

Argumentative Essay: Introduction to the Essay

Extended Writing Project Prompt and Directions:

Every day the media run headlines celebrating heroes among us. The firefighter who charges into the burning building to save an infant is a hero. The nurse who risks her own life to help patients with infectious diseases—she’s a hero too. What qualities do all heroes have in common? What makes one person more heroic than another?

In this unit, you have been reading both nonfiction and fiction texts about people who are considered American heroes. Recognizing that not everyone agrees on what it means to be a hero or who our heroes are, write an argumentative essay that identifies an individual from the selections in this unit who you feel best exemplifies the qualities of a hero.

To support your ideas you will include textual evidence from at least one selection in the textbook and research from one other print or digital source.

Your argumentative essay with research should include:

- **an explicitly stated claim about the individual who you think is the most heroic**
- **a logically organized argument supported by persuasive reasons and relevant textual evidence**
- **information from one unit text and at least one other print or digital source**
- **citations of your sources and a Works Cited page**
- **a conclusion that restates your claim, sums up your reasons and evidence, and leaves your readers with an original thought about the topic**

An **argumentative essay** is a form of persuasive writing. The writer’s job is to make a claim about a topic, present logical reasons for making the claim, and then provide evidence—facts, details, and quotations—to support the claim. After first introducing the claim, the writer develops his or her ideas in the body of the argument, maintaining a formal style and using transitions to link related ideas. The purpose of the argument is for the writer to convince readers that his or her claim is valid. After presenting all the evidence to support his or her claim, the writer provides a concluding statement that follows from the argument presented.

In order to provide convincing supporting evidence, the writer must often do outside research, either because it is assigned or because it is essential to understanding a complex topic. That means the writer looks at print or digital sources of information related to the topic—books, articles, Web pages, diaries, letters, interviews, and other documents, and incorporates the information he or she finds into the argument. The writer cites these sources so that readers know where the supporting evidence was found and can confirm credibility. (In later Extended Writing Project Lessons, you will learn more about how to research a topic, including selecting appropriate material, effectively incorporating your research, and citing your sources.)

The features of an argumentative essay include the following:

- an introduction that states a claim, or an opinion, about the topic
- reasons and evidence that support the claim or claims
- a logical organizational structure with clear transitions
- embedded quotations from credible sources that are clearly cited
- a formal style that is maintained throughout the essay
- a concluding statement that follows from the argument presented

As you continue working on this Extended Writing Project, you'll learn more about crafting each of the elements of an argumentative essay with research.

Practice:

Brainstorm heroic qualities. You can use any of the prewriting strategies you have learned, including list making, brainstorming, freewriting, concept mapping, sketching and so on. Use the rest of this paper to complete the sentence, “A *hero* is someone who...”