Argumentative essay planning sheet

Use this sheet to turn a topic into a thesis, with evidence on both sides and a counterargument you can answer.

Step 1: Your topic as a question

Write it as a "Should..." question:

Step 2: Evidence on both sides

Find at least two pieces of evidence for each side before you decide.

For	Against	Source and date

Step 3: Narrow the claim

Add a who, where or when so the claim fits the evidence and your word count.

- Who? (for example: high school students, city voters)
- Where? (for example: in class, in local elections)
- When? (for example: during the school day)

Narrowed question: _____

Step 4: Write the thesis

Template: [Position], because [reason 1] and [reason 2].

With a counterargument: Although [opposing view], [position], because [reason].

My thesis: _____

Step 5: Counterargument and answer

- Strongest point against my thesis:
- Evidence the other side would use:
- My answer to it:

Essay outline

1. Introduction: context, then the thesis.
2. Body paragraph 1: reason 1, evidence, explanation.

3. Body paragraph 2: reason 2, evidence, explanation.
4. Counterargument paragraph: the opposing view stated fairly, then your answer.
5. Conclusion: why the position matters, without repeating the thesis word for word.

Final check

- The thesis takes a side someone could disagree with.
- Every reason in the thesis has its own paragraph and evidence.
- Every source is named and dated.
- The counterargument is the strongest one, not the easiest to answer.