**Activity: Introduction to the Language of Argument**

**ANSWER KEY**

Directions

Students should be put in pairs or groups of three. Each student first read the New York Times article, from July 18, 2017, entitled “A Movie Heroine’s Long Quest to Passing ‘Go,’” then students should each answer the questions below in complete sentences and independently. Then, students should discuss with each other their responses to each question, noting in the space below how they would revise their response, in light of the discussion. Finally, pairs (or groups) will be asked to share out both their responses and the portions of the discussion that led to revisions.

Questions

**1. What is Annie Rose’s overall argumentative position in her letter to Hasbro, written in early 2016?**

**Annie Rose’s overall argumentative position in her letter is that Hasbro should include Rey as a regular player piece in its Star Wars monopoly game.**

**2. Annie Rose makes two argumentative claims in her letter to support her position. Quote one of them and paraphrase (put in your own words) the other.**

**Paraphrased claim: Rey is a major character in the film.**

 **Quoted claim: “Boys and girls need to see women can be as strong as men.”**

**3. What evidence does Annie Rose use to support each of her two arguments?**

**Evidence for claim #1 (Rey is a major character)**

**-- The Force awakens in Rey in the film; without her, no Force.**

**-- Without Rey, the bad guys would win.**

**Evidence for claim #2 (gender equality)**

**-- Girls matter (in our society, in the game-buying marketplace)**

**-- All human beings are fundamentally equal**

**4. Assess the strength of the two arguments made in Annie Rose’s letter. What are their strengths? Do they have any weaknesses? If so, what is the most important weakness of each?**

**Strengths:**

**-- The argumentative claims are focused and organized (they are both sequenced and separate).**

**-- Both arguments are supported with credible and aligned evidence**

**-- The arguments appeal to simple and well-founded values (importance of the character and, especially, equality)**

**Possible weaknesses:**

**-- There is an absence of reasoning, especially in the first argument, which might have referred to specific plot points to further develop the backing for its claim**

**-- There is a missed opportunity for making an argument to appeal to the interests of the immediate audience (Hasbro) in selling more board games. This audience may have been more open to the argument that an increasing share of the board game market is female, for instance, making it possible that the game without Rey would be less appealing.**

**-- Adding additional evidence – making the evidence more *sufficient* – may have included, in the second argument for instance, reference to gender equality in other board games (Clue, for instance).**

**5. What “evidence from authority” referenced in the article might Annie Rose and her family have used, either in the letter or later in the follow-up to the letter?**

**The film’s director, J.J. Abrams, called excluding Rey as a character piece in the Monopoly game “preposterous,” according to the article. That could have been used as evidence from authority for one or the other of the two arguments, depending on Abrams’ warrant for this conclusion.**

**6. The Monopoly game manufacturer Hasbro has made several counter-arguments, both explicitly and implicitly, to Annie Rose’s argumentative position. Paraphrase two of the counter-claims**

 **Counter-claim 1: Including Rey as a character piece would have given away the plot of the movie, since the game was released several months before it opened.**

 **Counter-claim 2: There is not enough interest among American retailers in a Star Wars Monopoly that includes Rey as a character piece.**

 **Counter-claim 3: Hasbro has made Rey available as a game piece for those consumers who write in to request it.**

**7. Ms. Goldman (Annie Rose’s mother) refutes (at least) one of Hasbro’s counter-arguments directly, in the article. Paraphrase the counter-claim she responds to, then summarize the two rebuttal arguments in her refutation.**

**Hasbro has made the Rey character piece available for those who write in and request it, but**

 **(1) Many kids are not going to be aware of this; and**

 **(2) This is still treating Rey differently, while the point of this protest is that male and female characters (and their game pieces) should be treated equally.**

**8. Evaluate the clashing argumentation between Hasbro and the Goodman family. Setting aside the public relations implications (influenced by the publication of the article), which side do you think prevails in this dispute, and why?**

**There are various ways to evaluate this clashing argumentation with validity. One way is to note that while the Goldmans attempt to refute Hasbro’s arguments, Hasbro makes no attempt to refute Annie Rose’s arguments. Additionally, while Annie Rose makes arguments that are not time-bound or temporary (Rey is a key character, equality is a fundamental American value), Hasbro’s arguments have a limited shelf-life. After the film was released, they could have added the Rey character. And after retailers’ inventory went down, they could have asked retailers again if they would be interested in (or at least not object to) a game with a Rey character piece.**