Parts of Argument III: The Claim Game

Objective: In this fast-paced card game, students practice identifying the parts of argument and generating their own arguments.

Activities: This game is played by students contributing to an ongoing class discussion: each time a student contributes a part of argument, she discards the corresponding card. Any player from any team can take a turn by playing a part of argument from her deck and contributing a comment to the topic at hand that constitutes that part of argument. To win, a teams must discard all their cards the fastest. To set up the game: divide the class into teams, each with a different color-coded set of cards (see below), elect a judge to settle disputed cases, and announce the topic or question for each round. Keep the following contingencies in mind as the game progresses: 1) If a player does not have a card corresponding to the part of argument she wishes to express, she cannot add the comment, and 2) At any time, a student can challenge a contribution from the opposing team by claiming that it is not a valid example of the part of argument played. The challenged player can respond by explaining why their comment should count. If the judge upholds the challenge, the challenged player must retrieve the discarded card.

Reflection & Evaluation: Students tend to run out of claim and reason cards before they have played many of the others. Discuss how this problem might translate to a writing problem as well, and point out the strategic value of balancing parts of argument as you play (or write!).

Curriculum Connection: Students will produce an argumentative research paper that responds to either a practical or a conceptual problem.

This lesson plan meets the following standards: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.8; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.9; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.8; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.9; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.5; and NCTE Standards 5, 6, and 11

Materials: Student’s Guide, section 1.3; Topic Sheet 3, “Core of an Argument = Claim + Reasons + Evidence”; Topic Sheet 4, “Plan Your Research around the Questions of Argument”; two or three decks of index cards of different colors, labeled with the parts
of argument (at a ratio of one claim: two reasons: three evidence: one acknowledgment & response).