Position Paper outline & Rubric for Grading

WRITING A POSITION PAPER – argumentative writing

Like a debate, a position paper presents one side of an arguable opinion about an issue. The goal of a position paper is to convince the audience that your opinion is valid and defensible. Ideas that you are considering need to be carefully examined in choosing a topic, developing your argument, and organizing your paper. It is very important to ensure that you are addressing all sides of the issue and presenting it in a manner that is easy for your audience to understand. Your job is to take one side of the argument and persuade your audience that you have well-founded knowledge of the topic being presented. It is important to support your argument with evidence to ensure the validity of your claims, as well as to refute the counterclaims to show that you are well informed about both sides.

Outline

I. Introduction
   A. Introduce the topic
   B. Provide background on the topic to explain why it is important
   C. Assert the thesis (your view of the issue). More on thesis (main claim) statements can be found below.

Your introduction has a dual purpose: to indicate both the topic and your approach to it (your thesis statement), and to arouse your reader’s interest in what you have to say. One effective way of introducing a topic is to place it in context – to supply a kind of backdrop that will put it in perspective. You should discuss the area into which your topic fits, and then gradually lead into your specific field of discussion (re: your thesis statement).

II. Counter Argument
   A. Summarize the counterclaims
   B. Provide supporting information for counterclaims
   *You may have more than 2 overall points to support your counterclaims, but you should not have fewer.
   C. Refute the counterclaims (give your rebuttal)
   D. Give evidence for argument (data-this is your Concrete Details from the text)

- You can generate counterarguments by asking yourself what someone who disagrees with you might say about each of the points you’ve made or about your position as a whole. Once you have thought up some counterarguments, consider how you will respond to them--will you concede that your opponent has a point but explain why your audience should nonetheless accept your argument? Will you reject the counterargument and explain why it is mistaken? Either way, you will want to leave your reader with a sense that your argument is stronger than opposing arguments.

- When you are summarizing opposing arguments, be charitable. Present each argument fairly and objectively, rather than trying to make it look foolish. You want to show that
you have seriously considered the many sides of the issue, and that you are not simply attacking or mocking your opponents.

- It is usually better to consider one or two serious counterarguments in some depth, rather than to give a long but superficial list of many different counterarguments and replies.
- Be sure that your reply is consistent with your original argument. If considering a counterargument changes your position, you will need to go back and revise your original argument accordingly.

III. Your Argument

A. Assert point #1 of your claims
   1. Give your educated and informed opinion
   2. Provide support-proof using more than one source (preferably three)
   3. Provide commentary sentences explaining your source (warrant & backing)

B. Assert point #2 of your claims
   1. Give your educated and informed opinion
   2. Provide support-proof using more than one source (preferably three)
   3. Provide commentary sentences explaining your source (warrant & backing)

You may have more than 2 overall points to your argument, but you should not have fewer.

IV. Conclusion

A. Restate your argument (main claim/thesis)
B. Provide a plan of action and/or recommend a solution if you have one.
   - Do not introduce new information

The simplest and most basic conclusion is one that restates the thesis in different words and then discusses its implications.

Resources for research and writing - http://goo.gl/gVnAFO

- Google Drive –Use your “@cusdstudent” Google account for this paper.
- EasyBib School Edition- This will help you keep track of your references
- Writing a Thesis- This page will guide you in how to begin in writing your thesis.
Grading Rubric

I. Introduction (12pts)
   ___A. Introduce the topic
   ___B. Provide background on the topic to explain why it is important
   ___C. Assert the thesis (your view of the issue/main claim)

II. Counter Argument (16pts)
   ___A. Summarize the counterclaims
   ___B. Provide supporting information for counterclaims
   ___C. Refute the counterclaims (Rebuttal)
   ___D. Give evidence for argument (Data-Concrete Details)

III. Your Argument
   A. Assert point #1 of your claims (12pts)
      _____1. Give your educated and informed opinion
      _____2. Provide support/proof using more than one source (preferably three)
      _____3. Provide commentary sentences explaining your source (warrant & backing)
   B. Assert point #2 of your claims (12pts)
      _____1. Give your educated and informed opinion
      _____2. Provide support/proof using more than one source (preferably three)
      _____3. Provide commentary sentences explaining your source (warrant & backing)

IV. Conclusion (8pts)
   ___A. Restate your thesis (main claim)
   ___B. Provide a plan of action and/or solution

Total Points Possible:

   60