



EXPEDITIONARY  
LEARNING

# Grade 8: Module 4: Unit 3: Lesson 1

## Analyzing a Model Position Paper



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Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)	
I can write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. (W.8.1)	
Supporting Learning Targets	Ongoing Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I can find the gist of the model position paper.</li><li>• I can determine the main ideas of a model position paper.</li><li>• I can analyze the structure of a model literary essay.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gist annotations on model position paper</li></ul>



Agenda	Teaching Notes
<p>1. Opening</p> <p>A. Unpacking Learning Targets (2 minutes)</p> <p>2. Work Time</p> <p>A. Unpacking the Prompt and Introducing the Rubric (8 minutes)</p> <p>B. Reading the Model Position Paper for Gist and Analyzing the Content (15 minutes)</p> <p>C. Analyzing the Structure of the Model Position Paper (10 minutes)</p> <p>3. Closing and Assessment</p> <p>A. Assessing the Model against the Rubric (10 minutes)</p> <p>4. Homework</p> <p>A. Quote Sandwich organizers: To prepare to draft the first body paragraph of your position paper (in which you are going to provide evidence to support one of your reasons for making your choice of food chain), use the evidence on your Position Speech graphic organizer and in your position speech from Unit 2 to fill out two Quote Sandwich organizers. If you can remember how to cite your sources in MLA format, please do so at the bottom of your organizers, but if you can't, leave it blank and we will review this in a later lesson.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This lesson launches the end of unit assessment, in which students will write a position paper to answer the question: Which of Michael Pollan's four food chains would you choose to feed the United States? Students have already done a lot of the thinking for this paper when writing their position speeches for the End of Unit 2 Assessment, so the focus of this unit is turning that speech into a position paper.</li><li>• In this lesson, students are asked to consider the difference between a position speech and a position paper and to analyze a model position paper to help them understand that difference. Students will use the evidence they gathered in Unit 2 to write their position paper.</li><li>• As students analyze the model essay, it is important to note that there is more than one way to organize a position paper, and this model is an example of one way. Students should be encouraged to find the organizational structure that will best suit their argument. For example, some students may decide to address the counterclaim earlier in their essay.</li><li>• The Position Paper Rubric will be used to assess the position paper. Students review the rubric briefly in this lesson, and will evaluate their own writing in later lessons in this unit. This rubric is nearly identical to the <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> Argument Rubric from Module 2A, as it assesses the same standard (W.8.1).</li><li>• Students have used the Quote Sandwich organizer before, and there are instructions on the organizer; however, if you are concerned that students may not be able to fill out the organizer without a review, please make time to do this in class.</li><li>• In order to complete the Quote Sandwich organizer for homework, students will need to take home their Position Speech graphic organizer and their position speech.</li><li>• In advance: Review the model position paper (see supporting materials).</li><li>• Post: Learning targets.</li></ul>



Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
gist, structure, stakeholders, consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• End of Unit 3 Assessment: Position Paper Prompt (one per student and one to display)</li><li>• Equity sticks</li><li>• Position Paper Rubric (one per student and one to display)</li><li>• Model position paper (one per student and one to display)</li><li>• Chart paper</li><li>• Qualities of a Strong Position Paper anchor chart (new; teacher-created; see Work Time C)</li><li>• Quote Sandwich organizers (two per student)</li></ul>



Opening	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>A. Unpacking Learning Targets (2 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Invite students to read the learning targets with you:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “I can find the gist of the model position paper.”</li><li>* “I can determine the main ideas of a model position paper.”</li><li>* “I can analyze the structure of a model literary essay.”</li></ul></li><li>• Remind students of what finding the <i>gist</i> means. Ask students to discuss with an elbow partner:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* * “What is the <i>structure</i>?”</li></ul></li><li>• Select volunteers to share their responses. Listen for students to explain that the structure is how something is put together or how it is organized and built, just like the structure of a building.</li></ul>	



Work Time	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>A. Unpacking the Prompt and Introducing the Rubric (8 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display and distribute the <b>End of Unit 3 Assessment: Position Paper Prompt</b>. Invite students to follow along silently as you read the prompt aloud. Ask students to circle any unfamiliar words. Clarify words as needed. Most of this vocabulary has already been addressed throughout the module, but students may need reminding of words like <i>stakeholders</i> and <i>consequences</i>.</li> <li>• Invite students to close their eyes for a moment and envision themselves writing their position paper. Ask them to think about what the paper needs to include and what thinking they need to do in order to write. Now have students open their eyes and discuss the following questions with an elbow partner:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* “What is this focusing question or prompt asking you to do?”</li> <li>* “What will your writing have to include to address the question?”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Circulate and listen for students to say that they will have to use the ideas they presented in their position speeches at the end of Unit 2 to write a position paper presenting their response to the question: Which of Michael Pollan’s four food chains would you choose to feed the United States?</li> <li>• Ask students to discuss with an elbow partner:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* “What is the difference between a position speech and a position paper?”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Consider using <b>equity sticks</b> to select students to share their responses. Listen for students to explain that a speech is to be spoken aloud, so when writing it they were thinking about speaking and how to make their ideas sound interesting and engaging to a listening audience of fellow students. A position paper requires a more formal tone and style because it is a written essay. It is important to note that sometimes a position paper is created first and then a speech is crafted based on the paper.</li> <li>• Display and distribute the <b>Position Paper Rubric</b>, the content of which they are familiar with from previous modules. Remind students that they will be assessed on this rubric.</li> <li>• Ask students to review the criteria of the rubric with you. Select volunteers to read each of the criteria for the whole group.</li> <li>• Invite students to turn and talk with an elbow partner. Ask:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* “Think about your position speech. Which criteria do you think is a strength for you? Why?”</li> <li>* “Which criteria do you think is a challenge for you? Why? How can you improve?”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Cold call students to share their responses with the whole group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using equity sticks provides equal opportunity for all students to be called upon and to participate in the class discussion.</li> </ul>



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>B. Reading the Model Position Paper for Gist and Analyzing the Content (15 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display and distribute the <b>model position paper</b>.</li> <li>• Congratulate students on unpacking the prompt for the end of unit assessment. Tell them they will now begin reading like a writer—studying a model position paper to see what they will be writing.</li> <li>• Direct students' attention to the focusing question on their prompt. Ask them to discuss in triads:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* "What is the difference between the focusing question in your prompt and the focusing question in this model?"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Select students to share their responses with the whole group. Listen for students to explain that the focusing questions are very similar, but instead of choosing one of Michael Pollan's food chains to best feed the United States, the model chooses a food chain that is best for the environment.</li> <li>• Invite students to follow along while you read the model position paper aloud. Be sure to follow the read-aloud practice used in previous modules of reading the text all the way through without stopping.</li> <li>• Ask students to discuss in triads:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* "What is this model position paper mostly about?"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Consider using equity sticks to select students to share their responses with the whole group. Listen for students to explain that the position paper describes how the local sustainable food chain is the best of Michael Pollan's food chains for the environment.</li> <li>• Explain that now students will be working in pairs to reread and annotate each paragraph of the model position paper for the gist—to get an idea of what each of the paragraphs is mostly about. Remind students to discuss the gist of each paragraph with their partners before recording anything.</li> <li>• Circulate and observe student annotations and invite students who are struggling to say the gist aloud to you before recording it.</li> <li>• Refocus whole group and ask students to discuss with an elbow partner:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* "What is the claim and the reasons for making that claim in the model position paper?"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Invite students to work with their partners to annotate the essay to identify the claim and reasons. Select volunteers to share their responses with the whole group. Listen for students to accurately state the claim and the reasons for making that claim.</li> <li>• Ask: "Where does the author get his or her evidence to prove the claim?" Listen for students to recognize that the strongest evidence comes from proving the claim with quotes from the text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A model essay provides both a scaffold and a goal for students. Consider working with small groups and chunking the model essay into introductory, body, and conclusion paragraphs for closer analysis with students who need it.</li> <li>• By providing a true read-aloud without stopping, the teacher provides a model of fluent reading and also allows students to hear the text in its entirety before processing and analyzing it at a deeper level.</li> <li>• Consider using a document camera to display and annotate the model essay with students.</li> </ul>



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw students' attention to the sentence, "In nature, 'birds follow and clean up after herbivores' (Pollan 147)" in the first body paragraph. Remind students that the writer of this essay doesn't just write a quote and leave it at that. The writer then explains his or her reasoning based on the quote. Share with students that they have done this before whenever they have correctly use a Quote Sandwich organizer to help them write an essay. They will have a chance to use a Quote Sandwich organizer as they plan this essay as well.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>C. Analyzing the Structure of the Model Position Paper (10 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to discuss with an elbow partner:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* "What is the structure of a strong position paper?"</li> <li>* "What are the qualities of a strong position paper?"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Use a sheet of chart paper to begin the <b>Qualities of a Strong Position Paper anchor chart</b>. Cold call pairs to share the structure and qualities they discussed that will make this a strong position paper. Be sure the chart includes:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Introductory Paragraph: introduces the claim and the reasons why the author is making that claim</li> <li>– Body Paragraph 1: provides evidence and reasoning for the first reason the author stated in the introduction</li> <li>– Body Paragraph 2: provides evidence and reasoning for the second reason the author stated in the introduction</li> <li>– Body Paragraph 3: provides and responds to a counterclaim with evidence</li> <li>– Concluding Paragraph: restates the position and restates own claim and leaves the reader with something to think about</li> </ul> </li> <li>• For anything students do not identify on their own, add it to the anchor chart and explain why you are doing so.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students should understand that there is more than one way to structure a position paper. Since they are learning to write a position paper, students will benefit from using this structure. However, if a student's position is better suited to a different structure, the student should be allowed to adapt the structure provided here. However, please note that students must fulfill all the requirements of the task.</li> </ul>





Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>A. Assessing the Model against the Rubric (10 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell students that they are now going to work in pairs to assess the model position paper using the first two rows of the Position Paper Rubric. Invite students to underline where on the rubric they think the model would score and to underline parts of the model that fulfill criteria on the rubric.</li><li>• Circulate to assist students. Ask guiding questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “Why did you underline that? Can you provide evidence of fulfilling that criteria in the model?”</li></ul></li><li>• Refocus whole group. Cold call students to share their assessment of the model and to justify their assessment with evidence on the rubric. Remind students that the essay reflects the cascading consequences thinking they have been doing in this module.</li><li>• Distribute <b>Quote Sandwich organizers</b>, two per student. Remind students that they have used this organizer before to help them plan the body paragraphs of their essays.</li></ul>	
Homework	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Quote Sandwich organizers:</b> To prepare to draft the first body paragraph of your position paper (in which you are going to provide evidence to support one of your reasons for making your choice of food chain), use the evidence on your Position Speech graphic organizer and in your position speech from Unit 2 to fill out two Quote Sandwich organizers. If you can remember how to cite your sources in MLA format, please do so at the bottom of your organizers, but if you can't, leave it blank and we will review this in a later lesson.</li></ul>	



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# Grade 8: Module 4: Unit 3: Lesson 1

## Supporting Materials



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End of Unit 3 Assessment:  
Position Paper Prompt

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Name:

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Date:

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**Learning Target:** “I can write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.” (W.8.1)

**Focusing question:** Which of Michael Pollan’s four food chain would you choose to feed the United States?

Throughout Unit 2 you identified the consequences and stakeholders of each of Michael Pollan’s four food chains in order to choose a food chain to answer the focus question. In this assessment, you will organize your ideas into a position paper. You have already done the thinking for this paper when writing your position speeches, so you should use your speech to help you write your paper.

**In your essay, be sure to:**

- State which food chain you would choose and at least two reasons why.
- Provide evidence and sound reasoning for each of the reasons you have provided.
- Provide a counterclaim and respond to it.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2	1	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- introduces the text and the claim in a manner that follows generally from the task and purpose</li> <li>- claim and reasons demonstrate a literal comprehension of the topic</li> <li>- acknowledges and responds to counterclaim(s), but thinking</li> <li>- partially develops the argument (claim and reasons) with the use of some textual evidence, some of which may be irrelevant</li> <li>- uses relevant evidence inconsistently</li> <li>- sometimes logically explains how evidence supports the claim and reasons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- introduces the text and the claim in a manner that does not logically follow from the task and purpose</li> <li>- claim and reasons demonstrate little understanding of the topic</li> <li>- does not acknowledge and/or respond to counterclaim(s)</li> <li>- demonstrates an attempt to use evidence, but only develops ideas with minimal, occasional evidence that is generally invalid or irrelevant</li> <li>- attempts to explain how evidence supports the claim and reasons</li> <li>- exhibits little attempt at organization, or attempts to organize are irrelevant to the task</li> <li>- lacks a formal style, using language that is imprecise or inappropriate for the text(s) and task</li> <li>- provides a concluding statement or section that is illogical or unrelated to the claim and reasons presented</li> <li>- demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent errors that hinder comprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- claim and reasons demonstrate a lack of comprehension of the topic or task</li> <li>- provides no evidence or provides evidence that is completely irrelevant</li> <li>- does not explain how evidence supports the claim and reasons</li> <li>- exhibits no evidence of organization</li> <li>- uses language that is predominantly incoherent or copied directly from the text(s)</li> <li>- does not provide a concluding statement or section</li> <li>- minimal, making assessment of conventions unreliable</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- exhibits some attempt at organization, with inconsistent use of transitions</li> <li>- establishes but fail to maintain a formal style, with inconsistent use of language and domain-specific vocabulary</li> <li>- provides a concluding statement or section that follows generally the claim and reasons presented</li> <li>- demonstrates emerging command of conventions with some errors that may hinder comprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- demonstrates emerging command of conventions with some errors that may hinder comprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- demonstrates emerging command of conventions with some errors that may hinder comprehension</li> </ul>



Position Paper Rubric

Scores 4 - 3

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– clearly introduces the text and the claim in a manner that follows from the task and purpose</li> <li>– claim and reasons demonstrate grade-appropriate analysis of the topic</li> <li>– acknowledges and responds to counterclaim(s) appropriately and clearly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– develops the argument (claim and reasons) with relevant facts, definitions, details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s)</li> <li>– sustains the use of relevant evidence, with some lack of variety</li> <li>– logically explains how evidence supports the claim and reasons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– exhibits clear organization, with the use of appropriate transitions to create a unified whole</li> <li>– establishes and maintains a formal style using precise language and domain-specific vocabulary</li> <li>– provides a concluding statement or section that follows from the claim and reasons presented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– demonstrates grade-appropriate command of conventions, with occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– clearly introduces the text and the claim in a manner that is compelling and follows logically from the task and purpose</li> <li>– claim and reasons demonstrate insightful analysis of the topic</li> <li>– acknowledges and responds to counterclaim(s) skillfully and smoothly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– develops the argument (claim and reasons) with relevant, well-chosen facts; definitions; concrete details; quotations; or other information and examples from the text(s)</li> <li>– sustains the use of varied, relevant evidence</li> <li>– skillfully and logically explains how evidence supports the claim and reasons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– exhibits clear organization, with the skillful use of appropriate and varied transitions to create a unified whole and enhance meaning</li> <li>– establishes and maintains a formal style, using grade-appropriate, stylistically sophisticated language and domain-specific vocabulary with a notable sense of voice</li> <li>– provides a concluding statement or section that is compelling and follows clearly from the claim and reasons presented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– demonstrates grade-appropriate command of conventions, with few errors</li> </ul>



Position Paper Rubric  
Criteria and CCLS

Criteria	CCLS
<p><b>CLAIM AND REASONS:</b> the extent to which the essay conveys complex ideas and information clearly and accurately in order to logically support the author's argument</p>	<p>W.2 R.1-9</p>
<p><b>COMMAND OF EVIDENCE:</b> the extent to which the essay presents evidence from the provided texts to support the author's argument</p>	<p>W.9 R.1-9</p>
<p><b>COHERENCE, ORGANIZATION, AND STYLE:</b> the extent to which the essay logically organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information using formal style and precise language</p>	<p>W.2 L.3. L.6</p>
<p><b>CONTROL OF CONVENTIONS:</b> the extent to which the essay demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling</p>	<p>W.2 L.1 L.2</p>

Position Paper

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Name:

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Date:

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**Prompt: Which of Michael Pollan’s four food chains is best for the environment?**

As Michael Pollan points out in his book, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, the path our food takes from the farm to our plates can have a major impact on the environment. When we decide what to eat, we should take into account which “food chain” negatively impacts the environment the least. While the hunter-gatherer food chain has very little impact on the environment, it is not realistic to think that this is a viable food chain for our country. Therefore, out of the three food chains that could realistically feed our nation, I think that the local sustainable food chain is the best food chain for the environment; it uses the fewest raw materials and gives off the least amount of pollution.

Local sustainable farms use very few additional materials because they use the natural resources available from the land. For example, Michael Pollan explains that on the Polyface farm, Joel Salatin farms following the natural cycle, which means he does not need to use toxic chemicals to get rid of parasites on his cows. In nature, “birds follow and clean up after herbivores” (Pollan 147). After the cows graze in a pasture, Salatin puts the hens in to eat the grubs and larvae from the cowpats. This prevents bugs and parasites from bothering the cows, so the cows don’t need insecticides (Pollan 165). Additionally, unlike industrial and industrial organic farms, Salatin’s local sustainable farm doesn’t require any added fertilizer. Salatin leaves the chickens in the pasture just long enough for their droppings to give the grass the right amount of nitrogen it needs (Pollan 163). Salatin does have to buy chicken feed since only 20 percent of his chickens’ diet comes from the grass, worms, and insects they find; but that chicken feed is one of the few raw materials he needs (Pollan 163). Because farmers like Joel Salatin orchestrate their animals and plants to work together just like they do in nature, local sustainable farms require very few added inputs and are therefore best for the environment.

In addition to using few raw materials, the local sustainable food chain gives off very little pollution. Unlike industrial farms and feedlots where the animal manure is unusable “toxic pollution” (Pollan 49), farms like Salatin’s don’t have any manure waste. On Salatin’s farm the manure either fertilizes the field directly, or it is turned into compost. For example, he suspends his rabbits’ cages over woodchips so the urine sinks into the chips. He lets hens loose in the woodchips to eat worms. According to Pollan, “the scratching of the hens turns the chips and the rabbits’ nitrogen-rich urine into valuable compost” (166). Rather than having manure and urine that has to be disposed of or hauled away, on a local sustainable farm like Salatin’s, this waste is not waste at all. It actually enriches the fields to keep the grass and the animals healthy. Another way in which the local

## Position Paper

sustainable farm creates less pollution is through transportation. Because local sustainable farms sell food locally, there is less pollution created by transporting the food. Pollan states that growing, processing, and transporting lettuce from the industrial organic food chain uses 57 times more calories in fossil fuel than it contains in food (125). Fossil fuels emit greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Food from farms like Polyface requires little transportation and therefore creates much less pollution.

Many people say that eating from the local sustainable food chain is not that much better for the environment if you eat meat, particularly beef. According to a 2006 report by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, 18 percent of the world’s man-made greenhouse-gas emissions come from livestock (Abend). This is because cows and other ruminants emit a large amount of methane and nitrous oxide through their digestion process (DeWeerd). However, people who argue that grass-fed beef is not better for the environment are not looking closely at farms like Salatin’s. Because cows at Polyface are moved from pasture to pasture to graze, the cows actually make the pastures healthier. And the healthy pastures keep carbon in the ground, reducing the amount of carbon released into the air as a greenhouse gas (Abend). Eliot Coleman, who runs a farm similar to Polyface, points to the value of eating from the local sustainable food chain, including meat. He says: “A vegetarian eating tofu made in a factory from soybeans grown in Brazil is responsible for a lot more CO<sub>2</sub> than I am” (Abend). The evidence shows that local sustainable meat does not harm the environment.

If we all eat food that is grown using local sustainable practices, following the natural cycle, then our food choices will not hurt the environment. Stakeholders—such as the farm animals like cows and chickens—will benefit from this food chain because they will live more naturally. In fact, if we, as consumers, show farmers that we want food grown on small sustainable farms like Joel Salatin’s, and more farmers start running their farms so that nothing is wasted, little input is required, and there is no pollution, then our land will actually begin to be repaired from the environmental degradation caused by the industrial food chain.

### Works Cited

- Abend, Lisa. “How Cows (Grass-Fed Only) Could Save the Planet.” *Time*. 25 Jan. 2010. Web. 12 Aug. 2013.
- Chevat, Richie, and Michael Pollan. *The Omnivore’s Dilemma: The Secrets Behind What You Eat*. Young Readers ed. New York: Dial, 2009. Print.
- DeWeerd, Sarah. “Is Local Food Better?” *Worldwatch Institute*. n.p., n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2013.





**Position Paper**  
Sandwich Organizer

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**Name:**

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**Date:**

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A sandwich is made up of three parts—the bread on top, the filling in the middle, and the bread on the bottom. A Quote Sandwich is similar; it is how you use evidence in an position paper. First, you introduce a quote (evidence from a text) by telling your reader where it came from. Then, you include the quote. Lastly, you explain how the quote supports your idea, which is the reasoning.

**Claim:**

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**Reason for Making that Claim:**

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Position Paper  
Sandwich Organizer

**Introduce the Quote:**

For example: In Chapter 17 of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, Michael Pollan writes ...

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**Include the Quote:**

Tip: Make sure to punctuate quotes correctly using quotation marks.

Remember to cite the page number in parentheses after the quote.

For example: "Because of the chickens, Joel doesn't have to treat his cattle with toxic chemicals to get rid of parasites" (165).

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**Analyze the quote:**

Tip: This is where you explain how the quote supports your idea.

For example: This shows that in local sustainable farming, animals are healthier because they don't need to be given toxic chemicals.

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