Unit 4 Assignment Example: Tablets for SAISD Students

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*Please note that this is a* ***sample*** *Unit4 Assignment to help inspire and guide your own original writing of the assignment. Be sure to review the assignment instructions and grading rubric, complete each task in the instructions, and contact the instructor with any questions.*

Unit 4 Assignment Worksheet

In the Units 3 and 4 Discussions, you created a thesis statement that offered a solution to a problem in your community or workplace. In this unit’s Assignment, you will revise and evaluate the effectiveness of that thesis using the Toulmin Model.

Part I: First of all, you will revise the provisional thesis statement that you generated in the previous unit Discussion. Make sure the thesis is concise (1–2 sentences) and includes two parts: a proposal for solving a problem and a reason that solution is needed. For more on creating effective persuasive thesis statements, review the following Writing Center resources:

* “[Give Your Paper Direction: Developing a Strong Thesis Statement](https://kucampus.kaplan.edu/DocumentStore/Docs11/pdf/WC/Thesis_presentation.pdf)”
* “[Writing a Thesis for a Persuasive Essay](https://khe2.adobeconnect.com/_a769721248/p88406952/)”

Write your revised two-part thesis statement here, and be sure to include a claim + reason (the “because” or “since” clause):

In order to improve academic performance and help SAISD students compete with peers in higher-rated districts when applying to college, the district needs to provide every high school student with an electronic tablet; this will encourage more learning outside of the classroom and increase mastery of skills.

What type of claim does this represent?

This would be a proposal since it advocates a plan of action that would benefit students in the San Antonio Independent School District.

Part II: Next, describe how you will use the appeals of logos, ethos, and pathos to make your argument more compelling to your audience. You can review the Writing Center resource on the appeals here: “[The Three Appeals of Argumentative Writing](http://www.screencast.com/users/KUWC/folders/Effective%20Writing%20Podcasts%20%282011%29/media/3b6c7ce0-bea8-4d61-a6e3-e9dac244b7ae).”

Logos: As evidence that students in the district need this boost, one needs only look at how the SAISD students compare to others in the state of Texas. One evaluator of Texas schools, Local School Directory, indicates that the district’s graduation rate is 51.5%, more than 20% below the state average, while the dropout rate of 10.9 % is more than double the state’s average of 4% (2014). Citing well-respected innovators like Microsoft founder Bill Gates and Khan Academy’s Salman Khan, who promote technology as a way to provide teachers with the tools they need to motivate, challenge, and support students, will also strengthen the argument that technology can make a difference.

Pathos: Including specific examples showing that students can make dramatic improvements thanks to technology could appeal to pathos while also providing further evidence.

Ethos: A key element of ethos will be to acknowledge and address potential objections: some voice concerns that technology costs too much to make the investment advisable, while others fret that technology will dehumanize education. Such concerns ignore the steep costs schools already pay to textbook publishers and the ways that technology can help to connect people.

Part III: Identify the parts of your argument based on the Toulmin Model. For more on the Toulmin Model, review the following Writing Center resources:

* Toulmin Model of Argument “[Podcast](https://soundcloud.com/kurtis-clements/argument-and-toulmin-model-1)” and “[Transcript](https://drive.google.com/a/kaplan.edu/file/d/0B7KJvorPRusccS0zSkdzYXRkbUk/view)”
* “[How to Support an Argument and Avoid Logical Fallacies](https://kucampus.kaplan.edu/MyStudies/AcademicSupportCenter/WritingCenter/WritingReferenceLibrary/TheWritingProcess/HowTosupportAnArgumentAndAvoidLogicalFallacies.aspx)”

Claim:

The San Antonio Independent School District needs to provide every high school student with an electronic tablet.

Warrant (shared assumption):

The assumption (warrant) the audience should agree with is that anything that could benefit students’ learning and create greater opportunities should be attempted.

Backing

The above warrant will likely ring true for my audience. However, if I were asked just *why* I think we should try new methods of improving student learning, I might say that educational methods are not static; they are constantly evolving, even if we do not see this happening. One example would be the different learning styles (auditory, visual, kinesthetic) that were not well understood in the past but are broadly incorporated into today’s educational systems.

Qualifiers: How strongly do you believe in the argument? Would any qualifiers be beneficial? Why or why not?

I may need to acknowledge that not all students are going to benefit from technology; would the district have to provide tablets to all, or would there be exemptions? Using terms like “most” or “some” could help my argument; not all technology is beneficial or educational, certainly.

Grounds:

Research on the flipped classroom, the benefits that technology provides, especially for underprepared students, and studies of tablet use that have already been implemented in other school districts would be needed. I have to find evidence that the investment will be worth it and these tablets will actually improve learning, especially if teachers are trained accordingly.

Rebuttals:

Challenges like cost and dehumanization caused by technology would need to be addressed. Minnesota’s Byron ISD experiment suggests that that technology combined with a thoughtful pedagogy can have a positive impact on learning, and that technology can even reduce costs. Teachers realized that designing their own curriculum meant they could adapt the curriculum as needed; technology actually afforded them the opportunity to personalize their students’ learning (Fulton, 2013), and they were able to abandon costly textbooks (Fulton, 2013).

Identify at least one logical fallacy to which your argument may be susceptible and how you will avoid that fallacy. For more on logical fallacies, review the University Writing Center resource “[How to Support an Argument and Avoid Logical Fallacies](https://kucampus.kaplan.edu/MyStudies/AcademicSupportCenter/WritingCenter/WritingReferenceLibrary/TheWritingProcess/HowTosupportAnArgumentAndAvoidLogicalFallacies.aspx).”

Anecdotal and cause/effect fallacies will be the main ones to avoid. While examples are helpful for supporting an argument, an audience will not be convinced that the school district should spend this money without numerous, reliable examples and studies from credible institutions that show technology improves test scores and graduation rates.

References

Castro, A. (2011, January 19). Texas cutting $5 billion from public schools. *The Huffington Post.* Retrieved from <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/19/texas-school-budget-cuts_n_811039.html>

Fulton, K. (2013). Byron’s flipped classrooms. *Education Digest, 79*(1), 22-26.

LocalSchoolDirectory.com. (2014). San Antonio Independent School District. Retrieved from http://www.localschooldirectory.com/district-schools/015907/San-Antonio-Independent-School-District-(ISD)/TX