



**RDP**

**RESEARCH DEBATE PROJECT**

AKA: The Big Honkin' Paper

# GENERAL OUTLINE

- I. INTRODUCTION
  - With Thesis Question
- II. SUMMARY of SIDE #1
  - 3 most significant points, emphatically arranged
  - 1 point per paragraph
- III. SUMMARY of SIDE #2
  - 3 most significant points, emphatically arranged
  - 1 point per paragraph
- IV. CONCLUSION
  - 3 paragraphs
    - their weaknesses
    - your strengths
    - Side #3
- V. WORKS CONSULTED

# SET UP

- Full header on page 1
- Proper header on remaining pages
  - (Last Name-#)
- Stapled
- TNR, 12"font
- **Proofread**



**TITLE**

# TITLE

- Identify the issue AND both sides
- Thesis Question:
  - Should We or Shouldn't We ....?
  - legalize, criminalize, decriminalize, revoke, repeal



# INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

## (1) INTRODUCE the Debate:

- What is the *current status* of the situation/argument?
  - Who said what or did what?
    - Has anything related to this topic happened lately that has been in the news?
    - Has the President or Congress (any elected official) done or said something on the matter?
  - Has some event ignited or re-ignited this issue?
  - What has recently happened to move this issue into the limelight again?
  - What has caused/sparked this debate, controversy, debate?
    - *laws, actions, proposals, amendments, bills, court cases, hearings, law suits, marches, protests, speeches, books, movies, scandals, ...*

# INTRODUCTION

## (1) INTRODUCE the Debate:

- What is the significance of the project?
  - *“a hotly debated issue on which my generation will have to vote”*
- What is its History (who, when, why)?
  - *In January of 1973, the Supreme Court passed . . . .*
  - Give a **brief** history or timeline of events, up to the present.
  - Example: Death Penalty in USA: court cases in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970, 1980s will bring readers up to the current status of the issue
- Generalize: *One of the most contested (divisive, hotly debated) issues in contemporary America concerns....*



# INTRODUCTION

## (2) NARROW towards Your Thesis Question:

- \*identify the 2 Sides to this issue + their main points
  - 2 minor points + 3 major points per side
    - *Some believe....On the other hand, others argue....*
    - *One group of Americans argues that ...*

<u>OPPONENTS</u>	<u>PROPONENTS</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adversaries</li><li>• Foes</li><li>• Challengers</li><li>• The Opposition</li><li>• Contenders</li><li>• Rivals</li><li>• Those who disagree w/the issue</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advocates</li><li>• Supporters</li><li>• Activists</li><li>• Promoters</li><li>• Believers</li><li>• Backers</li><li>• Campaigners</li></ul>

# INTRODUCTION

## (3) End with Your THESIS QUESTION:

- remain *objective*, unbiased, neutral
- refer to *both* sides of the issue
- do *not* argue for your side (yet)
- phrase as a *question*
  - *Once again, we are faced with the difficult question: Should we repeal or support Roe v. Wade?*
  - *Are the claims regarding Global Warming warranted or unwarranted?*
  - *Should we allow or deny homosexuals the right to marry?*



**BODY**

# BODY

- For **EACH** Body paragraph:
- For **BOTH** sides of the issue.
  - Name
  - Explain
  - Illustrate
  - Justify

# BODY

- Remember, remain **OBJECTIVE** in your presentation of the data.
- Do **NOT** end paragraphs with quoted material, citations.
- 1 point at a time
  - each par. = one of the side's major arguments (**1 per par.**)
- “facts & stats” for *this side* ONLY
- **\*\*REMEMBER:**
  - you are **NOT** summarizing *sources* here
  - **BUT** you are summarizing the *side*
    - (**the main claims, arguments made by this side**)
- \*arrange points in the “**EMPHATIC ORDER**”
  - save the “best” (**the most common, argued, significant, important**) for last
  - build towards this point, each point gets “better”

# BODY

## (1) Name the point

- Clearly identify the point to be discussed in the paragraph
- Do this in the **TOPIC SENTENCE**

### ATTRIBUTION

- ❖ Attribute all points to THE SIDE.
- We don't want this to sound as if it's coming from you.
- We want to maintain the OBJECTIVITY, rather than subjectivity, of the paper.
- SO, in each Topic Sentence & Clincher Sentence of the Body, attribute the respective point to the side using these synonyms:
  - Another argument raised by proponents of the death penalty concerns....
  - While \_\_ and \_\_ are important points, \_\_ is the most common argument raised by opponents of physician-assisted suicide.
  - Embryonic stem cell advocates also argue that -
  - Thus, as Dr. Jayne Smith clearly demonstrates, those who challenge the Patriot Act assert that -

# BODY

## (1) Name the point

- Do NOT make it seem as if the point comes from you
- Remain **objective**
  - In addition to financial reasons (the previous point - *name it*), another argument raised by opponents of embryonic stem cell research involves its morality—or, more to the point, its immorality.
  - While the aforementioned points (*name them, items in a series*) are major points to this side of the issue, the most common (*or most argued, obvious, ...*) argument posited by death-penalty proponents concerns ....

# BODY

## (2) Explain the point

- Be brief –
  - 1 or 2 sentences
- Make the point clearly understandable
- Define your term
- Usually in your own words
- Sometimes with a quote
  - “In other words”
  - “That is to say”



# BODY

## (3) Illustrate the point

- Use a *representative quote* from a source (RESEARCH)
- Show someone who favors this side of the issue *actually* arguing this particular point
  - To illustrate, Jayne Smith, professor of Bioethics at Stanford University and author of the Opposing Viewpoints article “Arguments Against Embryonic Stem Cell Research,” claims, “The use of embryonic stem cells for research is unethical” (par. 6).

# BODY

## (4) Warrant, or justify, the example

- Warrant or justify the example to the paragraph's point
  - How is the example relevant to the point covered in this paragraph & perhaps to the entire side?
- End the paragraph with a Warrant Statement
  - a Clincher Sentence for the paragraph
- Repeat your Topic Sentence (*not verbatim*)
  - "Thus"
  - "Therefore"
  - Thus, as Jane Smith succinctly illustrates in her quote, opponents of embryonic stem cell research argue that it is immoral.

# TRANSITIONS

- **Between each POINT**
  - In the Topic Sentences
  - Perhaps as part of the Clincher Sentences
  - Usually showing “addition”
    - ▣ *Also, furthermore, additionally, another argument offered by proponents of...*
- **Between each EXAMPLE**
  - To enumerate each one
  - Usually showing addition
    - ▣ *For example, For instance, Another example concerns*

# TRANSITIONS

- \*Between each SIDE –
  - List SIDE #1's 3 main points again
    - ▣ Thus, opponents argue that....
  - Segue to SIDE #2
    - ▣ However, proponents are in favor of X and thus...



# CONCLUSION

# CONCLUSION

- Conclusion = 3 Paragraphs
  1. *their* weaknesses
  2. *your* strengths
  3. **\*Side #3\***
- *more than* a few sentences
- **\*\* 3 fully developed paragraphs \*\***

# CONCLUSION

## (1) Refer to Your INTRODUCTION:

- Segue from the Body (Side #2) to the Conclusion
  - How did you introduce the debate?
- Bring the essay **full-circle**.
- Do *NOT* merely cut-and-paste the Introduction.
- Refer to the **current status**, **repeat the significance** of the issue.

# CONCLUSION

## (2) ANALYZE the Evidence:

- **SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS**
- *NOW* is the time become *subjective*.
  - not necessarily your *opinion*, but your *subjective analysis* of the data
  - no need for “I believe” or “I think”
- Analyze the evidence that was objectively presented in the Body.
  - What are the weaknesses of Side #1?
  - What are the strengths of Side #2?
    - Evaluate the points to each side.
    - In terms of *Logos, Pathos, Ethos, Fallacies*
    - Perhaps catalogue the points of Side #1 in *items in a series* AND then examine them one by one. Then do the same for Side #2.
    - Perhaps add an *Analogy* here as one of the strengths of your side.
      - concise
      - 1 paragraph at most
- Don't merely repeat what you've already stated.



# CONCLUSION

## (3) End with a COMPROMISE:

- SIDE #3 – THIS IS THE CRUX OF THE PROJECT.
  - Take the best of Side #1 + the best of Side #2 = Side #3
  - Move the argument *forward*.

# SIDE #3

- This paper is more REPORT *than* ARGUMENT:
- Your objective is to report on the 2 sides to the issue – *fully, fairly,* and *objectively*;
  - your objective is *not* to “win” or “beat” your opponent.
- Since, then, the Body essentially **summarizes** the issue/debate, Side #3 at the end is a way of **moving the issue forward** –
  - a conclusion to the Conclusion, if you will.

# SIDE #3

- Where do the ideas come from?
  - your opinion
  - your sources (*cite!*)
  - your group's brainstorming
- How many?
  - I'm looking for suggestions (*plural!*)
    - ▣ for a compromise
    - ▣ concession to *their* side's good point
    - ▣ concession to *your* side's weak point

# SIDE #3

- At that point in the essay, we may ask:
  - OK, so that's what Side #1 has to say & that's what Side #2 has to say,
  - so *where do we go now, how do we move forward, how do we resolve the deadlock?*
- Think “**bi-partisanship**” in politics:
  - where can *both sides come together,*
  - what *concessions can a side make?*
  - Take the best of both sides.

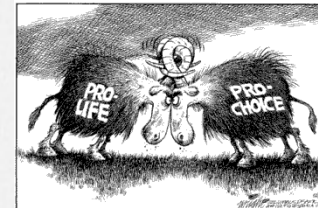
# SIDE #3

- Dr. Tannen in her article speaks against our “argument culture,”
  - in which everything’s always a war, a battle,
  - so 2 sides **butting heads** *ad infinitum* & *ad nauseam*
  - & **nothing ever gets done or resolved.**
- Envision 2 rams smashing heads:
  - no “communication” is going on here
  - & no one is “listening” to the other.



# SIDE #3

- The issue of **ABORTION** provides us with a valuable example:
  - Proponents and opponents have been butting heads for decades now and nothing has been resolved.
  - However, the issue does, in fact, have a common **Side #3**: its common points involve
    - late-term abortions
    - cases of rape
    - and cases of incest.
  - Thus, both sides can typically agree to these points without compromising their respective values/beliefs.



# SIDE #3

- For me, Side #3 is **the most important part of the paper**,
  - for it represents the critical thinking skills at the heart of this course's learning objectives –
  - the theme of the course, if you will.
- So it should NOT be “blown off,”
  - completed half-heartedly because you're tired at the end of the paper and have something better to do;
- *no*, it should be **plural** & it should be **well-considered**.
- I'm *not* asking you to have all the answers
  - to have the perfect solution to this complex problem,
- *but* I am asking you to **think critically**
  - think long and hard about ways this can be resolved
  - (spitballing, as it were).
- Do your hard work justice and end the paper on a high note that points the way to a solution, to an “adult” temperament, and to another essay.



**WORKS  
CONSULTED**



# WORKS CONSULTED

- Perfect **MLA format**
- **Alphabetical Order**
- **Reverse Indentation**

# WORKS CONSULTED

- Continue your pagination
- **Works Consulted**
  - *not Cited*
- Format
  - Centered
  - No bold, underlining, quotation marks
- MLA
  - **Exact** MLA formatting
  - Consult our **MLA 2010** page



**THE END**

[RDP: Detailed Outline](#)