

Your Argument: What issues do YOU care about?

CRT 100/ Prof. Barnes

Why are you constructing and presenting an argument? We are surrounded by arguments. This is why much of the work you do as a college student requires you to read and construct arguments. Think about it: even a toilet paper ad argues that “you deserve a little luxury in your life, and so does your bottom.” Since you are pursuing your undergraduate studies at BMCC, you probably believe that college education is valuable. In your social life, you may agree or disagree that TikTok is the best social media platform. All of those positions are arguable—we can agree or disagree with them and present reasons and evidence to support our position.

For this assignment, you are asked to find, evaluate, and synthesize the ideas of experts in order to present your own compelling argument. Those are skills that you will likely use in any profession you might eventually pursue, as well as in your personal life. And since in real life you present arguments to real people, I ask that for this assignment **you direct your argument to a specific individual/ audience**. This can be a politician, an author, a celebrity, a social media group, anyone you’d like to convince to think or to do something.

Select your own topic from a list of topics on CQ Researcher (a database available via BMCC library), **research the topic, and then construct an argument about it**. Your final product should include at least **3 secondary sources**, including at least **2 from CQ Researcher and/ or Opposing Viewpoints**.

Final Product: present your argument to your audience in writing, in a format that you think is best. Here are some examples:

- A newspaper article
- a letter
- a speech

Do you have a better idea for presenting your argument? Let me know, and I will add it to the list of options.

How you will be evaluated

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|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Summary and Response | 4% |
| Annotated Bibliography | 5% |
| Outline + Draft + Peer Review | 10% |
| Final Draft | 15% |
| Argument Presentation | 6% |
| Total | 40% of your final grade! |

Steps and Assignments

Summary and Response, 250 words +/- Submit on Blackboard

Once you conduct some research on your topic for the argumentative essay, select one article from CQ Researcher or Opposing Viewpoints and do the following:

- provide a brief summary of the article, including the main idea and supporting details
- respond to the article: why you selected it, what you learned, how you might use it

Annotated Bibliography/ Submit on the OpenLab in Conversation

You are writing an annotated bibliography as an indication of the sources you intend to use for your essay. The goal here is to continue thinking critically about your topic and the sources you decide to incorporate into your essay. **Your annotated bibliography must include at least 3 sources relevant to your topic.** For each source,

- write 3-5 sentences summarizing or describing content, including the main idea/ argument
- 1-2 sentences providing an evaluation of the source's usefulness: why the source is interesting or helpful to you.

I encourage you to (re)use your source from the Summary and Response assignment here.

Peer Review

- Your outline: conclusion + at least 3 claims, each with a premise and supporting evidence, including one counterargument with your rebuttal
- Your draft (add some information to your outline and you're done)
- Your idea for the final product, including a statement about your audience

You will receive 60 points if you submit your outline and draft according to the guidelines, and another 40 points if you comment on two of your classmates' outlines.

Extra Credit: Peer Review Response, 200 words+

Once you have received feedback from classmates, think about how you may want to revise your outline and/ or idea. Address the following questions: What, according to your critics, are the strengths of your idea? Do you agree? What, according to your critics, might you need to work on? Do you agree? How do you plan to revise and improve your idea? Be specific. *Extra 25 points on Peer Review.*

Final Product

Submit the final draft on Blackboard.

Argument Presentation

By now, you will be an expert on your topic. Now share what you learned with your classmates. Post your video presentation on Flip, and comment on at least 5 of your classmates' presentations, via text or video.

You will receive 50 points if you submit your presentation on time and according to the guidelines, and another 50 points if you comment on 5 of your classmates' presentations.

Plagiarism Alert: Remember that using language or ideas that are not your own without proper citation is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade on the paper or in the class. Please don't use ChatGPT—I am interested in YOUR ideas and YOUR writing.

CHECKLIST FOR ARGUMENT ESSAY

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| A clear, arguable position/ conclusion directed to specific audience. |
| A compelling introduction that establishes the topic of the essay, includes background information on your topic, and narrows the focus to the thesis/ conclusion. |
| For each body paragraph, clear topic sentences/ premises that relate to the thesis and clearly identify the focus of the paragraph. |
| Analysis of your and others' assumptions including attention to possible sources of bias, fallacies, and errors in thinking. |
| Thorough evidence in support of your conclusions and that takes into account opposing points of view. |
| A compelling closing paragraph that represents your thesis but is not simply repetitive. |
| At least 2 sources from BMCC's virtual library. All sources are relevant to your thesis. |
| Thorough analysis of your sources and attention to reliability, validity and accuracy of the sources. The sources do not displace your own thinking and voice. |
| Acknowledgement of all sources through properly formatted citations using MLA style and a complete, properly formatted works cited page. |
| Final draft is 4-5 pages in length (+ a works cited page). |
| Required drafts are present (draft 1 and draft 2). Essay is submitted according to requirements. |
| Polished and focused writing, with no errors in grammar, punctuation, and word usage. |

Sample Annotated Bibliography

(please note that yours should include at least 3 sources, a 3-5 sentence summary followed by 1-2 sentences letting your professor know why/ how you are going to use the source)

Karaim, Reed. "Race and Education" *CQ Researcher* 24.31 (2014): 721-744. *CQ Researcher*.

Web. 16 Oct. 2015

Karaim argues that American schools are becoming resegregated, though not as viciously as before. He examines the history of integration in schools since the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and efforts by the federal government to ensure integration of schools according to the law. I will use this article to further my claim that resegregation of schools is affecting the ability of African-Americans to get an education in school.

Jost, Kenneth. "School Desegregation". *CQ Researcher* 14.15 (2004): 345-372. *CQ Researcher*.

Web. 23 Oct. 2015

Jost argues that there is still a racial imbalance in American public schools, despite the efforts to integrate them. School districts have tried to fix this problem by using laws and policies to diversify schools. I will use this article to argue that these methods of diversifying schools are actually causing African-Americans to become isolated in schools.