

## Guidance to Score Student Writing - Arguments

### Understanding CERCA

Element	Definition
<b>Claim</b>	A claim is an opinion, or point of view, that the author wants others to understand and accept. Good claims should be specific, debatable, defensible, and significant or meaningful to the audience.
<b>Counterargument</b>	A counterargument includes BOTH a counterclaim, or a statement that is opposed to the writer's claim, and a piece of evidence, a reason, and/or reasoning that explains why the writer believes the counterclaim to be incorrect or not as strong their claim.
<b>Reason</b>	A reason explains why the author believes the claim (or thinks it is true or valid). An argument may have one reason or multiple reasons to be strong.
<b>Evidence</b>	Evidence are facts or details that a writer uses to show why the claim is true or valid. Evidence can include statistics, quotations, or examples. Each reason should be supported by evidence.
<b>Reasoning</b>	Reasoning statements link evidence back to reasons or claims. Reasoning should clearly explain why the evidence is relevant.
<b>Organization</b>	<p>A piece of writing should have a clear and coherent organization to show how all the ideas are connected. Ideas should be clearly grouped and flow easily from one group of ideas to another. Strong organization includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-An introduction that engages the reader, sets a purpose, and introduces the topic.</li> <li>-A conclusion that restates the claim in a different way.</li> <li>-Transitions between ideas, especially between paragraphs and between elements of the argument (claim, reasons, evidence, reasoning).</li> </ul>
<b>Audience Appropriate Language</b>	Writers should choose language that is appropriate to their audience and purpose. They should have a clear style and tone that matches their purpose. Sentences should be varied to support meaning and purpose.
<b>Conventions of English</b>	The writer should use correct and conventional grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling.

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### Understanding the Rubrics

Students can score between 1-5 on the rubric, which generally means:

Levels	General Meaning
1	Not Present/Absent
2	Struggling to express rubric components - Attempted but not fully correct and/or effective
3	Emerging competency of rubric components - Demonstrated the structure, but clarity, cohesion, and/or linking to the topic/claim are still areas of growth
4	Well-understood and accomplished use of rubric components - CERCA mechanics understood and used correctly
5	Exemplary use of rubric components - mechanics understood and correctly demonstrated and integrated with Personalization/Voice (Flair)

**NOTE:** Mastery occurs over time. No one assessment (or assignment) should be used to demonstrate mastery.

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Below are examples for how you can provide a score for student work. Please refer to [Feedback on Student Writing](#) for additional questions and comments you can use in written or conference feedback. Additional guidance for scoring can be found in the [grade-level rubrics](#).

### Claim/Counterclaim

If your student does this	Then you should give them
Writes "I don't know" (IDK) or leaves it blank.	Benchmark writing - Give the student a 1.  During the year - Don't score this element. Return for revision with a comment. Ask students if they forgot to copy over their writing or if they used the graphic organizer in the the platform.
Provides a claim <b>but</b> is not clear or supportable.	Give the student a 2. Provide guiding questions to help students support or clarify their claim.
Does not pick a side of the claim. They choose to remain neutral and will argue for and against in one sentence.	Give the student a 2. Provide guiding questions to help students choose a side.  <i>Some students may provide a claim that is nuanced and supports both sides, but explains that one is more important than another: give students a 4 or 5 depending on how strong their claim is.</i>
Provides a clear and supportable claim that responds to the question <b>but</b> does <b>not</b> have a counterargument.	<i>If the student is in 7th grade or above:</i> Give the student a 2.  <i>Below grade 7, counterclaim is not required so do not decrease the score if they don't have a counterclaim: give students a 4 or 5 depending on how strong their claim is.</i>
Provides a clear and supportable claim that responds to the question and a counterclaim <b>but</b> reasons, evidence, or reasoning is not present to rebut the counterclaim.	<i>If the student is in 7th grade or above:</i> Give the student a 2. Provide guiding questions to help students explain why the counterclaim is not as strong as their claim.  <i>Below grade 7, counterclaim is not required so do not decrease the score if they don't have a counterclaim: give students a 4 or 5 depending on how strong their claim is.</i>
Provides a clear and supportable claim that responds to the prompt <b>and</b> has an explicit counterclaim written.	Give the student a 4 on claim/counterclaim.
Provides a strong claim and counterclaim <b>and</b> those elements are written in a way that reveals the student's voice.	Give the student a 5 on claim/counterclaim.

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### Reasons

If your student does this	Then you should give them
Has not included a reason for the claim.	Give the student a 1 and provide guiding questions in feedback on how to appropriately include reasons.
Has included a reason, but it isn't connected to the claim.	Give the student a 2 and annotate where else they should have included a reason with guiding questions such as "Can you tell me more about why you believe your claim is true?"
Has included reasons but they are not referred to throughout the argument.	Give the student a 3 and provide guiding questions to help them identify places to refer to their reasons.
Has included clear reasons that connect to the claim and are referred to throughout the argument.	Give the student a 4.
Has included clear reasons that connect to the claim and are referred to and supported throughout the argument. Reasons are written in a strong, compelling voice.	Give the student a 5.

### Evidence

If your student does this	Then you should give them
Does not use evidence from the text.	Give the student a 1. Identify where students could have brought in evidence to support their argument. Remind students that in this type of writing, their beliefs and perspectives are most useful in the reasoning section. Consider returning for revision or having a writing conference with students on future lessons. Point students to the highlighting step which often provides opportunities to find evidence they can use in their arguments.
Includes fewer than 3 pieces of evidence (or fewer than you requested) <b>and</b> they are not drawn explicitly from the text.	Give the student a 2 or 3 (depending on how effective the evidence is in supporting the claim). Remind students of the expectation of how much evidence they were to include. Consider returning for revision.
Has 3 pieces of evidence but it is not cited and/or drawn explicitly from the text.	Give the student a 3 or 4 (depending on how effective the evidence is in supporting the claim) and remind the student how to use the information from the text and cite it appropriately.
Includes 3 pieces of evidence (or the number you requested) and draws explicitly from the text, with citations.	Give the student a 4.

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Includes 3 pieces of evidence (or the number you requested). The evidence draws explicitly from the text and is rewritten, summarized, or quoted in a way that demonstrates their unique student voice.	Give the student a 5.
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### Reasoning

If your student does this	Then you should give them
Has not included reasoning.	Give the student a 1 and provide guiding questions in feedback on how to appropriately include reasoning.
Has included reasoning that is not related to evidence or indicates limited understanding of the topic.	Give the student a 2 and provide guiding questions about how to make reasoning more specific or relevant.
Has included reasoning for only some of their points of evidence.	Give the student a 3 and annotate where else they should have included reasoning with guiding questions such as “Can you tell me more about why this piece of evidence fits with your claim?”
Has included reasoning for all points of evidence.	Give the student a 4.
Provides reasoning for all points of evidence and integrates it in a way that adds to the complexity and nuance of the topic. .	Give the student a 5.

### Organization - Introduction and Conclusion

*Organization includes introduction, conclusion, and the way that ideas are developed in the body of the essay. Please use the information in both of these organization charts to guide your scoring and feedback.*

If your student does this	Then you should give them
Does not have a conclusion or introduction.	Give the student a 1, ask them to write a conclusion or introduction, and return for revision.
Is missing an introduction or a conclusion.	Give the student a 2 and indicate the missing piece. Provide guiding questions to help the students craft the missing piece.
Includes attempts at an introduction and a conclusion, but the conclusion does not wrap up the argument clearly <b>or</b> the introduction does not introduce the writing coherently.	Give the student a 3, but give feedback on why they received that score. This feedback may include “be specific in your conclusion so your reader recalls your positions and points.” If the introduction or conclusion attempt is not coherent, you may wish to give the students a 2 and provide guiding questions to help them clarify their ideas.

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Has a clear, strong conclusion and introduction.	Give the student a 4.
Has a clear, strong conclusion and introduction that uses the student's unique voice.	Give the student a 5.

### Organization - Development of Ideas

*Organization includes introduction, conclusion, and the way that ideas are developed in the body of the essay. Please use the information in both of these organization charts to guide your scoring and feedback.*

<b>If your student does this</b>	<b>Then you should give them</b>
Ideas are not developed and the argument is hard to follow.	Give the student a 1. Provide guiding questions to help the student rearrange the ideas. Refer them
Ideas are generally developed. Reasons are not clearly supported or connected to evidence through reasoning. Transitions are inconsistent or incorrectly used.	Give the student a 2 or 3 (depending on the development) but give feedback on why they received that score. This feedback may include "be specific in your conclusion so your reader recalls your positions and points)
Has a clear organization. Reasons are supported and connected to evidence through reasoning. Ideas flow clearly and the essay uses transitions to indicate the introduction of new ideas.	Give the student a 4.
Has a clear organization with transitions and is written with a clear, unique student voice.	Give the student a 5.

### Audience Appropriate Language (Style)

<b>If your student does this</b>	<b>Then you should give them</b>
Writes in an informal tone most of the time.	Give the student a 1 or 2.
Has a piece of writing that does not have a clear audience in mind.	Ask students who their audience is for their piece of writing and what type of language or vocabulary they would use for that audience. If this should have been done before they submitted, give your student a 2. If not, then return for revision.
Consistently maintains a formal tone but grade level and/or discipline specific vocabulary may be missing.	Give the student a 3 or 4.

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Consistently maintains a formal tone with grade level and/or discipline specific vocabulary.	Give the student a 5.
Has a clear audience through language.	Give your student a 5, but make sure to provide feedback as to why their language was audience-appropriate.

### Conventions of English

If your student does this	Then you should give them
Has many errors that hinder understanding.	1
Has some errors.	2-3 (depending on how much the errors hinder understanding)
Has a few errors.	4
Has no errors.	5
Conventions of English include many topics, so regardless of the score you give your student here, make sure that you are clearly identifying what they did well and what they need to work on. Do not focus all the feedback on spelling, grammar, or punctuation, unless it is clear that is a major part of their grade.	Identify one area for students to focus on. Provide feedback, return for revision, and continually support student growth. Regardless of the score, provide meaningful feedback to students.