APPENDIX D
Critical thinking Skill Rubric
by
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Critical thinking Essay Test for Secondary School Students

DIRECTIONS

A. Read the article ‘Crisis: Choosing between pristine nature and petroleum’ thoroughly and write an essay in response to this one. Your essay should have six numbered paragraphs showing your reactions to this issue in the following way:

1. Write about main idea of the article and summarize arguments in your own words.
2. Write about the arguments /controversies surrounding this issue.
3. You are to judge which point of view makes more sense, and why?
4. What could you do about this issue? What would be the effects of decision taken by you?
5. How can you effectively communicate your decision or/ and any conclusions reached?
6. What are your initial emotional reactions and opinions about this issue? Where do you think these reactions come from? How will you justify them?

B. Each paragraph should contain your reason(s).

C. Spend about 10 minutes reading the article and thinking about it.

D. Then write for not more than 30 minutes (about five minutes for each of your short paragraphs).

E. The maximum total time for the test is 40 minutes.

F. Do not forget to give your reasons in each paragraph. Please write clearly.

G. Sign your name to your essay.

Remember, write six numbered paragraphs and give reasons.
Crisis: Choosing between pristine nature and petroleum

It is one of last areas where nature remains unspoiled and it is now in trouble. The story of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) in Alaska is a classic case of the environment vs. development dilemma.

In 1980, the US Congress created the ANWR-7.3 million hectares of undisturbed tundra, wetlands, and glaciers. It is home to an extremely diverse community of organisms, including polar bears, arctic foxes, peregrine falcons, musk oxen, snow geese, and many other animal species. It is also the calving area for large migrating herds of caribou. More than 150,000 caribou return here after wintering in Canada. All the tundra plant species, such as mosses, lichens, and dwarf trees are found here. Under a thin layer of soil there is permafrost, ice that does not melt even in summer.

The ecosystem is fragile and finely balanced. Any additional stress can do irreversible damage. Environmentalists have always argued for leaving the area undisturbed. Unfortunately for the region, however, it has deposits of oil!

The US Geological Survey estimates the oil reserves to be about 7.7 billion barrels, 2 billion of which could be extracted economically under current oil prices. There was always pressure to begin drilling in ANWR, but the US Congress has allowed only exploration, with the condition that its approval was needed for any drilling activity. Faced with insatiable demand, rising prices of crude oil and uncertainties of imports, the US government and the oil companies are dead set on drilling in ANWR.

The pro-drilling groups point out that, in neighboring Prudhoe Bay, oil is already being extracted and the infrastructure for drilling exists. No environmental impact has been reported. What is more, only 1.5 per cent of the total area will be encroached upon. There are sound economic reasons for extracting oil from ANWR and reducing the dependence on imports.

The environmentalists say that any drilling poses a permanent threat to the delicate balance of nature. Prudhoe Bay has in fact suffered damage- wolves and bears have been decreasing in number, resulting in an abnormal increase in the caribou population. What is more, the oil will not last long, but we would have already sacrificed nature. In fact, the production in Prudhoe Bay has peaked and is now declining.

As the arguments go back and forth, the tundra is waiting to know its fate.

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Critical thinking Skill Rubric

(Hofreiter et al., 2007)

Interpretation

Total Score: (___ out of 20)

The writer correctly identifies the main purpose.

The writer articulates divergent points of view.

The writer attempts to categorize information.

The writer summarizes main ideas or paraphrases in own words

Analysis

Total Score: (___ out of 20)

The writer identifies relationships among statements, concepts, judgments, and opinions.

The writer detects arguments supporting and contesting points of view.

The writer distinguishes relevant from irrelevant points of view.

The writer identifies biases and unstated assumptions.

Evaluation

Total Score: (___ out of 20)

The writer reassesses credibility of evidence.

The writer assesses credibility of points of view and opinions.

The writer raises questions or objections to discover weaknesses in an argument.

The writer offers supplementary information that may strengthen or weaken an argument.
Inference

Total Score: (_ out of 20)

- The writer derives plausible conclusions from the given information.
- The writer makes logical recommendations (not questions) for action.
- The writer gives recommendations (not questions) for further inquiry.
- The writer identifies potential consequences.

Explanation

Total Score: (_ out of 20)

- The writer demonstrates breadth and depth of information.
- The writer communicates clearly, accurately.
- The writer uses relevant information to support their opinion.
- The writer logically communicates their lines of thinking.

Self-Regulation

Total Score: (_ out of 20)

- The writer demonstrates self-questioning and self-validation
- The writer recognizes their own need for further inquiry.
- The writer reflects upon and justifies own thinking process.
- The writer identifies personal biases.