

# Argumentative Essay Outline Templates

## Fill-in-the-Blank Templates for Classical, Toulmin & Rogerian Models

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### TEMPLATE 1: CLASSICAL (ARISTOTELIAN) MODEL

**Best for:** General academic essays, receptive audiences, traditional assignments

**Essay Topic:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Target Length:** \_\_\_\_\_ words | **Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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#### I. INTRODUCTION (150-200 words)

**A. Hook (Choose one strategy and fill in):**

☐ **Surprising Statistic:** \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Provocative Question:** \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Relevant Anecdote:** \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Bold Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Background Context (2-3 sentences explaining the issue):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Thesis Statement (Your position + main reasons):**

\_\_\_\_\_

*Example: "Universities should eliminate standardized test requirements because they perpetuate economic inequality, fail to predict academic success, and disadvantage qualified minority applicants."*

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#### II. BODY PARAGRAPH 1 - First Main Argument (200-250 words)

**A. Topic Sentence (State your first main argument):**

*Example: "Standardized tests perpetuate economic inequality by favoring wealthy students with access to expensive test preparation."*

**B. Evidence (Fill in 2-3 pieces of supporting evidence):**

**Evidence 1:** - Source:

Data/Quote:

**Evidence 2:** - Source:

Data/Quote:

**Evidence 3 (if needed):** - Source:

Data/Quote:

**C. Analysis (Explain how evidence proves your point):**

Why this evidence matters:

How it supports thesis:

**D. Rhetorical Appeals Used:**

☐ **Ethos (Credibility):** How?

☐ **Logos (Logic):** How?

☐ **Pathos (Emotion):** How?

**E. Transition to Next Paragraph:**

*Example: "Beyond economic barriers, standardized tests also fail to predict actual college success."*

**III. BODY PARAGRAPH 2 - Second Main Argument (200-250 words)**

**A. Topic Sentence:**

**B. Evidence:**

**Evidence 1:** - Source:

\_\_\_\_\_ -  
Data/Quote:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Evidence 2:** - Source:

\_\_\_\_\_ -  
Data/Quote:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**C. Analysis:**

Why this matters:

\_\_\_\_\_

Connection to thesis:

\_\_\_\_\_

**D. Rhetorical Appeals Used:**

☐ Ethos:

\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Logos:

\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Pathos:

\_\_\_\_\_

**E. Transition:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**IV. BODY PARAGRAPH 3 - Third Main Argument  
(200-250 words)**

**A. Topic Sentence:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Evidence:**

**Evidence 1:** - Source:

\_\_\_\_\_ -  
Data/Quote:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Evidence 2:** - Source:

\_\_\_\_\_ -  
Data/Quote:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**C. Analysis:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**D. Primary Appeal (Usually Logos):**

\_\_\_\_\_

### E. Transition to Refutation:

*Example: "Despite these clear problems, some argue standardized tests provide objective comparison."*

## V. REFUTATION - Address Counterarguments (250-300 words)

### A. State Strongest Counterargument:

Critics argue that:

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### B. Explain Why Some Hold This View:

They believe this because:

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### C. Acknowledge Any Validity (builds credibility):

While it's true that:

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### D. Refute with Evidence:

However, this argument fails because:

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**Supporting Evidence for Refutation:** - Source:

\_\_\_\_\_ - Data:

\_\_\_\_\_

### E. Transition to Conclusion:

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## VI. CONCLUSION (150-200 words)

### A. Restated Thesis (Use different wording than introduction):

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### B. Brief Summary of Three Main Arguments:

1. First argument summary:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Second argument summary:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Third argument summary:

\_\_\_\_\_

### C. Broader Implications or Call to Action:

Why this matters beyond essay:

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What should happen next:

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### D. Strong Closing Sentence (Leave lasting impression):

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*Example: "The question isn't whether to eliminate biased testing, but how quickly we can build fairer admissions."*

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#### CLASSICAL MODEL CHECKLIST:

☐ Hook grabs attention immediately ☐ Background provides necessary context ☐ Thesis clearly states position + reasons ☐ 3 distinct arguments (no overlap) ☐ Each argument has 2-3 pieces of evidence ☐ Analysis explains "so what?" for each argument ☐ Used ethos, pathos, logos strategically ☐ Addressed strongest counterargument ☐ Refuted counter with evidence ☐ Conclusion restates thesis differently ☐ Summary is brief (not repetitive) ☐ Closing sentence is memorable

## TEMPLATE 2: TOULMIN MODEL

**Best for:** Complex issues, policy analysis, topics without absolute answers

**Essay Topic:**

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**Target Length:** \_\_\_\_\_ words | **Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### I. INTRODUCTION (150-200 words)

**Hook and Background:**

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### II. CLAIM - State Your Position (100-150 words)

**A. Your Main Claim (Thesis):**

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*Example: "The United States should adopt universal healthcare because it improves health outcomes while reducing overall costs."*

**B. Why This Claim Matters:**

This issue is important because:

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**C. Scope of Your Claim:**

This claim applies to:

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### **III. GROUNDS - Evidence Supporting Claim (300-350 words)**

#### **Primary Evidence #1:**

**Source:**

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**Data/Fact:**

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**Why this supports claim:**

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#### **Primary Evidence #2:**

**Source:**

---

**Data/Fact:**

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**Why this supports claim:**

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#### **Primary Evidence #3:**

**Source:**

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**Data/Fact:**

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**Why this supports claim:**

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#### **Summary: How This Evidence Directly Supports Your Claim**

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### **IV. WARRANT - Reasoning Connection (250-300 words)**

#### **A. Explain WHY Your Evidence Supports Your Claim:**

The logical connection is:

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*Example: "Better health outcomes indicate a superior healthcare system because the*

*primary purpose of healthcare is to improve and maintain population health.”*

**B. Underlying Assumptions:**

We assume that:

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**C. Logical Principle at Work:**

The reasoning follows this principle:

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**D. Why This Reasoning Is Valid:**

This makes sense because:

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**V. BACKING - Support for Your Warrant (250-300 words)**

**A. Additional Evidence Supporting Your Reasoning:**

Source:

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Evidence:

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**B. Expert Testimony or Research Validating Your Warrant:**

Expert/Study:

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What they say:

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**C. Real-World Examples Demonstrating This Principle:**

Example 1:

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Example 2:

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**D. Why Your Reasoning Is Credible:**

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**VI. QUALIFIER - Acknowledge Limitations (200-250 words)**

### A. Add Qualifying Words to Your Claim:

☐ "In most cases" ☐ "Probably" ☐ "Usually" ☐ "Likely" ☐ "Generally"

### B. Modified Claim with Qualifier:

Example: "Universal healthcare would *likely* improve health outcomes for *most* Americans."

### C. Conditions Under Which Your Claim Holds True:

This claim is valid when:

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This claim applies to:

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### D. Why Qualifier Strengthens (Not Weakens) Your Argument:

Acknowledging limits shows:

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## VII. REBUTTAL - Address Exceptions (300-350 words)

### A. Exceptions to Your Claim:

Your claim might not hold when:

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### B. Strongest Counterargument:

Opponents argue that:

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**Evidence they use:** - Source:

---

- Data:

### C. Why This Objection Exists:

They hold this view because:

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### D. Refutation - Why Counterargument Fails:

This objection is insufficient because:

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**Your Evidence Against Counter:** - Source:

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- Data:



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### E. Why Your Qualified Claim Still Stands:

Even considering exceptions:

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## VIII. CONCLUSION (150-200 words)

### A. Restated Claim with Qualifier:

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### B. Summary of Grounds-Warrant-Backing Chain:

The evidence shows:

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Which means:

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Supported by:

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### C. Significance of Your Qualified Position:

This matters because:

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### D. Implications for Policy/Action:

Based on this analysis:

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#### TOULMIN MODEL CHECKLIST:

☐ Claim is clear and specific ☐ Grounds provide substantial evidence ☐ Warrant explains reasoning connection ☐ Backing supports warrant with additional proof ☐ Qualifier acknowledges limitations appropriately ☐ Rebuttal addresses exceptions and counters ☐ All 6 components present ☐ Logical flow from claim through rebuttal ☐ Analytical tone maintained throughout ☐ Complex issue handled with nuance ☐ Evidence is credible and recent ☐ Reasoning is sound and explained

## TEMPLATE 3: ROGERIAN MODEL

**Best for:** Controversial topics, hostile audiences, finding compromise

**Essay Topic:**

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**Target Length:** \_\_\_\_\_ words | **Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **I. INTRODUCTION - Establish Neutral Ground (150-200 words)**

### **A. Identify Problem Objectively (No position yet):**

The issue is:

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### **B. Establish Shared Concern for Both Sides:**

Everyone agrees that:

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Both sides care about:

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### **C. Why This Issue Matters to All:**

This is important because:

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### **D. Neutral Tone Statement (No thesis yet - just setting up dialogue):**

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*Example: "Both supporters and opponents of gun control want to reduce violence and protect constitutional rights."*

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## **II. OPPOSING VIEW - Present Their Position Fairly (250-300 words)**

### **A. Introduce Opposing Position Respectfully:**

Many people believe that:

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### **B. Their Strongest Argument #1:**

**Their position:**

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**Evidence they use:** - Source:

---

Data/reasoning: 

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### **C. Their Strongest Argument #2:**

**Their position:**

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**Evidence they use:** - Source:

---

Data/reasoning: 

---

#### **D. Their Strongest Argument #3:**

**Their position:**

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**Evidence they use:** - Source:

Data/reasoning: 

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#### **E. Why They Hold This Position (Show understanding):**

They value:

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They're concerned about:

---

They believe this because:

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#### **F. Present Without Judgment:**

☐ Used neutral language (avoid "claim," "merely believe") ☐ Presented their strongest arguments ☐ No mockery or dismissiveness ☐ Showed genuine understanding

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### **III. STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING - Validate Concerns (150-200 words)**

#### **A. Acknowledge Validity in Their Position:**

These concerns about

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are legitimate because:

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#### **B. Identify Common Values:**

Both sides want:

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We all value:

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Everyone seeks:

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#### **C. Find Shared Goals:**

We're all trying to:

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The common goal is:

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#### **D. Show Genuine Understanding:**

It's understandable why:

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Given \_\_\_\_\_, their position makes sense.

### **E. Build Trust Through Empathy:**

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*Example: "Concerns about government overreach are grounded in legitimate historical precedent and constitutional principles."*

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## **IV. YOUR POSITION - Present Your View (300-400 words)**

### **A. State Your Position (Finally):**

While respecting these concerns:

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### **B. Frame as Complementary (Not Oppositional):**

This perspective adds:

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Rather than contradicting, it: \_\_\_\_\_

This approach also achieves:

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### **C. Your Main Argument #1:**

**Your position:**

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**Evidence:** - Source:

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- Data:

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### **D. Your Main Argument #2:**

**Your position:**

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**Evidence:** - Source:

---

- Data:

---

### **E. Your Main Argument #3:**

**Your position:**

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---

**Evidence:** - Source:

---

- Data:

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### **F. Connect to Shared Values (Identified in Section III):**

This approach honors the shared value of:

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This also addresses the common concern about:

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### **G. Maintain Respectful Tone:**

☐ No attacking opposition ☐ Using inclusive language (“we,” “our,” “together”) ☐  
Emphasizing cooperation over conflict

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## **V. COMPROMISE/MIDDLE GROUND - Win-Win Solution (250-300 words)**

### **A. Propose Middle Ground Solution:**

What if we:

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*Example: “What if gun safety measures focused on background checks and training while protecting ownership rights?”*

### **B. How This Addresses THEIR Concerns:**

This solution protects:

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It prevents:

---

It ensures:

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### **C. How This Addresses YOUR Concerns:**

While also ensuring:

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And promoting:

---

It achieves:

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### **D. Benefits to Both Sides:**

**Opponents gain: -**

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**Proponents gain: -**

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### **E. Shared Benefits to All:**

Everyone benefits from:

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### **F. Path Forward Together:**

By working cooperatively:

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We can achieve:

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The next steps are:

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## **VI. CONCLUSION (150-200 words)**

### **A. Restate Shared Values:**

We all value:

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Everyone wants:

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### **B. Emphasize Common Ground Found:**

Despite disagreements, we agree on:

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### **C. Proposed Solution Summary:**

The compromise of

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benefits everyone by:

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### **D. Call for Dialogue and Understanding:**

Moving forward:

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Let's work together to:

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### **E. Hopeful Closing (Not divisive):**

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*Example: "By respecting each other's concerns and finding practical middle ground, we can address this issue in ways that honor everyone's values."*

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### **ROGERIAN MODEL CHECKLIST:**

☐ Introduction establishes neutral ground ☐ Stated shared concerns upfront ☐ Presented opposing view fairly and completely ☐ Used their strongest arguments (not strawmen) ☐ Showed genuine understanding of their position ☐ Acknowledged validity in their concerns

☐ Identified common values/goals ☐ Presented your view as complementary ☐  
Connected your position to shared values ☐ Proposed genuine compromise ☐ Showed  
benefits for both sides ☐ Maintained respectful, empathetic tone throughout ☐ No attacks  
or dismissiveness ☐ Called for cooperation (not capitulation)

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## GENERAL TIPS FOR ALL MODELS:

### Before You Begin:

☐ Choose model based on topic and audience ☐ Research both sides thoroughly ☐  
Gather 5-8 credible sources minimum ☐ Identify strongest counterarguments ☐ Plan your  
structure before writing

### While Outlining:

☐ Be specific (no vague placeholders) ☐ Include actual evidence and sources ☐ Note  
transitions between sections ☐ Check for logical flow ☐ Ensure no repetition between  
arguments

### After Outlining:

☐ Review for completeness ☐ Verify all evidence is credible ☐ Check thesis clarity ☐  
Confirm counterarguments addressed ☐ Ready to draft!

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## DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCES:

**These templates are available at:** [www.5staressays.com/blog/argumentative-essay-guide/](http://www.5staressays.com/blog/argumentative-essay-guide/)

- Classical Model Template (PDF)
- Toulmin Model Template (PDF)
- Rogerian Model Template (PDF)
- Model Comparison Chart (PDF)
- Evidence & Citation Tracker (Excel)
- Transition Phrase Guide (PDF)

**Need more help?** - [Read our complete writing guide](#) - [Study annotated examples](#) - [Browse 350+ essay topics](#) - [Learn about argument types](#)

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### How to Use These Templates:

1. **Print** or fill out digitally
2. **Choose** model based on topic/audience
3. **Complete** each section thoroughly
4. **Use** as roadmap while drafting
5. **Check off** sections as completed

**Time Investment:** - Template completion: 30-45 minutes - Time saved during drafting: 2-3 hours - Grade improvement: 10-15 points average

**Remember:** A solid outline prevents hours of revision. Invest time upfront for better results!

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