

Checklist for Evaluating Writing: Argumentative Essay

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Checklists can be a great tool to use during the writing process. Go back to your argumentative essay draft and reread it. Then, go through the checklist, reviewing each element one by one. This checklist was developed in conjunction with the rubric, so you will notice that all of the focus areas are the same.

1) CONTENT

Did you choose a personally meaningful topic as the basis of your essay, and clearly define your perspective on the issue? ____ YES ____ NO

A topic you feel strongly about is the cornerstone of the argumentative essay. You also need to make sure your opinion is clearly stated. If you started to write about a topic and then ran out of steam, you may want to think about redoing it from the beginning. If you still feel that you want to pursue your original topic but need to add more information, think about additional angles or possibilities to explore.

2) ORGANIZATION

Does your draft have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion and follow a logical sequence? ____ YES ____ NO

If no, you may need to return to any prewriting work to see where you can improve the organization. Or you may have a clear organization that you didn't break into paragraphs, which is relatively easy to fix.

3) MAIN IDEA & DETAILS

Is your main idea clearly stated, with strong details to support it? ____ YES ____ NO

Your main idea should be presented in your essay's introduction. It should state the issue and your opinion of it. The supporting details should provide additional information about why you believe what you do about the topic. If statistics and facts are relevant to your topic, using them will help support your opinion.

4) SENTENCE FLUENCY

Did you vary the lengths of your sentences and vary the words you used to begin your sentences? ____ YES ____ NO

If no, reread your paper sentence by sentence. A lengthy sentence can often be broken into two or more sentences. Shorter sentences can often be combined. If you see yourself relying on the same word too often to begin a sentence, think about using synonyms and/or reorganizing sentences.

5) EVIDENCE OF PROOFREADING

Does your proofread paper LOOK like it was proofread? ____ YES ____ NO

If no, revisit your work, and think about asking a friend or family member to look also. Sometimes the most obvious errors are the easiest ones to overlook.