



EduTrend Contents

P4C · LOGIC AND CRITICAL THINKING · HIGH SCHOOL

Mapping an Argument

Find the premises, conclusion and hidden assumptions in a real-world argument

Ages 15–18

Level: Advanced

60 minutes

Circle and pairs · up to
30

Activity 05

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 05 · AT A GLANCE

Mapping an Argument

Students read a short invented opinion piece arguing that schools should ban homework. In pairs they map the argument: the main conclusion, the reasons given, the evidence, and the hidden assumptions the author needs. They then test the weakest link, suggest an objection and a reply, and enquire into what makes an argument persuasive versus sound.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- map argument structure;
- identify hidden assumptions;
- evaluate premises and inferences;
- construct objections and replies.

KEY WORDS

argument map · premise · assumption · inference · objection · soundness

CURRICULUM LINKS

English: persuasive writing.
Politics: public debate. Philosophy: logic.

1**STIMULUS**

Share something to think about

2**THINK**

Quiet thinking time

3**QUESTION**

Create and choose a question

4**ENQUIRE**

Reason together

5**BUILD**

Agree, disagree, add

6**REFLECT**

Last words

Materials (per class)

- Opinion piece
- Argument map template
- Question and thinking-move cards
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Read the stimulus and note possible concepts.
- Prepare question and thinking-move cards.
- Set out a circle so everyone can see each other.
- Print the worksheets.

SAFETY

Everyone may pass. Discuss ideas, not people, and use the story or invented examples rather than personal situations.

ACTIVITY 05 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Stay neutral: ask for reasons, examples and counter-examples rather than giving your own view.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–10 min Stimulus	Read the homework opinion piece.	<i>"What did you notice?"</i>
10–22 min Questions	Students create questions in pairs and vote on one.	<i>"Which question is most interesting to talk about?"</i>
22–52 min Enquiry	Enquire into the chosen question, building on each other's ideas.	<i>"What makes an argument sound rather than just persuasive?"</i>
52–60 min Last words	Each person says one last thought or passes.	<i>"Has your thinking changed?"</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Produce a map of the argument, name its weakest point and repair it if you can.

ACTIVITY 05 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Argument mapping shows how reasons connect to conclusions and where they depend on unstated assumptions.

Persuasive techniques can make weak arguments feel strong, so structure must be checked.

Common ideas to listen for

- “Persuasive means good.” Rhetoric can hide weak logic.
- “Assumptions are always bad.” They must be reasonable.
- “Finding a flaw means the conclusion is false.” It may still be true.

Adapting the activity

Support

Provide a partly completed map.

Stretch

Map a real opinion article on a different topic.

WORKSHEET 1

Argument map

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Draw the structure.

Conclusion at the top, reasons below, assumptions in dotted boxes

WORKSHEET 2

Thinking moves

Use these in the enquiry.

Thinking moves

Thinking move	My example
I agree with... because...	
I disagree with... because...	
An example is...	
A counter-example is...	
Building on what... said...	

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

Which hidden assumption does this argument need most? Before the enquiry I thought... Now I think... because...

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Asks a philosophical question	Gives reasons and examples	Listens and builds on others

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Mapping an Argument is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Logic and Critical Thinking programme (high school, level: advanced). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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