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Argumentative Text

Focus Lesson

Speeches, editorials, and advertisements are all examples of **argumentative text**. An **argument** begins with an opinion. It is meant to *persuade*, which means to convince someone to do something or respond.

You can tell when someone is using an opinion because they often use special words. These signal words might be *all, think, believe, feel, always, never, best, worst, nobody, or seem*.

Authors give their opinions by telling readers what they think of an idea. Then they support their opinion with facts that can be proven. They also support their argument with reasons. The **point of view** is the author's. The point of view may depend on the **author's purpose** for writing. Analyze the ideas in an argumentative text to form your own opinion. Ask yourself if there is more than one way to look at an issue. Do the author's ideas agree with what you know from your own experience? It is up to you, the reader, to determine if you believe what the author is saying.

Read the editorial and answer the questions that follow.

Our Town Needs a Skateboard Park

1 My friends and I skateboard after school and on weekends. Many other groups of teens also do this. We are not doing anything wrong, yet we upset the citizens of our town. They say we crowd sidewalks and make them unsafe for pedestrians. They say we damage property. These complaints have led our mayor and town council to consider building a skateboard park. This is a wonderful idea.

2 We need something to do and skateboarding is great exercise. When we skateboard, we socialize and work out at the same time. We enjoy learning to do kickturns and ollies. We wear helmets and are very responsible. If we had a skateboard park, we could practice in a safe place built for such activities. We would not crowd sidewalks or damage property. Furthermore, we would be safer in a skateboard park and less likely to become injured. A skateboard park would be good for everyone.

An author's purpose may be to inform or explain, to persuade, or to describe.

What is the author's purpose of this passage?



3 Yet, some people say that our town does not have enough money for a skateboard park. These people are misinformed. Some businesses have agreed to donate money for the materials needed to build the park. Our parents have agreed to help build the park—and, of course, our town’s skateboarders will pitch in. The biggest expense our town would face is insurance and we are willing to hold fundraisers to raise money for this.

4 On Monday, our mayor is holding a meeting to discuss the pros and cons of the skateboard park. Please attend—and please help us convince everyone that a skateboard park is good for both kids and adults.

An **editorial** is an article that gives someone’s opinion.
Where would you most likely see an editorial?

1 Part A

What is the main argument of the passage?

Read the passage again. Think about what the author wants readers to do. The main argument of the passage is that the town should build a skateboard park because it will help both kids and adults.

Part B

Based on the answer to Part A, what claims does the author make to support the main argument?

Reread the passage and look for the reasons the author gives. The author claims that citizens do not want skateboarders around because they crowd sidewalks and damage property. The author also claims that kids would be safer in a skateboard park.



Guided Practice

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

Remarks by FDR after the Attack on Pearl Harbor

See page 27
Focus Lesson:
Argumentative Text

- 1 Mr. Vice President, and Mr. Speaker, and Members of the Senate and House of Representatives:
- 2 Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the empire of Japan.
- 3 The United States was at peace with that nation and was still in conversation with its government and its emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in the American island of Oahu, the Japanese ambassador to the United States delivered a formal reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or armed attack.
- 4 It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During this time, the Japanese government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.
- 5 The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. I regret to tell you that very many American lives have been lost. In addition, American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.
- 6 Yesterday, the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaya. Last night, Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong. Last night, Japanese forces attacked Guam. Last night, Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands. Last night, the Japanese attacked Wake Island. And this morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island.
- 7 Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions. They well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our nation. As Commander in Chief of the army and navy, I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.





Guided Practice: INFORMATIONAL TEXT

8 No matter how long it may take us to overcome this planned invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory. I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us.

9 Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger.

10 With confidence in our armed forces and with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain certain triumph.

11 I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.

1 Part A

Why did the speaker include paragraphs 3 and 4?

Reread these two paragraphs. What point is the speaker trying to make about Japan?

Part B

Which sentence supports your answer to Part A.

Look for a sentence that summarizes Roosevelt's point in these paragraphs.



Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

Alice Paul

1 Alice Paul was a key member of the women's suffrage movement and author of the Equal Rights Amendment. She was born on January 11, 1885, in Moorestown, New Jersey. The product of an upper middle-class Quaker family, Paul attended Swarthmore College and earned a doctorate in social work from the University of Pennsylvania.

2 Alice Paul joined the women's suffrage movement while pursuing her graduate studies in England. When she returned to the United States in 1910, Paul found the suffrage movement in need of new ways to capture public and press interest. In November 1912, Paul attended the annual convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and offered her services. NAWSA accepted her offer and made her chairman of their Congressional Committee.

3 Paul was charged with maintaining NAWSA's presence in Washington, DC. Her first task was to organize a parade designed to draw attention to the suffrage movement. The event coincided with festivities surrounding the inauguration of President Woodrow Wilson. The parade nearly caused a riot to break out as angry crowds surrounded the participants. Nonetheless, the spectacle highlighted the suffrage cause at a time when the issue was fading from public awareness.

4 In 1913, Alice Paul and several others organized the Congressional Union (CU), later known as the National Woman's Party (NWP). The group's goal was ratification of a suffrage amendment to the United States Constitution. Until the late 1910s, NAWSA mainly worked on the state level. They urged each state to pass legislation permitting women to vote. Sensing the Congressional Union was moving in a more radical direction, NAWSA ousted the CU almost immediately following its formation.

5 Over the next seven years, Paul and her followers relentlessly pursued a Constitutional Amendment. Their policy held the party in power responsible for the Amendment's success. This differed sharply from NAWSA's commitment to political neutrality. In the 1916 election, for example, the National Woman's Party campaigned against Wilson's Democrats in states where women could vote.

6 Even World War I failed to sidetrack the National Woman's Party from the suffrage campaign. Instead of calling a truce with President Wilson, suffragists picketed his White House with signs demanding he extend





democracy to women. These peaceful, if aggressive, demonstrations ended with arrest and imprisonment. Behind bars, Paul and other suffragists continued their protest with a hunger strike and eventually were force fed.

7 Following adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, which prohibited any United States citizen from being denied the right to vote on the basis of sex, Alice Paul continued to fight for women's equality. After earning a law degree in 1922, she wrote the first version of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The National Woman's Party proposed the amendment in 1923 as a means of ending discrimination on the basis of gender. The ERA passed both houses of Congress fifty years later when a new generation of feminists took up the cause. However, three-fourths of the states failed to ratify the amendment by the 1982 deadline. Active in the movement until her death in 1977, Alice Paul lived to see enormous change in the rights and status of American women.

1 Part A

Which of these best describes the structure the author uses to organize the article?

- A descriptive
- B chronological
- C problem-solution
- D compare-contrast

Part B

How does the organizational structure you selected in Part A contribute to the development of ideas in the article?

- A It provides colorful details intended to highlight special moments in Alice Paul's life.
- B It emphasizes the problems with the suffrage movement that were solved by Alice Paul's innovative ideas.
- C It shows the progression of Alice Paul's involvement in the suffrage movement over time.
- D It highlights the differences between Alice Paul's activism and other suffragists' commitment to political neutrality.