Building a Spoken Argument — Claim, Evidence and a Fair Reply: Worksheet

Public Speaking and Debate · Worksheet for https://jugami.com/speech/building-an-argument/ · For instant feedback, try the self-guided quiz online.

Grades 6–8 · Public Speaking and Debate · Unit 2

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Read each problem and write your answer in the space provided. The school, people and details in this worksheet are made up for practice. Use the ideas from the unit: a clear claim, checkable evidence, reasoning that links the two, and a fair reply. Do not copy the speech-lab outline or the self-guided quiz items from the unit page.

The situation (used in problems 1–10): Willow Bend Middle School is deciding how to use a newly opened corner of the courtyard. Some students want a quiet sitting area with benches. Others want a second basketball hoop. You will give a two-minute spoken comment at a lunchtime student meeting. A current courtyard notice says the space will be assigned next month. The physical-education teacher, Mr. Cho, confirms the existing hoop is busy every lunch. The librarian, Ms. Adeyemi, confirms the library already offers quiet seating during lunch for students with a pass.

---

1. Write one clear claim for your two-minute comment. (Choose a side, or a limited proposal such as sharing the space by days.)

_____

_____

2. Which of these is a **claim**, which is only a **topic**, and which is a **feeling**? Label each: C, T or F.

a. "The courtyard." ____

b. "Willow Bend should add benches for a quiet sitting area on three lunch days a week." ____

c. "A second hoop would be so cool." ____

3. Circle the strongest piece of **evidence** you could actually check, and explain why the other two are weaker.

a. "Everyone already hates the current hoop."

b. "Mr. Cho confirms the existing hoop is busy every lunch."

c. "A student in the hall said the benches would never work."

Choice: ____ Why: _____

_____

4. You decide to use this evidence: "Ms. Adeyemi confirms the library already offers quiet seating during lunch for students with a pass." Write a **"so…" reasoning sentence** that connects this evidence to a claim that the courtyard should get a second hoop. Do not enlarge the claim beyond what the evidence can support.

_____

_____

5. Now write a **"so…" reasoning sentence** that connects the same library evidence to a claim that the courtyard should get quiet benches. Again, do not stretch the evidence.

_____

_____

6. A classmate says, "A second hoop will help more students because lots of people already play basketball at lunch." Restate that view **accurately** in one sentence the classmate would recognize.

_____

7. Using your restatement from question 6, write a **fair reply**. You may keep a benches claim, keep a hoop claim, or propose sharing the space. Do not invent a weaker version of the classmate's point.

_____

_____

_____

8. Which reply is **unfair**, and what makes it unfair?

a. "You want a hoop, and I hear that. The current hoop is already busy, so a second hoop could reduce waiting. I still think benches should get two days, because some students have no quiet courtyard option without a library pass."

b. "So you just want to take over the whole courtyard and leave no room for anyone who reads. That's a selfish plan."

Unfair: ____ Why: _____

_____

9. Revise this oversized claim to a claim this evidence can support, such as when to decide.

Claim: "The courtyard plan will make every student happy and fix all lunch problems."

Evidence: "The current courtyard notice says the space will be assigned next month."

Revised claim: _____

_____

10. Outline a two-minute spoken argument for the student meeting. Fill in each line. Use only details from this worksheet (you may choose either side or a shared-use plan).

Claim: _____

Evidence: _____

Reasoning (the "so…" link): _____

Fair reply to the other view: _____

Closing sentence: _____

When you finish, practice the outline from question 10 aloud once. Check that a listener could repeat your claim in one sentence.