*English Instructional Plan – Grades 9-12*

**Argumentation Editorial Concerning a Current Social/Health Issue**

VDOE Performance Assessment Prompt Sample for Argumentation:

Argumentation Editorial**:** Select a current topic that concerns students and about which you are passionate. (E.g. social media, technology, educational choices and restrictions, the arts, media, gender issues, race issues, sports, politics, the legal system, health and nutrition, science, etc.) Research the topic. Write an editorial or letter to the editor arguing your position supported with facts and evidence. Submitting the essays to a local newspaper, student newspaper, or *The* *New York Times* Student Opinion Feature would enhance the experience.

This and other sample prompts from the VDOE are found here:

[Sample Writing Tasks that could be used for the Body of Evidence to Verify Credits in Writing](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/sample-writing-tasks.docx)

**Primary Strand: 11.6 Writing, 11.8 Research, and 11.5 Nonfiction**

**Integrated Strand/s: 11.2 Media, 11.7 Editing**

**Essential Understanding:**

* understand that writing should be purposefully crafted with attention to deliberate word choice, precise information, and vocabulary
* understand the importance of evaluating the intent of the author, which may include misinformation, bias, and unsupported assertions
* understand how to analyze informational material

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

* write persuasively/argumentatively, organizing reasons logically and effectively
* synthesize information in a logical sequence
* analyze information from multiple texts to make inferences and draw conclusions

**Primary SOL:**

11.6b Produce arguments in writing, developing a thesis that demonstrates knowledgeable judgments, addresses counterclaims, and provides effective conclusions.

11.8c Synthesize relevant information from primary and secondary sources and present it in a logical sequence.

11.5f Analyze multiple texts addressing the same topic to determine how authors reach similar or different conclusions.

**Academic Background/Language:**

* argumentation
* editorial
* credit (as in sources)
* outline (as in a paper)

## Materials:

* Sample editorials and letters to the editor
* One editorial sample and three research sources on one current topic such as vaping

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

**Day one:**

Step one: Engage/Preview/Hook

* Define “editorial” and share the purposes with the class
* Share samples in small groups and discuss audiences for the different editorials and use of anecdotes and factual evidence
* Preview assignment/prompt: Adjust this according to the needs and abilities of students and provide choice when possible. Model/practice with a specific topic that was relevant for our school’s population; for example, vaping. Collect materials for practicing the steps all connected to that one topic, then give students the choice to either complete the project with the pre-selected topic and resources or choose their own topics, and seek out their own resources. Students who need more support and intervention can keep the vaping topic, work through the process with the curated sources, while other students can choose another social issue, and research the sources to support their editorial.
* Discuss that students will choose their own audience for their editorial and brainstorm possible ones: a parent, a friend, self, society, teens, etc.

Step two: Explore

* Activate prior knowledge by discussing what students know or have heard about the topic; for example, vaping, how vaping can affect health, and how vaping companies target teens.
* Next, they read an editorial about the dangers of vaping. Encourage students to pay attention to the structure of the editorial on the first read and then focus on the meaning/content on the second read. For example: Chicago Tribune Editorial Board. “Editorial: America's Outbreak of Vaping Illness and Its Most Vulnerable Victims - Teens.” Chicagotribune.com, Chicago Tribune, 7 Sept. 2019, https://www.chicagotribune.com/opinion/editorials/ct-editorial-vaping-illness-epidemic-vitamin-e-acetate-20190906-6dyc4z72afcxlgwdpibnqza5n4-story.html.
* Depending on student needs, the editorial could be read aloud or read independently.
* Likewise, questions can be given to guide students to focus on the important elements while reading. Consider putting guided reading questions in a simple two column graphic organizer. See Appendix A
* Students should explore and discuss the important features of this model editorial so they know how to emulate the stronger elements of the editorial.

Step three: Question

* Modify the Inquiry method “questioning” step have students answer four questions in order to identify their audience and focus. See Appendix B

**Day two:**

Step four: Collect and Credit

* To begin this step, pass back the notes taken the previous class and review the focus and audience answers they gave for their own editorial. Explain that this next step will take the longest amount of time because they will be reading and gathering facts for their editorial.
* This is where the most differentiation happens. Some students will work with the curated sources you have collected on your model topic and others will work on their own independent topic to find their own sources.
* Work with the media specialist to embed a lesson about credibility and reliability in this step for both sets of students. The media specialist could model credibility and reliability with one of the curated vaping sources before working with the independent researchers.
* Work with the media specialist to create parameters and databases for students to use to find their own articles such as Gale’s Opposing Viewpoints.
* Three sources for the Vaping model are as follows:
  + - Center for Disease Control. “Know the Risks of E-Cigarettes for Young People: Know the Risks: E-Cigarettes & Young People: U.S. Surgeon General's Report.” E-Cigarettes Surgeon General Warning, 2019, <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/knowtherisks.html>.
    - National Institute on Drug Abuse. “Teen e-Cigarette Use Doubles since 2017.” NIDA, 18 Sept. 2019, <https://www.drugabuse.gov/news-events/news-releases/2019/09/teen-e-cigarette-use-doubles-2017>.
    - Center for Disease Control. “E-Cigarette Ads and Youth Infographics.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 5 Jan. 2016, <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/ecigarette-ads/infographic.html#infographicb>.
* For their notes, create a simple sheet word processing document that asks for a few reminders about their topic at the top and then create a simple two-column graphic organizer with space at the top for the source information and a bigger spot for their notes from the source. As a “stretch” goal, ask students to reread their notes and think about a call to action for their editorial to add to the bottom of their notes sheet. See Appendix C for suggested elements.

**Day three:**

Step five:

* This step is when students synthesize all the notes they have collected and outline their editorial. Remind them that while they are outlining, they may find they need more information or evidence which might mean revisiting previous steps in the Inquiry Process.
* Depending on how comfortable they are with writing an editorial, they may need more or less direction and modeling. Pull the early editorial models to remind the students of some options and to show that they did not all follow one “cookie-cutter” format.
* Outlining in a graphic organizer encourages the students to utilize their research notes from the previous step and helps teachers monitor progress easier. For this step, a two column graphic organizer that has the reminders on the left and space to write on the right is an efficient structure. See Appendix D.

**Day four:**

Step six: Communicate

* During this step, students can have writing conferences with a teacher who reviewed the outline. Use the notes in the left column as look-fors and topics for conferencing, such as evidence, continuity of argument, etc.
* Students can pair up with a peer to share their outline and receive suggestions to influence final revisions and edits. Some suggestions for peer work in Appendix E.
* Students can review the scoring guide/rubric and evaluate their outline in terms of the elements of strong argumentative writing.
* Based on the emphasis in this instructional plan, teachers should emphasize composing and written expression elements connected to the three main parts of an essay, the audience, and how references were used in the paper.
* Ask your media specialist to give a quick review of ways to reference sources within the writing. Offer sentence starters like the ones included in the outline step in Appendix D.
* Students should type the final draft of the paper and “publish” by sharing or sending it to the intended audience or sending it to the publication they chose in step three.

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

* Formative checks: When planning for the reading of the sample editorial and the articles, preview the reading and break them up into smaller chunks. After students have finished reading the smaller chunk, ask questions to check for understanding and to point out features within that section of text. Circulate and look at their annotations/notes to give immediate clarification. Check graphic organizers/notes to assess student essay readiness.
* Summative assessment: The summative assessment is the performance assessment, the argumentation editorial itself. This will be scored with the state rubric.

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

* Cross-curricular: This could be an editorial on any current event connected to:
  + **science class** (climate change, pollution, pollination, decline of bees),
  + **workplace issues** or some of the topics discussed in **Personal Finance** (paycheck loans, balloon payments, credit scores, student loans),
  + or even a **historical** controversy written from the point of view of one of the leading figures (emancipation, trade, immigration, a war).
* If this same essay type were repeated later, guidance would look different. If students wrote argumentation papers in the past, this could be used as a summative performance assessment without the step-by-step feedback.

**Strategies for Differentiation**

* Sentence frames/starters will help struggling students frame their evidence and opinions in more academic forms. Finding some that relate to including evidence, analyzing evidence, and persuasion could be most beneficial. These can particularly support ELs and SWD. These are easily found through a Google search. Here are some possible sources:
* <http://www2.eit.ac.nz/library/ls_guides_sentencestarters.html>
* <https://www.is34.org/pdfs/Examples_of_Argumentative_Language.PDF>
* <https://www.smore.com/d91s-sentence-frames>
* Other options for differentiation are embedded in the plan itself.

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

**Appendix A**

Exploring Step Guided Questions

**First read (skimming the article)**

What do you notice about the structure of this editorial?

Who is the intended audience?

What type of evidence does the author provide to support the main idea?

**Second Reading (read for understanding)**

How does the author start this editorial?

What does the author suggest could be the cause of vaping related illnesses?

What organization did the research to support this?

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, what percentage of teens admitted to vaping within the past month?

What is the marketed purpose of e-cigarettes?

What is happening to teens and e-cigarettes?  What evidence does the author give to support this?

How does the author conclude the editorial?

**Appendix B**

Question Step Focus and Audience Questions

## During this stage, you need to answer questions in order to identify your audience and focus.

## 1. Who is your target audience?

## 2. Do you want to publish in a school paper, local paper, national paper or is this a more personal editorial to be given to the specific audience?

## 3. What do you want the audience to know after reading your editorial?

## 4. What do you want the audience to do after reading your editorial?

**Appendix C**

Collect and Credit Notes

At the top of the paper for quick reference:

* Who is your target audience?
* What is your focus?

For each source graphic organizer/note-taking space:

* Source information:
* Notes from Source:

(If you are taking something word for word, you will need quotes around it.)

At the end of the paper:

* Call to action:

**Appendix D**

Editorial Outline

Introduction paragraph:

* The introduction does not need to be long.
* You can start with a shocking statistic.
* You could start with a story about vaping.
* Make sure your audience understands your main idea.

Point #1, #2, etc. (three separate sections per point)

* Write a clear statement about your first point.
* Use a transition to start.
* Give evidence to support this point.
* Include a reference to where you got this information.

       For example:

The Center for Disease Control found that \_\_\_

According to the Center for Disease Control, \_\_\_

A study by the CDC indicates \_\_\_

* Explain in your own words how your evidence supports your point.

**\*You can continue with additional points if you think it would strengthen your argument.**

Summary and call to action:

* Restate your main idea
* End with a strong call to action.  What do you want the reader to do?

**Appendix E**

Peer Revision Ideas

The clocking method of peer editing can be adapted to revision by asking students to look for particular parts of specific paragraphs and make comments on them. It cuts down on students closing over specifics and helps with time-management. Once papers are reviewed, each “round of clocking” can serve as an opportunity for a brief mini lesson or a time to project a strong example for students.

Here is a video explaining clocking used for grammatical edits: <https://youtu.be/12oAuQi_UzU>

Connected to the notes in Appendix D, here are some suggestions for peer revision:

* 1. Read the introduction paragraph. Put a smiley face next to the strongest part.
  2. Highlight the main idea. If there is not one, write “main idea?” in the margin.
  3. Scan the body paragraphs and find one that has a quotation in it. Read the topic sentence and the quotation. If they match, put a check mark in the margin. If they do not match, write, “This doesn’t match your topic sentence” next to the quotation.

Create your own steps for the clocking method based on time set aside for peer review, the other notes in Appendix D, or the rubric.