

Mount Laurel Language Arts Curriculum  
Grade 8

**Writing Unit 3: Argument**

**Stage 1: Determine the Desired Results**

**Enduring Understanding(s):**

Writers include theories and arguments in their writing and back them up with facts.

A writer selects a form based on audience and purpose. Words powerfully affect meaning.

Researchers gather and critique information from different sources for specific purposes.

**Essential Question(s):**

How do writers develop their theories and arguments in their writing and back them up with facts?

Why does a writer choose a particulate form of writing?

Why conduct research?

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:**

**Progress Indicators for Writing**

Text Types and Purposes:

W.8.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence

W.8.1.A

Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

W.8.1.B

Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

W.8.1.C

Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

W.8.1.D

Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form.

W.8.1.E

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W.8.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

W.8.2.A

Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition,

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classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia).

W.8.2.B

Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

W.8.2.C

Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

W.8.2.D

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

W.8.2.E

Establish and maintain a formal style.

W.8.2.F

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

W.8.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

W.8.3.A

Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

W.8.3.B

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

W.8.3.C

Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.

W.8.3.D

Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

W.8.3.E

Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Production and Distribution of Writing:

W.8.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

W.8.5

With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 8 here.)

W.8.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships

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between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

W.8.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

W.8.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

W.8.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.8.9.A

Apply grade 8 Reading standards to literature (e.g., "Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new").

W.8.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Progress Indicators for Reading Literature**

Key Ideas and Details:

RL.8.1

Cite the textual evidence and make relevant connections that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.8.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.8.3

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

Craft and Structure:

RL.8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

RL.8.5

Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

RL.8.6

Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.

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Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

RL.8.7

Evaluate the choices made by the directors or actors by analyzing the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script.

RL.8.10

By the end of the year read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity (see Appendix A) or above, scaffolding as needed.

**Progress Indicators for Informational Text**

Key Ideas and Details:

RI.8.1

Cite the textual evidence and make relevant connections that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.8.2

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.8.3

Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

Craft and Structure:

RI.8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

RI.8.5

Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences, to develop and to refine a key concept.

RI.8.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

RI.8.10

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

**8.1 Educational Technology: Interdisciplinary Connection**

All students will use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaborate and to create and communicate knowledge.

**Integration of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Themes and Skills:**

- CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
- CRP5. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
- CRP7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.

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- CRP8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

**Stage 2: Assessment Evidence**

**Performance Task:**

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Apply grade 8 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new”).

Apply grade 8 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is

**Other Forms of Assessment:**

**Bend I:**

Debate different positions of an argument  
Set goals for writing and planning  
Explain evidence fully  
Use word choice to support and set tone of an argument  
Develop a conclusion that restates claim and offers insights  
Edit text using a variety of tools (checklist, peer, digital tools)  
Rehearse speech focusing on tone, body language, and gesture  
Use humor, personal anecdotes, and compelling research

**Bend II:**

Read, write, and discuss new topics to become familiar  
Revise position based on incoming information  
Acknowledge all angles of a topic  
Choose relevant, significant, and convincing evidence  
Study and incorporate counter arguments  
Develop an organizational structure to build a strong text  
Write letters tailored to fit the audience  
Explain a complex argument clearly and convincingly

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introduced”).

**Stage 3: Learning Plan**

**The Components of a Minilesson**

A writing minilesson is a short lesson focused on a specific principle or procedure (Calkins 1986, 1994). A minilesson’s components are: Connection, Teaching, Active Engagement, and Link. Each minilesson follows the same architecture:

**Connection:** Students learn why today’s instruction is important and how it relates to the prior work. They hear the teaching point that crystallizes the lesson.

**Teaching:** The teacher shows students how writers go about doing whatever is being taught. Usually this involves a demonstration, which the teacher sets up and explains.

**Active Engagement:** Students are given a chance to practice (for a minute) what has just been taught. The teacher scaffolds their work so they can be successful.

**Link:** The teacher crystallizes what has been taught, adding it to student’s growing repertoire. Students are reminded that today’s lesson pertains not only to today, but to every day. The teacher often summarizes the conditions under which a student is able to reach for this new knowledge.

**The Architecture of a Conference**

Each conference is unique; however, they nevertheless do have a predictable structure.

**Research:** Observe and interview to understand what the student is trying to do as a writer. Probe to glean more about the student’s intentions. Name what the student has already accomplished as a writer and remind the student to do this in future writing.

**Decide:** Weigh whether you want to accept or alter the student’s current plans and processes. Decide what you will teach and how you will teach it. Although there may be several teaching decisions, think about the one teaching point that is apt to make the biggest difference in the student’s writing. Plan the way in which you will provide the student with guided practice.

**Teach:** Instruct the student on critical writing strategies, i.e., adding details, creating a more effective hook, removing information that does not support the topic, or selecting a topic that the student may not know.

**Link:** Name what the student has accomplished as a writer and remind the student to do this often in the future.

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Calkin's Units of Study in Writing: Grade 8, Unit 3, Research and Argument

**Bend I Writing a Position Paper: Games Based on Fictional Violence-Diverting or Harmful?**

Session 1: Debate Positions to Develop a Complex Argument (p. 2)

Session 2: Flash-Drafting Arguments while Working on Specific Writing Goals (p. 14)

Session 3: Angling Evidence to Support Specific Points (p. 27)

Session 4: Using Connotative Language to Paint a Tone (p. 43)

Session 5: Writing Powerful Conclusions (p. 54)

Session 6: Getting Ready to Publish: Polishing Presentations and Attending to Conventions (p. 65)

Session 7: Unleashing the Inner Dramatist to Give Speeches More Impact (p. 70)

Session 8: A Celebration of Speeches (p. 81)

**Bend II Writing a Position Paper on a Complicated Issue: Should Child Soldiers Be Given Amnesty?**

Session 9: Grappling with Issues of Intensity and Developing Initial Understanding (p. 86)

Session 10: Developing Preliminary Positions and Revising Thinking (p. 95)

Session 11: Debating to Draft More Balanced and Principled Arguments (p. 100)

Session 12: Strengthening, Framing, and Pacing Evidence (p. 113)

Session 13: Attending to Alternative Arguments and Points of View (p. 128)

Session 14: Using the Organizational Structure of Your Piece to Help Build Your Argument (p. 142)

Session 15: Tailoring Position Papers as Letters: Attending to Audience and Presentation (p. 154)

Session 16: A Social Activist Celebration (p. 15).

**Modifications**

**Special Education:**

- Use Research, Decide, Teach, Link methodology during conferring with students
- Teacher models own writing
- Show additional number of samples/examples
- Provide additional opportunities to practice
- Use individual teacher/student conferences to address student's needs
- Use small group table conferences to address needs
- Chunk mini-lessons over a number of days
- Develop target vocabulary
- Scaffold comprehension when reading is used to promote reader response
- Chunk reading material
- Use graphic organizers to develop key concepts/ideas

**English Language Learners (ELLs):**

- Model Thinking Aloud
- Encourage Partner Talk
- Repeat and Clarify
- Provide a Sequence
- Encourage self-selection of topics
- Target vocabulary
- Scaffold comprehension when reading is used to promote reader response
- Scaffold content-literacy reading
- Allow products to demonstrate student's learning
- Provide on-going feedback

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teach key aspects of a topic. Eliminate nonessential information</li> <li>● Provide individual copies of the student's writing checklists</li> <li>● Use sentence frames to promote student's thinking and writing (this is found in Lucy's Units)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Students at Risk of School Failure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Utilize TIME Mentor Program</li> <li>● Build a relationship</li> <li>● Allow flexible due dates</li> <li>● Employ strategies from Classroom Instruction that Works</li> <li>● Create the Opportunity to Learn strategies</li> <li>● Build lessons around student interests</li> </ul>	<p><b>Gifted Students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use Flexible grouping</li> <li>● Give Independent projects</li> <li>● Differentiate product assignments</li> <li>● Offer student choice</li> <li>● Use multiple intelligence options</li> <li>● Provide opportunities to research (Individual/Group)</li> <li>● Focus on Habits of Mind</li> <li>● Focus on Webb's Depth of Knowledge - Emphasis on Level 4</li> </ul>
<p><b>Core Instructional Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Calkins Units of Study in Writing</i> Program 2014 edition</li> <li>● Newsela.com for leveled texts</li> <li>● Technology/Equipment: ACTIV Board, LCD projector, sound system , CDs, DVDs, videos, internet, iPod</li> </ul>	