**Writing a Position Paper**

A position paper presents an arguable opinion about an issue. The goal of a position paper is to convince the audience that your opinion is valid and worth listening to. Ideas that you are considering need to be carefully examined in choosing a topic, developing your argument, and organizing your paper. It is very important to ensure that you are addressing all sides of the issue and presenting it in a manner that is easy for your audience to understand. Your job is to take one side of the argument and persuade your audience that you have well-founded knowledge of the topic being presented. It is important to support your argument with evidence to ensure the validity of your claims, as well as to address the counterclaims to show that you are well informed about both sides.

**Analyzing an Issue and Developing an Argument**

Once your topic is selected, you should do some research on the subject matter. While you may already have an opinion on your topic and an idea about which side of the argument you want to take, you need to ensure that your position is well supported. Listing out the pro and con sides of the topic will help you examine your ability to support your counterclaims, along with a list of supporting evidence for both sides. Supporting evidence includes the following:

* Factual Knowledge - Information that is verifiable and agreed upon by almost everyone.
* Statistical Inferences - Interpretation and examples of an accumulation of facts.
* Informed Opinion - Opinion developed through research and/or expertise of the claim.
* Personal Testimony - Personal experience related by a knowledgeable party.

Once you have made your pro and con lists, compare the information side by side. Choose the position you will take.

**The Final paper should include a work cited page and should be 5-6 pages in length (not including the works cited)**

**Organization**

Your introduction should lead up to a thesis that organizes the rest of your paper.

**Below is a generic sample outline for a position paper:**

**I. Introduction**

\_\_\_A. Introduce the topic (get your reader’s attention!)

\_\_\_B. Provide background/history on the topic

\_\_\_C. Assert the thesis (your personal view and defense of the issue)

**II. Counter Argument**

\_\_\_A. Summarize the counterclaims (the other side’s defense of it)

\_\_\_B. Provide supporting information for counterclaims

\_\_\_C. Refute/Argue Against the counterclaims

\_\_\_D. Give factual evidence for argument

**III. Your Argument**

\_\_\_A. Assert point #1 of your claims

\_\_\_\_\_1. Give your opinion

\_\_\_\_\_2. Provide support/evidence

\_\_\_B. Assert point #2 of your claims

\_\_\_\_\_1. Give your opinion

\_\_\_\_\_2. Provide support/evidence

\_\_\_C. Assert point #3 of your claims

\_\_\_\_\_1. Give your opinion

\_\_\_\_\_2. Provide support/evidence

**IV. Conclusion**

\_\_\_A. Restate your argument

\_\_\_B. Provide a plan of action (What should be done about it?)