


 Trinity College Dublin  
 Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
 The University of Dublin

## Write Right: Developing content, building arguments

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### content

- How would you explain this to a friend?
- Try to communicate, before trying to impress.
- Outline your writing before you write.
- Bad papers meander from citation to citation: avoid this.
- Explain why and justify!
- Pay attention to how you format your pages.

### Steps to building your argument

- Analyse topic
- Organise your argument
- Develop your argument
- Document points and claims
- Signpost your line of reasoning



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**Introduction** – where you state topic, outline the argument, your view

A major change that has occurred in the Western family is an increased incidence in divorce. Whereas in the past, divorce was a relatively rare occurrence, in recent times it has become quite commonplace. This change is borne out clearly in census figures. For example thirty years ago in Australia, only one marriage in ten ended in divorce; nowadays the figure is more than one in three (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996: p.45). A consequence of this change has been a substantial increase in the number of single parent families and the attendant problems that this brings (Kilmartin, 1997).

An important issue for sociologists, and indeed for all of society, is why these changes in marital patterns have occurred. In this essay I will seek to critically examine a number of sociological explanations for the 'divorce phenomenon' and also consider the social policy implications that each explanation carries with it. It will be argued that the best explanations are to be found within a broad socio-economic framework.

From: [www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/writing/general/essay/sample-essay/index.xml](http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/writing/general/essay/sample-essay/index.xml)

## Step: Organise your argument

- Title
- Introduction
  - Thesis statement
  - Background
  - Plan of essay
- Body Paragraphs
  - Constructing Topic Sentences
  - Building Main Points
  - Countering the Opposition
- Conclusion
  - Summary



From <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

## Step: Develop your argument

- Use body paragraphs & topic sentences
- Use source material – reliable evidence
- Show awareness of complexities
  - Counter arguments, relativism
  - Evidence to support, evidence opposing

## Step: Document points and claims

- Quotations (e.g. direct quotes, paraphrases, summaries)
- Examples (e.g. illustrations of your points)
- Statistics (e.g. facts, figures, diagrams)

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## Writing statements to support your argument

Supporting argument:

A number of researchers have noted that assignment tasks help students to learn the language of their subject (**your statement**). For instance, Smith and Jones (2002, p. 27) found that students who do assignments demonstrate a better use of the terminology of their subject when they write in their exams than students who do only exam assessment (**evidence to support your statement**).

From <http://learninghub.une.edu.au/tlc/aso/aso-online/academic-writing/supporting-evidence.php>

## Writing about the opposing ideas

Opposing argument:

Some educators argue that assignments are time consuming to mark (**your opposing statement**). However, evidence from student feedback surveys finds that students value this feedback more than any other learning experience in their courses (Jackson & Peters, 2008) (**counter evidence to support your opposing position**).

From <http://learninghub.une.edu.au/tlc/aso/aso-online/academic-writing/supporting-evidence.php>

One type of explanation for rising divorce has focused on changes in laws relating to marriage. **[Topic sentence]** For example, Bilton, Bonnett and Jones (1987) argue that increased rates of divorce do not necessarily indicate that families are now more unstable. It is possible, they claim, that there has always been a degree of marital instability. **[Evidence]** They suggest that changes in the law have been significant, because they have provided unhappily married couples with 'access to a legal solution to pre-existent marital problems' (p.301). Bilton et al. therefore believe that changes in divorce rates can be best explained in terms of changes in the legal system. **[Further support]** The problem with this type of explanation however, is that it does not consider why these laws have changed in the first place. It could be argued that reforms to family law, as well as the increased rate of divorce that has accompanied them, are the product of more fundamental changes in society. **[Conclusion]**

From: [www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/writing/general/essay/sample-essay/index.xml](http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/writing/general/essay/sample-essay/index.xml)

## Step: Signpost your line of reasoning

- Link points
- Indicator words for claims
  - Therefore, thus, hence, so, as a result
- Indicator words for reasons
  - Because, since, on account of, for, in view of, for the reason that
- Indicator words additive/adversative
  - Finally, in addition, similarly
  - On the other hand, however, although, while

[www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk)

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