

In Common: Effective Writing for All Students
Collection of All Argument/Opinion Samples, K-12

by The Vermont Writing Collaborative, with Student Achievement Partners, and CCSSO



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Document Overview

Common Core State Writing Standard 1: Argument/Opinion Writing

The first Common Core State Writing Standard calls for students to "write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence." The following collection of student work offers a series of samples illustrating what effective argument/opinion writing might look like at each grade level.

The first section of the document is comprised of "On Demand" writing. This section contains pieces written in response to a uniform text-based prompt. The second section is made up of "Range of Writing" samples. These pieces provide examples of student writing for "a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences" over both extended and shorter time frames.

Each piece in the collection is annotated using the language of the Common Core State Standards for a particular grade level and writing type.

Brief User Guide for On-Demand Argument/Opinion Writing

Brief User Guide for On-Demand Argument/Opinion Writing

The pieces in this On-Demand section represent one of the three types of writing named in the Common Core State Standards for Writing: opinion/argument writing. Students at all grade levels were given one to three texts and a writing prompt that asked them to form an opinion or a claim about a focusing question. Students at kindergarten through grade five were given the focusing question, “Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?” At grades six through twelve, students were given the focusing question, “Should your school participate in the national ‘Shut Down Your Screen Week’?”

Because students needed time to build content knowledge from the texts in order to be able to write, the process took anywhere from two to three days for most students. Teachers read the text aloud to students at all grade levels, to ensure that all students could access the text when they needed to re-read the text(s) to gather evidence to develop their writing. All writing was done on their own, without input from peers or teachers.

The prompts and the individual pieces based on them are arranged in grade order. Each piece has a file number for easy identification. Every piece of writing includes two versions that have been transcribed exactly as written by the student – one annotated with the language of the Common Core Standards, and one unannotated for a variety of uses. In addition, pieces in the K-5 collection have a third version as well; this version has been revised and edited for major errors in conventions and can be used as a model for students. Kindergarten pieces also include PDF’s of original student work, including student writing and drawing. This is because kindergarten students may use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to satisfy the Standards.

Suggestions on how to use these pieces are available at the end of the introductory document, “Using the *In Common* Resource.”

K-5 On-Demand Argument/Opinion Samples

Grade K, Prompt for Opinion Writing Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

(Passage should be read aloud by the teacher)

Bob and his friend Ann don't agree on which pet is best. Listen to find out what they each think.

The Best Pet

My friend Ann says her pet is better than mine! I have a brown cat named Fluffy. Ann has a black and white dog named Spot. We each think our pet is the best.

I told Ann that cats are better pets because they are clean, quiet and very cute. Cats wash themselves with their tongues. You don't have to walk them. They use a litter box. Also, cats are sweet and quiet. I think dogs are too noisy! They bark a lot. They don't clean themselves or use a litter box. Dogs need someone to give them baths, train them and walk them. Dogs are more work.

Ann says that cats are no fun! She says that dogs are better to play with. Spot always wags his tail when he sees her. He can even do tricks. He barks when she says, "Speak". He knows how to roll over! Ann says dogs are also better because they protect their owners. Spot always barks when there is someone at the door. It makes Ann feel safe. So, Ann thinks dogs are best.

I guess Ann's dog is pretty cool, but so is Fluffy. Maybe different kinds of pets are good for different people.

Teacher Directions to Students (after reading):

- What do you think? Which pet is best—a cat or a dog?

- Turn and talk to a partner about which pet you chose. Be sure to tell your partner WHY you picked that pet.

Allow about 3 minutes for students to discuss their choices.

- Now, use this paper to draw a picture of the pet you chose. I will help you write words under your picture to tell more about your choice.

Kindergarten Opinion Prompt

Teacher Directions

- Read the story, present the question, and allow a few minutes for discussion with a partner. Give out lined or unlined paper. Then, use your typical classroom writing process to support students in completing the writing prompt. The piece should represent first draft writing (done in a single sitting).
- The response should include a picture and whatever sentences, words, or letters the child can add. An adult may assist with sounding out or spelling words and/or transcribe the child's words if desired.
- Please distinguish the child's independent production from words or letters produced with adult help by **underlining any part of the writing done with teacher support**. The writing sample will be most useful to other teachers if it is easy to tell where help was given.
- We understand that, especially in the fall, most Kindergartners have had limited experience with writing.

File Name: OKFP The Best Pet

Opinion/Argument

Kindergarten, Fall

On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

The Best Pet

MKIECYKDBbD

*I like my cat because they are better than dogs.**

**dictated response*

Tells the reader the topic he or she is writing about and states an opinion or preference about the topic

In this Kindergarten opinion piece, done in the early fall, the student shows a basic awareness that what we say can be written down. Early in the Kindergarten year, specific letter/sound association has typically not yet developed, yet the above type of experimentation with writing plays a crucial role in the development of written language

File Name: OKFP The Best Pet

Opinion/Argument

Kindergarten, Fall

Revised and Edited for Student Use

The Best Pet

I like cats because they are better than dogs.*

**dictated response*

File Name: OKFP The Best Pet

Opinion/Argument

Kindergarten, Fall

On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

The Best Pet

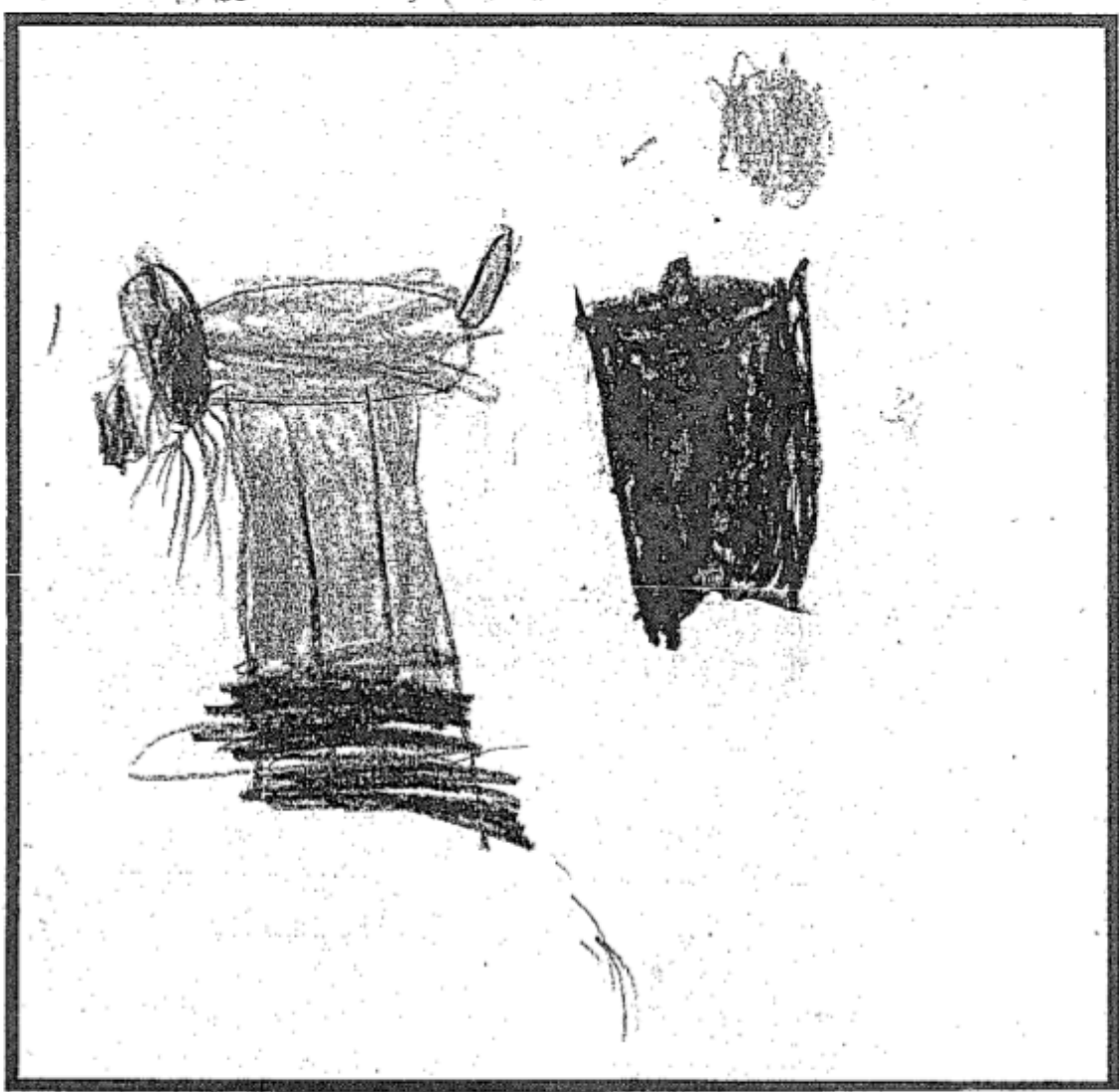
MKIECYKDBbD

*I like my cat because they are better than dogs.**

**dictated response*

AKTECKK DPWD

"I like my cat because they are better than dogs."



File Name: OKSP The Best Pet

Opinion/Argument

Kindergarten, Spring

On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

Dog is the Bst Becs thea BuRc.

Tells the reader the topic he or she is writing about and states an opinion or preference about the topic

In this Kindergarten piece, done in the spring, the student shows a growing understanding of the sounds in words and the letters that represent those sounds. The writer names a topic and clearly expresses an opinion. Although not required by the standards, this writer also gives a reason for the opinion (*Becs thea BuRc*), laying the foundation for the more complex opinion pieces he will write in first grade.

File Name: OKSP The Best Pet

Opinion/Argument

Kindergarten, Spring

Revised and Edited for student use

Dogs are the best because they bark.

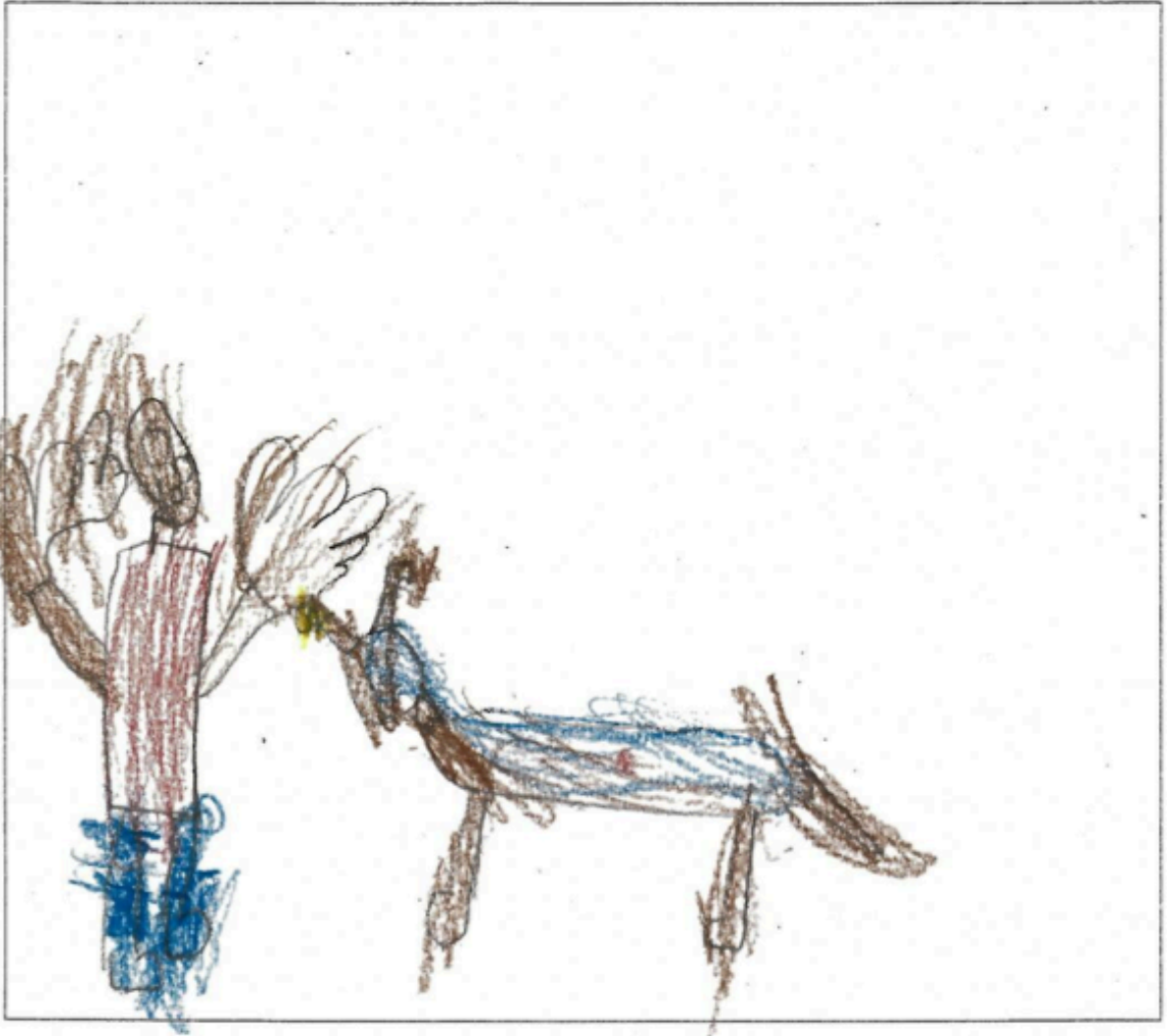
File Name: OKSP The Best Pet

Opinion/Argument

Kindergarten, Spring

On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

Dog is the Bst Becs thea BuRc.



DOG IS THE BEST BECS
 THEY BARK.

Dog is the best because they bark

Grade 1, Prompt for Opinion Writing

Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

(Passage should be read aloud by the teacher)

The Best Pet

My friend Ann says her pet is better than mine! I have a brown cat named Fluffy. Ann has a black and white dog named Spot. We each think our pet is the best.

I told Ann that cats are better pets because they are clean, quiet and very cute. Cats wash themselves with their tongues. You don't have to walk them. They use a litter box. Also cats are sweet and quiet. I think dogs are too noisy! They bark a lot. They don't clean themselves or use a litter box. Dogs need someone to give them baths, train them and walk them. Dogs are more work.

Ann says that cats are no fun! She says that dogs are better to play with. Spot always wags his tail when he sees her. He can even do tricks. He barks when she says, "Speak". He knows how to roll over! Ann says dogs are also better because they protect their owners. Spot always barks when there is someone at the door. It makes Ann feel safe. So, Ann thinks dogs are best.

I guess Ann's dog is pretty cool, but so is Fluffy. Maybe different kinds of pets are good for different people.

The Best Pet

Student Directions, Part 1

15 minutes

Today, you are going to get ready to write an opinion piece that answers this question:

Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?

PART 1 To help you think about the question before writing:

- Listen to the story carefully as your teacher reads aloud.
- Listen to the question again. **Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**
- **THINK!** Decide which is the best pet.
- Tell a partner which pet you chose. Then, tell your partner **WHY** you are picking that pet.

The Best Pet

Student Directions, Part 2

30 minutes

Now, you are going to write an opinion piece that answers this question:

Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?

PART 2 Now that you have finished Part 1, you will write your piece.

- Listen to the story again.
- What pet is best for you, a cat or a dog? Why?
- Write your answer. Be sure to **pick either a cat or a dog** and **explain why** this kind of pet is best. You may look back in the story for ideas.

Write as much as you can. Use as much paper as you need.

A good opinion piece will:

1. **Introduce the topic you are writing about.**
2. **Clearly answer the question.**
3. **Give lots of reasons and explanations.**
4. **"Wrap up" the piece with a concluding sentence.**
5. **Use capitals, periods and question marks, and spell words correctly.**

When you are finished, check your paper over and fix any mistakes you see.

If you have time, you may add a picture at the bottom or on the back to show why this pet is the best. Have fun!

Grade 1 Opinion Prompt

Teacher Directions

- Use the student prompt as directions for the session. Provide each student with a copy of the prompt and the story. Both should be read aloud while students read along silently (if they are able). The teacher should feel comfortable re-reading, explaining, or clarifying directions as needed.
- The story provides information that may be used to address the prompt. The story should be read aloud at least twice before writing. If students choose to refer back to the story while writing, the teacher may provide help with reading words or phrases.
- The prompt may be given in one or two sessions. Allow approximately 10-15 minutes for Part 1 and approximately 30 minutes for Part 2, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should take the time they need to write and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, word walls or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing. Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. If desired, unlined paper may be provided for drawing.
- This will be first draft writing, but be sure to encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

File Name: O1P A Dog is Best

Opinion/Argument

Grade 1

On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

A Dog is Best

**Introduces the topic he
or she is writing about**

Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?

States an opinion

I used to have a dog and I think a dog is best.

A dog becas its cute and it likes to Play and its snuggly and it likes to choo bones.

A dog is best because of theese reasons.

**Supplies a
reason for the
opinion**

Provides some sense of closure

This first-grade opinion piece offers a brief introduction (*"I used to have a dog"*) and then states an opinion (*"I thinck a dog is best"*). The writer supplies several reasons for the opinion. However, at this grade level, one reason would have been sufficient. A simple concluding statement provides a sense of closure.

File Name: O1P A Dog is Best

Opinion/Argument

Grade 1

Revised and Edited for Student Use

The Best Pet

Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?

I used to have a dog, and I think a dog is best. A dog is best because it is cute, it likes to play, it is snuggly, and it likes to chew bones. A dog is best because of these reasons.

File Name: O1P A Dog is Best

Opinion/Argument

Grade 1

On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

The Best Pet

Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?

I used to have a dog and I think a dog is best.

A dog becas its cute and it likes to Play and its snuggly and it likes to choo bones.

A dog is best because of these reasons.

Grade 2, Prompt for Opinion Writing

Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

(Passage should be read aloud by the teacher)

The Best Pet

My friend Ann says her pet is better than mine! I have a brown cat named Fluffy. Ann has a black and white dog named Spot. We each think our pet is the best.

I told Ann that cats are better pets because they are clean, quiet and very cute. Cats wash themselves with their tongues. You don't have to walk them. They use a litter box. Also cats are sweet and quiet. I think dogs are too noisy! They bark a lot. They don't clean themselves or use a litter box. Dogs need someone to give them baths, train them and walk them. Dogs are more work.

Ann says that cats are no fun! She says that dogs are better to play with. Spot always wags his tail when he sees her. He can even do tricks. He barks when she says, "Speak". He knows how to roll over! Ann says dogs are also better because they protect their owners. Spot always barks when there is someone at the door. It makes Ann feel safe. So, Ann thinks dogs are best.

I guess Ann's dog is pretty cool, but so is Fluffy. Maybe different kinds of pets are good for different people.

Cat or Dog?

Should you get that cute little puppy or a cuddly kitten? Deciding between a cat and a dog can be hard. Here are some things to think about.

Company

Dogs make great listeners. Many people tell dogs things they can't tell anyone else. Dogs are great for someone who lives alone or needs company. On the other hand, most cats enjoy being alone. You can leave them home alone for the day while your family is at school or work.

Exercise

Cats and dogs both need exercise. Dogs need to be walked every day. This can be healthy for both of you. Exercise gives you energy. It also strengthens your muscles and bones. Walking and playing with your dog can make you both healthier! A cat needs much less exercise than a dog, but this makes a cat much easier to take care of. Your cat will probably be happy to chase a ball in your living room.

Training

Dogs need training to live with people. This can take a lot of time, but you can teach your dog great tricks. Your dog can learn to sit, fetch and lie down. Cats need less training. Cats can be trained to fetch a ball or walk on a leash, but these lessons are just for fun. You don't need to train your cat to have a good pet.

Both cats and dogs can be wonderful family pets. Which pet is the right one for you?

The Best Pet

Student Directions, Part 1

30 minutes

Today, you are going to get ready to write an opinion piece that answers this question:

Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?

PART 1 To help you think about the question before writing:

- Listen to the story, *The Best Pet* carefully as your teacher reads it aloud.
- Listen to the question again. **Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**
- THINK! Decide which is the best pet.
- Tell a partner which pet you chose. Then, tell your partner **WHY** you picked that pet.
- Now, listen to the article, *Dog or Cat?* .
- Now that you have some more information, think about the question again. **Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**
- Explain your thinking to a partner. Be sure to use facts and reasons when explaining your opinion.

The Best Pet

Student Directions, Part 2

30 minutes

Now, you are going to write an opinion piece that answers this question:

Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?

PART 2 Now that you have finished Part 1, you will write your piece.

- Listen to the story and the article again.
- What pet is best for you, a cat or a dog? Why?
- Write your answer. Be sure to **pick either a cat or a dog** and **explain why** this kind of pet is best. You may look back in the text for ideas.

Write as much as you can. Use as much paper as you need.

A good opinion piece will:

1. **Introduce the topic you are writing about.**
2. **Clearly answer the question.**
3. **Give lots of reasons and explanations.**
4. **"Wrap up" the piece with a concluding sentence.**
5. **Use capitals, periods and question marks, and spell words correctly.**

When you are finished, check your paper over and fix any mistakes you see.

If you have time, you may add a picture at the bottom or on the back to show why this pet is the best.

Grade 2 Opinion Prompt

Teacher Directions

- Use the student prompt as directions for the session. Provide each student with a copy of the prompt, the article, and the story. These should be read aloud while students read along silently (if they are able). The teacher should feel comfortable re-reading, explaining, or clarifying directions as needed.
- Both texts provide information that may be used to address the prompt. They should be read aloud at least twice before writing. If students choose to refer back to the text while writing, the teacher may provide help with reading words or phrases.
- The prompt may be given in one or two sessions. Allow approximately 30 minutes for Part 1 and approximately 30 minutes for Part 2, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should take the time they need to write and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, word walls, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing. Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. If desired, unlined paper may be provided for drawing.
- This will be first draft writing, but be sure to encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

File Name: O2P Dogs Rule

Opinion/Argument

Grade 2

On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

Dogs ru **States an
opinion**

What pet is best for you cat or dog? I like dogs because they exercise a lot. *A*
play fetch with you. They are fun to play with. Thats why I like dogs best.

**Uses linking
words to
connect opinion
and reason**

**Introduces
the topic he
or she is
writing about**

Provides a concluding statement

**Supplies reasons
that support the
opinion**

This second-grade opinion piece introduces the topic with a question (*“What pet is best for you cat or dog?”*) and states an opinion (*“I like dogs”*). Linking words (*“because”, “Also”*) connect the opinion with several reasons. A concluding statement restates the main idea of the piece (*“Thats why I like dogs best”*).

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File Name: O2P Dogs Rule

Opinion/Argument

Grade 2

Revised and Edited for Student Use

Dogs Rule

What pet is best for you, a cat or dog? I like dogs because they exercise a lot. Also they play fetch with you. They are fun to play with. That's why I like dogs best.

File Name: O2P Dogs Rule

Opinion/Argument

Grade 2

On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

Dogs rule

What pet is best for you cat or dog? I like dogs because they exercise a lot. Also they play fetch with you. They are fun to play with. That's why I like dogs best.

Grade 3, Prompt for Opinion Writing

Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

(Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher)

Name:

Before you begin: On a piece of lined paper, write your name and grade, the date, the name of your school and your state, and your teacher's name. You will use this paper for writing.

The Best Pet

There are many reasons why people own pets. A pet can entertain you, keep you company or even protect you! Dogs and cats are the most popular pets in America today. Some people prefer an energetic dog and others, a cuddly kitten. Which do you think is best?

Your teacher is going to read two articles aloud. One is about the benefits of owning a cat and the other is about the benefits of choosing a dog as a pet. As you listen to these texts, think about the advantages of each kind of pet. *Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?* After you have had a chance to hear the articles a second time, you will write an essay that states your opinion and explains your thinking.

For the essay, your focusing question will be:

Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?

You will explain your thinking with facts and reasons from the articles.

Remember, a good opinion essay:

- *Has an introduction*
- *Clearly states your opinion/claim in a focus statement*
- *Uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support your opinion and explains your thinking*
- *Groups ideas in paragraphs*
- *Has a conclusion*
- *Uses precise language and linking words to connect ideas*
- *Has correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation*

You will have two class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. You may take notes right on the articles or on a separate sheet of paper. You may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. The essay will have a single draft. When you have finished, be sure to proofread your work.

GOOD LUCK! WE LOOK FORWARD TO READING YOUR GOOD WORK!

Teacher Directions

Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?

Day 1 (45 minutes)

- Give out the assignment sheet.
- Read the assignment sheet aloud together and clarify the task for the students.
- Give each student a copy of *Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs*. Explain that they may want to underline or take notes on the article as you read it aloud. Read the article aloud.
- Pose the question, "Why might a cat make a good pet?" Remind students to use the article and their notes when thinking through their response. Have students turn and talk to a partner about this question for 3 minutes.
- Give each student a copy of *Why Dogs make Good Pets*. Remind students that they may want to underline or take notes on the article. Read the article aloud.
- Pose the question, "Why might a dog make a good pet?" Remind students to use the article and their notes when thinking through their response. Have students turn and talk to a partner about this question for 3 minutes.

- Explain that tomorrow you will be writing about whether a cat or a dog makes a better pet. Collect the articles and assignment sheets. (Be sure names are on them.)

*Teacher Directions***Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?****Day 2 (45 minutes)**

- Return the articles and reread both aloud.
- Ask students to think about both articles. Which pet would be best? Why? Have students turn and talk to a partner about this. Each student should talk for 3 minutes.
- Return the assignment sheet and reread it aloud.
- Provide lined paper (or a computer if your students are accustomed to composing on a keyboard) and give students the remainder of the period to write. The writing should be completed individually, without help.
- When the period is over, explain that students may finish writing and proofread tomorrow. Collect student work and materials.

Day 3 (45 minutes)

- Return student work and materials. Students may be given access to a dictionary, thesaurus, spell check or grammar check.
- Give students the remainder of the period to finish writing and proofreading.

Name:

Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs

Should you get that cute little puppy or a cuddly kitten? Deciding between a cat and a dog can be difficult. However, cats as pets do have some advantages.

Grooming

Cats bathe themselves. Most do not even need brushing. Dogs are more likely to need help from their owners in keeping clean.

Companionship

Cats enjoy being alone. You can leave them home alone for the day while you go to school. Dogs, however, need company. A dog needs much more of your time.

Exercise

Cats and dogs both need daily exercise. However, a cat needs much less exercise than a dog. Most dogs need to be taken for walk at least twice a day, even in the rain. Your cat will probably be happy to chase a ball in your living room.

Noise

Dogs can bark at all hours of the day or night. Cats sleep most of the day and are much quieter. They are unlikely to disturb your neighbors.

Training

Dogs need training to live with people. They need to be taught not to jump on people, how to sit and stay, and many other things. You may even need to teach your dog to lie down so you can have some quiet time. Cats can be trained to fetch a ball or walk on a leash, but these lessons are just for fun. You don't need to train your cat to have a good pet.

Both cats and dogs can be wonderful family pets. Each can be affectionate and playful, but cats are much easier to care for. Maybe a cat is the right pet for you!

This article was adapted for classroom use from "Reasons Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs" by Dee Em, eHow Contributor <http://www.ehow.com>

Used by permission of Dee Em, eHow Contributor <http://www.ehow.com>

Name:

Why Dogs Make Good Pets

Thinking about getting a new pet? One of the most popular pets is a dog. Dogs make great pets for many reasons.

Companions

Dogs are patient and make great listeners. Many people tell dogs things they can't tell anyone else. Dogs are great for someone who lives alone or needs company.

Friends

Most dogs are curious. They want to meet other people and animals. Owners are likely to meet others while out walking their dogs. Dogs are good conversation starters. They make it easy to meet new people.

Health

Dogs can make you healthier. Studies show that dog owners are less likely to get sick. When they do get sick, they get well quicker.

Safety

Most dogs will bark if there is danger. Dogs can scare off intruders or warn their owners of fire. Specially trained dogs can also find missing people, sniff out bombs and drugs and help disabled people.

Exercise

A dog needs daily exercise. The owner who walks his dog also benefits from this. Daily exercise can help keep you at a healthy weight. It gives you energy. It also strengthens your muscles and bones. Walking and playing with your dog can make you both healthier!

Is a dog the right pet for you? Owning a dog is a big responsibility, but there are many benefits. A dog might just be the perfect pet for you!

This article was adapted for classroom use from "Why Dogs Make Good Pets" by Cecilia McCormick, eHow Contributor <http://www.ehow.com>

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File Name: 03P The Best Pet

Opinion/Argument

Grade 3

On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

**Introduces
the topic**
by posing a
question

States an opinion

The Best Pet

Are you looking for a now Pet? I'd rekomend a cat. For one thing they aren't that
egspensev you could find one on your porch and aboped it. Cat's yushely baeth them
self. Cat's will sleep with you and can help you cawlm down when you'r upset or mad.
Cat's allso don't need training and you can's leave cats home for the day. Cat's don't
need much exercise. So if you are looking for a pet maebv see some cat's and you mite
find your self a great pet!

**Provides reasons
that support the
opinion**

**Uses linking words
and phrases to
connect opinion and
reasons**

**Provides a concluding
statement**

In this third-grade opinion piece, the writer begins with a question, which introduces the topic and provides some context for the reader. The stated opinion ("*I'd rekomend a cat.*") provides a clear focus, which is developed with reasons from the source that accompanies the prompt. The reasons given are additive and do not build upon one another; they could be presented in any order. Linking words ("*and*", "*allso*", "*so*") connect opinion to reasons and help create cohesion. The writer creates an organizational structure that states an opinion, lists reasons, and concludes. Both the introduction and conclusion are designed to engage the reader, and each shows a beginning awareness of purpose and audience.

File Name: 03P The Best Pet

Opinion/Argument

Grade 3

Revised and Edited for Student Use

The Best Pet

Are you looking for a new pet? I'd recommend a cat. For one thing, they aren't that expensive. You could find one on your porch and adopt it. Cats usually bathe themselves. Cats will sleep with you and can help you calm down when you're upset or mad. Cats also don't need training and you can leave cats home for the day. Cats don't need much exercise. So if you are looking for a pet, maybe you can find some cats, and you might find yourself a great pet!

File Name: 03P The Best Pet

Opinion/Argument

Grade 3

On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

The Best Pet

Are you looking for a new Pet? I'd recommend a cat. For one thing they aren't that expensive you could find one on your porch and adopt it. Cats usually bathe themselves. Cats will sleep with you and can help you calm down when you're upset or mad. Cats also don't need training and you can't leave cats home for the day. Cats don't need much exercise. So if you are looking for a pet maybe see some cats and you might find yourself a great pet!

Grade 4, Prompt for Opinion Writing

Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

(Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher.)

Name:

Before you begin: On a piece of lined paper, write your name and grade, the date, the name of your school and your state, and your teacher's name. You will use this paper for writing.

The Best Pet

There are many reasons why people own pets. A pet can entertain you, keep you company or even protect you! Dogs and cats are the most popular pets in America today. Some people prefer an energetic dog and others, a cuddly kitten. Which do you think is best?

Your teacher is going to read two articles aloud. One is about the benefits of owning a cat and the other is about the benefits of choosing a dog as a pet. As you listen to these texts, think about the advantages of each kind of pet. *Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?* After you have had a chance to hear the articles a second time, you will write an essay that states your opinion and explains your thinking.

For the essay, your focusing question will be:

Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?

You will explain your thinking with facts and reasons from the articles.

Remember, a good opinion essay:

- *Has an introduction*
- *Clearly states your opinion/claim in a focus statement*
- *Uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support your opinion and explains your thinking*
- *Groups ideas in paragraphs*
- *Has a conclusion*
- *Uses precise language and linking words to connect ideas*
- *Has correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation*

You will have two class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. You may take notes right on the articles or on a separate sheet of paper. You may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. The essay will have a single draft. When you have finished, be sure to proofread your work.

GOOD LUCK! WE LOOK FORWARD TO READING YOUR GOOD WORK!

Teacher Directions

Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?

Day 1 (45 minutes)

- Give out the assignment sheet.
- Read the assignment sheet aloud together and clarify the task for the students.
- Give each student a copy of *Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs*. Explain that they may want to underline or take notes on the article as you read it aloud. Read the article aloud.
- Pose the question, "Why might a cat make a good pet?" Remind students to use the article and their notes when thinking through their response. Have students turn and talk to a partner about this question for 3 minutes.
- Give each student a copy of *Why Dogs make Good Pets*. Remind students that they may want to underline or take notes on the article. Read the article aloud.
- Pose the question, "Why might a dog make a good pet?" Remind students to use the article and their notes when thinking through their response. Have students turn and talk to a partner about this question for 3 minutes.
- Explain that tomorrow you will be writing about whether a cat or a dog makes a better pet. Collect the articles and assignment sheets. (Be sure names are on them.)

*Teacher Directions***Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?****Day 2 (45 minutes)**

- Return the articles and re-read both aloud.
- Ask students to think about both articles. Which pet would be best? Why? Have students turn and talk to a partner about this. Each student should talk for 3 minutes.
- Return the assignment sheet and re-read it aloud.
- Provide lined paper (or a computer if your students are accustomed to composing on a keyboard) and give students the remainder of the period to write. The writing should be completed individually, without help.
- When the period is over, explain that students may finish writing and proofread tomorrow. Collect student work and materials.

Day 3 (45 minutes)

- Return student work and materials. Students may be given access to a dictionary, thesaurus, spell check, or grammar check.
- Give students the remainder of the period to finish writing and proofreading.

Name:

Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs

Should you get that cute little puppy or a cuddly kitten? Deciding between a cat and a dog can be difficult. However, cats as pets do have some advantages.

Grooming

Cats bathe themselves. Most do not even need brushing. Dogs are more likely to need help from their owners in keeping clean.

Companionship

Cats enjoy being alone. You can leave them home alone for the day while you go to school. Dogs, however, need company. A dog needs much more of your time.

Exercise

Cats and dogs both need daily exercise. However, a cat needs much less exercise than a dog. Most dogs need to be taken for walk at least twice a day, even in the rain. Your cat will probably be happy to chase a ball in your living room.

Noise

Dogs can bark at all hours of the day or night. Cats sleep most of the day and are much quieter. They are unlikely to disturb your neighbors.

Training

Dogs need training to live with people. They need to be taught not to jump on people, how to sit and stay, and many other things. You may even need to teach your dog to lie down so you can have some quiet time. Cats can be trained to fetch a ball or walk on a leash, but these lessons are just for fun. You don't need to train your cat to have a good pet.

Both cats and dogs can be wonderful family pets. Each can be affectionate and playful, but cats are much easier to care for. Maybe a cat is the right pet for you!

This article was adapted for classroom use from "Reasons Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs" by Dee Em, eHow Contributor <http://www.ehow.com>

Used by permission of *Dee Em, eHow Contributor* <http://www.ehow.com>

Name:

Why Dogs Make Good Pets

Thinking about getting a new pet? One of the most popular pets is a dog. Dogs make great pets for many reasons.

Companions

Dogs are patient and make great listeners. Many people tell dogs things they can't tell anyone else. Dogs are great for someone who lives alone or needs company.

Friends

Most dogs are curious. They want to meet other people and animals. Owners are likely to meet others while out walking their dogs. Dogs are good conversation starters. They make it easy to meet new people.

Health

Dogs can make you healthier. Studies show that dog owners are less likely to get sick. When they do get sick, they get well quicker.

Safety

Most dogs will bark if there is danger. Dogs can scare off intruders or warn their owners of fire. Specially trained dogs can also find missing people, sniff out bombs and drugs and help disabled people.

Exercise

A dog needs daily exercise. The owner who walks his dog also benefits from this. Daily exercise can help keep you at a healthy weight. It gives you energy. It also strengthens your muscles and bones. Walking and playing with your dog can make you both healthier!

Is a dog the right pet for you? Owning a dog is a big responsibility, but there are many benefits. A dog might just be the perfect pet for you!

This article was adapted for classroom use from “Why Dogs Make Good Pets” by Cecilia McCormick, eHow Contributor <http://www.ehow.com>

Used by permission of by Cecilia McCormick, eHow Contributor <http://www.ehow.com>

File Name: O4P Which is Better

Opinion/Argument

Grade 4

On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

Which is Better?

Introduces a topic clearly

Many people have a dog for a pet. Some people have cats. Which is better? I say dog. Maybe you say cat. I just might be able to persuade you in the following.

States an opinion

Dogs are great companions for lonely people. They can go for a rousing walk in the park, or a good long nap. Playing games of catch or fetch every day makes good fun. Even a jog on the hottest day could even be enjoyable too. Dogs don't just provide fun though. They can also provide protection.

Provides reasons that are supported by facts and details

Dogs are very intelligent. They can be trained to find people or save them. Some don't even need to be trained. For instance, if someone is trying to break in, your dog might bark and scare them off. Dogs are great for many different reasons.

Links opinion and reasons using words and phrases

Overall, dogs are awesome pets to have. Have I convinced you though? If you are, then great! If your not then thats okay. It's really up to you. So which one is it going to be?

Creates an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose

Provides a concluding section related to the opinion presented

This fourth-grade opinion piece has a well-developed introduction that establishes some context (*"Many people have a dog for a pet. Some people have cats."*) and states an opinion (*"Wich is better? I say dog."*). The purpose of the piece, to convince the reader that dogs are better as pets than cats, is clearly stated in the last line of the introduction. Although the paragraphs are incorrectly indented, related ideas are grouped together; the writer presents two main reasons that dogs are better: they are great companions, and they can provide protection. Each reason is well-elaborated using supporting facts and details drawn from the source included in the prompt. Transitional sentences (*"Dogs don't just provide fun though."*) and linking words and phrases (*"even", "also", "for instance"*) connect ideas in the piece and provide cohesion. The last paragraph shows the writer's confidence in her reasoning by acknowledging that readers must form their own opinions after considering the opinion she presents.

File Name: O4P Which is Better

Opinion/Argument

Grade 4

Revised and Edited for Student Use

Which is Better?

Many people have a dog for a pet. Some people have cats. Which is better? I say dog. Maybe you say cat. I just might be able to persuade you in the following.

Dogs are great companions for lonely people. They can go for a rousing walk in the park or take a good long nap. Playing games of catch or fetch every day makes good fun. Even a jog on the hottest day could be enjoyable, too.

Dogs don't just provide fun, though. They can also provide protection. Dogs are very intelligent. They can be trained to find people or save them. Some don't even need to be trained. For instance, if someone is trying to break in, your dog might bark and scare them off. Dogs are great for many different reasons.

Overall, dogs are awesome pets to have. Have I convinced you, though? If you are convinced, then great! If you're not convinced, then that's okay. It's really up to you. So which one is it going to be?

File Name: O4P Which is Better

Opinion/Argument

Grade 4

On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

Which is Better?

Many people have a dog for a pet. Some people have cats. Which is better? I say dog. Maybe you say cat. I just might be able to persuade you in the following.

Dogs are great companions for lonely people. They can go for a rousing walk in the park, or a good long nap. Playing games of catch or fetch every day makes good fun. Even a jog on the hottest day could even be enjoyable too. Dogs don't just provide fun though. They can also provide protection.

Dogs are very intelligent. They can be trained to find people or save them. Some don't even need to be trained. For instance, if someone is trying to break in, your dog might bark and scare them off. Dogs are great for many different reasons.

Overall, dogs are awesome pets to have. Have I convinced you though? If you are, then great! If you're not then that's okay. It's really up to you. So which one is it going to be?

Grade 5, Prompt for Opinion Writing

Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

(Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher)

Name:

Before you begin: On a piece of lined paper, write your name and grade, the date, the name of your school and your state, and your teacher's name. You will use this paper for writing.

The Best Pet

There are many reasons why people own pets. A pet can entertain you, keep you company, or even protect you! Dogs and cats are the most popular pets in America today. Some people prefer an energetic dog and others, a cuddly kitten. Which pet do you think is best?

Your teacher is going to read two articles aloud. One is about the benefits of owning a cat and the other is about the benefits of choosing a dog as a pet. As you listen to these texts, think about the advantages of each kind of pet. *Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?* After you have had a chance to hear the articles a second time, you will write an essay that states your opinion and explains your thinking.

For the essay, your focusing question will be:

Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?

You will explain your thinking with facts and reasons from the articles. Your teacher will also give you a page of "Pet Statistics" which you can use to support your opinion if you would like.

Remember, a good opinion essay:

- *Has an introduction*
- *Clearly states your opinion/claim in a focus statement*
- *Uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support your opinion and explains your thinking*
- *Groups ideas in paragraphs*
- *Has a conclusion*
- *Uses precise language and linking words to connect ideas*

- *Has correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation*

You will have two class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. You may take notes right on the articles or on a separate sheet of paper. You may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. The essay will have a single draft. When you have finished, be sure to proofread your work.

GOOD LUCK! WE LOOK FORWARD TO READING YOUR GOOD WORK!

*Teacher Directions***Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?****Day 1 (45 minutes)**

- Give out the assignment sheet.
- Read the assignment sheet aloud together and clarify the task for the students.
- Give each student a copy of *Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs*. Explain that they may want to underline or take notes on the article as you read it aloud. Read the article aloud.
- Pose the question, "Why might a cat make a good pet?" Remind students to use the article and their notes when thinking through their response. Have students turn and talk to a partner about this question for 3 minutes.
- Give each student a copy of *Why Dogs make Good Pets*. Remind students that they may want to underline or take notes on the article. Read the article aloud.
- Pose the question, "Why might a dog make a good pet?" Remind students to use the article and their notes when thinking through their response. Have students turn and talk to a partner about this question for 3 minutes.
- Explain that tomorrow you will be writing about whether a cat or a dog makes a better pet. Collect the articles and assignment sheets. (Be sure names are on them.)

Teacher Directions

Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?

Day 2 (45 minutes)

- Return the articles and reread both aloud.
- Ask students to think about both articles. Which pet would be best? Why? Have students turn and talk to a partner about this. Each student should talk for 3 minutes.
- Return the assignment sheet and reread it aloud.
- Hand out the sheet of *Pet Statistics*. Explain that students may use this as an additional resource if desired. If students choose to use this resource, the teacher may provide help by reading any difficult words or phrases.
- Provide lined paper (or a computer if your students are accustomed to composing on a keyboard) and give students the remainder of the period to write. The writing should be completed individually, without help, using only the sources provided.
- When the period is over, explain that students may finish writing and proofread tomorrow. Collect student work and materials.

Day 3 (45 minutes)

- Return student work and materials. Students may be given access to a dictionary, thesaurus, spell check or grammar check.
- Give students the remainder of the period to finish writing and proofreading.

Name:

Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs

Should you get that cute little puppy or a cuddly kitten? Deciding between a cat and a dog can be difficult. However, cats as pets do have some advantages.

Grooming

Cats bathe themselves. Most do not even need brushing. Dogs are more likely to need help from their owners in keeping clean.

Companionship

Cats enjoy being alone. You can leave them home alone for the day while you go to school. Dogs, however, need company. A dog needs much more of your time.

Exercise

Cats and dogs both need daily exercise. However, a cat needs much less exercise than a dog. Most dogs need to be taken for walk at least twice a day, even in the rain. Your cat will probably be happy to chase a ball in your living room.

Noise

Dogs can bark at all hours of the day or night. Cats sleep most of the day and are much quieter. They are unlikely to disturb your neighbors.

Training

Dogs need training to live with people. They need to be taught not to jump on people, how to sit and stay, and many other things. You may even need to teach your dog to lie down so you can have some quiet time. Cats can be trained to fetch a ball or walk on a leash, but these lessons are just for fun. You don't need to train your cat to have a good pet.

Both cats and dogs can be wonderful family pets. Each can be affectionate and playful, but cats are much easier to care for. Maybe a cat is the right pet for you!

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Name:

Why Dogs Make Good Pets

Thinking about getting a new pet? One of the most popular pets is a dog. Dogs make great pets for many reasons.

Companions

Dogs are patient and make great listeners. Many people tell dogs things they can't tell anyone else. Dogs are great for someone who lives alone or needs company.

Friends

Most dogs are curious. They want to meet other people and animals. Owners are likely to meet others while out walking their dogs. Dogs are good conversation starters. They make it easy to meet new people.

Health

Dogs can make you healthier. Studies show that dog owners are less likely to get sick. When they do get sick, they get well quicker.

Safety

Most dogs will bark if there is danger. Dogs can scare off intruders or warn their owners of fire. Specially trained dogs can also find missing people, sniff out bombs and drugs and help disabled people.

Exercise

A dog needs daily exercise. The owner who walks his dog also benefits from this. Daily exercise can help keep you at a healthy weight. It gives you energy. It also strengthens your muscles and bones. Walking and playing with your dog can make you both healthier!

Is a dog the right pet for you? Owning a dog is a big responsibility, but there are many benefits. A dog might just be the perfect pet for you!

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Name:

Pet Statistics

According to the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association (APPMA) 2001-2002 National Pet Owners Survey:

Dogs

In the United States:

- There are approximately 68 million owned dogs.
- Four in ten (or 40 million) U.S. households own at least one dog.
- Most owners own one dog (63%).
- About one-fourth (24%) of owners own two dogs.
- Thirteen percent of owners own three or more dogs.
- There are an equal number of male and female dogs owned.
- Twenty percent of owned dogs were adopted from an animal shelter.
- On average, dog owners spent \$196 on veterinary related expenses in the past 12 months.

Cats

In the United States:

- There are approximately 73 million owned cats.
- Three in ten (or 34.7 million) U.S. households own at least one cat.
- One half of cat-owning households (49%) own one cat; the remaining (51%) own two or more.
- There are a similar number of owned female (51%) versus male (49%) cats.
- Twenty percent of owned cats were adopted from an animal shelter.
- Cat owners spent an average of \$104 on veterinary related expenses in the past 12 months.

American Pet Products Manufacturers Association (APPMA) 2001-2002 National Pet Owners Survey:
http://www.americanpetproducts.org/pubs_survey.asp

Used by permission of American Pet Products Manufacturers Association

File Name: OSP Dogs are Best

Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt

Dogs are Best

**Introduces
a topic or
text clearly**

Cats and dogs can be very entertaining. But when it comes down to the best pet, I would say the dog.

States an opinion

One reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have, is because you can talk to them. And they listen to you. You can tell them secrets, and how you feel. Kind of like a personal journal, except they actually hear what your saying.

Links opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses

Another reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have, is because dogs can warn you of danger. And sometimes that danger might be life threatening. So with a dog its like you have your own danger alarm.

Provides logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details

Also another reason why I think dogs are the best pets to have is because they keep you company. They are perfect pets to have if you love company.

from the sources and personal experience

And with a dog, its almost like you are having your best friends over. And better yet, if you own the dog, and it's a weekday, its like your friends are spending the night on a school night.

Another reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have is because they need to get excersise. You will have to walk your dog every day. So even if

you don't like to walk, your dog and you will be getting automatic exercise.

Which will make you and your dog healthier.

Cats and dogs are very unique in their own fascinating way. But to choose between the both of them, I would go for the dog. Even though dogs require lots of responsibilities, and need maintenance and training, they are still worth the effort. But most importantly, they are like a best friend.

Provides a concluding section related to the opinion presented

This fifth-grade opinion piece provides some context (*"Cats and dogs can be very entertaining"*) and then clearly states an opinion. The writer creates an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped in paragraphs to support the writer's purpose. Each paragraph presents a reason and then explains or elaborates on that reason. Transitions used within and between paragraphs (*"but when it comes down to", "one reason", "so", "better yet", "even if", "which will"*) provide cohesion. A range of general academic vocabulary (*"automatic", "fascinating", "maintenance"*) conveys ideas precisely. The well-developed conclusion restates the context and the opinion, briefly acknowledges possible counterarguments, and reflects on the importance of the information presented.

File Name: OSP Dogs are Best

Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

Revised and Edited for Student Use

Dogs are Best

Cats and dogs can be very entertaining. But when it comes down to the best pet, I would say the dog.

One reason why I think dogs are the best pets to have is because you can talk to them and they listen to you. You can tell them secrets and how you feel. Kind of like a personal journal, except they actually hear what you're saying.

Another reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have is because a dog can warn you of danger, and sometimes that danger might be life threatening. So, with a dog, it's like you have your own danger alarm.

Also another reason why I think dogs are the best pets to have is that they keep you company. They are perfect pets to have if you love company. And with dogs, it's almost like you are having your best friends over. And better yet, if you own the dog, and it's a weekday, it's like your friends are spending the night on a school night.

Another reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have is because they need to get exercise. You will have to walk your dog every day. So, even if you don't like to walk, your dog and you will be getting automatic exercise. This will make you and your dog healthier.

Cats and dogs are very unique in their own fascinating way. But if I had to choose between the both of them, I would go for the dog. Even though dogs require lots of responsibility and need maintenance and training, they are still worth the effort. Most importantly, a dog is like a best friend.

File Name: OSP Dogs are Best

Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

Dogs are Best

Cats and dogs can be very entertaining. But when it comes down to the best pet, I would say the dog.

One reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have, is because you can talk to them. And they listen to you. You can tell them secrets, and how you feel. Kind of like a personal journal, except they actually hear what your saying.

Another reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have, is because dogs can warn you of danger. And sometimes that danger might be life threatening. So with a dog its like you have your own danger alarm.

Also another reason why I think dogs are the best pets to have is because they keep you company. They are perfect pets to have if you love company. And with a dog, its almost like you are having your best friends over. And better yet, if you own the dog, and it's a weekday, its like your friends are spending the night on a school night.

Another reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have is because they need to get excersise. You will have to walk your dog every day. So even if you don't like to walk, your dog and you will be getting automatic excersise. Which will make you and your dog healthier.

Cats and dogs are very unique in their own fascinating way. But to choose between the both of them, I would go for the dog. Even though dogs require lots of responsibilities, and need maintenance and training, they are still worth the effort. But most importantly, they are like a best friend.

6-12 On-Demand Argument/Opinion Samples

Grades 6-12, Prompt for Argument Writing

Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

A group of parents and teachers in your school have made a proposal to the school board. In their proposal, they are suggesting that the school join in a national movement called “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” The parents and teachers in the group believe that not using any electronic media for an entire week would be good for students for many reasons.

They have taken the proposal to a teachers’ meeting, so that teachers can discuss the issue of whether or not to ask their students to participate in the “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” The teachers have decided they would like to hear from the students before they decide.

This is not a simple issue, so you need to think very carefully about it. You have three texts to read relating to the issue: “Social Media as Community,” “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” and “Attached to Technology and Paying a Price.” As you read and re-read these texts, think about what they show you about the issue. Think about what position you will take and what evidence you will use to support your thinking.

Finally, write an essay, in the form of a letter to the teachers, explaining your thinking.

For the essay, your Focusing Question is:

Should your school participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week?” Be sure to use evidence from the texts, as well as your own knowledge, to support and develop your thinking.

Remember, a strong and effective piece of argument writing:

- *Takes the audience into account*
- *Has a clear introduction*
- *States a focus/position statement clearly, precisely, and thoughtfully*
- *Uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support and develop the position, and explains that evidence logically*
- *Takes into account what people who disagree with you might think and tries to respond to that*
- *Concludes effectively*
- *Uses precise language*
- *Shows control over conventions*

You will have three class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. The essay will have a single draft, and you may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. When you have finished, be sure to proofread.

Argument Writing

Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

Teacher Directions

- The texts provide the information needed to address the prompt, and students should independently read the texts carefully before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing and to take notes, and to mark up the text as much as is helpful to them.

- Students should be given three sessions for the prompt. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given as much time as needed to plan, write, and proofread.

- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing.
 - Be sure students have paper to take notes or do whatever pre-planning they might choose to do.
 - If students are writing by hand, provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. If they are using a word processor, make sure they save their work so it can be accessed the next day.

- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

Social Media as Community

By Keith Hampton

[Keith Hampton](#) is an associate professor in the School of Communication and Information at Rutgers, and a past chairman of the American Sociological Association's section on Communication and Information Technologies.

Updated June 18, 2012 *New York Times / Opinion Pages* Excerpt

Neither living alone nor using social media is socially isolating. In 2011, I was lead author of an article in [Information, Communication & Society](#) that found, based on a representative survey of 2,500 Americans, that regardless of whether the participants were married or single, those who used social media had more close confidants.

The constant feed from our online social circles is the modern front porch.

A recent follow-up study, "[Social Networking Sites and Our Lives](#)" (Pew Research Center), found that the average user of a social networking site had more close ties than and was half as likely to be socially isolated as the average American. Additionally, my co-authors and I, in another article published in [New Media & Society](#), found not only that social media users knew people from a greater variety of backgrounds, but also that much of this diversity was a result of people using these technologies who simultaneously spent an impressive amount of time socializing outside of the house.

A number of studies, including my own and those of [Matthew Brashears](#) (a sociologist at Cornell), have found that Americans have fewer intimate relationships today than 20 years ago. However, a loss of close friends does not mean a loss of support. Because of cellphones and social media, those we depend on are more accessible today than at any point since we lived in small, village-like settlements.

Social media has made every relationship persistent and pervasive. We no longer lose social ties over our lives; we have Facebook friends forever. The constant feed of status updates and digital photos from our online social circles is the modern front porch. This is why, in "[Social Networking Sites and Our Lives](#)," there was a clear trend for those who used these technologies to receive more social support than other people.

The data backs it up. There is little evidence that social media is responsible for a trend of isolation, or a loss of intimacy and social support.

Used by permission of New York Times.

Is Google Making Us Stupid?

YES

Who doesn't love Google? In the blink of an eye, the search engine delivers useful information about pretty much any subject imaginable. I use it all the time, and I'm guessing you do too.

But I worry about what Google is doing to our brains. What really makes us intelligent isn't our ability to find lots of information quickly. It's our ability to think deeply about that information. And deep thinking, brain scientists have discovered, happens only when our minds are calm and attentive. The greater our concentration, the richer our thoughts.

If we're distracted, we understand less, remember less, and learn less.

That's the problem with Google—and with the Internet in general. When we use our computers and our cellphones all the time, we're always distracted.

The Net bombards us with messages and other bits of data, and every one of those interruptions breaks our train of thought. We end up scatterbrained. The fact is, you'll never think deeply if you're always Googling, texting, and surfing.

Google doesn't want us to slow down. The faster we zip across the Web, clicking links and skimming words and pictures, the more ads Google is able to show us and the more money it makes. So even as Google is giving us all that useful information, it's also encouraging us to think superficially. It's making us shallow.

If you're really interested in developing your mind, you should turn off your computer and your cellphone—and start thinking. Really thinking. You can Google all the facts you want, but you'll never Google your way to brilliance.

Nicholas Carr, Author

The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains

NO

Any new information technology has both advocates and critics. More than 2,000 years ago, the classical Greek philosopher Socrates complained that the new technology of writing "will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls because they will not use their memories."

Today, Google is the new technology. The Internet contains the world's best writing, images, and ideas; Google lets us find the relevant pieces instantly.

Suppose I'm interested in the guidance computers on Apollo spacecraft in the 1960s. My local library has no books on that specific subject—just 18 books about the Apollo missions in general. I could

hunt through those or turn to Google, which returns 45,000 pages, including a definitive encyclopedia article and instructions for building a unit.

Just as a car allows us to move faster and a telescope lets us see farther, access to the Internet's information lets us think better and faster. By considering a wide range of information, we can arrive at more creative and informed solutions. Internet users are more likely to be exposed to a diversity of ideas. In politics, for example, they are likely to see ideas from left and right, and see how news is reported in other countries.

There's no doubt the Internet can create distractions. But 81 percent of experts polled by the Pew Internet Research Project say the opportunities outweigh the distractions.

Socrates was wrong to fear the coming of the written word: Writing has improved our law, science, arts, culture, and our memory. When the history of our current age is written, it will say that Google has made us smarter—both individually and collectively—because we have ready and free access to information.

Peter Norvig, Director of Research
Google Inc.

Used by permission of (*The New York Times Upfront*, Vol. 143, October 4, 2010)

Attached to Technology and Paying a Price

By [MATT RICHEL](#) *New York Times* June 6, 2010

SAN FRANCISCO — When one of the most important e-mail messages of his life landed in his in-box a few years ago, Kord Campbell overlooked it. Not just for a day or two, but 12 days. He finally saw it while sifting through old messages: a big company wanted to buy his Internet start-up.

The message had slipped by him amid an electronic flood: two computer screens alive with e-mail, instant messages, online chats, a Web browser and the computer code he was writing. While he managed to salvage the \$1.3 million deal after apologizing to his suitor, Mr. Campbell continues to struggle with the effects of the deluge of data. Even after he unplugs, he craves the stimulation he gets from his electronic gadgets. He forgets things like dinner plans, and he has trouble focusing on his family.

This is your brain on computers.

Scientists say juggling e-mail, phone calls and other incoming information can change how people think and behave. They say our ability to focus is being undermined by bursts of information. These play to a primitive impulse to respond to immediate opportunities and threats. The stimulation provokes excitement — a [dopamine](#) squirt — that researchers say can be addictive. In its absence, people feel bored.

The resulting distractions can have deadly consequences, as when cellphone-wielding drivers and train engineers cause wrecks. And for millions of people like Mr. Campbell, these urges can inflict nicks and cuts on creativity and deep thought, interrupting work and family life.

While many people say multitasking makes them more productive, research shows otherwise. Heavy multitaskers actually have more trouble focusing and shutting out irrelevant information, scientists say, and they experience more stress. And scientists are discovering that even after the multitasking ends, fractured thinking and lack of focus persist. In other words, this is also your brain *off* computers.

“The technology is rewiring our brains,” said Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute of Drug Abuse and one of the world’s leading brain scientists. She and other researchers compare the lure of digital stimulation less to that of drugs and alcohol than to food and sex, which are essential but counterproductive in excess.

Technology use can benefit the brain in some ways, researchers say. Imaging studies show the brains of Internet users become more efficient at finding information. And players of some video games develop better visual acuity.

More broadly, cellphones and computers have transformed life. They let people escape their cubicles and work anywhere. They shrink distances and handle countless mundane tasks, freeing up time for more exciting pursuits.

For better or worse, the consumption of media, as varied as e-mail and TV, has exploded. In 2008, people consumed three times as much information each day as they did in 1960. And they are constantly shifting their attention. Computer users at work change windows or check e-mail or other programs nearly 37 times an hour, new research shows.

The nonstop interactivity is one of the most significant shifts ever in the human environment, said Adam Gazzaley, a neuroscientist at the [University of California, San Francisco](#).

“We are exposing our brains to an environment and asking them to do things we weren’t necessarily evolved to do,” he said. “We know already there are consequences.”

Mr. Campbell, 43, came of age with the personal computer, and he is a heavier user of technology than most. But researchers say the habits and struggles of Mr. Campbell and his family typify what many experience — and what many more will, if trends continue. For him, the tensions feel increasingly acute, and the effects harder to shake.

Always On

Mr. Campbell, whose given name is Thomas, had an early start with technology in Oklahoma City. When he was in third grade, his parents bought him Pong, a video game. Then came a string of game consoles and PCs, which he learned to program.

Mr. Campbell loves the rush of modern life and keeping up with the latest information. “I want to be the first to hear when the aliens land,” he said, laughing. But other times, he fantasizes about living in pioneer days when things moved more slowly: “I can’t keep everything in my head.”

No wonder. As he came of age, so did a new era of data and communication. At home, people consume 12 hours of media a day on average, when an hour spent with, say, the Internet and TV simultaneously counts as two hours. That compares with five hours in 1960, say researchers at the [University of California, San Diego](#). Computer users visit an average of 40 Web sites a day, according to research by RescueTime, which offers time-management tools.

As computers have changed, so has the understanding of the human brain. Until 15 years ago, scientists thought the brain stopped developing after childhood. Now they understand that its neural networks continue to develop, influenced by things like learning skills.

So not long after Eyal Ophir arrived at Stanford in 2004, he wondered whether heavy multitasking might be leading to changes in a characteristic of the brain long thought immutable: that humans can process only a single stream of information at a time. He was startled by what he discovered.

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The Myth of Multitasking

The test subjects were divided into two groups: those classified as heavy multitaskers based on their answers to questions about how they used technology, and those who were not.

In a test created by Mr. Ophir and his colleagues, subjects at a computer were briefly shown an image of red rectangles. Then they saw a similar image and were asked whether any of the rectangles had moved. It was a simple task until the addition of a twist: blue rectangles were added, and the subjects were told to ignore them.

The multitaskers then did a significantly worse job than the non-multitaskers at recognizing whether red rectangles had changed position. In other words, they had trouble filtering out the blue ones — the irrelevant information.

So, too, the multitaskers took longer than non-multitaskers to switch among tasks, like differentiating vowels from consonants and then odd from even numbers. The multitaskers were shown to be less efficient at juggling problems. Other tests at Stanford, an important center for research in this fast-growing field, showed multitaskers tended to search for new information rather than accept a reward for putting older, more valuable information to work.

Researchers say these findings point to an interesting dynamic: multitaskers seem more sensitive than non-multitaskers to incoming information.

The results also illustrate an age-old conflict in the brain, one that technology may be intensifying. A portion of the brain acts as a control tower, helping a person focus and set priorities. More primitive parts of the brain, like those that process sight and sound, demand that it pay attention to new information, bombarding the control tower when they are stimulated.

Researchers say there is an evolutionary rationale for the pressure this barrage puts on the brain. The lower-brain functions alert humans to danger, like a nearby lion, overriding goals like building a hut. In the modern world, the chime of incoming e-mail can override the goal of writing a business plan or playing catch with the children.

“Throughout evolutionary history, a big surprise would get everyone’s brain thinking,” said Clifford Nass, a communications professor at Stanford. “But we’ve got a large and growing group of people who think the slightest hint that something interesting might be going on is like catnip. They can’t ignore it.”

Melina Uncapher, a neurobiologist on the Stanford team, said she and other researchers were unsure whether the muddled multitaskers were simply prone to distraction and would have had trouble focusing in any era. But she added that the idea that information overload causes distraction was supported by more and more research.

A study at the [University of California, Irvine](#), found that people interrupted by e-mail reported significantly increased stress compared with those left to focus. Stress hormones have been shown to reduce short-term memory, said Gary Small, a psychiatrist at the [University of California](#), Los Angeles.

Preliminary research shows some people can more easily juggle multiple information streams. These “supertaskers” represent less than 3 percent of the population, according to scientists at the [University of Utah](#).

Other research shows computer use has neurological advantages. In imaging studies, Dr. Small observed that Internet users showed greater brain activity than nonusers, suggesting they were growing their neural circuitry.

At the [University of Rochester](#), researchers found that players of some fast-paced video games can track the movement of a third more objects on a screen than nonplayers. They say the games can improve reaction and the ability to pick out details amid clutter.

“In a sense, those games have a very strong both rehabilitative and educational power,” said the lead researcher, Daphne Bavelier, who is working with others in the field to channel these changes into real-world benefits like safer driving.

There is a vibrant debate among scientists over whether technology’s influence on behavior and the brain is good or bad, and how significant it is. Mr. Ophir is loath to call the cognitive changes bad or good, though the impact on analysis and creativity worries him.

The Toll on Children

The Campbells, father and son, sit in armchairs. Controllers in hand, they engage in a fierce video game battle, displayed on the nearby flat-panel TV, as Lily watches.

They are playing Super Smash Bros. Brawl, a cartoonish animated fight between characters that battle using anvils, explosives and other weapons.

“Kill him, Dad,” Lily screams. To no avail. Connor regularly beats his father, prompting expletives and, once, a thrown pillow. But there is bonding and mutual respect.

Screens big and small are central to the Campbell family’s leisure time. Connor and his mother relax while watching TV shows like “Heroes.” Lily has an [iPod](#) Touch, a portable DVD player and her own laptop, which she uses to watch videos, listen to music and play games.

Lily, a second-grader, is allowed only an hour a day of unstructured time, which she often spends with her devices. The laptop can consume her.

“When she’s on it, you can holler her name all day and she won’t hear,” Mrs. Campbell said.

Researchers worry that constant digital stimulation like this creates attention problems for children with brains that are still developing, who already struggle to set priorities and resist impulses.

Connor's troubles started late last year. He could not focus on homework. No wonder, perhaps. On his bedroom desk sit two monitors, one with his music collection, one with [Facebook](#) and Reddit, a social site with news links that he and his father love. His iPhone availed him to relentless texting with his girlfriend.

When he studied, "a little voice would be saying, 'Look up' at the computer, and I'd look up," Connor said. "Normally, I'd say I want to only read for a few minutes, but I'd search every corner of Reddit and then check Facebook."

His Web browsing informs him. "He's a fact hound," Mr. Campbell brags. "Connor is, other than programming, extremely technical. He's 100 percent Internet savvy."

No Vacations

For spring break, the family rented a cottage in Carmel, Calif. Mrs. Campbell hoped everyone would unplug. But the day before they left, the iPad from [Apple](#) came out, and Mr. Campbell snapped one up. The next night, their first on vacation, "We didn't go out to dinner," Mrs. Campbell mourned. "We just sat there on our devices."

She rallied the troops the next day to the aquarium. Her husband joined them for a bit but then begged out to do e-mail on his phone. Later she found him playing video games.

On Thursday, their fourth day in Carmel, Mr. Campbell spent the day at the beach with his family. They flew a kite and played whiffle ball. Connor unplugged too. "It changes the mood of everything when everybody is present," Mrs. Campbell said. The next day, the family drove home, and Mr. Campbell disappeared into his office.

Mr. Nass at Stanford thinks the ultimate risk of heavy technology use is that it diminishes empathy by limiting how much people engage with one another, even in the same room.

"The way we become more human is by paying attention to each other," he said. "It shows how much you care."

That empathy, Mr. Nass said, is essential to the human condition. "We are at an inflection point," he said. "A significant fraction of people's experiences are now fragmented."

File Name: A6P Dear Teachers, Parents, and School Board

Opinion/Argument

Grade 6

On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

Dear Teachers, Parents, and School Board,

The children in my class have been talking about the proposal that some of you have made which is whether or not our school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen” week. I don’t think that if we did that, it would have a positive effect on the children in our school. There are a few reasons that we might want to participate but I weighed it out and I don’t think that we should participate. These are the reasons.

One reason that I don’t think that our school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen” week is that when we can use computers, we can get assignments done faster during the school day so that we can move on to other things. For example, when you are given a task to type, if you write it by hand, it will take a much longer time than if we just decided to type it. If we are given an assignment that we have to do research on, we can usually get a lot more useful information from the internet than even from a book sometimes. Also, we will be able to move on to our next subject much faster because our research or typing will be finished.

Another reason that I don’t think we should shut down our screens for a week is because the Internet is the most reliable source for information. In the article “Is Google Making Us Stupid” it said the internet has the world’s best images, writing and ideas. That means that it will have better, more honest and reliable information than even a book. The internet lets us expand our range of thinking and see things in a

Introduces a claim:

Introduction gives context for the proposal about “Shut Down Your Screen Week”

States focus / claim

Organizes the reasons and evidence clearly

Supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

Evidence here is from writer's own experience, and **demonstrates an understanding of the topic**

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claims and reasons

different way from possibly someone else's perspective. The internet's information lets us think better and faster. Some people say that the internet is not helping us learn and not making us brilliant but I don't believe that is the case. I'm only eleven years old and I have already learned things off the internet like how solar power works and how animals like dolphins survive so that is obviously a myth. Google and the internet gives us ready and free access to information on just about anything.

Acknowledges counterclaims, then rebuts with clear **reasons and relevant, credible evidence** and reasoning from the writer's own experience

The last reason that I think that we shouldn't participate is because overall, calling, emailing, texting, or video chatting is more efficient. It takes less time and we are in the twenty-first century. We live in a time when it is a very normal thing to call or text someone instead of writing to them or just going to visit them. It might seem overwhelming and people might say that it is making us stupid but I find it fun and interesting to explore. I don't think that I could go a week without music or TV! I couldn't do it! I know for certain people this might not be the route that they want to take and that is fine but this world is only going to get more tech-like, it really is.

Supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence. Evidence here is from writer's own experience and **demonstrates an understanding of the topic**

As you can see, these are the reasons that I believe that we shouldn't participate in the "Shut Down Your Screen" week.

Provides a concluding statement that follows from the argument presented

Your friend,

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether their school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” This writer begins by offering some context concerning the issue, and then asserts the claim that in her view the school should not participate.

The writer develops her claim with several reasons, which she supports with some relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating her understanding of the topic. The evidence in this piece comes from her own experience. The writer organizes her ideas clearly and supports her claim with logical reasoning. In addition, she acknowledges a counterclaim and then refutes the counterclaim with support for her own position, even though use of counterclaim is not stated in the Standards for this grade level. Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claims, reasons, and evidence, and to create cohesion. The conclusion follows from the argument presented.

The writer maintains a reasonably formal style throughout the piece.

File Name: A6P Dear Teachers, Parents, and School Board**Opinion/Argument****Grade 6****On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

Dear Teachers, Parents, and School Board,

The children in my class have been talking about the proposal that some of you have made which is whether or not our school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen” week. I don’t think that if we did that, it would have a positive effect on the children in our school. There are a few reasons that we might want to participate but I weighed it out and I don’t think that we should participate. These are the reasons.

One reason that I don’t think that our school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen” week is that when we can use computers, we can get assignments done faster during the school day so that we can move on to other things. For example, when you are given a task to type, if you write it by hand, it will take a much longer time than if we just decided to type it. If we are given an assignment that we have to do research on, we can usually get a lot more useful information from the internet than even from a book sometimes. Also, we will be able to move on to our next subject much faster because our research or typing will be finished.

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The last reason that I think that we shouldn't participate is because overall, calling, emailing, texting, or video chatting is more efficient. It takes less time and we are in the twenty-first century. We live in a time when it is a very normal thing to call or text someone instead of writing to them or just going to visit them. It might seem overwhelming and people might say that it is making us stupid but I find it fun and interesting to explore. I don't think that I could go a week without music or TV! I couldn't do it! I know for certain people this might not be the route that they want to take and that is fine but this world is only going to get more tech-like, it really is.

As you can see, these are the reasons that I believe that we shouldn't participate in the "Shut Down Your Screen" week.

Your friend,

File Name: A7P Dear Teachers

Opinion/Argument

Grade 7

On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

Dear Teachers,

I have recently begun learning about the “Shut Down Your Screen” week. This is a program where kids in school and out of school don't use any electronics for one week. Everyone in your school would participate. This is a way to save the way we think and try something new. My question is should we participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week?” I think it would be a good idea for many reasons.

First, I think we should participate because using too much technology affects the way we think and behave. In the article Attached to Technology and Paying a Price by Matt Richtel it gives many scientifically proven facts that using technology too much affects the way we think. If you are juggling e-mail, phone calls and other incoming information it can lose people’s focus. Also as the text states, “The stimulation provokes excitement that researchers say can be addictive. In its absence, people feel bored.” This means that people can become addicted and when not using technology become bored with things they used to love to do.

Another reason I think we should participate in this program is because using technology while doing something else (multitasking) really just creates more trouble focusing. Scientists did an experiment where they took someone that multitasks and someone that doesn’t. It was proven that even though the multitasker multitasks more, they did a worse job than the other person. Therefore technology and multi-tasking does nothing for you.

Introduces a claim:
Introduction gives context for the proposal “Shut Down Your Screen Week” and states a **claim**

Organizes the reasons and evidence logically
First, I think we should

Supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, including direct quotations, from **accurate, credible sources,** thereby **demonstrating understanding of the topic**

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim, reasons, and evidence
Another reason I think

Establishes and maintains a formal style

Another reason I think we should participate is it puts a bad toll on children. Some people may say that playing a video game or watching a movie with your family helps to bond with family. That may be true, but you can get addicted and not want to do anything else. “Lily, a second grader, is allowed only an hour a day of unstructured time, which she often spends with her devices.” This shows that kids are playing on devices and not outside or with friends. If we participate, we, the kids, can do other things and be more social.

Therefore, I think we should participate in the “Shut Down Your Screen Week.”

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Acknowledges an opposing claim and then counters with logical reasoning and relevant evidence

Provides a concluding statement that follows from but does not add support to the argument presented

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether their school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” This writer begins by offering context concerning the issue and then asserts the claim that, in her view, the school should participate.

The writer develops her claim with several reasons, which she supports with some relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating her understanding of the topic and the texts she has read. The evidence in this piece comes from those texts. The writer organizes her ideas clearly and supports her claim with logical reasoning. In addition, she acknowledges a counterclaim and then refutes it with support for her own position, which is not required in the Standards for this grade level and, again, includes evidence from the texts. Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from the argument presented but does not significantly support it.

File Name: A7P Dear Teachers

Opinion/Argument

Grade 7

On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

Dear Teachers,

I have recently begun learning about the “Shut Down Your Screen” week. This is a program where kids in school and out of school don't use any electronics for one week. Everyone in your school would participate. This is a way to save the way we think and try something new. My question is, should we participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week?” I think it would be a good idea for many reasons.

First, I think we should participate because using too much technology affects the way we think and behave. In the article [Attached to Technology and Paying a Price](#) by Matt Richtel it gives many scientifically proven facts that using technology too much affects the way we think. If you are juggling e-mail, phone calls and other incoming information it can lose people's focus. Also as the text states, “The stimulation provokes excitement that researchers say can be addictive. In its absence, people feel bored.” This means that people can become addicted and when not using technology become bored with things they used to love to do.

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Another reason I think we should participate is it puts a bad toll on children. Some people may say that playing a video game or watching a movie with your family helps to bond with family. That may be true, but you can get addicted and not want to do anything else. “Lily, a second grader, is allowed only an hour a day of unstructured time, which she often spends with her devices.” This shows

that kids are playing on devices and not outside or with friends. If we participate, we, the kids, can do other things and be more social.

Therefore, I think we should participate in the “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

File Name: A8P Shut Down Your Screen

Opinion/Argument

Grade 8

On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

Shut Down Your Screen

Dear Teachers,

I believe that we should participate in shutdown your screen week. I think that everyone in the school should not use any electronics for one week. Since the invention of the computer, cellphone and other electronics, people have been using them more and more and more. These electronics have big upsides, you're never alone if you have cell service and Facebook allows people to talk to multiple friends at once when they're not in the same room, town, state, or country. But they also have their downsides. What makes us truly great is our ability to think deeply and focus, but when we use electronics or the internet we aren't doing either of these things. In fact, using these things makes us think more shallow and focus less. I think that we should participate in shut down your screen week.

One reason is that using electronics and multi-tasking causes focus problems, on and off computers. In *Attached to Technology and Paying a Price* by Matt Richtel, it says, "Scientists say juggling email, phone calls, and other incoming information can change how people think and behave. They say our ability to focus is being undermined by bursts of information." This ability to focus is enormously important, it's one of the things that we depend on almost every day. Like when you're driving a car to work or flying a plane. If you're distracted while doing one of these things it can have dire consequences for yourself and for others. Multi-tasking can also affect creativity, deep thought, causing problems for work and family life. By participating we could give

Introduces a claim:

The introduction gives specific context for the proposal about "Shut Down Your Screen Week" and then states a claim

Organizes the reasons and evidence logically

Supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, including direct quotations, **from accurate, credible sources,** thereby **demonstrating understanding of the topic**

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence

people a chance to develop new habits of not using their phone or computer all the time.

A second reason that we should participate is that heavy multitaskers have trouble filtering out irrelevant information on and off the computer. In *Attached to Technology and Paying the Price* by Matt Richtel it says the multitaskers “had trouble filtering out the blue ones – the irrelevant information.” If we participated, we could give these people a chance to develop new habits that would help them filter out irrelevant information and only pay attention to the things that are important. For example, if someone’s playing with their daughter, they would check their email every time they received an email instead of focusing on playing with their daughter.

Now, some people say that we shouldn’t participate because technology makes you smarter, why stop doing something that’s helping yourself. In an imaging study by Dr. Small, he found that “Internet users showed greater brain activity than nonusers, suggesting they were growing their neural circuitry.” While they may be growing their neural circuitry, they were also changing a characteristic of the brain that was thought to be unchangeable, the ability to only process one stream of information at a time. This ability allows humans to think deeply, an important characteristic in today’s society. By changing it, they were preventing themselves from having the ability to think deeply.

Technology is a new thing, and it has many advantages and conveniences. But for many it becomes more than a convenience, it becomes an obsession. For this reason I believe that we should participate in shut down your screen week, to give people a chance to make new habits and make technology a convenience again, not a necessity.

Supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, including direct quotations, from accurate, credible sources, thereby demonstrating understanding of the topic

Acknowledges an opposing claim, which the writer distinguishes from the claim and then counters with logical reasoning and relevant evidence

Establishes and maintains a formal style

Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the argument presented

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether their school should 98 participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” This writer begins by offering specific, well-developed context concerning the issue and then asserts the claim that, in his view, the school should participate.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he supports with some relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating his understanding of the topic and the texts he has read. The evidence in this piece comes from those texts. The writer organizes his ideas clearly and supports his claim with logical reasoning. In addition, he acknowledges a counterclaim, distinguishes it from his own claim, and refutes it with support for his own position, even though this development of a counterclaim is not stated in the Standards at this grade level, and again includes evidence from the texts. Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from and supports the argument presented.

File Name: A8P Shut Down Your Screen

Opinion/Argument

Grade 8

On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

Dear Teachers,

I believe that we should participate in shutdown your screen week. I think that everyone in the school should not use any electronics for one week. Since the invention of the computer, cellphone and other electronics, people have been using them more and more and more. These electronics have big upsides, you're never alone if you have cell service and Facebook allows people to talk to multiple friends at once when they're not in the same room, town, state, or country. But they also have their downsides. What makes us truly great is our ability to think deeply and focus, but when we use electronics or the internet we aren't doing either of these things. In fact, using these things makes us think more shallow and focus less. I think that we should participate in shut down your screen week.

One reason is that using electronics and multi-tasking causes focus problems, on and off computers. In *Attached to Technology and Paying a Price* by Matt Richtel, it says, "Scientists say juggling email, phone calls, and other incoming information can change how people think and behave. They say our ability to focus is being undermined by bursts of information." This ability to focus is enormously important, it's one of the things that we depend on almost every day. Like when you're driving a car to work or flying a plane. If you're distracted while doing one of these things it can have dire consequences for yourself and for others. Multi-tasking can also affect creativity, deep thought, causing problems for work and family life. By participating we could give people a chance to develop new habits of not using their phone or computer all the time.

A second reason that we should participate is that heavy multitaskers have trouble filtering out irrelevant information on and off the computer. In *Attached to Technology and Paying the Price* by Matt Richtel it says the multitaskers "had trouble filtering out the blue ones – the irrelevant information." If we participated, we could give these people a chance to develop new habits that would

help them filter out irrelevant information and only pay attention to the things that are important. For example, if someone's playing with their daughter, they would check their email every time they received an email instead of focusing on playing with their daughter.

Now, some people say that we shouldn't participate because technology makes you smarter, why stop doing something that's helping yourself. In an imaging study by Dr. Small, he found that "Internet users showed greater brain activity than nonusers, suggesting they were growing their neural circuitry." While they may be growing their neural circuitry, they were also changing a characteristic of the brain that was thought to be unchangeable, the ability to only process one stream of information at a time. This ability allows humans to think deeply, an important characteristic in today's society. By changing it, they were preventing themselves from having the ability to think deeply.

Technology is a new thing, and it has many advantages and conveniences. But for many it becomes more than a convenience, it becomes an obsession. For this reason I believe that we should participate in shut down your screen week, to give people a chance to make new habits and make technology a convenience again, not a necessity.

File Name: A9-10P High School Should Not Participate**Opinion/Argument****Grade 9-10****On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt****High School Should Not Participate**

To whom it may concern:

L High School should not participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” Technology can be beneficial, especially to students. A vast majority of students finds it helpful to have access to technology. Technology makes quicker, more efficient work. Without the advancements of technology, we are no farther along than school children in the 1960’s.

The internet and social media, such as Facebook, improve the social lives of those who use it. In the article Information, Communication and Society, a survey found that whether the participants were married or single, people who used social media had more close friends. An average American who uses social media is half as likely to be socially isolated. They also know more diverse people. Also, users of social media never lose ties because of relocating, because you can always keep your friends on social media.

Internet search engines allow us better access to information. In my experience, information is far more accessible and quick than searching through books. That allows for time to complete other class assignments. According to Peter Norvig, director of research for Google, Inc., in an article for the New York Times, “The internet contains the world’s best writing, images, and ideas; Google lets us find the relevant pieces instantly.” Some argue that ads and irrelevant sites may be distracting, but more find that the

Introduces a precise claim: The introduction states a claim and then gives context about the subject of technology, acknowledging it as a **substantive topic**

Creates an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence

Develops the claim fairly, supplying evidence for it, but does not develop the counterclaims or acknowledge significant limitations of the claim

Distinguishes the claim from an opposing claim

benefits are worth it. Eighty-one percent of experts polled by the Pew Internet Research Project support this opinion.

The internet also makes a good learning tool. In an article by Matt Richtel for the New York Times, he proves that it helps our brains.

“Imaging studies show the brains of Internet users become more efficient at finding information.” Basically, the more we use online resources to learn, the better our brains become at learning. Also, in the same article, it says, “Internet users showed greater brain activity than non-users...” The internet even develops our brain to think more! Technology is improving our brains.

I have heard it argued that children “rot” their brains with video game systems. In the previously mentioned article by Matt Richtel, he says, “At the University of Rochester, researchers found that players of some fast-paced video games can track the movement of a third more objects on a screen than nonplayers...games can improve reaction time and the ability to pick out details amid clutter.” It seems that the more people play fast-paced video games, the more efficient they become at finding important details. These games may not be so “brain rotting “ after all. They could even be argued as beneficial.

Some also argue that because of new technologies, people limit how much they associate together, even in the same area. Social media disproves this argument. Not only can people associate easily with friends, they can also chat with relatives. They can also show relatives photos, even if they are states away. People who use social media are more likely to know more diverse people, according to the article by Keith Hampton. People still associate with people just as much as before, if not more. They are merely doing it in a different manner than before social media was in use.

Cyber bullying has now become an issue. I would like to bring to attention that all bullying is a big issue. I do not think that technology has caused bullying. It has just allowed for a new way to bully someone. I

Develops the claim fairly, supplying evidence for it, but does not develop the counterclaims or acknowledge significant limitations of the claim

Distinguishes the claim from an opposing claim

Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships between claim and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim and counterclaims

Acknowledges counterclaim, pointing out its limitation, anticipates audience's (other students, parents, teachers, school board) concern.

have never been cyber-bullied. I personally was bullied in a face-to-face manner. A bully will take any chance to bully a target. Social media has not caused bullying.

Like most tools, technology is useful if used correctly. Work quality on a computer can be better, because people have more time to check over their work and improve it. Unfortunately, some people are lazy, and use that extra time they could use for editing for other things. That is not a problem with the tools, it is a problem with the people. People who use such technology correctly and efficiently should still have access. If our screens are shut down, there is no access. We should not participate in "Shut Down Your Screen Week."

Sincerely,

Acknowledges counterclaim, pointing out its limitation, anticipates audience's (other students, parents, teachers, school board) concern.

NOTE: "people are lazy" is an *ad hominem* approach, and should not be used

Provides a concluding statement that follows from but does not add support to the argument presented

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether their school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” This writer begins by asserting the claim that, in his view, the school should not participate and then discusses technology in a broad and substantive sense to provide context concerning the issue.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he supports with sufficient, relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating his understanding of the topic and the texts he has read. The evidence in this piece comes from those texts and from the writer’s experience. The writer organizes his ideas clearly and supports his claim with logical reasoning. In addition, he acknowledges multiple counterclaims, distinguishes them from his own claim, and refutes them with support for his own position, which again includes evidence from the texts. In some cases, the writer introduces counterclaims specifically to anticipate the concerns of the likely audience (other students, parents, teachers, school board members). However, the writer does not develop the counterclaims or acknowledge their strengths, and he resorts to *ad hominem* (“people are lazy”) in the closing paragraph—approaches inconsistent with the Standards at this grade level. Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style and objective tone throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from the argument but does not significantly support it.

File Name: A 9-10P High School Should Not Participate

Opinion/Argument

Grade 9-10

On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

High School Should Not Participate

To whom it may concern:

L _____ High School should not participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” Technology can be beneficial, especially to students. A vast majority of students finds it helpful to have access to technology. Technology makes quicker, more efficient work. Without the advancements of technology, we are no farther along than school children in the 1960’s.

The internet and social media, such as Facebook, improve the social lives of those who use it. In the article Information, Communication and Society, a survey found that whether the participants were married or single, people who used social media had more close friends. An average American who uses social media is half as likely to be socially isolated. They also know more diverse people. Also, users of social media never lose ties because of relocating, because you can always keep your friends on social media.

Internet search engines allow us better access to information. In my experience, information is far more accessible and quick than searching through books. That allows for time to complete other class assignments. According to Peter Norvig, director of research for Google, Inc., in an article for the New York Times, “The internet contains the world’s best writing, images, and ideas; Google lets us find the relevant pieces instantly.” Some argue that ads and irrelevant sites may be distracting, but more find that the benefits are worth it. Eighty-one percent of experts polled by the Pew Internet Research Project support this opinion.

The internet also makes a good learning tool. In an article by Matt Richtel for the New York Times, he proves that it helps our brains. “Imaging studies show the brains of Internet users become

more efficient at finding information.” Basically, the more we use online resources to learn, the better our brains become at learning. Also, in the same article, it says, “Internet users showed greater brain activity than non-users...” The internet even develops our brain to think more! Technology is improving our brains.

I have heard it argued that children “rot” their brains with video game systems. In the previously mentioned article by Matt Richtel, he says, “At the University of Rochester, researchers found that players of some fast-paced video games can track the movement of a third more objects on a screen than nonplayers... games can improve reaction time and the ability to pick out details amid clutter.” It seems that the more people play fast-paced video games, the more efficient they become at finding important details. These games may not be so “brain rotting “ after all. They could even be argued as beneficial.

Some also argue that because of new technologies, people limit how much they associate together, even in the same area. Social media disproves this argument. Not only can people associate easily with friends, they can also chat with relatives. They can also show relatives photos, even if they are states away. People who use social media are more likely to know more diverse people, according to the article by Keith Hampton. People still associate with people just as much as before, if not more. They are merely doing it in a different manner than before social media was in use.

Cyber bullying has now become an issue. I would like to bring to attention that all bullying is a big issue. I do not think that technology has caused bullying. It has just allowed for a new way to bully someone. I have never been cyber-bullied. I personally was bullied in a face-to-face manner. A bully will take any chance to bully a target. Social media has not caused bullying.

Like most tools, technology is useful if used correctly. Work quality on a computer can be better, because people have more time to check over their work and improve it. Unfortunately, some people are lazy, and use that extra time they could use for editing for other things. That is not a problem with the tools, it is a problem with the people. People who use such technology correctly and efficiently should still have access. If our screens are shut down, there is no access. We should not participate in “Shut Down Your Screen Week.”

Sincerely,

File Name: A9-10P To Teachers and Whom It May Concern**Opinion/Argument****Grade 9-10****On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

To Teachers and Whom It May Concern:

A proposal has been brought to the school board concerning the possibility of participating in “Shut Down Your Screen Week,” a movement in which students do not use any electronic media for a seven day duration. Technology and electronic media have been shown to have a variety of negative impacts on people, especially youth. For this reason, I believe that participating in “Shut Down Your Screen Week” would benefit our students in a variety of ways.

There are many negative impacts of electronic media upon our students, but among the most severe is its effects on the brain. According to the article, “Attached to Technology and Paying a Price,” technology is “rewiring our brains.” Technology has been proven to have significant effects on the way brains take in and process information. That’s not surprising considering people use an average of 12 hours a day (one half of every day) of media each day. The brain behaves hyperactively while using electronic media, as it is presented with a “deluge of data.” This

hyperactivity transfers into one’s daily life, causing troubles focusing, forgetfulness, and boredom. A break from social media and technology would help students become more focused and attentive, giving their brains a break from technology.

Additionally, students could better obtain information without technology or social media. High-result-yielding search engines are not the most productive way for students to take in information. When a brain is using a computer, it is taking

Introduces a precise claim: The introduction gives context about the subject of technology, acknowledging it as a **substantive topic**, and then states a claim

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships between claim and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim and counterclaims

Creates an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence

Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline

Develops the claim fairly, supplying evidence for it, using valid reasoning in form of text-based evidence

in a great amount of information quickly. According to the article, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” deep thinking “happens only when our minds are calm and attentive.” With an overload of information, the brain is not at all calm and does not deeply interpret information. Although search engines like Google may present much information, with its use, little information will be internalized, and little knowledge will be gained.

During a week without technology, students could gain and truly internalize knowledge.

I do understand that there are many benefits of technology in education. I understand that technology can help students efficiently find information, and technology has even shown signs of “growing neural circuitry” in brains, according to “Attached to Technology and Paying the Price.” Additionally, according to the article “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” the efficiency of search engines “outweigh the distractions.” Due to the positive aspects of technology and social media, I would not suggest that the school remove technology or social media for good. I believe that, since technology is so addictive, it would be beneficial to students to experience a week without it. During this time, students would be more focused, attentive, and better internalize information, along with innumerable other benefits.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that you will consider my proposal.

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships between claim and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim and counterclaims

Develops claim and counterclaim fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strength and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's (other students, parents, teachers, school board) knowledge level and concerns

Provides a concluding statement that follows from but does not add support to the argument presented

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether their school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” To provide context concerning this substantive issue, this writer begins by noting that technology has harmful effects. He then asserts the claim that, in his view, the school should not participate.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he supports with sufficient, relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating his understanding of the topic and the texts he has read. The evidence in this piece comes from those texts and from the writer’s experience. The writer organizes his ideas clearly and supports his claim with logical reasoning. In addition, he acknowledges a counterclaim, distinguishes it from his own claim, and acknowledges the limitations this places on his own position. In this case, the writer introduces the counterclaim specifically to anticipate the concerns of the likely audience (other students, parents, teachers, school board members). Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style and objective tone throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from the argument but does not significantly support it.

File Name: A 9-10P To Teachers and Whom It May Concern**Opinion/Argument****Grade 9-10****On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

To Teachers and Whom It May Concern:

A proposal has been brought to the school board concerning the possibility of participating in “Shut Down Your Screen Week,” a movement in which students do not use any electronic media for a seven day duration. Technology and electronic media have been shown to have a variety of negative impacts on people, especially youth. For this reason, I believe that participating in “Shut Down Your Screen Week” would benefit our students in a variety of ways.

There are many negative impacts of electronic media upon our students, but among the most severe is its effects on the brain. According to the article, “Attached to Technology and Paying a Price,” technology is “rewiring our brains.” Technology has been proven to have significant effects on the way brains take in and process information. That’s not surprising considering people use an average of 12 hours a day (one half of every day) of media each day. The brain behaves hyperactively while using electronic media, as it is presented with a “deluge of data.” This hyperactivity transfers into one’s daily life, causing troubles focusing, forgetfulness, and boredom. A break from social media and technology would help students become more focused and attentive, giving their brains a break from technology.

Additionally, students could better obtain information without technology or social media. High-result-yielding search engines are not the most productive way for students to take in information. When a brain is using a computer, it is taking in a great amount of information quickly. According to the article, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” deep thinking “happens only when our minds are calm and attentive.” With an overload of information, the brain is not at all calm and does not deeply interpret information. Although search engines like Google may present much information,

with its use, little information will be internalized, and little knowledge will be gained. During a week without technology, students could gain and truly internalize knowledge.

I do understand that there are many benefits of technology in education. I understand that technology can help students efficiently find information, and technology has even shown signs of “growing neural circuitry” in brains, according to “Attached to Technology and Paying the Price.” Additionally, according to the article “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” the efficiency of search engines “outweigh the distractions.” Due to the positive aspects of technology and social media, I would not suggest that the school remove technology or social media for good. I believe that, since technology is so addictive, it would be beneficial to students to experience a week without it. During this time, students would be more focused, attentive, and better internalize information, along with innumerable other benefits.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that you will consider my proposal.

File Name: A11-12P Proposal to Shut Down Screen**Opinion/Argument****Grade 11-12****On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt****Proposal to Shut Down Screen**

To whom it may concern:

A group of parents, and some teachers, have made a proposal to the school board. They would like the school to participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” A week without any electronics is what parents believe the school needs. Technology is a big contradiction. It is useful with all the tools it has, yet it can be a distraction, or addicting.

Our school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week” because of the following issues with technology.

“Based on a representative survey of 2,500 Americans...those who used social media had more close confidants,” says Keith Hampton. Facebook, Twitter, and other social media allow people to connect with each other and have social interactions, but through the web. The web, or a phone, that allows people to be more social is a major issue today. Kids, especially high school students, feel no need to talk to a friend in person. They can just text them. The problem with Facebook, or texting, is that people interact differently than they would in person. Cyberbullying is one of the biggest issues with the web today. People say things on the web that they wouldn’t say to the person’s face. Bullies feel safe when hidden behind a screen. Whether or not the survey of 2,500 people was accurate, it still did not account for the differences in interactions for media and in person. Having no electronics for a week would allow students to see that difference.

Although technology allows students to do research, that research isn’t helping students to do strategic and logical thinking. “What really

Introduces a knowledgeable claim and establishes its significance: The introduction gives context about the subject of technology, acknowledging it as a **substantive topic**, and then states a claim, albeit not very precisely

Develops the claim and a counterclaim fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the concerns, values, and possible biases of the audience (other students, parents, teachers, school board members)

Addresses significance of claim and topic

Points out limitation on claim

Uses words, phrases, and varied syntax to create cohesion, clarify the relationships among claims and reasons

makes us intelligent isn't our ability to find lots of information quickly. It's our ability to think deeply about that information," says Nicholas Carr, author of the book *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*. Brain scientists have researched and found out that deep thinking only happens with a calm mind. "The greater our concentration, the richer our thoughts," Nicholas Carr says. The internet is a useful search engine, but does not allow students to go deeply into thought. Google allows people to find anything by the click of a button. This isn't the way students should learn. Nicholas Carr says, "If you're really interested in developing your mind, you should turn off your computer and your cellphone – and start thinking. Really thinking."

Technology can be distracting, but most of all it is addictive. Scientists say that using email, texting, or searching the web can change how someone thinks or behaves. "The stimulation [of technology use] provokes excitement – a dopamine squirt – that researchers say can be addictive. In its absence, people feel bored," says Matt Richtel of the New York Times. Addiction to technology may not compare to the addiction of certain drugs, but being a student who is addicted to something that creates different social interactions, and doesn't allow deep thought, could be very bad. "In 2008, people consumed three times as much [technology] each day as they did in 1960," Matt says. This rate has already increased, and a break from it wouldn't be a bad thing. Researchers worry that constant digital stimulation like this creates attention problems for children with brains that are still developing, who already struggle to set priorities and resist impulses," Matt says. Students in high school, or even in college, have brains that are still developing. A week off from the technology would allow these students to develop skills, with their growing brains, that could be used instead of electronics.

Our school should start participating in the national "Shut Down Your Screen Week." It would allow students to see the difference in social interactions of electronics and in person. The week would allow students

Acknowledges counterclaims, then distinguishes from claim with reasons and relevant, credible evidence from text, using valid reasoning

Creates an organization that logically sequences claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence throughout

Develops the claim fairly and thoroughly, supplying evidence for it in a manner that anticipates the concerns, values, and possible biases of the audience (other students, parents, teachers, school board members).

Uses depth of evidence

Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline

Provides a conclusion that follows from and supports the argument presented

to go into deep thought and understand subjects and ideas that Google cannot. Lastly, technology is addictive and a break is what students need to understand the consequences of it being addictive. By our school doing this national movement, we could change the way school is taught to better help each and every student.

Recognizes and appeals to the **audience's concerns**, values, and **possible biases**, coming back to further **establishing the significance of the claim**

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether or not his school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” This student gives an introduction about technology in a broad and substantive sense as context on the issue and makes a claim that in his view the school should not participate.

The writer reminds the reader of the significance of his claim by pointing out one of the reasons to support that claim (*“Cyber bullying is one of the biggest issues with the web today”*), then develops the overall claim with several reasons, which he supports with sufficient relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating his understanding of the topic and the texts he has read. The evidence in this piece comes from those texts and from the writer’s experience. The writer organizes his ideas clearly and supports his claim with logical reasoning. In addition, he acknowledges and treats fairly multiple counterclaims, distinguishes them from his own claim, and refutes them with support for his own position, which again includes evidence from the texts. The writer introduces counterclaims specifically to anticipate the concerns, values, and possible biases of the likely audience (other students, parents, teachers, school board members). Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style and objective tone throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from and supports the argument presented, reminding the reader of the significance of the topic and claim to this particular audience (other students, teachers, parents, school board members).

File Name: A 11-12P Proposal to Shut Down Screen**Opinion/Argument****Grade 11-12****On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt****Proposal to Shut Down Screen**

To whom it may concern:

A group of parents, and some teachers, have made a proposal to the school board. They would like the school to participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” A week without any electronics is what parents believe the school needs. Technology is a big contradiction. It is useful with all the tools it has, yet it can be a distraction, or addicting. Our school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week” because of the following issues with technology.

“Based on a representative survey of 2,500 Americans...those who used social media had more close confidants,” says Keith Hampton. Facebook, Twitter, and other social media allow people to connect with each other and have social interactions, but through the web. The web, or a phone, that allows people to be more social is a major issue today. Kids, especially high school students, feel no need to talk to a friend in person. They can just text them. The problem with Facebook, or texting, is that people interact differently than they would in person. Cyberbullying is one of the biggest issues with the web today. People say things on the web that they wouldn’t say to the person’s face. Bullies feel safe when hidden behind a screen. Whether or not the survey of 2,500 people was accurate, it still did not account for the differences in interactions for media and in person. Having no electronics for a week would allow students to see that difference.

Although technology allows students to do research, that research isn’t helping students to do strategic and logical thinking. “What really makes us intelligent isn’t our ability to find lots of information quickly. It’s our ability to think deeply about that information,” says Nicholas Carr,

author of the book *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*. Brain scientists have researched and found out that deep thinking only happens with a calm mind. “The greater our concentration, the richer our thoughts,” Nicholas Carr says. The internet is a useful search engine, but does not allow students to go deeply into thought. Google allows people to find anything by the click of a button. This isn’t the way students should learn. Nicholas Carr says, “If you’re really interested in developing your mind, you should turn off your computer and your cellphone – and start thinking. Really thinking.”

Technology can be distracting, but most of all it is addictive. Scientists say that using email, texting, or searching the web can change how someone thinks or behaves. “The stimulation [of technology use] provokes excitement – a dopamine squirt – that researchers say can be addictive. In its absence, people feel bored,” says Matt Richtel of the New York Times. Addiction to technology may not compare to the addiction of certain drugs, but being a student who is addicted to something that creates different social interactions, and doesn’t allow deep thought, could be very bad. “In 2008, people consumed three times as much [technology] each day as they did in 1960,” Matt says. This rate has already increased, and a break from it wouldn’t be a bad thing. Researchers worry that constant digital stimulation like this creates attention problems for children with brains that are still developing, who already struggle to set priorities and resist impulses,” Matt says. Students in high school, or even in college, have brains that are still developing. A week off from the technology would allow these students to develop skills, with their growing brains, that could be used instead of electronics.

Our school should start participating in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” It would allow students to see the difference in social interactions of electronics and in person. The week would allow students to go into deep thought and understand subjects and ideas that Google cannot. Lastly, technology is addictive and a break is what students need to understand the consequences of it being addictive. By our school doing this national movement, we could change the way school is taught to better help each and every student.

Brief User Guide for Range of Writing Argument/Opinion Writing

Brief User Guide for Range of Writing, Argument/Opinion

The pieces in this Range of Writing section represent one of the three types of writing named in the Common Core State Standards for Writing: opinion/argument writing. However, unlike the on-demand pieces, these pieces were not done in response to a particular focusing question or under specific conditions. Rather, these pieces represent a wide variety of content areas, curriculum units, conditions for writing, and purposes – exactly what one would expect to find in a range of classrooms. They reflect Common Core State Writing Standard 10, which specifies that students “[w]rite routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.”

Like the on-demand pieces, these pieces are arranged in grade order. Each piece has a file number for easy identification. Every piece of writing includes two versions that have been transcribed exactly as written by the student – one annotated with the language of the Common Core Standards, and one un-annotated for a variety of uses. In addition, pieces in the K-5 collection have a third version as well; this version has been revised and edited for major errors in conventions and can be used as a model for students. Kindergarten pieces also include PDF’s of original student work, including student writing and drawing. This is because kindergarten students may use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to satisfy the Standards.

Suggestions on how to use these pieces are available at the end of the introductory document, “Using the *In Common* Resource.”

K-5 Range of Writing Argument/Opinion Samples

File Name: OKR Make Way for Ducklings

Opinion/Argument

Kindergarten

Range of Writing

Make Way for Ducklings

**Tells the reader the name of the
book he/she is writing about**

I liKe MKe WAY FoR DucKLINGS ThE Best Beycus IT HAS CYowT

**States an opinion
about the book**

DucLINGS

This Kindergarten opinion piece was written in response to a book read aloud in class. The writer tells the reader the name of the book being written about (“MKe WAY FoR DucKLINGS”) and clearly states an opinion (“I liKe MKe WAY FoR DucKLINGS THE Best”). Although this piece includes a reason for the opinion (“Beycus IT HAS CYowT DucLINGS”), it is not necessary for students to do so at this grade level.

File Name: OKR Make Way for Ducklings

Opinion/Argument

Kindergarten

Revised and Edited for Student Use

Make Way for Ducklings

I like Make Way for Ducklings the best because it has cute ducklings.

File Name: OKR Make Way for Ducklings

Opinion/Argument

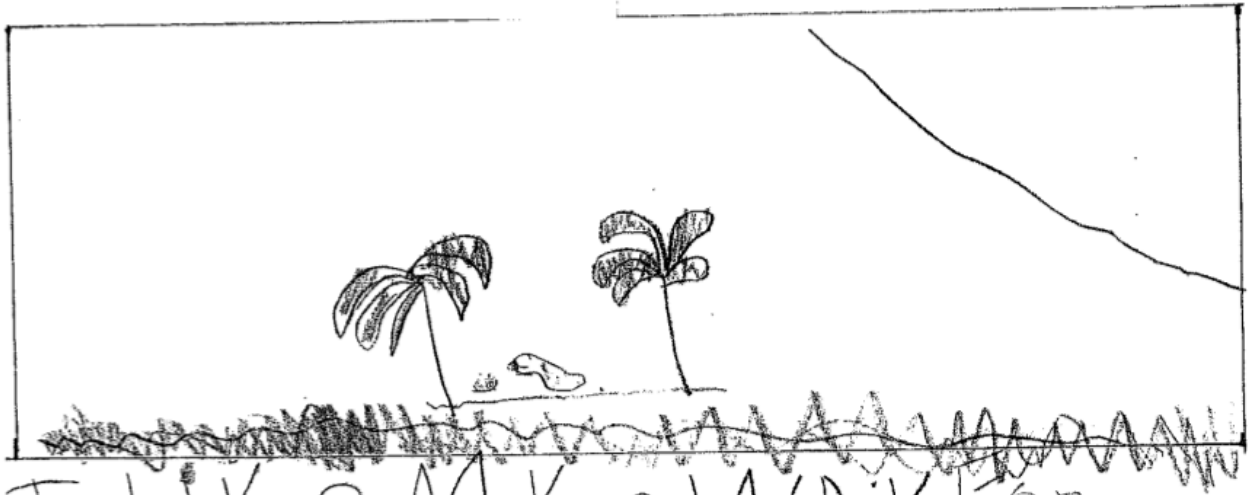
Kindergarten

Range of Writing

Make Way for Ducklings

I liKe MKe WAY FoR DucKLINGS ThE Best Beycus IT HAS CYowT DucLINGS

4



I I K E M K E W A Y I O R

D U C K L I N G S T H E

B E S T | B E Y C U S I T H A S C Y O W T

D U C L I N G S | ☺

File Name: OKR A Special Person

Opinion/Argument

Kindergarten

Range of Writing

**Tells the
reader the
topic**

**States an
opinion
about the
topic**

A Special Person

My mom is speshl becus. she plac wit me.

*Gives a reason for the
opinion*

In this Kindergarten opinion piece, the writer tells the reader the topic (“*my Mom*”), states an opinion (“*is speshl*”). Although not required by the Standards at this grade level, the writer even provides a reason for the opinion (“*becus she plac wit me*”). In the original, an accompanying illustration adds detail to the writing.

File Name: OKR A Special Person

Opinion/Argument

Kindergarten

Revised and Edited for Student Use

A Special Person

My mom is special because she plays with me.

File Name: OKR A Special Person

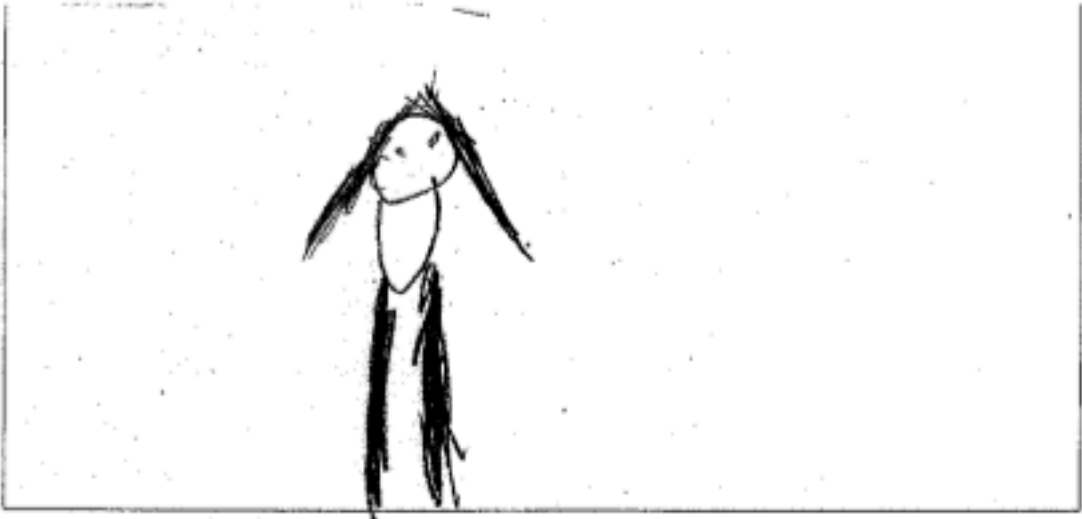
Opinion/Argument

Kindergarten

Range of Writing

A Special Person

My mom is speshl becus. she plac wit me.



MY MOM IS SPECIAL
BECAUSE SHE PLAYS WITH ME.

File name: OIR A Special Person

Opinion/Argument

Grade 1

Range of Writing

A Special Person

Introduces the topic

My mommy is my speshl prsin! My mommy is the best because she loves m **States an opinion**

My mommy helps me by helping me bake. mommy and me like to go to the **Supplies a reason for the opinion**
park. I Love my mommy.

Provides some sense of closure

This first-grade opinion piece introduces a topic and states an opinion (“*My mommy is the best*”). Although the Standard calls for only one reason, this writer supplies several reasons for the opinion (she loves me; she helps me bake; we go to the park). The ending sentence (“*I Love my mommy.*”) provides a sense of closure.

File name: OIR A Special Person

Opinion/Argument

Grade 1

Revised and Edited for Student Use

A Special Person

My mommy is my special person! My mommy is the best because she loves me. My mommy helps me by helping me bake. Mommy and I like to go to the park. I love my mommy.

File name: OIR A Special Person

Opinion/Argument

Grade 1

Range of Writing

A Special Person

My mommy is my speshl prsin! My mommy is the best because she loves me. My mommy helps me by helping me bake. mommy and me like to go to the park. I Love my mommy.

File name: O1R Mother Cat

Opinion/Argument

Grade 1

Range of Writing

Mother Cat

Names the poem he is writing about

Hello my name is Derek. I'm going to tell you about how mother cat in the poem kittens is a good mother. When it was stormy outside the mother cat stayed in and kept her babies warm and safe. She also took the smallest one outside on a sunny snowy day, and the dog helped her take the other three kittens. She is teaching the baby's about snow. The kittens mother is a good mother because:

States an opinion

- she keeps the babies safe
- she teaches them many things
- she loves her baby's
- she asks for help

**Supplies
reason(s) for
the opinion**

and much much more! If the mother cat wasn't a good mother she wouldn't do all that good stuff.

**Provides some sense
of closure**

In this strong, first-grade opinion piece, the writer names the poem he is writing about ("*kittens*"), states an opinion ("*mother cat...is a good mother.*"), and then provides some evidence from the text ("*When it was stormy outside the mother cat stayed in and kept her babies warm and safe. She also took the smallest one outside on a sunny snowy day*") before listing several reasons for the opinion ("*she keeps the babies safe*", "*she teaches them many things*", "*she loves her baby's*", "*she asks for help*"). Although this writer provides several reasons, one reason would have been sufficient. The ending sentence, "*If the mother cat wasn't a good mother she wouldn't do all that good stuff*" provides a sense of closure.

File name: O1R Mother Cat

Opinion/Argument

Grade 1

Revised and Edited for Student Use

Mother Cat

Hello my name is Daniel. I'm going to tell you about how Mother Cat in the poem, "Kittens" is a good mother. When it was stormy outside, the Mother Cat stayed in and kept her babies warm and safe. She also took the smallest one outside on a sunny, snowy day, and the dog helped her take the other three kittens out, too. She is teaching the babies about snow. The kittens mother is a good mother because:

- she keeps the babies safe,
- she teaches them many things,
- she loves her babies,
- she asks for help,

and much, much more! If the Mother Cat wasn't a good mother she wouldn't do all that good stuff!

File name: O1R Mother Cat

Opinion/Argument

Grade 1

Range of Writing

Mother Cat

Hello my name is Daniel. I'm going to tell you about how mother cat in the poem kittens is a good mother. When it was stormy outside the mother cat stayed in and kept her babies warm and safe. She also took the smallest one outside on a sunny snowy day, and the dog helped her take the other three kittens. She is teaching the baby's about snow. The kittens mother is a good mother because:

- she keeps the babies safe
- she teaches them many things
- she loves her baby's
- she asks for help

and much much more! If the mother cat wasn't a good mother she wouldn't do all that good stuff.

File name: O2R Chocolate Milk

Opinion/Argument

Grade 2

Range of Writing

Persuasive Essay

Our class is learning about nutrition and what is in our food that our body needs. We've also been looking at nutrition labels to help us make healthy food choices. Our school lunchroom offers students the choice of chocolate milk or white milk.

Using what you have learned to support your opinion, should Edmunds Elementary School serve chocolate milk? Write a letter to Mr. Davis, the head of Food Service, to explain your position.

The assignment **introduces the topic** for writing. The piece could be improved with an introductory sentence that provided some context.

Dear Mr. Davis,

States an opinion

you should serve chocolate milk because. It has 0% fat just like 0% fat white milk. Another reason is some kids will only drink chocolate Milk Another reason is. they Both have the same amount of protein (8 grams) and calcium. protein Gives you energy calcium makes your bones stronger. chocolate milk is still really healthy even though it has chocolate in it.

Uses linking words to connect opinion and reasons

Supplies reasons that support the opinion

Provides a concluding statement

In this second-grade opinion piece, the writer uses information learned in a nutrition unit to argue that chocolate milk should be served in the school cafeteria. The writer's opinion is clearly stated and is supported by facts ("*it has 0% fat*") and reasons ("*some kids will only drink chocolate Milk*"). Linking words and phrases ("*because*", "*another reason*") connect the opinion with the reasons given. The concluding statement sums up the opinion piece for the reader. This second grader has not yet learned to use commas, and the attempt to use periods instead can make the piece a bit confusing. This misunderstanding could easily be addressed on a second draft.

File name: O2R Chocolate Milk

Opinion/Argument

Grade 2

Revised and Edited for Student Use

Persuasive Essay

Our class is learning about nutrition and what is in our food that our body needs. We've also been looking at nutrition labels to help us make healthy food choices. Our school lunchroom offers students the choice of chocolate milk or white milk.

Using what you have learned to support your opinion, should Edmunds Elementary School serve chocolate milk? Write a letter to Mr. Davis, the head of Food Service, to explain your position.

Dear Mr. Davis:

You should serve chocolate milk because it has 0% fat just like 0% fat white milk. Another reason is some kids will only drink chocolate milk. Another reason is both kinds of milk have the same amount of protein (8 grams) and calcium. Protein gives you energy, and calcium makes your bones stronger. Chocolate milk is still really healthy even though it has chocolate in it.

File name: O2R Chocolate Milk

Opinion/Argument

Grade 2

Range of Writing

Persuasive Essay

Our class is learning about nutrition and what is in our food that our body needs. We've also been looking at nutrition labels to help us make healthy food choices. Our school lunchroom offers students the choice of chocolate milk or white milk.

Using what you have learned to support your opinion, should Edmunds Elementary School serve chocolate milk? Write a letter to Mr. Davis, the head of Food Service, to explain your position.

Dear Mr. Davis,

you should serve chocolate milk because. It has 0% fat just like 0% fat white milk. Another reason is some kids will only drink chocolate Milk Another reason is. they Both have the same amount of protein (8 grams) and calcium. protein Gives you energy calcium makes your bones stronger. chocolate Milk is still really healthy even though it has chocolate in it.

File name: O2R Thomas Edison

Opinion/Argument

Grade 2

Range of Writing

Response to Literature

We've been reading, thinking, and talking about *Biographies*. We've read about many famous scientists, artists, musicians, inventors, leaders, etc. Who do you think is the most important person that we have read about? Be sure to support your opinion using evidence of how this person has made a significant contribution to society and/or changed the world and impacted your life.

States an opinion	Thomas Edison	Introduces the topic or book he or she is writing about	Uses linking words to connect opinion and reasons
<p><u>I think that Thomas alva Edison is the most inportant preson that we read about because he invented the electrick light bolb. back a long time ago w did not have the electrick light bolb. we had candle's. If we did not have the electrick light bolb we would have more fire's, it would be a lot darcker then it is with the electrick light bolb now would kid's do Home work in the dark hov would we ge around at night</u></p> <p>if thomas alva Edison never lived what do you think it would be like with only candles for light how would it feel what would it be like without the electrick light bolb what would it be live without thomas alva Edison.</p>		Supplies reasons that support the opinion	
Provides a concluding section			

This second-grade opinion piece was done independently as the culminating activity in a unit on biographies. The writer states an opinion (*“I think that Thomas alva Edison is the most inportant preson”*) and provides needed context (*“that we read about”*) in a single sentence. After stating the main idea of the piece, the writer works to establish the importance of Edison’s invention by providing reasons and examples (*“we would have more fire’s”, “it would be a lot darcker”, “now would kid’s do Home work in the dark”*). The writer uses linking words (*“because”, “if”*) to connect the opinion to reasons. The concluding section very effectively supports the writer’s opinion by inviting the reader to reflect on the effect Edison’s work has had on our lives (*“if thomas alva Edison never lived what do you think it would be like...”*).

File name: O2R Thomas Edison

Opinion/Argument

Grade 2

Revised and Edited for Student Use

Response to Literature

We've been reading, thinking, and talking about *Biographies*. We've read about many famous scientists, artists, musicians, inventors, leaders, etc.

Who do you think is the most important person that we have read about?

Be sure to support your opinion using evidence of how this person has made a significant contribution to society and/or changed the world and impacted your life.

Thomas Edison

I think that Thomas Alva Edison is the most important person that we read about because he invented the electric light bulb. Back a long time ago, we did not have the electric light bulb. We had candles. If we did not have the electric light bulb, we would have more fires. It would be a lot darker than it is with the electric light bulb. How would kids do homework in the dark? How would we get around at night?

If Thomas Alva Edison never lived, what do you think it would be like?

With only candles for light, how would it feel? What would it be like without the electric light bulb? What would it be like without Thomas Alva Edison?

File name: O2R Thomas Edison

Opinion/Argument

Grade 2

Range of Writing

Response to Literature

We've been reading, thinking, and talking about *Biographies*. We've read about many famous scientists, artists, musicians, inventors, leaders, etc.

Who do you think is the most important person that we have read about?

Be sure to support your opinion using evidence of how this person has made a significant contribution to society and/or changed the world and impacted your life.

Thomas Edison

I think that Thomas alva Edison is the most inportant preson that we read about because he invented the electrick light bolb. back a long time ago we did not have the electrick light bolb. we had candle's. If we did not have the electrick light bolb we would have more fire's, it would be a lot darcker then it is with the electrick light bolb now would kid's do Home work in the dark how would we ge around at night

if thomas alva Edison never lived what do you think it would be like
with only candles for light how would it feel what would it be like without the
electrick light bolb what would it be live without thomas alva Edison.

File Name: O3R School Year Time

Opinion/Argument

Grade 3

Range of Writing

States an opinion

School Year Time

I do not think school should be year round. Do you think school should be year round? Without summer vacation students would not be able to go on family vacations. If a student wanted to go to a sleepaway camp they would not be able to do it. At camp you learn how to do things on your own. If school was year round older siblings would not have time to teach younger siblings how to swing or climb trees. Teachers would also not have time for vacation. Eeven if you are not at school you can still lirn things. Teachers cal also lirn things outside of school. Kids need to get thieir energy out. They can get it out by doing big races. In summer it is very hot indoors and children wuold be thinking about outside and not school. Children usually like warm or hot weather. I know that towards the end of the year I look forwards to summer vacation and I think other children do to. If a student wants to learn more things in the summer, they can take classes about that subject. I do not think school needs to be year round!

Introduces the topic

Provides reasons that support the opinion

Uses linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons

Creates an organizational structure that lists reasons

Provides a concluding statement

In this third-grade piece, the writer supports a point of view with reasons. The topic is introduced with a question (“*Do you think school should be year round?*”) and a clearly stated opinion (“*I do not think school should be year round.*”). Reasons for the opinion are loosely organized; they could be arranged in any order within the piece. Although the reasoning is “listy”, some points are explained and elaborated upon (“*If a student wanted to go to a sleepaway camp they would not be able to do it. At camp you learn how to do things on your own.*”). The student is beginning to use linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reason (“*If school was year round older siblings would not have time to teach younger siblings how to swing or climb trees*”), but the argument would be more effective if linking words and phrases were used more frequently. A concluding statement (“*I do not think school needs to be year round!*”) clearly restates the focus of the piece.

File Name: O3R School Year Time

Opinion/Argument

Grade 3

Revised and Edited for Student Use

School Year Time

I do not think school should be year round. Do you think school should be year round?

Without summer vacation, students would not be able to go on family vacations. If a student wanted to go to a sleep away camp, they would not be able to do it. At camp you learn how to do things on your own. If school was year round, older siblings would not have time to teach younger siblings how to swing or climb trees. Teachers would also not have time for vacation. Even if you are not at school, you can still learn things. Teachers can also learn things outside of school.

Kids need to get their energy out. They can get it out by doing big races. In summer it is very hot indoors and children would be thinking about outside, and not school. Children usually like warm or hot weather.

I know that towards the end of the year, I look forward to summer vacation and I think other children do too! If a student wants to learn more things in the summer, they can take classes about that subject. I do not think school needs to be year round!

File Name: O3R School Year Time

Opinion/Argument

Grade 3

Range of Writing

School Year Time

I do not think school should be year round. Do you think school should be year round? Without summer vacation students would not be able to go on family vacations. If a student wanted to go to a sleepaway camp they would not be able to do it. At camp you learn how to do things on your own. If school was year round older siblings would not have time to teach younger siblings how to swing or climb trees. Teachers would also not have time for vacation. Eaven if you are not at school you can still lirn things. Teachers cal also lirn things outside of school. Kids need to get thier energy out. They can get it out by doing big races. In summer it is very hot indoors and children wuold be thinking about outside and not school. Children usually like warm or hot weather. I know that towards the end of the year I look forwards to summer vacation and I think other children do to.

If a student wants to learn more things in the summer they can take classes about that subject. I do not think school needs to be year round!

File Name: O3R Chuke Cheese's

Opinion/Argument

Grade 3

Range of Writing

Chuke Cheese's

Once a year my family goes to Chuke Cheese's. It's a popular place.

Introduces the topic

Chuke Cheese's is a nice place to go because of the tasty food and the awesome arcade.

States an opinion

Chuke Cheese's food is excellent! Thier peporoini pizza is mouth watering. The salads are great with diced tomatoes. The selections of veggies are endless and very good. The macoroni has a special ingredient in it. Well it seems it. The food is scrumpshish at Chuke Cheese's.

Provides reasons and details that support the opinion

While your waiting for your food, the arcade makes time fly. You have to by coins which each arcade game is only 1 coin. And if you do good you get lots of tickets to buy fun stuff. So it's not wasting your money parents! The motor games such as: The: Snowmobile, four wheeler, motor cycle, car and many more are great. The arcade is great while waiting for your food.

Creates an organizational structure that lists reasons

Chuke Cheese's is bad for you but is great. I wish I could go there every day! Oh well it's fun going to Chuke Cheese's because of the extraordinary food and spectacular arcade. I can't wait to win some more prizes next year at Chuk Cheese's.

Uses linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons, and reasons to details

Provides a concluding section

This third-grade opinion piece, based on personal experience, states an opinion (“*Chuke Cheese's is a nice place to go*”) and supports that opinion with reasons (“*because of the tasty food and the awesome arcade*”) and details (“*Thier peporoini pizza is mouth watering.*”). The writer has created an organizational structure—one paragraph for each reason—that explains each reason with supporting details (“*The selections of veggies are endless*”, “*the arcade makes time fly*”). Linking words and phrases (“*and*”, “*so*”, “*but*”, “*because*”) connect opinion to reasons and reasons to details. Although not required by the Standard, the writer even acknowledges a possible counterclaim (“*Chuke Cheese's is bad for you*”). The piece concludes by clearly restating opinion and reasons.

File Name: O3R Chuke Cheese's

Opinion/Argument

Grade 3

Revised and Edited for Student Use

Chuck E. Cheese's

Once a year, my family goes to Chuck E. Cheese's. It's a popular place. Chuck E. Cheese's is a nice place to go because of the tasty food and the awesome arcade.

Chuck E. Cheese's food is excellent! Their pepperoni pizza is mouthwatering. The salads are great, with diced tomatoes. The selection of veggies is endless and very good. The macaroni has a special ingredient in it. Well, it seems to. The food is scrumptious at Chuck E. Cheese's.

While you're waiting for your food, the arcade makes time fly. You have to buy coins, and each arcade game is only 1 coin. And if you do well, you get lots of tickets to buy fun stuff. So it's not wasting your money, parents! The motor games, such as the snowmobile, four-wheeler, motorcycle, car, and many more, are great. The arcade is great while waiting for your food.

Chuck E. Cheese's is bad for you but is great. I wish I could go there every day! Oh well. It's fun going to Chuck E. Cheese's because of the extraordinary food and spectacular arcade. I can't wait to win some more prizes next year at Chuck E. Cheese's.

File Name: O3R Chuke Cheese's

Opinion/Argument

Grade 3

Range of Writing

Chuke Cheese's

Once a year my family goes to Chuke Cheese's. It's a popular place.

Chuke Cheese's is a nice place to go because of the tasty food and the awesome arcade.

Chuke Cheese's food is excellent! Thier peporoini pizza is mouth watering. The salads are great with diced tomatoes. The selections of veggies are endless and very good. The macoroni has a special ingredient in it. Well it seems it. The food is srumpshish at Chuke Cheese's.

While your waiting for your food the arcade makes time fly. You have to by coins which each arcade game is only 1 coin. And if you do good you get lots of tickets to buy fun stuff. So it's not waisting your money parents! The motor games such as: The: Snowmobile, four wheeler, motor cycle, car and many more are great. The arcade is great while waiting for your food.

Chuke Cheese's is bad for you but is great. I wish I could go there every day! Oh well it's fun going to Chuke Cheese's because of the extraordinary food and spectacular arcade. I can't wait to win some more prizes next year at Chuke Cheese's.

File Name: O4R Wow I am glad we have zoo

Opinion/Argument

Grade 4

Instructional Writing

Wow I am glad we have zoo

There should be zoos because they save animals and help people learn a lot about animals. Did you know thirty species of animals were saved because of zoos? Zoos give great care to animals don't receive in the wild. I am so glad that there are zoos to save animals without them?

States an opinion

Introduces the topic clearly by stating, in general terms, the reasons that will later be discussed in detail

There should be zoos because zookeepers give so much care to the animals. There are no longer cages and the fences are hidden, so the animals feel like they're in the wild. Zoos make sure to hide the animals' food so they can learn to hunt. Sometimes there's a tinted glass so the animals can't see all the chaos going on. I am so glad the zookeepers give their time to care for the animals. Thanks goodness we have zoos.

Provides reasons that are supported by facts and details

Without zoos, a lot of animals could have been extinct. Zoos are trying to prevent extinction, and they're doing a great job! Animals such as red wolves were saved. Zoos take a male and a female so they can have babies and make more of the animal's kind. When animals mate in zoos their babies won't get diseases from the wild. Zoos are trying to stop extinction and they're doing great.

When visiting a zoo, you can learn so much. You are able to see animals without paying a \$200 plane ticket. Zoos are a great way to learn and have fun. No

Links opinion and reasons using words and phrases

customers learn at zoos the workers do to about animal behavior to make their habitats better. Thank goodness zoos are here, so we can learn a lot about different animals.

Zoos benefit both people and animals. We could help by going to a zoo in. when we do that all the money goes to the zoo and animals. It is important kids learn while having fun seeing the animals in person. With the help of you support a lot of animals. So with that said next times you do not know what to

Provides a concluding section related to the opinion presented that summarizes the argument and suggests an action to be taken

In this fourth-grade opinion piece, written in response to an informational article, the writer clearly states an opinion (“*There should be zoos*”) and provides three reasons for the opinion (“*zookeepers give so much care to the animals*”, “*animals could have been extinct*”, “*you can learn so much*”). Related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose. Each reason is discussed in a focused paragraph and is supported with facts (“*red wolves were saved*”) and details (“*zoos take a male and female animal so they can have babies*”). Linking words and phrases (“*because*”, “*so*”) connect ideas within paragraphs. The concluding paragraph summarizes the argument (“*Zoos benefit both people and animals.*”) and suggests an action to be taken (“*go to a zoo*”).

File Name: O4R Wow I am glad we have zoo

Opinion/Argument

Grade 4

Revised and Edited for Student Use

Wow! I Am Glad We Have Zoos!

There should be zoos because they save animals and help people learn a lot about animals. Did you know thirty species of animals were saved because of zoos? Zoos give great care that most animals don't receive in the wild. I am so glad that there are zoos to save animals. What would we do without them?

There should be zoos because zookeepers give so much care to the animals. There are no longer cages, and the fences are hidden, so the animals feel like they're in the wild. Zoos make sure to hide the animals' food so they can learn to hunt. Sometimes there's tinted glass so the animals can't see all the chaos going on. I am so glad the zookeepers give their time to care for the animals. Thank goodness we have zoos!

Without zoos, a lot of animals could have become extinct. Zoos are trying to solve the problem of extinction, and they're doing a great job! Animals such as red wolves were saved. Zoos take a male and a female so they can have babies. This makes more animals of its kind. When animals mate in zoos, their babies won't get diseases from the wild. Zoos are trying to stop extinction, and they're doing great.

When visiting a zoo, you can learn so much. You are able to see animals from faraway places without paying for a \$200 plane ticket. Zoos are a great way to learn and have fun. Not only do the

customers learn at zoos, but the workers do, too—about animal behavior and how to make animal habitats better. Thank goodness zoos are here so we can learn a lot about different animals.

Zoos benefit both people and animals. We could help by going to a zoo and paying a fee to get in. When we do that, all the money goes to the zoo and animals. It is important that we have zoos to help kids learn while they are having fun and seeing the animals in person. With your help, zoos can support a lot of animals. So, with that said, the next time you do not know what to do, go to a zoo!

File Name: O4R Wow I am glad we have zoo

Opinion/Argument

Grade 4

Instructional writing

Wow I am glad we have zoo

There should be zoos because they save animals and help people learn a lot about animals. Did you know thirty species of animals were saved because of zoos? Zoos give great care that most animals don't receive in the wild. I am so glad that there are zoos to save animals, what would we do without them?

There should be zoos because zookeepers give so much care to the animals. There are no longer cages and the fences are hidden so the animals feels like there in the wild. Zoos make sure to hide the animals food so they can learn to hunt, sometimes theres a tinted glass so the animals cant see all the chaos going on. I am so glad the zookeepers give there time to care for the animals. Thanks goodness we have zoos.

Without zoos, a lot of animals could have been extinct. Zoos are trying to solve the problem of extinction and there doing a great job! Animals such as red wolves were saved. Zoos take a male and a female so they can have babies and make more of the animals kind. This makes more animals of its kind. when animals mate in zoos their babies wont get diseases from the wild. zoos are trying to stop extinction and they're doing great.

When visiting a zoo you can learn so much.you are able to see animals from far away places without paying a \$200 plane ticket.zoos are a great way to learn and have fun.Not only do the

customers learn at zoos the workers do to about animal behavior to make their habitats better. Thank goodness zoos are here, so we can learn a lot about different animals.

Zoos benefit both people and animals. We could help by going to a zoo and paying a fee to get in. when we do that all the money goes to the zoo and animals. It is important we have zoos to help kids learn while having fun seeing the animals in person. With the help of you going to a zoo, you will support a lot of animals. So with that said next times you do not know what to do, go to a zoo!

File Name: O5R Global Warning

Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

Range of Writing

Global Warning

Deep in the Arctic a mother polar is returning from a long, hard day of hunting. But looking ahead she sees the ice floes she uses to get home are much farther apart. It will be a lot harder to make it home. She jumps in and swims for it but pretty soon becomes exhausted. Just when she can't make it any further another ice floe appears. She barely made it.

Clearly introduces the topic or text using a narrative lead

Sadly, not all polar bears are this lucky. The North Polar ice caps are melting rapidly causing all sorts of problems needing grave attention. The cause of this problem I can sum up in two words. Global warming. Global warming is caused by carbon dioxide and other air pollution that's collecting up and trapping the sun's heat. Many of us never dream that little things like driving a car and turning on the lights could be part of the reason this planet is warming up. Scientists believe that U.S. temperatures could be 3 to 9 degrees higher by the end of the century. To make matters worse, global warming doesn't only affect polar bears, but people and places all over the **world**. It is crucial we take action against global warming and all the issues it has caused before it's too

States an opinion

Global warming is a huge problem most people don't seem to be aware of. And the environment is just one of the things changing around us. Things never hear of before are jeopardizing our planet. In 2002, Colorado, Arizona, and Oregon suffered through one of the worst wildfire seasons ever. At the same time, Montana and Texas endured droughts that were creating dust storms. And

to add to all these rugged weather changes, just the next year, 2003, extreme heat waves caused more than 20,000 deaths in Europe and more than 1,500 deaths in India. Talk about changing climate.

And I'm only getting started. Let's go back to the polar bears. As I briefly mentioned before, in the Arctic and Antarctic dramatic changes are happening. Even though the Arctic is a region meant to stay frozen 365 days a year, the ice cap is melting rapidly. Unless we stop releasing greenhouse gases the polar ice cap will completely disappear each year during summertime. In the book An Inconvenient Truth, it clearly states, "This is a dangerous situation for all of us, because the Arctic ice cap plays a very crucial role in cooling the entire planet." We are in a very serious position. **We must stop Global Warming!**

As Al Gore once said, "Each one of us is a cause of global warming, but each of us can become part of the solution..."

It isn't too late to stop global warming, or at least slow it down a bit. And who better than us, the cause of this awful problem, to do just that.

Tell me, how often do you use your car? Don't get me wrong! I don't want you to stop using it completely, but cars are the 2nd to largest source of global warming. Cars burn off tons carbon dioxide. This creates a hole in the ozone layer. Very VERY strong sunlight shines through the hole which contributes to global warming.

One quick and easy way to save money and gas is to carpool with your friends and family. That way instead of the pollution from 2 cars, it will be just one! Or even better, buy a hybrid car! These energy efficient cars have gas

Links opinion and reasons using words and phrases

Provides reasons that are supported by facts and details and includes statistics as supporting evidence

electric engines and cut global warming pollution by one third or more! Much better than *Hummers* and SUV's. The popularity of these cars has generated a 20% increase in transportation-related carbon dioxide pollution.

It's hard to believe that something as simple as the light bulb could play a major role in global warming. But there is a way to save energy for everything. Instead of picking incandescent light bulb choose a compact fluorescent one instead. You'll lower your energy bill AND keep nearly 700 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the air. How about that, a way to save money, and the environment! Another way to reduce carbon dioxide pollution is to take a chance and try a refrigerator with the Energy Star label. That indicates it uses at least 15 percent less energy than the federal requirement. Try to make everything you do one more step towards solving global warming. Every little thing counts.

If we want our children to grow up in a carefree, healthy world, we need to start working toward it now. We are not just hurting the earth, but hurting ourselves and the way we live. Some of it we can't help, but most of it we **should** try to change. When so much has already been lost to us think life might be in a few years. In the words of Al Gore—

Provides an effective concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

“It is our only home.

And we must take care of it.”

This fifth-grade research project concluded in an opinion piece urging readers to stop global warming. The problem is introduced with a vignette designed to help the reader understand the effect global warming is having on polar bears. This is followed by an introduction which provides some context on the issue and clearly states an opinion (“*It is crucial we take action against global warming and all the issues it has caused before it's too late.*”) The writer creates an organizational structure, which supports her purpose by first explaining the problem and then suggesting possible solutions. Ideas within the piece are linked using words and phrases (“*As I briefly mentioned*”).

File Name: O5R Global Warning

Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

Revised and Edited for Student Use

Global Warning

Deep in the arctic, a mother polar is returning from a long, hard day of hunting. Looking ahead she sees the ice floes she uses to get home are much farther apart. It will be a lot harder to make it home. She jumps in and swims for it, but pretty soon becomes exhausted. Just when she can't make it any further, another ice floe appears. She barely made it.

Sadly, not all polar bears are this lucky. The North Polar ice caps are melting rapidly, causing all sorts of problems needing grave attention. The cause of this problem I can sum up in two words. Global warming. Global warming is caused by carbon dioxide and other air pollution that's collecting and trapping the sun's heat. Many of us never dream that little things like driving a car and turning on the lights could be part of the reason this planet is warming up. Scientists believe that U.S. temperatures could be 3 to 9 degrees higher by the end of the century. To make matters worse, global warming doesn't only affect polar bears, but people and places all over the **world**. It is crucial we take action against global warming and all the issues it has caused before it's too late.

Global warming is a huge problem most people don't seem to be aware of. And the environment is just one of the things changing around us. Things never heard of before are jeopardizing our planet. In 2002, Colorado, Arizona, and Oregon suffered through one of the worst wildfire seasons ever. At the same time, Montana and Texas endured droughts that were creating dust storms. And

to add to all these rugged weather changes, just the next year, 2003, extreme heat waves caused more than 20,000 deaths in Europe and more than 1,500 deaths in India. Talk about changing climate!

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As Al Gore once said, "Each one of us is a cause of global warming, but each of us can become part of the solution..."

It isn't too late to stop global warming, or at least slow it down a bit. And who better than us, the cause of this awful problem, to do just that?

Tell me, how often do you use your car? Don't get me wrong, I don't want you to stop using it completely, but cars are the 2nd largest source of global warming. Cars burn off tons carbon dioxide. This creates a hole in the ozone layer. Very, VERY strong sunlight shines through the hole, which contributes to global warming.

One quick and easy way to save money and gas is to carpool with your friends and family. That way instead of the pollution from 2 cars, it will be just one! Or even better, buy a hybrid car! These energy efficient cars have gas

electric engines and cut global warming pollution by one third or more—much better than *Hummers* and SUV's. The popularity of these cars has generated a 20% increase in transportation-related carbon dioxide pollution.

It's hard to believe that something as simple as the light bulb could play a major role in global warming. But there is a way to save energy for everything. Instead of picking an incandescent light bulb, choose a compact fluorescent one instead. You'll lower your energy bill AND keep nearly 700 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the air. How about that, a way to save money, and the environment! Another way to reduce carbon dioxide pollution is to take a chance and try a refrigerator with the Energy Star label. That indicates it uses at least 15 percent less energy than the federal requirement. Try to make everything you do one more step towards solving global warming. Every little thing counts.

If we want our children to grow up in a carefree, healthy world, we need to start working toward it now. We are not just hurting the earth, but hurting ourselves and the way we live. Some of it we can't help, but most of it we can and **should** try to change. When so much has already been lost to us, think how life might be in a few years. In the words of Al Gore—

“It is our only home.

And we must take care of it.”

File Name: O5R Global Warning

Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

Range of Writing

Global Warning

Deep in the Arctic a mother polar is returning from a long, hard day of hunting. But looking ahead she sees the ice floes she uses to get home are much farther apart. It will be a lot harder to make it home. She jumps in and swims for it but pretty soon becomes exhausted. Just when she can't make it any further another ice floe appears. She barely made it.

Sadly, not all polar bears are this lucky. The North Polar ice caps are melting rapidly causing all sorts of problems needing grave attention. The cause of this problem I can sum up in two words. Global warming. Global warming is caused by carbon dioxide and other air pollution that's collecting up and trapping the sun's heat. Many of us never dream that little things like driving a car and turning on the lights could be part of the reason this planet is warming up. Scientists believe that U.S. temperatures could be 3 to 9 degrees higher by the end of the century. To make matters worse, global warming doesn't only affect polar bears, but people and places all over the **world**. It is crucial we take action against global warming and all the issues it has caused before it's too late.

Global warming is a huge problem most people don't seem to be aware of. And the environment is just one of the things changing around us. Things never hear of before are jeopardizing our planet. In 2002, Colorado, Arizona, and Oregon suffered through one of the worst wildfire seasons ever. At the same time, Montana and Texas endured droughts that were creating dust storms. And

to add to all these rugged weather changes, just the next year, 2003, extreme heat waves caused more than 20,000 deaths in Europe and more than 1,500 deaths in India. Talk about changing climate.

And I'm only getting started. Let's go back to the polar bears. As I briefly mentioned before, in the Arctic and Antarctic dramatic changes are happening. Even though the Arctic is a region meant to stay frozen 365 days a year, the ice cap is melting rapidly. Unless we stop releasing greenhouse gases the polar ice cap will completely disappear each year during summertime. In the book An Inconvenient Truth, it clearly states, "This is a dangerous situation for all of us, because the Arctic ice cap plays a very crucial role in cooling the entire planet." We are in a very serious position. **We must stop Global Warming!**

As Al Gore once said, "Each one of us is a cause of global warming, but each of us can become part of the solution..."

It isn't too late to stop global warming, or at least slow it down a bit. And who better than us, the cause of this awful problem, to do just that.

Tell me, how often do you use your car? Don't get me wrong! I don't want you to stop using it completely, but cars are the 2nd to largest source of global warming. Cars burn off tons carbon dioxide. This creates a hole in the ozone layer. Very VERY strong sunlight shines through the hole which contributes to global warming.

One quick and easy way to save money and gas is to carpool with your friends and family. That way instead of the pollution from 2 cars, it will be just one! Or even better, buy a hybrid car! These energy efficient cars have gas

electric engines and cut global warming pollution by one third or more! Much better than *Hummers* and SUV's. The popularity of these cars has generated a 20% increase in transportation-related carbon dioxide pollution.

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“It is our only home.

And we must take care of it.”

File Name: O5R Homework

Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

Range of Writing

Homework: How much is enough??

Recently our class read an article in the Time for Kids Magazine. The title was “Too Much Homework!?” and it was about how much homework kids are doing today. It said that 100 years ago, kids never had any homework because they had to work on their farms or do chores for their families.

Introduces the text clearly

But in the 1950’s, American kids began to score really low on math and science tests. Other countries were doing better than we were. Teachers thought that since their students were getting low grades, they should do some homework to practice and catch up to the rest of the world. Since then students have been getting more and more homework and it doesn’t look like that is going to change. I think that students should have enough homework, but still have time for fun. So, students in third grade should start having 15 minutes a night and work up to a little over an hour by the sixth grade.

States an opinion

One reason to have homework is kids can become more responsible. example, if someone usually forgets a due date, he can practice remembering and using an assignment book to help him remember his homework. When kids

Links opinion and reasons using words and phrases

grow up and get a job, they will have deadlines to meet and homework is good practice for that.

Another reason to have homework is a kid can become faster at doing his work. If he needs to practice multiplication he can do that at home better than at school. Also, some kids who have big projects or posters would rather work where it is quiet and they can concentrate better. Also, long searches on the Internet are done at home easier than at school because you can be comfortable at home and you don't have a schedule to keep.

Provides logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.

These are the reasons why I think students in third grade should start having 15 minutes a night and work up to a little over an hour by the sixth grade. If you agree with what I have said you should write a letter to A----- School addressed to the Superintendent and Principal so she can show it to the School Board. Thank you for your support.

Provides a concluding section related to the opinion presented.

This fifth-grade opinion piece was written after reading an article called “Too Much Homework!?”. The writer begins by introducing the text, and then clearly introduces the topic using specific facts from the text (“*But in the 1950’s American kids began to score really low on math and science tests*”). After establishing this context, the writer states an opinion (“*I think students should have enough homework, but still have time for fun.*”), and then provides two reasons for the opinion. Each reason is explained, using supporting facts (“*When kids grow up and get a job they will have deadlines to meet*”) and details (“*he can practice remembering and using an assignment book*”). Related ideas are grouped in paragraphs to support the writer’s purpose, and phrases are used to link reasons to the opinion (“*One reason*”, “*For example*”, “*Another reason*”). The concluding section offers a specific recommendation (students in third grade should start having 15 minutes a night and work up to a little over an hour by sixth grade) and a call to action (“*if you agree with what I have said you should write a letter*”).

File Name: O5R Homework

Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

Revised and Edited for Student Use

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But in the 1950’s, American kids began to score really low on math and science tests. Other countries were doing better than we were. Teachers thought that since their students were getting low grades, they should do some homework to practice and catch up to the rest of the world. Since then, students have been getting more and more homework, and it doesn’t look like that is going to change. I think that students should have enough homework, but still have time for fun. So, students in third grade should start having 15 minutes a night and work up to a little over an hour by the sixth grade.

One reason to have homework is that kids can become more responsible.

For example, if someone usually forgets a due date, he can practice remembering and using an assignment book to help him remember his homework. When kids grow up and get jobs, they will have deadlines to meet and homework is good practice for that.

Another reason to have homework is that a kid can become faster at doing his work. If he needs to practice in multiplication, he can do that at home better than at school. Also, some kids who have big projects or posters would rather work where it is quiet and they can concentrate better. Also, long searches on the Internet are more easily done at home than at school because you can be comfortable at home and you don't have a schedule to keep.

These are the reasons why I think students in third grade should start having 15 minutes a night and work up to a little over an hour by the sixth grade. If you agree with what I have said, you should write a letter to A----- School addressed to the superintendent and principal so she can show it to the School Board. Thank you for your support.

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Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

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File Name: O5R Roll of Thunder

Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

Range of Writing

Book Response on Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor takes place in Mississippi in the 1930's, a time when segregation was present. Some of the characters in this story are: the Logans (Cassie, Stacey, Little Man, Christophe John, Mama, and Papa), T.J. Avery, and Mr. Morrison. In the book, one of the characters, Mr. Morrison says, "In those years I suppose it was just as hard being free as it was being a slave." In this book response, I am going to use examples from the book to help explain why I agree with that quote.

Introduces the text clearly by providing some background information about the time period, as well as the quote on which the response is based

One of the examples to support the quote is Soldiers Bridge. Soldiers Bridge is a bridge on which white men have power over black men. The bridge has only one lane for only one car. If two people with the same skin color meet at the bridge, the person who reached the bridge first gets to go first. If a white and a black meet at the bridge, the white automatically gets to go first, always. This is

States an opinion

Provides logically ordered reasons for the opinion **that are supported by details** from the text.

true even if the black wagon/car is halfway across the bridge. The blacks would have to back off the bridge, and allow the whites to cross! This makes them feel like slaves obligated to obey their masters' commands.

Another example is Mama losing her job. Mama lost her job as a school teacher because Mr. Granger, who is the school district manager (and who also wants the Logans' land) claimed that Mama was teaching inappropriate information at the school, and should not be teaching anymore. Mr. Granger is white, and he feels strongly that whites are better than blacks. Mama was teaching about slavery and how black women/men were treated unfairly. He wanted a reason to fire her because without her paycheck, the Logans would not have enough money to pay the taxes for their land, and he might be able to get it.

Another example is the Jefferson School Bus (the white school's bus) that drives past Cassie, Stacey, Christopher John, and Little Man every morning as they walk to school. The driver and the children make fun of the Logans and laugh at them. If it has rained the night before, the driver would speed up and splash mud at the Logans. The Logan children felt mad, and humiliated, but they could do nothing to stop the white bus driver from doing this. They were like slaves, because they had no control over what was happening to them.

**Links opinion and reasons
using words and phrases**

Yet another example to support Mr. Morrison's idea, is the Wallace store.

The Wallace store is the local store where people shop (and which also sells alcoholic beverages). Most of the white men gather at the Wallace Store to drink, smoke, and play cards. If black skinned people were to enter the Wallace Store, the drinkers and smokers would insult them by calling them names, like "nigger" and they would make fun of them. The blacks would also always be served last. This is like Soldiers Bridge, because even if a black person was already being waited on, if a white person arrived, Mr. Wallace would stop waiting on the black person, and help the white person. This is definitely not fair.

My last example is the textbooks that the students are given in the black school. At first the black students were all excited about the new books, but when Little Man accepts his book, their point of view changes completely. The "new" textbooks are discards from a white school, where they were used until they were in very bad condition. Little Man (who is very meticulous) refused to use his book because it was old and dirty. Little Man's teacher became mad and used the whip on him.

As you can see from the situations I have explained, life for the Logans during this time was completely unfair. They were treated unfairly, because their

skin is black. The black skinned people in this story were treated with almost no respect from the white skinned people in this story. Although slavery had ended, these people were still treated like slaves because the whites would order them around, and they would have to obey, or risk their lives.

Provides a concluding section related to the opinion presented.

This well-constructed piece was written after reading the novel, "Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry". The writer uses events from the text to support the opinion that, for the Logans, it was "just as hard to be free as it was to be a slave." The piece is logically organized; the opinion is clearly stated at the end of the first paragraph, followed by five examples from the text, each explained in a well-elaborated paragraph. Linking words and phrases ("*One of the examples*", "*Another example*", "*As you can see*") connect the writer's opinion with clear examples from the text. The concluding paragraph restates the opinion ("*Although slavery had ended, these people were still treated like slaves*") and summarizes the reasons for it ("*they were treated unfairly...with almost no respect...and they would have to obey or risk their lives.*").

File Name: O5R Roll of Thunder

Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

Revised and Edited for Student Use

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Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

Range of Writing

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6-12 Range of Writing Argument/Opinion Samples

File Name: A6R Animals are Smart

Opinion/Argument

Grade 6

Range of Writing

Animals are Smart

Some people think that we are superior to animals but I think that animals are as smart as we are. Pets react to your moods and seem to know just when it's dinner time! Some animals use tools, communicate and think for their own.

If animals can use tools, they must be smart. For instance, a cow named Betty made a hook out of a piece of metal wire. That's obviously pretty smart but she didn't stop there. She then used the hook to get treats out of a glass tube. I think this is smart because Betty figured out how to make a tool to get something she wanted. Another smart animal who used a tool was Fu Manchu the Orangutan. Fu Manchu first traded Food for wire with another orangutan and then he hid it in his mouth until the right time. Then he used the wire as a tool to pick the lock on his cage and escape. I think this shows Fu Manchu was smart because he used a tool and he outsmarted humans by escaping from his cage.

Animals who communicate might be even smarter than animals who use tools. For instance one clever gorilla actually learned sign language! Not only that but she started making her own signs. This showed scientists that she was trying to communicate her thoughts, which takes big brainpower. I think this is smart because when Koko made her own signs it showed that she wasn't just memorizing signs, she was thinking and making her own signs. Another smart animal who could understand communication was Betsy the dog. Betsy understands 340 spoken words! Not only that, but when someone showed her a picture of something she had never seen before she would go and get the item. I think this is really smart because Betsy didn't just

Introduces claim, with a bit of context (*some people think we are superior to animals*), which functions as a counterclaim

Organizes the reasons and evidence clearly

Supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence, and demonstrates an understanding of the topic

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify relationships among claim and reasons

Supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence, and demonstrates an understanding of the topic

memorize words she could recognize objects and fetch them. Betsy didn't really communicate, but I think she understood so much. It's just as good.

For animals who don't communicate or use tools there is another category: Animals that think on their own. For example, the poison dart Frog. Aside from protecting themselves with poison, they have AMAZING memories! The mothers hide their pollywogs in individual nests all over the jungle and had to remember where each one is and to come back every couple days to feed them! I think that is amazing how they think for their own because every pollywog (up to 35!) is in a different, camouflaged spot and their mom can still remember where each and every one is. Another example of animals thinking on their own is Alex, the African grey parrot. Alex can figure out likeness and difference between two objects. For instance, when scientists hold up two objects and ask what the difference is he will answer either shape or color, depending on what it was. This is really smart because not only can Alex tell the difference he can tell what is the same about some objects. I'd say that is a pretty smart bird to be able to figure out what was the same and different in his mind, but he also translated that out into words. I'd say these animals are really smart in thinking on their own.

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify relationships among claims and reasons
Writer explains her thinking, relating back to claim

I know that some of you may think that animals are not smart. Some of you may think that animals are not smart. Some of you may think that most of the animals I talked about were special, that they were bred in a lab. But animals in natural life are smart too. For instance, a girl in my class named Erin has a farm, and every day her dad goes out at 2:30 AM to milk them. The cows line up at 2:25 am without being told. I think that this is smart because the cows know what time it is, AND line up early without being told. I think this is really smart of the cows. Another real life example of smart animals is my friend Mandy's Cockatoo. Now, you all know Cockatoos repeat what is said. This Cockatoo, However takes it a step farther. Instead of just saying things at random times, she actually answers the door when the doorbell is rung. She doesn't open the door, but she does say things like "Hello", and "Come in." I think this is

Introduces a counterclaim which writer then refutes

smart because instead of just saying random words, she responds with the right words at right time.

My goal of this essay was to convince you that animals were smart. You may have already known this and reading this essay was a waste of time to you. Or, you might have thought animals were not smart and still think that. If that is the case I have failed in my essay. However If you have changed your mind and now think that animals are smart, I have succeeded! I know that animals are smart, especially ones that use tools, communicate, and think for their own.

Provides concluding statement that follows from the argument presented

In this assignment, the student has been working with a study of animals and has read several informational pieces. She appears to be responding to a Focusing Question of “What have you learned about how smart animals are?” The writer makes the claim that animals are smart, in spite of anticipation that some might disagree with her.

The writer develops her claim with several reasons, and uses credible and relevant evidence to develop the reasons, showing her understanding of her topic. The writer organizes her ideas clearly and supports her claim with logical reasoning. She uses phrases (such as “*this shows*” and “*this is really smart because*”) to clarify the relationship between the claim she makes about animals being smart and the reasons and evidence she gives to support the claim. She even includes a form of counter-claim (“*some of you may think that animals are not smart*”), which she refutes, even though use of the counterclaim is not stated in the Standards for this grade level.

While the writer occasionally adopts a personal tone, (“*my goal of this essay was to convince you...*”), the overall tone of the essay is appropriately formal. The writer concludes by restating the focus / claim about animals being smart.

File Name: A6R Animals are Smart

Opinion/Argument

Grade 6

Range of Writing

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For animals who don't communicate or use tools there is another category: Animals that think on their own. For example, the poison dart frog. Aside from protecting themselves with poison, they have AMAZING memories! The mothers hide their pollywogs in individual nests all over the jungle and had to remember where each one is and to come back every couple days to feed them! I think that

is amazing how they think for their own because every pollywog (up to 35!) is in a different, camouflaged spot and their mom can still remember where each and every one is. Another example of animals thinking on their own is Alex, the African grey parrot. Alex can figure out likeness and difference between two objects. For instance, when scientists hold up two objects and ask what the difference is he will answer either shape or color, depending on what it was. This is really smart because not only can Alex tell the difference he can tell what is the same about some objects. I'd say that is a pretty smart bird to be able to figure out what was the same and different in his mind, but he also translated that out into words. I'd say these animals are really smart in thinking on their own.

I know that some of you may think that animals are not smart. Some of you may think that animals are not smart. Some of you may think that most of the animals I talked about were special, that they were bred in a lab. But animals in natural life are smart too. For instance, a girl in my class named Erin has a farm, and every day her dad goes out at 2:30 AM to milk them. The cows line up at 2:25 am without being told. I think that this is smart because the cows know what time it is, AND line up early without being told. I think this is really smart of the cows. Another real life example of smart animals is my friend Mandy's Cockatoo. Now, you all know Cockatoos repeat what is said. This Cockatoo, However takes it a step farther. Instead of just saying things at random times, she actually answers the door when the doorbell is rung. She doesn't open the door, but she does say things like "Hello", and "Come in." I think this is smart because instead of just saying random words, she responds with the right words at right time.

My goal of this essay was to convince you that animals were smart. You may have already known this and reading this essay was a waste of time to you. Or, you might have thought animals were not smart and still think that. If that is the case I have failed in my essay. However If you have changed your mind and now think that animals are smart, I have succeeded! I know that animals are smart, especially ones that use tools, communicate, and think for their own.

File Name: A6R Tom Sawyer

Opinion/Argument

Grade 6

Range of Writing

Tom Sawyer

Having complicated characters in a book makes the story more interesting, as well as enjoyable to read. Tom Sawyer is one of those kinds of characters that is very complicated and sometimes hard to put into one group, such as likable or dislikable.

Introduces claim, by giving some context about complicated characters, and about the setting of the text

The book *Tom Sawyer*, by Mark Twain, is about a boy, age twelve, named Tom who lives in a small town in Missouri. He lives with his Aunt, Aunt Polly. The Mississippi River, which runs very close to the town is often the center of the excitement. The story is about how Tom grows up in the small town, and the adventures he and his friends have.

I think that even though Tom does do some very brave and admirable things, the author, Mark Twain, wants us to think of Tom as a character to dislike. For example, Tom often gets his friends into trouble. Also, Tom does sometimes steal things. When it is little things he is stealing, like a doughnut from Aunt Polly, it seems okay. But when it is bigger things from somebody else, it is a big deal because whatever he stole could be important to that person, or it could be necessary for them to survive.

States a focus / claim

However, Tom is not *only* dislikable. He has done some very good things and it is easy to see why many people would like him. For example, even when Tom runs away to be a pirate, he still feels that he should say his prayers, even though nobody is there to tell him he has to. He can also be very kind to his friends, and help them when they are stuck in difficult situations, or when they are in trouble.

Distinguishes claim from opposing claim (that in some ways Tom is likeable). Opposing claim is fully and fairly developed with evidence from the text

One example of Tom being kind to his friends is the time when his friend Becky is in big trouble. She accidentally ripped the school Master's book, that she was not even supposed to open. When the schoolmaster found out that someone had ripped the book, he was furious. He began to ask the students one by one, who had done it. When he came to Becky, Tom knew she would not be able to keep the secret, so he

jumped up and yelled, “I done it!” That is an example of a time when Tom did a very brave thing, by taking the blame for Becky.

Organizes the reasons and evidence clearly

Another example of how Tom could be considered a likeable character is when Tom ran off to be a pirate with his friends, Joe Harper and Huckleberry Finn. Even though they had run off so no one could tell them what to do, they found themselves feeling bad about the things they had stolen. They also felt they should still say their prayers, even though nobody was there to tell them to. That shows that even though he had run away to become a pirate, he is still good.

A third example of how Tom could be considered as a good person is the time when he saved Becky in the cave. It really was his fault that they got lost in the first place, because he lead them further and further in the cave. But in the end, he saved her. He left her and let her sleep, and he traveled around the cave and eventually he found an entrance out. He then went back into the cave to find her. Then he makes his way back with her, and they both are able to escape the cave. It was brave of Tom to go back into the cave for Becky.

Distinguishes claim from opposing claim (that in some ways Tom is likeable). Opposing claim is developed fully and fairly with evidence from the text

A last example of Tom acting as the kind of character you would admire is the time when Tom was going to leave a note for Aunt Polly saying that he was not dead, and had only run away. But Tom did not end up leaving the note. However, he did kiss Aunt Polly in her sleep, before leaving. This shows that even though Tom ran away, he still cares about Aunt Polly, and that is good.

Establishes and maintains a formal style

However, although Tom does show some examples of being a likeable character, he shows even more examples of being dislikable. One example of this is when Tom and Huck witness Injun Joe murder Dr. Robinson. Huck and Tom swear not ever to tell anyone about the murder. Later, Tom breaks the vow, and confesses in front of everyone. But Huck never broke the vow, and in some ways Tom betrayed him. Also, if Tom and Huck had told earlier, but this time agreed to both tell, Muff Potter would not have been falsely accused of murder. If Muff Potter had been proven innocent by Tom and Huck, he would not be in jail for nearly as long as he was, if at all.

Restates claim, then supports with clear reasons and relevant evidence from the text about why Tom is dislikeable, demonstrating an understanding of the text

Another example of Tom as a dislikeable character is the day he meets the new boy. Almost the minute Tom meets him, they are in a fight.

Supports claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence from the text about why Tom is dislikeable, demonstrating an understanding of the text

Tom ends up winning, and he beats up the new boy badly. That was a pretty mean thing for Tom to do, especially when it is the new kid.

Another time, Tom steals a whole leg of a ham. He and his friends are playing a game, and Tom takes a ham from a family. That much ham is a lot of meat, and for many families back then, that much meat could last the whole winter. It was a really terrible thing to do, because whoever he stole the meat from, might even need it to survive. Tom should never have stolen that meat. His friends too had taken things like fish or bacon from other families.

A third example of Tom doing something that the reader would think of as a dislikeable thing about Tom, is again, the time when Tom, Huck, and Joe run away. Tom knows that Aunt Polly is worried sick, and very sad. But Tom and his friends don't even leave a note to their parents, or anything to let them know that they are okay. That is a very cruel thing to do to them, to keep them waiting, thinking the boys are dead.

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationship among claims and reasons

But the most dislikable thing about Tom is the way Tom takes advantage of his friends. One example of this is when Tom is given the job of whitewashing the fence. Tom tricks his friends into doing his chore. He makes the job seem important by telling his friends that they would not be able to do a good enough job at it. They beg him and they trade him all sorts of things to do his job, and he knows he is being mean, and tricking them. Then Aunt Polly gives him an apple for the good work, that he didn't even do, but he steals a doughnut from her anyway. Later, when Tom goes to Sunday school, he gives his friends back the things they traded him to whitewash the fence, in exchange for bible tickets. The Sunday School gives out a blue ticket for every two verses memorized. Ten blue tickets equaled one red ticket, ten reds equals one yellow, and for ten yellow tickets you got a copy of the bible. Tom traded his whitewashing earnings for enough tickets for a bible. Then in front of the whole Sunday school Tom receives a bible. I think that is a truly nasty thing to do. He basically cheated to get the bible, and he cheated his friends.

Overall, Tom Sawyer is a complicated character that the author wants us to think of as a dislikeable one. Although Tom does do things that are likeable, the dislikable ones outweigh it. A lot can be learned from Tom about people's characteristics, and about what they are really like.

Provides concluding section that follows from the argument presented

In this assignment, the student has read and studied *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain. She is responding to a Focusing Question of “Do you think the author wants the reader to think of Tom as a likeable or a dislikeable character?” The writer makes the claim that although Tom is likeable in many ways, the weight of the evidence lies with him being dislikeable.

The writer develops her claim with several reasons. She uses relevant evidence from the text to develop the reasons, showing her understanding of her topic and the text. The writer organizes her ideas clearly and supports her claim with logical reasoning. She uses phrases (such as “*this shows*” and *the “most dislikeable thing about Tom”*) to clarify the relationship between the claim she makes about Tom being dislikeable and the reasons and evidence she gives to support the claim. She even includes substantial use of counter-claim (“*However, Tom is not **only** dislikeable. He has done some very good things and it is easy to see why many people would like him.*”). The writer refutes this by pointing out the weight of the evidence supporting her claim. This use of the counterclaim is not stated in the Standards for this grade level.

The overall tone of the essay is appropriately formal. The writer concludes by restating the focus / claim that Tom is dislikeable and reflects a bit on what can be learned from Tom, which, again, is not required by the Standards at this grade level.

File Name: A6R Tom Sawyer

Opinion/Argument

Grade 6

Range of Writing

Tom Sawyer

Having complicated characters in a book makes the story more interesting, as well as enjoyable to read. Tom Sawyer is one of those kinds of characters that is very complicated and sometimes hard to put into one group, such as likable or dislikable.

The book *Tom Sawyer*, by Mark Twain, is about a boy, age twelve, named Tom who lives in a small town in Missouri. He lives with his Aunt, Aunt Polly. The Mississippi River, which runs very close to the town is often the center of the excitement. The story is about how Tom grows up in the small town, and the adventures he and his friends have.

I think that even though Tom does do some very brave and admirable things, the author, Mark Twain, wants us to think of Tom as a character to dislike. For example, Tom often gets his friends into trouble. Also, Tom does sometimes steal things. When it is little things he is stealing, like a doughnut from Aunt Polly, it seems okay. But when it is bigger things from somebody else, it is a big deal because whatever he stole could be important to that person, or it could be necessary for them to survive.

However, Tom is not *only* dislikable. He has done some very good things and it is easy to see why many people would like him. For example, even when Tom runs away to be a pirate, he still feels that he should say his prayers, even though nobody is there to tell him he has to. He can also be very kind to his friends, and help them when they are stuck in difficult situations, or when they are in trouble.

One example of Tom being kind to his friends is the time when his friend Becky is in big trouble. She accidentally ripped the school Master's book, that she was not even supposed to open. When the schoolmaster found out that someone had ripped the book, he was furious. He began to ask the students one by one, who had done it. When he came to Becky, Tom knew she would not be able to keep the secret, so he jumped up and yelled, "I done it!" That is an example of a time when Tom did a very brave thing, by taking the blame for Becky.

Another example of how Tom could be considered a likeable character is when Tom ran off to be a pirate with his friends, Joe Harper and Huckleberry Finn. Even though they had run off so no one could tell them what to do, they found themselves feeling bad about the things they had stolen. They

also felt they should still say their prayers, even though nobody was there to tell them to. That shows that even though he had run away to become a pirate, he is still good.

A third example of how Tom could be considered as a good person is the time when he saved Becky in the cave. It really was his fault that they got lost in the first place, because he led them further and further in the cave. But in the end, he saved her. He left her and let her sleep, and he traveled around the cave and eventually he found an entrance out. He then went back into the cave to find her. Then he makes his way back with her, and they both are able to escape the cave. It was brave of Tom to go back into the cave for Becky.

A last example of Tom acting as the kind of character you would admire is the time when Tom was going to leave a note for Aunt Polly saying that he was not dead, and had only run away. But Tom did not end up leaving the note. However, he did kiss Aunt Polly in her sleep, before leaving. This shows that even though Tom ran away, he still cares about Aunt Polly, and that is good.

However, although Tom does show some examples of being a likeable character, he shows even more examples of being dislikable. One example of this is when Tom and Huck witness Injun Joe murder Dr. Robinson. Huck and Tom swear not ever to tell anyone about the murder. Later, Tom breaks the vow, and confesses in front of everyone. But Huck never broke the vow, and in some ways Tom betrayed him. Also, if Tom and Huck had told earlier, but this time agreed to both tell, Muff Potter would not have been falsely accused of murder. If Muff Potter had been proven innocent by Tom and Huck, he would not be in jail for nearly as long as he was, if at all.

Another example of Tom as a dislikeable character is the day he meets the new boy. Almost the minute Tom meets him, they are in a fight. Tom ends up winning, and he beats up the new boy badly. That was a pretty mean thing for Tom to do, especially when it is the new kid.

Another time, Tom steals a whole leg of a ham. He and his friends are playing a game, and Tom takes a ham from a family. That much ham is a lot of meat, and for many families back then, that much meat could last the whole winter. It was a really terrible thing to do, because whoever he stole the meat from, might even need it to survive. Tom should never have stolen that meat. His friends too had taken things like fish or bacon from other families.

A third example of Tom doing something that the reader would think of as a dislikeable thing about Tom, is again, the time when Tom, Huck, and Joe run away. Tom knows that Aunt Polly is worried sick, and very sad. But Tom and his friends don't even leave a note to their parents, or

anything to let them know that they are okay. That is a very cruel thing to do to them, to keep them waiting, thinking the boys are dead.

But the most dislikable thing about Tom is the way Tom takes advantage of his friends. One example of this is when Tom is given the job of whitewashing the fence. Tom tricks his friends into doing his chore. He makes the job seem important by telling his friends that they would not be able to do a good enough job at it. They beg him and they trade him all sorts of things to do his job, and he knows he is being mean, and tricking them. Then Aunt Polly gives him an apple for the good work, that he didn't even do, but he steals a doughnut from her anyway. Later, when Tom goes to Sunday school, he gives his friends back the things they traded him to whitewash the fence, in exchange for bible tickets. The Sunday School gives out a blue ticket for every two verses memorized. Ten blue tickets equaled one red ticket, ten reds equals one yellow, and for ten yellow tickets you got a copy of the bible. Tom traded his whitewashing earnings for enough tickets for a bible. Then in front of the whole Sunday school Tom receives a bible. I think that is a truly nasty thing to do. He basically cheated to get the bible, and he cheated his friends.

Overall, Tom Sawyer is a complicated character that the author wants us to think of as a dislikeable one. Although Tom does do things that are likeable, the dislikable ones outweigh it. A lot can be learned from Tom about people's characteristics, and about what they are really like.

File Name: A7R The Fight for Education**Opinion/Argument****Grade 7****Range of Writing****The Fight for Education**

I ran as fast as I could. I could see my destination just ahead of me. Just a little further, I kept saying to myself, just a little further and I will have made it to the land of the free and the home of the brave, the land of opportunity.

Diego finally got to his destination. He had gotten to America without getting caught. Now he could get the education to become a mechanic.

Like Diego, many illegal immigrants come to America every day for a better life and a better education. Whether these illegal immigrants should get the education they came for is very controversial in today's economy. Some Americans think that illegal immigrants shouldn't be eligible for instate tuition, but other Americans think that these illegal immigrants should be eligible for instate tuition. I am one who thinks that illegal immigrants should be eligible for instate tuition.

One of the most important arguments is that illegal immigrants pay taxes. By buying goods in America they are paying sales taxes, and in April most files and pay their [income] taxes. In fact, illegals pay about nine billion dollars in [Social Security] taxes every year. Where do these taxes go? They go to lowering the cost of instate tuition, making it so affordable today. So why shouldn't the illegal immigrants be eligible for instate tuition when they are helping to lower the price of the tuition?

Another important argument is one that our forefathers set forth to make a better nation. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are

Narrative lead engages reader, gives context about issue of illegal immigrants.

Introduces claim: Like Diego, mar introduction gives context about issue of whether or not illegal immigrants should receive in-state college tuition.

Acknowledges competing claims

States focus / claim

Organizes the reasons and evidence logically One of the most

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify relationships among claim and reasons

Supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence, and demonstrates an understanding of the topic A reasons importa

created equal...and hold unalienable rights, among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” If we are truly equal, then illegal immigrants deserve the same rights as we do for instate tuition.

However, some Americans say that illegal immigrants don’t deserve instate tuition because they are sending money back to their home country and families. But we do not know how much money they are actually sending back, and besides, this helps spread the money around. It may even help a foreign country to get out of poverty. This could actually stop more illegal immigrants from coming to America because they would be stable enough from the money that is being sent to them so that they don’t need to look to the land of opportunity for a job.

In conclusion, illegal immigrants should be eligible for instate tuition so, like Diego, they can follow their dreams. If you ever have to take a side on this issue, I hope you will consider mine.

Acknowledges However, some counterclaims, then rebuts with reasons and relevant, accurate, credible evidence and reasoning

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify relationships among claim and reasons

Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports argument presented

In this assignment from a social studies class, at the end of a unit on immigration, the student was asked to take a position on whether or not illegal immigrants should be eligible for in-state tuition. She gives an introduction of some background / context on the issue and makes a claim that in her view illegal immigrants should be eligible for in-state tuition.

The writer supports her claim with several reasons, which she develops with some relevant, accurate, credible evidence. She supports her claim with logical reasoning, and organizes the reasons logically. In addition, she acknowledges the counterclaims. She then refutes the counterclaim with support for her own position, even though use of counterclaim is not stated in the Standards at this grade level. The writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style throughout the piece. The conclusion ties back to the narrative lead, and follows from and supports the argument presented.

File Name: A7R The Fight for Education

Opinion/Argument

Grade 7

Range of Writing

The Fight for Education

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One of the most important arguments is that illegal immigrants pay taxes. By buying goods in America they are paying sales taxes, and in April most file and pay their [income] taxes. In fact, illegals pay about nine billion dollars in [Social Security] taxes every year. Where do these taxes go? They go to lowering the cost of in-state tuition, making it so affordable today. So why shouldn't the illegal immigrants be eligible for in-state tuition when they are helping to lower the price of the tuition?

Another important argument is one that our forefathers set forth to make a better nation. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal...and hold unalienable rights, among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." If we are truly equal, then illegal immigrants deserve the same rights as we do for in-state tuition.

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coming to America because they would be stable enough from the money that is being sent to them so that they don't need to look to the land of opportunity for a job.

In conclusion, illegal immigrants should be eligible for instate tuition so, like Diego, they can follow their dreams. If you ever have to take a side on this issue, I hope you will consider mine.

File Name: A8R Years Gone By

Opinion/Argument

Grade 8

Range of Writing

Years Gone By;

The Importance of Great Literature

“That one day little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today.”

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

As years have gone by, as we take actions and feel emotions, we embark upon a search for something to describe the indescribable, to understand the most complicated of thoughts, and to ease unrelenting pain. It is in this search that we stumble upon literature, and we have learned that it can be one of the most effective tools to both spiritually and bodily heal the wounds of human nature.

Martin Luther King, Jr.’s message of equality is one that has stayed rooted deep in American history. He speaks of a problem that must not be neglected. In many cases, the key to problems such as these is understanding and awareness. Through literature we find that we benefit through both. Really great literature speaks to you forever, despite years of actions taken and emotions felt.

An example of such literature is the book *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain. Through its main character, Huckleberry Finn, a young, boisterous white boy who has recently run away, and his friend Jim, a runaway slave, live the values of America and the values of a very turbulent, but loyal friendship.

Regardless of its message, Mark Twain’s talent and its ability to withstand, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is at risk of being taken off the shelves of schools across the country. As an American student, I firmly believe that we must make a stand against this potentially great loss, and make sure that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is kept in our schools and in our

Introduces a claim:

Introduction sets stage for claim to follow, connecting the purpose of great literature with the American ideal of equality

Defines problem / issue at hand (*Huckleberry Finn* being challenged in curriculum)

States focus / **claim**

minds for the sake of describing the indescribable, understanding the most complicated of thoughts and easing pain.

Some may disagree with the message conveyed by Mark Twain in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. With fire in their eyes they say that such a book encourages bad behavior and addresses racism in such a way that it should not be on school shelves.

First, they find that Huck is too unlawful a child to be portrayed as a hero. He steals, lies, and runs away. He has no problem going against the law or his own conscience and takes pride in achievements he has been taught not to strive for, they point out. However, to this point we shake our head. Many, many books have characters that lead lives that today's children are taught against. Among the pages of The Old Testament, Cain, brother of Able, stands clearly as a wrong-doer in order to help us better understand the negative forces of human nature. Though some may believe that Huck is among these undying wrong-doers, he may well be, like Cain, an example of how not to act. Yet you cannot classify Huck as a bad or good person, he is one of the many complicated characters that call the pages of great literature home. When stealing, Huck is actually "borrowing", his lies cause him great stress and come back to haunt him. When he runs away, he is running from an abusive father, taking control of a situation that was headed for disaster. When he goes against his conscience it is for the sake of a friend. In that case, Huck decides that the laws of human nature are more important than the laws that are ignorant, laws that discriminate, laws that could undeservingly take away what is yours. Huck is indeed no criminal, and if anything his values are something to be admired.

Those who still believe that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* should be taken off our schools' shelves say that it addresses racism in a way that is inappropriate for students. But that point, like the other, holds no water. It addresses racism in an appropriate and indeed necessary format. Like Martin Luther King Jr.'s message, it enables us to understand

Distinguishes claim from opposing claims in a series of counterclaims

Explains counterclaim thoroughly

Phrases and clauses clarify relationships within reasons

Acknowledges an opposing claim, which the writer distinguishes from the claim and then counters with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, demonstrating a deep understanding of the text and topic

**Organizes the reasons and evidence logically
Establishes and maintains a formal style.**

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence

and at the same time helps us become aware of how poorly African-Americans were treated during the time the book was set, and it does this in a true-to-life and very real layout. Also, Huck and Jim strike a friendship that white people and slaves could not have in the limits of society during the time period and this reminds the reader in many places that everyone deserves the same freedom and equality.

You must also take into account that if there is any place to read a book with possibly risky content it would be inside classrooms, classrooms where the material would certainly be discussed and explained. In class is perhaps the safest place for one to read this book, or any book that could result in conflicting viewpoints. To take it off the shelves of schools would be to take away the ability to help children understand and be aware of the deeper meaning, and therefore they would be worse off than if it were to be in their schools.

In light of the past arguments, we must now press on to show you what an excellent book *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain really is. It is a book that contains important illustrations of racism and how to overcome it, as well as many American values.

First, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* illustrates a struggle that has been deeply rooted in our past, and remains deeply rooted in the present. Though we have come a long way, a wall built of racial cloud still stands. Huck and Jim find a way to get past this wall and despite slavery and the examples set in society, treat each other as equals. In Chapter 15, titled “Fooling Poor Old Jim” Huck tries to play a trick on Jim to make fun of him, not thinking about Jim’s feelings. When Jim discovers the truth he is deeply hurt, but is able to express that to Huck. Hearing of his friend’s sadness, Huck in turn apologizes for his actions.

“En when I wake up en fine you back agin, all safe en soun’, de tears come, en I could ‘a’ got down on my knees en kiss yo’ foot, I’s so thankful. En all you wuz thinking’ ‘bout wuz how you could make a fool uv ole Jim wid a lie. Dat truck dah is *trash*; en trash is what people is dat puts

Supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, thereby demonstrating deep understanding of the text and topic, including broader ideas about education

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence

Supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, including direct quotations, thereby demonstrating deep understanding of the text and topic; uses precise references to text which are thoroughly analyzed and explained

dirt on de head er dey fren's en makes 'em ashamed.' Then he got up slow and walked to the wigwam, and went in there without saying anything but that. But that was enough. It made me feel so mean I could almost kissed *his* foot to get him to take it back. It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger – but I done it and I warent every sorry for it afterward, neither. I didn't do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn't done that one if I'd 'a' knowed it would make him feel that way.”

It is a very important time in this book when Jim is able to express to Huck how being lied to hurt him, especially when he thought of Huck as a friend. After Jim has spoken of feelings and retired for bed, Huck takes time to reflect upon his actions, and how they made Jim feel. Fifteen minutes later, despite what society taught him, Huck apologies to Jim as only a friend would, and takes what Jim says to heart.

Not only does *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* address racism in an appropriate way and remarkably find a way to overcome it, but in many ways it reminds the reader of the important values that can only too often be forgotten in America. One of the biggest is freedom. Both Huck and Jim are searching for freedom, escaping the imprisonment of slavery and an abusive father. Another value that is evident is equality. As expressed in the quote above, Huck and Jim find that equality is an essential in their friendship. Through this understanding, they manage to stay friends despite all that life throws their way.

One clear and significant value shows in this book is perseverance. Both Huck and Jim set a valiant and enduring example of this value throughout the book. Despite Huck's father and slave catchers close on their trail; a rattlesnake skin that constantly brings them bad luck; a wrecked ship that accommodated a murder plot; a tumultuous friendship and a family blinded by bloodshed, Huck and Jim find themselves pushing that much harder to reach the freedom that their hearts desire. They find courage and want within each other, and as a heroic duo conquer all that flows to them upon the river of life.

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence

Supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, thereby demonstrating deep understanding of the text and topic; uses precise references to text which are thoroughly analyzed and explained

There are many values evident in this book that are set down in the Declaration of Independence, and values that have stood the test of time. This brings us back to the fact that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* must be taught in schools. As Huck and Jim lead their lives they set the examples that are crucial to students' education. When people learn how to treat each other and learn significant values at a young age, they are given the opportunity to apply those lessons to their future and in turn teach their children. To leave these lessons behind would be doing these students a disservice, for it is lessons like these that teach us who we are, who we need to be.

Great literature is a food that is scarce, but it will always be universal. Do your part to foster its presence in your life, and the life of the youth of America. As years have gone by, as actions are taken and emotions are felt, we all search for something to describe the indescribable, to understand an idea that is conflicting, or to ease unrelenting pain. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain is a possible outcome of that search, teaching the significance of friendship, freedom and equality. Under the nose of a visceral world, two differing runaways find shelter in a friendship banned from society. In this friendship, they teach the world the importance of understanding and the importance of great literature.

Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the argument presented

In this assignment from a language arts class, the student was asked, after studying *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, to take a position on whether or not the book should continue to be included in the school curriculum. She gives an introduction of some background / context on the issue, and makes a claim that the book should continue to be included.

The writer develops her claim with several reasons, which she supports thoroughly and thoughtfully with relevant, accurate evidence from the text, showing deep understanding of both the text and the issue, and even of broader connections to bigger ideas like equality and the purpose of education. In a clearly organized essay, she relies on logical reasoning to develop her claim and persuade her audience of the correctness of her position. In addition, she thoroughly and thoughtfully acknowledges the counterclaim that there are reasons to eliminate the book, then refutes that counterclaim with clear and logical, text-based reasoning.

The writer maintains a formal style throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from the argument presented and synthesizes the key points.

File Name: A8R Years Gone By

Opinion/Argument

Grade 8

Range of Writing

**Years Gone By;
The Importance of Great Literature**

“That one day little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today.”

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

As years have gone by, as we take actions and feel emotions, we embark upon a search for something to describe the indescribable, to understand the most complicated of thoughts, and to ease unrelenting pain. It is in this search that we stumble upon literature, and we have learned that it can be one of the most effective tools to both spiritually and bodily heal the wounds of human nature.

Martin Luther King, Jr.’s message of equality is one that has stayed rooted deep in American history. He speaks of a problem that must not be neglected. In many cases, the key to problems such as these is understanding and awareness. Through literature we find that we benefit through both. Really great literature speaks to you forever, despite years of actions taken and emotions felt.

An example of such literature is the book *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain. Through its main character, Huckleberry Finn, a young, boisterous white boy who has recently run away, and his friend Jim, a runaway slave, live the values of America and the values of a very turbulent, but loyal friendship.

Regardless of its message, Mark Twain’s talent and its ability to withstand, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is at risk of being taken off the shelves of schools across the country. As an American student, I firmly believe that we must make a stand against this potentially great loss, and make sure that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is kept in our schools and in our minds for the sake of describing the indescribable, understanding the most complicated of thoughts and easing pain.

Some may disagree with the message conveyed by Mark Twain in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. With fire in their eyes they say that such a book encourages bad behavior and addresses racism in such a way that it should not be on school shelves.

First, they find that Huck is too unlawful a child to be portrayed as a hero. He steals, lies, and runs away. He has no problem going against the law or his own conscience and takes pride in achievements he has been taught not to strive for, they point out. However, to this point we shake our head. Many, many books have characters that lead lives that today's children are taught against. Among the pages of The Old Testament, Cain, brother of Able, stands clearly as a wrong-doer in order to help us better understand the negative forces of human nature. Though some may believe that Huck is among these undying wrong-doers, he may well be, like Cain, an example of how not to act. Yet you cannot classify Huck as a bad or good person, he is one of the many complicated characters that call the pages of great literature home. When stealing, Huck is actually "borrowing", his lies cause him great stress and come back to haunt him. When he runs away, he is running from an abusive father, taking control of a situation that was headed for disaster. When he goes against his conscience it is for the sake of a friend. In that case, Huck decides that the laws of human nature are more important than the laws that are ignorant, laws that discriminate, laws that could undeservingly take away what is yours. Huck is indeed no criminal, and if anything his values are something to be admired.

Those who still believe that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* should be taken off our schools' shelves say that it addresses racism in a way that is inappropriate for students. But that point, like the other, holds no water. It addresses racism in an appropriate and indeed necessary format. Like Martin Luther King Jr.'s message, it enables us to understand and at the same time helps us become aware of how poorly African-Americans were treated during the time the book was set, and it does this in a true-to-life and very real layout. Also, Huck and Jim strike a friendship that white people and slaves could not have in the limits of society during the time period and this reminds the reader in many places that everyone deserves the same freedom and equality.

You must also take into account that if there is any place to read a book with possibly risky content it would be inside classrooms, classrooms where the material would certainly be discussed and explained. In class is perhaps the safest place for one to read this book, or any book that could result in conflicting viewpoints. To take it off the shelves of schools would be to take away the ability to help children understand and be aware of the deeper meaning, and therefore they would be worse off than if it were to be in their schools.

In light of the past arguments, we must now press on to show you what an excellent book *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain really is. It is a book that contains important illustrations of racism and how to overcome it, as well as many American values.

First, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* illustrates a struggle that has been deeply rooted in our past, and remains deeply rooted in the present. Though we have come a long way, a wall built of racial cloud still stands. Huck and Jim find a way to get past this wall and despite slavery and the examples set in society, treat each other as equals. In Chapter 15, titled “Fooling Poor Old Jim” Huck tries to play a trick on Jim to make fun of him, not thinking about Jim’s feelings. When Jim discovers the truth he is deeply hurt, but is able to express that to Huck. Hearing of his friend’s sadness, Huck in turn apologizes for his actions.

“‘En when I wake up en fine you back agin, all safe en soun’, de tears come, en I could ‘a’ got down on my knees en kiss yo’ foot, I’s so thankful. En all you wuz thinking’ ‘bout wuz how you could make a fool uv ole Jim wid a lie. Dat truck dah is *trash*; en trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er dey fren’s en makes ‘em ashamed.’ Then he got up slow and walked to the wigwam, and went in there without saying anything but that. But that was enough. It made me feel so mean I could almost kissed *his* foot to get him to take it back. It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger – but I done it and I waren’t every sorry for it afterward, neither. I didn’t do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn’t done that one if I’d ‘a’ knowed it would make him feel that way.”

It is a very important time in this book when Jim is able to express to Huck how being lied to hurt him, especially when he thought of Huck as a friend. After Jim has spoken of feelings and retired for bed, Huck takes time to reflect upon his actions, and how they made Jim feel. Fifteen minutes later, despite what society taught him, Huck apologizes to Jim as only a friend would, and takes what Jim says to heart.

Not only does *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* address racism in an appropriate way and remarkably find a way to overcome it, but in many ways it reminds the reader of the important values that can only too often be forgotten in America. One of the biggest is freedom. Both Huck and Jim are searching for freedom, escaping the imprisonment of slavery and an abusive father. Another value that is evident is equality. As expressed in the quote above, Huck and Jim find that equality is an essential in their friendship. Through this understanding, they manage to stay friends despite all that life throws their way.

One clear and significant value shown in this book is perseverance. Both Huck and Jim set a valiant and enduring example of this value throughout the book. Despite Huck's father and slave catchers close on their trail; a rattlesnake skin that constantly brings them bad luck; a wrecked ship that accommodated a murder plot; a tumultuous friendship and a family blinded by bloodshed, Huck and Jim find themselves pushing that much harder to reach the freedom that their hearts desire. They find courage and want within each other, and as a heroic duo conquer all that flows to them upon the river of life.

There are many values evident in this book that are set down in the Declaration of Independence, and values that have stood the test of time. This brings us back to the fact that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* must be taught in schools. As Huck and Jim lead their lives they set the examples that are crucial to students' education. When people learn how to treat each other and learn significant values at a young age, they are given the opportunity to apply those lessons to their future and in turn teach their children. To leave these lessons behind would be doing these students a disservice, for it is lessons like these that teach us who we are, who we need to be.

Great literature is a food that is scarce, but it will always be universal. Do your part to foster its presence in your life, and the life of the youth of America. As years have gone by, as actions are taken and emotions are felt, we all search for something to describe the indescribable, to understand an idea that is conflicting, or to ease unrelenting pain. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain is a possible outcome of that search, teaching the significance of friendship, freedom and equality. Under the nose of a visceral world, two differing runaways find shelter in a friendship banned from society. In this friendship, they teach the world the importance of understanding and the importance of great literature.

File Name: A8R We Need the League

Opinion/Argument

Grade 8

Range of Writing

We Need the League

Great people of North Dakota,

I, Senator McCumber, [an actual Senator from 1919 in the League of Nations debate], have just participated in a debate regarding whether or not America should sign the Treaty of Versailles, and in doing so, join the League of Nations. The League of Nations is a unified group of nations dedicated to the preservation of peace. The League is designed to deal with international issues, adjudicating differences between countries instead of them going directly to combat.

Now, in the interests of the great state of North Dakota, I voted in favor of the treaty with no reservations. We need a fair treaty to prevent future wars as horrible as the Great War was. After the war, the central powers composed the Treaty of Versailles to create the League of Nations in an attempt to ward off future conflicts. We cannot have another war as horrible as this one. I believe, because of that, that we need a fair treaty, equal to all its members, that will restrict the use of new weapons, and prevent future wars from breaking out.

First, the Treaty and the League will control the use of new weapons. As stated in Article VII, “One of its (the League’s) jobs will be to come up with a plan for reducing the number of weapons around the world (arms reduction).” This means that the League will be in charge of weapons issues. This will cause heavily armed countries to demilitarize and make it less possible for war to break out. This is good because heavily armed countries generally end up using those arms in some way.

Another reason why I believe we need to sign the Treaty with no reservations is we need a treaty that is fair to all its members. Reservations

Introduces a claim:

The introduction gives specific context about the issue whether to join the League of Nations in 1919. Writer makes the claim of supporting U.S. entry into League of Nations and **distinguishes it from alternate claims** that the U.S. should not vote to enter League.

States focus / claim

Defines problem, reason for debate; gives enough background / context so that a reader can follow writer’s thinking.

Organizes the reasons and evidence logically

Supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, including direct quotations, **from accurate, credible sources**, thereby **demonstrating understanding of the topic**

[proposed by the League's opponents] would give America too much power within the league, thus allowing America to bend the rules of the League to suit its own will. This would cause unrest in the League, possibly causing America to make enemies. This could lead to another war. The treaty should be as fair as possible.

Establishes and maintains a formal style.

Yet another reason why I voted for America to sign the treaty is the fact it would prevent future wars from breaking out. The way the League is designed, it would give plenty of time for the League to settle the countries' differences with a fair and equal compromise. If war were to break out, the council members in the League would all help in defending each other, thus ending the war as quickly as possible with as few deaths as possible. The treaty would prevent war from happening or end the fighting as quickly as possible.

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence

Some people say that we shouldn't join the League because we would be intervening in foreign affairs, that it would cause another war. How can you not intervene when 8 million people died in the last war? How can you stand there with a clear conscience when you know you could have prevented all that carnage from ever happening? The League will help countries settle their differences with plenty of time to talk it over. Six months for the countries to listen to the council's advice, and after that another three months before they can mobilize. If we join the League, we will keep anything like the Great War from happening again.

Acknowledges an opposing claim, which the writer distinguishes from the claim and then counters with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, demonstrating an understanding of the topic

In conclusion, the Treaty of Versailles needs to be signed so the League will be put into affect. The League of Nations will prevent war from breaking out, restrict weapons development and militarism, and keep us from the horrors of another Great War.

Provides a concluding section that follows from the argument presented

Thank you.

In this assignment from a social studies class, the student was asked, in the persona of a senator from 1919, to take a position on whether or not the United States should join the League of Nations. He gives an introduction of some background / context on the issue, and makes a claim that in his view the United States should join the League.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he develops with relevant, accurate, credible evidence. In a clearly organized essay, he relies largely on logical reasoning to develop his claim and persuade his audience of the correctness of his position. In addition, he acknowledges the counterclaim that there are reasons to not support the League, then refutes that counterclaim with an argument that is both moral (*eight million people died, so how can we not support the League?*) and practical (*the League will give countries time to talk out their differences instead of going to war*). Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style throughout the piece. The conclusion is a basic restatement that follows from the argument presented.

File Name: A8R We Need the League

Opinion/Argument

Grade 8

Range of Writing

We Need the League

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I, Senator McCumber, [an actual Senator from 1919 in the League of Nations debate], have just participated in a debate regarding whether or not America should sign the Treaty of Versailles, and in doing so, join the League of Nations. The League of Nations is a unified group of nations dedicated to the preservation of peace. The League is designed to deal with international issues, adjudicating differences between countries instead of them going directly to combat.

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First, the Treaty and the League will control the use of new weapons. As stated in Article VII, “One of its (the League’s) jobs will be to come up with a plan for reducing the number of weapons around the world (arms reduction).” This means that the League will be in charge of weapons issues. This will cause heavily armed countries to demilitarize and make it less possible for war to break out. This is good because heavily armed countries generally end up using those arms in some way.

Another reason why I believe we need to sign the Treaty with no reservations is we need a treaty that is fair to all its members. Reservations [proposed by the League’s opponents] would give America too much power within the league, thus allowing America to bend the rules of the League to suit its own will. This would cause unrest in the League, possibly causing America to make enemies. This could lead to another war. The treaty should be as fair as possible.

Yet another reason why I voted for America to sign the treaty is the fact it would prevent future wars from breaking out. The way the League is designed, it would give plenty of time for the League to settle the countries' differences with a fair and equal compromise. If war were to break out, the council members in the League would all help in defending each other, thus ending the war as quickly as possible with as few deaths as possible. The treaty would prevent war from happening or end the fighting as quickly as possible.

Some people say that we shouldn't join the League because we would be intervening in foreign affairs, that it would cause another war. How can you not intervene when 8 million people died in the last war? How can you stand there with a clear conscience when you know you could have prevented all that carnage from ever happening? The League will help countries settle their differences with plenty of time to talk it over. Six months for the countries to listen to the council's advice, and after that another three months before they can mobilize. If we join the League, we will keep anything like the Great War from happening again.

In conclusion, the Treaty of Versailles needs to be signed so the League will be put into affect. The League of Nations will prevent war from breaking out, restrict weapons development and militarism, and keep us from the horrors of another Great War.

Thank you.

File Name: A9-10R Is It Love?

Opinion/Argument

Grade 9

Range of Writing

Is It Love?

One of the most misunderstood emotions is love. There are so many different perspectives that it can be interpreted as something completely opposite of its intention. Harper Lee, the author of *To Kill a Mockingbird* states that “it’s a love story, plain and simple.” This statement confuses many people because her book is anything but a romance novel. However, that is not the kind of love she is referring to. This is the love among family, friends, neighbors, and enemies. This love is called *agape*, and as Martin Luther King defines it, it is “a disinterested love in which the individual seeks not his own good, but the good of his neighbor...it begins by loving others *for their sakes*...it’s a love seeking to preserve and create community” (King 19-20). In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, love is brought up in many ways. Love is shown throughout the book as different actions by the characters coming together so they can understand each other.

Atticus shows love towards his neighbor Ms. Dubose, even though she is completely disrespectful towards him. Everyday she insults Atticus and his children because he is defending Tom Robinson, but he does nothing to stop her. Instead, he sends Jem over to her house everyday for about a month to read to her. One day, it is Atticus who goes to her house, and he stays for most of the day. When he returns home, he tells Jem that she has died, and the reason he had to read to her was because “ Ms. Dubose was a morphine addict”(147). Atticus knew that she wanted to die free, and he helped her achieve her goal by sending Jem to read to her, so she could get her mind off the drug. “She said she was going to leave this world beholden to nothing and nobody” Atticus tells Jem (148). This is when Atticus and Jem realize her true determination to no longer be a morphine addict, and it’s in this way that they both truly understand her. Even though she was dying, Atticus still sends Jem to read to her everyday to help her become sober. Even when she is dying, Ms. Dubose is still trying to

Introduces a precise claim:
The introduction states a claim and then gives context about the subject, acknowledging it as a **substantive topic** (connecting upcoming claim with Martin Luther King’s concept of the *Greek agape*)
Distinguishes upcoming claim from potential competing counterclaims or misunderstanding

States focus / claim

Supports claim with logical reasoning, accurate and credible evidence and demonstrates understanding of the topic / text; uses precise references to text, which are thoroughly analyzed and explained

Phrases and clauses clarify relationships within reasons and evidence.

conquer her addiction, and it's for that reason Atticus says, "She was the bravest person I ever knew" (149). Love is shown here because even though Ms. Dubose is completely disrespectful towards Atticus, he steps up to help her die free. This is an example of agape because instead of fighting hate with hate, Atticus loves Ms. Dubose, and by doing so, he is able to understand her, and therefore love her.

Reminds reader of **claim**

Another place love shows up is during the trial. Atticus truly believes that Tom Robinson is not guilty, and he goes out of his way to prove his point in courts. A majority of Maycomb is mad at Atticus for even taking the case, let alone actually trying to set him free. Atticus turns to the jury and tells them, "I am confident that you gentlemen will review without passion the evidence you have heard, come to a decision, and restore this defendant to his family"(275). Atticus fights as hard as he can to prove his case, but it just isn't what people want to hear. The jury votes Tom Robinson guilty, and less than a week later he is shot. This upsets Atticus, and especially Jem. But Atticus comforts Jem by telling him it affected somebody on the jury, because one of the Cunninghams wanted to vote 'not guilty'. Confused, Jem says, " One minute they're tryin' to kill him and the next they're tryin' to turn him loose...I'll never understand those folks as long as I live" (298). Jem is too young to really understand, but Atticus knows his case is changing the views and thoughts of racism in their community. After the trial, Atticus is surprised to find that the entire black community gave his family a surplus of food as a thank you. This touches his heart because he starts crying, and he tell Calpurnia to "Tell them I'm very grateful" (86). We again see love in this situation because Atticus got the jury to understand Tom, even though he ends up dead. Also, when Tom's friends and family reach out to thank Atticus for his efforts and his true support in the trial, we can see that there is understanding. One step at a time, Atticus is changing the thoughts of the people in the community to make it stronger by using agape.

Supports claim with logical reasoning, accurate and credible evidence and demonstrates understanding of the topic / text; uses precise references to text, which are thoroughly analyzed and explained

Reminds reader of **claim**

Supports claim with logical reasoning, accurate and credible evidence and demonstrates understanding of the topic / text; uses precise references to text, which are thoroughly analyzed and explained

One of the places we see the most love is with Boo Radley. He is just a misunderstood man who Jem and Scout torment and talk about throughout the summer. Boo, however, does little things to change their opinion of him. One night when there is a fire, Boo Radley comes out of his

Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline

house and puts a blanket on Scout without knowing- a very loving and caring gesture. When Jem tells Atticus, he says, “Someday, maybe, Scout can thank him for covering her up” (96). After this, the kids start thinking of Boo differently. One night, after the play, Jem and Scout are attacked in the woods by Mr. Ewell when they are walking home. Suddenly, somebody kills their attacker and brings injured Jem home. It’s not until they are home that Scout realizes it was Boo who saved them. “Hey, Boo” she says (362). This is the part of the story that the reader sees how much Boo Radley loves Jem and Scout. When Scout looks out from Boo’s porch, she glimpses his perspective, and summarized the events that took place over the summer, and thinks, “Autumn again, and Boo’s children needed him” (374). Boo cares for these children so much that he considers them his own kids. This is another example of agape, because he’s giving without expecting anything in return. It’s when Jem and Scout finally realize this that they know they love him back, which brings them closer together.

We see countless examples of love throughout the book through the characters actions. Martine Luther states that agape is “understanding” (King 19). The more the characters understand each other, the more they come to care and love each other. This makes them all, as a community, much stronger. “It’s a love story, plain and simple” Harper Lee states. Not a romance, but a book in which agape is shown throughout. This is a book of understanding, and when there’s understanding, there is agape. This love is important because this is what human nature needs in order to become united. King and Lee see this importance, and consider agape a tool used to bring people together to make a stronger community.

Provides a concluding statement that follows from and supports argument presented; synthesizes arguments to talk about “stronger community”

Works Cited

King, Martin Luther. “An Experiment in Love.” *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King*. Ed. James M. Washington. San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 199. 16-20.

Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. New York: Grand Central, 1982. Print.

In this assignment from a language arts class, the student was asked, after studying *To Kill a Mockingbird*, to support the position that the book should be considered a love story. She gives an introduction of some background / context on the concept of love as *agape*, and makes a claim that in her view the book is indeed a love story.

The writer develops her claim with several reasons, which, here, take the form of deep evidence from the text. She develops her thinking thoroughly with relevant, accurate, credible evidence, showing deep understanding of the text and the concept of *agape*. She organizes her ideas clearly and relies on logical reasoning to develop her claim. In this essay, she does not address counterclaims except a bit in the introduction, but here the counterclaim is not needed.

The writer maintains a formal style and objective tone throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from the argument presented and synthesizes the key points.

File Name: A 9-10R Is It Love?

Opinion/Argument

Grade 9

Range of Writing

Is It Love?

One of the most misunderstood emotions is love. There are so many different perspectives that it can be interpreted as something completely opposite of its intention. Harper Lee, the author of *To Kill a Mockingbird* states that “it’s a love story, plain and simple.” This statement confuses many people because her book is anything but a romance novel. However, that is not the kind of love she is referring to. This is the love among family, friends, neighbors, and enemies. This love is called *agape*, and as Martin Luther King defines it, it is “a disinterested love in which the individual seeks not his own good, but the good of his neighbor...it begins by loving others *for their sakes*...it’s a love seeking to preserve and create community” (King 19-20). In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, love is brought up in many ways. Love is shown throughout the book as different actions by the characters coming together so they can understand each other.

Atticus shows love towards his neighbor Ms. Dubose, even though she is completely disrespectful towards him. Everyday she insults Atticus and his children because he is defending Tom Robinson, but he does nothing to stop her. Instead, he sends Jem over to her house everyday for about a month to read to her. One day, it is Atticus who goes to her house, and he stays for most of the day. When he returns home, he tells Jem that she has died, and the reason he had to read to her was because “Ms. Dubose was a morphine addict”(147). Atticus knew that she wanted to die free, and he helped her achieve her goal by sending Jem to read to her, so she could get her mind off the drug. “She said she was going to leave this world beholden to nothing and nobody” Atticus tells Jem (148). This is when Atticus and Jem realize her true determination to no longer be a morphine addict, and it’s in this way that they both truly understand her. Even though she was dying, Atticus still sends Jem to read to her everyday to help her become sober. Even when she is dying, Ms. Dubose is still trying to conquer her addiction, and it’s for that reason Atticus says, “She was the bravest person I ever knew” (149). Love is shown here because even though Ms. Dubose is completely disrespectful towards Atticus, he steps up to help her die free. This is an example of *agape* because instead of fighting hate with hate, Atticus loves Ms. Dubose, and by doing so, he is able to understand her, and therefore love her.

Another place love shows up is during the trial. Atticus truly believes that Tom Robinson is not guilty, and he goes out of his way to prove his point in courts. A majority of Maycomb is mad at Atticus for even taking the case, let alone actually trying to set him free. Atticus turns to the jury and tells them, “I am confident that you gentlemen will review without passion the evidence you have heard, come to a decision, and restore this defendant to his family”(275). Atticus fights as hard as he can to prove his case, but it just isn’t what people want to hear. The jury votes Tom Robinson guilty, and less than a week later he is shot. This upsets Atticus, and especially Jem. But Atticus comforts Jem by telling him it affected somebody on the jury, because one of the Cunninghams wanted to vote ‘not guilty’. Confused, Jem says, “ One minute they’re tryin’ to kill him and the next they’re tryin’ to turn him loose...I’ll never understand those folks as long as I live” (298). Jem is too young to really understand, but Atticus knows his case is changing the views and thoughts of racism in their community. After the trial, Atticus is surprised to find that the entire black community gave his family a surplus of food as a thank you. This touches his heart because he starts crying, and he tell Calpurnia to “Tell them I’m very grateful” (86). We again see love in this situation because Atticus got the jury to understand Tom, even though he ends up dead. Also, when Tom’s friends and family reach out to thank Atticus for his efforts and his true support in the trial, we can see that there is understanding. One step at a time, Atticus is changing the thoughts of the people in the community to make it stronger by using agape.

One of the places we see the most love is with Boo Radley. He is just a misunderstood man who Jem and Scout torment and talk about throughout the summer. Boo, however, does little things to change their opinion of him. One night when there is a fire, Boo Radley comes out of his house and puts a blanket on Scout without knowing- a very loving and caring gesture. When Jem tells Atticus, he says, “Someday, maybe, Scout can thank him for covering her up” (96).After this, the kids start thinking of Boo differently. One night, after the play, Jem and Scout are attacked in the woods by Mr. Ewell when they are walking home. Suddenly, somebody kills their attacker and brings injured Jem home. It’s not until they are home that Scout realizes it was Boo who saved them. “Hey, Boo” she says (362). This is the part of the story that the reader sees how much Boo Radley loves Jem and Scout. When Scout looks out from Boo’s porch, she glimpses his perspective, and summarized the events that took place over the summer, and thinks, “Autumn again, and Boo’s children needed him” (374). Boo cares for these children so much that he considers them his own kids. This is another example of

agape, because he's giving without expecting anything in return. It's when Jem and Scout finally realize this that they know they love him back, which brings them closer together.

We see countless examples of love throughout the book through the characters actions. Martine Luther states that agape is "understanding" (King 19). The more the characters understand each other, the more they come to care and love each other. This makes them all, as a community, much stronger. "It's a love story, plain and simple" Harper Lee states. Not a romance, but a book in which agape is shown throughout. This is a book of understanding, and when there's understanding, there is agape. This love is important because this is what human nature needs in order to become united. King and Lee see this importance, and consider agape a tool used to bring people together to make a stronger community.

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File Name: A9-10R Keep On Reading

Opinion/Argument

Grade 10

Range of Writing

Keep On Reading

On the first day of school, the students walk into the classroom and see a book on every desk. The teachers happily greets them and tells everyone to sit at a desk with a book that seems interesting to them. The pupils tentatively sit down in their seats and look up at their young teacher for instructions, but she sits down and is soon deeply absorbed in her story, eyes shimmering in the light. The pupils gaze in wonder at her and slowly crack open their books. We've grown up reading, but not very often do we see a teacher who exemplifies reading. Reading is recurrently a forced activity. Therefore, people both young and old feel like they HAVE to read, and so it's only something they have to do for school or work. They don't see it as an amazing skill that will not only help with their futures but also a great hobby to enjoy in life. Continuing to silent read for at least the first ten minutes of every class is a very good idea.

The first reason why reading is class is a good idea is because it helps get some of our required silent reading done. Envision Anne, an active, sweet young lady who participates in sports and also plays a big part in the school play. The little time she spends at home every day is reserved for homework assignments and memorizing her lines. Time reading in class at school cuts down on the time Anne has to make in order to read. Reading is important to Anne but she knows she can't possibly read and make good reflections if she doesn't have the time to do so. Some people just don't have the time, so making them read more outside of school is like telling the workers of IBM to go play a football game every day- there's just not enough time outside of work and school.

There are people who say that silent reading doesn't help low level readers, but in reality, it actually helps a lot. James McNair has many

Uses narrative lead to set context and engage reader

Introduces precise claim: The introduction states a claim about the value of ten minutes of silent reading; **distinguishes it from alternate claims** that many students do not see the value of silent reading. **Topic is substantive.**

States focus / **precise claim**

Supports claim with logical and valid reasoning, accurate and credible evidence. Points out strengths of reason by anticipating the knowledge level and concerns of the audience (teachers, other students, parents).

Names **counterclaim**

techniques to help children better comprehend what they are reading. He says that children can get bored with reading if it has no meaning to them (i.e. when reading as a class, not everyone is on the same level, and therefore, the lower level readers are not as interested). Once a child discovers the wonders of reading, they are sure to come across words they don't know (2). When this happens, silent reading will surely help because they can go over words they do know, and learn as they go. This really helps since classwork reading may be harder for lower level readers and they have many words they don't understand as opposed to learning a couple new words a day. They need practice in order to read better so if students are not surrounded by reading then they will not get better. In a research evaluation by Chow & Chou, 9th grade students were allowed 10 minutes each day to silent read and improved their reading skills by the end of the year (4). This is solid proof that having time to read in class is a benefit to everyone.

Creates an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence

Develops claims and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each

Reminds reader of claim.

Silent reading is not only fun, it paves way for tests – no one is allowed to read out loud or have questions read to them during a test. All tests require you to read at least questions. This doesn't include the rereading you need to do when you write essays for a test, an example being the NECAPs. Based on the National Center for Educational Statistics of 2008, reading is one of the few factors that can be the big change in test scores. The more you practice reading, the more enhanced your vocabulary gets. This helps not only the reading part, but also the writing parts, most importantly on standardized tests. Getting students to read in school ensures at least some practice for the testing that the United States schools have for students.

Uses clauses to link major sections of text, creating cohesion and clarifying relationships between reasons and claims

Supports claim with logical and valid reasoning, accurate and credible evidence. Points out strengths of reason by anticipating the knowledge level and concerns of the audience (teachers, other students, parents).

Not only is silent reading useful, it allows students to choose what they want to read, which in turn can help their future. Too frequently, class discussions are based on books that the teacher selects for their students to read. Students may get bored of always having their choices made for them and some even take it for granted and can soon forget how to deal with life on their own. KC, an avid reader, agrees: "Picking your own books allows you to be more prepared for real life, not just a classroom where decisions are typically made for you". By having the choice to find

Establishes and maintains formal style, objective tone

their own books, students become more independent in the process. School prepares them for life, but their choices prepare them for their future.

Silent reading during school hours has been a widely argued situation in many school districts of the world. We should continue to have silent reading for at least ten minutes every day, especially because of Winooski High School's Tier 1 situation. Our school officials say that our NECAP scores are getting lower and require more structure to help fix it. If that's the case, then silent reading could only help raise the scores reading well is a big part of the NECAPs, not only when we read the essays but also to read the questions that accompany them. Having a good knowledge of reading and reading strategies will help our school and a good start to getting there is through silent reading.

Distinguishes claim about value of silent reading from counterclaim.

Provides a conclusion which follows from and supports arguments presented

Sources

McNair, James. "Helping Children to Comprehend Faster For Better School Achievements". May 22 2009. *Ezine Articles*. March 10 2011 <http://ezinearticles.com/?Helping-Children-to-Comprehend-Faster-For-Better-School-Achievements&id=2381196>.

In this assignment from a language arts class, the student was asked to take a position on whether or not the school should continue its program of ten minutes of daily silent reading. He gives an introduction of some background / context on the issue, and makes a claim that in his view the ten minutes of silent reading should continue.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he develops with relevant, accurate, credible evidence. The writer organizes his ideas clearly and supports his claim with logical reasoning, on which he relies to develop his claim and persuade his audience of the correctness of his position. He also uses credible evidence to support and develop his claim. In addition, he acknowledges the counterclaim that there are reasons to not support the ten minutes of silent reading, then refutes that counterclaim with an argument that anticipates the concerns of his intended audience.

The writer maintains a formal style and objective tone throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from and supports the argument presented.

File Name: A 9-10R Keep On Reading

Opinion/Argument

Grade 10

Range of Writing

Keep On Reading

On the first day of school, the students walk into the classroom and see a book on every desk. The teachers happily greet them and tell everyone to sit at a desk with a book that seems interesting to them. The pupils tentatively sit down in their seats and look up at their young teacher for instructions, but she sits down and is soon deeply absorbed in her story, eyes shimmering in the light. The pupils gaze in wonder at her and slowly crack open their books. We've grown up reading, but not very often do we see a teacher who exemplifies reading. Reading is recurrently a forced activity. Therefore, people both young and old feel like they HAVE to read, and so it's only something they have to do for school or work. They don't see it as an amazing skill that will not only help with their futures but also a great hobby to enjoy in life. Continuing to silently read for at least the first ten minutes of every class is a very good idea.

The first reason why reading in class is a good idea is because it helps get some of our required silent reading done. Envision Anne, an active, sweet young lady who participates in sports and also plays a big part in the school play. The little time she spends at home every day is reserved for homework assignments and memorizing her lines. Time reading in class at school cuts down on the time Anne has to make in order to read. Reading is important to Anne but she knows she can't possibly read and make good reflections if she doesn't have the time to do so. Some people just don't have the time, so making them read more outside of school is like telling the workers of IBM to go play a football game every day- there's just not enough time outside of work and school.

There are people who say that silent reading doesn't help low level readers, but in reality, it actually helps a lot. James McNair has many techniques to help children better comprehend what they are reading. He says that children can get bored with reading if it has no meaning to them (i.e. when reading as a class, not everyone is on the same level, and therefore, the lower level readers are not as interested). Once a child discovers the wonders of reading, they are sure to come across words they

don't know (2). When this happens, silent reading will surely help because they can go over words they do know, and learn as they go. This really helps since classwork reading may be harder for lower level readers and they have many words they don't understand as opposed to learning a couple new words a day. They need practice in order to read better so if students are not surrounded by reading then they will not get better. In a research evaluation by Chow & Chou, 9th grade students were allowed 10 minutes each day to silent read and improved their reading skills by the end of the year (4). This is solid proof that having time to read in class is a benefit to everyone.

Silent reading is not only fun, it paves way for tests – no one is allowed to read out loud or have questions read to them during a test. All tests require you to read at least questions. This doesn't include the rereading you need to do when you write essays for a test, an example being the NECAPs. Based on the National Center for Educational Statistics of 2008, reading is one of the few factors that can be the big change in test scores. The more you practice reading, the more enhanced your vocabulary gets. This helps not only the reading part, but also the writing parts, most importantly on standardized tests. Getting students to read in school ensures at least some practice for the testing that the United States schools have for students.

Not only is silent reading useful, it allows students to choose what they want to read, which in turn can help their future. Too frequently, class discussions are based on books that the teacher selects for their students to read. Students may get bored of always having their choices made for them and some even take it for granted and can soon forget how to deal with life on their own. KC, an avid reader, agrees: "Picking your own books allows you to be more prepared for real life, not just a classroom where decisions are typically made for you". By having the choice to find their own books, students become more independent in the process. School prepares them for life, but their choices prepare them for their future.

Silent reading during school hours has been a widely argued situation in many school districts of the world. We should continue to have silent reading for at least ten minutes every day, especially because of Winooski High School's Tier 1 situation. Our school officials say that our NECAP scores are getting lower and require more structure to help fix it. If that's the case, then silent reading could only help raise the scores reading well is a big part of the NECAPs, not only when we read the essays but also to read the questions that accompany them. Having a good knowledge of reading and reading strategies will help our school and a good start to getting there is through silent reading.

Sources

McNair, James. "Helping Children to Comprehend Faster For Better School Achievements". May 22 2009. *Ezine Articles*. March 10 2011 <http://ezinearticles.com/?Helping-Children-to-Comprehend-Faster-For-Better-School-Achievements&id=2381196>

File Name: A11-12R The Day Dreamers

Opinion/Argument

Grade 12

Range of Writing

The Day Dreamers

Have you ever wondered why so many students at _____ are sluggish and lethargic? Are they just lazy and unmotivated? No, most of them probably suffer from lack of sleep, caused by biological clocks that are set to a different schedule than their classes. Teenagers have a physiological need to stay up later and sleep longer than pre-adolescents, yet the daily schedule of the school runs oblivious to this.

_____ students usually have to get up a little before 6:30, yet it is only natural for teenagers to get up later in the mornings. According to Mark Mahowald, MD, director of the Minnesota Regional Sleep Disorders Center, “(Adolescents’) biological clocks program them to go to sleep late—too late to get an adequate amount of sleep before the next school day begins” (qtd. in Lamberg). Because he believes that most high schools open too early, he is leading a campaign to move the start of high school to 9 a.m. in Minneapolis. Puberty causes teenagers to go to sleep an hour later than when they were younger, according to Dr. Mary Caraskadon, director of chronobiology

Introduces issue / **topic** of whether or not ^{high school} students need a different schedule due to sleep needs. **Topic is substantive.**

At

Uses precise evidence to describe the problem, leading to **claim** made later in the essay that the schedule needs to be changed. Writer quotes experts in the field who have researched the issue and think the schedule needs to be changed for high school students.

and sleep research at Bradlet Hospital in Rhode Island (Lamberg). In contrast to this law of nature, _____ students have to go to school about an hour earlier than elementary school students in the same school district. Because of her research, Dr. Caraskadon agrees with Dr. Mahowald’s opinions: “The practice of ringing the opening bell earlier in high school than in...elementary school may run precisely counter to children’s biological needs” (qtd. In “Sleeping until...”).

Establishes and maintains formal style, objective tone

Dr.

Caraskadon supports her argument to change the starting time of schools with studies showing that “adolescents need an hour more sleep every day to achieve the same level of alertness they experienced when younger, although they rarely get it: (Lamberg). Most teenagers need about nine hours of sleep every night, but only get about seven (Gofen 6). Because teenagers need to go to sleep later, but are forced to get up earlier, they don’t get nearly as much sleep as they should. This could be remedied by holding school later, which would allow many students to get much closer to the amount of sleep they need.

States focus / precise knowledgeable claim

U-

32’s early start every morning causes students to suffer academically. Students are so tired in school that many of them drift off during class, falling into a semi-conscious state. “I fell asleep once in my first band class for twenty minutes. I didn’t wake up until the band ended,” says Nathan, who is

First reason supports claim with logical and valid reasoning, accurate and credible evidence. Points out strengths of reason by anticipating the knowledge level, concerns, and values of the

one of the top students in the junior class (Bowles interview). Teenagers' lack of sleep causes them to be cranky and prevents them from thinking as well as they could if they weren't tired. According to Dr. William Dement, sleep expert from Stanford University, the effects of sleep loss are loss of initiative, loss of energy, lapse of attention, distractibility, and that overwhelming agony of wanting to go to sleep no matter what you're doing" (qtd. in Gofen 8). If they got an extra hour of sleep in the morning, students would be much more capable of learning and have a much more enthusiastic attitude towards learning. "Most adolescents are sub-optimally alert in the morning," says Dr. Mahowald. "If we as a society are sending our kids to school to learn, it would be wise to send them in a condition that fosters learning" (qtd. in Lamberg).

Sometimes students

Sometimes students skip school, and often come in late, because they dread waking up so early in the morning. "It's just too hard to get up early in the morning," says Tom, a junior. "I've been late to school so many times this year because I couldn't force myself to get up that early with such a small amount of sleep" (White interview). This is another way ____'s early start lowers grades. Less motivated students find it challenging to go to school anyway, and the early start is another reason not to.

Uses clauses to link major sections of text, creating cohesion and clarifying relationships between reasons.

In addition to damaging students' academic performance, waking up early

also harms students physically. Many students try to sleep as late as possible in the mornings and skip breakfast to get in another ten minutes of sleep. Lack of sleep also causes fatigue, especially because many teenagers are so busy with sports and other activities that require them to get a good night of sleep. Extended loss of sleep harms the immune system, hampering its ability to fight sickness and repair injuries (Gofen 8). Teenagers would get sick much less often if they slept enough, which would not only improve their health, but prevent them from missing more days of school.

Uses clauses and varied syntax to link major sections of text, creating cohesion and clarifying relationships between reasons.

deprivation caused by an early schedule is not only academically harmful, but also dangerous. Sixteen to twenty-five year-olds cause 55% of sleep-related automobile accidents, according to a 1990-92 North Carolina study (Lamberg). Many _____ students drive to school in the morning, and administrators should consider how many lives are jeopardized by holding school so early.

Sleep

Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline

g the start of school back as little as an hour could help students get a lot
 Moving the start of school back as little as an hour could help students get a lot more sleep. Students get so tired on weekdays that they sleep in extra late on the weekends to catch up on sleep. While this works, by the time Sunday night rolls around they are well rested and can't get to sleep until after midnight. This causes them to be extra tired Monday morning and for the rest of the week.

Movin

Reason supports claim with logical and valid reasoning, accurate and credible evidence. Points out strengths of reason by anticipating the knowledge level and concerns of the audience (teachers, other students, parents).

When people go to sleep and wake up at around the same time every day, they get used to this sleeping pattern. Once this healthy sleeping pattern is established, they do not have to catch up on their sleep or go without enough rest because they can't get to sleep. If teenagers were able to get up later on week days, they would get up earlier on weekends and form better sleeping habits. This would allow them to get more than an extra hour of sleep, even though school would start only an hour later.

Other

than the reasons, teenagers need to get up later than elementary school students because they stay up later. Play practice, athletic competitions, newspaper production night, and concerts all run until after nine o'clock, which is close to when students should be going to sleep. Often, though, teenagers have to do homework after these activities, and stay up much too late. "Homework, extracurricular activities...and sports all steal time from teens' sleep," according to Dr. Mahowald (Lamberg). The television shows and movies teenagers like to see also run well into the hours when they should be sleeping. Some high school students also work late into the night. Younger children hardly ever have a reason to stay up after nine o'clock, yet they have from then until seven-thirty in the morning to sleep, whereas high school students go to sleep much later and get up an hour earlier.

Creates an organization that logically sequences claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence throughout

Holdi

ng school an hour later would be easy for our school to do. Currently,

buses pick up high school students and drop them off early in the morning and then take elementary school students to school. Although the bus schedule could be reversed, allowing high school students to go to school an hour later, _____'s principal J _____ says administrators would probably be against this. He says there is a concern that parents would not be awake to feed elementary school students and help them get ready for school if the students had to get up an hour earlier. He offered the solution that hiring a different bus company to transport the elementary school students would allow them to go to school at the regular time, while high school students could use the current bus company and go to school later. However, this would probably cost more money than the school district is currently paying for busing.

Develops the claim and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the concerns, values, and possible biases of the audience (other students, parents, teachers, possibly school board members)

J _____

_____'s main concern with delaying the start of school is that if school started and ended an hour later, practices and games would run an hour later also. He thought that many teams would not have enough light after school to make a long road trip and then play a whole game. These students would have to get out of school early for many games, and this would cause them to miss a lot of school. He also feared that sometimes teams would not have enough light to practice. However, the only team this would really affect would be the cross country skiing.

There are solutio

Acknowledges limits of claim; offers solutions to the problem so that all parties are satisfied.

rescheduling of practice and games. Sports teams could save their long road trips for Saturdays, and play nearby teams on weekdays. The only team at _____ that couldn't do this would be the track team, because track meets have to start early. However, there are just two away meets this year which would require the team to leave school early, so these athletes wouldn't miss many classes. The ski team could deal with a later schedule by training immediately after school ends. This would give them at least an hour of outdoor training, and any skiers wanting more training could do it in the morning before school.

Movin

g _____'s start back an hour would be beneficial to the school. Students would be healthier and do better academically, and, as surprising as it seems, there would be no major draw-backs. Administrators should ask themselves why this isn't happening already.

Provides a conclusion that follows from and supports the argument presented

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In this assignment from a language arts class, the student was asked to research and take a position on an issue of his choice. He gives an introduction of some researched background / context on the issue of how much sleep teenagers need, and makes a claim that, in his view, the school should change the schedule so that high school students start later.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he develops with relevant, accurate, credible evidence. Although there is an occasional poor reason (*high school students stay up later watching television*), he relies largely on logical and valid reasoning, within a clear organizational structure, to develop his claim and persuade his audience of the correctness of his position. In addition, he acknowledges the counterclaim that there are reasons to not support the changed schedule, and takes pains to fully and fairly develop that position. Instead of refuting this counterclaim, he acknowledges its validity, approaches it as a problem, and offers solutions so that all parties could be satisfied. Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains an objective throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from the argument presented.

File Name: A 11-12R The Day Dreamers

Opinion/Argument

Grade 12

Range of Writing

The Day Dreamers

Have you ever wondered why so many students at _____ are sluggish and lethargic? Are they just lazy and unmotivated? No, most of them probably suffer from lack of sleep, caused by biological clocks that are set to a different schedule than their classes. Teenagers have a physiological need to stay up later and sleep longer than pre-adolescents, yet the daily schedule of the school runs oblivious to this.

At _____ students usually have to get up a little before 6:30, yet it is only natural for teenagers to get up later in the mornings. According to Mark Mahowald, MD, director of the Minnesota Regional Sleep Disorders Center, “(Adolescents’) biological clocks program them to go to sleep late—too late to get an adequate amount of sleep before the next school day begins” (qtd. in Lamberg). Because he believes that most high schools open too early, he is leading a campaign to move the start of high school to 9 a.m. in Minneapolis. Puberty causes teenagers to go to sleep an hour later than when they were younger, according to Dr. Mary Caraskadon, director of chronobiology and sleep research at Bradlet Hospital in Rhode Island (Lamberg). In contrast to this law of nature, U-32 students have to go to school about an hour earlier than elementary school students in the same school district. Because of her research, Dr. Caraskadon agrees with Dr. Mahowald’s opinions: “The practice of ringing the opening bell earlier in high school than in...elementary school may run precisely counter to children’s biological needs” (qtd. In “Sleeping until...”).

Dr. Caraskadon supports her argument to change the starting time of schools with studies showing that “adolescents need an hour more sleep every day to achieve the same level of alertness they experienced when younger, although they rarely get it: (Lamberg). Most teenagers need about nine hours of sleep every night, but only get about seven (Gofen 6). Because teenagers need to go to

sleep later, but are forced to get up earlier, they don't get nearly as much sleep as they should. This could be remedied by holding school later, which would allow many students to get much closer to the amount of sleep they need.

_____’s early start every morning causes students to suffer academically. Students are so tired in school that many of them drift off during class, falling into a semi-conscious state. “I fell asleep once in my first band class for twenty minutes. I didn’t wake up until the band ended,” says Nathan, who is one of the top students in the junior class (Bowles interview). Teenagers’ lack of sleep causes them to be cranky and prevents them from thinking as well as they could if they weren’t tired. According to Dr. William Dement, sleep expert from Stanford University, the effects of sleep loss are loss of initiative, loss of energy, lapse of attention, distractibility, and that overwhelming agony of wanting to go to sleep no matter what you’re doing” (qtd. in Gofen 8). If they got an extra hour of sleep in the morning, students would be much more capable of learning and have a much more enthusiastic attitude towards learning. “Most adolescents are sub-optimally alert in the morning,” says Dr. Mahowald. “If we as a society are sending our kids to school to learn, it would be wise to send them in a condition that fosters learning” (qtd. in Lamberg).

Sometimes students skip school, and often come in late, because they dread waking up so early in the morning. “It’s just too hard to get up early in the morning,” says Tom, a junior. “I’ve been late to school so many times this year because I couldn’t force myself to get up that early with such a small amount of sleep” (White interview). This is another way _____’s early start lowers grades. Less motivated students find it challenging to go to school anyway, and the early start is another reason not to.

In addition to damaging students’ academic performance, waking up early also harms students physically. Many students try to sleep as late as possible in the mornings and skip breakfast to get in another ten minutes of sleep. Lack of sleep also causes fatigue, especially because many teenagers are so busy with sports and other activities that require them to get a good night of sleep. Extended loss of sleep harms the immune system, hampering its ability to fight sickness and repair injuries (Gofen 8). Teenagers would get sick much less often if they slept enough, which would not only improve their health, but prevent them from missing more days of school.

Sleep deprivation caused by an early schedule is not only academically harmful, but also dangerous. Sixteen to twenty-five year-olds cause 55% of sleep-related automobile accidents, according to a 1990-92 North Carolina study (Lamberg). Many _____ students drive to school in the morning, and administrators should consider how many lives are jeopardized by holding school so early.

Moving the start of school back as little as an hour could help students get a lot more sleep. Students get so tired on weekdays that they sleep in extra late on the weekends to catch up on sleep. While this works, by the time Sunday night rolls around they are well rested and can't get to sleep until after midnight. This causes them to be extra tired Monday morning and for the rest of the week. When people go to sleep and wake up at around the same time every day, they get used to this sleeping pattern. Once this healthy sleeping pattern is establish, they do not have to catch up on their sleep or go without enough rest because they can't get to sleep. If teenagers were able to get up later on week days, they would get up earlier on weekends and form better sleeping habits. This would allow them to get more than an extra hour of sleep, even though school would start only an hour later.

Other than the reasons, teenagers need to get up later than elementary school students because they stay up later. Play practice, athletic competitions, newspaper production night, and concerts all run until after nine o'clock, which is close to when students should be going to sleep. Often, though, teenagers have to do homework after these activities, and stay up much too late. "Homework, extracurricular activities...and sports all steal time from teens' sleep," according to Dr. Mahowald (Lamberg). The television shows and movies teenagers like to see also run well into the hours when they should be sleeping. Some high school students also work late into the night. Younger children hardly ever have a reason to stay up after nine o'clock, yet they have from then until seven-thirty in the morning to sleep, whereas high school students go to sleep much later and get up an hour earlier.

Holding school an hour later would be easy for our school to do. Currently, buses pick up high school students and drop them off early in the morning and then take elementary school students to school. Although the bus schedule could be reversed, allowing high school students to go to school an hour later, _____'s principal J _____ says administrators would probably be against this. He says there is a concern that parents would not be awake to feed elementary school students and help them get ready for school if the students had to get up an hour earlier. He offered the solution that hiring a different bus company to transport the elementary school students would allow them to go to school at

the regular time, while high school students could use the current bus company and go to school alter. However, this would probably cost more money than the school district is currently paying for busing.

J _____'s main concern with delaying the start of school is that if school started and ended an hour later, practices and games would run an hour later also. He thought that many teams would not have enough light after school to make a long road trip and then play a whole game. These students would have to get out of school early for many games, and this would cause them to miss a lot of school. He also feared that sometimes teams would not have enough light to practice. However, the only team this would really affect would be the cross country skiing.

There are solutions to these problems, even though they would require some rescheduling of practice and games. Sports teams could save their long road trips for Saturdays, and play nearby teams on weekdays. The only team at _____ that couldn't do this would be the track team, because track meets have to start early. However, there are just two away meets this year which would require the team to leave school early, so these athletes wouldn't miss many classes. The ski team could deal with a later schedule by training immediately after school ends. This would give them at least an hour of outdoor training, and any skiers wanting more training could do it in the morning before school.

Moving _____'s start back an hour would be beneficial to the school. Students would be healthier and do better academically, and, as surprising as it seems, there would be no major .draw-backs. Administrators should ask themselves why this isn't happening already.

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File Name: A11-12R Macduff True Hero

Opinion/Argument

Grade 12

Range of Writing

Macduff: A True Hero

Though many refer to the titular character of William Shakespeare's Macbeth as a tragic hero, another character stands out as a much greater protagonist. While Macbeth is driven towards madness and to committing atrocities through his tragic flaw of ambition, Macduff lacks such a flaw and remains uncorrupted and heroic throughout the play. As Macbeth strives to gain power and prestige at the expense of the lives of his king, his friends, and his countrymen, Macduff meanwhile endures great personal loss in his attempts to stop Macbeth's tyrannical rule and to restore justice and freedom to Scotland. With a name so similar to Macbeth's, it is ironic yet fitting that Macduff acts so much more nobly than his king (Piotr 20). Throughout the tragic, events of William Shakespeare's Macbeth, Macduff serves as a heroic figure through his demonstrations of intelligence, loyalty, and righteousness.

Macduff's prevalence is minimal early in the play, though his intelligence can first be noted in his actions that follow King Duncan's death. While many Scottish nobles prepare to welcome Macbeth to the throne and accept him as their king, Macduff shows his skepticism of the story surrounding the king's demise. Though Macduff at first accepts the verdict that Malcolm and Donalbain are the most likely suspects in the murder of their father, he does so reluctantly and only because the evidence points to them given that they have fled the scene. When asked if he will attend Macbeth's inaugural ceremonies, Macduff responds, "No, cousin, I'll to Fife" (2.4.36). Macduff is less convinced than the others that the mystery of the king's death has been solved, and he wisely distances himself from Macbeth, in whose home the murder occurred, rather than simply accept Macbeth

Begins by **acknowledging counterclaim, then distinguishes from own**

Introduces a knowledgeable claim about a **substantive topic** and **establishes its significance:** gives context about the play itself by contrasting Macbeth and Macduff, and then states a precise claim

States focus, **precise claim**

Creates an organization that logically sequences, develops, and supports the claim

Uses words, phrases, and varied syntax to create cohesion, clarify the relationships among claims and reasons

as his new king. When news spreads that Banquo too has been murdered in Macbeth's castle, Macduff is again the first to act, as noted when Lennox states, "Thither Macduff/ is gone to pray the holy King, upon his aid/ To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward" (3.6 29-31). Macduff demonstrates his intelligence in astutely connecting Macbeth to the murders of King Duncan and Banquo before any other nobles come to such a realization. Macduff's intelligence and willingness to act on what information he has gathered demonstrate his heroism and help to save Scotland from destruction.

In all of Macduff's actions, he remains loyal to his country and acts solely in the interest of Scotland. When Macduff travels to England to raise an army against Macbeth, he must leave his family behind. As noted by literary critic Piotr Sadowski, "...once Macduff has chosen to serve the political cause all qualms about abandoning his family became suppressed" (21). Though a loving family-man with devotion towards his "pretty chickens and their dam," or his children and his wife, Macduff's other loyalties are stronger (4.3.218). Macduff selflessly puts his country before those he loves, leaving his family vulnerable to attack from Macbeth so that he may raise an army to defeat him and end the tyranny that plagues his country. It becomes clear that Macduff is sincere in his displays of loyalty when he is tested by the young Malcolm, who will inherit the throne if Macduff succeeds in overthrowing Macbeth. After Malcolm proudly asserts his sinful nature in his "voluptuousness" (4.3.61), his "stanchless avarice" (4.3.78), and his complete disregard for virtues, Macduff's loyalty to Scotland goes unbroken in his response to Malcolm, who asks if he is fit to govern. Macduff states, "Fit to govern/ No, not to live. O nation miserable! /...When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again..." (4.3.102-105). Macduff's display of loyalty towards his country over its potential ruler suffices to prove to Malcolm his loyal nature and lack of selfish motives. Malcolm agrees to lead the forces against Macbeth in a move that ultimately saves Scotland.

In all events of the play, Macduff acts to combat tyranny and all that is evil, making him a truly righteous character. From serving King Duncan

Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline

Uses words, phrases, and varied syntax to create cohesion, clarify the relationships among claims and reasons

Develops the claim fairly and thoroughly, supplying evidence for it in a manner that anticipates the concerns, values, and possible biases of the audience (other members of the scholarly community)

Uses depth of evidence, from both text (the play) and scholars, showing deep understanding of the text

Develops the claim fairly and thoroughly, supplying evidence for it in a manner that anticipates the concerns, values, and possible biases of the audience (other members of the scholarly community)

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to protecting Scotland and taking the throne back from Macbeth, Macduff acts in service of what is morally just and does not boast in his deeds or in any way act for himself. After learning that his family has died at the command of Macbeth, Macduff weeps for them and expresses first his anger and regret, showing his human side, but he then accepts what has occurred and begins to ponder his next action. Realizing that he serves no one by weeping over his loss or boasting about how he will avenge his family's death, Macduff simply states, "Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself; / Within my sword's length set him. If he 'scape, / Heaven forgive him too" (4.3.233-235). Macduff believes that it is right and just to kill Macbeth, not only for what the tyrant has done to his family, but for how he has brought pain and suffering to an entire nation. In stating his hope that Macbeth's sins be forgiven if he fails to kill him, Macduff further reflects his righteous, almost biblical qualities in his ability to not hold a grudge against the man who has killed his family. In the end, Macduff seems destined to kill Macbeth given that the former was "from his mother's womb / Untimely ripped" (5.8.15-16), and that, "In folklore, the child born through what later became the Caesarian section was said to possess great strength and the power to find hidden treasure and to see spirits" (Piotr 20). Not only do the witches' prophecies point to Macduff as the one who has the power to dethrone Macbeth, but Shakespeare also uses a common supernatural theme of his day to portray Macduff as a character of a higher power who seems the only one fit to take down a powerful military ruler as Macbeth. When Macbeth emerges from battle victorious in the final scene and holds Macbeth's severed head, the image created is one of good finally triumphing over evil.

Regardless of the events and fortunes surrounding Macduff's character in William Shakespeare's Macbeth, he serves as a heroic figure for his qualities of intelligence, loyalty, and righteousness. As the first to recognize the mystery and guilt surrounding Macbeth and the murders that seem to line his path on his rise to power, Macduff displays an inquisitiveness and prudence that his fellow nobles seem to lack. Using his knowledge for the good of his country, Macduff balks at opportunities for personal gain and acts solely in the

Provides a conclusion that follows from and supports the argument presented

Writer reflects, again, on the significance of the claim

interest of his beloved nation, to which he demonstrates supreme loyalty. This loyalty runs so deep in Macduff that not even the murder of his family can deter him on his righteous quest of vanquishing from the Scottish throne the evil that has befallen it. In his heroic qualities, Macduff emerges as the true hero of Macbeth, far more so than the titular character whose flaw of ambition drives him to the point of being a plague upon the nation he so desires to govern. In the words of politician Edmund Burke, “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.” Macduff’s role as a good man in Macbeth is not simply to bring about justice to an oppressed nation. Rather, his character reminds readers that justice cannot be done without the vigilance and actions of ever wise, virtuous men and women who loyally devote their efforts to upholding what is righteous.

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- Sadowski, Piotr. “Macbeth.” *Fofweb.com*. Bloom’s Literary Reference Online. 2010. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. [http://www.fofweb.com/Lit/LowerFrame.asp?ItemID=WE54\\$SID=5&iPin=+MCIMAC10&SingleRecord-True](http://www.fofweb.com/Lit/LowerFrame.asp?ItemID=WE54$SID=5&iPin=+MCIMAC10&SingleRecord-True).
- Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. New York: Signet Classics, 1998. Print.

In this literary analysis from an English language arts class, the student has taken a position on who the hero of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is. In anticipation of his claim that Macduff is the true hero of the play, he begins by acknowledging the counterclaim that Macbeth is often described as the "tragic hero" of the play, then states his own claim that the hero is in fact Macduff.

Throughout the essay, the writer organizes his ideas clearly. He develops the claim logically, fairly, and thoroughly with several reasons, which he supports with in-depth relevant, credible evidence, both from the text itself and from scholarly sources. He thoroughly demonstrates his understanding of the topic and the texts he has read. The writer supplies evidence for his claim in a manner that anticipates the concerns, values, and possible biases of the audience (other members of the scholarly community). Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses, as well as varied syntax, to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style and objective tone throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from and supports the argument presented, reminding the reader of the significance of the topic and claim.

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Opinion/Argument

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