

Inf2-SEPP 2025-26

Tutorial 1 (Week 2, on ProP)

How to Write a Good Argumentative Essay

Study this tutorial sheet and make notes of your answers to Activity 1 BEFORE the tutorial.

1 Introduction

The purpose of this tutorial is to help you learn how to write an academic argumentative essay, which will be required in the assessment for Professional Practice. In the

first part of the tutorial you will discuss about premises and conclusions, as well as the evidence needed to support the premises that you will identify, based on the three extracts on Digital Transformation presented in lecture 3 of Week 1. You will then learn more about how to structure an argumentative essay, and you will discuss a prior essay which was submitted in previous years as part of Inf2-SEPP CW3. Finally, you will learn about referencing styles and how you can identify a reference for a resource using Google Scholar.

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

1. Pair up with a classmate. Interview them for 2-3 minutes, then switch roles. You may want to ask the following questions:
 - What is your name?
 - What is your background (education, employment)?
 - What degree are you studying?
 - Why have you chosen this degree?
 - And something silly, like: "If you were an animal, what type of animal would you want to be?", or "Would you rather be a pet or a wild animal?"
2. When done, each of you are asked to introduce your neighbour to the group in 1 min.

3 Activity 2: Premises and Conclusions (10 mins)

Identify the premises and conclusions, as well as the evidence needed to support the premises, from the three extracts on Digital Transformation from Lecture 3:

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

4 Structure of an Argumentative Essay (10 mins)

Discuss with your tutor the below two models of structuring argumentative essays, and provide examples:

Model 1: Block organisation

1. Introduction: Establish topic, provide context, present thesis statement (main conclusion).
2. Premise I
3. Premise II
4. ...
5. Counter-premise and Refutation
6. Conclusion: Restate thesis, summarise key points, offer a final insight or call to action.

Model 2: Point-by-point organisation

1. Introduction: Establish topic, provide context, present thesis statement (main conclusion).
2. Counter-premise I and Refutation
3. Counter-premise II and Refutation
4. ...
5. Conclusion: Restate thesis, summarise key points, offer a final insight or call to action.

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

1. Quickly read the essay which can be found at this link and identify which of the models of essay described above is followed (5 mins).
2. Summarise each paragraph in 1-2 sentences (5 mins).
3. Identify the strengths of the essay (2 mins).
4. Identify its weaknesses and suggest how can it be improved (3 mins).
5. Share your findings with the entire group (10 mins).

6 Referencing (10 mins)

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

1. **Author and date (e.g. APA):** the work is cited using the author and year.

Examples (taken from this link):

- (a) **For citing in the 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).

- (b) **For writing a reference list** (Note: The reference list would arrange references in alphabetical order by author):

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.

More information on APA can be found at this link.

2. **Numeric (e.g. Vancouver):** the work is cited using a number.

Examples:

- (a) **For citing in the 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).

(b) **For writing a 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 about the Vancouver style is available at this link.

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7 Activity 4: Identifying a reference (5 mins)

1. Open Google Scholar
2. Use the phrase "impact of Covid-19 on education" to search relevant articles
3. Identify the number of citations for the first article in the list of results
4. Click on "Cite", and identify the APA reference
5. Identify the BibTex for that reference – you need it when using LaTex for editing a document. You can read about LaTeX at this link. It is recommended to use Overleaf (available at this link) 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 at this link.

8 Questions (5 mins)

Ask any questions and discuss with the entire group.

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