



Evidence Draft

Duration: 30-40 minutes | **Overview:** A draft-style game to help students practice selecting persuasive evidence.

Steps:

Setup (before class)

Create one claim and roughly nine pieces of evidence (a mix of strong, so-so, and weak, so there's a real decision to make). Post the claim where every team can see it. Spread the evidence cards face-up where the whole room can see them – on a table, the board, or projected.

[Evidence Draft – Topics + Evidence Cards for Younger Students](#)

[Evidence Draft – Topics + Evidence Cards for Older Students](#)

Running it

1. Divide the class into teams of 2-4.
2. Determine draft order – pull numbers from a hat, or just go by table order. Write the order where everyone can see it.
3. In order, each team picks one evidence card from the shared pool and says, in one sentence, why they picked it (how it supports the claim, or who it would convince).
4. Once every team has picked once, reverse the order for the next round (team that picked last now picks first) – this is a "snake draft" and keeps it fair, since the last pick in round one gets the first pick in round two.
5. Keep going in snake order until the pool is empty or every team has 2-3 cards, whichever comes first.

Wrap-up

6. Reflect as a group: which pieces went in the first round and why, which piece sitting in the pool the longest surprised everyone, and whether any team's final hand was strong enough to stand on its own.

Variation and Extension Options:

- After the draft, give each team two or three minutes to build the strongest case they can for the claim, using only the evidence they drafted. Teams present their case to the class, or to a neighboring team.
- Run a trade round before the presentations – each team can offer one card to another team in exchange for one of theirs. It forces a second look at what they actually drafted versus what they now realize they need.



- Groups can draft a written argument based on their team's evidence pool. While the logistics of writing together can be tricky, small group writing provides scaffolded support for challenging argumentation skills.



Evidence Draft – Topics + Evidence Cards for Younger Students

Screen Time Rules

Claim: Students should be allowed 30 minutes of tablet time after finishing homework.

A class survey found most students finish homework faster when they know a break is coming after.	Tablets have really fun games on them.	A children's health guideline suggests some recreational screen time is fine when balanced with other activities.
An older sibling gets to use a tablet whenever they want.	An educational reading app has been shown to help some students build vocabulary.	The classroom tablets have a bright orange case, which is a fun color.
A teacher noticed students who used tablets briefly after finishing work seemed calmer moving into the next subject.	Some students already use tablets at home every day anyway.	A librarian mentioned certain educational apps are linked to improved spelling scores in short pilot programs.



Cafeteria & Food Choices

Claim: Our cafeteria should offer a fruit and vegetable bar every day.

A visiting nutritionist said fresh produce every day helps kids concentrate better in the afternoon.	Another school in the district added a produce bar and reported less food thrown away at lunch.	The cafeteria already has a salad bar sign, so it wouldn't be that different.
Fruit looks colorful and pretty on a lunch tray.	Some fruits are a student's favorite snack at home.	A student said their cousin's school has one and "it's cool."
A class poll found most students said they'd eat more vegetables if there were more choices.	A pediatric guideline recommends several daily servings of fruits and vegetables, and school lunch is where many kids eat most of their meals.	A national survey found that self-serve produce bars led students to take more fruits and vegetables on average.



Homework Policy

Claim: Students should get one homework-free night every week.

A class poll found most students would read for fun on a homework-free night instead of watching more TV.	A parent group at another school reported fewer bedtime arguments about unfinished homework after adding a no-homework night.	A friend's school already does this and everyone likes it.
Homework-free nights would mean less time checking planners.	Homework-free nights sound really fun.	Some students said weekends already feel like a break, so one more night wouldn't matter much.
A children's wellness guideline suggests unstructured time supports development alongside schoolwork.	A school counselor noted a small drop in reported stress during a trial month of homework-free Wednesdays.	A teacher who tried a homework-free Wednesday noticed students seemed more rested and focused on Thursday.



Evidence Draft – Topics + Evidence Cards for Older Students

Screen Time Rules

Claim: Schools should not confiscate students' phones for the entire school day.

A teen survey found many students feel anxious when fully cut off from a phone that could reach a parent in an emergency.	Some students say having their phone taken away all day feels unfair.	A study comparing full-day bans to lunch-only bans found no significant difference in reported classroom disruptions between the two.
Phones are useful for looking up information quickly.	A school safety consultant noted that during a lockdown drill, students without phones felt more anxious about reaching family.	A tech executive said in an interview that phones are "an essential part of modern life."
A nearby school found a lunch-only restriction still reduced classroom phone use by a large margin, without a full-day ban.	Some students said they'd just find a way to sneak a phone in anyway.	A youth mental health researcher noted that structured, permitted access can reduce students' anxiety about being unreachable, compared to total removal.



Cafeteria & Food Choices

Claim: Schools should ban sugary drinks from vending machines.

A public health study linked regular sugary drink consumption in teens to higher rates of several long-term health problems.	Some students say they just like the taste of soda.	A district that removed sugary drinks from vending machines reported a measurable rise in water and milk purchases the next year.
A beverage company spokesperson argued students should have the "freedom to choose" their own drinks.	A school nurse noticed more stomachache visits on days when vending machine sales were highest.	Sugary drinks are cheaper than some healthier vending options.
A multi-district comparison found removing sugary drinks alone, without other changes, had only a modest effect on students' overall sugar intake.	Several students said they'd just bring their own soda from home instead.	A student wellness committee found strong support for keeping flavored water and juice available if soda were removed.



Homework Policy

Claim: Homework should be optional as long as a student demonstrates mastery on tests and in class.

A study comparing mandatory versus optional homework, holding test difficulty constant, found no significant difference in test scores between groups.	Some students say homework "just feels like busywork" some nights.	A teacher piloting optional homework found students who skipped it but scored well on quizzes maintained their grades over a semester.
A parent argued at a school board meeting that optional homework would let families "decide what's best for their kid."	An education researcher found homework's effectiveness varies by subject, with more benefit in practice-based subjects like math than in reading-heavy ones.	A few students said they'd just stop doing homework altogether if it were optional.
A district that tried optional homework in one subject saw mixed results – some students improved, others' grades dropped without the structure.	A teacher noted optional homework could make it harder to know which students need extra support before a test.	A survey of teachers found most who tried flexible homework policies still required some practice for skills students hadn't yet mastered.

