Inquiry-Based Argumentative Essay

Argumentative skills are a part of everyday life: On a daily basis, each of us makes claims about issues large or small. Consider the argumentative elements of issues that you're concerned about. To make this assignment a meaningful and successful endeavor, choose a topic with a narrow focus, so you can successfully support your stance. *Avoid* global issues and claims that are supported more by emotion than fact. The key to a successful argumentative essay is to *combine facts with logic to form a convincing argument.*

Once you've selected a topic, examine the subject for a debatable claim. If the claim is arguable (if there is an opposing side), then you have the focus for an argumentative essay. To clarify your purpose for writing this essay, you MUST define a specific audience.

Essay length: Minimum of 1 page, plus Works Cited page
Font: Times New Roman (size 12)
Spacing: Double-Spaced (for easier reading and commenting)
Formatting: MLA
Research/Pre-Writing Packet: Must be complete!

Guidelines for Selecting a Successful Argumentative Essay Topic
1. Is the topic narrow enough to be successfully and convincingly developed in a 1-2 page paper? A very specific topic, well presented, is more effective than a broad (seemingly more significant) topic that can't be developed fully.
2. Is there a legitimate opposition?
3. Can you refute the opposition's argument (counterargument)?
4. Can your position be argued and supported primarily with fact and logic rather than emotion, or a morality-based stance?
5. Is it an issue you have experience with or have a vested interest in? To be convincing, your voice must be heard.

Argumentative Essay Checklist

All four parts must be completed and turned in or the essay will be considered incomplete. The highest grade for an incomplete is a 50.
Prewriting/Research Packet___
Rough Draft___
Peer Review___
Final Draft___

Grade 9-12 SAUSD Writing Rubric – Argumentative (Writing Standard 1)

Criterion	Standard Exceeded 5	Standard Met 4	Standard Nearly Met 3	Standard Not Met 2	Standard Not Met 1
Focus/ Claim	Insightfully addresses all parts of the writing task Introduces precise claim(s) in a sophisticated thesis statement	Competently addresses all aspects of the writing task Introduces reasonable claim(s) in a clear thesis statement	Superficially addresses all aspects of the writing task Introduces plausible claim(s) in a thesis statement	Partially addresses aspects of the writing task Introduces superficial or flawed claim(s) in a weak thesis statement	Minimally addresses some aspect of the writing task Fails to introduce a relevant claim and/or lacks a thesis statement
Organization/ Structure	Maintains a logical and seamless organizational structure Thoroughly develops complex claim(s) with relevant body paragraphs Provides a meaningful and reflective conclusion Creates cohesion through skillful use of transitions between ideas	Maintains a logical organizational structure, includes paragraphs, and transitions between ideas Develops complex claim(s) with relevant body paragraphs Provides a meaningful conclusion	Maintains a mostly logical structure, includes paragraphs and some transitions between ideas Superficially develops claim(s) with relevant body paragraphs Provides a conclusion which repetitively or partially follows the claim	Offers an inconsistent organizational structure and may not include paragraphs or transitions (or transitions are awkward) Inadequately develops claim(s) with minimal body paragraphs Provides a sense of closure	Lacks an apparent organizational structure and transitions, but reader may still follow overall argument Fails to develop claim(s) with body paragraphs Provides an inadequate conclusion or omits conclusion
Evidence/ Support	Provides substantial and pertinent evidence to support claim(s) Seamlessly and effectively integrates and cites credible sources and/or textual evidence Convincingly refutes specific counter-claim(s)	Provides sufficient and relevant evidence to support claim(s) Competently integrates and cites credible sources and/or textual evidence Competently refutes specific counter-claim(s)	Provides limited and/or superficial evidence to support claim(s) Ineffectively integrates and cites adequate sources and/or textual evidence Minimally refutes counter-claim(s)	Provides minimal and/or irrelevant evidence to support claim(s) Incorrectly integrates or cites sources and/or textual evidence that may not be credible Acknowledges alternate or opposing claim(s)	Provides inaccurate, little, or no evidence to support claim(s) Does not use or cite sources and/or textual evidence Fails to acknowledge alternate or opposing claim(s)
Analysis	Shows insightful understanding of topic/text Uses persuasive and valid reasoning to connect evidence with claim(s)	Shows competent understanding of topic/text Uses valid reasoning to connect evidence with claim(s)	Shows superficial understanding of topic/text Uses some valid and accurate reasoning to connect evidence with claim(s)	Shows limited understanding and/or flawed understanding of topic/text Uses limited, simplistic and/or flawed reasoning to connect evidence with claim(s)	Shows no understanding of topic/text Reasoning is missing or does not connect evidence with claim(s)
Language	Uses purposeful and varied sentence structure Contains minimal to no errors in conventions (grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization) Strategically uses academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose	Uses correct and varied sentence structure Contains few minor errors in conventions Competently uses academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose	Uses mostly correct and some varied sentence structure Contains some errors in conventions which may cause confusion Superficially uses academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose	Uses limited and/or repetitive sentence structure Contains numerous errors in conventions which cause confusion Inadequately uses academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose	Lacks sentence mastery (e.g., fragments/ run-ons) Contains serious and pervasive errors in conventions Fails to use academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose

Evaluating Resources: the CRAPP TEST

Cite the source you are evaluating:

Currency: the timeliness of the information

- When was the information published or posted?

- Has the information been revised or updated?

- Is the information current or out-of date for your topic?

- Are the links functional?

Relevance: the importance of the information for your needs

- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?

- Who is the intended audience?

- Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too elementary or advanced for your needs)?

- Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is one you will use?

- Would you be comfortable using this source for a research paper?

Authority: the source of the information

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?

- Are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations given?

- What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations given?

- What are the author's qualifications to write on the topic?

- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or e-mail address?

- Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source? Examples:
  - com (commercial),
  - .edu (educational),
  - .gov (U.S. government),
  - .org (nonprofit organization),
  - or .net (network)

Accuracy: the reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content

- Where does the information come from?

- Is the information supported by evidence?

- Has the information been reviewed or refereed?

- Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?

- Does the language or tone seem biased and free of emotion?

- Are there spelling, grammar, or other typographical errors?

Purpose: the reason the information exists

- What is the purpose of the information? to inform? teach? sell? entertain? persuade?

- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?

- Is the information fact? opinion? propaganda?

- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?

- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?

After evaluating this source, do you think you will use it for your paper? Why or why not? If you are not sure, explain why.

Evaluating Sources Check List:

Once you've located your resources in the online database and catalog, you should evaluate them to determine if the information presented is useful for your research. Consider the following criteria:

Relevance

Is the content of the item suitable for your research?

In a journal article, usually the abstract or lead paragraph will give you enough information to determine if the item is relevant. Be sure to check the date of publication. Does it fit with your research needs?

Circle your answer: Yes, No, Not Sure

Timeliness

Is the information provided in the article or book up-to-date?

Check the date of the publication. Are you looking for contemporary materials (sources which originated near or at the time of an event, idea, or phenomenon)? Are you looking for a current account of an historic event? The nature of your assignment will determine whether you need the most recent material available.

Circle your answer: Yes, No, Not Sure

Reliability

Is the information presented accurate and dependable?

One way to help determine the reliability of a source is to compare the facts with other documents on the same topic to check supporting facts or data.

Circle your answer: Yes, No, Not Sure

Validity

From what sources were the facts gathered?

Be sure that you know where the information presented in the source is coming from. Is the work based on personal opinion, original research, laboratory experiments, or other documentation? Is the periodical a scholarly journal or a popular source? A book based on opinion or research?

Look for bibliographies or original research as attachments or appendices. References often give you an opportunity to check item validity and are a possible avenue to additional resources.

Credibility

What are the author's credentials? Is the author an expert in the field?

Biographical reference sources on your Library Guide or a Google search for the author can often give you this information.

_____

_____

_____

Perspective

What is the author's point of view?

Be watchful of author bias, especially when looking for objective accounts. Consider the author's cultural, political, social, and economic background.

_____

_____

_____

Purpose

What is the purpose of the source? Why was this item written: to persuade; to reinforce; to preach to the choir; to provide an overview; to generate controversy and provoke?

Ask these and similar questions about your source so that you can find out if it would be a good fit with your own research project. The purpose of a source can range from dissemination of information about an important study or research project, to the insight of a specific group of people, to propaganda. Also, you want to consider your own purpose in conducting your research: does it mesh with the purpose of your source?

_____

_____

_____

Commercialism

Does the source contain advertisements or other forms of commercialism that may bias the information provided?

Commercial intrusions into sources (particularly websites) can often make these sources difficult to use and unreliable. Your search for a source may be driven off course, for example, by websites directing you to their sponsors. Similarly, what information appears or does not appear in a source may be dictated by the commercial owners or pressures of a source. Be aware of this when you look for sources—particularly on the Internet.

Circle your answer: Yes, No, Not Sure

Intended Audience

Who is the target audience (children, scholars, professionals, laypersons)? Is the source for scholarly use or popular reading?

The intended audience is often reflected in the author's style. Is the intended audience of the article appropriate to your research?

_____

_____

Sophistication

How well does the source present key information? Is it well written and organized, enabling you, the reader, to learn something from reading it?

You should aim in your research to use sources two steps or so above your own current level of knowledge on the topic. Does your source fulfill this criterion, or is it obviously written 10 steps above or 10 steps below your current level of knowledge? If it is obviously not aimed for your general level of knowledge, discard it.

_____

_____

Type of Source
(Look at last handout for details on types of sources)

      Circle your answer: **Popular, Trade, Scholarly**

Will you use this source for your research paper? Why or why not?

_____

_____

Annotated Bibliography Rubric

You must submit a minimum of three (3) Annotated Bibliography entries to receive credit for this component!!!
**Note: Two points will be deducted for each missing entry

Is the Annotated Bibliography page formatted correctly? (MLA format) 12 Point Times New Roman Font Name block in left corner (Name, Date, Block, Mrs. Browne) Title: Annotated Bibliography or Topic: An Annotated Bibliography	10	8	6	4	2
Citation: Is the citation formatted correctly with a hanging indent? Does it contain all of the important information?	10	8	6	4	2
Summary/Annotation: Did you <u>fully summarize</u> this source in your own words in **3-5 sentences?**	10	8	6	4	2
Assessment: Have you analyzed and explained why this source is credible in at **5-10 sentences?**	10	8	6	4	2

Total: _____/40

Sample Graphic Organizer of an Annotated Bibliography

Bibliography: Make sure it is in MLA format and it has a hanging indent. No bold; no underline	"Your Space: Schools Struggle to Find Ways to Curb Cyberbullying without Violating Student Rights." *Current Events, a Weekly Reader publication* 25 Oct. 2010: 7+. *Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center*. Web. 30 Mar. 2011.
Summary/Annotation: Summarize the entire article or the excerpt you used in your own words. <u>This should be done in 3-5 sentences.</u>	This article discusses whether or not schools should be able to punish students for bullying online. The argument is most cyberbullying isn't occurring on school computers or during school time. However, in the Tinker vs. Des Moines case in the 1960s, it was decided schools could discipline students for off-campus behavior that seriously disrupted school life. The article notes the debate that cyberbullying is different than the Tinker vs. Des Moines case because their peaceful protesting didn't harm anyone, whereas bullying is hurtful and interferes with someone else's life. It also discusses schools' efforts to involve the student body in preventing cyberbullying.
Analysis/Assessment/Reflection: Analyze and explain why this source is credible. Describe in detail how the information in this source is going to be used in your paper. <u>This should be done in 5-10 sentences.</u>	I found this article on Gale Opposing Viewpoints, and this article references well known court cases that involve students' rights and cyberbullying. This article also shows both sides of the story. And, it was published in *Weekly Reader.* Lastly, being published in 2010, it is an article that is current and deals with current issues being faced in schools. This will help me explain why although privacy rights are important and we shouldn't take them away from students, something has to be done about cyberbullying. I will also use this article to show why it should be the school's responsibility to help protect its students.

Name: _____ **Annotated Bibliography Organizer**

Items 1, 2 & 3 make up an entry for an annotated bibliography. For this assignment, you will need three (3) sources so you can complete three of these sheets - one for each source. Then type up each entry in MLA format for a complete annotated bibliography. Alphabetize your entries by author last name.

1) Citation of Source: Make sure it is in MLA format and it has a hanging indent. No bold; no underline	
2) Summary/Annotation: Describe the TYPE of source - book, article, database, video clips, etc., then summarize the entire article or excerpt you used in your own words. This should be done in 3-5 sentences.	
3) Analysis/Assessment: Analyze and explain why this source is credible. Describe in how the information in this source is going to be used in your paper. This should be done in 5-10 sentences.	

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WriteScore

Model Argumentative Essay with Counterclaim and Rebuttal

Topic: Argue whether skateboarding should be added to your school's extracurricular activities.

Skateboarding has gotten a bad reputation. For some reason, lots of people don't approve of the activity. Perhaps they think it's too dangerous. For many skaters, though, skateboarding is an important part of their lives. Their boards provide transportation as well as a way to spend free time and improve their skills. Adding competitive skateboarding to a school's offered options of sports is a great idea because it will benefit students and the public. It will provide a safe, organized place for skateboarding, and it will attract a group of students who might not otherwise get involved.

Consider, for a moment, the kids you know who skateboard. Most of them are not involved in extracurricular activities at school, because there's nothing for them to do. They want to skate! Providing them with an organized skate program will help these students in more ways than one. According to Passage 2, "Students who are involved in extracurricular activities are less likely to miss school than students who are not involved in extracurricular activities." That, alone, should be a strong enough reason to have skateboarding in schools. If adding this after-school activity to students' options means more students will spend more time in school, then it's a win-win situation. Not only will students who skateboard become more involved, but they will also be in a safe environment.

Organized skating is safer. Many people who skateboard have nowhere to practice their skills, other than on the streets, sidewalks, and steps where the public is walking. This is dangerous for the people walking and for the skateboarders. The author of Passage 1 states that "Most skateboarding injuries occur outside of skate parks, often on steps and railings." This shows that an organized sport held on and around a skate park would definitely be safer for skateboarders. Since skaters would be off the streets, it would be safer for the public, too.

There are lots of people who think skateboarding is still too dangerous to be an after-school sport. True, there is some risk involved, but that's no different from other athletics. As included in Passage 1, "More students are injured playing football than in any other sport. Head injuries are the most frequent and the most serious." Despite this, there isn't much talk of taking the football team away. Skateboarding isn't a contact sport, no one is hitting another person purposefully, and the injury risk goes way down in an organized skate park environment. Compared to some other sports, skateboarding doesn't seem too bad.

Skateboarding should become an official after-school sport because it will help people. There's no solid reason not to add it to the list of options. It's a good way to get students involved, and it can improve the safety for skateboarders and the public alike. If it were up to me, skateboarding would definitely make the cut.

INTRO PARAGRAPH

Find and label the following:

Hook & Counterclaim
Thesis
Mention of claims

FIRST CLAIM PARAGRAPH

Find and label the following:

First claim
Evidence with citation
Elaboration of evidence
Transition to next paragraph

SECOND CLAIM PARAGRAPH

Find and label the following:

Second claim
Evidence with citation
Elaboration of evidence

COUNTERCLAIM PARAGRAPH

Find and label the following:

Counterclaim
Rebuttal & evidence
Rebuttal elaboration

CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH

Restatement of argument
Restatement of claims in a new way
Closing sentence

Step-by-Step: Counterclaim and Rebuttal

Step 1: Write a counterclaim.

Write a sentence that contradicts the claim. For example, if your thesis says, *"Everyone should eat chocolate ice cream,"* then your counterclaim might be, *"Some people are allergic to chocolate."*

Practice: Write your claim here:

_____

Now write a counterclaim for it:

_____

Step 2: Explain the counterclaim.

The more "real" you make the opposing position, the more "right" you will seem when you disprove it. For example, *"People who are allergic will want to avoid eating chocolate ice cream."*

Practice: Write one or two sentences elaborating on your counterclaim:

_____

_____

Step 3: Rebut the counterclaim.

Write a response to the counterclaim that shows why it is wrong or unimportant. For example, *"Ice cream manufacturers can use artificial ingredients to duplicate the flavor of chocolate. This makes it possible for people who are allergic to chocolate to eat "chocolate" ice cream without risking an allergic reaction.*

Practice: Write one or two sentences to rebut your counterclaim:

_____

_____