

Grades 11-12 Argument Rubric

	Above Grade-level	On Grade-level	Moving Toward Grade-level	Not YET on Grade-level
Score				
Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crafts complex texts, intentionally selecting argumentative, expository, and narrative structures and techniques to present ideas in nuanced ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents an argument, offers context, honors other points of view, and indicates the conditions under which the position holds true. • Develops the argument with logical reasoning and convincing evidence, acknowledges the limitations of the position and critiques and cites sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents an argument, offers context, honors other points of view, and indicates the conditions under which the position holds true. • Develops the argument with logical reasoning and convincing evidence, acknowledges the limitations of the position and critiques and cites sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes an argument about a topic and makes it clear why this particular argument is important and valid. • Stays fair to those who might disagree by describing how the writer's position is one of several and makes it clear where the writer's position stands in relation to others.
IDEAS & ORGANIZATION				
Orientation/ Opening (Lead)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selects points of view and perspectives to introduce claims, topics, problems, situations, or observations. • Entices readers to construct inferences and begin analyzing the significance of the issue or issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the significance of the argument to capture audience's interest and offer hints of upcoming parts of the essay. • Presents needed background information to show the complexity of the issue. • Introduces the overall line of logic the argument will take and distinguishes that line of logic from others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the significance of the argument and may offer hints of upcoming parts of the essay. • Presents needed background information to show the complexity of the issue. • Introduces the overall line of development the argument will take and distinguishes that argument from others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hooks readers and provides specific context for the writer's as well as another's position(s). • Introduces the writer's position, and orients readers to the overall line of argument that will develop.
Development of Ideas (Elaboration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angles and/or frames key concepts, evidence, and details to construct meaning, anticipating and extending audience's attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions about the topic. • Uses elaboration, reflection, and evaluation techniques to advance the overall purpose of the writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops the aspects of the argument that are most significant to the audience and to the purposes. • Articulates the validity of sources—evaluates sources' reasoning to enhance position and refute alternative points of view. • Angles and/or frames evidence to clearly and fairly represent various perspectives, while also maintaining a clear position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops the aspects of the argument that are most significant to the audience and to the purposes. • When appropriate, acknowledges limitations or critiques of sources—evaluates sources' reasoning or suspect motivations. • Angles and/or frames evidence to clearly and fairly represent various perspectives, while also maintaining a clear position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops the aspects of the argument that are most significant to the audience and to the overall purpose(s). • Incorporates trustworthy and significant sources and explains if and when a source seems to be problematic. • Analyzes the relevance of the reasons and evidence for the claims as well as for the counterclaim(s) and helps readers understand each position. Ensures that all of the analysis leads readers to follow the line of argument.
Development of Internal Structure (Organization & Transitions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chooses compelling and varied techniques and structures that match the dominant mode of each part of the text moving readers toward analytical understanding. • Layers claims, information, and experiences to establish references and themes allowing for inferential understanding. • Uses transitions to show the relationships between the parts of the text connecting prior sections and previewing future sections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a logical and compelling structure for the argument so that each part builds on a prior section, and the whole moves readers toward understandings. • Uses transitions to clarify relationships between claims, reasons, and evidence, and helps readers follow the logic in the argument. Also uses transitions to clarify relationships between sources and to claims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a logical and compelling structure for the argument so that each part builds on a prior section, and the whole moves the reader toward understandings. • Uses transitions to clarify the relationship between claims, reasons, and evidence, and helps the reader follow the logic in the argument. Also uses transitions to make clear the relationship of sources to each other and to the claim. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizes claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence into sections and clarifies how sections are connected. • Creates an organizational structure that supports a reader's growing understanding across the whole of the argument, arranging the sections to build on each other in a logical, compelling fashion. • Uses transitions to lead readers across parts of the text and to help them note how parts of the text relate back to earlier parts.

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Closure (Ending)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows readers opportunities to infer and analyze the significance of claims, topics, problems, situations, or observations. Offers final moment(s) or idea(s) for readers to ponder. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifies the conditions under which the position holds true, discusses possible applications or consequences, and/or offers possible solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifies the conditions under which the position holds true, discusses possible applications or consequences, and/or offers possible solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes the significance of the argument for stakeholders or offers additional insights, implications, questions, or challenges.
CRAFT & STYLE				
Word Choice and Tone (Craft)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selects precise language and literary devices to craft tone and capture and sustain the audience's receptiveness, interest, and understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intends to make the reader think, realize, or feel a particular way – selects language to do that. Uses other literary devices, and may use allusions. Varies the tone to match the purposes of different sections of the argument, as well as to develop and overall impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intends to make the reader think, realize, or feel a particular way – selects language to do that. Uses other literary devices, and may use allusions. Varies the tone to match the purposes of different sections of the argument, as well as to develop and overall impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intends to affect readers in particular ways – to make the reader think, realize, or feel a particular way – and selects language to do that. Consistently uses comparisons, analogies, vivid examples, anecdotes, or other rhetorical devices to help readers follow the writer's thinking and grasp the meaning and significance of a point or piece of evidence. Varies tone to match the different purposes or different sections of the argument.
Sentence Fluency/ Syntax (Sentence Structure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selects sentence structures and verb tenses to emphasize connections, influence pace and tone, clarify, and add complexity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses sentence structure and verb tense purposefully. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses sentence structure and verb tense purposefully (i.e., using fragments to emphasize key points, using present tense to create immediacy). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses different sentence structures to achieve different purposes throughout the argument. Uses verb tenses that shift when needed (e.g., when moving from a citation back to own writing), deciding between active and passive voice where appropriate.
LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS				
Conventions (Spelling & Punctuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selects capitalization, punctuation, and spelling to emphasize connections, influence pace and tone, clarify, and add complexity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses punctuation to emphasize connections, to strengthen tone, and to clarify and add complexity. Uses accurate spelling throughout, including cited text and citations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses punctuation to emphasize connections, to strengthen tone, and to clarify and add complexity. Uses accurate spelling throughout, including cited text and citations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses internal punctuation effectively, including the use of ellipses to accurately insert excerpts from sources. Spells technical vocabulary and literary vocabulary accurately. Spells material in citations according to sources, and spells citations accurately.