ENGLISH, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

Argument structure

Difficulty level: Advanced

English, Literacy, and Communication

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Overview of the concept

This is how you build an argument that convinces people. You state your claim, back it with evidence, answer the other side, and wrap up. That shape works whether you are writing an essay, debating a school rule, or making your case to a parent, because it shows you have thought about the whole question, not just your own side.



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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q **Put this argument in order: (a) Therefore, school should start later. (b) School should start later. (c) Students who sleep more focus better. (d) Some say later starts disrupt sports, but schedules can adjust.**

SOLUTION

First comes the claim: (b).

Then come reasons with evidence: (c). Then the counterargument is answered: (d). Last comes the conclusion: (a).

So the order is: b, c, d, a.

EXAMPLE 2

Q **Name the missing part: 'Recycling saves trees. Recycling paper saves resources. Therefore, we should recycle.' What is missing?**

SOLUTION

Check the parts: claim and reasons are there, and a conclusion is there.

No opposing view is mentioned or answered.

So the missing part is: the counterargument (and its reply).

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Practice questions

1

Order:
(a) Homework should be shorter.
(b) Shorter homework leaves time for rest.
(c) Therefore, homework should be shorter.
(d) Some say practice needs homework, but short focused tasks work well.
Give the order.

A a, b, c, d

B a, b, d, c

C a, d, b, c

D b, a, d, c

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2 Name the part: 'We should plant more trees.'

- A Evidence
- B Claim
- C Counterargument
- D Conclusion

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3 Name the part: 'Trees clean the air, as studies show.'

- A Claim
- B Counterargument
- C Evidence
- D Conclusion

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4 Name the part: 'Some say trees cost money, but their benefits outweigh the cost.'

- A Claim
- B Evidence
- C Conclusion
- D Counterargument

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5 Name the part: 'Therefore, we should plant more trees.'

- A Counterargument
- B Claim
- C Evidence
- D Conclusion

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6

Order:
(a) Exercise should be daily.
(b) Daily exercise improves health.
(c) Therefore, exercise should be daily.
(d) Some say time is short, but short active breaks fit the day.
Give the order.

A a, b, c, d

B b, a, d, c

C a, d, c, b

D a, b, d, c

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Name the missing part: 'Exercise improves health. Therefore, exercise should be daily.' These parts are there:
Claim
Evidence
Conclusion

A Claim

B Evidence

C Counterargument

D Conclusion

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Order:
(a) Reading should be daily.
(b) Reading builds vocabulary.
(c) Therefore, reading should be daily.
(d) Some say children are busy, but 15 minutes a day is enough.
Give the order.

A a, c, b, d

B a, b, d, c

C d, a, b, c

D a, b, c, d

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9 Name the part: 'A study found readers scored higher.'

- A Counterargument
- B Claim
- C Conclusion
- D Evidence

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10 Name the missing part: 'Some say homework is useless, but focused tasks help. Therefore, homework should be shorter.'
These parts are there:
Counterargument
Conclusion

- A Counterargument
- B Claim and reasons
- C Conclusion
- D Claim only

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ANSWER KEY

1. a, b, d, c

2. Claim

3. Evidence

4. Counterargument

5. Conclusion

6. a, b, d, c

7. Counterargument

8. a, b, d, c

9. Evidence

10. Claim and reasons

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