

Argumentative Research Paper

Do you feel that CDs should carry warning labels about bad language? Do you think school lunch periods should be longer? Do you believe professional athletes have a responsibility to be good role models?

You probably have strong opinions about these and many other issues. However, your opinion alone will not convince anyone to agree with you. Your assignment is to write a research-based argument to convince the reader.

Instructions (words in bold are defined below):

1. Have a clear **purpose** in mind as you begin writing. SELECT A TOPIC THAT YOU'RE ACTUALLY INTERESTED IN!!!
2. Formulate a higher-order research question and other related questions to help guide your research.
3. Find out sources for your research. Distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources.
4. Read and take careful note cards on your research.
5. Develop a clearly stated **thesis** on which you base your argument. Focus your argument so that it can be discussed in a short essay.
6. Pre-write.
 - a. Organize your arguments and your note cards.
 - b. Include **logical** and **ethical** appeals.
 - c. **Sequence** your **reasons** and **evidence** in the most effective order (logical appeal).
 - d. Use an organizational strategy with important information to prepare for writing assignments: LINKS, Toulmin graphic organizer, Inspiration, outline, or other graphic organizer template.
 - e. Revisit your thesis
7. Write your paper.
 - a. Direct your argument toward the appropriate **audience**
 - b. Employ an appropriate **tone** for that audience. Choose words that carry an effective connotation.
 - c. Address the most convincing **counterclaim** (opposing "side" of the argument); prove your "side" correct.

Important Vocabulary

Argumentative writing: writing that appeals to logic and reason and consists of thesis, evidence, and a formal style.

Thesis statement a clear sentence that states the "side" of the issue for which the writer is arguing.

Counterclaim: the other "side" of the issue; the writer must show logically why the counterclaim is invalid or incorrect or why his or her own opinion statement is better.

Connotations: of words ("loaded language"): implied or underlying meanings of words that create emotional responses in readers. Consider these three sentences. I am responsive. You are talkative. He is obnoxious. *Responsive*, *talkative*, and *obnoxious* may all be used to describe a student who is making noise in a classroom, but each word carries a different connotation (emotional appeal). *Responsive* has a positive connotation (i.e., the student is responding to another person). *Talkative* has a neutral connotation; it could be good or bad depending on the circumstance. *Obnoxious* has a negative connotation, clearly indicating behavior that is grossly impolite or inappropriate.

Audience: the people the writer is trying to persuade; you must have a clear audience in mind before you start, and you must be sure you are appealing to the correct audience; for example, if you argue that school lunch should be ten minutes longer, you'll have to make sure that your argument appeals to the administration (the ones who could make that change) and not just your classmates (who would likely already agree with you and would not need to be persuaded).

Purpose: what the writer is trying to convince his/her audience to do or believe

Tone: the writer's attitude towards the subject or the audience; the "voice" the writer assumes: serious, sarcastic, funny, etc. Writers use different tones to appeal to different audiences.

Reasons: explanations of why an opinion is valid; you usually need at least three of them in a persuasive essay

Evidence: specific examples, details, facts, anecdotes, case studies, quotes from experts, and/or commonly accepted beliefs that prove a writer's reasons; in persuasive writing it is wise to use logical evidence because your writing needs to be logical and rational; you can't just fall back on arguments like "It's not fair!" or "Everyone else gets to do it!"

Sequencing: the order in which the writer's reasons are presented; many writers save their best sub-argument (the "kicker") for the last support paragraph so that it will remain in the reader's mind.

Ethical appeal: when the author tries to make himself or herself sound more credible by showing how he or she is qualified to speak on this subject, or when the author presents moral arguments for the position.

Emotional appeal: when the author tries to get the audience to feel emotions—laugh, cry, feel pity, sympathize, empathize—in order to sway the reader to the author's perspective.

Logical appeal: when the author tries to appeal to the audience with facts, statistics, and logical reasoning.

Rhetorical Triangle

Ethos:

Context (Where? Why?)

Audience (Who?)

Message:

Logos: Appeals to reason, logic, evidence.

Pathos: Appeals to morals, values, ethics, emotions, or needs

Overall Effectiveness:

Writer's Name: _____ Peer Editor's Name: _____

ARGUMENTATIVE RESEARCH PAPER

DIRECTIONS: Please read the assigned research paper carefully. Using a colored pen, make the necessary proofreading marks on the student's paper. Then complete the following items:

1. The paper includes an introduction that clearly states the **thesis statement** of the argument.

Yes: _____ No: _____ Somewhat: _____
Comment: _____

2. The paper includes textual evidence from multiple sources and **at least two quotations** are correctly integrated and cited using MLA format.

Yes: _____ No: _____ Somewhat: _____
Comment: _____

3. The paper includes at least **three types of appeals**: logical, emotional, and ethical.

Yes: _____ No: _____ Somewhat: _____
Comment: _____

4. The paper includes an **opposing argument** and the writer's **counter claim**.

Yes: _____ No: _____ Somewhat: _____
Comment: _____

5. The paper includes a **call to action** or **personal comment** for the reader to consider.

Yes: _____ No: _____ Somewhat: _____
Comment: _____

6. The paper included a **works cited page** using correct **MLA format**. Sources were listed in alphabetical order, hanging indent, with identification of source type, correct punctuation, and double spacing.

Yes: _____ No: _____ Somewhat: _____
Comment: _____

7. The paper shows mastery of **grammatical, punctuation, and spelling** conventions.

Yes: _____ No: _____ Somewhat: _____