

# When is it right to “Take a Stand”? HONORS

This quarter you have read examples of people who took a stand for or against something they thought was worth fighting for because it mattered to them. In this assignment, you will attempt to argue for something you think is worth fighting for because it matters to you.

Standards:

CCSS.W.8.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to support the argument.
- e. Establish and maintain a formal style. f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

CCSS.W.8.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.W.8.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

CCSS.W.8.8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

Task: Prompt: You will be writing a formal, academic, argument letter to the LHMS PTSO or the WestAda School Board where you advocate for a want or a need with evidence as to why you would benefit from receiving that item or activity. You will need to follow the provided letter format. You must include an introductory statement, your claim, the potential counterclaims, a rebuttal for each of the counterclaims, a researched quote supporting your request, and a concluding statement.

Purpose: You will be writing an argument letter. What is an argument letter? “Arguments are used for many purposes—to change the reader’s point of view, to bring about some action on the reader’s part, or to ask the reader to accept the writer’s explanation or evaluation of a concept, issue, or problem. An argument is a reasoned, logical way of demonstrating that the writer’s position, belief, or conclusion is valid.” (CCSS Appendix A, p. 23)

Audience: Your English teacher will be reading and grading your argument letter based on the provided rubric. **READ THE RUBRIC AND FOLLOW IT CAREFULLY.** You may choose to present this to the LHMS PTSO or the WestAda School Board as well so ensure it serves both purposes.

Restrictions: Your request **MUST BE SCHOOL APPROPRIATE.**

Examples: A field trip somewhere, a new piece of technology, a class pet, different seating, other food options, outside items, a rule change, different school year start and end dates, etc.

Extra Details and Directions:

- Your letter should be one full page in length, following the letter format guideline provided.
- Your letter should include the foundations of good writing, as described in the rubric.
- Argue your point using data (research) that supports your request, also include the counterclaim and how you would disprove the opposing side's argument.
- All researched material must be cited and follow MLA standards for internal citations and a works cited page. Review your notes and be sure to use the checklist for editing details.
- Watch your use of pronouns and keep them consistent. Select first person or third person point of view pronouns. Do not switch into second person.
- Be sure to follow the writing process: plan, draft, revise, edit, and clean copy.

## HONORS LETTER PLANNING

Item Brainstorming:

What have you always wanted, or recently want from the LHMS PTSO or the WestAda School Board?

List some reasons WHY they should provide that for you (maybe how you could help them).

What might they say against your argument? (Counterclaim).

Library Research Planning:

You will need to use researched evidence to support your choice, but you can't just google your request and hope for the best. You need to find useful search terms.

Example: I want to ask the WestAda School Board for more laptops at LHMS because they would provide me with a better education as I would have more consistent access to online curriculum. To support my argument, I would research the cost of this process, the benefit of "one-to-one" technology, and maybe the research behind how having a laptop provided by the school fosters responsibility in students.

Key Search Terms (what you will put in the search box) for your request:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

21 Feb. 2020  
Your First and Last Name  
11625 W. LaGrange  
Boise, ID 83709

Dear LHMS PTSO or WestAda School Board,

The first paragraph should contain some kind of greeting and acknowledgement of receipt of the letter. This section is used to state the main point of the letter. Begin with a friendly opening; then quickly transition into the purpose of your letter (what you want the LHMS PTSO or the WestAda School Board to provide for you). This should be just a couple of sentences, but do not go into detail until the next paragraph.

The next paragraph (or paragraphs) expresses the purpose of your letter. Your letter might be full of several paragraphs of the benefits of this request or the ways the item/event may help you and your education. You might thank the LHMS PTSO or the WestAda School Board for considering this request. You might discuss how grateful you will be. Be respectful in your request and always ask in a nice, "may I please" voice, not an, "I deserve this" voice.

This paragraph will include all of the counterclaims you believe the PTSO or the School Board may come up with to shoot down your request. EACH counterclaim should be addressed with a rebuttal where you provide the reasons they should still grant your request. At least one rebuttal needs evidence from your research that PROVES (with a quote and citation) that your request is necessary.

The last paragraph re-states the request of your letter and thanks the reader. It is one or two sentences. As this is an assignment for your English teacher, it should be as formal/professional as possible. Remember: your letter must be at least one full page in length and sincerity is part of the final grade. You should have a neatly, hand-written or typed letter that is perfect, with no stray marks. You also need one inch margins, double-spacing between paragraphs, and the correct data outlined in this block-format example, including: the date, your name & address, the recipient's name with the correct title, and your name typed before printing, and signed after printing.

Sincerely,

*Sign Your First & Last Name* (with a blue or black pen in cursive after printing)

Hit "Enter" three times, then type your First & Last Name

## Argument Writing Rubric Grade 8

Argument	Advanced 4 90-100	Proficient 3 70-89	Basic 2 60-69	Below Basic 1 50-59
<p><b>Ideas/Purpose:</b> The argument is focused and clearly states the claim(s).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Claim(s) is clearly stated and distinguished from alternate or opposing claims</li> <li>-Claim(s) is purposefully focused and consistent</li> <li>-Complex claims are well-developed</li> <li>-Alternate or opposing claims are thoroughly addressed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Claim(s) is clearly stated and distinguished from alternate or opposing claims</li> <li>-Claim(s) is focused and consistent</li> <li>-Alternate or opposing claims are addressed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Claim(s) is sometimes clear, focused or consistent</li> <li>-Alternate or opposing claims are sometimes addressed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Claim(s) is unclear, unfocused, inconsistent, or missing</li> <li>-Alternate or opposing claims are not addressed or missing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organization:</b> The writing has a clear and effective organizational structure creating unity and completeness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claims, reasons, and evidence are organized into clear categories:</li> <li>-Skillful and varied use of transitions</li> <li>-Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end</li> <li>-Purposeful introduction and conclusion</li> <li>-Strong connections among ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claims, reasons, and evidence are organized into clear categories:</li> <li>-Appropriate use of transitions with some variety</li> <li>-Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end</li> <li>-Evident introduction and conclusion</li> <li>-Adequate connections among ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claims, reasons, and evidence are inconsistently organized into categories:</li> <li>-Some use of transitions</li> <li>-Inadequate progression of ideas from beginning to end</li> <li>-Ineffective introduction and conclusion</li> <li>-Weak connections among ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claims, reasons, and evidence are inconsistently organized into categories:</li> <li>-Little or no use of transitions</li> <li>-Confusing progression of ideas</li> <li>-Missing introduction and/or conclusion</li> <li>-No connections among ideas</li> </ul>
<p><b>Language and Vocabulary:</b> The writing uses precise and topic-specific language and maintains a formal/appropriate style.</p> <p>Third person pronouns include: he, she, they, them, it, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Uses precise, academic language</li> <li>-Use of topic-specific vocabulary is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>-Establishes and consistently maintains a formal/appropriate style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Uses a mix of precise with more general language</li> <li>-Use of topic-specific vocabulary is generally appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>-Establishes and generally maintains a formal/appropriate style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Uses simplistic language</li> <li>-Inconsistent use of topic-specific vocabulary</li> <li>-Lacks a consistent formal/appropriate style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Uses limited or vague language</li> <li>-Lacks topic-specific vocabulary</li> <li>-Lack of formal/appropriate style shows little sense of audience and purposes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conventions:</b> The writing demonstrates a command of conventions and assigned format.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Minimal errors/patterns of error in usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and format</li> <li>-Skillful use of sentence structure enhances meaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal errors/patterns of error in usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and format</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequent errors/patterns of error in usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and format</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severe errors/patterns of error in usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and format interfere with understanding</li> </ul>

**0=no evidence/missing**