



PLANIT

TEACHERS

Discursive Writing: Arguments & Evidence Analysis

Warm-Up Exercise: Understanding Arguments (10 minutes)

Read the following passage about social media's impact on mental health:

Recent studies have shown a significant correlation between increased social media usage and declining mental health among teenagers. According to a 2023 study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health, teenagers who spend more than four hours daily on social media platforms are three times more likely to report symptoms of anxiety and depression compared to those who limit usage to one hour. Dr. Sarah Chen, leading researcher at the Digital Wellness Institute, emphasizes that the constant exposure to curated content and peer comparison creates unrealistic standards and diminishes self-esteem. Furthermore, data from 50,000 participants across 12 countries indicates that nighttime social media use disrupts sleep patterns, leading to decreased academic performance and emotional regulation difficulties.

1. Identify the main thesis statement (3 points)

2. List three supporting arguments from the text (6 points)

a. Evidence 1:

b. Evidence 2:

c. Evidence 3:

Evidence Strength Analysis (20 minutes)

Evaluate each piece of evidence below as STRONG or WEAK. Explain your reasoning.

Evidence 1: "A comprehensive meta-analysis of 50 peer-reviewed studies published in Nature Communications (2023) demonstrates that excessive social media use correlates with increased anxiety levels in 78% of participants aged 13-19."

Strength Rating: ☐ Strong ☐ Weak

Explanation:

Evidence 2: "My cousin's friend said that everyone they know feels sad after using Instagram."

Strength Rating: ☐ Strong ☐ Weak

Explanation:

Evidence 3: "According to an online blog post with no cited sources, social media is destroying society."

Strength Rating: ☐ Strong ☐ Weak

Explanation:

Argument Construction Exercise (30 minutes)

Choose *ONE* of the following topics and construct a well-reasoned argument. Include a clear thesis, supporting evidence, and consider counter-arguments.

Topics (choose one):

1. Should social media have age restrictions?
2. Is online learning as effective as traditional classroom education?
3. Should smartphones be banned in schools?

1. Thesis Statement (5 points)

2. Supporting Arguments (15 points)

First Argument:

Evidence:

Second Argument:

Evidence:

Third Argument:

Evidence:

3. Counter-Argument Consideration (5 points)

Logical Fallacies Identification (20 minutes)

For each statement below, identify the logical fallacy and explain why it's problematic.

Statement 1: "If we allow students to use tablets in class, they'll never learn to write with pen and paper, and eventually all human knowledge will be lost."

Identify the fallacy:

Explain why it's problematic:

Statement 2: "My gym teacher says the new economics textbook is poorly written, so we shouldn't use it."

Identify the fallacy:

Explain why it's problematic:

Statement 3: "Everyone in my class has a smartphone, so smartphones must be essential for learning."

Identify the fallacy:

Explain why it's problematic:

Rhetorical Analysis Exercise (25 minutes)

Analyze the following speech excerpt using the rhetorical triangle (Ethos, Pathos, Logos):

"As an environmental scientist with twenty years of research experience, I've witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of climate change on our communities. When I visit coastal towns that are literally disappearing under rising seas, I see families losing not just their homes, but their heritage. The data is unequivocal - global temperatures have risen by 1.1°C since pre-industrial times, causing catastrophic weather events that cost our economy billions. But there's hope: by implementing renewable energy solutions, we can reduce carbon emissions by 45% within a decade, creating thousands of new jobs while saving our planet for future generations."

Ethos (Credibility)

Identify examples:

Explain effectiveness:

Pathos (Emotional Appeal)

Identify examples:

Explain effectiveness:

Logos (Logical Appeal)

Identify examples:

Explain effectiveness:

Counter-Argument Development Workshop (30 minutes)

Practice developing and responding to counter-arguments for the following controversial statements:

Topic 1: "Homework should be abolished in all schools."

Main Argument FOR:

Counter-Argument:

Rebuttal:

Topic 2: "All students should learn programming in elementary school."

Main Argument FOR:

Counter-Argument:

Rebuttal:

Evidence Evaluation Matrix (25 minutes)

Evaluate the following pieces of evidence using the CRAAP test (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, Purpose):

Source 1: A peer-reviewed article from The Journal of Educational Psychology (2023) about the effects of technology on learning outcomes.

Criterion	Rating (1-5)	Justification
Currency		
Relevance		
Authority		
Accuracy		
Purpose		

Source 2: A blog post from a popular social media influencer about educational trends.

Criterion	Rating (1-5)	Justification
Currency		
Relevance		
Authority		
Accuracy		
Purpose		

Final Assessment: Argumentative Essay Planning (45 minutes)

Create a detailed essay plan addressing the following prompt:

"In an increasingly digital world, should traditional handwriting still be taught in schools? Develop a well-reasoned argument supported by evidence."

1. Thesis Development (10 points)

Write a clear, arguable thesis statement:

2. Evidence Collection (15 points)

Evidence Type
Source
Relevance to Argument

3. Outline Development (20 points)

I. Introduction
II. Body Paragraph 1
III. Body Paragraph 2
IV. Body Paragraph 3

V. Conclusion

Grading Rubric

Component	Points
Warm-Up Exercise	9 points
Evidence Analysis	15 points
Argument Construction	25 points
Fallacy Identification	15 points

Student Reflection

What was the most challenging aspect of analyzing arguments today?

How will you apply these critical thinking skills in your daily life?