

Key Elements In Persuasion

- **A claim**
- **At least one counterclaim**
- **Reasons supporting each claim**
- **Explanation of why one claim is more valid**

The Paragraphs

(Version 1)

- **Introductory Paragraph**
Specifies the issue or the claims
- **Reasons Paragraphs**
Each provides details about a major reason for your claim
- **Counterargument Paragraph**
Provides reasons supporting the counterclaim
- **Concluding Paragraph**
Sums up the reasons
Refutes the counterclaim
Provides suggestions

Introductory Paragraph

- **Topic Sentence**
 - Specifies the issue or your claim
- **Detail Sentences**
 - Specify details about the claim and counterclaim
 - Provide background information
 - Include an Introductory Option

Example Introductory Paragraph

Free the Animals!

In front of the big circus tent, protesters were holding posters and yelling, “Free the animals!!” What was THAT about? They can’t be serious about not having animals in circuses, can they? Who ever heard of a circus without animals? Without question, when most people think of a circus, they think of animal acts like the lions, tigers, and dogs doing tricks. They look forward to seeing the elephants parade while holding onto each other’s tails. They laugh when the clowns and their dogs do a funny act. However, because many people believe that animals should live a natural life and should not be abused, they argue that animals should be banned from the circus.

Reasons Paragraphs

- **Topic/Transition Sentence**
 - Includes a transition
 - Names the claim
 - Names the major reason
- **Detail Sentences**
 - Support the major reason with details

Example Reasons Paragraph

First, they reason that animals should not be in the circus because they should live a natural life. Importantly, animals should live in their natural habitat, like the jungle or the woods instead of a cage. For example, elephants like to live together in families and communities and roam freely. Instead, elephants in the circus are tied with a rope to a post or kept in a cage or a truck. Additionally, animals should be able to obtain their own food when they get hungry and eat it as they normally would. Instead, they are given dried food on a rigid schedule. Further, animals living in the wild do what they want to do when they want to do it. Circus animals are made to travel around the country from place to place in vehicles and to perform on a schedule. As they perform, they are made to perform acts that are not natural to them. For example, elephants in the wild do not parade in a line with their front feet on the backs of other elephants.

Counterargument Paragraph

- **Topic/Transition Sentence**
 - Includes a transition
 - Names the counterclaim
 - Introduces the reasons
- **Detail Sentences**
 - Each pair covers one reason supporting the counterclaim

Example Counterargument Paragraph

Of course, there are people who argue that having animals in the circus is part of the tradition surrounding circuses and that circuses should continue to include animal acts. Crucially, they feel that having animals in the circus educates people about animals. For example, they say that animals are very smart and talented creatures, and people need to understand how smart animals are. People will be more likely to protect animals if they understand their intelligence. Moreover, they say that the animals play important roles in the circus acts. Without the animals, many acts could not exist. The lion-tamer act could not exist without the lions! They also say that the animals are funny. Without the animals, people might not laugh and have as much fun as they watch the circus acts.

Sentences in a Concluding Paragraph

- **Concluding Transition Sentence**

- Has a Concluding Transition
- Names the issue or claim

- **Detail Sentences**

- Sum up the reasons
- Explain why one claim is best (refutes the counterclaim)

- **Clincher Sentence**

- Supports the chosen claim

Example Concluding Paragraph

Nevertheless, regardless of how talented animals are and the role they play in the circus, their participation does not seem worth the costs to their lives. No amount of entertainment is worth an animal's pain or death. Taking the animals out of their natural habitats and forcing them to behave in ways that are unnatural to them is a blow to their nature and existence. It is an example of humans lording over the animal world for financial gain. Putting the animals in a position where they can be abused and injured without giving them adequate medical care is a moral and ethical travesty. For these important reasons, this country should ban the presence of animals in circuses. Animals currently in circuses should be allowed to live naturally on protected lands. In lieu of that, the presence of animals in circuses should be monitored with strict regulations and health guidelines. After all, freeing the animals is not such a far-fetched idea!

The Paragraphs

(Version 2)

- **Introductory Paragraph**
 - **Specifies the issue or the claim**
- **Reasons Paragraphs**

Each provides:

 - **Details about a major reason for the claim**
 - **AND details about a related reason for the counterclaim**
- **Concluding Paragraph**
 - **Sums up the reasons**
 - **Refutes the counterclaim**

Example Introductory Paragraph

Biking: A Good Way to Commute!

As Gabriella is getting ready for work, she puts on her biking shoes, biking clothes, and biking helmet. Is she training for the Olympics? No, this is just her usual routine for getting ready for her commute to work in the city. Into her backpack go her lunch, her high heels, and her wrinkle-free dress. In fact, Gabby is not unique; she is just one of thousands of people who believe in commuting to work on two-wheeled vehicles without motors. They believe that despite the drawbacks, biking is not only an efficient way to get to work, but it keeps them healthy while saving the environment.

Types of Sentences in Reasons Paragraphs

- **2 Topic/Transition Sentences**
 - One specifies a reason
 - The other specifies an opposite reason(Either order can be used.)
- **Detail Sentences**
Lead-off Sentences and Follow-up Sentences that support the reason and opposite reason

Order of Sentences #1 For a Reasons Paragraph

- **Topic/Transition Sentence
about the Claim and the Major Reason**
- **Lead-off and Follow-up Sentences
about the Major Reason**
- **Topic/Transition Sentence
about the Counterclaim and
Opposite Reason**
- **Lead-off and Follow-up Sentences
about the Opposite Reason**

Example Reasons Paragraph (Order #1)

Interestingly, bikers claim that biking to work can actually save time. For example, they say that riding a bike gives the commuter a lot of flexibility. When they encounter a traffic jam or an accident, they can quickly take another road. They do not get stuck in traffic. Also, bikes take up little space, are easy to maneuver, and can weave through bumper-to-bumper traffic easily. They can travel down the side of the road or even on a sidewalk if the law allows. As a result, bikers are more likely to get to work on time than drivers. In contrast, lots of people choose not to bike to work because it might take more time than driving. They complain that they have long commutes. Of course, cars can travel faster than bikes. If people have a long commutes over open highway, driving a car saves time.

Order of Sentences #2 For a Reasons Paragraph

- **Topic/Transition Sentence
about the Counterclaim and
Opposite Reason**
- **Lead-off and Follow-up Sentences
about Opposite Reason**
- **Topic/Transition Sentence
about the Claim and Major Reason**
- **Lead-off and Follow-up Sentences
about the Major Reason**

Example Reasons Paragraph (Order #2)

Naturally, the time commitment is one reason people choose not to use a bike to commute to work. With reason, they complain that biking to work takes more time than driving a car. Even a short trip can take less time by car than by bike. Of course, cars can travel faster than bikes. If people have a long commute over open highway, driving a car saves lots of time. Nevertheless, bikers claim that biking can actually save time. For example, they say that riding a bike gives the rider a lot of flexibility to move through traffic snarls. When they encounter a traffic jam or an accident, they can quickly take another road. They do not get stuck in traffic. Also, bikes take up little space on the road, are easy to maneuver, and can weave through bumper-to-bumper traffic easily. They can travel down the side of the road or even on a sidewalk if the law allows. As a result, bikers are more likely to get to work on time than drivers.

Order of Sentences #3 For a Reasons Paragraph

- **Topic/Transition Sentence
about the Claim and Reason
AND the Counterclaim and
Opposite Reason**
- **Lead-off and Follow-up Sentences
about the Major Reason**
- **Lead-off and Follow-up Sentences
about the Opposite Reason**

Example Reasons Paragraph (Order #3)

For one issue, some people think biking saves time, and others think that biking takes too much time. Those who like biking say that riding a bike gives commuters a lot of flexibility. When they encounter a traffic jam or an accident, they can quickly take another road. They don't get stuck in traffic. Also, bikes take up little space, are easy to maneuver, and can weave through bumper-to-bumper traffic easily. They can travel down the side of the road or even on a sidewalk if the law allows. As a result, bikers are more likely to get to work on time than drivers. Those opposed to biking say that the extra time commitment is the reason they choose to drive a car to work. They complain that biking to work takes more time than driving a car. Of course, cars can travel faster than bikes. If people have a long commute over open highway, driving a car saves time.

Example Concluding Paragraph

To conclude, Gabriel's commute to work on her bike produces many benefits. She gets to work on time because she can move around and through traffic jams quickly and easily. She arrives at work feeling energized and good about the fact that she has done her daily exercise. She stays healthy while saving money and time. She can also feel good about doing her part to save the planet. She knows that people who say biking takes too much time, makes them tired, and is not convenient are just making excuses. Obviously, those people who have very long commutes on major highways that flow smoothly have a reason to drive their cars. Perhaps they should consider moving closer to their work place. For those who have short congested commutes, the benefits outweigh the inconvenience. In fact, Gabby wonders, based on all the benefits associated with biking to work, how can anyone not find a way to use a bike, at least for part of the time?

Example Introductory Paragraph

Asteroids: A New Frontier?

Are asteroids a new frontier that humans should settle? Some people think that they are; others do not agree. Most people think of asteroids as big rocks floating randomly around in space such as those in the asteroid field encountered by Han Solo, Princess Leia, and Chewbacca in the movie “The Empire Strikes Back.” Nevertheless, asteroids are much more than big rocks. They are actually called “minor planets” because they orbit around the sun (*Asteroids* 1). With regard to size, some of the smallest asteroids are almost a mile across. The largest is about a quarter of the size of the Earth’s moon. All the asteroids together equal the mass of the Earth’s moon (*Asteroids* 1). With regard to location, many of them are located in the asteroid belt. This is a region between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter (*Asteroids: Overview* 1). Because of their natural resources and opportunities for jobs and investments, asteroids offer great potential as places to live and work in the future.

Example Reasons Paragraph

Also importantly, since these natural resources are potentially useful for humans, they represent a great source of new job opportunities. Clearly, workers will be needed to travel to asteroids to work in the mines and extract the metals and volatiles. Workers also may be needed to create steel and other products from the mined materials that can be used in constructing new homes and buildings on asteroids and larger planets. Additionally, inventors will be needed to create the technologies for extracting metals and volatiles and transforming them into useful products on the asteroids. Also, pilots will be needed to ferry workers to and from the asteroids. They will also be needed to take materials and people to other planets. Surely, investors and business people will be needed to supply the funds for space travel, salaries, starting up mines, buying initial equipment, and running the mines.

Example Counterargument Paragraph

Of course, some people object to trying to obtain resources from and settling on asteroids. Not surprisingly, they indicate that traveling to and working on asteroids will be dangerous. Some people have died during space travel, and others have experienced physical problems like brittle bones after space travel. Additionally, no one really knows the hazards that might be associated with mining certain metals and volatiles on asteroids. Mining has always been dangerous, even here on Earth. Furthermore, space travel is very expensive. A single space launch can cost millions of dollars. People wonder whether this money should be spent to cure diseases and feed the world's hungry people. Finally, there are many international legal issues associated with obtaining natural resources on asteroids. Although questions such as who owns materials mined on asteroids and whether whole asteroids can be owned have been settled, future court cases are sure to surface.

Example Concluding Paragraph

Despite these problems, living and working on asteroids should be seriously pursued because of the resources, opportunities, and need for way stations in space. Obviously, resources such as metals and volatiles are going to be needed in space as more and more space travel and space settlement takes place. These resources can be mined on asteroids. Because many people are unemployed, they need the work opportunities that asteroids would provide. Mine workers, inventors, and pilots will be able to find jobs on asteroids. Because some asteroids are located near the Earth, they can be used as way stations for space travelers to obtain fuel and supplies as they go to other planets. Yes, mining on asteroids might be dangerous, but mining and the settlement of any new place can be dangerous, even on the Earth. Humans are adventurers, and they need new worlds to explore and tame. The money spent on these pioneering activities will be well spent, especially if the Earth is running out of space and is polluted. People will work out the legal issues related to asteroids as time goes forward. Thus, asteroids are a new frontier to be explored, mined, and settled.

Example Format for an ACT Answer

- **Title**
 - Grabs the reader**
- **Introductory Paragraph**
 - **Introduces the issue**
 - **Provides background**
- **3 Body Paragraphs**
 - **Each provides reasons for one perspective**
- **Concluding Paragraph**
 - **Chooses one perspective**
 - **Explains why it is best**
 - **Negates the other perspectives**