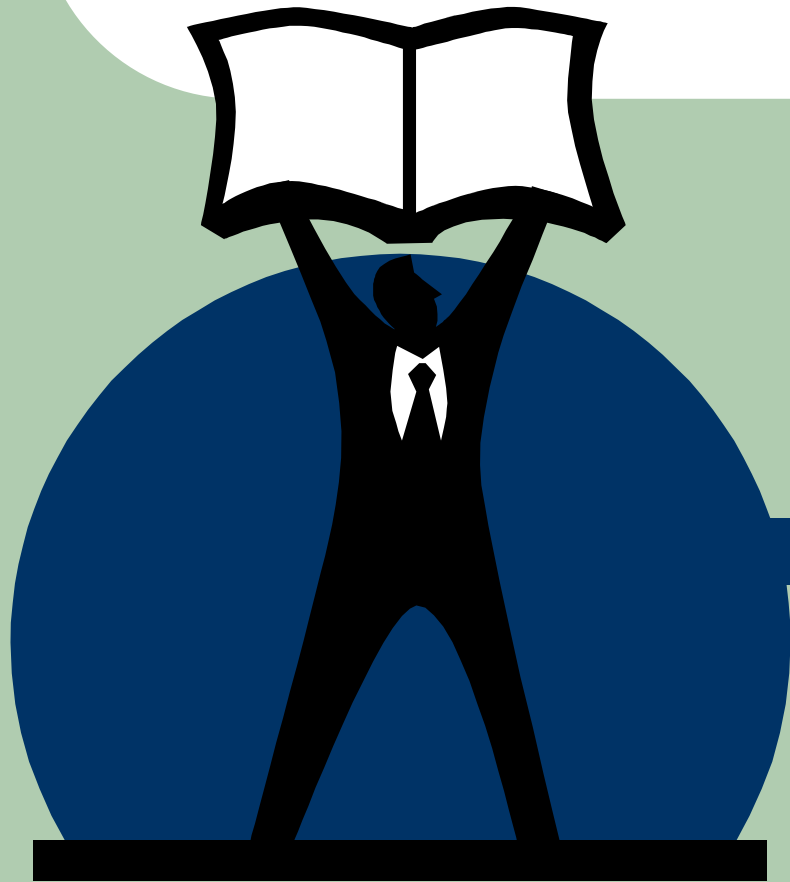


Using Mental Models and Authentic Texts to Prepare Students for the PSAE

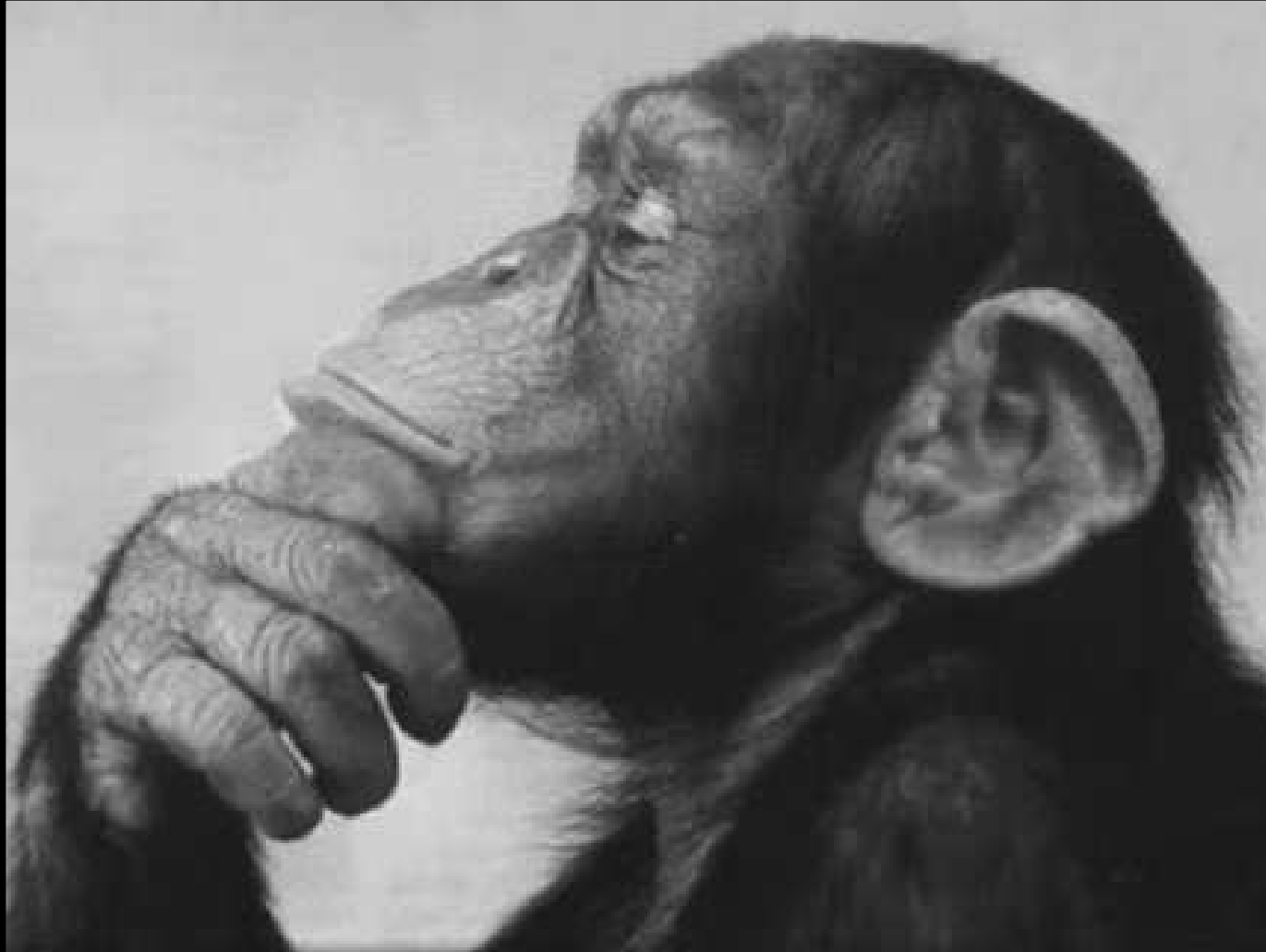


Presentation Prepared
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What constitutes a good score on the ACT?

How ACT Reports Scores

Make and Articulate Judgments

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 20. | Your essay responded to the prompt by taking a position on the issue. |
| 21. | Your essay responded to the prompt by taking a clear position on the issue. |
| 22. | Your essay acknowledged counterarguments on the issue but did not discuss them. |
| 23. | Your essay showed recognition of the complexity of the issue by addressing counterarguments. |
| 24. | Your essay showed recognition of the complexity of the issue by partially evaluating its implications. |
| 25. | Your essay addressed the complexity of the issue by fully responding to counterarguments. |
| 26. | Your essay addressed the complexity of the issue by evaluating its implications. |

Develop Ideas

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 30. | Your essay provided very little writing about your ideas. Try to write more about the topic. |
| 31. | The ideas in your essay needed to be more fully explained and supported with more details. |
| 32. | Your essay used some specific details, reasons, and examples, but it needed more of them. |
| 33. | Your essay adequately supported general statements with specific reasons, examples, and details. |
| 34. | General statements in your essay were well supported with specific reasons, examples, and details. |
| 35. | Your essay effectively supported general statements with specific reasons, examples, and details. |

Sustain Focus

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 40. | Your writing did not maintain a focus on the issue. Try to plan your essay before you write. |
| 41. | Your essay focused on the general topic rather than on the specific issue in the prompt. |
| 42. | Your essay maintained focus on the specific issue in the prompt. |

Organize and Present Ideas

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 50. | Your essay lacked organization. Try to plan and arrange your ideas logically. |
| 51. | Your essay was not clearly organized. Try to plan and arrange your ideas logically. |
| 52. | Your essay showed basic organizational structure, but the ideas needed to be more clearly connected. |
| 53. | The organization of your essay was adequate, but the rigid structure seemed to limit discussion. |
| 54. | Your essay was well organized, making it easy to understand logical relationships among ideas. |
| 55. | The logical sequence of ideas in your essay fit its persuasive purpose well. |

Communicate Clearly

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 60. | Grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors made your essay difficult to understand. |
| 61. | Grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors were distracting. Proofread your writing. |
| 62. | Using correct grammar and more varied sentence structures would improve your essay. |
| 63. | Using more varied sentence structures would make your essay clearer and more engaging. |
| 64. | Using more sentence variety and precise word choice would make your essay clearer and more engaging. |
| 65. | Some varied sentence structures and precise word choice added clarity and interest to your writing. |
| 66. | Your essay showed a good command of language by using varied sentences and precise word choice. |

POSITION PAPER RUBRIC

	6	5	4	3	2
Make & Articulate Judgments	Takes position; addresses complexity; evaluates implications or examines perspectives; responds to counterarguments;	Takes position; addresses complexity; responds fully to counterarguments;	Takes position; counterargument addressed;	Takes position; recognizes counterargument but does not develop;	May or may not take position; may waiver; no counter;
Develop Ideas	effectively supports w/ specific reasons, examples, and details;	well supports w/ specific reasons, examples, and details;	adequately supports w/ some reasons, examples, and details;	may be redundant in use of reasons and examples;	need more explanation and details;
Sustain Focus	stays focused on specific prompt issue;	stays focused on specific prompt issue is maintained;	stays focused on specific prompt issue is maintained;	focus shifts from issue to general topic;	focus on general topic--not the issue;
Organize & Present Ideas	organization fits the persuasive purpose; transitions are integrated; shows more writer's craft. Intro & conclusion are developed & effective;	organization is clear; transitions may be simple and obvious; intro & conclusion are clear and developed;	organization is logical; transitions simple and obvious; rigid structure limits discussion intro & conclusion are clear;	ideas grouped together, but no overall logic in organization; there is an intro and a conclusion;	some logical grouping of ideas; misused transitions; intro / concl. minimal;
Communicate Clearly	few, if any, grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors; good sentence variety; precise diction.	few errors; none distracting.	some distracting errors, but not interfering w / meaning.	distracting errors that may interfere w / meaning.	distracting errors that probably interfere w / meaning.

Comparing ACT and ISAT Expectations



Why might our students not be prepared for the ACT writing assessment?

Making & Articulate Judgments

ISAT

Not a discrete evaluated feature; judgment is part of “Focus”; moreover, ISAT primarily evaluates singularity of thought

ACT

Evaluates ability to recognize and discuss multiple perspectives while maintaining singular position

Develop Ideas

ISAT

Evaluates ability to provide multiple means of support: evidence, example, explanation.

ACT

Evaluates ability to move from generality to specificity, to make inferences and support with evidence and explanation

Sustain Focus

ISAT

Evaluates connection between introduction & conclusion; evaluates logical progression of thought; appreciates cleverness.

ACT

Evaluates ability to maintain focus while positing details & addressing controversial nature of the issue w/ specifics from others' point of view; no specific reference to intro & conclusion

Organize and Present Ideas

ISAT

Evaluates logical progression both within (cohesion) and among (coherence) paragraphs; use of transition, parallel structure, repetition, & sentence variety

ACT

Evaluates ability to connect ideas through a less rigid structure; values writer's craft in structuring support and organization; evaluates the introduction & conclusions as contributions to the essay's organization

Communicate Clearly

ISAT

Evaluates conventions,
this aspect has less
weight

ACT

Evaluates effectiveness
of word choice in
developing the position;
evaluates use of
conventions in relation
to effect of errors

ACT Prompts



SAMPLE PROMPT

<http://www.act.org/essayview/sample/index.html>

Many high school libraries use some of their limited funding to subscribe to popular magazines with articles that are interesting to students. Despite limited funding, some educators support this practice because they think having these magazines available encourages students to read. Other educators think school libraries should not use limited funds to subscribe to these magazines because they may not be related to academic subjects. In your opinion, should high school libraries subscribe to popular magazines even though the magazines may not be related to academic subjects?

In your essay, take a position on this question. You may write about either one of the two points of view given, or you may present a different point of view on this question. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

PROMPT FORMAT

- States an issue
- Provides two points-of-view
- Asks students to respond
- Students may choose a third position
- Students are not scored based on position taken

SAMPLE PROMPT

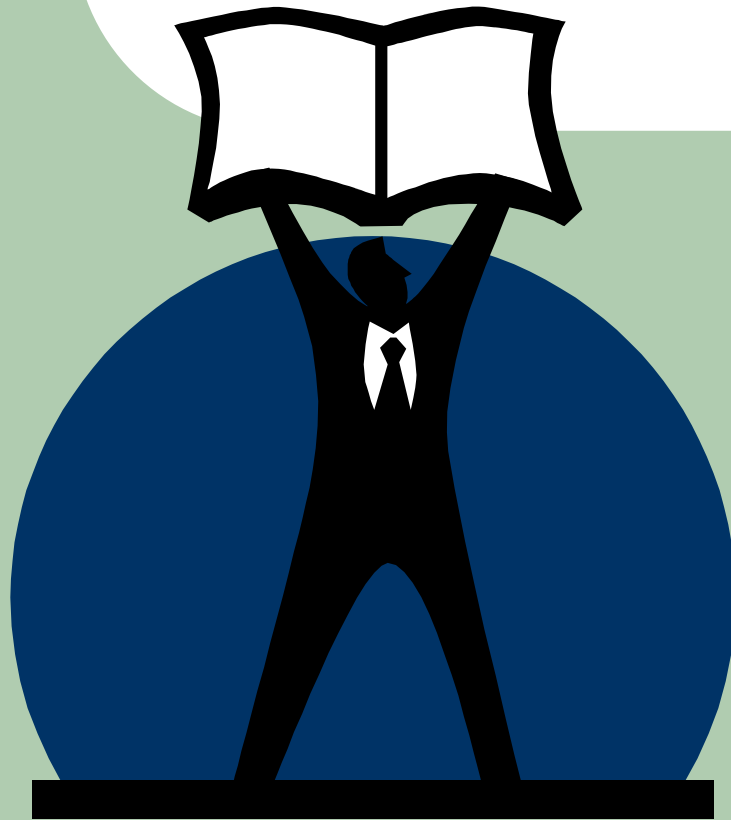
<http://www.act.org/aap/writing/sample/index.html>

Educators debate extending high school to five years because of increasing demands on students from employers and colleges to participate in extracurricular activities and community service in addition to having high grades. Some educators support extending high school to five years because they think students need more time to achieve all that is expected of them. Other educators do not support extending high school to five years because they think students would lose interest in school and attendance would drop in the fifth year. In your opinion, should high school be extended to five years?

In your essay, take a position on this question. You may write about either one of the two points of view given, or you may present a different point of view on this question. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position

Mental Models

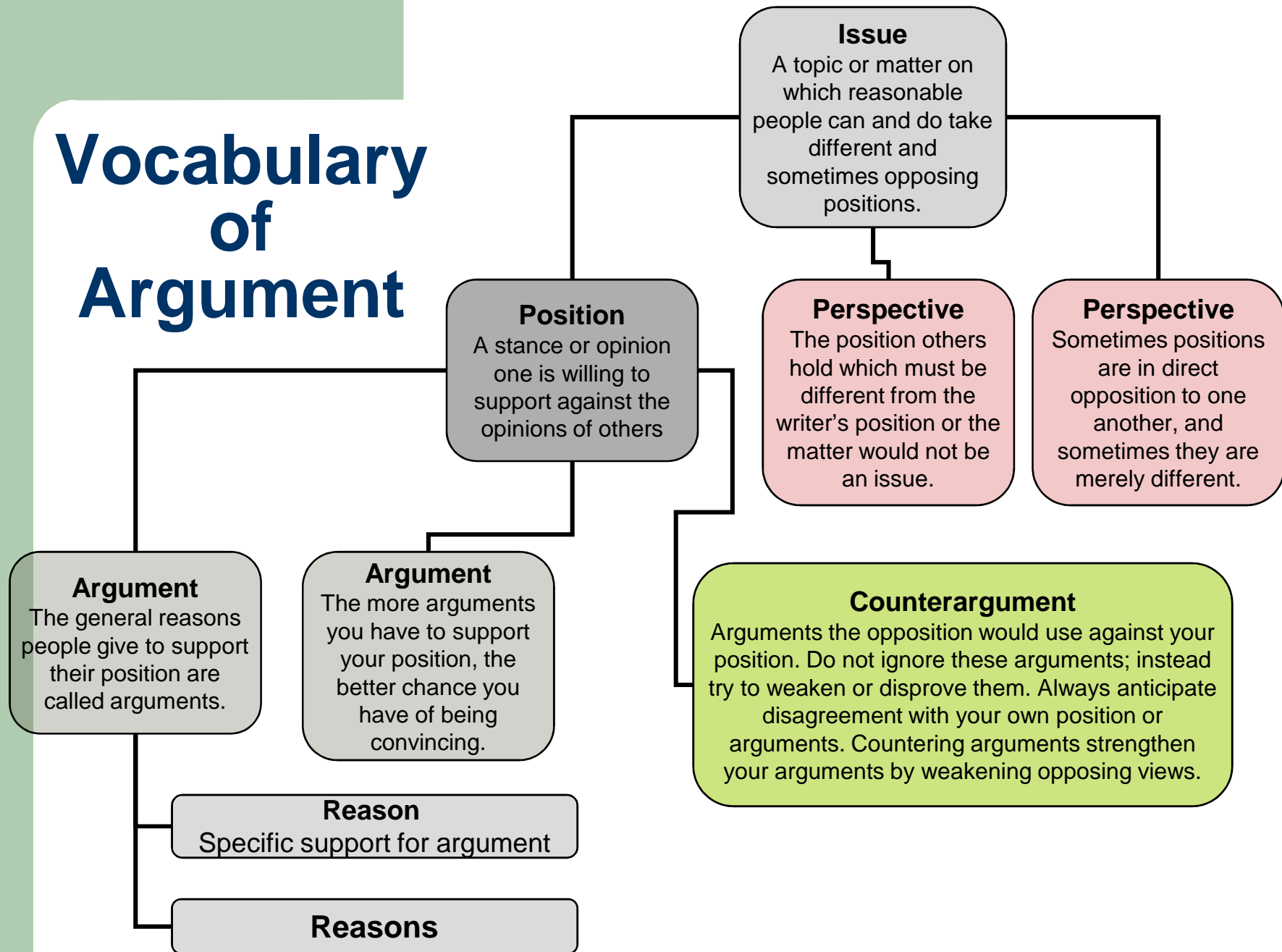
Organization of Persuasion



Why Create Mental Models?

- Experts' knowledge organized around important ideas/concepts
 - Suggestion: curricula should also be organized in ways that lead to conceptual understanding.
- Transfer is affected by how deeply people learn rather than merely memorizing facts or procedures
 - ask learners to solve a specific case and then provide them with an additional, similar case
 - let students learn in a specific context and then help them engage in "what-if" problem solving designed to increase the flexibility of their understanding.
 - generalize the case so that learners are asked to create a solution that applies not simply to a single problem, but to a whole class of related problems

Vocabulary of Argument



The Position Paper: Basic ACT Terms

