

PATIENCE LEARNING • FREE 1-DAY CASE

Two Slots

A free single-session case from the world of **The Editorial**, the 11-day argument-evaluation simulation.

GRADE 8 • ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (EVALUATING ARGUMENTS & EVIDENCE) • ~45 MIN • 1 CLASS PERIOD

Your students run a newspaper's editorial board. Three op-eds, one open slot. Each one argues well and pulls at you. The job isn't to pick the one you agree with — it's to pick the one whose argument actually holds up, and to tell reasoning apart from confidence.

TEACHER QUICK-START

Objective: Students evaluate written arguments for evidence and logic (not agreement or confidence), identify a persuasive-but-flawed argument, and defend which op-ed earns publication.

Standards tie-in: CCSS RI.8.8 (evaluate an argument and specific claims; assess whether reasoning is sound and evidence relevant), W.8.1 (argument), SL.8.3 (evaluate a speaker's reasoning).

What you need: Just this packet. Print the student pages (works individually or in teams of 3–4). No prep.

- 1. Set the scene (5 min).** “You're the editorial board. One slot, three op-eds. You can only print what actually holds up.”
- 2. Read the op-eds (8 min).** Teams read the three argument summaries and the evaluation checklist.
- 3. Judge & decide (20 min).** Rate each argument, then pick which to publish and defend it.
- 4. The reveal (8 min).** Walk the answer key. The point: a confident, moving argument can still be a weak one.
- 5. Reflection (4 min).** Each student answers the reflection question.

The Editorial Board

You are the editorial board of the *Lincoln Middle Ledger*. Three students submitted op-eds arguing the school should ban phones during lunch. You have ONE slot. You must publish the strongest ARGUMENT — not the one you personally agree with, and not the one that sounds the most confident.

HOW A BOARD JUDGES AN ARGUMENT

Check each op-ed for: **(1) Evidence** — real facts/data, or just strong feelings? **(2) Logic** — do the reasons actually lead to the conclusion? **(3) Fairness** — does it deal with the other side honestly? Confidence and passion are NOT on this list.

THE THREE OP-EDS

Op-Ed A — “Obviously.” Passionate and certain: “Everyone KNOWS phones are ruining lunch. Anyone who disagrees just doesn’t care about real conversation. It’s common sense.” No data; dismisses the other side as not caring. Reads with total confidence.

Op-Ed B — “The Cafeteria Study.” Calm and specific: cites the school’s own survey (lunch-table conversations dropped after phones spread), acknowledges that some students use phones to include shy friends, and argues a lunch-only limit still respects that. Modest tone.

Op-Ed C — “My Cousin.” Emotional and vivid: tells a moving story about the writer’s cousin who felt alone at lunch because everyone was on phones. Powerful — but it’s one story, and it leaps from that to “so phones must be banned for everyone.”

Your Call (Decision Sheet)

Team name: _____ Period: _____

Step 1 — Rate each op-ed on the three tests (Strong / Weak).

	Evidence?	Logic holds?	Fair to other side?
A — “Obviously”	_____	_____	_____
B — “Cafeteria Study”	_____	_____	_____
C — “My Cousin”	_____	_____	_____

Step 2 — The trap. Op-Ed C is the most moving to read. Why is “most moving” not the same as “strongest argument”?

Step 3 — Publish which one? Pick the op-ed you'd print and defend it with the three tests:

Step 4 — The fix. Op-Ed C has a real strength (that story). How could its writer turn it into a publishable argument? _____

ANSWER KEY (for the reveal)

Step 1 — Ratings:

A (“Obviously”): Weak on all three — no evidence, a “common sense” claim isn’t logic, and it dismisses opponents as not caring (unfair). Confidence is doing all the work. **B (“Cafeteria Study”): Strong on all three** — real survey data, reasoning that fits, and it honestly addresses the other side. **C (“My Cousin”): mixed** — vivid and sincere, but one story isn’t evidence for a school-wide rule, and it leaps to the conclusion.

Step 2 — The trap:

Op-Ed C moves you emotionally, and it’s easy to confuse “I felt something” with “this was argued well.” One powerful anecdote can carry a weak argument past your guard. Feeling persuaded is not the same as being given good reasons.

Step 3 — Publish:

Op-Ed B. It’s the only one that passes all three tests — evidence, sound logic, and fairness to the other side. It’s also the least dramatic to read, which is exactly why a careful board has to resist A’s confidence and C’s emotion.

Step 4 — The fix for C:

Keep the cousin’s story as an opening hook, then back it with real evidence (like B’s survey) and stop overclaiming — argue for a lunch-only limit the data supports, not a total ban “because of one person.” Story + evidence beats story alone.

The big idea:

The most confident argument (A) and the most moving one (C) were the weakest. The quiet, evidenced one (B) was the strongest. Real editorial judgment separates how an argument makes you FEEL from whether it actually holds up.

REFLECTION (graded on thinking, not the “right” answer)

“One op-ed was confident, one was moving, one was evidenced. Which pulled at you hardest, and how did the three tests keep you honest?”

SCORING THE THINKING

	3 — Strong	2 — Developing	1 — Beginning
Applies the tests	Uses all three on every op-ed	Partial	Judges by agreement
Confidence ≠ strength	Flags A’s confidence as a gap	Hints at it	Rewards confidence
Emotion ≠ evidence	Explains why C isn’t strongest	Mentions it	Publishes C for feeling
Explains clearly	A reader can follow it	Partly clear	Unclear

READY FOR THE FULL SIMULATION?

This was three op-eds. The Editorial is eleven days on the board.

In the full 11-day simulation, students run an editorial board choosing which two of five op-eds to publish. Each piece argues well and pulls differently, and the group has to decide what actually holds up versus what merely reads with confidence — tracking how their collective opinion drifts along the way. Graded on reasoning, never on picking the “right” pieces.

THE EDITORIAL · GRADE 8 ELA · \$39 · patiencelearning.com/simulations

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