



Advanced



Proficient



Developing



Emerging



Claim and Focus

Take an arguable stance on the issue and develop the essay around that stance.

The essay introduces an interesting, clear, arguable, and precise claim, based on the topic or text(s) and establishes the significance of the claim. The essay maintains strong focus on the purpose and task, using the whole essay to support and develop the claim and counterclaims fairly while thoroughly addressing demands of the prompt.

The essay introduces a clear, arguable, and specific claim, based on the topic or text(s). The essay maintains focus on the purpose and task, using most of the essay to support and develop the claim and counterclaims while thoroughly addressing the demands of the prompt.

The essay introduces a clear, arguable, and specific claim, based on the topic or text(s), but it may be somewhat unclear or not maintained throughout the essay. The essay may not fully address the demands of the prompt or stay focused on the purpose and task. The writing may stray off topic at times. Counterclaims may not be presented evenly or objectively.

The essay does not clearly make a claim, or the claim is overly simplistic or vague. The essay does not maintain focus on purpose or task. The essay does not address counterclaims.



Support and Evidence

Explain relevant facts, definitions, and examples to back up the claim.

The essay cites the most relevant, appropriate, and valid evidence to support its claim and the counterclaims while fully explaining how the evidence cited and reasons support the claim. The essay demonstrates reasoning and full understanding of the topic and/or text(s), thoroughly stating the strengths and weaknesses of both the claim and the counterclaim(s). Counterclaims are acknowledged and/or distinguished from the essay's central claim. The essay anticipates the audience's background knowledge, potential biases, and concerns.

The essay cites clear, relevant, and appropriate evidence related to the claim and counterclaims while explaining how the evidence supports the claim. The essay demonstrates some logical reasoning and understanding of the topic and/or text(s) and states the strengths and weaknesses of both the claim and counterclaim(s). Counterclaims are acknowledged but may be only generally explained and/or distinguished from the essay's central claim.

The essay uses some evidence but may not precisely explain how it supports the claim and/or the claim is not properly distinguished from the counterclaim. The essay includes some reasoning and understanding of the topic and/or text(s), but the strengths and weaknesses of the claim and counterclaims may be confusing, unclear, or absent.

The essay does not use clear or relevant evidence or reasoning to support the claim or to demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text(s) or uses very little evidence from the source. Counterclaims are not acknowledged, addressed, or distinguished from the claim.

**Advanced**

The essay incorporates an organizational structure with clear transitional words and phrases that enhances the relationships between and among ideas (i.e. claim and evidence, claim and counterclaim, strengths and weaknesses) and establishes cohesion and clarity. The essay includes a logical progression of ideas from beginning to end, including an effective introduction and a conclusion which follows from and supports the arguments presented.

**Proficient**

The essay incorporates an organizational structure with clear transitional words and phrases that show the relationship between and among ideas (i.e. claim and evidence, claim and counterclaim, strengths and weaknesses). The essay includes a progression of ideas from beginning to end, including an introduction and conclusion which generally supports the argument presented.

**Developing**

The essay uses a basic organizational structure but relationships between and among ideas are not consistently clear, including the explanation of the claim and the counterclaims or their strengths and weaknesses. The essay may move from beginning to end; however, the introduction and/or conclusion may be overly formulaic and/or repetitious.

**Emerging**

The essay does not have a clear organizational structure and may simply offer a series of ideas without any clear transitions or connections. An introduction and/or conclusion are not evident.

**Organization**

Explain your position using transitions and a strong introduction and conclusion.

**Language and Style**

Pay attention to using active words, a formal tone, and a variety of sentence structures.

The essay demonstrates a definitive perspective and voice, as well as a clear command of conventions. The essay incorporates language that appeals to the reader's interests and effectively maintains a formal style and objective tone. The essay consistently employs vivid word choice and varied sentence structure.

The essay demonstrates a perspective and voice, as well as a general command of conventions. The essay incorporates language that shows an awareness of the reader's interests and generally maintains a formal style and somewhat objective tone with few possible exceptions. The essay employs interesting word choices and some variety in sentence structure.

The essay demonstrates an uneven and/or inconsistent perspective and/or voice; it may also contain errors in conventions that interfere with meaning. The essay incorporates language that may not show an awareness of the reader's interests and does not maintain a formal and/or objective style consistently. Some attempts at strong word choices are made, and sentence structure may not vary.

The essay does not demonstrate a clear voice and/or perspective and may contain pervasive errors in conventions that interfere with meaning. The essay employs language that is inappropriate for the reader's interests and is not formal in style or objective in tone. Word choice is uninteresting or poor, and sentence structures are simplistic and unvaried.