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ELA Grade 5 Benchmark Assessment Test ID: 87491

Go to the Next Page

Page 1

The following content will be used for item 8

Directions: Read the passages. Then write your response.

The Laughing Skull

A Dominican Legend

Long ago, next to the Convent of Santo Domingo, stood a stone wall. Nestled in that wall was an empty niche. But the niche had not always been empty. It is said that since the seventeenth century when the church was built, a human skull was displayed there. Perched on an iron stand, it

 5 was quite visible during the day. By nightfall, it was well-illuminated by the oil lamp above it. And hanging just beneath this niche was an ordinary wooden sign that read:

10 *Oh, you passerby—
 look at me, please.
 Like you I once was
 Like me you will be!*

As the years passed, people became so used to this sight that they walked right by the wall, ignoring the skull and the unusual inscription. That is, until one day, or rather one night, when a neighbor who lived

 15 near Hostos Street was on his way home. He heard some very strange noises coming from the skull, and he looked up. As his heart beat fast in sheer horror, he watched the skull nod once, then again, then shake its head as if it were at first approving—then disapproving of his thoughts. He raced home in shock, gasping and whimpering all the way.

20 The news of this strange event spread like wildfire. And those who feared the sight of the skull, or those who had something to hide, wisely did not go near the convent. However, the daring and curious would wander by the church at night to see the frightening scene for themselves. Then they would later boast of their courage in great detail,

 25 telling of how the skull appeared to read their minds.

Once, some young boys who stayed late to watch the skull were quite sure they heard it laugh at them in a loud, shrill tone. Soon after, fear

 grew and grew in the neighborhood, as did the stories and gossip. People went far out of their way to avoid passing the wall. Since most odd things

 30 happened after dark, the lamplighter was careful to light the lamp while the sun was out. Eventually, even the military police would not dare go near the wall.

One very dark night, however, two soldiers patrolling the area decided to defy their own fear, and cautiously approached the convent. As they

 35 looked inside the niche, they saw it with their own eyes. The skull was shaking, back and forth, clattering loudly against the stone wall. Without thinking twice, the men fled in panic, and did not stop until they reached their headquarters. There they pounded desperately on the gate. And it was this that triggered the events that later would break the spell of the

 40 skull.

Go to the Next Page

At this particular time, it happened that Abad Alfau was second lieutenant of the battalion that patrolled the main square of Santo Domingo. He was nineteen years old, and was a very handsome and bright lad, whom everybody called simply Abad. He was on duty the night
 45 the two soldiers fled from the horrifying sight. Abad was very upset at the cowardice of the soldiers and sternly reprimanded them. The next evening, when he found out that yet another patrol had detoured from the frightening corner to avoid the laughing skull, he flew into a rage. "This will stop immediately," he said to himself, "or these cowards will be
 50 dismissed from the force!"

The following night, Abad ordered two soldiers to bring him a ladder. Two hours before midnight he removed his uniform and dressed in dark pants and a long, dark cape. Then he bravely marched to the wall on Hostos Street, brandishing his sword in his right hand. The two soldiers
 55 carrying the ladder followed sheepishly behind him.

They must have been about twenty feet from the niche in the wall when the skull began to shake, and laugh, and clatter, and moan. The noise was too much for one of Abad's companions, and he turned to flee.

"Stop!" cried Abad.

60 The soldier stopped as he was commanded.

"Now place the ladder in front of the niche," Abad ordered. The soldier did so.

Abad clung tightly to his sword and began to climb up. As he climbed higher, the noises became louder and louder. The skull shook once, twice,
 65 three times—until it began to spin violently. Chilling screeches emerged, screeches that would freeze the hearts of even the bravest of men. Oddly enough, Abad remained calm. He was determined to discover the mystery of the skull. As the soldiers held on firmly to the ladder, Abad reached the top. Slowly he lifted his weapon and, with the flat of his sword, he struck
 70 two heavy blows that sent the skull spinning and whirling and crashing to the ground.

It was this that unveiled the mystery. From beneath the skull, a horde of frightened mice scurried down the wall, onto the street, then into the darkness of the breezy island night.

75 People say that at dawn the broken skull was swept up by a street cleaner, and no one ever mentioned it again. Nearly seventy years later the ancient wall was demolished—and along with it, the empty niche.

"The Laughing Skull" from *Golden Tales: Myths, Legends & Folktales from Latin America* by Lulu Delacre. Copyright © 1996 by Lulu Delacre. Used by permission of Scholastic, Inc.

A Dispute in Sign Language

A Zen master and his one-eyed student lived together in a monastery. One day a wandering monk came to the Zen master and said, "If you will accept me, I wish to study with you."

5 The old monk replied, "Decide first if you belong here. Go into the garden and speak to my student. Converse with him in any way that you wish. After that, come and tell me your decision."

Go to the Next Page

The visiting monk nervously went out into the garden and saw the one-eyed monk meditating. "I will show him how profound I can be," thought the visitor. "I will converse with him in sign language."

10 Approaching quietly, the visiting monk tapped the one-eyed monk on the shoulder and held up one finger. The one-eyed monk held up two fingers. In response, the visiting monk held up three fingers. The one-eyed monk held up his fist. When the visiting monk saw this, he dashed out of the garden to tell the old monk his decision.

15 He came upon the old monk at his chores and gasped, "I do not deserve to stay here! I am unworthy of being a fellow student with the enlightened young monk I met in the garden!"

The old monk paused in his work and asked incredulously, "Are you speaking of the young one-eyed monk in the garden?"

20 "Yes!" exclaimed the visitor. "His knowledge is far superior to mine. I will humbly leave."

"Please tell me what happened in the garden," said the old monk, wide-eyed with amazement.

The visitor explained, "I approached the venerable monk and decided
25 to converse in sign language. I held up one finger to indicate the Buddha. Whereupon he held up two fingers to indicate the Buddha and his teaching, the *Dharma*. I persevered in the discussion, however, and held up three fingers to show the Buddha, the *Dharma*, and the *Sangha*, the community. Then he revealed the limitations of my understanding. He
30 held up his fist to show me that they all are one. I immediately ran here to tell you I must leave." With a sigh, he turned and left the temple.

A moment later the young one-eyed monk stumbled into the temple. He grumbled and shouted, "Where is that scoundrel? How dare he insult me!"

35 "Calm your temper," said the old monk. "Please tell me what happened in the garden."

The young monk explained, "I was peacefully meditating when that rude visitor interrupted my concentration. When I looked up at him, he held up one finger, indicating that I have only one eye. I held up two
40 fingers, politely congratulating him that he has two eyes. Then he insulted me further! He held up three fingers, pointing out that there were only three eyes among us. I could bear it no longer. I raised my fist to punch him in the nose and he ran away!"

"A Dispute in Sign Language" from *Wisdom Tales from Around the World* by Heather Forest, published by August House Publishers, copyright © 1996 by Heather Forest. Used by permission of Marian Reiner.

8. Based on the two stories, write an essay that describes what happens when people have different ways of understanding the same events. Be sure to include details and examples from both stories to support your answer.

In your response, be sure to:

- Introduce the topic
- Use details from the stories to support your answer
- Organize and connect your ideas in your writing
- Provide a closing statement
- Check your writing for complete sentences, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

Write your answer in complete sentences.

What do students need to ...	
Know?	Be able to do?

Go to the Next Page

8. Based on the two stories, write an essay that describes what happens when people have different ways of understanding the same events. Be sure to include details and examples from both stories to support your answer.

In your response, be sure to:

- Introduce the topic
- Use details from the stories to support your answer
- Organize and connect your ideas in your writing
- Provide a closing statement
- Check your writing for complete sentences, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

Write your answer in complete sentences.

When people have different ways of understanding the same events it is because they are heard in different ways. Misunderstandings happen when people don't explain things clearly.

In the story, The Laughing Skull, a man told everyone about the strange event with the skull. Everybody tried avoiding the niche with the laughing skull until one night, a young man, ^{known as Abad,} decided to discover the mystery. He didn't believe in such nonsense and when he broke the skull, a horde of mice came scurrying out into the darkness. In the story it says, "slowly he lifted his weapon and, with the flat of his sword, he struck two heavy blows that sent the skull spinning and whirling and crashing to the ground. It was this that unveiled the

Go to the Next Page

mystery. From beneath the skull, a horde of frightened mice scurried down the wall, onto the street, then into the darkness of the breezy island night."

In the story, A Dispute In Sign Language, the one-eyed monk and the visitor had a misunderstanding in the meanings of sign language. The visitor was describing Buddah, Dharma, and Sangha but to the one-eyed monk, they were insults. In the story it says, "The visitor explained, 'I approached the venerable monk and decided to converse in sign language. I held up one finger to indicate the Buddah. Where upon he held up two fingers to indicate the Buddah and his teaching, the Dharma. I persevered in the discussion, however, and held up three fingers to show the Buddah, the Dharma, and the Sangha, the community... The young monk explained, "I was peacefully meditating when that rude visitor interrupted my concentration. When I looked at him, he held up one finger, indicating I have only one eye. I held up two fingers, politely congratulating him that he has two eyes... He held up 3 fingers, pointing out that there were only 3 eyes among us."

The best way to solve a misunderstanding is to talk with that person and explain your actions or words.

8. Based on the two stories, write an essay that describes what happens when people have different ways of understanding the same events. Be sure to include details and examples from both stories to support your answer.

In your response, be sure to:

- Introduce the topic
- Use details from the stories to support your answer
- Organize and connect your ideas in your writing
- Provide a closing statement
- Check your writing for complete sentences, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

Write your answer in complete sentences.

In both stories, people looked at things differently. In "The Laughing Skull", everyone was scared of the skull, even the bravest men. Some people thought it was a curse and some people just ran away without trying to figure out what was happening. In "A Dispute in Sign Language," a visitor wanted to study with the Zen Monk, when he went to talk with the one-eyed monk, he held up 1 finger. When the monk saw, he held up 2. And when the visitor saw this, he held up 3 fingers. The monk held up a fist the visitor ran to the Zen Monk and told him of their conversation. The Zen Monk was surprised, so when the one-eyed monk came, he told

a whole different thing than
what the visitor said!

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**ELA Grade 6 Spring Benchmark
Assessment
Test ID: 88109**

Go to the Next Page

Page 1

The following content will be used for item 9

Directions: Read the texts. Then write your response.

The Origin of Species

Is it time to scale back the war on alien plants and animals?

By Kirsten Weir

February 24, 2012

The cane toad is the Darth Vader¹ of the amphibian world. A native of Central and South America, the lumpy toad was turned loose in Australia in the 1930s. Farmers hoped it would eat the beetles that were damaging sugarcane crops. The toad made itself at home, spreading steadily across
 5 the land.

As the toad multiplied, though, conservationists started to worry. The toad secretes a goo that can be toxic when eaten. Some feared that the imported amphibian would kill off snakes, crocodiles, and other local predators.

10 For years the cane toad has been the poster child² of *invasive species*. An invasive species is a plant or an animal that settles in a new region, where it does harm to the environment, the economy, or human health. Conservationists regularly take up arms against plant and animal invaders by trapping, hunting, poisoning, or bulldozing them.

15 A growing number of scientists have now begun to argue, however, that conservationists are too hung up on the *native* versus *nonnative* distinction. "The public has embraced the idea of hating nonnative species," says Mark Davis, a biologist at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minn. "There's no scientific basis for that."

Hitching a Ride

20 It's easier than ever for people to move around the planet, often bringing other species along for the ride. Sometimes that's done on purpose. Gardeners have been moving desirable plants from continent to continent for centuries. Other times, nonnative species are accidental tourists. Zebra mussels arrived in the Great Lakes after being
 25 inadvertently toted across the ocean in the ballasts³ of ships.

Scientists estimate that some 50,000 foreign species have settled in the U.S. Among them is the python, a 6-meter (20-foot) Asian constrictor. Florida pet owners dumped pythons into the wild and they're now spreading across Everglades National Park. Another is kudzu, a vine from
 30 Japan that grows as much as a foot in one day and is running rampant across the southeastern U.S. Then there's the zebra mussel, which clogs water pipes and has done hundreds of millions of dollars in damage to power plants and water utilities around the Great Lakes.

Billions of dollars are spent in the U.S. alone to control invasive species
 35 each year. Tim Male, vice president of conservation policy at Defenders of Wildlife, says the country should do even more to fight nonnative species.

Go to the Next Page

"It's rarer than it should be that people are going out and trying to control nonnative species in some of our most special habitats," he says.

Male and his colleagues are engaged in the preservation of the country's *ecological niches*. An ecological niche is a unique position that a species fills in an ecosystem—the species' habitat, the food it eats, and the predators that eat it. If nonnative species are allowed to invade local niches, Male says, "we're affecting the species that are present now, and we're also significantly affecting the future web of life, forever."

Toad Hype

Davis agrees that some nonnative species are harmful. And he agrees that vigorous efforts should be made to prevent the accidental introduction of foreign species to new habitats. But too many biologists assume *nonnative* means harmful, he says. He and 18 other ecologists made that case in the scientific journal *Nature* this past summer. "It is time for scientists, land managers, and policy makers to ditch this preoccupation" with nonnative species, they wrote.

Some nonnative species aren't as bad as they're made out to be, say the ecologists. Take the cane toad, the horror of which hasn't lived up to the hype. While the toad's presence led to a decline in some predator populations in Australia, most species weren't impacted at all, scientists reported recently. Some species actually benefited from the toad's arrival.

And consider the *salt cedar*, a shrub brought from Africa and Eurasia to the western U.S. in the 1800s. Between 2005 and 2009, the U.S. government spent \$80 million fighting the shrub because it's suspected of soaking up too much valuable groundwater from its desert habitat. But, notes Davis, the shrub is now the favorite nesting site for the southwestern willow flycatcher, an endangered bird. The shrub may be doing more good than harm.

Some nonnative species do nothing but good. Honeybees are an example. They pollinate more than 100 crops in the U.S., providing an estimated value of more than \$9 billion a year. Honeybees are an import from Europe, but nobody's suggesting they buzz off.

Native species, on the other hand, aren't always helpful. Mountain pine beetle outbreaks occur periodically in the forests of western North America. Millions of trees perish as the beetle larvae eat their way through the trees' trunks. The mountain pine beetle is currently killing more North American trees than any other bug. It's a homegrown hazard.

Land Management

Instead of waging war on foreign species, Davis says, conservationists should figure out how to include them in land management plans. In general, he notes, the introduction of nonnative species results in more species in a given habitat, not fewer.

To Davis, the lesson is clear: "Don't judge species on where they came from. Judge them on what they are doing."

¹Darth Vader — an evil villain in the *Star Wars* movies

²poster child — someone who stands out as an example or type of something

³ballasts — any heavy material carried in ships to provide balance or support at sea

Alien Attack

Invasive species spread in U.S.

December 7, 2009

Some lurk in swamps, ready to strike. Others lie half buried at the bottoms of lakes and ponds, eating everything in sight. Still others greedily munch on forest trees.

Invasive species, or nonnative animals and plants, are threatening the natural balance of ecosystems all over the United States. There are an estimated 50,000 invasive species in the U.S. today. Together, those pests cause more than \$120 billion in damage to harvests, trees, and fisheries each year. That's according to David Pimentel, a leading invasive species expert at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y.

Really Big Snakes

Each year, Florida welcomes millions of tourists who bask in the warm weather and then return home. Unfortunately, the Sunshine State also has a number of unwelcome foreign visitors that stay for good: snakes from South America, Asia, and Africa. According to a study released in October by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Florida is now home to growing populations of Burmese pythons, anacondas, African rock pythons, and other big snakes. (A Burmese python can reach a length of 23 feet!)

Pythons and other constrictors capture food by wrapping their bodies around animals, suffocating them, and then crushing their bones before swallowing them whole. The snakes eat deer, livestock, and even alligators. Scientists fear that an exploding population of constrictors could devastate Florida's natural wildlife, especially in the Everglades.

Unlike most invasive species, the big snakes didn't hitch rides on ships or other types of transportation into the U.S. Instead, many were former pets that had been released into the wild by their owners. Others may have escaped from zoos and pet shops when Hurricane Andrew hit southern Florida in 1992.

"It's just a matter of time before one of these snakes gets to a visitor in the Florida Everglades," U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) told The Associated Press. Nelson has introduced a bill that would ban the importing of snakes as pets.

Beetle Mania

A thousand miles north of Florida, a much smaller invasive species is causing problems. The Asian long-horned beetle (ALB) is 1 inch long and about the width of your pinkie. It has blue legs and long black-and-white banded antennae. As its name indicates, the beetle comes from Asia—chiefly China, Korea, and Japan. It is believed that the insect first came to the United States in the 1980s in wooden packing material on a ship from China.

Like all invasive species, the ALB has no natural predators in the U.S. to keep its population down. That could spell disaster for forests in New England. Adult ALBs eat leaves, twigs, and young bark, especially of

Go to the Next Page

maple trees. Females deposit eggs in pits they dig in tree bark. When the eggs hatch, the beetle larvae bore into the cambium, the part of the bark that carries a tree's nutrients, killing the tree within two years. Right now, there is no way to defend the trees against ALBs. Infected trees have to be cut down and burned. If ALBs cannot be contained, they could wipe out New England's maple forests and the maple sugar industry.

Mussel Aches

The Great Lakes also have unwanted visitors. Zebra mussels and quagga mussels started showing up in the lakes in the 1980s, most likely brought by ships that had come from the animals' native homes of Russia and Ukraine. With no natural enemies in the Great Lakes, they spread out of control. They now carpet the floor of Lake Erie, gobbling up the tiny organisms at the bottom of the lake's food chain. That has left little food for the lake's native creatures. As a result, fish populations have plummeted in Lake Erie and have dropped drastically in Lake Huron.

Animals aren't the only unwanted invaders. Plants are big offenders too. In 1940, an unusual plant was found in a Washington, D.C., pond. Now, almost 70 years later, the Eurasian watermilfoil, a water plant native to Europe and Asia, has spread to every part of the country. It now crowds out native plants from Maine to Nevada, killing wildlife and changing the natural ecology of lakes. In many places, the pesky plant has grown so thick that it becomes entangled in boat propellers and makes swimming impossible.

What Can Be Done?

Stopping the invasion of plants and animals has proved exceedingly difficult. One of the worst invasive species outbreaks in history—Australia's rabbit invasion—is still a problem after more than 200 years.

U.S. lawmakers are stepping up the fight against the invaders. On October 30, President Barack Obama signed the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative,¹ granting \$475 million to restore the health of the Great Lakes. A large portion of the money will go toward battling the spread of quagga and zebra mussels and other nonnative species.

The new law is an important step, but fighting invasive species will require a team effort from scientists, public officials, and ordinary citizens. "We are only beginning to invest the tremendous amount of resources needed," says Jennifer Nalbene of the international group Great Lakes United.

¹Great Lakes Restoration Initiative — an initiative that addressed five urgent issues in the Great Lakes: 1) cleaning up toxics and areas of concern; 2) combating invasive species; 3) promoting nearshore health by protecting watersheds from polluted run-off; 4) restoring wetlands and other habitats; and 5) tracking progress and working with strategic partners (Courtesy of: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "Great Lakes Restoration Initiative." Accessed October 30, 2012. <http://greatlakesrestoration.us>.)

"Alien Attack" from *Current Events* 12/7/2009 issue. Copyright © 2009 by The Weekly Reader Corporation. Used by permission of Scholastic Inc.

9. Consider these claims from the articles you have read.

If nonnative species are allowed to invade local niches, Male says, "we're affecting the species that are present now, and we're also significantly affecting the future web of life, forever." ("The Origin of Species")

Invasive species, or nonnative animals and plants, are threatening the natural balance of ecosystems all over the United States. ("Alien Attack")

Write an argumentative essay that explains whether you agree with these claims and why. Use evidence from both articles to support your argument.

In your response, be sure to:

- Use facts, reasons, and evidence from both articles to support your argument
- Use varied and effective sentence structure and vocabulary
- Organize your ideas effectively and coherently in your writing, including an introduction and conclusion
- Follow the conventions of standard English, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

What do students need to ...	
Know?	Be able to do?

Go to the Next Page

STUDENT 1

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- Follow the conventions of standard English, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

Write your answer in complete sentences.

I disagree with these claims. I think that these animals are doing good to the environment. Yes, they may be causing to make us lose money, but they also do good to make us raise money. Just think about if you were them, you wouldn't want to be taken away. That is why I disagree.

One example is the salt cedar shrub. This shrub gives a living to the southwestern willow flycatcher, this bird is endangered and the salt cedar is helping that not happened

Go to the Next Page

because honestly we dont need any more extinct species. This shrub is doing alot more good than harm.

Another example is the honey bee the pollinate more than 100 US crops a year! Giving us a esimated value of \$9 billion a year. Honey Bees are really important to us and they make us alot of money and thats great! So we shouldn't let the honey bees Buzz off!

You have learned what I think about these claims, which is that I disagree and think we should keep the animals. There literally giving us money! Why pass that offer? I think the animals are great and thats my opinion.

Go to the Next Page

STUDENT 2



9. Consider these claims from the articles you have read.

If nonnative species are allowed to invade local niches, Male says, "we're affecting the species that are present now, and we're also significantly affecting the future web of life, forever." ("The Origin of Species")

Invasive species, or nonnative animals and plants, are threatening the natural balance of ecosystems all over the United States. ("Alien Attack")

Write an argumentative essay that explains whether you agree with these claims and why. Use evidence from both articles to support your argument.

In your response, be sure to:

- Use facts, reasons, and evidence from both articles to support your argument
- Use varied and effective sentence structure and vocabulary
- Organize your ideas effectively and coherently in your writing, including an introduction and conclusion
- Follow the conventions of standard English, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

Write your answer in complete sentences.

I agree with the claims that the articles "The Origin of Species" and "Alien Attack" are making. "The Origin of Species" is saying if nonnative species are allowed to invade local niches we are affecting the species that are present now, and we are significantly affecting the future web of life forever. "Alien Attack" is saying invasive species or nonnative animals and plants are threatening the natural balance of ecosystems all over the U.S.

I agree with these claims because of the evidence to →

Go to the Next Page

back up these claims. It says in the article "Alien Attack", that this is "one of the worst invasive species outbreaks in history!"

In both articles they say that the invasive species "have no natural predators. They also say that these animals cost our country billions and billions every year.

I know that we need a way to get rid of these pests they are taking away from our environment and that should be stopped.

Go to the Next

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**ELA Grade 8 Spring Benchmark
Assessment
Test ID: 88111**

Go to the Next Page

Page 1

The following content will be used for item 9

Directions: Read the texts. Then write your response.

Should the U.S. End Birthright Citizenship?

Adopted in 1868, the 14th Amendment to the Constitution guarantees that everyone born in the United States is automatically a citizen.

Senator David Vitter Republican of Louisiana

America's illegal-immigration problem is out of control. To change this, we must better protect our borders, particularly the border with Mexico, and ensure that only citizens and those in our country legally can be hired for jobs.

5 But that's not enough. Currently, babies who are born in this country to two illegal immigrant parents automatically become U.S. citizens. This happens between 300,000 and 400,000 times each year, and it needs to change. It's just flat wrong, and it serves as a magnet to attract illegal immigrants to the U.S.

10 I recently introduced legislation that would grant automatic citizenship only to those born in the United States to at least one parent who is a legal citizen (including naturalized citizens), legal immigrant, or active member of the armed forces.

15 Closing this loophole would not prevent anyone from becoming a citizen. What it would do is ensure that he or she has to go through the same process as those born to foreign parents outside the U.S. who want to become American citizens.

The 14th Amendment to the Constitution was not intended to grant citizenship to the children of people living in our country illegally.

20 Adopted in 1868, this Amendment was specifically designed to address the horrible injustice of slavery by guaranteeing that children born to former slaves would automatically be American citizens.

My goal is to make sure that the 14th Amendment is not stretched to allow a person born in the United States to illegal immigrants to

25 automatically have citizenship. I want to bring the 14th Amendment back to what its authors intended—nothing more and nothing less.

Michele Waslin Immigration Policy Center

Attempts to eliminate birthright citizenship are an assault on the Constitution and on innocent children born in the U.S. These attempts are based on myths and, if successful, would undermine basic principles of

30 equal rights and adversely affect all Americans.

The concept of "anchor babies"—which seems to motivate those who seek to repeal birthright citizenship—is a myth. Immigrants do not come to the U.S. just to give birth. Nor can U.S.-born children protect their parents from deportation if they're illegal; in fact, they can't even try to obtain

35 legal status for their parents until they're 21 years old.

Eliminating birthright citizenship would actually *increase* the number of people defined as illegal, since babies born to anyone here illegally

Go to the Next Page

- would be illegal from the moment of their birth. It would also create a perpetual underclass of people living in the shadows.
- 40 All Americans, not just immigrants, would be affected, since all parents would have to prove the citizenship of their children. For some parents, this would be relatively simple; for others, it would be difficult and expensive to collect all the necessary paperwork. Inevitably, a large new bureaucracy would develop solely for determining the citizenship of
- 45 children born in the United States.

- The 14th Amendment was adopted in the aftermath of the Civil War expressly to ensure that all persons born in the U.S. would be citizens, and that no state or individual could redefine citizenship to create an underclass. Repealing the 14th Amendment would do exactly what its
- 50 authors sought to prevent almost 150 years ago. In the U.S., we do not hold innocent babies accountable for the actions of their parents.

"Should the U.S. End Birthright Citizenship?" by Senator David Vitter and Michele Waslin from *The New York Times Upfront* 4/4/2011 issue. Copyright © 2011 by Scholastic Inc. Used by permission of Scholastic Inc.

Under One Roof: Legal & Illegal

She was brought to the U.S. illegally as a child. Her brother was born here and is a citizen: A look at life in a 'mixed status' family.

By David Gonzalez

- The father, an engineer, saw no future for his daughter and son in their struggling country, Ecuador. In 2001, he made his way to Mexico and paid smugglers known as "coyotes" to help him sneak across the border into Texas. Then he headed to New York, where his wife and children flew
- 5 in as tourists and stayed.

But the consequences of that decision—an immigrant's uprooting his family for the sake of the next generation—have been anything but simple.

- His daughter, now 22, graduated from college with honors, and is still
- 10 living in the U.S. illegally. While her classmates have good corporate jobs and take foreign vacations, she's a bookkeeper for a small immigrant-run business. She fears venturing outside New York City and can't even get a driver's license.

- Meanwhile, her 17-year-old brother—who was born in the U.S. and is
- 15 therefore an American citizen—can do things his family cannot, like spending summers in Ecuador with his cousins. But he's lonely during the school year here and would like to move back to Ecuador.

- "How can he even think that?" asks his mother. "We're sacrificing ourselves so he can get a better education and a better job. After giving
- 20 up everything to come here, he—the only one with papers—wants to go back?"

Citizen & Noncitizen Children

This family of four—who let a reporter and a photographer spend time

Go to the Next Page

with them only if they were not identified, for fear of being deported—is part of a growing group of what are often called mixed-status families.

25 Nearly 2.3 million undocumented families—about three quarters of those that are in the U.S. illegally—have at least one child who is a U.S. citizen, according to the Pew Hispanic Center in Washington, D.C.; nearly 400,000 families have both citizen and non-citizen children.

The increase in mixed-status families is due to a tide of illegal
30 immigration and federal laws that deny legal status to illegal immigrants' foreign-born children—who had no say in coming here—while granting citizenship to their American-born siblings.

And as their numbers rise, they are challenging three of the biggest stereotypes of immigrants today.

35 The first stereotype is that immigrant families are either legal or illegal. The second stereotype is that they either know they're here to stay or bent on returning home. The third is that most immigrants are men on their own, without wives and children.

In fact, most immigrants live in families, and with a blend of legal
40 statuses, opportunities, and plans. This family, in Queens, New York, shows how such disparities within immigrant homes can pull family members in such different directions.

Mother, father, son, and daughter are now split between two
households, and between those who expect to stay in the U.S. and those
45 who want to return to Ecuador. The daughter, despite tireless efforts to get ahead, feels she is losing ground and that her brother—who carries the weight of his family's highest hopes—takes his citizenship for granted.

The mother, 47, who gave up her job in Ecuador as a computer
systems analyst and now babysits for a living, has tried in vain to leverage
50 her son's citizenship to get a green card, which would grant her permanent legal residency.

'Passing into Illegality'

Still, they are better off than many illegal immigrants. They have built a comfortable life in New York, a city that has traditionally welcomed foreigners, regardless of whether they have immigration papers. And the
55 parents are among a rising proportion of illegal immigrants with higher educations—about 25 percent have had some college—abandoning careers back home to come to the U.S. to vault their children into the American middle class.

The daughter showed promise at age 7, when she was already working
60 the cash register at her parents' office-supply shop in Ecuador, and by the time she was 9, she was absorbed in math. As she neared her 14th birthday, her father began to think about taking his family back to the United States so she could go to college here.

The family had been here before. After graduating at the top of his
65 class from the polytechnic university in Quito, Ecuador's capital, the father moved to New York in 1986—legally, on a student visa—to study for a graduate degree in engineering. He planned to return home to his wife.

But when he learned that she was expecting their first child, he quit
70 school and took a factory job—which violated the terms of his visa—and

Go to the Next Page

arranged to have his wife and baby daughter smuggled into Texas and travel to New York.

"I knew I was passing into illegality," he says. "It was a very difficult decision to make. But I had to support them."

75 They all eventually moved to Miami, where their son was born. But hopes of a prosperous American life eluded them, and in 1992 they returned to Ecuador.

80 As their daughter raced through school, skipping two grades and outpacing her classmates, her father worried about the quality of schooling in Ecuador, where the economy was slipping into chaos. He resolved to give her, and her brother, the American education he never completed.

No Social Security Number

85 When they arrived in New York in 2001, the father found work as a draftsman with a construction company. He earns more than he would in Ecuador, and enjoys the chance to showcase his skills and move around the city, working in nice office and apartment buildings. The mother, on the other hand, cares for other people's children in cramped apartments.

90 These discrepancies put a strain on their relationship, and four years ago they separated. The children spend most weekdays with their father, in the attic of a house in Queens owned by his brother, who is a legal resident. On weekends, they visit their mother in her basement apartment in another neighborhood.

95 The daughter is among 65,000 young people who graduate from American high schools each year without immigration papers, according to the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C. She began to understand just what that meant when she talked to a guidance counselor about college.

"She asked me for my Social Security number," the daughter recalls. "She said she couldn't help me with applications without one."

100 She quickly learned the other things she couldn't have, like scholarships and the chance to attend college outside New York. And it is nearly impossible for illegal-immigrant children to become legal residents without going back to their native country, and then waiting 10 years to apply.

105 For the daughter, going back to Ecuador is out of the question. "All my friends are here," she says. "All I know is here. If I returned, I'd be lost."

110 Luckily, she lives in New York, one of 10 states that allow illegal immigrants to pay resident tuition rates at public universities. With \$5,000 a year from her father and a babysitting job, she attended a highly ranked college in the City University of New York, earning a 3.8 GPA in accounting.

Overqualified & Underpaid

But she still lacked the Social Security number needed to apply for jobs and internships. While friends—many of them children of legal immigrants—landed \$70,000-a-year jobs, she sought out small businesses willing to risk hiring her for half that.

115 "Sometimes I felt like crying or screaming," she says. "Some of my friends knew why I didn't apply for corporate jobs. But other people who

Go to the Next Page

didn't know would criticize and judge me. They thought I was lazy or stupid."

120 She was eventually hired as a bookkeeper by a small company that, ironically, provides immigrants with information on visas and citizenship. She is paid on the books—and pays taxes—thanks to the tax-identification number the federal government gives people without Social Security numbers.

125 Though overqualified and underpaid, she rarely complains. Instead, she and her boyfriend—a Mexican college student who is also here illegally—volunteer with an immigrant group pushing Congress to pass the Dream Act, which would grant legal status to high school graduates who were brought to the U.S. by their parents.

130 Her mother has a quicker solution: Dump the boyfriend and marry an American. At first, the daughter was shocked at the idea of marrying for reasons other than love. But she's begun to waver. "I'm thinking it might be worth a try because this is so frustrating," she says.

135 Her brother, on the other hand, is tightly tied to Ecuador. As the only family member who can travel freely, he's spent three summers there with his cousins. Back in New York, he's in touch with them by e-mail and on Facebook.

He seems much less connected to New York, where he comes home after school to an empty apartment to do homework. But his family insists he stay in the U.S.

140 His father doesn't want him to go for the quick money that leads other boys in the neighborhood to drop out of school to work at delis or construction sites for \$500 a week. He closely follows his son's schoolwork, and meets often with his teachers.

145 The daughter thinks that her brother "doesn't see how difficult it is for us not having documents. And he sees how it is for me—I can't go back to Ecuador or get a better job."

150 For now, her brother has stopped talking about going back to Ecuador and started thinking about going to college in the U.S. to study architecture. But he still feels the pressure that many citizen-children of illegal immigrants experience.

"Maybe they expect too much of me," he says. "But my family wanted me to come here. It's better for me, and better for my sister."

"Under One Roof: Legal & Illegal" by David Gonzalez from *The New York Times Upfront* 9/29/2009 issue. Copyright © 2009 by Scholastic Inc. and The New York Times Company. Used by permission of Scholastic Inc.

9. Write an essay in which you argue whether the United States should put an end to birthright citizenship.

In your response, be sure to:

- State your opinion about whether birthright citizenship should be eliminated
- Use evidence from the texts to explain the reasons for your opinion
- Support your response with details from both texts
- Organize your ideas effectively and coherently in your writing
- Follow the conventions of standard English, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

Write your answer in complete sentences.

What do students need to ...	
Know?	Be able to do?

Go to the Next Page



9. Write an essay in which you argue whether the United States should put an end to birthright citizenship.

The US should keep birthright citizenship

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The US should keep birthright citizenship.

Birthright citizenship allows babies born in the US to have a good, easy life there despite their parents' citizenship. Illegal immigrants are real people with real feelings and hopes, most immigrants immigrate for better opportunities and why should their babies be denied that?

Birthright citizenship allows illegal immigrants children the right to be true Americans, this allows them to have good American opportunities despite their parents bad decision to come to America illegally. For example, the article "Under One Roof: Legal & Illegal" shows a look at the life in a 'mixed status' family, the son in the article is an American citizen due to birthright citizenship. He has the freedom to come and go

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TL - allows immigrants to make choices easier
 Brother
 can visit home while others can't
 girl could not go to college despite good grades
 women said

from Ecuador (where his cousins are) to New York. The rest of his illegal immigrant family cannot visit anywhere out of New York. The daughter in the article got very good grades in school, but due to her lack of citizenship, she couldn't go to

Go to the Next Page

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The 14th Amendment guarantees that everyone born in the U.S. is automatically a citizen. People like Senator David Vitter, Republican of Louisiana want to repeal this Amendment because they think it causes our illegal immigration problems.

I don't believe the United States should put an end to birthright citizenship. As Michele Walsin said "Eliminating birthright citizenship would actually increase the number of people defined as illegal, since babies born to anyone here illegally would be illegal from the moment of their birth. It would also create a perpetual underclass of people living in the shadows." I completely agree with this because it's true. The amount

Go to the Next

of illegal citizens would possibly double, triple, or go up even more. Repealing the amendment would make matters worse. It would also prevent the opportunities like the ones the son from the text "Under One Roof: Legal and Illegal" got from others born in the U.S. to illegal immigrants.

Therefore the U.S. shouldn't put an end to birthright citizenship because it wouldn't solve anything. Our problems would only intensify.

Go to the Next Page