Higher Education
Persuasive/Argumentative
Prompt Catalog

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Below each prompt title is the number of sources. Zeros denote prompts that are not research or source dependent. Zeros also indicate when the number of sources is unknown or unspecified (i.e., recommends but does not require sources, or requires research by the student (and/or teacher).

Table of Contents

Pilot Prompts

The Editor's Note provides an overview of the content for this catalog and brief descriptions of the index and appendices included herein.

Editor's Note

Statement of Purpose and Alignment

This catalog provides a list of all of the Persuasive/Argumentative prompts that are currently active in MY Access!® and available for use at the Higher Education level. Each prompt aligns to Common Core and State educational standards and assessment practices expected of Higher Education students for the Persuasive and Argumentative writing genres. All prompts also align to the educational standards outlined in our rubrics and writing genres, which in turn align to the National and State education standards. Each genre was re-evaluated and updated in accordance with current academic standards and practices to better serve teachers and students. As a result of this and the MY Access!® redesign, several prompts previously found in other genres have been moved to account for these shifts in educational standards and to provide a more accurate representation of the prompts in the system. Please refer to the list of migrated prompts available in the MY Access!® Resource and Training Center to locate prompts that recently moved to other genres, or contact our staff for further assistance in locating specific prompts in the system.

Catalog Overview

The catalog provides an overview of each prompt in the system. Each catalog entry provides the title of the prompt and the text of the prompt task. The catalog entry only includes the prompt task and basic data related to the prompt. Sources and our in-house specific genre-based prompt instructions are not included. These are accessible in the system for each prompt. However, wherever possible and if applicable, a list of source titles, authors, and data are provided for each prompt entry.

Lexile level data provides a basic reference for the textual complexity levels found in particular sources. This data features in each prompt entry as both a range (from lowest to highest level, or approximate level, for a prompt's sources) and a specific value (if known or available). Only text-based sources include a Lexile level. Any multimedia source, such as a video, audio clip, map, or chart, will feature a Lexile reading of 'N/A' in the system for 'not applicable.' Teachers are encouraged to perform their own assessment of any Lexile levels provided for sources and to assess each prompt to ensure the content is appropriate for your students. All genres include prompts with and without sources. The quantity and complexity of sources varies according to education standards in each grade band.

However, some prompts may be more rigorous than others due to changing academic standards and particular task requirements. Generally, the MY Access!® Persuasive/Argumentative genre for the High School level requires more in-depth analysis, research, and more advanced argumentative writing and reasoning skills. The genre can incorporate prompts that may require students to formulate and express an opinion about a topic, although this occurs more in the lower grade levels, or create a persuasive argument in response to a topic or issue. Likewise, prompt tasks may require creating a formal analytical argument based on empirical evidence from research using primary and secondary sources in multiple mediums. These are more common at the Higher Education level. Other prompts may require or recommend integrating relevant in-depth research from sources about a topic into a student's argument, which will be either persuasive or argumentative in nature. Opinion, persuasive argument, and analytical argument writing are simply examples of the most common types of tasks seen in the Persuasive/Argumentative genre in MY Access!®.

A Note about Sources

Most argumentative tasks require close reading and analysis of sources, primarily works of non-fiction. Students base the bulk of their argument on their close reading of sources. Tasks may require students to identify, discuss, and/or apply applicable terms, techniques, and strategies relevant to persuasive and/or argumentative writing to their persuasive or analytical argument. The quantity, quality, and depth of persuasive or analytical argument required of students varies in accordance with education standards for each grade band level.

The catalog lists details about the sources for a particular prompt when known. Sources are considered unknown when a prompt only recommends rather than requires particular sources, or requires students (and/or teachers) to research and provide their own sources. In these cases, a prompt will list a zero as the number of sources. However, this does not necessarily mean the prompt does not include, require, or recommend sources. It merely means the actual source number is unknown or specific sources are not provided. Sometimes a zero source number does simply mean the prompt does not require, need, or provide sources. Some prompts specify a required number of sources to use, while others do not. Each prompt entry in the catalog records the number of sources (if known), Lexile levels (if applicable and/or known), source titles and authors, and notes pertaining to the types of sources used in the prompt. Each Table of Contents entry includes the title of a prompt, whether it is IntelliMetric™ or Pilot, and the number of sources. Source notes provide explanation as to why certain sources were not included directly in the prompt, most often due to copyright regulations and/or length of the source. Other source notes specify if a prompt is source-based,

quotation-based, or research-based. Quotations, even if integrated into the prompt task as a stepping off point, are included in the catalog as a source.

Index and Appendices

New features in the catalogs include the Index and Appendices section found at the end of each catalog. The purpose of these sections is to provide a list of prompt titles at a glance that are specifically source-based, quotation-based, and research-based, as well as a list of titles for prompts that do not require sources or evidence-based research. New features are planned for subsequent publications of the catalogs to make viewing and accessing prompts easier for teachers.

A Skill to Master

| Prompt Source(s): | 0 | Source Lexile Range: | N/A |

There are some skills that virtually all people use every day. There are also some skills that only few people have, but all people should master.

Think about a skill that most people do not have but could benefit from mastering. Why would people benefit from having this skill? What are the consequences of not having this skill? Write an essay to persuade your classroom instructor that all people should master this certain skill.

Adopt a Global Language?

| Prompt Source(s): | 0 | Source Lexile Range: | N/A |

Currently there are hundreds of languages spoken in countries all over the world. Yet, due to increases in global business and communications, it is becoming more essential for citizens of the world to be able to communicate with one another effectively. So, do you think the world should adopt one global language? If so, what language should be used?

Write a multi-paragraph essay in which you defend your position. Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your argument.

Change the Legal Driving Age?

| Prompt Source(s): | 0 | Source Lexile Range: | N/A |

The legal driving age is currently 16 in most states. However, with the increasing number of accidents among teenagers, some people feel that the legal driving age should be changed to at least 18. How do you feel about this issue?

In a persuasive editorial for your school newspaper, write why the legal driving age should either be changed or kept the same. Remember to cite reasons and facts to support your argument.

Choosing a Rewarding Occupation

Prompt Source(s):	0	**Source Lexile Range:**	N/A

People choose their occupations for different reasons: to make money, to help others, or to make the world a better place. What do you think is the most rewarding occupation you could have, excluding illegal activities?

Write a newspaper editorial to convince readers which occupation is the most rewarding and why.

Cloning of Humans

Prompt Source(s):	0	**Source Lexile Range:**	N/A

Scientists have successfully cloned animals like Dolly the sheep. Some people hope that cloning techniques will be used to clone humans someday, while others strongly oppose this use of technology. What is your position on cloning humans?

Write a persuasive essay articulating your position on the cloning of humans. Use specific examples and details to support your views.

Internet or Traditional Classrooms

Prompt Source(s):	0	**Source Lexile Range:**	N/A

With advancements in technology, some students have chosen to complete their schoolwork through the Internet, rather than in traditional classrooms. Those who support a traditional classroom approach to learning argue that it provides more of an opportunity for students to interact with the teacher and other students. Those who feel that learning over the Internet is better argue that it allows students to learn anytime and anywhere they choose.

Do you feel education is better provided in traditional classrooms or when offered over the Internet? Write an essay to be read by a classroom teacher in which you persuade the reader that either traditional classroom education or Internet-based learning is better.

Is Cheating Wrong?

_____

Prompt Source(s):   *2 quots.*   **Source Lexile Range:**   N/A

Source One: **Quotation** By Sophocles
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Source Two: **Quotation** By Susannah Centlivre
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

_____

"I would prefer even to fail with honor than to win by cheating."
—Sophocles

"Tis my opinion every man cheats in his own way, and he is only honest who is not discovered."
—Susannah Centlivre

Recently, the idea of cheating has gotten much attention in the world of sports, entertainment, and politics. Many celebrities have been accused of gaining a competitive edge through dishonest means. While cheating has mainly been publicly condemned, there are many that feel there are times when cheating can actually be a way of making things better. They believe there is nothing wrong with making yourself a better athlete, entertainer, or politician if what you have done makes the event more entertaining, or assists the greater good. Do you feel that there are times when cheating is acceptable, or is cheating never justified?

In a detailed essay, articulate your position on whether cheating is always wrong. Use facts and examples to support your position.

Job Skills Necessary for Success

_____

Prompt Source(s):   0   **Source Lexile Range:**   N/A

_____

Many people have argued that the skills needed to be successful in today's workforce have changed. What skills do you feel an individual needs to be successful in a job today? Why do you feel these skills are most important?

In an essay to be read by a teacher, identify the skills you feel are most needed by an individual to be successful at work and provide reasons to persuade your teacher that these are the most critical skills for success.

Luck or Opportunity?

| **Prompt Source(s):** | *1 quot.* | **Source Lexile Range:** | N/A |

Source One: **Quotation** By Oprah Winfrey
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

Carefully read the following quote from Oprah Winfrey:

"Luck is a matter of preparation meeting opportunity."

What do you think the speaker was trying to say about the notions of luck and opportunity? Do you agree or disagree with the speaker?

In a well-developed essay, discuss what you think this quote means and whether you agree with it or not. Use specific examples from your studies, personal experience, and/or observations to support your interpretation.

Mandatory Recycling

| **Prompt Source(s):** | 0 | **Source Lexile Range:** | N/A |

Your class is studying recycling. On the one hand recycling can help protect the environment. On the other hand recycling is inconvenient and places an added burden on citizens. Do you feel that recycling should be required of all citizens? Why?

Write an essay persuading your legislator to accept your recommendation on whether or not recycling should be mandatory.

Music: Luxury or Important for Survival?

| **Prompt Source(s):** | 0 | **Source Lexile Range:** | N/A |

Music has become a major part of almost everything in our lives. Does this mean that music is important for us to survive, or is music a luxury for us? Write a persuasive argument in favor of your choice.

Should the Penny be Eliminated?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

For many years, there has been a growing debate over whether or not the penny should be eliminated from all cash transactions. There are vastly differing opinions on the effect the elimination of the penny would have on the government, businesses, and individuals. What is your opinion on this issue? Should the penny be eliminated?

Write a persuasive letter to your Congressman or Congresswoman arguing for or against the elimination of the penny. Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your argument.

Success Leads to Problems

Prompt Source(s):	*1 quot.*	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

Source One: **Quotation** By Henry Kissinger, *Wilson Library Bulletin*, March 1979
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

"Each success only buys an admission ticket to a more difficult problem."
—Henry Kissinger (1923 -), *Wilson Library Bulletin*, March 1979

While most of us strive for success, we are sometimes surprised to learn that it is not always a good thing. In fact, some people believe it can lead to more difficult problems. Do you agree or disagree?

Write a multi-paragraph essay supporting your position on this issue. Be sure to include specific details and examples from your own experiences or readings.

Using Alternate Energy Sources

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

Electricity is necessary for the operation of everyday electronic devices such as televisions, computers, microwaves and refrigerators. Suppose there were a global force that stopped the flow of electrons. Convince the public what energy sources you would set up and use in your home to help you survive and why. Include your own ideas, insights, and understanding of the problem.

Your Right to Privacy

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

Notices from credit card companies, ads on television, warnings on the evening news, release forms at the doctor's office, and locker searches at school all address the issue of invasion of privacy. Some are opposed to what they believe is an increased invasion of privacy for individuals. Others believe that national and individual safety and security necessitate some invasion of privacy for individuals.

In a well-developed essay, articulate your position on your right to privacy. Include facts and examples to support your position.

Pilot Prompts

Casino Gambling in Your Community

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

Once relegated to a few metropolitan centers, casino gambling is slowly making its way into communities all across the nation. Some citizens of these new "gaming towns" favor casino gambling because it brings investment, employment, and entertainment opportunities; other citizens, however, fear that the introduction of casino gambling will be accompanied by crime, addiction, and ill-considered development.

Imagine that your town council is considering approving the development of a new casino. Do you support the development of a casino in your community? Why or why not? Write a convincing speech to be delivered to your town council in which you articulate and defend your position on this issue.

Formal vs. Informal Education

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

Students learn both formally, in classes and through teacher instruction, and informally through their interaction with fellow students and experiences outside of the classroom. Some people argue the most important part of education is the knowledge gained from formal schooling, while others contend the most important part of education is those

things learned informally. Do you think formal or informal learning is most important to a student's overall education?

In an essay to be read by a school administrator, take a position on whether formal or informal learning is most important to a student's overall education.

Limiting Class Size

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

The Dean of your school is considering placing a cap on the size of classes in an effort to keep classes smaller. Do you feel this change will benefit or hinder student learning? Why or why not?

Write a letter to your Dean to persuade him or her to agree with your views on the issue of limiting class size.

Limiting Internet Access

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

Increased use of the Internet in classrooms has led administrators at your school to consider imposing restrictions on the sites that are accessible to students. Opponents of the plan argue that such a policy is unlikely to work.

Do you think that Internet access should be limited in schools? Why or why not? Write a persuasive essay in which you take a position on the issue of limiting Internet access in schools.

Losing Jobs to Machines

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

Technological advances in computers and other machines are causing many people to lose their jobs since companies often find it more cost efficient and productive to have a machine do the job of a human.

Imagine your company is considering replacing some of its workers with machines in order to cut costs and ensure accuracy, and your job on the production line is at risk. Write a letter to your manager persuading him or her not to cut your position. Be sure to use specific details and examples to support your argument.

Recruitment Campaign

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

Your school is conducting a recruitment campaign to encourage new students to attend. You have been asked to help recruit new students.

In an essay to be read by students considering your school, persuade students that they should attend your school.

Small vs. Large School

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

After high school, some students choose to go on for additional formal education. One of the choices they face is whether to attend a "small" school with a smaller number of students or a "large" school with a larger number of students. Some argue there are benefits to attending a smaller school, while others argue there are advantages to attending a larger school. Do you think it is better to attend a small school or a large school?

Write an essay in which you take a position on which type of school you think is better.

Success from Failure

Prompt Source(s):	1 *quot.*	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

Source One: **Quotation** By William Zinsser
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

In his article, "College Pressures," William Zinsser argues,

> "One of the few rights that America does not proclaim is the right to fail."

He and others believe that failure in school can lead to success in life. Opponents of this view feel that failure in school leads to failure in life. What do you think? Does failure in school lead to success or failure in life?

In a well-developed essay, articulate your position on this issue. Be sure to include specific reasons and examples in your essay.

Thomson Business: Are Facts Always Truthful?

Prompt Source(s):	1 *quot.*	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

Consider the following statement:

> "Let the facts speak for themselves."

Do you think that facts are always truthful? Could they be used in less-than-truthful ways by businesses? In a well-developed essay, analyze this statement and articulate your position on it. Be sure to support your position with reasons and information from your experience or readings.

Thomson Business: Desk Return

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

Consider the following scenario:

> As the founder and president of a successful consulting firm, you decided to splurge and purchase a fine executive desk for your own office. You ordered an expensive desk described as "North American white oak embellished with hand-inlaid walnut cross-banding." Although you would not ordinarily purchase large, expensive items by mail, you were impressed by the description of this desk and by the money-back guarantee promised in the catalog.
>
> When the desk arrived, you knew that you had made a mistake. The wood finish was rough, the grain looked splotchy, and many of the drawers would not pull out easily. The advertisement had promised "full suspension, silent ball-bearing drawer slides."

Your task:

Because you are disappointed with the desk, you decide to send it back, taking advantage of the money-back guarantee. Write a claim letter to Patrick Dwiggens, Operations Manager, Premier Wood Products, P.O. Box 528, High Point, NC 27261, asking for your money back. You're not sure whether the freight charges can be refunded, but it's worth a try. Be sure to supply relevant details to support your claim.

Thomson Business: Email Privacy

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

Should employers have the right to monitor all email messages of employees? In a well-developed essay, present the employer's position and then the employees' position. Be sure to support these positions with well-reasoned arguments and information from your experience and reading.

Thomson Business: Employee Fitness

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

Imagine your company is considering ways to promote employee fitness and morale. Select a possible fitness program that seems reasonable for your company. Consider an activity such as a softball or bowling league, lunchtime walking program, fitness speaker, company-sponsored health club membership, or on-site fitness center.

Your supervisor has tentatively agreed to one of the programs and has asked you to write a report investigating its feasibility. In a well-developed essay, discuss the feasibility of the fitness program you have selected and how it would specifically benefit your company. Be sure to support your findings with relevant details.

Thomson Business: "Junk" Mail

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A

In view of the burden that "junk" mail places on society (depleted landfills, declining timber supplies, overburdened postal system, etc.), how can "junk" mail be justified?

In a well-developed essay, justify the use of "junk" mail by American businesses. Be sure to support your argument with reasons and information from your experience or readings.

Index for Source-based and Non-source-based Prompts

The appendices that follow provide lists of prompts with different types of sources. These appendices are intended to assist teachers in more easily identifying and locating prompts in the catalog. Each appendix includes only the titles of prompts from this catalog. Prompts are arranged in alphabetical order in the catalog by type (IntelliMetric™ or Pilot), as indicated in the Table of Contents. The appendices are divided into two main categories: source-based (including research-based and quotation-based prompts) and non-source-based prompts. The first three appendices are for source-based prompts; the last appendix is for non-source-based prompts. The following are notes pertaining to the definitions and content specifications of source-based and non-source based prompts.

Source-based Prompts:

- Source-based prompts are research-based and often require sources (whether specified or not) and include quotation-based writing tasks.
- Some source-based prompts provide or indicate specific sources while others require students and/or teachers to conduct their own research to address a prompt topic.
- Quotation-based prompts require reference to, analysis of, and/or interpretation of a particular quotation.
  - Most quotation-based prompts integrate quotations into the prompt task rather than offer the quotation as a separate source.
  - Quotations are typically too brief compared to most sources or excerpts from works that are more extensive; thus they are usually not considered a formal 'source' for students to use in addressing a prompt task.
  - To prevent inaccuracy, Lexile levels for quotations are not provided due to the brevity of most quotations.
- The types of sources used in source-based prompts vary greatly by prompt and can include multimedia and text-based sources.

Non-source-based Prompts:

- Non-source-based prompts do not require or necessitate research and/or source-based evidence to complete the writing task.
- Most non-source-based prompts are typically knowledge, experience, and/or opinion-based prompt tasks.

Appendix I: Source-based Prompts (Sources Provided)

IntelliMetric™

N/A[1]

Pilot

N/A[1]

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1. **This type of prompt is not available at this time in MY Access!®. However, new prompts and IntelliMetric™ models are in development. Check back frequently for updates!**

Appendix II: Source-based Prompts (Sources Not Provided)

IntelliMetric™

N/A[1]

Pilot

N/A[1]

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1. **This type of prompt is not available at this time in MY Access!®. However, new prompts and IntelliMetric™ models are in development. Check back frequently for updates!**

Appendix III: Quotation-based Prompts

IntelliMetric™

Is Cheating Wrong?
Luck or Opportunity?
Success Leads to Problems

Pilot

Success from Failure
Thomson Business: Are Facts Always Truthful?

IntelliMetric™

A Skill to Master
Adopt a Global Language?
Change the Legal Driving Age?
Choosing a Rewarding Occupation
Cloning of Humans
Internet or Traditional Classrooms
Job Skills Necessary for Success
Mandatory Recycling
Music: Luxury or Important for Survival?
Should the Penny be Eliminated?
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Casino Gambling in Your Community
Formal vs. Informal Education
Limiting Class Size
Limiting Internet Access
Losing Jobs to Machines
Recruitment Campaign
Small vs. Large School
Thomson Business: Desk Return
Thomson Business: Email Privacy
Thomson Business: Employee Fitness
Thomson Business: Justifying "Junk" Mail