



Common Assignment 2

LDC Argumentative Essay: Mexican-American War

Table of Contents

1. Teacher Materials

- a. [Notes to the Teacher](#)
- b. [Incorporating Quotes PowerPoint](#)

2. [LDC Argumentation Rubric](#)

3. Student Materials

- a. LDC Documents (Excerpts)
 - i. [Polk's Inaugural](#)
 - ii. [Thoreau](#)
 - iii. [Polk's Letter](#)
 - iv. [Polk's Special Message](#)
 - v. [Giddings](#)
 - vi. [Sumner](#)
 - vii. [Historian Haynes](#)
- b. Reading Tools
 - i. [Mexican War LDC Documents 1–7 Comprehension Reading Questions](#)
 - ii. [Vocabulary Collection Tool](#)
- c. [Graphic Organizer](#)
- d. [Introducing Quotes Practice](#)
- e. [Essay Organizer: Outline](#)
- f. [Peer Review Tool](#)



Notes to the Teacher

Find all materials and more detailed instructions in [CoreTools](#) .

If students need help with understanding the LDC documents, use the **Reading Tools** (Comprehension Reading Questions and Vocabulary Collection Tool) to help them understand the main points of each document and learn difficult vocabulary. After using these tools, students should use the Graphic Organizer to help them analyze the documents in relation to the prompt.

Use the **Introducing Quotes PowerPoint** with the **Introducing Quotes Practice Tool** to help students with this skill. Emphasize that the information a student includes to introduce a quote should help the reader understand the authority or perspective of the source. Use these tools after reading activities and before writing activities.

Before writing the essay, students create an outline or graphic organizer based on their notes and reading in which they state their claim, sequence their points, and note their supporting evidence. The **Essay Organizer: Outline** is a tool that can support this, or use a tool of your own.



Incorporating Quotes PowerPoint

Introducing and Incorporating Quotes In Text

- When using quotes/research/evidence, you need to introduce them.
- You cannot just “drop” in quotes without explaining who and where it came from.



Access the full PowerPoint here: <http://collegeready.gatesfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Incorporating-Quotes-Practice-ppt..pptx> ↗

How and Why Did the United States Expand Westward? The 1830s and 1840s *Common Assignment 2*

LDC Student Work Rubric - Argumentation

	Not Yet	Approaches Expectations	Meets Expectations	Advanced
	1	2	3	4
Focus	Attempts to address prompt, but lacks focus or is off-task.	Addresses prompt appropriately and establishes a position, but focus is uneven. D: Addresses additional demands superficially.	Addresses prompt appropriately and maintains a clear, steady focus. Provides a generally convincing position. D: Addresses additional demands sufficiently	Addresses all aspects of prompt appropriately with a consistently strong focus and convincing position. D: Addresses additional demands with thoroughness and makes a connection to claim.
Controlling Idea	Attempts to establish a claim, but lacks a clear purpose.	Establishes a claim.	Establishes a credible claim.	Establishes and maintains a substantive and credible claim or proposal.
Reading/Research	Attempts to reference reading materials to develop response, but lacks connections or relevance to the purpose of the prompt.	Presents information from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt with minor lapses in accuracy or completeness.	Accurately presents details from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt to develop argument or claim.	Accurately and effectively presents important details from reading materials to develop argument or claim.
Development	Attempts to provide details in response to the prompt, but lacks sufficient development or relevance to the purpose of the prompt.	Presents appropriate details to support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim, with minor lapses in the reasoning, examples, or explanations.	Presents appropriate and sufficient details to support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim.	Presents thorough and detailed information to effectively support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim.
Organization	Attempts to organize ideas, but lacks control of structure.	Uses an appropriate organizational structure for development of reasoning and logic, with minor lapses in structure and/or coherence.	Maintains an appropriate organizational structure to address specific requirements of the prompt. Structure reveals the reasoning and logic of the argument.	Maintains an organizational structure that intentionally and effectively enhances the presentation of information as required by the specific prompt. Structure enhances development of the reasoning and logic of the argument.
Conventions	Attempts to demonstrate standard English conventions, but lacks cohesion and control of grammar, usage, and mechanics. Sources are used without citation.	Demonstrates an uneven command of standard English conventions and cohesion. Uses language and tone with some inaccurate, inappropriate, or uneven features. Inconsistently cites sources.	Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Cites sources using appropriate format with only minor errors.	Demonstrates and maintains a well-developed command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone consistently appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Consistently cites sources using appropriate format.
Content Understanding	Attempts to include disciplinary content in argument, but understanding of content is weak; content is irrelevant, inappropriate, or inaccurate.	Briefly notes disciplinary content relevant to the prompt; shows basic or uneven understanding of content; minor errors in explanation.	Accurately presents disciplinary content relevant to the prompt with sufficient explanations that demonstrate understanding.	Integrates relevant and accurate disciplinary content with thorough explanations that demonstrate in-depth understanding.



Document 1: Polk's Inaugural

Source: *Excerpt from President James K. Polk's inaugural address, March 5, 1845*

[E]ighty years ago our population was confined on the west by the ridge of the Alleghenies. Within that period . . . our people . . . have filled the eastern valley of the Mississippi, adventurously ascended the Missouri to its headsprings, and are already engaged in establishing the blessings of self-government in valleys of which the rivers flow to the Pacific. The world beholds the peaceful triumphs of the industry of our emigrants. To us belongs the duty of protecting them adequately wherever they may be upon our soil.

Document 2: Thoreau

Source: *Excerpt from Henry David Thoreau's book, Civil Disobedience. He wrote it in prison between 1846-1848 and it was originally published in 1849.*

... Witness the present Mexican war, the work of comparatively a few individuals using the standing government as their tool; for, in the outset, the people would not have consented to this measure ...

... In other words, when a sixth of the population of a nation which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty are slaves, and a whole country is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army, and subjected to military law, I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize. What makes this duty the more urgent is the fact that the country so overrun is not our own, but ours is the invading army...

Thoreau: <http://thoreau.eserver.org/civil1.html> 

Document 3: Polk's Letter

Source: *Excerpt from Letter from President James K. Polk to his agent in Mexico, John Slidell. November 10, 1845.*

I am extremely desirous to acquire California.... If unfortunately, you should fail to effect a satisfactory adjustment of the pending differences between the two countries...I will call on Congress to provide the proper remedies.



Document 4: Polk's Special Message (Modified)

Source: Excerpt from President James K. Polk, to the Congress of the United States: a special message calling for a declaration of war against Mexico, Washington D.C., May 11, 1846.

Note: President Polk attempted to end the disputes with Mexico through diplomacy. He sent a representative to Mexico, but the Mexican government refused to speak with the representative and bloodshed began. Both the U.S. and Mexico claimed land between the Nueces and Del Norte rivers and both saw the other military as invading their land.

Mexico has repeatedly threatened to make war upon us, for the purpose of reconquering Texas. In the meantime, we have tried every effort at reconciliation. The cup of forbearance [restraint] has been exhausted, even before the recent information from the frontier of the Del Norte. But now, after repeated threats, Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon American soil. She has proclaimed that hostilities have commenced, and that the two nations are now at war. . . .

We are called upon, by every consideration of duty and patriotism, to defend the honor, the rights, and the interests of our country.

Document 5: Giddings (Modified)

Source: Excerpt from Congressman Joshua Giddings speech during the Debate on the Mexican War, House of Representatives, Washington D.C., May 13, 1846.

Sir, no man regards this war as just. *We know*, the country knows, and the civilized worlds are conscious that it has resulted from a desire to extend and sustain an institution on which the Almighty [does not approve]. Mexico has long since abolished slavery and purified herself from its crimes and its guilt. Slaves now find asylum in the southwest and it has therefore become necessary to extend our people into Mexico in order to render slavery secure. . . .

This war is waged against an unoffending people, without just or adequate cause, for the purpose of conquest, with the design to extend slavery; in violation of the Constitution, against the dictates of justice, of humanity and the sentiments of the age in which we live and the [beliefs] of the religion we profess. I will not aid, no support whatever. I will not bathe my hands in the blood of the people of Mexico, nor will I participate in the guilt of those murders which have been and which will [later] be committed by our army there. For these reasons, I shall vote against the bill under consideration and all others calculated to support this war.



Document 6: Sumner

Source: *Excerpt from a speech Representative Charles Sumner delivered about the Mexican War at Tremont Temple in Boston, MA, on November 5, 1846.*

The Mexican War is an enormity born of slavery. Base in object, atrocious in beginning, immoral in all its influences, vainly prodigal of treasure and life, it is a war of infamy, which must blot the pages of our history.

Glossary

- Enormity: outrageous evil, wickedness
- Base: dishonorable, low
- Atrocious: extremely, shockingly wicked, cruel, or brutal
- Prodigal: wasteful
- Infamy: fame or being well known for a bad thing

Document 7: Historian Haynes

Source: *Excerpt from “Manifest Destiny” written by Historian Sam W. Haynes for PBS.org’s series, “U.S.-Mexican War” in 2006.*

Expansionists were also motivated by more immediate, practical considerations. Southerners anxious to enlarge the slave empire were among the most ardent champions of the crusade for more territory. New slave states would enhance the South’s political power in Washington and, equally important, serve as an outlet for its growing slave population. For American commercial interests, expansion offered greater access to lucrative foreign markets. Washington policy-makers, anxious to compete with Great Britain for the Asia trade, had long been convinced of the strategic and commercial advantages of San Francisco and other ports on the Pacific coastline of Mexican-owned California. The disastrous Panic of 1837, which had resulted in huge surpluses and depressed prices for American farm products, also focused attention on the need to develop new foreign markets.

Haynes: http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar/prelude/md_manifest_destiny.html 



Mexican War LDC Documents 1–7

Comprehension Reading Questions

Document 1: Polk’s Inaugural

1. What movement is Polk referring to in the first two sentences?
2. Why does Polk use the term “emigrant” instead of “immigrant”?
3. What have “our people” brought to the West?
4. What duty belongs to the United States?

Document 2: Thoreau

1. What “nation” is Thoreau referring to when he says, “a sixth of the population of this nation”?
2. Which country is Thoreau referring to when he says, “a whole country is unjustly overrun”?
3. Which foreign army is Thoreau referring to when he says, “conquered by a foreign army”?

Document 3: Polk’s Letter

1. What does Polk mean by “extremely desirous”?
2. What two countries is Polk talking about?
3. What pending differences is Polk referring to?
4. What could Polk mean by calling on Congress to “provide the proper remedies”?

Document 4: Polk’s Special Message

1. Why is Polk concerned for the people living in the West?
2. According to Polk, what has Mexico done that the United States must respond to?

Document 5: Giddings

1. How does Giddings feel about slavery?
2. According to Giddings, what are the reasons for going to war with Mexico?

Document 6: Sumner

1. What is Sumner’s view of the Mexican-American War?

Document 7: Historian Haynes

1. How is this source different from the other sources in this set?
2. What are three things that motivated Expansionists to support westward settlement?



Name: _____

Vocabulary Collection Tool

Vocabulary Term	Definition	Picture

How and Why Did the United States Expand Westward?
The 1830s and 1840s *Common Assignment 2: Graphic Organizer*



Name: _____

Should the United States have gone to war with Mexico?

	Who wrote it? 1. Name of author 2. Month and year document was written 3. Audience for document	What is this source's point of view on western lands or the Mexican-American War?	Write one piece of evidence from the document (quote or information) that shows this point of view.
Document 1			
Document 2			
Document 3			
Document 4			
Document 5			
Document 6			
Document 7			

How and Why Did the United States Expand Westward?
The 1830s and 1840s *Common Assignment 2: Graphic Organizer*



Sources that support the Mexican-American War	Sources that oppose the Mexican-American War
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••



Name: _____

Introducing Quotes Practice

Directions: Using the authors, publications, and quotes given, write a sentence in which you incorporate all pertinent information. Remember, you can introduce a quote at the beginning or the end of a sentence.

Instead of “said,” try:

Explained	Described	Emphasized	Acknowledged	Agreed	Claimed
Stated	Proclaimed	Illustrated	Suggested	Argued	Announced

Example:

Mr. Cosby, an 8th grade teacher, *Beaumont Gazette*, “Although I do enjoy reading about princesses and dragons, my favorite kinds of stories are mysteries.”

In the *Beaumont Gazette*, Mr. Cosby, an 8th grade teacher, explained, “Although I do enjoy reading about princesses and dragons, my favorite kinds of stories are mysteries.”

1. Mrs. Owen, construction worker, letter to the editor of the *Herald Leader*, “Building a garage is not as easy as it looks. It takes a lot of math, determination, and teamwork.”
2. Mrs. Friedlander, gardening enthusiast, *Home and Gardens Magazine*, “Flowers bring a smile to everyone’s face. I can’t help but smile when I look out at my garden and see my hard work blooming.”
3. Mr. Goff, World Fit leader, in an email to parents, “World Fit has been a great addition to our school. Our students are able to have a movement break and exercise, which improves their academics and behavior.”
4. Ms. Nelson, dog lover, *Horse and Hound Online*, “I believe everyone should own at least two dogs. They bring joy to every family, and I think we should make owning dogs a requirement in our country.”



Name: _____

Mexican-American War LDC: Outline

First Body Paragraph: One reason for your side of the argument

Topic sentence or claim:

Evidence (information and/or quotes):

Explanation of how evidence supports your argument:

Second Body Paragraph: Second reason for your side of the argument

Topic sentence or claim:

Evidence (information and/or quotes):

Explanation of how evidence supports your argument:

How and Why Did the United States Expand Westward?
The 1830s and 1840s *Common Assignment 2: Essay Organizer*



Third Body Paragraph: Opposing argument

Topic sentence or claim:

Explanation of opposing argument:

Evidence that supports opposing argument:

Reason and explanation detailing why your argument is stronger than this opposing argument:



Writer's Checklist: LDC

Element	Your Own Check	Partner Check
Does the introductory paragraph include necessary background information?		
In your thesis statement, do you clearly state your view of Polk's justification for going to war with Mexico?		
Does each paragraph begin with a topic sentence or claim?		
Is each reason developed so that the reader has a clear understanding of your ideas?		
Are specific details and quotations included?		
Do you explain how details and quotations support your argument?		
When using quotes, are the sources of those quotes identified?		
Do you include a counterclaim or contrary view?		
Does the conclusion mirror the introduction and restate key points of your essay?		
Does the paper use correct grammar and punctuation?		
Does the paper flow—does it seem organized?		
Give this paper a score: 1–5 (5 being the best)		

1. Give your partner two compliments about his or her paper. What were areas of strength?
2. Write at least one helpful comment. What can be changed in the essay to strengthen the argument?

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Do you explain how details and quotations support your argument?		
When using quotes, are the sources of those quotes identified?		
Do you include a counterclaim or contrary view?		
Does the conclusion mirror the introduction and restate key points of your essay?		
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