

Argument Essay Grading Rubric

Saint Paul College

	Beginning	Developing	Proficiency	Mastery	Score
Thesis/Claim <i>10 points</i>	Reader cannot determine thesis and purpose OR thesis has no arguable claim.	Thesis may be obvious or unimaginative. Thesis and purpose are somewhat vague.	Contains an arguable claim that is somewhat original. Thesis and purpose are fairly clear.	Contains an arguable claim that develops fresh insight and challenges the reader's thinking.	
Support/Reasoning <i>10 points</i>	The writer focuses on own thoughts and beliefs about the topic; neglects the rhetorical elements. Offers simplistic, undeveloped, or cryptic support for the ideas.	The writer includes 1 rhetorical element in the development of ideas. Offers somewhat obvious support that may be too broad. Details are too general, not interpreted, irrelevant to thesis, or inappropriately repetitive.	The writer includes 2 rhetorical elements in the development of ideas. Offers solid but less original reasoning. Assumptions are not always recognized or made explicit.	The writer includes all 3 rhetorical elements (logos, pathos, ethos) in the development of ideas. Assumptions are made explicit. Details are relevant, original, and convincingly interpreted.	
Opposing Viewpoints <i>10 points</i>	Refutation missing or vague. Obvious lack of sound, logical argument throughout.	Refutation paragraph missing and/or vague. There are one or two examples that are not sound, logical argument.	Author acknowledges the opposing view, but does not present sound counterpoint.	Author acknowledges the opposing view and argues it logically.	
Structure & Organization <i>10 points</i>	Work lacks structure; lacks a clear thesis or conclusion, body seems haphazard; transitions are not present.	Body lacks a clear direction; supporting evidence loosely tied to thesis; transitions missing; conclusion has no sense of closure.	Body mostly flows from the thesis; transitions are awkward at times; appropriate conclusion.	Body flows from thesis; transitions guide the reader smoothly through the text; conclusion effectively wraps up the essay.	
Sources/Documentation <i>5 points</i>	Neglects important sources. Overuse of quotations or paraphrase to substitute writer's own ideas. (Probably uses source material without acknowledgement.)	Uses relevant sources but lacks in variety of sources and/or the skillful combination of sources. Quotations and paraphrases may be too long and/or inconsistently referenced.	Uses sources to support, extend, and inform, but not substitute writer's own development of ideas. Doesn't overuse quotes, but may not always conform to MLA format.	Uses sources to support, extend, and inform, but not substitute writer's own development of ideas. Source material is announced by a signal phrase and ended with in-text citations.	
Grammar/Mechanics <i>5 points</i>	Errors so numerous they distract the reader and skew the writer's meaning	Repeated weaknesses in mechanics and usage. Pattern of flaws. Meaning is still clear.	Occasional minor errors do not distract the reader or interfere with meaning.	Essentially free from mechanical, grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors.	
TOTAL					