

## WRITERS WRITE: 8 Informational Essay Prompts

Our mini-grant offers a solution to a problem we voiced in our discussions at the last Institute: teaching the informational essay for the TASC exam is much more of a challenge for us than teaching the argumentative essay. We identified two reasons for this:

- Lack of practice essays. Most of the testing preparation books focus more on the argumentative essay.
- Lack of a “one size fits all” template or outline for the essays. In our experience, this essay cannot be easily formatted in a pro/con/my opinion organizational structure like the argumentative style. It depends on a close reading of the prompt to determine what the writer’s “job” is. This job differs from prompt to prompt.

We created a bank of 8 text-based, practice informational essays to use in the HSE classroom on the following topics:

The Harms of Television	Global Warming
The Great Depression	Concerns Regarding Green Energy
Fixed vs. Growth Mindset	Dangers of Supplements and Miracle Cures
The Heroin Epidemic	Civil Rights Movements: Then and Now

In addition to these 8 essays you will find corresponding extension activities which include the following:

- Embedded skills-based activities to reinforce the teaching of grammar, mechanics, and usage. We focused on TASC identified high-medium emphasis writing skills like sentence combining, items in a series, parallelism and the use of the colon and semi-colon.
- Activities to reinforce important reading skills such as building vocabulary and reading visual information, and writing skills such as paraphrasing.
- Graphic organizers and templates that we created with our students. These assist in reading with purpose and planning the essay.

This is a work in progress, one that we plan to build upon, edit, and change based on feedback from colleagues and students.

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# WRITERS WRITE

8 PRACTICE

INFORMATIONAL ESSAYS

FOR THE TASC EXAM

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## INFORMATIONAL ESSAY

TOPIC:

Purpose :

Audience:

Form

In the box below, you will turn the essay topic—what you are going to write about—into one or more questions. For example, if the essay assignment read, “Write an informational essay explaining what the TASC exam is and how to prepare for it,” you then turn the assignment into the following 2 questions: *What is the TASC exam? How can students prepare for it?* These questions will be your guiding questions for your reading. Your essay will be focused on answering those two questions.

GUIDING QUESTIONS—TURN TOPIC INTO QUESTIONS:

Now you can start reading the texts you need in order to answer your guiding questions and write your essay. But first, know that you already have almost enough done to write a simple, easy introduction. I call this “INTRODUCTION 911”—if you feel like you can’t get started after you do the readings, this will get the introduction out of the way. Remember, you don’t have a lot of time to write this essay.

Ask one or two questions to get your reader interested and to introduce the topic. The 2nd to last sentence will be your guiding question. If you can answer the question, that answer will be your thesis (the “topic sentence” for an essay). For example, let’s again assume my essay assignment asked me to write about the TASC exam and how to best prepare for it. I can write the following for my introduction start without even worrying about the readings yet:

**Have you ever heard of the TASC exam? Perhaps you or a friend are studying for the TASC exam. What is the TASC exam? What can students do to best prepare for the exam?**

This may not sound “pretty” or “perfect,” but it gets you started and on your way!

Now read the texts and keep your guiding questions in your mind. Don’t worry about any information that doesn’t answer those questions.

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## *Topic 1- Fixed vs. Growth Mindset*

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Essay Prompt:

Interesting and important research has been done about how to best promote learning and growth. Write an informative essay in which you discuss fixed and growth mindset and how they affect learning and growth. Also include mistakes educators and adults make in their attempts to embrace the growth mindset.

**Before you begin planning and writing, read the two texts:**

1. How Your Beliefs Can Sabotage Your Behavior
2. Carol Dweck Revisits the 'Growth Mindset'

As you read the texts, think about what details from the texts you might use in your essay.

After reading the texts, create a plan for your informative essay. Think about ideas, facts, definitions, details, and other information and examples you want to use. Think about how you will introduce your topic and what the main topic will be for each paragraph.

**Now write your informative essay. Be sure to:**

- Introduce the topic to be examined.
  - Develop the topic with specific facts, details, definition, examples and other relevant information from both passages.
  - Organize the information and evidence effectively.
  - Use words, phrases, and/or clauses to connect and show the relationship among your ideas.
  - Establish and maintain a formal style.
  - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information presented.
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Adapted from: **How Your Beliefs Can Sabotage Your Behavior  
(And What You Can Do About It)**

By James Clear <http://jamesclear.com/fixed-mindset-vs-growth-mindset>

The stories you tell yourself and the things you believe about yourself can either prevent change from happening or allow new skills to blossom. Carol Dweck, a researcher at Stanford University, is well-known for her work on “the fixed mindset vs. the growth mindset.” Dweck describes the difference between the two mindsets and how they impact performance:

*In a fixed mindset students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that’s that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb. In a growth mindset students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence. They don’t necessarily think everyone’s the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it.*

—Carol Dweck, Stanford University

The benefits of a growth mindset might seem obvious, but most of us are guilty of having a fixed mindset in certain situations. That fixed mindset often prevents important skill development and growth, which could sabotage your health and happiness down the line. For example, if you say, “I’m not a math person,” then that belief acts as an easy excuse to avoid practicing math.

Meanwhile, someone with a growth mindset would be willing to try math problems even if they failed at first. They see failure and setbacks as an indication that they should continue developing their skills rather than a signal that indicates, “*This is something I’m not good at.*” As a result, people who have a growth mindset are more likely maximize their potential. They tend to learn from criticism rather than ignoring it, to overcome challenges rather than avoiding them, and to find inspiration in the success of others rather than feeling threatened.

### **Are Your Beliefs Holding You Back?**

Dweck’s research raises an important question about the connection between what you believe and what you do. A fixed mindset is at play if you’ve ever told yourself: “It’s hard for me to lose weight,” “I’m not good with numbers,” or “I’m not a natural student.”

It’s clear that fixed mindsets will cause you to avoid experiences where you might feel like a failure. As a result, you don’t learn as much and it’s hard to improve. How can you change the things you believe about yourself, eliminate your fixed mindset, and achieve your goals?

## How Your Actions Change Your Beliefs

In order to change the type of person that you believe that you are, start with small, repeated actions. For example, Leah Culver, a new runner, writes about how she started running:

*“I set a goal for myself. I knew I would never be fast enough to impress anybody, so it didn’t make sense to make speed my goal. I could have picked a race to train for, but I knew how those ended. Everyone seems to quit running right after their big race. I wanted to do something different. I wanted to not quit.*

*My goal involved not going too long between runs. If I skipped more than a couple days, wouldn’t that be quitting? So I started running four and five days a week. My goal made all the difference. I’d have good days where I would run fast and feel great, but I also had lots of bad days where I was tired and didn’t feel like running. In retrospect, those days were almost better than the good days because they reinforced my goal — I didn’t quit.*

*I ran my first 5k nearly five months after I had taken up running. I finished and was super happy. I learned that racing wasn’t always about being the fastest but about doing my personal best. I’ve started to think of myself as a runner. I didn’t care if I was a great runner. I just wanted to stick to my one goal: don’t quit.”*

Did Leah start by thinking about how fast she wanted to run? No. Did she start by thinking about the marathon she wanted to complete? No. She didn’t start by thinking about the results. She focused on the process. She focused on showing up. She focused on the schedule. She focused on “not quitting.”

### Identity-Based Habits vs. Rapid Transformations

So often, we overestimate the importance of a single event (like a marathon) and underestimate the importance of making better choices on a daily basis (like running 5 days per week). We think that getting “that job” or “that diploma” or losing “those 30 pounds” will transform us into the person we want to become.

Here’s the truth: it’s your daily actions that will change what you believe about yourself and the person you become. It’s about setting a schedule, showing up, and sticking to it. It’s about focusing on building the right identity rather than worrying about getting the right result. When you dedicate yourself to showing up each day and focusing on the habits that form a better identity, that’s when you learn and develop. That’s what a growth mindset looks like in the real world.

Adapted from: **“Carol Dweck Revisits the 'Growth Mindset'” By Carol Dweck**

Through research, my colleagues and I learned about students’ mindsets—how they perceive their abilities—played a key role in their motivation and achievement, and we found that if we changed students’ mindsets, we could boost their achievement. More precisely, students who believed their intelligence could be developed (a growth mindset) outperformed those who believed their intelligence was fixed (a fixed mindset). Finally, we found that having children focus on the process that leads to learning (like hard work or trying new strategies) could foster a growth mindset and its benefits.

Many educators have applied the mindset principles in spectacular ways with tremendously gratifying results.

This is wonderful, and the good word continues to spread. But as we’ve watched the growth mindset become more popular, we’ve become much wiser about how to implement it. This learning—the common pitfalls, the misunderstandings, and what to do about them—is what I’d like to share with you, so that we can maximize the benefits for our students.

*A growth mindset isn’t just about effort.* Perhaps the most common misconception is simply equating the growth mindset with effort. Certainly, effort is key for students’ achievement, but it’s not the only thing. Students need to try new strategies and seek input from others when they’re stuck. They need this repertoire of approaches—not just sheer effort—to learn and improve.

We also need to remember that effort is a means to an end to the goal of learning and improving. Too often nowadays, praise is given to students who are putting forth effort, but *not learning*, in order to make them feel good in the moment: “Great effort! You tried your best!” It’s good that the students tried, but it’s not good that they’re not learning. The growth-mindset approach helps children feel good in the short *and* long terms, by helping them thrive on challenges and setbacks on their way to learning. When they’re stuck, teachers can appreciate their work so far, but add: “Let’s talk about what you’ve tried, and what you can try next.”

**“The growth mindset was intended to help close achievement gaps, not hide them.”**

Recently, someone asked what keeps me up at night. It’s the fear that the mindset concepts, which grew up to *counter* the failed self-esteem movement, will be used to *perpetuate* that movement. In other words, if you want to make students feel good, even if they’re not learning, just praise their effort! Want to hide learning gaps from them? Just tell them, “Everyone is smart!” The growth mindset was intended to help close achievement gaps, not hide them. It is about telling the truth about a student’s current achievement and then, together, doing something about it, helping him or her become smarter.

I also fear that the mindset work is sometimes used to justify why some students aren’t learning: “Oh, he has a *fixed* mindset.” We used to blame the child’s environment or ability. Must it always come back to finding a reason why some children just can’t learn, as opposed to finding a way to help them learn? Teachers who understand the growth mindset do everything in their power to unlock that learning.

In recent research, Kathy Liu Sun found that there were many math teachers who endorsed a growth mindset and even said the words “growth mindset” in their middle school math classes, but did not follow through in their classroom practices. In these cases, their students tended to endorse more of a fixed mindset about their math ability. My advisee and research collaborator Kyla Haimovitz and I are finding many parents who endorse a growth mindset, but react to their children’s mistakes as though they are problematic or harmful, rather than helpful. In these cases, their children develop more of a fixed mindset about their intelligence.

*How can we help educators adopt a deeper, true growth mindset, one that will show in their classroom practices?* You may be surprised by my answer: Let’s legitimize the fixed mindset. Let’s acknowledge that (1) we’re all a mixture of fixed and growth mindsets, (2) we will probably always be, and (3) if we want to move closer to a growth mindset in our thoughts and practices, we need to stay in touch with our fixed-mindset thoughts and deeds. If we “ban” the fixed mindset, we will surely create false growth-mindsets. But if we watch carefully for our fixed-mindset triggers, we can begin the true journey to a growth mindset.

*What are your triggers?*

Watch for a fixed-mindset reaction when you face challenges. Do you feel overly anxious, or does a voice in your head warn you away? Watch to see whether criticism brings out your fixed mindset. Do you become defensive, angry, or crushed instead of interested in learning from the feedback? Watch what happens when you see someone who’s better than you at something you value. Do you feel envious and threatened, or do you feel eager to learn? Accept those thoughts and feelings and work with and through them. Maybe we originally put too much emphasis on sheer effort. Maybe we made the development of a growth mindset sound too easy. Maybe we talked too much about people having one mindset or the other, rather than portraying people as mixtures. We are on a growth-mindset journey, too.

*Carol Dweck is the Lewis and Virginia Eaton professor of psychology at Stanford University and the author of Mindset: The New Psychology of Success (Ballantine Books).*

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## *Topic 2- The Harm of Television*

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Essay Prompt:

Television has long been a part of our everyday lives, but at what cost to adults and children? Write an informative essay in which you explain the harm that television can cause to adult and children viewers.

**Before you begin planning and writing, read the two texts:**

1. TV Watching and Health
2. Is TV Really So Bad for Kids?

As you read the texts, think about what details from the texts you might use in your essay. You may take notes on scrap paper as you read.

After reading the texts, create a plan for your informational essay. Think about ideas, facts, definitions, details, and other information and examples you want to use. Think about how you will introduce your topic and what the main topic will be for each paragraph.

**Now write your informational essay. Be sure to:**

- Introduce the topic to be examined.
  - Develop the topic with specific facts, details, definitions, examples and other relevant information from both passages.
  - Organize the information and evidence effectively.
  - Use words, phrases, and/or clauses to connect and show the relationship among your ideas.
  - Establish and maintain a formal style.
  - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information presented.
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**Adapted from: TV WATCHING AND HEALTH ([Health.com](#))**

Watching too much television can make you feel a bit brain-dead. According to a new study, it might also take years off your life. The more time you spend watching TV, the greater your risk of dying at an earlier age -- especially from [heart disease](#), researchers found.

The study followed 8,800 adults with no history of heart disease for more than six years. Compared to those who watched less than two hours of TV per day, people who watched four hours or more were 80 percent more likely to die from heart disease and 46 percent more likely to die from any cause. All told, 284 people died during the study.

Each additional hour spent in front of the TV increased the risk of dying from heart disease by 18 percent and the overall risk of death by 11 percent, according to the study, which was published Monday on the Web site of *Circulation*, an American Heart Association journal.

Television isn't lethal in and of itself; the real problem appears to be that sitting is the "default position" for TV viewing, says lead study author David Dunstan, Ph.D., the head of the physical activity lab at the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute, a national research center in Victoria, Australia.

"Prolonged watching of television equals a lot of sitting, which invariably means there's an absence of muscle movement," Dunstan says. If your muscles stay inactive for too long, it can disrupt your metabolism, he explains.

What's more, [exercise](#) doesn't necessarily make up for long sessions in front of the tube. Dunstan and his colleagues figured into their analysis how much the study participants exercised. When they compared groups of adults who exercised the same amount but watched varying amounts of TV, those who watched more TV were still at a higher risk of dying during the study.

"You can be active and also watch high amounts of television," Dunstan says. Television isn't necessarily replacing our exercise time, he explains, but it is replacing everyday, "non-sweaty" movements as basic as standing and walking from room to room. The positive health effects of these seemingly negligible activities are underestimated, he says.

The amount of television a person watches is a good index of the overall time they spend sitting, Dunstan says. But there's also some evidence that watching TV may be healthier than other sedentary activities, says Peter Katzmarzyk, Ph.D., an exercise scientist at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

The bottom line? Exercise is important for health, but avoiding prolonged periods of sitting is nearly as important, Dunstan says. "Just get up and move about during the day. The more you move, the greater the health benefits are likely to be."

Copyright [Health Magazine](#) 2011

## **Adapted from: Is TV Really So Bad for Kids?** Reviewed by [Michael W. Smith, MD](#)

WebMD Feature: <http://www.webmd.com/parenting/features/tv-violence-and-impact-on-children>

Violence and sexual images are as much a part of today's television fare as peanut butter ads and infomercials. A Surgeon General's report last year concluded that 61% of all TV programming contains violence. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a child who watches three to four hours a day of non-educational TV will see about 8,000 small-screen murders by the time he or she completes grade school.

American children spend an average of 6 hours, 32 minutes each day watching TV or using other media (including the Internet, videotapes, video games, and radio). That's more time than they devote to any other activity except sleep, according to the AAP.

"Most parents don't spend the same amount of time-- about six hours a day --with their children," says child psychiatrist Michael Brody, MD, chair of the television and media committee of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. "Television has a very big influence, and a lot of it is negative. There are hundreds of studies showing a connection between violence on TV and its impact on children -- from aggressive behavior to sleep disturbances."

A recent study by New York University School of Medicine researchers concluded that preschool children who frequently watch violent TV programs or play violent video games are 11 times more likely to engage in aggressive and antisocial behavior than children not frequently exposed. A study at the National Institute on Media and the Family, published in 2002, found that third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade children who watch media violence are more likely to treat their peers with rudeness and mean behavior.

In a study of more than 700 children, Columbia University researchers found that adolescents who watch more than an hour a day of TV are more prone to aggression and violence once they reach their late teens and early 20s.

Here's how the AAP puts it: "Watching a lot of violence on television can lead to hostility, fear, anxiety, depression, nightmares, sleep disturbances, and posttraumatic stress disorder. It is best not to let your child watch violent programs and cartoons."

### **Risks and Benefits**

When it comes to choosing the best programs for your child, an AAP policy statement issued in 2001 notes that by watching certain carefully selected shows, children can, in fact, learn positive social behaviors, including cooperation, sharing, and good manners. "Children in the over-3 age group can learn songs, learn to count, and increase their vocabulary if they already have a good language base," says Miriam Bar-on, professor of pediatrics at Chicago's Loyola University Health System and chair of the organization's committee on public education.

But, adds Bar-on, the AAP believes that parents should discourage children under the age of 2 from watching TV. According to AAP policy, "Research on early brain development shows that babies and toddlers have a critical need for direct interaction with parents and other significant caregivers for healthy brain growth and the development of appropriate social, emotional, and cognitive skills.

Directions: Complete the “TV IS HARMFUL” essay. If you are having trouble, please use the template below. This is not the only way to write this essay. It just offers a simple, straightforward “formula” to get you on the right track. You can get this essay done in four paragraphs.

*(Start with an introduction opener. Here are four common ways to start an essay: questions, a story, opening with the opposite, and general to specific. I'll write a simple “questions” opener. This is as easy as turning the prompt's topic into a question).*

Have you ever allowed your child to watch television in order to have some time to get things done? Do you enjoy watching TV? Is television harmful to children and adults? *(Now, here is your thesis statement)* Television is harmful to both adults and children.

Passage one shows that \_\_\_\_\_. *In this paragraph you include the details of HOW TV harms adults. Explain how this passage shows that television is harmful to adults' health. Use expert evidence of this harm. Try using a direct quote: The article states, “\_\_\_\_\_.” Then explain why the quote is proof that TV is harmful.*

In addition to harming adults, television also has been proven harmful to children. Passage \_\_\_\_\_ explains that \_\_\_\_\_. *In this paragraph you include the details of TV's harm. Explain harmful effects on children. Use expert evidence of this harm. Try using a direct quote: The article states, “\_\_\_\_\_.” Then explain why the quote is important proof that TV is harmful.*

Clearly, television is not a harmless form of entertainment. Research has proven that it \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. It is time for us all to take an honest look the amount of time we and our children spend in front of the television. It's time to turn off the television for our own good.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Vocabulary Exercise for the “TV is Harmful” essay texts:

1. **PROLONGED**: in this reading, “prolonged” acts as an adjective (describing word) meaning “**continuing for a long time; lasting for a long time.**” Prolonged is extra long.

*Example from the article: “Prolonged watching of television equals a lot of sitting....”*

Complete the following sentence:

The prolonged applause meant that \_\_\_\_\_.

The prolonged wait for my test scores caused me to \_\_\_\_\_.

Try creating your own sentence using the word “prolonged”: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. **INVARIABLY**: something “invariable” never changes; it’s not able to change. **INVARIABLY** is the adverb which means “**always.**”

*Example from the article: “Prolonged watching of television equals a lot of sitting, which invariably means there is an absence of muscle movement.”*

Write a sentence about your evening study habits using the word “invariably.” Here is mine:

*While putting my children to bed, I invariably fall asleep with them and neglect to get my work done.*

Now you try: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Write a sentence about something invariable about our class, the weather, or your day:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

PUT AN “X” next to things that are mostly invariable:

The color of your eyes: \_\_\_\_ that spring follows winter: \_\_\_\_\_

Your mood: \_\_\_\_\_ Contentment: \_\_\_\_\_

The weather: \_\_\_\_\_ Change: \_\_\_\_\_

3. VARYING: *Vary* means different; change: not the same. “Variable” is the opposite of invariable. It means able to change; not always the same. In the article “varying”=“different.”

*Example from the article: “When they compared groups of adults who exercised the same amount but watch varying amounts of TV, those who watched more TV were still at a higher risk of dying during the study.”*

Why are we advised to “VARY” the types of food we eat?

Why do gas prices “VARY” so much?

She decided to go back to school for a variety (another form of vary) of reasons, including

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I like to vary the music I listen to on trips. I will change from listening to \_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_. You’ll invariably hear a little bit of everything if you take a road trip with me.

4. PRONE: in this case, it means **likely to do or suffer from something**. (It can also mean lying down, face down. “She was prone on the floor when the ambulance came.”)

*Example from article: “...adolescents who watch more than an hour a day of TV are more prone to aggression and violence once they reach their late teens and early 20s.”*

Name a type of illness we are prone to get in the winter: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one: I am most prone to (rush, panic, focus) during a big exam.

If you are prone to headaches, you should try\_\_\_\_\_.

5. LETHAL: causing or able to cause death; deadly

*Example from article: “Television isn’t lethal in and of itself.”*

What is more lethal, driving too fast or driving while tired?

Write a sentence using lethal: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Topic 3- The Great Depression

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### BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE:

Before starting this essay, we took a look at a slide show of Dorothea Lange's photographs of the Great Depression and completed this "Primary Source Analysis Tool":

[http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Primary\\_Source\\_Analysis\\_Tool.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Primary_Source_Analysis_Tool.pdf)

<http://www.slideshare.net/mdunne/dorothea-lange-slideshow>

We compared and contrasted her photographs to our perception of what poverty "looks" like in the U.S.A. today.

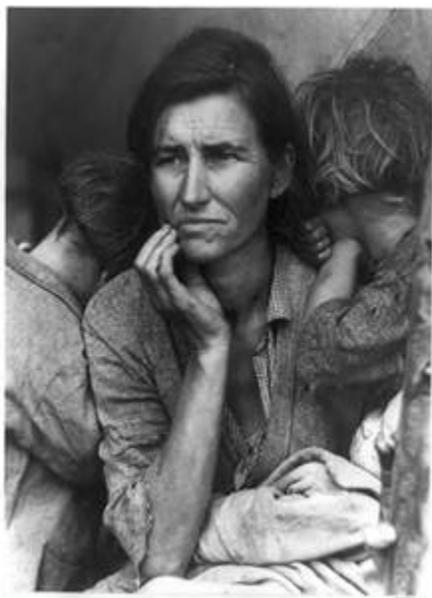
Then we looked at the visuals in this 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies DBQ:

<http://www.nysedregents.org/Grade8/SocialStudies/20070606book2.pdf>

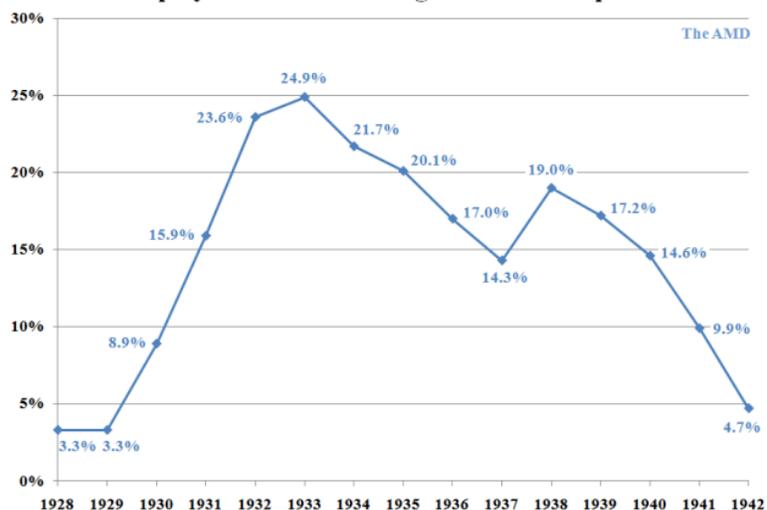
Finally, we read and complete the accompanying comprehension questions for the Great Depression readings found on [ReadWorks.org](http://ReadWorks.org).

The assignment and readings for this practice essay were adapted from:

[achievethecore.org/file/1050](http://achievethecore.org/file/1050)



**Unemployment Rates During The Great Depression**



Essay Prompt:

After the stock market crash of 1929, the United States went into a period of economic crisis known as the Great Depression. Write an informative essay in which you discuss the problems that Americans faced during the Great Depression and actions taken by the government and individuals in an attempt to solve those problems.

**Before you begin planning and writing, read the two texts:**

1. Digging In
2. The New Deal

As you read the texts, think about what details from the texts you might use in your essay.

After reading the texts, create a plan for your informative essay. Think about ideas, facts, definitions, details, and other information and examples you want to use. Think about how you will introduce your topic and what the main topic will be for each paragraph.

**Now write your informational essay. Be sure to:**

- Introduce the topic to be examined.
  - Develop the topic with specific facts, details, definition, examples and other relevant information from both passages.
  - Organize the information and evidence effectively.
  - Use words, phrases, and/or clauses to connect and show the relationship among your ideas.
  - Establish and maintain a formal style.
  - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information presented.
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## Digging In

By Robert J. Hastings

The closing of Old West Side Mine meant the end of anything resembling a steady job for the next eight years. From 1930 on, it was a day's work here and a day's work there, a coal order from the welfare office, a few days on WPA, a garden in the back yard, and a few chickens and eggs.

We weathered the storm because of Dad's willingness to take any job and Mom's ability to stretch every available dollar. It was not so much a matter of finding a job as of filling in with odd jobs wherever and whenever you could, and most of the "jobs" were those you made for yourself.

My diary shows that Dad sold iron cords door to door, "worked a day in the hay," rented an extra lot for a garden on the shares, picked peaches, raised sweet potato slips, hung wallpaper, "painted Don Albright's house for \$5," picked up a day or two's work at the strip mines, guarded the fence at the county fairgrounds, cut hair for boys in the neighborhood, and when he had to and could, worked intermittently on WPA.

With no dependable income, we cut back on everything possible. We stopped the evening paper, turned off the city water, sold our four-door Model T touring car, and stopped ice and milk delivery. There was no telephone to disconnect, as we didn't have one to start with!

Looking back, I find it amazing what we did without. A partial list would include toothpaste (we used soda), toilet paper (we used the catalog), newspaper or magazine subscriptions, soft drinks, potato chips and snacks, bakery goods except bread and an occasional dozen of doughnuts, paper clips, rubber bands and restaurant meals. We had no water bill, sewer bill, telephone bill, no car expenses – gasoline, tires, batteries, licenses, insurance, repairs – no laundry service, no bank service charge (no bank account), no sales or income tax.

Typical of the simple economies Mom practiced was keeping the electric bill to \$1 a month....Since our only appliance was an electric iron, the chief use of electricity was for lighting. With only a single bulb suspended by a cord from the ceiling of each room, there weren't many lights to burn...On winter evenings, Mom would turn on the kitchen light while she cooked supper. After supper we "turned off the light in the kitchen" and moved to the dining-sitting room, where another light was switched on. If we wanted to read on winter afternoons, we sat as near a window as possible, with the curtains pinned back, to save the lights until it was nearly dark...

We took care of what we had. Every cotton cloth was used over as a dish cloth, wash cloth, dust cloth, shoe-shining cloth, window-washing cloth, to scrub and wax floors, make bandages, make quilt pieces, make kite tails, or to tie boxes and papers together. The cotton bags from flour, salt, and cracked chicken feed were washed, bleached, and cut into dish cloths and towels. Some neighbors made curtains or even dresses from feed sacks. Every paper bag was saved for lunches or cut and used for wrapping paper. String was wound into balls for later use. At one point in the Depression, the cupboard was literally bare of money.

Excerpted from "Digging In", 1986. Found in *Dark Days*, Perfection Learning, 2006

## The New Deal

In 1932 Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected overwhelmingly on a campaign promising a New Deal for the American people. Roosevelt worked quickly upon his election to deliver the New Deal, an unprecedented number of reforms addressing the catastrophic effects of the Great Depression. Unlike his predecessor, Herbert Hoover, who felt that the public should support the government and not the other way around, Roosevelt felt it was the federal government's duty to help the American people weather these bad times.

Together with his "brain trust," a group of university scholars and liberal theorists, Roosevelt sought the best course of action for the struggling nation. A desperate Congress gave him carte blanche and rubber-stamped his proposals in order to expedite the reforms. During the first 100 days of his presidency, a never-ending stream of bills was passed, to relieve poverty, reduce unemployment, and speed economic recovery.

His first act as president was to declare a four-day bank holiday, during which time Congress drafted the Emergency Banking Bill of 1933, which stabilized the banking system and restored the public's faith in the banking industry by putting the federal government behind it. Three months later, he signed the Glass-Steagall Act which created the FDIC, federally insuring deposits

The Civil Conservation Corps was one of the New Deal's most successful programs. It addressed the pressing problem of unemployment by sending 3 million single men from age 17 to 23 to the nations' forests to work. Living in camps in the forests, the men dug ditches, built reservoirs and planted trees. The men, all volunteers, were paid \$30 a month, with two thirds being sent home. The Works Progress Administration, Roosevelt's major work relief program, would employ more than 8.5 million people to build bridges, roads, public buildings, parks and airports.

The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) and the National Recovery Administration (NRA) were designed to address unemployment by regulating the number of hours worked per week and banning child labor. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), created in 1933, gave \$3 billion to states for work relief programs. The Agricultural Adjustment Act subsidized farmers for reducing crops and provided loans for farmers facing bankruptcy. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) helped people save their homes from foreclosure.

While they did not end the Depression, the New Deal's experimental programs helped the American people immeasurably by taking care of their basic needs and giving them the dignity of work and hope.

*Excerpted from [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)*

One skill we definitely need for TASC exam is sentence combining. Today we will be combining sentences by deleting repetitive information and using commas to create items in a series.

**Set One**

Franklin Delano Roosevelt remained determined in the face of the devastation caused by the Great Depression.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt remained realistic in the face of the devastation caused by the Great Depression.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt remained optimistic in the face of the devastation caused by the Great Depression.

- ***Combine the three sentences above into one sentence below:***

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**Set Two**

We stopped the evening paper.

In addition, we sold our Model T touring car.

Also, we turned off the city water and cleaned out our well.

- ***Combine the three sentences above into one sentence below:***

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**Set Three**

The Works Progress Administration (WPA), one of the New Deal's major relief programs, employed people to build bridges.

It also employed people to build parks.

The WPA employed people to build public buildings.

- ***Combine the three sentences above into one sentence below:***

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**Set Four**

The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) and the National Recovery Administration (NRA) addressed unemployment by regulating the number of hours worked per week.

The NIRA and NRA also addressed unemployment by establishing a minimum wage.

In addition, the NIRA and NRA addressed unemployment by banning child labor.

- **Combine the three sentences above into one sentence below:**

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**Set Five:** Complete the following statements.

I save money by \_\_\_\_\_.

I also save money by \_\_\_\_\_.

Another way I save money is by \_\_\_\_\_.

- **Combine the three sentences above into one sentence below:**

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- In the space below, summarize the skill we learned today:

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## *Topic 4- Painkiller/Heroin Epidemic*

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Essay Prompt:

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the number of overdose deaths caused by heroin increased from around 2,000 in 2001 to over 12,000 in 2014; that's over a 600% increase! The number of overdose deaths caused by prescription opioid painkillers increased over 300% in that same time period. Write an informative essay in which you examine the reason for the dramatic increase and what is being done to address this problem.

**Before you begin planning and writing, read the two texts:**

1. The opioid abuse epidemic: How healthcare helped create a crisis
2. The great American relapse: An old sickness has returned to haunt a new generation

As you read the texts, think about what details from the texts you might use in your essay.

After reading the texts, create a plan for your informational essay. Think about ideas, facts, definitions, details, and other information and examples you want to use. Think about how you will introduce your topic and what the main topic will be for each paragraph.

**Now write your informational essay. Be sure to:**

- Introduce the topic to be examined.
  - Develop the topic with specific facts, details, definition, examples and other relevant information from both passages.
  - Organize the information and evidence effectively.
  - Use words, phrases, and/or clauses to connect and show the relationship among your ideas.
  - Establish and maintain a formal style.
  - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information presented.
-

Adapted from: "**The Opioid abuse epidemic: How healthcare helped create a crisis.**" By Steven Ross Johnson. *Modern Healthcare* 15 Feb. 2016: 0008. *General OneFile*. Web. 20 Feb. 2016.

In 1996, pharmaceutical firm Purdue Pharma launched a campaign informing patients and doctors that a new, safe drug was available to combat pain that was not the result of cancer, surgery or trauma. This pill could relieve chronic back pain caused by daily physical demands. And it was safe because it would slowly release its narcotic ingredients, making it unlikely to become addictive, it said. The drug caused a cultural shift in the way physicians treated pain and how Americans viewed it. "It was this change in prescribing practices that would lead to our public health crisis," said Dr. Andrew Kolodny, executive director of Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing.

Two decades later, the country faces record mortality rates associated with drug overdoses, including those related to heroin, an option many addicts turn to as a cheaper and more accessible alternative to painkillers.

Now the federal government, states, drug manufacturers and health providers are scrambling to find ways to confront an epidemic that began in the doctor's office rather than the street, and is affecting a more diverse swath of America.

The number of deaths from prescription drug overdoses jumped 242% in less than 20 years, from 7,523 in 1999 to more than 25,000 by 2014, according to the National Institutes of Health. The number of opioid prescriptions also rose significantly in the U.S., from 116 million in 1999 to 207 million in 2013, according to figures from IMS Health.

Kolodny said the rise was largely the result of that 1996 campaign touting Purdue's new drug OxyContin. Its sales grew from \$45 million in its first year to \$1 billion four years later.

It was not until 2007 that Purdue would plead guilty to federal criminal charges of misinforming doctors when it claimed OxyContin's time-release mechanism made it less likely to be abused. Addicts quickly learned that simply crushing the pill released the narcotic.

But by that time, doctors were in the habit of regularly prescribing the pain killers. Doctors were forced to stop viewing OxyContin and other opioids as the answer to the pain affecting blue-collar and rural patients.

"When our patients complain of pain, we need to be better at alternative treatments and not ways just quickly writing a prescription for opioids," said Dr. Gail D'Onofrio, chair of the Yale School of Medicine's Department of Emergency Medicine. "The problem is that they take longer, but that's where we are right now. We can't keep just prescribing these drugs the way we have been doing," D'Onofrio said.

The opioid crisis is compelling providers to rethink the role of powerful, addictive narcotics and the way they help patients manage pain.

Adapted from: **“The great American relapse: An old sickness has returned to haunt a new generation”** [www.economist.com/news/united-states/21633819-old-sickness-has-returned-haunt-new-generation-great-american-relapse](http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21633819-old-sickness-has-returned-haunt-new-generation-great-american-relapse)

Picture a heroin addict. “A bum sitting under a bridge with a needle in his arm, robbing houses to feed his addiction,” is what many imagine, believes Cynthia Scudo. But Ms. Scudo, a smartly dressed young grandmother from a middle-class Denver suburb, knows that these days it is not always like that. Until not so long ago, she was a heroin addict herself.

The face of heroin use in America has changed utterly. Forty or fifty years ago heroin addicts were overwhelmingly male, disproportionately black, and very young (the average age of first use was 16). Most came from poor inner-city neighborhoods. These days, the average user looks more like Ms Scudo. More than half are women, and 90% are white.

The spread of heroin to a new market of relatively affluent, suburban whites has allowed the drug to make a comeback, after decades of decline. Over the past six years the number of annual users has almost doubled, from 370,000 in 2007 to 680,000 in 2013. What explains America’s relapse?

### **A shot in the arm**

Like many of America’s new generation of users, Ms. Scudo never intended to take up the drug. Her addiction began in 2000 when, after a hip injury, a doctor prescribed her “anything and everything” to relieve the pain. This included a high dose of OxyContin, a popular brand of opioid pill. Her prescription was later reduced, but she was already hooked. On the black market OxyContin pills cost \$80 each, more than she could afford to cover habit; so she began selling her pills and using the proceeds to buy cheaper heroin. As if from nowhere, Ms Scudo had become a heroin addict. The 1990s saw a big increase in prescriptions of opioids for chronic pain. Last year 11 million Americans used illicitly-acquired prescription painkillers. People who would never dream of injecting heroin seem to assume that opioids in packets are safe.

But they aren’t. In 2012 prescription painkillers accounted for 16,000 deaths—nearly four out of every ten fatal drug overdoses in America. As the toll grew, some states tightened up the law. In many places doctors must now check databases to make sure the patient has not already been prescribed painkillers by another clinic. Prescriptions have been cut down to as little as a single pill, to reduce the supply of unfinished packets. And drug manufacturers have made their medicines harder to abuse: the latest OxyContin pills, when crushed, turn into a gloop that cannot easily be snorted or dissolved for injection. These measures have had some impact: rates of prescription-drug abuse and of overdose have dipped.

But as the supply of pain pills has dropped, their black-market price has risen, and many addicts have turned to heroin to satisfy their craving more cheaply. “We saw it coming at us at 90mph, like a freight train,” says Meghan Ralston of the Drug Policy Alliance, a drug-reform pressure group. The number of deaths from heroin overdoses doubled between 2010 and 2012, and many of those attending addiction clinics started on prescription pills. As fewer people are introduced to prescription opioids, the number who are vulnerable to heroin addiction will also eventually fall.

The Obama administration's latest national drug strategy criticized "the misconception that a substance-use disorder is a personal moral failing rather than a brain disease." It called for greater access to naloxone, an antidote that can reverse the effects of heroin overdose, and backed state-level "good Samaritan" laws, which give immunity to people who call 911 to help someone who is overdosing. Needle-exchange services, which have cut rates of hepatitis and HIV among drug users in Europe, are expanding. These programs are easier for politicians to sell now that heroin addiction is no longer just the "bum under the bridge".

PARALLELISM REVIEW: “Whenever you include a list of actions or items, you must use equal grammatical units. If the first item is a noun, then the following items must also be nouns; if the first action is a simple past tense verb, then make the other items simple past tense verbs as well.”

<http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/parallelstructure.htm>

“If two or more ideas are parallel, they are easier to grasp when expressed in parallel grammatical form. Single words should be balanced with single words, phrases with phrases, clauses with clauses.”

From: *A Writer’s Reference*, by Diana Hacker

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**Directions: The sentences below exhibit FAULTY (incorrect) PARALLELISM. For each one, underline the error and correct the sentence.**

1. Forty or fifty years ago heroin addicts were overwhelmingly male, disproportionately black, and they were young people (the average age of first use was 16).

CORRECT: Forty or fifty years ago heroin addicts were **overwhelmingly male, disproportionately black**, and \_\_\_\_\_ (the average age of first use was 16).

2. Doctors have started to combat the problem by checking drug databases, write prescriptions for fewer pills, and trying other forms of pain management.

CORRECT: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Ms. Scudo is a middle-class grandmother who began taking OxyContin for hip pain, ended up addicted to the pills, and switching to the cheaper and more accessible heroin.

CORRECT: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Doctors and patients were initially excited to find a drug that could fight pain not caused by cancer or experiencing pain after a surgery.

CORRECT: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Many addicts find it less shameful to pop a pill than shooting up with a needle.

Correct: \_\_\_\_\_

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## *Topic 5 - Global Warming*

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Most people today have accepted the idea that global warming is a reality. As temperatures slowly rise, there are consequences for all of us. Many people, though, feel helpless about addressing the situation. Read the following two texts and write an informational essay describing ways in which a warmer Earth affects us on a daily basis, as well as ways we as individuals can help reduce the effects of global warming.

The texts are *How Does Global Warming Affect Daily Life?* and *What Are Ways to Stop Global Warming?*

In your informational essay, be sure to:

- use information from both texts in your essay
- introduce the topic clearly, provide a focus, and organize information in a way that makes sense
- develop the topics with facts, definitions, details, quotations or other information and examples related to the topic
- use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion
- clarify the relationship among ideas and concepts
- use clear language and vocabulary to inform about the topic
- provide a conclusion that follows the information presented

### *How Does Global Warming Affect Daily Life?*

by Suzanna Didier

[www.homeguides.sfgate.com/effects-global-warming-human-body](http://www.homeguides.sfgate.com/effects-global-warming-human-body)

Earth's climate is changing. In the past 50 years, the average temperature in the United States has gone up by 2 degrees Fahrenheit, precipitation has increased by roughly 5 percent, and extreme weather events have become more frequent and intense, according to a recent report by the U.S. Global Change Research Program. Global warming doesn't just impact nature; your daily life is affected, too.

Food prices are rising as climate change makes it trickier to maintain the specific conditions crops need to thrive. As the climate warms, the air holds more moisture and rainstorms become more intense, damaging crops. Overall precipitation patterns are also changing, bringing droughts to some areas of the world and floods to others. A recent study published by Stanford University showed that global wheat production decreased by 5.5 percent as a result of an unstable climate, and world corn production was down by nearly 4 percent. So far, North

American farmers haven't seen the same drop in productivity, but that is expected to change. The EPA reports that an additional increase of 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit in the global temperature could decrease production of American corn by 10 to 30 percent.

Fresh water is becoming scarcer in some regions. Many mountainous states rely on snowmelt to replenish their water sources, and snowpack is declining as well as melting earlier in the season. Severe droughts, increased evaporation and changes in precipitation patterns are impacting water levels in streams, rivers and lakes. Nearly 18 percent of the world's fresh water is found in the Great Lakes, which supply drinking water to a large region. Scientists expect lake levels to drop as the climate continues to warm up. Lake Superior --- the largest of the five Great Lakes --- is 4.5 degrees F warmer than it was in 1980, and water levels in all of the Great Lakes have generally declined since 1986.

Rising ocean levels will cover some of the coastline used for recreation and human habitation. Sea ice is melting at an accelerated rate, according to the National Wildlife Federation. Arctic sea ice has shrunk by 30 percent since 1979. As it melts and ocean levels rise, coastlines and low-lying areas like New Orleans, Miami and New York are threatened. If the Earth's climate warms by 2 or 3 more degrees by 2100, global sea level will rise 3 feet, displacing almost 56 million people around the world.

More wildfires are breaking out as droughts become increasingly common. Fires that go through drought-stricken land spread more quickly and burn longer, destroying forests and homes, public recreation spaces and grasslands. The University of Arizona reported that from 1987 to 2003, seven times more forested land burned in the western United States than during the preceding 17 years, and large fires were four times as frequent. The EPA predicts that if the earth warms another 3.6 degrees F, wildfires in that part of the country will burn four times more land than they currently do.

### ***What Are Ways to Stop Global Warming?***

Adapted from an article by Benna Crawford, Demand Media  
[www.homeguides.sfgate.com/ways-stop-global-warming](http://www.homeguides.sfgate.com/ways-stop-global-warming)

The remedies for global warming are in the big picture, but also in the details. In order to change the circumstances that are melting the ice caps and creating climate chaos, people have to adopt new behaviors. Science and technology have to step up to the challenge, as well.

Although several greenhouse gases contribute to global warming, carbon dioxide is the main culprit. By 2008, scientists recommended that carbon dioxide in the atmosphere be reduced to no more than 350 parts per million, from highs of at least 385 parts per million, to prevent catastrophic warming, rising sea levels, freshwater shortages, widespread destruction of marine

life and the spread of deadly mosquito-borne diseases. They advise we must stop using coal and other fossil fuels unless we capture and sequester the carbon dioxide emissions.

There are a number of changes you can make in your day-to-day life to reduce your personal carbon footprint. Although these measures alone will not be enough to curtail global warming, if undertaken by enough people, they do have the ability to significantly reduce the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere. Recycle your household waste. Try composting to recycle kitchen garbage, landscape trimmings and paper waste. Use the compost to grow your own organic vegetables -- plants remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Change to compact fluorescent bulbs to save on electricity. Turn off that light bulb when you leave the room and save even more. Walk, bike or take public transit instead of driving and save a pound of carbon dioxide for every mile that you don't drive. If you do drive and keep your tires inflated, you'll get better mileage -- every gallon of gas saved stops 20 pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere.

Zero-energy buildings and bold, innovative clean-energy production can halt greenhouse gas increases and initiate their gradual decrease to safer levels. The U.S. Green Building Council administers green building certification for commercial, institutional, medical, residential and school buildings that adhere to green construction practices and operate energy-efficient buildings. The Union of Concerned Scientists urges people to push for energy-efficient buildings made with sustainable materials and practices. Support green-building initiatives in your town and try to incorporate their principles into your own projects. Contact elected representatives to ask them to vote for climate-control legislation. Demand action from state and local officials to build nonpolluting local transportation and offer supply incentives for wind and solar energy systems. Write to your energy company to ask for clean energy sources. Your vote and your voice can help to cool the planet.

The Union of Concerned Scientists says deforestation of the world's tropical rain forests accounts for at least 15 percent of all heat-trapping emissions -- more than every plane, train, ship, truck and car on the planet. Plants take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen. Cutting down and destroying the rain forest's verdant biosphere releases the considerable amount of carbon stored in those plants. Therefore, stopping deforestation is a consequential action. Deforestation clears the land for cattle grazing and growing crops, sometimes for biofuels. Commercial logging strips an entire habitat of its trees and complex environment. These are short-term, relatively low-income activities with a devastating long-lasting effect on climate. Supporting sustainable agriculture practices and purchasing only sustainably harvested lumber will help slow deforestation. Controlling sprawl and paying people in developing nations to protect their forests rather than cut them down are all urgent remedies.

## Sentence Combining

Combine the following sets into one or two sentences. Remember to eliminate repeated phrases and use commas correctly.

### Set One:

Global warming affects the Earth.

Global warming affects nature.

Global warming affects us all as individuals.

### Set Two:

Higher food prices is an effect of rising temperatures. Less fresh drinking water and rising ocean levels are also effects of rising temperatures. Threatening wildfires are caused by rising temperatures, too.

### Set Three:

Reduce your carbon footprint by using your car less often. Reduce carbon usage by recycling.

Reduce carbon emissions by supporting sustainable agricultural practices which reduces deforestation.

### Set Four:

Global warming is everybody's problem.

Everybody can play a part in the solution to global warming.

We can fight global warming by making small changes in our life.

We can also let elected officials know we are concerned about global warming.

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## *Topic 6 - Concerns Regarding Green Energy*

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It is well known that the United States has been on a quest to move towards “green” energy sources such as solar power and wind turbines. There are obvious benefits to these sources, in that they are renewable, cleaner, and reduce our dependence on oil and natural gas. But is that the whole story? Read the two texts that follow. Then write an informational essay describing the possible disadvantages or drawbacks regarding the production and use of “green” energy.

The two texts are *Potential Environmental Impacts and Obstacles of Solar Energy* and *Environmental Impacts of Wind Power*

In your informational essay, be sure to:

- use information from both texts in your essay
- introduce the topic clearly, provide a focus, and organize information in a way that makes sense
- develop the topics with facts, definitions, details, quotations or other information and examples related to the topic
- use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion
- clarify the relationship among ideas and concepts
- use clear language and vocabulary to inform about the topic
- provide a conclusion that follows the information presented

### *Potential Environmental Impacts and Obstacles of Solar Energy*

Adapted from an article written by Ajay Pal Singh Chabba,

[www.en.reset.org/blog/potential-environmental-impacts-and-obstacles-solar-energy](http://www.en.reset.org/blog/potential-environmental-impacts-and-obstacles-solar-energy)

Solar energy is considered a sustainable energy supply technology; however, the predominant negative environmental impacts of solar energy come from producing the solar panels. Production of these panels consumes substantial amounts of energy and produces waste water and hazardous by-products which are released to the air during the manufacturing process.

To combat the environmental effects of producing the panels, hazardous by-products and air pollutants are passed through pollution control equipment and waste water is treated before being discharged into drains.

The point of concern in the manufacture of solar panels is that the silver content used in the module is left over and is considered a dangerous waste. Producing these panels in high quantities could also lead to the depletion of silver resources.

Extra care should also be taken to prevent accidental emissions of chemicals and solvents during the various manufacturing steps of panels, such as carbon dioxide which effects global warming and isopropanol and solvents which are toxic to humans.

The construction and operation of solar farms also has an impact on the environment. The major drawbacks of constructing a solar farm are that it affects existing land uses, such as grazing and agriculture as well as special recreation management areas.

The direct environmental impact of installing a solar farm has to do with the clearing large areas of land which in turn affects native vegetation and wildlife in numerous ways and has an adverse ecological impact and can affect the rainfall and the drainage of a region. Reflected light beams coming from the concentrated solar power system can, if misdirected, interfere with aircraft operating pathways. Solar system operations involve high temperature emissions in surroundings which may pose an environmental risk. These facilities also produce electric and magnetic fields which can hamper the natural surroundings.

Solar systems use steam plants to generate electricity, which generally use water for cooling. Increase in water demand can strain available water resources while the use of chemicals at solar facilities could result in contamination of local water, soil and air. If new electric transmission lines or related facilities were needed to service a new solar energy development, construction, operation and decommissioning of the transmission facilities could also cause a variety of environmental impacts.

Solar power is beneficial to the environment in contrast to other power producing sources as it does not produce carbon dioxide air emissions. Using a renewable resource medium like solar power decreases the need for fossil fuels while also helping us keep tabs on our carbon footprint. Good maintenance practices and proper planning can certainly help minimize the negative impacts of producing solar panels using hazardous material. Innovative production technologies for PV modules would help to lower the environmental impacts by efficiently utilizing silicon in modules and recycling it. Reducing the use of silver content in the modules would also be a significant step. Finally, an increase in efficiency and longer life time of modules and inverters would contribute to reduction of environmental impacts.

## ***Environmental Impacts of Wind Power***

Adapted from an article by The Union of Concerned Scientists

[www.ucsusa.org/clean\\_energy/our-energy-choices/renewable-energy/environmental-impacts-wind-power](http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/our-energy-choices/renewable-energy/environmental-impacts-wind-power)

Harnessing power from the wind is one of the cleanest and most sustainable ways to generate electricity as it produces no toxic pollution or global warming emissions. Wind is also abundant,

inexhaustible, and affordable, which makes it a viable alternative to fossil fuels. Despite its vast potential, there are a variety of environmental impacts associated with wind power generation that should be recognized.

The land use impact of wind power facilities varies depending on the site: wind turbines placed in flat areas typically use more land than those located in hilly areas. Thus, the turbines themselves and the surrounding roads and transmission lines occupy a small portion of the total area of a wind facility. The remainder of the land can be used for a variety of other productive purposes, including livestock grazing, agriculture, highways, and hiking trails.

The impact of wind turbines on wildlife, most notably on birds and bats, has been widely documented and studied. A recent National Wind Coordinating Committee (NWCC) review of research found evidence of bird and bat deaths from collisions with wind turbines and due to changes in air pressure caused by the spinning turbines, as well as from habitat disruption. Offshore wind turbines can have similar impacts on marine birds, but as with onshore wind turbines, the bird deaths associated with offshore wind are minimal. Wind farms located offshore will also impact fish and other marine wildlife.

Some people living close to wind facilities have complained about sound and vibration issues. Also, under certain lighting conditions, wind turbines can create an annoying effect known as shadow flicker. It is important for wind turbine developers to take these community concerns seriously by following “good neighbor” best practices for siting turbines and initiating open dialogue with affected community members. Additionally, technological advances, such as minimizing blade surface imperfections and using sound-absorbent materials can reduce wind turbine noise.

When it comes to aesthetics, wind turbines can elicit strong reactions. To some people, they are graceful sculptures; to others, they are eyesores that compromise the natural landscape. Whether a community is willing to accept an altered skyline in return for cleaner power should be decided in an open public dialogue.

While there are no global warming emissions associated with operating wind turbines, there are emissions associated with other stages of a wind turbine’s life-cycle, including production and transportation of the turbines, on-site construction and assembly, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning and dismantlement.

## **;;; Semicolons ;;;**

Most commonly, semicolons separate two main clauses that are closely related to each other but that *could* stand on their own as sentences if you wanted them to. Here's an example: "Some people think wind turbines are artistic sculptures; others think they are eyesores." In other words, you could substitute a period for the semicolon and have two separate sentences. But a semicolon would add variety and avoid lots of short, choppy sentences in a row. The key is that when you use a semicolon, the main **clauses should be closely related to each other**. You wouldn't write, "Solar panels are springing up in neighborhoods around the country; it is supposed to be bitter cold this weekend" because those two main clauses have nothing to do with each other. Notice, too, that the word following the semicolon is not capitalized.

**Are the following semicolons used correctly? If not, how could you fix the sentence?**

1. Sun and wind are renewable resources; oil is not.
2. Sun and wind are renewable resources; but not oil.
3. Some people that live near wind farms report health problems; which are difficult to link to the turbines.
4. Bird and bat deaths are associated with turbines; and must be monitored carefully.
5. There are negative impacts associated with green energy; however, the benefits outweigh the costs.

**Could a semicolon be used in the following sentences? If so, insert one. If not, what punctuation would work better?**

1. Green energy is renewable and cleaner than oil it has its negative impacts as well.
2. Waste water at solar panel production plants must be monitored so harmful chemicals don't get into the environment.
3. One potential problem with solar panel production is the overuse of silver resources another is the amount of space that they require.
4. Wind turbines can produce an annoying effect known as shadow flicker which is less of an issue with offshore turbines.

**Now you try it. Write 2 examples of sentences that contain semicolons (on the topics of your choice) below:**

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## *Topic 7 - The Dangers of Supplements and “Miracle” Cures*

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Given the cost of health care today, and unlimited information available on the internet, some people are skipping their doctors’ appointments and trying to treat themselves. With numerous products on the market, patients are taking health care into their own hands and buying pills, treatments and home remedies advertised online, in magazines and on TV. But is this always a good practice?

Read the two articles that follow and write an informational essay describing the possible dangers - for both healthy individuals and those with serious illnesses - associated with using these dietary supplements and “miracle” cures.

The two texts are *Dietary Supplements: What You Need to Know* and *Miracle Health Claims*

In your informational essay, be sure to:

- use information from both texts in your essay
- introduce the topic clearly, provide a focus, and organize information in a way that makes sense
- develop the topics with facts, definitions, details, quotations or other information and examples related to the topic
- use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion
- clarify the relationship among ideas and concepts
- use clear language and vocabulary to inform about the topic
- provide a conclusion that follows the information presented

### ***Dietary Supplements: What You Need to Know***

Adapted from [www.ods.od.nih.gov/HealthInformation/DS\\_WhatYouNeedToKnow.aspx](http://www.ods.od.nih.gov/HealthInformation/DS_WhatYouNeedToKnow.aspx)

The majority of adults in the United States take one or more dietary supplements either every day or occasionally. Dietary supplements come in a variety of forms: traditional tablets, capsules, and powders, as well as drinks and energy bars. Popular supplements include vitamins D and E; minerals like calcium and iron; herbs such as echinacea and garlic; and specialty products like glucosamine, probiotics, and fish oils.

If you don’t eat a nutritious variety of foods, some supplements might help you get adequate amounts of essential nutrients. However, supplements can’t take the place of the variety of foods that are important to a healthy diet.

Scientific evidence shows that some dietary supplements are beneficial for overall health and for managing some health conditions. For example, calcium and vitamin D are important for keeping bones strong and reducing bone loss; folic acid decreases the risk of certain birth defects; and omega-3 fatty acids from fish oils might help some people with heart disease. Other supplements need more

study to determine their value. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not determine whether dietary supplements are effective before they are marketed.

Many supplements contain active ingredients that can have strong effects in the body. Always be alert to the possibility of unexpected side effects, especially when taking a new product.

Supplements are most likely to cause side effects or harm when people take them instead of prescribed medicines or when people take many supplements in combination. Some supplements can increase the risk of bleeding or, if a person takes them before or after surgery, they can affect the person's response to anesthesia. Dietary supplements can also interact with certain prescription drugs in ways that might cause problems. Here are just a few examples:

- Vitamin K can reduce the ability of the blood thinner Coumadin® to prevent blood from clotting.
- St. John's wort can speed the breakdown of many drugs (including antidepressants and birth control pills) and thereby reduce these drugs' effectiveness.
- Antioxidant supplements, like vitamins C and E, might reduce the effectiveness of some types of cancer chemotherapy.

Keep in mind that some ingredients found in dietary supplements are added to a growing number of foods, including breakfast cereals and beverages. As a result, you may be getting more of these ingredients than you think, and more might not be better. Taking more than you need is always more expensive and can also raise your risk of experiencing side effects. For example, getting too much vitamin A can cause headaches and liver damage, reduce bone strength, and cause birth defects.

Be cautious about taking dietary supplements if you are pregnant or nursing. Also, be careful about giving them to a child. Most dietary supplements have not been well tested for safety in pregnant women, nursing mothers, or children.

Dietary supplements are complex products. The FDA has established quality standards for dietary supplements to help ensure their identity, purity, strength, and composition. These standards are designed to prevent the inclusion of the wrong ingredient, the addition of too much or too little of an ingredient, the possibility of contamination, and the improper packaging and labeling of a product.

In addition, several independent organizations offer quality testing and allow products that pass these tests to display their seals of approval. These seals of approval provide assurance that the product was properly manufactured, contains the ingredients listed on the label, and does not contain harmful levels of contaminants. These seals of approval do not guarantee that a product is safe or effective.

## ***Miracle Health Claims***

Adapted from an article by the Federal Trade Commission at [www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0167](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0167)

You've seen miracle claims for products related to health. It's no wonder. People spend billions of dollars a year on fraudulently marketed health-related products and treatments that not only are unproven and often useless, but sometimes also are dangerous.

Health fraud trades on false hope. It promises quick cures and easy solutions for a variety of problems, from obesity and arthritis to cancer and AIDS. But the "cures" don't deliver. Instead, people who buy them are cheated out of their money, their time, and even their health. Fraudulently marketed health products can have dangerous interactions with medicines people are already taking, and can keep them from getting a proper diagnosis and treatment from their own health care professional. Many unapproved treatments are expensive, too, and rarely covered by health insurance.

If you or someone you love has cancer, you may be curious about supposed "miracle" cancer-fighting products — like pills, powders, and herbs — that you've seen advertised or heard about from family and friends. Scammers take advantage of the feelings that can accompany a diagnosis of cancer. They promote unproven — and potentially dangerous — substances with claims that the products are both "natural" and effective. But "natural" doesn't mean either safe or effective, especially when it comes to using these products for cancer. In fact, a product that is labeled "natural" can be more than ineffective: it can be downright harmful. What's more, stopping or delaying proven treatment can have serious consequences.

The truth is that no single device, remedy, or treatment can treat all types of cancer. All cancers are different, and no one treatment works for every cancer or every body. Even two people with the same diagnosis may need different treatments. That's one more reason to be skeptical of websites, magazines, and brochures with ads for products that claim to treat cancer, and to decide on treatments with your health professional.

Although proven treatments can extend and improve the quality of life for people with AIDS, so far there is no cure for the disease. If you've been diagnosed with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, you may be tempted to try untested drugs or treatments. But trying unproven products or treatments — like electrical and magnetic devices and so-called herbal cures — can be dangerous, especially if it means a delay in seeking medical care.

For example, the herb St. John's Wort has been promoted as a safe treatment for HIV. But there's no evidence that it is effective in treating HIV; in fact, studies have shown that it interferes with medicines prescribed for HIV.

There's no shortage of people selling unproven arthritis remedies, which include thousands of dietary supplements and so-called natural cures like mussel extract, desiccated liver pills, shark cartilage, CMO (cetylmyristoleate), honey and vinegar mixtures, and gimmicks like magnets and copper bracelets. But these remedies aren't backed adequately by science to demonstrate relief.

It's easy to see why some people believe product claims, especially when successful treatments seem elusive. But pressure to decide on-the-spot about trying an untested product or treatment is a sure sign of a fraud. Ask for more information and consult a knowledgeable doctor, pharmacist, or other health care professional. Promoters of legitimate health care products don't object to your seeking additional information — in fact, most welcome it.

## **::: Colons :::**

Use a colon to show expectation or addition. For example, “There is one product people need to use with care: dietary supplements.” The colon here makes us wait.

In the sentence “I take two dietary supplements daily: a multivitamin and calcium” the words following the colon give us additional information. Here are the rules:

1. What follows the colon has to be closely related to what is before it.
2. Only use a colon after what could be a complete sentence on its own, not a sentence fragment.

“When she is getting a cold she takes: vitamin C and zinc.” This is incorrect because “when she is getting a cold she takes” could not be a sentence by itself.

To fix it, add ‘*the following*’. “When she is getting a cold she takes the following: vitamin C and zinc.”

**Are the following colons used correctly? If not, why?**

1. Supplements come in many forms: pills, powders, drinks, and bars.
2. When taking supplements, be careful not to: take too much and mix too many.
3. Before starting an over-the-counter treatment you should do the following: check with your doctor and read about any possible side effects.
4. Two popular dietary supplements are: St. John’s wort and Echinacea.

**Insert colons where appropriate. Not all sentences will need one.**

5. There are several diseases that “miracle” drug companies claim they can cure cancer, arthritis and HIV.
6. Two ways “miracle” cures can be dangerous are when they are used in place of a doctor’s care and when they interact with a patient’s prescribed medicine.
7. There is one thing everyone should know about supplements the word “natural” on a label does not mean safe.
8. Those who should be especially careful about taking any over-the-counter products are children and pregnant women.

**Now it’s your turn! Write 2 sentences that show correct use of a colon below:**

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## *Topic 8 - Civil Rights Movements: Then and Now*

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In the wake of several high profile cases in the US in recent years where black citizens have died during confrontations with white police officers, groups such as ‘Black Lives Matter’ have formed in protest. The movement that has resulted has both similarities to and differences from the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Read the two texts that follow and write an informational essay that compares and contrasts these two movements. What do they have in common? How are they different?

The two texts are *Martin Luther King Jr’s “I Have a Dream” speech* and *The Birth of a New Civil Rights Movement*

In your informational essay, be sure to:

- use information from both texts in your essay
- introduce the topic clearly, provide a focus, and organize information in a way that makes sense
- develop the topics with facts, definitions, details, quotations or other information and examples related to the topic
- use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion
- clarify the relationship among ideas and concepts
- use clear language and vocabulary to inform about the topic
- provide a conclusion that follows the information presented

### ***“I Have a Dream”***

Background: The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom (1963) was a non-violent demonstration in support of President John F. Kennedy’s civil rights bill (which passed the following year and outlawed discrimination and segregation.) Around 250,000 blacks and whites made the journey to the Lincoln Memorial to hear civil rights speeches including Martin Luther King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech.

#### **Excerpted from Martin Luther King Jr’s speech given on August 28, 1963:**

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One

hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity...

Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice...

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment... There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges...

In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny... We cannot walk alone...

We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality.

We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one.

Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering.

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character...

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom to ring... we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last."

## ***The Birth of a New Civil Rights Movement***

Adapted from an article by Gene Demby

[www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/12/ferguson-new-civil-rights-movement](http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/12/ferguson-new-civil-rights-movement)

The events of 2014, beginning with Michael Brown's death in Ferguson, Missouri, in August, did more than touch off a national debate about police behavior, criminal justice and widening inequality in America. They also gave a new birth of passion and energy to a civil rights movement that had almost faded into history, and which had been in the throes of a slow comeback since the killing of Trayvon Martin in 2012.

This re-energized millennial movement differs from its half-century-old civil rights-era forebear in a number of important ways. One, it is driven far more by social media and hashtags than marches and open-air rallies. Indeed, if you wanted a megaphone for a movement spearheaded by young people of color, you'd be hard-pressed to find a better one than Twitter, whose users skew younger and browner than the general public.

Two, the new social-justice grass roots reflects a broader agenda than just racial equality, which includes LGBTQ (lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-questioning) issues and immigration reform. The young grass-roots activists have a broad suite of concerns: the school-to-prison pipeline, educational inequality, the over-policing of black and Latino communities. In essence, they're trying to take on deeply entrenched discrimination that is fueled less by bigotry than systemic biases.

Three, the movement's renewal has exposed a serious generational rift. It is largely a movement being led by young unknowns who have rejected, in some cases angrily, the presumption of leadership thrust on them by veteran celebrities like Al Sharpton. While both the younger and older activists both trace their lineage to the civil rights movement, they seem to align themselves with different parts of that family tree. And in several ways, these contemporary tensions are updates of the disagreements that marked the earlier movement.

Sarah Jackson, a professor at Northeastern University whose research focuses on social movements, said the civil rights establishment embraces the "Martin Luther King-Al Sharpton model"—which emphasizes mobilizing people for rallies and speeches and tends to be centered around a charismatic male leader. But the younger activists are instead inclined to what Jackson called the "Fannie Lou Hamer-Ella Baker model"—an approach that embraces a grass roots and in which agency is widely diffused. Baker helped found Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference but became deeply skeptical of the cult of personality that she felt had formed around him. And she vocally disagreed with the notion that power in the movement

should be concentrated among a few leaders, who tended to be men with bases of power that lay in the church. “My theory is, strong people don’t need strong leaders,” she said.

By December 2014, some of these same uncelebrated community organizers who spent the year leading “die-ins,” voting drives and the thousands-deep rallies around the country would meet privately with President Barack Obama in the Oval Office. A few days after that White House meeting, Hillary Clinton nodded to them when she dropped one of the mantras of the demonstrators—“black lives matter”—into a speech at a posh awards ceremony in New York City.

Ashley Yates, of Millennial Activists United, was one of the organizers who met with Obama in the White House in December. She put the meeting with the president in historical perspective. “The day we met with the president was Dec. 1—it was the 59th anniversary of Rosa Parks not getting up from her seat,” she pointed out. The die-ins and demonstrations of the past year were part of a long tradition of intentionally polarizing civil disobedience, she said. “We definitely realize that we’re standing on the shoulders of the people who came before us.”

**List ideas and quotes you might want to use as you read:**

<b>Similarities</b>	<b>Quote</b>
<b>Differences</b>	<b>Quote</b>

## Extension Activity – Paraphrasing from “I Have a Dream”

Quotation

Paraphrase

<p>“One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination”</p>	
<p>“In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.”</p>	
<p>“The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny.”</p>	
<p>“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”</p>	

## **Supplement:**

Alternate article for use with Topic 8 - Civil Rights Movements: Then and Now.

The article that follows on the next page (for ease of photocopying), “The Truth of ‘Black Lives Matter’” can be used in place of Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech for the **Civil Rights Movement: Then and Now** essay prompt. This is appropriate for higher level readers that have background knowledge of the 1960s movement.

## **The Truth of ‘Black Lives Matter’**

The New York Times 9/3/15 by The Editorial Board

The Republican Party and its acolytes in the news media are trying to demonize the protest movement that has sprung up in response to the all-too-common police killings of unarmed African-Americans across the country. The intent of the campaign is to cast the phrase “Black Lives Matter” as an inflammatory or even hateful anti-white expression that has no legitimate place in a civil rights campaign.

This campaign betrays a disturbing indifference to or at best a profound ignorance of history in general and of the civil rights movement in particular. From the very beginning, the movement focused unapologetically on bringing an end to state-sanctioned violence against African-Americans and to acts of racial terror very much like the one that took nine lives at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC, in June 2015.

The civil rights movement was intended to make Congress and Americans confront the fact that African-Americans were being killed with impunity for offenses like trying to vote, and had the right to life and to equal protection under the law. The movement sought a cross-racial appeal, but at every step of the way used expressly racial terms to describe the death and destruction that was visited upon black people because they were black.

Even in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, civil rights groups documented cases in which African-Americans died horrible deaths after being turned away from hospitals reserved for whites, or were lynched – which meant being hanged, burned or dismembered – in front of enormous crowds that had gathered to enjoy the sight.

The 2015 Charleston church massacre has eerie parallels to the 1963 bombing of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama which occurred at the height of the early civil rights movement. Four black girls were murdered that Sunday. When Dr. King eulogized them, he did not shy away from the fact that the dead had been killed because they were black, by monstrous men whose leaders fed the “the stale bread of hatred and the spoiled meat of racism.” He said that the dead “have something to say” to a complacent federal government, as well as to “every Negro who has passively accepted the evil system of segregation and who has stood on the sidelines in a mighty struggle for justice.” Shock over the bombing pushed Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act the following year.

During this same period, freedom riders and voting rights activists offered themselves up to be beaten nearly to death, week after week, day after day, in the South so that the country would witness Jim Crow brutality and meaningfully respond to it. This grisly method succeeded in Selma, Alabama in 1965 when scenes of troopers bludgeoning voting rights demonstrators compelled a previously hesitant Congress to acknowledge that black people deserved full citizenship, too, and to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Along the way, there was never a doubt as to what the struggle was about: securing citizenship rights for black people who had long been denied them.

The “Black Lives Matter” movement focuses on the fact that black citizens have long been far more likely than whites to die at the hands of the police. Demonstrators who chant the phrase are making the same declaration that voting rights and civil rights activists made a half-century ago. They are not asserting that black lives are more precious than white lives. They are underlining an indisputable fact – that the lives of black citizens in this country historically have not mattered, and have been discounted and devalued.