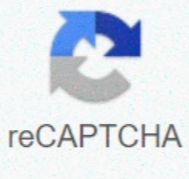


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Easy argumentative essay topics for college students

At some point, you’re going to be asked to write an argumentative essay. An argumentative essay is exactly what it sounds like—an essay in which you’ll be making an argument, using examples and research to back up your point. But not all argumentative essay topics are created equal. Not only do you have to structure your essay right to have a good impact on the reader, but even your choice of subject can impact how readers feel about your work. In this article, we’ll cover the basics of writing argumentative essays, including what argumentative essays are, how to write a good one, and how to pick a topic that works for you. Then check out a list of argumentative essay ideas to help you get started. **What Is an Argumentative Essay?** An argumentative essay is one that makes an argument through research. These essays take a position and support it through evidence, but, unlike many other kinds of essays, they are interested in expressing a specific argument supported by research and evidence. A good argumentative essay will be based on established or new research rather than only on your thoughts and feelings. Imagine that you’re trying to get your parents to raise your allowance, and you can offer one of two arguments in your favor: You should raise my allowance because I want you to. You should raise my allowance because I’ve been taking on more chores without complaining. The first argument is based entirely in feelings without any factual backup, whereas the second is based on evidence that can be proven. Your parents are more likely to respond positively to the second argument because it demonstrates that you have done something to earn the increased allowance. Similarly, a well-researched and reasoned argument will show readers that your point has a basis in fact, not just feelings. The standard five-paragraph essay is common in writing argumentative essays, but it’s not the only way to write one. An argumentative essay is typically written in one of two formats, the Toulmin model or the Rogerian model. The Toulmin model is the most common, comprised of an introduction with a claim (otherwise known as a thesis), with data to support it. This style of essay will also include rebuttals, helping to strengthen your argument by anticipating counterarguments. The Rogerian model analyzes two sides of an argument and reaches a conclusion after weighing the strengths and weaknesses of each. Both essay styles rely on well-reasoned logic and supporting evidence to prove a point, just in two different ways. The important thing to note about argumentative essays as opposed to other kinds of essays is that they aim to argue a specific point rather than to explain something or to tell a story. While they may have some things in common with analytical essays, the primary difference is in their objective—an argumentative essay aims to convince someone of something, whereas an analytical essay contextualizes a topic with research. If all goes well, your essay could be in a book like this! **What Makes a Good Argumentative Essay?** To write an effective argumentative essay, you need to know what a good one looks like. In addition to a solid structure, you’ll need an argument, a strong thesis, and solid research. **An Argument** Unlike other forms of essays, you are trying to convince your reader of something. You’re not just teaching them a concept or demonstrating an idea—you’re constructing an argument to change the readers’ thinking. You’ll need to develop a good argument, which encompasses not just your main point, but also all the pieces that make it up. Think beyond what you are saying and include how you’re saying it. How will you take an idea and turn it into a complex and well thought out argument that is capable of changing somebody’s mind? **A Strong Thesis** The thesis is the core of your argument. What specific message are you trying to get across? State that message in one sentence, and that will be your thesis. This is the foundation on which your essay is built, so it needs to be strong and well-reasoned. You need to be able to expand on it with facts and sources, not just feelings. **Research** A good argumentative essay isn’t just based on your individual thoughts, but research. That can be citing sources and other arguments or it can mean direct research in the field, depending on what your argument is and the context in which you are arguing it. Be prepared to back your thesis up with reporting from scientific journals, newspapers, or other forms of research. Having well-researched sources will help support your argument better than hearsay or assumptions. If you can’t find enough research to back up your point, it’s worth reconsidering your thesis or conducting original research, if possible. **How to Come Up With an Argumentative Essay Topic** Sometimes you may find yourself arguing things you don’t necessarily believe. That’s totally fine—you don’t actually have to wholeheartedly believe in what you’re arguing in order to construct a compelling argument. However, if you have free choice of topic, it’s a good idea to pick something you feel strongly about. There are two key components to a good argumentative essay: a strong stance, and an assortment of evidence. If you’re interested and feel passionate about the topic you choose, you’ll have an easier time finding evidence to support it, but it’s the evidence that’s most important. So, to choose a topic, think about things you feel strongly about, whether positively or negatively. You can make a list of ideas and narrow those down to a handful of things, then expand on those ideas with a few potential points you want to hit on. For example, say you’re trying to decide whether you should write about how your neighborhood should ban weed killer, that your school’s lunch should be free for all students, or that the school day should be cut by one hour. To decide between these ideas, you can make a list of three to five points for each that cover the different evidence you could use to support each point. For the weed killer ban, you could say that weed killer has been proven to have adverse impacts on bees, that there are simple, natural alternatives, and that weeds aren’t actually bad to have around. For the free lunch idea, you could suggest that some students have to go hungry because they can’t afford lunch, that funds could be diverted from other places to support free lunch, and that other items, like chips or pizza, could be sold to help make up lost revenue. And for the school day length example, you could argue that teenagers generally don’t get enough sleep, that you have too much homework and not enough time to do it, and that teenagers don’t spend enough time with their families. You might find as you make these lists that some of them are stronger than others. The more evidence you have and the stronger you feel that that evidence is, the better the topic. Of course, if you feel that one topic may have more evidence but you’d rather not write about it, it’s okay to pick another topic instead. When you’re making arguments, it can be much easier to find strong points and evidence if you feel passionate about our topic than if you don’t. **50 Argumentative Essay Topic Ideas** If you’re struggling to come up with topics on your own, read through this list of argumentative essay topics to help get you started! **Science** Should fracking be legal? Should parents be able to modify their unborn children? Do GMOs help or harm people? Should vaccinations be required for students to attend public school? Should world governments get involved in addressing climate change? **Technology** Should Facebook be allowed to collect data from its users? Should self-driving cars be legal? Is it ethical to replace human workers with automation? Should there be laws against using cell phones while driving? Has the internet positively or negatively impacted human society? **Sports** Should college athletes be paid for being on sports teams? Should coaches and players make the same amount of money? Should sports be segregated by gender? Should the concept of designated hitters in baseball be abolished? Should US sports take soccer more seriously? **Religion** Should religious organizations have to pay taxes? Should religious clubs be allowed in schools? Should “one nation under God” be in the pledge of allegiance? Should religion be taught in schools? Should clergy be allowed to marry? **Health** Should minors be able to purchase birth control without parental consent? Should the US switch to single-payer healthcare? Should assisted suicide be legal? Should dietary supplements and weight loss items like teas be allowed to advertise through influencers? Should doctors be allowed to promote medicines? **Government/Politics** Is the electoral college an effective system for modern America? Should Puerto Rico become a state? Should voter registration be automatic? Should people in prison be allowed to vote? Should Supreme Court justices be elected? **Ethics** Should sex work be legalized? Should Columbus Day be replaced with Indigenous Peoples’ Day? Should the death penalty be legal? Should animal testing be allowed? Should drug possession be decriminalized? **Economic** Should unpaid internships be legal? Should minimum wage be increased? Should monopolies be allowed? Is universal basic income a good idea? Should corporations have a higher or lower tax rate? **Education** Are school uniforms a good idea? Should PE affect a student’s grades? Should college be free? Should Greek life in colleges be abolished? Should students be taught comprehensive sex ed? **Arts/Culture** Should graffiti be considered art or vandalism? Should books with objectionable words be banned? Should content on YouTube be better regulated? Is art education important? Should art and music sharing online be allowed? **Speaking from authority** is great for enhancing your argument—as is being a cat. **How to Argue Effectively** A strong argument isn’t just about having a good point. If you can’t support that point well, your argument falls apart. One of the most important things you can do in writing a strong argumentative essay is organizing well. Your essay should have a distinct beginning, middle, and end, better known as the introduction, body and opposition, and conclusion. This example follows the Toulmin model—if your essay follows the Rogerian model, the same basic premise is true, but your thesis will instead propose two conflicting viewpoints that will be resolved through evidence in the body, with your conclusion choosing the stronger of the two arguments. **Introduction Hook** Your hook should draw the reader’s interest immediately. Questions are a common way of getting interest, as well as evocative language or a strong statistic. **Background** Don’t assume that your audience is already familiar with your topic. Give them some background information, such as a brief history of the issue or some additional context. **Thesis** Your thesis is the crux of your argument. In an argumentative essay, your thesis should be clearly outlined so that readers know exactly what point you’ll be making. Don’t explain all your evidence in the opening, but do take a strong stance and make it clear what you’ll be discussing. **Body Claims** Your claims are the ideas you’ll use to support your thesis. For example, if you’re writing about how your neighborhood shouldn’t use weed killer, your claim might be that it’s bad for the environment. But you can’t just say that on its own—you need evidence to support it. **Evidence** Evidence is the backbone of your argument. This can be things you glean from scientific studies, newspaper articles, or your own research. You might cite a study that says that weed killer has an adverse effect on bees, or a newspaper article that discusses how one town eliminated weed killer and saw an increase in water quality. These kinds of hard evidence support your point with demonstrable facts, strengthening your argument. **Opposition** In your essay, you want to think about how the opposition would respond to your claims and respond to them. Don’t pick the weakest arguments, either—figure out what other people are saying and respond to those arguments with clearly reasoned arguments. Demonstrating that you not only understand the opposition’s point, but that your argument is strong enough to withstand it, is one of the key pieces to a successful argumentative essay. **Conclusion** Conclusions are a place to clearly restate your original point, because doing so will remind readers exactly what you’re arguing and show them how well you’ve argued that point. Summarize your main claims by restating them, though you don’t need to bring up the evidence again. This helps remind readers of everything you’ve said throughout the essay. **End** by suggesting a picture of a world in which your argument and action are ignored. This increases the impact of your argument and leaves a lasting impression on the reader. **Key Tips** A strong argumentative essay is one with good structure and a strong argument, but there are a few other things you can keep in mind to further strengthen your point. **Focus** When you’re crafting an argument, it can be easy to get distracted by all the information and complications in your argument. It’s important to stay focused—be clear in your thesis and home in on claims that directly support that thesis. **Be Rational** It’s important that your claims and evidence be based in facts, not just opinion. That’s why it’s important to use reliable sources based in science and reporting—otherwise, it’s easy for people to debunk your arguments. Don’t rely solely on your feelings about the topic. If you can’t back a claim up with real evidence, it leaves room for counterarguments you may not anticipate. Make sure that you can support everything you say with clear and concrete evidence, and your claims will be a lot stronger! **What’s Next?** No matter what kind of essay you’re writing, a strong plan will help you have a bigger impact. This guide to writing a college essay is a great way to get started on your essay organizing journey! Brushing up on your essay format knowledge to prep for the SAT? Check out this list of SAT essay prompts to help you kickstart your studying! A bunch of great essay examples can help you aspire to greatness, but bad essays can also be a warning for what not to do. This guide to bad college essays will help you better understand common mistakes to avoid in essay writing!

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