

Name: _____ Period: _____

Argumentative Writing: The Value of a College Education

Your assignment is to write an essay of argumentation about the value of a college education. Your essay must be organized as an argument in which you assert a precise claim, support it with reasons and evidence, and acknowledge and refute counterclaims fairly.

Examine your research notes and see how you can categorize your evidence (financial, emotional, societal, etc.). List some of the categories you may have: _____

After you have come up with categories, think about how each of those categories could be made into a claim to help support your overall thesis. Then, use this chart to document your thesis, claims, and a place to organize evidence. You may expand the chart to include more evidence. However, you will eventually want to have only 3-4 pieces of evidence per paragraph. Choose the best ones that will fit together to create the most coherent argument. If you find that you have more than 3-4 excellent pieces of evidence for a claim, you may need to have multiple paragraphs about that claim, or think about how the claim could be separated into multiple smaller claims.

What is my overall claim (Thesis):			
What is a sub-claim I can make to help support my thesis? This will serve as a topic sentence for a body paragraph	What is a sub-claim I can make to help support my thesis? This will serve as a topic sentence for a body paragraph	What is a sub-claim I can make to help support my thesis? This will serve as a topic sentence for a body paragraph	What is a counterclaim to my thesis?
Individual specific evidence that supports my claim	Individual specific evidence that supports my claim	Individual specific evidence that supports my claim	Individual specific evidence that supports counterclaim

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Organization notes

Introductory paragraph

Your introductory paragraph should include the following parts: Hook, background of topic (explain the current debate about the value of a college education), and thesis.

Body paragraphs

Remember, you are writing 8-part paragraphs. That means, you need to have commentary for each piece of evidence. However, you also need to include context for each piece of evidence. You should not just drop in a quote after the previous piece of evidence. You need to transition to the next evidence and include context (this can be as simple as the source of the information). A well written body paragraph structure may look like this:

Claim

Context for evidence

Evidence (direct quote from credible source)

Commentary

Transition to next evidence?

Context

Evidence

Commentary

Transition

Context

Evidence

Commentary

Concluding sentence (Make sure your concluding sentence solidifies how the three pieces of evidence work together to support the claim. You should not simply restate your three pieces of evidence)

Counterclaim and refutation

Your counterclaim and refutation can be located in any number of places (look at the next page for help).

Your counterclaim must be supported by evidence. That means you will be spending time proving your argument wrong. It is not enough to assert that other people might think the opposite of you. That is why you are writing this. It is clear that other people may view the topic differently. Your job is to provide evidence for the other side of the argument in order to spend time explaining why they are wrong. Your refutation should provide evidence that directly refutes the claim and evidence previously provided. **This does not have to happen all in one paragraph.**

Counterclaim – assert a specific opposing viewpoint (not just the college is valuable or not)

Counterargument – evidence that supports the counterclaim

Refutation – evidence that proves the counterargument wrong

Conclusion

Reassert your main arguments and provide a so what? In this paragraph you need to leave the reader with an understanding of the significance of your points. What does your argument mean for the reader? The community? The nation? The world? Do you have a call to action? Why does this argument matter?

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Possible essay formats			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Body paragraph #1 • Body paragraph #2 • Body paragraph #3 • Counterargument and refutation paragraph* • Conclusion • *This paragraph could be placed in any order, it does not have to be last 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Background paragraph including further context of debate • Body paragraph #1 • Body paragraph #2 • Body paragraph #3 • Counterargument and refutation paragraph* • Conclusion • *This paragraph could be placed in any order, it does not have to be last 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Body paragraph #1 (Include one counterclaim and refutation) • Body paragraph #2 (Include one counterclaim and refutation) • Body paragraph #3 (Include one counterclaim and refutation) • Conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Background paragraph including further context of debate • Body paragraph #1 (Have paragraph lead with a counterclaim - refute it for the entire paragraph*) • Body paragraph #2 • Body paragraph #3 • Conclusion • *This could be one, or multiple paragraphs
<p>Remember, you are not limited to three body paragraphs. Three is simply the minimum to be able to receive full credit. These are also not the only formats this essay could take. If you use a different format, please talk to me, though.</p>			

Here is a simplified version of a counterclaim and refutation. This would not constitute an entire paragraph. This is only a sample. You do not need to write on it. You also do not need to use this structure.

(Others might think that,)

Concession (other side of claim)

(other side's reason/evidence)

Refutation (However, but, on the other hand, etc.) - Evidence

This shows that college is/is not worth it because (commentary)
