

12	Developing Your Thesis Statement
13	Developing and Organizing Your Argument
14	Drafting
15	Using Sources Effectively
16	Designing Documents
17	Revising and Editing
18	Presenting Your Work

13

Developing and Organizing Your Argument

Key Questions

- 13a. How can I develop my argument?** 213
 Choose reasons to support your main point
 Select evidence to support your reasons
 Decide how to appeal to your readers
 Decide how to address opposing arguments
 Check for logical fallacies
- 13b. How can I organize my argument?** 224
 Choose an organizing pattern
 Review and arrange your evidence
 Create an outline

Once you've determined your position on an issue and expressed it as a thesis statement, you've laid the foundation for developing your contribution to the conversation you've decided to join. Developing your argument involves identifying reasons to accept the main point you've advanced in your thesis statement, selecting evidence to support your reasons, deciding how to appeal to your readers, and determining how best to address counterarguments. To improve the overall effectiveness of your argument, you should also assess the integrity of your reasoning and organize your evidence clearly and logically.

13a

How can I develop my argument?

Developing an effective argument involves far more than knowing what you want others to understand or believe or how you want them to act. It requires the development of a strategy to explain and support the main point made in your thesis statement. That strategy should reflect not only your purpose and role but also your readers' needs, interests, values, beliefs, and knowledge of an issue. It should also take into account the conventions typically used in the type of document you plan to write. Most important, it should reflect a willingness to change your argument—from your thesis statement to your reasons and evidence—in response to new information, ideas, and arguments that you might encounter as you work on your research writing project.

Choose Reasons to Support Your Main Point

In longer documents, such as essays, reports, and Web sites, writers usually present several reasons for readers to accept or act on their thesis statements. The kinds of reasons they choose will vary according to the type of document they are writing. In informative articles in newspapers and magazines, for example, writers are likely to focus on the three or four most important aspects of the issue they want readers to understand. In blog posts that analyze an issue, in contrast, writers are likely to choose reasons that help readers understand the results of the analysis. In an argumentative essay, writers usually offer a series of claims that will lead readers to accept their argument or take action in response to it.

To choose reasons to support your main point, consider your readers' expectations.

- Readers of reflective documents, such as some blog posts and academic essays, will expect you to focus on a particular subject. If you are writing a reflective document, ask which of your observations about a subject are most significant and what kind of impression you want to create for your readers.
- Readers of informative documents, such as reports, essays, and articles, expect you to help them understand something about an issue. As you plan an informative document, ask what you want to convey to your readers and what they are most likely to want to know about it.
- Readers of analytical documents, such as some articles in newspapers like the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, expect a straightforward and logical presentation of the analysis. To meet readers' expectations about this kind of document, reflect on what your readers are likely to know about the issue, the kinds of questions they might have about it, and the overall conclusion you hope to share with them.

- Readers of evaluative documents, such as movie and media reviews and progress reports, expect you to provide a reasonable judgment based on a fairly selected set of criteria. As you choose reasons to accept your evaluation, ask what readers will want to gain from reading your document and what you want them to understand about the results of your evaluation.
- Readers of argumentative documents, such as argumentative essays, opinion columns, and blog posts, will expect you to provide a set of reasons for accepting your argument. As you choose your reasons, consider what your readers will know about the issue, how they are likely to respond to your overall argument, and the likely counterarguments they might propose.

As you develop reasons to support your main point, remember that your overall goal is to help your readers pay attention to—and perhaps even to take action in response to—your argument. To guide your efforts, ask questions such as the following, and respond to them by brainstorming, freewriting, looping, clustering, or mapping.

- **Costs.** What costs are associated with not accepting and acting on your main point? Are there monetary costs? Will time and effort be lost or wasted? Will valuable resources be wasted? Will people be unable to lead fulfilling lives? Will human potential be wasted? Will lives be lost?
- **Benefits.** What will be gained by accepting and acting on your main point? Who or what will benefit if your main point is accepted and acted on? What form will these benefits take?
- **Alternatives, choices, and tradeoffs.** In what ways are the potential costs or benefits associated with accepting or acting on your main point preferable to those associated with rejecting your main point or accepting an alternative point?
- **Parallels.** Can you find similarities between the main point you are making about this issue in your thesis statement and claims made about other issues? Can you argue that, if your main point is accepted and acted on, the outcomes will be similar to those found for other issues? What consensus, if any, exists among experts on this issue about what similar situations have led to in the past?
- **Personal experience.** What does your personal experience tell you is likely to happen if your main point is accepted and acted on? What does it tell you might happen if it is rejected?
- **Values and beliefs.** In what ways is your main point consistent with your values and beliefs? With those of your readers? In what ways is it consistent with larger societal and cultural values and beliefs? How might it further those values and beliefs?

Examine the list of reasons you've generated to determine which ones best suit your purpose and will most likely appeal to your readers. Select the reasons that, individually and as a group, best support your main point. If you see inconsis-

tency between the reasons you've chosen and your current thesis statement, consider revising your thesis statement (p. 303).

Decide How Your Reasons Support Your Main Point Effective arguments make connections (sometimes called *warrants*) between a main point (sometimes called an *overall claim*) and the reasons offered to support it. Sometimes readers accept a connection because they share the writer's values and beliefs or have similar experiences with and knowledge of an issue. In other cases, readers accept a connection because the writer explains it effectively. This explanation (sometimes called *backing*) provides readers with information and analysis that help them understand and accept the connection (see Figure 13.1).

The reasons you choose to support your main point should reflect your understanding of the conversation you've decided to join. Your reasons should emerge from careful thought about the information, ideas, and arguments you've encountered in your reading. Your reasons should reflect your purpose and goals. They should take into account your readers' needs, interests, backgrounds, and knowledge of the issue. And they should be consistent with the conventions of your discipline or profession.

As you consider your reasons, ask how clearly they connect to your main point as it is expressed in your thesis statement. Ask whether you should explain each connection or leave it unstated. Your answers will depend in part on the extent to which your readers share your values, beliefs, experience, and knowledge of the issue. If your readers' background and knowledge differ from yours, connections that make sense to you might not be clear to them.

Select Evidence to Support Your Reasons

For every reason you offer to support your main point, you'll need evidence—such as details, facts, personal observations, and expert opinions—to back up your assertions and help your readers understand your ideas.

You can draw evidence from your sources in the form of quotations, phrases, summaries, numerical data, and visual images (p. 90). You can also gather

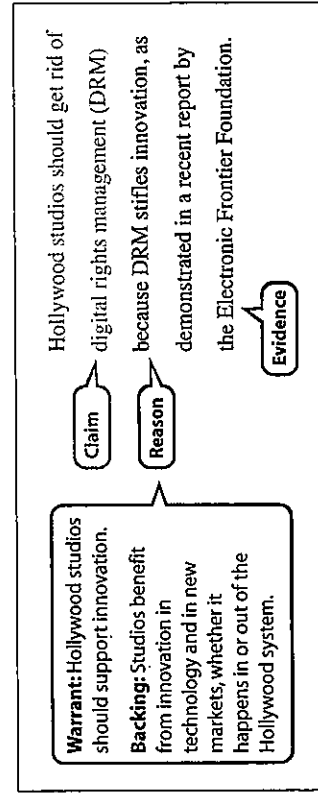


FIGURE 13.1 Supporting Your Main Point

evidence firsthand by conducting interviews, observations, and surveys, or by reflecting on your personal experience (pp. 183–97).

As you choose evidence to support your reasons, think about whether—and, if so, how—you will show the connections between reasons and evidence. These connections, often called *appeals* (p. 217), help readers understand why a reason is appropriate and valid (see Figure 13.2). Common appeals include citing authorities on an issue; using emotion to sway readers; calling attention to shared principles, values, and beliefs; asking readers to trust the writer; and using logic.

As you select supporting evidence, consider the type of document—or genre—you plan to write. The type of evidence used in various genres can differ in important ways. Articles (p. 294) in magazines, newspapers, and Web sites, for example, are more likely to rely on interviews, observations, and illustrations as primary sources of evidence than are academic essays, whose writers tend to draw information from published sources found in a library or database. Multimodal essays (p. 290), in contrast, are likely to use not only textual information and images but also audio, video, and animation. Evidence also varies widely depending on your discipline or profession, with some relying heavily on textual evidence and others relying on data from original research.

Decide How to Appeal to Your Readers

[FRAMING MY ARGUMENT]

For thousands of years, writers have appealed to readers to accept their ideas as reasonable and valid. Much of the work of ancient Greek and Roman thinkers such as Aristotle and Cicero revolved around strategies for presenting an argument to an audience. Their work continues to serve as a foundation for how we think about conveying information, ideas, and arguments to readers. In particular, the concept of an *appeal* to an audience plays a central role in thinking about how to develop an argument. Essentially, when you ask someone to accept your argument, you are appealing to them—you are asking them to consider what you have to say and, if they accept it as appropriate and valid, to believe or act in a certain way.

You can persuade your readers to accept your argument by appealing to authority, emotion, principles, values, beliefs, character, and logic. Your choice of

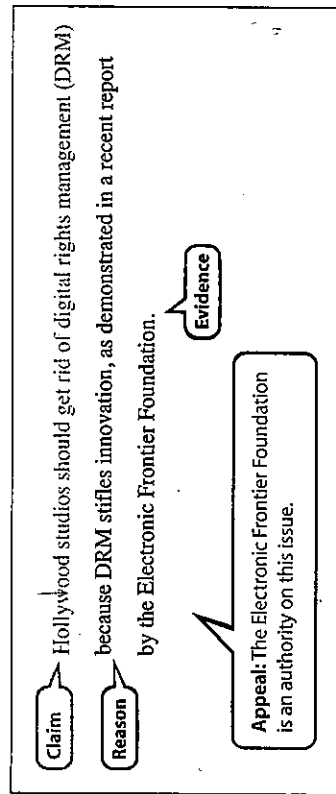


FIGURE 13.2 Supporting Your Reasons with Evidence

these appeals should reflect your understanding of your research writing situation and your sense of which appeals might be most effective—individually or in combination—at helping you achieve your goals as a writer.

Appeals to Authority When you make an appeal to authority, you ask your readers to accept a reason because someone in a position of authority supports it. The evidence used to support this kind of appeal typically takes the form of quotations, paraphrases, or summaries of the ideas of experts on an issue, of political leaders, or of people who have been affected by an issue. As you consider whether your readers will accept a reason, reflect on the notes you've taken on your sources. Ask whether you've identified experts, leaders, or people who have been affected by an issue, and then ask whether you can use them to convince your readers that your reason has merit.

Appeals to Emotion Appeals to emotion attempt to elicit an emotional response to an issue. The famous “win one for the Gipper” speech delivered by Pat O'Brien, who was playing the part of Notre Dame coach Knute Rockne in the 1940 film *Knute Rockne: All American*, is an example of an appeal to emotion. At halftime during a game against Army, with Notre Dame trailing, he said:

Well, boys . . . I haven't a thing to say. Played a great game . . . all of you. Great game. I guess we just can't expect to win 'em all.

I'm going to tell you something I've kept to myself for years. None of you ever knew George Gipp. It was long before your time. But you know what a tradition

My Research Project

Select Evidence to Support Your Reasons

Use the following prompts to help identify evidence to support your reasons.

1. List the reasons you are offering to support your main point.
2. Identify relevant evidence, and then list the evidence below each reason. You might need to review your sources to locate additional evidence or even obtain additional sources.
3. Determine whether you are relying too heavily on information from a single source.
4. Determine whether you are relying too heavily on one type of evidence.
5. Determine whether you've chosen evidence that is consistent with the type of document you plan to write.
6. Determine whether the evidence you've collected might lead you to revise the reasons you are offering to support your main point—or whether the thesis statement in which you express your main point should be revised.

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My Research Project Activities > Select Evidence to Support Your Reasons

he is at Notre Dame. . . . And the last thing he said to me—“Rock,” he said, “sometimes, when the team is up against it—and the breaks are beating the boys—tell them to go out there with all they got and win just one for the Gipper. . . . I don’t know where I’ll be then, Rock,” he said, “but I’ll know about it—and I’ll be happy.”

Using emotional appeals to frame an argument—that is, to help readers view an issue in a particular way—is a tried and true strategy, especially in advertising, fundraising, and personal communication. But use it carefully, if you use it at all. In some types of documents, such as scholarly articles and essays, emotional appeals are used infrequently, and readers of such documents are likely to ask why you would play on their emotions instead of making a logical appeal or appeals to authority.

Appeals to Principles, Values, and Beliefs Appeals to principles, values, and beliefs rely on the assumption that your readers value a given set of principles. Religious and ethical arguments are often based on appeals to principles, such as the need to respect God, to love one another, to trust in the innate goodness of individuals, to believe that all of us are created equal, or to believe that security should never be purchased at the price of individual liberty. If you are considering making an appeal to principles, values, or beliefs, be sure your readers are likely to share the particular principle, value, or belief you will use.

Appeals to Character Writers frequently use appeals to character. When politicians refer to their military experience, for example, they are saying, “Look at me. I’m a patriotic person who has served our country.” When a celebrity endorses a product, he or she is saying, “You know and like me, so please believe me when I say that this product is worth purchasing.” Appeals to character can also reflect a person’s professional accomplishment. When scientists or philosophers present arguments, for example, they sometimes refer to their background and experience, or perhaps to their previous publications. In doing so, they are implicitly telling their readers that they have proven to be accurate and truthful in the past, and that readers can continue to trust them. Essentially, you can think of appeals to character as the “trust me” strategy. As you consider this kind of appeal, reflect on your character, accomplishments, and experiences, and ask how they might persuade your readers to trust you.

Appeals to Logic When writers talk about logical appeals, they are referring to the concept of reasoning through a set of propositions to reach a considered conclusion. For example, you might argue that a suspect is guilty of murder because police found her fingerprints on a murder weapon, her DNA in blood under the murder victim’s fingernails, scratches on the suspect’s face, and video of the murder from a surveillance camera. Your argument would rely on the logical presentation of evidence to convince a jury that the suspect was the murderer and to persuade them to return a verdict of guilty. As you develop reasons to support your claim, consider using logical appeals such as deduction and induction.

Deduction is a form of logical reasoning that moves from general principles to a conclusion. It usually involves two propositions and a conclusion.

Proposition 1 (usually a general principle): Stealing is wrong.

Proposition 2 (usually an observation): John stole a candy bar from the store.

Conclusion (results of deductive analysis): John’s theft of the candy bar was wrong.

Deduction is often used in arguments about issues that have ethical and moral dimensions, such as birth control, welfare reform, and immigration policy.

Induction is a form of logical reasoning that moves from specific observations to general conclusions, often drawing on numerical data to reveal patterns. Medical researchers, for example, typically collect a large number of observations about the effectiveness and side effects of new medications and then analyze their observations to draw conclusions about the overall usefulness of the medications. Induction is based on probability, that is, it can tell you whether something seems likely to occur based on what has been observed. Three commonly used forms of induction are trend analysis (p. 81), causal analysis (p. 82), and data analysis (p. 82).

My Research Project

Decide How to Appeal to Your Readers

To develop an argumentative strategy, reflect on your purpose, your readers, and your main point. In your research log, record your responses to the following.

1. List each of your reasons.
2. Ask what sorts of appeals are best suited to each reason. Ask, for example, whether appeals to emotion, logic, or character are appropriate for a particular reason.
3. Sketch out promising appeals. Ask, for example, how you would appeal to authority, or how you would appeal to logic.
4. Ask how your readers are likely to respond to a given appeal.
5. Ask whether the kind of document you are writing lends itself to the use of particular appeals.

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My Research Project Activities > Decide How to Appeal to Your Readers

Decide How to Address Opposing Arguments

If you are writing to convince or persuade your readers, if you are offering an evaluation or analysis that might be challenged by your readers, or if you are proposing a solution to a problem, take the time to identify opposing arguments, or counterarguments. You might assume that calling attention to counterarguments

will undermine your argument. Nothing is further from the truth. Identifying counterarguments provides opportunities to test and strengthen your reasons and evidence by comparing them with those put forth by other writers. Considering counterarguments also allows you to anticipate questions and concerns your readers are likely to bring to your document. And later, as you are writing your draft, your responses to these opposing arguments provide a basis for clearly explaining to your readers why your argument, evaluation, analysis, or solution is superior to others.

Remember that if reasonable alternatives to your argument didn't exist, there would be no need for a conversation about the issue in the first place. As a writer contributing to an ongoing conversation, you have a responsibility to indicate that you're aware of what has been said and who has said it. More important, you have a responsibility to consider carefully how your argument improves on the arguments made by other members of the conversation.

Identify Counterarguments To identify counterarguments, review the sources you encountered as you learned about your issue. Identify the most compelling opposing viewpoints you found, and ask how the reasons and evidence offered to support them compare to yours. Then ask whether you can think of reasonable alternative positions that haven't been addressed in the sources you've consulted. Finally, talk with others about your issue and ask them what they think about it.

Address Counterarguments To address counterarguments, consider the strengths and weaknesses of each claim in relation to your argument and in relation to the other opposing claims you might have identified. Then decide whether to concede, refute, or ignore each claim.

Concede valid claims Show your readers that you are being fair—and establish common ground with readers who might otherwise be inclined to disagree with you—by acknowledging opposing points of view and accepting reasonable aspects of counterarguments. For example, if you are arguing that your state government should spend more to repair roads and bridges, acknowledge that this will probably mean reducing funding for other state programs or increasing state taxes.

You can qualify your concession by explaining that although part of a counterargument is sound, readers should consider the argument's weaknesses. You might note, for example, that reducing funding for some state programs could be offset by instituting fees for those who use those programs most.

Refute widely held claims A counterargument might be widely advocated or generally accepted yet still have significant weaknesses. If you identify widely held claims that have weaknesses such as cost, undesirable outcomes, or logical flaws, describe the counterargument, point out its flaws, and explain why your claim or reason is superior. For example, you might note that, although it is costly to maintain roads and bridges, allowing them to fall into disrepair will cost far more in the long run—in terms of funding, possible injury, or loss of life.

Ignore competing claims Don't assume that addressing counterarguments means giving every competing claim equal time. Some counterarguments will be much stronger than others, and some will be so closely related to one another that you can dismiss them as a group. Once you've addressed valid and widely held competing claims, you can safely ignore the rest. Even though your sense of fairness might suggest that you should address every counterargument, doing so will result in a less effective (and potentially much longer) essay.

Later, as you draft your document, remember to present your discussion of counterarguments using a reasonable and polite tone. You will gain little, if anything, by insulting or belittling writers with whom you disagree, particularly when it's possible that some of your readers think a certain counterargument has merit. You will find it preferable—and generally more effective in terms of achieving your goals as a writer—to carefully and politely point out the limitations of a particular counterargument.

WORKING TOGETHER

Identify and Consider Counterarguments

Working with a group of two or more classmates, carry out a "devil's advocate" exercise to identify and consider opposing claims. First, briefly describe your issue, main point, and reasons. Other members of the group should offer reasonable alternative arguments. One member of the group should serve as a recorder, taking careful notes on the exchange, listing opposing claims, reasons supporting those claims, and your response to the claims. Once the exchange (which might last between three and ten minutes) is completed, switch roles and repeat the activity for every other member of the group.

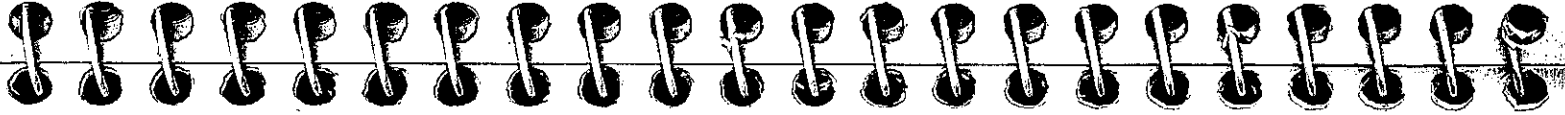
This activity can be carried out face to face or electronically. If you are working on the activity using a chat program or a threaded discussion forum, you can record your exchange for later review. Most chat programs allow you to create a transcript of a session, and threaded discussion forums will automatically record your exchange.

Check for Logical Fallacies

To ensure the integrity of your argument, acquaint yourself with common logical fallacies—errors in logic that have the potential to undermine readers' willingness to accept an argument. Then check that your argument does not fall victim to them. Some of the most common logical fallacies are described below.

Fallacies Based on Distraction Careful readers will question attempts to divert their attention from the heart of your argument. Avoid the following fallacies:

A red herring is an irrelevant or distracting point. The term originated with the practice of sweeping a red herring (a particularly fragrant type of fish) across the trail being followed by a pack of hunting dogs to throw them off the scent of



their prey. For example, the question *Why worry about the rising cost of tuition when the government is tapping our phones?* is a red herring (government surveillance has nothing to do with increases in college tuition).

Ad hominem attacks attempt to discredit an idea or argument by suggesting that a person or group associated with it should not be trusted. These kinds of attacks might be subtle or vicious. If you hear someone say that a proposed wind farm should be rejected because its main supporter cheated on her taxes, or that school vouchers are bad because a principal who swindled a school district supports them, you're listening to an *ad hominem* attack.

Irrelevant history is another form of distraction. For example, arguing that a proposal is bad because someone came up with the idea while they were using cocaine suggests that the state of mind of the person who originates an idea has something to do with its merits. It might well be the case that the idea is flawed, but you should base your assessment on an analysis of its strengths and weaknesses. Otherwise, you might as well say that an idea is undoubtedly sound because someone thought of it while he or she was sober.

Fallacies Based on Questionable Assumptions Guard against the following fallacies by examining the foundations of your argument.

Sweeping generalizations, sometimes known as *hasty generalizations*, are based on stereotypes. Asserting that the rich are conservative voters, for example, assumes that someone who is rich is just like everyone else who is rich. These kinds of arguments don't account for variation within a group, nor do they consider exceptions to the rule.

Straw-man attacks oversimplify or distort another person's argument so it can be dismissed more easily. Just as a boxer can easily knock down a scarecrow, a writer who commits this fallacy might characterize an opposing position as more extreme than it actually is or might refute obviously flawed counterarguments while ignoring valid objections.

Citing inappropriate authorities can take several forms: citing as an authority someone who is not an expert on a subject, citing an authority who has a strong bias on an issue, suggesting that an individual voice represents consensus when that person's ideas are far from the mainstream, or treating paid celebrity endorsements as expert opinion.

Jumping on a bandwagon, also known as *argument from consensus*, implies that if enough people believe something, it must be true. This type of argument substitutes group thinking for careful analysis. The idea of jumping on a bandwagon refers to the practice, in early American politics, of parading a candidate through town on a bandwagon. To show support for the candidate, people would climb onto the wagon.

Fallacies Based on Misrepresentation Ensure your readers will not question your integrity—or perhaps even call you a liar—by avoiding the following fallacies.

Stacking the deck, often referred to as *cherry picking* or *suppressing evidence*, is the act of presenting evidence for only one side of an argument when sufficient evidence exists for an alternative argument. Most readers will assume that a writer has done this deliberately and will wonder what he or she is trying to hide.

Base-rate fallacies are commonly found in arguments based on statistics. If you read that drinking coffee will triple your risk of developing cancer, you might be alarmed. However, if you knew that the risk rose from one in a billion to three in a billion, you might pour another cup.

Questionable analogies, also known as *false analogies*, make inappropriate comparisons. They are based on the assumption that if two things are similar in one way, they must be similar in others. For example, a writer might argue that the rise in temperatures due to climate change is like a fever, and that just as a fever usually runs its course on its own, so too will the climate recover without intervention.

Fallacies Based on Careless Reasoning Writers who are rushing to meet a deadline sometimes fall victim to the following fallacies.

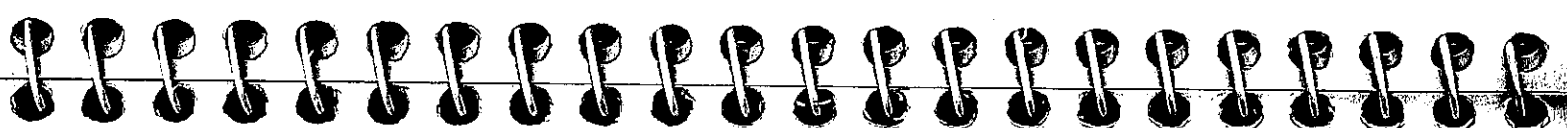
Post hoc fallacies, formally known as *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* fallacies ("after this, therefore because of this"), argue that because one event happened before a second event, the first event must have caused the second event. For example, a student might conclude that she received a low grade on an essay exam because she argued with an instructor during class. In fact, the real cause might be the poor quality of her exam responses.

Slippery-slope arguments warn that a single step will inevitably lead to a bad situation. For instance, one of the most common arguments against decriminalizing marijuana is that it leads to the use of stronger narcotics. Indeed, some heroin or cocaine addicts might have first tried marijuana, but there is no evidence that *all* marijuana users inevitably move on to harder drugs.

Either/or arguments present two choices, one of which is usually characterized as extremely undesirable. In fact, there might be a third choice, or a fourth, or a fifth.

Non sequiturs are statements that do not follow logically from what has been said. For example, arguing that buying a particular type of car will lead to a successful love life is a non sequitur.

Circular reasoning, also known as *begging the question*, restates a point that has just been made as evidence for itself. Arguing that a decline in voter turnout is a result of fewer people voting is an example of circular reasoning.



As you build your argument—and in particular, as you consider counterarguments and check your reasoning for fallacies—you might find that you need to refine your thesis statement and perhaps even your main point. In fact, most writers refine their argument as they learn more about an issue and consider how best to contribute to a conversation. As you prepare to write a first draft of your project document, take another look at your main point, thesis statement, reasons, and evidence. Do they still make sense? Do they stack up well against competing arguments? Do you have enough evidence to meet the expectations of your intended readers? If you answer “no” to any of these questions, continue to develop and refine your argument.

13b

How can I organize my argument?

A well-organized document allows a reader to anticipate—or predict—what will come next. Choose an appropriate organizing pattern by reflecting on your writing situation, main point, thesis statement, reasons, evidence, counterarguments, and appeals. Then use labeling, grouping, clustering, and mapping to arrange your argument and formal and informal outlining strategies to organize your document.

Choose an Organizing Pattern



Organizing patterns provide an overall principle for arranging your argument and your research writing project document. Common organizing patterns include the following.

Chronology The document's organization reflects the sequence in which events occur over time. For example, you might focus attention on a sequence of events in a recent election or during the course of a certain time span. If you are writing an academic essay or developing a multimedia presentation about a historical issue, you might find this organizing pattern useful.

Description The document provides a point-by-point description of the physical attributes of a subject. For example, you might focus on the typical architectural features of a suburb or use a spatial arrangement that mimics the movement of the human eye as it takes in an image (left to right, top to bottom, near to far, and so on). Description is best for documents that address physical spaces, objects, or people—things that we can see and observe—rather than theories or processes that are not visible.

Definition The document lays out the distinguishing characteristics of a subject and then provides examples and reasoning to explain what differentiates it from similar subjects. For instance, an essay defining *pride* might begin by stating

that it is an emotion and then move on to explain why that particular emotion is not as harmful as many people believe.

Cause/Effect The document is organized according to factors that lead to (cause) an outcome (effect). For example, you might identify the reasons behind a recent strike by grocery store employees or the health risks that contribute to heart disease.

Process Explanation The document outlines the steps involved in doing something or explains how something happens. You might, for example, help readers understand the stages of nuclear fission or teach them what steps to take in the event of a meltdown in a nearby power plant.

Pro/Con Ideas and information are organized to show support for and opposition to an argument or proposal. For example, a writer might organize an analysis of legislation calling for increased reliance on nuclear power by explaining why some groups support the legislation (pro) and others oppose it (con).

Multiple Perspectives The document arranges information, ideas, and arguments according to a range of perspectives about a subject. Documents using this organizing pattern frequently provide an analysis supporting one perspective. For instance, a document addressing the use of tidal power as an alternative energy source might present the perspectives of utility company executives, environmentalists, oceanographers, legislators, and waterfront residents, ultimately favoring one group over the others.

Comparison/Contrast The document identifies similarities and differences among the information, ideas, and arguments relevant to a subject. Documents that compare and contrast can be constructed in one of two ways. In the point-by-point approach, the writer presents each relevant point individually and then analyzes how that point operates in the two items being compared. In the whole-by-whole approach, the writer addresses the first item in its entirety, as a whole, and then moves on to the second item. For example, a document analyzing a policy initiative to decriminalize marijuana possession might compare current drug laws to alcohol prohibition or attempt to contrast medical and recreational uses of marijuana.

Strengths/Weaknesses The document examines positive and negative aspects of a subject, such as increasing federal funding for health care by instituting a national lottery. Documents using this organizing pattern typically work toward a conclusion that one or two considerations outweigh the others.

Costs/Benefits The tradeoffs associated with a subject, usually a choice or proposal of some sort, are considered in turn. For example, an evaluative essay might discuss why the expenses associated with implementing a particular educational initiative are justified (or not) by the potential for higher test scores.

Problem/Solution Documents define a problem and discuss the appropriateness of one or more solutions. If multiple solutions are proposed, an argument usually made for the superiority of one over the others. For instance, an informative article might explain the problem of “brain drain,” in which highly educated and skilled workers move out of state, and then argue in support of a proposal to retain and attract more skilled workers.

Your choice of organizing pattern will reflect your purpose and the role or roles you adopt as a writer. If you’re adopting the role of *reporter*, for example, you might select chronology, cause/effect, or comparison/contrast. If you’re adopting the role of *evaluator*, you’re likely to choose from patterns such as strengths/weaknesses, pro/con, comparison/contrast, or multiple perspectives. If you’re adopting the role of *problem solver*, you’re likely to choose from patterns such as strengths/weaknesses, pro/con, comparison/contrast, or multiple perspectives. If you’re adopting the role of *advocate*, you might opt for an organizing pattern that is well suited to argumentation, such as pro/con or strengths/weaknesses.

Your choice of organizing pattern should also reflect the argument you are making in your document and the reasons, evidence, and appeals you use to make your argument. Keep in mind as well that a writer may use more than one organizing pattern in a document. For instance, a process explanation often works in tandem with chronology, since both present steps in a sequence. Similarly, a document presenting multiple perspectives might also adopt a strengths/weaknesses pattern to evaluate the merits of each perspective.

Review and Arrange Your Evidence

Once you have selected an organizing pattern, you can use strategies such as labeling, grouping, clustering, and mapping to determine how to arrange your argument. These strategies will also help you later as you develop an outline for your document.

Label Evidence Labeling can help you understand at a glance how and where you will use evidence from your sources. For example, you might label notes or sources containing the evidence you want to use in your introduction with “Introduction,” those that you plan to use to define a concept with the name of that concept, and so on. If you have taken digital notes or saved digital sources, as Brandon Tate did, you have a number of options (see Figure 13.3). Once you’ve labeled your notes and sources, you can organize them into groups or order them according to the outline you will create.

Group Evidence Grouping involves categorizing the evidence you’ve obtained from your sources. Paper-based notes and copies of sources can be placed in related piles or file folders; sources and notes in word processing files or a smartphone can be saved in larger files or placed in folders; items in Bookmarks or Favorites lists can be sorted by category.

Label at the top of a note in a word processing file.

Legislative Issues
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2012, May). *Hydraulic fracturing background information*.
http://water.epa.gov/type/groundwater/ute/class2/hydraulicfracturing/wells_hydrowhat.cfm

This web page gives a complete background of hydraulic fracturing and includes a summary of a 2004 study on coalbed methane reservoirs. Based off of this study the EPA concluded that there was little to no risk of fracturing fluid contaminating underground sources of drinking water during hydraulic fracturing of coalbed methane production wells. EPA retained the right, however, to conduct additional studies in the future.

Key Quotes:
“EPA began a study on hydraulic fracturing used in coalbed methane reservoirs in 1999 to evaluate the potential risks to USDWs. . . . EPA concluded that there was little to no risk of fracturing fluid contaminating underground sources of drinking water during hydraulic fracturing of coalbed methane production wells. EPA retained the right, however, to conduct additional studies in the future.”

FIGURE 13.3 Labeling Digital Notes and Sources

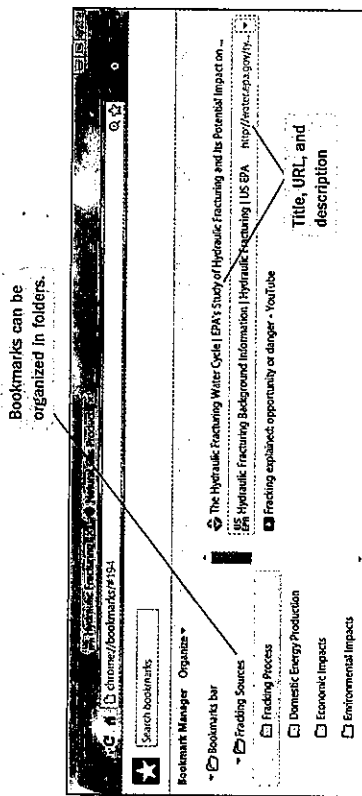


FIGURE 13.4 Grouping Electronic Notes and Sources

Use Clustering Clustering can be used to explore the relationships among your thesis statement, reasons, and evidence. Clustering involves arranging these elements of your argument visually on a sheet of paper or on a computer screen. By putting your thesis statement at the center of the cluster and your reasons and evidence around it, you can explore how reasons and evidence relate to your main point, and how your reasons relate to each other.

Clustering can be used at several points in a research writing project: as you begin to explore your topic, as you brainstorm to come up with ideas, as you explore relationships among the material you’ve collected, and now as you begin to arrange your argument (see Figure 13.4).

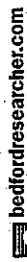
Use Mapping You can use mapping to explore sequences of reasons and evidence. For example, you might use mapping to create a timeline or to show how an argument builds on one supporting point after another. This use of mapping

My Research Project

Arrange an Argument by Clustering

Clustering can help you explore the relationships among your main point, thesis statement, reasons, and evidence. To create a cluster:

1. In the middle of a sheet of paper, or in the center of a digital document (word processing file or graphics file), write your main point or thesis statement.
2. Place your reasons around your main point or thesis statement.
3. List the evidence you'll present to support your reasons next to each reason.
4. Think about the relationships among your main point, reasons, and evidence, and draw lines and circles to show those relationships.
5. Annotate your cluster to indicate the nature of the relationships you've identified.



My Research Project Activities > Arrange an Argument by Clustering

is particularly effective as you begin to think about organizing your project document, and it often relies on the organizing patterns discussed on pp. 224–26, such as chronology, cause/effect, comparison/contrast, cost/benefit, and problem/solution.

The tutorial on pp. 230–31 shows a map that Nicholas Brothers created to organize his thoughts about the argument in his research essay about U.S. reliance on private military corporations.

Create an Outline

An outline represents the sequence in which your reasons and evidence will appear in your document. As you develop an outline, you'll make decisions about the order in which you will present your reasons and the evidence you'll use to back them up. Later, as you draft, your outline can serve as a plan for creating your document.

Create an Informal Outline Informal outlines can take many forms: a brief list of words, a series of short phrases, or even a series of sentences. You can use informal outlines to remind yourself of key points to address in your document or of notes you should refer to when you begin drafting. Elizabeth Leontiev, who wrote a research essay about the impact of the U.S. war on drugs on South American coca farmers, created the informal outline shown in Figure 13.5. In her outline, each item represents a section she planned to include in her essay.

Nicholas Brothers wrote a “thumbnail outline,” a type of informal outline, as he worked on his research essay about private military corporations. Nicholas identified the major sections he would include in his research essay and noted which sources he would use to provide background information and to support his argument (see Figure 13.6).

1. Introduction – what is coca? where is it grown?
2. Cultural and economic importance of coca crop
3. Evo Morales's plan: “zero cocaine, not zero coca”
 - benefits of the Morales plan
4. Brief history of other plans and their failures
 - U.S. “war on drugs”
 - aerial fumigation / coca eradication
 - alternative cropping
5. Conclusion supporting the Morales plan

FIGURE 13.5 Elizabeth Leontiev's Informal Outline

Intro

Introduce private military corporations as integral to U.S. military operations. Present the many costs of PMCs to be examined.

Section 1

Explain the history of PMCs, from the Napoleonic era to today. Focus on the post-9/11 era and how privatization of the U.S. military has increased in the last ten years. Key sources: interview transcripts from Brothers and Euchner.

Section 2

Discuss the frequent use of PMCs in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well their diversified functions. Examine the distinction between PMCs and mercenaries. Key sources for background and argument: Scallill and Singer.

Section 3

Give examples of abuses and illegal acts by PMC contractors. Explain why contractors have not been convicted of crimes. Key sources for abuse evidence: Capps, Simpson, and Savage; key sources for lack of legal accountability: Singer, Yeoman, and Risen.

Section 4

Present the view that abuses by contractors undermine the image and goals of the U.S. military. Key sources: the Army Field Manual and the Congressional Research Service report.

Section 5

Discuss other “costs” of PMCs, in particular the amount of taxpayer money spent on them and the brain drain that occurs. Key sources: Stanger, Moshe, and Felton.

Conclusion

Look at ways Americans can take civic action to end the overreliance on PMCs.

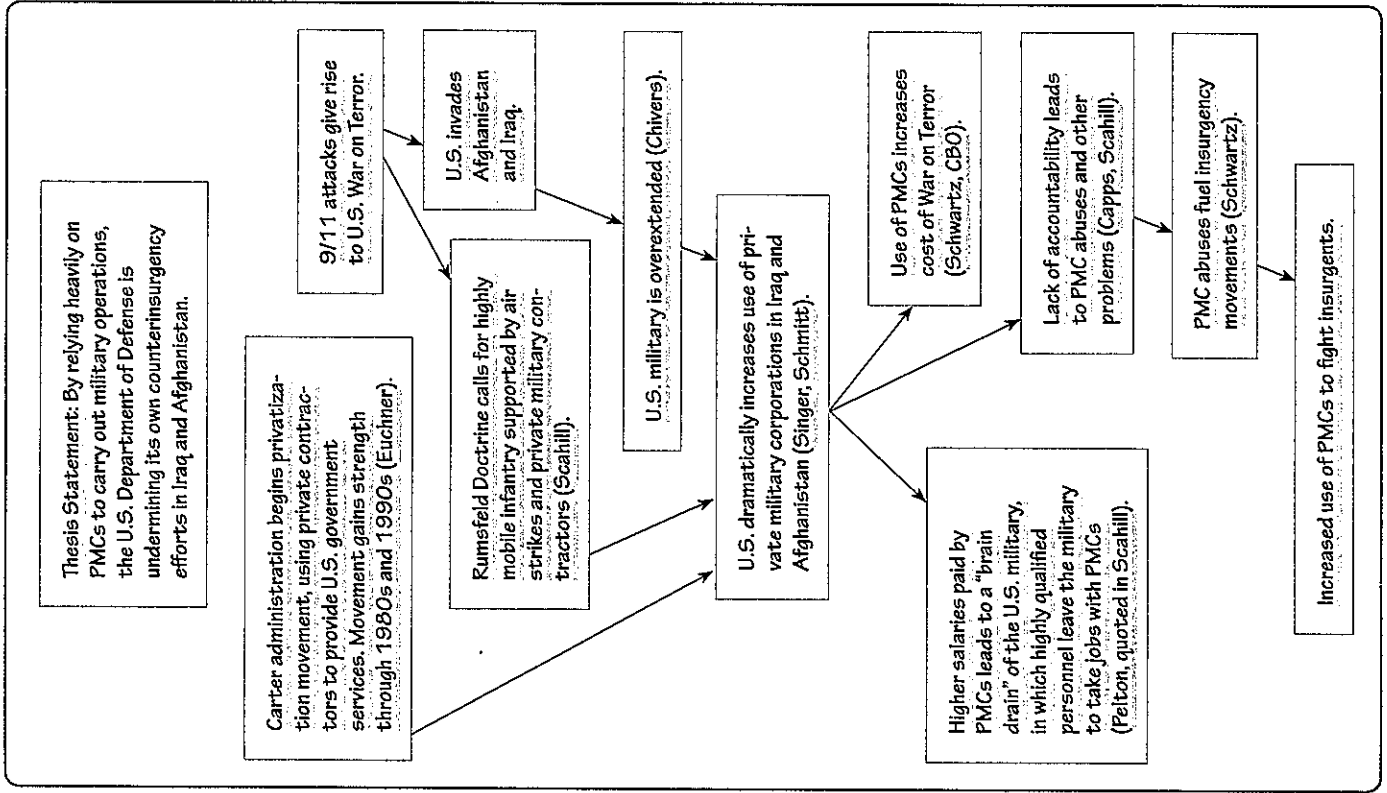
FIGURE 13.6 Nicholas Brothers's Thumbnail Outline

TUTORIAL

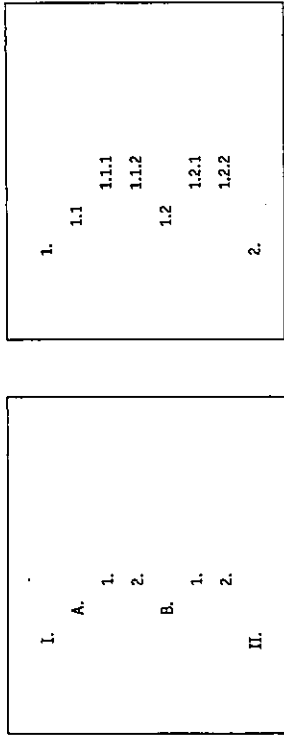
How can I map my argument?

You can map your argument by arranging your reasons and evidence to support your main point. In this example, Nicholas Brothers maps the reasons and evidence in his argumentative essay about U.S. reliance on private military corporations (PMCs) in its war on terror. Later, he will use this map as he develops his outline.

- ① List your main point or thesis statement.
- ② Review your notes to identify reasons that support your main point.
- ③ Based on the reasons you will use to help readers accept or act on your main point, choose an organizing pattern (pp. 224–26). Here, the writer chooses a cause/effect pattern to arrange his argument.
- ④ Use the organizing pattern to map your argument. Here, the writer maps the causes and effects of U.S. reliance on private military corporations.
- ⑤ List evidence near supporting points. Here, the writer includes references to sources in parentheses.



Create a Formal Outline A formal outline provides a complete and accurate list of the points you want to address in your document. Formal outlines use Arabic numerals, letters, and Roman numerals to indicate the hierarchy of information. An alternative approach, common in business and the sciences, uses numbering with decimal points:



Writers use formal outlines to identify the hierarchy of information, ideas, and arguments. You can create a formal outline to identify:

- your main point and/or thesis statement
- your reasons
- the sequence in which those reasons should be presented
- evidence for your reasons
- the notes and sources you should refer to as you work on your document

The most common types of formal outlines are topical outlines and sentence outlines.

Topical Outlines present the topics and subtopics you plan to include in your research document as a series of words and phrases. Items at the same level of importance should be phrased in parallel grammatical form.

In her topical outline for her research essay on steroid use among adolescent girls, Alexis Alvarez includes her thesis statement, suggests the key points she wants to make in her document, maps out the support for her points, and uses a conventional system of numbers and letters (see Figure 13.7).

Sentence Outlines use complete sentences to identify the points you want to cover (see Figure 13.8). Sentence outlines typically serve two purposes.

1. They begin the process of converting an outline into a draft of your document.
2. They help you assess the structure of a document that you have already written.

When you've created your outline, ask whether it can serve as a blueprint for the first draft of your document. Taking the time to create an effective outline now will reduce the time needed to write your first draft later.

Thesis statement: Although competitive sports can provide young female athletes with many benefits, they can also have negative effects, the worst of which is increasing drug use.

- I. **Female Participation in Competitive Athletics**
 - A. Short history and current trends
 - B. Understanding the female athlete
- II. **Positive Impact of Competitive Athletics**
 - A. Physiological (Kane & Larkin)
 1. Reduced risk of obesity and heart disease
 2. Increased immune functioning and prevention of certain cancers
 3. Improved flexibility, strength, and aerobic power
 - B. Psychological (Kane & Larkin)
 1. Improved self-esteem
 2. Enhanced mental health
 3. Effective in reducing symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression
 - C. Sociological
 1. Expansion of social boundaries
 2. Teaches responsibility, discipline, and determination
 3. Educational asset
- III. **Negative Impact of Competitive Athletics**
 - A. Physiological (Graham)
 1. Overtraining
 2. Eating disorders
 3. Exercise-induced amenorrhea and osteoporosis

FIGURE 13.7 Part of Alexis Alvarez's Topical Outline

Thesis statement: Although competitive sports can provide young female athletes with many benefits, they can also have negative effects, the worst of which is increasing drug use.

- I. Society has been concerned with the use of performance-enhancing drugs among younger male athletes, but many don't know that these drugs are also used by younger female athletes.
 - A. Women began participating in sports in the mid-19th century, although participation was not encouraged until recently. Millions of girls are involved in a wide range of physical activities and are participating in school-sponsored sports.
 - In response to pressures of competitive sports, girls' steroid use has increased and younger and younger girls are taking steroids.
 - B. Sports can benefit a girl's growth and development physiologically as well as psychologically and sociologically.
 - A. Participation in sports has a wide range of positive physiological effects on adolescent girls.
 1. Studies have shown that participation in sports can reduce the risk of obesity and heart disease.
 2. Studies have shown that participation in sports appear to increase immune functioning and prevent certain cancers.
 3. Participation in sports has also been linked to improved flexibility, strength, and aerobic power.

FIGURE 13.8 Part of Alexis Alvarez's Sentence Outline

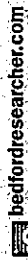
My Research Project

Create and Review Your Outline

In your word processing program or in your research log, create an outline. If your word processing program has an outlining tool, use it to create a formal outline. In Microsoft Word, use Outline View (available in older versions of Word through the View Outline menu command) to view your document in outline mode. Use the Promote and Demote buttons on the outlining toolbar to set the levels for entries in your outline. Use the Collapse and Expand buttons to hide and show parts of your outline.

Review your outline by asking yourself the following questions.

1. Does my outline provide an effective organization for my document?
2. Have I covered all of my key points?
3. Have I addressed my key points in sufficient detail?
4. Do any sections seem out of order?



My Research Project Activities > Create and Review Your Outline



QUICK REFERENCE

Developing and Organizing Your Argument

- Identify reasons to accept your thesis statement. (p. 213)
- Select evidence to support your reasoning. (p. 215)
- Decide how to appeal to your readers. (p. 217)
- Consider and address counterarguments. (p. 219)
- Check for logical fallacies. (p. 221)
- Choose an organizing pattern for your argument. (p. 224)
- Arrange your evidence. (p. 226)
- Create an outline. (p. 228)

12	Developing Your Thesis Statement
13	Developing and Organizing Your Argument
14	Drafting
15	Using Sources Effectively
16	Designing Documents
17	Revising and Editing
18	Presenting Your Work

14

Drafting



Key Questions

- 14a. How can I help my readers follow my argument?** 236
- Work from an outline
 - Create paragraphs that focus on a central idea
 - Create paragraphs that use appropriate organizing patterns
 - Create transitions within and between paragraphs
 - Provide cues to keep your readers on track
 - Integrate information from sources effectively
- 14b. How can I write with style and engage my readers?** 242
- Use details to capture your readers' attention
 - Write clearly and concisely
 - Write actively (most of the time)
 - Adopt a consistent point of view
 - Vary your sentence structure
 - Choose your words carefully
 - Avoid sexist language
 - Consult a good handbook
- 14c. How can I use my introduction to frame my issue?** 249
- Call attention to an aspect of the issue
 - Choose an appropriate strategy for your introduction
- 14d. How can I use my conclusion to frame my issue?** 253
- Reinforce your argument
 - Select an appropriate strategy for your conclusion

If you're new to research writing, you might be surprised at how long it's taken to get to the chapter about writing your document. If you are an experienced research writer, you know that you've been writing it all along. Research writing isn't so much the act of putting words to paper or on screen as it is the process of identifying and learning about an issue, reflecting on what you've learned, and contributing to the conversation about your issue.