

**Title:** Explain Your Vote!

**Subject:** Language Arts/Writing

**Grade Level:** 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Time:** 20 minutes – 1 hour depending on student involvement

**Objective:**

Students will communicate their ideas and demonstrate their reasoning skills through writing.

**Method:**

Students will have a chance to increase their vote's weight in the Cast Your Vote poll by writing well-developed expository writing samples and submitting them to The Wilderness Classroom. Writing samples will be evaluated on the attached rubric. Students can use the attached worksheet, Explain Your Vote! as a guide to writing their essays and submitting them. Students may work in pairs, small groups, or individually.

Find this week's Cast Your Vote! along the left-hand side of the Trans-Amazon Expedition web site. Read the Cast Your Vote! as a class and make sure that students understand the options.

Have students complete the Explain Your Vote! worksheet and write their essay based on it. Responses need to be emailed or submitted via the online form at the bottom of the Cast Your Vote! page no later than Friday at 1:00 PM CST!

*Sometimes, the Trans-Amazon Team needs the responses earlier. We will make note of that on the Cast Your Vote! page.*

**Illinois State Goals and Learning Standards:**

**5.C.2a** Create a variety of print and nonprint documents to communicate acquired information for specific audiences and purposes.

**5.C.3a** Plan, compose, edit and revise documents that synthesize new meaning gleaned from multiple sources.

**3.C.2a** Write for a variety of purposes and for specified audiences in a variety of forms including narrative

**3.C.3a** Compose narrative, informative, and persuasive writings

**3.C.2b** Produce and format compositions for specified audiences using available technology.

## Explain Your Vote! You Decide!

Do you want your vote in this week's Cast Your Vote! to count more than others? You have the chance to make your vote count 10 times! **You** could determine exactly what the team does next week!

Write an expository essay on why you think the team should listen to your advice.

We really do rely on your help to guide us safely through the Amazon. We need to make sure that the decisions your making for us are well-thought out and show that you're working with us!

One of the best ways to make your ideas count is by writing to us. You can use this worksheet to help your organize your essay.

Make sure that your essay is well written, spelled correctly, and uses proper punctuation.

1. What is the decision that needs to be made?

---

---

---

2. Why does this decision need to be made for the team?

- a. Logistical – they need to know where to go
- b. Safety – they need to find out a way to stay safe
- c. Operational – the team needs to find out a better way to do something
- d. Ecological/ Moral – the team has a chance to help the rainforest or people

3. What are the choices that are available? (Some weeks have more options than others – only fill out what's necessary)

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is positive about each option?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

5. What might be negative about each option?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

**Submit your Essay to The Wilderness Classroom Team!**

Essays need to be sent no later than **Friday at 1:00 PM!**

You can email them to [eric@wildernessclassroom.com](mailto:eric@wildernessclassroom.com) or [info@wildernessclassroom.com](mailto:info@wildernessclassroom.com)

Or you can copy and paste them into the form at the bottom of the Cast Your Vote! page.

**Make sure your name, school, grade and teacher's email address is correct!**

5. Fill in the chart to help your organize your thoughts.

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
Why I like this option				
Why I don't like this option				

6. My thesis statement is going to be...

---

---

---

7. The topic sentence for Paragraph 2 is going to be...

---

---

---

8. The topic sentence for Paragraph 3 is going to be...

---

---

---

9. The topic sentence for Paragraph 4 is going to be...

---

---

---

10. My conclusion statement is going to be....

---

---

---

11. Fill out the chart to help develop support for your ideas

	Paragraph 2	Paragraph 3	Paragraph 4
Supporting Detail #1			
Supporting Detail #2			
Supporting Detail #3			

## Explain Your Vote! Scoring Rubric

Score	Criteria
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Writer demonstrates understanding of the problem that needs to be solved</li> <li>▪ Writer clearly uses information from Cast Your Vote! or the Daily Dilemma to make their decision</li> <li>▪ Thesis statement is clear</li> <li>▪ Topic Sentences are clearly written and follow a logical sequence</li> <li>▪ Writer gives three or more details to support their opinion</li> <li>▪ Essay is easy to read and information is presented logically</li> <li>▪ Concluding statement is clear and logically connects to the rest of the essay</li> <li>▪ Spelling and punctuation is accurate</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Writer demonstrates understanding of the problem that needs to be solved</li> <li>▪ Thesis statement is clear</li> <li>▪ Each paragraph has a clear topic sentence</li> <li>▪ Writer gives two details to support their opinion</li> <li>▪ Essay is relatively easy to read and their idea is clearly presented</li> <li>▪ Concluding statement present</li> <li>▪ One or two punctuation errors</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Writer identifies the problem that needs to be solved</li> <li>▪ Thesis statement present</li> <li>▪ Most paragraphs have a topic sentence</li> <li>▪ Writer gives one supporting detail</li> <li>▪ Essays sequence is confusing</li> <li>▪ Somewhat difficult to follow and understand</li> <li>▪ A few spelling and punctuation errors</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Problem is not addressed, but opinion is clear and present</li> <li>▪ Thesis statement is unclear, but present</li> <li>▪ Essay does not demonstrate organization (i.e. no paragraphs or logical order demonstrated)</li> <li>▪ No supporting details present in essay.</li> <li>▪ Essay is difficult to read and follow</li> <li>▪ Frequent spelling and grammar errors</li> </ul>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Essay lacks organization</li> <li>▪ No supporting details present</li> <li>▪ No thesis statement present</li> <li>▪ Opinion not made clear</li> </ul>

**Score of 4 = 10 votes**

**Score of 3 = 8 votes**

**Score of 2 = 5 votes**

**Score of 2 = 3 votes**

**Score of 2 = 2 votes**

**Score of 0 = 2 votes**