

7th Grade
Argument Writing Unit

Name

Teacher's Name

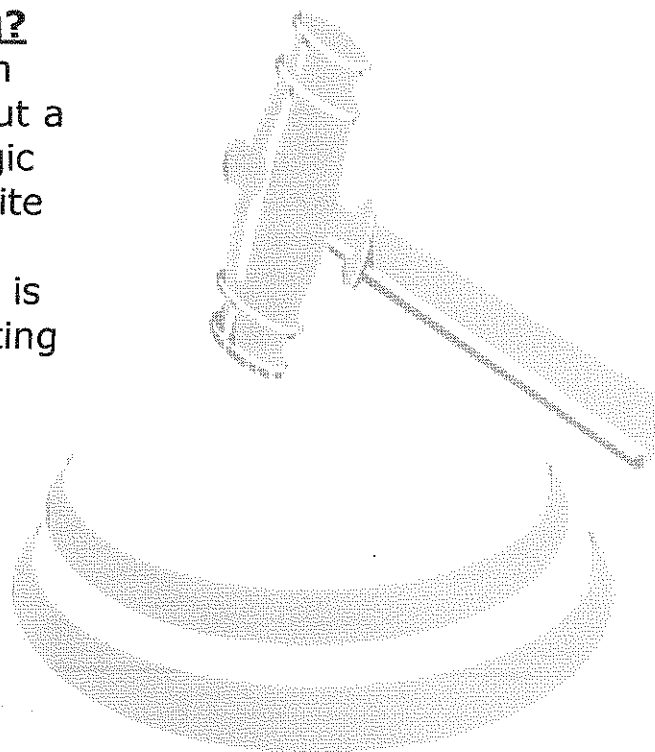
Argumentative Essay Terminology

What is argumentative writing?

Argumentative writing is writing in which a writer makes a claim about a topic and then supports it with logic and evidence. Learning how to write an effective argument is key to learning critical thinking skills and is an important part of "school" writing and real life.

How does it differ from persuasive writing?

Persuasive writing also involves making a claim. However, the supporting details are based on feelings and emotions.



Term	Definition
argument	Making a claim and supporting it using logic.
persuasion	Making a claim and supporting it using feelings and emotions.
claim	The point that you are trying to get your readers to accept.
evidence	Facts that support your claim.
bridge/warrant	Statement that explains how the evidence supports and connects to the claim.
counter-argument/concession	Challenging the argument by addressing the position of someone who may not agree with the argument.
turn-back/refutation	Demonstrating why the counter-argument is wrong.
audience	Who will be affected by the topic? Who will read the essay?

Organizing the Argument Essay

For an argument essay to be effective, you must organize your ideas, provide solid supporting evidence, and present the information clearly. Let's take a look at how that's done.

An argument essay is usually at least 5 paragraphs. It requires an introductory paragraph, at least 3 body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.

Introduction

The first paragraph is where you will hook the reader and state your claim. The claim is the thesis statement.



Body Paragraph #1

This paragraph includes the first reason that your claim is valid. Support it with evidence, such as facts, examples, and data.



Body Paragraph #2

This paragraph includes the second reason that your claim is valid. Support it with evidence, such as facts, examples, and data.



Body Paragraph #3

The paragraph should introduce an opposing claim, which is the counter-argument or concession. It also contains the turn-back, which takes the reader back to your claim and position.



Conclusion

The last paragraph restates the thesis statement and summarizes the main idea of the argument. It also contains a strong concluding statement.

Writing the Introductory Paragraph

The **introduction** to your essay has three parts and purposes.

1) Lead: The lead “hooks” readers and encourages them to keep reading. Try one of the following:

Lead	Example
Quote (by a famous person)	President Obama once said, “ During the summer, students are losing a lot of what they learn. A longer school year makes sense.”
Unusual Detail	According to historians, American farm children once attended school from December to March and mid-May to August.
Statistic or Fact	Experts say that during the summer, students lose approximately 22 percent of what they learned during the school year.
Strong Statement	Students must attend school; a shorter school year is comparable to child neglect.
Question	Are most Americans satisfied that compared to their peers in Europe and Asia, American students score lower on achievement tests?
Anecdote	There was a time when summer vacation meant endless lazy days, sitting on the porch, and watching the bees pollinate the flowers.

2) Introduce the issue: Briefly explain the issue and the controversy surrounding the argument. Give background information.

Ex. Much to the public’s dismay, summer vacations are in jeopardy in America, as the Secretary of Education pushes forward with a movement to extend the school year.

3) State your claim: This is the **thesis statement**. It is a promise to the reader that the essay will address the argument and prove the claim. Use one of these key words to form the thesis:

***Reasons *Benefits *Advantages or Disadvantages**

Ex. There are definite advantages associated with switching to a year round school schedule in the United States.

Writing the Body Paragraphs

Body paragraphs #1&2: Support the thesis statement/claim.

- 1) Start with a **topic sentence** that includes a **reason** people should be convinced by the argument.

Ex. In order for students to improve academically, and avoid "summer slide," American students should attend school year round.

- 2) Then include specific **evidence** to support the **thesis statement** (the claim). Use **facts, examples and statistics** to back up the claim.

Ex. For example, Balsz, a district in Arizona, saw reading test scores go up from 51 percent to 65 percent after extending the school year by 20 days.

- 3) Follow each piece of evidence with a **bridge** to explain how the evidence supports the claim.

Ex. This significant increase proves that students benefit by having more time in school.

- 4) Close with a **concluding sentence**.

Ex. It is possible to improve student test scores by requiring more days in school.

Text-reference and transition words and phrases to use in the body paragraphs:

First,
For example,
Furthermore,
Therefore,
According to

Also,
Above all,
Additionally,
Consequently,
For instance,

Finally,
Particularly,
Specifically,
Due to

Writing the Counter Argument Body Paragraph

Body paragraph #3: Writing the opposing argument.

- 1) The opposing argument, also called the **counter argument or concession**, proves that you fully understand the topic, and that you are fair minded.

Transition words and phrases to use in the counter argument:

It might seem that
Of course,
Certainly

It's true that
One might object
At first glance,

Admittedly,
While
Some people claim

- 2) The **turn back** is a return to the original argument. Be sure to refute the opposing claim.

Transition words and phrases to use in the turn back:

Yet,
Still

Despite
Except

However,
Conversely,

Nevertheless,
Even so,

Ex. Some critics of year round school say that the real results of studies that seem to show score increases in year round schools are inconclusive , and it is difficult to pinpoint the real reason for the increases. However, there is no doubt that students in Europe, where there is year round school, outperform American students on achievement tests.

Writing the Concluding Paragraph

The **concluding** paragraph is important, as it must close the issue by showing that the topic has been covered thoroughly. It should also provide an idea as to how people should be warned about the topic, or how they can benefit from the position argued.

1) Begin by restating the thesis statement or claim.

Ex. Year round school is the answer to the economic and educational problems in the United States.

2) Then, present one or two sentences that summarize the reasons and evidence.

Ex. A year round schedule will prevent students from losing the hard earned knowledge gained during the school year.

3) Finally, provide a benefit that will result from complying with or heeding the argument. Or provide a call to action to move the audience into wanting to make a change.

Ex. The nation's future depends upon having intelligent citizens. Schools must be year round in order to graduate such citizens.

General Tips

Do	Do Not
Use strong, convincing language.	Weaken your argument by using "I believe" or "I think."
Use reliable websites for research.	Make up "facts" or statistics.
Use 2-3 facts, examples, and/or statistics per body paragraph.	Rely on personal experiences.
Be respectful of those who disagree with your position.	Insult those who disagree.

Argument Essay Example

Directions: Read this argument essay that was written by a student. Label the following parts in the right-hand margin:

- Hook
- Thesis Statement/Claim
- 1 Example of Evidence
- 1 Bridge
- Counter-Argument
- Turn Back

Should Metal Bats be Banned in Youth Baseball?

On March 11, 2010, a high school pitcher in California was facing a player using a metal bat, when he was hit in the temple by a line drive travelling 100 mph. His skull was crushed, and he spent weeks in a coma. Fortunately, after surgery and months of rehabilitation, he survived. The accident brought to the forefront an issue that has been a safety concern ever since the 1970s when metal bats began being used instead of wooden bats. Metal bats are dangerous and should be banned by youth sport leagues for several reasons.

Baseballs hit with metal bats travel at a higher rate of speed than those hit with wooden bats. Researcher J.J. Crisco studied aluminum bats and found that they produced a “trampoline” effect, which means the baseball springs off of the bat at a high rate of speed. This happens so fast that pitchers and infielders don’t have time to react, which places them in danger. *The New York Times* reported that baseballs hit with metal bats travel almost 20 mph faster than baseballs hit with wooden bats. This is a huge difference to a player trying to make a play on a line drive in time. Consequently, the high rate of speed makes using a metal bat dangerous.

In addition, there have been many instances of players getting hurt by baseballs hit with metal bats. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, between 1991 and 2001, 18 players were killed by batted balls, and only two involved wooden bats. This proves that wood bats are safer than metal. Also, *The New York Times* reports that several lawsuits have been won by parents who sued metal bat makers after their child had been hurt. After being presented with evidence about the dangers of aluminum bats, judges and juries agreed they are responsible for injuries. Therefore, the high rate of injuries proves that metal bats are unsafe.

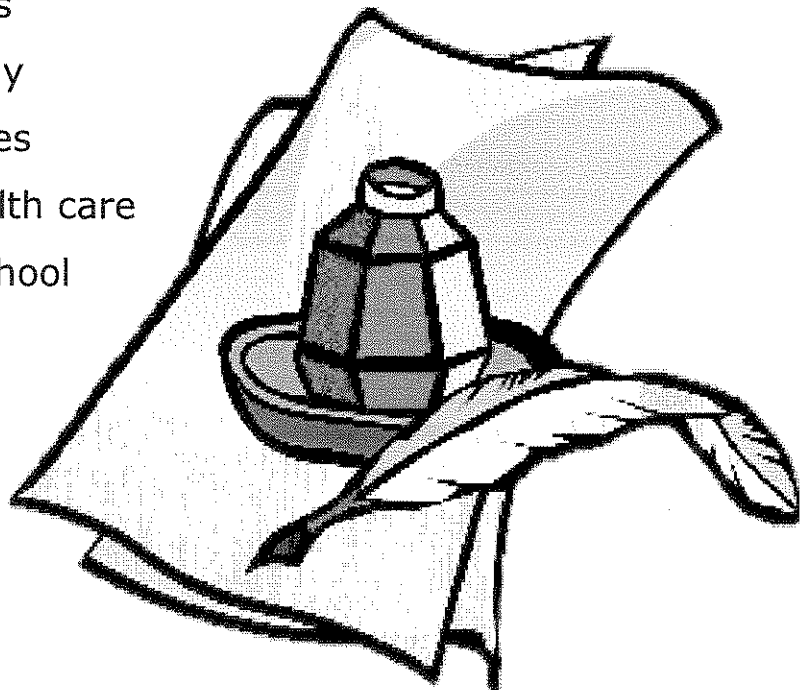
Some people claim that wooden bats are too expensive to supply to youth leagues because they are not as long lasting. This is true. Even so, a higher cost should not matter when safety is concerned.

Metal bats endanger the lives of young baseball players. First, they make the baseball travel at a high rate of speed, making it difficult to catch. Secondly, they have resulted in many injuries. Banning metal bats is necessary in order to save the lives of young players.

Possible Topics

Possible Topics for an Argumentative Essay

- Mandatory curfews for teens
- Common Core curriculum
- School uniforms
- Year-round schools
- Technology dependence
- Cellphones in schools
- Animal testing
- Cheating in schools
- Cyberbullying
- Salaries of professional athletes and actors
- Testing in schools
- Longer school day
- Homework policies
- Government health care
- Mandatory preschool
- Book banning



Choosing a Topic

Choosing a topic can be difficult. When you begin considering a topic, remember that it is the topic that is important, not the claim. Your position on the claim can come later, after you do some research. So begin thinking about possible issues by answering the following questions.

I. Current Controversial Topics: People sometimes have strong feelings about topics currently in the news.

a) Have you ever argued with someone about a controversial topic? If so, which one?

b) Have you recently read or heard about something in the news that you either strongly agreed or disagreed with? If so, which one?

c. Which school related issue do you feel strongly about?

Now choose a topic from the answers you wrote above. Write the topic and the controversy below.

Topic: _____

Controversy: _____

II. Your Interests: Another approach is to think of a subject you already know a lot about, or think of a subject in which you are already interested.

a) Is there anything controversial about something you've learned in school, or a sport or hobby you're interested in?

b) List some of your favorite hobbies and activities.

c) Is there anything unfair involving one of the your hobbies or activities?

d) Are there any laws that seem unfair or controversial about one of your interests?

Now choose a topic from the answers you wrote above. Write your interest and the controversy below.

Interest: _____

Controversy: _____

III. Something You Want to Learn About: Another way to find a topic is to research something you've wanted to know more about, but never had the time to pursue.

a) What are you curious to learn about?

b) Are there any controversies involving that topic of interest?

Now choose a topic you are curious about from the answers you wrote above. Write your interest and the controversy below.

Interest: _____

Controversy: _____

Important to Remember!
Once you have chosen your topic, be open-minded and flexible about your claim. You may have a position in mind already, but that may change after you begin your research. That is fine. You must gather facts in order to have a valid opinion.

Topic Proposal Form

Directions: Fill out the following information in order to get approval from the teacher. If your position changes during the course of your research, fill out the bottom of the sheet and resubmit for approval.

Name: _____

Topic: _____

Argument: _____

Claim: _____

Why are you interested in this topic?

Your Signature: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____

Comments: _____

Position Switch

Explain your new position and why you changed your mind.

Reapproval: _____

Gathering Evidence Through Research

Source: _____

Title: _____

Evidence/Information: _____

Source: _____

Title: _____

Evidence/Information: _____

Source: _____

Title: _____

Evidence/Information: _____

Source: _____

Title: _____

Evidence/Information: _____

Organization and Planning

Introduction

Hook: _____

Background Information: _____

Claim: _____

Body Paragraph 1

Topic Sentence- Reason:

Evidence: _____

Bridge: _____

Evidence: _____

Bridge: _____

Conclusion: _____

Organization and Planning

Body Paragraph 2

Topic Sentence- Reason:

Evidence:

Bridge:

Evidence:

Bridge:

Conclusion:

Organization and Planning

Body Paragraph #3

Counter Argument/Concession: _____

Turn Back: _____

Conclusion

Restate Claim/ Thesis Statement: _____

Summarize the evidence: _____

Final Statement: _____

Argumentative Writing Student Checklist

Criteria	Absolutely	Mostly	Partially	Not Really
Introduction ➤ Have you provided an interesting hook?				
➤ Have you given background information?				
➤ Have you stated a claim in the thesis statement?				
Body Paragraphs ➤ Have you used statistics or facts to provide evidence?				
➤ Have you explained by using a bridge?				
➤ Have you included a concession and a turn back?				
Conclusion ➤ Have you restated the claim, summarized, and ended strongly?				
Organization & Style ➤ Have you organized the response and used transitions?				
➤ Have you written for your audience?				
Mechanics: ➤ Have you reviewed for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors?				

Argumentative Essay Rubric

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clear, interesting introduction of topic. ➤ Demonstrates understanding of topic and claim. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clear introduction of topic. ➤ Demonstrates grade level understanding of topic and claim. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduction of topic is unclear. ➤ Demonstrates limited understanding of topic and claim. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduction does not address task. ➤ Demonstrates little understanding of topic and claim.
Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Facts are well-chosen and support argument. ➤ Evidence is fully explained by use of a bridge. ➤ Concession and turn back are convincing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Facts are relevant to argument. ➤ Evidence is explained by use of a bridge. ➤ Concession and turn back are included. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Partial use of evidence. ➤ Use of evidence that may not be accurate ➤ Concession and turn back are incomplete. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No evidence is provided, or evidence is irrelevant. ➤ Concession and turn back are missing or irrelevant.
Organization, Clarity, and Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Skillful organization and use of transitions enhance meaning. ➤ Includes style, sophisticated vocabulary, and voice. ➤ Interesting concluding statement that clearly stems from the topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clear organization and use of transitions. ➤ Includes style and grade-level vocabulary. ➤ Concluding statement relates to topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Partially organized, with little use of transitions. ➤ Some attempt at style, with basic vocabulary. ➤ Some attempt is made to conclude. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Little attempt at organization. ➤ No use of transitions. ➤ Lacks style. ➤ Conclusion is missing or irrelevant.
Mechanics: grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is clear evidence that the response has been reviewed, revised and edited. ➤ There are few errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is some evidence that the response has been reviewed, revised, and edited. ➤ There are some errors, but they do not interfere with understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is little evidence that the response has been reviewed, revised, and edited. ➤ Frequent errors interfere with understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is no evidence that the response has been reviewed, revised, and edited. ➤ Frequent errors hinder understanding.

Argument Writing Rubric Scoring Guide

16	100
15	94
14	88
13	81
12	75
11	69
10	63
9	56
8	50
7	44
6	38
5	31
4	25