

Elements of a Strong Argument

- * Clearly-stated claim (thesis)
- * Concrete evidence and logic to support your claim
 - * Factual evidence
 - * Anecdotal evidence (stories or elements from real-life)
- * Recognition of the counterclaim (the other side of the argument)
- * Gives a specific proposal/solution/compromise
- * Effective transitions between ideas
- * Background information/imagery/description/humor to support the argument

There is no doubt that a dog would be a lot of work. He would need to be given food and water each day, be cleaned up after, be walked a few times a day, be bathed, and taken to the vet. And I know that because of how much responsibility a dog can be and my track record at being a bit of a slacker (the state of my bedroom says it all), you've always said "no" to a dog in the past. But, since I started mowing Mrs. Wilson's yard over the summer to earn some money, I have become way more responsible. So, I can absolutely promise that I am ready to take care of a pet and will do everything necessary to care for my new friend without complaining or needing to be reminded. Just to show you how serious I am, I am not asking you to make your decision now. For the next three months, I promise I will keep my room spotless. That way you can see just how serious I am about being responsible. After three months, you can make your decision. So? What do you say? Do we have a deal or am I "barking" up the wrong tree?

TRANSITION WORDS

SIMILAR/SAME

- * also
- * similarly
- * just as
- * likewise
- * in the same vein
- * relatedly

SEQUENCE...

- * first
- * second
- * next
- * then
- * lastly
- * finally

CONTRAST...

- * but
- * despite
- * however
- * nevertheless
- * on the contrary
- * still

EXAMPLE...

- * as an example
- * specifically
- * for instance
- * namely
- * particularly

IN ADDITION...

- * additionally
- * further (furthermore)
- * then
- * moreover
- * as well
- * besides

CONCLUSION...

- * in closing
- * in the end
- * in conclusion
- * to sum up
- * finally
- * to wrap up

Name: _____ Date: _____

Paragraph Puzzle (#1)

Directions: Cut out the strips below and arrange them to make a strong argumentative paragraph.

However, providing kids with the opportunity to help those in need is actually a wonderful idea because it will likely cause just the opposite.

Additionally, it will teach kids responsibility.

Without a doubt, these are admirable qualities, therefore, it would certainly be in the best interest of our community to foster these qualities by having kids volunteer.

Recently, our Board of Education announced it would require middle school students to spend a certain number of hours each semester doing volunteer work or community service.

This responsibility will transfer to other parts of their lives, like becoming more responsible in school.

Kids who perform community service, like serving in a soup kitchen or helping out at the Boys and Girls Club, will get a chance to work with members of our community who are less fortunate.

Opponents of this idea claim that forcing people to do anything will make them angry and resentful.

This will lead them to become more compassionate and understanding human beings.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Paragraph Puzzle (#2)

Directions: Cut out the strips below and arrange them to make a strong argumentative paragraph.

Sports and activities are so important in a young person's life because it's how we get exercise and time with our friends.

It would make doing well in school such a struggle.

Their rational is that our developing brains need lots of sleep to function well and, unfortunately, kids today just are not getting enough.

We could never get all of that stuff finished in an hour, so we would have to limit our activities and workload.

Playing sports and participating in afterschool activities is a huge part of most kids' lives.

It seems there are some pediatricians recommending that adolescents go to bed by 8:00pm.

But, when I have basketball practice or a Girl Scout meeting, I am rarely home before 7:00pm, and I am sure this true for many of friends, too.

Although there may be some benefit to more sleep, earlier bedtimes would cause several other problems.

I hope my parents hit snooze on this recommendation.

If our bedtimes were 8:00pm, this would leave us only one hour to eat dinner, take a shower, do homework, brush teeth, do chores, and pack our lunches for the next day.

And there is no way we could give up homework and study time.

Sure, there may be some benefit to more sleep, but an 8:00pm bedtime is just too unrealistic.

Argument Task Card

Scenario:

- * You really want an iPhone.
- * Your parents say no because they do not want to waste money on something you will only use for texting and social media communication.
- * You do not deny that you will use your phone for communication, but you also know that it has many other uses, some of which are helpful to your education.

Task: Write an argumentative paragraph explaining why you should get an iPhone.

Transition Words to include:

Although...
For instance,
In fact,
I am sure...
In conclusion,

#1

Argument Task Card

Scenario:

- * Your school is advocating that all families participate in National TV Turn-Off Week.
- * Your parents think this is a great idea because they feel television is too violent.
- * You do not deny that there is some violent programming, but there is also many excellent educational shows, as well.

Task: Write an argumentative paragraph explaining why your family should not participate in National TV Turn-Off Week.

Transition Words to include:

Undoubtedly,
However,
It seems...
Moreover,
I am sure,

#2

Argument Task Card

****SAMPLE ANSWER****

Although it is true that I would use an iPhone to text my friends and post pictures to Instagram, there would be other ways that my phone could be used, some of which would help with my education. For instance, many of my teachers recommend websites that can help students practice skills, like math facts or vocabulary. In fact, my teacher has given us user names and passwords for a variety of these sites so we can practice on our own time. I am sure that using my phone to practice these skills before bed, when waiting for the bus, or when driving to soccer practice would certainly help to make me a better student. In conclusion, an iPhone would be great for communicating with my friends, but more importantly it will be an awesome tool to help me do better in school.

#1

Argument Task Card

****SAMPLE ANSWER****

Undoubtedly, there are many violent shows and movies on television. However, before you agree to our participation in National TV Turn-Off Week, please know that few of the programs I watch are violent. It seems that most of what I watch is educational, like when I watched the specials about great white sharks. Moreover, my favorite television shows are on the history channels, especially the shows about the Civil War, which is definitely educational since we spend so much time studying it in Social Studies class. I am sure that there are many parents out there whose children watch terribly violent programming and **SHOULD** participate in this event, but I am not one of them. And since I watch so many educational shows, it would be a shame for me to miss them.

#2

Argument Task Card

Scenario:

- * Your Board of Education is recommending that the school day be extended by one hour for more ELA and Math time, cutting time for afterschool activities.
- * You do not deny that ELA and Math are important subjects to learn, but you also feel that afterschool sports, teams, and clubs are valuable, as well.

Task: Write an argumentative paragraph explaining why your Board of Education should reconsider this recommendation.

Transition Words to include:

It is true...

But,

Without a doubt,

Additionally,

Of course...

#3

Argument Task Card

Scenario:

- * Your principal is planning to allocate half of the student activity fund to buy new playground equipment for the Kindergarten playground.
- * You do not deny that new playground equipment would be great for the Kindergarten students, but you also feel that updating the computers in the school's computer lab would better serve the entire school.

Task: Write an argumentative paragraph explaining why your principal should rethink how this money will be spent.

Transition Words to include:

Despite...

Since...

As you can see,

Further,

In the end,

#4

Argument Task Card

****SAMPLE ANSWER****

It is true that ELA and math are important subjects in school and students need to work hard in these areas to do well. But, to add another hour to the school day and cut afterschool activities for this is going a bit overboard. Without a doubt, some kids could benefit from a longer school day, but for most kids, our afternoons are packed with sports and clubs which are also important for our health, development, and socialization. Additionally, we need time to spend with our families and to do homework and study, and a longer school day would certainly take away from that. Of course school is important, but to increase our time there at the expense of everything else we have in the afternoons and evenings is just taking things too far.

#3

Argument Task Card

****SAMPLE ANSWER****

Despite the fact that our Kindergarten students deserve a great playground, to spend half of the student activity fund to buy new equipment for them is going too far. Since the playground would only be used by Kindergarten students, very few in our student body would be able to enjoy this purchase. As you can see, it would be difficult to justify giving so much money to a project that benefits so few, so a better idea might be to update the computers in the lab because all the students in the entire school use them. Further, the staff often uses the lab, so this would help them, as well. In the end, updating the computers in the lab would be a much better purchase because the whole building, students and staff, would be able to benefit.

#4

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Do teachers give out
too many As on report
cards?

#2

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Should students get
paid by schools for
good test grades?

#4

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Should students be
able to give their
teachers a grade?

#1

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Should schools cut
specials so students can
spend more time in
reading and math
class?

#3

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Should all classes in school be grouped according to student ability?

#6

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Should tablets, like iPads, replace all textbooks in school?

#8

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Should schools be allowed to use corporal punishment to control student behavior?

#5

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Should your school be able to punish you for what you post on Facebook/Instagram?

#7

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Is school designed to
be better suited for
girls?

#10

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Should violent video
games be sold to kids
under the age of 18?

#12

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Is graffiti art or
vandalism?

#9

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Do boys feel as much
pressure as girls to have
a "perfect body?"

#11

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Do kids today get
too many trophies?

#14

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Should kids only be
allowed to play one
sport per year?

#16

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Are youth sports too
intense?

#13

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Should excellent
student athletes get
paid to play?

#15

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Should parents have
access to your social
media accounts if you
are a minor?

#18

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Should schools stop
utilizing standardized
tests?

#20

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Should parents have
access to your text
messages?

#17

ARGUMENT TASK CARD

Should all students be
required to wear a
uniform to school?

#19

Discussion Organizer

(Argument Writing)

1. Discussion team members:
2. What is your question?
3. What is your “gut” reaction to this question and why?
4. What might be an argument against your gut reaction?

5. Your teammates thoughts on this issue:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Argumentative Paragraph

Question: _____

Mandatory Community Service

Recently, our Board of Education announced it would require middle school students to spend a certain number of hours each semester doing volunteer work or community service. Opponents of this idea claim that forcing people to do anything will make them angry and resentful. However, providing kids with the opportunity to help those in need is actually a wonderful idea because it will likely cause just the opposite. Kids who perform community service, like serving in a soup kitchen or helping out at the Boys and Girls Club, will get a chance to work with members of our community who are less fortunate. This will lead them to become more compassionate and understanding human beings. Additionally, it will teach kids responsibility. This responsibility will transfer to other parts of their lives, like becoming more responsible in school. Without a doubt, these are admirable qualities, therefore, it would certainly be in the best interest of our community to foster these qualities by having kids volunteer.

ATTENTION

RANDALL JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS!!

The holiday season is quickly approaching and you know what that means...

Our annual

Holiday Food Drive!

So, clean out your cupboards and hit up a “can-can” sale because we need your donations! We will be collecting non-perishable goods that will be donated to local families who need a little help this holiday season.

In addition to donations, you may want to consider being a Helping Hand. Helping Hands will be traveling around the community on Wed., Nov. 27 and delivering our collected goods to our neighbors.

“At last year’s food drive, I volunteered as a Helping Hand and it was an awesome experience. All the families were so touched and grateful for their box of food. It felt so good to help these people out and certainly made me feel very grateful for all that I have. If you get the chance, volunteer to be a helping hand! You won’t regret it!”

~ Jamie K., grade 8



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Community Service Boosts Happiness



BY J. SMITH

NEW JERSEY—Those who have spent time volunteering or doing some form of community service know that it makes you feel all warm and fuzzy inside. To help others less fortunate, or to do something that will benefit an entire community brings out a sense of gratitude and pride.

Helping others can actually make people feel so good, that doctors are now advocating service as a mood booster and way of stress reduction.

According to Dr. Phil Brinley, from the Institute of Health and Well-Being in Boston, MA, volunteering can have many of the same effects as exercise on mood and stress-reduction.

“Folks who spent just an hour a week doing some form of service work, reported feeling a reduction in stress. Further, they claim to have felt an increase in happiness and overall satisfaction with their daily lives,” says Brinley.

Dr. Mark Halden, principal at Randall Junior High, believes so much in the benefits of community service that he is urging his Board of Education to require middle school students to spend a certain number of hours per semester volunteering.

“When students volunteer, they develop a real sense of compassion for their fellow man. They develop a strong sense of respect for their community and pride in their actions. Additionally, our students who volunteer demonstrate responsibility, which manifests in less tardiness and absenteeism,

and fewer missing or incomplete homework assignments.

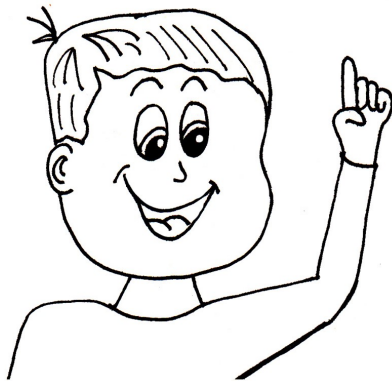
“A service requirement for our students is a win-win! The community benefits and the student benefits. This in turn benefits our entire school.”

Despite the research Halden has to support his push for a community service requirement for middle schoolers, there are some students and parents who are rallying against it.

“You can’t force anyone to do anything!” says Dan L., parent of a 6th grade student at Randall. “When you force people to do things they don’t want to do, they get resentful. I don’t want my kid to be resentful. They go to school to learn, not volunteer. The school should leave this alone.”

The Randall School Board will be voting on this issue early next week.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



I THINK:

(CLAIM)

BECAUSE...

BECAUSE...

BECAUSE...

SUPPORT:

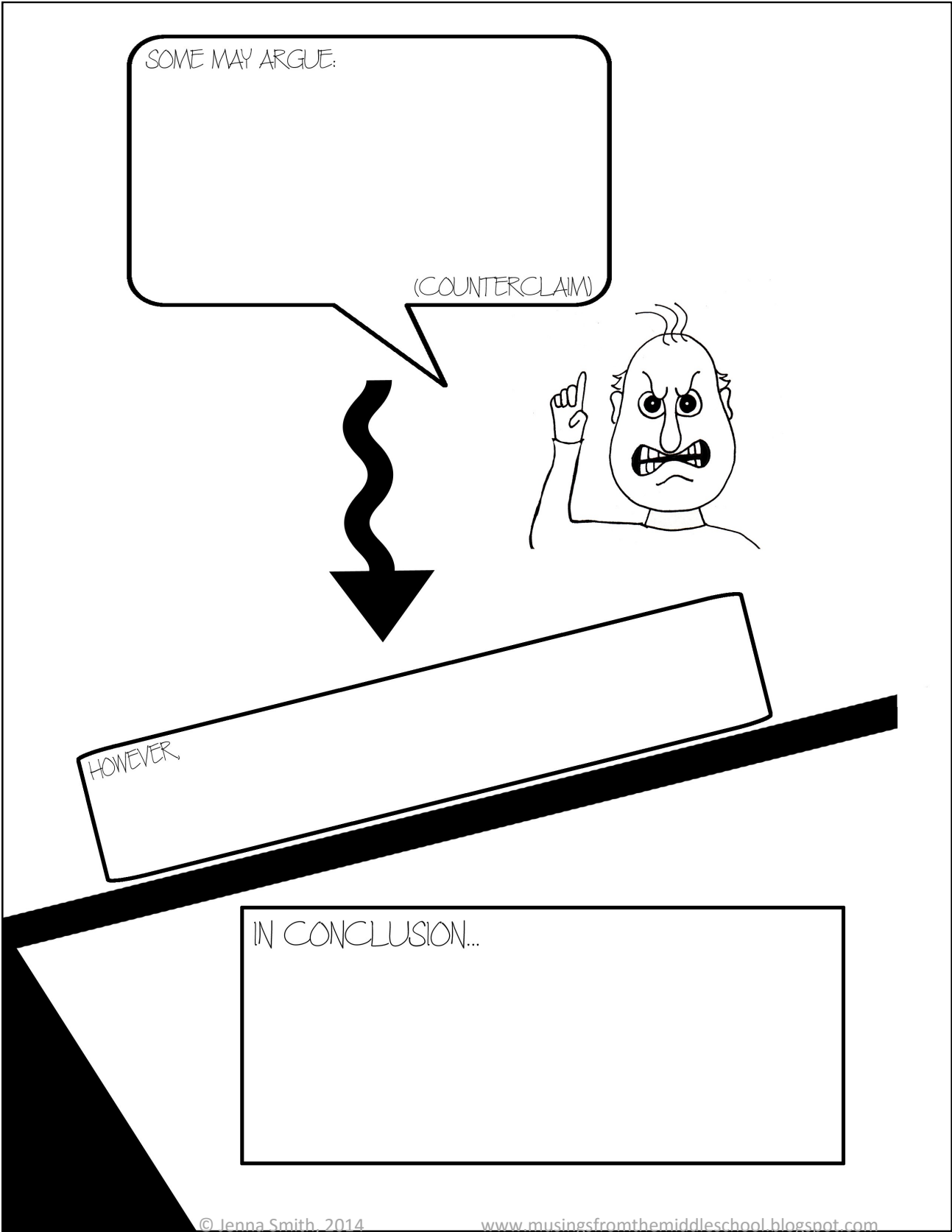
SUPPORT:

SUPPORT:

Argument Map

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PEER CONFERENCING FORM

DIRECTIONS: Read your partner's paper. Follow the directions in the left-hand column. Place a check in the box in the right-hand column after each direction is completed.

Highlight the CLAIM (thesis statement) in yellow.

Highlight each TRANSITION word or phrase in green.

Highlight the evidence that SUPPORTS your claim in pink.

Highlight the COUNTERCLAIM in blue.

Highlight the proposal, solution, or compromise in purple.

Highlight any background information, imagery, description, humor in orange.

EDITOR'S CHECKLIST



DIRECTIONS: Read your paper. Follow the directions in the left-hand column. Place a check in the box in the right-hand column after completing each step.

All of my sentences are complete thoughts.

None of my sentences are run-ons.

Every sentence has a punctuation mark at the end.

I have used quotation marks when quoting from a source.

The first word of each sentence and proper nouns all begin with a capital letter.

I have checked the spelling of any words that I wasn't sure about or that looked funny.