

What is a position paper?

A position paper is an essay that presents an opinion about an issue – typically that of the author or some specified entity. Position papers are published in academia, in politics, in law and other domains. A position paper presents an arguable opinion about an issue.

Why write a position paper?

- Organize and outline your viewpoint on an issue
- Formally inform others of your position
as a foundation to build resolution to difficult problems
- Present a unique, though biased, solution
or a unique approach to solving a problem
- Frame the discussion in order to define the "playing field."
This can put you in an advantageous position with those who may not be so well prepared as regards the issues behind their positions
- Establish your credibility
Here you are demonstrating that you have a command of the issues and the research behind them, and can present them clearly
- Let your passion be demonstrated in the force of your argument
rather than in the use of emotional terms
- Guide you in being consistent in maintaining your position in negotiation

Guidelines:

- Format should be consistent with guidelines determined by the sponsoring organization or committee
- Include topic, date, purpose, etc., and should readily identify you as the author
- If the paper represents a group, organization, committee, do not write in the first person (not I, my, mine, etc. but rather we, our, etc.)
- Limit yourself to two pages following the format established by previous successful position papers

Research:

- Develop supporting evidence for both sides including factual knowledge, statistical evidence, authoritative testimony
- Identify the issues and prejudices keeping in mind your audience; List these as appropriate and anticipate counterclaims
- Assume familiarity with basic concepts, but define unfamiliar terms/concepts or state meanings that define your point of departure
- Refer to those who agree with your position to assist you in developing your argument (make reference to them in the text and in your bibliography)
- Familiarize yourself with those who disagree with you to prepare your defense; you can summarize their argument and evidence, then refute it.

Introduction:**Consider your audience:**

start with a topic sentence or two that attracts attention and summarizes the issue

Inform the reader of your point of view

Where is the thesis statement located in the PP?

The thesis statement usually appears near the beginning of a paper, within the first paragraph.

Development:

Focus on three main points to develop

Each topic is developed with

- a general statement of the position
- an elaboration that references documents and source data
- past experiences and authoritative testimony
- conclusion restating the position

Establish flow from paragraph to paragraph

- **Keep your voice active**
- **Quote sources** to establish authority
- **Stay focused** on your point of view throughout the essay
- Focus on **logical arguments**

How do you end a PP?

- Restate your thesis.
- Sum up the main points made in the body of your essay.
- End with a strong statement.

Conclusion

- **Summarize, then conclude your argument**
- **Refer to the first paragraph/opening statements and title**
as well as the main points
 - Ensure that the conclusion restates the main ideas
 - Reflect the succession and importance of the arguments
 - Logically conclude their development

Share a draft with others

to better develop the paper and ensure that your argument is clear

Revise, spell-check, and succeed in building your case.

Sources:

- Writing Position Papers: Study Guides and Strategies, viewed on 30.5.2018 at <http://www.studygs.net/wrtstr9.htm>
- The Thesis Statement, viewed on 30.5.2018 at <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/thesis.htm>
- Writing Your Position Paper's Conclusion: Scholastic, view on 30.5.2019 at <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/writing-your-position-papers-conclusion/>