



# HxA High School Classroom Activity Series

## Mini-Unit One: Understanding Terms and Critiquing an Argument

This mini-unit builds a foundation for student engagement in discussion with others. By practicing how to come to terms with an author of a book and understand their arguments, students will be better prepared to exercise these skills when engaging in dialogue.

By completing this mini-unit, students will:

- Be able to identify important words utilized by an author of a book.
- Be able to reconstruct arguments that authors present.
- Be able to critique arguments that authors make to take a stance: agree, disagree, suspend judgement.

This mini-unit will prepare students to understand arguments presented in text or orally.

### Standards

This mini-unit addresses the Common Core State Standards outlined in the table below.

	Grades 9 – 10	Grades 11 – 12
<b>English Language Arts — Reading: Informational Texts</b>		
<i>Craft and Structure</i>	<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4</a> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.	<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.4</a> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text.
	<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.5</a> Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text.	<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.5</a> Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

	Grades 9 – 10	Grades 11 – 12
<i>Craft and Structure</i>	<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6</a> Determine an author’s viewpoint or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that viewpoint or purpose.	<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6</a> Determine an author’s viewpoint or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
<b>English Language Arts — Literacy in History/Social Studies</b>		
<i>Key Ideas and Details</i>	<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2</a> Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; accurately summarize how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.	<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2</a> Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
<i>Craft and Structure</i>	<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4</a> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.	<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4</a> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text.
	<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5</a> Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.	<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5</a> Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.
<i>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</i>	<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8</a> Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author’s claims.	<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8</a> Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.
<b>English Language Arts — Writing</b>		
<i>Text Types and Purposes</i>	<a href="#">CSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2</a> Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2</a> Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

## Time

Plan to spend 4 to 8 days (50 minutes per day) on this mini-unit. Spend one day on the discussion questions and three days on the activities, adding more time if needed. This timeline assumes that students will read the designated chapters at home. If the chapters are read in class, add the appropriate number of days.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Warm-Up Activity: Pose series of questions (Students read <i>How to Read a Book</i> at home) Teach about the stages for analytic reading and how to be a demanding reader Discussion questions from "Fundamentals of Analytic Reading: A Guide for Teachers"	Warm-Up Activity: Ask students: What are the three stages of analytic reading? Continue Day 1, if necessary	Warm-Up Activity: Ask students: How can you be a demanding reader? Re-read chapter 8 of <i>How to Read a Book</i> Activity 1 from "Classroom Activities: <i>How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading</i> "	Warm-Up Activity: Ask students: What does it mean to come to terms with an author? Re-read chapter 9 of <i>How to Read a Book</i> Activity 2 from "Classroom Activities: <i>How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading</i> "	Warm-Up Activity: Ask students: How do you identify the important sentences in a book? Re-read chapter 9 of <i>How to Read a Book</i> Activity 3 from "Classroom Activities: <i>How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading</i> "

## Warm-Up Activity

Each day of this mini-unit starts with a warm-up activity. The following section, titled "How Do *You* Read a Book," outlines the activity for the first day of the mini-unit. The activity for each subsequent day is outlined in the "time" table above. The first day can be a whole class discussion, but for each subsequent day, have students work in pairs to discuss the topic or answer the question(s).

### How Do *You* Read a Book?

Ask students to describe how they read a book: How do you ensure that you understand the language of the author? How do you determine the author's message? How do you decide if you agree or disagree with the author? What are your criteria for a good book?

### How to Read a Book

Before engaging students in this mini-unit, read the introduction to “Discussion Guide & Classroom Activities: ‘How to Read a Book,’” titled [“Book Discussion Guide & Classroom Activities”](#). The introduction will provide you with background information about [How to Read a Book: The Classical Guide to Intelligent Reading](#) and the learning outcomes for the discussion questions and activities accompanying the book.

### Purchase Copies of the Book

The discussion questions and activities in this guide are based on the instructions for reading for understanding set forth by the authors of *How to Read a Book*. Having students read the recommended sections of the book outlined in the guide is ideal, but the discussion questions are designed to be applied to any book. If purchasing a copy of the book for each student is impossible, have your students apply the skills of analytic reading described in the guide—[“Fundamentals of Analytic Reading: A Guide for Teachers”](#)—to another non-fiction book. The first level discussion questions (numbered) can be asked of any book.

### Prior to Reading

The [“Fundamentals of Analytic Reading: A Guide for Teachers”](#) introduces what the authors of *How to Read a Book* consider the highest goal of reading: analytic reading. Your students will read about the stages of analytic reading in *How to Read a Book*, but reiterate these stages through direct instruction. In addition, follow the guide to instruct students in “how to be a demanding” reader.

### Discussion Questions

After your students have read the assigned sections of the book, chapters 5 – 12, pose the discussion questions to the entire class using the Socratic seminar method. In a Socratic seminar, desks are arranged in a circle or U-shape, and the teacher poses the discussion questions, but they are not the center of questioning. A successful seminar involves students asking each other questions with the teacher only stepping in as facilitator to pose focus questions and bring the discussion back to the book if it veers off course.

### Classroom Activities

The activities in [“Classroom Activities: How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading”](#) are specific to *How to Read a Book* but can be modified to apply to any non-fiction book.

Students should re-read chapters 8 – 10 in class (either as a class, in small groups, or independently). Then complete activities 1 – 3 as independent work.

### Looking Ahead

Mini-Unit Two has students apply what they learned from *How to Read a Book* to an edited version of John Stuart Mill’s “On Liberty,” *All Minus One*.