

Option 1: Unit 1, Embedded Assessment 2

Synthesizing the American Dream

Assignment:

Your assignment is to synthesize at least three to five sources and your own observations to defend, challenge, or qualify the statement that America still provides access to the American Dream. This question requires you to integrate a variety of sources (three to five) into a coherent, well-written argumentative essay. Your argument should be central; the sources and your observations should support this argument.

Planning and Pre-Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the elements of a strong synthesis paper, and how can you use these elements as a sort of “to-do list” for your planning? • What texts from Unit 1 provide relevant evidence for your own answer to the essay prompt?
Drafting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you clearly voice your position on the topic without overlooking the nuances and complexities of the topic? • What assumptions or beliefs are either spoken or unspoken in your sources? • How do the ideas in your selected sources relate to your position? Do they agree with, disagree with, or offer a sort of qualification to your ideas?
Evaluating and Revising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you consistently show how each selected quote from your sources relates to your central position? • How can you make sure that your syntax is sophisticated and varied, especially the openings of your sentences? • Are your ideas sequenced in the best way to guide your reader through your ideas and present a convincing argument? How could reordering some of your ideas improve this?

Next Meeting: Day, Month Date, Year, Time, Location

Editing and Publishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you check for grammatical and technical accuracy? • What sort of outside resources can help you to check your draft (e.g., a style guide such as MLA, a dictionary)? • How will you prepare yourself to present this essay to an audience?
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Reflection:

After completing this Embedded Assessment, think about how you went about accomplishing this assignment and respond to the following:

- In what ways did your various sources validate your ideas about the American Dream, and in what ways did they add new elements or depth to your thinking?

Resources:

This Embedded Assessment is the culmination of Unit 1, Part 2. This portion of the unit begins on Page 101 of the English 3 Student Edition.

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Incomplete
Ideas	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> effectively synthesizes sources to defend, challenge, or qualify the central claim of the prompt provides a strong thesis that anticipates audience needs uses convincing, thorough, and relevant evidence acknowledges and refutes counterclaims fairly and thoroughly 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adequately synthesizes sources to defend, challenge, or qualify the central claim of the prompt provides a straight forward thesis that briefly contextualizes the issue uses support that clearly connects the various source materials to the writer's position 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempts to synthesize sources but inadequately defends, challenges, or qualifies the central claim of the prompt provides a thesis that attempts to contextualize the issue uses support that connects the source material but with lapses in accuracy or completeness 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tries to synthesize sources but does not defend, challenge, or qualify the claim of the prompt includes a weak thesis or one that is lost in a summary of sources includes support that paraphrases source material with no commentary or analysis
Structure	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is organized to effectively reinforce the ideas of the argument moves smoothly with successful use of transitions that enhance coherence concludes by going beyond the thesis, illuminating how the writers influence the reader 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is organized to support the ideas of the argument arranges ideas so they are easy to follow, using transitions to move between ideas includes a conclusion that is logical yet may be somewhat repetitive to the thesis 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> follows a simplistic organization with lapses in coherence arranges ideas in a confusing way and with an inconsistent use of transitions includes a conclusion that may be logical yet is too close to the original thesis 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows a lack of organization that detracts from argument, making the ideas difficult to follow may jump too rapidly between ideas and lack transitions includes a conclusion that returns directly to the attempted thesis
Use of Language	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates a mature style that advances the writer's ideas employs precise diction and skillful use of syntax, with keen attention to varied sentence openings, which helps to create a convincing voice follows standard writing conventions (including accurate citation of sources) 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates a style that adequately supports the writer's ideas uses logical diction and syntax, with some attention to varied sentence openings, creating a suitable voice largely follows standard writing conventions (including accurate citation of sources); errors do not seriously impede readability 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates an inconsistent style that minimally supports the writer's idea unevenly uses diction and syntax to convey a suitable voice, with few varied sentence openings contains errors in standard writing conventions that may impede readability; some sources are inaccurately cited 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates a limited style that ineffectively supports the writer's ideas contains lapses in diction or syntax that may not allow a suitable voice to sustain throughout the essay; sentence openings may be repetitive contains errors that impede readability; sources may be inaccurately cited

Option 2: Springboard Writer's Workshop Argumentative Essay

Argumentative Writing

Learning targets:

- Analyze the characteristics of argumentative writing, and evaluate a writer's use of reasoning and evidence to support a claim.
- Use knowledge of the writing process to plan, write, revise, and edit an argumentative essay that supports claims with valid reasoning and relevant evidence.
- Introduce and develop claims and counterclaims effectively, anticipating the knowledge, concerns, values, and possible biases of the audience.
- Use an organizational structure and transitional words, phrases, and clauses that make the relationships between claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence clear.
- Craft writing that effectively employs figurative language or hyperbole.
- Edit drafts to conform to standard English conventions.
- Participate collaboratively during discussions by contributing relevant ideas and information, building on others' ideas, and moving the discussion forward with thoughtful questions and responses.

Preview:

In this workshop, you will work with your teacher and classmates to construct two arguments that respond to a specific perspective. You will then use these as models as you write an argumentative essay independently.

Activity 1: Discovering the Elements of an Argumentative Response Essay

Addressing Opposing Points

1. Honing skills in civil debate and diplomatic argumentation is important in many careers and fields. When trying to convince others of your point of view and calling on them to take action, it is especially important to understand the logic of the opposition. Think of the last time that you engaged in a debate or disagreement about a worthy topic. Was your understanding of the other point of view strong enough to respond with a rebuttal based on logic and reason? How did you address the opposing point of view effectively?

As You Read

- Underline key ideas, and reread any sections that you do not understand at first.
- Highlight phrases and clauses that contribute to the author's tone.
- Jot down notes and any questions that you may have in the margins.

Background Information: The following letter of veto (a form of rebuttal) is an example of formal argumentation, responding to legislation passed by the Illinois State Senate. The author, Adlai Stevenson (Illinois governor, 1949– 1953), maintains a professional persona while expressing his opinion that Bill No. 93 is ridiculous.

Sample Text: Argumentative Response

To the Illinois State Senate by Adlai E. Stevenson

1 To the Honorable, the Members of the Senate of the Sixty-sixth General Assembly:

2 I herewith return, without my approval, Senate Bill No. 93 entitled "An Act to Provide Protection to Insectivorous Birds by Restricting Cats." This is the so-called "Cat Bill." I veto and withhold my approval from this bill for the following reasons:

3 It would impose fines on owners or keepers who permitted their cats to run at large off their premises. It would permit any person to capture, or call upon the police to pick up and imprison, cats at large. It would permit the use of traps. The bill would have statewide application—on farms, in villages, and in metropolitan centers.

4 This legislation has been introduced in the past several sessions of the Legislature, and it has, over the years, been the source of much comment—not all of which has been in serious vein. It may be that the general assembly has now seen fit to refer it to one who can view it with a fresh outlook. Whatever the reasons for passage at this session, I cannot believe there is a widespread public demand for this law or that it could, as a practical matter, be enforced.

5 Furthermore, I cannot agree that it should be the declared public policy of Illinois that a cat visiting a neighbor's yard or crossing the highway is a public nuisance. It is in the nature of cats to do a certain amount of unescorted roaming. Many live with their owners in apartments or other restricted premises, and I doubt if we want to make their every brief foray an opportunity for a small game hunt by zealous citizens—with traps or otherwise. I am afraid this Bill could only create discord, recrimination and enmity. Also consider the owner's dilemma: To escort a cat abroad on a leash is against the nature of the cat, and to permit it to venture forth for exercise unattended into a night of new dangers is against the nature of the owner. Moreover, cats perform useful service, particularly in rural areas, in combating rodents—work they necessarily perform alone and without regard for property lines.

6 We are all interested in protecting certain varieties of birds. That cats destroy some birds, I well know, but I believe this legislation would further but little the worthy cause to which its proponents give such unselfish effort. The problem of cat versus bird is as old as time. If we attempt to resolve it by legislation who knows but what we may be called upon to take sides as well in the age-old problems of dog versus cat, bird versus bird, or even bird versus worm. In my opinion, the State of Illinois and its local governing bodies already have enough to do without trying to control feline delinquency.

7 For these reasons, and not because I love birds the less or cats the more, I veto and withhold my approval from Senate Bill No. 93.

Working from the Text

2. RAFT is an acronym for a strategy used to respond to and analyze texts. Using this strategy can help the reader understand the relationship among the following elements: Role of the author, Audience, Format, and Topic. If only one element is changed or adjusted, the text can take on an entirely different complexity. Begin by identifying the following elements from the sample text:

R—Role of the author

A—Audience

F—Format

T—Topic

Check Your Understanding

Examine the specific phrases and clauses that you highlighted. How would you categorize the tone of this letter? Why does Stevenson choose to approach this topic with this tone? What is the intended effect of this approach?

*For the purpose of this assignment, we are skipping activities 2 and 3 which require group/class writing.

Activity 4: Independent Writing

WRITING PROMPT: Locate a published, publicly filed lawsuit or proposed bill that inspires you to respond with a rebuttal. Then respond to the ideas expressed in the piece in a well-crafted argumentative letter or essay. Review the writing steps from the class-constructed response, and apply them to your response.

Refer to the Scoring Guide for this writing task—it will help you understand where to focus your attention and efforts.

Planning and Prewriting:

1.

Claims	Potential Rebuttals and Evidence that Could Be Employed to Respond to This Claim

2. To augment your evidence, spend time researching credible online sources as well as conducting informal interviews. Search for both primary and secondary sources. Your goal here is to search out information that represents the entire range of relevant perspectives on this lawsuit—not just your own.

3. Once you have found additional sources, consider their relevance, validity, and reliability. If you deem your new information relevant, valid, and reliable, add the information to your brainstorm list so you can accurately represent these viewpoints in your class-constructed text.

To consider your sources’ relevance, validity, and reliability, think about the following questions:

- Relevance and Validity: Does the information appear to be legitimate? Is it timely and closely connected to the rebuttal? In what ways could this evidence be used to support the ideas generated for response?

- Reliability: Are the author's name and qualifications clearly identified? Is the information from a respected source of publication? If it is an online resource, is the site listed as .gov, .edu, or .org rather than .com?

4. Once you have compiled a list of relevant, valid, and reliable evidence, choose two to three of the most compelling and precise pieces of evidence and share them with the class.

5. After everyone has submitted their best evidence, you will have a solid representation of a range of views and information on the topic. As a class, use the synthesized information to construct an outline that will frame the response.

Drafting:

6. Remember that part of your task is to maintain formal style while exposing the absurdity of this case. This is crafted not only into what you write but also how you write it. The tone you strike will have a great deal of impact on the effectiveness and ethos of your response. Before you begin drafting, come to an agreement as a group about how to promote this style in your response. This selection will influence your choices regarding diction, syntax, and rhetorical appeals/devices.

7. Draft the introduction, or opening paragraph, of the response. Remember that while this will take the form of a letter of response, the forum is public and the appeals should be directed at a broader audience than just Lloyd as an individual.

8. Draft the body paragraphs and conclusion or closing.

Check Your Understanding:

After you have completed this process, read over the drafted response that you created. Use these questions as a checklist:

- Does the introduction clearly establish your group's position and the topic of contention?
- Are the strongest points of argument in the lawsuit adequately addressed?
- Does the diction and syntax maintain decorum while promoting the specified tone desired?
- Does the writing expose the absurdity of holding small children liable for stray throws?
- Is the tone effective for the purpose and audience?
- Do transitions help the reader clearly make connections among the ideas of the response?
- Is the response organized in the most effective way to convince the audience?

Resources:

The full activities are found within the English 3 Writers Workshop Student Edition. Pages 15-24.

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Incomplete
Ideas	<p>The essay or letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asserts an insightful thesis or position statement and effectively anticipates counterarguments • supports reasons with precise, convincing evidence and authoritative commentary • demonstrates thoughtful consideration of relevance, validity, and reliability of evidence • consistently presents counterarguments accurately, honestly, and diplomatically 	<p>The essay or letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presents a clear thesis or position statement that anticipates and distinguishes counterarguments • supports reasons with specific and relevant evidence and commentary • demonstrates consideration of relevance, validity, and reliability of evidence • usually presents an accurate, honest, and diplomatic representation of counterarguments 	<p>The essay or letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presents a limited or unfocused thesis that does not distinguish counterarguments • uses insufficient evidence and vague commentary • demonstrates little or no consideration of relevance, validity, and reliability of evidence and insufficient research • often struggles to represent counterarguments accurately or diplomatically 	<p>The essay or letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presents neither a clear claim nor counterarguments • contains insufficient and/or irrelevant evidence with little or no commentary • pays little attention to research and consideration of relevance, reliability, and validity of evidence • shows little attempt to present counterarguments fairly
Structure	<p>The essay or letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skillfully uses an appropriate organizational structure • presents a sustained focus that displays a progression of ideas with depth and complexity appropriate for the audience • effectively sequences ideas and uses graceful transitions 	<p>The essay or letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes an appropriate organizational structure • includes a sustained focus that presents ideas with clarity and coherence appropriate for the audience • sequences ideas logically and uses transitions appropriately 	<p>The essay or letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may lack an organizational structure or contain one that is inappropriate • presents unfocused or underdeveloped ideas inappropriate for the audience • presents disconnected ideas and limited use of transitions 	<p>The essay or letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lacks a clear or appropriate organizational structure • presents unfocused and underdeveloped ideas inappropriate for the audience • presents ideas that are unconnected with little or no use of transitional elements
Use of Language	<p>The essay or letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses syntax effectively to contribute to the clarity of ideas and persuasive effect • uses diction and tone that are deliberately crafted for the topic • employs hyperbole in a way that enhances the argument • uses conventions skillfully to contribute to the rhetorical effectiveness 	<p>The essay or letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses syntax deliberately for persuasive effect • uses diction and tone appropriately for the topic and audience • uses hyperbole • uses conventions correctly; minor errors do not affect meaning 	<p>The essay or letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows little or no deliberate use of sentence structure for effect • uses inappropriate diction and tone for the topic and audience • does not use hyperbole • uses conventions incorrectly; errors may interfere with meaning 	<p>The essay or letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows no deliberate use of syntax for a certain effect • shows no evidence of careful and deliberate use of diction and tone • shows little or inappropriate use of hyperbole • contains multiple errors in conventions that interfere with meaning