Writing a Micro-Argument

A How-To Guide

what is a Micro-Argument?

- A claim that MUST be supported with evidence.
- Usually 1 paragraph (5-6 sentences).
- Students must take a stand, locate evidence to support their stand, and explain how their evidence backs up their claim.

How Do You write a Micro-Argument?

- There a 3 main parts:
  - Claim
  - Evidence
  - Reasoning

You CANNOT get full credit on a micro-argument if you are missing ANY of these pieces.

Step 1: Write a claim
- Decide what side you are going to take
- Rewrite the question as a statement to include your position.

Step 2: Evidence
- Find information that supports your claim.
- You can take a sentence from a reading (called a quote) or use can use information from a photograph.

Step 3: Reasoning
- Answers "So what?"
- Explains how the evidence supports your claim and why it is important

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Quiz

Which of the following is the correct order of a micro-argument?

○ **Claim --> Evidence --> Reasoning**

○ **Claim --> Reasoning --> Evidence**

○ **Reasoning --> Evidence --> Claim**

True or False: If you are missing a claim, evidence, or reasoning you CAN still get full credit.

○ True

○ False.

Step 1: Writing a Claim
An Example

Say your micro-argument question was "What **is the most important similarity between Hinduism and Buddhism**?", how would you write a claim statement?

1) Restate the question! EX: The most important similarity between Hinduism and Buddhism is...

2) Use the information you have learned to help you decide on a position. For example, if both religions have karma (and you think that is important), you will finish your claim with "karma"

Final Product: The most important similarity between Hinduism and Buddhism is their belief in karma.

Open Ended Question

You try it! Question: What is the most popular sport in the United States? Write a claim statement.

Step 2: Finding Evidence

Evidence can be...
- 1-2 sentences pulled from a document (called a quote)
- Facts
- Information from a table or graph
- Details from a text or picture

Question: What is the most important sport in the United States?

Paragraph from "Superbowl 50 Audience is Third Largest in History"
http://money.cnn.com/2016/02/08/media/super-bowl-50-ratings/

Peyton Manning's potential last game, $5 million ads, and Beyoncé made Super Bowl 50 the third most watched broadcast in U.S. television history. The game, which saw the Denver Broncos win a defensive battle over the Carolina Panthers 24-10, averaged 111.9 million TV viewers. This number was a decline from last year's record viewership of 114.4 million people on NBC.

When you are writing a micro-argument, you have to give credit to where ever you get your evidence from. If my claim was "Football is the most important sport in the United States", I could use the highlighted sentence as my evidence. I would cite my evidence using the sentence stem: "According to _____,..." On the line you can put the name of the article or textbook or the author's name.

EX: According to "Superbowl 50 Audience is Third Largest in History", "The game, which saw the Denver Broncos win a defensive battle over the Carolina Panthers 24-10, averaged 111.9 million TV voters".

Draw It

Step 2: Finding Evidence
You try it!

Title: "Football Officially Takes Over from Baseball as America's Favorite Pastime"
Author: Kevin O'Brien
Source: Sun Times

It was long considered to be America's favorite pastime, but it looks as though baseball no longer dines at the top table.

According to a new poll from Bloomberg Politics, football is the nation's most popular sport.

67% of respondents said that gridiron [football] is America's pastime, while only 28% voted for baseball.

Bloomberg's Will Leitch doesn't see these figures as surprising. He argues that the media is the biggest factor that has driven the nation away from the MLB with its constant headlines about concussions, domestic abuse cases and drug use.

Step 3: Write your reasoning

You have two goals when write out your reasoning:
1) Explain what your evidence means: If you use a quote, put the quotes in your own words.
2) Demonstrate WHY the evidence is important and HOW the evidence supports your claim

Claim: Football is the most important sport in the United States.

Evidence: According to "Superbowl 50 Audience is Third Largest in History", "The game, which saw the Denver Broncos win a defensive battle over the Carolina Panthers 24-10, averaged 111.9 million TV voters".

Reasoning:
1) The quote (or the evidence) means that over 100 million people watched the Superbowl on TV this year.
2) The evidence is important because 100 million out of the U.S.'s population of 300 million watched the Superbowl. This proves that football is the most important sport in the United States because 1 in 3 people watched the Superbowl.

Draw It

Put it All Together!

Directions: Read the sample micro-argument. <mark>Highlight the claim in YELLOW.</mark> Underline the evidence in GREEN. <mark>Highlight the reasoning in ORANGE.</mark>

Question: Which Enlightenment thinker had the greatest impact on the government of the United States?

Micro-Argument:

John Locke had the greatest impact on the American Government. He wrote the Two Treaties of Government. The Two Treaties of Government took a lot of time and effort to write. In the Two Treaties of Government it says, " It teaches that all men are equal and independent, that no one ought to harm another in his life, liberty, or possessions." That quote explains how everyone was born with the same rights and treat everyone equally. That quote influenced American government because it showed everyone equality and to treat everyone right. John Locke had the greatest on the American government because he pushed natural rights, which is now a law. John Locke changed the American government in many ways. He supported self-government and argued that the purpose of government is to protect the natural rights of people.

How Will You Be Graded for Micro-Argument #1?

4	3	2	1
• Includes all components of an argument: Claim, evidence, and reasoning • Engaging and insightful intro and conclusion	• Includes all parts of an argument, but reasoning requires more develop • Intro and conclusion are clear, but lack depth	• Intro or conclusion suggest topic, but there is little argument or position • 1 element of an argument is missing or weak.	• Writing jumps from topic to topic with no logic or explanation • At least 2 elements of an argument are missing.