Collection 4: Present an Argument

Scenario
You are a member of a Congressional Exploration Committee, which is responsible for allocating funds for research and exploration. Your committee has traditionally provided funding for both space and deep sea research and exploration, however, due to budget cuts you can only fund one for an undetermined amount of time. You must present a brief speech to the committee stating where you believe the funding should go, with the goal of getting others to agree with you. Along with your speech, you will need to have an accompanying visual aid. You will also need to submit your argument and its citations for the chairman’s review.

Plan
Choose Your Position: Think about the texts you read in this collection and the various points made by the writers. Then choose a position either for or against major exploration based on the risks involved, and write out your claim in a statement.

Gather Information: Focus on the selection(s) that have information you can cite to support your position. Take notes on important information that supports your claim. Consider the following:
• What are your reasons for taking the position you took?
• What evidence can you use as quotes to support your claim?
• What might others say to oppose your claim? How would you try to convince them to agree with you?
• What do you want your audience to understand?
**Don’t forget! You must cite your source of evidence!**

Do Further Research: Research additional print and digital sources to find solid, credible evidence for your argument. Take notes as you go—be sure to paraphrase general information and to directly quote sources when appropriate.
• Search for facts, quotes, and statistics that support your claim.
• Find sources that don’t agree with you. Develop a counterargument to address an opposing view.

You MUST include evidence from: 2 Collections texts, 2 outside sources, and may choose to use one or more Articles of the Week.

Organize Your Ideas: Think about how you will organize your argument. This can help you to present your ideas coherently. Use the following to outline your argument:
1) Claim/thesis statement:
2) Reason #1
   a) Evidence (source) and explanation
   b) Evidence (source) and explanation
3) Reason #2
   a) Evidence (source) and explanation
   b) Evidence (source) and explanation
4) Reason #3
   a) Evidence (source) and explanation
   b) Evidence (source) and explanation
5) Opposition opinion
   a) Counterargument
6) Conclusion

Write
Draft Your Argument: Use the information you have gathered to help you write your argument.
• Introduce your claim. Begin with an attention-grabbing comment or an unusual or funny quote, statistic, or story.
• Organize your reasons and evidence logically.
• Be sure to include quotes and other data from your sources.
• Include the opposition’s view point(s) and present a well-thought-out counter argument.
• Conclude your argument. Summarize your main points in a restatement, and connect them to your introduction.

Revise your work: The focus of revision is content! Is your message clear? Is your paper organized in a logical manner? Follow revision checklist (to be provided.)

Edit your work: The focus of editing is to find and correct errors in spelling and grammar. Are you using the most effective words to reach your reader? Follow editing checklist (to be provided.)
Write your final draft: Type, or write in your best handwriting, your final draft. This should represent your best work and include all changes made during revision and editing stages. Remember: You’re never “done” writing, you simply run out of time!

Prepare Visual Aids

Create a poster: Select or create charts, graphs, or pictures that help clarify and strengthen your claim. Minimum requirements: 2 images, 2 statistics, 2 facts, all of which are accurate & relevant. A well-crafted poster will make excellent use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. to enhance the presentation, AND make excellent use of space to effectively support ideas.

Prepare to Present

Make notecards: Using your outline and paper, create notecards that you may refer to during your presentation. Your notecards should be written in bullet-point style, NOT in SENTENCES. They should provide enough information to prompt you to remember what you planned to say, but they should not be a written speech. (You should plan on speaking for no less than 1 minute and no more than 4 minutes.)

Rehearse: Now that you know what you want to say, you need to work on how you will say it. Your goal is to convince your audience that your ideas are the best ideas! Your peers won’t get the chance to read your paper, so your presentation is your chance to “hook them and reel them in;” you should convey genuine interest in your topic and passion for your claim. Consider your tone of voice, volume, and body language when rehearsing. How will you include your visual aid in your presentation? It shouldn’t just be something you’re standing by.

Rehearse with a partner: Practice delivering your presentation to a partner, and get feedback on how well you did. (Evaluation to be provided.)

Rehearse: Seriously, you’re never done rehearsing. Use the feedback you received from your partner, work to make your presentation even better. The more you can “memorize,” the more effective you will be in presenting your ideas!

Managing Your Nerves

You may have heard that a good way to not be nervous when presenting is to imagine your audience looking silly, but this really doesn’t help many people conquer their nerves. So what does?

Figure out why you’re nervous: If you can figure out what scares you about presenting, you can overcome your fear. Don’t worry about looking bad in front of your friends—if they’re your friends, they’ll support you. And, if they’re not your friends, who cares?!

Visualize being successful: Imagine giving a perfect presentation to your class. What do you look like? Do you portray confidence? Do you speak clearly? How does your audience respond? Silly as it may seem, people who visualize success are better able to achieve it.

On the big day: BREATHE! Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and focus on what you have to say, NOT on how you feel.

When it’s your turn: Walk to the front of the class confidently. Stand up straight, take a deep breath, and begin. You’ve got this!