

# Graphic Organizers for Argumentative Writing

## Unpacking Prompts

Do	What

## Close Reading Questions

After they have read the excerpt(s), can your students answer these questions?

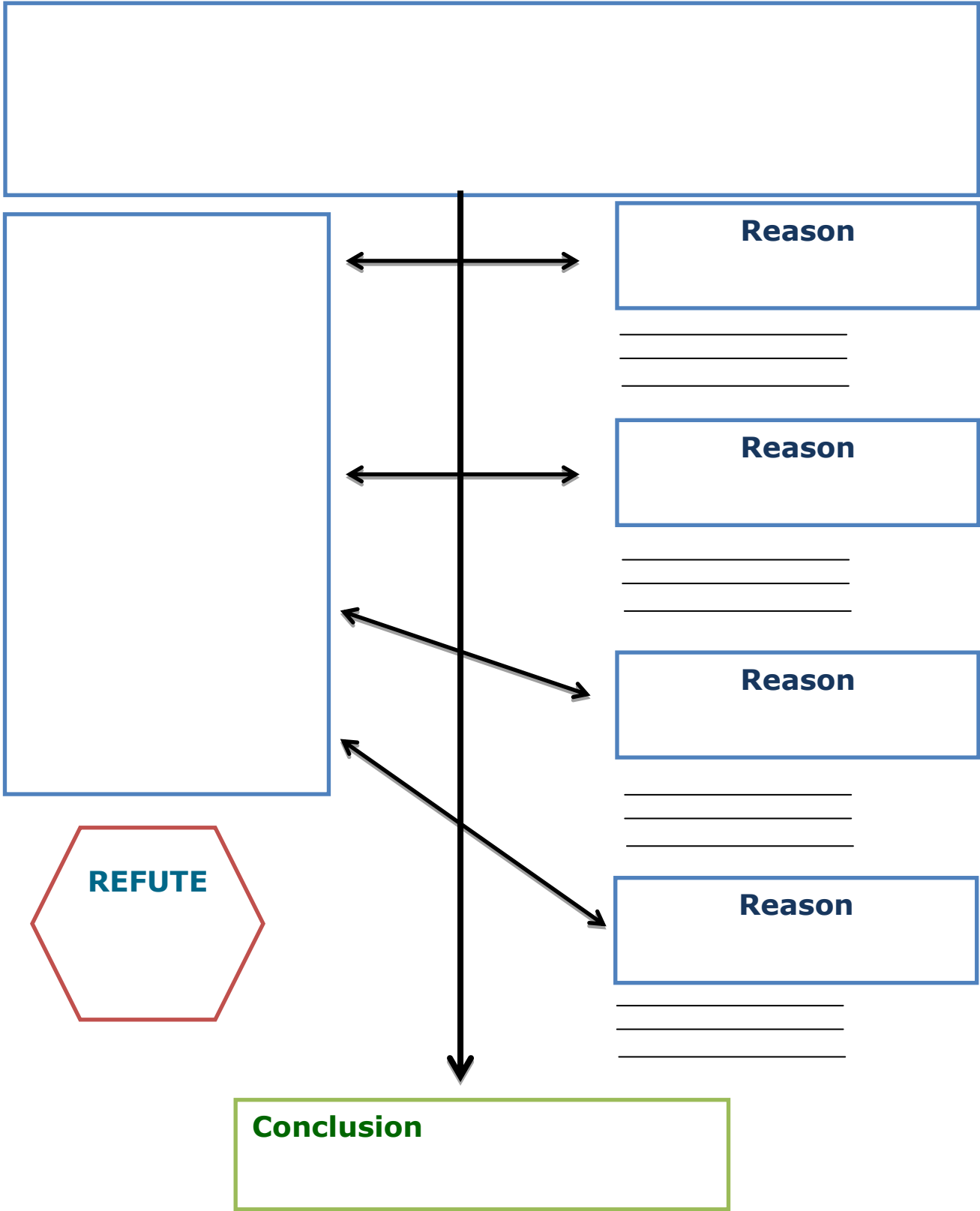
- What is the author's argument?
- What position does the author take (for or against)?
- What is one point that supports the author's argument?
- What evidence does the author give to support this point?
- What is the point of view of the author?
- What is one point that refutes the author's point of view?

## Both Sides Now

When reading argumentative non-fiction text, materials often present one side or viewpoint on a particular issue. Sometimes, the text may provide evidence to support both sides. Then, it is up to the reader determine which is best supported. Analyzing and evaluating the evidence for both sides is one way to identify a claim and the reasons for making a specific decision/claim.

Both Sides Now		
Evidence that Supports	Question or statement Which position is best supported?	Evidence that Opposes
Decision (Claim)		
Reasons (Analysis/Evaluation)		

Prewriting Organizer: Toulmin Model for Argumentation



## Constructed Response Organizer

Prompt/Question:		
<p>Restatement of question in own words (unpack it)</p> <p>Claim</p> <p>Evidence Detailed body of evidence or reasons that support answer – include enough details to answer the question. Make sure all details support the claim and are not off-topic.</p> <p>Counterargument(s)</p> <p>Restated question Concluding thoughts</p>	<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>	
	Text 1	Text 2
	Claim	Rebuttal

## Sample Thesis/Claim Frames

A thesis is an answer to a specific question. A thesis statement makes a claim or proposition that reflects a specific point of view. The thesis statement should recognize both sides of a question, yet focus on two to three specific points (discussion points) sometimes called points of analyses. A thesis statement is the roadmap for the written response. The placement of the thesis statement is generally located in the introduction and summarized in the conclusion of a writing sample.

The general argument made by \_\_\_\_\_ in his/her work \_\_\_\_\_ is that \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

Although \_\_\_\_\_ (believes, demonstrates, argues) that \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ supports/provides the clearest evidence \_\_\_\_\_.

A key factor in both \_\_\_\_\_ can be attributed to \_\_\_\_\_.

When comparing the two positions in this article, \_\_\_\_\_ provides the clearest evidence that \_\_\_\_\_.

Looking at the arguments regarding \_\_\_\_\_, it is clear that \_\_\_\_\_.

In discussion of \_\_\_\_\_, one controversial issue has been \_\_\_\_\_ believes that \_\_\_\_\_. On the other hand, \_\_\_\_\_ asserts that \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ is clearly the best supported argument on the issue of \_\_\_\_\_.

## How Do You Know? – Frames for Incorporating Evidence

In the article, “\_\_\_\_\_,” \_\_\_\_\_ maintains that \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_’s point is that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_’s claim rests upon the questionable assumption that \_\_\_\_\_

One reason that \_\_\_\_\_ maintains the position of \_\_\_\_\_ is that \_\_\_\_\_

According to the text/article/passage/report, \_\_\_\_\_

An example of \_\_\_\_\_, is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. This proves/supports that \_\_\_\_\_

The author states that \_\_\_\_\_

In addition, the author/article/research supports that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. This proves that \_\_\_\_\_.

Examples/data supporting \_\_\_\_\_, include \_\_\_\_\_

## Explain the Evidence

Teach students how to identify evidence through direct quotes, paraphrase the information, and explain how the evidence supports the claim/thesis.

<b>Claim</b>	<b>Using a Direct Quote</b> (What direct quote supports the claim?)	<b>Paraphrasing</b> (How can you rewrite the direct quote in your own words?)	<b>Explanation</b> (How does the evidence support the claim?)



## Sentence Structures: Helping Students Discuss, Read, and Write About Texts

Students at all levels struggle to find language that expresses their ideas and helps them achieve their rhetorical purpose. Sentence structures offer a useful means of getting students up and running with academic language through either sentence starters or sentence frames. Both approaches are useful for writing about and discussing different types of texts.

Sentence Starters	Sentence Frames
<b>Making Predictions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I predict that...</li> <li>If x happens, then...</li> <li>Because x did y, I expect z.</li> </ul> <b>Making Connections</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>X reminds me of...</li> <li>X is similar to y because...</li> <li>X is important to y because...</li> </ul> <b>Making Inferences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>X means . . . since x is...</li> <li>Early on the author says... which suggests</li> <li>X is...</li> <li>X causes y as a result of... which shows...</li> </ul> <b>Summarizing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The main (central) idea is...</li> <li>The author argues that...</li> <li>In _____, (author's name) implies...</li> </ul> <b>Evaluating</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The author's point is/is not valid because...</li> <li>The author does/does not do a good job of...</li> <li>The most important aspect/event/idea is...</li> </ul> <b>Analyzing the Text</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The author uses _____ to show/achieve...</li> </ul>	<b>Summarizing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Readers often assume that....</li> <li>While many suggest x, others say y....</li> <li>(Author's name) agrees/disagrees with x, pointing out...</li> </ul> <b>Responding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>X claims...which I agree/disagree with because....</li> <li>X's point assumes x, which I would argue means...</li> <li>While I agree that_____, you could also say...</li> </ul> <b>Agreeing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most will agree that...</li> <li>I agree with those who suggest that...</li> <li>X offers an effective explanation of why y happens, which is especially useful because most think that....</li> </ul> <b>Disagreeing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I would challenge x's point about y, arguing instead...</li> <li>X claims y, but recent discoveries show this is...</li> <li>While X suggests y, this cannot be true since...</li> </ul> <b>Taking the Third Path: Agreeing and Disagreeing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While I agree that..., I reject the larger argument that...since we now know...</li> <li>I share X's belief that..., but question...due to...</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The author assumes _____ which is/is not true...</li> <li>• The use of _____ strengthens/weakens the author's argument by...</li> </ul> <p><b>Clarifying</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the author is saying is...</li> <li>• Given that x happened, the author is trying to show...</li> <li>• X is not _____ but is, instead, _____ since....</li> </ul> <p><b>Synthesizing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These elements/details, when considered together, suggest...</li> <li>• Initial impressions suggested x, but after learning _____ it is now clear that... It is not a question of x but rather of y because....</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most concede x though few would agree that y is true...</li> </ul> <p><b>Arguing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although x is increasing/decreasing, it is not y but z that is the cause...</li> <li>• While x is true, I would argue y because of z.</li> <li>• X was, in the past, the most important factor but y has changed, making it the real cause.</li> </ul> <p><b>Explaining Importance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on x, people assumed y, which made sense at the time, but now we realize z, which means....</li> <li>• This change questions our previous understanding of x, which means that now we must assume...</li> <li>• While this conclusion appears insignificant, it</li> <li>• challenges our current understanding of x, which means that...</li> </ul>
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Sentence starters and frames from: "A Cognitive Strategies Approach to Reading and Writing Instruction for English Learners in Secondary School," by Olson and Land in *Research in the Teaching of English* (Feb 2007) and *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, by Graff and Birkenstein (Norton 2006/2010).

## Connecting Ideas – Using Transitional Words and Phrases (Odell Education)

Transitional words and phrases create link between your ideas when you are speaking and writing. They help your audience understand the logic of your thoughts. When using transitional words, make sure that it is the right match for what you want to express. Remember, transition words work best when they are connecting two or more strong ideas that are clearly stated. The following is a list of transitional words and phrases that you can use for different purposes.

Add Related Information	Give an Example or Illustrate an Idea	Make Sure Your Thinking is Clearly Understood	Compare Ideas or Show How Ideas Are Similar	Contrast Ideas or Show How They Are Different
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• furthermore</li> <li>• moreover</li> <li>• too</li> <li>• also</li> <li>• again</li> <li>• in addition</li> <li>• next</li> <li>• further</li> <li>• finally</li> <li>• and, or, nor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to illustrate</li> <li>• to demonstrate</li> <li>• specifically</li> <li>• for instance</li> <li>• as an illustration</li> <li>• for example</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that is to say</li> <li>• in other words</li> <li>• to explain</li> <li>• i.e., (that is)</li> <li>• to clarify</li> <li>• to rephrase it</li> <li>• to put it another way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in the same way</li> <li>• by the same token</li> <li>• similarly</li> <li>• in like manner</li> <li>• likewise</li> <li>• in similar fashion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nevertheless</li> <li>• but</li> <li>• however</li> <li>• otherwise</li> <li>• on the contrary</li> <li>• in contrast</li> <li>• on the other hand</li> </ul>
Explain How One Thing Causes Another	Explain the Effect or Result of Something	Explain Your Purpose	List Related Information	Qualify Something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• because</li> <li>• since</li> <li>• on account of</li> <li>• for that reason</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• therefore</li> <li>• consequently</li> <li>• accordingly</li> <li>• thus</li> <li>• hence</li> <li>• as a result</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in order that</li> <li>• so that</li> <li>• to that end, to this end</li> <li>• for this purpose</li> <li>• for this reason</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First, second, third...</li> <li>• First, then, also, finally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• almost</li> <li>• nearly</li> <li>• probably</li> <li>• never</li> <li>• always</li> <li>• frequently</li> <li>• perhaps</li> <li>• maybe</li> <li>• although</li> </ul>

*From Odell Education*

## Assessing the Claim

Response	Notes
	<p><b>The Claim</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it debatable?</li> <li>• Is the focus narrow enough for the writing required?</li> <li>• Does it establish the argument?</li> <li>• Is it valid?</li> </ul> <p><b>The Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it support the claim?</li> <li>• Does it include facts or statistics?</li> <li>• Does it include examples?</li> <li>• Is it based on an expert's or the writer's personal opinion?</li> </ul> <p><b>The Warrant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it explain the pieces of evidence?</li> <li>• Does it connect evidence to the claim?</li> <li>• Is it reasonable?</li> <li>• Does it make assumptions?</li> <li>• Is it logical?</li> </ul> <p><b>The Counterclaim</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the writer include information that disagrees with the original claim?</li> <li>• Is it reasonable?</li> <li>• What is the evidence that supports the counterclaim?</li> </ul> <p><b>The Rebuttal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it explain why the counterclaim does not work?</li> <li>• What is the evidence used to support the rebuttal?</li> </ul>

# Revising and Editing Checklist

## Introduction

- ☐ Does your introduction begin with a sentence that grabs the reader's attention?
- ☐ Does your paper contain a thesis that is a clear summary of your main point or argument?
- ☐ Is your thesis arguable? Your thesis should not simply be the statement of a fact because a statement is NOT arguable.
- ☐ Does your thesis match your assignment? A thesis for a compare-contrast paper is constructed differently than a thesis for a personal narrative or a research paper.
- ☐ Is your thesis placed correctly? Normally the thesis should be the last sentence of your introductory paragraph, but it can also appear either as the first sentence or within the first paragraph.
- ☐ Does your thesis provide a clear outline for the entirety of your paper?
- ☐ Does your thesis answer a question? Keep in mind, a thesis should never be written as a question.

## Body Paragraphs

- ☐ Does the topic sentence of each body paragraph summarize the entirety of the points that paragraph covers?
- ☐ Does each topic sentence correspond with your thesis statement?
- ☐ Does all of the information in your paragraph support your topic sentence?
- ☐ Is the final sentence in each body paragraph a sentence that either summarizes the paragraph or transitions to the next point?
- ☐ Do you acknowledge an opposing point of view and then explain why you think it isn't strong enough to change the point of view selected?

## Conclusion

- ☐ Does the last paragraph remind readers of the main points of the essay, without going into too much detail repeating everything readers just read?
- ☐ Is the conclusion free of new information (such as another supporting point)?
- ☐ Does the last sentence leave readers with a strong final impression?

## Entire Paper

### General

- ☐ Is the writing in formal, third person?
- ☐ Does one idea flow smoothly into the next?
- ☐ Do the sentence structures and lengths vary?
- ☐ Does every sentence relate to the thesis?
- ☐ Does everything make sense?
- ☐ Is the essay convincing?
- ☐ Are the grammar, punctuation, and spelling correct?

## Sentence Composition

- ☐ Have you removed unnecessary hedges that weaken your arguments such as *probably*, *might be*, *somewhat*, or *kind of*?
- ☐ Have you removed unnecessary words that do not add to the sentence such as *really* or *a lot*?
- ☐ Have you varied your vocabulary by utilizing a thesaurus and dictionary when necessary in order to avoid repetition or incorrect word choices?
- ☐ Are your sentences of varied lengths and complexities? A paper is stronger when it has a mixture of sentences versus all short sentences or all long sentences.
- ☐ Are all transitions from one idea to another smooth and clearly explained, so the reader does not need to make any leaps in logic?
- ☐ Has all slang and conversational language been removed?
- ☐ Have you removed any offensive language, such as gender-based or biased language?

## Verbs

- ☐ Do your verb tenses match?
- ☐ Are your verb tenses consistent?
- ☐ Have you replaced unnecessary "to be" verbs (be, been, is, are, were, was) with stronger verbs?
- ☐ Are you using "active" verbs?

## Integration of Information

- ☐ Are all of your quotes and paraphrases correctly cited?
- ☐ Are all of your quotes introduced and explained properly?
- ☐ Is all of your information, such as quotes and data, pertinent to your topic? Does your information correspond with the topic sentence of your current paragraph?

## Grammar and Mechanics

- ☐ Have you used parallel structure?
- ☐ Do your pronouns agree with the antecedents they are replacing?
- ☐ Is your paper free of fragments and run-on sentences?
- ☐ Is your paper properly punctuated?
- ☐ Is your paper free of spelling errors?
- ☐ Have you read through your paper (slowly) in order to catch errors that you would miss otherwise?