

Argument Essay Rubric

The Exceptional Essay

- Introduces a compelling thesis (or claim) that is clearly arguable, takes a purposeful position on an issue, and insightfully addresses all aspects of the prompt
- Meticulously develops the thesis with relevant body paragraphs; logical and orderly progression of ideas
- Thesis is supported with substantial and pertinent evidence, from outside sources and/or the text, that is properly cited and credible
- Convincingly refutes counterclaim(s)
- Skillfully uses specific rhetorical devices to support assertions (e.g., logos, pathos, ethos)
- Provides a meaningful and reflective conclusion that effectively strengthens the thesis and evidence
- Uses purposeful and varied sentence structure; creates cohesion through skillful use of transitional words and phrases
- Contains minimal to no errors in conventions (grammar, punctuation, spelling, usage, capitalization)
- Strategically uses academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose.
- Tone is engaging, formal, and objective

The Skilled Essay

- Introduces a precise thesis (or claim) that is clearly arguable, takes an identifiable position on an issue, and competently addresses all aspects of the prompt
- Thoroughly develops the thesis with relevant body paragraphs; logical progression of ideas
- Thesis is supported with relevant and sufficient evidence, from outside sources and/or the text, that is properly cited and credible
- Fairly addresses counterclaim(s)
- Uses specific rhetorical devices to support assertions
- Provides a conclusion that follows from and supports thesis
- Uses correct and varied sentence structure; creates cohesion through transitional words and phrases
- Contains few, minor errors in conventions (grammar, punctuation, spelling, usage, capitalization)
- Competently uses academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose.
- Tone is formal and objective

The Proficient (Basic) Essay

- Introduces a reasonable thesis (or claim) that is arguable, takes a position on the issue, but superficially addresses all aspects of the prompt
- Generally develops the thesis with relevant body paragraphs; adequate progression of ideas
- Thesis is supported with limited and/or superficial evidence, from outside sources and/or the text, that is ineffectively integrated and cited
- Minimally refutes counterclaim(s)
- Uses some rhetorical devices to support assertions
- Provides a conclusion that repetitively supports thesis
- Uses mostly correct and some varied sentence structure; creates some cohesion through basic use of transitional words and phrases
- Contains some errors in conventions (grammar, punctuation, spelling, usage, capitalization) which may cause confusion
- Superficially uses academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose
- Tone is formal

The Developing (Below Basic) Essay

- The text contains a weak, unclear or emerging thesis that suggests a vague position and partially addresses all aspects of the prompt
- Inadequately develops the thesis with relevant body paragraphs; uneven progression of ideas
- Thesis is supported with minimal and/or irrelevant evidence, from outside sources and/or the text, that is incorrectly integrated and cited
- Acknowledges alternate or opposing claim(s)
- Uses some rhetorical devices to support assertions with limited success
- Provides an inadequate conclusion
- Uses limited and/or repetitive sentence structure; uses limited and/or inappropriate transitional words or phrases
- Contains numerous errors in conventions (grammar, punctuation, spelling, usage, capitalization) which cause some confusion
- Inadequately uses academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose
- The text illustrates a limited awareness of a formal tone

The Inadequate (Far Below Basic) Essay

- The text contains an unidentifiable thesis or vague position and minimally addresses some aspect of the prompt
- Fails to develop the thesis with relevant body paragraphs; little to no discernible organization of ideas
- Thesis is supported with inaccurate, little, or no evidence
- Does not use or cite sources and/or text evidence.
- Fails to acknowledge alternate or opposing claim(s)
- Lacks rhetorical devices to support assertions
- Omits conclusion
- Lacks sentence mastery (e.g. fragments, run-ons); uses few or no transitional words and phrases
- Contains serious and pervasive errors in conventions (grammar, punctuation, spelling, usage, capitalization)
- Fails to use academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose
- The text illustrates a limited awareness of or inconsistent tone

Comments: