

## Argumentative Writing/ Mini-Research Paper

Prerequisite assignments: Composition for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Online Argument Work and OWL at Purdue Quiz.

Your next assignment is to write an argumentative research paper. In this paper you will take a stand on a topic of your choice. You must make a persuasive claim that exhibits logical thinking, specific evidence, sound organization, and a concise and coherent argument. That argument must be backed up with specific factual information from research, not just based on your own impressions and opinions. The outcome, (**mandatory inclusion in your final portfolio**) will include the following:

- a six to ten page paper that logically argues your stance on a topic
- a minimum of six sources (two databases, two websites, two print sources)
- a valid Works Cited Page
- valid parenthetical citation
- logical arguments with concessions

Don't be intimidated by the length or any of the other components of this paper. Take it step-by-step – this is a process.

### Choosing a Topic

The first step of this process is choosing a topic. For many, this is the most difficult part. Certain topics, while debatable, are NOT appropriate for formal argumentation. Such arguments are known as *a priori* arguments<sup>1</sup> (made before or without examination; not supported by factual study). For instance, abortion and capital punishment fall into this category. You cannot convince a pro-life person or a pro-choice person of the opposite sides since they are both coming into the argument with prior belief systems.

No two people can have the exact same topic, so be sure to sign up for your topic with your instructor. There are SO many ideas for a paper – this is just a small list of some potential topics. The library has amazing resources on controversial topics

### TOPICS

**Random:** Gun companies should be held responsible for gun crimes, Minors are denied many rights, Athletes should have higher GPA eligibility requirements, Schools should have an armed police officer, Administrators should extend the academic year, Gambling should be outlawed, Intelligent Design Vs. Evolutionary Theory, Higher education should be available and affordable to

<sup>1</sup> Knowledge, judgments, and principles which are true without verification or testing. It is universally true. (from <http://www.carm.org/atheism/terms.htm>)