

How to Write the Argumentative FRQ

Overview:

- This FRQ presents you with a question that has multiple answers. You are not scored on providing a “correct” answer. Your score is based on your ability to support your answer with evidence from the course.

Sample Question

Develop an argument that explains which of the three models of representative democracy—participatory, pluralist or elite—best achieves the founders’ intent for American democracy in terms of ensuring a stable government run by the people.

In your essay you must...

- Articulate a defensible claim or thesis that responds to the prompt and establishes a line of reasoning
 - Support your claim with at least 2 pieces of accurate and relevant information
 - At least one piece of evidence must be from one of the following foundational documents:
 - Brutus 1
 - Federalist 10
 - US Constitution
 - Use a second piece of evidence from another foundational document from the list or from your study of the electoral process
 - Use reasoning to explain why this evidence supports your thesis
 - Respond to an opposing viewpoint using rebuttal
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- Format: This should be a 4 paragraph essay, and yes you **MUST** divide it into separate paragraphs
 - #1: Thesis statement
 - #2: Evidence #1
 - #3: Evidence #2
 - #4: Identify an alternate viewpoint and explain why it’s inaccurate
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 - Important reminders about the evidence that you choose to use
 - Your first supporting evidence paragraph should be tied to one of the provided foundational documents that was reviewed in class.
 - Your second evidence paragraph CAN be from one of the other documents listed in the question OR can be any other SPECIFIC piece of content reviewed during the course. Translation: this evidence can, but doesn’t have to come from a document
 - The Constitution is the only document that you can use twice. But if you choose to use it twice you have to use info from different articles of the Constitution, from an article and amendment, or 2 different amendments

ARGUMENTATIVE FRQ EXAMPLE

Despite some arguing the participatory model best represents the Founders intent because of our numerous elections, in actuality the elitist model best represents the Founders intent because of the way Senate elections were originally designed and the Founders' creation of the Electoral College in limiting the influence of ordinary citizens.

(1) The first piece of evidence that supports that the Founders favored the elitist model is the way in which the Constitution originally specified how Senators were given their jobs. (2) Unlike the House of Representatives which has always been elected, Senators were originally appointed by the states. (3) This shows the Founders favored the elitist model because they wanted to be able to offset the influence of the citizens in Congress. The House would be influenced by the people, and the Senate would be more protected from the influence of the people.

(1) The second piece of evidence that supports the Founders favoring the elitist model is the Electoral College. (2) This is the part of the Presidential election system in which the American voters are actually voting for Electors to select the President. (3) This shows the Founders favored the elitist model because they did not trust the regular citizens with the important decision of selecting the President. That decision would be left up to the more educated, elite electors.

(1) Some may claim that the participatory model best represents the Founders' intent for democracy because we do hold so many elections within this country that the people participate in. (2) However, these elections elect representatives to do the actual work of government. These elite rulers get to make the vast majority of the government decisions once they are put in power. This shows that it's really these government officials that have most of the power, not the people.

Paragraph #1: Your thesis statement	Start with your opponent's views, then state your opinion and provide a <i>because statement</i> (line of reasoning). Do not just mention the names of the docs you are going to use
Paragraphs 2 & 3: The evidence paragraphs	#1: Identify the source you are using. Actually write " <i>the first piece of evidence that supports...</i> " #2: Describe something from the source that relates to the question that show the reader you understand how the doc #3: Explain how the point you mentioned in #2 actually supports your thesis. Actually write: " <i>this shows that (repeat stance on topic) because...</i> "
Paragraph #4: The rebuttal	#1: Provide an argument that highlights why some people may specifically disagree with you and support another viewpoint. This should correspond to the point that you started your thesis with. #2: Explain why that alternate viewpoint is wrong. Be sure to specifically write, " <i>however</i> " as you begin to refute the point

***Don't # or underline anything in your actual FRQ!**

TOPIC: Congress & Term Limits

Foundational Document	Related Points
Federalist 10	
Federalist 51	
Brutus 1	
Articles of Confederation	
Constitution & Amendments	

TOPIC: Gerrymandered House Districts

Foundational Document	Related Points
Federalist 10	
Federalist 51	
Brutus 1	
Articles of Confederation	
Constitution & Amendments	

