

EVALUATE



arguments & claims

Star Wars versus Star Trek

A debate has raged for decades between fans of Star Wars and Star Trek. Which is the superior science fiction franchise? Star Wars has always held the upper hand in terms of sheer cultural dominance. It is much more popular. However, if the debate is about the which



than mainstream blockbuster. So what? Star Wars is not even really science fiction.

3. Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines science fiction as "fiction dealing principally with the impact of actual or imagined science on society or individuals." For all its spaceships and blasters, Star Wars is really about the triumph of faith over science. Take the first film as an example. Han Solo may be the most popular character in the galaxy, but his

Evidence

4. The author argues that Star Trek is more realistic because it:

- a. deals with historical events.
- b. portrays a mission to Mars.
- c. shows the power of faith.
- d. explores societal topics.

5. Evaluate the author's "fiction gold standard." support the thesis? Do

The author claims science fiction is more realistic than the dictionary definition of each series because Star Wars is more aligned with reality.

Evidence

Answer the following questions. Underline the text evidence in the color indicated.

1. The author includes quotes from scientists in order to support the claim that:

- a. Star Wars is mostly about science.
- b. Star Wars is mostly about spirituality.
- c. Star Trek is mostly about science.
- d. Star Trek is mostly about spirituality.

2. Choose all that apply. The author supports his argument in favor of Star Trek with a(n):

- a. analysis of its themes.
- b. comparison of ticket sales.
- c. definition from a dictionary.
- d. description of its plot.

3. What reason does the author give for his claim that Star Wars is "culturally dominant" than Star Trek?

The author claims high ticket sales for Star Wars as a reason for its cultural dominance.

EVALUATE ARGUMENTS & CLAIMS

6th grade

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ABOUT LEXILE LEVELS



Common Core Kingdom, LLC is a certified Lexile® Partner. These texts are officially measured and approved by Lexile and MetaMetrics® to ensure appropriate rigor and differentiation for students.

The Lexile Framework® for Reading measures are scientific, quantitative text levels. When the Lexile of a text is measured, specific, measurable attributes of the text are considered, including, but not limited to, word frequency, sentence length, and text cohesion. These are difficult attributes for humans to evaluate, so a computer measures them.

Common Core State Standards uses Lexile level bands as one measure of text complexity. Text complexity ranges ensure that students are college and career ready by the end of 12th grade. Lexile measures help educators scaffold and differentiate instruction, as well as monitor reading growth.

Grade Band	Lexile® Bands Aligned to Common Core Expectations
K-1	N/A
2-3	420L-820L
4-5	740L-1010L
6-8	925L-1185L

Keep in mind when using any leveled text that many students will need scaffolding and support to reach text at the high end of their grade band. According to Appendix A of the Common Core Standards, "It is important to recognize that scaffolding often is entirely appropriate. The expectation that scaffolding will occur with particularly challenging texts is built into the Standards' grade-by-grade text complexity expectations, for example. The general movement, however, should be toward decreasing scaffolding and increasing independence both within and across the text complexity bands defined in the Standards."



Finding Arguments and Claims

An author presents an **argument** by outlining a position on a topic that the author wants readers to agree with. To find the argument, first find the central idea. Then ask yourself, "what is the author's position on the topic?"

An author makes **claims** to help support an argument. Claims are assertions that the author presents as accurate. Claims can be statements about what is true, good, better, or what should be done or believed.

As you read the passage below, try to identify the argument and claims the author uses to support the argument. Underline the argument and circle the claims, then compare with the chart on the bottom.

Modern grocery stores are way too big. The aisles in large grocery stores would be easier to navigate. The isles in large grocery stores are like a giant maze. A shopper can get lost in one for hours trying to find one or two simple items. Just last week, my neighbor was lost for 2 hours trying to find olives.

Smaller stores would make it easier to find things. According to CreditDonkey.com, the average shopper spends about 41 minutes per grocery store visit. People would spend less time finding what they need in a smaller store.

Big grocery stores means lots of variety. What people really want is shopping to be quick and easy.



Argument

Shopping would be easier if stores were smaller.

Claims

Smaller stores are easier to navigate.

Smaller stores make it easier to find things.

The author's **argument** is that shopping would be easier if stores were smaller. The author makes this statement expressly in the last sentence of the first paragraph. "Grocery stores should be smaller to make grocery shopping easier."

The author makes two separate **claims** that help support his argument. First, the author states that smaller stores would be easier for shoppers to navigate. Second, the author states that shoppers would find what they need more easily if stores were smaller. Both claims support the author's argument that smaller stores are better.

Evaluating Arguments and Claims

Not all claims are created equal. In order to be **reliable**, claims must be **supported** by sensible **reasons** and/or reliable **evidence** to prop up the author's argument.

A **reason** is simply a statement that supports a claim. A reason answers the question "why does the author believe the claim is true". Reasons are closely tied to claims.

*Smaller grocery stores would be easier to navigate [CLAIM]
because large grocery stores are like giant mazes [REASON].*

Evidence supports reasons by providing examples, narratives, statistics, expert opinions, eyewitness accounts, scientific research, or historical events.

Just last week, my neighbor was lost for 2 hours trying to find olives [EVIDENCE].

Good readers can evaluate whether an author's argument is compelling based on the reasons and evidence that the author provides to support his or her claims.

Using the same text, complete the outline below by indicating the reasons and evidence provided to support the author's claims.

Argument	Claims	Reason/Evidence
Grocery shopping would be easier if stores were smaller.	Smaller stores are easier to navigate. Smaller stores make it easier to find things.	Large grocery stores are like a maze. My neighbor got lost looking for olives. The average shopping trip is 41 minutes.

- In order to evaluate an argument and specific claims in a text, ask yourself the following questions:
- Does each claim support the author's argument?
 - Does each claim make sense?
 - Do the reasons provide reasons and evidence that support each claim?
 - Are the reasons presented sensible and/or is the evidence provided reliable?

Evidence

Answer the following questions. Underline the text evidence.

1020L

Evidence

Name: _____ Date: _____

laser guns can't kill

1020L

Evidence

Name: _____ Date: _____

Star Wars versus Star Trek

1. A debate has raged for decades between fans of Star Trek and Star Wars. Which is the superior science fiction franchise? Star Wars has always held the upper hand in terms of sheer cultural dominance. It is much more popular. However, if the debate is about the which franchise is the science fiction gold standard, Trekkers hold the advantage.

2. The debate shouldn't be a popularity contest. If it is, Star Wars wins hands down. When Star Trek's Captain Kirk and his crew first appeared on television in 1966, the show received unimpressive ratings. It was canceled after only three seasons. In contrast, Star Wars set box office records the instant Luke Skywalker hit movie screens in 1977. Disney's recent imperial onslaught of new Star Wars movies and TV shows seems to have secured its cultural dominance permanently. Not even the promised big-screen return of Captain Jean-Luc Picard in 2019 will tip the scales in favor of Star Trek. Despite many TV and film spinoffs, Star Trek has always been more cult classic



than mainstream blockbuster. So what? Star Wars is not even really science fiction.

3. Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines science fiction as "fiction dealing principally with the impact of actual or imagined science on society or individuals." For all its spaceships and blasters, Star Wars is really about the triumph of faith over science. Take the first film as an example. Han Solo may be the best pilot in the galaxy, but his

©Julia Baker

s. At all." NASA technician Schneider agreed, telling us that "Star Trek is ed to be our future in It is not intended to be a far, far away. It is d to be what we do on net with our capabilities e next few hundred Star Wars takes place 10," but Star Trek is space, the final frontier."

Settling the raging s easier than it sounds. its many Muppet aliens, s is really just spiritual y. Star Trek is true iction.

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for Star Wars
reason for
not.

underline the text evidence in the

the chances of dying bec

s of snake bites.

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ple who were bitten by snakes.
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snake.

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e all that apply.)

ecosystem.

ould be handled carefully.

hurt if they try to handle or kill

ss snakes with venomous

examples of John Brock and
es support his argument?

examples to as evidence
it is unlikely to die from
very few snake bite deaths
and if some of those
acting irresponsibly then
a snake bite are even

1120L

Evidence

Name: _____

Why You Shouldn

1.

Snakes have the



Name: _____

Date: _____

Evidence



while trying to move it from the middle of a road. If you take out incidents of people who died because they tried to touch, hold, or kill a snake, the chances of being fatally bitten decreases even further.

4. When people try to kill snakes, they often use garden tools or apparatuses that require proximity to the snake. This is to leave the snake alone. According to the distance of up to one foot long, it can strike anything. It's easy to see why charg

es across all 6 inhabited
me across a snake once in
ough there are about 600
world, most of them live in
United States, there are only
which are variations of
t species of coral snakes, or
of cottonmouth. This means
ins. Many non-venomous
ough handling wild snakes is
kes that are harmless to

enomous and nonvenomous
cosystem. Snakes eat lots of



Water Moccasin

1 is the author trying to support by providing the data
away.org in paragraph 4?

ng a snake is never a good idea.
g snakes alone is more dangerous than killing them.
encounters are not for the faint of heart.
snakes is more dangerous than leaving them alone.

uthor's claim in paragraph 5. What is one reason or
thor uses to support this claim? Is the claim
d upon this reason/evidence?

is making the claim that many snakes
enomous, and that Americans can easily
tify venomous snakes since there are
ifferent major types. The
y providing statistics about
venomous snakes.

author uses the following type of evidence to support the
 that video games improve hand eye coordination.

the text evidence in the

rg in order to support the

skills.
 social skills.
 critical thinking skills.
 thinking skills.

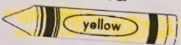
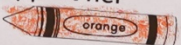
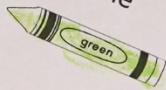
or uses to support her

coordination.
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responsibility.

ho play video games are
 ted by reasons and

orted although
 directly the
 other claims
 er success.



1030L

Evidence

Name: _____

Date: _____

Are Video Games Actually Good

1. Parents and teachers are always telling kids that video games will rot their brains. They say that video games are a waste of time, and they



1030L

Evidence

Name: _____

Date: _____

4. Not only do games help kids become better problem solvers and communicators, but they also help them develop better hand-eye coordination. In a study done by the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston High School, gamers performed better at virtual surgery than medical students. Another study found that surgeons who "played video games for at least three hours a week saw 37 percent fewer mistakes" in actual surgeries. These studies support the idea that video games help gamers develop eye-hand coordination.
5. Clearly, video games help kids develop problem-solving skills, social skills, and their hand-eye coordination. Kids who play video games not only do better in school, they are more successful in their careers.
6. Video games are an excellent way for kids to learn essential skills. They keep kids engaged, which makes them want to keep learning. Next time you see a kid playing a video game, think about how that person could become the next excellent brain surgeon!



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Why You Shouldn't Kill Snakes

1. Snakes have the unique capacity to strike fear in the hearts of even the bravest people. Many people are so afraid of snakes that they try to kill them when they find one. Some people believe that they are safer by killing snakes because some snakes are venomous. By killing snakes, these people believe that they are removing the threat that



Venomous Diamondback Rattlesnake

the snakes may bite them, their family members, or their pets. The reality is that you should never try to kill a snake.

2. People kill snakes because they believe that venomous snakes are extremely dangerous. Although people do die from snake bites, the chances of dying from a snake bite are nearly zero. The University of Florida's Department of Wildlife Ecology & Conservation reports, "Only one in 50 million people will die from snakebites in the United States." That's about five people each year. They go on to say that in the United States, "You are nine times more likely to die from being struck by lightning than to die of a venomous snakebite."

3. If you take a closer look, the roughly five people who die each year from snakebites include people who are irresponsible around snakes. This includes people who keep venomous snakes as pets, handle them as part of religious exercises, or otherwise interact with them in irresponsible or disrespectful ways. Although some bites are accidents, irresponsible interactions with venomous snakes or refusal to seek medical treatment after a bite account for many of these deaths. For example, in July of 2015, a man named John Brock was bitten during a religious service at a Pentecostal Church in Kentucky. He died after refusing medical treatment. In April of 2018, another man named Barry Lester was bitten by a rattlesnake and died after he picked it up



Nonvenomous Banded Water Snake

while trying to move it from the middle of a road. If you remove the incidents of people who died because they tried to touch, hold, or kill snakes, the chances of being fatally bitten decrease even further.

4. When people try to kill snakes, they often use garden tools or other apparatuses that require close proximity to the snakes. This puts people in more harm than if they were to leave the snakes alone. Snakes have surprisingly long striking distances. According to alongtheway.org, a rattlesnake has a striking distance of up to one half the snake's length. If the snake is four feet long, it can strike anything that is within two feet at blinding speeds. It's easy to see why charging a snake with a garden rake is a bad idea.

5. With about 3,500 different species across all 6 inhabited continents, there's a chance that you'll come across a snake once in a while. Don't let them scare you. Although there are about 600 venomous species of snakes across the world, most of them live in Africa, Asia, and South America. In the United States, there are only 20 species of venomous snakes – 16 of which are variations of rattlesnakes. There are also two different species of coral snakes, one species of copperhead, and one species of cottonmouth. This means that many snakes are harmless to humans. Many nonvenomous snakes look like venomous snakes. Although handling wild snakes is never a good idea, some people kill snakes that are harmless to humans because they think that they are venomous.

6. Keep in mind that both venomous and nonvenomous snakes play an important part in our ecosystem. Snakes eat lots of pests, like mice, lizards, and rats. They are important predators in the food chain.

7. The next time you see a snake, keep your distance and let it go on its way. Trying to kill it could be bad for the ecosystem and puts you in direct danger of getting bit.

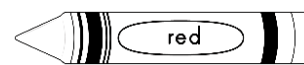


Venomous Water Moccasin

Arguments & Claims

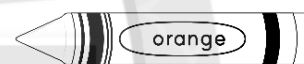
Answer the following questions. Underline the text evidence in the color indicated.

1. How does the author support the claim that the chances of dying because of a snake bite are nearly zero?



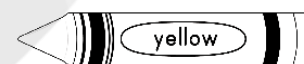
- a. by providing eyewitness accounts of snake bites
- b. by quoting statistics from researchers who have studied venomous snake deaths
- c. by providing narratives from people who were bitten by snakes
- d. by explaining the difference that modern medical care can make after being bitten by a venomous snake

2. What claims does the author make to support his or her argument that you should never kill snakes? (Choose all that apply.)



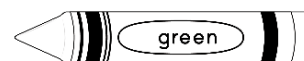
- a. Snakes are beneficial to the ecosystem.
- b. Snakes are very long and should be handled carefully.
- c. People are more likely to get hurt if they try to handle or kill snakes.
- d. Many people confuse harmless snakes with venomous snakes.

3. Why does the author provide the examples of John Brock and Barry Lester? How do these examples support his or her argument?



Arguments & Claims

4. What claim is the author trying to support by providing the data from alongtheway.org in paragraph 4?



- a. Handling a snake is never a good idea.
- b. Leaving snakes alone is more dangerous than killing them.
- c. Snake encounters are not for the faint of heart.
- d. Killing a snake is more dangerous than leaving it alone.

5. What is the author's claim in paragraph 5? What is one reason or evidence the author uses to support this claim? Is the claim compelling based upon this reason/evidence?



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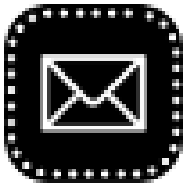
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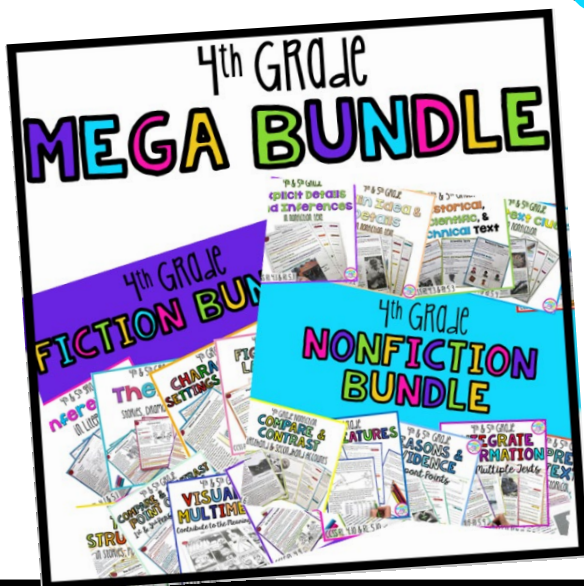


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