

PREVIEW

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# Evaluating Arguments

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# Bias

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- A tendency to lean in a certain direction about a claim; either in favor of or against something because of personal reasons (whether subconsciously or consciously)
- For example: I think Joe should win class president. But Joe is my best friend, so I'm biased.

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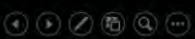
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# Audience

- The intended reader that the author is trying to persuade.



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# Claim

- A claim is the author's main argument.



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# Counterclaim

- The opposite of the writer's claim, used to rebut the claim.



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# Evidence

- Information that supports the claim. This includes: quotes, examples, anecdotes, statistics, and facts.



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# Emotional Appeal

- A method of persuasion where the writer tries to win the audience by getting an emotional response from the reader; for example, anger, sadness, guilt etc.



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# Ethical Appeal

- A method of persuasion where the writer tries to win the audience by establishing credibility on the subject. Readers believe the writer because of their expertise on the topic.



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# Logical Appeal

- A method of persuasion where the writer tries to win the audience by using factual information and practical reasoning. The writer will use statistics, numbers, and figures to support their claim.



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Evaluating Arguments

Bias	
Audience	
Claim	
Counterclaim	
Evidence	
Emotional Appeal	
Ethical Appeal	
Logical Appeal	

Name:

Class:

### Identifying Audience

**Directions:** For each of the following passages, list all probable target audiences. Be as specific as possible.

1. Gasoline: it's not the most exciting thing to buy, but nonetheless, we all need it. On average, consumers visit the gas station at least once a week. That money adds up. Right now, unleaded fuel at Rutter's cost \$2.34 a gallon. But, you can save an additional \$.10 per gallon when you become a member of Rutter's Rewards! Speedway's current prices are \$2.45. Think about where that extra cash can be better spent if you go to Rutter's instead of Speedway. There are plenty of pumps available at Rutter's and the staff is always ready to help. There are 68 locations in central Pennsylvania, so go to our website to find the nearest location to you.

**Audience:**

**How do you know:**

2. Smart Boards are more than just a white board in the classroom. By using this interactive tool, students can seamlessly learn difficult concepts and participate in solving math problems. Students learn better when they are involved in the instruction. Smart Boards enhance any lesson, they provide flexibility, they are low maintenance, and they are environmentally friendly! Talk to your school board today about investing in a Smart Board.

**Audience:**

**How do you know:**

3. Rescuing a dog is far more rewarding than buying one from a breeder. When you go to a pound to adopt a dog who needs a home, rather than buying from a breeder, you are SAVING A LIFE. Dogs who grow old in the pound live sad, lonely lives, and that's only if they are not euthanized. Puppies are not always available, but puppies are extremely difficult to raise. If you've ever owned a dog before, you know, potty-training is not a fun task. Unless you are going to be home 24/7, you will most likely struggle to train your puppy. Consider opening your home to a pet that will appreciate your affection and attention, and don't just focus on the specific breed of dog.

**Audience:**

**How do you know:**

4. In high school, you're going to write essays all the time, and not just for English class. It's not such bad thing since writing is an important skill set that you'll need for the rest of your life, no matter what career you choose. Did you know The Writing Center at Cedar Cliff High School supports how all forms of writing are taught and learned? We offer individual consultations as well as a quiet space to get writing done. It's free of cost and your teachers will be impressed to see that you took the time to see a writing tutor. Stop by today... one hour in the writing center can be the reason your grade improves!

**Audience:**

**How do you know:**

5. Perhaps you don't have a big family feast planned for Christmas this year. Maybe you don't celebrate Christmas, maybe you don't live close to your family, or perhaps you just feel like being a Grinch... Whatever the case may be, it doesn't mean you have to be deprived of a delicious home-cooked meal. Mashed potatoes, gravy, fresh vegetables, corn bread, macaroni and cheese, fried chicken, carved ham, roast beef, and eggnog are just a few of the menu items at The Old Country Buffet! All you can eat for a low price will change the way you view Christmas dinner. The Old Country Buffet will be open 11:00AM – 6:00PM on Christmas day, so make sure you come on by. Don't forget to hit the sundae bar!

**Audience:**

**How do you know:**

6. You should not vote if you aren't educated on the issues or topics present in society. Voting is a right that we have in America, but historically, not everyone has always had this privilege. Because of this, voting holds a great responsibility. If you've never done it before, you might not know that it's an honor to cast a vote for the people you want to see make a difference in the community. Make sure before you vote for the first time, you do your research on all the candidates and you don't just focus on political parties or what your favorite celebrity thinks.

**Audience:**

**How do you know:**

7. Child obesity is a growing problem in America. Parents should be held responsible if their child is overweight. People say that eating healthy is too expensive, but fast food prices are rising every day. It costs almost ten dollars to get a full-size meal at Wendy's or Burger King. It only cost \$.89 to purchase one banana. Health is not just about physical features; if a child is obese, they are more likely to develop heart issues and blood disorders. If you want your child to live a long, healthy life, consider what you are feeding them. Remember, you are the adult, and so you are responsible for the health of your children. The youth depends on you.

**Audience:**

**How do you know:**

8. The Ritz Carlton located in Maui, Hawaii is one of the most famous and luxurious resorts in America. It's not just a hotel, it is paradise. There's a spa, plenty of places to eat, and several golf courses—perfect for a peaceful, quiet getaway. Set amid a historic, 22,000-acre pineapple plantation, the golf courses at our Kapalua resort offer incredible views and challenging 18-hole play. You have been searching for the perfect place to visit after retirement, and this is it. After decades of hard work, you and your spouse deserve a trip away— your grandchildren will be there when you get back! Make sure you visit the spa for the Lava Shell Body Treatment before you leave. Your arthritis will thank you.

**Audience:**

**How do you know:**

9. Maybe teachers would let students have cell phones in school if we acted more responsibly. Think about all we could do in the classroom if we were allowed to have our phones. We could use media to create and complete projects. We could listen to music while we work! I know I would just feel better to have my phone with me instead of in my locker. It is so frustrating because if students would just stay off Snapchat and Tik Tok during the school day, then cell phones in school wouldn't be a problem. I know I can handle using my phone appropriately in school, and I'm in 8th grade.

**Audience:**

**How do you know:**

10. Take your family on a vacation that they will never forget... Disney World! There's something for everyone. Your teens will love the thrilling rides and roller coasters like Tower of Terror and Rock N Roller Coaster. Younger kids can take a ride on Dumbo, the famous flying elephant, or fly on a magical pirate ship to Never Land on Peter Pan's Flight. Your toddlers can meet all of the Disney characters like Mickey and Minnie and even get a princess makeover from Cinderella. The Animal Kingdom is filled with thousands of animals, which is fun for the whole family. Need somewhere just for the adults? Travel all around the world in Epcot trying famous authentic dishes you can't get anywhere else. Your spouse will love a romantic night in Paris eating croissants. It is no wonder that this place is dubbed, "the happiest place on earth."

**Audience:**

**How do you know:**

## Evaluating Arguments Practice

What method of persuasion does each author use in the following statements? Ethical (ET), Emotional (EM), or Logical (LO)? Write your answer on the line. Circle any words/phrases that helped you come to your conclusion.

\_\_\_\_\_ 90% of car accidents involve at least one driver under the age of eighteen years old. And according to the CDC, teens have the lowest rate of seat belt use of any age group. Driving without a seatbelt is reckless and dangerous. That's why we need to reconsider raising the legal driving age in all states.

\_\_\_\_\_ Innocent kids under the age of five tragically die every year from accidental drownings. This is the main reason parents should sign their kids up for swimming lessons as soon as possible. It only takes 20 seconds for a child to drown. It could be your child next.

\_\_\_\_\_ Doctors all over the world recommend drinking lemon water and honey to prevent illness. They say drinking a glass a day can fight the common cold before it starts.

\_\_\_\_\_ If you care about your health, you will stop eating foods that contain GMOs. Non-GMO foods are plenty available and don't contain harmful carcinogens that cause cancer. Protect yourself and shop smart.

\_\_\_\_\_ Football is a high-risk injury sport. There are approximately 67,000 diagnosed concussions in high school football every year. And the average football player's risk of developing chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) increases by 30% every year.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have been a cheerleader for eight years and can say that it is more physically challenging than most people think. It requires stability, flexibility, endurance, strength, and cheerleaders spend hours practicing every day to learn meticulous routines.



## Bias Is Everywhere

"Reading is fun!" says the English teacher.

### To identify bias, look at the following:

1. Determine who the speaker is. Are they credible? Do they have the authority to speak about this topic? What is the author's purpose for writing the text? Are they trying to sell you something?
2. Be on the look out for persuasive techniques and word choice. Is the reader trying to guilt trip you or play on your emotions? Are they using loaded language to manipulate how you feel about a topic?
3. Does the speaker mention a counterclaim or is the argument one-sided? Are they providing you with all of the information? Is the information factual?

**DIRECTIONS:** Use the scale of 1-5 below to rate the bias in the following passages. Explain your answer.

- 1 = almost totally unbiased; highly objective
- 2 = mostly unbiased; fairly reliable
- 3 = somewhat biased; accuracy is questionable
- 4 = biased; probably unreliable
- 5 = totally biased; highly subjective; inaccurate

1. Citizens of Burmwood County, you should be alarmed at the government's diabolical plot to change our beautiful Titan Park—a landmark in our town—into a shopping center. If this malicious plan is carried out next summer, all the lovely trees will be chopped down and thousands of nature's creatures will lose their habitats. Values of the homes within the area will drop immensely as the park fills with the filth and debris of the bulldozers and other equipment. The air will become filthy, even poisonous, and could kill local residents. We pay taxes to keep this community wholesome and family-friendly. The shopping center will only bring crime and waste in the place we raise our children. People are more likely to get mugged in a parking lot rather than a park. Sign the petition to stop this project before it starts!

**How would rate the bias of this passage?**

**Explanation:**

2) High schools should change the curriculum so that students are required to take more practical classes that will actually help them in the future. Why is it that students know how to paint an abstract work of art, but they do not know anything about how to pay taxes or how to cook a balanced meal? The liberal arts are important, and I am not saying they should be eliminated necessarily. However, more classes that conquer skills about how to successfully be independent after graduation should take priority. I have no future as an actor or a musician; I personally hate music class. But, I will need to know how to balance a budget. Why can't high school require both?

**How would rate the bias of this passage?**

**Explanation:**

3) Zoos save the lives of many endangered species and therefore, should not be closed down. At a glance, zoos may seem unethical because the animals are all in cages, but the reality is that the animals are safer in the zoos than they would be in the wild. Zoos are protected from poachers, habitat loss, and predators that would



otherwise kill them. Plus, there's probably no real evidence that captivity is bad for animals. Employees who work with the animals at the zoo look after the animals with care. Zoologist at the Philadelphia zoo, Jessica Monroe states, "Treatment teams at our zoo includes veterinarians, pathologists, technicians and other specialists who can create and maintain individualized care plan for the creature in need." She states all animals get food and water daily and are given plenty of space to roam around. In conclusion, if we stop people from going to zoos, people won't be able to learn about all the amazing animals that exist and many species will become extinct.

**How would rate the bias of this passage?**

**Explanation:**

4) Professional athletes are paid too much money. On average, MLB players make 4.1 million a year, NFL players make 2.5 million a year, and NBA players make an average of 7 million dollars a year! Those are only the averages; the better the player, the more they make. In 2020, Tom Brady signed a 50 million dollar two-year contract with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Is that really fair when teachers, firefighters, nurses, and other occupations that serve the community don't make nearly as much? The starting salary for an enlisted Marine is only \$22,000. Some people say that athletes make a lot of money because their careers are extremely short (due to injuries and age) but even if an athlete played in the NFL for only two years, they would still never have to work another job again because they would be a millionaire. Plus, plenty of athletes continue to profit off their success once they no longer play sports through sponsorships and celebrity appearances. Professional athletes work hard to make it as far as they do, but their salaries are still excessive. Cutting the salaries of the athletes, even by half, would not affect their quality of life and then the money could be used for something that benefits the economy better.

**How would rate the bias of this passage?**

**Explanation:**

5) Nearly 300,000 homes are broken into and robbed every year. Having an ADT advanced security system installed in your home can protect you from unwanted intruders. It's not just about someone stealing your belongings... break-ins can leave you completely traumatized and feeling violated for years after the event. In the best case scenario, you're not home for the intrusion. But what if you are? Do you have the means to scare off a vicious criminal? Burglars will do what it takes to avoid arrest... they don't care about you. How would you feel if your child was killed over a lousy television set? You want an ADT home security system to keep your family safe at night and make sure you are never the victim of a home intrusion or violent attack.

**How would rate the bias of this passage?**

**Explanation:**

Name:

Class:

Directions: Read the following article and answer the questions that follow.

### Untitled Article by Andrea Perez

How often do you see an image of someone on social media that is completely unfiltered or unedited? It's not that common anymore. Sure, it's fun to play around with different color schemes and animal filters, but what about when people deliberately change the way they look just to be accepted by their peers? What about magazine covers that undoubtedly use Photoshop in every advertisement or cover published? Using editing programs to alter the physical appearances of people should be illegal because it promotes false advertising and unhealthy, unattainable beauty standards for men and women.

In today's society, Photoshop is used in all kinds of way, such as fixing facial flaws and imperfect lines, or eliminating acne and stretch marks. But sometimes the digital retouching goes too far. In 2016, the cover of W Magazine featured supermodels Kendall Jenner and Gigi Hadid without the appearance of knees. Their skin was smoothed and glossed over so much with an editing program that the image showed both women with completely flat, silky legs. This Photoshop "fail" can be seen as humorous, but the reality is, most magazine covers are Photoshopped and it's causing many young men and women to view themselves as inferior or ugly. Plus, Kendall Jenner looks beautiful with or without knees.



Editing pictures really becomes an issue when companies use these photos to try and sell weight loss products and other beauty merchandise. For example, when you see "before" and "after" pictures of people who lost weight, you should know that there's an extremely easy tool on Photoshop that shrinks the shape of someone's waist and other limbs. It's not just the small, unknown businesses who are pulling these tricks. The Kardashians have been under criticism for trying to sell "waist trainers" and "fit tea" to their Instagram followers. People are still tricked into buying these products although most people are aware that the women heavily Photoshop their pictures. Moreover, the Kardashians have had multiple plastic surgery procedures done to look the way they do.

Though most adults can realize these sleazy sales tactics, adolescents just want to look like their favorite celebrities. It's easy prey for these companies since puberty already makes teenagers feel insecure about their appearances. "Even if you look at a photo that you know is edited, it doesn't stop the harmful thoughts that make you say, 'I wish I looked like that,'" states Jordan Dresser, a fifteen-year-old student who has recovered from orthorexia and anorexia. It's not just about feeling ugly; sometimes, the negative thoughts manifest into serious health problems. Four million men and women in the United States suffer from an eating disorder and maybe it's because they are chasing a standard of perfection that doesn't exist. According to a study by USA Today, 47% of girls from 5th-12th grade reported wanting to lose weight because of magazine pictures. There is actual harm being done mentally and physically to people who are seeing these edited images on a daily basis.



Some people may argue that editing photos is the individual choice and right of every person. It falls under the The First Amendment, freedom of speech, to post what you want. While this may be true, false advertising is an illegal offense under The Federal Trade Commission Act (FTC) as it misleads consumers and affects consumers' decisions. We can't stop everyone from using filters on their personal social media accounts, but we can stop companies from using these edited pictures to sell their products.

Overall, using editing programs to alter the bodies and faces of people to fit a certain beauty standard is harmful to society and should be illegal. It's costing people hundreds of dollars in products that don't actually work (or that they don't need) and it lowers the self-esteem of young people who try to match what they see in the magazines. As a young person, I would like to see more models and celebrities be featured who actually look normal.

### After Reading Questions

1. What is the writer's claim?

2. What type of evidence is used? Facts? Quotes? Examples? Statistics? Anecdotes? Provide at least one type and an example from the text.

3. Who is the target audience?

4. What is the counterclaim mentioned in this article? How does the author rebut the counterclaim?

5. What transitional words or phrases help the writer organize her ideas?

6. Why does the writer refer to a teenager for her opinion? What point does it prove?

7. What does the writer repeat at the end of her essay?

8. Do you believe Andrea Perez has a strong claim? Why or why not?

9. What would you title this essay? Why?

10. What persuasive appeals does the author use? Emotional? Logical? Ethical? Explain.

11. Is there any bias? Explain.

12. What detail does the author mention that is the least relevant to her claim and should be removed?

## Evaluating Arguments **Answer Key**

Bias	A tendency to lean in a certain direction about a claim; either in favor of or against something because of personal reasons (whether subconsciously or consciously)
Audience	The intended reader that the author is trying to persuade.
Claim	A claim is the main argument.
Counterclaim	The opposite of the writer's claim, used to rebut the claim.
Evidence	Information that supports the claim. This includes: quotes, examples, anecdotes, statistics, and facts.
Emotional Appeal	A method of persuasion where the writer tries to win the audience by getting an emotional response from the reader; for example, anger, sadness, guilt etc.
Ethical Appeal	A method of persuasion where the writer tries to win the audience by establishing credibility on the subject. Readers believe the writer because of their expertise on the topic.
Logical Appeal	A method of persuasion where the writer tries to win the audience by using factual information and practical reasoning. The writer will use statistics, numbers, and figures to support their claim.



Name:

Class:

### Identifying Audience Answer Key

**Directions:** For each of the following passages, list all probable target audiences. Be as specific as possible.

1. Gasoline: it's not the most exciting thing to buy, but nonetheless, we all need it. On average, consumers visit the gas station at least once a week. That money adds up. Right now, unleaded fuel at Rutter's cost \$2.34 a gallon. But, you can save an additional \$.10 per gallon when you become a member of Rutter's Rewards! Speedway's current prices are \$2.45. Think about where that extra cash can be better spent if you go to Rutter's instead of Speedway. There are plenty of pumps available at Rutter's and the staff is always ready to help. There are 68 locations in central Pennsylvania, so go to our website to find the nearest location to you.

**Audience:** Drivers who live in central Pennsylvania.

**How do you know:** Rutter's gas stations are located in Pennsylvania and the writer wants the reader to become a member of their rewards program. You also would not be interested unless you drive some type of vehicle that requires gasoline.

2. Smart Boards are more than just a white board in the classroom. By using this interactive tool, students can seamlessly learn difficult concepts and participate in solving math problems. Students learn better when they are involved in the instruction. Smart Boards enhance any lesson, they provide flexibility, they are low maintenance, and they are environmentally friendly! Talk to your school board today about investing in a Smart Board.

**Audience:** Teachers who want to integrate more technology into the classroom.

**How do you know:** Teachers would care about helping students learn more efficiently and enhancing their lessons. They would also be interested in their low maintenance and would be the advocate who speaks to a school board.

3. Rescuing a dog is far more rewarding than buying one from a breeder. When you go to a pound to adopt a dog who needs a home, rather than buying from a breeder, you are SAVING A LIFE. Dogs who grow old in the pound live sad, lonely lives, and that's only if they are not euthanized. Puppies are not always available, but puppies are extremely difficult to raise. If you've ever owned a dog before, you know, potty-training is not a fun task. Unless you are going to be home 24/7, you will most likely struggle to train your puppy. Consider opening your home to a pet that will appreciate your affection and attention, and don't just focus on the specific breed of dog.

**Audience:** Someone who is interested in buying a dog that might not be home all the time.

**How do you know:** The writer discusses the best option when adopting a dog and tries to persuade the reader that puppies are very difficult to raise unless you're home 24/7.

4. In high school, you're going to write essays all the time, and not just for English class. It's not such bad thing since writing is an important skill set that you'll need for the rest of your life, no matter what career you choose. Did you know The Writing Center at Cedar Cliff High School supports how all forms of writing are taught and learned? We offer individual consultations as well as a quiet space to get writing done. It's free of cost and your teachers will be impressed to see that you took the time to see a writing tutor. Stop by today... one hour in the writing center can be the reason your grade improves!

**Audience:** High school students at Cedar Cliff High School that want help in writing.

**How do you know:** Only a student at Cedar Cliff High School would be allowed to see a writing tutor at their school. Students who would want to raise their grades would be interested in getting extra help.

5. Perhaps you don't have a big family feast planned for Christmas this year. Maybe you don't celebrate Christmas, maybe you don't live close to your family, or perhaps you just feel like being a Grinch... Whatever the case may be, it doesn't mean you have to be deprived of a delicious home-cooked meal. Mashed potatoes, gravy, fresh vegetables, corn bread, macaroni and cheese, fried chicken, carved ham, roast beef, and eggnog are just a few of the menu items at The Old Country Buffet! All you can eat for a low price will change the way you view Christmas dinner. The Old Country Buffet will be open 11:00AM – 6:00PM on Christmas day, so make sure you come on by. Don't forget to hit the sundae bar!

**Audience:** Anyone who isn't celebrating Christmas, will be alone on Christmas, or someone who doesn't want to cook on Christmas.

**How do you know:** The writer wants readers to go to their restaurant on Christmas, so it has to be someone with no plans on that day.



6. You should not vote if you are not educated on the issues or topics present in society. Voting is a right that we have in America, but historically, not everyone has always had this privilege. Because of this, voting holds a great responsibility. If you've never done it before, you might not know that it's a huge honor to cast a vote for the people you want to see make a difference in the community. Make sure before you vote for the first time, you really do your research on all the candidates and you don't just focus on political parties or what your favorite celebrity thinks.

**Audience:** First time voters or people who are 18 and are US citizens.

**How do you know:** The writer warns people who have never voted to take it seriously; if you just turned 18, you are now eligible to vote. You also have to be an American citizen to vote in America.

7. Child obesity is a growing problem in America. Parents should be held responsible if their child is overweight. People say that eating healthy is too expensive, but fast food prices are rising every day. It costs almost ten dollars to get a full-size meal at Wendy's or Burger King. It only cost \$.89 to purchase one banana. Health is not just about physical features; if a child is obese, they are more likely to develop heart issues and blood disorders. If you want your child to live a long, healthy life, consider what you are feeding them. Remember, you are the adult, and so you are responsible for the health of your children. The youth depends on you.

**Audience:** Parents with young children in America.

**How do you know:** Young children can't control what they eat, their parents choose for them. The writer wants parents to choose wisely when spending money on what they feed their children to prevent future health problems.

8. The Ritz Carlton located in Maui, Hawaii is one of the most famous and luxurious resorts in America. It's not just a hotel, it is paradise. There's a spa, plenty of places to eat, and several golf courses—perfect for a peaceful, quiet getaway. Set amid a historic, 22,000-acre pineapple plantation, the golf courses at our Kapalua resort offer incredible views and challenging 18-hole play. You have been searching for the perfect place to visit after retirement, and this is it. After decades of hard work, you and your spouse deserve a trip away—your grandchildren will be there when you get back! Make sure you visit the spa for the Lava Shell Body Treatment before you leave. Your arthritis will thank you.

**Audience:** Older folks, elderly people, or retired couples.

**How do you know:** The writer talks about playing golf post retirement which indicates the reader is old enough to retire. They also mention grandchildren and arthritis which suggests the audience is older.

9. Maybe teachers would let students have cell phones in school if we acted more responsibly. Think about all we could do in the classroom if we were allowed to have our phones. We could use media to create and complete projects. We could listen to music while we work! I know I would just feel better to have my phone with me instead of in my locker. It is so frustrating because if students would just stay off Snapchat and Tik Tok during the school day, then cell phones in school wouldn't be a problem. I know I can handle using my phone appropriately in school, and I'm in 8th grade.

**Audience:** Middle school students and high school students who have phones.

**How do you know:** The writer is in 8th grader and says if "we" acted more responsibly meaning she/he wishes her/his peers would stay off their phones when it's not allowed. The mention of Tik Tok and Snapchat indicate the audience is young, but not as young as elementary school.

10. Take your family on a vacation that they will never forget... Disney World! There's something for everyone. Your teens will love the thrilling rides and roller coasters like Tower of Terror and Rock N Roller Coaster. Younger kids can take a ride on Dumbo, the famous flying elephant, or fly on a magical pirate ship to Never Land on Peter Pan's Flight. Your toddlers can meet all of the Disney characters like Mickey and Minnie and even get a princess makeover from Cinderella. The Animal Kingdom is filled with thousands of animals, which is fun for the whole family. Need somewhere just for the adults? Travel all around the world in Epcot trying famous authentic dishes you can't get anywhere else. Your spouse will love a romantic night in Paris eating croissants. It is no wonder that this place is dubbed, "the happiest place on earth."

**Audience:** A family looking to take a vacation with kids of multiple ages— younger kids who like Disney or older kids who like roller coasters.

**How do you know:** The writer discusses activities the young kids would like, such as the Peter Pan ride and meeting Mickey; activities the teens would like, such as the roller coasters, and activities the adults would like, such as Epcot.



## Evaluating Arguments Practice Answer Key

What method of persuasion does each author use in the following statements? Ethical (ET), Emotional (EM), or Logical (LO)? Write your answer on the line. Circle any words/phrases that helped you come to your conclusion.

**LO** \_\_\_\_\_ 90% of car accidents involve at least one driver under the age of eighteen years old. And according to the CDC, teens have the lowest rate of seat belt use of any age group. Driving without a seatbelt is reckless and dangerous. That's why we need to reconsider raising the legal driving age in all states.

**EM** \_\_\_\_\_ Innocent kids under the age of five tragically die every year from accidental drownings. This is the main reason parents should sign their kids up for swimming lessons as soon as possible. It only takes 20 seconds for a child to drown. It could be your child next.

**ET** \_\_\_\_\_ Doctors all over the world recommend drinking lemon water and honey to prevent illness. They say drinking a glass a day can fight the common cold before it starts.

**EM** \_\_\_\_\_ If you care about your health, you will stop eating foods that contain GMOs. Non-GMO foods are plenty available and don't contain harmful carcinogens that cause cancer. Protect yourself and shop smart.

**LO** \_\_\_\_\_ Football is a high-risk injury sport. There are approximately 67,000 diagnosed concussions in high school football every year. And the average football player's risk of developing chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) increases by 30% every year.

**ET** \_\_\_\_\_ I have been a cheerleader for eight years and can say that it is more physically challenging than most people think. It requires stability, flexibility, endurance, strength, and cheerleaders spend hours practicing every day to learn meticulous routines.



## Bias Is Everywhere

"Reading is fun!" says the English teacher.

### To identify bias, look at the following:

1. Determine who the speaker is. Are they credible? Do they have the authority to speak about this topic? What is the author's purpose for writing the text? Are they trying to sell you something?
2. Be on the look out for persuasive techniques and word choice. Is the reader trying to guilt trip you or play on your emotions? Are they using loaded language to manipulate how you feel about a topic?
3. Does the speaker mention a counterclaim or is the argument one-sided? Are they providing you with all of the information? Is the information factual?

**DIRECTIONS:** Use the scale of 1-5 below to rate the bias in the following passages. Explain your answer.

- 1 = almost totally unbiased; highly objective
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- 4 = biased; probably unreliable
- 5 = totally biased; highly subjective; inaccurate

### Answer Key

**Answers May Vary Slightly (I just allow my students to have good reasoning for their rating)**

1. Citizens of Burmwood County, you should be alarmed at the government's diabolical plot to change our beautiful Titan Park—a landmark in our town—into a shopping center. If this malicious plan is carried out next summer, all the lovely trees will be chopped down and thousands of nature's creatures will lose their habitats. Values of the homes within the area will drop immensely as the park fills with the filth and debris of the bulldozers and other equipment. The air will become filthy, even poisonous, and could kill local residents. We pay taxes to keep this community wholesome and family-friendly. The shopping center will only bring crime and waste in the place we raise our children. People are more likely to get mugged in a parking lot rather than a park. Sign the petition to stop this project before it starts!

**How would rate the bias of this passage? 5**

**Explanation:** The writer uses strong biased language like "diabolical" and "malicious" to convince readers that this is a bad idea. Some information is inaccurate such as people will get mugged in the parking lot and the polluted air will kill residents.

2) High schools should change the curriculum so that students are required to take more practical classes that will actually help them in the future. Why is it that students know how to paint an abstract work of art, but they do not know anything about how to pay taxes or how to cook a balanced meal? The liberal arts are important, and I am not saying they should be eliminated necessarily. However, more classes that conquer skills about how to successfully be independent after graduation should take priority. I have no future as an actor or a musician; I personally hate music class. But, I will need to know how to balance a budget. Why can't high school require both?

**How would rate the bias of this passage? 3**

**Explanation:** The writer has valid points but is biased since the writer doesn't have an interest in acting or music (hates music class). The writer has a good foundation for an argument, but fails to use any substantial evidence or rebut the counterclaim.

3) Zoos save the lives of many endangered species and therefore, should not be closed down. At a glance, zoos may seem unethical because the animals are all in cages, but the reality is that the animals are safer in the zoos than they would be in the wild. Zoos are protected from poachers, habitat loss, and predators that would otherwise kill them. Plus, there's probably no real evidence that captivity is bad for animals. Employees who work with the animals at the zoo look after the animals with care. Zoologist at the Philadelphia zoo, Jessica Monroe states, "Treatment teams at our zoo includes veterinarians, pathologists, technicians and other specialists who can create and maintain individualized care plan for the creature in need." She states all animals get food and



water daily and are given plenty of space to roam around. In conclusion, if we stop people from going to zoos, people won't be able to learn about all the amazing animals that exist and many species will become extinct.

**How would rate the bias of this passage? 2**

**Explanation:** The writer uses factual information, expert opinions from the field of zoology, and even mentions the counterclaim as to avoid being biased. The information is mostly unbiased, but the writer says there's "probably no real evidence that captivity is bad for animals" which is untrue. She also says that if zoos are closed, we won't be able to learn about animals which is also untrue.

4) Professional athletes are paid too much money. On average, MLB players make 4.1 million a year, NFL players make 2.5 million a year, and NBA players make an average of 7 million dollars a year! Those are only the averages; the better the player, the more they make. In 2020, Tom Brady signed a 50 million dollar two-year contract with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Is that really fair when teachers, firefighters, nurses, and other occupations that serve the community don't make nearly as much? The starting salary for an enlisted Marine is only \$22,000. Some people say that athletes make a lot of money because their careers are extremely short (due to injuries and age) but even if an athlete played in the NFL for only two years, they would still never have to work another job again because they would be a millionaire. Plus, plenty of athletes continue to profit off their success once they no longer play sports through sponsorships and celebrity appearances. Professional athletes work hard to make it as far as they do, but their salaries are still excessive. Cutting the salaries of the athletes, even by half, would not affect their quality of life and then the money could be used for something that benefits the economy better.

**How would rate the bias of this passage? 1**

**Explanation:** The writer uses several pieces of factual, objective information and compares salaries to other professions to illustrate their point. The writer explains the counterclaim that athletes have incredibly short careers, but rebuts this fact by saying that even if they only worked 2 years in the NFL, they'd be set up financially for life.

5) Nearly 300,000 homes are broken into and robbed every year. Having an ADT advanced security system installed in your home can protect you from unwanted intruders. It's not just about someone stealing your belongings... break-ins can leave you completely traumatized and feeling violated for years after the event. In the best case scenario, you're not home for the intrusion. But what if you are? Do you have the means to scare off a vicious criminal? Burglars will do what it takes to avoid arrest... they don't care about you. How would you feel if your child was killed over a lousy television set? You want an ADT home security system to keep your family safe at night and make sure you are never the victim of a home intrusion or violent attack.

**How would rate the bias of this passage? 4**

**Explanation:** The writer is trying to sell a product which makes it biased. They also use language such as "traumatized" and "violated" to scare the reader. They also use the emotional appeal to make you feel guilty if your child were killed during a break-in.

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

Name:

Class:

Directions: Read the following article and then answer the questions that follow.

### Untitled Article by Andrea Perez

How often do you see an image of someone on social media that is completely unfiltered or unedited? It's not that common anymore. Sure, it's fun to play around with different color schemes and animal filters, but what about when people deliberately change the way they look just to be accepted by their peers? What about magazine covers that undoubtedly use Photoshop in every advertisement or cover published? Using editing programs to alter the physical appearances of people should be illegal because it promotes false advertising and unhealthy, unattainable beauty standards for men and women.

In today's society, Photoshop is used in all kinds of way, such as fixing facial flaws and imperfect lines, or eliminating acne and stretch marks. But sometimes the digital retouching goes too far. In 2016, the cover of W Magazine featured supermodels Kendall Jenner and Gigi Hadid without the appearance of knees. Their skin was smoothed and glossed over so much with an editing program that the image showed both women with completely flat, silky legs. This Photoshop "fail" can be seen as humorous, but the reality is, most magazine covers are Photoshopped and it's causing many young men and women to view themselves as inferior or ugly. Plus, Kendall Jenner looks beautiful with or without knees.

Editing pictures really becomes an issue when companies use these photos to try and sell weight loss products and other beauty merchandise. For example, when you see "before" and "after" pictures of people who lost weight, you should know that there's an extremely easy tool on Photoshop that shrinks the shape of someone's waist and other limbs. It's not just the small, unknown businesses who are pulling these tricks. The Kardashians have been under criticism for trying to sell "waist trainers" and "fit tea" to their Instagram followers. People are still tricked into buying these products although most people are aware that the women heavily Photoshop their pictures. Moreover, the Kardashians have had multiple plastic surgery procedures done to look the way they do.

Though most adults can realize these sleazy sales tactics, adolescents just want to look like their favorite celebrities. It's easy prey for these companies since puberty already makes teenagers feel insecure about their appearances. "Even if you look at a photo that you know is edited, it doesn't stop the harmful thoughts that make you say, 'I wish I looked like that,'" states Jordan Dresser, a fifteen-year-old student who has recovered from orthorexia and anorexia. It's not just about feeling ugly; sometimes, the negative thoughts manifest into serious health problems. Four million men and women in the United States suffer from an eating disorder and maybe it's because they are chasing a standard of perfection that doesn't exist. According to a study by USA Today, 47% of girls from 5th-12th grade reported wanting to lose weight because of magazine pictures. There is actual harm being done mentally and physically to people who are seeing these edited images on a daily basis.

Some people may argue that editing photos is the individual choice and right of every person. It falls under the The First Amendment, freedom of speech, to post what you want. While this may be true, false advertising is an illegal offense under The Federal Trade Commission Act (FTC) as it misleads consumers and affects consumers' decisions. We can't stop everyone from using filters on their personal social media accounts, but we can stop companies from using these edited pictures to sell their products.

Overall, using editing programs to alter the bodies and faces of people to fit a certain beauty standard is harmful to society and should be illegal. It's costing people hundreds of dollars in products that don't actually work (or that they don't need) and it lowers the self-esteem of young people who try to match what they see in the magazines. As a young person, I would like to see more models and celebrities be featured who actually look normal.



## After Reading Questions Answer Key

1. What is the writer's claim?

Using editing programs to alter the physical appearances of people should be illegal because it promotes false advertising and unhealthy, unattainable beauty standards for men and women.

2. What type of evidence is used? Facts? Quotes? Examples? Statistics? Anecdotes? Provide at least one type and an example from the text.

**Statistics:** 47% of girls in the 5th to 12th grades reported wanting to lose weight because of magazine pictures. **Quote:** "Even if you look at a photo that you know is edited, it doesn't stop the harmful thoughts make you say, 'I wish I looked like that,'" states Jordan Dresser. **Example:** The Kardashians have been under criticism for trying to sell "waist trainers" and "fit tea" to their Instagram followers. **Statistics:** Four million men and women in the United States suffer from an eating disorder. **Fact:** False advertising is an illegal offense under The Federal Trade Commission Act (FTC).

3. Who is the target audience?

The target audience could be congress since they make federal laws or any governor because they can approve state laws. Other audiences include young people who are captivated and deceived by companies and magazines who edit pictures.

4. What is the counterclaim mentioned in this article? How does the author rebut the counterclaim?

Some people may argue that editing photos is the individual choice and right of every person. It falls under the The First Amendment, freedom of speech, to post what you want. The author states that this is true, but when companies fall into the territory of "false advertising," it actually becomes illegal.

5. What transitional words or phrases help the writer organize her ideas?

"In today's society," "Some people may argue," "For example," "Moreover," and "Overall."

6. Why does the writer refer to a teenager for her opinion? What point does it prove?

The quote from Jordan Dresser is included to illustrate the point that even if teens or adults are aware that photos aren't real, the damage that is done to their psyche still occurs. They still get the feeling of insecurity and inferiority regardless if they know it's fake which helps the writer's claim that it should be illegal.

7. What does the writer repeat at the end of her essay?

She repeats her claim: Using editing programs to alter the bodies and faces of people to fit a certain beauty standard is harmful to society.

8. Do you believe Andrea Perez has a strong claim? Why or why not?

Answers will vary. Mostly, she has a strong claim because she uses a range of evidence.

9. What would you title this essay? Why?

Answers will vary.

10. What persuasive appeals does the author use? Emotional? Logical? Ethical? Explain.

She uses logical and ethical appeals. She uses mostly logical appeals by including facts and statistics. She uses the ethical appeal by proclaiming she is a young person and she would feel better seeing less edited photos out there.

11. Is there any bias? Explain.

There is some bias. The writer is a young person that might struggle with self-esteem. She says she "wants" to see models who look normal, but just because she "wants" something, doesn't make it right for everyone.

12. What detail does the author mention that is the least relevant to her claim and should be removed?

Kendall Jenner looks beautiful with or without knees.