

# PLANNING YOUR DRAFT

---

When you first assemble your argument, you don't have to put your reasons in any special order. But when you plan a draft, you must choose an order that meets your readers' needs. When you're not sure how best to order your reasons, consider these options.

1. **Chronological.** This is the easiest order, from earlier to later, or vice versa.
2. **Part by part.** If you analyze your topic by its parts, order them by their relationship to one another.
3. **Short to long, simple to complex.** Most readers prefer to deal with simpler issues before they work through more complex ones.
4. **More familiar to less familiar.** Most readers prefer to read what they know about before they read what's new.
5. **Most acceptable to most contestable.** Most readers move more easily from what they agree with to what they don't.
6. **Less important to more important (or vice versa).** Most readers prefer to cover more important reasons first (but those reasons may have more impact when they come last).
7. **Step-by-step understanding.** Readers may need you to explain some events, principles, definitions, and so on before they are ready to understand what's most important.

To test an order, create one paragraph that includes just your reasons in the order you want to test. If that paragraph reads like a convincing elevator story, then you have found a useful order.