

Argumentative Essay Task

Write an essay.

An essay:

1. Has a point of view;
 - The point of view is not just an opinion, it rests on a set of evidence that supports it. The point of view is your answer to the question. It is your argument.
 - The evidence is not all one-sided (there's no argument in a one-sided debate), it accepts and responds to counter-evidence. The counter evidence is not simply a set of "straw men" (easily rebuffed points and views), but are fully-fleshed out and serious challenges that make your victory so much sweeter.
2. Considers evidence – what is evidence in the context of the answer you are presenting? What is more important evidence? What is less? Is the important evidence given due regard?
3. Has structure – it's planned out: points build on points, concepts are defined before they are discussed.
 - Structure includes good paragraphs. Good paragraphs are about 5 sentences long. They start with a topic sentence that contains the main point of the paragraph and backs up your overarching essay argument. Following sentence back up the topic sentence with argument and evidence.
 - Structure includes good sentences. Good sentences are not too long, on average about 20 words. Sentences make a point that contributes to the main point of the paragraph, and essay as a whole. Good sentences have correct grammar. Incorrect grammar makes your writing less clear and confuses your points.

Checklist

This is a guide to the minimum requirements to writing an acceptable essay.

A. Introduction, guiding the reader's interpretation of your argument

	1. Restates the question as you understand it
	2. Provides a clear statement of the argument / core conclusions
	3. "Walks through" the structure of the essay

B. Set-up, making it a substantive work

	1. Key theories are introduced: what are they, what do they say?
	2. Critical definitions are provided (minima: all technical terms in the question)
	3. Theory is employed (descriptive work is pass work, conceptual analysis is higher order work, theory provides the basis for analysis)
	4. Concepts and literature from the relevant parts of the course are employed / recognised. You need not agree with material included in the course, but it's existence should be acknowledged (see D4)

C. Writing, process, and appearance

	1. Essay was planned before writing begun. Plan was employed as a guide, and adjusted based on reflection as the essay develops (plan is a "living document")
	2. Short sentences, clearly formed
	3. Short paragraphs, one or two key points per paragraph
	4. Drafted, redrafted, proofread, redrafted (minima)
	5. Correct grammar and spelling
	6. Referencing is complete and the system used is consistent throughout

D. Arguments as constructed and defended

	1. Argument / key conclusions is planned (separate plan to essay plan) – it has got an internal structure and logical elements that guide it
	2. Evidence supports each logical claim in the argument (assumptions, claim, causality, Examples / case material)
	3. Use of theory is evident in the argument – weakness of theory are recognised
	4. Counter-evidence is dealt with fairly (no "straw man" arguments to deal with uncomfortable counter-points (may feed into D3))

E. Conclusion, reminding the marker it is worth a good grade

	1. Restates question
	2. Provides restated argument
	3. "Ticks off" key points made so that E2 answers E1
	4. Nothing new in conclusion