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English Composition II

December 1, 2019

**Research question:** How should ethical concerns direct the choices that people make about eating meat?

**Comment [SL1]:** Hi Logan! This is a very good research question. It is relevant, debatable, and is adequately focused for a paper of this length.

**Working thesis statement:** For ethical and environmental reasons, people should limit their beef consumption, and the beef that they do eat should be humanely raised, locally sourced, and grass-fed.

**Comment [SL2]:** This is a very well-constructed thesis statement. You take a very clear stance on the issue, indicating how you plan to argue one aspect of the research question.

#### Detailed Outline

- I. Working Thesis in Introduction: For ethical and environmental reasons, people should limit their beef consumption, and the beef that they do eat should be humanely raised, locally sourced, and grass-fed.
  - A. Hook with description statistics on beef consumption.
  - B. Introduce two concerns: humane treatment, environment
    - Source: Davis and Lin on statistics on beef consumption in the U.S.
- II. Ethical Issues

- A. Animals feel pain
- B. CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations)
- C. Inhumane treatment of domesticated cattle

Source 1: Grandin and Smith, paragraph 2

Source 2: Pollan on ethical conflicts, paragraphs 32 and 40

III. Environmental Issues

- A. Mono-cropping: feed for cattle and transport
- B. Manure: contamination, transport, ground water
- C. Antibiotics: rise in antibiotic resistant bacteria

Source 1: Lappe on mono-cropping com/soy and production, page 22

Source 2: Sager on manure issues, paragraph 7

Source 3: Palmer on antibiotics, paragraph 12

IV. Health Benefits of Grass-Fed

- A. Higher in vitamins A and E and contains half the saturated fat and more omega-3 fatty acids, all of which fight cancer and heart disease
- B. Cows are healthier, so their meat is healthier to consume.
- C. Note that organic is a separate category.

Source 1: Ruechel on health benefits, page 235

Source 2: Sager on organic note, paragraphs 10-15

V. Environmental Benefits of Grass-Fed Beef

- A. Local production is better for the climate
- B. Forage is better for the climate than corn/soy
- C. Some meat consumption is good for the planet.

**Comment [SL3]:** Good. You are indicating which sources you plan to use in support of your discussion and highlighting the specific part of the source which will be used here. This helps you to find exactly what you need when you are writing your final paper. Well done.

**Comment [SL4]:** Your argument is progressing in a very logical manner so far.

Source 1: Lappe on climate change, page 11

Source 2: Pollan on local and diverse, end of article

VI. Counterargument

A. Rainforest razing in South America – increases carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and depletes the ozone layer

B. Travel distance from S. America & Australia is environmentally negative – depends on fossil fuels

Source 1: Brown and Funk, and Sage, on issues w/grass-fed cattle in the developing world.

Source 2: Pollan (and possibly Lappe) on “season” for beef

VII. Conclusion

A. Grass-fed is better on both ethical and environmental grounds, but the real answer is to eat less beef overall.

B. Emphasizing respect for animals solves ethical dilemmas

Source 1: Pollan on eating less and the ethics of being choosy, paragraph 82

**Comment [SL5]:** Good. It is important to present the counter-arguments in order to establish a balanced perspective on the issue.

**Comment [SL6]:** Excellent. This summarizes the main points you have made throughout your essay and ties the discussion back to your thesis statement.

**Reflection Questions**

**1) Learning to conduct research is important because it is a skill you will use both in academia and in your professional life. It improves critical thinking and empowers you to find information for yourself. Consider the process of researching as a whole.**

**What was the most challenging aspect of the process for you? (2-3 sentences)**

One of the most challenging aspects of researching for me was how much time it took to find all of the different types of sources for this paper. It was also very difficult to assess each source and determine whether the information it provided was credible and useful for my essay. I really thought this would only take an hour or two, but it ended up being a much more involved process. Now I know that if you want to really learn about an issue, it takes more than a quick web search for information!

**2) The working thesis statement is a proposed answer to your research question. It should clearly identify a debatable topic and take a position on one side of that topic. Analyze the effectiveness of your working thesis statement.**

My working thesis statement is one sentence that presents one side of a relevant and debatable argument. In addition, I tried to be as specific as I could. Instead of simply saying “People should not eat beef” I stated that it was for ethical and environmental reasons. I offered an alternative for what should be done if people would not avoid beef completely. I really tried to explain why this issue was important and discuss what could be done to improve the situation.

**3) A detailed outline is an effective tool for laying out the progression of an argument. It allows you to consider the arrangement and organization of your ideas, as well as choose places to incorporate outside source materials. Review your detailed outline and summarize the argument you've presented.**

I start by laying out the ethical issues and inhumane treatment of mass-produced cattle and discuss the environmental concerns of feeding and transporting cattle. I then switch

to discussing the health and environmental benefits of grass-fed, humanely raised beef.

The counterargument outlines a few issues that still exist with grass-fed beef and the conclusion reiterates that eating grass-fed beef is better but eating less beef is the more environmentally friendly option. I think that the argument progresses logically in this way and I think that the information I provided in my introduction and conclusion will be very helpful in introducing and summarizing the topic.

**4) You will use the same topic on three of the remaining Touchstones in this course.**

**What kind of feedback would be helpful for you? What are specific questions you might have as you go deeper into the research process?**

I'm pretty confident in the information I provided, but I would like additional insight into the structure of my essay. I think that my outline is clear, but I am not sure if it will make as much sense to someone who is not as familiar with the topic. I would also like some guidance on my use of formatting. I tried my best to use APA guidelines, but I'm not as familiar with these

**Comment [SL7]:** You've done a really great job with these things. It can be difficult to strike the right balance in providing enough information in the bibliography and outline, but you have summarized the sources well and your outline clearly shows how you plan to develop your topic. Your formatting is also very precise and adheres to all the conventional guidelines. Very well done!

Sophia Pathways for College Credit – English Composition II  
SAMPLE TOUCHSTONE AND SCORING

<b><u>Touchstone 1 Rubric and Feedback</u></b>		
<b><i>Rubric Category</i></b>	<b><i>Feedback</i></b>	<b><i>Score (acceptable, needs improvement etc.)</i></b>
<b>Research Question</b>	Your research question is very precise and represents a relevant and debatable topic.	<b>8/10</b>
<b>Working Thesis</b>	Your working thesis is also very clear and you clearly state which side of the issue you plan to take.	<b>9/10</b>
<b>Detailed Outline</b>	Your outline is clearly labeled and demonstrates the logical progression of your argument. You have provided sufficient notes so that the reader can easily see how you plan to use each source to support the discussion in each section. You also include all of the required components.	<b>14/15</b>
<b>Style</b>	Your tone is consistent and informative.	<b>5/5</b>
<b>Conventions</b>	Your use of English conventions is consistent.	<b>5/5</b>
<b>Reflection</b>	You thoroughly answer all questions and provide insights, observations, and examples in your responses.	<b>5/5</b>
<b><i>Overall Score and Feedback: 46/50</i></b>		