



Seventh Grade

ELA

Exploring and Evaluating Reasons and Evidence

Learning Targets

- Explain how evidence is used to support an author’s purpose and message.
- Identify the claim of an argumentative text.

Preview

In this activity, you will review the characteristics of argumentative text and conduct research to identify valid reasons and evidence to support a claim.

Supporting a Claim

1. In a successful argument, the claim must be backed up with support, such as **valid** facts, details, and examples. A writer can support his or her viewpoint with both reasons and evidence. Brainstorm what you already know about these concepts.

Reasons are:

Evidence is:

Types of evidence include:

Rhetorical Appeals

You have learned about claims, reasons, and evidence as important elements of effective arguments.

Rhetoric is the art of using words to persuade in writing or speaking. Writers find interesting ways to use just the right words that appeal to their audience in order to convince them.

Rhetorical appeals can strengthen an argument by appealing to logic (*logos*), emotions (*pathos*), or a sense of right and wrong (*ethos*).

Let’s look more closely at the appeal of logos, or logic, as a way to build and strengthen an argument. Logos is one of the most important appeals in an effective argument because of its use of facts and logic to build relevant and valid reasoning.

Paraphrase the definition of *logos*:

Learning Strategies

Skimming/Scanning
Brainstorming
Graphic Organizer
Marking the Text
Discussion Groups

ACADEMIC

Facts and details in a text are **valid** when they support the claim a writer is making and are credible and true.

VOCABULARY

LITERARY

Rhetoric is the language a writer or speaker uses to persuade an audience. One characteristic of speeches is that they often include powerful rhetoric.

VOCABULARY

WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

The word **logic** comes from the Greek word *logos*, which means “reason.” Based on this, what do you think an appeal to logic would be most concerned with?

GRAMMAR & USAGE

Easily Confused Words

Learn to use *affect* and *effect* correctly. *Affect* is generally used as a verb and means “to influence.”

Example: Marketers ... are aware of new calls for federal action—including voluntary marketing guidelines that would affect food marketers.

Effect is generally used as a noun and means “a result.”

Example: But the net effect on kids’ diets was not good.

- Interact with the text as you read by underlining the statistics the author uses as evidence.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

News Article

Another Study Highlights the Insanity of Selling Junk Food in School Vending Machines

by Karen Kaplan/Los Angeles Times

1 For many students, “back to school” means back to a vending machine diet. As you might guess, this isn’t necessarily a good thing for student health.

2 Vending machines are found in 16% of U.S. elementary schools, 52% of middle schools and 88% of high schools. About 22% of students in grades 1 through 12 buy food in vending machines each day—and those purchases added an average of 253 calories to their diets, according to a new study in the September issue of the *Journal of School Health*.

3 Just to be clear, those were not 253 calories’ worth of tofu, yogurt or carrot sticks. The most popular vending machine items included soft drinks, candy, chips, crackers, cookies, cakes and ice cream. On the plus side, kids also bought low-fat milk, fruit juice and even fruit, the study found.

4 But the net effect on kids’ diets was not good. Those who bought from vending machines ate an average of 156 grams of sugar per day, compared with 146 grams for those who abstained. They also consumed less dietary fiber, iron and B vitamins like thiamine, riboflavin, niacin and folate.

5 One silver lining: Vending machine customers ate 4% less sodium than other students—an average of 3,287 milligrams per day compared with 3,436 mg for those who didn’t buy from vending machines. That’s probably because the extra snacks made kids too full to eat as much at mealtime, when dishes are especially salty. In any event, kids should eat no more than 1,200 to 1,500 mg of sodium each day, according to the Mayo Clinic. (Even for adults, the government recommends a daily limit of 2,300 mg.)

6 Overall, vending machines in school appear to be taking a toll on public health. The researchers—from the University of Michigan, Michigan State University and Food & Nutrition Database Research Inc. of Okemos, Mich.—calculated that all that snacking adds up to about 14 extra pounds per child per school year.

7 “For some students this might be a serious contributor to weight issues,” they wrote. Other public health problems include Type 2 diabetes and cavities.

8 The study was based on data collected from 2,309 children nationwide for the third School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study, which was conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service.

net effect: overall result



Making Observations

- What do you notice in the article that someone skimming it might miss?
- Which statistics are most surprising? Why?

Returning to the Text

- Return to the text as you respond to the following questions. Use text evidence to support your responses.
- Write any additional questions you have about the news article.

3. Which sentences in the text introduce the author’s purpose and message?

4. In paragraph 4, what context clues help you understand the likely meaning of the word *abstained*?

5. What evidence supports the notion that selling junk food in school vending machines is “insanity”? Why might the author have chosen such a strong word?

6. Notice the emphasis on facts and statistics. What inference can you make about how the writer is trying to convince the audience?

2.13

Working from the Text

Complete a SOAPSTone analysis of the text to help you prepare for your writing task.

SOAPSTone	Analysis
Subject: What is the issue?	
Occasion: What circumstances surrounding the issue make it important or relevant?	
Audience: Who would care about or be affected by this issue?	
Purpose: What do you want the audience to do?	
Speaker/writer: How do you show authority in presenting this issue?	
Tone: What attitude do you want to show about this issue (serious, humorous, passionate, indignant)?	

7. Use a graphic organizer similar to the following to complete your analysis.

Text	Claim (Directly Stated or Implied)	Most Logical Reason(s) and Relevant Evidence	Credibility of Reasons/ Evidence (Explain)
“Another Study Highlights the Insanity of Selling Junk Food in School Vending Machines”			

LANGUAGE & WRITER’S CRAFT: Sentence Structure

When citing evidence to support a claim, writers use phrases at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of sentences to show readers how that evidence connects to its source. Citations that connect evidence with its source are often phrases that begin with words such as *in*, *from*, *by*, and *according to*. These phrases are set off from the rest of the sentence by punctuation (such as a comma or dash), as shown in the following examples.

Phrase at the beginning: In the *Journal of School Health*, a recent study showed that 22% of students in Grades 1 through 12 buy food from a vending machine.

Phrase in the middle: The researchers—from the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Food & Nutrition Database Research Inc. of Okemos, Mich.—calculated that all that snacking adds up to about 14 extra pounds per child per school year.

Phrase at the end: In any event, kids should eat no more than 1,200 to 1,500 mg of sodium each day, according to the Mayo Clinic.

PRACTICE In your Reader/Writer Notebook, write a sentence in which you use a phrase to cite the following evidence to its source. Use proper punctuation to set off the citation.

Evidence: The most popular vending machine items are soft drinks, candy, chips, crackers, cookies, cakes, and ice cream.

Source: a study in the *Journal of School Health*

Argumentative Writing Prompt

8. Write a body paragraph for an argumentative essay. Choose a claim that either supports or refutes the use of vending machines in schools. paragraph for the class argumentative essay. Plan the essay as follows:
- I. Topic Sentence: Refers to the claim stated in the introductory paragraph.
 - II. Supporting Sentences
 - a. Main reason of support for the claim; this reason or evidence will become a topic sentence for a paragraph.
 - b. Evidence and examples to support the reasoning
 - c. Commentary that includes an explanation of the significance of the evidence or the connection to the claim
 - d. Use phrases at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of sentences to show how evidence connects to its source.