

## WRITERS WRITE: 8 Informational Essay Prompts

Our mini-grant offers a solution to a problem we voiced in our discussions at the last Institute: teaching the informational essay for the TASC exam is much more of a challenge for us than teaching the argumentative essay. We identified two reasons for this:

- Lack of practice essays. Most of the testing preparation books focus more on the argumentative essay.
- Lack of a “one size fits all” template or outline for the essays. In our experience, this essay cannot be easily formatted in a pro/con/my opinion organizational structure like the argumentative style. It depends on a close reading of the prompt to determine what the writer’s “job” is. This job differs from prompt to prompt.

We created a bank of 8 text-based, practice informational essays to use in the HSE classroom on the following topics:

The Harms of Television	Global Warming
The Great Depression	Concerns Regarding Green Energy
Fixed vs. Growth Mindset	Dangers of Supplements and Miracle Cures
The Heroin Epidemic	Civil Rights Movements: Then and Now

In addition to these 8 essays you will find corresponding extension activities which include the following:

- Embedded skills-based activities to reinforce the teaching of grammar, mechanics, and usage. We focused on TASC identified high-medium emphasis writing skills like sentence combining, items in a series, parallelism and the use of the colon and semi-colon.
- Activities to reinforce important reading skills such as building vocabulary and reading visual information, and writing skills such as paraphrasing.
- Graphic organizers and templates that we created with our students. These assist in reading with purpose and planning the essay.

This is a work in progress, one that we plan to build upon, edit, and change based on feedback from colleagues and students.

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