

Name: _____ Date: _____

Scavenger Hunt

Directions: Fill in the boxes below to explore how the authors of the letters in "Should the School Week Be Shorter?" develop their arguments. We filled in some information for you.

	Dylan	Bethany
line(s) that expresses the central idea, or central claim	"I've been researching other districts that have made the switch, and I have discovered that a four-day week has many exciting benefits—for both students and teachers."	
two pieces of evidence that support the central idea, or central claim		
line(s) that expresses the counterargument		"I understand that some people are excited about a shorter week because it would allow for more family time . . ."
line(s) that contains the rebuttal to the counterargument		

Name: _____ Date: _____

Scavenger Hunt

Directions: Fill in the boxes below to explore how the authors of the letters in "Should the School Week Be Shorter?" develop their arguments. We filled in some information for you.

	Dylan	Bethany
line(s) that expresses the central idea, or central claim	"I've been researching other districts that have made the switch, and I have discovered that a four-day week has many exciting benefits—for both students and teachers."	
two pieces of evidence that support the central idea, or central claim		

Name: _____ Date: _____

Go to Scope
Online to listen
to the words
and definitions
read aloud.

Vocabulary:

"Should the School Week Be Shorter?"

1. consecutive (kuhn-SEHK-yuh-tiv) *adjective*; *Consecutive* means "following one after the other in order, with no interruption or gaps." April, May, and June are consecutive months of the year. If your soccer team won two consecutive state championships, your team won the championship two years in a row.

2. long-term effect (lawng turm ih-FEKT) *noun*; The adjective *long-term* means "lasting, relating to, or involving a long period of time." A long-term effect is a result that doesn't happen immediately, but rather, over a period of time. Ben's doctor might tell him about the long-term effects of listening to loud music: Over time, it could damage his hearing. The opposite of a long-term effect is a short-term effect.

3. myriad (MIR-ee-uhd) *adjective or noun*; The adjective *myriad* means "a very large but not specified number." *Myriad* is often used to describe something that cannot be counted. For example, someone might refer to the myriad stars in the sky or the myriad grains of sand on a beach.

When used as a noun, *myriad* means "a great number" and is usually followed by the word *of*. A T-shirt might come in a myriad of colors, meaning it comes in many colors.

4. perspective (per-SPEK-tiv) *noun*; As it is used in the article, *perspective* means "a particular way of thinking about a situation or topic; a point of view." Your perspective on what's most important in life may change as you get older.

5. productive (pruh-DUHK-tiv) *adjective*; If something (or someone) is productive, it (or the person) has the ability to do a lot of work and get good results. If your study group was productive, your group got a lot of studying done. A productive apple tree produces a lot of apples.

6. project (pruh-JEKT) *verb*; In the article, *project* is used as a verb meaning "to predict, estimate, or forecast something based on present trends," as in, "After a highly successful season, the Chicago Bears are projected to win this year's Super Bowl."

7. substantial (suhb-STAN-shuhl) *adjective*; As it is used in the article, *substantial* means "large in amount, size, or number." A substantial number of students ride the bus to and from school each day. If you spent a substantial amount of money on your new bike, the bike was expensive. Skateboarding without a helmet poses a substantial risk of injury.

Directions: Below and on the back of this page, list any other words from the debate whose definitions you are not sure about. For each word, use context clues to try to figure out the meaning. Then look up the word in a few different dictionaries. Discuss the primary meaning of the word with your teacher or another adult. Then write a definition for the word and one example sentence using the word.

Vocabulary Practice

"Should the School Week Be Shorter?"

Directions: Below are titles and summaries for imaginary books. Choose the best title for each book. Briefly explain your choices.

BOOK TITLES

- A. *A Substantial Blunder*
- B. *A New Perspective*
- C. *My Myriad Mistakes*

1. In his journal, Alex keeps a list with two columns: *Got It Wrong* and *Got It Right*. That *Got It Wrong* column is filling up awfully fast.

Title (A-C): _____ Why I chose this title: _____

2. Janet messed up. Like, *really* messed up. Like, maybe-ruined-her-best friend's-life-forever messed up. Is it too late for her to set things right?

Title (A-C): _____ Why I chose this title: _____

3. Last fall, Eli made two terrible decisions that resulted in his life being pretty unpleasant for a while. But now, a year later, Eli is finding out that those mistakes have led to a shift in the way he looks at life—in a way that might be kind of great.

Title (A-C): _____ Why I chose this title: _____

Directions: Briefly respond to each prompt below.

4. Author J.K. Rowling says she is most productive in the morning. What does she mean?

5. List four consecutive days of the week.

Directions: Choose the word or phrase that is most similar in meaning to each word in bold.

6. **myriad**

Ⓐ limited Ⓑ countless

7. **substantial**

Ⓐ large Ⓑ little

8. **project**

Ⓐ doubt Ⓑ forecast

9. **perspective**

Ⓐ viewpoint Ⓑ ability

Name: _____ Date: _____

Write an Argument Essay

Directions: Read "Should the School Week Be Shorter?" Complete the scavenger hunt on page 29.
Then follow the steps below.

STEP 1: DECIDE WHAT YOU THINK

Should the school week be shorter?

Consider what you read in the two essays, as well as your own viewpoint.

Check the box next to the point of view you will argue in your essay,
or write your own opinion in the space provided.

☐ **Yes!** The school week should be shorter. ☐ **No!** The school week should stay the same.

STEP 2: GATHER SUPPORT FOR YOUR OPINION

Which details from the letters support your opinion? What other information supports your opinion?

List at least three supporting details on the lines below.

Here's an example: If you think the school week should be shorter, one of your supporting details might be that a shorter week would give teachers more time to plan.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

STEP 3: ACKNOWLEDGE THE OTHER SIDE

If you think the school week **SHOULD** be shorter, summarize the strongest arguments against a four-day week that Bethany presents in her letter. If you think the school week **SHOULD NOT** be shortened, summarize the strongest arguments in favor of a four-day week that Dylan presents in his letter.

STEP 4: CRAFT YOUR THESIS (CENTRAL CLAIM)

The thesis is where you tell readers what your essay is going to be about. The thesis should be a clear, strong statement of the opinion you gave in Step 1. The rest of your essay will support this thesis.

Your thesis: _____

STEP 5: WRITE YOUR HOOK

The very beginning of your essay is called the hook because it "hooks" your readers' attention. The hook should relate to the topic of your essay, but it can take many forms. It can be:

- 1. An anecdote** (a very short story): Describe what your schedule is like during the school week. Do you ever get overwhelmed? Or do you feel like you have enough time to take care of all of your responsibilities?
- 2. A surprising fact:** Find a fact that will raise your readers' eyebrows. Several surprising facts are included in the article. You can also do some research to find one that is not included in the article.
- 3. A rhetorical question** (a question to which you don't expect an answer): Ask your readers a question that reflects your point of view about shortening the school week. Here's one way you could structure your question: "Would shortening the school week really _____?"
- 4. A quote:** Find a thought-provoking quote that relates to the topic of your essay.

Choose one of the ideas above, or use your own idea, and write a hook on the lines provided.

Your hook: _____

Let readers know a little about the issue you will be writing about. This is not your point of view; it's a brief summary of the issue. Use information from both essays to finish the summary below.

[illegible]

On the next page, you'll find guidelines for how to organize your essay.

Argument Essay Outline

Directions: Use the outline below to write your essay. You will use what you wrote on the first three pages of this activity.

1

INTRODUCTION

Open with your hook from Step 5.



Write a transition sentence that relates your hook to the question of a shorter school week.



(See *Scope's* handout "Great Transitions" for some ways to link your ideas.)



Write your summary of the issue from Step 6.



Finish with your thesis from Step 4.

2

BODY PARAGRAPH(S)

**Now write your supporting points from Step 2.
For each one, write 1-3 sentences that
provide additional details.**

You can put your supporting points and detail sentences together in one paragraph or you can split them into several paragraphs. It depends on how much you want to write about each point.

Hint! Order your supporting points from weakest to strongest. Readers will remember details that are presented last.

3

ACKNOWLEDGE THE OTHER SIDE

Now it's time to recognize the other side of the argument.

Use what you wrote in Step 3.

Then explain why you think the opposing point of view is wrong.

4

CONCLUSION

**Write 2-3 sentences to remind your readers
of your main points.**

Finish with a strong final sentence.

*Need an idea?
Refer to your hook,
find a quote, or give
a call to action.*

5

READ AND REVISE

Use *Scope's* "Argument-Essay Checklist" to evaluate and edit what you have written.