

**TASK 1: PLANNING COMMENTARY**

Respond to the prompts below (**no more than 9 single-spaced pages, including prompts**) by typing your responses within the brackets. Do not delete or alter the prompts. Pages exceeding the maximum will not be scored.

**1. Central Focus**

- a. Describe the central focus and purpose of the content you will teach in this learning segment.

[The central focus of this learning segment is argument and persuasion. Eighth grade students are required to know how to analyze the parts of an argument, evaluate the logic and effectiveness of an argument, and to write an argumentative essay. In this learning segment, students learn the parts of an argument, practice analyzing arguments, learn key vocabulary, and read and evaluate two pieces of argumentative writing. Students will be able to identify and analyze the claim, opposing claim, counter argument, and evidence in an argument. Students will be able to analyze and interpret persuasive techniques to determine the tone and recognize logical fallacies. Understanding these aspects of persuasion will help students sort through arguments to make educated choices when they encounter persuasive techniques used by commercials, advertisements, and presidential candidates. The questions that students answer at the end of this segment will demonstrate their learning and reflect what they need to practice more before they move on to writing argumentative essays.]

- b. Provide the title, author (or, if a film, the director), and a short description (about a paragraph in length) of salient features of the text(s) that a reviewer of your evidence, who is unfamiliar with the text(s), needs to know in order to understand your instruction. If there is more than one text, indicate the lesson(s) where each text will be the focus.

Consider including the following in your description: genre, text structure, theme, plot, imagery, or linguistic features, depending on the central focus of your learning segment.

[The text used in this learning segment is California Literature McDougal Littell, 2009, "Unit 9: Argument and Persuasion", pages 926-928, 930, 948-955. Page 926 introduces the elements of an argument and includes a poster called "One Person Can Make A Difference"; the sidebar includes notes that show each element of argument as it applies to the poster. On the following page, 927, there is an excerpt from "Why Can't I Live on French Fries?" by Richard J. Roberts, an argument about why french fries do not provide enough nutrition to live on. Page 928 introduces persuasive techniques and includes a list of techniques including types of appeals and word choice. Page 930 is an editorial article, "Should the Driving Age Be Raised to 18? NO!" by Alex Koroknay-Palicz of the National Youth Rights Association; it presents an argument for students to analyze with questions in the sidebar to help identify the claim, supports, and persuasive techniques. The second half of the text, pages 948-955 are about dodgeball in physical education programs. The topic is briefly introduced on pages 948 and 949 with a paragraph about the key idea, a segment about emotional and ethical appeals, a "Reading Strategy: Set a Purpose for Reading" chart for students to copy, a "Vocabulary in Context" section with vocabulary from the articles, and finally, information about the authors of the two articles. "Position on Dodgeball in Physical Education" by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), pages 950-951, is about the NASPE's position against dodgeball and it's argument for why it should be banned from physical education programs. The article that follows, "The Weak Shall Inherit the Gym" by Rick Reilly (pages 952 and 954), is an argument for keeping dodgeball and similar sports in school. These two articles use a variety of persuasive techniques to sway readers; the questions that follow on page 955 include two

comprehension questions and five critical analysis questions for students to use to guide their interpretation and analysis of the text.]

- c. Given the central focus, describe how the standards and learning objectives within your learning segment address students' abilities to use the textual references to
  - construct meaning from, interpret, or respond to complex text
  - create a written product, interpreting or responding to complex features of a text

[Speaking Listening Grade 8, Standard 3: Comprehension and Collaboration (SL.8.3) and Reading Informational Text Grade 8, Standard 8: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (RI.8.8) address students' abilities to use textual references to construct meaning from, interpret, and respond to complex text because they require students to be able to extract information from an argument. In the case of SL.8.3, the textual references come from a text that is read aloud to students, while RI.8.8 is used when students read the text directly. The students then must recall or locate adequate textual evidence to use to interpret the persuasive techniques and construct meaning based on the speaker's intent. These standards are supported two of my learning objectives. The first states that students will be able to read and listen to determine an author's argument and tone and support their conclusions with textual evidence with 90% accuracy. This means that the students will be meeting one or both standards (SL.8.3 and RI.8.8) when they demonstrate that they can interpret the author's argument and tone using textual evidence either by speaking or writing. The second learning objective supported by these standards states that students will be able to analyze a persuasive argument by listening to or reading the argument to identify the claim, opposing claim, counterargument, and evidence with 95% accuracy. This objective meets the standards because it requires students to delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, a central part of both SL.8.3 and RI.8.8. By doing this, students are demonstrating that they can interpret an argument and use evidence from the argument to determine the central idea, or claim, thereby constructing meaning from the text.

Reading Informational Text, Grade 8, Standard 1 (RI.8.1) and ELD Standards Part 1 B7 (ELD.1.B7) require students construct meaning from a text. RI.8.1 explicitly states that "students cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text". This means that students must be able to construct meaning from the text so that they draw evidence from the arguments that they are reading and use that evidence to support their analysis of what the author is arguing and the persuasive techniques used in the argument. This lines up with ELD.1.B7 because the students must be able to evaluate the way language is used in the text before they can use evidence drawn from the text. If the writer is unclear in his or her message, the students may not understand the meaning behind the text and will be unable to construct meaning from, interpret, or respond to the text. Therefore, this standard is critical to the students' ability to meet the other standards and the lesson objectives. Standards RI.8.1 and ELD.1.B7 are also critical to students' success in meeting their third lesson objective which states that students will be able to interpret multiple types of appeals (persuasive techniques) using textual evidence to construct meaning from them by listening to or reading an argument with 90% accuracy. This objective requires students to identify appeals in the argumentative writing they are listening to and reading. To do this, students must be able to evaluate and interpret the language used in the argument because the appeals are not always easy to identify. The authors use multiple persuasive techniques which can be challenging to distinguish from one another without a careful interpretation of the language and word usage. If students can evaluate the text and construct meaning from it, they will be able to interpret the text and respond to written questions about the persuasive techniques.]

- d. Explain how your plans build on each other to help students **make connections** between textual references, constructions of meaning, interpretations, and responses to a text to deepen their learning of English Language Arts.

[My plans start at the most basic level of persuasive argument: identifying and learning the elements of an argument. The students learned about persuasive writing last year in seventh grade, so I use a pre-assessment to see what they remember. Most students will be able to identify the claim and the opposing viewpoint in this assessment. If they cannot identify these elements, they will become familiar with the terms and practice identifying them during the lesson. The elements of argument are critical to students' ability to analyze and interpret argumentative writing and will help them understand textual references that use persuasive techniques in order to construct meaning from the text. The first lesson provides the basis for the learning that supports the students in making these deeper connections.

The second lesson plan builds on the foundation of the first. Students begin by taking notes on how to construct an argumentative essay using an organizational chart. Although the class will not begin writing their essays until they are able to analyze and interpret the elements of persuasion and persuasive techniques, the organizational chart will help them construct meaning and interpret the texts they read in each lesson. They can use the chart as a reminder of where they should expect to find the different elements of an argument, therefore supporting students as they move into more complex elements of persuasion. After the students finish their notes, they will read about different persuasive techniques, which focus on types of appeals (page 928 in the textbook). This section teaches students to identify and interpret more complex features of a text. Students practice thinking of examples of types of appeals and identifying the examples I provide to prepare them for making connections between textual references they will encounter in their reading. Since many of my students struggle more with reading and writing than they do with listening and speaking, practicing using persuasive techniques as a class discussion is a critical support. If the students can make connections between what they read and what we speak about, they will be more comfortable stretching their knowledge to make the same connections about a text in writing in the next lesson. Finally, students will read about and paraphrase the key vocabulary terms for the next section so that they will be prepared to read and discuss two arguments about dodgeball. The vocabulary is essential for constructing meaning from the text and will provide the background students need to interpret what they read.

Students apply their knowledge of argument and persuasive techniques in the third and fourth lesson plans. The first two plans are meant to be large group and individual practice with support as students become familiar with the new concepts and build on their prior learning. In the third lesson, students will read two pieces of argumentative writing (pages 950-954 in the textbook) and then respond to questions (page 955 in the textbook). Both articles are about dodgeball in physical education programs, but each represents a different viewpoint and they utilize different persuasive techniques. The students will take turns reading aloud with a partner and discuss their answers to the questions before writing them down. Students will use the vocabulary they learned in Lesson 2 along with evidence from the texts to support their answers. Since students are expected to work together to construct meaning from the text and interpret persuasive techniques, the lesson is continued in Lesson 4 to account for the discussion and writing time needed to determine underlying messages and write responses that reflect learning. To ensure that students are able to correctly analyze the elements of argument and persuasive techniques in the articles, I will check in with pairs and ask questions about the reading as well as their responses to the questions in the book. The responses I receive as well as the students' performance with the written questions will show how well they are able to use textual references to interpret the text and construct meaning from what they read. Their

progress will determine what students need more practice with before they begin their essays the following week.]

## 2. Knowledge of Students to Inform Teaching

For each of the prompts below (2a–b), describe what you know about **your** students **with respect to the central focus** of the learning segment.

Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

- a. Prior academic learning and prerequisite skills related to the central focus—**Cite evidence of what students know, what they can do, and what they are still learning to do.**

[Students learned about argument in 7th grade and should be familiar with the terms claim, counterclaim, and evidence. Students can use context clues to determine the meaning of words, but this skill is dependent on each student's reading level. A recent test showed that 95% of students are proficient at citing textual evidence to identify and support the central idea of a text. This skill will transfer to finding and supporting the claim in argumentative writing. Students are still learning to elaborate on their statements to explain what the evidence they cite means or how it connects to their statements. Students know how to analyze other types of complex texts such as narrative and compare/contrast essays, but have not yet done this with argumentative texts. The students' skill levels and needs vary in each of these areas and can be examined more closely based on the subgroups of the class.

Advanced students and my IEP student are able to construct meaning from, interpret, and respond to complex texts using relevant details and explain their reasoning. These students sometimes forget to read the whole question or respond to all of the parts of a question. They are still learning to reread questions and to read over their work for errors. The IEP student is not required to speak in class due to the IEP, so this skill is less developed than the rest of the advanced students, but he can otherwise listen to or read a complex text, analyze, and interpret the text in writing using relevant textual evidence at an advanced level.

The Hiding Out (HO) students can use context clues to determine the meaning of a new word at a level that is limited by their reading level. These students need extra assistance with Tier 2 and relevant Tier 3 vocabulary prior to reading. HO students are still learning to analyze complex texts and must practice the analysis with the class and with a partner before doing it on their own to succeed. These students have demonstrated that they can analyze narrative, explanatory, and various informational texts at their individual reading levels with vocabulary support and practice. With support from a more advanced partner, the HO students can complete the same tasks with grade level material. These students are still learning to respond to multiple-part questions and will only respond to the first part if they are not prompted to go back and read the question aloud. Reading a aloud is a skill that these students use to process information as they read.

The Redesignated Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) and Initially Fluent English Proficient (IFEP) students have a broad range of skills and abilities, but in general, are still learning strategies to define new vocabulary and are challenged by incorporating Tier 2 words. These students have demonstrated that they can analyze narrative, explanatory, and various informational texts with vocabulary support and practice. They need to repeat words multiple times, see the words in context, and practice analyzing texts to identify key features such as the claim. Most of these students are able to read, interpret, and respond to complex texts at their own grade level, but need additional supports to read and analyze grade level texts.]

- b. Personal, cultural, and community assets related to the central focus—**What do you know about your students’ everyday experiences, cultural and language backgrounds and practices, and interests?**

[The students in this class come from primarily middle class backgrounds which is not the norm for the majority of the students at the school. Many of the students have college educated parents and one student’s mother is on the school board. This means that this class brings a unique approach to topics; they often focus on the rights of students at our school and in the community. This is an asset for the central focus of my lessons because the students will be able to discuss topics that they are already passionate about. For instance, nearly a quarter of the class is involved in at least one sport and all of the students wear the school uniform; both of these topics will be addressed in the lesson segment through the reading that students will complete to meet the central focus.

A majority of the students come from families who are immigrants themselves or who have close friends and relatives who are. In addition, 75 percent of students in this class are bilingual. This will present some challenges for the IFEP student and the 15 RFEP students when we learn the new vocabulary, because they are still challenged by Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary and struggle to interpret complex texts. Despite the challenges posed by language differences, these students have a unique perspective regarding racial tensions in this country and have repeatedly demonstrated their interest in the presidential election, which will be important when learning about argument and persuasion.]

### 3. Supporting Students’ English Language Arts Learning

Respond to prompts 3a–c below. To support your justifications, refer to the instructional materials and lesson plans you have included as part of Planning Task 1. **In addition, use principles from research and/or theory to support your justifications.**

- a. Justify how your understanding of your students’ prior academic learning and personal, cultural, and community assets (from prompts 2a–b above) guided your choice or adaptation of learning tasks and materials. Be explicit about the connections between the learning tasks and students’ prior academic learning, their assets, and research/theory.

[A majority of the students in my class have prior learning related to argumentative writing, so I decided to start the unit by presenting an argument and asking students to analyze it. I chose a topic that students are passionate about, the school’s uniform requirement, specifically because this class has tried to petition teachers to get rid of the school uniform policy several times. This topic will draw students in and provide an example that they relate to throughout the unit. The fact that students will be interested in the argument I am presenting will ensure that I have their full attention and their interest will help me more accurately gauge their prior knowledge than if I asked them to listen to a topic they cannot connect to.

I decided to utilize the examples and articles in the textbook for this unit because they are also topics that many of my students are familiar with. For instance, I expect the students to be interested in the dodgeball articles because they have played it in physical education classes. There will also be a direct connection to students who play sports, nearly a quarter of the class. I expect these students to be ready to argue about the possibility of banning any sports because of the implications it has for their sports of choice. This reaction would benefit the students in achieving the central focus of my plans because, as John McCarthy states, “Making learning contextual to real-world experiences is a key learning technique with differentiating for student interests.” This means that students will engage with the analysis and interpretation of the argument and persuasive techniques used because of their personal interest in the topic.

Students' cultural backgrounds are also an asset that my lesson uses to enhance student learning and understanding. According to the "Six Key Strategies for Secondary Teachers of English Learners" (Bongolan 2015), using culturally relevant examples and student interest will promote learning and engage students in the material. I adapted lessons two and three for this class so that students can come up with their own examples of different types of appeals (persuasive techniques). Many of the students in this class are from culturally diverse backgrounds and are personally familiar with issues of immigration. As a result, these students have a unique perspective regarding racial tensions in this country and have repeatedly demonstrated their interest in the presidential election. News articles, presidential debates, and the candidate's statements via social media will provide students with numerous examples to choose from while they learn to identify techniques that are essential to the learning goal of this segment.]

- b. Describe and justify why your instructional strategies and planned supports are appropriate for **the whole class, individuals, and/or groups of students with specific learning needs**.

Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

[The instructional strategies I use in my lessons include: Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR), read alouds, think-pair-share activities, and group work. My use of GRR and think-pair-share activities are important for the students who need additional language support because it gives them time to think about what they are expected to do before they actually perform the activity. With GRR, students observe me do something, then practice the activity with support, and finally they complete the activity on their own. I modified this activity in my first lesson plan to also accommodate my advanced students. I know these students get bored and disengage from activities when I walk the entire class through a new process for the first time, so to keep the support in place, but engage these students, I ask for volunteers, who are almost always advanced students in this class, to demonstrate how to analyze an argument. Then we walk through it with randomly selected students to make sure that everyone is on track before I ask the students to complete the activity together. The think-pair-share works essentially the same way except students get to think about their responses before discussing with a partner and then presenting to the class. The partner sharing is critical because it allows students to verbalize their responses, an important EL strategy according to Bongolan (2015). This method allows struggling students to learn from more advanced students and advanced students learn from teaching students who need assistance, thus also utilizing Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Students also benefit from the ZPD through scaffolding, which is dependent on the arrangement of students in the classroom. Students are seated near others of varying skill levels and abilities to ensure that this is effective and the group work that takes place in lessons three and four allows students to take full advantage of this arrangement to maximize learning.]

- c. Describe common student errors or misunderstandings within your central focus and how you will address them.

[Students connect the term "opposing" to "opposite" because they are similar words. In this lesson, it is critical for students to be able to interpret the opposing claim, which is not necessarily opposite the claim. An opposite claim would be an opposing claim, but the opposing claim is any claim that is made by an opponent, or someone who disagrees with the claim, not only a claim that is directly opposite. I will have the students write down both definitions and

then explain the difference to a partner. I will then ask students to volunteer a few responses, show me things that are opposites, identify things that are opposing, and to give examples of different ways to oppose my claim if I said uniforms should be worn by everyone. This will help students distinguish between the two terms and we can refer back to our examples as needed through the unit.

Students struggle to account for fallacies such as name-calling when they interpret an argument and therefore misunderstand illogical arguments, thinking that they are logical based on the fact that they understand the argument rather than on an evaluation of the argument. I will address this by walking students through the argument and stopping at each point to ask questions. For example, in one of the dodgeball articles, the author states that, “Some of these... whiners say dodgeball is inappropriate...” (*California Literature* p. 954) thereby implying that those who think dodgeball is inappropriate for any reason are whiners. To help students understand how this makes the argument illogical, I will ask them questions about the text such as “Is everyone who worries about safety a whiner?” and “Does this address the opponents themselves or the opposing claim?” to guide their thinking.]

#### 4. Supporting English Language Arts Development Through Language

As you respond to prompts 4a–d, consider the range of students’ language assets and needs—what do students already know, what are they struggling with, and/or what is new to them?

- a. **Language Function.** Using information about your students’ language assets and needs, identify **one** language function essential for students within your central focus. Listed below are some sample language functions. You may choose one of these or another more appropriate for your learning segment.

Analyze	Argue	Describe	Evaluate
Explain	Interpret	Justify	Synthesize

[One essential language function for students within my central focus is analysis.]

- b. Identify a key learning task from your plans that provides students with opportunities to practice using the language function identified above. Identify the lesson in which the learning task occurs. (Give lesson day/number.)

[Students will practice analyzing multiple pieces of argumentative writing during Lesson One in my plans by completing the read and analyze activities that are throughout the lesson. The class will practice first as a group and, then with partners, and finally independently as they read and analyze several short texts.]

- c. **Additional Language Demands.** Given the language function and learning task identified above, describe the following associated language demands (written or oral) students need to understand and/or use:
- Vocabulary
  - **Plus** at least one of the following:
    - Syntax
    - Discourse

[Students will read and analyze an argument and speak about their findings using the following vocabulary to identify the different parts of the text: claim, opposing claim, counterargument,

and evidence. Students will explain their analysis to their partner and then to the class using appropriate syntax to demonstrate their grasp of the vocabulary and concepts in the text.]

- d. **Language Supports.** Refer to your lesson plans and instructional materials as needed in your response to the prompt.
  - Identify and describe the planned instructional supports (during and/or prior to the learning task) to help students understand, develop, and use the identified language demands (language function, vocabulary, discourse, or syntax).

[I will review vocabulary during the pre-assessment at the beginning of class to make sure students remember the vocabulary and can use correct syntax when speaking about the text. Students are familiar with the language function because they have analyzed multiple types of texts this school year, so I can access prior knowledge to support their application of analysis. Students have learned how to identify the main idea of an informational text this year, which is essentially the claim in argumentative writing. I will support students by helping them make this connection which is essential to the IFEP, RFEP, and HO students' vocabulary acquisition. The opposing claim and counterclaim will not have the same correlation to other types of writing, however, the supports I use are dependent on how much students recall from last year. If they are struggling with the opposing claim, the problem will most likely be the word "opposing" which is similar to, but different in meaning, than the word "opposite". To support this, I will have students define, discuss, and provide examples of things that are opposing and things that are opposite. This will help them distinguish between the two and will help them analyze arguments for the opposing claim. I will relate counterclaims to countering in video games, which will be relevant to students. This concept will help them understand that the counterclaim is how you counter, or counterattack, the opposing claim, or opponent. Once the class understands the vocabulary, they will be able to draw from their prior knowledge to use the lesson's syntax correctly while analyzing the arguments they read.]

## 5. Monitoring Student Learning

In response to the prompts below, refer to the assessments you will submit as part of the materials for Planning Task 1.

- a. Describe how your planned formal and informal assessments, including a written product, will provide direct evidence of students' abilities to construct meaning from, interpret, **OR** respond to a complex text **throughout** the learning segment.

[In Lesson Plan 1, my pre-assessment provides evidence of student's abilities to construct meaning from a complex text by demonstrating how well they analyze a verbal argument. While students are not reading an argument, the assessment is designed to engage the entire class in a discussion to demonstrate prior knowledge, establishing a baseline to measure learning. My first and second informal assessments are also verbal and provide a progress check demonstrating students' ability to construct meaning from arguments presented in the text. Students demonstrate their ability to analyze the text and to provide evidence for their analysis while other students elaborate on responses. The first informal assessment is based on a text with clues written in the margins to assist students in understanding the text while the second assessment is more complex. Finally, in the closure activity, students write responses to questions about another argument in their notebook to show that they can construct meaning from and interpret the argument based on their analysis of the reading.

Lesson Plan 2 includes an informal assessment writing assessment to see if students remember the parts of an argumentative essay. If students remember the parts, they should also be able to construct meaning from an argument based on this knowledge. There are three additional informal assessments during this lesson. First, students will demonstrate their ability



to interpret persuasive techniques by taking turns identifying techniques based on examples I give them. This requires students to think about what I am saying and what I am implying in order to correctly interpret the language and apply it to a specific technique. The next assessment measures understanding of vocabulary words based on the definitions students wrote by paraphrasing dictionary definitions. This requires them to read and interpret text to construct their own meaning from it and then convey the meaning in writing and verbally. The third informal assessment is similar to the second, only it is based on identifying vocabulary words using context clues. The students should be able to interpret the meaning of the vocabulary based on how they are used in sentences.

In Lesson Plan 3, students have an informal assessment in which they define two different types of appeals that are used in the text they are about to read. This is a pre-reading assessment and their responses indicate how well students will be able to interpret the reading. If they do not understand the appeals, they will need more work before they can successfully construct meaning from a text that uses those same appeals to convey information. Finally, the written formal assessment for the learning segment begins in Lesson 3 and ends in Lesson 4. This assessment is the culmination of the material from the first two lessons. Students must read two articles, analyze, and interpret them successfully in order to construct meaningful responses to the questions at the end of the chapter.]

- b. Explain how the design or adaptation of your planned assessments allows students with specific needs to demonstrate their learning.

Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

[Most of the informal assessments are verbal because students with specific language needs express themselves more comfortably while speaking. In addition, having the class verbally respond to questions allows me to make sure that students are using their Tier 2 vocabulary appropriately before they have written assessments. Then when I read their work later, I have notes regarding how well students conveyed the lesson's information verbally compared to their written responses. This means I can go back and work with specific students on targeted writing skills and that I will not mistake their challenges with writing for insufficient content area knowledge or understanding. In addition, I provide time for students to think or discuss with a partner in several of the informal assessments and the formal assessment is a partner activity. These assessments are meant to measure the student's learning, but the topic is still new- I do not expect mastery yet, so individual assessments are not appropriate for this situation. These assessments are for me to gauge the overall skill of students in interpreting and constructing meaning from argumentative texts so that I know what I need to clarify before I begin teaching them to write argumentative essays.]

**Lesson Materials:**

- California Literature McDougal Littell, 2009, pages 926-928, 930, 948-955. (Lesson Plans 1-4)
- "Pillars of Persuasion" organizational chart from Deborah P. in my Professional Learning Committee (Lesson Plan 2)

**Works Cited:**

- Bongolan, Lorraine. "Six Key Strategies for Secondary Teachers of English Learners". Handout. California State University, Monterey Bay. Seaside, CA. September 2015.
- McCarthy, John. "Learner Interest Matters: Strategies for Empowering Student Choice." *Edutopia*. N.p., 25 Aug. 2014. Web. 21 Jan. 2016.