

## Unit 3: Argument

### "Sis! Boom! Bah! Humbug!" by Rick Reilly

#### Part 1:

Close reading is a method to aid comprehension of a piece of text in order to gain a better understanding than a reader gets with traditional reading alone. During a close read, the text (or a portion of the text) is read multiple times, usually three.

You will read, "Sis! Boom! Bah! Humbug!" three times. Each time you will be required to complete a task. The sections below will provide the instructions for each read.

**First Reading:** Label the elements of an argument in the left-hand margin of the text. You may use some elements more than once or not at all.

- ✓ Claims
- ✓ Reasons
- ✓ Evidence
- ✓ Sources
- ✓ Opposing Viewpoint
- ✓ Counterargument
- ✓ Counterargument's Reasons, Evidence, and Sources
- ✓ Rebuttal
- ✓ Rebuttal's Reasons, Evidence and Sources

**Second Reading:** Record the words that show Reilly's bias in the right-hand margin. Remember to look for words with positive and negative connotations.

**Third Reading:** You will grade the argument. Attached you will find a report card focusing on the elements of an effective argument. Evaluate each element of the argument and use the A-F grading scale below to represent the effectiveness of each element.

A - Very effective

B- Effective

C- Somewhat Effective

D- Not Effective

F- Not Present

## Part 2:

Write a four-paragraph essay evaluating the effectiveness of the argument Rick Reilly presents in "Sis! Boom! Bah! Humbug!" Use the following questions to guide your paragraphs.

### Paragraph One:

- ✓ Identify the claim when answering if the argument is or is not effective.
- ✓ How many reasons does the author give?
- ✓ Are the reasons relevant to the claim? Provide at least one example from the text, and explain how the reason is or is not clearly related to the claim.
- ✓ Are the pieces of evidence relevant to the reasons? Provide at least one example from the text, and explain how the evidence is or is not clearly related to the claim.
- ✓ Is there a sufficient amount of relevant evidence?

### Paragraph Two:

- ✓ Are there sources?
- ✓ Are the sources reliable?
- ✓ What do you know about the author?
- ✓ Is the author credible?

### Paragraph Three:

- ✓ Does the counterargument address the claim? Provide at least one example from the text, and explain how the counterargument is or is not clearly related to the claim.
- ✓ Does the counterargument present facts?
- ✓ Is the counterargument presented with or without bias? What words show the author's bias?

### Paragraph Four:

- ✓ Does the rebuttal address the counterargument? Provide at least one example from the text, and explain how the rebuttal is or is not clearly related to the claim.
- ✓ Does the rebuttal prove the counterargument? Provide at least one example.

Title of the argument: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher (you are the teacher): \_\_\_\_\_

Elements of an Argument	Grade
CLAIM	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Clearly stated</li></ul>	
REASON	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Relevant to the claim</li><li>Sufficient</li></ul>	
EVIDENCE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Relevant to the reasons</li><li>Sufficient</li></ul>	
SOURCES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Trustworthy</li></ul>	
COUNTER ARGUMENT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Addresses the claim</li><li>Presents facts</li><li>Presented without bias</li></ul>	
REBUTTAL	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Addresses the counter argument</li><li>Proves counter argument wrong</li></ul>	
AUTHOR	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Credible</li></ul>	

Additional teacher comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



October 18, 1999

**Sis! Boom! Bah! Humbug!**

Rick Reilly



Every Friday night on America's high school football fields, it's the same old story. Broken bones. Senseless violence. Clashing egos.

Not the players. The cheerleaders. According to a report by The Physician and Sportsmedicine, cheerleaders lose more time from their activity because of injury—28.8 days per injury—than any other group of athletes at the high school level. The University of North Carolina found that cheerleading is responsible for nearly half the high school and college injuries that lead to paralysis or death.

It's crazy, isn't it? We have girls building three-story human pyramids, flipping one another 30 feet in the air, and we give the boys helmets.

A buddy of mine has twin daughters, both cheerleaders. At the end of last school year one needed plastic surgery on her cheek after another girl's teeth went through it during a pyramid collapse, the other broke her hand and finger. They're not cheering anymore.

I don't hate cheerleading just because it's about as safe as porcupine juggling. I also hate it because it's dumb. The Velcroed-on smiles. The bizarre arm movements stolen from the Navy signalmen's handbook. The same cheers done by every troupe in every state.

What's even dumber is that cheerleaders have no more impact on the game than the night janitorial staff. They don't even face the game. They face the crowd, lost in their bizarre MuffyWorld. They cheer, they rah, they smile, they kiss, they hug. Meanwhile, Milford High just scored three touchdowns against their guys. A UFO could land at the 30-yard line, disgorging a chorus line of tiny, purple Ethel Mermans, and most cheerleaders would still be facing the other way yelling, "We got the fever!"

Exactly what does a girl get out of cheerleading, anyway, besides a circle skirt and a tight sweater? Why do we encourage girls to cheer the boys, to idolize the boys? Why do we want them on the sideline when most of them could be between the sidelines?

Studies show that by the time otherwise smart girls hit high school, they start to raise their hands less in class, let the boys take the lead. Isn't cheerleading the same thing, only outdoors?

Look, I married a cheerleader. My sisters were cheerleaders. I could see it then: Cheerleading was just about the only way a girl could be a part of sports. Not now. Not in the age of Mia Hamm and Marion Jones and the Williams sisters. Not when most high schools offer as many girls' sports as boys'.

Oh, right, nowadays cheerleading is classified as a sport. There are now "cheer gyms," where kids go to learn to throw each other around like Frisbees. You can even watch the National High School Cheerleading Championships on ESPN just after the Harley-Davidson Olympics. This is the event in which 408 girls named Amber attempt to create a human Eiffel Tower, screaming, "Two! Four! Six! Eight!" while displaying all their gums at once. I'm not saying it's not hard. I'm just saying it's pointless.

Do you realize colleges are even giving cheerleading scholarships? Can you believe that? Sorry, Mrs. Roosevelt, we just gave away your daughter's chemistry scholarship. But you should have seen Amber here do "We've got spirit!"

If cheerleading is a sport, Richard Simmons is a ballerina. It's athletic, but it's not a sport. In fact, what's sad is that most cheerleaders would make fine athletes. Watch for five minutes and you'll see. But these girls won't be on anybody's gymnastics or diving or basketball team because every season is cheerleading season.

Cheerleaders don't just shake their pom-poms at football games; they're also at baseball games and wrestling matches and girls' soccer games and most everything else short of chess-club tournaments. No matter how many hours they've already put in, no matter how freezing it is, no matter how few fans are at the jayvee badminton match, the cheerleaders are out there in their short skirts.

What's that spell? Frostbite!

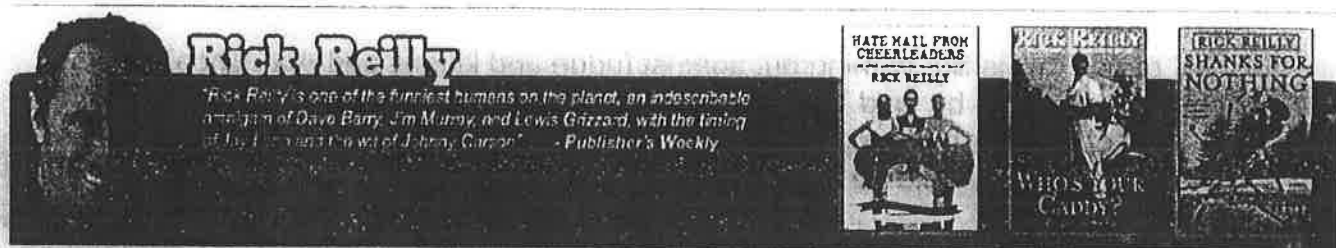
If they're lucky, they might grow up to become Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders. In the book *Deep in the Heart of Texas*, three former Cowboys Cheerleaders wrote that they snorted coke, gobbled diet pills, and vomited to lose weight.

Rah!



I guess this is like coming out against fudge and kittens and Abe Lincoln, but it needs to be said. In four years my little girl hits high school. It's up to her, of course, but if my wife and I could choose her after-school activities, cheerleading would be next to last.

Just ahead of Piercing Club.



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## About Rick Reilly



Photo by Gavin Holt

**RICK REILLY**, 55, has been voted National Sportswriter of the Year 11 times. He is a front-page columnist for ESPN.com and delivers human-interest television features for ESPN's Monday Night Countdown, opinion essays and features for ESPN's golf coverage, and essays for SportsCenter, which he also occasionally anchors.

Reilly won the 2009 Damon Runyon Award for Outstanding Contributions to Journalism, an honor previously won by Jimmy Breslin, Tim Russert, Bob Costas, Mike Royko, George Will, Ted Turner and Tom Brokaw, among others. Three times his columns have been read into the record in the U.S. Congress. An astronaut once took his signed trading card into space.

He is the author of 10 books, including his latest -- *Sports From Hell, My Search for the World's Dumbest Competition* (Doubleday). The book was a finalist for the 2011 Thurber Prize. It's the account of his three-year search for the dumbest sport in the world. Not to give anything away, but a good bet would be either Ferret Legging or the World Sauna Championships. It also includes embarrassing attempts by Reilly to try Nude Bicycle Racing, Zorbing, Chess Boxing, Extreme Ironing, the World Rock Paper Scissors Championships, and an unfortunate week on a women's pro football team.

For two years, he was the host of ESPN's *Homecoming with Rick Reilly*, a one-hour interview show which has featured Michael Phelps, John Elway and Magic Johnson, among many others.

The *New York Daily News* called him "one of the funniest humans on the planet." Publishers Weekly called him, "an indescribable amalgam of Dave Barry, Jim Murray, and Lewis Grizzard, with the timing of Jay Leno and the wit of Johnny Carson."

He has written about everything from ice skater Katarina Witt behind the Iron Curtain to actor Jack Nicholson in the front row, from wrestling priests in Mexico City to mushers at the Iditarod, from playing golf with President Clinton to playing golf with O.J. Simpson and back again. He was once President Obama's fantasy football partner for a week. He has five times had the disagreeable task of accompanying the models on the annual *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue. He was once featured in a Miller Lite ad with swimsuit cover girl Rebecca Romijn (Stamos). In July of 2010, he survived running with the bulls of Pamplona, Spain. Twice.

For nearly 23 years -- from 1985 until 2007 -- his breezy, hilarious and yet often emotional style graced the pages of Sports Illustrated. For the last 10 there, he wrote the popular "Life of Reilly" column, which ran on the last page. It was the first signed



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weekly opinion column in the magazine's long history. He is "the Tiger Woods of sports columnists," says Bloomberg News.

Reilly is the founder of the anti-malaria effort Nothing But Nets ([NothingButNets.net](http://NothingButNets.net)), which had raised over \$40 million to hang mosquito nets over kids in Africa, where 3,000 children die every day of the disease. A partnership with the United Nations Foundation, every dollar goes to buying the nets. Wrote the *Denver Post*, "Nothing but Nets is one charity that scores big."

His last collection -- "*Hate Mail from Cheerleaders*" -- included 100 of his best *SI* columns. The foreword is by Lance Armstrong. It became a *New York Times* bestseller in its first week.

His current novel "Shanks for Nothing" (Doubleday) is a madcap golf romp that cracked the *New York Times* bestseller list. It's the sequel to Reilly's cult classic "Missing Links" (Doubleday), whose film rights were recently sold to Steve Carell, star of NBC's *The Office*. Both books revolve around regulars at the worst public course in America -- Ponkaquogue Municipal Golf Links and Deli -- and the insane bets, pranks and camaraderie that goes on there. *The New York Times* hailed "Missing Links" as "three laughs per page."

In Reilly's previous book -- "Who's Your Caddy?" (Doubleday) -- he caddies for everyone from Jack Nicklaus to Donald Trump to a \$50,000-a-hole gambler. It rose to No. 3 on the *New York Times* best-seller list.

His first collection of columns -- "The Life of Reilly: The Best of *Sports Illustrated's* Rick Reilly" -- was also a *New York Times* bestseller.

*Slo-Mo: My Untrue Story*, (Doubleday) is a farce on the NBA, which the *Denver Post* called, "a romp that could have been written only by someone who has seen the game from the inside."

Reilly is the co-author of the movie "Leatherheads," the comic romance centered on the 1924 Duluth Eskimos of the fledgling NFL, starring George Clooney, Renee Zellweger and John Krasinski. It opened on April 4, 2008. MTV called it "a small, unassuming jewel." And *USA Today* wrote: "Leatherheads is a real winner."

His ESPN interview show *Homecoming*, is a kind of cross between *This is Your Life* and *Inside the Actor's Studio*, for sports. The show goes deep inside the life of America's greatest athletes. Filmed in front of a live audience, usually at the guest's high school or college, it's full of surprises, with home video, interviews with old teammates and coaches, family, friends and rivals. Jerry Rice, Dwayne Wade, Chris Paul, Emmitt Smith, Billie Jean King, Donovan McNabb and Tony Hawk have been guests, to name a few. "That was the greatest night of my life," soccer star Landon Donovan said of it. Magic Johnson called it, "The most fun interview I've ever done."

Probably too curious for his own good, Reilly has flown upside down at 600 miles per hour in an F-14, faced fastballs from Nolan Ryan, jumped from 14,000 feet with the U.S. Army Parachute Team, driven a stock car 142 miles per hour, piloted the Goodyear blimp, competed against 107 women for a spot in the WNBA, worked three innings of play-by-play for the Colorado Rockies, bicycled with Lance Armstrong, driven a monster truck over six parked cars, worked as a rodeo bullfighter, and found out the hard way how many straight par 3s he'd have to play before he made a hole in one (694).

Reilly has won numerous awards in his 30-year writing career, including the prestigious *New York Newspaper Guild's* Page One Award for Best Magazine Story. He is the co-author of "The Boz," the best-selling autobiography of bad-boy Oklahoma linebacker Brian Bosworth; "Gretzky," with hockey superstar Wayne Gretzky of the Los Angeles

Kings; "I'd Love to but I Have a Game" with NBC announcer Marv Albert, and the "The Wit and Wisdom of Charles Barkley."

Reilly began his career in 1979 taking phoned-in high-school volleyball scores for his hometown *Boulder (Colo.) Daily Camera* while a sophomore at the University of Colorado, from which he was graduated in 1981. He wrote for two years at the *Camera*, two more at the *Denver Post* and two more at the *Los Angeles Times*, before moving to *Sports Illustrated* in 1985.

Reilly dabbles in magic, piano, mountain biking, SCUBA, back-alley basketball, skiing and snowboarding. He lives in Denver and Hermosa Beach, CA, with his wife -- The Lovely Cynthia -- and a putter he's not currently speaking to.

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