Grades 9 and 10 English Language Arts, Week Two

USING CLAIMS AND EVIDENCE IN ARGUMENT

Overview: This lesson will engage students in a debate over the role of robots and automated technology in the workplace. Students will review three texts to analyze the arguments of others, and will compose their own argument based upon the claims and evidence they read. This week's language and mechanics practice focuses on the use of phrases.

Florida Standards Covered: LAFS.910.RI.3.8 Delineate and evaluate the claims and evidence used in a text; LAFS.910.RI.1.2 Evaluating central ideas and claims in a text; LAFS.910.RI.2.6 Understanding the use of rhetoric; LAFS.910.L.1.1 Demonstrate the commands of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking (b. use various types of phrases)

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Part One: Evaluating Claims and Evidence in an Argument

Argumentative Writing
1. **Read the introductory material below on the use of claims and evidence in an argument.**
When writers formulate arguments, they make various claims and defend their claims through the use of evidence.

A **claim** persuades, argues, convinces, proves, or provocatively suggests something to a reader who may or may not initially agree with you. Claims can be formulated as statements of cause and effect, suggestions for policy, definition, or action, or an expression of values.

The following scenarios show a variety of claims that could be made to defend an argument.

A teenager who wants a new cellular phone makes the following claims:
- Every other girl in her school has a cell phone.
- She will be safer with a cell phone because she can call 911.
- A cell phone with Internet access will help her do homework.

A politician arguing for a new domestic spending program makes the following claims:
- The economy will be improved by the influx of money into the market.
- Jobs will be created by the new program.
- The program will improve infrastructure by repairing out-of-date roads, bridges, etc.

A charity applying for grant funds to increase its work makes the following claims:
- The additional funding will allow the charity to help an additional 100 people per year.
- They already have an action plan for how to use the funding, and a method to evaluate the effectiveness of their programming.
- A recent survey shows an additional need for the work of this charity in the community.

In argument, **evidence** refers to facts, documentation or testimony used to strengthen a claim, support an argument or reach a conclusion. Evidence can come in factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal forms.

2. **Read the opinion piece "Robots in the Workplace" by Robert Samuelson (Text One). As you read, annotate the text to mark the author's claims and evidence throughout.**

3. **After reading and annotating the article, complete the graphic organizer "Evaluating an Argument." After completing the graphic organizer for text one, you will read texts two and three.**

The Washington Post

Opinions

Robots in the workplace

By Robert J. Samuelson
March 15, 2015

For some time, I've been collecting news stories about robots and jobs. By robots, I mean almost any automated process that substitutes machines for people. Here are some examples:

● The restaurant chain Chili's installed 45,000 computer tablets in its U.S. locations, says The Post. The tablets enable customers to pay their bills, play games and place some orders.

● One hotel is introducing a robot bellhop that delivers items to guests' rooms, reports the New York Times. The same story mentions automated golf caddies. Another Times story reports that the German firm Daimler has demonstrated a self-driving truck.

● Lowe's, the hardware chain, is testing a robot that greets customers and directs them to the correct aisle for purchases, says the Wall Street Journal. Once large and expensive, robots have so shrunk in size and price that small factories can use them, says another Journal story.

A specter haunts America: robots. There's a vague fear that continual advances in computing power and software will automate many more jobs. The threat transcends the business cycle. Almost everyone might ultimately be at risk. Could a robot write this column? It seems plausible. Some might even regard that as an improvement.

Ironically, the loudest warning comes from two champions of digital technologies, Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee, scholars at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and authors of "The Second Machine Age." Digitalization, they argue, creates services (Google, Facebook) and expands consumer choice. But there's also a dark side. "Progress is going to leave behind some people, perhaps even a lot of people," they write.

It's easy to see why. Competing with a robot can be futile. Consider a robot costing $25,000. Unlike the $25,000 worker, the robot's expense is one-time; it can work 24 hours a day, and there's no health insurance.

What's unclear is whether this differs from the past, when new technologies have created more jobs than they destroyed. The fear of technological unemployment isn't new. In the early 1800s, English workers destroyed mechanical looms to prevent these efficient machines from taking their jobs. One alleged leader was Ned Ludd — hence the term "Luddite," someone resisting new technologies.

In 1964, technology anxieties caused President Lyndon B. Johnson to create a national commission on automation. When it reported in 1966, the unemployment rate had dropped to 3.8 percent. "Technological shocks have been happening for decades, and ... the U.S. economy has been adapting to them," writes economist Timothy Taylor (whose Web site recounts the 1960s episode).

One reason is that new technologies typically involve lower prices, superior value or both. This creates a huge demand. Take airlines. After World War II, railroads still dominated intercity travel. But airlines' greater speed and increasing size, especially after the advent of jets in the late 1950s, made trains uncompetitive. Adjusted for inflation, airfares declined. While rail travel collapsed, the number of annual airline passengers rose from 19 million in 1950 to 737 million in 2012. In 2014, the industry employed 589,000 full- and part-time workers.

The same logic applies now. Someone has to design, program, service and coordinate the robots and other digitized processes. Job creation is inevitable.

Jobs also survive in sectors that seem largely immune to digitization — "whether it is taking care of the young or taking care of the old, or repairing a lot that needs to be repaired," as former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers recently put it. Human contact is wanted or needed in places where it seems obsolete. Logically, ATMs should have decimated bank tellers. In reality, the number of tellers (about 600,000) is slightly above its 1990 level, notes Taylor, citing a study by James Bessen of Boston University's law school.

The fear of technological job loss is real but, I suspect, exaggerated, because it occurs after a period when deep employment losses for other reasons — the financial crisis and Great Recession — have made people extra sensitive to any threat to their livelihoods. In this climate, the specter of hordes of job-destroying robots seems realistic. History suggests skepticism; strong job creation (11.5 million since 2010) is a real-world rebuttal.

But also temper the skepticism. The fact that new jobs have always replaced the old is an aggregate phenomenon. It does not shield all individuals. Waves of technological advances have always left losers — people whose factories moved or shut; or whose skills became obsolete; or whose firms succumbed to new competition. Often, the new jobs aren't where the old ones were and aren't suitable for their workers.

This is the crux of the matter. If the new skills demanded by robots cannot be easily supplied by America's workers, then there will be a fateful break from history. The question is, can we adapt? The past gives cause for confidence but no ironclad guarantee.

Evaluating an Argument

Complete the organizer below after reading Text One, "Robots in the Workplace"

Argument (What is the author's overall position?):

Claim #1 (What is one point the author made to support his argument?):

Did the author use evidence to support this claim?			Which paragraph(s) contains this supporting evidence?
	Yes	No	Paragraph Number(s):
Is the evidence used to support the claim thorough?	Yes		No
What evidence could be added to further or better support this claim?			

Claim #2 (What is another point the author made to support his argument?):

Did the author use evidence to support this claim?			Which paragraph(s) contains this supporting evidence?
	Yes	No	Paragraph Number(s):
Is the evidence used to support the claim thorough?	Yes		No
What evidence could be added to further or better support this claim?			

MACHINES TRANSFORM THE ENGLISH TEXTILE INDUSTRY
June 13, 1786

The Industrial Revolution began in England in the late 1700s. The introduction of new machines revolutionized the country's clothmaking industry. However, not everybody in England was happy about this transformation. Below are two different viewpoints about these machines.

READING FOCUS:
How do the Yorkshire Cloth Workers and the Leeds Cloth Merchants differ in their opinions about the machines?

Viewpoint 1, by the Yorkshire Cloth Workers

The scribbling machines mentioned in this notice by the Yorkshire cloth workers were used to prepare wool for spinning.

The number of Scribbling-Machines extending about seventeen miles south-west of Leeds, exceed all belief, being no less than one hundred and seventy! and as each machine will do as much work in twelve hours, as ten men can in that time do by hand, (speaking within bounds) and they working night-and day, one machine will do as much work in one day as would otherwise employ twenty men. . .

How are those men, thus thrown out of employ to provide for their families;—and what are they to put their children apprentice to, that the rising generation may have something to keep them at work, in order that they may not be like vagabonds strolling about in idleness? Some say, Begin and learn some other business.—Suppose we do; who will maintain our families, whilst we undertake the arduous task; and when we have learned it, how do we know we shall be any better for all of our pains; for by the time we have served our second apprenticeship, another machine may arise, which may take away that business also . . .

Leeds lntelligencer and Leeds Mercury, June 13, 1786

Text Three

MACHINES TRANSFORM THE ENGLISH TEXTILE INDUSTRY

1791

Viewpoint 2, by the Leeds Cloth Merchants

The Leeds cloth merchants issued this proclamation in 1791 as an advertisement to defend the use of machinery in the textile industry.

At a time when the People, engaged in every other Manufacture in the Kingdom, are exerting themselves to bring their Work to Market at reduced Prices, which can alone be effected by the Aid of Machinery, it certainly is not necessary that the Cloth Merchants of Leeds, who depend chiefly on a Foreign Demand, where they have for Competitors the Manufacturers of other Nations, whose Taxes are few, and whose manual Labour is only Half the Price it bears here, should have Occasion to defend a Conduct, which has for its Aim the Advantage of the Kingdom in general, and of the Cloth Trade in particular . . .

In the Manufacture of Woollens, the Scribbling Mill, the Spinning Frame, and the Fly Shuttle, have reduced manual Labour nearly One-third, and each of them at its first Introduction carried an Alarm to the Work People, yet each has contributed to advance the Wages and to increase the Trade . . .

The Leeds Woollen Industry. 1780-1820

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Supporting a Claim

After reading the documents titled "Machines Transform the English Textile Industry," (texts two and three) complete the questions below.

Viewpoint 1, by the Yorkshire Cloth Workers (Text Two)

A: What argument is made in this document?
B: Provide an example of words, phrases, or sentences that support your answer to question A.
C: How could this document be used in the argument from "Robots in the Workplace?"

Viewpoint , by the Leeds Cloth Merchants (Text Three)

A: What argument is made in this document?
B: Provide an example of words, phrases, or sentences that support your answer to question A.
C: How could this document be used in the argument from "Robots in the Workplace?"

Making an argument

Consider where you have encountered automated technology that has replaced a human worker in your life. This should be something other than the examples from the readings. You might use things like: self-checkout machines at stores, automated toll booths, Roombas or other robotic chore machines, self-serve car washes, etc. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of this technology below.

Technology:	Where you encounter it:
Describe how this machine works and consider the human activity (work) it replaces:	
Advantages of this technology:	
Disadvantages of this technology:	

Writing Task: Consider the arguments and opinions made in the readings and the notes you just made. On your own paper, write a brief argument either supporting or opposing the use of automated technologies. Your argument should include at least one example from the readings as well as the technology that you described as evidence to support your claim.

Types of Prepositional Phrases

A **phrase** is a group of related words that is used as a single part of speech. A phrase does not contain both a verb and its subject.

A **prepositional phrase** includes a preposition, the object of the preposition, and any modifiers of that object. (NOTE: Prepositions are words which show direction or relationship such as *in, to, by, with, from*…)

Example 1: A koala is a marsupial, a mammal **with an external abdominal pouch.**
The bolded portion of the sentence above is an example of a prepositional phrase. The preposition is the word "with," and the object of the preposition is the word "pouch." "External" and "Abdominal" are words modifying the word pouch.

Example 2: The mole burrowed **under our lawn.**
The bolded portion of the sentence above is an example of a prepositional phrase. The preposition is the word "under" and the object of the preposition is "lawn." The word "our" describes the lawn.

There are two main types of prepositional phrases: **Adverb Phrases** and **Adjective Phrases.**

Adjective Phrases are prepositional phrases that modify, or describe, other nouns or pronouns in the sentence.

Example 1: A koala is a marsupial, a mammal **with an external abdominal pouch.**
This prepositional phrase is an ADJECTIVE PHRASE because it provides more information to describe, or modify, the word "mammal."

Adverb Phrases are preposition phrases that modify, or describe, verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. Adverb phrases usually tell when, where, why, how, or to what extent.

Example 2: The mole burrowed **under our lawn.**
The bolded portion of the sentence above is an ADVERB PHRASE because it describes the verb "burrowed" by providing more information about where the mole burrowed.

Exercise One: For each of the following sentence, underline the prepositional phrase. Then, write next to the sentence to identify the phrase as either an ADJECTIVE PHRASE or ADVERB PHRASE.

1. The tall building with the statues out front is the art museum.

2. The red notebook is used for our English class.

3. The selection committee was impressed with the candidates.

4. After a long day at work, we decided to spend the evening quietly at home.

5. I saw a raccoon running through the backyard.

6. Early in June, my family holds a reunion for all of our relatives.

7. The tools in the garage were no use to us if we could not open the door.

8. The resources from the internet are good, but I prefer printed articles.

9. The rosebush in the planter box out front has seen better days.

10. After arguing to stay up late, my younger brother eventually to sleep in the guest bedroom.