

Debate & Argumentative Writing

Overview:

Effective communication often involves engaging in civil discourse regarding texts and ideas. Yet it can be overwhelming with the amount of research and synthesis it can take in developing strong arguments. In Packback, students can easily practice taking a position and defend their viewpoint using evidence!

Teachers can mix and match this plan which contains three ideas to support debate & argumentative writing:

- Packback Instruct (1-2 days)
- Packback Questions (1 week)
- Instruct & Questions in support of longer form writing (2 - 4 weeks)

Learning Objective or Goal (Applicable Common Core Standard):

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.8

- Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3

- Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

Approximate Time:

- Ranges between 1 day - 2 weeks depending on usage

Prep, set up, and/or materials needed before class:

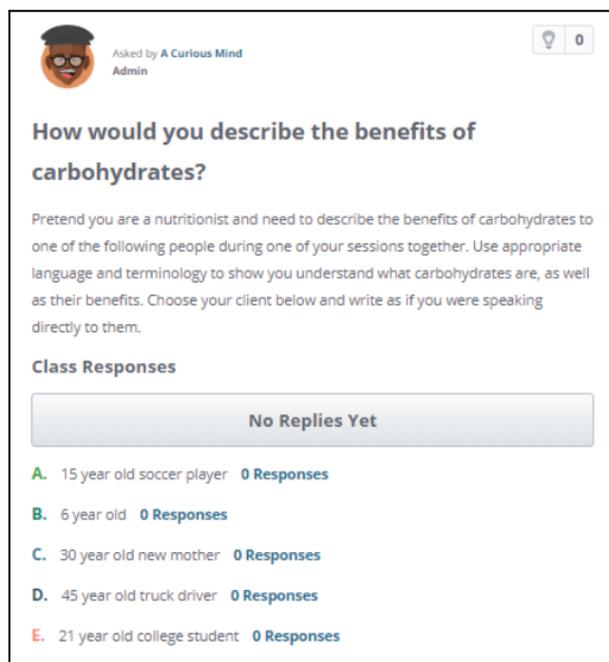
- Educators need to clearly outline the benefits of debate and civil discourse.
- Outline the expectations up front
 - Packback allows us to practice argumentation and debate in a structured environment. This is a low stakes environment where you can state your position, utilize evidence to strengthen your argument, and respond to classmates' viewpoints.
 - Students should focus on [replies, supporting points, and counterpoints](#).
 - Grading: If you're using Packback independently to practice skills you can include this in your participation or formative assignment grade categories.
 - If using as part of a larger assignment, we recommend at 10% toward the final grade

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Idea #1 (1 - 2 days): In-Class Activity with Instruct

Students will respond to discussion poll, defend response, and add counter/support point (optional)

- **Day 1:** [Create a "Homework Discussion Poll"](#) as it will require students to select a response and defend it in writing. You can create up to 8 different responses where you could have students select a similar side, but choose the stronger piece of evidence. We recommend picking a high interest topic that will quickly grab students' attention.
- **Day 2 (Optional):** Feature a few replies that meet your academic expectations. You can share why these are strong posts or encourage students to identify what makes these posts strong.
 - If you have time, have students create a supporting point to another peer who selected the same answer OR create a counter point to a peer who selected a different option.



The screenshot shows a Packback poll interface. At the top, it says "Asked by A Curious Mind Admin" next to a profile icon. The poll question is "How would you describe the benefits of carbohydrates?". Below the question is a paragraph of instructions: "Pretend you are a nutritionist and need to describe the benefits of carbohydrates to one of the following people during one of your sessions together. Use appropriate language and terminology to show you understand what carbohydrates are, as well as their benefits. Choose your client below and write as if you were speaking directly to them." Underneath, there is a section titled "Class Responses" with a button that says "No Replies Yet". Below that, there are five options, each with "0 Responses":

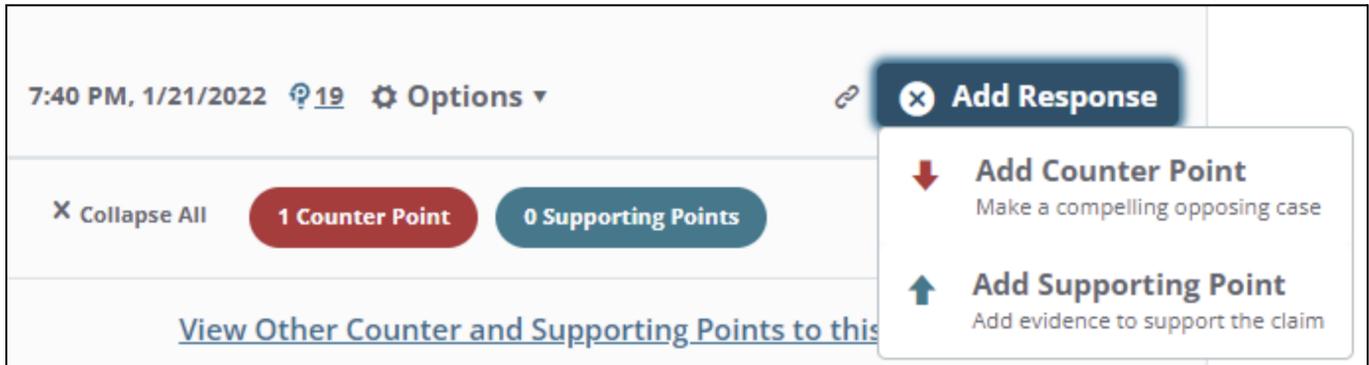
Option	Responses
A. 15 year old soccer player	0 Responses
B. 6 year old	0 Responses
C. 30 year old new mother	0 Responses
D. 45 year old truck driver	0 Responses
E. 21 year old college student	0 Responses

Idea #2 (1 week): Packback Questions

Ask 1 question, post 2 responses including counter/support point

- **Day 1:** Set expectations on what civil discourse looks like in class and online settings. Review particular behaviors that you would like to see in students' arguments (ex. Claim, evidence, reasoning)
 - Provide students with class time as needed to either begin or complete this first question. Encourage students to post a question based on a particular controversy or topic. You can also select a few topics to narrow students' range.
 - Ex. Should the drinking age be lowered? Should schools enforce dress codes? Should cellphones be allowed in the classroom?
 - If students do not finish their question including a description, it will automatically be saved as a draft. They can access their drafts by going to ["See My Posts"](#) and click on Draft.
 - *Teacher:* Feature strong questions you'd encourage students to respond to!
- **Day 2:** Review some top questions from yesterday. Then, classmates will respond to initial questions with their ideas. If questions are not finished, students should go back and work on drafts.
 - Students should be given time to begin or complete their responses to peer questions. Students should respond to questions that interest them or pertain to their topic to enhance their own understanding and their classmates. Educator may want to require students to add a source to back up their claim or response.
 - *Teacher:* Feature strong responses that model expectations of evidence and reasoning!

- **Day 3:** Now that we have initial responses, students can use counter and supporting points. Students should be given time to begin or complete their responses.
 - *Teacher:* Feature strong responses that model expectations of enhancing initial argument (support) OR posts providing effective rebuttals to the initial thread.



- **Day 4 (Optional)** Students participate in a live discussion utilizing Packback content!

Idea #3 (1 - 2 weeks): Packback Instruct & Questions

- **Week 1: Packback Instruct** → (see Idea #1 for more details)

Students will respond to discussion poll & defend response.

- Create a "Homework Discussion Poll" as it will *require students to select a response and defend it in writing*. You can create up to 8 different responses where you could have students select a similar side, but choose the stronger piece of evidence. We recommend picking a high interest topic that will quickly grab students' attention.
- **Week 1 & 2: Packback Questions (see Idea #2 for more details)**
 - Set expectations on what civil discourse looks like in class and online settings. Review particular behaviors that you would like to see in students' arguments (ex. Claim, evidence, reasoning)
 - *Day #1:* Provide students with class time as needed to either begin or complete this first question. Encourage students to post a question based on a particular controversy or topic. You can also select a few topics to narrow students' range.
 - *Day #2:* Students should be given time to begin or complete their responses to peer questions. Students should respond to questions that interest them or pertain to their topic to enhance their own understanding and their classmates. Educator may require students to add a source to back up their claim or response.
 - *Day #3:* With initial responses, students can use counter and supporting points. Students should be given time to begin or complete their responses.

- **Week 2 (Optional):** Complete final writing assignment or in-person debate!
 - You can create one last discussion poll if you're curious to see what side students decided!

Assessment & Evaluation:

Students should be evaluated on participation. Educators should be monitoring student work on Packback throughout the project. Use the engagement tools to highlight great student questions by featuring them. Provide specific praise for students who have done exemplary work. Use the coaching tool for the students who need direct feedback to improve their work.

Modification & Differentiation: Utilize Instruct to support scaffolding. All timelines can be extended. Selecting a topic can also narrow focus. **Sentence starters for Packback posts (for questions or responses) can be provided.**