

Argument

Arguments are used for many purposes – to change the reader’s point of view, to bring about some action, or to ask the reader to accept the writer’s explanation or evaluation of a concept, issue, or problem. An argument is a reasoned, logical way of demonstrating that the writer’s position, belief, or conclusion is valid. In English language arts, students make claims about the worth or meaning of a literary work or works. They defend their interpretations or judgments with evidence from the text(s) they are writing about. In history/social studies, students analyze evidence from multiple primary and secondary sources to advance a claim that is best supported by the evidence, and they argue for a historically or empirically situated interpretation. In science, students make claims in the form of statements or conclusions that answer questions or address problems. Using data in a scientifically acceptable form, students marshal evidence and draw on their understanding of scientific concepts to argue in support of their claims.

<p>Grade 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write arguments to support claim(s)• Introduce precise claim(s)• Introduce counterclaims• Introduce reasons and evidence• Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text and create cohesion• Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships between claim(s) and counterclaims• Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented• Use transitions to clarify	<p>Grade 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write arguments to support claim(s)• Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly• Supply evidence for each• Point out strengths and limitations of both• Anticipate the audience’s knowledge level and concerns• Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing
<p>Grade 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write arguments to support claim(s)• Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s)• Establish the significance of the claim(s)• Distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims• Create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence• Develop claim(s) and counterclaims thoroughly• Supply the most relevant evidence for each• Point out the strengths and limitations of both• Anticipate the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values and possible biases• Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing	<p>Grade 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write arguments to support claim(s)• Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims• Clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons• Clarify the relationships between claim(s) and counterclaims• Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing• Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented

An Important Distinction Between “Persuasion” and “Argument”

When writing to persuade, writers employ a variety of persuasive strategies, such as appealing to the credibility, character, and authority of the writer (or speaker) or appealing to the audience’s self-interest, sense of identity, and emotions. A logical argument, on the other hand, convinces the audience because of the perceived merit and reasonableness of the claims and proofs offered rather than either the emotions the writing evokes in the audience or the character or credentials of the writer. The Standards place special emphasis on writing logical arguments as a particularly important form of college- and career-ready writing. See page 4 for more information.

Informational/Explanatory Writing

Informational/explanatory writing conveys information accurately and serves one or more closely related purposes: to increase readers' knowledge of a subject, to help readers better understand a procedure or process, or to provide readers with an enhanced comprehension of a concept. Informational/explanatory writing addresses matters such as types (*What are the types of poetry?*) and components (*What are the parts of a motor?*); size, function, or behavior (*How big is the U.S.? What is an X-ray used for? How do penguins find food?*); how things work (*How does the legislative branch of government function?*); and why things happen (*Why do some authors blend genres?*). To produce this kind of writing, students draw from what they already know and from primary and secondary sources. With practice, students develop the ability to refine a controlling idea, maintain a coherent focus on a topic, and incorporate relevant examples, facts, and details. They are also able to use various techniques to convey information, such as naming, defining, describing, or differentiating different types or parts; comparing or contrasting ideas or concepts; and citing an anecdote or a scenario to illustrate a point. Informational/explanatory writing includes a wide array of genres, including academic genres such as literary analyses, scientific and historical reports, summaries, and précis writing as well as technical writing, such as instructions, manuals, memos, reports, applications, and resumes.

<p>Grade 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write informative/explanatory texts• Introduce a topic• Organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions• Include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension• Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text• Clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts• Develop a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented	<p>Grade 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write informative/explanatory texts• Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts• Develop the topic with extended definitions• Develop the topic with concrete details, quotations and other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic• Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic• Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing
<p>Grade 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write informative/explanatory texts• Introduce a topic• Organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole• Include formatting (e.g., heading), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension• Develop a topic appropriate to the audience's knowledge by selecting the most significant and relevant facts• Develop a topic appropriate to the audience's knowledge by using extended definitions• Develop a topic appropriate to the audience's knowledge by using concrete details and quotations• Develop the topic thoroughly by using information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic• Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing	<p>Grade 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write informative/explanatory texts• Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text• Create cohesion• Clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts• Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary• Use techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic• Develop a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic)

Narrative

Narrative writing conveys an experience, either real or imaginary, and uses time as its deep structure. It can be used for many purposes, such as to inform, instruct, persuade, or entertain. In English language arts, students produce narratives that take the form of creative fictional stories, memoirs, anecdotes, and autobiographies. Over time, they learn to provide visual details of scenes, objects, or people; to depict specific actions (for example, movements, gestures, postures, and expressions); to use dialogue and interior monologue that provide insight into the narrator's and characters' personalities and motives; and to manipulate pace to highlight the significance of events and create tension and suspense. Narrative writing can also be an element of argument and informational/explanatory writing. For example, in history/social studies, students write narrative accounts about individuals to convey important information. They also construct event models of what happened, selecting from their sources only the most relevant information. In science, students write narrative descriptions to explain the step-by-step procedures they follow in their investigations so that others can replicate their procedures and (perhaps) reach the same results. With practice, students expand their repertoire and control of different narrative strategies and its uses in multiple modes of writing.

<p>Grade 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a narrative • Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation • Establish one or multiple points of view • Introduce a narrator and/or characters • Create a smooth progression of experiences or events • Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory setting, and/or characters • Develop a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented 	<p>Grade 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a narrative • Use a variety of techniques, such as flashback, foreshadowing, and anachrony, to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole • Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue and pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters • Use description • Use reflection • Use narrative technique of multiple plot lines to develop experiences, events, and/or characters
<p>Grade 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a narrative • Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation • Establish one or multiple points of view • Introduce a narrator and/or characters • Create a smooth progression of experiences or events • Use precise words and phrases to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters • Use descriptive details to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters • Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative 	<p>Grade 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a narrative • Use a variety of techniques (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution) to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome • Use dialogue and pacing to develop experiences, events, and/or characters • Use description to develop experiences, events, and/or characters • Use reflection and multiple plot lines to develop experiences, events, and/or characters • Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative

Creative Writing beyond Narrative

The narrative category does not include all of the possible forms of creative writing, such as many types of poetry. The Standards leave the inclusion and evaluation of poetry and dramas to teacher discretion.

An Important Note about Writing Modes

The Common Core State Standards note that

“For students, writing is a key means of asserting and defending claims, showing what they know about a subject, and conveying what they have experienced, imagined, thought, and felt. To be college- and career-ready writers, students must take task, purpose, and audience into careful consideration, choosing words, information, structures, and formats deliberately. They need to know how to combine elements of different kinds of writing – for example, to use narrative strategies within argument and explanation within narrative – to produce complex and nuanced writing. They need to be able to use technology strategically when creating, refining, and collaborating on writing. They have to become adept at gathering information, evaluating sources, and citing material accurately, reporting findings from their research and analysis of sources in a clear and cogent manner. They must have the flexibility, concentration, and fluency to produce high-quality first-draft text under a tight deadline as well as the capacity to revisit and make improvements to a piece of writing over multiple drafts when circumstances encourage or require it.”

The Special Place of Argument

The Indiana Department of Education has created presentations outlining major shifts brought about by the Common Core Standards. A presentation about the special place of argument in the Common Core explains that

While all three text types [argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative] are important, the Standards put particular emphasis on students' ability to write sound arguments on substantive topics and issues, as this ability is critical to college and career readiness. English and education professor Gerald Graff (2003) writes that “argument literacy” is fundamental to being educated. The university is largely an “argument culture,” Graff contends; therefore, K-12 schools should “teach the conflicts” so that students are adept at understanding and engaging in argument (both oral and written) when they enter college. He claims that because argument is not standard in most school curricula, only 20 percent of those who enter college are prepared in this respect. Theorist and critic Neil Postman (1997) calls argument the soul of an education because argument forces a writer to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of multiple perspectives. When teachers ask students to consider two or more perspectives on a topic or issues, something far beyond surface knowledge is required: students must think critically and deeply, assess the validity of their own thinking, and anticipate counterclaims in opposition to their own assertions.