

Argument Essay Assignment

English 1301

Overview

Building on your informative synthesis essay, you will now develop an argumentative essay that takes a clear position on your topic. This assignment asks you to move from explaining multiple perspectives to advocating for a specific stance, using evidence to support your claims and addressing counterarguments.

This assignment develops two critical General Education Outcomes that are foundational for college success and transferability:

Written Communication: You will develop clear, effective academic writing that considers audience, purpose, and context while using appropriate conventions for an argumentative essay.

Inquiry and Analysis (Critical Thinking): You will use analytical reasoning to examine your topic from multiple perspectives, evaluate evidence, and draw logical conclusions that support your position.

Learning Objectives

Through this assignment, you will:

- Develop a clear and focused argumentative thesis that takes a specific, debatable position
- Transform informative content into persuasive writing using ethos, pathos, and logos
- Integrate source material strategically to support your argument and build credibility
- Address counterarguments fairly and refute them logically
- Apply proper APA formatting and citation practices
- Revise content purposefully to enhance persuasiveness while maintaining academic integrity

Assignment Details

Length: Minimum 4 full pages of text (excluding title and References pages)

Format: APA 7th edition

Sources: Minimum 4 sources required (you may include up to 6 sources total):

- *Required:* The 4 sources—these should mostly be the ones used in your informative essay, but you may trade out a few if you've found better sources for your argument since then.
- *Optional:* 2 additional credible sources of your choosing
- *Note:* Brief statistics or definitions from other sources may be used without counting toward your source maximum

Essential Components

1. Introduction: Engage readers with your opening and establish the controversy surrounding your topic. Build context for why this issue matters. End with an argumentative thesis statement that clearly presents your position and previews your main reasons.

2. Body Paragraphs: Each paragraph should develop one main reason supporting your thesis. Structure each paragraph to:

- Begin with a claim that supports your thesis (topic sentence)
- Present relevant, credible evidence from your sources
- Explain how the evidence supports your claim (analysis—don't just drop in quotes)

- End with a sentence that reinforces your argument and transitions to the next paragraph

3. Counterargument Section: Acknowledge and respond to at least one significant opposing viewpoint. Present the counterargument fairly and accurately, then explain why your position is more compelling. This demonstrates critical thinking by showing you've considered the complexity of your topic.

4. Conclusion: Synthesize your main points and reinforce your thesis using fresh language. Discuss the broader significance of your argument—why should readers care about this issue? Leave readers with a compelling final thought.

5. References Page: Properly formatted APA citations for all sources used in your essay.

6. AI Disclosure: Along with your final argument essay, you'll submit a brief reflection (1-2 paragraphs) explaining how you used AI tools—or didn't—during your writing process. This isn't about whether AI use is "allowed" or "forbidden." Instead, it's about developing your awareness of how these tools affect your writing and thinking. ([See the sample](#))

What to include:

1. **Be specific and honest:** Name which AI tools you used (ChatGPT, Claude, Grammarly, etc.) and what you used them for. If you didn't use AI, that's fine too—just say so.
2. **Explain your decisions:** Tell me about moments when AI was helpful and moments when you realized it was taking over your voice or thinking. When did you adopt its suggestions? When did you reject them? Why?
3. **Reflect on what you learned:** What did using AI (or not using it) teach you about your own writing process? How can you tell when your work is genuinely yours versus when you've let AI do too much of the thinking?

Why this matters:

AI tools aren't going away, and I want you to learn to use them wisely—like you'd use a tutor or a writing guide, not like a shortcut to avoid thinking. This disclosure helps you practice being intentional about your choices and taking ownership of your work. It also helps me understand your process and give you better feedback.

The key question: At the end of this assignment, can you explain and defend every argument in your essay? If yes, you've used AI responsibly. If not, you've let it do too much of your work.

How This Assignment Develops Your General Education Skills

Written Communication Development:

This assignment asks you to adapt your writing for a new rhetorical purpose. While your informative essay explained multiple perspectives objectively, your argument essay advocates for one position persuasively. You'll practice:

- Using appropriate academic tone while being persuasive (not pushy)
- Organizing ideas logically to build a compelling case
- Integrating sources smoothly to support your claims
- Revising for clarity and effectiveness, not just error correction

Inquiry and Analysis Development:

This assignment requires you to move beyond summarizing sources to actually analyzing your topic and making your own reasoned judgments. You'll practice:

- Evaluating evidence to determine what most effectively supports your position
- Identifying logical connections between ideas and evidence
- Considering multiple perspectives and responding to opposing views fairly
- Drawing reasonable conclusions based on evidence rather than assumptions

Submission Requirements

- Final draft must be submitted as a Word document
- Double-spaced, standard 12-point font
- 1-inch margins
- APA 7th edition formatting throughout (title page, in-text citations, References page)
- Include an AI disclosure statement at the end of your references list—skip a few extra lines and insert a short paragraph (sentence if you did not use AI)
- Late points will be strictly applied.

How Your Essay Will Be Assessed

Your essay will be evaluated using the rubric on the following pages, which assesses both your written communication skills and your critical thinking abilities. The rubric focuses on:

- How effectively you communicate your argument to a general academic audience
- How well you use analytical reasoning to support your position
- How thoughtfully you engage with evidence and counterarguments
- How professionally you present your work using academic conventions

Use the rubric as you work on your essay, review it, go over it with classmates and Writing Center tutors, or ask an AI for feedback as appropriate. Just make sure the paper is yours—your voice matters, especially to me and especially at the end of the semester. Do not forget the AI disclosure statement as explained above.

Remember: These general education skills will serve you in every college course you take and in your future career. Strong performance on this assignment demonstrates you're ready for the expectations of ENGL 1302 and other college-level courses. Understanding Your GEO Development

Grading Rubric

This rubric assesses your development of Written Communication, Inquiry & Analysis, and Personal Responsibility skills at the foundational level appropriate for ENGL 1301. Strong performance (Proficient or Excellent) on this assignment demonstrates that you are developing the general education outcomes necessary for success in ENGL 1302 and other college courses.

Remember: Level 2 (Emerging/Proficient) performance represents solid college-level work for a first-semester composition course. Level 3 (Developing/Excellent) represents strong achievement. These skills will continue developing throughout your college career.

For more information about General Education Outcomes and how to improve your skills, see the GEO Student Self-Assessment Guide available on the [English General Outcomes SharePoint page](#).

Argument Essay Rubric

Excellent (90-100%) Level 3	Proficient (80-89%) Level 2	Developing (70-79%) Level 1	Needs Improvement (Below 70%)
Thesis & Argumentative Reasoning <i>GEO Focus: Written Communication (clear position) + Inquiry & Analysis (analytical reasoning)</i>			
Thesis is clear, specific, and argumentative. Presents a nuanced position with sophisticated reasoning that acknowledges complexity. Claims build a compelling, logical case.	Thesis is clear and argumentative. Position is evident with solid reasoning. Claims adequately support the argument with logical connections.	Thesis is present but may be overly broad or simplistic. Position lacks some clarity. Claims somewhat support the argument but reasoning is basic.	Thesis is unclear, missing, or purely informative. Position is difficult to identify. Claims don't support a coherent argument or show logical reasoning.
Evidence & Analytical Reasoning <i>GEO Focus: Inquiry & Analysis (evaluating evidence, drawing conclusions) + Written Communication (integration)</i>			
Evidence from all required sources is relevant, credible, and strategically selected. Shows sophisticated analysis that explains HOW evidence supports claims. Makes insightful connections between evidence and conclusions. Sources seamlessly integrated.	Evidence from all required sources is relevant and credible. Shows clear analysis connecting evidence to claims. Makes logical connections. Sources well-integrated with proper citations.	Evidence from most required sources is present but may be less relevant or poorly chosen. Analysis is basic or mechanical. Connections between evidence and claims need development. Source integration is awkward.	Insufficient evidence and/or unreliable sources. Minimal or missing analysis—evidence is dropped in without explanation. Poor integration. Sources not properly cited.
Organization & Development <i>GEO Focus: Written Communication (structure, audience awareness, coherence)</i>			
Logical flow with effective transitions between all paragraphs. Introduction engages readers and establishes context skillfully. Each paragraph is cohesive, focused, and fully developed with clear topic and concluding sentences. Conclusion synthesizes ideas effectively with thoughtful implications.	Clear organizational structure with transitions between most paragraphs. Introduction establishes context adequately. Most paragraphs are cohesive and adequately developed. Conclusion summarizes main points and offers closure.	Basic organizational structure with some abrupt transitions. Introduction provides some context. Some paragraphs lack clear topic or concluding sentences. Paragraph development is inconsistent. Conclusion restates thesis with minimal synthesis.	Disorganized structure lacking clear progression. Introduction lacks context. Many paragraphs are underdeveloped or unfocused. Conclusion is abrupt, missing, or merely repeats thesis.

Excellent (90-100%) Level 3	Proficient (80-89%) Level 2	Developing (70-79%) Level 1	Needs Improvement (Below 70%)
Engagement with Counterarguments <i>GEO Focus: Inquiry & Analysis (considering multiple perspectives, responding logically)</i>			
Skillfully addresses opposing viewpoints with fairness and depth, showing genuine engagement with complexity. Refutation is logical, respectful, and strengthens the overall argument. Demonstrates sophisticated critical thinking.	Clearly acknowledges opposing viewpoints with accuracy. Refutation is logical and adequately responds to counterarguments. Shows solid critical thinking by considering multiple perspectives.	Mentions opposing viewpoints but may oversimplify them or present them inaccurately. Refutation is present but may be weak or dismissive. Critical thinking is basic.	Fails to acknowledge opposing viewpoints or presents them as strawmen. Refutation is missing or illogical. Shows little evidence of considering multiple perspectives.
Language, Style & Academic Conventions <i>GEO Focus: Written Communication (tone, clarity, conventions, mechanics)</i>			
Academic tone maintained throughout. Precise word choice and varied sentence structure. Language effectively persuades while maintaining objectivity. Perfect APA formatting. Virtually error-free—demonstrates mastery of standard written English.	Academic tone generally maintained. Mostly precise word choice with some sentence variety. Language is clear and appropriate. Minor APA formatting errors. Few minor grammatical errors that don't interfere with meaning.	Inconsistent academic tone. Some imprecise language or repetitive sentence structure. Language is sometimes unclear or inappropriate. Several APA formatting errors with consistent patterns. Several grammatical errors that occasionally interfere with meaning.	Inappropriate tone for academic writing. Imprecise language and simple sentence structure. Language impedes understanding. Major APA formatting errors. Numerous grammatical errors that significantly interfere with meaning.
Personal Responsibility <i>a GEO focus that encompasses accountability for your choices, ethical decision-making, and academic professionalism.</i> <i>Holistically +/- 10 except for optional Writing Center credit = +5</i>			
Timeliness & Planning: Submitted on time. Evidence of sustained engagement throughout the writing process (prewritings completed thoughtfully, multiple drafts developed).	<input type="checkbox"/> Prewriting Assignments <input type="checkbox"/> Late points -5 points per day up to 7 days. After that not accepted: <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		
Resource Use: Proactively used available resources (Writing Center, office hours, peer review) during drafting stage. Shows evidence of incorporating feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/> Workshop <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/> Writing Center Extra Credit (+5): _____		
Academic Integrity: All work is original. All sources properly cited with no academic integrity concerns. Demonstrates honest engagement with sources. AI disclosure is clear and specific.	<input type="checkbox"/> Required AI disclosure: <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
Professional Standards: Meets all assignment requirements (length, format, source count). Follows APA guidelines. Professional presentation throughout.			Total personal responsibility grade: