

Teacher: Elissa Knight

Date: March 9-13, 2009

School: Academy of Scholastic Achievement

Subject: Research Writing

Grades: 9-12 (predominantly 11-12)

Overview of Class:

The course objective in the syllabus states, "Students will become familiar with the process of researching and revising papers. They will complete their senior level research papers." During the first quarter students hone their research, note taking and writing skills through a series of mini units. In choosing the mini unit topics, I looked at a school-wide ASA Leadership Committee survey from the middle of the year asking students what they thought were the major issues in their communities and major barriers preventing students from doing well in school. Teen pregnancy and violence were high on their list. So, in February we looked at issues of teens and sexuality. The academic objectives included identifying main idea, summarizing, and articulating their opinions in speaking and writing. In March we looked at issues of violence. The focus topic for the unit outlined below is: Do guns do more harm or good? My academic objectives for the students were the same as before, but, in addition, I expected them to begin citing research in their debates and essays. In April and May students chose a topic from a list of nine controversial social issues to write their ten page research papers about.

Prevention Strategies Utilized (and How):

- Increasing perceptions of personal risk: I plan to have students read articles, debate and write about the risks associated with firearms. Through these activities they will become more aware of the correlation between gun ownership and violent crimes. Students will also research, debate and write about gun laws and the use of firearms by citizens. Through these activities they will be exposed to information and participate in activities that challenge the perception that citizens should have guns because this protects them from violent crimes.

English Goals: 1) Read with understanding and fluency; 2) Write to communicate for a variety of purposes; 3) Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations; and 4) Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate.

Day 1

Objective: Students will identify a homicide case (specifically one resulting from the use of a firearm) in their community and will conclude what the number one cause was (coincidence, prevalence of firearms, not protected, etc.)

Time	Activities	Illinois and SEL Standards	Resources	Assessments
5 min	*Students will correct sentences with errors in punctuation. (bell ringer)	ELA: 1.B.4c- Read age-appropriate material with fluency and accuracy.	http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,443989,00.html	1) Graphic organizer (see attachment A) 2) Participation
30 min	*Students will independently read online articles about the Lane Bryant shooting, the first homicide in 2009 and the Jennifer Hudson family slayings. They will fill out a 5W graphic organizer with details from the case to demonstrate comprehension. They will fill in the why column with their own assessment of the cause, in order to spur an analysis of why gun violence occurs.	1.B.5a-Relate reading to prior knowledge and experience and make connections to related information. SEL: 3A.5a-Apply ethical reasoning to evaluate societal practices. 3A.5b-Examine how the norms of different societies and cultures influence their members' decisions and behaviors.	http://www.suntimes.com/news/metro/773695,tinley020208.article http://cbs2chicago.com/local/first.homicide.2009.2.898473.html	
5 min	*Students will fill in the last row with details of a case from their neighborhood (or one they have heard about in Chicago at large). *Students will share the reason for the homicide they charted out on			

10 min	their own, while the class creates a graph of reasons for homicide in their community. (This will be done on the board and transferred to the back of their graphic organizer) The chart will provide a visual representation of the reasons student identify as key causes of gun violence. On the bottom of the graph students will write a summarization of the trends they see.			
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Day 2

Objective: Students will comprehend the reasons why people support citizens owning guns, and will discern the strongest quotes in an article sorting gun ownership for each specific reason.

Time	Activities	Illinois and SEL Standards	Resources	Assessments
5 min	*Students will correct sentences with errors in punctuation. (bell ringer)	ELA: 1.B.4c- Read age-appropriate material with fluency and accuracy.	En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_arguments_of_gun_politics_in_the_United_States (This is the article I used, and the one that correlates to the attached outline.)	1) Summaries 2) Outline (see attachment B)
30 min	*Students will volunteer to read an excerpt of an article out loud while the rest of the class follows along and summarizes each paragraph in the margin. They will comprehend five key arguments in support of gun ownership: why some think it is a fundamental right, the second amendment argument, self defense, states' rights and	5.C.4c-Prepare for and participate in formal debates. SEL: 3A.5a-Apply ethical reasoning to evaluate societal practices. 3A.5b-Examine how the norms of different societies and cultures influence their	http://www.nraila.org (This is included as a supplementary resource.)	

15 min	<p>protection against tyranny and invasion. This section of the article supports individual gun ownership. The hope is that they will see that many of their reasons for supporting it differ from many of the arguments at the forefront of the debate.</p> <p>*Students will fill out an outline where they define each argument and identify the most persuasive quote supporting the argument. Again, they will be made aware of some social norms regarding gun ownership through this reading.</p>	members' decisions and behaviors.		
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Day 3				
Objective: Students will comprehend the reasons why people oppose citizens owning guns, and will discern the strongest quotes in an article supporting gun ownership for each specific reason.				
Time	Activities	Illinois and SEL Standards	Resources	Assessments
5 min	*Students will correct sentences with errors in punctuation. (bell ringer)	ELA: 1.B.4c- Read age-appropriate material with fluency and accuracy.	En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_violence_in_the_United_States	1) Summaries 2) Outline (see attachment C)
30 min	*Students will read an excerpt from an article about gun violence in the U.S. independently and summarize each paragraph in the margin. They will look at the following	5.C.4c-Prepare for and participate in formal debates. SEL:		

15 min	<p>sections: introduction, suicide, homicide, assassinations, and other violent crimes. This article lays out what gun crimes occur most frequently, as well as provide information on the correlation between guns and violent crimes.</p> <p>*Students will fill out an outline where they define each argument and identify the most persuasive quote supporting the argument. They will be made more aware of personal risks associated with gun ownership through the reading.</p>	<p>3A.5a-Apply ethical reasoning to evaluate societal practices.</p> <p>3A.5b-Examine how the norms of different societies and cultures influence their members' decisions and behaviors.</p>		
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Day 4				
Objective: Students will debate whether guns do more harm or good in society, Chicago in particular.				
Time	Activities	Illinois and SEL Standards	Resources	Assessments
5 min	*Students will correct sentences with errors in punctuation. (bell ringer)	ELA: 4.A.4b-Apply listening skills in practical settings (e.g., classroom note taking, interpersonal conflict situations, evaluating persuasive messages).	Not Applicable	1) Notes 2) Participation
40 min	*Students will debate whether guns do more harm or good in society. Throughout the debate students will take notes on the points made for and against guns. As they debate and cite the articles they will be reminded of what the social norms and personal risks are.	5.C.4c-Prepare for and participate in formal debates. SEL: 3A.5a-Apply ethical reasoning to evaluate		

5 min	*Students will summarize the debate. They will answer the following questions: 1) Which side won the debate and why? 2) In what ways has this week's activities impacted their knowledge base and or opinions about gun ownership?	societal practices. 3A.5b-Examine how the norms of different societies and cultures influence their members' decisions and behaviors.		
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Day 5				
Objective: Students will know how to write a persuasive essay and will write one on the following topic: Do guns do more harm or good? Students will use citations correctly.				
Time	Activities	Illinois and SEL Standards	Resources	Assessments
5 min	*Students will correct sentences with errors in punctuation. (bell ringer)	ELA: 3.A.5-Produce grammatically correct documents. 3.B.5-Using technology, produce documents of publication quality.	checklist	1) Essay (see attachment D for checklist rubric)
40 min	*Students will type and email the teacher their position essay in response to the question: Should citizens be allowed to own guns?	5.B.5b-Credit primary and secondary sources in a form appropriate for presentation or publication for a particular audience.		
5 min	*Students will grade their essay using a simple checklist rubric.	SEL: 3A.5a-Apply ethical reasoning to evaluate societal practices. 3A.5b-Examine how the		

		norms of different societies and cultures influence their members' decisions and behaviors.		
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Note: This basic schedule was repeated for three more units: 1) Should abortion be legal? 2) Should schools pass out birth control? 3) Should parents spank their kids? On Mondays I introduced the topic. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays students researched both sides of the issue. On Thursdays they debated the topic. On Fridays they wrote position essays. The unit plan above can be easily modified and used to study any number of controversial topics.

Attachment A

Case	Who	What	When	Where	Why
#1					
#2					
#3					

#4					
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Attachment B

I. Fundamental Right

A. Summary

B. Quote

II. Second Amendment Argument

A. Summary

B. Quote

III. State Constitutions

A. Summary

B. Quote

IV. Right of Self-Defense

A. Summary

B. Quote

V. Security Against Tyranny and Invasion

A. Summary

B. Quote

Attachment C

I. Introduction

A. Summary

B. Quote

II. Suicide

A. Summary

B. Quote

III. Homicide

A. Summary

B. Quote

IV. Assassinations

A. Summary

B. Quote

V. Other Violent Crimes

A. Summary

B. Quote

4 CARD PARAGRAPH RUBRIC

Indents the paragraph ____

Capitalizes sentences ____

Ends sentences with periods ____

Has a topic sentence that does not use I,

you, yes or no ____

Essay clearly chooses a side ____

Uses transitions ____

Has one supporting reason, which includes a cite and is

explained ____

Has a second supporting reason, which includes a cite and

is explained ____

Has a third supporting reason, which includes a cite and
is explained ____

Essay ends with a clincher sentence ____

Points ____/10