

LAUNCH TEXT | ARGUMENT MODEL

This selection is an example of an **argument**, a type of writing in which the author presents a claim and organizes evidence and reasons to support that claim. This is the type of writing you will develop in the Performance-Based Assessment at the end of the unit.

As you read, look closely at the writer's argument, including the consideration of various viewpoints. Mark facts and examples that provide strong evidence to support the main claim.



NOTES

- 1 If you ask a dozen high school students to define *freedom*, odds are that ten of them will answer, "Freedom means that I can do anything I want." For many people, freedom is an absolute. It implies the right to think, speak, or act however one wishes. Because we live in a civil society, however, we need to consider other people's rights as we exercise our own freedoms. A better world would combine essential human freedoms with the understanding that my freedoms should not conflict with your right to lead a safe and happy life.
- 2 Suppose that those ten high school students had the total freedom they describe. They might drive a car without a license, because they were free to do so. They might even drive *your* car, because total freedom means that they can have anything they want and do anything they like. They would be free to attend school or not, to run screaming down the hallways if they chose, or even to treat other people cruelly without fear of reprisal. Total freedom could result in lawless mayhem.
- 3 Despite their desperate desire to be free from England's rule, our nation's early leaders carefully defined freedoms in the Bill of Rights. They did not say, "Everyone is free to do as he or she chooses." They said, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress

of grievances.” They established a delicate line between the rights of individuals and the power of the government.

- 4 In his 1941 State of the Union address, President Franklin Roosevelt identified four key freedoms as being basic human rights: freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. Those are not freedoms that one finds in a dictatorship. Nor are they freedoms that we grant to each other without the oversight and protection of government institutions. With the government’s help, and the writing of laws, my freedom from want does not allow me to steal your food, and your freedom of speech does not let you publish lies about me. We are free, but only up to the point at which our freedoms clash.
- 5 Is it even possible to be “totally free”? A person living “off the grid,” far away from civilization, might achieve that kind of liberation. Such a person could live as he or she pleased without ever imposing on the freedoms of others.
- 6 Most of us, however, live in a community. We are bound by laws that both restrict and protect us. If we live in a dictatorship, we may be more restricted and less protected. If we live in a democracy, we may be more protected and less restricted. Human history is a balancing act between the desire for individual freedom and the need to protect everyone’s freedoms.
- 7 *Freedom* implies a lack of restraint, but we are all better off if our freedoms are preserved and protected. At the same time, as members of a society, we must be sure that our freedoms do not conflict. “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” are powerful goals, but we must never allow one person’s liberty to impose on another’s happiness. 🐼

NOTES

WORD NETWORK FOR WRITING FREEDOM

Vocabulary A word network is a collection of words related to a topic. As you read the unit selections, identify words related to freedom, and add them to your Word Network. For example, you might begin by adding words from the Launch Text, such as *restricted* and *liberty*. For each word you add, note a related word, such as a synonym or an antonym. Continue to add words as you complete this unit.



Tool Kit
Word Network Model

