Macbeth Argumentative Essay

Shakespeare’s Macbeth, is filled with characters who commit, what most would consider, heinous acts—murder, treachery, deceit, treason. Whether for crimes against the state or for crimes against humanity, most people in most places and in most time periods would agree that acts such as these should not go unpunished. The crimes are serious, heinous, and should be punished. Yet many of the characters in Macbeth seem to commit these acts without as much as a second thought. They seem to act with a pragmatic approach to what is right and what is wrong—the ends (attaining the highest position in Scotland) justify the means (murder and treachery) ethic. In other words, if there is a positive outcome, then the action is morally acceptable. But is this true?

Argue whether Macbeth was justified in his “ends justify the means” pursuit of the king’s throne. If things had turned out well for Macbeth—if he had brought about a peaceful, prosperous rule, would his treachery and murder have been justified?

Essay Requirements

- 3-5 pages typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font
- Minimum of 3 sources – You can use any sources from the above list – USE CITATIONS!
- MLA format
- Works Cited Page
- Follow the Outline

Tips

- Follow SPES guidelines
- Consider the nature of your appeals (ethos, pathos, logos)
- Avoid using pronouns – this discredits the essay making it an opinion piece
- You don’t always have to agree with the position you take in your essay. Sometimes it is easier to argue the other side.
- Remember that this is an argument essay; you are not simply summarizing the story and offering your opinion about it. You are constructing an argument, built on the principles of assertion, support, evidence, and synthesis.
- To synthesize means simply to collect your arguments into a well-expressed “clincher” sentence at the end of your paragraph.
- You must cite your research in a Works Cited page, MLA style. This means multiple sources. Use: http://citationmachine.net/index2.php?reqstyleid=1&newstyle=1&stylebox=1
  To assist you with your citation needs…
Macbeth Argumentative Essay Outline

The Assignment: You are to research (at least 3 sources) and compose a 3-5 page argumentative essay. Essays enlighten your readers to the rationale behind your position on a debatable issue. Please refer to the MLA Essay Outline on my weebly site.

Outline

Introductory Paragraph
1. Define the issue and your purpose to your readers. Why are you writing about this? Why should your audience be interested?
2. Getting the reader’s attention – anecdote, startling statistic, interesting quote, significance of your concerns
3. The background/history of the issue (if significant)
4. Establish the appropriate tone for your subject and your audience

Determine your thesis statement – state your claim. Your thesis statement should answer/address the question - Was Macbeth justified in his “ends justify the means” pursuit of the king’s throne. If things had turned out well for Macbeth—if he had brought about a peaceful, prosperous rule, would his treachery and murder have been justified?

Body Paragraphs (2 minimum) to support your claim
1. Statement: reiterate what you’re specifically arguing in each paragraph with a clear, concise opening statement
2. Proof: incorporate sources/research (news articles provided, Macbeth text, etc.) to defend argument you are making
3. Explanation: justify how your proof supports the stance you’ve taken in the argument, illuminating why your evidence is valid.
4. Synthesis: create 1-2 sentences at the end of your paragraph that fuse your statement, proof, and explanation together in a creative way.

Body Paragraph(s) (1 minimum)

Addressing potential opposing arguments
You may either:
1. Concede the validity of an opposing argument by qualifying part or accepting all of it while explaining why your position is stronger, or
2. Refute the opposing argument by stating why it is invalid or weak

Conclusion
1. Restate your claim/thesis
2. State the significance of your position. How does it affect the future?
3. Make a final emotional appeal