**Claim Game**

This fast-paced card game has several benefits: students practice identifying the parts of argument; it encourages them to discuss what does or does not count as specific parts of one; it helps them generate arguments quickly; and most students think it’s fun. Use it not only to liven up the class but also to prompt students to speak up about a text or topic they would otherwise not be eager to discuss. This game works best after students have had some experience identifying the parts of argument, but you can return to it throughout the term.

**Materials**

Make two or three decks of index cards of different colors, labeled with the parts of argument. You need enough cards so that each student receives one claim card, two reason cards, three evidence cards, and one acknowledgment and response card. If students seem to grasp warrants, add one warrant card to each student pack.

**Process**

1. The game is played by students contributing to an ongoing class discussion.

   Each time a student contributes a part of argument, she discards the corresponding card. The winning team is the one left with the fewest cards. The first time you play this game, let it continue until one team has discarded all its cards or neither team can add to the discussion. But as students gain experience, set shorter and shorter time limits to make them think fast.

2. Divide the class into teams, each with different color cards. You’ll need judges to settle disputed cases. At first you can serve as judge, but it can be instructive for students to do that themselves.
3. Announce the topic or question for each round. Any player from any team can take a turn adding a part of argument to the discussion. But she must first name the part before discarding a corresponding card. (Our students prefer tossing the card on the floor, a la David Letterman.) If a player does not have a card corresponding to that part of argument, she cannot add the comment.

4. At any time, a student can challenge a contribution from the opposing team by claiming that it is not a valid example of the claimed part of argument. In making the challenge, the student must explain why the comment should not count as the claimed part. The challenged player can respond by explaining why it should. If the judges uphold the challenge, the challenged player must retrieve the discarded card.

5. If the discussion begins to slow down before the teams have discarded most of their cards (especially if some students have few cards but others have many), call a five-minute time out for the teams to plan how best to get rid of the rest of their cards. Students with few cards but plenty of ideas will instruct those slow to catch on.

When students get involved, the class can get rowdy. Try to manage the pace so that students don’t talk over one another, but don’t stifle their enthusiasm. Students can be surprisingly inventive when the game forces them to think quickly. As for strategy, students will discover that they tend to run out of claim and reason cards before they have played many of the others. When that happens, they find it difficult to keep the discussion going. Point out the strategic value of playing warrant and acknowledgment and response cards as quickly as possible and playing evidence cards before they run out of reasons.