

How to Write a Classic Argument Essay: From Thesis to Final Draft

Step 1: Make your Claim (your debatable opinion of the topic)

Example: C. Trevino's Claim – **Employee stealing = OKAY**

Step 2: Make a Topic (that is the "Point" for Each Body Paragraph) Outline*

*Note: For this guide, we will use the "Classic (Definition) Method" on pages 101-105 in [Structures](#).

Instructions: In a Classic Argument structure, the topics (or "points") have the four elements of Argumentation – **Claim, Reason, Evidence, Opposition** and **Rebuttal** -- in separate paragraphs.

Example:

CLAIM: **Employee Stealing = OKAY**

- I. **REASON:** **Big company = rich and uncaring, causes employee to want "eye for an eye"**
- II. **EVIDENCE:** **Personal example – workplace experience**
- III. **A. OPPOSITION:** **they say, "Stealing is wrong!"**
B. REBUTTAL: **I say, not when company is mistreating employees & won't feel the difference.**

RESTATED CLAIM: **Employee Stealing = OKAY**

Step 3: Turn your Topic Outline into a Topic Sentence Outline

Instructions: Put all of the info of your Topic Outline into complete sentences. You'll produce a Claim Statement, Topic Sentences, and a Restated Claim Statement.

Example:

CLAIM Statement: **Although it is ethically and legally wrong for an employee to steal, in my experience, it is justified when it is from a big, uncaring company.**

- I. **REASON:** Companies are the size they are simply because they have a lot of money and are good at making money, even if that means cutting some corners.
- II. **EVIDENCE:** For example, my coworker and I have experienced having to steal from our company to make ends meet due to unfair rules to save the company a couple of extra dollars -- when they are capable of covering it themselves, even though it comes directly from our pockets.
- III. A. **OPPOSITION:** Some will argue that stealing is bad and yes, no doubt stealing is most definitely wrong, as we may never know what position and effects it may have on the people we are stealing from.

B. **REBUTTAL:** However, stealing from a big, uncaring company is okay when underpaid employees need to make money because the big companies make money regardless of the microscopic fraction of money we are taking from their income.

Restated CLAIM Statement: Therefore, even when it is ethically wrong and can place you in legal trouble, stealing from a large company is more than justified and okay, especially when you are being mistreated and underpaid by them.

Step 4: Make a Tiny Rough Draft from Your Sentence Outline

Instructions: Put all the info of your Sentence Outline in Paragraph form. You'll have

1. your Essay Title, which is a Keyword or Keywords of your Claim Statement,
2. your Intro paragraph's Claim Statement,
3. your Body Paragraphs' Topic Sentences, and
4. your Conclusion paragraph's Restated Claim Statement

Example:

Big Companies Can Share

Intro paragraph -- CLAIM Statement: Although it is ethically and legally wrong for an employee to steal, in my experience, it is justified when it is from a big, uncaring company.

1st body paragraph section -- REASON: Companies are the size they are simply because they have a lot of money and are good at making money, even if that means cutting some corners.

2nd body paragraph section – EVIDENCE: For example, my coworker and I have experienced having to steal from our company to make ends meet due to unfair rules to save the company a couple of extra dollars - when they are capable of covering it themselves, even though it comes directly from our pockets.

3rd body paragraph section: A. OPPOSITION: Some will argue that stealing is bad and yes, no doubt stealing is most definitely wrong, as we may never know what position and effects it may have on the people we are stealing from. **B. REBUTTAL:** However, stealing from a big, uncaring company is okay when underpaid employees need to make money because the big companies make money regardless of the microscopic fraction of money we are taking from their income.

Conclusion paragraph -- Restated CLAIM Statement: Therefore, even when it is ethically wrong and can place you in legal trouble, stealing from a large company is more than justified and okay, especially when you are being mistreated and underpaid by them.

Step 5: Expand Your Tiny Rough Draft, Starting with Intro Paragraph

Instructions: Use the information on pages 22-25 in [Structures](#) -- 1) to start your Intro paragraph, 2) to write your supporting details in your Body paragraphs, and 3) to finish your Conclusion paragraph.

- **NOTE:** C. Trevino found two outside sources – which he paraphrased a personal interview in his “Evidence” paragraph and quoted an academic journal article in his “Rebuttal” section. When using an outside source in your essay (**also called research**), you will need to name the source (either the **Human Author’s Name** or – if missing – the **“Article Name”**) wherever you used it in your essay (called **in-text citation**) plus provide a source list at the end of the essay (called **Work Cited**). For more information on how to document in MLA Style researched info used in your essay, see pages 14-20 in [Structures](#).

Example (for a minimum **1000-word** rough draft):

Big Companies Can Share

Intro paragraph -- CLAIM Statement (100 words): Oftentimes, large-scale companies start off with good morals and ethics. However, when they grow to a very large scale, they lose track of where they

started and focus more on how to make the most money to better themselves. In doing so, the people who keep their steady stream of income flowing get forgotten about, mistreated, unheard, and underpaid. Being placed in this perspective raises some ethical and legal concerns. Although it is ethically and legally wrong for an employee to steal, in my experience, it is justified when it is from a big, uncaring company.

1st body paragraph – REASON (150 words): Companies are the size they are simply because they have a lot of money and are good at making money, even if that means cutting some corners. Companies that want to reduce production costs can directly affect the employees. This can range from cutting people's pay to implementing rules where the employee has to pay for something they have no control over in order to save the company some money, such as a customer not paying, and the employee is expected to cover the company's loss of sale. When multimillion-dollar companies perform these unjust actions against the people who are keeping their businesses alive, it creates an eye-for-eye situation for the employees where they may need to steal from their employer just to make ends meet. Although technically wrong, which may have adverse consequences, employee stealing has little to no effect on the company as they continue to make and have more than enough money.

2nd body paragraph / section – EVIDENCE (250 words): For example, my coworker and I have experienced having to steal from our company to make ends meet due to unfair rules to save the company a couple of extra dollars -- when they are capable of covering it themselves, even though it comes directly from our pockets. The mixture of getting paid \$2.13 an hour and yet being expected to pay for customers who don't pay leaves us in a bad position morally, as stealing is wrong and we could get fired. But when talking to the manager of the restaurant where we valet park, he said the valet company I work for gets paid a set amount of \$3,000 monthly by the restaurant (Wade). They also receive money from us as they have a deposit per car we park, which is set at \$3.00 per car. Although \$3.00 per car seems low, we park fifty to one hundred cars daily, meaning we end up paying the company \$100 to \$300 per night, even if we receive nothing from the

customer as tip. This leads us to reticket or lower the number of cars in the accounting books so that we are not responsible for the people who didn't give us anything. Knowing that the company is still making over \$3,000 a month just off of the restaurant we work at eases our moral discomfort and justifies our actions of stealing, as the company is still continuing to make money and be successful while we both employee and employer meet our financial needs.

3rd body paragraph / section (400 words): A. OPPOSITION: Some will argue that stealing is bad and yes, no doubt stealing is most definitely wrong, as we may never know what position and effects it may have on the people we are stealing from. Stealing is also unethical and breaks moral codes for some people. **B. REBUTTAL:** However, stealing from a big, uncaring company is okay when underpaid employees need to make money because the big companies make money regardless of the microscopic fraction of money we are taking from their income. Although it is easy to say, "Don't steal," big companies will never go broke, and we, as the employees, are just the worker ants to make them more money. On top of making money every second they are open, depending on how many locations they have, the company I work with has millions of dollars in assets. These assets secure the company even more financially, knowing they are able to sell their assets at any time. The amount of backup plans companies have to secure themselves financially is the icing on the cake to justify why stealing from them is okay because we hourly-wage employees are nowhere found in any of their self-focused escape routes. In fact, we are often the victim of their self-focused escape routes, as explained in Robert White's article "Docking Do's and Don'ts: Pilfering from Employee Paycheck." He writes,

Docking comes in many forms: legitimate, not so legitimate, and unconscionable. Tax withholding is legal, although not welcome. Most employees will agree to deductions for health or pension benefits. Sometimes, bad marriages or bad debts lead to court-ordered garnishments, and the employee--and the employer--must comply. What so many American workers do not like is the slicing and dicing of

their paychecks into pieces to pay for the employer's bad luck or poor business acumen. Sometimes, the cuts stem from events that are beyond the employee's control, or that may logically be interpreted as part of the employer's cost of doing business. (White)

This shows how companies implement rules and play with employees' paychecks. Later in the document, White also states seven instances when an employer has withheld a paycheck or even made employees pay back the customers' debts. Therefore, if split between me or the company winning, I would do everything I can to make sure it is me because they essentially have no genuine care for their employees when they are focused on much bigger things.

Conclusion paragraph -- Restated CLAIM Statement (100 words): Therefore, even when it is ethically wrong and can place you in legal trouble, stealing from a large company is more than justified and okay, especially when you are being mistreated and underpaid by them. These companies will feel no effect as they make millions in one year's time. Despite the ethical and legal implications, when multi-million-dollar companies perform demoralizing acts against their employees, it leaves employees in a sticky situation -- a situation of mental battles between doing the ethically correct thing or securing your own well-being. I feel it is, although morally wrong, an easy thing to justify because, at the end of the day, the big companies and the owners have millions, and I don't.

Works Cited

Wade, Seth. Personal Interview. 5 October 2023.

White, Robert. "Docking Do's and Don'ts: Pilfering from Employee Paychecks." *Employee Rights Quarterly*, vol.

3, no. 1, summer 2002, pp. 18+. *Gale Academic OneFile*,

link.gale.com/apps/doc/A92404093/AONE?u=txshracd2500&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=c928786d.

Accessed 7 Oct. 2023.

Step 6: Transform Your Rough Draft into a Final Draft

Instructions: Revise for body paragraph structure and word count, edit for errors, and format in [MLA Manuscript style](#) for a Final Draft, including complete in-text citations for all sources in Works Cited ([MLA documentation](#)).

Example: see [C. Trevino's Classic Argument final draft, "Big Companies Can Share."](#)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Trevino's Final Draft is just over 1000 words. Here's how to make it longer (1200 words):

- Add more supporting details for the EVIDENCE and OPPOSITION + REBUTTAL sections (by providing more examples as well as analyzing those examples).
- Additionally, offer a solution (recommendation) to increase the CONCLUSION paragraph.
- Doing these revisions would provide the 200 additional words for a 1200-word final draft.