

Minnesota Writing Project

---Demonstration Lesson---

Title of lesson: Position Paper (Is College Worth It)

Suggested grade/age: 11th/12th

Approximate time needed to complete lesson: 2 weeks for the entire unit; 2-3 days for the lessons demonstrated

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson:

- argumentative writing
- developing arguments
- synthesizing sources
- citing sources
- refutation and counterargument
- writing process

This writing assignment is important in the development of my students' skills and knowledge because it fulfills the CCSS and also prepares students to write arguments in college. It encourages deep and close reading of a text and the article can also serve as a mentor text for argumentative writing. Students also need to cite their sources and work through the writing process. Students will also work with audience and voice, as well as refutation and counterargument. Finally, due to the topic, students will also continue to explore their post-high school plans.

Brief summary/outline of lesson:

This lesson is close to the beginning of the semester (block schedule) and is the first writing assignment of English 12. The entire unit, Position Paper, encompasses looking at persuasive techniques, working through the writing process, and conducting research. It culminates in a final paper. The article, "Is College Worth It" is the impetus for students' opinions and research. In the past, students have struggled with close reading of the article and refutation; this assignment attempts to lessen the struggle.

Main Steps:

- Read and take notes (annotate) on article, "Is College Worth It."
- Create 17 Word Summary (Kelly Gallagher), and Window Quote (Gallagher).
- Share with partner/group.
- Go through the article and identify elements of argument writing (syntax, diction, refutation, audience, persuasive techniques . . .).
- Learn about/review the templates from They Say/I Say.
- Give one person/group skittles, one person/group M&Ms.
- Using the templates, students have to develop an argument for why their candy is best. - Then students will use the rest of the unit time to conduct additional research, write, workshop, and finish their papers.

Related Resources:

Technology: internet, electronic databases; computer

Article: “Is College Worth It” by Quinton Skinner (2015)

Book: *They Say/I Say*

Supplies: computer, hard copy of article, high-lighters/pens, skittles and M&Ms.

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:

-The articles can be shorter

-All students can make arguments with M&Ms and Skittles

-Many students can use the templates of *They Say/I Say*

-There are some additional research opportunities: more articles, interviews of college students etc.

-Students could also create a presentation of some kind to fulfill speaking/listening and media

-Could be inter-disciplinary—work with Business/economics classes; college counselors; government (policy regarding tuition and student loans)

For additional information, contact: Dr. Kate Fullmer

kfullmer@edenpr.org