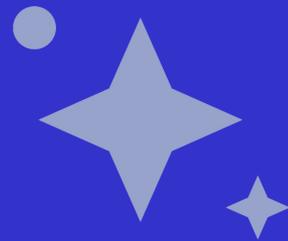




Project

Many Hands Make Light Work



Your Goal:

Make a GREAT argument to solve a BIG problem



Project

What makes an argument powerful?



Learning Support Tool: “Exploring the Essential Question”



Consider the Essential Question...

Explore how your powerful words help you mobilize your community to pitch in and solve problems. You aren't just learning how to **make a strong argument** to be a better writer. **You are actually figuring out how to have impact on a big problem by using effective writing as a powerful tool.**

What's the goal this month?:

To engage your audience in helping to solve **a big problem.**



What academic skills will you focus on this month?

You will learn powerful communication skills using evidence and reasoning to make a **Claim**.



What Habits of Success will be reinforced this month?

You will have the opportunity to explore **Purpose and Self-efficacy.**





Your project culminates into a final product to share.

In this project you will...

1. Learn the skill of constructing an argument to solve a big problem you care about.
2. Translate this argument into a final product that could be a blog, paper, speech, video, website or much more.
3. Present your final product, if you choose, to family and friends, and celebrate your accomplishments.

Your argument will include these components:

Introduction

- Hook audience with vivid description
- Transition to your claim
- State your claim

Body

- Three reasons to support your claim
- One (or more) piece of evidence per reason
- Reasoning to explain your evidence

Conclusion

- Recap your main points
- Mobilize your audience and explain why this matters



Each challenge has clear **steps** to follow.

Identify Your Big Problem

Research

Consider Your Audience and Medium

Draft Your Argument

Prepare to Share



2 hours

8 hours

2 hours

3 hours

4 hours

Product

Description of the problem and a draft claim.

Solid reasons and evidence to build your argument.

Determine your target audience and product for communication.

Determine your target audience and product for communication.

Your final product!

Steps

1. What is the big problem?
2. Complete the "5 Whys" analysis.
3. Develop a draft claim.

1. Read and discover.
2. Develop reasons.
3. Evaluate and select evidence.
4. Explain your reasoning and link it to your claims.

1. Consider who you must reach.
2. How will you reach your audience?
3. Choose your medium.

1. Revisit Your Purpose.
2. Draft your introduction.
3. Draft your body.
4. Draft your conclusion.

1. Partner with a reviewer.
2. Revise.
3. The Final Edit!
4. Publish or Present!



Inspiration

Throughout history people have accomplished great things under harsh circumstances. They were passionate about solving a big problem.

William Kamkwamba is an example.



William's Story

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind is the story of 14-year-old William Kamkwamba who developed a windmill to power irrigation for his family farm during a drought. Through his relentless pursuit of learning, ingenuity, and ability to engage his home team, William made a huge impact on his whole village. His story is one of perseverance, and **the importance of expressing your ideas effectively to solve problems.**

Watch: [William's Ted Talk: "How I built a windmill."](#)



Learning Support Tool: "Finding Your Inspiration"

Challenge 1

Identify Your Big Problem



Before making an **argument**, you need to understand the problem you are trying to solve. Take time to get to the root cause of the problem, to ensure a successful solution.

These are the steps to complete.

Objectives: Describe the problem, analyze its causes, and develop a working claim so that your research in the next challenge is more successful.

Identify Your Big Problem

Research

Consider Your Audience and Medium

Draft Your Argument

Prepare to Share



Step 1: **What is the big problem?**

Consider local or global problems you care about.

20-40 minutes

Step 2: **Complete the “5 Whys” analysis.**

Determine the root cause of the problem.

20-40 minutes

Step 3: **Develop a claim statement.**

Start with a draft claim statement to begin research.

15-20 minutes



Step 1

What is the **BIG** problem you want to solve?

Choose a specific angle. The more specific the problem, the better!

Example Problem: Food waste pollutes the earth.

Not Specific: People shouldn't throw out so much food.

Specific: Too many American families throw out too much food.

Specific: My family throws away too much food.



Learning Support Tool: “Describe the Big Problem” and “Choose a Specific Angle”

Think



Consider a problem in your home, community, or the world?



What is a “5 Whys” analysis?

What is the problem?

Who is affected? How?

1. Describe

What is the cause of this problem?

What is your hypothesis?

2. Hypothesize

Find the root cause of the problem.

Why? 5 times.

3. Analyze

Get specific in problem solving by thinking through the root causes of the problem until you get to the bottom of it. Explore the example that follows.





An example of the “5 Whys.”

Big Problem

Food waste is a huge problem causing methane, a dangerous greenhouse gas, to be released into the atmosphere.

Hypothesis about Cause
Consumers waste food.

1. Why would people spend money on food and then throw it away? Because they don't plan before they go shopping.

2. Why don't they plan before they go shopping? People buy food but don't plan how much or when they will eat it.

3. Why don't people plan when or how much they will eat if waste costs money? Often people don't have the time to plan menus before shopping, because they don't always plan for when they will shop.

4. Why don't they plan when they will shop? People are busy and run out of an item and stop at the store, picking up food they haven't planned for.

5. Why don't people make time to prioritize menu planning and shopping? It's challenging to demonstrate food waste is money wasted AND has environmental impacts. Without a clear understanding of these negative impacts, it's easy to ignore the problem because it's feels inconvenient to plan menus.

Solution Based on the Root Cause: If we could easily show people the money wasted and negative environmental impacts, people might be better about planning, shopping, and preparing food to avoid waste.



Step 2

Try “5 Whys” with your big problem.

Big Problem

Hypothesis about Cause

Your Solution Based on the Root Cause:



Step 3

Root cause of the problem identified!

Now you can build an argument to motivate people to help solve it.

First **draft a claim statement**. You will learn much more about the topic in the next challenge, and it's okay if your claim changes. That's great learning! The goal now is to draft of your claim to help narrow your research. You can finalize your claim (or change it!) as your thinking evolves later.



Tip

A claim statement is a sentence that states your **opinion** about the problem.

The words “opinion” and “claim” are sometimes interchanged. For example, the supreme court makes arguments to support their claims. These pieces of writing, which are called “opinions,” become law.



Step 3

Develop your claim statement.

In one sentence: What do you want people know after they have heard your argument?

Use these sentence starters to jump-start your thinking!

“___ is a problem faced by ___.”

“The solution to ___ is ___.”

“The real cause of ___ is ___; therefore ___.”



Tip

For example:

The root cause of food waste is poor planning.

Claim:
“Planning menus before shopping, would end food waste.”



Learning Support Tool: “Draft Claim Statement”



Step 3

Check your claim.

Is it **clear**, **specific**, and **debatable**?

Clear: Your claim should be immediately understandable by the audience.

Specific: Your claim should focus on a particular aspect of the problem or a specific action you want from the audience.

Debatable: Your claim allows for someone to take a different and equally valid position on the same topic. “Food waste is often placed in landfills” is not debatable. It is an objective fact.



Tip

Your statement can focus on having people accept that there is a problem.

Your statement could also tell an audience how to support your solution.



Step 3

Revise your claim statement Ensuring it's clear, specific and debatable.

Some examples that are clear, specific, and debatable:

“Food waste hurts the planet, but we can help in two simple steps: plan our groceries more effectively and mind our serving sizes.”

“The real cause of food waste is the size of our plates.”

“We don't need to change laws to reduce food waste; we need to change our grocery shopping habits.”



coaching moment

You may be wondering,

“OK...What do I do with this statement?”



Answer: Hold onto it for later.

In Challenge 4, you will be putting all the pieces of your argument together into a first draft.

The statement you just wrote will be included in your introduction when you get to the drafting challenge later on.

There is more to learn about the topic before you start your draft. Following the steps in this process, will make writing your presentation feel effortless and exciting.

Challenge 2

Research

As you complete this challenge, you will research a **set of reasons**, backed by **evidence**, to support the claim statement you wrote in Challenge 1.

Be prepared—your thinking will grow and change throughout this process as you are learning and experimenting.



50%

to complete

These are the steps to complete.

Objectives: Develop reasons, find supporting evidence, and explain your reasoning.

Identify Your Big Problem

Research

Consider Your Audience and Medium

Draft Your Argument

Prepare to Share

1

2

3

4

5

Step 1: Read and discover.

Read about the problem you are trying to solve

30-60 minutes

Step 2: Develop reasons.

Develop draft supporting reasons.

30-60 minutes

Step 3: Evaluate and select evidence.

Which examples, data, or quotations support your reasons most powerfully?

40-120 minutes

Step 4: Explain your reasoning, and link it to your claim.

How does the evidence support your reasons and link back to the claim?

40-80 minutes



coaching moment

This challenge is the biggest of them all. But, don't feel intimidated. Because...



...ultimately, you are going to be creating **evidence sandwiches!**

Strong arguments are supported with solid reasons, evidence, and explanations. You'll put these together to build something like a sandwich with evidence as the filling.

You'll learn more about this through the challenge. For now,, the first step—Read and Discover—is to find your evidence!





Step 1

Read and discover!

Why do you believe your claim?

Read and explore texts, videos, and other credible sources.

As you **gather evidence**, think **about the reasons** to support your claim.



Learning Support Tool:
“Read and Discover”



Tip

Don't worry if you come across arguments that oppose your claim. These arguments help you understand the topic better.

These also provide evidence you should be aware of, and address in your presentation if necessary. That is called **addressing a counterargument**. It builds your audience's trust that you know the topic and aren't afraid if others disagree.



Step 2

Why reasons support your claim.

Imagine an audience member who doesn't know about this topic asking you to explain **why** you believe your claim. You would likely share with them a few reasons why.

Reasons support your claim statement, and later when you draft, provide organization for your argument.

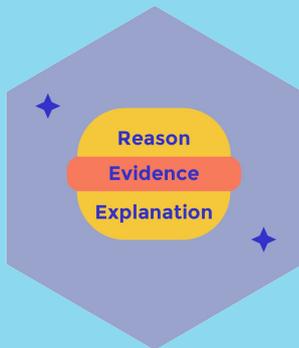


Tip

As you generate reasons for your claim, remember that these provide the building blocks for supporting paragraphs that will hold up the entire claim.



Step 2



Draft 3 Reasons.

Write down the reasons that support your claim.

As you discover new information and other points of view on the problem, your thinking might change. If it does, you can also revise your reasons!

For example:

Big Problem: Families waste too much food.

Claim: Every American should care about food waste.

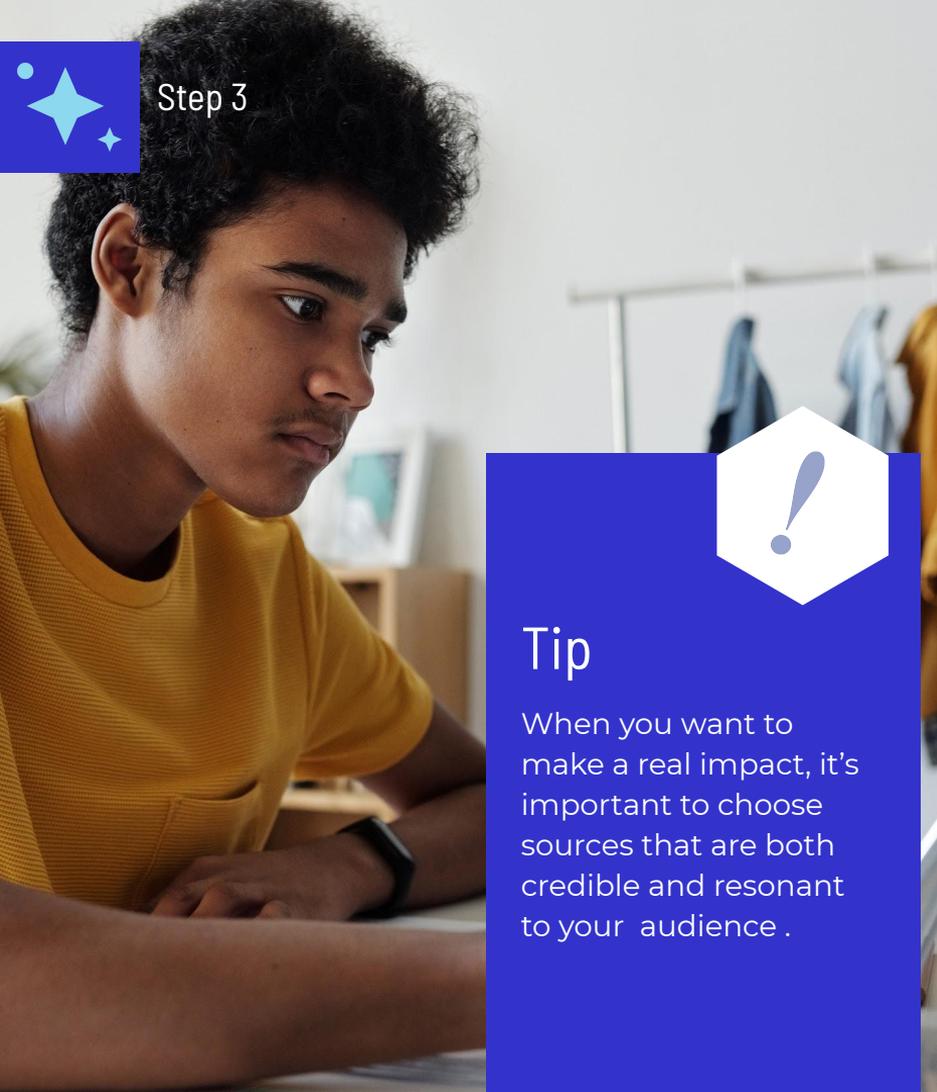
Reason 1: Food waste contributes to the huge amount of garbage sent to landfills in the U.S.

Reason 2: Food left on plates after a meal creates unnecessary housework.

Reason 3: When my family throws out produce that we never even touched, it's like throwing away money.



Learning Support Tool: “Develop Reasons to Support Your Claim”



Step 3



Tip

When you want to make a real impact, it's important to choose sources that are both credible and resonant to your audience .

Let's gather evidence!

First, pick your sources.

Look for reliable sources, such as universities (.edu), government sources (.gov), and not-for-profit organizations (.org), as well as professional journals and widely respected news publications.

Remember to track the sources you select. You will need to credit them.



Step 3

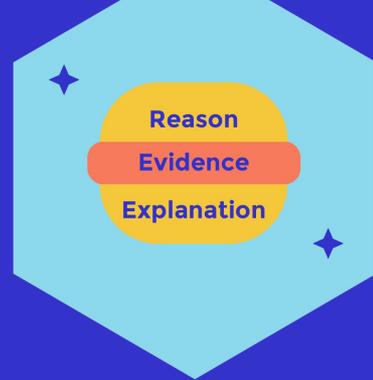
Use your sources to select evidence.

Evidence helps you prove that your reasons are valid. For each reason, you should include **1–3 pieces** of evidence, such as a summary of evidence you read, a quote, a statistic, or a real-life example.

As you select new evidence, some of your original ideas may have changed. If that happens, revise your claim or reasons to support your new understanding.



Learning Support Tools: “Evaluate Your Sources” and “Gather Evidence”



For example:

Claim: Every American should make avoiding food waste a priority.

Reason 1: Food waste contributes to the huge amount of garbage sent to landfills in the U.S.

Evidence: 80 billion pounds of food per year is wasted.

Evidence: 40% of the food supply in the U.S. ends up in landfills.

Evidence: That's 219 pounds of wasted food per family.



Step 4

Now, you have some explaining to do!

For each piece of evidence, you need to explain how it supports *your* reason. Otherwise, your audience might see the same piece of evidence differently. For example, some see a glass of water filled 50% as half empty and others see it as half full.

This explanation is your **reasoning**. Reasoning **links your ideas** and makes **clear connections**.



Tip

Not everyone sees evidence the same way! Explain your unique interpretation to show how the evidence connects to your reasons and claim.



Step 4

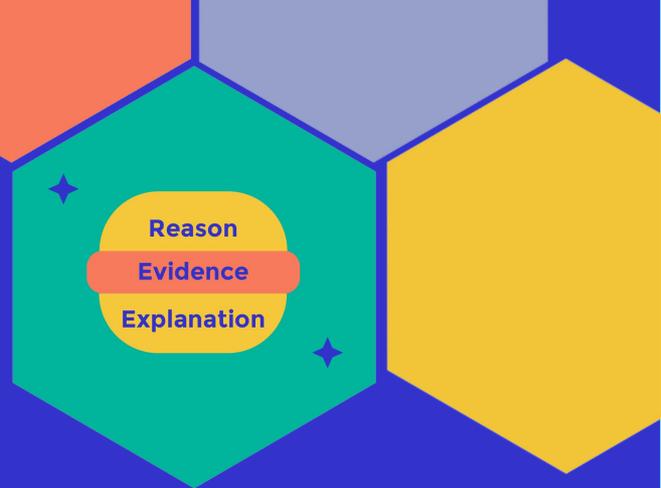
Link your evidence to the claim.

You should be able to explain how your evidence supports your reasons and show how it links back to your overall claim. Try weaving in words and phrases that make a clear connection to the claim.

Remember, this is an evidence sandwich. Your reason and explanation are the bread, and the evidence is the filling.



Learning Support Tool:
“Link Evidence to Your Claim”



Your evidence sandwiches are an important part of your argument. They demonstrate how you think, why your audience join your cause. This is where you express your deep learning about the problem.



coaching moment

You may be wondering,

“What do I do with these evidence sandwiches?”



Answer: Hold on to them for later.

In Challenge 4, you will be putting all the pieces of your argument together into a first draft.

The evidence sandwiches you just wrote will be included in your body paragraphs in the drafting challenge later on.

The next steps will help you consider your potential audience and how best to reach them. You want this argument to change the world, so you'll have to be strategic about where and how you share it based on your audience!

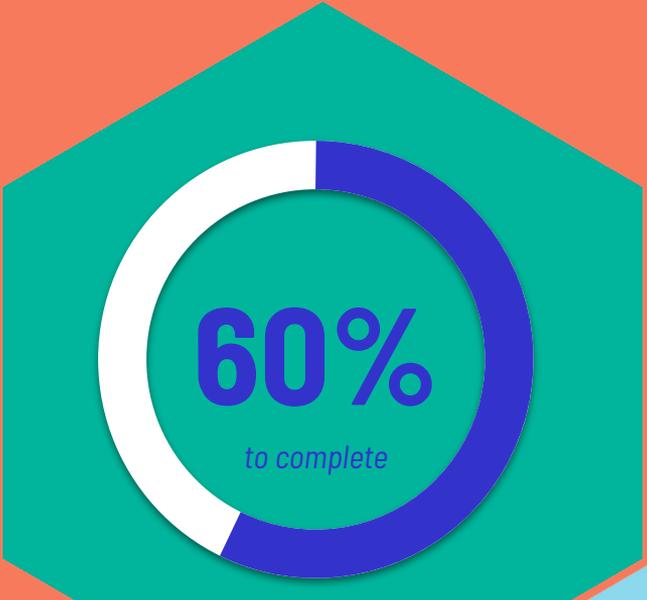
Challenge 3

Consider Your Audience & Medium

Your argument must appeal to your audience and gain their support. **Who can help** you solve this problem?

Once you know who your audience is, it's time to figure out **the best way** to compel those people to help.

Your **medium** is the product that you use to share your argument. For example you might make a video, draw a comic strip, or give a speech. This is the fun part!



60%

to complete

These are the steps to complete.

Objectives: Think about who will be your audience and make a strategic decision about the best way to reach and win them over.



Step 1: Consider who to reach.

Decide who you will engage with to impact the problem?

20-30 minutes

Step 2: How will you reach your audience?

Explore the style of your audience's medium.

20 minutes

Step 3: Choose your medium.

Determine the best medium (s) to reach your audience.

10 minutes



Step 3 Optional

Analyze how different choices in different mediums impact messages.



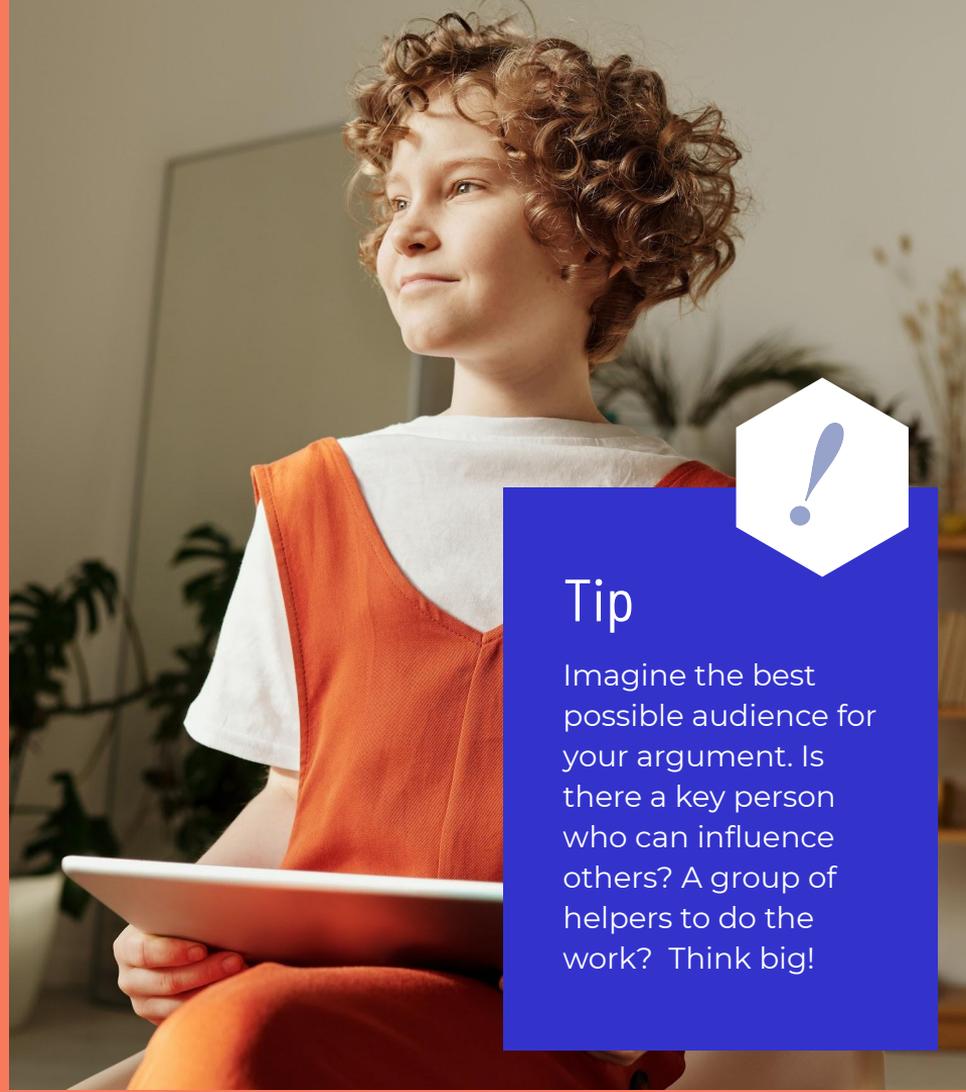
Step 1

Consider who to reach

Your family is a great test audience, but your *real* audience might be someone else entirely.

Who are they and why is it important that you reach them?

Knowing your audience will help you understand the best medium and style for your message.



Tip

Imagine the best possible audience for your argument. Is there a key person who can influence others? A group of helpers to do the work? Think big!



Who can help you solve this problem?

Go back to your thinking about the root cause. Who can help you tackle the root cause of this problem? Or, who needs to adopt your solution in order for it to be successful?

Below is a sample analysis using our example food waste problem. You'll do this yourself on the next slide.

Group	Why should they be your audience?	Why should they care about this topic?
Adults in my family For example, Mom/Dad/ Grandma/Aunt/Uncle	They do all of our grocery shopping and most of the cooking.	Because they worry about money and paying bills. Helping with food waste would save them money in the long-run and reduce financial stress.
My siblings	They don't eat all of their food and end up throwing a lot away.	If we spent less on wasted food, we might have more money to spend on other important family and home items.



Step 2



Tip

As you explore, think about what might be most moving, memorable, convincing, engaging, or appealing to your audience.

How do you speak their language? First, find the right media.

Where does your audience go for news, entertainment, or communication?

It's important to understand which **medium** might be most appealing to your **specific audience** for your topic.

Once you know their preferred media, you can analyze the **style** of the media so you know how to speak its language.



Use these questions to analyze the style of your audience’s media.

Describe your audience.	What’s their preferred media?	How is written content typically organized?	How are graphics used?	How is video, audio, or other media used?



Tip

Notice the details.

Content is important, but also look at how content is presented.

How are different fonts, sizes, and colors used for emphasis?

How are descriptions, videos, photos, or audio incorporated?



Step 3



Tip

Ask yourself: Will a simple face-to-face meeting compel your audience to help you? An entire website? Or something else? Time to commit to a format and start drafting!



Choose the best medium to reach your audience.

You know your audience best! For your **final product** you will take your argument and deliver it through the **medium you choose**.

Will you...

- ◆ send a letter?
- ◆ make a presentation?
- ◆ write a blog or develop a website?
- ◆ write a newspaper article?
- ◆ record a speech?
- ◆ Or do something else entirely?



“What if I can’t create my argument in the medium I want?”

Budget, time limitations, and other constraints might limit your choices—but maybe those limitations present an opportunity to be creative!

For example, if you can’t get your piece published in a leading newspaper, you can still write the opinion piece and publish it on a blog. You might not be able to be on the radio just yet, but you can still record a podcast. And instead of a full-blown animation, you could create a powerful storyboard or a cool flipbook.

Search for tutorials on the media formats you like!

Now, it’s time to extend ourselves a bit.

How will you make your argument **great?**



Step 3 Optional Activity

Let's explore examples of “greatness.”

Each of these example arguments offers an opportunity to explore our essential question:

What makes an argument powerful?

Accessible to a broad audience	Moderately challenging	Challenging
<p>Video: “The World of Autism PSA”</p> <p>Animation: “Healthy Use of Laptops”</p> <p>Video: “How to Change the World from Kid President”</p>	<p>Infographic: “5 Ways College Pays”</p> <p>Opinion: “Remote Learning Is Hard. Losing Family Members Is Worse”</p> <p>Speech: Chadwick Boseman's Howard University 2018 Commencement Speech (Start at 8:35)</p>	<p>Correspondence: Give Bigotry no Sanction by Moses Seixas to George Washington</p> <p>Video: “Frederick Douglass' Descendants Deliver His 'Fourth Of July' Speech”</p> <p>Website: Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Prize acceptance speech</p>

Tip

Think about the order in which each message unfolds. For example, is it a chronological story? Does the message build to a compelling clincher? Where are statistics, stories, and images dropped in?

Challenge 4

Draft Your Argument



We're almost there! You have done so much purposeful learning, now it is time to develop an argument that has the power to make a real impact in the world.

Ask yourself again, what are the characteristics of the most powerful arguments, those that change the beliefs or behaviors of others?

These are the steps to complete.

Objectives: Draft a powerful argument designed to win over your audience.



Step 1: Revisit Your Purpose.

Center yourself around your goal—compelling your audience to act.

5-10 minutes

Step 2: Draft your introduction.

Hook your audience and share your claim.

25-35 minutes

Step 3: Draft your body.

Develop your reasons and evidence and explain how each supports your claim.

90 minutes

Step 4: Draft your conclusion.

Recap your argument, answering the “so what?” and call others to action.

30-45 minutes



Step 1



Revisit Your Purpose.

Remember your goal is **to solve a problem**. Your argument is a key step in making that happen because you need every member of your audience to lend a hand.

If anyone can write about this problem and get others on board to solve it, you can. **Your passion is your purpose!**

Remember many hands make light work and that is why great arguments are such powerful problem-solving tools.



Learning Support Tool: “Argument Components Checklist”



Step 1

In this challenge you will draft your argument in the form of your final product.

Write your best first draft of your argument in the most compelling possible.

Translate this argument into the final product you've chosen. Regardless of the medium, your product should include all the components of a strong argument. We'll remind you of these in the following steps.

Your product should include these components of an argument:

Introduction

- Hook audience with vivid description
- Transition to your claim
- State your claim

Body

- Three reasons to support your claim
- At least one piece of evidence per reason
- Reasoning to explain your evidence

Conclusion

- Recap your main points
- Mobilize your audience and explain why this matters



Step 1

You are prepared!
Now go forth and
write an awesome
Intro, Body, and Conclusion.



Tip

As you develop each part, remember your goal is to solve a problem by engaging your audience to believe in or do something important.



Step 2

Draft Your Introduction

Write your introduction to appeal to your specific audience. What will get their attention?

Think through, how will you...

hook them?

Consider using a vivid description of the problem.

Videos, images, quotes, and questions work, especially in live or digital presentations.

transition to your claim?

Provide 1 to 2 sentences that links your hook to your claim sentence.

present your claim?

Ask the audience to recognize a previously unknown problem, or ask them to help implement or adopt a solution!



Step 3

Draft Your Body

Develop the body of your piece to appeal to your specific audience. What will help win them over?

Think through, how will you...

...arrange your reasons?

First, second, third?

Weakest to strongest?

By issue (impact on finance, education, health)?

...support them with evidence?

For each reason provide 1 to 3 pieces of evidence, such as quotes, statistics, or examples.

Provide evidence from an authority on the topic.

...link back to your claim?

Do not assume your audience sees the evidence the same way you do. You have to explain why, for example, the glass of water is half full and not half empty!



Step 4

Draft Your Conclusion

Your conclusion is your final appeal. Make it powerful so your audience will run with you to help!

Think through, how will you...

...recap the argument?

Walk the audience through a succinct summary of your reasoning, reminding them of how brilliant and irrefutable your argument is.

...make the ask?

Remind them of what you are asking them to believe in or do.

This might mean accepting the fact that a problem they didn't notice actually exists, or it might mean taking a specific action.

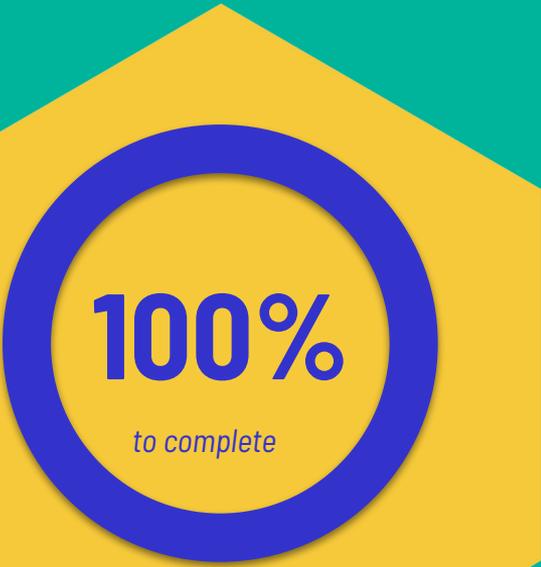
...provide a powerful why?

Answer the question, "So what? Why should I care?"

Connect their values, concerns, and desires back to the problem at hand.

Challenge 5

Prepare to Share



100%

to complete

You'll partner with at least one reviewer for your draft before the final revision and edit.

Be open to the ideas your reviewers share. Their questions may be the same as other audience members, and your response to their feedback may clinch the success of your argument!

These are the steps to complete.

Objectives: Revise, polish, and share your piece to increase your chances of success in solving the problem with the help of your awesome audience.



Step 1: Partner with a reviewer.

Have a real audience member or supporter share feedback.

20-40 minutes

Step 2: Revise.

Revise for substance, organization, and appeal.

20-30 minutes

Step 3: The Final Edit!

Proofread your final draft.

20-30 minutes

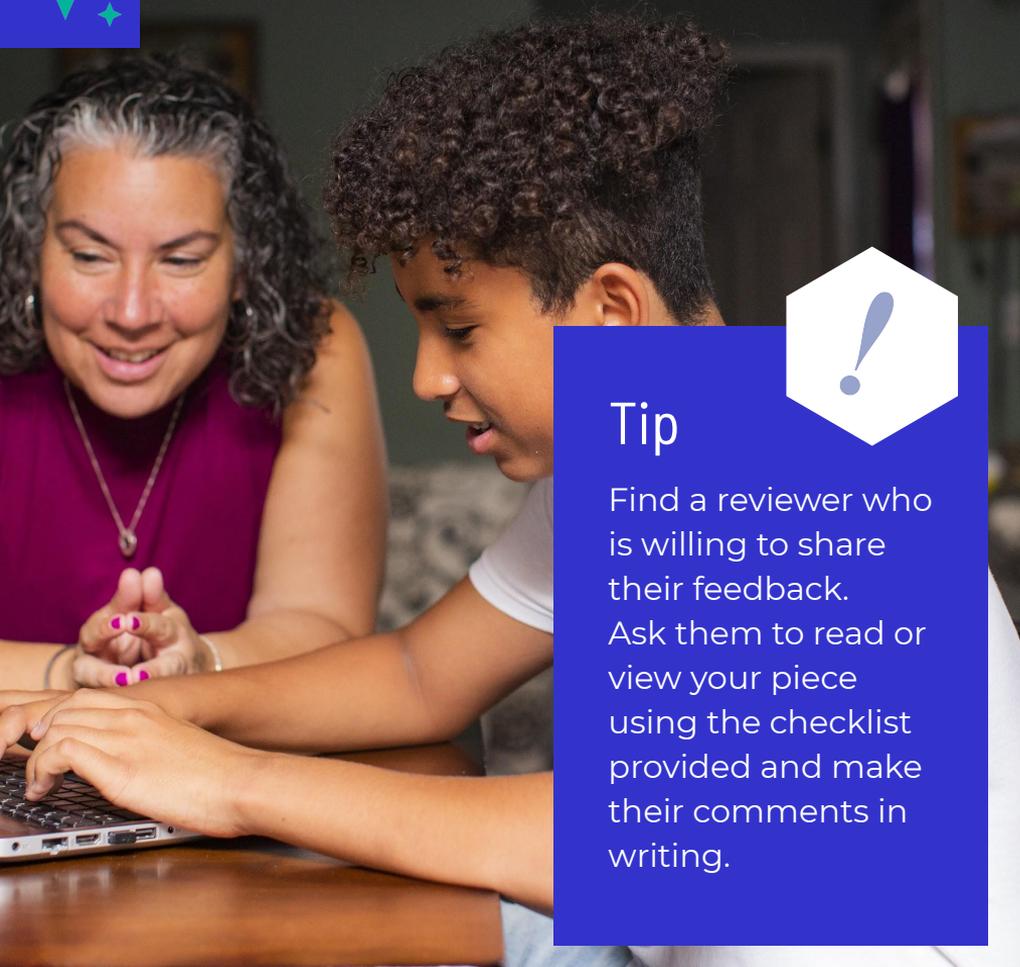
Step 4: Publish or Present!

Share the final piece with your audience.

20 minutes



Step 1



Tip

Find a reviewer who is willing to share their feedback. Ask them to read or view your piece using the checklist provided and make their comments in writing.

Partner With a Reviewer.

Seek out a member of your audience, ask a peer, a sibling, or an adult to commit to spending time with your first draft as a partner. Let them know that **their role** is to help you achieve **your goal** of solving the problem.

See the helpful set of guidelines on the next slide: "Guidelines for Providing Useful Feedback."



Here’s what you need from your reviewer:

Reviews are most helpful to you when they follow certain guidelines. Ask your reviewer to follow these great strategies for providing feedback to young authors.



Tip

In addition, the Learning Support Tools that come with **Learn** contain a handy resource for your reviewer that outlines the components of a great argument.

Guidelines for Providing Useful Feedback

Be specific: Where is something unclear, unsupported, or otherwise in need of help? Check the criteria for arguments to be sure they are included.

Suggest actions: If you have ideas for improving a specific area of growth, share your solution or link right then and there.

Be nice! Remember the goal is to help someone who is doing something great for the world to achieve their vision!



Step 2



Make your argument **great** for your audience!

You're almost there. This is your last opportunity to look carefully at the details you've included.

Did you make your best information stand out?

Where and how did you highlight your most compelling details?

Make your final touches now!

Learning Support Tool:
"Your Medium and Style"





Step 2



Revise for substance

Review the requirements of the argument. Is everything included?

Is your claim specific and are your reasons related to it?

Do you support each reason with powerful evidence and examples?

Pay special attention to explaining your evidence. Describe why the evidence you included supports your reason and claim.



Organize for clarity and power

Have you arranged your reasons and evidence in the most powerful way?

Explore putting them in a different order.

Are you building toward a powerful conclusion with clear connections from one main point to the next?



Revise for audience appeal!

Consider your introduction and conclusion. Are they clear and attention-grabbing? Will they motivate your audience to action?

Is your word choice clear?

Do you use vivid descriptions?

Read your piece aloud to see if your sentences and paragraphs flow well. Does your argument build to a powerful ending?

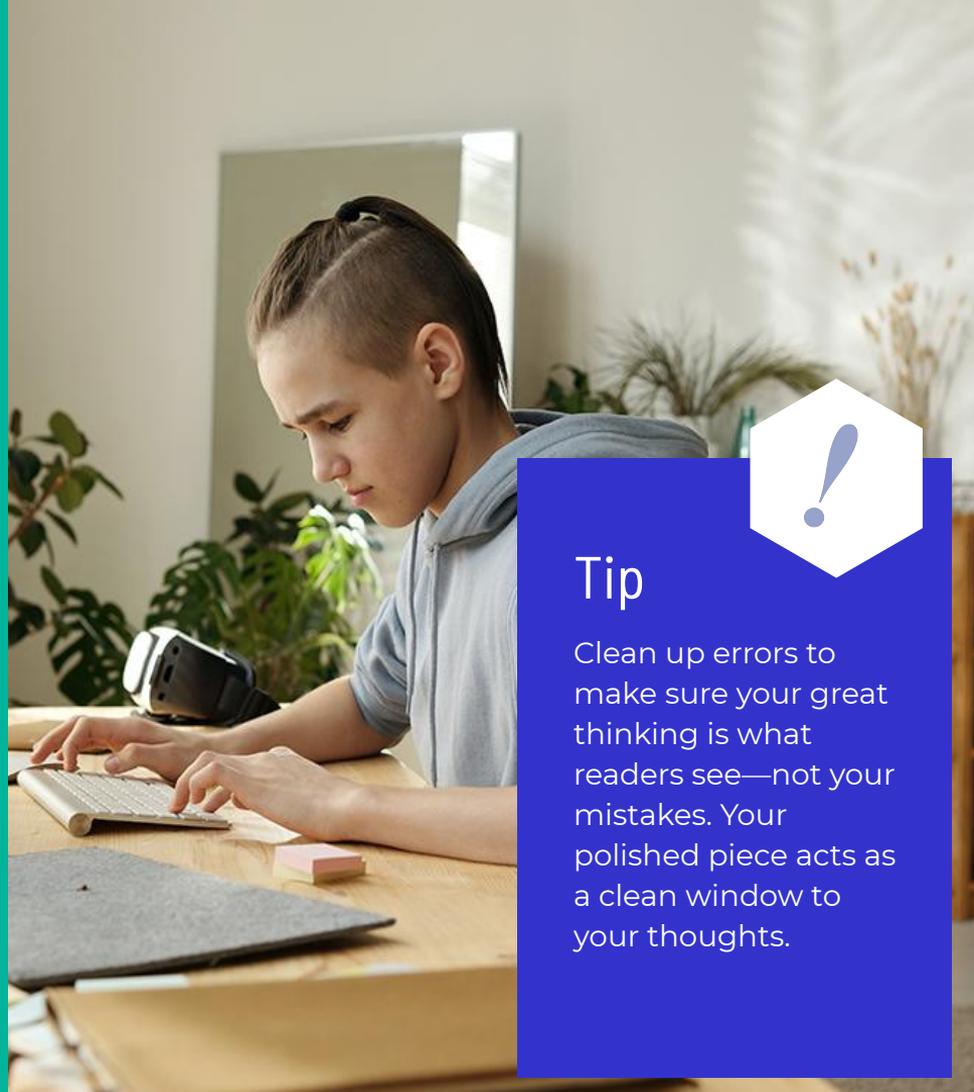


Step 3

The Final Edit!

You don't want minor issues distracting from your powerful message.

Clean up any remaining grammar, mechanics, and style errors.



Tip

Clean up errors to make sure your great thinking is what readers see—not your mistakes. Your polished piece acts as a clean window to your thoughts.



Step 4

Publish or Present

You Are Prepared to Share!

Share your final product with your audience through your ***Celebration of Learning***.

Savor the accomplishment, and take time to think about all you've learned.

Celebration of Learning Reminder!

Remember, a **celebration of learning** is an opportunity for you to showcase your work, feel pride in your accomplishments, and expand your comfort zone to present to family, friends, and the community. The celebration is a terrific opportunity to share your final product and everything you've learned in making it. So, celebrate! Everyone is excited to see what you've learned.



celebrate