



## Reading & Writing Companion



## GRADE 10 UNITS

Destiny • Taking a Stand  
Technical Difficulties • The Human Connection



Reading & Writing Companion

## GRADE 10 UNITS

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Destiny • Taking a Stand

Technical Difficulties • The Human Connection

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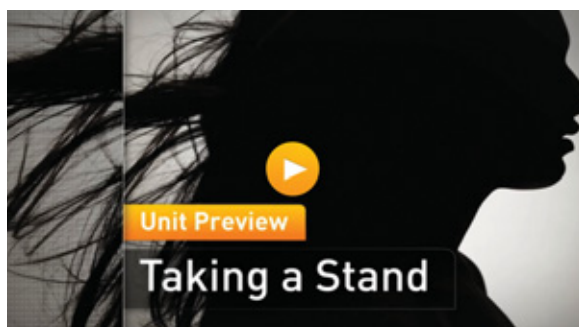


## Destiny

How much of what happens in our lives do we control?

UNIT 1

1

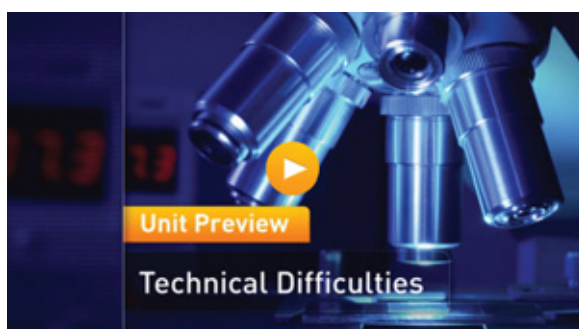


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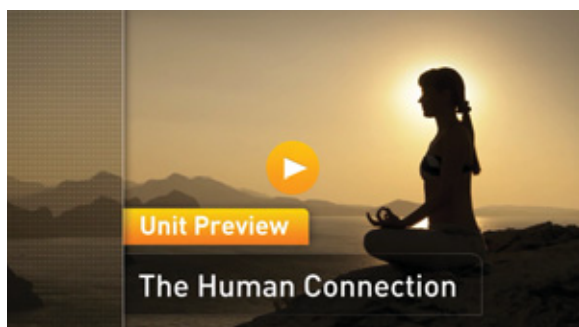


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# STUDENT GUIDE

## GETTING STARTED

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Welcome to the StudySync Reading and Writing Companion! In this booklet, you will find a collection of readings based on the theme of the unit you are studying. As you work through the readings, you will be asked to answer questions and perform a variety of tasks designed to help you closely analyze and understand each text selection. Read on for an explanation of each section of this booklet.





## CORE ELA TEXTS

In each Core ELA Unit you will read texts and text excerpts that share a common theme, despite their different genres, time periods, and authors. Each reading encourages a closer look with questions and a short writing assignment.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

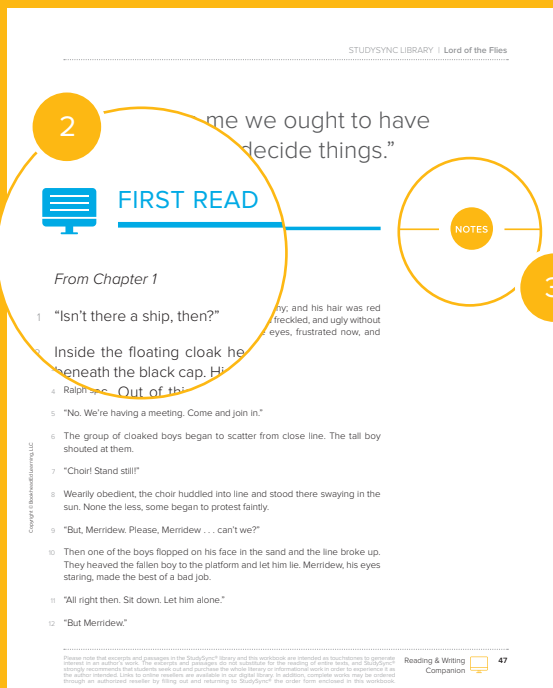
An Introduction to each text provides historical context for your reading as well as information about the author. You will also learn about the genre of the excerpt and the year in which it was written.

### 2 FIRST READ

During your first reading of each excerpt, you should just try to get a general idea of the content and message of the reading. Don't worry if there are parts you don't understand or words that are unfamiliar to you. You'll have an opportunity later to dive deeper into the text.

### 3 NOTES

Many times, while working through the activities after each text, you will be asked to **annotate** or **make annotations** about what you are reading. This means that you should highlight or underline words in the text and use the "Notes" column to make comments or jot down any questions you may have. You may also want to note any unfamiliar vocabulary words here.





## 4

## THINK QUESTIONS

These questions will ask you to start thinking critically about the text, asking specific questions about its purpose, and making connections to your prior knowledge and reading experiences. To answer these questions, you should go back to the text and draw upon specific evidence that you find there to support your responses. You will also begin to explore some of the more challenging vocabulary words used in the excerpt.

## 5

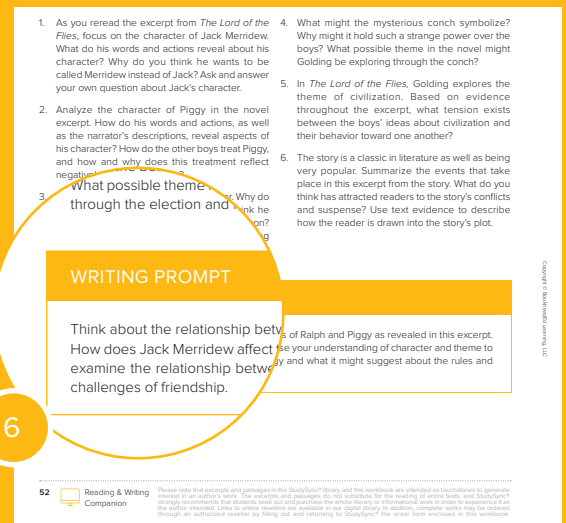
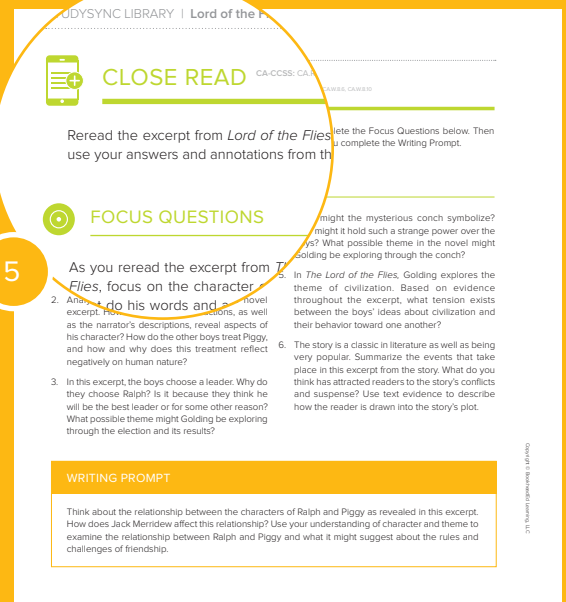
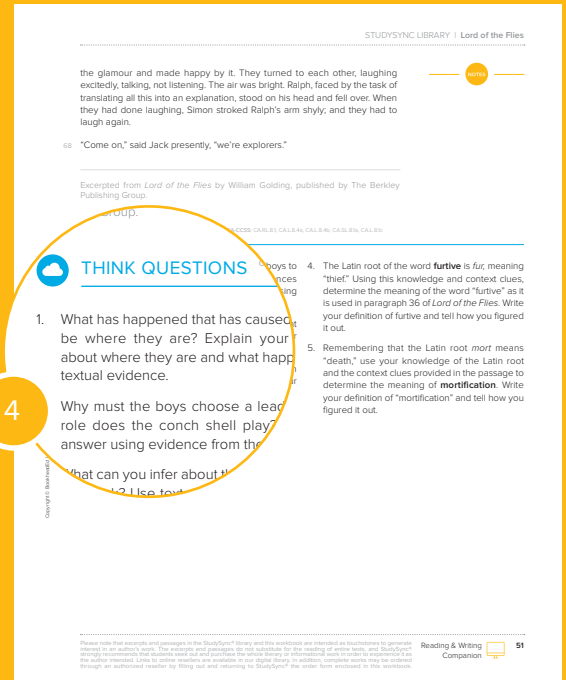
## CLOSE READ &amp; FOCUS QUESTIONS

After you have completed the First Read, you will then be asked to go back and read the excerpt more closely and critically. Before you begin your Close Read, you should read through the Focus Questions to get an idea of the concepts you will want to focus on during your second reading. You should work through the Focus Questions by making annotations, highlighting important concepts, and writing notes or questions in the “Notes” column. Depending on instructions from your teacher, you may need to respond online or use a separate piece of paper to start expanding on your thoughts and ideas.

## 6

## WRITING PROMPT

Your study of each excerpt or selection will end with a writing assignment. To complete this assignment, you should use your notes, annotations, and answers to both the Think and Focus Questions. Be sure to read the prompt carefully and address each part of it in your writing assignment.





## 1 REREAD

## 2 USING LANGUAGE

### 3 MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS & SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

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## EXTENDED WRITING PROJECT

The Extended Writing Project is your opportunity to explore the theme of each unit in a longer written work. You will draw information from your readings, research, and own life experiences to complete the assignment.

### 1 WRITING PROJECT

After you have read all of the unit text selections, you will move on to a writing project. Each project will guide you through the process of writing an argumentative, narrative, informative, or literary analysis essay. Student models and graphic organizers will provide guidance and help you organize your thoughts as you plan and write your essay. Throughout the project, you will also study and work on specific writing skills to help you develop different portions of your writing.

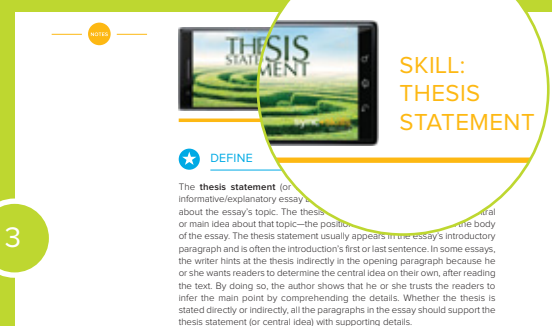
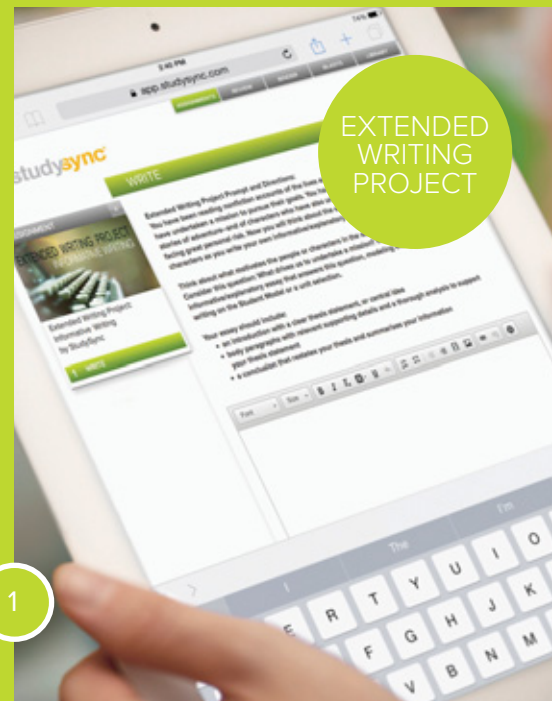
### 2 WRITING PROCESS STEPS

There are five steps in the writing process: **Prewrite, Plan, Draft, Revise, and Edit, Proofread, and Publish.** During each step, you will form and shape your writing project so that you can effectively express your ideas. Lessons focus on one step at a time, and you will have the chance to receive feedback from your peers and teacher.

### 3 WRITING SKILLS

Each Writing Skill lesson focuses on a specific strategy or technique that you will use during your writing project. The lessons begin by analyzing a student model or mentor text, and give you a chance to learn and practice the skill on its own. Then, you will have the opportunity to apply each new skill to improve the writing in your own project.

#### EXTENDED WRITING PROJECT





## Reading & Writing Companion



How much of what happens in our lives do we control?

# Destiny



# Destiny



## TEXTS

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 4  | The Sports Gene<br><b>NON-FICTION</b> David Epstein  |
| 10 | Outliers: The Story of Success<br><b>NON-FICTION</b> Malcolm Gladwell  |
| 15 | Into the Wild<br><b>NON-FICTION</b> Jon Krakauer   |
| 21 | Invictus<br><b>POETRY</b> William Ernest Henley  |
| 25 | If<br><b>POETRY</b> Rudyard Kipling  |
| 29 | Macbeth (Act I, Scene III)<br><b>DRAMA</b> William Shakespeare   |
| 37 | The Iraq War Blog: An Iraqi Family's Inside View<br>of the First Year of the Occupation<br><b>NON-FICTION</b> Faiza Al-Araji |
| 42 | Oedipus Rex<br><b>DRAMA</b> Sophocles  |



- 49 Introduction to Oedipus the King  
**NON-FICTION** Bernard Knox
- 54 Fate slew Him, but He did not drop  
**POETRY** Emily Dickinson
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**POETRY** Emily Dickinson



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- 108 **SKILL:** Conclusions
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- 115 Extended Writing Project: Edit, Proofread, and Publish

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Text Fulfillment  
through  
StudySync





# OUTLIERS:

THE STORY OF SUCCESS

NON-FICTION  
Malcolm Gladwell  
2008

## INTRODUCTION

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**M**alcolm Gladwell's *Outliers: The Story of Success* unravels the conventional wisdom about what makes extremely high achievers different from the rest of us. In this excerpt, Gladwell argues that practice is far more important than natural talent, and explains the 10,000-hour rule, which holds that it takes that much practice time to achieve true mastery at anything.



# “Is there such a thing as innate talent?”



## FIRST READ

NOTES

*Excerpt from Chapter Two: The 10,000-Hour Rule*

- 1 For almost a generation, psychologists around the world have been engaged in a spirited debate over a question that most of us would consider to have been settled years ago. The question is this: is there such a thing as **innate** talent? The obvious answer is yes. Not every hockey player born in January ends up playing at the professional level. Only some do—the innately talented ones. Achievement is talent plus preparation. The problem with this view is that the closer psychologists look at the careers of the gifted, the smaller the role innate talent seems to play and the bigger the role preparation seems to play.
- 2 Exhibit A in the talent argument is a study done in the early 1990s by the psychologist K. Anders Ericsson and two colleagues at Berlin’s elite Academy of Music. With the help of the Academy’s professors, they divided the school’s violinists into three groups. In the first group were the stars, the students with the potential to become world-class soloists. In the second were those judged to be merely “good.” In the third were students who were unlikely to ever play professionally and who intended to be music teachers in the public school system. All of the violinists were then asked the same question: **over the course** of your entire career, ever since you first picked up the violin, how many hours have you practiced?
- 3 Everyone from all three groups started playing at roughly the same age, around five years old. In those first few years, everyone practiced roughly the same amount, about two or three hours a week. But when the students were around the age of eight, real differences started to emerge. The students who would end up the best in their class began to practice more than everyone else: six hours a week by age nine, eight hours a week by age twelve, sixteen hours a week by age fourteen, and up and up, until by the age of twenty they were practicing—that is, **purposefully** and single-mindedly



playing their instruments with the intent to get better—well over thirty hours a week. In fact, by the age of twenty, the elite performers had each totaled ten thousand hours of practice. By contrast, the merely good students had totaled eight thousand hours, and the future music teachers had totaled just over four thousand hours.

- 4 Ericsson and his colleagues then compared amateur pianists with professional pianists. The same pattern emerged. The amateurs never practiced more than about three hours a week over the course of their childhood, and by the age of twenty they had totaled two thousand hours of practice. The professionals, on the other hand, steadily increased their practice time every year, until by the age of twenty they, like the violinists, had reached ten thousand hours.
- 5 The striking thing about Ericsson's study is that he and his colleagues couldn't find any "naturals," musicians who floated effortlessly to the top while practicing a fraction of the time their peers did. Nor could they find any "grinds," people who worked harder than everyone else, yet just didn't have what it takes to break the top ranks. Their research suggests that once a musician has enough ability to get into a top music school, the thing that distinguishes one performer from another is how hard he or she works. That's it. And what's more, the people at the very top don't work just harder or even much harder than everyone else. They work much, *much* harder.
- 6 The idea that excellence at performing a complex task requires a critical minimum level of practice surfaces again and again in studies of **expertise**. In fact, researchers have settled on what they believe is the magic number for true expertise: ten thousand hours.
- 7 "The emerging picture from such studies is that ten thousand hours of practice is required to achieve the level of mastery associated with being a world-class expert—in anything," writes the neurologist Daniel Levitin. "In study after study, of composers, basketball players, fiction writers, ice skaters, concert pianists, chess players, master criminals, and what have you, this number comes up again and again. Of course, this doesn't address why some people get more out of their practice sessions than others do. But no one has yet found a case in which true world-class expertise was accomplished in less time. It seems that it takes the brain this long to **assimilate** all that it needs to know to achieve true mastery."
- 8 This is true even of people we think of as prodigies. Mozart, for example, famously started writing music at six. But, writes the psychologist Michael Howe in his book *Genius Explained*,
- 9 by the standards of mature composers, Mozart's early works are not outstanding. The earliest pieces were all probably written down by his



father, and perhaps improved in the process. Many of Wolfgang's childhood compositions, such as the first seven of his concertos for piano and orchestra, are largely arrangements of works by other composers. Of those concertos that only contain music original to Mozart, the earliest that is now regarded as a masterwork (No. 9, K. 271) was not composed until he was twenty-one: by that time Mozart had already been composing concertos for ten years.

- 10 The music critic Harold Schonberg goes further: Mozart, he argues, actually “developed late,” since he didn’t produce his greatest work until he had been composing for more than twenty years.

Excerpted from *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell, published by Little, Brown and Company.



## THINK QUESTIONS

CA-CCSS: CA.RI.9-10.1, CA.RI.9-10.4, CA.L.9-10.4a, CA.L.9-10.4d

1. What similar patterns emerged in the groups of musicians—both violinists and pianists—that psychologist K. Anders Ericsson and his colleagues studied? Use several examples of evidence from the text to support your answer.
2. What did neurologist Daniel Levitin discover after examining many different studies of expertise? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
3. Aside from discovering how many hours of practice it takes to achieve true mastery in a field of endeavor, what other striking thing did Ericsson’s study uncover? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
4. Use context to determine the meaning of the word *assimilate* as it is used in *Outliers: The Story of Success*. Write your definition of *assimilate* here and explain how you arrived at it.
5. Remembering that the Latin suffix “ful” means “full of,” and the suffix “ly” means “in what manner,” use this information and the context clues provided in the passage to determine the meaning of **purposefully**. Write your definition of *purposefully* here and explain how you determined it. Use a dictionary to verify your preliminary determination of the word’s meaning.



**CLOSE READ**

CA-CCSS: CA.RI.9-10.1, CA.RI.9-10.3, CA.L.9-10.4b, CA.W.9-10.4, CA.W.9-10.5, CA.W.9-10.6, CA.W.9-10.9b, CA.W.9-10.10

Reread the text *Outliers: The Story of Success*. As you reread, complete the Focus Questions below. Then use your answers and annotations from the questions to help you complete the Writing Prompt.

**FOCUS QUESTIONS**

1. In the opening paragraphs the author discusses a study conducted with violinists. What conclusion does he reach after examining the results of this study? What evidence from the study does he include to support his conclusion? Highlight evidence to support your ideas and write annotations to explain your choices.
2. Which experts does Gladwell cite in this excerpt from *Outliers: The Story of Success*? Does Gladwell provide enough information about these experts to help you evaluate the text evidence? Highlight your evidence and annotate to explain your ideas.
3. In the sixth paragraph, Gladwell uses the word *minimum* in the first sentence. The word *minimum* comes from the Latin root *minimus*, meaning “least.” Using your knowledge of this Latin root as well as context clues and any prior knowledge, define the word *minimum*. Why do you think the author uses this specific word in his explanation? Cite textual evidence to explain your ideas.
4. What important information is included in paragraphs 7 - 10? What kind of text evidence is this? Why is it so important to have this information? Highlight your evidence and make annotations to explain your choices.
5. How does the selection help answer the question of how much we can control what happens in our lives? Make annotations and use text evidence to support your response.

**WRITING PROMPT**

How does the text evidence that Malcolm Gladwell provides in Chapter 2 of *Outliers: The Story of Success* help you identify and understand his central idea or claim? Which examples of the text evidence are strong and which are weaker? Are there examples of faulty logic? If so, how do they affect your response to the author’s central idea? Use your understanding of identifying and evaluating text evidence to develop your response. Support your writing with evidence from the text.







# THE IMPORTANCE OF MINDSET

English Language  
Development

NON-FICTION

## INTRODUCTION

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New research into the contrast between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset has provided insights into the relationship between intelligence and skill. Can abilities be strengthened through determined work? Or are intelligence and talent fixed and unchangeable traits?





“...learn, work hard, face setbacks, and carry on. Above all, relish a challenge.”



## FIRST READ

NOTES

- 1 Which has more influence on the development of the individual: his or her inborn abilities or the learning that occurs as the person matures? In the past, researchers believed that intelligence could not be increased. Some people are naturally wiser, more intelligent, creative, and talented. The basis for these traits is physical because they are unchangeable and unavoidable so those not so gifted are naturally out of luck.
- 2 Current research says differently, however, suggesting that both nature and nurture influence development. People are born with certain **aptitudes**, but training, experience, and effort are vital to success. Recently, the focus has been on mindset—a mental attitude that determines how the individual will react and respond to various situations. In simple terms, geniuses may come and go, but those individuals who make the most difference are passionate, dedicated, and hardworking. The reason for this has to do with the way the brain functions.
- 3 Carol Dweck, a psychologist at Stanford University, defines two types of mindsets: fixed and growth. In a fixed mindset, intelligence and even talent are fixed traits. They come with the individual at birth and cannot be changed. The attitude that comes with a fixed mindset is limiting; success alone is insufficient. A person must be flawless and see him or herself as perfect. Intelligence is demonstrated through performance. If a person performs poorly, then he or she is not perfect and probably unintelligent. Therefore, the fear of failure becomes almost overwhelming. Mistakes are not acknowledged or are hidden; others are blamed for the problem. **Alternatively**, the individual may simply walk away from the challenge never to return because he or she believes that mistakes mean you are unintelligent.
- 4 The growth mindset is the mirror opposite of the fixed. Intelligence is a quality that can be developed through hard work and determination. This view creates a long and enduring love of learning as well as a certain flexibility and



## NOTES

adaptability vital to success. No one, not da Vinci, Mozart, Darwin, or Einstein, ever accomplished anything without years of learning and passionate hard work. They shared a growth mindset, and they instinctively knew that the view you have of yourself affects your life and can determine whether you achieve your goals. Everyone can grow and develop through experience and **deliberate** application.

- 5 The self-talk of a person with a growth mindset differs radically from that of a fixed mindset. Setbacks, while traumatic, are learning experiences that can be turned into achievement. A balance must be kept between learning and performance. People with a growth mindset recognize the value and the necessity of learning. Failure does not result in excuses or blame. Instead, they develop strategies to improve. A successful athlete focuses on performance during a game but values learning, challenges, and practice after the game is over.
- 6 Carol Dweck and her team conducted the following experiment. They wanted to see how different kinds of praise affected children and their test taking. The children took three tests. The second test was purposely difficult so that all the children failed. The team found that children who had been praised for their *efforts* recovered from the test two failure and scored 30% higher on the third test than they did on the first test. Students praised for their *intelligence* scored 20% lower than the scores on their first test. Dweck concluded that you should praise children for what they can control, like effort.
- 7 Based on the study by Carol Dweck, praising efforts promotes hard work and leads to better test scores. Further, researchers who have studied creative geniuses point out that the most important factor in achievement is the person's willingness to work hard and to continue despite setbacks. Thus the recipe to developing the growth mindset seems simple: learn, work hard, face setbacks, and carry on. Above all, relish a challenge. Choose difficult tasks. Finally, figure out approaches to help you succeed and become **competent**. Monitor your success. Decide what works and what does not. The ability to face challenges and overcome setbacks does not depend on your IQ. It depends on your mindset. It's not the weight of the load, but how you carry it that allows you to move on.



## USING LANGUAGE

CA-CCSS: ELD.PI.9-10.6.c.Ex

Read each sentence. Choose the correct meaning for the word in bold based on the context of the sentence.

1. **Current** research says differently.
  - ☐ Something happening now
  - ☐ Water or air moving in a clear direction
2. Thus the recipe to developing the growth mindset seems simple: learn, work hard, **face** setbacks, and carry on.
  - ☐ The front part of someone's head
  - ☐ Confront, acknowledge
3. The second **test** was purposely difficult so that all the children failed.
  - ☐ To challenge someone's skill
  - ☐ A written or oral exam
4. Everyone can grow and develop through experience and **deliberate** application.
  - ☐ To talk about a matter with other people
  - ☐ Specific action
5. This **view** creates a long and abiding love of learning as well as a certain flexibility and adaptability vital to success.
  - ☐ A way of thinking about things
  - ☐ The scenery in an area





MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS CA-CCSS: ELD.PI.9-10.6.a.Ex

Discuss Carol Dweck’s fixed vs. growth mindset principle. You can use the speaking frames below to help express your ideas in the discussion. Remember to paraphrase, that is, to put Dweck’s ideas into your own words. Then use the self-assessment rubric to evaluate your participation in the discussion.

- The text defines the fixed mindset as . . .
- The text defines the growth mindset as . . .
- The basic distinction or difference between these two mindsets is . . .



SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC CA-CCSS: ELD.PI.9-10.1.Ex

|  | 4<br>I did this well. | 3<br>I did this pretty well. | 2<br>I did this a little bit. | 1<br>I did not do this. |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| I expressed my ideas clearly.  |                       |                              |                               |                         |
| I supported my ideas using evidence from the text.                           |                       |                              |                               |                         |
| I accurately explained the difference between the fixed and growth mindsets. |                       |                              |                               |                         |
| I effectively paraphrased ideas, putting them into my own words.             |                       |                              |                               |                         |



## REREAD

Reread paragraphs 3–6 of “The Importance of Mindset.” After you reread, complete the Using Language and Meaningful Interactions activities.



## USING LANGUAGE CA-CCSS: ELD.PII.9-10.3.Ex

Read each sentence. Choose the correct form for the boldfaced verb.

- Researchers formerly **believed** intelligence was fixed at birth.  
☐ past                      ☐ present
- Carol Dweck **decided** to conduct an experiment to test her theory about mindset.  
☐ past                      ☐ future
- Today, she **claims** that a positive mindset can increase success.  
☐ past                      ☐ present
- I **enjoy** challenges.  
☐ present                      ☐ future
- Researchers **will continue** to study mindset in a variety of ways.  
☐ present                      ☐ future
- Teachers **have seen** a difference since they began praising their students based on effort.  
☐ progressive                      ☐ perfect
- I **am trying** to better myself by having a growth mindset.  
☐ progressive                      ☐ perfect





MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS CA-CCSS: ELD.PI.9-10.1.Ex

Based on what you have read in “The Importance of Mindset,” what do you think are the most convincing details in Dweck’s theory and research? (Refer to paragraphs 3–6.) Work with partners or small groups to practice sharing and discussing your opinions using the speaking frames. Then use the self-assessment rubric to evaluate your participation in the discussion.

- Dweck states . . . , which is convincing because . . .
- I was not as convinced by Dweck’s point that . . . because . . .
- One step in Dweck’s experiment was . . .
- I felt Dweck’s experiment was convincing / not convincing because . . .
- I feel the most convincing detail of her theory was . . .



SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC CA-CCSS: ELD.PI.9-10.1.Ex

|  | 4<br>I did this well. | 3<br>I did this pretty well. | 2<br>I did this a little bit. | 1<br>I did not do this. |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| I expressed my opinion clearly.                          |                       |                              |                               |                         |
| I was courteous when persuading others to share my view. |                       |                              |                               |                         |
| I spoke respectfully when disagreeing with others.       |                       |                              |                               |                         |
| I took turns sharing my ideas with the group.            |                       |                              |                               |                         |

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## REREAD

Reread paragraphs 1, 2, and 7 of “The Importance of Mindset.” After you reread, complete the Using Language and Meaningful Interactions activities.



## USING LANGUAGE

CA-CCSS: ELD.PI.9-10.12.b.Ex

Complete each row by writing the correct affix in the second column, and the new word it creates in the third column.

| Affix Options |       |     |      |       | New Word Options           |                            |           |
|---------------|-------|-----|------|-------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| un-           | -able | -ly | -ive | -less | instinctive<br>passionless | intelligently<br>unwilling | adaptable |

| Root Word   | Affix | New Word |
|-------------|-------|----------|
| adapt       |       |          |
| instinct    |       |          |
| willing     |       |          |
| passion     |       |          |
| intelligent |       |          |



## MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS

CA-CCSS: ELD.PI.9-10.1.Ex, ELD.PI.9-10.11.a.Ex

Answer this question: to what extent can motivation, effort, and belief in success, make up for a lack of natural talent? Use the speaking frames to help support your answer.

- I feel that motivation, effort, and belief in success can / cannot make up for lack of talent because . . .
- An example in my own life or from someone else’s life that helps me to prove my point is . . .
- Additional evidence I have for my point is . . .
- An additional comment I have about motivation versus natural talent is . . .



# EXTENDED WRITING PROJECT

studysync

WRITE

ASSIGNMENT

EXTENDED WRITING PROJECT  
ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

Extended Writing Project:  
Argumentative Writing  
by StudySync

1 WRITE

Extended Writing Project Prompt and Directions:  
Review the selections you have explored in this unit. Choose an argumentative essay that makes a claim about which text in the unit's essential question: *How much of what happens in a story is determined by the characters' choices?* Use text evidence from both sources to support your claim.

Your argumentative essay should include:

- an introduction that
  - presents a reasonable claim, expressed in a clear thesis statement
  - names the author and genre of each text you have selected to support your claim
- body paragraphs that
  - present a thorough analysis of your claim
  - contain textual evidence and details to support your claim
  - demonstrate a logical organization of ideas
- a conclusion paragraph that
  - restates your thesis statement
  - effectively wraps up your essay
  - leaves your reader with a lasting impression, perhaps through an interesting final thought

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## ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

### WRITING PROMPT

Review the selections you have explored in this unit. Choose two and write an argumentative essay that makes a claim about which text most convincingly answers the unit's essential question: *How much of what happens in our lives do we actually control?* Use text evidence from both sources to support your claim.

Your argumentative essay should include:

- an introduction that
  - › presents a reasonable claim, expressed in a clear thesis statement
  - › names the author and genre of each text you have selected to support your claim
- body paragraphs that
  - › present a analysis of your claim
  - › contain textual evidence and details to support your claim
  - › demonstrate a logical organization of ideas
- a conclusion paragraph that
  - › restates your thesis statement
  - › effectively wraps up your essay
  - › leaves your reader with a lasting impression, perhaps through an interesting final thought

**Argumentative writing** is a type of nonfiction writing in which a writer establishes a strong position on a topic and develops it with paragraphs that support that position with evidence. The purpose of argumentative writing is to persuade an audience to agree that the writer's claim is sound and true.



Argumentative writing can appear in many forms, including essays, speeches, debates, and letters to the editor of a newspaper.

The most important part of a strong argumentative essay is a clear **claim**. A claim is a writer's central argument or thesis. It communicates the main focus of the writing and allows readers to understand exactly what a writer is arguing. The claim should appear in the introductory paragraph, to help readers understand what will come next.

An argumentative essay should stay focused on the main claim and present information in a logical order that is easy for a reader to follow. Transition words help connect ideas and build the argument point by point. Effective argumentative writing includes strong evidence that supports the writer's reasoning and demonstrates the validity of the claim. It also adopts a formal tone that is appropriate to the purpose and style of this type of writing. A strong argumentative conclusion restates the writer's claim, effectively wraps up the argument, and leaves readers with a lasting impression, perhaps through an interesting final thought. The features of argumentative writing include:

- an introduction with a clear thesis statement
- a clear and logical organizational structure
- supporting details, including valid reasoning and textual evidence
- effective transitions to show the connections between ideas
- a formal style and objective tone
- a concluding restatement of the claim

As you continue with this extended writing project, you will receive more instructions and practice to help you craft each of the elements of argumentative writing in your own essay.



## STUDENT MODEL

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You will learn skills of the writer's craft as you follow the writing process steps of Prewrite, Plan, Draft, and Revise, before the final step of Edit, Proofread, and Publish. Before you get started on your own argumentative essay, begin by reading this essay that one student wrote in response to the writing prompt. As you read this student model, highlight and annotate the features of argumentative writing that the student included in her essay.

### *The Key to Success Is in Our Hands*

*Some people believe that we have the ability to forge our own successful destinies, while others believe that a successful destiny is predetermined by our natural*



abilities. Who is right? Two authors, David Epstein and Malcolm Gladwell, take two different positions on this subject. The author of *The Sports Gene*, David Epstein, concludes that innate physical ability is an advantage over athletic practice. Malcolm Gladwell, the author of *Outliers: The Story of Success*, argues that preparation is more important than innate talent. With strong evidence and logical reasoning, Gladwell builds a more convincing argument to support the claim that humans forge their own successful destinies through hard work and practice than Epstein does to support his opposing position, and thus Gladwell better answers the question, *How much of what happens in our lives do we actually control?*

In *The Sports Gene*, David Epstein describes two high jumpers and their approaches to their sport to illustrate that athletic greatness may be the result of biology. Epstein introduces Donald Thomas, a novice high jumper who began to win championships after only eight months of training, with minimal practice. Epstein then transports readers to the 2007 World Championship, where the “cool” and casual Thomas competed against the disciplined and “laser-focused” reigning Olympic champion of the high jump, Stefan Holm. Epstein relates the dramatic events of the competition, at the end of which Thomas “was crowned the 2007 world champion” and came close to breaking the world record for the high jump. Epstein describes studies conducted on Thomas at the Neuromuscular Research Center at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland, in which scientist Masaki Ishikawa noted that Thomas “was gifted with a giant’s Achilles tendon.” He then quotes exercise physiologist Gary Hunter as stating, “The Achilles tendon is very important in jumping.” Epstein concludes that Thomas’s Achilles tendon gives him an advantage over Holm, even though Holm had much more practice. “The tendons are one puzzle piece that helps explain how two athletes could arrive at essentially the same place, one after a twenty-year love affair with his craft, and the other with less than a year of serious practice after stumbling into it on a friendly bet” (Epstein). Epstein goes on to point out that “Thomas debuted on top and has not progressed. He seems to contradict the deliberate practice framework in all directions.” Some may argue that Epstein’s analysis offers a convincing argument in favor of how innate talent trumps hard work. However, the fact that Epstein’s analysis focuses on only one aspect of only one athlete’s physiology, as well as his admission that his conclusions are just “one puzzle piece” to explain Thomas’s athletic success, which “seems” to contradict the idea





that practice leads to greatness, do not provide adequate support for the idea that our destiny for success is predetermined by our genes.

On the other hand, Malcolm Gladwell makes a compelling argument for the idea that destiny is a result of our choices, rather than our genes. In *Outliers: The Story of Success*, Gladwell describes the results of a research study conducted by psychologist K. Anders Ericsson and two colleagues in an attempt to measure innate talent and its relationship to overall success. In one portion of the study, he explains, violinists at the elite Academy of Music in Berlin were divided into three groups and asked to report the number of hours they had practiced violin since their first childhood encounters with the instrument. As Gladwell notes, “. . . by the age of twenty, the elite performers had each totaled ten thousand hours of practice. By contrast, the merely good students had totaled eight thousand hours, and the future music teachers had totaled just over four thousand hours.” Gladwell determines, “Their research suggests that once a musician has enough ability to get into a top music school, the thing that distinguishes one performer from another is how hard he or she works. That’s it. And what’s more, the people at the very top don’t work just harder or even much harder than everyone else. They work much, *much* harder.” To further support his claim, Gladwell then quotes neurologist Daniel Levitin, who states, “The emerging picture from such studies is that ten thousand hours of practice is required to achieve the level of mastery associated with being a world-class expert—in anything . . . It seems that it takes the brain this long to assimilate all that it needs to know to achieve true mastery.” Gladwell further supports his claim by examining expert testimony on the talent of famous composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who, he explains, “famously started writing music at [age] six” but “didn’t produce his greatest work until he had been composing for more than twenty years.” In other words, although some may argue that Mozart is the perfect example of a person whose innate talent led to his success, Gladwell’s evidence refutes this claim by demonstrating how much practice and preparation the composer’s best work required. This wealth of evidence makes a strong argument for the claim that our destiny for success is within our individual control.

The authors of both texts agree on certain points about the human capacity for success. Epstein writes that “Tendon length is not significantly impacted by training” but that “it appears that an individual can increase tendon stiffness by training,” an admission that training does have some connection to athletic



ability.” Gladwell also considers the role of biology in achievement. He asks, “. . . is there such a thing as innate talent? The obvious answer is yes.” However, Gladwell offers a more developed view of the factors contributing to success: “Achievement is talent plus preparation.” In the end, Gladwell makes a strong case for the human ability to achieve more than innate talent has provided us, and he shows that it is hard work that truly shapes our destinies.

### Works Cited

Epstein, David. *The Sports Gene: Inside the Science of Extraordinary Athletic Performance*. StudySync. BookheadEd Learning, LLC., 2015. Web. 4 May 2015.

Gladwell, Malcolm. *Outliers: The Story of Success*. StudySync. BookheadEd Learning, LLC., 2015. Web. 4 May 2015.



### THINK QUESTIONS

1. What is the topic of the prompt? What claim does the student writer make in response to the prompt?
2. What technique does the writer use to organize her essay? What evidence from the text does the writer offer as support for her claim?
3. What is the purpose of the final sentence in the concluding paragraph of the essay?
4. Thinking about the writing prompt, which selections, Blasts, or other resources would you like to use to create your own argumentative essay?
5. Based on what you have read, listened to, or researched, how would you answer the question, *How much of what happens in our lives do we actually control?*





## PREWRITE

CA-CCSS: CA.RI.9-10.1, CA.RI.9-10.2, CA.W.9-10.5, CA.W.9-10.6, CA.W.9-10.9b, CA.SL.9-10.1a, CA.SL.9-10.1b, CA.SL.9-10.1c, CA.SL.9-10.1d

### WRITING PROMPT

Review the selections you have explored in this unit. Choose two and write an argumentative essay that makes a claim about which text most convincingly answers the unit's essential question: *How much of what happens in our lives do we actually control?* Use text evidence from both sources to support your claim.

Your argumentative essay should include:

- an introduction that
  - › presents a reasonable claim, expressed in a clear thesis statement
  - › names the author and genre of each text you have selected to support your claim
- body paragraphs that
  - › present a thorough analysis of your claim
  - › contain textual evidence and details to support your claim
  - › demonstrate a logical organization of ideas
- a conclusion paragraph that
  - › restates your thesis statement
  - › effectively wraps up your essay
  - › leaves your reader with a lasting impression, perhaps through an interesting final thought

In addition to studying techniques authors use to build an argument, you have been reading and exploring texts that examine how much control people have over their own destinies. In the Extended Writing Project, you will use argumentative writing techniques to compose your own argumentative essay that addresses the unit theme.



As you begin to brainstorm for your essay, think back to the selections you have read in this unit. In what ways do these selections examine how much of what happens in our lives is within our control and beyond our control? What possible answers do they offer to the question of how much control we actually have? What specific details in the texts support these answers?

Choose four selections from the unit and write a list of answers to these questions. As you write down your ideas, look for contrasts that begin to emerge. How do the texts differ in terms of the answers they offer to the unit essential question? Do you observe any texts that offer stronger evidence in support of the answers they provide? Looking for these differences may help you solidify the ideas you want to discuss in your essay. Use this model to help you get started with your own prewriting:

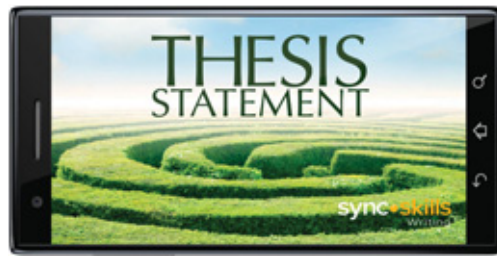
**Text:** *The Sports Gene* by David Epstein

**Answer Text Gives to the Essential Question:** Innate talent, rather than hard work and practice, may determine success, which suggests that people have limited control over what happens in their lives.

**Details That Support This Answer:** Donald Thomas became a world champion high jumper after only eight months of practice, beating an opponent who had trained for twenty-one years; studies conducted on Thomas showed that he had a giant Achilles tendon, which physiologist Gary Hunter indicates is very important to jumping.

When you have completed the four lists, choose the two that you believe will help you develop the strongest argument in response to the prompt.





## SKILL: THESIS STATEMENT



### DEFINE

The **thesis statement** is the most important sentence in an argumentative essay because it introduces what the writer is going to explore and attempt to prove in the essay or analysis. The thesis statement expresses the writer's **central or main idea** about that topic, which is the position or claim the writer will develop in the body of the essay. The thesis statement usually appears in the essay's introductory paragraph and is often the introduction's last sentence. The rest of the paragraphs in the essay all support the thesis statement with specific details, facts, evidence, quotations, and examples. The thesis statement should reappear in some form in the essay's concluding paragraph.



### IDENTIFICATION AND APPLICATION

A thesis statement:

- makes a clear statement about the central idea or claim of the essay.
- lets the reader know what to expect in the body of the essay.
- responds fully and completely to an essay prompt.
- is presented in the introductory paragraph and restated in the conclusion.
- is a work-in-progress and should be revised and improved, as needed, during the early stages of the writing process.



### MODEL

The following is the introductory paragraph from the Student Model essay, "The Key to Success Is in Our Hands":

*Some people believe that we have the ability to forge our own successful destinies, while others believe that a successful destiny is predetermined by our natural abilities. Who is right? Two authors, David Epstein and Malcolm*



Gladwell, take two different positions on this subject. The author of *The Sports Gene*, David Epstein, concludes that innate physical ability is an advantage over athletic practice. Malcolm Gladwell, the author of *Outliers: The Story of Success*, argues that preparation is more important than innate talent. **With strong evidence and logical reasoning, Gladwell builds a more convincing argument to support his claim that humans forge their own successful destinies through hard work and practice than Epstein does to support his opposing position, and thus Gladwell better answers the question, *How much of what happens in our lives do we actually control?***

The thesis statement is shown above in bold. This student's thesis statement responds to the prompt directly and includes the guiding question from the prompt. It also specifically states the writer's central idea about that topic. In this writer's view, Gladwell presents a stronger argument, backed with evidence and logical reasoning that better answers the question about how much of our lives we control. This position or main claim, which appears at the end of the essay's first paragraph, sets up the rest of the essay on this topic.



## PRACTICE

Consider the two texts you identified for use in your argumentative essay during the Prewrite stage of the writing process. Then draft a complete, effective thesis statement with pen and paper that states your central idea or claim in a clear and engaging way. Be sure that your thesis statement addresses the prompt. When you are done writing, switch papers with a partner to evaluate each other's work. How clearly did the writer state his or her central idea or claim? Does the thesis statement clearly and effectively address the topic posed in the prompt? Does the thesis statement clearly express the focus of the rest of the essay? Offer suggestions, and remember that they are most helpful when they are informative and constructive.





## SKILL: ORGANIZE ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING



### DEFINE

Persuasive or argumentative essays intend to convince readers of an author's position or point of view on a subject. To build an argument, authors introduce **claims**, or arguments, they will support with logical and valid reasoning and relevant evidence from reliable sources. The author's claim is stated in an **argumentative thesis statement**. In order to make a convincing argument, authors must distinguish their claims from **opposing claims**, or **counterclaims**—those that are contrary to the author's position or point of view. Authors then organize the claims, reasons, supporting evidence, and counterclaims into an effective argument.

A strong argumentative essay contains an introductory paragraph, several body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph. The **introductory paragraph** presents the **topic** and the writer's position or central claim in the thesis statement. The introduction is then followed by **body paragraphs**, each of which presents detailed evidence and strong reasoning to support some aspect of the essay's thesis. The fifth paragraph is a conclusion that provides a unique restatement of the thesis, reviews the evidence presented, and leaves readers with a lasting impression, perhaps through a compelling final thought.

The content of the essay—that is, the type of prompt the writer is responding to and the nature of the textual evidence to be presented for support and analysis—must also be considered in choosing an overall **organizational structure** that suits the topic. For example, in addressing a topic of a historical nature, the writer might decide that a **sequential** or chronological structure might work best, since events can then be discussed in the order they occurred. On the other hand, if the writer is analyzing the similarities and differences between two authors' treatments of a topic, a **comparison and contrast** structure might be the most effective organizational method. Other organizational structures include **problem and solution** and **cause-and-effect**. It is important to remember that while an essay or a paragraph may exhibit an overall organizational method, it may be necessary to introduce



another organizational technique to convey an important point and make a solid argument.

NOTES



## IDENTIFICATION AND APPLICATION

- When selecting an organizational structure, writers must consider the purpose of their writing. They often ask themselves questions about the nature of the writing task in which they are engaging. They might ask themselves the following questions:
  - › What is the claim or thesis that I am making about the topic?
  - › Am I comparing and contrasting different viewpoints held by different authors about the same topic, issue, or conflict?
  - › Would it make sense to relay events related to the topic in the order they occurred?
  - › What is the problem and what solutions do the authors propose?
  - › Do any natural cause and effect relationships emerge in my analysis of the topic?
- Writers often use word choice to create connections between details and hint at the organizational structure being used:
  - › Sequential order: *first, next, then, finally, last, initially, ultimately*
  - › Cause and effect: *because, accordingly, as a result, in effect, so*
  - › Compare and contrast: *like, unlike, also, both, similarly, although, while, but, however*
- Sometimes, within the overall structure, writers may find it necessary to organize individual paragraphs using other structures—for instance, a paragraph that compares and contrasts might benefit from a quick summary of events presented in chronological order. Be careful that such mixed strategies do not muddy the overall organization of the essay.



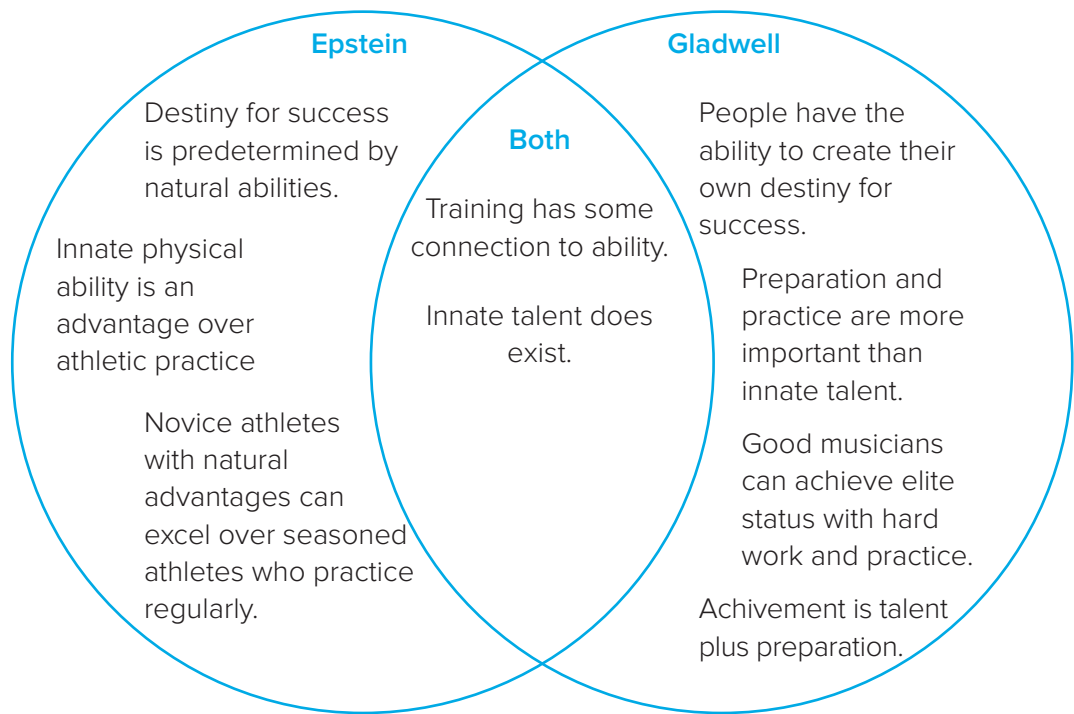
## MODEL

The writer of the Student Model essay “The Key to Our Success is in Our Hands” understood from the prompt that she would choose two texts from the unit and compare and contrast them to decide which text most convincingly answers the unit’s essential question: *How much of what happens in our lives do we control?* Her prewriting helped her decide that she would compare and contrast the texts *The Sports Gene* by David Epstein and *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell.





The writer knows that in her introductory paragraph, she will state her claim and identify the sources she will use to defend her claim. Because the prompt calls for a comparison and contrast of texts from the unit, the writer created a Venn diagram to organize the similarities and differences between the viewpoints of the authors she will address in her essay:



As the information in this Venn Diagram makes clear, the writer identified points of comparison (ways the two authors' ideas align, or are similar) and contrast (ways their ideas diverge, or are different). She then used these points of comparison and contrast as a basis for organizing the content of her argumentative essay.

In the first body paragraph, the writer explores Epstein's premise, which differs from Gladwell's, that a destiny for success is predetermined by our natural abilities:

***"In *The Sports Gene*, David Epstein describes two high jumpers and their approaches to their sport to illustrate that athletic greatness may be the result of biology."***

She then identifies potential flaws in this argument, which she finds less compelling than Gladwell's.

In the second body paragraph, the writer examines Gladwell's premise that preparation and practice are even more important than innate talent:

NOTES

***“On the other hand, Malcolm Gladwell makes a compelling argument for the idea that destiny is a result of our choices, rather than our genes.”***

She then identifies the strengths of this argument, which she finds more convincing than Epstein's. In the third body paragraph, the writer examines the common ground between the two authors' perspectives:

***“The authors of both texts agree on certain points about the human capacity for success.”***

She then reinforces her argument that, overall, Gladwell makes a stronger case than Epstein.

Having a clear organizational structure helps readers follow the train of a writer's argument, making them more likely to find it clear and convincing.



## PRACTICE

Compare and contrast the two texts you have selected for use in your argumentative essay. Using the *Organize Argumentative Writing* graphic organizer, fill in the information you gathered about each text during the Prewrite stage of the writing process as well as any additional information about the texts you would like to include. When you are done writing, switch diagrams with a partner to evaluate each other's work. Did the writer enter different viewpoints of each author or text? Has the writer completed the center of the diagram, to show similarities between the presentation of ideas in each text? Are the ideas appropriate for each section of the diagram? Offer suggestions, and remember that they are most helpful when they are informative and constructive.

