



**Lesson Title: So You Think You Can Argue (5<sup>th</sup> lesson in the unit)**

**Context of the lesson within the project:** Students will now review/practice a foundation for argument writing through David’s case, and write a “brief” following the guidelines of the standards. They will use their final briefs to share with fellow jurors and decide on a verdict with this case.

\* Teacher Note: Juries do not write “briefs”. This is added in order to have students practice their persuasive/argumentative writing.

**Common Core State Standards Addressed:**

**College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing**

**Text Types and Purposes**

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**California English Language Arts Content Standards  
(2.0 Writing Applications)**

**(Genres and Their Characteristics)**

- 2.4 Write persuasive letters or compositions:
- a. State a clear position in support of a proposal.
  - b. Support a position with relevant evidence.
  - c. Follow a simple organizational pattern.
  - d. Address reader concerns.

**Essential Questions/Issues:**

**What is justice?**

In what ways does the Rule of Law apply to impartiality of the courts?

In what ways are arguments productive?

Are the processes in place in democracy designed to “level” individual bias in the court system effective? Why or why not?

Should one’s “character” influence judicial decisions? Why or why not?

**Objective(s):**

Students will show their understanding of the analysis and application of the rule of law as evidenced through argumentative writing.

## Assessment:

<b>Written Brief Quality Criteria</b>	<b>Absolutely!</b>	<b>Almost!</b>	<b>Not Yet!</b>
<p><b>Introduction and statement of claim</b></p> <p>I included an introduction giving the background of the topic and then included the claim with three reasons.</p>			
<p><b>Claims Evidence</b></p> <p>I made three strong claims and supported my reasons very clearly with credible sources (law vocabulary) and with details. I was organized by separating each reason for the claim in a separate paragraph.</p>			
<p><b>Counter claim</b></p> <p>I recognized the counter claim and gave good arguments against it.</p>			
<p><b>Transitions</b></p> <p>I used transition words like <i>for example, another example, for instance, specifically</i>, when giving evidence. I also used other transitions words such as: <i>in addition to, also, and another</i> when I wanted to make another point.</p>			

## Learning Activities

(60-65 minutes)

**Hook:** (5 minutes) How many of you have ever had an argument? (Share out) Are arguments always bad or negative? Issues bring up several different points of view, and in the example of a court case, it is important that all sides be heard. We must learn to persuade others, and to argue in a civil way! We will practice this first with the simple idea of having an opinion about a cake that changes into a persuasive argument!

**PowerPoint** (15 minutes)

Show the power point and go through the steps that detail going from “opinion” to “persuasive/argument”, using the cake as an analogy. This can be done as a whole group to model, and/or in small groups and share out. (Sample below). Complete the power point that moves to the persuasive argument of David’s verdict.

**Depending upon the experience of your students with argument writing, you may want to provide them with a “process piece” for this assignment. (Process piece format provided and TE of this format.**

**Graphic Organizer** (15minutes)

After this, the graphic organizer is used as a guide for students (as jurors) to write notes they may use in their argument “brief” regarding a verdict in David’s case, using the “cake persuasion” model, or the “process piece” that relates to the cake to assist them (look at handouts to decide which one you will use). Students should be told that jurors do not actually write “briefs” when serving jury duty, but the class will be doing so to practice their argumentative writing, and help organize their thoughts when they “deliberate” as jurors. Students may work in pairs to brainstorm and complete organizers.

**First Stage of Argument Writing** (30 minutes)

**(continued revisions during additional English Language blocks or social studies time will be necessary).** Students will use the graphic organizer and begin to write their own “brief”, including each part of the argument: claim, counter claim, summary, and use of transitions. In order to meet the CCSS, there needs to be editing, and analysis of the argument to make sure it is complete before the final brief is accepted – **this is just the beginning!** Have students share their “briefs” with a partner – have them “talk-through” the sections of the brief using the Assessment as their guide, giving one another feedback.

Homework and additional class time may needed to be dedicated to this persuasive essay before students complete this final brief. Give students feedback on their briefs, and have them make final revisions before the jury meets in the next lesson.

**Closure:** (2 minutes)

You will become jury members and present your arguments, “deliberating”...to decide as a group if you can all agree David is “guilty” or “not guilty”. Make your revisions carefully and be prepared to be a responsible member of the jury!

**Materials and Resources Needed: Take a look at your options with these handout, they may be helpful!** Power point on Writing, Rubric for the brief, graphic organizer, final brief form, “process brief” format – for students who need more guidance, Process Brief TE.

**Special Needs of students are considered in this lesson:** Students can be called up as a small group for extra guidance, work in partners, using auditory clues for help with writing, use computers to complete the brief. In addition, the “process” brief may be used to give more guidance when needed. Small groups may need to meet with the teacher to organize thoughts and complete the graphic organizer, and/or brief.

**Extension Ideas:** Students may begin creating their own cartoon character ~ illustrating David (or another character) following the “rule of law” as it applies at school.

\*If desired, there is a Teachers Edition example of a fully written essay within Lesson 5