

Recommended Writing from Sources Book: Grades 6-12

Teaching Argument Writing

by George Hillocks

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"In this book, George Hillocks teaches us not only what an argument is, but how to teach it and why we should. Essential reading for those preparing ALL students to think critically, write well, and succeed academically in both high school and college."
-Jim Burke, Author of *The English Teacher's Companion* and *What's the Big Idea?*

Argument writing can be difficult to teach, but it may be the most important set of skills we teach in English. According to the National Common Core Standards, by the end of high school, students should be able to write arguments to support claims with clear reason and relevant evidence-and they should be able to do so *well*.

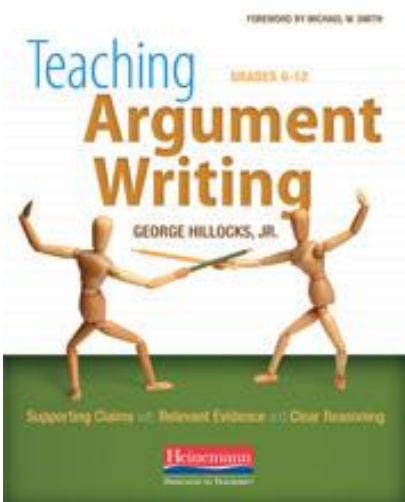
Designed for middle and high school students, the activities in this book will enable students to *write* strong arguments and *evaluate* the arguments of others. When they are through, students will be able, as the Common Core Standards ask, to "Delineate and evaluate [an] argument and specific claims...including the validity of the reasoning [and] the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence." Developed by **George Hillocks, Jr.** and others in diverse inner city classrooms in Chicago, students are easily engaged in the lively problem-solving approach detailed in this book.

Teaching Argument Writing begins with how to teach simple arguments and moves onto those that are more complex, showing step-by-step how to teach students to write and evaluate:

- arguments of fact
- arguments of judgment
- arguments of policy

Student handouts, activities, and models of classroom discussions are provided to help you bring these methods to your classroom. Among other things, Hillocks guides you through teaching your students:

- how judgments are made in the real world
- how to make literary judgments based on criteria
- how to develop and support criteria for arguments.



Teaching students “how to write” can seem like a daunting task on top of teaching them course content. On the other hand, if you teach students how to argue, you can leverage writing to help students engage more deeply with course content. (15) Thus, when you teach argument, you’re teaching students how to think, and how to communicate their thinking, about the course material—the “meat” of your field—while also teaching them how to write.