

Analyzing Argument and Rhetoric

Course: English I (Grades 9–12) **Subject:** English Language Arts & Reading **Time:** ~50-min period, or a ~90-min block (adds deeper analysis + revision) **Work mode:** Independent · pencil only RLA

Start Here

This is a **reading and analysis task**. You will read an original argumentative essay, then analyze how the writer builds a case — the **claim**, the **evidence**, and the **rhetorical appeals** (ethos, pathos, logos) — and judge how well it all works. You will work with a pencil only; you do **not** need a computer or any device. Every question about the essay can be answered **from the essay itself** — the evidence is on the page. Write in complete sentences where you are asked to explain, and always name the **paragraph** you are drawing from. If a question is hard, skip it, keep going, and come back. Reading the essay quietly aloud to yourself is allowed and encouraged.

Start Predict & Warm Up 5 min

Look only at the title and the first sentence of the essay before you read the rest.

1The essay is titled "**Keep the Doors Open: Why Lincoln High Should Not Close Its Campus at Lunch.**" From the title alone, **predict the author's position** — what does the writer want, and which side of the debate are they on?

2**Rhetorical-term warm-up.** Match each appeal to the kind of support it makes. Write the letter (A, B, or C) on each blank.

A. ethos — appeal to credibility, character, or trustworthiness · **B. pathos** — appeal to emotion · **C. logos** — appeal to logic, facts, and reasoning

___ "A 2019 district survey found that 61% of students skipped lunch on closed-campus days."

___ "As a nurse who works with teenagers, I have seen what a skipped meal does to a young person."

___ "Imagine your own child sitting hungry through fifth period, unable to focus."

Build Read the Argument 12 min

Words to know (for analyzing argument and rhetoric)

claim

the main position the writer is trying to prove.

evidence

facts, data, examples, or expert statements used to back up a claim.

ethos

a rhetorical appeal to the speaker's credibility, character, or authority.

pathos

a rhetorical appeal to the audience's emotions.

logos

a rhetorical appeal to logic — facts, data, and reasoning.

counterargument

a point from the opposing side that the writer raises.

rebuttal

the writer's response to a counterargument, explaining why their position still stands.

"Keep the Doors Open: Why Lincoln High Should Not Close Its Campus at Lunch" — an original argument

[1] Next month, the Lincoln High School board will vote on whether to close our campus during the lunch period, meaning students could no longer walk to the diner, the taquería, or their own kitchens for the thirty-five minutes we have to eat. Supporters of the closed-campus plan say it is about safety. I understand that concern, and safety must come first. But closing the campus at lunch is the wrong tool for the job: it would harm student health and trust while doing little to make anyone safer. Lincoln High should keep an open campus at lunch.

[2] The strongest reason is what an open campus does for students who cannot eat the food served here. Last spring, our own student council surveyed 480 students. In that survey, 61% of students said they skip lunch entirely on the days they cannot leave — many because of allergies, religious dietary rules, or simply because the cafeteria runs out of food before the last lunch period is served. A student who does not eat at noon is a student who is running on empty through the whole afternoon. When more than half of us are going hungry, the schedule is the problem, not the students.

[3] The health cost of that hunger is not just an opinion. According to Dr. Alvarez, the school nurse who has worked with teenagers for fifteen years, skipping a midday meal leaves students with lower concentration, headaches, and irritability by the afternoon. "I see the same faces in my office every closed-campus day," she told our newspaper. When the person who treats these students every day tells us that hunger is hurting them, we should listen. Her years of firsthand experience carry more weight than a rule written by people who never see the nurse's office at 1:00 p.m.

[4] Now picture your own younger brother or sister sitting through fifth period with an empty stomach and a pounding head, watching the clock, unable to hear a word the teacher says. That is not a rare student; on our campus it is hundreds of them, every single closed-campus day. We should not build a policy that leaves so many young people hungry and unable to learn.

[5] Supporters of the closed-campus plan raise a fair point: they worry that students who leave for lunch are more likely to be late, skip class, or get hurt crossing the busy street outside. That concern deserves a real answer, not a shrug. But the answer is not to lock everyone in. A neighboring district kept its campus open and cut tardies by adding a crossing guard and a clear sign-out system; their after-lunch attendance actually improved. We can protect students who leave without punishing the hundreds who simply want to eat.

[6] Some will say that an open campus has always caused a few problems, and that is true — every policy does. But everyone knows that closing the doors is what responsible schools do, and no one who really cares about students would vote to keep them open. Besides, my cousin at another school says their closed campus is "totally fine," so ours would be too.

[7] Closing the campus would trade real, measurable harm to student health for a safety benefit no one has actually shown. Keep the doors open, fix the real problems with guards and sign-outs, and trust students to feed themselves. A school that feeds its students' bodies is a school that can finally reach their minds.

3In paragraph [2], what specific finding from the student-council survey does the author use to support keeping the campus open? Answer using details from the essay.

Apply Analyze the Argument 20 min

Every answer in this section is in the essay. Point to the paragraph in your head before you write.

4Identify the claim. In one sentence, state the author's main **claim** — the position the whole essay is trying to prove. (paragraph [1])

5Label the three appeals. The essay uses each of the three rhetorical appeals at least once. For each appeal below, **copy one sentence** (or a close phrase) from the essay that shows it, and name the paragraph.

Ethos (credibility) — sentence + paragraph #

Pathos (emotion) — sentence + paragraph #

Logos (logic/facts) — sentence + paragraph #

6Evaluate evidence quality. Paragraph [2] and paragraph [6] each try to support the claim. One relies on **strong** evidence and one on **weak** evidence. Decide which is which and explain **why** — consider whether the support is factual, relevant, and reliable, or whether it leans on unproven assumptions.

Paragraph [2] — strong or weak? Why?

Paragraph [6] — strong or weak? Why?

7Find the counterargument and the rebuttal. In paragraph [5], the author raises a point from the opposing side (a **counterargument**) and then responds to it (a **rebuttal**). State the counterargument in your own words, then explain how the author answers it.

Counterargument (the opposing point)

Rebuttal (how the author responds)

8Which evidence best supports the claim? The claim is that Lincoln High should keep an open campus at lunch. Which piece of evidence from the essay **best** supports that claim? Fill in the circle for ONE choice.

- "My cousin at another school says their closed campus is 'totally fine,' so ours would be too."
- "Everyone knows that closing the doors is what responsible schools do."
- "A student-council survey of 480 students found that 61% skip lunch entirely on days they cannot leave."
- "An open campus has always caused a few problems."

8b. In one sentence, explain why the evidence you chose is stronger than the others.

Explain Evaluate the Argument's Effectiveness 10–15 min

Question 9. Write an **analytical response** that judges **how effective** this argument is. Do not summarize the essay — **analyze** it. Take a position on whether the argument is convincing overall, and support that position by discussing **two** specific appeals or pieces of evidence from the essay, **judging the quality of each** (strong or weak, and why). Use the C-E-R frame below and name the paragraph for each piece you cite.

Sentence stems you may use: "Overall, this argument is (convincing / partly convincing / weak) because..." · "One appeal the author uses is ____ in paragraph ____, which is effective/ineffective because..." · "A second piece of support is ____ (paragraph ____); its quality is strong/weak because it is factual / from a credible source / merely opinion / an unproven assumption..."

Claim (your judgment of the argument's effectiveness)

Evidence (two appeals/pieces from the essay, with paragraph #)

Reasoning (why each is strong or weak, and how it affects the argument)

Block period only (~90-min class): Revise the weakest paragraph.

Question 10. Paragraph [6] is the weakest part of the essay — it leans on the bandwagon "everyone knows," an insult to anyone who disagrees, and one cousin's opinion. **Rewrite paragraph [6]** so it strengthens the argument instead: replace the weak reasoning with **real evidence or an appeal already used elsewhere in the essay** (for

example, the survey data in [2], the nurse's testimony in [3], or the neighboring district in [5]). Write your improved paragraph on the lines below.

Close ACE Wrap-Up 5 min

Articulate

Say the author's **claim** in your **own words**, in one sentence, as if telling a friend the point of the essay.

Connect

Name the **one appeal** (ethos, pathos, or logos) you think does the **most** to make this argument convincing, and point to the paragraph.

Extend

Name **one weak spot** in the argument and, in a sentence, tell what the author could add to make it stronger.

Continue Early Finisher optional

If you finish early (no new materials needed):

Write a rebuttal paragraph. On the back of this page, take the **opposite** side: argue that Lincoln High **should** close its campus at lunch. Include one counterargument that the "Keep the Doors Open" author might raise, and write a **rebuttal** that answers it. Use at least one rhetorical appeal (ethos, pathos, or logos) on purpose, and label which one you used.

Turn in: Hand in this whole packet with your name, class period, and date filled in. Make sure questions 1–9 and the ACE box are answered. Question 10 (revision) is for block periods; the early-finisher rebuttal is optional — turn either in if you did it.

HS_ENG1_ArgumentRhetoric_01 — Analyzing Argument and Rhetoric Student Packet