

# Unit 4: Argumentative Writing 2023 (Resource)

Content Area: **English**  
Course(s): **Language Arts Literacy**  
Time Period: **April**  
Length: **Approximately 60 days**  
Status: **Published**

## Unit Overview:

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This unit is designed to equip 8th grade students with the skills and knowledge necessary to construct compelling arguments and effectively communicate their viewpoints. Throughout this unit, students will explore various strategies for developing persuasive arguments, analyzing evidence, and presenting their ideas in a clear and organized manner. By the end of the unit, students will be able to articulate their positions on different topics, support their claims with evidence, and engage in respectful debates.

## Essential Questions:

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1. What is the purpose of argumentative writing, and why is it important in various aspects of our lives?
2. How can we distinguish between strong and weak arguments, and what criteria should we use to evaluate their effectiveness?
3. How can we identify and address counterarguments to strengthen our own arguments?
4. What are the different types of evidence that can be used to support claims, and how do we determine their validity and reliability?
5. What strategies can we use to organize our arguments coherently, including the structure of introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions?
6. How can the use of rhetorical devices enhance the persuasiveness of our writing?
7. What techniques can we employ to revise and edit our work to improve clarity, coherence, and persuasiveness?
8. How can we engage in respectful and constructive discussions and debates while considering different viewpoints?

## Enduring Understandings:

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1. Effective argumentative writing requires a clear and focused claim supported by credible evidence and logical reasoning.
2. Constructing a strong argument involves anticipating and addressing counterarguments to strengthen one's position.
3. Thorough research is essential to gather reliable evidence and data to support claims in an argument.
4. Organizing ideas in a coherent and structured manner enhances the clarity and persuasiveness of an argumentative essay.
5. Skillful use of rhetorical devices can enhance the persuasiveness and impact of argumentative writing.
6. Effective revision and editing processes improve the overall quality of argumentative writing, including clarity, coherence, and persuasiveness.
7. Engaging in respectful discussions and debates fosters understanding, empathy, and the ability to consider different viewpoints.
8. Argumentative writing skills are transferable and applicable across various disciplines and real-world

situations.

9. Developing strong argumentative writing skills enhances critical thinking, effective communication, and the ability to advocate for one's idea

## **Standards/Indicators/Student Learning Objectives (SLOs):**

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### **ANCHOR STANDARDS:**

NJSLSA.W1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

NJSLSA.W2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

NJSLSA.W3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

NJSLSA.W4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.W5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

### **8th Grade Progress Indicators:**

- W.8.1 - Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
  - A. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
  - B. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
  - C. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
  - D. Establish and maintain a formal style.
  - E. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented

## **Content Specific Focus Skills**

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## Writing

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- Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented

## Reading

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- Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
- Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences, to develop and to refine a key concept.
- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
- Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

## Critical Language

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- Thesis
- Claim
- Counter-claim
- Ethos
- Logos
- Pathos
- Hook
- Call to action
- Proper Citations
- Analyze
- Evaluate

- Synthesize
- Tone

## **Inter-Disciplinary Connections:**

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### **Social Studies**

- Legal system

## **Instructional Strategies, Learning Activities, and Levels of Blooms/DOK:**

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In the course of focusing on responding to argumentative writing prompts, students will focus on the skills of analyzing and evaluating. During this process, they will do the following:

- Read mentor texts
- Use graphic organizers to collect their thoughts
- Write
- Revise/Edit

Students will use the following instructional strategies during their work.

- Graphic organizers
- Guided practice (teacher led)
- Individual practice

### **Depth of Knowledge**

- Students will demonstrate all 4 levels.
- Level One: Listing elements of a text that stand out to them, recalling the author/artist of the text, defining key terms.
- Level Two: Comparing how different texts address the same topic
- Level Three: Citing evidence to support claims, revising written work
- Level Four: Critiquing and evaluating sources

## **Resources & Materials:**

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### **Information/Non-Fiction:**



[Why Did I Serve 16 Years for Murder When I Didn't Kill Anyone? | NYT Opinion](#)

## **Fiction:**

- *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers
- "A Sound of Thunder" by Ray Bradbury

## **Formative Assessment:**

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- Anticipatory Set
- Closure
- Lexia; Achieve3000; IXL; Instructional Software (Progress Monitoring)
- Warm-Up

## **Modifications**

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## **G&T Modifications:**

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- Alternate assignments/enrichment assignments
- Enrichment projects
- Extension activities
- Higher-level cooperative learning activities
- Pairing direct instruction with coaching to promote self-directed learning
- Provide higher-order questioning and discussion opportunities
- Provide texts at a higher reading level
- Tiered assignments
- Tiered centers

## **ELL Modifications:**

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- Choice of test format (multiple-choice, essay, true-false)
- Continue practicing vocabulary
- Provide study guides prior to tests
- Read directions to the student

- Read test passages aloud (for comprehension assessment)
- Vary test formats

## **At Risk Modifications**

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The possible list of modifications/accommodations identified for Special Education students can be utilized for At-Risk students. Teachers should utilize ongoing methods to provide instruction, assess student needs, and utilize modifications specific to the needs of individual students. In addition, the following may be considered:

- Additional time for assignments
- Adjusted assignment timelines
- Agenda book and checklists
- Answers to be dictated
- Assistance in maintaining uncluttered space
- Books on tape
- Concrete examples
- Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts
- Follow a routine/schedule
- Graphic organizers
- Have students restate information
- No penalty for spelling errors or sloppy handwriting
- Peer or scribe note-taking
- Personalized examples
- Preferential seating
- Provision of notes or outlines
- Reduction of distractions
- Review of directions
- Review sessions
- Space for movement or breaks
- Support auditory presentations with visuals
- Teach time management skills
- Use of a study carrel
- Use of mnemonics
- Varied reinforcement procedures
- Work in progress check

## **IEP & 504 Modifications:**

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\*All teachers of students with special needs must review each student's IEP. Teachers must then select the appropriate modifications and/or accommodations necessary to enable the student to appropriately progress in

the general curriculum.

Possible Modifications/Accommodations: (See listed items below; accommodations and modifications include, but aren't limited to) -

- Allow for redos/retakes
- Assign fewer problems at one time (e.g., assign only odds or evens)
- Breaking larger assignments/projects into shorter tasks w/ clear deadlines for each section
- Differentiated center-based small group instruction
- Extra time on assessments
- Highlight key directions
- If a manipulative is used during instruction, allow its use on a test
- Modeling; Examples
- Opportunities for cooperative partner work
- Provide reteach pages if necessary
- Provide several ways to solve a problem if possible
- Provide visual aids and anchor charts
- Small Groups and 1:1 assistance as needed
- Test in alternative site
- Tiered lessons and assignments
- Use of a graphic organizer
- Use of concrete materials and objects (manipulatives)
- Use of word processor

## **Equity Considerations**

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## **Amistad Mandate**

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Topic:

Materials Used:

Addresses the Following Component of the Mandate:

- African Slave Trade

- Amistad
- Contributions of African Americans to our society
- Slavery in America
- Vestiges of slavery in this country

## **Holocaust Mandate**

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Topic:

Materials Used:

Addresses the Following Component of the Mandate:

- Bias
- Bigotry
- Bullying
- Holocaust Studies
- Prejudice

## **LGBTQ and Disabilities Mandate**

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Topic:

Materials Used:

Addresses the Following Component of the Mandate:

- Economic
- Political
- Social

## **Asian American and Pacific Islander Mandate**

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Topic:



Materials Used:

Addresses the Following Component of the Mandate:

- Economic
- Political
- Social

## **Climate Change**

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### **Summative Assessment:**

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Students will respond to the following Argumentative Writing prompt:

- We have spent time in class reading *Monster* and exploring what the various witnesses have said about the felony murder case involving Steve Harmon. Using the techniques that we've learned about argumentative writing, pretend that you are either O'Brien (Steve's defense lawyer) or Petrocelli (the prosecutor attempting to argue that Steve is guilty). Write a closing statement where you either argue that Steve should be found guilty or not guilty, being sure to follow the general structure of argumentative writing (introduction, Reason 1, Reason 2, Reason 3, conclusion).

*The students' writing will be assessed using a common scoring rubric. The rubric will be shared with the students at the outset of the unit.*

- Alternate Assessment (when indicated per IEP)
- Essay
- Lexia; Achieve3000; IXL; Instructional Software (Reports)
- Marking Period Assessment
- Multiple Choice Tests on Readings
- Performance Based Projects
- Reading Inventory
- STAR
- Writing Portfolio

**Benchmark (Assessments):**

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Skills-based assessment

Reading responses

Writing responses

**Alternative Assessment(s):**

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Performance tasks

Project-based assignments

Problem-based assignments

Presentations

Reflective pieces

Concept maps

Case-based scenarios

Portfolios