

Students Know How to Argue: Easing into TASC Argument Based Writing!



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Passing TASC = No Fear!

The really big reason not to worry about students passing TASC is _____ !

“[The] norming sample consisted of a national sample of high-school seniors and recent high-school graduates . . . the passing standard for each sub-test was determined by calculating the score on the sub-test resulting in a 70% pass rate based on the norming sample data . . . For example, the passing standard for the Mathematics section was determined by calculating the score that resulted in 70% of the norm sample passing TASC test Mathematics . . . This process for setting the cut scores is similar to how the cut scores for the GED test have been set in the past.”

- Description of TASC Test Assessing Secondary Completion™ Standard Scoring Process

The bottom line: Students will pass TASC at similar rates to GED 2002!

TASC Language Arts- Writing is based on these College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education:

- 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.

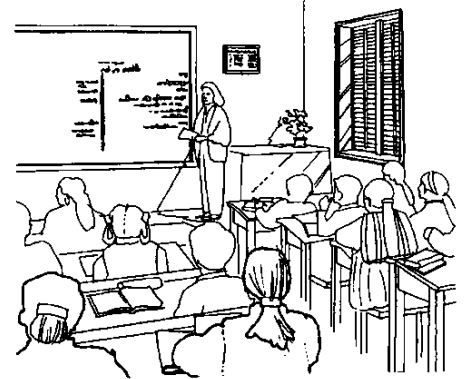
TASC Writing Overview

The TASC Language Arts – Writing Test argument essay asks students to unpack a prompt, read source material that’s 600 to 800 words, plan their response, write it, and then edit/revise. Students are given 50 minutes to complete their response. TASC does not ask for a certain number of words or paragraphs. The writing portion of the test is 17% of the possible points.

Grading and Scoring the Reasoning through Language Arts Test

Grading: TASC writing is graded on a rubric that emphasizes how well students create an argument, back it with strong evidence, have an organizational structure, and use Standard English. See pages 25 - 26 for the scoring rubric.

Scoring: Students can score up to 4 points. Their total score is then doubled and added to the number of correct answers on the rest of the test to get their raw score. The raw score is then converted to a scale score ranging from 300 to 800.



TASC 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 use the What, Why, How chart on page 11.

Writing about reading

Create writing prompts that focus on reading passages

Reading a range of texts

Have students read informational and literary texts. TASC reading is 70% informational and 30% literature.

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.

Writing for a variety of purposes, including argumentative writing

Argument Based Writing

Thesis Statement

In the first paragraph of an argument essay, students should set the context by reviewing the topic in a general way. Next the author should explain why the topic is important or why readers should care about the issue. Lastly, students should present the thesis statement. It is essential that this thesis statement be appropriately narrowed to follow the guidelines in the prompt.

Clear and Logical Transitions between the Introduction, Body, and Conclusion

Transitions are the mortar that holds the foundation of the essay together. Without logical progression of thought, the reader is unable to follow the essay's argument, and the structure will collapse. Transitions should wrap up the idea from the previous section and introduce the idea that is to follow in the next section.

Body Paragraphs Should Include Evidential Support

Each paragraph should be limited to the discussion of one general idea. This will allow for clarity and direction throughout the essay. In addition, such conciseness creates an ease of readability for one's audience. It is important to note that each paragraph in the body of the essay must have some logical connection to the thesis statement in the opening paragraph. Some paragraphs will directly support the thesis statement with evidence collected during research. It is also important to explain how and why the evidence supports the thesis.

Use **PEA** while writing body paragraphs:

- P** **Point** - Make your point
- E** **Evidence** – Support your point with evidence and examples
- A** **Argue** – Explain how the evidence supports your points

Evidence

The argumentative essay requires well-researched, accurate, detailed, and current information to support the thesis statement. Some factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal evidence should support the thesis. However, students must consider multiple points of view when collecting evidence. A successful and well-rounded argumentative essay will also discuss opinions not aligning with the thesis. It is not the student's job to point out how other positions are wrong outright, but rather to explain how other positions may not be well informed or up to date on the topic.

Conclusion

A conclusion that does not simply restate the thesis, but readdresses it in light of the evidence provided. This is the portion of the essay that will leave the most immediate impression on the mind of the reader. Therefore, it must be effective and logical. Do not introduce any new information into the conclusion; rather, synthesize the information presented in the body of the essay. Restate why the topic is important, review the main points, and review your thesis.

Adapted from Purdue Owl

Preparing for Argument Writing

Quick Writes

See pages 21 and 22

I Wanna Iguana

In this exercise, we use a children's book to help students understand how to locate arguments and to realize they have been preparing for argument writing their whole life!

Strike or Stroll?

Use prediction and inference to help students develop arguments

Apples to Apples Game

Students can argue why their red apple noun card best matches the green apple adjective card

Oral Argument

I agree with _____ because _____

I disagree with _____ because _____

Interviews

Have students play the authors of each paper in the prompt. Students can ask them questions about the evidence in their paper.

\$5 or a Lottery Ticket

See page 23

Teaching 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.

U = Unpack the prompt – What are you being asked to do?

R = Read the source material

P = Plan the response

W = Write the response

E = Edit the response



Instructors should model the writing process for students using think alouds while demonstrating multiple examples!

TASC Writing Prompts Overview

TASC Argumentative Essay Prompt

The first paragraph presents one sentence that gives an overview of the topic on which students will write. The next two sentences ask questions that frame both sides of the issue.

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 _____ .
Be sure to use information from both texts in your argumentative essay.

Before you begin planning and writing, read the two texts:

Text 1

Text 2

As you read the texts, think about what details from the texts you might use in your argumentative essay. You may take notes or highlight the details as you read.

After reading the texts, create a plan for your argumentative essay. Think about ideas, facts, definitions, details, and other information and examples you want to use. Think about how you will introduce your topic and what the main topic will be for each paragraph.

Now write your argumentative essay. Be sure to:

- Introduce your claim.
- Support your claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence from the passages.
- Acknowledge and address alternate or opposing claims.
- Organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- Use words, phrases, and clauses to connect your ideas and to clarify the relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Do What? Unpacking Prompts!

When we unpack a prompt, we ask, “What am I supposed to do?”

TASC Writing

The standard format of a TASC writing prompt is:

1. The essay prompt which gives an overview of the issue and specific directions on how to write the essay.
2. A page supporting one side of the issue and a page supporting another side of the issue.



Let's Practice:

Essay 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 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.

DO (LOOK FOR VERBS)	WHAT

Let's Practice:

Essay Prompt

There is an ongoing debate about the use of so many plastic shopping bags in the United States today. How does using so many plastic shopping bags affect the environment? Is it time to require shoppers to use cloth shopping bags?

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

DO (LOOK FOR VERBS)	WHAT

Let's Practice:

Prompt

There is a debate about using food products like corn to make biofuel for vehicles. How does using food products for fuel affect food prices? Should we prohibit the use of food products for the production of biofuel?

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

DO (LOOK FOR VERBS)	WHAT

Reliable Evidence? Think CARBS

As students look at the evidence presented in source documents, they should consider how reliable it is. Some things used to measure reliability are:

Currency

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

Authority

Who created the source? Are they really an expert in this field? Just because someone is well known (actors, singers, sports stars) does not make them an expert.

Relevance

Does the evidence specifically relate to the topic being discussed? Let's look at the following evidence for the following topic: There are great health benefits to running.

1. Running burns many calories
2. Running works out the entire body
3. Running can help someone lose weight
4. Running workout clothes are really fashionable
5. Running is great cardiovascular exercise

While number 4 talks about running, it is not relevant since it has nothing to do with running's health benefits. Instead, it focuses on the fashionable styles of some runners.

Bias

Is the evidence from an unbiased source? Sources such as government agencies and educational institutions are usually unbiased. Look at who funds a study. For example, if a drug company is funding a study about one of its new drugs, we would be surprised if the findings showed that the drug did not work. We would expect the findings to be biased in favor of the company since it paid to have the study done and wants to show that its product works.

Specific

Is the evidence specific? For example, the phrase "two decades of research shows that breathing has positive health benefits" is not specific. We do not know over which two decades the research was done. Also, "several studies have shown that walking is a great way to move from one place to another" is not specific either. We know nothing about the studies so we cannot know if they are current, authoritative, relevant, or biased.



Writing about Reading: What-Why-How Chart

What? What does the author think about the topic?

WHY? These are the author's reasons for thinking this way.	HOW? These are the author's support, evidence and/or examples for each reason. Use C A R B S to evaluate the evidence.
	C A R B S
	C A R B S
	C A R B S
	C A R B S
	C A R B S

Adapted from GED Testing Service

TASC Prompt 1: Minimum Legal Drinking Age

Essay Prompt

There is an ongoing debate in the public domain as to whether speed limits should be lowered across the country. Are lower speed limits an effective way to save gas and lives? Do lower speed limits take away our freedom?

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 lower speed limits. Be sure to use information from both texts in your argumentative essay.

Before you begin planning and writing, read the two texts:

1. The Legal Drinking Age Should be Lowered
2. Underage Drinking Kills

As you read the texts, think about what details from the texts you might use in your argumentative essay. You may take notes or highlight the details as you read.

After reading the texts, create a plan for your argumentative essay. Think about ideas, facts, definitions, details, and other information and examples you want to use. Think about how you will introduce your topic and what the main topic will be for each paragraph.

Now write your argumentative essay. Be sure to:

- Introduce your claim.
- Support your claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence from the passages.
- Acknowledge and address alternate or opposing claims.
- Organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- Use words, phrases, and clauses to connect your ideas and to clarify the relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

The Legal Drinking Age Should be Lowered

My name is Ronald Williams, and I am a senior at Learning Tech College and will graduate next May. I think the minimum legal drinking age should be lowered to 18. The fact is, young people under 21 are going to drink no matter what the law says. A walk around campus almost every night of the week shows underage students drinking in different party spots around campus. Almost everyone I know under 21 drinks, and I know a majority of the students on this campus.

A painter could not learn how to paint if she was never given brushes and paint. How can you expect students to learn to drink responsibly if they are not allowed to have alcohol until they are 21? An old saying is that “practice makes perfect.” If young people have no opportunity to practice safe drinking habits before age 21, how are they going to suddenly learn them at age 21? Isn’t it better for us to learn safe drinking habits at home from our parents than at a wild campus party?

We are considered adults at age 18 in all areas except alcohol use. We can vote, sign contracts, get married, and smoke cigarettes. We make major life decisions such as whether to attend college or get a job. We can join the military and give our lives for our country. Why should alcohol use be any different? What sense does it make to treat us like children in the area of alcohol use?

Finally, a 2007 article from youthfacts.org showed that the law is ineffective because 70 percent of 12th graders admitted to drinking. Since so many people are drinking underage, it leads to overall disrespect for the law. A 2008 article from Forbes magazine showed that many kids drink because of the thrill of doing something illegal. Lowering the drinking age to 18 would solve all these problems. Contact your Congressional representative and let's work to change the legal drinking age to 18!"

Underage Drinking Kills

"Underage drinking kills," says Dr. Sally Miller, the President of Learning Tech College from 1996 to 2010. The following is from an article that Dr. Miller recently wrote for the Chronicle of Higher Education where she describes her experiences leading a college where underage drinking was a constant issue:

"I have seen firsthand the danger of underage drinking by students. Sadly, during the 14 years I was a college president, I attended the funerals of five students under age 21 who were killed in alcohol related traffic accidents. I strongly support keeping the minimum legal drinking age 21. A 2008 study from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration showed that the 21 year old minimum drinking age has decreased the number of fatal accidents of 18 to 20 year olds by 13 percent, saving 27,052 lives between 1975 and 2008.

While some argue that young people have full adult rights at age 18, this is not entirely true. Young people must be 21 or older to buy guns, gamble in a casino, adopt children, and even to rent a car. Potentially dangerous and more responsible activities require the maturity of someone over age 21 or over to do.

Medically, lowering the drinking age to 18 would not be responsible. A 2007 study by the United States Surgeon General showed that a young adult's brain is not fully developed until they reach age 25. Alcohol can interfere with the development of the brain's planning and emotion centers and could lead to a greater increase in addiction, risk taking, depression, and memory loss.

Finally, the argument that young people being allowed to drink will teach them to drink responsibly is not true. Many European countries have lower drinking ages than the United States. A 2010 study from the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation showed that the United States teens had equal or lower rates of intoxication/binge drinking than European teens. European teens drinking experience did not make them more responsible drinkers."

TASC Prompt 2 – Analyzing Lower Speed Limits

Essay Prompt

There is an ongoing debate in the public domain as to whether speed limits should be lowered across the country. Are lower speed limits an effective way to save gas and lives? Do lower speed limits take away our freedom?

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 lower speed limits. Be sure to use information from both texts in your argumentative essay.

Before you begin planning and writing, read the two texts:

1. Let's Not Race by Speed Limits
2. Speed Limits Take Our Freedoms

As you read the texts, think about what details from the texts you might use in your argumentative essay. You may take notes or highlight the details as you read.

After reading the texts, create a plan for your argumentative essay. Think about ideas, facts, definitions, details, and other information and examples you want to use. Think about how you will introduce your topic and what the main topic will be for each paragraph.

Now write your argumentative essay. Be sure to:

- Introduce your claim.
- Support your claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence from the passages.
- Acknowledge and address alternate or opposing claims.
- Organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- Use words, phrases, and clauses to connect your ideas and to clarify the relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Let's Not Race by Speed Limits

In a recent *Washington Post* editorial, Ms. Keepit Slow argues that the United States should consider lowering speed limits which have been on the rise around the country since the 1970s:

“I am concerned about a trend I see sweeping across our country. It seems that speed limits are moving ever higher. In most of the central and western parts of the United States, speed limits range from 70 to 85 miles per hour (mph). These higher speeds waste precious fuel and endanger the lives of motorists across our land. We need to keep speed limits below 60 mph.

With the economic downturn of the past few years, we still need to be concerned about saving fuel. The US Department of Commerce did a study that showed the difference between driving under and over 60 mph. They found that driving under 60 mph would save Americans 2 billion dollars a year in fuel costs.

In another important study done in 2007, the state of Florida examined consumer spending on gas during the 1990s. They found that consumers paid \$220 million more dollars on gas as speed limits were increased on Florida roads from 1990 to 1999. This sharp increase was directly related to driving faster which lowers fuel economy.

Much more important than saving fuel is saving lives. It just makes sense that the faster you are traveling, the longer it takes your vehicle to stop. The longer it takes your vehicle to stop, the more likely you are to hit another vehicle. When you are racing along the freeway at 70 mph, your car is traveling over 100 feet per second. In just three seconds, you have traveled the length of an entire football field!

From 1973 to 1987 the National Maximum Speed Law lowered the speed limit to 55 mph for the entire country. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) did a study on how this change impacted highway deaths. What the NHTSA found was fewer people died in traffic related accidents because of the lower speed limits.

Also, other important evidence shows that lower speed limits save lives. In 2006, the Pew Trust did a study on speed limits and traffic deaths. They found that deaths increased by 1200 people each year for every mile per hour the speed limit was raised. I call on our government to once again set a national speed limit of 55 mph.

Speed Limits Take Our Freedoms

In his recent blog post, Mr. Speed Demon said:

“Hey, I just got back from the most awesome ride I have ever had! Of course I was out in my mean machine. You know the car I’m talking about: my 2012 Chevy Camaro. Camaros are not made to just cruise. When I want to go full throttle, I can’t go as fast as I want. I always have to put up with these stupid speed limits on the freeway. Dude, I just love to boogity, boogity, boogity. (For those of you living in a cave, boogity is NASCAR slang for going fast!) I think we should be able to drive as fast as we want on the highways and not have speed limits.

I just read some stupid article called Let’s Not Race by Speed Limits about why lower speed limits are a good thing. It’s so lame, man! It says that speed limits save lives and gas. Cars back in the day were not built like they are today. I remember my first Camaro, a 1976. It could fly but it was a piece of junk. Everybody knows that cars today are so much better made. Those robots do a much better job making cars than those drunks on the assembly line did back in the 1970s. If you get hit or hit somebody, your better made car and air bags will save you!

People talk about gas prices, but I don’t see that as an issue. Yeah, I remember when gas was above four bucks in 2008. That was a while ago. Gas prices are coming down, man. I paid just a little over three bucks when I filled up my car last week.

Finally, living in the United States is all about freedom. The more rules big government puts on us, the less free we are. My old history teacher used to say, “The bigger the government, the smaller the citizen.” So, don’t mess with my freedom, and let’s not have any speed limits!

Teaching Using Models (Using prompt from pgs. 14 – 15)

In her Washington Post editorial, Ms. Keepit Slow argues that speed limits below 60 miles per hour save gas and lives. In his blog, Speed Demon says we should not have speed limits because he likes to drive fast, cars today are safer, and gas prices are coming down. **Keepit Slow's editorial is the better of the two because she supports her claims with recent evidence from reliable sources while Mr. Demon's uses only his personal experience to back up his arguments.**

In the editorial, Ms. Slow's first reason why speed limits should be below 60 miles per hour is that it saves gas. She uses *data from the US Department of Commerce to back her claim that driving under 60 would "save Americans 2 billion dollars a year in fuel costs."* She also *points to a recent 2007 study by the state of Florida* that showed consumers paid \$220 million dollars more per year for gas when speed limits were raised in the 1990s.

Also, Ms. Slow shows that driving slower save lives. She uses *data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to show that fewer people died when speed limits were lowered in the 1970s.* Keepit Slow also talked about a *2006 study by the Pew Trust* that showed how "deaths increased by 1200 people each year for every mile per hour the speed limit was raised."

In contrast to Keepit Slow, Speed Demon's arguments are not based on strong evidence but on his personal opinion. His biggest argument was that there should be no speed limits *because "dude, I just love to boogity, boogity, boogity."* He could provide no evidence for his claim that cars today were made better than in the past *beyond his phrase "everyone knows that."* He based his argument that gas prices were going down on the *price he paid when he filled up his car last week*, not on national studies.

In conclusion, Keepit Slow's editorial supports her opinions by using current evidence from reliable government sources. Speed Demon's blog is just his personal opinion, and he has not done any research to prove his points.

The first paragraph introduces the topic

The thesis (argument) is in bold

The criteria for evaluating evidence are underlined

Specific evidence from the text is in italics

Organization is shown through paragraph structure where first Keepit Slow's evidence is discussed and then Speed Demon's evidence is contrasted

Transition words like also and in contrast connect paragraphs together

Awareness of audience and purpose is shown by a conclusion which summarizes the argument

TASC Graphic Organizer

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

Write the thesis: “Argument 1 is better supported than Argument 2 because _____”

Body 1 Explain reasons Argument 1 is better than Argument 2

Evidence and/or counterclaims

Body 2 Explain reasons why Argument 2 is weaker than Argument 1

Evidence and/or counterclaims

Conclusion Summarize your main points

Argument 1 is the stronger argument

Writing Frame – TASC Writing

_____ makes the claim that _____

_____ makes the claim that _____

The best argument is _____

because _____

The first reason _____ is better because

Evidence supporting this reason is _____

There is also _____

Also, the second argument is weaker because _____

Evidence supporting this reason is _____

Another piece of evidence is _____

In conclusion, _____

Argument Writing Vocabulary

Neutral Expressions, Words, & Phrases	
(Passage B) argues in favor of.... On the other hand, (passage A) argues against...	(Passage B) argues.... On the other hand, (Passage A) argues....
(Passage A) is better supported than (passage B) because.... In contrast,	(author/passage) backs up (its/his/her) claim (with/by)....
For example, (An example is ...)	Another example of (is)....
On the other hand,	counterclaim (counterargument)
In addition to..., (In addition,)	statistics
However,	claims (argues)
rebuttal	refutes
In contrast, (In contrast to...)	mentions (uses, cites, provides)
To support (demonstrate) this....	

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

Source: Gibson

Editing Checklist: TASC Writing

Read what you wrote again to make sure you:

- Introduced your claim

Ex: “The article Breathing is Good for You is the better of the two because it contains results from scientific studies and responded to arguments in the other article.”

- Supported your claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence from the passages

Ex: “The author of the Breathing article used several recent scientific studies to back their claim. The 2006 study from Indiana University showed that people who breathe live much longer than those who do not.”

- Acknowledged and addressed alternate or opposing claims

Ex: The Breathing article made an effective counter argument against the Hold Your Breath article. It acknowledged that sometimes it is good to hold your breath such as when swimming underwater. However, most people cannot hold their breath longer than a few minutes without passing out.”

- Organized the reasons and evidence logically

- Used words, phrases, and clauses to connect your ideas and to clarify the relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence

- Established and maintained a formal style

- Provided a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented

Ex: “To sum up, the Breathing article was the better claim for several reasons. It used scientific evidence from 3 studies that were done recently at major universities. It also responded to the claims in the Hold Your Breath article effectively and showed where its reasoning was weak.”

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 related to 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 from 2 to 10 minutes to write and be sure you as the instructor 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!

Prompt

What information did you learn about interdependence from reading this passage?

Did you know the microprocessor that lives in a laptop computer is a world traveler? It begins life as a pile of quartz chips and charcoal at a factory in Brazil. After being heated and processed, it is sent for more refining to a German factory. After being formed into blocks of polysilicon, it goes to Japan where it is made into tiny circular wafers. These thin disks are then shipped to the United States where Intel Corporation turns them into microprocessors by adding hundreds of tiny chips. They then journey for testing to the Philippines where more circuitry is added and testing takes place.

(continued on next page)

Continuing its journey, the chips move to a factory in China where they are placed on the laptop's motherboard along with many other components made in Southeast Asia. The motherboard, along with the other parts of the computer including the battery, hard drive and keyboard, are assembled at another Chinese factory. Finally, the completed laptop is shipped to the United States for distribution. The other parts that make up this computer come from as many as 50 countries on six continents including steel from Russia, copper from Chile, glass from Korea and lithium from Zimbabwe.

So what's the point of knowing how well traveled a laptop is? The global makeup of the laptop computer is a great example of an economic concept called interdependence. Interdependence means we rely on others to make or do things we do not make or do ourselves. No one country has all the raw materials it needs to produce the products it wants to sell. So, it must trade with other countries to get the materials it needs. Most all the other manufactured goods we buy have similar stories of raw material mining and finished product processing taking place around the globe. The next time you see a laptop; remember the amazing global journey it had just to reach you!

My Quick Write

Making a Formal Argument – \$5 or a Lottery Ticket

Directions: Answer the question below using a formal argument. In a formal argument, you must

- 1) State your position.
- 2) Provide point(s) that support your position.
- 3) Support each point with specific reasons/examples.

Question: Which is better: five dollars or a lottery ticket?

Example Answer: A lottery ticket is better than five dollars. You cannot buy much with five dollars. For example, you can buy a hamburger for five dollars. A hamburger may be nice for now, but you will be hungry again later. On the other hand, a lottery ticket may be worth millions of dollars; enough to feed you for the rest of your life.

Rough Draft:

Final Draft:

Source: Englishforeveryone

Thoughts about TASC Scoring

Holistic Scoring

Holistic scoring gives a single score to an entire piece of writing based on several criteria. The scoring criteria for TASC argumentative writing focuses on how well students create an argument, support it with evidence, organize their writing, and use proper tone and grammar.

On Demand Writing

There is a difference between grading on demand writing where a student is given something to read, a prompt to write about, and a certain amount of time to write compared with a writing assignment that a student has had days or weeks to complete. We cannot expect a piece of writing created in under one hour to be free from mistakes. Keep in mind that you are grading on demand writing as you score students' extended responses.

Comparison Don't!

It's human nature to want to compare different responses when we score multiple pieces of student writing. Please resist the temptation! Score each response based on the traits in the rubric instead of comparing different pieces of student writing.

It's Confusing at First, But Then

Doing anything new is shaky at first but soon we get used to it and become experts!

TASC Argumentative Writing Scoring Rubric

Score: 4

The response is a well-developed essay that develops and supports an argument.

- Effectively introduces a claim
- Uses logical, credible, and relevant reasoning and evidence to support claim
- Uses an organizational strategy to present reasons and relevant evidence
- Acknowledges and counters opposing claims, as appropriate
- Uses precise and purposeful word choice
- Uses words, phrases, and/or clauses that effectively connect and show relationships among ideas
- Uses and maintains an appropriate tone
- Provides a strong concluding statement or section that logically follows from the ideas presented
- Has no errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 3

The response is a complete essay that develops and supports an argument.

- Clearly introduces a claim
- Uses reasoning and evidence to support claim
- Uses an organizational structure to present reasons and relevant evidence
- Attempts to acknowledge and/or counter opposing claims, as appropriate
- Uses clear word choice
- Uses words and/or phrases to connect ideas
- Uses an appropriate tone
- Provides a concluding statement or section that follows from the ideas presented
- Has few, if any, errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 2

The response is an incomplete or oversimplified essay that develops and supports an argument.

- Attempts to establish a claim
- Develops, sometimes unevenly, reasons and/or evidence to support claim
- Attempts to use an organizational structure
- Makes little, if any, attempt to acknowledge or counter opposing claims
- Uses simple language, which sometimes lacks clarity
- Provides a weak concluding statement or section
- May have errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 1

The response provides evidence of an attempt to write an essay that offers an argument.

- Weakly states or alludes to a claim
- Has minimal support for claim
- May be too brief to demonstrate an organizational structure
- Makes no attempt to acknowledge or counter opposing claims
- Uses words that are inappropriate, overly simple, or unclear
- Provides a minimal or no concluding statement or section
- Has errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 0

The response is completely irrelevant or incorrect, or there is no response.

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.

I Wanna Iguana Video

This children’s book can help students begin how to recognize and evaluate arguments. To find it, Google: I Wanna Iguana Youtube

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.

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.

ReadWriteThink

Developed by literacy professionals, readwritethink has many lesson plans and graphic organizers that help students developing critical thinking skills, write about reading, and improve reading skills.

TASC LiveBinder

This LiveBinder (like a three ring binder for online information), has some information about the TASC test and where to find the latest updates. Please find it at: <http://tinyurl.com/oj7pybr>

200 Prompts for Argumentative Writing

This website from The Learning Network at the New York Times has 200 prompts for argument writing covering ten major groups of issues including education, technology and social media, sports and athletics, and parenting and childhood. To find it, Google: 200 prompts for argument writing.