

Writing a position paper

[Law](#), [Evidence](#)



A position paper (also called a point of view paper) is an essay that presents the author's opinion about an issue. Like a debate, a position paper presents one side of an arguable opinion about an issue. The goal of a position paper is to convince the audience that your opinion is valid and defensible. Ideas that you are considering need to be carefully examined in choosing a topic, developing your argument, and organizing your paper.

It is very important to ensure that you are addressing all sides of the issue and presenting it in a manner that is easy for your audience to understand. Your job is to take one side of the argument and persuade your audience that you have well-founded knowledge of the topic being presented. It is important to support your argument with evidence to ensure the validity of your claims, as well as to refute the counterclaims to show that you are well informed about both sides. Organization - Sample Outline for a position paper I. Introduction A. Introduce the topic B. Provide background on the topic to explain why it is important C.

Assert the thesis (your view of the issue) - Thesis statement -. II. Counter Argument A. Summarize the counterclaims B. Provide supporting information for counterclaims C. Refute the counterclaims D. Give evidence for argument III.

Your Argument A. Assert point #1 of your claims 1. Give your opinion 2. Provide support B. Assert point #2 of your claims 1. Give your opinion 2. Provide support C.

Assert point #3 of your claims 1. Give your opinion 2. Provide support IV.

Conclusion A. Restate your argument B. Provide a plan of action but do not

introduce new information I. Introduction Your introduction has a dual purpose: to indicate both the topic and your approach to it (your thesis statement), and to arouse your reader's interest in what you have to say.

One effective way of introducing a topic is to place it in context – to supply a kind of backdrop that will put it in perspective. You should discuss the area into which your topic fits, and then gradually lead into your specific field of discussion (re: your thesis statement). II. Counter Argument You can generate counterarguments by asking yourself what someone who disagrees with you might say about each of the points you've made or about your position as a whole. Once you have thought up some counterarguments, consider how you will respond to them--will you concede that your opponent has a point but explain why your audience should nonetheless accept your argument? Will you reject the counterargument and explain why it is mistaken? Either way, you will want to leave your reader with a sense that your argument is stronger than opposing arguments. When you are summarizing opposing arguments, be charitable. Present each argument fairly and objectively, rather than trying to make it look foolish.

You want to show that you have seriously considered the many sides of the issue, and that you are not simply attacking or mocking your opponents. It is usually better to consider one or two serious counterarguments in some depth, rather than to give a long but superficial list of many different counterarguments and replies. Conclusion Be sure that your reply is consistent with your original argument. If considering a counterargument changes your position, you will need to go back and revise your original

argument accordingly. III. Your Argument You may have more than 3 overall points to your argument, but you should not have fewer. IV.

Conclusion The simplest and most basic conclusion is one that restates the thesis in different words and then discusses its implications. **Stating Your Thesis** A thesis is a one-sentence statement about your topic. It's an assertion about your topic, something you claim to be true. Notice that a topic alone makes no such claim; it merely defines an area to be covered. To make your topic into a thesis statement, you need to make a claim about it, make it into a sentence. Look back over your materials--brainstorms, investigative notes, etc. --and think about what you believe to be true.

Think about what your readers want or need to know. Then write a sentence, preferably at this point, a simple one, stating what will be the central idea of your paper. The result should look something like this: Original Subject: an important issue in my major field Topic:

mediatechnologyeducationforcommunicationmajors Thesis: Theories of media technology deserve a more prominent place in this University's Communication program Or if your investigations led you to a different belief: Thesis: Communication majors at this University receive a solid background in theories of media technology It's always good to have a thesis you can believe in. Notice, though, that a sentence stating an obvious and indisputable truth won't work as a thesis: Thesis: This University has a Communication major. That's a complete sentence, and it asserts something to be true, but as a thesis it's a dead end. It's a statement of fact, pure and

simple, and requires little or nothing added. A good thesis asks to have more said about it.

It demands some proof. Your job is to show your reader that your thesis is true. Remember, you can't just pluck a thesis out of thin air. Even if you have remarkable insight concerning a topic, it won't be worth much unless you can logically and persuasively support it in the body of your essay. A thesis is the evolutionary result of a thinking process, not a miraculous creation. Formulating a thesis is not the first thing you do after reading the essay assignment. Deciding on a thesis does not come first.

Before you can come up with an argument on any topic, you have to collect and organize evidence, look for possible relationships between known facts (such as surprising contrasts or similarities), and think about the beneath-the-surface significance of these relationships. After this initial exploration of the question at hand, you can formulate a "working thesis," an argument that you think will make sense of the evidence but that may need adjustment along the way. In other words, do not show up at your Teacher's office hours expecting her to help you figure out your thesis statement and/or help organize your paper unless you have already done some research. Useful Transitions Transitions help you convey information clearly and concisely. Similarity - also, in the same way, just as ...

o too, likewise, similarly Exception/Contrast - but, however, in spite of, on the one hand ... on the other hand, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, in contrast, on the contrary, still, yet Sequence/Order - first, second, third, ... next, then, finally Time - after, afterward, at last, before, currently, during,

earlier, immediately, later, meanwhile, now, recently, simultaneously, subsequently, then Example - for example, for instance, namely, specifically, to illustrate Emphasis - even, indeed, in fact, of course, truly Place/Position - above, adjacent, below, beyond, here, in front, in back, nearby, there Cause and Effect - accordingly, consequently, hence, so, therefore, thus Additional Support or Evidence - additionally, again, also, and, as well, besides, equally important, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, then Conclusion/Summary - finally, in a word, in brief, in conclusion, in the end, in the final analysis, on the whole, thus, to conclude, to summarize, in sum, in summary Plagiarism and academic honesty Plagiarism is a form of stealing; as with other offences against the law, ignorance is no excuse.

The way to avoid plagiarism is to give credit where credit is due. If you are using someone else's idea, acknowledge it, even if you have changed the wording or just summarized the main points. To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you use

- another person's idea, opinion, or theory;
- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings--any pieces of information--that are not common knowledge;
- quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words; or
- paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.