

Task Prompt: For this informational essay, you will compare and contrast two perspectives on a critical issue to gain a complete understanding of the topic.

After deciding on a topic, you will clarify the two contrasting perspectives (also known as stances). After recording all your prior knowledge, you'll develop research questions to guide your research and writing. Next, you'll determine what else you need to know to answer your question and set to work researching. Through research, you will develop a central idea about this issue, which will help you select and organize the most relevant details, quotations, examples, and other information about your topic in your first draft. You will then analyze your information to explain the similarities and differences in the two perspectives on your topic. In your concluding paragraph, be sure to summarize your findings and tell the reader why this is important information to have and how this issue might change over time.

School All Year?

Introduction

Year round schools are in session as many days as traditional school, the only difference is when the breaks occur and how long each one is. Some people believe that with a long two and a half month summer break, students experience learning loss, but with year round school they won't. In year round school, there is something called the 45-15 day plan where students go to school for 45 days then go on break for 15. This could potentially help students to not forget material. Others argue a traditional schooling calendar is better. Summer break is an important thing for a child to experience that should not be taken away. For example, students get summer jobs and go to camp where they learn information that a school doesn't teach. Year round school has a positive effect on low income families and can also keep teachers from re-teaching material from the previous year. On the other hand, with a year round school, students are missing out on family vacations, summer camps, extracurricular activities, and summer jobs.

Summer Camp Beneficial

On one hand, some see summer camp as beneficial, teaching a student independence, social skills, and life skills. "They need that break. And people forget that not all learning takes

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Comment [1]: Title introduces the main research question

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Comment [2]: Writer begins to introduce the two sides.

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Comment [3]: Writer introduces important vocabulary for the topic. Also, side 1: year-round school.

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Comment [4]: Side 2: traditional school.

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Comment [5]: Writer's central idea which identifies both sides and relevant evidence that relates to each side.

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Comment [6]: Writer uses headings to help the reader understand the main topics of her essay and the point-by-point structure. To aid the compare and contrast structure the writer could have created more broad topics that included two perspectives.

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Comment [7]: Topic sentence for side 2.

place in the classroom" ("Should School Be Year-Round?"). There is so much learning that takes place outside of a school classroom. Like at summer camp or an extracurricular club or activity. Summer camp offers life skills of high importance, like at my camp, cooking. Also, there are no electronics at most camps, so to contact home you need to know how to write a letter, but as long as there is year round school, there will be none of these skills learned by students. During the summer, I do not study my math or review my science; I go to camp and interact with my life-long friends. During this time we may not be learning school material, but we are learning independence, social skills, and a lot about ourselves. During the time I'm away, I can't go on social media, I can't text or call home; It's like I'm cut off from the rest of the world while learning who I am and how to be self-dependent. These are skills I wouldn't be able to have if my school was on a year round schedule. Obviously, school isn't just the only place you can learn. School does not teach everything about life, so students need to balance out school and vacation time so they can learn both. Furthermore, instead of summer camp, some teenagers who are students get summer jobs. Not only is this beneficial, but it can teach a child the value of money. I strongly agree that, life skills learned at summer camp are very beneficial (Huebner). During camp, a camper is very self-dependent. Camp is crucial because it can also build problem solving skills, social skills, and academic skills. Moreover, camp offered over summer recess, can be a stress reliever, it can give you a nice break to collect your thoughts.

Summer Learning Loss

But during this time information learned at school is forgotten. One of the major concerns with the issue of education is the learning loss taking place over summer, in other words, the summer slide. "...students don't do much reading or learning at home during the summer, making the summer learning loss significant" (Kenning). When summer vacation starts, students

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Comment [8]: Writer includes direct quotation as evidence with MLA citation.

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Comment [9]: Writer includes herself in the example she gives to relate to the audience.

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Comment [10]: Writer's anecdotal evidence which positively shows how this topic impacts her life.

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Comment [11]: The writer uses her personal evidence of going to camp to show different skills that students gain while being on summer vacation.

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Comment [12]: Write tries to include another relevant piece of evidence for her topic, but the placement in between camp evidence is a little awkward.

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Comment [13]: Paraphrase evidence with MLA citation.

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Comment [14]: Writer transitions from previous reading by acknowledging the same time period with a new topic.

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Comment [15]: Key vocabulary explained by the writer.

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Comment [16]: Direct quotation as evidence. Writer uses ellipsis to include the most important part of lengthy evidence.

throw away every piece of school material. This is like throwing away everything from the last nine months. Instead of keeping the most important notes and checking over them, students kick back and forget much of their learned material. Students may become more knowledgeable without lengthy breaks during learning sessions (Hallisey). Without the lengthy summer break, students will maintain information instead of experiencing the summer slide. Summer vacation is argued to make students forget a lot of material which makes teachers review it for about four to six weeks the next school year.

Benefits Certain Students

Conversely, year round education can also be helpful to students with learning disabilities and low-income students. "Students with learning disadvantages may receive academic benefits" (Yeager). This could be very helpful in terms of the goal, No Child Left Behind. In other words, teachers will have a better chance to catch these students up because there is no long break standing in the way of this. According to this article, "...research shows it has the biggest effect among at-risk and low-income students" (Towler). You'd be surprised to know how many of your classmates are eligible for a free school lunch. Year round school could help change this; it could benefit these students helping them and their families. One researcher, "...found that low-income students made similar achievement gains to other students during the school year" (Huebner). This idea addresses the larger matter of children who are bullied for how they dress or what shoes they are wearing. At year round schooling, low-income students could save money making them more self-confident, boosting their self-esteem. This could potentially result in an academic benefit.

Filling All Tracks

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Comment [17]: Paraphrase evidence with MLA citation.

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Comment [18]: Direct quotation as evidence.

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Comment [19]: Commentary which addresses the central idea.

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Comment [20]: Writer attempts to grow the information by making a statement about what the evidence proves for the central idea, but there is little connection between the evidence and the reasoning presented here.

But are there enough children signing up for year round schools? Evidence suggests otherwise. "We wonder why the multi-track year round is needed if we cannot completely fill all four tracks" (Towler). At one year round school, a few teachers lost their jobs because there weren't enough students to fill all the classes. So is year round school needed if teachers will become unemployed? Won't this then lead to a higher unemployment rate in America? "...although one of the main reasons for switching to year-round schools is to improve retention rates, there is no concrete proof that students improve academically" (Towler). Every student is unique, so every student is different. This leads to the fact that there is no solid proof a student can academically benefit from a year round school.

Family Vacation Hurt

Impacts on vacationing are the third aspect of year round schooling that has come up often in research. "Families found it easier to decide what time of year to go on a family vacation before year-round school" (Ho). Obviously, summer is long, so a family has a long time to figure out when everyone has time for a vacation. In other words, since summer vacation is so long, families with multiple students have a lengthy period of time from which they can choose when everyone has time to go on a vacation. But having said this, if you have multiple students each on a different schooling calendar, even a vacation over summer may be hard to plan. "Unless the entire district converts to the same calendar, parents with kids in different grade levels can find it troublesome to plan vacations" (Towler). When a family has one student on a traditional schooling calendar, and another on a year round schooling calendar, planning a family vacation will be hard. Moreover, while one child is in school, the other is out. "When a school system adopts year-round school, children do not have 10-13 weeks during the summer from which parents can choose when planning a vacation" (Ho). Those 10-13 weeks are crucial when trying

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Comment [21]: This paragraph uses questions to make the reader answer rather than providing reasons why this topic is a valid piece of information. Without the writer's reasoning, the paragraph seems misplaced in the essay.

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Comment [22]: Writer includes reasoning for both sides in a paragraph that has the purpose of supporting the traditional school model. This creates some confusion for the reader.

to juggle around a family's schedule to match with each other's. Since it's such a long period of time, there is a good amount of days for a family vacation. Between a students' extracurricular and their siblings, family vacations are hard to coordinate, even more so on a year round school schedule.

Vacation Still Possible

Even so, vacations may still possible in year round school. "According to a University of Missouri study, many teachers spend up to six weeks on review each fall. Year-round schooling, researchers say, enables students to enjoy vacation time without forgetting information" ("Should School Be Year Round?"). If you want to take a really short vacation in the middle of the school year, a year round schooling schedule is perfect for you! Unless you want the vacation to be with the whole family, of course then, a traditional schooling calendar is better. But in year round school, "Right when you start feeling overwhelmed, you get a break" (Kenning). A lot of times during the school year, a weekend isn't enough to rest you up. But a year round schooling calendar can change that. The most common schedule, in year round school, is the 45-15 plan. Furthermore, students will attend school for 45 days, and then go on a 15 day break. Whereas traditional schooling has shorter breaks scattered throughout the year with one long summer break. Now that you have learned more about traditional school and year round school, you understand each ones advantages and disadvantages.

Recap

Year round school has a positive effect on low income families plus students with learning disadvantages. It can also keep teachers from re-teaching material from the previous year. Others argue that with a year round school, students are missing out on family vacations, summer camps, extracurricular activities, and summer jobs.

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Comment [23]: The writer is experimenting with structure here. The summary of evidence could have fit nicely in a conclusion.

Conclusion

In conclusion, schooling schedules will continue to be explored until everyone is satisfied with one. But having said this, it is impossible to have everyone agree on the exact same thing. Furthermore, some people will continue to agree with the idea that summer and family vacations are more important than the summer slide, while others will still agree with the idea that year round school is more beneficial. This is because year round school helps low income students and students with learning disadvantages academically improve. This debate is important to families plus students and their futures'. School is what gets your life started. It's what gets you on the path your life will take. It is clear education is important to many people and impacts many lives.

Teacher's Note

Amy 6/13/2015 8:02 PM
Comment [24]: Writer summarizes the two sides presented in the essay.

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Comment [25]: The writer tells the reader why this debate is important and why it will continue for many years.

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Comment [26]: Students produced a print copy of informative text and a digital copy, not included here. The digital copy utilized the skills of included pictures and hyperlinks to add to the depth of the text

Works cited

- Hallisey, Patrick. "Should kids go to school year-round?" Scholastic News/Weekly Reader Edition 4 12 May 2014: 15. Junior Edition. Web. 6 Feb. 2015.
- Ho, Sookhan. "Skip Menu." Year-round School Changes Traditional Family Summer Vacation. N.p., 6 June 2011. Web. 10 Mar. 2015.
- Huebner, Tracy A. "Membership." Educational Leadership:Reimagining School:Year-Round Schooling. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 Mar. 2015.
- Kenning, Chris. "Teachers See Benefits in Year-round Schools." n.d.: n.p. 17 July 2006.Web. 10 Mar. 2015.
- "Should school be year-round?" Junior Scholastic 1 Sept. 2003: 5. Kids InfoBits. Web. 10 Mar.2015.
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- Towler, Luke. "Districts Weigh Pros and Cons of Year-Round Schools - NEA Today." NEA Today. N.p., 04 Sept. 2014. Web. 01 Mar. 2015.
- Yeager, Fred. "Year-Round Education Program Guide." - Multitrack Year-Round Education (CA Dept of Education). N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Mar. 2015.

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Comment [27]: Works cited pages follow MLA citation rules. Student utilized Easy Bib to generate these citations.

***n.d. and n.p. mean no publishing date or no publisher found by Easy Bib when generating the entry.

Informational Essay Rubric – Comparing & Contrasting Perspectives on an Issue

Element	Advanced	On-Target	Novice
Content	<p>The writer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artfully presents the issue background, perspectives, key questions, and key terms in the introductory paragraph(s). Has crafted a central idea that concerns 2-3 of the most pressing questions regarding the critical issue. Thoughtfully presents an abundance of supporting details highly relevant to the central idea in the form of facts, quotations, examples, and statistics. Always carefully analyzes supporting details to explain how they answer key questions, define a perspective, and contrast with the opposing perspective. Consistently compares and contrasts the two perspectives on the critical issue using signal words and phrases. Uses the concluding paragraph to briefly summarize the two perspectives, to explain why this issue is so critical to society, and to discuss what the future debate over this issue might involve. 	<p>The writer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents the issue background, perspectives, key questions, and key terms in the introductory paragraph(s). Has crafted a central idea that concerns 1-2 of the most pressing questions regarding the critical issue. Presents supporting details highly relevant to the central idea in the form of facts, quotations, examples, and statistics. Often analyzes supporting details to explain how they answer key questions, define a perspective, and contrast with the opposing perspective. Often compares and contrasts the two perspectives on the critical issue using signal words and phrases. Uses the concluding paragraph to briefly summarize the two perspectives and explain why this issue is so critical to society. 	<p>The writer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents the issue background, perspectives, key questions, and key terms, but not all these crucial elements. Has crafted a central idea that does not concern key questions about the critical issue or chosen perspectives. Presents minimal supporting details relevant to the central idea in the form of facts, quotations, examples, and statistics. Occasionally or never analyzes supporting details to explain how they answer key questions, define a perspective, and contrast with the opposing perspective. Rarely or never compares and contrasts the two perspectives on the critical issue using signal words and phrases. Uses the concluding paragraph only to summarize what has already been explored in the essay.
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chosen structure is the most effective means of conveying/supporting the controlling idea. Headings and sub-headings are effective titles and assist the reader in understanding how information is organized. The use of signal words and phrases create a logical flow between sentences and paragraphs. Each paragraph has a clear central idea that is presented in the topic sentence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chosen structure is an effective means of conveying/supporting the controlling idea. Headings and sub-headings are effective titles and often assist the reader in understanding how information is organized. The use of signal words and phrases usually create a logical flow between sentences and paragraphs. Most paragraphs have a clear central idea that is presented in the topic sentence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chosen structure is not the most effective means of conveying/supporting the controlling idea; or there is no clear structure to the essay. Headings and sub-headings create confusion for the reader about how information is organized. Signal words and phrases are rarely or never used to create a logical flow between sentences and paragraphs. Few paragraphs have a clear central idea that is presented in the topic sentence.
Style & Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing voice is engaging and consistently appropriate for the intended audience. The word choice is specific to the chosen topic. Sentence structures are varied and complex. The essay contains no errors in spelling or punctuation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing voice is engaging and usually appropriate for the intended audience. The word choice is somewhat specific to the chosen topic. Sentence structures are often varied and sometimes complex. The essay contains minimal spelling and punctuation errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing voice is not engaging or is not appropriate for the intended audience. The word choice is not specific to the chosen topic. Sentence structures are not varied or complex. The essay contains multiple spelling or punctuation errors.

This essay is an average 8th grade Informative Essay. The topic is important to the writer as seen by the anecdotal evidence which she includes, but she assumes that readers will be able to relate to the topic and therefore does not analyze the relationship between evidence and central idea as much as is necessary for the reader to clearly understand the topic. The writer clearly attempted to use the organizational structures presented in class lessons, but the headings and overall organization leaves the reader confused about the main points of the central idea.