

How to Write a Rebuttal (Debate) Argument Essay: From Thesis to Final Draft

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

Example: Monique Hickey's Claim – **School uniforms = essential** 😊

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

*Note: For this guide, we will use the "Rebuttal (Debate) Method" on page 111 in [Structures](#).

Instructions: In a Rebuttal Argument structure, the topics (or "points") are the **Opposition's Reasons**. You have at least **THREE Oppositional Reasons**, and each ONE of **Your Reasons and Evidence serves as Rebuttal** for EACH Oppositional Reason.

Example:

CLAIM: **School uniforms = essential** 😊

- I. **A. OPPOSITION'S REASON 1:** they say **limit self-expression**
B. YOUR REBUTTAL 1: my answer -- **can express in other ways**
- II. **A. OPPOSITION'S REASON 2:** they say **"expensive"**
B. YOUR REBUTTAL 2: my answer -- **"loss costly in the long run"**
- III. **A. OPPOSITION'S REASON 3:** they say **"causes poor academic performance"**
B. YOUR REBUTTAL 3: my answer **"can cause more focus on school"**

RESTATED CLAIM: **School uniforms = essential** 😊

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: **My opposition overlooks that school uniforms benefit the education system and have been persuaded by others' negative opinions that school uniforms are not needed.**

- I. **A. OPPOSITION'S REASON 1:** First, my opposition may say that school uniforms limit self and personal expression.
B. YOUR REBUTTAL 1: However, students can express their individuality in uniforms by expressing personality through sports, appearance, and accessories.
- II. **A. OPPOSITION'S REASON 2:** Second, the opposing side may argue that school uniforms could cause stress for parents who are unable to afford several sets of uniforms.
B. YOUR REBUTTAL 2: However, uniforms can allow parents to save time and money that is spent on school clothes.
- III. **A. OPPOSITION'S REASON 3:** Finally, people against my claim may also say that school uniforms could lead to poor academic performance and a decrease in attendance.
B. YOUR REBUTTAL 3: However, school uniforms let students focus more time on doing schoolwork and other beneficial activities about school.

RESTATED CLAIM: In conclusion, my opposition overlooks the advantage of school uniforms because they have been convinced by the public's misguided opinions that school uniforms are purposeless and ineffective.

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:

School Uniforms Are Essential

Intro Paragraph with CLAIM: My opposition overlooks that school uniforms benefit the education system and have been persuaded by others' negative opinions that school uniforms are not needed.

1st body paragraph section: A. OPPOSITION'S REASON 1: First, my opposition may say that school uniforms limit self and personal expression.

B. YOUR REBUTTAL 1: However, students can express their individuality in uniforms by expressing personality through sports, appearance, and accessories.

2nd body paragraph section: A. OPPOSITION’S REASON 2: Second, the opposing side may argue

that school uniforms could cause stress for parents who are unable to afford several sets of uniforms,

B. YOUR REBUTTAL 2: However, uniforms can allow parents to save time and money that is spent

on school clothes.

3rd body paragraph section: A. OPPOSITION’S REASON 3: Finally, people against my claim

may also say that school uniforms could lead to poor academic performance and a decrease in attendance.

B. YOUR REBUTTAL 3: However, school uniforms let students focus more time on doing schoolwork

and other beneficial activities about school.

Conclusion Paragraph with RESTATED CLAIM: In conclusion, my opposition overlooks the

advantage of school uniforms because they have been convinced by the public’s misguided opinions that

school uniforms are purposeless and ineffective.

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 of the Body paragraphs, and 3) to finish your Conclusion paragraph.

- **NOTE:** 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 Title”**) 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 **1500 word** rough draft):

School Uniforms Are Essential

Intro Paragraph with CLAIM (150 words): Many schools require students to wear school uniforms when they attend school. However, in the United States, some require students to wear school uniforms while some do not. School uniforms have always been an important role in the education system and for some is a necessary part of a good school environment. The original idea for school uniforms was to hide social differences between students. However, in today's time uniforms can also help with various things such as discipline, equality, and safety. Although school uniforms are worn to help better the education system, uniforms have become a big debate and have caused quite some controversy within the education system. People have concluded that school uniforms do not improve school quality and are not necessary for students to receive an education. However, school uniforms positively impact student's academic performance and are needed in the education system. **My opposition overlooks that school uniforms benefit the education system and have been persuaded by others' negative opinions that school uniforms are not needed.**

1st body paragraph section: OPPOSITION'S REASON 1 + EVIDENCE (200 words): **First, my opposition may say that school uniforms limit self and personal expression.** Furthermore, a person's individuality is a characteristic that is significant to every individual. However, requiring students to wear school uniforms supposedly takes away that aspect by restraining them. Also, how a student chooses to dress could be a bold statement of one's personal or political views according to **Julie Underwood**. She continues by saying, that the way people choose to dress could convey or represent a message. The following caused the First Amendment to be involved in determining how far a school district can go in regulating what students can wear (**Underwood 74**). After all, kids and teens use the way they dress to express themselves. Before I graduated high school, students that attended the same school as me would say that their creativity was hindered and restrained because not only were they expected to wear uniforms, but they also held back on expressing their behavioral originality to follow a set code of conduct. As a result, they felt uncomfortable while wearing uniforms because my peers would that they lose self-identity whenever they lost their right to

express and show themselves through fashion. Therefore, many believe that wearing uniforms can limit self-expression.

YOUR REBUTTAL 1 + EVIDENCE (200 words): However, students can express their individuality in uniforms by expressing personality through sports, appearance, and accessories. Students could start by wearing jewelry, such as earrings and bracelets. Students could also add more details to their shirts by adding pins to them and dressing up their shirts by adding a stylish jacket to their uniform. Although some schools limit which hair colors are appropriate, students could still try wearing different hairstyles. Furthermore, they could add hair accessories to show character. Another way a student could express their individuality is by wearing unique looking shoes. For example, when I attended high school, I expressed myself by wearing a cool, bold backpack to make a statement. Also, being required to wear school uniforms can encourage students to express themselves in other complex ways such as sports, academics, arts, and other school activities. School uniforms allow students to promote their individual expression of school spirit. For instance, students can express themselves by joining sports and other school activities such as football, volleyball, theater club, and more. In a published article, it is said that extracurricular activities in school life is important and significant for the development of students. The article also states that students learn to express themselves beneficially in sports by learning time management, organizational skills, and improved self-confidence (Naik). Therefore, students can express themselves through school activities and accessories, rather than regular clothes.

2nd body paragraph section: OPPOSITION'S REASON 2 + EVIDENCE (200 words): Second, the opposing side may argue that school uniforms could cause stress for parents who are unable to afford several sets of uniforms. That is because uniforms are only sold and available from a limited number of suppliers, which could be a reason why school uniforms are sold at a high price. Suppliers may also sell needed items such as blazers and dress shoes at a high price. This could cause some families and parents who struggle

financially to not be able to afford them. In an article from *The Guardian* by Donna Ferguson, charities and community groups are trying to lower the costs of school uniforms for low-income families because affording school uniforms has become a big problem. The article says that applications for help with the cost of school uniforms and shoes have risen by 90 percent over the past year in 2019. Furthermore, the charities and volunteers think the problem grew when schools began to use branded school clothes rather than standard uniforms, and private school uniforms could be more expensive for children's parents (Ferguson). The article also shows that uniforms are becoming more expensive due to high demand and limited markets, and the more financially unstable parents are, the more they have to depend on charities and community groups to provide their children with uniforms for school rather than being able to afford them (Ferguson).

YOUR REBUTTAL 2 + EVIDENCE (200 words): However, uniforms can allow parents to save time and money that is spent on school clothes. Yes, school uniforms may be pricey, but they still allow parents to save money by being able to be worn for one or two complete school years. Furthermore, stores tend to have back to school sales whenever school is about to start, to help save money on school uniforms. In contrast, it may be difficult to find sales for regular clothes when school is about to start, especially when children want to attend school wearing popular, expensive brands and styles of clothing. Yes, school uniforms could cost about \$300 dollars, depending on the requirements of the school and how many children there are in the family; however, regular clothes for school may cost just as much, if not more, since name brand clothing could be more expensive than less popular, standard clothing, and different stores and brands could affect the price. Furthermore, parents who may have more than one child who attends school would have to buy more regular clothing, rather than save money with buying school uniforms that could be passed down, since being current in style and fashion is not an issue. As a result, in addition to having to spend more money on expensive brands, parents would also have to buy their children regular clothes more often than they would if their child

were required to wear uniforms. School uniforms may cost a great deal; however, parents might have to spend twice as much money for regular branded clothes than uniforms.

3rd body paragraph section: OPPOSITION'S REASON 3 + EVIDENCE (200 words): Finally,

people against my claim may also say that school uniforms could lead to poor academic performance and a decrease in attendance. It's because school uniforms could be uncomfortable and inconvenient to some students when they are being forced to wear them every day at school. Also, some parents may not be financially stable to afford good quality uniforms for their children to wear to school, resulting in them having to wear low-quality uniforms that are stiff and unpleasant. Being in stiff and itchy school uniforms for seven or more hours could be frustrating to students because the clothing may restrict their movements. The discomfort of school uniforms could affect students by distracting them from their education during school hours. Also, students' attendance suffers when they come to school not wearing uniforms, and they have to wait outside of the classroom for their parents to come with their uniforms to change. The opposing side worry that students may avoid going to school to avoid these two problems of wearing uncomfortable school uniforms or being in trouble for not wearing school uniforms, which could affect their academic achievements and goals. Thus, schools with school uniforms could cause students to stop attending school and prevent them from being in good academic standing.

YOUR REBUTTAL 3 + EVIDENCE (200 words): However, school uniforms let students focus

more time on doing schoolwork and other beneficial activities about school. First, they don't have to spend time choosing what clothes to wear for school, since they always wear the same thing. When I attended high school, most of my peers were early and on time to class. The reasoning may be because students did not have to waste time choosing what clothes they would wear to school the next day. Furthermore, school uniforms reduce visual distractions for students because everyone wears the same clothes at school. Students become less interested in what their peers are wearing when they are all wearing the same outfits. In my

school, instead of being interested in what we looked like at school, we became interested in what we did at school. My peers began to support my school by participating in sports and joining tutoring services within the school, to better their learning in subjects. Therefore, wearing school uniforms allows students to devote more of their time to learning. It influences them to focus more on homework, projects, and tests, resulting in higher academic performance. School uniforms help improve student performance by helping students focus more on learning and academics rather than popular clothes.

Conclusion Paragraph with RESTATED CLAIM (150 words): In conclusion, my opposition overlooks the advantage of school uniforms because they have been convinced by the public's misguided opinions that school uniforms are purposeless and ineffective. Their claims to put a stop to school uniforms for public schools fail to notice that school uniforms are essential to the education system. The number of schools that require their students to wear school uniforms continues to show how beneficial school uniforms are. They encourage students to express themselves in more creative ways. They can save parents money. Finally, they are effective in improving their students' attendance and academic performance. School uniforms will continue to exist in schools, regardless of recent or future decisions to debar this misunderstood rule.

Works Cited

- Ferguson, Donna. "School's Back-but Some Parents Can't Keep up with Cost of Branded Uniforms." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 31 Aug. 2019, www.theguardian.com/education/2019/aug/31/schools-back-parents-cant-keep-up-with-cost-of-branded-uniforms.
- Naik, Nirbhay. "Importance of Extracurricular Activities in School Life." *YourStory.com*, Yourstory, 27 Aug. 2018, yourstory.com/mystory/d48a322b39-importance-of-extracur.

Underwood, Julie. "School Uniforms, Dress Codes, and Free Expression: What's the balance?" *Phi Delta Kappan*, vol. 99, no. 6, Mar. 2018, pp. 74-75. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1177/0031721718762429.

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 [Monique Hickey's Rebuttal Argument Final Draft "School Uniforms Are Essential"](#).

- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** to make a word count of 1500 words, **separate Opposition and Rebuttal in separate paragraphs AND also explain how your research supports your Claim and rebuts the Opposition** -- to provide enough supporting details in the body paragraphs.