

Topeka Onboarding Guide

Topeka is a suite of resources to support students as they develop argumentative writing skills. Joining the Topeka community offers you and your students access to a variety of resources including:

- Lesson plans and supplementary materials to instruct students on writing argumentative essays
- Student-centric prompts with sources students can use to build their arguments
- Real-time feedback for students using artificial intelligence (AI) to help them get more feedback, faster
- Strategies for giving high-quality feedback to students while reducing your workload
- Formative assessment reports on student performance and progression over time
- Connections to a community of teachers using Topeka

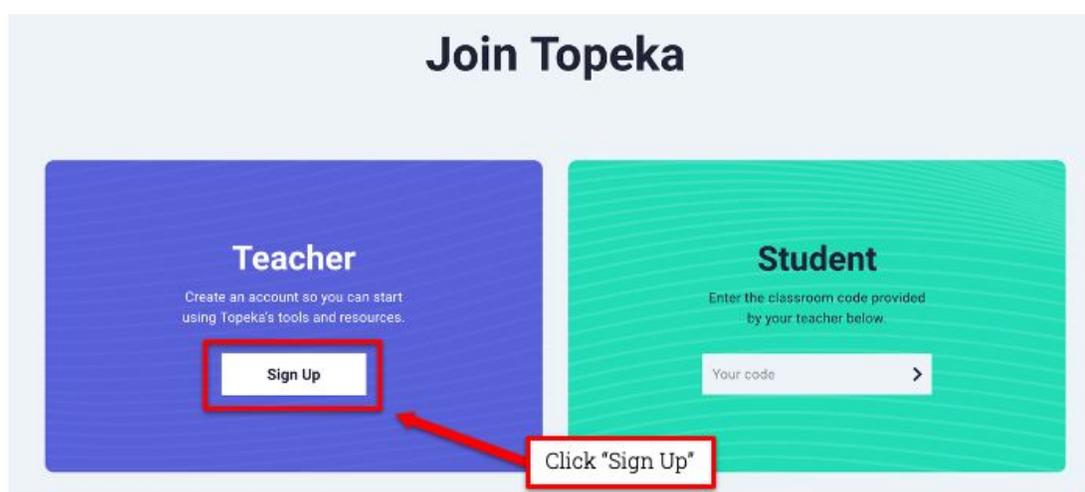
Creating a Topeka Account

Ready to get started? Begin by creating an account on the Topeka website. Creating an account is the first step to gaining access to all of Topeka's resources.

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Creating a New Class and Adding Students

On Topeka, you assign prompts based on class. From your **Teacher Dashboard**, set up a class for each group of students with whom you will be using Topeka. Students can join your class using the class code that will be supplied at the end of the set-up process and is also visible when you view the class from your teacher dashboard.

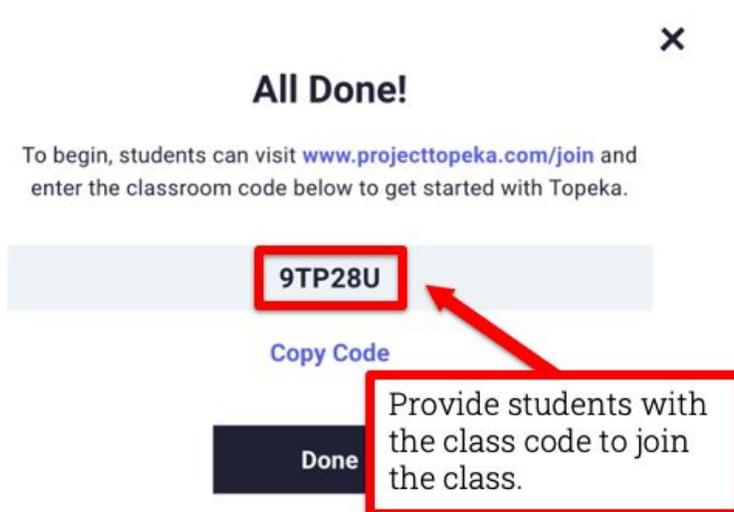
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Assigning a Prompt

Next, select a [prompt](#) to assign to your students. Each prompt includes not only a topic on which your students will write, but also a set of sources available right in Topeka for students to use in their essays. If you already know which prompt you want to assign, you can easily create a new assignment and assign that prompt just by adding a few details.

We recommend assigning each prompt twice. First, assign as a **First Draft**. This allows students to create a complete draft of their essay before receiving feedback. Once students have submitted their First Draft, you can close that assignment and click "Assign again." In the new assignment, the text from a student's first draft will automatically appear and they will now have access to Signal Checks to provide them feedback as they revise.

Assigning a prompt gives your students access to Topeka's feedback through **Signal Checks**. Once students have written a draft of their essay following the prompt, the AI within the site will provide feedback and help students to improve their writing. While this feedback cannot replace you as the teacher, it can provide students with additional support and help you to focus the feedback that you give them later.

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Select the featured prompt you want to learn more about.

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Introduction

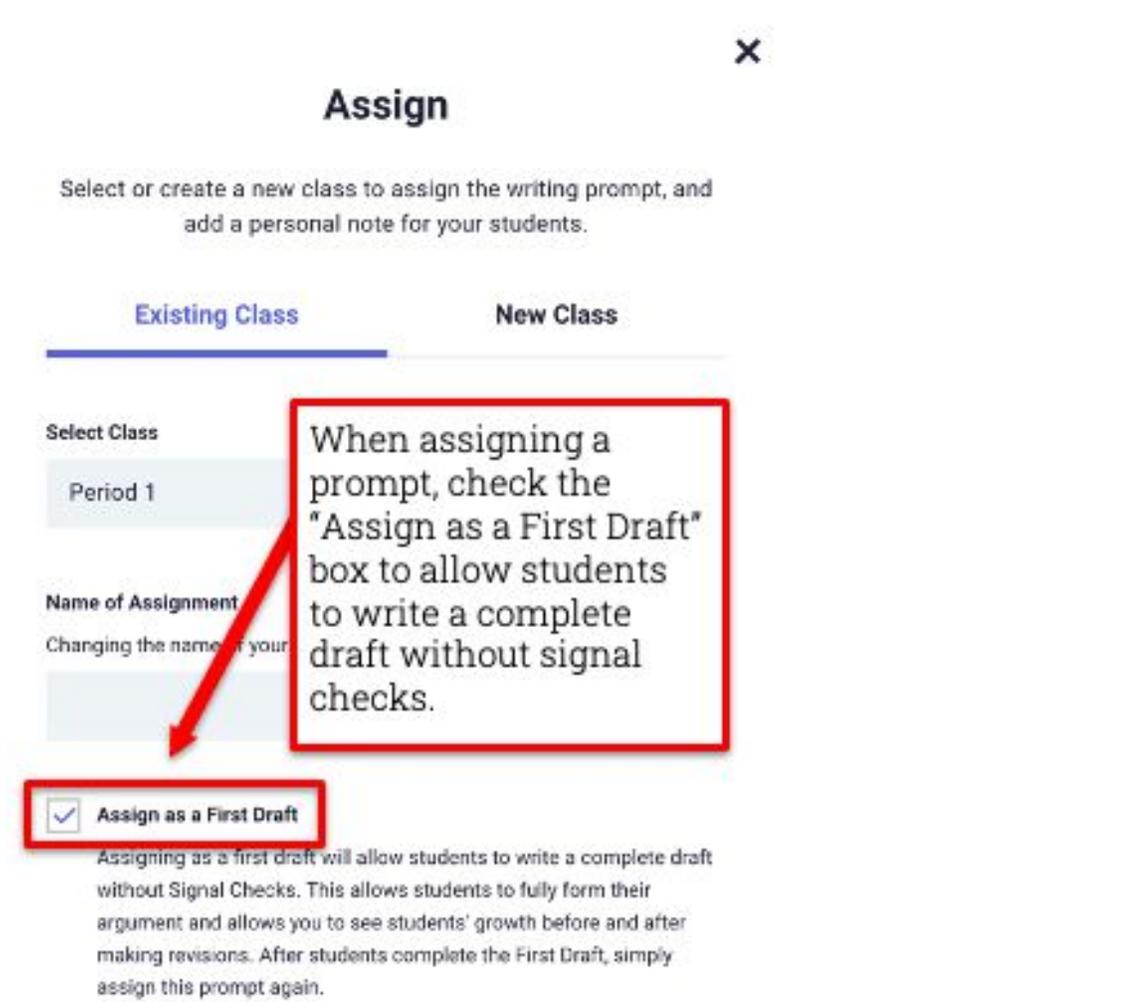
Click "Assign" to assign the selected prompt & articles to a class.

If students need printed materials, you can also download the assignment as a PDF.

Materials

- Lesson Plan
- Scoring Rubric
- Guidance for Students

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The screenshot shows the 'Period 1' class page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'My Classes', 'Teaching Resources', 'Writing Prompts', 'Community', and 'Topeka Teacher'. Below this, the class name 'Period 1' is displayed, along with the class code '86JC1S' and an 'Edit Class' link. Two buttons are visible: 'Add New Assignment' and 'View Cumulative Report'. The main content area shows a list of assignments under the 'Assignments' tab. The first assignment is 'Should students be allowed cell phone use in school'. Below it, a specific assignment entry is shown: 'Cell Phone Use in Schools - First Draft', which was opened on 08/26/20. To the right of this entry, there are three buttons: 'Give Feedback', 'Close Assignment' (highlighted with a red box), and 'Assign Again'. A red callout box with an arrow points to the 'Close Assignment' button, containing the text: 'Click "Close Assignment" when students have finished their First Draft.'

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The screenshot shows the same 'Period 1' class page as in the previous image. The assignment 'Cell Phone Use in Schools - First Draft' is shown. In this view, the 'Close Assignment' button is no longer visible, and a 'Re-Open' button has appeared. A red callout box with an arrow points to the 'Assign Again' button, containing the text: 'Click "Assign Again" to assign students the same prompt. For this assignment, leave "Assign as a First Draft" unchecked to allow Signal Checks.'

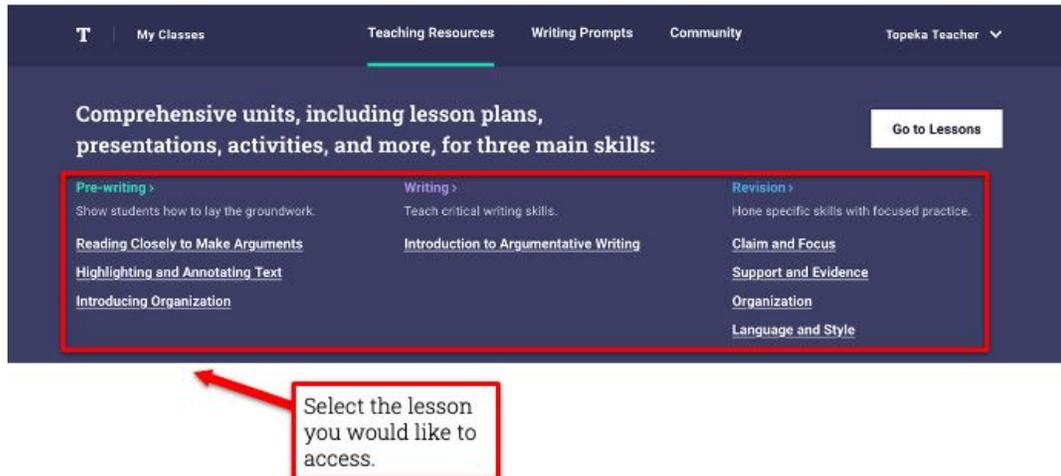
Accessing Topeka Lesson Plans and Teaching Resources

Topeka is not just a platform to assign writing to your students and provide them with feedback. Topeka also includes a suite of lesson plans and materials to support you, the teacher, as you implement Topeka. The lesson plans include pre-writing lessons to help focus student attention as they read sources, writing lessons introducing argumentative writing, and revision lessons for reteaching. All of these lesson plans can be found in the “Teaching Resources” tab. As you explore the lessons, you will find all the resources you need to teach them in your classroom and support your students’ argumentative writing.

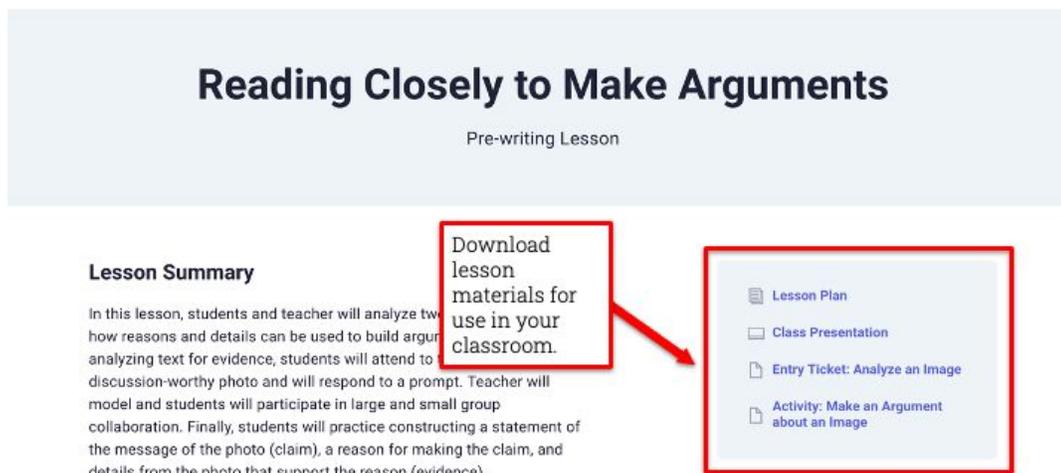
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Join the Topeka Teacher Community

Topeka includes a community of teachers who are all using this platform. Visit the “Community” tab to join the community. You’ll find discussion about how to get started with Topeka in “Getting Started” and ideas for improving your teaching practice in “Teaching Writing.”

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Links to Teacher Support Guides

- [Remote Learning With Topeka](#)
- [Supporting Students with Effective Feedback](#)
- [Planning from Data with Topeka](#)