

ENG 1213: Unit 4 Argument

Free Topic Choice

READINGS

- Unit 4 Handout
- "Paper Proposal" Handout
- "How to Research" Handout. If you need more guidance, the following resources also provide detailed information about researching and using sources:
 - *QA Compact* chapters 30, 31, and 32 about researching and using sources
 - Norton Field Guide Chapters 39, 40, and 41 on developing a research plan and finding, and evaluating sources
- Norton Field Guide Chapter 9 (review) – note the information about counterargument (or refutation), and finding a topic
- Previous handouts and PowerPoint presentations concerning essay writing given this semester
- Sample essays from students

DUE

See TimeCruiser Assignments for specific due date.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Your essay should:

- Concern a **current event** that people debate about (but avoid any topics I identify below as off limit)
- Be at least 1000 words (minimum), double spaced with 1" margins in 12 point, black print using Times New Roman font;
- Contain a clear and arguable claim supported with convincing, academic evidence that incorporate the required research elements (including the minimum sources);
- Use sources in significant and meaningful ways – not to support a trivial or insignificant point, but primarily to backup points made in the body paragraphs, providing logos for the position you are taking;
- Be written with a clear plan related to your thesis showing logical order and persuasion;
- Clearly show use of the basic elements of argument: claim, refutation, logic (no fallacies);
- Be addressed to a clearly identifiable target audience as evidenced in the tone, diction and selection of support material from texts and/or personal experience;
- Follow standard academic English, only using 3rd person point of view, *unless* you have RELEVANT personal experience to support your point;
- Demonstrate correct in-text and work cited MLA citations;
- Show evidence of revision and editing.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION

This four page (minimum) argument presents not only your reasons for supporting your position but also counter positions or refutations of the major positions that oppose your thesis. The paper must have a minimum of **five academic** sources with the following limitations:

1. **No** encyclopedias (including online versions such as Wikipedia) may count as a source. You may use a scholarly encyclopedias, such as the Britannica, Americana, or specialized professional reference books

(e.g., *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry* or *West's Encyclopedia of Western Law*), but it is **in addition** to the five required sources.

2. You must use at least **two sources** from our library, or another college's library, in your essay. This includes databases such as EBSCOhost, available online via SSC's library web site. To access Ebsco from off campus, go to <http://search.ebscohost.com> and use the id: BLIB and the password: password. Ebsco's STUDENT RESEARCH CENTER is a great place to find current event topics and resources.
3. Personal interviews do not count as required sources, but they can be supplemental sources.
4. **AVOID** the following topics: religion, guns, marijuana, illegal immigration, teen pregnancy, steroids, stem cell research, homosexuality, euthanasia, death penalty, texting while driving, and abortion.

SUGGESTED OUTLINE OF ESSAY:

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Attention getter
- b) Relevant background information
- c) Clear audience identification
- d) Arguable thesis statement

2) BODY PARAGRAPH 1

- a) Topic sentence
- b) Explanation of your point that shows your reasoning process – why and how this supports the position you have taken on this issue
- c) Fact-based evidence to support your position (do not leave it at opinion)
- d) Wrap up of the point that moves the reader to the next point in your essay

3) BODY PARAGRAPHS 2+ (REPEAT STEPS IN BODY PARAGRAPH 1)

4) COUNTERARGUMENT

- a) Identify the most relevant position(s) against your position.
- b) Explain that position.
- c) Argue why this position is either faulty or insufficient to undermine your position.

5) CONCLUSION

- a) Restate thesis
- b) Begin wrapping up the essay by taking the reader back to the big picture. This could entail:
 - Reminding them of what's at stake by allowing the situation to continue
 - Predicting what will happen in the future if action is or is not taken
 - Encouraging the reader to act
- c) Do not argue another topic sentence here. The case you make in the conclusion is more about showing the reader why your thesis claim is important or significant. You might also clarify how it specifically impacts them as the audience you have targeted. Put yourself in your reader's shoes: what would convince you to act? To believe? You may have many options here, and you should always choose the one best aligned with academic standards: remember the Rhetorical Triangle.