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.

11-12th Grade ELA Project: Arguing Effectively in Writing
11-12th Grade ELA Project: Arguing Effectively in Writing

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<th>Estimated Time</th>
<th>225 minutes of project time for each course</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grade Level Standards</td>
<td>RI.11-12.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text. W.11-12.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver Support Option</td>
<td>Discuss recent experiences, texts, and writing prompts with your student. Participate in “Flash Debates” with your student.</td>
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<td>Materials Needed</td>
<td>Paper, Pencil, Pen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question to Explore</td>
<td>Why do editorials matter? How can I use an editorial to express my opinion to others?</td>
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<td>Student Directions</td>
<td>Please see below</td>
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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.

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. You can also enter the editorial you will write in the New York Times editorial contest (due April 21).

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 gentleman named Tim Herrera, a NYT editor who writes about health and wellness. In this piece, he’s arguing that we should NOT hold grudges. (Oh, boy. Don’t we LOVE a good grudge? I STILL can’t believe she said that about my FAVORITE jeans!) Let’s take a close look at how he makes his argument.

A. Read the article that follows. As you read, pay attention to moments where you feel the author is making a strong argument. Maybe he uses convincing evidence. Maybe there are particular words that convince you. Underline those parts -- they might be individual words, phrases, or whole sentences.

Let Go of Your Grudges. They’re Doing You No Good.

By Tim Herrera May 19, 2019

What does holding onto grudges really get us?

One of my favorite party games is to ask a group of people this simple question: What is your oldest or most cherished grudge?

Without fail, every person unloads with shockingly specific, intimate detail about their grudge. Career slights (intentional or not), offhand-yet-cutting remarks, bitter friendship dissolutions; nothing is too small or petty when it comes to grudges.

One of my favorite answers I’ve gotten to this question came from a friend whose grudge stretched back to second grade. A classmate — he still remembered her full name and could describe her in detail — was unkind about a new pair of Coke-bottle glasses he had started wearing. Her insult wasn’t particularly vicious, but he’d been quietly seething ever since. Childhood!

Even this very publication has taken a pro-grudge stance, calling them “petty Tamagotchis in our
emotional pocket." The HBO show "Big Little Lies" perhaps put it best, when Reese Witherspoon’s character, Madeline Mackenzie, matter-of-factly noted: “I love my grudges. I tend to them like little pets.”

But what does holding onto grudges really get us, aside from amusing anecdotes at parties (and pitch-perfect quips delivered by Ms. Witherspoon)? And what could we gain from giving them up?

I posed this question on Twitter last week, asking if people had ever given up on a grudge and, if so, how that made them feel. The responses were delightfully all over the place.

“Yeah pretty much most of them since entering my 30s,” one respondent said. “It feels cleansing to free up the brain space.”

“Literally not once,” another said.

“I felt neutral!!” one more wrote. “Like I just couldn’t be bothered anymore but also I didn’t feel relieved or anything. Just indifferent.”

The replies kept coming in: “Great. Really free.” “Only after getting my revenge.” “It was, of course, a relief, but also a kind of let down. It’s exciting and fulfilling to hold a grudge.” “Forgiveness is the most rewarding lesson you never stop learning from.” “Bored.” “Liberated. Most of the time if they’ve got my hatred they kind of own me.” A few people replied simply: “No.” (As for me, I gave all of my grudges back to the universe last year, and it felt amazing.)

But my favorite response was the most introspective one I got: “I felt very, very mature. I admitted that my feelings were valid for my situation at the time, but allowed myself to reshape my thinking/attitude based on my personal growth experiences since then. Physically, I felt lighter, but that sounds cliché haha.”

Yes, it does sound cliché, but it’s also a feeling that is backed by the science and research of forgiveness. Really.

A 2006 study, published in the Journal of Clinical Psychology as part of the Stanford Forgiveness Project, suggested that “skills-based forgiveness training may prove effective in reducing anger as a coping style, reducing perceived stress and physical health symptoms, and thereby may help reduce" the stress we put on our immune and cardiovascular systems. Further, a study published this year found that carrying anger into old age is associated with higher levels of inflammation and chronic illness. Another study from this year found that anger reduces our ability to see things from other people’s perspective.

“Holding onto a grudge really is an ineffective strategy for dealing with a life situation that you haven’t been able to master. That’s the reality of it,” said Dr. Frederic Luskin, founder of the Stanford Forgiveness Project.

“Whenever you can’t grieve and assimilate what has happened, you hold it in a certain way,” he said. “If it’s bitterness, you hold it with anger. If it’s hopeless, you hold it with despair. But both of those are psycho-physiological responses to an inability to cope, and they both do mental and physical damage.”
He went on: “The hopelessness shuts down and dampens immune response, leads to some aspects of depression. Anger can have immune implications, it dysregulates the nervous system, it certainly is the most harmful emotion for the cardiovascular system. But you have this top point where something happened that I can’t really deal with, and often we do deal with it somehow, but unskillfully.”

A poor attempt to deal, Dr. Luskin said, “mirrors the fight-or-flight mechanism built in for how to cope with stress.”

[Like what you’re reading? Sign up here for the Smarter Living newsletter to get stories like this (and much more!) delivered straight to your inbox every Monday morning.]

At the same time, he said, the converse is true: Full forgiveness can more or less reverse these negative repercussions of holding onto anger and grudges.

O.K., so getting over grudges is good. But how do we do it?

In broad strokes, full forgiveness has four actions, according to Dr. Luskin. But before that, we need to recognize three things: 1. Forgiveness is for you, not the offender. 2. It’s best to do it now. 3. It’s about freeing yourself — forgiving someone doesn’t mean you have to like what they did or become their friend.

From there, the first tactic is to calm yourself down in the moment. This can mean just taking a deep breath to collect yourself or going on a jog, but the idea is you want to slow down and collect yourself to create a little distance between what happened and how you’re going to react to it.

“You have to counter-condition the stress response when it happens,” Dr. Luskin said.

Next, shift how you think and talk about the source of your grudge. “Change your story from that of a victim to a more heroic story,” Dr. Luskin said.

The final two pieces go hand-in-hand. Pay attention to the good things in your life “so you have an easy way to balance the harm,” Dr. Luskin said, then remind yourself of one simple truth: Life doesn’t always turn out the way we want it to. Combining those two ideas can “shift the ground, and it lowers very dramatically” your general level of stress. (For even more on learning to forgive, click here.)

Perhaps most crucially, Dr. Luskin stressed, forgiveness is a learnable skill. It just takes a little practice.

“That’s such an important thing. You’re not stuck in your life,” he said. “What a wonderful thing to know that there are simple strategies, trainings, technologies that can teach people to do something about what’s been burdening them forever.”

But yes, I’ll admit grudges can be fun to hold — and they make for great stories when someone asks about them at parties.
B. Let’s put your annotations aside for a moment while we learn some vocabulary. Each box below contains an important part of an argument -- parts that you should include in every argument you make. Some of these words might be familiar, but it’s important to define them in the context of our work on arguments. On a piece of paper, set up a table like you see below.

<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>

Take a minute to write a definition in your own words for each vocabulary word as it pertains to arguments.

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.

1. Review each part of the text you underlined. Write the word under the best category in the rubric (Viewpoint, Evidence, Analysis and Persuasion, Language). Ask yourself where this word fits best?
   a. For example, did you underline the sentence that begins, “A 2006 study…?” You might put that in the “Evidence” box.
   b. Did you underline “bitter friendship dissolutions” 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. What part of the rubric contains the most annotations? What might that mean about the way Herrera crafted his argument?
4. What would you add to Herrera’s argument to strengthen it?

E. Real Life Connection: What grudge can’t you give up?

Tim Herrera begins the article you just read with a question: What is your oldest or most cherished grudge? Let’s answer his question!

What is yours? Write a short paragraph explaining your grudge, why your grudge is your “oldest and most cherished,” and what you’ve done to try to give it up. Can you confess your grudge to someone?

Activity 2: Practicing Arguments

A. Speaking of editorials, please read our Mentor Text #2: “Taking Away the Phones Won’t Solve Our Teenagers’ Problems.” Think about the validity (or lack thereof) within this person’s argument.

Taking Away the Phones Won’t Solve Our Teenagers’ Problems

By Tracy A. Dennis-Tiwary Dr. Dennis-Tiwary is a psychology professor. July 14, 2018

Apple has introduced new software designed to help users restrict the time they spend on their phones — just change your settings and your favorite app will lock you out after a certain number of hours. It’s been especially welcomed by parents who fret about the habits of their “screenagers” — young people who seem permanently attached to their mobile devices.

Even Silicon Valley insiders demanded that Apple make its devices “less addictive.” Some researchers have gone so far as to declare that smartphones have psychologically destroyed a generation of millennials and are fueling the epidemic of teenage anxiety and suicide in the United States. One study notes a spike in anxiety and depression among teenagers in 2011 — around the time of broad smartphone adoption.

But I’ve come to believe that conventional wisdom about the relationship between troubled kids and their favorite technology is wrong.

Although some research does show that excessive and compulsive smartphone use is correlated with anxiety and depression, there is a lack of direct evidence that devices actually cause mental health problems.

In other words, there simply does not yet exist a prospective longitudinal study showing that, all things being equal, teenagers who use smartphones more often or in certain ways are more likely than their fellows to subsequently develop mental illness.

Large studies that fail to follow individuals over time can reveal only correlation, not cause. Luckily, some recently begun studies will be poised to weigh in on causation — but we’ll have to wait years
for the results.

In the meantime, we can’t just blame the machines. This is especially important because if smartphones aren’t a direct cause of teenagers’ mental health struggles, their use might instead be a crucial way in which these struggles are expressed. This calls for a different set of solutions.

Teenagers are struggling with anxiety more than any other problem, and perhaps more than ever before. There’s a good chance that it is anxiety that is driving teenagers (and the rest of us) to escape into screens as a way to flee fears. Across most types of anxiety runs a common thread — difficulty coping with feelings of uncertainty: something today’s teenagers have more than their fair share of.

They have uncertain economic lives: Unlike previous generations, they can anticipate a worse economic future than their parents.

They’ve also grown up with uncertain truths and unreliable sources of news and facts, yet they cannot easily escape the digital ecosystem that’s to blame.

Finally, teenagers have uncertain independence, many having been raised under the whirring of helicopter parents, overinvolved and trying to fix every problem for their children. This suffocates independence at a time when teenagers should be exploring autonomy, limits the development of self-reliance and grit and may even directly produce anxiety and depression.

When we’re anxious, we gravitate toward experiences that dull the present anxious moment. Enter mobile devices, the perfect escape into a two-dimensional half-life, one that teenagers can make sense of.

We already know that teenagers go online to avoid feelings of stress, depression and anxiety, and we also know this strategy has more negative emotional consequences than positive ones. With their slot-machine logic and addictive properties, smartphones keep us coming back for more: for distraction, a message from a friend, news, a funny cat meme.

Digital technology is designed to grab our attention, so it exhausts us, distracts us and detracts from our ability to nurture fulfilling relationships. With that in mind, teenagers should reduce their reliance on smartphones, and we must heed the call to make smartphones and social media less addictive while figuring out how they affect us and our children.

At the same time, if smartphone addiction is a reflection of adolescent anxiety, cutting screen time may not solve the broader problems that drive teenagers to their screens. Just blaming the machines is a cop-out, a way to avoid the much more difficult task of improving young people’s lives so they won’t need to escape.

Yes, we should devote resources to making smartphones less addictive, but we should devote even more resources to addressing the public health crisis of anxiety that is causing teenagers so much suffering and driving them to seek relief in the ultimate escape machines.
Questions to consider:
- How does she support her claims?
- How does this writing differ from that of a mere rant?
- At which points is here argument the strongest? What does she do that works well?

B. Make note of the rubric from Step 3 of Activity 1. On your notepaper, write the sections from the text that support those 4 ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viewpoint</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Analysis and persuasion</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>

C. Now that you have read an example of an editorial, it is your turn to try out those skills. Here is your prompt: What do older generations misunderstand about teenagers today? Explain.

There are a few points to consider when writing:
- What is your central claim? How would you answer this question in one sentence? [This is your thesis statement.]
- What are 2-3 reasons you feel that? [These are your claims of support.]
- What details and real life scenarios or experiences support the reasons you feel this way? [This is your evidence.]

Once you have established your thesis statement, claims, and evidence, take the time to write your editorial on older generations and teenagers. Remember, your perspective or area of focus is your own, but you need to support your claims with evidence and examples. Try to write about one page.

D. Once you have written your full perspective, find another person and pose your point of view to that person. Then, have a Flash Debate with this person!
- Give yourself 3-5 minutes and argue your position on the topic from Part 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?

E. Now that you have taken the time to analyze the mentor text, draft your own thoughts on generational differences, 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.
- 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 a few steps to consider within this project.

   **Step 1**: Gather your data. Determine who you will survey for this task. You can reach out
to people electronically if possible or ask those who are closest to you. Craft 3 questions to pose regarding phone use. 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

**Step 2:** Compile your data into a table. Once you have everyone’s information, put it in the following chart.

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

Step 3: Examine your data. Once you’ve listed all of the responses, note the similarities and differences within their replies. What trends do you notice? Craft 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.

**Claim:**

Step 4: Craft 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, then conclude your editorial with a takeaway for readers.

**Activity 3: You’re Becoming an Expert**

A. Choose a prompt from the list or choose your own topic.
   - What should #MeToo mean for teenage boys?
   - Is football too dangerous for children and teenagers?
   - Can graffiti be considered art?
   - How important is college?
   - Should voting be mandatory?
   - Is it true that what doesn’t kill us makes us stronger?

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

C. Examine what the Experts Do.
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/SAUNTER 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
Uses compelling evidence to support the opinion, and cites reliable sources.

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?

Cross Content Connection:
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