Big Idea/ Topic

The Power of Argument Writing: How to Build Confidence Using CCW Technique
Lesson Five: Introductions and the Importance of the Thesis Statement

This is the fifth lesson of a 10-segment lesson series on the “Power of Argument Writing.” This lesson primarily works to introduce students to how to compose a thesis statement, which will serve as the anchor of the paper.

**Essential Questions:**

- How can I empower myself through my writing?
- How can I show growth in my argumentative writing proficiency this year?
- What is the “Color Coded Writing Technique” and how does it work? How can I make it work for me?

**NOTE:** This learning plan uses specific texts (e.g., written, performed, illustrated) as concrete examples of standards-based learning activities. These texts are not endorsements. The selection of classroom texts is completely a local decision and subject to local approval processes.

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<th>Learning Targets</th>
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| I can **connect** to something I know to help me understand something new. | • Thesis statement | • Argumentative Essay  
• Rubric for Scoring |
| I can **introduce** my topic and provide essential information to set up my argument. | | |
| I can **compose** a clear, developed thesis. | | |

*adapted from Cris Tovani’s Why Do I Have to Read This? Literacy Strategies to Engage our Most Reluctant Readers (2021)*
### Standard Alignment

- **ELAGSE11W1** (Introduce precise claims and organize claims, counterclaims, reason, and evidence; develop claims and counterclaims; create cohesion; establish and maintain formal tone; provide appropriate conclusion)
- **ELAGSE11W4** (Produce clear and coherent writing,)
- **ELAGSE11W5** (Develop and strengthen writing through planning revising, editing, etc.)
- **ELAGSE11SL1** (Initiate and participate in a range of collaborative discussions...building on others’ ideas.)
- **ELAGSE11SL3** (Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence/rhetoric.)
- **ELAGSE11L1** (Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing; use parallel structure.)
- **ELAGSE11L2** (Demonstrate the command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.)
- **ELAGSE11L3** (Make effective choices for meaning or style.)
Instructional Design

For more information regarding daily routine practices and/or additional information on the unit framework (including materials), please see the Power of Argument Writing Unit Overview.

Various evidence-based practices (EBPs) are identified throughout the lesson below; however, we believe good teaching can be eclectic, “...thoughtfully, intentionally taking some of the best of different teaching methodologies, while always holding onto some research-based, core beliefs, we can help our students flourish in ways that teaching only one way will not” (Roberts, 2018, p. 6). Always feel free to adapt the lesson to meet your professional needs with your specific student population. Ideas for student supports and enrichments can be found in the “Student Learning Supports” section.

This mini unit is written for synchronous distance learning or face-to-face learning that utilizes various technology resources. Everything listed as synchronous can be utilized with little to no change in a face-to-face (f2f) environment. However, guidance is provided for modifications, including ideas for supporting students who are learning asynchronously and those with little or no access to technology (unplugged / offline).

Materials
Teacher—virtual whiteboard (shared document), debatable prompts, Teacher Slide Deck
Students—reader & writer’s notebooks, digital or physical annotation tools, graphic organizer, Reading Power: Lesson Five Handout (Unplugged)

Engage
Opening: [Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning [Moderate evidence] (Kamil, et al., 2008)].

Synchronous or Asynchronous

- Through live discussion or a pre-recorded video, ask students to think back on the previous lesson where you worked together to compose a list of Pros/Cons about (Topic). Show your final T chart from lesson. Ask students if they thought of anything new since the last session to add to the list.
After the list is finalized, review some of the writing elements of an introduction:

Your Graphic Organizer: Before we start coloring, let’s review some key writing elements:

**Introductions:**

- **What is a hook?**

**Examples:**

- **What is a topic?**

**Examples:**

- **What does expansion/support mean?**

- **What is a thesis statement?**

**Examples:**

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**Unplugged/Offline**

- Have students read Part I of the [Power of Argument Writing: Lesson Five Handout (Unplugged)](#).
- If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).

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**Explore**

**Synchronous or Asynchronous**

- Using Pear Deck or another tool, present a graphic that you can encourage students to copy. Using a tool like Pear Deck, they can type on the slide, and you can present their ideas. It is also helpful for students to copy this graphic in a journal or notebook for future reference.
- Ask students to complete the graphic organizer, inserting ideas from the brainstorming session. If face-to-face, it would probably be beneficial to circulate and see where/if students are struggling with the template.
• Then, allow students approximately ten minutes to move from the graphic to a written thesis statement, transferring/translating their points to a sentence format. Again, this can be done using Pear Deck, Padlet, Google Forms, etc. [EBP: Integrate writing and reading to emphasize key writing features [Moderate evidence] (Graham, et al., 2016)].

• Alternatively, you could have students typing on a google doc and presenting their screen to small groups or to the whole group when you pull back together.

• Ask students to share with their working thesis with you for review; individual feedback, when working digitally, takes seconds per student in real time.

• Sometimes students are willing to share in the moment, and if you have the opportunity, ask a student to volunteer a working thesis for the class to discuss. If you have reticent writers, it is a good idea to have some exemplars ready for discussion.

Unplugged/Offline

• Have students complete Part II of the Power of Argument Writing: Lesson Five Handout (Unplugged).

• If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).
Apply

Synchronous or Asynchronous

- Come back together and use your classroom space (if possible) to critique a working thesis. If in a synchronous or asynchronous setting, you can use the board to mimic face-to-face as much as possible. By taking pictures of your physical space, you can embed important parts of the collaborative writing process into your digital teaching resources. You can also model for students as if you were face-to-face simply by using your computer camera pointed at your board.

- If face-to-face, you can use your board and/or chart paper to assist students. You can also incorporate color-coded labels for each part of your thesis.

- Using a student sample (or an exemplar), critique a thesis with the class as a whole (via live demonstration and/or recorded session) where you can model your think-aloud and engage students in the process. (See sample below.) [EBP: Integrate writing and reading to emphasize key writing features [Moderate evidence] (Graham, et al., 2016)].

Unplugged/Offline

- Have students complete Part III of the Power of Argument Writing: Lesson Five Handout (Unplugged).

- If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).
Working Thesis Statements

This is a student-generated thesis that we edited as a class.

We talked about:

- length
- passive voice
- parallel structure
- 3-pronged thesis

Let me explain...
Important terms

Draft of thesis

Standardized tests should not be required because they can cause stress and anxiety, results can be misleading, and testing takes too much time.

Critique 1: length-It feels wordy.

Critique 2: Passive Voice-This part of the thesis can be much more direct.

Critique 3: Parallel Structure: The list needs to be balanced. This example is not.

Definition: 3-Pronged Thesis: provides argumentation

Unplugged/Offline

- Have students complete Part II of the Power of Argument Writing: Lesson One Handout (Unplugged).
- If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).

Reflect

Synchronous or Asynchronous

- Have students go back to their own working thesis for revision; allow 5-10 minutes before coming back together as a whole group. Allow students to volunteer revised thesis statements and continue discussing.
- By the end of class, you should have a consensus on the thesis statement for your
So we revised and came up with this thesis:

**Students should not take standardized test because results can be misleading, testing takes too much time, and the whole process causes stress and anxiety.**

This is more direct, is parallel, and is 3-pronged.

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**Unplugged/Offline**

- Have students complete Part IV of the [Power of Argument Writing: Lesson Five Handout (Unplugged)](https://example.com).
- If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).
Evidence of Student Success

As this is the fifth lesson in the Power of Argument Writing unit, the formative assessment of students’ discussions and writings will serve as evidence of student success in this lesson.

Students’ participation in the lesson and submitted thesis statement draft (with revisions) will inform instruction regarding readiness to proceed through process.

Formative Assessment

“More of What’s Meaningful”: Formative Assessments (Serravallo, 2013)

Formative assessment can occur in two ways:

- Conferring [Guidance: Tips for Conferring to Maximize Student Engage]
  “Supercharge your Conferring: Focus on Goals, Strategies, and Feedback” (Serravallo, 2018)
- Sharing [“How to Create an Inclusive Virtual Classroom” (Kern, 2020)]
  “8 Strategies to Improve Participation in Your Virtual Classroom” (Minero, 2020)

Student Learning Supports

At all levels, the English Language Arts standards encourage students to become critical thinkers and communicators. The following strategies are designed to support students who are either struggling to meet this lesson’s learning target and/or are exceeding and would benefit from enrichment.

Supports/Scaffolding

- **Conceptual Processing**: Allow additional processing time. Review this content prior to the lesson occurring so that the student will have additional time to formulate responses. Summarize each lesson segment and keep summary accessible for students. Implement scaffolds identified below for various circumstances.
- **Language**: Prior to beginning of the lesson, explicitly teach vocabulary required to engage with the content. [EBP: Explicit vocabulary instruction [strong] (Kamil, et al., 2008)].
- **Visual-spatial Processing**: Provide opportunities for students to engage with visual representations and/or manipulatives (virtual or concrete) as they explore concepts of power and communicate ideas.
- **Organization**: Maintain logical progression of big ideas/lesson segments in the course’s shared virtual space so that students can revisit lesson segments as necessary. Help students bookmark frequently utilized sites (such as Flipgrid) or how to group tabs in Chrome to assist with organization.
- **Memory**: Maintain logical progression of big ideas/lesson segments in the course’s shared virtual
space so that students can revisit lesson segments, as necessary.

**Scaffolds for work session**

- Pull a small group and demonstrate a think-aloud by sharing your screen and talking through an additional sample thesis, modeling your process of approach.

**Acceleration/Extension**

- Have students compose a thesis statement for an additional self-selected topic, following the same framework. You could encourage students to write three thesis statements, experimenting with the form of each to determine which one they like the best.

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**Engaging Families**

Aligning with your district’s family engagement plan to facilitate the most meaningful way to work with your families. At the secondary level, much of the communication occurs with the student serving as a liaison.

- Encourage students to develop a thesis statement to convince their parents of something they want and report back the results.

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**References**


