PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS/DO NOT PLAGIARIZE OR TAKE THIS IF IT CANNOT BE COMPLETED IN TWO DAYS/NO BAD GRAMMAR

Touchstone 1.2: Outline a Persuasive Proposal

ASSIGNMENT: In your personal, academic, and professional life, you will encounter countless situations where you will need to convince family members, friends, coworkers, committees, and other audiences to adopt new policies, consider different processes and perspectives, or make changes that will impact others. Being able to convince others will allow you to have a voice in your own life and impact the lives of others. In order to do this, you will need to develop strategies for persuasion. You will be more convincing if you are able to provide credible evidence to support your point. Having valid and credible evidence to support your arguments plays a large role in how persuasive you are, how others receive your information, and the credibility you can build for yourself.

Following the Assignment Guidelines below, choose an argumentative topic to research. This will be your topic throughout the entire course, so the activities required for this assignment will provide the foundation for your future Touchstones. The topic for an argumentative research paper must be a debatable topic, meaning that it involves conflicting viewpoints. Additionally, it cannot be a topic that is already decided or agreed upon by most of society. You will need to take a firm position on the topic and use evidence and logic to support the position.

Touchstone 1.2 includes a research question, a working thesis, a detailed outline, and a reflection on this pre-writing process.

[Sample Touchstone 1.2](https://app.sophia.org/download/attachment/11825-Sample%20Touchstone%201.2.pdf)

In order to foster learning and growth, all essays you submit must be newly written specifically for this course. Any recycled work will be sent back with a 0, and you will be given one attempt to redo the Touchstone.

**A. ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES**

DIRECTIONS: Choose a scenario below and create a research question, a working thesis, and a detailed outline. Your topic should be current, appropriate for an academic context and should have a focus suitable for a 6-8 page essay.

**STEP 1: SELECT A SCENARIO AND TOPIC**

You’re going to begin your prewriting process by choosing a scenario so you can then start to brainstorm the problem you’d like to focus on. The scenario you select will help determine what type of problem you will explore in your proposal, as well as what audience you’ll be writing for. Since you’re writing a proposal, you already know your purpose is to persuade. But how you will persuade—what rhetorical appeals and research you will use—will likely depend on your audience.

Scenario 1: Community

Community-focused problems are issues that affect the daily life of individuals. These individuals can be from the same neighborhood, a neighborhood across town, or the same city. Have you ever wished the city would install more street lights, or put in a skating park, or did something about the persistent littering throughout the neighborhood?All of these are examples of community-focused problems.  
  
The goal of this scenario is to persuade a community group to fund the solution that you believe will address a particular problem and benefit the area. How will you persuade the community group to give you what you're asking for?

Scenario 2: Workplace

Workplace-focused problems involve issues or needs that affect employees at the office, department, or company. Some examples of workplace issues might include poor communication between departments, wasteful spending, lack of work-life balance, or a desire to have on site childcare. The goal of this scenario is to analyze the problem, then develop a solution that you think will resolve or improve the situation for the employees. How will you convince management to accept your solution?  
  
If you are wondering which scenario would be best to choose, think about concerns, issues,or projects that you are passionate about in your own life and career. For Example, as you think of this, if you keep coming back to how the empty lot on your block would make a great community garden space, you may want to consider choosing Scenario 1. If, when you think of your workplace, and it is experiencing a delay in receiving supplies, and want to explore a solution to this problem, you may want to consider choosing Scenario 2.

Once you select a scenario, focus on identifying a specific topic that you’d like to address and think about why that topic is important to you. Use the prewriting strategies you learned about in Unit 2 to narrow down your final topic.

**STEP 2: DETERMINE RESEARCH QUESTION AND WORKING THESIS**

The research question and working thesis are the driving force behind your research and eventual argument.

Remember from [1.2.2: Identifying the Problem](https://www.sophia.org/tutorials/identifying-the-problem) that a research question defines exactly what you are trying to find out. It will influence most of the steps you take to conduct the research. Consider what you need to know and research to persuade your audience. You may remember this research question from Anna’s example: How can a recycling program save the city money, both now and in the future?

Possible research question stems:

* How will benefit our workplace?
* What steps will we need to implement in the community?
* What are the costs associated with ?

Next, construct a clear and concise thesis statement that states your opinion or stance on the topic. Since this is about a problem and a solution, you would state the solution, and why it is the best choice.

Possible sentence stems for your thesis statement:

* In order to solve the issue of , the company should because .
* The most worthwhile program for our community is because .
* Implementing would benefit our workplace because .

**STEP 3: CREATE DETAILED OUTLINE**

For this assessment, you will use your communication skill to create an outline that lays out the thesis for your argument as well as its main points, your specific persuasive approaches, and evidence used to support your arguments. You will have the opportunity to continue practice pre-writing strategies like creating a solid thesis, identifying main and supporting points, and developing an effective conclusion.

The skills used in this assessment can be applied across both daily life and careers, regardless of the type of communication modality. Whether it is a formal proposal or a subtweet, thinking about your audience and using prewriting strategies makes for a more effective message, and makes you a more effective communicator. Using these skills can help you become an agent of positive change in your own life!

Your detailed outline provides a map of the argumentative research essay that you will write, including your key claims and the sources that support them. You may not have all your sources yet, and that is fine. The outline is a way to organize your essay and determine which areas (e.g. your sub-points) will require researched evidence as support.

Keep in mind: Refer to the list below throughout the writing process. Do not submit your Touchstone until it meets these guidelines.

**SCENARIO AND TOPIC**

❒ Have you identified a specific topic/problem to be addressed and explain why this topic is important to you?

❒ Is your topic focused and debatable?

**RESEARCH QUESTION AND THESIS**

❒ Is your research question a single sentence, framed as a question?

❒ Is your working thesis a single focused sentence, framed as a statement that takes a clear position on the research question?

**OUTLINE**

❒ Have you included headings: one for each paragraph with a brief label of the paragraph’s controlling idea(s)?

❒ Have you included an introduction, at least five body paragraphs, and a conclusion?

❒ Does your introduction include your working thesis?

❒ Does each body paragraph have its own unique title and key points?

❒ Do you have subheadings: two to five for each paragraph, below each heading, indicating key points that support the controlling idea?

❒ Does your conclusion include notes on your final thoughts?

❒ Do you have sources: one to three for each paragraph, as relevant, indicating the support for the key points?

❒ For each source, did you include the author’s name and the idea or information relevant to your argument (e.g. “Lappé on mono-cropping corn/soy and production”)?

**B. REFLECTION QUESTIONS GUIDELINES**

DIRECTIONS: Below your assignment, include answers to all of the following reflection questions.

1. Learning to conduct research is important because it is a skill you will use both in academia and in your professional life. It improves critical thinking and empowers you to find information for yourself. Consider the process of researching as a whole. What was the most challenging aspect of the process for you? (2-3 sentences)
2. The working thesis statement is a proposed answer to your research question. It should clearly identify a debatable topic and take a position on one side of that topic. Analyze the effectiveness of your working thesis statement. (3-4 sentences)
3. A detailed outline is an effective tool for laying out the progression of an argument. It allows you to consider the arrangement and organization of your ideas, as well as choose places to incorporate outside source materials. Review your detailed outline and summarize the argument you've presented. (3-4 sentences)
4. You will use the same topic on three of the remaining Touchstones in this course. What kind of feedback would be helpful for you? What are specific questions you might have as you go deeper into the research process? (2-3 sentences)

Keep in mind: Refer to the list below throughout the reflection process. Do not submit your Touchstone until it meets these guidelines.

❒ Have you answered all reflection questions thoughtfully and included insights, observations, and/or examples in all responses?

❒ Are your answers included on a separate page below the main assignment?

**C. RUBRIC**

|  | **Advanced (100%)** | **Proficient (85%)** | **Acceptable (75%)** | **Needs Improvement (50%)** | **Non-Performance (0%)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **RESEARCH QUESTION (10 POINTS)**  Pose a meaningful research question on a debatable topic. | Constructs a precise and focused research question relative to a current and debatable topic. | Constructs a focused research question relative to a debatable topic. | Constructs a research question relative to a debatable topic; however it is somewhat too broad or too narrow for the assignment. | Constructs a research question; however, the question is too broad or too narrow for the assignment and/or it is not debatable. | Does not construct a research question, or constructs a research question that does not meet any of the rubric criteria. |
| **WORKING THESIS (10 POINTS)**  Propose a focused working thesis. | Includes a working thesis that takes a well-articulated, clear, specific position on one side of an issue. | Includes a working thesis that takes a clear, specific position on one side of an issue. | Includes a working thesis that takes a clear position on one side of an issue; however it lacks specificity. | Includes a working thesis; however, it lacks specificity and does not take a clear position. | Does not include a working thesis, or includes a thesis that does not take a position. |
| **DETAILED OUTLINE (15 POINTS)**  Present a detailed outline that includes coherent headings, subheadings, and source placement notes. | Outline is thoroughly developed and clearly labeled with effective notes, such that the reader can easily see how the essay will build its argument; all necessary elements of the outline are present. | Outline is well-developed and labeled with sufficient notes, such that the reader can get a sense of how the essay will build its argument; all necessary elements of the outline are present. | Outline is primarily well-developed and labeled with sufficient notes, such that the reader can get an overall sense of how the essay will build its argument; however, a few necessary elements may be unclear or missing. | Outline is not fully developed and/or labeling and notes are often unclear, such that the reader cannot easily get a sense of how the essay will build its argument; several necessary elements of the outline are unclear or missing. | Outline is not developed and/or labeling and notes are unclear or absent, such that the reader is unable to see how the essay will build its argument; most necessary elements of the outline are unclear or missing. |
| **STYLE (5 POINTS)**  Establish a consistent, informative tone and make thoughtful stylistic choices. | Demonstrates thoughtful and effective word choices, avoids redundancy and imprecise language, and uses a wide variety of sentence structures. | Demonstrates effective word choices, primarily avoids redundancy and imprecise language, and uses a variety of sentence structures. | Demonstrates generally effective style choices, but may include occasional redundancies, imprecise language, poor word choice, and/or repetitive sentence structures. | Frequently includes poor word choices, redundancies, imprecise language, and/or repetitive sentence structures. | Consistently demonstrates poor word choices, redundancies, imprecise language, and/or repetitive sentence structures. |
| **CONVENTIONS (5 POINTS)**  Follow conventions for standard written English. | There are only a few, if any, negligible errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and usage. | There are occasional minor errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and usage. | There are some significant errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and usage. | There are frequent significant errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and usage. | There are consistent significant errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and usage. |
| **REFLECTION (5 POINTS)**  Answer reflection questions thoroughly and thoughtfully. | Demonstrates thoughtful reflection; consistently includes insights, observations, and/or examples in all responses, following or exceeding response length guidelines. | Demonstrates thoughtful reflection; includes multiple insights, observations, and/or examples, following response length guidelines. | Primarily demonstrates thoughtful reflection, but some responses are lacking in detail or insight; primarily follows response length guidelines. | Shows limited reflection; the majority of responses are lacking in detail or insight, with some questions left unanswered or falling short of response length guidelines. | No reflection responses are present. |

**D. REQUIREMENTS**

The following requirements must be met for your submission to be graded:

* Double-space the outline and use one-inch margins.
* Use a readable 12-point font.
* All writing must be appropriate for an academic context.
* Composition must be original and written for this assignment.
* Plagiarism of any kind is strictly prohibited.
* Submission must include your name, the name of the course, the date, and the title of your composition.
* Submission must include your research question, working thesis, outline, and reflection questions.
* Include all of the assignment components in a single file.
  + Acceptable file formats include .doc and .docx.

**F. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

The following resources will be helpful to you as you work on this assignment:

1. [Purdue Online Writing Lab's APA Formatting and Style Guide](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html)
   1. *This site includes a comprehensive overview of APA style, as well as individual pages with guidelines for specific citation types.*
2. [Frequently Asked Questions About APA Style](https://apastyle.apa.org/learn/faqs/index?_ga=2.108387778.1714049845.1568211418-1848442951.1567702038)
   1. *This page on the official APA website addresses common questions related to APA formatting. The "References," "Punctuation," and "Grammar and Writing Style" sections will be the most useful to your work in this course.*
3. [APA Style: Quick Answers—References](https://apastyle.apa.org/learn/quick-guide-on-references?_ga=2.35495777.1714049845.1568211418-1848442951.1567702038)
   1. *This page on the official APA Style website provides numerous examples of reference list formatting for various source types.*

Requirements: see above