

## Instructions for Argumentative Research Essay

### Assignment Description

The objective of the argumentative research essay is to investigate an important issue or problem in today's world and take a stance in the debate surrounding the issue. Your task is to make a claim about a debatable topic and to persuade the reader to accept your claim.

For this assignment, you must choose one of the following questions:

- Should the federal minimum wage be increased?
- Should college athletes be paid for their participation in college sports?
- Should there be mandatory minimum sentences for drug related crimes?
- Should police officers be required to wear body cameras?
- Should the U.S. government provide free higher education?
- Should the U.S. government provide free health care for all?
- Should single-use plastic (packaging, utensils, grocery bags) be banned from use?

The essay you write is to be both informative and persuasive. This means that you are expected to fully report on the topic and to stake a position in relation to it. Your essay must therefore proceed from a clear thesis statement (a clearly stated claim, assertion or proposition). You will support and defend your thesis with information and evidence gathered in your research, so be sure to examine your topic from various perspectives and carefully consider the controversies or debates that might surround it.

Your paper must be written so that it is convincing even for a skeptical audience. Your essay must therefore include a counterargument—a view that is different from your own. In various lessons, you may see words like opposing viewpoint, opposition, objection, and naysayer; these are all terms for a counterargument. When you insert a counterargument into your argument essay, you are essentially making a preemptive strike by anticipating objections that an opposing side might bring up and exposing their weaknesses.

Your essay must also then include a refutation. A refutation or rebuttal is a paragraph that comes after the counterargument and disproves it. In other words, the refutation paragraph explains why the opposing view (counterargument) is incomplete, problematic, or simply wrong.

### Steps to take:

#### 1. Begin by brainstorming ideas

Think carefully about the choices above. What are your initial thoughts on each issue? In what ways might these be debatable or controversial? What do you know about each issue? What do you not know and would have to conduct research to find out?

Once you have decided which question you will select, try to narrow even further by considering the debates related to the topic and reflecting on the differing viewpoints and perspectives on the issue.

Once you have a clear and narrow focus (or perhaps even a tentative thesis), you can begin doing research.

## 2. Conduct Research

Begin by accessing the Richland College library databases <http://www.richlandcollege.edu/library/>. One of the best resources there is *Academic Search Complete*.

### Sources

You are required to have a minimum of five sources for this research project. Your sources should be of diverse types. To help you achieve this, you are required to have at least two newspaper articles and one scholarly journal article. Note that these can all be accessed through the Electronic Databases in our library.

Be sure to record the details about every source you find (authors, titles, publication places and dates, page numbers, etc.) for the Annotated Bibliography and your Works Cited list.

### Annotated Bibliography:

An Annotated Bibliography is merely a standard Works Cited list that includes a brief description and/or evaluation of each source cited. Your Annotated Bibliography shows what resources you have consulted and how useful they have been.

NOTE: This is a separate assignment, and you will be provided with instruction and guidance on how to develop an Annotated Bibliography withing the research unit. Refer to the Course Calendar for the specific due date.

## 3. Write Your Argumentative Essay

As you draft your essay, but sure it contains all of these elements:

- An **introduction**. This first paragraph provides context for the reader; it should include general information about the topic being addressed as well as the more specific concerns or issues to be examined as part of the debate. You introduction should also include your thesis statement.
- A **thesis statement**. This sentence should be direct and make clear your position or stance in the debate.
- At least three supporting claims/points for the thesis. Be sure to organize your essay around the concerns and/or supporting claims, and not around authors or articles.
- At least one **counterargument** (i.e., a naysayer voice or an opposing viewpoint)
- At last one **refutation** of a counterargument (i.e, a rebuttal)
- Focused and well-organized paragraphs with clear topic sentences. Each topic sentence should offer a claim that addresses a specific concern and functions to support the thesis.
- In-text (parenthetical) references to any sources directly quoted or paraphrased.

- A clear concluding paragraph.
- A Works Cited page listing your sources

**Minimum Requirements**

- Approximately 5 pages, not including the Works Cited page
- A minimum of 5 credible sources
- An interesting and informative title
- A clear thesis statement
- At least one counterargument and one refutation
- MLA format with in-text citations and a Works Cited entry