

Writing an Argument Part 4: Analyzing and Writing Arguments

Goal:

Participants will become familiar with tools and resources to support the assessment of argumentative writing.

Participants will apply their knowledge of argument writing by composing an argument.

Session Preparation:

- For *Rubric for Argument Writing*, one copy the ELA/Literacy Common Core State Standards (booklet) is needed for every two participants.
- For Writing an Argument, articles on “Middle School Grade Set Up” must be copied prior to the session. There are nine articles, mostly 1-2 pages long. They provide a range of viewpoints that will enable participants to defend varied positions on the topic. One set of articles (all 9) will be needed for each group of 3-4 participants. The articles may be accessed from the [Sources for Writing an Argument on Middle School Grade Set Up](#).

Distribute to Participants:

- [Hand-out 4.1: School Bond Levy](#)
- [Hand-out 4.2: Annotation: School Bond Levy](#)
- [Hand-out 4.3: Delaware’s Argumentation/Opinion Text-based Writing Rubric](#)
- [Hand-out 4.4: Rubric/CCSS Standards Side-by-Side Template](#)
- [Hand-out 4.5: Rubric/CCSS Standards Side-by-Side Comparison](#)
- [Hand-out 4.6: Planning Your Argument](#)

Time required: 75 minutes

Activate and Connect (5 minutes)

Ask participants to turn and talk about the following question: Based on the previous sessions, what do you think will be important when teaching students to write arguments? Share out some responses as a large group.

Annotate Student Work (15 minutes)

- Distribute [Hand-out 4.1: School Bond Levy](#) and [Hand-out 4.2: School Bond Levy Annotation Sheet](#)
 1. Inform participants that School Bond Levy is a student writing sample taken from samples of student writing found in [Appendix C](#) of the CCSS.

2. Explain to participants that the Annotation Sheet ([Hand-out 4.2](#)) is a bulleted list of the criteria for argument writing in grade 9-10 based on CCSS W.9-10.1.
 - Ask them to take a minute to look at what students need to know and be able to do.
3. Ask participants to independently read the student School Bond Levy sample to determine the extent to which it meets the expectations of CCSS W.9-10.1.
 - Have participants work in small groups to annotate the student sample by quoting phrases or sentences that demonstrate the student is meeting each of the criteria.
 - After a few minutes, have participants share out responses for each of the criteria.
4. Point out to participants that a completed version of the annotation for School Bond Levy can be found on pages 66-67 of [Appendix C](#) of the Common Core State Standards. Also mention that Appendix C includes annotations for all student writing samples at each grade level.

Rubric for Argument Writing (25 minutes)

- Distribute [Hand-out 4.3: Delaware Department of Education: Argumentation/ Opinion Text-Based Writing Rubric](#).
- Explain to participants that they will have an opportunity to look at one example of a rubric for writing an argument that the Delaware Department of Education has developed. Note: Remind participants that this rubric is just one example of many available and has been selected to be the catalyst for discussion during the session.
- Highlight for participants that the rubric is divided into four categories: Reading/Research; Development; Organization; and Language/Conventions.
 - Ask participants to scan the criteria in the “Score of 3” column in each category to become familiar with the expectations.
- Distribute Hand-out 4.4: Rubric/CCSS Standards Side by Side Template and copies of the CCSS (booklet) for participants.
 - Ask participants to sit in groups of four. They will work in pairs for this activity.
 - Each pair will be responsible for looking at the criteria in two of the four rubric categories to identify the standards that are being addressed.
 - Using the copies of the CCSS (booklets), the pairs will find Writing and Language standards in grades 9-10 that match with or align to the wording in the rubric categories.
 - They will enter the standard codes in the right hand column in line with each category.
- After 5 minutes, ask the pairs to briefly share their findings with each other.
- Distribute [Hand-out 4.5: Rubrics/CCSS Side-by-Side Comparison](#). Ask participants to look at how the standards are mapped to the rubric.

- Participants should compare their mapping to that of the rubric (Delaware's mapping) and discuss with their group members some of the differences they noted.
- Ask participants to discuss how analyzing this rubric will inform their instructional practices. Turn and talk in groups.
- Share out a few comments as a large group.

Writing an Argument (25 minutes)

Facilitator Note: The following activity requires participants to draft an argument using articles related to the best grade set-up for middle school age students. The articles provide a range of viewpoints that will enable participants to defend varied positions on the topic. The articles should be accessed through the websites provided and copied for the workshop. One set of articles is needed for each group of teachers. The purpose of this activity is to have participants begin to apply their learning about argument writing and also experience a strategy for teaching argument writing to students using a text set, a collection of resources compiled by the teacher.

- Distribute [Hand-out 4.5: Plan Your Argument](#) and a set of articles for each group.
- Explain to participants that they will be reading several articles to begin to plan for writing an argument which answers this focusing question: What is the best grade set-up for middle school age students?
 - In groups of 3 to 4, have participants consider the focus question.
 - Each member of the group will select one or two articles to read from the provided resources.
 - Each person will briefly summarize his/her article for their group.
 - Groups will then decide what position they will take on the issue and begin to plan an argument using all of the resources provided.
 - Participants will draft their argument by responding to the following questions using the Plan Your Argument Hand-out:
 - What claim(s) would you make?
 - What reasons would you give?
 - What evidence would you use?
 - What counterclaim(s) would you address?
- After about 15 minutes, ask for one person from each group to summarize the argument made by the group by sharing the claim and some reasons/evidence to support the claim.

Reflection: (5 minutes)

Exit slip: On a sticky-it note (or verbally), ask participants to identify one change or next step they will make in their teaching of argument writing as a result of their new learning.