Eric Dunk: Alright! So welcome to the GRE Writing Workshop. You guys are here because you're going to be taking the GRE right, and you want to kind of get the lowdown on the writing portion of the GRE. So yeah, this is week one like I was saying this like a four week, we call them cycles or whatever. There is another cycle after this, you're more than welcome to sign up for that one as well. So this will be four weeks and we'll cover a whole bunch of material about what the GRE writing portion is and things like that and you know just some strategies to write like they want to see you write on the GRE. Students find this really helpful, things like that. I taught this workshop like two semesters ago and then they limit your hours that you can work on campus and I was on a 20 hour max, so then unfortunately I couldn't teach this workshop so, but now I'm back. So yeah.
Eric Dunk: My name is Eric Dunk. Here’s my contact information if you want to write it down, my phone number, and my email address. I also work as a tutor at the writing center and here are my appointment and my drop in hours. So if you’re ever you know working on some of this writing outside of this workshop feel free to make an appointment with me or come to my drop in hours and we can kind of talk through it or any other writing of course that you have for any of your other classes, so there’s that. I am in grad school right now for English with focus in creative writing. I also got my undergrad here at Chico State, I double majored in philosophy and English literature, and then I decided to go on to grad school because I didn’t know what the heck I wanted to do for a career. And you know we all have our reasons for going to grad school but I was still very interested in academics right, so I just thought well grad school might be just for me you know.

So I went through the whole process of you know, what do they make you do, letters of recommendation right, GRE, I have taken the GRE, writing samples you know, your credentials right or whatever, your grades throughout undergrad. They make you get all this stuff and compile it into this big packet so, so I went through all that, I know what it’s like. So beyond the GRE, if you have any questions about grad school, or like how to get in grad school, or what grad school is all about. I had to go through that whole process as well, so I would be a great resource for that as well. Did everyone get this information down, you guys good on this? Alright cool.
Eric Dunk: I want to get to know you guys too. So there's only two of you so this will go by a lot faster, so yeah. So you don't have to answer these questions, I just threw them up there as like a guideline like name, what did you majored in, what are you going to grad school for, you know where you're going to grad school and things like that, anything you want to tell us. So yeah.

Renee: I'm Renee and I'm going to grad school for biology.

Eric Dunk: Biology, okay awesome. And one of the things with grad school you pick like a focus right. Do you have any idea of what you're going to focus in or.

Renee: [Inaudible]

Eric Dunk: Oh okay, so like the easiest thing that you can possibly go to grad school for, right. What did you get your undergrad in?

Renee: I got an undergrad degree in 1979 at UC Berkeley but it was in art history.

Eric Dunk: Oh wow good for you.

Renee: But they won't admit me as an undergrad here to get an actual undergraduate biology degree so I'm skipping over. I took stuff at Butte College and I'm just skipping over into grad school.
Introductions (your story)

Name?
Major?
What you are going to grad school for?
Where are you going to grad school?
Anything else you want to tell us?

Eric Dunk: There you go, just diving right in right. Awesome good for you. So what are your career aspirations?

Renee: I don't know. I'm very interested in amino acids, or detecting diseases, or coming up with some wonderful little tactics that is cheap and affordable.

Eric Dunk: Very cool, awesome. Well Renee welcome, that's awesome that you're coming back to school after getting your bachelor's in 79, that's awesome. Great and right here.

Amber: I'm Amber and I got my B.A. in psychology here at Chico State, just graduated and I decided to turn around and go to grad school aiming for a doctorate in neuroscience.

Eric Dunk: Whoa, whoa. A doctorate in neuroscience, awesome. So you're going to get a master's degree first and then?

Amber: Don't need it.

Eric Dunk: Don't need it.

Amber: I'm just going to go right into it with just a bachelor's.

Eric Dunk: Okay awesome. So is that like, it sounds like medical school-ish.
Introductions (your story)

Name?
Major?
What you are going to grad school for?
Where are you going to grad school?
Anything else you want to tell us?

Amber: Well it's kind of in that department, but not really, it's kind of in the biology department. Okay yeah we could work together.

Eric Dunk: Yeah cool neuroscience, that's awesome.

Amber: My dream is to work for CDC organization, to help people better their lives from the very beginning.

Eric Dunk: Wow that's cool. So you guys are both interested in disease it sounds like and cures for that disease and things like that. And the CDC, that's the top right, that's the big one, yeah that's cool.

Renee: [Inaudible]

Amber: I'm willing, I'm willing, but NIH has more places around.

Eric Dunk: NIH, what is that, I'm not familiar with that?


Eric Dunk: Of health okay. So yeah they probably have a bunch of places in California and stuff. Well if you do move to Atlanta I have been there before and gets freaking hot there.
Introductions (your story)

Name?
Major?
What you are going to grad school for?
Where are you going to grad school?
Anything else you want to tell us?

Amber: Hotter than here?

Eric Dunk: Whoa.

Renee: Humid.

Amber: Oh.

Eric Dunk: You will step outside and it feels like you can't even breathe.

Amber: Yeah I been there, I been to Louisiana.

Eric Dunk: That's the same kind of humid, wet. Florida if you ever been there, all very similar down there. Yeah my mom is from Georgia so I went back there for like some family reunion stuff and that was probably the hottest weather I think I've ever been in, in my life.

Amber: Clammy.

Eric Dunk: Yeah clammy or always sweating, but everyone is sweating so it's good, it's cool. Okay cool, so that's awesome you guys are doing good things for the world it sounds like, and here I am, I'm a creative writer's so I'm like selfish and I just write what I think, right. But you guys want to help people so that's cool, awesome. Okay well then let's just dive in right, shall we. Alright.
The GRE (and some more story)

1) Has anyone taken it yet?
2) All computer based.
   - NO SPELL-CHECK!
3) Security check in, bathroom breaks
4) ½ hour for each portion of analytic section
   - Don't fret! This is plenty of time! (PREWRITE)
5) Score out of six
   - Half Point Increments

Eric Dunk: So has anyone taken the GRE yet? No, okay. So you guys are both, don't really know, I wish I knew some of this stuff, I didn't know any of this stuff going in. So you take it on a computer, right, and so it's really weird, when you walk in it's really serious, they, like, frisk you and they wand you to make sure that you don't have like anything that you're trying to hide to sneak in, to cheat on the test. So be prepared for that, when you show up they're going to like pull you aside, and they're going to pat you down, and they're going to wand you, they're going to make you take off your shoes, it's like boarding an airplane, it's crazy. Because they want to make sure that you can absolutely in no way cheat, that you just have like your body going into the thing, right? So there's like a separate room where they search you and you take off your shoes and you have a little locker for your belongings and things like that. You can't bring anything in there it's just you and like scratch paper, that's about it.

Amber: What about if you get coffee?

Eric Dunk: Yeah, yeah. I think there are rules about that, I think if you do have a beverage it has to be like a clear bottle, and they'll like, they inspected like the labels because I brought a clear bottle, they inspect the back of labels to make sure you don't like write anything down and hide it and yeah. And then if you have to go to the bathroom you like raise your hand and there's people that watch you and then they come in and they escort you to the bathroom, they don't watch you go to the bathroom but they stand outside the door like security.
The GRE (and some more story)

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5) Score out of six
   - Half Point Increments

It's really intense and I wasn't like, I wasn't expecting it really, I just kind of went in there and was like, “Hey I'm here to take the test.” And they're like, “Take of your shoes and go in.” And I was like, “Whoa.” Yeah so it's pretty serious but the reason they do that obviously, they just want to make sure that it's fair, you know that no one is cheating or gaining an edge because you know your GRE scores like a big deal right, it's like a big life thing that's going to either help you go into grad school or not. So okay that's fine.

So you enter the room and it's a computer-based test. So it goes in cycles right, there's like the math right, I think they call it to the quantitative right, and then there's like the verbal right which is kind of like language-based, and there's like the writing portion. And so one of the tricky things that I knew this, but if you didn't know this it could really suck, but you take it on a computer but they have the computer set up in such a way to where they don't have spellcheck. So you're used to that on a computer, when you misspelled a word and Microsoft Word it underlines it red, and your like ugh I misspelled a word and it would even correct it for you sometimes and things like that. They have completely turned off that function on the GRE computers you take. So you really gotta pay attention to typos and things like that, it's funny because I got in there and it's such a simple word but I couldn't remember how to spell politician, I didn't know if it was IN or just AN, and I was like how do I not know how to spell politician. So you gotta really be like double check, right, because it will mark you down on spelling and things like that so you really got to be aware of that.
Okay, yeah, the analytic portion is what the writing portion is called. So what does that word mean, analytic, to analyze right. So the whole writing portion is basically geared towards analyzing and what you're analyzing, and this what we are going to go over today is your analyzing issues and your analyzing arguments, which are two very different things as you'll see today. But basically what the writing portion is, I might be ahead of myself but it's, you're given a prompt and it will say something provocative or will make some kind of claim or it will present some kind of logical progression about something, right, and then you need to analyze the validity of that or analyze the coherence of what they're saying and things like that. So that's kind of the gist of like what they're looking for in the writing portion and we will go over all the stuff today. Any questions on the basic format or anything like that? Okay.

You get half an hour, and that might not sound like a lot of time to write an essay but it is, especially the kind of essays that they want you to write. You're not writing a 50 page dissertation on neuroscience or something right, you're writing a very pointed, direct, concise response, I wouldn't even call it an essay I would call it more of a response. It should be structured like an essay because like essays is analyzing things right so it should be kind of structured like an essay, but when we say essay we immediately think like the 12 pager that took me like a month to write, so a half of an hour seems really intimidating. But when you see what kind of writing it is that we do for the GRE you'll understand like okay it's very direct and like basically they would want you to start your introduction saying like back in 1965 when, they want you to
The GRE (and some more story)

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   - Don’t fret! This is plenty of time! (PREWRITE)
5) Score out of six
   - Half Point Increments

get right to the point right, like they want you just like dive right in and start tackling what it is that they want to talk about. They don't want you to show off how good of a writer you are you know, they know you're good writers right, you guys went through undergrad and all that stuff. Basically they just want to see how smart you are I guess.

So the scoring is out of six. So six is a perfect score on the writing, and it goes in like half-point increments so like I think if you do something like wrong or if you missed like a point, they dock you like half a point, and we will go over all that stuff.

Okay so I knew some of this stuff, and I didn't know some of this stuff. Like I didn't know how serious they were searching and things like that. Actually there is a funny story about when I took the GRE. So you know how, let me back up for a second actually. So the half-hour thing, you'll be going through and you'll be going through like the math portion and then you'll like click next and then it will be like, you are about to enter like the analytic writing portion or whatever, and when you click next your time starts immediately, so you have 30 minutes to like read the prompt, come up with something to write about and then write it right. And it's kind of intimidating because as soon as you click next you can see like the thing counting down in the corner, it will go like 29:59, 58, 57 right, so it counts down and you feel like you're always up against the clock, and that can really like freak some people out I know. So we're going to practice throughout these four weeks, writing under like a time
The GRE (and some more story)

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constraint because a lot of people aren't used to that kind of like in the moment, you have to think of something and write. You know when you write for class you get to go home and kind of digest what you think about it and you know, kind of organize your ideas. The GRE is very spontaneous and very like you got to get down and start writing right away, so yeah that's what I was going to say about that.

When I took the GRE you know how you sign up for it like months in advance, or like a month or two in advance, and it costs like an arm and a leg I think it's like 170 bucks or something. So I have signed up for the GRE right, and then I'm studying for it a while or whatever and then I wake up the morning to go take it and my stomach doesn't feel very good, and I feel kind of queasy, and I'm like seriously, and like I thought it might of just been like whatever, just like woke up on the wrong side of the bed or whatever. So I go there and I you know get searched and I go in and I sit down on my computer and I start taking it and I'm in the room looking at the computer screen and I just feel dizzy, and I feel like I'm going to throw up, in the middle of me taking the test, right, and it's like a four hour test right. So I'm in there like sweating trying not to vomit, looking at a computer screen like not comprehending what I'm reading, and eventually I was just like I don't even care like if I fail it, I just need to get out here and go home and throw up basically, I needed to throw up really bad. So I plowed through it and I finish the test in like 3 hours and I went home and I must have had food poisoning or a stomach virus because I vomited for like 24 hours straight, just drink water, vomit. And so as I was
taking the GRE this hit me and didn't care about test anymore because I was sick as a dog. So that happened to me, then I got my results back and I passed the test. So yeah I got into grad school obviously. So yeah get sick right, it'll really help your concentration.

So the reason I tell that story is because the GRE can seem really intimidating but when you apply to grad school like I was saying in the beginning, you have a packet of like a bunch of stuff that's going to showcase who you are as a student right. You're going to have writing samples, letters of recommendation, you know a statement of purpose is one of the things you have to write, you know your grades from undergrad and then there is the GRE score, which a lot of schools recognize as just like one piece of like who you are as a student or whatever right. They take into account all of the things, right, if you have really strong writing samples and really strong letters of recommendation and things like that, they take all that into consideration. So if you don't do as well in the test it's not like game over you know. So I was able to get the score that I wanted to get into grad school through me being queasy and things like that. You guys will go in there sharp minded and you guys will be just fine. So don't get freaked out by the GRE, it's not like, it's a long test you know, you have to study for it and things like that, but it's not like, it's not going to kill you, you know. My mom is a CPA and she said taking the CPA exam it's like a two week long test. You go in there like every day and there's a different portion of the test and there's like some crazy fail rate like 90% of people fail it and like things like that. So and it probably cost like $1000 or something to take it so.
The GRE (and some more story)

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So the GRE is not, you should be intimidated if you're going to take CPA basically, but GRE you'll be fine. Okay any questions on that stuff there, with the setup of the test or any like the logistical stuff that I just went over? Pretty good.

So let's just go right in then to what it is the test consists of. First we'll talk about timing, so 30 minutes that freaks a lot of people out. There is a formula to this though, that I have devised.
Timing

30 minutes per essay (don’t worry)
A recommended formula (not universal):
- Reading the prompt, prewrite: 8 minutes
- Writing the Essay: 15 minutes
- Proofreading: 5 minutes

=28 minutes

Two minutes to spare. This helps you budget for any “unforeseen circumstances.”

Eric Dunk: Reading the prompt and laying down some of your ideas that should take about eight minutes roughly. I would say right here you know it's not universal, this is just like a guideline. That should take about eight minutes. Now this is what people think is crazy, writing the essay should take you about 15 minutes. Again that doesn't seem like a lot of time but through the reading of the prompt and through the prewriting that we did up here for the eight minutes, you're going to have a whole list of ideas that now you just need to turn into sentences and turn into language that's sophisticated or whatever, right. So in the eight minutes prior, you are already starting to write because you're going be jotting down ideas and notes and you're in that process you are going to be kind of internalizing with the prompt the same, right. And you guys are both smart people, you'll be able to come up with ideas and be able to throw them down. So 15 minutes to write the essay. Again the writing is very concise, it’s very to the point right, it's not, you don't have to have like a flowery introduction, you know tells me a history of whatever, you just dive right in and you start talking about it. Again this is not to show off how good of a writer you are, it's to show off how analytical you are, how you could read something and then respond to it through writing in a sophisticated intelligent way, right?

Five minutes to proofread and that's pretty important because you want to catch those spelling mistakes right, and you want to check for coherence, grammar, things like that, the structure, all that stuff you're going to want to look through that. And you do the math that is 28 minutes, so you have two extra minutes for what I call unforeseen circumstances. So you know that two
Timing

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minutes is kind of like a wiggle room that you're going to want to use, you know maybe you could spend a couple more minutes writing the essay or maybe you can spend a couple more minutes prewriting, or you know maybe if you write really fast through it you have a bunch of time to proofread now. That two minutes is kind of you know insurance, basically. We're going to practice writing like under a time crunch basically, like I'm going to be like alright you have five minutes, like form a thesis sentence or something, and so we will do those kinds of exercises and you guys will get really familiar with the type of writing that we do okay. Questions on this like break down? Ideas on it, concerns, anything? It's pretty straightforward right? Alright.
The Essays: Argument vs Issue

What constitutes an argument? An issue?

Eric Dunk: So what's in, what are we talking about on these essays, what do these essays consistent of? So I said arguments and issues, so I'm going to have you guys talk for a little bit, what is an argument and what is an issue? We will start with argument. I'm going to put it over here. What kind of things are in an argument? And I assume a lot of the writing that you did in undergrad and things like that, or a lot of the writing that you've done in like a professional or an academic setting has been kind of an argument. So what is argumentative writing?

Amber: Choosing a side and defending it, and a degree in which you agree with that side. I'm not an English major.

Eric Dunk: No that's good. So an argument chooses a side and then tries to prove that side through like evidence?

Amber: Yeah.

Eric Dunk: Like a premise and a conclusion. What do you think Renee?

Renee: On scientific papers they start out with what they call an introduction which is basically their argument that if you do this you get that. Then they set out, lay out the experimental events.

Eric Dunk: Right, okay.
The Essays: Argument vs Issue

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Renee: You can't really do that in the essay.

Eric Dunk: So let's talk about it in the scientific way, since you guys are both scientists. So it'll lay down like, like in the introduction right they will lay down, they will try and prove something or whatever right?

Amber: So your thesis statement. Structured order of your introduction.

Eric Dunk: Okay yeah there is a very structured order to the introduction that ends with a thesis. And they are trying to prove, in a science paper they're trying to tell us, this is the cause of something right, like science looks for causes, like what causes the apple to fall from the tree, gravity or whatever right. And so like in a scientific vein it would be like, they're looking for a cause about how we should think about something, is that, so that's kind of another thing that an argument can do for sure. Like Galileo right had the theory of heliocentrism that the Earth goes around the sun, that was Galileo right or was it Da Vinci, whatever.

Renee: [Inaudible]

Eric Dunk: Okay yeah that is true, one of those really famous Renaissance dudes proposed heliocentrism, that was a really like blasphemous idea right, so he had to go and prove with evidence right why that is. And they said hey we know you're right but you are a heathen so go to jail. So Galileo was trying
to prove, he was trying to get us to think about something a certain way, to think differently about something, so science does that too. Like the recent discovery that there is water on Mars right, very exciting stuff so. So think about the world in a certain way. Okay let's switch gears here, actually no I'm going to keep talking about arguments.

So, and we're going to go over this today a lot. But on the GRE you're not going to be forming, well I shouldn't say you're not going to, you're not going to be making an argument based on their argument okay. Like a lot of times we're used to being presented with something and then saying whether we agree or disagree and why, or whatever right, that is basically academic writing in a nutshell. The GRE is a little different though, what we do is we are presented with an argument on the GRE and then we analyze the argument. We're not making an argument of our own about the argument, we're going to make an argument about the contents of their argument. Does that make, and we will go over this today.

Amber: Pick apart their statement basically.

Eric Dunk: Yeah exactly, so exactly. You'll be presented with an argument and you're going to have to come up with reasons why it's fallacious or whatever right, assumptions they make, blah blah blah, we will talk about it. So just be aware right now this is what an argument does right here, and we're going to be dissecting and critiquing the arguments right, we're not going to be making
an argument okay. What about an issue? How do you understand like an issue? You can just yell it out. Because there is basically two types of prompts, there's arguments and there's issues. So that's an argument, what's like an issue when I say that, what kind of things do we think of?

Renee: Problems.

Eric Dunk: Problems, controversies right. Okay what's like an issue in our society today?

Renee: Immigration.

Eric Dunk: Immigration okay. When we talk about immigration what do people do, like.

Renee: Choose sides.

Eric Dunk: They choose a side okay. So they kind of make an argument about the issue right. Right so argue about the issue, like with immigration what kind of things, like how would that be different from an argument maybe let's think like that. How would talking about an issue be different from an argument? These aren't easy questions that I'm throwing at you so just throughout whatever, you can't be wrong. So how would an issue like immigration let's say, how would the issue of immigration be different from an argument about immigration, about why we should or should not allow it.
Amber: An issue is more of a statement without being very much biased, an argument would be more biased.

Eric Dunk: Okay, without biased. Like what if I say we should build a wall between Mexico and America so that immigrants can't come into the country anymore, is that an argument? How is that an argument you think?

Renee: [Inaudible]

Eric Dunk: Now is that an argument or is that just what I think?

Renee: [Inaudible]

Eric Dunk: It's an issue kind of, it's like an opinion. So and this is what we're going to talk about today about what arguments do and how they function, but if I just say we should build a wall so that immigrants can't come into the country more and steal our jobs or whatever. That's just me putting down an opinion right, whereas an argument would give reasons for that, right, they would give like supporting evidence or something like that, they would demonstrate logically why that's our, why that's the most appropriate action. So you have to be really wary of the difference between like an opinion and argument because issues are more opinion based about things or concepts or controversies in society okay, so they are very opinion based. Okay so that, arguments and issues, analyzing arguments and issues that is like what GRE
The Essays: Argument vs Issue

What constitutes an argument? An issue?

writing is all about. Okay I know you guys have questions on these differences, I want to hear you guys talk. Just talk through the issue and the argument, like what stands out to you or what kind of questions do you have about it.

Amber: Would an argument have more to it than an issue would, an issue would more often be like incentives for the prompt, or would the argument to visually identify it would it, would there be a little bit more body to it.

Eric Dunk: Normally yes, an issue can be you know huge, but yes generally an issue is just like a statement about something, whereas an argument gives a bunch of reasons that progress towards like a conclusion or whatever, or states a conclusion and then gives reasons why they got to that conclusion. So yeah one of the things to look for is like oh yeah that's an issue because it's only like a couple sentences or whatever, or one sentence even.

On the GRE they don't ask you to like distinguish between the two basically. They don't give you a prompt and say is this an argument or an issue, but I think we should be familiar with the distinction because a lot of people mistake, they get them mixed up. A lot of people think that issues are arguments which is understandable because they take like a stance right, but I can take a stance on anything, it's not an argument until I validate that stance right, until I say why or till I try to start arguing why that's the best stance, right, the best way to think or whatever.
Amber: [Inaudible], for an argument prompt you would either argue for or against what they're putting up.

Eric Dunk: Yes and no. I wouldn't think of it so strongly like that, what, we will go over this don't worry. But basically you're going to be presented with an argument and then you're going to say why the argument is wrong.

Amber: Or right, or we should always go with its wrong.

Eric Dunk: Well there are going to be aspects to every argument that are right and that are wrong. So you can highlight some, because there is no perfect argument in my opinion. So you can point out things about the argument that are working well for sure, you can say hey they bring in this piece of evidence that really strengthens this kind of conclusion or whatever, but they overlook or they assume this or whatever. They do want to see because it's easier to like just say yeah that sounds like a good argument to me or whatever, it's easier to say that, whereas like actually intelligently critiquing an argument is a lot more difficult to do. So if they see you like call the argument out on its bullshit then they will be like oh she was able to catch that or whatever, that's really like sophisticated of her to be able to acknowledge that assumption or whatever. Yeah did that answer your question?

Amber: It did, especially that last statement on calling the argument out on its bullshit.
Eric Dunk: Yeah exactly because every argument has bullshit, right, behind it. So I mean even think of something like, like I am an undergrad in philosophy and philosophers make arguments that's basically what they do, about how we should think about the world, and they sound really good but then there's always like a response about why they were wrong, and you're like I didn't think of that, you know. So there's no perfect argument you know, as smart as Immanuel Kant is, and as smart as Frederick Nietzsche is, there arguments have flaws. So every argument, it's really interesting actually because every argument just based on like the way we think as humans has like a flaw, like we have to assume things to get to a conclusion basically right. And so and we will see how that works, and then some people commit really bad fallacies about like irrelevance and things like that, and just like you know the progression of it makes the argument invalid and things like that. So, and these are kind of like philosophical, like logic terms I'm throwing at you, but you'll kind of get more familiar with what I'm talking about. Okay any other questions about these two distinctions? No, good okay.
**Prompts: Argument vs. Issue**

- **Issue:**
  - Discuss issue from a perspective (personal experience, real-life examples, reading, history, pertinent hypothetical, &c.
- **Argument:**
  - A *short* argument assessing the cogency of the argument. You DO NOT make your own argument, but rather critique the provided argument.

*Remember: ANALYTIC writing means analyze the thing!*

**Eric Dunk:** So maybe we just, let's see, yeah, okay. I think I have an example after this, yeah. So this is what they're going to do on a prompt. This is like what a, this is like what your response is kind of going to be. Let's start with issue, so they're going to give you an issue. How about I show you what the issue is, or like what an issue looks like and then this will make a lot more sense. So let's start here.
**Prompts: Issue**

Analyze an issue

Example:

“The perceived greatness of any political leader has more to do with the challenges faced by that leader than any of his or her inherent skills and abilities.”

Analyze an issue by:
- Using personal experience/observation
- Discussing in a cultural context
- Implications of the statement
- Relevance to history, political, morality, &c.

**Eric Dunk:** So this one is an example of an issue right here. Oh I can't highlight, what?

**Amber:** I think it's in the corner.

**Eric Dunk:** It's right here, oh is the highlight in the corner.

**Amber:** [Inaudible]

**Eric Dunk:** It's all good. So the issue states, “The perceived greatness of any political leader has more to do with the challenges faced by that leader than any of his or her inherent skills and abilities.” So that's like really dense language, that's the first thing that you should notice about issues, they have really dense language, and a lot of times they have really complex ideas behind them. “So what the heck does that mean?”, is probably the first thing that we should ask ourselves. What does this sentence mean you think? And here are some strategies to do this, let's see here. Can we still see that?

One strategy of doing this is it's really dense language so we want to dissect it and figure out what each thing is saying okay. So what does this phrase mean, perceived greatness?

**Amber:** [Inaudible]
Eric Dunk: Right, how society views the greatness of a leader, right? Of any political leader. Okay so the perceived greatness is kind of like, it's kind of like a down player to there actually greatness, it's just calling it a perceived greatness meaning like that it is only what society thinks of them, it doesn't mean they're actually great, it's just their perceived greatness, right? So issues have this really dense language that you kind of have to like look at the phrase and be like perceived greatness was does that mean you know or whatever. Okay what about the next part, so the appearance of being great for political leaders has more to do with the challenges faced by that leader than any of his or her inherit skills and abilities.

Amber: [Inaudible]

Eric Dunk: There you go, yeah. The challenges faced rather than, right, inherent skills and abilities. So wartime presidents, right? Winston Churchill, right? WWII. After 9/11 George Bush's popularity was like the highest I think it has ever been by any president, it was like 98% or something was his approval rating because of the political fervor that was behind 9/11 and because America will bounce back or you know. It was very easy for a political leader to kind of present that tragedy and get people behind them basically because in a tragic thing like 9/11 people looked to the leader. So the issue is saying that we define a leader’s greatness by the challenges that they face rather than their actual skills okay. Now you don't have to agree with that right, you can say that's bullshit, that's you opportunity to write about it basically in

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**Prompts: Issue**

Analyze an issue

Example:

“The perceived greatness of any political leader has more to do with the challenges faced by that leader than any of his or her inherent skills and abilities.”

Analyze an issue by:

- Using personal experience/observation
- Discussing in a cultural context
- Implications of the statement
- Relevance to history, political, morality, &c.
the prompt. So like if you just think of some of the greatest presidents or what we call, or the perceived greatness of our presidents is maybe what we should call it, George Washington because he was there at the time of the American Revolutionary War and so he was able, so we think of him as great now because of the Revolutionary War and he was able to bring our country together right.

Renee: And he was first.

Eric Dunk: And he was first right.

Amber: Technically he wasn't.

Eric Dunk: Technically like there was a bunch of presidents before him. But when we were established as an actual independent country in the eyes of world or whatever, we defeated the damn red coats, George Washington was our first president. So through that struggle, through the challenges faced we come to think of George Washington as a great president, he could of just been any old dude right who didn't have any inherent skills or abilities but just by the way that the events, like what if we lost the American Revolutionary War, then we would look at George Washington and be like what are you freaking kidding me, we would think that he didn't have skills or abilities right. Abraham Lincoln going through the Civil War maybe any old dude could have stood up there and said a house divided could not stand, any old dude could have said that.
So what the issue says is that we view leaders as great because of the things that are happening at the time rather than, and it's actually kind of like funny because it's like who are the presidents that we don't remember like Gerald Ford, like what the heck did Gerald Ford do? Like no one knows because he didn't have any challenges right. We remember the war time presidents, and we remember you know the presidents that have great decisions to make for our country and things like that. We even remember some of the negative presidents for the challenges they faced like Reagan right.

So let's go back. So that's an issue, and now I have writing all over the board. So on the prompt of the issue they're going to want you to talk about the issue in a certain vain, which I have kind of detailed here. They're going to want you to discuss that issue from a perspective right, and then I have kind of a list here, like some of things you could bring in, personal experience, like actual examples, anything that you read, history that you know, pertinent hypothetical, or anything that you can think of right that would be able to discuss the issue in a certain vain. And that's what we just did, like we, I just like called up Abraham Lincoln and said like well do you remember the president before Abraham Lincoln and do you remember the president after Abraham Lincoln? No you don't because Abraham Lincoln had to go through the Civil War and he got assassinated or whatever so we remember him for these things. That's putting the issue in a historical perspective, and I'm kind of agreeing with the issue by saying that, right. Nothing against Abraham Lincoln and his inherent skills and abilities but that's kind of what you're going to be
doing. So it's kind of, it's actually kind of backwards, argument like I said, we're not going to be making our own arguments about things right, but on the issue you are going to be making some kind of argument about what you think about the issue. I have this twice here, analyze the issue by using personal experience, I added some new stuff.

Discussing it in a cultural context right, like we did with George Bush and 9/11, his approval rating was like through the roof after 9/11, and then as we know it deteriorated over his two terms or whatever.

You could even discuss things like the implication of like what they're talking about. Like you could just say like, we could have had some really smart presidents but we don't remember them because they didn't have any challenges to face, right. In a time of peace right no one cares or whatever.

Relevance to things like history and politics and morality and all these things right. You can discuss this type of issue in that context. Now you're going to want to, you're going to want to form some argument around all this though, right, that is going to have evidence, and is going to choose a side. Like with this you might say that's bullshit, Abraham Lincoln was like an awesome dude, like he you know, he had great leadership abilities you know. I think he wrote the Gettysburg address on a train to Gettysburg, he wrote it like while he was going there, so you could say like for someone to be able to write that speech after such a horrible thing happened, that is a skill, I couldn't have written the
Gettysburg address, that's for sure. So you could say things like that to disagree with the statement. Notice that you are putting it in a historical context or whatever or kind of imagining right, like put yourself in that situation, be like well what if I was Abraham Lincoln, I sure as hell wouldn't be able to write the Gettysburg address on a train.

Renee: [Inaudible]

Eric Dunk: Yeah exactly. Don't take what I say, take it with a grain of salt basically. Okay any observations on this process, any questions about it? So like with an issue we're going to be forming some kind of argument about it, whether basically you agree or disagree with it. What do you guys think of that one? Do you guys agree or disagree?

Renee: Agree.

Eric Dunk: Agree okay. So another thing to is, it's not always so black and white either. You can say that like yeah we remember presidents that you know face challenges and we only remember those kinds president, but they also have to have some skills to be able to get through that. They just can't be some old Joe off the street leading us through the Civil War right. We needed someone like Abraham Lincoln, yeah we remember him because it was a historical time in our countries whatever you know and things like that. So if that's your observation to that it's not black and white, then you can write about
that as well. They want to see you analyze the issue right, and that's what you're going to be doing when you talk about things like that.

Amber: Are any of these really wishy-washy or is it best to stick with one side?

Eric Dunk: That's a good question, I wouldn't use like wishy-washy like what I just did, like.

Amber: Like where there are some aspects where it's true and some aspects were its not, should we just kind of go with one side and try to stay with one side?

Eric Dunk: Well you're not going to like my answer. I would recommend an intelligent response that shows your ability to analyze an issue you know. No I don't know, it's, I wouldn't use the term wishy-washy, I would maybe say like your being like smart about it, or like, you're basically, what they want to see is that you can take a complex thing like that, a complex idea and that you can talk about it sophisticatedly and intelligently and things like that.

Amber: So it probably wouldn't be totally a bad thing if we defended both sides and just kind of like basically not stay with one

Eric Dunk: Right, yeah. I don't think that's necessarily a problem because I mean I don't know, that's what I think about this issue. I think that yeah our
presidents are great because they have things that make them great, but then again they have to have some kind of leadership skills to be able to lead us through that. Like.

Amber: The argument against that is that we are talking about perceived greatness rather than inherit skills.

Eric Dunk: There you go, what you're doing there is that you're analyzing the issue, you're analyzing the words right, even the particular words that they use, you could be like perceived greatness is kind of like a low blow to say about Abraham Lincoln, he is good dude or whatever you know. So you can analyze language, right, you can approach the argument from two sides like I did, like yeah you need bad things to happen to become great in the history books right, but you also need to have skills to lead us through those times. And then you can kind of write your way through what you think is like the best answer. Did that answer your question? Yeah, alright. If you feel more comfortable taking one side whether you agree with what you're saying or not, that's fine too as long as you're just analyzing this issue really in depth is what they want to see. Any other questions? No, alright. What's my next slide here?
Scoring

Highest score is a 6. This response will be intelligent, objective, curious, &c. Follow directions!

- Articulate, clear, insightful
- Challenging, philosophical, objective
- Demonstrates a strong use of language
  - Ideas are connected, fluid, and logically presented
- Strong language, strong position, holistic knowledge

_Basically, the way I see it, they want you to show off what you learned in undergrad. This is where you argue for or against the issue presented._

**Eric Dunk:** Yeah this is whatever, it doesn't really say much. They want you to articulate a clear insightful whatever, what we just went over. So I put at the end basically the way I see it they just want you to show off what you learned in your undergrad, they want you to be like hey I am really smart person that can think about complex issues intelligently. Like the perceived greatness of a leader, and like right, you need to have like general knowledge of history and like you know things that have happened that caused leaders to be great and things like that. You are showcasing your knowledge and your ability to analyze a really complex cultural societal thing, right? So yeah, I say holistic knowledge, right? You want to be like objective but also like analytical right, philosophical, you want to challenge people's ideas and things like that, right. You guys did this all throughout undergrad and things like that, and you do this in your day to day lives even, so.
Prompts: Argument

“The city council of Smithville has instituted changes to police procedures to improve the visibility of the police force. These changes require that the town hire more police officers, budget more funds for police overtime, and direct officers to patrol significantly more often on foot rather than from their patrol cars. These improvements in visibility will significantly lower the crime rate in Smithville and make its citizens feel safer.”

Eric Dunk: Okay, let’s change gears to an argument. So first thing we notice is that it’s longer, "The city council of Smithville has instituted changes to police procedures to improve the visibility of the police force. These changes require that the town hire more police officers, budget more funds for police overtime, and direct officers to patrol significantly more often on foot rather than from their patrol cars. These improvements in visibility will significantly lower the crime rate in Smithville and make it safer for citizens". So how is this different than issue, we'll start there. What are some of the things you notice?

Amber: There's a lot of evidence, they're like well here's what we are going to do, and this is how it's going to work, and this is going to do this basically.

Eric Dunk: Right, it gives reasons or like evidence, like budget, a concrete thing like patrolling on foot.

Amber: At the very end they make like a very incentive statement that these will indeed improve the primary [inaudible].

Renee: And they have a list of things that they're going to do, like A B C and D and it's going to lead them.

Eric Dunk: Right, so what these are, are like, they're premises that lead to a conclusion. The conclusion is we are going to lower crime rate. A premise gives an evidence or like an action that we can do to achieve that conclusion.
Okay, so that's what they're going to, that's what you'll see as an argument, right. So if we go back, alright so an argument. What you're going to do on the prompt is assess the cogency of the argument, what the heck is cogency, what does that word mean?

Amber: [Inaudible]

Erick Dunk: Right.

Amber: [Inaudible]

Eric Dunk: Right, cogent basically means does it make sense, because what I'm being told, logical, rational, reasonable, achievable, right, that's what you're going to be talking about when you analyze the argument. You're not going to be making arguments of your own right, you're not going to be saying oh well if we wanted to lower the crime rate in Chico we have to do these things or whatever. You're not going to be making a new argument, right, you're simply going to be saying oh well if we wanted to lower the crime rate in Chico we have to do these things or whatever. You're not going to be making a new argument, right, you're simply going to be taking what's provided you and you're going to start dissecting the argument, strengths and weaknesses. Okay questions on that and how it's different from an issue, because it's pretty different from an issue, right. Issues you kind of have more freedom to the talk about whatever, right, you can talk about Abraham Lincoln and George Bush.
or you know, to bring in your own personal experience and you also have the freedom to make your own argument. When you're responding to arguments on the GRE you have a pretty stringent like thing that you have to follow. Okay questions on that? Any, no, alright. Let's go back to our argument then.

Okay so underlined right now is evidence and the conclusion, right. So now here comes the challenging part, and you guys are going to tell me. What's wrong with the argument or what would you write about on the GRE? And take a minute to think about it if you need.

**Amber:** [Inaudible], doesn't necessarily mean that [Inaudible], people will become sneakier.

**Eric Dunk:** Boom. People would become sneakier, I like that. Yeah so the argument does what, it jumps from this, that's not a pen, that doesn't work. It jumps from this right to this. What is it doing when it does that?

**Amber:** Making it into an assumption.

**Eric Dunk:** It's making a huge assumption, right. It's making an assumption and like it's interesting like remember how I said there's no perfect argument, this is kind of like a fault of language almost, or a fault of the way humans think. But you're right we jump from visibility to a lower crime rate saying that those things are like, like if we do that then that's going to happen, right. It
assumes like a cause or like a reaction to the thing we're going to implement, right. So that's one thing that you could attack in the argument, you could say that the, the conclusion makes an assumption based on the premises. We have all these premises of visibility, right, budget, hire more police officers, and we're going to patrol on foot right, all these things is like a visibility thing that is going to lower crime rate.

Now we've actually seen this fail miserably right, like in our own country, like they thought the answer to solving crime was we'll just hire more police officers. Well then criminals just get smarter or whatever, or we throw trillion of dollars at the war on drugs and what do you know there is still drugs. So you wouldn't talk about that necessarily in your prompt, but you could keep that in the back of your mind. Like, and so what you want to do is like dissect the premise as well, like the premises that are provided. Yeah, go ahead, and you don't need to raise your hand by the way, yeah its fine.

Amber: We're trained.

Eric Dunk: Yeah I know, it's like a, I still do it too but.

Amber: So for the first one the change is for the town to hire more police officers, [Inaudible], just because there's more doesn't mean that they're confident.
Prompts: Argument

“The city council of Smithville has instituted changes to police procedures to improve the visibility of the police force. These changes require that the town hire more police officers, budget more funds for police overtime, and direct officers to patrol significantly more often on foot rather than from their patrol cars. These improvements in visibility will significantly lower the crime rate in Smithville and make its citizens feel safer.”

Eric Dunk: There you go.

Amber: And there's also that fine line of productivity when you have a certain number of people that do the job well and if you add too many more then it just gets muddled and clogged up. So too many officers might not be the answer. Also budgeting funds for police overtime could lead to people being greedy of an overtime and not exactly doing the job they need to be doing and just staying for the overtime.

Eric Dunk: Just staying for the dollars.

Amber: Yeah the dollars.

Eric Dunk: Good, what about patrolling on foot, how could we attack that?

Amber: Does it mean that they're necessarily willing to go farther out, and to be more physical than they would when they're in their cars?

Eric Dunk: Well yeah, one of my questions was what makes a police more productive on foot than in his car, like how are those things, like the argument assumes that patrols being on foot is somehow like better than being in their car.

Amber: Cover less ground.
Eric Dunk: Cover less ground, yeah you could say you covered less ground, you know a whole number of things you can potentially say about that.

Renee: Could you just walk around or do you interact with people?

Eric Dunk: Yeah, right. Like I don't know, I guess if some teenagers were like smoking pot or something and they saw a cop walking down the street they would be like oh shit put it away or whatever, you know. That just got on camera. So yeah they assume that this like moving on foot will somehow lower like crime rate. Which is like unfortunately when we make decisions about things that, that's like what we just have to do, we just have to like assess what may be the best method is, and then assume that it's going to work. Like that's why no argument is perfect because we have to make an assumption to get to a conclusion, if not then we would just be like stuck without any answers, which I think is really interesting.

Amber: [Inaudible]

Eric Dunk: So yeah, what you were doing there is you were saying, and that was a really sophisticated observation, just because we hired more police officers well then we got to train them. Who's going to train them and how are we going to train all of them?

Amber: [Inaudible]
Eric Dunk: The overtime is a really good assessment too. Like you put it in a very real human context right, like a police officer would be like dude I've been on patrol for like 12 hours and like just by natural human fatigue, like you know they're not going to be as productive. So just because they're, just because officers are doing overtime doesn't mean that like they're fighting crime any more efficiently, right, just like the hiring. So like one of the things you can say is like the argument overlooked the fact, the fact that we could, rather than hire more police officers, we could train our existing police officers to be better or something right. It makes a huge assumption that just by raising police whatever it will lower crime, which we seen obviously fail miserably.

So yeah so that's kind of the things that you would write about in a response. Because you would take what's being presented and you would kind of give alternatives to that, counterexamples, right, assumptions. Every argument like can come up against these things, so you want to keep, you want to look in those premises and at that conclusion and you got to say okay what kind of things are they assuming, or what kind of counterexample's could we provide. Like your counterexample was why we don't we just train the police officers we already have, rather than have, like better to have 10 awesome police officers than 20 incompetent police officers, right.

Amber: [Inaudible]

Eric Dunk: Yeah I know. Well these are the kind of decisions you know, like
look at it, it's a very real kind of decision that someone has to make, right.

Amber: Or Smithville.

Eric Dunk: Yeah Smithville, I don't even know if it's a real place.

Amber: It probably is.

Eric Dunk: Probably.

Renee: Bound to be one some place.

Eric Dunk: Yeah there's bound to be a Smithville, that's for sure.

Amber: And they're plain names that we [Inaudible].

Eric Dunk: Right, yeah, for sure. So notice on these and this is really important that I stress this, you're not making your own argument, right, and I'll just repeat that. You're not going to say like oh I agree with that because of this, this, and this, you're saying the argument is fallacious or it has some good qualities, you know whatever, based on these things. These things in the argument make it wrong or whatever, and not that the argument is necessarily like wrong, it just fails to human language and things like that, that we can pick apart.
Eric Dunk: Okay. So yeah what we just talked about. You're going to analyze the cogency right. Like the argument kind of makes sense, right? I mean it makes sense to more funding or whatever, and more police officers fight crime and things like that. But it does other things, right, that you know like it assumes things, and there's counterexamples and things like that, and you know, in your writing you're going to kind of present those. Okay let's pause for a second. Questions on that because that's kind of, it's kind of dense, it's a lot of stuff to take in for sure.

Renee: [Inaudible]

Eric Dunk: Good that's a quality you need to go to grad school, that's for sure.
Eric Dunk: Yeah, again this slide doesn't mean anything. It just says a bunch of generic things about like looking awareness toward fallacies and assumptions or shortcomings or whatever. Again they just want, like you guys are smart people they just want to see that you can analyze the argument and find like the assumptions behind it, right, and the things like that because like people who aren't educated they just accept an argument as valid or whatever, yeah sounds good to me, or whatever, more police officers the lower crime. But an intelligent person would be able to say like well wait a second you know that is kind of an assumption. So your job is to find it and exploit it basically.

Oh okay, what do we got left? There's a lot left and we're not going to get to it but it's alright. They're basically just a bunch of examples. So what do you guys want to go over, do you guys want to go over issue again or do you want to see another argument because I have like three or four examples after this? I have like a couple issues and a couple arguments.

Renee: One of each.

Eric Dunk: One of each, okay.
An Issue, i.e Not an Argument

“As people rely more and more on technology to solve problems, the ability of humans to think for themselves will surely deteriorate.”

Eric Dunk: We've heard this before, "As people rely more and more on technology to solve problems, the abilities of humans to think for themselves will surely deteriorate". Agree or disagree?

Amber: The word surely just throws me off.

Eric Dunk: Surely, yeah.

Amber: Like always [Inaudible].

Eric Dunk: I know right. Good. That is okay, that's a really good observation. That's another thing that you want to look for in arguments as well when you're analyzing arguments is like really definitive words that say like this has to be, right, and you can say well like wait a minute not necessarily, right. So yeah that's one problem, it will surely deteriorate, this person really believes this. What do you think though? Do you think smartphones and computers and Internet, have these things made us?

Amber: Basic things like spelling, [Inaudible], intentionally yes I agree with this but, [Inaudible].

Eric Dunk: Yeah this might be another one too, where like you would like be wishy-washy.
Amber: Definitely wishy-washy.

Eric Dunk: You would say like for sure like, things like spelling like they've done studies that spelling is worse than it was 100 years ago or whatever, because now we have things that correct spelling for us. So like spelling is definitely deteriorated but then again I can go on my phone and I can find out who the president of Zimbabwe is right now in an instant, right.

Amber: So in this situation if we already like, something like that, like I would have a sign that states like spelling, social interaction, we're losing that but at the same time making an argument that says it also makes us smarter because we do have access and are connected to everything.

Eric Dunk: Right yeah. You're, and this is really like pertinent issue today, right, this technological discussion. So what you would be doing is you would be discussing it from like personal experience or whatever, or like a real-life example like the spelling thing you brought up, you know they have done studies that spelling is worse. But then again everything is more connected in your own personal experience, like yesterday NASA found out that there is water on Mars and I was able to find out pretty much at the same time that NASA did because I get news notifications on my phone. And so you could argue that has made us smarter because we are more, intelligence has, there is more access to intelligence now. Like back in the day, like they discovered that water was on Mars or whatever I would of had to wait for the paper or
whatever the next day. And then even you know 500 years ago obviously we wouldn't have discovered water is on Mars, but news traveled very slowly as well back then, so the speed of things you could say has made us smarter. I can instantly find out something has happened right. I can go on google like the ultimate data base and I can find out basically anything, right. So smarter in that sense of accessibility, right, but like.

Amber: More basic skills are deteriorating.

Eric Dunk: Yeah, people have said with technology that we become lazier. Like if I wanted to find out who the president of Zimbabwe was 50 years ago I would've had to go to a damn library and hunt down a book about Zimbabwe or whatever. Now if I want to find out who the president of Zimbabwe is I just type it in to my phone, or I could even talk to my phone.

Amber: I was saying that too.

Eric Dunk: Who's the president of Zimbabwe, bloop, and his name will pop up.

Renee: You don't even have to type.

Eric Dunk: I don't even have to type.
Amber: They even took away having to press that button now, you could just say hey Siri.

Eric Dunk: Yeah, right, if it's plugged in or whatever on the charger you can just say, “Hey Siri.” and she will talk back to you. So you can say technology has made us lazier but then again I can find out anything that has ever been known by a human on Google.

Amber: With it being an issue could we make the argument that, oh shoot I just lost it, darn it, never mind.

Renee: You should have prewritten it.

Amber: I know.

Eric Dunk: What were you saying, if we can make the argument that?

Amber: That it makes us, so they're going with our ability to think for ourselves will surely deteriorate, instead of going with that direction could we, would it be alright to say that it makes us lazy but it does give us access rather than going with the idea that our ability to think will deteriorate. Or is that kind of going away from the prompt a little bit too much?

Eric Dunk: I would say no it's not going away from the prompt because we're
still talking about the issue in like a certain, like you're talking about the issue and a cultural context of today, right. Now that is an interesting phrase though, that we would want to pause on, the ability for humans to think for themselves, right, what the heck does that even mean?

**Amber:** Actually now that you stated that I'm going to change my answer.

**Eric Dunk:** Okay.

**Amber:** I would have to agree because we are letting the phones think for us.

**Eric Dunk:** Okay.

**Amber:** We are letting technology think for us although that we're doing the research and putting in all the words and everything, we are not thinking for ourselves. I mean calculators would be a great example, we know how to add but we're going to type it into the calculator anyways. Which I have done many times calculating my grade whereas I write it out and easily do it, but I went to my phone and my calculator instead. So I just switched the prewriting.

**Eric Dunk:** Okay good awesome. Yeah, you'll have sometimes an epiphany or whatever, oh wait no I actually don't think of that. I would push back and I would say like isn't that just a different way of thinking, like before we would write it out, two plus six or whatever, that was a skill, then we invented
calculators and we had to come up with a skill of typing into a calculator, maybe. Like I would argue that technology, and humans have always had technology to help us, even if we go back to stone tablets or whatever, those, that was a technology to help us think, right. So we're all freaked out now because technology has been expanding so exponentially, and that everyone has like this accessibility at their fingertips, so everyone's freaking out now. But I would basically argue that humans have always been assisted with knowledge, right, we need tools to learn things, and we just have another tool, a better tool. So I would say what is wrong with that, it's a different way.

**Renee:** Our knowledge wouldn't be expanding if people stopped thinking, technology is expanding exponentially.

**Amber:** Technology is the tool that we are using to think for ourselves.

**Eric Dunk:** Right, yeah. And we think of technology as like electronics but I would argue that even like a pencil is a form of technology that helped us think. So like, like if we didn't have tools to help us think then we would just be thinking up here with nothing, right. So, wow that's a really interesting discussion that I could talk about forever. [Inaudible]

**Amber:** It's under there.
An Issue, i.e Not an Argument

“As people rely more and more on technology to solve problems, the ability of humans to think for themselves will surely deteriorate.”

Eric Dunk: Yeah, I'll get it later. So yeah, so that's kind of, what we just did is we just analyzed the issue, right. So like that is an interesting take on to be like well yeah the phones think for us now, but on the other hand that's also like we're just gaining a different type of knowledge or whatever. Like you know, I could look up the president of Zimbabwe and I can know his name, and then I have more knowledge. The phone you know did the thinking for me, I can also argue that when I went to the library and got the book on Zimbabwe, the book did the thinking for me. Like what would thinking for ourselves be, going to Zimbabwe and meeting the president and learning about him that way? I don't know. So these are the kind of things that you're going to want bring in to this discussion here, you analyze this issue, and whether you agree or disagree. And they are kind of hard to agree or disagree with I think. Like I would say that there's certain capabilities that have deteriorated, right. But then again we have always used technology to think for ourselves, or whatever, or to help us think. Okay so that was interesting. So that's kind of the gist of an issue, right, those two that we saw right, the perceived greatness and now we have this one about technology and things like that.
Potential Prompt?

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider ways in which the statement might or might not hold true and explain how these considerations shape your position.

Okay, let’s talk about this.

Eric Dunk: So this would be like a prompt, "Write a response on which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for taking that position. Consider ways in which the statement might or might not hold true", right and so that's what we did. Yeah the phones are thinking for us but then again it's a different kind of thinking or whatever, right. And you're going to shape your position, right. I don't even really like that, like agree or disagree because that is a very like, that's such a binary of like black, it's very black and white. A lot of these issues I'm starting to find are like, there's a lot to them basically, they're complex. Okay.
A Pretty Long Argument

Prompt:
“Tusk University should build a new recreational facility, both to attract new students and to better serve the needs of our current student body. Tusk projects that enrollment will double over the next 10 years, based on current trends. The new student body is expected to reflect a much higher percentage of commuter students than we currently enroll. This will make the existing facilities inadequate. Moreover, the cost of health and recreation club membership in our community has increased rapidly in recent years. Thus, students will find it much more advantageous to make use of the facilities on campus. Finally, an attractive new recreation center would make prospective students, especially athletically gifted ones, more likely to enroll at Tusk.”

Eric Dunk: So we want to look at another argument, right. Okay so here’s a pretty long argument, “Tusk University should build a new recreational facility, both to attract new students and to better serve the needs of our current student body. Tusk projects that enrollment will double over the next 10 years, based on current trends. The new student body is expected to reflect a much higher percentage of commuter students than we currently enroll. This will make the existing facilities inadequate. Moreover, the cost of health and recreation club membership in our community has increased rapidly in recent years. Thus, students will find it much more advantageous to make use of the facilities on campus. Finally, an attractive new recreation center would make prospective students, especially athletically gifted ones, more likely to enroll at Tusk”.

Amber: That’s a long one.

Eric Dunk: That’s a lot of stuff to take in. And we are going to have to analyze it in 6 minutes. So this our time crunch thing right. Okay time crunch exercise number one, we have five minutes now to analyze this. So what would you say about it?

Renee: It assumed that there will be double the enrollment over the next ten years.

Amber: Yeah what he just said.
Renee: It's a big [Inaudible]. No matter which one you pick it's running out.

Eric Dunk: It's like they work and then they don't work all of a sudden. Right, so based on current trends they're going to expect the enrollment to increase. That is a big assumption, right.

Renee: [Inaudible]

Eric Dunk: Yeah. You know the stock market current trends, or whatever, it's like doesn't necessarily mean that it's going to keep going. But then again I would just point out that, that's what we have to do though, we have to collect data that gives us the best answer.

Amber: Would data be, it said in the second statement I feel is really just pulling it out of nowhere, without any data to support it, but that's coming from my research background that when you make a statement like that you need to back it up with data.

Eric Dunk: Right.

Amber: "The new student body is expected to reflect a much higher percentage of commuter students than we currently enroll", my question would be like where did you get that information from and why.
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Eric Dunk: Good that is analyzing another shortcoming of the argument in the sense that they said this like, this huge thing and then they didn't provide any evidence for it, right. Like.

Amber: And then the sentence after that is only true with the support of the sentence before which is "This will make the existing facilities inadequate", well that may be true and at this point we just assumed that the enrollment is going to grow.

Eric Dunk: Right.

Amber: So that little small sentence is kind of like has no weight without everything else, with nothing else stating the fact that is behind it, it has no weight.

Eric Dunk: Good, you're good at English, you should be a lawyer or something.

Amber: Thank you.

Renee: Hey don't say that. I'm insulted.

Eric Dunk: Oh yeah, no you're going to be a neuroscientist. Yeah.
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Amber: [Inaudible]

Eric Dunk: Based on an assumption we then make an assertion about something that, that is like an opinion too that the facilities are inadequate, well like that's the renders opinion. One thing that jumped out on me is who's going to pay for it, the argument doesn't address that, right, and that's like a very thing that would be a concern, where is the money going to come from. So another shortcoming of the argument it might be like it doesn't address a strategy to do this, like obviously we could build a new facility, great but there's real life limitations to that like who is going to pay for it. So.

Amber: It does start off saying that it should build a new recreational facility, so with that and what you just said you're right, they don't really plan, which may be great but who's going to make it happen. So it depends really on [Inaudible]

Eric Dunk: No, every single one of them, it's all good. We can see where we're at. Yeah so that's one of the things that argument does do is it does call on us to like do an action or like perform, or do something basically, or think in a certain way. Yeah so basically what does is it gathers a bunch of data that they don't really give us, and then says that we should build something, and in my opinion, or it would probably cost millions of dollars to do this. So what about the last sentence?
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Amber: That one actually holds a good amount of weight.

Eric Dunk: Okay, why?

Amber: People like not old things, new things, and with a new attractive recreational center new students looking for a beautiful campus which most of them are attracted to and the athletically gifted ones do, I mean I don't see why they wouldn't enjoy a really nice recreational facility.

Renee: Or what if their academics are crud.

Eric Dunk: Yeah that's another question.

Renee: If there is anything to improve its academics.

Eric Dunk: Yeah we might be attracting the athletically gifted ones.

Renee: And you can have a nice football program but what are you going to do about.

Eric Dunk: But yeah.

Amber: Yeah it might not be good for the university as a whole.
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Eric Dunk: Yeah. My professor told me a story. He went to, where did he go to college? He went somewhere for college that has a big football thing and they invested like a billion dollars to build a new stadium. A billion to build this huge stadium and all this stuff. And the football program was really, you know, strong. It’s a big university. But then it was like he would be teaching, he got his PhD from the school, he would be teaching and the lights would go out in his class. He would be like and then get on the thing, he would call and they would be like oh yeah sorry we can't get the electrician out today or whatever. So they had like invested all this money into building the, that was supposed to bring in more money right for the football program, but then the academics kind of started going down because he couldn't teach basically. That would be another assumption or something that the argument doesn't address either is like it's a school at the end of the day, right, it's a school not a gym.

Okay well we're actually out of time but you guys did a great job today. So next week the format is we're going to review what we touched on, just kind of talk about it again, and then we're going to dive in to like actual writing stuff, like we are going to be writing next week.

Amber: Can we bring our computer?

Eric Dunk: Yes you can bring your computer, absolutely, after all you are taking your test on the computer, so, yeah.
Thanks for coming!

Next week:
   Review
   Time budgeting
   Prewriting strategies

Have a great week!

Eric Dunk: So I'll see you guys next week. Alright.