

Lesson 19

Lesson 19 Part 1: Introduction Evaluating an Argument

LAFS
 8.RI.3.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

Theme: Innovation and the Future

When people debate an issue—for instance, whether social networking is good or bad—they present an **argument** and then try to support their ideas with evidence. A written argument is like a debate: authors state their position and then provide facts to support their beliefs. Authors first make a **claim**, or a statement that they believe to be true. Then they back up this claim with reasons to accept the claim. Reasoning should be logically sound. Finally, authors list **evidence**, or factual information that supports their reasoning. This evidence should be **relevant**, or directly concerned with what is being discussed. It should also be **sufficient**; in other words, there should be enough to firmly support the claim.

Look at the cartoon showing an argument about funding the U.S. space program.



Each person presents a claim about the space program based on what he or she believes to be true. Does each person provide relevant details to support the claim? Complete the chart below to analyze each person's claim about the space program.

Claim	Reasoning	Relevant Evidence	Irrelevant Evidence
We should fund the space program.	The space program leads to important discoveries.	NASA developed fireproof fabric now used by firefighters.	Space travel is exciting to watch.
We should not fund the space program.	We should fund programs on Earth instead.	Money from the space program could be used to improve education.	No one watches space launches.

When you read an argument, look first to see what claims it makes. Then look for the reasoning and evidence that's provided to support each claim. Do the reasons make sense? Is the evidence factual? Does it relate directly to the claim? Beware of irrelevant evidence that might be interesting but does not directly relate to the author's claim.

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