



**High School
Persuasive/Argumentative
Prompt Catalog**



High School Persuasive/Argumentative Prompt Catalog

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)).

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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 High School level. Each prompt aligns to Common Core and State educational standards and assessment practices expected of High School 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 High School 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.



IntelliMetric[®] Prompts

A Controversial Issue

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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It seems our society continually wrestles with controversial issues that have no clear resolutions because of the complexities of the circumstances and people involved. Capital punishment, euthanasia, faith healing, suicide, and abortion are just a few of the controversial issues facing our nation and the world. As the media highlights these issues, individuals are left to decide which side they agree with, and in some cases, join efforts in persuading legislators or the general public to agree with their views.

Select a controversial issue that interests you. After researching the subject, decide which side of the issue you support. Write a multi-paragraph essay in which you persuade the reader to agree with your position on this issue. Be sure to include and cite specific details and examples to support your argument, and remember to address opposing viewpoints.

A Global Language

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

A High School Travel Abroad Program in Your School

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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These days, there are an increasing number of travel abroad programs available to students at many high schools. Some of these programs focus on studying or volunteering abroad for a week or semester or are offered as precollege programs. These programs expose students to a variety of diverse cultures and experiences that can enrich the regular school curriculum, especially in the study of history, literature,

and foreign language. Imagine that your school, however, does not offer any such programs.

In a detailed letter to your principal or school district superintendent, persuade him/her to develop a travel abroad program in your school.

A Sense of Wonder

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

Source One: Quotation from “No. 137,” featured in *The Rambler* By Samuel Johnson

Source Lexile Level: N/A

Source Two: Quotation By Albert Einstein

Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“Wonder is a pause of reason, a sudden cessation of the mental progress, which lasts only while the understanding is fixed upon some single idea...It may be remarked with equal truth that ignorance is often the effect of wonder.”

— Samuel Johnson, “No. 137” from *The Rambler*

“The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed.”

— Albert Einstein

Samuel Johnson and Albert Einstein share different opinions regarding our sense of wonder and its overall usefulness. Do you agree with Einstein or Johnson’s view of wonder?

Write a multi-paragraph essay in which you persuade your reader to agree with your definition of wonder. Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your argument.

Adding a Class to Your School’s Curriculum

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

Your principal is currently considering adding a new class to your school’s curriculum and is seeking suggestions from students. What new course do you think your school should offer? How would this course benefit students?

equipment in exchange for advertising on school grounds. Proponents of such plans assert that schools desperately need the funding/equipment and that students benefit from such corporate sponsorships. Opponents argue that these arrangements allow corporations to treat school children as potential consumers, not learners, and that schools should be safe from commercial pressure.

Write a letter to your local school board either supporting or opposing a plan to allow corporate sponsors to provide money and/or equipment in exchange for advertising on school grounds.

The Connecticut Department of Education has granted Vantage Learning specific permission to use the following prompt within its My Access!® online writing application. The prompt shown is an official previously released CAPT program prompt sanctioned and administered by the CDE, although scores provided to responses will be based upon a separate My Access!® rubric. The permission extended to Vantage Learning to use the prompt within My Access!® is not intended as an endorsement of the system.

After-School Job

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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You are trying to decide whether to take an after-school job during the school year. The money would be helpful, but you would have to give up something else to find time to work.

Write a letter to your parent(s) persuading them that you should or should not get a job during high school.

Alternate Energy Sources

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

Are Expensive Clothes Worth It?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Some people buy expensive clothing because spending the extra money makes them feel like they are getting a better quality item. Some just like to wear specific clothing

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because it is a brand name. Others say that wearing expensive and brand name clothing makes them feel better about themselves.

Society makes some people feel that it is “cooler” to only wear brand names. Looking good and having nice clothes may increase confidence, but should that confidence come just from having an expensive wardrobe?

In a well - developed essay, articulate your position on whether or not expensive clothes are worth buying. Include facts and details to support your argument.

Ban Cell Phone Use in Some Places?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Many people enjoy the freedom of using cell phones wherever they go. Some people argue, however, that cell phone use should be limited because it may disturb others. Should people be allowed to use cell phones in places like stores, restaurants, and movie theaters, or should cell phone use in such places be banned? Take a position on this question. Use reasons and specific examples to support your views.

Beauty Pageants: Rewarding or Degrading?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Beauty pageants have been a part of our culture for many years, especially with the Miss America Pageant, which was first held in Atlantic City in 1921. However, beauty pageants, such as Miss America, Miss USA, and Miss Universe, have been criticized for a number of years regarding the way in which the female participants are portrayed, with some critics arguing that these events objectify and degrade women. The swimsuit competition, in particular, came under scrutiny in 1996. A televised viewer poll was even held to determine whether or not the swimsuit competition should be continued, and the majority of viewers voted to keep it. What is your opinion on beauty pageants? Do you feel that they are demeaning to women, or do you feel that these pageants provide good opportunities for the winners to get immersed in community involvement?

In a well-developed essay, argue your position on the issue of beauty pageants. Remember to provide facts and examples to support your argument.

Benefits of Globalization

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Do the benefits of globalization outweigh the costs? After reading the teacher-provided texts, write an essay that argues your position on whether the benefits of globalization outweigh the costs. Support your position with evidence from your reading. Be sure to acknowledge competing views. Give examples from past or current events or issues to illustrate, clarify, and support your position.

Cell Phone Ban on Operators of Motor Vehicles

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Your state legislature is considering adopting a new law that would ban all cell phone use while operating a motor vehicle. What is your position on this law?

After reading the teacher-provided informational texts, write an essay that addresses the question of adopting a law banning all cell phone use while operating a motor vehicle. Support your position with evidence from the texts, and be sure to acknowledge competing views. Give examples from past or current events or issues to illustrate and clarify your position.

Challenging Authority

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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In your reading experiences, you undoubtedly have encountered characters that challenge authority - be it in the form of a person, a group, or an institution. Of these characters, whom do you most admire? What were the circumstances surrounding the challenge to authority? What does your choice of character reveal about you?

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss a literary character you admire because he or she challenged authority. In your discussion, be sure to include the circumstances of the challenge and what your choice reveals about you.

Challenges of Parenthood

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Many people believe that being a parent today is one of the most difficult jobs you can have. Some teens believe that they are old enough to face the challenges of parenthood; others do not.

State your position on the issue and provide reasons for your decision. Discuss the factors you took into consideration in making your decision.

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Changes the Next President Should Make

Prompt Source(s): 0

Source Lexile Range: N/A

The need for “change” is a frequent rallying cry of politicians trying to win national elections. What advice would you provide to a new presidential candidate to help him or her run an effective and successful campaign using this strategy?

In a well-organized essay, considering the current condition of the nation, persuade a presidential candidate to make an important change. Be sure to support your position with examples and reasons drawn from your studies and observations.

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.

Choosing a School

Prompt Source(s): 0

Source Lexile Range: N/A

A foreign student is considering several American schools to attend.

Why would your school be the best choice? Write an essay persuading the student that he or she should attend your school.

Cloning

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.

Competition or Competence?

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

Source One: Quotation By Alfie Kohn
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“Trying to be number one and trying to do a task well are two different things.”
— Alfie Kohn

Many apply the law of the jungle (i.e., “the survival of the fittest”) to human behavior. Is it more important to be highly competitive or highly competent in order to be successful?

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.

Competitive Sport Requirement

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

Your school board is considering adopting a new rule that requires every student to play at least one competitive sport in order to graduate from high school.

Do you think this is a good idea? Why or why not? Write a letter to persuade members of the school board that they should or should not adopt this rule.

Conflict Resolution Programs in Schools

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

School violence has become one of the main concerns for parents and administrators throughout America. In order to curb parental fears and concerns, Conflict Resolution programs have been introduced into many school districts. Conflict Resolution programs mainly start at the beginning of the school year, and consist of simulated situations and discussions that best aid students in how best to handle their anger and many difficult situations they face at school. Peer interaction, problem solving skills and strategies and role playing are other key factors that are stressed within these classes.

Some believe that schools should use their money to make these programs consistent throughout the year in order to better aid students, while critics of Conflict Resolution programs view them as a waste of precious funds and classroom time. They believe that most schools already have counselors and established programs to aid students in

dealing with difficult encounters. They also argue that in reality, school violence is a larger societal problem of violence and that simply putting money into several school programs will do little to defeat a larger social issue.

Do you believe that Conflict Resolution programs are a feasible means to help prevent school violence or do you agree with the program's critics and see it as a waste of important school dollars? In a detailed essay, articulate your position on this issue. Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your argument.

Consequences of Success

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

Source One: **Quotation** By Henry Kissinger
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 -), from the *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.

Department Store Dilemma

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

A large department store chain wants to open a store just outside your town or city. The new store would attract customers from miles around and would create jobs. It would also drive some local store owners out of business and would cause traffic problems.

Write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper to convince people why they should support the new store or prevent it from being built.

Dependence on Calculators

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

The first mechanical calculator was invented in 1642, but it was not until modern times that the average person relied heavily on a machine to complete mathematical calculations. Today, there are calculators with specific applications, including one which will convert measurements for recipes. Have we become too dependent on calculators? What might be the long-term consequences of this dependence?

In a well-developed essay, articulate your position on the level of our dependence on calculators. Include examples and reasons for your position.

Do Teens Consider the Consequences?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Some people say that most teenagers are careless and do not think about the consequences of their actions. Do you agree or disagree with this idea? Take a position on this question. Use reasons and specific examples to support your opinion.

Do You Agree With a Curfew?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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The mayor of your town is considering establishing a 10:00 pm curfew for all children under the age of 18. What do you think?

Write a multi-paragraph letter to persuade your mayor that he or she should or should not enact the curfew.

Do You Agree with Capital Punishment?

Prompt Source(s):	2 <i>quots.</i>	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Source One:	Quotation By Ernest Van Den Haag, Professor of Jurisprudence and Public Policy, Fordham University
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Source Lexile Level:	N/A
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Source Two:	Quotation By Hugo Adam Bedau, Professor of Philosophy, Tufts University
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Source Lexile Level:	N/A
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Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“The crime sets the victim and the murderer apart; if the victim died, the murderer does not deserve to live. The thought that there are some who think that murderers have as

much right to live as their victims oppresses me. So does the thought that Stalin or Hitler should have the right to go on living.”

— Ernest Van Den Haag, Professor of Jurisprudence and Public Policy, Fordham University

“There is an alternative to capital punishment: long-term imprisonment. Such a punishment is retributive and can be made appropriately severe to reflect the gravity of the crime...Each of us has a hand in the killing, and unless such killings are absolutely necessary they cannot be justified.”

— Hugo Adam Bedau, Professor of Philosophy, Tufts University

Consider these quotes and write an essay either in support of or in opposition to the death penalty. When writing, you might want to consider the possible execution of the innocent, whether the death penalty qualifies as “cruel and unusual punishment,” and whether or not capital punishment is a deterrent.

Driver’s Ed or Personal Finance?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Young people need many skills to be successful adults after high school: They should learn how to properly save and spend money in order to manage their finances, but they also require driving skills in order to be safe on the road.

Imagine that your school has announced that it will sponsor either a Driver’s Education or Personal Finance class for all seniors in your school. Which class do you think is more important for students at your school? Write an essay to your principal in which you support the choice of one class or the other. Be sure to support your choice with relevant details and arguments.

Eliminating Extracurricular Activities

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Your school district has recently decided to eliminate your favorite sport or club due to funding problems. Do you think that eliminating sports teams or clubs is a good way for school districts to help reduce spending? Why or why not?

Write an essay either to persuade the district to uphold its decision or to persuade the district to change its decision and reinstate the sport or club.

Write a persuasive essay in which you articulate your position on this issue. What “rule” would you offer to a friend to guide him or her in leading the right kind of life with respect to material possessions? Be sure to support your stance with examples and reasons drawn from your studies, personal experience, and/or observations.

Essential Job Skills

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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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 a persuasive essay, identify the skills you feel are most needed by an individual to be successful at work and provide reasons to persuade your reader that these are the most critical skills for success.

Extracurricular Activities Requirement

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Your school is considering a proposal that would only allow students who have a “C” average or better to participate in extracurricular activities such as sports, band and clubs. Students who do not have an average grade of “C” or better would not be able to participate in these activities. Do you feel that students should be required to maintain a “C” average or better in order to participate in extracurricular activities?

Write a letter persuading your principal to accept your recommendation on whether or not students should be required to have a “C” average or better to participate in extracurricular activities.

Four-Day School Week?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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To conserve energy and resources, some businesses have adopted a four-day work week, with each day consisting of ten hours. Should your school follow this model by extending the school day two hours? After considering the benefits and disadvantages to a four-day school week, take a position on this issue. Support your response with reasons and examples.

Genetically Modified Foods

Prompt Source(s): 1 **Source Lexile Range:** 1300L-1400L

Source One: “What Are Genetically Modified Foods?” By Vantage Learning
Source Lexile Level: 1420L

[Click here to view the source\(s\) for this prompt.](#)

Read the passage about genetically modified foods. Considering the risks and benefits of this new technology, what do you think about the use of such foods? Write a well-developed essay in which you articulate a position on the use of genetically modified foods. Support your position with information from the passage or other research you have conducted.

Gun Control and Violence

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

“Guns don’t kill people, people kill people,” is an expression often quoted by those who support the right to freely carry firearms. For many years, organizations such as the National Rifle Association (NRA) have pointed to the high rate of gun violence in the United States and compared it with the low rates in Europe; this comparison was done in order to stress their point that gun violence is a cultural/societal problem that should not impede anyone’s right to own firearms. Those who advocate gun control, and oppose the NRA, point to the United States’ high level of gun ownership (as compared to other countries) as one of the leading reasons for the increase in the amounts of murders and violence associated with guns. They also point to the easy accessibility of guns in America as one of the major causes of the high level of gun violence.

In a well-developed essay, articulate whether you believe that gun violence is a societal/cultural problem or an issue of gun control that can be legislated. Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your argument.

Internet Censorship

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

Source One: Quotation By W. W. Webster
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“Internet censorship around the world occurs on many levels from the filtering of inappropriate websites in school computer labs to government removal of access to

controversial websites. In the United States, we enjoy the freedom to express ourselves freely, which should include access to and availability of content on the Internet. School districts and governments do not have the right to withhold access to largely available information, regardless of the nature of the content. If a computer user is mature enough to access the Internet, he or she should be able to view any and all websites.”
— W. W. Webster

Discuss Webster’s position and whether you agree or disagree with his analysis of the situation. Be sure to support your position with facts and details from your experiences, observations, or research.

Internet Classrooms vs. Traditional Classrooms

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

Invasion of Privacy

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

Is Cheating Always Wrong?

Prompt Source(s):	2 <i>quots.</i>	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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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.

Is Music a 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.

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Is Summer Homework Beneficial?

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

Summer homework for students has become a controversial issue and the subject of myriad books, articles, and commentaries. Although teachers believe in the benefits of

academic work assigned for the summer, research conducted on its merits would seem to indicate that the benefits are questionable.

After reading the provided texts, write an essay that argues your position on whether or not summer homework is beneficial. Support your position with evidence from the texts. Be sure to acknowledge competing views.

It Should Be Law!

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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New laws are continually being put into place in order to provide order, rules, and regulations that guide the actions of the members of the country, state, or local municipality.

Write an essay in which you persuade your local townspeople that a certain new law should be put into place. In your essay, provide an explanation of the law you wish to enact and at least three reasons in support of the need for the law. You may support your reasons with statistics, quotes, or other research you have gathered on the issue.

Later School Opening

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Current research suggests that because teenagers have different sleep patterns, they would benefit from beginning the school day at a later time. Some schools are considering holding the school day from 9am - 4pm. Is this new time schedule more beneficial or detrimental to the well-being of the students?

Write a multi-paragraph essay in which you persuade the Board of Education to agree with your position on this issue. Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your argument.

Limiting the Amount of Homework

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Your school is reviewing its homework policy and has asked for your recommendation whether there should be a limit on the amount of homework assigned by teachers. Some students feel that the amount of homework should be limited to allow more time for other extracurricular activities. Some teachers, however, are opposed to limits on the

amount of homework they can assign and believe that they are in the best position to decide how much homework is required for learning.

Do you feel that the amount of homework assigned by teachers should be limited? Write an essay supporting or opposing a policy to limit the amount of homework assigned to students.

Mandatory Recycling

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

Minimum Driving Age

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Because of safety concerns, many states have increased the age at which teens can begin to drive. Your state legislature is considering raising the minimum driving age from 16 to 18. Do you think the minimum driving age should be raised? Take a position on this issue. Support your response with reasons and specific examples.

Nature vs. Nurture

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Psychologists have argued for centuries regarding the influences of nature (genetic influences) and nurture (environmental influences) on the human personality. There is evidence to support both views, but the question is ultimately, which of the two, nature or nurture, plays the greatest role in shaping our personality.

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

Our Changing Society

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

Source One: **Quotation** By Anne Frank
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single minute before starting to improve the world.”
—Anne Frank

While society is currently undergoing many rapid changes, people disagree about their direction. Has the world, in fact, changed for the better or worse?

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.

Paying Students to Keep Schools Safe

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

There are schools that offer a cash reward to individuals who provide information about students carrying weapons to school. Rewards are also given for tips about drug use and vandalism.

Imagine that your school is considering a similar policy. Do you think students should be paid to tell on each other? Write a persuasive letter to your principal convincing him or her to agree with you. Make sure to include specific details and examples to support your arguments.

Persuade a Tourist to Visit

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

Tourism committees spend a great deal of money each year advocating natural landmarks of states and countries. By using media such as posters, magazines advertisements, television commercials, and radio advertisements, committees are able to send a message about beautiful places, and hopefully convince some tourists to travel to those places.

Suppose you have been hired by a tourism committee. Write a persuasive essay in which you identify a place in the world that has something tourists might find interesting.

Explain precisely what makes this particular place so special. Develop your ideas so that a potential tourist would be persuaded to visit the place you have identified.

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Rating Movies, Music, and Video Games

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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The amount and intensity of violence, profanity, and other mature content that has been showing up in children’s movies, video games, and music lately has stirred quite a public debate about the use of “ratings,” such as “MA,” to indicate “Mature Content.” Some authorities believe ratings should be provided to help parents control what their children can access. Critics, on the other hand, believe such ratings are a waste of time. What do you think?

Write an editorial for your school newspaper in which you argue whether or not you think ratings are an effective way to control children’s access to movies, music, and video games with mature content. Be sure to include specific examples to support your argument.

Recommending Literature

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Your school is reviewing the literature to be included in high school English courses. You have been asked to recommend a book, story or other piece of literature to be included in the list of books to be read by high school students. Which piece of literature would you include in a high school English course? Why would you choose it?

Write an essay persuading your school to include the piece of literature you recommend in the new reading list.

Reinstating the Draft

Prompt Source(s):	1 <i>quot.</i>	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Source One:	Quotation By Thomas Jefferson
Source Lexile Level:	N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“Every citizen should be a soldier. This was the case with the Greeks and Romans, and must be that of every free state.”
— Thomas Jefferson

With American forces attending to crises across the globe, some experts believe the United States should increase the size of its military by reinstating a mandatory draft. Thomas Jefferson believed that every person has a duty to fight in America’s wars. Do you?

In a well-organized essay, discuss whether or not you think the United States should reinstate the draft. Be sure to support your position with significant details from your readings or personal experience.

Reputation or Success?

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

Source One: Quotation By Socrates
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“Regard your good name as the richest jewel you can possibly be possessed of - for credit is like fire; when once you have kindled it you may easily preserve it, but if you once extinguish it, you will find it an arduous task to rekindle it again. The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear.”
— Socrates

In today’s society many people forgo their “good name” as they strive to get to the top: business leaders break ethical rules to earn a profit; sports stars use drugs to enhance their performance; political leaders accept bribes to please their constituents. Do you think success, wealth, and power have become so important in today’s society that they have overtaken the need for a “good name” and reputation?

In a well-organized essay, articulate your position on this issue. Be sure to support your position with reasons and arguments from your readings or personal observations.

Requiring Protective Helmets

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

Do you think that people under the age of 18 should be required to wear protective helmets when skateboarding, in-line skating, bicycling, snowboarding, or skiing? Why or why not?

“There are two tragedies in life. One is not to get your heart’s desire. The other is to get it.”

In this quote, what do you think this speaker was trying to say about your dreams versus reality? 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.

Rhetorical Devices: Princess Diana Death Responses

Prompt Source(s): 3 **Source Lexile Range:** 1200L-1400L

Source One: “1997: Princess Diana Dies in Paris Crash” featured on the *BBC News website* By the staff of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), provided courtesy of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

Source Lexile Level: 1200L-1300L

Source Two: Transcript of the “Funeral Oration for Diana, Princess of Wales” featured on the *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) website* Funeral oration written and performed by Earl Spencer, transcript provided courtesy of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

Source Lexile Level: 1300L-1400L

Source Three: “Goodbye England’s Rose” song performed by Sir Elton John at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales Song and lyrics by Sir Elton John, lyrics published online by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), provided courtesy of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

Source Lexile Level: NP

[Click here to view the source\(s\) for this prompt.](#)

Read three texts responding to the 1997 death of Princess Diana of Wales. Suggestions include the *BBC News* article “1997: Princess Diana Dies in Paris Crash,” Earl Spencer’s eulogy to the Princess, and the lyrics to Elton John’s “Goodbye England’s Rose.”

Write an argumentative essay that identifies the rhetorical devices used in each example, and analyze which text is most appropriate and effective in achieving its purpose. Consider the interaction of speaker, audience, and subject. Be sure to support your position with evidence from the texts.

Robots in the Workforce

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

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Artificial Intelligence is increasingly becoming a part of our everyday lives. Some robots use artificial intelligence, are highly sophisticated, and even have humanoid features. Your school district has just received a technology grant and plans to purchase robots to serve as teachers' assistants. Before they place an order, they would like every student to write an essay to answer the question: What is your position on robots with artificial intelligence having jobs in the American workforce? To prepare for your essay, you must determine how you feel about this topic based on all of the information you have read and analyzed, as well as your own experiences.

In a well-developed essay, design and write a claim that clearly answers the question: What is your position on robots and artificial intelligence having jobs in the American workforce? Defend your claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence from the sources you have read, viewed, and analyzed, as well as from your own experience.

Role of Citizens in a Democracy

Prompt Source(s): 3

Source Lexile Range: 800L-1450L

Source One: **Excerpt and audio recording of “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” received by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1963**
By Martin Luther King, Jr., edited by Vantage Learning, published in the *Online King Records Access (OKRA)* database of *The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute* of Stanford University

Source Lexile Level: 1250L-1450L

Source Two: **Excerpt from “Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities”** By the U.S. *Citizenship and Immigration Services* staff, provided courtesy of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Source Lexile Level: 800L-900L

Source Three: **Excerpt from “On the Duty of Civil Disobedience”** By Henry David Thoreau, edited by the *Project Gutenberg* staff, provided courtesy of Project Gutenberg

Source Lexile Level: 1200L-1300L

[Click here to view the source\(s\) for this prompt.](#)

What are the roles and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy? In the following sources, Henry David Thoreau, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the U.S. government present their views on the voluntary rights, privileges, and mandatory responsibilities of citizens in a democracy. Read Thoreau's essay “On the Duty of Civil Disobedience,” King's “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” and the government's article from the *United States Citizenship and Immigration Services* website. Consider the views of Henry David Thoreau, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the U.S. government on the roles and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy. As you read, pay attention to the government's and two patriots' views on citizens' rights and responsibilities.

After reading the views of King, Thoreau, and the government, write a detailed essay that presents your position on the roles and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy. Consider what you have learned about citizenship, civic duty, and the roles and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy. Support your position with evidence from the sources you have read. Be sure to acknowledge competing views and give examples from past or current events or issues to illustrate and clarify your position.

R-rated Movies in High-School Curricula?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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In order to enhance the curriculum and bring history, literature, or other studies to life, many teachers obtain approval from their districts to view R-rated movies in their classrooms. Movies such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Glory*, and *Braveheart* are just a few of the films being shown.

Some parents and community groups are opposed to this idea and do not want students being exposed to foul language, extreme violence, and sexual content in school. Others feel that not allowing students to view these approved materials is a form of censorship and can lead to other censoring decisions in the future.

Think about this controversial issue and decide which side of the debate you support. In a well-developed essay, state your position on the issue and convince your readers why your view is correct. Be sure to address any arguments your audience may consider.

Should School Start Later?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Research has shown that teenagers experience a change in their internal sleep clocks so that waking up early and going to sleep early are difficult. Should high school classes begin later in the day and end later in the day to accommodate students' natural sleep clocks? Consider some of the benefits and disadvantages to starting school later in the day. Take a position on this issue. Support your response with reasons and examples.

Should the Legal Driving Age be Changed?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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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. As a teenager, 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.

Steroids in Sports

Prompt Source(s): 0	Source Lexile Range: N/A
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The entire sports world is under fire over the use and abuse of anabolic steroids and human growth hormones. Amateur and professional sports have become a billion dollar worldwide industry, and for the athletes, the pressure to compete with their peers is enormous. Many popular sports such as baseball, football, tennis, and cycling have been plagued by innuendos of steroid abuse, leaving many of these sports in a state of suspicion and turmoil. This is also the case for many popular Olympic athletes, who have either been caught or suspected of abusing performance-enhancing substances. Over the last two decades, many popular athletes from various sports have either had their records wiped away, or have been suspended after testing positive for illegal performance drugs and hormones. This debate has grown from discussions of who has been taking illegal performance-enhancing substances to whether those who are caught should lose all of their credibility and have a special kind of mark placed on their records.

Do you believe that athletes who have been discovered using illegal steroids or growth hormones should have all of their awards and records taken away, or should they be allowed to keep their records and prove themselves without these performance-enhancing drugs?

In a well-organized essay, articulate your position on this issue. Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your argument.

Teen Curfews

Prompt Source(s): 0	Source Lexile Range: N/A
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A city council is debating the adoption of a 10 P.M. weekday curfew and a midnight weekend curfew for teenagers. If the curfew is adopted, teenagers on the streets after those hours would be breaking the law. Do curfews keep teenagers out of trouble, or do they unfairly interfere in young people's lives? Take a position on this question. Use reasons and specific examples to support your views.

The Danger of Headphone Use

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

Source One: Quotation By Bill Walker
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“Major cities around the world have issued the alarm about cyclists, joggers and walkers wearing iPod or MP3 player headphones and being completely unaware of their surroundings. Runners and walkers have been hit by semi tractor-trailers and trains when they simply did not hear the oncoming vehicles. In one extreme case, a runner was crushed to death by a plane attempting an emergency landing. States should enact laws prohibiting the use of iPod or MP3 players at such volume that ambient noise is completely filtered. If a runner, walker, jogger, or cyclist listening to an iPod or MP3 player with headphones cannot hear an approaching police officer calling to him or her, that person should be fined. This simple law will prevent double-victim tragedies: the victim who suffers severe injury or death, and the victim who is unable to avoid hitting the headphone-wearer and must live with this memory for the rest of his or her life.”
—Bill Walker

Discuss Walker’s position and whether you agree or disagree with his analysis of the situation. Be sure to support your position with facts and details from your experiences, observations, or research.

The Impact of Video Games on the Individual and Society

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

After conducting research about the impact that video games have on individuals and society, you are now presenting your findings to college students as well as a panel of professors at your local community college. They are ready to listen, but you must first allow all audience members to review your final research results in the form of an essay.

Write a well-informed multi-paragraph argumentative essay in which you take a position on whether the impact of video games on individuals and society has been negative or positive. Support your stance using multiple sources to inform your audience. Be sure to address opposing views to create a well-balanced, comprehensive essay.

The Importance of Reading

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

All of us have heard time and time again from parents and from teachers that reading is important. Why do you think reading is so essential?

Write a multi-paragraph essay explaining why reading books, magazines, newspapers, and other forms of writing is so important. Make sure to include specific details and examples to support your argument.

The Importance of the Arts in Education

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Including art, dance, drama, and music in a student's education is a topic of national debate. Some people believe that these subjects are not a necessary part of a student's education. Others believe that these subjects are not only needed but are vital to a well-rounded education.

Write a persuasive essay explaining whether or not art, dance, drama, and music are an important part of a student's education. Be sure to provide reasons and evidence for your position.

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The Right to Search

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Due to recent acts of violence, schools are considering enforcing a random locker and book bag search to ensure students are not bringing in any illegal drugs or weapons. These random searches are intended to make students feel safer, allowing students to focus more on their education than their own well-being.

Write a letter to your principal convincing him or her to agree with your position on this issue. Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your argument.

Tiger Farming: Pro or Con?

Prompt Source(s):	1	Source Lexile Range:	1300L-1400L
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Source One:	"Tiger Farming: Salvation for the Southern Chinese Tiger?" By Vantage Learning
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Source Lexile Level:	1300L-1400L
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[Click here to view the source\(s\) for this prompt.](#)

After reading the article about tiger farming, consider the plight of the Southern Chinese tiger.

Write a detailed essay in which you take a position on the issue of tiger farming. Is it a viable solution to the problems that face the tiger? Why or why not? Be sure to support your position with specific examples and arguments from the article, or your studies and research.

Time Capsule

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

Your school is preparing a time capsule with items that effectively represent the times in which we live. You have been asked to recommend one item to include in the time capsule. What item would you recommend? Why?

Write an essay persuading the time capsule selection committee to include the item you recommend.

Time Spent with Electronic Video Games

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

Should parents limit the amount of time their children spend on electronic video games? After reading the provided texts, write an essay that argues your position on parents limiting time on video gaming. Support your position with evidence from the texts. Be sure to acknowledge competing views.

To Frack or Not to Frack

Prompt Source(s): 3 **Source Lexile Range:** 1000L-1100L

Source One: Video “Oil and Gas: To Frack or Not to Frack” By CNBC
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Source Two: “Drilling Frenzy Fuels Sudden Growth in Small Texas Town” from the *NPR: All Things Considered Program* By Melissa Block of *National Public Radio (NPR)*, provided courtesy of National Public Radio
Source Lexile Level: 1000L-1100L

Source Three: Video “Light Your Water on Fire from Gas Drilling, Fracking” By the *Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition* staff, uploaded to *YouTube* by user

Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition, provided courtesy of *YouTube* and the Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition

Source Lexile Level: N/A

[Click here to view the source\(s\) for this prompt.](#)

Fracking (hydraulic fracturing) is a process by which natural gas is extracted from rocks below the earth’s surface by injecting chemicals and liquids at high pressure. This process makes it possible to obtain valuable natural gas that would otherwise be unobtainable. However, there are adverse environmental consequences which impact residents in areas where fracking is conducted. The costs and benefits of the fracking process are presented in the CNBC video “Oil and Gas: To Frack or Not to Frack,” in the NPR All Things Considered program “Drilling Frenzy Fuels Sudden Growth in Small Texas Town,” and the YouTube video “Light Your Water On Fire from Gas Drilling, Fracking.”

Do the benefits of fracking outweigh the costs? In a well-developed essay, analyze the information presented in the resources above and develop a claim on the costs and benefits of fracking. To support your claim, consider the varied information expressed in the resources. Include specific details from the interviews and videos to support your claim.

Truth and Lies

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

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

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“Truly, to tell lies is not honorable; but when the truth entails tremendous ruin, to speak dishonorably is pardonable.”
—Sophocles

Is it always necessary to tell the truth, regardless of the consequences, or are there times when it is permissible to tell a lie? What “rule” should guide a person in determining when to tell the truth or to tell a lie?

Write a multi-paragraph essay in which you articulate your position on this issue. Be sure to support your position with relevant examples and arguments from your readings or personal experience.

Tyranny of the Majority

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

Source One: Quotation By John Stuart Mill
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“... Protection, therefore, against the tyranny of the magistrate is not enough; there needs protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling, against the tendency of society to impose, by other means than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them; to fetter the development and, if possible, prevent the formation of any individuality not in harmony with its ways, and compel all characters to fashion themselves upon the model of its own. There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence; and to find that limit, and maintain it against encroachment, is as indispensable to a good condition of human affairs as protection against political despotism ...”
—John Stuart Mill, from *On Liberty*

Read the excerpt from John Stuart Mill warning of the tyranny of the majority—the ability of the majority of the people to control all individuals in a representative democracy. Is majority rule an effective method of government? Should the majority of the people be able to impose their views on all the citizens?

In a persuasive essay, take a position on this issue and defend your position using examples based on your experience and reading.

Was Life in the U.S. Better in 1900 than in 2000?

Prompt Source(s): 2 **Source Lexile Range:** 1000L-1100L

Source One: “America Transformed” By Vantage Learning
Source Lexile Level: 1000L-1100L

Source Two: Excerpt from “American Labor in the 20th Century” from the Fall 2001 Issue of *Compensation and Working Conditions* By Donald M. Fisk of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, provided courtesy of the Bureau of Labor Statistics
Source Lexile Level: 1000L-1100L

[Click here to view the source\(s\) for this prompt.](#)

Life in the United States has changed drastically since 1900, with notable differences in everything from the cost of food to the average life expectancy. Many people refer to those earlier times as “the good old days,” believing that life then was simpler than today. Nevertheless, there are many who prefer modern life as we know it in the 2000s.

After reading “America Transformed” and “American Labor in the 20th Century,” argue whether you would prefer living in America in 1900 or 2000. Use facts and details from the text to support your argument.

What Is Wisdom?

Prompt Source(s):	1 quot.	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Source One:	Quotation By Doc Childre and Deborah Rozman
Source Lexile Level:	N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“It is no longer enough to be smart—all the technological tools in the world add meaning and value only if they enhance our core values, the deepest part of our heart. Acquiring knowledge is no guarantee of practical, useful application. Wisdom implies a mature integration of appropriate knowledge, a seasoned ability to filter the inessential from the essential.”

—Doc Childre and Deborah Rozman

People define wisdom in a variety of ways. How would you define it?

Write a multi-paragraph essay exploring your own conception of what it is that makes a person wise. Be sure to support your interpretation with specific details and examples from your own experiences or readings.

What Makes a Good Coach?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Coaches play an important role in our lives, guiding us as we develop our athletic skills and abilities. Experience tells us that different coaches will have different styles, strengths, and weaknesses. What qualities do you think a good coach should possess?

In a well-developed essay, discuss the qualities that you feel define a good coach. Support your position with well-reasoned arguments or examples from your own experience or reading.

Your Special Skill

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Imagine that you have decided to apply for a job. As part of the job application, you have been asked to identify one thing that you do particularly well and to write an essay convincing the employer to hire you based on this special talent.

Write an essay identifying your special skill and convincing the employer to hire you based on your special skill.

Youth and Violence

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

Source One: **Quotation** By Anthony Burgess
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“Violence among young people is an aspect of their desire to create. They don’t know how to use their energy creatively, so they do the opposite and destroy.”
—Anthony Burgess

It is a commonly held belief that youth violence is an inevitable reality of the world we live in. A certain amount of youth violence can stem from the exposure to violent acts within the community. In a world where quite often our daily news is punctuated by stories of hate crimes, tragic school shootings, workplace rampages, and attacks on churches and community centers, it is clear that this is a major issue of concern.

What is your opinion on the Burgess quote? What do you think causes young people to act violently? What can be done to curb or eliminate youth violence?

In a well-developed essay, articulate your position on the Anthony Burgess quote on youth and violence. Include facts, details, and examples to encourage readers to support your position.



Pilot Prompts

A Chef’s Most Important Ingredients

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

In an organized and well-developed essay, write about the most important ingredient a chef needs to have in each of the following categories: produce, dairy, and vinegar and/or spices. Include a description of the ingredient, the variety of its uses, and why it

is the most important ingredient in that category. In addition, describe the challenges a chef would face if he or she did not possess that ingredient.

Analyzing an Argument about Celebrity Testimony in Advertising

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

Source One: Quotation By Sue Jozui
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“Advertisers frequently use the testimony of a celebrity to support a claim: a football star touts a deodorant soap, an actress starts every day with Brand A coffee, a tennis pro gets stamina from Brand X cereal, a talk-show host drives a certain kind of car. The audience is expected to transfer approval of the celebrity to approval of the product. This kind of marketing is misleading and insults the intelligence of the audience. Am I going to buy the newest SUV because an attractive talk-show host gets paid to pretend he drives one? I don’t think so. We should boycott this kind of advertising and legislate rules and guidelines for advertisers.”
—Sue Jozui

In a multi-paragraph persuasive essay, explain the argument that Jozui makes and discuss the ways in which you agree or disagree with her analysis and conclusion. Support your position by providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

“An Eye for an Eye”

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

Contrapasso, “an eye for an eye,” is not just a literary theme, but in some countries around the world, it is the basis of their criminal law. For example, a thief might expect to lose a hand if he or she is caught stealing with it, or someone who takes a human life might expect to give up his or her own in return. Can consequences that mirror the crime be an effective deterrent in modern society?

In a multi-paragraph essay, assert your position on whether “an eye for an eye,” the concept of the punishment fitting the crime, can be an effective crime deterrent in modern society. Be sure to provide relevant support for your stance on the issue and address those who may disagree with your point of view.

Are Racial Discrimination and Bigotry Eliminated?

Prompt Source(s): 0

Source Lexile Range: N/A

How far has our society come in terms of eliminating racial discrimination and bigotry? What evidence suggests that we have made progress, and what evidence suggests that we have not?

After reading the teacher-provided texts, write an essay that argues your position on the degree to which discrimination and bigotry exist today. Support your argument with evidence from the texts. Be sure to acknowledge competing views and past or current events to strengthen your argument.

Are Unpaid Internships Fair?

Prompt Source(s): 3

Source Lexile Range: 1100L-1550L

Source One: “Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act” By the staff of the Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor, edited by Vantage Learning

Source Lexile Level: 1350L-1550L

Source Two: “The Good, the Bad, and the Unpaid Internships” By Vantage Learning

Source Lexile Level: 1100L-1200L

Source Three: “Unpaid Internships: Not Only Valuable, But Necessary” By Vantage Learning

Source Lexile Level: 1200L-1300L

[Click here to view the source\(s\) for this prompt.](#)

For many years, high schools and colleges have encouraged students to gain work experience through internships or apprenticeships. Schools and students alike believed that interning or training with a company for a few months could lead to more job opportunities after graduation. However, many of the internships offered today are not paid or do not provide a chance to learn or gain new skills. Instead, many interns simply make coffee or take out the trash for their supervisors.

Recently, interns have gained the ability to file lawsuits against their internship companies, demanding pay for their time. As a result, entire industries are faced with a difficult choice: pay their interns minimum wage or cancel their internship program altogether. For some, internships or apprenticeships can mean a chance to obtain important work experience after graduation. Yet, other students cannot afford to work for free and, as a result, cannot get the experience they need. As a student who will one day enter the workforce, either through college or through a trade, you will research this topic and come to your own conclusion about unpaid internships and apprenticeships.

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You will read a number of sources that provide information about unpaid internships and apprenticeships.

Your high school is considering making unpaid internships or apprenticeships a mandatory requirement during the summer months between your junior and senior year. Your principal wants to hear what her students think of the idea, so she has planned a town meeting where you will present your potential argument to the audience. Your principal has invited parents and guardians, teachers and coaches, and small business owners in the community who would potentially participate in the internship program.

After examining several sources, write a multi-paragraph argumentative letter to your audience at the town meeting that argues either your support or opposition to mandatory unpaid internships and apprenticeships. Make sure you address potential opposing viewpoints in your letter and support your claim with information from the sources you have examined.

Baby Tourism

Prompt Source(s):	1 <i>quot.</i>	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Source One:	Quotation From the 14 th Amendment
Source Lexile Level:	N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

Included in the range of delicate immigration issues that America faces is a new business sometimes called “Baby Tourism.” This industry involves American brokers who, for a fee, supply pregnant women from other countries with the resources they need to come to the United States to give birth. The resources include hotels, doctor appointments, hospitalization, and afterbirth care. Once the babies are ready, their mothers return to their homelands with children that are United States citizens. As such, these children are then entitled to all the rights given to any American, as written in the 14th Amendment:

“All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

Many lawmakers are outraged by this new business and want the 14th Amendment changed to curtail the practices of baby tourism in the country. Others think that, in spite of whatever circumstances bring these women to the United States, their children should be protected under the laws of the land because these children are American citizens and should be treated as such. Do you think the 14th Amendment should be

changed or do you think the 14th Amendment should be upheld in light of this new industry?

In a multi-paragraph essay, assert your position on the debate over “Baby Tourism.” After researching the subject, support your stance with facts, statistics, and examples that you find. Address those who may oppose your position and try to persuade your audience to see your point of view.

Business: Resisting the Dress Code—Part 3

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Imagine you are an employee at a growing company. Senior management has recently announced a new dress-code policy for the company. There are several provisions of the policy with which you disagree, so you have decided to write a letter to the editor of the company newsletter to express your opinion.

Write a multi-paragraph letter in which you discuss the policy recommendations with which you disagree. Be sure to support your arguments with detailed reasons and examples. Choose your words carefully, as this letter will be read by everyone in the company.

Caffeine, Energy Drinks, and Effects on the Body

Prompt Source(s):	3	Source Lexile Range:	900L-1300L
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Source One: Excerpt from “Medicines in My Home: Caffeine and Your Body” By the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), edited by Vantage Learning, LLC.

Source Lexile Level: 1200L-1300L

Source Two: Excerpt from “Energy Drinks: A Boost in the Wrong Direction?” By Sara Bellum of the *National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens: Advancing Addiction Science*, excerpt edited by Vantage Learning, provided courtesy of the National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens (NIDA for Teens)

Source Lexile Level: 900L-1000L

Source Three: “Recorded Medical Cases in 2011 Reported to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of Adverse Events Related to 5 Hour Energy” By Vantage Learning

Source Lexile Level: 1100L-1200L

[Click here to view the source\(s\) for this prompt.](#)

Energy drinks and vitamin supplements containing caffeine have become increasingly popular with teens and young adults. These drinks and their ingredients are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) despite documented deaths attributed to them.

After reading the resources, take a position on whether drinks and supplements that contain high caffeine levels should be restricted for sale to minors. Use facts and details from the resources to support your position.

Campaign Finance Reform

Prompt Source(s): 0

Source Lexile Range: N/A

Campaign finance reform is a current effort in the United States to change and regulate the use of money in political campaigns. Many critics of the current political system believe that politicians who have the ability to raise the most money, gain an unfair advantage by having the ability to gain better exposure and run an overall more effective campaign. Also, there is the belief that a significant portion of this money is given to campaigns by special interest groups who support campaigns in order to have their specific opinion on an issue legislated. In the 2004 Presidential election, over 400 million dollars were spent on advertising by special interest groups with very specific arguments for and against each candidate. The first major attempt to better curb this spending was set in motion in 2002 with the Bipartisan Reform Act. This act was spurred into motion by the campaign finance scandal of 1996 and mainly attempted to curb the amount of money one could give to a national committee by banning the use of union or corporate dollars. In the years since, this act has gotten mixed reactions from both parties and the public. These ideas are hotly contested in every branch of our government, with some believing that more should be done to stop the flooding of special interest groups and the wealthy into elections, while others find these laws and bills unconstitutional.

Many critics believe that reforming campaigns and regulating the amount of money that a politician can spend will more fairly represent the actual voter who cannot afford to spend a large amount of money to have his opinion heard. Also, it is extremely expensive to run a campaign, which has been a problem throughout the history of America. For example, Lincoln's 1858 senate campaign bankrupted him and forced him to solicit funds from local businessmen and his law firm. Some feel that if the current system did not exist, there would be an even greater danger of politicians working for special interest groups because there would always be a constant struggle to find money for advertising. Also, the pool of those candidates running would mainly consist of those who are wealthy. There is a fear that those who cannot afford to spend millions on campaigns would simply not run, leading to a lack of diversity in those elected to represent America. There is also the basic notion that politicians should not be punished for their success. Since we live in a democratic society, all people, including politicians,

have a right to raise as much money as possible, therefore making any attempt to stop funding a breach of their First Amendment rights.

Imagine that your local newspaper has asked you to write an editorial deciding whether or not there should be a limit on how much money presidential candidates can spend and what special interest groups can invest in their political campaign. In a detailed essay, describe whether you agree or disagree with changing the current money use by political campaigns.

Can First Impressions Be Changed?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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It has been said that first impressions are almost impossible to change. Based on your experiences, do you agree or disagree with this statement? Take a position on this issue. Support your response with reasons and specific examples.

Cell Phones While Driving

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Some states have now made it illegal to drive while using a hand-held cell phone. Do you agree or disagree with this law? Why or why not? Take a position on the issue. Support your response with reasons and examples.

Change the Speed Limit?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Public policy makers often make controversial decisions about speed laws, which can bitterly divide the public.

Some people argue that lower speed limits save lives and should be strictly enforced. Opponents insist that raising the speed limit helps relieve traffic congestion and promotes commerce.

After researching the subject, decide which side of the issue you support. Then, using your research and personal experiences, write a persuasive essay arguing for or against changing the speed limit. Include information from your research to support your position.

Change to a Healthier Lunch Menu?

Prompt Source(s): 0

Source Lexile Range: N/A

Imagine your school cafeteria plans to change to a new, healthier school lunch menu, which would eliminate some of the students' favorite cafeteria foods. Take a position on this issue and write to convince your principal whether this change to the school menu is a good idea or a bad idea. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

College Tuition: A Parent's Responsibility?

Prompt Source(s): 5

Source Lexile Range: 1130L-1280L

Source One: "Rachel Canning" By Vantage Learning
Source Lexile Level: 1180L

Source Two: "Caitlyn Ricci" By Vantage Learning
Source Lexile Level: 1130L

Source Three: "Parents Paying their Children's Way" By Vantage Learning
Source Lexile Level: 1280L

Source Four: "Average Estimated Undergraduate Budgets, 2018-2019" By *The College Board* staff
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Source Five: Excerpt from "Time Use on an Average Weekday for Full-Time University and College Students" featured in the *American Time Use Survey* By the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Source Lexile Level: N/A

[Click here to view the source\(s\) for this prompt.](#)

Most parents want to ensure that their children succeed by providing the basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing. However, arguments can arise as to what constitutes basic needs. In recent years, young adults have claimed that their parents should also be held legally responsible for providing the funds for college tuition as one of their basic needs. Should children be allowed to sue their parents for the money to attend college and to cover other expenses that the child deems necessary to succeed?

After reviewing the resources, write a multi-paragraph essay defending your argument for or against a parent's legal responsibility to pay for a child's college tuition. Support your stance with evidence from the resources and be sure to address opposing points of view.

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

The British naturalist and politician John Lubbock wrote,

“Your character will be what you yourself choose to make it.”

Do we choose our own character traits, or is our character formed by influences beyond our control? Take a position on this issue. Support your response with reasons and examples.

Does Inactivity Serve a Purpose?

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

Source One: Quotation By Thomas Jefferson
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

Thomas Jefferson wrote,

“Determine never to be idle It is wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing.”

Do we accomplish more if we are always doing something, or does inactivity also serve a purpose? Take a position on this question. Support your response with reasons and specific examples.

Establishing a Position on the Paris Peace Conference

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

The Prime Minister of your country is attending the Paris Peace Conference. The Prime Minister has asked you, an ambassador, to research the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles to establish a position for him or her to assume at the conference. The peace proceedings and decisions being made are viewed as harsh by some and just by others. Use your research to decide your country’s position on the proceedings.

In a detailed report, establish your country’s position on the decisions being made at the Paris Peace Conference. Include sufficient facts and details that support the position and inform your Prime Minister.

Federal vs. State Jurisdiction

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

Source One: Quotation By Amendment X to the United States Constitution
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”
—Amendment X to the United States Constitution

Currently, the Tenth Amendment ensures that states can enact laws which are not enacted at a Federal level. Since different geographical regions of the United States have different cultures and demographics, it follows that different laws might be more appropriate for different states or regions. Those who oppose state control believe that decisions on a Federal level best protect the rights of all people.

In a detailed essay, articulate whether you believe issues should be legislated on a Federal or state level to ensure protection of all people. Include facts and details to support your argument.

Fundraising for a Culinary Tour

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

Imagine the Culinary Arts program at your school offers a two-week trip to Italy and France on a “Culinary Tour.” Write a persuasive essay that will convince potential sponsors to donate towards the cost of your trip. Include details such as the purpose of the trip, what you hope to learn, and how you will use the knowledge you gain in your Culinary Arts program.

Getting Out the Vote

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

It is election time again for your high school student government. Your principal wants to see a high voter turnout and has appointed you to write an essay for the student newspaper, convincing your peers to vote in the upcoming election.

Write an essay persuading your fellow students to vote in the student government elections. Include a thesis and develop it with sufficient examples and details.

Is a Positive Attitude the Key to Success?

Prompt Source(s):	1 quot.	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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It has been said that a positive attitude is the key to success in life. Do you agree or disagree with this statement about the importance of attitude? Take a position on this issue. Support your response with reasons and specific examples.

Is Failure the Worst Thing?

Prompt Source(s):	1 quot.	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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It has been said,

“Failure is not the worst thing in the world. The very worst is not to try.”

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Take a position on this issue. Use reasons and specific examples to support your opinion.

Is Fierce Competition Good or Bad?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Many people feel that American society is too competitive. Does competition lead to better products and results, or does it lead to a focus on winning at all costs? Is fierce competition a good idea or bad idea? Take a position on the issue. Support your response with reasons and examples.

Is Honor Inherent or Bestowed?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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We sometimes describe a person or his/her actions as honorable. What historic figures do we consider honorable? How have they behaved honorably?

fall. Does this sound like a good idea to you? Why or why not? Take a position on the issue. Support your response with reasons and examples.

Limitations of Machines

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

Source One: **Quotation** By John von Neumann
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Source Two: **Quotation** By Elbert Hubbard
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“You insist that there is something a machine cannot do. If you tell me precisely what it is a machine cannot do, then I can always make a machine which will do just that.”
—John von Neumann

“One machine can do the work of fifty men. No machine can do the work of one extraordinary man.”
—Elbert Hubbard, philosopher, writer (1856-1915)

John von Neumann and Elbert Hubbard present two different notions regarding man and machine. Do you think that machines can be designed to do anything, or are there some things that a machine cannot do?

In a well-developed essay, articulate your position on this issue. Be sure to include details and examples that support your argument.

Maintaining Individuality

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

Source One: **Quotation** By Ralph Waldo Emerson
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

Author Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote,

“To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.”

Do you agree or disagree with Emerson’s statement about individuality? Take a position on this issue. Support your response with reasons and specific examples.

Margaret Mead’s Analysis of Success: Agree or Disagree?

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

Source One: **Quotation** From Margaret Mead, *The Egalitarian Error*
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“For many Americans, the concept of success is a source of confusion. As a people, we Americans greatly prize success. We are taught to celebrate and admire the one who gets the highest grades, the one voted most attractive or most likely to succeed. But while we often rejoice in the success of people far removed from ourselves—people who work in another profession, live in another community, or are endowed with a talent that we do not especially want for ourselves—we tend to regard the success of people close at hand, within our own small group, as a threat.”
—Adapted from Margaret Mead, *The Egalitarian Error*

In a detailed essay, explain Mead’s analysis of success, and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with her opinion. Be sure to state your own opinion on Mead’s analysis, and provide reasons and examples from personal experience, observations, or reading.

Muslim Civilization: Navigation and the Hajj

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

Navigation and sailing were vital skills in the early Muslim world. How might the requirements of the Hajj have helped to develop those skills?

After researching primary documents and other information, write a multi-paragraph essay in which you support your position on the effect of the Hajj on the development of navigation and sailing skills in the Muslim world. Include facts and details to support your argument.

Napping: Helpful or Harmful?

Prompt Source(s): 9 **Source Lexile Range:** 800L-1400L

Source One: **“Why You Should Really Take a Nap This Afternoon, According to Science” featured in *The Week*** By Eric Barker, provided courtesy of The Week Publications, Inc.

Source Lexile Level: 800L-900L

Source Two: **“Are You Getting Enough Sleep?”** By the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)* staff, provided courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Source Lexile Level:	1100L-1200L
Source Three:	“Are Naps Good for You?” featured in <i>The Telegraph</i> By Phil Hammond, provided courtesy of <i>The Telegraph</i> and the Telegraph Media Group
Source Lexile Level:	1100L-1200L
Source Four:	“You Asked: Is It Good or Bad To Take a Nap?” featured in <i>Time</i> magazine By Markham Heid, provided courtesy of <i>Time</i> and Time USA, L.L.C.
Source Lexile Level:	1100L-1200L
Source Five:	“Mid-Day Naps Can Be a Sign of Bad Health” featured in <i>Smithsonian</i> magazine By Rachel Nuwer, provided courtesy of <i>Smithsonian</i> magazine and the Smithsonian Institute
Source Lexile Level:	1100L-1200L
Source Six:	“Naps Linked with Higher Risk of Death” featured on <i>Fox News</i> Original article by Rachael Rettner, published and provided courtesy of <i>LiveScience</i> and the TechMediaNetwork, Inc., republished by the <i>LiveScience</i> staff on <i>Fox News</i> , provided courtesy of <i>Fox News</i> and the FOX News Network, L.L.C.
Source Lexile Level:	1300L-1400L
Source Seven:	“Daytime Napping Linked to Early Death, But Is It the Cause?” featured in <i>Medical Daily</i> By Anthony Rivas, provided courtesy of <i>Medical Daily</i> and IBT Media, Inc.
Source Lexile Level:	1300L-1400L
Source Eight:	“Midday Naps Found To Help Fend Off Heart Disease” featured in <i>The Washington Post</i> By Rob Stein, provided courtesy of <i>The Washington Post</i> and The Washington Post Company
Source Lexile Level:	1200L-1300L
Source Nine:	“Sleep on It” podcast episode from the 24 October 2014, from the series <i>A Cup of Health with CDC</i> By the <i>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</i> staff, presented by Dr. Robert Gaines, provided courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Source Lexile Level:	N/A

[Click here to view the source\(s\) for this prompt.](#)

People of all ages suffer from sleep deprivation. So how much sleep do we actually need? Can napping make up for too little sleep? While some claim that taking naps will make up for lost sleep, others disagree, believing that naps negatively impact our sleep and can cause further sleep deprivation.

Carefully review the sources provided about napping and determine your position on the issue.

Write a multi-paragraph essay that states an argumentative claim about napping. Support your claim using evidence from the sources provided. Be sure to address

opposing points of view in your argument and to provide evidence from multiple sources.

No Presidential Re-election

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Recently, some observers have speculated as to whether or not one man or woman is both mentally and physically able to run the country for eight straight years. It has been proposed that an amendment to the U.S. Constitution be ratified to extend the term of the President from four years to six years and to remove the opportunity for re-election.

Write a multi-paragraph essay in which you persuade your readers to agree with your opinion on this controversial issue. Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your argument.

Occupations Which Require No Math

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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We all have learning strengths and weaknesses. Those who consider math a weakness would prefer an occupation that does not require math. However, some argue that all occupations require math at some level. Is there an occupation which requires no math?

In a well-developed essay, persuade your math teacher that either all occupations require some math, or that there is an occupation which requires no math whatsoever. Use facts and examples to support your position.

Politicians' Religious Beliefs

Prompt Source(s):	1 <i>quot.</i>	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Source One:	Quotation By Amendment I of the United States Constitution
Source Lexile Level:	N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”
—Amendment I of the United States Constitution

The First Amendment of the United States ensures that no law or governmental policy will be created that favors any particular group or system of beliefs, while also securing that no group will be treated unequally due to theirs. In America, a growing number of politicians and lawmakers have begun to openly express their ideology of religious beliefs; some even stating that they use these beliefs to influence legislation that passes their way. While many Americans feel comfortable with these leaders, some have become outraged by these statements, believing it is a direct violation of The First Amendment. They also fear that if this behavior continues, soon, a time will come when all Americans must conform to the principles of one system of beliefs and choice of lifestyle.

Do you agree with the politicians that cite their faith as a better means to legislate or their critics who view this trend in politics as a serious danger to America’s system of equality? In a detailed essay, articulate you position on this issue. Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your argument.

Proposition 187

Prompt Source(s):	1 <i>quot.</i>	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Illegal immigration has been one of the more hotly debated issues in American politics. In 1994, California voters passed Proposition 187, eliminating free public education and other public benefits to illegal immigrants.

Though Proposition 187 was eventually defeated due to its unconstitutionality, today, many continue to argue in favor of the basic theme of this proposition. They believe that illegal immigrants and their children deplete the financial and social resources available to Americans, and in turn, damage the overall economy by adding a heavier fiscal burden. Those who support immigrant rights point to the constitution and the overall belief that no individual in need should be turned away.

In a detailed essay, describe whether you agree or disagree with the idea of Proposition 187. Should illegal immigrants be given the same medical and social benefits as American citizens, or should they be forced to find other means to provide for their families? Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your argument.

Public School Sports for Home-Schooled Students

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Many school districts do not allow home-schooled students to participate in public school extracurricular activities and sports. Think about the issue of allowing home-schooled students to participate in public school extracurricular activities and sports.

Now write to convince your local school administration whether to allow home-schooled students to participate in public school extracurricular activities including sports.

Responding to a Quote by Colin Wilson

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

Source One: **Quotation** By Colin Wilson
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“The average man is a conformist, accepting miseries and disasters with the stoicism of a cow standing in the rain.”
—Colin Wilson

What do you think Colin Wilson was trying to say about the average man (or woman)? 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.

Responding to a Quote by Emerson

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

Source One: **Quotation** By Ralph Waldo Emerson
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

Carefully read the following quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson’s speech, “The American Scholar:”

“But genius looks forward: the eyes of man are set in his forehead, not in his hindhead: man hopes: genius creates.”

What do you think the speaker was trying to say about the human mind? How does this quote apply to you?

In a well-developed essay, explain what Emerson’s statement means to you. Use specific examples from your studies, personal experience, and/or observations to support your interpretation.

Rhetorical Strategies in Kennedy's 1968 Speech

Prompt Source(s): 1 **Source Lexile Range:** 1200L-1300L

Source One: Excerpt and audio recording from “Statement on Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., Indianapolis, Indiana, April 4, 1968” featured in a news release version of Robert F. Kennedy’s statement Speech by Senator Robert F. Kennedy, provided courtesy of the *John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum*

Source Lexile Level: 1200L-1300L

[Click here to view the source\(s\) for this prompt.](#)

Read the speech given by Robert Kennedy in 1968 shortly after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Then, view the video of Kennedy giving the speech before a crowd. How do the effects of the rhetorical strategies differ when reading and viewing the speech?

In a multi-paragraph essay, present an argument on the effects of the rhetorical strategies of ethos, pathos, and logos in Robert Kennedy’s 1968 speech. Discuss the difference in impact of those strategies when the speech is read and viewed. Support your argument with evidence from the speech.

Right to Rule in Near East Early Civilizations

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

Over the centuries, dozens of empires ruled the Near East. Why did people think they had the right to rule over others in this region?

After researching primary documents and other information, write a multi-paragraph essay in which you argue why other empires thought they had a right to rule over the people of the Near East. Include facts and details to support your argument.

Rome’s Cultural Legacy

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

The many achievements of the Roman Empire are still used in the world today. What are some of the most important and influential Roman legacies?

After researching primary documents and other information, write a multi-paragraph essay in which you argue the most important and influential legacies of the Roman Empire that are still used today. Include facts and details to support your argument.

Some people believe that students should be required to take a music, a drama, or an art class. Should students be required to take a class in the arts, or should such classes be electives?

Take a position on this issue. Use reasons and specific examples to support your position.

Should Schools Control Student Involvement?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Many students become involved in extracurricular activities to enrich their educational experiences, and some even become involved in so many activities that they have little time to study or complete homework assignments. Should schools control student involvement in extracurricular activities, or should the decision regarding extracurricular involvement be left to students and their families? Take a position on the issue. Support your response with reasons and examples.

Should School Teams Make Cuts?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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For many middle and high school students, being part of a sports team can play a major part in their school years. Athletics is not only viewed as a means of getting into shape but also as an area where life lessons can be learned through winning and losing. Currently there is a debate about a common school policy of allowing all students who try out to automatically make the team. This policy is thought to enable all the students involved to have better self-esteem and learn the lessons that competitive sports offer. On the other hand, the school policy of making cuts for a team is thought to provide an important life lesson for young people, to enable players to enjoy more playing time, and to keep athletics budgets reasonable.

Imagine that your school principal is deciding which of the above policies to adopt for your school. Write a persuasive letter to your principal stating your position. Use facts and examples to support your position.

Should Students Make Donations to Their Schools?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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The administrators of your high school have just decided to build a new, state-of-the-art gymnasium and a television production studio, as well as add some new programs.

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However, to help raise some money for these endeavors, they have decided to ask students and their families to donate money to the school. What is your position on this issue? Do you feel that students and their parents should be obligated to help pay for new school upgrades and programs?

Write a persuasive essay discussing whether you are in favor of or against asking students and their families for monetary donations. Remember to cite reasons and facts to support your argument.

Should Students Use Cell Phones in School?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Some schools use cell phones in the classroom for educational purposes. Think about the effects of allowing students to have and use cell phones in classrooms. Take a position on this issue. Use reasons and specific examples to support your opinion.

Success by Failure

Prompt Source(s):	1 <i>quot.</i>	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Source One:	Quotation By Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister
Source Lexile Level:	N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill once said that “success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.” Do you agree with Churchill’s statement about the important role that failure plays in the pursuit of success? Take a position on this question. Use reasons and specific examples to support your ideas.

Summer Projects

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Some schools require students to complete summer projects to assure they continue learning during their break. Should these summer projects be teacher-designed or student-designed? Take a position on this question. Support your response with reasons and specific examples.

The Best Way to Influence Others

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

Source One: **Quotation** By Albert Schweitzer
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

Philosopher, physician, and humanitarian Albert Schweitzer said,

“Example is not the main thing in influencing others; it is the only thing.”

Is setting a good example by your own behavior the best way to influence other people, or are there better ways to influence others? Take a position on the issue. Support your response with reasons and examples.

The Danger in Aiming Too Low

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

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

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

The great artist Michelangelo once said,

“The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark.”

Do you agree or disagree with Michelangelo’s statement? Take a position on this issue. Support your response with details and specific examples.

The Declining Interest in Science Education

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

Source One: **Quotation** By Stephen Jay Gould
Source Lexile Level: N/A

Prompt includes quotation-based source(s).

“Science is an integral part of culture. It’s not this foreign thing, done by an arcane priesthood. It’s one of the glories of the human intellectual tradition.”
—Stephen Jay Gould

We live in an age where scientific advances—in computers, biotechnology, and nanotechnology to name just a few—come and go with increasing speed. Yet, some observers maintain that young Americans have lost interest in the study of basic science. Why do you think this is the case?

Write an essay in which you discuss your opinion as to why many students have lost interest in studying science. Be sure to support your position with arguments and reasons drawn from your studies or personal observations.

The Impact of World War II on the Social Position of Mexican Americans

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Mexican Americans played an important role during World War II by not only joining the US military, but also by filling a need for laborers and agricultural workers. Research the role of Mexican Americans during the WWII era and how their involvement affected their social position in America.

In a detailed essay, argue whether the social position of Mexican Americans improved, declined, or stayed the same as a result of their experiences in America during WWII. Use evidence from your research and prior knowledge to support your argument.

The Importance of Spelling Rules

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Spelling bees, spelling tests, spell check: for most students, spelling has been a crucial part of language development. Spelling skills are measured on every standardized test, but many argue that with technological advances, spelling is becoming less and less important. Autocorrect and voice recognition software have enabled individuals to communicate quite effectively with little need for spelling skills.

As a result of lowered proficiency in spelling due to students' overreliance on technology, your local school district is considering adopting a more formal spelling instruction program. They are interested in hearing from students, along with parents and other stakeholders, to determine whether or not there is a need for programmatic spelling instruction. Find articles for and against correct spelling in Wired (Anne Trubek, "Proper Spelling? It's Tyme to Let Luce!," February 2012, and Lee Simmons, "Spelling: A Rebuttal From Wired's Copydesk," February 2012).

As a result of lowered proficiency in spelling due to students' overreliance on technology, your local school district is considering adopting a more formal spelling instruction program. Before your school board makes a decision, they will read letters from the students, parents, and other stakeholders. Using evidence from the Wired articles, write a letter to the school board in which you argue for or against the importance of spelling rules in a time of increasing technological advances. Include details from your research to support your position.

“The Lottery”

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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After carefully reading Shirley Jackson's short story "The Lottery," consider the author's message regarding the dangers of conformity. Do you believe that someone can successfully be a member of a larger group or culture and still retain his/her individuality?

In a detailed essay, articulate your position on this issue. Be sure to use specific details and examples from your reading to support your argument.

The Perfect Site for Your Family Reunion

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Your whole family has agreed to have a family reunion this year. What they cannot agree on is where to meet for the big event. There are so many beautiful places in the world to visit, and your powers of persuasion can perhaps convince your family to travel to the destination of your dreams!

Write a multi-paragraph essay to your family in which you identify a place in the world that would be the perfect setting for your family reunion. Explain, with specific details, what makes this particular place so exceptional. Develop your ideas so that your family members will be persuaded to vote for your chosen destination.

The Power of Fear

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Many advertisements and political campaigns are designed to exploit the fears of the public. Is fear the most effective way to influence individual and collective behavior?

Three Years to Graduation

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Some school districts offer programs that allow high school students to graduate in three years instead of the traditional four years. Most students who follow this plan must take courses during the summers or in the evenings or may not be able to take elective courses. Is it a good idea for students to finish high school in three years and enter college or the work force one year early? Take a position on this issue. Support your response with reasons and examples.

Title IX and Sports Equality

Prompt Source(s):	1 <i>quot.</i>	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Title IX is part of the landmark legislation that banned gender discrimination from schools; it states:

“No person in the U.S. shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal aid.”

This law has had a tremendous impact on the world of high school and college athletics. In the past, schools focused most of their funding and attention on men’s athletics, but Title IX demands that schools fund women’s programs equally. This has increased the competition for limited school resources and led to some men’s sports being abolished. What do you think of this issue?

Write a persuasive essay in which you articulate your position on this law. What do you think is the best way to create an equal playing field for both men and women’s sports? Be sure to include specific details to support your argument.

Use of Rote Memorization in Mathematics Instruction

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Many experts have argued for the elimination of rote memorization as a method for learning mathematical facts such as basic operations and properties. They believe that other instructional practices are more effective. What do you think?

In a well-developed essay, articulate your position on the value of rote memorization of mathematical facts. Be sure to include specific reasons and examples to support your argument.

Using Advice from Experts

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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People who value self-reliance define it as the need for each individual to follow his or her own instincts and ideas. Should people make their own decisions, or should they seek guidance from experts and authorities about life's important matters? Take a position on this issue. Support your response with reasons and specific examples.

Visual Art vs. Text to Describe an Event

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Which is more descriptive, a text that describes an event or a work of visual art? Why?

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Volunteer Programs Required for Graduation

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Many schools require students to participate in volunteer programs in their communities as a requirement for graduation. However, some people feel that requiring students to volunteer defeats the purpose of volunteering. Do you think students should be required to volunteer in their communities to receive their high school diplomas? Take a position on this issue. Support your response with reasons and specific examples.

What Is the Definition of Music?

Prompt Source(s):	0	Source Lexile Range:	N/A
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Come up with a definition of what you think music is and then develop an argument as to why yours is a complete definition.

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What Is the Source of Self-Esteem?

Prompt Source(s): 0

Source Lexile Range: N/A

Some people believe in praising a student's work to build self-esteem, even if the work is not the student's best effort. They believe that students must be self-confident in order to learn. Others believe that praise given for deficient work undermines learning by lowering standards. They believe that the source of true self-esteem is achievement. Does true self-esteem come from praise or does it come from achievement? Take a position on this issue. Use reasons and specific examples to support your ideas.

Winter Holiday Controversies

Prompt Source(s): 0

Source Lexile Range: N/A

In recent years, there has been growing debate about whether to replace the word "Christmas" with "Holiday," especially for government-run celebrations and community decorations. For example, to eliminate controversy, authorities are considering changing the name of the annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony to the Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony. What is your opinion on this issue? Should the name be changed?

Write a persuasive letter to local government authorities arguing for or against the name change for celebrations and decorations. Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your argument.

Women in Combat Roles

Prompt Source(s): 0

Source Lexile Range: N/A

In the last several decades, women have signed up for military service in increasing numbers, and consequently, their service has occasionally brought them into combat situations. Americans disagree on whether they think women should be permitted to serve in military roles that will bring them into dangerous combat situations. What do you think?

In a well-developed essay, defend your position on whether or not you think women should be prevented from serving in combat roles in the US military. Be sure to provide reasons and examples to support your argument.

Work Alone or with a Group?

Prompt Source(s): 0

Source Lexile Range: N/A

Think about the benefits of working with a group or working alone. Which do you feel is more beneficial? Write to convince your teacher of your preference, either to work with a group or to work alone. Support your position with reasons and specific examples.

Xenotransplantation: Promise or Problem?

Prompt Source(s): 1

Source Lexile Range: 1400L-1500L

Source One: “Xenotransplantation” By Vantage Learning
Source Lexile Level: 1400L-1500L

[Click here to view the source\(s\) for this prompt.](#)

Due to a worldwide shortage of organs for clinical transplantation, scientists have come to a point where it is reasonable to consider that organs from other species, mostly pigs, could be used as an alternative to human tissues. But great scientific advances always come with a risk; the transplanted tissue may carry unknown latent infections that, once introduced into the recipient, could be activated and give rise to infection. These infectious diseases could be the beginning of a life-threatening pandemic.

Should animal organs be used to replenish this shortage or are the risks to the larger population too great? Write a multi-paragraph essay in which you discuss your position on this controversial issue. Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your argument.

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™

Advertising E-Cigarettes
Genetically Modified Foods
Rhetorical Devices: Princess Diana Death Responses
Role of Citizens in a Democracy
Tiger Farming: Pro or Con?
To Frack or Not to Frack
Was Life in the U.S. Better in 1900 than in 2000?

Pilot

Are Unpaid Internships Fair?
Caffeine, Energy Drinks, and Effects on the Body
College Tuition: A Parent's Responsibility?
Rhetorical Strategies in Kennedy's 1968 Speech
The Values and Costs of Naps
Xenotransplantation: Promise or Problem?

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

IntelliMetric™

A Controversial Issue
Advertising and its Influence on Society
Benefits of Globalization
Cell Phone Ban on Operators of Motor Vehicles
Challenging Authority
Is Summer Homework Beneficial?
It Should Be Law!
Recommending Literature
Robots in the Workforce
Should the Legal Driving Age be Changed?
The Impact of Video Games on the Individual and Society
The Importance of Reading
The Importance of the Arts in Education
Time Spent with Electronic Video Games
What Makes a Good Coach?

Pilot

Are Racial Discrimination and Bigotry Eliminated?
Campaign Finance Reform
Change the Speed Limit?
Controversy in Science 101
Establishing a Position on the Paris Peace Conference
Government Secrets
Is Honor Inherent or Bestowed?
Is Technology Dangerous?
Muslim Civilization: Navigation and the Hajj
Right to Rule in Near East Early Civilizations
Rome's Cultural Legacy
Teens in Solitary Confinement
The Impact of World War II on the Social Position of Mexican Americans
The Importance of Spelling Rules
"The Lottery"
The Power of Fear
The Renaming of Washington Middle School

Appendix III: Quotation-based Prompts

IntelliMetric™

A Sense of Wonder
Competition or Competence?
Consequences of Success
Do You Agree with Capital Punishment?
Enough is Enough! Or is it?
Gun Control and Violence
Internet Censorship
Is Cheating Always Wrong?
Our Changing Society
Reinstating the Draft
Reputation or Success?
Responding to a Quotation about Luck
Responding to a Quote by George Bernard Shaw
The Danger of Headphone Use
Truth and Lies
Tyranny of the Majority
What Is Wisdom?
Youth and Violence

Pilot

Analyzing an Argument about Celebrity Testimony in Advertising
An Eye for an Eye
Baby Tourism
Credit Cards for Teens
Discovering Yourself in Service to Others
Does Inactivity Serve a Purpose?
Do We Choose Our Character Traits?
Federal vs. State Jurisdiction
Growing by Going Beyond What You Have Mastered
Is a Positive Attitude the Key to Success?
Is Failure the Worst Thing?
Limitations of Machines
Maintaining Individuality
Margaret Mead's Analysis of Success: Agree or Disagree?
Politicians' Religious Beliefs
Proposition 187
Responding to a Quote by Colin Wilson
Responding to a Quote by Emerson
Success by Failure
The Best Way to Influence Others
The Danger in Aiming Too Low
The Declining Interest in Science Education
The Source of Our Talent
Title IX and Sports Equality

Appendix IV: Non-source-based Prompts (Sources Not Required)

IntelliMetric™

Adding a Class to Your School's Curriculum
Advertising on School Grounds
After-School Job
A Global Language
A High School Travel Abroad Program in Your School
Alternate Energy Sources
Are Expensive Clothes Worth It?
Ban Cell Phone Use in Some Places?
Beauty Pageants: Rewarding or Degrading?
Challenges of Parenthood
Changes the Next President Should Make
Choosing a Rewarding Occupation
Choosing a School
Cloning
Competitive Sport Requirement
Conflict Resolution Programs in Schools
Department Store Dilemma
Dependence on Calculators
Do Teens Consider the Consequences?
Do You Agree With a Curfew?
Driver's Ed or Personal Finance?
Eliminating Extracurricular Activities
Eliminating the Penny
Emphasis on Sports
Essential Job Skills
Extracurricular Activities Requirement
Four-Day School Week?
Internet Classrooms vs. Traditional Classrooms
Invasion of Privacy
Is Music a Luxury or Important for Survival?
Later School Opening
Limiting the Amount of Homework
Mandatory Recycling
Minimum Driving Age
Nature vs. Nurture
Paying Students to Keep Schools Safe
Persuade a Tourist to Visit
Rating Movies, Music, and Video Games
Requiring Protective Helmets
Requiring School Uniforms
R-rated Movies in High-School Curricula?
Should School Start Later?
Steroids in Sports
Teen Curfews
The Right to Search

Time Capsule
Your Special Skill

Pilot

A Chef's Most Important Ingredients
Business: Resisting the Dress Code—Part 3
Can First Impressions Be Changed?
Cell Phones While Driving
Change to a Healthier Lunch Menu?
Committing to a Career at a Young Age
Destination or Journey?
Fundraising for a Culinary Tour
Getting Out the Vote
Impact of Electronic Musical Instruments
Is Fierce Competition Good or Bad?
Is Photography Art?
Is Remote Learning Beneficial?
Is Year-Round Schooling a Good Idea?
No Presidential Re-election
Occupations Which Require No Math
Public School Sports for Home-Schooled Students
School Grounds Cleanup
Selling a Vehicle
Setting Goals
Should Fine Arts Classes Be Required?
Should Schools Control Student Involvement?
Should School Teams Make Cuts?
Should Students Make Donations to Their Schools?
Should Students Use Cell Phones in School?
Summer Projects
Surveillance Cameras and Security
Technical Quality vs. Emotion in Art
Technology Causes Less Human Contact
The Perfect Site for Your Family Reunion
Three Years to Graduation
Use of Rote Memorization in Mathematics Instruction
Using Advice from Experts
Visual Art vs. Text to Describe an Event
Volunteer Programs Required for Graduation
What Is the Definition of Music?
What Is the Source of Self-Esteem?
Winter Holiday Controversies
Women in Combat Roles
Work Alone or with a Group?
