**Reasoning and Organization**

**Activity One: Analysis of Frederick Douglass’s “What to a Slave is the 4th of July?’**

**Part One: Quick Write responses**

* Why do we celebrate the 4th of July? How do we celebrate? Why does this holiday have such meaning in our society?
* How does your perspective affect your view of the holiday?

**Part Two: Annotations of Sections. Read excerpts from the introduction, body, and conclusion of the speech. Annotate based on the questions before each excerpt.**

Frederick Douglass, a former slave, author and abolitionist delivered this speech in Rochester New

York in 1852.

Entire Speech is Here

<https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/what-to-the-slave-is-the-fourth-of-july/>

**Excerpt One Introduction**

* How is the historical context of the situation significant to Douglass’s speech?
* Which methods of development does the Douglass utilize to develop his ideas in the introduction?
* What is Douglass’s central argument in the passage?
* How does this method affect the audience? How does it make for a compelling argument?
* How does Douglass build a connection with his audience in the introduction?
* How does this lead the audience into the rest of the argument?

Mr. President, Friends and Fellow Citizens:

He who could address this audience without a quailing sensation, has stronger nerves than I have. I do not remember ever to have appeared as a speaker before any assembly more shrinkingly, nor with greater distrust of my ability, than I do this day. A feeling has crept over me, quite unfavorable to the exercise of my limited powers of speech. The task before me is one which requires much previous thought and study for its proper performance. I know that apologies of this sort are generally considered flat and unmeaning. I trust, however, that mine will not be so considered. Should I seem at ease, my appearance would much misrepresent me. The little experience I have had in addressing public meetings, in country schoolhouses, avails me nothing on the present occasion.

The papers and placards say, that I am to deliver a 4th [of] July oration. This certainly sounds large, and out of the common way, for it is true that I have often had the privilege to speak in this beautiful Hall, and to address many who now honor me with their presence. But neither their familiar faces, nor the perfect gage I think I have of Corinthian Hall, seems to free me from embarrassment.

The fact is, ladies and gentlemen, the distance between this platform and the slave plantation, from which I escaped, is considerable — and the difficulties to be overcome in getting from the latter to the former, are by no means slight. That I am here to-day is, to me, a matter of astonishment as well as of gratitude. You will not, therefore, be surprised, if in what I have to say I evince no elaborate preparation, nor grace my speech with any high sounding exordium. With little experience and with less learning, I have been able to throw my thoughts hastily and imperfectly together; and trusting to your patient and generous indulgence, I will proceed to lay them before you.

This, for the purpose of this celebration, is the 4th of July. It is the birthday of your National Independence, and of your political freedom. This, to you, is what the Passover was to the emancipated people of God. It carries your minds back to the day, and to the act of your great deliverance; and to the signs, and to the wonders, associated with that act, and that day. This celebration also marks the beginning of another year of your national life; and reminds you that the Republic of America is now 76 years old. I am glad, fellow-citizens, that your nation is so young. Seventy-six years, though a good old age for a man, is but a mere speck in the life of a nation. Three score years and ten is the allotted time for individual men; but nations number their years by thousands. According to this fact, you are, even now, only in the beginning of your national career, still lingering in the period of childhood. I repeat, I am glad this is so. There is hope in the thought, and hope is much needed, under the dark clouds which lower above the horizon. The eye of the reformer is met with angry flashes, portending disastrous times; but his heart may well beat lighter at the thought that America is young, and that she is still in the impressible stage of her existence. May he not hope that high lessons of wisdom, of justice and of truth, will yet give direction to her destiny? Were the nation older, the patriot’s heart might be sadder, and the reformer’s brow heavier. Its future might be shrouded in gloom, and the hope of its prophets go out in sorrow. There is consolation in the thought that America is young. Great streams are not easily turned from channels, worn deep in the course of ages. They may sometimes rise in quiet and stately majesty, and inundate the land, refreshing and fertilizing the earth with their mysterious properties. They may also rise in wrath and fury, and bear away, on their angry waves, the accumulated wealth of years of toil and hardship. They, however, gradually flow back to the same old channel, and flow on as serenely as ever. But, while the river may not be turned aside, it may dry up, and leave nothing behind but the withered branch, and the unsightly rock, to howl in the abyss-sweeping wind, the sad tale of departed glory. As with rivers so with nations.

Fellow-citizens, I shall not presume to dwell at length on the associations that cluster about this day. The simple story of it is that, 76 years ago, the people of this country were British subjects. The style and title of your “sovereign people” (in which you now glory) was not then born. You were under the British Crown. Your fathers esteemed the English Government as the home government; and England as the fatherland. This home government, you know, although a considerable distance from your home, did, in the exercise of its parental prerogatives, impose upon its colonial children, such restraints, burdens and limitations, as, in its mature judgment, it deemed wise, right and proper.

But, your fathers, who had not adopted the fashionable idea of this day, of the infallibility of government, and the absolute character of its acts, presumed to differ from the home government in respect to the wisdom and the justice of some of those burdens and restraints. They went so far in their excitement as to pronounce the measures of government unjust, unreasonable, and oppressive, and altogether such as ought not to be quietly submitted to. I scarcely need say, fellow-citizens, that my opinion of those measures fully accords with that of your fathers. Such a declaration of agreement on my part would not be worth much to anybody. It would, certainly, prove nothing, as to what part I might have taken, had I lived during the great controversy of 1776. To say now that America was right, and England wrong, is exceedingly easy. Everybody can say it; the dastard, not less than the noble brave, can flippantly discant on the tyranny of England towards the American Colonies. It is fashionable to do so; but there was a time when to pronounce against England, and in favor of the cause of the colonies, tried men’s souls. They who did so were accounted in their day, plotters of mischief, agitators and rebels, dangerous men. To side with the right, against the wrong, with the weak against the strong, and with the oppressed against the oppressor! here lies the merit, and the one which, of all others, seems unfashionable in our day. The cause of liberty may be stabbed by the men who glory in the deeds of your fathers. But, to proceed.

Feeling themselves harshly and unjustly treated by the home government, your fathers, like men of honesty, and men of spirit, earnestly sought redress. They petitioned and remonstrated; they did so in a decorous, respectful, and loyal manner. Their conduct was wholly unexceptionable. This, however, did not answer the purpose. They saw themselves treated with sovereign indifference, coldness and scorn. Yet they persevered. They were not the men to look back.

As the sheet anchor takes a firmer hold, when the ship is tossed by the storm, so did the cause of your fathers grow stronger, as it breasted the chilling blasts of kingly displeasure. The greatest and best of British statesmen admitted its justice, and the loftiest eloquence of the British Senate came to its support. But, with that blindness which seems to be the unvarying characteristic of tyrants, since Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned in the Red Sea, the British Government persisted in the exactions complained of.

The madness of this course, we believe, is admitted now, even by England; but we fear the lesson is wholly lost on our present ruler.

Oppression makes a wise man mad. Your fathers were wise men, and if they did not go mad, they became restive under this treatment. They felt themselves the victims of grievous wrongs, wholly incurable in their colonial capacity. With brave men there is always a remedy for oppression. Just here, the idea of a total separation of the colonies from the crown was born! It was a startling idea, much more so, than we, at this distance of time, regard it. The timid and the prudent (as has been intimated) of that day, were, of course, shocked and alarmed by it.

**Excerpt 2 Body**

* How does beginning with a question help to organize this section?
* What evidence does Douglass utilize to develop his response to the question he poses?
* How compelling is his personal narrative?

What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade, and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy — a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices, more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States, at this very hour.

Go where you may, search where you will, roam through all the monarchies and despotisms of the old world, travel through South America, search out every abuse, and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with me, that, for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival.

Take the American slave-trade, which, we are told by the papers, is especially prosperous just now. Ex-Senator Benton tells us that the price of men was never higher than now. He mentions the fact to show that slavery is in no danger. This trade is one of the peculiarities of American institutions. It is carried on in all the large towns and cities in one-half of this confederacy; and millions are pocketed every year, by dealers in this horrid traffic. In several states, this trade is a chief source of wealth. It is called (in contradistinction to the foreign slave-trade) “the internal slave trade.” It is, probably, called so, too, in order to divert from it the horror with which the foreign slave-trade is contemplated. That trade has long since been denounced by this government, as piracy. It has been denounced with burning words, from the high places of the nation, as an execrable traffic. To arrest it, to put an end to it, this nation keeps a squadron, at immense cost, on the coast of Africa. Everywhere, in this country, it is safe to speak of this foreign slave-trade, as a most inhuman traffic, opposed alike to the laws of God and of man. The duty to extirpate and destroy it, is admitted even by our DOCTORS OF DIVINITY. In order to put an end to it, some of these last have consented that their colored brethren (nominally free) should leave this country, and establish themselves on the western coast of Africa! It is, however, a notable fact that, while so much execration is poured out by Americans upon those engaged in the foreign slave-trade, the men engaged in the slave-trade between the states pass without condemnation, and their business is deemed honorable.

Behold the practical operation of this internal slave-trade, the American slave-trade, sustained by American politics and America religion. Here you will see men and women reared like swine for the market. You know what is a swine-drover? I will show you a man-drover. They inhabit all our Southern States. They perambulate the country, and crowd the highways of the nation, with droves of human stock. You will see one of these human flesh-jobbers, armed with pistol, whip and bowie-knife, driving a company of a hundred men, women, and children, from the Potomac to the slave market at New Orleans. These wretched people are to be sold singly, or in lots, to suit purchasers. They are food for the cotton-field, and the deadly sugar-mill. Mark the sad procession, as it moves wearily along, and the inhuman wretch who drives them. Hear his savage yells and his blood-chilling oaths, as he hurries on his affrighted captives! There, see the old man, with locks thinned and gray. Cast one glance, if you please, upon that young mother, whose shoulders are bare to the scorching sun, her briny tears falling on the brow of the babe in her arms. See, too, that girl of thirteen, weeping, yes! weeping, as she thinks of the mother from whom she has been torn! The drove moves tardily. Heat and sorrow have nearly consumed their strength; suddenly you hear a quick snap, like the discharge of a rifle; the fetters clank, and the chain rattles simultaneously; your ears are saluted with a scream, that seems to have torn its way to the center of your soul! The crack you heard, was the sound of the slave-whip; the scream you heard, was from the woman you saw with the babe. Her speed had faltered under the weight of her child and her chains! that gash on her shoulder tells her to move on. Follow the drove to New Orleans. Attend the auction; see men examined like horses; see the forms of women rudely and brutally exposed to the shocking gaze of American slave-buyers. See this drove sold and separated forever; and never forget the deep, sad sobs that arose from that scattered multitude. Tell me citizens, WHERE, under the sun, you can witness a spectacle more fiendish and shocking. Yet this is but a glance at the American slave-trade, as it exists, at this moment, in the ruling part of the United States.

I was born amid such sights and scenes. To me the American slave-trade is a terrible reality. When a child, my soul was often pierced with a sense of its horrors. I lived on Philpot Street, Fell’s Point, Baltimore, and have watched from the wharves, the slave ships in the Basin, anchored from the shore, with their cargoes of human flesh, waiting for favorable winds to waft them down the Chesapeake. There was, at that time, a grand slave mart kept at the head of Pratt Street, by Austin Woldfolk. His agents were sent into every town and county in Maryland, announcing their arrival, through the papers, and on flaming “hand-bills,” headed CASH FOR NEGROES. These men were generally well dressed men, and very captivating in their manners. Ever ready to drink, to treat, and to gamble. The fate of many a slave has depended upon the turn of a single card; and many a child has been snatched from the arms of its mother by bargains arranged in a state of brutal drunkenness.

**Excerpt 3: Conclusion**

* What rhetorical choices does Douglass make in the conclusion in order to convey his purpose to the audience?
* Why are these choices compelling?
* What is his view of the 4th of July in this passage?
* How is Douglass’s tone different in this section than in the introduction and body sections?
* Why did Douglass end not with his own words but with the poem from William Lloyd Garrison? Is this method of conclusion effective in making Douglass’s argument?

Allow me to say, in conclusion, notwithstanding the dark picture I have this day presented of the state of the nation, I do not despair of this country. There are forces in operation, which must inevitably work the downfall of slavery. “The arm of the Lord is not shortened,” and the doom of slavery is certain. I, therefore, leave off where I began, with hope. While drawing encouragement from the Declaration of Independence, the great principles it contains, and the genius of American Institutions, my spirit is also cheered by the obvious tendencies of the age. Nations do not now stand in the same relation to each other that they did ages ago. No nation can now shut itself up from the surrounding world, and trot round in the same old path of its fathers without interference. The time was when such could be done. Long established customs of hurtful character could formerly fence themselves in, and do their evil work with social impunity. Knowledge was then confined and enjoyed by the privileged few, and the multitude walked on in mental darkness. But a change has now come over the affairs of mankind. Walled cities and empires have become unfashionable. The arm of commerce has borne away the gates of the strong city. Intelligence is penetrating the darkest corners of the globe. It makes its pathway over and under the sea, as well as on the earth. Wind, steam, and lightning are its chartered agents. Oceans no longer divide, but link nations together. From Boston to London is now a holiday excursion. Space is comparatively annihilated. Thoughts expressed on one side of the Atlantic, are distinctly heard on the other. The far off and almost fabulous Pacific rolls in grandeur at our feet. The Celestial Empire, the mystery of ages, is being solved. The fiat of the Almighty, “Let there be Light,” has not yet spent its force. No abuse, no outrage whether in taste, sport or avarice, can now hide itself from the all-pervading light. The iron shoe, and crippled foot of China must be seen, in contrast with nature. Africa must rise and put on her yet unwoven garment. “Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand unto God.” In the fervent aspirations of William Lloyd Garrison, I say, and let every heart join in saying it:

God speed the year of jubileeThe wide world o’erWhen from their galling chains set free,Th’ oppress’d shall vilely bend the knee,

And wear the yoke of tyranny  
Like brutes no more.  
That year will come, and freedom’s reign,  
To man his plundered fights again  
Restore.

God speed the day when human blood  
Shall cease to flow!  
In every clime be understood,  
The claims of human brotherhood,  
And each return for evil, good,  
Not blow for blow;  
That day will come all feuds to end.  
And change into a faithful friend  
Each foe.

God speed the hour, the glorious hour,  
When none on earth  
Shall exercise a lordly power,  
Nor in a tyrant’s presence cower;  
But all to manhood’s stature tower,  
By equal birth!  
That hour will come, to each, to all,  
And from his prison-house, the thrall  
Go forth.

Until that year, day, hour, arrive,  
With head, and heart, and hand I’ll strive,  
To break the rod, and rend the gyve,  
The spoiler of his prey deprive —  
So witness Heaven!  
And never from my chosen post,  
Whate’er the peril or the cost,  
Be driven.

Source: Frederick Douglass: Selected Speeches and Writings, ed. Philip S. Foner (Chicago: Lawrence Hill, 1999), 188-206.

**Part Three: After Reading write a paragraph in response to the following questions**

The title of the speech is a question.

Write out what you think Douglass’s thesis is. Does this thesis answer the question? Has the evidence Douglass provided effectively defended this argument? How appropriate is this speech in thinking about the 4th of July this year?

**Activity Two: What is an American? Socratic Seminar Readings**

Read the following articles, all from section A and one from section B.

Fill out the attached chart. You print it and scan it or type it up and turn it in. This is due by the beginning of class and will be a preparation for a Socratic seminar on Thursday.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Article | How does the author of the article view being an American? | How does the article extend its line of reasoning? | Give at least two examples or pieces of evidence for this view | Do you agree with this view why or why not? |
| Hudgins Cato Institute |  |  |  |  |
| De Sales Atlantic Article |  |  |  |  |
| Paine Passage |  |  |  |  |
| Frederick Douglass  What is 4th of July to a Slave? |  |  |  |  |
| Article from Part B (write Article Name) |  |  |  |  |

1. Read All the Following and fill out the chart by Wednesday beginning of period
2. [What is an American](https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/what-is-american) by Edward L. Hudgins Cato Institute 1998
3. Passage from *The Atlantic* 1939 by Raoul de Roussy de Sales (at the bottom of this document) handout pages 11-12
4. What to A Slave Is the 4th of July? by Frederick Douglass 1852 (read excerpt page 1-8) complete link here
5. <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/what-to-the-slave-is-the-fourth-of-july/>
6. Thomas Paine excerpt from AP exam (page 10)
7. Read **One** of the Following
8. From *Hillbilly Elegy* by JD Vance 2015 (attached)
9. From *New Jim Crow Laws* by Michelle Alexander 2011 (attached)
10. [Young Latinos Carving out their Own Identity](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/young-latinos-born-u-s-carving-their-own-identity-n908086) in NBC News
11. [Muslims are facing a Civil Rights Crisis in America](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-theory/wp/2015/11/11/muslims-are-facing-a-civil-rights-crisis-in-america/?utm_term=.f5798041f969) by Evelyn Alsultany in *Washington Post* 2015
12. [The Real Success to Asian Americans was Not Education](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/11/19/the-real-secret-to-asian-american-success-was-not-education/?utm_term=.d6c2ff406f31) by Jeff Guo in *Washington Post* 2016
13. Ngyuyen Time Magazine 2018 I Love America That Is Why I Must Tell the Truth about It (passed out in class or linked here)

<http://time.com/5455490/american-like-me/>

1. Barack Obama 2008 National Constitution Center

<http://consitutioncenter.org/amoreperfectunion>

AP Prompt 2011

The following passage is from Rights of Man, a book written by the pamphleteer Thomas Paine in 1791. Born in England, Paine was an intellectual, a revolutionary, and a supporter of American independence from England. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay that takes a position on Paine’s claim that in America “there is nothing to engender riots and tumults.”

If there is a country in the world, where concord, according to common calculation, would be least expected, it is America. Made up, as it is, of people from different nations, accustomed to different forms and habits of government, speaking different languages, and more different in their modes of worship, it would appear that the union of such a people was impracticable; but by the simple operation of constructing government on the principles of society and the rights of man, every difficulty retires, and all the parts are brought into cordial unison. There, the poor are not oppressed, the rich are not privileged. . .. Their taxes are few, because their government is just; and as there is nothing to render them wretched, there is nothing to engender riots and tumults.

# What Makes an American?

"To become an American is a process which resembles a conversion. It is not so much a new country that one adopts as a new creed."

[Raoul de Roussy de Sales](https://www.theatlantic.com/author/raoul-de-roussy-de-sales/)

[March 1939 Issue](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/toc/1939/03/) The Atlantic

**II**

To a European, no country is more interesting from this point of view than America, and in the seven years I have lived here none has interested me and puzzled me more.

To begin with, it took me some time to formulate to myself an answer to the very simple questions: "What makes an American? How does it *feel* to belong to this nation?"

These questions will naturally sound absurd to an American, and he might retort, "Well, how does it feel to be a Frenchman?" But that is just the point—most Frenchmen can tell you quite clearly what makes them conscious of being French, but I have found it very difficult to obtain from my American friends or from my reading a comprehensive definition of the American nationality.

First of all, it is obvious that the sense of nationality is not less developed in Americans than in any other people. It is quite as real and quite as visible in all its manifestations. But the fact that such expressions as "Americanism," the "American way," the "American outlook," and so forth, have had to be coined seems to indicate that Americans are the first to feel the need of qualifying themselves when they say, "I am an American." More than that, the American consciousness gives an impression of growth. It is not static, and one feels that it still contains tremendous possibilities of expression.

For the moment, however, there is a very important trait in the make-up of the American nationality which does not exist, I believe, in any other. And that is the fact that America is a permanent protest against the rest of the world, and particularly against Europe.

This attitude has both historical and psychological reasons. Most Americans believe today the following facts concerning their nation: (1) that this continent was peopled by men who rebelled against the tyrannies of Europe; (2) that these men dedicated themselves, from the very beginning, to the purposeful establishment of a kind of freedom that should endure forever; (3) that they succeeded, by a "revolution" in breaking away forever from the oppressive domination and the cupidity of European imperialisms; (4) that in establishing a democratic government they determined forever the course of political perfection, and that whoever followed another course was on the road to damnation; (5) that although European nations were becoming progressively harmless in relation to the increasing power and resources of the ever-growing America, they remained a potential danger to the integrity of this great nation on account of their deplorable habit of wandering away from the true path of civilization, which is democracy, the pursuit of material comfort and more happiness for everybody on this earth as soon as possible.

An Englishman may have doubts regarding the British Empire, a Frenchman may be discouraged concerning the future of France. There are Germans who are not sure that they represent a superior race. All of them, however, remain thoroughly English, French, or German in spite of everything. The type of American who does not accept America as it is and has misgivings about it—such as Henry James, Edith Wharton, T. S. Eliot, and some others—belongs to a past generation. Today one seldom meets an American skeptic, for the reason that nothing is more assuredly unamerican than to entertain any doubt concerning the fact that somehow or other this country will come out all right.

There are many who will find such a statement too sweeping, and say, for instance, that President Roosevelt is destroying the national ideal, that he is leading the country to ruin, decadence, anarchy, and so forth. But even those objectors are not skeptical about the future of their country. Even they feel that faith in America is what makes them Americans. All their irritation would be assuaged if Mr. Roosevelt were removed, all their confidence restored. This kind of skepticism is skin-deep. It does not affect the soul of Americanism.

This faith, like all faiths, does not engender a passive attitude towards the rest of the world. Americans are tolerant to all creeds and to all convictions, but few people express their distrust and indignation with more vigor whenever some of *their* beliefs are offended. Few people are more conscious that ideas may be more destructive than guns. And rightly so, because if any unorthodox creed really implanted itself in America—if the day came when an American citizen could really feel that his country was not following the right course and that a change was due—the political disunion thus produced would have unforetold consequences. The one serious crisis of this kind that America has known, the Civil War, showed the frightful results of a real political conflict. It nearly made two nations out of one. But this experiment in dissension seems to have served as a lasting lesson. It is difficult to believe that it would be repeated. Unity on the fundamental principles of politics is indispensable to the life of this country. The presence of even a small minority who would question the validity of Americanism would attack at the very core the concept of American nationality itself…

In fact, to become an American is a process which resembles a conversion. It is not so much a new country that one adopts as a new creed. And in all Americans can be discerned some of the traits of those who have, at one time or another, abandoned an ancient faith for a new one.

Opener:

* What is America?
* Is there an American identity?
* In American society do you think environment and upbringing (nurture) or nature (genetics and natural ability) are more important to a person’s role in society?

Core:

* What vision of America do the articles/excerpts represent?
* What are the strengths and weaknesses of the presentations?
* Which text presents the most effective line of reasoning to support its position?
* Which presentation did you find most compelling? Why?

Closer:

* To what extent are the visions of Paine or Douglass more true today?

Scoring Rubric for Group *What is an American? Members Names*

*4 3 2 1*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Makes at least three contributions during the round. Demonstrates advanced understanding and depth of knowledge *core texts on race and identity*  Examples (evidence)  used from the texts are pertinent and insightful  Shows thorough preparation for the seminar. Arguments are reasonable and backed up with evidence from the texts. Ideas are original and insightful.  Adds new ideas that build  connections to the texts or  the ideas of others. Or elaborates on other’s ideas | Makes at least 2 contributions  Demonstrates effective understanding of core texts on race and identity  Evidence used from the  texts are relevant to the discussion. Shows effective  preparation for the  seminar.  Backs up arguments with clear examples.  Expresses reasons  for agreeing or disagreeing  with the ideas of the texts or  of others. Is an active listener  and participant. | Demonstrates basic  understanding of the  texts  Evidence is used but may need more elaboration  Shows adequate  preparation for the  seminar.  Some arguments are  underdeveloped and not  backed up by evidence.  Has difficulty moving  beyond opinions to make  new arguments within the  discussion.  Comments may lack deep  thought or contain ideas that  may have already been said.  Makes at least two contributions to the discussion—shows having read and thought about the texts. | Shows poor  preparation for seminar. Arguments are  underdeveloped and generally  based only on opinions with little reference to texts or the novel.  Comments lack deep  thought and often only  repeat what other students  have already said.  Makes at least two comments—does not reference texts! |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Round | 4-20 points | 3-18 points | 2-16 points | 1-12 points |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |

**Activity Three: Editorial**

**Assignment**

Write an editorial/opinion piece on a topic of your choice from general fields such as the following: arts and entertainment, culture, news/politics, science, sports, technology, travel, food, psychology, history, economics, fashion, etc. The editorial should be a maximum of three pages (750 words, 3 pages).

Find two editorials by an author whose style/voice you like (the articles do not have to be on the same topic you are writing about). Write an analysis of how you incorporated the style of the author into your own work—structure, voice, syntax, diction, argumentative strategies etc. (250 words maximum).

Provide a link to the articles in your paper.

The editorial should focus on argumentative strategies. Within the editorial you should make four links to articles which support your position, offer arguments which you refute, or provide interesting information which elaborates on your topic.

**Requirements**

1. **The Editorial Elements (60 points)**

You are attempting to persuade your audience of a position that you take on a certain issue—the editorial should have both facts and opinions and it should be clear which are which. You should have the following elements within your editorial

1. A hook which captures the audience’s attention
2. A clear thesis which states your position
3. An objective explanation of the issue (what are the facts)
4. An explanation of the opposition’s point of view
5. Your counterargument and explanation of why your argument is better
6. Ending with a dynamite conclusion that explodes your reader’s mind into tiny granules of adoration for your editorial’s splendor, sage insight into the world that we inhabit

**Your editorial should incorporate elements of argumentation**

**Logos: cause and effect, definition, syllogism, analogy, statistics**

**Pathos: emotion, good and bad**

**Ethos: credibility or validity of speaker**

**Avoid logical fallacies!**

1. **Links inserted into sentences in your document (10 points)**

Link four sources to your document, sources may be article you refute, articles which support your argument, information which elaborates on your topic, information which provides context for your topic, fun facts that your readers might enjoy about your topic, etc. Hyperlinks should be connected to your sentences through words.

1. **Write up of two mentor texts by the same editorialist (20 points)**

Explain how you stylistically used the work of an editorialist to create your work. Focus on style. The editorial does not have to be on the same or related topic but I would suggest using an editorialist who writes in the same genre because they may help you with style.

1. **Written style and proofreading (10 points)**

Please edit for complete sentences, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and appropriate agreement of tense and subjects and verbs.

**Sources for tips and Models**

**“For the Sake of Argument” *New York Times* by Michal Gonchar**

[**https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/02/07/for-the-sake-of-argument-writing-persuasively-to-craft-short-evidence-based-editorials/?\_r=1**](https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/02/07/for-the-sake-of-argument-writing-persuasively-to-craft-short-evidence-based-editorials/?_r=1)

**“How to Write an Editorial”**

[**http://www.creative-writing-ideas-and-activities.com/how-to-write-an-editorial.html**](http://www.creative-writing-ideas-and-activities.com/how-to-write-an-editorial.html)

**“Writing an Editorial” by Alan Weintraub**

[**https://www.geneseo.edu/~bennett/EdWrite.htm**](https://www.geneseo.edu/~bennett/EdWrite.htm)

**Video on Writing an Editorial from New York Times**

[**https://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000002691088/how-to-write-an-editorial.html**](https://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000002691088/how-to-write-an-editorial.html)

**Notable Characteristics of an Editorial**

[**http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Notable-Editorial**](http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Notable-Editorial)

**Journals, Magazines and Newspapers—Just suggestions you do not have to use any of these**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Arts and Entertainment**  **Rotten Tomatoes**  **The Vulture**  **Screen Rant**  **Spin**  **Rolling Stone**  **Pitchfork**  **Metacritic**  **Aesthetica**  **The Artist**  **Classical Music** | **Culture**  **New Yorker**  **Vanity Fair**  **The Onion**  **Jezebel**  **Essence**  **Lifestyle**  **The Atlantic** | **Food**  **Food**  **Garden and Gun**  **Gastronomica**  **Southern Living**  **Bon Appetite** |
| **News and Politics**  **BBC World**  **CNN**  **Fox**  **Time**  **Newsweek**  **MSNBC**  **Atlanta Journal and Constitution**  **Washington Post**  **New York Times**  **National Review**  **Los Angeles Times**  **Huffington Post**  **The Onion (satire)** | **Science**  **Scientific American**  **Discover**  **Popular Science**  **Wired** | **Fashion**  **Vogue**  **Town and Country**  **Harpers Bazaar**  **Cosmopolitan** |
| **Psychology, Economics, and History**  **American Historian**  **Smithsonian**  **Psychology Today**  **The Economist** | **Sports**  **ESPN Magazine**  **Sports Illustrated**  **Yardbarker**  **Bleacher Report** |  |

Planning Sheet

Name

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Article Name and Author | Topic | Did you find this interesting enough to write your own position on? |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

List 5 things that you are interested, have an opinion about, or might make a good topic to discuss. It has to be something about which you can take a position.

**Editorial Analysis Sheet**

**Name:**

**Article Name:**

**Publication:**

**Author’s Name**

1. **What is the hook?**
2. **What is the thesis?**
3. **What is the issue? What are some facts about the issue upon which everyone agrees?**
4. **Who is the audience?**
5. **Who are the folks who opposed the author’s viewpoint? What are their positions?**
6. **What is the counterargument? What is it based upon logic, emotion, your credibility or authority? Why is it effective?**
7. **How are links and visuals incorporated.**
8. **How does it end?**
9. **What are some interesting stylistic elements?**
10. **What makes the conclusion powerful?**

**Editorial Planning Sheet**

1. **What is your hook?**
2. **What is your thesis?**
3. **What is the issue? What are some facts about the issue upon which everyone agrees?**
4. **Who is the audience?**
5. **Who are the folks who opposed your viewpoint? What are their positions?**
6. **What is your counterargument? What is it based upon logic, emotion, your credibility or authority? Why is it effective? Ending with a dynamite conclusion**
7. **What links will you use and how will they add to your editorial.**
8. **How are you going to explode your audience’s sensory systems with your conclusion?**

Rubric for Editorial Name: Topic

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category | Missing/weak | Adequate | Effective | Superior |
| Hook | 0-6 | Somewhat clichéd/trite (7) | **Original and interesting** (8-9) | Original, interesting, and **memorable (**10) |
| Thesis | 0-6 | **Clea**r/related to topic (7) | **Well worded**/related to topic (8-9) | Well worded/ related to topic/**insightful and original** (10) |
| Issue/facts | 0-6 | States issue and facts **clearly**  **(7)** | States issue and facts **clearly and thoroughly (8-9)** | States issues and facts clearly, thoroughly, and **insightfully (10)** |
| Opposition Points | 0-6 | Presents opposition position **generally (7)** | Presents **key arguments** of opposition’s position (8-9) | Presents **thorough** explanation of **essence** of opposition’s position (10) |
| Counter arguments and Evidence | 0-6 | Uses specific appeals to logic, ethos, and/or pathos connected to topic which are **appropriate (7)** | Uses specific appeals to logic, ethos, and/or pathos connected to topic which are appropriate **and sufficient**  **(8-9)** | Uses specific appeals to logic, ethos, and/or pathos connected to topic which are **appropriate and convincing** |
| Conclusion | 0-6 | **Ties arguments together** (7) | Ties arguments together coherently **making the reader think about the issues** (8-9) | Closes in a powerful manner which **convinces** the reader of the author’s position and leaves a **lasting impression (10)** |
| Links | 0-6 | Connected to topic could be integrated **more fluidly** (7) | **Thoughtful connection** to issues (8-9) | Links are **fluid and illuminate** the topic (10) |
| Mentor Texts | 0-10 | Clear writing shows model’s influence (11-15) | Clear writing, **model’s influence is closely examined** (16-17) | **Well written and supported explanation of specific aspects of models which influenced editorial** (18-20) |
| Grammar,  Syntax, diction,  structure | Frequent errors | * Clear grammar * Complete sentences * Basic paragraph structure   (7) | * Varied syntax, diction * Fluid transitions between paragraphs * Correct grammar | * Fluid transitions, * Sophisticated syntax and diction * Correct Grammar |
| Total |  |



Sample Student Essay One

The World Isn’t Going to Destroy Itself

It seems today that the world is going to destroy itself at any minute. Some complain of the impending over-population resulting from bringing countries out of poverty. Others lament the good-old-days when [vaccines didn’t cause autism](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/concerns/autism.html). A few are afraid that exhausted resources will drive authoritarian regimes to fight one another in strife for the remaining earthly elixirs. This world, filled to the brim with hatred, despair, and unholy mergers, is considered by many to be fixable only though a return to the rosy and all-perfect past. For such naysayers, however, their nostalgia and convenient forgetfulness of the horrors that plagued our ancestors are the only broken glue holding their argument from obscurity. The world is not on track to destroy itself because 1. The news media we currently use isn’t an accurate representation of the facts and trends of global well-being, and 2. The resources of the world are positive-sum, not diminishing with the increase in population.

It seems like the number of horrible events in the world has been increasing over the past decade. News stories have gotten increasingly more pessimistic about the world we live in, releasing one downpour after the other. Their status as the torch bearing heralds of our culture elevates newscasters’ words to the highest levels of respect awarded by our community. However, this doesn’t bode well for the majority of those that read the news because there is an increased flow of information around the world. This causes many to have a pessimistic mindset because all they see is war, wanton destruction, and suffering. Over the past two decades, the content put out by mainstream news media, has gotten more accurate, more current, and more pressing. This is a result of advancements in technology and development of journalistic techniques. The internet has allowed light-bringers around the world to put the transfer of information on steroids. This has the advantage of bringing everyone’s attention together at a moment’s notice and giving them the necessary information to act with immediacy. Citizens can be warned of severe weather, small businesses can be saved from international trade disasters, and children can be quickly recovered from abductions. However, this system’s dark side can be seen in the news corporations vying for the attention of millions as they come up stories, each racier and more sensational than the last. They jump upon hearing the news story, not to do justice or to help, but to wolf the viewership and watch-time. Hooked on this excitement, the audience becomes nothing more than a source of revenue for news sites. Because it makes monetary sense, a cycle of constant news is formed, where there is always something noteworthy that the audience needs to know about to stay current. The stories that maximize the attention garnered by the company are seldom about the leaps and bounds we make as humans. No reporter stands at an international border reporting, “I’m here in Somalia, where a Civil War did not break out today.” Neither does anyone say, “Here in Nicaragua, we don’t have famine. All the children, as you can see, are well-fed and well-clothed. There’s absolutely nothing to worry about.” In the span of day, the number of newsworthy negative events far outnumber the number of newsworthy positive things, simply because there are far more possibilities for something to go wrong, than there are for something to go right. This probability plays through in the news because for corporations to turn out attention-grabbing stories consistently, they must record all the negativity they possibly can. In maximizing their viewership to appease their investors and stock-holders, news companies leave audience members with a false hopelessness at the state of our world. They compare the slow and steady rate of progress to the jittery and jumpy spurts of wars, famines, and disasters. This comparison, however, does not represent the reality of the human state because it discounts all the achievements made thus far and all those we will make in the future. [Most people think](https://ourworldindata.org/optimism-pessimism) the human condition has gotten worse over the past few decades, when the opposite is, in fact, true. The world has been absolutely getting better. The [prevalence of disease](https://ourworldindata.org/eradication-of-diseases), the [infant death rate](https://ourworldindata.org/child-mortality), the [deaths from child-birth](https://ourworldindata.org/maternal-mortality), [poverty](file:///C:\Users\ramgaru\Downloads\world-population-in-extreme-poverty-absolute.png), and [malnourishment](https://ourworldindata.org/hunger-and-undernourishment) have taken a steep decline in the past fifty years. This wasn’t a result of chance or a natural play of events. This progress was a result of human ingenuity and problem-solving. It was the fruition of the efforts of billions of people working hard for the betterment of their communities. It entailed the deaths of many but saved the lives of many more. With this context, the news we see and read is so keen on missing the big picture entirely by pointing out the minutiae of political drama, superfluous celebrities, and extraneous economics. The inner-workings of news companies as machines of monetary interests is clearly seen by their ignorance of general global trends.

A newscast happening less often would not only to set different priorities for its air time but would also be much more careful with the content it spreads to audiences that are tuned in much more intently. Instead of focusing acutely on disasters, it would showcase the advancements made, such as the cell-phone, the growing [world-wide access to vaccination](https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis-dtp3-immunization-global), and the [decrease in military conflicts](https://ourworldindata.org/war-and-peace). Once every decade or two, the span of human progress yielded by logic and science can be showcased to determine what has been done right and what needs to be fixed. This won’t be to preen and rest easy about the remaining problems, but strictly to analyze what has worked and what hasn’t. Having objective viewpoints of our problem-solving will give us the tools to solve problems more effectively because we can develop patterns of treatment for recurring problems. Being transparent with the successes and failures of our attempts will engender the spirits of younger generations to continue bearing the torch of humanity. Rather than feeling betrayed by their ancestors for bringing them into a terrible world, the coming generations will flourish in a community of people who uplift one-another. They will be fostered in an environment where failure is encouraged because it brings us closer to solving the problem. Humanism will become a part of everyone when the spirit of brotherhood and companionship drive people to sacrifice their individual wants for those in need. A world where a young boy is quick to help a starving child is an optimistic world. Such a world could only be brought about by culling mass media of its cherry-picked disasters, unrelenting politics, and constant outflow of information. Doing so would free the mind from unnecessary distractions and irrelevant sidetracks. It would allow people to focus on what truly matters: the replenishing of human livelihood.  
 Thinkers, makers, and doers are the ones pulling countries out of poverty, vaccinating people from sickness, and educating young minds to pursue greatness. They are the ones generating more human capital for the world. However, some argue that in shelling out aid to foreign countries is a bad policy because it prevents our own infrastructure from being more sophisticated. The return on investing back into ourselves is stronger and more secure in comparison to investing elsewhere. The [top receivers of US financial aid](https://explorer.usaid.gov/aid-trends.html) also have the lowest GDP. Jordan, Iraq, Nigeria and South Sudan are among the most desolate countries in the world. Therefore, the money being spent on these nations has had minimal effect in making them self-sufficient, right? Instead of funding the militaries of foreign regimes and protecting their interests, our funds can protect our own interests and nurture young minds.

Those statements assume that the world is a place with limited resources. They follow classic Malthusianism in believing the limited resources of the world would need to be shared by more people as the population increases. Since population needs to be controlled, helping countries out of poverty wouldn’t alleviate suffering, but further it. However, that doesn’t account for human ingenuity. Reducing poverty is in the best interests of everyone because the world is a [positive-sum game](https://ourworldindata.org/economic-growth). An increasing population is not just a liability, but also an asset because it means more minds available for cultivation. Cultivating the youth will bring light to everyone’s future because they will become self-sufficient problem solvers, builders, thinkers, and advocates. This investment will have a magnanimously large return because the human mind is the single greatest resource afforded to any community.

Furthermore, a decrease in poverty often coincides with an increase in health and well-being of individuals. In this way, families will choose to have fewer children because there is a lowed likelihood of infant mortality. This means that bringing countries out of poverty won’t negatively impact the long-term distribution of resources because populations will stabilize based on the economic conditions surrounding them. In this way, the fear that bringing countries out of poverty would result in an unsustainable population explosion is baseless.

The effects of ending world poverty would result in more educated minds and a more stable population. These effects have no negative consequences on prosperous countries. Rather, having a larger pool of competent minds would improve quality of life for everyone. It would mean more and better inventions to alleviate the stressors of life. A constant state of improvement would be the most ideal human condition because it results in the benefit of everyone. Having a more mindful approach to solving problems by understanding them objectively is the key to bringing about such a world. Combined with more accurate news reporting, the pace of our world’s improvement can be maintained at a more constant pace. Ultimately, the world has no mind of its own; all it has are the inhabitants making their existence on it. Therefore, the world isn’t going to destroy itself; someone must deliberately do the deed. The world won’t save itself either; we must unite in collectivity to ameliorate our condition.

Document Analysis.

My paper is written in the shadow of Steven Pinker’s prose on the human condition and the accumulation of wealth worldwide. In his works, Pinker argues against misconceptions people hold about the world. Among his more popular theses is that the Enlightenment, a movement that took place during the late 18th century, is bearing fruit in our world today. His tools to argue for this consist of data, analysis, and counter-arguments.

Firstly, Pinker’s main sources of data are publicly available charts, graphs, and statistics. Using sources like the World Health Organization, Our World in Data, and federal government websites adds credibility to Pinker’s argument because the audience can fact check him. Accumulating publicly available data also ensures that organizations do not have conflicts of interests. Had he used journals and encyclopedias that required a paid membership or the creation of an account, Pinker’s words would not have been received as well. This transparency puts greater pressure on the author to check their own facts because their word won’t be taken for granted. However, it adds to Pinker’s ethos because it shows that he is capable of sifting through gigabytes of data to find relevant details. A fifth of the pages in his most recently published book, *Enlightenment Now*, are occupied by the references he uses to back up his argument for science, reason, and objectivity. In my editorial, I have also used publicly available facts and figures to back up claims. Having access to hyperlinks makes my job comparatively easier than Pinker’s because I don’t have to separately keep track of my sources.

Pinker’s analysis consists of stories on how the data could present itself to a bystander. Often, he would put the data in perspective by building a world around it. When talking about the reduced infant death rate, for example, Pinker highlights that the current rate of progress saves 120 million babies each year. 120 million babies that would have died each year, if not for the advancements made by science. Reading this for the first time caused me to be awed at how little I understood of the chart I saw when viewed out of context. By identifying concepts that audiences have trouble grasping (like large numbers), Pinker targets his analysis to fill in the holes to leave the reader with a more complete understanding.

Finally, Pinker’s use of counter arguments strengthen his claims by showing his consideration for the opposite side. This makes for deeper comprehension of his topics because Pinker does things in a very methodical way. It is far too easy to get swept off in a tangent when addressing a point that conflicts one’s view. However, Pinker’s organized points ensure that he does not get swept away speaking about the semantics. Instead, for every point he makes, Pinker addresses a directly conflicting point of view. Not only does this stretch his argument to encompass more situations, but it also makes for a smooth transition for the next point when done coherently. For example, he claims a point on infant deaths, refutes a counter-claim on infant deaths, and then moves on to speak about maternal mortality. This works well because it develops a gradual shift in focus. The reader recognizes that a new claim has been made, but isn’t put off by the jagged change in topic.

Sample Student Editorial 2

Why School Shootings Should Cease to Exist: An Exploration of Causes and Potential Solutions

Bang. Bang. Bang.

Tears.

13 dead: 12 students and 1 teacher

#WeAreAllColumbine

#ColoradoStrong

[“I sat there thinking of how that second shot ended the life of my son. Could there possibly be a more horrific, solitary sound that a parent might hear?”](https://momsdemandaction.org/from-a-loving-father-who-lost-his-son-in-the-columbine-massacre-14-years-ago/) -Tom Mauser, Father of Daniel Mauser

04.20.1999

Bang. Bang. Bang.

Cries.

26 dead: 20 children and 6 teachers

#26Angels

#ProtectOurKids

#SandyHook

[“I don’t think I’ve every properly grieved Dylan because I still find it too hard to accept that he’s gone…I’ve had to find space to forgive myself because I couldn’t save my son.”](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/sandy-hook-victims-5-years_n_5a2ac6cce4b073789f695659) -Nicole Hockley, Mother of Dylan Hockley

12.14.2012

Bang. Bang. Bang.

Screams.

17 dead: 14 students and 3 teachers

#MSDStrong

#NeverAgain

#MarchforOurLives

[“I wish I could take all the bullets for you.”](https://www.mynews13.com/fl/orlando/news/2019/02/14/dear-alyssa--a-parkland-mother-s-valentine-s-letter-to-her-daughter) -Lori Alhadeff, Mother of Alyssa Alhadeff

02.14.2018

02.18.2019

Twenty years have passed since the Columbine shooting. Seven years have passed since the Sandy Hook massacre. A little more than one year has passed since the tragedy at Parkland. These three events, three of the most heart-wrenching and soul-shattering events to plague the lives of school children and their families, have one major thread in common: the use of guns to inflict violence and horror. There are no words to describe the grief of parents and siblings, friends and teachers, who have lost integral people in their lives. There is no remedy to return the shining lights of children who had to leave this world prematurely. The loss that those communities and our nation as a whole face can not be filled with thoughts and prayers, as soothing as they may be. That hole in our hearts can not be fixed with flags at half-mast every few weeks for every preventable tragedy that occurs. In all three school shootings, the killers should have been prevented from even gaining access to the fatal weapons due to various developmental disorders, mental health issues, lapses in background checks, and a lack of effective federal laws. In other words, the system designed to protect us, our children, and our peers, failed us.

Nikolas Cruz, murderer of 17 people at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, was [expelled from MSD for exhibiting troubling behavior, bragged about his firearms, boasted about how much he loved killing animals, and even went to a clinic for mental health treatment](https://canoe.com/news/crime/how-u-s-mass-shooters-got-their-guns) before the tragedy occurred. The FBI had also received a tip that Cruz exhibited warning signs that could manifest in a potential school shooting a month before it occurred. There was no follow-up. Somehow, the troubled 19-year old was able to legally purchase an [AR-15](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/the-ar-15-americas-rifle-or-illegitimate-killing-machine/2018/02/15/743e66ca-1266-11e8-9065-e55346f6de81_story.html?utm_term=.10f1c822007d), a military-grade assault weapon. According to federal law, people who are at least 18 years of age can purchase a firearm, even while undergoing mental treatment. Additionally, it is easier to purchase a semi-automatic rifle than it is to purchase a [handgun that shoots low-velocity bullets with few fatal wounds](https://globalnews.ca/news/4043345/ar-15-handgun-bullet-wounds-difference/), with the legal age of purchase for a handgun being 21 years instead of 18. Loopholes and conflicting legislation such as these contribute to the problem: a gun violence epidemic sparked by a lack of stringent gun control laws, a lack of enforcement when it comes to protocols and background checks, and a lack of human decency in the face of profit and power. From a global perspective, America owns [48%](https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/03/americas/us-gun-statistics/index.html) of total civilian guns, and despite being less than 5% of the world population, we account for 31% of mass shooters worldwide, beating out countries known for instability and unceasing conflict. So, what needs to change?

With the majority of gun reform being taken up by select [state governments](https://www.cnbc.com/2018/12/26/tougher-gun-laws-to-take-effect-in-2019-in-ca-several-other-states.html), the federal government has yet to catch up. Under current federal legislation, only federally licensed gun dealers are required to conduct background checks, leaving those that are prohibited from buying guns ([roughly 22%, around millions of Americans](https://lawcenter.giffords.org/gun-laws/policy-areas/background-checks/universal-background-checks/)) to purchase their weapons from gun shows and via the Internet. This is where universal background checks are key. With universal background checks, virtually all transactions involving firearms would be forced to be recorded and undergo the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, closing up private sale loopholes, and providing accurate results [99.3-99.8%](https://lawcenter.giffords.org/gun-laws/policy-areas/background-checks/universal-background-checks/) of the time in only 90 seconds. Supported by [97%](https://lawcenter.giffords.org/gun-laws/policy-areas/background-checks/universal-background-checks/) of Americans, universal background checks would significantly curb the number of gun related deaths per year from a whopping [40,000](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/18/us/gun-deaths.html) in 2018, the highest in 50 years. In addition to the legislative loopholes surrounding background checks, the availability of military-grade weapons to civilians has also posed a dire threat to the safety of children.

While actual automatic weapons, that release bullets for as long as the trigger is pulled, are heavily regulated for civilian use, their presence raises the question of why any non-military personnel would need such a lethal weapon. They aren’t designed for hunting, sport, or any other recreational activity. Their sole objective is to kill. [Gun rights advocates](https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/en/why-american-citizens-need-assault-rifles) cite a need to have the same weaponry as the government to be prepared to fight a tyrannical regime if necessary, claiming the Second Amendment protects this right. However, this argument remains ignorant of the minimal chances that an American Revolution scale rebellion would occur in today’s times. The trend in American political activism has gone towards nonviolent protests, peaceful demonstrations, and marches as opposed to full blown wars. Long story short: if you, a sane human being capable of rational thinking, have an opinion to express about the government, chances are you will not be using a militaristic weapon to shoot government workers and kill top officials in cold blood. You would just write a letter to your Congressman or sign a petition like a normal person. To claim you would do otherwise just demonstrates the lack of enforcement of the background checks we *do* have and puts gun rights advocates in a double bind. Either they admit they’re not mentally stable enough to be in legal possession of an automatic gun, or they concede they have no real and justifiable purpose in owning one. We stand nothing to gain from leaving these military-grade weapons available for civilians, but everything to lose if it gets misused or falls into the wrong hands.

Furthermore, the historical context of the Second Amendment was when the right to bear arms meant a musket that could fire approximately one bullet a minute, not a semi-automatic rifle that could kill 14 teenagers and three adults in the span of six seconds, as was the case in Parkland. In a largely unsettled America, these obsolete firearms were necessary to defend your family against wild animals, unlike modern urban society where the reoccurring threat of wild animals affects very few of us. On top of the dramatic change in the ability of firearms and the circumstances surrounding their use, the Constitution was meant to change with the times and reflect society as it progressed. That was the point of creating a process to formally amend the backbone of our government. The United States has even overturned amendments when they were deemed no longer relevant. For example, the 21st Amendment nulled the effects of the 18th Amendment Prohibition-era ban on alcohol. The Constitution was designed to be flexible and meet the needs of the people, not hold children hostage to centuries-old legalities. Despite the fact that the majority of gun control activists are nowhere near willing to revoke the Second Amendment altogether, the proponents of the Second Amendment argument are clinging to a tiny piece of legislation, desperately willing the Constitution to be static and unchangeable, and using it to justify mass murders beyond the human imagination.

Apart from the Second Amendment, another big argument used by gun rights advocates claim that [people are the sole instigator of conflicts, not the weapons themselves](https://www.theodysseyonline.com/guns-problem). While technically accurate, this argument ignores the volatility of a semi-automatic firearm as opposed to a knife or a fistfight. Even if one wants to concede that a gun is harmless without a human to operate it, the presence of a weapon that damaging is the reason that mass murders in the span of minutes can occur. If an attacker tried to use a knife to inflict damage upon a school, he or she would be incapable of wounding more than a handful of people before the knife got too dull and bloody to keep using or officials eventually caught up to the perpetrator and detained him or her. A knife is only effective at a close-range, giving most of the people present in the building the opportunity to run. Even with throwing knifes, accuracy is not as guaranteed as a rifle that comes with aim-aiding technology. As for fistfights? By the time someone was capable of seriously wounding another person with nothing but hand-to-hand combat in a school setting, an administrator would have broken up the fight. Only a gun can kill people from long distances instantaneously, require very little work to shoot, and take the lives of dozens of human beings in a matter of minutes, if not mere seconds.

The most disturbing part of the school shooting, and gun violence at large, epidemic in the United States is not that the status quo is ineffective at deterring future threats. It’s the fact that politicians are more enamored with their careers and the prospect of campaign donations to change anything, despite the [33,000](https://theundefeated.com/features/fivethirtyeight-breaks-down-the-more-than-33000-annual-u-s-gun-deaths/) people that die each year to preventable gun violence. Entities such as the National Rifle Association, that rate candidates on a grading scale of A+ to F based on their dedication to keeping guns free from more governmental interference, are part of the issue. Interest groups are inevitable in a democracy like the United States, and guns are not all bad. Yet, the fact that a third-party organization [controls the campaign platforms and agenda of candidates](https://www.theodysseyonline.com/nra-problem), especially in red states, at the cost of their own children is sickening. The fact that these politicians welcome the high ratings and flowing campaign donations while agreeing not to do anything to protect human lives is even worse.

School shootings are not the result of violent video games or [ADHD kids](https://themighty.com/2018/05/incoming-nra-president-oliver-north-ritalin-school-shootings-santa-fe/), as NRA president, Oliver North, [claimed](https://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2018/may/22/oliver-north/no-connection-ritalin-school-shootings-nra/). Stigmatizing mental illnesses and the necessary medication to avoid taking responsibility for one’s role in the deaths of countless kids is despicable. Universal background checks, a popular and easy solution to attack the root cause of this violence, work and need to be enacted. The federal government should be stepping up and carrying out their mandate to protect the life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness of the American people, instead of staying neutral and leaving the job up to the states. The Alhadeffs deserve it. The Hockleys deserve it. The Mausers deserve it. All of those families broken apart by senseless violence deserve it.

And we, as the children of America, should expect nothing less.

## Model Analysis

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/20/opinion/america-children-guns-shooting-florida.html>

<http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/1876-1900/william-allen-white-whats-the-matter-with-kansas-august-16-1896.php>

Both the *New York Times* article, pertaining to the topic of gun control itself, as well as the William Allen White piece on economic and infrastructural problems in Kansas in 1896 held a plethora of stylistic choices and rhetorical devices that inspired my editorial on the school shooting epidemic. The *New York Times* editorial masterfully blended pathos into its statistics and fact-grounded logical appeals. This is seen throughout my editorial in the way I tried to incorporate numbers and yearly statistics into the overarching emotional framework I set up in the beginning with the introduction of major school shootings in American history. The sentence structure in the *New York Times* article also placed an emphasis on simple sentences that command attention and draw an emotional reaction, as opposed to overly lengthy sentences that distract from the desired effect. In terms of personification, both the *New York Times* editorial and the William Allen White paper personified the United States and Kansas, respectively, to draw a connection between the audience and the patriotic ties the audience feels towards its governmental institution. This makes the argument feel personal in both the papers and hooks the reader into the intricate weaving of logos and pathos that is prevalent throughout. By referring to the audience as “children” of the country, the editorials trigger a protective instinct and instills a personal resolve to fix the problem into the hearts and souls of the readers.

The William Allen White article also focused on rhetorical questions, something that I tried to employ throughout my paper to introduce the topic of solutions as well as counter gun-rights advocate claims about alternative weapons filling in the spot of guns. In addition, White made a point of distinguishing Kansas’s role in the United States from more economically prominent states, using this juxtaposition to highlight the blanks that need to be filled in terms of Kansas’ infrastructure, and focusing on the root cause of the problem. To parallel this stylistic decision, I brought up the gun rights culture in America as opposed to countries that are frequently in the media for mass violence to bring attention to the severity of the problem that largely goes unnoticed in the context of global issues. The organization of both these editorials relied heavily on emotion, which I felt suited a topic as heavy and controversial as school shootings. These stylistic trademarks helped give the topic a personal connection with the audience and draw a line from the root cause of the epidemic to the solutions.

**Activity One: Tableau and Runagate, Runagate**

Intro and essential questions

* What was the Underground railroad? Read the history and background.
* What did it represent? How did it provide hope to slaves?
* Read the section on the underground railroad

[Underground Railroad](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2944.html)

[Painting](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3a29554/)

* View the painting
* What is the tone of the painting?
* What images are you drawn to in the painting?
* What argument does the painting make?

Step Two: Explanation of Tableau and Tableau Reading

* Directions for [tableau](https://dramaresource.com/tableaux/) and sheet

In this activity you are going to be assigned a section of Robert Hayden’s Poem, “Runagate, Runagate”

We are going to do a tableau which means a freeze frame. You are going to have one member of your group serve as the narrator who will read the lines. While that person reads the lines the other members of your group will act out the actions in any way that you seem necessary. When the last line is done being read you will freeze in place. The stances you are frozen in should explain the pattern, meaning, rhythm style, pace, tone, theme whatever you want to focus on of the text. Be prepared to explain why you selected to freeze in this manner.

While you are reading you should annotate the text for tone, rhetorical devices, mood, etc. What effect do these rhetorical strategies have upon the audience?

Step Three: Present the readings. After each group presents, have them explain what they were attempting to convey with the way that they froze their section.

Step Four: Write a thesis statement of what you think the argument of the poem is. Support your thesis with at least two examples from the text that elaborate upon the position which you are taking.

**Runagate Runagate**

[**Runagate Runagate**](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/237678##)

By [Robert Hayden](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/robert-hayden) 1913–1980 Robert Hayden

          I.

Runs falls rises stumbles on from darkness into darkness

and the darkness thicketed with shapes of terror

and the hunters pursuing and the hounds pursuing

and the night cold and the night long and the river

to cross and the jack-muh-lanterns beckoning beckoning

and blackness ahead and when shall I reach that somewhere

morning and keep on going and never turn back and keep on going

                Runagate

                              Runagate

                                            Runagate

Many thousands rise and go

many thousands crossing over

                                                           O mythic North

                                               O star-shaped yonder Bible city

Some go weeping and some rejoicing

some in coffins and some in carriages

some in silks and some in shackles

                 Rise and go or fare you well

No more auction block for me

no more driver’s lash for me

         If you see my Pompey, 30 yrs of age,

         new breeches, plain stockings, negro shoes;

         if you see my Anna, likely young mulatto

         branded E on the right cheek, R on the left,

         catch them if you can and notify subscriber.

         Catch them if you can, but it won’t be easy.

         They’ll dart underground when you try to catch them,

         plunge into quicksand, whirlpools, mazes,

         turn into scorpions when you try to catch them.

And before I’ll be a slave

I’ll be buried in my grave

         North star and bonanza gold

         I’m bound for the freedom, freedom-bound

         and oh, Susyanna don’t you cry for me

                                 Runagate

                                               Runagate

          II.

Rises from their anguish and their power,

                                       Harriet Tubman,

                                       woman of earth, whipscarred,

                                       a summonning, a shining

                                       Mean to be free

          And this was the way of it, brethren brethren,

          way we journeyed from Can’t to Can.

          Moon so bright and no place to hide,

          the cry up and the patterollers riding,

          hound dogs belling in bladed air.

          And fear starts a-murbling, Never make it,

          we’ll never make it. *Hush that now*,

          and she’s turned upon us, levelled pistol

          glinting in the moonlight:

          Dead folks can’t jaybird-talk, she says;

          you keep on going now or die, she says.

Wanted     Harriet Tubman     alias The General

alias Moses     Stealer of Slaves

In league with Garrison     Alcott     Emerson

Garrett     Douglas     Thoreau     John Brown

Armed and known to be Dangerous

Wanted     Reward     Dead or Alive

          Tell me, Ezekiel, oh tell me do you see

          mailed Jehovah coming to deliver me?

Hoot-owl calling in the ghosted air,

five times calling to the hants in the air.

Shadow of a face in the scary leaves,

shadow of a voice in the talking leaves:

          Come ride-a my train

*Oh that train, ghost-story train*

*through swamp and savanna movering movering,*

*over trestles of dew, through caves of the wish,*

*Midnight Special on a sabre track movering movering,*

*first stop Mercy and the last Hallelujah.*

          Come ride-a my train

                   Mean mean mean to be free.

Activity Two: Poetry Out Loud

1. Select one of the poems from below—read it with your partner out loud to the class paying attention to the following attributes

Physical Presence

Voice and Articulation

Dramatic Appropriateness

Evidence of Understanding

Overall Performance

2. Example from Frederick Douglass

[Shawntay Henry Frederick Douglass](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rG9877CqppA)

[Marta Palombo, Cambridge High School, GA Mingus at the Showplace, 2nd Place National, 2016](https://www.dropbox.com/s/bodn41mp9wfczc0/GA%20Palombo%20Mingus%20at%20the%20Showplace.mov?dl=0)

**Late 19th early 20th Century African American Poems**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Paul Laurence Dunbar**  **WE WEAR THE MASK**  WE wear the mask that grins and lies, It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,- This debt we pay to human guile; With torn and bleeding hearts we smile, And mouth with myriad subtleties.  Why should the world be over-wise, In counting all our tears and sighs? Nay, let them only see us, while We wear the mask.  We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries To thee from tortured souls arise. We sing, but oh the clay is vile Beneath our feet, and long the mile; But let the world dream otherwise, We wear the mask!  **KEEP A-PLUGGIN' AWAY**  I'VE a humble little motto That is homely, though it's true, -- Keep a-pluggin' away. It's a thing when I've an object That I always try to do, -- Keep a-pluggin' away.  When you've rising storms to quell, When opposing waters swell, It will never fail to tell, -- Keep a-pluggin' away. If the hills are high before And the paths are hard to climb, Keep a-pluggin' away.  And remember that successes Come to him who bides his time, -- Keep a-pluggin' away. From the greatest to the least, None are from the rule released. Be thou toiler, poet, priest, Keep a-pluggin' away.  Delve away beneath the surface, There is treasure farther down, -- Keep a-pluggin' away. Let the rain come down in torrents, Let the threat'ning heavens frown, Keep a-pluggin' away. When the clouds have rolled away, There will come a brighter day All your labor to repay, -- Keep a-pluggin' away.  There 'll be lots of sneers to swallow. There'll be lots of pain to bear, - Keep a-pluggin' away. If you've got your eye on heaven, Some bright day you'll wake up there, Keep a-pluggin' away. Perseverance still is king; Time its sure reward will bring; Work and wait unwearying,-- Keep a-pluggin' away.  Those Winter Sundays  by Robert Hayden  Sundays too my father got up early and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold, then with cracked hands that ached from labor in the weekday weather made banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.  I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking. When the rooms were warm, he'd call, and slowly I would rise and dress, fearing the chronic angers of that house,  speaking indifferently to him, who had driven out the cold and polished my good shoes as well. What did I know, what did I know of love's austere and lonely offices?  **The Whipping**  **By Robert Hayden**  The old woman across the way      is whipping the boy again and shouting to the neighborhood      her goodness and his wrongs.  Wildly he crashes through elephant ears,      pleads in dusty zinnias, while she in spite of crippling fat      pursues and corners him.  She strikes and strikes the shrilly circling      boy till the stick breaks in her hand. His tears are rainy weather      to woundlike memories:  My head gripped in bony vise      of knees, the writhing struggle to wrench free, the blows, the fear      worse than blows that hateful  Words could bring, the face that I      no longer knew or loved . . . Well, it is over now, it is over,      and the boy sobs in his room,  And the woman leans muttering against      a tree, exhausted, purged-- avenged in part for lifelong hidings      she has had to bear.  **If We Must Die** [**Claude McKay**](http://www.poets.org/poets/poets.cfm?45442B7C000C0403)  If we must die--let it not be like hogs  Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,  While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,  Making their mock at our accursed lot.  If we must die--oh, let us nobly die,  So that our precious blood may not be shed  In vain; then even the monsters we defy  Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!  Oh, Kinsmen! We must meet the common foe;  Though far outnumbered, let us show us brave,  And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!  What though before us lies the open grave?  Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,  Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!  **Saturday's Child  by** [**Countee Cullen**](http://oldpoetry.com/author/Countee%20Cullen)**)**  Some are teethed on a silver spoon, With the stars strung for a rattle; I cut my teeth as the black racoon-- For implements of battle. Some are swaddled in silk and down, And heralded by a star; They swathed my limbs in a sackcloth gown On a night that was black as tar. For some, godfather and goddame The opulent fairies be; Dame Poverty gave me my name, And Pain godfathered me. For I was born on Saturday-- "Bad time for planting a seed," Was all my father had to say, And, "One mouth more to feed." Death cut the strings that gave me life, And handed me to Sorrow, The only kind of middle wife My folks could beg or borrow. [Juke Box Love Song](https://allpoetry.com/Juke-Box-Love-Song)By Langston Hughes I could take the Harlem night and wrap around you, Take the neon lights and make a crown, Take the Lenox Avenue busses, Taxis, subways, And for your love song tone their rumble down. Take Harlem's heartbeat, Make a drumbeat, Put it on a record, let it whirl, And while we listen to it play, Dance with you till day— Dance with you, my sweet brown Harlem girl.  Oblivion  Jesse Redmon Faucet  I hope when I am dead that I shall lie In some deserted grave--I cannot tell you why, But I should like to sleep in some neglected spot Unknown to everyone, by everyone forgot.  There lying I should taste with my dead breath The utter lack of life, the fullest sense of death; And I should never hear the note of jealousy or hate, The tribute paid by passersby to tombs of state.  To me would never penetrate the prayers and tears That futilely bring torture to dead and dying ears; There I should lie annihilate and my dead heart would bless Oblivion--the shroud and envelope of happiness. | **Oriflamme**  Jessie Redmon Fauset  I think I see her sitting bowed and black, Stricken and seared with slavery's mortal scars, Reft of her children, lonely, anguished, yet Still looking at the stars.   Symbolic mother, we thy myriad sons, Pounding our stubborn hearts on Freedom's bars, Clutching our birthright, fight with faces set, Still visioning the stars!  **Mother To Son**  **Langston Hughes**  Well, son, I'll tell you: Life for me ain't been no crystal stair. It's had tacks in it, And splinters, And boards torn up, And places with no carpet on the floor -- Bare. But all the time I'se been a-climbin' And reachin' landin's, And turnin' corners, And sometimes goin' in the dark  Where there ain't been no light. So boy, don't you turn back. Don't you set down on the steps 'Cause you finds it's kinder hard. Don't you fall now -- For I'se still goin', honey, I'se still climbin', And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.  **Dream Deferred**  **Langston Hughes**  What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up Like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore-- And then run? Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over-- like a syrupy sweet? Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?  **Lift Every Voice and Sing** [**James Weldon Johnson**](http://www.poets.org/poets/poets.cfm?45442B7C000C0106)  Lift ev'ry voice and sing,  Till earth and heaven ring,  Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  Let our rejoicing rise  High as the list'ning skies,  Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,  Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;  Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  Let us march on till victory is won.  Stony the road we trod,  Bitter the chast'ning rod,  Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  Yet with a steady beat,  Have not our weary feet  Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?  We have come over a way that with tears has been watered.  We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,  Out from the gloomy past,  Till now we stand at last  Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.  God of our weary years,  God of our silent tears,  Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;  Thou who hast by Thy might,  Led us into the light,  Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,  Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;  Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  May we forever stand,  True to our God,  True to our native land.  **THE POOL PLAYERS.**  **SEVEN AT THE GOLDEN SHOVEL.**  **By Gwendolyn Brooks**  We real cool. We  Left school. We  Lurk late. We  Strike straight. We  Sing sin. We  Thin gin. We  Jazz June. We  Die soon.  **the sonnet-ballad** [**Gwendolyn Brooks**](http://www.poets.org/poets/poets.cfm?45442B7C000C07030F)  Oh mother, mother, where is happiness?  They took my lover's tallness off to war,  Left me lamenting. Now I cannot guess  What I can use an empty heart-cup for.  He won't be coming back here anymore.  Someday the war will end, but, oh, I knew  When he went walking grandly out that door  That my sweet love would have to be untrue.  Would have to be untrue. Would have to court  Coquettish death, whose impudent and strange  Possessive arms and beauty (of a sort)  Can make a hard man hesitate--and change.  And he will be the one to stammer, "Yes."  Oh mother, mother, where is happiness?  **The Tropics of New York** [**Claude McKay**](http://www.poets.org/poets/poets.cfm?45442B7C000C0403)  Bananas ripe and green, and ginger root  Cocoa in pods and alligator pears,  And tangerines and mangoes and grape fruit,  Fit for the highest prize at parish fairs,  Sat in the window, bringing memories  of fruit-trees laden by low-singing rills,  And dewy dawns, and mystical skies  In benediction over nun-like hills.  My eyes grow dim, and I could no more gaze;  A wave of longing through my body swept,  And, hungry for the old, familiar ways  I turned aside and bowed my head and wept.  **Incident  by** [**Countee Cullen**](http://oldpoetry.com/author/Countee%20Cullen)  Once riding in old Baltimore, Heart-filled, head-filled with glee; I saw a Baltimorean Keep looking straight at me.  Now I was eight and very small, And he was no whit bigger, And so I smiled, but he poked out His tongue, and called me, "Nigger."  I saw the whole of Baltimore From May until December; Of all the things that happened there That's all that I remember.   *Those Winter Sundays* [Robert Hayden](https://poets.org/poet/robert-hayden) - 1913-1980  Sundays too my father got up early and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold, then with cracked hands that ached from labor in the weekday weather made banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.  I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking. When the rooms were warm, he'd call, and slowly I would rise and dress, fearing the chronic angers of that house,  Speaking indifferently to him, who had driven out the cold and polished my good shoes as well. What did I know, what did I know of love's austere and lonely offices? *Black Woman* [Georgia Douglas Johnson](https://poets.org/poet/georgia-douglas-johnson) - 1880-1966   * Don’t knock at my door, little child,      I cannot let you in, You know not what a world this is      Of cruelty and sin. Wait in the still eternity      Until I come to you, The world is cruel, cruel, child,      I cannot let you in!   Don’t knock at my heart, little one,      I cannot bear the pain Of turning deaf-ear to your call      Time and time again! You do not know the monster men      Inhabiting the earth, Be still, be still, my precious child,      I must not give you birth! |

**Activity 3 (students should have read this far in the Narrative before doing the activity)**

**Look at the two paintings by Jacob Lawrence, Frederick Douglass #6 and Harriet Tubman #10. Select one of the paintings and write a poem of at least five lines which includes three concrete images.**

[**Links to Children’s Books Based on Jacob Lawrence’s Series**](https://www.culturetype.com/2019/02/28/black-art-history-jacob-lawrences-narrative-series-about-black-perseverance-and-american-rebellion-inspired-a-cache-of-childrens-books/)



