



Writing Project #4: Argumentative Essay

Argumentative essays have a twofold purpose: to explore a topic rigorously for both the writer and readers and to persuade readers. This twofold aim is achieved in part by the dialectic nature of argumentation where the writer thoroughly presents both sides of the topic while clearly favoring his/her own position. The principles of argumentation, presented through three mini-papers, will prepare you for writing an argumentative essay on a topic of your choice.

The success of any argument depends on the quality of the support behind it; gathering support on both sides of a topic is crucial. You will need to bring in **at least three sources**, which can be personal testimony from an interview or material drawn from WWW, journals, books, magazines, and newspapers. When you use any material from outside sources, you must follow proper internal citation and Works Cited formats as presented in [The Skidmore Guide to Writing](#), [The Prentice Hall Guide to Grammar and Usage](#), or the [MLA Handbook](#). It is also appropriate to use the Aristotelian appeals to analyze and construct your argument.

The mini-papers will cluster your ideas about your topic into clearly defined parts (arguments, objections, rebuttals) from which you can select to organize a sustained argumentative essay. There are a variety of organizational patterns through which you can present these argumentative parts. However, the argumentative essays include a position statement, background (or contextualizing) information, two arguments, two objection-and-rebuttal pairs a rebuttal must immediately follow the objection it addresses), and a firm conclusion. Of course, you may include additional arguments or objection-rebuttal pairs.

Your argumentative essay should be approximately five typed pages. The argumentative essay counts as 20% of your final grade: 15% is the essay itself and 5% accounts for the three mini-papers.

This assignment will give you practice in

- taking a stance on a controversial topic
- understanding and garnering support for both sides of a topic
- organizing material effectively
- using a range of sources to write persuasively

[Questions to help you Analyze Paper Assignments](#)

[Acknowledgements Page](#)

[ProCon.org](#): Pros and Cons on Controversial Issues

[Mini-Paper Assignment #1](#)

[Mini-Paper Assignment #2](#)

[Mini-Paper Assignment #3](#)

[Critique Letter Instructions for the Argumentative Essay](#)