

Writing an Argument



When completing a shared writing of a new text type for students, it is helpful to walk the students through the same process you will ask them to use on their own. Here, I've listed each step on the "how to" chart the students will have, then described what the teaching might sound and look like as you collaboratively work through the process for the first time. Since there will be so much guidance and support during the shared writing phase, you can choose to take on a more complex topic such as one from your science or social studies curriculum.



1. *Research a topic that you care about.*

Generate a list of topics to explore for argument writing with your students. You will choose one for the group essay, and later the students may choose others from the same list for their own essays. See page 15 for many possibilities.

Once the topic is chosen, read and research as a whole class on the topic. This is a good time to teach students how to choose good search terms, evaluate the credibility of websites, and keep track of the information they glean in on-line or paper notes. You'll also want to teach them how to list their sources using whichever format your school chooses to teach.



2. *State your claim: choose an argument that is well supported with evidence.*

Use "Take a Stand" or "Talk Tickets" to guide the students to developing claims about the topic. Since this will be a group essay, you'll have to choose one claim to support in the class essay. You may want to vote to choose a side.



3. *List evidence you will use. Focus on the most credible sources.*

Introduce whichever graphic organizer for planning you want them to use. Have the students write the claim and gather evidence for their argument into the organizer. You may want to do this on a large chart with students offering their evidence via white boards, for example.



4. *Choose your best evidence*

With your guidance, choose the best evidence and arguments for your claim and put a check mark, or star next to them. You can also use numbers to order these to show the sequence you will use in your essay.



5. *Write your introductory paragraph. Begin with a hook, then write a topic or thesis sentence that states your claim.*

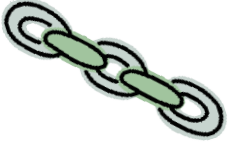
As you and the students begin writing the essay, have them refer to the language frames guide to create sentences to suggest for the class essay. Refer to the chart for hooks to generate possible first sentences as well. Students can write possibilities as pairs, then display their suggestions and the class can vote.





6. **Write paragraphs outlining your argument with evidence.**

Continue writing the rest of the essay with input from the class. Feel free to guide the class to the best sounding language and the clearest structure. You'll want the resulting effort to reflect at least grade level standards for argument writing: clearly established claim, organized writing in multiple paragraphs, good use of transitions and linking words, effective conclusion.



7. **Use linking words to connect your ideas.**

Refer to the transitions/cues words chart as you go to select the best ways to link ideas throughout the essay.



8. **Write a conclusion to remind the reader of your claim and/or call for action**

Try a few ideas for the conclusion before choosing one. You may want to refer back to the mentor texts from week one to give them ideas.



9. **Reread and revise: Does it make sense? Sound convincing? Any missing information?**

If you have time, you could refer here to the A.R.M.S. poster and look at the essay again for each element (Add, Remove, Move, Substitute)



10. **Reread and edit: Check**

- *capitals*
- *spelling*
- *punctuation*

☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
Punctuation	Capitals only where they go	Spelling	Spaces between all words	Paper is Neat
. ? ! " ,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning of sentence • Names • Months • Days of the week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All word wall words • Harder words spelled using the sound cards and/or attempted spelling 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handwriting • No smudges



11. **Type or write a final draft!**

12. **Celebrate your hard work!**

Since you as teacher will have typed this up with the class as it is composed, you won't need to edit, but do celebrate! You could print it out and give it to a staff member or the parents for feedback, for example. Do print a copy of this as well for each student as a reminder of the elements of an argument essay.

