

Argument Class Three Day Cycle

Modified from "Looking for an Argument" curriculum, Urban Academy, NYC

Argument class involves cycles of three classes about one topic. After we are done with one topic we will move on to another topic and start another three day cycle.

We will have argument class approximately 3 times a week, usually on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays (this will change for short weeks).

Argument class will involve very short presentations by three students for each cycle, covering background to topic and pro and con arguments. Presentations will be followed by class debate, reading, and writing

Presentations are worth 40 points. PREPARE IN ADVANCE. If a daily homework assignment is due the day of a presentation, you will be allowed to turn it in late without penalty.

The purpose is to exercise critical thinking about important contemporary topics through reading, writing, and discussion.

On some weeks we might supplement argument class with writing workshops, grammar mini-lessons, and mini-lessons on logic.

I. Day One (Presentation of topic)

A. Critique and Discussion of previous week's essays

1. Student Samples provided by teacher
2. Immediately after, students critique their own writing

B. New Debate Topic

1. Moderator Introduces Topics
2. Pro/Con Student Presentations (2-3 minutes each)

C. Class Discussion

1. All students take notes & turn them in

D. Student critiques on note cards

1. Student Scoring Guide
 - Warm Critique
 - Cool Critique
 - What would you do differently?

II. Day Two (Read Articles & Write Outlines)

- A. Discuss notes from day one
- B. Distribution of articles
- C. Student read and annotates articles
- D. Students develop outlines for day three paper

III. Day Three (Timed Writing)

- A. Discuss outlines
- B. Timed student writing

Argument Class Requirements Day One

I. Moderator, Pro, and Con

A. Presentation Prep: Write a two page written essay OR an outline of your argument presentation

1. Prep requirements

- Essay or outline must be typed with full heading
- Heading should indicate the role (moderator, pro, or con) and the title should indicate the topic and debate question
- Must be neat & organized - see model outline

2. Turn in

- Post on blog
- Hard copy given to teacher the day of presentation

B. Presentation that is 2-3 minutes long

- Above or below 2 minutes will lead to a reduction of points
- Can refer to essay or outline, but can't read directly from it. Must make eye contact with audience.
- Take notes during your opponent's presentation

C. Written reflection

1. After in-class critique and the gathering of critique note cards must write a full paragraph reflection (minimum 5 solid sentences).

2. Prompts

- Based on your self-assessment and the assessment of your peers and teachers, how did you do? What would you do differently? What would you change?

3. Turn in

- Post on blog
- Bring in hardcopy and staple to the back of presentation prep. Presentation prep will be in the in-box.

D. Read and write with the rest of the class when it comes time. You can use your presentation prep and any other notes you have.

D. Grade

1. All three steps (prep paper/outline, presentation, and reflection must be completed for a grade.
2. All three steps = 50 points.

II. Moderator

A. In addition to presenting the background, the moderator must follow the debate procedures in moderating all aspects the debate.

1. That includes:

- Introduction and transitions
- Keeping time of pro/con presentations
- Keeping list of audience participants during clarifying time and discussion time AND calling on people
- Keeping time of clarification/discussion

III. Audience

A. Keep notes during debate

1. These will be turned in after the debate

B. Ask clarifying questions

C. Share opinions during discussion

D. Provide constructive feedback during critique and write constructive feedback on card.

Argument Class Debate Procedures

1. Moderator

A. Introduction

1. Example: "Welcome to the Narnians/Chewies debate topic for today. My name is _____ and I'll be the moderator for today. On the right, I have _____ who will be taking the pro side and on the left I have _____ who will be taking the con side. The debate question is _____ and I will proceed by giving a short background to the topic."

B. Give 2-3 minute background presentation

1. Provide context – Why is this important? Why is it controversial? Who is most effected?

2. Historical precedent – How has this topic come up in the past? *This part is especially important for constitutional issues, like freedom of speech. What does the Constitution say about the topic? How has the Supreme Court interpreted it?*

3. What are key terms, key phrases, historical facts and/or social background that people need to know to understand the topic?

C. Conclusion

1. Example: "That concludes my presentation. I will now turn it over to _____ for the pro side of this issue."

2. Student #1 (Pro)

A. Introduction

1. Thank you (name of moderator). I believe

B. Provides 2-3 minute presentation arguing for the pro side.

- Moderator keeps tract of time

C. Conclusion

1. That concludes my presentation, I'll now turn it over to the con side.

3. Student #2

A. Introduction

1. Thank you (name of pro side)

B. 2-3 Minute Presentation

- Moderator keeps track of time

C. Conclusion

2. That concludes my presentation

4. Moderator leads clarifying questions

A. Thanks both sides:

1. "For example: "Thank you _____ for representation the pro side of the argument and _____ for representing the con side of the argument."

B. Introduce clarifying questions:

1. "We will now open the floor to clarifying questions for the any of the panelists. Please refrain from stating an opinion. Only ask questions about facts or positions that need clarification."

C. Audience raises hands, moderator writes down the names of students with raises hands and calls on them in order

5. Moderator leads discussion

A. Introduction: "That concludes clarifying questions. We will now open the floor to discussion that can include opinions and interpretations"

B. Audience raises hands, moderator writes down the names of students with raises hands and calls on them in order

C. Conclusion: "Unfortunately, that is all we have time for today. I would like to thank _____ and _____ for opening up the debate and the audience for sharing their opinions with us.