



Assignment

Write an Argument Based on the Sources

Topic: Historic Lands

Task:

Recently, you were watching your local news station and the lead story described the destruction of Native American lands across the country. The reporter discussed the need for preservation not only of native lands but of original settlements. Furthermore, it was mentioned that wealthy businessmen, as well as large corporations, could be to blame for this tragedy.

That evening, while preparing for bed you glance at your grandfather's photo hanging on the wall. Suddenly, you are reminded of your Native American heritage. You remember that your grandfather was the son of a great Cherokee Indian Chief and that means you, too, have Native American blood. The news broadcast brings to light an issue that could actually affect some of your family members.

You are sure that there is more to the story than you are seeing on the news. You decide to ask your history teacher what he thinks about it. Your teacher explains that although he has an opinion, he thinks that we should research the issue, and then I should make a decision for myself about what I think once I have all the facts.

So, you did some research on the issue. As part of your research you found three sources. After you reviewed these sources, you answered some questions about them.

Now, in Part 2, you will write an argument piece using information you have read.

Directions for Beginning:

You will now review several sources. You may review the sources as often as you like.

Sources for the Performance Task:

Source #1

You have found an article from the Discovery Channel website about a new show called “Edge of Alaska”:

“Living on the Grid”

By Reba James

McCarthy, Alaska is a nearly deserted town nestled in the middle of the Wrangell-St. Elais National Park, the country’s largest national park spanning across an impressive 13.2 million acres. Although, the people of McCarthy would hardly refer to their town as deserted. They prefer the term remote, or living “off the grid.” This means that they enjoy living off of the natural resources the land provides, reduced fossil fuels, and the beauty of self-reliance. The town of McCarthy doesn’t even have electricity.

Home to one of the largest known copper mines, McCarthy was once a booming frontier city. Unfortunately, in 1938 the mines ran dry, and the vibrant city of McCarthy became a ghost town. Just a handful of people remained and today the town has a tiny population of 42 permanent residents with a single restaurant and lodge.

In 2014, the Discovery channel launched a new show “Edge of Alaska,” highlighting the remote living of the people of McCarthy. Clearly the citizens enjoy the many benefits of a small town. Everyone has strong beliefs rooted in self-reliance. This means that the people raise their own fruits and vegetables, hunt and fish, and use natural resources to provide other necessities. There is little need for modern conveniences including electricity. Quite literally the town’s people live as if they were transplanted back to the early 1900’s. Perhaps this is the most fascinating aspect of the show. City folks and the rest of the world cannot begin to fathom this type of lifestyle.

Jeremy Keller, one of the main characters of the show, remains steadfast in maintaining a bush community. A bush community means living off of the North American road system, disconnected from the rest of the state. It is a rural community that is only accessible via a small bush plane or snow mobile. Jeremy and others have no intention of changing this and believe it is their duty to preserve the rich history and simple lifestyle of the folks in McCarthy. Part of McCarthy’s charm is its distance from the modern world

and reliance on self-sustaining farms. With the freedom to choose any lifestyle, the people of McCarthy would not have it any other way.

Fifteen years ago, in 2001, a wealthy entrepreneur named Neil Darish fell in love with McCarthy. After settling in this isolated town, Neil invested in large amounts of property. He bought the only bar in town, a lodge (hotel) and eventually the largest known copper mine, "The Motherlode." Darish enjoys the life of solitude he now lives, but dreams of making McCarthy a popular tourist destination. His plans include restoring McCarthy to its glory days by reopening The Motherlode Mine, offering historical tours to travelers and even selling artifacts from the mine. Therefore, revitalizing the community and providing financial stability.

The show follows the opposition Darish faces from the very community he loves. With no desire to attract outsiders, the town's people face off with the wealthiest man in McCarthy. It is yet to be seen how this controversy will be resolved. Will preservation prevail over economic growth?

Source #2

You have found information about organizations that offer help and financial aid to Native American tribes across the country. Funds collected support efforts to preserve tribal communities:

Save Our Settlements

Several organizations around the United States, like the Native American Rights Fund, offer help and support to tribes and native people who struggle to preserve their way of life and protect their natural resources. Today, indigenous people occupy a fraction of the land they once owned, but they still control large regions of land and water resources.

Economic growth and financial gain are often behind the loss of land or territory. In many cases, these original lands contain an abundance of crucial resources—water, oil, gas, and rich soil. These valuable resources attract the attention of various governmental agencies and private companies who are thirsty to gain huge profits from these lucrative (very profitable) assets and try to persuade the Native Americans to either sell or give up their land.

The unique laws surrounding the protection of native lands and territories are often challenging to navigate. Not many people understand legal vocabulary. As a result, the people need legal help from knowledgeable lawyers to help maintain and protect their rights as land owners.

The Native American Rights Fund relies on donations from the public to “promote Native American rights.” Help save tribal natural resources. Donate today!

Source #3

You have found an article in the New York Times explaining The Dakota Access Pipeline:

The Dakota Access Pipeline

By Robert Wong

The Dakota Access Pipeline Project has come under fire in recent months. Although the project was approved by local and state government agencies in 2014, a bitter battle between the Standing Rock Sioux Indian tribe and the Energy Transfer Partners has temporarily halted the project.

What is The Dakota Access Pipeline?

According to the Energy Transfer Partners (ETP), the company spearheading the project, it is a 1,772 mile, 30-inch diameter pipeline that will transport approximately 470,000 barrels of crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois. Thus, allowing for a speedy delivery of domestically produced oil to larger markets in the Gulf Coast, Midwest, and East Coast regions of the United States. As a result, this project will bring much needed money to local economies and create 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs. Local communities will see increased growth and wealth.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

Standing Rock Sioux Reservation was established in 1851 with the signing of the Fort Laramie Treaty. Over time, the Sioux have witnessed the continued loss of land. Today, the reservation still spans across two states, North Dakota and South Dakota, and is just over two million acres.

The tribe strives to preserve their rich cultural history and restore their original way of life. This includes honoring the sacred burial grounds of their ancestors, hunting and fishing, as well as being self-reliant.

Conflict

The Dakota Pipeline Project threatens the ancestral lands of the Standing Rock Sioux. Although the land is not part of the reservation, it remains holy to the tribe. Tribal members argue that the government is in violation of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) by approving the project. According to legislation, NHPA is required to “consider the cultural significance of federally funded or permitted projects on historic properties.” By nature, if allowed to continue, the pipeline will disturb lands sacred to the tribal people.

Environmental Impact

While the ETP and other supporters of the project argue that the pipeline is environmentally responsible and safer than oil transport by rail or trucks, opponents disagree. The New York Times reports that more than 3,300 oil spills or leaks have been reported around the country since 2010. Therefore proving that even the most state-of-the-art systems are not full proof. In addition to the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, other ranchers and farmers in the area fear that a leak could contaminate their primary water source, the Missouri River. Construction plans indicate, and have been approved by the Army Corp of Engineers, that the pipeline will pass under the river on its way to Illinois. Tribal supporters are desperately pressuring officials to change course because their greatest resource is at stake.

¹The United States Army Corp of Engineers is responsible for investigating, developing and maintaining the nation’s water and related environmental resources.

The Assignment:

You will write a multi-paragraph argumentative paper in which you take a stance on the topic of preservation of lands versus financial gain. Make sure you establish an argumentative claim, address potential counterarguments, and support your claim from the sources you have read. Develop your ideas clearly and use your own words, except when quoting directly from the sources. Be sure to reference the sources by title or number when using details or facts directly from the sources.

Your Response:
