



HxA High School Classroom Activity Series

Mini-Unit Five: Present Your Own Argument and an Opposing Argument

This mini-unit has students actively engage in dialogue with one another to develop arguments and present opposing views.

By completing this mini-unit, students will:

- Be able to come to a mutual understanding with a conversation partner on terms.
- Be able to develop an argument with a conversation partner.
- Be able to present an argument.
- Be able to steel man the arguments of others.

By completing the activities in this mini-unit, students should feel more comfortable constructing and presenting their own arguments as well as constructing and presenting an opposing view.

Standards

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

	Grades 9 – 10	Grades 11 – 12
English Language Arts — Speaking & Listening		
<i>Comprehension and Collaboration</i>	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

<p><i>Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas</i></p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.</p>
<p>English Language Arts — Writing</p>		
<p><i>Text Types and Purposes</i></p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2 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.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2 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.</p>

Time

Plan to spend approximately 4 to 5 days (50 minutes per day) on this mini-unit.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
<p>Warm-Up Activity: “Meeting the Enemy” (see below) Teach the stages of analytic reading Activity 1 from “Classroom Activities: Applying the Rules of Analytic Reading to Dialogue”</p>	<p>Warm-Up Activity: Ask students: Why is it important to come to terms when engaging in dialogue? Activity 2 from “Classroom Activities: Applying the Rules of Analytic Reading to Dialogue”</p>	<p>Warm-Up Activity: Ask students: Was it uncomfortable to listen to feedback from your peers about your argument? Activity 3 from “Classroom Activities: Applying the Rules of Analytic Reading to Dialogue”</p>	<p>Warm-Up Activity: Ask students: What was easy about agreeing or disagreeing with your conversation partner’s argument? What was difficult? Activity: “All Minus One: Play the Devil’s Advocate”</p>

Warm-Up Activity

Each day of this mini-unit starts with a warm-up activity. The following section, titled “Meeting the Enemy: Listening to Understand,” 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).

Meeting the Enemy: Listening to Understand

Have students watch the TEDx Talk, [“Meeting the Enemy: A Feminist Comes to Terms with the Men’s Rights Movement”](#) by Cassie Jaye. After watching the video, ask the following questions: How did Cassie Jaye learn about the views of her “enemy”? What was her barrier to understanding the perspectives of the men she interviewed? How did she overcome this barrier and come to understand their perspective?

Tell students: In this unit, you will practice listening to understand the perspective of someone else. To show you understand another’s perspective, you will state their perspective in a way that they would agree with

Analytic Dialogue

Teach students the stages of analytic reading found on page 2 of [“Fundamentals of Analytic Reading: A Guide for Teachers,”](#) specifically stages two and three. Describe how these stages of reading apply to dialogue. For example, explain to students that when reading a book, it’s important to understand the terms that the author uses and how they define those terms. The same applies to dialogue; it’s important to understand the words a conversation partner uses and how they define those words to grasp the argument that the partner is making.

Next, have students complete the activities in [“Classroom Activities: Applying the Rules of Analytic Reading to Dialogue.”](#)

Play the Devil’s Advocate

After students have completed the activities in “Classroom Activities: Applying the Rules of Analytic Reading to Dialogue,” have them “Play the Devil’s Advocate.” By playing the devil’s advocate, students will have a better grasp of John Stuart Mill’s second argument for free speech: “He who knows only his side of the case, knows very little of that.”

Start by generating a list of popular opinions and teaching students the layers of argumentation found on page 2 of [“All Minus One: Play the Devil’s Advocate.”](#) Then, implement the activity found starting on page 1 of this guide.

Looking Ahead

Mini-Unit Five concludes the “HxA High School Classroom Activity Series.” See the “Culminating Activity” for an assignment to conclude the series and assess what students learned from this series.

For other activity ideas that will build on the knowledge and skills acquired through this series, see the [“How to Create a Political Classroom”](#) guide, specifically [“Tips for Teachers to Create and Assess a Political Classroom.”](#)