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| Criteria | BONUS | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| The claim | I make a claim and explain why it is controversial. | I infer a claim and explain why it is controversial. | I make/infer a claim but don't explain why it is controversial. | My claim is buried, confused and/or unclear. | I don't say what my argument or claim is. |
| Reasons in support of the claim | I clearly and accurately give the 3 most important reasons to support my claim. | I give clear and accurate reasons (at least 3) in support of my claim. | I give reasons in support of my claim but I may overlook important reasons. | I give 1 or 2 weak reasons that don't support my claim and/or irrelevant or confusing reasons. | I do not give convincing reasons in support of my claim. |
| Organization | Engaging. Shows advanced understanding of organization and structure to contribute to meaning | My writing has a compelling **opening**, an informative **middle** and a satisfying **conclusion**. | My writing 2 of the 3 components. I use appropriate transitions. | My writing is incomplete, or gets off topic | My writing is incomplete, unfocused and disorganized. |
| Voice and tone | Clearly shows unique writing style. | It sounds like I care about my topic. I show how I use appropriate voice and tone to support topic. | My tone is vague but my paper could have been written by anyone. I need to give more details. | My writing is elementary. It needs better sentence structure to sound more mature. | My writing is not appropriate. The tone & voice don’t match my natural writing style. |
| Word choice | Words chosen with a purpose to establish tone and convey meaning. | The words I use are descriptive but natural, varied and vivid. (Typically, 6-7 words per sentence) | I make vague word choices that don’t enhance my topic. (Typically, 4-6 words per sentence) | The words I use are often dull or uninspired. It needs more precise vocabulary. | I use the same words over and over and over and over. Some words may be confusing to a reader. |
| Sentence fluency | My sentences are clear, complete, and of varying structure. | My sentences are clear, complete, and of varying lengths. (Typically 6-7 sentences per paragraph) | I have well-constructed sentences, but lack variety. (Typically 4-5 sentences per paragraph) | My sentences are sometimes awkward, and/or contain run-ons and fragments. | Many run-ons, fragments and awkward phrasings make my writing hard to read. |
| Conventions | Advanced understanding of language conventions. | I use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. | I generally use correct conventions. I have a couple of errors I should fix. | I have multiple errors in my essay that distract a reader. | Numerous errors make my paper hard to read. |
| Sources Sited | n/a | n/a | n/a | I included my research sheet. | I did not include/do a research sheet. |