

WORDS TO KNOW

argument
claim
evidence
relevant
credible
formal
transition

Lesson 6

WRITE ARGUMENTS 6W1, 6W4

INTRODUCTION

Real-World Connection

TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA

Karen visits her school library to research the plays of William Shakespeare. On a video-sharing site, she finds a clip from *Romeo and Juliet*, but when she clicks on the link the site is blocked. Her teacher explains that the school blocks the site because students use it to watch TV. Karen agrees students could misuse the site. However, it is also useful for research. Karen wants to write a letter to the principal to persuade her to unblock the site. She begins her letter with the sentence, “I am really angry and frustrated that you blocked the video-sharing site. These sites are really cool, and it’s just not fair to block them!” How can Karen revise the beginning of her letter to state her argument clearly? How can she make sure that her letter is reasonable and persuasive? We will practice these skills in Guided Instruction and Independent Practice, then at the end of the lesson come back to Karen and her letter.



What I Am Going to Learn

- How to introduce a claim
- How to support a claim with reasons and evidence
- How to organize ideas and clarify the relationships between them
- How to use a formal style
- How to provide a conclusion with a call to action

What I May Already Know 5W1, 5W4

- I know how to state my opinion on a topic.
- I know how to connect my opinion to reasons and information that support my point of view.
- I know how to write a concluding statement.
- I know how to produce writing that is appropriate to the task.

Vocabulary in Action

As you read, you will come across words that are used in a variety of ways.

An **argument** expresses an opinion on an issue. Arguments state what you agree or disagree with and can also state what you want readers to do.

A **claim** is a statement that shows what you believe to be true and what you want readers to believe.

Evidence includes the relevant facts and reasons that prove your claim. This evidence must come from sources that are credible, meaning current and trustworthy sources.

Formal writing is academic writing that is less personal than conversational writing. It does not use the conversational tone or slang you might use with your friends.

A **transition** is a connecting word or phrase. Transitions signal when you are moving from one idea to another. Here are some examples of transitions and when you can use them.

- When things happened – *first, second, next, finally, after, last*
- How things are different – *however, nevertheless, although, even though, but, yet, despite*
- How things are the same – *similarly, likewise, also, like, just as*
- Causes and effects – *therefore, thus, consequently, as a result*

A **call to action** inspires your readers to do something after reading your argument.

GUIDED INSTRUCTION

To understand persuasive writing, Karen reads this article about video games. She thinks this article might help her write her letter to the principal.

Gaming and Studying DO Mix

Genre: Student Sample Writing

In 2012, President Barack Obama gave a speech in which he challenged people to create educational software that is as interesting to students as

President Obama pointed out what we gamers have if you want to get a student's attention, video games

◀ HINT, HINT

Do you remember what the goal of a persuasive argument is? How does the writer persuade the reader to agree with the claim?

① The author states the argument's claim.

Highlight the transitions in this paragraph.

② The writer provides a reason to support the claim.

Highlight the evidence the writer gives to back up the reason.

Highlight the conclusion, which wraps things up by linking to the claim and making a call to action.

To say video games are popular today is an understatement. In the United States, 91 percent of children under 18 play video games. To many adults, these numbers are bad news. Many believe that video games are harmful. They believe it is better for children to read or play sports. At the very best, they believe gaming is a waste of time. I think that video games can be a great tool for learning and studying. ①

People who play video games develop many skills. Many games require players to read carefully. Players may encounter new words. Therefore, they build vocabulary skills. In many games, players read maps. In addition, observational skills, logical thinking, and problem solving are needed. Some games help build knowledge. Players explore new places and have true-to-life experiences. All of these skills can be improved by playing games that are not "educational."

Video games that are intended for learning can teach math, English, engineering, and computer programming. ② Using video games to study at home allows students to learn at their own pace. If students don't pass a certain level, it makes them realize that they are weak in the skill. When students know their weaknesses, they can work on those areas. I have gamer friends who are not good at math. I know others who can use help in English. But they're all excellent at playing video games. The right educational game could help them improve both their grades and test scores.

Video games can help students think in new ways. School can be boring at times, with reading, tests, and talks. Video games promote creativity and independent thinking. Traditional teaching at school is necessary. However, using video games to study after school is more stimulating than textbook reading and printed homework.

Technology is another reason that playing video games should be encouraged. Game developers come from many backgrounds, including engineers, artists, writers, teachers, and programmers. Many technology jobs did not exist 20 years ago. This shows how fast the world is changing. Playing video games will help students prepare for the jobs of tomorrow.

It is true that a person can play too many video games. However, research shows that children who play video games for an hour a day are happier and get along better with others than those who do not play at all. What is important is for students to be involved in a wide variety of activities, both in school and at home. Using video games as a studying tool is a great way to do this. Talk to your teacher about finding educational video games.

Complete the chart using your own words to describe what you highlighted in the article.

| WORD | ANTONYM |
|-----------------|---------|
| Claim | |
| Transition word | |
| Reason | |
| Evidence | |
| Conclusion | |

Reread the beginning of Karen's letter to the principal. Why is this opening paragraph not appropriate? What kind of result might she get if she sent a letter beginning with that paragraph?

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

1. Do you agree with Karen or with her teacher? Write an argument that states and develops your opinion. Be sure to clearly state a claim and support it with reasons and evidence. Use the graphic organizer below to outline your letter to the principal and plan your ideas.

| |
|---|
| <p>I. Introduction</p> <p>A. Introduce your topic.</p> <p>B. State your claim: <i>I think . . .</i></p> |
| <p>II. Reason #1</p> <p>A. State your first reason: <i>because . . .</i></p> <p>B. Provide evidence to support this reason.</p> |
| <p>III. Reason #2</p> <p>A. State your second reason: <i>because . . .</i></p> <p>B. Provide evidence to support this reason.</p> |
| <p>IV. Reason #3</p> <p>A. State your third reason: <i>because . . .</i></p> <p>B. Provide evidence to support this reason.</p> |
| <p>V. Conclusion</p> <p>A. Summarize your claim, reasons, and evidence.</p> |

◀ TIPS AND TRICKS

Plan your argument by asking yourself which side of the issue you most believe. How can you persuade a reader to agree with you?

◀ THINK ABOUT IT

Think of your claims as “because” statements. I think that [argument] because [claim].

◀ TIPS AND TRICKS

★ Do not introduce any new information in your conclusion; just summarize your claims and add a call to action. ★

Use the space below to write your argument to block or unblock sites at your school. Should be a full paragraph.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for writing a full paragraph.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying most of the page. It is intended for students to write their arguments.

▶ **WRITING CHECKLIST**

- Did you read the prompt carefully?
- Did you use evidence to support your ideas?
- Did you clearly organize your ideas?
- Did you write complete sentences?
- Did you check your spelling and punctuation?

