Hello Students,

This resource packet includes a project that you can work on independently at home. You should also have project packets for some of the other courses you are enrolled in. Each project can be completed over multiple days, and the projects can be completed in any order.

High school project packets are available for the following courses:

- English 1
- Algebra
- Biology
- US History
- English 2
- Geometry
- Chemistry
- World Studies
- English 3
- Algebra 2
- Physics
- Civics
- English 4

Additional enrichment activities are also available and organized into Read, Write, Move, Design, and Solve categories to engage you in learning in many different ways while at home. Please be sure to also pick up an enrichment packet for access to these activities.

Use the table of contents on this page to navigate through the project packet.

9-10th Grade ELA Project: Writing an Editorial
9-10th Grade ELA Project: Writing an Editorial

**Estimated Time**
~225 minutes of project time for each course

**Grade Level Standards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RI.9-10.5</td>
<td>Analyze in detail how an author’s ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RI.9-10.6</td>
<td>Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.9-10.4</td>
<td>Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Caregiver Support Option**
Discuss recent experiences, texts and writing prompts with students. Participate in “Flash Debates” with students.

**Materials Needed**
- Paper
- Pencil
- Pen

**Question to Explore**
Why do editorials matter? How can I use an editorial to express my opinion to others?

**Student Directions**
Please see below.

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**Activity 1: Understanding Editorial Writing**

Have you ever wondered why your English teachers want you to write so many ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS? Perhaps it is because our whole world is FULL of arguments and arguments are EVERYWHERE you look! Don’t believe it? Consider the following:

- Every time you see an advertisement for a product or a product logo, a company is making an argument that you should buy something
- When you read a book, an author is making an argument that you should care about their story
- Movie trailers are an argument made by film companies that you should go see a movie
- An election speech is an argument by a candidate that you should vote for him/her
- When you go on a job interview, you are making an argument that you are the best candidate for a job
- This list of arguments is making an argument that arguments are everywhere!

It’s helpful to remember that an “argument” isn’t necessarily a fight or a disagreement, but an opinion or position that someone wants to communicate -- and to convince others is correct.
It follows, then, that learning to create and write effective, creative, and convincing arguments is a life skill worth cultivating. Your English teachers might be onto something.

**ENTER THE EDITORIAL**

Editorials are articles written by experts that present an opinion about a topic. Editorial pieces usually appear in newspapers, magazines and online publications, and are really just an argumentative essay, much like the ones you write for English class. If we study published editorials and take them apart to understand how they work, then we’ll be able to piece together our own arguments more thoughtfully and thoroughly. Speaking and writing arguments is like any skill: the more you practice, the better you become. Let’s do it.

**EXPERT EDITORIALS**

When we want to do something well, it helps to look at expert examples. For example, if you want to dominate the tennis court with indefensible serves, you should watch tapes of Serena Williams. If you want to kickflip like a pro, watch Tony Hawk. If we want to write well, we should read expert writers.

Below is an editorial article that appeared in *The New York Times*, one of the world’s great newspapers. It’s written by a high school student who recently won the NYT Student Op-Ed contest. In this piece, she argues that being messy is a great thing—you’re creative and it’s something that should be celebrated. Let’s take a close look at how she makes her argument.

A. Read the article that follows—“The Life-Changing Magic of Being Messy”. As you read, pay attention to moments where you feel the author is making a strong argument. Underline those parts -- they might be individual words, phrases, or whole sentences. **Look for and underline directly on the article:** Author’s opinion/claim, convincing and strong evidence, and powerful words or phrases that convince you.

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The Life-Changing Magic of Being Messy
By The Learning Network June 4, 2019
This essay, by Isabel Hwang, age 17, is one of the Top 12 winners of our Sixth Annual Student Editorial Contest.

The Life-Changing Magic of Being Messy
You might have a “messy” friend or family member. You can’t help but sigh at the chaos of their room — clean and dirty laundry mixed together. Odds are it’ll be difficult to walk two feet without encountering an empty chip bag. Gross? Yes. Bad? Not necessarily.

As a stereotypically “messy” person myself, I’ve received my own share of scorn. Living in a boarding school, I’m obligated to keep my room nice and tidy, ready for visitors and as a model to underclassmen. Monday room inspections are the norm, and faculty members have sometimes passively, sometimes aggressively, urged my roommate and me to clean up. For these purposes, I used to harbor a 24 x 24 x 24 cardboard box in which I’d stuff everything on Monday mornings and...
empty it out later that evening. Now, I just throw everything downstairs into the communal storage. Out of sight, out of mind.

As much judgment as we get for our clutter, research has shown that messiness can be a sign of creativity and openness. In the NYT article “It’s Not ‘Mess.’ It’s Creativity,” Kathleen D. Vohs’ study of messiness serves as a rare champion for us less-than-neat people. In her study, she gathered a group of subjects in a tidy room and another in a messy room. When each subject had to choose between a “classic” or “new” smoothie on a fake menu, the subjects in the tidy room chose “classic” while subjects in the messy room chose the “new” smoothies. This shows that “people greatly preferred convention in the tidy room and novelty in the messy room.” In addition, Vohs revealed that messy people were more creative. So, what does this mean?

Messy people are willing to challenge the conventional norm. They aren’t confined to the status quo. In a growing age where minimalism seems to be taking on the world by storm, we must remember that there is beauty in chaos. Although a University of Michigan study warns that some people might take one look at your messy desk and view you as “lazy” or “neurotic,” we must remember the people who challenge the old ways of being are some of our greatest innovators. After all, Albert Einstein, Mark Twain, Steve Jobs, and Mark Zuckerberg famously harbored hideously disorganized workplaces.

So, when you see a scatter of papers, laundry, and old food containers, don’t rush out to buy your child, friend, or roommate “The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up.” Instead, appreciate that your acquaintance might be “sparking joy” by channeling their creativity differently.

Works Cited
On a piece of paper:
- Set up a table like you see below
- Take a minute to write a definition for each word as it relates to writing arguments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viewpoint</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Analysis and persuasion</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>States a clear opinion and issues a call to action or solution to action through argument</td>
<td>Uses compelling evidence to support the opinion, and cites reliable sources</td>
<td>Convincingly argues point of view by providing relevant background information, using valid examples, acknowledging counter-claims, and developing claims --all in a clear and organized fashion.</td>
<td>Uses a strong voice and engages the reader. Uses language, style, and tone appropriate to its purpose and features correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. How did you do? Review the official definitions below. Can you add anything from your own definitions?

D. Now that we understand the most important parts of arguments, let’s return to our article and your annotations. Review all the words and phrases you underlined. **On your paper where you created your definition table, write your answers to the questions below:**

1. Review each part of the text you underlined. Copy these examples under the section of the definition table (Viewpoint, Evidence, Analysis and persuasion, language) where it fits best. For example:
   a. Did you underline the sentence that begins, “Although a University of Michigan study warns...” You might put that in the “Evidence” box.
   b. Did you underline “Gross? Yes. Bad? Not necessarily.” in the first paragraph? That’s a great example of powerful language.
2. Are you missing annotations for any section of the chart? If so, re-read the article. Can you find some for each section?
3. **Below the examples you added to the table, write your thoughts about the questions below:**
   a. What part of the table contains the most examples? What might that mean about the way Hwang crafted her argument?
   b. What would you add to Hwang’s argument to strengthen it?
E. Real-Life Connection: Is being messy or neat more “magical”?
Isabel Hwang explores this idea of how being messy is actually a beautiful and “magical” trait some people have. Take a few minutes to reflect on this topic. Write a short paragraph on your paper answering some or all of the questions below:

- Do you consider yourself a messy or neat person? How do you feel about this?
- Do you think being messy or neat is better than the other?
- Do you think that being messy actually means you are a more creative person?
- Does being messy mean you’re lazy? Does being neat mean you’re a perfectionist?
- Did the article make you think about anything else? Write about it!

Activity 2: Practicing Arguments

A. Reading for Understanding: Speaking of editorials, please read our Mentor Text #2: “Student Opinion: Is the Internet teaching young people not to think?”

Think about the validity (or lack thereof) within this person’s argument.

Questions to consider as you read:
- How does she support her claims?
- How does this writing differ from that of a rant (going on and on about the topic without much thought or evidence—more feelings)?
- At which points is her argument the strongest? What does she do that works well?

Student Opinion: Is the Internet teaching young people not to think?

By Julienne Vicente, adapted by Newsela staff  Published:05/19/20

I grew up hearing, "Figure it out, but don't look it up." I could use this advice when I'm tempted to turn to a search engine for answers. Should all of us limit our use of technology?

Nicholas Carr, the author of "The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains," says that we should take some time away from screens. According to Carr, "Deep thinking, brain scientists have discovered, happens only when our minds are calm and attentive."

It is difficult to focus while using the Internet. On top of all the distracting notifications and advertisements, there's also the tendency to start surfing on websites from one topic to another.

I know what it's like to look up a question and end up skimming through unrelated information. Some people might not even notice when they start mindlessly scrolling and clicking. Our digital generation uses the Internet as a second brain.

Mindless Scrolling
It's as if the Internet overtakes our thoughts, even when we're not using technology. Matt Richtel wrote an article called "Attached to Technology and Paying a Price." He mentions that most computer users switch between tabs and webpages almost every two minutes!

The temptation to know more information creates an impulse to scroll through it all.

Some might say that sites such as Google have positive effects on their users. While it's true that the Internet gives us answers quickly and reliably, it's not something to get into a habit of doing. It doesn't do much harm to look up some facts every once in a while, but we forget things because we can get the answers so easily.

In "Cognitive Offloading: How the Internet is Changing the Human Brain," Philip Perry discusses issues affecting our memory. He describes a test that compared two groups. One group couldn't use any sort of device to answer questions. The other group was allowed to use Google. The group that had access to their smartphones immediately looked up answers on the Internet. The group without smartphones were quicker at answering questions because they didn't reach for their smartphones.

Everyone knows that the Internet makes problem-solving easier, but is it too easy?

A Support For Learning
David Price, a guest blogger on a website called techaddiction, says that teaching may be getting easier with Google because parents can now use the Internet to help with their kids' homework. This led me to think about how schools make us memorize facts and equations even though we have apps to solve problems.

Why should people have to remember all that when they could turn to Google instead? We have to at least attempt to use our minds for problem-solving so we don't forget how to do so.

If we always turn to technology for answers, we'll never learn anything on our own.

An example is when my class had a math test and we were allowed to use calculators. Most of us used it at every opportunity even though everyone in that room was capable of solving each problem. The Internet is like that because we know the answers to many of the questions we search. We use technology because we can get the answers and don't want to be wrong.

Not all ways to use technology are negative. Though adults and children use the same type of devices, they use different content.

Adults likely use more apps such as the calendar, notes, reminders and news articles. Kids and teenagers probably use more apps for messages, games and streaming sites.

I understand that the problems with technology are only when it is used in a certain way, but the positives of technology don't erase the negatives. We can delete or use fewer of those apps that won't help us improve.
I'm convinced that technology is not as unproductive as many people say. However, it's not the solution to every problem.

**Find Time For Other Activities**
It's time to take a step back from technology and take a break from our devices by doing hobbies such as reading, drawing or playing sports.

This generation may have been born into a digital world, but we can set the next generation up for success. We can start by teaching them how to use technology productively and responsibly.

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Make note of the rubric from Step 3 of Activity 1. **On your paper, draw out the table below again and write examples from the text that support those 4 ideas.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viewpoint</th>
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B. Practicing the Skill: Now that you have read an example of an editorial, it is your turn to try out those skills. Here is your prompt: **Is the internet really teaching teenagers not to think on their own anymore? Explain.**

There are a few points to consider when writing. **Take notes on your paper about the questions below:**

- How would you answer this question in one sentence? [This is your main claim.]
- What are 2-3 reasons you feel that? [These are your supporting claims.]
- What details and real life examples or experiences support the reasons you feel this way? [This is your evidence.]

Now that you have some of your thoughts on the paper, **write a draft of your editorial about how the internet is or isn't teaching teenagers not to think on their own.** Remember:

- your perspective or area of focus is your own, but you need to support your claims with evidence and examples.
- This draft should be about 3 paragraphs (main claim and a paragraph for each supporting claim with evidence)

C. Exercising Your Understanding

Once you have written your full perspective, find another person and share your point of view with them. Then, have a Flash Debate with this person!

- Give yourself 3-5 minutes and argue your position on the topic from Step 2.
- Allow the other person to counter your position and/or offer up a different perspective
for 3-5 minutes.

- For another round or 2, debate this topic until you come to an understanding. Whose argument was stronger? Why?--Maybe reflect on this in your notes.

D. Bringing Understanding to Life

Now that you have taken the time to analyze the mentor text, draft your own thoughts on the effects the internet has on your thinking, and defend your claims against someone else, it’s time to bring that understanding to life with an examination of the phone use of people around you.

Your Task: Depending on your surroundings, find two to three people within your age range or otherwise and examine how their use of phones affects their daily lives. Include your own experiences in your findings if applicable. There are four steps to complete within this project:

Step 1: Gather your data

- **Decide who you will survey for this task.** You can reach out to people electronically if possible or ask those who are closest to you.
- **Create 3 questions** to ask about phone use in your survey. Questions may include (but are not limited to):
  - On average, how often how many hours a day do you spend on your phone?
  - What do you predominantly use your phone to do? (Social media, texting, calling, online info search, etc)
  - Are you more productive with or without your phone?
  - Any other questions that are relevant to you and help you get to know about your people’s phone use
- **Take notes** on each person’s answer to each of your questions. You will need these notes for the next step!

Step 2: Compile your data into a table. Once you have everyone’s information, put it in the following chart. **Draw this chart out on your paper and use the notes you took on the answers to the questions to fill it in.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>Question 2</th>
<th>Question 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My Responses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 3: Examine your data.
● Once you’ve listed all of the responses in the chart, reflect on these questions in your notes:
  ○ What are the similarities and differences within their replies?
  ○ What trends do you notice?
● Write a claim about personal phone use based on your information. Notice how you can use evidence to build a claim; we don’t always make a claim first and THEN find evidence. Write your claim in your notebook.

Step 4: Write your editorial argument.
● In 2-3 paragraphs on notebook paper, write about your findings.
  ○ Introduce your claim and perspective on personal phone use.
  ○ Support your claim with evidence and examples from your survey (information that you put in the data table).
  ○ Conclude your editorial with a takeaway for readers—What do you think your reader should consider about personal phone use?

Activity 3: You’re Becoming an Expert
A. Choose a prompt:
   a. What should #MeToo mean for teenage boys? What advice would you give teenage boys confused by contradictory expectations about how they should behave with teenage girls?
   b. Should plastic bags be banned everywhere? New York has a law that bans most single use plastic bags like the ones found in grocery stores. Do you think all communities should do the same?
   c. Is it immoral to increase the price of goods during a crisis? As the coronavirus outbreak spread, some people saw an opportunity in the rising demand for products like hand sanitizer and masks. But when should you think twice about making a profit?
   d. Would you allow an ex-prisoner to live with you? A new program pairs the recently incarcerated with homeowners. Would you be willing to open your home?
   e. Should facial recognition software be used in schools? Will it make schools safer, or infringe upon our privacy?
   f. Should public transit be free? Several cities are experimenting with free public transit. Do you think that getting to and from school and work on public transit should be free?
   g. Do you complain too much, too little, or just the right amount? Research shows that griping can be good for you. Has it ever played a positive role in your life?
   h. Are comic book movies ruining film? An acclaimed film director argues that comic book movies are driving out great cinema. Is he right?
   i. Should students be punished for not having lunch money? What should schools do if students are consistently unable to pay for lunch?

B. Write a response of about 450 words (two pages hand-written). This is your editorial!

C. Examine what the Experts Do by following the directions below.
If you’re completing these activities in order, you’ll recall from Activity #1 that when we want to do something well, it’s very helpful to look at expert examples. (Tony Hawk, Serena Williams) As you continue to practice your own editorial writing skills, let’s dig deeper into what expert writers do.

Below are three excerpts from editorials that were recently published in The New York Times. While the editorials chosen are generally well written, we’ve highlighted particularly good examples of strong writing from contributors. As you reflect on these examples, note their use of strong language, supporting evidence, and clearly established viewpoints.

Excerpt #1 -- Language

Language

Uses a strong voice and engages the reader. Uses language, style, and tone appropriate to its purpose and features correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Language, of course, is at the very center of writing. The words writers choose are an essential part of how they craft an argument.

Think about this: you can WALK to the store.

But, you can also HOP/SKIP/SHUFFLE/SAUNDER or BOOGIE to the store! Consider how that simple sentence changes depending on the work you choose to express action. What a difference a word makes! Experts choose their words carefully to help make their arguments.

1. Read the excerpt below.

“But these products miss the point of what it means to be a kid, hampering children on the road to independence. And more heartbreakingly, trackers may prevent our kids from feeling truly free.” From “The Rise of Location Trackers for Kids as Young as 3,” Jessica Grose for The New York Times

2. Are there any words you don’t know? Write them in the space below, alongside definitions.

3. Underline words that seem strong and engaging.

4. Now go back to the “Language” section on the rubric, pasted above for your reference. Why did the writer choose the language she did? How does her word choice impact the meaning of the passage as a whole?

5. Identify the metaphor used in the passage above. What two things is the author comparing? Why do you think she chose that particular metaphor? Do you think it’s effective? Why or why not?

Excerpt #2 -- Evidence

Evidence

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Chicago Public Schools
As you begin to write, you should start by gathering background information on the topic you’ve chosen. That might mean reading newspaper articles, consulting an encyclopedia, finding reliable websites or reaching out to an expert to make sure you have enough context about why your topic is important to write a strong persuasive essay. You can also use your own experience. This is exactly what expert writers do.

Let’s look at some examples of strong, compelling evidence from reliable sources.

1. Read the excerpt below. Underline the evidence you find.

“According to the Agriculture Department, last week wholesale egg prices rose more than 50 percent in some parts of the country, because of demand; eggs have been running low if not sold out altogether in many stores in the United States. The egg supply is normal, of course; demand just grew significantly.” from “How Do Animals Provide Comfort in Your Life?” by Nicole Daniels for The New York Times

2. Rewrite the author’s argument in your own words.

3. Look back at the evidence you underlined in the passage above. What makes it “compelling” and “reliable?”

4. Where do you look for evidence when you’re writing an argument?

Excerpt #3 -- Viewpoint

Viewpoint
States a clear opinion and issues a call to action or solution to action through argument

If you are going to convince someone of your position on a topic, your viewpoint has to be crystal clear, otherwise your audience won’t know what you’re writing about or how they should respond.

1. Consider the two statements below:

Statement A
“Well, gosh, I’m not sure. We could eat before we go to the movie, or we could get a snack on the way, or we could just maybe wait until the movie starts and then buy some popcorn. Or, I don’t know, maybe it’s just too expensive and confusing and we should stay home.”

Statement B
“I suggest we have a quick snack at home before we go see the film.”

It’s easy to see why Statement B is a clearer, more convincing viewpoint. Why is it?

2. Now, consider an expert viewpoint from a published editorial.

“Take a walk before your first coffee or tea. Walking, especially early in the morning, provides a fresh view of the day. It’s hard to be pessimistic when the day is just beginning.” From 36 Hours in Wherever You Are, The New York Times
3. Use the guidelines from the rubric to explain why this is a clear argument and strong call to action.

D. Revise your draft, paying attention to the elements on the rubric.
E. Optional: Submit to NY Times Editorial Contest (link below)

Activity 4: Reflection
A. Having completed all of the activities above, now it is time to reflect on our learning and work. Consider the following 2 questions and respond in 5-7 sentences (or more) with your thoughts. (Remember, do not do this activity until you have completed those above!)
   1) What are the most important arguments I make? Why?
   2) How do I use ideas from this project to strengthen the arguments I make every day?

Additional Activities:

ART: On a blank sheet of paper draw images that reflect the way you feel when you are holding a grudge or when someone has a grudge against you.

Optional Digital Extensions:

Grudge Quiz