Essay #3: Argument (1250+ words)

MLA format

3+ outside sources required

Due Sunday, October 25 at 11:59 p.m.

1. **Choose an argumentative topic**. Be sure that--to fit the definition of argumentative--you choose a topic that has at least two sides to it. In other words, it should be a topic that is open to debate, discussion, and currently lacks a perfect solution. Don't, for example, argue that recreational marijuana should be legalized in Illinois--it already happened. On the other hand, you could argue that marijuana legalization should be repealed in Illinois, resulting in recreational marijuana being illegal again.

2. **Be sure your argument is academic**.In other words, choose a topic that matters. I would love to hear about whether a cat makes a better pet than a dog, or whether Michael Jordan is truly the best basketball player of all time, or whether Cocoa Puffs are tastier than Lucky Charms, but those topics are not academic.

I recommend visiting the website [www.procon.org (Links to an external site.)](http://www.procon.org/) for a few ideas. Once you arrive at the home page, simply scroll down, and have a look at the individual topics within larger categories. You may also search the keyword phrase "argument essay topics" on Google or your preferred search engine.

In this essay, you will be required to both support your point of view, as well as introduce and later refute your "opposition's" point of view. For example, if you chose the topic of "College athletes should receive monetary compensation."--a perfectly fair topic--to be your thesis statement, the opposition's point of view would be that "College athletes should not receive monetary compensation."

If you choose to argue that colleges should be tuition-free, your opposition will argue the opposite.

In sum, select a topic that works for you, understand the various arguments that accompany it, and prepare a thesis statement, which should provide your topic and main idea.

\*\*Remember: Your thesis should not be a fact, and to avoid opinionated language, do not use words like "I think," "I feel," "I believe," "In my opinion," or "In my humble opinion."

**ARGUMENT ESSAY BREAKDOWN**

1. **Introduction**--Just like previous introductions, you may use an optional attention-getter to begin. More importantly, provide background information about your topic for the majority of the introduction. Your approach to the background information depends entirely on your chosen topic. For example, some of you might want to provide a historical overview about your topic whereas some of you may want to offer a basic definition/explanation of your topic. Assume that your reader knows nothing about your topic, so try your best to bring the reader up to speed, so to speak, before you cap off your intro with the thesis statement.

2. **Body Paragraphs--**Your goal in writing your body paragraphs, like ALL previous essays, is to prove your thesis statement. Be sure to begin each BP with a topic sentence that captures the topic and main idea of the paragraph. From there, alternate between MAJOR DETAILS and EVIDENCE to support your topic sentences.

Because this is an argument essay, you will be required to include at least 3 body paragraphs to support YOUR argument. In the outline below, I will label these paragraphs as "PRO."

\*\*However, unlike previous essays, you will also be required to write an additional body paragraph in which you explain the opposition's (people who disagree with you) major argument(s) against yours. In the outline below, I will label this paragraph as "CON."

So far, here's how your outline should look:

I. Introduction

II. Body Paragraph 1 (PRO)

III. Body Paragraph 2 (PRO)

IV. Body Paragraph 3 (PRO)

V. Body Paragraph 4 (CON)

Now, let's plug in a sample topic/thesis statement so that you can visualize this better. Let's use the argument of "homeschooling." Here is a sample thesis: "Homeschooling is an excellent alternative to attending public school."

Now, your outline may look like this:

I. Introduction (Thesis: Homeschooling is an excellent alternative to attending public school.)

II. BP1 (PRO)  (Students receive individual attention)

III. BP2 (PRO) (Students can work at a more flexible schedule/pace)

IV. BP3 (PRO) (Students are not exposed to potentially negative influences at school)

V. BP4 (CON) (Students will struggle to develop social skills)

To recap, there are three body paragraphs supporting your thesis, and following those, there is a body paragraph that will explain the major counterargument your opposition would make. Of course, you would not want to move on to your Conclusion after you have just explained the opposition's argument against you. Instead, you must include what I will call the "PRO REBUTTAL" in which you should respond to your opposition by attempting to refute their argument.  Let's update the outline below:

I. Introduction (Thesis: Homeschooling is an excellent alternative to attending public school.)

II. BP1 (PRO) (Students receive individual attention)

III. BP2 (PRO) (Students can work at a more flexible schedule/pace)

IV. BP3 (PRO) (Students are not exposed to potentially negative influences at school)

V. BP4 (CON) (Students will struggle to develop social skills)

VI BP5 (PRO REBUTTAL) (Even though students are not attending school, they can socialize in other ways (e.g., community activities, sports teams, clubs, etc.)

3. **Conclusion--**Your conclusion will be no different from a typical conclusion in which you restate your thesis, summarize your major ideas, and leave the reader with a final impression (something to think about).