# Patterns of Organization for Argumentative Essays

There are three typical ways to construct the body of an argumentation essay. Each type meets the expectations for an argumentative essay. The motivation for choosing any particular type, however, is different.

**1 “You First”**

This essay is called “You First” because the writer starts with the other side’s arguments and ends with their own arguments. The body begins with a paragraph that outlines the main counterargument. At the end of this paragraph, there needs to be an acknowledgement of the full or partial validity of the opposing viewpoints. After that paragraph, you can begin your arguments for your perspective.

**2 “Me First”**

This essay is called “Me First” because the writer starts with their own arguments and ends with the other side’s arguments. The paragraph that outlines the main counterargument comes at the end of the discussion of your arguments. This paragraph is formed and developed exactly the same as the 1st body paragraph in a “You First.” The only difference is that the counterargument/refutation paragraph in “Me First” occurs after one’s own arguments

**3 “Point-by-Point”**

In a Point-by-Point essay, each body paragraph lists a single counterargument. After describing this opposing argument, there needs to be a transition before starting the detailed refutation of the counterargument. In the Point-by-Point essay, your refutation serves as your argument of each point you want to make. In other words, you deal with each counterargument separately, whereas “You First” and “Me First” essays group all the counterarguments together and develop one’s own arguments separately.

*For this course you are recommended to use the “you first” or “me first” patterns.*

**Which pattern should I use?**

In order to answer this question, you need to answer some questions:

1. What are the strongest counterarguments? (It might be helpful to spend some time with a person or people who believe the opposite of you so that you can hear why they believe what they do.)
2. What do your readers generally believe about this topic? How strongly do they believe that? (You might need to ask a sample of people what they think about your topic.)

**There are three basic scenarios that typically arise:**

1. Your readers are against your position.
2. Your readers are for your position.
3. Your readers have not made up their mind yet.

\*Which pattern of organization does the writer use in the model essay?

**Me First**

1. Introduction
2. Body
   1. Argument 1
   2. Argument 2
   3. (Argument 3)
   4. Counterargument+Refutation (=Argument 4)
3. Conclusion

**Point by Point Pattern**

1. Introduction
2. Body
   1. Counterargument
   2. Refutation (= Argument 1)
   3. Counterargument
   4. Refutation (= Argument 2)
   5. Counterargument
   6. Refutation (= Argument 3)
3. Conclusion

**You First Pattern**

1. Introduction
2. Body
   1. Counterargument+Refutation (= Argument 1)
   2. Argument 2
   3. Argument 3
   4. (Argument 4)
3. Conclusion