



**General Description of Assignment:** The second essay for this course is a research-based argumentative essay. Unless stated otherwise by the course instructor, the topic you choose should be discussed in relation to the course theme. Within this broad framework however, you should choose a sub-theme and devise a thesis which makes a claim that can be supported by evidence.

**Assignment Purpose:** The overall purpose of a research-based argumentative essay is to persuade the reader that your thesis or reasoned point of view is correct. It is a way to advance a thesis that you have carefully developed, using logical arguments and evidence that you have uncovered via research. Unlike with Essay 1 however, you will be choosing your own topic (optimally, one that interests you), and conducting preliminary research to identify a significant issue related to this topic. Reading extensively on the topic should allow you to develop an original angle of vision on the topic, and thus, a thesis that is compelling and defensible with evidence from your sources.

As with Essay 1, another purpose of the essay is for you to demonstrate the academic skills of paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting information; and incorporating arguments, illustrations, and supporting evidence from sources to support your thesis. Your original thinking should be displayed through the sources you choose to support your reasoning and flow of ideas.

**Use of Sources:** At least six sources are required for this essay, all of which should be credible; three of which need to be peer-reviewed, academic sources.

**Essay Development:** Your essay will be developed through a process of class workshops, outlining activities, peer feedback activities, and (lastly) through a one-on-one consultation with your teacher to discuss either an outline or a draft of your essay.

**NOTE:**

- **Students must write and submit a final draft of this essay in order to pass the course.**
- The final essay that you submit must align with work done during the development process (topic selection, thesis development, annotated bibliography, outlines, drafts, etc.)
- Any changes (esp. topic changes) must be discussed with, and agreed to, by the instructor well in advance of the final assignment deadline.

**Percentage of Course Grade:** 25%

**Length and Formatting:** The essay should be 6-7 pages in length, double spaced, written in a 12-point serif font such as Times New Roman, with standard one-inch (2.54 cm) margins. The essay must adhere to either MLA or APA citation stylistic conventions.

**General Organizational Guidelines/Tips:**

INTRODUCTION (1-2 paragraphs)

**Purpose:** To create interest in the topic, provide contextual information, and state your claim or thesis.

Elements of an Introduction:

- An opening sentence or passage that creates interest for the reader in the topic.
- Information that provides the context of the issue or topic. For example, a brief explanation of theory or issue and why it is significant or meaningful is often used to provide a “frame” for the reader to view the issue/theory.
- Definitions of key terms that may not be familiar to the reader.



- A clear statement of your thesis or claim at the end of the introductory paragraph or paragraphs (required).

#### SUPPORTING EVIDENCE PARAGRAPHS

**Purpose:** To prove your thesis/claim. The number of paragraphs will vary, but you should include as many as you need to provide complete arguments that effectively support your thesis.

##### Elements of Supporting Evidence Paragraphs:

- A topic sentence that states the main point of each paragraph. This should be a fact, claim, statement, or example that makes the focus of the paragraph clear.
- An explanation of the topic sentence.
- Introduction and/or statement of supporting evidence: the reasons, examples, facts, statistics, quotations etc. that prove/support/explain your topic sentence.
- Explanation and/or analysis of the evidence: How should the reader interpret this evidence? How does the evidence prove the point you are trying to make in this paragraph based upon your analysis?
- Concluding sentence: End your paragraph with a concluding sentence that reasserts how the main point of the paragraph proves your thesis and/or helps the reader understand your thesis. This sentence can also provide a transition to the next paragraph.

#### COUNTERARGUMENT PARAGRAPH

**Purpose:** To anticipate your reader's or a reasonable critic's objections. By responding to these "naysayers," you, as the writer, show that you can consider and respond to other perspectives, thus strengthening your position. Depending on the topic, this section could be longer than a paragraph and it could come before your supporting evidence paragraphs (i.e. at the beginning of your essay) or after your supporting paragraphs (i.e. just before your conclusion).

#### CONCLUSION: YOUR "SO WHAT?" PARAGRAPH

**Purpose:** To remind the reader of your thesis, main arguments, and supporting evidence while illustrating that you have thought critically and analytically about this issue.

##### Elements of a Concluding Paragraph:

Your conclusion should not simply restate your intro paragraph since you will seem to have ended up right where you started. If it does, this may indicate that you need to do more critical thinking about the issue. Instead,

- Your conclusion should tell us why we should care about the ideas you have expressed in your essay. What is the significance of your thesis for the present or future? What do you want the reader to think or do about this issue?
- Your conclusion should answer the question "So What?". It should reflect the complexity of the issue to look beyond your essay toward a larger point.
- Vivid, concrete language is as important in a conclusion as it is in the rest of your essay—perhaps more essential—since the conclusion will leave the reader with a final impression of the validity of your arguments. Be definitive and state your final thoughts boldly.