

Argumentative Research Essay Rubric

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional lapses in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into the holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality.

In no case should a score higher than a 2 be given to an essay with errors in grammar and mechanics that persistently interfere with understanding of meaning.

9/100 – Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for the score of 8 and, **in addition**, are especially sophisticated in their argument, thorough in development, address the complexity, or impressive in their control of language. The essay reflects a comprehensive knowledge of the print source. **The essay, parenthetical citations, and Works Cited page adhere to MLA format.**

Commented [DS1]: In other words, you are proving you have read the FULL text and understand the complexities of the situations presented.

8/95 – Effective Essays earning a score of 8 effectively state and develop a position on the topic. **They develop their position by effectively synthesizing* at least four of the sources.** The evidence and explanations appropriately and convincingly support the student's position. The prose demonstrates a consistent ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless. The essay reflects a comprehensive knowledge of the print source. **The essay, parenthetical citations, and Works Cited page adhere to MLA format.**

Commented [DS2]: This refers to your thesis. The last sentence of your introduction.

7/90 – Essays earning a score of 7 meet the criteria for the score of 6 **but provide more complete explanation, more thorough development, or a more mature prose style.** The essay reflects a comprehensive knowledge of the print source. **The essay, parenthetical citations, and Works Cited page adhere to MLA format.**

6/85 – Adequate Essays earning a score of 6 clearly state and **adequately develop** a position on the topic. They develop their position by adequately synthesizing at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations appropriately and sufficiently support the student’s position. The language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear. **The essay reflects an adequate knowledge of the print source. The essay, parenthetical citations, and Works Cited page adhere to MLA format.**

5/ 80 – Essays earning a score of 5 **develop a position** on the topic. They state and develop their position by synthesizing at least three sources, but the evidence and explanations used to support that position may be uneven, inconsistent, or limited. The student’s argument is generally clear, and the sources generally develop the student’s position, but the links between the sources and the argument may be strained. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the student’s ideas. **The essay reflects a limited knowledge of the print source.** The essay, parenthetical citations, and Works Cited page **adhere** to MLA format.

4/ 75 – Inadequate Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately develop a position on the topic.** They develop their position by synthesizing at least two sources, but that position may be inappropriately, insufficiently, or unconvincingly supported by the evidence and explanations used. The sources may dominate the student’s attempts at development, the link between the argument and the sources may be weak, or the student may misunderstand, misrepresent, or oversimplify the sources. The prose generally conveys the student’s ideas but may be inconsistent in controlling the elements of effective writing. The essay reflects a limited knowledge of the print source. The essay, parenthetical citations, and Works Cited page **adhere** to MLA format.

3/ 70 – Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less success in developing a position on the topic. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the sources, or the evidence and explanations used may be particularly limited or simplistic. The essays may show less maturity in control of writing. **The essay reflects a minimal knowledge of the print source.** The parenthetical citations and/ or Works Cited page **do not** adhere to MLA format.

Commented [DS3]: One or more mistakes on the works cited page trumps any higher grade: no matter how “perfect” the paper can be.

ALWAYS PROOF THE PRESENTATION OF YOUR WORK CITED PAGE. DO NOT EXPECT THE DATABASE TO BE ACCURATE. COMMON MISTAKES ARE MADE IN THE PRESENTATION OF THESE ENTRIES.

This trumps all possible higher scores, no matter how “perfect” the essay will be.

2/ 60 – Little Success Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in developing a position on the topic. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. The student may misread the sources, fail to develop a position, or substitute a simpler task by merely summarizing or categorizing the sources or by merely responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated or inaccurate explanation. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as grammatical problems, a lack of development or organization, or a lack of control. The essay reflects a minimal knowledge of the print source. The parenthetical citations and/ or Works Cited page may be missing or not adhere to MLA format.

Commented [DS4]: Again-- this trumps all possible higher scores, no matter how "perfect" the essay will be.

1/ 50 – Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation, weak in their control of writing, or do not allude to or cite even one source. The essay reflects a minimal knowledge of the print source. The parenthetical citations and/ or Works Cited page may be missing or not adhere to MLA format.

* For the purposes of scoring, synthesis means using literary and critical sources to defend your position and citing them accurately.