

Proposition Support Outline

What is a Proposition Support Outline and why is it important?

A Proposition Support Outline (Santa, 1988) is an organizational strategy that helps students select and evaluate information from a text so that they can support an argument with evidence.

How can I use a Proposition Support Outline with my students?

After students have read and thought about a controversial topic, have them discuss how they feel about the issue. For example, if the topic is capital punishment, encourage students to discuss whether they support or oppose it. They can write down reasons for and against the issue on the Proposition Support Outline. They can then use the Outline to evaluate the pro and con arguments and determine their own position.

Students can then write a summary using the About Point Writing Response format. They compose a topic sentence by using the issue as the About and their stance on the issue as the Point. They create the body of the paragraph by using information in the support, the opposition, or both of the columns. They can end the summary with their conclusion about the issue. Following is an example of a Proposition Support Outline with a summary of the opposing viewpoint.

Proposition	Support	Opposition
Capital punishment is a good way of punishing people for the crime of murder.	Do unto others—an eye for an eye Person could get out and kill again Punishment should fit crime Teaches that murder is wrong	Think about prisoners' family Wrong to kill Prison might be worse People can change—second chance What if person is innocent?

Refuting Summary:

Capital Punishment Is Wrong

I believe that capital punishment is wrong.

One reason that I think capital punishment is wrong is that a person might be put to death for a crime he did not commit. Also, capital punishment affects not only the condemned person but his family as well. If the condemned person was innocent, his family would suffer through the rest of their lives knowing that their family member was killed even though he did not commit a murder.

Another reason that I think capital punishment is wrong is that people can change. Serving a long term in prison would be a bad experience to go through, but the prisoner might turn his whole life around and become a better person.

The final reason that I think capital punishment is wrong is that I believe killing another human being is wrong under any circumstances. I think everyone deserves to live. Punishment for murder could be imprisonment, but not death.

I believe that capital punishment is wrong.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Proposition/Support Outline

Proposition:	Support:	Opposition:

Summary:

