Explain or Argue?

Sort social studies statements by their purpose.

TOT.P.4.1 "Summarize and paraphrase, integrate evidence, and cite sources to create written products, research projects, and presentations for multiple purposes related to social studies content. Compose informative essays and written products..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

INFORMATIVE THESIS

An informative thesis explains a topic or process. It does not recommend a choice.

Ancient irrigation canals carried water to farmland and supported harvests in arid climates.

ARGUMENTATIVE CLAIM

An argumentative claim takes a position that someone could disagree with and gives a reason for it.

Museums ought to waive admission fees on weekends because more families could see historical artifacts.

1 SORT

8 items

In Part 1, circle EXPLAIN or ARGUE for each statement; in Part 2, pick one item from each category and explain how you knew.

1.	A census counts residents and gives officials data for planning public services.	EXPLAIN ARGUE
2.	Cities should add more bus routes because reliable transit can connect residents to jobs.	EXPLAIN ARGUE
3.	States should hold public hearings before changing voting rules so residents can comment on the proposals.	EXPLAIN ARGUE
4.	The amendment process requires broad approval and makes changes to the U.S. Constitution difficult.	EXPLAIN ARGUE
5.	Trade routes move goods between regions and can spread ideas along with products.	EXPLAIN ARGUE
6.	Local elections choose officials who make decisions about community services and spending.	EXPLAIN ARGUE
7.	Lawmakers should fund emergency shelters because shelters give displaced residents a safe place to stay.	EXPLAIN ARGUE
8.	Maps of shifting state borders show how territories were reorganized over time.	EXPLAIN ARGUE

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new informative thesis and one new argumentative claim about social studies topics.

EXPLAIN _____

ARGUE _____

CHALLENGE

Write an informative statement, turn it into a claim recommending a specific action, and name one credible source you would consult to support your reason.

ANSWER KEY

Explain or Argue?

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	A census counts residents and gives officials data for planning public services.	**EXPLAIN**	Describes what a census does without recommending an action.
2	Cities should add more bus routes because reliable transit can connect residents to jobs.	**ARGUE**	Recommends a city action and gives a reason.
3	States should hold public hearings before changing voting rules so residents can comment on the proposals.	**ARGUE**	Takes a position on a state decision and explains why.
4	The amendment process requires broad approval and makes changes to the U.S. Constitution difficult.	**EXPLAIN**	Explains how the amendment process affects constitutional change.
5	Trade routes move goods between regions and can spread ideas along with products.	**EXPLAIN**	Explains two effects of trade routes without recommending a choice.
6	Local elections choose officials who make decisions about community services and spending.	**EXPLAIN**	Describes the role of local elections.
7	Lawmakers should fund emergency shelters because shelters give displaced residents a safe place to stay.	**ARGUE**	Recommends funding and supports that position with a reason.
8	Maps of shifting state borders show how territories were reorganized over time.	**EXPLAIN**	Explains what maps can reveal about territorial change.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **EXPLAIN**: Tax records show how a city collected revenue and paid for public works.
- **ARGUE**: County leaders should protect wetlands because wetlands can reduce stormwater damage.

Challenge: Informative: Voter guides summarize candidates' positions. Claim: Election offices should mail voter guides to residents because the guides could help people compare candidates. Source: A peer-reviewed study on voter guides and voter knowledge.

For Part 2, accept explanations that identify a description or explanation in an EXPLAIN item and a recommended action with a reason in an ARGUE item. For Part 3, student examples should maintain the same distinction.