Effective Argumentation for School and Life
The information and techniques in this presentation come from the National Writing Project – College Ready Writers Program.
NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT

A network of sites anchored at colleges and universities working with teachers at all levels to implement high-quality writing programs in our schools.
CENTRAL TEXAS WRITING PROJECT

Taught through Texas State University, the Central Texas Writer’s Project offers teachers the opportunity to become Teacher Consultants and grow as writers and writing instructors.

Find more info [here](http://example.com)

(Heart of Texas @ UT is also associated with NWP)
This is an advanced institute focused on helping students to become more skilled at writing arguments from nonfiction sources.

The website contains many helpful resources you may want to explore!
**RESULTS**

In a 2 year study involving 22 districts across 10 states, results showed:

× A positive, statistically significant effect on content, structure, stance & conventions
× Greater proficiency in quality of reasoning & use of evidence

See the results for yourself [here](#)!
A FINAL CAVEAT BEFORE WE BEGIN:
As we have told our students,

When we are writing arguments, we are writing essays, not STAAR essays.

STAAR essays are not real writing.

An analogy is in order...
These are dogs:
 THESE ARE NOT DOGS:
WE ARE WRITING GREAT DANE, SAINT BERNARD, GOLDEN RETRIEVER ESSAYS!
NOT THESE...
That day will come, but it is not this day!
...IN OUR LIVES
IN A SCHEDULE OF A DAY:

1. Model writing out a list of your daily schedule.
2. Have students write out their own schedule.
3. Demonstrate how different parts of your schedule contain arguments.
4. Ask students to go back and annotate their own arguments.
5. Choose one to quickwrite.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00 AM</td>
<td>Wake up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:15 AM</td>
<td>Shower &amp; get dressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 AM</td>
<td>Leave for school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:15 AM</td>
<td>Plan lessons &amp; grade appears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
<td>Tutorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:35 AM</td>
<td>School begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 PM</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:45 PM</td>
<td>Do after school duty and have tutorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
<td>Go home/shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td>Watch TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 PM</td>
<td>Grade papers and/or read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 PM</td>
<td>Bedtime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example - Annotated with Arguments

6:00 AM – Wake up – School starts too early
6:15 AM – Shower & get dressed Should women have to wear makeup/attend to personal appearance more
7:00 AM – Leave for school
7:15 AM – Plan lessons & grade papers Teachers should be given more grading/planning time in the schedule
8:00 AM – Tutorials Academics & Extracurricular activities complete instead of cooperating
8:35 AM – School begins
1:00 PM – Lunch Lunch break should be longer
3:45 PM – Do after school duty and have tutorials
5:00 PM – Go home/shop; cook dinner Lack of vegan options/healthy eating restaurants in Cedar Park/Leander
6:00 PM – Watch TV Need for better methods of stress release
8:00 PM – Grade papers and/or read Need for more professional development for teachers
10:00 PM – Bedtime Use of screens & effect on sleep
STUDENT EXAMPLES:
1. 6:00: go to shower. Shower in the morning or at night?
2. 7:00: Get ready. False advertising.
3. 8:00: Go to tutorials/Hang w/sis. Mandatory tutorials?
4. 8:15-3:00 School: Too early.
5. 4:15: Get home/take out dogs/play w/dogs/take care of cat/eat/...
6. 6:30: HW: Is HW really necessary? Useful? Or just extra work?
7. 8:00: Do whatever I want. Too much screen time bed?
8. 9:00-10:00 Sleep: How much do teens need to sleep?
6:00 am: Wake up
6:30-7:45: Get ready
8:35-11:30: 1st & 2nd period
11:35-12:15: Read/Study/Study
12:20 - 1:42: Breakfast
1:46 - 2:16: Lunch
2:20 - 3:45: 3rd period
3:45 - 5:30: Basketball
5:55 - 7:30: Eat dinner/TV time
7:30 - 9:50: Homework/Free time
10:00 - 12:00: Go to bed

1. Waking up too early is not good for the brain.
2. School starting so early reduces the amount of time students have to get ready & upset their routine.
3. Having core classes back to back can increase stress.
4. Active periods do not provide a substantial amount of time for students to use.
5. Sports can help to wake up the brain and provide a well-needed break from studying.
6. Lunch periods are not long enough for students to use the time, either productively or take a break from school.
7. Last periods of the day are often the most stressful, especially if a core class is involved.
8. After-school practice takes time away from homework & other things.
9. Homework is too heavy & work related to school should be done at school.
6:45 Wake up. Full nights of sleep help students perform better.
7:00 Shower. Use excessive water when shower.
7:10 Dentist (wake-up) Social Standards set by other women and men create stress for younger adolescent to "look good."
8:00 Go to School. Later starting times will help students perform better.
8:20 Arrive at school. Rush to get to school creates stress.
8:40 - 12:15 School. Sitting for too long can cause circulation problems.
12:30 Lunch. Longer lunches to increase activity time.
12:50 Band. Students involved in extracurriculars are more likely to be able to multitask.
14:15 School. OFF PERIOD. Periods designated for HW for better sleep.
3:45 Go to band hall. Social areas are needed for students to feel safe.
4:20 Get homework. Later school days will help students perform better.
5 - 6 nap/computer/TV. Naps during the day help with energy.
6 - 6:30 Dinner
7 - 9 HW. Less homework for more sleep to help with brain.
8 - 12. Computer/rec ofCLEM. Screen time before bed affects sleep.
12 get ready for bed. The amount of time you spend in deep sleep.
12:30 Sleep. Teenagers need 8 - 10 hours of sleep.
Schedule
6:30 - Wake up, getting up makes you tired all day
6:30 - 7:30 - get ready for school, school can make you stressful
7:20 - 7:45 - go to bus stop, buses could be early or late so you miss it.
7:45 - 8:00 - drive to school, driving in the morning is dangerous
8:00 - 8:45 - wait for school to start, school starts too early
8:45 - 3:45 - school, school is too long
3:45 - 4:30 - drive home, driving on busses is dangerous
4:30 - 8 - watch TV, eat, etc. TV could be a bad influence
8:00 - 11:00 - homework, students have too much homework which stresses you out
11:00 - go to bed, going to bed too late can be bad
This routine helps students start looking at arguments within their own daily lives.
**Finding Arguments in a List**

- Model listing with students
- Spend time sharing lists
- Change “Talk” to “Write” and select a few topics
- Identify opinions based on topics
- Choose one to quickwrite
EXAMPLE

× Make a list from 1–10
× 1 & 2 – write two things you did yesterday
× 3 & 4 – write two things you like that others don’t
× 5 & 6 – write two conversations you’ve had recently
× 7 & 8 – write two things you don’t like that others do
× 9 & 10 – write two things you don’t think you could live without
1. I Watched Television
2. I Played with my dogs
3. I Enjoy Writing
4. I Like Vegetables
5. I've talked about taking care of my aging mom
6. I've talked about the television show Fargo
7. I don't like calamari
8. I don't like running
9. I can't live without the Great British Baking Show
10. I can't live without my dogs
1. I Watched Television - Effects of television on kids
2. I Played with My Dogs - Benefits of owning pets
3. I Enjoy Writing - How writing improves your brain
4. I Like Vegetables - Protein controversy
5. I've talked about taking care of my aging mom - Lack of care options
6. I've talked about the television show Fargo - violence in media
7. I don't like calamari
8. I don't like running - benefits of exercise
9. I Can't Live Without the Great British Baking Show - BBC/PBS debate (public funding of television)
10. I Can't Live Without My Dogs - excessive spending on pets
STUDENT EXAMPLES
Our Example:

- Name three things that make you angry.
- Name two ideas that make you think “unfair!”
- Name three situations that make you think “I wish I could change this.”
- Name one situation that makes you wish you knew more
- Name two things we should stop or start doing in the world
- Name two issues that are important to you or affect you personally
1) Racism
2) Cruelty to animals
3) Careless comments from people in power
4) Slavery in history
5) Double standards
6) The actions and words of the president
7) The selfishness of people in fossil fuel industry
8) The way the electoral college works
9) How to convince people to convert to clean energy
10) Converting to clean energy
11) Sharing wealth with other countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Background Knowledge and Current Interest</th>
<th>What do I Want to Learn</th>
<th>Others' Thoughts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Electoral College</td>
<td>- Not presidents in power are not trusted by the people</td>
<td>- What burdens it has, how to remove it from our system</td>
<td>- System needs to be represented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Clean Energy</td>
<td>- Climate change is causing our overuse of unclean energy</td>
<td>- How to work towards clean energy for the world</td>
<td>- Climate change is a lie... (which is false)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Animal Cruelty (Stunning)</td>
<td>- Worked on shelters, love animals and don't want them to be mistreated</td>
<td>- How to stop corporations that involve animal cruelty</td>
<td>- Believe that animals aren't intelligent... completely false</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mad
1. When people hint
2. When people don't ask for stuff
3. The morning
Unfair
A. Cleaning My Sister's Mess
A.2. When people don't want to hear the other side of the story
Change
1. My Parents
2. Weather
Know More
1. Yet
Start or Stop in world
1. Stop the inequality
2. Start having equality
Personal
1. My parents (Cuz I'm gay)
2. Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>What I Know and why I'm interested?</th>
<th>What I want to know?</th>
<th>What do others think?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People don't</td>
<td>I'm interested because people spread the word and it makes me upset</td>
<td>I want to know why they do this.</td>
<td>Others would think it's something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>want to hear the other side</td>
<td>because people spread the word and it makes me upset</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning</td>
<td>I'm interested because it's not my mess to fix</td>
<td>I want to know why I have to clean it up</td>
<td>Others might think I don't know how to fix it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Sister's Mess</td>
<td>It's not my mess to fix</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>I'm interested because I want to be accepted by others</td>
<td>I don't know what people would think of me with my religion.</td>
<td>Others think I'm not accepted by others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This routine helps students generate a list of possible interests that are opinion-based. They can return for several writing projects.
...IN THE WORLD
Take pictures of posters, bulletin boards, even physical objects you see that contain arguments

Display the image and discuss the arguments you find
**PROCEDURE:**

1. Notice the text
2. Define the claim
3. Share your response and your own claim about the topic
...IN OUR SCHOOL
DEAF YES
NO HEARING IMPAIRED
BAN THE TERM
WE THE DEAF PEOPLE CAMPAIGN
The Devices are Coming!

Have you signed up yet?

bit.ly/mlisdfee
Mrs. Questad is Reading

Grunt
by Mary Roach
10 Ethical Principles

1. Honesty
   telling the truth

2. Integrity
   doing the right thing

3. Promise-keeping
   doing what you say
   you are going to do

4. Loyalty
   supporting someone
   or something

5. Concern for Others
   caring for and helping others

6. Law-abidance/
   Civic Duty
   obeying rules and laws/
   making the world a better place

7. Respect for Others
   being polite and kind
   to everyone and everything

8. Fairness
   treating everyone equally

9. Pursuit of Excellence
   doing everything the best you can/
   looking for ways to improve

10. Accountability
    admitting to what you do wrong,
    and taking pride in what you do right

Leander ISD
Leading to a Bright Future
I believe in Raider Pride!
Ms. Lufkin is the best!

~ Melissa Phung
Extensions:

- Have your students photograph a visual argument and post a picture and an explanation of the claim on a Google slide
- Branch out into PSA’s to discuss claims
- Use video PSA’s to discuss claims
- Have students create their own visual PSA photograph or drawing
- Bring up editorial cartoons, which typically require MUCH more background knowledge
YOUR WORDS HAVE POWER
USE THEM WISELY.
WHY IS IT SO HARD
TO SEE BLACK AND BLUE

The only illusion is if you think it was her choice.
One in 6 women are victims of abuse.
Stop abuse against women.

If you need help or are able to help, contact us on 021 638 3511
This snowball proves global warming doesn’t exist...
HE REFUSES to COME OUT UNTIL the ELECTION is OVER.
ORAL ARGUMENTS
Making Mini-Speeches

1. Have students do a quick debate on an issue
2. For fun, use “Would You Rather” Questions for this activity
3. Have audience decide on most persuasive evidence
Would You Rather

Smell bad and not know it
Or
Be able to smell horrible odors no one else can?
WOULD YOU RATHER

Always have to say whatever came into your mind

Or

Never be able to speak again?
WOULD YOU RATHER?

Have the hiccups for the rest of your life

Or

Always feel like you have to sneeze and not be able to?
WOULD YOU RATHER?

Talk like Yoda
    Or
Breathe like Darth Vader?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talk like Yoda</th>
<th>Breath Like Darth Vader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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Creating Arguments
“Writing Into the Day”
Procedure

1. Collect two or three articles on the same topic. Articles should be fairly short and have a focused opinion.

See the [NWP CRWP](https://www.nwp.org) website for text sets. Also, see [Room for Debate](https://www.nytimes.com/section/roomfordebate) on the NYTimes website.
2. On Day One, students read the first article.

They then identify the author's claim and some forms of evidence he/she uses.
3. Day Two - repeat with the second article
4. On the third day, read the third article and create a visual representation of the author’s opinions/positions. (Students include all three)
5. On the fourth day (optional), have students add themselves to the graphic organizer and then do a quick write explaining why they put themselves there in relation to the other positions.
Most of the first semester, our focus in English 2 is on fiction (poetry, short stories & novels).

We found the following articles about poetry:
Our Articles

David Orr, “Why Bother?”
Patrick Rosal, “Poetry is Hospitable to Strangeness and Surprise”
William Logan, “Poetry Requires an Education of the Senses”
Student Examples:
Is Poetry Relevant?

1. "A Poetry Critic Asks His Reader?"
   - "You shouldn't be forced to read it."
   - "It is an important and should be taught to like it.

2. "Poetry is just as important as food, water, etc., etc., etc.

3. "Poetry Requires an Education of the Senes" by William Logan

Summary: These three are all similar because they all promote the importance of poetry. They are different in how much they emphasize it. For example, in "A Poetry Critic Asks His Reader?" the conclusion is that you shouldn't be forced to read poetry, that it is a choice. However, in "Poetry Requires an Education of the Senes," the author considers poetry to be just as necessary as food in its receivers. Revised Parables 2 and 3 (see your diagram).
“A poetry critic asks: Why bother?”

Mindless reading poetry is a personal decision. The poet might explain how poetry is important to our society because it’s a written art form that allows us to put together our emotional feelings, possibly feel the author’s emotion as well.

Their two arguments relate to that poetry creates emotion and thought within us.

“Poetry is hospitable to strangeness & surprise.”

The importance of poetry is up to us. Everyone views poetry differently, depending on how they feel about it. Poetry creates feeling of curiosity, but it’s up to us to decide if it’s important or not.

All of these arguments are very similar in that: yes, poetry is important, but it is up to us to decide how important it is.

“Poetry requires an education of the senses.”

Poetry is an art form that requires more than what you can see on the surface. Although it can just be simply written, poetry holds much more importance & significance when it digs deeper & appeals to our other senses & thought.

These two arguments relate in that they both explain that it’s up to us on how we comprehend and view the poem to really decide it’s importance.

Personally, I agree that poetry is important, but only if you want it to be. I love writing, but poetry is not the most important form to me while it is for others.
Is poetry relevant?

Patrick: That depends. I agree with you, David. Poetry does not need to be educated on. You make an opinion before you try or are educated on the subject.

David: You need to be educated on poetry before you make an opinion.

Poetry is dumb, I don't understand it.

Author: I agree with William Logan. You can't make an opinion before you try or are educated on the subject.
Education of the Senses

Of course poetry is important! But it does not need to be relevant. People will read and learn and grow on their own without poets raising their hands.

Why bother

It doesn't really matter if you read it or not. If you do, good on ya. If you don't, cool.

Strangers and Surprise

I totally agree. If you feel it awesome, but I personally don't.

Poetry is already huge! It's never really been out of style. Hundreds of people come together and read it or just read on their own. I'm not worried.
myself. 

Personally, I follow a live your own life motto meaning do what you want. I like poetry, but I do not think everyone has to take part.

Patrick Rospo - Patrick Rospo does not really endorse poetry as much as the others, yet still says it would be nice.

David Orr - David Orr is a bit iffy on the whole poetry thing, while he himself enjoys it, he does not say others must do so as well.

William Logan - William Logan states that poetry is critical in life. He is vrij witty about art and endorsed it greatly.
Poetry Arguments Graphic.

Big Question: Why is poetry important?

Poetry requires the use of the senses.

I agree that poems shouldn't be easier to read but I don't think they should be the main focus in the classroom.

"Why Bother?"

The bigger the circle, the more I agree with their argument.

I really agree with this poem because poetry is an acquired skill. You shouldn't be forced to do something you don't enjoy.
“Writing From Sources"
During a study of *A Lesson Before Dying*, students chose issues seen in the book for their first attempts at writing an argument.
Our topics:
- Busing
- Police Brutality
- Death Penalty

Non-Fiction Companion Pieces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Title</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal Arguments Handout</td>
<td>Google Docs</td>
<td>Each student will get a copy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busing Taught Me Valuable Life Lessons</td>
<td>Google Docs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busing Isn't the Answer, Choice Is</td>
<td>Google Docs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Cameras Will Stop Police Brutality</td>
<td>Google Docs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Cameras Will Not Stop Police Brutality</td>
<td>Google Docs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of Course the Death Penalty Is Cruel and Unusual</td>
<td>Google Docs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Death Penalty Needs to Be an Option for Punishment</td>
<td>Google Docs</td>
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</table>
The Assignment:

Mini-Lesson Instructions

Informal Argument Student Handout

Student Example
“Using Evidence Effectively”
In *Rewriting* by Joseph Harris, he lists “moves” writers can make using evidence including:

- Illustrating
- Authorizing
- Countering
- Extending
Using a Metaphor to Understand:
The World of Cooking

Illustrating - using specific examples to support your claim
... is Rachel Ray

She shows you step-by-step exactly what to do - illustrating each recipe
Authorizing - lending the voice of authority to your claim

... is Julia Child

The undisputed master of all French cooking
Countering - using evidence to counter an idea (or pushing back against evidence)

...is Marcel Vigneron

You think a strawberry should taste like a strawberry, but he pushes back and asks why it shouldn't taste like a lobster?
Extending - borrowing language or ideas from evidence and using them in a different way
David Chang of Momofuku

Fusing Asian, Southern & Traditional American food together into a new cuisine (fried chicken with mu shu pancakes and caviar)
Presenting to Classes

Our presentation

For simplicity sake, we leave out extending. As the year goes on, we might add it, particularly through style imitations.
Considering your Audience and Ranking Evidence

Practice with Ranking Evidence from NWP

Blank Ranking Evidence Handout
"Researched Arguments - Putting it All Together"
This year, we chose to have students research a topic and write letters to an authority proposing a change.

*Inspired by [Letters to the Next President 2.0](https://letters2npr.org)
"Our Research Project"
Next Steps:

- More writing from sources, including a nonfiction book they will choose
- Using models of writing to extend students’ style
- Using evidence without having access to sources (the dreaded STAAR essay)