

Argumentative Writing: School Garden vs. Parking Lot

Name _____

Date _____

Source A: Environmental & Educational Benefits

(Note: Both source notes and all figures below represent fictional classroom practice, not real research.)

A school garden provides hands-on learning opportunities for biology and environmental science classes. Additionally, replacing asphalt with soil and plants reduces the 'urban heat island' effect and absorbs some rainwater runoff, though it does not prevent flooding. A survey shows 78% of students support having more green spaces on campus.

Source B: Student & Staff Parking Concerns

The school parking lot is currently used by 45 student drivers and 15 staff members daily. Removing it would force student drivers to park on residential streets up to three blocks away, raising safety concerns and causing friction with neighbors. Public transit is an option, but it adds 30 minutes to the average student's commute.

Read the model paragraph below. Notice how the writer integrates evidence and addresses opposing views:

"Replacing the school's parking lot with a garden is a strong environmental goal, but any decision must be conditional. While a garden reduces heat and absorbs some runoff (Source A), public transit adds 30 minutes to commutes (Source B). Therefore, we should propose the garden conditionally: the school must first conduct a transportation and accessibility audit. Only if we can establish a workable plan for safe, reasonable access for the 45 student drivers and 15 staff members should we proceed with transforming the lot."

Answer the following questions based on the model paragraph above.

1. Identify the main claim of the model paragraph.

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2. What counterargument does the writer acknowledge, and which source does it reference?

3. How does the writer respond to the counterargument through a concession and condition?

Choose a position (which may be qualified or conditional): either support replacing the parking lot with a garden, or support keeping the parking lot. Write a short argumentative paragraph (4–5 sentences) that includes a clear claim, evidence from the sources, a counterargument, and a reasoned response (such as a concession and condition).

4. Draft your paragraph below. Be sure to label or highlight your claim, counterargument, and reasoned response (including any concession or condition).
