



Argument-Building Practice: Flash Arguments

Duration: 10 minutes | **Overview:** Lead students through a super-fast practice making a claim, selecting evidence, and supplying a reason this matters.

Steps:

1. Split students into small groups of 2-4.
2. Give each group claim and three evidence options.

[Claim-and-Evidence Sets for Younger Students](#)

[Claim-and-Evidence Sets for Older Students](#)

3. Set the timer for 5 minutes, ask each group to select that best piece of evidence for the claim and discuss their reasoning.

Variation & Extension Options:

This can be the entire practice, but if you want to extend the activity ask groups to share out. If you would like to extend it even further, groups can engage in light debate about which piece of evidence is truly the best one of the set.

You can develop your own claim-and-evidence sets to connect this activity more tightly to course content. Once students have practiced it a few times, students can also develop their own claim-and-evidence sets and swap with other groups.



Claim-and-Evidence Sets for Younger Students

1) Claim: Our class should get fifteen extra minutes of recess every day.

Evidence Options:

- A) A poll of our class found most students said they focus better in the afternoon on days with longer recess.
- B) Recess happens right before lunch, and lunch is everyone's favorite part of the day.
- C) Children's health guidelines recommend a certain amount of active play daily, and the current recess schedule falls short of it.

2) Claim: The class should adopt a guinea pig instead of a fish.

Evidence Options:

- A) Guinea pigs make happy squeaking sounds when they're excited.
- B) Guinea pigs need daily handling and cage cleaning, which research on kids and pet care links to stronger responsibility habits.
- C) The reading corner shelf is shaped like an aquarium, so a fish would "match" the room.

3) Claim: Students should be allowed to choose their own seats in class.

Evidence Options:

- A) During a week when the teacher tried choice seating, more homework came in on time than in any other week this year.
- B) Choosing your own seat feels more grown-up and fair.
- C) A student in a different class says their teacher allows it and "it's awesome."

4) Claim: The school should switch from paper lunch trays to reusable ones.



Evidence Options:

- A) The custodian says the cafeteria throws away hundreds of paper trays every day.
- B) Reusable trays usually come in nicer colors.
- C) A reusable tray can be washed and used thousands of times, which cuts down significantly on trash sent to landfills.

5) Claim: Students should read for at least twenty minutes every night.

Evidence Options:

- A) Studies on reading habits link nightly reading to significantly greater exposure to new vocabulary over a year.
- B) Reading before bed is a nice, quiet way to end the day.
- C) A well-known author has said reading is her favorite hobby.



Claim-and-Evidence Sets for Older Students

- 1) Claim: Schools should start later in the morning for teenagers.

Evidence Options:

- A) Sleep research on adolescent circadian rhythms shows teens' natural sleep-wake cycles shift later during puberty, misaligning with early start times.
- B) Several students say they'd rather sleep in.
- C) A district that delayed its start time reported fewer teen driver accidents the following year.

- 2) Claim: Social media platforms should verify users' ages before creating accounts.

Evidence Options:

- A) Internal company documents made public through litigation showed executives knew certain features increased anxiety in teen users.
- B) Age verification would make an app feel less appealing to some younger users.
- C) Multiple countries have passed minimum-age laws for social media platforms, citing mental health research.

- 3) Claim: The school should offer a personal finance course as a graduation requirement.

Evidence Options:

- A) A national financial literacy survey found most recent graduates couldn't correctly answer basic questions about credit and interest.
- B) Adults often say they wish they'd learned this in school.
- C) States that added a personal finance requirement saw measurable improvements in graduates' credit scores within a few years of the policy change.



- 4) Claim: Standardized test scores shouldn't be the main factor in college admissions.

Evidence Options:

- A) A multi-year study comparing test-optional and test-required admissions found high school GPA predicted first-year college performance about as well as test scores did.
- B) Testing makes a lot of students anxious.
- C) Several highly selective universities have permanently dropped testing requirements in the past few years.

- 5) Claim: Cities should invest in more protected bike lanes.

Evidence Options:

- A) Traffic safety data from cities that added protected bike lanes shows a measurable drop in cyclist injuries on those streets.
- B) Biking is a fun, low-cost way to get around.
- C) A city planner argued in an interview that protected lanes make streets feel safer even to people who don't bike.