

Argument-Centered Education -- Argument Builder

Overall Position: In recent hurricanes, America has not been living up to its values

Label	Inequality
Argumentative Claim	Hurricanes have further divided the nation between rich and poor, and have had a very unequal and tragic impact on low-income people.
Evidence A (Summary or Quotation of Facts, Research, Expert View, etc.)	In "What to Tweak," poor residents of the ninth ward in New Orleans are shown to be suffering the loss of their meager possessions as they have to flee the flooding and the damage to their homes caused by Hurricane Katrina. In "Superdome" poet Patricia Smith describes the suffering and fear experienced by even those poor people in New Orleans who are able to find shelter in the city (Patricia Smith, Blood Dazzler, 2008).
Reasoning (Analyzing How the Evidence Proves the Argumentative Claim)	Partly through the dialect she adopts in her poetic voice in these two poems, and partly through the physical details she chooses, Patricia Smith focuses on the uniquely devastating impact that Katrina had on low-income, usually African-American people living in New Orleans. Their suffering is both intense and undeniable, though the entire absence of more affluent people throughout these poems also implies that the hurricane extended and deepened the division between rich and poor in New Orleans. Instead of upholding or celebrating equality (one of America's founding values), hurricanes like Katrina have nakedly revealed the nation's deep and deepening inequality.
Evidence B (Summary or Quotation of Facts, Research, Expert View, etc.)	"Victor put one hand on his mother's stomach and the other on his father's. There was enough hunger in both, enough movement, enough geography and history, enough of everything to destroy the reservation and leave only random debris and broken furniture. But it was over. Victor closed his eyes, fell asleep. It was over. The hurricane that fell out of the sky in 1976 left before sunrise, and all the Indians, the eternal survivors, gathered to count their losses" (Sherman Alexie, "Every Little Hurricane," 1994).
Reasoning (Analyzing How the Evidence Proves the Argumentative Claim)	Sherman Alexie's literary and semi-autobiographical memoir uses hurricanes as a metaphor throughout. In this passage, the poverty his family lives in is like a hurricane, destroying "normal" or "average" or "middle class" possessions and lifestyle, and leaving the damage and debris that he (Victor) lived in as a child. Hurricanes force the marginalized (the Indians) to "count their losses." Hurricanes have always demonstrated the inequality that we live with in America.