**Subject area/course**: English/Language Arts

**Grade level/band**: 10

**Task source**: Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE); Inquiry by Design

**The DREAM Act and College Access**

**TEACHER'S GUIDE**

1. **Task overview**:

This task teaches the basics of argument and requires students to demonstrate their ability to read a text critically as well as to write an evidence-based essay. Before students complete the task, they will participate in scaffolding and instructional activities. These include developing background knowledge in argument-based writing as well as finding information about the topic of the assessment.

1. **Aligned standards:**
2. **Primary Common Core State Standards**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy-11-12 Write argument to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.BDevelop claims and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each, while pointing out of the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values and biases.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.CUse words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.D Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.EProvide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.4Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/11-12/7/) Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

1. **Critical abilities**

Analysis of Information**:** Integrate and synthesize multiple sources of information (e.g., texts, experiments, simulations) presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to address a question, make informed decisions, understand a process, phenomenon, or concept, and solve problems while evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

Communication in Many Forms**:** Use oral and written communication skills to learn, evaluate, and express ideas for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, and rewriting while considering the audience.

1. **Time/schedule requirements:**

This task will take approximately one week to complete. The following schedule is an estimate of the number of school days required for students to complete this task. Time requirements will vary based on grade level, schedule constraints, class size, class length, and academic readiness.

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| Day 1: Introduction | These materials and activities are designed to introduce the topic of argument, build common background knowledge, and share expectations for task completion with the students. |
| Day 2: Assessment of Reading Comprehension | This session is devoted to an assessment of reading comprehension. Students read one or more non-fiction texts, engage in activities that help them to analyze those texts, and then write a short (2 paragraphs) constructed response to an open-ended reading prompt. This reading task is also designed to develop students’ understanding of the topic so that they can take an informed position when they write their essay. |
| Day 3: Building Understanding of the Topic | Students read and analyze two additional texts that will serve as the basis for their response to the writing prompt during sessions 4 and 5. |
| Days 4 and 5: Argument-based Essay Writing | These two sessions focus on students writing a short (500 word) argument-based essay on the topic introduced on day 2 and developed in sessions 2 and 3. |

1. **Materials/resources:**

* Smart board/chart paper
* Documents:
  + Item A. Text 1 and Graphic Organizer
  + Item B. Text 2: Summary of the Federal DREAM Act
  + Item C. Text 3
  + Item D. Text 4
  + Item E. Graphic Organizer 2
  + Item F. Argument Checklist

1. **Prior knowledge:**

None listed.

1. **Connection to curriculum:**

None listed.

1. **Teacher instructions:**

**Day 1**

The purpose of Day 1 is to:

* Create a level playing field with respect to understanding the concept of argument.
* Provide students with “the big picture” of the task activities.
* Begin sharing the ingredients of an effective argument through asking students to discuss both sides of the question of whether one ought to go to college.

*Activity 1*

Introduce Students to Evidence-based Argument

* Students may need help building an understanding of the concept of an argument as it is used here: taking a position on an important issue, and backing it up with evidence and reasoning. Some students may need help making the distinction between this meaning of argument and the everyday term for a noisy disagreement with two sides stubbornly holding on to their original positions.
* To build this understanding, ask students to work in pairs to discuss the following:
* There are two kinds of argument:
  + A noisy disagreement with two (or more) sides stubbornly holding on to their original positions.
  + An exchange on an important issue, where each speaker/writer uses evidence and reasoning to convince the other to consider a different point of view, choice or action.
* What happens in these two different kinds of exchanges?
  + What strategies do people use in the first case?
  + What strategies do people use in the second case?
* If you can get your way in the first kind of argument, why does the second kind of argument matter (e.g., in court cases, in making significant choices for government, etc.)?

Use a smart board or chart paper and note students’ ideas and the key differences between these two definitions of the term.

Help students develop an understanding of the work they will be doing over the next several days:

* They will be discussing an issue, from two different perspectives (pro and con) and will consider what they learn from both sides.
* They will be reading and evaluating what supporters and opponents on an issue have to say.
* They will write an argument-based essay in which they:
  + Take a clear position.
  + Present their supporting evidence.
  + Evaluate what people with other positions (counterclaims) argue.
  + Draw a conclusion about the issue and the actions that should be taken.

Review key vocabulary for argument writing:

* Review the important parts of an evidence-based argument and explain that these are some of the criteria that their essays will be scored on:
  + Introducing the issue and its importance.
  + Taking a clear position on the issue.
  + Stating claims in defense of that position and backed by evidence drawn from texts and other sources.
  + Considering the counterclaims and the evidence behind them.
  + Making balanced evaluation of the evidence on both sides.
  + Presenting a conclusion that summarizes the argument and the understandings, questions, or decisions that come from considering the issues, positions, and evidence.

*Activity 2*

Use the lead-in text (Text 1 from Item A) to introduce students to the issues that young people face in deciding whether or not they should invest the time, effort, and money that it takes to go to college. This activity uses an oral discussion as a way to familiarize students with taking a position, using evidence, and evaluating fairly what others have to say.

With students, read Text 1 (“Whether to go to college”) aloud and complete the graphic organizer as they discuss the issues raised by the scenario.

* Students read a summary of a situation, included in Text 1, involving a high school student who is deciding if he will go to college.
* Students divide into two groups. One group takes the perspective of the student. The other takes the perspective of a teacher who is trying to convince him to think about going to college.
* Each group develops and presents its argument (position, evidence, and conclusion).
* The two groups question one another.
* Each group comes to a final decision about how to handle the incident.
* Throughout the process students keep track of their discussion and thinking using Graphic Organizer 1 (Item A).

**Day 2**

This session is devoted to an assessment of reading comprehension. Students read a text (Item B), engage in activities that help them to analyze those texts, and then write a short constructed response to an open-ended reading prompt. This reading task is also designed to develop students’ understanding of the topic so that they can take an informed position when they write their essay.

*Prompt:*

Read the summary of the Federal DREAM Act (Item B, Text 2) carefully. Use the notes column to plan your response. Then write a short (about 250 words) response in which you:

* Summarize:
  + What does a young person have to do in order to qualify for the benefits of the DREAM Act? (Cite specific points from the text.)
  + What does a young person get if s/he meets the requirements?
* Evaluate the DREAM Act:
  + Some critics of this version of the DREAM Act argue that it sets unreasonable expectations for undocumented students.In your view, how balanced and fair are the expectations and rewards in the DREAM Act? (Cite specific points to support your position.)

**Day 3**

The purpose of Day 3 is to:

* Students read and analyze two additional texts (Items C and D) that serve as the basis for their response to the writing prompt during Days 4 and 5.

Teachers provide students with the following background to what they will be reading:

Background on the DREAM Act

When families enter the U.S. illegally and bring their children, those children are also without the documents they need to be citizens. Without those documents, children cannot have licenses, sign contracts, vote, or become eligible for a number of the benefits of public colleges and universities.

The DREAM Act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) is a legislative proposal first introduced in the Senate on August 1, 2001 and most recently reintroduced there on May 11, 2011. This bill is designed to provide residency and eventually citizenship to these undocumented children.

Given more than a decade of disagreements at the national level over the DREAM Act, some states are developing their own versions of the bill.

When states vote to pass the DREAM Act, legislators have to decide a number of tough issues, including:

* Can undocumented students qualify for the much lower rates of in-state tuition like other resident students? In-state rates can be as little as a third of out- of-state tuition. This makes a huge difference in who can afford college. The difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition is paid for by state or local tax income.
* Can they qualify for state and federal financial aid? Without financial aid few students can afford college.
* What kinds of grades do students have to maintain in order to continue to stay in the program?

Students read and analyze two additional texts in which these issues are discussed:

1. An interview with a strong proponent of the educational portions of the DREAM Act (Item C, Text 3)
2. A set of critical comments from a U. S. senator and voters in states where the educational provisions of the DREAM Act have been passed (Item D, Text 4)

Students mark up these texts in order to understand and evaluate the arguments on both sides and organize their thoughts using a graphic organizer (Item E).

**Days 4 & 5**

These two days focus on students writing a short (500 word) argument-based essay on the topic introduced on Day 1 and developed on Days 2 and 3.

*Prompt:*

You have read about the debate over the federal DREAM Act. Your state legislature is drafting its own version of the DREAM Act. So now it is time for you to enter the debate.

Write a multi-paragraph essay (about 500 words) in which you advise the legislature on whether they should pass a version of the DREAM Act.

No matter what position you take, it is important to:

* Introduce the issue and its importance
* State your position: Should the legislature pass a version of the DREAM Act?
  + If so, why? What should undocumented young people be asked to do? What rights and opportunities should they be earning?
  + If not, why not? What is unfair or wrong with the legislation?
* Back up your position with clear claims and evidence.
* Consider why people might disagree with you (make counterclaims) and defend your position against their objections.
* Conclude by summarizing your position and what actions should be taken.

Student may use the Argument Checklist (Item F) to guide their writing or for peer review.

1. **Student support:**

When implementing the performance tasks with English Language Learners (ELLs) and Students with Disabilities (SWD), teachers should consider the following instructional supports:

*Vocabulary Building*

* Provide student-friendly definitions, examples, synonyms, antonyms, multiple meanings, roots, affixes, pictures, diagrams, and realia prior to reading.
* Advise ELLs when words are cognates as cognate recognition is not always automatic when students are not proficient in both languages.
* Teach academic language and create purposeful opportunities for students to practice using the words and phrases.
* Provide visual representations prior to teaching and reading of content area material.
* Explicitly teach word origins, roots, prefixes, and suffixes.

*Reading Comprehension*

* Elicit prior knowledge and build background knowledge to access content in reading.
* Have students complete graphic organizers constructed with prompts that guide them to paraphrase what they are reading and cite supporting evidence.
* Construct prompts so that students are able to make the connection between what they are reading and how the content can be used in developing their writing response(s).
* Utilize various ways of students being able to hear text as they read it including software and other technology- based options that are available for text-to-speech purposes.

*Writing*

* Provide writing frames and sentence starters.
* Explicitly teach the academic language associated with the writing genre being taught.
* Note that cultural differences in writing discourse may influence ELLs’ approaches to writing in English. For example, the order of ideas and arguments within an argument essay in English may be significantly different than that which is in the ELLs’ native languages. This can be taken into account when scaffolding writing instruction and providing feedback to student writing.
* Present alternate ways of communicating ideas other than traditional writing which can include dictating, using speech-to-text software, and allowing a student with grapho-motor, fine motor, and/or visual perception challenges to use a computer instead of writing the essay by hand.
* Explicitly teach how to use information from a graphic organizer to create an essay.

*Native Language Support for ELLs:*The strategic use of the native language can be incorporated into English instruction as a support structure to clarify, build prior knowledge, extend comprehension, and bridge prior learning and experiences. This can be integrated into a teacher’s instructional practice through the following: technology, human resources (e.g., paraprofessionals, peers, and parents), native language materials, and flexible grouping.

1. **Extensions or variations:**

* Teachers should consider modifying or eliminating scaffolding steps if a class is strong enough. For example, students may construct their own graphic organizers.
* Teachers may want to eliminate Text 1 or substitute a different text to teach argument, if the class is likely to confuse the “college or not?” argument with the DREAM Act argument.
* The final writing task could be assigned as a letter of opinion to a state legislator or to the local newspaper supporting the writer’s opinion. In this case, depending on the class level, the instructor may ask students to research the correct person and correct format for the letter. Additional time, including peer review, may be included.
* Students may be asked to research additional information on their own. Such information might include one or more of the following:
  + Additional informational articles
  + Articles containing charts, graphs, or other graphic representations of data
  + Audio source (e.g., a broadcast interview with someone knowledgably on the topic)

1. **Scoring:**

Student work can be scored using the Reading Information/Writing Argument: Analytic Rubric (9-10).