Lesson Plan: Writing an Argument

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What is an archive? What stories are in this archive? How does the information in this archive inform my understanding of activism? Historically, what strategies do students deploy to enact change?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

SWBAT develop a thesis based on evidence/resources gathered. SWBAT write an argument analyzing the significance, impact, and barriers of their chosen student organization.

HOOK / INTRODUCTION

Now that you've spent a significant amount of time identifying other sources and ranking the utility of these sources, you will take time to develop your argument. Share with your partner, what are some of the barriers your organization faced? What was the impact of the organizations' activism? After sharing with your partner, write down a potential thesis for your final argument. This thesis should take a clear position, address all elements of the essential question, and be supported by evidence from your research.

Teaching note: This lesson may take multiple class periods depending on the scope and depth you dedicated to the unit. Writing arguments in history are opportunities to align with ELA skills and standards either by reinforcing skills learned using similar templates and rubrics or offering alternative modes of understanding. For example, you may choose to reintroduce a thesis rubric, essay template, and argument rubric introduced by their ELA teachers or create your own materials that are appropriate for your students. Also, you may choose to focus and assess their ability to use evidence in an argument.

ORGANIZING YOUR ARGUMENT

Depending on skill level, give students time to organize their argument either using a graphic organizer used in your curriculum or allow them to independently organizer their argument. You can also use this free graphic organizer. For middle school, go through one example together, let them independently do their own example, and share out before releasing to do independent work. While students are organizing their argument, take the time to check-in with students who need extra support.

WRITING YOUR ARGUMENT

Now that you have taken time to organize your argument, the bulk of your work is done. You will spend the rest of your time writing your final argument. Take the time to review the writing rubrics used by your school or introduce them to a new rubric. Here is an example. While students are writing their final arguments, take time to check-in with students who need extra support.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3
Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9
Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

TEKS STANDARDS

d(9) History The student understands the impact of the American civil rights movement.
d(10) History The student understands the impact of political, economic, and social factors in the U.S. from the 1970s through 1990.
d(20) Government The student understands the impact of constitutional issues on American society.
d(22) Citizenship The student understands the promises of the Declaration of Independence and the protections of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.
d(25) Culture The student understands how people from various groups contribute to our national identity.
d(28) (28) Social studies skills. The student understands how historians use historiography to interpret the past and applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including technology.