**Instructional Rubric for a Persuasive Essay**

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| **Criteria** | **Gradations of Quality** | | | |
| **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| The claim | I make a claim and explain why it is controversial. | I make 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 give clear and accurate reasons in support of my claim. | I give reasons in support of my claim, but I overlook important reasons. | I give 1 or 2 weak reasons that don't support my claim and/or irrelevant or confusing reasons. | I don't give reasons in support of my claim. |
| Reasons against the claim | I discuss the reasons against my claim and explain why it is valid anyway. | I discuss the reasons against my claim but neglect some or don't explain why the claim still stands. | I say that there are reasons against the claim, but I don't discuss them. | I don't acknowledge or discuss the reasons against my claim. |
| Organization | My writing has a compelling opening, an informative middle, and a satisfying conclusion. | My writing has a beginning, a middle, and an end. | My organization is rough but workable. I may sometimes get off topic. | My writing is aimless and disorganized. |
| Voice and tone | It sounds like I care about my argument. I tell how I think and feel about it. | My tone is OK, but my paper could have been written by anyone. I need to tell how I think and feel. | My writing is bland or pretentious. There is either no hint of a real person in it, or it sounds like I'm faking it. | My writing is too formal or informal. It sounds like I don't like the topic of the essay. |
| Word choice | The words that I use are striking but natural, varied, and vivid. | I make some fine and some routine word choices. | The words that I use are often dull or uninspired or sound like I'm trying too hard to impress. | I use the same words over and over. Some words may be confusing. |
| Sentence fluency | My sentences are clear, complete, and of varying lengths. | I have well-constructed sentences. My essay marches along but doesn't dance. | My sentences are often awkward, run-ons, or fragments. | Many run-on sentences and sentence fragments make my essay hard to read. |
| Conventions | I use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. | I have a few errors to fix, but I generally use correct conventions. | I have enough errors in my essay to distract a reader. | Numerous errors make my paper hard to read. |

Persuasive Argument

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| Criteria | Explanation | Checklist and Notes |
| Claim | \*I make a claim  \*I explain my claim |  |
| Reasons For | \*2 reasons to support my claim |  |
| Reasons Against | \*2 reasons against my claim |  |
| Organization | \*compelling opening  \*informative middle  \*satisfying conclusion |  |
| Voice and Tone | \*I care about my claim  \*I tell how I think and feel about it |  |
| Word Choice | \*good word choices |  |
| Sentence Fluency | \*clear and complete sentences  \*varying sentence length |  |
| Conventions | \*correct grammar  \*correct punctuation  \*correct spelling |  |