Please Write on This Packet!
You can find everything from this workshop at: abspd.appstate.edu. Look under: Teaching Resources, Adult Secondary Resources, Language Arts/Reading, ASE LA 02: Argument Based Writing.

Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 – 10:00</td>
<td>Argument Based Writing 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:15</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 – 11:45</td>
<td>Commercials and Argument Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 – 12:45</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45 – 2:00</td>
<td>CRAP Test and Evidence Organizer</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 – 2:15</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15 – 4:00</td>
<td>The Great Debate: Dress Code</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Today’s Objectives

Participants will:

- Understand adult education standards’ shifts and their impact on teaching writing
- Learn creative techniques to teach argument writing skills
- Discover how to help students evaluate evidence sources
Argument Based Writing and High School Equivalency Tests

Argument based writing appears on all three high school equivalency tests. Students are given “paired texts,” two readings with a pro/con view on a certain topic and then a writing prompt.

GED®
On the Reasoning through Language Arts test, the extended response is 18.5% of the total points possible on the test (Source: M. Kehe, GED® Testing Service).

GED® Prompt
“The article presents arguments from both supporters and critics of drug testing welfare recipients who disagree about the practice’s impact on saving money and helping welfare recipients.

In your response, analyze both positions presented in the article to determine which one is best supported. Use relevant and specific evidence from the article to support your response.”

TASC®
The TASC® Writing test may have either an argumentative or informative/explanatory writing prompt. The essay is 17% of the total points possible on the test (Source: B. Fayyad, Product Manager, TASC® Test).

TASC® Prompt
“There is an ongoing debate in the public domain as to whether free public libraries are still practical in today’s world. What are the implications for society of a “free” public library system? Has the time come for cities to consider requiring patrons to pay a fee to use library services?

Weigh the claims on both sides, and then write an argumentative essay supporting either side of the debate in which you argue for or against the free library system. Be sure to use information from both texts in your argumentative essay.”

HiSET®
On the Language Arts – Writing test, students must score at least a 2 on the 6 point writing rubric in order to pass this test (Source: HiSET® Information Brief - 2016).

HiSET® Prompt
“Write an essay in which you explain your own position on the issue of whether or not businesses should allow employees to wear casual clothing in the workplace.

Be sure to use evidence from the text passages provided as well as specific reasons and examples from your own experience and knowledge to support your position. Remember that every position exists within the context of a larger discussion of the issue, so your essay should, at minimum, acknowledge alternate and/or opposing ideas. When you have finished your essay, review your writing to check for correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.”
College and Career Readiness Standards for Argument Writing

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

a. Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level and concerns.

c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

d. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Adult Education Standards Writing Instructional Shifts

Guided practice of close analytic reading

Since students are writing about reading, we need to model for students how to get meaning from texts. One way to do this is to practice close reading strategies.

Writing about reading

Create writing prompts that focus on reading passages

Using text evidence to support claims

Ask, “How do you know?” Move students away from their opinions to using text based evidence to back up their arguments.

Source: College and Career Readiness Standards, Pimentel (2013)
Argument Based Writing

Introductory Paragraph with Thesis Statement

The introductory paragraph should give some background about the argument. It ends with a thesis statement describing which argument is better and why. In the sample paragraph below, the thesis statement is underlined.

“Plastic bags are everywhere! What is the best way to get rid of them? In the article, *Banning Plastic Bags is Best for Oceanside*, Samantha Phillips makes the claim that banning plastic bags is the best solution for helping the environment. In his article, John Adamson says that taxing plastic bags will stop them from hurting communities. After looking at both sides, it is clear that Samantha Phillips has the best argument because she uses strong evidence from research studies instead of emotion to show that banning plastic bags will stop them from hurting animals and polluting the environment.

Body Paragraphs Have PEEL (Point, Evidence, Explanation, Link)

P  **Point** – Write your belief about the topic. This will be a reason why one side of an argument is stronger than the other

“Scientific research shows that banning plastic bags is better than taxing them.”

E  **Evidence** – Support your point with evidence

“In 2012, two Stanford University researchers looked at whether it was better to ban or tax plastic bags. The researchers studied 15 different communities. They found the communities that banned plastic bags had fewer bags along city streets and in landfills.”

E  **Explanation** – Explain how the evidence supports your point

“Research studies are among the best evidence used to back up arguments. The 2012 Stanford study, done recently at a well-known university, showed that banning plastic bags led to fewer bags in communities. The researchers looked at 15 very different places across the United States demonstrating that banning bags could work anywhere in the country.”

L  **Link** - Link this point to the next paragraph or offer a conclusion

Link to next paragraph - “There is further evidence why banning plastic bags beats taxing them.”

Conclusion – “So, this strong research based evidence proves banning is better than taxing bags.”
Conclusion

This portion of the essay will leave an immediate impression on the mind of the reader, so it must be effective. Do not introduce any new information. Restate why the topic is important and review the main points and your thesis.

Example

“Plastic bags cause great harm to the environment. They take a lot of energy to produce, pollute roadsides and parks, and cause animals to die. While there is no easy solution to this problem, it was clear from the evidence presented in the article that banning plastic bags works better than taxing them. Several excellent research studies show that banning bags decreases their use and helps the environment. This strong evidence from several university studies was much better than the emotional arguments used to support taxing bags. I hope the people of Oceanside will listen to the evidence based argument and ban plastic bags instead of listening to a much weaker argument and tax them.”

Adapted from Dr. Chris Rauscher, GED Testing Service, and Purdue Owl
Evidence Used to Support Arguments

Evidence is facts, documentation or testimony used to support or oppose an argument. The examples are from an argument about whether disposable plastic shopping bags should be banned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Evidence</th>
<th>Definition and Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factual</td>
<td>Truthful statements that cannot be denied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: “California was the first state to ban plastic shopping bags.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics or Data</td>
<td>Factual statements that use numbers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: “Twelve million barrels of oil are needed each year to make all the plastic shopping bags used in the United States each year.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Studies</td>
<td>Gathering data, information and facts to increase knowledge about a subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: “In 2016, Researchers at Harvard University found that banning plastic bags was more effective for communities than taxing them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Testimony</td>
<td>The conclusions of people who are very knowledgeable about certain subjects. Experts have done years of research in their field and may work at a university or think tank.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: “Stuart Pimm of Duke University believes that the continued use of plastic shopping bags will cause the Blue Heron to become an endangered species.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>Real life situations or experiences that illustrate an author’s point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: “When San Francisco, CA banned plastic bags, they found they saved so much money on landfill costs that they were able to give more money to their local schools.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdotes</td>
<td>Stories told that help explain an author’s point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: “Saco, Maine found that their community began to recycle other plastics more after their plastic bag ban went into effect.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Appeal</td>
<td>Using techniques like sympathy, fear, anger or loyalty to persuade someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: “How many more animals do we need to see strangle on plastic bags? This is especially tragic since we can prevent these deaths. Let’s all get behind the proposed ban on plastic bags.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from GED® Testing Service’s Thinking Strategies for Crafting Constructed Responses
Activities to Prepare for Argument Writing

Journaling  See the bottom of this page

Quick Writes  See page 8

Debate
Find a controversial topic, allow your students to research it (use procon.org) and have a debate! Students can argue in teams or by themselves. Have students judge who presented the most convincing argument and decide why it was the most convincing. See pages 15 - 16.

Interviews
Have students play the authors of each paper in the prompt. Students can ask the actors questions about the evidence in their paper. In the career day prompt on pages 24 and 25, students can play Darnell Hughes and Shanice Jones.

Using Ads
Students are exposed to ads every day, and they are a great way to sneak up on argument based writing. As students analyze ads, they see how advertisers try and convince them to buy products. The claims the advertisers make are similar to claims writer’s make in argument writing. As students analyze ads to see if they make them more or less likely to buy a product, they practice analyzing arguments. See page 9.

The CRAP Test
Working in pairs, students are given two sets of evidence to consider and must decide which is more reliable and why. See page 12

Graphic Organizer, Frame, and Model
Three very helpful tools to help students do argument writing are a graphic organizer (pgs. 20 - 21) that helps students put their thoughts together, a writing frame (pgs. 22 - 23) that provides an outline and blank space for students to write, and a model essay (pg. 26).

What Would You Do?
This TV show provides interesting situations where bystanders may or may not get involved. Show a clip from the show (Google: what would you do tv show) and have students discuss and then write about whether or not they would get involved in one of the situations.

Journaling
Our students are under stress. Journaling is a way they can practice writing while helping them relieve anxiety and be ready to learn. Start class with 5 or 10 minutes of structured (by giving a writing prompt) or unstructured (students can write on anything) journaling.
Writing about Reading: Quick Writes

A Quick Write helps students think about a topic before, during, and after reading. Students are asked to respond to a question or prompt based on a text and should write down whatever comes to their mind without worrying about grammar or organization.

The writing topics are related to a text and may be:

- Summaries of learning
- An explanation of a concept or vocabulary
- A prediction, inference, or hypothesis

Give students a time limit (2 to 10 minutes) and ask that they write until time is up. (Model this as the instructor and write too!) Quick Writes can be used as part of instruction, assessment, or discussion. They help bring out the writer in students, build their writing confidence, and help their reading skills too!

Quick Write Practice:

It is 5:15 PM. You are dead tired after a long day at work. All you want to do us go home, put on some comfortable clothes, and relax. Your brain flashes forward to the happy scene of you, in just a few minutes, relaxing on the couch watching some mindless TV show. You can hardly wait to get home!

Oh no! You realize that in order to eat tonight, you need some food. You drag out your phone and your grocery list app reminds you that you need milk, bread, hamburger and about 10 other things too. After the day you had, some ice cream would be good as well.

You unhappily steer your car to the store and start shopping. After grabbing the ice cream, you head to pick up your last item, the hamburger. Suddenly you see something strange. There is a young mother with a small boy riding in her cart. She looks around to see if anyone is looking. She does not see you coming down the aisle behind her. You clearly see that she takes a package of meat and hides it in her young son’s sweatshirt. Thinking no one saw her, she heads toward the checkout.

You grab some hamburger meat, toss it in your cart, and follow her. You wonder what she is going to do. You wonder what you are going to do. It clearly looks like she is shoplifting food. It is her turn now to check out. Your heart is pounding. Every inch of you just wants to check out and get home as soon as possible. The young mother puts all the items in her cart on the conveyer belt, but the package of meat is still in her son’s sweatshirt. The little boy says, “Mama, I’m cold.” The young mother smiles at the clerk who is checking her out, and she says to her son, “We’ll be home soon.”

Prompt

What would you do if you were in this situation?
## Ad Analyzer

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is this ad trying to get you to do? (This is the point.)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How does the ad try to convince you to buy this product? (This is the evidence.)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe 3 things it does:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Did the ad make you want to buy this product? Why or why not? (This is the explanation.)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Idea based on R. Baron
Teach Writing Using Think Alouds

When we teach writing using think alouds, we show students what is going on in our heads as we write. This provides students with a model they can follow as they write and shows them good writing is not magic but a process they can learn.

The video used to demonstrate this technique is found here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsYFqnk_AFM&feature=youtu.be

Teach Writing as a Process

Teach students to tackle writing assignments using a process. A process is a standard method for doing something. For example, use **URPWE** as a process for writing extended responses and short answers.

\[
\begin{align*}
U &= \text{Unpack the prompt – What are you being asked to do?} \\
R &= \text{Read the source material} \\
P &= \text{Plan the response} \\
W &= \text{Write the response} \\
E &= \text{Edit the response}
\end{align*}
\]
Ideas for Controversial Subjects to Argue About

Should schools have dress codes?
How old should someone be before having a cell phone?
How old should a woman be before having a baby?
Is it a good idea to listen to music while studying?
Should the drinking age be lowered to 18?
Should the United States reform its immigration policy?
Should marijuana be legal across the United States?
At what age should someone be considered an adult?
Should people who receive government benefits (TANF) be drug tested?
Should all children be vaccinated?
Should recycling be mandatory?
Is it better to get a job or go to college after finishing high school?
Should the United State have tougher gun control laws?
Should states require citizens to have a photo ID for voting?
Is it better to shop at local stores instead of national chain (like Wal Mart) stores?
Is it better to buy American or foreign made products?
Should health care be reformed in the United States?
Are lotteries good for states?
Should the United States raise its minimum wage?
Should violent video games be outlawed?
Are concealed carry laws a good idea?
Should fracking be allowed in the United States?
Should e-cigarettes be more closely regulated?
Are e-textbooks better than paper textbooks?

Other Ideas:

For more ideas about controversial subjects, visit procon.org or the New York Times 200 prompts for argument writing
Reliable Evidence? Think CRAP!

The best arguments are backed with strong reasons supported with reliable evidence. Academic studies done by universities usually are the strongest evidence. The CRAP test below will help us see which evidence is best.

**Currency**

Is the evidence up to date? Studies done more recently are usually better than ones conducted years ago, especially in science, technology and health.

**Relevance**

How does the evidence specifically relate to the topic being discussed? In irrelevant arguments, writers attack their opponent (“they don’t know what they’re talking about”), appeal to authority (“the Governor supports this, so should you”), or appeal to emotion (“this will save all the cute, fluffy bunnies in the forest”).

Writers may also come to irrelevant conclusions: “We should all support the new crime bill. We cannot continue to see people being robbed, and we must have safer streets.” We all agree that safety is important, but the crime bill may not be the best way to get it.

**Authority**

Who is the source? Are they really an expert in this field? Just because someone is well known (actors, musicians, sports stars) does not make them an expert. Someone that has credentials like an academic degree (Ph.D. or Ed.D.) and/or years of real world experience would know much more than a famous personality about a subject.

**Purpose**

Why is someone’s reason for writing? Take a close look at an argument to see if it is propaganda (misleading information used to promote a point of view). Does the information come from an unbiased source? Sometimes people will say one thing but have a hidden agenda because of their bias. For example, a person might argue that a new road through town will help the community, but they make this argument because it will help their personal business instead since the road runs in front of their store.
### Phrases to Describe Strengths and Weaknesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrases to Discuss Passage Strengths (+)</th>
<th>Phrases to Discuss Passage Weaknesses (-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>better supported</td>
<td>unsupported personal opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reliable evidence</td>
<td>weak evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sound reasons</td>
<td>contradictory evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>valid</td>
<td>invalid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logical</td>
<td>weak logic (illogical)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reliable (knowledgeable, unbiased, credible, etc.) source(s)</td>
<td>(This passage) lacks sound reasons…. (or any other phrases from the strengths column)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>significant evidence</td>
<td>uncited sources (source is not identified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recent sources</td>
<td>evidence is out-of-date (or no source is included)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relevant reasons / evidence</td>
<td>biased sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substantiated evidence</td>
<td>unsubstantiated evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expert testimony</td>
<td>personal attacks (name-calling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sufficient reasons / evidence</td>
<td>insufficient reasons / evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reputable source (strong reputation)</td>
<td>fallacy/fallacies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well-supported argument</td>
<td>oversimplification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supports (demonstrates)</td>
<td>false conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C. Gibson, WCCS Writing Center, Selma AL
## Argument Reason Evidence Graphic Organizer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reason:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence:</td>
<td>Evidence:</td>
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<td>Reason:</td>
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<td>Evidence:</td>
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Put checks by the best reasons/evidence
The Great Debate

A wonderful way for students to learn argument writing is to debate. Debate teaches students how to think critically, speak clearly, and analyze evidence. To get started debating:

- Choose a controversial topic (see the list on page 11)

- Have students analyze sample prompts from high school equivalency tests or use a source like procon.org. Use the Argument Reason Evidence Organizer on page 14 and CRAP (page 12) to analyze the evidence students collect.

- Debates can be done with just three students or in teams with more. One student takes the pro (for) side, another the con (against) side, and another is the judge. Follow the Great Debate format on page 16. Decide how long each section of your debate will be (usually 3 minutes or less is good for new debaters).

- The judge must give reasons why they have decided for either the pro or con side of the issue. Their decision should be based on the stronger evidence, not on their personal feelings!

Some questions that debaters can ask are:

1. Ask about the quality of the evidence presented:
   
   What was the date of that evidence?
   
   What qualifies the source of that evidence as an expert?
   
   Who funded that study?

   You claim that walking helps people get somewhere faster than standing still. Could you show how much faster through a statistic or a study?

2. Ask questions to clarify arguments:

   This will help you make sure you understand your opponents’ arguments. Avoid open ended questions like, “Could you repeat your first point?” This gives your opponent more time to make their case. Instead, show that you understand their point by summarizing it and seeing if your summary is right. See below for an example:

   In your first point, you claim that fish need water in order to live, is that right? Could you explain exactly how this happens?

3. Ask questions to get your opponent to admit their case has weaknesses

   How will __________ really solve the problem of __________?

   Your evidence showed your plan works in one state. What reason is there to think it will work in the whole United States?

Questions taken from Breaking Down Barriers: How to Debate (2000) and Effective Cross Examination (Motiejunaite)
The Great Debate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pro presents arguments</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Con asks questions about Pro’s arguments/Pro responds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con presents arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro asks questions about Con’s arguments/Con responds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge asks Pro questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge asks Con questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge decides for ________ Reasons for the decision: (Pro/Con)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Mr. Humphreess,

I sending you this letter to tell you that I want to apply for the job you advertised. I have downloaded my resume to your website. I may not have all the qualifications you ask for in the job posting, but I am a great worker. I am hardworking, detail oriented, and a team player. I am good on the computer to. I can do just about anything you need. If not, I can learn. I really want to work for your company because I need a job bad. I have worked on and off for 10 uyears so I really have some great experience.

I left my last job because of my terrible awful boss. She was mean and expected me to work all the time. She wanted me to be on call 24/7 and I can’t live like that. I mean that was totally out of line. I need some time for me, you know? She would tell me to do one thing and then 10 minutes later tell me to do something that was completely different. I never know what was going on. It was so stressful. She would also scream at us if things did not go her way. Who needs dat? I am so thankful to be outta there!

In this new job, I need to make at lest $12.50 an hour. I know the job is advertised at $10, but I’m worth it! I have a lot of bills to pay so I really really need the extra cash. Like right now! You gotta pay more for the best, right?

I’m lookin forward to hearing from you soon. The best way to get me is to text me at 111.111.1111. You can also send me an email at bigbabydaddy22@hotmail.com

Bye for now, Lazario.
Cover Letter

Sent: Friday, April 8
From: Enrique Hernandez
To: Gary Humphrey
Re: Job Opening

Dear Mr. Humphrey:

Ever since I was five years old and put bandages on all my “sick” stuffed animals, I have been drawn to the health care field. I am excited to apply for the Phlebotomist Patient Service Technician position at LabWorks where I know I can make a positive difference in patient’s lives.

As you can see from my resume, I meet all the requirements in the job posting. I completed my high school equivalency at Tryon Tech. While there, I took the phlebotomy training course and received my Certified Phlebotomy Technician (CPT) certificate. For the last three years, I worked in the lab at Tryon General Hospital. Working in the lab gave me experience with a wide variety of patients including those housed in long-term care facilities, drug rehabilitation facilities, and prison facilities. I did a wide variety of testing including collection by venipuncture and capillary, urine drug screens, paternity collections, pediatric collections, and breath/saliva alcohol testing.

If you talked with my supervisor, she would tell you that I am an expert in difficult blood draws. When the other technicians had problems, they knew they could call on me and that I would successfully perform the task. I also love working with people and have a sincere desire to help patients of all kinds.

Having researched your company, I am aware of all your service locations here in Tryon City. I am also thrilled that I would be working in one of your state of the art facilities that house the new electronic reporting and accuracy equipment. I know this equipment will allow me to spend more time with our patients and less time doing paperwork.

With my experience with a wide variety of patients and collection methods, I am confident I will be an excellent fit for this job. I look forward to interviewing with you at your convenience. I can be reached at hernandez123@zion.com or 111.111.1111. Thank you so much for your time in considering my application.

Best Wishes,
Enrique Hernandez

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**Extended Response Prompt**

Analyze the arguments presented in the two cover letters. Who would you hire?

In your response, develop an argument in which you explain how one position is better supported than the other. Incorporate relevant and specific evidence from both sources to support your argument.

Remember, the better-argued position is not necessarily the position with which you agree. This task should take approximately 45 minutes to complete.
Answer Guidelines – Cover Letter

Lazario Stevens Cover Letter

- The hiring manager’s name is misspelled (Humphreess vs. Humphrey)

- The cover letter has not been proofread, and there are many grammatical mistakes and typos: “I sending you this cover letter,” “on and off for 10 uyears,” “because of my terrible awful boss”

- The letter is written with a casual instead of a formal tone: “Who needs dat?” “to be outta there,” ”you gotta"

- The job applicant sells themselves short: “I may not have all the qualifications you ask for in the job posting”

- The applicant never provides the skills he does have

- The applicant spends the whole second paragraph bad mouthing their former boss

- The letter is all about the applicant instead of what they can do for the company

- The letter gives too many personal details “I need a job bad,” “I have a lot of bills to pay”

- The applicant uses clichés “hardworking, detail oriented, team player” but does not give any specific examples

- The applicant brings up salary and asks for more than the offered amount in the third paragraph

- The writer uses an unprofessional email address: bigbabydaddy22@hotmail.com

Enrique Hernandez Cover Letter

- The job applicant starts with a creative opening “Ever since I was five years old . . .” that grabs the readers’ attention

- The applicant lists all their qualifications for the job opening

- In the third paragraph, they provide a specific example of how they were helpful with difficult blood draws

- The applicant researched the company in the fourth paragraph showing their knowledge of locations and new equipment

- The closing sums up the applicants’ qualifications

- The cover letter was proofread and has no grammatical mistakes or typos

This prompt is based on articles from the web that you can read and discuss with your students before analyzing the source material. The Lazario Stevens cover letter is based on the article “15 Cover Letter Mistakes to Avoid” found here: http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/6879-cover-letter-mistakes.html. The Enrique Hernandez cover letter is based on the article “5 Things Your Cover Letter Must Cover” available at: http://www.experience.com/entry-level-jobs/careers/jobs/5-things-your-cover-letter-must-cover/
**Argument Writing Graphic Organizer**

**Intro** Summarize the two arguments. (Include passage titles and authors.) “Argument 1 says . . . . On the other hand, Argument 2 says . . .”

Write reasons why Argument 1 is better: “Argument 1 is better supported than Argument 2 because:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body 1</th>
<th>Explain one reason why Argument 1 is better than Argument 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Point</td>
<td>(What is your reason?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>(Text evidence that backs your reason)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation:</td>
<td>(Explain how the evidence supports your reason)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link:</td>
<td>(Link to the next paragraph or write a conclusion)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body 2</th>
<th>Explain another reason why Argument 1 is better than Argument 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Point:</td>
<td>(What is your reason?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence:</td>
<td>(Text evidence that backs your reason)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation:</td>
<td>(Explain how the evidence supports your reason)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link:</td>
<td>(Link to the next paragraph or write a conclusion)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Body 3 Counterargument

Counterpoint: (Briefly state the opposing argument and then explain why it is wrong)

Evidence: (Text evidence that backs your reason)

Explanation: (Explain how the evidence supports your reason)

Link: (Write a conclusion “So, this definitely shows that . . . “)

Conclusion Summarize your main points

Argument 1 is the stronger argument
Argument Writing Frame

makes the claim that ______________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

makes the claim that ______________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
The best argument is ______________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
because __________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
The first reason ___________________________________________________________ is better is because ______
________________________________________________________________________

Evidence supporting this reason is ___________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

This evidence shows that ___________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
This goes along with evidence in the next paragraph which shows ______________________

Also, the second reason ___________________________________________________ is better is because ______
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Evidence supporting this reason is ___________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
This evidence shows that ________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Counterargument
While some may say __________________________________________ is the better argument because
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

This argument is wrong because _______________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Evidence supporting this is __________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

This evidence shows that _____________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

In conclusion, ______________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
Darnell Hughes, Student Speaker
Career Day Speech

I will speak today about the most important soft skills workers should have. Soft skills are the people skills and self-management skills we should bring to the workplace. Based on my experience working part-time jobs, the three most important soft skills are communication skills, a positive attitude, and flexibility.

I think excellent communication skills are hugely important in today’s workplace. Strong writing skills are necessary so emails and reports are easily understood by all who read them. When talking with co-workers, employees must be able to explain their point of view clearly. Outstanding presentation skills help persuade others and communicate ideas to people both inside and outside the company. Employees should also keep their boss and co-workers aware of their progress on projects so there are no last minute surprises.

Additionally, I feel a positive attitude is a key factor in job success. Chuck Swindoll once said, “Life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it.” A great employee follows this quote by keeping a positive attitude no matter what happens on the job. They look for solutions instead of focusing on problems. No one wants to be around someone who always complains, so workers with positive attitudes look for the good and leave their gripes outside the office.

Finally, I believe flexibility is also a soft skill employers’ value. Things constantly change at work whether it is new employees or new ways of doing things. A flexible employee learns new skills and technology and embraces change. Most job descriptions have the phrase “other duties as assigned” written in them, so workers need to be prepared to face new challenges. Instead of saying, “that’s not my job,” a valuable employee pitches in and helps wherever needed. Flexible workers are willing to come in early or stay late as necessary to meet important deadlines.
When thinking about the three most important qualities an employee brings to a job, we must consider having a strong work ethic, being a team player, and having strong organizational skills. All these soft skills ranked highly in a 2014 survey done by careerbuilder.com, the U.S.’s largest online job site. CareerBuilder surveyed over 2000 hiring managers across the U.S to get their findings.

First, an employee must have a strong work ethic. This means that their motivation to work comes from inside themselves, and they feel personally responsible for the job they do. They come to the office on time, work hard during the day, and keep their word. Employees with good work ethics are very productive and can complete large amounts of work because they are focused. They produce high quality work with good attention to detail. Their managers describe them as dedicated to their jobs and loyal to their company. They keep their jobs and do not “job hop” from place to place.

Next, being a team player is critically important. The old saying, “There is no ‘I’ in team” is very true. A team player is not selfish but works well with others. They communicate well by listening actively, by asking good questions, and by making appropriate suggestions. When facing a deadline, team players will do what it takes to meet it. This may mean working more hours or finding a way to work more efficiently. Team players avoid workplace politics and instead focus on their jobs. They perform their role well, no matter how big or small, so their team succeeds.

Finally, a valuable employee has excellent organizational skills. Well-organized employees keep their workspace neat, so they do not need to waste time looking for things. They are also mentally organized. They prioritize tasks and keep a to-do list so they know what needs to be done next. Because of their great organizational skills, they can manage multiple priorities.

As a small business owner, these skills are ones I look for when I hire new employees.

**Extended Response Prompt:**

Analyze the arguments presented in the two speeches.

In your response, develop an argument in which you explain how one position is better supported than the other. Incorporate relevant and specific evidence from both sources to support your argument.

Remember, the better-argued position is not necessarily the position with which you agree. This task should take approximately 45 minutes to complete.
Having the right soft skills are important when we look for a job. Two speakers, Darnell Hughes and Shanice Jones, talk about the importance of soft skills in the workplace. Shanice Jones gives the best speech of the two because she is more qualified and her evidence is stronger.

To start, let us look at the qualifications of the two speakers. Darnell Hughes identifies himself as a student. As a student, he does not have much experience in the workplace. He has only worked some part time jobs after school or on the weekends. On the other hand, Shanice Jones is far more qualified. She is identified as the owner of a consulting business at the beginning of the speech and also mentions that she is a small business owner in the last sentence. This means she sees firsthand what soft skills are needed as she runs her business. A person who makes workplace hiring and firing decisions is definitely more of an expert on soft skills than a student. There are more reasons why Shanice Jones’s speech is stronger than Darnell Hughes’s speech.

Shanice Jones’s speech is also better because she has some strong evidence to back up what she says. In the first paragraph, she mentions that the soft skills she would be talking about come from a 2014 survey done by careerbuilder.com. This survey was done very recently making it a current source. It was also done by a company recognized as being an expert in the job market as they are identified as being the United States’ largest online job site. The people who did the survey talked with over 2000 experts, those who hire people for jobs. These hiring managers come from across the U.S. too. Because the survey was done recently, comes from a reliable source, and used expert sources, it is strong evidence.

While some may say that Darnell Jones has some strong points with the three soft skills he describes, his evidence is not well supported. He bases his experience only on some part time jobs he has worked. A student who has just worked some part time jobs does not have much workplace experience. He does not offer any credible sources to back up what he says. All his paragraphs begin with his opinion as he says “I think” or “I feel” or “I believe” at the beginning of paragraphs two, three, and four. Who would take the opinion of a young student versus that of an experienced professional like Shanice Jones?

In conclusion, we have to listen more carefully to Shanice Jones’s speech. She is in the business world and based her speech on strong research done by a leading career website. If we listen to Darnell Jones’s speech, all we hear are the weak opinions of a student who may have never worked at a real job.
Writing in a Formal Style

What Not to Do:

Use slang: Dude, s’up? My bad, you don’t have to get all emo on me.

Use contractions: Don’t use contractions. We’ve better ways to write!

Use abbreviations: There are many facts to support this, etc.

Use second person pronouns to address readers: You don’t know what you don’t know until you know that you don’t know. You know?

What to Do:

Write in the third person and use longer and more complex sentences:

A recent study by Dr. Ernesto Johnson at Emory University noted that walking was the most effective way of moving short distances in the least amount of time. She also mentioned that people normally walk with their feet. However, some talented circus performers have become quite good at walking on their hands.

Adapted from Dr. Chris Rauscher

Editing Checklist: Reasoning through Language Arts

Read your response again to make sure you:

☐ determined which position was better supported by evidence from the passage
☐ explained why the position you chose is the better-supported one
☐ defended your thesis with multiple pieces of evidence from the passage
☐ built each main point thoroughly
☐ put your main points in logical order
☐ tied details to your main points
☐ organized the response to consider your audience, message, and purpose
☐ used transitional words and phrases to connect sentences, paragraphs, and ideas
☐ chose words carefully to express your ideas clearly
☐ varied your sentence structure to enhance the flow and clarity of your response
☐ corrected errors in grammar, usage, or punctuation
Where Can I Find Practice Prompts?

ABSPD website  www.abspd.appstate.edu  and go to Teaching Resources

www.writing4.newreaderspress.com  This website has free practice prompts and mimics actual test taking conditions

Other Resources

English for Everyone
This site contains a wealth of worksheets that assist students in writing. To find argument writing prompts, go to  www.englishforeveryone.org  , choose writing practice, and scroll down to find the argumentative writing worksheets.

Newsela
Newsela has articles on health, kids, money, law, and other subjects in the news. The reading levels of the texts can be changed depending on the needs of your students. It is found at  www.newsela.com

ProCon.org
This website lists the pro and con arguments of 50 controversial subjects including medical marijuana, video games and violence, and the death penalty. It is found at  www.procon.org

Evidence Base:

