

Extension: Building Arguments

Name _____

Date _____

Your Turn

Read the following argument essay. Then identify the parts of the essay by filling in the blank with the appropriate letter: *a. main claim, b. supporting idea, c. key objection, d. summing up, or e. final word.*

The Value of Serving

Anna Hernandez plays board games with residents at Bington’s Senior Living Center. Scott Thompson helps pick up trash at Wilson Park during the city’s spring cleanup campaign. Mansi Dass reads to preschoolers enrolled in the Head Start program. Parkview’s community service requirement gives students life-changing experiences not available in the classroom.

Participating in the community is the first work experience for many Parkview students. They learn about the importance of being on time and completing the work. They also learn about working together and communicating with adults. Anna Hernandez said, “I had to be at the senior center right at 3:00 p.m. because that’s when board games started.” Practicing these job skills helps students learn about the world of work.

The students’ community service also helps them appreciate the problems and challenges facing Bington. Scott Thompson said, “I never realized how thoughtless people can be until I started cleaning up after them. Some people really trash the parks.” Mansi Dass learned that some young children really need help with reading and learning. She said, “Some of these kids have hardly ever been read to, so they don’t know how fun books can be.” Community service helps connect students to their city.

Most importantly, students learn about giving back. For many students, their community service will be the first time they have helped strangers who need help. Ms. Sandra Williams, the community service advisor, said, “Working in the community shows students that a lot of other people need their help.” Learning this lesson should help Parkview students become more involved in the community.

Some people think that the community service requirement may feel like a punishment to some students. They point out that people who get in trouble are often required to complete community service. But most students quickly discover that community service is a pleasure, not a punishment. They feel better because they’ve done good and made a difference.

Bington students are in school for 180 days, 8 hours each day. Depending on their grades, they have to complete between 6 and 12 hours of community service. When you look at the program in this way, students aren’t asked to do much. What students gain from their experience far outweighs anything they may have to give up. Their community service gives them a taste of real life at just the right time.

Follow-up: Identify the same parts (listed above) on a copy of a newspaper editorial or another argument essay. Afterward, share your work with your classmates.