Grading Rubric for Writing Assignment 1 (10 points possible)

1. _____ Student has titled paper, including name, date, class listing, and subject title

2. _____ Student has written a clear thesis statement indicating which side of the argument s/he has taken and why. Criteria for thesis statement:
   a. Has the student offered a thesis statement in the first paragraph? ___ There needs to be a clear purpose or perspective for why the paper is being written. Otherwise, it is just a stream of consciousness.
   b. Has the student taken a position? ___ If the thesis simply states facts with which no one would disagree with, then the it is simply providing a summary rather than staging an argument.
   c. Is the thesis statement specific enough? ___ If the thesis does not address the questions of “how” and “why”, then it’s too vague (TV) to offer a strong argument.
   d. Does the thesis pass the "So what?" test? ___ If a reader's first response is, "So what?" then there is a lack of clarity about the relationship, or connection to the larger issue.

3. _____ Student has examined both authors’ perspectives:
   a. Has the student addressed at least one element of each authors’ argument? ___ A one-sided argument is rhetorically weak; ignoring evidence does not make it go away!
   b. Does student’s evidence connect/relate to thesis statement? ___ There needs to be an explicit connection between the stated position and the evidence used to advance that position to have a thesis “work.”
   c. Does the student explain the validity of her/his evidence oppose to alternatives? ___ Although an argument might sound good, it is necessary to explain why some evidence takes precedent over others. For example, questions of epistemology are very important.
   d. Does the student cite information? ___ When using quotes from the book, there must be at least a page number after the quote. Any outside evidence must be fully cited: e.g. (Name, date, page number). Followed by reference on last page.

4. _____ Student has summarized her/his position.
   a. Has the student tied up all the loose ends? ___ It is important to make sure that by the end of the paper every element of your argument ties into your position/thesis statement. Your summary should restate in even clearer language why you have picked your position.

Normative Assumption (NA)—statements based on speculation often informed by a set of values and norms. (Home schooling shelters kids from the important real life experiences public school offers.)

Causal Statement (CS)—statements claiming that variable A has a direct effect on variable B resulting in outcome C (kids who are taught at home become awkward adults.) In the social sciences, causal statements are very, very hard to prove.

Too Vague (TV)—statements in which buzzwords are used without any explanations (home schooling limits a child’s development, especially when entering the real world.)

Need Citation (NC)—making statements that requires evidence to support the claim (Parents who teach their children at home create stronger family ties.)