

Writing an Argumentative Essay

1. Task Definition: What needs to be done and what information do I need to accomplish it?

Over the next few weeks, you will choose a issue that has two sides and write an argumentative essay. To find good topic for an argument essay you should consider several issues that will have two conflicting points of view or very different conclusions. As you brainstorm a list of options, you should choose one that really sparks your interest. It should also be something you have a strong belief about and can find reasonable and logical support.

2. Information Seeking Strategies: What are the best sources for finding this type of information?

The act of arguing involves providing proof to support your claim, with or without emotions. In an argument essay you will have to provide evidence without providing too much drama. You'll explore two sides of a topic (briefly) and provide proof as to why one side or position is the best one. **For this assignment, you will need 3 relevant and current sources. You will primarily use the Internet for finding online articles and authoritative websites.**

3. Location & Access of Sources: How will I locate the sources needed to find this information and how will I locate the information within the source?

I will help you select sources that are current, authoritative, and age-appropriate. We will review how to conduct an effective and efficient internet search, how to access a database, and how to locate other appropriate sources. Once you find your sources, you will need to find the specific information within the source. Determine which text features will assist you (i.e. an index, Table of Contents, headings) and use the reading skills of skimming and scanning for appropriate information. Use your individual wiki page for gathering possible sources. You will also create citations as you gather each source.

4. Use of Information: What information is relevant to my task? What notes do I need to take and how will I take them?

You will take and organize your notes from specific sources on your own wiki page. You will primarily use the skills of summarizing and paraphrasing to take appropriate notes. You will only take notes word for word if it is a direct quote you will be using in your story. Your notes will be checked carefully and regularly, and all sources will be properly documented.

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5. Synthesis: How does the information from all the sources fit together? How will I organize and present this information?

Once you have adequate notes, you will draft your text. An argument essay should contain three parts: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion.

Introduce your topic and assert your side

As in any essay, the first paragraph of your argument essay should contain a brief explanation of your topic, some background information, and a thesis statement. In this case, your thesis will be a statement of your position on a particular controversial topic.

Example introductory paragraph with thesis statement:

Since the turn of the new century, a theory has emerged concerning the end of the world, or at least the end of life as we know it. This new theory centers around the year 2012, a date that many claim has mysterious origins in ancient manuscripts from many different cultures. The most noted characteristic of this date is that it appears to mark the end of the Mayan calendar. But there is no evidence to suggest that the Maya saw any great relevance to this date. In fact, none of the claims surrounding a 2012 doomsday event hold up to scientific inquiry. *The year 2012 will pass without a major, life-altering catastrophe.*

The Essay Body

The body of your essay will contain the meat of your argument. You should go into more detail about the two sides of your controversy and state the strongest points of the counter-side of your issue. After describing the "other" side, you will present your own viewpoint and then provide evidence to show why your position is the correct one. Select your strongest evidence and present your points one by one. Use a mix of evidence types, from statistics, to other studies and anecdotal stories. You should plan to use a minimum of **three arguments for support**.

The Conclusion

In your conclusion, be prepared to argue that your evidence is the most logical and reasonable.

6. Evaluation: How do I feel about my product? Did I effectively and thoroughly complete my task? Did I use my time efficiently?

What could I do differently next time to improve the process and the product? Once completed, I will ask you to reflect on the process and product.

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