

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

- Close Reading of Complex Texts
- Writing from Sources:
Argument, Literary Analysis,
Research Simulation
- Performance Assessment Practice

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Approaching Common Core Assessments with Confidence

By Carol Jago



In order to get good at anything, you need to practice. Whether the goal is to improve your jump shot, level up in a video game, or make the cut in band tryouts, success requires repeated practice on the court, computer, and field. The same is true of reading and writing. The only way to get good at them is by reading and writing.

Malcolm Gladwell estimates in his book *Outliers* that mastering a skill requires about 10,000 hours of dedicated practice. He argues that individuals who are outstanding in their field have one thing in common—many, many hours of working at it. Gladwell claims that success is less dependent on innate talent than it is on practice. Now I'm pretty sure that I could put in 10,000 hours at a ballet studio and still be a terrible dancer, but I agree with Gladwell that, "Practice isn't the thing you do once you're good. It's the thing you do that makes you good."

Not just any kind of practice will help you master a skill, though. Effective practice needs to focus on improvement. That is why this series of reading and writing tasks begins with a model of the kind of reading and writing you are working towards, then takes you through practice exercises, and finally invites you to perform the skills you have practiced.

Once through the cycle is only the beginning. You will want to repeat the process many times over until close reading, supporting claims with evidence, and crafting a compelling essay is something you approach with confidence. Notice that I didn't say "with ease." I wish it were otherwise, but in my experience as a teacher and as an author, writing well is never easy.

The work is worth the effort. Like a star walking out on the stage, you put your trust in the hours you've invested in practice to result in thundering applause. To our work together!

Unit 1 Argumentative Essay

Relationships

STEP 1 ANALYZE THE MODEL

Is it better to be at the center of one group of friends or at the perimeter of several?

Read Source Materials

INFORMATIONAL ARTICLE

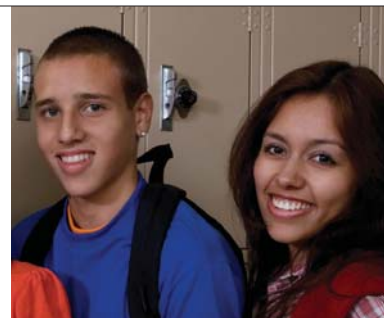
New School, New Groups of Friends Marvin Hampton 4

INFORMATIONAL ARTICLE

Teen Friendships: A Cauldron of Closeness Cassie Ammerman 5

STUDENT MODEL

Are Close Friends Better? Philip Patel 6



STEP 2 PRACTICE THE TASK

Is reaching consensus always a good idea, or are there times when it is better to disagree?

Read Source Materials

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Consensus Will Be Used to Decide School Board Policy Soledad Stephens 10

INFORMATIONAL ARTICLE

How to Reach a Consensus Marc Vargas 11

LIST

Is Consensus Decision-Making Right for Your Group? 12

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Write an Argumentative Essay

*Is reaching consensus always a good idea?
Are there times when it is better to disagree?* 16



STEP 3 PERFORM THE TASK

Can you make real friends on the Internet?

Read Source Materials

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Study: The Internet Helps You Make More Friends, Be More Social
Graeme McMillan 22

BLOG

Social Media, Pretend Friends, and the Lie of False Intimacy
Kwabena Danso 24

MAGAZINE ARTICLE

Making Friends Through the Internet
Sally Arthur 27

Write an Argumentative Essay

Can you make real friends on the Internet? 29



Unit 2 Informative Essay

Ancient Civilizations

STEP 1 ANALYZE THE MODEL

Exploring Peru

Read Source Materials

INSTRUCTIONAL ARTICLE

Chart a Course That Works! 34

STUDENT MODEL

Cuzco, Peru
Ken Norris 36

STUDENT MODEL

Machu Picchu
Claudia Zhang 38



STEP 2 PRACTICE THE TASK

In what ways are the Mayan and Egyptian pyramids alike and different?

Read Source Materials

MAGAZINE ARTICLE

The Pyramids of Giza Helena Gustafson 42

DATA ANALYSIS

The Great Pyramid at Giza 44

TRAVEL GUIDE

Visiting the Mayan Pyramids Caitlin Bresnahan 45

INFOGRAPHIC

El Castillo Mayan Pyramid 47

The Great Pyramid at Giza 47

Write a Comparison/Contrast Essay

In what ways are the Mayan and Egyptian Pyramids alike and different? 50



STEP 3 PERFORM THE TASK

In what ways were the Maya, the Aztecs, and the Inca advanced for their time?

Read Source Materials

INFORMATIVE ARTICLE

Mayan Civilization Suzanne Hopkins 56

INFORMATIVE ARTICLE

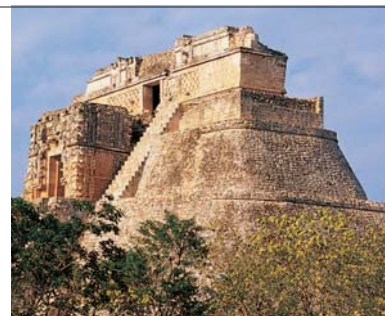
Aztecs Jose Maldonado 58

INFORMATIVE ARTICLE

The Inca Akbar Patel 60

Write an Informative Essay

In what ways were the Maya, the Aztecs, and the Inca advanced for their time? 63



Unit 3 Literary Analysis

Changes

STEP 1 ANALYZE THE MODEL

How does the coming of spring change us?

Read Source Materials

BIOGRAPHY

E.E. Cummings: The Poet and His Craft 68

POEM

Spring is like a perhaps hand E. E. Cummings 69

STUDENT MODEL

Winter Becomes Spring Valerie Jones 70



STEP 2 PRACTICE THE TASK

How can the use of irony change our ideas?

Read Source Materials

BIOGRAPHY

Mark Antony Marko Gusev 74

HISTORICAL NOTE

Caesar's Death and Shakespeare's Play 75

INFORMATIONAL TEXT

What Is . . . Irony in Literature Erica Duvall 76

SPEECH

from *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*,
Act III. Scene 2 William Shakespeare 77

Write a Literary Analysis

How does Shakespeare use irony in Mark Antony's speech? 80



STEP 3 PERFORM THE TASK

How do our life experiences change us?

Read Source Materials

BIOGRAPHY

The Life of Elizabeth Barrett Browning Alicia Kim 86

HISTORICAL ESSAY

The Browning Letters Gregory Evans 88

POEM

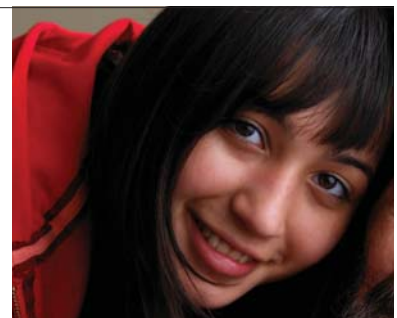
Sonnet 43 Elizabeth Barrett Browning 90

LETTERS

The Letters of Robert Browning and
Elizabeth Barrett Barrett Robert Browning and
Elizabeth Barrett Barrett 91

Write a Literary Analysis

How did Elizabeth Barrett Browning's life experiences influence her poetry? 95



Unit 4 Mixed Practice

On Your Own

TASK 1 ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY RESEARCH SIMULATION

Read Source Materials

Anchor Text

NEWS ARTICLE

Do You Really Want a Baby Tiger? Mia Lewis 103

NEWS ARTICLE

REXANO Proves That Politicians and Lobbyists Introducing and Passing Laws Against Exotic Animal Ownership in the Name of 'Public Safety' Use False and Misleading Claims REXANO 106

Write an Argumentative Essay 109

TASK 2 INFORMATIVE ESSAY RESEARCH SIMULATION

Read Source Materials

NEWS ARTICLE

Miraculous Lost and Found Katherine Leonard 115

Anchor Text

NEWS ARTICLE

The Most Important Rule Jared Myers 117

Write an Informative Essay 120

TASK 3 LITERARY ANALYSIS

Read Source Materials

POEM

To Helen Edgar Allan Poe 125

POEM

Helen H. D. 126

Write a Literary Analysis 129

UNIT 1: Argumentative Essay



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Relationships

UNIT 1

Argumentative Essay

STEP

1

ANALYZE THE MODEL

Evaluate an argumentative essay about whether it is better to have many friends or a few close friends.

STEP

2

PRACTICE THE TASK

Write an argumentative essay that evaluates the benefits and drawbacks of reaching a consensus.

STEP

3

PERFORM THE TASK

Write an argumentative essay that offers reasons for or against making friends on the Internet.

Questioning another person's point of view is something we as humans love to do. Interacting with others—friends, neighbors, relatives, strangers—sometimes can lead to disagreements. Arguing, giving your reasons for your stance on an issue, and explaining your point of view, can be challenging on a person-to-person level.

The argumentative essay, on the other hand, is a more formally constructed argument.

IN THIS UNIT, you will learn how to write an argumentative essay that is based on your close reading and analysis of several relevant sources. You will learn a step-by-step approach to stating a claim—and then organizing your essay to support your claim in a clear and logical way.

ANALYZE THE MODEL

Is it better to be at the center of one group of friends or at the perimeter of several?



You will read:

- ▶ **TWO INFORMATIONAL ARTICLES**
New School, New Groups of Friends
Teen Friendships: A Cauldron of Closeness

You will analyze:

- ▶ **A STUDENT MODEL**
Are Close Friends Better?

Source Materials for Step 1

The following texts were used by Ms. Jefferson’s student, Philip Patel, as sources for his essay, “Are Close Friends Better than Many Friends?” As you read, make notes in the side columns and underline information that you find useful.

NOTES

New School, New Groups of Friends

It was really tough moving and starting from scratch at a new school, but after a year, I can say that there have been some good things as well as bad ones.

At my old school, I was part of a small group of “band geeks.” That’s what we called ourselves because that’s what we were. I was right at the center of the group. I helped decide things like what we were going to do for fun, where we would sit in the lunchroom, and who we would hang out with. I’m not saying we were a clique but we knew each other really well and all agreed that we didn’t want a lot of random kids hanging out with us.

The problem with a group like that is that it is hard to change and try new things without your friends getting mad at you or thinking you are rejecting them. So, at my new school, I’ve made an effort not to get too tight with any one group, but to try new things and stay flexible. I like being involved with a few groups and getting to know kids with different interests, even if I’m not right at the center of things. It’s a relief not to have to worry about any of the intense friendship drama and just have fun doing cool activities and meeting new people.

I certainly miss my old gang of friends, but it’s been a lot of fun having this chance to spread myself out.





Teen Friendships: A CAULDRON OF CLOSENESS

NOTES

It will come as no surprise to parents that the teenage years are particularly intense ones when it comes to friendships and group dynamics. Many of our children find themselves both benefitting from—and sometimes struggling with—issues relating to being part of a group of friends.

Being part of a small, tight group can bolster a teen’s sense of identity, supply a feeling of belonging, and provide close, loyal, and lasting friendships. Being part of a group can mean fewer awkward social moments, fewer social decisions to make, and more social stability and security.

Problems arise when a group becomes too small, too closed and limiting, or too controlling. The teenage years are times of great change and growth, and children should be free to rethink themselves and their friendships without the limitation of what can amount to a group veto.

Being the center of a tightly knit group can mean that there is less freedom to explore, meet new friends, and try out other interests and ideas. It is important that children understand that even the best of friends sometimes grow apart. They may no longer share the same interests. It is normal, natural, and healthy to change and grow, and even sometimes grow apart.

Maintaining a variety of friendships, some close, and some more casual, can help a teen through a tough transition out of a group. Also, it is important to remind teens to conduct themselves in a manner that they will have no cause to regret later on, always being fair, upfront, and generous. People of all ages do well when they remember that being right isn’t as important as being kind.

Discuss and Decide

You have read two sources about social circles. Without going any further, discuss the question: Is it better to be at the center of one group of friends or at the perimeter of several? Cite text evidence in your discussion.

Analyze a Student Model for Step 1

Read Philip's essay closely. The red side notes are the comments that his teacher, Ms. Jefferson, wrote.

Philip Patel
Ms. Jefferson
English 9
November 18

Are Close Friends Better?

Interesting hook.

Do I really have to choose? If I could have my way, I would have both. I'd be at the center of a small group of close friends, but I'd also have a wide range of more casual friendships. Being at the perimeter of a number of groups would be a good balance to my more intense and cliquish small group. I'd have depth as well as breadth, and I'd have options if anything ever went wrong in my small group.

The issue and your claim are clear.

Good transition.

But let's say I can't have both and I have to choose one. In that case, I would choose to be at the center of a group of friends, even if that group were only three or four people. Here's why: no number of casual friends can equal the benefit of having one or two true close friends. Close friends are nothing like casual friends. You can trust them. You can laugh with them. They are there for you when life is good and when it is tough.

Valid reason, clearly stated.

Excellent point.

Also, being at the center of something is completely different from being on the outside. When you are in the center of a small group of friends, you have a say over things. You can say what you prefer and what you really think. You can make decisions, or help make decisions. You are in charge.

Valid opposing claim.

When you are on the perimeter of a group, you are on the outside looking in. You can decide to join in or not, but you can't really participate in decision-making, and that can get frustrating.



It is nice to know people from many different groups with many different interests, but if none of them are close friends, then you are still missing out.

It's true that being at the center of a small group is like putting all your eggs in one basket. Yes, it has more risks, but it also has more rewards. There is nothing quite as special as a group of close friends.

Concluding statement is well made.

Well done!

Discuss and Decide

Did Philip's essay convince you that it is better to have a small circle of friends? If so, which of his reasons are the most compelling?

Terminology of Argumentative Texts

Read each term and explanation. Then look back at Philip Patel’s argumentative essay and find an example to complete the chart.

Term	Explanation	Example from Philip’s Essay
audience	The audience for your argument is a group of people that you want to convince. As you develop your argument, consider your audience’s knowledge level and concerns.	
purpose	The purpose for writing an argument is to sway the audience. Your purpose should be clear, whether it is to persuade your audience to agree with your claim, or to motivate your audience to take some action.	
precise claim	A precise claim confidently states your viewpoint. Remember that you must be able to find reasons and evidence to support your claim, and that you must distinguish your claim from opposing claims.	
reason	A reason is a statement that supports your claim. (You should have more than one reason.) Note that you will need to supply evidence for each reason you state.	
opposing claim	An opposing claim , or counterclaim , shares the point of view of people who do not agree with your claim. Opposing claims must be fairly presented with evidence.	

PRACTICE THE TASK

Is reaching consensus always a good idea, or are there times when it is better to disagree?



You will read:

- ▶ **A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE**
Consensus Will Be Used to Decide School Board Policy
- ▶ **AN INFORMATIONAL ARTICLE**
How to Reach a Consensus
- ▶ **A LIST**
Is Consensus Decision-Making Right for Your Group?
- ▶ **TWO LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

You will write:

- ▶ **AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY**
Is reaching a consensus always a good idea, or are there times when it is better to disagree?

Source Materials for Step 2

AS YOU READ Analyze and annotate the sources in ways that help you reach a decision regarding consensus.

Source 1: Newspaper Article

Consensus Will Be Used to Decide School Board Policy

by Soledad Stephens, Education Correspondent

May 25, 2012

At a meeting last night, the Tiberi Township School Board chose a new method to determine standards for grade promotion. Normally the 12-person board votes on the proposals. Now they will use consensus to build a plan of action acceptable to all. Although none are likely to get their first choice, there will also be no winners and no losers.

Consensus decision-making is very different from voting. Voting is a way to choose between alternatives. With consensus, a group can bring the best parts of many proposals together to create something new. Voting is faster, but it may leave some “defeated” voters upset with the outcome. When a group achieves consensus after a thorough discussion, all parties are on board with the outcome.

“I’m just pleased we will be working together to shape a proposal that everyone can

get behind,” said School Board President Patti Rincon.

However, not all are in consensus about using consensus.

“Consensus is too much compromise,” said parent Tyrell Washington. “Everyone gives up something and no one really likes the final result. They should keep working until they have a proposal that everyone likes, unanimously!”

School administrator Jesse VanDeLaar thinks just the opposite. “These decisions should be made by the experts,” he declared. “It really isn’t useful to vote or reach consensus. This is not a popularity contest—it’s a question of what the research has shown will or will not work.”

Good luck to the members of the school board on reaching a consensus that will be accepted by all stakeholders—parents, teachers, *and* school administrators.

Source 2: Informational Article

How to Reach a Consensus

A *consensus* is when a group of people reaches a general agreement. Getting to a consensus requires a special decision-making process that takes everyone's opinions and concerns into account. In consensus decision-making, everyone is included, everyone participates, everyone's voice is equal, and everyone works towards the same goal—finding a solution.

- 1 Define and describe the issue that needs to be decided.
- 2 Decide how your group will reach a final decision. (Some groups insist on unanimity; others accept a consensus with one or two dissenting voices.)
- 3 List all the concerns that the final proposal should address.
- 4 Brainstorm and record a list of possible solutions. Encourage every participant to offer ideas, opinions, and comments.
- 5 Evaluate the list of alternatives. Write up a draft proposal that combines the best of all the ideas.
- 6 Revise the proposal until it best meets the interests of the group.

Close Read

You've read two sources on reaching a consensus. Explain some advantages to making decisions this way, and cite text evidence to support your response.

Source 3: List

Is Consensus Decision-Making Right for Your Group?

Advantages of Consensus Decision Making:

- ▶ Consensus decision-making helps build trust and a sense of community.
- ▶ Everyone's ideas are included, which leads to a wider range of possible solutions.
- ▶ The solutions are supported by the whole group.

Reaching a consensus may be difficult if:

- ▶ the group has not worked together before or is too large (15 or more).
- ▶ some members do not understand or accept the consensus-seeking process, or argue, bully, or intimidate others.
- ▶ the issue is complicated with few viable solutions available.
- ▶ one member has more power than others (this may discourage others from speaking freely).
- ▶ there is a lack of trust among group members.
- ▶ there is not enough time for discussion.
- ▶ group leaders try to control outcomes rather than facilitate discussion.
- ▶ one or two "dissenters" hold up the whole process.
- ▶ there is no agreed-upon consensus process for the group to use.

Discuss and Decide

When might making a decision by consensus not be the best method to use?

Source 4: Letters to the Editor

To the Editor

I'm writing to protest the School Board's recent adoption of the consensus decision-making method to decide grade promotion policy. This is not a situation where it is appropriate to choose a course of action by finding something that everyone can agree on. Maybe everyone agrees on a plan that makes no sense at all. Decisions about grade promotions should be made by administrators who have responsibility and experts who have special knowledge. We owe our students the BEST decisions, not just the most popular ones.

Yours truly,
Jesse VanDeLaar
Deputy Principal

To the Editor

Congratulations to the School Board for choosing to make their policy decisions by consensus! No longer will the policies they adopt be the subject of bitter disagreements and lackluster support. We parents will no longer feel like cats who have left the mice to play. When the whole school board unites behind a plan, then teachers, parents, and students will unite behind it as well. A plan which has taken into consideration the opinions and interests of all the members—and survived extensive debate—is a plan that will stand the test of time.

In a world with far too much strife and conflict, few leaders seem to have the skills needed to compromise and work together effectively. Hats off to the school board for leading by example.

Mary Anne Dunlop
Parent

Discuss and Decide

Which claims in one letter are not directly refuted in the other letter?

Respond to Questions on Step 2 Sources

These questions will help you analyze the sources you've read. Use your notes and refer back to the sources in order to answer the questions. Your answers to these questions will help you write your essay.

- 1 Evaluate the sources. Is the evidence from one source more credible than the evidence from another source? When you evaluate the credibility of a source, examine the expertise of the author and/or the organization responsible for the information. Record your reasons in the chart.

Source	Credible?	Reasons
Newspaper Article Consensus Will Be Used to Decide School Board Policy		
Informational Article How to Reach a Consensus		
List Is Consensus Decision-Making Right for Your Group?		
Letters to the Editor		

- 2 **Prose Constructed-Response** If you disagreed with Mary Anne Dunlop's position on decision-making by consensus, which sources would you use to refute her argument? Why?

- 3 **Prose Constructed-Response** Which source best complements the information found in the list, "Is Consensus Decision-Making Right for Your Group?" Explain your rationale, citing evidence from the text.

Searching for Evidence

Every reason you offer to support the central claim of your argument must be upheld by evidence. It is useful to think ahead about evidence when you are preparing to write an argument. If there is no evidence to support your claim, you will need to revise your claim. The evidence you provide must be relevant, or related to your claim. It must also be sufficient. Sufficient evidence is both clear and varied.

Use this chart to help you vary the types of evidence you provide to support your reasons.

Types of Evidence	What Does It Look Like?
<p>Anecdotes: personal examples or stories that illustrate a point</p>	<p>Letters to the Editor “No longer will the policies they adopt be the subject of bitter disagreements and lackluster support.”</p>
<p>Commonly accepted beliefs: ideas that most people share</p>	<p>Newspaper Article “‘Consensus is too much compromise,’ said parent Tyrell Washington.”</p>
<p>Examples: specific instances or illustrations of a general idea</p>	<p>Newspaper Article “Normally the 12-person board votes on the proposals. Now they will use consensus to build a plan of action acceptable to all.”</p>
<p>Expert opinion: statement made by an authority on the subject</p>	<p>Newspaper Article “. . . we will be working together to shape a proposal that everyone can get behind,” said School Board President Patti Rincon.”</p>
<p>Facts: statements that can be proven true, such as statistics or other numerical information</p>	<p>Informational Article “A <i>consensus</i> is when a group of people reaches a general agreement.”</p>

Find Evidence

You have identified reasons that support your claim. Summarize your reasons in the chart below. Then complete the chart by identifying evidence that supports your reasons.

Relevant Evidence: The evidence you plan to use must be *relevant* to your argument. That is, it should directly and factually support your position.

Sufficient Evidence: Additionally, your evidence must be *sufficient* to make your case. That is, you need to supply enough evidence to convince others

Short Summary of Reasons	Evidence
Reason 1	<p style="text-align: right;">Relevant? _____ Sufficient? _____</p>
Reason 2	<p style="text-align: right;">Relevant? _____ Sufficient? _____</p>
Reason 3	<p style="text-align: right;">Relevant? _____ Sufficient? _____</p>

Finalize Your Plan

Whether you are writing your essay at home or working in a timed situation at school, it is important to have a plan. You will save time and create a more organized, logical essay by planning the structure before you start writing.

Use your responses on pages 16–17, as well as your close reading notes, to complete the graphic organizer.

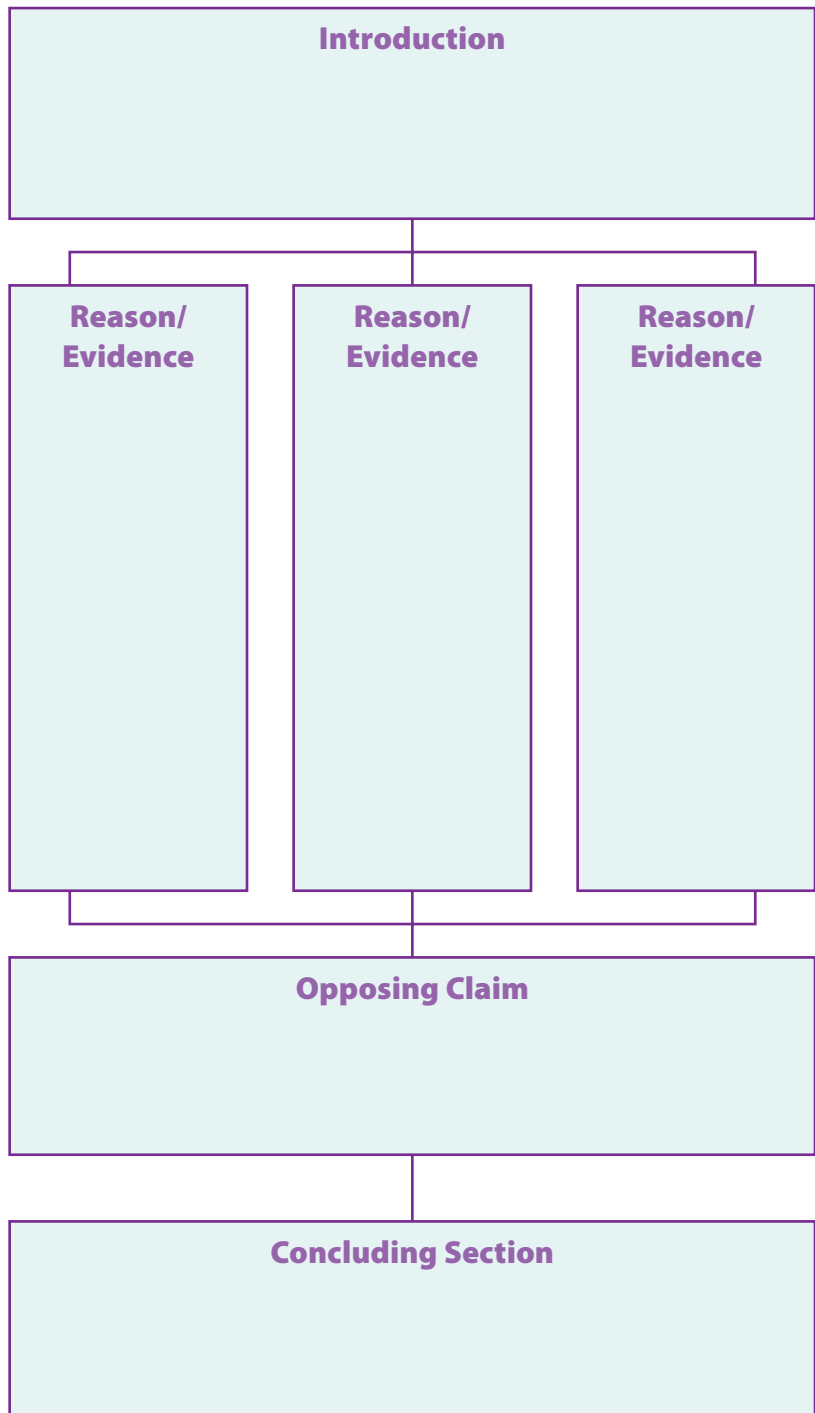
▶ Think about how you will grab your reader’s attention with an interesting fact or anecdote.

▶ Identify the issue and your position.

▶ State your precise claim.

▶ List the likely opposing claim and how you will counter it.

▶ Restate your claim.



Draft Your Essay

As you write, think about:

- ▶ **Audience:** Your teacher
- ▶ **Purpose:** Demonstrate your understanding of the specific requirements of an argumentative essay.
- ▶ **Style:** Use a formal and objective tone that isn't defensive.
- ▶ **Transitions:** Use words, such as *furthermore* or *another reason*, to create cohesion or flow.

Revise

Revision Checklist: Self Evaluation

Use the checklist below to guide your analysis.



If you drafted your essay on the computer, you may wish to print it out so that you can more easily evaluate it.

Ask Yourself	Tips	Revision Strategies
Does the introduction grab the audience's attention and include a precise claim?	Draw a wavy line under the attention-grabbing text. Bracket the claim.	Add an attention grabber. Add a claim or rework the existing one to make it more precise.
Do at least two valid reasons support the claim? Is each reason supported by relevant and sufficient evidence?	Underline each reason. Circle each piece of evidence, and draw an arrow to the reason it supports.	Add reasons or revise existing ones to make them more valid. Add relevant evidence to ensure that your support is sufficient.
Do transitions create cohesion and link related parts of the argument?	Put a star next to each transition.	Add words, phrases, or clauses to connect related ideas that lack transitions.
Are the reasons in the order that is most persuasive?	Number the reasons in the margin, ranking them by their strength and effectiveness.	Rearrange the reasons into a more logical order of importance.
Are opposing claims fairly acknowledged and refuted?	Put a plus sign by any sentence that addresses an opposing claim.	Add sentences that identify and address those opposing claims.
Does the concluding section restate the claim?	Put a box around the restatement of your claim.	Add a sentence that restates your claim.

Revision Checklist: Peer Review

Exchange your essay with a classmate, or read it aloud to your partner. As you read and comment on your classmate's essay, focus on logic, organization, and evidence—not on whether you agree with the author's claim. Help each other identify parts of the draft that need strengthening, reworking, or a new approach.

What To Look For	Notes for My Partner
Does the introduction grab the audience's attention and include a precise claim?	
Do at least two valid reasons support the claim? Is each reason supported by relevant and sufficient evidence?	
Do transitions create cohesion and link related parts of the argument?	
Are the reasons in the order that is most persuasive?	
Are opposing claims fairly acknowledged and refuted?	
Does the concluding section restate the claim?	

Edit



Edit your essay to correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.

PERFORM THE TASK

Can you make real friends on the Internet?



You will read:

- ▶ **A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE**
Study: The Internet Helps You Make More Friends, Be More Social
- ▶ **A BLOG**
Social Media, Pretend Friends, and the Lie of False Intimacy
- ▶ **A MAGAZINE ARTICLE**
Making Friends Through the Internet

You will write:

- ▶ **AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY**
Can you make real friends on the Internet?

Part 1: Read Sources

Source 1: Newspaper Article

Study: The Internet Helps You Make More Friends, Be More Social

by Graeme McMillan, June 16, 2011

AS YOU READ Analyze the data presented in the articles. Look for evidence that supports your position that you can make real friends online, or inspires you to change your position.

NOTES

It's the kind of news you can use next time concerned parents bring up the idea that the internet is making people more withdrawn and closed off from the rest of humanity: A new study from the Pew Research Center has found that online social networks actually seem to make people more social.

Pew polled 2,255 Americans during October and November last year, and of the 1,787 internet users in that group, 47% used social networking sites. Facebook was used by 92% of the 975 people that used social networks, with MySpace in second place, with 29%.

10 LinkedIn and Twitter trailed behind, with 18% and 13% respectively.

That's almost twice as many as in 2008, when the survey was last held. But more interestingly, there's also been a rise in the number of close friendships people are reporting when compared with 2008—2.16 close friends on average, compared with 2008's 1.93—with that increase being lead by those online, who reported an average of 2.26 close friends to the offline respondents' 1.75. It gets even better when you look at those using social networks, who reported 2.45 close friends on average.

Discuss and Decide

The author includes information about the number of close friends reported. What trend does the Pew Survey seem to reveal? Cite text evidence in your discussion.

“...online Americans tend to have 664 [social] ties on average, compared with an offline average of around 506.”

The study even looked into the number of social ties internet users and non-internet users have, and found that online Americans tend to have 664 ties on average, compared with an offline average of around 506. That number goes crazy when you start to plug in different social networks, however: Facebook users average 648 social ties, but Twitter users have an average of 838.

So, the next time someone says that they think the internet is bad for society, the answer is clear: Sign them up for Twitter, and see how they feel a couple of weeks later.

NOTES

Close Read

1. How did Pew Research collect their data?

2. Explain the change in the number of people using social networking sites from 2008 to 2011.

3. Are the increases in “close friends” and “ties” similar or different? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

Source 2: Blog

Social Media, Pretend Friends, and the Lie of False Intimacy



AS YOU READ Note all the issues that having many online friends can create. Is your opinion altered by this information?

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It's not an illusion. We really are doing more with each 24 hours, as technology enables (or forces) us to interact and intersect and do and consume with unprecedented volume and vigor. **We live our lives at breakneck speed because we can, because we feel we have to keep up, and because every macro and micro breeze blows in that direction.**

I remember the days before social media when I would get 20 phone calls per day and 50 or 60 emails, and felt exhausted by the pace of communication. Now we've traded the telephone for other
10 connection points (I only get 2-3 calls per day), but the overall number of people ringing our doorbell through some mechanism has ballooned like Charles Barkley.

The number of "inboxes" we possess is staggering: Email (3 accounts for me), public Twitter, Twitter DM, public Facebook, Facebook messages, Facebook chat, LinkedIn messages, public Google +, Google + messages, blog comments, Skype, text messages, Instagram, phone, voice mail, and several topically or geographically specific forums, groups and social networks. That's a lot of relationship bait in the water.

Close Read

Which specific words does the author use in the text to suggest his or her position? What inference can you make about the nature of this position?

20 **The Lie of Opportunity**

How do we justify this? How do we convince ourselves that slicing our attention so thin the turkey becomes translucent is a good idea?

We do it because we believe that more relationships provides more opportunity.

“It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.”

“Social media makes a big world smaller.”

“LinkedIn is for people you know, Facebook is for people you used to know, Twitter is for people you want to know.”

30 All of these chestnuts are passed around like a flu strain because they make intuitive sense. But common among them is the **underlying premise that interacting with more people is inherently better than interacting with fewer people**. I have always believed this to be true, and in fact have delivered the lines above in presentations and on this blog. But today, I’m no longer convinced.

Instead I wonder, what if we have it ALL wrong?

I recognize this is not purely an either/or scenario, and relationships that began with a Twitter exchange or series of blog comments can flourish into treasured real-world ties.

40 But those situations where we “meet” someone through social media, have the opportunity to interact in real life, and then develop a relationship that creates true friendship are few and far between. **And as social media gets bigger and more pervasive, this chasm becomes even more difficult to cross.** As my own networks in social media have gotten larger, I’ve ended up talking about my personal life less, because a large percentage of that group don’t know me, or my wife, or my kids, or my town, or my interests. I don’t want to bore people with the inanities of the everyday. (Facebook is the one exception, as I’ve always kept my personal account relatively small).

50 To some degree, I think this explains the popularity of Google + among people with very large followings on Twitter and/or Facebook. Google + provides a chance for a do-over, to create a new group of connections that are more carefully cultivated.

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But that's just medicating the symptoms, not curing the disease. **Fundamentally, technology and our use of it isn't—as we've all hoped—bringing us closer together.** In fact, it may be driving us farther apart, as we know more and more people, but know less and less about each of them.

Making Friends Out of Connections

60 **Maybe we should be focused less on making a lot of connections, and focused more on making a few real friends?** I'm going to try to work on this, to identify people with whom I want to develop real friendships, and make a concerted effort to do so, even if it means answering fewer tweets and blog comments from a much larger group of casual connections.

We have to take at least some of these social media spawned relationships to the next level, otherwise what's the point beyond generating clicks and newsletter subscribers?

70 **You think you know someone, but you don't. And that's social media's fault. But more so, our own.**

Close Read

What claim and counterclaim about the value of Internet contacts does the blogger make? Be sure to cite textual evidence in your response.

Source 3: Magazine Article



Making Friends Through The Internet

Advantages and disadvantages of meeting friends online

by Sally Arthur

Meeting friends on the Internet can have its advantages and disadvantages. There are a number of factors to consider.

Meeting friends online can happen more quickly than it might happen offline. You can even become friends with someone who lives in a different part of the world.

You can remain anonymous on the Internet. You do not have to share information about where you live, how old you are, or any personal details about your life. Online, you can be whoever you want to be, or just be yourself. This allows people to practice their social skills in an anonymous setting.

One major disadvantage of making friends online is that you do not always know if people are who they say they are. Just as it can be a good thing to be anonymous to protect your safety and personal information, anonymity can be dangerous, too. If you are dealing with someone who is not forthcoming about their identity, you don't know his or her motive for doing so.

Making friends online also may prevent people from socializing outside of the Internet. While having friends online is a good way to find people with similar interests, friends who exist only on a computer screen do not provide the companionship necessary to sustain friendships. If having Internet friends comes at the cost of neglecting friends offline, the Internet becomes a disadvantage.

While there are advantages and disadvantages to meeting friends online, it is up to every individual to use discretion and be safe.

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Discuss and Decide

Reviewing the advantages and disadvantages Arthur lists, do you have a sense of her bias? Explain your thinking, citing evidence from the text.

Respond to Questions on Step 3 Sources

These questions will help you analyze the sources you've read. Use your notes and refer back to the sources to answer the questions. Your answers to these questions will help you write your essay.

- 1 Is the evidence from one source more credible than the evidence from another source? When you evaluate the credibility of a source, examine the expertise of the author and/or the organization responsible for the information. Record your reasons.

Source	Credible?	Reasons
Newspaper Article Study: The Internet Helps You Make More Friends, Be More Social		
Blog Social Media, Pretend Friends, and the Lie of False Intimacy		
Magazine Article Making Friends Through the Internet		

- 2 **Prose Constructed-Response** What point about making friends online is raised in all three sources? Why is this point important to address when making an informed decision about the validity of online friendships? Support your answer with details and evidence.

- 3 **Prose Constructed-Response** Does the evidence in "Making Friends Through the Internet" support or contradict the evidence in "Study: The Internet Helps You Make More Friends, Be More Social"? Use details from the article to support your answer.

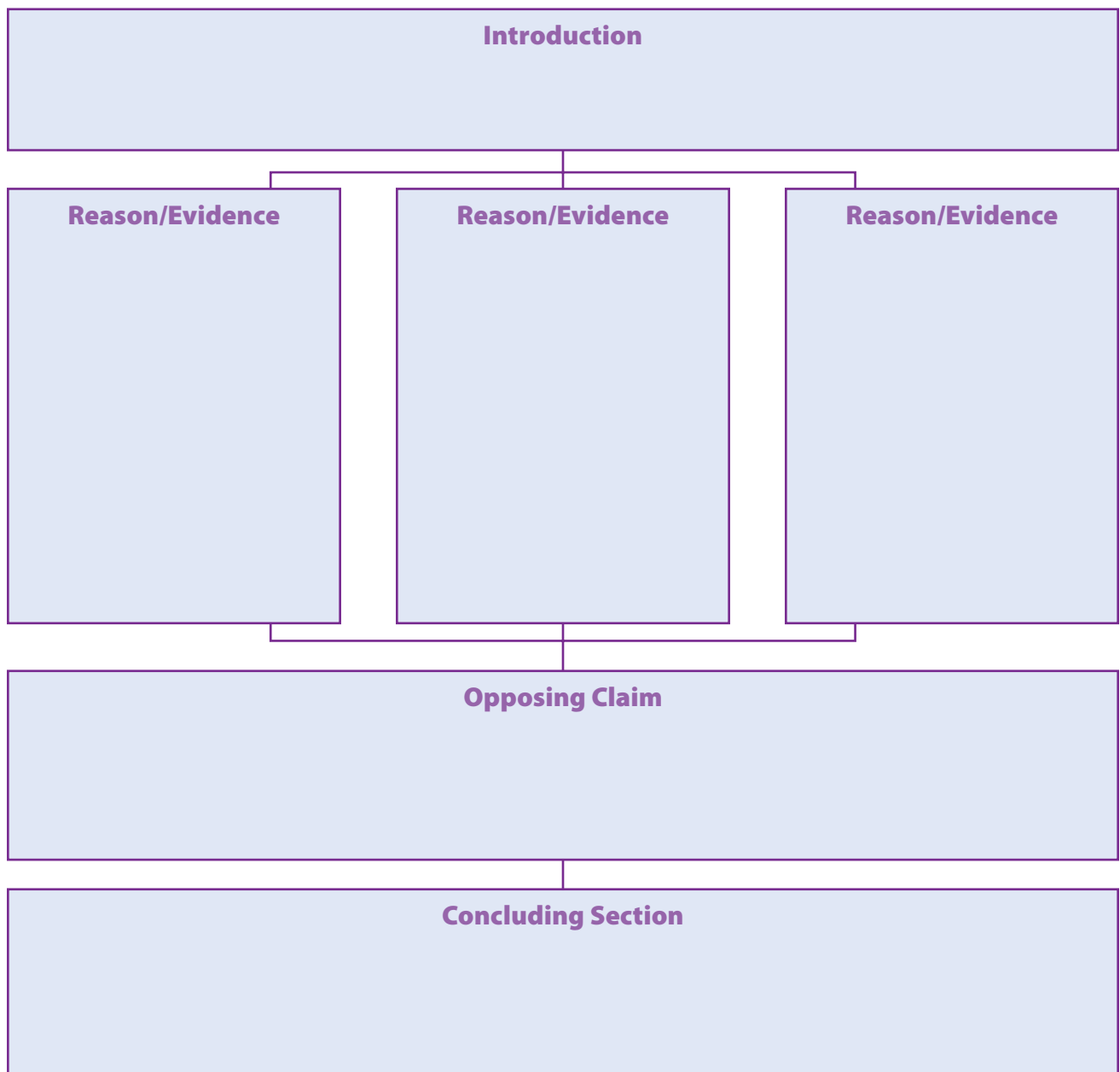
Part 2: Write

ASSIGNMENT

You have read about making friends online. Now write an argumentative essay explaining why you agree or disagree with the idea that you can make real friends on the Internet. Support your claim with details from what you have read.

Plan

Use the graphic organizer to help you outline the structure of your argumentative essay.



Draft



Use your notes and completed graphic organizer to write a first draft of your argumentative essay.

Revise and Edit



Look back over your essay and compare it to the Evaluation Criteria. Revise your essay and edit it to correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.

Evaluation Criteria

Your teacher will be looking for:

1. *Statement of purpose*

- ▶ Is your claim specific?
- ▶ Did you support it with valid reasons?
- ▶ Did you anticipate and address opposing claims fairly?

2. *Organization*

- ▶ Are the sections of your essay organized in a logical way?
- ▶ Is there a smooth flow from beginning to end?
- ▶ Is there a clear conclusion that supports the argument?
- ▶ Did you stay on topic?

3. *Elaboration of evidence*

- ▶ Is the evidence relative to the topic?
- ▶ Is there enough evidence to be convincing?

4. *Language and Vocabulary*

- ▶ Did you use a formal, non-combative tone?
- ▶ Did you use vocabulary familiar to your audience?

5. *Conventions*

- ▶ Did you follow the rules of grammar usage as well as punctuation, capitalization, and spelling?