


**Let's Argue: Evidence Based Writing IS Critical Thinking for All Learners, grades 6-12**



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**THANK YOU!**



Wisconsin State Reading ASSOCIATION

**Short, Short, BIG**

Short Reads. Short Writes. BIG Gains!

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 **Today's Agenda and Focus**

- Why does argumentation in writing matter?
- Importance of Critical Thinking!
- Strategies and ready-to-use writing activities that develop a student's ability to:
  - Write a well-reasoned claim (claims vs non-claims)
  - Cite and evaluate evidence (fact vs. fake)
  - Develop in writing a well-reasoned argument (ethos logos and pathos)
  - Craft a conclusive conclusion (logical reasoning)

**CLAIM IT! CITE IT! CEMENT IT!**

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
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WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

**"Evidence based writing is at the heart of critical thinking. When students have an understanding of the components of an argument and are able to closely examine texts and identify evidence, they are engaging in that deep critical thinking."**

Hillocks, G. (2010). "EJ" in Focus: Teaching Argument for Critical Thinking and Writing: An Introduction. *The English Journal*, 99(6), 24-32.

Hillocks, G. (2011). *Teaching argument writing, grades 6-12*. Portsmouth, NH: Heineman.



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THE RESEARCH



edited by Charles A. MacArthur, Steve Graham, Jill Fitzgerald

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MODEL AND PRACTICE

400 hours

10 hours



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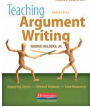
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The Basics of Argumentation



**The Basics**

- Solving Mysteries (Simple Arguments)
- Solving Problems Kids Care About (Writing Simple Arguments of Policy)

Teach THINKING First

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Writing and DEEP LEVELS of Reading Comprehension

Evaluative	Evaluative Comprehension requires the reader to move beyond the text to consider what they think and believe in relation to the message in the text
Inferential	Inferential comprehension is often referred to as 'between the lines' or 'think and search' comprehension.
Literal	Literal comprehension is often referred to as 'on the page' or 'right there' comprehension. This is the simplest form of comprehension.

Levels of Reading Comprehension  
(Copyright)

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Using Non-Text Based Materials for the Basics of Argumentation




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Claim #1: Arthur was pushed down the stairs.

Claim #2: Arthur fell down the stairs.

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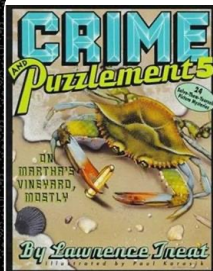
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More Resources for Visual Rhetoric



Library of Congress: [loc.gov/collections/](http://loc.gov/collections/)  
Smithsonian: [learninglab.si.edu](http://learninglab.si.edu)  
National Geographic Resource Library: [education.nationalgeographic.org](http://education.nationalgeographic.org)

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CLAIM IT!

- What it Means to Lay Claim to a Text
- Identifying Claims vs. a Statement
- P-Q-A Putting the Question in an Answer
- Honing in on **Highly Reasonable** Claims
- Honing in on **Richly Expressed** Claims
- Honing in on **Well-Written** Claims



**BASELINE ASSESSMENT:**  
How Well Do Students Make Claims?

**DEMONSTRATING STANDARDS-BASED COMPETENCY:**  
CLAIMING IT!

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 **Learning Target: To make sure students understand the significant difference between claims and statements so that once they start composing complete Short Writes, they will know how to start their compositions off on the proper foot.**

**IDENTIFYING CLAIMS**

Determine whether each sentence below is a Claim or a Statement.

1. Vegetarians don't eat meat.  
Claim \_\_\_\_\_ Statement \_\_\_\_\_
2. Movies are more entertaining than YouTube videos.  
Claim \_\_\_\_\_ Statement \_\_\_\_\_
3. Beach vacations are more fun for kids than mountain vacations.  
Claim \_\_\_\_\_ Statement \_\_\_\_\_
4. The school principal is in charge of the campus.  
Claim \_\_\_\_\_ Statement \_\_\_\_\_
5. Nike makes comfortable running shoes.  
Claim \_\_\_\_\_ Statement \_\_\_\_\_
6. Dogs are better pets than cats.  
Claim \_\_\_\_\_ Statement \_\_\_\_\_
7. Dogs and cats are both pets.  
Claim \_\_\_\_\_ Statement \_\_\_\_\_
8. Spending too much time on a computer can make you tired.  
Claim \_\_\_\_\_ Statement \_\_\_\_\_
9. Cereal is the best breakfast to eat if you want to start your day right.  
Claim \_\_\_\_\_ Statement \_\_\_\_\_
10. Goldfish live in water.  
Claim \_\_\_\_\_ Statement \_\_\_\_\_

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**MODEL AND PRACTICE**

400 hours

10 hours

Short, Short, BIG

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**How does zombie fungus impact an ecosystem?**

**Claim #1**  
Zombie Fungus is beneficial to an ecosystem.

**Claim #2**  
Zombie Fungus is NOT beneficial to an ecosystem.

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STATEMENTS	CLAIMS
<p>A STATEMENT is a FACT that can be proven to be true.            Tip: You cannot change a fact. You cannot argue a fact.</p>	<p>A CLAIM or OPINION describes how someone thinks or feels.            Tip: Look for sentences about feelings or beliefs. Cue phrases include: I believe...or, I think...</p>
<p>Identify 2 statements from the Zombie Fungus video</p>	<p>Identify Two claims from the Zombie Fungus video</p>

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**P**ut the  
**Q**uestion in the  
**A**nswer

**P-Q-A** stands for "Put the Question in the Answer." It's a surefire way of making sure your claim can be clearly understood without a reader having to have know the question you are answering.

Why is P-Q-A so important? Well, imagine you read this:

*Chocolate sauce, whipped cream, and sprinkles.*

As a reader, you would have no idea what the writer was talking about. However, if you read this, you would understand:

*Three popular toppings that kids like to put on ice cream are chocolate sauce, whipped cream and sprinkles.*

Makes sense, right? Take a look at the 3 examples below:

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**Instruction for Students**

Question: **What are three popular toppings kids like to put on ice cream?**

- Incorrectly stated claim: *Chocolate sauce, whipped cream and sprinkles.*
- Correctly stated claim: *Three popular toppings that kids like to put on ice cream are chocolate sauce, whipped cream and sprinkles.*

Question: **What is your favorite color?**

- Incorrectly stated claim: *Blue.*
- Correctly stated claim: *My favorite color is blue.*

Question: **What is your least favorite vegetable to eat?**

- Incorrectly stated claim: *Broccoli.*
- Correctly stated claim: *My least favorite vegetable to eat is broccoli.*

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**Why Does PQA Matter?** **Put the Question in the Answer**

Using P-Q-A is a must for success. And using the words from the question in your answer is not cheating; it's what strong writers do!

**Why?**

The two most important reasons are:

1. By **restating the question** in the answer, a writer **provides context** for the reader. (And this is VERY important.)
2. It helps **limit your claim to only one strong sentence**. And that's what we want right now (one strong sentence).

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**WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS**

*Practice is critical.* In the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) framework, the idea is for students to have ample practice time in order to develop skills and content knowledge. This is especially important in light of Richard Allington's research about schools that are able to close the student achievement gap in literacy.

Allington, R., & Gabriel, R. (2012). Every child, every day. *Educational Leadership*, 69(6), 10- 15.

**STUDENTS NEEDS TONS OF PRACTICE**

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**CITE IT!**

**BASELINE ASSESSMENT: How Well Do Students Cite Evidence?**

- What it Means to Cite and Evaluate Evidence
- How to Properly Quote Evidence
- How to Properly Paraphrase Evidence
- Model Sentence Starters to Help Cite It!
- Honing in on Citing Relevant Evidence
- Honing in on Citing Strong Evidence
- Honing in on Citing Accurate Evidence
- Citing More than One Piece of Evidence

**DEMONSTRATING STANDARDS-BASED COMPETENCY: CITE IT!**

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 **Learning Target: To make sure students understand:**

- What evidence actually is
- Why evidence is so important
- The difference between strong and weak evidence

**Claim It! - BLUE - Says what you know**

**Cite It! - GREEN - Says how you know it**

**Cement It! - ORANGE - Says why you know it**

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**STRONG EVIDENCE VS. WEAK EVIDENCE**

**OUR BRAIN'S THREE-STEP THOUGHT PROCESS**

When we hear a claim—even if it's rock-solid—we typically go through a three-step evaluation process inside our own heads.

1. **We reflect** on the claim (checking to see if we understand its meaning)
2. **We evaluate** the claim (and see how it holds up against our own existing beliefs).
3. **We decide** whether we want to support the claim or not (depending on the degree to which we agree or disagree with the idea).

Knowing how to properly cite relevant, strong, accurate evidence can be the great difference maker as to whether or not a claim eventually wins support. For example:

<b>Student Claim</b> My parents should be giving me a higher allowance.	<b>Weak Student Evidence</b> I want more money to spend on the stuff to buy that's cool.
<b>Student Claim</b> My parents should be giving me a higher allowance.	<b>Stronger Student Evidence</b> Now that I am in 4th grade and do more chores and have continued to do very well in school, it only makes sense that they give me more than they gave me when I was in 1st grade.

The stronger the evidence, the higher the likelihood that an audience will support the claim.

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**SIDE NOTE: Color Coding**

Each sentence in a well-written short response has a very specific job.

**Claim It!** Says what you know.

**Cite It!** Says how you know it.

Color-coding also helps you, the writer, focus on the purpose of the sentence you are writing.

Going forward, we will write all claims in blue so you can easily remember the job of the sentence is to assert a claim (that is highly reasonable, richly expressed, and well-written).

Going forward, we will also write all citation of evidence sentences in green so that you can easily remember the job of the sentence is to cite support for the claim.

**Claim It! - BLUE - Says what you know**  
**Cite It! - GREEN - Says how you know it**  
**Cement It! - ORANGE - Says why you know it**

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**EVALUATING EVIDENCE**

Activity Part 1: Determine whether the evidence being cited to support the claim is STRONG or WEAK

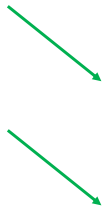
Activity Part 2: Write one sentence explaining why (i.e. your reasoning).

1. I deserve a new tennis racket. The one I currently have is old and ugly and I really want one.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Strong Evidence \_\_\_\_\_ Weak Evidence

Reason for my decision:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. It's a smart idea that the school makes sure to teach its students about the value of recycling paper and plastic on campus. According to leading environmental experts, when young people learn about the positive impact of recycling as children, the amount of non-recyclable waste they produce as adults is reduced by 63%.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Strong Evidence \_\_\_\_\_ Weak Evidence

Reason for my decision:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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**MAKE A CLAIM, PROVIDE EVIDENCE**

Answer the following questions.

- Make sure to provide at least one piece of evidence for each of your claims.
- Make sure to color code your replies (blue for claims, green for evidence)

**Question 1:** Is it fair for a teacher to assign homework over the weekend?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Question 2:** Should parents require their kids to take at least one day off every two weeks from watching screens (i.e. no phone, tablet, computer and/or TV) so that their children's eyes and brains can take a rest?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Question 3:** Which superhero has the best costume?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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athletes push themselves hard. They want to be the best. But sometimes players need a break. Taking a break can be a good idea. Sometimes it is necessary. The time off might be due to sickness. It could be because of an injury. After some time, they return. Often, the players are better than before. This is called a comeback.

Venus and Serena Williams are sisters and famous tennis stars. The two have overcome a lot to achieve their success. They grew up in a dangerous area. Their older sister was shot and killed in 2003. In that sport, the women have experienced racism. They both made incredible comebacks after illness or injury and were even better than before.

**Serena Williams**

Serena Williams battled tennis as a preschooler. As a young woman, she went

pro. By 1999, she was the top player in the world. In 2002, Serena Williams was ranked number one.

Just like tennis star, developed problems with her knee. Many matches were missed. But Williams got strong again. She won the 2005 Australian Open.

Years later, Serena got her foot. Many surprised Wimbledon match in 2011, she could mean of joy. It was a great comeback.

**Venus Williams**

Serena's sister, Venus Williams suffers from a disease called Sjogren's syndrome. The disease pain and makes her tired. The syndrome almost ended her career. That was in 2011.

Venus had treatment. She began a strict diet. Healthy foods help her feel better. The athlete made a comeback. By 2015, she was in the top ten again. Fans voted her Comeback Player of the Year. In 2019, she had 13 wins in her first 17 matches.

Adapted from: *Illustration: Corbis/Outlines; Photograph: Getty Images; Photograph: Michael O'Regan/Retna; Photograph: Kevan Maas/Outlines*

**Read the article INCREDIBLE COMEBACKS.**

• Fill in each Claim-It! box with textual evidence that supports the claim.

**EXAMPLE QUESTION: Is it sometimes a good idea for athletes to take a break?**

Claim-It!	City-It!
<p>Strategy: P.C.A.</p> <p><i>It is sometimes a good idea for athletes to take a break.</i></p>	<p>Strategy:</p> <p>As the text says, Serena and Venus Williams, "both made incredible comebacks after illness or injury and were even better than before."</p>
<b>Question 1:</b> Why does the article say that Venus and Serena Williams overcame a lot to achieve their success?	
<p>Claim-It! <th>City-It!</th> </p>	City-It!
<p>Strategy:</p> <p>Venus and Serena Williams have overcome a lot to achieve their success because their fans have not been easy.</p>	<p>Strategy:</p> <p>Provide textual evidence to support the claim.</p>
<b>Question 2:</b> How does Serena Williams feel after winning a Wimbledon match in 2017?	
<p>Claim-It! <th>City-It!</th> </p>	City-It!
<p>Strategy:</p> <p>Serena Williams was happy after winning a Wimbledon match in 2017.</p>	<p>Strategy:</p> <p>Provide textual evidence to support the claim.</p>
<b>Question 3:</b> Do you think Venus Williams' decision to treat her medical condition was a good idea?	
<p>Claim-It! <th>City-It!</th> </p>	City-It!
<p>Strategy:</p> <p>I think Venus Williams' decision to treat her medical condition was a good idea.</p>	<p>Strategy:</p> <p>Provide textual evidence to support the claim.</p>

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### WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

**Writing skills don't develop in a vacuum. Not only is writing a method for communication and expression, it is a tremendous learning tool. Researchers have also found that student writing, like reading, actually increases their capacity to learn (National Institute for Literacy, 2007).**

National Institute for Literacy. (2007). Adapted from What Content-Area Teachers Should Know About Adolescent Literacy. Retrieved from [http://www.nifl.gov/hnfi/publications/adolescent\\_literacy07.pdf](http://www.nifl.gov/hnfi/publications/adolescent_literacy07.pdf)

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### CEMENT IT!

- What it Means to Compose a Well-Reasoned Conclusion
- Model Sentence Starters to Help Cement It!
- Honing in on Cementing **Well-Reasoned** Conclusions
- Honing in on Cementing **Conclusive** Conclusion
- Honing in on Cementing Presentable Short Write (Proofreading)

**BASILINE ASSESSMENT:**  
How Well Do Students Cement a Short Write?

**DEMONSTRATING STANDARDS-BASED COMPETENCY:**  
**CEMENTING IT!**

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**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO CEMENT A SHORT WRITE?**

When it comes to short-response writing, being brief is your best friend.

While some genres of writing ask students to expand their thoughts into long, multi-paragraph essays, short-response writing encourages you to keep replies concise, intelligent, and to the point.

We've stated our claim. We've supported our claim with evidence. Now is when we cement our Short Write with a rock-solid conclusion that ties the evidence to the claim through logical reasoning.

That means it's time to introduce our third and final color: orange.

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**Claim It!**

**Says what you know.**



**Cite It!**

**Says how you know it.**

**Cement It!**

**Says why you know it**

Every Sentence has a Job!

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Example 1:

Halloween candy sales are a booming business. According to the National Confectioners Association, "Americans will spend around 2.7 billion dollars on Halloween candy this year." The large amount of money that gets spent on candy every Halloween explains why so many supermarkets have gigantic promotions each October.

Example 2:

It's not fair that I have to clean up my brother's toys. For the past 3 days I have helped him to clean up his toys even when I wasn't the one playing with them so it's about time he gets his lazy butt off the couch and cleans everything up for himself. In order for me to feel as if I am being treated with respect, my brother needs to be held responsible for putting everything back where it belongs.

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**BEWARE OF BITERS**

Big animals kill people. Some small ones do too. Venom is one of the tools snakes use. It packs a deadly punch.

There are over 3,000 kinds of snakes in the world. A fifth of those use venom. Snakes use it to take down prey. They also use it in self-defense. People are not prey to these snakes. They just pose a danger. A person may surprise a snake. Someone may try to handle one. The snake wants to be left alone. It bites.

The Inland Taipan lives in Australia. It has the strongest venom. One dose can kill 100 people. But the snake is shy. It would rather get away than fight. That keeps it from biting many.


The king cobra is also a deadly biter. Its venom can kill an elephant. Most cobras live in India. Some are in Asia.

The U.S. has killer snakes too. One is the rattlesnake. It has the strongest venom of all snakes in the U.S.

Snakebites can be bad. They kill over 90,000 people a year. This is worldwide. India has the most deaths. 11,000 die from bites each year.

For example: According to the author, which snake is the most dangerous?

Claim It!	Cite It!	Cement It!
Strategy: P-Q-A	Strategy: Provide textual evidence to support the claim (quote or paraphrase)	Strategy: Tie the claim to the evidence with logical reasoning
According to the author, the Inland Taipan is the most dangerous.	As the text says, "it has the strongest venom."	Because one dose is strong enough to kill many people, it is the most dangerous snake.



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**1. Question:** Why do snakes bite people?

Claim It!	Cite It!	Cement It!
Strategy: P-Q-A	Strategy: Provide textual evidence to support the claim (quote or paraphrase)	Strategy: Tie the claim to the evidence with logical reasoning
Snakes bite people in self-defense.	According to the article, people pose a danger and snakes just want to be left alone.	

Chunking and providing structures helps students to break down the components and then build them together.

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**Freebies and Tons of Resources!**

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