Academic Moves for College and Career Readiness, Grades 6–12

15 Must-Have Skills Every Student Needs to Achieve

Jim Burke
Barry Gilmore
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Visit the companion website at [www.resources.corwin.com/burkeacademicmoves](http://www.resources.corwin.com/burkeacademicmoves) for downloadable resources, including reproducible annotated student essays, Mental Moves, Rubrics, Planning Pages, and more.
Determine central ideas or themes of a text and interpret data to determine similarities or differences in findings to determine similarities or differences among two or more texts (RL9), across texts (RL5), or within a text (RL2) to develop and interact over the course of a text (RL3).

Core Connections provides an at-a-glance view of related national and state standards.

Underlying Skills showcases the objective of the lessons in each section.

The Main Idea

Students must bring misconceptions to the task of analysis. As you practice analysis in your subject area, be sure to clarify the academic language for the following with your students.

1. Analyze Break something down methodically into its parts
   - break down
   - deconstruct
   - examine

2. Analyze Analyze a painting, a novel, a conversation, each requires similar steps that may not be intuitively obvious to all students.
   - break something down methodically into its parts
   - make, what it is, how it works; order to grasp its essence
   - look at something critically in order to grasp its essence

The Main Idea

Analyze: break something down methodically into its parts to understand how it is designed, built, and made, what it is, how it works; in order to grasp its essence. Analyze a painting, a novel, a conversation, each requires similar steps that may not be intuitively obvious to all students.

Underlying Skills

- Understand genres and conventions.
- Define Expectations: What comprises a successful analysis in your discipline? If it's presented in an essay, do you expect to see specific types of evidence, a particular type of thesis statement, or a particular conclusion?
- Build Content Knowledge: Give students the academic language and understanding they need to look for evidence effectively. Do they need to understand terms such as cause and effect, evidence, evidence, or evidence? Do they need a knowledge base to look for evidence effectively?
- Practice Mental Moves: Long short tends to small groups or pairs and have students practice the mental moves and answering the questions described in the Mental Moves feature at the side bar. As you introduce skills such as analyzing, post the moves on the wall and have students practice making the mental moves and answering the questions described in the Mental Moves feature at the side bar.

ACADEMIC MOVES WALK THROUGH

Detailed definitions clearly break down each concept

Bold headings foreground each term and highlight related keywords

The Main Idea gets at the gist of each skill

Before: Preparing Students to Analyze sections set the stage for successful instruction

Shaded boxes provide guidance on introducing students to each move

Underlying Skills

- Understand genres and conventions.
- Define Expectations: What comprises a successful analysis in your discipline? If it's presented in an essay, do you expect to see specific types of evidence, a particular type of thesis statement, or a particular conclusion?
- Build Content Knowledge: Give students the academic language and understanding they need to look for evidence effectively. Do they need to understand terms such as cause and effect, evidence, evidence, or evidence? Do they need a knowledge base to look for evidence effectively?
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Before: Preparing Students to Analyze

Students must bring misconceptions to the task of analysis. As you practice analysis in your subject area, be sure to clarify the academic language for the following with your students.
ACADEMIC MOVES

During: Practicing Analysis

Students get better at analyzing with practice. Whether they’re trying to make sense of a football play or the design of a football stadium, repetition is key to developing and independent skill.

1. Present a short text to be analyzed; a magazine ad, an opening paragraph, or a commercial.
2. Have students work in small groups to select key details—such as a literal description of characters, or references to facts that they think might be meaningful. Each group should list around ten.
3. Combine the words from all groups on the board. Then, ask students to work with a partner to draw an inference from the list. What overarching emotions or ideas emerge from the list?
4. As a class, share and discuss the inferences. Could you create a thesis statement about the meaning of the piece based on these insights? If yes, what might it be?

ELL Focus: Do This One Thing to Help

Inference is likely to be harder for English language learners (ELL) students than others when dealing with verbal texts, but pictures bridge language. Try an inference activity that begins with the visual and allows students to state important details in their own languages before composing their conclusive statements in English.

Discussion, Presentation, Technology, and Multimedia

1. Discuss. Analyze can occur on many levels. Close reading takes place microscopically; students must practice “zooming in” to the level of words in order to make sense of a text. But macroscopic, or “zooming out,” exercises are also valuable activities. Discussion is a critical vehicle for this level of comprehension and enables group discussion to happen frequently and can also take place at the end of a unit, novel, or grading period.
2. Note Map. Consider this play, or use a graphic organizer to analyze. Assign each student a character or historical figure. For instance, to represent a character—students will have to see the same process of gathering evidence and sharing conclusions to portray a character accurately.

Discussion, Presentation, Technology, and Multimedia sections cover important classroom considerations.
Student examples focus on a range of genres and illustrate the product to look for and the process to get there.
Rubric for Analytical Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>USE OF EVIDENCE</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>STYLISTIC, VOICE, AND CLARITY</th>
<th>MECHANICS AND CONVENTIONS</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Clear, vivid, and engaging support for the analysis.</td>
<td>The response is clear and engaging with effective use of examples and evidence.</td>
<td>Errors in usage or syntax are correct and add to the effectiveness of the lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>Clear organization with supporting evidence.</td>
<td>The response is clear and engaging with effective use of examples and evidence.</td>
<td>Errors in usage or syntax are few or no errors present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Meets Expectations</td>
<td>Some organization with supporting evidence.</td>
<td>The response is mostly clear with occasional errors in usage or syntax.</td>
<td>Errors in usage or syntax are present, but without undermining the effectiveness of the lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Approaches Expectations</td>
<td>Limited organization with supporting evidence.</td>
<td>The response is somewhat clear, but with some errors in usage or syntax.</td>
<td>Errors in usage or syntax are significant, undermining the effectiveness of the lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Below Expectations</td>
<td>Poor organization with limited evidence.</td>
<td>The response is not clear and engaging, with significant errors in usage or syntax.</td>
<td>Errors in usage or syntax are present, seriously undermining the effectiveness of the lesson.</td>
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Reproducible rubrics simplify the assessment process.

Planning Pages provide space for recording lesson objectives.

Planning Page: Analyze

Analysis: break something down methodically into its parts to understand how it is made, what it is, how it works. Look at something critically in order to grasp its essence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goal</th>
<th>What will your students analyze? What learning outcomes or assessments do you wish to see?</th>
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<td>What activities will you use to model, extend, and engage students in analysis?</td>
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<td>Evaluating: What will you use to evaluate students’ responses to the analysis?</td>
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Notes from This Chapter

1. What ideas or activities from this chapter do you wish to remember as you teach students to analyze?

2. What will your students analyze? What learning outcomes or assessments do you wish to see?

3. What activities will you use to model, extend, and engage students in analysis?

4. How will you evaluate students’ responses to the analysis?
Argue
provide reasons or evidence to support or oppose

claim • persuade • propose

**The Main Idea**

Students argue every day. But arguing with your parents about cleaning your room is not the same as constructing an intellectual argument. In the latter case, the word *argument* describes the process of stating and supporting a claim, as well as taking into account possible counter-claims. An academic argument is not one you win or lose; and it’s not simply an opinion; it’s a balanced and reasoned process that requires accountability.

Underlying Skills:

- **Engage ideas critically.** Passive learning is not an option when students write even the simplest pieces, much less sophisticated arguments. Students must approach topics and texts with critical thinking in order to argue effectively.

- **Consider multiple sides of an issue or idea.** An ability to consider counterarguments (easily represented by a Venn diagram) is crucial to structuring solid argument.

- **Support an idea.** Arguments demand evidence tied thoughtfully to statements of position (such as a thesis statement or hypothesis). You can illustrate a point when describing something (“The cups in the cafeteria are all red”), but arguing a point requires more nuanced detail (“The cups in the cafeteria should be blue”) and demands reasons and evidence.
Before: Preparing Students to Argue

As you introduce students to the concept of argument, it’s important to discuss the related but not synonymous term persuade. Keep in mind that an argument is always an attempt to persuade, but a piece of persuasive writing may not be an academic argument; it may simply be an opinion and an attempt to win.

Constructing an argument

**Argue**

An argument relies on the careful examination of evidence. It takes all points of view and perspectives into account and assumes a scholarly audience.

*Example lead sentence:* While some might argue that students should be expelled for the complaints they make about their teachers online, the law supports their freedom of speech in the digital arena as well as the real world.

**Persuade**

Persuasive essays or speeches attempt to win the audience over. They may appeal to emotions as much as to logic or the weight of evidence.

*Example lead sentences:* Should schools allow students to post negative comments about their teachers online? Absolutely not; recognizing the potential damage of posts to real human beings is a vital component of any student’s education.

We include both of these terms in this section, but students need to learn to recognize them in assignments and prompts and answer accordingly.

**Before you teach students to analyze a text, issue, situation, or work, try these four things:**

- **Model:** Gather several articles from a local newspaper, including those from the front page and the editorial section. Ask students to discuss which present an argument and which merely report information. Then, for any articles that argue, analyze the components of that argument. To whom do they appeal and how?

- **Define Expectations:** You may wish to develop a rubric and discuss it with students before they write or speak. Are you requiring a claim and counterclaim? How much and what kinds of evidence must be used?

- **Build Content Knowledge:** As you will with other terms in this book, discuss the nature and conventions of evidence in your subject area. What type of details might a student use to support an argument in a history class, a science discussion, or a literary analysis?
• **Practice Mental Moves:** As students prepare to construct academic arguments, have them research ideas and then discuss those ideas in small groups or pairs by answering the questions listed in the Mental Moves feature in the sidebar. Post these questions on the wall and keep circling back to them so that students internalize them and can transfer them to new learning situations.

**Obstacles to the Moves**

When teaching students to argue, watch out for these areas of difficulty:

• **Faulty Logic.** Basing an argument on a mistaken assumption (such as a misunderstanding of a plot point, for instance) can undermine a strong argument. Help students avoid such missteps by asking them to research carefully.

• **Lack of Clarity.** Academic arguments often reside in formal papers. Sometimes, students will be so convinced that their audience wants a certain level of formality in writing that they overdo it and lose clarity and precision.

• **Hasty Assumptions.** As with faulty logic, overgeneralizing (say, about a historical era) can lead to a weak argument. Help students be precise.
**During: Practicing Argumentation**

For younger students, use a modified Venn diagram to introduce the concept of argument, using the labels below (“agree” and “disagree”) or similar labels such as “pro” and “con” for the two sides:

![Venn Diagram](image)

You might try using hula hoops on the floor and allowing students to present oral claims and counterclaims while standing inside one; then ask what someone in the overlapping section might say. Alternatively, you could use the middle section as an “undecided” section in which students can stand until they are forced to make a choice and explain why (see the “get off the fence” activity in the section on discussion that follows).

For older students, you may wish to discuss the importance of audience and Aristotle’s triangle of persuasive appeals, including *ethos* (trust and authority), *logos* (reason and logic), and *pathos* (emotion and values). Make it clear to students that pathos is a tool more often reserved for persuasive argumentation, while academic arguments generally rest on ethos (e.g., quotes from a text) or logos (e.g., a reasoned line of thinking).

![Aristotle’s Triangle](image)

**ELL Focus: Do This One Thing to Help**

Ferlazzo and Hull-Sypnieski (2014) suggest having ELL students translate key words, such as *problem*, *cause*, *effect*, *solution*, and *reason*, into their native languages. Then ask the students to find key details or evidence related to each of those concepts. They also used sentence starters—in English—to help the students get going: “The main problem is that . . .” Once students have begun in this way, structuring an argument may be a less overwhelming task.
Discussion, Presentation, Technology, and Multimedia

- **Discuss.** To get students thinking about claims and counterclaims, try a get off the fence discussion.
  
  - First, come up with a series of arguable statements or questions about a text or topic. *Example: Romeo and Juliet are not truly in love; they're infatuated only with one another.*
  
  - Have students who agree with the statement move to one side of the room and students who disagree move to the other. Balance discussion by calling on each side in turn.
  
  - Students who are undecided may stand in the middle of the room but may not speak. At the end of the discussion, have these students choose a side and explain why.
  
  - After you’ve discussed several statements, have students write down their thoughts, including noting any convincing arguments made by other students, places they changed their minds, or new ideas about the topic. Use these notes to come up with a claim and counterclaim as a class.

- **Track.** Once students have practiced identifying claims and counterclaims, teach them to create a table in Microsoft (MS) Word or to use columns in MS Excel in order to create T charts. This use of technology allows students not just to catalog pros and cons, for instance, but also provides them a tool for organizing and reorganizing that material to find the most effective argument.

- **Present.** When students share material with the class, ask them to include a counterclaim as part of the presentation, perhaps devoting one slide to this task. Encourage them to use this moment in a presentation as a chance to involve the audience by asking for feedback or discussion on a point.

*YouTube Moment:* The online world is robust with argumentation, from political speeches on YouTube to blogs to posts and comments in online forums. Students need to learn to navigate these arguments. Choose a video with user comments, which you’ve prescreened for appropriate content, and ask students to look at those user comments for appeals to logos, pathos, and ethos and to evaluate the effectiveness of each. Ask if each is an argument or a persuasive/opinion piece. How do they know? Present their findings to the class.
After: Producing Arguments

Student Example 1: Argumentative Writing

The ninth grade reading list at Anton's school included a number of canonical texts with a common motif: Sophocles Antigone, Arthur Miller’s The Crucible, and Robert Bolt’s A Man for All Seasons. At the same time, Anton’s social studies class discussed the civil rights movement and, specifically, Martin Luther King Jr.'s “Letter From a Birmingham Jail.” Because the idea of resisting laws cut across their disciplines, Anton's English and American History teachers decided to assign a cross disciplinary assignment focused on an argumentative task. The assignment unfolded in three steps.

Step One: Discussion

In social studies class, Anton and his peers participated in a fishbowl discussion focusing on the question, “What makes a law just or unjust?” The fishbowl procedure worked this way:

- Four to five students sat in an inner circle and discussed their answer to the question.
- The other students sat in an outer circle and took notes on points raised in the discussion.
- When an outer circle student wanted to contribute a point, he or she would tap one of the inner circle students on the shoulder and take that place, while the speaker returned to the outer circle.
- The teacher monitored the discussion, encouraging new speakers to add points by asking if anyone could add a different point of view.

Step Two: Claim and Counterclaim

The next day, Anton’s English teacher took students to the computer lab and allowed them access to online versions of all three of the plays they’d read that grading period. He had them work in pairs to find two lines in the texts, one that supported the idea that citizens should obey laws and one that supported the idea that citizens should resist unjust laws. When several of the pairs struggled to come up with lines, the teacher offered two suggestions: first, the students were allowed to summarize actions or scenes in the play instead of writing down a specific line of text, and second, they could use the search function to look for specific words in the online texts.
Anton and his partner searched the online text for the word law in all three plays. From those, they chose the following two lines from Antigone:

- **Citizens should obey:** “I will obey those in control. That’s what I’m forced to do.” (Ismene)
- **Citizens should resist:** “I’ll lie down there forever. As for you, well, if you wish, you can show contempt for those laws the gods all hold in honour.” (Antigone)

Anton and his partner wrote each line on a sticky note and put it on the board in the room along with those from the rest of the class. The teacher then gave each student five minutes to read each group of sticky notes silently and, individually, come up with a statement that summarized the lines. When the students returned to their seats, she called on volunteers to share their statements and, as a class, the students came up with a claim and counterclaim:

- **Claim:** Because laws represent the collective wisdom of a society, no one individual has the right to violate those laws.
- **Counterclaim:** Because the majority group in a society can overlook the rights of minorities or can be misled by a powerful view, individuals have the right to violate laws that are clearly unjust.
Laws shape and define the structure of any group of people by setting boundaries, justly or unjustly. However, at a certain point, laws might infringe upon the basic universal human rights of any individual if the law is not carefully thought out and planned. Unjust laws are broken in modern society quite often, and not only are there points at which individuals may break a law but should break it. An example of this is the civil rights movement, in which individuals such as Martin Luther King Jr. violated laws through civil disobedience in order to fight injustice. One might claim that such disobedience creates chaos and incites others to break the law, but without the ability to protest such laws, how will change ever occur? Examples from history (civil rights) and two plays (Antigone and The Crucible) demonstrate this fact. If humans can’t violate a clearly unjust law, any government could oppress its people without fear of consequences—there must be a way to stop bad government and bad laws.
**Student Example 2: Class Discussion**

In John Reynolds’s eighth grade Global Studies class, there’s no simple multiple choice exam at the end of the semester. Instead, each student is expected to research the position of a nation involved in the tension between North Korea and the rest of the world. Students write individual “white papers” summarizing the position of the counties they’re assigned then work in teams of three to prepare arguments for a solution to the conflict that draws on factual information and represents the actual positions of the countries they represent. On the day of the exam, the students gather around a large table and conduct six-party talks while Mr. Reynolds plays the role of facilitator and takes notes on each student’s contributions.

Because this is an exam, Mr. Reynolds needs to assess each student. The final grade includes several components, each of which has its own rubric: a score for the white paper, a score for contributions to the discussion, an individual self-assessment, and a reflection written by each student that discusses the effectiveness of his or her contributions.

Here is the reflection written by Sam, who took on the role of South Korea. While Sam never uses the words **claim** or **counterclaim** in this reflection, those ideas are clearly present:

In order to positively contribute to the group, I knew that I had to have a goal and understanding of what South Korea, my assigned country, would desire. The first day of deliberation, I brought forth several points, but specifically a main issue in North Korea that their population is starving. The response to my point was surprising; argumentative debate and disorder broke out. I realize now that the tone and accusation I made came out incorrectly; I was intending on bringing up a way to show that North Korea needs other countries’ help. The following day, I made sure to react to comments with a calmer and less aggressive manner, and I used my notes to prepare to respond to other views to reach a compromise. I proposed that North Korea should rejoin the six-party talks and start to denuclearize their weapons, and as more trust is gained, South Korea would take action in removing the United States troops from their border. While discussing in small groups on the first day, I found out that each country had different objectives and main concerns, which made forming a solution harder, but after talking and presenting evidence, overall, all of the countries contributed to making a final, peaceful compromise.
By allowing his students to work together and discover the consequences of argument, evidence, and counterclaims in action, Mr. Reynolds created a sense of relevancy and practicality. He also gave students a valuable discussion experience with enough structure to ensure learning.

“When the girls do a project with several assessment pieces, as Sam did in her reflection,” John told us, “they deconstruct their learning, and this, to me as a teacher, is the essence of creating and nurturing exemplary students. The written piece of argument as content is important, but the self-assessments, reflections, and peer evaluations demonstrate how students learn where their arguments succeeded, failed, and could be improved.”

**Works Cited**


Scaffolding Argument With Webb’s DOK

HOW ARGUMENT WORKS IN JIM’S CLASSROOM

The following examples come from a recent unit Jim taught on Orwell’s *1984*.

**Level One (Recall)**

- *Sample Task:* Define *ironic* (1) as it appears in the dictionary and (2) as you understand it in your own words.
- *What Jim’s Students Did:* Looked online for simple definitions and then composed their own, setting Jim’s students up to think more deeply about uses of irony in the novel.

**Level Two (Skills)**

- *Sample Task:* Explain how Orwell’s (2013) use of the word *victory* (e.g., Victory Mansions, Victory Gin) is ironic, supporting your answer with details or examples from the text.
- *What Jim’s Students Did:* Applied this key literary term and their knowledge of how to analyze and find evidence to this novel.

**Level Three (Strategic Thinking)**

- *Sample Task:* A *conditioned response* is defined as the learned response to the previously neutral stimulus. For example, let’s suppose that the smell of food is an unconditioned stimulus, a feeling of hunger in response to the smell is an unconditioned response, and the sound of a whistle is the conditioned stimulus. The conditioned response would cause you to feel hungry when you heard the sound of the whistle.

  Respond to the claim that everyone’s behavior during the Two Minutes Hate (2013, pp. 11–17) is a conditioned response. In your response, you should agree, disagree, or do both (agree and disagree). Explain your reasoning, supporting your explanation with examples from the text.

- *What Jim’s Students Did:* Drew together a number of skills—analysis, organization, and support, for instance—to produce a synthesized piece that made a clear argument.

**Level Four (Extended Thinking)**

- *Sample Task:* Think back to the lessons from your history class earlier this year concerning behavior during the 1950s and the McCarthy era. What do you think Orwell would have said about the reactions of US citizens to the House Un-American Activities Committee trials? Using evidence from your notes or research, argue that Orwell would or would not have characterized these reactions as conditioned responses.

- *What Jim’s Students Did:* Linked their current study to another discipline and unit, prompting thinking that required making connections and revisiting material.
### Rubric for Argument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>THESIS AND ARGUMENT</th>
<th>USE OF EVIDENCE</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>STYLE, VOICE, AND CLARITY</th>
<th>CONVENTIONS AND MECHANICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Amply and /pr selected details effectively support the argument throughout the response</td>
<td>Clear and consistent organization with well-executed transitions excellently supports the argument, including an excellent introduction and conclusion</td>
<td>The response is clear and original and employs appropriate stylistic elements for effect in an exceptional manner</td>
<td>Syntax, grammar, and conventions are correct and add to the effectiveness of the response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Exceeds Expectations</td>
<td>Appropriately selected details support the argument throughout the response</td>
<td>The organization is clear and supports the argument; the introduction and conclusion are well-executed</td>
<td>The response is clear and employs appropriate stylistic elements for effect</td>
<td>Few or no errors are present in usage or syntax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Meets Expectations</td>
<td>Details adequately support the argument, but may demonstrate some inconsistencies in execution or application</td>
<td>The organization, including introduction and conclusion, are adequate to support the argument</td>
<td>The response is mostly clear and adequately employs stylistic elements</td>
<td>Minor errors in usage or syntax may be present, but without repetition or undermining overall effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Approaching Expectations</td>
<td>There is insufficient evidence to support the argument, or details are not always adequate to support points</td>
<td>Some flaws in organization or lack of clarity and transitions make the argument hard to follow</td>
<td>The response may be unclear or misuses stylistic elements in ways that interfere with voice and meaning</td>
<td>Patterns of errors in usage or syntax undermine the effectiveness of the response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Well Below Expectations</td>
<td>Evidence and details are missing or insufficient to support the argument</td>
<td>The organization lacks focus and clarity; transitions may be unclear</td>
<td>The response is vague or lacks clarity; stylistic choices may confuse rather than enhance meaning</td>
<td>Significant errors in usage or syntax obscure the meaning and effectiveness of the response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Planning Page: Argue**

Argue: provide reasons or evidence in order to support or oppose something; persuade another by reason or evidence; contend or maintain that something is true

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What will your students argue? What learning outcomes or assessments do you wish to see?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>During</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How will you prepare students to construct arguments about texts, issues, situations, or works?</td>
<td>What activities will you use to model, scaffold, and engage students in creating argument?</td>
<td>How will you measure the effectiveness of your lesson?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes From This Chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What ideas or activities from this chapter do you wish to remember as you teach students to argue?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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