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Argument Paper

Definition

An argument paper makes a claim about a topic and supports this claim with specific information. The goal of an argument is to convince the audience that your claim is true. Follow your professor's instructions for further clarification.

Finding a Topic

To find a controversial issue or a topic of current interest for an argument paper, consult **Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center**, an electronic database. The first screen displays a long list of these topics. Also, consult the news media. The Rancho Library provides today's issues of the following newspapers on a stand as you enter the Reading Room:

Daily Bulletin

The Wall Street Journal

Los Angeles Times

You can also search our newspaper databases and find some newspapers online. Ask a librarian for assistance.

Reference Books

There are several excellent reference resources for argument papers in our database, **Gale Virtual Reference**, located under the Encyclopedias tab once logged in to [AGent](#), the Chaffey databases portal. Below are some highlights from the collection:

- **Encyclopedia of Science and Religion**-This four-volume resource addresses all aspects among the sciences and world religions and extends into the humanities as well as the physical sciences and technology.
- **Macmillan Encyclopedia of Death and Dying**-Covers aspects of death and dying in the biological, medical, social, sociological, psychological, religious, and philosophical disciplines. This two-volume resource also provides a deep historical and cross-cultural perspective through the ages.
- **Encyclopedia of Bioethics**-Covers a wealth of topics on the ethics of health professions, animal research, population control, and the environment. This set informs researchers on the impact of new scientific knowledge and its potential to harm or benefit present and future generations.
- **Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered History in America**-This resource deals with more than 400 years of American, lesbian and gay history and covers a broad range of areas including but not limited to people, public policy, economics, and culture.

Information Plus, is a series of books providing analysis of today's social issues. The series is especially strong in providing statistical data. Each book covers a specific topic such as **Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illicit Drugs; Crime, Prisons, and Jails** and **The Environment**. The series is part of the library's reference collection, opposite the Reference Desk at the Rancho campus Library. Reference books cannot be checked out. However, note that there is a second copy of each book in the series in our general collection, which you can check out. Ask a librarian for assistance.

Books in the general collection

Once you have a topic, look for books which you can check out of the library. Click on [Catalog](#) on the Chaffey College Library home page.

For example,

All Headings capital punishment

Or

Subject capital punishment

Books with a **Call Number** are located in the library.

If you cannot find a book on your topic, ask the librarian at the Reference Desk.

Electronic Books

Electronic books, **EBooks - NetLibrary**, read page by page on your computer screen, are accessed by following directions for **Electronic Databases** below.

To access **EBooks** from off campus, you must first create an account at the library. Ask a librarian for further instructions.

Electronic Databases

1. Click on **AGent** on the Chaffey College Library home page.
2. Log in
3. Click on **Databases A – Z**
4. Click on the database of your choice

Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center (magazines, academic journals, books and more)

This is the most useful and comprehensive database for argument papers. It deals with current, controversial issues. It contains a Viewpoints section which explores pro and con perspectives. Many topics also have a statistics section.

CQ Researcher

This database offers comprehensive, in-depth analyses of issues in the news. It presents both sides of the argument.

Academic Search Premier (magazines and academic journals)

The library has other databases specializing in specific subjects. Consult a librarian.

Websites

- **Brookings Institute** <http://www.brookings.edu/topiclist.aspx>-The Brookings Institute is a non-partisan think-tank that produces a variety of books, articles, and other documents on a variety of controversial topics. Current research topics fall within Global and U.S. Economics, Education, Environment and Energy, Governance, Global and U.S. Politics, Science and Technology, and Social Policy among others.
- **DebateBase** <http://www.idebate.org/index.php>-This online debate database, courtesy of the International Debate Education Association, covers numerous, current, debate topics.
- **ProCon** <http://www.procon.org/>-
- This website contains information both for and against on topics within business, health and medicine, law, politics, and religion among other areas.
- **PBS Frontline** <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/>-This web resource provides background information, links, chronologies, interviews, documentaries, online discussions, and makes available transcripts corresponding to documentaries filmed for the PBS show. Comprehensive topics include foreign affairs and defense, criminal justice, science and technology, and social issues as well as many others.
- **Ron Gunzburger's Political Issues and Debates** <http://www.politics1.com/issues.htm>-Pages contain links to a balanced mix of leading groups on all sides of the hot issues facing our nation today. Presented free of editorial remarks this resource contains material from groups on all sides of the issues and encourages people to form their own, educated opinions.

Remember, if you have any questions regarding your search, contact a librarian in person at the Reference Desk or Phone: 909 652 – 6808.

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