

## Age of Responsibility – Student Packet

In this module you will engage in the ongoing, shifting debate about when an individual may be considered mature.

Items needed to complete the module:

1. Reading: “What Is the Age of Responsibility” by Alan Greenblatt
2. Internet access
3. Handouts:
  - Activity 1: Key Concepts
  - Activity 2: How Old Do You Have to Be?
  - Activity 5: Key Vocabulary
  - Activity 8: Annotating the Text
  - Activity 11: Thinking Critically: Logos, Ethos, and Pathos

**Instructions:** Complete all of the activities on separate sheets of lined paper or type your responses in a Word or Google document if no handout is provided. Label each activity so that it is easy for your teacher to check your work.

### Activity 1: Quickwrite

Write a paragraph in response to the following question.

Think of a time when you were told that you were not old enough to do something. How did you feel? Did you have any influence or say in that decision? Did you agree or disagree with the decision and the reasoning behind it? Why?

### Activity 2: How Old Do You Have to Be?

See handout

### Activity 3: Surveying the Text

1. What do the title and subheading of Greenblatt’s article “What is the Age of Responsibility?” tell you about the topic of this article?
2. What can you tell about the article by briefly looking at its length and the length of its paragraphs: Will it be difficult or easy? Why do you feel this way?
3. What do you think is the purpose of this article—to entertain, to inform, or to persuade readers? Why?

**Activity 4: Making Predictions and Asking Questions**

1. Read the first two paragraphs and the last paragraph. Predict what the article will be about.
2. Will the article take a strong position on the issue? What makes you think so? Briefly explain your answer.

**Activity 5: Key Vocabulary**

See handout

**Read “What Is the Age of Responsibility”****Activity 6: Reading for Understanding**

Read with the grain for understanding: As your teacher/parent reads part of the article aloud . . .

1. Highlight the ideas you are confused about (in a different color than your vocabulary words).
2. Underline the points that seem to be main ideas.
3. Next to the confusions that you highlighted, write in the right- hand margin a question that you have about the meaning or purpose of the statement.

Complete the reading on your own, or as instructed by your teacher/parent.

4. If you find any sentences that could be the author’s thesis, write “thesis” in the right hand margin.
5. Look back at your prediction for the purpose of this article. Did it entertain, inform, or attempt to persuade?

Author’s thesis:

6. Does Greenblatt have an explicit (stated) thesis anywhere in the article? If so, double underline it.
7. If not, is his point of view on the age of responsibility implicit (implied) throughout the article? Write his opinion about the age of responsibility at the bottom of the last page of the article.

**Activity 7: Descriptive Outlining**

See handout

**Activity 8: Noticing Language – Three R’s of Maturity**

See handout

**Activity 9: Post Reading****Responding to the Article**

1. From your work charting the text in Activities 9 and 10, what do you think is the essay’s main point? Is it explicit, or is it implicit? Explain your answer.
2. Which section is the most developed?
3. Which section needs more development?
4. Which section is the most persuasive? The least persuasive? Explain your answer.
5. What was the author’s purpose in writing this article?
6. Who do you think was the intended audience?

**Thinking Critically—Ethical Questions (*Ethos*)**

From the analysis you have done so far, you should be well prepared to analyze the various voices and points of view in the article, the emotional effects of the language on the reader, and the logic and support of the arguments.

1. Who is this author? What can you tell from the information in the text? Does he or she have the background to speak with authority on this subject?
2. If you were going to do an Internet background check on this author, what would you want to find out?
3. What sort of ethos does this writer try to project in this article? What devices does he or she use to project this ethos?
4. Do you trust this author? Do you think this author is deceptive? Why or why not?

**Thinking Critically—Questions about Emotional Effects (*Pathos*)**

1. Does this piece affect you emotionally? What parts? In what ways?
2. Do you think the author or any of his sources are trying to manipulate your emotions? How?

3. Do your emotions conflict with your logical interpretation of the arguments? In what ways?

**Thinking Critically—Logical questions (*Logos*)**

1. Can you think of counterarguments that the author doesn't deal with?
2. Do you think the author has left something out on purpose? Why or why not?

**Activity 10: Think-Write-Pair-Share**

Finally, all things considered, are you persuaded by this article's thesis and arguments? Why or why not?

- First, think about what you have read and discussed.
- Then jot down your response to the above question with a few strong reasons that come to mind.
- Get with a partner and discuss your responses.
- Prepare to share your ideas and discoveries with the group.

**Activity 11: Preparing to Write**

See handout

**Activity 12: Essay**

As a culmination of this module, you will write an essay. Your teacher will tell you if you will:

- a) have 15 minutes to plan and 45 minutes to write an on-demand essay in response to the reading and topics of this module...or...
- b) work on drafting, revising, and polishing your essay over the week and turning in the final version along with any earlier drafts and the completed packet.

Either way, use your essay planner (Activity 11) and the reading "What Is the Age of Responsibility" during writing. This essay will be scored using the CSU English Placement Test – Essay Scoring Guide Rubric.

**\*\*Turn in your completed Module Packet along with your essay.\*\***

## Activity 2: How Old Do You Have to Be?

Hit the Internet! Try to discover the ages for as many of these activities in our own and other countries as you can. Circle any outliers that seem inappropriate. Then, for each activity, write down your thoughts on what appropriate age should be for that activity and why. Be prepared to share and discuss!

| Activity                             | USA | Brazil | Iran | Japan | Germany | What IS the appropriate age? WHY? |
|--------------------------------------|-----|--------|------|-------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Drink alcohol                        |     |        |      |       |         |                                   |
| Get driver's license                 |     |        |      |       |         |                                   |
| Attend school (upper required limit) |     |        |      |       |         |                                   |
| Serve in the military                |     |        |      |       |         |                                   |
| Get married (women)                  |     |        |      |       |         |                                   |
| Vote                                 |     |        |      |       |         |                                   |
| Get a tattoo                         |     |        |      |       |         |                                   |
| See R-rated movies                   |     |        |      |       |         |                                   |

### Activity 5: Key Vocabulary

#### Vocabulary Self-Awareness Chart

- Examine the list of words in the first column.
- Put a “+” next to each word you know well (third column).
- Put a “□” next to any words for which you could provide an example or a partial definition, if asked (fourth column).
- Put a “-” next to the words that are new to you (fifth column).
- Find each word in the designated paragraph in the article and highlight it.
- Study your assigned word(s) in context, and write a brief definition in your own words that can be shared with the class (last column). Consult a printed or online dictionary if needed for clarification.
- Share definitions with the class/group.

| WORD       |     | +       | □           | -         | DEFINITION   |
|------------|-----|---------|-------------|-----------|--|
|            | ¶ # | Know it | Heard of it | New to me | Use the context in the article to help you write it in your own words. |
| scope      | 3   |         |             |           |  |
| rampant    | 4   |         |             |           |  |
| reprise    | 4   |         |             |           |  |
| revelation | 6   |         |             |           |  |
| precedent  | 7   |         |             |           |  |
| rite       | 8   |         |             |           |  |

|                   |    |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------|----|--|--|--|--|
| counterproductive | 12 |  |  |  |  |
| cohort            | 18 |  |  |  |  |
| tantamount        | 24 |  |  |  |  |
| punitive          | 30 |  |  |  |  |

**Demonstrate Understanding of Key Vocabulary**

Use the word bank below to complete the sentences in the following paragraph about the topic you are about to study. Each word will be used once.

|       |                   |         |            |           |
|-------|-------------------|---------|------------|-----------|
| scope | rampant           | reprise | revelation | precedent |
| rite  | counterproductive | cohort  | tantamount | punitive  |

“May I have the car keys?” is a familiar refrain to many parents of teenagers, and although it is almost a cliché for older adults, it may come as a \_\_\_\_\_ to many that the under-eighteen \_\_\_\_\_ is finding it increasingly more difficult to participate in this quintessentially American \_\_\_\_\_ of passage—taking the car out for a spin without mom or dad in the passenger seat.

A 2011 \_\_\_\_\_ of this question might be: “My probationary year was up last week, so I’m going to pick up Jack and Jill and drop them off before the curfew . . . Can I have the car keys?” The Graduated Driver’s License (GDL) may be setting a for policies regulating the \_\_\_\_\_ of young people’s rights. But, could this approach really work with, say, teens and alcohol? Binge drinking is \_\_\_\_\_ at many college campuses, and the majority of drinkers are likely underage. Supporters of a lowered drinking age believe that forcing young people to wait until they are 21 is \_\_\_\_\_ to encouraging them to party in unsafe and secretive situations. Those who oppose lowering it to match the social reality say it would be \_\_\_\_\_ and dangerous, claiming that moving the drinking age to 18 would actually be pushing the limit towards 15 and 16 year olds. Regardless, many experts are suggesting a less \_\_\_\_\_

more understanding approach to the rights of minors in the hopes of teaching them to take on more responsibility, even as they seek more freedoms.

## Activity 7: Descriptive Outlining

### DIRECTIONS

Following is a version of the article with boxes labeled alphabetically beneath 12 sections of the article. In small groups or with partners, re-read the text. Together, decide on the purpose(s) for each section.

- “Purpose” refers to the author’s reason for including those paragraphs, as well as the function they serve in the article.

Section A is done for you as a model.

### What is the Age of Responsibility?

Alan Greenblatt | September 30, 2009

1. Justin McNaul grew up in a hurry. By the time he was 23, McNaul had graduated from college, married and gone to work for his local police force in Virginia. But McNaul, now 36, still bristles at the memory of something he wasn’t allowed to do at 23: Go down to the airport counter and rent a car. “I’d been involved in police pursuits at more than 100 mph,” he says, “and yet they still wouldn’t rent me a car.”
2. To many young people, rental-car restrictions are more than an annoyance. They’re also a confusing contradiction, in terms of what society expects of them. After all, states trust people to drive at a much younger age: Most states issue driver’s licenses to persons as young as 16 years old. Yet nearly a decade must pass before the same persons can earn the trust of Hertz or Avis.

### A

**Purpose:**

*To introduce the concept of societal mixed messages and to grab the reader’s interest of sympathy.*

**One-Sentence Summary:**

*At 23 years old, Virginia police officer Justin McNaull could pursue lawbreakers at 100MPH, but he couldn't rent a car—one example of the contradictory and confusing expectations states place on young people when it comes to age and responsibility.*

3. By the time adolescents become adults, they are accustomed to such inconsistent treatment. Practically from puberty, young people are bombarded with mixed signals about the scope of their rights and the depth of their responsibilities. And most of those mixed signals come from the laws of state and local governments. In most respects, people are considered adults at 18. That's when they can vote and enter into legal contracts—including the purchase, if not rental, of a car. But a 20-year-old Marine, just back from patrolling the streets of Baghdad, would have to turn 21 before he could join a local police force in most cities in the United States. A 20-year-old college junior, far more educated than the average American, cannot buy alcohol or enter a casino. In 10 states, a single 20-year-old cannot legally have sex with a 17-year old. But in nearly every state, a 16-year-old can marry—if he has his parents' permission. (A handful of states allow girls to marry before boys.)
  
4. Recently, many of these lines drawn between adolescence and maturity have been called into question. For example, the presidents of 135 universities are campaigning to consider lowering the drinking age from 21. They note that binge drinking on campus is rampant despite the stricture, and argue that if students were given the right to drink at an earlier age, they might handle it more responsibly. Another argument is a reprise of the one that came up 40 years ago when servicemen came home from Vietnam. Then, the complaint was that soldiers were old enough to die but not to vote. (The 26th Amendment took care of that problem by lowering the voting age to 18.) Today, military personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are left to question why they can fight America's wars but still can't patronize its bars.

**B**

**Purpose:**

**One-Sentence Summary:**



stuck as a threshold age through the 19th century and into the 20th. Until they turned 21, young people owed their parents either their labor or their wages, whether that meant working on the family farm or operating a machine in an urban factory and handing over their pay.

8. Through the middle of the 20th century, the onset of adulthood seemed to come earlier and earlier. War was partly responsible for that, as 18-year-olds went off to fight in World War II, followed by the wars in Korea and Vietnam. On the home front, manufacturing jobs didn't require a high-school diploma. It was thus common for 18-year-olds to support themselves and start their own families. And the rise of youth culture in the 1950s and 60s turned the teen years into their own distinctive stage of development—and consumer spending. There was a new sense that reaching the end of this life phase was a rite of passage in and of itself.

## D

**Purpose:**

**One-Sentence Summary:**

9. Nowadays, teens face more cultural pressure than ever to grow up fast, in certain ways. Yet there's a strong pull in exactly the opposite direction, too. Many more 18-year-olds are choosing college over work now than a generation or two ago. They live independently at school for part of the year but under their parents' roofs for the rest. People are getting married later than they used to, and many have become slower about starting their own careers. Even before the current recession, plenty of college grads and dropouts had "boomeranged" back to Mom and Dad's house. Sociologists now talk of "extended adolescence" and "delayed adulthood."
10. That means that the window of time during which teens and young adults "grow up" is opening wider. This partly explains why state and local governments are so haphazard when it comes to young people: The law, and the people who write and interpret it, are just as befuddled about how to





and drug crimes but also for minor infractions and misdemeanors. Specific numbers are hard to come by, but on any given day, an estimated 10,000 minors are housed in adult facilities.

17. Now, states are just starting to rethink the wisdom of sending 13-year-olds to spend hard time among older, more experienced criminals. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, youths who had previously been tried as adults are 34 percent more likely to commit a crime again than those who went through the juvenile justice system. Not only do young offenders treated as adults reoffend sooner and more frequently, they're also more likely to go on to commit violent crimes.
18. On this matter, states are finding, nothing is more persuasive than crime data. Despite all the media attention given years ago to superpredators, the vast majority of youth crimes involve property theft and drugs and seldom involve murder. And while there are still roughly 250,000 juveniles tried each year, the rate of crime for this cohort, as measured by arrests, has gone down in each of the past 15 years. Tough policies toward juveniles remain prevalent, but a few states have begun loosening up.

## G

**Purpose:**

**One-Sentence Summary:**

19. It's precisely because policy toward teens can be so random and emotionally charged that some people find the discoveries about brain development reassuring. The brain scans are putting hard science behind what anyone who has raised an adolescent knows—that young people simply aren't always capable of making good decisions.
20. Increasingly, this scientific evidence is being introduced in regard to juvenile justice. In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the juvenile death

penalty after receiving stacks of briefs summarizing the latest adolescent brain research. Scientists now regularly appear before legislative committees, showing pictures that make clear the developmental differences between a 16-year-old brain and that of a 25-year-old. The scans show, in the words of Temple University psychologist Laurence Steinberg, that juveniles may be “less guilty by reason of adolescence.” But even scientists are cautious about leaning too hard on the neurobiology.

21. Research linking brain structure to actual human behavior is still limited. And neuroscientists are clear about the fact that different parts of the brain mature along different timetables. In other words, executive thinking may not reach its peak until 25 but most people are capable of performing many adult functions adequately at an earlier age—probably between 16 and 21.
22. The fact that every person is different and develops at his own pace doesn't make the creation of policy any easier. Parents can guide their children, let them learn from their mistakes when they need to and bail them out when they have to. But laws are less sympathetic. Laws must draw lines, in order to be fair and comprehensible. And there will never be enough brain scans to go around to draw those lines as accurately as we might like.

## H

**Purpose:**

**One-Sentence Summary:**

23. What those laws can do, however, is acknowledge that growing up is a process, not a birthday. And in at least one major policy area—the driving age—states are finding ways to recognize this by introducing youngsters to increasing levels of responsibility, rather than foisting it upon them all at once.
24. Of the rights and rites of adulthood, driving holds a special place. On one hand, in a country with meager access to public transit, being able to operate

a car is tantamount to mobility. Learning to drive is as essential to taking a first job as it is to going out on a first date—or at least doing those things without being chauffeured around by parents. On the other hand, driving is by far the most likely way that a young person will kill himself or others.

According to the CDC, 4,500 Americans between 16 and 19 die from motor vehicle crashes annually, while another 400,000 are injured seriously enough to require emergency treatment. Obviously, driving is a responsibility that must be given to young people with great care.

25. The new approach that has taken hold among the states is called “graduated driver licensing,” or GDL. The idea is to license kids to start driving at a certain age, but on a probationary basis. They might have to put in more hours driving with their parents or with professional instructors. They might not be allowed to drive at night. Or they might not be permitted to drive in the company of friends—peer pressure is often a factor when young drivers make bad decisions behind the wheel. GDLs have been implemented in some form in every state except North Dakota.

I

**Purpose:**

**One-Sentence Summary:**

26. One reason why GDLs have become popular with state lawmakers is because they represent the middle ground in a highly emotional debate. Following a horrific car crash in his district, Illinois state Representative John D’Amico introduced legislation to raise the driving age in his state from 16 to 18. But D’Amico, who is from Chicago, quickly found out that the rural roots of early driving run deep. “I couldn’t get Southern Illinois to agree to it,” he says. Instead, D’Amico proposed a GDL. The law that passed in 2007 tightened nighttime driving curfews for 16- and 17-year-olds and required new drivers to wait a full year before they can carry more than one non- relative.

27. The impact was immediate. In 2007 in Illinois, 155 teens between the ages of 16 and 19 died in automobile crashes. In 2008, that number fell to 92. Those results track with findings on GDLs nationally. According to a Johns Hopkins University study, states with strong GDL laws have cut accidents among young drivers by 40 percent, with injuries down 38 percent.

**J**

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>Purpose:</b></p><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><p><b>One-Sentence Summary:</b></p> |
|---|

28. GDLs give adolescents time to practice, with less risk to themselves and other drivers. Their brains may not always make the best judgments about how fast to drive at night or in the rain. But that's somewhat compensated for by the experience they're getting behind the wheel. "The science says that what you want to do with kids is what parents and grandparents know," says Ronald Dahl, a professor of pediatrics and psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh. "If you give them freedom and they can handle it, then they get a little bit more."
29. Robert Epstein, a psychologist and author of Teen 2.0, says states could learn something from the way they regulate pharmacists and masseurs. Just as those groups are licensed based on the competence requirements of their professions, adolescents could accrue rights based on somehow proving they're up to the task. Teens would do pretty well under such a system, he argues. He's just completed a study of more than 30,000 people showing that 30 percent of American teens are more competent than the median adult in a variety of areas.

**K**

|                        |
|------------------------|
| <p><b>Purpose:</b></p> |
|------------------------|

**One-Sentence Summary:**

30. It would be useful for states to think more broadly when it comes to the age of responsibility. States have been acting in ever-more-punitive ways toward teens. Yet the point of laws regulating the behavior of young people should not be to restrict them. It's to begin educating them in the ways of responsible adulthood. What's important, after all, is not passing a test or meeting an arbitrary age requirement, but learning lessons and applying them to real life.

L

**Purpose:**

**One-Sentence Summary:**

### **DIRECTIONS**

Now that you have finished determining the purpose of each section, you will go back through the article and write a one-sentence summary for each section assigned to you/your group (or the entire article, depending).

You may need to write a summary for each paragraph within your section before writing your single sentence summary. Once again, Section A is done for you as a model.

### Activity 8: Noticing Language

As a class, determine the definitions of the “Key Concepts” of **rites**, **rights**, and **responsibilities** relating to the article and briefly discuss them with the class.

1. Three R’s chart. Using the Greenblatt article to guide you, complete the chart below with a partner.
2. Discuss the chart, focusing on an understanding of the three R’s.
3. Reread paragraph 5 of the article together and discuss “executive decision making.” Note: Neuroscientists have further discovered that the connective/linking tissues in the brain develop from back to front, explaining why the *prefrontal cortex* is one of the last to form.

#### Age of Responsibility—Key Concepts

| 3 R’s         | Definitions | Examples |
|---------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>Rites</b>  |             |          |
| <b>Rights</b> |             |          |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Responsibilities</b>  |  |  |
| <b>Put the three concepts together by writing a paragraph that explains a topic (e.g., learning to drive a car) in terms of its rites, rights, and responsibilities.</b> |  |  |
|  |  |  |

### Rites, Rights, and Responsibilities—The Three R’s of Maturity

Follow the steps as directed by your teacher. For each word or phrase from “What is the Age of Responsibility?” . . .

1. Check the correct “R” category or categories for each item: Does this word involve rites or customs, laws and legal rights, or legal and personal responsibilities? It’s possible to have more than one check mark per word!
2. Then provide an example from everyday life. The first row has been completed for you.

| # | ¶ | Word/Phrase               | <br>Rites | <br>Rights | <br>Responsibilities | An example from everyday life                           |
|---|---|---------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| 1 | 3 | rights                    |  | ✓   |  | <i>Driving a car with a minor in the passenger seat</i> |
| 2 | 3 | responsibilities          |  |   |  |   |
| 3 | 4 | maturity                  |  |   |  |   |
| 4 | 4 | stricture                 |  |   |  |   |
| 5 | 5 | executive decision making |  |   |  |   |
| 6 | 5 | consequences              |  |   |  |   |

| #  | ¶  | Word/Phrase               | <br>Rites | <br>Rights | <br>Responsibilities | An example from everyday life |
|----|----|---------------------------|--|---|--|-------------------------------|
| 7  | 6  | milestone birthday        |  |   |  |                               |
| 8  | 8  | rite of passage           |  |   |  |                               |
| 9  | 9  | getting married           |  |   |  |                               |
| 10 | 10 | curfews                   |  |   |  |                               |
| 11 | 11 | mastery of their vehicles |  |   |  |                               |
| 12 | 12 | the drinking age          |  |   |  |                               |
| 13 | 14 | enforcement               |  |   |  |                               |
| 14 | 16 | juveniles                 |  |   |  |                               |
| 15 | 16 | murder and drug crimes    |  |   |  |                               |
| 16 | 23 | birthday                  |  |   |  |                               |

| #  | ¶  | Word/Phrase                | <br>Rites | <br>Rights | <br>Responsibilities | An example from everyday life |
|----|----|----------------------------|--|---|--|-------------------------------|
| 17 | 24 | driving                    |  |   |  |                               |
| 18 | 25 | graduated driver licensing |  |   |  |                               |
| 19 | 28 | best judgments             |  |   |  |                               |
| 20 | 29 | competence requirements    |  |   |  |                               |

### Activity 11: Preparing to Write

#### Considering the Writing Task

In “What is the Age of Responsibility?,” Alan Greenblatt observes, “In America, ‘adulthood’ already has its familiar compass points, 18 and 21. But what is the age of *responsibility*? And what if that age—the point when citizens are responsible enough to earn all of the rights a democracy confers upon its people—bears no resemblance to the ages already enshrined in law? Finding the answers to those questions is a more complicated task than simply choosing a milestone birthday.”

#### **Assignment**

What is the age of responsibility? That is, when should a person be considered to be an adult? Use your notes, readings, observations and experience to support your position.

In your response, be sure to consider all three “R’s” (rites, rights, and responsibilities) involved in becoming a mature person, an adult.

**Take a Stance—Quickwrite**

Where would you draw the line to separate adulthood from childhood? Why? Do you think there is one age that could be established as the threshold for everything from drinking to driving to fighting in the military to watching an R-rated movie? Why or why not?

*Space for Quickwrite:*

**Formulating a Working Thesis**

**Thesis Generator:** You will use this graphic organizer to generate a thesis. First, read the example below.. Then you will use the Thesis Generator to create a thesis for your own essay.

Example: *How is the relationship between teenagers and their parents affected by the age of responsibility?*

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Identify the subject of your paper        | <i>Relationships between teenagers and their parents</i>                     |
| 2. Turn your subject into a guiding question | <i>How does the relationship between teenagers and their parents change?</i> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 3. Answer your question with a statement       | <i>As teens grow more independent, they resent and resist the limitations and expectations their parents impose on them.</i> |
| 4. Refine this statement into a working thesis | <i>Conflict between teenagers and their parents is a difficult but necessary stage in kids' development.</i>                 |

Real Topic: *What is the age of responsibility? That is, when should a person be considered an adult? Use your notes, readings, observations and experience to support your position.*

In your response, be sure to consider all three “R’s” (rites, rights, and responsibilities) involved in becoming a mature person, an adult.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Identify the subject of your paper          |  |
| 2. Turn your subject into a guiding question   |  |
| 3. Answer your question with a statement       |  |
| 4. Refine this statement into a working thesis |  |

You may also want to think about or write the answers to the following questions in order to generate your thesis:

1. What is your tentative thesis?
2. What support have you found for your thesis?
3. What evidence have you found for this support (e.g., facts, statistics, statements from authorities, personal experience, anecdotes, scenarios, and examples)?
4. How much background information do your readers need to understand your topic and thesis?
5. If readers were to disagree with your thesis or the validity of your support, what would they say? How would you address their concerns? (What would you say to them?)
6. Think about what most people know and think about the topic of your paper. If you want to change the opinions of the audience, you will need to think about persuasive techniques, both logical and emotional.

### **Considerations for Writers**

The following are considerations that you may want to take into account when organizing your texts:

#### **The Beginning or Introduction:**

- Directs readers' attention to the topic or issue the writing addresses
- Establishes the importance of the topic
- Provides background information that the audience may need
- Introduces the thesis, purpose, or main claim of the writing in order to suggest how the piece will be developed

#### **The Middle or Body:**

- Explains, illustrates, and develops the topic or issue
- Contains as many paragraphs as are necessary to develop the ideas
- Contains examples or arguments supported by evidence
- Often quotes, paraphrases, or summarizes other texts in support of the purpose of the writing

- May present and analyze data
- Often addresses counterarguments, alternative positions, or explanations
- Use sophisticated domain-specific words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied word order

**The Conclusion:**

- Connects the writing to some larger claim or idea
- Points the reader to next steps or new questions raised by the writing
- Identifies the conclusion the writer has reached and its significance
- Evaluates or analyzes the conclusions drawn
- Explains the implications of the major point of the writing

**Using the Words of Others (and Avoiding Plagiarism):**

You may be citing the Greenblatt article or other sources to support the claims in your persuasive essay. The following guide will help you correctly use those sources and properly document them:

One of the most important features of academic writing is the use of words and ideas from written sources to support your own points. Here are three ways to incorporate words and ideas from sources into your own writing:

1. **Direct quotation:** Alan Greenblatt says, “Practically from puberty, young people are bombarded with mixed signals about the scope of their rights and the depth of their responsibilities” (1).
2. **Paraphrase:** In “What is the Age of Responsibility?” Alan Greenblatt notes that starting in their early teens, adolescents receive contradictory messages about their rights and responsibilities (1).
3. **Summary:** In “What is the Age of Responsibility?” Alan Greenblatt cites statistics and examples from different sources to illustrate the range of societal opinions on when a young person matures and becomes an adult. According to the author, “the age of responsibility” is not so much an age as it is the result of a cyclical process of “learning lessons and applying them to real life” (1, 5).

