Controversial Topics in Development

Goal:
The goal of this paper is to practice reading articles carefully and with understanding, think critically about an issue, and come to an informed conclusion based on the articles.

General Instructions:
Choose a controversy/debate in developmental psychology. Read 2 articles related to your chosen topic – one article from each side of the debate. Write a 2-page paper in which you: explain, analyze, and evaluate the evidence from each article, compare the arguments, and come to a conclusion. Specifically, you will be asked to select the side of the argument you believe has the most merit, based on the articles and knowledge you have gained in class, and explain why.

Potential Topics:
- Is breastfeeding better than bottle-feeding?
- Is spanking young children effective discipline?
- Should young children be exposed to TV/screens?
- Should the drinking age be lowered?

Specific Instructions:
STEP 1 – Select a topic from the list provided or choose a one of your own. NOTE: If you are choosing a topic that is NOT from the list, you must have your topic approved by me.

STEP 2 – Find 2 articles related to your topic - one article from each side of the controversy/debate. Articles must come from reputable sources (e.g., magazines, newspapers). Use the Evaluating Research template to help you select high quality resources. If you are unsure about the quality of a source, come check with me.

STEP 3 – For each article, complete the Article Analysis template.
STEP 4 – Write a 2-page paper using the following guidelines:

○ **Paragraph 1: Introduction**
  ▪ Identify and explain the controversy you have chosen:
    ● What is the issue that is being debated? What are the two sides of the debate?
    ● Why is this controversy significant? Why is this an important topic to be researching and writing about?
  ▪ Briefly introduce the articles and their relation to your topic.

○ **Paragraph 2: Article 1 (Use the Article Analysis from Step 3)**
  ▪ Explain the problem or issue presented in the article.
    ● What is the main purpose of the article? What is the author’s argument?
  ▪ Analyze and interpret relevant information.
    ● Identify and describe the evidence presented in the article that relates to the controversy you are researching.
    ● How does the evidence clarify the issue presented in the article?
  ▪ Evaluate the information to determine potential conclusions.
    ● What conclusion does the author come to?
    ● Do you believe that the evidence in the article supports the conclusion made by the author? If yes, how? If no, why not?
    ● Are there any limitations or potential issues with the evidence in the article? Does the author make any inappropriate assumptions? Is there additional information that would be important for the reader to know?

○ **Paragraph 3: Article 2 (Use the Article Analysis from Step 3)**
  ▪ Explain the problem or issue presented in the article.
    ● What is the main purpose of the article? What is the author’s argument?
  ▪ Analyze and interpret relevant information.
    ● Identify and describe the evidence presented in the article that relates to the controversy you are researching.
    ● How does the evidence clarify the issue presented in the article?
  ▪ Evaluate the information to determine potential conclusions.
    ● What conclusion does the author come to?
    ● Do you believe that the evidence in the article supports the conclusion made by the author? If yes, how? If no, why not?
    ● Are there any limitations or potential issues with the evidence in the article? Does the author make any inappropriate assumptions? Is there additional information that would be important for the reader to know?

○ **Paragraph 4: Discussion/Conclusion**
  ▪ Briefly compare the articles - In what ways are the arguments similar and/or different?
    ● Are there any similarities? Do the authors of the articles agree about anything? Do they present any of the same evidence?
    ● What are the most important differences between the articles? Focus on a) the main arguments and concepts and b) the types of evidence used in the articles.
  ▪ Based on your analysis and evaluation of the articles and on information from class, generate a conclusion regarding which side of the argument you believe has the most merit and why.
STEP 5 – Review your paper using the following Intellectual Standards as a guide:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intellectual Standards</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Is your writing understandable and easy to read? Could you elaborate further in your explanations or provide additional examples?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>Did you present the information from the articles in a way that is accurate and free from bias?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Does the evidence presented relate clearly to your chosen controversy? Do you focus on information that helps your reader understand the issue?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth</td>
<td>Does your paper address the complexities of the problem? Do you take into account all the relevant evidence about the controversy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breadth</td>
<td>Does your paper consider multiple viewpoints? Do you give enough information to allow your reader to grasp both sides of your controversy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic</td>
<td>Does your conclusion make sense based on the information gathered from the articles and in class? Does what you say follow from the evidence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>Does your paper focus on the more important pieces of information? Do you clearly explain why this is an important topic to consider?</td>
</tr>
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If the answer to any of these questions is “No,” you want to work on editing/revising your paper until you can answer “Yes” to each one.

**Formatting Guidelines:**
- Papers must be typed: 12 point font, double-spaced, with one inch margins.
- Papers should be no more than 2 pages in length (~600 words).