English 102: Argumentation Essay Assignment & Rubric

Assignment

This assignment will combine the unit on Argumentation with the unit on Research for a single, 1,000–1,200 word research essay. This essay is worth 150 points.

Select a topic that has two positions or two "sides." Consider social issues. Oftentimes, these are controversial issues (after all, there are two positions and you are arguing for one). After choosing your topic, think about your purpose and audience. Remember that the paper's thesis should state the issue under discussion as well as your position on the issue. You will have to narrow the scope of your topic to meet the scope of the essay.

Research

This essay requires research. In addition to your own experience, you must have support from 5-6 sources from the UMES academic databases (at least 3) or other sources identified as credible by your instructor. Your instructor will conduct his/her own library orientation using the projection computer. Your sources must be cited in correct MLA format. You do not have to have direct quotations, but you do have to cite the source of all facts you provide in your paper, unless the information would qualify as "common knowledge."

Length

1,000-1,200 words (This is approximately 4-5 word-processed, double-spaced pages.)

Format

Your paper must in correct MLA format (9th edition) with the standard MLA heading. Use the Word Count tool to determine the number of words. At the end of your paper, skip a line and then type the following:
Word count: xxx words

Submission

You MUST submit your essay electronically through the SafeAssign Assignment in Blackboard as a Microsoft Word file.

Argumentation Essay Assignment Steps

Writing an argumentation essay is a process that takes time and planning. You BUILD an argumentation essay; you don't just sit down and write it.

1. Select topic/formulate a draft thesis.
2. Use the library's databases and/or books and periodicals (but not internet sources) to research the topic and compile a list of reference sources.
3. Compile a bibliography of at least five sources. The bibliography must conform to MLA guidelines.
4. Develop and submit an outline of your essay with an annotated bibliography. (more information later)
5. Write first draft of essay.
6. Have your essay critiqued at the Writing Center.
7. Submit the final draft of essay.

Keep in mind that effective argumentation-persuasion means that you should acknowledge and then refute opposing points of view. The conclusion should contain a call to action, which asks/ encourages/persuades the reader to do something (this may be a simple as asking the reader to agree with your thesis).

Possible Topics

You are not limited to the topics below; they are intended to give you inspiration. Get your topic approved by your instructor. Try to select a topic with which you have some familiarity or interest. Feel free to select a topic that is connected to your field: a new law or policy being implemented, a healthcare issue.

1. Should states be able to ban texting while driving?
2. Should hazing be controlled on college campuses?
3. Should teachers be paid based on performance?
4. Is torture ever acceptable?
5. Should men get paternity leave from work?
6. Do curfews keep teens out of trouble?
7. Do parents need to be more vigilant in overseeing their children's use of computers?
8. Should animals be used for research?
9. Should the government have a say in our diets?
10. Does access to condoms prevent teen pregnancy?
11. Does access to condoms promote irresponsible, dangerous, or bad behavior?
12. Are actors and professional athletes paid too much?
13. Do violent video games cause behavior problems?
14. Should the alcoholic drinking age be increased or decreased?
15. Does religion cause war?
16. Is homework harmful or helpful?
17. Should teens get treated as sex offenders for sexting?
18. Should college be free to everyone?
19. Do standardized tests discriminate against minorities?
20. Should racial classifications be abandoned?
21. Is international adoption harmful and exploitive?
22. Should transracial adoption be allowed?
23. Are NBA labor issues based in racism?
24. Does white privilege still exist?
25. Should hospitals offer emergency contraception to rape victims?
26. Does violence in the media cause juvenile crime?
27. Is there a serious problem with sexual assault on college campuses?
28. Should teens have a right to privacy?
29. Does The Patriot Act Threaten Students' privacy rights
30. Does the No Child Left Behind Act violate high school students' rights?
31. Should a teen's cell phone privacy be respected at school?
32. Has this year's presidential election cycle changed the way our candidates run for office? Or changed the way we elect our officials? Or changed the structure of the political parties in the US?
33. Should a wall be built between the United States and Mexico?

English 102: Introduction to & Annotated Bibliography for the Argumentation Essay & Rubric

Assignment

This assignment is two-fold. First, you will write a two-paragraph introduction to your research essay. Second, you will provide an annotated bibliography for at least 4 of your 5-6 sources. Three of these sources must be academic articles from the UMES databases. This assignment is worth 50 points.

Topic/Issue Definition/Introduction

- Once you have completed reading several sources related to your specific topic, compose a well-developed two-paragraph introduction to your research essay.
- The first paragraph will hook the reader by explaining what the topic is and why it is an important topic. For example, you may refer to the recent mass shootings to introduce the concept of gun control, or you may reference the California Dream Act to introduce the topic of immigration and education. These are just examples. You need to provide background information and fully define what the topic or issue is.
- The second paragraph needs to fully explain the two opposing views on your topic or solutions to the problem. What do people on each side of the issue believe about this topic? What do they disagree about? Finally, you need to conclude the second paragraph with a clear statement of your position on the topic (your thesis).

Annotated Bibliography

- The second part of this assignment is to provide an Annotated Bibliography for at least 4 of your sources. (This paper requires 5-6 credible sources, 3 of which must be from the UMES databases.)
- Provide a complete citation (just like you would for a Works Cited) in correct MLA format. Beneath each entry, provide a short paragraph that summarizes the source's key points and states how you plan to use this source in your paper. Each paragraph should be between 75 and 150 words.

Rubric for Argumentation Topic Definition and Annotated Bibliography (50 pts.)

Criteria	Score
Introduction **1.** The first paragraph effectively hooks the reader and establishes the purpose and importance of the topic. **2.** Any necessary background information is provided for readers to understand the issue. **3.** The issue is clearly defined, and both sides are summarized. **4.** The thesis is effectively "set up" and comes at the end of the introduction. **5.** The thesis clearly states the writer's position on the issue and is sufficiently narrow and focused for the scope of this assignment.	/20
Annotated Bibliography 1. There are at least four credible sources cited, with at least three from the library databases. **2.** For each source, there is a complete MLA format citation. **3.** For each source, there is a clear summary of key points made in the source. **4.** For each source, the writer explains how he or she will use this source in the final essay. (What points will be supported by this source?)	/30
Total:	/50

Rubric for Argumentation Essay Criteria	Score
Introduction Content (15 points) *Excellent 14-15; Good 12-13; Satisfactory 11; Poor 9-10; Failing 0-8* 1. The introduction effectively hooks the reader, establishes the purpose and importance of the topic, and provides any necessary background to effectively set up the thesis. 2. The thesis is at the end of the introduction, clearly expresses the main idea of the essay, makes a significant point about the topic, and presents a plan of development for sub-topics.	/15
Body Content (25 points) *Excellent 23-25; Good 20-22; Satisfactory 18-19; Poor 15-17; Failing 0-14* 1. The paper meets the length requirement, and the word count is at the bottom of the paper. 2. Each body paragraph is supported with concrete, specific, relevant and ample support related to the topic sentence.	/25
Conclusion Content (10 points) *Excellent 9-10; Good 8; Satisfactory 7; Poor 6; Failing 0-5* 1. The essay contains an appropriate and adequately developed conclusion that brings closure to the essay. 2. The conclusion restates the thesis, briefly summarizes the main points of the essay, and presents an implication (or so-what).	/10
Organization (15 points) *Excellent 14-15; Good 12-13; Satisfactory 11; Poor 9-10; Failing 0-8* 1. Each paragraph begins with a clear topic sentence that indicates the sub-topic being addressed in that paragraph. 2. Paragraphs are arranged in a logical order. 3. Appropriate transitions are used both within paragraphs and between paragraphs to show logical connections between ideas. 4. Paragraphs are unified: every sentence clearly supports the topic sentence. 5. Paragraphs are coherent: the sentences flow clearly and logically from one to another.	/15
Style/Grammar/Punctuation/Mechanics (25 points) *Excellent 23-25; Good 20-22; Satisfactory 18-19; Poor 15-17; Failing 0-14* 1. Essay is written in first or third-person point of view, and second-person (you) is avoided. 2. Sentences are clear, coherent, and unambiguous. There are no missing words and/or awkward constructions. 3. The paper is relatively free of distracting errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. 4. Word choice is effective and appropriate for a college essay. Language is precise. 5. There is clarity of thought and expression in the essay.	/25
MLA Format (10 points) *Excellent 9-10; Good 8; Satisfactory 7; Poor 6; Failing 0-5* 1. Essay is in readable 11 or 12-pt. font. 2. Essay is left-aligned. 3. Essay has 1-inch margins. 4. Essay has correct MLA heading on 1st page. 5. Essay has a centered, meaningful title in title-style capitalization below the heading. 6. Essay has correct MLA header, created using "insert header," on pages after the first. 7. Essay has correct word count one line below the last line.	/10
MLA Use of Sources (50 points) *Excellent 45-50; Good 40-44; Satisfactory 35-39; Poor 30-34; Failing 0-29* 1. All material from sources is cited both in text and on the Works Cited page. 2. Quotations and other source materials are well integrated, introduced, and explained. 3. Quotations and other source materials clearly support the subject matter being addressed they are relevant and significant. 4. Quotations and other source materials are accurately and correctly cited within the body of the paper. **5.** The Works Cited page is correctly formatted and complete. **NOTE: Plagiarism will cause you to receive a zero on the paper.** **Total**	/50 /150