AP English Language and Composition
Education Argument Paper

In the Education unit, we study several pieces which argue for educational reform and revision to the field of education. For example, *The Lottery* calls for the expansion of the charter school model while Francine Prose’s "I Know Why the Caged Bird Cannot Read" calls for major revisions of high school English Literature curricula.

For this assignment you will identify a pressing educational issue at local level (RFH, sending schools) or at the state level (across NJ public schools). In a typed, 4-5 page paper, compose a claim of policy that would improve this issue, provide supporting evidence for your suggested reform, and develop a clear argument for addressing the issue you selected. Be sure to provide adequate background information to ground your argument.

Requirements:
- Clear identification of an educational issue at RFH or in NJ
- Adequate background information about selected educational issue
- Offers a clear, reasonable, and achievable claim of policy in response to issue
- Addresses potential counterarguments to your proposal
- Utilizes effective evidence/logical support to scaffold your argument & develop your claim of policy
- MLA formatting and citation style (including in-text, parenthetical citations)
- A works cited with REPUTABLE academic sources (at least 2 journal articles/at least 5 sources total)
- Typed 4-5 pages in length (Times New Roman, double spaced, 1 inch margins)

Due Date: ________________ (in hard copy with works cited and receipt -- on turnitin.com by 7:40 am)

Steps for the Education Reform Research Paper
Due Dates:

1. Topic Proposal  
   Thursday, 12/20

2. Thesis and Annotated Bibliography  
   Friday, 1/4

3. Outline  
   Monday, 1/14

4. Rough Draft  
   Monday, 2/4 (shared via Google)

5. Peer Editing  
   Monday, 2/4 and Tuesday, 2/5

6. Final Submission  
   Thursday, 2/7

*Note: (If you are going away for Winter Break, you still MUST submit before you leave)*
Student Name: ________________________________

AP Language and Composition
Educational Reform Paper Rubric

Claim and Topic Grounding

____/5 Provides an interesting opening to introduce the topic
____/5 Includes a clear identification of an educational issue/problem at RFH/state
____/5 Offers adequate background information about selected educational issue
____/5 Suggests a clear and achievable claim of policy in response to issue/problem

Score: ____/20

Argument and Evidentiary Support

____/6 Utilizes several logical points of support to build argument for reform
____/6 Clearly scaffolds argument and utilizes logical organization
____/6 Employs evidence from at least two academic sources; each source is reliable/credible
____/9 Utilizes sufficient evidence; effectively explains how evidence supports claims
____/9 Addresses major counterarguments and rebuts each effectively

Score: ____/36

Writing Style, Verbal Expression and Clarity of Language

____/2 Sentence structure and syntax are clear; expression aids in effectiveness argument
____/4 Vocabulary is sophisticated; uses an appropriate tone & distinctive style
____/4 Evidence is smoothly woven into argument

Score: ____/10

MLA Formatting and Paper Requirements

____/2 4.5 to 5.5 pages in length
____/2 Times New Roman, double spaced, 1 inch margins
____/5 Utilizes correct MLA in-text citation style/formatting
____/5 Includes a correctly formatted works cited page

Score: ____/14

TOTAL SCORE: ____/80
AP Language and Composition
Education Reform Brainstorming

Reflect on your educational experience here at RFH, especially with regards the following categories:

Curricula
Schedule
Rules and policies
Teaching and instruction
Sports and extra-curriculars
Administration
School culture

What does RFH do that you would recommend be implemented in other schools? What effectively helps students learn/create a meaningful educational experience?

If you were an administrator here at RFH, what would you change, modify, or do differently to improve students' educational experiences? Use the space below to list changes you might want to see enacted.
We will be spending five days conducting research on our selected education topics. As a requirement for this project, you must meet with me for a brief conversation concerning your research process. This meeting will give you the opportunity to ask any questions you might have and for me to check in with you to better understand the direction of your paper. These meetings should take place during one of the five periods in the library (first come, first serve).

Please come to the meeting with any and all questions you might have and be able to discuss your answers to the following:

- Summarize the general problem you are trying to solve.
- What are some of the possible solutions you’ve discovered?
- What sources have you consulted thus far? Which have been most helpful?
- What is your general plan from here?

You will receive 10 Classwork points for attending this meeting. Failure to meet with me by the end of the class period on Friday will result in a zero for this assignment. Please keep in mind, I will not hunt you down to arrange for this meeting – the onus is on you.
AP Eng. Language and Comp
Education Reform Paper
Topic Selection

Name: ____________________________

Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences. These will be collected and graded midway through our week of research.

1. Identify the topic you plan to investigate:

2. Explain why you selected that topic, why you are interested in it, and what problem it addresses:

3. On what level is this problem addressed (local district, county, state)?

4. Cite TWO sources (in MLA format) from your research that you have found useful thus far:
Name: ____________________________

AP Language and Composition
Educational Reform Tentative Thesis and Annotated Bibliography Rubric

Compose a tentative thesis. This should be a claim of policy that addresses both the problem and your proposed solution.

Thesis: Claim of Policy

_____/10

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Summary of Sources
- a brief summary of what this source says

Evaluation of Sources
- Assess this source and offer some criticisms of it
  - Does it seem like a reliable and current source? Why?
  - Is the research biased or objective?
  - Are the facts well documented?
- Who is the author? Is she qualified in this subject?
- Is this source scholarly, popular, some of both?

Reflection for Use of Source
- How does it fit into your research?

TOTAL: _____/35
Sample MLA Annotated Bibliography Entry:


Lamott’s book offers honest advice on the nature of a writing life, complete with its insecurities and failures. Taking a humorous approach to the realities of being a writer, the chapters in Lamott’s book are wry and anecdotal and offer advice on everything from plot development to jealousy, from perfectionism to struggling with one’s own internal critic. In the process, Lamott includes writing exercises designed to be both productive and fun.

Lamott offers sane advice for those struggling with the anxieties of writing, but her main project seems to be offering the reader a reality check regarding writing, publishing, and struggling with one’s own imperfect humanity in the process. Rather than a practical handbook to producing and/or publishing, this text is indispensable because of its honest perspective, its down-to-earth humor, and its encouraging approach.

Chapters in this text could easily be included in the curriculum for a writing class. Several of the chapters in Part 1 address the writing process and would serve to generate discussion on students’ own drafting and revising processes. Some of the writing exercises would also be appropriate for generating classroom writing exercises. Students should find Lamott’s style both engaging and enjoyable.

NOTE: In the sample annotation above, the writer includes three paragraphs: a summary, an evaluation of the text, and a reflection on its applicability to his/her own research, respectively. Since yours is being done using MLA rules, yours should be formatted in the same way.
AP Language and Composition
Research Outline

Directions: To organize your research and prepare to write your first draft, the next step of the process is to create an outline of your ideas. Consider how you will structure your argument and what evidence you will use to substantiate each claim. This outline requires only one complete sentence – your thesis. All other information can be in note form. This document must be typed.

Your outline should contain the following:

- A well-crafted, arguable thesis which presents an achievable claim of policy
- Thoughtful organization in structuring your argument
- Properly aligned evidence with accurate MLA citations
- References to at least FIVE reputable sources
- Proper MLA format (see reverse side)
- Meets length requirement (at least one page single-spaced)
Thesis: Because of the socioeconomic issues that arise as a result of students wearing their own clothes and the problem of gang affiliation, Rumson Fair Haven Regional High School should adopt a school uniform that students are to wear on a daily basis.

I. Kids wearing their own clothes causes social conflict in school
   A. Red and blue = gang colors
      1. Rise in gang violence over past 5 years (Peterson)
      2. 15 fights last year over issues of fashion (Sarles)
         a. 10 fights resulted in suspensions (Sarles)
         b. Could prevent these distractions to learning
   B. Creates pressure for kids to fit in
      1. Socioeconomic disparities highlighted through fashion (Eton)
      2. Adds to issues of cliques and bullying (Eton)

II. Students would benefit from compulsory uniforms
   A. Would cut down on issues already established
   B. Would be easier for kids to get off to school in the morning
      1. 75% of students report they spend at least 20 minutes deciding what to wear (Olszewski)
      2. Tardiness an issue facing RFH – 100 detentions given last year alone for lateness (Sarles)

III. Parents would appreciate policy
    A. Don’t need to purchase as many clothes (NY Times)
    B. Saves money from year to year (NY Times)
    C. “Every year my kids feel the pressure to fit in...” (Smith)

IV. Teachers/administrators benefit from this policy
    A. Eliminates the need for a dress code
       1. Teachers report discomfort reporting dress code issues (Olszewski)
       2. Issues of fairness solved
    B. Better attention paid in class

V. Concessions
   A. Infringes on freedom of expression
      1. Schools first responsibility is to instruct which this will allow more of
   B. Students generally oppose this idea – want to pick clothes
      1. Dress down days could be used as a reward
      2. Uniforms create a sense of school identity (Gates)