

GENERIC EXPLORATION TASKS FOR AN ARGUMENT ADDRESSING AN ISSUE

1. Write out the issue your argument will address. Try wording the issue in several different ways. (3 minutes)
2. Why is this a controversial issue? (For example, is there not enough evidence to resolve the issue? Is the current evidence ambiguous or contradictory? Are definitions in dispute. Do the parties disagree about basic values, assumptions, or beliefs? (15 minutes)
3. What personal interest do you have in this issue? What personal experiences do you have with it? How does the issue affect you? (10 minutes)
4. Pick one side of the issue, and come up with the best arguments you can in its favor. Freewrite everything that comes to mind that might help you support this side. (Three 10-minute sessions)
5. Now pick the other side of the issue and do the same thing. (Three 10-minute sessions).
6. As you found arguments in favor of both sides of the issue, what gaps in your knowledge did you discover? What additional research do you need to do? What further questions do you need to answer? (10 minutes)
7. Do the additional research.
8. Now that you have looked at all sides of the issue and done additional research, which side do you plan to argue for and why? (10 minutes)
9. You are now ready to write a rough draft of your argument.

(Taken from Bean, *Engaging Ideas*, pp. 989-118)