



Skill Set Resource Sheets Reasoning and Evidence

Reasoning and evidence denotes the argumentation skills students need. It represents the ability of students to explain and justify the positions they take.

A persuasive speaker:

- Defends statements using clear, logical reasons
- Chooses relevant statements to defend
- Supports their arguments with well-chosen evidence, which is explained and analysed thoroughly

Developing Arguments With 'Why?'

The most intuitive way to develop an argument is to ask 'why?' after every statement made. In answering those questions, students will provide justifications, and in doing so, construct an argument.

When students are new to debating, they will need to be prompted (you'll have to ask 'why?' on their behalf). This method is also a good illustration of the idea that statements need justification, rather than being 'just true'.

Developing Arguments With 'Who?'

In a classroom setting, debates may be linked to existing schemes of work, and as such students may have a strong knowledge base to draw from. In other cases, pre-existing knowledge may be more variable.

Considering who will be affected by a proposed motion is another good way to generate arguments for a debate. Stakeholders may include groups of people (e.g. 'tourists', 'school students') or organisations (e.g. 'universities', 'small businesses').

Students should consider: who are the most important groups in this debate? How will they be affected? Throughout, students should remember that stakeholder groups can be complicated, and persuasive speakers must describe them carefully, bearing in mind the differences within groups, as well as between them.

Structuring Arguments With 'PEEL'

Good arguments have a clear structure. It can help to plan your arguments by thinking 'PEEL': **Point** - a short statement or headline that makes it clear what your argument is about.

Explanation - an explanation of why the point is true, and why it is important.

Evidence or example - a statistic or story that illustrates the point and makes it easier for the audience to understand.

Link - a connection back to the point to bring everything together.

For example:



ESU TEACHING RESOURCE



- P We should ban homework because it stops young people having fun.
- E Childhood is meant to be a time to have fun and play about, as well as learning. Homework makes us spend all of our time outside of school working, just like in school, so we don't have time to play.
- **E** For example, this week I wanted to go and play football, but I had too much homework, so I couldn't. This is bad.
- L So, because children are meant to have fun, and homework gets in the way, we should ban homework. Generating arguments

Prep-Time Questions to Consider

Why is this motion (and our arguments for or against it) a good or bad thing?

Who is affected by this motion?

Have we considered all the words in the motion?

What would the world look like if this was in place now?

What will the other side argue?

Reasoning and Evidence Activity

Zombie Apocalypse

Learning Objectives:

- Students make arguments in a low-pressure environment
- Students are aware that there's never 'nothing to say'!

Average time:

• 10 minutes

Use with:

KS3-5, debating and public speaking

Task:

Divide the group into four or five groups (4-6 students per group). Ask everyone to think of a household object, and tell their group what they've thought of. Now set the scene: there's been terrible news. There's a zombie apocalypse: the zombies are closing in right now. Each person has to defend their household object as the most useful during this apocalypse, to the rest of their group. Each group should then vote for one object.