



Inclusive Access to a Diploma:
Reimagining Proficiency
for Students with Disabilities



English Language Arts / English Language Development

Analyzing & Writing Arguments

Performance Task | Teacher Document

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Table of Contents

Inclusive Access to a Diploma: Reimagining Proficiency for Students with Disabilities Initiative Overview	1
Overview of the Performance Task	3
Administering the Performance Task and Embedding Resources for Students	4
Key Vocabulary Terms	4
Strategies for Supporting Students	4
Potential Alternative Means of Expression	6
PART 1. Analyzing Arguments (A)	8
Task Alignment to Key Elements of Big Ideas and Standards	8
Big Idea: Analyzing and Writing Arguments—Using Knowledge of Rhetoric to Write Arguments and Analyze Arguments from Diverse Perspectives	9
Part 1. Teacher Directions	12
Part 1. Student Directions [Student Document, p. #]	13
Part 1. Sample Student Responses	17





PART 2. Writing Arguments (B)	22
Task Alignment to Key Elements of Big Ideas and Standards	22
Big Idea: Analyzing and Writing Arguments—Using Knowledge of Rhetoric to Write Arguments and Analyze Arguments from Diverse Perspectives	23
Part 2. Teacher Directions	27
Part 2. Sample Student Response	32
Appendix A—Mentor Text 1, Student Responses, Part 1	36
Appendix B—Mentor Text 2, Student Responses, Part 1	38
Mentor Text References	40





Inclusive Access to a Diploma: Reimagining Proficiency for Students with Disabilities Initiative Overview

Thank you for utilizing the materials developed for the *Inclusive Access to a Diploma: Reimagining Proficiency for Students with Disabilities* initiative. The strategy and materials developed for this performance task were created through a partnership between the California State Board of Education (SBE), the California Department of Education (CDE), and WestEd. The included performance task is one of many resources developed for this initiative. Senate Bill 101 provided funding to the development of these materials which focus strategically on providing students with disabilities options that would support their high school coursework completion. While the resources are aimed at supporting students with disabilities, LEA governing boards may consider adopting this initiative for all student demographics through Education Code 51225.3. Additionally, because this performance task is based on the general requirements for graduation, it should not be seen as a modification to coursework and is therefore able to be made available to all students with disabilities.¹

¹ This performance task may not be appropriate for some students with disabilities based on their needs. It is an IEP team decision whether students with disabilities are working toward coursework requirements tied to this initiative and congruent with a standard diploma that meets federal definitions, an alternate pathway to a diploma, or a certificate of completion.

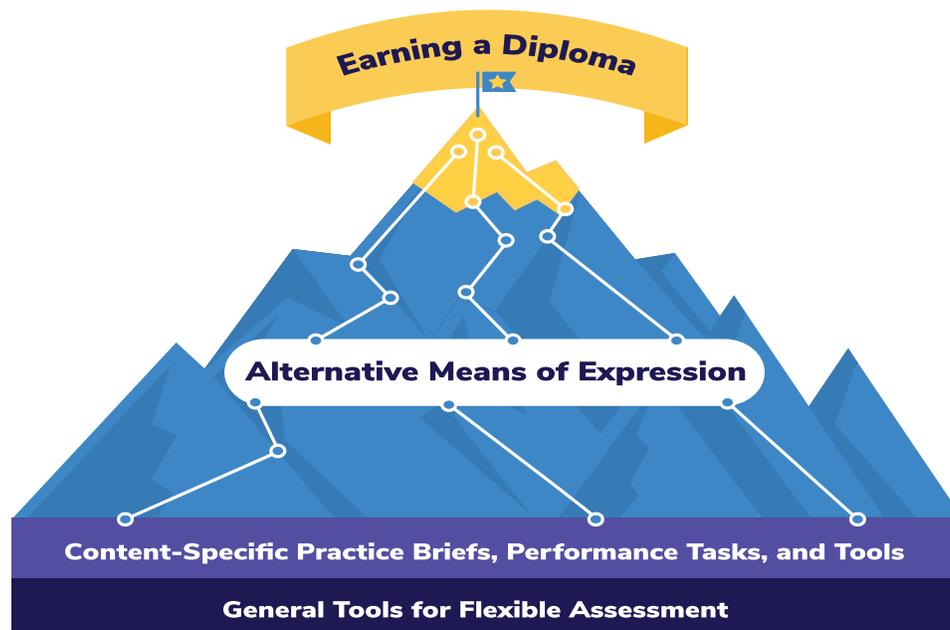




Multiple Routes to Proficiency

Figure 1 provides the conceptual framework for the *Inclusive Access to a Diploma: Reimagining Proficiency for Students with Disabilities* initiative. The graphic displays a mountain with the peak representing coursework requirements for earning a diploma, and the routes up the mountain representing different alternative means of expression made available to students for showing their understanding. The first bar at the foundation of the mountain represents the documents, materials, and resources—such as content-specific practice briefs, performance tasks, and assessment tools—serving as sample alternative means of expression. The second bar at the foundation of the mountain references the general tools, such as the Best Practice Guide, created through this initiative to support schools and districts in providing flexible assessment models.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Inclusive Access to a Diploma Initiative





Overview of the Performance Task

This performance task evaluates students' understanding of the following key Big Ideas within the grade nine English language arts (ELA) and English language development (ELD)-based course:

- **Analyzing and Writing Arguments:** Using knowledge of rhetoric to analyze arguments from diverse perspectives and write arguments.

The task targets specific overlapping components of the associated Big Idea and offers accessible strategies and examples of how students can demonstrate proficiency with the concepts. Various tools, mediums, and connections are provided for teachers to customize the task to the unique needs, cultures, interests, and abilities of their students to promote an inclusive and relevant educational experience. As explained in the Practice Brief, “Selecting and Scaffolding Complex Texts,” the instructional sequencing of texts and tasks is a way to maintain the rigor of the grade nine ELA and ELD standards while also bolstering students' motivation and success. In this performance task, the texts and tasks are divided into parts and sequenced specifically to foster engagement and build a coherent experience for the students. For example, in this performance task, students first analyze others' arguments in Part 1 and write their own argument in Part 2.

When preparing to administer this performance task, the teacher needs to distinguish between flexible and fixed elements based on what the Big Idea-aligned standards require to ensure students have multiple ways to demonstrate their knowledge without compromising the depth and rigor within the standards. Furthermore, when specifically focusing on students with disabilities, educators should always consult and embed supports defined within a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) to ensure that all required accommodations and supplementary aids are provided during the assessment. For more information on the standards supporting each Big Idea please refer to the *ELA/ELD Guidance Document: Big Ideas and Standards Alignment*.





Administering the Performance Task and Embedding Resources for Students

Each part of this task is broken into a series of items for administration. This section provides guidance on how to administer each part of the task while supporting students in demonstrating their understanding of the Big Ideas flexible ways. As you are planning to administer this performance task, review these recommendations as they offer associated key vocabulary, appropriate and inappropriate resources, and potential alternative means of expression.

Key Vocabulary Terms

The key vocabulary terms provided below are essential to the concepts within the Big Ideas, therefore unless otherwise noted, these vocabulary terms should have been pre-taught to students before completing these performance tasks. Ensure your students have encountered these terms before providing them with this performance task as they are not to be taught during the assessment:

- claim, counterclaim, evidence, reasoning, refute, fallacy, valid, theme, tone, analysis, rhetoric

Strategies for Supporting Students

The following sections describe appropriate and inappropriate resources to provide students as they complete a task.

Appropriate Resources

Appropriate resources maintain the rigor of the standards while also accommodating student difficulties such as confusion and anxiety or providing material resources specific accommodations identified in a student's IEP that the student could use to complete the task without compromising the standard or Big Idea:





- reading the item to the student
- answering clarifying questions related to the key vocabulary (for example, to clarify *theme*, a teacher could ask, “What idea seems to appear regularly as you read this text?” or for *evidence*, a teacher could say, “Where in the text can you find a sentence that supports your response to the question?”)
- helping the student to make sense of the item by asking questions such as, “What is this question asking you to figure out? What important information does the question give you? Are there any words you want to ask about or look up?”
- offering manipulatives and tools to support expressing knowledge and proficiency such as pictures or objects that represent a setting or a character in the text
- helping the student to access classroom or web-based resources that support a greater understanding of ELA/Literacy and ELD Big Idea terms
- providing multiple copies of the content
- providing a graphic organizer or sentence stems for students to take notes before any discussion
- providing a blank outline for students to plan their narrative prior to writing or a collaborative conversation
- providing a brainstorming template for students to jot down their ideas for writing or a collaborative conversation
- printing images or content on larger sheets
- allowing students to complete different parts or items over an extended period of time (versus completing an entire task or part in one sitting)
- providing multiple choices for where and how students can complete the performance task (for example, a quiet area in the classroom, at the student’s desk but with headphones projecting white noise, on a computer, or by hand)

Inappropriate Resources

This section describes resources that, when applied, modify the task by supporting the student in a facet of the task they need to do themselves to be proficient. These resources should be avoided as they may alter the rigor of the standards and negatively impact the student’s ability to independently demonstrate proficiency:





- explaining to students how to use the resources such as a notetaking template or an outline for their writing
- reteaching the ELA/Literacy and ELD Big Idea concepts such as how to analyze a theme and gather evidence to support the analysis
- retelling students how to complete the concepts being assessed
- providing students with sentence stems to use as a framework for their writing task
- translating materials for students into another language or allowing students to write their narrative or converse in a language other than English
- offering multiple comprehensive prompts for each question that lead the student to the answer

Potential Alternative Means of Expression

The following options provide various ways students might demonstrate their knowledge of the standards being assessed.²

When **analyzing literature** from diverse perspectives, students can use the following to demonstrate their thinking and learning:

- writing short responses with pen and paper or a word-processing application
- communicating their understanding verbally
- creating an infographic or other visualization
- creating a multimedia presentation

When **writing arguments**, students can utilize the following options for demonstrating their skills and knowledge:

- using text-to-speech or speech-to-text to complete the content
- handwriting with pen and paper

² As an important note, there will likely be other ways students can express their understanding beyond this list. For an option to be viable, it must allow for each element defined as necessary in a proficient response to be assessed.





- writing using a word processor that includes spelling and grammar tools
- dictating to a scribe³

In addition to the alternative means of expression listed above, educators should consult a student’s IEP to determine if any other accommodations or supplementary aids could be provided as appropriate resources in this performance task.

³ In this situation, it is important for the scribe to be careful to record **only** what the student explicitly communicates, rather than making interpretations and “filling in the blanks” based on what they think the student meant.





PART 1. Analyzing Arguments

Part 1 of this performance task outlines the following:

- associated standards that will be assessed
- assessment items
- rubrics that assess each item
- sample student responses

Teachers should familiarize themselves with the related standards, review the student task, explore each item’s rubric, and view the sample student responses to sufficiently prepare students to use this performance task to show proficiency in this task. The items for this part of the task pair with the items from Part 2 of this performance task. Part 1 and Part 2 together assess the entire *Analyzing and Writing Arguments: Using Knowledge of Rhetoric to Write Arguments and Analyze Arguments from Diverse Perspectives* Big Idea.

Task Alignment to Key Elements of Big Ideas and Standards

Clusters of content standards exist within the Big Ideas, allowing the Big Ideas to demonstrate the central concepts and key understandings of the course content. The assessment categories provide the teacher with the key concepts being evaluated in each Big Idea as well as the associated content standards centered within the Big Idea of this task and come from the California ELA/Literacy and ELD Framework and are aligned to California-adopted ELA and ELD state standards.





Big Idea: Analyzing and Writing Arguments—Using Knowledge of Rhetoric to Write Arguments and Analyze Arguments from Diverse Perspectives

Students will critically analyze diverse perspectives and craft well-reasoned arguments. The California ELA/Literacy and ELD Framework⁴ highlights the importance of these skills, noting that students must go beyond understanding texts to analyze their composition and craft their own convincing arguments (ELA/Literacy and ELD Framework, p. 672). Developing rhetorical knowledge enables students to understand the impact of authors' choices; grasp the role of audience, purpose, and context; and apply that rhetorical knowledge in their own writing (ELA/Literacy and ELD Framework, p. 689). Students understand the power of language and persuasive communication which enhances their world understanding and prepares them for effective participation in society. Note that in Part 1 of this performance task, students analyze arguments. In Part 2, students will write an argument.

Related Standards

Evidence Statement 1: Students identify and analyze an author's perspective or intent in a text and evaluate the rhetorical strategies used to promote it.

- **ELA.RI.9-10.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (*Item 1*)
- **ELA.RI.9-10.3** Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them. (*Item 2*)

⁴ The multiple references to the *California English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework* in this performance task are cited and abbreviated as (ELA/Literacy and ELD Framework, p. number).

California Department of Education (CDE). 2014. *English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*. Sacramento, CA: CDE Press.





- **ELA.RI.9-10.6** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose. (*Item 2*)
- **ELD.PI.9-10.6b.Br** (Reading/viewing closely) Explain inferences and conclusions drawn from close reading of grade-level texts and viewing of multimedia using a variety of verbs and adverbials (for example, creates the impression that, consequently). (*Item 1*)
- **ELD.PI.9-10.7.Br** (Evaluating language choices) Explain how successfully writers and speakers structure texts and use language (for example, specific word or phrasing choices) to persuade the reader (for example, by providing well-worded evidence to support claims or connecting points in an argument in specific ways) or create other specific effects, with light support. (*Item 2*)
- **ELD.PII.9-10.1.Br** (Understanding text structure) Apply analysis of the organizational structure of different text types (for example, how arguments are organized by establishing clear relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence) to comprehending texts and to writing clear and cohesive arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. (*Items 1 and 2*)

Evidence Statement 2: Students critically evaluate an argument in a text, including its claims and evidence, to determine the validity of its reasoning and identify any inaccuracies or logical fallacies.

- **ELA.RI.9-10.5** Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (for example, a section or chapter). (*Item 2*)
- **ELA.RI.9-10.8** Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning. (*Item 3*)





- **ELA.L.9-10.3** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening. *(Item 2)*
- **ELD.PI.9-10.7.Br** (Evaluating language choices) Explain how successfully writers and speakers structure texts and use language (for example, specific word or phrasing choices) to persuade the reader (for example, by providing well-worded evidence to support claims or connecting points in an argument in specific ways) or create other specific effects, with light support. *(Items 2 and 3)*
- **ELD.PII.9-10.1.Br** (Understanding text structure) Apply analysis of the organizational structure of different text types (for example, how arguments are organized by establishing clear relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence) to comprehending texts and to writing clear and cohesive arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. *(Items 1 and 2)*

Evidence Statement 4: Students apply their understanding of language to both comprehend text and effectively choose language for its intended impact in various contexts.⁵

- **ELA.L.9-10.3** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening. *(Item 2)*
- **ELD.PI.9-10.8.Br** (Analyzing language choices) Explain how a writer’s or speaker’s choice of a variety of different types of phrasing or words (for example, hyperbole, varying connotations, the cumulative impact of word choices) produces nuances and different effects on the audience. *(Items 2)*
- **ELD.PII.9-10.1.Br** (Understanding text structure) Apply analysis of the organizational structure of different text types (for example, how arguments are organized by establishing clear relationships among claims, counterclaims,

⁵ Evidence Statement 3 is assessed in Part 2 of this performance task and, therefore, is skipped in Part 1.





reasons, and evidence) to comprehending texts and to writing clear and cohesive arguments, informative/explanatory texts and narratives. *(Items 1 and 2)*

Part 1. Teacher Directions

Part 1 focuses on students being able to understand arguments. Much of what is being assessed centers on the students reading a text or set of texts that contain an argument and their ability to identify the main claims made in favor of the key issue in the text. As the student moves through the tasks, the student’s analysis must expand to include finding evidence to support how the author structures their argument to show their point of view. Part 1 concludes with the student evaluating the arguments and specific claims in the text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid, and the evidence is relevant and sufficient.

Task Entry Activity

To enhance student motivation and relevance, teachers will introduce argumentative topics through a piece of literature—such as a novel excerpt, short story, or poem—that features an issue with multiple perspectives that is of interest to students (for example, teen social media use, cell phone use in school, fur banning, social media banning, binge-watching). The selected piece of literature could be read aloud or together, and the teacher can facilitate a discussion around the issue with multiple perspectives. The arguments that students analyze in Part 1 of this performance task can align with the issue and multiple perspectives presented in the selected piece of literature.

Part 1. Student Directions [Student Document, p. 1]

In this part of the performance task, you will read and analyze an argument that your teacher will provide featuring a multisided issue of interest. The reading can be read aloud with a partner, read silently on your own, or during a facilitated discussion with your teachers and peers. Your responses to the following questions will be used to demonstrate your understanding and analysis.





Item Directions

After reading the teacher provided pieces of literature that feature multiple perspectives of an argument, you will identify the main claims made in favor of the key issue in the text and cite evidence to support the analysis. Answer the item tasks below about this argument.

Item 1 Task [Student Document, p. 2]

After reading the text, respond to the following question.

- What are the main claims being made in the text? Cite strong and thorough evidence from the text to support your analysis.

A Rubric for Assessing a Response to Item 1

The points below are derived from standards contained in the ELA/Literacy and ELD Framework, pp. 672–673, and 681–682, which outline the guidelines for grade nine ELA/Literacy and ELD courses. The following success criteria are used to assess proficiency in the performance task according to the related standards listed above for evidence statements 1 and 4 in the *Task Alignment to Key Elements of Big Ideas and Standards* section covering standards **ELA.RI.9-10.1**, **ELD.PI.9-10.6b.Br**, **ELD.PII.9-10.1.Br** of this performance task.





Rubric for Part 1, Item 1

Attempted	Approaching	Proficient
The student attempts to cite textual evidence but may unclearly or insufficiently support the analysis. The student uses limited verbs and adverbials to explain.	The student cites textual evidence that somewhat supports the analysis but may lack thoroughness or clarity in connecting to explicit statements and inferences. The student uses some verbs and adverbials to explain (for example, creates the impression that, consequently).	The student cites strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. The student effectively uses verbs and adverbials to explain (for example, creates the impression that, consequently).

Item 2 Task [Student Document, p. 2]

After reading the text, respond to the following questions.

- How does the author structure their argument to support their claim? How are the ideas and claims developed and refined throughout the text?
 - In your response, analyze the order of points, specific sentences, and paragraphs and how they are introduced and developed.
- What is the author’s point of view? How do they use rhetoric and language to advance this point of view?
 - In your response, analyze the choice of words, tone, style, and rhetorical strategies used.

A Rubric for Assessing a Response to Item 2

The points below are derived from standards contained in the ELA/Literacy and ELD Framework, pp. 672–673, and 681–682, which outline the guidelines for grade nine ELA/Literacy and ELD courses. The following success criteria are used to assess proficiency in the performance task according to the related standards listed above for evidence statements 1, 2, and 4 in the *Task Alignment to Key Elements of Big Ideas and Standards* section covering standards **ELA.RI.9-10.3**, **ELD.PII.9-10.1.Br**, **ELA.RI.9-**





10.6, ELD.PI.9-10.7.Br, ELD.PI.9-10.8, ELA.RI.9-10.5, ELD.PII.9-10.1.Br, ELA.L.9-10.3 of this performance task.

Rubric for Part 1, Item 2

Criteria	Attempted	Approaching	Proficient
Structure and Idea Development	The student attempts to describe how the author structures their argument and develops their ideas, but the explanation is unclear, inaccurate, or incomplete.	The student provides a general description of the author's argument structure and development of ideas but may miss some nuances or specific examples.	The student thoroughly analyzes how the author structures their argument and develops their ideas, including the order of points, specific sentences, and paragraphs, with detailed examples.
Author's Point of View and Rhetorical Strategies	The student identifies the author's point of view or purpose, but the analysis of rhetorical strategies is superficial or inaccurate, with limited supporting details.	The student identifies the author's point of view or purpose with some clarity and includes some relevant supporting details and specific techniques but lacks thoroughness.	The student clearly and accurately identifies the author's point of view or purpose, providing a thorough analysis with specific examples and explanations of rhetorical strategies.
Analyzing Language	The student attempts to analyze the author's choice of words, tone, and style but the analysis is unclear or lacks depth.	The student analyzes the author's choice of words, tone, and style but may not fully capture their impact on the argument.	The student thoroughly analyzes the author's choice of words, tone, and style, clearly explaining how these elements enhance the argument, with specific examples.





Item 3 Task [Student Document, p. 2]

After reading the text, respond to the following.

- Restate the argument the text is making.
- Evaluate the reasoning in the text to determine if the evidence is strong and relevant.
 - o In your response, identify and explain any untrue claims or faulty reasoning.

A Rubric for Assessing a Response to Item 3

The points below are derived from standards contained in the ELA/Literacy and ELD Framework, pp. 672–673 and 681–682, which outline the guidelines for grade nine ELA/Literacy and ELD courses. The following success criteria are used to assess proficiency in the performance task according to the related standards listed above for evidence statement 2 in the *Task Alignment to Key Elements of Big Ideas and Standards* section covering standards **ELA.RI.9-10.8** and **ELD.PI.9-10.7.Br**.

Rubric for Part 1, Item 3

Attempted	Approaching	Proficient
The student has a vague or unclear evaluation, limited identification of evidence, and little to no recognition of false statements or logical fallacies.	The student has some evaluation of reasoning, identifies some relevant evidence, and recognizes some false statements or logical fallacies but lacks depth.	The student has a clear and thorough evaluation of reasoning, identifies strong and relevant evidence, and accurately identifies false statements and logical fallacies.





Part 1. Sample Student Responses

The content below provides sample proficient responses from a student based on their reading analysis of opposing arguments about the multisided topic of book banning. The text that leads with “Student Voice” is an example of how a student might respond to each item. This section should only serve as a model—different students will arrive at solutions in different ways. Since it is important to provide students with more than a single perspective, the “Student Voice” section has a sample response for a text with the “pro” position and a sample response for a text with the “against” position. Lastly, because this Big Idea does not dictate the expression mediums students use, students can be given different communication mediums as viable alternative means of expression. The book-banning argument texts that served as the basis for the “Student Voice” responses were adapted from resources found at ProCon.org and can be found in **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**.

Item 1 Task [Student Document, p. 2]

After reading the text, respond to the following question.

- What are the main claims being made in the text? Cite strong and thorough evidence from the text to support your analysis.

Student Voice—Text 1: The main claims in favor of book banning are that it protects children from exposure to inappropriate material and respects parents’ rights to decide what their children read. Evidence includes: “Parents have the right to decide what material their children are exposed to and when” and “Book bans help guide young people toward appropriate content while still allowing the availability of such books through other means.” Additionally, the text states, “If books with inappropriate material are readily accessible, children might encounter content their parents disapprove of before parents even realize what their children are reading” (ProCon.org).

Student Voice—Text 2: The main claims against book banning are that it violates freedom of speech and access to information, stops people from seeing different





viewpoints, and limits intellectual and personal growth. Evidence includes: “Parents may control what their own children read, but they do not have the right to restrict what books are available to other people” (NCAC) and “Justice William Brennan wrote that removing books from library shelves could violate students’ First Amendment rights” (Brennan 1982).

Item 2 Task [Student Document, p. 2]

After reading the text, respond to the following questions.

- How does the author structure their argument to support their claim? How are the ideas and claims developed and refined throughout the text?
 - In your response, analyze the order of points, specific sentences, and paragraphs and how they are introduced and developed.
- What is the author’s point of view? How do they use rhetoric and language to advance this point of view?
 - In your response, analyze the choice of words, tone, style, and rhetorical strategies used.

Student Voice—Text 1: The author argues that banning books in schools and public libraries is necessary to protect children and respect parents’ rights. The argument is made through clear points: parents’ control over what their kids read, the harm of inappropriate content, and the idea that this isn’t true censorship. Each point is backed up with examples and evidence.

First, the author says parents should decide what their children read. This is supported by the example of the group Speak Up for Standards, which points out that explicit content is in school reading lists. Next, the author talks about the harm of inappropriate content like sex, violence, and drug use. Studies from the American Academy of Pediatrics show that early exposure to explicit content can lead to negative effects and early engagement in adult behaviors. The Top Ten Most Challenged Books in 2020, which include adult themes, show how common this content is in young adult literature.





The author also explains that removing certain books from libraries is about community standards, not censorship. Quotes from Peter Sprigg and Mark Hemingway argue that it's about guiding children to appropriate material without completely restricting access. This helps to show that book banning is not a total ban but a guided choice.

The author's view is clearly in favor of book banning to protect children and respect community values. The author uses strategies like quoting experts and providing evidence to support this view. The words "necessary measure" and "protect" show the importance of book banning. The tone is protective and reasonable, making book banning seem like a sensible action.

Overall, the author's word choice, tone, and style make the argument stronger by presenting it as balanced. The use of specific examples and evidence helps build a thorough analysis, making the argument convincing. The detailed explanation of how book banning protects children and respects parents' rights, along with the discussion of community standards, provides a clear and structured argument that supports the claim effectively.

Student Voice—Text 2: The author argues that book banning in schools and public libraries takes away the right to freedom of speech and access to information. The argument is structured through clear points: the importance of different perspectives, the educational value of challenged books, and the role of books in building empathy. Each point is backed up with examples and evidence.

First, the author says that book banning limits exposure to different perspectives, which are important for intellectual and personal growth. This point is supported by quotes from the National Coalition Against Censorship and the 1982 Supreme Court ruling on *Board of Education v. Pico*. Justice William Brennan's statement that removing books from libraries because of disagreement with their ideas violates students' First Amendment rights strengthens this claim.

Next, the author talks about the educational value of frequently challenged books. Examples like "The Great Gatsby," "The Catcher in the Rye," and "To Kill a





Mockingbird” show how these books are important for understanding literature and American history. The author mentions that 46 of the Radcliffe Publishing Group’s “Top 100 Novels of the 20th Century” are frequently challenged, showing the importance of these works in education.

The author refines the argument by discussing how books help build empathy and social–emotional development. Studies are cited to show that reading fiction improves social skills and understanding of others. For example, reading “Harry Potter” has been shown to improve attitudes about immigrants, homosexuals, and refugees. The author’s point of view is clearly against book banning, arguing that it limits important freedoms and hinders intellectual and emotional growth. The author uses strategies like citing experts and providing evidence to support this view. The words “infringes” and “limits” emphasize the negative impact of book banning. The tone is critical and persuasive, presenting book banning as harmful and unnecessary.

Overall, the author’s word choice, tone, and style enhance the argument by presenting it as balanced and well-supported. The use of specific examples and evidence helps build a thorough analysis, making the argument convincing. The detailed explanation of how book banning infringes on rights and limits important educational opportunities provides a clear and structured argument that supports the claim effectively.





Item 3 Task [Student Document, p. 2]

After reading the text, respond to the following.

- Restate the argument the text is making.
- Evaluate the reasoning in the text to determine if the evidence is strong and relevant.
 - In your response, identify and explain any untrue claims or faulty reasoning.

Student Voice—Text 1: The reasoning in the text is mostly valid, as it logically moves from the need for parental control to the types of inappropriate content and the impact of community values. The evidence is relevant, with citations from credible sources like the American Academy of Pediatrics and examples from book challenges. However, the argument could be stronger by addressing the full range of impacts of book banning on intellectual freedom. There are no false statements, but there might be a logical fallacy in assuming that removing books from libraries greatly prevents access. This point is mentioned in the text but could be explained more.

Student Voice—Text 2: The reasoning in the text is valid. It logically progresses from the need for intellectual freedom to the benefits of reading diverse literature. For example, studies showing the positive effects of reading books like the “Harry Potter” series on people’s attitudes toward different groups strengthen the argument. The evidence is relevant and sufficient, with citations from credible sources. Sources like the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) are used to argue that even books some people find “objectionable” can have educational value. There are no false statements or logical fallacies present.





PART 2. Writing Arguments

Part 2 of this performance task outlines the following:

- associated standards that will be assessed
- assessment items
- rubrics that assess each item
- sample student responses

Teachers should familiarize themselves with the related standards, review the student tasks, explore each item’s rubric, and view the sample student responses to sufficiently prepare students to use this performance task to show proficiency in this task. Part 1 and Part 2 together assess the entire *Analyzing and Writing Arguments: Using Knowledge of Rhetoric to Write Arguments and Analyze Arguments from Diverse Perspectives* Big Idea.

Task Alignment to Key Elements of Big Ideas and Standards

Clusters of content standards exist within the Big Ideas, allowing the Big Ideas to demonstrate the central concepts and key understandings of the course content. The assessment categories provide the teacher with the key concepts being evaluated in each Big Idea as well as the associated content standards centered within the Big Idea of this task and come from the California ELA/Literacy and ELD Framework and are aligned to California-adopted ELA and ELD state standards.

Big Idea: Analyzing and Writing Arguments—Using Knowledge of Rhetoric to Write Arguments and Analyze Arguments from Diverse Perspectives

Students will critically analyze diverse perspectives and craft well-reasoned arguments. The California ELA/Literacy and ELD Framework highlights the importance of these





skills, noting that students must go beyond understanding texts to analyze their composition and craft their own convincing arguments (ELA/Literacy and ELD Framework, p. 672). When students develop rhetorical knowledge, this enables them to understand the impact of authors' choices, grasp the role of audience, purpose, and context, and apply that rhetorical knowledge in their own writing. (ELA/Literacy and ELD Framework, p. 689). Students understand the power of language and persuasive communication which enhances their world understanding and prepares them for effective participation in society. Note that in Part 1 of this performance task, students analyzed arguments. In this part, Part 2, students will write an argument.

Related Standards

Evidence Statement 3: Students construct well-reasoned arguments in writing, incorporating clear claims, relevant evidence, and counterarguments while maintaining a formal style and structure that facilitates clear communication.⁶

- **ELA.W.9-10.1** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
(*Item 1*)
 - **ELA.W.9-10.1a** Introduce precise claims, distinguish the claims from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
 - **ELA.W.9-10.1b** Develop claims and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
 - **ELA.W.9-10.1c** Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claims and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claims and counterclaims.

⁶ Evidence statements 1 and 2 were fully assessed in Part 1 of this performance task and, therefore, are not the essential focus of this part of the task.





- **ELA.W.9-10.1d** Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- **ELA.W.9-10.1e** Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
- **ELA.L.9-10.1** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (*Item 1*)
 - **ELA.L.9-10.1a** Use parallel structure.
 - **ELA.L.9-10.1b** Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.
- **ELA.L.9-10.3** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening. (*Item 1*)
- **ELA.L.9-10.6** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (*Item 1*)
- **ELD.PI.9-10.4.Br** (Adapting language choices) Adjust language choices according to the task (for example, group presentation of research project), context, (for example, classroom, community), purpose (for example, to persuade, to provide arguments or counterarguments), and audience (for example, peers, teachers, college recruiter). (*Item 1*)
- **ELD.PI.9-10.11a.Br** (Justifying/arguing) Justify opinions or persuade others by making connections and distinctions between ideas and texts and articulating





sufficient, detailed, and relevant textual evidence or background knowledge, using appropriate register. *(Item 1)*

- **ELD.PII.9-10.1.Br** (Understanding text structure) Apply analysis of the organizational structure of different text types (for example, how arguments are organized by establishing clear relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence) to comprehending texts and to writing clear and cohesive arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. *(Item 1)*
- **ELD.PII.9-10.2a.Br** (Understanding cohesion) Apply knowledge of a variety of language resources for referring to make texts more cohesive (for example, using nominalization, paraphrasing, or summaries to reference or recap an idea or explanation provided earlier) to comprehending grade-level texts and to writing clear and cohesive grade-level texts for specific purposes and audiences. *(Item 1)*
- **ELD.PII.9-10.6.Br** (Connecting ideas) Combine clauses in a variety of ways to create compound and complex sentences that make connections between and link concrete and abstract ideas, for example, to make a concession (for example, *While both characters strive for success, they each take different approaches through which to reach their goals.*), or to establish cause (for example, *Women’s lives were changed forever after World War II as a result of joining the workforce*). *(Item 1)*

Evidence Statement 4: Students apply their understanding of language to both comprehend text and effectively choose language for its intended impact in various contexts.

- **ELA.L.9-10.3** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening. *(Item 1)*
- **ELA.L.9-10.1** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. *(Item 1)*





- **ELA.L.9-10.1a** Use parallel structure.
- **ELA.L.9-10.1b** Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.
- **ELA.L.9-10.6** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (*Item 1*)
- **ELD.PI.9-10.4** (Adapting language choices) Adjust language choices according to the task (for example, group presentation of a research project), context, (for example, classroom, community), purpose (for example, to persuade, to provide arguments or counterarguments), and audience (for example, peers, teachers, college recruiter). (*Item 1*)
- **ELD.PI.9-10.12a.Br** (Selecting language resources) Use a variety of grade-appropriate general academic words (for example, anticipate, transaction) and domain-specific words and phrases (for example, characterization, photosynthesis, society, quadratic functions), including persuasive language, accurately and appropriately when producing complex written and spoken texts. (*Item 1*)
- **ELD.PII.9-10.1.Br** (Understanding text structure) Apply analysis of the organizational structure of different text types (for example, how arguments are organized by establishing clear relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence) to comprehending texts and to writing clear and cohesive arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. (*Item 1*)
- **ELD.PII.9-10.2a.Br** (Understanding cohesion) Apply knowledge of a variety of language resources for referring to make texts more cohesive (for example, using nominalization, paraphrasing, or summaries to reference or recap an idea





or explanation provided earlier) to comprehending grade-level texts and to writing clear and cohesive grade-level texts for specific purposes and audiences.

(Item 1)

Part 2. Teacher Directions

In Part 2, students apply their research about the multisided topic of their choice and argue about a related position. Part 2 has one item which is the written argument. All the previous parts of the performance task have been leading up to this final application. In Part 1 of this performance task, students analyzed arguments. Now, in Part 2, students take a position about the topic they researched and write an argument based on the task guidelines. Because this item centers on the skill of writing, all alternative means of expression must also ultimately produce written text as well. For more on potential alternative means of expression for this item, refer to the “Potential Alternative Means of Expression” section of this document.

Part 2. Student Directions [Student Document, p. 3]

Part 2 has only one item. For this part of the performance task, you must take a position about a topic you have researched and write an argument based on the parameters of the task. Use content developed in the other parts of this performance task to aid you in your response.

Item 1 Directions

Using your research on your chosen topic, take a stance, and write a well-reasoned argumentative essay. Your essay should incorporate clear claims, relevant evidence, and counterarguments while maintaining a formal style and structure.

Item 1 Task [Student Document, p. 3]

Follow the guidelines below to write an argumentative essay.

- **Claim**





- o Clearly state a precise, knowledgeable claim.
- o Ensure your main point (thesis) is clear, compelling, and sets the direction for your argument.
- **Development**
 - o Develop claims and counterclaims thoroughly.
 - o Provide strong, relevant, and sufficient evidence to support your claims.
 - o Acknowledge and refute counterclaims effectively.
- **Organization** [Student Document, p. 4]
 - o Use clear and logical organization with appropriate transitions.
 - o Ensure your argument flows smoothly with a clear progression of ideas.
 - o Structure sections and paragraphs cohesively.
- **Style and Tone**
 - o Maintain a formal style and objective tone appropriate for the audience and purpose.
- **Grammar and Usage**
 - o Demonstrate command of standard English grammar and usage.
 - o Use parallel structure and a variety of phrases and clauses effectively.
 - o Accurately use general academic and domain-specific vocabulary.
- **Conclusion**
 - o Provide a strong and effective conclusion.
 - o Ensure your conclusion follows from and supports your argument.
 - o Synthesize the main points and reinforce your thesis.





A Rubric for Assessing a Response to Item 1

The points below are derived from standards contained in the ELA/Literacy and ELD Framework, pp. 685–686, which outline the guidelines for grade nine ELA/Literacy and ELD courses. The following success criteria are used to assess proficiency in the performance task according to the related standards listed above for evidence statements 3 and 4 in the *Task Alignment to Key Elements of Big Ideas and Standards* section covering standards **ELA.W.9-10.1a-e**, **ELA.L.9-10.1a-b**, **ELA.L.9-10.3**, **ELA.L.9-10.6**, **ELD.PI.9-10.4.Br** **ELD.PI.9-10.11a.Br**, **ELD.PII.9-10.1.Br**, **ELD.PII.9-10.2a.Br**, **ELD.PII.9-10.6.Br**, and **ELD.PI.9-10.12a.Br** of this performance task.

Rubric for Part 2, Item 1

Success criteria	Attempted	Approaching	Proficient
Claim and Thesis	The student states a claim, but it is unclear, vague, or not well-defined; and the thesis is weak or missing.	The student states a claim that is clear but may lack precision or depth, and the thesis is present but may not be as compelling or well-developed.	The student clearly states a precise, knowledgeable claim; and the thesis is compelling, clearly articulated, and sets the direction for the argument.
Development of Claims and Counterclaims	The student develops claims and counterclaims minimally or with irrelevant evidence; the evidence is insufficient or poorly organized; and counterclaims are acknowledged but not effectively refuted.	The student develops claims and counterclaims with some relevant evidence but may not be thorough; the evidence supports the argument but may lack depth or clarity; and the student acknowledges counterclaims, but the refutation may be weak or unclear.	The student develops claims and counterclaims thoroughly, using relevant and sufficient evidence; the evidence is logically organized and clearly supports the argument; and the student acknowledges and refutes the counterclaims effectively.





Success criteria	Attempted	Approaching	Proficient
Organization and Cohesion	The student uses weak or unclear organization; the argument lacks a clear progression of ideas; and sections and paragraphs are poorly structured and lack cohesion.	The student uses organization that is mostly logical but may lack clarity or smooth transitions; the argument is generally clear but may have some gaps in the progression of ideas; and sections and paragraphs are structured but may lack full cohesion.	The student uses clear and logical organization with appropriate transitions; the argument flows smoothly with a clear progression of ideas; and sections and paragraphs are well-structured and cohesive.
Style and Tone	The student fails to maintain a formal style or objective tone; uses language that is too informal or imprecise; and demonstrates limited control of conventions and vocabulary.	The student maintains a mostly formal style and tone but may have lapses; uses appropriate language but may lack variety or precision; and demonstrates some control of conventions and vocabulary.	The student maintains a formal style and objective tone appropriate for the audience and purpose; uses varied and precise language; and demonstrates control of conventions and vocabulary.
Language Usage	The student has a limited command of standard English grammar and usage; little to no use of parallel structure or varied phrases and clauses; and vocabulary use is often inaccurate or simplistic.	The student demonstrates some command of standard English grammar and usage; attempts parallel structure and varied phrases and clauses but with errors; and uses appropriate vocabulary with occasional inaccuracies.	The student demonstrates command of standard English grammar and usage; uses parallel structure and a variety of phrases and clauses effectively; and accurately uses general academic and domain-specific vocabulary.





Success criteria	Attempted	Approaching	Proficient
Conclusion	The student provides a weak or missing conclusion; and fails to effectively summarize or reinforce the main points and thesis.	The student provides a conclusion that follows from the argument but may be weak or underdeveloped and summarizes the main points but may not effectively reinforce the thesis.	The student provides a strong and effective conclusion that follows from and supports the argument, synthesizes the main points, and reinforces the thesis.

Part 2. Sample Student Response

The content below provides a sample of proficient responses from a student. The text that leads with “Student Voice” is an example of how a student might respond to each item. This section should only serve as a model—different students will arrive at solutions in different ways.

Item 1 Task [Student Document, p. 3]

Follow the guidelines below to write an argumentative essay.

- **Claim**
 - o Clearly state a precise, knowledgeable claim.
 - o Ensure your main point (thesis) is clear, compelling, and sets the direction for your argument.
- **Development**
 - o Develop claims and counterclaims thoroughly.
 - o Provide strong, relevant, and sufficient evidence to support your claims.
 - o Acknowledge and refute counterclaims effectively.
- **Organization**





- o Use clear and logical organization with appropriate transitions.
- o Ensure your argument flows smoothly with a clear progression of ideas.
- o Structure sections and paragraphs cohesively.
- **Style and Tone**
 - o Maintain a formal style and objective tone appropriate for the audience and purpose.
- **Grammar and Usage**
 - o Demonstrate command of standard English grammar and usage.
 - o Use parallel structure and a variety of phrases and clauses effectively.
 - o Accurately use general academic and domain-specific vocabulary.
- **Conclusion**
 - o Provide a strong and effective conclusion.
 - o Ensure your conclusion follows from and supports your argument.
 - o Synthesize the main points and reinforce your thesis.

Student Voice: We Must Improve Pedestrian Safety in Our City

In our neighborhood, driving appears to be the default mode of transportation even for short-distance trips. This preference raises important questions about the design of our community and its impact on pedestrian safety. My research aimed to uncover the reasons behind this trend and explore how our neighborhood could be made more pedestrian friendly. Using sources such as “Want To Live In A Walkable, Bikeable City? Follow These Tips” from *LAist* and the “Walk Audit Tool Kit” from AARP, I discovered that convenience, appeal, and safety significantly influence people’s reliance on cars. Therefore, I argue that our city must enhance pedestrian safety by adding barriers, such as hedges, between sidewalks and traffic.





To begin with, convenience plays a crucial role in people's decision to drive rather than walk. Driving is often seen as more practical when individuals need to transport items, stop at multiple locations, or travel in groups. Although these conveniences are valid, they should not overshadow the need for safer walking conditions. By creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment, we can encourage walking for short trips, reducing traffic congestion, and promoting a healthier lifestyle.

Furthermore, the appeal of driving over walking is deeply ingrained in our societal norms. Many people find comfort in the security of their vehicles, particularly when walking feels unsafe or unusual. In areas where pedestrian activity is rare, the sight of empty sidewalks flanked by busy roads can be intimidating. Enhancing the visual and physical appeal of walking routes through the addition of green barriers can make walking a more attractive option. These barriers not only beautify the environment but also provide a sense of safety and separation from vehicular traffic (AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit).

Safety, perhaps the most critical factor, has a substantial impact on walking habits. Alarming statistics reveal that pedestrian deaths increased by 77 percent from 2010 to 2021, largely due to the rise of heavier and taller vehicles like SUVs and the prevalence of large, multi-lane intersections (*LAist*, 2023). These factors create hazardous conditions for pedestrians, especially at intersections where visibility is limited and crossing times are short for some people. Implementing barriers such as hedges can protect pedestrians by providing a buffer zone between sidewalks and traffic. Additionally, features like pedestrian islands can break up crossing distances and allow individuals to navigate one direction of traffic at a time, significantly enhancing safety (AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit).

Critics might argue that implementing such measures is costly and could disrupt traffic flow. However, the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks. Improved pedestrian infrastructure can lead to reduced traffic congestion, lower accident rates, and a healthier population. Increased walkability can also reduce pollution, save individuals time and money, and boost the local economy, as highlighted by





resources on the America Walks website (America Walks). Cities across California and organizations like Walk America are already demonstrating the success of such initiatives. By prioritizing pedestrian safety, we can create a more inclusive and vibrant community.

In conclusion, our city must take decisive action to improve pedestrian safety by adding barriers such as hedges between sidewalks and traffic. This measure addresses the issues of convenience, appeal, and safety that currently deter people from walking. By making these changes, we can encourage more residents to opt for walking over driving, fostering a safer, healthier, and more connected community. It is time for our city to prioritize pedestrians and transform our neighborhood into a model of walkability and safety.





Appendix A—Mentor Text 1, Student Responses, Part 1

Pro: Book Banning Protects Children and Society

Book banning in schools and public libraries is a necessary measure to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material and respect parents' rights to decide what their children read. Book bans help guide young people toward appropriate content while still allowing the availability of such books through other means.⁷

Parents have the right to decide what material their children are exposed to and when. Having books with adult topics available in libraries limits parents' ability to control their children's reading material. For instance, Speak Up for Standards, a group seeking age-appropriate reading materials for students in Dallas, TX, pointed out that "Literary works containing explicit [scenes, as well as] vulgar and obscene language" were on the approved reading list for grades seven through twelve (ProCon.org). If books with inappropriate material are readily accessible, children might encounter content their parents disapprove of before parents even realize what their children are reading. As writer Macey France stated, "Opting your child out of reading [a certain] book doesn't protect him or her. They are still surrounded by the other students who are going to be saturated with this book" (ProCon.org). According to a study by the American Academy of Pediatrics, early exposure to explicit content can influence the psychological development of children, often leading to premature engagement in adult behaviors (AAP 2016).

Children should not be exposed to sex, violence, drug use, or other inappropriate topics in school or public libraries. The young adult genre often includes adult themes that young people are not yet ready to handle. The American Academy of Pediatrics found that exposure to violence in media can make kids act aggressively and desensitize them to violence (AAP 2016). As Kim Heinecke, a mother of four, emphasized, "It is not a matter of 'sheltering' kids. It is a matter of guiding them toward what is best. We are the adults. It is our job to protect them—no matter how unpopular that may seem" (White 2016).

⁷ Adapted from [ProCon.org](https://www.procon.org).





Keeping books with inappropriate content out of libraries protects kids but does not prevent people from reading those books or authors from writing them. Peter Sprigg of the Family Research Council noted that removing certain books from libraries is about showing discretion and respecting community values, without stopping anyone from obtaining those books elsewhere. He stated, “It’s an exaggeration to refer to this as book banning. There is nothing preventing books from being written or sold, nothing to prevent parents from buying it or children from reading it” (Rohrer 2010). Mark Hemingway, a writer and school board member, argued that deciding not to use public funds to disseminate certain books is a responsible choice rather than censorship, similar to not offering highly controversial books like “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” in public libraries (Hemingway 2014). The American Library Association notes that book challenges are often about community standards and parental guidance rather than outright censorship (ALA 2021).

Critics of book banning argue that it infringes on freedom of speech and access to information, preventing individuals from being exposed to diverse perspectives and ideas essential for intellectual and personal growth. They believe that book banning leads to a homogenized society where controversial or challenging viewpoints are suppressed. However, this perspective overlooks the primary concern of protecting young readers from inappropriate content and respecting community values. Moreover, the availability of these books through other channels ensures that access is not entirely restricted.

In conclusion, book banning in schools and public libraries is a necessary and responsible measure to protect children from inappropriate content and uphold community values. It respects parents’ rights to guide their children’s reading while ensuring that young people are exposed to age-appropriate material. Removing certain books from libraries does not prevent access to these books but ensures that public resources are used responsibly.





Appendix B—Mentor Text 2, Student Responses, Part 1

Con: Book Banning Infringes on Freedom of Speech and Access to Information

Book banning in schools and public libraries infringes on the fundamental rights of freedom of speech and access to information. It prevents individuals from being exposed to diverse perspectives and ideas, which are essential for intellectual and personal growth. Rather than protecting children, book bans limit their understanding of the world and their place in it.⁸

Parents may control what their own children read, but they do not have the right to restrict what books are available to other people. Parents who object to specific books can opt their children out of assignments without infringing on the rights of others. The National Coalition Against Censorship (2016) explains, “Even books or materials that many find ‘objectionable’ may have educational value, and the decision about what to use in the classroom should be based on professional judgments and standards, not individual preferences.” In the 1982 Supreme Court ruling on *Board of Education v. Pico*, Justice William Brennan wrote that removing books from library shelves could violate students’ First Amendment rights, adding, “Local school boards may not remove books from school libraries simply because they dislike the ideas contained in those books” (U.S. Supreme Court 1982).

Many frequently challenged books help people gain a better understanding of the world and their place in it. Books like *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, and *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee have long been considered essential reading for understanding literature and American history, yet they are frequently challenged. Banning these books would deprive students of essential cultural and historical knowledge, as well as differing points of view. In fact, 46 of the Radcliffe Publishing Group’s “Top 100 Novels of the 20th Century” are frequently challenged, highlighting the importance of these works in education.

⁸ Adapted from [ProCon.org](https://www.procon.org).





Books serve as portals to different life experiences, fostering empathy and social–emotional development. One study found that reading J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series, which is frequently challenged for religious concerns about witchcraft, “improved attitudes” about immigrants, homosexuals, and refugees (Vezzali et al. 2014). Another study discovered that reading narrative fiction helps readers understand their peers and raises social abilities (Kidd et al. 2013). A study published in *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* found that people who read a story about a Muslim woman were less likely to make broad judgments based on race (Johnson, Huffman, and Jasper 2014).

Proponents of book banning argue that it is necessary to protect children from harmful content and uphold community values. They believe that certain books contain inappropriate material that can negatively influence young readers. However, this argument fails to recognize that shielding children from diverse perspectives can hinder their intellectual and emotional development. Instead of banning books, providing guidance and open discussions about challenging content can better prepare children for the complexities of the world.

In conclusion, book banning in schools and public libraries infringes on freedom of speech and access to information, limiting exposure to diverse perspectives and essential knowledge. Books play a crucial role in fostering empathy, intellectual growth, and social understanding. Rather than imposing restrictions, we should encourage open dialogue and critical thinking to help young people navigate complex issues and become informed, engaged citizens.





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