

Performance Task: Argument Essay

Description:

In *A Raisin in the Sun*, the Younger family carries big dreams, but the world they live in stands in the way of achieving them. This Performance Task recognizes that many of the barriers the Younger family faced in 1950s Chicago did not disappear when the play ended. Some of those same barriers continue to limit people's lives today, even if they show up in different forms.

You will choose one topic such as education, housing, employment, citizenship, or healthcare and research a specific barrier that limits people's opportunities in that area. Your job is not simply to describe that barrier. Your job is to argue: to show how this barrier shapes people's opportunities and to make the case for what should change. You will write an **argument** that answers this question: *How does this barrier shape people's opportunities, and what can we do to make things more equitable?*

Your essay will make a clear claim, support it with evidence from at least two credible research sources, address a counterclaim, and close with a call to action: your own voice making the case for why equitable opportunity matters.

Why This Task Matters:

Everyone has dreams. But not everyone has the same access to opportunity. Some people face barriers that others never have to think about. When you research a barrier and build an argument around it, you are doing something that writers, advocates, and citizens do every day: use evidence and voice to make the case for change.

Criteria for Success:

- A focused, arguable research question identifying a specific barrier and its impact on people's opportunities
- A clear claim about how that barrier shapes people's opportunities
- Accurate evidence from at least two credible sources, with analysis explaining how each piece supports your argument
- A counterclaim and a strong, evidence-based rebuttal
- A closing call to action making the case for equitable opportunity
- Formal tone, precise vocabulary, and logical organization throughout

Performance Task Rubric: Argument Essay

Use this rubric to check your work before you submit. Ask yourself: does my argument essay meet the Proficient description in every row?

Criteria	1 — Beginning	2 — Developing	3 — Proficient
Claim & Argument W.7.1, W.7.1.a	Does not include a clear claim, or the claim does not address how a specific barrier shapes people’s opportunities.	Includes a claim about a barrier and its impact on opportunity, but the claim is vague or does not fully explain the argument.	Includes a clear, specific, arguable claim that explains how a specific barrier shapes people’s opportunities and sets up the argument for change.
Evidence & Analysis W.7.9, RI.7.1	Does not include evidence from research sources, or the evidence is not relevant to the claim. Analysis is missing or unclear.	Includes some evidence from research sources, but it may lack specific details or accuracy. Analysis is present but does not fully explain how the evidence supports the claim.	Includes accurate, relevant evidence from at least two credible sources with specific details. Provides clear analysis explaining how each piece of evidence supports the argument.
Counterclaim & Rebuttal W.7.1.a	Does not include a counterclaim or a rebuttal.	Includes a counterclaim, but the rebuttal is weak or lacks supporting evidence.	Includes a clear counterclaim and provides a strong rebuttal supported by relevant evidence.
Research & Sources W.7.7, W.7.8, RI.7.6, RI.7.8, RI.7.9	Does not use credible sources, or sources are not cited. Evidence is copied rather than quoted or paraphrased appropriately.	Uses some credible sources and attempts citation, but sources may not be fully evaluated for credibility or accuracy. Quoting and paraphrasing is inconsistent.	Uses multiple credible sources that are accurately cited. Evaluates sources for credibility and relevance, and quotes or paraphrases evidence appropriately while avoiding plagiarism.
Organization & Transitions W.7.4	Organization is unclear or difficult to follow. Transitions between ideas are missing or confusing.	Organization is mostly logical, but some transitions between ideas are weak or unclear. The essay structure could be more cohesive.	Organization is logical and easy to follow. Clear transitions guide the reader between ideas and paragraphs. The essay has a cohesive structure with an effective closing call to action.

Criteria	1 — Beginning	2 — Developing	3 — Proficient
Language & Style W.7.1.d, L.7.3, L.7.6	Language is informal or inappropriate for academic writing. Vocabulary is basic and does not demonstrate understanding of key terms.	Tone is mostly formal and appropriate for academic writing. Vocabulary includes some grade-appropriate academic terms but may lack precision.	Tone and style are formal and appropriate for academic writing. Vocabulary is precise and includes grade-appropriate academic and domain-specific words that demonstrate understanding of key terms.
Conventions L.7.1, L.7.2	Contains frequent errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation that interfere with understanding.	Contains some errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation that occasionally interfere with clarity. Most conventions are correct.	Demonstrates command of standard English conventions. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation are correct throughout.