Today you will write your second argument essay using documents in this class.

**DIRECTIONS:**
*Answer the question in the box below based on your current knowledge and information from the documents provided to you by your teacher. As you read closely and analyze the documents, take into account both the source of each document and the author’s point of view. Be sure to do all of the following before you attempt to answer the question and write your essay.*

1. Read the question below and think about what you may already know about the topic.
2. Analyze each document provided to you carefully, underlining key phrases and words, as well as, taking notes that might help answer the question below. *(NOTE: You may write on each document and take notes of important information.)*
3. Determine the main idea of each document and think about how it might contain information that relates to the question in the box below.
4. Based on your own knowledge and the information in the documents, develop a claim (thesis) statement that directly answers the question.
5. Gather any relevant information from the documents as evidence to support your claim (thesis) statement. Organize your thoughts into a graphic organizer.
6. Write a well-organized essay supporting your claim (thesis) statement. Be sure to write your essay in a logical sequence that will make sense to the reader.
7. Include information obtained from the documents, as well as, your own knowledge. Be sure to cite each document that you use in your essay. (Doc. A, Doc. B, etc.)

**Question – Has NAFTA kept its promises to Mexican Workers?**

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Curriculum and Instruction  
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Office of Social Studies
Globalization at the Border: Has NAFTA Kept Its Promises to Mexican Workers?

On January 1, 1994, NAFTA was born. Known officially as the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA was a treaty signed by Mexico, Canada, and the United States. It had many goals: to help corporations, to increase workplace efficiency, and to improve the lives of workers. However, its main purpose was to encourage free trade.

Historically, many countries have limited free trade by imposing tariffs, or taxes on imported goods. Tariffs increase the price of imports. Since most people don’t want to pay high prices, these taxes give an advantage to national industries and the workers employed by them. In other words, tariffs provide protection from foreign competition. The problem with tariffs is that, because they decrease competition, they allow badly run businesses to survive.

Those who support free trade believe everyone benefits when tariffs are eliminated. The idea is that because goods without tariffs are less expensive, consumers can better afford them. More affordable goods result in increased sales. In turn, more sales mean higher profits and more jobs.

The free trade brought about by NAFTA is an example of globalization, or international connectedness. By the 1990s, the worldwide exchange of goods was becoming easier and less expensive. As countries agreed to let their industries compete across international borders, each country began to specialize in producing the goods and services they were best at providing.

NAFTA has shaped US–Mexico economic cooperation since 1994, but the two countries have been closely connected economically for much longer. In 1942, the United States and Mexico created the Bracero Program. Since many Americans were overseas fighting in World War II at the time, this program allowed American farm owners to temporarily hire Mexican workers to pick their tomatoes, oranges, and other crops. More than 4.5 million Mexicans participated. Mexican workers had hoped to earn more money than they could have in Mexico. However, for many, the Bracero Program did not live up to its promise. Workers endured harsh working conditions and lower-than-expected wages. American employers often took out payments for food, housing, and other expenses.

When the Bracero Program ended in 1964, the number of unemployed workers in Mexico grew. In response, the Mexican government made a serious effort to encourage foreign investment in the country. This led to the creation of foreign-owned assembly plants, called maquiladoras. The name comes from a Spanish word that means “to make for another.”

Foreign manufacturers benefited from the tax incentives Mexico offered, but low labor costs were an even bigger draw. Since Mexico has a much lower minimum wage and high rates of rural poverty, Mexican workers cost employers less. This helped keep production costs down, which helped manufacturers earn greater profits. Mexican workers benefited because more jobs became available.

NAFTA encouraged the growth of even more industry in Mexico. Since the treaty made it more profitable for companies to employ Mexican workers to assemble auto parts and refrigerators, multinational companies built more maquiladoras. Many of these Mexican-made goods were increasingly delivered to the United States.

By 1996, maquiladoras were the second largest employer in Mexico. Attracted by the promise of a better life, workers from the rural south flocked to jobs in these new factories at the northern border. But did they find what they were looking for?

This Mini-Q contains six documents about maquiladora workers today, more than 20 years after NAFTA took effect. Your task is to examine the evidence and decide for yourself: Globalization at the border: Has NAFTA kept its promises to Mexican workers?
Document A

Note: A preamble is an introduction, usually to a formal document.

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)
PREAMBLE

The Government of Canada, the Government of the United Mexican States, and the
Government of the United States of America, resolved to:
STRENGTHEN the special bonds of friendship and cooperation among their nations;
CONTRIBUTE to the harmonious development and expansion of world trade and provide a
catalyst to broader international cooperation;
CREATE an expanded and secure market for the goods and services produced in their
territories;
REDUCE distortions to trade;
ESTABLISH clear and mutually advantageous rules governing their trade; ... 
ENHANCE the competitiveness of their firms in global markets; ... 
CREATE new employment opportunities and improve working conditions and living standards
in their respective territories;
UNDERTAKE each of the preceding in a manner consistent with environmental protection and
conservation; ... 
PROMOTE sustainable development;
STRENGTHEN the development and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations; and
PROTECT, enhance, and enforce basic workers’ rights; ...
Document B

Source: Based on data from the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, the Economic Policy Institute, and Chad Broughton, *Boom, Bust, Exodus: The Rust Belt, the Maquilas, and a Tale of Two Cities*, 2015.


Employment in Maquiladoras by Border City, 2014

Total Maquiladora Employment Over Time

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Document C

Source: "Employees Work the Production Line at a Factory in Ciudad Acuna, Coahuila State, Mexico," McClatchy-Tribune Information Services, June 17, 2012.

Note: Safety signs and instructions are often written in English, a language most maquiladora workers do not read or speak.

Flora felt demeaned by the low wages Maytag paid and found the work tedious and the factory culture oppressive and demoralizing. Yet she stayed.

As a single mother, Flora lived on the razor’s edge of survival, but she had something her friends back in [Veracruz, Mexico] did not: steady work. . . . With overtime Flora could cross the poverty threshold to move into the nonpoor half [of the population].

The border was also where Flora . . . thought she could be a better parent. . . . [Here] in modernizing Reynosa, her daughters—if not herself—had a much better chance at getting ahead than they had had in Veracruz. “The education is better here, a lot better,” Flora reflected. . . . Her boyfriend, Arturo Mireles Guzman, agreed. The girls needed a technical profession, in his view. . . . “so they can be the bosses.” . . .

Flora’s gamble was about more than education. Coming north meant escaping crushing gender limitations in all aspects of life in Veracruz. . . . Despite the ceaseless and horrific headlines about drug-related violence, much of it directed at young women, there was a sense of freedom and possibility at the border. There were concrete freedoms too—access to more occupational fields, contraception, women’s health care, and divorce.
Document E


Note: In the border town of Reynosa, Mexico, children's shoes cost up to $25. Air-conditioning units cost $260 each. A two-liter bottle of soda costs $1.35.

By day, Sergio Martinez labors in a modern air-conditioned factory a few miles from the Texas border. . . .

At night, he comes home to a dirt-floor shack with a bare light bulb and no indoor plumbing. Mosquitoes buzz incessantly. . . .

His salary of $7.50 a day is enough to provide for the family dinner table, the cost of bootleg water and electricity, and an occasional article of discarded clothing for his wife or two girls, but rarely anything else. . . .

For nine years, Martinez has been a constant presence on a fast-moving assembly line. He unspools and tapes electrical wiring systems for Ford pickups, Harley-Davidson motorcycles, Volvo and Scania trucks and other vehicles.

He and his wife, Elba, are from a rural area of Veracruz state on the Gulf of Mexico, part of a large community from that state that's moved to Mexico's northern border. Once a municipal policeman, Martinez heard of good-paying jobs so he migrated, later bringing his wife and starting a family.

They live in what Mexicans call a "jacal," a homemade shanty of scrap wood and tarpaper. Boulders keep the corrugated tin roofing on in case of high wind. An outhouse is a few feet away. . . . A broken stove also lies outside, hollowed out and Jerry-rigged to serve as a barbecue. A makeshift electrical line brings power from a neighbor's house. A homemade pipe brings water from a different direction.

After nearly a decade at his job, Martinez isn't optimistic.

"We don't have hopes for a better life here for our kids," he said.
Women and men, more than 70 of them, were fired on December 9th [2015] from the factory on the Mexican side of the Mexico-Texas border where they made printers for the American company Lexmark. They say they were terminated because they were trying to form an independent union. . . .

"We are hungry. Our children are hungry," Blanca Estella Moya, one of the fired workers, tells me. "You cannot live on these wages in Juárez."

In the Lexmark maquiladora, or factory, Moya made 112 pesos, or roughly six US dollars, a day. Her shifts were nine-and-a-half hours long . . . . That’s about 39 cents an hour . . .

The Lexmark workers decided to try and form a union because they wanted better working conditions. Blanca Estella Moya, for example, was responsible for putting metal parts in a plastic cartridge, a job that made her wrists sore and caused tendonitis . . . . The machine she worked with constantly broke, she says, and supervisors were unsympathetic, expecting her to continue to produce 1,700 parts a day, even with a broken machine. The workers called one manager "The Dog" because of his record of sexual harassment . . .

[There] are [also] signs that the government and the factories are colluding to punish agitators. The names of the workers who asked to form a union were supposed to be secret . . . , but after they submitted the petition, 90 workers were fired, 75 of whom had signed the petition . . .