Structure in Persuasion

About this Lesson
The purpose of this lesson is to compare, analyze, and evaluate the claims, persuasive techniques, and structures of two opinion pieces originally printed in newspapers. Students will read the texts, paragraph by paragraph, and determine the purpose of each paragraph while analyzing and evaluating the effectiveness of the techniques the writers use to defend their claims. Students will also read an additional brief excerpt, identify the claim, and practice writing a concession and counterargument following a model.

Passages for LTF® lessons are selected to challenge students while lessons and activities make texts accessible. Guided practice with challenging texts allows students to gain the proficiency necessary to read independently at or above grade level.

This lesson is included in Module 10: Analyzing Organization and Syntax.

Objectives
Students will
- compare, analyze, and evaluate claims, persuasive techniques, and structures in two contrasting texts.
- evaluate the effectiveness of techniques a writer uses to defend his or her claims.
- write a concession and counterargument in response to an argument.

Level
Grades Six through Ten

Connection to Common Core Standards for English Language Arts
LTF Foundation Lessons are designed to be used across grade levels and therefore are aligned to the CCSS Anchor Standards. Teachers should consult their own grade-level-specific Standards. The activities in this lesson allow teachers to address the following Common Core Standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Level of Thinking</th>
<th>Depth of Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R.1</td>
<td>Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it. Cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.2</td>
<td>Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.3</td>
<td>Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.4</td>
<td>Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>III</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.5</td>
<td>Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>III</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.6</td>
<td>Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>III</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.8</td>
<td>Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.</td>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>III</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.9</td>
<td>Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>III</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.10</td>
<td>Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>II</td>
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<tr>
<td>L.3</td>
<td>Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.6</td>
<td>Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.1</td>
<td>Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</td>
<td>Create</td>
<td>IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>W.4</td>
<td>Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</td>
<td>Create</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.10</td>
<td>Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.</td>
<td>Apply</td>
<td>III</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL.1</td>
<td>Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>II</td>
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</table>
Implicitly addressed in this lesson

<table>
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<td>Understand</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>L.2</td>
<td>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>I</td>
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**LTF Skill Focus**

The foundation for LTF English lessons is the Skill Progression Chart that identifies key skills for each domain, beginning with grade 6 and adding more complex skills at each subsequent grade level while reinforcing skills introduced at previous grade levels. The Skill Focus for each individual lesson identifies the skills actually addressed in that lesson.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Thinking</th>
<th>Remember</th>
<th>Understand</th>
<th>Apply</th>
<th>Analyze</th>
<th>Evaluate</th>
<th>Create</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Close Reading</strong></td>
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<td>written, spoken, and visual texts</td>
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<td><strong>Grammar</strong></td>
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<td>purposeful use of language for effect</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Composition</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>written, spoken, and visual products</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Reading Strategies**
- Annotation
- Determining Audience
- Determining Author’s Purpose
- Determining Fact and Opinion
- Determining Main Idea

**Literary Techniques**
- Argumentation
  - cause/effect
  - claim
  - classification
  - comparison/contrast
  - concession
  - counterargument
  - deductive/inductive reasoning
  - emotional appeals
  - ethical appeals
  - logical appeals
  - *refutation*
  - unspoken assumptions

**Types (modes)**
- Persuasive (argumentation)
  - challenge
  - claim
  - counterargument
  - defend
  - qualify
  - *refutation*

**The Process of Composition**
- Drafting
  - extended time

**Organization**
- Patterns (spatial, order of importance, chronological, etc.)
- Transitions
Connections to AP*
Especially on the AP Language exam it is important that students be able to identify, analyze and evaluate the claims made in effective and purposeful persuasive writing. In addition, students should be able to write an effective concession and counterargument following a model.

*Advanced Placement and AP are registered trademarks of the College Entrance Examination Board. The College Board was not involved in the production of this material.

Materials and Resources
- Excerpt from “Is Google Evil?” Mother Jones, 2006

Assessments
The following kinds of formative assessments are embedded in this lesson:
- guided questions
- graphic organizers
- writing activity

Teaching Suggestions
Teachers should note that this lesson might be challenging, especially for middle school students. Teachers therefore might need to review the lesson before introducing it to students and also consider modeling some of the concepts in the lesson with their students. Finally, this lesson should not be done independently but rather in groups, with students sharing ideas and responses to the lesson exercises.

Answers
Activity One
After reading the Op-Ed piece, answer the following questions:
Suggested responses—answers will vary.
1. What is the writer’s overall purpose in writing the essay? The overall purpose is to bring attention to the stereotyping of “nerds” and to express his dismay over their “ostracized” condition.
2. What is the writer’s chief claim (in your own words)? The negative way students who are intellectually gifted are treated in school and in society at large tells us about the values of the society itself.
3. Consider the ways in which the writer uses the appeals of logos, pathos, and ethos. Cite a sentence or short passage which expresses each appeal:
   **Logos:** The use of the definition from Webster’s in paragraph 2 and the use of comparison/contrast are appeals to the logic of the reader. Including the footnote about “Weber” is also intended as a logical appeal.
   **Pathos:** Evoking emotions of shame and anger over the possible injustice in the way intelligent people are treated is an example of pathos. The reader’s response is also heightened by the inflammatory diction in the words “It is high time to face the persecutors who haunt the bright kid with thick glasses from kindergarten to the grave. For America’s sake, the anti-intellectual values that pervade our society must be fought.”
Ethos: Without knowing more about the writer, it’s hard to assess his credibility. However, his use of Harvard University as his specific example suggests that he is either a student or an instructor there, and the prestige of Harvard adds to his stature somewhat. His knowledge of a specific German economist, Weber, also suggests his level of education, which brings with it a certain respect for his credentials.

4. Who is the intended audience for this Op-Ed piece? The writer is addressing two groups: intellectuals and those who demoralize the intellectuals by calling them geeks and nerds and not affording them the respect the writer believes they deserve.

5. What does the writer assume about that audience? The writer assumes that readers value intellectualism and perhaps that readers will buy into the stereotype of its being impossible for athletes to possess both physical prowess and intellectual gifts.

Activity Two
After reading the Letter to the Editor, answer the following questions:
Answers will vary—suggested responses.

1. What is the writers’ overall purpose in writing the letter? Lessing and Herne intend to dispute Mr. Fridman’s contention that “nerds and geeks” are treated unfairly by society.

2. What is the writers’ chief claim (in your own words)? Mr. Fridman’s definitions of “intellectualism” were erroneous, and therefore his conclusions were erroneous as well. True intellectualism should include not only academic commitment and study but social knowledge as well.

3. Consider the ways in which the writers use the appeals of logos, pathos, and ethos. Cite a sentence or short passage which expresses each appeal:

   Logos: The entire letter to the editor is constructed in a logical manner. The use of the acknowledged elements of argument—concession, counterargument, examples, definitions—in a point-by-point rebuttal of Fridman’s Op-Ed essay appeals to the intelligence and logical reasoning of the reader. There are no uses of exaggerated diction or engaging figurative language which might connect to readers in an emotional way.

   Pathos: Very little if any appeal to emotion is used in this letter. It is based on a logical response to the points made in Fridman’s original Op-Ed piece.

   Ethos: A level of ethos is established through the acknowledgement of two of Fridman’s points and through a concession to the truth of his statements. In addition, the writers are Harvard students, which qualifies them to respond to criticism about the way certain students are treated on their campus, and they are obviously interested in fairness in the way they refute the Op-Ed piece. Finally, the use of educated diction and an understanding of the way argumentative writing should be organized suggests intelligence and skill in communication, which engenders a certain level of respect for the writers and adds to their credibility.
4. Who is the intended audience for this letter to the editor (besides the editor)? *Those who have read and perhaps at first agreed with Fridman’s article or the intellectual who has made himself/herself a nerd by not socializing with others.*

5. What do the writers assume about that audience? *The writers assume readers will appreciate a debunking of Fridman’s illogical comparisons. They also assume readers will be against stereotyping in general as they avoid it in their letter.*

6. What is the reason for the concession in paragraph 1? How does the use of concession at the beginning of the letter strengthen the writers’ argument? *The concession announces the topic and clarifies the purpose of the letter. This concession strengthens the argument because it shows the writers to be open-minded and fair, and it provides an opportunity to present a different opinion through counterargument.*

Write a general conclusion about the effectiveness of the letter, based on the structure and content of each paragraph, the chief claim, and the use of the appeals, compared to the effectiveness of the Op-Ed piece by Leonid Fridman. *Answers may vary.*

*Lessing’s and Herne’s use of logical appeal* and *rebuttal makes (his/their) argument more effective than that of Fridman because Lessing and Herne rely on a calm, rather emotionless, reasoned argument, employing concession twice while Fridman never concedes, and therefore their argument is strengthened. Fridman appears to be reacting emotionally to the labels of “geek” and “nerd” by using stereotypes and inflammatory language.*

(Write the name of the writer[s] of the stronger argument.)

(Write one of the devices used by the writer[s].)

(Write another of the devices used by the writer[s].)

(Name the writer[s] of the weaker argument.)

Write an explanation of why the argument is stronger.)
Activity Three
Answers will vary.

1. What is the claim, as stated in the excerpt? “Google already knows more about you than the National Security Agency ever will.”

2. Whether you actually agree or disagree with the claim is not important for the purposes of this exercise. For practice, assume you disagree with the claim. In the space below, write one sentence of concession, followed by one or two sentences of counterargument. Refer to “Structural Elements and Rhetorical Strategies” for assistance. Be prepared to share your response.

I concede that by its very nature Google may possess the ability to “know” very personal information about me, and, while I admit that it’s possible my information may someday be revealed in a way that could harm me, at the present time I believe the advantages of using Google as a research tool far outweigh any future danger such use may pose. Without access to Google’s “open door” on the infinite World Wide Web, average people like me would find it very difficult to obtain information on subjects ranging from health and well-being to investment opportunities, from government and politics to vacation destinations, from a search for ancestors to providing for an elderly parent. Google provides those of us with limited time and limited patience a way to conduct research on all things great and small. So, in spite of the warnings about “Big Brother” under the guise of Google, I choose to give up a little privacy and gain much in the way of knowledge. As they say, knowledge is power.
Structure in Persuasion

While all language—written, spoken, or visual—has an argumentative element that aims to make a point, the most easily recognized as arguments are those messages that make a claim and present evidence to support it. Writers seek to maximize the effectiveness of their claims by using various devices of language, by appealing to the audience with emotions and logic, and by establishing their own credibility and integrity. But writers also reinforce their claims by the way they structure each piece. Each writer decides:

- how to introduce the topic
- how and when to make the claim
- how to offer concession and counterargument
- how to provide evidence and information that will best support that claim

Activity One: An Op-Ed piece that appeared in the New York Times in 1990 is reprinted below. As you read, mark any structures or devices that create logical, emotional, and ethical appeals.

America Needs Its Nerds
by Leonid Fridman

(1) There is something very wrong with the system of values in a society that has only derogatory terms like nerd and geek for the intellectually curious and academically serious.

(2) A geek, according to Webster’s New World Dictionary, is a street performer who shocks the public by biting off heads of live chickens. It is a telling fact about our language and our culture that someone dedicated to pursuit of knowledge is compared to a freak biting the head off a live chicken.

(3) Even at a prestigious academic institution like Harvard, anti-intellectualism is rampant: Many students are ashamed to admit, even to their friends, how much they study. Although most students try to keep up their grades, there is a minority of undergraduates for whom pursuing knowledge is the top priority during their years at Harvard. Nerds are ostracized while athletes are idolized.

(4) The same thing happens in U.S. elementary and high schools. Children who prefer to read books rather than play football, prefer to build model airplanes rather than get wasted at parties with their classmates, become social outcasts. Ostracized for their intelligence and refusal to conform to society’s anti-intellectual values, many are deprived of a chance to learn adequate social skills and acquire good communication tools.

(5) Enough is enough.

(6) Nerds and geeks must stop being ashamed of who they are. It is high time to face the persecutors who haunt the bright kid with thick glasses from kindergarten to the grave. For America’s sake, the anti-intellectual values that pervade our society must be fought.

(7) There are very few countries in the world where anti-intellectualism runs as high in popular culture as it does in the U.S. In most industrialized nations, not least of all our economic rivals in East Asia, a kid who studies hard is lauded and held up as an example to other students.

(8) In many parts of the world, university professorships are the most prestigious and materially rewarding.
positions. But not in America, where average professional ballplayers are much more respected and better paid than faculty members of the best universities.

(9) How can a country where typical parents are ashamed of their daughter studying mathematics instead of going dancing, or of their son reading Weber* while his friends play baseball, be expected to compete in the technology race with Japan or remain a leading political and cultural force in Europe? How long can America remain a world-class power if we constantly emphasize social skills and physical prowess over academic achievement and intellectual ability?

*Maximilian Weber (1864–1920), German political economist and sociologist.

After reading the Op-Ed piece, answer the following questions:

1. What is the writer’s overall purpose in writing the essay? ________________________________

2. What is the writer’s chief claim (in your own words)? ________________________________

3. Consider the ways in which the writer creates the appeals of logos, pathos, and ethos. Cite a sentence or short passage which expresses each appeal:

   Logos: ________________________________________________________________

   Pathos: ________________________________________________________________

   Ethos: ________________________________________________________________

4. Who is the intended audience for this Op-Ed piece? ________________________________

5. What does the writer assume about that audience? ________________________________
Now re-examine the essay, which has been reprinted in the center column, one paragraph at a time. In the right-hand column, write a brief explanation of how the writer attempts to persuade the reader in that particular paragraph. Then, using the terms from “Structural Elements and Rhetorical Strategies,” write the purpose of the paragraph. The first three have been done for you as examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph</th>
<th>There is something very wrong with the system of values in a society that has only derogatory terms like nerd and geek for the intellectually curious and academically serious.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|           | • Sets tone with diction: “. . . something very wrong . . .” and “derogatory terms”  
|           | • Sets up the either-or absolute: “only derogatory terms” |
|           | **Structural or Rhetorical Element(s):**  
|           | INTRODUCTION, CLAIM  
| Paragraph 2 | A geek, according to *Webster’s New World Dictionary*, is a street performer who shocks the public by biting off heads of live chickens. It is a telling fact about our language and our culture that someone dedicated to pursuit of knowledge is compared to a freak biting the head off a live chicken. |
|           | • Surprising, even shocking, definition of “geek”  
|           | • Ties language and cultural values together |
|           | **Structural or Rhetorical Element(s):**  
|           | DEFINITION  
| Paragraph 3 | Even at a prestigious academic institution like Harvard, anti-intellectualism is rampant: Many students are ashamed to admit, even to their friends, how much they study. Although most students try to keep up their grades, there is a minority of undergraduates for whom pursuing knowledge is the top priority during their years at Harvard. Nerds are ostracized while athletes are idolized. |
|           | • Qualifies with “many,” “most,” “a minority”  
|           | • Uses Harvard to impress and perhaps to shock  
|           | • Stereotypes “nerds” and “athletes” as polar opposites |
|           | **Structural or Rhetorical Element(s):**  
|           | EXAMPLE  
| Paragraph 4 | The same thing happens in U.S. elementary and high schools. Children who prefer to read books rather than play football, prefer to build model airplanes rather than get wasted at parties with their classmates, become social outcasts. Ostracized for their intelligence and refusal to conform to society’s anti-intellectual values, many are deprived of a chance to learn adequate social skills and acquire good communication tools. |
|           | **Structural or Rhetorical Element(s):**  
|           |  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph 5</th>
<th>Enough is enough.</th>
<th>• Three-word sentence signals shift in voice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Structural or Rhetorical Element(s): TRANSITION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 6</td>
<td>Nerds and geeks must stop being ashamed of who they are. It is high time to face the persecutors who haunt the bright kid with thick glasses from kindergarten to the grave. For America’s sake, the anti-intellectual values that pervade our society must be fought.</td>
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<td>Structural or Rhetorical Element(s):</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paragraph 7</td>
<td>There are very few countries in the world where anti-intellectualism runs as high in popular culture as it does in the U.S. In most industrialized nations, not least of all our economic rivals in East Asia, a kid who studies hard is lauded and held up as an example to other students.</td>
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<td>Structural or Rhetorical Element(s):</td>
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<td>Paragraph 8</td>
<td>In many parts of the world, university professorships are the most prestigious and materially rewarding positions. But not in America, where average professional ballplayers are much more respected and better paid than faculty members of the best universities.</td>
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<td>Paragraph 9</td>
<td>How can a country where typical parents are ashamed of their daughter studying mathematics instead of going dancing, or of their son reading Weber while his friends play baseball, be expected to compete in the technology race with Japan or remain a leading political and cultural force in Europe? How long can</td>
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</table>
Activity Two: Now read a letter to the editor which appeared in the New York Times to rebut Mr. Fridman’s Op-Ed piece. After reviewing the entire letter, you will be asked to examine the structure, one paragraph at a time—as you have just done with the original essay. As you read, mark where you see structures or devices that create logical, emotional, and ethical appeals being used.

All Work and No Play Makes Jack a Nerd
by David Lessing and David Herne (Harvard, Class of ’93)
published January 28, 1990

To the Editor:

(1) While “America Needs Its Nerds” (Op-Ed, Jan. 11) by Leonid Fridman, a Harvard student, may be correct in its message that Americans should treat intellectualism with greater respect, his identification of the “nerd” as guardian of this intellectual tradition is misguided.

(2) Mr. Fridman maintains that anti-intellectualism runs rampant across this country, even at the “prestigious academic institution” he attends. However, he confuses a distaste for narrow-mindedness with anti-intellectualism. Just as Harvard, as a whole, reflects diversity in the racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds of its students, each student should reflect a diversity of interest as well.

(3) A “nerd” or “geek” is distinguished by a lack of diverse interest, rather than by a presence of intellectualism. Thus, a nerd or geek is not, as Mr. Fridman states, a student “for whom pursuing knowledge is the top priority” but a student for whom pursuing knowledge is the sole objective. A nerd becomes socially maladjusted because he doesn’t participate in social activities or even intellectual activities involving other people. As a result, a nerd is less the intellectual champion of Mr. Fridman’s descriptions than a person whose intelligence is not focused and enhanced by contact with fellow students. Constant study renders such social learning impossible.

(4) For a large majority at Harvard, academic pursuit is the highest goal; a limited number, however, refuse to partake in activities other than study. Only these select few are the targets of the geek label. Continuous study, like any other obsession, is not a habit to be lauded. Every student, no matter how “intellectually curious,” ought to take a little time to pursue social knowledge through activities other than study.

(5) Mr. Fridman’s analysis demonstrates further flaws in his reference to Japan. He comments that “in East Asia, a kid who studies hard is lauded and held up as an example to other students,” while in the United States he or she is ostracized. This is an unfair comparison because Mr. Fridman’s first reference is to how the East Asian child is viewed by teachers, while his second reference is to how the American child is viewed by fellow students. Mr. Fridman is equating two distinct perspectives on the student to substantiate a broad
generalization on which he has no factual data.

(6) Nerdism may also be criticized because it often leads to the pursuit of knowledge not for its own sake, but for the sake of grades. Nerds are well versed in the type of intellectual trivia that may help in obtaining A’s, but has little or no relevance to the real world. A true definition of intellectualism ought to include social knowledge.

(7) While we in no way condone the terms “nerds” and “geeks” as insults, we also cannot condone the isolationist intellectualism Mr. Fridman advocates.

After reading the letter to the editor, answer the following questions.

1. What is the writers’ overall purpose in writing the letter? ____________________________

2. What is the writers’ chief claim (in your own words)? ____________________________

3. Consider the ways in which the writers create the appeals of logos, pathos, and ethos. Cite a sentence or short passage which expresses each appeal:

   Logos: __________________________________________

   Pathos: __________________________________________

   Ethos: __________________________________________

4. Who is the intended audience for this letter to the editor (besides the editor)? ____________

5. What do the writers assume about that audience? ____________________________
6. What is the reason for the concession in paragraph 1? How does the use of concession at the beginning of the letter strengthen the writers’ argument?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mr. Fridman maintains that anti-intellectualism runs rampant across this country, even at the “prestigious academic institution” he attends. However, he confuses a distaste for narrow-mindedness with anti-intellectualism. Just as Harvard, as a whole, reflects diversity in the racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds of its students, each student should reflect a diversity of interest as well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3         | A “nerd” or “geek” is distinguished by a lack of diverse interest, rather than by a presence of intellectualism. Thus, a nerd or geek is not, as Mr. Fridman states, a student “for whom pursuing knowledge is the top priority” but a student for whom pursuing knowledge is the sole objective. A nerd becomes socially maladjusted because he doesn’t participate in social activities or even intellectual activities involving other people. As a result, a nerd is less the

Now re-examine the letter, which has been reprinted in the center column, one paragraph at a time. In the right-hand column, write a brief explanation of how the writer attempts to persuade the reader in that particular paragraph. Then, using the terms from “Structural Elements and Rhetorical Strategies,” write the purpose of the paragraph.

- First clause offers a concession to Fridman’s opinion: “may be correct…”
- Second clause begins the counterargument: “his identification…is misguided.”

Structural or Rhetorical Element(s):

CONCESSION/COUNTERARGUMENT

Structural or Rhetorical Element(s):
intellectual champion of Mr. Fridman’s descriptions than a person whose intelligence is not focused and enhanced by contact with fellow students. Constant study renders such social learning impossible.

Paragraph 4
For a large majority at Harvard, academic pursuit is the highest goal; a limited number, however, refuse to partake in activities other than study. Only these select few are the targets of the geek label. Continuous study, like any other obsession, is not a habit to be lauded. Every student, no matter how “intellectually curious,” ought to take a little time to pursue social knowledge through activities other than study.

Structural or Rhetorical Element(s):

Paragraph 5
Mr. Fridman’s analysis demonstrates further flaws in his reference to Japan. He comments that “in East Asia, a kid who studies hard is lauded and held up as an example to other students,” while in the United States he or she is ostracized. This is an unfair comparison because Mr. Fridman’s first reference is to how the East Asian child is viewed by teachers, while his second reference is to how the American child is viewed by fellow students. Mr. Fridman is equating two distinct perspectives on the student to substantiate a broad generalization on which he has no factual data.

Structural or Rhetorical Element(s):

Paragraph 6
Nerdism may also be criticized because it often leads to the pursuit of knowledge not for its own sake, but for the sake of grades. Nerds are well versed in the type of intellectual trivia that may help in obtaining A’s, but has little or no relevance to the real world. A true definition of intellectualism ought to include social knowledge.

Structural or Rhetorical Element(s):
### Paragraph 7

While we in no way condone the terms “nerds” and “geeks” as insults, we also cannot condone the isolationist intellectualism Mr. Fridman advocates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural or Rhetorical Element(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Write a general conclusion about the effectiveness of the letter, based on the structure and content of each paragraph, the chief claim, and the use of the appeals, compared to the effectiveness of the Op-Ed piece by Leonid Fridman.

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Write the name of the writer[s] of the stronger argument. and Name one of the devices used by the writer[s]. makes (his/their) argument more effective than that of Name another of the devices used by the writer[s]. because Write an explanation of why the argument is stronger.

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Activity Three: Writing a Concession/Counterargument

Read the excerpt below.

Is Google Evil? (excerpt)
By Adam L. Penenberg

Internet privacy? Google already knows more about you than the National Security Agency ever will. And don’t assume for a minute it can keep a secret. YouTube fans—and everybody else—beware.

What’s at stake? Over the years, Google has collected a staggering amount of data, and the company cheerfully admits that in nine years of operation, it has never knowingly erased a single search query. It’s the biggest data pack rat west of the NSA, and for good reason: 99 percent of its revenue comes from selling ads that are specifically targeted to a user’s interests. “Google’s entire value proposition is to figure out what people want,” says Eric Goldman, a professor at Silicon Valley’s Santa Clara School of Law and director of the High Tech Law Institute. “But to read our minds, they need to know a lot about us.”

Every search engine gathers information about its users—primarily by sending us “cookies,” or text files that track our online movements. Most cookies expire within a few months or years. Google’s, though, don’t expire until 2038. Until then, when you use the company’s search engine or visit any of myriad affiliated sites, it will record what you search for and when, which links you click on, which ads you access. Google’s cookies can’t identify you by name, but they log your computer’s IP address; by way of metaphor, Google doesn’t have your driver’s license number, but it knows the license plate number of the car you are driving. And search queries are windows into our souls, as 658,000 AOL users learned when their search profiles were mistakenly posted on the Internet.

And Google knows far more than that. If you are a Gmail user, Google stashes copies of every email you send and receive. If you use any of its other products—Google Maps, Froogle, Google Book Search, Google Earth, Google Scholar, Talk, Images, Video, and News—it will keep track of which directions you seek, which products you shop for, which phrases you research in a book, which satellite photos and news stories you view, and on and on. Served up à la carte, this is probably no big deal. Many websites stow snippets of your data. The problem is that there’s nothing to prevent Google from combining all of this information to create detailed dossiers on its customers, something the company admits is possible in principle. Soon Google may even be able to keep track of users in the real world: Its latest move is into free wifi, which will require it to know your whereabouts (i.e., which router you are closest to).

Google insists that it uses individual data only to provide targeted advertising. But history shows that information seldom remains limited to the purpose for which it was collected. Accordingly, some privacy advocates suggest that Google and other search companies should stop hoarding user queries altogether: Internet searches, argues Lillie Coney of the Electronic Privacy Information Center, are part of your protected personal space just like your physical home.

So the question is not whether Google will always do the right thing—it hasn’t, and it won’t. It’s whether Google, with its insatiable thirst for your personal data, has become the greatest threat to privacy ever known, a vast informational honey pot that attracts hackers, crackers, online thieves, and—perhaps most worrisome of all—a government intent on finding convenient ways to spy on its own citizenry.
1. What is the claim, as stated in the excerpt? 

2. Whether you actually agree or disagree with the claim is not important for the purposes of this exercise. For practice, assume you disagree with the claim. In the space below, write one sentence of concession, followed by one or two sentences of counterargument. Refer to “Structural Elements and Rhetorical Strategies” for assistance. Be prepared to share your response.

   - Concession—a respectful acknowledgment of an opposing viewpoint. By recognizing and fairly summarizing an opposing viewpoint, the writer or speaker is seen as logical and fair-minded.
   - Counterargument—follows a concession and strongly counters or refutes the opposition’s evidence

**Terms of concession and counterargument:**

   - I concede that...; however,
   - Yes, ...but...
   - I recognize that..., but I must point out that...
   - While I agree that..., I doubt that...
   - While it is true that..., we must remember that
   - Although I understand that..., I still believe that...