**Toulmin Argument Research Paper Assignment**

Length: 3-4 pages (not including the Works Cited Page)

Research Sources: At least 6 sources, 8+ citations

**The Task:**  After selecting a controversial topic, doing research, and completing an annotated bibliography for both sides of your argument, you are now ready to write an argument using the Toulmin Method. Using your sources, present a reasonable, detailed, and convincing argument that proves your stance.  Your audience is undecided about the topic. Your goal is to convince your audience of the validity of your position by using logical reasoning and valuable and reliable supporting evidence.

**Structure**

**Introduction** **+ CLAIM**

* Introduce the topic—consider the goal/reason behind tackling this topic. Why should this topic concern society as a whole? Make sure the topic is controversial and current. What conversations are currently being had about this topic? (current = this year)
* Include essential/necessary background about the issue, including history, facts, dates, statistics, etc.
* Define any unfamiliar/ambiguous terms. Explain any jargon associated with your topic.
* Summarizethe specific controversy and include the opposing views/possibilities.
* State a claim or a position about the issue. Your claim is a statement that is debatable. If you qualify your claim, then you will limit your argument, which will make your argument easier to support.
* Establish your credibility by demonstrating knowledge of the issue.

**GROUNDS**

* Develops several reasons that support the claim
* Supports all reasons with specific evidence from research. (statistics or facts)
* Any direct quotes should follow this criteria:

1. The idea expressed is so clearly stated that paraphrasing or summarizing would distort or change the meaning of the statement or idea.
2. Experts whose opinions and exact words establish your credibility
3. Those who disagree or offer counterarguments to show that you are representing their opinions fairly
4. Lead-ins, no “drop quotes”
5. Cite every quote (paraphrased or direct)

* Fully explains the significance of evidence as it relates to reason and claim.
* Each quote needs to include a stem explaining who is speaking and why we should listen to him/her. Is he/she an expert, not just a writer/reporter?
* Any research evidence introduced needs to explain exactly how the research was conducted, time period or time frame of research, and who the subjects were / how they were selected.
* Avoids argumentation fallacies.
* If needed include warrants and backing; explain any underlying assumptions that your audience may need to understand in order to accept or agree with your argument.

**REBUTTAL PART I: Counterargument**

* Presents the strongest opposition points to “claim.”
* Uses specific quotes from the opposition to present their argument. (Suggestion: quoteswith statistics or facts)
* Fully develops and objectively presents the material.

**REBUTTAL PART 2: Refutation/Dismissal**

* Specifically addresses and refutes each point in the above counterargument.
* Discovers a logical fallacy or employs critical reasoning to dismiss counter point.
* Uses specific quotes to support point of view of paper. (Quotes with statistics or facts)

**Conclusion**

* Restates claim and summarizes major supporting reasons.
* Expresses the urgency of the issue, offers resolutions, and leaves a lasting impression.
* What are the implications of your argument? Why does this matter? What do you want to happen? What should people think or do?

**Works Cited**

* Follows MLA guidelines for format and individual citation entries.
* Begins on separate page and is double-spaced.
* Matches parenthetical documentation.
* All sources on the Works Cited page must be evaluated and annotated in the annotated bibliography.
* Title is centered.
* Citations are in alphabetical order.

**Reminders**

* Beware of argumentative fallacies in reasoning.
* Follow MLA guidelines for quotations and parenthetical documentation.
* Fully develop/explain supporting points.
* Proofread for technical/style flaws.
* Write in 3rd person point of view.
* NO MORE than 15% of your paper should be quotations. More than one block quote is a BAD idea! Block quotes longer than six lines are a BAD idea! You are the author; quotes are used ONLY to support YOUR ideas. If there is not a solid fact or a statistic in the quote, don’t use it.

Steps:

1. Write your paper, one section at a time.
2. Peer edit, revise, and proofread your paper as you write each paragraph so you can catch any major problems before you get too far.
3. Create your Works Cited page, including all sources used in the paper. (Use your annotated bibliography for this).
4. Double check parenthetical citations against your Works Cited page—they must match.
5. Turn in typed rough draft (CU) for peer editing (RA).
6. Edit, revise, and proofread your entire paper again, several times. Read the paper aloud to yourself, your family, and your friends. Make any necessary changes before you turn in the final draft (SA).