
Question 3: Argument Essay

6 points

The late Barbara Jordan, a former United States representative, once warned: “[T]his is the great danger America faces—that we will cease to be one nation and become instead a collection of interest groups: city against suburb, region against region, individual against individual; each seeking to satisfy private wants.”

Write an essay that argues your position on Jordan’s claim that “private wants” threaten national identity.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Q3 Argument Essay – CED Sample Questions

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row A Thesis (0-1 points)</p> <p>4.B</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no defensible thesis. The intended thesis only restates the prompt. The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	<p>1 point</p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only restate the prompt. Do not take a position, or the position is vague or must be inferred. State an obvious fact rather than making a claim that requires a defense. 		<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to the prompt rather than restate or rephrase the prompt. Clearly takes a position on Jordan’s claim that ‘private wants’ threaten national identity.
<p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Do not take a position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Jordan claims that ‘region against region’ and ‘individual against individual’ is harmful to our country. This may be true.” <p>Address the topic of the prompt but are not defensible—it is an obvious fact stated as a claim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “People want what they want and a society is made-up of people.” 		<p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <p>Present a defensible position that responds to the prompt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “While Barbara Jordan correctly depicts an era of growing tension, she omits the significant fact that private wants and national identity both exist throughout history, neither completely occluding the other.” “We as a nation have become too regionalist. We no longer work for the best of this nation. We have begun to focus on our own region and ourselves instead of the American people as a whole. I agree with Jordan’s claim that ‘private wants’ threaten our national security.”
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. The thesis may be anywhere within the response. The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn’t do so to earn the thesis point. A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 		

Q3 Argument Essay – CED Sample Questions

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
<p>Row B</p> <p>Evidence AND Commentary (0-4 points)</p> <p>2.A</p> <p>4.A</p> <p>6.A</p> <p>6.B</p> <p>6.C</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.</p>	<p>1 point</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the argument.</p>	<p>2 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides some specific, relevant evidence.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.</p>	<p>3 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>	<p>4 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes					
<p>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. May be just opinion with no evidence or evidence that is irrelevant. 		<p>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tend to focus on summary of evidence rather than specific details. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. May make one point well, but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. Focus on the importance of specific details to build an argument. Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on the importance of specific details to build an argument. Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained.
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. 					

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Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row C</p> <p>Sophistication (0-1 points)</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point</p> <p>Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.</p>
<p>2.A</p> <p>4.C</p> <p>6.B</p> <p>8.A</p> <p>8.B</p> <p>8.C</p>	<p>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</p>	
	<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to contextualize their argument, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”). Only hint at or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that...</i>” OR “<i>Some people say...</i>”). Use complicated or complex sentences or language that are ineffective because they do not enhance the argument. 	<p>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Crafting a nuanced argument by consistently identifying and exploring complexities or tensions. Articulating the implications or limitations of an argument (either the student’s argument or an argument related to the prompt) by situating it within a broader context. Making effective rhetorical choices that consistently strengthen the force and impact of the student’s argument. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
	<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference. 	