

Unit 7 Lecture

ENG102: Argumentative Essay



The argumentative essay goes beyond creating a structured story. It evokes thought and allows students to see that their thoughts and positions on issues have a place in possible changes. It places the student in the midst of controversial issues—issues in students' own backyards, within communities, and globally. The argument *is* in every aspect of everyday living. It is present in every advertisement—which sneaker should I buy? What disposable diaper is best? Which shaving cream should I use? It is present in every political rally when the audience considers who to vote for because of *how* the issues they are familiar with, vaguely knowledgeable about, or clueless to, are presented. It is in decisions to build a park or new prison. It is ever thought-provoking reminding students that they are not on the sideline, and that their very opinions translated into solid views and claims, built by varying factors, and manipulated by existing and historical discussions can create change.

Writers become aware of producing strong claims, varying them to suit specific arguments, writing and rewriting until claims are simple and clear to a reader. Writers learn to embed claims in introductions that hook readers, cajoling them to stay for the long haul; writers follow through with well selected diverse evidence that integrates

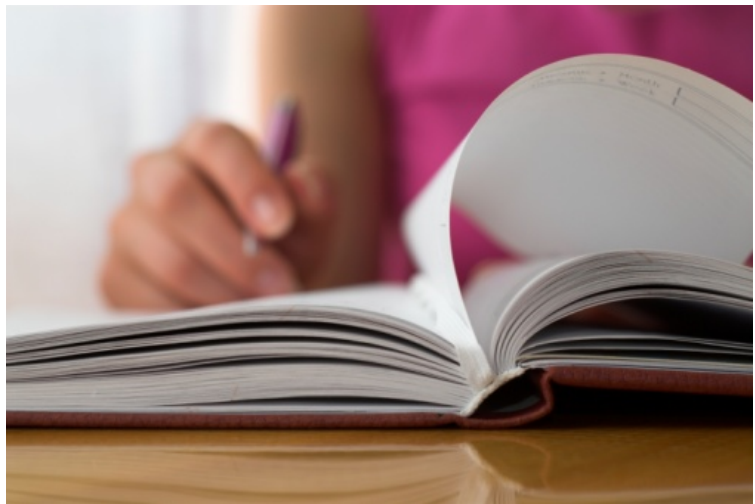
oppositions' views and combine emotions, logic, and credibility. Writers are readers. Critically reading and analyzing arguments place the writer in a position to recognize fallacies both in the readings as well as their own writing; they learn to understand the power of these *faults* and why, even when wrong, they continue to be entrenched in arguments.

One of the most compelling factors of the argument today is the appreciation that there are gray areas. Students now know that arguments need not be a straight yes/no or agree/disagree situation; however, they know that middle ground arguments mean that their writing must clearly present why the issue cannot simply be placed in one category or another and that the reasoning on either side has solid validity. The audience is crucial to a writer who must consider many factors when writing—diction, general essay order, which evidence, best combination of logos, ethos, and pathos, to name a few. Selecting which of these factors is best goes hand-in-hand with the already selected topic/claim.

Structure and clarity must tie all these ideas and stands on issues. Considering how well a sentence, paragraph, and essay are written is paramount in wrapping up. Which ideas should be removed or expanded on? Where should which evidence be placed and what type?

Does each paragraph or grouped paragraphs have a control element/point? Is there unity and coherence—consistency of tense, person, mood? Is there control of the language, sentence structure, and grammar? Has the fuzziness and the cloudiness been cleared eliminating the need for readers to do the writer's work? Does the writing distract the reader from the argument or does the writing itself fade to the background as the presented argument takes center stage?

The **researched argument** goes a step further by placing writers in conversation with others. Focused library and internet searches permits for more control of a well-structured research paper. Seeking out variations of a topic's conversations creates a well-informed researcher. What are opponents saying/feeling? Which specific aspects are they focused how? Can I find loopholes in their arguments or agree with valid points? The research allows writers to combine others' thoughts and views into their own, ultimately becoming the expert on the chosen topic—a topic that undoubtedly caught the attention of the student writer. Choosing topics of interest, topics that (for whatever reason) invoke curiosity, is the first step into building a search. Incorporating self into the process makes for an enjoyable journey.



Writers must now recognize that all evidence and sources are not created equal and must decipher between the good and the bad, selecting reliable, valid sources that work with their claims, incorporating compelling opponents' views, and meticulously document all within and at end-of text using the one form of documentation the instructor selected. In so doing, recognizing that plagiarism can be an easy pitfall is essential to a proper research. Effective summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting help present a well-packaged research so long as the writer's views stay in control.

Working with topics that matter to students, carefully exploring issues that affect their lives locally and globally, building solid, clear claims that are relevant to the particular argument, considering who the audience is and the best way to reach them are vital in presenting an argument. Understanding how to best search the most relevant issues within a given topics, deciphering the good from the bad, properly documenting others' views, including opposition, in a research, and possibly filling a hole in on-going conversations on a topic, presents a fair-minded, diligent researcher.

Writing all clearly through tireless, passionate revising and rewriting pulls it all together for the reader.