Argument Interpretive Assignment #1 Writing About "Everyday Use"

Name: _____ **Period:** _____

For this assignment you will write an argument about "Everyday Use" that answers the question in the box below. It will sound familiar to you because you participated in a dis- cussion about it in the previous session's work:

> At the end of the story, Maggie smiles—"But a real smile, not scared."
>
> *Why isn't Maggie scared anymore?*

There are many possible correct answers to this question. Here are a few:

- Because for the first time, her mother stood up to Dee on her behalf.
- Maggie realizes that her life is not inferior to her sister's.
- She's no longer afraid of her sister because she understands that she (Maggie) has inherited her family's legacy.

Your job is to think through the possible answers—both the answers listed above as well those that you generate on your own or with the class—and choose the one you think is best. Then write a compelling, 1-2 page argument that supports your answer.

Use your "Checklist for Argument Writing" to help you remember everything you must in- clude in your writing, and be sure to draw on all of your discussion notes and class charts as you write. These are valuable resources that will help you complete the assignment.

When you finish writing, make sure your argument includes

1. A claim that answers the question;
2. Support for the claim with evidence from the text;
3. An explanation that shows how that evidence supports your position; and
4. Commentary on potential counterclaims or alternate positions.

Citing Evidence

When you refer to a specific line or moment from our unit texts, make sure you quote it accurately and tell what page and line number the quotation or moment is from. Here's an example of a sentence in which a line from the text is quoted:

Near the end of the story, Mama describes a dramatic scene, saying, "I did some- thing I never had done before: hugged Maggie to me, then dragged her on into the room, snatched the quilts out of Miss Wangero's hands and dumped them into Maggie's lap" (p. 20, lines 400-404).

Please notice three things about this example:

1. There are double quotation marks around the part that Walker wrote.
2. The quotation is copied exactly as Walker wrote it.
3. The page and line numbers the quotation comes from is placed in parentheses after the last double quotation marks but before the period.

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Grade 8 Student Checklist for Interpretive/Argument Writing

Comprehensive Understanding of Issues

- □ I write about the text in a way that shows that I fully understand it.
- □ I support my claim or position by selecting and organizing evidence from the text.
- □ I give reasons that clearly explain how the evidence I chose supports my claim or position.

Organization

- □ My response is logical and is organized around the facts and reasons for my clearly stated claim.
- □ My response is well organized throughout my writing.
- □ I am clear and explicit about the way I relate my claim to reasons and evidence.
- □ I use specific and helpful words, phrases, and clauses to connect my claims to reasons and evidence.
- □ I clearly show the relationships between the parts of my response.
- □ I have a conclusion that makes sense. It follows from the argument and connects back to my introduction.

Development

- □ I discuss information related to my claim that sets a context to help my reader understand my argument.
- □ I show that I understand the text by citing sufficient evidence from the text.
- □ The evidence I use is relevant and accurate.
- □ I use quotes and paraphrases of the text in a way that feels smooth and seamless.
- □ I explain how my claim and evidence compare with alternate positions.

Language Conventions

- □ I use correct spelling.
- □ I use correct grammar.
- □ My writing sounds formal.
- □ I went back and made sure that the words I used in my writing helped me explain my ideas.

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Scoring Sheet/Teacher Feedback

Interpretive/ Argument Writing	**4** The student response…	**3** The student response…	**2** The student response…	**1** The student response…
Comprehensive Understanding of Issues	• Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the text or topic by selecting, organizing and providing explicit reasons and appropriate evidence from the text that support a clear, cogent claim.	• Demonstrates a reasonable understanding of the text or topic by providing general support through reasons and evidence that are relevant to a claim.	• Demonstrates a superficial understanding of the text or topic and provides some support for a loosely stated claim, with reasons and evidence that are only minimally text-based.	• Demonstrates no understanding of the topic.
Organization	• Is logical and establishes and maintains a coherent organizing structure that makes explicit the relationship between the claim, warrant, accurately cited text-based evidence, and counterclaims. • Employs the use of connecting words, phrases, and clauses to establish coherence and signal the major sections of the text. • Provides a conclusion that follows from the argument and/or ties to the introduction.	• Uses an organizing structure that links the claim, warrant, accurately cited text-based evidence, and counterclaim. • Employs some words, phrases, and clauses to signal the major sections of the text. • Provides a conclusion that ties to or follows from the argument.	• Establishes a loosely linked organizing structure to explain the relationship between the claim, warrant, and at least some accurately cited text-based evidence. • Embeds a brief mention of a counterclaim or claims. • Employs a few organizing words. • Provides a brief concluding statement.	• Attempts to organize ideas through a focus on claim and evidence but does not explain their relationship. • Does not employ connecting words to signal major sections of the paper. • Does not address counterclaims. • Provides a brief concluding statement.

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Interpretive/ Argument Writing	**4** The student response…	**3** The student response…	**2** The student response…	**1** The student response…
Development	• Provides a context specific to the claim to facilitate reader (audience) understanding. • Cites textual evidence that is relevant, convincing, detailed, and accurate. • Quotes, paraphrases, and cites evidence correctly and smoothly. • Explains the relationship between the claim and alternative positions.	• Embeds the claim in a very general context. • Cites some textual evidence that is loosely linked to the claim. • Quotes evidence to support the claim but does so in a stilted manner. • Links the alternate position to the claim in a cursory manner.	• Provides only a brief contextual reference for the claim. • Provides only partial or uneven evidence for the claim, with only an indirect reference to the text. • Weakly integrates evidence from sources or fails to include evidence from sources altogether. • Fails to integrate or explain alternate perspectives, or fails to include alternate perspectives at all.	• Provides no context for the claim. • Provides evidence for the claim that is vague and/or weak. • Includes only minimal evidence from sources and evidence that is included may reflect erroneous understanding of the text or topic.
Language and Syntax	• Maintains a formal style and tone appropriate to purpose and audience. • Maintains the precise meaning of the text through the use of specialized and appropriate vocabulary. • Employs syntax, capitalization, and punctuation to effectively express meaning.	• Establishes a fairly consistent formal style. • Uses vocabulary that is generally appropriate to purpose and audience. • Employs a variety of sentence structures and uses capitalization and punctuation correctly.	• Expresses ideas unevenly using simplistic vocabulary and syntax. • May have some grammatical errors but these do not impede meaning.	• Demonstrates a limited understanding of language and syntax. • Contains frequent grammatical errors that obscure meaning.

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[Start Prompt Here]

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