

Grade 6, Prompt for Argument Writing

Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

Your school asked for student input to help choose a field trip. First, any student could make a suggestion by writing down the name of their choice and putting it in a Field Trip Suggestion Box. All suggestions had to 1) be educational, 2) fit into one of the following core curriculum areas: Social Studies, Science, Fine Arts or Language Arts, and 3) be within a 100-mile radius of your school. A committee of students was selected to collect the student suggestions, get rid of any that did not meet the three guidelines and choose three possibilities for all students to vote on at a future date. Write an article for the school newsletter giving your choice of the proposed three field trips. Explain your choice using the descriptions below as your source of information.

While each of the three final choices would be great places to visit, your task is to convince others to vote for your choice. Before you read the descriptions, make a list of what makes up a great field trip to you as well as a list of all the details that need to be accomplished for a field trip to happen. Read the description for each of the options below. As you read and re-read these texts, think about your lists. Reading the descriptions may make you think of things to add to your lists. Decide which field trip you will choose and use specifics from both of your lists and evidence from the articles to support your choice.

Finally, write an essay, in the form of an article for the newsletter, explaining your thinking.

For the essay, your Focusing Question is:

Of the three field trip suggestions chosen by the committee, which would you choose as a field trip for your school.

Remember, a strong and effective piece of argument writing:

- *Takes the audience into account*
- *Has a clear introduction*
- *States a focus/position statement clearly, precisely, and thoughtfully*
- *Uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support and develop the position, and explains that evidence logically*
- *Takes into account what people who disagree with you might think and tries to respond to that*
- *Concludes effectively*
- *Uses precise language*
- *Shows control over conventions*

You will have three class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. The essay will have a single draft, and you may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. When you have finished, be sure to proofread.

Argument Writing

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Teacher Directions

- The student has been give directions to make lists before reading the texts. The teacher may need to brainstorm a couple of ideas for each list to help the student get started. However, the lists should be created mostly by the student.

- The texts provide the information needed to address the prompt, and students should independently read the texts carefully before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing and to take notes, and to mark up the text as much as is helpful to them. **IMPORTANT:** When a student does this kind of writing for the first time, it should be a joint project between student and parent teacher, with the parent teacher modeling how to take notes and how to determine which information is important enough to deserve highlighting.

- Students should be given three sessions for the prompt. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given as much time as needed to plan, write, and proofread.

- The writing should be done with limited help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing.
 - Be sure students have paper to take notes or do whatever pre-planning they might choose to do.
 - If students are writing by hand, provide lined paper for writing. If they are using a digital device, make sure they save their work so it can be accessed the next day.

- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

1) Empire Mine State Historic Park

Grass Valley, CA

Brief History:

The Empire Mine was the richest hard-rock mine in the State of California producing 5.8 million ounces of gold in its operating history of 106 years (1850-1956). George Roberts, the original discoverer of the gold soon sold his interest and by 1869 William Bourn Sr. owned controlling interest. The Bourn family maintained control of the mine until 1929 when it was sold to Newmont Mining. It ceased operation in 1956. In 1975 the State purchased the surface property as the Empire Mine State Historic Park. The Park continues to draw thousands of worldwide visitors each year and is noted for its historical tours of the Bourn Cottage, the mineyard and "living history" events.

Tours:

Cottage Grounds: Your tour guide will lead you through the history of the ownership of the Empire Mine and the key players in the mine development. The tour includes the Bourn Cottage, the Clubhouse, and the George Starr home ruins.

Mineyard: This tour addresses the gold mining process, mine statistics, mining equipment, the use of mules and the miners themselves.

Gardens: This tour features a walk in the rose garden with its many varieties of roses and other plants. Most of the roses are from original plantings in the 1897 time period and some have been propagated by Park volunteers and are available for purchase at the sales counter.

Park Attractions: In addition to the tours noted above, the Park museum has a scale model of the underground workings of the Empire/Star mine complex, a "gold room" which displays ore samples from local mines, an Assay Office, and an extensive mineral collection. A video entitled "Tears from the Sun" depicting various gold mining techniques is shown on a regular basis.

Daily Park Hours:

10:00 AM. - 5:00 PM. (Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Years Day)

Entrance Fee:

\$7.00 for adults over 16, \$3.00 for children 6 to 16, children under 6 are free. Tours: Cottage, Mineyard and Grounds & Gardens included with the entrance fee.

All information taken from: www.empiremine.org

2) California State Railroad Museum

Sacramento, CA

First opened to the public in 1976, the California State Railroad Museum complex is one of Sacramento's largest and most popular visitor destinations. Over 500,000 visit the Museum annually, with guests traveling from throughout the world to experience this world-renowned facility.

The California State Railroad Museum complex consists of six original, reconstructed, and new buildings completed at a cost of \$30 million. The primary exhibit building, the Railroad History Museum, totals 100,000 square feet. Completed at a cost of \$16.1 million, it opened in May 1981.

With over 225,000 square feet of total exhibit space, the buildings within the California State Railroad Museum complex use stimulating exhibits, enthusiastic and knowledgeable docents, and beautifully restored railroad cars and locomotives to illustrate railroad history in California and the West.

Throughout the main Railroad History Museum building, 21 meticulously restored locomotives and cars and numerous exhibits illustrate how railroads have shaped people's lives, the economy, and the unique culture of California and the West. Included are a Pullman-style sleeping car, a dining car filled with railroad china, and a Railway Post Office that visitors can actually step aboard.

A visit to the California State Railroad Museum is a not-to-be-missed experience that will be enjoyed by persons of all ages and abilities.

Hours

The Museum is open daily (except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day) from 10 a.m to 5 p.m.

Admission

\$10 adults; \$5 youths ages 6-17; children ages 5 and under are free.

All information taken from: <http://www.csrnf.org/>

3) California Academy of Sciences Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA

The **California Academy of Sciences** is among the largest museums of natural history in the world. The Academy began in 1853 as a learned society and still carries out a large amount of original research, with exhibits and education becoming significant endeavors of the museum during the 20th century. The Academy is driven by two burning questions: 1) How did life on Earth develop? 2) How will we sustain life on Earth?

The Academy brings the whole universe under one roof - an aquarium, a planetarium, a natural history museum, a rain forest, 40,000 live animals and engaging exhibits all housed beneath a living roof. The 412,000 square foot structure is not only physically impressive, but it just may be the greenest museum on the planet, with a 2 ½ acre Living Roof, an expansive solar canopy, an extensive water reclamation system, and walls insulated with recycled blue jeans.

It's easy to plan a visit to the California Academy of Sciences. One general admission includes access to all museum and aquarium exhibits, including the rainforest, planetarium, and living roof. Admission to this popular Bay Area attraction includes a wide range of daily programs and activities, including dive shows, penguin feedings, swamp talks and more. It's fun for the whole family!

Regular Hours: 9 a.m to 5 p.m.

General Admission

Adult	\$34.95
Senior (ages 65 and over)	\$29.95
Student	\$29.95
Youth (ages 12-17)	\$29.95
Child (ages 4-11)	\$24.95
Ages 3 and under	FREE

All information taken from: www.calacademy.org/



Writing Scoring Guide (Rubric)

(for Opinion/Argument writing)	<i>Great!</i>	<i>O.K.</i>	<i>Needs Help</i>
Critical Components			
Demonstrates clear understanding of purpose			
Provides specific textual examples and factual information			
Links opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses			
Style (lively, engaging and appropriate use of language)			
Precise words			
Strong, active verbs			
Includes a variety of sentence types and structures			
Maintains a consistent point of view and focus			
Organization			
Contains clearly presented central idea with supporting evidence			
Logical and orderly sequence of ideas			
Flows well-easy to understand-including use of transitional words			
Begins with strong introductory paragraph clearly stating thesis			
Has a defined conclusion			
Conventions (accepted practice established by usage)			
<i>Usage:</i>			
Correct use of pronouns			
Clear pronoun reference			
Subject/Verb agreement			
Correct word choice			
<i>Mechanics:</i>			
Ending punctuation			
Proper capitalization			
Correct use of commas			
Complete sentence formation (no fragments or run-ons)			
Quotation marks used appropriately			
<i>Spelling:</i>			
Words spelled correctly			

