OUTLINE FOR AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

I. **Introduction** -- (sets the tone for the entire essay -- be serious, formal, convincing)
   A. **Lead** (hook, attention-getter, motivator)
      • 2-4 well-developed sentences
      • Use an anecdote (a little story), startling facts, surprising statistics, a quotation, a contrary opinion, an emotionally charged statement, or any combination of the above.
   B. **Background information** (2-3 sentences to explain the history or background or seriousness of the issue)
   C. **Thesis statement/Claim** (strong, clear statement of your position on the issue)
      Samples:
      • Participation in school athletics builds character.
      • Children up to the age of ten and pregnant women should receive free medical care.
      • A class in multicultural literature should be required for graduation.
      (The thesis always includes the topic + position.)
   D. **Blueprint** (a sentence that offers 2-3 lines of argumentation that will support the thesis statement)
      Sample:
      • Jogging is an overrated form of exercise. (Thesis statement)
      • Few joggers consider that jogging can be hazardous to one’s emotional, financial, and physical health. (Blueprint)

II. **First body paragraph** (use order of importance and start with your weakest argument)
   A. **Transition + Topic sentence** (begins each body paragraph; your first line of argumentation in your blueprint)
   B. **Support/Evidence**
      • facts/statistics
      • examples/observations
      • expert’s/authority’s opinion
   C. **Concluding sentence** (ties the above together and leads into next paragraph)

III. **Second body paragraph** (stronger argument—the second line of argumentation in your blueprint) Include transitions.
   A. Transition + Topic sentence
   B. Support/evidence
   C. Concluding sentence

IV. **Third body paragraph** (the strongest argument—the third line of argumentation in your blueprint.) Include transitions and points A, B, and C above.

V. **Counterclaims/Concessions** -- the opposing point of view (admitting they have a point) and rebuttals/counter arguments/refutations (countering the opposing view). Not necessarily a separate paragraph but may be structured that way. May be included in the intro, the body, or the conclusion.
   Sample:
   • Some people argue that teenagers are better drivers than older people. It’s true that young people have faster reflexes, but they also have less experience on the road....
VI. **Conclusion** (should be powerful and leave a lasting impression)

A. **Reworded thesis statement/claim**
B. One or more of the following:
   - **call to action** (what is the next logical step)
   Examples:
     - Our responsibility is…
     - Research the subject
   - **solution**
C. **Clincher statement** (tie it back to the lead—this rounds everything out for the reader)

VI. **Works Cited** (a list of sources or references on a separate page at the end of the essay)

**Additional Argumentative Essay Helps -- Phrases to Use When Presenting Evidence**

1. One piece of evidence that shows this . . .
2. Proof of this is obvious when . . .
3. Further proof of . . . is obvious when . . .
4. Additional proof of . . . is shown by . . .
5. More evidence of . . . can be seen in . . .
6. . . . is also revealed through . . .
7. . . . can also be seen when . . .
8. . . . is also shown by . . .
9. It is obvious from . . . that . . .
10. It should be clear from what . . . says that . . .
11. . . .’s words reveal that . . .
12. There can be no doubt that . . .
13. Undoubtedly . . . / Without a doubt . . .
14. There can be no question that . . .
15. As the evidence correctly shows . . .
16. One is forced to conclude that . . .
17. Finally, the most important evidence showing that . . . is revealed when . . .
18. Final proof of . . .
19. The evidence is clear: (add reworded topic sentence)
20. Only one conclusion can be drawn: (add reworded topic sentence)

**DO NOT USE** phrases such as the following: **DO USE:**

- as I have said
  - in fact
- as I have proved
  - clearly
- as you can see
  - truly

**Remove all use of I or you.**

**Remove any casual, informal or slang expressions.**