

Argument Structure Checklist + Signal Bank

1. Thesis Clarity

- The thesis clearly states the writer's position.
- The thesis answers the essay question directly.
- The thesis is specific, not overly general.

2. Reasons & Evidence

- Each body paragraph contains one clear reason.
- Evidence types are varied: statistics, examples, explanations, expert opinions.
- Examples support reasons, not replace them.

3. Counter-Argument

- At least one opposing viewpoint is acknowledged.
- The counter-argument is realistic and relevant.

4. Refutation

- The refutation directly addresses the counter-argument.
- The refutation shows why the counter-argument is weak or limited.

5. Conclusion

- Restates key points without repeating them verbatim.
- Includes a final insight (so-what / call-forward).

Signal Bank (Useful Phrases)

Thesis Signals:

- This essay argues that...
- It is widely believed that...
- The main reason for this is...

Reason Signals:

- One key reason is...
- This is primarily because...
- Another significant factor is...

Evidence Signals:

- For example...
- According to recent studies...
- Research shows that...

Counter-Argument Signals:

- Some people claim that...
- A common objection is that...
- It is often argued that...

Refutation Signals:

- However, this does not mean that...
- This concern can be reduced by...
- While this is partly true, it fails to consider...