

Argumentative Essay

Now that we have practiced with the smaller pieces necessary to creating a convincing argument, we will begin a more in-depth argumentative essay assignment. Here are the steps to this assignment:

- 1. Choose a topic - select one from the list provided or create your own and run it by me.
- 2. Research both sides of the issue.
- 3. Decide where you stand on the issue.
- 4. Continue collecting research on your topic until you have enough evidence to support your argument.
- 5. *Optional*: Create a written outline for your essay; decide what you will discuss in each paragraph.
- 6. Write a rough draft of your paper. Your paper should be at least 5 full paragraphs in length with...
 - a. An intro with a hook and a thesis statement
 - b. Body paragraphs with evidence and reasoning to support your argument
 - c. A conclusion summarizing your argument and encouraging change in thought and/or action on the part of your reader

Be sure to consider your use of ethos, pathos, and logos throughout your essay. Also, be sure to include counterarguments to refute some of the claims of your opposition. You should be citing at least 4 sources in your paper and in your works cited page.

- 7. Revise, edit, and proofread your paper (we will also be doing in-class peer-critiques). Make sure to create a works cited page.
- 8. Polish and turn in your final draft.
- 9. Bask in the glory of your astounding argumentation skills. Celebrate with a cold glass of orange juice :)

★ steps 1-6 (rough draft) due Mar. 8th

Argument Topics

1. Is global climate change man-made?
2. Is our election process fair?
3. Do colleges put too much stock in standardized test scores?
4. Should men get paternity leave from work?
5. Do we have a fair taxation system?
6. Do curfews keep teens out of trouble?
7. Are we too dependent on computers?
8. Should animals be used for research?
9. Should cigarette smoking be banned?
10. Are cell phones dangerous?
11. Are law enforcement cameras an invasion of privacy?
12. Are test scores a good indication of a school's competency?
13. Should companies market and advertise to children?
14. Can advertisements manufacture "needs"?
15. Should the government have a say in our diets?
16. Are actors and professional athletes paid too much?
17. Are CEOs paid too much?
18. Do violent video games cause behavior problems?
19. Should creationism be taught in public schools?
20. Are beauty pageants exploitive?
21. Should English be the official language in the United States?
22. Does the American government serve the interests of the American people?
23. Should the racing industry be forced to use biofuels?
24. Should the military be allowed to recruit at high schools?
25. Should gay couples be able to marry?
26. Does participation in sports keep teens out of trouble?

27. Is competition good?
28. Should the government provide health care?
29. Is fashion important?
30. Is homework harmful or helpful?
31. Should students be allowed to grade their teachers?
32. Is the cost of college too high?
33. Is college admission too competitive?
34. Should we rethink how long students spend in high school?
35. Do schools provide students with enough opportunities to be creative?
36. How important is arts education?
37. Do you support affirmative action?
38. Does technology make us more alone?
39. Are we distracted by technology?
40. Do apps help you or just waste your time?
41. Does facebook make people feel bad?
42. Should people be allowed to hide their identities online?
43. What should the punishment be for acts of cyberbullying?
44. Should companies be allowed to collect information about you?
45. What role will robots play in our future?
46. Does TV capture the diversity of america yet?
47. Is TV stronger than ever, or is it becoming obsolete?
48. Does reality TV promote dangerous stereotypes?
49. Do we need art in our lives?
50. Why aren't there more women in leadership roles?
51. Why aren't more girls choosing to pursue careers in math and science?
52. Should women be allowed to fight on the front lines alongside men?
53. Should athletes who take performance-enhancing drugs have to forfeit their titles and medals?
54. What local problems do you think your mayor should try to solve?

55. When is the use of military force justified?
56. Is military torture ever acceptable?
57. What is more important: our privacy or national security?
58. Should the U.S. Be spying on its allies?
59. Do rich people get off easier when they break the law?
60. Should rich people have to pay more taxes?
61. Is the American pharmaceutical industry corrupt?
62. Do laws that ban offensive words make the world a better or worse place?
63. Do you support or oppose the death penalty?
64. When should juvenile offenders receive life sentences?
65. Is modern culture ruining childhood?
66. Are adults hurting young children by pushing them to achieve?
67. Is it ethical to eat meat?
68. Should companies be required to label foods that contain GMOs?
69. Should we shop more at locally owned businesses?
70. Should vaccination be mandatory?
71. Should students be required to take drug tests?
72. Should you care about the health and safety of those making your clothing?
73. Does buying and accumulating more and more stuff make us happier?
74. Are we losing the art of listening?
75. Is your generation more or less self-centered than earlier generations?
76. Should scientists try to help people beat old age so we can live longer lives?
77. Should we continue with space exploration programs?
78. Do you think life exists — or has ever existed — somewhere besides earth?
79. Choose one element of society today — what will it be like in 10 or 20 years?
80. Can art bring about social change in today's world?

Suggested Argumentative Essay Format

Intro paragraph:

The introduction will start out with an attention-getter (or “**hook**”); this should be an interesting fact about the topic, a probing question for the audience, or a quote from an authoritative source about the topic. This will be followed by a **general overview of the topic**, generally spanning three to four sentences. The final sentence of the introduction will be the **thesis statement**. It is important that the writer provide a **stance** in this statement along with reasons that support this stance.

Body Paragraphs:

The next two paragraphs are the support body paragraphs. Each of these paragraphs will start with a **topic sentence**; the topic of these paragraphs must support the thesis statement. Within the paragraph, the student should have **arguments and examples** that support the topic of each paragraph. The arguments and examples must be accompanied by **explanation and reasoning**. Students must display the connection of these ideas and arguments to the thesis.

The next body paragraph, the fourth overall, is very important for an argumentative essay. The writer will state the **opposing side of the argument** in this particular paragraph, followed by an explanation of this opposing side. However, the writer should not stop there. The **counter argument** must be followed by a **rebuttal**, or a reason why the counter argument is ineffective or wrong. This will further strengthen the initial position of the writer and give more credibility to the stance that the writer has chosen by showing that they have considered opposing viewpoints.

Conclusion

Finally, the writer must provide a conclusion in the final paragraph. The conclusion will start with a **restatement of the thesis statement** and will continue with a **restatement of some of the main points** brought up in support of the thesis (from the body paragraphs). This will be followed by an **explanation of the significance of the topic** and how it affects, or can affect, the reader and/or society. The conclusion will end with a **call to action**. This call to action will hopefully inspire people to do something that shows support of the original stance of the writer (a change in thought or action).

Organizational Structure of Argumentative Writing

Opinion pieces:

In this type of essay, the author proposes his opinion on an issue, and backs it up with solid facts and reasoning. This type of essay would be organized as follows:

- **Background**- why is this issue important?
- **Claim**- what is the author trying to convince the reader of?
- **Arguments for**-clear reasons and facts that support the claim
- **Reader concerns/counterarguments**-the author anticipates objections and refutes them
- **Conclusion**- A recap of the most important points, and may include a final appeal to do something about the issue.

Problem/Solution structure

- **Background**- why is this issue important?
- **Problem**- a clear statement of what needs to be fixed
- **Proposals/solutions**-the author proposes solutions to address the problem
- **Reader concerns/counterarguments**-the author anticipates objections and refutes them
- **Conclusion**- the author may explain why this issue is so important, and may include a final appeal to do something about the issue.

Note: Not all essays fall neatly into one of these categories. Some have elements of both. When you read an opinion piece, first try to determine what the general organizational scheme is, based on the author's purpose. Then start identifying the elements listed.

Finally, any type of argumentative writing should contain

- Appeal to emotion (pathos)
- Appeal to logic (logos)
- Appeal to ethics (ethos)