

Solar Power: Guide to Critical Analysis

This guide is intended to help you evaluate the topics presented in EBSCO Information Services' *Points of View Reference Centre*[™]. Using this analysis will enhance your ability to read critically, develop your own perspective on the issue of Solar Power, and make an effective argument on the topic, in writing or in a debate.

Before You Read

- In a single sentence, state what you currently think is/are the argument(s) in the Solar Power debate.
- On the Points of View home page, under Browse by Category, go to "Energy," and then click on "Solar Power."
- Each topic in *Points of View Reference Centre*[™] has three main Points of View sections. While there may be many opinions on the issue, these sections are designed to provide a base from which you may engage in further analysis. The Overview provides general background information on the issue. The Point and Counterpoint present opposing perspectives on the issue, with talking points that support those positions.

As You Read

- **Read the Overview, Point, and Counterpoint sections.** Reading all three will enable you to better understand the controversy, providing a foundation from which you can broaden your knowledge of the topic.
- **Take notes** on the main ideas. Use the online Notes tool to make notes about the article and save them for later. To find it, see the Tools column to the right of the article on your screen. Look for the Create Note icon on the list. Or, print out the essay and highlight the main ideas. Circle key words.
- **Review the terms** in the Understanding the Discussion section of the Overview.
- **Organize your ideas.** Go to the Research Guide "Visual Ways to Organize Your Ideas." You can access it from the Research Guides link in the Reference Shelf section on the home page. Use one of the graphic organizer templates provided to break the essay down into its main points. Bottom line: use the approach that suits you best.

Judge Fact and Opinion

Review the Research Guide article titled "Judging Fact vs. Opinion."

FACTS

- Facts are statements that can be proved true or false.
- Facts tell what actually happened.
- Facts tell what is happening now.
- Facts state something that can be observed or verified.

OPINIONS

- Opinions are statements that cannot be proved true or false because they express a person's thoughts, beliefs, feelings, or estimates.
- Opinions express worth or value.
- Opinions express what the author or speaker thinks should or should not be thought or done.
- Opinions are based on what seems true or probable.

Example 1:

Fact: Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction Angus Taylor stated that solar power can help Australia reach its net-zero carbon emission goals.

Opinion: Solar power is the best way for Australia to reach its net-zero carbon emission goals.

- In this example, the fact attributes a statement about a belief to a particular individual, the details of which can be proven or disproven, while the opinion makes a value judgment about what is "best" based on personal belief.

Example 2:

Fact: Curtailment is a technique used by energy companies to avoid overloading the power grid if too much voltage is being fed in from residential solar panels.

Opinion: It is unnecessary for the Government to continue subsidizing solar panel installation because there are too many residential systems installed in Australia.

- In this example, the opinion statement is a generalization that cannot be proved and expresses the speaker’s subjective belief.

Example 3:

Fact: Solar energy lobbying group Solar Citizens argued that taxing homeowners for the energy they feed into the power grid will provide a disincentive for the installation of residential solar panels.

Opinion: Taxing homeowners for the solar energy they feed into the power grid is unfair.

- In this example of an opinion, “unfair” is a value judgment based on personal belief and does not provide additional supporting information.

Example 4:

Fact: Lobbying groups such as the Riverina Sustainable Food Alliance (RSFA) worry that prime agricultural land is being sacrificed for solar energy production at the expense of food security.

Opinion: Solar farms occupy too much land that should be used for agriculture and food production.

- In this example, the fact attributes a statement about a belief to a particular organization, the details of which can be proven or disproven. The opinion expresses personal belief without supporting evidence.

Based on the criteria listed above, select:

- Three fact statements from the Overview, Point, or Counterpoint sections, or one of the bibliographic sources within the essay on Solar Power.
- Three opinion statements from the Overview, Point, or Counterpoint sections, or one of the bibliographic sources within the essay on Solar Power.

In Depth

Use the “Search” box at the top of the page to look up articles about your topic. The Result List you get will offer many kinds of related information from various sources, such as magazines, journals, blogs, newspapers, reference books, and images.

Select one or two to explore.

- What source did you use and what is one benefit of using this type of source?
- What is one drawback?
- What new information did you learn from reading this article?

You Decide

Based on the readings and review of the Related Items offered, consider the Point and Counterpoint commentary in light of your own set of personal values and understanding of the topic.

- Reflect on which arguments about Solar Power you accept, those outlined in the Point, Counterpoint, or a completely different argument. For you, what is the single most compelling argument regarding Solar Power, and why?

Write an 800- to 1,000-word essay response to the question above; include a thesis statement and two or three supporting arguments. See “Writing a Thesis Statement” and “Writing a Persuasive Essay” Research Guides for tips on how to write your essay.

- Use facts from other resources found in *Points of View Reference Centre*TM, other than the Overview, Point, and Counterpoint information. See “Judging Fact vs. Opinion” in the Research Guide section to help determine the value of the information you find.
- Investigate some of the sources cited in the Bibliography at the end of each Point of View essay to review the kinds of sources those authors consulted.
- For website information, first review the Research Guide article titled “Evaluating a Website.” Use the information you find there to guide your decisions on which sites provide the most credible information and would add value to your essay.
- Suggest ways in which the controversy surrounding Solar Power could be resolved.

See these other *Points of View Reference Centre*TM “how to” topics for additional help. They can be found using the Research Guides link on the home page.

- Writing a Topic Sentence
- Taking Good Notes
- From Notes to Outline
- Visual Ways to Organize Your Ideas
- Writing a Conclusion
- Citing Sources
- Creating a Bibliography
- Writing a Research Paper

Debate It

- Debate the issue. To create an effective debate, refer to the tips offered in the Research Guides—“Debate Strategies,” “Giving an Oral Presentation,” and “Starting a Debate Club.”
- Select someone else to read an excerpt from a bibliographic source in either the Point of View essay or a related article. The excerpt should clearly support

an argument for one side or the other of the discussion. As you listen, make note of the points (contentions) you would make to oppose the arguments.

- Respond to the arguments presented with opposing arguments (rebuttals), pointing out any contradictions you have heard.
- Create a video or slide presentation that illustrates the essence of the debate. Include the issue at hand, your viewpoint, and evidence to support it.