

COMP

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Taking a Position

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1 Understand how to read position papers
- 2 Develop sound claims with reliable evidence
- 3 Make concessions & rebut opposing arguments
- 4 Make effective appeals
- 5 Write, revise, and edit a logical position paper

Understand How to Read Position Papers

- Consider the rhetorical situation
 - *Purpose*
 - Inform the nature and relevance of a topic
 - Persuade readers to accept that one's position on the topic is most reasonable
 - *Audience - Writers may address people who are:*
 - Opposed to the writer's position
 - Uncertain of what position to take
 - Unaware that an issue exists
 - Agreeing and looking for sensible reasons
 - *Topic - Debatable issues*

Understand How to Read Position Papers

- Qualities of strong arguments
 - *Informed Writing* - Writer has researched the topic thoroughly and understands it fully
 - *Logical Writing* - Writer presents the topic objectively taking position upheld by best logic
 - *Engaging Writing* - Writer converses by:
 - Making reasonable points
 - Rebutting opposing arguments
 - Refocusing claims

Develop Sound Claims with Reliable Evidence

- “Nuclear is not the answer” by student writer Alyssa Woudstra
 - *Writer takes a position on the environmental issue of energy production*
 - *Convincing position is built on sound claims supported by clear and reliable evidence*
 - *Writer supports her position on energy from fossil fuels over nuclear power by advocating strong points of advantage for the fossil fuels*

Make Concessions and Rebut Opposing Arguments

- “The Emancipation of Abe Lincoln” by Eric Foner, professor of history at Columbia University
 - *Strongly claims, with suitable evidence, that emancipation was a process and not a single event*
 - *Lincoln’s perception of black people changed over course of the war*
 - *View of a biracial America laid foundation for the end of slavery*

Make Effective Appeals

- “Sorry, Vegans: Brussels Sprouts Like to Live, Too” by Natalie Angier
 - *Op-ed essay that makes appropriate appeals to credibility, logic, and emotion*
 - *Avoids logical fallacies such as oversimplifying and attacks against opponents*
 - *Provides evidence to support claim that plants are as alive as animals*
 - *Writing style adds color to arguments presented by elaborating on animal instincts that plants possess, with scientific reasoning for the same*



Write, Revise, and Edit a Logical Position Paper

- Planning
 - *Select a debatable topic*
 - Current affairs
 - Burning issues
 - Dividing lines
 - *Take stock - Identify your current stand on the topic*
 - *Get inside the issue*
 - Investigate all possible positions
 - Do firsthand research
 - Set up position and develop reasoning to support it



Write, Revise, and Edit a Logical Position Paper

- Planning
 - *Refine your position - Changes incurred as result of deeper understanding of the topic that shape one's current position*
 - *Organize your argument and support*
 - Traditional pattern
 - Blatant confession
 - Delayed gratification
 - Changed mind
 - Winning over

Write, Revise, and Edit a Logical Position Paper

- Drafting
 - *Opening - Have a captivating start to the essay*
 - *Development - Deepen, clarify, and support the position using solid logic and reliable support*
 - *Closing - End on a thoughtful note that stresses commitment to the position*
- Revising - Ideas, organization, and voice
- Edit and proofread
- Publish the essay

SUMMARY

- Learning to read and write position papers enables one to take a position
- Reading skills help to:
 - *Analyze others' positions*
 - *Recognize others' strengths*
 - *Identify others' weaknesses*
- Writing skills help to
 - *Probe a topic*
 - *Refine own perspective*

