

Writing Topics

The following is a list of topics for essays taken from a publication giving guidelines to TOEFL candidates. Argumentative essays are written for the purpose of presenting one's views – arrived at through the process of critical thinking, and persuading others of the veracity of your position. Being able to write a good argumentative essay is one of the fundamental skills of a university-educated citizen in a democratic country.

People attend college or university for many different reasons (for example, new experiences, career preparation, increased knowledge). Why do **you** think people attend college or university? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Parents are the best teachers. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Nowadays, food has become easier to prepare. Has this change improved the way people live? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

It has been said, "Not everything that is learned is contained in books." Compare and contrast knowledge gained from experience with knowledge gained from books. In your opinion, which source is more important? Why?

A company has announced that it wishes to build a large factory near your community. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this new influence on your community. Do you support or oppose the factory? Explain your position.

If you could change one important thing about your hometown, what would you change? Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.

How do movies or television influence people's behavior? Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Television has destroyed communication among friends and family. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Some people prefer to live in a small town. Others prefer to live in a big city. Which place would you prefer to live in? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

"When people succeed, it is because of hard work. Luck has nothing to do with success." Do you agree or disagree with the quotation above? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your position.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Universities should give the same amount of money to their students' sports activities as they give to their university libraries. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Many people visit museums when they travel to new places. Why do you think people visit museums? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Some people prefer to eat at food stands or restaurants. Other people prefer to prepare and eat food at home. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Some people believe that university students should be required to attend classes. Others believe that going to classes should be optional for students. Which point of view do you agree with? Use specific reasons and details to explain your answer.

Neighbors are the people who live near us. In your opinion, what are the qualities of a good neighbor? Use specific details and examples in your answer.

It has recently been announced that a new restaurant may be built in your neighborhood. Do you support or oppose this plan? Why? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

Some people think that they can learn better by themselves than with a teacher. Others think that it is always better to have a teacher. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons to develop your essay.

What are some important qualities of a good supervisor (boss)? Use specific details and examples to explain why these qualities are important.

Should governments spend more money on improving roads and highways, or should governments spend more money on improving public transportation (buses, trains, subways)? Why? Use specific reasons and details to develop your essay.

It is better for children to grow up in the countryside than in a big city. Do you agree or disagree? Use specific reasons and examples to develop your essay.

In general, people are living longer now. Discuss the causes of this phenomenon. Use specific reasons and details to develop your essay.

We all work or will work in our jobs with many different kinds of people. In your opinion, what are some important characteristics of a co-worker (someone you work closely with)? Use reasons and specific examples to explain why these characteristics are important.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Sometimes it is better not to tell the truth. Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

In some countries, teenagers have jobs while they are still students. Do you think this is a good idea? Support your opinion by using specific reasons and details.

A person you know is planning to move to your town or city. What do you think this person would like and dislike about living in your town or city? Why? Use specific reasons and details to develop your essay.

It has recently been announced that a large shopping center may be built in your neighborhood. Do you support or oppose this plan? Why? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

It has recently been announced that a new movie theater may be built in your neighborhood. Do you support or oppose this plan? Why? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People should sometimes do things that they do not enjoy doing. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Television, newspapers, magazines, and other media pay too much attention to the personal lives of famous people such as public figures and celebrities. Use specific reasons and details to explain your opinion.

Some people believe that the Earth is being harmed (damaged) by human activity. Others feel that human activity makes the Earth a better place to live. What is your opinion? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

It has recently been announced that a new high school may be built in your community. Do you support or oppose this plan? Why? Use specific reasons and details in your answer.

Some people spend their entire lives in one place. Others move a number of times throughout their lives, looking for a better job, house, community, or even climate. Which do you prefer: staying in one place or moving in search of another place? Use reasons and specific examples to support your opinion.

Is it better to enjoy your money when you earn it or is it better to save your money for some time in the future? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

You have received a gift of money. The money is enough to buy either a piece of jewelry you like or tickets to a concert you want to attend. Which would you buy? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

You must select a person to teach others to do a job. Which one of the following is the **most** important for you to consider in making your selection?

- the person's education
- the person's work experience
- the quality of the person's previous work

Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Businesses should hire employees for their entire lives. Do you agree or disagree? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Countries, businesses, and schools are three areas that need good leaders. Choose **one** of these three areas and describe the most important qualities of a leader in that

area. Explain why these qualities are important, using specific examples and details.

Choose **one** of the following transportation vehicles and explain why you think it has changed people's lives.

- automobiles
- bicycles
- airplanes

Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree that progress is always good? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Learning about the past has no value for those of us living in the present. Do you agree or disagree? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

The expression "Never, never give up" means to keep trying and never stop working for your goals. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? With the help of technology, students nowadays can learn more information and learn it more quickly. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Games are as important for adults as they are for children. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Awards and prizes are given for excellence in various fields. Do these awards and prizes serve a useful purpose? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Some people think that human needs for farmland, housing, and industry are more important than saving land for endangered animals. Do you agree or disagree with this point of view? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

What is a very important skill a person should learn in order to be successful in the world today? Choose one skill and use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

Resolving problems between individuals or groups is important. What should be considered or kept in mind in resolving problems between individuals or groups? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Self-confidence is the most important factor for success in school at work. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Why do you think some people are attracted to dangerous sports or other dangerous activities? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Which is more important for success: the natural ability you are born with or hard work? Explain your opinion, using specific reasons and examples.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Parents or other " adult relatives should make important decisions for their older (15 to 18 year-old) teenaged children. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Some people like to travel with a companion. Other people prefer to travel alone. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

Some people prefer to get up early in the morning and start the day's work. Others prefer to get up later in the day and work until late at night. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

What are the important qualities of a good son or daughter? Have these qualities changed or remained the same over time in your culture? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Some people prefer to work for a large company. Others prefer to work for a small company. Which would you prefer? Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.

People work because they need money to live. What are some other reasons that people work? Discuss one or more of these reasons. Use specific examples and details to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, e-mail, or telephone calls. Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

Some people like to do only what they already do well. Other people prefer to try new things and take risks. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

Some people believe that success in life comes from taking risks or chances. Others believe that success results from careful planning. In your opinion, what does success come from? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

What change would make your hometown more appealing to your age? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The most important aspect of a job is the money a person earns. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? One should never judge a person by external appearances. Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? A person should never make an important decision alone. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

A company is going to give some money either to support the arts or to protect the environment. Which do you think the company should choose? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Some movies are serious, designed to make the audience think. Other movies are designed primarily to amuse and entertain. Which type of movie do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Businesses should do anything they can to make a profit. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

Some people are always in a hurry to go places and get things done. Other people prefer to take their time and live life at a slower pace. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Some people think governments should spend as much money as possible exploring outer space (for example, traveling to the Moon and to other planets). Other people disagree and think governments should spend this money for our basic needs on Earth. Which of these two opinions do you agree with? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

People have different ways of escaping the stress and difficulties of modern life. Some read; some exercise; others work in their gardens. What do you think are the best ways of reducing stress? Use specific details and examples in your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Teachers should be paid according to how much their students learn. Give specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

If you were asked to send one thing representing your country to an international exhibition, what would you choose? Why? Use specific reasons and details to explain your choice.

You have been told that dormitory rooms at your university must be shared by two students. Would you rather have the university assign a student to share a room with you, or would you rather choose your own roommate? Use specific reasons and details to explain your answer.

Some people think that governments should spend as much money as possible on developing or buying computer technology. Other people disagree and think that this money should be spent on more basic needs. Which one of these opinions do you agree with? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

Some people like doing work by hand. Others prefer using machines. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Schools should ask students to evaluate their teachers. Do you agree or disagree? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

In your opinion, what is the most important characteristic (for example, honesty, intelligence, a sense of humor) that a person can have to be successful in life? Use specific reasons and examples from your experience to explain your answer. When you write your answer, you are not limited to the examples listed in the prompt.

It is generally agreed that society benefits from the work of its members. Compare the contributions of artists to society with the contributions of scientists to society. Which type of contribution do you think is valued more by your society? Give specific reasons to support your answer.

Students at universities often have a choice of places to live. They may choose to live in university dormitories, or they may choose to live in apartments in the community. Compare the advantages of living in university housing with the advantages of living in apartment in the community. Where would you prefer to live reasons for your preference.

You need to travel from your home to a place 40 miles (64 kilometers) away. Compare the different kinds of transportation you could use. Tell which method of travel you would choose. Give specific reasons for your choice.

Some people believe that a college or university education should be available to all students. Others believe that higher education should be available only to good students. Discuss this views. Which view do you agree with? Explain why.

Some people believe that the best way of learning about life is by listening to the advice of family and friends. Other people believe that the best way of learning about life is through personal experience. Compare the advantages of these two different ways of learning about life. Which do you think is preferable? Use specific examples to support your preference.

When people move to another country, some of them decide to follow the customs of the new country. Others prefer to keep their own customs, Compare these two choices. Which one do you prefer? Support your answer with specific details.

Some people prefer to spend most of their time alone. Others like to be with friends most of the time. Do you prefer to spend your time alone or with friends? Use specific reasons to support your answer.

Some people prefer to spend time with one or two close friends. Others choose to spend time with a large number of friends. Compare the advantages of each choice. Which of these two ways of spending time do you prefer? Use specific reasons to support your answer.

Some people think that children should begin their formal education at a very early age and should spend most of their time on school studies. Others believe that young children should spend most of their time playing. Compare these two views. Which view do you agree with? Why?

The government has announced that it plans to build a new university. Some people think that **your** community would be a good place to locate the university. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a new university in your community. Use specific details in your discussion.

Some people think that the family is the most important influence on young adults. Other people think that friends are the most important influence on young adults. Which view do you agree with? Use example to support your position.

Some people prefer to plan activities for their free time very carefully. Others choose not to make any plans at all for their free time. Compare the benefits of planning free-time activities with benefits of not making plans. Which do you prefer—planning or not planning for your leisure time? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your choice.

People learn in different ways. Some people learn by doing things; other people learn by reading about things; others learn by listening to people talk about things. Which of these methods of learning is best for you? Use specific examples to support your choice.

Some people choose friends who are different from themselves Others choose friends who are similar to themselves. Compare the advantages of having friends who are different from you with the advantages of having friends who are similar to you. Which kind of friend do you prefer for yourself? Why?

Some people enjoy change, and they look forward to new experiences. Others like their lives to stay the same, and they do not change their usual habits. Compare these two approaches to life. Which approach do you prefer? Explain why.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People behave differently when they wear different clothes. Do you agree that different clothes influence the way people behave? Use specific examples to support your answer.

Decisions can be made quickly, or they can be made after careful thought. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The decisions that people make

quickly are always wrong. Use reasons and specific examples to support your opinion.

Some people trust their first impressions about a person's character because they believe these judgments are generally correct. Other people do not judge a person's character quickly because they believe first impressions are often wrong. Compare these two attitudes. Which attitude do you agree with? Support your choice with specific examples.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People are never satisfied with what they have: they always want something more or something different. Use specific reasons to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People should read **only** those books that are about real events, real people, and established facts. Use specific reasons and details to support your opinion.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is more important for students to study history and literature than it is for them to study science and mathematics. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? All students should be required to study art and music in second school. Use specific reasons to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? There is nothing that young people can teach older people. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Reading fiction (such as novels and short stories) is more enjoyable than watching movies. Use specific reasons and examples to explain your position.

Some people say that physical exercise should be a required part of every school day. Other people believe that students should spend the whole school day on academic studies. Which opinion do you agree with? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

A university plans to develop a new research center in your country. Some people want a center for business research. Other people want a center for research in agriculture (farming). Which of two kinds of research centers do you recommend for your country? Use specific reasons in your recommendation.

Some young children spend a great amount of their time practicing sports. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? **Only** people who earn a lot of money are successful. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

If you could invent something **new**, what product would you develop? Use specific details to explain why this invention is needed.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? A person's childhood years (the time from birth to twelve year age) are the most important years of a person's life. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Children should be required to help with household tasks as soon as they are able to do so. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Some high schools require all students to wear school uniforms. Other high schools permit students to decide what to wear to school. Which of these two school policies do you think is better? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Playing a game is fun only when you win. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? High schools should allow students to study the courses that students want to study. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is better to be a member of a group than to be the leader of a group. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

What do you consider to be the most important room in a house? Why is this room more important to you than any other room? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

If you could make one important change in a school that you attended, what change would you make? Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.

A gift (such as a camera, a soccer ball, or an animal) can contribute to a child's development. What gift would you give to help a child develop? Why? Use reasons and specific examples to support your choice.

Some people believe that students should be given one long vacation each year. Others believe that students should have several short vacations throughout the year. Which viewpoint do you agree with? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

Would you prefer to live in a traditional house or in a modern apartment building? Use specific reasons and details to support choice.

Some people say that advertising encourages us to buy things we really do not need. Others say that advertisements tell us about new products that may improve our lives. Which viewpoint do you agree with? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Some people prefer to spend their free time outdoors. Other people prefer to spend their leisure time indoors. Would you prefer to be outside or would you prefer to be inside for your leisure activities? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your choice.

Your school has received a gift of money. What do you think is the best way for your school to spend this money? Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Playing games teaches us about life. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Imagine that you have received some land to use as you wish. How would you use this land? Use specific details to explain your answer.

What is the most important animal in your country? Why is the animal important? Use reasons and specific details to explain your answer.

Many parts of the world are losing important natural resources, such as forests, animals, or clean water. Choose one resource that is disappearing and explain why it needs to be saved. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? A zoo has no useful purpose. Use specific reasons and examples to explain your answer.

In some countries, people are no longer allowed to smoke in many public places and office buildings. Do you think (this is a good rule or a bad rule? Use specific reasons and details to support your position.

Plants can provide food, shelter, clothing, or medicine. What is one kind of plant that is important to you or the people in your country? Use specific reasons and details to explain your choice.

You have the opportunity to visit a foreign country for two weeks. Which country would you like to visit? Use specific reasons and details to explain your choice.

In the future, students may have the choice of studying at home by using technology such as computers or television or of studying at traditional schools. Which would you prefer? Use reasons and specific details to explain your choice.

When famous people such as actors, athletes and rock stars give their opinions, many people listen. Do you think we should pay attention to these opinions? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

The twentieth century saw great change. In your opinion, what is **one** change that should be remembered about the twentieth century? Use specific reasons and details to explain your choice.

When people need to complain about a product or poor service, some prefer to complain in writing and others prefer to complain in person. Which way do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

People remember special gifts or presents that they have received. Why? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Some famous athletes and entertainers earn millions of dollars every year. Do you think these people deserve such high salaries? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Is the ability to read and write more important today than in the past? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

People do many different things to stay healthy. What do you do for good health? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

You have decided to give several hours of your time each mo improve the community where you live. What is one thing you do to improve your community? Why? Use specific reasons art details to explain your choice.

Your school has enough money to purchase either computers for students or books for the library. Which should your school choose to buy—computers or books? Use specific reasons and examples to support your recommendation.

Many students choose to attend schools or universities outside their home countries. Why do some students study abroad? Use specific reasons and details to explain your answer.

People listen to music for different reasons and at different times. Why is music important to many people? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

Groups or organizations are an important part of some people's lives. Why are groups or organizations important to people? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your answer.

Imagine that you are preparing for a trip. You plan to be away from your home for a year. In addition to clothing and personal care items, you can take **one** additional thing. What would you take and why? Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.

When students move to a new school, they sometimes face problems. How can schools help these students with their problems? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your answer.

It is sometimes said that borrowing money from a friend can harm or damage the friendship. Do you agree? Why or why not? Use reasons and specific examples to explain your answer.

Every generation of people is different in important ways. How is generation different from your parents' generation? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your answer.

Some students like classes where teachers lecture (do all of the talking) in class. Other students prefer classes where the students do some of the talking. Which type of class do you prefer? Give specific reasons and details to support your choice.

Holidays honor people or events. If you could create a new holiday, what person or event would it honor and how would you want people to celebrate it? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

A friend of yours has received some money and plans to use all of it either

- to go on vacation
- to buy a car

Your friend has asked you for advice. Compare your friend's two choices and explain which one you think your friend should choose. Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.

The 21st century has begun. What changes do you think the new century will bring? Use examples and details in your answer.

What are some of the qualities of a good parent? Use specific details and examples to explain your answer.

Movies are popular all over the world. Explain why movies are so popular. Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.

In your country, is there more need for land to be left in its natural condition or is there more need for land to be developed for housing and industry? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Many people have a close relationship with their pets. These people treat their birds, cats, or other animals as members of their family. In your opinion, are such relationships good? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Films can tell us a lot about the country where they were made. What have you learned about a country from watching its movies? Use specific examples and details to support your response.

Some students prefer to study alone. Others prefer to study with a group of students. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

You have enough money to purchase either a house or a business. Which would you choose to buy? Give specific reasons to explain your choice.