

VSCC English Department's Best Essays 2012-13

English Composition at VSCC: Expository Writing and Researched Argument

Introduction

We are proud to share with you this ninth edition of the *VSCC English Department's Best Essays*. This publication is the result of many hours of hard work on the part of students and faculty. Each year, instructors in the English Department encourage students who have demonstrated excellence in their writing to submit an essay to the committee; that committee of Vol State faculty then works collaboratively to choose superior student work for publication. The purpose of this publication is twofold: first, to showcase exemplary student writing by Vol State students, and second, to provide our faculty with helpful tools for teaching writing and critical thinking skills to our students.

The student essays published here exhibit the elements essential to high-quality college-level writing. They are separated into three categories, and one student in each category is awarded a prize for their work, which shows creativity, deep critical thought, excellent organization, and an awareness of the fundamentals of good writing.

Section I focuses on ENGL 1010 Expository writing, essays which are personal responses to a topic and include no research. The rhetorical modes included in this publication are narration, description, and illustration.

Section II includes researched essays specifically selected from ENGL 1010 students. This represents a change from previous years when Sections II and III included essays using 1-4 sources and five or more sources, respectively. The committee decided that this year we would give ENGL 1010 students the chance to show their research skills without competing directly with more advanced students.

Finally, Section III concludes the publication with advanced research papers (written by students in any class other than ENGL 1010). Most of the submissions came from ENGL 1020

students, though it is an ongoing desire of the committee to draw future submissions from other courses and even other disciplines.

The student essays included in this publication were submitted between the Summer 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters, and they are representative of the diversity of student writing found in composition and literature classes at Vol State. We would like to thank all of the teachers who encouraged their students to submit, and to express our sincere congratulations to those students who are published here. Our goal is to continue to grow this project so that it remains meaningful for students and faculty alike.

Deb Moore, Committee Chair
Renee Eades, Committee Chair
On behalf of the Best Essays Committee
August 1, 2013

Acknowledgments

Dean of Humanities: Dr. Alycia Ehlert

Chair of English Department: Mickey Hall

Best Essays Selection Committee: Laura Black, Renee' Eades (chair), Kay Grossberg, Jennifer McMillion, Deb Moore (chair), Jaime Sanchez, and Cynthia Wyatt

Participating Faculty and Instructors: Laura Black, Cindy Chanin, Renee' Eades, Kay Grossberg, David Johnson, Jennifer McMillion, and Cynthia Wyatt

Supporting Staff: Debra Lindsay and Rhonda Custer

Text and Layout: Deb Moore

Cover Design: Eric Melcher, Coordinator of Communications and PR

Table of Contents

Section I: Expository Writing

| | |
|---|----|
| <u>Description</u> | 2 |
| “Leaving His Marks” – Melanie Daniel, Prize Winner | 4 |
| “Afghanistan” – Billy Joseph Hager | 7 |
| <u>Narration</u> | 9 |
| “The Best of Competition” – Bethany Shelton | 11 |
| “Live Long and Prosper” – Merri Welch | 14 |
| <u>Illustration</u> | 17 |
| “A Soldier’s Sacrifice” – David Crotzer | 20 |
| “The Good Fight” – Steven Cory Bunt | 22 |

Section II: ENGL 1010 Researched Argument

| | |
|---|----|
| <u>Cause and Effect</u> | 26 |
| “Hispanophobia” – Richard Hevia, Prize Winner | 28 |
| “Military Experience and College Success” – Billy Joseph Hager | 34 |
| “Ash Tree Predator: Controlling the Emerald Ash Borer Beetle” – Joel Meoak | 38 |
| <u>Problem – Solution</u> | 43 |
| “The New Epidemic” – Darielle Schroeder | 45 |
| <u>Claim of Fact</u> | 50 |
| “Tag! You’re It!” – Christine Price | 52 |

Section III: Advanced Researched Argument

| | |
|---|----|
| “The Environmentalist versus the Economist” – Jackson Bogach, Prize Winner | 58 |
| “Get A Life: We Would if We Had Transportation” – Jacquelyn Anderson | 65 |
| “Freedom to Want: How the Cold War Reversed American Economic Freedom” – Adam Proctor | 76 |
| “Countering the Environmental Effects of Tobacco Production and Cigarette Litter” – Kyle Baker | 84 |
| “What Can Be Done About the Rising Suicide Rate?” – Colton Lockhart | 93 |

SECTION 1:
EXPOSITORY WRITING

Writing Descriptive Essays

As part of the human experience, we take in and process the world around us through the use of our senses, and many times, we form opinions about objects, places, and people within our world based on the use of that sensory information. These sensory impressions are often the basis for our writing when we write a descriptive essay. The purpose of descriptive writing involves helping an audience understand more fully the subject of an essay, usually a person or place with which the audience is unfamiliar, and to create a dominant impression of that place or person.

The most explicit statement of that impression should be offered in the thesis of the descriptive essay. This thesis should show the audience the writer's plans to reveal something new or unconventional about the essay's subject. For example, a descriptive essay about an umbrella might have the following thesis: "While an umbrella is very useful in the rain, it also serves as an example of one of architecture's most useful elements—the arch." This thesis prepares the audience to look at an ordinary object in a new, more complete way, emphasizing the purpose and need for creating an essay to describe something.

Description can be used as a method of development for an entire essay, or it can be incorporated into other modes of writing, like narration, comparison/contrast, and definition to make those modes of writing more sensory experiences because descriptive papers seek to use language that creates for the audience a vivid mental picture. Developing descriptions often means using similes and metaphors to describe something, invoking all five senses. For example, a writer may choose to describe eating a jalapeno pepper in the following way: "Once the tongue registers the heat of the pepper, it is as if your whole mouth expands in an attempt to get away from the flames but cannot quite stay out of reach." When an audience reads language

such as this, they can understand the feeling much better than if you simply wrote, “Eating a jalapeno pepper makes your mouth hot.” At its best, descriptive writing allows readers to close their eyes and see the event, person, object, or place being described in the essay. The ultimate goal is to create an impression and to convey your attitude towards that subject by offering the most revealing and significant details and anecdotes about the subject.

Quick Tips for Students:

1. Pay careful attention to the details and examples you include: all should work towards conveying a dominant impression of the subject of your description, and they should be the most important details and examples for the reader’s understanding of that subject’s significance to you and your audience.
2. Avoid over-idealizing or demonizing the subject of a description. Present your description as being objective and realistic. Nothing is completely good or bad, so describe the subject as something REAL. Don’t forget to use sensory images, especially similes and metaphors, to draw your readers into the description.
3. When describing a person, choose the person for your description wisely. Avoid a person who will lead you to be overly sentimental, such as a family member or friend who has recently died. Choose, instead, a person who is somewhat unusual or engaging, not only to you, but to your audience.
4. Also, keep in mind that this is not a story about your experience, so remember that your purpose in describing is different from the narrative.

PRIZE WINNER

The writer of this descriptive essay does a great job of character development. At first, she seems to be writing about her mother who has abandoned the family, but the focus quickly becomes the father, who, though not a perfect person, stays with the children. Instead of viewing herself as victim, the writer appreciates and even cherishes the father's sacrifices and chooses to focus on his positive influence in her life.

This essay is focused, has an original voice and good details, and makes an important point. At times, the author even uses metaphors of high literary quality.

Melanie Daniel

Professor David Johnson

English 1010

21 November 2012

Leaving His Marks

Many people sail through this life in a sleepless slumber, letting it drift them farther out to sea. They become oblivious to how they affect anyone around them because in their eyes, everyone is out of reach. I can still hear the thick accent in my mother's voice as she is trying to tell me she loves me and misses me dearly. It has the soft ring of broken English, years of guilt, bad pronunciation, and a hint of desperation that is barely comprehensible. I cannot decide whom she is trying to convince more, herself or me. No matter how many times I have reached out for her, it has always been a vast empty spot I've caught. We have never shared the special bond that mothers and daughters share that is like a tethered string winding in and winding out, but never breaking. So I grasped from a very young age that my dad would be a man who would forever impact my life, and if it weren't for him, I might not be here today. He is a man who can tell a story just through the bitter scars life has left; however, he chooses not to. The years have left their marks on him, each mark having a story of its own and being nothing less than a

symbol of each struggle he has had to overcome; however, the life he holds within him now is in the depths of his distinctive blue eyes, where the knowing lies.

There are times in life when we get to choose if we are to become the victims, villains, or heroes. I feel more often than not that children choose to become the victims of their parents, turning a blind eye towards all the selfless acts their guardians have performed for them along the way. My dad isn't a perfect man, and one could even say he is pretty far from it; however, one could also say that he has sacrificed most of his dreams and life so that his children might still have theirs.

More often than not, when a mother abandons her family, leaving nothing but broken pieces and unanswered questions, it is enough to change a man. My dad was no exception. For years afterward he was like a cast out ship with no real destination, on the verge of sinking, but with two children, survival was his better nature. One of my favorite memories of him is when we would walk to daycare together. Just as the sun had risen in the sky and was beaming rays of light through my window, my dad would cautiously, but gently rouse me from sleep. Warily, I would open my eyes, and after we found my outfit, usually a very distinct mismatched one, we would begin our journey. Often, he would set me upon his shoulders so that I might view the world from his perspective. I never yearned for anything more than that single moment to last for a lifetime. It was untouched by selfishness, greed, and guilt. For me it was a sign of hope, and nothing more than that single moment gave me enough hope for a lifetime. No matter how bad things got, I knew we didn't have to make the worst of it and that there could always be something to gain from the trials in our life. Our destination always came too swiftly, but that little act will forever be burned into my inner being so that I may carry it with me wherever I go. In the end, that moment will mean more to me than any toy ever could, because it will never lose

its value.

The only thing that's left of people when they have made their way into the valley of death is the mark that they have unknowingly etched upon our souls. Those memories will forever live through us, and if we are lucky, perhaps, we will leave our mark on someone so that our memories might too live a dozen lifetimes.

This five-paragraph essay is organized in chronological order to describe a soldier's view on his deployment to Afghanistan. The author uses a unique voice that enriches the ethos and pathos of the essay. However, this work's strongest point is its richness in images that appeal to all the senses.

Billy Joseph Hagar

Professor David Johnson

English 1010

8 February 2013

Afghanistan

When I got off the plane, all I could see were the flashing lights from the runway; the roaring sound of jet engines was all I could hear, and the smell of jet fuel lingered in the air. I didn't know where I was or what was going to happen next. My heart was pulsating out of my chest because all I could think was, "We're at war with the country I just entered."

I arrived in Afghanistan February of 2011. It was frigid and wet, enclosed by huge mountains in the horizon. The mountains were as white as a Colorado winter, and the ground concealed in about two feet of snow that was as white as cotton. This was astonishing to me because most people think of Afghanistan as the desert, arid and sweltering all year round. When I got a chance, I'd scale atop the watch tower to see the clay-built villages and the perfectly sculpted geography of the country. As time passed, my anticipation of seeing more of the country diminished. I felt like a prisoner trying to get a glimpse of daylight.

Nights in Afghanistan were probably the most unfavorable times there. Once I got settled to the camp, I had guard duty. One night I had a four-hour shift; it was dragging on like a long day of work while standing at the gate trying to stay vigilant. Suddenly, I heard a whistling noise and shortly after an explosion; there was one after another. I followed the protocol, locking the

front gate to the camp. Suddenly, I heard two F-16 fighter jets take off like a rocket to terminate the enemy. While the jets were soaring in the air like hawks ready to attack their prey, missiles were shot off, destroying the hopeful attackers. I had experienced my first attack.

I was pleased to meet the good people of the country, those who cared about the land and the people in it. I met mostly men, ranging from eighteen to fifty years of age. The average male had very greasy hair, and his skin was golden brown. When they spoke English, it sounded like a toddler learning new words. I got to know many locals, learning their culture and views of the war.

I met a man named Dariush, a thirty-year old Afghan civilian who had worked for the base since the war started. We were sitting in the office of the dining facility on the torrid summer day of May 2, 2011. Televisions were on across the dining facility at the peak of lunch time. Suddenly, a roar of exuberance and commotion filled the building. CNN had reported the confirmed kill of the al-Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden. Dariush got down on his knees and cried sweet tears of gratification and satisfaction. I then crouched down to Dariush's level to ask him why he was crying. He said, "No longer will there be a civil war in my country, and my people can gain back their freedom." After I heard what he said, it struck my heart like a nine-pound hammer beating a nail into an unfinished house. Afghanistan was not only in a war with the United States; it was also in a war with itself.

Writing Narrative Essays

Narration is frequently the first assignment in most English 1010 Composition classes but it may also be assigned in other classes or used as support in other types of essays. Although students and teachers often view narrative writing as one of the simplest forms of writing, there are actually many skills a writer needs to effectively convey meaning in this form.

The purpose of narrative writing is to tell a story with which an audience can relate or from which an audience can learn. Narratives must have both a cohesive plot and a central point of significance to be complete; you cannot have one without the other. While many narratives may use a clear thesis statement to present the main idea of the story, others are not so explicit. The thesis in any narrative, however, should reveal the purpose or reason for telling the story in the first place so that the audience can understand the story's underlying significance or relevance to their own lives.

Narratives are organized around the plot points of the story a writer is telling and developed with the most important details. Often, a writer will start the paper at the beginning of the story and tell us the story straight through. Another way of organizing a narrative is to tell the story as a series of flashbacks where the plot is interrupted in well-chosen places with commentary by the writer. Once the writer has a purpose, thesis, and method of organization, he or she can begin to develop the plot of the story. Often students can get bogged down in all the possible details they can include in their narrative. For example, if the writer is telling a story about a childhood baseball game, he may be tempted to tell his audience about the uniforms, the weather conditions of the day, and how many people were watching the game. While all of these details help create a precise picture of that baseball game, they may not have anything to do with the point the writer is making, i.e. the writer's specific purpose. A good rule for developing

narratives is to include details about emotions and thoughts of the central characters, and descriptions of the most important objects and places to give the audience clues that will lead the audience to the central purpose of the story.

When a student writes a narrative, it is important to keep in mind the fact that the reader might not be as familiar with the events and places as the writer is. Consequently, the writer should try to include details that will make the readers see the characters and events of the story as if they were watching the story play out in front of them. An audience should be able to anticipate the point the story is making and follow the plot of the story without confusion. Narrative writing, at its best, will take an audience through some chronological version of events and reveal to them something that they can learn through the experiences of others.

Quick Tips for Students:

1. Pay close attention to the assignment requirements for length when determining the timeframe for your narrative. Especially in English 1010 essays that are usually shorter in length, it sometimes helps to consider narrowing the timeframe for the body of the essay to the most significant part of a day, an hour, or even a portion of an hour. Then, student writers can employ methods of flashback or use introductory paragraphs to offer essential background information (exposition) for the narrative.
2. Prioritize when it comes to choosing the most important details, characters, and events for developing a narrative, but make those details, characters, and events vivid for your readers by employing methods of description and appealing to the five senses. Keep your audience in mind by understanding that they may not be as familiar with the people, places, and things that make up your story, so you may need to offer a little more description for those people than you would for others.
3. Don't forget to include dialogue in your narrative, but choose dialogue that reveals something about the characters or the relationships between the characters who are speaking to one another.

This five-paragraph essay is a good treatment of what the writer learned from a single event, a competition. The writer gets high marks for a clear thesis, organization, diction, writing style, originality, and support. The author presents a clear voice to highlight the importance of how a seemingly simple event can shape a person's character.

Bethany Shelton

Professor Renee Eades

Eng. 1010, Sec 11

12 December 2012

The Best of Competition

Does competition always affect people in a negative way? We commonly see athletes losing their tempers during games and behaving in an unbecoming fashion. Yet, given the right atmosphere, competition can instill in contestants good character qualities that will last a lifetime. This kind of atmosphere can be found at Accelerated Christian Education competition. When I was in the eighth grade, my family discovered ACE Convention, a competition that has affected my life for the better. ACE Convention competition brings out the best in the participating students, including the qualities of perseverance, sportsmanship, and camaraderie.

The ACE Convention gives homeschoolers, like me, and private school students who use ACE curriculum the opportunity to compete in a wide range of over one hundred events. The five categories of competition are as follows: academics, with events like essay-writing, spelling, or PowerPoint presentations; athletics, with team or individual sports in track and field and on-the-court games; exhibits, with photography, art, and crafts; music, with events ranging from instrumental/vocal solos to full ensembles; and platform or drama, with such events as plays, preaching, and puppets. Participants go for five days to their closest regional competition, which usually takes place on a college campus, and compete in a maximum of twelve events. On the

last day, medals are given to the first through sixth place winners.

Before students actually go to the convention, they must choose the events in which they wish to compete and work hard to get ready for the competition. Students show perseverance by working and practicing for months so that they can do their very best. All of their determination pays off when they finally go and succeed in their events. A good example of this perseverance from my own experience happened when, one year, I decided I wanted to sing a solo. My mom was my pianist, so I practiced with her almost every night and any other time she wasn't too busy. I had to memorize the lyrics and work on my facial expressions. When the day arrived to compete, I was very nervous, but I persevered through the performance and did my best. My persistence was rewarded when I placed fifth out of about thirty girls. By practicing often and performing to the best of my abilities, I learned perseverance. This has been of value to me in many other areas of my life such as when I have a difficult school assignment or another responsibility to complete. I conquer these tasks through perseverance.

However, some students, no matter how much they persevere, will not place in their events. These students can show good sportsmanship by accepting the loss and congratulating the winner. One such occurrence happened to me last year when I competed in tennis. There was only one other girl competing with me in tennis, and when the time came for our match, I could tell right away that even though I had practiced for months, she was better than I was, and she would win. I played my best, yet my inevitable defeat still occurred. I complimented her on her skill and told her how I looked forward to playing her again. She was very gracious and kind to me. I displayed good sportsmanship by having a positive attitude and good will towards my opponent even though I lost, and she displayed good sportsmanship by treating me with respect even though she won. This good sportsmanship applies to my life when someone is chosen

instead of me or I am chosen over someone else. I have learned to be gracious in both situations by displaying good sportsmanship.

No matter if one wins or loses, there is nothing like the support of friends to help celebrate the victory or forget the failure. While at the convention, there is a unique camaraderie that exists among the participants, especially with those in a group from the same school. Students go to watch each other's events and cheer on their fellow competitors. This camaraderie takes place in the group of other homeschoolers I go with every year. We encourage each other in individual events, and we pull together for our group events. Even though there are usually about forty students with our group, we always come away feeling like a family. By supporting one another, we have a special camaraderie that spills over into other areas of our lives. We help each other if in trouble, and we comfort one another if bad things happen.

The ACE Convention is the perfect place to find wholesome competition because the participating students display perseverance, sportsmanship, and camaraderie. These are good qualities to have not only for a convention, but for life. The ACE Convention shows that competition does not always have to affect people in a negative way and can in fact be a very positive aspect of a person's life. I am very happy that my family discovered ACE Convention all those years ago, and I look forward to going back next spring to compete again.

The writer of this narrative essay presents a fortuitous experience and its influence on the narrator's life. The piece is original, and its thesis is implied. Furthermore, this writing is rich with information and details, and it succeeds in creating an atmosphere where friendship and the fantasy of the Star Trek world overcome the harshness of reality.

Merri Welch

Professor Cynthia Wyatt

English 1010

22 June 2012

Live Long and Prosper

Since the age of five, I have been obsessed with anything related to science fiction. I loved watching the original *Star Trek* reruns that came on late at night and the new spin-offs that came on when I was a teenager. One day, almost fifteen years ago, I was staying at a hotel in Charleston, South Carolina, and ran into someone who changed my life in an unusual way. I never imagined my decision to have a drink at the hotel bar and an act of fate would introduce me to a world that I could not have imagined, the world behind *Star Trek*. In this fantastic world I was able to work with celebrities at conventions, learn how to become a Trekkie, and do rewarding charity work.

I sat down on a barstool to order my drink, and as I put my purse on the bar, I literally bumped into none other than Terry Farrell. Terry, a star of one of the *Star Trek* spin offs, was at the bar with a promoter named Joe. We all started talking, and I was invited to attend the convention the next day as their guest. As I walked into that huge ballroom the next day, people dressed like Starfleet officers, Klingons, and even a few Ferengi surrounded me. Most of my friends thought I was nuts for going, but not me. I was having the time of my life.

As I walked around deciding which collectible action figure I was going to buy, I noticed

Terry was surrounded by overly excited people. I went over to ask what was going on, and they explained to me that several people did not show up to work. I volunteered to help out, and they put me to work at the autograph table with Terry. There were people in line crying because they were meeting her, and she took her time with each person, making him or her feel special. After that day, I was lucky enough to work at other conventions where I met several other stars and started my journey to become a full-fledged Trekkie.

The definition of a Trekkie is an avid fan of *Star Trek* and science fiction television shows and films. To most people this sounds crazy, but to me it felt like home. I grew up watching *Star Trek* on T.V. but never imagined I would get to meet the actual stars of the show and become a part of the Trekkie phenomenon. Trekkies in my area would get together several times a year to organize functions and role play actual scenes as characters from the show. There were people dressed in black pants and red, blue, or yellow shirts with insignias to designate their rank, and some even had communicators much like the ones used in the shows.

One honor of becoming a part of this world was the charity work involved. Since I worked a regular job, my weekends were spent on the road traveling around to various charities we sponsored. One charity in particular that touched me the most was the Ron McNair Shuttle Program. Ron was an astronaut from my local town who died in the space shuttle Challenger explosion. We gathered groups of inner city and special needs children together and had them do an actual space shuttle mission. The children would dress up as astronauts and were assigned an area they would be responsible for, such as mission specialist, pilot, or commander. It was so rewarding to watch children from diverse backgrounds work together to complete a successful mission. The sense of accomplishment was overwhelming at times. We also worked with local food banks and delivered meals to shut-in people, and yes, we were in full uniforms.

I look back now and realize just what being a Trekkie has meant to me. It is one of the greatest highlights of my life. The world of *Star Trek* accepted me for who I was, no matter my background. Although I don't help out with conventions anymore, I still keep in touch with my friends from those days. Just a few years back I received a package in the mail from Terry. It was an autographed book from Mr. Spock himself, Leonard Nimoy, and the inscription said, "To Merri, Live long and prosper."

Writing Illustrative Essays

Illustration is often taught in English 1010 Composition classes as a way to help student writers learn to support any analytical or persuasive statements they make in their essays with clear, effective examples and evidence. These essays may serve to bridge early assignments in narration or description with the later assignments in writing cause/effect, problem/solution, or other, more persuasive essays. Students coming into college may find that illustrative writing is familiar to them because it often works with the form of organization and development they might have been taught in high school or other writing classes. Nonetheless, this form of writing serves as a good example of how to make a point and then thoroughly explain oneself as a writer so that reading audiences can clearly understand the writer's point and intention.

The general purpose of illustrative writing is to inform readers that a certain phenomenon or situation exists and to develop the main points through offering real-life examples or well-researched evidence from credible sources of information. These essays show—instead of telling—readers where and how we can see these situations occurring in our lives or in the lives of people around us. Illustration essays must have a clear central point, supportive points that directly relate to the main point or thesis, and vivid examples that show—or illustrate—the point that the writer is communicating. The thesis in any illustration, then, should reveal the purpose or reason for examining this situation in the first place so that the audience can understand the essay's connection and relevance to their own lives.

Illustrative essays are organized around the author's main points or assertions, and they will often follow an emphatic or point-by-point organization. To achieve cohesiveness in the essay, writers will need to focus on specific elements of the topic that are logically related to one another. For example, in an essay that illustrates the ways that people can be seen acting

selfishly on Black Friday, the writer might want to focus on what he/she sees in one store, illustrating different situations from the same location but in different areas of the store or from different types of people. It's important to keep in mind, though, that writers of illustration offer examples for several different reasons: to give readers a visual image of an abstract concept, to help readers connect to a problem that might be difficult for them to visualize or understand, or simply to let readers see the issue or situation as you have seen it through your own eyes by offering a different perspective.

When a student writes an illustrative essay, the writer must be aware of his/her audience at all times and consider what he/she hopes to accomplish with them. Irrelevant details and examples are distracting, so understanding what the audience needs in order to visualize the situation and relate to the writer's point of view is essential. An audience should be able to anticipate the point the writer is making and follow the logic of the essay without confusion. Illustrative writing, at its best, will take an audience through a situation and reveal to them something that they can learn through the experiences or knowledge of others.

Quick Tips for Students:

1. Create a thesis statement that expresses your specific point of view on a subject of interest to your intended audience. Your thesis should take into consideration the length and scope of the assignment: what is your instructor asking you to do? Consider the purpose of the assignment, whether it be persuasive or simply expository. Your thesis can provide a "roadmap" for the rest of your essay if you go the three-point route, or you may have a more generalized point of view that the body of your essay illustrates with more vivid, specific examples.
2. Pay close attention to the assignment requirements for length when determining the number of points you will cover in your illustration. You may be accustomed to a three-point thesis pattern, but you can also divide your essay into points and sub-points to make

the organization clearer and more cohesive. Organize your essay point-by-point, in order of emphasis.

3. As you would do with a narrative, prioritize when it comes to choosing the most relevant details, characters, and events for illustrating your points, but make those details, characters, and events vivid for your readers by employing methods of description and appealing to the five senses. Keep your audience in mind by understanding that they may not be as familiar with the people, places, and things that make up your story, so you may need to offer a little more description for those readers than you would for others.

This five-paragraph essay is focused, well-organized, and has convincing support. The conclusion is especially good. It contrasts what the writer's brother expected the military would be like with the way he actually found it. It ends by restating the thesis in new words. The essay is original, and the author shows courage in presenting an unconventional view of war.

David Crotzer

Professor Cynthia Wyatt

English 1010

1 July 2012

A Soldier's Sacrifice

The life of a United States soldier can be a difficult one. There are sacrifices made that may or may not be worth the costs. Most believe that it is an honor to serve our country and fight for freedom. Some soldiers are proud to serve, but in the end may regret some of the sacrifices they had to make. My brother's choice to become a soldier was not worth the sacrifices because he had to spend long periods of time away from his family, put himself in harm's way, and deal with post-traumatic stress long after returning home.

My brother spent a total of three years away from his family while he was on tour in Iraq. This is time that he will never be able to get back. One of the most significant reasons that his time away was not worth the sacrifice was that he missed the births of both of his daughters. He didn't get to see their first steps, hear their first words, or comfort them when they cried. The time away also caused irreparable damage to his marriage. During the time that he was gone fighting for his country, his wife cheated on him a total of three times.

While he was in Iraq, my brother found himself in several dangerous situations where he could have been badly injured or even killed. One of his jobs was to patrol the streets of Baghdad. During patrols, he could have been killed at any moment by improvised explosive

devices (IEDs), snipers, or mortar shells. Another duty my brother performed as a soldier was guarding prisoners of war. While guarding these prisoners, there was always the danger that they could attempt an escape, which could have resulted in serious injury or death.

Finally, when my brother returned home, he was a completely different person due to post-traumatic stress. While in Iraq, he participated in a skirmish where he shot and killed another man. The burden of killing someone weighed heavily on his conscience. He also witnessed the death of a close friend when an insurgent fired a rocket propelled grenade (RPG) at them while on patrol. This tragic event continues to haunt him and have an impact on his life to this day.

My brother decided to join the army because there were great benefits and it would pay for a college education in the future. He originally thought that serving his country would be beneficial to his family and would be a great stepping stone to the career that he dreamed of having when he completed his military contract. Others benefited from his service, enjoying their freedoms back in America, but as a result of his time in the military, my brother's life was forever changed. The motto of the Army is "This We'll Defend." My brother spent three years of his life defending his country, and if you ask me, it wasn't worth the costs.

The writer of this essay is successful in presenting his own personal fight for equality and acceptance as a gay man by broadening this view not only to the LGBT community, but to society in general. The thesis is clear, and the essay is very well organized. The diction and writing style evoke the harshness of the strife and the determination to win.

Steven Cory Bunt

Professor Cynthia Wyatt

English 1010

24 June 2012

The Good Fight

As a member of the gay community, I am part of a diverse and colorful minority. We are comprised of people from every nationality, religious belief, and social standing. We look like everyone else, and we feel feelings with the same intensity. We have enjoyed increasing support in the past couple of decades as a result of awareness programs and some outspoken members' willingness to share experiences. The eagerness to express our diversity and the shared experiences of being treated differently allow us to relate to one another on a level that is comforting and fulfilling. We can come together to speak out against bullying, marriage inequality, and being excluded.

Many gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered have been affected by bullying, and this hateful practice has caused many of us to hide our sexuality for fear of physical or verbal abuse simply because we are different. Most bullying starts in school and ends at adulthood, but gay bullying goes beyond school days. To respond to this, many members have posted videos on YouTube with the theme, "It Gets Better." The videos share hope gained from living through such atrocities. Many are heartfelt and sincere and show the pain one feels by being hurt because of something we have been unable to change about ourselves.

Another common bond we share as members of the gay community is the struggle for marriage equality. Just as we saw in the 1960s with the Civil Rights Movement, gay people are coming together to fight for the rights afforded the majority. Our motives are pure in that we wish to have the same legal rights afforded heterosexual married couples: property inheritance rights, the ability to make medical decisions for our partners, and the right to obtain health and pension benefits for our spouses. We are not asking for anything that isn't afforded to everyone else. Many of us would even settle for civil unions so that the legal protections given freely to heterosexual couples would apply to us as well. We have rejoiced with every state added to the list that agrees that marriage equality is one of those unalienable rights afforded in the Constitution.

Exclusion has been something forced on the gay community. We had been excluded from serving openly in the United States Armed Forces until recently. In many states, it is unlawful for a homosexual couple to adopt children. We have faced housing inequality that allows landlords to evict tenants based solely on their sexual orientation. Employers can fire employees when they find out we are gay. All of these exclusions have forced us to hide who we truly are, or be branded a second-class citizen without equal protection under the law. Although these exclusions are painful to think about, we have united ourselves in the fight to overturn these obtrusive and unjust laws.

As a community, instead of lying down and giving up, we have banded together in a common goal of equality for all. We have formed organizations like the Human Rights Campaign, Lambda, and the Tennessee Equality Project. As members of these groups, we use our collective voice to persuade lawmakers to see the impact of discriminatory laws from our

point of view. We make phone calls to our elected representatives, send letters, and employ teams of lawyers to appeal harmful legislation.

Our proponents have used many excuses to deny us the same rights given freely to the majority. They have used pejorative terms like “the Gay Agenda” and “the Sanctity of Marriage” to exclude us from equal protection under the law. The Gay Agenda isn’t controversial or destructive. We are human beings capable of loving and being loved. We are sons, daughters, coworkers, and neighbors. We want to be equal. We deserve to be equal. We will peaceably strive toward equality united in a determination that comes from our need to be an equal part in the human race. We will overcome.

**SECTION 2:
ENGL 1010
RESEARCHED ESSAYS**

Writing Cause/Effect Essays

Oftentimes we find ourselves in a situation, wondering how we got there, why certain events have happened, or what the results of our own actions will be. These are situations where we examine issues of cause and effect. We consider whose actions were responsible for the situation, why the person or group acted as they did, and what consequences result from those actions. In a similar respect, when writing a cause and effect essay, we are working to determine and explain reasons for behaviors, actions, or beliefs and the consequences of situations that arise because of those behaviors, actions, or beliefs.

When searching for reasons why something happened or why a situation exists, we usually find a variety of causes that are interconnected, albeit by a remote connection at times. Our purpose when writing a cause/effect essay, then, is to unravel the mystery of the causal relationship between events or happenings first for ourselves, and then for our audience. We write to explain what did or might occur, and why. Because it is not likely that a situation is the result of only a few causes—nor will there be only a few people affected by a situation or decision that is worthy of our writing—we must be sure to narrow our focus so that our subject is manageable based on the assignment’s requirements. A cause/effect essay must thoroughly and reasonably discuss each cause and explain the logical connection between those causes in order to illustrate their effects on a certain person or group. Similarly, since one particular action (cause) may result in effects on any number of people in a number of ways, we need to narrow our subject for our writing to a few effects, while still recognizing the ongoing possibilities for other consequences. Any time we find a number of apparent causes or effects, then, we should weigh them against one another and assign each a level of importance so that when we write, we may choose the most closely related causes and effects and create a thesis statement that clearly explains to our audience the connection between the most relevant causes and effects.

Another way to keep your essay focused is to consider who would and who would not agree with you; then, consider why. If there is widespread disagreement over causes or effects, you might need to go a bit further in your examination of causes and effects in order to be clear and accurate in your interpretation of the situation while also treating others' opinions fairly. Once you have determined who your audience is and on what level they will agree with you, develop your subject by describing the event or situation for which you are explaining causes and effects, offering information on who is responsible for the situation and why, what beliefs they hold, what types of decisions they have made to cause the situation, when these decisions occurred, and where those people who are affected can be found. Organize your information into paragraphs by setting a goal for each paragraph: answer one question per paragraph, and order your paragraphs to offer cause(s) before effect(s).

Quick Tips for Students:

1. Beware of confusing coincidence with cause. There always needs to be a logical, explainable relationship between your causes and effects, and you'll need to be able to discuss that relationship in your essay.
2. Do not oversimplify causes by failing to recognize their full number and complexity. Show in your writing that you recognize that the causes you are outlining there are not the only ones although they are the most important to your argument or your point of view.
3. Do not assume that because one thing preceded another, they are directly or causally related. Cause and effect depends not only on a timeline of when things happened, but also on how and why those actions are related.

PRIZE WINNER

The face of America is changing. In this prize-winning essay, the student focuses on a group that is often misunderstood in Middle Tennessee—the Hispanic population. Notice how the writer moves smoothly in the introduction from discussing general fears to his specific thesis statement about people’s fears of the Hispanic population. He strongly blends facts, figures, and academic sources with personal experience to create an essay that challenges its readers to rethink their preconceived notions and to welcome the richness of other cultures into our society.

Richard Hevia

Professor Kay Grossberg

English 1010-020

25 April 2013

Hispanophobia

People always fear the unknown, but, as an old proverb says, fear is a feeling, not a fact. People choose what they fear. When the question “What is your worst fear?” is asked, very often the answers are the same: ghosts, heights, spiders, closed spaces, snakes, planes, rats, etc. As Muhammad Safer Awain wrote in his article "Global Terror and the Rise of Xenophobia/Islamophobia: An Analysis of American Cultural Production since September 11,” the American public is saturated with fears:

In reality, fear is the basic ingredient of American socio-political scenario as public fear of the “other” - the alien, the extraterrestrial, the serial-killer, the vampire, and numerous other fears - is constantly exploited not only by the media and the politicians but also by the Hollywood film industry that produces scores of films annually based on one such fear or the other. (534)

People often ignore the most irrational and common fear of the “other” that arises between them: xenophobia. Classified as the fear or dislike of foreign people or of that which is perceived to be

foreign or strange, xenophobia is, in essence, a product of an unreasonable belief that foreign people can be harmful (“Xenophobia”). A modern variant of xenophobia known as “Hispanophobia” has taken place among the American public during the last decade. Hispanophobia has caused aversion, distrust, and discrimination of Hispanic people. The current increasing anti-immigrant sentiment is not only an issue in cities of the states of Texas and Arizona, but in non-border states like Tennessee. In my community, Goodlettsville, a rural, Southern culture aggravates this phobia. An irrational fear of Hispanic people is a fact in the United States, and three main causes fuel the problem: some Americans see Hispanics as silent invaders, illegals, or trouble makers.

First, some Americans see Hispanic people as silent invaders. A rapid growth of the Hispanic population in the last decade has awakened the American fear or rejection of Hispanic people. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, “the Hispanic population increased by 15.2 million between 2000 and 2010, accounting for over half of the 27.3 million increased in the total population of the United States”(United States, Department of Commerce). Radical groups have switched their target from African-American to Hispanic people. A strong nativist sentiment is the pillar of the new, popular anti-immigrant groups. However, looking back in history, the only ones who should be anti-immigrants are the Native American people. Those hordes of white people who reject the Hispanic migration are but descendants of European immigrants who conquered America and displaced the native, original population of the continent. Their grandparents were English Protestants looking for freedom, Irish people looking for jobs, Germanic refugees, French revolutionary thinkers, Italians, Finnish, Norwegians, Dutch people, etc.

On the other hand, sometimes those groups who claim to be anti-illegal, like the

Minuteman Project and ALIPAC, are really anti-Hispanic. America is the land of opportunities. Its own label, made once to attract immigrants, has a real significance for people around the world. Looking for economic improvement or political freedom, Hispanic people have been following the American dream for decades. The United States was built by immigrants, so a nationalist identity should be more concerned about immigrants. On the other hand, there is a common fear among the American community that Hispanics may take over and become the majority in the country, something that places the Hispanic community as the best candidate for discrimination. Some Americans have the fear of losing their jobs, benefits, or majority because the Hispanic population in the U.S. is growing strong. In the 2010 Census, there were counted more than fifty million Hispanic people in the U.S., around sixteen percent of the total population of the country (United States, Commerce). But the reality is that Hispanics are not invaders but people, like those who founded the United States, looking for a better future. Unfortunately, Hispanic people are seen as foreign invaders in the U.S. just because they are becoming a major ethnic group in the country.

Second, for some Americans, most Hispanic people are illegal. It is a wrong generalization based on the wide focus of the media on illegal matters. According to the Department of Homeland Security, an estimated 11.5 million illegal immigrants were living in the U.S. in the year 2011 (United States, Homeland Security). That means that approximately twenty percent of the Hispanic population in the U.S is illegal. Four of every five times people are wrong when judging every Hispanic as an illegal. In a survey I made in my neighborhood, twenty Americans were interviewed. The questions I asked were: How many Hispanic people do you think are living in the United States, and what percent do you consider are illegal? Fourteen of them felt that the Hispanic population in the U.S. is less than forty million, while sixteen

agreed that the illegal percentage exceeds seventy percent (Hispanic Population in U.S. Survey). This local belief that a very high percentage of Hispanic people in United States are illegal is incredible.

Furthermore, many Hispanic people have to suffer because of this wrong belief. Some years ago, a friend of my father was arrested by the police in Goodlettsville. He forgot his license at home, so he was conducted to the police station. Because he was short, had brown skin and Latin features, the police thought he was an illegal Mexican and tried to make him sign a deportation form. They didn't believe he was Cuban, and also an American citizen, until his wife came to his aid. Incredibly, things like that happen daily in the United States where Hispanic people are arrested by the police because of their features. My father's friend soon moved to Nolensville Road, which he always says is the best place for Latinos. Undoubtedly he is right; the Nolensville area has one of the highest rates of Hispanic population in Tennessee. Unlike Goodlettsville, the Nolensville area has a rich mixture of international cultures where people ask someone where he or she is from before judging features. Unfortunately, a community like Goodlettsville is far from that level of acceptance. It is a fact that a large number of Americans sees Hispanics as illegals.

Third, Hispanic people have a popular image as trouble makers among the American public. Prison movies often depict fearless Latin gangs in dispute with counterpoints African-American or pro-Nazi gangs; some examples are *American Me*, *Get the Gringo*, and *Blood in Blood Out*. American news programs show brutal murders and dangerous, unscrupulous drug lords who control crime in Central America. A Latin male walking in a neighborhood is cause for more than one suspicious gaze and phone call. That common belief causes a real panic in some Americans. As a study of the modern rise of xenophobia states, "In the wake of 9/11

attacks, due to the myth-making capabilities of the American corporate media, new 'fears of the other' or the immigrant have been systematically induced in the minds of the American public” (Awan 525). Crime has no face, although it seems to have Hispanic features for some Americans. My father had to stop running in the mornings in our neighborhood because he felt he was scaring our neighbors. We are the only Hispanic family in our neighborhood. After living a year there, we haven't met one of our neighbors. We lived four months before in Madison where we knew everybody in our building. People in Goodlettsville are more conservative about socializing with Hispanics, maybe because Hispanics fit their profile of dangerous and untrustworthy people.

The actual increase in Hispanophobia in the United States is caused by a global culture of fear. Some fear Hispanics can become the dominant culture of the nation, while others judge according to what they wrongly believe. Like other victimized groups, sometimes the easiest defense Hispanics find is rebellion or alienation. Others call for a stronger Hispanic community in the U.S. According to Clare Mar-Molinero, author of *The Politics of Language in the Spanish-Speaking World*, after some pressure in the American Congress for the approbation of radical legislations which would recognize English as the national language and restrict the use of other languages, Spanish has become a symbol of unity and common struggle among the diverse Hispanic population in the United States (169). The solution to the problem calls not only for a Hispanic response. For example, groups like the Visa Club at Volunteer State Community College promote a friendly interaction and cultural exchange between international and American students. People should not fear others because they are different. Our differences should be solved with acceptance instead of fear.

Works Cited

- Awain, Muhammad Safeer. "Global Terror and the Rise of Xenophobia/Islamophobia: An Analysis of American Cultural Production since September 11." *Islamic Studies* 49.4 (2010): 521-37. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 16 Apr. 2013.
- Hispanic Population in US Survey. Personal interview. 20 Apr. 2013.
- Mar-Molinero, Clare. *The Politics of Language in the Spanish-speaking World: From Colonisation to Globalisation*. London: Routledge, 2000. eBook file.
- United States. Department of Commerce. *The Hispanic Population: 2010*. U.S. Census Bureau. Web. 25 Apr. 2013.
- - -. Department of Homeland Security. *Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2011*. *Population Estimates*. Web. 16 Apr. 2013.
- "Xenophobia." Def. 1. *Random House Webster's Dictionary*. New York: Random House, 1990. Print.

This essay is a good example of a cause and effect essay, which features both an engaging personal voice that is conversational in tone and the integration of outside sources. The writer uses his personal experience to communicate the larger idea of how the choices we make can lead to both academic and personal success.

Billy Joseph Hager

Professor David Johnson

English 1010

26 April 2013

Military Experience and College Success

After I graduated from high school in 2008, I immediately attended Volunteer State Community College. I was a tall, skinny, frail kid, and I didn't know what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. I was barely getting by with below average grades, and my pockets were so bare I couldn't pay for school. I felt like my future was withering away like grapes on a vine not picked in time. I quit school during the middle of my second semester and then got a job. For six months, I worked at a little candy store called Candy Craze, and then it hit me like a ton of bricks. I thought to myself, "What are you doing with your life? You need to get off your butt and make something of yourself." I was always known as a "go-getter," and I made sure I was going to live up to that reputation.

I called my childhood best friend, Mikey, because I knew he was in a similar situation. We both were upset that night so we ended up drinking our pain away on my brother's couch. While we were drinking, I looked over to Mikey and said, "We're going nowhere fast Mikey. We really need to do something with our lives." He nodded and agreed with what I said, and then I asked if he had ever thought about joining the military. He said no, so I proceeded to tell him about all the benefits. That night we made a pact that we would go talk to an Air Force recruiter

the next day and join the Air Force. It turned out that Mikey chickened out on me, but I kept my word, and I ended up joining the Air Force that week. It was one of the best decisions I've ever made, because the window of opportunity finally opened up for me.

The military helped me solve a bunch of problems I had with college, and one of those setbacks was money for school. The military offers a program that will not only pay tuition and fees each semester, but which also offers servicemen and servicewomen a monthly housing allowance and money for books. The program is called the Post-9/11 GI Bill and sends over two million military men and women to higher levels of education. In 2010, legislation expanded eligibility for an additional 85,000 members of the National Guard and reserves (O'Herrin). If it weren't for this program, I would have been a veteran with no way to pay for school, and I wouldn't have been blessed with the opportunity of not working while going to school. Although the military has taught me many things, if it weren't for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the military almost would have been a useless route.

The Air Force embedded three values that I still try to live by today, which are the Air Force's three core values. The first one is "Integrity First." Integrity is defined as the adherence to ethical and moral principles. It also deals with character, honesty, courage, and responsibility (Toner). Integrity really helps me because there are times in college when you just don't want to do the work, or you just don't study. Cheating is a simple way to get out of your laziness, but "Integrity First" always flashes in my mind when I think to myself, "I don't want to do this right now. I'll just get the answers from a friend." The second is "Service before self." This means that I have a commitment to my country and fellow Airmen. An English novelist and journalist, George Orwell said, "People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf" ("Quotes About Military"). You may not think this relates

to school in anyway, but to me it does. People know that I currently serve in the Air National Guard, and as an extension of the Air Force, I must present myself in a certain structured way, which encourages me to not goof off and skip class. The third is “Excellence in all we do.” This explains the manner in how we do things. We as airmen strive for perfection, and we don’t just sweep things under the rug. We will continue a task until it has reached perfection. Just imagine if an airplane mechanic did things that were just “good enough.” Would you want to be a pilot who has to fly a plane that is just “good enough?” The point is that if I strive for excellence in all that I do in school, then I am bound to succeed.

After learning about the military, I knew changes were coming. When it comes to change, President Barack Obama explains it like this:

Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek. Focusing your life solely on making a buck shows a certain poverty of ambition. It asks too little of yourself. Because it's only when you hitch your wagon to something larger than yourself that you realize your true potential. (“BrainyQuote”)

If I had not joined the military, I would not be in the position I’m in now, and that position is pointed down the road of success. I am now ready for the challenges that are to come in my path. I have the Post-9/11 GI Bill to fund my endeavors, and I have three simple core values to help me remember why I’m in school and why I will not fail. The military experience I have has truly and undoubtedly helped me succeed in college.

Works Cited

BrainyQuote. Xplore, n.d. Web. 16 Apr. 2013.

O'Herrin, Elizabeth. "Enhancing Veteran Success in Higher Education." *Peer Review* 13.1 (2011): 15+. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 16 Apr. 2013.

Toner, Christopher Hugh. "A Critique of the Air Force's Core Values." *Air & Space Power Journal Winter 2006*: 99+. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 16 Apr. 2013.

"Quotes About Military." (205 Quotes). N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Apr. 2013.

This is a good example of a cause and effect essay. The writer uses a variety of sources, including a personal interview with a tree expert, to support his argument about the threat the Ash Borer beetle poses to ash trees and to offer potential solutions to this growing problem. This essay presents a potentially complex problem and potential solutions through clear and concise writing that is understandable for a broad audience.

Joel Meoak

Professor Cynthia Wyatt

English 1010

7 November 2012

Ash Tree Predator: Controlling the Emerald Ash Borer Beetle

Each day millions of Americans and Tennessee residents depend on natural resources, such as trees, for the comforts of their lives, often without even realizing it. Families gather around the home's dinner table, which is made of ash. City residents enjoy the beauty of urban parks from the shade of towering ash trees. Little Leaguers hit their first home runs using bats made of ash. Perhaps even more important, these individuals do not realize that these and many other daily conveniences are now at risk – all because of a small, seemingly insignificant pest possibly already visible among their ash trees. The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) beetle presents a significant threat to ash trees (*Fraxinus* spp.) and the Tennessee timber industry, as well as to the hundreds of other industries that rely on ash wood and the thousands of Tennessee communities populated with ash trees.

As long as trees have existed, insects and disease have preyed on them. As Scott Johnson, Board-Certified Master Arborist for Davey Expert Tree Company explains, “Trees normally live in a balance with the pests that prey on them. However, when an exotic invasive species is introduced, the trees have no natural defense.” Natural predators to the pest often do not exist, and the effects can be catastrophic.

The Emerald Ash Borer, a beetle normally found in Asia, has been killing ash trees in the northeast United States and southern Canada since the 1990s, although the pest was not officially identified until 2002, according to Therese M. Poland, Ph.D., and Deborah G. McCullough, Ph.D., entomology researchers for *Journal of Forestry* (118). Experts believe the EAB was brought into America within the wood materials used in international shipping pallets and crates. In its native habitat, the EAB is not a serious pest, explains Juli Gould of the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Leah Bauer of the USDA Forestry Service. Ash trees in Asia have thicker barks and the EAB has natural Asian predators (Gould and Bauer). Scott Johnson adds, “In North America, the EAB population exploded particularly quickly in urban areas because ash trees are one of the most popular tree choices to shade city blocks.”

Only ash trees are affected by the EAB. Adult beetles lay eggs on the outer bark of the ash tree. When the eggs hatch, the larvae burrow through the bark. According to Gould and Bauer, “EAB larvae feed on ash phloem, cutting off nutrients and water and resulting in tree death over a period of approximately four years.” When the larvae have grown into beetles, they emerge from beneath the tree’s bark leaving D-shaped holes (Poland and McCullough 118). Tree owners can look for this tell-tale sign to determine if their trees have been infested.

The EAB primarily relies on humans to help it spread (“Genetically”). The EAB travels in the wood that people buy or transport from infested states or areas to use as firewood. The EAB can only spread at a rate of half a mile a year without the unknowing aid of humans; however, with human assistance the beetle has been spreading an average of 20 miles per year, according to Dan Herms, Professor of Entomology, Ohio State University (“Genetically”). State and federal authorities have instituted quarantines in the areas where the EAB has been detected. Despite this, uninformed or uncaring people continue to transport firewood, helping the EAB to

migrate rapidly. According to the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, 18 Tennessee counties are currently under quarantine because of the EAB (“Emerald Ash Borer Found”).

The long-term impact the EAB could have on the Tennessee ash trees, local communities, and timber-related industries throughout the county is astounding. Poland and McCullough explain the negative implications of the EAB to the timber industry:

At least six ash species are commercially important and the wood is used for numerous products including tool handles, baseball bats, furniture, cabinets, crating, cardboard, and paper. In the eastern United States, ash comprises roughly 7.5% of the volume of hardwood saw timber, with an undiscounted stumpage value estimated to be at least \$25.1 billion. More than 8 billion ash trees occur across the United States; 40% of those trees fall into large-diameter classes. The undiscounted compensatory value of forest ash in the United States was estimated at \$282.3 billion (123).

In addition to the monetary impact, the EAB presents a danger to people living in affected communities, according to Johnson. He explains that as trees decay, the risk of falling limbs or trees increases significantly. The death of these ash trees could not only put the safety of residents at risk, but could also cost individuals and municipalities billions of dollars and could destroy the beauty of many urban streets. According to agricultural scientist Richard S. Cowles, Ph.D. and other experts, “Ash species [. . .] represent 10 to 40 percent of the canopy cover in many communities.” Gould and Bauer explain that the urban environment alone can expect to lose 30 to 90 million ash trees, valued at 20 to 60 billion dollars. In addition, the loss of aesthetics to city streets, parks, and private property is incalculable.

The EAB is spreading and sightings are already documented in 18 Tennessee counties

(Emerald Ash Borer Found in Middle Tennessee). In Tennessee alone 10 million urban ash trees and 260 million ash trees in timberland are currently at risk (“Emerald Ash Borer Found”). These ash trees are valued at more than 10 billion dollars (“Emerald Ash Borer Discovered”). The death of these ash trees could reduce property values for thousands of Tennessee homeowners. The impact on cities and municipalities could cost taxpayers millions of dollars in tree removal and replacement.

There are several options to help with the EAB problem, but none are viable in all situations. Poland and McCullough explain that preventative measures, such as insecticidal trunk injections, can save the ash trees, but only if the tree has not already been infested (125). Once a tree has been infested, it can still be successfully treated if the infestation is discovered early. One solution, though undesirable, is to cut down and burn ash trees surrounding the infested area in strips to eradicate the EABs’ food supply, according to Johnson. This keeps the pest contained within an established boundary much like a burn line does in preventing a forest fire.

Controlling the rapid spread of the EAB throughout Tennessee and other infested states must begin with better education to the general public about this growing risk. Only when people understand the signs of EAB infestation and the real danger this pest presents will they take action. Although the Tennessee counties where the EAB has been sighted are under quarantine that prohibits the transportation of firewood from those counties, residents and visitors remain largely unaware of the problem. As a result, the quarantine is only minimally effective. The long-term solution for controlling the EAB has to include concentrated efforts to better educate the public through Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and other media. In addition, state officials must enforce the quarantines with significant fines and other penalties. Stewardship of Tennessee’s natural resources is a responsibility that all of the state’s residents must share.

Works Cited

- Cowles, Richard S. et al. "Coalition for Urban Ash Tree Conservation." *Emeraldashborer.info*. USDA Forest Service, Michigan State University, Purdue University, Ohio State University. 6 Jan 2011. Web. 4 Nov. 2012.
- "Emerald Ash Borer Beetle Discovered in East Tennessee." *Mghc.org*. University of Tennessee Knoxville. 2 Aug. 2010. Web. 28 Oct. 2012.
- "Emerald Ash Borer Found in Middle Tennessee for the First Time." *TN.GOV*. Tennessee Department of Agriculture. 20 Sept. 2012. Web. 4 Nov. 2012.
- "Genetically Engineered Trees to Fight Beetles." Los Angeles, United States, Los Angeles: National Public Radio, 2008. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 1 Nov. 2012.
- Gould, Juli and Leah Bauer. "Biological Control of Pests in Forests of Eastern United States: Emerald Ash Borer." *forestpestbiocontrol.info*. UMass Amherst. n.d. Web. 28 Oct. 2012.
- Johnson, Scott. Personal Interview. 13 November 2012.
- Poland, Therese M., and Deborah G. McCullough. "Emerald Ash Borer: Invasion of the Urban Forest and the Threat to North America's Ash Resource." *Journal of Forestry* 104.3 (2006): 118-24. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 1 Nov. 2012.

Writing Problem/Solution and Claims of Policy

Problem/solution essays and claims of policy make recommendations. These recommendations call for a specific solution to a specific problem. This writing assignment is often assigned later in a semester since students will need to understand the other rhetorical modes that build to the problem/solution or claim of policy essay.

Currently in the VSCC English Department, English 1010 instructors assign the substantive research essay as a means for assessing students' abilities in writing a focused, well-researched position essay. This project is often the culmination of everything these students have learned throughout the semester: focusing a topic, creating a thesis, organizing points logically to support that thesis, and supporting the main ideas with examples and researched evidence. The problem/solution essay is a reasonable assignment since it requires students to have a broader perspective on the issue than purely personal experiences. It is also perfectly designed for the SEEK assessment, which focuses on expanding students' problem-solving abilities. The skills students learn while writing this essay can then carry over into the work they will do in their other college courses, and if required of them, in English 1020.

For the Claim of Policy assignment, English 1020 instructors may have students focus on a single issue about which they feel passionate, such as “creating a living working wage for workers,” “providing affordable health care for all Americans,” or “establishing a daycare center on VSCC’s college campus for students with childcare needs.” English instructors may ask students to build shorter argumentative essays—a claim of fact, a claim of value, and a claim of cause—to establish a problem, and the student will end the course by writing a longer argumentative essay, a claim of policy that offers solutions to the problem. Some instructors may begin the course with an I-Search paper that allows students to explore their interests as they

begin to shape their research for a claim of policy. However, other VSCC English 1020 teachers take an opposite approach, asking students to write shorter claims of fact, definition, value, cause, and policy covering a variety of topics—one topic for each claim type. All of these methods can yield strong claims of policy.

Students can write successful claims of policy by clearly establishing a specific problem, discussing the problem’s causes or effects, offering an evaluation of the problem, and providing a solution to the problem. As is the case in writing successful arguments, the claim of policy should also provide a clearly focused persuasive thesis that identifies the problem and solution, well-supported reasons backed by relevant and sufficient evidence, a counter-argument, and an appeal to an audience’s pathos, logos, and ethos.

Quick Tips for Students:

1. Note that policy claims are recognizable because they tend to use the words “should” and “should not,” but students need to also recognize when the words are implied. For example, “Support Our Troops” is a declarative bumper sticker that is a policy claim because the understood larger statement is, “We should support our troops.”
2. Writers of policy claims often have problems coming up with specific solutions for the problem, and many times, it is because those writers have failed to narrow their audience to a specific group of people. Consider your options when it comes to audience; in other words, determine who will be responsible for carrying out the actions you propose in your solution and what level of responsibility you are assigning to each group of people in that audience.
3. Don’t forget to familiarize yourself with as many options as possible before suggesting a plan of action. Also consider research on solutions that have been implemented and how and why they have been unsuccessful in other places. This knowledge will help you improve your counterargument.

This is a good example of an essay which presents a problem and offers practical solutions about the dangers of texting while driving. The writer's personal connection to this problem gives this essay a real sense of authority, and the writer also uses a variety of sources to support his/her discussion of the problem and possible solutions.

Danielle Schroeder

Professor Cynthia Chanin

English 1010

14 February 2013

The New Epidemic

In this new age, everything is electronic. You can order dinner, lock up your house, and start your car all with one push of a button on your phone. Everyone is one call away, one text away. But in this high-tech, instant gratification world our lives are now in more danger than ever. According to the study *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, “an overwhelming majority (75 percent) of serious teen driver crashes are due to ‘critical errors,’ ... one being distracted by something inside or outside of the vehicle” like texting and driving (Curry). This, like many other statistics, shows how serious, and deadly, this growing epidemic is. And in recent years, there has been a slow, but steady, improvement in the prevention of texting and driving. Yet the problem still remains at large. One major solution could be to continue to push for a nationwide ban on all hand-held devices in all vehicles for every driver.

I can personally testify for how deadly texting and driving can really be. On July 18, 2010, my best friend died in a car accident. Rachel was not hit by a drunk driver. She was not speeding, and she did not get sideswiped by a high stupid teenager. She was 17 and on her way back to a hotel to grab some food. She was on vacation with her family in California. I was bored, sitting at the pool by myself back here in Nashville, so I texted her. All I said was, “Hey

babe! Miss you. :)” I did not know she was driving, and I did not know that “more than 20% of fatal car crashes involving teenagers have been the result of cell phone use” (Choquette). I did not know until nine hours later that my best friend had died in a car crash with her cell phone still in her lap.

According to the police report, Rachel was two blocks from her hotel when she saw she had a text and began to text back. That is when she drifted into the other lane and then allegedly over-corrected her vehicle to avoid oncoming traffic. She sideswiped a palm tree and collided head-first into a building, cutting out power to about four other buildings around the scene of the accident. The police were called; traffic was backed up for hours. Life Flight came but did not make it in time. People were frustrated and late to their meetings and late for lunch with their friends. I was home, waiting for my friend to text me back, but it was not until nine hours later I found out that I would never see her name pop up on my phone again. I would never meet her to go play tennis. I would never see my best friend again. Rachel was one of the about 2,700 teens in the United States ages 16–19 who were killed in motor vehicle accidents in 2010 (“Fatality”). I never thought she would be part of the statistics I always found so terrifying. Only now do I realize how real and life-changing these statistics are.

It seems that every month a new study emerges concerning text-related accidents. At this very minute, you can Google “texting and driving” and find bullet point after bullet point of statistics, each more terrifying than the last. Some statistics gathered by the law firm of Edgar Snyder & Associates indicate that each year, 21% of fatal car crashes involving teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19 were the result of cell phone usage. This result has been expected to grow as much as 4% every year (“Cell Phone”). Similar facts are equally frightening. About 6,000 deaths and a half a million injuries are caused by distracted drivers every year. Talking on

a cell phone while driving can make a young driver's reaction time as slow as that of a 70-year-old, and in 2009, 867 fatal crashes were reported to have involved cell phones as a means for driver distraction ("Cell Phone"). Overall, texting and driving have been proven to impair and dramatically affect one's ability to drive. A recent study paired "21 teen drivers with a cell phone for texting and an MP3 player in a simulated drive. The teens in the study that were texting and finding music on their players while driving did badly. Really, really badly. They wove in and out of traffic, made dramatic changes in their speed, and actually ran over virtual pedestrians!" (Choquette).

So what can we do? The obvious answer is to ban all hand held devices while driving, and although we are not there yet, there is promise. Between a few forward-thinking government officials and the relentless number of studies, our nation is making some progress that could, hopefully, keep us moving in the right direction.

One example of the many forward-thinking congressmen and women is Representative Carolyn McCarthy. She calls for the passage of a ban that would outlaw texting and driving nationwide:

"The proliferation of smartphones brings more distracted driving, and government needs to respond to keep our roads safe," said Rep. McCarthy, a former nurse who has made public health and safety a hallmark of her tenure in Congress. "With some basic commonsense rules that are already in place in some parts of the country, we can reduce injuries and save lives in America. The House Republican Majority should help make our roads safer by passing the Safe Drivers Act." (United States)

As of December of 2012, 10 states, the District of Columbia (DC), Guam, and the Virgin Islands have all instituted a hand-held cell phone ban for all drivers, along with 32 states and DC banning all cell phone use by novice drivers (National Highway). Although these may seem like major victories, there are still many things that need to be improved, and Georgia is a prime example. In an article by Andria Simmons, she explains, “In the two years after a ban on texting while driving in Georgia took effect on July 1, 2010, state records reveal that fewer than 50 people a month have been convicted of the offense, for a total of 1,281 convictions as of Sept. 17.” This problem may be because the law is difficult to enforce and unknown to the overall public. A few solutions, as an article in *Teen Driver Source* suggests, are to better educate all law enforcement, publicize the real-world consequences of the enacted laws, and educate the public to raise awareness of the problem and danger of texting while driving (“Distracted Driving Laws”).

In recent years, texting and driving has moved to the forefront of the constant battle to keep America and its people safe. Studies have shown how serious this new epidemic is, and improvements in both law enforcement and public awareness have increased. But there is still one major goal that must be met to ensure the safety of all drivers: a nationwide ban on all hand-held devices in all vehicles, for every driver. We are not there yet, but the light at the end of the tunnel is growing larger. We just have to keep our eyes on the road long enough to see it.

Works Cited

- "Cell Phone & Texting Accident Statistics." Law Offices of Edgar Snyder & Associates, A Law Firm Representing Injured People, n.d. Web. 17 Feb. 2013.
- Choquette, Joy, ed. "Texting plus Driving Equals." Review and Herald Association Apr 2010, 26 Oct. 2011. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.
- Curry AE, Hafetz J, Kallan MJ, Winston FK, and Durbin DR. "Prevalence of Teen Driver Errors Leading to Serious Motor Vehicle Crashes." *Accident Analysis and Prevention*. April 2011.
- "Distracted Driving Laws." *Teen Driver Source*. December 4, 2012, 4 Dec. 2012. Web. 17 Feb. 2013.
- "Fatality Facts: Teenagers 2010." *Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS)*. Arlington (VA): The Institute; 2012. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *Teens and Distracted Driving, 2010 Data*. 4 Dec. 2012.
- Simmons, Andria. "Texting While Driving Law Rarely Enforced." *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. Cox Media Group, 30 Oct. 2012. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.
- United States. Cong. House. Secretary of Transportation. *Texting While Driving up 50 Percent Congresswoman Calls for Passage of Law*. H. Rept. 909925840. Print.

Writing Claims of Fact

As active participants in our world community, we come into contact with the conditions of the world around us every day—through interacting with the people around us, watching the news on television, reading a newspaper, or even attending the performance of a drama. These experiences and the knowledge that we gain from them can often make us want to share our knowledge with others, a responsibility many of the world’s citizens take seriously. Oftentimes, that responsibility leads to a desire to write in order to share our own knowledge—and the knowledge of reliable authorities—with others in our world. This desire results in our writing claims of fact.

Writers of claims of fact seek to offer factual information about past, present, or future societal conditions that involve specific communities or interest groups. Many times, our purpose in writing claims of fact is to discuss our reasons for disagreeing with some widely held belief, or because we endeavor to inform our audience about a condition in our society with which the audience is unfamiliar. For instance, we may write a claim of fact to explain why we see a condition in our society as a problem for a minority group by illustrating how that group of people is negatively affected by the beliefs and actions of the majority. On the other hand, we may write a claim of fact to explain how a specific group benefits from a program that has recently been implemented by our community. Thus, a claim of fact does not have to focus only on the negative, but instead it focuses on simply offering information to an audience who does not have ready access to all the facts and, as a result, may be mistaken in their beliefs.

To strengthen our argument, we support claims of fact with factual information such as firsthand experiences, examples, statistics, and information from other reliable authorities whom the audience would be able to verify through their own research. Our argument is made sound

by giving irrefutable evidence for the claims that we make, which are often inferences based on the factual evidence we have gathered. We typically can prove claims of fact without a doubt although there may at times be exceptions to the fact. The thesis statement should offer a comprehensive explanation of our attitude towards the issue on which the essay focuses. When writing a claim of fact, we should always write with a specific audience in mind, addressing those people or groups who would have a vested interest in the issue and how that issue is viewed by the community, or world, around them.

Quick Tips for Students:

1. Be sure to offer evidence that is sufficient for proving your point, information that is relevant to the issue at hand. Depending on how complex or controversial your claim is, you may need to offer more data if the claim is difficult to prove or less if your audience would be easily convinced.
2. Always question the reliability of your sources because some may be misleading in the way they present themselves. Look for other sources who use your authorities' information instead of assuming the source is reliable. Since not all sources are reliable, it is up to you as the writer and researcher to determine the credibility and authority of your sources.
3. Balance information gleaned from sources with your own statement of factual information. Avoid reliance on the sources to make your argument for you; instead, offer inferences based on your interpretation and understanding of the facts.

A concrete descriptive introduction using a visual picture draws the reader into this essay. Once the writer defines her term “vandalism graffiti,” she sets up a clear thesis statement she will defend with a mixture of academic sources and unfortunate personal experiences. Note the use of abundant specific examples from a variety of sources including newspapers, guides, and websites. Her essay shows how all of us lose when vandalism of this type occurs where we live and work.

Christine Price

Professor Kay Grossberg

English 1010-008

8 April 2013

Tag! You're It

Tall grass, rusted cars on blocks, boarded up windows, and vandalism graffiti – these are things people do not want to see in their neighborhood. Vandalism graffiti especially is a nuisance and a hassle. According to a brochure published by the City of Spokane Valley in Washington, graffiti is defined as “any type of unauthorized marking on public or private property. It may include words, figures, designs or other inscriptions on any type of property that can be seen by the public. It may be applied using paint, ink, dye or other substances that can be used to mark property” (“Help Keep Spokane Valley Graffiti-free”). Even a 30 mile per hour sign changed to 80 miles an hour is considered graffiti. Vandalism graffiti affects a neighborhood in multiple ways. It lowers property values, it makes residents feel insecure about their surroundings, and it costs residents and local governments thousands of dollars to clean.

Vandalism graffiti can lower property values in a neighborhood. “According to the National Association of Realtors, properties located in neighborhoods where there is graffiti vandalism lose 15% of their value” (“Recognizing Gang Activity”). As prospective home buyers drive through a community, the sight of vandalism graffiti can conjure up images of a low-

income, high-crime area. For those who are willing to invest in the neighborhood, a reasonable price for a home is expected. The buyer will not want to spend a great deal of money on a property that will need constant removal and clean-up of the unwanted art. Residents may miss out on a much needed service in the community because a business may have second thoughts about moving into a neighborhood with lots of graffiti.

Along with lower property values, graffiti can make residents feel insecure about their surroundings. When there are instances of graffiti in a neighborhood, a rise in crime and gang activity are usually to blame. Graffiti can lead a drug user to the neighborhood where the drug of choice is sold. Gangs may notify opposing gangs of their territory with graffiti. This makes people feel unsafe. These kinds of activities can keep residents barricaded in their homes – afraid to go outside and play with their children. I experience this feeling of being unsafe. I live next door to a high school; my fence separates the two properties. One evening on the way home from work, I noticed that my fence was spray painted with graffiti. My heart sank. I felt like someone hit me in the stomach. My family and I work hard to keep our home beautiful, and to see it defaced made me sick. I felt unsafe not knowing who did this or why he or she did it. This caused some sleepless nights as any noise outside invited a visit to the window. I was determined to catch the perpetrator of the unsolicited decoration. Since private citizens are responsible for the clean-up and removal, we did not call the police. In turn, no one was caught for this crime. Residents can experience fear and anxiety when their property is damaged or destroyed. The feeling of being safe at home is no longer there. No one wants to feel unsafe at home. Moving to a neighborhood without graffiti may ease any fears while establishing a sense of security.

Another hassle of vandalism graffiti is the cost to the community. The cost of removal

and clean-up affects everyone. Homeowners have costly repairs, and local governments also have a significant cost. As reported in the *Tennessean*, an incident of vandalism of a sign on interstate I-65 cost the city of Nashville \$2,000 to make the sign legible to drivers after an individual spray painted it. The Tennessee Department of Transportation spent over \$240,000 on graffiti removal on roads and bridges in 2006 alone – this number did not include property of private citizens; the responsibility for removal of graffiti lies with the private citizen (Brooks A1). In 2006, Denver, CO and Milwaukee, WI spent over one million dollars on graffiti removal. Las Vegas, NV incurs over three million dollars in clean-up costs annually (“Cost of Graffiti: How Does Graffiti 'Hurt'”). Deborah Lamm Weisel states the following in her report for the US Department of Justice:

There are huge public costs associated with graffiti; an estimated \$12 billion a year is spent cleaning up graffiti in the United States. Graffiti contributes to lost revenue associated with reduced ridership on transit systems, reduced retail sales, and declines in property value. In addition, graffiti generates the perception of blight and heightens fear of gang activity. (United States 2)

I know firsthand what this involves. When my fence was spray-painted, my family incurred an unexpected expense. The first time it happened, we had to rent a pressure washer to remove the graffiti, buy a stain to match the existing color of the fence, and spend a few hours out of the day to repair the damage. The second time it happened, my husband was so angry he ripped 40 pickets from the fence. It was a little dramatic and comical at the same time. This tirade cost us a trip to Home Depot, the price of 40 new dog-eared pickets, gas, and two days' worth of work. The most costly expense was the security cameras that we installed; the system cost over five hundred dollars. When the local governments have to spend part of their annual budget on

cleaning graffiti, taxes can increase or a needed service can be eliminated from the community. A homeowner will also have to adjust his or her budget to accommodate the unexpected cost. Depending on the damage, the money necessary for clean-up and repair cost can determine if a family travels for vacation or stays at home.

Finally, vandalism graffiti changes the landscape of our surroundings, and not for the betterment of the community. Residents and businesses take pride in their neighborhoods and do not want the value of their property to decrease. No one wants to feel unsafe when travelling through a neighborhood, so quick removal is the key to keeping graffiti out of the neighborhood. It puts the vandals on notice that a community will not put up with this type of activity. No matter where we live or who is responsible to clean it up, vandalism graffiti affects all.

Works Cited

- Brooks, Jennifer. "Graffiti Grows as Costly Nuisance for Nashville." *The Tennessean* [Nashville] 14 Jan. 2007, Main sec.: A1. *ProQuest*. Web. 16 Apr. 2013.
- "Cost of Graffiti: How Does Graffiti 'Hurt'?" *Graffiti Hurts: Get Facts*. Keep America Beautiful, 2013. Web. 19 Apr. 2013.
- "Help Keep Spokane Valley Graffiti-free." Spokane Valley, WA: City of Spokane Valley, 2011. *The City of Spokane Valley*. Web. 18 Apr. 2013.
- "Recognizing Gang Activity." *Marion County Sheriff's Office*. Marion County Sheriff's Office, 2007. Web. 24 Apr. 2013.
- United States. Department of Justice. *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police Problem-Specific Guides Series Guide No. 9: Graffiti*. By Deborah Weisel Lamm. Washington, DC: 1-68., 2009. *cops.usdoj*. Web. 24 Apr. 2013.

SECTION 3:
ADVANCED
RESEARCHED ESSAYS

PRIZE WINNER

Even though the writer of this argument plans to major in environmental engineering, before researching for this essay, he knew little about the current controversy of fracking. In an evaluation of his process for this paper, he noted that this was a great learning experience, and one thing that especially helped was writing an annotated bibliography of his sources. He did not give up easily on interviewing an expert in the field even when getting this took several emails. One strength of this essay is the fair treatment of both sides of the issue. The writer did not exaggerate either position. He also qualified his claim by admitting that fracking may be safe in the future.

Jackson Bogach

Professor Cynthia Chanin

English 1020

29 April 2013

The Environmentalist versus the Economist

If somebody were to claim that a certain process could substantially help a declining economy, of course any sane human being would jump right on board with the idea. However, the underlying issues should be examined and studied before jumping right into the process. That is the mistake the gas companies are making, promoting an industry where there are known dangerous consequences. Hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as fracking, is the process of injecting copious amounts of water, sand, and chemicals into underground shale formations, which then releases natural gas up to the Earth's surface. Natural gas is very much in demand right now in the United States and the world market, and the gas companies want to get in on the profit. According to the Annual Energy Outlook, there may be up to 23,427 billion cubic meters of gas below the surface of the United States, and as a country, we will use around 650 bcm (Leahy). Being in demand and having an abundance of resources is a lucrative combination in the eyes of the gas companies, but the toll it leaves on an already deteriorated environment is

alarming. Fracking has a chance to help this country's down economy, but currently, the negative consequences such as water and air pollution, potential earthquakes, and acceleration of global warming are too harmful to keep moving forward.

Fracking is a fairly new up and coming process, though Halliburton, one of the world's largest gas and oil companies, claims that it invented the method of fracking in 1947. However, only within the last decade or so has the industry really started to increase production (Gies). Because it is a somewhat new method of extracting gas, scientists and researchers have just now started doing research on the process and the effect it has on the environment. As of right now, there is not a substantial amount of evidence on either side of the issue. This is why some proponents of fracking would say that there is not enough evidence proving it unsafe; therefore, gas companies should not halt drilling. There is even a report done by the Energy Institute at the University of Texas at Austin, which concludes that there is no correlation between fracking and pollution. The problems that are associated with fracking are the same problems that come with any type of gas drilling (Duffy).

Proponents of the issue will also say that the independence from foreign oil and the positive economic factors will be very beneficial. Both of these claims are true. Dr. James A. Mason, who has a Ph.D. in geotechnical engineering from Cornell University, says, "We use a lot of foreign oil. If we can become independent of this, then we will become a stronger country." However, he goes on to note that fracking can harm the environment, and the process should be safe before becoming dependent on natural gas (Mason). Ed Morse, an analyst at the company Citigroup, argues in favor of continuing to frack. He concludes that the industry will bring three million jobs to the United States, add up to three percent to the nation's GDP, provide trillions of dollars in tax revenue, and help the steel and manufacturing industries (qtd. in Hart).

Some individual states are already benefiting from the process. Maureen Nevin Duffy points out, “North Dakota, for one, credits the drilling with the best employment numbers the state’s seen in years and has threatened to sue the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) if it bans the practice” (Duffy). Yes, all of these are very beneficial attributes related to fracking, and hopefully in the near future this country will be able to continue drilling and become a world natural gas powerhouse, all the while having a minute effect on the environment and this nation’s people.

On the other hand, there are many problems surrounding the process of fracking. The most pernicious problem is water pollution from chemicals used in the drilling process, and leaks in faulty piping and wells due to the lack of sufficient technology. Watson and Bachu, a company that does research within the industry, did a study on 352,000 new wells in Canada. Out of those 352,000, 12 percent leaked fluids from the wells, which is a higher number than older wells. The technology is not improving, and in fact, it is getting worse (“Does”). The leaked fluids usually include benzene, methane, and other drilling chemicals. Duke University researchers found methane in water near fracking wells while doing their study. Also, the University of Pittsburgh noticed problems with wastewater from fracking. Their research shows that wastewater being brought into a public water treatment plant was so chemically different that the facilities were unable to hold the water (Tucker). Theo Colborn of The Endocrine Disruption Exchange in Paonia, Colorado, led a group of scientists researching over 632 chemicals that are used in fracking operations. Their findings are astonishing considering that many of these chemicals have the capability of accidentally flowing into a person’s personal water source:

Colborn’s group reported that at least 3 in every 4 chemicals they examined could affect

breathing systems, the gut and several sensory organs, including the skin and eyes. Roughly half might affect the brain or nervous system, immunity, the kidneys and the cardiovascular system. And perhaps 1 in 4 of the chemicals “could cause cancer and mutations”. (Gies)

Even though there has not been a vast amount of research done on the subject yet, these initial findings are terrifying when one takes into consideration that the gas companies are trying to drill on public land where a large number of people get their water. For example, the Marcellus Shale region, which covers around 124,000 square kilometers of area from New York to West Virginia, is being debated over whether to use for drilling or not. Scientific research at Stony Brook University in New York concludes, “Producing natural gas in the Marcellus Shale region poses substantial potential risks of river and other water pollution that suggests additional regulation to reduce the potential of drinking water contamination” (“Researchers”). These northeastern states are heavily populated, and fracking could have a negative effect on a large number of people. Furthermore, the problems surrounding the process go beyond water pollution.

There is also a possibility of earthquakes being caused by this method. The U.S. Geological Survey and the National Research Council both concluded that earthquakes might be linked to the injection of wastewater into the underground shale formations. This happens when the water is forced into cracks within the rock, causing two different slabs to slide past one another. Recently, areas that include Arkansas, Ohio, Oklahoma, and the United Kingdom, have experienced seismic activity near fracking sites (Gies). In another case, Deb Nardone, director of the Sierra Club’s Natural Gas Reform Campaign, acknowledges, “[Fracking] is also linked to causing earthquakes in parts of the country not known to have earthquakes in the past, like

Youngstown, Ohio” (qtd. in Duffy). As of right now, the earthquakes are very minor, but more research needs to be done to fully understand the effect of the issues.

The EPA and American Lung Association have also presented concern with air pollution. The EPA reported that during air quality tests near a fracking site in Texas, chemicals that are used in the drilling process were found in the air (Duffy). The American Lung Association has noted that there are deficiencies in the air related to fracking. This was in reply to a plan set by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The association goes on to say that the plan will harm the air, without even taking into consideration the number of truck trips needed for a fracking operation (Tucker). The air we breathe is a very precious resource, and harming it could cause various problems in human health.

Although natural gas is cleaner than burning coal or oil, the heavy production of natural gas could actually accelerate the problem of global warming. A study done by the U.S. National Center for Atmospheric Research entitled “Coal to Gas: The Influence of Methane Leakage,” concludes that the combination of energy needed to extract the gas and methane leakage could stimulate global warming. The study asserts, “Natural gas is mainly methane, so even if leaks are limited to one to two percent, it would only be slightly better than continuing to burn coal” (qtd. in Leahy). This is only a problem currently. If scientists can figure out how to stop leaks and come up with a more environmentally safe way to extract the product, then natural gas would certainly be cleaner than coal or oil.

As of right now, scientists and researchers are trying to find ways to make fracking safer, but there are not many solutions. This is because research on fracking is only in its initial phases. However, scientists at Stony Brook University have researched a method that may reduce wastewater and contamination in the water. The method would be to use nitrogen-based or

liquefied petroleum instead of various other chemicals and drilling fluids throughout the fracking process. They insist that the government should look into this process when making regulations (“Researchers”). It is uncertain how well this solution will work, but there is progress.

Water and air pollution, possible earthquakes, and the risk of contributing to the current climate problem certainly pose a threat to the environment and humans. The United States should stop drilling until the entire process is researched, studied, and made safer. Madelon Finkel, who is a professor of clinical public health at Weill Cornell Medical College reasons, “If you have an industry where there are, in a sense, known dangers, don’t go forward until you’ve actually analyzed and assessed what these dangers are” (qtd. in Tucker). The gas will always be there under the earth, or at least until it is drilled. The gas companies should halt drilling and wait until research is done to make it safer and assess how harmful the process actually is. When it is deemed safe, then the gas companies can go on with drilling. There are always going to be negative consequences when it comes to drilling for gas, so it will never be absolutely safe. We just need to make it as safe as possible before moving forward.

Works Cited

- "Does the Natural Gas Industry Need a New Messenger?" *Fractured Future*. CBC News, 29 Nov. 2011. Web. 31 Mar. 2013.
- Duffy, Maureen Nevin. "New Fracking ETF Looks Past the Backlash." *Institutional Investor* (2012): n. pag. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 31 Mar. 2013.
- Gies, Erica. "Fracking Fuels Energy Debate." *Science News for Kids* 18 July 2012: n. pag. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 31 Mar. 2013.
- Hart, Peter. "Fracking: Too Much of a Good Thing, Says Planet Money Guy." *Fair Blog*. N.p., 18 Dec. 2012. Web. 31 Mar. 2013.
- Leahy, Stephen. "Environment: 'Fracking' For Shale Gas: Neither Clean Nor Green." *Global Information Network* [New York] 5 Dec. 2011: n. pag. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 31 Mar. 2013.
- Mason, James A. Personal interview. 15 Apr. 2013.
- "Researchers Find Substantial Water Pollution Risks From 'Fracking' to Recover Natural Gas." *Targeted News Service* [Washington D.C.] 6 Aug. 2012: n. pag. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 31 Mar. 2013.
- Tucker, Charlotte. "Health Concerns of 'Fracking' Drawing Increased Attention." *The Nation's Health* 42.2 (2012): 1+. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 31 Mar. 2013.

This research-based argument essay moves from establishment of a problem, the surprisingly high percentage of disabled citizens who can't drive and the lack of public transportation in rural areas to serve them, to a practical solution, the establishment of "cooperative" rural transportation networks using federal vehicles already in service and paid for by a "cheques" system. The writer engages us by making the case, in the opening paragraph, that disabled people have talents and abilities that would be well-served by better access to work and education opportunities. The reader is bound to be struck by the well-supported information regarding the high percentage of disabled citizens in the nation, for whom the writer creates a sympathetic image, drawing effectively on her own experience as a blind person. In fact, the personal perspective and the sound integration of compelling sources, mostly from Thigpen databases, make this essay effective and memorable. The conclusion, that many well-known artists and leaders had disabilities, brings home the point that we all benefit when all our citizens reach their potential and live rich, full lives.

Jacquelyn Anderson

Professor Laura Black

English 1020, Sec. 020

27 April 2013

Get a Life: We Would If We Had Transportation

Since its activation in 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has seen to countless improvements in daily living for people with disabilities; however, reliable and accessible public transportation remains painfully behind. Because most rural areas in America still have little to no public transportation, city councils that rule over such communities should strive to install public transit systems so that people with disabilities can become active, successful, and independent members of society. In many areas across the country, mainly suburban and rural areas, there is no option for public transportation at all, or else the few options do not reach to provide service to the entire area. Many people with disabilities possess substantial education as well as sufficient work capabilities. They would be more than capable of working, attending school, or even volunteering for a charity, but they cannot manage any of these things

independently if they do not have access to a mode of transportation. Because of this lingering problem, many disabled citizens are left with no way to demonstrate their full potential as productive members of society, which often leads to the popular belief that people with disabilities cannot be independent.

Thanks to the ADA's requirements, many things have improved and become considerably more accessible than they were before its activation. Businesses and public sites of entertainment have made changes and renovations to their buildings to make them wheelchair accessible as well as labeling individual rooms with signs that sport both raised print and braille identification of the room's number and purpose. Some restaurants now provide the option of braille menus, some theatres offer descriptive audio options for the blind or sign language providers for the deaf, and movies on home video have even been made accessible by being made available in descriptive audio, again for the blind. In addition, many technological advances have been made as well. Screenreaders exist for computers, whether they are a PCs or a Macs, and devices with touch-activated screens such as iPods, iPads, and iPhones have been programmed to speak so that blind users can successfully own and operate them. With all of these improvements, the mind is left to wonder why it is that public transportation is still so lacking. There may be many varying reasons, or there may be no central reason at all. Like everything else, the ADA does address transportation.

According to an article in the *Gale Encyclopedia of American Law*, "Title II of the ADA requires that state and local government programs and activities be accessible to those with disabilities. Title III of the ADA applies the same requirement to certain private entities that own, lease or operate places of public accommodation" ("Disability"). Among the items listed under Title III are travel services and public transits. Therefore, the ADA includes public

transportation in its requirements, and once again, the mind is left to wonder why transportation remains so behind in the midst of so many other adaptations.

To further understand the group that I am speaking of, it must first be understood that the term “disability” does not refer solely to those with physical disabilities. It covers a broad spectrum of definitions, and refers to visual or hearing impairments, mental or learning disabilities, and even includes senior citizens. Therefore, it is not only the blind or physically handicapped that would benefit from public transportation in these areas. According to an article by the States News Service, a local transportation program would provide “critical transportation for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, the economically-disadvantaged and rural residents” (“Board”). While citizens with disabilities are certainly the ones who need access to transportation the most, they are not at all the only ones. Due to rising gas prices, many citizens who live in the more populated areas of the country have already resorted to public transit systems as a means to save money, especially those who have no disabilities, but cannot afford their own vehicles. Therefore, the population as a whole would benefit from available public transportation. It could even benefit those who live in the city but have relatives out of town. It would be more convenient—and probably less expensive—to have access to a form of public transportation for such trips.

Of course, education and employment aren’t the only uses for public transportation. Disabled persons would also be able to participate in more leisure activities as well—activities that “normal” people take for granted, such as movies, dating, and shopping trips. Citizens with disabilities, myself included, often have very limited social lives because they have no way to get out in order to go anywhere. Most of my friends—the ones I speak to daily—are online friends. Why? Because I am blind, and therefore cannot drive. I live outside city limits, so I cannot walk

either. I live in a rural area that has absolutely no transportation whatsoever, except for one option: the church van. However, the church van only transports from home to church and back. It is not an official mode of public transportation. Certainly, I have friends at school and friends at church, but all of my in-person friends talk about movies, concerts, seeing each other at work, having lunch or dinner together, or going on shopping trips together. I am never able to be included in any of these activities for several reasons: they do not know where I live, my house might be out of their way, and I never know when they are planning such outings. But the main reason is that I have no transportation. Unless one of them (or one of my parents) is available to come pick me up to give me a ride, I have no way to join them. Church is my only leisure activity; school and church are the only places I go on a regular basis that are not family gatherings. Not only would social lives benefit from public transportation, but so would other important aspects of life.

In an article by the US Fed News Service, it is said that while other things have improved since the ADA's activation, public transportation, especially in rural areas, continues to be a serious problem, and because of the still-lacking transportation in rural areas, those people with disabilities participate less in all aspects of community living ("Impact"). This is understandable, considering the fact that those without a means of public transportation must then rely upon friends and family to transport them to their destinations. They must coordinate their schedules to fit with the schedules of their drivers, which is not always easy or convenient. In some cases, it even makes things more difficult, which is usually because the disabled party's schedule cannot be adjusted, and so the driver must adjust his or her schedule instead. For the mother of a blind daughter who works a full-time job, it can become frustrating when she has to miss half a day of work in order to take her child to a doctor's appointment. That is four hours' worth of

money sliced off of her paycheck, and in a crumbling economy, every last cent is needed to stay out of financial misery.

While it is true that persons with disabilities are a minority, they are not quite as much of a minority as many believe. In her article, “TANF: What Went Wrong and What To Do Next,” Vicki Lens clarifies the percentage of disabled persons in the United States. She explains that “the number of people in America with physical disabilities ranges from ten to twenty percent, mental disabilities is four to twenty-eight percent, and learning disabilities is from twenty-four to forty percent.” This demonstrates that there are more citizens with disabilities than it seems. There are certainly enough of them to make a difference when it comes to things like voting or volunteering for large charity activities, both of which are highly important aspects of community living. Furthermore, in their article, “Rehabilitation Service Patterns: A Rural/Urban Comparison of Success Factors,” Daniel Lustig, David Strauser, and Gail Weems reveal that “twenty percent of America’s population lives in rural areas, and twenty-three percent of those who live in rural areas have a disability compared to eighteen percent in metropolitan areas” (Lustig et al.). Thus, there is a large percentage of people with disabilities in America, and a large number of them cannot properly be active in community living because they have no way to get out of the house unless it is necessary or, as previously mentioned, a family gathering.

At a glance, this seems to be a problem of great size and weight; while it is a very large problem, research has been conducted to prove that something can be done. Every problem has a solution, no matter how complex it appears. Why should others be concerned? Because disabled citizens are just like anyone else, and they have lives to live just like everyone else. Imagine how frustrating it is to be unable to live your own life, to have to rely on others to help you live your life, and imagine how tantalizing it is to know that the only thing you need to take control of

your own life is your own transportation.

It's not that big a deal, some may say, but when you think about the numbers involved, the true magnitude of the issue is revealed. Twenty-five percent of America's population is made up of citizens with disabilities (Lens). Within this twenty-five percent exists the nearly twelve million people with disabilities that are classified as transportation-dependent. This means that without transportation, they cannot properly carry out any tasks away from home. Given what many disabled people have proven themselves capable of doing, should this not be a concern for the population as a whole and not just for those with disabilities? If America is to be a fully united country, its population must care for its minorities and do all that it can to ensure that they have the same opportunities as the majorities. Solutions do exist for this problem, but like most any other problems of this magnitude, they require funding as well as willingness to participate. One solution was described as forming a "cooperative" rural transportation model for disabled citizens that would involve forging transportation cooperatives among agencies with federally-funded vehicles. Agencies such as a senior citizen program, a mental health center, and a developmental disabilities service provider could team up by combining their vehicles and transportation budgets to serve any and all people with disabilities and not just each individual agency's clients. Such a model was found to be effective as well as financially feasible, but it has not been widely adopted for several reasons, the two largest ones being that local agencies often fear loss of control or income, and it requires a community to be large enough to have at least two cooperative agencies with accessible vans. The latter reason is typically not an available option for smaller and more remote rural areas. Unfortunately, many such areas in the United States are just that: smaller and/or more remote than other areas. There are a great many rural areas that are not just outside city limits, but are also further away from surrounding city borders,

making it necessary to drive to complete a simple grocery run.

Similarly, as of 2009, officials in Pike County, Illinois, have begun to take an active approach to provide public transportation for their citizens with disabilities in rural areas. According to an article in *The Jacksonville Journal-Courier*, “a third of the population needs a public transit system, and another sixty-eight percent would use it if available” (“Public”). Transportation was needed outside their county as well, “especially for things such as medical appointments, shopping, work and entertainment” (“Public”). With assistance provided by Western Illinois University, a five-step process was put into motion, and instead of tax increases, any public transportation system will rely on grants and funding. If Pike County can show their initiative and concern, what is holding back the other one thousand, two hundred counties in America that have no public transportation at all? There should be no hesitation from other areas in the country. If one can do it, so can the others, and if it means helping disabled citizens to become independent, it should be more than worth the effort.

One alternative solution has proven itself to be relatively simple, straightforward, and undeniably effective. This alternative involves using a voucher model for transportation. Two widely-known examples of this model are the Food Stamp program and various school voucher projects. In their article “Accessible Rural Transportation: An Evaluation of the Traveler’s Cheque Voucher Program,” by Linda Gonzales, Dennis Stambaugh, Tom Seekim, and Devva Kasnitz, it is explained that “In the voucher model for rural transportation, a community transportation coordinator facilitates transportation by negotiating with any public and private providers to accept vouchers; identifies potential volunteers who may accept vouchers in partial payment for transportation; reimburses transportation providers who submit vouchers for payment; and recruits eligible participants, provides them with vouchers to pay for rides, and

trains them to use vouchers creatively and effectively” (Gonzalez et al.) Put simply, it is the transportation coordinator’s duty to find providers that will accept the vouchers as well as provide participants with vouchers and training to educate them on how to use the vouchers (Gonzalez et al.).

Of course, every solution has at least one flaw. The flaw of the voucher system is addressed in the article, but so is the action that was taken to attempt to remedy the situation. In the article, it is stated that “a review of the use of transportation voucher models indicates that this option is rarely used to create transportation options for our target population of people with severe disabilities living in rural areas. Without a clear model, operating procedures, and evidence for its utility, communities may be unaware of this option or may lack the capacity to pursue it” (Gonzalez et al.). A national demonstration was then carried out to explore the strategy for transportation provision to people with disabilities, and it focused on how small towns and rural communities could organize and operate a flexible supported transportation program for people with disabilities (Gonzalez et al.).

The demonstration ran for four years. During the first year, each site only operated for two to four months, but during the second, third and fourth year, they operated for a full twelve months. A total of five hundred eighty-eight adults with various disabilities participated in the program, and at its conclusion, one hundred seventy-one of them had obtained employment. A similar number of people that were already employed when they enrolled reported that the program either helped them maintain their current job or improved their employment (Gonzalez et al.). As it stands, this solution offers more success and stability than most other options, and should be given serious consideration.

How does this voucher program work? Is it really simple and straightforward? The vouchers,

or Traveler's Cheques, are very similar in style to standard bank checks and provide a means of tracking each ride for each participant. The cheques have areas where the user identifies the ride's date, purpose, provider, and estimated mileage. The listed purposes include trips for employment, education, medical, shopping, and social or religious purposes (Gonzalez et al.). When a user needs a ride, he or she must identify a transportation provider and arrange a ride, and at the end of the ride, he or she must fill out a cheque. The original is given to the driver while the carbon copy is kept by the user. The driver then submits the original to the sponsoring agency for reimbursement. When more cheques are needed, the user simply exchanges their filled registers for new ones, and the process continues (Gonzalez et al.). It is that simple!

Yes, that is all well and good, but how expensive is it? Naturally it requires a bit of funding, but it is not nearly as costly as some other possible solutions. For those in charge of seeing to the system's implementation, funding would be required to see that the drivers are reimbursed for their work as well as for any special vehicles that would be required. Some drivers may be volunteer drivers, in which case they may use their own vehicles. For those who would be clients, payment is only required when writing the cheques for the drivers, like average bank checks. As for the price, it would of course depend upon the distance traveled, similar to most taxi services, but according to the results of the national demonstration, no trip taken cost more than twenty dollars(Gonzalez et al.). It is flexible, simple, and not nearly as expensive as one would think it to be; this is a wonderful solution!

In conclusion, the Traveler's Cheque program appears to be highly effective, simple, flexible, and easily implemented. If more rural communities were so inclined, this voucher model could be applied to many areas across the country to provide that much-needed transportation for people with disabilities, who would then be considerably more capable of becoming active,

successful, and independent members of society. We have so much potential, so much to offer as American citizens, and if we could just get off of our “islands” and out into the “mainland,” we could better our own lives and, one day, perhaps better the lives of others around the world. Think of how many disabled people have made themselves known worldwide in the books of history. Stevie Wonder is blind and is one of the most well-known musical artists of America; Franklin D. Roosevelt was unable to walk without assistance due to developing polio, but he became one of the most recognizable American presidents in history. Beethoven was deaf, yet he composed many musical classics that countless people today still adore. Do you think they could have accomplished half of what they did without the ability to travel? That being said, let me ask you again: should the lack of public transportation for people with disabilities not be a concern for all? Yes, it should because the disabled are capable of doing just as much as anyone else. Perhaps not in the same way, but that is what makes them unique, not incapable. Give them a chance; let them show you.

Works Cited

- “Board Approves NJ Transit’s Local and Community Transportation Program.” *States News Service* 11 July 2012. *General OneFile*. Web. 1 April 2013.
- “Disability Discrimination.” *Gale Encyclopedia of American Law*. Ed. Donna Batten. 3rd edition. Vol. 3. Detroit: Gale, 2010. 457-465. *Opposing Viewpoints In Context*. Web. 29 Mar. 2013.
- Gonzales, Linda, Dennis Strombaugh, Tom Seekim, and Devva Kasnitz. “Accessible Rural Transportation: An Evaluation of the Traveler’s Cheque Voucher Program.” *Community Development: Journal of the Community Development Society* 37.3 (2006): 106+. *General OneFile*. Web. 1 April 2013.
- "Impact of Americans with Disabilities Act: Assessing the Progress Toward Achieving Goals of Ada." *US Fed News Service, Including US State News* 26 July 2007. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 15 Feb. 2013.
- Lens, Vicki. "TANF: What Went Wrong and what to Do Next." *Social Work* 47.3 (2002): 279-90. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 15 Feb. 2013.
- Lustig, Daniel C., David R. Strauser, and Gail H. Weems. "Rehabilitation Service Patterns: A Rural/Urban Comparison of Success Factors." *Journal of Rehabilitation* 70.3 (2004): 13-9. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 15 Feb. 2013.
- “Public Transportation Needed, Pike Officials Find.” *Jacksonville Journal-Courier [Jacksonville, IL]* 10 Aug. 2009. *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*. Web. 29 Mar. 2013.

This essay provides an excellent example of how to advance a nuanced analytical thesis by presenting the complex cultural and historical contexts from which it is drawn. The writer traces how the American definition of freedom in the post-World War II era became synonymous with consumerism and explores how this has reduced the economic freedom of individual citizens. This expansive essay is distinguished by a persuasive academic voice, judicious use of sources, and in-depth critical analysis of historical material. The writer uses a variety of rhetorical approaches—including definition, cause-and-effect reasoning, comparing and contrasting, and illustration—to build the argument.

Adam Proctor

Professor Laura Black

Honors History/Literature Combo II

7 May 2013

Freedom to Want: How the Cold War Reversed American Economic Freedom

Citizens of the United States have the inalienable right to consume. They are encouraged to consume—voraciously, insatiably—from the moment they leave the womb to the moment they enter the grave. When U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon and U.S.S.R. Premier Nikita Khrushchev met in Moscow for the 1959 American National Exhibition, they debated the relative economic freedom of the consumer in a capitalist versus communist country, asking always, "Who has the greater freedom of choice and freedom from labor?" Insofar as these were the terms of the competition, the Soviet cause was doomed to failure. After the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. emerged as the two major powers following World War II, the ensuing ideological debate prompted Americans to invert their perception of economic freedom. During the ideological revision, "freedom of choice" became tantamount to "economic freedom," consumerism consumed American culture, and freedom of labor was again superseded by freedom of enterprise. To understand the underlying causes of this redefinition of economic freedom, it is first necessary to understand the economic conditions which preceded the era.

The 1920s were marked by a massive disparity of wealth, but also by a prototype of the same concept of "freedom of choice" as thought of today. During this time, the increased perception of wealth by consumers, generated largely by installment plans, led to a massive increase in consumption. In turn, this led to a similar increase in the number and variety of products available to the average household. This dubious prosperity continued until 1929, when the Great Depression drastically reduced the money supply and consumer expectations, and thus aggregate demand; naturally, the quantity of supply shifted to meet the new equilibrium. American involvement in World War II necessitated a vast increase in government purchases, leading to a marked increase in employment, in order to prevent the surplus of supply from becoming a deficit. With new jobs came an increase in both the money supply and consumer expectations: demand was thus set to increase again as World War II ended. During the war rationing, American consumers once again came in possession of money but lacked products on which to spend it. When the war ended—and rationing with it—the American public was eager to begin spending the wealth they had accumulated, and American firms were eager to give them the opportunity.

Clark Kerr, president of the University of California at Berkeley, wrote in 1960 that the reduced economic freedom of the worker was offset by wider "alternatives in goods and services," referring to these alternatives as indicative of "a greater scope of freedom" (Foner 264). In this assertion, he summarized the primary indicator of the Cold War-era redefinition of economic freedom: unlike the communists, whose command economy made advertisements and other brand differentiations largely (if not entirely) unnecessary, the "free enterprise" enjoyed by Americans made available an overwhelming multitude of products and brands. Seven years earlier, a 1953 *House Beautiful* article declared that the American market economy gave

consumers "a greater chance to be yourself than any people in the history of civilization" (Foner 264).

Because the primary enemy of a capitalistic economic system is a closed market, the communist U.S.S.R.—being a "monolithic" symbol of communism and command economies—was the enemy of the United States. Every ideological stance taken by the Soviets had to be countered by the U.S.: where the "godless Commies forced their women to work," Nixon promised to protect American housewives—for the place of the woman was, necessarily, in the home—from even household labor. Describing an automatic floor-sweeper, Nixon said, "You don't need a wife" (Foner 272). Similarly, because the centralized economy of Russia could not produce as wide a variety of products as a market economy, freedom of choice in products became the United States' chosen battlefield. To a people who had spent over a decade with the inability to purchase freely, it was a welcome change. Indeed, the change was welcomed to such a degree as to usher in a new era of consumerism, rivaling or surpassing that of the 1920s.

M.C. Patterson, a vice president of the Chrysler Corporation in the 1950s, argued that "economic Spartanism" was a direct threat to the free-enterprise system of the U.S. (Foner 271). He was correct: constant consumption is as necessary to the expansion of a market economy as constant innovations in methods of production. That consumption manifested during the Cold War in the American love affair with the automobile—a love affair which still runs strong today. The open road offered a change of scenery to the clustered hives of urban America, allowing suburbanites to enjoy Sunday drives in their shiny, new Fords—cars as familiar to them as the new definition of freedom, according to one commentator (Foner 265). After all, what better way existed to exercise one's freedom of choice than by partaking of the market capitalism which, according to *Life* magazine, fashioned America's "amazing achievement of wealth and

power" (Foner 265)? More importantly than its implications for the economy, the consumerist culture which arose in the Cold War kept civil unrest at a minimum.

During the "kitchen debate," Nixon made it quite clear that most Americans felt the place of the woman was in the home. Historian Eric Foner notes that Nixon used "woman" and "housewife" interchangeably (272). The new conveniences demonstrated in the American National Exhibition were designed to keep women content to remain in the home, rather than pursuing the increased economic freedom which they had briefly enjoyed during the war. The return of the patriarchal view of the woman's "place" was protested by the confessional poets of the 1950s and '60s, such as Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath. In her poem "Daddy," Plath captures the embittered, feminist view of many women forced out of the workplace: "Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through." The increased materialism following World War II was designed, in part, to prevent uprising among the disillusioned blacks, women, impoverished, and other minorities.

According to historian Howard Zinn, following World War II, "[t]he country was on a permanent war economy which had big pockets of poverty, but there were enough people at work, making enough money, to keep things quiet." One of the most striking changes of the time was the blatant redefinition of the American concept of freedom by President Harry S Truman. A week before outlining the Truman Doctrine, he removed "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" from Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms," replacing both with "freedom of enterprise" (Foner 262). In the face of the perceived threat of communism, the Age of McCarthy dictated that any "socialist" concepts had to be eliminated from the public lexicon—this, in turn, reduced the fear that a public finding itself wanting might question the existing economic system. In addition, the elimination of want from a *truly* capitalist society is an impossibility: even assuming a definition of "want" along the lines of "having access to the necessary resources

to maintain a minimum standard of living," the unfettered market will inevitably produce divisions in wealth.

All but a very few resources are "scarce": that is, their acquisition by one individual denies another individual the opportunity to acquire that same resource. Because a capitalist market encourages ruthless acquisition of these scarce resources, even companies playing "by the rules," as it were, are very unlikely to find themselves in perfect competition—a situation necessary to prevent the price of goods and services from maximizing consumer surplus, and in turn maximizing the availability of that good or service to all participants in the economy. Such an untenable position would set up capitalist America to have a significant chance of "losing" to the communist Soviet Union, and was thus a non-ideal front for the ideological war between the two countries, from the U.S. point of view. Because that ideological war was largely based around the definition of freedom, as evidenced by the "kitchen debate" (Foner 271-73), the U.S. had the incentive to pursue a "freedom" which lent itself to a capitalist rather than command economy. Free enterprise, being the keystone of a market economy, was a clearly superior basis for the American argument for capitalism. Perhaps unsurprisingly, "free enterprise" translated into a reduction of workers' rights.

Typically, when discussing "producers" and "consumers," it is assumed that firms are producers, and individuals are consumers. While true, this presents only half of the situation; in the labor market, these roles are reversed. The tendency of American enterprise, however, is to maximize the economic freedom of the firm-as-producer, often to the detriment of the individual-as-producer. This may be due in part to purely economic considerations: the firm is often mistakenly identified as the "job creator" of the economy, and so is given the means to reduce the costs of production as much as possible. However, the ideological portion comes into

play when the rhetoric of communism is considered. With the stated goal of creating a classless society and a "dictatorship of the proletariat," the communist economy is based in the rights of the individual-as-producer, the worker. Seeing that the United States sought to contrast as sharply with the Soviet Union as possible, it seems fairly natural that they should emphasize the rights of the firm-as-producer instead. Though some would claim that the reduction of cost benefits both firms and individuals to a greater degree than would maximizing the utility of the individual over that of the firm, a closer examination demonstrates why the Cold War redefinition of economic freedom failed to achieve the "classless society" Nixon claimed (Foner 271).

The individual, not the firm, is the driving force of the economy. When stripped down to the simplest terms, two primary factors drive the expansion of the market economy: an increase in demand (driven by consumers) and an increase in supply (driven by producers). Of the material necessities to increase supply, one of the few which the firm can directly enact is to expand their facilities, or advance the state of the arts of technology. However, this expansion or advancement cannot happen in a vacuum: it is, in turn, driven by the consumption of individuals. During the years of the Cold War, Americans redefined economic freedom to emphasize that of the firm—and in so doing, reduced their own economic freedom. To counter this, the emphasis on consumerism and freedom of choice was invented.

Freedom is continually being redefined. Any time the question of how to treat a new minority, such as trans* individuals or non-heterosexuals, arises, we must decide how far the American love of "freedom" extends. Other minorities, like the impoverished, are still seeking to define a freedom where their wants and needs are recognized as being of equal importance as those of the mainstream. During the Cold War, it was decided that "economic freedom" no

longer involved the rights of the worker or the poor—rather, that it involved the right of the middle-class to consume however they please, and the right of firms to produce however they please. Slowly, the liberal movement is gaining some small victories toward securing more rights for workers; however, so long as there remains an attachment to the current economic system, the definition of economic freedom will stagnate. When restricted to the narrow, capitalistic band of "freedom," we cannot make radical changes to the definition; however, even seemingly small changes can have a major impact on the lives of the masses. Just the alteration of one word—from "want" to "enterprise"—led to a major step backward for workers' rights. The language we employ, especially when applied to the concept of freedom, reflects deeply in our civilization.

Works Cited

Foner, Eric. *The Story of American Freedom*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999. Print

Zinn, Howard. "A People's War?" *History Is a Weapon*. N.p., n.d. Web. 7 May 2013.

Plath, Sylvia. "Daddy." 1962. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature: Since 1945*. Ed.

Nina Baym. Eighth ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011. 629. Print.

What a refreshing approach to the topic of “harmful” tobacco we have here in this research essay which combines a claim of fact, establishing that there is a problem, a claim of cause, establishing the cause(s) of the problem(s), and a claim of policy which proposes solutions. The writer first establishes the premise that tobacco production and cigarette litter are causing environmental problems with excellent support from his research and concedes that it is not realistic to imagine that tobacco production and use will end anytime soon. Proposing solutions, he suggests ways that the tobacco farmer can produce crops without soil erosion, water pollution and deforestation, and ways that smokers can become more responsible about the toxic butts they carelessly discard. The writer draws on Thigpen database sources, government sources, publications like National Geographic, and numerous websites, all of which are cited correctly both in quotations and paraphrase. In several instances, he provides the credentials of his sources in signal phrases.

Kyle Baker

Professor Cynthia Wyatt

English 1020

21 Apr. 2013

Countering the Environmental Effects of Tobacco Production and Cigarette Litter

Cough, cough, cough! This is a common sound among smokers. As many Americans know, cigarettes and tobacco can cause cancer, heart attack, stroke, tooth decay, osteoporosis, and many other physical problems. If the health problems and financial responsibility associated with smoking are not big enough deterrents, the environmental effects should also be considered. The process of growing tobacco and the litter left behind from smoking cigarettes are destructive to the planet. As a species, humans must come to grips with these effects and implement techniques that will help resolve the problem.

Tobacco cultivation will continue as long as there are tobacco users. With this continuation in cultivation, the environmental problems associated with growing tobacco will also continue. Some of these problems are outlined in Warren McLaren’s article, “Smoking: Environmental and Social Impacts.” He blames the growing of tobacco as a cause for

deforestation, unhealthy chemicals being released into the environment, and nutrient-poor soil (McLaren).

For tobacco production to occur, there must first be land on which it can grow. Like other agricultural products, this land must first be cleared and turned into a field. McLaren writes, “In Africa, around 5% of all deforestation is caused by tobacco. In Malawi, where the ancient dry forests of the miombo highlands are particularly under threat, tobacco accounts for 20% of deforestation” (McLaren). This deforestation is increased by the need for wood to dry the tobacco and the papers from which cigarettes are rolled. According to McLaren, “Each year nearly 600 million trees are destroyed to provide fuel to dry tobacco. Put in another way, one tree is destroyed for every 300 cigarettes,” and “cigarette manufacturing machines use more than six kilometers of paper per hour” (McLaren).

Why should anyone care about the cutting of these trees? There are multiple reasons. The first reason should be very important to humanity. Through the process of photosynthesis, plants release oxygen, the number one thing humans need to survive (Farabee). With fewer trees, there is less oxygen to breathe but more carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide is a form of greenhouse gas (“Deforestation”). With the increase in greenhouse gases, there is a greater risk for climate change (“Effects”).

Another issue of deforestation is erosion. Erosion can be caused by heavy rains and a lack of ground vegetation (Baldwin et al.). Without tree roots to hold the soil in place, it can be easier for the rain to remove this soil (Baldwin et al.). Without this soil, the land becomes much harder for any plant life to grow. This too reverts back to the issue of less oxygen.

One last issue associated with deforestation is the loss of habitat for animal life. Without the shelter of the trees, animals must move to another location or die (“Deforestation”). These

animals could play an important role in the food chain, and without them, the results could be catastrophic. Also, these animals may lose their entire habitat and be forced to move into urban areas. This could cause serious problems for that animal species and humans alike (“Deforestation”).

In order to help reduce deforestation, one should learn this small five-letter acronym: “TREES.” This acronym stands for “teach, restore, encourage, establish, and support” (Butler). It proposes different techniques to help with deforestation. During the “teach” step, others are informed of the issue at hand, deforestation (Butler). Once individuals are informed, they can actually begin helping the planet recover. Restoring means new trees are planted where the old ones were cut down (Butler). This process is also called reforestation. The first “E” stands for “encourage” (Butler). It is used to encourage others to live in a way that does not harm the environment (Butler). “Establish” means to set up parks and protected areas so that trees and wildlife are not harmed (Butler). The final step is “support.” Humans should support companies that do not use the deforestation method to harm the environment (Butler).

In modern agriculture, there has been the development of pesticides and insecticides. These products are manmade chemicals, which can pose problems for the planet. McLaren indicates that some of the chemicals used to fight off pests in tobacco growing can deplete Earth’s ozone (McLaren). This ozone layer is important in blocking the Sun’s UV (ultraviolet) radiation, harmful rays of light that can cause skin cancer (“The Ozone”). Unfortunately, this is not a one-time thing. McLaren explains that tobacco is recommended to have “up to 16 applications of pesticide [...] during one three-month growing period” (McLaren). Imagine the amount of ozone depletion this could cause.

If these chemicals did not already cause enough problems, they can run off from fields

and into waterways (McLaren). If this happens, the water is contaminated. This is the same water that is being drunk by humans and other animal species. Perhaps the water treatment plants can remove these chemicals from the water for humans, but the animals do not have this luxury.

To help solve the pesticide problem, farmers raising tobacco should start using natural, ecofriendly pesticide options. An option that has gained in popularity in recent years is the use of biopesticides. Instead of being manmade from chemicals that are potentially harmful to the planet, biopesticides are “naturally occurring products derived from materials like plants and microorganisms” (Marrone). These new “pesticides” are generally safer for humans and animals, and they generally only affect the targeted pest (Marrone). Another important reason for the use of biopesticides is the quick rate at which they decompose. These chemicals break down more quickly than ordinary pesticides, because they are all natural, and because of that, insects are less likely to develop a tolerance to them (Marrone). These biopesticides have been known to “improve efficacy, enhance yield, and be cost effective” (Marrone).

In order to help control the runoff of the pesticide chemicals, the EPA suggests that tobacco farmers implement “Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques” (United). This process suggests two main things. First, farmers should make natural barriers to stop chemicals from washing off fields (United). These could be as simple as mounding up soil to act as a wall, or they could be more complex, such as adding a small webbing fence around the field. The second technique in this process is simply limiting pesticide use (“Protecting”). That particular technique would be very useful since tobacco requires multiple applications during a single growing season (McLaren).

A final issue that tobacco growing causes is having soil with few nutrients left in it. As mentioned previously, the deforestation could lead to erosion, which affects soil quality, but

tobacco itself has a negative effect on the soil. Tobacco feeds heavily on potassium (McLaren). Potassium is a fundamental element. Without it, other crops begin to suffer (McLaren). If other crops begin suffering, humans may have less vegetative food.

To solve the problem of soil losing its nutrients, one must use something that puts nutrients back into the soil. This can be accomplished through fertilization; however, like pesticides, fertilizers are manmade and can possibly cause environmental problems. Therefore, the best solution is environmentally sound fertilizers. One such example is animal feces (Laird). Feces still contain some nutrients that the soil is able to reuse.

A similar way to get nutrients back into the soil is by adding compost. Since compost can contain animal feces, these two solutions are similar to one another. Many things can be used as compost. All vegetable products are a good option, and even coffee grounds. In my area, Books-A-Million even gives away free used coffee grounds to anyone who wants to use them in his or her garden.

If growing tobacco does not have a big enough effect on the Earth's environment, the litter caused by smoking it only increases the problem. This litter encompasses discarded filters, cellophane, aluminum foil, empty cardboard packs, and lighters ("Keep"). This litter has been coined cigarette litter, and it "represents more than 20 percent of the litter collected in many community cleanup initiatives" ("Keep"). It does not take a rocket scientist to figure this out, only an observant, average Joe. Look around. Whether it is on the side of the road, in parking lots, in water ways, on the side of trails, or in the front yard, cigarette litter is virtually everywhere, and it is affecting the planet.

Out of all the cigarette litter, butts make up the largest item littered. Smokers throw them down without a second thought. Many smokers believe that the butts are made from cotton;

however, they are not. Cigarette butts are made from cellulose acetate, a form of plastic, which takes years to biodegrade (Register). In her study, Kathleen M. Register, a researcher from Longwood University and supporter of Clean Virginia Waterways, found that cigarette butts and the tobacco left in them do cause problems for organisms. She conducted her study on water fleas (*Daphnia*), and found that used filters and leftover tobacco killed the water flea within two days.

This experiment is important because *Daphnia* are organisms that researchers use to determine water quality (Register). If this water is unsafe for an organism such as the water flea, is it safe for humans? Due to the small size of the water flea, it does not take a large concentration of tobacco or the chemicals in it to kill them; however, if the concentration is high enough, it can pose a problem for humans as well. After all, a high enough dose of nicotine in its pure form is fatal (Register).

To stop cigarette litter and clean up what is already there, more programs like Keep America Beautiful need to be introduced. Keep America Beautiful is an organization that has spread its campaign all across the United States. Its goal is to make people aware that cigarettes are litter and inform them about ways that should be used to prevent it from continuing (“Cigarette”). This organization holds clean up days across the country, and they distribute information on prevention (“Cigarette”). The organization suggests the enforcement of local litter laws (applied to cigarettes, of course), the installation of “ash receptacles at ‘transition points,’ places where smokers must stop smoking before proceeding,” and the use of pocket ashtrays by smokers (“Cigarette”). The use of these techniques would greatly reduce the cigarette litter that is already present and help prevent the spread of more.

Whether discussing tobacco production or the litter left behind from its products, tobacco

has a negative effect on the planet. It causes damage to soil, water, air, and life on the planet. Without tobacco, the planet would be much healthier, but the likelihood of that happening anytime soon is extremely rare. Therefore, humans must implement the techniques discussed above in order to improve their health and the health of their home, the planet Earth.

Works Cited

- Baldwin, C. S., I. J. Shelton, and G. Wall. "Soil Erosion Causes and Effects." *Evirothon*. Ontario Ministry of Agriculture – Food and Rural Affairs, n.d. Web. 15 Apr. 2013.
- Butler, Rhett. "How to Save Tropical Rainforests." *Mongabay*. 22 July 2012. Web. 15 Apr. 2013.
- "Cigarette Litter Prevention Program." *Keep America Beautiful*. Keep America Beautiful, Inc., 2013. Web. 15 Apr. 2013.
- "Deforestation." *National Geographic*. National Geographic Society, 2013. Web. 15 Apr. 2013.
- "Effects of Global Warming." *National Geographic*. National Geographic Society, 2013. Web. 15 Apr. 2013.
- Farabee, M. J. "Photosynthesis." *Maricopa*. N.p., 18 May 2010. Web. 15 Apr. 2013.
- "Keep America Beautiful Issues Guide to Cigarette Litter Prevention." *PM. Public Management* 88.3 (2006): n. pag. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 15 Apr. 2013.
- Laird, Elmer. "Return Nutrients to the Soil." *Alive*. Alive Publishing Group, 2013. Web. 15 Apr. 2013.
- Marrone, Pam. "Natural Pesticides? Large-scale Farmers Turn to Safer Products to Keep their Plants Healthy." *Onearth*. Natural Resources Defense Council, n.d. Web. 15 Apr. 2013.
- McLaren, Warren. "Smoking: Environmental and Social Impacts." *Treehugger*. MMN Holdings, LLC., 2013. Web. 15 Apr. 2013.
- United States. Environmental Protection Agency. "Protecting Water Quality from Agricultural Runoff." U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Mar. 2005. Web. 15 Apr. 2013.
- Register, Kathleen M. "Cigarette Butts as Litter—Toxic as Well as Ugly." *Cigarette Butt Litter*. Clean Virginia Waterways, n. d. Web. 15 Apr. 2013.

“The Ozone Layer.” *NOAA Research*. NOAA’s Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, 4
Apr. 2011. Web. 15 Apr. 2013.

This essay addresses the problem of death by suicide among our military personnel. The writer incorporates articles primarily from Thigpen Library databases and integrates paraphrase and quotations smoothly to show that the problem of military suicides is worthy of close examination and that solutions are being discussed and implemented on an on-going basis. In his cause/effect argument, the writer suggests that rising suicides are symptoms of basic problems such as mental health care availability, the military culture of “shame” that inhibits individuals from seeking help, and poor attention to the situations that military personnel often find themselves in upon their return home. The writer concludes that suicide is a problem that needs multiple solutions to help those who in service to their country have done so much for us at home.

Colton Lockhart

Professor Cynthia Wyatt

English 1020

21 April 2013

What Can Be Done About the Rising Suicide Rate?

The recent increase in U.S. military suicides has led to multiple problems within the military and also at home with the families that are affected. With numbers reaching 160 total soldiers committing suicide in 2009 (“U.S. Army”), the rates have been on a rapid incline and professionals are having a difficult time pinpointing an exact cause of this. There are multiple problems that many professionals agree tend to cause more stress and suicides than others, such as the specific risk factors that military personnel are exposed to. Also, the availability of mental health help to military personnel is usually limited or is not easy to receive, so those who really need it may not seek it. Finally, the military has put multiple preventative measures into place, but that still has not helped to reduce the number of suicides by much, if at all.

If something isn’t done about the rising suicides rates soon, it is going to lead to tremendous problems now and in the long run. Don’t get me wrong: the military has put some impressive preventative efforts forth to help reduce the rapid incline in suicide rates, such as a

mandatory stand-down at all U.S. army bases in March of 2009 so that the personnel could have time to regain their personal accountability and remember that they're there for our country, but they also have to stand up for themselves and take care of themselves (De Luce). However, if the rates continue to rise, it is going to cause fewer and fewer people to volunteer to go into the military. If this happens, it will affect our whole country and eventually the entire world. Also, while the military tries to keep a close watch on the personnel, the families and others that are left at home to worry about the soldiers aren't thought about as much as they should be. We don't want to be losing soldiers and their families because of the stress of the military. One way we could solve this is to offer seminars and support groups for those who are either in combat or in training, or even the families and loved ones of those in military service. This may not be an immediate fix for the problem, but the more we educate individuals about depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other problems and risk factors that go along with military life, then the better chance we have at reducing the number of suicides.

A risk factor is an individual's characteristics and experiences that can contribute to the risk for suicide. PTSD, relationship problems, substance abuse, and major depressive disorder are just a few risk factors that military personnel have to face. Because those who are actively serving have easy access to firearms and they are usually well trained with them, this is one factor that is a major issue. Also, as Jeffery Martin states in his study, "A Comparative Review of U.S. Military and Civilian Suicide Behavior: Implications for OEF/OIF Suicide Prevention Efforts," the link between "stress and suicide has been well established, with stress often acting as a precipitating factor for suicide." If we could figure out a way to help by either giving the personnel an outlet for the stress or helping to make the everyday life in the military less stressful, this could possibly decrease suicides. Another big issue is the effects of PTSD on those

who are returning from war. PTSD can have detrimental effects if left untreated. As Martin says, “In community samples, 20% of those suffering from PTSD report at least one suicide ideation.” This is truly becoming more and more of a problem that is sometimes reported to a physician, but not often enough. The military should put a screening process into place for when personnel return from their tour of duty so that they can be screened by mental health physicians and at least checked for any clear signs of PTSD or any other mental health problems.

When military personnel are serving our country, the resources are not always available to them like they are to the civilians. While the military does what it can to try and provide the best health care possible for its current and previous personnel, some individuals may not try to seek out help when they truly need it. According to Jeffrey Hyman in his study, “Suicide Incidence and Risk Factors in an Active Duty US Military Population,” even when personnel are able to receive regular mental health visits and other resources for mental health issues, mental health visits and diagnoses were also positively correlated with the risk of suicide. So having the availability of health care for the personnel isn’t enough; something has to be there to show the individuals that it’s effective and that even if they choose to seek out help, their military careers or personal lives won’t be affected. Many military personnel have reported that they are reluctant to seek mental health help because they are afraid of the effects it could have on their career in the military.

Suicide prevention efforts are not always the right answer for those who are experiencing suicidal ideation and risk, or at least they don’t think so. For individuals who are suicidal, seeking out the help that is needed isn’t always so easy. As Martin states, military mental health counselors are encouraged to keep in mind that military personnel’s skewed understanding of how much these programs can really contribute to an individual’s feelings of “shame,

embarrassment, and reluctance and refusal to seek out mental health care.” To any individual, seeking out help is hard, but especially for the troops and others serving our country it is even more difficult to admit that help is needed. The suicide preventative efforts that are put in place are developed by very skilled and qualified professionals. The more reinforcement that is used with the military’s suicide prevention programs, the more proactive they’re going to become. As Barbara Barrett states in her article “Task Force: Military Suicide Prevention Efforts Inadequate,” in Parris Island, S.C., Marine recruits are starting to be trained to have the mindset that they “should be as quick to call in support for personal problems as they would for air support during combat.

The current prevention programs are constantly being evaluated for ways that they can be improved by the military officials, government officials, and mental health professionals. Progress was made in this direction when in 2011 a new office opened in the Pentagon called the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (McCloskey). This office helps to inventory and review the various prevention programs.

While many military personnel are injured through combat related injuries, there are also numerous military personnel whose lives are taken through suicide. While suicide is often an impulsive act, there are multiple things that can contribute to suicidal thoughts and factors. When at war and in combat, military personnel face multiple risk factors, both common and more military-specific ones. Individuals that are in the National Guard, for example, have the stress of being called from their civilian job and going to serve the country, and then returning and sometimes finding that they have been “eased out” of their position or passed over for promotion (Macaskill). These individuals’ jobs are supposed to be protected by law, but the laws obviously need to be tightened up and more fully enforced so that those in the National Guard don’t always

have to worry about what they're coming back to. Also, those individuals who are serving do not always have the chance to receive help as civilians do when they begin to exhibit the signs of suicidal risk. If they are out on tour, they can't just say that they are starting to feel down or something is bothering them. If the military was able to keep psychologists closer to the active personnel, while keeping them out of harm's way, then it would help offer support in the true time of need for those that need it.

Concerned authorities both in and out of the military have proposed multiple solutions to the problem of the rising suicide rates in the US armed forces. Even though they may not all be the best idea, they each have the possibility to save a life of one of the brave individuals who put their lives out on the line so that we can be free. They should not have to feel helpless or as if there isn't anyone there to help them. They deserve the same life, same happiness, and same freedom that they give us by going out there and risking it all. There are so many possibilities for solutions to the rise in suicides, such as educating individuals more on the effects of depression and PTSD and other factors that come along with being in the military. Also, if the military was able to provide therapists and help closer to those that are on tour or active duty, then it could potentially save a number of lives. These solutions aren't something that can be done in a day or even a year, but the faster something is implemented and put into place to help, the faster the solution will come.

Works Cited

- Barrett, Barbara. "Task Force: Military Suicide Prevention Efforts Inadequate." *McClatchy Washington Bureau* (DC). 24 Aug. 2010. *America's Newspapers*. Web. 21 Apr. 2013.
- De Luce, Dan. "US Army Base Shuts down to Focus on Rise in Suicides." *Agence France-Presse*. 29 May 2009. *Global NewsBank*. Web. 21 Mar. 2013.
- Hyman, Jeffrey, et al. "Suicide Incidence and Risk Factors in an Active Duty US Military Population." *American Journal of Public Health* 102 (2012): 138-46. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 12 Feb. 2013.
- Macaskill, Ewen. "U.S. Military Suicides at Highest Rate for 16 Years: Longer and More Frequent Tours of Duty Blamed: Troops Stretched to Cover Afghanistan and Iraq Wars." *The Guardian* [London, England]. 17 Aug. 2007. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 16 Feb. 2013.
- Martin, Jeffery. "A Comparative Review of U.S. Military and Civilian Suicide Behavior: Implications for OEF/OIF Suicide Prevention Efforts." *Journal of Mental Health Counseling* 31.2 (2009): 101-18. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 4 Feb. 2013.
- McCloskey, Megan. "Military Evaluating Suicide Prevention Programs." *McClatchy-Tribune Regional News*. 21 Mar. 2013. Web. 21 Apr. 2013.
- Nock, Matthew K. "A Soldier's Suicide: Understanding Its Effects on Fellow Soldiers." *Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition*. 1 Jun. 2011. Web. 20 Mar. 2013.
- "US Army Suicides Hit Grim Record for 2009." *Agence France-Presse*. 15 Jan. 2010. *Global NewsBank*. Web. 20 Mar. 2013.