An argumentative paper makes a claim about a topic and justifies this claim with specific evidence. The claim could be an opinion, a policy proposal, an evaluation, a cause-and-effect statement, or an interpretation. The goal of the argumentative paper is to convince the audience that the claim is true based on the evidence provided.

2. Your thesis statement/claim should be specific—it should cover only what you will discuss in your paper and should be supported with specific evidence.

3. The thesis statement/claim usually appears at the end of the first paragraph of a paper.

4. Your topic may change as you write, so you may need to revise your thesis statement/claim to reflect exactly what you have discussed in the paper.

Example of an argumentative claim: Find the Topic + Opinion ; Why.

High school graduates should be required to take a year off to pursue community service projects before entering college in order to increase their maturity and global awareness.

The paper that follows should:

Present an argument and give evidence to support the claim that students should pursue community projects before entering college

Sample Introductions. Identify the claim in the following sample paragraphs.

Sample 1 Single Parent Struggle

For many years, children growing up in a single parent family have been viewed

as different. Being raised by only one parent seems impossible to many yet over the

decades it has become more prevalent. In today’s society many children have grown up

to become emotionally stable and successful whether they had one or two parents to show

them the rocky path that life bestows upon all human beings. The problem lies in the

difference of children raised by single parents versus children raised by both a mother and a father. Does a child need both parents? Does a young boy need a father figure around? Does the government provide help for single parents? What role do step-parents and step-siblings play? With much speculation, this topic has become a very intriguing argument. What people must understand is that properly raising a child does not rely on the structure of a family but should be more focused on the process or values that are taught to these children as they learn to mature. Children of single parents can be just as progressive with emotional, social and behavioral skills as those with two parents.

Sample 2 Legalize It

In 2000, George Bierson’s "Marijuana, the Deceptive Drug", was published by

the Massachusetts News. Bierson concludes that marijuana is harmful in many ways,

including brain damage, damage to the reproductive system, and weakening of the

immune system. He also attempts to convince the reader that marijuana is a "gateway

drug" that leads the users to venture into much harder drugs. I believe that research to

support anything can be found if one is looking hard enough, but that the fallacy of

Bierson’s conclusion is due to his research seeking facts to support an already-assumed

conclusion. Based on my research and my own personal experience, I have found that

several of his points, when looked at logically, do not reach his conclusion.

Sample 3 Puerto Rico walks away from commonwealth.

I will not pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands. This must be the words of thousands of Puerto Ricans living in the island today wishing that their small island would once and for all become free from the colonization of the United States. Puerto Rico has been living under U.S. domination for the past 92 years and it’s considered the last nation in Latin America that is still living in colonization. Puerto Ricans want to be free and should be allowed to be free; to have the opportunity to vote for the president who sends its young people to war, to have their own currency, to fly one flag in all their schools and finally to feel pride in being an independent nation and not labeled with terms like “territory”and “commonwealth”. Bigger and more powerful nations that inhabit smaller nations for various benefits should never deny a nation’s culture and roots, instead in these modern times people should be allowed to govern themselves and be independent nations. In the midst of the struggle over status (U.S commonwealth or Independency) only one clear realization can come of this, Puerto Rico ought to be independent and refuse commonwealth to the United States of America.

PRACTICE 1: Thesis Statement/Claims

Study the following thesis statements/claims. Put “A” in the blank if the statement is argumentative. Be careful! A statement having “should” as part of the verb is not automatically argumentative.

1. \_\_The earthquake in Gölcük, Turkey, was the most destructive in history.

2. \_\_ Prospective\* parents should be required to get licenses in order to have children. (Prospective: future, expected

3. \_\_ The building codes in Las Vegas, Nevada, are inadequate\*. (Inadequate: not enough)

4. \_\_ Some of the Americans I have met are quite hospitable.

5. \_\_ Students should have a say in the hiring and firing of teachers.

6. \_\_ Pornographic books ought to be banned from the library.

7. \_\_ State University should not have a football team.

8. \_\_The citizens of this state should be allowed to carry guns.

9. \_\_ The United States ought to allow more immigrants into this country.

PRACTICE 2: Choose one opinion (a or b) from each of the following pairs of thesis statements.

1. a. It is a good idea for students to work part time while they are going to school.

b. Students should not work while they are going to school.

2. a. Young people should continue to live with their parents after they finish their education.

b. Young people should move away from home after they finish their education.

3. a. Wars are always wrong. b. Wars are not always wrong.

4. a. Exams are useful.

b. Exams do not check students’ knowledge.

Practice identifying the parts in these claims:

1. The University's creation of co-ed dorm rooms will encourage more interesting, progressive students to apply to UVA.
2. Up to one-quarter of the estimated 40,000 new cases of HIV infection that occur in the United States each year may be among young people under age 22; the best way to prevent these infections is through mandatory sex education classes for all grade levels.

c. The University of Virginia should create dormitories in which men and women are roommates.

d. The key to preserving the New Zealand kiwi bird is keeping abandoned cats, dogs, and ferrets from getting into the wild.

e. Without drastic action, global warming will change our environment--for the worse.

f. Flannery O'Connor's letters reveal racist attitudes that are echoed in her stories.

g. The top priority of the U.S. government should be protecting social security benefits; without real vision and vigilance, by 2015 social security will cease to exist.

h. Francisco Bulnes was the most influential Mexican theorist of revolution and social policy of the 30s and 40s.

i. The parking problem in Chicago could be solved by improving public transportation.

Practice writing Claims: http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/05/10/should-what-you-say-on-facebook-be-grounds-for-getting-fired/

http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/developing-evidence-based-arguments-31034.html

Should What you Say on Facebook Be Grounds for Getting Fired?

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/09/nyregion/brooklyn-teacher-who-talked-out-of-school-can-keep-her-job.html