This activity asks students to critically analyze a series of claims or arguments in order to strengthen and refine them. The process also allows students to work together in small groups and regularly shifting between different types of intellectual tasks from creating claims, finding evidence, explaining reasoning, and in some cases questioning arguments and creating counterarguments. For this activity, students should be divided into small groups of 3 students who will sit in a circle together.

The teacher announces a debatable topic or problem to the class and hands out a Pass the Paper graphic organizer to each student. The graphic organizer is divided into three columns, the first of which asks students to make a claim. Each student will write a claim about the posted topic in the first column. Once all students have filled in a claim in column 1, the teacher directs students to pass their papers to the person on their left. Students will then read the claim written by the previous student and fill in a piece of evidence in the second column to support the claim. Next, students again pass papers to the left to the third person who reviews the claim and evidence recorded by the two previous students. They fill in the third column with the reasoning they believe ties the evidence to the claim. After all students have completed this step, they rotate clockwise a last time, receiving back their original paper and claim. Students review their original papers with a now-completed argument.

In other variations of this activity, students are asked to write a complete argument, then pass the paper and ask a question to expose an assumption or gather new information, then pass again and answer the question posed. Finally, the original student is asked to refine the argument based on the question and response given by the other students. Similarly, this activity can be done by asking students to evaluate an argument by weighing the validity and relevance of the argument as students pass the paper between them.

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| **Step** | **Teacher Move** | **Student Move** |
| **1** | Develop a debatable topic for student groups to make claims about. |  |
| **2** | Divide the class into groups of 3 and pass out a Pass the Paper graphic organizer to each student. |  |
| **3** | Instruct students to make a claim about the topic provided. | Write a claim in column one of your paper. |
| **4** | Direct students to pass papers to their left. Instruct students to… | Read the claim in column one and write evidence to support that claim in column two. |
| **5** | Direct students to pass papers to their left. Instruct students to… | Read the claim and evidence and then write the reasoning for how the evidence supports the claim column three. |
| **6** | Direct students to pass papers to their left. Instruct students to… | Read the evidence and reasoning the other students provided for your claim. Assess the full argument to assure it makes sense. |