



Argument Tree: School Start Times

Mission: The student council is voting on a later school start. Map the author's argument, from claim to reasons to evidence, and find the claim that is NOT supported. Then evaluate whether the argument is convincing.

Big question: How do we trace an argument and tell supported claims from unsupported ones?

★ Warm-up: Claim, reason, or evidence?

Label each: C, R, or E.

"Our town needs a skate park." ✓ **C.**

"It gives kids a safe place to play." ✓ **R.**

Key vocabulary

Claim	The author's main argument or position.
Reason	A point that explains why the claim is true.
Evidence	Facts, data, or examples that support a reason.
Unsupported claim	A statement with no evidence.
Counterclaim	An opposing view the author addresses.

1 Box 1

Build the tree

In the simulator: Place every card in the argument tree.

What did you notice?

2 Box 2

Spot the unsupported claim

Why is "Everyone knows teenagers are lazy anyway" an unsupported claim?

☐ It gives no evidence and is an overgeneralization ☐ It is a fact ☐ It is the main claim

✓ **It gives no evidence and is an overgeneralization**

3 Box 3

Counterclaim

Which sentence addresses a COUNTERCLAIM (an opposing view)?

☐ Some parents worry about sports ending later, but schools can adjust practice times.

☐ Well-rested students learn better. ☐ Our school should push back the start time.

✓ **Some parents worry about sports ending later, but schools can adjust practice times.**

4 Box 4

Evaluate the argument

Is the argument convincing? Evaluate it.

Judgment

Look for: Gives a judgment; at least 8 words

Strength

Look for: Names specific evidence; at least 12 words

Weakness

Look for: Identifies the unsupported claim; at least 12 words

5 Box 5

Legend: improve it Legend only

Rewrite the unsupported sentence as a reason WITH evidence (you may invent a realistic statistic and cite it as a study).

Look for: Includes evidence; a number from the simulator; at least 18 words



Exit ticket: answer the big question in your own words

How do we trace an argument and tell supported claims from unsupported ones?

Look for: An argument has a claim (the main position), reasons (why), and evidence (facts, data, examples that prove each reason). A claim without evidence, like "everyone knows teenagers are lazy," is unsupported and weakens the argument.

Completion codes

Students see a code like **ABC-I3** when they finish. The first part must match below. The letter is the level (E = Explorer, I = Investigator, L = Legend), and the number at the end is how many stars they earned.

Level	Code starts with
 Explorer	K3Z-E
 Investigator	23A-I
 Legend	1M4-L



Watch for these misconceptions

- "A strong argument just needs strong feelings." Arguments need evidence.
- "Statistics always prove a claim." Evidence must be relevant and from a reliable source.
- "The central idea is the topic." The central idea is a full statement about the topic.