Benchmark Rubric for Argument Writing

Modified from Literacy Design Collaborative

Scoring Elements	Not Yet		Approaches Expectations		Meets Expectations		Advanced
	1	**1.5**	**2**	**2.5**	**3**	**3.5**	**4**
Thesis	Attempts to establish a claim, but lacks a clear purpose. Makes no mention of counter claims.		Establishes a claim. Makes note of counter claims.		Establishes a credible claim. Develops claim and counter claims fairly.		Establishes and maintains a substantive and credible claim or proposal. Develops claims and counter claims fairly and thoroughly.
Support	Attempts to reference reading materials to develop response, but lacks connections or relevance to the purpose of the prompt.		Presents information from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt with minor lapses in accuracy or completeness.		Accurately presents details from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt to develop argument of claim.		Accurately and efficiently presents important details from reading materials to develop argument and claim.
Development	Attempts to provide details in response to the prompt, but lacks sufficient development or relevance to the purpose of the prompt. Makes no connections or a connection that is irrelevant to argument or claim.		Presents appropriate details to support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim, with minor lapses in the reasoning, examples, or explanations. Makes a connection with a weak or unclear relationship to argument or claim.		Presents appropriate and sufficient details to support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim. Makes a relevant connection to clarify argument or claim.		Presents thorough and detailed information to effectively support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim. Makes a clarifying connection(s) that illuminates argument and adds depth to reasoning.
Organization	Attempts to organize ideas, but lacks control of structure.		Uses an appropriate organizational structure for development of reasoning and logic, with minor lapses in structure and/or coherence.		Maintains an appropriate organizational structure to address specific requirements of the prompt. Structure reveals the reasoning and logic of the argument.		Maintains an organizational structure that intentionally and effectively enhances the presentation of information as required by the specific prompt. Structure enhances development of the reasoning and logic of the argument.
Language/Style	Language, vocabulary, and style are inappropriate to the task, purpose, and audience. Demonstrates little to no syntactic variety. Rarely, if ever, provides transition words.		Language, vocabulary, and style are not always appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience. Demonstrates insufficient syntactic variety. Provides insufficient transitions to link the claims with groups of ideas.		Language, vocabulary, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience. Demonstrates sufficient syntactic variety by expanding, combining, and reducing sentences for meaning and reader interest. Provides sufficient transitions to link claims within and across groups of ideas in a cohesive response.		Demonstrates command of language, vocabulary, and style appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience. Demonstrates syntactic variety by expanding, combining, and reducing sentences. Provides sophisticated, varied transitions to clearly link the claim within and across a group of ideas, resulting in a strong, fluent cohesive response.
Conventions	Attempts to demonstrate standard English conventions, but lacks cohesion and control of grammar, usage, and mechanics. Sources are used without citation.		Demonstrates an uneven command of standard English conventions and cohesion. Uses language and tone with some inaccurate, inappropriate, or uneven features. Inconsistently cites sources.		Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Cites sources using appropriate format with only minor errors.		Demonstrates and maintains a well-developed command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone consistently appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Consistently cites sources using appropriate format.