**I Already Know How to Write!**

**Do I Really Need a Course in Composition?**

**Subject area/course:** English/Language Arts, Composition 2

**Grade level/band**: 11–12

**INSTRUCTOR PROCEDURES**

1. **Task overview**:

Students address an argumentative essay to the state Board of Higher Education on the real-world question of whether they should be required to take a writing course in postsecondary education. In the process, they must consider how valuable the skill of writing will be to their future careers and in any further education they may pursue.

1. **Prior knowledge required:**

Students should be able to:

* Understand the organization of argumentation.
* Evaluate sources.
* Use MLA style.
* Draw inferences from sources.
* Write an argumentative essay.

1. **Common Core State Standards aligned to this task**:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/1/) Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/4/) Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.5](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/5/) Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/7/) Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.8](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/8/) Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.9](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/9/) Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

1. **Time requirements**:

Plan about two weeks for students to complete the research and write their essay. Allow in-class time to review a first draft. Schedule in-class time, if needed, for students to complete their research and word process their final essays. Other work may be in or out of class, at teacher discretion.

1. **Instructor materials to use during administration**:

There are many sources available that directly address the issue of writing skills. Instructors might want to familiarize themselves with those available in order to guide the research process.

* <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/design/instructionalstrategies/writing/poorlyprepared.html>
* <http://wac.colostate.edu/journal/vol23/crank.pdf>
* <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/educate/casestudies/writingskills.pdf>
* <http://www.ocregister.com/articles/students-371409-writing-graders.html>

1. **Instructor procedures during administration**:

* Students should work independently throughout this task.
* Some students will have good research skills, but some will need guidance in the determination of appropriate sources and where to look for them. It is important to spend time during class to review what constitutes an appropriate source in advance of students’ independent work.
* In order to give students feedback on their rough draft, you may provide feedback yourself, engage students in a peer review process, and/or ask them to do a self-review.

1. **Student support:**

The following suggestions are examples of scaffolding that can be used to meet the diverse student needs within the classroom.

* Provide class time for research on students’ topics.
* Provide definitions of new vocabulary words ahead of time.
* For the final product, all learners will benefit from peer assistance while brainstorming their topics, as well as a peer- or teacher-edit of their papers before final submission.

1. **Extensions or variations:**

* Depending on your class schedule and as students are ready to turn in their final paper, you could have students divide into small groups that are for or against the proposition. Students could share what they feel to be their most persuasive argument for that side, first within their small group, then with another group who holds the opposing view.
* If this is a topic of interest in your local or state politics, you could forward some or all of your students’ letters to an appropriate governing body.

1. **Scoring and assessment considerations:**

EPIC developed the *College and Career Ready (CCR) Task Bank Scoring Rubric* to accompany this task. If your school or department uses a standardized rubric that would fit the content and requirements of this task, you may choose to use your existing rubric. The following notes and suggestions are meant to clarify the intent of the rubric and include considerations for the assessment of student work.

* When assigning the task, provide students with the rubric that will be used to score their final product and discuss it as a class.
* Unlike some rubrics, the *CCR Task Bank Rubric* does not predetermine “point values” for the scoring criteria. The rubric thus allows for flexibility with different instructors’ scoring systems and individual determination of the “weight” of each criterion.
* Student work that scores at the *Accomplished* level is considered to be entry-level college work.
* The *Exceeds* category on the rubric provides an example of how a student can go above and beyond the *Accomplished* level. These examples are intended to be only ONE way a work product can exceed expectations, thus allowing room for your professional judgment.
* If needed, consider including task-specific criteria as an additional scoring category to the rubric or providing a checklist of requirements for the task.