

9.7 Writing Mini-Cases

This activity develops case construction skills. In this activity, students write scaled down versions of first constructive speeches (with evidence you provide). The activity is a great activity to teach students about affirmative cases. It provides a nice lead in to negative case argumentation and engages students in selecting and summarizing their arguments.

Time Allotment

40-80 minutes

Objectives

By the end of this activity, students will:

- develop understanding of argument structure and logic.
- be able to identify arguments in a text.
- be introduced to comparatively evaluating pieces of evidence.

Materials and Preparation

Untagged cards (with citations) for and against a particular plan. (You can pull these cards from a handbook, a completed case file or a previous research assignment that the students have completed.)

The affirmative evidence should include at least one card identifying a significant problem (harms) one that demonstrates the problem will not be solved under current policies (inherency) and one that shows the plan will solve the problem (solvency.) You may choose to include several cards for each of these case components.

The negative cards should include many different arguments against the affirmative.

Method

Writing the mini-affirmative: Divide the students into groups. Tell them to pick the best three or four 1AC cards, one for each category. Once they have selected the best card in each category, they should arrange the cards in a logical order, tape them down on paper, and write tags for them. After each card, they should also write a sentence or two that explains the implications of the card.

Next, have them write an introduction to their 1AC speech that states their plan and lists the reasons they will give to support their plan. Finally, have them write a conclusion that sums up their speech in one sentence.

Writing the mini-negative: Divide the students into groups and tell them to pick the best three or four 1NC cards, put them in a logical order, tape them down, and give them tags. After each card, they should write a quick explanation (like the affirmative did) of why the card is important to the debate. Like the affirmative, they should write an introduction to the negative position and a one sentence conclusion.

Mini-Debate: This is optional. Once the students have completed the above steps, they can have a mini-debate with the affirmative and negative mini-cases.