

Triple Q

Argument Writing for Middle School

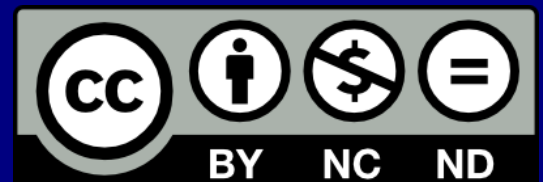
Team Sports

UNIT 2

*What policy should your
school follow about
team sports?*

This workbook belongs to: _____

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Argument Writing for Middle School

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Team Sports Build Character

by Robert K. Fuller

1 Why join a sports team? It is a fun way to get exercise,
2 build friendships, and develop physical skills. But
3 participating in sports is a good choice for an even more
4 important reason. The greatest benefit of team sports is
5 that they help young people build good character.

6 A key part of developing character is learning positive
7 values, and that is an outcome of being part of a sports
8 team. Discovery Education surveyed 9,000 children,
9 parents, teachers, and coaches. According to the survey,
10 most parents whose children play sports believe their
11 child is learning values such as teamwork, commitment,
12 fairness, and respect for others. In addition, the survey
13 showed that more than half of the children who play
14 sports agree that they have a stronger sense of right and
15 wrong because of the sport they play. Another survey,
16 conducted by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, involved
17 35,000 high school students. They found that 90% of
18 athletes say their coach “consistently sets an example of
19 good character” and “expects players to do the right
20 thing.” Both surveys provide evidence that playing a
21 team sport helps young people learn positive values.

22 Participating in sports also helps young people learn to
23 make good choices. The U.S. Department of Education
24 sponsored a series of studies that followed the same
25 students over multiple years. Results indicate that
26 students who play sports are less likely to drop out of
27 school than those who do not play sports. They also
28 spend more time on homework, get higher grades, apply
29 to more colleges, and are more likely to graduate from
30 college. In another study, researchers surveyed over
31 7,000 high school students in Georgia. They found that
32 athletes are more likely than non-athletes to use
33 seatbelts, exercise regularly, and eat healthy foods. The
34 Department of Education and the Georgia studies
35 provide a great deal of evidence that young people learn
36 to make good choices when they play team sports.

37 Finally, team sports build character by discouraging bad
38 behaviors. Researchers surveyed 400 middle school
39 students in Arizona. They found that sports participants
40 are less likely than non-participants to exhibit such
41 behaviors as smoking, drinking, cheating on tests,
42 vandalizing school property, fighting, and stealing.
43 Another study examined the rate of fights and other
44 disturbances at 21 high schools in Maryland. They

45 found that, when two schools have the same number of
46 students, the school with more students involved in team
47 sports will have fewer disturbances. The authors
48 conclude that encouraging more students to play team
49 sports may help make schools safer. All of this evidence
50 shows that sports help young people stay out of trouble.

51 Critics say that team sports often have negative impacts
52 on players. If players are made to feel that they do not
53 play well, it may lower their self-esteem and cause them
54 to become angry or depressed. Such outcomes do occur,
55 but they can be minimized if coaches are properly
56 trained. Programs like *Coach Effectiveness Training*
57 encourage coaches to focus less on winning and more on
58 improving each player's skills. One study examined the
59 impact of this training on Little League coaches by
60 interviewing 152 players, ages 10 to 12. The study found
61 that trained coaches were evaluated more highly by their
62 players than untrained coaches. Players with trained
63 coaches also had more fun, liked their teammates more,
64 and had higher self-esteem than players with untrained
65 coaches. In a British study, surveys were given to 265
66 boys who played soccer or cricket. Results indicate that,
67 when the coach focuses on effort and improvement,
68 most players feel good about themselves. When the
69 coach focuses on winning, most players feel
70 unsuccessful and incompetent. These studies show that,
71 by focusing on effort and improvement, coaches can
72 help players feel competent and build self-esteem.

73 Playing team sports can provide young people with
74 positive experiences that build character. Players learn
75 important values like discipline, teamwork, fairness, and
76 respect for others. They also learn to make good choices
77 and avoid bad behaviors. And best of all, while they're
78 learning all those things, they are playing a game and
79 having fun.

The Dark Side of Team Sports

by Grace Young

1 Playing sports should be fun for kids, but too often the
2 focus is not on having fun but on winning, being the best
3 and beating the competition. The best players are
4 recognized as stars, which can make them think too
5 much of themselves. Kids who are not the stars feel
6 unsuccessful and incompetent. Instead of working to
7 improve their skills, they often quit trying or drop out of
8 the sport altogether. For these reasons, participating in
9 sports can lead young players to focus on the wrong
10 values instead of developing good character.

11 Kids who play team sports often develop bad personality
12 traits. Researchers in Finland studied girls and boys,
13 ages 8 to 16, who played baseball. They measured
14 sensitivity, which is the ability to understand what others
15 are feeling. They also measured narcissism, which is
16 when people think only of themselves. The study found
17 that, the more years kids spent playing baseball, the
18 lower they scored on sensitivity and the higher they
19 scored on narcissism. This shows that sports can cause
20 kids to ignore what others are feeling and become vain
21 and self-centered. Mark Edmundson is a writer who
22 played football in high school. He says that athletes “are
23 often bullies. They often seek violence for its own sake.
24 They like to humiliate their foes, off the field as well as
25 on it.” This shows that sports can cause kids to become
26 overly aggressive and even cruel.

27 Participating in team sports can also encourage kids to
28 make bad choices. The Josephson Institute of Ethics
29 conducted a survey of 35,000 high school students. They
30 found that athletes are more likely than non-athletes to
31 cheat in school, and many athletes believe it’s okay for
32 coaches to teach players how to cheat without getting
33 caught. In another study, researchers gave the Youth
34 Risk Behavior Survey to 4,000 middle school students.
35 They found that kids who play sports are more likely
36 than non-players to engage in risky behaviors like
37 fighting, smoking, drinking, and using drugs. Taken
38 together, the two studies show that sports encourage kids
39 to make bad choices on the field and in life.

40 People who promote team sports claim that they teach
41 positive values like discipline, fair play, respect for
42 others, and teamwork. In a Discovery Education survey,
43 those were all rated as important values for sports to
44 teach. Competitiveness and winning were rated as

45 unimportant. And yet, when asked which values sports
46 *actually* teach, competitiveness and winning were at the
47 top of the list and the others were at the bottom. In
48 another study, researchers gave the Youth Experiences
49 Survey to 450 high school students. They found that kids
50 who played sports reported more negative experiences
51 than kids in non-sport activities like church choir or
52 scouts. For example, kids in sports were more likely to
53 report that peers in their activity made fun of them or
54 that an adult told them to do something they knew was
55 wrong. Although team sports could teach important
56 values, these studies show that, in reality, they do not.

57 Finally, playing team sports can weaken the family ties
58 that are essential for developing good character.
59 Jeannette Twomey is a writer whose son played youth
60 league baseball. His family attended all practices and
61 games, which often involved weekend travel. She wrote
62 this about the impact on her family:

63 Over the years, we saw one family activity after another
64 bow its head to youth sports. Dinner at home, reading
65 before bedtime, visits to grandma's, games, picnics,
66 camping trips – all were casualties of the sport schedule.

67 Researchers interviewed parents of tennis players, who
68 described similar problems. They reported less time with
69 their spouses and less time spent together as a family.
70 Family activities bind families together. Without them, a
71 family will drift apart. This can cause children to feel
72 less support and parents to have less influence over their
73 children's behavior.

74 It is often said that team sports build character. Yet kids
75 who play sports often develop bad personality traits.
76 They tend to make bad choices in life, and their family
77 relationships often suffer. Despite what many people
78 believe, participating in team sports can be harmful to a
79 player's character.

Assorted Evidence

1	Quote from Lisa Harper, mother of an 11-year-old who has played soccer since age 7: “We’ve seen our daughter and her teammates learn how to work together. They respect the uniform and one another. They know what it means to work for something beyond themselves.”	2	A survey by i9 Sports found that most mothers of sports players are stressed by their child’s participation in sports, and over half said it caused stress for the entire family. Almost 90% said the stress was due to schedule conflicts and about 60% blamed money issues.
3	Quote from writer Mark Edmundson: “There were times while I was playing that I thought that I was an abject failure at the game. I simply never got very good. But I came to see that I was actually quite a success. I was able to show up every day, to work hard at something that was extremely difficult for me, and to improve little by little.”	4	Researchers from the University of Illinois surveyed 2300 high school students. The survey asked about students’ experiences in different types of activities, including drama and music groups, volunteering, faith-based activities, and sports. They found that sports help students learn to set goals, work hard, solve problems, and manage their time.
5	Researchers at the University of California conducted a study at a sports camp for boys and girls, ages 9-16. They found that kids who play contact sports like football tend to be more aggressive in sports and in daily life than kids who play other sports.	6	In a follow-up study of Coach Effectiveness Training, researchers interviewed players of trained and untrained coaches. After one year, 26% of players with untrained coaches had quit the team, compared to only 5% of players with trained coaches.
7	A study described in <i>Youth & Society</i> followed 1800 young people from sixth grade until age 25. They found that most children who play sports continue to be active in sports and fitness activities as adults.	8	Researchers from the University of Ottawa reviewed 185 studies of young athletes and their families. They found that parents often pay thousands of dollars for sports fees, equipment, uniforms, and other costs.
9	A study described in the <i>Journal of Youth and Adolescence</i> surveyed 260 boys and girls who play sports. They found that when there is a good relationship between the coach and the players and when players treat each other with respect and fairness, students are more likely to do positive things like sharing, helping, and supporting others.	10	Researchers from the University of Alberta followed 122 boys and girls over the first 12 games of their hockey season. Players completed questionnaires before and after each game. They found that players had the most fun in games where they thought they played well. Playing well was rated as considerably more important to having fun than winning.
11	A study described in <i>School Counselor</i> examined the grades of 123 high school students who played soccer one semester and did not play a sport the following semester. They found that their grades were significantly higher during the soccer season than during the off season.	12	The 2002 National Youth Survey of Civic Engagement shows that young adults who played sports in high school are more likely than non-athletes to watch the news, register to vote, volunteer, and participate in fundraising events and public meetings.
13	Data from <i>High School and Beyond</i> , a multi-year study of over 30,000 young people, shows that girls who play team sports are more likely to succeed in science than girls who don’t play sports.	14	According to the Center for Disease Control, regular physical activity helps children build strong bones and muscles, reduces the chance of being overweight, and promotes emotional health.
15	The National Center for Sports Safety reports that 3.5 million children aged 14 years and younger receive medical care for sports injuries each year. Two thirds of all sports-related injuries treated in emergency rooms involve injuries to children.	16	The U.S. Anti-Doping Agency says that an athletes’ use of performance-enhancing drugs reveals a fundamental ethical problem – the willingness to win at all costs. This attitude destroys the true value of sport and all that it can offer.





Triple Q

Argument Writing for Middle School

Tab 2 – Worksheets

- Lesson 1 Quickwrite
- Lesson 2 Quickwrite
- Lesson 4 Quickwrite
- Lesson 5 Quickwrite



Name _____

Lesson 1

Quickwrite!

In response to "Team Sports Build Character"

Do you agree with this author about team sports building character?
Explain why or why not.



Name _____

Lesson 2

Quickwrite!

In response to both texts

What does each of these authors want you to think about this topic?

Team Sports Build Character
by Robert K. Fuller

The Dark Side of Team Sports
by Grace Young



Name _____

Lesson 4

Quickwrite!

In response to both texts

What is the most convincing reason each of these authors gave? In your own words, briefly describe each reason and evidence the author provided to support it.

Team Sports Build Character
by Robert K. Fuller

Most convincing reason:

Evidence for that reason:

The Dark Side of Team Sports
by Grace Young

Most convincing reason:

Evidence for that reason:



Name _____

Lesson 5

Quickwrite!

I'm Not Convinced

Choose something from one of the texts that did not convince you. Tell the author what was not convincing and explain why you were not convinced.

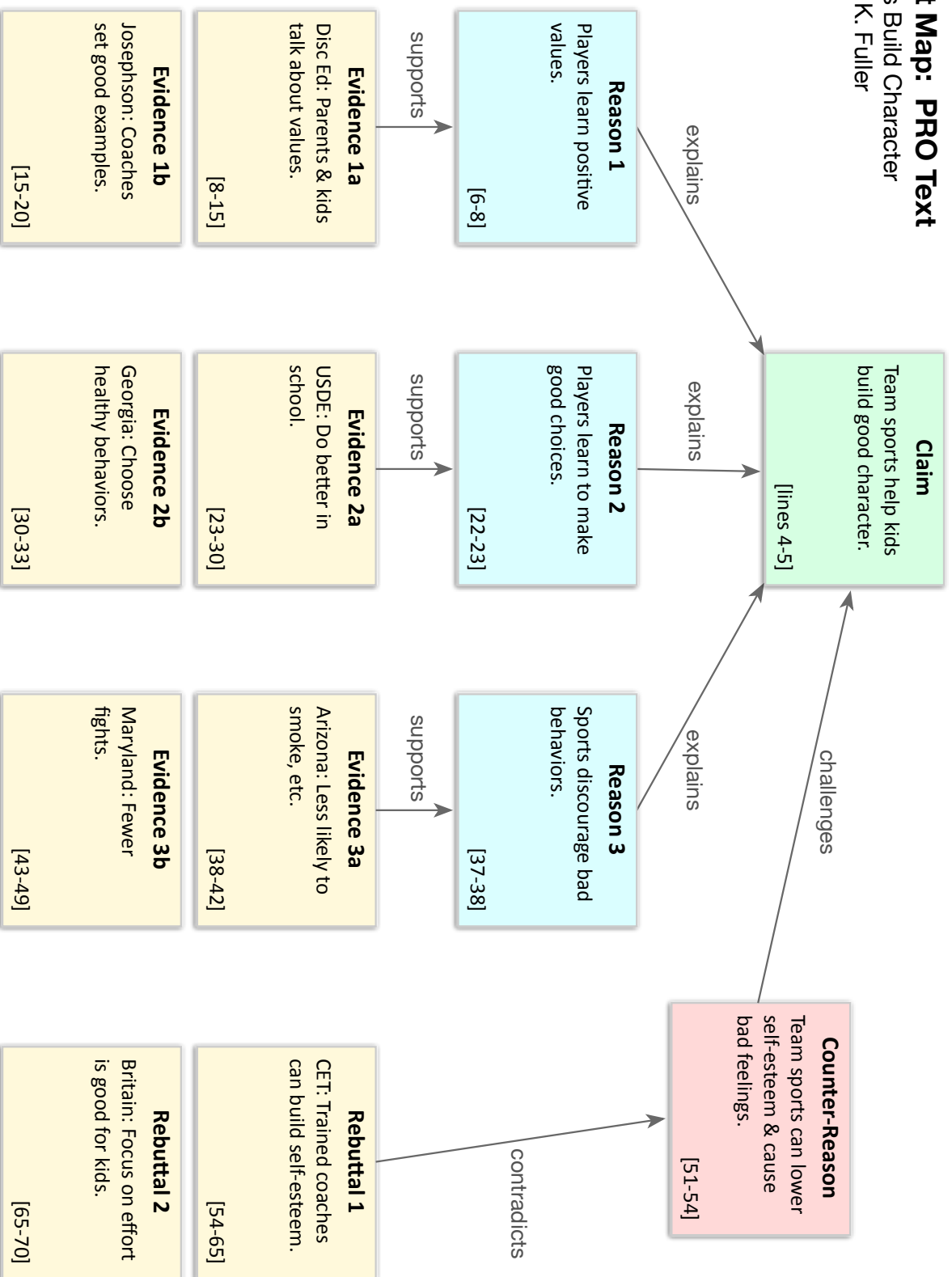


Tab 3 – Argument Maps

- Map of PRO text:
Team Sports Build Character
- Map of CON text:
The Dark Side of Team Sports



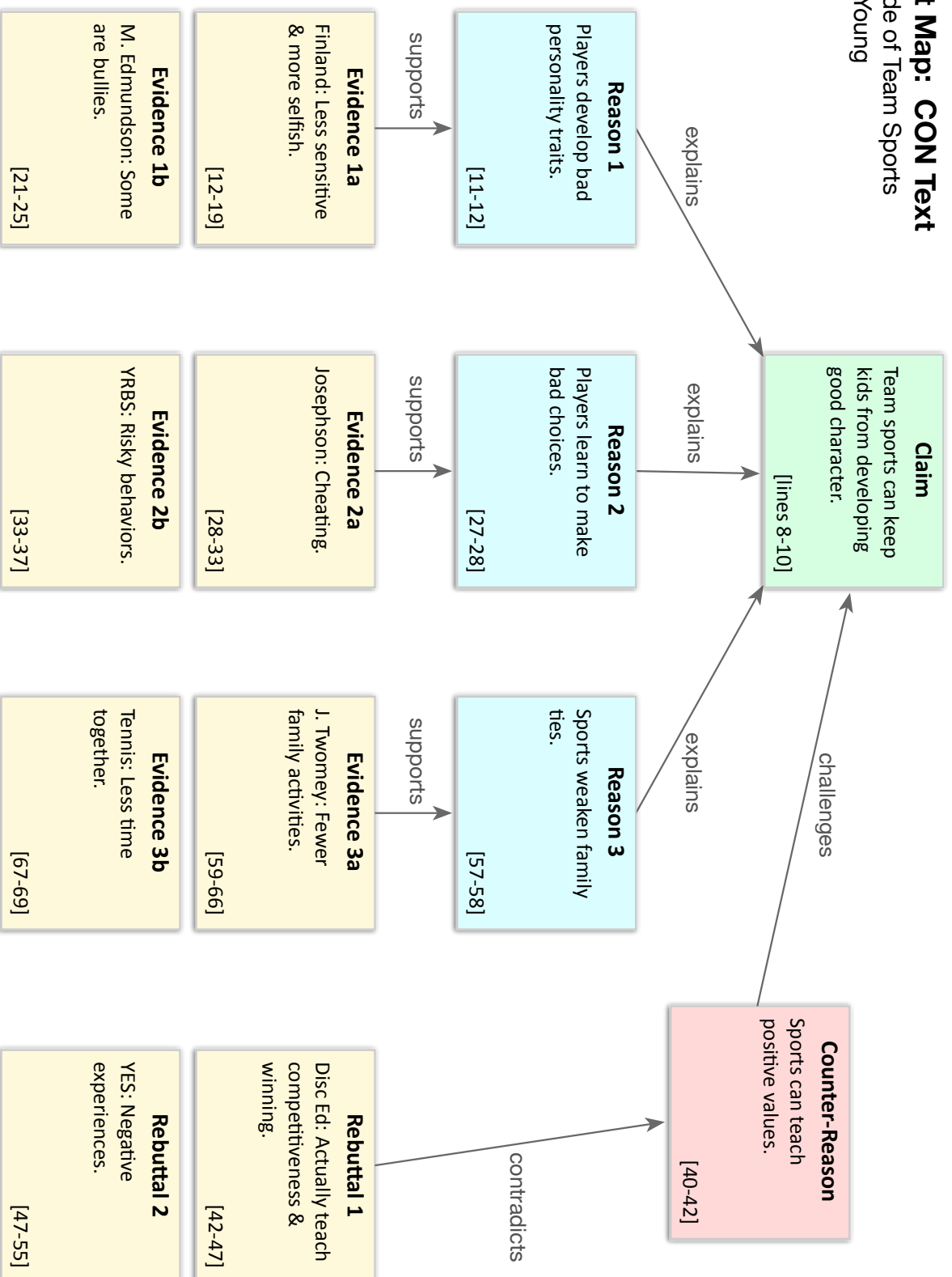
Argument Map: PRO Text
 Team Sports Build Character
 by Robert K. Fuller





Argument Map: CON Text

The Dark Side of Team Sports
by Grace Young





Tab 4 – Planning your essay

- Essay Criteria
- Outline Template
- Peer Feedback 1
- Peer Feedback 2



Team Sports

Extended Writing Task: Argument Essay

Essay prompt:

What policy should your school follow about team sports?

Your score will be based on the following criteria:

Claim	Your claim is clearly stated and it responds to the prompt
Reasons	You include at least two different reasons why you believe your claim
Evidence	Each reason is supported by at least one piece of evidence
CR/Rebuttal	You include a counter-reason that goes against your claim and a rebuttal that shows that the C-R is false
Conclusion	Your essay ends with a conclusion that connects back to the claim
Signal Words	You use signal words to help readers follow the logic of your argument
Organization	Your essay has paragraphs that organize your argument

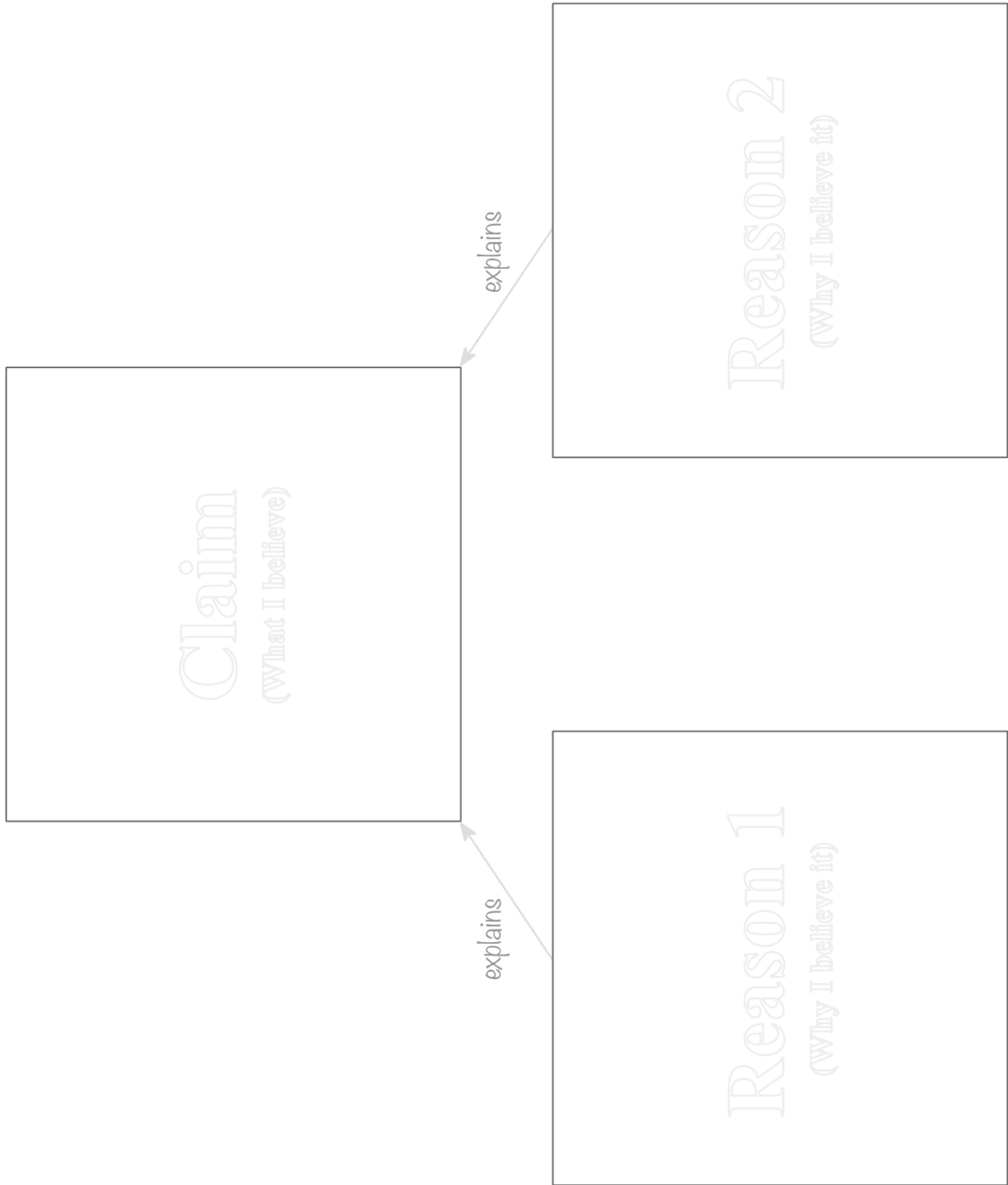
Bonus points will be awarded for:

- a third reason with evidence
- originality of ideas



Outline Map on Back →





supports

Evidence 2a
(How I know it's true)

Evidence 2b
(How I know it's true)

supports

Evidence 1a
(How I know it's true)

Evidence 1b
(How I know it's true)

← Outline Map on Front



Counter-Reason
(A reason that goes against my argument)

challenges claim

goes against

Rebuttal a
(How I know it's false)

Rebuttal b
(How I know it's false)





explains claim

Reason 3
(Why I believe it)

supports

Evidence 3a
(How I know it's true)

Evidence 3b
(How I know it's true)



PEER FEEDBACK I

- Read the author's claim and provide feedback by writing comments that answer the questions below.
- Write your comments on a post-it and place it on the author's outline near the claim.
- Add your initials to the post-it so your partner will remember who wrote it.
- Honest feedback can help your partner improve their essay.

Essay prompt: **What policy should your school follow about team sports?**

Question 1 – Do you understand exactly what the claim is saying?	
If your answer is:	You could write something like:
yes	Your claim is clear.
kind of	Try to make your claim a little clearer.
no	I don't understand your claim.
Question 2 – Does the claim address the prompt?	
If your answer is:	You could write something like:
yes	Addresses prompt.
no	Does not address prompt.
Question 3 – Can the claim be supported by text evidence?	
If your answer is:	You could write something like:
yes	Easy to support.
kind of	Might be hard to support.
no	Will probably be hard to support.



PEER FEEDBACK 2

- Examine the author's outline and write comments that answer the questions below.
- Write your comments and your initials on post-its and place them on the author's outline.
- Honest feedback can help your partner improve their essay.

Essay prompt: **What policy should your school follow about team sports?**

Question 1 – Is there a clearly stated claim that addresses the prompt?	
If your answer is:	You could write something like:
yes	Your claim is clear and it addresses the prompt.
no	Try to make your claim clearer; Your claim does not address the prompt.
Question 2 – Are there at least two different reasons that clearly explain why the author believes the claim?	
yes	Your reasons explain your claim.
no	Missing a reason; This reason isn't clear; This reason doesn't explain your claim.
Question 3 – Is there at least one piece of text evidence to support each reason?	
yes	You have text evidence to support each reason.
no	Missing text evidence for this reason; This evidence isn't clear; This isn't text evidence.
Question 4 – Is there a counter-reason that goes against the claim?	
yes	You have a counter-reason that goes against your claim.
no	Missing a counter-reason; Your counter-reason doesn't really go against your claim.
Question 5 – Is there a rebuttal that shows the counter-reason is false?	
yes	Your rebuttal shows your counter-reason is false.
no	Missing a rebuttal; Your rebuttal doesn't really show your counter-reason is false.



Tab 5 – Writing your essay

- Teacher’s Model Draft
- Self Checklist
- Draft paper
- Sample Marked Essay
- Scoring Rubric
- Sample Draft & Final
- Final essay paper



Teacher's Model Draft

One reason the school should promote team sports is because it can help students stay active and healthy. A survey of high school students in Georgia found that sports players are more likely than non-players to use seatbelts, get regular exercise, and eat healthy foods. Moreover, the Center for Disease Control says that regular physical activity helps children grow physically strong and emotionally healthy. Together, these two pieces of evidence show that playing sports can help students develop healthy habits and stay fit.

Some people say sports make children too competitive. However, programs like Coach Effectiveness Training teach coaches to focus more on improvement than winning. This helps players work together instead of competing with each other. Similarly, Lisa Harper says playing soccer taught her daughter to work with her teammates and respect them. Both pieces show that sports can teach cooperation rather than competition.



SELF CHECKLIST

Author _____

CLAIM

- yes no Do you state a claim?
- yes no Is it clear?
- yes no Does your claim respond to the writing prompt?

REASONS

- yes no Do you have at least 2 reasons?
- yes no Do they explain why you believe the claim?
- yes no Are your reasons different from each other?

EVIDENCE

- yes no Do you support each reason with text evidence?
- yes no Are your sources given?
- yes no Do you have different evidence for different reasons?
- yes no Do you explain how your evidence supports its reason?

COUNTER-REASON

- yes no Do you have a counter-reason that goes against your claim?
- yes no Is it clear?

REBUTTAL

- yes no Do you have a rebuttal?
- yes no Are your sources given?
- yes no Do you explain how your rebuttal shows the counter-reason is false?

CONCLUSION

- yes no Do you have a conclusion?
- yes no Does it connect back to the claim?

LANGUAGE & ORGANIZATION

- yes no Do you use signal words to help readers follow your argument?
- yes no Do you use paragraphs to organize your argument?

What are you doing in your essay to make sure your argument will be convincing to your readers?







Sample Marked Essay

C

My school should not have a team sports program, and here's why.

R1

One reason is because kids can get hurt playing sports. The National Center for

E1a

Sports Safety says that 3.5 million kids are treated for sports injuries each year.

R2

Another reason is because uniforms, equipment and fees can be very expensive.

R3

A third reason is that it can be hard on families. In an ig Sports survey, most

E3a

moms say their whole family is stressed by the sport, mostly because of time and

money issues. This shows that families can suffer when kids play sports. Also,

some coaches teach players to cheat without getting caught.

C-R

Supporters claim that sports build character. But that isn't really true.

reb

Writer Mark Edmundson says that many athletes are bullies who "like to

humiliate their foes." This shows that sports actually do the opposite of building

conc

character. In conclusion, middle schools should not have sports teams

because kids can get hurt, it can be expensive, and it can stress their family.



Argument Essay Scoring Rubric – Unit 2

Claim	
2	Your claim is clearly stated and it answers the writing prompt.
1	Your claim addresses the topic, but it is not clear or it does not answer the prompt.
Reasons <small>(third reason is bonus)</small>	
2	You include at least two different reasons that explain why you believe your claim.
1	You have only one reason, or your reasons are very similar or do not connect to your claim.
Evidence	
2	For each reason, you include at least one piece of evidence that clearly supports the reason.
1	You support one but not all of your reasons with text evidence, or your evidence does not clearly support a reason.
Connections	
2	You include sentences that explain how evidence connects to a reason or how a reason connects to your claim.
1	You try to explain connections, but your explanations are vague, unclear, or inaccurate.
Counter-Reason & Rebuttal	
2	You include a counter-reason that goes against your claim and a rebuttal that goes against the counter-reason.
1	You include a counter-reason and rebuttal, but your rebuttal supports the counter-reason rather than arguing against it.
Conclusion	
2	Your essay ends with a conclusion that connects back to your claim.
1	Your essay ends with a conclusion, but it is unclear or simply restates your claim.
Signal Words	
2	You use signal words to help readers follow the logic of your argument.
1	You include signal words, but you use them incorrectly.
Organization	
2	Your essay is divided into paragraphs, and each paragraph has just one big idea.
1	Your essay is divided into paragraphs, but you have a paragraph with multiple reasons or a reason and counter-reason.
Originality of Ideas <small>(bonus)</small>	
2	Your argument is different from the unit texts. Your reasons might be original, or you might use evidence in an original way.
1	Part of your argument is original, but one or more segments are very similar to a unit text.





