

ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING UNIT

Step-by-Step

Grades 7 - 10 | 4 Weeks | 20 Lessons

A Complete Scaffolded Unit: Claim to Revision

What's Inside:

- 20 Detailed Lesson Plans (Scaffolded: Claim, Evidence, Counterclaim, Revision)
- 5 Mentor Text Analysis Activities with Full Texts and Guided Worksheets
- 6 Graphic Organizers for Planning, Drafting, and Revising
- Peer Editing Checklist and Protocol
- Argument Revision Guide for Self-Editing
- Final Essay Rubric (4-Point Scale)

UM Printables
Premium Teaching Resources

Table of Contents

Unit Overview

- Standards Alignment
- Pacing Guide (4 Weeks)
- Assessment Overview
- Materials Needed

Week 1: Understanding Argument and Crafting Claims (Lessons 1-5)

- Lesson 1: What Is Argumentative Writing?
- Lesson 2: Identifying Strong Claims
- Lesson 3: Crafting Your Own Claims
- Lesson 4: Mentor Text Analysis #1 - Deconstructing an Argument
- Lesson 5: Types of Evidence

Week 2: Building the Argument (Lessons 6-10)

- Lesson 6: Finding and Evaluating Evidence
- Lesson 7: Integrating Evidence Into Your Writing
- Lesson 8: Reasoning - Connecting Evidence to Claims
- Lesson 9: Mentor Text Analysis #2 - Evidence and Reasoning
- Lesson 10: Organizing Your Argument

Week 3: Counterclaims and Structure (Lessons 11-15)

- Lesson 11: Understanding Counterclaims
- Lesson 12: Acknowledging and Refuting Counterclaims
- Lesson 13: Mentor Text Analysis #3 - Counterclaim Strategies
- Lesson 14: Structuring the Argumentative Essay
- Lesson 15: Mentor Text Analysis #4 - Full Essay Structure

Week 4: Drafting, Revising, and Publishing (Lessons 16-20)

- Lesson 16: Drafting the Argumentative Essay
- Lesson 17: Mentor Text Analysis #5 - Revision Techniques
- Lesson 18: Peer Editing Workshop
- Lesson 19: Argument Revision Guide and Self-Editing
- Lesson 20: Final Essay Submission and Reflection

Mentor Text Analysis Activities

- Mentor Text #1: School Uniforms Debate
- Mentor Text #2: Social Media and Teenagers
- Mentor Text #3: Homework Policy
- Mentor Text #4: Cell Phones in School
- Mentor Text #5: The Revision Process

Graphic Organizers

- GO 1: Claim Testing Chart
- GO 2: Evidence Evaluation Matrix
- GO 3: CER Framework (Claim-Evidence-Reasoning)

GO 4: Counterclaim and Rebuttal Organizer

GO 5: Argumentative Essay Outline

GO 6: Revision Checklist Organizer

Peer Editing Checklist

Argument Revision Guide

Final Essay Rubric

Review Request

Unit Overview

This four-week unit takes students on a scaffolded journey through argumentative writing, moving from foundational concepts to a polished, rubric-graded final essay. Each week builds on the previous one, ensuring students develop confidence and skill at every stage.

Standards Alignment (CCSS)

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7-10.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7-10.1.A: Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize reasons and evidence logically.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7-10.1.B: Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7-10.1.C: Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7-10.1.D: Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7-10.1.E: Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7-10.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, and rewriting.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7-10.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Pacing Guide

Week	Focus	Lessons	Key Outcomes
1	Understanding Argument and Crafting Claims	1-5	Define argument; write strong claims; identify evidence types; analyze mentor text
2	Building the Argument	6-10	Evaluate sources; integrate evidence; develop reasoning; organize arguments
3	Counterclaims and Structure	11-15	Write counterclaims and rebuttals; structure full essay; analyze mentor texts
4	Drafting, Revising, and Publishing	16-20	Draft essay; peer edit; revise; submit final essay with reflection

Assessment Overview

- **Formative:** Exit tickets (daily), graphic organizers, mentor text analysis worksheets, quick-writes
- **Peer Assessment:** Peer editing checklist (Lesson 18)
- **Summative:** Final argumentative essay graded with the unit rubric (Lesson 20)
- **Self-Assessment:** Revision guide reflection (Lesson 19), final reflection (Lesson 20)

Materials Needed

- Student notebooks or writing journals
- Mentor text packets (provided in this resource)
- Graphic organizer copies (provided in this resource)
- Highlighters (at least two colors per student)
- Sticky notes
- Access to research materials (library, approved websites)
- Peer editing checklists (provided in this resource)
- Argument revision guides (provided in this resource)
- Final essay rubric (provided in this resource)

WEEK 1

Understanding Argument and Crafting Claims

Lessons 1-5 | 5 days

This week, students build the foundation for argumentative writing. They learn to distinguish arguments from opinions, craft debatable claims, analyze a mentor text, and identify types of evidence. By the end of Week 1, every student should be able to write a strong, specific, and debatable claim and identify at least three types of evidence.

Lesson 1: What Is Argumentative Writing?

Week 1 | 45-50 minutes

Objective	Duration
Students will distinguish argumentative writing from other text types and explain its purpose and key components.	45-50 minutes

Argument: A reasoned, logical attempt to convince an audience to accept a position on a debatable topic

Claim: A statement that asserts a position on a debatable issue

Opinion: A personal belief or judgment that is not necessarily supported by evidence

Evidence: Facts, statistics, examples, or expert testimony used to support a claim

Persuasion: The act of convincing an audience through reasoning and evidence

>> Materials

Student notebooks; chart paper or whiteboard; three short text samples (one informative, one narrative, one argumentative); highlighters; sticky notes.

>> Mini-Lesson (Direct Instruction)

Begin by asking students: *"What is the difference between arguing and fighting?"* Allow 2-3 minutes of think-pair-share. Explain that argumentative writing is about reasoned debate, not conflict. It uses logic and evidence to persuade. Display three short text excerpts on the board: one informative (e.g., a encyclopedia entry about volcanoes), one narrative (e.g., a story opening), and one argumentative (e.g., an editorial about school uniforms). Ask students to identify which is which and justify their answers.

Present the five key features of argumentative writing: (1) takes a clear position on a debatable topic, (2) supports the position with credible evidence, (3) acknowledges and responds to opposing views, (4) uses logical reasoning to connect evidence to the claim, and (5) maintains a formal, objective tone. Emphasize the critical difference between an opinion and an argument: **opinions lack evidence and reasoning; arguments are built on them.** For example, "I think homework is bad" is an opinion, while "Homework should be limited because research shows it has diminishing returns after two hours" is an argument.

>> Guided Practice

WEEK 4

Drafting, Revising, and Publishing

Lessons 16-20 | 5 days

This is the culmination of the unit. Students draft their full argumentative essays, study revision techniques through a final mentor text, participate in a structured peer editing workshop, engage in self-editing using the revision guide, and submit their final polished essays. The focus this week is on the writing process: drafting, feedback, and revision.

Lesson 16: Drafting the Argumentative Essay

Week 4 | 45-60 minutes

Objective	Duration
Students will write the first draft of their argumentative essay, applying all unit concepts: claim, evidence, reasoning, counterclaim, and structure.	45-60 minutes (may extend to a second day if needed)

Drafting: The process of writing the first complete version of an essay, focusing on ideas over perfection

Formal Tone: An objective, professional voice that avoids slang, contractions, and first-person opinions (e.g., replacing "I think" with "The evidence suggests")

>> Materials

Student notebooks or laptops/computers; students' completed outlines and Quote Sandwiches from previous lessons; transition word bank; writing rubric (provided in this resource, for reference).

>> Mini-Lesson (Direct Instruction)

Frame the drafting mindset: *"The first draft is you telling yourself the story. Revision is you making it clear for the reader."* Emphasize that the goal today is to get ideas down, not to write perfectly. Review the key elements they must include: (1) Introduction with hook, context, and thesis; (2) At least two body paragraphs with the Quote Sandwich and So What? reasoning; (3) One counterclaim-rebuttal paragraph; (4) Conclusion with restated thesis and call to action.

Briefly review **formal tone**: Replace "I think" and "I feel" with stronger phrasing ("The evidence clearly indicates," "Research demonstrates"). Avoid contractions and slang. The writer should sound like a knowledgeable, confident authority on the topic.

>> Guided Practice

Model writing the introduction for a sample topic, thinking aloud about hook selection, context, and thesis placement. Then, model transitioning from the introduction to the first body paragraph. Write the first two sentences of the body paragraph together, demonstrating the topic sentence and the beginning of the Quote Sandwich.

>> Independent Practice

Students write the first draft of their argumentative essay. They should work directly from their outlines and integrate their pre-written Quote Sandwiches. The teacher circulates, conferencing briefly with students who are struggling to get started or who need redirection on claim clarity or evidence integration. If time runs out, drafting continues for homework or in a second drafting period.

>> Closure / Exit Ticket

Record your progress: "Today I completed my (introduction / body paragraphs / counterclaim / conclusion). One challenge I faced while drafting was _____. One thing I am proud of in my draft so far is _____."

TIP:

While students draft, play soft instrumental music to maintain a focused writing environment. Keep the transition word bank, Quote Sandwich model, and Counterclaim Formula posted visibly for reference.

>> Differentiation

Scaffold: Allow students to dictate their draft using speech-to-text technology. Provide sentence frames for each paragraph. Permit students to draft only three paragraphs (intro, one body, conclusion) if the full essay is too ambitious in one sitting.

Extend: Challenge students to include a concession within their counterclaim paragraph and to use at least three different types of evidence (factual, statistical, expert testimony) across the essay.

Lesson 17: Mentor Text Analysis #5: Revision Techniques

Week 4 | 45-50 minutes

Objective	Duration
Students will compare a draft and a revised version of a mentor text to identify specific revision strategies that strengthen argumentative writing.	45-50 minutes

Revision: The process of re-seeing and rethinking the content, structure, and logic of a piece of writing (not just fixing errors)

Editing: The process of correcting grammar, spelling, punctuation, and formatting errors

Word Choice: The specific words a writer selects to convey tone and meaning precisely

>> Materials

Mentor Text #5: "Before and After - The Revision Process" (provided in the Mentor Text Analysis Activities section); highlighters; Mentor Text Analysis Worksheet #5; student notebooks; students' own first drafts.

>> Mini-Lesson (Direct Instruction)

Explain the critical difference between revision and editing: "*Editing is fixing the surface. Revision is rebuilding the foundation.*" When you revise, you ask: Is my claim clear? Is my evidence strong enough? Does my reasoning actually prove my point? Is my counterclaim paragraph convincing? When you edit, you ask: Are

there spelling errors? Is the punctuation correct?

Present three key revision strategies:

- 1. Deepen Reasoning:** Apply the So What? test again. If your explanation is thin, push further.
- 2. Strengthen Evidence:** Replace vague or weak evidence with specific, credible data.
- 3. Sharpen Word Choice:** Replace bland verbs and vague nouns with precise, powerful language. "The evidence shows" becomes "The evidence demonstrates" or "The data confirms."

>> Guided Practice

Display the "Before" paragraph from Mentor Text #5. Read it together and identify weaknesses: vague claim, dropped quote, missing reasoning. Then display the "After" paragraph. Compare the two side by side. Highlight the changes: where did the author add reasoning? Where did they replace weak evidence? Where did they upgrade word choice? Complete the first section of Worksheet #5 together.

>> Independent Practice

Students read the full Before/After text and complete Worksheet #5. They must: (1) Identify three specific revisions the author made, (2) Classify each revision as Deepening Reasoning, Strengthening Evidence, or Sharpening Word Choice, (3) Explain how each revision improved the argument, and (4) Select one revision strategy to apply to their own draft immediately, writing the before and after version of one of their own paragraphs.

>> Closure / Exit Ticket

Write one "before" sentence from your draft and the "after" (revised) version. Explain why the revised version is stronger.

>> Differentiation

Scaffold: Provide a checklist of the three revision strategies with examples. Point students to one specific paragraph in their draft to revise, rather than the whole essay.

Extend: Have students revise a paragraph from their draft using all three strategies and write a brief reflection comparing the original and revised versions, analyzing the impact on the reader.

Lesson 18: Peer Editing Workshop

Week 4 | 45-50 minutes

Objective	Duration
Students will provide and receive constructive feedback on their argumentative essays using a structured peer editing protocol and checklist.	45-50 minutes

Constructive Feedback: Specific, actionable suggestions that help the writer improve, rather than just pointing out flaws
Peer Review: The process of having a classmate read and evaluate your writing, and you evaluating theirs
Criteria: The standards or requirements on which an essay is evaluated (from the rubric)

Graphic Organizer #6: Revision Checklist Organizer

Use this organizer during self-editing to track your revisions for each section of the Argument Revision Guide (Lesson 19).

Focus Area	Checklist Question	Self-Rating (Yes/Somewhat/ No)	Revision Notes / What I Changed
1. Claim	<i>Is my claim debatable, specific, and clear? Does my thesis include a roadmap?</i>		
2. Evidence	<i>Do I have enough evidence? Is it credible? Is it integrated with the Quote Sandwich?</i>		
3. Reasoning	<i>Does my reasoning pass the So What? test? Is the connection to the claim explicit?</i>		
4. Counterclaim	<i>Is the counterclaim represented fairly? Is my rebuttal logical and supported?</i>		
5. Conventions	<i>Are there spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors? Is the tone formal and objective?</i>		

Instructions: For each focus area, read the checklist question and rate your essay honestly. If your rating is "Somewhat" or "No," use the Revision Notes column to record exactly what you need to change, and then make those changes on your draft.

Peer Editing Checklist

Use this structured checklist during peer review to provide specific, actionable, and constructive feedback.

Reviewer Name: _____ Author Name: _____

Focus Area	Checklist Question	Yes	No	Suggestions / Evidence
Claim / Thesis	Is the claim debatable, specific, and clear? Does the thesis provide a roadmap of the main reasons?	■	■	
Evidence	Is the evidence credible and relevant? Is it integrated using the Quote Sandwich (Introduce, Quote, Explain)?	■	■	

Reasoning	Does the reasoning pass the "So What?" test? Is the connection between the evidence and the claim explicitly explained?	■	■	
Counterclaim	Is the counterclaim acknowledged fairly? Is there a clear pivot? Is the rebuttal logical and supported by evidence/reasoning?	■	■	
Structure & Flow	Are body paragraphs ordered logically (emphatic order)? Are transitions used effectively between paragraphs and ideas?	■	■	
Conventions	Is the tone formal and objective (no "I think" or "I feel")? Are there minimal spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors?	■	■	

Three Stars and a Wish

Star 1 (Strength): _____

Star 2 (Strength): _____

Star 3 (Strength): _____

Wish (Suggestion for **Improvement**):

Argument Revision Guide

Use this guide to self-edit and revise your essay. Complete each check carefully. Remember: Revision is re-seeing your argument; Editing is fixing surface errors.

Check 1: The Claim

- Is my claim debatable? (Could a reasonable person disagree?)
- Is my claim specific? (Is it focused and precise?)
- Is my claim clear? (Does the reader know exactly where I stand?)
- Does my thesis statement include a roadmap of my main reasons?

If any box is unchecked, revise your thesis here:

Check 2: The Evidence

- Do I have at least two pieces of credible evidence?
- Did I use more than one type of evidence (statistical, factual, expert, etc.)?
- Is every piece of evidence introduced with context (Top Bun)?
- Is every piece of evidence cited properly?
- Is every piece of evidence explained in my own words (Bottom Bun)?

List a weak piece of evidence you need to replace or add context to:

Check 3: The Reasoning

- Does every piece of evidence have reasoning that follows it?
- Does my reasoning answer the "So What?" question?
- Do I explicitly connect the evidence back to my claim?
- Did I avoid simply restating the evidence?

Write a sentence where you need to push your "So What?" reasoning deeper:

Check 4: The Counterclaim & Rebuttal

- Did I clearly acknowledge the opposing viewpoint without bias?
- Did I use a clear pivot transition word (However, Nevertheless)?
- Does my rebuttal use logic/evidence rather than just opinion?
- Does my rebuttal prove why my original claim is still the stronger position?

If your rebuttal is weak, write a stronger counter-argument or evidence point here:

Check 5: Conventions & Tone

- Did I remove "I think," "I feel," or "I believe" to maintain a formal tone?
- Did I replace vague words with precise, academic vocabulary?
- Are my transitions effective between paragraphs and ideas?
- Have I checked for spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors?

Final Essay Rubric

Argumentative essays will be graded using the following 4-point rubric. A score of 3 or 4 indicates proficiency.

Category	4 - Exemplary	3 - Proficient	2 - Developing	1 - Beginning
Claim / Thesis	Claim is compelling, highly debatable, specific, and clear. Thesis provides a clear roadmap of reasons and sets a strong direction for the essay.	Claim is debatable, specific, and clear. Thesis includes a roadmap of reasons. Position is evident but may lack nuance.	Claim is present but may be somewhat vague, too broad, or not clearly debatable. Thesis may lack a roadmap of reasons.	Claim is missing, merely an opinion, or a statement of fact. Thesis is absent or unclear.
Evidence & Integration	Multiple pieces of credible, relevant evidence are seamlessly integrated using the Quote Sandwich. All evidence is properly cited.	Adequate credible evidence is provided and integrated using the Quote Sandwich. Minor errors in citation or integration may exist.	Evidence is present but may be insufficient, lack credibility, or be poorly integrated (e.g., dropped quotes). Citation may be missing.	Little to no credible evidence provided. Evidence is dropped without context or explanation. No citations.
Reasoning	Reasoning is thorough and insightful. The "So What?" test is consistently passed. Clear, logical connections between evidence and claim are explicit in every paragraph.	Reasoning is present and mostly explains how evidence supports the claim. Some connections may be implicit rather than explicit. Passes the "So What?" test generally.	Reasoning is superficial or repetitive. The writer assumes the evidence speaks for itself. Fails the "So What?" test in key areas.	No reasoning provided. Evidence is listed without any explanation of how it supports the claim.
Counterclaim & Rebuttal	Counterclaim is acknowledged fairly and objectively. A clear pivot transitions to a logical, evidence-based rebuttal that strengthens the original argument.	Counterclaim is acknowledged. A pivot and rebuttal are present, though the rebuttal may rely more on opinion than evidence.	Counterclaim is present but misrepresented (straw man) or the rebuttal is weak/missing. Pivot may be absent or confusing.	No counterclaim or rebuttal included.
Organization & Flow	Introduction hooks the reader; conclusion ends powerfully. Body paragraphs follow emphatic order. Transitions create seamless flow between all ideas.	Introduction and conclusion function properly. Paragraphs are logically ordered. Transitions are used, though some may be mechanical.	Structure is attempted but flawed. Missing hook or conclusion. Paragraphs may be out of order. Lack of transitions makes flow choppy.	No clear organizational structure. Ideas are randomly ordered. No transitions. Missing introduction or conclusion.
Conventions & Tone	Formal, objective tone maintained throughout. Virtually no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Precise academic vocabulary.	Formal tone maintained with rare lapses (e.g., an "I think"). Minor errors in conventions that do not impede readability.	Tone fluctuates between formal and informal. Several convention errors that occasionally distract the reader.	Informal or inappropriate tone. Pervasive convention errors that significantly impede understanding.
Total Score: ____ / 24				Grade: _____

Grading Scale:

- 21-24 points = A (Exemplary)
- 17-20 points = B (Proficient)
- 13-16 points = C (Developing)
- 0-12 points = D/F (Beginning - Needs Major Revision)

Teacher Comments:

Thank You for Your Purchase!

I truly appreciate your support and hope this Argumentative Writing Unit serves your students well. Creating premium, high-quality educational resources is my passion, and your feedback makes a world of difference.

If you found this resource helpful, **please take a moment to leave a review on Teachers Pay Teachers.**

Your honest feedback not only helps me improve but also guides other educators toward quality resources for their classrooms. It only takes a minute, and it means so much!

How to Leave a Review:

1. Go to your **My Purchases** page on TPT.
2. Find this resource and click **Leave a Review**.
3. Share your honest experience and rating!

UM Printables

Premium Teaching Resources