Inf2-SEPP

Tutorial 1 (Week 2)

How to Write a Good Argumentative Essay

Study this tutorial sheet and make notes of your answers in activity 1 BEFORE the tutorial.

Introduction

The purpose of this tutorial is to help write an academic argumentative essay.

In the first part you will discuss the premises and conclusions, as well as the evidence needed to support the premises that you have written down based on the three extracts about digital transformation presented in lecture 3 in Week 1.

Then, you will learn more about how to structure an argumentative essay. Finally, you will discuss an example essay.

Activity 1: Let's get to know each other (~20 mins)

- Pair with a colleague. Every student interview their partner for 2-3 minutes, then switch roles. They may ask the following questions:
  - What is your name?
  - What is your background (education, employment)?
  - Why did you pick up this BS / MSc and specialism?
  - What is your career plan after this BS / MSc?
  - and something silly, like: 'If you could sing one song from your country, what would it be and why?" or "If you were a bird, what type of bird would you want to be? Would you rather be a pet or a wild bird?"

- When done, every student introduces their neighbour to the group in 1 min.

Activity 2: Premises and Conclusions (~10 mins)

Discuss premises and conclusion based on Lecture 3:

- Pair with a colleague and discuss your ideas with them.
- Discuss with the whole group.

IMF

Premise:

1. **Digital platforms are recasting the relationship between customers, <u>workers</u>, and employers**
2. **Computing power is improving dramatically and more and more people around the world participate in the digital economy**

Conclusion

1. **We should think carefully about how to devise policies that will allow us to fully exploit the digital revolution's benefits while minimizing job dislocation**

OECD

Premises

1. **Digital technologies are transforming our lives and our economies.**
2. **[Digital technologies] change the way firms produce goods and services, innovate, and interact with other firms, workers, consumers and governments.**
3. **For example, cloud computing gives firms access to flexible data storage and processing capacities, online platforms can make their interactions with consumers more fluid, and artificial intelligence enables them to automate increasingly complex tasks (OECD, 2019a).**

Conclusion

1. **These technologies seem to offer a vast potential to enhance firm productivity and ultimately living standards.**

WEF

Premises

1. **New technologies are redefining customer expectations, enabling businesses to meet these new expectations, and changing the way people live and work.**

Conclusion

1. **Digital transformation, as this is commonly called, has immense potential to change consumer lives, create value for business and unlock broader societal benefits.**

Structure of an Argumentative Essay (~10 mins)

You may want to structure your argumentative essays using one of the two models of a five-paragraph essay:

Model 1: Block organisation

1. Introduction – thesis statement
2. Pro-argument I
3. Pro-argument II
4. Counter-argument & Refutation
5. Conclusion

Model 2: Point-by-point organisation

1. Introduction
2. Counter-argument I and Refutation
3. Counter-argument II and Refutation
4. Counter-argument III and Refutation
5. Conclusion

Block organisation:

1. **Introduction:** Social media apps are harmful to people of young age.
2. **Pro-argument I:** Studies have shown that teenagers who engage with social media have lower self-esteems.
3. **Pro-argument II:** Social media also negatively impacts youngster's attention span.
4. **Counter argument & Refutation:** Others say that social media serves as a medium of expression for young people. But the costs associated with it are too high. Young people can find alternative and healthier means of expressions.
5. **Conclusion:** Social media apps should be banned for people of young age.

Point-by-point organisation

1. **Introduction:** Social media apps have permeated all aspects of our life, including those of young people, one of the most vulnerable segments of our society.
2. **Counter argument I & Refutation:** Some argue that young people use social media as a means of expression. However, studies have shown that like all people, social media is used to highlight only the positive experiences, and not to express all feelings and emotions. This can cause pressure on youngsters.
3. **Counter argument II & Refutation:** Yet others argue that social media serves as meeting point for young people, especially those that may feel isolated. This is not confirmed by studies, though. Numerous studies point to the fact social media makes people of young age feel more isolated. This is partly due to the fact that the social media experience is not an authentic experience.
4. **Counter argument III & Refutation:** Finally, some purport that social media serves as an important way of informing young people, through posts that match their style and that are liked by their peers. This is not a well-supported claim as social media is a fertile ground for misinformation spread. Young people are even more vulnerable to fall prey of misinformation precisely because they are not as experienced.
5. **Conclusion:** In conclusion, social media apps should be banned for young people.

Activity 3: Reviewing a prior essay (~30 mins)

Quickly (re)read the essay and identify what model of essay is followed (5 mins)

- Summarise each paragraph in 1-2 sentences (5 mins)
- Identify the strengths of the essay (2 mins)
- Identify its weaknesses and suggest how can it be improved (3 mins)
- Share with the entire group (10 mins).

Summaries:

Introduction: AI in education has stirred debate focusing on the benefits and harms it could bring.

Par 1: One of the benefits of using AI is that it can help teachers analyse student data faster and more efficiently.

Par 2: AI can help in providing individualised resources for student to learn better.

Par 3: Other say AI can harm critical thinking skills of students; however, AI can be used to devise scenarios where students specifically are encouraged to think critically and creatively.

Conclusion: The debate about AI is not decided yet, but the technology is unavoidable. Its impact will depend on the way it is used.

Strengths: The writing is clear and to the point.

Weaknesses: The essay does not have much evidence especially for its main positive points. It also does not take a firm position definitively, even though it leans more towards a positive stance towards AI. More citations can be added supporting the claims. Evidence can also be provided in the form of anecdotes or real-life examples.

Referencing (~10 mins)

Referencing can be done in many styles. The most common are:

1. **author and date** (e.g., APA) - the citation of someone's work is done with the author and year

    Examples (from https://uscmed.sc.libguides.com/c.php?g=477787&p=3266941)

    a) *citation in text:*
        One study found that the most important element in comprehending non-native speech is familiarity with the topic (Gass & Varonis, 1984).

Gass and Varonis (1984) found that the most important element in comprehending non-native speech is familiarity with the topic.

One study found that "the listener's familiarity with the topic of discourse greatly facilitates the interpretation of the entire message" (Gass & Varonis, 1984, p. 85).

Gass and Varonis (1984) found that "the listener's familiarity with the topic of discourse greatly facilitates the interpretation of the entire message" (p. 85).

a) *reference list:*

Derwing, T. M., Rossiter, M. J., & Munro, M. J. (2002). Teaching native speakers to listen to foreign-accented speech. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development,* 23(4), 245-259.

Krech Thomas, H. (2004). *Training strategies for improving listeners' comprehension of foreign-accented speech* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Colorado, Boulder.

Note: The reference list would arrange references in alphabetical order by author
More information on APA, here: https://guides.libraries.psu.edu/apaquickguide/intext

2. **numeric** (e.g., Vancouver) – the citation of someone's work is done with a number

Examples

b) *citations in text:*

Recent research (1) indicates that the number of duplicate papers being published is increasing.

Simons et al. (3) state that the principle of effective stress is 'imperfectly known and understood by many practising engineers' (p.4).

c) *reference list:*

(1) Errami M, Garner H. A tale of two citations. *Nature.* 2008;451(7177): 397–399.

(2) Watkins PJ. *ABC of Diabetes*. 5th ed. London: Blackwell Publishing; 2003.

(3) Simons NE, Menzies B, Matthews M. *A Short Course in Soil and Rock Slope Engineering*. London: Thomas Telford Publishing; 2001.

Note: When using the Vancouver style, the reference list should be in numerical order and each number matches and refers to the one in the text.

More information on Vancouver style, here: https://library-guides.ucl.ac.uk/referencing-plagiarism/vancouver

More information about referencing styles: https://libguides.reading.ac.uk/citing-references/referencingstyles

APA example: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1524904204000049
Vancouver example: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1155/2021/5924040

Activity 4: Identify a reference (~5 mins)

- Open Google Scholar
- Use the phrase "impact of Covid-19 on education" to search relevant articles
- Identify the number of citations for the first article in the list of results
- Click on "Cite", and identify the APA reference
- Identify the BibTex for that reference – you need it when using Latex for editing a document. More on LaTeX: here. It is recommended to use Overleaf which is an online LaTeX editor that's easy to use. It allows you to use LaTeX without installing it on your own machine. See an introduction to Overleaf here.

Questions (~5 mins)

Ask any questions and discuss with the entire group.