

# Writing Argumentative and Analytical Papers

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# In Your Papers...

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1. Do Not Argue in a Vacuum: **Join or intervene** in an ongoing critical or theoretical discussion, but do not *merely* summarize others' arguments.
2. Center your **original analysis** in a **close** reading of a primary source or sources.
3. **Contextualize** in a theoretical and/or socio-historical frame.
4. Advance a **compelling thesis** in your introduction and orient your entire argument towards proving and advancing it.
5. **Don't bite off more than you can chew.** Choose a topic/object of investigation appropriate to the page length.
6. Write in your **own voice**: merge personal style with academic register. Do not be afraid of colorful phrasings, but rely centrally on logic over rhetoric.
7. Strive towards a **synthesis** in your conclusion. What are the implications of what we have learned?
8. **Write multiple drafts**; update your thesis as you go, tighten your argument and proofread before submitting. Organize sections, paragraphs, sentences, etc. in a clear and appropriate structure.
9. Follow standard academic conventions for citation (MLA, CMS). **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE IN ANY FORM!**

# Basic Structure of Academic Theses & Research Papers

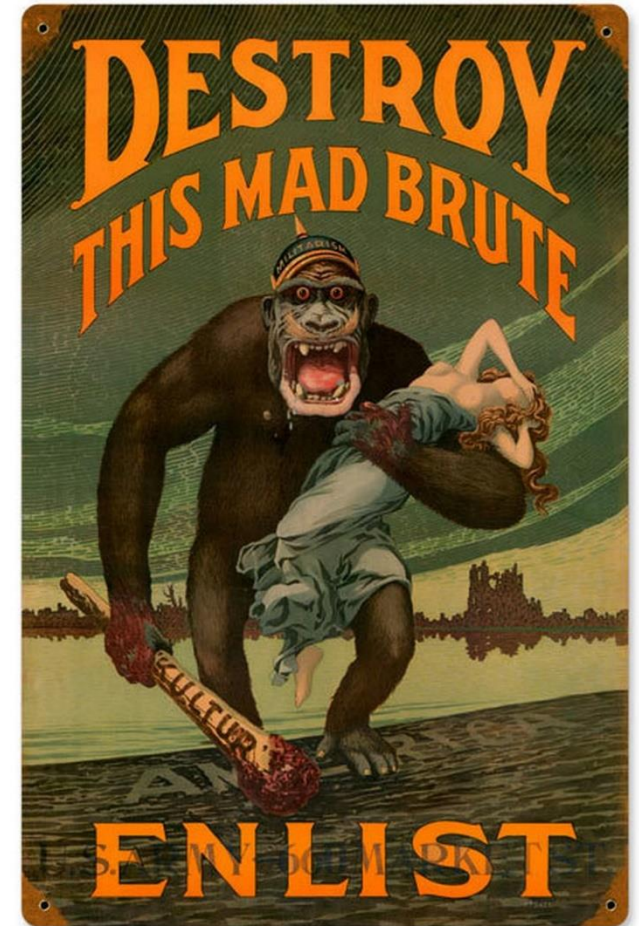
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1. **Introduction:** Quickly establishes context, stakes, research questions, and thesis statement. A quick outline of the rest of the paper is optional.
2. **Background/Context/Literature Review Section(s):** Sections which establish the necessary context for the paper's analysis of primary sources/objects. This includes relevant historical context, theory, secondary research, etc.
3. **Analytical Chapter(s):** presentation of argumentation and evidence in support of the thesis statement. Should be primarily based on the author's own original analysis, even if supported by other secondary sources. Should be rooted in the context created in prior sections.
4. **Conclusion:** Discussion & Wrap-up. You may restate the thesis, but better is to strive to gesture towards a further synthesis of findings and why they matter.

# Building A Thesis Statement

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**Describe** The WWI recruitment poster *Destroy This Mad Brute* ostensibly refers to the barbarisms of German militarism and the threat of German invasion in order to persuade young men to join the US military.



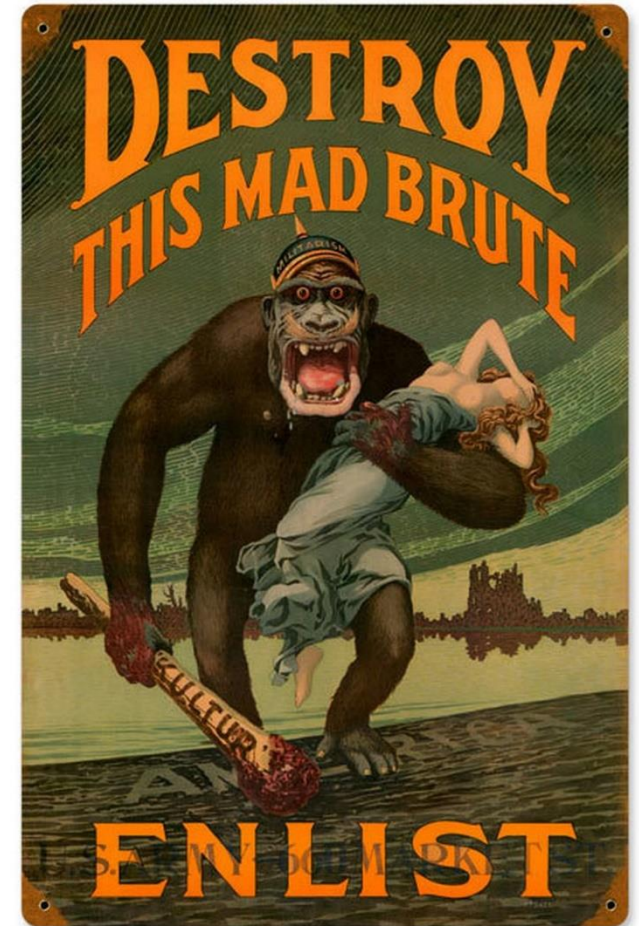
# Building A Thesis Statement

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The WWI recruitment poster *Destroy This Mad Brute* ostensibly refers to the barbarisms of German militarism and the threat of German invasion in order to persuade young men to join the US military.

However, it utilizes racialized and gendered imagery drawn from American cultural tropes which villainize black Americans as threats to the presumed sexual purity of white women, two groups who have been routinely and systematically oppressed throughout American history.

Analyze/  
Historicize/  
Critique



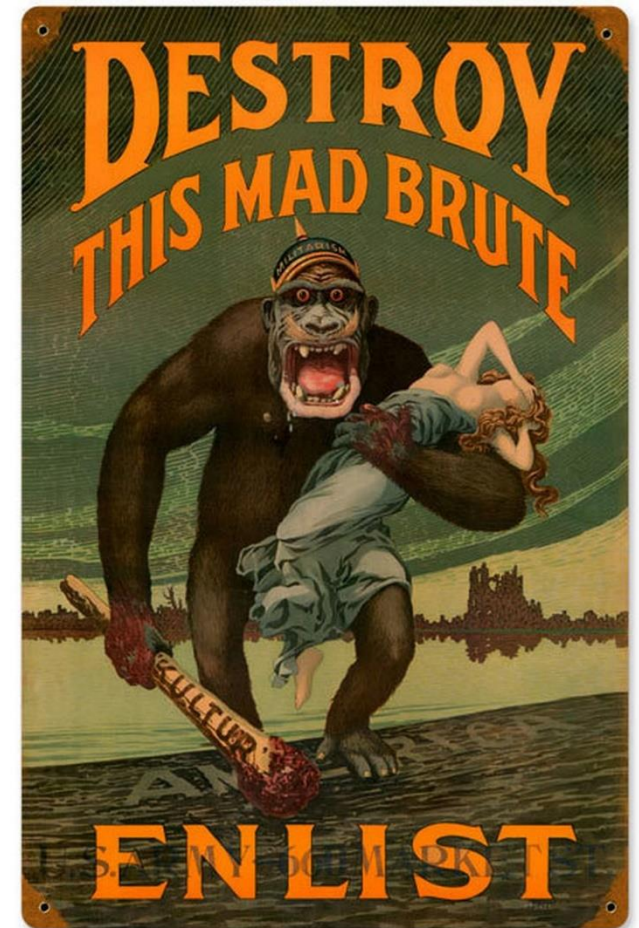
# Full Statement

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The WWI recruitment poster *Destroy This Mad Brute* ostensibly refers to the barbarisms of German militarism and the threat of German invasion in order to persuade young men to join the US military.

**However**, it utilizes racialized and gendered imagery drawn from American cultural tropes which villainize black Americans or ethnic newcomers as threats to the presumed sexual purity of white women, two groups who have been routinely and systematically oppressed throughout American history.

*Destroy this Mad Brute* **therefore** perpetuates logics of patriarchy and white supremacy which deeply problematize simplistic historical narratives which cast the United States as the righteous defender of democracy in WWI.

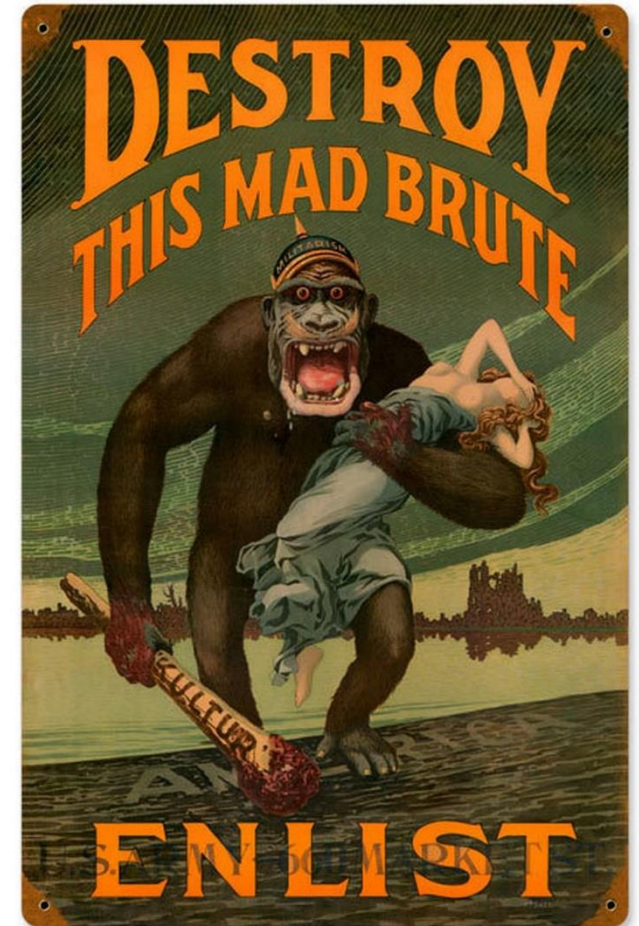


# Thesis Proposes Main Argument

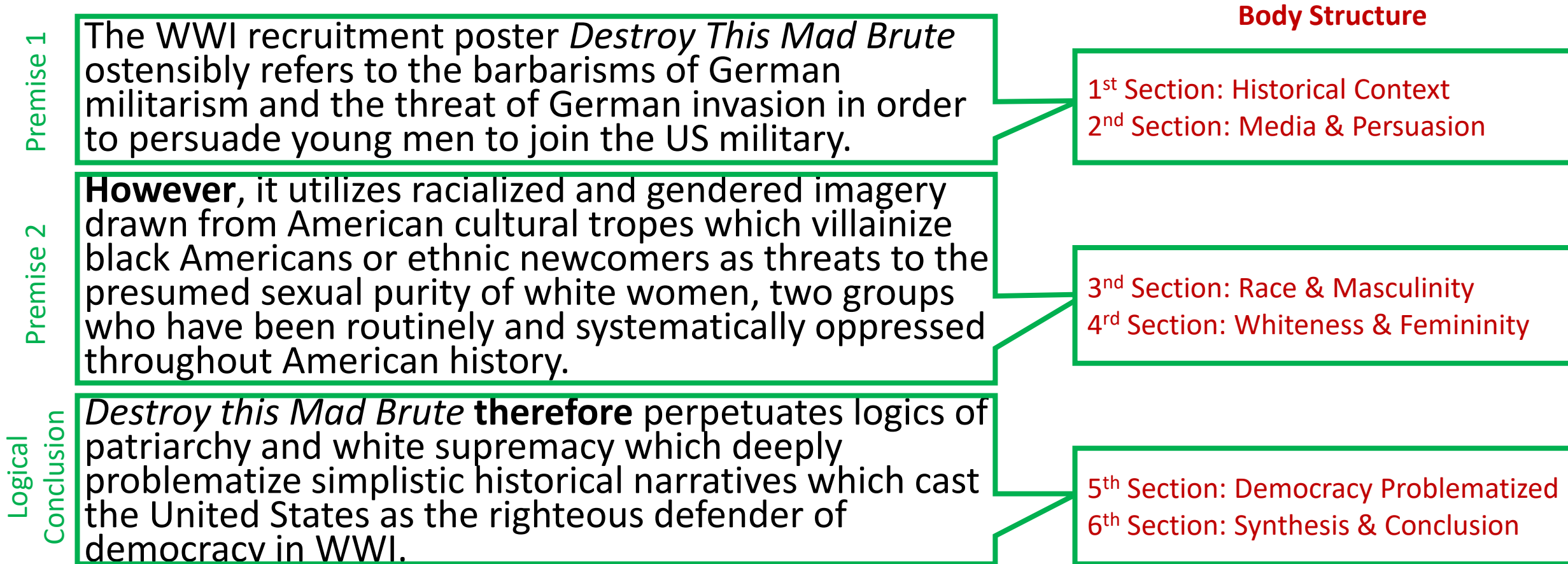
- Premise 1:** Describes  
The WWI recruitment poster *Destroy This Mad Brute* ostensibly refers to the barbarisms of German militarism and the threat of German invasion in order to persuade young men to join the US military.
- Premise 2:** Problematises  
**However**, it utilizes racialized and gendered imagery drawn from American cultural tropes which villainize black Americans or ethnic newcomers as threats to the presumed sexual purity of white women, two groups who have been routinely and systematically oppressed throughout American history.
- Logical Conclusion**  
*Destroy this Mad Brute* **therefore** perpetuates logics of patriarchy and white supremacy which deeply problematize simplistic historical narratives which cast the United States as the righteous defender of democracy in WWI.

Each premise supported with evidence & argument in main body!

Syllogism



# The Thesis May Suggest a Body Structure



# Quick Review: Structure of a paragraph

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- The Basic Rule: Keep one controlling idea per paragraph
- Unity: keep focus, don't wander off or go on a tangent
- Avoid overly long next to overly short paragraphs (unless for rhetorical effect)
- Coherence
  - Logical Connectors
  - Logical bridges (carry the subject over sentence to sentence).
  - Verbal bridges
    - Repeating key words, synonyms, pronouns, transition words (however, nevertheless, additionally, etc)

# Quick Review: Structure of a paragraph

Components of the Perfect Paragraph Structure		
1	Topic Sentence	Clear, relevant, and broad sentence with controlling idea/blueprint for the paragraph.
2	Support Sentences	<p>Step 1: Explains topic sentence/adds more detail.</p> <p>Step 2: Uses textual "evidence" that supports and develops the topic sentence using concrete details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facts, details, examples, reasons</li><li>• Analysis or arguments</li><li>• Direct quotes, paraphrased info from sources</li><li>• Statistics, data from research</li><li>• Personal experience, anecdotes, stories</li></ul>
3	Concluding Sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explains the significance of supporting information.</li><li>• Unifies all paragraph info to answer "so what?"</li><li>• Synthesizes paragraph content with topic sentence and thesis statement.</li></ul>

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## Body ¶ Structure

Topic sentence. Transition, example #1. Explain! (supporting details, evidence, tie it to the topic sentence) Transition, example #2. Explain! (supporting details, evidence, tie it to the topic sentence) Transition, example #3. Explain! (supporting details, evidence, tie it to the topic sentence) Closing sentence.

# Quick Review: Structure of a paragraph

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## TOPIC SENTENCES...

- Have a clear **topic** (usually a noun phrase)
- Has a **controlling idea** about the topic
- Functions like a **mini-thesis statement** for the rest of the paragraph.
- Is **clear** and **concise** (but can still be complex)
- At or near the **start** of the paragraph

# Further suggestions

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- **You learn to write, in part, by reading.** Find academic papers which are appropriate to your topic/primary source/discipline and which you admire. Analyze how they work functionally and rhetorically, understand how they build an argument, hook a reader, engage with other scholarship, etc.
- **Let your own voice shine through.** Use other scholarly work for inspiration, context, assistance, or to spare with, but do not simply emulate it.
- **ALWAYS REVISE AND REDRAFT.** Consider how sections and paragraphs flow together. Put yourself in a reader's shoes. At best, ask a more advanced friend you trust to critique and proofread your paper, and revise accordingly.
- (Re)write your thesis statement **AFTER** you've finished the paper. Often, you don't know what you want to say until you've laid it down on the page in your analysis.

# Quick Checklist

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- ☐ My paper has a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. Body sections are arranged appropriately and logically.
- ☐ My introduction includes a thesis statement which summarized my original argument. The thesis statement is non-obvious and supported by the rest of the paper.
- ☐ My thesis statement is drawn from by my original analysis of primary sources. I've written this analysis so that a reader can follow my logic clearly.
- ☐ I have used secondary research to contextualize and illuminate my argument, but not to replace my own reasoning. I am *in conversation* with my secondary sources, not beholden to them. This is clear to the reader.
- ☐ I have revised and redrafted my paper so that my argument flows smoothly and is easy for the reader to follow. Sections and paragraphs are arranged logically to build to my conclusion. I have proofread for grammar, spelling, and syntax issues.
- ☐ I have formatted my paper so that it is easy on the eyes and a reader can follow it closely without being distracted by inconsistencies in layout or formatting. For example, paragraph and section breaks are clearly legible and standardized throughout.
- ☐ I have properly cited all sources according to a standardized style guide. I have appended all required authenticity declaration documents.