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PRO/CON ARGUMENTATION SPEECH OR RESEARCH PAPER

How do you gather information when you are assigned a speech or research paper on a controversial topic? This handout will help you locate broad topics of interest and then help you narrow down your main topic, examine different viewpoints, find statistical information to back up your argument as well as journal, magazine, newspaper, and Internet sites of good authority. By using this guide, you will be able to give or write a thoroughly researched speech or paper conveying your point of view intelligently on the controversial topic you have selected.



PRO/CON REFERENCE BOOKS – This is a great place to start your research. The following list of books will help you narrow down your controversial topic, examine different viewpoints, and find statistical information.

Opposing Viewpoints – REF H31 – *Opposing Viewpoints* presents stimulating debates that can be used to enhance and evaluate ideas. The varied opinions contained in each book examine many different aspects of a single issue. *Opposing Viewpoints* books challenge readers to question their own opinions and assumptions by reading carefully balanced opposing views.

Current Controversies – REF H30 – The purpose of the *Current Controversies Series* is to explore many of the social, political, and economic controversies dominating today's national and international scene. The debates in *Current Controversies* are presented in a useful, timeless fashion and the articles and book excerpts included in each title are selected if they contribute valuable, long-range ideas to the overall debate.

Information Plus – REF H30 - Although statistics are a major focus of the *Information Plus Reference Series*, each book contains historical background, descriptions of major events related to the subject, relevant laws and court cases, and examples of how these issues play out in American life. Other features may include primary documents or pro and con debate sections. All material is presented in an unbiased manner.

Facts on File Library in a Book – REF H31 – *Library in a Book Series* is designed to be a first-step research source on important current issues. Each set includes an overview of the topic, chronology of important events, glossary of terms, biographical listing, complete index, and a fully annotated bibliography.

Contemporary World Issues – REF H31 – This series addresses vital social, political, environmental, and economic issues in today's society. Each book is authoritative, clearly written, up-to-date, and objective. Each volume contains an overview of the subject, a detailed chronology, biographical sketches, facts and data, and /or documents, and other primary-source material, a directory of organizations and agencies, annotated lists of print primary-source material, a directory of organizations and agencies, annotated lists of print and non-print resources, and an index.

The CQ Researcher – REF H35.E35 – *The CQ Researcher* focuses on issues in the news. Each report offers an in-depth, balanced look at a controversial issue followed by two or three key issues that drive the debate. Also, you will find a chronology, a look at the current situation, the current outlook, and a thorough bibliography.

Statistical Abstract of the United States – REF HA202.U5x – *The Statistical Abstract of the United States* is the standard summary of statistics on the social, political, and economic organization of the United States.



PERIODICAL DATABASES – You will want to use the Periodical Databases to help you locate magazine, journal and newspaper articles. For off-campus access to these electronic resources, logon to MyOCC and click on the link to “Periodicals and Electronic Resources.”

Opposing Viewpoints – *Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center* contains information on social issues. You may access viewpoint articles, topic overviews, statistics, primary documents, links to websites, and full-text magazine and newspaper articles. *For access from home: enter your eight digit student ID number.

Academic ASAP – *InfoTrac Expanded Academic ASAP* provides full-text access to over 2,089 periodical titles from the arts and the humanities to the social sciences, science and technology. You may access scholarly journals, news magazines, and newspapers. * For access from home, see above instructions.

Lexis-Nexis Academic -- *Lexis-Nexis Academic* is a premier online source of approximately 5,600 local, national, and international news, business, legal, medical, and government information, mostly full-text and mostly from 1985 to the present. *For access from home: enter your eight digit student ID number.

CQ Researcher and CQ Global Researcher – These weekly publications provide in-depth, non-bias analysis of the most current major and controversial issues of the day with complete summaries, all the pros and cons, bibliographies and more. *CQ Researcher* covers national issues; *CQ Global Researcher* covers international issues. *At this time, you may access this database from the campus networked computers only.



INTERNET WEB SITES – The following web sites will help you find reliable Internet resources that are of good authority for speech and research paper use.

Librarians’ Index to the Internet – <http://lii.org> - This site was developed by librarians as a reliable and efficient guide to Internet resources. The *Index* is a searchable, annotated subject directory of more than 14,000 Internet resources that have been selected and evaluated by librarians.

Mamma.com – <http://www.mamma.com> - *Mamma.com* is a “smart” metasearch engine. Every time you type in a query, *Mamma* simultaneously searches a variety of engines, directories, and deep content sites, properly formats the words and syntax for each, compiles their results in a virtual database, eliminates duplicates, and displays them in a uniform manner according to relevance. It is like using multiple search engines all at the same time. Also, on the right hand side of the search screen when searching popular topics, the metasearch engine refines your search and redirects you to pro/con sites.

Yahoo - <http://www.yahoo.com> - To locate information on controversial topics using *Yahoo*, go to the *Yahoo! Web Directory* and click on Society. Then click on Issues and Causes. You will find a variety of categories to choose from. Or, you can type in http://dir.yahoo.com/society_and_culture/issues_and_causes/.

Facster – <http://www.facster.com> - This site was created to help you easily find and check all statistical facts. This site contains *California Abstracts*, *Census of the United States*, and *Statistical Abstract of the United States* as well as *State and Foreign Statistical Abstracts*. *Facster* is an easy and reliable place to go to find statistical information.