

ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

ID BADGES

THE NEGOTIATOR

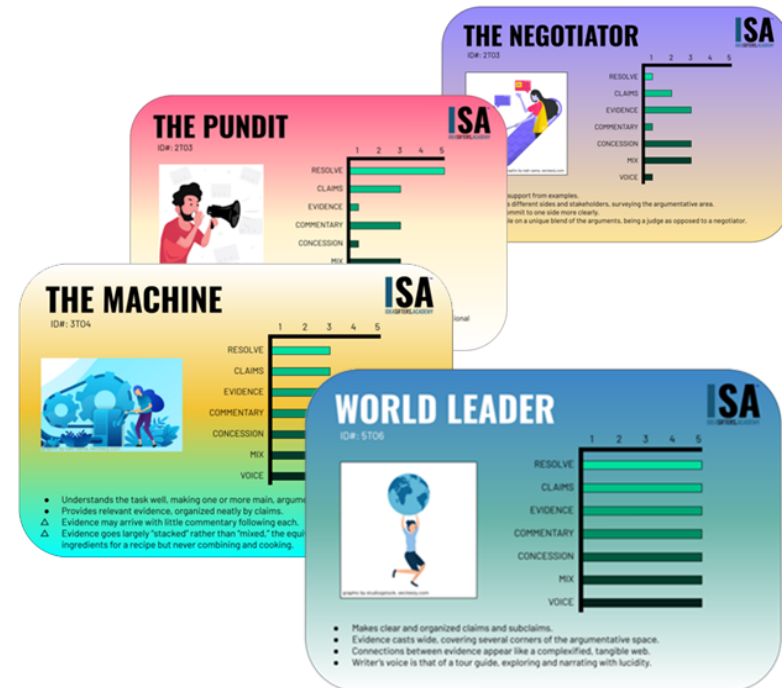
THE PUNDIT

THE MACHINE

THE BEST FRIEND

NATIONAL LEADER

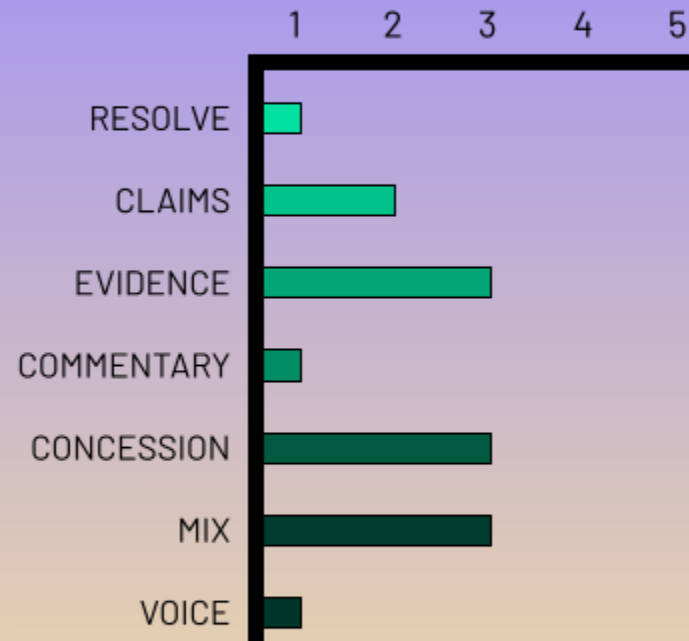
WORLD LEADER



THE NEGOTIATOR

ID#: 2T03

ISATM
IDEASIFTERS.ACADEMY



- Provides support from examples.
- Highlights different sides and stakeholders, surveying the argumentative area.
- △ Should commit to one side more clearly.
- △ Should rule on a unique blend of the arguments, being a judge as opposed to a negotiator.

COMMON COMMENTS | THE NEGOTIATOR

A2.50/50. Your thesis statement does not yet take a clear, debatable stance. It reads “50/50”, as though both sides may be equally right. To fix the ambiguity, incorporate precise diction to make it clearer which side you fall on.

A10. There’s little to no stated complexity. Find a path forward that is less absolute and more realistically complex. The examples and their relationships to one another can help inspire the complexity. Pretend for a moment that the essay itself is a conversation between the examples. Some will agree, some will disagree, but most will qualify as they discuss with one another, willing to find at least some small overlap. Find this qualifying area, the asterisk that must be added for a full examination of the issues, and explore. Preview it early in your thesis and then dedicate a portion of your work to it.

A3. Include clear, argumentative topic sentences. Each is a claim for its paragraph, a focal point. Write these topic sentences first, and the evidence and commentary that arrive after will read as clearer and more persuasive.

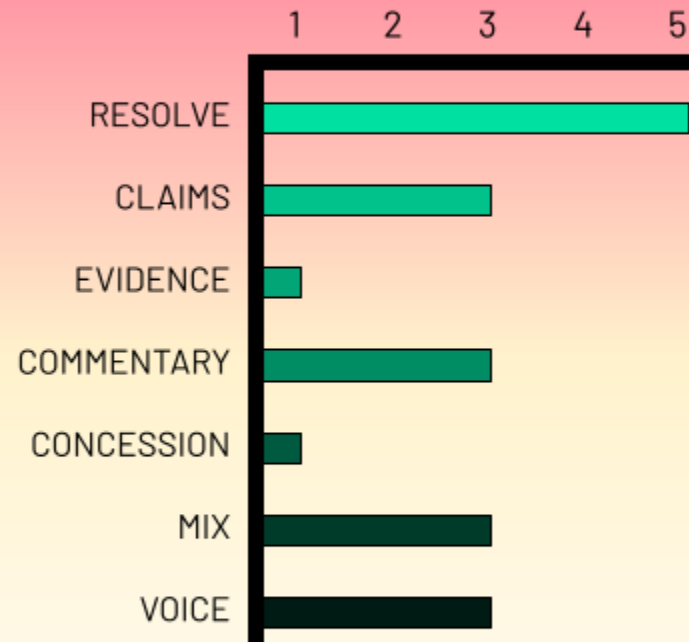
A31. You picked an oversimplified example that has limited your argument. Don’t get so caught up in an example in that you argue against common sense. In an argumentative prompt that asks whether there are benefits to adversity, for instance, you should avoid characterizing an example where one person overcame their obstacles as though that proves obstacles everywhere are what we all need to motivate us. The reality is far more complex, so be careful with your ideas when you explain your examples and derive conclusions.

A11. Concession/opposition missing or limited. Arguments are stronger if you examine evidence from “the other side.” As you explore, determine whether you must outright disprove that side—or more persuasively if you can incorporate with your own argument in some small way. To be safe, find the other side’s absolute strongest point and relay it honestly and fairly. Then decide how it can still fit with your argument in a way that brings you closer, but not all the way to center.

THE PUNDIT

ID#: 2T03

ISATM
IDEASIFTERS.ACADEMY



- Articulates intense support for one side of the debate.
- Examines multiple claims or subclaims, exploring the chosen side.
- △ Would benefit from including examples more often or with greater detail, a foundational strength of evidence.
- △ Would strengthen through flexibility in the form of small exceptions or nuance.

COMMON COMMENTS | THE PUNDIT

A2.ABS. Your thesis statement is too limited and absolutist—so one-sided that it's unrealistic. Be more specific and detailed about your argument. Take an opinionated, unique stance, and briefly outline any complexity.

A10. There's little to no stated complexity. Find a path forward that is less absolute and more realistically complex. The examples and their relationships to one another can help inspire the complexity. Pretend for a moment that the essay itself is a conversation between the examples. Some will agree, some will disagree, but most will qualify as they discuss with one another, willing to find at least some small overlap. Find this qualifying area, the asterisk that must be added for a full examination of the issues, and explore. Preview it early in your thesis and then dedicate a portion of your work to it.

A15. Your writing is in need of brevity. What you've said is strong and worth discussing, but you've said it either repeatedly without adding anything new or you have taken a long, roundabout path to arrive at your ultimate, late analysis. Say the same with less, and move forward.

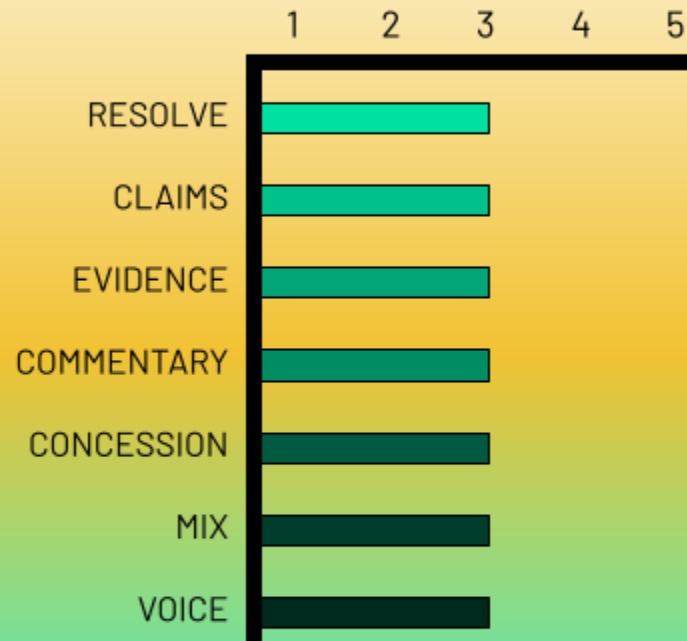
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THE MACHINE

ID#: 3T04

ISATM
IDEASIFTERS.ACADEMY



- Understands the task well, making one or more main, argumentative claims.
- Provides relevant evidence, organized neatly by claims.
- △ Evidence may arrive with little commentary following each.
- △ Evidence goes largely "stacked" rather than "mixed," the equivalent of having all the ingredients for a recipe but never combining and cooking.

COMMON COMMENTS | THE MACHINE

A21. Your new angle is not yet unique—add uncommon complexity to stand out. There exist common, easily accessible angles that barely extend discussion in argumentative writing, and there exist less common, more complicated and subtle angles that widen exponentially. Start to unscrew the training wheels and ride towards realistic complexity. The easy angles were always just that: easy ways out. Consider the argumentative prompt “What is the role of humorists in our society?” A “too-easy” angle that may at first seem nuanced is the idea that humorists should just avoid serious topics. That’s an important point worth some investigation in a body paragraph, but is not unique or persuasive argumentatively on its own. Better would be to consider the ethical implications of inadvertently allowing hate speech in open humor, or of how the medium of delivery for humor changes the weight of the ideas it can deliver, etc.—more complex conversations.

A7. Examples need specificity. You are rushing through your examples, leaving a void where steps of logic and detail should exist. Adding the necessary specifics to your evidence will foster the syllogistic connections (like Geometric proofs) that we seek.

A9. The examples stack rather than blend. In an argumentative essay, the writer should leverage examples in tandem or against one another to further an argument. Treat the essay itself as though it is a conversation between the examples. Some will agree, some will disagree, some will qualify as they discuss with one another. You should facilitate this conversation. If you include examples but fail to mix them at least minimally so in transitions between paragraphs, you run the risk of merely summarizing the sources. Summarizing is not the task. Remain argumentative; advance unique claims that weigh the sources together as evidence. Of the more effective places to blend is either, again, at the beginning of each body paragraph in transition, or within commentary when you “connect the dots” of the essay thus far.

G3. Vary the length and structure of your sentences. Implement a change every few lines. Write with occasional, shorter syntax and dynamic punctuation, and watch your voice come alive. Sometimes strong students try to run marathons with extraordinarily long sentences, each seemingly an attempt to outrun the last. For clarity, consider the occasional sprint.

EXERCISES

Concise > complex

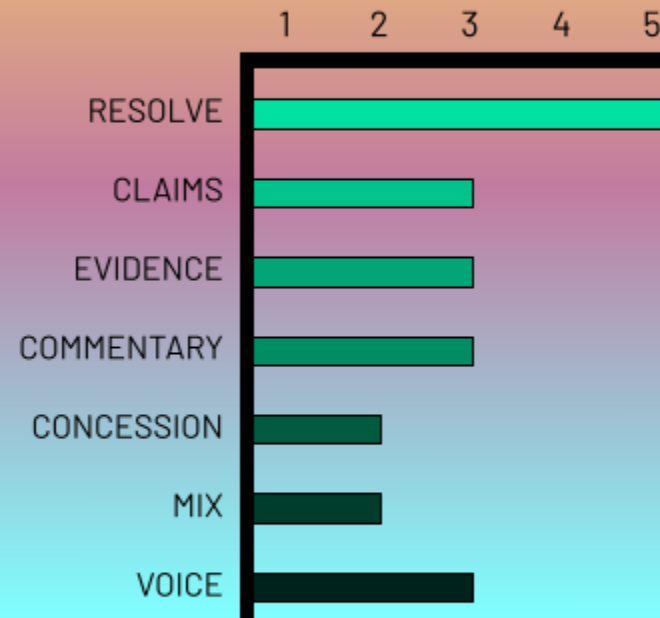
[Google “concision exercises”](#)

Active voice > passive voice

[Google “active voice exercises”](#)

THE BEST FRIEND

ID#: 3T04



- Advocates for a side clearly.
- Makes generalized, effective and accurate claims.
- △ Evolve and complexify arguments gradually.
- △ With so many basics complete, make conscious efforts to elevate voice.

COMMON COMMENTS | THE BEST FRIEND

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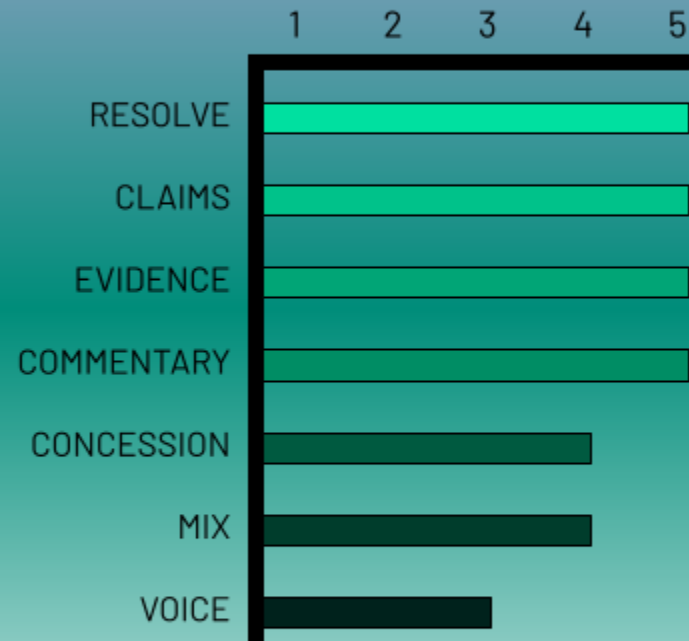
A30. By adding even **a small qualifier like “may” or “some”**, a statement you’ve made becomes universally true. Otherwise, you’ve offered an absolute, easily refuted. If I can find even one exception, I’ve proven you wrong. Don’t leave yourself open to such easy refutation; qualify.

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NATIONAL LEADER

ID#: 4T06

ISA[™]
IDEASIFTERS.ACADEMY



- Makes clear and organized claims and subclaims.
- Evidence casts wide, covering several corners of the argumentative space.
- Connections between evidence appear like a simple web.
- △ Can complexify the web to catch more readers through argumentative complexity and voice development.

COMMON COMMENTS | NATIONAL LEADER

GJA1. Your thesis is strong and unique, going beyond the basic noise of a debate's two-sided spectrum. The thesis conveys complexity either in the form of concession—"pullback"—or by adding a new angle often unexamined.

GJA3. Your body paragraph starts with a clear topic sentence, a kind of "sub-thesis statement" that ushers the reader towards a new facet of exemplification and argument. You incorporate an example early in the paragraph, and synthesize at a level that exceeds that of summary. The argument here is strong and unique enough, such that only through a merging of examples would the examples be useful to you at all—that's because your commentary constitutes your ideas, not just the examples endlessly summarized or paraphrased. Your commentary traces back not just to the topic sentence, but to the thesis as well. Here, you have crafted a well-organized, and therefore highly effective argument.

GJA4. Concession or opposition exploration is mandatory given the argument you've tackled, and in addressing one of the two, you positioned yourself for success. Your overall effect as a writer is now more persuasive because of this choice. In explaining the "other side," you've found arguments worth noting and delicately incorporated them into your view.

A19. Your conclusion does not yet synthesize the best parts of your argument persuasively. Do not merely copy and paste your thesis. Instead, without looking back, summarize the best parts of your essay by memory. The product will likely be concise and represent the most important points—two fundamental qualifications for a persuasive, effective conclusion.

G56. Your written voice is strong. Moving into a state of crystal clarity is the next logical goal. **Metaphors** are one of the easiest and most effective ways to do so. They exist in our language for a reason: metaphors communicate concepts quickly. Consider adding brief, or extended metaphors to encapsulate, synthesize, and package big ideas for immediate use. Avoid cartoonish or clichéd ones, but do not avoid them altogether. Start with adding one in a conclusion for an assignment, and as you become more comfortable with them, pull them into commentary selectively. Ex: "Here, murder is as impersonal as the squashing of a gnat" (Arendt 167).

G3. Vary the length and structure of your sentences. Implement a change every few lines. Write with occasional, shorter syntax and dynamic punctuation, and watch your voice come alive. Sometimes strong students try to run marathons with extraordinarily long sentences, each seemingly an attempt to outrun the last. For clarity, consider the occasional sprint.

EXERCISES

Concise > complex

[Google "conclusion exercises"](#)

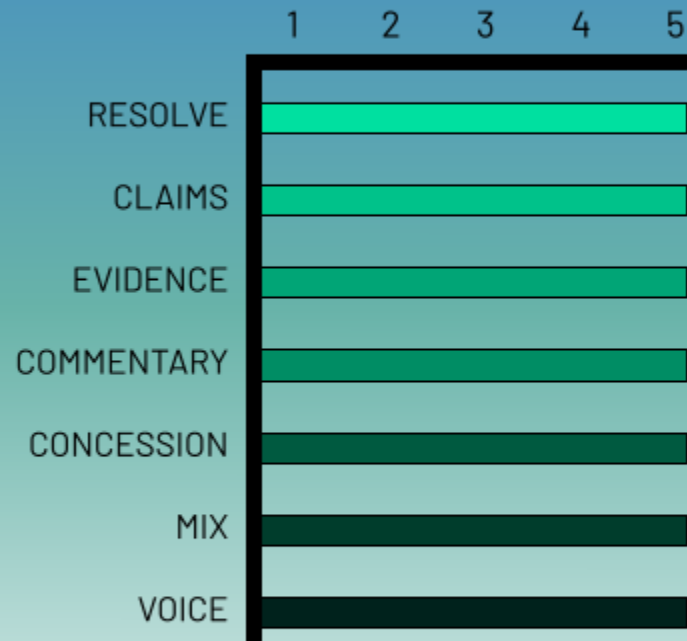
Active voice > passive voice

[Google "active voice exercises"](#)

WORLD LEADER

ID#: 5T06

ISA
IDEASIFTERS.ACADEMY



- Makes clear and organized claims and subclaims.
- Evidence casts wide, covering several corners of the argumentative space.
- Connections between evidence appear like a complexified, tangible web.
- Writer's voice is that of a tour guide, exploring and narrating with lucidity.

COMMON COMMENTS | WORLD LEADER

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GJA8. You've included a genuinely unique sub-argument, which you then evidence with examples. Consider how the opposite is true for most argumentative writers: the examples define their arguments in simple "yes" or "no" binaries. To have achieved such levels of unique argument even once is worth celebrating.

GJA6. Your syntax is varied and engaging. Your voice is confident. Take another look at how well your work reads overall. The more conscious you are of when and why your syntax works, the better. Keep it up.

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