So You Think You Can ARGUE?

All about writing persuasively...
What is an argument?

An argument is just a statement that someone believes is true or should be true.

Kids should be in school Monday through Saturday!
Hey, wait a minute!

A *counterargument* expresses the opposite point of view.

Kids should NOT have to go to school on Saturdays.
A main argument all by itself is not very strong. Supporting arguments explain why the main argument is true.
Main Argument:
- Kids should not have to go to school on Saturdays.

Supporting Arguments:
- Students need a rest.
- Most working parents have weekends off, and students need to be with their families.
- Some students have jobs
- Students need time for other activities.
Are you laboring under a Misconception?

Common Myths about Arguing

**MYTH**

An argument is just people yelling at each other.

**REALITY**

Arguments can be very calm.
An argument in writing is silent!
MYTH
You have to totally believe in what you are arguing.

REALITY
Making an argument has nothing to do with how you feel.
(Bet you can think of one reason why school should be on Saturdays...)
MYTH
Every argument has a right and wrong side.

REALITY
Most of the time, the two sides of an argument are just different points of view. Neither side is really right or wrong.
**Myth**

You can’t be good at arguing unless you can think fast on your feet.

**Reality**

A lot of great arguing takes place on paper, where you can take as much time as you need to think everything through.
But why would you want to argue on paper?
Imagine this:

Your state legislature is thinking about passing a law that says teens can’t drive until they are 18. You want to write a letter to convince your state senator to vote against the idea. What would you say?
Your city decided to close the park where you always hang out and play basketball. The city officials say there was too much trouble at the park and there was trash everywhere. Would you know what to write in a letter that would convince them to re-open the park?
The mall rules say people can’t do anything that interferes with business. You and four friends were standing outside a store window talking about what store to visit next. All of a sudden, mall security came over and asked you to leave. They said you were interfering with business!

Someone had complained that a gang of teens was blocking the entrance to the store. Now you aren’t allowed to return to the mall for 6 months! You want to convince the mall headquarters that you were not interfering with business and you should be allowed back to the mall immediately.
You’re going to need **ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING!**
To Argue, you need to know how to PERSUADE...

What does it mean to “persuade” someone?

A. to disturb someone about something
B. to sweat on someone
C. to convince someone that something is true
D. to cause someone to be confused about something
## Two Kinds of Arguments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Should/Should Not</th>
<th>Does/Does Not</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argue why something <strong>should or should not</strong> be true.</td>
<td>Argue why something <strong>does or does not</strong> violate a rule.</td>
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<td>Use this kind of argument when you are arguing your opinion about something.</td>
<td>Use this kind of argument when there is already a rule in place.</td>
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<td><strong>Example:</strong> Should school be held Monday through Saturday?</td>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> The mall rule says no interfering with business. A group of kids was standing in front of a store. Were they interfering with business?</td>
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Let's Practice

The school rules say students are not allowed to wear hats inside the building. The rules say a hat is anything that covers and protects a person’s head.

Susie wore a giant ribbon in her hair and got in trouble for violating the no-hat rule!

Did Susie really violate the rule?
There are 2 possible main arguments...

1. Susie did not violate the rule because her ribbon is not a hat, or

2. Susie did violate the rule because her ribbon is a hat.

* What do you think?
Making arguments is a skill that you learn. “What you think” doesn’t really matter at all. You should be able to argue for both sides no matter which side you think is right.
The park rules say “Don’t walk on the grass.” Misti avoided a neatly-mowed lawn but cut across another mowed area that was mostly weeds. Did Misti violate the rule?

What are the two possible arguments?

(You may have to think a little harder with this one...)
Two possible main arguments:

1. Misti did not violate the rule because she walked on a weedy area, not on the grass.

2. Misti did violate the rule because there was grass in the area where she walked.

(You could also argue that the park rule meant for people to stay off any green, mowed area.)
Let’s look at some arguments about Susie’s ribbon. Remember, the school rule says a hat is anything that covers and protects a person’s head. For each argument, choose A or B.

**Argument #1:**

The ribbon is something on her head.

A. This argument supports the idea that Susie did not violate the rule because her ribbon is not a hat.

B. This argument supports the idea that Susie did violate the rule because her ribbon is a hat.
Argument #2:
The ribbon is too flimsy to protect Susie’s head.

A. This argument supports the idea that Susie did not violate the rule because her ribbon is not a hat.

B. This argument supports the idea that Susie did violate the rule because her ribbon is a hat.
Argument #3:
The ribbon does not cover all of Susie’s head.

A. This argument supports the idea that Susie did not violate the rule because her ribbon is not a hat.

B. This argument supports the idea that Susie did violate the rule because her ribbon is a hat.
Argument #4:
The ribbon could protect Susie’s head from rain or dust.

A. This argument supports the idea that Susie did not violate the rule because her ribbon is not a hat.

B. This argument supports the idea that Susie did violate the rule because her ribbon is a hat.
Argument #5:
The ribbon would not keep Susie’s head warm.

- **A.** This argument supports the idea that Susie did not violate the rule because her ribbon is not a hat.
- **B.** This argument supports the idea that Susie did violate the rule because her ribbon is a hat.
Argument #6:
The ribbon covers most of Susie’s head.

A. This argument supports the idea that Susie did not violate the rule because her ribbon is not a hat.

B. This argument supports the idea that Susie did violate the rule because her ribbon is a hat.
Argument #7:
The ribbon could protect Susie’s head from sunlight.

A. This argument supports the idea that Susie did not violate the rule because her ribbon is not a hat.

B. This argument supports the idea that Susie did violate the rule because her ribbon is a hat.
Argument #8:
The ribbon is not fitted to Susie’s head.

A. This argument supports the idea that Susie did not violate the rule because her ribbon is not a hat.

B. This argument supports the idea that Susie did violate the rule because her ribbon is a hat.
If you’ve seen one argument...

You’ve NOT seen them all!
Some arguments are better than others.
Look at the four arguments below.
Which one do you think is the strongest?
Weakest?

A. The ribbon doesn’t look like a hat.
B. The ribbon does not cover all of Susie’s head.
C. The ribbon would not keep Susie’s head warm.
D. The ribbon is dumb.
Complete the Mini-Quiz. We will go over this as a class.