Map an Argument

SD-B145 / THINKERS · AGES 13+

Split an argument into claim, evidence and assumptions.

YOU NEED: One short opinion piece (about a page), pencil

ANALYZE	Read the piece. Underline the main claim: what does the writer want you to accept?
CHOOSE	List the evidence given. Which parts are facts and which are opinions?
TEST	Find one hidden assumption: something the argument needs to be true but does not say.
REFLECT	Is the argument strong? What is the best counterpoint?

ARGUMENT MAP

CLAIM

EVIDENCE

ASSUMPTION

Facts or opinions

Facts:

Opinions:

The best counterpoint

A fair objection is

Map an Argument

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A little help beside the learner. Read this page first; keep the answers here.

LEARNING GOAL
Practice breaking an argument into claim, evidence and assumptions.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN
You need: One short opinion piece (about a page), pencil. Choose a piece that is not about a personal conflict.

HOW TO GUIDE
Pick an opinion piece on a topic that is not heated in your home. A good map separates what is claimed, what supports it and what is assumed. Disagreeing with the claim is separate from judging how well it is argued.

WHY IT MATTERS
Separating the parts of an argument makes it easier to respond with reasons instead of reflexes.

LOOK FOR THIS REASONING
Look for a claim stated plainly, evidence sorted into fact and opinion, and an assumption that is truly unstated.

IF THEY GET STUCK
Ask: what does the writer want me to think? What reasons do they give? What do they take for granted?

MAKE IT GENTLER
Map only the claim and one piece of evidence.

ADD A LITTLE STRETCH
Map an argument you disagree with, then restate it fairly.

A USEFUL STOPPING POINT
Use the map on a post or video this week.