

TEMPLATE FOR RESEARCH AND PERSUASIVE WRITING LESSONS

In this activity, students will use with [MPR's Morning Edition](#) site to research an issue and then write an editorial.

Time: 3 – 5, 50 minute class periods, plus 10 - 30 minutes of initial prep for each period.

Materials:

- Computers with Internet connection for each student or pairs of students
- Classroom computer with Internet connection and speakers
- [Real Audio Player 8.0](#) or higher for each computer used
- Copies of the 5W + H map (see attached)
- 2 blank 5W+ H maps (transparency or drawn on easel paper that can be transported).

Optional:

- Student copy of a word processing program (e.g., Microsoft Word, etc).
- Copies of Editorial Writing Organizer (see attached)
- Headphones for each student (if using computer lab)
- Rubrics (see below) posted on easel paper or on transparency. The first rubric is geared specifically to an editorial. Alternatively, you might want to use the [MN BST scoring rubric](#).

Objectives for Middle and High School Students:

- Write an editorial/persuasive writing piece around a student-selected topic.
- Compile information from several articles.
- Compare the points of view in stories' sources.

Correlations to Grades 6 - 8 Minnesota Standards:

- Grades 6: Language Arts – Reading and Literature – Comprehension – Benchmarks 1, 9
- Grades 6: Language Arts – Writing - Research – Benchmark 1
- Grades 6, 7, 8 Language Arts – Writing - Types of Writing – Benchmark 1
- Grades 7: Language Arts – Reading and Literature – Comprehension – Benchmarks 5, 7, 10
- Grade 7: Language Arts – Writing – Research – Benchmarks 3
- Grade 8: Language Arts – Reading and Literature – Comprehension – Benchmarks 3, 8


Correlations to Grades 9 – 12 Minnesota Standards:

- Grade 9 – 12 Language Arts – Reading and Literature – Comprehension – Benchmarks 2, 5, 6, 9
- Grade 9 – 12 Language Arts – Writing – Types of Writing – Benchmark 1
- Grade 9 – 12 Language Arts – Writing – Research – Benchmark 1, 5

Period #1: Note Taking Practice

PREP:

Estimated time: 10 – 35 minutes, depending on if you are setting up bookmarks for your computer lab.

- 1) Access <http://news.minnesota.publicradio.org/programs/morninged/> and click on “Entire regional (MPR) rundown” link. Find a story on an issue you want to use for this project (e.g., a story on the Hennepin County smoking ban).
- 2) Practice using stories with an audio segment: click on the  button to launch and load the Real Audio Player with the audio segment.
- 3) Preview the segment, checking that your speaker volume is high enough to reach all corners of your classroom.
- 4) Do a preliminary search in the *Morning Edition* archive (can be located at the bottom of rundown page) and browse articles related to the issue you’re demonstrating.
- 5) Select, print, and run off enough copies of an article related to the audio segment you will be presenting. If using blackline master, make enough copies so each student has two.

INSTRUCTION:

Estimated time: 30 -50 minutes

- 1) Explain that over the next few periods, the class will be using the *Morning Edition* website to research an issue. The final product will be an editorial piece that can be submitted to the MPR forum (if students are over the age of 13 and in accordance with your district’s AUP and student’s parental permission) or other venue. Today’s task is to practice taking notes from both audio and text sources.
- 2) Optional: If you have a projector hooked up to your classroom computer, demonstrate the *Morning Edition* website, pointing out the regional rundown section and archive search function.
- 3) Distribute first copy of the 5W + H map (if using) and introduce the topic covered in this week’s rundown.
- 4) Play the audio segment and direct students to take notes using the 5W + H map or notebook paper
- 5) Fill out class 5W + H map, soliciting student notes.
- 6) Distribute printed article and second 5W + H map to individual or pairs of students. Have students take notes in pairs or individually on the article, filling out the second map.
- 7) As a class, fill out second 5W + H map, again soliciting student notes. Save charts for next period.
- 8) If time allows, have class evaluate each story’s objectivity and accuracy of information. Ask for any specific examples of bias, being sure to make the distinction between a source’s bias and a reporter’s bias.

Periods # 2 & 3 (if needed): Research in the lab.

PREP:

Estimated time: 10 – 25 minutes, depending on if you are setting up bookmarks for your computer lab.

- 1) If using a lab, set up the computers: either add a bookmark for MPR's *Morning Edition* website - <http://news.minnesota.publicradio.org/programs/morninged/> to each computer or write the following navigation on a board or easel paper: <http://www.mpr.org> > select "Morning Edition" from "Programs A – Z" menu. Click "go".
- 2) Practice demonstrating how to search *Morning Edition*'s archives.
- 3) Optional: Select a week from *Morning Edition*'s archives for your students to work in.

INSTRUCTION:

Estimated time: 30 -50 minutes

- 1) Review the purpose for doing today's research: to pick a topic and find enough source material on which to form an informed opinion.
- 2) Review how to take notes, using the charts from the last period as an example.
- 3) Optional: If you have a projector hooked up to the teaching workstation, demonstrate the *Morning Edition* website, pointing out the regional rundown section and archive search function.
- 4) Direct students to *Morning Edition*'s website and encourage them to browse the week's rundown as well as the day's highlights.
- 5) Once students have selected an article on a topic they can form an opinion on, direct them to either play and take notes on its audio segment or read the article online and take notes.
- 6) Require students to take notes on at least 2 – 3 articles.

Periods # 3 - 5 (as needed): Editorial Writing.

PREP:

Estimated time: 5 – 30 minutes, depending on how much you plan to model.

- 1) Hang up the 5W + H maps from the previous periods.
- 2) Spend some time using the writing organizer in order to model it to your class, incorporating notes from the chart filled out in period 2. Try writing a few example editorials to model or mix your examples with editorials from student or professional newspapers (e.g., The Minnesota Daily: <http://www.mndaily.com/sections/Opinion>) NOTE: MPR does not endorse and is not responsible for any statement, opinion, or advice given or made by anyone other than authorized MPR representatives. Make copies of your writing or display on transparency paper for demonstrating writing.
- 3) Optional: If using the rubric or writing organizer, print out and make enough copies for your class.

INSTRUCTION:

Estimated time: 70 - 100 minutes, spread over 2 - 3 periods.

- 1) Review the purpose for doing today: use notes from research to write an editorial.
- 2) Optional: Demonstrate organizer, if using, and model for class how to select notes that would help the writer make points.
- 3) Direct students to start writing by looking over and identifying which notes might help them make points to support their opinion.

- 4) After sufficient time, demonstrate the organizer (attached)– starting with stating the topic and one’s opinion.
- 5) Direct students to work through their first draft.

- 6) After sufficient time, introduce the rubric and display your editorial. Solicit from the class how the editorial fared against the rubric.
- 7) Have students trade papers with their partners and compare them against the rubric. Coax the partners to identify specific points one’s partner could do to improve the editorial.
- 8) Students revise editorial.
- 9) Solicit volunteers to read editorial and query class about what opinion the editorial writer holds.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

5W + H Map

Who:	Who:	Who:	Who:
Point of View:	Point of View:	Point of View:	Point of View:

What:

When:

Where:

Summary:

Why:

How:

Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Editorial Writing Organizer:

A quality editorial is at least 5 paragraphs long:

I) Introduction: State your topic and opinion.

- Have an interesting lead.
- Clearly state your opinion about the topic.

I) _____

II) 1st Point: Give a reason for your opinion.

- Reason logically supports your opinion.
- Reasons are written to convince appropriate audience.
- Reason is written in a topic sentence.
- Use words that help switch to the next reason.

II) _____

III) 2nd Point: Give a reason for your opinion.

- Reason logically supports your opinion.
- Reasons are written to convince appropriate audience.
- Reason is written in a topic sentence.
- Use words that help switch to the next reason.

III) _____

IV) 3rd Point: Give a reason for your opinion.

- Reason logically supports your opinion.
- Reasons are written to convince appropriate audience.
- Reason is written in a topic sentence.
- Use words that help switch to the next reason.

IV) _____

V) Conclusion: Last chance to convince.

- Restate reasons in one sentence.
- Give at least 2 specific solutions for the problem, if any.

V) _____

Editorial Rubric

0 points

No article is submitted.

1 point

- This editorial is written with a uninteresting lead which does not encourage the reader to continue.
- This story contains no background information about the issue being discussed.
- The writer is very confusing about his/her opinion on the issue.
- This article does not contain any valid reasons for the given opinion.

- None of the reasons address the intended audience.
- The reasons are not written in good paragraphs and have no logical order.
- The writer does not use any transitions between ideas.
- The ending of the story does not summarize any of the reasons.
- The ending of the story does not give any clear recommendations for the reader to take action.
- The article contains many grammar and spelling mistakes.

2 points

- This editorial is written with a lead but it needs to be more interesting.
- This story contains very little background information about the issue at hand.
- This article has an opinion which is somewhat confusing.
- This article contains only one really valid reason for the opinion given, and 2 debatable reasons.
- One of the reasons would concern the intended audience.

- The reasons are not necessarily written in distinct paragraphs.
- The writer uses only a couple transitions between ideas.
- The ending of the story restates one of the reasons.
- The writer ends the article giving at least 1 recommendation for the reader.
- The article contains several grammar and spelling mistakes

3 points

- This editorial is written with an interesting lead to bring the reader into the story.
- This story contains some background information about the issue being debated.
- This article has an opinion that could be stated more clearly using better wording.
- This article contains at least 3 reasons for the stated opinion with 2 being very distinct from each other and logical for the argument.
- Two of the reasons would concern the intended audience.
- Each reason is written in separate paragraphs, but not necessarily in the topic sentence.

- The writer uses some transitions between each idea.
- The ending of the story restates most of the reasons.
- The writer ends the article giving at least 2 specific recommendations for the reader.
- The article contains mostly correct grammar and spelling.

4 points

- This editorial is written with an interesting lead to bring the reader into the story.
- This story contains an abundant amount of background information about the issue.
- This article has a clearly stated opinion toward the beginning of the article.
- This article contains at least 3 different, but logical reasons for the stated opinion.
- All of the reasons are written to convince the appropriate audience.
- Each reason is written in a topic sentence of separate paragraphs.

- The writer uses effective words throughout the article to make transitions between ideas.
- The ending of the story restates all the reasons in one sentence.
- The writer ends the article giving at least 3 specific recommendations for the reader to take action.
- The writer uses all correct grammar and spelling.

Rubric for the Minnesota Basic Skills Test of Written Composition, Grade 10

From the Minnesota Department of Education: <http://education.state.mn.us/content/069049.pdf>

Not scorable = Responses that cannot be evaluated – Not Passing

The composition:

- is not related to the topic (off topic) (OT).
- is not readable because it is wholly illegible or incoherent (UR).
- is written largely or entirely in a language other than English (NE).
- contains an insufficient amount of writing to evaluate (IN).
- is non-existent (blank) (BL).

Score point 1 = Below Basic Composition – Not Passing

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- is very difficult to follow.
- may lack a coherent focus.
- is disorganized.
- may contain errors in sentence formation, word usage and mechanics that are frequent enough to detract from the overall quality of the composition.

Score point 2 = Below Basic Composition – Not Passing

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- may be somewhat focused.
- may lack a beginning, a middle or an end.
- may present obstacles for the reader in moving from idea to idea.
- may contain errors in sentence formation, word usage and mechanics that are frequent enough to detract from the overall quality of the composition.

Score point 3 = Basic Passing Composition – Passing

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- has a central idea that is clearly expressed.
- has some supporting details and sufficient development.
- has a beginning, a middle and an end.
- may present minor obstacles for the reader in moving from idea to idea.
- may have errors in sentence formation, word usage and mechanics, but they do not substantially detract from the overall quality of the composition.

Score point 4 = Competent Composition – Passing

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- has a central idea that is clearly expressed.
- is well developed with supporting details.
- has a beginning, a middle and an end.
- demonstrates a control of language that enhances the overall quality of the response.
- may have errors in sentence formation, usage and mechanics, but they do not detract from the overall quality of the composition.