

Outline of an Argumentative Essay-Classical Pattern

- I. **Introduction**
 - A. **Background Information:** basic information about the issue and the position being argued.
 - B. **Thesis Statement:** states the position to be argued in the essay

- II. **Reasons that Support the Thesis Statement**
 - A. **Reason/Argument 1 (main point #1)**
 1. Supporting evidence
 2. Supporting evidence

 - B. **Reason/Argument 2 (main point #2)**
 1. Supporting evidence
 2. Supporting evidence

 - C. **Reason/Argument 3 (main point #3)**
 1. Supporting evidence
 2. Supporting evidence

- III. **Counter Arguments and Responses to Them**
 - A. **Mention the arguments from the other side of the issue if there could be an opposing interpretation.**
 - B. **Briefly refute the other side's arguments**

- IV. **Conclusion**

Thesis Statements (courtesy of the History Writing Center)

A short essay should contain a thesis statement in its first paragraph. The thesis statement informs the reader, as soon as possible, what argument the paper will make. A thesis statement may require more than one sentence. In deciding where to place the thesis statement and how to introduce it, consider what a typical UW student would need to know to understand your thesis.

A good thesis statement will probably have these characteristics:

- ⊗ It is clearly and forcefully supported by the rest of the paper, and all of the evidence pertains to it.
- ⊗ It is precise, and can be understood on its own, before one has read the essay.
- ⊗ It is precise, and not so general and vague that it does not express an arguable position.

A List of Dos and Don'ts for Paper Writing

Do

italicize or underline book titles, including abbreviated titles
put quotes that are four lines or longer in block quote format (CMS: single space the quote and indent evenly on both sides)
cite your sources using parenthetical citations or footnotes/endnotes [see below]
use first person plural (we) or third person (he/she/one)

Don't

use contractions (don't, won't, would've, it's, he's, etc.)
use its' (no apostrophe is necessary when indicating a possessive-so just "its")
use second person (you) or first person singular (I)
use "I believe" or "I feel"-as this is your paper, there is no need to state that this is your personal opinion
split infinitive verb forms-ex. "to accurately judge" should be "to judge accurately"

A good, and inexpensive, text to refer to for grammatical questions is Strunk and White, *Elements of Style*.

Citation Guidelines

CMS-Chicago Manual of Style-is the style manual used by historians. You may also want to refer to Kate Turabian's *A Manual For Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. The following are guidelines for citations as per CMS/Turabian.

Footnotes/Endnotes:

Julius Caesar, *The Gallic War*, trans. by H. J. Edwards, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 100. **Note:** In the case of some sources, you may cite by book/chapter and paragraph/line number instead of page number. This allows the reader to track down the passage you're citing without having to find the particular edition.

Subsequent footnotes/endnotes should read as follows: Caesar, 100.

Bibliography:

Julius Caesar. *The Gallic War*. Translated by H. J. Edwards. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Parenthetical Citations:

This is another way to cite sources, based on the MLA-Modern Language Association-style guide: (Caesar, p. 100)

Here you **must** include a bibliography, as this is where the full information on the source will appear.

Julius Caesar. *The Gallic War*. Trans. H. J. Edwards. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.