

Argumentative Essay – Rubric

An “A” Paper – Brilliant/Excellent

Title is unexpectedly delightful and fully grabs reader’s attention
Claim fully answers essay prompt with bold and arguable stance
Each body paragraph sets a clear, powerful path in supporting the claim
Evidence is insightful, unexpected choices from a variety of high-quality, reputable sources
Skillfully uses argumentation to connect evidence with reasons why claim is valid
Powerful vocabulary with no repetition of key words or phrases; always fresh and interesting
Excellent sentence flow and variety of sentence structures
Skillful use of transitions to help create a unified, cohesive piece of writing
M.L.A. citations are perfectly formatted and skillfully embedded so the resource information is seamless
A lively, interesting writer’s voice comes through to the audience

A “B” Paper – Good/Above Average

Title is appropriate to the topic, but lacks great inspiration
Claim fully answers essay prompt, but lacks the power of the “A” level claim
Each body paragraph logically supports the claim, but doesn’t add as much power as the reader would like to see
Evidence is appropriate, but somewhat obvious; sources are reliable
Clear attempts to use argumentation to connect evidence with reasons why claim is valid
Good vocabulary that clearly, but not always powerfully, expresses your ideas; you don’t repeat words or phrases
Smooth sentence flow and occasionally effective sentence variety
Correct use of transitions for unity and cohesiveness
M.L.A. citations are correctly formatted and embedded
The writer’s voice comes through to the audience, but the passion falls flat at times

A “C” Paper – Okay/Average

Title is flat or predictable
Claim answers essay prompt, but is too timid, safe, or bland
Each body paragraph supports the claim, but construction is mechanical
Evidence is present, but blatantly obvious; sources are marginal in quality and/or you needed a broader variety of sources
Attempts to use argumentation to connect evidence with reasons why claim is valid are made, but are a bit clumsy or thin
Average, simple vocabulary or overly flowery language that blocks meaning at times
Sentence flow is choppy at times; limited sentence variety
Limited use of transitions; at times, an inappropriate transition is used or is missing altogether
M.L.A. citations are correctly formatted for the most part, but embedding is clunky/not always handled well
The writer’s voice is flat, too formal, or rigid. Where’s the passion in your voice?

A “D” Paper – Demonstrates Problems/Below Average

Title is just a restatement of the title of the work being discussed or just a label
Claim does not fully answer the essay prompt; you seem to be struggling with your thoughts
Each body paragraph doesn’t clearly connect to the claim and/or includes just stacked data/evidence without argumentation
Evidence is thin, inaccurate, and/or not connected to the argument
Rarely uses argumentation to connect evidence with reasons why claim is valid; this is mostly missing
Flat, below grade-level vocabulary and/or inappropriate word choice
Flow is mostly choppy and erratic; little or no sentence variety
Little or no use of transitions
M.L.A. citations are not correctly formatted or embedded
No writer’s voice is present. The words are lifeless or robotic.

A “F” Paper – Far Below Average

Is incomplete, incoherent, undeveloped, or does not meet the requirements of the assignment

Note to teacher:

For this content rubric, the teacher evaluates ten different elements of the essay, placing a checkmark next to the line that reflects the writer's performance on each particular skill. To figure the final grade for content, gauge where the bulk of checkmarks are located and assign an appropriate grade. I figure grammar grades using a coding system, which is separate from this content rubric. You may want to add a grammar line to this rubric form or adjust a form you're already comfortable using.

More information on how I am able to grade each essay in just five minutes is located here:

<http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Exhausted-by-Essays-5-Minute-Essay-Grading-System-Reclaim-Your-Weekends-1134474>