

# Sample Outline for an Argument Paper

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. **Lead-in:** Suggested options to choose from:
  - Quotation(s)
  - Question(s)
  - Anecdote (from personal experience or reading)
  - Myths (Most people think that . . . ; but in fact, . . . )
  - Reference to text (e.g., one of the assigned essays)
  - Statistics, quick background to the issue in your paper
- B. **Thesis** – YOUR position on the controversy

## II. BODY

- A. ►Definitions, background information (e.g., for a paper on day labor centers: What is a day labor center? Where did this practice start? How long has this practice been in existence?); not too much of this, just enough so that the instructor has a clear understanding of the issue  
►This is also a place for you to lay out any implicit values that need to be made explicit and defended (e.g., all workers, whatever their legal status, need to have their rights protected; *or*, the government should only be protecting the rights of citizens and legal immigrants.)
- B. Acknowledgement of perspective(s) other than your position; succinct summary of opposing position with good quotes
- C. Reason # 1: First major sub-argument or area of evidence supporting your position (Topic sentence followed by support, with quotes and paraphrases from sources)
- D. Reason # 2: Second major sub-argument or area of evidence supporting your position (Topic sentence followed by support, with quotes and paraphrases from sources)
- E. Reason # 3: Third major sub-argument or area of evidence supporting your position (Topic sentence followed by support, with quotes and paraphrases from sources)

*(Order your sub-arguments and evidence to move toward your strongest argument or piece of evidence; think also of moving from rational appeal to emotional appeal, then culminating in ethical (values) appeal)*

## III. CONCLUSION

- A. Recommendations and Conclusions
- B. Restate argument in light of material covered above. Show once and for all how the evidence leads to the conclusion, the recommended course of action.
- C. **Lead-out:** Suggested options to choose from;
  - Look to the future
  - Return to subject of lead-in and now look to a better future
  - Excellent final quote