Argument Essay

PROCEDURE

Step 1: <u>Research a narrow topic that can be thoroughly supported with strong evidence</u>. Do not choose a topic on which there is limited available evidence and avoid overly broad subjects. For example, the topics of gun control, capital punishment, and healthcare are popular topics which are difficult to narrow down. More defined subjects might include race-based quotas, tuition costs, and tax brackets. For this handout, consider the hypothetical topic: "Should texting while driving be banned?"

Step 2: <u>Thoroughly research all existing stances before creating a claim.</u> Do not decide on a point of argument to write about before examining the topic at hand. After accumulating knowledge of the subject, gather more evidence than will likely be used and define a claim to support in the paper.

Step 3: <u>After examining all sides of a subject, choose a point to argue</u>. One stance regarding the topic from Step 1 could be, "Texting while driving is harmful and should be illegal across all states and in all circumstances." Another argument could be summarized with, "Drivers should be permitted to text while at stoplights or when stuck in traffic."

Step 4: <u>Identify the type of audience who will receive the argument</u>. Different types of audiences ought to be approached in different ways. <u>Please note</u>: All argument papers should contain logic, a clear delivery, and a call-to-action. Depending on which audience the paper addresses, stress the element that best appeals to its respective audience. A **hostile audience** should be approached with extensive logic by demonstrating knowledge of the opposite view and clarifying common ground. A **neutral audience** should be provided a straightforward delivery so that they can choose which side to take. Finally, an **audience who is likely to agree** with the writer should be prompted with a call-to-action.

Step 5: Review the UWC's "<u>Logical Fallacies</u>" handout to ensure that the use of argument is free of fallacies.

WRITING PROCESS

Introduction: Begin by giving a brief overview of the subject and its importance. Mention the various views regarding the topic. Then, in the thesis statement, state the claim on the topic at hand and provide the supporting points that will be explained throughout the paper. For more information, please see the UWC's "Writing a Thesis" handout and "Writing an Introduction" handout. An overview for texting while driving could be, "Drivers are constantly tempted to use their cellphones while driving, which can result in lethal accidents."

Body Paragraphs: There should be at least one body paragraph for every point laid out in the thesis statement. For example, if the thesis statement claims that texting should be banned because it "distracts, promotes lazy language, and is time consuming," the first body paragraph should provide evidence to explain why texting is distracting. The second paragraph would then detail how texting promotes lazy language and so on.

Acknowledging the Opposing View: At least one body paragraph should acknowledge the other side/s of the argument. Briefly state the other side, recognize the valid points, and concisely refute them. For example, "Some have argued that texting while driving cannot always be avoided in the case of emergency messages or the need to communicate urgent information. However, even in the case of an emergency, texting while driving can always be avoided by pulling over on the side of the road or making a phone call instead."

Conclusion: The conclusion should summarize all of the supporting points of the claim without restating them word-for-word. Likewise, the thesis should be emphasized again but not regurgitated verbatim. If appropriate, include a call-to-action, which urges the reader to act on behalf of the claim. For example, if the claim states that people would be better off if they texted less, the call-to-action might read something like, "Cell phone users can avoid the harms caused by texting and driving simply by putting the phone down." Use the UWC's "Writing a Conclusion" handout for guidance.