

Humanities 12 - Arguing a Position

Your paper must fulfill the following requirements:

- Be 6-10 double-spaced pages
- follow the guidelines of one of the specific guidelines I've listed below
- Use at least three different pieces of evidence from readings, class activities, and films that we go over in class. Honors students must integrate their chosen film, *The Grand Inquisitor*, or *Angels in America* into their argument in some way. Refer to the List of Topics We've Studied posted on my DP under Student Resources to choose these three pieces of evidence
- Use proper MLA in-text citations and include a works-cited page. A handout explaining MLA citation is in your writing folder

Arguing a Position - Specific Guidelines

In this format, you will make a reasoned argument for a specific position on a controversial issue. I will evaluate the following four features to arrive at a final grade.

- **Well-presented issue** - You must show that there are at least two different sides, explaining each position with at least a sentence. The rest of the essay must argue convincingly that your position is clearly stronger than the others. For lesser known issues, you must quickly prove the issue is important.
- **Well-supported argument** – You will need to have at least two reasons for your position that you explain and elaborate within your paper. You should support these reasons with at least three references to material we have studied in class.
- **Effective counterargument** – You will need to include at least one potential objection to your position. You will need to accommodate or refute this objection, not simply acknowledge it.
- **Readable plan** – You must have a clear thesis and forecasting statement in your introduction. Paragraphs should have topic sentences. The best papers will use repeated words or phrases to focus the reader and include strong transitional phrases to move the reader from one section of the essay to the next.

Note that I do not assign point totals or percentages to these features above. An essay that is extremely strong on one feature can make up for an area that requires more refinement. Match these requirements with the general essay standards posted on my DP to understand how I will evaluate your essay.

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Here is the checklist I will use to evaluate each feature

Feature	Comments
Well-Presented Issue	Shows there are at least two sides to the issue Establishes the issue as important Frames the issue effectively Writes with a clear purpose to a defined audience
Well-Supported Argument	At least two reasons supporting the position Reference to at least three topics we've covered in class Sources are credible
Effective Counterargument	At least one objection to the argument Provides an accommodation or refutation
A Readable Plan	Thesis and forecasting statement Topic sentences Labels positions consistently Repeats key words to identify agreement and disagreement Uses transitional words and phrases - "For example," "as well as," "Even though."
Mechanics	No comma splices or sentence fragments Correct use of punctuation Writes primarily in active voice, minimizing passive voice Errors do not significantly hinder comprehension

A Note on Topics

The topic you choose should be: controversial, arguable, one for which you have a strong position. I recommend that you select a topic that you can evaluate with objectivity. For this reason, I suggest you avoid issues that revolve solely on ethical or religious beliefs as these tend to be difficult to support with logical reasoning, which is the focus of this particular assignment. Debates on abortion or creationism, for example, often result in unsupported arguments. You can still choose such topics but must accept the burden of using logic and facts in your argument and explicitly address how logic and belief intersect.

Due: End of class on Monday, November 2nd