

Evaluating Arguments

Vocabulary

NEATLY write down the vocabulary word and the definition.

There will be a quiz later, so THINK while you write.

Include examples when you think they are helpful.

Ad hominem attack

An attack on a person rather than on his or her argument.

An ad hominem attack is a fallacy and weakens an argument

- Ex: Kristin: I think school should start later so kids will be rested at school. Steve: Of course you'd say that. You just want to sleep in.

Argument

A position or viewpoint along with the claims and evidence used to support that position

Claim

A statement that supports a position

- Ex: If school started later, kids would get more sleep

Counterargument

A rebuttal, or argument against, an opposing viewpoint or claim

- Ex: Starting school later won't actually help kids get more sleep because kids will just stay up later at night.

Emotional Appeal

Appealing to the readers' emotions by making the reader so upset, excited, or scared that the reader will just agree with them.

- Ex: Think of those poor, exhausted kids getting up at dawn every morning and shuffling to school half asleep!

Evidence

Facts, statistics, examples, and comparisons that SHOW why a claim should be believed

- Ex: A 2012 study by the National Sleep Institute found that 47 percent of kids aren't getting enough sleep.

Fallacy

A false or mistaken belief or claim, usually based on poor reasoning

- Ex: All kids are tired because the kids in my class are tired

Opposing viewpoint

A position that is the opposite of another person

Position (or viewpoint)

The central idea the author is trying to support in his or her argument; thesis

- Ex: School should start later.

Rebut

To claim or prove
that something is
untrue or false

Refute

To prove a statement, position, or claim is wrong or false

Relevant

Having to do with the matter being considered; pertinent

When writers use claims and evidence that is irrelevant, or not relevant, they weaken their argument

Tracing an argument

Identifying and exploring how an argument is made in an essay, a speech, or other text.