

Take a Stand: Dredging Controversy

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Lesson Overview: The students will use the computer lab to survey several teacher-selected websites and then write a persuasive position paper on the issue of dredging. The paper will be evaluated on the writer's use of supporting information in constructing a sound argument as per the new Common Core Standards.

Sources Consulted:

http://wupcenter.mtu.edu/education/great_lakes_maritime/2007/presentations/Dredging_Clark.pdf

Great Lakes Dredged Material Testing & Evaluation Manual

<http://www.epa.gov/greatlakes/sediment/gltem/backg.htm>

Dredging on the Great Lakes

<http://www.lre.usace.army.mil/newsandevents/publications/publications/dredgingonthegreatlakes/>

<http://www.glc.org/dredging/dredgingBooklet.pdf>

http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10370_30909_43606-154921--,00.html

<http://www.glerl.noaa.gov/pubs/fulltext/1985/19850006.pdf>

Learning Objectives: The students will gain practice in writing arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. They will be able understand the process of dredging and why dredging is important to shipping and the effects that dredging might have on the environment.

Michigan Benchmarks Addressed

State: Writing W.GN.08.03 and W.PR.08.01-.05

Common Core:

W.8.1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

List Materials Needed

Access to computer lab

Writer's composition book

Pens and pencils

Computer again for final copy work

New Vocabulary:

Dredging

Contaminated

Shipping Lane

Containment

Focus Question: A group of protestors has gathered on the Grosse Ile “Free Bridge” asking that a dredging project in the shipping channel be halted. Review the information on dredging provided. You may also use other research for yourself from credible sources. Then construct a letter supporting/or disproving their request.

Classroom or Field Activities:

Day 1: Students go to the computer lab and begin by surveying the above articles. Instruct the children to look at the first site by Clark as it gives background information in a very accessible manner. They may check other credible sources as time allows. At the end of the survey period they are to provide a thesis statement and three supporting details to be elaborated on in their essays. These can be changed later but that will help focus their thoughts initially. Remind the students that a thesis is never a yes or no question and must be appropriate to the length of a position paper/letter.

Day 2: Students begin by working with the thesis and details from Day 1 to pull those into a coherent essay. By the end of the period the students will have a first draft of their position. If possible have a computer or two available to check facts or allow for a student to redirect their essay with additional research if their original thesis seems unusable.

Day 3: Students have a short peer edit/review session in which each student reads three different papers noting the strength of their support. Everyone should have a copy of the rubric to reference as they work with peers. Students are directed to have an adult edit as well.

Day 4: If time allows you might consider a debate style oral interaction with a possibility of role-playing if you are comfortable with that modality.

Assessment: Use the attached rubric to direct the assessment process. Have students self evaluate on a rubric attached to their final copy in pencil and the teacher can then respond to their self-evaluation as necessary.