An argument isn’t just a disagreement with your best friend about what to do on Saturday afternoon. In writing, an **argument** is a text that expresses the author’s position about a topic and why that position is correct. As a reader, it’s your job to evaluate the strength of the author’s argument and decide whether you agree with it. To do that, you must first identify the writer’s specific **claims**, or statements of what the author believes. A claim may propose the solution to a problem or make a judgment about something.

Then decide whether the writer has provided **reasons** to accept the claim. If an author claims people should stop wearing shoes, then he or she should explain why. The reason should be followed with **evidence**, or information that supports the reason. For instance, if the author’s reason is that shoes are bad for our feet, then the evidence ought to support it.

**Look at the illustration below and think about the girl’s argument.**

![Illustration of a conversation about getting a dog]

**Complete the following chart using details from the images above.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The girl should have a dog.</td>
<td>Dogs are lovable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like a writer, the girl in the cartoon backs up her claim with a reason and evidence. When you read an argument, notice whether the claims are supported by reasons and evidence. Then you will be ready to make an informed judgment about the claims.
Read the following essay about whether it is appropriate for hip-hop music to be taught in English classes. Then read and answer the question that follows.

Today’s Lesson: Hip-Hop     by Anita Perry

Year after year, most literature classes cover the same authors and genres. It’s time that educators made a change. For teachers to keep current and engage students, we must allow students to read diverse texts from their own generation. As a first step, hip-hop should be included in the literature curriculum.

This suggestion is not as odd as it may seem. After all, hip-hop is simply another form of poetry, as are all song lyrics. It contains rhyme scheme, rhythm, and meter. In addition, hip-hop lyrics deal with the same timeless themes as other forms of poetry, including heartache and the challenges of growing up. In many ways, today’s hip-hop artists are contemporary versions of Shakespeare and Emily Dickinson, only with a modern, fresh perspective.

What is the author’s argument?

First, decide what the author wants to convince readers of. This is the claim. Then look for the reasons she presents, as well as the evidence that supports her reasoning.

What reason does the author give in the second paragraph? Read the chart below and fill in the evidence the author gives in support of this reason.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hip-hop should be taught as literature.</td>
<td>Hip-hop is a form of poetry.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On page 180, the author presents a claim about hip-hop and gives a reason to support it. What reason does the author give in this part of the article? Underline this second reason.

Examine hip-hop songs in class can help teachers identify more closely with their students' interests, cultures, and life experiences. The subject matter or lyrics of some hip-hop songs may be objectionable, but teachers can find plenty of acceptable options to explore. In turn, teachers can also help students think critically about the lyrics and messages of their favorite songs.

Exploring hip-hop in class will strengthen students' critical thinking skills and help them make connections between old and new forms of literature. Our students will therefore become more engaged, challenged, and informed.

Which answer choice reflects the author’s feelings about hip-hop?

How does the author begin this section of the article?

Circle the correct answer.

What is the second reason the author gives to support the claim that hip-hop should be taught in literature classes?

A  Hip-hop is more interesting than classic poetry.
B  Lyrics for hip-hop songs can teach students life lessons.
C  Teachers can better relate to their students’ experiences.
D  Students can learn to write hip-hop lyrics.

Look at the answer that you chose. Explain whether or not this reason is supported with evidence.

With a partner, list additional reasons the author could have included to support her claim.
Read the following editorial about the censorship of school yearbooks. Use the Study Buddy and the Close Reading to guide your reading.

**Say No to Censorship**  
*by Marcos Suarez*

1. A yearbook is a special collection of memories that will be treasured by students for decades. However, some school authorities insist on dictating what students can include in yearbooks. Teachers often remove articles and images they feel are inappropriate. Authorities should not ruin this treasure by censoring yearbooks and removing what they believe to be unsuitable.

2. Educators need to respect students’ right to free speech. Everyone needs to be reminded that the First Amendment of the Constitution protects “freedom of expression.” This fundamental right should be upheld and appreciated.

3. School authorities also need to consider how much students can learn when they can express themselves freely. Students need more opportunities to develop their creativity. Creative expression will allow students to create interesting yearbooks that capture all of their school experiences.

4. Those who feel that yearbooks should be censored need to explain their goals. They may claim that they want to protect students, but are they really trying to promote their own values? Authorities need to be open and honest about what they want to accomplish by censoring yearbooks.

5. Teachers should work together with students to define and discuss the word *objectionable*. Respecting students’ opinions on censorship will empower students and allow school yearbooks to be the treasure they deserve to be.

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**Close Reading**

What is the author’s claim? **Underline** the claim and **circle** the first reason the author gives in support of the claim.

What is the second reason the author gives? **Circle** the second reason and label it “2.” Then **underline** the evidence—if any—the author provides.
L18: Evaluating an Argument

Lesson 18

Part 4: Guided Practice

Look at your marked-up text. Then use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.

1. Why does the author mention the First Amendment in the article?
   - A to explain why yearbooks should be censored by school authorities
   - B to support the idea that students have a right to express themselves
   - C to point out why yearbook censorship is a controversial topic
   - D to emphasize the importance of censoring all school materials

2. Which statement best explains the author’s argument?
   - A Censorship should be used to remove important stories from school yearbooks because they are treasures.
   - B School authorities should remove objectionable material from yearbooks because they are protecting students.
   - C School authorities should work together with students to delete objectionable material from yearbooks.
   - D School authorities should not censor school yearbooks because it limits students’ rights and creativity.

3. How well does the author support his claim in this article? Does he include reasons and evidence? Cite details from the text to support your answer.

   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
Lesson 18

Read the article. Then answer the questions that follow.

Longer school day: Expanded learning time pros and cons

by Bethany Bray, The Andover Townsman

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR

• **More time to cover the curriculum.**

  1. “I’m always hearing from teachers that there’s not enough time,” Superintendent Claudia Bach said. “We really need more time to do the academic things, not just extracurricular.”

  2. The extra time allotted with ELT [expanded learning time] would allow teachers to expand current lessons, introduce special projects, provide new enrichment and have time for more teacher workshops and development, supporters say.

  3. “If you look at the curriculum, you say, ‘Oh my gosh, how can a teacher possibly get this done?’ ELT will allow us to do so much more, for all our kids,” said Brad Heim, a High Plain Elementary parent. “There’s always room for improvement, and we have the luxury of being out front and being able to decide how we want to do it.”

• **Provide students global, 21st century skills.**

  4. “Andover’s looking at 21st century skills like cultural awareness, communication skills. For Andover, it’s making education all it can be . . . The big vision is that the world is changing, education is changing, and how can the schools meet the needs of the children and society?” said Lisa Glickstein, grant coordinator for the district. “Kids are doing reading and math that we didn’t do at their age.”

  5. But Glickstein added, “Parents are justifiably concerned . . . We’re still figuring out if this grant program is right for Andover.”

• **State money is growing.**

  6. Although ELT grants guarantee money for only one year, school districts can reapply year after year, and preference is given to districts that have ELT programs, Glickstein said.

  7. ELT funding has increased substantially in the three years it’s been offered by the state, Heim said. What started as $500,000 has increased to $13 million this year, and Gov. Deval Patrick and Sen. Edward Kennedy are in favor of ELT, he said.

1 **21st century skills:** The skills students need to succeed in a highly technological workplace.
“With such tremendous support from our legislature, even in these economic times, (ELT funding) is being increased,” Heim said. “It’s being funded because it works.”

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

- **If it ain’t broke, why fix it?**

  Andover is already one of the top districts in the state. In the past, ELT grants have helped underperforming districts such as Boston and Worcester with low state test scores and high dropout rates, problems Andover does not have.

- **Only one year of funding guaranteed.**

  “As the political atmosphere changes, there’s no promise of long-term funding,” said Karen Lu, a High Plain Elementary parent. “Realistically, we cannot support this kind of budget long term, and it’s almost practically a certainty that funding would be dropped eventually.”

- **Takes time away from families.**

  Bancroft Elementary mother Dawn Kalinowski, who also teaches at Pentucket Regional High School, believes ELT could eliminate the positive effect of parental involvement.

  “We may be taking away the very thing that makes Andover such a great district,” she said.

  She switched careers from engineering to teaching to have more time with her kids. Being able to put her kids on the bus in the morning is priceless, she said.

  Also, Andover parents, including Kalinowski herself, provide very specific extracurricular activities and lessons tailored to their children. School districts can’t provide something each youth likes.

1. Why does the author include the fact that the amount available for ELT programs has increased to $13 million?

   A. It proves that starting an ELT program is a good way for Andover to raise money.

   B. It suggests that ELT programs are growing rapidly, so Andover should add one.

   C. It shows that ELT is too expensive a program for Andover to fund on its own.

   D. It supports the idea that state funding for Andover’s ELT program will not run out.
2 Which statement best explains the argument against lengthening the school day?

A There is no point in starting ELT in Andover because the grant to fund it might run out after a single year, and the town could not pay for it.

B Andover should not begin ELT because Andover is a high-performing district, the funding might run out, and ELT takes time away from families.

C ELT is most useful in districts where test scores are low and dropout rates are high, but Andover does not have these problems.

D Adding extra time to the school day would allow less time for parents to help their own children, so students’ performance might actually suffer from ELT.

3 What evidence does the article provide to support the reasoning that the current system is fine as it is?

A Andover schools are already top-performers in the district.

B Funding for longer school days is only guaranteed for one year.

C ELT will allow teachers to expand the curriculum they want to teach.

D Some believe ELT could encourage positive parent involvement.

4 How effective is the argument for lengthening the school day? Using details from the article, discuss whether there are sufficient reasons and evidence to support the claim.

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Lesson 18  (Student Book pages 179–186)
Evaluating an Argument

**Theme:** Weighing the Evidence

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**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

- Evaluate an argument’s effectiveness by determining whether its specific claims are supported by reasons and evidence from the text.

**THE LEARNING PROGRESSION**

- **Grade 5:** CCLS RI.5.8 focuses on finding evidence that supports points made by the author.
- **Grade 6:** CCLS RI.6.8 builds on the Grade 5 standard by emphasizing the claims made in the author’s argument and whether those claims are supported.
- **Grade 7:** CCLS RI.7.8 requires students to analyze whether the reasoning and evidence used by the author is sufficient to support the claims.

**PREREQUISITE SKILLS**

- Identify the author’s point of view or purpose in a text.
- Recognize statements and word choices that make clear the text is expressing the author’s point of view.
- Explain how word choice and tone help establish an author’s perspective and biases.
- Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.

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**TAP STUDENTS’ PRIOR KNOWLEDGE**

- Tell students they will be working on a lesson about evaluating an argument. Explain that an argument is a text that expresses the author’s position about a topic. A good argument will include reasons and evidence. Ask students what evidence is. (facts, details, and other information that supports an argument)
- Ask students if they have used evidence to prove an argument. (Students may mention using evidence to convince their family members to allow them to do something.) Point out that arguments, whether they are written or spoken, are often constructed in the same way.
- Next, ask students how an author can make an argument strong. (Authors make claims and prove them using reasons and evidence.)
- Point out that using strong evidence to support a claim is essential to a good argument. Recognizing the evidence authors use to support their claims will help students determine whether or not the author has made a convincing argument.

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**CCLS Focus**

**RI.6.8** Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

**ADDITIONAL STANDARDS:** RI.6.2, RI.6.4, RI.6.5, RI.6.6, RI.6.7, RI.6.9.a; W.6.1, W.6.4, W.6.9, W.6.11.c; SL.6.1, SL.6.2.a, SL.6.3, SL.6.5; L.6.1, L.6.3.a, L.6.4.a, L.6.4.d (see page A31 for full text)
Lesson 18: Evaluating an Argument

Part 1: Introduction

Lesson 18: Evaluating an Argument

AT A GLANCE

Through an illustration, students are introduced to the process of evaluating an argument. They learn how to assess the argument and understand the way it is supported.

STEP BY STEP

• Read the first two paragraphs, which include the definitions of argument, claims, reasons, and evidence. Then have students study the illustration and think about the argument that the girl is making.

• Explain that the chart organizes the structure of an argument. Read the first two columns. Ask students how the girl explains her reasoning for getting a dog.

• Then have students describe details from the illustration that serve as evidence for the girl’s argument. Have students write this evidence in the chart.

• Ask students to explain why having good evidence is key to a well-supported argument. Have volunteers share any arguments they have made and how they have supported their claims.

• Reinforce how evaluating an argument is an important part of reading essays and other persuasive writing. When a claim is made, it must be supported with reasons and evidence to make a solid argument.

Genre Focus

Informational Texts: Persuasive Essay

Tell students that in this lesson they will read informational texts. One type of informational text is a persuasive essay, which makes an argument. A persuasive essay has the following characteristics:

• is a short opinion piece in which the writer makes an argument to express his or her position about a topic and why that position is correct

• provides evidence such as facts, examples, and reasons

• should convince readers to agree with the writer’s opinion

Ask students to share any persuasive essays they have read or written. What subjects or issues are often addressed in persuasive essays? Who writes persuasive essays? Explain to students that persuasive essays are often published in magazines and newspapers. They may also appear on websites related to the essay’s topic.

Ask students to consider writing a persuasive essay and what argument they would like to make. Perhaps they would try to bring about change in the school or at home. Encourage students to brainstorm sources for evidence, such as books, scientists, officials, and other experts. Point out that authors of persuasive essays follow the same steps.
AT A GLANCE

Students read an essay about the value of including hip-hop lyrics in literature classes. They then evaluate the author’s argument.

STEP BY STEP

- Remind students that they just analyzed a girl’s argument, which is shown in an illustration.
- Tell students that in this lesson they will learn how to evaluate an author’s argument.
- Read aloud “Today’s Lesson: Hip-Hop.”
- Then read the question: “What is the author’s argument?”
- Now tell students you will use a Think Aloud to demonstrate a way of answering the question.

Think Aloud: To determine the author’s argument, I’ll reread the text to decide what the author wants to convince readers of. In the first paragraph, I read that the author suggests that hip-hop be included in the literature curriculum. This must be the author’s claim.

- Direct students to the chart and ask where they’ve seen a similar chart before. Review that it shows the structure of an argument, and point out the claim in the first column.

Think Aloud: Now I’ll look for ways that the author supports the claim. In the second paragraph, the author states, “Hip-hop is simply another form of poetry.” This statement is a reason hip-hop should be included in the literature curriculum, because poetry is already part of this curriculum.

- Have students read the information in the second column of the chart.

Think Aloud: To determine the author’s argument, I need to find the evidence she uses to support this reasoning. She explains that hip-hop contains rhyme, rhythm, and meter, like other poetry. She also states that hip-hop is about timeless themes.

- Finally, have students complete the third column of the chart with evidence from the text. Ask volunteers to share their answers with the class.

Tier 2 Vocabulary: Contemporary

- Direct students to the word contemporary in paragraph 2. Remind them that they can use context clues to help them determine the meaning of a word. Point out that synonyms, or words that are similar in meaning, are one type of context clue. Have students identify synonyms and other context clues that help them understand the meaning of contemporary (“modern,” “fresh perspective”). Then ask students to define contemporary in their own words (“in the present day”).

- Have students verify that their definition makes sense by checking it in the context. (RI.6.4; L.6.4.a; L.6.4.d)
Students continue reading the persuasive essay about using hip-hop lyrics in the literature curriculum. They answer a multiple-choice question and evaluate how well the author supports her reasons with evidence.

**STEP BY STEP**

- Tell students they will continue reading the essay about hip-hop lyrics in the literature curriculum.
- Close Reading guides students to look for another reason for the author’s claim. The Hint will help them locate the reason and select the best answer for the question.
- Have students read the passage and underline the reason the author gives in this passage, as directed by Close Reading.
- Ask volunteers to share the sentence they underlined. Discuss how that sentence further supports the author’s claim that hip-hop songs should be taught in literature class.
- Have students circle the answer to the question, using the Hint to help. Then have them respond to the question in Show Your Thinking. Responses will vary. Students may say that the author does not support this reason well because there are no facts to prove that teaching hip-hop will make teachers better relate to their students’ experiences.

**ANSWER ANALYSIS**

*Choice A is incorrect.* It is an opinion, not a reason to support the author’s claim.

*Choice B is incorrect.* The author does not make this point in this part of the text.

*Choice C is correct.* It gives another reason for teachers to use hip-hop songs in literature class.

*Choice D is incorrect.* The author does not mention students learning to write hip-hop lyrics.

**ERROR ALERT:** Students who did not select C may have chosen an answer that is not a reason. The question asks for a second reason. A reason should support the claim. Only C provides another reason that hip-hop should be taught in literature classes.
Students read a passage twice about the censorship of yearbooks. After the first reading, you will ask three questions to check your students’ comprehension of the passage.

**STEP BY STEP**

- Have students read the editorial silently without referring to the Study Buddy or Close Reading text.
- Ask the following questions to ensure students’ comprehension of the text:
  - What does the author say teachers are doing to censor yearbooks? (Teachers are removing things from yearbooks that they think are unsuitable.)
  - Why does the author feel the First Amendment protects students’ right to put what they want into their yearbooks? (The First Amendment includes the right to freedom of expression.)
  - How do students use creative expression to make yearbooks? (They use creativity when putting together yearbooks. It allows them to capture their experiences in an interesting way.)
- Then ask students to reread paragraph 1 and look at the Study Buddy think aloud. What does the Study Buddy help them think about?

**Tip:** The Study Buddy tells students to think about the author’s claims and to look for reasons and evidence as they read. Thinking about and looking for the reasons for an argument are important steps in understanding an argument.

- Have students reread the rest of the passage. Tell them to follow the directions in the Close Reading.

**Tip:** The Close Reading assists students in locating the author’s claims, reasons, and evidence. Students need to first determine this information before they can take the next step, which is to decide how well the author makes the argument.

- Finally, have students answer the questions on page 183. Use the Answer Analysis to discuss correct and incorrect responses.

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**Tier 2 Vocabulary: Censorship**

- Point out the word *censorship* in the title and paragraph 1. Ask students to use the context clues in paragraph 1 to help them understand what *censorship* means. What examples of censorship does the author include? (“remove articles and images they feel are inappropriate”)
- Then work with students to define *censorship* (“reviewing and not allowing content”). (RI.4.4; L.6.4a)
STEP BY STEP

- Have students read questions 1–3, using the Hints to help them answer those questions.

**Tip:** If students have trouble answering question 1, remind them that the First Amendment plays an important role in the author’s argument because it describes a right that is protected by the Constitution.

- Discuss with students the Answer Analysis below.

**ANSWER ANALYSIS**

1. The correct choice is B. The First Amendment protects the right to expression. It supports the reasoning that students have a right to express themselves. Choice A does not agree with the author’s ideas. Choice C is incorrect. Censorship is controversial, but this does not explain why the author refers to the First Amendment. Choice D is incorrect. The author does not emphasize the importance of censoring school materials.

2. The correct choice is D. The author believes that students should be allowed to use creative expression to create their yearbooks. Choices A and B are incorrect because they contradict the author’s claim. Choice C is incorrect. The author doesn’t make this claim.

3. Sample response: The author presents several reasons that yearbooks should not be censored, including students’ right to free speech. He uses the First Amendment as evidence that this is a “fundamental right.” But other reasons do not have much evidence. He says “creative expression” will lead to “interesting yearbooks,” but he does not give any evidence.

**RETEACHING**

Use a graphic organizer to verify the answer to question 1. Draw the graphic organizer below, and have students fill in the boxes. Sample responses are provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authorities should not censor yearbooks.</td>
<td>Students have a right to express themselves.</td>
<td>The First Amendment protects “freedom of expression.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Integrating Standards**

Use these questions to further students’ understanding of “Say No to Censorship.”

1. How does the first sentence set up the author’s claim in this editorial? *(RI.6.5)*

   The author informs the reader that yearbooks are created for students to enjoy for years to come. This sets up the author’s claim by explaining why yearbooks are important before the author tells why yearbooks should not be censored by teachers.

2. What do you think is the author’s purpose in writing this editorial? *(RI.6.6)*

   His purpose is to convince school authorities that they should not allow censorship of yearbooks at their schools.
Lesson 18

Read the article. Then answer the questions that follow.

Longer school day: Expanded learning time
pros and cons

by Bethany Bray, The Andover Townsman

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR

• More time to cover the curriculum.
  1 “I'm always hearing from teachers that there's not enough time,” Superintendent Claudia Bach said. “We really need more time to do the academic things, not just extracurricular.”

• The extra time allotted with ELT [expanded learning time] would allow teachers to expand current lessons, introduce special projects, provide new enrichment and have time for more teacher workshops and development, supporters say.
  2 “If you look at the curriculum, you say, ‘Oh my gosh, how can a teacher possibly get this done?’ ELT still allow us to do so much more, for all our kids,” said Brad Heim, a High Plain Elementary parent. “There's always room for improvement, and we have the luxury of being out front and being able to decide how we want to do it.”

• Provide students global, 21st century skills.
  3 “Andover's looking at 21st century skills like cultural awareness, communication skills. For Andover, it's making education all it can be. The big vision is that the world is changing, education is changing, and how can the schools meet the needs of the children and society?” said Lisa Glickstein, grant coordinator for the district. “Kids are doing reading and math that we didn't do at their age.”

  4 But Glickstein added, “Parents are justifiedly concerned. . . . We're still figuring out if this grant program is right for Andover?”

• State money is growing.
  5 Although ELT grants guarantee money for only one year, school districts can reapply year after year, and preference is given to districts that have ELT programs, Glickstein said.
  6 “ELT funding has increased substantially in the three years it's been offered by the state,” Heim said. What started at $500,000 has increased to $13 million this year, and Gov. Deval Patrick and Sen. Edward Kennedy are in favor of ELT, he said.

  7 “21st century skills: The skills students need to succeed in a highly technological workplace.”

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

• If it isn't broke, why fix it?
  8 “With such tremendous support from our legislature, even in those economic times, (ELT funding) is being increased,” Heim said. “It's being funded because it works.” . . .

• Only one year of funding guaranteed.
  9 “As the political atmosphere changes, there's no promise of long-term funding,” said Karen Lu, a High Plain Elementary parent. “Realistically, we cannot support this kind of budget long term, and it's almost practically a certainty that funding would be dropped eventually.”

• Takes time away from families.
  10 “In the political atmosphere, there really is no way that the town budget would be able to support that amount of time in a long-term way.”

• ELT programs are too expensive for Andover to fund on its own.
  11 Lisa Glickstein, grant coordinator for Andover, said, “It is a legitimate concern that the grant will go away. Practically a certainty that funding would be dropped eventually.

• ELT programs would receive grants, which are not a way to raise money. Choice A is incorrect because ELT programs would receive grants, which are not a way to raise money. Choice B is incorrect.

• ELT programs are growing rapidly. Choice C is incorrect. Increased funding does not mean an ELT program is too expensive for Andover to fund on its own.

• ELT programs are well-funded. Choice A is incorrect because ELT programs would receive grants, which are not a way to raise money. Choice B is incorrect. Increased funding does not mean an ELT program is too expensive for Andover to fund on its own.

1 Why does the author include the fact that the amount available for ELT programs has increased to $13 million?
A It proves that starting an ELT program is a good way for Andover to raise money.
B It suggests that ELT programs are growing rapidly, so Andover should add one.
C It shows that ELT is too expensive a program for Andover to fund on its own.
D It supports the idea that state funding for Andover's ELT program will not run out.

2 Increased funding does not prove that ELT programs are well-funded. Choice A is incorrect because ELT programs would receive grants, which are not a way to raise money. Choice B is incorrect.

3 Increased funding does not prove that ELT programs are growing rapidly. Choice C is incorrect. Increased funding does not mean an ELT program is too expensive for Andover to fund on its own.

4 Choice D is correct. This fact shows that ELT programs are well-funded.

5 How do all the articles in this lesson relate to the theme of weighing the evidence?

6 What is one fact you learned from each article?
Part 5: Common Core Practice

Lesson 18

2 Choice B is correct. It includes all of the main points of the argument against lengthening the school day. Choice A is incorrect because it lists only a single reason, that funding may run out. Choice C is incorrect because it lists only a single reason, that Andover does not have low test scores or high dropout rates. Choice D is incorrect because it lists only a single reason, that it takes away from the time parents can help their children.

3 Choice A is correct because it supports the reasoning that Andover is doing well without ELT. Both Choice B and Choice C are incorrect because they support other reasoning in the text, not the reasoning that the current system is fine as it is. Choice D is incorrect. The article states that parent involvement is currently strong. It does not mention encouraging positive parent involvement.

4 Sample response: The argument for lengthening the school day is somewhat effective. It presents three reasons, such as ELT giving teachers more time. Some reasons are supported with evidence, such as the rise in state funding. But the author does not give much evidence that ELT will help provide 21st-century skills.

Integrating Standards

Use these questions and tasks as opportunities to interact with “Longer school day: Expanded learning time pros and cons.”

1 How does the arrangement of the opposing sides of the ELT argument help make each argument clearer? (RI.6.7)

The claims for both sides of this argument are clear because they are divided up into two sections and labeled under headings. The main points are also bulleted and in bold, which makes it easy to see what is most important.

2 Briefly summarize the opposing sides of this argument. (RI.6.2)

The arguments in favor of ELT are that it gives teachers more time to cover the curriculum; it provides students with global, 21st-century skills; and state ELT funding is growing. The arguments against ELT are that the current program doesn’t need to be fixed, only one year of funding is guaranteed, and ELT takes time away from families.

3 What does the phrase “expanded learning time” mean? (RI.6.4; L.6.4.a)

Expanded learning time is an extension of the school day that some school systems use.

4 Write a paragraph to explain the author’s purpose in writing this article. (RI.6.6; W.6.4)

In this article, the author’s purpose is to present both sides of the ELT argument by explaining reasons for each side and the evidence that supports that reasoning.

5 Discuss in small groups: What are some other reasons ELT should or should not be used in the Andover schools? What are some other solutions for more classroom time? (SL.6.1)

Discussions will vary. Encourage students to use the arguments in the article to share their personal opinions and whether or not they agree with the points in the article.
Writing Activities

Advocate Persuasively (W.6.1)
- Have students review the arguments for and against Andover schools switching to a longer school day. Which claims do they agree with most? Which claims are best supported by evidence?
- Challenge students to write a persuasive essay that is either for or against extended learning time. Encourage them to use evidence from the text in their writing. Students may also choose to present some of the reasons for the opposing side and explain why those reasons are less convincing.
- Allow time for students to share their essays with the class.

Vary Sentence Patterns (L.6.3.a)
- Have a volunteer read aloud the second paragraph of “Today’s Lesson: Hip-Hop” on page 180. Discuss with students how the variation in sentence pattern helps maintain readers’ interest. For example, the author uses some longer sentences and some shorter sentences. She also begins some sentences, but not all of them, with an introductory phrase that is set off with a comma.
- Have students reread their persuasive essays and revise them to add more variety to their sentence patterns.

LISTENING ACTIVITY (SL.6.1; SL.6.3)

Listen Closely/Summarize a Viewpoint
- After reading “Today’s Lesson: Hip-Hop,” ask pairs of students to discuss their opinion about the argument that hip-hop should be taught in literature class. Students take turns stating their opinion while the other student listens.
- Ask for students to explain to the class their partner’s viewpoint on the matter, without interjecting their own opinion.

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY (SL.6.1)

Talk in a Group/Debate an Argument
- Ask students to review the arguments in “Say No to Censorship.”
- Have students work in small groups to discuss whether or not they think this argument applies to other school materials. Should students be allowed to publish whatever they like in the school newspaper or in a newsletter that goes home to family members? Why or why not?
- Have groups discuss their arguments for both sides. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for discussion. Then have students present their results to the class.

MEDIA ACTIVITY (RI.6.7)

Be Creative/Act It Out
- Have students review the girl’s argument shown in the illustration on page 179.
- Then ask students to work in pairs to create a script for the rest of the conversation between the girl and her mother. Encourage them to include other reasons the girl might use, as well as an argument the mother might present. Remind them that their scripts should have a clear conclusion.
- Have students practice their scripts and then act them out for the class.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY (W.6.9; SL.6.5)

Research and Present/Give a Presentation
- Ask students to use the claims and reasons in “Today’s Lesson: Hip-Hop” as a basis for an argument that literature classes should use song lyrics from all genres of music.
- Students create visual displays using lyrics from songs to show how they are worthwhile for analysis in literature class.
- Have students present their work to the class.