

6.2 Finding Cards in Articles

This activity introduces evidence identification and carding skills. Students will take an article and mark the passages within the article that they think could be useful in a debate round to prove a given argument. This activity is a good way to guide students through the first step in converting research material into usable briefs. For this activity, students should be familiar with the topic and the use of evidence in a round and ready to learn to write their own briefs.

Time Allotment

Take-home assignment or 30-minute in-class activity.

Objectives

By the end of this activity, students will:

- develop skills in identifying the arguments in articles.
- develop skill in identifying evidence to support a particular claim.
- develop skills in critical reading.

Materials and Preparation

The full text of 1-2 articles for each student. The articles should be relevant to the topic and useful for proving a specific argument (like a disadvantage or an affirmative case.) You can have the whole class work with the same article. Or, with more advanced students, you may have each student work with a different article. You may ask students to use articles that they have found as part of a separate activity.

Method

This can be an individual take-home assignment or small group in-class activity. The experience level of your students should determine whether they work on this activity independently or with assistance.

Pass out an article to each student or small group. If you want to be able to compare different solutions, give each the same article. If you want to convert the carded articles into usable files later on, give each a different article to work with.

Have students read through the article and mark passages that could be used as evidence. For each passage they find, students should write brackets around the first and last words of the passage. Then the students should write an abbreviated tag line (4-6 words, abbreviations or incomplete sentences are OK for now) in the margin next to the text they have selected. The tag should indicate the main argument in the passage and how it would be used in a debate round.

Possible Follow-up Activity:

If students all used the same article, go through the article as a class and talk about the different passages the class has chosen. If students worked on different articles, have several volunteers read out a passage they selected and describe the way they believe it will be useful in a debate round. Discuss the volunteers' choices as a class. After they have identified all the useful passages in their article, students should turn their articles in to you for review.



Variation:

Have each student read the same article. Give each student a list of possible claims that portions of the article could be used to prove, and have students identify the passage in the article that best supports the argument. Leave a space between each claim so student can paste a card below each.

For instance: I want to prove that lead poisoning is causally linked to permanent mental health problems in children. Cut out the passage you choose and paste it below, along with a citation for the article.