

Dear Parent:

Your child will be working on an argumentative essay/letter over the 2-week break in classes.

Please work with your child as they develop their topic and research opposing points of view.

They may compose their argumentative piece as either a letter or essay.

We have been working on the differences between persuasive and argumentative, and your child has a reference sheet explaining them. Please familiarize yourself with the differences between the 2 - the argumentative piece includes opposing points of view, whereas the persuasive states their opinion and uses emotional appeals.

Your child will need to have their essays/letters completed when we return to class on Feb. 3

Mr. Keene

## Opinion/Argument Essay Planning Guide

1. Clarify the topic.	
2. Brainstorm both sides of the topic.	
3. Develop a thesis statement for your side of the argument - What do you believe to be true for your side of the argument?	
4. What is the evidence that supports your thesis statement? This should include references to researched information when possible.	
5. Identify counter-arguments What might the other side say about your arguments?	6. Provide an organized reaction to counter-arguments. Why is your argument stronger?
7. Summarize why the thesis statement is correct based on your arguments. What are the most important points you can make to convince others to support your arguments? How does your side "outweigh" the other side?	

Adapted with permission from the author from:  
Zwiers, J. (2004) *Developing Academic Thinking Skills in Grades 6-12*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

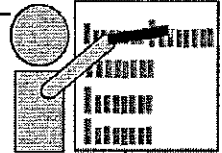
# How to Write an Opinion/Argument Letter



(This is an example of a "how to" chart you would want to post as you guide students through the writing process, modify this to match the format and topic your students will be writing. Post the examples you model, label these, and leave them up throughout the unit on opinion/argument writing.)

## Chart It!

1. Identify the topic for the letter.
2. Choose your position on the topic.
3. List all of the reasons supporting your position.
4. Choose the reasons from the list that will appeal to the person to whom you are writing the letter.
5. Consider the counterargument. With what will the person reading the letter disagree?



### Examples:

- Field Trip Ideas:**
- Beach
  - Aquarium
  - Jelly bean factory
  - Museum
  - Marine World

- Reasons my principal will like:**
- Dolphin show
  - Educational shark exhibit
  - Safe— many security guards
- What he will disagree with:**
- Expensive
  - Scary rides
- My counter argument:**
- Kids will fundraise

- My choice: Marine World**
- My Reasons**
- Fun
  - Rides
  - Many different activities
  - Dolphin show
  - Shark exhibit
  - Cotton candy
  - Expensive
  - Gift shop

6. Write your letter in at least three paragraphs with the following elements:
  - Why you are writing and what your request is
  - Your reasons for your request
  - Their counter argument and your response

Use a polite closing ("Please consider....", "Sincerely yours", etc.)

7. Reread your letter to yourself and at least three others to see if they are convinced. Add/delete sentences as needed to make your most convincing argument.

# Opinion/Argument Language Frames

## State your position:

- In my opinion....
- I believe that....
- It seems obvious to me that....
- Although not everybody would agree, my position is....

## Support your position:

- I have several reasons for arguing this point of view.
- My first reason is.... Another reason is....
- There are several points I want to make to support my point of view.
- Research shows.....
- It has been found that .....

## Consider the counterargument:

- Some argue that....
- They say (claim, hold, maintain) that....
- On the other hand, there are many who disagree with the idea that....
- They also argue that....
- A further point they make is....
- Yet some argue vehemently that....

## Restate your position:

- However, there are several reasons to oppose this point of view.
- After looking closely at both sides of the issue and the evidence, I believe it is best to.... because...
- Despite the fact that....it is also vital to consider....
- Well, that is only partly the case. The other side of the story is....
- The advantages of ... outweigh the disadvantages of....
- The issue is not so much a question of..., but a question of....
- What it seems to come down to is... versus....
- Even though the issue has two sides, I think I have shown that....
- Even though both sides have merits, the greater good will come from....
- If we look closely at..., we will see that it is better to....
- Based on the evidence so far, we should...because ....
- When you take a close look at this part, you see that....