

Arguing With Evidence

Part 1: Deconstructing Arguments

Keristy Nieto
Published by *K20 Center*

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License

Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	100 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	2–3 class periods
Course	Composition, Creative Writing		

Essential Question

What issue is one of the most important to the current generation of youth in America?

Summary

This lesson guides students to examine and deconstruct published arguments based on social issues that are important to them. Students develop and present an argument related to issues in today's society, then evaluate their peers' work. While this lesson is currently aligned to 10th-grade standards, it would be appropriate to teach in grades 9–12, adjusting standards as needed.

Snapshot

Engage

Students share causes or issues that are important to them and connect with classmates who share interest in similar causes.

Explore

Students watch a video about argumentative writing and discuss the essential elements of an argument.

Explain

Students deconstruct a published argumentative article focusing on the thesis, evidence, and counterarguments.

Extend

Students create a visual representation of a selected topic.

Evaluate

Students evaluate their peers' work, offer feedback, and reflect on their own learning through a brief writing activity.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

ARG401: Analyze how one or more sentences in somewhat challenging passages offer reasons for or support a claim
ARG402: Identify a clear central claim in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 9)

9.3.R.2: Evaluate authors' perspectives and explain how those perspectives contribute to the meanings of texts.
9.3.R.5: Evaluate the validity of a speaker's argument:
- distinguish the kinds of evidence (e.g., logical, empirical, anecdotal)
- distinguish substantiated from unsubstantiated claims
- analyze rhetorical appeals (i.e., ethos, logos, pathos)
- identify bias
- identify logical fallacies

9.3.R.6: Analyze how informational text structures support the author's purpose.
9.3.W.3: Compose argumentative essays, reviews, or op-eds that:
- introduce precise, informed claims
- include a defensible thesis
- acknowledge counterclaims or alternate perspectives
- organize claims, counterclaims, and evidence in a logical sequence
- provide the most relevant evidence to develop balanced arguments, using credible sources
- use sentence variety and word choice to create clarity and concision
- use style and tone that suits the audience and purpose

Attachments

- Arguing With Evidence—Arguing With Evidence - Spanish.docx
- Arguing With Evidence—Arguing With Evidence - Spanish.pdf
- Arguing With Evidence—Arguing With Evidence.docx
- Arguing With Evidence—Arguing With Evidence.pdf
- Argument Essay Notes—Arguing With Evidence - Spanish.docx
- Argument Essay Notes—Arguing With Evidence - Spanish.pdf
- Argument Essay Notes—Arguing With Evidence.docx
- Argument Essay Notes—Arguing With Evidence.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Arguing With Evidence.pptx

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Argument Essay Notes handout (attached; one per student)
- Arguing With Evidence handout (attached; one per student)
- Poster board (one per pair of students)
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils
- Sticky notes
- Student devices (Chromebook, laptop, tablet, etc.; one per pair of students)

15 minutes

Engage

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson. Display **slide 3** and have the question, "What are three issues or causes that are important to you?" posted in the classroom when students enter the classroom.

Have students read the question on the slide and allow them time to consider their cause or issue. Assure students there are no right or wrong answers and they should simply answer the question to the best of their ability.

Move to **slide 4**. On the class board space or poster paper, draw an axis to be used as part of the Sticky Bars instructional strategy. Add the following labels evenly spaced along the axis: “Education,” “Social Media,” “Politics,” “Health,” and “Personal Character.” Share with students that many of their causes or issues should fall under one of these categories.

Give each student one sticky note and have them write their response to the question on the note. Then, invite students to bring their sticky notes to the prepared Sticky Bars space and place their sticky note above the category they believe best fits their cause. As students place their sticky notes, guide them to stack their notes so that they move up the board like a bar graph. The structure of the graph should help students see which categories are most important to their class.

Teacher's Note: Sticky Bars Example

If students need help visualizing what the Sticky Bars graph should look like, provide them with a visual example, like this example photo from IgnitED.

When students are finished placing their notes, organize students into pairs. Pair students based on their interests so that students passionate about a similar cause are working together. Students should work with their partners for the remainder of the lesson.

Use **slides 5–6** to share the essential question and learning objectives with students.

25 minutes

Explore

Move to **slide 7** and distribute the attached **Argument Essay Notes** handout to each student. Play the video on the slide, *How to Write an Argumentative Essay by Shmoop*, and have students independently complete the handout as they watch.

Allow students extra time to finish the handout after the video is over. Then, have students discuss their responses with a partner. Invite pairs to share out some of the most significant components of argumentative writing.

Explain

Display **slide 8** and pass out the attached **Arguing With Evidence** handout to each pair. Explain to students that they should use the handout to deconstruct argumentative articles.

Have students use a device to navigate to either *Britannica* or Kelly Gallagher's *Article of the Week* to browse collections of argumentative articles. Share that these websites feature articles with an argumentative stance.

Teacher's Note: Previewing Websites

Preview each website provided before you offer them to students. Ensure that the websites meet the needs of your lesson and modify or provide necessary alternatives.

Have each pair choose an article that fits their chosen issue from the beginning of the lesson. For example, if students chose an issue related to social media, they should find an article about social media.

Once pairs have chosen their articles, have them complete the Arguing With Evidence handout using the information from their articles. They should identify the main thesis of the article, supporting evidence, and possible counterarguments. Begin the 20-minute timer on the slide and allow students time to complete the handout.

Optional Modifications

If students need assistance, consider modeling how to complete the Arguing With Evidence handout using an article of your choice.

Lead a class discussion to guide students in identifying the thesis, supporting evidence, counterarguments, and a conclusion. This process will assist students in deconstructing their own arguments later.

If electronic devices are not available for each group, print copies of a variety of articles for each group to choose from.

30 minutes

Extend

Once students have deconstructed the argument from their articles, pass out markers and poster paper to each pair.

Display **slide 9** and tell students that they should create posters to represent their arguments. Share that each poster should include a thesis, evidence, and counterarguments. Tell students that they should use the information from their handouts to create their posters. Encourage students to use creative, artistic symbolism or a visually appealing outline.

Begin the 15-minute timer on the slide and allow students time to work. Inform students that their work will be evaluated, and they should prepare to present to their peers.

15 minutes

Evaluate

Have each pair hang their finished poster somewhere in the classroom.

Display **slide 10** and review the Gallery Walk strategy. Give each pair of students sticky notes of two different colors. Tell students to use the sticky notes to give their peers feedback on their deconstruction of an argument. Share that they should use one color of sticky note to record one thing about the argument they agree with, and they should use the other color of note to record one thing about they argument they disagree with. They should then stick the sticky notes on the poster. Stress that their feedback should be meaningful and constructive.

Have each pair stand in front of a poster that is not their own and begin writing feedback. Allow approximately 2 minutes for students to write and post their feedback. Then, have groups rotate to the next poster and repeat the process until all posters have been reviewed.

Teacher's Note: Guiding Feedback

Guide a class discussion on appropriate feedback. Feedback such as "Great job!" or "I don't like this" is not meaningful or constructive. Give some examples of the kind of feedback you hope to see.

Examples:

- "I agree with the argument that this issue affects many Americans."
- "I disagree with this argument because _____."
- "The thesis is interesting, but I'm not sure how the second piece of evidence supports the thesis."

Once the Gallery Walk is complete, ask students to return to their desks.

Move to **slide 11** and have them take out a piece of paper. Introduce the prompts on the slide:

- Has your opinion of the issue you first explored changed throughout the lesson?
- If so, how has it changed? If not, why not?

Start the 2-minute timer on the slide and have students write a quick reflection on the prompt.

Teacher's Note: Purpose of the 2-Minute Paper

During the 2-minute paper, students should write continuously. The purpose of this activity is for students to dump their thoughts while focusing on their ideas and not grammar or mechanics. Their pencils should not stop moving the entire time. Assure students they will not be graded on spelling or grammar, but on ideas.

Resources

- Gallagher, K. (n.d.). *Article of the week*. Kelly Gallagher. https://www.kellygallagher.org/article-of-the-week
- IgniteED. (2014). [Visual representation of sticky bars strategy][Photograph]. http://fuelgreatminds.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/formative-assessment.jpg
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery walk / carousel. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/118
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Sticky bars. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/12
- K20 Center. (2021, September 21). *K20 Center 2 minute timer* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcEEAnwOt2c
- K20 Center. (2021, September 21). *K20 Center 15 minute timer* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3zT2lxZQaw
- K20 Center. (2022, April 6). *K20 Center 20 minute timer* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjcwzinQlEE
- The Learning Network. (2024, August 8). Open letters: Our opinion-writing contest. *New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/08/learning/open-letters-our-opinion-writing-contest.html
- Shmoop. (2013, March 26). *How to write an argumentative essay by Shmoop* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lzGy5gizKg