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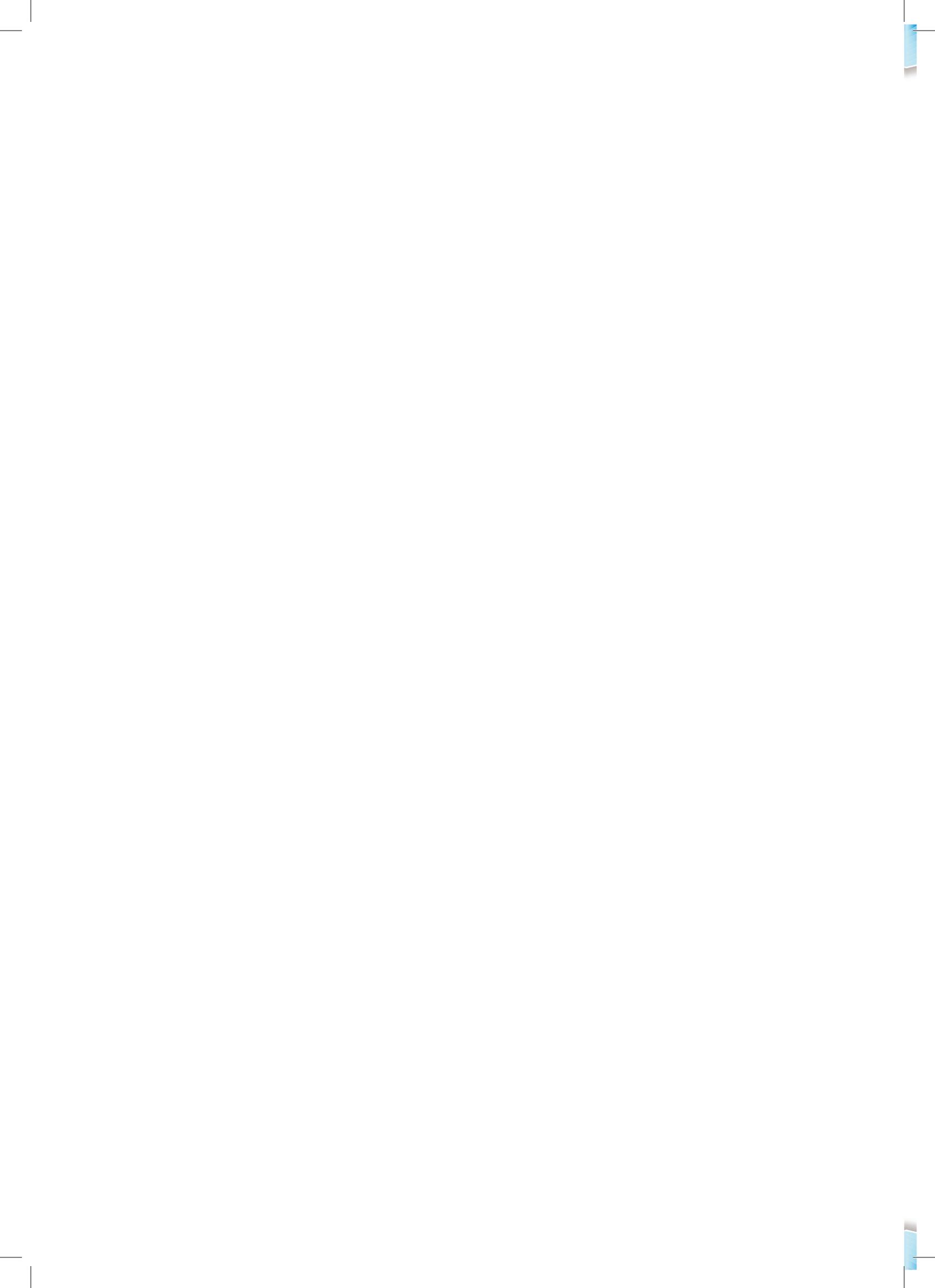
Debate

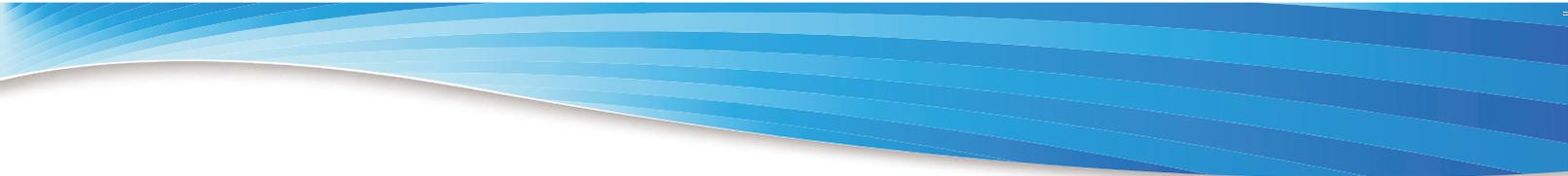
Instructional Resource Materials

Lesson 5: Refutation



Debaters Today, Leaders Tomorrow





Lesson Plan

Part One – Unit 1

Lesson 5: Refutation

Subject

Debate and the skills of debating

Topic

Refutation

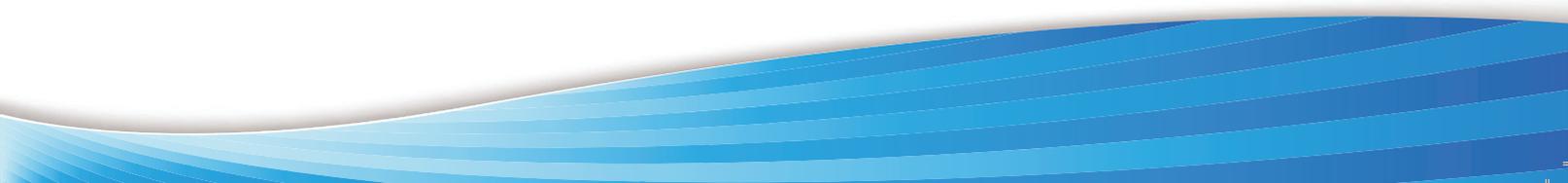
Level

Intended audience: Beginners.

Projected Length of the Lesson

Pre-requisites

Lessons 2 and 3.



Description:

By now the students should have learnt some of the basics of debate, including:

- The format and structure of a debate.
- The roles of the different speakers.
- The components of an argument.

In this lesson, students will learn how to refute an argument.

Goals

The overall goals of this lesson are to:

- To reinforce basic public speaking and argumentation skills.
- To attain an understanding of debate and argumentation.
- To exhibit comprehension of the four-step model of refutation.

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- Identify and acknowledge opposing arguments.
- Learn how to refute opposing arguments.
- Be introduced to the concept of direct refutation.
- Learn about the different ways of refuting opponents' arguments.
- Be able to respond to individual arguments in a structured and understandable way.

Key words & phrases

- a) **Argument:** A conclusion together with the premises that support it.
- b) **Assertion:** A statement or claim (usually an opinion) about the world.
- c) **Reasoning** (elaboration and explanation): This is the “because” part of the argument. Reasoning makes the speaker’s assertion an argument.
- d) **Evidence** (support used to help prove and show): Provides proof to support your argument. The four types of evidence include: example, common sense, statistics and expert opinion.
- a) **Refutation/Rebuttal:** This refers to the response or reaction of debaters to the arguments of the opposing team. Refutation/Rebuttal is one of the most important components of debating. Different speakers should handle rebuttal slightly differently. For example, the rebuttal by a first negative should be brief enough to allow the negative to develop their case fully.
- e) **Point of information:** A request to the speaker that holds the floor to yield the floor to a statement or question from a member of the opposing team.

Introduction

After students have covered lessons 2, 3 and 4, they are now ready to learn about refutation. The core in this lesson is introducing students to the four-step refutation. Students learn about the different ways of refuting opponents’ arguments and how to respond to individual arguments in a structured and understandable way.

Materials

- Laptop
- Video projector
- Screen

- Writing pads
- Pens/Pencils
- Flipcharts

Procedure

This section describes the different component parts of the present lesson.

1. Preparation (5 minutes)

- a) Prepare a PowerPoint Presentation created to run slide shows that explain the intended debate format.
- b) Have short embedded video clips ready for use to demonstrate the debate format.
- c) Have an LCD projector ready for displaying computer data on a screen.
- d) Provide notepads, pens, and pencils.

2. Lesson Body

This part of this lesson includes the different steps followed in the delivery of the lesson.

Session 1: Stage Fright

Warm-up Activity

As a warm-up exercise, the instructor may ask students to think about possible meanings of the word/term ‘Refutation’.

The instructor may initiate the activity by questions such as:

- What do we refute?
- Why do we refute?
- How do we refute?
- What do we need to refute?

The students are encouraged to share and discuss their answers and the instructor guides the students as they engage in this open discussion.

Activity 2: In-class exercise

- a) Split the class into groups of 3–4, depending on class size.
- b) Choose a newspaper or magazine article that deals with a controversial issue.
- c) Provide each group with copies of the article.
- d) Ask the students to read the article.
- e) Have them think of reasons why they might support the issue.
- f) Have them also think of reasons why you (or other students) might reject it.
- g) Students read and analyze the articles.
- h) Each group is to provide feedback summary to the class.
- i) They then try and provide brief answers to these questions:
 - What is the article about?
 - What is the purpose of this article?
 - What does the writer intend to say?
 - What claims and/arguments does the writer present?

- How does the writer defend these claims/arguments?
 - What evidence does the writer give to support his claims and arguments?
 - Does the article reflect the writer's opinion on its topic, or is it purely objective?
 - What possible sources of evidence are not included?
- j) Ask the students to think of arguments that can be used against the writer's claims?
- k) Ask some of them to give a 2 to 3-minute speech about both sides of the issue.
- l) Allow some time for discussion, depending on the size of the group.
- m) Guide the discussion.

Activity 3: Four-Step Refutation

- a) Distribute to the class an equal number of affirmative and negative 'evidence cards'.
- b) Each student should have at least one card; for small groups, they may have several.
- c) The instructor should create a flow chart on the board with 2 columns, an affirmative and negative answer.
- d) Explain to the students what the affirmative case proposal is.
- e) Ask them to identify if they are holding a negative or affirmative piece of evidence.
- f) Place the students into affirmative and negative groups.
- g) Allow them 5 minutes to review their evidence and construct a response using Four Step Refutation.
- h) The first affirmative student should present their evidence using Four Step Refutation, with the instructor flowing the argument on the board.
- i) Then the negative students should determine if their evidence answers the argument.

- If it does, ask that student/small group to craft the statement into the argument model and present it to the class.
- j) This reinforces for the students how to make a complete argument, while exhibiting how to flow Four Step Refutation in the round.

Note: *The most important tool a debater possesses is the ability to flow precisely. Flowing is the practiced art of note taking. Good argumentation requires you to specifically address your opponent's arguments.*

Handout: Four-Step Refutation

Four-Step Refutation is a powerful tool that helps you respond to opponent's arguments while keeping your own arguments organized.

1. Identify your opponent's claim that you are refuting.
2. Number your response, 1, 2, 3, etc., and recite the counter claim or tag.
3. Read the warrant evidence that supports your claim, or explain the logical warrant to your argument.
4. Impact your argument by explaining to the judge/audience the implications of your argument.

Activity 4: Rebuttal tennis (Presenting & Refuting Arguments)

The purpose of this activity is to engage all students in class. The students will practice the skills of refuting by holding short bouts of 'rebuttal tennis'. This is an activity during which one team is on the offensive. Suggested steps for the instructor include:

- a) Prepare a list of topics to use in class. The number may depend on class size and time availability.
- b) Explain that the activity will involve:
 - Students making statements in favor of the topic.
 - Others attacking those statements.

- c) Give guidance to the students regarding
 - What each student is supposed to do
 - Who will start
 - Who is next
 - What each student is supposed to do
 - When to speak, etc.
- d) Divide the class into 2 groups.
- e) Each group consists of 3, 5, or 7 members depending on class size.
- f) Have the 2 groups sit opposite each other.
- g) Each student sits facing a partner from the other group.
- h) The 1st student from group (A) makes a statement in support of the topic.
- i) The 1st student from group (B) sitting opposite immediately disagrees and rejects the statement made by the previous speaker.
- j) The 2nd student from group (A) makes a statement in support of the topic.
- k) The 2nd student from group (B) sitting opposite immediately disagrees and rejects the statement made by the previous speaker.

The game continues until everyone has had a chance to participate.

Activity 5: The Assertion Box

Students will produce assertions on slips of paper and “stock” the classroom Assertion Box. Students practice refutation skills by pulling an assertion from the box and refuting it either orally or in writing.

DIRECTIONS:

- a) Begin the exercise by reviewing the following :
 - A.R.E. argument construction.
 - Four-Step Refutation with the class.
- b) Ask each student to take out paper and pencil.

Lesson 5: Refutation

- c) Explain that they will be helping to stock the classroom “Assertion Box.”
- d) Tell them that they should try to come up with (4-6) depending on age and skill level) assertions that will be approved and cut up into folded slips to be placed in the box.
- e) Tell students that they will be asked to draw randomly from the box on regular basis for refutation practice, so it is not in their interest to produce assertions that are too difficult to refute. For example:
 - “The north and south poles are covered with ice.”
 - “Plants grow in soil.”
 - “Rain gives water to life.”
- f) Give students 5-10 minutes to write out their assertions.
- g) Review them before giving permission to cut up for placement in the box. When you review the assertions, don’t use too heavy of a hand on spelling and grammar; this is to be a fun exercise.
- h) Do suggest corrections when the assertion is illegible or incoherent, and encourage students to rewrite when appropriate.
- i) Pass the stocked box around and ask each student to draw out an assertion.
- j) Ask students to take a minute to write out their Four-Step Refutation.
- k) Then go around the class while students stand and present their refutations.

Activity 6: Video

- a) Show a video of a debate, such as a competitive debate.
- b) Make sure to run through the entire video which shows the moderator of the debate allowing opposing parties to enter in to a rebuttal response in regards to statements and opinions.
- c) Make sure to pause the video before the other party begins the rebuttal to point out to students that this is the point where a rebuttal fits in to a debate or discussion
- d) Have students write reviews about the debate they just watched.

- e) Ask to make sure each student lists the pros and cons associated with each candidate or participant's rebuttal and the effectiveness of the response.
- f) For example, remind students to pay attention to tactics such as staying on topic, remaining calm during the rebuttal delivery, having a strong voice and backing up rebuttal claims with facts, figures and clearly defined data.

Activity 7: One-on-One Refutation

This activity introduces the technique of line-by-line refutation. Using a simple debate with only a few arguments, the instructor walks two students through a demonstration line-by-line refutation. Meanwhile, the class learns to flow arguments in an orderly manner that will allow them to visualize the progress of an argument.

- a) Ask two students to sit fact to face in desks at the front of the classroom
- b) Ask the rest of the students to take out a piece of paper and pen in order to flow the debate they are about to observe.
 - Each student should divide their paper into three columns in order to flow the debate.
 - You may wish to flow the debate on the board as well to demonstrate to students the basic technique of flowing.
- c) The first student at the front of the class should make a simple, controversial statement (i.e. "Fast food is healthy.")
 - The students in the class should write this statement in the first column of their paper.
- d) The second student should come up with 3 or 4 arguments against the proposal and deliver them with a clear distinction between the arguments
 - "My first argument is ..."
 - "My second argument is ..."
 - "My third argument is ...", etc.

- e) The students in the class should write each of these points, in order, one beneath the other, in the second column of their paper.
- f) The original speaker should answer each of the second speaker's arguments one by one.
- g) The original speaker should reference his/her opponent's arguments and then offer at least two responses. For example:
 - "Her/His first argument is ..."
 - One. (Speaker's first response)
 - Two. (Speaker's second response)
 - "Her second argument is..."
 - One (Speaker's first response)
 - Two (Speaker's second response.)
- h) The students in the class should write the original speaker's responses in the third column of their paper next to each of the second speaker's arguments.

Activity 8: Real debate

- a) Give students a list of debatable topic ideas.
- b) Divide the classroom up in to teams.
- c) Make sure for each topic and team, you have clear instructions which team is for or against an issue about the topic. For example, the topic of "Women in combat."
- d) Have one team take the position 'For' women in the military fighting in an active war.
- e) Have the other team take the stance against the practice.
- f) Allow teams to prepare thoughts and remarks before beginning discussions.
- g) Have the "pro" team go first, followed by the "against" team which is using the rebuttal techniques learned prior.

- h) Have the first side - the “pro / for” side - then launch a rebuttal to the opposition’s remarks.
- i) Take notes regarding the rebuttal skills of all students and teams as a whole. Discuss with the class ways to strength rebuttal skills.
- j) View additional debate or discussion footage illustrating rebuttal tactics and delivery methods

Summary & Recap

The main purpose of this part is to strengthen the material that was covered in class before. The aim is to also give students an opportunity to ask questions or make comments that they may have regarding the lesson.

Closure

In closing the lesson, the instructor may provide a general review of the lesson. This will help in reminding students of the materials that was taught in class. This can also be useful in identifying areas that would need further practice or emphasis. Activity 4: Identifying Arguments





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