

# Opposing viewpoints on wal-mart essay sample

[Business](#), [Company](#)



When you hear the words low prices it is hard not to think of Wal-Mart. The company that revolutionized discount shopping. But what happens behind the scenes? How is it that the world's largest retail chain can offer so many deals? In the last 20 years the anti-Walmart campaign seems to continuously be on the minds of many. Sebastian Mallaby and Karen Olsson share radically different views on the ethics of the Wal-Mart Corporation. In "Up Against Wal-Mart" we are forced to believe that Wal mart is a vicious company that shows no remorse when firing employees and cutting their benefits. The author produces factual information and eyewitness accounts pointing to these horrible deeds that the large corporation run by money hungry businessmen have cheated many employees out of proper wages, proper benefits and even their jobs. While Sebastian Mallaby depicts Wal-Mart like the average American company. In his article "Progressive Wal-Mart. Really." He states that while Wal-Mart is responsible for many questionable deeds, they are merely doing what they have to in order to survive.

Within Karen Olsson's "Up Against Wal-Mart" logos the author throws numbers at the audience to appeal to our logical sense of financial instability created by the poor benefits and wages Wal-Mart gives its employees. This is the author's way of depicting the difficult if not impossible means that these families live. This article is very clearly anti Wal mart, mentioning not one instance of any "good deed" done by the corporation. Using each of the first-hand account the author shows a different aspect of the cruel mistreatment of employees. Even telling us about Wal mart's tendency to hire a major company to bust up any union supporters in the corporation.

Using logos the author shows us all the numbers that appeal to our financial reasoning, presenting these numbers that lead us to the conclusion that the workers at Walmart are living with impossible means. It implies that Walmart is more concerned with profit than the welfare of their employees. Olsson quotes that “ Walmart’s domestic revenue accounts for 2 percent of the countries domestic income (Olsson, 2005, p. 608)”. At the same time most employees make a paycheck bimonthly, which only adds up to about 550 (Olsson pp. 607 2005)”.

The author’s purpose is very strongly fortified by this. Strengthening the overall idea. While these numbers appeal to our logic they are also used by the author to appeal to our emotions when she proceeds to tell us how the company’s healthcare plan cost so much that most employees cannot afford it. On page 607 we learn that \$85 dollars is deducted from each paycheck for a family of 2 (Olsson 2005)”. This is an effective use of pathos as she tells us about Jennifer McLaughlin and her son gage, who because of the expense is forced to rely on Medicaid as their only insurance. Which only covers a miniscule amount of the expense of basic health care. This makes us feel sorry for the single mother and her child. Overall, using these facts and the union busting tactics of Walmart’s corporate headquarters. The author uses ethos to invoke a sense of sympathy for the workers and then compound it by telling how the attempts by workers to improve these working conditions has been met by extreme opposition from union busters buried in several stores in each state.

“ A former union buster for Walmart described the policy at Walmart as “ zero Tolerance” (Olsson pp. 209 2005).” By doing this we are inclined to believe that despite every attempt of improvement the corporation refuses to acknowledge or do anything to improve conditions, because it would cost the company a great amount more to operate. This shows that Walmart cares about profits over people which is ethically wrong, which evokes that exact feeling in the audience. This article very clearly presents the negative aspects of the ethics used by Walmart to keep everything at the lowest cost possible, which results in poor working conditions. On the opposite end of the spectrum some would say that for the largest corporation in America to make a profit it is impossible to give employees the same pay they would receive working for a smaller company. This idea is represented in Sebastian Mallaby’s “ Progressive Wal-Mart. Really.”. Walmart may be a large company that treats its employees badly and does everything it can to prevent a movement to change that. However are they any different than other companies?

This is the standpoint of Author Sebastian Mallaby in his article “ Progressive Wal-Mart. Really.” Mallaby explains the business choices made by the company from the aspect of comparing them to other companies similar in size. While these choices may not be ethically sound they do not stand out from other corporations. The author uses logos on page 621 very similarly to the way that Olsson uses logos in the Opposing article. Numbers are being thrown around to show us how much Walmart saves it employees on grocery costs and other items. Mallaby states “ 5% of its workers are on Medicaid (Mallaby pp. 622, 2003)”. Then later explains that it is “ a typical level for

large retail firms (Mallaby pp. 622 2003)". This implies that Walmart has initiatives that encourage employees to save money and spend frugally. That does however require the employees to spend their money at Wal-Mart to receive these benefits. The company has been accused of paying "\$4. 7 billion less per year (Mallaby pp. 621, 2003.)".

However the company saves consumers more money per year in savings, " 50 billion- plus on food...never mind much larger sums that they save altogether (Mallaby pp. 621-622, 2003)". The Author uses this information as a way of painting Walmart as associate friendly, or as the money saved makes up for the minimal wages the company pays. Using these numbers the author is trying to make us see the benefits above the shortcomings, to make us feel like Walmart does what they can to help, even though they can't pay their employees more. Mallaby uses Pathos when empathizing with Wal-Mart critics by saying " Companies like Wal-Mart are not run by saints. They can treat workers and competitors roughly (pp. 622) by doing so we are inclined to believe that even though these things may be true the author has facts to show how Wal mart redeems itself in some way, making us feel like the company at least tries to do something to better the working conditions. This induces empathy and almost a sort of encouraging pride.

Ethically the author is trying to encourage us to believe that it is a common thing by not singling out Walmart and saying other companies are just as responsible for the poor working conditions in retail firms. He does this by making us think about the struggle of running a private retail firm successfully. This makes us relate to Walmart and empathize with them due

to our own experiences. Mallaby presents us with a wide spread of information supporting the necessity or reasoning behind the questionable choices made by Wal-Mart. His writing is very much like a rebuttal to the anti-Wal-Mart campaign which is supported in Karen Olsson's article. Which takes a direct stance in opposition to the same behavior Mallaby is defending.

#### Reference Page

Olsson, K. (2005). *Up Against Wal-Mart* (2nd ed., pp. 602-619). New York: W. M. Norton & Company.

Mallaby, S. (2003). *Progressive Wal-Mart. Really.* (2nd ed., pp. 620-623). New York: W. M. Norton & Company.