

Constructing an Argument

Using the CPOC model

What is an argument?

An argument involves establishing a claim and providing reasons, explanation, examples, and evidence from research to support it.

Why structuring your argument is important?

- Clarifies your main message logically so your audience can easily understand.
- Encourages writers to analyse and evaluate ideas critically, rather than presenting unsupported opinions.
- Ensures your essay meets the assessment requirements and makes it easier for markers to assess your work against the marking rubric.

CPOC model (Claim-Proof-Objection-Conclusion)

CPOC is a simple framework for structuring and advancing an academic argument. It helps writers move beyond description to develop clear and evidence-based reasoning.

C - Claim: the argument, position, or idea you want to make	A strong claim • is specific and focused • can be supported with evidence • goes beyond simply stating facts. Example: <i>Hybrid cars are an effective strategy to fight pollution.</i>
P - Proof: the evidence that strengthens your argument	Rigorous proof • is established using credible and relevant sources • should be explained rather than simply being included • connects to and reinforces your argument. Example: <i>As transportation is the largest source of direct greenhouse gas emissions in the United States (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], 2024), switching to hybrid cars would have a positive impact on fighting pollution.</i>

O – Objections: the acknowledgement of alternative perspectives (counter argument)	Objections can be positive or negative. Therefore, a convincing or well-reasoned objection • recognises alternative perspectives • considers limitations or challenges • evaluates competing evidence • responds to counterarguments respectfully. Example: <i>Although mass transit systems are available in some regions Vuchic (2007), it is not feasible in many rural and suburban areas.</i>
C – Conclusion: the significance of your argument and connection to the bigger discussion	An effective conclusion • reinforces the main argument • synthesises key ideas • explains implications or significance • does not introduce new ideas. Example: <i>Therefore, hybrid cars are a better solution for much of the nation's population.</i>

Try it!

Read the following paragraph and identify the four CPOC components. Then re-arrange the sentences into a suitable paragraph structure. Then .

1. Research reviewed by Wheaton et al. (2016) found that later school start times are associated with longer sleep duration, improved attendance, and better grades.
2. Thus, because the educational and health benefits are substantial, schools should consider later start times.
3. Schools should start later in the morning for teenagers.
4. Some people argue that changing school schedules would create transportation and childcare challenges, but there is limited evidence to support this.

Answer keys: (3)Claim-(1)Proof-(4)Objection-(2)Conclusion

References and Resources

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