*English Instructional Plan –* Task Assigned: **Write a persuasive essay with a viable action step based on research** Read two or more contrasting informational texts including cross-curricular content (E.g. science or environmental issues, history or political news) and write a persuasive essay including data, evidence, and facts to support your side. Include counterclaims and evidence and argue effectively against them. Conclude with a viable action step based on reading and research. Sharing the findings in a multimodal presentation would enhance the impact of this selection.

**Primary Strand: 11.6** **Writing --**The student will write in a variety of forms, to include persuasive/argumentative, reflective, interpretive, and analytic with an emphasis on persuasion/argumentation.

**Primary Strand: 11.5 Reading –** The student will read, interpret, analyze, and evaluate a variety of nonfiction texts.

**Integrated Strand/s: 11.2, 11.5, 11.7, 11.8 (9.5, 10.5 and 9.6, 10.6 and 9.7, 10.7 and 9.8, 10.8)**

**Essential Understanding:**

* recognize that media messages express viewpoints and contain values to influence the beliefs and behaviors of the intended audience
* understand how to analyze informational material
* understand a variety of persuasive techniques and rhetorical devices
* understand that writing should be purposefully crafted with attention to deliberate word choice, precise information, and vocabulary
* understand that grammatical conventions vary syntax and paragraph structures for a variety of purposes and audiences
* understand the ethical issues and responsibility of documentation in research

**Essential Knowledge, Skills, and Processes:**

* analyze and use a variety of persuasive techniques and rhetorical devices, including, but not limited to logos, ethos, pathos, claims, counterclaims
* analyze information from multiple texts to make inferences and draw conclusions
* provide an objective summary of a text
* evaluate the relevance and quality of evidence used to support a claim and address a counterclaim
* write persuasively/argumentatively, organizing reasons logically and effectively
* analyze sources and determine the best information to support a position/argument
* identify counterclaims and use counterarguments
* compare/contrast and select evidence from multiple texts to strengthen a position/argument
* determine a viable action step based on reading and research
* revise writing for clarity and quality of information to effectively match the intended audience and purpose
* document sources using MLA or APA style, including in-text citation and corresponding works cited list
* incorporate ideas and quotations skillfully by directly quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing text from reliable sources and citing them appropriately
* revise and edit writing for appropriate style and language
* identify and narrow a topic for research and develop a plan to locate and collect relevant information from diverse sources
* identify valid main and supporting ideas in various sources and distinguish them from misconceptions and biased points of view when information conflicts
* incorporate ideas and quotations skillfully by directly quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing text from reliable sources and citing them appropriately

**Primary SOL: 11.6** **Writing --**The student will write in a variety of forms, to include persuasive/argumentative, reflective, interpretive, and analytic with an emphasis on persuasion/argumentation.

**Reinforced (Related Standards) SOL: 11.2 Communication and Multimodal Literacies**: The student will examine how values and points of view are included or excluded and how media influences beliefs and behaviors. **SOL: 11.5 Reading:** The student will read, interpret, analyze and evaluate a variety of nonfiction texts. **SOL: 11.7 Writing:** The student will edit writing for capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, paragraphing, and Standard English. **SOL: 11.8 Research:** The student will analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and organize information from a variety of credible resources to produce a research product.

**Academic Background/Language:**

* To be successful with this assignment, students must be familiar with the language of persuasion/argumentation and nonfiction: claim, counterclaim, thesis, conclusion, viable solution, audience, rhetorical devices, and logical organization.
* To be successful with this assignment, students must be familiar with the language of writing and revision: composition, written expression, usage, mechanics, revision, and self-editing.
* To be successful with this assignment, students must be familiar with the language of research: credible sources, MLA or APA documentation, in-text citation, works cited, and the incorporation of ideas through quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing.

## Materials

* Students will need to have computers to use for research and for writing.
* Students will need to have a specific database for research such as ProQuest, ProCon.org, Newsela. There are many available through your school library.
* Students will need to have a place to save their papers such as Google Docs, Microsoft word.
* Students may need to have a folder to keep all their work together. This is especially helpful if students are writing the paper by hand.

## Student/Teacher Actions: What should students be doing? What should teachers be doing?

* Before beginning this unit the teacher will need to spend some time planning and working with the librarians and the research database selected. Also, before beginning, the teacher should review prior class notes on writing and research to determine areas of concern so that there is a clear purpose for the assignment.
* The teacher should create or be able to provide a rubric for the final assessment so that students understand expectations. It is best to plan with the end result in mind, and the rubric should be selected or written to allow for student growth and success.
* The teacher should determine time in class and time in the library. The teacher should consider the class time needed for each activity. For example, this unit will span \_\_\_\_\_\_ days, including \_\_\_\_ days for research, \_\_\_\_\_ for outlining, \_\_\_\_\_ for drafting, \_\_\_\_ for revision, \_\_\_\_ for edits. Of course, this schedule may change due to student need or snow days, but it is a good idea to have a calendar in place.
* On day one, the teacher will need to introduce the assignment and assist students in selecting a research topic. The teacher or the librarians can introduce the database selected. Students will select a topic and begin preliminary research. The teacher may want to approve students’ selections to avoid repetition. *A day one research sheet is included under resources.*
* Students need to complete their research. The teacher needs to determine the number of sources needed and make that clear to the students. The teacher should collect and check the research work sheets for students each day. This allows the teacher to check students’ sources, help with summaries, catch any plagiarism errors in paraphrasing or quoting, keep students on task, and encourage each one individually. If part of the expectation, this also helps insure students do not do additional research at home. Students may turn in their research sheets in a folder. *A sample research sheet is included under resources.*
* Students should work in class to complete the outlines for the papers. The teacher may choose to have students all follow the same outlining strategy, or the teacher may allow students to select what type of outline they would like to do. A mini-lesson on outlining would be helpful if a specific method is required. The teacher will monitor to make sure students are on task and that their organizational strategies are clear. If time allows the teacher might have each student share his or her final thesis statement with the class. Students may turn in their outlines. *A sample outlining sheet is included under resources.*
* If work was collected, the teacher needs to return the research sheets and the outlines to each student. Students will need these to write the paper in class. It might be helpful to have a folder for each student so that no work gets misplaced. Students will use time in class to type their paper. The teacher may choose to share a Google Folder with each class and require the students to type/ submit their paper in that folder. If needed, the teacher may remove editing rights to insure students do not do additional writing or revision at home.
* Teacher should provide students with time for revision. The teacher should guide students through the revision process. The teacher may have to instruct students on how to revise on the computer, how to add notes, to change the font, color, etc. During the process of revision, students need to work on their own papers (the focus is on self-reflection, not peer-revision). If needed, the teacher may remove editing rights at the end of class to insure students do not do additional writing or revision at home.
* On the final day, students should re-read, edit, and polish their final drafts before submitting the papers. This should only take a short time; however, this final read is very helpful to the students.

**Assessment (Diagnostic, Formative, Summative)**

**Diagnostic:** review prior research and determine areas of need, approve research topic (after discussion with student) share thesis statements, monitor classroom computer use and instruct students in areas of need, determine student’s level of comfort with the vocabulary of writing and research and teach mini-lessons accordingly, determine students’ level of comfort with documentation and teach mini-lessons accordingly.

**Formative:** completed research sheet day one and topic selection, completed research sheets, check of summary of article, completed and checked outline. This assignment could be replicated with different texts or assigned texts & topics for assessment purposes. The teacher should set expectations prior to research based on class need and ability.

**Summative:** Completed and assessed final paper (the summative assessment should be based on a rubric provided to students prior to collection of the final paper)

**Reading Connections:**

* **SOL 11.5 – The student will read, interpret, analyze, and evaluate a variety of nonfiction texts.**

**Extensions and Connections (for all students)**

* Allow students to select their own topics for research
* Allow only one topic per class (so that students do not share research)
* Encourage students to select topics with personal interest / understanding
* Select a database that provides students the ability to read the documents at their most comfortable Lexile level and font size
* Select a database that provides works cited entries for each article
* Provide time for students who are absent to make up research and writing in a supervised study hall or after school setting
* Prior to research and writing, review and provide students a class “glossary” of writing and research terms to reference in class.
* Allow students to outline in a format that is best suited for their needs and their topic.
* Plan mini-lessons as needed for whole class concerns such as formatting and documentation.

**Strategies for Differentiation**

* Consider student ability concerning the number of researched sources expected (for example, a struggling reader may complete only two full articles; whereas, another student may easily complete more).
* Print requested articles for students to annotate and highlight for research – rather than completing the research sheets
* Allow ELL students to read articles in their home language if possible
* Allow ELL or SWD students to use alternative multimedia resources such as Infographics, statistics, cartoons, posters, pictures with captions, documentaries, videos or interviews with an expert, if nonfiction articles are too challenging.
* Consider student ability in determining the length of the paper for assessment

*Note: The following pages are intended for classroom use for students as a visual aid to learning.*

Writing and Research ☺ Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Today** you are visiting the library, learning how to use the research tools, determining a topic and writing a working thesis for a paper.

**This week** – You will be completing the research for your paper. Your goal will be to complete \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ research sheet(s) per day for the assignment – turn these in to me!

**The assignment:** Read contrasting informational texts including cross-curricular content and write a persuasive paper using data, evidence, and facts to support your side. Include counterclaims and evidence and argue effectively against them. Conclude with a viable action step based on reading and research.

Define the following:

* Persuasive paper:
* Counterclaim:
* Viable Action Step:

**The Audience:** Your teacher(s)

**The research source:** It is called \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and it focuses on providing scholarly research on two sides of current issues. You will be able to look at the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the issue you are writing about.

**As the librarians share the database with you, please write down interesting and pertinent information about the research source and how to use it:**

**Browse Issues**

After browsing topics and issues, list four topics that are of most interest to you

**To narrow down your topic, consider**

* Does this issue have a personal impact or appeal?
* Do I know someone affected by this issue?
* Has this issue affected my state or my community?
* Is this a topic I have always wanted to know more about?
* Does this topic connect to my future field of studies?
* Does this topic meet the requirements of the project?

Make sure you get teacher approval BEFORE beginning your actual research.

**Chosen Research Topic** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Approval** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (teacher must initial)

Answer the following questions based on your chosen topic

1. What terms do you need to know to better understand and write about this issue?
2. Who is affected by the issue you have selected?
3. What are the main controversies associated with this issue?
4. Who are the key people or key organizations associated with this issue?
5. Determine significant events related to this issue. Write some notes or create a timeline to help guide your thinking about this issue.

**Research Sheet:** Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Class / Block \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Checked by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your working thesis statement\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 How will this article be used in your paper? Circle all that apply

Main Point Counterclaim Evidence Viable Solution Multimodal Analysis

Summary of the Article you read:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Quote the information you plan to use from the article. Include the parenthetical citation.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Write the works cited information for this article (MLA format) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Outlining and preparing to write your paper** – Doing a great outline will make writing the paper a breeze. You will want to think about how you plan to organize all of your ideas and research. *Please remember that you are not writing a five paragraph essay!*

**First:** Introduce the problem and provide some background for the situation. Make this your hook – really convince the audience that there is a problem / issue to be solved. This is a good place to include the time-line or history of the issue. It is a great place for some shocking statistics or even for an image. Jot down some ideas here of what you might use for this section.

 **Next:** Write your thesis statement

**Then:** You will have several paragraphs – somewhere between two and ten – in which you do the following:

* Support your argument (evidence and experts)
* Acknowledge or refute other arguments (counterclaims)

Write your topic sentences for each of these paragraphs of your paper and determine what research you are going to use in each paragraph. You can do that with highlighters or numbering on your research sheets. Think through this and do it! This really helps!

**And:** You will have paragraph(s) on what your viable solution is to the issue or problem. This may be in your conclusion paragraph, or you may want to do a paragraph or more for this on its own. You may want to include the solution in with your body paragraphs. Think through this as you outline!

 What is your viable solution?

Where will you include it?

 How will you support it in your paper?

Make sure that you use transitions as you are writing:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP** | **TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION** |
| **Similarity** | also, in the same way, just as … so too, likewise, similarly |
| **Exception/Contrast** | but, however, in spite of, on the one hand … on the other hand, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, in contrast, on the contrary, still, yet |
| **Sequence/Order** | first, second, third, … next, then, finally |
| **Time** | after, afterward, at last, before, currently, during, earlier, immediately, later, meanwhile, now, recently, simultaneously, subsequently, then |
| **Example** | for example, for instance, namely, specifically, to illustrate |
| **Emphasis** | even, indeed, in fact, of course, truly |
| **Place/Position** | above, adjacent, below, beyond, here, in front, in back, nearby, there |
| **Cause and Effect** | accordingly, consequently, hence, so, therefore, thus |
| **Additional Support or Evidence** | additionally, again, also, and, as well, besides, equally important, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, then |
| **Conclusion/Summary** | finally, in a word, in brief, briefly, in conclusion, in the end, in the final analysis, on the whole, thus, to conclude, to summarize, in sum, to sum up, in summary |

This list is from UNC at Chapel Hill, but you can find lots of others on line if needed. Just make sure that you use transitions so that your argument is clearly stated – it needs to flow!

**Finally,** you will write the paper and write the works cited page. Remember that that works cited gives the complete information for the sources that you used in your paper. The parenthetical citation will include the first word from the entry (usually the author’s last name) and the page number. The works cited page will give ALL the information about your sources. It is typed, using hanging indent. It is double spaced and needs to be in alphabetical order.

DNA Databases Aid Investigators in Keeping Communities Safe (Student Sample 1)

 Recent searches on genome websites have allowed authorities to arrest serial rapist and murderer, Joseph James DeAngelo, also known in California as the “Golden State Killer” (Leavenworth “Don’t”). The former cop was caught when DNA he left at a crime scene was matched with his great-great-great-grandparents’ DNA, which investigators revealed through a genome website, similar to Ancestry.com (Rosen). This new tool could be a game changer for investigators, considering many serial killers and rapists are not in DNA or fingerprint databases. A Radford University study showed that from the 5,031 serial killers documented from the 1900’s, 12.9% had never been arrested before starting their killing sprees (Leavenworth “Don’t”). According to an MIT study, more than 12 million people have submitted their DNA to various genealogy sites, with approximately a million more submitted each month (Rosen). Anyone who uploads his or her DNA to these sites is helping investigators keep their community safe. Forensic genetic testing and collection for databases does not violate privacy or ethics when used by law enforcement. While there is currently no legislation allowing or permitting investigators to use this tool, I feel with a few privacy tweaks this tool may soon become essential in major criminal investigations.

Joseph DeAngelo’s arrest was not the only example of investigators using family members’ DNA to invoke an arrest. Well known serial killer “The Grim Sleeper” was identified when his son was arrested on a weapons charge. Thus, his DNA was entered into California’s DNA database and yielded a familiar match to DNA from the brutal slayings (Rosen). Once three million Americans have uploaded their genomes to one public genealogy website, nearly everyone in the United States would be identifiable by solely their DNA (Rosen). This technology would help aid society in various ways including finding missing children, researching genetic diseases, aiding criminal investigations, reuniting lost family members, and strengthening national security. Christine Rosen writes, “Niche DNA companies market to parents, urging them to bank their child’s DNA in case a child is kidnapped or offering to help determine paternity” (Rosen). By banking a child's DNA in a database, if they were ever to become a missing person, investigators don’t have to patiently wait on labs to collect DNA from a toothbrush before intensively searching. Already having a missing person’s DNA before they vanish saves valuable time, and it saves lives. Many citizens and law enforcement agencies follow the belief of CeCe Moore who said, “I think we can make society a safer place and hopefully even cause someone to stop and think -- maybe it could be a deterrent” (Leavenworth “Don’t”). Communities need as many deterrents for crime as possible due to the rising crime rates. As these rates increase, the technology investigators use to catch criminals must become more complex.

 As always, there are two sides to every issue. Many Americans fear a loss of privacy and violation of ethics when their DNA is used for other reasons. DNA databases were originally designed to aid law enforcement in making direct genetic matches, not partial ones like familial searching (Leavenworth “Don’t”). While some may argue this, investigators have to change their ways and techniques, much like criminals do. Why would a criminal do the same thing over and over that law enforcement knows how to stop? As criminals get creative and innovative, so do investigators. Another reason citizens are reluctant to support this method is the worry of foreign government interference. One concerned scholar points out, “Think of foreign governments using this technique to track down American citizens” (Netburn). While there is a slim possibility this may happen, you must have done something illegal in that other country. Russia, for example, would not be tracking down Billy Jones just for fun. He must have done something to get their attention, so that one is on you buddy. While there are risks to having your DNA accessible by law enforcement, the good it may do will greatly outweigh the cons.

 A big concern in this whole debate is the DNA of children that is collected for the database. During traffic stops or investigations, police can conduct “DNA dragnets” and collect DNA from the individual (Leavenworth “Most”). Police officers sometimes collect DNA from minors for the database instead of charging them with a crime. In these situations, adults and minors have the legal right to refuse to give up their DNA if they are not charged with a crime (Leavenworth “Most”). This collection of DNA is highly helpful to law enforcement. Having your DNA on file can help with medical emergencies, kidnapping cases, lost family members, and putting familiarial criminals behind bars.

 While there are many who support DNA in databases, others feel strongly against it. They think, “Kids are so young they probably don’t even think about having their DNA in a database, which has implications for their entire family” (Leavenworth “Most”). If families have nothing to hide and don’t commit crimes, what negative effect does their DNA in a system have on them? As stated above, the good outweighs the bad. To help those feeling weary of the collection for databases, “California Governor Jerry Brown signed legislation that requires police in that state to obtain either judicial approval or consent from a parent or guardian before collecting DNA from minors during street stops” (Leavenworth “Most”). The legislation also states, “In cases where a minor and parent agrees to DNA collection the new law also obligates the police agency to delete the DNA information from its database if the minor no longer remains a suspect after two years”(Leavenworth “Most”). While this law may be helpful in the sense of privacy, it really just impedes justice for law enforcement. Many police chiefs in California also agree. They oppose any restriction that acts as a nuisance to law enforcement who want to collect DNA from minor suspects (Leavenworth “Most”).

No matter how you and others feel about the situations, we can all agree that we need a solution. Erlich and his co authors proposed a strategy for the dilemma. They suggested that direct-to consumer DNA testing companies can put a special code on the raw data files they send to customers (Netburn). Genealogy sites could then agree to allow people to upload their DNA sequences only if they have a valid code (Netburn). This would ensure people could conduct searches related only to their DNA (Netburn). While it would keep others from seeing all data, it would not prevent law enforcement’s use (Netburn). While Erlich’s proposal for a solution is very proactive, personally, I would make a few minor changes. I would keep the code so individuals can only find information pertinent to them and their family, but add a code that only law enforcement can use to access the system. This will keep foreign governments from spying and tracking citizens, while allowing investigators to keep our communities safe.

Christine Rosen poses this eye opening logical question in her article: “You can’t consent to what you don’t know. If we can’t guarantee the privacy and integrity of the information stored in them, how can we prevent their misuse?” (Rosen). Technology is always changing; how do we know how to protect ourselves if we don’t even know the technology is out there? This is the edge investigators need to help catch serial murders and rapists. Using databases from genealogy sites in criminal investigations will help put criminals like the “Golden State Killer” and “The Grim Sleeper” behind bars. Citizens need to become more aware of issues surrounding them to help find a solution. We all want safe communities, do your part to help achieve it!

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The Helicoptered Generation (Student Sample 2)

 Imagine a noisy, nosey, hovering presence constantly demanding that you do more or do better. You just pictured what it is like to have a helicopter parent. Helicopter parenting has not been an issue for a very long time historically, but it is a big one currently. It is defined as a parent or parents who are “closely associated” with their children’s lives (Eight). This close knit lifestyle has caused harm to children's development. In the past twenty years we have gone from a society who encourages adventure and self-reliance to one that is solely focused on safety and a single view of success. This shift in perspective has produced a generation of children who are more stressed, depressed, incompetent, and ironically less successful than ever before.

 Sadly, many children of helicopter parents become incompetent adults; they are stuck in a position of forever pleasing their parents. For example, many of these children never learn to drive. Their parents take them everywhere feeling that it will be safer so these children often don’t have a need to drive. If they date or even go on adventures with friends, it is always with a parent. These children often don’t know how to cook, do laundry, talk on the phone, or even converse with new acquaintances because their parents don’t want them to get hurt. A child on his or her own is going to make mistakes and it is certainly true that young people often need guidance in learning to drive; however, developing “curiosity, bravery, and self-reliance” is essential to becoming a competent adult (Skenazy “Parents”). Instead of creating successful members of society, they create children terrified of the real world.

Along with being incompetent as adults many children of helicopter parents suffer from moral weaknesses. They are unable to do things on their own and are unsure of themselves because they have previously had their parents do mostly everything for them. Children raised in this way are at a disadvantage. Their parents instill a large amount of extrinsic motivation, rather than intrinsic motivation, which leads to low personal drive (Eight). This immense amount of extrinsic motivation also results in them not having many of their own dreams for their future and their grades fall due to a lack of desire for success, since they are not really looking forward to anything. Later in life, they have nothing pushing them to be their best and stand up for what is right because as a child, it was their parents pushing what they saw as important onto their child, instead of their child working for what was important to him or her. Not having to think for themselves or for what they believe in causes these children to be “fragile, more easily offended, and more reliant on others,” and they are being diagnosed by sociologists with a condition called “moral dependency” (Skenazy “The”). So, in the long run helicopter parenting is causing children to have no mind of their own, and when they enter the world they are depressed because, unlike children who were taught to embrace their individuality and do what makes them happy, they do not have any sense of who they really are.

One of the biggest issues helicoptered kids face is dealing with their grades. Recently, almost all parents have gained access to seeing their child's grades online. This ability has caused extremely high standards. Online, parents are able to see nine week’s grades, individual assignment grades, class rank, grade point average, and the whole year’s attendance. No longer is an “A” good enough; it must be 95 or above. Every graded assignment is critiqued and pulled apart so a parent can understand why this easy test was not a 100%. The focus on perfection creates a fear of failure and children are not able to learn from their mistakes because they are too worried about what they will tell their parents. Some parents even take this a step further and do their children's work themselves to ensure what they feel will be a better outcome. Parents take over projects and even college applications to make their children successful but in reality they are only causing their kids to not be prepared to go about this work alone when the time comes. Lastly, many parents force their children to be a part of so many extracurriculars and advanced classes, so their child does not have the time between meetings and their workload to learn to make new friends or relax and focus on their well being mentally and physically.

 While helicopter parenting has many proven downsides there is one prevalent upside I would like to acknowledge. In a recent study, statistics have shown that the states with lower death and injury rates are also the states with the greatest number of helicopter parents (Eight). This would make one stop and think that helicopter parenting is aiding child safety. About 16% of parents use tracking devices in order to monitor their children's driving habits and see their location when out with friends (Rosenwald). While many may feel this is an invasion of privacy, myself included, it can potentially keep children remarkably safer. Knowing their child tends to drive faster than they should or seeing a pattern of hard braking can alert the parent to talk to their child and stop a car accident before it happens. Currently, in the U.S., car accidents are the number one cause of death in children (Skenazy “Parents”), and only 16% of parents are taking action to make sure their children are not a part of that statistic. Instead, people are worried about kidnappings and letting their children go out alone. If the statistics are checked, nine kids total were kidnapped and murdered by strangers in 2011; in that same year 1,140 kids died in car accidents (Skenazy “The”). It is more unsafe for someone to drive their child to the park, than it is to let them walk down the street there alone. So instead of solely focusing on how someone could walk up and snatch your child, which rarely happens, focus on the habits they have formed driving since that offers a much greater risk to their lives.

 Being a newer problem, there are not a ton of solutions to help parents learn how to avoid this type of behavior. However, the Let it Grow foundation has been recently established to work against raising kids in this way; it seeks to change social norms and laws that scare parents into coddling their children (Skenazy “The”). I think it would also be beneficial to create classes to teach parents how to care for teens like we have classes on how to care for infants. School counselors and psychologists could teach these classes and give parents some key information so they can better understand how their children are growing emotionally and physically in order to take care of their children in a way that is beneficial to the parents and child alike. Learning is limitless and life continues to change, having these classes available would help parents understand how to keep their children safe while also keeping them healthy. Finally, if parent involvement in all levels of schooling was encouraged more, it would allow for parents to hear directly from teachers to understand how the child is really doing instead of creating outrageous standards dictated by meaningless numbers.

 In conclusion, there is no harder job than raising a child; life is scary and children are not capable of facing it on their own. But, they need to be taught how to take on life in the right way, not in the overbearing harmful way that currently seems to be the trend. In order to keep our society healthy we need to start at the beginning and fix the way we bring up our kids.

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Zoos and Aquariums are Beneficial to Both Humans and Animals (Student Sample 3)

Giraffes! Elephants! Rhinos! We all love these adorable giants; they are such remarkable creatures and a magnificent sight that all should see. Unfortunately, over 16,000 species have been categorized as endangered; fortunately, programs have been implicated to assist the preservation of these animals. A common program is through the help of zoos and aquariums by “field studies, breed-and-release initiatives, rescue programs, and public engagement campaigns” (Lanthier). Counter to popular belief, zoos are incredibly beneficial to the study of animals and are a key role in the survival of many species.

While zoos in the past have focused on showcasing wildlife, modern ones, “focus on educating the public” (Myers “Animal”). The first scientific zoo opened in London in 1828, which shifted the focus towards educating, as well as providing entertainment (ProQuest). “Chats or live animal demonstrations,” expand tourists’ knowledge, allowing them to learn more about our animals and find out unique information they never knew before (Myers “Animal”). The face to face interaction has been shown to inspire guests to become a part of the conservation plan. Some even aid in organizations such as the, “Vancouver Aquarium’s shoreline cleanup and ocean wise programs and Toronto Zoo’s adopt-a-pond outreach programs” (Lanthier). Viewing and learning about the struggles of Earth’s animals can provide help from people around the world to preserve our endangered animals.

While zoos and aquariums have presented many benefits, some still believe they are unsafe for both animals and humans. There have been various cases where an employee or tourist have been attacked or killed while visiting the zoo. For instance, “33 year old keeper,” Rosa King, was killed “by a tiger,” in a “‘freak accident’” (Myers “Zoos”). Also, a couple years ago, there was an incident where a, “three year old boy managed to climb into a gorilla enclosure,” which resulted, “in the need for the zoo to shoot and kill a threatened western lowland gorilla” (Myers “Zoos”). There have been multiple occasions where someone, animal or human, has been killed that could have been prevented. Between each zoo and aquarium, there are, “varying standards of safety and security” (Myers “Zoos”). Worldwide, there are over 10,000 zoos and aquariums, but only approximately 200 are a part of AZA, an organization that requires high standards of animal safety, research, and protection. Nowadays, there is so much technology, some say we really do not need zoos at all. There have been suggestions that we could study animals, “in documentary films” (Myers “Zoos”). This way we could study animals in their natural habitat, which provides a, “more informative and less obtrusive study of wildlife” (Myers “Zoos”). Another suggestion is to leave animals in their environment and take a trip to visit them there. Third world countries, like some in Africa, would benefit greatly from the tourism that would occur here since there are many zoo animals located in these areas. Money would be put in places that need it and animals would be, “enjoying their natural climate, in spaces that are larger and more peaceful” (Myers “Zoos”). Arguments have been made against the use of zoos and aquariums, but I still believe they provide substantial help to preserving the wildlife.

 It is said that both aquariums and zoos have, “become the last refuge for many species” (Lanthier). Most animals out in the wild become endangered due to human effects, such as deforestation, poaching, habitat loss, etc. However, with the help of conservation programs at zoos and aquariums, “there is a growing list of species that survive in the wild today” (Lanthier). Also, there are many breeding facilities that help animals outlast their endangerment; one in Canada has saved, “the Puerto Rican toad, California condor, Scimitar-horned oryx, Amur leopard, and the black-footed ferret” (Graham). The populations kept in zoos and aquariums, “serve as safety nets against extinction” (Graham). Another example is The Center for Research and Conservation of Endangered Wildlife; they keep a, “CryoBioBank, which is a collection of animal and plant tissues frozen in liquid nitrogen that can aid in future conservation missions” (Myers “Animal”). It not only helps animals, but plants as well. Scientists have developed ways to maintain the population by means of artificial insemination for many species. They have already saved many, and they will continue to save more with the help of zoos and aquariums.

 Did you know that,

* “248 species [are] listed as endangered” (Lanthier).
* “60 per cent of vertebrates disappear over the past 40 years” (Lanthier).
* “80 per cent of our ocean fish biomass has vanished” (Lanthier).

Many places have taken an act to stand against the extinction of any animal; zoos and aquariums play a major role in this. Seaworld is an excellent example; they have “already rescued more than 500 sea lions in 2015, and over the past five decades, [have] rescued more than 25,000 animals” (Dalton). Although many believe that these places are “inhumane” to animals, the keepers of the facilities try their best to give the animals the appropriate amount of care and safety. A way to compromise with those not in favor of zoos and aquariums is for all facilities to join the AZA. This way they will be monitored for the safety of visitors and animals. Zoos and aquariums provide a home to animals that have had their habitat taken away by man and supply ample care. They have been a great impact on advertising and teaching about our amazing creatures that roam this Earth.

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