



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

How to Develop an Argument

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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OK...so you've got your plan...

- Now what?
- How do you start writing?



Built an Argument

- Your argument is how you express your viewpoint and answer the question you have been set, using evidence.
- Your argument can help you plan the structure of your work and guide you to find the evidence you need to support it.
- Make sure that your argument runs throughout your writing and that everything you include is relevant to it.
- Try to sum up your argument in a few words before you start writing and keep checking that it remains the focus as you research and write your work.

Putting ideas onto paper

- Plan should indicate direction and structure
- Having researched you should have examples to back up your thesis
- Start to think of sequence of 'story'

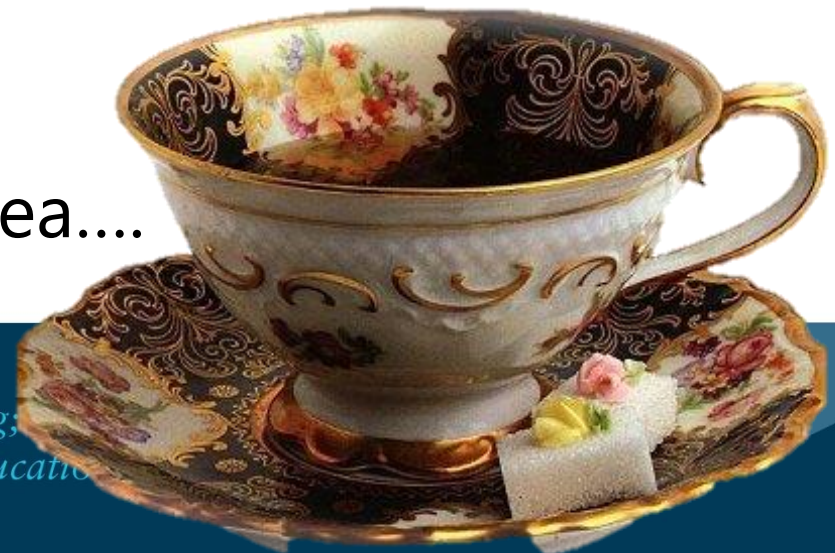


Structure your argument

- Guide your reader through your argument in a logical way. Think about what questions your reader might have. If you can answer these questions through your argument, it will seem more convincing.
- Present both sides of the debate, along with your thoughts, linking together the different elements.
- You can then work towards a conclusion by weighing the evidence and showing how certain ideas are accepted and others are rejected. Your conclusion should make clear where you stand.

Sequence of info

- Stories have a beginning, middle and an end
- Stories are written for the reader
- Each part of the story should unfold in logical order
- Think 'instructions'
 - how to make a cup of tea....



Develop your argument

- Develop your argument by considering the evidence and drawing your own conclusion.
- If you are considering a range of opinions, try to group them together under different headings.
- Look at the strengths and weaknesses of the different sets of evidence and present these clearly and in a critical way. This will help to show you understand what you have read.
- Take the evidence into account in developing your own argument and make clear what your viewpoint is. Perhaps your argument has strengths and weaknesses as well – it is fine to acknowledge these.

An argument is ..

- A discussion that shows how one idea (or thing) links to, or follows from, another
 - It deals with causes and consequences
 - It should show reasons/rationale
 - It should be logical
 - It should be persuasive
 - It should make sense



What makes a coherent argument?

- **Thesis** – the point/argument/view that you want to express
- **Evidence** – examples to back up claims
- **Warrant** – shows how examples back up your thesis
- **Concessions/qualifications** – points that balance your discussion



Example:



- **Claim** – hand washing stops the spread of germs
- **Evidence** – various reports show that germs are not transferred between people if hands are regularly washed
- **Warrant** – reports back up the claim
- **Qualification/Concessions** – not all germs might be killed by washing; when one washes one's hands might matter

Pitfalls to avoid

- Description only
- Blurred focus
 - Digression
 - Circular reasoning
- Opinion; little evidence of research
- Irrelevance
- Rambling
- Padding



Outlines

- ❖ Always be thinking about the structure
- ❖ Create an outline, and develop it
- ❖ By the end of block 1, you should have an annotated outline, i.e. a detailed outline with a summary of what you will put in each chapter.
- ❖ You will need to bring this along to your sessions with your supervisor
- ❖ This is not written in stone but it will help you to develop your project

The Project Management Plan

Can be

- A mind map
- A Gantt chart
- A table
- And so on

What is this?

- Your project/dissertation takes about 8 months from proposal to the deadline.
- In the meantime, you have to also complete a number of other modules.
- The project management plan is there to identify what you need to do, and when, what your goals are, and when you will reach them.
- Also, the project management plan will allow to schedule your supervision meetings, and what and when you will give chapters, etc. to your supervisor.

How to project manage

- It is useful to create a chart, like a Gantt chart.
- You can create Gantt charts on excel, word, visio.

Easy example

Time	Task	Target (milestone)
Block 1	Finalise topic	
Block 2	Discuss topic with supervisor Get an overview of resources and skills needed Research literature Write short comments on readings	Submit reflective report on 12 th November
Block 3	Write overview of key literature (i.e. Literature review) and discuss with supervisor	
Block 4	Finalise structure of dissertation (i.e., chapter headings)	
Block 5	Write draft of chapter	

Time	Task	Target
Block 6	Prepare presentation about dissertation Finalise dissertation Revise dissertation (i.e., spell check)	Presentation with structure of dissertation
End of Easter Break	Finalise bibliography Prepare dissertation for submission	Submit dissertation on 4th May