



Learning Objective: Students will be able to

- identify indicators of bias in an argument.
- debate a topic and evaluate each side of the argument for bias: including or excluding a clearly stated claim, reasons, evidence, or other elements of bias.

Key Vocabulary

Note: This list is for teacher reference; you do not need to pre-teach the vocabulary. Students will learn it in context during the lesson's activities.

- **Bias:** language or parts of an argument that support one side unfairly over another

Introduce and Connect

Explain that students are going to learn about how some arguments can have problems because they don't include good evidence or they are unfair to people who have different opinions.

Guide students in a discussion using questions such as the following. Students may not know the answers, but these questions are meant to foster discussion, not necessarily correct answers.

- *What are some arguments you have heard recently? Did any of them seem to favor one side unfairly over another? How did you know?*
- *What language do people use when they have strong feelings about one side of an argument?*

Say: *Arguments have two or more sides. An argument usually supports one side clearly through its claim, reasons, and evidence. Sometimes, however, an argument can use unfair language or use the parts of the argument to support one side unfairly. When that happens, an argument is biased.*

Teach the Skill

Say: *Today we are going to learn how to identify bias in an argument. Let's start by watching an animation.*

1. **Project** the **Bias animation**.
2. **Play** the animation. **Pause** it when the statement "Bias can be found in all parts of an argument." appears on the screen.

Ask: *What is bias?* (language or elements of an argument that support one side of an argument unfairly over another)

1. **Resume** the animation. **Pause** it when the full argument appears on the screen.
2. **Discuss** the argument. For example, *What examples of bias did you find?*

Ask: *How did each example of bias change the argument? Did it make you think about the claim differently?*

1. **Say:** *The argument is biased because it uses unfair language. It also doesn't include facts or evidence to support all the reasons.*
2. **Explain** that unfair language does not all have to be negative. If an argument gives a lot of praise to one side over another without showing that the praise is deserved, that can also be a biased argument.
3. **Resume** the animation and let it play to the end.
4. **Discuss** the argument. For example, ask: *What examples of bias did you find? How did the bias change the argument?*
5. **Discuss** bias in arguments. For example, ask: *Do you think bias in an argument makes it stronger, weaker, or doesn't make a difference?* Encourage students to use specific examples from the animation in their responses.

Explain that most arguments contain some bias. After all, arguments choose a side and carefully choose evidence to support that side. However, an argument is considered biased when there are many examples of biased language or little or no evidence to support the argument's claims and reasons.

Apply the Skill in Context

Model with the Projectable

Project **Passage 1** and ask a student to read it aloud.

1. **Model** using the eTools to underline examples of bias in the passage. **Use** a different color to mark the examples of biased language and the examples of unsupported reasons. For added participation, ask students to take turns underlining words, phrases, or statements.



2. **Guide** students to locate the unfair language (*foolish, didn't consider*), and statements that are not supported by evidence (*students will never get to do anything, never make it to games, it is clear that there are no health benefits to starting school later, gigantic pain for everyone*). **Remind** students that statements that take a small example and apply it to everyone are considered statements that are missing evidence.
3. **Guide** students to rate the argument on the scale shown. For example, ask: *Were there lots of examples of bias or only a few?*
4. **Discuss** how the bias affects the argument. For example, ask: *Did the bias make you agree with the argument? Why or why not?*

Project Passage 2, but this time ask students to begin thinking about possible examples of bias in the argument.

1. **Ask:** *What evidence supports the reasons in the argument? Which reasons are not supported?*
2. **Invite** a student to rate the argument on the bias scale and explain his or her thinking.
3. **Guide** students to understand that this argument has little to no bias. All reasons are supported. Point students to some unfair language (*they were very, very wrong*), but help them understand that this small amount of unfair language does not overly bias the whole passage.

Practice with the Projectable

Distribute Passages 3–5 to students and have them underline examples of bias in each passage and then rate each passage on the relative amount of bias present, using the bias scale provided.

Guide students using **Passage 3**, then encourage them to complete the remaining passages with increasing independence. **Regroup** as a class and discuss answers.

Note: An Answer Key for the Passages is attached to the end of the Lesson Plan.

Write and Share

Project the Writing Prompt. Tell students that they will read an argument and think about the bias in the argument. Then they will write a paragraph explaining the bias found in the argument and its impact.

Have students discuss their thinking with a partner after they have finished writing.

Extend the Lesson

Give two groups of students different claims to support. Suggested claims are listed below. Have each group prepare an argument that supports their side, generating reasons and researching supporting evidence in the media center. Have groups debate their positions in front of the class. Have students listening to the debate evaluate each argument, including their claims, reasons, evidence, and elements of bias using the **Argument Checklist**.

- *Students should be required to take music and art classes.*
- *Students should get to choose whether or not they will take music and art classes.*
- *Athletes who make hundreds of millions of dollars make too much money.*
- *Athletes who make hundreds of millions of dollars make the right amount of money based on their skills and ability.*

Independent Practice | Interactivities

Reading A–Z subscribers: Print and distribute the **Independent Practice** activities for students to complete in class or as homework. Answer Keys for the printable Independent Practice activities are attached to the end of the Lesson Plan.

Raz-Plus subscribers: Assign the **Interactivities** to students to complete using the **Kids A–Z** student portal.

Discuss answers as a class.