

Argumentative Text Lesson



What are the elements of argumentative text?

Argumentative texts aim to persuade readers by presenting a clear claim or position supported by evidence and logical reasoning, while also acknowledging and addressing counterarguments.

Pictured: Toni Morrison (1931 – 2019), author of *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*,

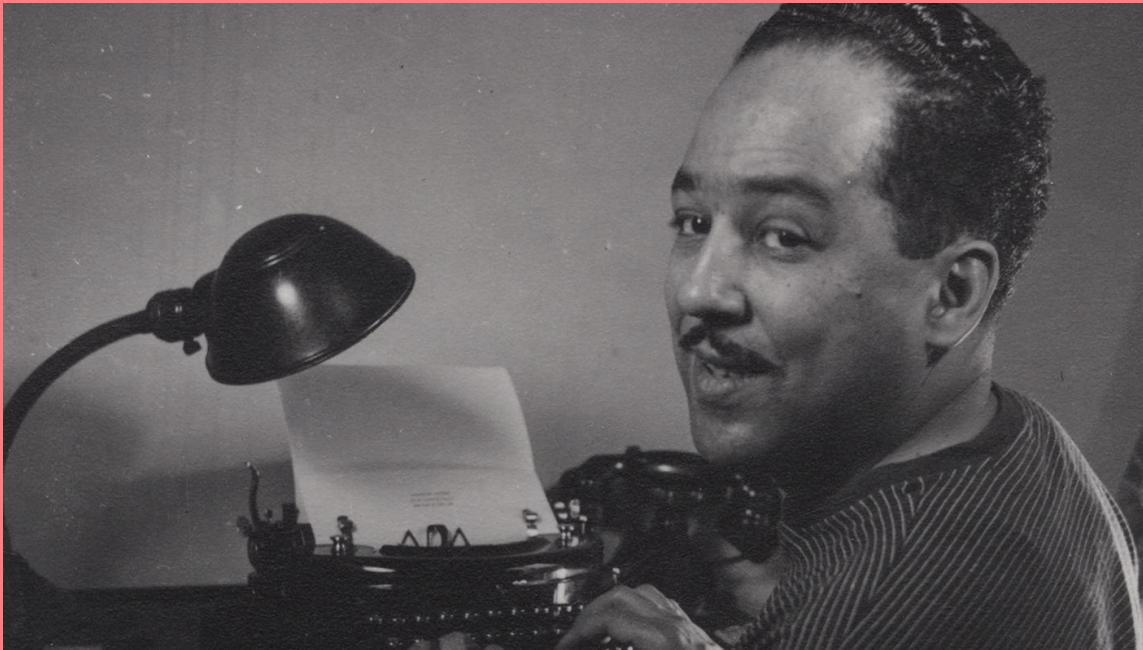
winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, the National Book Award, and the Nobel Prize for Literature

Elements of Argumentative Text

Element 1: Claim/Thesis Statement

An argumentative text presents a specific claim or thesis statement that the author intends to prove. The claim should be debatable and require support with evidence and reasoning.

Pictured: Prominent voice of the Harlem Renaissance and prolific poet, Langston Hughes



Examples of Claims:

1. Capital punishment should be illegal because of immorality issues, socioeconomic and racial bias, and the possibility of wrongful executions.
2. Cyberbullying adversely impacts adolescents' mental

health, self-esteem, and academic performance.

3. Students should wear uniforms to schools to reduce distractions, create unity, and enhance focus on learning
4. Renewable energy systems contribute to sustainability through reduced emissions, resource conservation, and energy independence.
5. Media perpetuates gender stereotypes through targeted representation, roles, and normalized behaviors.

Element 2: Evidence and Reasoning

The author uses evidence (facts, statistics, examples, expert opinions) and logical reasoning to support their claim. Evidence can include data, research findings, real-world examples, and credible sources.

Example of Evidence:

1. Studies show that a 10% increase in public transportation ridership leads to a 5% reduction in carbon emissions.
2. According to a reading expert, Jennifer Serravallo, executive function plays a critical role in reading comprehension.

Element 3 Counterarguments and Refutations:

Acknowledging and addressing opposing viewpoints strengthens the argument by demonstrating fairness and understanding. The author refutes counterarguments by providing evidence and reasoning that demonstrates why their claim is more valid.

Example of Counterclaim: "While some argue that increased funding for public transportation is expensive, the long-term benefits in terms of environmental and economic costs outweigh the initial investment."

Element 4 Audience Awareness:

Argumentative texts are written with a specific audience in mind, and the author's language, tone, and level of detail are tailored to that audience. For example, an argument aimed at policymakers would likely use more formal language and present data in a more structured way than an argument aimed at the general public.



Element 5 Persuasive Language:

Argumentative texts use persuasive language and rhetorical devices to convince the reader to accept the author's position. Strong verbs, logical connectors, rhetorical questions, and appeals to emotion or logic can be used to persuade the reader.

Pictured: Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, Gwendolyn Brooks
(1917- 2000)

Argumentative Essay Writing Video 1 (Writing Better):

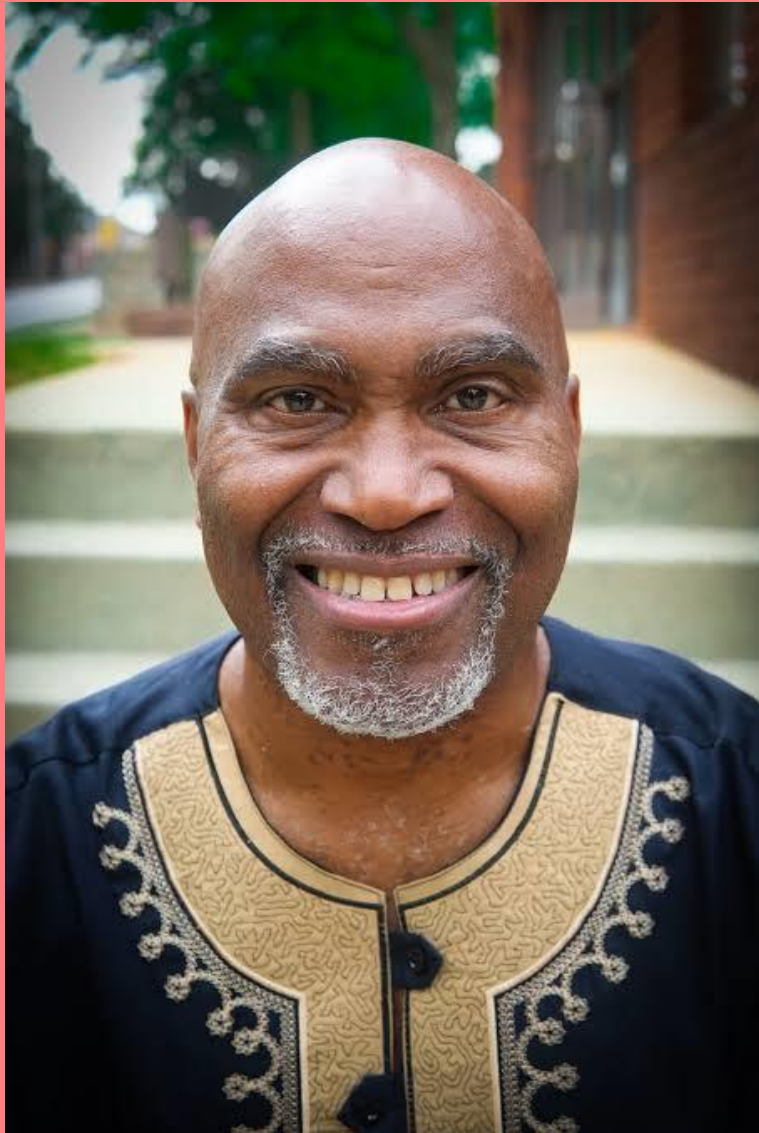
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_D6K42DTSA

Argumentative Writing Video on the Counter Claim and Rebuttal (Writing Better)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ga_MbjKk-0

Writing a counter argument paragraph (Mr. Messinger)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2YuUCKxnK8>



Argumentative Essay Formats

Pictured: Professor and novelist, Daniel Black

Argumentative Essay Format 1

Paragraph 1: Engaging introduction (hook), background information, claim and two reasons (points of discussion)

Paragraph 2: cite evidence, two examples, and commentary/explanations for reason 1

Paragraph 3: cite evidence, two examples, and commentary/explanations for reason 2

Paragraph 4: address counterclaim (opposing idea), refutation (explain how the opposing issue is

wrong or not true), provide evidence and examples to support claim

Paragraph 5: Conclusion

Argumentative Essay Format 2

Paragraph 1: Engaging introduction (hook), background information, claim and two reasons (points of discussion)

Paragraph 2: cite evidence, two examples, and commentary/explanations for reason 1

Paragraph 3: cite evidence, two examples, and commentary/explanations for reason 2

Paragraph 4: cite evidence, two examples, and commentary/explanations for reason 3

Paragraph 5: address counterclaim (opposing idea), refutation (explain how the opposing issue is wrong or not true), provide evidence and examples to support claim

Paragraph 6: Conclusion

AP Students, for Q3 use CHORES (Current events, history, observation, reading, experiences, and science) for evidence.

Sample Argumentative Essays

<https://blog.prepscholar.com/argumentative-essay-examples>

Let's analyze and discuss this sample argumentative text!

“The Other Best Friend”

The common saying "a dog is man's best friend" may contain some truth, but dogs are not the only animal friend people enjoy. For many, a cat is their best friend. Despite what dog lovers may believe, cats, too, make excellent house pets as they are good companions, civilized, and easy to care for.

In the first place, people enjoy the companionship of cats. Many cats are affectionate. They will snuggle up and ask to be petted or scratched under their chin. Who can resist a purring cat? If they're not feeling affectionate, cats are generally quite playful. They love to chase balls and feathers or just about anything dangling from a string. They especially enjoy playing when their owners are participating in the game. Contrary to popular opinion, cats can be trained. Using

rewards and punishments, just like with a dog, a cat can be trained to follow commands such as fetch or sit and perform tricks such as jumping through a hoop or doing flips! Companionship by any means is great, but with cats, it's truly unconditional.

Secondly, cats are very civilized creatures. Unlike dogs, cats do not bark or make other loud noises. Most cats don't even meow very often. They generally lead a quiet existence. Cats also don't often have "accidents." Mother cats train their kittens to use the litter box, and most cats will use it without fail from that time on. Even stray cats usually understand the concept when shown the box and will use it regularly. Best of all, cats are not as dangerous as dogs. You seldom, if ever, hear about cats being responsible for vicious attacks on humans. When was the last time you read a news headline that stated, "Pet Cat Mauls Human to Death," or heard about someone in the hospital with sixty-seven stitches to the face to reattach ears or replace lips? Because cats are so civilized, you will almost think they are human.

Lastly, one of the most attractive features of cats is their ease of care. Cats do not have to be walked. They get plenty of exercise in the house as they play. Cats also take care of their own grooming. Bathing a cat is almost never necessary because they clean themselves. Cats are more particular about personal cleanliness than even some people. In addition, cats can be left home alone for a

few hours without fear. Unlike some pets, most cats will not destroy the home furnishings. A tall scratching post in a favorite cat area of the house will often keep the cat content until their owners return. Because cats are so easy to care for, you might want to give owning a cat a second thought.

In closing, cats are low maintenance, civilized companions. People who have small living quarters or less time for pet care should appreciate these characteristics of cats. These aspects make cats the purrrfect pet!

Pictured: Edwidge Danticat, the author of *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, *Krik! Krak!*, and *The Farmer of Bones*.

PARAGRAPHS

Argumentative Essay Paragraphs Contain:



Topic Sentence: Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence that introduces the main point of that paragraph and connects it to the thesis.

Evidence: **Cite textual** evidence (facts, statistics, examples, etc.) to support your topic sentence and thesis.

Analysis: **Explain** how the evidence supports your argument and connect it back to the topic sentence and thesis.

Transition: Use transition words or phrases to smoothly connect the paragraphs and create a logical flow.

Conclusion: the final section; summarizes the connections between the information discussed in the body of the paragraph and the paragraph's controlling idea.

Sample paragraph

Topic sentence

Supporting details

Concluding sentence

Body Paragraph: The Ethical and Practical Arguments Against Capital Punishment

Capital punishment should be abolished due to its irreversible nature and the documented cases of wrongful executions that have occurred throughout history. Studies from the Innocence Project have demonstrated that since 1973, more than 185 people who were wrongly convicted have been exonerated from death row through DNA evidence, highlighting the fallible nature of our justice system. Furthermore, extensive research published in the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology shows that capital punishment does not serve as a more effective deterrent to crime than long-term imprisonment, while also being significantly more expensive for taxpayers due to lengthy appeal processes and specialized death row facilities. The psychological impact on corrections officers, judicial staff, and families involved in executions creates additional trauma within the criminal justice system, as documented in multiple psychological studies published in the American Journal of Psychiatry. When considering these factors alongside the moral implications of state-sanctioned execution, it becomes clear that capital punishment represents an outdated and problematic approach to criminal justice that should be eliminated in favor of more humane and effective alternatives.



Pictured: Lucille Clifton (1936 – 2010), poet, educator and winner of the National Book Award for Poetry

Let's analyze and discuss another example of argumentative text!

"Why College?"

Nearly every high school student at some point in time has asked himself: "What will I do after graduation?" Though the choices are few, the impact of your choice will be great. Attending college is one of the best decisions that you could make because it promotes independence, provides social opportunities, and instills a sense of accomplishment that will prepare you for this big thing called LIFE.

One often overlooked benefit of attending college is that it prepares you to be independent. Students are away from the protection of their parents and the comfort of their homes for the first time and must now face the reality of being partially on their own. Remember, there won't be any school bells, campus advisors,

or moms and dads around to monitor your behavior. One very important aspect cultivating independence is time management. Students must manage their time from waking up to get to the cafeteria, to getting to classes, to making the dorm curfew. Making your own decisions fosters a sense of independence as well. Students must learn to make important decisions about what to major in and how to schedule their classes, what's appropriate to wear, whether to attend a party or complete an assignment, or sleep in late and miss a class. College is the great balance that bridges the security of home to striking out on your own one day as an independent adult.

Another advantage of attending college is the social opportunities that it provides. College is the home of endless activities. Nowhere else can you find sports, parties, bands, sororities, fraternities, concerts, student government, talent shows, contests, and work study programs, just to name a few. College is also such a fantastic way to meet people. Life-long friendships become established, cultural diversity is explored, academic cohorts are created and dating spills into the new extracurricular activity. If you're lucky, that date could even turn into your future spouse. These social aspects occur at no other place and at no other time except college, and



they enable students to participate with a greater depth of experience, school spirit, and community.

Finally, attending college creates a foundation for success. College provides a platform on which to advance your knowledge in subjects such as history, literature, science, mathematics, and so on. Whether it's an associate's, bachelor's, master's, or doctor's degree, it exemplifies hard work, perseverance, dedication, and status. College also prepares you for achievement in any chosen career field. Unlike jobs of the past, current jobs rely on technology, creativity, and problem solving to sustain our rapidly changing world. As a result, they require more brain power than brawn. What's more, a person who attends college has greater access to the job markets, many of which require advanced degrees; has advanced positions such as CEOs, directors, and managers; and has salaries that earn thousands more than a person who does not. Generally, it's always necessary to have a good education, but attending college also gives you a chance to cash in.

In closing, college gives you the opportunity to enjoy a richer, more meaningful life.



Obtaining a college degree remains the greatest achievement of all professions and the greatest hope for all generations. What could be a greater reward?

Citing Evidence

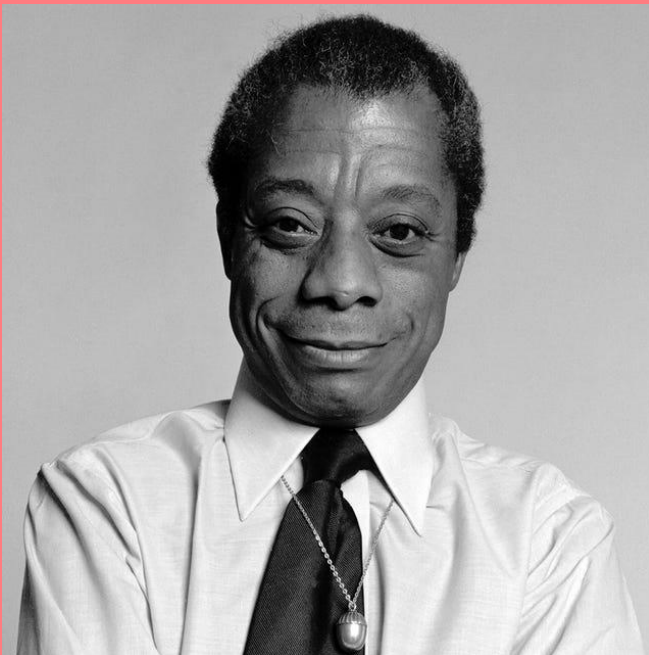
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyJr3Zv5lvQ>

(Mr. Messinger)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tq_BoPJsv-4

(Khan Academy)

Transitional Words and Phrases



Pictured: Acclaimed novelist, essayist, and activist of *Go Tell It on the Mountain*; *The Fire Next Time*; and *If Beale Street Could Talk*, James Baldwin (1924 – 1987)

TRANSITION

WORDS, also known as linking or connecting words, are words or phrases that help connect ideas and show the relationship between

Cite Text Evidence

SUPPORT YOUR ANSWER USING A QUOTE FROM THE TEXT

EXAMPLES:

- According to the text...
- The author stated...
- Based on the text...
- The text mentioned that...
- In the second paragraph, it stated that...
- On page ____, the text stated...
- An example from the text is...

sentences, paragraphs, or sections of text. They enhance flow and clarity by signaling how ideas relate to one another.

Giving Examples: For example, for instance, such as, to illustrate, for illustration, in this case...

Adding Information: Additionally, also, furthermore, moreover, in addition, besides...

Showing Sequence: First, second, third, next, then, after, subsequently, finally, initially, before, before this, at this time, now, at this point...

Contrasting Ideas: However, on the other hand, in contrast, conversely, nevertheless, nonetheless, yet, although, despite, while...

Showing Results: Therefore, consequently, as a result, thus, hence, so...

Summarizing: In conclusion, in summary, finally, to conclude, overall...

(Video 1 on transitional words and phrases)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTmCWLIA0K8>

Writing Conclusions

Conclusions wrap up what you have been discussing in your paper. After moving from general to specific information in the introduction and body paragraphs, your conclusion should begin pulling back into more general information that restates the main points that you have discussed.

Restate your topic the main point that is significant

Restate your thesis/claim in a different way

(Writing Better) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uu1GSqp_wPo

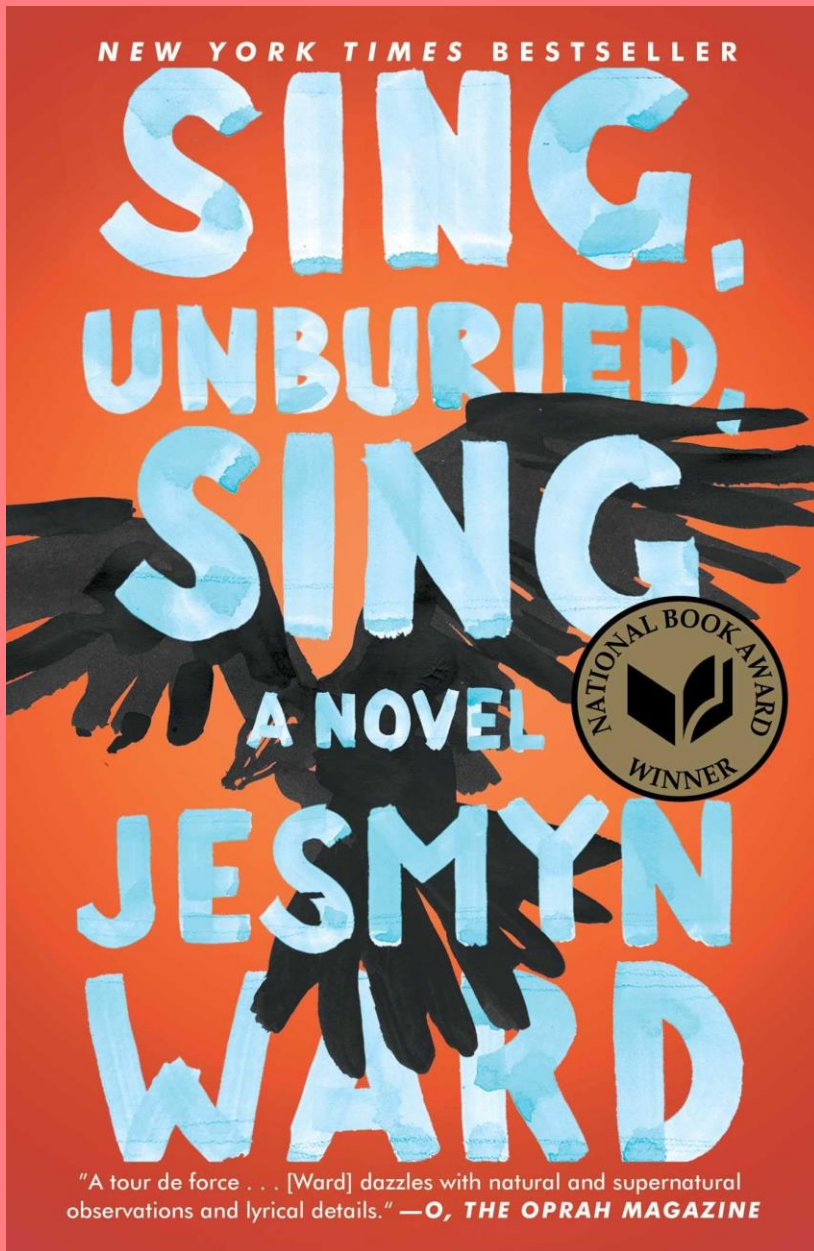
Example of Concluding Paragraph

In conclusion, the practice of capital punishment stands in stark opposition to fundamental human rights and modern principles of justice. The irreversible nature of the death penalty, combined with documented cases of wrongful executions, demonstrates the inherent flaws in this system of punishment. Furthermore, studies have consistently shown that capital punishment fails to serve as an effective deterrent to serious crimes, while simultaneously placing a substantial financial burden on taxpayers compared to life imprisonment. The racial and socioeconomic disparities evident in death penalty cases underscore a troubling pattern of



systemic inequality in its application. When considering the moral implications, psychological impact on corrections officers, and the existence of alternative punishments that better serve both justice and rehabilitation, it becomes clear that capital punishment has no place in a civilized society. Therefore, based on ethical, practical, and economic grounds, capital punishment should be abolished and replaced with more humane and effective forms of criminal justice. In summary, history is a popular subject.

Pictured: Novelist and Playwright of *The Wake of the Wind*, *Homemade Love*, *Family*, and *The Matter Is Life* and Winner of the American Book Award, J. California Cooper (1931-2014)

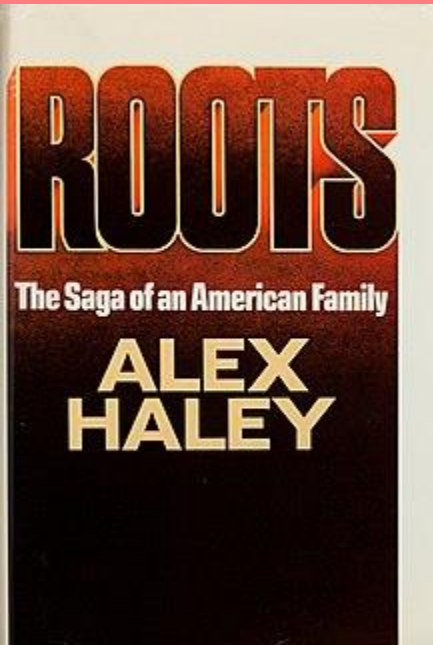


Define each term: (1) phrase, (2) clause, and (3) sentence

Kinds of Sentences

Simple Sentences

1. The flu is contagious.
2. Despite the availability of numerous over-the-counter drugs, the best remedy for a common cold is still getting rest and staying hydrated.
3. Jalen Hurts and his teammates lift weights every day.
4. Brooklyn and Imani are studying in France next year.
5. As a result of Dr. Kittles' research, people can discover their African genealogy.



Compound Sentences

1. “Success doesn’t always mean climbing the corporate ladder; sometimes it means stepping off entirely and building something better.”—Deidre Osei
2. Robert studied all night for his physics test; he still failed.
3. Madame Hardy is counting her calories, yet she really wants to have some ice cream and cake.
4. The girl returned the pictures she had taken, for it was an honorable thing to do.
5. The man was fatigued, but he still needed to go to work.
6. Zaria and Reign bought the cake, and they got balloons.

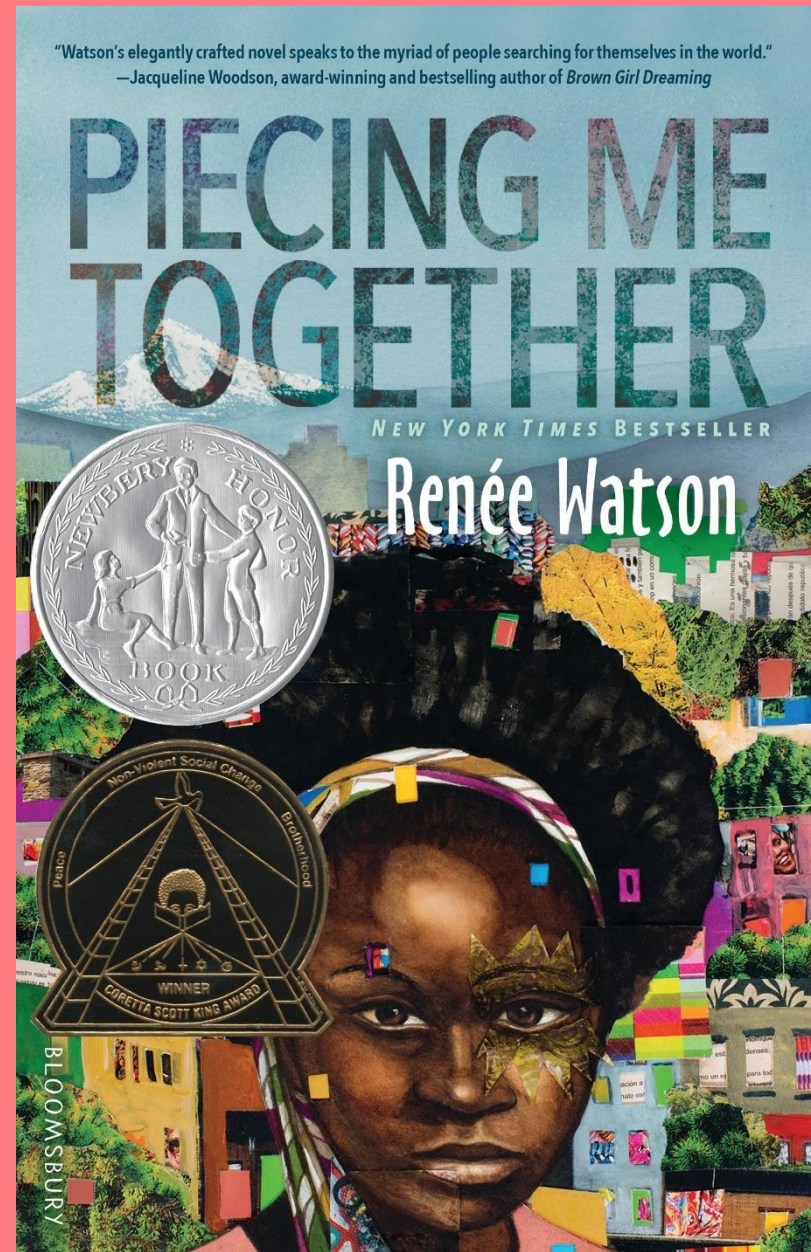
Complex Sentences

1. As an immigrant professional living in Los Angeles, she didn’t have family nearby.
2. Even though it was late, Kyla continued to practice her free throws.

3. Since Mrs. Washington arrived early, she had time to review the school's MAP data.
4. After Madame Hardy ate too much cake and ice cream, she had a debilitating stomachache.
5. "If the path is beautiful, let us not ask where it leads."—Anatole France
6. "If you're always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be."—Maya Angelou

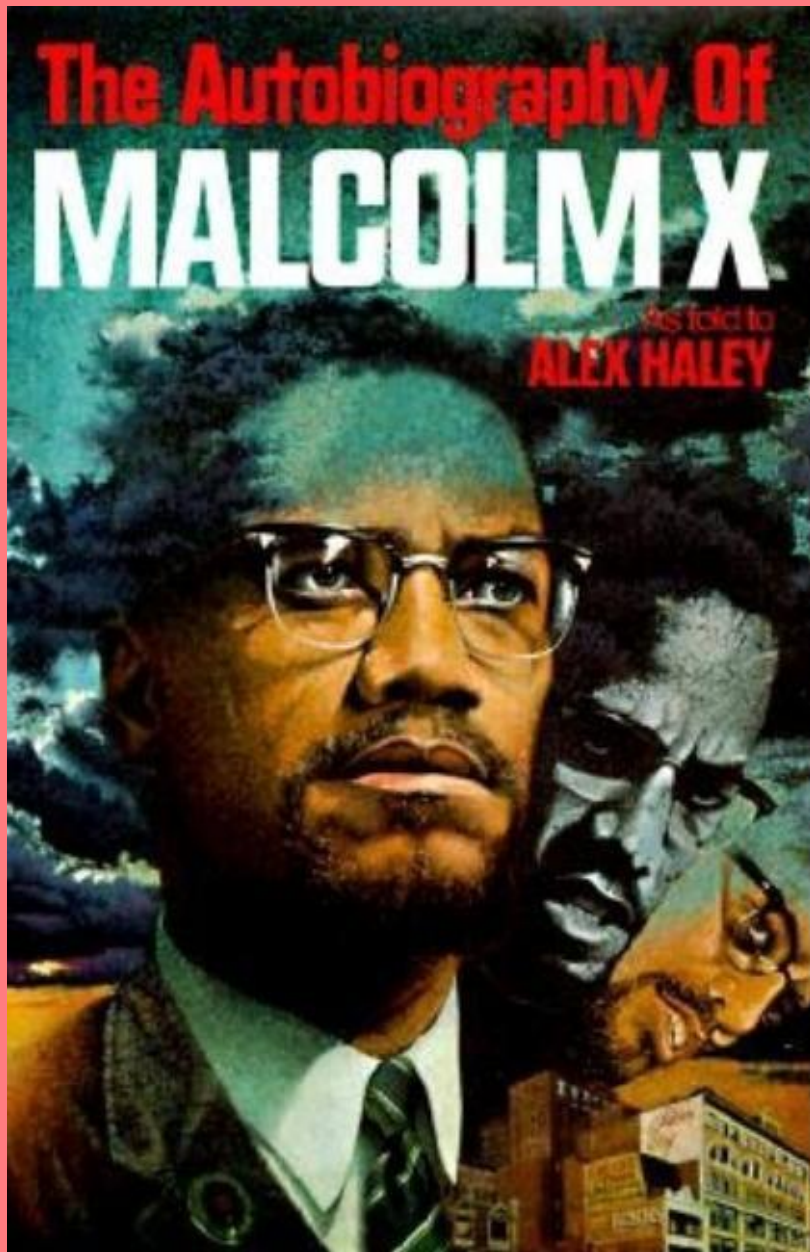
Compound-complex Sentences

Instead of asking how she could make corporate life work, she asked a different question: What if I created something new?



Compound Complex

1. Because it was snowing, we didn't go to school, and we stayed home.
2. Corey completed his rhetorical analysis project, but he still needs to prepare his Power Point even though he had time in class.
3. After I got home from work, my friends invited me out, and I left my apartment again.
4. Although Dr. Warren prefers watching documentaries, she rented the latest romantic comedy, and she really enjoyed it.
5. Nicole forgot to do her homework, so she completed it during Advisement when she finally remembered.
6. Mississippi ratified the Thirteenth Amendment—which abolished slavery—130 years after it was added to the U.S. Constitution; however, Mississippi's ratification was not made official until 2013, when the state notified the U.S. Archivist.



Pre-writing Tips for Standardized Tests

Brainstorming: Jot down everything: Write down any and all ideas, thoughts, and potential arguments related to your topic, without worrying about organization or structure.

Explore different angles: Consider various perspectives and potential connections to the topic.

Use visual aids: Mind maps or clustering can help organize your thoughts and ideas

Outlining: Create a framework for your writing by organizing your main points and supporting details.

Use a hierarchy: Outline main ideas, subtopics, and supporting evidence to create a clear structure.

List: Make a list of all the evidence, ideas, and details you can use from the passage.

Free-write: Write continuously for a set amount of time, focusing on generating as many ideas as possible without worrying about grammar or structure.

Questioning: Ask "who, what, when, where, why, and how":

Use these questions to explore different aspects of your topic and generate ideas.

Argumentative Writing Assignment

Choice A: The Value of Failure

"Some argue that failure is an inevitable part of the journey towards success, while others believe that failure should be avoided at all costs. Write an essay in which you argue your position on the value of failure, using specific examples from history, literature, or your own experiences to support your claims."

Choice B: The Impact of Social Media

"Social media has become an increasingly pervasive force in modern society. Do you believe that its impact is overwhelmingly positive, overwhelmingly negative, or a mixed bag? Develop an argument, supported by evidence, that explores the various ways in which social media influences individuals and society."

Choice C: The Power of Education

"Some argue that education is the key to unlocking individual potential and societal progress, while others suggest that it is a system that often fails to meet the needs of its students. Write an essay in which you evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of education and argue for a specific position on its role in society."

Choice D: The Role of Art

"Art has been described as a mirror reflecting society, a tool for social commentary, and a means of personal expression. Write an essay in which you argue your position on the role of art in society, using specific examples from various art forms (music, literature, visual arts, etc.) to support your claims."

Choice E: The Ethics of Technology

"Technology has brought about incredible advancements, but it has also raised complex ethical questions. Write an essay in which you argue your position on the ethical considerations surrounding a specific technological issue (e.g., artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, social media surveillance), using evidence and reasoning to support your stance."

AP Students

(2024/Set 1) <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/ap24-frq-english-language-set-1.pdf>

(2024/Set 2) <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/ap24-frq-english-language-set-2.pdf>

(2023/Set 1) <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/ap23-frq-english-language-set-1.pdf>

(2023/Set 2) <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/ap23-frq-english-language-set-2.pdf>

