

Suggestions for Improving Your Argumentative Essay

1. Brainstorm all sides of your topic before you write! This will help you to choose a position, if you have not already done so. It will also help you to understand the various points you might develop in support of your position. Don't just brainstorm the side of the issue that you agree with. It is important to consider all sides of the issue so that you will know what opposing arguments you may want to address in your essay.
2. Create a brief outline, detailing the arguments you will be making in each paragraph. This is an opportunity for you to organize the points you developed in your brainstorm. This will help you to avoid repetitive, stream-of-consciousness writing.
3. You must have a clear argumentative thesis statement somewhere in your introduction. Without a clear thesis, your essay will lack purpose and direction.
4. Each paragraph should begin with a clear topic sentence letting the reader know exactly what point it will be arguing.
5. Try not to explore more than one new supporting point in each paragraph. Doing so usually results in short, unconvincing statements that lack examples and details.
6. Remember that each new argument you make in support of your thesis needs to be backed up by supporting evidence and examples. Occasionally you may rely on personal experiences, hypothetical situations, anecdotes and other self-generated sources of logic and emotion to illustrate your points, but you will often need to find statistics and other authoritative evidence to back up your arguments convincingly.
7. Statements such as "I believe," "I think," and all of the many other "I" qualifiers only weaken your overall credibility as a writer.
8. If you used source material, you need to cite it, both within the text of the essay, and in a Works Cited Page! For an in-text citation, you need to tell us the author's name, the article, book or website title, and the page number from which the information was taken. If you relayed information word for word from your source, you need to put quotation marks around it! Use a handbook to help you develop a works cited page.