When Parents Go Back To School, Their Kids Benefit

Students read, annotate and discuss an article about the benefits low-income children receive when their parents return to school, and then write a letter of advice to a parent who is considering going back to school.

PREP

• Read When Low-Income Parents Go Back to School article.

MATERIALS

• When Low-Income Parents Go Back to School article
• Should I Go Back To School?: Letter to a Parent worksheet

EXPLAIN

1. What are the benefits of adults going back to school to get a HSE diploma or college degree?
   ➔ You can get better employment, make more money, accomplish your academic and career goals, raise self-esteem.

2. Do you think anyone else besides the student benefits from them going back to school? How or why?
   ➔ Their families get to experience having more economic stability and more opportunities. Bosses and co-workers get to experience having a more knowledgeable and skilled employee and colleague. Parents become academic role models for their children.

3. Today we’re going to read about some specific ways in which the children of parents who go back to school benefit from their parents’ efforts and accomplishments. Distribute When Low-Income Parents Go Back to School article.

4. Ask students to read and annotate the article, circling any unfamiliar words and underlining anything they think is interesting, important, surprising or confusing. Ask students to write down the following things:

   • The main idea of the article.
   • Two new things they learned from the article.
   • At least one question they have related to what they read.
When students are finished, have them turn to a partner and share what they learned and what questions they had.

**DISCUSSION**

**What is the main idea of this article?**

- Although being a parent makes returning to school especially challenging, children of low-income parents who return to school benefit from their parents’ new skills. They see their parents struggle and resilience are facing academic and are more likely to graduate from high school as a result.

**Why do you think children of low-income parents who go back to school are more likely to graduate from high school than those whose parents did not?**

- Parents are better able to help with homework. Parent and child can encourage each other. Parent becomes an academic role model.

Some parents go back to school and are able to get a better paying job to help the family be more economically stable as a result of their continuing education.

**Do you think this might affect their children’s success in school? Why or why not?**

- More economic stability can decrease the stressors of being low-income or living in poverty, which can allow a child to learn better. When children do not have the things they need or their family is stressed about money all the time, it makes it hard to concentrate and learn.

The article states, “About one in 10 low-income parents participate in education and training courses, according to a 2014 report by the Urban Institute. About half of those parents work while enrolled, creating a need for childcare.”

**How is this connected to the main idea of the article?**

- Low-income parents often find going back to school more challenging than the average student because they have to find childcare in order to be able to go to class. If they miss too many classes because they can’t find or pay for childcare, they won’t be able to pass the class or graduate.

**What do you think could be done to solve this problem?**

- Schools could offer childcare centers, childcare services could offer discounts for students, the government could subsidize/provide childcare for students.
What are some other roadblocks or challenges adults face when trying to go back to school?

- Answers will vary depending on student experience. Use follow up questions to elicit deeper thinking such as: How do you know that? Why do you think that is? Can you say more about that?

What are some ways that you or someone you know have dealt with these challenges and succeeded?

- Answers will vary depending on student experience.

What other questions do you have about this article?

- Answers will vary. Use the article to clarify any remaining questions.

**EXPLAIN**

1. Based on the information you learned from this article and your own experience, you are going to write a letter to a friend (real or imagined) who is a parent and who is considering going back to school. They are having a hard time deciding if they want to get their GED and need some advice. In your letter, you must use at least two quotes (pieces of evidence) from the article to back up your opinion or advice.

2. What kinds of things might you want to say to or ask this person in your letter?

    - What challenges this person might be facing and how they can deal with them, what kinds of support system they might have, what questions they need to ask themselves, what the benefits of going back to school will be for them, how their children could benefit, what kinds of opportunities might be available to them if they go back, etc.
When Low-Income Parents Go Back to School

By Leah Askarinam


Earning a GED can have financial benefits for parents who didn’t graduate—and make it more likely that their children will get a diploma.

Leon Sykes has eight children at home, works two jobs, and drives for Uber and Lyft on the side. Yet the 34-year-old father has found time to take classes Monday through Thursday from 6 to 9 p.m. to earn his high-school credentials at Academy of Hope, an adult public charter school in Washington, D.C. Sykes is about two years into the program. His wife usually picks up their children, ages 5 to 15, from after-school activities, but he still can’t always make it to class. “Some days, you just have to pick and choose,” he says.

About one in 10 low-income parents participate in education and training courses, according to a 2014 report by the Urban Institute. About half of those parents work while enrolled, creating a need for childcare. The Department of Labor’s Strengthening Working Families Initiative has set aside $25 million to fund partnerships between workforce and childcare organizations to help parents who want to advance their education. For parents who did not graduate from high school, earning a GED can have financial benefits. Adults who hold a GED certificate end up with higher monthly earnings than those who never finished high school.

Working parents often take classes in the evenings but childcare centers generally close before 6 p.m., leaving parents to find informal options, such as asking a family member to come over or dropping a child off with a neighbor. At Academy of Hope, which has two campuses serving a total of about 330 students, 42 percent say they have at least one dependent. Parents can participate in the GED-preparation program or in the college-transition program, where students can earn four college credits that transfer to a local community college. Parents who take classes here can qualify for a voucher for childcare through the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program, but there are more children than slots. And while the school considered offering childcare, it has decided that it would be too complex and costly.

The Academy of Hope CEO Lecester Johnson says that there are plenty of reasons a student might have to miss class: Many students have multiple jobs, for instance,
and schedule changes can prevent them from showing up. Being a parent, however, can make things even more difficult. “If their babysitting or childcare falls apart, there isn’t usually a backup, and that’s the case for most folks,” Johnson says. At this school, female students who are also parents are especially affected by the lack of childcare, according to Richmond Onokpite, a lead science and technology teacher. Nationally, of the 1.8 million low-income parents who participate in education and training, more than half are single moms.

In a science class at Academy of Hope sits Domonique Gillis, a 27-year-old single mother of four. This is her favorite subject. Gillis grew up in West Virginia, where she did well in high school. But her junior year she got into a fight, which resulted in her being moved to an alternative school. She knew that the alternative school was for “bad kids,” and so she stopped listening in class and completing her school work. “I wasn’t bad until I went there and I adapted to the environment to fit in,” she says. “And then I stopped going to school.”

Poor children whose parents have at least a GED or high-school diploma are more likely to complete high school.

About two years ago, she started taking classes at Academy of Hope to earn a GED. Last year, she missed too many classes to complete the program. This year, she might again miss too many classes to finish it. Academy of Hope usually allows eight missed classes per 13-week term, though the staff tries to meet with each student before his or her absences reach this point to discuss solutions. “Once students miss beyond that eight, it’s really hard for them to catch up,” Johnson says.

While parents have a hard time actually getting to class, the benefits can be huge for their kids, as poor children whose parents have at least a GED or high-school diploma are more likely to complete high school. Johnson said she notices that a lot of parents start enrolling at Academy of Hope when their kids reach fourth grade, after recognizing that they need to pursue their education to help their children with homework. Parents start attending school functions, too, as their positive adult education experience starts replacing frequently negative childhood ones.

At Academy of Hope, about a quarter of students set a goal to become more involved in their children’s schooling; about 70 percent achieve it. “[They] look at the child’s homework and they can help them out, rather than just looking at the homework and having no idea what’s going on,” Onokpite says.

Gillis said that her eldest son has provided a lot of encouragement. She says if she doesn’t earn her high-school credentials, her children won’t feel they have to, either. “My son said, ‘Mom, if you want a high-school diploma from me, you have to get your GED. If you don’t get your GED, I can’t promise you a high-school diploma.’ So that made me want to go to school more to get my GED because I owe it to my kids.”
Should I Go Back To School?
Letter to a Parent

Based on the information you learned from the article and your own experience, write a letter to a friend (real or imagined) who is a parent and who is considering going back to school. They are having a hard time deciding if they can commit to earning their HSE diploma and need some advice. Your letter must use at least two quotes (pieces of evidence) from the article to support your opinion or advice.

Dear Friend,
I am writing to you today because ________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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Sincerely,
________________________
Community Parenting and Family Resources*

Students will research a variety of community resources available to families and community members, paraphrase what they have read, examine scenarios that describe family needs, and match the family with an appropriate resource. They will take information they have read and use it to solve scenarios, activating critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Note: This activity uses New York City public and community resources as a means for helping students practice computer literacy, paraphrasing and problem-solving skills. All communities have resources that can help residents live more safely, efficiently or with greater fulfillment. This activity can be adapted to local resources.

PREP

Read about each of the community resources below through their website. Print materials are also provided, following these instructions.

Write the names and web addresses of the following community resources on the board, or others that you select:

- New York City Department of Education Parents Bill of Rights*  
- New York City Childcare Connect*  
  [https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/ChildCare/ChildCareList.do](https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/ChildCare/ChildCareList.do)
- New York City Early Intervention (services for infants and children with disabilities)*  
- New York City Know Before You Enroll in education or Training Programs*  
- Access NYC (Screening for government benefits)*  
  [https://a069-access.nyc.gov/ACCESSNYC/application.do](https://a069-access.nyc.gov/ACCESSNYC/application.do)
- Single Stop (Free tax preparation, legal advice, government benefit screening and more)*  
- CUNY Fatherhood Academy*  
  [www.cuny.edu/cfa](http://www.cuny.edu/cfa)
MATERIALS

- This activity requires a computer lab
- *Community and Family Resource Recommendation* worksheet

EXPLAIN

1. There are many community resources available to help parents access services for themselves and their children. These resources can provide parents with the information they need to help their children be successful in school, secure childcare, prepare their taxes, enroll themselves in college or continuing education courses, and apply for government assistance programs such as unemployment benefits or SNAP food assistance.

2. Navigate to the websites written on the board and read about local resources. Based on what you learn, you will provide recommendations to families who can benefit from their services.

3. On a clean piece of paper, write the following about each resource:
   - Name of resource and contact information.
   - What specific services or information does this resource provide?
   - Who is eligible and/or could benefit from this resource?
   - How is this resource useful for parents?

4. When students are finished with their research, distribute *Parent Resource Recommendation* worksheet and have them complete it. They should use their notes on the services each resource provides to help them match a resource with a family in need of assistance.

5. When students are finished with worksheet, discuss their recommendations as a class.
Parent Resource Recommendations

Read the descriptions below of family situations. Use your research to recommend a resource or resources they should contact. Explain why or how this resource(s) might help them with their particular need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARENT NEEDS</th>
<th>RESOURCE(S) RECOMMENDATION</th>
<th>WHY/HOW MIGHT THIS RESOURCE HELP?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patricia recently lost her job as a child care worker because the daycare she worked for went out of business. She has two kids of her own and is worried because she has to look for a new job and has no idea how she is going to pay the rent or feed her family in the meantime. She doesn’t know if she is eligible for government assistance or how to apply for it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rikki needs to find childcare for her 1-year-old daughter so that she can return to work full time. She is so overwhelmed by how many child care services there are in NYC and has heard that some of them can be very poorly run, which makes her very afraid to choose one without knowing a lot about it.</td>
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<td>Louis and Yolanda’s 10-month-old baby girl was born prematurely and, as a result, has been diagnosed with developmental delays. She doesn’t seem to be able to recognize simple words like dog or cat and hasn’t yet been able to understand simple commands like, “wave bye-bye!” These are milestones that most 10-month-olds have met already. Louis and Yolanda want to help their baby, but they can’t afford to hire a specialist to work with her.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARENT NEEDS</td>
<td>RESOURCE(S) RECOMMENDATION</td>
<td>WHY/HOW MIGHT THIS RESOURCE HELP?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darien is about to become a father for the first time. He is excited, but he is also terrified. He has no idea how to be a parent and he is also worried he won't be able to provide enough money to support his partner and their new baby. He wants to try to get his HSE diploma so that he can get a better job than he has now.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andy's son Johnny attends a NYC public school and comes home from school every day crying. Another boy at school has been bullying Johnny in his math class. Andy isn't sure if he should just tell Johnny to stand up to the boy, which could be dangerous, or if he has the right to demand the teacher or principal do something about the situation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris and Michael have two sons who are 3 and 7 years old. Chris is a stay-at-home parent and Michael just lost his job as a construction worker because the company had to downsize its staff. They need to get some financial advice and help while Michael gets a new job. They are also now without health insurance and want to see what their options are.</td>
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Department of Education Parents’ Bill of Rights*

The New York City Department of Education’s Parents’ Bill of Rights is a 5-page, highly detailed document. To download the complete document, visit:


Parents’ Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

Each child’s maximum potential can best be achieved through a partnership between parents and the education community. To foster active engagement between parents and schools, parents have certain rights and responsibilities.

ALL PARENTS HAVE THE FOLLOWING RIGHTS:

1) THE RIGHT TO A FREE PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

Parents have the right to a free public school education for their child in a safe and supportive learning environment.

Parents have the right to:

a) a free public school education for their child, from kindergarten until age 21, or receipt of a high school diploma, whichever comes first, as provided by law;

b) an evaluation for their child with a disability and, if found to be in need of special education, receive a free, appropriate education from age 3 through age 21, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations;

c) bilingual education or English as a Second Language services, for their child with limited English proficiency, as required by law and regulations;

d) have their child receive his or her full instructional schedule in accordance with the Department of Education school year calendar;

e) have their child learn in a safe and supportive learning environment, free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, and bigotry;

f) have their child receive courtesy and respect from others and equal educational opportunities regardless of actual or perceived race, color, religion, age, creed, ethnicity, national origin, alienage, citizenship status, disability, sexual orientation, gender (sex) or weight;

g) have a child accorded all the rights set forth in the Bill of Student Rights and Responsibilities found within the New York City Department of Education’s Citywide Standards of Intervention and Discipline Measures.
NYC Childcare Connect*

Childcare Connect is a database of New York City childcare providers. It is searchable by program name, type of program, such as infant/toddler or pre-kindergarten, borough, neighborhood and zip code. In addition to general information, it also contains information on the results of routine inspections, for example, childcare providers who have received fines or warnings for failure to comply with required procedures.

Childcare Connect can be found at:
https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/ChildCare/ChildCareList.do

Childcare Connect Video

A 30-second video about the Childcare Connect database can be seen at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5-tom1ItVY#t=13
Early Intervention

Explain
When parents, caregivers or doctors suspect a child may have developmental delays, they can request evaluation and treatment from Early Intervention specialists. These are people who are trained to work with families to help children develop to their full potential. They use the existing household routines and children's interests to encourage children to develop in their areas of need, such as walking, playing with a ball or holding a bottle. Many young children are able to make up for physical, mental, learning or emotional deficits caused by birth complications or disease. Others are able to learn strategies and tools that help them cope with their delays or impairments.

Does Your Child Need Early Intervention (EI)?
If you have a concern about your child’s development, the Early Intervention Program (EIP) can help by providing an evaluation of your child at no cost to you. The evaluation will identify your child's strengths and needs and find out if your child is eligible for the EIP.

Skills like taking a first step, smiling for the first time, and waving “bye-bye” are called milestones. To find out if your child's development is on track or if you should refer your child to the Early Intervention Program, learn more about the developmental milestones for your child's age.

Who Can Be Referred to the NYC Early Intervention Program (EIP)?
Infants and toddlers who live in New York City, are from birth to three years old, and:

- have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that is likely to result in a developmental delay; or

- are suspected of having a developmental delay or disability.

These infants and toddlers will receive an evaluation to find out if they are eligible for the EIP. Children must be found eligible in order to receive services.

Children who are 2 years and 11 months or older should be referred to the Committee for Preschool Special Education (CPSE) under the Department of Education for preschool special education. Call 311 for information on the CPSE.

Who Can Refer to the EIP?
Infants and toddlers up to age three can be referred by anyone: their family, doctors, social service workers, child care workers, community agencies, and others.
In New York City, call 311 and say that you want to refer a child to the EIP, or fill out a Referral Form (PDF).

**What Happens When a Child is Referred to the EIP?**

A service coordinator will be assigned. She/he will explain the program and help the family choose an evaluation agency.

If the evaluation shows that a child is eligible for the EIP, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting will be held. At the IFSP meeting, the family works with a team to develop goals and a plan that meets their child’s developmental needs. After the meeting early interventionists (teachers and therapists) will work with the family to help their child learn.

Since children learn best from the people that they spend the most time with, early interventionists work with each child and family during their daily routines. The service coordinator works with the family to ensure that the EIP is working for them.

**Who Will Pay for Early Intervention Services?**

- Early Intervention is at no direct cost to families.
- The program uses a child’s Medicaid and/or insurance (if available) to help pay for services. This will not affect or reduce a family’s Medicaid or insurance benefits.
- When a family’s insurance is billed, the family may receive Explanation of Benefits (EOB) letters from their insurance company. This is not a bill.

**What if a Child is Not Eligible for the EIP?**

Not all children with delays are eligible for the EIP. If a child is at risk of developing a delay, or has been evaluated and found not eligible for Early Intervention, the family may enroll in the Early Intervention Developmental Monitoring Program at no cost.

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**Early Intervention Video**

The following video shows an early intervention treatment session in process. It shows how the therapist works with the mother, supporting her to work with the child, using already existing routines and interests.

Know Before You Enroll*

Before you take on debt or pay to enroll in a school or training program, do your homework first. Here are 10 important tips to help you protect your money.

1. **Free and low-cost adult education and training options are available.** Visit nyc.gov or call 311 and ask about free and low-cost adult education and job training options. You can attend classes at the Department of Education, City University of New York (CUNY), public libraries, community-based organizations, Workforce Career Centers, and more.

2. **If a school or training program sounds too good to be true, it probably is.**

3. **Research, research, research.** Consider multiple schools before deciding which one is right for you. Ask for information on graduation and completion rates, student loan debt, and whether or not the credits you get will transfer to other schools. Sit in on a class, ask to speak to former students who have completed the program, and visit nyc.gov to read reviews from real students in the NYC Training Guide. Ask to see a list of employers that hire graduates, and call those businesses to ask their opinion of the school. You should also research the general field you’re interested in to make sure it’s the right fit and there’s potential for job availability and growth.

4. **Avoid unlicensed schools.** Some schools are operating illegally. If you go to an unlicensed school, you can’t take exams to become licensed in many fields such as nursing. Visit nyc.gov or call the New York State Education Department at (212) 643-4760 or (518) 474-3989 to check if a vocational or trade school is licensed. Remember, even if a school has a license, it might not be well run, so research the school before you sign up. Call 311 or visit nyc.gov to file a complaint about an unlicensed school.

5. **Don’t sign up the day you visit a school.** Before you sign up, you need to understand how much the program will cost and how you will pay for it. Do not make such an important decision on the spot! Take your time, and research the school. Visit nyc.gov for the NYC Training Guide to learn more about specific schools and programs.

6. **Never sign anything you don’t understand.** If a school pressures you to sign a contract or agreement on the spot, walk away. You have the right to bring some important forms so you can read them more carefully and review them with people you trust.

7. **Ask for the school’s tuition cancellation policy in writing.** The policy should describe how you can get a refund if you need to cancel or withdraw. However, once you have signed up, it can be tough to get your money back.

8. **Be careful of taking on a lot of debt.** Some schools charge tons of thousands of dollars. Often, the “financial aid” that is available isn’t free money, but rather loans you have to pay back—with interest. School loans last a long time, and there’s a limit on how much money you can borrow. Loans can also lower your credit score if you don’t pay them back on time. Make sure you understand the terms and will be able to make the payments. Remember that free and low-cost education and training options are available. See tip #1!

9. **Avoid schools that “guarantee employment” after you graduate.** A school can’t guarantee that you’ll get a job when you graduate. Many times, the schools that make these types of promises don’t actually place you in a job.

10. **You have the right to file a complaint.** Did you enroll in a school or training program but didn’t get what you were promised? Call 311 or visit nyc.gov to file a complaint.

Are you in debt from school?

Visit nyc.gov or call 311 and ask for an NYC Financial Empowerment Center, where you can get free one-on-one professional financial counseling.

*RAENS will provide adaptations based on local labor conditions.
Access NYC*

https://a069-access.nyc.gov/ACCESSNYC/application.do

ACCESS NYC is a free service that helps you find out if you may qualify for over 30 City, State and Federal benefit programs. You can apply online for certain programs through ACCESS NYC.

*RAENs will provide regional adaptations.
Single Stop

http://www.bcc.cuny.edu/Single-Stop/

The One Stop Source for Help

Single Stop provides students and their immediate families with access to benefits and services that help students stay in school and graduate. Whether it is afterschool programs, health insurance, legal advice, debt solutions, childcare, or government benefits, we can help to identify the services that are available to you. Single Stop offers:

Benefits Screening

The free benefits screening takes you through a quick series of questions to see which public benefits you qualify for. We will discuss the options that are best for you, help you complete the appropriate application(s), and then help you prepare for the application process.

Financial Counseling

Meet with a financial expert and learn lifelong strategies that will help you save money, build assets, and manage debt. We can also help you get your free credit report, establish credit if you have none, and improve your credit scores. We provide one-on-one, private counseling that will help you establish and achieve your financial goals. Financial counseling is available Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons. Contact us to make an appointment.

Legal Aid

If you have questions about divorce, child support, employment, housing, debt collection, public assistance, or another topic, come to the Single Stop office for a free and completely confidential consultation. Contact us to make an appointment with an attorney to answer any legal questions.

Tax Preparation

Get a free tax preparation and e-file submission through this special IRS approved program. Come to see us during tax season from January through April 15.
The CUNY Fatherhood Academy*

Are you a father between the ages of 18-24 years old? Are you unemployed or underemployed? Do you want to expand your education? Do you want to learn new ways to engage with your child?

The CUNY Fatherhood Academy is a **FREE** 16 week, 3-day a week program that can help you:

- Prepare for the TASC, NY’s high school equivalency exam.
- Provide a direct pathway to college enrollment at one of the three college campuses.
- Learn about important topics such as parenthood, health and financial literacy.

Programs available in the BRONX, BROOKLYN, AND QUEENS at 3 of CUNY’s Community Colleges

Visit us on the web at [www.cuny.edu/cfa](http://www.cuny.edu/cfa)
Or call **311** to learn more and mention CUNY Fatherhood Academy.

*RAENS will provide adaptations based on local labor conditions.
Reading a New York City School Evaluation*

Students analyze an evaluation of a New York City school. They read infographics and perform calculations using percents. They make an assessment of a school based on quantitative and qualitative data. They also consider what they would be looking for in a school for their children if they are parents, or what they would have wanted in their own high school experience.

PREP


MATERIALS

• Academy of Careers in Television and Film snapshot handout
• The Mathematics of the High School for Careers in Television and Film worksheet

EXPLAIN

1 Did you know that public schools in New York City are given a report card by school evaluators to show parents and others how the school compares with other schools? What kind of information do you think should be included in this report card?

   > Examples: assessment of teachers from students and parents, condition of the school building and facility, incidences or perceptions of violence/safety.

2 You’re going to read a Report Card for a high school in Queens. There are nearly 50 pages of information on each school. What you are going to read is a snapshot, a short summary of the school’s assessments. This information is public information and can be found on the Department of Education’s (DOE) website. You can search for evaluations of every public school in New York City.
3 Distribute *Academy of Careers in Television and Film snapshot* handout and have students read it.

**DISCUSS**

What kinds of information are included in this evaluation?

- *General information about the school, number of graduates, who goes to college, how teachers and students feel about the school, etc.*

What are your general impressions of this school?

Does it seem like a “good” school? Why or why not?

What makes a school good?

- *Teachers that are respectful to students and parents and create a positive learning environment, physical and emotional safety for students, students are successful, the classes are interesting, extra curricular activities are offered, effective leaders are in charge.*

4 Distribute *The Mathematics of the High School for Careers in Television and Film* worksheet and have students complete it. When students are finished, discuss their answers together as a class.
New York City School Quality Snapshot: Academy for Careers in Television and Film

### 2014-15 School Quality Snapshot / HS

**Academy For Careers In Television And Film (3XQ301)**

#### Student Achievement

**Progress Toward Graduation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>98% earned enough credits in 9th grade to be on track for graduation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|          | City: 84%  
|          | Borough: 86%  
|          | Comparison Group*: 88% |
|          | City: 79%  
|          | Borough: 82%  
|          | Comparison Group*: 83% |

**Graduation**

- **4-Year**  
  - 98% graduated within four years  
  - City: 79%  
  - Borough: 73%  
  - Comparison Group*: 85%

- **6-Year**  
  - 98% graduated within six years  
  - City: 76%  
  - Borough: 77%  
  - Comparison Group*: 87%

**Regents**

- How well does this school help students improve from their incoming proficiency levels and pass regents exam?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
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<td>Grade 9</td>
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<td>Grade 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**College and Career Readiness**

- **98%** successfully completed approved college or career preparatory courses and assessments
- **55%** graduated college ready (met CUNY’s standards for avoiding remedial classes)
- **72%** graduated from high school and enrolled in college or other postsecondary program within 6 months

*Comparison Group* is made up of students from other schools across the city who were the most similar to the students at this school, based on their incoming test scores, disability status, economic need, and over-age status. Comparing the school’s result to the “comparison group” result provides insight on how well the school is helping its students in light of their starting points and the challenges that they face.

**At this school, how did students from different starting points in 8th grade perform in high school?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starting Point (8th grade level)</th>
<th>Graduated in 4 yrs</th>
<th>College ready</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 or 4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Closing the Achievement Gap**

- How well did this school help different groups of students graduate in four years?

| English Language Learners | N/A |
| Students with Special Needs |     |
| City’s Lowest Performing Students |     |

The citywide graduation rates are projected numbers, subject to correction by the New York State Education Department.

---

**KEY:**

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

The section ratings are based on more information than what is included in this summary report. For more information, please see: [http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability](http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability)
### Rigorous Instruction
Curriculum and instruction are designed to engage students, foster critical thinking skills, and are aligned to the Common Core.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Review 1</th>
<th>Selected Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How interesting and challenging is the curriculum?</td>
<td>91% of students say that they learn a lot from feedback on their work (City: 84%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How effective is the teaching and learning?</td>
<td>94% of students know what their teacher wants them to learn in class (City: 90%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well does the school assess what students are learning?</td>
<td>51% of teachers say that students build on each other’s ideas during class discussions (City: 78%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Survey 1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey 1</th>
<th>Rigorous Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91%</td>
<td>responded positively to questions about Rigorous Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City: 85%</td>
<td>Borough: 87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Collaborative Teachers
Teachers participate in opportunities to develop, grow, and contribute to the continuous improvement of the school community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Review</th>
<th>Selected Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How well do teachers work with each other?</td>
<td>100% of teachers say that they work together to design instructional programs (City: 91%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Survey 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey 2</th>
<th>Collaborative Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98%</td>
<td>responded positively to questions about Collaborative Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City: 86%</td>
<td>Borough: 87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Supportive Environment
The school establishes a culture where students feel safe, challenged to grow, and supported to meet high expectations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Review</th>
<th>Selected Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How clear are high expectations communicated to students and staff?</td>
<td>53% of students feel safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker room, and cafeteria (City: 84%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Survey 3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey 3</th>
<th>Supportive Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>89%</td>
<td>responded positively to questions about Supportive Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City: 83%</td>
<td>Borough: 84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Less Restrictive Environment
Movement of students with special needs to less restrictive environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61% of students say that teachers notice when they are upset or having emotional difficulty (City: 71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% of students say that this school supports students in navigating the post-secondary process (City: 82%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**2014-15 School Quality Snapshot / HS**
Academy For Careers In Television And Film (30Q2011)

### Effective School Leadership

Survey:
- 97% responded positively to questions about Effective School Leadership

City: 82%
Borough: 82%

Selected Questions:
- 100% of teachers say that the principal communicates a clear vision for this school (City: 86%)
- 100% of teachers say that curriculum and instruction are well coordinated across different grade levels (City: 82%)
- 94% of parents feel that the principal works to create a sense of community in the school (City: 89%)

### Strong Family-Community Ties

Survey:
- 81% responded positively to questions about Strong Family-Community Ties

City: 75%
Borough: 74%

Selected Questions:
- 94% of parents say that school staff regularly communicate with them about how the staff can help their children learn (City: 88%)
- 96% of parents feel that teachers try to understand families' problems and concerns (City: 90%)
- 100% of teachers say that teachers at this school work closely with families to meet students' needs (City: 91%)

### Trust

Survey:
- 95% responded positively to questions about Trust

City: 89%
Borough: 89%

Selected Questions:
- 100% of teachers say that they trust the principal (City: 82%)
- 97% of teachers say that they trust each other (City: 87%)
- 96% of parents say that school staff work hard to build trusting relationships with their children (City: 91%)
- 93% of students say that teachers treat them with respect (City: 86%)

* Survey Response Rates
  - Teachers: 100%
  - Parents: 75%
  - Students: 95%

**KEY:**
- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

For more information on this document:
- [NYC School Directory](http://nycschooldirectory.nyc.ny.us/)
The Mathematics of the High School for Careers in Television and Film

Use the General Information section on the first page to solve the following problems.

1. During the year this report evaluated the school, how many students were Hispanic/Latino? Show your work below.

Write one sentence describing the steps you took to solve this problem.

2. How many were Black? Show your work below.

Write one sentence about the steps you took to solve this problem.

3. How many were Asian? Show your work below.
The only racial and ethnic categories presented are Hispanic, Black, White and Asian, but New York is so diverse. How can you rewrite these categories to capture the diversity of New York City students?

Describe the quality of the academics at this school. Use data from the snapshot to support your answer.

How does this school compare to other high schools in New York City? Use evidence from the snapshot to support your answer.

If you were choosing a high school for your child, a younger relative such as a sibling or cousin or niece/nephew, or friend, what information in addition to the information presented in this snapshot would you want in order to advise your family member or friend?
**We Are New York: “Welcome Parents”**

Students watch a video from the City’s *We Are New York* video series titled, “Welcome Parents,” make predictions about the video’s content, practice taking notes, and write questions for their classmates to answer based on what they learn.

**PREP**

- This activity requires note-taking. Students should already be familiar with note-taking strategies before doing this activity.

**MATERIALS**

- This lesson requires a computer and projector
- *We Are New York* worksheet
- *What You Can Do* handouts
- Extension Activity: *Write Carmen a Letter* handout

**EXPLAIN**

1. Moving to a new country and learning a new language are among some of the biggest challenges a person can face in life.
   
   What about this experience do you think is difficult and why?
   
   - Leaving your home, family and friends, learning new cultural traditions and norms, not knowing anyone or many people, getting lost, not being able to say what you think/feel/need.

2. Consider your own experience or try to put yourself in the shoes of someone who is a parent and has had to face this challenge with their children.
   
   What are some issues people might encounter, specific to being a parent or becoming a parent, in a new country trying to learn a new language?
   
   - Not being able to communicate with kids’ teachers, healthcare providers, friends’ parents, etc. Trying to access support services for children. Trying to help children with homework. Difficulty finding adequate employment to support a family.

3. Today we are going to watch a video about parents who are new to the United State and to speaking English. We are also going to practice note taking.
4 Distribute *We Are New York* worksheet and write the title of the video, “Welcome Parents,” on the board. Ask students to write 2 predictions about the video based on the title.

5 Play video:

Ask students to take notes on the video as they watch. They should note anything that seems important to understanding who the characters are and what is happening in their lives. Students should also make a note of anything they find interesting, surprising or confusing and write down any questions they have.

6 When the video is finished, ask students to complete the rest of the worksheet using their notes.

7 When students are finished writing their questions, have them exchange papers with a partner and answer each other’s questions. When they are finished, students should correct each other’s papers and return them.

**DISCUSS**

Who was your favorite character and why?

What are the support services for parents of NYC public school children we learned about in the video? How does each one help parents?

▶ Parent Coordinator—meets with parents and gives them advice, resources, assistance

▶ Translator—parents can request a translator when they need to communicate with a teacher, principal, school staff, etc.

If you had a parent-teacher conference coming up, what could you do to prepare?

▶ Write down what you want to say, get together with friends and practice asking questions, take a pen and paper to conference to take notes, repeat back what you hear, ask questions.

What did you learn from the video that could be useful even if you aren’t a parent or learning a new language?

▶ Working with your community can help solve problems, ask questions when you don’t understand something, investigate resources that could be available to you, you usually aren’t alone (other people have the same challenges as you), you can be a leader in your community by helping to organize others around a common goal.
We Are New York

Complete the questions below, based on the We Are New York video. Complete the first question (with two responses) before you watch the video, and the rest of the questions once you have watched the video.

The title of today’s video is ________________________________

Write 2 predictions about this video based on the title:

1. ______________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________

After watching the video:

Were your predictions correct? Explain why or why not.

1. ______________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________

Write 3 questions about facts from this video for a classmate to answer. Give your paper to a classmate and have them write the answers to your questions.

Question 1: ______________________________________________

Answer:

Question 2: ______________________________________________

Answer:

Question 3: ______________________________________________

Answer:
Extension Activity: Letter to Carmen

Students read two tip sheets. One addresses Carmen’s situation directly; the other is about parental school involvement more generally. After reading the tip sheets, they write a letter to Carmen giving her advice.

MATERIALS

- *What You Can Do to Prepare for Parent-Teacher Conferences* tip sheet
- *Dear Carmen* handout

EXPLAIN

1. There are so many things that parents can do to help their children succeed in school.
   Read the *What You Can Do to Prepare for Parent-Teacher Conferences* tip sheet, and annotate it, by writing an example of how a parent can use each tip.

2. Distribute the *What You Can Do to Prepare for Parent-Teacher Conferences* tip sheet.

3. Distribute the *Dear Carmen* handout and ask students to write a letter, using the tip sheet and their own experiences, offering Carmen advice on the parent-teacher conference. They should consider their own experiences with learning a language, immigration or parenting, as well as explaining how she should use some of the tips on the tip sheet. They can discuss experiences related to building community, accessing resources, learning something new or being in an unfamiliar place.

NOTE

Teachers may want to use writing strategies they have been using in class, such as creating an outline, using pair discussions or writing a chart of topics and topic sentences.
What You Can Do
To Prepare for Parent-Teacher Conferences

Carmen
Write down what you want to say.

Fatima
Get together with friends and practice asking questions.

Pierre
Take your notebook with you.

Juan
Don't forget your pen!

Ming
Repeat back what you hear.

Sayeed
Ask questions!
Dear Carmen

Write a letter to Carmen.
Ask her a question.
Give her advice.
Tell Carmen your story!

Dear Carmen,

Sincerely yours,
We Are New York: Stay In School

Students watch a video from the We Are New York video series that depicts a boy who is struggling with the decision to stay in school or drop out to help his family out financially and develop character maps for the two main characters.

PREP

- Vocabulary: flashback

MATERIALS

- Newsprint and markers
- Stay In School screen capture

EXPLAIN

1. Distribute Stay In School screen capture and ask students what they see. You may prompt them by asking what people, places and things they see, and what they think is happening. Make thinking visible by writing student ideas on newsprint that will remain posted around the room.

Specifically, on one piece of newsprint establish the characters of A Man and on another establish the character of A Boy; you will be developing character maps for each as the story unfolds.

2. Ask what they think the story will be about. Finally, ask students what they wonder about the story we are about to watch.

3. Transition to viewing by using student predictions to offer a brief overview of the episode. Make special note of the concept of a flashback.

4. Remind students about the two pieces of newsprint containing the words “A Boy,” and “A Man.” Tell them we will be learning who these people are and adding information to the posters as we go. (These will serve as the character maps for Diego and Uncle Juan.) Begin viewing.

5. Viewing segment 1: Stop after Diego asks Lupe in the front hall, “Hey, Lupe, do you want to play?” [end of Scene 2] Ask class what we have learned about the Boy. Add their ideas to the Boy’s character map, including his name. Clarify their understanding of how a flashback is being used. Resume viewing.

**Viewing segment 2:** Stop after Diego learns his aunt and uncle are having trouble paying the rent and Uncle Juan says, “Come on. Eat. Eat.” [end of Scene 6] Ask class what we have learned about the Man. Add their ideas to his character map, including his name, then ask specifically what his problem is. Summarize this in one sentence and add it to the map. Resume viewing.

**Viewing segment 3:** Stop after Omar asks Diego, “Did they find out the truth?” [end of Scene 9] Check comprehension by asking students to summarize the action so far. Elicit Diego’s problems and summarize these clearly on his character map. Resume viewing.

**Viewing segment 4:** Stop after Juan and Carmen confront Diego and he replies, “I don’t know. I don’t know.” [end of Scene 12] Check comprehension by asking students, “How do we know Diego is doing poorly in school?” Establish that the teacher mentions three reasons in her phone message. Then ask what problems Diego says he is having in school; he mentions three problems to his aunt and uncle. Finally, ask students what Diego’s choices are at this point. It should be clear that he can either stay in school or quit and go to work. Have the class vote on their prediction and ask them what makes them say that. Resume viewing.

**Viewing segment 5:** Stop after Diego tells his classmates, “My uncle took two days off of work.” [end of Scene 16] Check comprehension by asking students what things Diego and his family did to find solutions to his problems. Add student ideas to Diego’s character map under the title, “Solutions.” Resume viewing.

**Viewing segment 6:** Play video to the end. Ask students to discuss and summarize the services available to NYC students to stay in school. Diego and his family learn about this from their visit to the school counselor.

**DISCUSS**

- Ask students, “Who was your favorite character?” and “Why?” (“What makes you say that?”). Many will indicate that they admire Diego for his decision.
- Ask students to summarize how Diego solved his problems and who helped him to do this. Write students’ ideas on newsprint.
- What did you learn from watching Diego solve his problem and how could this information be useful to you in your own life?
Stay in School Screen Capture

Writing Activity: Advice for Teachers

Students will reflect on a moment in their past that an educator or educational experience helped them grow as a student or person. They will complete a three-paragraph writing assignment about this experience, conduct peer reviews, and revise their writing.

Note: Rather than focus on one writing strategy, this activity is designed to be flexible and invites teachers to use the activity as is (good for lower level students) or incorporate a focus on a specific writing skill of their choosing, such as topic sentences, paragraph structure, or transitional sentences.

**PREP**

- Review the writing assignment.
- **OPTIONAL:** Choose a writing strategy to incorporate into the activity. This could be a skill you have already introduced or are introducing for the first time. Some possible options include:
  - **Topic Sentences:** Use sentence starters/stems to help students focus on developing effective topic sentences for their paragraphs. For example:
    - *According to the article,…*
    - *The article focused on…*
    - *The key issue discussed in the article…*
  - **Paragraph Structure:** Use a Sandwich Paragraph (or other) graphic organizer to help students understand the different parts of a paragraph. See the following link or google “sandwich paragraph” for more guidance.
    [https://missisparagraphpage.weebly.com/paragraph-sandwich.html](https://missisparagraphpage.weebly.com/paragraph-sandwich.html)
Section 14

Lesson Guide

Transition phrases/sentences: Use transitional sentence stems/starters to help students understand strategies useful for transitioning between ideas. For example:

In addition,....
As a result,....
First,... Second,... Third,... Finally,...

MATERIALS

• Writing Activity: Advice for Teachers worksheet

EXPLAIN

1. Who has had a favorite teacher or has a favorite positive memory from a time when you were in school? It could be from any age or grade or even now! Elicit 2–3 brief examples from students.

2. Today you are going to write about a positive educational experience you’ve had as a way to give advice to all the teachers out there. You’ll need some paper and a pen or pencil.

3. Review any applicable writing skills you have decided to focus on, such as topic sentences, paragraph structure, transition sentences, etc. (See Prep section for examples)

4. Distribute Writing Activity: Advice for Teachers handout. Have students read and explain the instructions and then give students time to write. You may also want to write the prompt on the board as follows:

PARAGRAPh 1: Describe the event.

PARAGRAPh 2: Describe how the event impacted you.

PARAGRAPh 3: What did you learn about education from the experience and what advice do you have for teachers?

Write in as much detail as possible!
Writing Activity: Advice for Teachers

In this writing activity, you will write three paragraphs about a positive educational experience you had—the earlier, the better. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence, details, and examples. Make sure your sentences flow with clear logic from one idea to the next and that your paragraphs address the topic completely.

Think back to one of your first positive educational experiences. Was it in preschool, kindergarten or elementary school? What were you doing—playing with blocks or trucks, dressing up, treating a pretend patient, reading? What did a teacher say or do that made you feel included, intelligent or important? Or maybe it was even another student that made you feel this way. Maybe it was an activity or subject that you were especially excited about. Think back to an early educational experience that’s a happy memory and write about it in as much detail as possible. Use the following template as your guide.

**PARAGRAPH 1:**

**Early Positive Educational Experience**
Describe an early positive educational experience that had an impact on you in as much detail as possible. Make sure to include your age, location, surroundings including people, and what made the experience positive for you.

**PARAGRAPH 2:**

**How it Impacted You**
Describe the impact this experience had on you, including why you remember it, how it changed you, and why this change was important.

**PARAGRAPH 3:**

**Lessons for Educators**
Based on this experience, describe what you learned about education and what advice you would give to teachers. Some things to consider while writing this paragraph: What creates a positive educational experience? What do children need in order to be and feel successful at this age?
Extension Activity: Peer Editing

Advice for Teachers

Students engage in a revision process of reading one another’s writing, providing feedback, receiving feedback from their partner, and revising their writing based on the feedback.

PREP

- Be prepared to explain vocabulary: relevant, peer, edit, revise

MATERIALS

- Extra copies of written assignment
- Peer Editing Worksheet and Error Log

EXPLAIN

1. Even the most successful writers have editors. Editors can catch mistakes writers have missed. Before you have someone else look at your writing, it’s always important to re-read it yourself and make sure it’s the best it can be.

2. Ask students to re-read what they have written to make sure:
   - It has at least 3 paragraphs and all the writing in each paragraph is relevant to the assignment and focused on one idea.
   - The writing is clear and easy to understand.
   - The writing is grammatically correct. It can help to read aloud or think each word to yourself.
   - There are no spelling mistakes.
   (You may want to write these on the board so students can refer to them as they re-read.)

3. If you encounter any mistakes, correct them now.

4. Now, write down three questions you have for your editor. These are parts of your writing that you are unsure of, for example, a question about the clarity of a certain part, or a question about whether one sentence is too long and should be split in two. Your editor is here to help you, so ask questions that will help clarify what might make your writing better.
5 Distribute *Peer Editing Worksheet* and *Error Log*.

6 Exchange your writing with a partner, read your partner’s writing and complete the following peer editing worksheet based on what you read. You will also need the assignment when completing the peer edit worksheet. Your goal is to help your partner make her writing the best it can be.
Peer Editing Worksheet

Complete this sheet based on your reading of your partner’s writing.

Editor ___________________________________________ Date ______________________

Writer ____________________________________________

A particularly effective part of this writing was:

PARAGRAPH ONE
This paragraph was about:

It was / was not (circle one) closely related to the assignment because:

It was / was not complete because:
PARAGRAPH TWO
This paragraph was about:

It was / was not (circle one) closely related to the assignment because:

It was / was not complete because:

PARAGRAPH THREE
This paragraph was about:

It was / was not (circle one) closely related to the assignment because:

It was / was not complete because:
## Error Log

Complete the chart below to help your partner refine his or her writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I found the following grammatical errors:</th>
<th>Where I found them:</th>
<th>Why they are incorrect:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I found the following problems with organization:</th>
<th>Where I found them:</th>
<th>Why this was a problem:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I found the following parts unclear:</th>
<th>Where I found them:</th>
<th>What made these parts unclear:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Discussing Feedback**

When students are finished with the peer editing sheet, they should discuss all points with their partners, and give their partners the sheet. Once they are finished, they should switch speaking and listening roles, so that both students’ writing is discussed. Once both are discussed, the editor should give the writer the feedback sheet.

Students should bring their first draft and the peer edits of their own writing to the next session.

---

**Revision, Based on Feedback**

With their partner’s feedback in front of them, writers should make changes to their writing on the first draft or on an additional sheet as necessary. The teacher circulates to check progress and answer questions. Pairs should continue to sit together in case they have questions for one another.

---

**Final Draft**

Using revisions, students write final drafts, at computers or by hand. Students turn in the first draft, peer edit worksheet, revision notes and final draft by the end of the class.

---

**A Celebration of Writing: Sharing Excerpts**

As the teacher circulates, she selects components of students’ writing that are particularly effective and asks the writer to share with the class, discussing as a class what made these parts particularly effective.
TASC Argumentative Essay: The Screen Time Debate

Students read and discuss the pros and cons of screen time for young children. Using evidentiary reasoning from articles and their personal experience, students write an argumentative essay about the issue. The argumentative essay is a type of essay that appears on the TASC exam.

PREP

- Pre-teach vocabulary from *Baby Einsteins*, including: detrimental, passive, interferes with, interact, stimulation/overstimulated, proliferate.
- Pre-teach vocabulary from *Parents, Calm Down*, including: abstain/abstinence, misleading, claim (as a noun), cognitive, moderation, crucial.

MATERIALS

- Picture 1 (either projected onto a screen, or copies to distribute to the students)
- *TASC Argumentative Essay: Impact of Screen Time on Children* handout
- *Baby Einsteins: Not So Smart After All and Parents* article
- *Calm Down about Infant Screen Time* article
- *The Pros and the Cons: Screen Time Debate* double entry journal
- *Argumentative Essay Template* handout

EXPLAIN

1. Project or distribute the picture of the baby at the computer. Ask students what they see in the picture, and how they feel about it. Lead a short discussion to draw out students’ opinions about and experiences with small children using electronic devices.

2. *SAY:* Today we will read two articles with opposing views about how screen time affects small children. Then we will write an argumentative essay in support of one side of the debate or the other. This is a type of essay that appears on the TASC exam.

3. Distribute *TASC Argumentative Essay: Impact of Screen Time on Children* handout. Ask students to read the essay prompt on their own and then together as a class, develop two guiding questions for the reading based on the prompt. Write the guiding questions on the board. Some examples might be:
• Does looking at screens, such as television, phone, tablet or computer screens, harm children?
• Should parents allow their children to watch television, phone, tablet or computer screens?

4 Distribute *Baby Einsteins: Not So Smart After All* article and *Parents, Calm Down about Infant Screen Time* article. Ask students to read the articles and try to answer the guiding questions. They should annotate the articles, noting the main ideas in the margins, underlining the evidence the writers use to support their arguments, and writing down any questions they have.

5 Tell students that one way to understand a reading well is to focus on the author's words, and then explain and analyze them in our own words. Distribute *The Pros and the Cons: Screen Time* debate double entry journal and have students read and explain the instructions.

6 Help students complete the double entry journals, first by copying a sentence from the article into the left-hand column. They should choose a sentence from the article that they feel best explains a reason WHY screen time is harmful to kids, or a reason why it's not so harmful (or HOW kids can use screens in a way that is helpful). After copying their quotation, students should explain/analyze the quotation in their own words in the right-hand column, then repeat the process with a second example.

**DISCUSS**

Lead a short follow-up discussion about students' opinions about small children and screen time. Draw out any new ideas that students may have learned in the reading.

Some additional questions might include:
• Are parents using screens as babysitters, or interacting with children while they watch?
• What is realistic for parents?
• What types of media are children using?

**WRITE**

Students will now develop their essay according to the prompt. Teachers may want to use the *Argumentative Essay Template* included to help students plan their essay or employ any essay-development strategies they have been using in class, such as using a graphic organizer, creating outlines, or discussing in pairs prior to writing the essay. Students should include quotations from the double journal entry or others they find compelling from the readings. They can also include examples from their own experiences or comments they’ve heard from trusted individuals or organizations.
Argumentative Essay: Impact of Screen Time on Children

There is an ongoing debate about whether or not parents should allow their young children to spend time looking at televisions, smart phones, or computer screens. People who oppose screen time for young children believe it can adversely affect their brain development. Others claim that keeping young kids away from screens entirely is unrealistic and ignores research that says it’s not so bad.

Weigh both sides of the claim, then write an argumentative essay supporting one side or the other. Be sure to use information from both texts in your essay.

Before you begin planning and writing, read the two texts:

1. Baby Einsteins: Not So Smart After All article
2. Parents, Calm Down about Infant Screen Time article

As you read the texts, think about which details you might use in your essay. Annotate the article, taking notes on the details as you read. After reading the two texts, create a plan for writing your essay. Think about what you know about the topic. Think about other information, details and examples that you may want to use. Plan how you will introduce the topic and think about the main ideas of the paragraphs in your essay. This is one type of essay that appears on the TASC exam.
The claim always seemed too good to be true: park your infant in front of a video and, in no time, he or she will be talking and getting smarter than the neighbor’s kid. In the latest study on the effects of popular videos such as the “Baby Einstein” and “Brainy Baby” series, researchers find that these products may be doing more harm than good. And they may actually delay language development in toddlers.

Led by Frederick Zimmerman and Dr. Dimitri Christakis, both at the University of Washington, the research team found that with every hour per day spent watching baby videos, infants learned six to eight fewer new vocabulary words than babies who never watched the videos. These products had the strongest detrimental effect on babies 8 to 16 months old, the age at which language skills are starting to form. “The more videos they watched, the fewer words they knew,” says Christakis. “These babies scored about 10% lower on language skills than infants who had not watched these videos.”

It’s not the first blow to screen time for young children and it won’t be the last. Mounting evidence suggests that passive screen time not only doesn’t help children learn, but could also set back their development. Last spring, Christakis and his colleagues found that by three months, 40% of babies are...
regular screen viewers (including television, computers, tablets, or smart phones); by the time they are two years old, almost 90% are spending two to three hours each day in front of a screen. Three studies have shown that screen time, even if it includes educational programming such as Sesame Street, delays language development. “Babies require face-to-face interaction to learn,” says Dr. Vic Strasburger, professor of pediatrics at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine and a spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics. “They don’t get that interaction from watching TV or videos. In fact, the watching probably interferes with the crucial wiring being laid down in their brains during early development.” Previous studies have shown, for example, that babies learn faster and better from a native speaker of a language when they are interacting with that speaker instead of watching the same speaker talk on a screen. “Even watching a live person speak to you via television or computer is not the same thing as having that person in front of you,” says Christakis.

This growing evidence led the Academy to issue its recommendation in 1999 that no child under two years old watch any television. The authors of the new study might suggest reading instead: children who got daily reading or storytelling time with their parents showed a slight increase in language skills.

Though the popular baby videos in the Washington study were designed to stimulate infants’ brains, not necessarily to promote language development, parents generally assume that the products’ promises to make their babies smarter include improvement of speaking skills. But, says Christakis, “the majority of the videos don’t try to promote language; they have rapid scene changes and quick edits, and no appearance of the ‘parentese’ type of speaking that parents use when talking to their babies.”

As far as Christakis and his colleagues can determine, the only thing that baby videos are doing is producing a generation of overstimulated kids. “There is an assumption that stimulation is good, so more is better,” he says. “But that’s not true; there is such a thing as overstimulation.” His group has found that the more screen time children have, the shorter their attention spans later in life. “Their minds come to expect a high level of stimulation, and view that as normal,” says Christakis, “and by comparison, reality is boring.”

He and other experts worry that the proliferation of these products will continue to displace the one thing that babies need in the first months of life—face time with human beings. “Every interaction with your child is meaningful,” says Christakis. “Time is precious in those early years, and the newborn is watching you, and learning from everything you do.” So just talk to them; they’re listening.
Parents, Calm Down About Infant Screen Time

By Chris Ferguson, in Time Magazine, Feb. 3, 2015


Too much of the wrong kind of media can hurt infants, but that doesn’t mean you need to practice total abstinence

Parents of infants face hard choices about how to raise their children, and sometimes misleading information can get in the way of their decisions. Take screen time: readers of the Guardian were recently treated to the claim that allowing toddlers to play with iPads or other small screens could damage their brains. It turned out, however, that the story (since corrected) was not based on an actual research study, but a press release regarding a commentary in the journal Pediatrics. The story was one in a series of claims in recent years that tablet use hurts infants’ development—scary headlines that too often mislead readers about research that is much less clear or consistent than claimed.

Both journalists and scholars are responsible for needlessly scaring parents. For instance, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has long called for complete avoidance of screen time in infancy. Yet a number of scholars and commenters have criticized the AAP for being both unrealistic and ignoring data that doesn’t fit their scarier message. One of the top experts in this area, Deborah Linebarger has said that the AAP should present all data on screen time rather than ignoring data that suggest positive benefits of media while sensationalizing flawed studies that find negative relations.

So what does the research really say on screen time for infants? Well, it’s complicated. First, claims that exposure to screens (including television) is associated with reduced cognitive development in childhood are controversial. In one of my own recent studies with coauthor M. Brent
Donnellan, we found that total abstinence, that is to say families following the AAP's recommendations, was actually associated with lower cognitive development, not higher. But this doesn’t mean that anything goes—no one is suggesting that we sit baby down for a Terminator marathon.

The non-profit group Zero to Three recently released screen time recommendations for infants. As they note, it really is not so simple as to say that screens are or aren’t good for infants. Nor is abstinence the answer. It’s more about using screens in a quality way, as when caregivers engage with infants while they watch and explain what they are seeing. Screens such as iPads or smartphones can actually be used in ways that promote babies’ cognitive and social development. But as they write, moderation is key: “the need for limits is still important because research clearly shows that it is active exploration of the real, 3-D world with loving, trusting caregivers that is most critical for healthy early development.”

In another recent study, presented by Deborah Linebarger at the American Psychological Association conference in 2014, researchers found that parent–toddler interactions around media were most crucial for toddlers' language development and that media that shows real characters in real situations is associated with better language development. Too often newspaper headlines and the AAP present media and parenting as a kind of zero-sum game. But media can be intelligently incorporated into smart parenting.

Who the media was designed for in the first place is important too. One 2010 study by Rachel Barr and colleagues found that infant exposure to adult-oriented media was associated with less cognitive development, but exposure to child-oriented media was not associated with any cognitive outcome.

So, given that the data is often complex and contradictory and even scholars debate these issues, what should parents do? Is it ok to let the little ones have a bit of screen time? Probably, so long as it’s not replacing interactions with parents and it’s using media that is educational or geared toward children and shows real characters in real situations. Don’t think of media as an either/or but something you can use with children and talk to them about. Sure, if you’re letting your infant watch CNN alone for hours on end, you’ve probably got media wrong. But total abstinence for toddlers isn’t necessary. Pressuring parents with total media abstinence, particularly with nonsense claims of damaged brains isn’t good science. It’s just frightening and shaming parents.
### The Screen Time Debate—The Cons

Use the following double entry journal to write about why the readings say that parents should NOT let young children have screen time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the words of the article (a quotation)</th>
<th>In your own words, explain what it means or how/why it’s saying that.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. “</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. “</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Screen Time Debate—The Pros

Use the following double entry journal to write about why the readings say that it's OK for parents to let young children have screen time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the words of the article (a quotation)</th>
<th>In your own words, explain what it means or how/why it's saying that.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. “</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. “</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Template for TASC Argumentative Essay

**ESSAY TEMPLATE: ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY**

### PARAGRAPH ONE: Introduction

- The topic
- Why the topic is important
- Your claim about the topic

An important issue today is ______________________. Some people feel that ______________________. Others believe ______________________. My own opinion is that ______________________.

### PARAGRAPH TWO: Reason One to support your claim

Further explanation/examples/evidence to support this reason  
*(Check that your whole paragraph is ONLY about Reason One)*

One reason I believe ______________________ is that ______________________.  
The article ______________________ states that ______________________.  
This article gives the example of ______________________.

### PARAGRAPH THREE: Reason Two to support your claim

Further explanation/examples/evidence to support this reason  
*(Check that your whole paragraph is ONLY about Reason Two and that Reason Two is DIFFERENT from Reason One)*

Another reason I think ______________________ is that ______________________.  
As the author of ______________________ shows, ______________________.  
In my own experience, ______________________. For instance, ______________________.
**PARAGRAPH FOUR: Counterclaim**

Mention ONE reason from the text that goes AGAINST your claim and explain why you disagree with it.

Although ____________________________ provides some evidence that ____________________________, I do not believe this is enough to justify the claim that ____________________________. Instead, ____________________________.

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**PARAGRAPH FIVE: Conclusion**

Two or three sentences that return to your claim and say again (1) why it is important (2) how things in general will be better if people do things the way you have recommended in your essay.

In conclusion, ____________________________ (restate your claim in different words and why it is important.)