

LAUNCH TEXT | ARGUMENT MODEL

This selection is an example of an **argumentative text**, a type of writing in which an author states and defends a position on a topic. This is the type of writing you will develop in the Performance-Based Assessment at the end of the unit.

As you read, look at the way the writer builds a case. What is the writer's position and how is it supported?

Isn't Everyone a Little Bit Weird?



NOTES

- 1 **E**veryone is a little bit weird. That's not a bad thing. It just happens to be true.
- 2 The common definition of the adjective *weird* is "unusual or strange." The connotation, or implied meaning, of the term is that there is something wrong with a person who is described in this way. While many people might feel the connotation is accurate, I would argue that it's wrong for two reasons. First, the most gifted, successful people are often eccentric. Second, some traits we now think of as being weird were once highly regarded and not weird at all.
- 3 Consider Benjamin Franklin. One of the framers of the United States Constitution, Franklin (1706–1790) was a leading author, political theorist, politician, scientist, inventor, activist, and businessperson. He invented the lightning rod, bifocal glasses, and the Franklin stove. His discoveries regarding electricity are important to the history of physics. His public push for colonial solidarity was vital to the formation of the Union. He became wealthy as the writer and publisher of *Poor Richard's Almanack*.
- 4 There's nothing weird in that list of accomplishments. *Brilliant* would better describe Franklin, and yet the man some call "the first American" had certain ways about him you might consider odd. He once pranked a competing publisher by astrologically predicting when the man's life would end. He created his own alphabet, dispensing with the letters *c, j, q, w, x,* and *y,* and adding others he made up to stand in for common sounds. He is said to have favored "air baths," often writing his essays and letters while sitting in a cold room with nothing on.

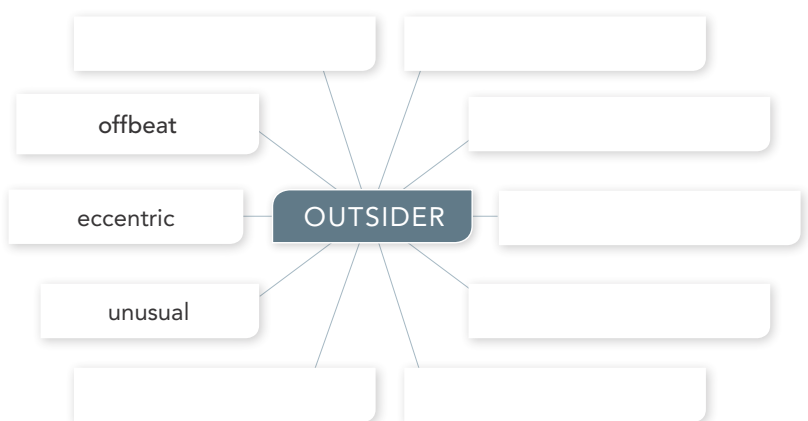


NOTES

- 5 Some aspects of Franklin’s life that people today might see as weird would have been viewed as unremarkable during his lifetime. Take, for example, his appearance. In famous portraits, he wears ruffled shirts, breeches, and tight stockings pulled up to the knee. He wore his hair long well into old age. Today’s viewers of those portraits might think him odd, but those were common fashions of his era. Likewise, consider Franklin’s education. He quit school at age ten and was apprenticed as a printer at age twelve—a career move that today would be considered both weird and illegal.
- 6 Perhaps Franklin’s oddness actually sparked his genius. He saw things in ways that challenged what other people accepted as fact. Additionally, he had the courage to communicate his insights, act on them, and turn them into achievements. It may have been Franklin’s weirdness that made him great.
- 7 Some might argue that weird people are just plain weird. By most people’s standards, an undressed man sitting in a cold room writing with a quill pen is undoubtedly strange. But that view of human nature is too narrow. It doesn’t recognize the important idea that many of those who see things differently turn out to be the most creative and ingenious among us.
- 8 Everyone has eccentricities—slightly odd, perhaps unique ways of thinking or behaving. These might be the first traits you notice in someone, or the last. Being a little bit weird may be one of the things that actually connects us, and makes us uniquely human.
- 9 Ben Franklin wrote, “Life’s tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late.” It takes wisdom to look past what seems weird in people—what makes them different—to find the offbeat humanity that unites us all.

 WORD NETWORK FOR OUTSIDERS AND OUTCASTS

Vocabulary A Word Network is a collection of words related to a topic. As you read the selections in this unit, identify interesting words related to the idea of the outsider and add them to your Word Network. For example, you might begin by adding words from the Launch Text, such as *weird*, *eccentric*, and *unusual*. Continue to add words as you complete the unit.



 **Tool Kit**
Word Network Model

Summary

Write a summary of “Isn’t Everyone a Little Bit Weird?” A **summary** is a concise, complete, and accurate overview of a text. It should not include a statement of your opinion or an analysis.

Lined writing area for the summary.

Launch Activity

Conduct a Small Group Discussion Consider this question: **Why might exceptionally talented people be considered odd?**

- Record your position on the question and explain your thinking.

- Get together with a small group of students and discuss your responses. Consider similarities in your points of view, and work to clarify differences. Support your ideas with examples from texts you have read or your own observations.
- After your discussion, have a representative from each group present a two- to three-minute summary of the group’s conversation.
- After all the groups have presented, discuss as a class the similarities and differences among the views presented.

QuickWrite

Consider class discussions, presentations, the video, and the Launch Text as you think about the prompt. Record your first thoughts here.

PROMPT: **Is the experience of being an outsider universal?**

EVIDENCE LOG FOR OUTSIDERS AND OUTCASTS

Review your QuickWrite, and summarize your initial position in one sentence to record in your Evidence Log. Then, record evidence from “Isn’t Everyone a Little Bit Weird?” that supports your position.

After each selection, you will continue to use your Evidence Log to record the evidence you gather and the connections you make.

 **Tool Kit**
Evidence Log Model

Title of Text: _____ Date: _____

CONNECTION TO PROMPT	TEXT EVIDENCE/DETAILS	ADDITIONAL NOTES/IDEAS

How does this text change or add to my thinking? _____ Date: _____