

Name: _____ Date: _____

Write an Argument Essay

Directions: Read "Should You Give Up Summer Vacation?" Complete the essay kit on page 29. Then follow the steps below to write an argument essay.

STEP 1: DECIDE WHAT YOU THINK

Should school be year-round? Consider what you read in the article, as well as your own viewpoints. **Check the box next to the point of view you will argue in your essay. Or write your own opinion in the space provided.**

Yes! Goodbye, summer.

No! Hello, summer.

STEP 2: FIND YOUR SUPPORT

Which of the items that you wrote in the "Yes" and "No" columns on page 29 support your opinion? What other information supports your opinion? List at least three supporting details here:

STEP 3: ACKNOWLEDGE THE OTHER SIDE

If you think we should switch to year-round school, summarize the strongest arguments of those who disagree with you. Alternatively, if you think we should keep the traditional school calendar, summarize the main reasons some people want to switch to year-round school.

STEP 4: CRAFT YOUR THESIS (CENTRAL CLAIM)

The thesis is where you tell readers what your essay is going to be about. The thesis should be a clear, strong statement of the opinion you gave in Step 1. The rest of your essay will support this thesis.

Your thesis: _____

STEP 5: WRITE YOUR HOOK

The very beginning of your essay is called the hook because it "hooks" your readers' attention. The hook should relate to the topic of your essay, but it can take many forms. It can be an anecdote (a very short story), a fact, a quote, or a rhetorical question (a question to which you don't expect an answer). **Choose one of the ideas below, or use your own idea, and write a hook on the lines provided (1-3 sentences).**

1. **ANECDOTE:** Describe what it's like to return to school after summer vacation. Do you spend the first several weeks trying to remember what you learned the previous year? Or are you refreshed and ready to dive right into your studies?
2. **SURPRISING FACT:** Find a fact that will raise your readers' eyebrows. Several surprising facts are included in the article. You can also do some research to find one that is not included in the article.
3. **RHETORICAL QUESTION:** Ask your readers a question that reflects your point of view about summer vacation. One way you could structure your question is like this: "Will getting rid of a long summer vacation really _____?"

Your hook: _____

STEP 6: SUMMARIZE THE ISSUE

Let readers know a little about the issue you will be writing about. This is not your point of view; it's a very brief summary of the issue—in this case, that people disagree on the necessity of summer vacation.

Your summary of the issue: _____

STEP 7: START WRITING

Now that you have the key ingredients for your essay, you are ready to start writing. On the next page, you'll find guidelines for how to organize your ingredients, as well as hints about what else you'll need to add.

Directions: Follow the guidelines below to write a strong essay on whether we should switch to year-round school. You will use what you wrote on the first two pages of this activity.

INTRODUCTION

Open with your hook from Step 5.



Write a transition sentence that relates your hook to the question of whether we switch to year-round school. (See *Scope's* handout "Great Transitions" for some ways to link your ideas.)



Write your summary of the issue from Step 6.



Finish with your thesis from Step 4.

BODY PARAGRAPH(S)

Here's where you write your supporting points from Step 2. For each one, write 1-3 sentences that provide additional details. You can put your supporting points and detail sentences together in one paragraph or you can split them into several paragraphs.

It depends on how much you want to write about each point. Order your supporting points from weakest to strongest. Readers tend to remember best the details that are presented last.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE OTHER SIDE

Now it's time to recognize the other side of the argument. Use what you wrote in Step 3. Then explain why you think the opposing point of view is wrong.

CONCLUSION

Use 2-3 sentences to remind your readers of your main points.



Finish with a strong final sentence. Looking for an idea? Try referring to your hook, finding a quote, or inspiring your readers.

READ AND REVISE

Use *Scope's* "Argument-Essay Checklist" to evaluate and edit what you have written. Make any necessary changes and write a second draft.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary:

"Should You Give Up Summer Vacation?"

1. **balk (bawlk)** *verb*; If you balk at something, you refuse to do it or you show that you do not want to do it. *Balk* can also mean "stop suddenly and refuse to start again." If your horse balks in the middle of your trip, you're stuck!
2. **clime (klahym)** *noun*; A clime is an area with a particular climate—that is, with specific weather conditions. People who live in cold, snowy climes need warm coats and mittens; people who live in hot, sunny climes need shorts and sandals.
3. **culture (KUHL-cher)** *noun*; *Culture* is the way of life of a particular group of people, including the group's beliefs, values, traditions, and language. Different countries have different cultures—but there are multiple cultures within countries too. Just think about all the different groups of people in the U.S.—people of different ages, religions, incomes, backgrounds, parts of the country, etc. Each of those groups has its own culture within the larger American culture.
4. **intersession (IN-ter-sesh-uhn)** *noun*; The prefix *inter* means "between." *Intersession* refers to the period of time "between sessions"—specifically, the time between academic terms, sessions, or semesters.
5. **lag (lag)** *verb or noun*; To lag is to stay or fall behind. You will lag behind your teammates on the track team if you are not as fast as they are. *Lag* can also mean "to decrease gradually," as in, "Interest in the new series about the talking kitten lagged as time went on."

As a noun, *lag* means "a slowing." If a group of friends was chatting away and then the conversation fizzled out, you say that there was a lag in the conversation.
6. **logistics (loh-JIS-tiks)** *noun*; When someone talks about the logistics of an event, they are talking about the details of how everything will get done. For example, say you have a bunch of relatives coming to town for your grandparents' anniversary. Some are arriving at the airport and some are arriving at the train station. Your parents need to figure out the logistics of picking everyone up—the details of who will pick up whom, as well as where, when, and how they will do it.
7. **mitigate (MIT-ih-gayt)** *verb*; If you mitigate something, you make it less severe, harmful, or painful. You might, for example, take medicine to mitigate the symptoms of a cold, or wear earplugs at a concert to mitigate damage to your hearing.

Directions: In the space below, list any other words from the article whose definitions you are not sure about. For each word, use context clues to try to figure out the meaning. Then look up the word in a few different dictionaries. Discuss the meaning of the word with your teacher or another adult. Then write a definition for the word and one example sentence.

Vocabulary Practice

"Should You Give Up Summer Vacation?"

Directions: Below are six possible titles and summaries for four imaginary books. Choose the best title for each book. Briefly explain your choices.

BOOK TITLES

A. *Intersession*

B. *The Great Lag* C. *Balking at Fate*

D. *An Introduction to Our Culture*

E. *My Kind of Clime* F. *Mitigating Stress: A Guide*

1. Desert-dweller Lizard Lee recalls life in the hottest place on Earth, Death Valley.

Title (A-F): _____ **Why I chose this title:** _____

2. Spring break turns out to be *way* more interesting than Jake and Jenna expected.

Title (A-F): _____ **Why I chose this title:** _____

3. Dr. Fran Ludwin reveals how even the busiest person can learn to sit back, relax, and enjoy life.

Title (A-F): _____ **Why I chose this title:** _____

4. The surprising history of American traditions and customs.

Title (A-F): _____ **Why I chose this title:** _____

Directions: Choose the word or phrase that is most similar in meaning to each word in bold.

5. **lag**

- Ⓐ expand Ⓒ speed up
Ⓑ slow down Ⓓ grow

6. **mitigate**

- Ⓐ ease Ⓒ assist
Ⓑ worsen Ⓓ argue

7. **balk**

- Ⓐ enjoy Ⓒ accept
Ⓑ attempt Ⓓ resist

Directions: For each statement below, fill in the circle to show whether you think it's true or false. Briefly explain your choice.

8. An event which involves many logistics will likely be easy to plan.

- Ⓐ true Ⓑ false

Reason: _____

9. The owner of a store would probably be very excited to learn that the store's sales are lagging.

- Ⓐ true Ⓑ false

Reason: _____

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“Should You Give Up Summer Vacation?” Quiz

Directions: Read “Should You Give Up Summer Vacation?” and then answer the questions below.

- The author develops the idea that a year-round school schedule can be beneficial for students in all of the following ways EXCEPT**
 - by explaining the origin of summer vacation.
 - by listing the types of intersession classes students can take at some year-round schools.
 - by explaining what summer learning loss is.
 - by quoting a student who attends year-round school.
- Imagine that there is a study about how a year-round school schedule affects students’ grades. A quote from this study would best fit into which section of the article?**
 - the introduction
 - An American Tradition
 - More Breaks, Less Stress
 - It would not fit anywhere in the article.
- Which of the following lines supports the idea that summer vacation is outdated?**
 - “Reorganizing the year has academic benefits too.” (p. 28)
 - “It’s an American tradition, a time to create lasting memories.” (p. 29)
 - “Today, we have air-conditioning.” (p. 29)
 - “Chances are, staying in school is not your top pick.” (p. 28)
- Consider this line: “Try setting up a soccer game with another school when you’re on a break every few weeks” (p. 29). How does this line contribute to the article?**
 - It offers a rebuttal to the argument that a year-round school schedule has academic benefits.
 - It supports the claim that extra breaks throughout the school year relieve stress.
 - It offers a rebuttal to the argument that summer vacation is an important tradition.
 - It supports the claim that a year-round school calendar can cause scheduling conflicts.
- The author writes, “But is tradition a good enough reason to keep it around?” What literary device is she using?**
 - hyperbole
 - rhetorical question
 - metaphor
 - symbolism
- The purpose of the literary device in question 5 is**
 - to encourage readers to question the value of summer vacation.
 - to convince readers of the value of summer vacation.
 - to emphasize how long summer vacation has been around.
 - to support the idea that summer vacation is harmful.

Constructed-Response Questions

Directions: Write your answers to the questions below on the back of this paper or type them up on a computer.

- Choose one argument used in the article that supports keeping a long summer vacation. Explain whether that argument is weak or strong. Use text evidence.
- Laura Kelsey writes, “For many kids . . . summer days are spent mostly indoors, playing video games and watching TV.” What point is she making with this information?

SKILL: Essay Writing

Argument-Essay Checklist

Directions: Use this guide to check your own essay, or exchange papers with a classmate and use the list to check each other's essays. In the margins of the essay you are checking, make notes about anything that needs to be revised.

Introduction

- ✓ Does the first sentence grab readers' attention?
- ✓ Does the first paragraph provide a general overview of the essay's topic?
- ✓ Does the first paragraph include a thesis statement that strongly and clearly states your point of view? Does the thesis clue readers in as to what the essay is going to be about?

Body Paragraphs

- ✓ Do they contain a total of at least three points that support the thesis?
- ✓ Do they provide details to further explain each of the supporting points?
- ✓ Are the supporting points presented in order from weakest to strongest?
- ✓ Do you acknowledge an opposing point of view and then explain why you think it isn't strong enough to change your point of view?

Conclusion

- ✓ Does the last paragraph remind readers of the main points of the essay, without going into *too* much detail and repeating everything readers just read?
- ✓ Is the conclusion free of new information (such as another supporting point)?
- ✓ Does the last sentence leave readers with a strong final impression?

General

- ✓ Does one idea flow smoothly into the next?
- ✓ Do the sentence structures and lengths vary?
- ✓ Does every sentence relate to the thesis?
- ✓ Does everything make sense?
- ✓ Is the essay convincing?
- ✓ Are the grammar, punctuation, and spelling correct?

SKILL: Essay Writing

Great Transitions

Transitions are like bridges between your ideas—they help your readers move from one idea to the next. Here are some transition words and phrases you may wish to use in your essay. Keep in mind that they can be used at the beginning of a sentence or within a sentence.

If you are adding information or showing similarity between ideas:

- additionally
- besides
- so too
- first of all/secondly/thirdly
- in addition
- also
- likewise
- to begin with
- as well as
- another
- furthermore
- finally

If you are showing that one idea is different from another:

- however
- even though
- in contrast
- on the one hand/on the other hand
- yet
- despite
- still
- some people say/other people say
- but
- although
- in spite of
- regardless

If you are showing that something is an example of what you just stated:

- for example
- to illustrate
- this can be seen
- for instance
- namely
- specifically

If you want to show cause and effect:

- as a result
- consequently
- so
- it follows that
- therefore
- eventually

If you want to add emphasis:

- in fact
- of course
- truly
- even
- indeed