



On the Fence

Students are asked to complete a claim for both sides of an issue-based argument prior to planning their discussion or writing.

Suggested Time: 20 Minutes

Student Tasks:

- Draft Claim Statements for Each Side of an Argument
- Develop Evidence and Examples to Support Each Side of an Argument

Online ThinkCERCA Modules:

- ThinkCERCA provides thematic units with persuasive writing prompts as well as pause and reflect questions.

Rationale/Research Base

Being able to explore and connect with both sides of an argument develops students' empathy as well as skills in building compelling arguments and counter-arguments.

Optimal Application Notes:

Provide students with a template that guides them in organizing their thoughts for each claim sentence.

Before:

- Introduce the issue-based argument topic through a reading and writing module in ThinkCERCA or prepare several debatable topics to assign to different groups.
 - Topic examples: cell phones in schools; effect of sports on society; school uniforms.
- Communicate to students clear, concise criteria for and description of an effective claim statement.
- Draft exemplar claim and counter argument for an issue
 - Example issue: "Should cell phones be allowed in schools?"
 - Example claim: "Cell phones should be allowed in schools because they can be used as tools for research and learning."
 - Example counter-argument: "Cell phones should not be allowed in schools because they can disrupt the learning environment."
- Draft exemplar brainstorming and evidence for each argument.

During:

- Frame the task and student-facing rationale: students will think critically and consider strong points for both perspectives equally by writing claim statements for both sides of the argument(s)
- Model brainstorming and drafting claims for both sides of an exemplar argument.
- Give students some time to brainstorm and develop claims for each perspective of the argument
- Have students record their two claims on a handout or in their notebooks. Circulate and provide feedback based on criteria for an effective claim.

After:

- Briefly discuss the importance of being able to articulate arguments for both sides of an issue. Emphasize the value of critical thinking in developing well-rounded arguments.

Scaffolds & Supports:

- Allow students to use tools such as an online translator or voice-to-speech technology.
- Provide a template that's partially completed, or allow students to brainstorm in pairs.
- Provide a visual anchor chart or handout of criteria for an effective claim statement for students to reference

Explore Your Claim

Strategy: On the Fence

Challenge yourself to think critically about both sides of an argument. Having a well-rounded view of the argument will help you strengthen your position and will also help you develop stronger counter-arguments.

Instructions: Write a claim statement for each side of the argument. Then brainstorm evidence and examples to support each side of the argument.

Topic:

Claim Statement in Support	Claim Statement in Opposition
Claim:	Claim:
Evidence/Examples: (Find evidence to support your claim.)	Evidence/Examples: (Find evidence to support your claim.)

Visual Vocabulary

3rd – 5th

Instructions: Get better at learning new words by using pictures and drawings to help you understand them!

Review and Brainstorm:

- Think about the new words you've learned, what they mean, and what type of word they are (like a noun, verb, or adjective).
- Brainstorm different pictures or drawings that show what the words mean. You can use symbols and drawings to help remember each word.

Guidelines for Visual Vocabulary:

- Create Visuals: Make pictures for our new words! Draw images that show what each word means. Use colors, shapes, and symbols to make your drawings really clear and easy to understand.
- Label and Annotate: Label each picture with necessary information and short explanations to make sure the meaning of the word is clear.
- Share with Peers: Share your pictures with your classmates, either in person or through digital platforms. Give them time to guess the word based on your drawing. Explain the meaning and why you used each visual, and invite suggestions and ideas from your classmates.
- Engage in Discussion: Talk to your classmates about the pictures of the vocabulary words. Share new ideas or connections and ask questions.