

Visual Argument

KWP's A Day on Argument at KCTE

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Background and Context: Everything is an argument—or so the textbook says. The following lesson, borrowed liberally and without shame from a Jefferson County Public Schools HS Literacy Unit on argument, is a simple introduction for students to understand the concept behind argument.

KCAS Standards Addressed:

- R1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- R6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of the text.
- R7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- R8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Materials:

Notebooks and/or paper

Multiple copies of print advertisements

Independent Work:

Ask students to write about the best commercial they've seen lately—you may wish to point to the recent Super Bowl and Grammy commercials and the buzz surrounding these advertisements to set the tone.

Interactive Instruction:

Have students do a Think/Pair/Share to discuss their entries. Discuss with the class as a whole.

Authentic Engagement:

Give each student a print advertisement, or have students work in pairs. (When I taught this lesson, I asked each student to bring in a print advertisement from home as homework.

- Ask students to determine the argument of the ad—what is the claim of the advertisers? Have students defend their assertion by supporting it from the text. How do you, as a consumer, know what is being argued? What are you being asked/encouraged/discouraged to do by this ad? What in the advertisement demonstrates this? Who or what is making this claim?
- Have student small groups share with one another. See if anyone from the group has a differing opinion and discuss.
- Have students/small groups/large groups share their ads, the arguments, and the text evidence.

Closure and Consolidation:

Generate a running list of claims in writer's notebooks. For homework, have students find another advertisement that argues a differing claim...which leads to a discussion of counterclaim later in an argument unit.