Unit plan example: Grade 8 ELA, argument writing

Illustration of a teacher-made unit plan. No classroom results are claimed. The standards are Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, quoted for states that use them: replace them with your own framework.

Unit title	Should our school day start later?	**Grade**	Grade 8
Subject	English Language Arts	**Length**	12 lessons of about 50 minutes
Teacher	(your name)	**Dates**	(dates)

Standards

W.8.1
Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

RI.8.8
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.

Big ideas and essential questions

Big ideas
A strong argument is a claim that others could dispute, backed by reasons and evidence that a reader can check. Good writers answer the other side instead of ignoring it.

Essential questions
What makes an argument convincing? When is evidence not good enough? Why answer the people who disagree with you?

Learning objectives (I can)

Objectives
I can identify the claim, reasons and evidence in an argument. I can judge whether evidence is relevant and sufficient. I can write a debatable claim, support it with evidence from credible sources, and answer a counterclaim. I can organize an argument with transitions and a conclusion that follows from it.

Assessment evidence

When	Evidence
Lesson 1	Pre-assessment: a one-paragraph opinion on a later school start, revised in lesson 12.
Lessons 2 to 11	Annotation checks, the T-chart, the claim check, the outline and a teacher conference
Lesson 12	Performance task: a 600 to 800 word argument essay with at least two cited sources and a counterclaim. Scored on four criteria: claim, evidence, counterclaim and rebuttal, organization and style.

Lesson sequence

#	Focus	Main activity	Check for understanding
1	Launch the question	Four-corners debate on a later school start; pre-assessment: a one-paragraph opinion	Pre-assessment
2	Claim, reason, evidence	Label the parts of a short model argument; build an anchor chart	Exit ticket: name the claim
3	Read argument 1	Read an editorial in favor; annotate claims and the evidence for each	Annotation check
4	Read argument 2	Read an editorial against; mark evidence as relevant, irrelevant or insufficient	Partner talk

#	Focus	Main activity	Check for understanding
5	Evaluate reasoning	Compare the two editorials in a T-chart; judge which reasoning is sounder	T-chart
6	Research	Gather two credible sources; record facts and source details in a note catcher	Note catcher
7	Write a claim	Draft and sharpen a debatable claim; peer test: could someone disagree?	Claim check
8	Counterclaims	Write a counterclaim and a rebuttal with evidence	Exit ticket
9	Organize	Outline the essay: introduction, reasons, counterclaim, conclusion; add transitions	Outline
10	Draft	Write the full draft in class with conferences	Teacher conference
11	Revise	Peer feedback with the rubric; revise for evidence and transitions	Feedback form
12	Publish and reflect	Final essay; short class panel; revise the lesson 1 paragraph	Performance task

Differentiation

Support and extension
Support: an essay frame with paragraph starters, a shorter pair of texts, a word bank of transitions. Language: sentence stems for claims and rebuttals. Extension: add a third source with a conflicting statistic and explain which one the reader should trust.

Reflection (after teaching)

Reflection
(To fill after the unit: which part of the argument students struggled with most; which texts worked; what to change next year.)

Original Draft My Lesson example, free to use and adapt. It illustrates a teacher-made unit plan: no classroom results are claimed. Use the standards adopted by your state or district, and review every lesson for your own learners before teaching.