

Grade 8 Argument Writing Standard W.8.1

Grade 8 Argument

W.8.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- d. Establish and maintain a formal style.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

The Reading/Thinking/Writing Task

Students engaged in a multi-text literature unit, and worked with the Focusing Question “*If it serves a greater good or solves societal problems, is it okay for a government to control the lives of people as seen in dystopian novels?*” Students read the book, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, as a guided, class-based common literary experience, unpacking and developing understanding about the characteristics of dystopian novels as they went. They then chose a novel in the same genre to read independently, and gathered details and evidence on the Focusing Question using a self-designed note-catcher that recorded both positive and negative aspects of dystopian systems of control. The students orally processed concepts from their books with each other, and planned their writing using teacher-generated graphic organizers crafted to further the synthesis of the two texts in answering the prompt.

This question requires that students choose and group information from multiple texts into categories of evidence organized by dystopian characteristics rather than by book, demanding understanding and recognition of how details can interact to support claims together, even if from different stories. They then had to use these categories to choose a stance and form a clear argument supported by relevant evidence, including a developed counterclaim, in a well-focused, logical essay.

Focus of the Writing Task

If it serves a greater good or solves societal problems, is it okay for a government to control the lives of people as seen in dystopian novels?

The Writing Task in the Curriculum

How is it embedded in curriculum/content?

- ★ *Class: 8th grade integrated ELA curriculum*
 - focus on dystopian novels and common characteristic themes or aspects of this genre
 - gradual release from in-class, highly guided reading to independent reading and gathering of evidence to support an argument
- ★ *Curriculum unit*
 - students studied the characteristics of multiple dystopian novels and the relationship to society with a particular focus on methods of control by governments
 - emphasis on selecting relevant details and grouping information from multiple texts in more nuanced ways than by book so as to prove a claim more completely
- ★ *Standards*
 - Reading: RL.8.1, RL.8.3, RL.8.9, RL.8.10
 - Writing: W.8.1, W.8.4, W.8.5, W.8.9, W.8.10

How did students build the knowledge they needed?

- ★ *Texts*
 - *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
 - a self-chosen dystopian novel from a list provided by teachers and librarian
- ★ *Reading and re-reading*
 - teacher read common text aloud while students read along in their heads
 - students read and re-read second texts independently
 - students took notes on texts independently using self-created and common graphic organizers
 - students orally processed evidence and practiced creating categories of details to support a claim

What instructional approaches were used to teach writing?

- ★ *Craft lessons*
 - students had already worked with argument writing structures (Painted Essay® in many forms and more) including such elements as introductions, transitions, counterclaims and conclusions
 - teacher gave specific instruction and practice in crafting a precise thesis statement to answer the Focusing Question, and in the thinking of proving claims and using counterclaims well
 - students were shown and worked closely with a teacher-written model showing similar skills
- ★ *Writing approaches*
 - students were reminded of the elements that make up a strong essay in the directions. They then wrote and proofread independently.

What was the timeframe?

Whole unit (two complete novels) took 4-6 weeks

Standard W.8.1
Grade 8
Proficient

Living in a World of Imprisonment

Making your own decisions and following your heart is important to shape you into the person you will become. What if all that were taken away though? You no longer have the ability to do what you want because the government controls everything. You're under constant surveillance and can't go back once a choice has been made. For the people in The Giver by Lois Lowry and Divergent by Veronica Roth control from the government is their way of life. Everything they do has to benefit the community. But does conforming to the rules and demands take first place over your own self interest? I believe that your own path should take first place over these rules of control and imprisonment.

Tris, the main character in Divergent, deals with lots of control over her self interest within the faction system. Factions is a way to divide groups of people based on what quality of personality they find the most important (Roth 2). When reached a certain age you must choose between the factions on where you think you belong. They then stay in that faction for the rest of their life. This takes out any way of going back to re choose their faction if they realize they made a mistake. In the same way that people can't fix their mistakes in Divergent Jonas in The Giver has the same type of control put over him by his government. People in his society are assign husbands and wives and can't pick their own jobs (Lowry 20). What if they don't like their job though? Maybe they're not compatible with the partner assigned to them. It would be in everyone's self interest to fix these terrible mistakes. The rules however say differently and won't let them do anything to improve their circumstance. I believe these citizens in the societies should be able to fix their mistakes the rules don't allow them to. Making everyone's life improved and avoiding inevitable sadness.

At the same time the demands of the society are dictating their ability to be their true selves. In Divergent some people fit into multiple factions (Roth 20). This is strictly forbidden and results in severe punishment. These people, also referred to as divergents, are just trying to follow their hearts. They want to show their true personality but can't because of the rules of the society. Likewise in the Giver people have to take stirring pills (Lowry 36). These pills wipe away emotion and true feeling, leaving just an empty shell of a human in its place. This is the

only way of life these people have ever known. Not being able to follow your true path in life is miserable and shouldn't be expected from anyone. If allowed to follow their own path these people would find true emotions. They would be forced outside their comfort zones and opened up to a world of possibility. True happiness would find its way into their hearts and minds, making them realize their true self that has been pushed aside for so long.

Equally important is the fact that these rules about "protecting the community" is really just hurting it. Some rules force people to die for no reason. This can be seen in the Giver with the release ceremonies. People think that the citizens being released are going to a different community or somewhere else (Lowry 7). In reality the truth is a lot darker. Jonas knows that something is wrong and would do anything to break the rules to save this innocent child. I think it would be in everyone's self interest to save an innocent person. If it comes by breaking the rules I think everyone would agree that the person's life is more important. Similar to this is in Divergent how they punish the people who are different (Roth 43). In our own history we can see examples of fear and hate against people who are different than what we used to think was normal. As a world we adapted to change and uniqueness and became better. To do this though people broke the rules. Everyone fought for a better future. Jonas and Tris are trying to put this message of rising up to help people in the minds of everyone.

If the societies had let the people make their own decisions and be themselves I think everything would have been fine. Rules have to be put in place to avoid total chaos. When it ruins people's lives and makes them lose their true self I think it has gone to far. These rules made it exponentially worse for everyone. In the future I think it is important to remember what these books tried to teach us. That following your heart and helping others is more important than following the rules. The government might think their right but people will realize the mistakes they have made. The people will rise and make the society better as a whole.

Standard W.8.1
Grade 8
Approaching

Everyone Will Feel Free

You are a teenager, and have to make a decision that will change the rest of your life. In the Giver by Lois Lowry, a 12 year old boy called Jonas gets assigned to a job as the new receiver and has to carry all the memories of the community. Instead of the whole community having pain, they chose one adept person to have all memories. In Divergent by Veronica Roth, Tris has to elect which faction she wants to be in and maybe abandon her old one. She has to choose what she want to do with the rest of her life. Both the Giver and Divergent has a very controlling government that helps and protects you. If it helps for the greater good and is meant to make things better or solve societal issues, it is okay. Many rules makes people stay out of trouble and there will be less disagreement.

A society with many rules, makes it safer. In The Giver, you can not choose your job, partner, and you do not have your own kids (Lowry 22). This may seem strict, but I think it makes everything more fair and safe. With many rules, no one will make poor choices. Another thing in The Giver is that you can not get a bike until you are nine years old (13). This makes the community more fair for all the kids because they all get a bike at the same time instead of some kids having bikes and some not. In Divergent, you can not visit or think about your old faction after choosing a new (Roth 184). This helps people change and get used to their new faction because they do not think about their old faction all the time. Many rules makes people in the community stay out of trouble and there will be less disagreements.

Many rules, gives everyone a feeling of belonging. The faction system in Divergent gives everyone a feeling of acceptance. You chose a faction based on personal interests, your aptitude test results, and what you like to do everyday (Roth 37). Each faction values different things. Dauntless values bravery which is a big part of Tris (47). When people with same interests as you are together, it is easier to make friends. In the Giver, everyone thinks that they belong to the job they get assigned to. The committee of Elders choses your job based on your talents (Lowry 15). This makes people like Jonas feel like they are the right place and that they are meant for their job.

Although some people might think that it takes away your freedom, a community with many rules makes it more efficient. In the Giver, you have assigned partner and kids (Lowry 15). You get a partner which avoids divorce and unhappiness. Assigned kids makes every family the same and no actions will be divisive. No family will be poor because of too many children and not enough money to take care of them all. All these rules about family and everyday life makes people stay out of disagreements and loneliness. In Divergent, you wear what is right in your faction. No one will stand out or look wrong. You can not look at yourself in the mirror except if you get a haircut (Roth 1). This avoids bullying, and it prevents people from judging themselves on their appearance. It stops everyone comparing themselves to others. The rules makes sure that there will not be any unhealthy and unhappy relationships and homes.

If individuals had more control over their own life, then the community would work less efficient and society would not be as safe. When the community is put first, everyone will feel comfort and safety because the government will never do anything just for their good. The people will never be in a state of anarchy. Individuals will never doubt the government because they know that they will not do anything to put the society in danger. If the government went against their own rules and did something disingenuous, the community would not work well because the people rely on rules to follow for things to work. Removing the questions of life is a way to enjoy and live life to the fullest, and it helps all people succeed. Everyone will do their job and always work optimistically without questioning and worrying about what rules to follow. Everyone will feel free.

Standard W.8.1
Grade 8
Beginning

What happens in a world of confinement ?

In dystopian novels people are treated like they have no purpose in their community .They are treated like resources by being considered a number . I think that is dehumanizing them because of their lifestyle is controlled by the community .

It is no okay to dehumanize even if it helps the greater good . They are dehumanized in **Divergent** because the people in there community are put into five fractions like a conformity and have no choice (Roth 2) . In **The Giver** they are dehumanized because they take away emotions and they are not allowed to love one another pick spouses or kids (Lowry 124-126) . In the book **The Giver** the people in the community are chosen for certain jobs .

In **The Giver** there is surveincence in there houses were the chief elders can listen and see what your doing (15) . In **Divergent** there is surveillance next to the water fountains (Roth) I don't think surveillance is a good thing in both of these communities because its invasion of privacy . But I can see that they don't want anyone to break the rules.

Even though in **The Giver** and **Divergent** they are trying to keep them safe but keeping them from what they want to do is not okay and take away their emotions . In **The Giver** they are given a spouse and kids . I can see why they dont let you love someone else because they don't want you to get hurt emotionally , but I don't think that makes it right .

What if we didn't have dehumanizing and surveillance would that make a great difference in the world ? I think these books are trying to show that even though it helps the greater good it's not right to dehumanize and use surveillance . As humans I think we should have the feel all of the emotions because that's human nature . These communities in dystopian novels are taking away human rights and human nature .

Standard W.8.1
Grade 8
Exceeds

Trapped

How would you feel if your feelings and thoughts were shared to the whole community? In *The Giver* by Lois Lowry and *The Knife of Never Letting Go* by Patrick Ness, your privacy isn't kept so private. The government believed that if there was more expression of your emotions, there would be less lies and crime. In *The Giver*, family compounds were forced to share their feelings and their dreams from the previous night regardless if they felt like sharing. In *The Knife of Never Letting Go*, a Noise germ was found on the planet the voyagers travelled to that speaks your thoughts out loud. The men on Prentisstown (which is a small village on the new planet) hate this, but, the government loves it because it can tell them if there's any defiance in the community. Although these acts were set in place to keep the community safe, life is limited and individuality is suppressed. I do *not* think conforming to society's rules and demands is more important than your own interests.

In both community's, there is very little individuality. Everybody in *The Giver* has the same beliefs, values, lifestyle, and homes (Lowry 42). Society decided on 'Sameness' which made everybody the same. Even their jobs were chosen for them! Sameness took away their emotion, color, and any other way they could express originality. *The Knife of Never Letting Go* is about a boy, his dog, and a girl he meets along the way trying to escape from the government. They're trying to escape because they've finally learned what a lie they had been living in. Everything young Todd had thought he had learned was in favor of the government to reduce any rebellious thoughts citizens might have. This is because freedom of thought wasn't allowed. Everybody *must* feel the same way about anything the government said. Your opinion is a big part of who you are; it's what gives you a voice. If your opinion was being altered, there would be no way to truly be yourself. This shows that since society's interests and individuality are discouraged, there is no independence or pure happiness which is beyond unfair.

Since society's rules and demands are depicted to be more important than the needs of the community, freedom is very restricted in both *The Giver* and *The Knife of Never Letting Go*. The men in Prentisstown in Ness' book are not allowed to leave their town (Ness 40). When Todd and his dog, Manchee, try to leave, the government hunts them down and plans to kill them.

Fortunately, they escape but that doesn't stop the Mayor and his men from coming for them. They think that if anybody leaves Prentisstown, they will want to live in a different community they find and expose the secrets Mayor Prentiss holds. In *The Giver*, the citizen's little freedom is shown when they can't choose their own spouse (Lowry 48). These rules are all to keep their towns safe, but, **although everybody would be safe, there would be such a limit to life.** When your everyday life is in somebody else's hands, you could start to feel vulnerable; as if your existence isn't respected. All the potential adventures and excitement would be missed out on and without passion towards anything, life would be pointless.

Lastly, if you lived in the general public of these books, your personal views and opinions would not be valued. The governments set an idea in the resident's minds and didn't give them an option to believe it or not. Everybody was forced to feel the same way no matter what. In *The Knife of Never Letting Go* and *The Giver*, death was a possible consequence for opposition! The **dehumanization** in these communities was so surreal that most didn't even realize there was a different way of living. When in a scenario in which you are dehumanized, you could feel small. Nobody deserves to feel like they're less than anybody else. *But*, citizens wouldn't realize they were being dehumanized in *The Giver* since their emotions were taken away. So, they would be living everyday the same way not feeling anything but what they were told too. Personally, this is an environment in which I would not want to live in and I believe many others could think the same.

Nobody should have to hide the way they feel or how they want to live. When everyday life is so restricted, you could start to lose track of who you are since you wouldn't be able to do the things you love. If the government kept rules simple but efficient and weren't such dictators, society could have been more peaceful. There could have been no wars, no running away, and most importantly, no fear. When you're scared of the world you live in, there's a problem. In conclusion, I feel that the rules and demands are overly harsh in these communities and that if you **conformed** to them before thinking about how they would affect you, you would be trapped in a world you don't want to live in.

Standard W.8.1
Grade 8
Proficient

Living in a World of Imprisonment

Making your own decisions and following your heart is important to shape you into the person you will become. What if all that were taken away though? You no longer have the ability to do what you want because the government controls everything. You're under constant surveillance and can't go back once a choice has been made. For the people in The Giver by Lois Lowry and Divergent by Veronica Roth control from the government is their way of life. Everything they do has to benefit the community. But does conforming to the rules and demands take first place over your own self interest? I believe that your own path should take first place over these rules of control and imprisonment.

Tris, the main character in Divergent, deals with lots of control over her self interest within the faction system. Factions is a way to divide groups of people based on what quality of personality they find the most important (Roth 2). When reached a certain age you must choose between the factions on where you think you belong. They then stay in that faction for the rest of their life. This takes out any way of going back to re choose their faction if they realize they made a mistake. In the same way that people can't fix their mistakes in Divergent Jonas in The Giver has the same type of control put over him by his government. People in his society are assign husbands and wives and can't pick their own jobs (Lowry 20). What if they don't like their job though? Maybe they're not compatible with the partner assigned to them. It would be in everyone's self interest to fix these terrible mistakes. The rules however say differently and won't let them do anything to improve their circumstance. I believe these citizens in the societies should be able to fix their mistakes the rules don't allow them to. Making everyone's life improved and avoiding inevitable sadness.

Introduces the claim

clearly: the writer gives appropriate context which summarizes the issue and establishes the texts referenced for a reader.

The writer **distinguishes their claim** by stating a main idea/focus/thesis that responds directly, appropriately, and specifically to the thinking required by the prompt.

Organizes reasons and evidence logically: the writer organizes by examples from both texts within a category related to the central claim made.

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim, reasons and evidence: the writer connects ideas from multiple texts within the paragraph.

The writer **supports the claim with logical reasoning, demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.**

At the same time the demands of the society are dictating their ability to be their true selves. In Divergent some people fit into multiple factions (Roth 20). This is strictly forbidden and results in severe punishment. These people, also referred to as divergents, are just trying to follow their hearts. They want to show their true personality but can't because of the rules of the society. Likewise in the Giver people have to take stirring pills (Lowry 36). These pills wipe away emotion and true feeling, leaving just an empty shell of a human in its place. This is the only way of life these people have ever known. Not being able to follow your true path in life is miserable and shouldn't be expected from anyone. If allowed to follow their own path these people would find true emotions. They would be forced outside their comfort zones and opened up to a world of possibility. True happiness would find its way into their hearts and minds, making them realize their true self that has been pushed aside for so long.

Equally important is the fact that these rules about "protecting the community" is really just hurting it. Some rules force people to die for no reason. This can be seen in the Giver with the release ceremonies. People think that the citizens being released are going to a different community or somewhere else (Lowry 7). In reality the truth is a lot darker. Jonas knows that something is wrong and would do anything to break the rules to save this innocent child. I think it would be in everyone's self interest to save an innocent person. If it comes by breaking the rules I think everyone would agree that the person's life is more important. Similar to this is in Divergent how they punish the people who are different (Roth 43). In our own history we can see examples of fear and hate against people who are different than what we used to think was normal. As a world we adapted to change and uniqueness and became better. To do this though people broke the rules. Everyone fought for a better future. Jonas and Tris are trying to put this message of rising up to help people in the minds of everyone.

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim, reasons and evidence: the writer connects evidence between and within paragraphs.

Organizes reasons and evidence logically

Supports claim with logical reasoning and well-chosen relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources

Establishes and maintains a formal style

The writer **supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.**

If the societies had let the people make their own decisions and be themselves I think everything would have been fine. Rules have to be put in place to avoid total chaos. When it ruins people's lives and makes them lose their true self I think it has gone to far. These rules made it exponentially worse for everyone. In the future I think it is important to remember what these books tried to teach us. That following your heart and helping others is more important than following the rules. The government might think their right but people will realize the mistakes they have made. The people will rise and make the society better as a whole.

Acknowledges and distinguishes the claim from alternate or opposing claims

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationship between claim and counterclaim

Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the argument presented

Final Thoughts
(Gr 8 Argument: Proficient)

Overall, this 8th grade essay shows solid understanding of the topic as she proves the side she has chosen and researched in response to the Focusing Question, the negative effects of government control taking precedence over one's self-interest and choices. The writer establishes a clear claim on the issue and sustains this argument throughout an essay that utilizes multiple texts in supporting a stance on a topic. She uses evidence from literary sources and connects these ideas using logic and reflection to demonstrate understanding of the claim and to try to persuade the reader of its validity. In addition, the writer analyzes the evidence at an appropriate 8th grade level, and includes a counterclaim that is explained and then successfully argued against as she returns the reader to the legitimacy of her focus/claim through word choice and reasoning.

All of this thinking is done within a clear structure, including clear transitions for cohesion, that makes the thinking well-connected and easy for the reader to follow. She concludes by reflecting appropriately on the significance of the topic in support of her argument and leaving the reader with a life-lesson to ponder.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 8 Argument: Proficient)

Control of Conventions: Although there are some errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.

Standard W.8.1
Grade 8
Approaching

Everyone Will Feel Free

You are a teenager, and have to make a decision that will change the rest of your life. In the Giver by Lois Lowry, a 12 year old boy called Jonas gets assigned to a job as the new receiver and has to carry all the memories of the community. Instead of the whole community having pain, they chose one adept person to have all memories. In Divergent by Veronica Roth, Tris has to elect which faction she wants to be in and maybe abandon her old one. She has to choose what she want to do with the rest of her life. Both the Giver and Divergent has a very controlling government that helps and protects you. If it helps for the greater good and is meant to make things better or solve societal issues, it is okay. Many rules makes people stay out of trouble and there will be less disagreement.

A society with many rules, makes it safer. In The Giver, you can not choose your job, partner, and you do not have your own kids (Lowry 22). This may seem strict, but I think it makes everything more fair and safe. With many rules, no one will make poor choices. Another thing in The Giver is that you can not get a bike until you are nine years old (13). This makes the community more fair for all the kids because they all get a bike at the same time instead of some kids having bikes and some not. In Divergent, you can not visit or think about your old faction after choosing a new (Roth 184). This helps people change and get used to their new faction because they do not think about their old faction all the time. Many rules makes people in the community stay out of trouble and there will be less disagreements.

Many rules, gives everyone a feeling of belonging. The faction system in Divergent gives everyone a feeling of acceptance. You chose a faction based on personal interests, your aptitude test results, and what

Introduces the claim clearly: the writer gives appropriate context which summarizes the issue and establishes the texts referenced for a reader.

The writer **distinguishes their claim** by stating a main idea/focus/thesis that responds directly, appropriately, and specifically to the thinking required by the prompt.

Organizes reasons and evidence logically: the writer organizes by examples from both texts within a category related to the central claim made.

The writer **supports the claim with logical reasoning, demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.**

Uses some words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim, reasons and evidence: the writer connects ideas from multiple texts within and between the paragraphs.

you like to do everyday (Roth 37). Each faction values different things. Dauntless values bravery which is a big part of Tris (47). When people with same interests as you are together, it is easier to make friends. In the Giver, everyone thinks that they belong to the job they get assigned to. The committee of Elders chooses your job based on your talents (Lowry 15). This makes people like Jonas feel like they are in the right place and that they are meant for their job.

Establishes and maintains a formal style

Although some people might think that it takes away your freedom, a community with many rules makes it more efficient. In the Giver, you have assigned partner and kids (Lowry 15). You get a partner which avoids divorce and unhappiness. Assigned kids makes every family the same and no actions will be divisive. No family will be poor because of too many children and not enough money to take care of them all. All these rules about family and everyday life makes people stay out of disagreements and loneliness. In Divergent, you wear what is right in your faction. No one will stand out or look wrong. You can not look at yourself in the mirror except if you get a haircut (Roth 1). This avoids bullying, and it prevents people from judging themselves on their appearance. It stops everyone comparing themselves to others. The rules makes sure that there will not be any unhealthy and unhappy relationships and homes.

Acknowledges and distinguishes the claim from alternate or opposing claims

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationship between claim and counterclaim

Organizes reasons and evidence logically

Supports claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources

If individuals had more control over their own life, then the community would work less efficient and society would not be as safe. When the community is put first, everyone will feel comfort and safety because the government will never do anything just for their good. The people will never be in a state of anarchy. Individuals will never doubt the government because they know that they will not do anything to put the society in danger. If the government went against their own rules and did something disingenuous, the community would not work well because the people rely on rules to follow for things to work. Removing the questions of life is a way to enjoy and live life to the fullest, and it helps

Attempts to **provide a concluding section that follows from and supports the argument presented**; however, the ideas in the conclusion are not an accurate representation of the texts and so do not support the claim

all people succeed. Everyone will do their job and always work optimistically without questioning and worrying about what rules to follow. Everyone will feel free.

Final Thoughts
(Gr 8 Argument: Approaching)

Overall, this 8th grade essay is nearly proficient. The writer shows an understanding of the topic as she proves the side she has chosen and researched in response to the Focusing Question in the introduction and body of her essay, namely the positive effects of government control. The writer uses evidence and reasoning from the sources to support the claim, creating a well-structured essay that is logical and clear. The writer's elaboration on the evidence chosen demonstrates understanding of both the topic and task of trying to influence the thinking of the reader. However, the conclusion is problematic as the writer expresses misunderstandings about the central messages of the two texts being considered. She shows she has misinterpreted the motivation for the methods of control within the stories, and has assigned benign intent to the actions of the governments in the texts, conclusions unsubstantiated by the stories themselves. This gap in accurate understanding of the material undermines her ability to support her claim clearly.

This student could benefit from teacher support in revising the conclusion to include and expand upon the solid examples chosen to support the claim in ways that reflect accurate understanding of the literature and serve to enhance the argument presented.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 8 Argument: Approaching)

Control of Conventions: Although there are some errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.

Standard W.8.1
Grade 8
Beginning

What happens in a world of confinement ?

In dystopian novels people are treated like they have no purpose in their community .They are treated like resources by being considered a number . I think that is dehumanizing them because of their lifestyle is controlled by the community .

It is no okay to dehumanize even if it helps the greater good . They are dehumanized in **Divergent** because the people in there community are put into five fractions like a conformity and have no choice (Roth 2) . In **The Giver** they are dehumanized because they take away emotions and they are not allowed to love one another pick spouses or kids (Lowry 124-126) . In the book **The Giver** the people in the community are chosen for certain jobs .

In **The Giver** there is surveincence in there houses were the chief elders can listen and see what your doing (15) . In **Divergent** there is surveillance next to the water fountains (Roth) I don't think surveillance is a good thing in both of these communities because its invasion of privacy . But I can see that they don't want anyone to break the rules.

Even though in **The Giver** and **Divergent** they are trying to keep them safe but keeping them from what they want to do is not okay and take away their emotions . In **The Giver** they are given a spouse and kids . I can see why they dont let you love someone else because they don't want you to get hurt emotionally , but I don't think that makes it right .

Introduces the claim

generally: the writer gives some context which briefly summarizes the issue.

The writer **distinguishes their claim** by stating a main idea/focus/thesis that answers the prompt.

Organizes reasons and evidence logically: the writer organizes by examples from both texts within a category related to the central claim made.

Uses a few words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim, reasons and evidence within and between the paragraphs.

The writer attempts to **support claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources.**

Acknowledges and distinguishes the claim from alternate or opposing claims

The writer attempts to **support the claim with logical reasoning, demonstrating some understanding of the topic or text.**

What if we didn't have dehumanizing and surveillance would that make a great difference in the world ? I think these books are trying to show that even though it helps the greater good it's not right to dehumanize and use surveillance . As humans I think we should have the feel all of the emotions because that's human nature . These communities in dystopian novels are taking away human rights and human nature .

Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the argument presented

Establishes a reasonably formal style

Final Thoughts
(Gr 8 Argument: Beginning)

Overall, this essay shows some understanding of the topic. The focus of the piece is clear and the writer attempts to use evidence from two texts to illustrate and prove the claim at a basic level. The structure is easy to follow and the writer shows they understood the task of grouping examples from multiple texts under categories in support of an argument. She includes a counterclaim and attempts to use this to strengthen her argument by distinguishing it from her claim. The conclusion logically follows from and attempts to deepen the claim made and maintained throughout the essay.

The next steps for this writer are to practice transitioning in varied ways that make relationships between concepts clearer and deeper, and to add sentences of more formal reasoning as elaboration on the details chosen. This might be accomplished through more chances to orally rehearse the notes/evidence on her graphic organizer prior to writing.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 8 Argument: Beginning)

Partial Control of Conventions: The writer shows some control over language and conventions. The lack of control of conventions and language interferes with the reader's understanding of the piece at times.

Standard W.8.1
Grade 8
Exceeds

Trapped

How would you feel if your feelings and thoughts were shared to the whole community? In *The Giver* by Lois Lowry and *The Knife of Never Letting Go* by Patrick Ness, your privacy isn't kept so private. The government believed that if there was more expression of your emotions, there would be less lies and crime. In *The Giver*, family compounds were forced to share their feelings and their dreams from the previous night regardless if they felt like sharing. In *The Knife of Never Letting Go*, a Noise germ was found on the planet the voyagers travelled to that speaks your thoughts out loud. The men on Prentisstown (which is a small village on the new planet) hate this, but, the government loves it because it can tell them if there's any defiance in the community. Although these acts were set in place to keep the community safe, life is limited and individuality is suppressed. I do not think conforming to society's rules and demands is more important than your own interests.

In both community's, there is very little individuality. Everybody in *The Giver* has the same beliefs, values, lifestyle, and homes (Lowry 42). Society decided on 'Sameness' which made everybody the same. Even their jobs were chosen for them! Sameness took away their emotion, color, and any other way they could express originality. *The Knife of Never Letting Go* is about a boy, his dog, and a girl he meets along the way trying to escape from the government. They're trying to escape because they've finally learned what a lie they had been living in. Everything young Todd had thought he had learned was in favor of the government to reduce any rebellious thoughts citizens might have. This is because freedom of thought wasn't allowed. Everybody *must* feel the same way about anything the government said. Your opinion is a big part of who you are; it's what gives you a voice. If your opinion was being

Introduces the claim

clearly: the writer gives appropriate context which summarizes the issue and establishes the texts referenced for a reader by choosing relevant details as background information for the essay.

The writer **distinguishes their claim** by stating a main idea/focus/thesis that responds directly, appropriately, and specifically to the thinking required by the prompt.

Organizes reasons and evidence logically:

the writer organizes by examples from both texts within clearly defined categories related to the central claim made.

Establishes and maintains a formal style

The writer **supports the claim with logical reasoning, demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.**

altered, there would be no way to truly be yourself. This shows that since society's interests and individuality are discouraged, there is no independence or pure happiness which is beyond unfair.

Since society's rules and demands are depicted to be more important than the needs of the community, freedom is very restricted in both *The Giver* and *The Knife of Never Letting Go*. The men in Prentisstown in Ness' book are not allowed to leave their town (Ness 40). When Todd and his dog, Manchee, try to leave, the government hunts them down and plans to kill them. Fortunately, they escape but that doesn't stop the Mayor and his men from coming for them. They think that if anybody leaves Prentisstown, they will want to live in a different community they find and expose the secrets Mayor Prentiss holds. In *The Giver*, the citizen's little freedom is shown when they can't choose their own spouse (Lowry 48). These rules are all to keep their towns safe, but, **although everybody would be safe, there would be such a limit to life**. When your everyday life is in somebody else's hands, you could start to feel vulnerable; as if your existence isn't respected. All the potential adventures and excitement would be missed out on and without passion towards anything, life would be pointless.

Lastly, if you lived in the general public of these books, your personal views and opinions would not be valued. The governments set an idea in the resident's minds and didn't give them an option to believe it or not. Everybody was forced to feel the same way no matter what. In *The Knife of Never Letting Go* and *The Giver*, death was a possible consequence for opposition! The **dehumanization** in these communities was so surreal that most didn't even realize there was a different way of living. When in a scenario in which you are dehumanized, you could feel small. Nobody deserves to feel like they're less than anybody else. *But*, citizens wouldn't realize they were being dehumanized in *The Giver* since their emotions were taken away. So, they would be living everyday the same way not feeling anything but what they were told too. Personally, this is an

Organizes reasons and evidence logically

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim, reasons and evidence: the writer connects ideas from multiple texts within and between the paragraphs.

Supports claim with logical reasoning and well-chosen relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources

Elaborates on **relevant evidence**, using the details to substantiate the claim and deepen the reader's understanding

The writer **supports the claim with logical reasoning, demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.**

environment in which I would not want to live in and I believe many others could think the same.

Nobody should have to hide the way they feel or how they want to live. When everyday life is so restricted, you could start to lose track of who you are since you wouldn't be able to do the things you love. If the government kept rules simple but efficient and weren't such dictators, society could have been more peaceful. There could have been no wars, no running away, and most importantly, no fear. When you're scared of the world you live in, there's a problem. In conclusion, I feel that the rules and demands are overly harsh in these communities and that if you **conformed** to them before thinking about how they would affect you, you would be trapped in a world you don't want to live in.

Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the argument presented

Acknowledges and distinguishes the claim from alternate or opposing claims

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationship between claim and counterclaim

Final Thoughts
(Gr 8 Argument: Exceeds)

Overall, this piece exceeds the standard for proficient. It meets all the criteria for proficient, and shows a nuanced understanding of both the topic and task of persuading a reader that a claim is valid. The writer consistently sticks to her focus, supplying and synthesizing evidence from the two texts read and using elaboration on that evidence to strongly connect the details to the claim as support for the argument.

In addition, the piece contains varied word choice and sentence structures to develop the focus. The writer uses complex and compound sentences, precise and sophisticated language, and domain-specific vocabulary. The clear structure and logical progression of reasoning cohesively support the position argued by the writer in respectful ways.

The next step for this writer would be to further develop phrasing for academic formality and impersonality (one vs. I) in order to make her arguments have more universal appeal and relevance.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 8 Argument: Exceeds)

Control of Conventions: Although there are some errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.