

Argumentation vs. Persuasion: What's the Difference?

Objective: I can explain the difference and identify examples of argumentative and persuasive writing.

Pre-Assessment:

1. Define these terms in your own words:
 - a. Argumentative writing:

 - b. Persuasive writing:

2. Is there a difference between them, or are they synonyms?

3. Give an example for each:
 - a. Argumentative writing:

 - b. Persuasive writing:

TED Talk: [For Argument's Sake](#), by Daniel H. Cohen (9 min 35 sec)

1. What is Cohen's profession? How does his job influence his bias/opinion on this topic?

2. "The more that I argue... the more that I _____!"
3. His questions:
 - a. "What do good arguers _____ when they win an argument?"
 - b. "Why do we try to convince others about _____ matters?"
 - c. "Is trying to make someone believe something they don't want to believe a _____ way to treat another human being?"

4. Three models for arguments:
 - a. Argument as _____.
 - b. Arguments as _____ (such as in math: "Does it work? Is it any good?").
 - c. Arguments as _____ (with audiences, juries, etc. "You have to tailor your argument to the audience at hand...").

5. "The war metaphor has _____ effects on how we argue."
 - a. **Follow-up question:** explain this statement made by Cohen. What are the downsides of only thinking about arguments with the "argument-as-war" model?

6. What does Cohen suggest that arguments should be like instead?

7. "How can arguing be _____?"
8. "We need to think of new kinds of _____."
9. Cohen proposes that you imagine yourself as the arguer AND the _____.
 - a. **Follow-up question:** What does he mean by this?

After the Video: Reflection Questions

10. What would Cohen say is the difference between argumentative and persuasive writing?

11. Do you agree or disagree with Cohen that not every argument needs a winner and a loser?
Explain your answer.

Post-Assessment:

1. Define these terms in your own words:
 - a. Argumentative writing:

 - b. Persuasive writing:
2. Is there a difference between them, or are they synonyms?

3. Give an example for each:
 - a. Argumentative writing:

 - b. Persuasive writing:

Argumentation vs. Persuasion: **ANSWER KEY**

Objective: I can explain the difference and identify examples of argumentative and persuasive writing.

Pre-Assessment:

1. Define these terms in your own words:
 - c. Argumentative writing: (Answer will vary)
 - d. Persuasive writing: (Answer will vary)
2. Is there a difference between them, or are they synonyms?
(Answer will vary)
3. Give an example for each:
 - a. Argumentative writing: (Answer will vary)
 - b. Persuasive writing: (Answer will vary)

TED Talk: [For Argument's Sake](#), by Daniel H. Cohen (9 min 35 sec)

1. What is Cohen's profession? How does his job influence his bias/opinion on this topic?
He's an academic (a philosopher); therefore, he not only has a lot of practice doing AND studying this topic, but he's more likely to be okay with losing (for example, as a way to teach his students or stretch his own thinking) or at least see the theoretical benefit of winning AND losing arguments.
2. "The more that I argue... the more that I lose!"
3. His questions:
 - a. "What do good arguers win when they win an argument?"
 - b. "Why do we try to convince others about academic matters?"
 - c. "Is trying to make someone believe something they don't want to believe a nice way to treat another human being?"
4. Three models for arguments:
 - a. Argument as war.
 - b. Arguments as proofs (such as in math: "Does it work? Is it any good?").
 - c. Arguments as performances (with audiences, juries, etc. "You have to tailor your argument to the audience at hand...").
5. "The war metaphor has deforming effects on how we argue."
 - a. **Follow-up question:** explain this statement made by Cohen. What are the downsides of only thinking about arguments with the "argument-as-war" model?
 - i. Possible ideas from the video:

1. Elevates tactics over substance
 2. It magnifies the differences (us vs. them) – adversarial, polarizing
 3. The only outcomes are victory or defeat
 4. Arguing can be a road to nowhere... Can make learning feel like losing
6. What does Cohen suggest that arguments should be like instead?
- a. Collaborating, deliberating, negotiation, compromise, working together, etc.
 - b. Other kinds of resolutions
 - c. More than winning, he wants both sides to get “cognitive gains” instead of only one person seizing victory but not academic gain.
7. “How can arguing be positive?”
8. “We need to think of new kinds of arguers.”
9. Cohen proposes that you imagine yourself as the arguer AND the audience.
- a. **Follow-up question:** What does he mean by this?
 - i. Can appreciate a good argument that just happened
 - ii. Can appreciate a good opponent, even when you lose
 - iii. Can see the benefits of losing (be willing to object, question, etc.)

After the Video: Reflection Questions

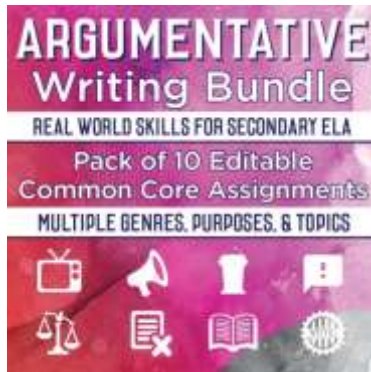
10. What would Cohen say is the difference between argumentative and persuasive writing?
Though he doesn't directly address persuasion, he would likely say that persuasion is closer to the dominant “argument as war” model that he does NOT like, because persuasion so often uses emotional appeals or tailoring to the audience to try to “win”; he would likely say that argument is the “proof” or sometimes the performance model, in which one (or more) people are trying to determine the strength, validity, or logic of an idea.
11. Do you agree or disagree with Cohen that not every argument needs a winner and a loser?
Explain your answer. (Answers will vary.)

Post-Assessment:

12. Define these terms in your own words:
- a. Argumentative writing: Proposing and/or testing an idea to test its validity.
 - b. Persuasive writing: Proposing an idea with an objective of convincing others or winning.
13. Is there a difference between them, or are they synonyms?
They are close, but not exactly the same thing; they both involve stating and supporting an opinion, but they have different opinions.
14. Give an example for each:
- a. Argumentative writing: Literary analysis, academic discussions, testing a theory, etc.
 - b. Persuasive writing: Opinion writing, speaking to a jury, presidential debates, etc.

Hey ELA Teachers,

Follow up this lesson with one of my argumentative or persuasive writing lessons!

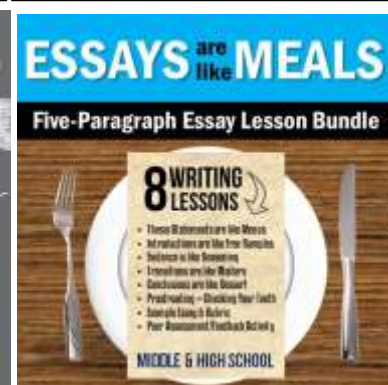
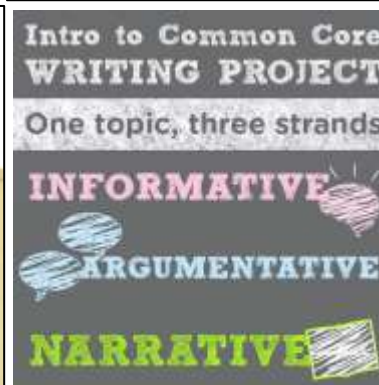
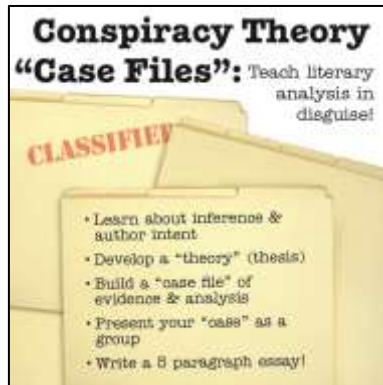
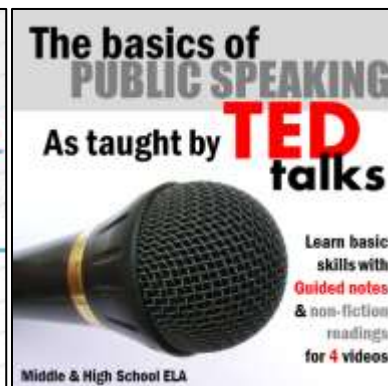
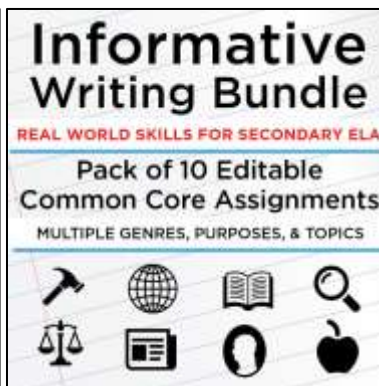
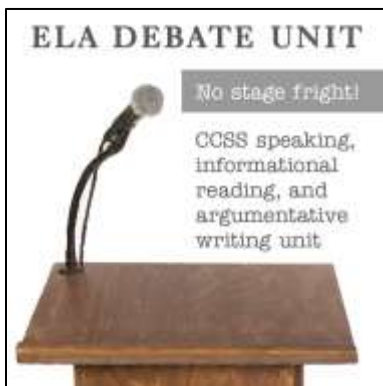


Variety Pack of 10 short argumentative writing assignments:

1. **#Fail:** Critique an opponent to evaluate that argument's weaknesses
2. **But Wait, There's More!** Pile on facts/reasoning to address the complexity of a situation
3. **Change My Allegiance:** Use logic to convince a supporter to switch to your side instead
4. **Go on Trial:** Imitate lawyers by presenting the opening statements in a mock trial.
5. **I Know, But:** Empathize to address a worried target audience
6. **Make Me Care:** Motivate an apathetic audience
7. **My Facts Don't Lie:** Emphasize data and practice analyzing it for significance
8. **My Side of the Story:** Defend perspectives against opposing viewpoints
9. **The Best Solution:** Support why one brand is factually superior to the alternatives
10. **Vote for Me:** Persuade a mixed audience to support, vote for, or believe in you!

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