BOSTON DEBATE LEAGUE
Transforming School Culture Through Debate

Baseline Assessment: Skill 2

Student's name:_____ Date:_____
Teacher's name:_____ Grade:_____

1. Each of the following questions provides a different warrant for the following claim: Cigarettes can cause cancer.

1a. Which type of warrant is given in the statement below? Circle one answer choice.

My doctor said cigarettes have chemicals that can lead to cancer.
(a) Data
(b) Personal experience
(c) Expert source
(d) Logical reasoning

1b. Which type of warrant is given in the statement below? Circle one answer choice.

My grandmother smoked for years and passed away with cancer.
(a) Data
(b) Personal experience
(c) Expert source
(d) Logical reasoning

1c. Which type of warrant is given in the statement below? Circle one answer choice.

A Department of Health report said that 80 percent of people who died of lung cancer in 2011 smoked.
(a) Data
(b) Personal experience
(c) Expert source
(d) Logical reasoning

1d. Which of the three warrants above provides the strongest support for the claim that cigarettes cause cancer (1a, 1b or 1c)? In a few sentences, provide a complete argument for why the warrant you chose is stronger than the others.

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2a. Which of the warrants below would be best for convincing your school principal to allow junk food on your school campus? Circle one answer choice.

(a) …schools should teach students how to make good choices instead of making rules.
(b) …junk food takes less time to buy and prepare.
(c) …it would be easier to buy junk food at school than at the store.
(d) …junk food sales could help raise money for the school.

In 1-2 sentences, explain why you circled the answer you chose above.

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2b. Which of the warrants below would be best for convincing your classmate that the school should allow junk food on campus? Circle one answer choice.

(a) …schools should teach students how to make good choices instead of making rules.
(b) …junk food takes less time to buy and prepare.
(c) …it would be easier to buy junk food at school than at the store.
(d) …junk food sales could help raise money for the school.

In 1-2 sentences, explain why you circled the answer you chose above.

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