## Learning Progression for Argument Writing

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<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td>The writer told readers his opinion and ideas on a topic or a text and helped them understand his reasons.</td>
<td>The writer made a claim about a topic or a text and tried to support her reasons.</td>
<td>The writer made a claim or thesis on a topic or text, supported it with reasons, and provided a variety of evidence for each reason.</td>
<td>The writer explained the topic/thesis and started to outline a position that can be supported by a variety of trustworthy sources. Each part of the text helped build his argument, and led to a conclusion.</td>
<td>The writer laid out a well-supported argument and made it clear why his argument is part of a bigger conversation about a topic/text. He acknowledged positions on the topic or text that might disagree with his own position, but still showed why his position made sense.</td>
<td>The writer laid out an argument about a topic/text and made it clear why her particular argument is important and valid. She stayed fair to those who might disagree with her by describing how her position is one of several and making it clear where her position stands in relation to others.</td>
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<td><strong>Lead</strong></td>
<td>The writer wrote a beginning in which she not only set readers up to expect that this would be a piece of opinion writing, but also tried to hook them into caring about her opinion.</td>
<td>The writer wrote a few sentences to hook her readers, perhaps by asking a question, explaining why the topic mattered, telling a surprising fact, or giving background information.</td>
<td>The writer stated his claim.</td>
<td>The writer wrote an introduction that led to a claim or thesis and got her readers to care about his opinion. The writer got his readers to care by not only including a cool fact or juicy question, but also by telling readers what was significant in or around the topic.</td>
<td>The writer wrote an introduction to interest readers and help them understand and care about a topic or text. She thought backward between the piece and the introduction to make sure that the introduction fit with the whole. Not only did the writer clearly state her claim, she also told readers how her text would unfold.</td>
<td>The writer presented an argument, offering context, honing other points of view, and indicating the conditions under which the position holds true.</td>
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<td><strong>Transitions</strong></td>
<td>The writer connected his ideas and reasons with his examples using words such as for example and because. He connected one reason or example using words such as also and another.</td>
<td>The writer used words and phrases to glue parts of her piece together. She used phrases such as for example, another example, one time, and for instance to show when she wanted to shift from reasons to giving evidence and in addition to, also, and another to show when she wanted to make a new point.</td>
<td>The writer used transition words and phrases to connect evidence back to her reasons using phrases such as this shows that. . . . The writer helped readers follow her thinking with phrases such as another reason and the most important reason. She used phrases such as consequently and because of to show what happened.</td>
<td>The writer used transitions to help readers understand how the different parts of his piece fit together to explain and support his argument. The writer used transitions to help connect claim(s), reasons, and evidence and to imply relationships, such as when material exemplifies, adds to, is similar to, explains, is a result of, or contrasts. The writer used transition words such as specifically and in particular to be more precise.</td>
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<td>The writer demonstrated the significance of the argument and may have offered hints of upcoming parts of the essay. The writer presented needed background information to show the complexity of the issue.</td>
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<td><strong>Ending</strong></td>
<td>The writer worked on an ending, perhaps a thought or comment related to her opinion.</td>
<td>The writer wrote an ending for his piece in which he restated and reflected on his claim, perhaps suggesting an action or response based on what he had written.</td>
<td>The writer worked on a conclusion in which he connected back to and highlighted what the text was mainly about, not just the preceding paragraph.</td>
<td>In the conclusion, the writer restated the important points and offered a final insight or implication for readers to consider. The ending strengthened the overall argument.</td>
<td>In conclusion, the writer reinforced and (built on the main point(s): in a way that made the entire text a cohesive whole. The conclusion reiterated how the support for his claim outweighed the counterclaim(s), restated the main points, responded to them, or highlighted their significance.</td>
<td>In the concluding section, the writer may have clarified the conditions under which the position holds true, discussed possible applications or consequences, and/or offered possible solutions.</td>
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<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>The writer wrote several reasons or examples why readers should agree with his point of view and wrote at least several sentences about each reason.</td>
<td>The writer organized his information so that each part of his writing was mostly about one thing.</td>
<td>The writer grouped information and related ideas into paragraphs. She put the parts of her writing in the order that most suited her purpose and helped her prove her reasons and claim.</td>
<td>The writer organized his argument into sections: he arranged reasons and evidence purposefully, leading readers from one claim or reason to another. The order of the sections and the internal structure of each section made sense.</td>
<td>The writer purposely arranged parts of her piece to suit her purpose and to lead readers from one claim, counterclaim, reason, or piece of evidence to another. The writer used topic sentences, transitions, and formatting (where appropriate) to clarify the structure of the piece and to highlight her main points.</td>
<td>The writer created a logical and compelling structure for the argument so that each part builds on a prior section and the whole moves the reader toward understanding.</td>
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Learning Progression for Argument Writing (continued)

**Development**

**Elaboration**
The writer not only named her reasons to support her opinion, but also wrote more about each one.
The writer gave reasons to support his opinion. He chose the reasons to convince his readers.
The writer included examples and information to support his reasons, perhaps from a text, his knowledge, or his life.
The writer gave reasons to support his opinion that were parallel and did not overlap. He put them in an order that he thought would be most convincing.
The writer included evidence such as facts, examples, quotations, stories, and information to support his claim.
The writer discussed and unpacked the way that the evidence went with the claim.
The writer included a variety of evidence such as facts, quotations, examples, and definitions.
The writer used trusted sources and information from experts and gave the sources credit.
The writer worked to explain how the reasons and evidence she gave supported her claim(s) and strengthened her argument. To do this the writer referred to earlier parts of her text, summarized background information, raised questions, or highlighted possible implications.
The writer included varied kinds of evidence such as facts, quotations, examples, and definitions. He analyzed or explained the reasons and evidence, showing how they fit with his claim(s) and built his argument.
The writer consistently incorporated trusted and significant sources to support his or her argument. He built his argument compelling as well as understandable.
The writer brought out the aspects of the argument that were most significant to the audience and to the purposes.

**Craft**
The writer not only told readers to believe him, but also wrote in ways that got them thinking or feeling in certain ways.
The writer made deliberate word choices to convince her readers, perhaps by emphasizing or repeating words that made readers feel emotions.
If it felt right to do so, the writer chose precise details and facts to help make her points and used figurative language to draw readers into her line of thought.
The writer made choices about which evidence was best to include or not to include to support her points.
The writer used a convincing tone.
The writer made deliberate word choices to have an effect on her readers.
The writer reached for the precise phrase, metaphor, or image that would convey her ideas.
The writer made choices about how to angle her evidence to support her points. When it seemed right to do so, the writer tried to use a scholarly voice and varied her sentences to create the pace and tone of the different sections of her piece.
The writer chose his words carefully to support his argument and to have an effect on his reader.
The writer worked to include concrete details, comparisons, and/or images to convey his ideas, build his argument, and keep his reader engaged.
When necessary, the writer explained terms to readers, providing definitions, context clues, or parenthetical explanations.
The writer made his piece sound serious.

**Spelling**
The writer used what she knew about word families and spelling rules to help him spell and edit.
The writer get help from others to check her spelling and punctuation before she wrote her final draft.
The writer used what she knew about word families and spelling rules to spell correctly and he used references to help him spell words when needed.
The writer made sure to correct spell words that were important to his topic.
The writer used resources to be sure the words in her writing were spelled correctly, including returning to sources to check spelling.
The writer matched the spelling of technical vocabulary to that found in technical sources.
The writer spelled technical vocabulary and literary vocabulary accurately. He spelled material in citations correctly.
The writer intended to affect his reader in particular ways—to make the reader think, realize, or feel a particular way—and he chose language to do that.
The writer consistently used comparisons, analogies, vivid examples, anecdotes, or other rhetorical devices to help readers follow his thinking and grasp the meaning and significance of a point or a piece of evidence.
The writer spelled accurately throughout, including cited text and citations.

**Punctuation and Sentence Structure**
The writer punctuated dialogue correctly with commas and quotation marks.
While writing, the writer put punctuation at the end of every sentence.
The writer wrote in ways that helped readers read with expression, reading some parts quickly, some slowly, some parts in one sort of voice and others in another.
When writing long, complex sentences, the writer used commas to make them clear and correct.
The writer used periods to fix her run-on sentences.
The writer used commas to set off introductory parts of sentences (At this time in history, . . .)
The writer used a variety of punctuation to fix any run-on sentences.
The writer used punctuation to cite her sources.
The writer used punctuation such as dashes, commas, parentheses, and semicolons to help him include or connect information in some of his sentences.
The writer used internal punctuation appropriately within sentences and when citing sources, including commas, dashes, parentheses, and semicolons.
The writer varied her sentence structure, sometimes using simple and sometimes using complex sentence structure.
The writer used internal punctuation effectively, including the use of ellipses to accurately insert excerpts from sources.
The writer used sentence structure and word tense purposefully (i.e., using fragments to emphasize key points, using present tense to create immediacy).
The writer used punctuation to emphasize connections, to strengthen tone, and to clarify and add complexity.