

# Argument Deconstruction

# What problem does Ripley address in her article?

- US students lag in international education rankings
- America has not found a way to dramatically improve its children's academic performance over the past 50 years, but other countries have—and they are starting to reap the economic benefits

# What is Ripley's thesis or main claim?

- Sports are central to the mission of American high schools
- That central focus needs to be reevaluated
- Placing academics first will improve overall student achievement

## What subclaim does Ripley make? Summarize the evidence she uses to support the claim.

“In many schools, sports are so entrenched that no one—not even the people in charge—realizes their actual cost.”

- **Example:** Budget analysis of Pacific NW high school with emphasis on math in strategic plan revealed disparity in spending (\$328 per math student & \$1,348 per cheerleader)
- **Example:** Premont high school, the district had laid off 8 employees, closed the middle school campus, and shut down the science labs, but they were spending \$150,000 on athletics programs

## What subclaim does Ripley make? Summarize the evidence she uses to support the claim.

“That kind of constant, low-level distraction may be the greatest cost of all.”

- **Examples:** Football season shifts focus away from academics and impacts the entire school community (long practices, pep rallies)
- **Example:** Nathan, Premont’s quarterback, acknowledges that having extra time to focus meant he never got behind in his school work

**How does Ripley address and refute opposing views? Note 2 examples in the space below.**

“In these communities, the dominant argument is usually that sports lure students into school and keep them out of trouble—the same argument American educators have made for more than a century.”

- **Refutation:** 40% of seniors participate in high-school athletics; what about everyone else?
- **Refutation:** this way of thinking is “old-fashioned”; our academic performance is lagging

## How does Ripley address and refute opposing views? Note 2 examples in the space below.

The academic approach is dysfunctional and unhealthy for students

- **Refutation:** the emphasis on sports is also unhealthy and dysfunctional
- **Refutation:** kids are stressed and disappointed by sports (2% get scholarships)