| **Criteria** | **4 - Exemplary** | **3 - Proficient** | **2 - Basic** | **1 - Limited** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Claim & Focus | The thesis is clear, specific, and takes a strong stance on the topic. The focus is maintained consistently throughout the essay. | The thesis is clear and takes a stance on the topic. The focus is generally maintained throughout the essay. | The thesis is present but may lack clarity. The focus may waver at times. | The thesis is unclear or absent, and the focus is inconsistent or absent. |
| Evidence & Support | Strong, relevant evidence is provided to support the thesis. Simple examples and details are effectively used, demonstrating a solid understanding of the topic. | Adequate evidence is provided to support the thesis. Examples and details are used, contributing to a reasonable argument. | Limited or irrelevant evidence is presented. Examples and details may be lacking or not effectively integrated. | Little to no evidence is presented to support the thesis. Examples and details are missing or poorly integrated. |
| Organization | The essay has a clear and logical organizational structure. Each paragraph contributes to the overall coherence and progression of ideas. | The essay has a solid organizational structure with clear transitions between paragraphs. Ideas are presented in a logical order. | The organizational structure is somewhat unclear, and transitions may be abrupt. Some ideas are out of order. | The organizational structure is confusing or absent, hindering the flow of ideas. |
| Language & Style | The writing is clear and effective, with a good command of language and style appropriate for an argumentative essay. Simple sentence structures enhance readability. | The writing is mostly clear and effective, with a basic command of language and style. Simple sentence structures are used. | The language and style are basic, with some inconsistencies. Sentence structures may lack variety. | The language and style are limited, hindering clarity. Sentences lack variety and may be awkward. |
| Conventions | The essay demonstrates a basic command of grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Errors, if any, are minor and do not significantly impact readability. | The essay has few errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Errors do not significantly impact readability. | There are noticeable errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Errors may occasionally distract the reader. | Numerous errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling significantly impact readability. |
| Conclusion | The conclusion summarizes key points and reinforces the thesis. It provides closure to the essay. | The conclusion summarizes key points and reinforces the thesis. It provides a basic closure to the essay. | The conclusion is present but may be weak in summarizing key points. It lacks a strong impact. | The conclusion is unclear or absent, leaving the essay incomplete. |