

# SESSION SEVEN >>

## Playing Argument Wars

- INTRODUCE >>** *Argument Wars* using "Introducing Argument Wars"
- LOG ON >>** to [www.icivics.org](http://www.icivics.org).
- NAVIGATE >>** to *Argument Wars* by following these steps: click the "Play Games!" button on the main screen, then scroll down to the *Argument Wars* game.
- INSTRUCT >>** players to click on "Instructions" if they haven't played the game before, or to jump right in by clicking "Get Started!" They should follow these simple steps:
1. Select an avatar and use their own first name. Players then pick which side of the case they will argue. (*New Jersey v. T.L.O.* is recommended for first-time players)
  2. Players should read each speech bubble carefully so they learn about the case they are arguing. If they read carefully the next few steps should be easy.
  3. Players must select the constitutional amendment that the case is about.
  4. Now the game begins and the students should follow the on-screen tutorials as they appear. They will play arguments and supports by dragging and dropping them at the top of the screen.
  5. Occasionally, players must provide additional support, and will put together a sentence that reinforces their argument.
  6. The game continues until one side has won the case.



# Introducing Argument Wars >>



- Tell students that you are going to tell them a story about a made-up school. Read the following aloud:

"At this made-up school, there is a rule that cannot be changed. It was put in place at the founding of the school because people who started the school believed it was important to protect students' rights. It says:

*'Students have the right to eat at any lunch table they choose.'*



One year, the principal noticed that the cafeteria was getting very noisy at lunchtime and that it took a long time for people to get seated. He decided to assign students to groups, and have each group choose their lunch table, rather than have each individual student choose a lunch table. Some students felt that this violated their right to choose their *own* table with their *own* friends, but the principal thought it was perfectly fine because the students still got to choose their own table."

- Divide the room into two halves based on where the students are sitting. One side of the room represents the student who believes that the principal broke the rule that says "students have the right to eat at any lunch table they choose." The other side of the room represents the principal who believes he didn't break this rule. Have the students, either individually or in pairs, come up with a reason (which is called a "support" in the game) that supports their side of the disagreement (which is called the "argument" in the game).
- Ask to share the reasons they came up with to support their side.
- Discuss why there is good reason for confusion or disagreement on whether the student came to school late or not. For example, the rule is vague, or there are good reasons to support both sides. You can tell the students that a judge would listen to both sides and decide who wins the disagreement.
- Connect this exercise to the game they will be playing today. In **Argument Wars**, the students will be playing lawyers. There is a disagreement over a rule in the Constitution.



One side believes the government broke the rule and violated someone's rights, and the other side does not think there is any problem with how the government handled the situation. As the lawyer, they are to choose the BEST supports to persuade the judge that their side is right!

- Now they are ready to begin!