Think about each question. If your answer to the question is “no,” follow the steps below the question to revise your essay.

**Language**

* **Is the essay free of significant errors in conventions?** If not,
  1. Copy and paste the essay from Topeka into a word processing program like Google Docs or Microsoft Word.
  2. Use a spelling and grammar check to identify the errors in the essay.
  3. If there are a lot of errors to be fixed, select one area of focus (for example, capitalization, run-on sentences, or fragments) and correct those errors first. Then, take a break from proofreading before coming back to work on other areas of focus.
  4. Once you have finished proofreading, copy and paste the essay back into Topeka.
* **Does the essay use strong and interesting word choice?** If not,
  1. Reread the essay paragraph by paragraph with the audience in mind.
  2. In each paragraph, try to find at least three words that can be replaced with stronger word choice. It helps to remove the “tired” words such as “nice,” “good,” “bad,” “happy,” “sad,” “said,” and “big.” Try to select wording that is more exact and provides information to the reader in an interesting way.
* **Does the essay use varied sentence structure?** If not,
  1. Reread the essay paragraph by paragraph.
  2. Tally how many sentences are short, and how many sentences are long in each paragraph. Ideally there should be a mixture of short and long sentences in each paragraph.
  3. For paragraphs that have too many short sentences, use conjunctions to combine sentences that have the same subject.
  4. For paragraphs that have too many long sentences, break independent clauses into their own shorter sentences. Use transition words to help the flow of sentences.
* **Does the essay use active voice rather than passive voice?** If not,
  1. Reread the essay and highlight any sentence that uses passive voice. Remember that passive voice does not have a person who is responsible for the actions. For example, “The book was read.”
  2. Identify the subject, or person performing the action, for each passive sentence and transition it into an active sentence such as, “Our class read the book.”
* **Is the essay clear to the audience?** If not,
  1. Read the essay aloud while imagining you are a person of authority (your intended audience).
  2. As you are reading, mark any places where the writing is confusing. This is often because it is missing words or has too many words.
  3. Looking at the marked-up essay, determine where you can add additional words or sentences to help the reader, or where the ideas need to be rewritten.

**Style**

* **Is the essay formal and appropriate for the goals of argumentative writing?** Does it maintain this style throughout? If not,
  1. Consider the audience of the writing. Argumentative writing is often written to convince someone in authority.
  2. Read the essay with a focus on whether ideas are presented in an objective manner and a formal style that is appropriate for the audience.
  3. Remove any slang that is present in the essay.
  4. Change all contractions such as “don’t” and “isn’t” to the full words such as “do not” and “is not.”
  5. Proofread the essay to ensure it is grammatically correct and uses complete sentences.
  6. Ensure that the wording of the essay is as technical and precise as possible.