

UNIT 9-A:

Evidence-based Writing Prompts for GED Practice

Suggestions for the Instructor

Pg. 9A-6 – 10 – Tools for Evidence-based Writing

The handouts in this section provide various tools to help students prepare to do evidence-based writing (“**Structure for Constructed Response**,” “**Pre-writing Questions**,” “**Read Like a Detective, Write Like a Reporter**” and “**Planning Box**.”) Have them use one or more of these models as templates for writing constructed response essays for the Evidence-based Writing Prompts which follow.

Pg. 9A-11 – 14 -- Evidence-based Writing Prompt #1 – The Right to Vote for People with Felonies

In these handouts, students will read primary source documents as well as pro / con opinions related to the issue of the right to vote for people with felonies. Using the **Tools for Evidence-based Writing** handouts as a guide, have them respond to the following prompt:

In your response, develop an argument about which Attorney General's position best reflects the position of the U.S. Constitution. Incorporate relevant and specific evidence from Article XV, the excerpts from the speeches, and your own knowledge of the issue of felon voting to support your analysis. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.

Pg. 9A-15 – 18 -- Evidence-based Writing Prompt #2 – Securing the Right to Vote: The Selma-to-Montgomery Story

In these handouts, students will read primary source documents related to the issue of securing the right to vote in the segregated South. Using the **Tools for Evidence-based Writing** handouts as a guide, have them respond to the following prompt:

What conditions created the need for a protest march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in 1965? Was the march successful in addressing those conditions? Use the primary source documents, the history of poll taxes and literacy tests designed to deny African Americans the right to vote in the segregated South, and the history of the Selma-to-Montgomery March to answer the question. Use specific evidence from texts to support your argument. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.

Pg. Pg. 9A-19 – 25 -- Evidence-based Writing Prompt #3 –The Right to Life, Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness

In these handouts, students will read three primary source documents related to the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness proclaimed by the Declaration of Independence. Using the **Tools for Evidence-based Writing** handouts as a guide, have them respond to the following prompt:

Dr. Martin Luther King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech of 1963 made reference to two primary documents, the Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. How does the position put forward in Dr. King’s speech reflect the enduring issues expressed in the two excerpts? Incorporate relevant and specific evidence from the speech, the two excerpts, and your own knowledge of the enduring issue to support your analysis.

Pg. 9A-26 – 29 -- Evidence-based Writing Prompt #4 – Pro / Con ~ Increasing the Minimum Wage

In these handouts, students will read pro / con opinions related to the issue of raising the minimum wage. Using the **Tools for Evidence-based Writing** handouts as a guide, have them respond to the following prompt:

Read the article, which gives arguments for and against raising the minimum wage for fast food workers to \$15.00 an hour. In your response, analyze both positions to determine which one is best supported. Use specific evidence from the article to support your claim. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.

Pg. 9A-30 - 34 -- Evidence-based Writing Prompt #5 – Should Marijuana Be a Medical Option?

In these handouts, students will read primary source documents as well as pro / con opinions related to the issue of the right to vote for people with felonies. Using the **Tools for Evidence-based Writing** handouts as a guide, have them respond to the following prompt:

Read the arguments for and against marijuana as a medical option. In your response, analyze both positions to determine which one is best supported. Use specific evidence from the article to support your claim. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.

**Pg. 9A-35 – 9-39 -- Evidence-based Writing Prompt #6 – Enduring Issue:
The Right to Bear Arms**

In these handouts, students will read pro / con opinions related to the issue of the right to bear arms. Using the **Tools for Evidence-based Writing** handouts as a guide, have them respond to the following prompt:

Analyze both positions for and against the right to carry concealed weapons in order to determine which one is best supported. Use specific evidence from the passages, as well as your own knowledge about the enduring issue of the right to carry weapons, to support your claim. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.

**Pg. 9A-40 - 44 -- Evidence-based Writing Prompt #7 – Pro / Con – Should
Work Requirements for Public Assistance be Increased?**

In these handouts, students will read arguments for and against President Trump’s executive order which directed federal agencies to strengthen and add work requirements for low-income Americans receiving public assistance. Using the **Tools for Evidence-based Writing** handouts as a guide, have them respond to the following prompt:

Read the article below, which gives arguments for and against increased and additional work requirements for people receiving assistance. Analyze both positions in order to determine which one is best supported. Use specific evidence from the article, as well as your own knowledge about the issue, to support your claim. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.

**Pg. 9A-45 - 50 -- Evidence-based Writing Prompt #8 – “Dreamers” and
DACA**

In these handouts, students will read arguments on both sides of the debate about “Dreamers” and whether or not to support DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.) They read background information about “Dreamers,” then read the arguments arguing for and against the claim that DACA is good for America. Using the **Tools for Evidence-based Writing** handouts as a guide, have them respond to the following prompt:

Analyze both positions on both sides of the debate to determine which one is best supported. In your response, use specific evidence from the article to support your claim. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.

Unit 9-A

Evidence-based Writing Practice



Student Activities

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Tools for Evidence-based Writing Pre-writing Questions



Before you begin writing, consider these questions about the essays and articles you have read and about the writing prompt:

What is the prompt asking me to do?

What is my central argument?

What evidence from the passages supports my position?

What do I know about this issue from my own experience and reading?

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Tools for Evidence-based Writing
Read like a Detective: Compare & Contrast

1. Unpack the prompt: *(List the specific tasks the prompt is asking you to do.)*

Do.....	What.....

2. Find evidence: *(Circle what the prompt is directing you to do.)*

Argue for / against	Identify Problem / solution	Compare / contrast	Identify Cause / effect
Evidence:		Evidence:	
Evidence:		Evidence:	
Evidence:		Evidence:	

3. Evaluate the evidence to determine which is stronger and best supports your argument.

4. Now “write like a reporter.”

Tools for Evidence-based Writing
Write like a Reporter: Compare & Contrast

Evidence-based writing is the use of sufficient and relevant data, studies and facts to support an argument.

Introduction

Based on your evaluation of the evidence, restate the question as a main idea (thesis) statement to set the stage for answering the prompt.

Body

Argue for / against

Identify
Problem / solution

Compare / contrast

Identify
Cause / effect

Answer the question.
Provide supporting evidence, details and examples from the text.

Conclusion

Restate your position based on the strength of the evidence.

Remember to edit and revise!

Tools for Evidence-based Writing

Planning Your Introduction

The general argument made by _____ in his/her work _____ is that _____.

Although _____ (believes, demonstrates, argues) that _____, _____ supports/provides the clearest evidence _____.

A key factor in both _____ can be attributed to _____.

In discussion of _____, one controversial issue has been _____.

_____ believes that _____.

On the other hand, _____ asserts that _____.

_____ is clearly the best supported argument on the issue of _____.

(www.FLIPDAE.org / from GED Testing Service)



Evidence-based Writing Prompt #1

The Right to Vote for People with Felonies

Should people with felonies be given the right to vote? In your response, develop an argument about which Attorney General's position best reflects the position of the U.S. Constitution. Incorporate relevant and specific evidence from Article XV, the excerpts from the speeches, and your own knowledge of the issue of felon voting to support your analysis. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.

DOCUMENTS

ARTICLE XV, Section 1

Right of certain citizens to vote established

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Excerpts from Speeches by Attorney Generals

"In many states, felony disenfranchisement laws are still on the books. And the current scope of these policies is not only too significant to ignore - it is also too unjust to tolerate...

Across this country today, an estimated 5.8 million Americans - 5.8 million of our fellow citizens - are prohibited from voting because of current or previous felony convictions. That's more than the individual populations of 31 U.S. states. And although well over a century has passed since post-Reconstruction states used these measures to strip African Americans of their most fundamental rights, the impact of felony disenfranchisement on modern communities of color remains both disproportionate and unacceptable...

...It is unwise, it is unjust, and it is not in keeping with our democratic values. These laws deserve to be not only reconsidered, but repealed. And so today, I call upon state leaders and other elected officials across the country to pass clear and consistent reforms to restore the voting rights of all who have served their terms in prison or jail, completed their parole or probation, and paid their fines."

Attorney General Eric H. Holder, JD Feb. 11, 2014 "Attorney General Eric Holder Delivers Remarks on Criminal Justice Reform at Georgetown University Law Center" (procon.org)

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #1, The Right to Vote for People with Felonies, cont.

"Every felony is a serious breach of the bonds that unite our society. Rather than obligate the government to initiate the restoration process, it is reasonable to require felons to ask to have their rights restored. Also, felons should demonstrate rehabilitation by living crime-free during a waiting period after the completion of their sentences...

Felons earned the designation of convicted felon by breaking the law, so they should also earn the restoration of civil rights by abiding by the law and applying... The 'paid their debt' argument also wrongly suggests that completion of a criminal sentence signals rehabilitation."

Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, JD Mar. 16, 2011 article "Clemency Shift Upholds Rule of Law," (procon.org)

"We let ex-convicts marry, reproduce, buy beer, own property and drive. They don't lose their freedom of religion, their right against self-incrimination or their right not to have soldiers quartered in their homes in time of war. But in many places, the assumption is that they can't be trusted to help choose our leaders... If we thought criminals could never be reformed, we wouldn't let them out of prison in the first place."

Steve Chapman, Columnist and Editorial Writer at the Chicago Tribune, "Too Many Ex-Convicts Aren't Able to Vote," Star Tribune of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Aug. 15, 2006

"We don't let children vote, for instance, or noncitizens, or the mentally incompetent. Why? Because we don't trust them and their judgment...

So the question is, do criminals belong in that category? And I think the answer is clearly yes. People who commit serious crimes have shown that they are not trustworthy."

Roger Clegg, JD, President and General Counsel of the Center for Equal Opportunity, Debate held by the Legal Affairs Debate Club, Nov. 1, 2004

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #2

Securing the Right to Vote: The Selma-to-Montgomery Story

DOCUMENTS

What conditions created the need for a protest march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in 1965? Was the march successful in addressing those conditions?

Excerpts from Primary Source Documents



“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the governed. . .”

From the Declaration of Independence, 1776

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America, 1787

“The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”

Fifteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, 1870

“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

Pledge of Allegiance, 1945

Image from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voting_Rights_Act_of_1965#/media/File:Bloody_Sunday-Alabama_police_attack.jpeg

Voting Rights History for African Americans

Prior to the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, African Americans faced great difficulty becoming registered voters. Literacy tests were used in Alabama and six other states to prevent blacks from voting, but white citizens were not mandated to take the test in order to register.

Literacy tests and poll taxes

At the end of the 1950s, seven Southern states (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia) used tests, and five states (Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia) used poll taxes to prevent blacks from registering.

In Alabama, applicants were given a test with three parts. In part A, they had to respond in writing to a twenty-page test about the Constitution and about state and local government. Questions included: "Where do presidential electors cast ballots for president?" and "Name the rights a person has after he has been indicted by a grand jury."

Based on the test, the registrar judged whether the applicant was "literate" or "illiterate." The registrar's judgment was final and could not be appealed. After that, an applicant was given Parts "B" and "C."

Examples of Parts "B" and "C" from the Alabama literacy test, from the group Civil Rights Movement Veterans, can be found here:

<http://www.crmvet.org/info/litques.pdf>

History of the Selma-to-Montgomery March

Refer to the following document, or another resource which outlines the history of the Selma-to-



Montgomery March, to understand what conditions created the need for a protest march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in 1965, and whether and how the march was successful in addressing those conditions.

<http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/selma-montgomery-march>

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #3

The Right to Life, Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness



Dr. Martin Luther King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech of 1963 made reference to two primary documents, the Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. How does the position put forward in Dr. King's speech reflect the enduring issues expressed in the two excerpts? Incorporate relevant and specific evidence from the speech, the two excerpts, and your own knowledge of the enduring issue to support your analysis.

DOCUMENTS

Declaration of Independence (excerpt)

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/declarationofindependence.htm>

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, -- That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness.

-- Action of Second Continental Congress, July 4, 1776

Emancipation Proclamation (excerpt)

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamation/transcript.html

That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

-- President Abraham Lincoln, January 1, 1863

Image from Creative Commons <https://pixabay.com/en/martin-luther-king-jr-portrait-23759/>

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #3 -- The Right to Life, Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness

"I Have a Dream" Speech

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkhaveadream.htm>

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #3 -- The Right to Life, Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone. And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: "For Whites Only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."¹

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest -- quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #3 -- The Right to Life, Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness

work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."² This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #3 -- The Right to Life, Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness

And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all
of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

*My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.
Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride,
From every mountainside, let freedom ring!*

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.
And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New
Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.
Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of
Pennsylvania.

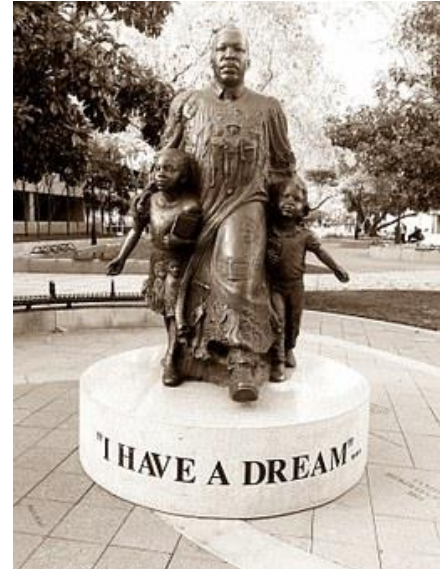
Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.
Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that:

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.
From every mountainside, let freedom ring.



And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every
village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day
when *all* of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and
Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!

-- Dr. Martin Luther King, March on Washington, Washington D.C., August 28, 1963

Image from Creative Commons <https://pixabay.com/en/martin-luther-king-jr-dream-american-749022/>

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #4 Pro / Con ~ Increasing the Minimum Wage

Read the article, which gives arguments for and against raising the minimum wage for fast food workers to \$15.00 an hour. In your response, analyze both positions to determine which one is best supported. Use specific evidence from the article to support your claim. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.

Strong Voice in 'Fight for 15' Fast-Food Wage Campaign

By Steven Greenhouse, DEC. 4, 2014

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/05/business/in-fast-food-workers-fight-for-15-an-hour-a-strong-voice-in-terrance-wise.html?_r=0



Steve Hebert for The New York Times
Terrance Wise, a low-paid fast-food worker, leading a one-day strike last year at a Burger King in Kansas City, Mo.

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #4: Pro / Con ~ Increasing the Minimum Wage

Questions

1. *What do you think the word **clamoring** means in paragraph five? Use the context clues in the sentence to help you.*
2. *What adjectives could you use to describe Terrence Wise?*
3. *What would you say is the primary objective of the Fight for 15 campaign? What reasons does the Campaign give for why this is important?*
4. *Terrence Wise compares the Fight for 15 Campaign to what other movements?*
5. *What are some of the strategies the Campaign is using to achieve its goals?*
6. *What groups are opposed to the minimum wage increase and what arguments do they give for why it would be harmful?*

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #5

Should Marijuana Be a Medical Option?

Read the arguments for and against marijuana as a medical option. In your response, analyze both positions to determine which one is best supported. Use specific evidence from the article to support your claim. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.

DOCUMENTS

Proponents of medical marijuana argue that it can be a safe and effective treatment for the symptoms of cancer, AIDS, multiple sclerosis, pain, glaucoma, epilepsy, and other conditions. They cite dozens of peer-reviewed studies, prominent medical organizations, major government reports, and the use of marijuana as medicine throughout world history.

Opponents of medical marijuana argue that it is too dangerous to use, lacks FDA-approval, and that various legal drugs make marijuana use unnecessary. They say marijuana is addictive, leads to harder drug use, interferes with fertility, impairs driving ability, and injures the lungs, immune system, and brain. They say that medical marijuana is a front for drug legalization and recreational use.



Should Marijuana Be a Medical Option?

Medical Marijuana ProCon.org is a nonpartisan, nonprofit website that presents research, studies, and pro and con statements on questions related to whether or not marijuana should be a medical option.

PRO (yes)

Joycelyn Elders, MD, former US Surgeon General, wrote the following in a Mar. 26, 2004 article titled "Myths About Medical Marijuana," published in the *Providence Journal*:

"The evidence is overwhelming that marijuana can relieve certain types of pain, nausea, vomiting and other symptoms caused by such illnesses as multiple sclerosis, cancer and AIDS -- or by the harsh drugs sometimes used to treat them. And it can do so with remarkable safety. Indeed, marijuana is less toxic than many of the drugs that physicians prescribe every day."

Mar. 26, 2004 - Joycelyn Elders, MD ★★★★★

CON (no)

Michael Bloomberg, MBA, former Mayor of New York City, May 31, 2013 on his WOR 710 radio show *The John Gambling Show with Mayor Mike*:

"There's no 'medical' [marijuana]. This is one of the great hoaxes of all time. The bottom line is, I'm told marijuana is much stronger today than it was 20-30 years ago. I don't have any personal experience, but in terms of today. So that's one problem. And number two, drug dealers have families to feed. If they can't sell marijuana, they'll sell something else. And the something else is gonna be worse. The push to legalize this is just wrong headed. If you think about what they say, 'It's not gonna hurt anybody, it doesn't lead to dependency.' Of course it does... This stuff is very dangerous."

May 31, 2013 - Michael Bloomberg, MBA ★

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #5
Should Marijuana Be a Medical Option?
PRO (yes)

Steven R. Patierno, PhD, Deputy Director of the Duke Cancer Institute and Professor of Medicine at Duke University School of Medicine, stated the following in a July 7, **2014** opinion article titled "New York Does Medical Marijuana Right," published in the *Wall Street Journal*:

"The use of marijuana as a medicine is remarkably uncontroversial at the bedside of a cancer patient or a child suffering from convulsions who might be helped...

The Compassionate Care Act, passed by the New York State Legislature last month and signed into law by Gov. Andrew Cuomo on July 5, [2014], introduces simple yet profound reforms by banning marijuana smoking and mandating individual dosing of medical cannabis in all other forms, such as capsules and vaporization. By treating medical marijuana like other medicines, New York shifted the debate into the mainstream of modern medicine and set a much-needed national standard of care...

Metered dosing is the standard of care in modern medicine, allowing doctors to prescribe precise amounts based on the patient's response, and reducing the chance of adverse drug interactions...

Cannabis produced in metered doses is easily tested for contaminants, and the potency of all active ingredients, for instance, and sterilized for safety—essential public-health safeguards... [T]he introduction of smokeless cannabis in dosage form will immediately ease human pain and suffering and help to move medical marijuana from the underground economy to the mainstream of the nation's health-care system."

July 7, 2014 - Steven Patierno, PhD ★★

CON (no)

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) stated in an Apr. 20, 2006 "Inter-Agency Advisory," posted on its website, *www.fda.gov*, and confirmed as current position on Apr. 9, **2014**:

"Marijuana is listed in schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA), the most restrictive schedule. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), which administers the CSA, continues to support that placement and FDA concurred because marijuana met the three criteria for placement in Schedule I under 21 U.S.C. 812(b)(1) (e.g., marijuana has a high potential for abuse, has no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States, and has a lack of accepted safety for use under medical supervision).

Furthermore, there is currently sound evidence that smoked marijuana is harmful. A past evaluation by several Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) agencies, including the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA), concluded that no sound scientific studies supported medical use of marijuana for treatment in the United States, and no animal or human data supported the safety or efficacy of marijuana for general medical use."

Apr. 9, 2014 - US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) ★



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Evidence-based Writing Prompt #5
Should Marijuana Be a Medical Option?

CON (no)

PRO (yes)

Sanjay Gupta, MD, Chief Medical Correspondent for CNN, wrote the following in an Aug. 8, **2013** article titled "Why I Changed My Mind on Weed," published on *CNN.com*:

"...I had steadily reviewed the scientific literature on medical marijuana from the United States and thought it was fairly unimpressive. Reading these papers five years ago, it was hard to make a case for medicinal marijuana. I even wrote about this in a TIME magazine article, back in 2009, titled 'Why I would Vote No on Pot.' Well, I am here to apologize.

I apologize because I didn't look hard enough, until now. I didn't look far enough. I didn't review papers from smaller labs in other countries doing some remarkable research, and I was too dismissive of the loud chorus of legitimate patients whose symptoms improved on cannabis...

I mistakenly believed the Drug Enforcement Agency listed marijuana as a schedule 1 substance because of sound scientific proof. Surely, they must have quality reasoning as to why marijuana is in the category of the most dangerous drugs that have 'no accepted medicinal use and a high potential for abuse.'

They didn't have the science to support that claim, and I now know that when it comes to marijuana neither of those things are true. It doesn't have a high potential for abuse, and there are very legitimate medical applications. In fact, sometimes marijuana is the only thing that works...

We have been terribly and systematically misled for nearly 70 years in the United States, and I apologize for my own role in that."

Aug. 8, 2013 - Sanjay Gupta, MD ★★★★★

Sanjay Gupta, MD, Chief Medical Correspondent for CNN, wrote the following in a Nov. 6, **2006** article titled "Why I Would Vote No on Pot," published in *TIME magazine*:

"Maybe it's because I was born a couple of months after Woodstock and wasn't around when marijuana was as common as iPods are today, but I'm constantly amazed that after all these years -- and all the wars on drugs and all the public-service announcements -- nearly 15 million Americans still use marijuana at least once a month...

Marijuana isn't really very good for you. True, there are health benefits for some patients. Several recent studies, including a new one from the Scripps Research Institute, show that THC, the chemical in marijuana responsible for the high, can help slow the progress of Alzheimer's disease. (In fact, it seems to block the formation of disease-causing plaques better than several mainstream drugs.) Other studies have shown THC to be a very effective anti-nausea treatment for people -- cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, for example -- for whom conventional medications aren't working. And medical cannabis has shown promise relieving pain in patients with multiple sclerosis and reducing intraocular pressure in glaucoma patients...

Frequent marijuana use can seriously affect your short-term memory. It can impair your cognitive ability and lead to long-lasting depression or anxiety. While many people smoke marijuana to relax, it can have the opposite effect on frequent users. And smoking anything, whether it's tobacco or marijuana, can seriously damage your lung tissue... Despite all the talk about the medical benefits of marijuana, smoking the stuff is not going to do your health any good."

Nov. 6, 2006 - Sanjay Gupta, MD

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #6

The Right to Bear Arms

The meaning of Second Amendment of the Constitution, which guarantees the “right of the people to keep and bear Arms,” is frequently debated. Read the article below and the passages which follow. These readings give arguments for and against the right to carry concealed weapons.

Analyze both positions in order to determine which one is best supported. Use specific evidence from the passages, as well as your own knowledge about the enduring issue of the right to carry weapons, to support your claim. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.

1. Primary source:

The Second Amendment was adopted on December 15, 1791, as part of the first ten amendments contained in the [Bill of Rights](#) in the US Constitution.

A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

2. Pro / con:

"The Second Amendment guarantees that ‘the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.’ This means that law-abiding citizens should not need to beg the government for permission to carry a firearm. That would turn the ‘right’ to bear arms into a mere ‘privilege.’ Likewise, one should not have to be photographed, fingerprinted, or registered before they can exercise their Second Amendment rights. Criminals certainly do not jump through these ‘hoops.’ The Second Amendment is no different than any of the other protections enumerated in the Bill of Rights. That is, honest citizens should not need a government issued permission slip; rather, they should be able to carry as a matter of right."

July 14, 2010 - [Gun Owners of America](#) ★

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #6 - The Right to Bear Arms

Robert Cottrol, JD, PhD, Professor of Law and History at George Washington University, wrote in the article "Gun Control Is Racist, Sexist, and Classist" published in the Sept. 1999 issue of *American Enterprise*:

"In recent years a majority of states have passed laws permitting honest citizens to carry concealed weapons, and the results tell us much about self-defense and the responsibility of the average citizen. Once it was passionately argued that such laws would turn minor altercations into bloody shoot-outs; now we know better. Over 1 million Americans have licenses to carry firearms, but firearms misuse by this group has been utterly negligible. Criminologists now debate not how much harm has been caused by concealed-carry laws, but how much good...

[A right to bear arms] says the individual is not simply a helpless bystander in the difficult and dangerous task of ensuring his or her safety. Instead, the citizen is an active participant, an equal partner with the state in ensuring not only his own safety but that of his community. This is a serious right for serious people. It takes the individual from servile dependency on the state to the status of participating citizen, capable of making intelligent choices in defense of one's life and ultimately one's freedom. This conception of citizenship recognizes that the ultimate civil right is the right to defend one's own life, that without that right all other rights are meaningless, and that without the means of self-defense the right to self-defense is but an empty promise."

Sept. 1999 - *Robert Cottrol, JD, PhD* ★★

Legal Community Against Violence wrote in the Dec. 11, 2009 publication "America Caught in the Crossfire: How Concealed Carry Laws Threaten Public Safety" available at www.lcav.org:

"Thanks to a relentless campaign by the gun lobby, state concealed carry laws aren't just bad; they're getting worse... Americans want solutions to our nation's gun violence epidemic - which kills more than 30,000 and injuries almost 70,000 each year - and understand that widespread carrying of concealed weapons isn't the answer; it's part of the problem...

Most existing CCW permitting schemes are full of dangerous gaps, allowing too many people to carry weapons in too many public places. Contrary to the claims of the gun lobby, research shows that permissive CCW laws do not decrease crime. In fact, these laws may increase crime."

Dec. 11, 2009 - *Legal Community Against Violence* ★

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #6 - The Right to Bear Arms

The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence wrote in the resource "Federal Concealed Carry" available on www.bradycampaign.org (accessed July 19, 2010):

"Allowing untrained, or under-trained, persons to carry loaded hidden handguns in public puts people at risk of being killed or injured, intentionally and unintentionally. It also makes it harder for law enforcement to identify the real perpetrators during a shooting. Allowing more people to carry concealed handguns in densely populated cities, on crowded subways, buses and sports stadiums, is a recipe for disaster..."

Almost every major law enforcement organization – including the International Brotherhood of Police Officers and the International Association of Chiefs of Police – thinks law enforcement should have discretion over the carrying of concealed handguns in public...

The public is overwhelmingly against allowing regular citizens to bring their guns into public places like sports stadiums, college campuses and bars."

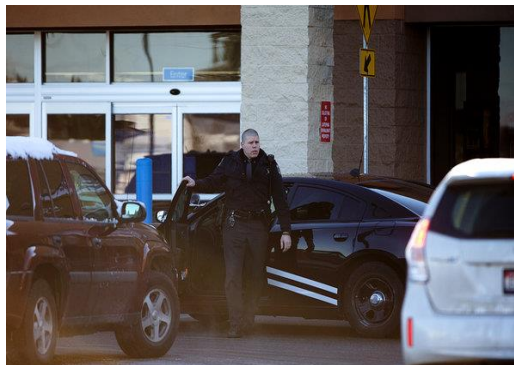
July 19, 2010 - *Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence* ★

2. News Story:

Woman at Walmart Is Accidentally Shot Dead by 2-Year-Old Son

By Bill Morlin and Kirk Johnson December 30, 2014

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/31/us/walmart-shooting-by-2-year-old.html?_r=0



An Idaho State Patrol officer arrived at the Walmart in Hayden, Idaho, on Tuesday after a 2-year-old boy accidentally shot and killed his mother with a gun he found in her purse.

Credit Tess Freeman/Coeur d'Alene Press, via Associated Press

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #7

Pro / Con – Should Work Requirements for Public Assistance be Increased?

President Trump signed an executive order on April 10, 2018 which directed federal agencies to strengthen and add work requirements for low-income Americans receiving public assistance.

Read the article below, which gives arguments for and against increased and additional work requirements for people receiving assistance. Analyze both positions in order to determine which one is best supported. Use specific evidence from the article, as well as your own knowledge about the issue, to support your claim. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.

Trump Executive Order Strengthens Work Requirements for Neediest Americans

by Tracy Jan, Washington Post, April 10, 2018

www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/trump-executive-order-strengthens-work-requirements-for-neediest-americans

President Trump on Tuesday signed an executive order directing federal agencies to strengthen existing work requirements and introduce new ones for low-income Americans receiving Medicaid, food stamps, public housing benefits and welfare as part of a broad overhaul of government assistance programs.

The order directs federal agencies to review all policies related to current work requirements as well as exemptions and waivers and report back to the White House with recommendations within 90 days.

“Welfare reform is necessary to prosperity and independence,” said Andrew Bremberg, assistant to the president and director of Trump’s domestic policy council.

Bremberg highlighted the success of the 1996 welfare changes, signed by President Bill Clinton, that required those receiving cash assistance to work, or look for work. He said “common-sense reforms” are needed to help Americans “reclaim their independence” and to ensure that tax dollars are being spent on the truly needy.

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #6 - Should Work Requirements for Public Assistance be Increased?

The federal government spent more than \$700 billion on low-income assistance in 2017. The executive order is the strongest statement Trump has made about the country's social safety net program since his February budget proposal to slash billions of dollars in food stamps, health insurance and federal housing subsidies.

Trump indicated at the time that he would push legislation to institute broad work requirements for families receiving housing vouchers, expanding on moves by some states to require recipients of Medicaid and food stamps to work.

Poverty advocates criticized the moves. "For those who are able to work, they should work. But there shouldn't be barriers for those who are in need when they can't work," said Derrick Johnson, president and chief executive of the NAACP.

Valerie Wilson, director of the Program on Race, Ethnicity and the Economy at the Economic Policy Institute, said a majority of those on assistance were already working – but that wages in many jobs remained too low for people to get by. "Work requirements are inconsistent with the realities of poverty in America and are unlikely to provide any resolution," she said. "The truth is that a majority of poor people who can work, do work – more than 60 percent."

Wilson said low-wage workers are working more hours now that they did nearly 40 years ago.

"The problem is that their jobs don't pay enough," she said. "People who are on public assistance and don't work are not choosing between a six-figure salary or staying at home. Taking a low-paying job gets no one closer to economic stability."

Conservatives praised the executive order, calling it "Welfare Reform 2.0." While congressional action is needed to institute tougher work requirements, which Republicans are trying to accomplish for food stamp recipients through the farm bill, the executive branch could unilaterally issue rules and regulations that promote work.

"It's a great start towards another wave of reform," said Josh Archambault, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Government Accountability, a free-market think tank based in Naples, Fla. "Work requirements have proven to be an effective tool to help people make it out of poverty. You can't be on food stamps and be out of poverty by definition if you have no other earned income."

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #6 - Should Work Requirements for Public Assistance be Increased?

Archambault said the White House could standardize work requirements and eligibility rules across programs.

Senior White House officials during a briefing Tuesday evening disagreed with the premise that many of those receiving government assistance already work. They said states with welfare policies that have enacted “common-sense” work requirements, such as Kansas and Maine, have helped drive the poorest Americans into jobs.

In Kansas, work requirements for adults without children resulted in caseloads dropping by 75 percent – and the average amount of time spent on welfare was cut in half, the White House said. The administration said studies after changes in Maine and Kansas showed that individuals who returned to work after leaving safety-net programs saw their incomes more than double, on average.

“Unfortunately, many of the programs designed to help families have instead delayed economic independence, perpetuated poverty, and weakened family bonds,” the executive order said. “The welfare system still traps many recipients, especially children, in poverty and is in need of further reform and modernization in order to increase self-sufficiency, well-being, and economic mobility.”



Image from Creative Commons <https://pixabay.com/en/signal-symbol-industrial-safety-2063091/>

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #8

“Dreamers” and DACA

Excerpted from <https://www.procon.org>

There are arguments on both sides of the debate about “Dreamers” and whether or not to support DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.) Read the background information about “Dreamers,” then read the arguments arguing for and against the claim that is DACA is good for America. Analyze both positions to determine which one is best supported. In your response, use specific evidence from the article to support your claim. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.

Background

DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) is an Obama administration policy implemented on June 15, 2012. DACA prevents undocumented immigrants who arrived in the United States as children from being deported and allows those immigrants to get work permits.

The undocumented immigrants who participate in the program are referred to as Dreamers, a reference to the DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act) that was first introduced in the Senate on Aug. 1, 2001 by Orrin Hatch (R-UT) but did not pass.

The DREAM Act would have implemented similar policies as DACA via legislation instead of a presidential memo. Many versions of the DREAM Act have been introduced by both parties and have failed to pass. A recent effort was introduced by Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) on July 20, 2017.

On Sep. 5, 2017 President Trump rescinded DACA, an action that was met with two federal court rulings saying the policy could not be ended on Mar. 5, 2018 as planned. The Trump administration appealed those federal court rulings to the US Supreme Court, but, on Feb. 26, 2018, the US Supreme Court declined to hear the appeal. DACA will therefore remain in effect while the lower courts or Congress decide its fate.

According to a Jan. 2018 CNN poll, 84% of respondents believed that DACA should be continued, allowing Dreamers to remain in the country; 11% thought the program should be stopped and Dreamers should be up for deportation; 5% had no opinion.

Proponents of DACA and the Dream Act say the policies are good for the US economy and that deporting Dreamers is inhumane and cruel. Opponents of DACA and the Dream Act say the policies only encourage more illegal immigration and that amnesty should not be given to law breakers.

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #8 -- "Dreamers" and DACA

Who are the Dreamers?

In order to qualify for DACA, undocumented immigrants must meet certain criteria:

- ❖ under 31 years old as of June 15, 2012
- ❖ have come to the United States before their 16th birthday
- ❖ lived in the United States continuously from June 15, 2007 to the present
- ❖ physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012 and at the time of application
- ❖ have come to the United States without documents before June 15, 2012 or have had their lawful status expire as of June 15, 2012
- ❖ currently in school, have graduated from high school or earned a GED, or have been honorably discharged from the Coast Guard or military
- ❖ have not been convicted of a felony or "significant misdemeanors" (such as DUI), or three or more misdemeanors of any kind

Enrollment in the program requires renewal every two years.

- About 690,000 undocumented immigrants were enrolled in DACA as of Sep. 4, 2017.
- 79.4% were born in Mexico, by far the majority nationality, with El Salvador coming in second with 3.7%.
- The remaining top ten countries of origin also include, in order of percentage of enrollees: Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, South Korea, Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, and Argentina. While the majority of Dreamers are from Mexico or Central and South America, many were born in Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa.
- 89,000 DACA recipients live in the Los Angeles metro area, with nearly twice as many enrollees as New York, which came in second. The average Dreamer is 21 to 25 years old (37%), a woman (53%), and not married (83%).

Evidence-based Writing Prompt #8 -- "Dreamers" and DACA

Con 1 -- DACA and the Dream Act encourage more illegal immigration

Congressman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA), said that DACA "encouraged more illegal immigration and contributed to the surge of unaccompanied minors and families seeking to enter the U.S. illegally." Between 2013 and 2016, 206,962 unaccompanied immigrant children were caught crossing the US-Mexico border, an average of over 50,000 annually.

According to Karl Eschbach, PhD, DACA will increase the undocumented population because those who don't qualify for DACA will stay in the hopes of qualifying eventually, and more people will immigrate assuming coverage by DACA or a similar program.

Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX) stated, "The Dream Act will only encourage more illegal immigration. One only needs to look at history to see how amnesty has played out in the past. The 1986 amnesty legislation legalized about three million illegal immigrants. But rather than put an end to illegal immigration, the amnesty only encouraged more. There are at least 11 million illegal immigrants in the U.S." The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) included the legalization of about three million undocumented immigrants. Following the act's implementation, between 1990 and 2007, illegal immigration grew by 8.5 million.

Con 2 -- Amnesty should not be given to law breakers

A country fairly enforcing its own laws is not cruel. As David Benkoff, MA, Senior Policy Analyst at The Daily Caller notes, Dreamers are "victims of their parents... [and] it's stunningly callous and cruel that they would knowingly subject their own children to such risks."

Dreamers have already broken the law by crossing the border illegally and/or remaining in the country without documentation. Rep. Steve King (R-IA) stated "amnesty in America, with regard to immigration, is a reward for immigration lawbreakers and is a pardon for immigration lawbreakers coupled with their reward of the objective of their crime." The Center for Immigration Studies stated that many Dreamers also commit work-related crimes such as Social Security fraud, forgery, perjury on I-9 employment forms, and falsification of ID cards.

Since 2012, 15,000 Dreamers have lost their DACA status because of gang involvement or other criminal activity. However, Dreamers are only disqualified if they are convicted of a crime, which according to Ronald W. Mortensen, PhD, means "Dreamer gang-bangers, Dreamer identity thieves, Dreamer sexual predators, Dreamers who haven't paid income taxes, and Dreamers committing a wide range of other crimes all qualify for DACA status as long as they haven't been convicted of their crimes."

