

Composition: Writing an Effective Argument

For this assignment, you will be arguing about a topic of your choice. As an argument, you will want to take what you've learned from other authors you've read and analyzed, considering how you might be able to **use rhetorical strategies to make your pieces as effective as possible**. In addition to picking a strong topic, you will want to pick something that will sustain your interest and that will challenge you as an opinion-holder. This does not necessarily mean, though, that you must choose a topic that focuses on a **controversial issue**, because **EVERYTHING can be an Argument**. Consider family members, other people your age, your countrymen, and various other perspectives, as you search for the perfect topic or angle on a topic to argue. Just remember that your attitude toward a subject may affect your enthusiasm and effort in completing this paper. As you go about selecting a topic for your paper, consider many of the issues and challenges people in our world face today. **Finally, remember the Rhetorical Situation. What will your argument bring to the ongoing debate?**

Possible Links:

National Forensics League:

<http://www.nflonline.org/StudentResources/PastLincolnDouglasTopics>

<http://www.nflonline.org/StudentResources/PastPolicyDebateTopics>

- Each topic on these is debatable topic, so consider “new” ideas and options as you search the list. Also, consider the idea behind the issues... feel free to use this resource to help you brainstorm issues that concern you today.

OpposingViews.com:

<http://www.opposingviews.com/>

- Many potentially good topics currently in the news, but realize that a solid argument is based on solid evidence, not simply on popularity. Browse the various links and current news items for ideas about topics relevant to you.

IDEA – The International Debate Education Association:

<http://www.idea.org/>

New York Times – 200 Prompts for Argumentative Writing

http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/02/04/200-prompts-for-argumentative-writing/?_r=0

ProCon.org

<http://www.procon.org/>

Ethics Updates

<http://ethics.sandiego.edu/>

- The Ethics Forums provide videos, articles, case studies, and forums on applied ethics topics. Ethics Updates and its associated websites are maintained in the Values Institute at the University of San Diego.

Internet Public Library Pathfinders

<http://www.ipl.org/div/pf/>

Policy Committees from the U.S. Senate Republican and Democrats

<http://rpc.senate.gov> Click "Issues"

<http://www.dpcc.senate.gov/> - Click "DPC Reports"

U.S. Government information by Topic

http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/All_Topics.shtml

Public Agenda Online

<http://www.publicagenda.org/pages/discussion-starters>

Google searches can be refined to limit the results to .gov or .edu sites:

"your topic" site:.gov or "your topic site:.edu"

Ask your school librarian, visit the local library, watch the daily news, and conduct searches on your own for additional resources and information on potential topics.

DEAD TOPICS



Abortion
Animal Abuse
Affirmative Action
Euthanasia
Legalization of Marijuana/Drugs
The Death Penalty
The Legal Drinking Age
Legalizing Gay Marriage
Climate Change

Steroids in Sports
Violence in Media
Media and Body Image/Self Esteem
College Sports Playoff / Salary System
Creation vs. Evolution
Fine Arts Curriculum in Schools
The Affordable Care Act
Personal Agenda Issues
(dress code, school rules, cell phones, etc.)



*****All topics must be approved by the instructor.*****

Topics from the list above are often over-used and typical arguments tend to be static and/or unchanging over time. For these reasons, you are cautioned against choosing one of these, although you are not prohibited. In order to avoid having a flat or repetitive argument, carefully consider what unique perspective your argument will bring to the ongoing conversation and to your audience before deciding on a topic.

Mr. Slater reserves the right to deny any topic for any reason.

Be prepared to answer questions about your proposal.