The Argumentative Essay in a Nutshell…

The argumentative essay is a specific type of writing in which a student chooses a topic (often a controversial topic), researches it extensively, and then uses the evidence gathered in their research process to establish their opinion or position on the topic in an essay designed to persuade others to share that opinion. The argumentative essay is typically composed of:

1. A clear, concise, and defined thesis statement that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay. Your thesis should be specific, accurate, and arguable. A thesis statement that is not debatable (or that cannot be seen from at least two different and opposing perspectives) would make for a pretty pointless argumentative essay.

2. Information that places your topic within a social and factual context. You should provide background information geared toward your specific audience so that they can clearly understand your arguments and the importance of the issue you’re exploring.

3. Your arguments, organized into body paragraphs that include evidential support. These are the reasons you offer to support and explain the position you take in your thesis statement. Be sure to include clear and logical transitions between these paragraphs.

4. Your opponents’ arguments, or counter arguments and your response to them. These are the objections that your opponents would raise against your arguments, and have to be addressed in order for your paper to be truly persuasive. Responding to your opponents arguments and point out why they are invalid is as important as presenting your own!

5. A conclusion that does not simply restate the thesis, but readdresses it in light of the evidence provided.