

Preparing to Write the Analysis Paper

1. ANALYZE THE ARGUMENTS ON THE TABLE

What makes an argument?

Premise + Premise + Premise + Premise + Counterargument/Refutation = Conclusion

Identify and map the arguments present in your source material. If you struggle to identify the argument, check the source’s introduction, conclusion, and, if applicable, the abstract.

EXAMPLE:

| <i>Romney’s speech about the Keystone XL Pipeline</i> | |
|--|--|
| <i>Premises</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Keystone creates jobs</i> ✓ <i>Keystone improves the economy</i> ✓ <i>Keystone reduces overseas oil consumption</i> |
| <i>Conclusion</i> | ❖ <i>Keystone should be constructed.</i> |

| <i>Obama’s speech about the Keystone XL Pipeline</i> | |
|---|--|
| <i>Premises</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Crude oil damages the environment.</i> ✓ <i>We should spend money on renewable energy since it is cleaner.</i> ✓ <i>Investing in renewable energy creates jobs.</i> ✓ <i>Investing in renewable energy decreases foreign oil dependence.</i> |
| <i>Conclusion</i> | ❖ <i>Keystone should not be constructed.</i> |

2. RESPOND TO THE ARGUMENTS

What is your response to the source’s argument? To effectively respond, you will have to *agree*, *agree in part*, or *disagree* with the writer’s argument. Use the following chart to help guide you through different responses.

| Agree | Agree in Part | Disagree |
|---|--|--|
| New/different evidence supports the claim | A qualified, more specific position exists | Evidence is false |
| No other conclusion is logically possible. (Rebut the counterargument). | Argument holds under reservation(s)—my position only applies under specific circumstances. | Claim does not follow logically from the evidence. |
| Evidence is authoritative or matches examples/personal experience. | Claim only follows with probability (inductive reasoning) not with necessity (deductive reasoning) | Logic is circular: The claim is the same as the evidence! |
| An analogy or comparison effectively supports the claim. | | Claim is too broad/accounts for too much. |
| | | Argument creates a false dilemma—it’s not a black and white situation. |

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Example of agreement

New/different evidence supports the claim

I agree with Obama's claim because if the pipeline broke, it might inflict major damage to the Sandhills Wetland and the Ogallala Aquifer.

Example of agreeing in part

A qualified, more specific position exists

If the pipeline created 20,000 jobs, the project would be worth environmental risk, as it would promote the U.S. economy. However, the project is a partnership of American and Canadian workers, so only about 10,000 jobs would be created in America.

Example of disagreement

Argument creates a false dilemma

We can invest in renewable resources and still build the Keystone XL pipeline. These are not mutually exclusive goals.

3. ANTICIPATE POSSIBLE COUNTERARGUMENTS

After you brainstorm responses to each of your source's arguments and premises, begin listing counterarguments, or counter-responses to your responses. Take notes and list counterarguments after each response.

AGREE

Supporting comparison—

Response: *I agree with Obama's claim because if the pipeline broke, it might inflict major damage to the Sandhills Wetland and the Ogallala Aquifer.*

Counterargument: *The pipeline's potentially negative environmental impact could be decreased if the pipeline were rerouted so that it did not flow through such fragile natural habitats.*

AGREE IN PART

Qualify—

Response: *If the pipeline created 20,000 jobs, the project would be worth environmental risk, as it would promote the U.S. economy. However, the project is a partnership of American and Canadian workers, so only about 10,000 jobs would be created in America.*

Counterargument: *Adding 10,000 American jobs to the economy is still an achievement, and we should accept economic growth opportunities when they arise.*

DISAGREE

Claim doesn't follow evidence—

Response: *We can invest in renewable resources and still build Keystone. These are not mutually exclusive goals.*

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Counterargument: The U.S. needs to take a strong and unified stance on sustainability investment. Building the Keystone pipeline would ideologically undermine attempts to improve the U.S.'s commitment to renewable resources.

4. BEGIN TO PLAN ORGANIZATION USING COUNTERARGUMENT

Use your responses and counterarguments to draw a conclusion of your own. Your conclusion should directly relate to the source's(s') arguments, and the conclusion should be your OWN.

THESIS – I agree that constructing Keystone XL, as planned, may cause tremendous damage to the surrounding wildlife. However, if the pipeline were rerouted, I believe the Keystone XL should be constructed, as it would help improve the American economy and help decrease the country's dependence on foreign oil.

- I. I agree with Obama's concerns about the environmental impact of the Keystone XL pipeline; if the pipeline broke, it could inflict major damage to the Sandhills Wetland and the Ogallala Aquifer.
- II. Nancy Sutley, chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality and President Obama's principal environmental advisor, does not think the pipeline would be safe. Her qualifications indicate that Sutley's definition of safe is superior to Romney's.
- III. While Romney cites Keystone's state-of-the-art safety measures, such measures do not guarantee that no spills will occur. Indeed, Keystone XL would be one of the largest pipelines ever constructed, and there is no way of predicting the possible dangers.
- IV. Proponents of the Keystone Pipeline correctly argue that the American economy needs jobs, and Keystone XL would create 20,000 of them.
- V. The U.S. needs to decrease foreign oil dependence. Building the Keystone XL Pipeline would help curb this dependence.

CONCLUSION – To appease environmentalists, the pipeline could be rerouted around the Sandhills wetland and the Ogallala Aquifer. Once the pipeline is rerouted, the pipeline's construction would benefit the hurting U.S. economy and allow for increased energy independence from foreign oil.