

## Argumentative Research (1-3 class periods)

<b>Text:</b> "Avoiding Common Mistakes in Argumentation" and "MLA Citations"	
<b>Standards:</b> Analyzing problem-solution structure in nonfiction texts (CCSS.W.1, FL BEST C.1.3 and C.4, TEKS Strand 6.C, VA SOL.7)	
<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and explore a nonfiction text.</li> <li>• Create a personal claim based on opinion.</li> <li>• Research reliable sources to support a claim.</li> </ul>	<b>Materials:</b> Materials for research Research organizer (below)
<b>Assessments of Learning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring student behavior or asking brief questions during group work provides informal assessment throughout the lesson.</li> <li>• Discussion questions can be used as formative assessments.</li> <li>• Writing prompt responses can be collected as a formal assessment.</li> </ul>	

### Lesson Procedures

Introduction: (5 minutes)	<p><b>Hook:</b> Argumentation is a way to change someone's mind and convince them to agree with you about a topic. This skill is practiced in school, and it applies to many careers in the real world. What are some jobs that would benefit from good argumentation skills? (e.g., politician, sales)</p> <p>Allow a partner discussion. Then, introduce the main text with the whole class.</p>
Reading Practice: (35-40 minutes)	<p><b>Group Reading:</b> Students work together in small groups (2-5) to read a text about mistakes in argumentation. While reading, students should annotate the text by underlining key terms and new ideas.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Answer Keys:</b> B, C, D, A, fails to address real issue</p> <p><b>Comprehension Practice:</b> After reading, students work together in groups to answer the question set for the text. They should discuss any questions or conflicting answer choices that arise within the group.</p>

	<p><b>Class Discussion:</b> Entire class participates in a teacher-led discussion about the 5 common argumentation errors. They should answer the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why is it important to avoid these 5 errors?</li> <li>2. How do these common errors weaken the goal of argumentative writing?</li> </ol>
<p>Citing Sources: (20-25 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Class Reading:</b> Students follow along as teacher reads a text about MLA citations. Students should annotate the key ideas about when to cite sources, and how to complete both in-text citations and a Works Cited page.</p> <p><b>Class Discussion:</b> As a class, discuss:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do reliable sources strengthen argumentative writing?</li> <li>2. Why is citation format helpful when writing?</li> </ol>
<p>Writing Process: (40-45 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Prompt Discussion:</b> Teacher introduces writing prompt, "What is the best job in your community?" Class discusses possible answers in an open brainstorm, but students should not yet make their own claims. Class then discusses what kinds of sources could support an argument about this prompt (e.g. employee data, training sources).</p> <p><b>Planning:</b> Students choose a job in response to the prompt. Then, they should plan the types of information they may need to research to support their claim.</p> <p><b>Research:</b> Students research sources to support their claim about the best job in the community. They should research at least 3 different trustworthy books or articles. Using the graphic organizer on the next page, they should take notes on each source.</p> <p>Depending on time limitations, teachers could have students draft and edit their research into an essay.</p>

**Educator Note!**

Some students may benefit from pre-selected research sources they can refer to, such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Accommodations & Modifications:**

- Allow students to dictate ideas when writing.

**Extensions:**

- Practice writing MLA citations for your research sources.
- Write an argumentative essay based on your research.
- Make an infographic showing facts about your chosen job.

## Research Organizer

**Source 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes from Source 1:**

**Source 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes from Source 2:**

**Source 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes from Source 3:**

## Avoiding Common Mistakes in Argumentation

People have been arguing for thousands of years, so there is a lot of thought about common mistakes in argumentation. You can try to avoid these common mistakes in your own writing to present clear and logical reasoning. This text discusses five **common mistakes in argumentative writing: straw man arguments, hasty generalizations, false dilemmas, ad hominem attacks, and appeals to emotion**. These errors can make arguments less persuasive.

A **straw man argument** misrepresents an opponent's position to make it easier to disagree with. The writer does not address the actual argument. Instead, they create a **distorted or exaggerated version of the argument to attack**. For example, someone may oppose a new law by falsely claiming it removes all taxes. Because they are using a **false claim**, they are using a straw man. This approach fails to address the true issue and misleads the audience. Avoiding this fault ensures the argument stays focused on the real debate.

**Hasty generalizations** occur when a writer **draws conclusions from insufficient evidence**. This happens when someone assumes a pattern exists based on too few examples. For instance, claiming that all dogs are aggressive after seeing one aggressive dog is a hasty generalization. Such conclusions ignore other evidence and lead to unfair or inaccurate judgments. Instead, arguments should be based on comprehensive and balanced evidence.

**False dilemmas** present **only two options when more possibilities exist**. This type of faulty reasoning oversimplifies complex issues. They force people to make a choice between extremes. For example, stating that someone must either support a policy entirely or oppose it entirely ignores the possibility of partial agreement. Recognizing multiple perspectives avoids false dilemmas. It also allows for more nuanced discussions.

**Ad hominem attacks** target a person's character instead of addressing their argument. This fallacy distracts from the issue by **focusing on irrelevant personal traits or behaviors**. For example, dismissing an idea because of the speaker's background rather than the idea's content is an ad hominem attack. Writers can strengthen discussions and promote fairness by respecting the topic of the argument, not focusing on the arguers.

Lastly, **appeals to emotion manipulate feelings** instead of providing logical reasoning. While emotions can enhance arguments, relying solely on them without evidence is misleading. For instance, some writer may try to use only fear to convince someone to do something. This argument is weak and unfair to

the arguers. A well-rounded argument balances emotional appeal with facts and logic to persuade effectively.

In conclusion, straw man arguments, hasty generalizations, false dilemmas, ad hominem attacks, and appeals to emotion are common faults of argumentation. Each mistake weakens reasoning in different ways. These errors detract from logical discussion. By identifying and avoiding these mistakes, writers can build stronger, more persuasive arguments. Using clear and logical reasoning leads to better communication and understanding.

- 1.** How can you avoid hasty generalizations?
    - a. recognize multiple perspectives
    - b. base arguments on balanced evidence
    - c. focus on respecting the topic of argument
    - d. make an argument with emotions, facts, and logic
  - 2.** How can you avoid ad hominem attacks?
    - a. recognize multiple perspectives
    - b. base arguments on balanced evidence
    - c. focus on respecting the topic of argument
    - d. make an argument with emotions, facts, and logic
  - 3.** How can you avoid appeals to emotion?
    - a. recognize multiple perspectives
    - b. base arguments on balanced evidence
    - c. focus on respecting the topic of argument
    - d. make an argument with emotions, facts, and logic
  - 4.** How can you avoid a false dilemma?
    - a. recognize multiple perspectives
    - b. base arguments on balanced evidence
    - c. focus on respecting the topic of argument
    - d. make an argument with emotions, facts, and logic
  - 5.** What is the problem with a straw man argument?
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## MLA Citations

Research strengthens argumentative writing. **When you make a claim, support it with details from a reliable source.** Then, it's important to **give credit** to the sources you used in a paper.

Citing sources tells your readers where you learned information. This shows that your sources, and your writing, are reliable. **MLA format** is a common way to cite sources in school. **Any time you use someone else's ideas or words in your writing, you need a citation!**

There are two ways to cite your sources with MLA formatting:

- 1. In-text citations** give credit to a source when you use it in your paper.
- 2. Works Cited pages** give credit to all sources at the end of a paper.

Different types of sources are cited differently in MLA. We will look at how to cite a book and a website.

**In-text citations** are short and only need a **few details**. One very important part of in-text citations is **quotation marks!** If you use the **exact words** as your source, put them in quotation marks. Otherwise, you need to summarize their ideas in **your own words**.

- For **books**, you need the **author** and **page numbers**. You can share this information **in the sentence** where you use a fact, **or write it in parentheses** at the end of the sentence. These examples show 3 ways to cite:

- On **page 43**, **Jane Smith** says "the sky is blue."
- According to **Smith**, "the sky is blue" **(43)**.
- We see the sky as the color blue **(Smith 43)**.

- For **websites**, you only need the **author**. If your article does not have a listed author, use the **article title** instead. You can either include this information **in the sentence**, or you can **write it in parentheses** at the end. These examples cite websites:

- **John Doe's** article says that "the sky is blue."
- We know the sky looks like blue **(Doe)**.
- According to an article, Earth's sky is blue **("Color of the Sky")**.

The details in your in-text citations should match your Works Cited page.

At the very end of a paper, add a page that **lists every source you used**. This page is called the **Works Cited page**. It shows all of the works that you cited!

The Works Cited page **gives more details** than in-text citations. It helps your readers find the sources you used. You do not include any facts from the sources you used. Instead, you show information that **helps others find the sources**.

**MLA uses a special format** to write each of the sources you used in your paper. Follow the formats below, and **list each source in alphabetical order**.

- For **books**, you need the **author, title, and publishing information**. The publishing information is usually in the front of a book, or you can ask your teacher to help you find it. These examples show books cited:

- **Last Name, First Name. Title of Book. Publisher, Publication Date.**
- Smith, Jack. *The Real Sky Book*. edMe Not Real Publishing, 2018.
- Smith, Jane. *A Book About the Sky*. edMe Not Real Publishing, 2014.

- For **websites**, include the **author, title, website name, publishing date, URL, and the date you went to the website**. You may not find all of these pieces for each website you use. That's okay! Skip pieces you can't find.

- **Last Name, First Name. "Article Title." Website Name. Publication Date, URL. Accessed day month year.**
- "Color of the Sky." *edMe Learning*. 2024, myedme.com. Accessed 1 January 2025.
- Doe, John. "The Sky." *edMe Learning*. 2021, myedme.com. Accessed 1 January 2025.

These examples cite websites:

**Take your time** when you cite resources. Look carefully at the source when you make each citation, and **ask for help if you need it!** It is very important to give credit when you write.

If you don't cite a resource when you use someone else's words or ideas, that is called **plagiarism**. Plagiarism is like stealing someone else's words and using it as your own. This can make you lose points in graded assignments and have big consequences at school or work.

**Do the right thing, and cite when you write!**