

Research Paper Option 1

An argumentative research paper presents one side of an arguable opinion about an issue. The goal of the paper is to convince the audience that your opinion is valid and defensible. Ideas that you are considering need to be carefully examined in choosing a topic, developing your argument, and organizing your paper. It is very important to ensure that you are addressing all sides of the issue and presenting it in a manner that is easy for your audience to understand. Your job is to take one side of the argument and persuade your audience that you have well-founded knowledge of the topic being presented. It is important to support your argument with evidence to ensure the validity of your claims, as well as to refute the counterclaims to show that you are well informed about both sides.

Choosing your topic

To take a side on a subject, you should first establish that the topic you have chosen is arguable. Ask yourself the following questions to ensure that you will be able to present a strong argument:

- Is it a real issue, with genuine controversy and uncertainty?
- Can you identify at least two distinctive positions?
- Can you find reliable data to support your position?
- Is the scope of the issue narrow enough to be manageable?

Analyzing an Issue and Developing an Argument

Once your topic is selected, you should do some research on the subject matter. While you may already have an opinion on your topic and an idea about which side of the argument you want to take, **you need to ensure that your position is well supported**. Listing the pro and con sides of the topic will help you examine your ability to support your claims, along with a list of supporting evidence for both sides.

The structure of the argumentative essay is held together by the following:

- **A clear, concise, and defined thesis statement that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay.**

In the first paragraph of an argument essay, students set the context by reviewing the topic in a general way. Next the author should explain why the topic is important (**exigence**) or why readers should care about the issue. Lastly, students should present the thesis statement. It is essential that this thesis statement be appropriately narrow, A statement that is too broad will be difficult to argue.

- **Clear and logical transitions between the introduction, body, and conclusion.**

In academic writing your goal is to convey information clearly and concisely, if not to convert the reader to your way of thinking. Transitions help you to achieve these goals by establishing logical connections between sentences, paragraphs, and sections of your papers. In other words,

transitions tell readers what to do with the information you present them. Whether single words, quick phrases or full sentences, they function as signs for readers that tell them how to think about, organize, and react to old and new ideas as they read through what you have written.

Transitions signal relationships between ideas. Basically, transitions provide the reader with directions for how to piece together your ideas into a logically coherent argument. They are words with particular meanings that tell the reader to think and react in a particular way to your ideas. In providing the reader with these important cues, transitions help readers understand the logic of how your ideas fit together.

- **Body paragraphs that include evidential support.**

Each paragraph should be limited to the discussion of one general idea. This will allow for clarity and direction throughout the essay. In addition, such conciseness creates an ease of readability for one's audience. It is important to note that each paragraph in the body of the essay must have some logical connection to the thesis statement in the opening paragraph. Some paragraphs will directly support the thesis statement with evidence collected during research. It is also important to explain how and why the evidence supports the thesis (**warrant**).

However, argumentative essays should also consider and explain differing points of view regarding the topic. You should dedicate one or two paragraphs of an argumentative essay to discussing conflicting opinions on the topic. Rather than explaining how these differing opinions are wrong outright, students should note how opinions that do not align with their thesis might not be well informed or how they might be out of date.

- **Evidential support (whether factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal).**

The argumentative essay requires well-researched, accurate, detailed, and current information to support the thesis statement and consider other points of view. Some factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal evidence should support the thesis. However, you must consider multiple points of view when collecting evidence. As noted in the paragraph above, a successful and well-rounded argumentative essay will also discuss opinions not aligning with the thesis. It is unethical to exclude evidence that may not support the thesis. It is not your job to point out how other positions are wrong outright, but rather to explain how other positions may not be well informed or up to date on the topic.

- **A conclusion that does not simply restate the thesis, but readdresses it in light of the evidence provided.**

This is the portion of the essay that will leave the most immediate impression on the mind of the reader. Therefore, it must be effective and logical. Do not introduce any new information into the conclusion; rather, synthesize the information presented in the body of the essay. Restate why the topic is important, review the main points, and review your thesis. You may also want to include a short discussion of more research that should be completed in light of your work.

For your final paper, you will investigate a question or topic you find interesting. While the world of possibilities is indeed at your fingertips, you must make sure your subject is closely related to either the content or ideas presented in your Narrative Medicine topic section.

Paper length: 1750-2000 words

Sources: Five source minimum. A minimum of one academic (peer-reviewed journal) source, at least one “narrative” source (literature, film, poetry), and a maximum of two sources from your Narrative Medicine reading list.

Formatting and Works Cited page: Use MLA 8th ed. guidelines

Writing schedule/due dates:

Draft 1 (1000 words): 11/19

Draft 2 (1500 words): 11/26

Draft 3 (Full draft): 12/03

Final Draft: 12/13