

# Toulmin Argument Essay

## Summary

This lesson extends over several class periods. Students view a Prezi presentation on Toulmin's argument and complete an assignment based on the presentation. Students then write an argument essay about the power of prevailing passion over reason.

## Main Core Tie

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Writing Standard 1 a.](#)

## Additional Core Ties

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Writing Standard 1 b.](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Writing Standard 1 c.](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Writing Standard 1 d.](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Writing Standard 1 e.](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Writing Standard 4](#)

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[Writing Standard 5](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Writing Standard 10](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Speaking and Listening Standard 1](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Language Standard 1](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Language Standard 2](#)

## Group Size

Pairs

## Materials

Brooke Ipson's Prezi on Argumentation.

Argumentation Prezi Notes handout.

Essay Basics - Required Elements handout.

Argument Essay - Passion and Reason handout.

Argument Essay Peer Review and Rubric handout.

## Background for Teachers

Teachers need a basic understanding of Toulmin's argument. I have attached a link to the Prezi presentation I use and I have included the assignment (Argument Prezi Notes) that I use to introduce Toulmin's argument with my students. I have also attached a website with more information about

Toulmin's argument.

### Intended Learning Outcomes

Students read a quote about passion and reason from Philip Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield (1694-1773), and formulate a claim. Students write an argument essay and support their claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

### Instructional Procedures

#### PART ONE

Put students into groups of four.

Pass out the Argumentation Prezi Notes handout. This handout goes along with the Argumentation Prezi that Brooke Ipson created and posted to the Prezi web site. This Prezi is "public" and you may use it in class. You may want to create your own argumentation Prezi, but you will need to create a handout to go along with it, as my assignment closely follows Brooke Ipson's presentation. There are a few You Tube connections that don't work in the argumentation Prezi. I just skip those as I go through the presentation and handout.

Show the Prezi, stopping at the appropriate points for groups to discuss and record their responses on the handouts.

#### PART TWO - Introduce the essay

Pass out the Essay Basics - Required Elements handout. Read through the handout. English 11 students should be familiar with all of the elements.

Pass out the Argument Essay - Passion and Reason handout.

Here is the prompt for the essay: "If you can once engage people's pride, love, pity, ambition (or whatever is their prevailing passion) on your side, you need not fear what their reason can do against you." -Philip Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield (1694-1773)

Here is the assignment: \*Consider this quotation about prevailing passion and reason from Lord Chesterfield. Then write an essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies Lord Chesterfield's assertion about the power of passion over reason. Support your argument with appropriate evidence from your reading, observation, or experience.

Put students into pairs and instruct students to summarize the QUOTATION from the prompt IN THEIR OWN WORDS. Ask for volunteers to read their summaries. Clarify any misunderstandings.

Now that everyone understands the quotation, tell students that they must decide if they agree or disagree with this claim. Will they defend, challenge or qualify (argue that this claim is only true in certain, limited instances) Chesterfield's claim? Give students time to think about and record a claim. Reassure students that this is just an initial claim and that they should go back and edit and revise.

Instruct students that they must now qualify their own claim. One way to qualify, or narrow, a claim is to define the terms in the claim. Instruct students to work with their partners to complete the rest of the assignment. Here are the directions:

DEFINE PASSION. Brainstorm a list of SPECIFIC examples of prevailing PASSION -- Be more specific than the examples given in the prompt (pride, love, pity, ambition). You will need at least three SPECIFIC examples of passion for your essay. Your examples should come from your reading, your observation of others, or your personal experience.

DEFINE REASON. Be SPECIFIC.

EXPLAIN how each of your examples of prevailing PASSION does or does not overcome REASON (as you have defined it).

Are there other ways in which you need to QUALIFY your CLAIM?

Refer to the rubric (I always print it on the back of the essay handout) and ask students if they

have any questions.

#### PART THREE - Write the rough draft

Assign the rough draft of the essay as homework or take the class to a computer lab. Remind students to review the prompt/quotation, the rubric, and the basic essay requirement handout.

#### PART FOUR - Peer review

Pass out the Argument Essay Peer Review and Rubric handout.

Assign each student a partner.

Read through the directions.

Read through your essay with your partner. Check off and/or assess all required elements that you find in your essay. If a required element is completely missing, give zero points.

Add up the total score for required elements.

Read through your essay with your partner, looking for problems with conventions. Assign a score for conventions.

Finally, work with your partner to IMPROVE YOUR spelling, grammar, mechanics and clarity. Mark up your essay so you know what to work on later!

Staple this sheet to the rough draft of your essay.

#### PART FIVE

Assign the final draft of the essay as homework or take the class to a computer lab.

#### Assessment Plan

A rubric for formative and summative assessment is included in the handouts and the instructional procedures sections.

#### Authors

[TERRY KRIEGER-JAMES](#)