

## PART B

## The Writing Process: Practice Writing an Argumentative Essay

### Objectives

Prewriting:

Planning:

Partner Feedback:

First Draft:

Partner Feedback:

Final Draft:

### In Part B, you will:

search for sources of information to support your argument

practice categorizing and synthesizing information from outside sources

use an outline to organize and sequence ideas for argumentation

review classmates' outlines and analyze feedback

write an argumentative essay

use "turning an argument on its head" as an introductory technique

review classmates' essays and analyze feedback

use feedback to write a final draft of your argumentative essay

### The Writing Process: Writing Assignment

In the United States there is an ongoing debate about making English the official language of the country. While at first it may be difficult to understand the need for such a law, since more than 90 percent of the inhabitants of the United States have English as their native language, this has become a serious issue for many people on both sides of the debate. Your assignment is to write an essay arguing for one side or the other of this debate. You must justify your position with reasons that support your viewpoint. Follow the steps in the writing process in this section.



ENGLISH ONLY LAWS—PRO	ENGLISH ONLY LAWS—CON
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Review the information in the chart above. Which ideas do you agree with the most? Which column has more information? Choose one of the two points of view, for or against the issue; in other words, take your stance. Then write a tentative thesis statement that gives your position. Remember that an argumentative thesis statement is distinctive in that it takes a stand. You can change it later if you need to.

**Tentative Thesis Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Categorizing Details*

In your research, you will also notice that some sources of information offer more convincing details and examples than others to support the reasons in favor of or against English-only laws. These details and examples may take several different forms.

- ▶ A **definition of a key term** may help **explain a point**.
- ▶ To counter the opposing view, you might **compare and contrast** different approaches or beliefs about English-only laws.
- ▶ You might show a **cause-effect relationship** between one idea and another.
- ▶ You may also find **expert or scientific evidence** to support an argument.

To synthesize information from more than one source, you must choose only the best supporting details and methods of showing those details. For example, if you are arguing *against* English-only laws, one reason may be that these laws infringe on the rights of recent immigrants to a fair trial if it is



in English and their language skills are not adequate to understand the proceedings. This is how the information might look in a chart.

Reasons	Details	Methods
1. <i>infringes on rights</i>	<i>may not get a fair trial</i>	<i>cause-effect</i>



**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Remember that you will need to summarize and paraphrase information that you synthesize from sources. For information about these skills, as well as additional information about synthesizing, see Unit 8.

When you write your essay, you need to make sure that the methods make logical sense for giving the details that will support your argument. For example, you may want to use the definition method in your introduction section to provide background information about English-only laws. Later, you might want to quote an expert on this issue using the expert testimony method to provide supporting details for your argument. Be sure to keep careful notes about which sources you used for each of the details you add to your argument so you can cite your sources properly.

**EXERCISE**

**13**

**COMPLETING A REASON/DETAIL CHART**

For each *reason* you find in your sources, write at least one *detail* to support it and a *method* of support for each side. Methods may include definitions, explanations, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, or expert testimony. You may need to add more rows to the charts.

**ENGLISH ONLY LAWS—PRO**

Reasons	Details	Methods
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

**ENGLISH ONLY LAWS—CON**

Reasons	Details	Methods
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

**Using an Outline**

Writers usually develop argumentative essays using one of the three methods of organization discussed in Part A. Once you choose a method, you can create an outline that does two things: 1) states and supports your viewpoint and 2) states, acknowledges, and refutes the opposing viewpoint. Organizing the ideas that support your argument lends coherence to your argument, just as using transition expressions do.

Review the three methods of organization that you studied in the Methods of Organization section in Part A (p. 171).

**EXERCISE**

**14**

**CREATING AN OUTLINE**

*Use one of the three methods of organization discussed in Part A (pp. x-x) to create an outline to develop your argument either in favor of, or opposed to, a federal English-only law in the United States. Using the information you collected on your research cards and in the chart in Exercise 13, organize your outline on a separate piece of paper. You may want to refer to the patterns chart on p. 171 to help you.*

**Partner Feedback Form 1**

Exchange outlines with another student. Read your partner's outline and answer the questions on Partner Feedback Form 1: Unit 7, p. 243, in Appendix 3. Discuss your partner's reactions to your outline. Make notes about any parts you need to change before you write your paper. For more information about giving partner feedback, see Appendix 2, p. 218, Guidelines for Partner Feedback.



**First Draft**

You are now ready to write the first draft of your essay. Before you begin, review your methods of presenting supporting details chart and any comments from your partner, especially the thesis statement suggestion.

**EXERCISE****15****WRITING THE INTRODUCTION**

Write an introduction for your essay, using your outline and the feedback you received from your partner. To begin your essay, use “turning an argument on its head” as explained on p. 17, Unit 1, and on this page.

Both “Why Adopt a Vegetarian Diet?” on pp. 175–177 and “Coffee: Surprising Benefits from This Herbal Supplement” on pp. 179–180 use this introduction technique. You can use them as models if you want. End your introduction with a well-constructed thesis statement. When you finish, use the checklist to review your work.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

**Turning an argument on its head** means presenting the opposing view as a starting point. You can use this technique as a hook to generate interest and pull the reader into the essay. After you give the opposing view, you present your own view. Follow it with general ideas and background information about the issue at hand. Then finish your first paragraph with the thesis statement. Here are some tips for using this technique:

- ▶ Make sure that you can use the opposing view as a starting point in a way that makes sense logically. If you simply state both views, this is not “turning the argument on its head.”
- ▶ Do not go into too much detail for this technique. Use only one or two sentences.

*Examples:*

Experts agree that developing nations should be encouraged to use modern agricultural techniques, purchasing equipment and seeds from large-scale Western agribusiness companies to bring them into the twenty-first century. However, the very practice of monoculture, or planting only one crop, destroys indigenous people’s ability to produce food, shelter, and medicine for themselves.

When trying to finish a term paper or other homework, college students may need to drink caffeinated beverages or even take amphetamines to stay awake. Giving in to the urge to sleep however, by taking a short “cat nap,” may in fact be just what you need to refresh yourself and be more productive.



*Check it for Essay Type!*

### Introduction Checklist

- |   | YES                      | NO                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ▶ Did I effectively use an introductory technique such as turning the opposing argument on its head to hook my audience?                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▶ Does my introduction include a clear statement of both sides of the issue?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▶ Do I take a stance with my thesis statement? Does my thesis statement provide a clear guide for the reader for the rest of the essay? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| What is it? _____   |                          |                          |
| ▶ Are both views in the debate clear?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| What are they? _____  |                          |                          |

**EXERCISE**

**16**

### WRITING BODY PARAGRAPHS

*Look again at your outline and at your introduction. Then complete the body paragraphs. Remember to use correct citation format for your researched information. When you finish, use the checklist to review your work.*

### Body Paragraph Checklist

- |  | YES                      | NO                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ▶ Does each body paragraph treat only one main idea?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▶ Do I successfully follow the method of organization chosen for my outline?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▶ Does each paragraph contain a topic sentence with a clear controlling idea?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▶ Is my viewpoint on this issue clear to the reader?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▶ Do I successfully refute the opposing view?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▶ Are all my methods of presenting supporting details clear and effective? (Check the reasons/details chart in Exercise 13.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▶ Does each paragraph end with a logical concluding sentence?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▶ Do my body paragraphs all relate to and support the thesis statement of the essay?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▶ Are my body paragraphs arranged in a logical order? That is, do they have coherence?                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▶ Are all sentences in my body paragraphs relevant to the topic? That is, do they have unity?                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |





## EXERCISE

## 17

## WRITING A CONCLUSION

Review again your outline, introduction, and body. Write a conclusion for your essay. When you finish, use the checklist to review your work.

## Conclusion Checklist

	YES	NO
▶ Does my conclusion successfully signal the end of my essay?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Does my conclusion add coherence to the essay by:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. restating the essay thesis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. summarizing or restating my viewpoint?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Does my conclusion:		
a. leave the reader with my final thoughts on the stance I have taken on the issue?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. make a prediction or suggestion about the topic of the essay?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Partner Feedback Form 2

Exchange essays with another student. Read your partner's essay and answer the questions on Partner Feedback Form 2: Unit 7, p. 245, in Appendix 3. Discuss your partner's reactions to your essay. Make notes about any parts you need to change before you write your second draft. For more information about giving partner feedback, see Appendix 2, p. 218, Guidelines for Partner Feedback.



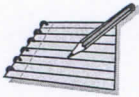
### Final Draft

Carefully revise your essay using all the feedback you have received: partner feedback, review of your outline and essay, instructor comments, and any evaluation you have done yourself. Use the checklist to do a final check of your essay. In addition, try reading your essay aloud. This can help you find awkward-sounding sentences and errors in punctuation. When you finish, add a title to your essay, and neatly type your final draft. See Appendix 4, p. 246, for information about writing titles.

### Final Draft Checklist

	YES	NO
▶ Did I include a thesis statement that contains a clear topic and controlling idea?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Which method of organization did I use to develop the argument? _____		
Is the method clear?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Did I argue for only one side of the issue? Did I adequately address opposing views?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Did I synthesize information from different sources well? Did I use correct citation format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Did I use transition expressions correctly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Did I use prepositions and noun clauses correctly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Does each of my body paragraphs have a clear topic sentence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Does each of my body paragraphs treat one reason or subtopic to support the argument I make?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Does my concluding paragraph successfully signal the end of my essay?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Does my entire essay have unity and coherence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





## Additional Writing Assignments from the Academic Disciplines

Beginning with the Prewriting activity on p. 191, use the writing process and write another essay. Choose a topic from the following list.

### *SUBJECT*

### *ESSAY WRITING TASK*

#### **Business**

Argue for or against moving a manufacturing plant to a less developed country than the United States. What are possible benefits to the host country? What might be harmful?

#### **Science**

Argue for or against accepting donations from pharmaceutical companies for scientific research.

#### **Sociology/Political Science**

Argue for or against accepting war refugees into more prosperous countries.

#### **Linguistics**

Argue for or against bilingual programs in public schools in the United States.