

That's debatable: Persuasive writing in the workshop model

"The idea again is that learned men show their differences by rhetoric, show their differences by persuasive arguments...Learned men don't fight." Dr. Donald Cole of the University of Mississippi

"My weapons [are] my words." from *The Great Debaters*

Standards:

6.7a,b; 7.7a,b; 8.7a,b; 9.6a; 10.6a; 11.6a; 12.6a

The student will write a persuasive essay. The student will be able to generate, gather, plan, and organize ideas for writing to a specific audience and purpose.

6.1, 7.1, 8.2, 9.1, 10.1, 11.1

The student will be able to participate in, collaborate in, and report on a variety of small group learning activities.

Sources Consulted:

Creelman, Valerie. "Teaching Students the Persuasive Message through Small Group Activity." *Business Communication Quarterly* (2008): 80-85. Print.

Dinitz, Sue, and Jean Kiedaisch. "Persuasion from a Eighteen-Year-Old's Perspective: Perry and Piaget." *Journal of Teaching Writing* 9 (Spring/Summer 1990): 85-98.

Lapp, Diane, and Douglas Fisher. "Persuasion = Stating and Arguing Claims Well." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 55.7 (2012): 641-44.

O'Brien, Keith. "Ole Miss Turns Scary Racial Incident Into Teachable Moment." *NPR*. NPR, n.d. Web. 07 July 2013

The Great Debaters. Dir. Denzel Washington. Perf. Denzel Washington, Forest Whitaker. Harpo Films, 2007. DVD.

Link to EOC writing prompts:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/2010/online_writing/writing_prompts/eoc_writing_prompts.pdf

Future uses/practice:

This activity is planned as just one of a variety of ways for students to be familiarized with the released EOC prompts, develop logical arguments, and anticipate counter-arguments. Once introduced, the graphic organizer can be used as a focus activity, exit slip, way to begin discussion, or plan for a culminating debate.

Pro/Con – Pick a side and generate ideas to support

Pair 1 – Take the affirmative side of this question and complete the left column with reasons to support your opinion.

Pair 2 – Take the dissenting or negative side of this question and complete the right column with reasons to support your opinion.

Pro	Con
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

The original pro-pair (pair 1) will work together to complete the following counter-argument frame:

<p>Although some may argue that _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____, to the contrary</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____ is actually true.</p>

Argument Resources:

TED Talk Lesson on Logic:

Logically Speaking: Truth and Fallacies

Description: In this lesson students learn about the structure of syllogistic logic and about what makes such a syllogism true or false.

[HTTP://ED.TED.COM/ON/TBMICW2L](http://ed.ted.com/on/tbmicw2l)

TED Talk on Advertisements:

Rory Sutherland: Life lessons from an ad man

Description: As a lead in to examining ads for fallacies, Rory Sutherland's discussion is entertaining and interesting. Advertising adds value to a product by changing our perception, rather than the product itself.

Rory Sutherland makes the daring assertion that a change in perceived value can be just as satisfying as what we consider "real" value -- and his conclusion has interesting consequences for how we look at life

http://www.ted.com/talks/rory_sutherland_life_lessons_from_an_ad_man.html



THE WORLD'S LEADING AUTHORITIES

GO HEAD-TO-HEAD

[HTTP://INTELLIGENCESQUAREDUS.ORG/DEBATES](http://intelligencesquaredus.org/debates)

Debates on various current issues by leading experts, each debate contains for and against articles on these topics. Students can read each and host their own debates, or listen to debates and evaluate. Use the argument study handout to guide this process.

Fallacious Arguments

To avoid fallacious arguments we must be aware of common fallacies. These include:

Appeal to Authority- Someone without expertise in the subject argued is a fallacious argument.

Appeal to Fear- Attempts to convince by implicitly threatening the audience. Based on emotion rather than reason.

Appeal to Pity- Attempts to win our sympathy in order to convince us of the conclusion. Appeals to emotions rather than intellect.

Begging the Question- Offers no actual support for a conclusions while appearing to do so. May argue in a circle by restating premise or claim.

Equivocation- The shifting of the meaning of a given term within a single argument. Manipulate language with ambiguous terms

False Analogy- Compares two or more things, alike in certain respects, and suggests that since they share certain characteristics, they probably share other characteristics as well.

False Cause- Assumes a cause-effect relationship between two events because one precedes another. It claims a causal relationship based solely on order.

False Dilemma- Presents two and only two alternatives for consideration when other possibilities exist. Either/or reasoning.

Hasty Generalization- A conclusion based on a sample that is too small or in some other way unrepresentative of the larger population.

Personal Attack- Attack against the person presenting the argument in an abusive or irrelevant way.

Poisoning the Well- An assertion that precludes or discourages an open discussion of the issue. Assertion intimidates the reader or listener, who fears resistance, will lead to personal disagreement rather than a critical discussion.

Slippery Slope- One thing leads to another. Often times exaggerated.

Special Pleading- Judges or labels the same act differently depending on the person or group who performs the act. A double standard

Straw Man- A person creates and then attacks a distorted version of the opposition's argument.

Argument Study

After reading the article, answer the following:

1. What is the opinion or argument of the author?

2. What proof or evidence does the author offer to back up his/her argument?

3. What counter-arguments does the author make against the opposing argument?

4. What is your opinion on the issue?

5. What claims would you use to support your argument?
