

Using Chapter 16 on argument writing in your *Mosaics* text as a guide, write an essay of **3-4 pages** in length in which you take a clear position on a controversial topic (e.g. abortion, immigration, U.S. foreign policy, etc.) and then lay out 2-4 reasons why your reader should support the same position. You may choose your own topic as long as you choose something that is **clearly controversial** – something for which you will have to argue **in depth**, a specific position that you will have to defend with good persuasive writing that includes multiple persuasive strategies.

Use facts, statistics, quotes, historical examples, anecdotes, discussion of opposing viewpoints, definitions, and explanations in your argumentation. Use strategies that appeal to your readers' emotions *as well as* to their sense of reason and logic. Your goal is to persuade but also to *educate* – *teach* us about your position before you convince us that it is the best possible position to take. Imagine a **skeptical, uninterested audience** as you write – this should make you write more thoroughly and forcefully in support of your own position.

Follow closely the writing models and guidelines covered in Chapter 16 to help you – look again at how Bob Herbert lays out his position on racial profiling in his essay “Racial Profiling is Unjust.” Try to imitate some of those strategies in your own argumentation. Provide lots of detailed examples and illustrations as you develop your discussion. Put your thesis statement, the sentence that unambiguously states exactly what you believe, at the end of your introductory paragraph so that your reader will know *exactly* what you wish to communicate in your essay.

You can do some outside research to help you with this essay, but remember: if you quote or paraphrase words or ideas from another source, you **MUST** attribute that material to its original source by naming the author and the title of the source in the body of your discussion.

Please do not write about yourself or about your own personal experiences this time – this argument essay is not meant to be a space for you to talk about yourself. Argue for a position that you passionately believe in but **DO NOT** refer to yourself in your discussion – just state your views as if they are settled fact, and then back them up assiduously with discussion and real life details.

Proofread your work very, very thoroughly, and use academic language throughout the essay. This means making sure all of your **verbs are in the same tense**, it means **eliminating contractions and slang speech**, and it means ensuring that **every sentence is complete**. Lastly, make sure to not use 1st person (I, me) or 2nd person (you, your) speech in this essay – keep your attention focused on the argument.

Follow the steps explained on pages 393-397 and briefly outlined below. Leave plenty of time for both the prewriting and drafting stages as well as the revision and proofreading stages of your writing process. I want only focused, error-free work for this assignment. Remember that there are **no rewrites** for this assignment – it must be perfect the first time around if you wish to pass the course.

- Your thesis statement should be **debatable** – a statement that can be argued or challenged and will not be met with agreement by everyone who reads it. Your thesis statement should clearly introduce your subject *and* unequivocally state your opinion about that subject.

- Use any combination of evidence and writing strategies that will help you support your thesis statement. Evidence can consist of facts, statistics, statements from authorities, and examples or anecdotes. Remember that **simple, unsupported opinions are NOT evidence** – they will not suffice as adequate support in a good persuasive essay. Without solid evidence, your essay is nothing more than unsubstantiated, indefensible opinion, but **with** good evidence and support your essay can be powerful and quite persuasive.
- Anticipate opposing points of view: Presenting only your side of the argument leaves half the story untold – the opposition’s half. If you **admit that there are opposing viewpoints** and respond to some of them, you will move your reader more in your direction than if you only provided your own positions. Offer opposing viewpoints in order to help clarify your own position; take the opportunity to point out the weaknesses of theirs and the strengths of your own.
- Keep the **“voice” of your essay calm and sensible** – your readers will be much more open to what you have to say if they think you are a reasonable, open-minded, knowledgeable person. Do not engage in unfair attacks on opposing positions – you will not win any arguments by rhetorically “shouting” or making nasty or sarcastic comments: readers generally do not respond very sympathetically to such alienating tactics.
- Organize your essay so that it presents your position as effectively and logically as possible. By the end of your essay, you want your audience to agree with you. They are only likely to do this if they understand what it is you are trying to say. Organize your essay so that your readers can easily follow each new stage of your argument, and make it clear enough that they can also easily link your supporting arguments back to your original thesis position, always. **Move clearly and methodically from one explanation to the next.**