

## Ranking Evidence

### Overview of Instructional Resource:

This instructional resource focuses on evaluating the quality and relevance of evidence used for supporting claims. Students will evaluate the evidence in texts that focus on the conversation around assigning homework. Students will join the conversation around the topic and ultimately compose a full argument that integrates and purposefully orders logical and relevant evidence from the texts.

This resource is located in the Advancing Arguments with Evidence section of the instructional resources guide, after Organizing Evidence and before Making the Case in an Op-Ed. Resources in this section build on the skills that have been developed in Entering the Conversation and Using Source Material Purposefully. Students should have experience with the skills emphasized in these earlier sections before beginning this resource

### Skill Emphasis

- Evaluate quality and relevance of evidence to support a claim
- Rank and order evidence
- Write a purposeful draft based on selected evidence

**Duration:** six to seven 45-minute class periods. All listed times are estimates and can be adjusted based on different contexts and student needs.

**Sample Text Sets:** This resource provides two sample text sets. Select the text set that you think is the best fit for your students and context. Or use the description of how texts were selected to create your own text set on a different topic. See below for more information on how the texts were selected.

### Sample Text Set #1: Homework

- **Two Shared Texts:** These texts introduce the issue without presenting a definitive argument. They are selected to help students become aware of the issue and to begin forming their working claims.
  - Short video that introduces the conversation around the topic: [Homework in High School: How Much is Too Much?](#) (KQED Above the Noise Video)
  - Article that provides more about the conversation around the topic: [Homework: Too Little or Too Much? It Depends](#) (Newsela Article)
- **Five Jigsaw Texts:** These texts represent a range of perspectives on the issue and are selected to make sure students have opportunities to write nuanced claims. These may be arguments (with a stated or implied claim) or informational texts. They are also of varied lengths and levels of complexity to provide opportunities for differentiation.
  - [More Parents, Schools Trying to Dig Out From Piles of Homework](#) (Newsela Article)
  - [Is Homework Good for Kids? Here's What the Research Says](#) (Time Article)
  - [Changing the Way Students Make the Grade](#) (Newsela Article)

- [Don't Bother, Homework is Pointless](#) (New York Times Room for Debate Opinion)
- [What Kinds of Homework Seem to be Most Effective?](#) (KQED Article)
- **Two Extension Texts:** These texts are selected to extend the conversation beyond the perspectives represented in the jigsaw texts. They may be included because they are longer or more complex, because they offer a unique and more complicated angle on the issue, because there is extended instructional time, or for other reasons based on specific instructional purposes or context.
  - [Homework Takes Over the Library for Kids Without Internet](#) (Newsela Article)
  - [Having a Home Computer Benefits Students Socially, but Not Academically](#) (Newsela Article)

### Sample Text Set #2: Plastic Straws

- **Two Shared Texts:** These texts introduce the issue without presenting a definitive argument. They are selected to help students become aware of the issue and to begin forming their working claims.
  - Short video that introduces the conversation around the topic: [A Brief History of How Plastic Has Changed the World](#) (National Geographic Video)
  - Article that provides more about the conversation around the topic: [Not on the Menu: Restaurants Seek to Wean Customers off Plastic Straws](#) (Newsela Article)
- **Five Jigsaw Texts:** These texts represent a range of perspectives on the issue and are selected to make sure students have opportunities to write nuanced claims. These may be arguments (with a stated or implied claim) or informational texts. They are also of varied lengths and levels of complexity to provide opportunities for differentiation.
  - [Plastic Straw Bans Hurt Kids and Adults with Disabilities](#) (Today Article)
  - [Unintended Consequences from Straw Bans Might Be Harming the Environment Even More](#) (The Blaze, News Article)
  - [McDonalds is Being Sucked Into the Movement to Ban Plastic Straws](#) (USA Today article)
  - [Plastic Trash Rides Ocean Currents to the Arctic](#) (Science News for Students article)
  - [Want to Ditch Plastic Straws? Consider These](#) (National Geographic article)
  - [Why Bans on Plastic Bags and Straws are Annoying and Overrated](#) (The Daily Signal article)
- **Two Extension Texts:** These texts are selected to extend the conversation beyond the perspectives represented in the jigsaw texts. They may be included because they are longer or more complex, because they offer a unique and more complicated angle on the issue, because there is extended instructional time, or for other reasons based on specific instructional purposes or context.
  - [Plastic Has a Big Carbon Footprint – But That Isn't the Whole Story](#) (NPR Story)

- o [Plastic Straw Myths](#) (Youtube video)

### Classroom Resources:

- Notebook/Journal
- Chart paper
- 3X5 Note Cards
- Document camera (if available)

### Digital Resources:

#### Organizers, Tools, and Resources

- [Technology Adaptation](#)
- [Evidence Ranking](#)
- [Facts and Statistics Slide](#)
- [Quick Sort Protocol](#)
- [Jigsaw Note-Catcher](#)
- [Planning Sheet](#)

### Overview of Lesson Sequence

1. Evidence Ranking and Anchor Chart
  - Introduce focus skill and begin formulating thinking about what makes good evidence
2. Mining a Text (I Do, We Do)
  - Shared text #1: Video to introduce topic
  - Shared text #2: Teacher modeling and student practice with annotated reading strategy
3. Mining Texts (Jigsaw)
  - Jigsaw texts: Student application of annotated reading strategy
  - Note-catcher to begin gathering and evaluating evidence
4. **OPTIONAL:** Extending the Conversation
  - Read and annotate extension texts to add additional angles on the issue
5. Ranking and Ordering Evidence
  - Select and organize evidence
6. Drafting
  - Use selected evidence to write a full draft
7. Process Analysis and Self-Assessment
  - Explanation and self-assessment of writing decisions

### Lesson Sequence:

#### Becoming Aware of the Emphasis Skill (45 minutes)

##### Evidence Ranking and Anchor Chart

The purpose of the [Evidence Ranking](#) activity is to begin the conversation about what makes logical, relevant evidence. This activity is highly supported, with the claims and evidence being provided for students so that they can practice the process of evaluating evidence related to a claim, the skill they will apply later on when mining texts for evidence.

#### Formative Assessment

The Anchor Chart discussion provides information on students' current thinking about what makes good

**Technology Adaptation**

[Digital Audience Response](#)

- To start, hand out the Evidence Ranking and explain that students will rank the evidence for each claim from least to most effective. Depending on student experience with claims and evidence, you may want to model one ranking or do a shared ranking as a class.
- Ask students to begin by completing the ranking on their own. Once most students seem to be finished, transition students to discussing their responses in small groups. Then, lead a full class discussion of the ranking. Depending on available time, the class discussion may not involve all three claims and evidence.
- After the discussion, the class works together to begin an anchor chart about what makes good evidence. You can use chart paper or a whiteboard and begin the discussion by writing “What Makes Good Evidence?” at the top, adding to the Anchor Chart with responses from students.
- Depending upon how this discussion goes, students may need a follow-up mini-lesson on possible limitations of facts and statistics. [This slide](#) is one way to guide students in a discussion of when they might question facts and statistics.

**Becoming Aware of the Issue (60 minutes)**

Mining a Text (I Do, We Do)

**ELL Notice**

Using **video** is a strategy that helps build background knowledge and vocabulary for ELL students. If possible, use a quick sort protocol to provide subtitles and a hardcopy of transcript to help with auditory discrimination. Tickets into categories based on the claims and selection of evidence. **I Do, We Do** strategy provides a model and is a way to scaffold reading processes.

- Begin the lesson by showing the Shared Reading short video for the text set you have selected (Homework or Plastic Straws).

**Teaching Tip**

Note that Newsela articles can be leveled to different lexile levels, but sometimes the lower lexile levels significantly change the text. If you decide to use a lower lexile level, be sure to try out the annotation process yourself to make sure the texts still work for the purpose.

- Then guide students in the practice of mining for evidence in the longer written text for the text set you have selected. Before asking students to apply this skill independently, they need to see a model of what it looks like. For this modeling, hand out a copy of the Shared Reading article that provides more about the conversation around the topic. Before the lesson, divide the text into three sections for the gradual release modeling of annotating the text. For the modeling process, tell students that you will be reading the first section of the article and “thinking aloud,” and annotating about the claims/perspectives and evidence used in the source. Note that Newsela articles often have *implied* claims; they also often present different perspectives on the issue and present evidence that might be used to support those perspectives. Remind students to follow along as you are modeling and write down the same annotation as they will be asked to help out in the next section. If possible, use a document camera to project the annotation for

students to follow along. Model “thinking aloud” and annotating with a focus on the author’s use of evidence through the end of the first section of the article.

- In the second section, read each paragraph and then pause to ask students what they notice about the claims/perspectives and evidence in each paragraph. Continue modeling annotation based on student responses.
- In the final section, ask students to continue reading and annotating in partners or small groups. If students seem ready, have them complete the last few paragraphs individually. If time allows, have a class discussion: What is the current conversation around this topic? What are people saying about it?
- Conclude the lesson by handing out a 3X5 card for an Exit Ticket and provide the following prompt:
  - o *After reading this source, what is your initial claim about the issue? Include at least one piece of evidence from the text to support your initial claim.*

**Teaching Tip**

To prepare for the jigsaw in the next lesson, divide the total number of students in the class by the number of articles. To calculate the number of copies of each article, add 3-4 copies to that number. Also, copying the articles on different colored paper makes the movement between groups run more smoothly.

**Getting Informed and Joining the Conversation (45 minutes)**

Mining Texts (Jigsaw)

The jigsaw text mining serves two major purposes:

**ELL Notice**

The jigsaw strategy helps ELLs with reading practice, comprehension when meeting with expert groups, and oral practice of academic language with embedded content.

If you have struggling students consider giving them the articles ahead of time to read.

1. It provides students with an opportunity to practice applying the skill of evaluating evidence more independently.
2. It exposes students to multiple sources representing a range of perspectives in a conversation around the issue as they refine and revise their arguments.
  - For the jigsaw, give each student one of the jigsaw texts from the text set you selected. The texts can be distributed randomly to students, they can choose an article, or you can match the articles to specific students based on ability (this is one place where color-coded copies come in handy). Note that the articles are at varied lengths of text complexity to allow for differentiation; there are less complex options for ELL students, students with disabilities or struggling readers, and more complex options for advanced students.

- For the jigsaw, students begin by reading and annotating the text on their own, identifying claims and evaluating the author’s use of evidence.
- Then direct students to meet in small groups with other students who read the same article to practice how they will explain their article to other students.
- After they meet in small groups, pass out a [Jigsaw Note-Catcher](#) to each student. Help them organize themselves into groups of 3-4, all with different articles (this is another place where the color-coded

**ELL Notice**

Graphic organizers help increase **Reading comprehension** and support students in gaining vocabulary. In addition they are practicing purposeful writing as they summarize and identify key concepts within a text.

copies come in handy). Students work together to complete the note-catcher, with each student explaining his or her article while the other group members take notes in their note-catchers.

- As time allows, you can close the lesson with a class discussion of what students are currently thinking about the topic based on the articles they read.

### Formative Assessment

Collect note-catchers to assess students' understanding and evaluation of claims and evidence.  
Adjust the next day's lesson as necessary based on this assessment.

### Optional Extension Lesson: Extending the Conversation (30-45 minutes)

Depending on available time and students' experience with argument writing, you may want to include a lesson that layers in an additional angle in the conversation.

Based on the group of students, you can select a process for reading, annotating and discussing the Extension Texts.

Some possible processes for reading/viewing, annotating, and discussing the extension texts:

- Students read/view and annotate the two texts on their own and have a brief discussion with a partner.
- Students collaboratively read and annotate/view the two texts with a partner.
- In small groups, students divide up the two texts, read/view and annotate individually, and then discuss as a group.
- Hand back the note-catcher from the previous day and guide students in adding two more rows on the back. Students complete the note-catcher for each of the extension texts as they are reading.

### Making a Plan (45 minutes)

Ranking and Ordering Evidence

- Begin the lesson by having each student get out their note-catcher and copies of all the texts they have annotated, including the shared text from lesson 2.
- Students individually review their note-catcher and the texts, then select 2-4 of the most logical, relevant pieces of evidence they will use to support their working claim about the topic. They can draw evidence from any of the sources. Students write their working claim and the evidence they selected on the [planning sheet](#). At this point,

#### Teaching Tip

Be sure to have extra copies of each of the texts available so that students have access to the texts their peers read for the jigsaw activity.

you might want to remind students of the evidence ranking activity from lesson 1.

- Here are possible directions for evidence selection
  - 1-2 sentence working claim that captures where you stand on the issue
  - 3-4 pieces of evidence

Select evidence that. . .

  - Is logically connected to the claim*
  - Is relevant to the claim*
  - And POSSIBLY: has limitations (evidence or source). If you decide to include this, be sure to include a note that you would use it to point out those limitations in order to advance your claim*
- After they have selected their evidence, students will then decide on the order they will use to organize their evidence. Have students consider the evidence they have selected and number it from 1-4, based on how they will order it in their argument. Students make notes about connections among pieces of evidence and their reasons for ordering the evidence the way they have. One important question for students to consider: “How does each piece of evidence logically lead to the next?”
- If time allows, you can lead a class discussion of evidence ranking and ordering for volunteers who are interested in getting additional feedback on their selected evidence.

### Formative Assessment

Collect planning sheets to assess students’ claims, selection, and ordering of evidence. Depending on this analysis, you may plan for full-class, small group, or individual conferences before students begin drafting.

### Writing an Argument (45-60 minutes)

#### Drafting

- Students take out their notebooks/journals, several pieces of paper, or open an electronic document if they have one-to-one access to devices. They should also take out their note-catcher, texts they will use, and their planning sheet.
- Students draft a full argument.

### Assessing Formative Growth and Next Steps (15-20 minutes)

#### Process Analysis and Self-Assessment

As a final step in this instructional sequence, students write a process analysis and self-assessment of their selection and ordering of evidence in their full argument. Depending on time and students’ experience with this kind of self-assessment and reflection, this could be done in a student-teacher writing conference.

- Students turn to a new page in their notebook, take out a sheet of paper, or open an electronic document.
- Hand back the full arguments and tell students that they will be writing a process analysis and self-reflection on the use of evidence in their argument.
- You can provide students with the following prompts:

- *How did you select the evidence you used in your argument?*
- *Why did you organize your evidence in the order you did? How do you know that each piece of evidence logically leads to the next?*
- *How would you rate your overall use of evidence? Did you select logical and relevant evidence to support your claim?*
- *What would do differently if you had the opportunity to write the argument again with different or additional evidence?*
- Collect these process analyses and self-reflections to make decisions about next instructional steps based on students' understanding of selecting, ranking, and ordering evidence in their arguments.

### **Revision Options**

One revision option is to have students use their process analysis and self-reflection to write another draft of their argument. Alternatively, since this instructional resource focuses primarily on claims and evidence, you and/or students may see opportunities to improve the commentary surrounding the evidence in their arguments. If this is the case, consider using the [“Revising for Commentary”](#) supplementary resource to support students in revising their arguments with a focus on commentary.

### **Formative Assessment Options**

Analyzing the student writing through the lens of the [Using Sources Tool](#) will provide more specific information on student progress toward integrating evidence from source material to fully support the argument. You might also consider having students analyze their own writing or the writing of a peer with the [Student Using Sources Tool](#).