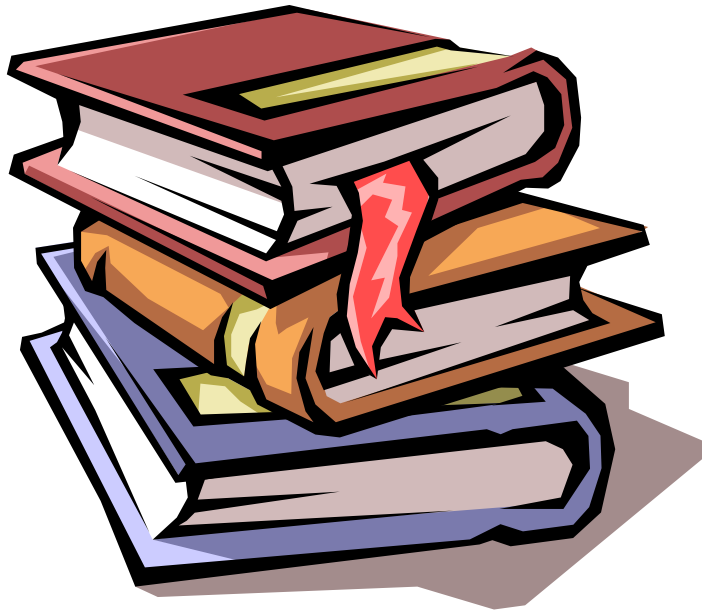


Tracking Argumentation As Readers



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Chicago in 1871 was a city ready to burn. The city boasted having 59,500 buildings, many of them—such as the Courthouse and the Tribune Building—large and ornately decorated. The trouble was that about two-thirds of all these structures were made entirely of wood. Many of the remaining buildings (even the ones proclaimed to be “fireproof”) looked solid, but were actually jerrybuilt affairs; the stone or brick exteriors hid wooden frames and floors, all topped with highly flammable tar or shingle roofs. It was also a common practice to disguise wood as another kind of building material. The fancy exterior decorations on just about every building were carved from wood, then painted to look like stone or marble. Most churches had steeples that appeared to be solid from the street, but a closer inspection would reveal a wooden framework covered with cleverly painted copper or tin.

The situation was worst in the middle-class and poorer districts. Lot sizes were small, and owners usually filled them up with cottages, barns, sheds, and outhouses—all made of fast-burning wood, naturally. Because both Patrick and Catherine O’Leary worked, they were able to put a large addition on their cottage despite a lot size of just 25 by 100 feet. Interspersed in these residential areas were a variety of businesses—paint factories, lumberyards, distilleries, gas works, mills, furniture manufacturers, warehouses, and coal distributors. Wealthier districts were by no means free of fire hazards. Stately stone and brick homes had wood interiors, and stood side by side with smaller wood-frame houses. Wooden stables and other storage buildings were common, and trees lined the streets and filled the yards.

The Great Fire, By Jim Murphy New York: Scholastic, 1995. From Chapter 1, “A City Ready to Burn”

Women Move Toward Greater Equality

Some of the most significant social changes of the 1920s occurred in the lives of women. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment granted women the right to vote. That same year, women voted on a nationwide basis in a presidential election for the first time. For suffragists, this was a dream come true. Many had hoped that because women had worked for the vote as a group, they would also vote as a group. The “woman’s vote,” they argued, could bring an end to war, crime, and corruption in politics. But that did not happen. Once women won the right to cast ballots, they tended to make the same choices as their male relatives made.

Women Organize and Enter Politics

Many of the women who had worked so hard to gain the vote continued to be active in politics: Some formed a grassroots organization known as the **League of Women Voters**. A grassroots organization is created and run by its members, as opposed to a strong central leader. Members of the League of Women Voters worked to educate themselves and all voters on public issues.

History Alive!: Pursuing American Ideals, Teachers’ Curriculum Institute, 2008, p. 360.

Argumentation in Disciplinary Texts

History	Explanations, generalizations, conclusions, and interpretations of the past based on historical evidence; proposition/support argumentation representing perspective/point of view, such as in primary documents or essay
Science	Scientific claims (explanations, generalizations, conclusions, theories) supported by evidence derived through scientific methods; interpretations of scientific data
Literature	Interpretations of literary texts; implicit author arguments that relate to possible themes of literary texts; proposition/support argumentation representing perspective/point of view, especially through essay
Mathematics	Explanations of logical mathematical concepts and relationships derived from mathematical "givens"; justifications of problem-solving methods
Technical Texts	Presentations of a case (often implicit) that specific steps or procedural methods will lead to desired results, and likely successful completion of a task, as in "how-to" texts, instructions, or manuals
Health & Fitness	Explanations of cause/effect relationships regarding physical activity or aspects of personal health; recommendations for fitness actions or lifestyle choices
Art & Music	Aesthetic judgments related to articulated criteria; explanations of how specific actions, procedures, or methods can achieve certain artistic or musical results

Forms of Argumentation

<i>Proposition</i>	Proposing an argument through overt expressions of viewpoint as an overall text structure [ie. essays, reviews, appeals, editorials, advocacy pieces]
<i>Explanation</i>	An argument positing that a particular way of understanding—usually "how" or "why" something happens or happened—is valid based on an examination of what we know or can observe.
<i>Conclusion</i>	An argument that, given what we know, certain conclusions can be justified that pull the specifics together into a coherent understanding (in other words, "given all this, we can say it means this").
<i>Generalization</i>	An argument to guide understanding through detecting patterns within what is known that can be summed up as relationships, interconnections, or trends.
<i>Interpretation</i>	An author's "take" on what can be understood or revealed after due examination and analysis; can become speculative— <i>theories</i> or <i>hypotheses</i> —that can be argued as consistent with what is known and which provide a foundation for further investigation and exploration.

“Reading With Attitude”

Critical Literacy

- ❖ Texts are rarely “neutral”—they represent particular points of view & perspectives
- ❖ Texts are intended to influence thinking
- ❖ Alternative points of view are “silenced”
- ❖ Argumentation is often implicit in texts

Reading From a Critical Stance

- Whose viewpoint is being expressed in this passage? How can you tell? What clues are provided by the author?
- What does the author want readers to think? How can you tell? What clues in the text suggest this?
- Whose voices are missing? Or silenced? Or discounted? Who are we not hearing from?
- What might these missing voices say? What are some alternative perspectives that could be represented? Are other ways of thinking about this topic discouraged?
- How does examining this text from a critical stance contribute to your understanding?
- What action might you take based on what you learned?

Privileged Viewpoints in Texts

- ◆ Who decides which viewpoints should be the ones we read about?
- ◆ Where can we go to access different viewpoints?
- ◆ Are some viewpoints more justifiable than others? How can we tell?
- ◆ How does looking at a topic from a variety of viewpoints help us more deeply understand this topic?
- ◆ How does looking at a topic from a variety of viewpoints help us clarify our personal ideas, thoughts, and beliefs?

Adapted McLaughlin & DeVogd, (2004). Critical Literacy As Comprehension: Expanding Reader Response. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*. Vol. 48, No. 1, pages 52-62.

Reader Bias

- Our personal experiences tend to override information to the contrary, no matter how persuasive it may be.
- We have a tendency to make up our minds on insufficient evidence.
- We are more likely to seek out, and notice, information that confirms what we already believe.
- We are also likely to overlook, or downgrade, information that contradicts what we believe.
- We tend to be less critical of information that supports our preexisting beliefs and more critical of information that challenges them.

Gilovich, *How We Know What Isn't So: The Fallibility of Human Reason in Everyday Life*

Three-Level Reading Guide

President Ulysses S. Grant

I. ON THE LINES. Did the author say it? Check the statements below that represent what the author said in the article. Note: the statement may not be in the exact words used by the author. Locate the spot in the text where "the author said it."

- _____ 1. Grant, a lesser President, should be replaced by a different American on the 50 dollar bill. L U
- _____ 2. Grant enjoyed extensive popularity during his lifetime. L U
- _____ 3. Grant may have been a fine soldier, but he made a poor President. L U
- _____ 4. Grant betrayed Lincoln's commitment to the equality and freedom of former slaves. L U
- _____ 5. Grant was not a participant in the corruption that existed during his Presidency. L U

II. BETWEEN THE LINES. Did the author imply it? Check the statements below that you believe are implied by the author. You will have to connect what the author says to information from your knowledge or experiences, to other texts you have read, or to your general understandings about this topic. Locate the spots in the text where the author provides you with clues about implied meanings.

- _____ 6. Those who downgraded President Grant had questionable motives.
- _____ 7. Racism has been behind the development of Grant's low reputation.
- _____ 8. Grant was one of the country's greatest civil rights leaders.
- _____ 9. Grant can be excused for the shortcomings of his administration.
- _____ 10. Historians are agreed about Grant's accomplishments as President.

III. BEYOND THE LINES. Check the statements below that you could agree with. You will need to think about what the author said in the text and your own knowledge to support your ideas.

- _____ 11. A person's personal beliefs can influence the way he or she understands historical figures and events.
- _____ 12. It is appropriate that our viewpoints of historical figures change with the passage of time.

Evidence/Claim Chart: "Trees"

Explain the Claim—scientific argument—presented by the author (in your own words):

Trees play an essential role in the health of our environment. The loss of trees due to droughts, insect damage, and widespread cutting is doing significant harm to our planet.

Evidence Presented by the Author to Support the Claim

Causes (What the author says trees do):

- *Trees turn sunlight into food through photosynthesis*
- *Microbes in soil around tree roots break down toxic wastes like chemicals, solvents, organic wastes*
- *Trees can also filter out pollutants in the air*
- *Trees release clouds of beneficial chemicals*
- *Trees capture carbon dioxide*
- *Trees provide cover from the sunlight*
- *Trees absorb excess chemicals that run off farm fields*
- *Decomposing tree leaves leach acids into the ocean*

Effects (Why the author says this matters):

- Provides food needed by insects, wildlife, people*
- Trees are nature's water filters; they are important for clean water*
- A study showed more trees in urban areas lead to less asthma due to cleaner air*
- These chemicals seem to help regulate the climate & some of them are antiviral, antibacterial, or anti-fungal; one of these chemicals is now used for cancer treatment; aspirin comes from willows*
- Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas that makes the planet warmer, so trees combat global warming*
- Tree cover can make the earth's surface ten degrees cooler and protect animals from UV sunrays; water vapor from forests lowers temperatures*
- Degraded water systems (like Gulf of Mexico) can be brought back to life from the damage caused by nitrogen and phosphorus*
- The acids help plankton thrive, which benefits the entire food chain; forests planted next to streams & oceans have revitalized fish & oyster stocks*

Buehl, D. (2014). *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning, 4th Edition*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
 Buehl, D. (2011). *Developing Readers in the Academic Disciplines*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
 Buehl, D. (2014). What's the Argument? Mentoring Readers of Argumentation in Disciplinary Texts. *The Utah Journal of Literacy*. Vol 17 No 1 Spring, 10-19.

Proposition/Support Outline: "Sitting"

Proposition (Author's Argument—conclusion, explanation, generalization, interpretation):
Sedentary behavior, like long stretches of sitting, is harmful to a person's health.

Support—Evidence presented by the author

1. Facts:

Electrical activity in our muscles drop when we are sitting
Harmful effects on our metabolism result—calorie burning goes down to 1/3 compared to walking
Insulin effectiveness drops within a single day—risk of Type 2 diabetes goes up
Enzymes that "vacuum fats" from bloodstream plunge, causing good cholesterol (HDL) levels to drop

2. Research & Statistics

Young thin fit subjects saw 40% reduction in insulin ability to process glucose after 24 sedentary hrs
Death rate of American men who sat 6 hours/day 20% higher than those sitting 3 hours or less
Death rate of American women who sat 6 hours/day 40% higher than those sitting 3 hours or less
Australian study found for each additional hour of sitting to watch TV increased risk of death 11%
Mayo Clinic study found subjects who unconsciously move around more burned more calories & didn't gain weight compared with those who ate the same food & portions but gained weight

3. Examples:

The author worked with Mayo clinic researchers to monitor his own physical movements & calorie burning rate for a 24 hour period
Obese people averaged only 1500 physical movements recorded by motion-tracking device & sat 600 minutes per day; Jamaica farm workers averaged 5000 daily movements & sat 300 minutes per day

4. Expert Authority:

2 Doctors who are Mayo Clinic researchers
An "inactivity" researcher at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center
An epidemiologist at the American Cancer society
An Australian researcher who published his study in the journal Circulation
The author is a journalist who published this article in a Health issue of New York Times Magazine

5. Logic & Reasoning:

The negative effects of extensive sedentary behavior are not overcome by regular exercise
The author compared sitting to smoking—jogging won't overcome negative effects of smoking & won't also overcome negative effects of extended sedentary behavior
People who sit regularly at the job need to integrate more movement activities/breaks into their routine—even minor movements like tying one's shoes add up & help
Workplaces need to be redesigned to facilitate more varied movement rather than just sitting

Argument/Question/Response Chart: "President Grant"

Argument	Question	Response
<i>Grant was one of the greatest Presidents of his time and one of the all-time greatest Presidents</i>	<i>Why do we always hear about what a bad President Grant was . . . doesn't he often come out as one of the worst Presidents?</i>	<i>The author says Grant's reputation will be restored to being positive; I wonder if this is really going to happen</i>
<i>Grant was a rigorous supporter of the rights of black Americans</i>	<i>How did Grant's actions help the people who were formerly slaves?</i>	<i>We always hear about Lincoln as a great civil rights leader, but maybe Grant's achievements have been overlooked</i>
<i>Grant was greatly admired by the public during his lifetime</i>	<i>Shouldn't the viewpoints of the people who lived during the time Grant was a general and the President count a lot?</i>	<i>It is interesting that Grant should go from being admired to later on being regarded in a very negative way</i>
<i>Grant's reputation was later damaged by historians who had a pro-Southern view of history</i>	<i>Does the author have a perspective that influences the way he regards history?</i>	<i>It seems the author thinks Grant was a victim of a "smear campaign"; we've seen that happen to other politicians</i>

Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down! Chart for Bacteria

Topic: Effects of Bacteria on Humans



Your Ideas/Arguments/Evidence For	Your Ideas/Arguments/Evidence Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are good bacteria. • They are used in foods such as yogurt. • We already have some in our bodies. • I think it is how they make cheese. • Bacteria make dead plants rot and turn into soil. • You can build up your resistance to bacteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are harmful germs. • You could get sick or even die. • They cause infections. • You need antibiotics to kill them. • We now have super bacteria that resist drugs. • You can get food poisoning from them. • E. coli on vegetables causes illness and can kill you. • They can get in cuts or wounds. • Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer to get rid of them. • They cause food to spoil.
The Author's Ideas/Arguments/Evidence For	The Author's Ideas/Arguments/Evidence Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humans consist of microbiomes that include bacteria. • Bacteria in humans outnumber human cells 10 to 1. • Humans could not live without bacteria. • Healthy humans are hosts for thousands of bacteria types. • Many essential life functions, such as digestion, need bacteria. • Gut bacteria break down carbohydrates. • Skin bacteria are vital for moisturizing the skin. • E. coli naturally lives in human intestines. • Antibiotics wipe out both good and dangerous bacteria. • Antibacterial soap kills both good and harmful bacteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mouth bacteria cause plaque, leading to tooth decay. • Good bacteria can become harmful with bad hygiene. • Good bacteria can cause harm in weak immune systems. • Bacteria cause strep throat and pneumonia. • Some bacteria cause botulism (lethal food poisoning). • Millions of people have died from bacterial diseases. • Poor sanitation often leads to bacterial outbreaks. • Antibiotic overuse can lead to mutated resistant forms. • We may run out of antibiotic options for new strains. • Deadly new bacterial diseases may lead to a pandemic.