An argument essay will look like a typical essay (as all essays are essentially arguments) with somewhat different terminology and a clear emphasis on the argument.

The **Claim** is the Thesis (the one overall, specific argument the whole essay will need to prove). In essays it should come at the end of your introduction/paragraph #1. In Response Papers, it should begin (or nearly) paragraph #1.

**Reasons** are the Point Sentences. They support the thesis and can be considered the Thesis Statement/focusing argument of an individual Body Paragraph. Present and prove only one Reason per body paragraph. (You might also have heard them called Topic Sentences, but for our purposes that term doesn’t sufficiently emphasize the argument they must have.)

**Evidence** is what it sounds like: examples from the text that help support the Reason. Evidence may be facts, quotations, paraphrase, or summary, etc., what you notice in or about the text that helps prove your Reason.

**Warrants** are the bridge that connects the Evidence to the Reason (as well as the Reason & Evidence to your Claim) that allow/convince your reader to accept the Reason (and Claim) as valid. Warrants may be based on logos, ethos or pathos, or values that are assumed to be shared with the reader. It’s your thinking about and interpretation of the details of the evidence and reason. It’s important to make your thinking visible to the reader, not to assume your reader knows what you are thinking, and thus to prove the relevance and validity of the Evidence, the Reason, and the Claim.

**Backing** is further support for the Warrants. Just as you cannot assume your evidence speaks for itself or proves its relevance and significance, similarly, you may need to back up your assumptions and interpretation with further evidence from the text or further explanation of your ideas/knowledge, etc. This support becomes particularly important with controversial assertions, reasons or interpretations your reader may not readily or willingly notice or share.

If an argument is particularly controversial in that more obvious or accepted interpretations are competing with it, you may need to provide **Refutation**. That is, you may need to present the other argument first along with sufficient evidence to prove it exists, to make it clear, and to present it fairly. But your main purpose will be to explain why yours should be considered valid (whether in addition or instead of the other argument). Of course, the bulk of the evidence, warrants, and backing should help support your argument.

Every Body Paragraph should start with a Reason and then support it with evidence, warrants, and backing connecting the Reason back to the Claim and developing it, the final step.