

Part 1. Short Answer. 3-4 questions (30%)

correct understanding: 2 (3) points

in own words: 2 points

own example: 2 points

brief: 1 point

1. Explain to an intelligent friend the concept of "ISSUE." 8 points

There is a lot of disagreement in the world, but not all of it is worth arguing about. We only argue about *issues*—disagreements that are important enough to spend time on. For example, we usually don't make an issue about taste in ice cream, but we do make an issue about what to do in Iraq—that matters a lot more.

2. Explain to an intelligent friend the concept of the "CURE" stock issue. 8 points

In policy debate, you have to propose a plan. That plan must solve the problem—otherwise, you won't be able to persuade your audience to adopt it. That is the CURE stock issue. For example, if a friend is thinking about dropping out of school, you might say that it won't help her worries.

3. Explain to an intelligent friend the concept of the "THINK BIG" method for arguing values. 7 points

Usually, we usually "think small"—we spend most of our time worrying about what someone said to us yesterday, or when we'll find the time to study for the next test. A person who wants us to change must often ask us to "Think Big"—to consider what's good in the long term, for many people or maybe even the whole world. When Al Gore gives his lectures on global warming, he's asking us to think big.

4. Explain to an intelligent friend the concept of the "AD POPULUM" fallacy. 7 points

Like my mother used to say, "If everyone else jumped off a bridge, would you, too?" A speaker uses the ad populum fallacy when he/she says we should believe something just because everyone else believes it.

Part 2. Analyze and Assess an Argument (30%)

Analyze the following argument, including:

- identifying the issue **2 points:**
 - Should Congress require more ethanol production?
- identifying the writer's conclusion on the issue. **2 points**
 - No, Congress should not require more ethanol production!
- identifying the writer's reason(s) on the issue
 - Producing ethanol will lead to higher food prices (economic harm). **2 points**
 - Producing ethanol harms the environment. **2 points**
- identifying the writer's assumption(s) about value preferences. **(6 points)** Any 2 of:
 - A good economy is preferable to a clean environment.
 - Free enterprise/a free market is preferable to government support of innovations.
 - Water quality is preferable to air quality. (?)
 - Security and stability are more important than risk-taking and innovation.
- using the "Good Argument Checklist" to give three pieces of feedback to the writer

Large-scale ethanol production is not best solution for energy crisis

Daily, 9/19/07

In the politically motivated rush to replace gasoline with corn ethanol, we may be doing ourselves real economic harm.

Clearly, there is a limit to how much of the U.S. corn crop can be gobbled up for ethanol without pushing food prices higher and higher. Increased production of corn-based ethanol during just the past 12 months has raised food prices by \$47 per person, according to a study by Iowa State University. Before the summer is over, the price of milk is expected to jump 40 cents a gallon, and up to 60 cents more for a pound of cheese.

Nevertheless, a Senate energy bill is coming up for final approval next month that would require a sevenfold increase in ethanol from 5 billion gallons this year to 36 billion gallons by 2022. The measure provides loan guarantees, biofuels research and development grants, and grants for ethanol plant construction for the politically powerful ethanol industry. As *The Wall Street Journal* pointed out, ethanol is produced by mixing corn with our tax dollars, currently \$5.5 billion annually in more than 200 ethanol tax breaks and subsidies.

Furthermore, the rush to produce ethanol is adversely impacting the environment. In many parts of the corn belt, water tables are dropping, in some places 10 feet or more in the past decade according to U.S. Department of Agriculture figures, because it takes so much water to grow corn and produce ethanol. For that matter, if the government keeps mandating unreasonably high levels of ethanol production, a prolonged drought that devastates the corn crop could cause fuel shortages in the future.

But there is a real danger that Congress will remain oblivious to the economic and scientific realities of ethanol and take us down the wrong path by mandating a huge increase in ethanol production. Washington might have a love affair with ethanol for political reasons, but increasing ethanol production will only lead to higher taxes, higher prices for both food and fuel, and damage to the environment, making us all worse off in the process. Congress needs to say no to the ethanol hustlers and end their political addiction to corn.

-apply the standard correctly 3 points

-isolate relevant details 2 points

-use good peer review form 1 point

1. MUST HAVE: Good CLARITY

This argument is very CLEAR in that it states the conclusion of each of its main arguments in the first sentence; it also states the overall conclusion in the last sentence. Good use of indicator words ("furthermore").

2. ONE OF THESE TWO

EITHER: This argument has good SUPPORT; it consistently answers HDYKT? questions (e.g., study of higher food prices, current drop in water table)

OR: This argument has good SUPPORT: it draws from well-identified, diverse and reliable sources (USDA, Wall Street Journal).

3. PLUS one negative comment. Any of:

-use the critical questions to develop SUPPORT for your cause argument (increase in food prices or drop in water table): otherwise, there's lots of holes in them.

-increase dairy prices: answer "SO WHAT?" question: is this caused by ethanol?!

-eloquence: language perhaps too strong ("hustlers/addiction")

-MORE? how much *new* tax money will be going to ethanol?

-CLARITY: not state conclusion at the beginning.

-Value arguments: some stronger (milk prices, taxes), but some weak (environment; insistence on economy as more important than environment)

Part 4. My Philosophy (10%)

In one page, raise an important question in the philosophy of argument, answer it, and defend your answer.

Articulates a good understanding of any real issue in the philosophy of argument, and takes a clear stand (7 points)

Plus: states at least one sound reason for his/her view. (8 points)

Plus: states at least two sound reasons for his/her view, or gives at least some support for the one reason. (9 points).

Plus: states at least three sound reasons for his/her view, or develops at least one reason with a good argument. (10 points).

Minuses:

- misses a real issue
- arguments not relevant
- writing disorganized or not comprehensible

Part 3. Assess a Source (30%)

In a debate, would you rely on the following source for this information:

"Myth #3: The US biofuels industry is using so much corn that it is driving up the price of corn used for feed grains.

"Fact: Total corn usage by the biofuels industry (around 2.3 billion bushels) is less than the increase in US corn production between 2005-2007. Plus, 33% of the output of ethanol production is distillers grains which are used as cattle feedstock."

Source analysis form
Points and Key Information in red

Information you want to use from this source: **Corn usage for ethanol is miniscule. 2 points**

URL: **XXXXXXXX**

Date you consulted it: **5 November 2007**

Page title: **BIOFUELS DIGEST**

STEP 1: Who is responsible? **4 points each**

Who is responsible for the page? Who is he/she/it? **Jim Lane, a corporate consultant whose portfolio includes biofuels development.**

HDYKT? **The page says it is "From the Editor", who is identified on the "About" page as "Jim Lane." His bio says he is the president of the "American Biofuels Council," and has a background in contemporary media and energy company acquisitions.**

Who is responsible for the website? Who is he/she/it? **"Biofuels Digest"**

HDYKT? **On the "About" page, it looks like "Biofuels Digest" is a daily blog for the biofuels industry. In addition to the editor, it claims to have other correspondents. It has a real-world address in Miami.**

STEP 2: Ask the Big Questions: **4 points each**

1. Expertise? HDYKT?

Although Lane is not a scientist or researcher, he does seem to be the real head of a corporate consulting firm of some type. He is likely to be expert in the economic aspects of ethanol, which is what's at stake here.

2. Information? HDYKT?

The information about corn yields is economic information, the sort Lane probably knows about. Further, I suspect it's not all that hard to find. So it looks like Lane is informed on this issue.

3. Bias? HDYKT?

Lane admits on the page ("Disclaimer") he is generally biased against ethanol development, but is coming out for it here. That looks well reasoned, balanced, unbiased. There is also some possibility that the "Biofuels Council" is pro-ethanol.

4. Guarantee? HDYKT?

It's likely that the entire blog is a sort of advertisement for "Lane & Associates" —to get them more corporate business. That might indicate that they'd say anything, just if it looked good. On the other hand, rich people and corporations are careful with their money, and it's likely that the "advertisement" will be a success only if the website consistently provides good information. Further, it looks pretty certain that "Lane & Associates" really exists. That means that there is a sort of guarantee here—Lane has something to lose.

STEP 3: FINAL JUDGMENT: Balancing the positive and the negative, do you rely on this information? Why or why not? **4 points: Any judgment, as long as the weighing is justified.**

The expertise is somewhat low, but the other factors seem strong; I'd believe this info.