

Essay 3: Argument

For your third essay, you will write an argumentative essay of at least four and no more than seven pages addressing a topic currently at issue in your life. You may choose any topic of local or national importance, but you must follow these criteria closely and exactly:

- Your topic must be narrow enough to be covered in a ~5 page paper. This means that if there's a book on your topic in our library, your topic is too broad.

Example: Bad topic: "Gambling is harmful."

Better topic: "Casino X should be shut down."

- If you choose to write about a controversy of national significance, you must narrow your topic to something that's currently at issue. Both your textbook and our class discussion will further expand upon the meaning of "at issue," but know that you can't expect to tackle all of the arguments for/against the death penalty, abortion, gun rights, or climate change legislation in a single 5 page, introductory college paper and succeed.

Example: Bad topic = "The Second Amendment is under siege."; Good topic = "Specific gun law X should be repealed."

- You do not have to choose a "serious" or "heavy" issue for this paper. Successful past papers have argued about everything from charging for parking on campus to whether the toilet seat should be left up or put down after use. Choosing a topic that's of interest and import to you will make the assignment much easier.
- Caveat: Do not choose a topic on which your opinion is rock-solid, unchangeable, and/or unreasonable. Rather, pick a topic where you still have a measure of uncertainty and let your research and writing process guide you to a stronger answer.

Your essay must include a position that's strongly supported with outside research, and it must also present at least one (but possibly more) strong counterarguments against your position. You'll be expected to refute this position within your paper. (Further discussion of argumentative structure will begin in class this week and is also covered in your textbook).

Any research – including that drawn from web sites – must be cited in your text and in an MLA formatted works cited page, which should appear at the end of your essay. This page does not count into your total page count.

Papers shorter than 4 full pages will receive an automatic F. There is no opportunity to rewrite this paper.

Your **final** draft will be due on the last day of regular class, March 6.

DUE: Peer Editing: _____

FINAL DRAFT: _____

Argumentative essays will be graded on the following:

Development:

Are points well supported with credible research? Does every paragraph make a single, focused point with appropriate examples? Does the author engage with the strongest possible counterargument?

Organization and formatting:

Is the essay written in a logical order? Is there appropriate space given to each point? Do paragraphs have clear topic sentences? Are transitions used throughout? Does the paper adhere to formatting guidelines, including correct use of MLA citation?

Mechanics:

Are sentences varied and correctly punctuated? Are there errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar that should have been caught through proofreading? Is the language and vocabulary of the piece appropriate for an academic audience?

Fulfillment of assignment:

Does the essay address a question that is at issue? Is it at least 4 full pages long? Does it draw upon class discussions and information in the book to make the best possible argument? Were pre-writing and in-class activities (including peer editing) taken advantage of to the fullest? Does the final draft show significant proof of revision?