

## Lesson Plan

### Creating Counterarguments

**Book:** *Saving Mountain Gorillas*

**Series:** Saving Animals

**Level:** Navigator

#### Objective

To help students practice choosing a claim and backing up that claim with supporting evidence.

#### Supplies

- *Saving Mountain Gorillas* book
- Paper and pencils

#### Before the Activity

Read through the *Saving Mountain Gorillas* book, or assign it to students to read on their own. Pass out paper and pencils.

#### Activity

Chapter 4 (“Protecting Gorillas”) describes the benefits and disadvantages of ecotourism as a way to help protect mountain gorillas. Students should take a stand on the following question:

- Is ecotourism more of a help or a hindrance to efforts to protect mountain gorillas?

Each student will write a paragraph clearly stating his or her opinion and providing support for that opinion. Give students time to write their paragraphs. Then, have the class participate in a discussion about the topic. Invite students from each side of the argument to share their reasons for their opinions. Students can respond to one another and ask questions for clarification. As the discussion is taking place, students should take notes on the reasons the other side gives. They should try to form counterarguments for those reasons.

After the discussion, give students time to rewrite their paragraphs, incorporating information from the discussion. The new version should mention and refute one of the other side’s claims. At the end of class, students should turn in both their original paragraphs and their revised paragraphs.

**Evaluation**

Could students participate in a group discussion about the value of ecotourism in protecting mountain gorillas? Could students respond to each other's arguments, both during the discussion and in their revised paragraphs?

**Standards**

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' speaking and listening standards, grade 6 (SL 6.1, 6.3), and writing standards, grade 6 (W 6.1).