**My Favorite Martian**

In this activity, students practice articulating warrants that seem too obvious to state. It helps them see when a warrant is obvious to them but not to others.

**Materials**

Students need several copies of a completed draft.

**Process**

1. Put students in groups of four and have them exchange copies of papers.

2. Students look at the papers one at a time, with two playing the role of Martians who understand little or nothing about how things work on earth and two responding (including the author of the paper). The Martians ask for a warrant for every step in the argument: *You say that the author's second point is more important than the first because he devotes three times as many pages talking about it; why do you say that?* The responders answer with a warrant: *Authors usually devote more pages to important subjects than to less important ones.* The Martians can then query the warrant: *What evidence do you have that an author devotes more pages to important subjects?* When the responders can’t answer, the Martians move on to another claim and reason.

3. Reconvene the class to discuss how many questions readers can conceivably have and what students can do to anticipate them.