

2012



INSTITUT
PENDIDIKAN
GURU
KAMPUS
DATO' RAZALI

WRITING AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

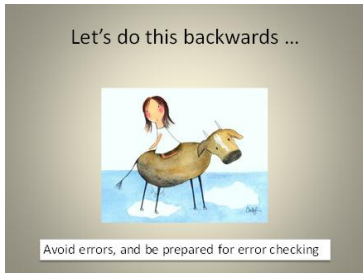
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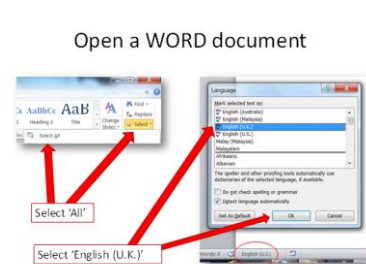
2-hour session on writing Argumentative essays. The students were expected to have a laptop.

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We are going to start with the thing you do last – checking for errors. If you make the right preparations to start with, you can check as you go along.

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Open a WORD document. On the 'Home' ribbon, at the right-hand end, click on select ... drop down to 'select all'. Now, on you bottom tool-bar, find the language near the left-hand side. Open this dialogue box and select one of the 'English' options – 'English (UK)' is probably best for English students in Malaysia. Click 'OK'.

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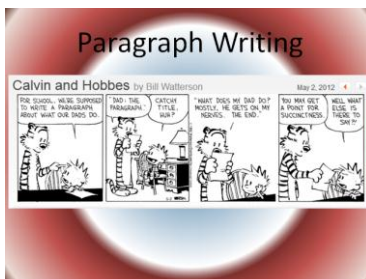


Now when you type, WORD will underline your mistakes in different colours. Red indicates a spelling mistake. Green indicates a grammar error. Blue means it's the wrong word. The program is not infallible, but its possible that it 'knows' more of the language than you do!

Now, try typing a compound sentence into your WORD document. ('Compound' - ? Putting it simply, that is at least two clauses joined with something like 'and' or 'but'.

Did you make any errors?

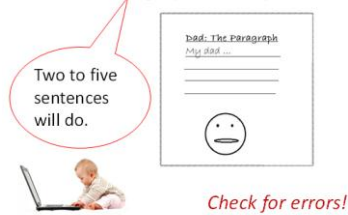
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Paragraphs. The structure of you essay is based on paragraphs, and it is vital that you understand how to create good paragraphs.

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Write a Paragraph about your Dad



Calvin (in the previous comic) had to write a paragraph about his dad – and he didn't do a very good job. So, just two – five sentences about your dad. Anything at all. And then check for errors.

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Share your Paragraph



Share your paragraph with others in your group. Did you like the paragraphs written by other group members? Was there one that you liked best?

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Argument



Do you argue? Are you argumentative? What do we mean by arguing?

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Arguments always have 2 sides



An argument always has (at least) 2 sides. To win an argument we need to be aware of the other side's point of view. When writing argumentatively we need to show that we have taken into account the other arguments.

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Persuasion and Reasoning



The purpose of an argumentative essay is to persuade people to agree with your point of view through careful reasoning. Your essay needs to show a logical progression that will convince the reader to follow your point of view.

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Know your facts



In order to persuade people, you need to be sure of your facts. If any point that you make is not based on fact, then your whole argument loses credibility. *You need to start with some research.* So: First: Write out the questions in your own words, and think of the questions posed in the assignment while you are reading and researching.

Determine:

- facts
- any sources that will help you determine their reliability (as well as for further reference)
- what *prejudices* lie in the argument or values that color the facts or the issue
- what you think of the author's argument

List out facts and consider their importance: prioritize, edit, sequence, discard, etc.

Ask yourself "What's missing?"

You need to refer to what other people have said. BUT you must not plagiarise. So let's look at how WORD helps you with your references and citations.

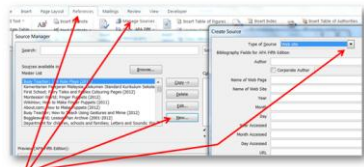
Click on the 'References' ribbon, and then 'Manage Sources'. Now select 'New'.

At the top of the dialogue box, open the drop-down menu marked 'Type of Source'.

Select 'Document from Web Site' because this is probably one that you will use a lot.

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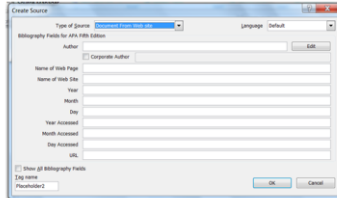
Use References (don't plagiarise)



References ribbon → Manage Sources → New → Web Site.

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Create a Source



If you take a few moments to fill in the 'Create a Source' box every time you find a new reference source, you will love yourself later.

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Let's quote a source



So let's give it a try.

Here is a web-page. Look for the name of the author – this is not always easy to find on a website. Sometimes you need to click 'Corporate Author' and type in the company or organisation that runs the website.

Find the name of the web page. (*now click*)

And the name of the website. (*now click*)

And the date. (*now click*)

And of course you need the URL. (*click*) Normally you would simply copy and paste it rather than trying to type it in.

It is important to put in the date you accessed this website – why?

Now click 'OK'.

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Let's Choose a Quote


The Appeal: Ever more people romanticize becoming an organic/sustainable farmer. Typical rationale: "America is clamoring for sustainability, so people will buy my locally produced organic produce. It will enable me to live close to the earth, literally see the fruits of my labor, and when day is done, day is done. I'm not academically oriented, so farming is a way for me to make a good living without a college degree."

The Reality: Farming is a tough row to hoe. Only a small percentage of the public is willing to pay what small-scale, organic farmers must charge—often \$2 for one fruit. Especially in our tight economy, people will choose a 50-cent supermarket fruit, and if they want organic, they'll reject the \$2 family-farm-grown fruit that requires a special trip to the farmer's market for the 75-cent one that a corporate organic farm makes available at your supermarket.

Okay, so this is the article on that website. Let's choose a pithy little comment to put into our essay.
Type this sentence into your WORD document. Put quotation marks around it because it is a quote.

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Include a citation



"Farming is a tough row to hoe." (Nemko, 2008)

Now open the 'References' ribbon, and click on 'Insert Citation'. We have only inserted one reference, so there is only one choice at this time. Click on it, and see it is correctly inserted into your document.

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What is in a paragraph?

Topic Sentence


Support

Let's have a closer look at paragraphs.
A paragraph must have a topic sentence.
And the topic sentence needs to be supported.

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Make an assertion about the topic


It can be fact, or opinion.



First you write your topic sentence which makes an assertion about the topic. It can be something that is a fact, or it could be an opinion that you have.

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Write a Topic Sentence



about **Farming**

So now write a topic sentence about farming.
Share your topic sentence with other group members. Are some topic sentences better than others?

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Now you need to support your topic sentence. You could use:
(click)

- Specific examples
- Reasons why you have this opinion
- Facts that support your opinion
- Descriptions and anecdotes that support your fact or opinion
- Expert opinion and analysis about the fact
- Quotations from the text.

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Add Support to your 'Farming' Paragraph



Add support to your farming paragraph.

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Share



Share what you have written with other group members. Are some types of support better than others?

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Convincing



You need to persuade and convince your readers that your argument is correct. Here are some pointers for convincing:

- Be specific – not vague and general
- Don't include ideas which you can't support
- Establish the credibility of your experts
- Acknowledge counterarguments
- Avoid absolutes
- Don't offend anyone

Did your supporting arguments do all of these?

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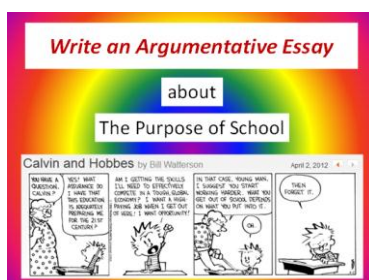
Check for errors ...



...and no lollygagging!

Check your paragraph for errors. Don't just sit there and stare at the screen!

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Now let's write more than just one paragraph.

Write an argumentative essay about 'The Purpose of School'.

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1. What's the Title??



Thesis Statement: Doesn't just state the topic but conveys your attitude about the subject.

Choose a title.

Your title states your thesis.


It conveys your attitude about the subject.

It's the first step in making people want to read your essay.

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2. Introduction Paragraph

- Provides context
- States the main point
- Hooks the reader



Now you need an Introduction paragraph. This paragraph provides a context for your essay, states the main point of your essay, and hooks the reader so that they will want to keep reading.

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Ways to Grab Attention:



A quotation
A question
A surprising statement or fact
Interesting background information
An anecdote
An imaginary situation

So how can you hook the reader? Here are some possibilities:

- A quotation (which seems profound, or surprising, or maybe contradictory)
- A question (which makes them start applying the topic to themselves)
- Some interesting background information about the topic (so the reader is surprised or curious and again applying to themselves)
- An anecdote (a story with a surprising twist)
- An imaginary situation (that the reader will naturally apply to their own situation).

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Now – Write Your Essay



Now write a short essay about school. Remember:

- Thesis statement – your title
- Introductory paragraph – hook your reader
- 2/3/4 main paragraphs each with a topic sentence and supporting sentences
- Conclusion – restate your thesis.