition—what the writer is trying to prove—clearly stated?
- Are all assertions supported by evidence?
- Is the evidence—facts, interpretations of facts, opinions—appropriate? Data should be accurate, recent, and sufficient. Sources cited should be reliable.
- Does the arrangement of evidence make sense? Does it emphasize the most important issues? Are there more effective ways of arranging the evidence?
- Are facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, and expert opinions placed properly? Are they used in the appropriate context?
- Is the evidence carefully documented?
- Is the reasoning sound?
- Has the writer avoided all logical fallacies?
- Are terms that might be controversial or ambiguous adequately defined?
- Have opposing arguments been considered and dealt with adequately?