Argument Essay Rubric

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| Description | You get it | Almost there | Need some help | Need a lot of help |
| **Thesis**: The essay introduces a clear arguable position that can be supported by reason and evidence. | Complete with a topic, strong opinion and a clear, debatable so what/why/because  Polished, sophisticated, and uses precise language | Complete with a topic, an opinion, and a so what/why/because, but one part is more vague | Missing one of the parts: topic, opinion or so what/why/because  Does not make a clear argument | Contains an unidentifiable claim or vague position  Does not take a clear stand  May not address assigned question |
| **Introduction:** Provides information to establish the issue. | Provides essential background information to help the reader see the position  Clearly sets up landscape of what is being discussed | Provides background information, some essential, some nonessential  Less focused in effort to introduce topic | Contains unclear information to inform the claim and or the issue | Contains a vague context  Could provide minimal to no information to inform the claim or position |
| **Subtopics:**  Provides two distinct reasons for the thesis. These reasons are named clearly and frame each body paragraph. | Specific and convincing contentions address 2 distinct ideas that build off how and why for thesis | Express contentions but could be clearer or more concise, link back to thesis more vague | One reason may be clear and compelling while the other is less so  May be more direct and thereby lead to repetition | Does not contain two reasons that clearly support claim  May not frame body paragraphs with clear reasons as topic sentences |
| **Analysis and support**: Sufficient and compelling evidence is integrated into the argument. Writer states what the evidence means and why it is important. | Focused, in-depth analysis to support the claim; demonstrates a deep understanding of the larger ideas  Clearly and logically explains how the evidence proves the claim  Clear and precise connection of ideas to one another and to the thesis/claim | Analysis demonstrates some understanding of the broader ideas, but could be more developed  Partially explains how the evidence proves the claim  Evidence may not be strongest choice  May be choppier in terms of connecting to other ideas or the claim itself | Demonstrates some understanding of the larger ideas, but needs more depth  Does not logically explain how the evidence proves the claim  May summarize more than argue  Contains minimal use of evidence to support the claim  Lacks clear transitions | Little or no analysis or evidence. Ideas need to be developed  Contains few, if any, words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text |
| **Counterclaims:** Looks at the other side and addresses concerns. | Acknowledges opposing ideas and addresses them with thoughtful and relevant support | Addresses counterclaims but support may be less strong | Opposing claims named but not addressed | Opposing claims not named or addressed |
| **Style and conventions:** The text presents a formal tone that demonstrates the English conventions of usage. | Uses a formal tone  Minimal mechanical errors and they do not distract (grammar, spelling, usage, punctuation, etc.) | Uses a formal tone most of the time  Few distracting mechanical errors (grammar, spelling, usage, punctuation, etc.) | Tone is more informal  Several mechanical errors (grammar, spelling, usage, punctuation, etc.) that begin to distract from the meaning | Inconsistent tone  Many mechanical errors (grammar, spelling, usage, punctuation, etc.) that distract from the meaning |