**Argumentative Paper Format and Outline Template**

**Introduction**

* 1 to 4 paragraphs (max)
* Purpose: To lay the foundation for proving an issue or argument and making your thesis/claim. This can include noting:
* Summary of the problem
* Definition of key terms
* Explanation of theories
* Provide a brief explanation of the theory or issue
* Note your claim at the end of your introductory paragraph

**Supporting Evidence Paragraph #1**

* ***Purpose of this paragraph***: To develop your argument. This is normally one paragraph, but it can be longer depending on the evidence presented. For the purposes of this class, keep this to 1 to 2 paragraphs.
* ***Topic sentence***: The topic sentence provides details for examples to help your reader understand why you are inserting the evidence that supports your claim. Your topic sentence is closely aligned with your thesis and works to introduce evidence to support your assertions.
* ***Explain your topic sentence***: Provide clarification of your topic sentence here if you see a need.
* ***Evidence introduction***: Insert your evidence with a brief introduction (As Dr. Smith stated, “…”)\_ or in a full sentence (To better understand the issue this data will help to illuminate…)
* ***State the evidence:*** What supporting evidence will you include to support or explain your topic sentence? You can paraphrase or quote your sources directly. This can include reasons, examples, facts, statistics, quotations, or paraphrases.
* ***Explain evidence***: How should your readers interpret the evidence you just gave them? Don’t leave the information hanging without noting why you inserted the evidence. You will want to be as direct as possible with your readers regarding the meaning of the evidence inserted as tied to your claim. This statement can be an opinion and is typically about one to three sentences in length. End this paragraph with a concluding sentence that reasserts the point of the topic sentence and helps your readers to see the overall claim you are making in the paper.

**Supporting Evidence Paragraph #2, 3, 4, etc.**

* (have at least 4 supporting evidence paragraphs)
* Repeat above instruction for paragraph 1

**Counter Argument Paragraph**

* ***Purpose of this paragraph***: To acknowledge and anticipate opposition to your claim or thesis while making yourself seem objective and knowledgeable about the topic.
* ***Length***: 1 to 3 paragraphs
* ***Commentary***: Note what possible objections your reader might counter your argument with. Insert two to three arguments here and counter them with evidence.
* ***Conclusion***: End your counter argument with a concluding sentence that reasserts your argument as a whole.

**Common Ground Paragraph**

* ***Purpose of this paragraph***: To make connections between your claim or thesis and any remaining counterarguments that you didn’t address OR minor points from the major counterargument that you addressed.
* ***Length***: 1 to 3 paragraphs
* ***Commentary***: Note the common ground that you and the opposition share on the topic and note some aspects of their reasoning to show you understand the issues.
* ***Conclusion***: Explain how your approach solves the problem or includes the common ground.

**Conclusion – Part 1 – Summary Paragraph**

* ***Purpose of this paragraph:*** Circle back and remind your readers of your argument and the points made in your body paragraphs. This resembles the conclusion you might have used in a previous English class while writing a persuasive paper. You will restate your thesis here coupled with supporting evidence.
* ***What’s at stake?***: To show you have thought deeply about your topic, explain who or what will be impacted negatively if your approach is not acted on or followed. This paragraph should tell your readers why we should care about your thesis and supporting evidence.
* ***Summary:*** Remember to incorporate vivid language and use rhetorical strategies of development to leave a strong impression on your reader. You are informing your readers of what they should take away from your work and remember for future use. Your conclusion works to show your reader a more complex means of looking at your argument and the issue you wrote about.
* ***Final statement (Sum up conclusion):*** Be careful about introducing completely new information into your paper; instead, draw inferences in your conclusion that develop from your argument.

Outline Template

Introduction: (Note your working thesis here)

Body Paragraphs:

Supporting Evidence Body Paragraph #1

(Note topic sentence and evidence)

Supporting Evidence Body Paragraph #2

(Note topic sentence and evidence)

Supporting Evidence Body Paragraph #3

(Note topic sentence and evidence)

Supporting Evidence Body Paragraph #4

(Note topic sentence and evidence)

Counter Argument Body Paragraph #5

(Note topic sentence and evidence)

Common Ground Body Paragraph #6

(Note topic sentence and evidence)

Conclusion

What’s at stake?

Summary

Final statement

**(Insert APA formatted references on the next page)**