

# FINDING AUTHENTICITY IN STANDARDIZATION

Jessica Lafontaine and Bethany Costello-Stebelton

De La Salle Institute, Chicago

[lafontainej@dls.org](mailto:lafontainej@dls.org)

[costello-stebeltonb@dls.org](mailto:costello-stebeltonb@dls.org)

**“I feel nervous because this is the test that will determine the rest of my life.” –DLS student**

High school students see writing for the ACT and SAT as authentic writing experiences. The tests intend to measure whether or not they can do authentic writing in college.

“The ACT writing test is a 40-minute essay test that **measures your writing skills**. The test consists of one writing prompt that will describe a complex issue and present three different perspectives on that issue,” (ACT.org).

### **“It’s About the Real World**

The SAT Essay is a lot like a typical college writing assignment in which you’re asked to analyze a text. Take the SAT with Essay and show colleges that you’re ready to come to campus and write.

### **What You’ll Do**

Read a passage.

Explain how the author builds an argument to persuade an audience.

Support your explanation with evidence from the passage,”  
(<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/inside-the-test/essay>) .

# WHAT IT TAKES: PROVIDING AN AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE

- Authentic writing skills
  - We all teach students to analyze, synthesize, and construct an argument.
  - This presentation will show how to do those things in ways that more closely mimic the actual look and wording of the standardized tests in order to increase transfer, particularly for struggling students.

# WHAT IT TAKES: FINDING STUDENT VOICE IN STANDARDIZATION

- Writing Assignments to follow that help students find their voices within the curriculum
  - ACT and SAT modeled in the classroom
    - *Nickel & Dimed: on not getting by in America* by Barbara Ehrenreich
    - Co-educational learning
    - Social networking
    - Kurt Vonnegut's letter, "I am very real"
    - *Crucible* Proctor's dilemma assignment
    - Nonfiction article in connection to *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline

## Globalization

Improved travel and communication networks have the potential to transform the world population into a single, global society. We can now travel across the globe in a matter of hours. The internet enables us to spread ideas and share cultural norms instantly. Many of the products we use every day are produced on the other side of the world. Globalization can be seen as beneficial, but is generally thought of as a more complicated issue. Given the accelerating pace of globalization, what are the implications it could have for humanity?

*Read and carefully consider these perspectives. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about increasing globalization.*

### Perspective One

As the development of a single world culture becomes a real possibility, we risk losing the diversity that makes life interesting. As people become more similar, the unique elements that identify various cultures will be lost in global melting pot.

### Perspective Two

The ability to cheaply ship goods across the planet makes necessities and luxuries more affordable to all. Increased product affordability leads to an increase in the quality of life for millions of people globally.

### Perspective Three

Globalization brings greater interaction between countries, which could lead to more conflict. The more we interact with other cultures, the more our differences and disagreements will be emphasized. It would be better for cultures to be more isolated from one another in order to exist harmoniously.

### Essay Task

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on the question of the implications increased globalization may have on humanity. In your essay, be sure to:

- analyze and evaluate the perspectives given
- state and develop your own perspective on the issue
- explain the relationship between your perspective and those given

Your perspective may be in full agreement with any of the others, in partial agreement, or wholly different. Whatever the case, support your ideas with logical reasoning and detailed, persuasive examples.

This is a  
real ACT  
prompt

***Nickel and Dimed: life for America's working-poor***  
**ACT Writing Practice**

Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed* attempts to demystify the lives of working-poor and poverty-stricken Americans by going undercover as a journalist to try and see if she can match real-life wages and the cost of living, as this group of people attempt on a daily basis. Along the route, Ehrenreich learns a great deal about life as a member of the working-poor and the views from those sitting on the other side. Based on her experiences, she poses several questions for the reader to ponder: Are there truly fair and reasonable accesses to adequate living standards in America, including wages, work hours, and opportunities?

Read and carefully consider the three perspectives regarding the access to adequate living standards in the United States. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the topic.

<b>Perspective 1:</b>	<b>Perspective 2:</b>	<b>Perspective 3:</b>
Unless we recalculate the cost of living in relationship to the cost of food and rent, especially in cities, the working-poor will continue to earn wages that are less than they can adequately live on. They will continue to remain in poverty.	The working-poor need to have more options to help them get out of poverty; such as free shelter so that they can save money to get ahead, but the current wages for the given jobs are fair.	The working-poor have the same access to adequate living standards as the rest of America, they just choose not to make the same choices that successful Americans make, like going to college or trade school.

**ESSAY TASK**

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on access to adequate living standards in the United States today. In your essay, be sure to:

- **Analyze and evaluate the perspectives given**
- **State and develop your own perspective on the issue**
- **Explain the relationship between your perspective and those given**

# This is a real SAT prompt

## Prompt

As you read the passage below, consider how Paul Bogard uses

- evidence, such as facts or examples, to support claims.
- reasoning to develop ideas and to connect claims and evidence.
- stylistic or persuasive elements, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.

**Adapted from Paul Bogard, “Let There Be Dark.” ©2012 by Los Angeles Times. Originally published December 21, 2012.**

At my family’s cabin on a Minnesota lake, I knew woods so dark that my hands disappeared before my eyes. I knew night skies in which meteors left smoky trails across sugary spreads of stars. But now, when 8 of 10 children born in the United States will never know a sky dark enough for the Milky Way, I worry we are rapidly losing night’s natural darkness before realizing its worth. This winter solstice, as we cheer the days’ gradual movement back toward light, let us also remember the irreplaceable value of darkness.

All life evolved to the steady rhythm of bright days and dark nights. Today, though, when we feel the closeness of nightfall, we reach quickly for a light switch. And too little darkness, meaning too much artificial light at night, spells trouble for all.

Already the World Health Organization classifies working the night shift as a probable human carcinogen, and the American Medical Association has voiced its unanimous support for “light

pollution reduction efforts and glare reduction. Our bodies need darkness to produce the hormones that regulate our developing, and our bodies need darkness to prevent diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and other health problems. The cause of “short sleep” is “long light.” Whether it’s laptops, notebooks and smartphones to bed, there

Write an essay in which you explain how Paul Bogard builds an argument to persuade his audience that natural darkness should be preserved. In your essay, analyze how Bogard uses one or more of the features in the directions that precede the passage (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of his argument. Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant features of the passage.

Your essay should not explain whether you agree with Bogard’s claims, but rather explain how Bogard builds an argument to persuade his audience.

The rest of the world depends on darkness as well, including nocturnal and crepuscular species of birds, insects, mammals, fish and reptiles. Some examples are well known—the 400 species of birds that migrate at night in North America, the sea turtles that come ashore to lay their eggs—and some are not, such as the bats that save American farmers billions in pest control and the moths that pollinate 80% of the world’s flora. Ecological light pollution is like the bulldozer of the night, wrecking habitat and disrupting ecosystems several billion years in the making. Simply put, without darkness, Earth’s ecology would collapse....

In today’s crowded, louder, more fast-paced world, night’s darkness can provide solitude, quiet and stillness, qualities increasingly in short supply. Every religious tradition has considered darkness invaluable for a soulful life, and the chance to witness the universe has inspired artists, philosophers and everyday stargazers since time began. In a world awash with electric light...how would Van Gogh have given the world his “Starry Night”? Who knows what this vision of the night sky might inspire in each of us, in our children or grandchildren?

Yet all over the world, our nights are growing brighter. In the United States and Western Europe, the amount of light in the sky increases an average of about 6% every year. Computer images of the United States at night, based on NASA photographs, show that what was a very dark country as recently as the 1950s is now nearly covered with a blanket of light. Much of this light is wasted energy, which means wasted dollars. Those of us over 35 are perhaps among the last generation to have known truly dark nights. Even the northern lake where I was lucky to spend my summers has seen its darkness diminish.

It doesn’t have to be this way. Light pollution is readily within our ability to solve, using new lighting technology. Already, many cities and towns across North America are experimenting with smart lighting systems which offer dramatic possibilities for controlling light pollution. Success with simply turning off portions of their public lighting. “City of Light,” which already turns off its monument lighting at night, requires its shops, offices and public buildings to turn off their lights. Even if we succeed in saving energy, such reductions in light will also never truly address the problem of light pollution and the value and beauty of the darkness we are losing.

## Prompt

As you read the passage below, consider how Barbara Ehrenreich uses

- evidence, such as facts or examples, to support claims.
- reasoning to develop ideas and to connect claims and evidence.
- stylistic or persuasive elements, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.

Adapted from *Nickel and Dimed: On Not Getting By In America* by Barbara Ehrenreich @ 2001 by Barbara Ehrenreich

When the market fails to distribute some vital commodity, such as housing, to all who require it, the usual liberal-to-moderate expectation is that the government will step in and help. We accept this principle—at least in a halfhearted and faltering way—in the case of health care, where government offers Medicare to the elderly, Medicaid to the desperately poor, and various state programs to the children of the merely very poor. But in the case of housing, the extreme upward skewing of the market has been accompanied by a cowardly public sector retreat from responsibility. Expenditures on public housing have fallen since the 1980s, and the expansion of public rental subsidies came to a halt in the mid-1990s. At the same time, housing subsidies for home owners—who tend to be far more affluent than renters—have remained at their usual munificent levels. It did not escape my attention, as a temporarily low-income person, that the housing subsidy I normally receive in my real life — over \$20,000 a year in the form of a mortgage-interest deduction — would have allowed a truly low-income family to live in relative splendor. Had this amount been available to me in monthly installments in Minneapolis, I could have moved into one of those "executive" condos with sauna, health club, and pool.

But if rents are exquisitely sensitive to market forces, wages clearly are not. Every city where I worked in the course of this project was experiencing what local businesspeople defined as a "labor shortage"—commented on in the local press and revealed by the ubiquitous signs saying "Now Hiring" or, more imperiously, "We Are Now Accepting Applications." Yet wages for people near the bottom of the labor market remain fairly flat, even "stagnant." "Certainly," the *New York Times* reported in March 2000, "inflationary wage gains are not evident in national wage statistics."<sup>1</sup> Federal Reserve chief Alan Greenspan, who spends much of his time anxiously scanning the horizon for the slightest hint of such "inflationary" gains, was pleased to inform Congress in July 2000 that the forecast seemed largely trouble-free. He went so far as to suggest that the economic laws linking low unemployment to wage increases may no longer be operative, which is a little like saying that the law of supply and demand has been repealed.<sup>2</sup> Some economists argue that the apparent paradox rests on an illusion: there is no real "labor shortage," only a shortage of people willing to work at the wages currently being offered.<sup>3</sup> You might as well talk about a "Lexus shortage"—which there is, in a sense, for anyone unwilling to pay \$40,000 for a car.

In fact, wages have risen, or did rise, anyway, between 1996 and 1999. When I called around to various economists in the summer of 2000 and complained about the inadequacy of the wages available to entry-level workers, this was their first response: "But wages are going up!" According to the Economic Policy Institute, the poorest 10 percent of American workers saw their wages rise from \$5.49 an hour (in 1999 dollars) in 1996 to \$6.05 in 1999. Moving up the socioeconomic ladder, the next 10 percent-sized slice of Americans—which is roughly where I found myself as a low-wage worker—went from \$6.80 an hour in 1996 to \$7.35 in 1999.<sup>4</sup>

Obviously we have one of those debates over whether the glass is half empty or half full; the increases that seem to have mollified many economists do not seem so impressive to me. To put the wage gains of the past four years in somewhat dismal perspective: they have not been sufficient to bring — workers up to the amounts they were earning twenty seven years ago, in 1973. In the first quarter of 2000, the poorest 10 percent of workers were earning only 91 percent of what they earned in the distant era of Watergate and disco music. Furthermore, of all workers, the poorest have made the least progress back to their 1973 wage levels. Relatively well-off workers in the eighth decile, or 10 percent-sized slice, where earnings are about \$20 an hour, are now making 106.6 percent of what they earned in 1973. When I persisted in my carping to the economists, they generally backed down a bit, conceding that while wages at the bottom are going up, they're not going up very briskly. Lawrence Michel at the Economic Policy Institute, who had at the beginning of our conversation taken the half-full perspective, heightened the mystery when he observed that productivity—to which wages are theoretically tied—has been rising at such a healthy clip that "workers should be getting much more."<sup>5</sup>

The most obvious reason why they're not is that employers resist wage increases with every trick they can think of and every ounce of strength they can summon. I had an opportunity to query one of my own employers on this subject in Maine. You may remember the time when Ted, my boss at The Maids, drove me about forty minutes to a house where I was needed to reinforce a shorthanded team. In the course of complaining about his hard lot in life, he avowed that he could double his business overnight if only he could find enough reliable workers. As politely as possible, I asked him why he didn't just raise the pay. The question seemed to slide right off him. We offer "mothers' hours," he told me, meaning that the workday was supposedly over at three—as if to say, "With a benefit like that, how could anybody complain about wages?"

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Write an essay in which you explain how Barbara Ehrenreich builds an argument to persuade her audience that there is a problem with wages for low-income workers in America. In your essay, analyze how Ehrenreich uses one or more of the features in the directions that precede the passage (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of her argument.

Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant features of the passage.

Your essay should not explain whether you agree with Ehrenreich's claims, but rather explain how Ehrenreich builds an argument to persuade her audience.

<sup>1</sup> "Companies Try Dipping Deeper into Labor Pool," *New York Times*, March 26, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> "An Epitaph for a Rule That Just Won't Die," *New York Times*, July 30, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> "Fact or Fallacy: Labor Shortage May Really Be Wage Stagnation," *Chicago Tribune*, July 2, 2000; "It's a Wage Shortage, Not a Labor Shortage," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, March 25, 2000.



# POSITIVE STUDENT RESPONSES TO THIS APPROACH

- **“I feel prepared because of all of the practice that I have received through my education at De La Salle. From working on prompts in class to taking the ACT prep class, I feel very prepared for this.”**  
-DLS student
- **“I feel confident because of my junior year teacher showing me how to extract evidence and main points out of the information I’m given as well as integrate what’s in the text with what I’ve been taught.”**  
-DLS student

# #1: ASSISTING STUDENTS IN INTERPRETING WRITING PROMPTS

- **“I feel angry because of the fact that we can’t choose the topic we are writing about.” -DLS student**
  - Build confidence here
  - Talk about power of choice and voice here
- Practice with topics they care about and want to talk about.
  - Poll students for hot topics, and teach paragraph and voice:
    - Co-ed learning is HOT @ DLS
    - Digital Lives
    - Presidential Election?

## Co-educational Learning ACT Writing Practice

A current debate among educators today is the value of co-educational high schools versus single-gender high schools. Students are expected to mature academically, intellectually, and emotionally in high school as a way to prepare for college and the global workforce they will eventually enter. But, does the quality of education suffer when high school adolescents are placed in co-educational classrooms as opposed to single-gendered classrooms?

Read and carefully consider the three perspectives regarding co-educational learning. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the topic

Perspective 1	Perspective 2	Perspective 3
<p>What students gain in a co-educational environment is the ability to prepare and grow together for the demands of the real world, a place where men and women must live and work together, and respect each other in very diverse settings.</p>	<p>While single gendered classes can help immature or shy students feel more at ease with the demands of high school, single-gender does not properly incorporate the practice of socialization, working with the opposite sex.</p>	<p>While the workforce forces us to collaborate with members of the opposite sex, at the high school level boys and girls brains are not at an equal maturation process and have different needs as students.</p>

### ESSAY TASK

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on co-educational high schools in the world today. In your essay, be sure to:

- **Analyze and evaluate the perspectives given**
- **State and develop your own perspective on the issue**
- **Explain the relationship between your perspective and those given**

## The Power of Social Networking Sites

### ACT Writing Practice

Technology has revolutionized the way the world stays connected and the way humans interact with each other. Almost all people in first-world countries are digitally connected to the globe and have immediate access to information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Many people use social networking sites as main forms of communication with friends, family, and the world around us. Advancements in technology are usually seen as a sign of progress and growth, but what is lost when we replace real human interaction with electronic devices and rely on social networking sites as a primary form of communication and interaction with the world around us? Given the rapid growth and prevalence of social networking sites in our world it is worth examining the implications and meanings of its presence in our lives.

Read and carefully consider the three perspectives regarding co-educational learning. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the topic.

Perspective 1	Perspective 2	Perspective 3
Social networking sites are negatively changing the way humans interact. Society is obsessed with technology and has forgotten how to interact with humans in face-to-face settings, and it causes social isolation.	Social networking sites are good tools for keeping in touch with old friends and family members you may not see often enough. Social networking sites are also much simpler tools than word-of-mouth to spread messages about views and beliefs and push for social justice in society in a civilly obedient manner.	Social networking sites are powerful tools because they allow the spread of information to happen almost immediately, especially breaking news. It keeps humans engaged and active in some of the most important facets of society including politics and global crises that they may otherwise not know about or care to be involved in.

#### ESSAY TASK

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on the power of social networking sites in the world today. In your essay, be sure to:

- **Analyze and evaluate the perspectives given**
- **State and develop your own perspective on the issue**
- **Explain the relationship between your perspective and those given**

# #2: ASSISTING STUDENTS IN GENERATING IDEAS

- Pre-writing and brainstorming
- In-class debates
  - Choose controversial topic
  - Engage in a four-corner debate
  - Write up perspectives
- Carousel activity
- Loose Socratic Seminar on topic

*Nickel and Dimed*  
"Socratic" Discussion Questions:

1. Were your perceptions of blue-collar Americans transformed or reinforced by *Nickel and Dimed*? Have your notions of poverty and prosperity changed since reading the book? What about your own treatment of waiters, maids, and salespeople?
2. Housing costs pose the greatest obstacle for low-wage workers. Why does our society seem to resist rectifying this situation? Are there realistic solutions to help solve/eliminate this continuous struggle?
3. Ehrenreich is white and middle class. She asserts that her experiences in this 'experiment' would've been different had she been a single mother or a different race. Discuss your views on this argument.

**Open-Ended Questions for a Socratic Seminar**  
AP ENG IV

To fully prepare for a Socratic Seminar, write questions and comments using these sentence frames to stimulate your thinking about the text.

1. This story reminds me of... because...
2. When thinking of our class discussion on perspective, I feel like this fits in/does not fit in because...
3. I think we can learn a lot from this text, including...
4. The narration of this text is.... It enhances/or detracts from the story because...
5. A point on the critical responses that I agree/disagree with is... because...

My Discussion Points:

**Open-Ended Questions for a Socratic Seminar**  
AP ENG IV

To fully prepare for a Socratic Seminar, write questions and comments using these sentence frames to stimulate your thinking about the text.

1. When I read this prompt I immediately think about... because...
2. I think we can learn a lot from this text, including...
3. A point I agree/disagree with is... because...

My Discussion Points:

# #3: ASSISTING STUDENTS IN STRUCTURING ESSAYS PART 1

- Weekly writing skills--‘CERCA’ Fridays
  - Normed paragraph structure
    - Claim, Evidence, Reasoning, Counterargument, Audience Recognition
      - <https://thinkcerca.com/>
    - Use current events and newspaper articles
    - Use sample ACT/SAT prompts they already have opinions on
      - Co-ed classrooms, social networking

**Example: "Opinion: Disney embraces culturally aware and diverse casting in 'Moana,'" by Michael Cayna**

**Claim:** In Michael Cayna's article, "Opinion: Disney embraces culturally aware and diverse casting in 'Moana,'" he is trying to get people to understand the importance of hiring actors who represent the culture of the characters within the movie instead of hiring just white actors to fill the roles, like Disney is doing with "Moana."

**Set-up + Evidence:**

According to research conducted by the author for this article, he found, "In Sony's movie, 'Aloha,'....," (Cayna 2).

According to Lalo Alcaraz, a cartoonist, cultural commentator, and TV show writer, "I have seen plenty....," (Cayna 2).

**Reasoning:** The research findings here suggest that there are more white actors playing roles of color or cultural roles in movies than actors of other colors or cultures. This is problematic because a white actor cannot necessarily relate to all cultures and ethnicities. There needs to be less bias by the hiring staff and more inclusion of all races and ethnicities to properly play roles.

This tells us that professionals, in the industry, are seeing this problem first hand. This matters because it's been happening for too long, and Disney is finally stepping up. White actors cannot necessarily relate to all cultures and ethnicities.

**Counter:**

Some may say that having white actors play any role is preferable because they will give the film a better rating and most white actors have won awards for their performances so they are good at their professions. However, this still does not help the viewer to fully understand the character's life and background. This is also problematic because a white actor cannot possibly begin to understand the cultural background of every single character he or she might audition to play; it is imperative to pick an actor who best represents a culture.

**Audience Recognition:**

Thus, hiring an actor who doesn't represent the cultural background of the character in the movie is a poor choice. It is good that Disney is starting to do something to fix this.

## Full Paragraph:

In Michael Cavna's article, "Opinion: Disney embraces culturally aware and diverse casting in 'Moana,'" he is trying to get people to understand the importance of hiring actors who represent the culture of the characters within the movie instead of hiring just white actors to fill the roles, like Disney is doing with 'Moana.' According to Lalo Alcaraz, a cartoonist, cultural commentator, and TV show writer, "I have seen plenty..." (Cavna 2). This tells us that professionals, in the industry, are seeing this problem first hand. This matters because it has been happening for too long, and Disney is finally stepping up. White actors cannot necessarily relate to all cultures and ethnicities. Some may say that having white actors play any role is preferable because they will give the film a better rating and most credible white actors have won awards for their performances so they must be good at their professions. However, this still does not help the viewer to fully understand the characters life and background. This is also problematic because a white actor cannot possibly begin to understand the cultural background of every single character he or she might audition to play; it is imperative to pick an actor who best represents the culture. Thus, hiring an actor who doesn't represent the cultural background of the character in the movie is a poor choice. It is good that Disney is starting to do something to fix this.



Student  
voice



# #3: ASSISTING STUDENTS IN **STRUCTURING ESSAYS** PART 2

- ACT/SAT ready
  - How to:
    - organize thoughts/perspectives
    - multiple body paragraphs

Perspective 1:	Perspective 2:	Perspective 3:
Unless we recalculate the cost of living in relationship to the cost of food and rent, especially in cities, the working-poor will continue to earn wages that are less than they can adequately live on. They will continue to remain in poverty.	The working-poor need to have more options to help them get out of poverty; such as free shelter so that they can save money to get ahead, but the current wages for the given jobs are fair.	The working-poor have the same access to adequate living standards as the rest of America, they just choose not to make the same choices that successful Americans make, like going to college or trade school.

**ESSAY TASK**

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on access to adequate living standards in the United States today. In your essay, be sure to:

- Analyze and evaluate the perspectives given
- State and develop your own perspective on the issue
- Explain the relationship between your perspective and those given

Body 1	Body 2	Body 3
<b>Claim 1: my best argument</b> <i>Developed from myself OR in line with one of the perspectives given</i>	<b>Claim 2: next argument</b> <i>Developed from perspectives given</i>	<b>Counter</b> <i>Developed from opposing perspective given</i>
<b>Evidence to support</b> <i>An example</i>	<b>Evidence to support</b> <i>An example</i>	<b>Rebuttal</b> <i>However...</i>

Body 1	Body 2
<b>Claim 1: my best argument</b> <b>Developed from perspectives given</b>	<b>Claim 2: next argument</b> <b>Developed from perspectives given</b>
<b>Evidence to support</b> <b>An example</b>	<b>Evidence to support</b> <b>An example</b>
<b>Counter:</b> <b>Implications and/or rebuttal</b>	<b>Counter:</b> <b>Implications and/or rebuttal</b>

## Prompt

As you read the passage below, consider how Barbara Ehrenreich uses

- evidence, such as facts or examples, to support claims.
- reasoning to develop ideas and to connect claims and evidence.
- stylistic or persuasive elements, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.

Write an essay in which you explain how Barbara Ehrenreich builds an argument to persuade her audience that there is a problem with wages for low-income workers in America. In your essay, analyze how Ehrenreich uses one or more of the features in the directions that precede the passage (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of her argument.

Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant features of the passage. Your essay should not explain whether you agree with Ehrenreich's claims, but rather explain how Ehrenreich builds an argument to persuade her audience.

**These can be interchangeable; this is student voice and choice.**

Body 1	Body 2	Body 3
Use of Evidence	Use of Reasoning	Implications/Counter
Evidence to support <i>An example</i>	Evidence to support <i>An example</i>	Rebuttal <i>However...</i>

Body 1	Body 2
Claim 1: authors best argumentative approach: evidence? Developed from author's own writing	Claim 2: next best argumentative approach: reasoning? Developed from author's own writing
Evidence to support An example	Evidence to support An example
Counter: Implications and/or rebuttal	Counter: Implications and/or rebuttal

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- **“Your tips really improved my writing style going into the writing test of the ACT. The chart really broke down how to interpret the perspectives.”**

**-DLS student**

# #4: ASSISTING STUDENTS IN SYNTHESIZING AND CLOSE READING

- ACT: “Explain the relationship between your perspective and those given.”
- SAT: “Consider how the author uses stylistic or persuasive elements, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.”
- Identifying relationships between ideas
  - Multiple related, but diverse, sources
    - *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut
    - “Dulce et Decorum Est” by Wilfred Owen
    - “Ambush” by Tim O’Brien
    - “Why Soldiers Won’t Talk” by John Steinbeck
  - Repetitive during and after reading questions
  - Essay asking them to use textual evidence from multiple sources to answer the central question: Based on your reading of the war literature, what is your conclusion about why soldiers are hesitant to speak of their experiences in battle?
  - Essay asking them to compare the writing of multiple works of literature
  - SAT-style essay about “I am very real” by Kurt Vonnegut

## “Why Soldiers Won’t Talk” by John Steinbeck

Answer the questions below.

1. What is Steinbeck’s claim? Why don’t soldiers talk about combat?
2. How do you respond to Steinbeck’s use of the second-person “you” in his descriptions of the physical effects of war?
3. Do Steinbeck’s evidence and reasoning seem believable to you? Be specific. Why or why not?
4. How does his claim cause us to question conventional ideas about war?
5. How does Steinbeck’s essay connect to *Slaughterhouse-Five*? (And to the other war literature we have now read?)

## Dulce et Decorum Est by Wilfred Owen

Answer the questions below.

1. Summarize Owen’s poem.
2. What images stand out to you? How do you respond to these?
3. What do you think is the main idea that Wilfred Owen is trying to communicate?
4. How does the main idea cause us to question conventional ideas about war?
5. How does Owen’s poem connect to *Slaughterhouse-Five*? (And to the other war literature we have now read?)

## “Ambush” by Tim O’Brien

Answer the questions below.

1. What are descriptive words or phrases used to describe the surrounding environment?
2. What are descriptive words or phrases used to describe the man the narrator killed?
3. What are descriptive words or phrases used to describe the narrator’s feelings?
4. What are descriptive words or phrases used to describe the action of the story?
5. What is your favorite quote from the story? Why? Provide quote and page #.
6. What do you think is the main idea that Tim O’Brien is trying to communicate?
7. How does the main idea cause us to question conventional ideas about war?
8. How does O’Brien’s short story connect to *Slaughterhouse-Five*? (And to the other war literature we have read?)

## Essay

Respond to the question below. (Refer specifically to at least 2 works of literature and write at least 2 paragraphs.)

Based on your reading of the war literature, what is your conclusion about why soldiers are hesitant to speak of their experiences in battle?

## Comparison

Choose 2 of the 4 passages below and compare them. (Write at least 1 paragraph.)

"In a way, it seemed he was part of the morning fog, or my own imagination, but there was also the reality of what was happening in my stomach... I tried to swallow whatever was rising from my stomach, which tasted like lemonade, something fruity and sour. I was terrified. There were no thoughts of killing" (O'Brien 1107).

"This is how you feel after a few days of constant firing. Your skin feels thick and insensitive. There is a salty taste in your mouth. A hard, painful knot is in your stomach where the food is undigested. Your eyes do not pick up much detail and the sharp outlines of objects are slightly blurred. Everything looks a little unreal. When you walk, your feet hardly seem to touch the ground and there is a floaty feeling all of your body" (Steinbeck 1092).

"Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,  
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,  
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.  
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,  
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;  
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots  
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind" (Owen).

"Now somebody was shaking Billy awake. Billy still felt drunk, was still angered by the stolen steering wheel. He was back in World War II again... Billy stopped, shook his head, 'You go on,' he said... The banks of the creek were high enough to allow the scouts to stand without being seen. Billy staggered down the bank ridiculously... Billy Pilgrim, there in the creekbed, thought he, Billy Pilgrim was turning to steam painlessly. If everybody would leave him alone for just a little while, he thought, he wouldn't cause any more trouble. He would turn to steam and float up among the treetops. Somewhere the big dog barked again. With the help of fear and echoes and winter silences, that dog had a voice like a big bronze gong" (Vonnegut 47-48).

## Prompt

As you read the passage below, consider how Kurt Vonnegut uses

- evidence, such as facts or examples to support claims.
- reasoning to develop ideas and to connect claims and evidence.
- stylistic or persuasive elements, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.

**Adapted from “I am very real” by Kurt Vonnegut 2002 in *Letters of Note*. Originally published November 16, 1973.**

November 16, 1973

Dear Mr. McCarthy:

I am writing to you in your capacity as chairman of the Drake School Board. I am among those American writers whose books have been destroyed in the now famous furnace of your school.

Certain members of your community have suggested that my work is evil. This is extraordinarily insulting to me. The news from Drake indicates to me that books and writers are very unreal to you people. I am writing this letter to let you know how real I am.

I want you to know, too, that my publisher and I have done absolutely nothing to exploit the disgusting news from Drake. We are not clapping each other on the back, crowing about all the books we will sell because of the news. We have declined to go on television, have written no fiery letters to editorial pages, have granted no lengthy interviews. We are angered and sickened and saddened. And no copies of this letter have been sent to anybody else. You now hold the only copy in your hands. It is a strictly private letter from me to the people of Drake, who have done so much to damage my reputation in the eyes of their children and then in the eyes of the world. Do you have the courage and ordinary decency to show this letter to the people, or will it, too, be consigned to the fires of your furnace?

I gather from what I read in the papers and hear on television that you imagine me, and some other writers, too, as being sort of ratlike people who enjoy making money from poisoning the minds of young people. I am in fact a large, strong person, fifty-one years old, who did a lot of farm work as a boy, who is good with tools. I have raised six children, three my own and three adopted. They have all turned out well. Two of them are farmers. I am a combat infantry veteran from World War II, and hold a Purple Heart. I have earned whatever I own by hard work. I have never been arrested or sued for anything. I am so much trusted with young people and by young people that I have served on the faculties of the University of Iowa, Harvard, and the City College of New York. Every year I receive at least a dozen invitations to be commencement speaker at colleges and high schools. My books are probably more widely used in schools than those of any other living American fiction writer.

If you were to bother to read my books, to behave as educated persons would, you would learn that they are not sexy, and do not argue in favor of wildness of any kind. They beg that people be kinder and more responsible than they often are. It is true that some of the characters speak coarsely. That is because people speak coarsely in real life. Especially soldiers and hardworking men speak coarsely, and even our most sheltered children know that. And we all know, too, that those words really don't damage children much. They didn't damage us when we were young. It was evil deeds and lying that hurt us.

After I have said all this, I am sure you are still ready to respond. I am sure you will decide what books our children are going to be made to read in your community. This is surely so. But it is also true that if you exercise your right and fulfill that responsibility in an ignorant, harsh, un-American manner, then people are entitled to call you bad citizens and fools. And your own children are entitled to call you that.

I read in the newspaper that your community is mystified by the letters from all over the country about what you have done. Well, you have discovered that Drake is a part of American civilization, and you have discovered that Americans can't stand it that you have behaved in such an un-American way. Perhaps you will learn from this that books are sacred to free people for very good reasons, and that wars have been fought against books which hate books and burn them. If you are an American, you should allow all ideas to circulate freely in your community, not merely your own.

If you and your board are now determined to show that you in fact have wisdom and maturity when you exercise your powers over the education of your young, then you should acknowledge that it was a rotten lesson you taught young people in a free society when you denounced and then burned books—books you hadn't even read. You should also resolve to expose your children to all sorts of opinions and information, in order that they will be better equipped to make decisions and to survive.

Again: you have insulted me, and I am a good citizen, and I am very real.

Kurt Vonnegut

Write an essay in which you explain how Kurt Vonnegut builds an argument to persuade his audience that his book should not have been censored by their school and that in fact students should be trusted to read literature with strong and diverse opinions. In your essay, analyze how Vonnegut uses one or more of the features in the directions that precede the passage (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of his argument. Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant features of the passage.

Your essay should not explain whether you agree with Vonnegut's claims, but rather explain how Vonnegut builds an argument to persuade his audience.





FINAL PURPOSE: TEACH TO THE TEST  
WITHOUT TEACHING TO THE TEST

**Proctor's Dilemma**  
**ACT Writing Practice**

At the end of Arthur Miller's play about the Salem Witch Trials, *The Crucible*, the protagonist John Proctor must make a choice between confessing and staying alive and telling the truth and dying. At first, he considers confessing because he wants to be with Elizabeth, and he already sees himself as a sinner. But he changes his mind because he doesn't want Danforth to use him to legitimize the court and tarnish the good names of those accused who refuse to confess and who go boldly to their deaths. But, does Proctor ultimately make the right decision for the right reasons, or are his priorities askew?

Read and carefully consider the three perspectives regarding Proctor's dilemma. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the topic.

Perspective 1	Perspective 2	Perspective 3
Proctor should have confessed and allowed himself to be labeled a witch because what is most important is that his wife and children have their husband and father in their lives, no matter the circumstances.	Proctor made the best and moral choice in sticking to the truth. He was right to defy the desires of Rev Parris and Judge Danforth and to protect the reputation of his friends.	It does not really matter what Proctor chooses because the damage has already been done to the town and the accused.

**ESSAY TASK**

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on Proctor's dilemma in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. In your essay, be sure to:

- **Analyze and evaluate the perspectives given**
- **State and develop your own perspective on the issue**
- **Explain the relationship between your perspective and those given**

TEACH  
LITERARY  
CURRICULUM  
AND  
STANDARDIZED  
TESTS

Though it is true if John would have confessed he would have lived, but if John would have confessed he couldn't live with himself. John was already living with his sin of adultery, and if you add that with his confession he would hate himself. Sure if he confessed he could have continued living with his wife and children but he wouldn't have been able to live with himself knowing that his confession justified the deaths of good people like Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey. If John choose to live he would not be alive physically, he would have been dead on the inside.



TEACH TEXTUAL ANALYSIS **AND**  
STANDARDIZED TESTS

## Prompt

As you read the passage below, consider how Peter Singer uses

- evidence, such as facts or examples to support claims.
- reasoning to develop ideas and to connect claims and evidence.
- stylistic or persuasive elements, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.

**Adapted from an opinion piece entitled “Ethics Plays an Important Role in Artificial Intelligence” by Peter Singer and found at Newsela.**

Last month, AlphaGo, a computer program specially designed to play the game Go, caused shockwaves among aficionados when it defeated Lee Sedol. He is one of the world’s top-ranked professional players. He lost the five-game tournament by a score of 4-1.

Why is that news? Nearly 20 years ago, the IBM computer Deep Blue defeated world chess champion Garry Kasparov. We all know computers have improved since then. But Deep Blue won through sheer computing power, using its ability to calculate the outcomes of more moves to a deeper level than even a world champion can. Go is played on a far larger board (19-by-19 squares, compared with 8-by-8 squares for chess). Go has more possible moves than there are atoms in the universe, so raw computing power was unlikely to beat a human with a strong intuitive sense of the best moves.

### Enthusiasm About Artificial Intelligence

Instead, AlphaGo was designed to win by playing a huge number of games against other programs and adopting the strategies that proved successful. You could say that AlphaGo evolved to be the best Go player in the world. It achieved in only two years what natural selection took millions of years to accomplish.

Eric Schmidt, executive chairman of Google’s parent company Alphabet, the owner of AlphaGo, is enthusiastic about what artificial intelligence (AI) means for humanity. He said humanity would be the winner, whatever the outcome.

Advances in AI will make every human being smarter, more capable and “just better human beings.”

Will it? Around the same time as AlphaGo’s triumph, Microsoft’s “chatbot” – software named Taylor that was designed to respond to messages from people ages 18 to 24 – was having a chastening experience. “Tay,” as she called herself, was supposed to be able to learn from the messages she received and gradually improve her ability to conduct engaging conversations. Unfortunately, within 24 hours, people were teaching Tay racist and sexist ideas. When she started saying positive things about Hitler, Microsoft turned her off and deleted her most offensive messages.

### “Smarter Than The Best Human Brains”

I do not know if the people who turned Tay into a racist undermine Microsoft’s new toy. Either way, AlphaGo’s serves as a warning. It is one thing to unleash AI within a controlled environment, but quite different to release AI into the real world, where the uncontrolled AI has disastrous consequences.

Nick Bostrom is director of the Future of Humanity Institute. He says that it will not always be as easy to turn off an intelligent

### Superintelligence Still A Distant Issue, But Worth Thinking About

We should not take these estimates too seriously. Only 31 percent of the scientists that were surveyed responded. The researchers who did respond work in AI and have an incentive to boost the importance of their field by trumpeting its potential to produce impressive results.

The prospect of AI achieving superintelligence may seem too distant to worry about, especially given more pressing problems. But there is a case to be made for starting to think about how we can design AI to take into account the interests of humans, and indeed of all sentient beings. That would include machines, if they are also conscious beings with interests of their own.

With driverless cars already on California roads, it is not too soon to ask whether we can program a machine to act ethically. As such cars improve, they will save lives, because they will make fewer mistakes than human drivers do. Sometimes, however, they will face a choice between lives. Should they be programmed to swerve to avoid hitting a child running across the road, even if that will put their passengers at risk? What about swerving to avoid a dog? What if the only risk is damage to the car itself, not to the passengers?

### An Ethical Machine

Perhaps there will be lessons to learn as such discussions about driverless cars get started. But driverless cars are not superintelligent beings. Teaching ethics to a machine that is more intelligent than we are, in a wide range of fields, is a far more daunting task.

Bostrom begins Superintelligence with a fable about sparrows who think it would be great to train an owl to help them

g. One sparrow objects that they should first complete an exciting new project underway. They will take on the owl when they have successfully raised one.

like those impatient sparrows. Bostrom is a Distinguished and Laureate Professor at the University

Write an essay in which you explain how Peter Singer builds an argument to persuade his audience that artificial intelligence should not be pursued without first considering how to design it to be ethical. In your essay, analyze how Singer uses one or more of the features in the directions that precede the passage (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of his argument. Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant features of the passage.

Your essay should not explain whether you agree with Singer’s claims, but rather explain how Singer builds an argument to persuade his audience.

Breaking arguments down to better understand what the argument is, its strengths and weaknesses, and how it is constructed

- What is Singer's **claim**?
- What is the piece of **evidence** you find most convincing? Why?
- Does Singer's **reasoning** seem believable to you? Be specific. Why or why not?
- What **persuasive techniques** does he use in his essay and are these effective? Explain.
- What **stylistic features** does he use in his essay and are these effective? Explain.

Works with anything argumentative you're reading or watching

- What is Steinbeck's **claim** in "Why Soldiers Won't Talk"?
- What is the piece of **evidence** you find most convincing? Why?
- Does Steinbeck's **reasoning** seem believable to you? Be specific. Why or why not?
- What **persuasive techniques** does he use in his essay and are these effective? Explain.
- What **stylistic features** does he use in his essay and are these effective? Explain.

# TEACH ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING AND STANDARDIZED TESTS

## Step 3: Draft

Spend 20 minutes writing your draft

- **Intro**
  - Hook: grab your readers attention
  - Background: context for your discussion
  - Thesis: claim 1 and claim 2
  
- **Body 1**
  - C: Claim 1
  - E: Evidence
  - R: Reasons why or how your evidence is legitimate...evaluate its worth!
    - “This matters because...”
  - A: Audience Recognition of the claim, then transition
  
- **Body 2**
  - C: Claim 2
  - E: Evidence
  - R: Reasons why or how your evidence is legitimate... evaluate its worth!
    - “This matters because...”
  - A: Audience Recognition of the claim, then transition
  
- **Body 3**
  - C: Counterpoint
    - This should address an opposing perspective from the prompt directly...evaluate its problems
  - R: Rebuttal... discuss the credibility of your side as better!
    - “This is not completely accurate because...”
    - “While this may be it, it is certainly ...”
  
- **Conclusion**
  - Restate main claims
  - End with a bang! Bold statement/ rhetorical question

Body 1	Body 2	Body 3
<b>Claim 1: my best argument</b> <i>Developed from myself OR in line with one of the perspectives given</i>	<b>Claim 2: next argument</b> <i>Developed from perspectives given</i>	<b>Counter</b> <i>Developed from opposing perspective given</i>
<b>Evidence to support</b> <i>An example</i>	<b>Evidence to support</b> <i>An example</i>	<b>Rebuttal</b> <i>However...</i>



QUESTIONS?





HOW TO CREATE ASSIGNMENTS LIKE  
THESE USING ANY TOPIC, WORK OF  
LITERATURE, OR SUBJECT: