

# The Interactive Argumentative Outline

This handout is designed for students who are writing a standard argumentative essay and are having trouble with structure, unity, and focus. By completing this worksheet, tutees will have both a tactile connection and a visual representation of how their essay should look, providing them with a physical “roadmap” that can be referenced throughout the writing process. Additionally, this handout may also be relevant to students who have already finished a draft of their essay and need to perhaps re-evaluate the format of their work as well as main points. Although an “incomplete” handout on outlining, these pages are generally meant to be filled out as a portion of the brainstorming and prewrite process.

**Background information:** Inform the reader about the topic, get them interested! Why should they care? What is so special about this debate? Why is it relevant? Who is debating? Brief summary of the issue or topic that doesn't give too much away about your points.

**Thesis- State Your Claim!** Should have three elements, mention the authors or articles discussed, state your claim, and then list your reasons (preferably one sentence, sometimes can be two): EX: America should adopt universal health care because it will save the country money, help make the healthcare system easier to use, and allow people to live longer happier lives.

**Body Paragraph 1: Reason #1 (Weakest point)**

EX: Universal health care should be adopted by the US because it will save the government and taxpayers money.

**Supporting Evidence:** EX: “According to studies done by the CBO, a single-payer universal health care system could save the US between \$100 billion and \$200 billion annually” (Johnson).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



## The Interactive Argumentative Outline

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Body Paragraph 2:</b><br>Reason #2 (Second Strongest Point)  | <b>Supporting Evidence:</b><br>1.<br><br>2.<br><br>3. |
| <b>Body Paragraph 3:</b><br>Reason #3 (Strongest Point)   | <b>Supporting Evidence:</b><br>1.<br><br>2.<br><br>3. |
| <b>Body Paragraph 4: Address and Refute Opposing Voices- Counter Argument:</b> Why do people disagree with your argument? Who are they? Why do they care? What do they think? Why do they feel that way? What questions might your reader have at this point? Why are these dissenting voices wrong? What makes your argument stronger or more compelling? Make sure to: Introduce opponent's side, state your side, refute these doubting voices. EX: Critics believe that the US should not adopt universal health care because it will cause an increase in taxes. They are often afraid that this will take money out of their pocket to pay for other people. While raising important issues, these individuals are wrong because..... |   |



# The Interactive Argumentative Outline

**Conclusion: Restate your thesis**

**Revisit main point one and its overall meaning**

**Revisit main point two and its overall meaning**

**Revisit main point three and its overall meaning**

**End by connecting to the real world, the past, a worldview, or specific emotion.** Should be thoughtful, fun, and wrap the essay in a nice bow. Try reading it our loud, does it feel like it's concluded or did it end in a way that needs another sentence?

**Pitfalls:** Avoid the first person, repetitious words, personal accounts, slang, padding the essay with quotes, "blending" body paragraphs together, unclear statements, too much evidence and no analysis, starting or ending a paragraph with a quote, and having an unclear thesis!

--

The following works were used during the creation of this handout: [The Purdue Owl: Argumentative Papers](#) and [SCAA Handout: Shape of an Essay by Luis DeGuzman](#).



(510) 885-3674  
[www.csueastbay.edu/scaa](http://www.csueastbay.edu/scaa)  
[scaa@csueastbay.edu](mailto:scaa@csueastbay.edu)