

ARGUMENTATIVE RESEARCH ESSAY

English 12B

PURPOSE

- Persuade an audience to believe a certain way on an issue
 - Show that there IS an issue at hand
 - Explain and support a specific perspective on that issue
 - With science and research--not emotion
 - Analyze HOW this issue should be solved

THE MICHIGAN ELECTRONIC LIBRARY

- Your research MUST begin at www.mel.org
- Use **Opposing Viewpoints in Context** database
- Here you will find “Viewpoints” on hundreds of real-life issues-- choose ONE to become your **thesis**
- You will also need to find another viewpoint that offers the OPPOSITE of what you believe for your **counter-argument**
- **RESEARCH FIRST**-- Then choose your thesis!!!

TOPIC VS. THESIS EXAMPLES

- Topic: Pollution
- Thesis: The effects of pollution are being exaggerated.
- Topic: Feminism
- Thesis: Feminism is harmful to society.
- Topic: Paranormal activity
- Thesis: Paranormal activity is a legitimate science.
- Topic: Political Parties
- Thesis: The two-party system in the United States is outdated.

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

- You CAN write an argumentative essay on a controversial or “hot” topic; however, some are exceedingly difficult even for the best of writers...
 - Abortion
 - Animal rights
 - Marijuana
 - Gay marriage
- Use science and research rather than emotionally charged, anecdotal statements (and questions!)
 - Ex. “Killing someone is just wrong!”
 - Ex. “If a person is old enough to vote, why shouldn’t he/she be able to drink alcohol?” (NO QUESTIONS EVER!!!)

STEPS FOR RESEARCH

- Choose a broad topic of interest
- READ, READ, READ!!!
- Narrow down your topic to a particular thesis
- Organize your information into an outline
- Draft your paragraphs
- Edit
- Edit again
- Edit again
- Print final draft

WORKS CITED PAGE

- Sources need to be referenced in text and at the end of your paper
- The organizer in your packet is ONLY for sources that do not give you a proper MLA citation on their site
 - Government websites
 - News articles
 - MEL.ORG articles WILL give you a proper MLA citation
- **The last page of your essay will include EVERY source you mentioned/referenced in your paper**
 - **ALPHABETICAL ORDER BY FIRST ITEM IN THE CITATION!!!**

INTRODUCTION

- **Attention Grabber**-- Background information or something more creative...not an opinion, no questions
- **Discussion of topic**-- What is the issue? No questions...
 - Ex. An issue of debate recently is whether or not gun laws should become more strict.
- **Side #1**-- OPPOSITE of what you are arguing
 - Ex. Some people feel that strict gun laws will eliminate violence.
- **Side #2**-- YOUR side
 - Ex. However, they fail to see that restricting laws will not keep guns out of the hands of psychotic criminals.
- **Thesis Statement**-- Your main point
 - Ex. Therefore, the United States should not ban personal firearms.

COUNTER-ARGUMENT

- You must acknowledge the other side of your argument for a valid essay
- Begin with an appropriate transition
 - “Admittedly, some people believe that crime rates will decrease by limiting gun rights because.....”
- Elaborate on **three** main points of the other side
- Transition into your side of the argument (1-2 sentences max!)
 - However, supporters of stricter laws fail to realize that criminals will still have access to guns, citizens will not be able to protect themselves, and revenue will be lost during game seasons.

BODY PARAGRAPHS

- Strong topic sentence proving your thesis
- Details that BUILD your argument and SUPPORT it
- Information from research that supports your own ideas --
CITED PROPERLY
 - At least two (2) quotes per paragraph
- Concluding sentence that summarizes your paragraph AND
leads into the next one.
 - Ex. Not only are essential oils organic substances found naturally in the earth, they can also be more cost-effective than over-the-counter medications.

SOLVENCY/SOLUTION PARAGRAPH

- What can be done to fix the issue you have been describing in your body paragraphs?
 - Should things stay as they are? Explain.
 - Do new laws need to be created? Explain.
 - Should awareness be raised? How and to target which group(s)?

CONCLUSION

- Restate thesis in a different way than your introduction
- Restate the main ideas in your body paragraphs
- Clincher -- leave the reader with final thoughts and something interesting...mic drop

IN-TEXT CITATIONS

- You **MUST** cite your sources for each quote/paraphrased information (minimum of two per paragraph) in the paragraphs
- MLA format requires the author's last name and the page that information came from.
- Ex. (Smith 3).
- **A study at Harvard found that “children who read twenty minutes per day know an average of 1,000 words when they reach kindergarten” (Smith 3).**
- For Internet sources and electronic articles, only the author is necessary.
 - If no author is given, use the title of the article or section.

SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND...

- A study at Harvard found that “children who read twenty minutes per day know an average of 1,000 words when they reach kindergarten” (Smith 3).

Your sentence should be COMPLETE if you take out the quotation marks.

Introduce or embed the quote into your paragraph.

Another ex: **According to John Smith, “children.....” (3).**