**AP Language Researched Argument**

**Topic Vetting**

**Directions:**

1. Choose an issue you may be interested in learning more about for your researched argument paper. Don’t yet choose the “side” or the “claim” you will espouse.
2. Read AT LEAST four (4) articles related to the issue. You need to read a variety of opinions about the issue (ie. 2 pro / 2 con). Google-search broad terms related to your community and the issue you are trying to resolve.
3. Answer all of the following questions **AFTER** reading the opinions in the articles.

**Issue**

* *State the issue as a question.*

**Community Context**

* *What principles, rules, and theories are central to the beliefs of the community involved in this issue?*
* *What social or historical context surrounds the issue within the community?*

#### Point of View

* *What are the different points of view within the community about this issue?*
* *To whom or to which groups does each point of view belong?*

#### Assumptions

Assumption is a prior belief that we usually do not question—something learned early that we believe is true.

* *What assumptions do the community members hold about this issue?*
* *How do those assumptions drive the behavior of the members?*

#### Inferences

Inference is a mental step between an assumption and an action. For instance, consider this example: “I heard a scratch at the door. I got up to let the cat in.” My inference was based on the assumption (my prior belief) that only the cat makes that noise, and that he makes it only when he wants to be let in.

* *What inferences might be made by the people who have points of view about this issue?*
* *Are these beliefs strong or weak? How do you know?*

#### Implications

* *What are the implications or consequences of researching this issue?*
* *What positive and negative results could emerge from the research?*

#### Purpose/Goal

* *What do you think is the purpose of considering/questioning/ researching this issue?*
* *What goals can be achieved by this purpose?*

#### Evidence/Data

* *What evidence should be pursued to resolve this issue?*
* *Where can evidence be found/gathered/generated?*
* *What data could serve as proof of goals to pursue?*

**Topic Vetting Example**

1. **Issue**: Who should be the sponsor for the HHS bird watching honor society?
2. **Community Context:** As honorable bird watchers, the values we espouse are nesting-environment conservation, habitat restoration in commercial areas, wildlife friendly garden creation, and Audubon Society recruitment.
3. **Points of View**:
   1. Members: we need to set guidelines for choosing a sponsor because we need a committed adult who will be ready for bird-watching at moment’s notice since opportunities arise naturally and unpredictably.
   2. Officers: we need a sponsor willing to help us fund raise for new binoculars and field guides.
   3. Potential Sponsors: they might fear the time commitment required since many bird-watching opportunities occur on weekends and evenings around dusk.
   4. Parents: they require the adult sponsor to be reliable and capable of handling the unique qualities of their children who take bird-watching very seriously.
4. **Assumptions:**
   1. Members assume a sponsor must be an adult.
   2. Members assume the sponsor must love bird watching.
   3. Sponsors assume they are responsible for all activities conducted in the name of the club.
5. **Inferences:** 
   1. Members may infer that a sponsor should be available 24/7. Some may realize this expectation is unreasonable, but some are avid and ardent watchers who sacrifice their own time and effort for the cause of backyard birdery.
   2. Potential Sponsors may misunderstand the environmentally inspired intentions of the bird watchers. Some may infer that the group members are somewhat outrageous in their demands of the sponsor’s time.
6. **Implications:** Setting guidelines for choosing a sponsor may limit the number of adults who the group would ask to sponsor. A limited number may make finding a sponsor statistically more difficult. However, guidelines may help the members to narrow down the options which might produce the most ideal sponsor for the group.
7. **Purpose/Goal:** The bird-watching honors society’s purpose for setting guidelines for choosing a sponsor is to gather the names of adults who would make a good fit for the club. The ultimate goal is to find the perfect sponsor.
8. **Evidence/Data:** The members need to find out what makes a perfect sponsor for this club—is bird-watching enough? What else is necessary? Members will want to find articles pertaining to choosing a club sponsor. Members need to generate a list of potential sponsors; they could create a survey to send to faculty and staff. Members need evidence of a sponsor’s commitment; they might find this through an application or interview process.