Unit 4: Argument Reading: Nonfiction Research Across Text Sets

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts**
Time Period: **Week 25**
Length: **6-8 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

In this unit, students will work in research clubs, reading briefly on a class topic (recommended issue: competitive sports) and then moving to study other debatable issues. This unit is written to parallel the writing unit *The Art of Argument*, and builds on the previous nonfiction unit. One of the main goals of the unit is to provide opportunities to transfer this work to their content studies, focusing on applying skills, and on building on prior learning to tackle new challenges. Students will get to know an issue deeply, reading both argumentative and informational texts about that topic. This unit focuses on understanding how authors use claims, evidence, and persuasive devices so that the students can then use these techniques within their own research, writing, and speaking. By critically analyzing arguments and persuasive presentations for validity, accuracy, and clarity, students will become more effective consumers of information.

Standards

LA.RI.7.1	Cite several pieces of textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
LA.RI.7.2	Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
LA.RI.7.3	Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).
LA.RI.7.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
LA.RI.7.5	Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.
LA.RI.7.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.
LA.RI.7.8	Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.
LA.RI.7.9	Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.
LA.RI.7.10	By the end of the year read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above, with scaffolding as needed.
LA.W.7.1	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
LA.W.7.1.A	Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons

	and evidence logically.
LA.W.7.1.B	Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
LA.W.7.1.C	Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
LA.W.7.1.D	Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form.
LA.W.7.1.E	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
LA.W.7.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.7.5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
LA.W.7.7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.
LA.W.7.8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
LA.W.7.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
LA.W.7.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
LA.SL.7.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
LA.SL.7.1.A	Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
LA.SL.7.1.B	Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
LA.SL.7.1.C	Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.
LA.SL.7.1.D	Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.
LA.SL.7.2	Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.
LA.L.7.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.7.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 7 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
LA.L.7.4.A	Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
LA.L.7.4.B	Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., belligerent, bellicose, rebel).

LA.L.7.4.C	Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
LA.L.7.4.D	Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
LA.L.7.6	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Essential Questions

How can we read in such a way that we develop more nuanced understandings of an issue, learning to weigh and evaluate evidence, compare perspectives, and analyze arguments?

- How can I draw upon all that I have learned about informational reading to discern arguments within texts, follow those arguments across texts, gather evidence for both sides, and come to a considered position on the topic?

- How can I read and reread critically to gain a deeper understanding of the nuances within the broader argument and to notice not only what argument is presented, but also how the author presents that argument and what techniques the author uses to get readers to follow his thinking?

- How can I use all that I have learned about reading and studying texts at different levels to research a new issue, letting not only my reading influence my thinking on the issue but also my conversations with my peers?

Questions for clubs to consistently consider include:

- What do these authors have to say about this topic?
- How does what they say fit with what we already think we know about this topic? How can we map all the parts of it and the different possible points of view that we could take?
- What are the issues within this topic and what "stance" or position is this text taking?
- How sound is the reasoning in this text?
- What is the evidence for this stance and how is that evidence presented?
- Who has a voice in this text and who doesn't? Why did the author include/not include particular voices or perspectives? What effect does that have?
- Who benefits from the topic being presented in this way?
- What gives the author of this text credibility on this topic? Why should we trust what he/she is saying? What craft does the author use to forward his/her claims?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that…

- Audiences/readers can make informed decisions about the influence of a text when they recognize a writer's possible bias/slant.
- Speakers and writers temper individual/personal passions to speak with diverse audiences.

- Authors use compelling claims, relevant evidence and persuasive devices to effectively communicate their perspective.
- Multiple perspectives help develop an informed understanding of an issue/idea.
- Readers pay close attention, for example, to the images, the stories, and the choice of information that authors include and how those stir up emotional responses in readers.
- Readers talk to let texts get through to us, to let texts change our minds. We talk to grow ideas.
- When you become an expert on a topic, it is important to begin using the technical vocabulary of that subject.

Application of Skills: Students will be able to…

- Develop text-dependent questions and use them to refine their analysis.
- Compare and contrast how different authors construct their arguments.
- Identify what authors make readers feel about a subject and investigate how the author caused those feelings to get stirred up.
- Read and analyze multiple background texts to expand and deepen their understanding of the issue.
- Summarize the parts of a text objectively and make inferences about the author's overall purpose.
- Synthesize their analysis and evaluation of other arguments into the development of their own position.
- Write an evidence-based claim about the nature of the issue.

Teaching Points and Suggested Activities

Possible Sequence of Teaching Points:

The following teaching points and activities are adapted from the TCRWP curricular calendars and texts and serve as a loose framework for teachers, who will add and or emphasize based on their students' needs.

Bend I: Becoming argument-debaters: Researchers investigate issues and recognize sides.

- After reading about an issue for a bit, nonfiction readers can let their research spur quick flash debates. This can help you clarify your thinking and know what further research you need to do. To truly understand your issue, it is important to consider both the arguments for and against your position.
- Researchers read deeply about an issue, developing background information that allows them to become authorities on that issue. Whenever they read, they ask, 'How might this information apply to the argument?'
- Readers summarize arguments by using their own words to express the most essential parts of the writer's argument, while being careful to not distort or change what the writer meant.

Bend II: Digging Deeper: Employing close, critical, interpretive reading to notice nuance in arguments

and how authors craft their arguments.

- Readers develop a mental map or chart of the topic they are studying and they push themselves to think about as many possible aspects of the topic as they can. They ask, 'What are the different positions or perspectives that we can imagine existing inside of this topic?' Then readers reread familiar texts or seek out new ones to help them learn more about these sides.

- Every text reveals an author's perspective on that event, topic, or issue. Figuring out an author's perspective can help you to figure out how exactly his or her ideas fit into the issue. One of the best ways to figure out an author's perspective is to lay that perspective next to others and study connections and contradictions across sources.

- Readers can think about, discuss, and write about texts on different levels. On one level, you can think about what they are about—their content. But another level of thinking about texts is to think more about how author's choices have shaped that content and why.

- Researchers look for nuance, even in articles that appear to agree—they look for evidence that overlaps and particularly for evidence that separates similar points of view.

Bend III: Raising the level of research and conversations around arguable issues.

- When researchers set out to study a new issue, they start by making a plan for how that study will go. They think about all that they know to do—about their repertoire of reading and research strategies—and they dive into new research with greater agency, drawing on all that they have learned from undertaking previous research studies.

- When a researcher reads in the company of a community, that researcher doesn't just have research texts as tools. Fellow researchers can act as dialogical tools. Your conversation and dialogue with your research club members can act as tools—helping to spark new insights to consider and new research agendas.

- As you read, you must pay attention to how your emotions are being manipulated, and ask yourself not just what view you are more sympathetic to, but also why are you more sympathetic to that view.

- Readers can ask, 'Who is this text for, and how do I know?' 'Does the author seem to be writing to persuade readers from another viewpoint or writing to a group of like-minded readers?' 'Is the author talking to readers as if they are beginners or experts in this topic?'

Suggested Activities:

Students will engage in a variety of activities before, during, and after reading. Typical daily activities reflect the routines of the workshop model, including but not limited to:

- Minilesson (connection, teaching point, modeling, active engagement, independent practice, sharing)
- Interactive Read Aloud/Along (with strategically planned stopping points to model strategies and assess partner talk)
- Independent reading (consistent time devoted to stamina/fluency)

- Writing about reading (notebooks, jots, long/short writes, etc.)
- Small group lessons (based on strengths/weaknesses)
- Centers (providing independent exploration and reinforcement of concepts)
- Conferences (frequent "check-ins" to compliment, research, teach and track goals)

Other possible activities could reinforce close reading "signposts" from *Notice and Note*. This refers to a reading routine which provides students with “look fors” as they are reading and encourages them to reread a portion of a text to answer a question about the meaning of the text. Additionally, lessons and activities can be used to analyze the following signposts:

- Contrasts and Contradictions – when the author presents something that contrasts or contradicts what the reader is likely to know, think or have experienced, or shows a difference between two or more situations, events or perspectives.
- Extreme or Absolute Language – author uses language that leaves no doubt about a situation or event that exaggerates or overstates a case.
- Numbers and Stats – author uses number or words that show amounts or statistical information to show comparisons in order to prove a point or help create an image.
- Quoted Words – author quotes others, directly, with a "voice of authority or personal perspective," or citing others’ words.
- Word Gaps – author uses words or phrases students recognize they don’t know.

Assessments

Assessment within this unit of study arrives in three forms: diagnostic, formative, and summative. The development and use of assessment will happen strategically throughout the unit as a means of maintaining a "pulse of learning" to ensure that students are grasping and mastering the skills and strategies intertwined within the teaching points prior to advancing on in the unit. Assessment will be formal and informal, as well as teacher-driven and student-driven. Students will be given the opportunity to self-assess their work to identify areas of weakness and development in order to develop ambitious, feasible goals. Students will also be asked to collaborate with peers in their assessment practices in order to support learning across zones of proximal development. On-going teacher assessment will take place in the context of the conference. Conferences, both small group and one-on-one conferring, are used to reinforce expectations, provide advice/or assistance, and to support growth.

Diagnostic Assessments:

- TC Running Record (http://readingandwritingproject.org/resources/assessments/running-records)
- Unit pre-assessment (On-demand performance task)

The running record forms provide a book introduction, the typed text, a sidebar of reading characteristics, a scoring guide, comprehension questions with sample responses, and space to take notes and to jot student responses. A Teacher Guidebook for Levels A-K and one for Levels L-Z+ is available in the Supporting Documents and explains in detail the assessments and includes suggestions for how to use the assessments to plan differentiated, explicit instruction for each student assessed.

Formative Assessments:

- Examination of student reading logs
- Examination of student developed jots and notebook entries
- Informal conferring and observation of independent reading habits and accountable talk
- Collection of anecdotes from teacher-student conferences: individual, small group, strategy, and guided
- Collection of observations from active engagement within mini-lesson
- Quick jots
- Exit tickets
- Student reflection

Summative Assessments:

- End of unit post assessment (On-demand performance task)
- Reading logs, jots, notebook entries, and other evidence of student growth
- Published writing composition

Before and after the unit of study, teachers may assess using text sets, Common Core aligned performance assessment tasks for information reading and argument writing, and rubrics from TCRWP:

http://readingandwritingproject.org/resources/assessments/reading-writing-assessments. These performance assessments consist of a small collection of texts that are multi-leveled, including digital texts, and represent multiple perspectives. Kids read the texts in one period, and write an argument responding to the prompt the next.

One Possible Informational Reading Performance Task:

Task 1: Summary of video "CNN: Most Bottled Water is Tap"

Students will watch the video and will be prompted to watch and listen for information about the pros and cons of bottled water. After the video is shown a second time, students will be prompted to write a summary in the response packet capturing central ideas and analyzing how key details support those ideas.

Task 2: Summary of article "City Council Shuns Bottles in Favor of Water From Tap?" Students will be prompted to use their response packet to summarize central ideas from the text and to analyze how those ideas are developed across the text.

Task 3: Summary of grade-level article, "Bottled Water Quality." Students will be prompted to use their response packet to summarize central ideas from the text and to analyze how those ideas are developed across the text.

Task 4: Summary of article “Water and You.” Students will be prompted to use their response packet to summarize central ideas from the text and to analyze how those ideas are developed across the text.

Task 5: Argument Essay: Take a position on whether or not bottled water should be banned in schools. Write an argument essay in which you clearly state your position either for or against bottled water in schools, and then support that claim with evidence from the texts you’ve read and watched.

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

Differentiation for special education:

- General modifications may include:
    - Modifications & accommodations as listed in the student’s IEP
    - Assign a peer to help keep student on task
    - Modified or reduced assignments
    - Reduce length of assignment for different mode of delivery
    - Increase one-to-one time
    - Working contract between you and student at risk
    - Prioritize tasks
    - Think in concrete terms and provide hands-on-tasks
    - Position student near helping peer or have quick access to teacher
    - Anticipate where needs will be
    - Break tests down in smaller increments
    - Strategy groups

- Content specific modifications may include:
    - Instruction aligned to student's performance level according to Teacher's College Reading Continuum
    - Personal student goals designed to move student along Teacher's College Reading Continuum

Differentiation for ELL's:

- General modifications may include:
    - Strategy groups
    - Teacher conferences
    - Graphic organizers
    - Modification plan
    - Collaboration with ELL Teacher
- Content specific vocabulary important for ELL students to understand include:

    - Central Idea, Relevant, Text Features, Point of

View, Perspective, Analyze, Synthesize, Critique, Interpret, Theory, Text Structure, Evidence, Evaluate, Summarize, Nuance, Persuade, Manipulate

Differentiation to extend learning for gifted students may include:

- special emphasis to the critical-thinking components of the standard scoring rubrics
- a wider array of related topics and cross-curricular connections
- opportunities for students to engage in peer instruction
- requiring more initiative and independence from students
- application of critical thinking skills to more sophisticated elements of author's craft including use of conflict, irony, symbolism, and metaphor appearing in non-fiction texts
- evaluation of the informational authority of a text

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

Cross-Curricular – Non-Fiction

Writing Workshop

- apply language and ideas from read alouds and independent reading
- utilize read alouds and independent reading as mentor texts
- expand written vocabulary from read alouds and independent reading
- apply sentence, paragraph, and text structure from mentor texts
- utilize other elements of author's craft seen in mentor texts and independent reading books

Content Areas: Science, Social Studies, Health

- use mentor texts to deliver Social Studies, Science, and Health content
- apply reading skills and strategies to the reading done in the content areas

Study Skills

- use graphic organizers to support reading
- use checklists and rubrics to monitor progress
- use Venn diagrams and t-charts to gather, compare, and contrast events
- use highlighters, note cards, post-its, and other tools to keep track of events, details, and ideas
- keep a log and notebook

The Arts

- analyze illustrations, diagrams, maps, photographs in books
- illustrate a text to show details and ideas
- create multimedia presentations based on reading
- act out a sequence from a text to better visualize a process

Suggested Mentor Texts and Other Resources

Suggested Professional Texts:

"Argument Reading: Nonfiction Research Across Text Sets." Curricular Calendars from Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Seventh Grade, 2016-2017.

Beers, G K, and Robert E. Probst. *Reading Nonfiction: Notice & Note Stances, Signposts, and Strategies*, 2015. Print.

Calkins, Lucy. *A Curricular Plan for the Reading Workshop Grade 7*. 2011–2012 Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH.

Serravallo, Jennifer. *The Reading Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Readers*., 2015. Print.

Possible Anchor Texts:

Use of subscriptions to Scholastic Scope and Action Magazines for a variety of high-interest nonfiction.

Digital text sets via www.readingandwritingproject.com. Suggested text sets from Teachers College Reading and Writing Project:

Bends I and II: Competitive Sports

- "Listening to Wisdom From a 10-Year-Old Son About His Head Injury" (2009) from New York Times
- "Unique study explores cumulative effect of hits in high school football" (2011) from Sports Illustrated
- "Section V: Increasing Physical Activity" (2010) from White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity Report to the President

Bend III: Alternative Issues

- Alternate: "FBI vs. Apple" (2016). Upfront (subscription required from Scholastic)
- "Metal Detectors in Schools: Source of Safety or Anxiety" (2015) Kansas City Star
- "5 Reasons Metal Detectors in Schools Are a Bad Idea"

- “Metal Detectors Making Students Late, if Not Safe”
- “When Metal Detection Makes Sense”
- “Schools Safe as Ever Despite Spate of Shootings”

21st Century Skills

CRP.K-12.CRP1.1	Career-ready individuals understand the obligations and responsibilities of being a member of a community, and they demonstrate this understanding every day through their interactions with others. They are conscientious of the impacts of their decisions on others and the environment around them. They think about the near-term and long-term consequences of their actions and seek to act in ways that contribute to the betterment of their teams, families, community and workplace. They are reliable and consistent in going beyond the minimum expectation and in participating in activities that serve the greater good.
CRP.K-12.CRP2.1	Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation.
CRP.K-12.CRP4.1	Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others’ time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization, and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to ensure the desired outcome.
CRP.K-12.CRP6.1	Career-ready individuals regularly think of ideas that solve problems in new and different ways, and they contribute those ideas in a useful and productive manner to improve their organization. They can consider unconventional ideas and suggestions as solutions to issues, tasks or problems, and they discern which ideas and suggestions will add greatest value. They seek new methods, practices, and ideas from a variety of sources and seek to apply those ideas to their own workplace. They take action on their ideas and understand how to bring innovation to an organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP7.1	Career-ready individuals are discerning in accepting and using new information to make decisions, change practices or inform strategies. They use reliable research process to search for new information. They evaluate the validity of sources when considering the use and adoption of external information or practices in their workplace situation.
CRP.K-12.CRP8.1	Career-ready individuals readily recognize problems in the workplace, understand the nature of the problem, and devise effective plans to solve the problem. They are aware of problems when they occur and take action quickly to address the problem; they thoughtfully investigate the root cause of the problem prior to introducing solutions. They carefully consider the options to solve the problem. Once a solution is agreed upon, they follow through to ensure the problem is solved, whether through their own actions or the actions of others.
CRP.K-12.CRP11.1	Career-ready individuals find and maximize the productive value of existing and new technology to accomplish workplace tasks and solve workplace problems. They are flexible and adaptive in acquiring new technology. They are proficient with ubiquitous technology applications. They understand the inherent risks-personal and organizational-of

	technology applications, and they take actions to prevent or mitigate these risks.
CRP.K-12.CRP12.1	Career-ready individuals positively contribute to every team, whether formal or informal. They apply an awareness of cultural difference to avoid barriers to productive and positive interaction. They find ways to increase the engagement and contribution of all team members. They plan and facilitate effective team meetings.