


Argumentative Essay Unit: The Basics

Objective: Students plan and write argumentative essays from scratch, focusing on developing strong thesis statements.

Prompt: Currently, US citizens can vote when they turn 18. Should the legal voting age be lowered?
 You can replace this prompt with your own in any activity (or use [our assignment library](#))!

Duration: 4–7 class periods, or fewer with homework

Pre-Write

1–2 class periods



Graphic Organizer: [Selecting a Thesis](#)

Students weigh two opposing opinions and decide which to argue in their essays.

10–15
minutes



Looking for more pre-writing resources? You can find [our full collection here](#)!



Peer Review: [Thesis Statement](#)

Students revise their thesis statements with anonymous feedback from five classmates.

30–45
minutes

Rubric: Thesis statement is an opinion
Thesis statement is interesting

Draft

2–3 class periods



Guided Draft: [Argumentative Essay](#)

Students draft a full argumentative essay with the support of targeted tips.



If needed, allow extra time before drafting for students to collect evidence.

Rubric: Thesis statement is a controversial opinion
Each topic sentence is a claim that supports the thesis
Each piece of evidence is a fact that supports the claim
Conclusion restates the argument and explains why readers should care
Language is specific and concise

120–180
minutes



Before starting to draft, students will see an [interactive tutorial](#) for this activity!
Try projecting the tutorial and going through it as a whole class.

Revise

1–2 class periods



Self Review: [Argumentative Essay](#)

Students review and revise their rough drafts with scaffolded support.

30–90
minutes

Rubric: Same as Guided Draft