

Writing Bundle

11 Text-Based
ELA Test Prep Prompts



Super Bundle:

Entire Collection

Adopt A Pet | Reduce Reuse Recycle
Homework Oh Homework | Technology & You
The Titanic | Country or City Life
National Parks | Branches of Government
Goldilocks & The 3 Bears | The Ivory Trade
Ebenezer Scrooge: Naughty or Nice

Less than \$1 per prompt

Prompts | Planning Sheet
3 Sources to Pull Evidence From

Text-Based Writing

Adopting Pets

2016

4th & 5th Grade | Informative/Explanatory



Directions:

The following passages are about adopting pets from animal shelters. Write an informative essay in which you explain why you should consider rescuing a pet instead of buying one from a store. Use information from the sources to support your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your response:
- Write your response:
- Revise and edit your response

Be sure to include:

- An introduction;
- Support for your controlling idea using information from the passages;
- A conclusion that is related to your controlling idea

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.

Source #1

Man's Best Friend

Pets are a lot of work. Before you can even consider bringing a new furry friend home, there are many things to contemplate. For instance, do you have the time to dedicate to a new pet? Do you know how to take care of one? If so, can you afford their food, their toys, and their veterinarian bills? If you answered yes to all these things and have done your research on how to take care of your pet, then you are ready to make the biggest decision of all: Where will you get your pet from?



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

It may seem like a silly question, but it's a very important one to ask. There are many options for new pet owners to choose from, but only one place that is beneficial to both you and your new-found friend.

Animal Shelters:

An animal shelter is a place where homeless or abandoned pets live. Some of these animals were found on the streets, while some were brought in by families who loved their pets, but could no longer take care of them. Regardless of where these loving creatures come from, they all have the same problem: they are in need of a new home and a family to care for them.

No animal shelter is the same. Some of them –like public schools- are paid for by our government, while some are privately run and supported by donations. Some are big, and some are small, but they all have the same mission in mind; they all want to help protect animals. Without shelters, these animals would still be stuck on the streets. And we wouldn't have the opportunity to find new, best friends for ourselves.

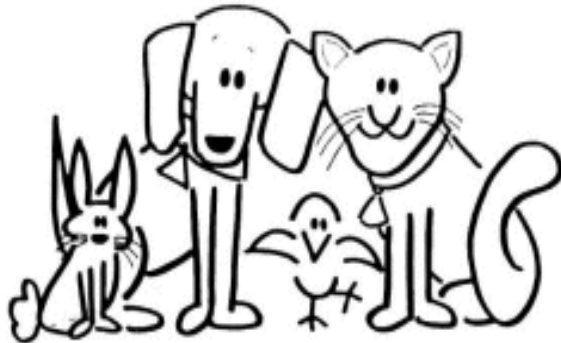
Source #2

Adopt-A-Pet

*Thinking about getting a new furry friend at home?
Consider adopting! Here are a few reasons why:*

You Can Save A Life: While animal shelters and humane societies do all that they can for their pets, there are simply too many unwanted animals to help them all. Because of this, over 2.7 million cats and dogs are *euthanized*, or put to sleep, each year. By adopting from a local shelter, you are not only saving your new pet's life, you are helping make space for another animal that may need a temporary home in a shelter!

Pets Are Well Tempered: While every pet is different, going to a shelter is a safe way to find an animal that is friendly. Pets at shelters have been *socialized*, or played with, by local volunteers at the shelters, and must be friendly for the society to keep them for adoption. These animals are also usually former pets from other homes, meaning they have been trained and loved their whole lives; PURRfectly ready to love you right back!



Save Your Money: While puppies and kittens from private stores or breeders can cost hundreds to thousands of dollars, animals at the shelter are VERY inexpensive. In fact, most shelters give you the animals for free, they just charge you for the animals' vet bills and ask for a small,

monetary donation. This donation goes towards helping feed and clean all the other animals they are taking care of; you get to be a hero twice in one day!

Being Socially Responsible: In today's ever changing culture, people are starting to think of responsible decisions as "cool" decisions. Adopting a pet is something many people brag about, and other adopters –like yourself- will love to hear about how you saved your pet! *"DOG RESCUE" slogans are the new cool!*

Source #3

“Tails” of a Stray

The following poems are about adopting animals. The first, a poem by Diane Morgan, is about a woman who helps care for animals while they are in the shelter.

She highlights the feeling of joy she feels being a hero for these animals. The second, a poem by an unknown author, is written from a stray dog’s point of view; telling his story about waiting for his new family to find him.

A Poem to my Foster Dog

I am the bridge,
Between what was and what can be.
I am the pathway to a new life.

I am made of mush,
Because my heart melted when I saw you,
Matted and sore, limping, depressed
Lonely, unwanted, afraid to love.

For one little time you are mine.
I will feed you with my own hand.
I will love you with my whole heart.
I will make you whole.

I am made of steel.
Because when the time comes,
When you are well, and sleek,
when your eyes shine,
And your tail wags with joy
Then comes the hard part.

I will let you go-not without a tear,
But without a regret.
For you are safe forever--
A new dog needs me now.

Author: Diane Morgan

“Tails” of a Stray

I’m waiting here in foster care
For you to come and see;
The one the others have passed by,
Please stop and look at me!
I’m not along here in my quest
to find myself a place.
Where someone will have love for me
And softly stroke my face;
Our faces have a bit of white,
our legs a slower gait.
Our hearts so full of love to give,
But still, we sit and wait.

Too big, too small, too brown, too blue,
too black, too old, too shy.
We may not be the perfect dogs
in everybody’s eyes.

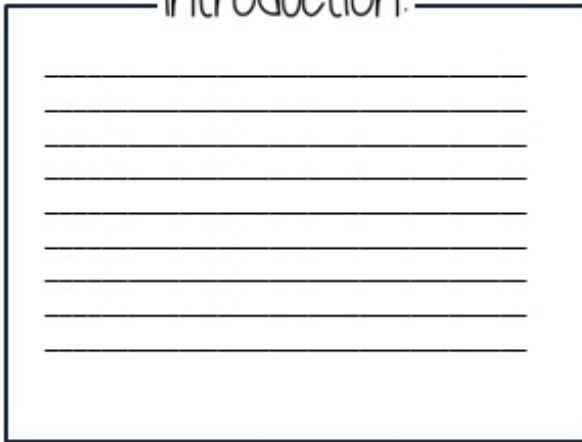
But unless you sit and take the time
to see all we can be.
You’ll miss that is right here:
Please, stop! Please look at me.

-Author Unknown

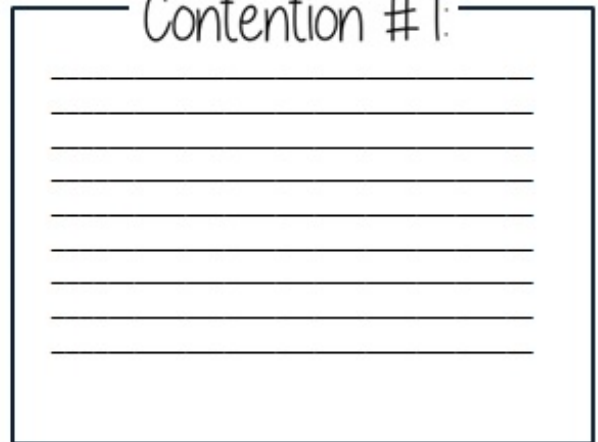


Get To Planning!

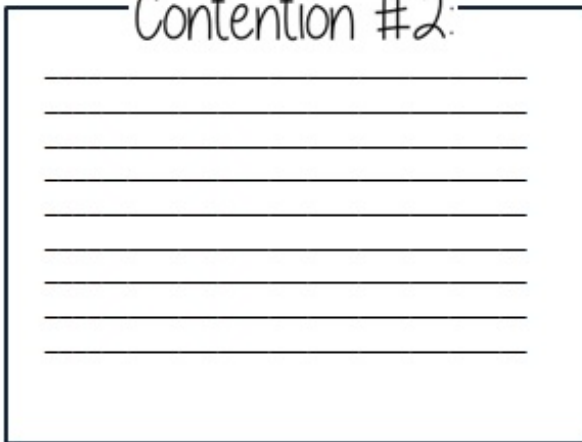
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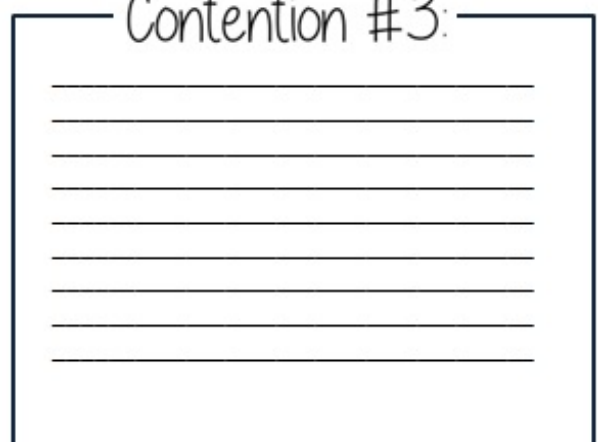
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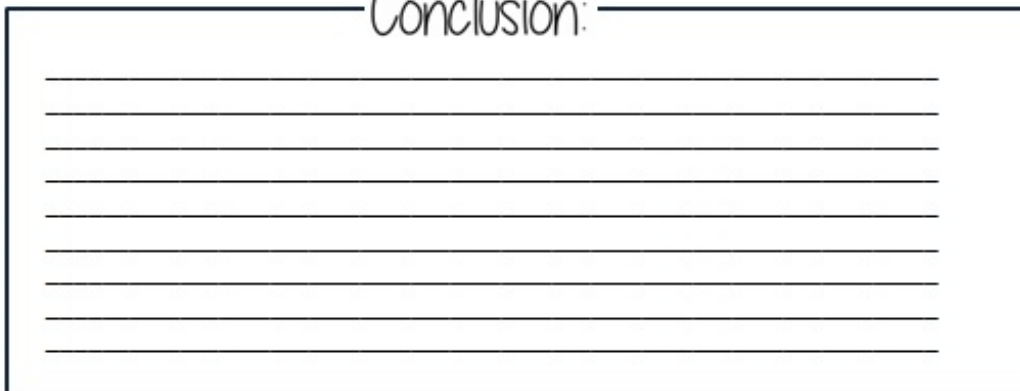
Contention #2:



Contention #3:



Conclusion:



Text-Based Writing

**Reduce,
Reuse,
Recycle**

2016

4th & 5th Grade | Informative/Explanatory



Directions:

The following passages are about reducing, reusing, and recycling. Write an informative essay in which you explain why you should participate in these three activities. Use information from the sources to support your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your response:
- Write your response:
- Revise and edit your response

Be sure to include:

- An introduction;
- Support for your controlling idea using information from the passages;
- A conclusion that is related to your controlling idea

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.

Source #1

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

The three R'S: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Everyone knows them, but does everyone use them? According to the data, in 2009, Americans threw away over 161 million tons of waste. This is equivalent, or equal to, almost 3 pounds of garbage per person per day. Think that's bad? What if I told you over 60% of this trash could have been recycled; a fact that could have saved over 96 million tons of space in landfills alone. More importantly, had Americans been more aware of their usage, it is estimated that an additional 45 million tons could have been avoided had more citizens opted to "reduce" and "reuse" the products available to them. This means that instead of 161 million tons of waste, we could have reduced our trash production to only about 20 million tons. Think you have what it takes to help keep our planet safe?

The image below shows several of the most easily recycled materials. Think of how often you recycle these products; is there anything you can do to improve your recycling habits?



PLEASE RECYCLE THESE ITEMS

On top of being recyclable, many of these products can also be reused, which would continue to reduce our overall production of trash. What would be a good substitute for plastic cups at a birthday party? What about refilling water bottles instead of grabbing a new one? Shorter showers? Not buying individually packaged snack packs? All of these things can significantly decrease the amount of trash we create every year! Don't you think that's a cause worth fighting for?

Source #2

What's The Point?

One of the main reasons America creates so much trash compared to other countries is because most people don't understand WHY we should recycle. Check out the list below and see what you think. Are these reasons worth recycling for?



1. ***Good for the Environment:*** Recycling keeps waste out of landfills, keeping our Earth both beautiful and healthy. Recycling also lowers our use of natural resources and helps ensure a bright future for generations to come!
2. ***Prevent Global Warming:*** Trash causes harmful gases to be emitted into our environment. Too much of these greenhouse gases (like carbon) cause harm to our Earth's ozone layer (the part of the atmosphere that keeps us safe from the sun's rays). By recycling, we can reduce these gases in our air, and protect the atmosphere around us.
3. ***Saves energy:*** When companies are able to reuse recycled materials to make new ones, they are able to save over 95% of energy. Because energy is both expensive to make and sometimes harmful to our environment, reducing energy use is a GREAT way to protect our Earth.
4. ***Good for our economy:*** An economy is the way that jobs and money flow through a community. When the economy is healthy, few people are unemployed, and most families are making enough money to live happy lives. The business of recycling is a \$236 BILLION industry; a business that provides jobs for over 1.1 million people around our nation. Think of how many happy families recycling creates! Without our help, these families and companies would cease to exist, and our economy would suffer for it.

My Responsibility

It is each and every one of our responsibilities to keep our planet healthy. If we do not protect our environment and its resources, there will be none left for people in the future! If we do not care for our Earth now, it may not even get the chance to exist later on! What are some things you can do to help ensure a healthy future?

Reduce. Reuse. And Recycle.

Reduce By:

- Walking or riding a bike instead of driving places. This reduces the amount of harmful emission (gases) put into our ozone and helps you save on gas money!
- Taking shorter showers, turning off the sink while you brush your teeth, and making sure the dishwasher is full before you run it. This helps preserve our limited water reserves.
- Turning off electronics, appliances, and even lights when you are not using them. This conserves energy, saving both electricity and money!

Reuse By:

- Shopping with a reusable canvas bag! Instead of using new plastic or paper bags every time you go to the store, you can reuse these more environmentally friendly bags. If you HAVE to use paper or plastic bags, make sure you recycle them when you are done!
- Using plastic, reusable plates for family events instead of throwing away paper ones. Washing dishes sure beats filling landfills with unnecessary garbage!
- Cleaning and refilling water bottles when you are finished with them. These plastic containers are NOT meant for one time use, and by reusing these bottles, we can help prevent millions of tons of waste in landfills alone!

Recycle By:

- Donating old toys, clothing or household goods you no longer want/need. Instead of throwing them away, these items can be recycled to families who can use them. Sometimes items may seem too old to you, but other people can find uses for them. This is good for the environment AND good for those receiving your thoughtful donations!

-Placing all recyclable items in the recycling bins near your home or work. Not throwing these recyclable items out saves millions of tons of space in landfills and helps protect our Earth limited natural resources.

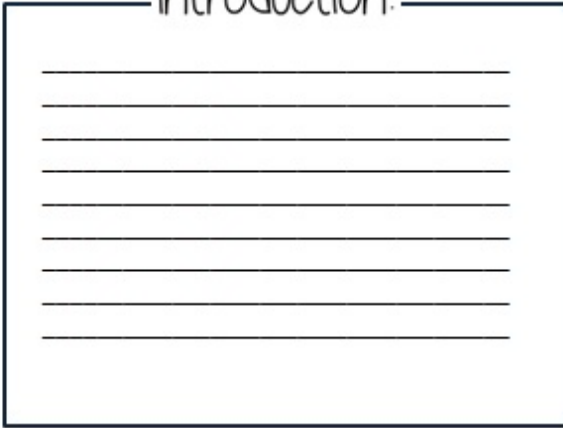
-Creating a compost bin where you place all unwanted foods. Most of these products will break down into yummy, delicious worm food that can, in turn, be made into dirt that's good for farming. Believe it or not, usable soil is a natural resource that we are quickly running out of, so creating a compost not only recycles your unwanted foods, but also helps provide a much needed natural resource for our planet!

While it may not be the most glamorous thing to talk about, the three R's, "Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle" are all key components to becoming real life heroes. It is up to you to make sure our planet's future is bright!

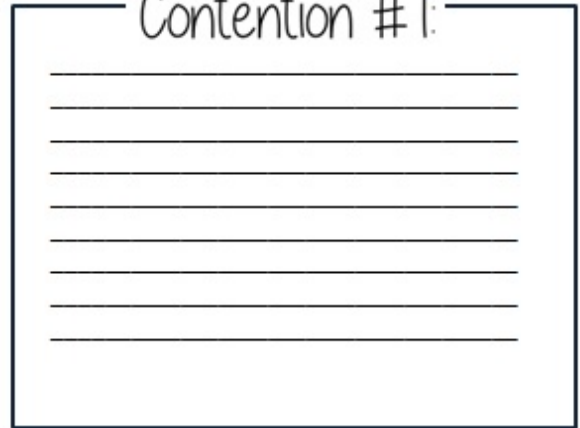


Get To Planning!

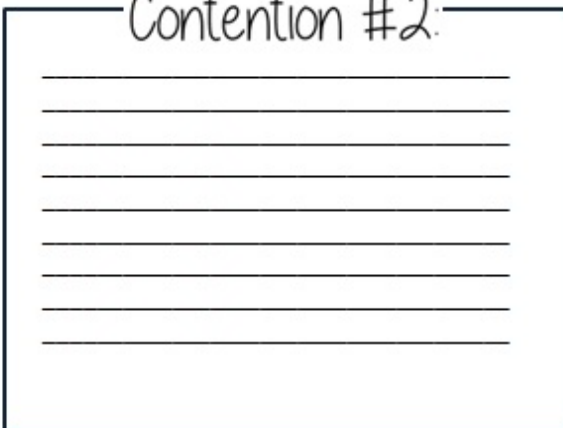
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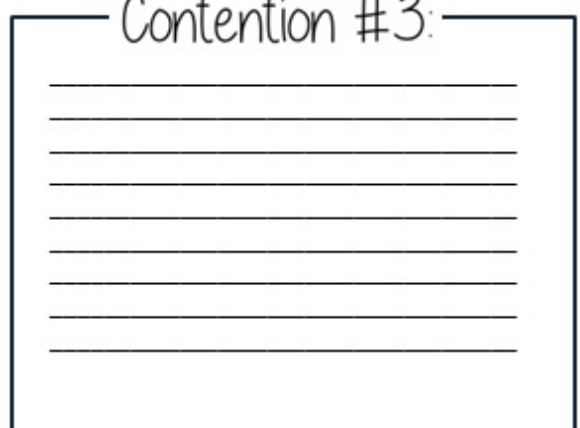
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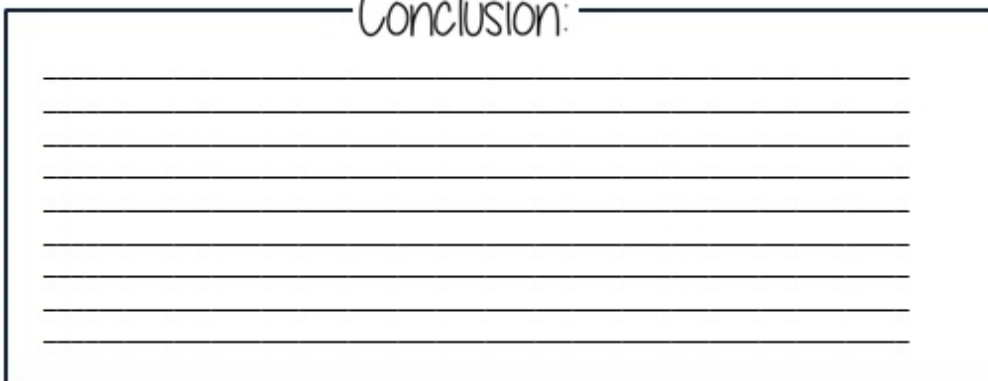
Contention #2:



Contention #3:



Conclusion:



Text-Based Writing

**The
Unsinkable
Titanic**

2016

4th & 5th Grade | Informative/Explanatory



Directions:

The following passages are about the sinking of the Titanic. Write an informative essay in which you explain how the Titanic sank, even though it was believed to be “unsinkable.” Use information from the sources to support your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your response:
- Write your response:
- Revise and edit your response

Be sure to include:

- An introduction;
- Support for your controlling idea using information from the passages;
- A conclusion that is related to your controlling idea

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.

Source #1

The Unsinkable Ship

After two years of construction, weighing in at a total of 52,310 tons, the British passenger ship the *Titanic* was finally launched on May 31, 1911. The ship was built by the White Star Line company, a leading cruise maker at the time, and was advertised as being “unsinkable” in design. An excerpt from Shipbuilder magazine (1911) writes about the different compartments under the ship, designed to close off if water somehow got on board. It claimed:

“Each door is held in the open position by a suitable friction clutch, which can be instantly released by means of a powerful electro-magnet controlled from the captain's bridge, so that in the event of accident, or at any time when it may be considered advisable, the captain can, by simply moving an electric switch, instantly close the doors throughout and make the vessel practically unsinkable.”

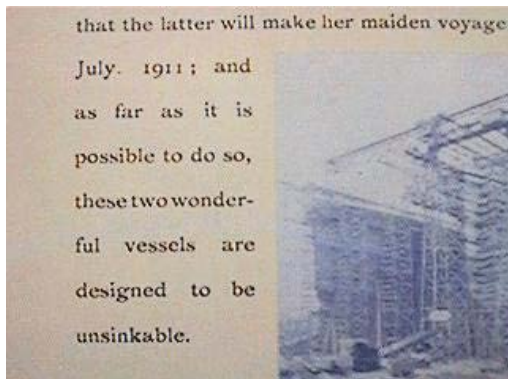
The *Titanic* was designed to stay afloat even with four of its watertight compartments being flooded, and passengers and crew alike had absolute faith that the steel-ship was positively unsinkable.

Unfortunately for both passengers and crew, this claim was only a myth.

The image shows the front page of The New York Times newspaper from April 15, 1912. The masthead reads "The New York Times" in a large, bold, serif font. Below the masthead, the date "NEW YORK, TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 1912" is printed. The main headline is in large, bold, black letters: "TITANIC SINKS FOUR HOURS AFTER HITTING ICEBERG; 866 RESCUED BY CARPATHIA, PROBABLY 1250 PERISH; ISMAY SAFE, MRS. ASTOR MAYBE, NOTED NAMES MISSING". To the left of the main headline, there are several smaller headlines: "Col. Aster and Bride, Major Strauss and Wife, and Maj. Butt Aboard.", "RULE OF SEA FOLLOWED", "PICKED UP AFTER 8 HOURS", "FRANKLIN HOOPER, 81, DIES", and "HEAD OF THE LINE ABOARD". To the right of the main headline, there are more headlines: "Biggest Liner Plunged to the Bottom at 2:20 A.M.", "RESCUERS THERE TOO LATE", "SEA SEARCH FOR BODIES", and "SUNSHINE BEHIND THE NEWS". In the center of the page, there is a large black and white photograph of the Titanic ship, which is being towed out of Belfast Harbor. The ship is shown from a side-on perspective, with its three funnels and masts visible. Below the photograph, the caption reads "The Lost Titanic Being Towed Out of Belfast Harbor." The overall layout is typical of a newspaper front page from that era, with a clear hierarchy of information and a central focus on the main event.

On April 15, 1912, the Titanic sank only 4 hours after accidentally striking an iceberg. On its maiden (1st) voyage, the \$7.5 million Titanic was reduced to nothing but a pile of rubble at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.

People around the world were shocked! With so many claims referring to the safety of the ship, no one could possibly understand what had happened. But scientists, with the help of many survivors' stories, have helped us piece together what when so wrong on that chilly, April morning. Even now, over 100 years later, we find ourselves fascinated with the tale of the "Unsinkable Ship," and still spend countless hours learning and researching this tragic, yet alluring tale.



On the left: An excerpt from an advertisement by the cruise company claiming that the Titanic and its sister ship the Olympic were "wonderful vessels designed to be unsinkable." We know now that these statements were not true.

On the Right: A newspaper for the Olympic and Titanic ships advertise the safety and luxurious-nature of the two cruises. Dates for their maiden voyages appear, with no one expecting the ship leaving on April 13th would sink only two days into its trip to the Americas.

INTERNATIONAL MERCANTILE MARINE LINES
 ALL OUR STEAMERS HAVE WIRELESS TELEGRAPH AND SUBMARINE SIGNALS

The Largest Steamers in the World

New	OLYMPIC	Sail	April 13³	P. M.
45,000		from	MAY 4, 25.	
Tons		NEW	APRIL 20¹²	Noon
Each	TITANIC	YORK		

May 11, June 1
June 22, July 13

FRENCH A LA CARTE RESTAURANT, TURKISH & ELECTRIC BATHS, SWIMMING POOL, FOUR ELEVATORS, GYMNASIUM, VERANDAH CAFE, PALM COURT, SQUASH RACQUET COURT.

NEARBY SAILINGS

Baltic	April 11, 12:00 Noon
Vaderland	April 13, 10:00 A. M.
Minnewaska	April 14.
Cedric	April 18, 12:00 Noon

AMERICAN Pier 62, N. R. 9:30 A. M.
 Plymouth—Cherbourg—Southampton
 S. Paul..... May 4—St. Louis..... May 11

ATLANTIC TRANSPORT
 New York—London Direct, Pier 58, N. R.
 Minnewaska..... Apr. 15 | Minnewaska, May 11
 Minnewaska, May 4, 10:30 AM | Minnewaska, May 18

RED STAR Pier 61, N. R. 10 A. M.
 London, Paris via Dover—Antwerp
 Vaderland..... Apr. 13 | Kronland..... Apr. 27
 Lapland..... Apr. 29 | Finland..... May 4

WHITE STAR Piers 59 & 60, N. R.
 Plymouth—Cherbourg—Southampton
 Olympic (new), Apr. 12, 12:30 | Olympic (new), May 4
 Titanic (new), Apr. 20, 6 P. M. | Titanic (new), May 11

New York—Queens-town—Liverpool
 Baltic..... Apr. 11, noon | Celtic..... Apr. 23
 Cedric..... Apr. 18, noon | Adriatic..... May 7

FROM BOSTON To The MEDITERRANEAN
 CANOPIC, Apr. 27, 9 P. M. | GREYHOUND, May 18, 11 AM

CANADIAN SERVICE.

LARGEST STEAMERS FROM CANADA
 MONTREAL VIA QUEBEC TO LIVERPOOL.
 *CANADA May 4, June 1, June 29
 *MEGANEO May 11, June 8, July 6
 *TELETONIC May 18, June 15, July 13
 *LAURENTIC May 25, June 22, July 20
 *Only One Class of Cabin (1st) Passengers.

PASSENGER DEPARTMENT, 9 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

Source #2

Warning's Unheeded

How do you sink an unsinkable ship? A combination of poor navigation, bad weather, and warnings that went unheeded.

Climate



Ships tremendous weight bearing down on ice shelf, levering the above water portion of the berg toward its starboard side. The resulting brush depositing chunks of ice on the forward well deck.

One of the greatest factors to consider in the sinking of the Titanic was the weather. Sources claim that during that year in particular, the world was experiencing climate conditions that led to an increase number of icebergs. Moreover, based on the positions of the moon and Earth, the tides were favorable for an unusually high tide; an event that would have caused even more icebergs to be in the area or ocean

where the Titanic first encountered it's large adversary. While the conditions were not enough to cause the sinking of the ship alone, the climate and corresponding large blocks of ice in the water were the first of many steps in the recipe for disaster.

Human Error

While it is unfair to place blame on any one individual for what happened, there is significant evidence pointing towards human negligence as a contributing factor. Negligence is when something is not taken care of or paid attention to. During its maiden voyage, the captain and crew were warned many times about the unusually large and prolific icebergs in the area. The Titanic had received multiple warnings over the radio about these icebergs, but many of these messages were never passed on to the ship's captain. Along with ignoring these crucial warnings prior to the accident, construction teams also ignored warnings concerning the boat's emergency exit options. The Titanic was not equipped with enough lifeboats to

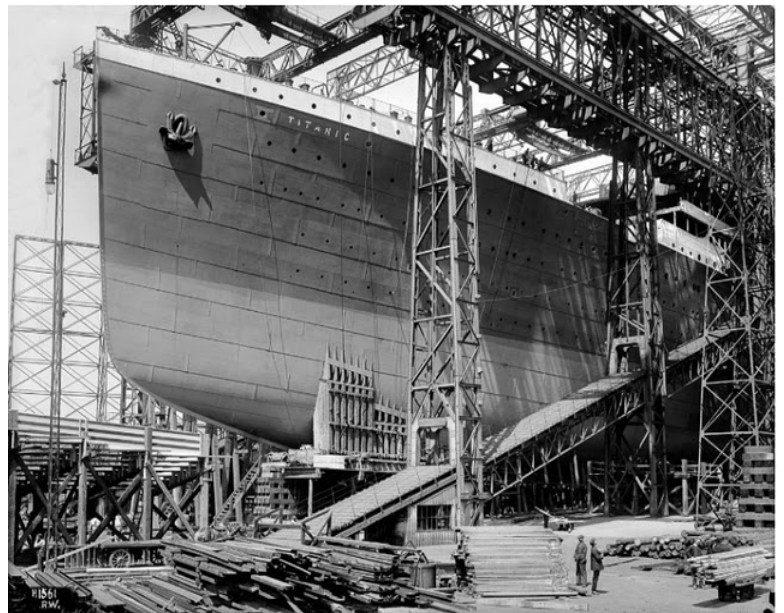
save all of its passengers in case of an emergency; leaving many people stranded when the ship went down.

Ship Malfunctions

Just before impact occurred, one of the first officers on board the ship telegraphed the engine room telling them to put the ship's engines in reverse. He had hoped this would help the boat avoid the iceberg, or at least mitigate (lessen) the damage.

Unfortunately, putting the ship in reverse was a fatal mistake, because the crew could not steer the ship as easily with the engine going in reverse. It's an ironic fact that had the crew not tried to slow the ship down, they may have been able to turn fast enough to avoid impact.

Regardless of this maneuver, however, was the fact that the ship was designed in a manner that was not strong enough to withstand the impact the ship faced when hitting the iceberg. Scientists went back and looked into the materials used to build the boat and found that even though the sides of the boat were constructed with high-quality, durable steel, the iron-rivets that held these pieces together were cheap, and low-grade. It was these low-grade, weak rivets that ripped apart during the collision and allowed for water to penetrate into 6 of the water-lock compartments; sinking the "unsinkable" ship in only 4 hours.



Source #3

Interviewing a Survivor

Below are several quotes from individuals who survived the sinking of the Titanic. They tell their versions of what they heard and saw that fateful April morning.

“I was on the whale deck in the bow calling the watch that was to relieve when the ice first came aboard. The collision opened the seams below the water-line but did not even scratch the paint above the line. I know that because I was one of those who helped to make an examination over the side with a lantern. I went down into the engine-room at 12:40am. We even made coffee, so there was not much thought of danger. An hour later I was still working at the light engines. I heard the chief engineer tell one of his subordinates that number six bulkhead had given way. At that time things began to look bad... I was told to go up and see how things were, and made my way up a dummy funnel to the bridge deck. By that time all the boats had left the ship, yet everyone in the engine-room was at his post. I was near the captain and heard him say, ‘Well boys, it’s every man for himself now.’” — **Alfred White, Greaser in the Engine Room**

Above: Alfred White, a crew member in one of the ship’s engine rooms writes about how even after the collision, no one on the ship seemed concerned. No one believed the ship could ever sink. How do you think this affected the overall tragedy of the Titanic? Could more have been done to protect passengers?

“When the Titanic struck the iceberg, I was in bed. However, for whatever reason I was awake and remember the jolt and cessation of motion. A steward knocked on the stateroom door and directed us to get dressed, put on life preservers and go to the boat deck, which we did... The steward as we passed was trying to arouse passengers who had locked themselves in for the night. Elevators were not running. We walked up to the boat deck. Al was calm and orderly. An officer was in charge. ‘Women and children first,’ he said, as he directed lifeboat number 11 to be filled. There were many tearful farewells. We and Uncle Jim said good-bye... The lowering of the lifeboat 70 feet to the sea was perilous. Davits, ropes, nothing worked properly, so that first one end of the lifeboat was tilted up and then far down. When I awoke it was broad daylight as we approached the Carpathia. Looking around over the gunwale it seemed to me like the Arctic. Icebergs of huge size ringed the horizon for 360 degrees.” — **Marshall Drew Eight-year-old traveling with his Aunt and Uncle**

Above: Marshall Drew speaks of evacuating passengers from the ship and remarks on the large number of icebergs surrounding the site of the sinking.

“A number of us who were enjoyed the crisp air were promenading about the deck. Captain Smith was on the bridge when the first cry from the lookout came that there was an iceberg ahead. It may have been 30 feet high when I saw it. It was possibly 200 yards away and dead ahead. Captain Smith shouted some orders... A number of us promenaders rushed to the bow of the ship. When we saw he could no fail to hit it, we rushed to the stern. Then came a crash, and the passengers were panic-stricken.”— **George Brayton - First Class Passenge**

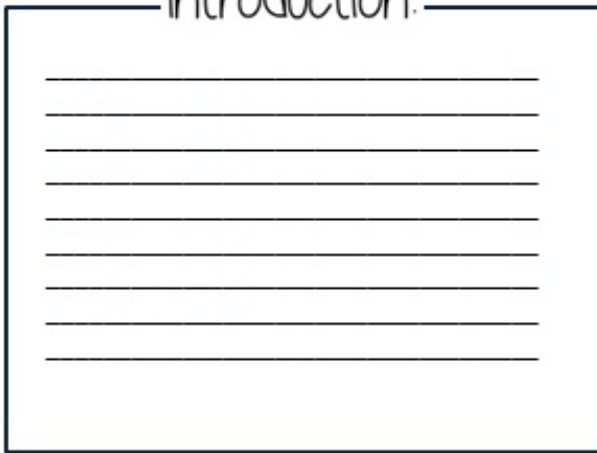
Above: George Brayton describes the whereabouts of the captain when the fatal iceberg hit the ship. Passengers were able to see the iceberg from the main deck, alluding to the fact that the captain was already aware and dealing with the issue from his point atop the bridge.

Below: A picture is taken of one of the life boats as a rescue ships comes to their aid.

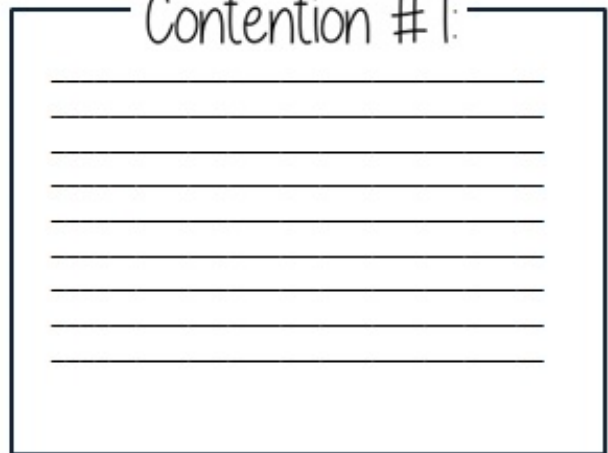


Get To Planning!

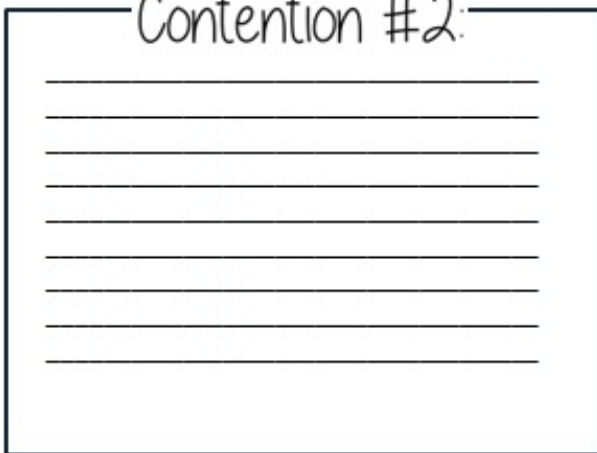
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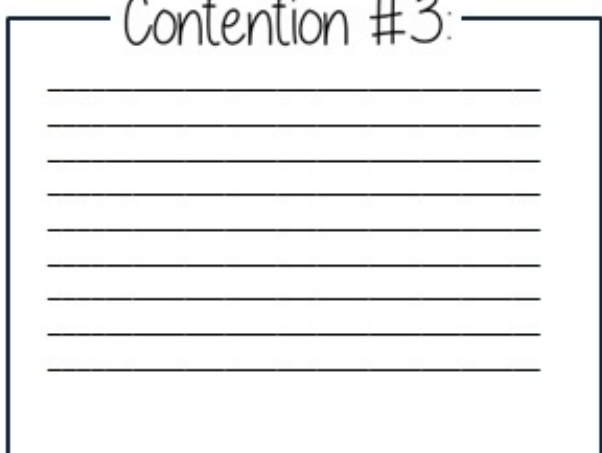
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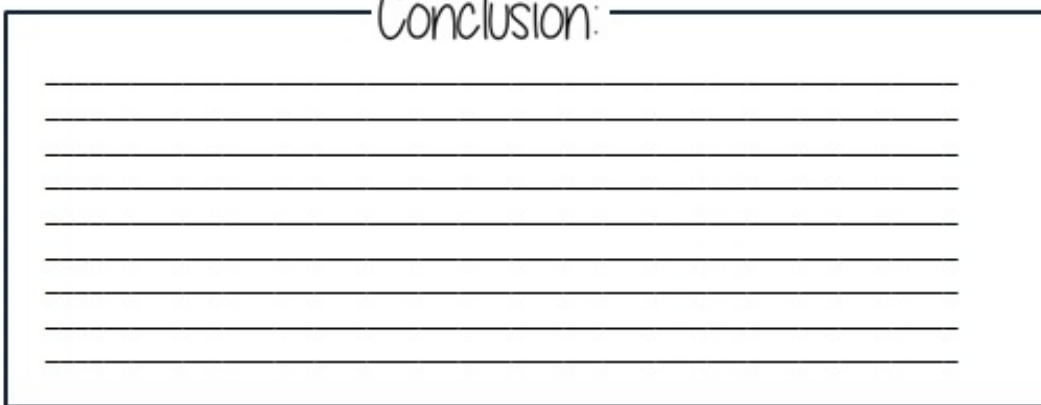
Contention #2:



Contention #3:



Conclusion:



Text-Based Writing

Countryside
or City Life?

2016

4th & 5th Grade | Opinion Prompt



Directions:

The following passages are about what life is like the city compared to life in a rural, countryside. Write an essay in which you give your opinion about which place you think is better to live. Explain why the other place is not the right choice for you. Support your opinion with evidence from the sources.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your response:
- Write your response:
- Revise and edit your response

Be sure to include:

- An introduction;
- Support for your opinion using information from the passage;
- A conclusion that is related to your opinion

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.

Source #1

Home Sweet Home

There are a lot of things to consider when choosing a perfect home. Families have to think about the size of the house, the costs, and, most importantly, where the home is located. Some people prefer quieter homes, while others would like to be close to the loud, bustling city around them. There is no “right” or “wrong” place to live, but there are definitely pros and cons to each.

City Living:

Many people prefer to live in big cities. In fact, about 80% of people in the United States live in an urban, or city, center. City living can be good because it puts people close to their jobs. People in major cities tend to make more money, but it is also more expensive to live in cities, so it balances out. Homes are usually closer together, and many more people live in close proximity, or distance, to one another. There are usually parks for people to enjoy, but not very large yards or private spaces for families. Often time people who live in cities are young adults with few to no children because the homes in cities are smaller. However, some families chose to live in the cities because, statistically, the schools there are better.

Country Life:

The other 20% of Americans chose to live in the countryside. While not all of these families are farmers or agriculturalists, almost all of them are lovers of nature. Country living can be good because it puts people close to the outdoors. Homes in the country are typically much large than homes in cities, and families have more privacy with large yards and distances between neighbors. Often times countryside families live so far apart, they must drive, or commute, to churches or public gatherings in order to see each other. Living far away from cities also makes shopping very difficult, and it can sometimes take 3-4 hours just to go to the grocery store for some milk! While fewer families chose to live in the countryside, those that do are usually larger families with more children, since homes are larger and more affordable. There are also more children who are homeschooled in the countryside than in the city.

Source #2

Big City Glamour

Have you ever dreamed of living in New York City? Working at your dream office, living in an awesome apartment with a gorgeous view of Central Park? So have over 18 million other residence of the New York-Newark metro area. And why do so many Americans share this dream? Because city living is the only way to live!

Diversity: One of the best things about living in a big city is the diversity. Diversity is when a bunch of very different people live together in the same place. While it is hard to believe that some people do not like diversity, cities are well known for being accepting and tolerant of people from all races, ages, and religions. There are so many different groups of people to meet and see, you will never be alone! Also, this gives city dwellers the opportunity to learn more about different cultures! And who doesn't like trying new foods from cool places?!

Museums: If you like science museums, art museums, or pretty much any type of indoor, educational playground, then city life is for you! New York itself boasts over 83 different museums, and that's only on a 304 sq. mile island! Not to mention all the theaters and incredible cultural centers found throughout the city. Cities have many great resources for learning... Which brings us to our next point...

Education: Year after years students in urban schools score higher than their counterparts in the countryside. This means that schools in the cities are (typically) better at teaching and preparing their students for these test and, arguably, their futures. There are also more colleges and universities in cities than rural areas, so more people have higher education levels than the percentage of people in the country.

Proximity: Proximity is defined as relative closeness to things. City life offers proximity to everything! Parks, restaurants, schools; everything is walking distance from your home. Why get in the car to go to the grocery store when you and your family can take a nice leisurely stroll or metro ride?

Source #3

Being Rural Rules

While most Americans chose to live in large cities, the minority who chose rural living have it all figured out! Why would you pay so much to live in a tiny apartment in the city when you can have a whole countryside to yourself? The people are extra nice and you never have to worry about angry taxi cabs! You are close to the beautiful outdoors and have plenty of space for your friends and family. Who wouldn't want a piece of paradise like this?

Community: In the countryside, everyone knows everyone! Because there are fewer residents, everyone can take the time to get to know each other. Often times when new neighbors move in, the neighborhood will go out of their way to welcome them with housewarming gifts or snacks and treats! The churches and schools in these communities also get together frequently and host events for the families in their town. Fun things like *Fall Fairs* and *Christmas Caroling* are not just a charming memory; people in the country still have these wonderful festivals together! You can even pick your pumpkins right off their home pumpkin patch!

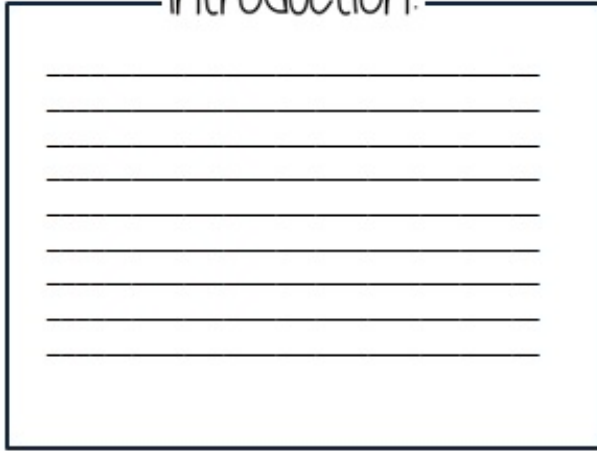
Cheap: Living in the countryside is much less expensive than the city. Often times the cost of a 1-2 bedroom apartment in the city is the same as buying a 4-5 bedroom house with a nice yard. Restaurants are less expensive, and even going to the movies costs half the price! Because people in the countryside usually have lower incomes, the things in their community are often more affordable! More affordable means you can afford to do more things with the same amount of money!

Space: Not only can you afford a house with more bedrooms, but each room will be bigger, along with the yard and all it encompasses. For anyone who values privacy –or at least doesn't want to share walls with their neighbors- a countryside home offers so much more “you-space” than anywhere in the city. There are places for children to run and play, and more wildlife to interact with. Some countryside areas are home to wild deer and bear, while other places are used to seeing wild mustangs run across nearby valleys. There is always something new to explore in the country!

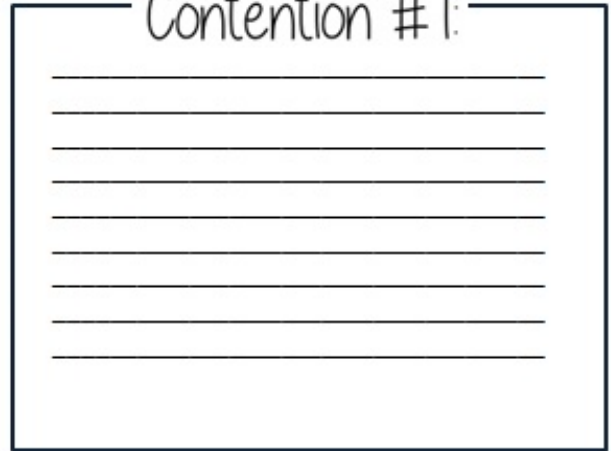
No traffic: You are never late to school or work because traffic does not exist! Why fight with other people to get somewhere when you can just enjoy a nice, peaceful ride in your car? You would have to be crazy to want to live in a place with traffic! Or a place with 18 million OTHER people!

Get To Planning!

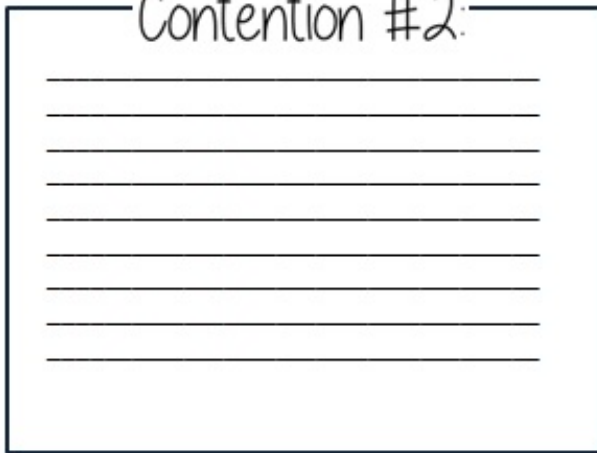
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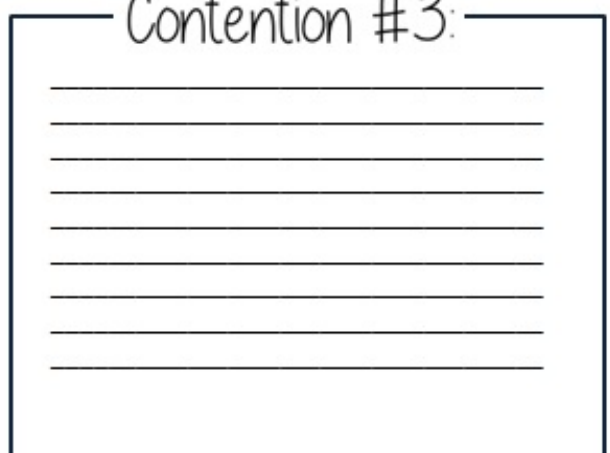
Contention #1:



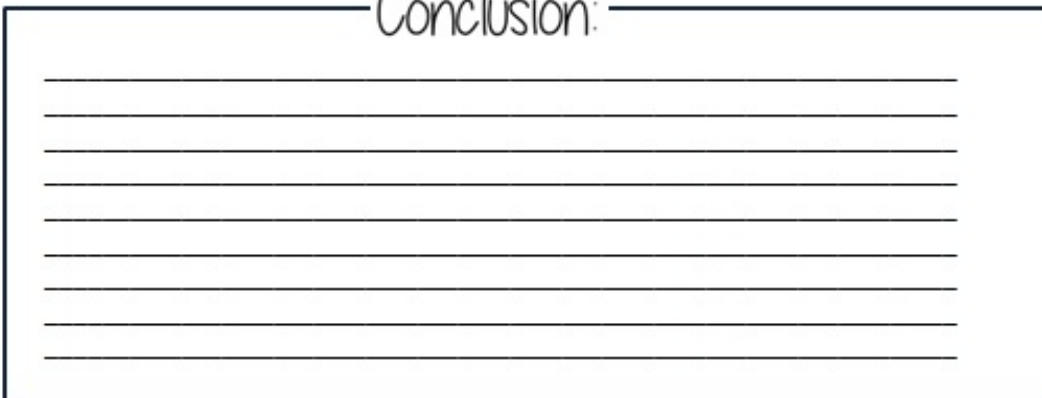
Contention #2:



Contention #3:



Conclusion:



Text-Based Writing

Homework Oh
Homework

2016

4th & 5th Grade | Opinion Prompt



Directions:

The following passages are about the pros and cons of homework. Write an essay in which you give your opinion about whether or not students should receive homework. Explain why the other solution is not as good a choice. Support your opinion with evidence from the sources.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your response:
- Write your response:
- Revise and edit your response

Be sure to include:

- An introduction;
- Support for your opinion using information from the passage;
- A conclusion that is related to your opinion

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.

Source #1

Homework Oh Homework

*“Homework! Oh Homework! I hate you! You stink!
I wish I could wash you away in the sink!”*

These famous words written by the poet Jack Prelutsky are felt by students everywhere. After a full day in school, students continue their education on their own at home. But why? Teachers can't possibly be so evil that they assign homework just for fun. So why in the world are students everywhere subjected to the long and tedious process known as “homework?” More importantly, SHOULD students have homework at all? Let's look at the cold hard facts to find out!

For starters, let's look at the numbers:

In 2007, it was reported that over 45% of students in Grades 3-12 spend over an hour a night doing homework.

More dramatically, almost 6% of these students reported doing over 3 hours of homework a night!

Additional studies showed that all students (aged 6-17) spend a minimum of 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours a week on homework alone.

Similarly, all studies show that older students tend to have more homework than younger students (mainly because the concepts they are learning are more difficult and take more time to complete). A study by the University of Michigan shows:

*-Students 6-8years old spend 30 minutes a night doing homework.
-Students 15-17years old spend 60 minutes a night doing homework.
-50% of students in 7th-12th grade spend over an hour a night doing homework. While only 37% of students in 3rd-6th grade report over an hour of homework every night. This adds up to almost 6.8 hours a week for most highschool students.*

So what is the point of all these hours? And is it necessary for older students to have more homework?

Motivation behind assigning homework deals with the concept of “reinforcement.” Reinforcement means “to support” or help strengthen. For example, underneath any building is a floor. But contractors don’t just pour concrete on the ground and hope for the best. Before pouring the concrete, the contractor will build a wall around the area and placed reinforcement steel bars in a grid-like pattern. This way, when the concrete is poured, it can stick to the metal rods and make sure the foundation doesn’t topple over or sink as the house is built.

Homework is supposed to be used similarly. At school, a teacher is ready to pour the concrete, but the student must first build a box and lay the metal reinforcement down. Students who complete homework will have a stronger “box” set up for when the teacher pours their “concrete-knowledge.”

The question becomes, how much homework (or how many metal bars) need to be put down for proper reinforcement? Too many bars end up making the building less safe. But not enough bars make the building unusable. In construction, there is a happy medium where just enough bars are used. Could it be the same thing with homework?



Sou

Why Is Homework Important?

Homework is important for a number of reasons.

For starters, completing homework helps students develop good study habits. Concepts in school get harder and harder every year a student grows, so learning how to study is very important, even from an early age. Practicing a concept over and over can help students who don't understand a concept to learn it, and can help students who DO grasp the idea REINFORCE what they already know! You can only get smarter by studying hard.

Secondly, completing homework is good for communication. It offers a way for parents to see what students are doing in school, and gives teachers an opportunity to see where a student may be struggling. Instead of waiting to find out a student doesn't understand something AFTER they fail a test, homework can offer a way for teachers to identify a student's weakness and help them learn the concept before the test comes around! Homework also offers the chance for parents or siblings to maybe explain the concept in a way the teacher didn't. Often times your family or friends may have a way to help you remember something that is different, but even better, than the way your teacher taught you!

Additionally, completing homework is also a great way for students to develop responsibilities and time management. If you know you have a soccer tournament coming up over the weekend, you must find a way to plan doing your homework before you head off on your trip! One of the hardest lessons to learn as an adult is how to manage your time properly, and make sure you complete the things you need completed on time.

In conclusion, completing homework isn't just a necessary evil. If a teacher assigns homework properly, than the work you are doing at home should simply serve as reinforcement for the lessons already learned. Homework can help strengthen your skills as a student and even help you and your teachers identify any areas you may be struggling. Homework is nothing but helpful, and should be embraced, not dreaded.

Banning Homework!

While the intentions of homework may be good, the outcomes are not so helpful! Read below to see why we should ban homework on the whole and find new ways of reinforcing school concepts at home!

1. ***Stress:*** Students today already face a great deal of stress. Completing an hour of homework every night only adds to the stressful nature of their days. If a student is unable to keep up, they begin feeling distraught, and will resort to unhealthy coping methods such as cheating. The point of homework is meant to make students stronger in school, but they cannot grow if they don't even have time to themselves after a long day at school!
2. ***Playtime:*** Students need the opportunity to play. An important part of developing into productive adults is knowing how to interact with peers and participate in meaningful activities with them. Older students often participate in extracurricular activities, which teach lessons homework cannot and take up much of the student's time. There have even been instances where students miss out on these extra activities because they are too overwhelmed with school and homework. This can be incredibly unfair to a student who is maybe an expert composer, but not so great at basic algebra. Why should that student be turned away from the thing he is passionate about because he is unable to complete homework in a subject he is not?
3. ***No Support:*** While it is all fine and dandy to expect homework time will be spent in the company of parents, siblings, and loved ones, for many students, this is not the case. Many parents are unable to help students complete homework, which is unfair when these students are compared against those who DO receive help. Moreover, many students' financial situations leave them in a position where they do not even have a well-lit, safe place to complete homework. How can you equally compare a student who has help from a private tutor every day with a student who doesn't even have electricity at their home once a month?

4. ***Lack of Achievement:*** There are very few studies supporting the academic merits of homework. This means that very few people have proven homework can help a student achieve more; and even some of those who HAVE proven it have shown very little progress for students completing homework regularly. How can we promote an idea that doesn't even PROVE to be successful?

5. ***Different Levels:*** No student is the same, so how can teachers assign the same homework to “strengthen” student weaknesses? It is wrong to assume that all students will benefit from the same assignment, and even worse to leave them on their own to complete it! If students need additional help with a topic, they should have the ability to come to the teacher themselves to ask for it. Additional tutoring hours or practice should be offered only to students who need and ask for it!

While homework CAN serve as helpful in some cases, it is wrong to simply assign homework without considering the consequences. Perhaps one day students will finally be free from overwhelming homework and be able to throw the “dog ate my homework” excuse out the window for good!



Get To Planning!

Introduction:

Contention #1:

Contention #2:

Contention #3:

Conclusion:

Text-Based Writing

Technology And You

2016

4th & 5th Grade | Informative/Explanatory



Directions:

The following passages are about technology in our homes. Write an informative essay in which you explain how too much technology can have a negative effect on our lives when used irresponsibly. Use information from the sources in your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your response:
- Write your response:
- Revise and edit your response

Be sure to include:

- An introduction;
- Support for your controlling idea using information from the passages;
- A conclusion that is related to your controlling idea

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.

Source #1

Technology and You!

Today, most of us have cell phones, televisions, and access to the internet. Believe it or not, ten years ago, that was not the case! In fact, technology is growing so quickly, we can't even keep track of how it's affecting us in our day to day lives.

How many hours would you say you spend in front of the television each day? For most Americans, it's somewhere between 4-6 hours a day! More importantly, 99% of all American households have at least one television, and 49% of them admit that they watch their tv's too much! Look at this data below to see some of the facts behind how much television affects us every year:

Number of minutes per week that parents spend in meaningful conversation with their children: 3.5
Number of minutes per week that the average child watches television: 1,680
Percentage of day care centers that use TV during a typical day: 70
Percentage of parents who would like to limit their children's TV watching: 73
Percentage of 4-6 year-olds who, when asked to choose between watching TV and spending time with their fathers, preferred television: 54
Hours per year the average American youth spends in school: 900 hours
Hours per year the average American youth watches television: 1500

According to this data, our American youth (students like you) spend more time watching tv every year than they spend in school! More importantly, more and more children are choosing to watch television instead of talking and enjoying time with their families.

While things like television and internet can be a great way to learn things, often times we don't use them for the right reasons. Using google to research your science project would be a smart way to use technology, but statistics show that most American students are spending hour after hours online playing games or surfing social media. Similarly, while television can be a great way to learn things, like world news or different nature topics, the majority of American preteens spend their time watching cartoons or reality television. Often times these types of shows expose students to excessive violence, bad language, and topics that are inappropriate for younger audiences. Do you think using technology like this is helping us grow and become smarter? Or are we being hurt by having all these high-tech gadgets so close to us all the time?

Source #2

Cyber Safety

Often times we hear reporters on the news talking about “Cyber Safety” and ways for parents to keep kids safe while they are using the internet. While the World Wide Web can be helpful for students who are researching facts or putting together projects, it can also be a very dangerous place if you are not responsible. The following topics are all things you need to be aware of to keep yourself safe on the internet!

Cyber Bullying:

The internet is a great place for people to connect with friends from work or school. However, it is also a very dangerous place when it comes to cyber bullying. Cyber bullying is very similar to traditional bullying except it is even much more public and often times more painful. Not only can students send hurtful messages or photos to one another, but, often times, complete strangers will join in the harassment as well. While it may not seem dangerous, cyber bullying is responsible for harming hundreds of thousands of victims each year. Some students are bullied so badly that they must move schools, or start to have problems with depression or anxiety. The best way to stay away from cyber bullying is to not get involved with social media until you are ready. Be very careful with your privacy settings on your computers, and always turn to an adult you trust if you or a friend ever starts to feel bullied! Do not share your passwords with ANYONE but your parents and teacher, and never respond to a rude or harassing email if you receive one.

Stranger Danger:

In the real world, it is easy to recognize strangers. However on the internet, it can be very tricky. Many times strangers will pretend to be young students your age and try to learn about you. This can be very dangerous because you think you can trust this person, but you can't; they are still a stranger! If you do not know who someone is, do NOT accept a friend request from them or respond to their emails.

Make sure your parents help you set up your privacy settings so no strangers can learn about you, and NEVER, EVER give out information like your full name, school or address to someone over the internet. Strangers on the internet are one of the most dangerous things about technology today, and you must be responsible to stay safe.

Reputation: While it is sometimes tempting to post pictures of yourself doing “grown up” things to seem cool, always remember, every action has a consequence. It may seem cool now, but any picture that you put on the internet becomes public property, and anybody can use it to hurt you or your reputation. A great rule of thumb for this danger is: If you don’t want your parents or teachers seeing it, DON’T POST IT!

While the internet can be a great place if used responsibly, sometimes this technology can prove to be a dangerous and difficult place to navigate safely! It is up to you to stay safe and make the right decisions!



Television: Friend or Foe

In our society, most people have at least 2 televisions in their home. While television does have a lot to offer us in a positive light, sometimes relying on it too much can be detrimental, or harmful, to our health. Keep the following in mind:

Bad for your health: Watching too much television is linked to child obesity. When you are sitting in front of a tv, you are being very inactive, and this inactivity leads you to being unhealthy. Childhood obesity is a growing epidemic, or problem, in our society, and can lead to all sorts of life-long health problems like heart disease or diabetes. Similarly, watching too much television has also proven harmful for your eyesight, and can even cause headaches and dizziness if overused.

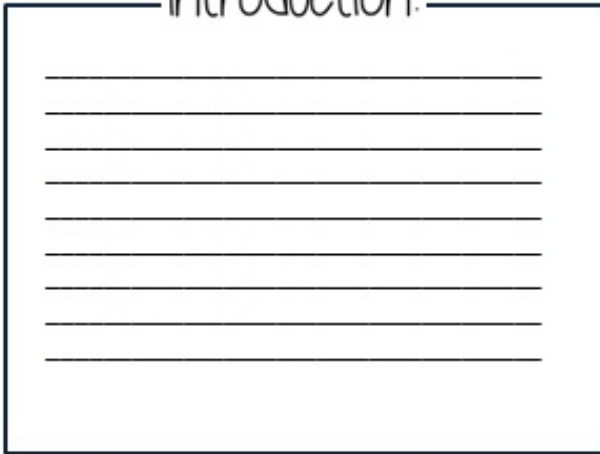
False information: Often times our friends and families get their information from television, but what happens when that information is wrong? Sometimes, when people rely too heavily on television to tell them the truth, people stop thinking for themselves and can actually start believing in false information. While most television is not created to purposely mislead you, screens writers and news stations are looking to present shows that you will enjoy, and sometimes “stretch the truth” to make their stories more exciting. It is hard to know what information is true and what is false when television is your only source of information.

Slows you thinking: Occasionally you will watch a tv series that really gets your mind thinking; maybe a behind the scenes look at ancient Egyptian pyramids or a “how to” show on building cars. But often times the shows we watch on television are nothing but spam and useless information that –believe it or not- affects the way we are able to think! Our brains work so that if we spend too much time listening to this information and not challenging our brains to analyze things, we actually start losing our ability to think critically. This means that when we are faced with challenges in the real world, we have trouble thinking for ourselves to solve it.

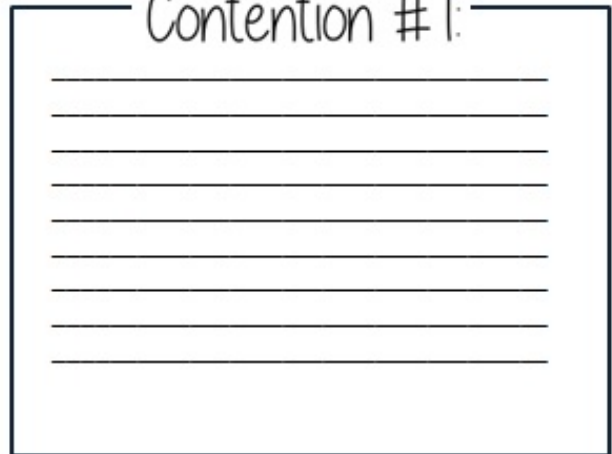
So before you sit down for a marathon of Teen Titans, think to yourself, “is this really the best way to be spending my time?” Chances are, there is an even more enjoyable, healthier alternative waiting for you!!

Get To Planning!

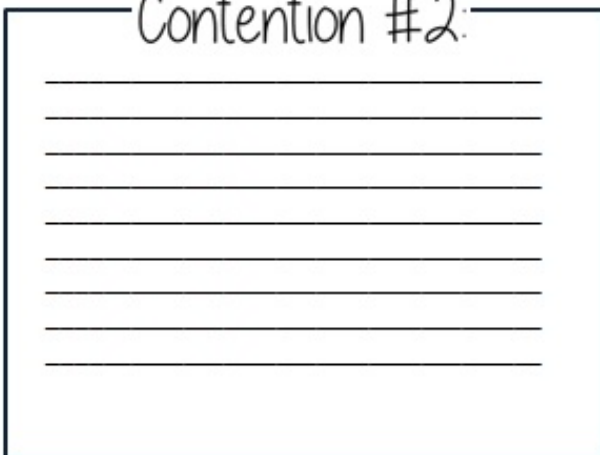
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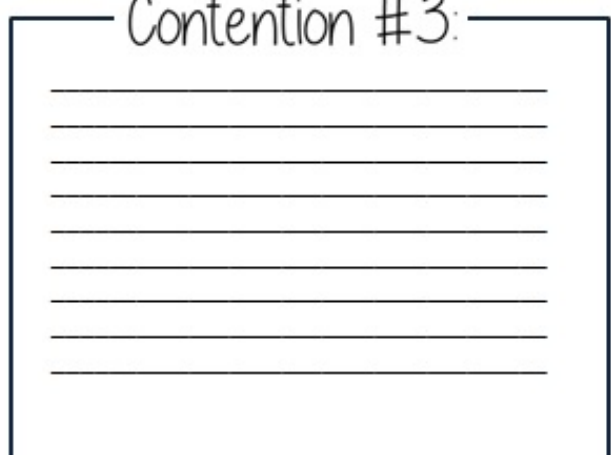
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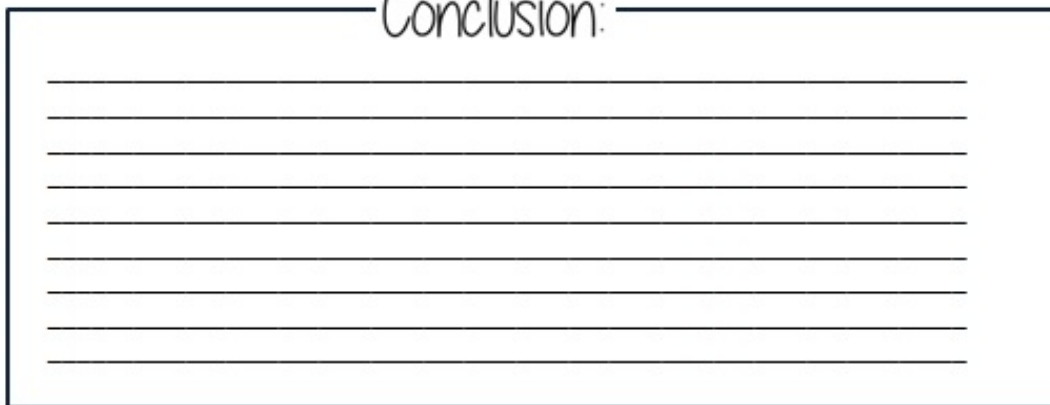
Contention #2:



Contention #3:



Conclusion:



Text-Based Writing

National Parks

2016

4th & 5th Grade | Informative/Explanatory



Directions:

The following passages are about National Parks. Write an informative essay in which you explain why it's important for us to protect our National Parks. Use information from the sources in your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your response;
- Write your response;
- Revise and edit your response

Be sure to include:

- An introduction;
- Support for your controlling idea using information from the passages;
- A conclusion that is related to your controlling idea

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.

Source #1

History of National Parks

Theodore Roosevelt:

Theodore “Teddy” Roosevelt is famous for many different contributions to our country. However, our 26th president’s legacy lives on in his conservation (*the act of protecting and preserving nature*) efforts. A wildlife pioneer himself, Teddy Roosevelt was the first president to establish National Parks, and offer legal consequences to people who did not help protect our country’s resources.

What is an National Park?

A National Park, by definition, is a scenic or historic piece of land that is protected by our federal (or “national”) government. These parks can be anything from the coral reefs in Biscayne National Park to the desert Grand Canyons and their surrounding areas. Each and every one of these parks is protected by park rangers and other law enforcement agents to make sure that these wonderful habitats stay clean and healthy. Everyone who pays taxes to the government is paying to protect these parks, meaning they actually belong to us, the American people; giving us pretty good reason to protect them and keep them clean!

What Good Are National Parks?

National Parks offer a wide variety of biodiversity. Biodiversity is simply the variety of wild life that can be found in a place. However, National Parks have been chosen because they offer very special and unique types of biodiversity. For instance, Everglades National Park is the only place IN THE ENTIRE WORLD that has the “Everglades” ecosystem. The animals that live there have a perfect balance with one another, and by intruding in these areas, we are destroying the one and only version of this environment! The volcanoes in Hawaii are also protected by the government, because intruding on these environments would completely change the future of the Hawaiian Islands and the beautiful, nutrient-rich environments these volcanoes have created for the past thousands and thousands of years.

The Everglades

To many uninformed people, the Everglades are just swamp land. A swamp like any other swamp; full of alligators, snakes, and mosquitoes galore. But to those of us who know better, the Everglades is something magical; a unique biome that cannot be replicated, or copied, anywhere else in the world. So why should we protect this amazing environment?

1. **Biodiversity:** The Everglades is the only place in the world home to the Florida Panther, Snail Kite, and Mangrove plants. It also the only place in the world where Florida Black Bears, Apple Snails, and Ghost Orchids can survive. What will happen to these species –and many other unique to the Everglades- if we do not protect their environments? Can you imagine a future where these animals, like the dodo and dinosaurs, are just a thing of the past? Unfathomable!
2. **Fresh Water:** More than 1/3rd of the people in Florida are dependent on water from the Everglades. In fact, it's the primary source of drinking water for more than 7 million Americans. If we continue to interrupt the flow of water from Lake Okeechobee down to the Everglades, we will be effectively destroying access to fresh water for millions of people!
3. **The economy:** An economy is the way a place makes money. The Everglades has helped the state of Florida bring in over \$67 billion in tourism. Not to mention the water used on private farms has helped to create over \$100 billion worth of agricultural products for use around the country. If not for the sake of the environment, we should at least protect the Everglades for the sake of our economy and all it does to help it!

Source #3

People & Parks: What's the Point?

Outside of protecting the biodiversity of many unique biomes, National Parks are also important for people!

National Parks offer a place for people to partake in physical activity, which helps keep us healthy. These parks offer trails for hiking, mountains for climbing, and reefs for exploring. National Parks have proven to improve the quality of life of the people around them- meaning people live happier, healthier lives when they live near a park. They get people out and actively communicating with one another, helping unify families and friends alike.

National Parks are also important for their monetary contributions. Monetary contributions means that these parks help attract money to an area. People who visit National Parks will come and spend money in hotels and restaurants nearby, helping support the local economy. Similarly, people spending money in these parks help the parks take care of themselves. It's very expensive to keep all the animals and people in a park safe, and the money someone spends at a National Park goes towards doing just that!

Most importantly, National parks help protect our earth for future generations. We must make sure we keep our parks safe so that our children can have the same beautiful parks to experience when they are alive. As people, we depend on trees for oxygen and running water for drinking. It would be truly unfair for us to neglect, *or not take care of*, our parks and have our future friends and family suffer for it. Our parents and grandparents worked hard to protect the National Parks for us, so it's only fair we do the same for generations to come!

Get To Planning!

Introduction:

Contention #1:

Contention #2:

Contention #3:

Conclusion:

Text-Based Writing
**Branches of
Government**

2016

4th & 5th Grade | Informative/Explanatory



Directions:

The following passages are about the U.S. Government. Write an informative essay in which you explain what the 3 branches of government are called and what their jobs are. Use information from the sources in your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your response;
- Write your response;
- Revise and edit your response

Be sure to include:

- An introduction;
- Support for your controlling idea using information from the passages;
- A conclusion that is related to your controlling idea

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.

Source #1

The Constitution

As many of us know, the United States once belonged to the King of England.

On July 4th, 1776, our founding fathers signed “*The Declaration of Independence*,” a letter to the king declaring that we were a free nation. After many years of fighting with England in *the Revolutionary War*, the United States of America finally became a sovereign (free) country! However, just because we were free didn’t mean we were safe. In order to make sure that all American citizens would be both free AND safe from an unfair government, a group of men, called *The Framers*, got together to write up our national constitution.

What is a constitution?

A constitution is a body of principals, or beliefs, used to create rules for the government. While every country is different, the United States’ constitution was designed to give the American people the power to control their own government. In order to do this, the Framers created amendments-or rules- that both the people and government have to obey. For example the first 10 Amendments, called the *Bill of Rights*, give us freedoms like 1) Freedom of Speech, 2)Freedom of Religion, and 3) Freedom to a Fair Trial, in case you are ever arrested.

Our Branches of Government

While most of us know about the President and his job, often times we forget about the other branches of government. Our constitution has rules about our 3 different branches of government: The Legislative, The Executive and The Judicial. Check out the chart on the next page to see what each one is about!



Even though the President is often referred to as the most powerful person in America, the constitution makes sure to have *check and balances*, which allows the other two branches of government (the Legislative and Judicial) to stop him if they need to. The same way these branches can “check” –or stop- the President, he can “veto” or “overrule” them, making sure no one branch gets too powerful. All of these components of our Constitution help make sure that our country and its government stays safe and fair.

Source #2

Legislative Branch: Making the Laws

Everyone knows what laws are, but do you know how they are made? More importantly, do you know who makes them? This very important job belongs to the members of the Legislative Branch. In the United States, we call these members Congress!

Congress:

Congress is the name given to the lawmakers in our country. There are two different types of law makers: Senators (from the Senate) and Representatives (from the House of Representative.) While both groups of people help make the laws, they have very different jobs.

Senate:

Every state votes for 2 senators to represent them in Congress. Senators jobs are to ask the people from their states what kinds of bills-or new laws- they want passed. Sometimes senators also help to stop bills from passing, if they think they will be harmful to the people of their state! Senators must do a good job listening to their voters, or else they will not get voted back into office at the next election.

House of Representatives:

Unlike the Senate, which allows 2 people from every state, the House of Representatives lets different states vote for a different numbers of people. The more people living in a state means more representatives in the house. For example, California –which has a high population- has more representatives in the House than a small, unpopulous state like Kansas. Just like the Senators, these representatives help make laws. They are different, however, in that they help to create NATIONAL laws that the entire country must follow.

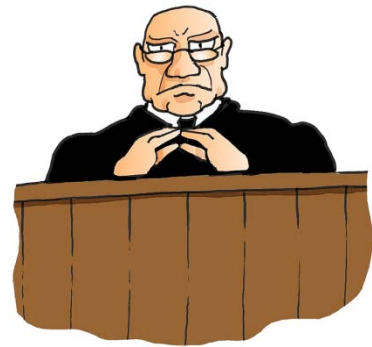
Being in Congress is a full-time job. Laws need to change often because the rules need to be current to our world. For example, before cars were invented, there were no speed limit laws. In order to keep drivers safe, legislators set rules, or laws, for drivers to follow!

Source #3

Judging & Enforcing!

Judicial Branch: The branch that helps interpret the Constitution. These are the courts and judges that decide whether or not laws have been broken. They can be criminal courts (a court where a judge decides if someone should go to jail or not) or civil courts (a court where a judge decides if someone broke a law and owes money to fix it.)

While there are local courts, statewide courts, and regional courts, the ultimate courtroom is that of the Supreme Court. These judges are responsible for deciding if certain laws are fair, or if it is time for them to be changed. Sometimes a law seems fair until a certain case makes it to the Supreme Court. The judges here are trusted to decide on what is fair for the whole country!



Executive Branch: The branch that helps execute, or make sure that laws are followed. These are the people responsible for making sure lawbreakers are stopped; people like police officers or U.S. soldiers. They enforce the laws that the legislators make, and bring the criminals to the judges who help decide if they are guilty or not. All three branches work together to make sure laws are followed.



While there are local police, national guards, and international soldiers, that ultimate “Executive” in this branch is our president. He has the final say in deciding the enforcement of laws. For instance, the President can decide whether or not we will punish other country’s governments if they are unfair to their people. He also decides when to send soldiers to different places, and how to keep people safe when protests break out. Even though the president has a lot of helpers (or advisors) to offer their advice, it is still a VERY difficult job with a lot of responsibility!

Get To Planning!

Introduction:

Contention #1:

Contention #2:

Contention #3:

Conclusion:

Text-Based Writing

Goldilocks
and the
Three Bears

2016

4th & 5th Grade | Opinion Prompt



Directions:

The following passages are about the fairy tale “Goldilocks”. Write an essay in which you give your opinion on who you think the “bad guy” is; Goldilocks or the three bears. Explain why the other character(s) is/are the “good guy(s).” Support your opinion with evidence from the sources.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your response;
- Write your response;
- Revise and edit your response

Be sure to include:

- An introduction;
- Support for your opinion using information from the passage;
- A conclusion that is related to your opinion

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.

Source #1

What Are Fairy Tales?

Fairy tales are short stories that often feature mythical creatures and characters. These folklore character (fairies, goblins, elves, etc) are usually set on a magical, far-fetched adventure in order to complete a goal. Although most fairy tales are very old, they are often changed over time, so there are usually many versions of the same fairy told from different points of view. Almost all fairy tales include some of the following:

Special beginnings or endings: How many times have you heard the phrase “Once upon a time...” when starting a fairy tale? Or ending with the classic, “They lived happily ever after.” In order to convey a sense of mysticism, or magic, the original storytellers used many of these cliché beginnings and endings to emphasize the magical sense of their stories.

Good characters: Sometimes a story has one main “good guy” or sometimes there are a group of them. Either way, no fairy tale is complete without a hero. Good characters are often kind, innocent, and portrayed as handsome or beautiful (although not always). Usually the “good guy” is the main character of a story, but sometimes, in a dark fairy tale, the story can actually be told by the “bad guy.”

Evil characters: An evil character is the person or thing who adds conflict to the story. Cinderella would be a happy but boring story without her evil stepmother and sisters to make it interesting! Often times the “Evil” characters in fairy tales are easy to spot for their cruel, unjust actions. But not all “bad guys” come in the shape of ugly stepsisters or sinister wolves; a “bad guy” can be anyone who stirs up trouble and is mischievous when it comes to our “good guys.”

Universal Truths: Probably the most important element of a fairy tale is the *universal truth* guiding it. All fairy tales touch on something that is experienced or felt by humans throughout time and space. Ideas like *love, growing up, and being brave* are things that happen to everyone at some point in their lives. Fairy tales

use their stories as ways to teach lessons and help guide us through these universal truths.

Source #2

Goldilocks

The story of “*Goldilocks and the 3 Bears*”, from Goldilocks point of view:

Once upon a time there was a beautiful little girl, named Goldilocks. One day, as she was walking through the woods, she came across a small cottage. Curious as she was, Goldilocks walked to the front window and peeked inside. From the window, she saw 3 delicious bowls of porridge sitting on a table. When she looked down at her stomach, it growled. She had been so busy this morning, she forgot to eat! So Goldilocks walked to the back door and let herself in. She sat down in front of the biggest bowl of soup and took a big gulp.

“Ouch!” she exclaimed, “This porridge is too hot!” So she tried the medium sized bowl next.

“Ick!” she spouted, “This porridge is too cold!” And she moved on to the smallest bowl on the end.

“Mmm,” said Goldilocks. “This porridge is JUST right.” And she ate and she ate until there was nothing left.

After her little snack, Goldilocks noticed some rocking chairs by the fireplace. It was very cold outside, and maybe she should warm up a little before she went back into the woods! She walked over to the biggest rocking chair,

“Ugh!” she complained, “This chair is too hard!” So she moved onto the medium, fluffy pink one next to it. She sank into its many cushions.

“Merp!” she thought, “This chair is too squishy!” So she moved onto the last, little chair with one simple cushion on its back.

“Ahh!” she sighed, “This chair is JUST right!” And she rocked and rocked until *crack* the chair split in half!

“Ouch!” exclaimed Goldilocks. “What an awful chair!” She kicked the broken bits of wood across the living room and set off to find another one. As she climbed up the stairs, she came across a bedroom with 3 beds. “Well,” she thought, “maybe I will take a nap instead!” She walked over to the biggest bed first.

“No way!” she said, “This bed is too hard!” And she jumped into the next, medium sized one. She sank beneath the cushions once again.

“Gross!” said Goldilocks, “This bed is too fluffy!” and she wandered over to the last little bed.

“Perfect!” thought Goldilocks and she shut her eyes to sleep.

Goldilocks woke with a fright to an angry growl. She opened her eyes and standing over her were 3 terrifying bears! A large papa bear, a medium sized mama bear, and a (still giant), but much smaller, baby bear. Before the father bear let out another angry grumble, Goldilocks was out the bed, through the window, and running back through the woods. She ran all the way back home, and vowed never to return to the cottage or its 3 angry inhabitants!



Source #3

The Three Bears

The story of "*Goldilocks and the Three Bears*" as told by Baby Bear:

I will never forget my 6th birthday. Mom and dad had taken me to the lake for a fishing trip. Before we left, mom had laid out my favorite breakfast for when we got home: porridge! Just the way I liked it!

After a long, successful trip on the water, my family and I made the trek back home to our little cottage. It wasn't much, but it was just what we needed, and nothing could beat an afternoon in front of the fire in my brand new rocking chair!

As we got closed to the cottage, we noticed something was wrong.... The back door was open, and the chimney was blowing out smoke, as if someone were home and had lit a fire. When we walked in, we noticed right away something was wrong. My parents walked over to their bowls of porridge and let out a gasp! It only took me a second to realize....

All of my special breakfast porridge was gone! Every last bite! I was upset, but trying to keep calm when I looked over at the fireplace. And then I saw it:

My brand new, home-made rocking chair lay in pieces on the floor. The beautiful chair my father and I had spent months making. Smashed into a dozen pieces. Left in a pile of rubble on the floor. I began to cry, until we heard snoring come from upstairs...

We climbed the stairs, one behind the other, and opened the bedroom door. As I cowered behind my parents I noticed both their beds were disheveled, but there, lying in my very own bed, was a miniature huntress, with golden blonde hair! Had she come here to attack us and accidentally fallen asleep? My dad whispered a low growl for us to get out and run, but the human hunter opened her eyes. She took one look at us and jumped from the bed and ran out the window.

I will never forget that day. The day the infamous Goldilocks snuck into our house, ate our food, broke our things, and ruined my 6th birthday!

Get To Planning!

Introduction:

Contention #1:

Contention #2:

Contention #3:

Conclusion:

Text-Based Writing

The Ivory Trade

2016

4th & 5th Grade | Opinion Prompt



Directions:

The following passages are about the ivory trade. Write an essay in which you give your opinion about which plan is better: making the trade illegal, or farming the animals for safe harvesting. Explain why the other solution is not a good one. Support your opinion with evidence from the sources.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your response:
- Write your response:
- Revise and edit your response

Be sure to include:

- An introduction;
- Support for your opinion using information from the passage;
- A conclusion that is related to your opinion

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.

Source #1

The Ivory Trade

The Ivory Trade: Historically

Since the early 14th century BC, people have harvested and traded **ivory**. *Ivory is a hard, white material removed from the tusks of animals such as elephants, walruses, rhinos, and even narwhals.* Traditionally it was used to create luxury items to trade with wealthy people around the world. The white keys on a piano used to be made entirely of ivory. Moreover, many works of art, furniture and jewelry contained pieces of ivory or ivory finishes as a status symbol, proving that someone had “exotic” and “expensive” taste.

While a very strong industry for a long time, the ivory trade eventually started to slow down during the 19th century. Many civil wars, not to mention the near extinction of some species of ivory-bearers, caused many people to rethink this practice of harvesting the material. By the end of the 20th century, elephants had already been wiped out in North Africa, and were critically endangered in both the West and South. While many people have recognized the need to harvest this resource more responsibly, there is much debate about how to best go about it.

The Ivory Trade: Currently

In the 1970's, as much of Asia was recovering from World War II, the demand for ivory products skyrocketed. Japan alone was harvesting 40% of the world's known ivory in order to produce *hankos*, or stamps, for personal prestige. After the elephant population in Africa dropped from 1.3 million to 600,000 in only 10 years, governments around the world began to take notice. Instead of harvesting the ivory in a safe, legal manner, many poachers (nearly 80% of ivory traders) were illegally killing elephants in order to harvest their ivory.

In order to help protect these gentle giants, CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) began banning ivory trade in their countries. Unfortunately, when government officials attempted to arrest and stop poachers, many times the poachers resisted, and violent revolts began occurring. Some

countries didn't want to stop the ivory trade at all, because most of the money their country made came from this business, and their people needed it to survive.

While there are still many people on both sides of the argument, it is not arguable that something must be done! Should it be illegal for people to harvest ivory? And how can we help stop the people who do it the wrong way? What other solutions do we have?



(Above) A picture showing some of the ivory products sold at an illegal marketplace. These items were being sent from Britain to China, until the government stepped in and confiscated it.

Ivory trade is illegal here, and border control helped stop these products from being sold by illegal poachers.

Source #2

The Ivory Trade Should Be Illegal

The ivory trade is dangerous business. Not only is it dangerous for the people involved, but also for the animals that get hurt. Yes, it is true that ivory can be harvested in a way that is safe for both the animals and the people, but we cannot trust poachers to do the right thing! This is why we must make sure the ivory trade is made illegal, everywhere!

First off, if the ivory trade is illegal, than people who steal animal husks will not make any more money. If it is illegal for people to buy ivory, the poachers who are trying to sell it will go out of business. This is the only way to stop the animals from getting hurt! We have to make sure no one wants to buy ivory to stop people from hurting animals to get it!

Secondly, if the ivory trade is illegal, poachers who are caught doing the wrong thing can go to jail. If they are in jail for these crimes, they will no longer be able to keep hurting the animals. Also, people who were thinking about becoming poachers will stop because they will see how dangerous it is to do so!

Most importantly, if the ivory trade is illegal, the whole world will work together to make sure it stops. Some countries still let ivory dealers bring in illegal products, so there is nothing the responsible countries can do to stop them. If ivory trading was illegal internationally and throughout the whole world, we could finally put an end to all the hunting, and potentially save the animals in Africa and Asia.

Source #3

The Ivory Trade Should Be Allowed

While the ivory trade is dangerous, it doesn't have to be. There is a safe way to remove the ivory from an animal without hurting it. Unfortunately, when we make ivory illegal, poachers are forced to kill the animals and steal their ivory quickly before they get caught. If we made ivory trading legal, we could farm the animals and harvest their ivory safely for people to have.

First off, making the ivory trade illegal will never stop poachers. There will always be people who want ivory (in many countries, ivory is thought to have magic healing powers, and many people buy it at VERY expensive prices.) If we make harvesting ivory illegal, poachers will be more likely to hurt more animals, and the prices for ivory will be even more expensive, so more poachers will join the hunt!

Second off, tusks can be removed safely. If we keep the trade legal, and farm the animals instead, we can provide ivory to the people who want in without hurting the animals. Instead of spending money to arrest poachers, the governments can use that money to protect the farms and homes of elephants and rhinos.

Most importantly, this solution has worked before! When poachers used to hunt alligators for their leather, the governments made it legal to have animal farms and many people began to raise/care for them. Now, alligators are no longer endangered and there is no need for illegally hunting them, since there are plenty on the farm bred for the sake of leather! We have proof that farming animals is enough to keep poachers away and give the people what they want, so why not do the same with ivory?

Get To Planning!

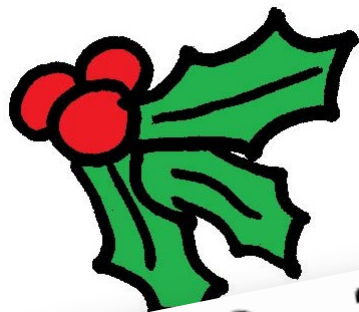
Introduction:

Contention #1:

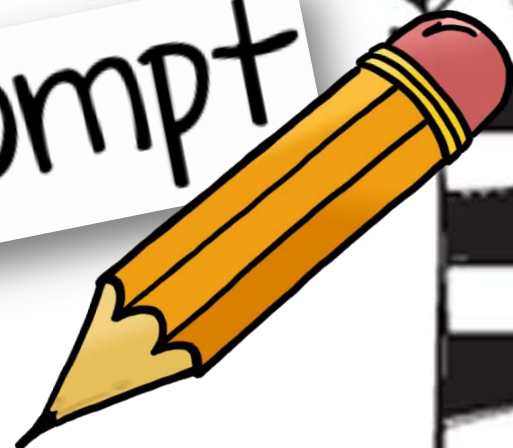
Contention #2:

Contention #3:

Conclusion:



FSA Opinion Prompt



ELA Text-Based Writing

A Christmas Carol

Includes:

Opinion Prompt | Planning Sheet
3 Independent Sources for Evidence Citation



Directions:

The following passages tell us the story of Ebenezer Scrooge and all his Christmas follies. Write an essay in which you give your opinion on whether he should make the “Naughty” or “Nice” list this Christmas. Explain why you think he shouldn’t be on the other list. Support your opinion with evidence from the sources.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your response:
- Write your response:
- Revise and edit your response

Be sure to include:

- An introduction;
- Support for your opinion using information from the passage;
- A conclusion that is related to your opinion

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.

Source #1

A Christmas Carol

"A mean-spirited, miserly old man named Ebenezer Scrooge sits in his counting-house on a frigid Christmas Eve. His clerk, Bob Cratchit, shivers in the other room because Scrooge refuses to spend money on heating coals for a fire. Scrooge's nephew, Fred, pays his uncle a visit and invites him to their annual Christmas party. Two heavyset gentlemen also drop by and ask Scrooge for a contribution to their charity. Scrooge reacts to all of these holiday visitors with bitterness and venom, spitting out an angry "Bah! Humbug!" in response to his nephew's "Merry Christmas!"



Later that evening, after returning to his dark, cold apartment, Scrooge receives a chilling visit from the ghost of his old friend and business partner, Jacob Marley. Marley, looking haggard and pale, tells Scrooge his unfortunate story. As punishment for his greedy and self-serving life, Marley's spirit has been condemned to wander the Earth weighted down with heavy chains. Marley hopes to save Scrooge from sharing the same fate and informs Scrooge that three spirits will visit him during each of the next three nights. After the wraith disappears, Scrooge collapses into a deep sleep."

As the story carries on, we are told of more and more bad choices made by Scrooge. Not only is he grumpy and greedy, he has caused many of the people around him misery leading up to the holidays. His employee, Bob Cratchit, tries to prepare a holiday "feast" with his family, but is only able to provide them with barely enough food to survive. Scrooge sees Cratchit's son is ill, starving, and still managing to seem happier than Scrooge ever has. Scrooge realizes it is his fault this family is struggling, as his greed and pettiness keeps him

from paying Cratchit a respectable salary to provide for his family. We learn also of past friends, family, and lovers all chased away by the greed and selfishness of Ebenezer Scrooge.

Source #2

Redemption

Redemption (noun): The action of saving or being saved from error or evil.
The woman received redemption for her crime by apologizing and giving all the money back.

One of the most powerful messages in “A Christmas Carol” is the idea of redemption. While Scrooge’s former partner dies without correcting the error of his ways, he comes back to warn Scrooge from the same fate. After being reminded of the many selfish mistakes he has made in his life, Scrooge decides to turn his life around and seek redemption for his cruelty.

“Overwhelmed with joy by the chance to redeem himself and grateful that he has been returned to Christmas Day, Scrooge rushes out onto the street hoping to share his newfound Christmas spirit. He sends a giant Christmas turkey to the Cratchit house and attends Fred's party, to the stifled surprise of the other guests. As the years go by, he holds true to his promise and honors Christmas with all his heart: he treats Tiny Tim as if he were his own child, provides lavish gifts for the poor, and treats his fellow human beings with kindness, generosity, and warmth.”



The question, however, becomes, is this redemption enough? Ebenezer Scrooge has been living a greedy, selfish life for many years; can he simply turn it around and receive full redemption for his past follies?

“With A Christmas Carol, the author hopes to illustrate how self-serving, insensitive people can be converted into charitable, caring, and socially conscious members of society through the intercession of moralizing quasi-religious lessons. Warmth, generosity, and overall goodwill, overcome Scrooge's bitter apathy as he encounters and learns from his memory, the ability to empathize, and his fear of death. Memory serves to remind Scrooge of a time when he still felt emotionally connected to other people, before he closed himself off in an austere state of alienation. Empathy enables Scrooge to sympathize with and understand those less fortunate than himself, people like Tiny Tim and Bob Cratchit. The fear of death hints at imminent moral reckoning--the promise of punishment and reward.”

Is Scrooge still acting out of selfishness? Being kind to others only to avoid the fate of his former business partner? Is it his fear of punishment after death that makes Scrooge a better person? Or has he truly redeemed himself as a new, generous, and caring man?

Naughty or Nice

What things put Scrooge on the Naughty List? What things put him on the Nice list?



Naughty List Attributes:

Cheap: Would not pay for coal to keep his employees warm at work. Severely underpaid Mr. Cratchit.

Uncharitable: Turned down the men who came asking for Christmas donations. "Bah Humbug!"

Greedy: Lost fiancé and friends for always putting money before them, so was always alone.

Selfish: Didn't care about anyone else's misfortunes, as long as he was comfortable.

Uncaring: Did not pay his employee fairly or care to learn his situation. Caused Mr. Cratchit to go home to a sick child and starving family over the holidays and took his services for granted.

Mean: Would shout at anyone speaking kindly or spreading the holiday cheer.

Unfriendly: Even refused to go to his own family's Christmas Party.

Nice List Attributes:

Redeemed: Scrooge goes through a phase of redemption where he apologizes for all that he does and tries to right his wrongs.

Giving: Donates to the men he turned down before. Takes a turkey to Mr. Cratchit's home to make their Christmas dinner a true holiday feast.

Caring: Begins to treat Tiny Tim (Mr. Cratchit's sick son) as if he is his own. Cares for him both physically and financially and make sure he wants for nothing.

Friendly: Goes to family Christmas party and attempts to make amends with those he has wronged.

Compassionate: Understands his employee's situation and begins paying him better so he can take care of his family. Begins to realize his needs are not the only ones that matter.



Get To Planning!

Introduction:

Contention # 1:

Contention #2:

Contention #3:

Conclusion:
