**Argument Writing**

**Ethos--Credibility and Trust**

* Present yourself as an expert on the issue/topic--know what you’re talking/writing about!
* So*und* like an expert! (No “I think/feel/believe”)
* Cite trustworthy sources! (not Yahoo Answers!)

**Logos--Logic and Reason**

* Provide proof/evidence--quotes, facts, statistics, etc.
* Walk your audience through your reasoning and logic. (Explain how your evidence proves your point!)
* Organize so that your points are easy to follow. Have an introduction, body, and conclusion. Each paragraph focuses on a clear argument. Arguments follow this pattern: claim, context, evidence, explanation.
* **Counter arguments-**-Acknowledge why some people might disagree with you, but then prove and explain why their argument is wrong or invalid(counter it!) and your argument is still right. More people will agree with you if you can address their concerns.

**Pathos--Emotion and Values**

* Appeal to your audience’s values and emotions. Anecdotes (very short stories) are a great way to do this.
* Get your reader to imagine she/he is in a situation so that she/he can empathize.
* Use strong, vivid language. For example, don’t say, “The man was bad.” Say, “The man was evil, brutal, and cruel.”

\*Rhetorical questions can backfire. If you ask your reader a question, she/he may not answer in the way you want. (Imagine that you ask your reader, “Would you ever kick a puppy?” You are hoping they’d say, “Never!” However, you might have a problem if your reader says, “Why, yes I would! I kick puppies all the time!)

**Rubric for Argument Writing**

|  | **Exceeding** | **Meeting** | **Progressing** | **Beginning** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Introduction: context | In addition to giving enough context, I also present my topic in a way that hooks my reader and makes him/her want to read on.  | I can introduce my reader to the topic/problem and give the reader enough information/context so that my thesis will make sense.  | I introduce my reader to the topic but I may leave out a few key pieces of information that my reader needs to understand the thesis.  | I give my reader some of the information she/he will need to understand my thesis.  |
| Introduction: thesis | In addition to stating the point I will make at the end of the introduction, my thesis reveals deep insight.  | I state the point I will make in the essay at the end of my introduction. My thesis makes a clear point that I maintain throughout the essay.  | I state the point I will make in the essay, but I may not do it at the end of the introduction, or the wording may be a little confusing.  | I did not state the point I will make in the essay.  |
| Body Paragraphs: Topic Sentence | In addition to beginning with a topic sentence that states a clear argument/main idea, I begin with a transition that makes it clear how this paragraph relates to the rest of the essay.  | I begin my body paragraphs with topic sentences that state the main idea/argument of the paragraph and relates to my thesis. All of my sentences in the paragraph relate to this main idea/argument.  | I begin most paragraphs with a topic sentence but it may not make the main idea/argument of the paragraph clear, or some of my sentences may not relate to this main idea.  | I do not begin with topic sentences.  |
| Body Paragraphs: context | I gave only the essential context that my reader would need to understand my evidence.  | I provided enough context so that someone who doesn’t know as much about the topic will still be able to follow my evidence. (introduce quotes, define key terms, introduce experts or sources.)  | I provided some context so that someone who hasn’t read the same texts I have can follow my evidence. I may have left out a little bit of information that my reader needed.  | I did not provide enough context so that someone who hasn’t read the same texts could follow my evidence.  |
| Body Paragraphs: Evidence | I provided strong, rich evidence to support my arguments. I made sure that I picked the most convincing evidence.  | I provided enough specific evidence (anecdote, fact, static, expert opinion, quote from the text) to support my arguments.  | I provided some evidence to support my arguments. I may need more evidence, or I may need to be more specific.  | I needed to add more evidence or be more specific to support my arguments of the paragraph.  |
| Body Paragraphs: Elaboration/ explanation | I analyzed all aspects of my evidence and explained how it supported my point. My analysis was powerful and persuasive.  | I analyzed my evidence and explained how it supported my arguments. I made sure that all of my explanation helps convince my reader to agree with my arguments.  | I analyzed some of my evidence but I needed to explain a little bit more so that my reader could understand how it supported my argument.  | I did not analyze my evidence or I simply stated that it supported my point rather than explaining how. (This shows.) |
| Counter Argument | I acknowledge and counter multiple arguments that might be used against me.  | I acknowledge a reason someone might disagree with me and provide reasoning and evidence to “counter” that argument. (Convince your reader that argument is wrong or invalid and you are still right.)  | I acknowledge a reason someone might disagree with me, but I don’t provide enough reasoning or evidence to fully “counter” that argument.  | I might not acknowledge why someone would disagree with me or I forget to “counter” that argument.  |
| Conclusion: restate and summarize | I reminded the reader of my thesis and main points. I was succinct and did not repeat any sentence I’d already used.  | I restated my thesis using different words. I summarized all of my main points.  | I restated my thesis using most of the same words. I summarized some of my main points.  | I forgot to either restate my thesis or summarize my main points.  |
| Conclusion: “so what” | I ended with a “so what” and explained how it relates to both my essay and the real word.  | I ended with “so what” that connects my essay to real life and the “big picture.”  | I ended with a “so what” but it may not be clear how it relates to my essay.  | I forgot to add a “so what.” |
| Organization: order of paragraphs | In addition to meeting the standard, each body paragraph builds on a previous point, so that I am leading the reader toward a deeper understanding. (Paragraphs are so deliberately ordered that nothing could be rearranged.)  | My essay has a clear beginning, middle, and end. Each of my body paragraphs has a clear focus, and I organized them in a logical way that supports my reader’s growing understanding.  | My essay has a clear beginning, middle, and end.Each of my body paragraphs has a clear focus, but some of my paragraphs could have been arranged in a better order.  | My essay does not have a clear, beginning, middle, and end. Either some of my paragraphs do not have a clear focus, or I did not arrange my paragraphs in a logical order.  |
| Organization: order of sentences | In addition to meeting the standard, the order of my details builds the reader towards a deeper understanding. | The order of my details in my paragraphs is logical and easy to follow. All details are on topic and each paragraph has a clear beginning, middle, and end.  | Most of my details in my paragraphs are in a logical order--a couple might be out of place. Most paragraphs have clear beginning, middle and end.  | The order of my details in my paragraphs needs to be revised to make more sense.  |
| Voice and tone: language | In addition to choosing specific language, I also used literary devices (simile, metaphor, imagery, repetition, allusion) to affect the reader in a particular way. I varied by tone to match my purpose and develop an impact.  | I intended to affect my reader in particular ways--to make him/her think, realize, feel a particular way--and I chose language to do that. I chose precise, descriptive words to help my reader following my thinking and grasp the meaning and significance of a point or a piece of evidence. I varied my tone to match my purpose.  | Most of the time I chose precise, descriptive words to make my meaning clear. Most of the time I maintained a formal, appropriate tone. (I avoided using “I” unless it was appropriate.)  | I used “I think,” “I feel” or “In my opinion.” Some of words could have been more specific to make my meaning clear. I did not maintain an appropriate tone.  |
| Voice and tone: transitions | I used transitions that were phrases and sentences rather than single words. My transitions clarify the relationship between ideas and paragraphs, and help the reader to follow my thinking.  | I provided a variety of transitions between parts of the text (paragraphs) and ideas. My transitions help the reader to see how parts of the text relate back to earlier parts and to follow my thinking.  | I used transitions to help the reader follow from parts to part and point to point, but some of my transitions could have been more varied.  | I used some transitions, but I could have used more, or I could have used more appropriate transitions.  |
| Voice and tone: sentence structure | I used varied sentence structure to create a specific effect. (e.g. Repetition or short, choppy sentences for emphasis.) | I used a variety of sentence structures (simple, compound, complex) and avoided beginning too many sentences the same way unless I did so for effect. II also avoided beginning sentences with “This shows” or “This is why.” | Most of the time I varied my sentence structure. I occasionally began too many sentences the same way (I could have combined more sentences to avoid repeating myself. ) or used “This shows.”  | Most of my sentences are simple or compound. Many sentences begin the same way or could have been combined to avoid repeating.  |
| Proofreading: Capitals | All words are capitalized correctly. | Almost all words are capitalized correctly. | I have several errors in capitalization. | I have many errors in capitalization. |
| Proofreading: Punctuation | All sentences, including dialogue, are punctuated correctly. | Almost all sentences, including dialogue, are punctuated correctly. | Several sentences, including dialogue, are punctuated incorrectly. | Many sentences, including dialogue, are punctuated incorrectly. |
| Proofreading: Sentences | All of my sentences are complete and make sense. | Almost all of my sentences are complete and make sense. | Several sentences are incomplete or don't make sense. | Many sentences are incomplete or don't make sense. |
| Proofreading: Spelling | All words are spelled correctly. | All words are spelled correctly, but I may have used the wrong word--its vs. it's, there vs. they're, etc.  | Several words are spelled incorrectly or I often mixed up words. (Its vs. it's, they're vs. there, etc.)  | Many words are spelled incorrectly or I often mixed up words. (Its vs. it's, they're vs. there, etc.) |