# ELA Argumentation Analysis Tool

The following version of this tool was designed to support the formative assessment of argumentation in secondary English Language Arts. It can be used to assess oral or written arguments. It may also be used to assess argumentative dialogue, but the focus should be on **one speaker’s argumentation moves** within that dialogue.

## Dimension 1: Makes a claim

***Clearly demonstrates:*** The student *clearly articulates a claim,* as appropriate for the given context.

***Partially demonstrates****:* The student attempts to articulate a claim but the *claim may be vague***.**

***Begins to demonstrate****:* The student *does* *not articulate a claim****,*** *but* *a claim or position is suggested*in the evidence/reasoning provided.

***Does not demonstrate*:** The student *does not attempt to make a claim*and *a* *claim cannot be inferred.*

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| **Dimension 1: Makes a claim** |
| ***Criterion level (i.e. clearly demonstrates, etc.)*** |
| ***Rationale*** |

## Dimension 2: Provides evidence for the claim

***Clearly demonstrates:***  The student provides *strong evidence* for the claim, providing multiple pieces of evidence that are clearly related to the claim **and** addresses the quality of the evidence, assessing its source, reliability, and/or accuracy.

***Partially demonstrates:***  The student provides *some evidence* for the claim, providing multiple pieces of evidence but not all clearly relate to the claim **or** providing one piece of evidence that relates to claim.

***Begins to demonstrate*:** The student provides *minimal/weak evidence* for the claim; s/he attempts to provide evidence, but that evidence does not clearly relate to the claim.

***Does not demonstrate:*** The student provides *no evidence* for the claim.

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| **Dimension 2: Provides evidence for the claim** |
| ***Criterion level (i.e. clearly demonstrates, etc.)*** |
| ***Rationale*** |

## Dimension 3: Provides justification

***Clearly demonstrates:***  The student provides *strong justification*, which explicitly describes how the provided evidence clearly supports and relates to the claim.

***Partially demonstrates:***  The student provides *some justification*, but the relationship between the evidence and claim is not made explicit.

***Begins to demonstrate*:** The student attempts to provide justification, but this justification is *weak or flawed*.

***Does not demonstrate:*** The student *does not attempt* to provide justification.

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| **Dimension 3: Provides justification for the claim** |
| ***Criterion level (i.e. clearly demonstrates, etc.)*** |
| ***Rationale*** |

## Dimension 4: Evaluates the strength of evidence on each side and chooses the strongest argument

(OPTIONAL for multi-sided arguments that present counter-claims):

***Clearly demonstrates:***  The student presents counter-claim(s) and *explicitly* chooses one side of an argument and provides *clear and rational* explanation of the criteria used to evaluate and compare evidence on *at least two sides* and why this choice was made.

***Partially demonstrates:***  The student presents counter-claim(s), *explicitly* chooses one side, and *partially* explains the process and/or criteria used to evaluate, compare, and choose the strongest side.

***Begins to demonstrate*:** The student presents counter-claim(s), chooses one side, but *does not* evaluate and compare evidence on each side, or the explanation is *unclear or flawed*.

***Does not demonstrate:*** The student *does not* present a counter-claim, despite that expectations.

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| **Dimension 4: Evaluates support on each side and chooses the strongest argument.** |
| ***Criterion level (i.e. clearly demonstrates, etc.)*** |
| ***Rationale*** |

## Dimension 5: Uses language to convey key relationships among ideas

***Clearly demonstrates:*** The student *effectively conveys* ***key relationships among ideas[[1]](#footnote-1)*** and makes argument and support clear, using *appropriate* ***linguistic markers[[2]](#footnote-2)*** *or* ***alternative expressions[[3]](#footnote-3)*** *that signal coherent reasoning*.

***Partially demonstrates:*** The student *at times* conveys key relationships among ideas and makes argument and support clear. However, the student may *rely on a limited number of linguistic markers, alterative expressions,* *and/or* *convey only one type of relationship between key ideas*.

***Begins to demonstrate:*** The student *attempts* to convey key relationships among ideas and make argument and support clear. However, *linguistic markers or alternative expressions may be used erroneously and/or the relationship among key ideas may be unclear*.

***Does not demonstrate:*** The student *does not* *convey key relationships among ideas or make argument and support clear.*

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| **Dimension 5: Uses language to convey key relationships among ideas** |
| ***Criterion level (i.e. clearly demonstrates, etc.)*** |
| ***Rationale*** |

1. Relationship among ideas may include cause-effect, contrastive, conditional, and/or sequential relationships. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Linguistic markers for cause-effect relationships might include: *because, so, when, as a result of, therefore*. Linguistic markers for contrastive relationships might include: *but, although, however, on the other hand*. Linguistic markers for conditional relationships might include: *if* and modal verbs (i.e., *could, would, might, may*). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Alternative expressions include other ways that relationships between ideas are conveyed besides explicit linguistic markers such as those listed above. For example, in the sentences, “Birds and dinosaurs share some characteristics. The most likely reason for these similarities is that they are related,” the phrase, “the most likely reason,” functions as an alternative expression connecting two ideas. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)