One class. An explanation on trial.

Who Holds the Advantage | Created by Yoav Duman | Revised 30 October 2026

Students curate two supporting observations and one complication, connect an action to another actor's options, face objections, and use a second country to test the explanation. Historical outcomes are visible from the start. They investigate what can be defended, rather than change the election result.

Prepare before class

Open The_Hearing.html in a modern browser, or use the hosted preview. The downloaded file contains its graphics, evidence and sources; the core needs no internet. Choose **For class** and assign a main case, repeating all four across the room. Original-source links are optional. For class blocks pasted text; built-in frames and backup import remain available.

For individual assessment, use one browser/device per student. Give each partner a brief private thinking turn, then alternate proposer/skeptic roles while keeping their own final account. A shared device produces one shared record. Do not treat it as two independent submissions.

Minutes	Work and consequential choice
0-4	Open the hearing. Explain evidence versus an inferred connection with the bus example.
4-7	Choose the main case and a provisional account. Record an initial hunch.
7-16	Inspect the table and all headings. Select two supporting cards and a distinct complication.
16-23	Name a short target; build the actor/action/option connection and begin the explanation.
23-30	Use the two-question agenda: answer each source challenge and record its own decision. Swap roles.
30-35	Apply board decisions; review the paragraph. Name a rival explanation and useful further evidence.
35-45	Choose a second country to test the account. Read its table and relevant cards; compare.
45-52	Finish the brief, inspect the record and export. If assigned, give or rehearse a 40-second briefing.
52-55	Discuss what survived scrutiny and what new evidence would help.

What to say, what to watch

The timetable is a design estimate. Protect the final explanation and comparison.

A thirty-second opening

"Buses arrived late is an observation. A bridge closure forced them onto a congested route proposes a connection. Drivers starting late is another explanation. Arrival times alone do not choose between them. In your case, name an action and explain whose options it changed."

The game constraint

All evidence is freely readable. Three board spaces represent limited public attention: two supporting cards and a complication. More cards do not automatically make a stronger account. Replacing one can leave an earlier claim without its original support. Ask students to inspect the revision trail.

When a student stalls

Ask who held an advantage, which action or rule affected whose opportunity, and which part is recorded or inferred. Keep directly recorded facts; compare accounts of an unresolved motivation, implementation or effect. Do not manufacture disagreement about an established event.

During the hearing

Both source-use challenges remain required. The agenda shows one at a time or both; recorded attempts are not correctness. Each decision names a phrase or link in the learner response. Keeping, narrowing and replacing need reasons. The rival and evidence request carry the stronger assessment work.

Keep writing bounded

Aim for 60-85 words in the main explanation; 50-120 is accepted for completion. The comparison remains 30-45 words. Short responses name a shared uncertain link, competing accounts and differing expected observations. Board changes do not rewrite paragraphs; students must reconcile them. The source limit belongs in the paragraph; a separate callout is optional. A human judges quality.

If you have...	Adapt the session
50 minutes	Shorten opening discussion and oral reports. Keep both source challenges, revision and the comparison. Use the opening/evidence table and the most relevant cards for the second case.
60 minutes	Use the extra five minutes for paired challenge and a whole-class comparison. Do not add a new essay.
Longer accommodations	Release the evidence early or extend completion. No countdown or speed score is needed. Do not remove the source, mechanism or alternative requirement.

Closing question

"Two cases show retention and two show turnover. Does a shared result establish a shared cause? What could actors actually change?" Carry one unresolved observation into Levitsky and Way. These selected cases are a primer, not a controlled test of the entire article.

Look for an accountable explanation

Assess the evidence and reasoning, rather than agreement with a favored interpretation.

Look for	A substantive response
Evidence	Two distinct, precise observations, cited with valid item IDs. Repeating a table fact in a card is still one observation.
Connection	A named action, rule or advantage affects another actor's option. Mark an inferred baseline; a result is not a mechanism.
Scope	A claim-specific limit: measurement, population, sequence, source role or an unobserved causal link.
Challenge	Competing accounts of a shared uncertain link, a meaningful complication, and a reasoned decision to retain, narrow or replace.
Comparison	A named event/period, second-case evidence and a process difference that tests or bounds the claim; the analogy may fail.

Suggested participation scale: **100** for a substantive attempt across these operations; **70** for meaningful work with a major operation incomplete; **0** for no substantive attempt, subject to course policy and accommodations. Neither speed, length, confidence nor a preferred political explanation belongs in the score.

Russia, January to March 2024

The Levada percentages are survey responses with different denominators, not official returns. Reported support and restricted challenger opportunities can coexist. No OSCE mission establishes a missing check, not a fabricated-vote total. The file cannot recover an unrestricted campaign that never occurred.

Malaysia, 2013 and 2018

PR and PH were different alliances. Cooperation already existed in 2013; PAS remained outside PH in 2018. PH's 113 seats exclude Warisan's eight. A vote-seat gap does not alone establish fraud. DOJ complaints documented allegations, and the late-2018 reform episode cannot cause an earlier victory.

Malawi, 2019 to 2020

Separate reopening the contest, implementing the ruling and explaining its different winner. Constitutional interpretation changed the rule applied; the constitutional text was not newly amended. Adding former rivals' shares does not establish individual voter transfer. The annulled 2019 figures are not a corrected count.

Two official MEC publications report slightly different 2020 totals, with the same shares at one decimal; the discrepancy remains unexplained. The game preserves the audited rounded presentation and source limitations. Do not explain the difference away as simple rounding.

Serbia, October 2023 to 6 February 2024

The SNS-led list won its own majority, 129 of 250 seats. This was a parliamentary contest; President Vucic campaigned but was not a parliamentary candidate. Genuine alternatives can coexist with unequal conditions. One investigation cannot estimate nationwide vote effects.

What this version can establish

A playable, research-informed design still needs an observed classroom trial.

What the review covers

Three AI first-use review rounds and a later focused homework review are documented separately. The latest adds nine fresh roles across preparation levels, including a high-school student, nonstudent and Instagram creator lens. Three used the interface to varying extents; six cold-read student materials. Setup exclusions and informed retests are separate. None is human evidence of timing or learning gains.

What to collect in the first class

Record when learners reach the exhibit, finish the hearing, begin comparison and file their account. Note misunderstood words and repeated source errors. Compare the initial hunch with the final explanation, and review first attempts as well as retries on source checks. Do not infer an effect merely because a later response is stronger after more evidence and scaffolding.

A useful follow-up

Use a new short case a week later if retention matters. Ask for one observation, an action/options connection and a source limit. If estimating effectiveness, use an appropriate comparison design; ordinary pilot notes establish usability and observed performance.

Research informing the design

The translations below are design inferences. None of these studies tested this political-evidence game.

Schwartz, D. L., and Bransford, J. D. (1998). A Time for Telling. Cognition and Instruction, 16(4), 475-522. doi:10.1207/s1532690xci1604_4. Three classroom studies combined contrasting psychology cases with later explanation. Design inference: use comparison to prepare an explicit closing discussion, rather than assume unguided exploration is enough. Author-hosted full text.

Kuhn, D., and Crowell, A. (2011). Dialogic Argumentation as a Vehicle for Developing Young Adolescents' Thinking. Psychological Science, 22(4), 545-552. doi:10.1177/0956797611402512. The multiyear dialogic intervention is not equivalent to a scripted skeptic in one lesson. Design inference: make objections specific and inspect the eventual individual account. Primary publisher abstract consulted.

Butler, A. C. (2010). Repeated Testing Produces Superior Transfer of Learning Relative to Repeated Studying. Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition, 36(5), 1118-1133. doi:10.1037/a0019902. Four experiments examined retention and inferential transfer one week later. Design inference: include a fresh application task, not only identical retries. An immediate check does not establish durable transfer. Primary article abstract.

Wineburg, S., Breakstone, J., McGrew, S., Smith, M. D., and Ortega, T. (2022). Lateral Reading on the Open Internet: A District-Wide Field Study in High School Government Classes. Journal of Educational Psychology, 114(5), 893-909. doi:10.1037/edu0000740. A cluster-randomized study taught open-web evaluation. This curated file practices only selected source judgments; it does not train or establish full lateral-reading competence. Authors' study summary.

Political reading: Levitsky, S., and Way, L. A. (2020). The New Competitive Authoritarianism. Journal of Democracy, 31(1), 51-65. doi:10.1353/jod.2020.0004. Kept separate from the historical case evidence.

Facts are a beginning. Check the link.

Use this invented example to calibrate feedback, without supplying a country answer.

Fictional evidence: L1: a library extends evening opening hours. L2: recorded evening visits rise afterward. L3: the last bus still leaves before the new closing time. The file does not record visitors' work hours or reasons for attending.

Accurate observation, unsupported jump

"Evening visits increased after the hours changed, so the new hours solved access for everyone." The sequence is observed. The universal access claim and the cause of each visit are not established.

A stronger, limited explanation

"Longer hours (L1) gave late workers another opportunity to visit. L2 records more evening visits, but not visitors' reasons. A new event is a competing explanation; L3 limits access for people needing the last bus. I would compare ordinary and event evenings: added-hours visits on ordinary evenings would favor the hours account; an event-night concentration would favor the event account. Both could contribute, so these records do not isolate their effects."

Criterion	What the stronger version does
Evidence	Uses specific observations and their IDs, without turning a count into a motive.
Action and option	Names an institutional action and a group with a changed opportunity.
Limit	States what the attendance record does not measure.
Rival or complication	Names another possible cause and a transport constraint.
Further evidence	Names observations and contrasting expected patterns, while acknowledging that causes may combine.

Participation calibration

100 means substantive engagement with the reasoning moves, even when a conclusion remains debatable. 70 fits a meaningful attempt with a major move missing, such as accurate facts but no action/options link. 0 concerns no substantive attempt, subject to ordinary policy and accommodations. These are participation judgments, not an automatic measure of analytical mastery.

A later application check

A week later, offer a new fictional file: an opposition list gains seats despite unequal news coverage. Ask students to explain one possible action/options connection, identify what the result cannot show, and name evidence that could distinguish two accounts. Review the reasoning; neither immediate practice success nor a later single item establishes a learning effect by itself.

Check feasibility and understanding.

A practical observation sheet. Use learner codes and existing work; completion is distinct from learning.

Intended learning: identify an action or rule and an affected opportunity; distinguish recorded evidence from an inferred link; test a competing account and a bounded comparison. The research target is a short label outside the paragraph word count. Optional frames need every bracketed instruction replaced.

Phase / planned minutes	Actual finish / help needed
Opening and roles / 7	_____
Evidence selection / 9	_____
Target, connection and paragraph / 7	_____
Two challenges and revision / 12	_____
Comparison, save and debrief / 20	_____

Use the learner response

Ask for the target, a supported statement, its uncertain link and a differing expectation under a rival. Use the saved optional reflection; selecting a supplied answer is weaker evidence of independent reasoning.

Human criterion	0 absent / 1 partial / 2 clear
Distinct supporting observations	_____ clause supported: _____
Actor/action/option and named target	_____ inferred link: _____
Source limit relevant to that claim	_____ claim narrowed: _____
Competing accounts share an uncertain link	_____ target: _____
Evidence distinguishes their expectations	_____ pattern: _____
Second-case difference tests or bounds the claim	_____ difference: _____

These codes organize pilot notes; they are not a validated learning scale or an automatic participation grade. Keep substantive participation and analytical quality distinct.

If the timetable slips

Preserve both challenges, comparison and debrief. Save after the board/connection and resume in a second session if needed. Use paired 40-second rehearsals and sample public reports; do not delete reasoning to meet the clock.

Voluntary exploration and classroom assessment

Casual users may save drafts; complete records retain the research work. In class, assign PDF upload or Canvas Text Entry. Print / Save as PDF opens the browser dialog; Copy grading summary supplies text. The .json file is a backup. Explain accommodations. A substantive draft is assessable, but an unfinished format checklist is not a completed analysis.

Later independent check: use unfamiliar material and another evidence type: observation, inference, limit and distinguishing evidence without supplied options. Delayed work can probe retention; causal learning claims need a suitable comparison design.