Sample Outline for Position Paper

The purpose of this paper is to explore your topic, figure out where you stand on it, and present your point of view. Research is not necessary at this point; instead you can field test your opinion and see if it stands up. This paper should be five to six paragraphs long.

I. Introduction
   A. Introduce the topic
   B. Provide background on the topic to explain why it is important
   C. Assert the thesis (your view of the issue). More on thesis statements can be found below.

Your introduction has a dual purpose: to indicate both the topic and your approach to it (your thesis statement), and to arouse your reader’s interest in what you have to say. One effective way of introducing a topic is to place it in context – to supply a kind of backdrop that will put it in perspective. You should discuss the area into which your topic fits, and then gradually lead into your specific field of discussion (re: your thesis statement).

II. Your Argument
   A. Assert point #1 of your claims
      1. Give your educated and informed opinion
      2. Provide support-proof using an example (this need not be cited yet)
   B. Assert point #2 of your claims
      1. Give your educated and informed opinion
      2. Provide support-proof using an example (this need not be cited yet)
   C. Assert point #3 of your claims
      1. Give your educated and informed opinion
      2. Provide support-proof using an example (this need not be cited yet)

You may have more than 3 overall points to your argument, but you should not have fewer.

III. Conclusion
   A. Restate your argument
   B. Tell the readers what action you want them to take but do not introduce new information

The Next Step:
Next we will write a first draft of an argument paper where we will find research to back up our claims from this paper, add various persuasive strategies and counter-arguments, and finesse the paper overall.