

Should Students Wear Uniforms?

Students read essays on the issue, then decide.

About the Story

Lexile® Measure 1020L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective: to trace and evaluate two opposing arguments

Featured Skill: analyzing arguments

Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.4, R.6, R.8, W.1, SL.1, SL.3

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Article read-aloud
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Scavenger Hunt*
- Essay Kit
- Anchor Chart: Transitions and Argument Essay Checklist
- Persuasive Appeals: Ethos, Pathos, Logos
- Lesson Plan Slide Deck

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

1. Prepare to Read (5 minutes)

Preview Vocabulary (5 minutes)

- Project the Google Slides version of **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice** on your whiteboard. Review the definitions and complete the activity as a class. Highlighted words: *conducive, impede, superficial*. Audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded on the slides. Optionally, print the PDF version or share the slideshow link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity independently before class.

2. Read and Discuss (45 minutes)

- For students' first read, have them follow along as they listen to the **audio read-aloud**, located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.
 - Have students silently reread the article to themselves.
 - Poll the class and tally the results on the board:
 - "Should students wear uniforms?"
 - "No matter what you personally think about school uniforms, who do you think makes the better argument: Esther or Malcolm?"
 - Now trace and evaluate the arguments in each essay:
1. **Read the directions in the Scavenger Hunt box on page 25 or at the bottom of the digital story page. If you need to review the bolded academic vocabulary in the box, here are definitions and examples:**
 - **central claim:** the big idea that the author supports in their argument; their position, belief, or viewpoint
Example: School should start later.
 - **reasons:** the grounds on which a central claim is based; the individual reasons that support or prove the central claim

Example: Middle school-aged kids need more sleep.

- **supporting evidence:** facts, statistics, and examples that show why a reason should be believed; evidence and reasons support and “hold up” a claim
Example: A study by the Sleep Institute found that 47 percent of kids aren’t getting enough sleep.
- **counterclaim:** an acknowledgment of a concern or disagreement from those with opposing viewpoints
Example: Some may argue that starting school later won’t help kids get more sleep, that they’ll just go to bed later.
- **rebuttal:** an author’s direct response to an opposing viewpoint or claim (the “comeback” to a counterclaim)
Example: Some may argue that starting school later won’t help kids get more sleep, that they’ll just go to bed later. ←[counterclaim] While that may be true in some cases, a 2018 study that looked at two schools in Seattle found that students’ sleep increased an average of 34 minutes each night after start times were moved nearly an hour later. ←[rebuttal]

For more argument terms support, see our **Argument Terms Glossary**, found in the Resource Library at Scope Online.

2. Project Esther’s essay and do a think-aloud that models each step in the Scavenger Hunt.

Students can mark along in their magazines with you, or fill in the **Scavenger Hunt** graphic organizer found at Scope Online. This activity is offered on two levels; the lower-level version has students identify central claims, reasons, and supporting evidence only.

- Identify Esther’s **central claim**. (*What does Esther think?*)
 - First, ask students: “Based on her essay, how would Esther respond to the question in the heading: Should students wear uniforms?” (Esther would say, “Yes, students should wear uniforms.”)
 - Think aloud: “I’m going to circle lines that express this big idea: ‘Uniforms would be a relief’ and ‘Maybe that’s why about one in five U.S. public schools have made the switch to uniforms, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. It’s time for Fairview to be one of them.’”
- Underline Esther’s **reasons**. (*Why does she think that?*)
 - Think aloud: “I just circled Esther’s central claim—that is, what Esther thinks. Now I’m going to underline her reasons—or why she thinks what she thinks. I’m going to underline ‘If Fairview had uniforms, we wouldn’t have to waste time worrying about our outfits.’ Then I’m going to underline ‘If Fairview had uniforms, nobody would feel bad about not wearing the

“right” clothes.’ Finally, I’m going to underline ‘If we don’t have to worry about clothes, we can focus more on learning.’”

- Put check marks on two pieces of **supporting evidence**. (*How does she know?*)
 - Think aloud: “Can I find information Esther provides to back up her reasons?” Then draw students’ attention to the following three pieces of evidence: (1) “‘Wearing a uniform has helped me not worry about what my peers are wearing,’ says Lauren Sarpong, 14, who attends a Success Academy charter school in New York City.” (2) “According to a study from the University of Nevada, 37 percent of students at middle schools that recently switched to uniforms reported that they worry less about their appearance than they did before they wore uniforms.”
- Star the **counterclaim**. (*What does the other side say?*)
 - Think aloud: “Where does Esther acknowledge a concern or concerns from the opposing viewpoint? I’m going to star ‘A common criticism of uniforms is that they impede self-expression.’”
- Put a double star next to her **rebuttal**. (*What is her response to the other side?*)
 - Think aloud: “Does Esther have a comeback for the viewpoint that school uniforms impede self-expression? Yes. She says, ‘But there are plenty of other ways for students to show their individuality—such as their hairstyles or backpacks. And of course, students can wear what they want outside of school.’ I’m going to double-star both of those sentences.”

3. Have students work in pairs to complete the Scavenger Hunt for Malcolm’s essay, optionally using the Scavenger Hunt graphic organizer available at Scope Online. Then share out responses as a class. Sample responses:

- **Central claim:** “Uniforms are unfair to students.” Students may also say: “Switching to uniforms would be a disaster for the students of Fairview Middle School.”
- **Reasons:** “For one thing, students would be self-conscious”; “Regardless, the solution to meanness shouldn’t be to make us all look the same. It should be for us to learn to respect our differences and not judge people based on superficial things like clothing”; “The bottom line is that uniforms can make students feel uncomfortable, won’t solve bullying problems, and on top of it all, students simply don’t want to wear them.”
- **Supporting evidence:** “... according to a report published in *Public Health Review* on uniform policies around the world, many uniforms aren’t well-designed and don’t always fit well. How is making students feel awkward and uncomfortable conducive to learning?”; “Here is a powerful statistic I did find though: Ninety percent of middle school students who recently switched to wearing uniforms said they don’t

like wearing a uniform, according to a study from the University of Nevada. In that same study, only 17 percent of students reported that they were treated better than before they wore uniforms.”

- **Counterclaims:** “Now, many say that a benefit of uniforms is that they can reduce bullying”; “Supporters of uniforms tend to point out that uniforms can improve punctuality, reduce behavior issues, and help students learn.”
- **Rebuttals:** “But if we have to wear uniforms, we’ll just find something else to judge each other by—our socks or shoelaces or phone cases. Regardless, the solution to meanness shouldn’t be to make us all look the same. It should be for us to learn to respect our differences and not judge people based on superficial things like clothing”; “But there isn’t a lot of recent research to support those claims. Here is a powerful statistic I did find though: Ninety percent of middle school students who recently switched to wearing uniforms said they don’t like wearing a uniform, according to a study from the University of Nevada. In that same study, only 17 percent of students reported that they were treated better than before they wore uniforms.”
- Discuss: Which evidence do you find most convincing in each essay? Least convincing? What do Esther and Malcolm agree about? Are there any important reasons you think they left out of their arguments? *Answers will vary.*

3. Write About It: What Do You Think?

(45 minutes)

- Have students respond to the following questions in writing:

Who makes the stronger argument?

Should students wear uniforms?