



John Locke Global Essay Prize 2025
How to Write an Argumentative Essay Outline



Rogerian argumentative essay outline template

When to use it:

- Both sides make valid arguments; your readers are sympathetic to the opposing position
- The Rogerian format gives ample respect to opposing stances, making it a great “middle-ground” approach for representing both sides. This method is ideal if your thesis is a compromise between conflicting positions or an attempt to unify them.
- Likewise, this format is best if you’re writing for readers who are already biased toward an opposing position, such as if you’re arguing against societal norms.
- Of all formats, Rogerian gives the most attention to opposing arguments. Its goal is to create a middle ground between two arguments, pointing out the validity of each and finding a way to unify them as one. If positions on a particular topic are too polarized or unable to coexist, this format won’t work.

Let’s take a closer look at the Rogerian argumentative essay outline example below and notice the concessions for opposing points of view.

I. Introduction

- A. State the problem that needs to be solved and any context necessary for understanding it
- B. Explain the ideal solutions from your position as well as the ideal solutions from opposing positions (and point out any overlap)
- C. Make your thesis statement

II. Summarise the opposing position

A. Summarise the opposition's point of view respectfully; consider their defense and reasoning

1. Present evidential support for the opposing position
2. Comment on or refute their support

B. Follow the same format for additional opposing points of view

III. Validate the opposing position



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A. Show that you understand and/or sympathize with the opposing position

1. Explain the context and reasoning behind your opposition's perspective
2. Elaborate on the evidence and data from opposing positions

B. Affirm the areas in which you agree with the opposition

IV. Present your position

A. Summarize your first reason for holding your position

1. Present your first piece of evidential support
2. Present your second piece of evidential support, and so on

B. Summarize your second reason for holding your position, and so on

V. Bring both sides together (compromise)

- A. Consider which aspects from each argument are most reasonable
- B. Propose a compromise that combines the best elements from each position

VI. Conclusion

- A. Reaffirm your respect for the opposing point of view
- B. Reiterate the areas in which the opposition can benefit from your argument and vice versa
- C. Summarize the earlier compromise and, if possible, end on a positive note