**Touchstone 4: Argumentative Essay**

ASSIGNMENT: Write a 4-6 page (approximately 1000-1500 word) argumentative essay using the classical model supported by evidence and research.  
  
[Sample Argumentative Essay](https://waldenu.sophia.org/download/attachment/11004-Touchstone%204%20Argumentative%20Sample%20Essay.pdf) In order to foster learning and growth, all essays you submit must be newly written specifically for this course. Any recycled work will be sent back with a 0, and you will be given one attempt to redo the Touchstone.

**A. Instructions**

Remember the word “argument” does not mean a fight in a writing context. An academic argument is more like a thoughtful conversation between two people with differing viewpoints on a debatable issue. However, you are required to take a position on one side of the issue.  
  
In order to foster learning and growth, all essays you submit must be newly written specifically for this course. Any recycled work will be sent back with a 0, and you will be given one attempt to redo the touchstone.

Your submission must include an APA style reference page following the essay. In your research, you will need 2-4 credible primary or secondary sources to use as support in your essay.

On a separate page, below your reference page, include thoughtful answers to the Think About Your Writing questions. References and Think About Your Writing questions are NOT included in the word count for this essay.

**B. Think About Your Writing**

Below your reference page, include answers to all of the following reflection questions.

1. What have you learned about how to present a strong argument? How could/will you apply this knowledge in your professional or everyday life (3-4 sentences)? *Sophia says: Think about the specific skills and techniques that you used while developing and writing your essay. What tools will you take with you from this experience?*

2. Consider the English Composition I course as a whole. What have you learned about yourself as a writer (5-6 sentences)? *Sophia says: What did you learn that surprised you? Is there anything that you have struggled with in the past that you now feel more confident about?*

**C. Argumentative Essay Guidelines**

Refer to the checklist below throughout the writing process. Do not submit your research essay until it meets these guidelines.

**Argumentative Topic and Thesis Statement**

❒ Have you included a thesis that takes a clear, specific position on one side of a debatable issue?

**Argument Development**

❒ Are all of the details relevant to the purpose of your essay?  
❒ Is the argument supported using rhetorical appeals and source material?  
❒ Is your essay 4-6 pages (approximately 1000-1500 words)? If not, which details do you need to add or delete?

**Research**

❒ Have you cited outside sources effectively using quotation, summary, or paraphrase?  
❒ Are the sources incorporated smoothly, providing the reader with signal phrases and context for the source information?  
❒ Have you referenced a range of 2-4 credible sources?  
❒ Have you included an APA style reference page below your essay?

**Organization and Flow**

❒ Is there an introduction, conclusion, adequate body paragraphs, and a counterargument?  
❒ Is the argument presented in a logical order and easy for the reader to follow?  
❒ Are there transitions within and between paragraphs?

**Style**

❒ Are the word choices accurate and effective?  
❒ Are the sentence structures varied?

**Conventions and Formatting**

❒ Have you properly cited your sources according to APA style guidelines?  
❒ Have you double-checked for correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, formatting, and capitalization?  
❒ Have you proofread for typos?

**Before You Submit**

❒ Have you answered all of the Think About Your Writing questions on a separate page below your reference page? Are your answers thoughtful and included insights, observations, and/or examples in all responses?  
❒ Does your submission include your essay, followed by your reference page, followed by your Think About Your Writing questions?

**D. Rubric**

|  | **Advanced (100%)** | **Proficient (85%)** | **Acceptable (75%)** | **Needs Improvement (50%)** | **Non-Performance (0%)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Argumentative Topic and Thesis Statement**  Take a clear position on a debatable topic. | Includes an argumentative thesis that takes a well-articulated, clear, specific position on one side of a debatable issue. | Includes an argumentative thesis that takes a clear, specific position on one side of a debatable issue. | Includes an argumentative thesis that takes a clear position on one side of a debatable issue; however, it lacks specificity. | Includes an argumentative thesis on a debatable topic; however, it lacks specificity and/or does not take a clear position. | Does not include a thesis, includes a thesis that does not take a position, and/or the topic is not debatable. |
| **Argument Development and Support**  Have a clear argument on a debatable topic and sufficient support | Details are highly relevant and clearly support the argument of the essay. Argument is thoroughly developed; the argument is consistently and effectively supported using rhetorical appeals and source material. | Details are relevant and support the argument of the essay. Argument is well developed; the argument is supported using rhetorical appeals and source material. | Details are predominantly relevant and generally support the argument, though some details may be irrelevant and/or distracting. Argument is not fully developed; the argument is supported by rhetorical appeals and source material; however, some aspects of the argument or support are neglected. | Details are often irrelevant and frequently distract from the argument of the essay. Argument is poorly developed; there is little evidence of rhetorical appeals and/or source material support. | Details are irrelevant and distract from the argument. Argument is not developed and/or the composition is not argumentative. |
| **Organization**  Exhibit competent organization and writing techniques. | Includes all of the required components of an argumentative research paper, including an introduction with relevant and engaging background information and an argumentative thesis, an adequate number of body paragraphs each with a topic sentence, a body paragraph addressing counterargument(s), and a conclusion with a concluding statement. | Includes all of the required components of an argumentative research paper, including an introduction with background information, an argumentative thesis, an adequate number of body paragraphs each with a topic sentence, a body paragraph addressing counterargument(s), and a conclusion with a concluding statement. | Includes nearly all of the required components of an argumentative research paper; however, one component is missing. | Includes most of the required components of an argumentative research paper, but is lacking two components. Sequences ideas and paragraphs such that the connections between ideas (within and between paragraphs) are sometimes unclear and the reader may have difficulty following the progression of the argument. | Lacks several or all of the components of an argumentative research paper. Sequences ideas and paragraphs such that the connections between ideas (within and between paragraphs) are often unclear and the reader has difficulty following the progression of the argument. |
| **Flow**  Establish and maintain a logical flow. | Sequences ideas and paragraphs logically and uses smooth transitions (within and between paragraphs) such that the reader can easily follow the progression of ideas. | Sequences ideas and paragraphs logically and uses transitions (within and between paragraphs) such that the reader can easily follow the progression of ideas. | Primarily sequences ideas and paragraphs logically and uses sufficient transitions (within and between paragraphs) such that the reader can generally follow the progression of ideas. | The progression of ideas is often difficult to follow, due to poor sequencing, ineffective transitions, and/or insufficient transitions. | The progression of ideas is consistently difficult to follow, due to poor sequencing and lack of transitions. |
| **Research**  Incorporate sources through effective quotations, paraphrases, and summaries. | Cites all outside sources appropriately, incorporates sources smoothly and effectively through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. References 2-4 credible primary or secondary sources. | Primarily cites outside sources appropriately, incorporates sources effectively through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. References 2-4 credible primary or secondary sources. | Generally cites outside sources appropriately, primarily incorporates sources effectively through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. References 2-4 credible primary or secondary sources. | Cites outside sources, but most sources are cited improperly; generally incorporates sources through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. References 2-4 primary or secondary sources, but some sources may not be effective or appropriate for the essay’s argument. | Does not cite sources, or citation is consistently inappropriate. Does not reference sources and/or sources are not credible or appropriate. |
| **Style**  Establish a consistent, informative tone and make thoughtful stylistic choices. | Demonstrates thoughtful and effective word choices, avoids redundancy and imprecise language, and uses a wide variety of sentence structures. | Demonstrates effective word choices, primarily avoids redundancy and imprecise language, and uses a variety of sentence structures. | Demonstrates generally effective style choices, but may include occasional redundancies, imprecise language, poor word choice, and/or repetitive sentence structures. | Frequently includes poor word choices, redundancies, imprecise language, and/or repetitive sentence structures. | Excessively demonstrates poor word choices, redundancies, imprecise language, and/or repetitive sentence structures. |
| **Conventions**  Follow conventions for standard English. | There may be a few negligible errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, formatting, and usage. | There are occasional minor errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, formatting, and usage. | There are some significant errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, formatting, and usage. | There are frequent significant errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, formatting, and usage. | There are consistent significant errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, formatting, and usage. |
| **Formatting**  Execute formatting according to requirements. | Consistently adheres to APA formatting requirements for in-text citations and the References page. | Primarily adheres to APA formatting requirements for in-text citations and the References page, such that formatting errors are minimal. | Adequately adheres to APA formatting requirements for in-text citations and the References page, such that formatting errors are occasional. | Inadequately adheres to APA formatting requirements for in-text citations and the References page, such that formatting errors are common. | Does not adhere to APA formatting requirements for in-text citations and the References page, such that formatting errors are pervasive. |
| **Think About Your Writing**  Reflect on progression and development throughout the course. | Demonstrates thoughtful reflection; consistently includes insights, observations, and/or examples in all responses. Answers all reflection questions effectively, following or exceeding response length guidelines. | Demonstrates thoughtful reflection; includes multiple insights, observations, and/or examples. Answers all reflection questions effectively, following response length guidelines. | Primarily demonstrates thoughtful reflection, but some responses are lacking in detail or insight. Answers all reflection questions, primarily following response length guidelines. | Shows limited reflection; the majority of responses are lacking in detail or insight. Answers reflection questions inadequately: may not answer all of the questions and/or may not follow response length guidelines. | Does not answer the majority of reflection questions or the majority of answers do not follow response length guidelines. |

**E. Requirements**

* The essay should be 4-6 pages (approximately 1000-1500 words in length
* Argumentative Essay Guidelines must be followed or submission will not be graded
* Double-space the essay and use 1-inch margins
* Use a readable 12-point font
* All writing must be appropriate for an academic context
* Composition must be original and written for this assignment
* Plagiarism of any kind is strictly prohibited
* Submission should include your name, the name of the course, the date, and the title of your composition
* Your submission must include the essay, reference page, and your answers to the refection questions
* Submit a single file only, including all assignment components
* Acceptable file formats include .doc and .docx.

**F. Additional Resources**

The following resources will be helpful to you as you work on this assignment:

1. [Purdue Online Writing Lab's APA Formatting and Style Guide](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html)
   1. *This site includes a comprehensive overview of APA style, as well as individual pages with guidelines for specific citation types.*
2. [Frequently Asked Questions About APA Style](https://apastyle.apa.org/learn/faqs/index?_ga=2.108387778.1714049845.1568211418-1848442951.1567702038)
   1. *This page on the official APA website addresses common questions related to APA formatting. The "References," "Punctuation," and "Grammar and Writing Style" sections will be the most useful to your work in this course.*
3. [APA Style: Quick Answers—References](https://apastyle.apa.org/learn/quick-guide-on-references?_ga=2.35495777.1714049845.1568211418-1848442951.1567702038)
   1. *This page on the official APA Style website provides numerous examples of reference list formatting for various source types.*