



★ Grammar & Writing

PAGE ▾





DISCUSSION

HISTORY

NOTIFY ME



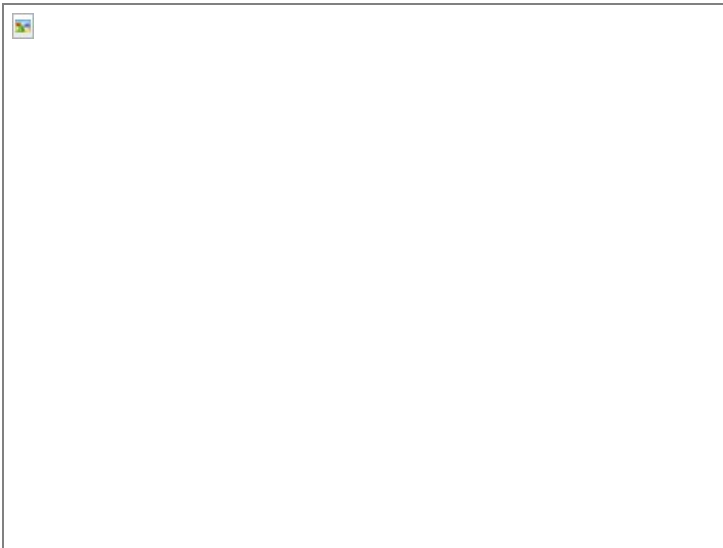
PROTECTED

-  Wiki Home
-  Join this Wiki
-  Recent Changes
-  Manage Wiki

- Home
- Course News & Updates
- Course Syllabus
- Critique Guidelines
- Discussion Guidelines
- Essay 1 - World View
- Essay 2 - Media
- Essay 3 - Ethics
- Essay 4 - Oral Presentation
- Ethics & Globalization
- Evolution & the Universe
- Food for Thought
- Grammar & Writing
- Internet & Education
- Language & Its Role
- Malcolm X
- Media Resources
- Morning Writing
- Occupy Wall Street
- Paradigms & World View
- Perception & the Brain
- Plato's Cave
- Propaganda & PR
- Questions Worth Asking
- Sharing the Planet
- Social Contract
- Student Questionnaire

## Grammar & Writing

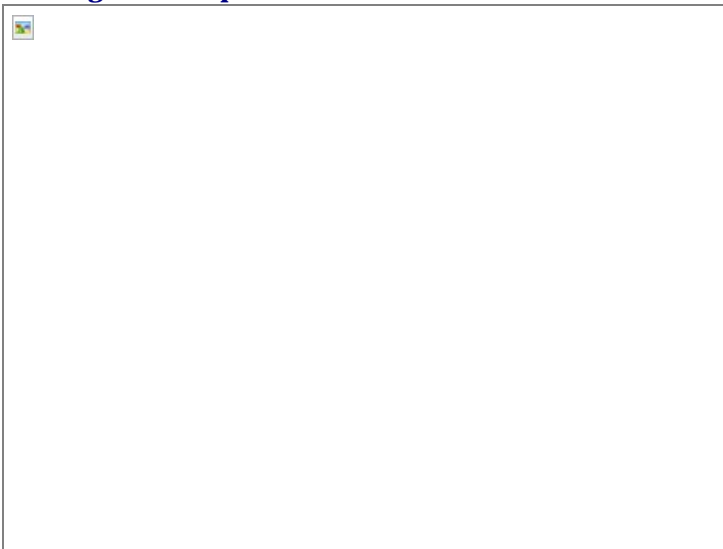
### Writing Argumentative Essays



#### Table of Contents

- [Grammar & Writing](#)
- [Writing Argumentative Essays](#)
- [Picking Your Topic](#)
- [ProCon.org](#)
- [From the Grammar Girl](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Writing Argument](#)

### Picking Your Topic



#### [ProCon.org](#)

ProCon.org nonprofit with no government affiliations of any kind. Their purpose is to provide resources for Critical Thinking and educate without bias. They do not express opinions. Their mission is to promote critical thinking, education and informed citizenry by presenting controversial and important issues in a balanced and comprehensive way.



On bad academic writing

### **From the Grammar Girl**

While it might be stylish in certain quarters to ignore the rules of standard usage, grammar matters elsewhere. It matters a lot.

#### **Getting a Job**

It matters, for example, when you're applying for a job. In one survey of hiring managers, 75 percent said it was worse for an applicant to have a spelling or grammar error on his application than for him to show up late or—get this—swear during an interview. Holy bleep.

#### **Keeping a Job**

It continues to matter when you've landed that job. Remember the fictional TV lawyer Ed? He lost his job in a Manhattan law firm because of a misplaced comma in a contract. Just in case you think this sort of thing only happens on TV, think again. A utility company in Canada had to pay an extra \$2.13 million in 2006 to lease power poles because someone stuck a comma in the wrong spot.

#### **Staying Out of Jail**

Grammar matters even if you have an illegal job. A bank robber once got nabbed, in part, because he spelled "money" M-U-N-Y. The bank teller realized the man was such an idiot, he could be tricked into robbing the bank across the street—where police summoned by the teller were waiting. And get this: A woman who killed her husband and then wrote notes to the police was caught in part because of her tendency to misuse dashes and quotation marks. All police had to do was compare her regular correspondence to the anonymous taunts sent to the police and they had a powerful piece of evidence against her.

#### **Finding Love**

Grammar also matters if you're looking for love. Raise your hand if you'd want to go out with someone whose personal ad contains spelling and grammar errors. That's right. It's a turnoff. It's the equivalent of having spinach in your teeth, or having the zipper on your jeans undone.

#### **Understanding Appropriateness**

Speaking of jeans, grammar and clothing have a lot in common. Let's say you see a man in a Speedo. Are you at the beach? Let's hope so. If he's wearing a Speedo on public transportation, the man's probably a lunatic. At the very least, you don't want to sit next to him on the bus. In just the same way, using the wrong kind of language in the wrong place can send some pretty nutty messages. Let's say you sent your company president e-mail and you used the number 2 as shorthand for "to." Essentially, you're saying, "I don't need that raise this year after all. In fact, I might not really even need this job."

That doesn't mean you can *never* use shortcuts like this. Even though people who love grammar are less likely to do so, it's fine to save your thumbs when you're texting. It's all about context. You don't wear a Speedo or other super-abbreviated forms of pants on the bus. Likewise, you don't use really abbreviated language where it doesn't belong. Of course, you know this already, you with your pants carefully zipped, you with your shirt covering your navel.

#### **Getting and Giving Respect**

You know that being grammatical isn't just about following the rules like some sort of robot. It's about paying attention to context. It's using language that's most likely to be understood. It's about sending a message that will be met with respect, just as it shows respect.

### **Resources**

[Sentence Structure](#) 

[Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#) 

[Academic Writing Guide](#) 

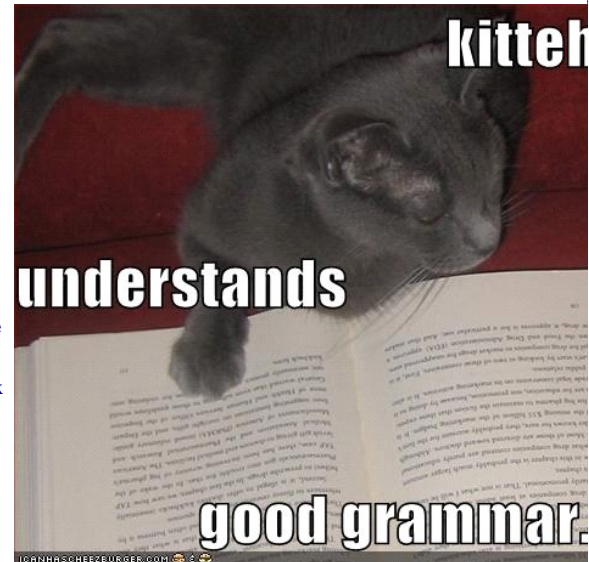
[University of Illinois Grammar Handbook](#) 

[University of Chicago, Grammar Resources](#) 

### **Writing Argument**

#### **University of Chicago: Argument: A Key Feature of College Writing**

Now by "argument" we do not mean a dispute over a loud stereo. In college, an argument is something less contentious and more systematic: It is a set of statements coherently arranged to offer three things that experienced readers expect in essays that they



judge to be thoughtful:

1. They expect to see a *claim* that would encourage them to say, "That's interesting. I'd like to know more."
2. They expect to see *evidence, reasons* for your claim, evidence that would encourage them to agree with your claim, or at least to think it plausible.
3. They expect to see that you've thought about *limits* and *objections* to your claim. Almost by definition, an interesting claim is one that can be reasonably challenged. Readers look for answers to questions like "But what about . . . ?" and "Have you considered . . . ?"

This kind of argument is less like disagreeable wrangling, more like an amiable and lively conversation with someone whom you respect and who respects you; someone who is interested in what you have to say, but will not agree with your claims just because you state them; someone who wants to hear your reasons for believing your claims and also wants to hear answers to their questions.

At this point, some students ask why they should be required to *convince* anyone of anything. "After all," they say, "we are all entitled to our opinions, so all we should have to do is express them clearly. Here's my opinion. Take it or leave it." This point of view both misunderstands the nature of argument and ignores its greatest value.

It is true that we are all entitled to our opinions and that we have no duty to defend them. But universities hold as their highest value not just the pursuit of new knowledge and better understanding, but the sharing of that knowledge. We write not only to state what we think but also to show why others might agree with it and why it matters. We also know that whatever it is we think, it is never the entire truth. Our conclusions are partial, incomplete, and always subject to challenge. So we write in a way that allows others to test our reasoning: we present our best thinking as a series of claims, reasons, and responses to imagined challenges, so that readers can see not only what we think, but whether they ought to agree.

And that's all an argument is—not wrangling, but a serious and focused conversation among people who are intensely interested in getting to the bottom of things *cooperatively*.

Those values are also an integral part of your education in college. For four years, you are asked to read, do research, gather data, analyze it, think about it, and then communicate it to readers in a form in which enables them to assess it and use it. You are asked to do this not because we expect you all to become professional scholars, but because in just about any profession you pursue, you do research, think about what you find, make decisions about complex matters, and then explain those decisions—usually in writing—to others who have a stake in your decisions being sound ones. In an Age of Information, what most professionals do is research, think, and make arguments. (And part of the value of doing your own thinking and writing is that it makes you much better at evaluating the thinking and writing of others.)

---

### What's Wrong with these Sentences?

1. The United States was built to help others and one another not to over take the world every person who since his or her name are willing to give there life for others so they can have or try having a better life.
2. Tragic, natural disasters that occurred out of nowhere we left to burden with the loss of someone we knew or had no idea who they were. We people, were unprepared for these natural disasters, as they strike unexpectedly, but we can do our best to prevent from losing a lot of people to these disasters.
3. With housing companies buying open land when we already have empty houses around town is taking up all the open land we need to produce those crops.
4. Reduce the temperature of the water in which you wash your clothes in.
5. Several examples include that microwave technology, plastics, and microprocessors all intricate parts of today's society in fact the majority of the technology that is used by the average person in today's society would not be here.
6. PG&E has a promotion that states that if their customer cuts twenty percent of their electricity bill, then they will get another twenty percent off, they even have other promotions that will give discounts for buying energy star appliances (lowest energy consuming appliances) and for changing fluorescent light bulbs instead of standard ones.
7. Some seemingly small but hugely altering steps we can take is by shopping organically as much as financially possible. Grow as much food of your own as you can, even if its only one plant, and spend money locally as much as possible.
8. Written language is one of the major forms for communicating and receiving language.
9. Every day throughout the world atrocities are committed against fellow human beings and we just stand by and let it happen it is not our "jurisdiction" or if we might offend a few people.
10. If we were to accept each others fault and try to work them out and not around them then there would be equality among us.
11. By raising children to have good ideals, and healthy perspectives as to how they live, treat the planet, and each other our chance at surviving and living fuller, more improved lives will be much more easily attained.
12. Today when the average citizen is hungry, they look for a market to buy food at.
13. Instead of letting people watch what is on TV, people should be focusing on their immediate community.
14. World leaders committed themselves to an ambitious but achievable intermediate target to have by 2015 the number of undernourished people in the world from the 1990 level.
15. Whale harvesting is an example, Japan and Russia still harvest whales even in the face of world pressure to stop they refuse and use false claims to continue to harvest whales.

