



Opinion/Argument Writing with Color Coding:

Provide students with a sample editorial piece of writing such as the one below. Establish a color coding system such as:

- Green** = Opinion Statement
- Yellow** = Reasons in support claim
- Pink** = Counter argument
- Blue** = to indicate facts and research to support claim
- Underline = linking words
- Ⓒ = Closure/conclusion

Guide students to highlight the article using the coding system. They may also want to number the reasons and put a star by the strongest reason provided. They can keep these examples as “anchor texts” to help them understand the structure of this genre of writing.

Sample One:

Are School Uniforms Really That Bad?

Last week the Parent Teacher Association met to discuss whether or not the students at our school should begin wearing school uniforms. Most students who heard about the discussion were completely against the idea. Juanita Sanchez, a seventh grader, said, “Uniforms are so gross. Why would anyone want to look the same as everyone else?” This seemed to be the general feeling among most students.

But this writer thinks that the school uniform issue should be seriously considered. **In my opinion, school uniforms are NOT that bad, and have some benefits that students should consider before making up their minds against them.**

Miss Sanchez stated that she felt that uniforms made everyone look the same. Is that really so bad? Obviously, we don’t all want to look alike in every way. But maybe if we all had to wear the same thing, we wouldn’t focus so much on having the coolest jeans, or the hottest sneakers. According to an article in the New York Times, students our age spend about \$50 a week on clothes and accessories. That is a lot of money! What if you don’t have that kind of money to spend on clothes? Unfortunately, at our school, if you are not wearing cool clothes, people make fun of you. Nobody likes to be made fun of, so students take matters into their own hands. Last year at Jefferson cool, over 60 students were robbed. Money, clothes, and jewelry were all taken from lockers and book bags.

If everyone had to wear uniforms, students would not feel such pressure to keep up with the latest styles. Also, students could express their individuality in different ways, like hairdos and by must being more outgoing.

Ⓒ **I urge parents, teachers and students at Jefferson School to really think about school**

uniforms—they are not as bad as you think!

Sample Two:

Hang Up and Drive

(6th grade student model from Write Source: <http://thewritesource.com/>)

You see it every day, especially in freeway traffic. A car is weaving back and forth, speeding up then slowing down, or suddenly stopping. No, it's not a drunk driver. It's a cell-phone driver. Cell phones are used everywhere, but on the road they are a dangerous distraction to drivers and should be prohibited.

The New England Journal of Medicine reported that "motorists using a cell phone were four times more likely to have an accident than those not using a phone." The major problem is that the driver is not focused on the road, but on his or her conversation. Cell-phone drivers are very unpredictable: they weave, tailgate, drive too fast or too slow, make improper turns, run red lights, and even stop at green ones. It's not only annoying; it's hazardous. Cell-phone-related accidents include rear-ending vehicles; running off a road and crashing into trees, fences, and buildings; flipping over; and having head-on collisions. Many of these accidents result in fatalities. In October at the California Traffic Safety Summit, experts testified that "cell phones used by drivers lead to at least 1,000 deaths per year in California." These are the same problems that occur with drunk driving, which is strictly outlawed and harshly enforced. For the same reasons, California needs laws that restrict the use of cell phones in cars.

Until we take action to pass new laws, drivers at least need to be more responsible when using cell phones. The American Automobile Association recommends that drivers pull off the road before using a cell phone, have a passenger use it for them, or use voice mail to answer calls. Another suggestion is to keep the phone off while moving or simply not use it in the car. Before using a cell phone, drivers should think to themselves, "Is this call really *that* important?"

© Cell phones can be a vital link in emergencies, but drivers need to use them wisely. As professional NASCAR racer John Andretti says, "Driving safely is your first responsibility." The best road to safety is to just hang up and drive.

Annotating Text:

Name: _____

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