



# Identify the Claim and Audience in Argumentative Texts

**R** 4.9(E)(i), **S** 4.9(E)(iii), **R** 4.10(A), **R** 4.7(C)

## Understand the TEKS

**Argumentative texts** are a type of nonfiction in which the author takes a position or opinion on an issue to persuade the reader.

### Author's Claim

It is important that you understand the author's **claim** in an argumentative text. The author's claim is the position or belief on an issue or topic. To identify the author's claim, read the text and look for opinion words or words that express emotion. The author should support the claim with facts or provable statements.

Argumentative text is most effective when the author states a claim clearly and gives sound reasons to support it. Look for these features as you read argumentative text to help you decide if you want to allow them to influence your thinking.

### Author's Purpose and Audience

The **author's purpose** is the reason the author writes a text. It can also be described as the goal the author has for writing a text. In an *informational text*, authors write to

- inform the reader about a certain topic.
- describe the details.
- explain the steps for doing or making something.
- persuade or convince others of a certain point of view.

The author's purpose for an argumentative text is to persuade the reader to *believe* their claim or position. The **audience** is who the author is writing to or for. Authors adjust their words and sentences to suit their audiences, or the people that they want to convince about their claim. They use different reasons, different supporting facts, and even different words to get readers to change their minds about an issue.



### Did You Know?

**Organization** Pay attention to persuasive devices to identify the author's claim or position.



## ★ Practice

Read the selection below. Then answer the questions that follow it.

## Going Bananas



### A Famous Fruit

- 1 How do you like your bananas? On top of cereal? In a smoothie? In banana bread or a banana split? Bananas are the most popular fruit in the world. They are also the world's most important crop after rice, wheat, and corn. Walk through the fruit aisle in any grocery store and you'll find a huge display set up just for bananas. Bananas are delicious and good for you. But the most interesting things about bananas may be less well-known.
- 2 Bananas have no set growing season. They are available year-round. And they are also the cheapest fruit in the store. But why are they cheaper than other fruits—such as apples—which are grown in the United States? Bananas are grown thousands of miles away, in the tropics! How do they make it to our grocery stores?
- 3 Bananas are not native to the Americas. In fact, they were first grown in South Asia. Portuguese colonists first brought them to South and Central America in the 1500s. Around this time, colonists started banana plantations in Brazil and on some Caribbean islands. The Portuguese were the first to view the banana as a cash crop. A cash crop is grown mainly to sell and make a profit, rather than feed the population. (Coffee, tobacco, and cotton are other cash crops.)

4 North Americans did not enjoy bananas until hundreds of years later. After the American Civil War ended in 1865, bananas were brought to Boston, Massachusetts. They became widespread in the 1880s. Around that time, two U.S. companies, United Fruit (now Chiquita) and Standard Fruit (now Dole), built banana plantations in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. They used the cheap labor found in these countries and they took advantage of the often-unstable governments there to gain more in profit and power. In the end, these companies became a powerful political force in the region. They often took control of land illegally and set unfair prices. They also used payouts to control elections and stop workers from organizing. Countries where this happened became known as “banana republics.”

### **An Unfair Trade?**

5 These companies did not always have negative effects on the host countries. In fact, the large banana companies set up much-needed transportation and communication networks. The host countries were often thankful to the fruit companies for the improvements. That is, until they figured out what they’d given away. The people found they no longer had the right to control their own transportation and communication companies. They also no longer had the right to set prices and elect leaders.

6 In addition, these companies also counted on banana breeding. There are more than 1,000 varieties of bananas, but only one is sold largely in the United States—the Cavendish. The five main growers of bananas worldwide stick to this variety to save money. First, they are picked by underpaid workers. Next, they must be shipped in cooled containers. Bananas only survive two weeks after being cut from the tree. In a given shipment, all the bananas ripen at the same time. This lowers the costs companies might suffer due to overripe or unripe fruit.

### **A Growing Problem**

7 As tough as these circumstances are, things have gotten worse for banana growers. Grocery stores have lowered banana prices. Buyers are likely to assume that other products, such as milk and bread, are also cheaper. Then other stores lower their banana prices to compete. Now, bananas are selling for less than they are worth.



- 8 The falling price of bananas might be great news for shoppers who want to save money, but it is terrible for workers in countries like Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. Lowering the cost of bananas threatens the livelihoods of thousands of plantation workers.
- 9 Meanwhile, shoppers have learned that some companies take advantage of their workers. Because of this, many grocery stores now have a “fair trade” section. In this section, shoppers can buy products that are produced by companies that pay workers fairly.
- 10 What will happen to the banana? Dan Koeppel, in a book about bananas, compares the Cavendish banana to a “fast-food hamburger.” Like bananas, hamburgers are easy to produce and do not cost much to buy. But can the countries that grow bananas keep growing bananas at this rate? And what will happen if and when workers demand fair wages? The answers to these questions are unknown.

- 1** Which statement best describes the author's claim in the passage?
- A** Bananas are best on top of cereal.
  - B** Bananas are the most popular fruit in the world.
  - C** Banana growers face many hardships.
  - D** Bananas grow year-round.
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- 2** Which statement from the text helps the reader infer the intended audience?
- A** *What will happen to the banana?* (paragraph 10)
  - B** *Meanwhile, shoppers have learned that some companies take advantage of their workers.* (paragraph 9)
  - C** *In addition, these companies also counted on banana breeding.* (paragraph 6)
  - D** *The Portuguese were the first to view the banana as a cash crop.* (paragraph 3)
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- 3** The author most likely wrote this article to persuade the reader to —
- A** buy bananas
  - B** buy fair trade bananas
  - C** grow bananas
  - D** work in grocery stores that sell bananas
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- 4** The author's claim persuades the reader to be concerned for which of the following groups of people?
- A** Shoppers at the grocery store
  - B** Companies who depend on banana breeding
  - C** Workers who grow bananas
  - D** Grocery store owners who are losing money on bananas
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- 5** In paragraphs 3–4, the author uses which of these devices to support the claim?
- A** Interviews with real people
  - B** Research into the history of bananas
  - C** Personal experience
  - D** Personal opinions



**6** Which of the following is most likely the intended audience of this passage?

- A** Companies that sell bananas
- B** Grocery store owners
- C** Grocery store workers
- D** People who buy bananas

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**7 Part A**

How does the author state the claim of the passage?

- A** Directly in the first paragraph
- B** Indirectly throughout the passage
- C** By arguing for and against the claim
- D** Indirectly in the middle and end of the passage

**Part B**

Which statement supports your answer in Part A?

- A** *Meanwhile, shoppers have learned that some companies take advantage of their workers.* (paragraph 9)
- B** *Bananas are grown thousands of miles away, in the tropics!* (paragraph 2)
- C** *Bananas only survive two weeks after being cut from the tree.* (paragraph 6)
- D** *And what will happen if and when workers demand fair wages?* (paragraph 10)

**8** According to information in paragraphs 5–6, which two statements support the author’s claim?

- A** *The host countries were often thankful to the fruit companies for the improvements.* (paragraph 5)
- B** *They also no longer had the right to set prices and elect leaders.* (paragraph 5)
- C** *In fact, the large banana companies set up much-needed transportation and communication networks.* (paragraph 5)
- D** *In addition, these companies also counted on banana breeding.* (paragraph 6)
- E** *The people found they no longer had the right to control their own transportation and communication companies.* (paragraph 5)