

Researched Argument Assignment

Word Count: 1800-2200 words

Required Sources: 12 sources minimum. Outside sources must meet criteria for academically appropriate and authoritative research.

Evaluation: You can view the [rubric](#)

Sample Assignment: [Click here to view a sample student Researched Argument from a previous term.](#)

(Note: Samples are offered to give a model of the assignment; they are good models, but not necessarily flawless.)

What Is a Researched Argument?

A Researched Argument is an essay in which you argue for a specific answer to a specific research question. In order to do this successfully, you have to both establish that there is a question out there on which intelligent, informed individuals or groups could intelligently disagree, and then intelligently argue your position on or offer an intelligent response to the question.

Basically, you need to research and write an argument. To write this essay, you'll ask a research question, conduct additional research on the issue you've identified, create a thesis that answers your research question with a specific argument, and develop that argument with your research and reasoning. In addition to an introduction and conclusion, your essay should have at least **four subsections with headings** (consisting of 1-5 paragraphs each, depending on your research findings and discussion goals.):

- A **Background section** (in which you introduce the issue your research question addresses and the existing conversation surrounding the issue. This will be a mini-synthesis of your authors, so you can look to and reuse portions of your previous Synthesis of Arguments to help you establish meaningful background.).
- An **Argument section** (in which you present each of your best reasons in support of your thesis, with each reason itself supported by your research and reasoning).

- A **Naysayers section** (in which you summarize those views which differ from your own in response to your research question/thesis--these should be fair and accurately presented).
- A **Rebuttal section** (in which you refute or concede to the opposing views summarized in the Naysayers section using your research and intelligent reasoning).

These body sections should be given informative, interesting headings to help make your organization of your essay clear to readers (the above descriptions should not be the actual titles of your own sections). Overall, these sections will help you establish the academic conversation surrounding your issue, argue for your position, and strengthen your argument by fairly acknowledging and addressing opposing views.

Basic Requirements

Your essay should, at minimum, include the following:

Introduction (1-2 paragraphs)

- Context specific to the issue you will address with your research question to not only make topic of argument clear but also to establish reader's feeling of meaningfulness/needfulness of an answer to the research question.
- Explicit statement of the research question you will answer.
- Thesis which clearly states your answer to your research question--this is the argument you will make in your essay (so make it as specific and focused as you can).
- Preview of the main points you will argue in support of your thesis (the reasons behind your argument), as well as a preview of the main subsections of the body to follow.
- A brief mention of the State of the Debate (what most people are saying on the topic), Gap (a missing piece of information, an unaddressed question, or a logical leap within the reasoning or evidence presented), and Contribution (unique addition or insight that your essay brings to the ongoing debate).

Body (minimum of four headed sections as assigned; 2-4 paragraphs each subsection)

- Headings for each subsection that communicate both purpose and content of subsection (not just "Naysayers," but "Arguments Against Privatizing American Schools" or "What's Wrong with Being Selfish?" e.g.)
- Topic sentences that make clear claims about the focus of the existing conversation (for background/synthesis paragraphs); clear claims in support

of thesis (for argument paragraphs); clear claims summarizing arguments of opposing views (for naysayers paragraphs); and clear claims arguing against or conceding a point to opposing views (for rebuttal paragraphs).

- Evidence (in the form of quotations/ paraphrases from the text) to support each major claim made, presented in “quote sandwiches” (introduce-quote-explain).
- Transition words and other connecting language to make logical relationships between ideas explicit.

Conclusion (1-2 paragraphs)

- Restatement/revisiting of research question and thesis in light of preceding argument.
- Recap of main points/highlights from body paragraphs.
- Emphasis of significance of essay’s main findings (relevance/ implications).

Conventions (throughout essay)

- APA format and citation (including cover page, running head, abstract, and both in-text and References page citations).
- Sentences that follow conventions for standard English (spelling, grammar, etc.).
- Professional, fair-minded, analytic tone throughout--even when expressing your own arguments (no soapboxing or ranting).

Task (throughout essay: essay purpose, goals, and genre)

- Fair representation of both the current conversation surrounding your issue and various positions taken in response to your issue and/or research question.
- Well-developed and significant contribution to the conversation (your argument), argued for and substantiated with intelligent, credible reasoning, research, and reflection.
- Fair acknowledgment of “naysayers,” that is, what reasonable readers might object to in your argument and how you’ve taken their objections into consideration (counter-argument or concession).

Purpose of Assignment

This assignment is designed to help you practice the following skills:

1. Identify both a focused issue and a contribution you can make to the conversation about that issue.
2. Locate and integrate credible research about that issue.
3. Craft an argument that contributes to the conversation.
4. "Chunk" an essay into sections with labeled subheadings to guide the reader.