

**Length: 500-600 words**

**Deadline: upload it in the appropriate odevzdavarna, together with the original (it can be an academic journal article, chapter from a book or any other reliable academic source related to your field of study) two days before the presentation exam date**

## **WRITING A POSITION PAPER**

Like a **debate**, a position paper presents one side of an **arguable opinion** about an issue. A position paper should convince the audience that your opinion is valid and **defensible**. It is important to **support your argument** with evidence, as well as to **refute the counterclaims** to show that you are well informed about **both** sides.

### **Issue Criteria**

To take a side on a subject, you should first establish the arguability of a topic that interests you. To present a strong argument, ask yourself:

- Is it a real issue, with real controversy?
- Are you personally interested in advocating one of these positions?
- Is the scope of the issue narrow enough to be manageable?
- Do you have enough material or proof to support your opinion?
- Does your topic assert something specific? Prove it, and where applicable, propose a plan of action.

### **Organization - Sample Outline**

#### **I. Introduction**

A. Introduce the topic

B. Provide background on the topic to explain why it is important

Your introduction has a dual purpose: to indicate both the topic and your approach to it (your thesis statement), and to arouse your reader's interest in what you have to say. One effective way of introducing a topic is to place it in context – to supply a kind of backdrop that will put it in perspective.

#### **II. Summary of the original article**

Go over its main points, be brief, stay on the surface. Do not forget to use signposting and linking words for better orientation in the text. It is important to stress the main ideas to prepare the ground for your own argumentation in the next part of the paper.

#### **III. Assert the thesis (your view of the issue).**

Present each argument fairly and objectively, rather than trying to make it look foolish. You want to show that you have seriously considered the many sides of the issue, and that you are not simply attacking or mocking your opponents. Give your educated and informed opinion and provide support/proof preferably justifying it by using some references to good-quality sources related to the field in question.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

- A. Restate your argument
- B. Provide a plan of action but do not introduce new information

The simplest and most basic conclusion is one that restates the main thesis *in different words* and then discusses its **implications**.

### **Writing with style and clarity**

#### **Paragraphs**

Creating clear paragraphs is essential. The two basic principles to remember are these:

- 1) A paragraph is a means of **developing and framing an idea** or impression. As a general rule, you should address only one major idea per paragraph.
- 2) The divisions between paragraphs are not random, but indicate a shift in focus. In other words, you must carefully and clearly organize the order of your paragraphs so that they are logically positioned throughout your paper. Transitions will help you with this.

#### **Transitions**

In academic writing your goal is to convey information clearly and concisely, if not to convert the reader to your way of thinking. Transitions help you to achieve these goals by establishing logical connections between sentences, paragraphs, and sections of your papers. In other words, transitions tell readers what to do with the information you present them. Whether single words, quick phrases or full sentences, they function as signs for readers that tell them how to think about, organize, and react to old and new ideas as they read through what you have written.

Transitions signal relationships between ideas. Basically, transitions provide the reader with directions for how to piece together your ideas into a logically coherent argument. They are words with particular meanings that tell the reader to think and react in a particular way to your ideas. In providing the reader with these important cues, transitions help readers understand the logic of how your ideas fit together.

| <b>LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP</b>           | <b>TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION</b>                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Similarity</b>                     | also, in the same way, just as ... so too, likewise, similarly                                                                                         |
| <b>Exception/Contrast</b>             | but, however, in spite of, on the one hand ... on the other hand, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, in contrast, on the contrary, still, yet |
| <b>Sequence/Order</b>                 | first, second, third, ... next, then, finally                                                                                                          |
| <b>Time</b>                           | after, afterward, at last, before, currently, during, earlier, immediately, later, meanwhile, now, recently, simultaneously, subsequently, then        |
| <b>Example</b>                        | for example, for instance, namely, specifically, to illustrate                                                                                         |
| <b>Emphasis</b>                       | even, indeed, in fact, of course, truly                                                                                                                |
| <b>Place/Position</b>                 | above, adjacent, below, beyond, here, in front, in back, nearby, there                                                                                 |
| <b>Cause and Effect</b>               | accordingly, consequently, hence, so, therefore, thus                                                                                                  |
| <b>Additional Support or Evidence</b> | additionally, again, also, and, as well, besides, equally important, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, then                                 |
| <b>Conclusion/Summary</b>             | finally, in a word, in brief, in conclusion, in the end, in the final analysis, on the whole, thus, to conclude, to summarize, in sum, in summary      |

For more information on transitions visit: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/transitions.html>

## Grammar and Spelling

You must make certain that your paper is free from grammar and spelling mistakes. Mechanical errors are usually the main reason for lack of clarity in essays, so be sure to thoroughly proof read your paper before handing it in. For help with common errors in grammar and usage consult the following websites and run a spell-check:

<http://www.sfu.ca/~gmccarro/Grammar/Grammar.html>

<http://ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/index2.htm>

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/>

## Plagiarism and academic honesty

To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you use

- another person's idea, opinion, or theory
- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings – any pieces of information that are not common knowledge
- quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words
- paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.

## **SOURCES**

Adapted from Simon Fraser University, Department of Communication (2016). *Writing a Position Paper*. Viewed on 14.9.2016 at <http://www.sfu.ca/cmns/130d1/WritingaPositionPaper.htm>