

Position Paper

Format

Position Paper Format

- First Paragraph (cf. a funnel)
- “You never get a second chance to make a first impression”
- “They don’t have to read it.”
- Introduce, focus, captivating sentence
- Elicit interest, concern
- Lead the reader to the thesis

Position Paper: Thesis Sentence

- LAST SENTENCE of first paragraph
- Boldly, clearly, firmly state the position, the argument, the thesis of the paper
- Thesis statements that contain “should” or “must” generally lead to stronger writing than “is” statements
- “Is” tells what is wrong; “should” leads to a solution, a position

Position Paper: Body

- Develop the body, the pages, the paragraphs to organize your arguments
- Shape your arguments to support your thesis, to persuade the reader
- Begin with your BEST argument
- Support with facts, quotations, experiences, reasoning, pathos
- Cite your text and other sources

Position Paper: Body

- Cite sources according to any manual
- Cite sources in the text
- Use signal phrases (According to...; Noll argues...; Newton counters this argument by saying...; "...” Smith stressed.)
- Tell the readers enough (in the text) for them to find the source

Position Paper: Body

- Transitions aid coherence, guide the reader, show the author's control
- *Another, In addition, Furthermore, Next, Besides, Now that we have discussed...*
- Avoid the “paste pot” technique:
Placing/pasting arguments and quotations on the pages with little or no regard for order or direction

Position Paper: Con

- Your task: Support your view, the “pro”/for arguments for the thesis
- Offer, explain, deal with, refute the “con”/against arguments
- Reflect academic honesty, sincerity
- Gain credibility through candor
- Arguments convince; mere words confuse

Position Paper: Body

- Plan your arguments for the entire paper
- Involve yourself in the paper: Let the reader see that YOU are the writer
- Move toward the conclusion: the thesis
- Double check the little stuff: spelling, punctuation, sentence sense, paragraph development, and structure

Position Paper: Last Paragraph

- Think of an upside down funnel
- Paragraph one leads TO the thesis
- This paragraph leads FROM the thesis
- **Begin with the thesis statement**
- Lead from it, about five sentences
- Generalize comfortably
- Keep the reader's mind open