



Concordia
UNIVERSITY • SAINT PAUL

The Writing Center
Luther Hall 116
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651-603-6233

Sample Rubric for Argumentative Papers (with a research component)

Professor Name and Class Title: This helps ensure the assignment sheet doesn't get lost in the shuffle.

Title of the Assignment: This helps students associate the name of this type of writing with the format described below.

Rough Draft Due:

Some instructors include these due dates so that students have all of the assignment information in one spot.

Final Draft Due:

Depending upon their students' habits, instructors often include the time as well as the date (e.g. Friday, March 10, 2006, at 5 p.m.).

Paper Length:

Providing length guidelines helps students focus their ideas and structure their writing.

Assignment Description:

Provide a brief overview of the assignment and the skills students should demonstrate in their papers.

Example: Write an argumentative research paper about a current issue in American society. In your paper, cite at least eight sources, four of them scholarly. No more than two out of all eight sources can be Internet sites. (This excludes scholarly articles you access online through Concordia's library. These are not considered Internet sites). Your thesis should reflect your stance on the topic, but you should not use first person.

Requirements:

List clearly the requirements to fulfill the assignment. Instructors can do this by breaking the paper into a set of skills (e.g. formulating a clear thesis statement, providing smooth transitions, etc.) students must demonstrate. This reinforces the idea that there are standard, "objective" criteria for evaluating informative/explanatory writing—as opposed to students' common perception that their papers are graded "subjectively" according to the instructor's whims—and, once graded, provides them with specific information about how well they demonstrate each skill. Having them turn in this assignment sheet with their final draft prevents having to print an assignment sheet and a grading sheet.

There are several ways to do this. One commonly-used method is presented on the following page:

<i>Skill Demonstrated</i>	<i>Exceeds expectations for college writing</i>	<i>Meets expectations for college writing</i>	<i>Does not meet expectations for college writing</i>
Introduction: provides background and context for the topic; includes a thesis; lays out main points to be covered; indicates why readers should care about the topic	(8-6 pts.)	(5-3 pts.)	(2-0 pts.)
Thesis: is clear and focused; indicates writer's stance on the topic	(5-4 pts.)	(3-2 pts.)	(1-0 pts.)
Body: explains clearly and thoroughly each of the main ideas	(14-10 pts.)	(9-5 pts.)	(4-0 pts.)
Logic: remains clear throughout paper; does not contain any logical fallacies	(8-6 pts.)	(5-3 pts.)	(2-0 pts.)
Counterargument(s): acknowledges and refutes alternative stances on the topic	(11-8 pts.)	(7-4 pts.)	(3-0 pts.)
Organization: follows an appropriate organizational scheme (e.g. chronological, least important to most important, etc.)	(14-10 pts.)	(9-5 pts.)	(4-0 pts.)
Supporting information: contains quotes, paraphrases, and examples from appropriate sources	(14-10 pts.)	(9-5 pts.)	(4-0 pts.)
Quotes: incorporates quotes by introducing them smoothly and explaining/demonstrating their relevance	(8-6 pts.)	(5-3 pts.)	(2-0 pts.)
Paragraphs: starts with a topic or transitional sentence; contain only information relevant to the paragraph's main idea	(8-6 pts.)	(5-3 pts.)	(2-0 pts.)
Transitions: moves the reader smoothly from one idea to the next	(6-4 pts.)	(3-2 pts.)	(1-0 pt.)
Conclusion: presents final thoughts on the topic; answers, "so what?" (in other words, why is this information important for the reader to know?)	(11-8 pts.)	(7-4 pts.)	(3-0 pts.)
Citation: cites in correct MLA style, both in-text and on the works cited page*	(11-8 pts.)	(7-4 pts.)	(3-0 pts.)
Revising: shows significant improvement from the rough draft to the final draft**	(8-6 pts.)	(5-3 pts.)	(2-0 pts.)
Editing and Proofreading: demonstrates careful reading and correcting of awkward sentences as well as grammar and punctuation errors	(5-4 pts.)	(3-2 pts.)	(1-0 pt.)

*Papers that do not contain citations will automatically receive an F.

**If you attach a signed form from the Writing Center indicating you worked with a writing tutor, you may be eligible for additional points in this category.

Total points available: 131

Your points: _____ / 131 = _____% = _____ letter grade