

Public Art Argumentative Performance Task (11th Grade)

Issue:

There has been much debate about the role of government-funded public art. Your local city council is holding a meeting to decide if city funds should be used to finance public art in your town.

Before you attend the meeting, you do some initial research on this topic and uncover four sources (two articles, a website and an editorial) that provide information about government-funded public art.

After you have reviewed these sources, you will answer some questions about them. Briefly scan the sources and the three questions that follow. Then, go back and read the sources carefully to gain the information you will need to answer the questions and write an argumentative letter.

In part 2, you will write an argumentative letter on a topic related to the sources.

Directions for beginning:

You will now examine several sources. You can re-examine any of the sources as often as you like.

Research Questions:

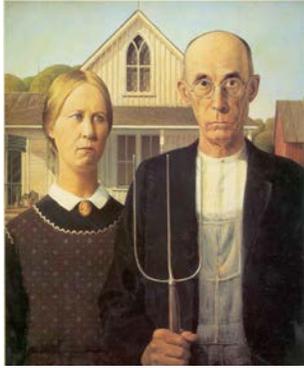
After examining the research sources, use the remaining time in Part 1 to answer three questions about them. Your answers to these questions will be scored. Also, your answers will help you think about the research sources you have read and viewed, which should help you write your argumentative letter.



Practice Test, May 2013

The History of Public Art

Experiencing the world of art can sometimes seem out of reach for the average person viewing such iconic paintings as Leonardo de Vinci's "The Mona Lisa," Vincent Van Gogh's "Starry Night," or Grant Wood's "American Gothic" requires a visit to the Louvre in Paris, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Art Institute of Chicago, respectively.



American Gothic

Michelangelo's sculpture "The Pieta" is in St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City; his sculpture of David resides at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence. Clearly, for most people, seeing these masterpieces takes some effort, and for many it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Does this mean that the enriching beauty of art is meant for only certain people? Fortunately, the answer is no.

Public art is artwork that is displayed in a public or open space and can be viewed by the general population free of charge. Just as the masterpieces found in the world's most famous museums have a long and interesting history, so does the public art that we enjoy on a daily basis.



Statue of Augustus

The ancient Greeks designed beautiful temples and statues to grace their magnificent metropolises, and the ancient Romans built larger-than-life statues to honor the mighty leaders of the empire. These monumental structures helped unite the citizens of the communities in which they stood by providing a concrete focus for national identity and pride.



The Parthenon in Greece

Through the years, countries around the world have used public art to reflect national pride. In France, the Arc de Triomphe monument is a national symbol of French patriotism, and in England the Queen Victoria Memorial honors the queen who ruled England from 1837-1901. Monuments such as these are generally sources of great pride. Unfortunately, sometimes such monuments also have had their difficulties.

In 1832, to commemorate the centennial of George Washington's birth, the United States Congress commissioned a statue by the sculptor Horatio Greenough. Greenough's depiction of Washington was based on an ancient Greek sculpture. The statue, despite its exquisite attention to detail and imitation of life, was immediately scorned by the public for portraying the father of the nation draped in a toga¹, with his bare chest exposed. An embarrassed Congress quickly removed Greenough's statue from its prominent place in the Capitol's rotunda. Today it resides on the second floor of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington, DC.



Horatio Greenough's statue of George Washington



Mural in Philadelphia

Today, public art is as varied as the communities in which it is situated. In many urban areas, murals have been used to revitalize inner-city communities. Philadelphia, for example, has so embraced the concept of murals to combat graffiti that the city has been dubbed, "The City of Murals." Artists and community members have painted over 3,000 murals on the sides of buildings in neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia since the program was initiated by city officials in the 1980's. Hailed as a successful public/private venture, the program has also turned lives around by enabling graffiti writers to use and develop their talents for constructive rather than destructive purposes.

¹toga: a loose one-piece outer garment worn in public by male citizens in ancient Rome

Other communities have used public art to raise funds for worthy causes. For example, in North Carolina, artists decorated the famous “winged horses” to commemorate the historic flight of Orville and Wilbur Wright. Many of the horses were auctioned off with the proceeds going to a number of local charities. Others have become tourist attractions.



Winged horse sculpture

Ranging from monumental structures to manipulations of the Earth to temporary installations in well-known places, public art has continued its important role in community identity and enrichment. The role of the artist continues to change as the community identifies its needs and desires for the art that graces its open spaces.

Source #2: page from public art website

Create For All: A Foundation for the support and growth of public art www.createforall.com

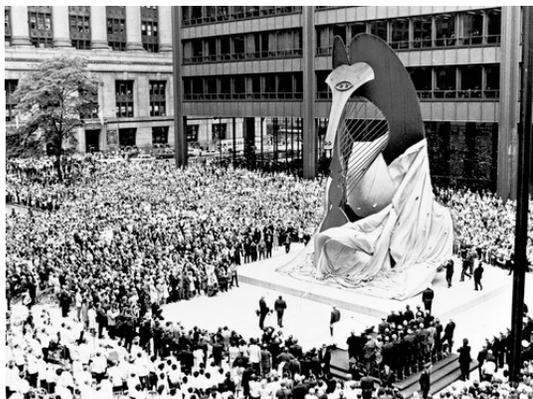
OUR MISSION

Create for All is dedicated to cultivating opportunities, awareness and funding for public art. As a collection of artists, engineers, designers, and social activists, we strive to empower the community and artists by providing space and opportunities for cultural interaction. We are dedicated to the advancement of public art as a platform for creative dialogue and a reflection of the community’s cultural values, history and environment. Public art makes art available to many people who might not typically have the time or money to visit museums or art galleries. Public art can also transform dull or rundown public spaces and inspire the people who live and work there. We believe that art is educational and belongs to all people. We endeavor to produce creative projects that engage citizens, beautify public spaces, and challenge expectations.

Chicago's Picasso Sculpture

By Alan G. Artner

Mayor Richard J. Daley (closest to the sculpture) unveils the Picasso "with the belief that what is strange to us today will be familiar tomorrow." The sculpture celebrated art rather than civic achievement.



Source #3:
article from *Chicago Tribune* newspaper,
1967

Just after noon, Mayor Richard J. Daley pulled a cord attached to 1,200 square feet of blue-green fabric, unwrapping a gift "to the people of Chicago" from an artist who had never visited--and had shown no previous interest in--the city. The artist was Pablo Picasso, who at age 85 had dominated Western art for more than half a century.

He had been approached by William E. Hartmann, senior partner of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, one of the architectural firms collaborating on Chicago's new Civic Center; Hartmann wanted a sculpture for the plaza bordered by Washington, Randolph, Dearborn and Clark Streets. The architect visited Picasso at his home in southern France, presenting several gifts (including a Sioux war bonnet and a White Sox blazer) plus a check for \$100,000 from the Chicago Public Building Commission. Picasso responded not with an original design but one from the early 1960s that he modified, combining motifs from as far back as the start of the century. The result was a forty-two-inch maquette, or model, for a sculpture made of Cor-Ten steel, the same material used on the Civic Center building. The American Bridge division of U.S. Steel in Gary, Indiana, translated the maquette into a piece that weighed 162 tons and rose to a height of 50 feet. It was the first monumental outdoor Picasso in North America. Daley said at the unveiling: "We dedicate this celebrated work this morning with the belief that what is strange to us today will be familiar tomorrow."

The process of familiarization brought trouble. Picasso's untitled sculpture proclaimed metamorphosis¹ the chief business of an artist by crossing images of an Afghan dog and a woman. However, the effort at first did not count for much, in part because Chicago's earlier monuments--statues of past leaders--commemorated a different idea: civic achievement. Col. Jack Reilly, the mayor's director of special events, immediately urged removal of the sculpture. Ald.² John J. Hoellen went further, recommending that the City Council "deport" the piece and construct in its place a statue of "Mr. Cub . . . Ernie Banks³."

In 1970, a federal judge ruled that since the full-size sculpture was technically a copy of the maquette, it could not be copyrighted. This opened the way to countless reproductions that bred familiarity, the first step toward love. The name-brand quality of the sculpture inspired other commissions--from Alexander Calder, Marc Chagall, Joan Miro, Claes Oldenburg, Henry Moore⁴--that found easier acceptance among Chicagoans. As much as the Water Tower⁵, the Picasso became a symbol of the city.

¹ metamorphosis: a dramatic transformation of one thing into another

² alderman: member of a city council

³ Mr. Cub.... Ernie Banks: professional baseball player for the Chicago Cubs from 1953 through 1971

⁴ Alexander Calder, Marc Chagall, Joan Miro, Claes Oldenburg, Henry Moore: renowned 20th-century artists

⁵ Water Tower: a castle-like tower built in Chicago in 1869 for pumping water from Lake Michigan; now an art gallery

SOURCE #4: editorial from Finance and Culture magazine

**Art for Art's Sake:
The case against government funding for public art**

As the fiscal year comes to a close, it's well worth our time to take a close look at the way local governments are budgeting tax dollars. With high unemployment and rising rents and food costs across the nation, every one of those dollars matters immensely—and none of them should be wasted on funding for public art.

I'll be the first to admit that, even during difficult economic times, people need the arts to offer commentary, philosophy, and amusement. I am, in fact a great supporter of the arts, and I regularly donate to arts organizations. The arts need money; they just don't need government money.

Cutting government funding for public art frees up tax dollars for indispensable government necessities that protect the safety and well-being of citizens, such as road building and maintenance, healthcare, housing and education. Directing would-be arts funding into other programs is not only beneficial for those areas in need of more crucial government support; it is also good for artists and the art itself.

Art is, by its very nature, expressive and controversial. The best art represents an individual point of view that is critical, imaginative, and eye-opening. This kind of ingenuity requires freedom and independence on the part of the artist. When the government provides funding for public art projects, the artist loses freedom. When using public funds, the artist is constrained by the need to represent the point view of the government and to gratify the general public. There are countless stories of public art pieces being altered, censored, or even destroyed when the public exerted its authority over the work. Naturally, this situation results in a loss of personal freedom for the artist and an abundance of mediocre public artwork.

The financial solution to producing high-quality, provocative art is private funding. If we allow the market to drive the production of art, artists and art-lovers will have a greater influence on the art being created and show to the public. Already, private funding accounts for most art being created in America. In 2008, a record-breaking 858 million public dollars was spent on the arts by local governments in the United States. This sum pales in comparison to the 12.79 billion private dollars donated to the arts in the same year. And the high number of private dollars donated to artists is of course supplemented by the money that collectors spend on buying art in auction houses and galleries. Statistics show us that art can and does flourish without public funding. In fact, for centuries great masterpieces have been created without government money. Masters such as Shakespeare and Leonardo da Vinci had private funders, and their masterpieces continue to influence generations around the world.

In light of this evidence, I offer a strong suggestion for the coming fiscal year: Let's stop the move towards government-funded public art projects and encourage private donors to invest in the creation of high-quality, uncensored art. We don't need public art pieces that incite controversy, upset some of the taxpayers who helped pay for them, and give the government the power of censorship. We need public funding to provide the necessities of health, safety, and education to our nation's citizens. We also need a thriving private art market that allows artists financial independence and freedom of expression.

1. As a mission statement, Source #2 makes some general claims about public art. One of these claims states:

“Through government partnerships, public art can also transform dull or run-down public spaces and inspire the people who live and work there.”

Identify another source that addresses this claim and explain **two** ways in which that source supports the claim.

2. According to what you have learned from your review of the sources, what are some potential challenges artists might face when creating public art pieces that are government-funded? Provide **three** challenges from at least two sources.

3. The sources you reviewed provide conflicting information about the benefits of government funding for public art.

Using information from two different sources, provide **two** pieces of evidence that support the claim that public art should be government-funded.

4. Using information from two different sources, provide **two** pieces of evidence that support the claim that public art should be privately funded.

Student Directions for Part 2

You will now look at your sources, take notes and plan, draft, revise and edit your letter. You may use your notes and go back to the sources. Now read your assignment and the information about how your informational letter will be scored; then begin your work.

Your assignment:

Your local city council is voting whether to use city funds to pay for a sculpture to be created and placed in the town center. Today you will write a multi-paragraph argumentative letter that will be presented to the city council that argues either in support or in opposition to the city government-funded sculpture. Make sure to address potential counterarguments in your letter and support your view with information from the sources you examined.

Argumentative Scoring

Your letter will be scored using the following:

1. **Statement of claim and organization:** How well did you state your claim, address opposing claims, and maintain your claim with a logical progression of ideas from beginning to end? How well did your ideas thoughtfully flow from beginning to end using effective transitions? How effective was your introduction and conclusion?
2. **Elaboration and Evidence:** How well did you integrate relevant and specific information from the sources? How well did you elaborate your ideas? How well did you clearly state ideas using language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose?
3. **Conventions:** How well did you follow the rules of grammar usage, punctuation, capitalization and spelling?

Now begin your work on your argumentative letter. Manage your time carefully so that you can

1. Plan your letter
2. Write your letter
3. Revise and edit the final draft of your letter

For Part 2, you are being asked to write a multi-paragraph letter, so please be as thorough as possible.

Argumentative Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 6-11)

Score	Purpose/Organization	Evidence/Elaboration	Conventions	
4	<p>The response has a clear and effective organizational structure, creating a sense of unity and completeness. The response is fully sustained and consistently and purposefully focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> claim is introduced, clearly communicated, and the focus is strongly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas effective introduction and conclusion logical progression of ideas from beginning to end; strong connections between and among ideas with some syntactic variety alternate and opposing argument(s) are clearly acknowledged or addressed* 	<p>The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the argument(s) and claim that includes the effective use of sources (facts and details). The response clearly and effectively expresses ideas, using precise language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensive evidence from sources is integrated; references are relevant and specific effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques** vocabulary is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose effective, appropriate style enhances content 	2	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adequate use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling
3	<p>The response has an evident organizational structure and a sense of completeness, though there may be minor flaws and some ideas may be loosely connected. The response is adequately sustained and generally focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> claim is clear, and the focus is mostly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety to clarify relationships between and among ideas adequate introduction and conclusion adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end; adequate connections between and among ideas alternate and opposing argument(s) are adequately acknowledged or addressed* 	<p>The response provides adequate support/evidence for the argument(s) and claim that includes the use of sources (facts and details). The response adequately expresses ideas, employing a mix of precise with more general language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adequate evidence from sources is integrated; some references may be general adequate use of some elaborative techniques vocabulary is generally appropriate for the audience and purpose generally appropriate style is evident 	1	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> limited use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling
2	<p>The response has an inconsistent organizational structure, and flaws are evident. The response is somewhat sustained and may have a minor drift in focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> claim may be somewhat unclear, or the focus may be insufficiently sustained for the purpose, audience, and task inconsistent use of transitional strategies and/or little variety introduction or conclusion, if present, may be weak uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end; and/or formulaic; inconsistent or unclear connections among ideas alternate and opposing argument(s) may be confusing or not acknowledged* 	<p>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the argument(s) and claim that includes partial or uneven use of sources (facts and details). The response expresses ideas unevenly, using simplistic language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some evidence from sources may be weakly integrated, imprecise, or repetitive; references may be vague weak or uneven use of elaborative techniques; development may consist primarily of source summary or may rely on emotional appeal vocabulary use is uneven or somewhat ineffective for the audience and purpose inconsistent or weak attempt to create appropriate style 	0	<p>The response demonstrates little or no command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> infrequent use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling
1	<p>The response has little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may be related to the claim but may provide little or no focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> claim may be confusing or ambiguous; response may be too brief or the focus may drift from the purpose, audience, or task few or no transitional strategies are evident introduction and/or conclusion may be missing frequent extraneous ideas may be evident; ideas may be randomly ordered or have an unclear progression alternate and opposing argument(s) may not be acknowledged* 	<p>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the argument(s) and claim that includes little or no use of sources (facts and details). The response's expression of ideas is vague, lacks clarity, or is confusing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evidence from the source material is minimal or irrelevant; references may be absent or incorrectly used minimal, if any, use of elaborative techniques; emotional appeal may dominate vocabulary is limited or ineffective for the audience and purpose little or no evidence of appropriate style 	NS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintelligible In a language other than English Off-topic Copied text <p>(Off-purpose responses will still receive a score in Conventions.)</p>
NS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintelligible In a language other than English Off-topic Copied text Off-purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintelligible In a language other than English Off-topic Copied text Off-purpose 		

* Begins in 7th grade

**Elaborative techniques may include the use of personal experiences that support the argument(s).