

Performance Task Item: Take a Knee

Grade Level: English III

Focus Areas: Informational Reading; Argument Writing; Collaborative Discussions

Essential Question: When is the wrong thing right?

Learning Targets:

- Students will cite strong and thorough evidence to support analysis of informational text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- Students will analyze the development of the theme or central idea over the course of the text (how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account).
- Students will evaluate the effectiveness of the structure of an author's explanation or argument (including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing and engaging).
- Students will evaluate the reasoning (premises, purposes, and arguments) in works of public advocacy (including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning).
- Students will write an analysis of substantive topics or text using valid reasoning and sufficient evidence.
- Students will adjust writing practices for different timeframes, tasks, purposes, and audiences.

STANDARDS

Content Standards:

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
- Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes.

Materials/Resources:

- Article: “Protest Started by Colin Kaepernick Spreads to High School” Lexile 1150
- Article: “The Opposition to NFL National Anthem Protests is Missing the Point” Lexile 1560
- Constructed Response Rubric
- Chart Comparing Two Texts
- Letter to the Editor Rubric

4. How effective is the argument for or against the protest? Evaluate both sides. Support your answer with evidence from the text. (DOK 3)

Read *The Opposition to NFL National Anthem Protests is Missing the Point* and answer questions 5 - 7.

5. Write a concise summary of the article. (DOK 2)

Part B:

8. Complete the following chart using information from both texts.

<i>Protest Started by Colin Kaepernick Spreads to High School</i>	<i>The Opposition to NFL National Anthem Protests is Missing the Point</i>
What is each saying?	
How are these texts similar? (subject matter, tone, theme, purpose)	
How are the two different? (subject matter, tone, theme, purpose)	

Part C:

9. Write a letter to the editor stating whether or not you support the protest. Make sure in your comments that you do not “miss the point.” (DOK 4)

ARTICLES/RUBRICS

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/04/us/national-anthem-protests-high-schools.html? r=0>

Protest Started by Colin Kaepernick Spreads to High School Students

By JULIE TURKEWITZ OCT. 3, 2016

Aurora Central High School football players in Colorado went down on one knee in a sign of protest while the national anthem was being played before a game on Saturday.

AURORA, Colo. — Vicqari Horton dropped a knee to the grass. The varsity choir piped out “The Star-Spangled Banner.” And in the bleachers at a sun-soaked football stadium here on Saturday, parents clenched their teeth in anger or raised their fists in support.



“You can’t continue to slap people in the face and not expect them to stand up,” said Mr. Horton, a junior tight end at Aurora Central High School who is black and began kneeling during the national anthem at games in mid-September. “When Kaepernick kneeled, he gave us an outlet. He gave us something to do.”

In the weeks since Colin Kaepernick, a San Francisco 49ers quarterback, took a knee during the national anthem — a protest against racial injustice — he has been discussed by President Obama, has been derided by Donald J. Trump and has helped to intensify an already roiling national debate about race, the police and the definition of patriotism.

He has also pushed that conversation onto a quintessential American stage: the high school football field.

Over the weekend, three-quarters of the 44 Aurora Central Trojans football players knelt during “The Star-Spangled Banner” before the team crushed a rival, the Hinkley Thunderbirds, 41-6. A thousand miles away, students at Madison East and Madison West High Schools in Wisconsin dropped to their knees, too.

So have players at Garfield High School in Seattle; Castlemont High in Oakland, Calif.; Woodrow Wilson High in Camden, N.J.; and Mission High in San Francisco. At Omaha Central High, cheerleaders and band members have joined the protest. And in Beaumont, Tex., so have 11- and 12-year-olds from a youth team called the Beaumont Bulls. They have received a variety of responses: In the case of the Bulls, internet comments included a call for coaches to be lynched and the children to be killed.

Here in Aurora, a sprawling, highly diverse suburb of Denver, the protest has invigorated a group of young people who have never known a world without viral videos of violence.

Those who kneel honor their country by refusing to be cowed into not protesting injustice and persecution. Their kneeling respects America.

They entered kindergarten about the time Facebook was born; were around the same age as Tamir Rice or Michael Brown, two African-Americans killed by police officers; and now attend one of the worst-performing schools in the state, a high school that is overwhelmingly black and Latino.

Melinda Holt, left, watched the game with her husband, Howard, center. “It’s ignorance,” Ms. Holt said of those who protested by getting down on one knee. “You are dishonoring our flag for the actions of a few.”

In interviews, several students took issue with critics who told them that they did not understand what they were protesting. “We know what we’re doing; we made a conscious decision,” said Jalil Grimes, 17, a senior and the team’s starting quarterback. “We see police do us wrong. We see our teachers give up on us and expect us to fail. We’ve always seen this. Once we saw somebody else stand up against it, we just fell in line.”

The idea of kneeling came from several players, including Mr. Horton, who approached their coaches to ask permission to do so. The coaches gave their support, and the school district issued a statement saying it would respect their actions. “Any time young kids can speak their minds, it’s always good,” said Tony Veasley, 49, a part-time coach for the Trojans who said six of his sons had graduated from Aurora Central.

On Saturday, though, the stadium was a sea of hearts tied up in internal conflict.

On the Hinkley side of the bleachers, near a mass of brass instruments and a cluster of exuberant cheerleaders — “Jam with us! Hey, hey!” — Melinda Holt, 60, a white Army veteran, sat with her husband, wearing Thunderbird blue. They were there to watch a grandson play, she said.

“It’s ignorance,” Ms. Holt said of the kneelers. “You are dishonoring our flag for the actions of a few. That’s like holding every black man or every white man accountable for what somebody else has done. And that’s wrong.”



On the other side of the stands, a Hispanic woman named Maria Mitchell — wearing Trojan green beside her daughter Téa — said she felt conflicted over the kneeling players. She spent more than 25 years as a military wife, she said, and believes that standing for the anthem is a way to honor lives lost in war.

But her children are of mixed ethnicity — black and Hispanic. “And if you’re not a person of color, you don’t understand any of it,” she said. “To wake up every day and not know whether your kids are coming home or not, just because of their color, is ridiculous.”

“Unless we walk in their shoes and feel what they feel on an everyday basis, we have no room to judge,” she continued. “We can choose to support, or not support and be blind.”

The protests come at a turbulent time for Aurora Central, a school of 2,172 students that is 67 percent Hispanic and 16 percent black. More than 40 percent of students are learning English as a second language, nearly 70 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, and officials have announced a drastic academic overhaul intended to stave off a school shutdown.

Aurora Central football players greeting friends as they boarded their bus after the game on Saturday.

Fights are a problem, and last year’s football game against Hinkley ended in a clash among students that forced the police to intervene.

Christian Wells, 17, an offensive and defensive lineman, ended that night in police custody, after officers confused him with someone else, he said. This year at the Hinkley game, he chose to go down on one knee.

“I’ve seen police brutality up close and personal,” he said. “To family members. To friends. To myself personally. It’s like, if nothing else will stop it, maybe silently protesting will do something.”

On Saturday, the Trojans finished the game in a cascade of cheers, bouncing out of the stadium and onto a yellow team bus. In the parking lot, a 13-year-old Trojan fan, Damian Chavez, called the decision to kneel a “sign of respect for every black person in the country.”

A few hundred feet away, inside the empty stadium, the 81-year-old press box manager, Bob Blair, dressed in cowboy boots and Wrangler slacks, looked out onto the field.

“They’ve never been anywhere to see what the rest of the world hasn’t got and what we have: It’s called freedom,” Mr. Blair said. “We don’t agree with it, but we can’t stop it.”

<http://sports.mynorthwest.com/185198/the-opposition-to-nfl-national-anthem-protests-is-missing-the-point/>

The opposition to NFL national anthem protests is missing the point

BY BRENT STECKER, 710 ESPN Seattle | September 12, 2016 @ 1:24 pm

Four Miami Dolphins joined the growing protests in the NFL during the national anthem on Sunday. (AP)

Chances are, you have an opinion on what happened before Seattle's season opener, when four members of the Miami Dolphins took a knee while each member of the Seahawks stood and linked arms during the national anthem.

You have a right to whatever your opinion may be, and a right to voice it. But under the same First Amendment that grants that right, each player had a right to his action as well. And before



your opinion of those actions hardens like a callus, consider the intentions of those players and why their perspective may have led them to make the choice they did.

Of course, this is more about the actions of Arian Foster, Michael Thomas, Kenny Stills and Jelani Jenkins – the four Dolphins who chose to kneel – and less about the Seahawks' gesture. It's also

about Seahawks cornerback Jeremy Lane, who sat during the anthem the week before in Seattle's final preseason game and very well could do so again next week, and about a growing list of NFL players who have joined 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who started the movement of silent protests as a way to bring to light the issues that African-Americans continue to face in this country, chiefly the spate of killings of unarmed black civilians at the hands of police officers in recent years.

The Seahawks' gesture was an effective message of unity, especially on the 15th anniversary of 9/11, but one that is unlikely to draw much ire in the national conversation. Nothing wrong with that. The silent protests have just as much of a place in the conversation, though. In fact, their intentions are very closely related to those of what wide receiver Doug Baldwin said the Seahawks' were on Sunday, yet a vocal portion of NFL fans have taken umbrage to these protests – and in many cases completely missed the point of them.

The common point of opposition to the protests are that they are a sign of disrespect for the military and veterans. If that's your opinion, it's your right to believe it. That does not make it fact.

One underlying issue behind the recent racial unrest in America is that there seems to be a disparity in weight that the voices of different races carry, that black voices still aren't heard near the level of white ones. That a growing protest focused on police brutality is being called disrespectful to the military underlines that exact point.

Never mind that the players themselves have said they don't mean disrespect to the military. Never mind the lack of perspective the backlash seems to have considering this adverse of a reaction is seldom seen when NFL players commit acts of domestic violence or other serious crimes in which there are victims – as opposed to the harmless act of not standing for the national anthem, which is neither a crime nor victimizes anyone. The response is that the act is too controversial, so the intention won't even be considered. Anyone who has that reaction is not listening and in fact then talking over African-Americans by misdirecting the conversation to the military.

Here are prominent black citizens merely trying to point out the struggles that their community faces, and they are jeered and told they aren't protesting the "right" way, that their method of protest is more offensive than the injustices they are protesting. And that's just not true.

It seems those opposed to these protests are only concerned about what the national anthem means personally to them, and not what it means to these members of the black community. It should not be a surprise that the anthem may have a different meaning to blacks than it does to whites in a country with a history of slavery and a systemic racism problem that lives to this day. And maybe you don't agree that systemic racism exists, but the likes of Kaepernick, Lane and the four Dolphins players are trying to tell you right now that it is, and it's only fair to listen to what they are saying before casting judgment.

By the way, systemic racism does in fact live in this very story. In 2016, there are still people who have no problem cheering a black athlete when he scores a touchdown then turning around to tell him not to speak his mind, to not take a stand against something that he feels in his heart is an injustice, to not use his standing in the public arena to help make positive change for the community he was born into.

That sends a message: "Just entertain us. You are paid to be an athlete, not to speak on issues."

That message is incredibly problematic. That's a message of ownership, that for the lone reason that an athlete is paid to play a sport, they should make no statements representative

of their political or social opinions. That they should waive their First Amendment rights, unless, of course, the things they say are in agreement with the paying masses.

Fans do not own players and should not insist that they have less rights than any other person in this country, and anybody who has read an American history textbook should know why black players would take exception to someone feeling that way.

If you oppose the protests, consider the definition of the word empathy: “The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.” It’s the same thing you’re demanding of these players when you call them disrespectful. And if you react that way without listening to and considering what they’re saying, you’re expecting something from these players you’re not even holding yourself accountable to.

So listen to what Kaepernick and the growing list of players are saying through their protests. Listen to Nate Boyer, a white man who once played for the Seahawks and fought in wars as a Green Beret and who has spoken about the courage it took for Kaepernick to start the protests. Boyer said he had an initial gut reaction of disappointment when Kaepernick didn’t stand for the anthem, but he took the time to talk to Kaepernick, to challenge his own assumptions, to truly empathize with somebody he thought he disagreed with before his initial opinion became a callus.

It’s easy to judge an athlete for speaking his mind. It’s a lot harder to challenge your own conceptions about what life is like in America for someone other than yourself. And neither of those things are as hard as being the people these NFL players are standing up for by kneeling down.

Constructed Response Rubric

Score Point	Descriptor
3	<p>The 3 response fully accomplishes the task requirements. It</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes a complete interpretation that goes beyond the text, • has clear logic or reasoning, and • provides specific, relevant support from the text.
2	<p>The 2 response adequately accomplishes the task requirements. It</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes an adequate interpretation, • may have minor flaws in logic or reasoning, and • provides general but relevant support from the text.
1	<p>The 1 response minimally accomplishes the task requirements. It</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes a minimal interpretation, • may have gaps in understanding or flaws in logic or reasoning, and • may provide sparse or irrelevant support from the text.
0	<p>The 0 response does not accomplish the task requirements. It</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may provide no support from the text, • may be limited to information copied directly from the text and presented as the student's own ideas, and • may be incorrect or illogical.

**Letter to the Editor
Rubric**

Achievement Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Knowledge/ Understanding -provide accurate information about the issue (e.g., the problem, the cause, who is involved, what decision needs to be made)	-limited accurate information	-some accurate information	-considerable accurate information	-thorough accurate information
Thinking/Inquiry -summarize alternate courses of action or opposing views	-limited information about possible courses of action or opposing views	-some information about possible courses of action or opposing views	-considerable information about possible courses of action or opposing views	-thorough (but succinct) information about possible courses of action or opposing views
Application -offered a reasoned conclusion or plan of action -provide reasons designed to appeal to reader	-conclusion or suggestions for action shows limited logic -provides limited support for conclusion	-conclusion or suggestions for action shows some logic -provides moderately convincing support for conclusion	-conclusion or suggestions for action shows considerable logic -provides convincing support for conclusion	-conclusion or suggestions for action shows a high degree of logic -provides highly convincing support for conclusion
Communication -clarity of communication -effectiveness in terms of audience and purpose (follows editorial style and conventions)	-written with limited clarity -limited evidence that writer is considering impact on audience	-written with some clarity -some evidence that writer is considering impact on audience	-written with considerable clarity -considerable evidence that writer is considering impact on audience	-written with a high degree of clarity -extensive evidence that writer is considering impact on audience



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