

Name: _____ Date: _____

Write an Argument Essay

Directions: Read "You Just Found a Dinosaur Fossil. Now What?" Complete the scavenger hunt on page 29.
Then follow the steps below.

STEP 1: DECIDE WHAT YOU THINK

You just found a dinosaur fossil. What should you do with it?

Consider what you read in the article, as well as your own viewpoints.

Check the box next to the point of view you will argue in your essay.

Or write your own opinion in the space provided.

☐

Sell it!

☐

Donate it!

☐

STEP 2: GATHER SUPPORT FOR YOUR OPINION

Which details from the letters support your opinion? What other information supports your opinion?

List at least three supporting details on the lines below.

Here's an example: If you would sell your fossil, one of your supporting details might be that dinosaur fossils can be worth millions of dollars.

1.

2.

3.

STEP 3: ACKNOWLEDGE THE OTHER SIDE

If you would sell your dinosaur fossil, summarize the strongest arguments against selling fossils that James presents in his letter. If you would donate your dinosaur fossil, summarize the strongest arguments in favor of selling fossils that Mia presents in her letter.

STEP 4: CRAFT YOUR THESIS (CENTRAL CLAIM)

The thesis is where you tell readers what your essay is going to be about. The thesis should be a clear, strong statement of the opinion you gave in Step 1. The rest of your essay will support this thesis.

Your thesis: _____

STEP 5: WRITE YOUR HOOK

The beginning of your essay is called the hook because it "hooks" your readers' attention. The hook should relate to the topic of your essay, but it can take many forms. It can be:

- 1. An anecdote** (a very short story): Describe a time when you found something valuable. What did you do with it? How did you feel?
- 2. A surprising fact:** Find a fact that will raise your readers' eyebrows. Several surprising facts are included in the article. You can also do some research to find one that is not included in the article.
- 3. A rhetorical question** (a question to which you don't expect an answer): Ask your readers a question that reflects your point of view. Here's one way you could structure your question:
"If you find a fossil, are you _____?"
- 4. A quote:** Find a thought-provoking quote that relates to the topic of your essay.

Choose one of the ideas above, or use your own idea, and write a hook on the lines provided.

Your hook: _____

Let readers know a little about the issue you will be writing about. This is not your point of view; it's a brief summary of the issue. Finish the summary of the debate over selling fossils that begins below.

Mia and James found a precious dinosaur fossil in their backyard. Mia thinks that they should sell the fossil because it could be worth a lot of money. James disagrees and believes that _____

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

On the next page, you'll find guidelines for how to organize your essay.

Argument Essay Outline

Directions: Use the outline below to write your essay. You will use what you wrote on the first three pages of this activity.

1

INTRODUCTION

Open with your hook from Step 5.



Write a transition sentence that relates your hook to the question of whether to sell or donate a fossil.



(See *Scope's* handout "Great Transitions" for some ways to link your ideas.)



Write your summary of the issue from Step 6.



Finish with your thesis from Step 4.

2

BODY PARAGRAPH(S)

**Now write your supporting points from Step 2.
For each one, write 1-3 sentences that
provide additional details.**

You can put your supporting points and detail sentences together in one paragraph or you can split them into several paragraphs. It depends on how much you want to write about each point.

Hint! Order your supporting points from weakest to strongest. Readers will best remember details that are presented last.

3

ACKNOWLEDGE THE OTHER SIDE

Now it's time to recognize the other side of the argument.

Use what you wrote in Step 3.

Then explain why you think the opposing point of view is wrong.

4

CONCLUSION

**Write 2-3 sentences to remind your readers
of your main points.**

Finish with a strong final sentence.

*Need an idea?
Refer to your hook,
find a quote, or give
a call to action.*

5

READ AND REVISE

Use *Scope's* "Argument-Essay Checklist" to evaluate and edit what you have written.