Nothing But the Truth

Argumentative Essay Assignment

By the end of this documentary novel, a number of injustices have occurred. Miss Narwin has been removed from her teaching job despite the fact that her record indicates she is one of the best teachers at the school; the school budget has been rejected by voters who did not have all the facts; and the public has not been presented the "whole truth and nothing but the truth." Write an argument that assigns responsibility these injustices.

Introduction: Capture attention and explain what actually happened in the story and why "the whole truth and nothing but the truth" was never made public. Summarize the REAL story using CAUSE-AND-EFFECT statements that address the motivations of the characters and the results of their actions.

Example: Philip wanted to be on the track team, but he was failing English, so he couldn't try out. Then, he…

Here are some sentence patterns you may use to complete the introduction:

_____ wanted _____, but _____, so _____.

Then, _____, and the result was _____.

This caused _____, which resulted in _____.

Note: These are only samples to help you get started. Your written introduction will be significantly longer and may include other sentence patterns. Your task is to show how one action led to the next and what the result ultimately was. You will use this information as a springboard into your argument, and you may need to illustrate how you know a character's motivations (with quotations from the text) when you get to that part of the argument. If you can't back it up with evidence, don't say it.

Argument: This is the most important part of the essay. The number, completeness, and quality of the paragraphs that make up your argument will determine how effective it is. The more evidence you present, the better. Each paragraph will follow a pattern like this:

***Claim*:** _____ is to blame for _____because _____.

Name the character. *Identify the injustice.* *Briefly state the reason the character is to blame.*

Evidence #1: Use specific quotations from the novel to support your claim.

Warrant #1: Explain how the evidence supports your claim. ("Connect the dots" for the jury. Do not assume that they will agree with your reasoning. Explain it completely.)

Evidence #2: Use another quotation from the novel to further support and develop the logic of your claim.

Warrant #2: Again, explain your reasoning. Show how this evidence proves your claim.

Address Counterarguments: Look critically at your own reasoning. Imagine being the lawyer representing the person you are blaming. What would that lawyer say in his/her client's defense? This is a counterargument, and you need to first admit that it exists and then explain why your reasoning is more logical and correct.

Conclusion/Transition: Put it all together and restate the claim and/or transition to your next claim.

Conclusion: Summarize your argument and reasons for the jury. End with a memorable "clincher" statement.