TED TALK ARGUMENTATIVE RESEARCH PAPER

OBJECTIVE:

- This assignment challenges you to engage critically with a TED Talk and develop a well-supported argumentative research essay. You will analyze a TED Talk of your choice, formulate your own position on the issue, and support your argument with credible research.

REQUIREMENTS

TOPIC

- Select a TED Talk that is at least 10 minutes long and addresses a topic that you can make an argument about.
- The topic should be complex enough to allow for multiple perspectives and require research to support your claims.
- Consider topics related to current events, social issues, scientific advancements, technology, or any other area that interests you and allows for debate.

RESEARCH:

- Minimum of 5-10 credible sources – any essay without the minimum research cannot pass the final paper.
- Your sources must pass the TRAAP test (Timeliness, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, Purpose). See pp. 38-39 in the Masterguide to Academic Essay and Rhetoric for a list of research types that you cannot use in your paper (e.g., *Wikipedia*). Using any source that does not meet credibility standards will mean you do not get credit for that source.
- Source Variety: Include a range of sources, such as academic journals, books, reputable websites, government reports, and expert interviews.
- TED Talk as a Source: Incorporate the chosen TED Talk as one of your sources, analyzing its arguments and using it as evidence to support your claims.
- All five paragraphs must have quotes, summaries, and/or paraphrases worked into your original content. These sources should not account for more than 20% of your final draft (that's 200-300 words depending on the final word count – not including the works cited) – this counts as part of the minimum research.

CONTENT REQUIREMENTS:

- Genre: Short Argument Research Essay
- Length: 1000-1500 words – this does not include the works cited page. Any paper below the minimum length will not pass. Papers can exceed the top number with no penalty.
- Clear Thesis: Present a clear and arguable thesis statement that states your position on the issue and lists the 3 supporting points.
- Well-Supported Arguments: Develop your argument with logical reasoning, evidence from your research, and analysis of the TED Talk.
- Counterargument: In each body paragraph, address a potential counterargument to your position and refute it with evidence and reasoning as part of your analysis.

- Organization: Organize your essay logically with an introduction, 3 body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Use clear topic sentences and transitions to guide the reader.

STYLE AND FORMATTING:
- Academic Tone: Maintain a formal and objective tone throughout your essay.
- College-level English written to an adult audience.
- MLA Style: Adhere to MLA style guidelines for formatting, in-text citations, and Works Cited page.

PROGRESS CHECKS:
- TED Talk Video proposal
- E3 Outline
- E3 Sources Check
- E3 Body Paragraph Check
- E3 Final Draft Check (for paragraphs and MLA)

SAMPLE THESIS

Remember, the formula for an academic argumentative thesis in this class is:
- X (Issue) + Y (Claim) + A, B, and C (3 supporting points)
- Example: Preschool reading programs should move beyond the limitations of Accelerated Reader-type programs and embrace a more holistic approach that cultivates wonder, curiosity, and visualization to foster deeper engagement with literature and a lifelong love of reading.

ARGUMENTATION

Okay, let's break down this information on argumentation and make it more relatable for college freshmen:

WHAT'S AN ARGUMENT? (IT'S NOT A FIGHT!)

Forget yelling and screaming matches. In college, an argument is about using logic and evidence to persuade your reader. You're not trying to "win" a fight, but rather explore different perspectives on a topic and figure out the best solution. Think of it like a detective investigating a case – you examine all the clues (evidence) to reach the truth.

BUILDING A STRONG ARGUMENT

To make your argument convincing, you need to follow some ground rules:
- Pick a debatable topic: There should be at least two different viewpoints on the issue.
- Find a solution: Your argument should aim to solve a problem or answer a question in a logical way.
- Back it up: Support your claims with solid reasons and evidence.
- Be clear: Explain your position and make sure your ideas are easy to understand.

ARGUMENT AS A CONVERSATION

Think of argumentation like a respectful conversation, where different sides share their views and try to find common ground. You present your ideas, listen to others, and maybe even

change your mind along the way. The goal is to find the best solution by considering everyone's perspective.

AVOIDING "FAKE" ARGUMENTS

Ever tried arguing with someone who just won't listen to reason? That's a pseudo-argument, and it's a waste of time. These arguments are like talking to a brick wall – there's no real exchange of ideas, just stubborn opinions. Here are two types of people to watch out for:

- Fanatical Believers: They base their arguments on personal beliefs, not facts. It's like saying, "I believe it, so it must be true!"
- Fanatical Skeptics: They refuse to believe anything, even with strong evidence. They're always looking for reasons to doubt.

KEEP IT REAL: RATIONAL ARGUMENTS

In college, you want to have rational arguments. This means:

- Be open-minded: Be willing to consider different viewpoints and change your mind if the evidence suggests you should.
- Find common ground: Look for shared values and assumptions to build a foundation for agreement.
- Use logic and evidence: Support your claims with facts and research, not just opinions.

TYPES OF CLAIMS: WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

When you write an argument, you're making a claim about something. Here are some common types of claims:

- Definition: What something is or how it should be defined. (e.g., Is graffiti art or vandalism?)
- Cause: What causes something to happen. (e.g., What are the causes of climate change?)
- Policy: What should be done about a problem. (e.g., Should the government regulate social media?)
- Value: Whether something is good or bad, valuable or worthless. (e.g., Is animal testing ethical?)
- Fact: Whether something is true or not. (e.g., Did humans land on the moon?)

COUNTERARGUMENT

WHAT IS A COUNTERARGUMENT?

- Imagine a debate where you present your argument with solid evidence. To be truly convincing, you need to address what the *other side* might say, backed by their own research. That's a counterargument! It's acknowledging a different viewpoint that opposes your own, supported by credible sources.
- In some papers, you will have an entire section that presents counterarguments with your rebuttal. In this essay, you are to incorporate them into the body paragraphs by identifying opposing positions to each of your supporting points and then rebut then as part of the analysis.

WHY USE COUNTERARGUMENTS?

- Shows depth of research: You've explored different perspectives and the evidence behind them, demonstrating a thorough understanding of the topic.
- Strengthens your argument: By addressing and refuting opposing views with evidence, your own argument becomes more robust and convincing.
- Builds credibility: You appear more objective and trustworthy when you acknowledge and engage with alternative perspectives supported by research.

HOW TO INCORPORATE COUNTERARGUMENTS IN YOUR BODY PARAGRAPHS:

Weave counterarguments into your analysis of each supporting point, using credible research to back them up. Here's a structure:

- Present your argument: State your point clearly with supporting evidence.
- Introduce the counterargument with research: Use phrases like "Some researchers argue that...", "A study by [author] suggests that...", or "Opponents of this view, citing [source], believe that..." to signal the opposing view and its supporting evidence.
- Refute the counterargument: Explain why the opposing view is flawed or less convincing, even with its research. Provide stronger evidence, highlight limitations of the opposing research, or offer alternative interpretations.

EXAMPLE:

You're arguing that regular exercise improves academic performance.

- Your argument: Studies by [Author A] and [Author B] show that exercise increases blood flow to the brain, which enhances cognitive function and memory, leading to better grades.
- Counterargument with research: However, a study by [Author C] published in [Journal Name] found that students involved in intensive athletic training had lower GPAs than those who didn't participate in sports, suggesting that exercise can negatively impact academic performance.
- Rebuttal: While [Author C's] study raises valid concerns, it focused on a specific group of students engaged in high-level athletic training. This may not apply to the general student population. Moreover, research by [Author D] indicates that moderate exercise, unlike intensive training, has a positive impact on cognitive function and academic success.

By incorporating credible research into your counterarguments and providing a well-supported rebuttal, you demonstrate strong critical thinking skills and elevate the quality of your academic essay.

SAMPLE BODY PARAGRAPH WITH COUNTERARGUMENT:

Cultivating a child's ability to create vivid mental images while reading is crucial for enhancing comprehension and deepening engagement. When children actively visualize, they are not merely passively decoding words but actively constructing meaning and stepping into the world of the story (Gambrell and Jawitz 21). Imagine a child reading about a majestic lion prowling the savanna; if they can vividly picture the lion's golden mane, the tall grasses swaying in the breeze, and the intense gaze of its amber eyes, the story transcends the page and

becomes a multi-sensory experience. This process strengthens their understanding, improves recall, and fosters a profound emotional connection with the text. Research by Sadoski and Paivio demonstrates that students encouraged to use visual imagery showed significantly higher levels of comprehension and recall (65). They argue that mental imagery "enriches the reading experience by creating a more elaborate and memorable representation of the text" (72). By fostering the ability to visualize, educators can empower students to become active participants in the reading process. However, programs like Accelerated Reader, with their emphasis on quizzes and quantifiable measures, may inadvertently undermine this crucial element. While AR can be a useful tool for monitoring progress, its focus on extrinsic rewards can shift the focus away from the intrinsic joys of reading (Krashen). The emphasis on literal comprehension in AR quizzes can also discourage children from actively constructing mental images. While acknowledging the potential benefits of AR, educators should prioritize practices that encourage active visualization, such as reading aloud with expression, providing opportunities for dramatic play, and facilitating discussions that prompt visualization. By nurturing the ability to create vivid mental images, educators can unlock a richer reading experience for young learners, encouraging them to connect with texts on a deeper level and develop a lifelong appreciation for the power of stories.