



4TH GRADE

VOLUME 4.4

Argumentative Writing Unit for *Children of the Gold Rush*

Sarah Collinge
with Bethany Robinson



Read Side by Side
9514 180th St. SE
Snohomish, WA 98296
425-412-3724
www.readsidebyside.com

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Welcome to the 4.4 Argumentative Writing Unit for *Children of the Gold Rush!*

If this is your first time using this guide, you will want to read through this introduction carefully, as it provides information that you will find critical to your establishment of a successful language arts block!

This argumentative writing unit is meant to be taught in conjunction with the *Read Side by Side Reading Program*, Unit 4.4, *Children of the Gold Rush*. The book *Children of the Gold Rush* will be used as a mentor text to build students' background knowledge and expose students to the craft of writing.

This unit takes approximately 15 days to complete, from brainstorming and planning to sharing the published piece! Lessons in this unit give students explicit instruction in the steps of the writing process and the structure of argumentative writing. Some craft and grammar lessons will be incorporated as students revise and edit their writing. You may want to supplement with additional craft, grammar, and spelling lessons between writing units.

Prior to starting the unit, you will want to consider how students will share their writing. Student read their writing aloud to their own classmates, visit another classroom, or make their writing available for others to read in the classroom, library or other public location.

After students have had the opportunity to publish their writing, assess their work using the checklist for grading an argumentative essay provided at the end of the unit.

Schedule

To complete this unit, you will need to set aside 30-minutes for writing, 2-4 times a week.

Instructional days begin with a whole-class lesson. Lessons will be 10-15 minutes in length, allowing a short time after the lesson for students to work on the assignment. While working, students will access the help of a writing partner as needed. It may be helpful to seat partners next to each other during the work time. The teacher then confers with partnerships as needed.

Working days allow students to get started right away on writing projects. During the work time, students will continue to access a partner or the teacher for help as needed. If it is challenging to find time every day for writing, teachers might assign these work-projects as homework.

Argumentative schedule:

1. Brainstorm & Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review research on the topic.• Select a position.• Complete the <i>Argument Planning Sheet</i>.• Elaborate with facts & details.• Design an illustration, cover or banner.	Day 1-7
2. Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write a draft using the 4-quadrant method.	Days 8-9
3. Revise & Edit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use transition words.• Use strong words.	Day 10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Edit and revise using a checklist.	Day 11
4. Publish & Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete a final product that is handwritten, typed, or other.• Share with a real audience.	Days 12-15

Day 1: Brainstorm Ideas & Plan: Introduction & Body 1

Lesson Goals: Brainstorm ideas for writing in response to the prompt. Begin to plan a piece of writing using the *Argument Planning Sheet*.

Materials:

Argument Planning Sheet

Notes from 4.4 Read-Aloud: *Cause & Effect Chart*

Article: *Positive and Negatives of Mining*

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Introduce the argumentative writing prompt:

How did the Yukon gold rush impact both the people and the environment? Do you believe the gold rush had a more positive or negative effect on the people and the environment? Develop an evidence-based argument.

2. *Discuss:* While reading *Children of the Gold Rush* and the nonfiction article, “*Positives and Negatives of Mining*”, you recorded notes about the positive and negative impact of mining on the people and the environment.

Discuss: What were the negative impacts on the people? What were the positive impacts on the people? Overall, do you think the impact to the people was more negative or more positive?

Discuss: What were the negative impacts on the environment? What were the positive impacts on the environment? Overall, do you think the impact to the environment was more negative or more positive?

3. *Plan:* Introduce the *Argument Planning Sheet*
 - Box 1 – Introduction – Thesis that answers the prompt.
 - Box 2 – Argument 1
 - Box 3 – Argument 2
 - Box 4 – Conclusion
4. *Draft:* Draft the first part of the introduction, which provides a thesis statement that answers the prompt.

Example: Box 1

Gold was discovered in the Yukon Territory in 1896. This event caused thousands of people from all over the world to give up their jobs and travel to the goldfields hoping to strike it rich. This major historical event impacted both people and the environment. After reading about the Yukon gold rush, I conclude that overall, the gold rush had a _____ impact on the people and a _____ impact on the environment.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to fill out the *Argument Planning Sheet* (Box 1) for their own argumentative essay. Then, give time for partners to share their writing plan and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing plan?
- What might I do to improve it?

ARGUMENT PLANNING SHEET

<p>1</p>	<p><i>Introduction (to include a thesis statement that answers the prompt).</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	
<p>2</p>	<p><i>Argument #1</i></p> <hr/> <hr/>	
<p><i>Reason 1:</i></p>	<p><i>Fact / Detail 1:</i></p>	
<p><i>Reason 2:</i></p>	<p><i>Fact / Detail 2:</i></p>	
<p><i>Counterargument:</i></p>		
<p><i>Reason 3:</i></p>	<p><i>Fact / Detail 3:</i></p>	

ARGUMENT PLANNING SHEET *Cont.*

3	<i>Argument #2</i> <hr/> <hr/>	
	<i>Reason 1:</i>	<i>Fact / Detail 1:</i>
	<i>Reason 2:</i>	<i>Fact / Detail 2:</i>
	<i>Counterargument:</i>	
	<i>Reason 3:</i>	<i>Fact / Detail 3:</i>
4	<i>Conclusion</i> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	

Day 2: Brainstorm Ideas & Plan: Body 1

Lesson Goals: Brainstorm ideas for writing in response to the prompt. Continue to plan a piece of writing using the *Argument Planning Sheet*.

Materials:

Argument Planning Sheet

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Review the argumentative writing prompt:

How did the Yukon gold rush impact both the people and the environment? Do you believe the gold rush had a more positive or negative effect on the people and the environment? Develop an evidence-based argument.

2. *Plan:* Plan body paragraph 1, which provides an argument supported by reasons and evidence.

Model writing your argument in box 2 of the *Argument Planning Sheet* and including 2 strong reasons to support your argument. (Do not fill out the *evidence* section. This will be completed on days 4-5.)

Example: Box 2

The gold rush had a negative impact on the Native people.

- forced to adapt to the new civilization.
- conflict occurred between the Native people and the white people.

Model writing a counterargument based on evidence from the cause and effect note-taking sheet. (A *counterargument* provides a reason someone might be opposed to your argument.)

Respond to that counterargument with another reason to support your position.

- +Natives benefited by becoming packers.
- This benefit was short-lived.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to fill out the *Argument Planning Sheet* (Box 2) for their own argumentative essay. Then, give time for partners to share their writing plan and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing plan?
- What might I do to improve it?

Day 3: Brainstorm Ideas & Plan: Body 2

Lesson Goals: Brainstorm ideas for writing in response to the prompt. Continue to plan a piece of writing using the *Argument Planning Sheet*.

Materials:

Argument Planning Sheet

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Review the argumentative writing prompt:

How did the Yukon gold rush impact both the people and the environment? Do you believe the gold rush had a more positive or negative effect on the people and the environment? Develop an evidence-based argument.

2. *Plan:* Plan body paragraph 2, which provides an argument supported by reasons and evidence.

Model writing your argument in box 3 of the *Argument Planning Sheet* and including 2 strong reasons to support your argument. (Do not fill out the *evidence* section. This will be completed on days 4-5.)

Example: Box 3

The gold rush had a negative impact on the environment.

-trees were cut down.

-mining was harsh on the environment and caused animals to relocate.

Model writing a counterargument based on evidence from the cause and effect note-taking sheet. (A *counterargument* provides a reason someone might be opposed to your position).

Respond to that counterargument with another reason to support your position.

+mining led to the development of towns and trading posts.

-new construction damaged the habitats of organisms.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to fill out the *Argument Planning Sheet* (Box 3) for their own argumentative essay. Then, give time for partners to share their writing plan and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing plan?
- What might I do to improve it?

Day 4-5: Plan: Elaborate with facts and details.

Lesson Goals: Use facts and details to create a strong argument.

Materials:

Children of the Gold Rush
Positive and Negatives of Mining
Argument Planning Sheet

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that argumentative writing uses elaboration (facts and details) to create a strong argument. In the book *Children of the Gold Rush*, the authors use facts and details to tell the stories of gold rush children. At the back of the book, you will find a list of sources for these facts and details.
2. Today, you will be rereading pages from *Children of the Gold Rush* and the article *Positives and Negatives of Mining* to gather 2-3 facts and details that would help to elaborate on your argument.

Model planning a piece of writing to include elaboration (facts and details) to create a strong argument. Go back into the texts looking for facts and details. (*Children of the Gold Rush* pp. 20-29, 36, 39, 48-55, 67, 79 and the article: *Positives and Negatives of Mining*).

Model adding these facts and details to the *Argument Planning Sheet* (column 2).

- Native people gave up their traditional lifestyle.
- Townspeople were prejudice toward Natives, and believed they should not be allowed to own claims.
- Packers could earn \$10-20 a day.
- The Yukon Gold Rush lasted only 25 years.
- Producing a single gold ring generates 20 tons of mine waste.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to revise their writing to include facts and details. Then, give time for partners to share their writing and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing?
- What might I do to improve my writing?

Day 6: Plan: Conclusion

Lesson Goals: Continue to plan a piece of writing using the *Argument Planning Sheet*.

Materials:

Argument Planning Sheet

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be planning the conclusion of their argumentative writing. When writing an argumentative piece, the conclusion will restate the position and summarize the key points.
2. *Plan:* Model summarizing the key points in the first part of the conclusion paragraph. Use box 4 of the *Argument Planning Sheet* to record your notes.

In conclusion, while the Yukon gold rush had some _____ impact on the people and the environment, I believe the _____ outweighed the _____.

1: _____.

2: _____.

As you can see, _____.

Example: In conclusion, while the Yukon gold rush had some positive impact on the people and the environment, I believe the negatives outweighed the positives. Native people were forced to give up their traditional ways. The land was stripped of its valuable resources. As you can see, the damage to people and the environment can never be fully repaired.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to finish filling out the *Quadrant Chart* (box 4) for their own persuasive essay. Then, give time for partners to share their writing plan and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing plan?
- What might I do to improve it?

Day 7: Plan: Title & Illustration

Lesson Goals: Continue to plan a piece of writing by choosing a title, then making an illustration, cover, or banner.

Materials:

Art materials or illustration software.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will be writing a title for their argumentative essay and creating an illustration, cover, or banner for their writing. Share tips for writing a good title:
 - It should provide the main idea.
 - It should be relatively short.
 - It should get the reader interested.
 - It should put a picture in the reader's mind.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to create a title and illustration, cover, or banner for their essay. Then, give time for partners to share their illustrations and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my illustration?
- What might I do to improve my illustration?

Day 8-9: Draft, Introduction, Body Paragraphs, and Conclusion

Lesson Goals: Draft the introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion.

Materials:

Transition Word List

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be drafting the introduction, the body paragraphs, and the conclusion of their argumentative writing piece.
 - Argumentative writing uses transition words between paragraphs (see list).
2. *Model* drafting an argumentative essay that incorporates transition words.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to draft the introduction, the body paragraphs, and the conclusion. Then, give time for partners to share their writing and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing?
- What might I do to improve my writing?

TRANSITION WORD LIST

First,	Second,	Third,	In Conclusion,
First of all, To begin with, Initially,	Additionally, Also, Furthermore, Another, Equally Important, In addition, Next,	Last, Lastly, Finally,	In summary, In the end, As you can see, It is clear,

Day 10: Revise

Lesson Goals: Revise a piece of writing to include strong words.

Materials:

Strong Word List

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be revising their argumentative essays to make them interesting to the reader. They will be adding strong words to their essays.
2. *Revise:* Model rereading your writing and adding strong language. (*See list*)

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to revise their writing to include strong language. Then, give time for partners to share their writing and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing?
- What might I do to improve my writing?

STRONG WORD LIST

Some examples of strong words from the book *Children of the Gold Rush*:

- Miners,
- Prospectors,
- Gold-seekers,
- Claim,
- Throngs of people,
- Boomtowns,
- Tons of goods,
- Trade route,
- Trading post,
- Klondike stampede,
- Pack train,
- Discovery claim,
- Remote,
- Crowded,
- Swarmed,
- Bustling,
- Townspeople,
- Tents,
- Buildings,
- Immigrants,
- Natives,
- Tlingit,
- Athabascans,
- Descendants,
- Changed forever,
- Traditional,
- Wild place,
- Disorder,
- Gold rocker,
- Sluice box,
- Construction,
- Hunting,
- Trapping,
- Fishing,
- Logging,
- Mining,
- Bedrock,
- Dwindled.

Day 11: Edit and Revise

Lesson Goals: Reread a piece of writing and make edits and revisions.

Materials:

Editing and Revision Checklist

Instructional Procedures:

3. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be editing and revising their persuasive writing pieces to make them easy to read as well as convincing.

4. *Edit:* Model rereading your writing and marking edits as you go:
 - Capitals
 - Punctuation
 - Spelling
 - Paragraphing

As you make editing marks, discuss the changes you will make and how they will help the reader understand the piece of writing better. Give students time to reread their writing and record editing marks.

5. *Revise:* Model rereading your writing and marking revisions as you go:
 - Complete sentences
 - Transition words
 - Elaboration (facts and details)
 - Key Vocabulary

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to their edit and revise their writing. Then, give time for partners to share their writing and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing?
- What might I do to improve my writing?

Editing Checklist:

- _____ Sentences start with a capital letter.
- _____ I used capital letters for proper nouns.
- _____ I have punctuation at the end of each sentence.
- _____ I checked my words for spelling.
- _____ I indented paragraphs.

Revision Checklist:

- _____ I started with an introduction that is clear.
- _____ I ended with a conclusion that is clear.
- _____ I used transition words at the beginning of paragraphs.
- _____ I used language to show how one event may have caused another event.
- _____ Sentences make sense.
- _____ Sentences stay focused on the topic.
- _____ I added details and elaboration that are important to the topic.
- _____ I used key vocabulary.

Day 12-15: Publish & Share

Lesson Goals: Publish a piece of writing.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will now be preparing their piece of writing for others to read. This is called publishing.
2. *Discuss:* how essays will be published—handwritten, typed, or other. Let them know when and how their essays will be shared with the class.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to publish their writing and share their writing with an audience.

Ideas for sharing:

- read essays aloud to classmates,
- read essays aloud to another class,
- make essays available for others to read (in the classroom, library, hallway bulletin board or other); and
- take essays home to share with family.

An **author's chair** is a fun classroom tradition. It is a decorated chair in which an author sits to share his/her writing. Teachers can paint a wooden chair or have each new class decorate a pillowcase to go over the back of a chair. This quickly transform a standard classroom chair into something special for young authors.

Checklist for Assessing an Argumentative Essay

<p>Cover/Illustration/ Banner _____/4</p>	<p>____ Has a title that is short. ____ The title puts a picture in the reader’s mind.</p> <p>____ Cover/illustration/banner introduces the main idea. ____ Cover/illustration/banner gets the reader interested.</p>
<p>Introduction Paragraph ____/3</p>	<p>____ The introduction includes a thesis statement that answers the prompt. ____ The introduction presents the argument. ____ The introduction is written clearly to grab the reader.</p>
<p>Body Paragraphs ____/6</p>	<p>Body Paragraph 1 ____ Introduces an argument. ____ Provides important reasons, facts, and details. ____ Provides a counterargument.</p> <p>Body Paragraph 2 ____ Introduces an argument. ____ Provides important reasons, facts, and details. ____ Provides a counterargument.</p>
<p>Conclusion ____/2</p>	<p>____ The conclusion restates the argument. ____ The conclusion provides a counterargument.</p>
<p>Craft and Structure ____/4</p>	<p>____ Paragraphs are well organized. ____ Paragraphs include transition words. ____ Elaboration is used to present facts and details. ____ Key vocabulary is used.</p>
<p>Revision and Editing ____/5</p>	<p>____ Writing is edited for spelling. ____ Writing is edited for grammar. ____ Writing is edited for punctuation. ____ Writing shows evidence of revision. ____ Published writing is polished.</p>
<p>Collaboration & Effort ____/4</p>	<p>____ Worked well with a partner. ____ Respectfully gave feedback to a partner. ____ Respectfully received feedback from a partner. ____ Showed good effort and persistence.</p>
<p>Total: ____/28</p>	<p>Comments:</p>



WAS THE GOLD RUSH REALLY GREAT?

Gold was discovered in the Yukon Territory in 1896. This event caused thousands of people from all over the world to give up their jobs and travel to the goldfields hoping to strike it rich. This major historical event impacted both people and the environment. After reading about the Yukon gold rush, I conclude that overall, the gold rush had a negative impact on the Native people and the environment.

To begin with, the Yukon gold rush changed the lives of Native people and I believe these changes were mostly negative. First, as thousands of gold seekers traveled to the gold fields, they stripped the land of the resources the Natives depended upon. Conflict was common between gold rushers and the Natives because some believed Native people should not be allowed to own claims. As Natives began to adapt to the new civilization, they also began give up their traditional ways. While some would say Natives benefitted from the gold rush by becoming packers, this benefit was short-lived.

Furthermore, I believe the gold rush had a negative impact on the environment because the gold rush changed the land and caused damage to animal habitats. Trees were cut down to build businesses, houses, and docks. As a result, the habitats of the animals were disrupted. Mining is harsh on the environment. Prospectors took sand and gravel out of the streams to sift it through sluice boxes. This disrupted the habitats of plants and animals. It also changed the flow of the water. When prospectors returned the murky water to the streams, they became polluted. Some would argue that the gold rush was positive because it led to the building of towns and trading posts. While this is true, many of those towns were gone by the time the gold rush ended. The gold rush in the Yukon that lasted only 25-years and left the landscape of the Yukon permanently altered.

In conclusion, while the Yukon gold rush had some positive impact on the people and the environment, I believe the negative impact outweighs the positive. The environment was damaged by mining and the building of boomtowns, and these damages made it difficult for Native people to hold onto their traditional lifestyle. As you can see, the gold rush was not really that great.