

OUTCOME TWO: ASSESSMENT TASK

Students are will be required to provide an argumentative essay on one of the following topics:

- **Privacy in the 21st Century: is it dead?**
- **WikiLeaks: is it good for democracy or a hindrance to it?** Is Julian Assange and his team making history by increasing accountability and improving the democratic process or are they simply whistle blowers severely damaging diplomacy and democracy whilst giving investigative journalism a bad name?

Submissions should be printed and presented appropriately by the nominated due date.

600-800 words (or approximate).

The due date for this task is:

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KEY CRITERIA

Evaluate the overall argument in terms of the student presenting his opinion along with reasons supporting his viewpoint.

5 marks	Argument presented extremely clearly with many supporting reasons
4-3 marks	Argument presented somewhat clearly with some supporting reasons
2 marks	Argument presented somewhat unclear with at least one supporting reason
1 mark	Argument presented extremely unclear with no supporting reasons.

Assess the research presented during the debate in the form of facts and examples.

5 marks	Wealth of relevant facts and examples presented
4-3 marks	Some relevant facts and examples presented
2 marks	Few relevant facts and examples
1 mark	Little or no facts and examples

WHAT IS AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY?

The function of an argumentative essay is to show that your assertion (opinion, theory, hypothesis) about some phenomenon or phenomena is correct or more truthful than others'. The art of argumentation is not an easy skill to acquire. Many people might think that if one simply has an opinion, one can argue it successfully, and these folks are always surprised when others don't agree with them because their logic seems so correct. Argumentative writing is the act of forming reasons, making inductions, drawing conclusions, and applying them to the case in discussion; the operation of inferring propositions, not known or admitted as true, from facts or principles known, admitted, or proved to be true. It clearly explains the process of your reasoning from the known or assumed to the unknown. Without doing this you do not have an argument, you have only an assertion, an essay that is just your unsubstantiated opinion.

Notice that you do not have to completely prove your point; you only have to convince reasonable readers that your argument or position has merit; i.e., that it is somehow more accurate and complete than competing arguments.

Argumentative essays are often organized in the following manner:

- They begin with a statement of your assertion, its timeliness, significance, and relevance in relation to some phenomenon.
- They review critically the literature about that phenomenon.
- They illustrate how your assertion is "better" (simpler or more explanatory) than others, including improved (i.e., more reliable or valid) methods that you used to accumulate the data (case) to be explained.

PLANNING AHEAD

For an argument essay to be effective, it must contain certain elements that will persuade the audience to see things from your perspective. For this reason, you must take a few minutes to plan and prepare before you jump into writing an argument essay.

Choose a topic and make a list of points for both sides of the argument and pick a side. One of your first objectives in your essay will be to present both sides of your issue with an assessment of each. Of course, you will conclude that one side (your side) is the best conclusion.

In the planning stage you will need to consider strong arguments for the "other" side. Then you'll shoot them down!

When we think of arguments we might picture two red-faced people speaking quite loudly and making dramatic gestures. But that's because face-to-face arguments often become emotional. In fact, the act of arguing involves providing proof to support your claim, with or without emotions.

In an argument essay you will have to provide evidence without providing too much drama. You'll explore two sides of a topic (briefly) and provide proof as to why one side or position is the best one. Once you've given yourself a solid foundation to work with, you can begin to craft your essay. An argument essay should contain three parts: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. The length of these parts (number of paragraphs) will vary, depending on the length of your essay.

INTRODUCE YOUR TOPIC AND ASSERT YOUR SIDE

As in any essay, the first paragraph of your argument essay should contain a brief explanation of your topic, some background information, and a thesis statement. In this case, your thesis will be a statement of your position on a particular controversial topic.

Example introductory paragraph with thesis statement:

Since the turn of the new century, a theory has emerged concerning the end of the world, or at least the end of life as we know it. This new theory centers around the year 2012, a date that many claim has mysterious origins in ancient manuscripts from many different cultures. The most noted characteristic of this date is that it appears to mark the end of the Mayan calendar. But there is no evidence to suggest that the Maya saw any

great relevance to this date. In fact, none of the claims surrounding a 2012 doomsday event hold up to scientific inquiry. *The year 2012 will pass without a major, life-altering catastrophe.*

PRESENT BOTH SIDES OF THE CONTROVERSY

The body of your essay will contain the meat of your argument. You should go into more detail about the two sides of your controversy and state the strongest points of the counter-side of your issue.

After describing the "other" side, you will present your own viewpoint and then provide evidence to show why your position is the correct one.

Select your strongest evidence and present your points one by one. Use a mix of evidence types, from statistics, to other studies and anecdotal stories. This part of your paper could be any length, from two paragraphs to two hundred pages.

Re-state your position as the most sensible one in your summary paragraphs.

TIPS FOR YOUR ESSAY:

- Avoid emotional language
- Know the difference between a logical conclusion and an emotional point of view
- Don't make up evidence
- Cite your sources
- Make an outline
- Be prepared to defend your side by knowing the strongest arguments for the other side. You might be challenged by the teacher or by another student.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

What do you value? Honesty, transparency, free speech, courage? Despite all controversy, WikiLeaks abides by all that we value and exposes cringe-worthy injustices in our society.

WikiLeaks promises to bring 'truth to the world' while at the same time, keep our society in check. Some governments and organisations have attempted to shut WikiLeaks down, saying it publishes private, secret information that could put lives at risk. I believe that these people feel threatened by the possibility of WikiLeaks revealing uncomfortable material. The possibility that they may be WikiLeaks' next target. Unlike other media organisations, WikiLeaks is not for profit and offers whistleblowers a way to reveal information without the risk of retaliation. WikiLeaks should be kept operating because if truth, and honest governments and organisations are important to us in our democratic society then WikiLeaks deserves a place in our world.

Imagine you are going to the city for work just like any other day. A helicopter is circling, but you aren't sure why – you're carrying no weapons, you aren't related to any criminals and you're only doing your job. They fire. They shower the ground with bullets and hit you, your crew, your friends, everyone. Dead. This is what happened to Saeed Chmagh and Namir Noor-Eldeen in 2007 Baghdad. The U.S. military army killed 12-18 innocent people including 2 children, who officers thought were insurgents. But in actual fact they killed Reuters news staff and children, not terrorists, carrying camera equipment, not weapons and who meant no harm whatsoever. WikiLeaks exposed this injustice 3 years later, after Reuters had attempted to attain the footage under the Freedom of Information Act but without success. The government wouldn't budge. The WikiLeaks' website states that they aim to 'reveal suppressed and censored injustices' even though this may cause controversy, the families of the deceased had a right to know. WikiLeaks shone a light on this issue with the attacks receiving worldwide coverage provoking a global discussion on the legality and morality of the attack. Consider, if your actions were constantly being watched, wouldn't you think twice before acting? Thomas Jefferson once wrote, "Whenever you do a thing, act as if all the world were watching." Numerous scientific studies have shown that people behave better if they believe they are being watched. WikiLeaks can keep organisations in check by acting like a watchdog.

Switzerland the home of Lindt chocolate has \$1.6 trillion in the banking system. Recently, WikiLeaks published a list of the top 100 Indian depositors of Swiss Banks who hold about \$2 billion of what has been referred to as Black Money that is, funds where tax has not been paid. If you think about how almost 30% of India's population is below the poverty line you can understand why the Indian people are demanding its government claw this money back into the country. But, whilst tax evasion is illegal, tax avoidance is not and the pursuit of WikiLeaks in exposing these inequalities and morally unjust practices, have forced Switzerland to disclose more information on its Swiss bank clients. Without this pressure, the Swiss banks would have continued to operate without public scrutiny, and the result would have been shameful. WikiLeaks can continue to work together with other (media) organisations to uncover such injustices.

On many occasions WikiLeaks is the first to 'break a story', but why WikiLeaks? It's the power of being anonymous; if not even WikiLeaks can identify their own sources, how can others? Therefore, WikiLeaks website is by far the safest platform to upload such confidential information. WikiLeaks can be used to expose the truth to reduce the unfairness in our world today.

Our country values 'freedom of speech and expression', so what reason is there to prohibit WikiLeaks presenting either informative, shocking or frivolous issues. This was evident with the 'Je suis Charlie' protest in France. Charlie Hebdo, published a cartoon depicting the Islamic prophet Muhammad in a way that was disrespectful to Muslims, and extremists shot 12 journalists in cold blood as a result. Publishers, journalists and

the public held up 'Je suis Charlie' posters and marched together because they believed that people were allowed to have differing opinions without attracting violence. If we believe something is not just, we have the right to take a stand just like whistleblowers are doing with WikiLeaks.

In an increasing technologically driven world we need an outlet for transparency, openness and the right to question and critique our institutions and governments. WikiLeaks is that outlet.

Julian Assange once said, 'If wars can be started by lies, then peace can be started by truth'.