# The Toulmin Model of Argumentation

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In *The Uses of Argument* Stephen Toulminproposes that most good extended written arguments have six parts (claim, warrant, evidence, backing, qualification, and rebuttal.) Toulmin states that three parts - the claim, the support, and the warrant - are essential to just about all arguments. Arguments may also contain one or more of following three elements: backing, rebuttal, and qualifier.

Grounds/Evidence
or Reason

 Claim

 Qualifier

Warrant

Rebuttal/

Reservation

Backing (Support for Warrant)

**The Toulmin Model**

1. *Claim*: the position or claim being argued for; the conclusion of the argument.
2. *Grounds:* reasons or supporting evidence that bolster the claim.
3. *Warrant:* the principle, provision or chain of reasoning that connects the grounds/reason to the claim.
4. *Backing*: support, justification, reasons to back up the warrant.
5. *Rebuttal/Reservation:* exceptions to the claim; description and rebuttal of counter-examples and counter-arguments.
6. *Qualification*: specification of limits to claim, warrant and backing. The degree of conditionality asserted.

 **We can also identify 3 other key parts of an argument**

 **Assumptions** **Counter-examples**  **Implications**

 **Counter-arguments**

**The Value of the Toulmin Model**
The Toulmin model provides a simple, broad, flexible set of categories for approaching the study of argument. While the model is simple, each major category can be unpacked and used to discuss arguments in increasing levels of detail. For example, once we have identified a rebuttal or reservation in an argument, we can then go on to examine the different kinds of rebuttals that authors make, and discuss which ones tend to be used in different contexts. For instance, we can ask whether a rebuttal consists of a “strategic concession,” “refutation,” or “demonstration of irrelevance” (to name three of the most common forms of rebuttal). We can then examine different forms of strategic concession. Furthermore, once we have used the Toulmin model to establish a common vocabulary for identifying parts of an argument, we can then introduce a set of criteria for evaluating the different parts of an argument. For example, warrants often consist of chains of reasoning that involve generalization, analogy, appeal to a sign, causality, authority, and principle. Once one has identified a chain of reasoning – let’s say a generalization – one can then consider more fine-grained evaluative criteria such as the scope of the generalization, the nature, uniformity, and definition of the population/thing being generalized about; the sufficiency, typicality, accuracy and relevance of the evidence on which the generalization is based, etc.

The Toulmin model has limitations. For example, it is sometimes of limited use in discussing specialized forms of argument such as those that occur in certain types of disciplinary writing
(we will discuss the Swales model and the milestone model as tools for analyzing academic arguments). The Toulmin model is not much use as a template for generating arguments. You shouldn’t try to rigidly fit every argument into the model’s format – some won’t work. However, it can be useful as a flexible tool for naming and analyzing arguments, and for applying this analysis in a self-reflective way to one’s own argumentation.

## Warrants

Warrants are chains of reasoning that connect the claim and evidence/reason. A warrant is the principle, provision, or chain of reasoning that connects the grounds/reason to the claim. Warrants operate at a higher level of generality than a claim or reason, and they are often implicit rather than explicit.

*Example*: “Needle exchange programs should be abolished **[claim]** because they only cause more people to use drugs.” **[reason]**

The unstated warrant is: “when you make risky behavior safer you encourage more people to engage in it.”

**General Forms of Reasoning (can also be assumption)**
There are 6 common chains of reasoning via which the relationship between evidence and claim is often established. They have the acronym “GASCAP.” Sometimes they are explicit, sometimes they are assumptions.

• Generalization G

• Analogy A

• Sign S

• Causality C

• Authority A

• Principle P

These argumentative forms are used at various different levels of generality within an argument, and rarely come in neat packages - typically they are interconnected and work in combination.

Components of the Toulmin Model in More Detail

**Claim**: The claim is the main point of an argument. The claim is sometimes called the thesis, conclusion, or main point. The claim can be explicit or implicit.

*Factual Claim*: based more on evidence and amenable to verification and falsification. For example, the question of whether Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, or whether there were links between Al Queda and Hussein.

*Judgment/Evaluation*: claim based more on norms, values and morals. Is an act good/bad?
Is it morally responsible to execute murderers?

*Recommendation/Policy*: what should be done? Claims that advocate a specific course of action or change in policy. Example: California law should/should not be changed to allow illegal immigrants to obtain drivers’ licenses.

*Definition*: sometimes claims center on a definitional issue. Example: does human life begin at conception? Are Taliban and Al Queda detainees being held at Guantanimo best defined as “enemy combatants,” “prisoners of war”, or “criminals”?

*Evaluation*: At the most general level, the claim is reasonable – buttressed with sufficient evidence, grounds, warrants, etc. Claim follows from (is closely tied to) evidence, grounds and warrants.

The general type of claim – factual, evaluation, definition, recommendation/public policy – influences the nature and amount of support required. Fulkerson argues that different kinds of claim impose different standards and demands when it comes to evidence, and for establishing a *prima facie* case. Substantiation tends more often to involve questions of definition & fact. In practice, these different types of claim are rarely easy to disentangle.

E.g.: affirmative action. Questions of definition and fact: What is affirmative action; what does it seek to address; what kind of problem is racism, and to what extent does affirmative action help lessen its effects.

Questions of evaluation: under what condition is it justified?

Questions of recommendation: what should be done? Should affirmative action be abolished, reformed, extended, etc.

**Evidence/Support for Claim:**The support consists of the evidence, reasons, examples, experience, data, quotations, reports, testimony, statistics etc. that underwrites the claim.

*Evaluation:* Evidence is strong – contains *sufficient* amounts of evidence from statistical, textual, an authority, or from experiential realms to support claim. In each case, there are criteria that determine whether the evidence is strong. E.g. authority is reliable and relevant; the experience is reasonably typical and relevant. The statistics are reliable, applicable, relevant, well researched, involve controls, etc. In general, the evidence is detailed enough, up to date, and verifiable (this includes using proper citation). The evidence is strong in terms of its relevance, sufficiency, scope, consistency, quality and 'fit' with the claim. In the Toulmin model, evidence comes into play in 2 places: as data/evidence that supports a claim with the aid of a warrant; or which functions as 'backing', and directly supports the sufficiency of the warrant.

We can also examine the source of the evidence – how reliable is it? Can it be verified? Is the source fair? What kinds of interests for the source represent?

# GASCAP - Common Forms of Reasoning

## 1. ARGUMENT BASED ON GENERALIZATION

This is a very common form of reasoning. It assumes that what is true of a well chosen sample is likely to hold for a larger group or population, or that certain things consistent with the sample can be inferred of the group/population.

*Evaluation*: To evaluate a generalization we need to determine the *scope* of the generalization (some, many, the majority, most, all, etc.). The scope of the argument will determine the degree to which a sufficient amount of typical, accurate, relevant support is required (although the extent to which a generalization is accepted by your audience is also crucial here). We also need to consider the nature, uniformity and stability of the group, category or population being generalized about. For example, when *Consumer Guide* tests a single car, we expect to be able to generalize from the results with a high degree of certainty since cars are standardized objects. If the generalization provided is based on examples, we need to consider whether there are significant counterexamples.

Determining which group or population to base one’s generalization on is often very complex, and as with categories and definitions, this is often highly contested. For example, a key question in the O.J. Simpson trial concerned which population ought to be used when generalizing about the likelihood of a wife-beater going on to murder his spouse. At the beginning of the trial the defense argued that O.J. Simpson’s prior arrest for assaulting his wife should not mislead jurors into thinking that this made O.J. Simpson significantly more likely to have murdered his wife. They said that if you examined the population of men who had been arrested for beating their wives, only a very small percentage of this group went on to kill their spouse. Thus one could not generalize with any confidence about the likely guilt of O.J. Simpson based on this. However, some legal scholars have pointed out that if you begin with the population of men who have a history of beating their spouses, who have been arrested for this, and whose wife turns up dead, then about 50% of the time the husband turns out to be the killer. Selecting a different population to generalize from may change the way an argument turns.

## 2. ARGUMENT BASED ON ANALOGY

Extrapolating from one situation or event based on the nature and outcome of a similar situation or event. An argument based on parallels between two cases or situations. Arguing from a specific case or example to another example, reasoning that because the two examples are alike in many ways they are also alike in one further specific way. Has links to 'case-based' and precedent-based reasoning used in legal discourse.

*Evaluation*: what is important here is the extent to which relevant similarities can be established between 2 contexts. Are there sufficient, typical, accurate, relevant similarities? If the analogy is based on similarities between two examples, we need to consider whether counterexamples exist. How strong is the claim? (The stronger the claim, the tighter the analogy must be). Are there counteranalogies that refute the original argument from analogy? Are there differences between the two situations that undermine the force of the similarity cited? How willing is the audience likely to be in accepting that the two different examples/cases/situations you present are really similar?

Analogies can also be used critically. If you can draw an analogy between your opponent’s argument and some other, generally unaccepted argument, this may undermine your opponent’s case. For example, many opponents of same-sex marriage argue that an expansion of the definition of marriage risks opening the door to polygamy and bestiality, and will undermine the institution of marriage. Proponents of same-sex marriage have argued that their opponents’ arguments echo, and are closely analogous to ones that were made by opponents of inter-racial marriage. Since opposing inter-racial marriage seems absurd nowadays, constructing an analogy between opponents of same-sex marriage and opponents of inter-racial marriage has the effect of undermining the former argument.

Example of a powerful counter-analogy

The Vatican is increasingly out of touch and exerts a reactionary — even, in this world of AIDS, deadly — influence on health policy in the developing world. Here in El Salvador, church leaders in 1998 helped ban abortions even when necessary to save the life of a woman, and, much worse, helped pass a law, which took effect last month, requiring condoms to carry warnings that they do not protect against AIDS. In El Salvador, where only 4 percent of women use contraceptives the first time they have sex, this law will mean more kids dying of AIDS. **The reality is that condoms no more cause sex than umbrellas cause rain.** (Nicholas Kristof , Don't Tell the Pope, *New York Times*.)

*Example 1*: the debate over president Clinton’s impeachment turned to a some degree on which analogy one used when evaluating Clinton’s perjury – did one compare it to the perjury carried out by other elected officials, did one compare it to perjury carried out by a judge or some other non-elected official, and did one compare it to the kind of perjury carried out in a purely personal context, or one involving affairs of state? Each case of perjury normally carries quite a different legal outcome.

*Example 2*: “George Bush once argued that the Vice-President’s role is to support the President’s policies, whether or not he or she agrees with them, because ‘You don’t tackle your own quarterback.’” (from *A Rulebook for Arguments* by Anthony Weston,1992.)

*Example 3*: When I lived in Pittsburgh some elected officials wanted to bring river-boat gambling to Pittsburgh (state law makes it illegal to have a casino on state land, but the waterways are not officially part of the state). Their reasoning went as follows: Las Vegas is the fastest growing city in the U.S. Its growth is fueled by gambling, and gambling has provided the city a huge revenue base. By analogy, if Pittsburgh has casinos, this will help it grow and provide it with more money. However, critics pointed out that the analogy was a poor one. Pittsburgh is different from Las Vegas in many important ways. Most importantly, people travel *to* Las Vegas to spend money. It seems unlikely many people will come to Pittsburgh to gamble. Instead, Pittsburghers will spend money at the casinos, which means there will be less money in circulation for other local businesses (differences in climate, geography, infrastructure and “attractions” also make the analogy a poor one.)

*Example 4:* Debates about gun control often employ different analogies with foreign countries. Proponents of gun control point out that Japan has very restrictive gun laws, and extremely low rates of violent crime. By analogy, if the U.S. had stricter gun laws, it too might have lower rates of violent crime. Opponents of gun control argue that almost all men in Switzerland have a gun (due to compulsory military training.) Yet Switzerland has extremely low rates of violent crime. By analogy, if Americans were given guns and the proper training, they too might have lower rates of violent crime. Both analogies are questionable – it seems likely that there are other factors besides gun ownership that cause low rates of crime in Japan. In Switzerland, men own and are trained to use *rifles* (not handguns), and the state typically keeps control of the ammunition for these rifles.

*Example 5*: The debate over gay marriage often centers on different analogies. Supporters of gay marriage use the analogy of equal rights for African Americans – they say African Americans were denied equal treatment under the law, and not so long ago anti-miscegenation laws banned interracial marriage. Just as these things were wrong and at odds with the constitution, so too is the denial of the right of gays to marry. Opponents of gay marriage often use the analogy of polygamy. They argue that just as polygamy, an attempt to expand “traditional” understandings of marriage, has been defined as illegal, so too should gay marriage. In San Francisco, marriage licenses have been given to gay and lesbian couples. Analogies have been drawn to the civil disobedience of Rosa Parks, as well as to law breaking, and to polygamy.

## 3. ARGUMENT VIA SIGN/CLUE

The notion that certain types of evidence are symptomatic of some wider principle or outcome. For example, smoke is often considered a sign for fire. Some people think high SAT scores are a sign a person is smart and will do well in college.

*Evaluation*: how strong is the relationship between the overt sign and the inferred claim? Have sufficient, typical, accurate, relevant instances of this relationship been observed? Have other potential influences been ruled out?

## 4. CAUSAL ARGUMENT

Arguing that a given occurrence or event is the result of, or is effected by, factor X. Causal reasoning is the most complex of the different forms of warrant. The big dangers with it are:

A) Mixing up correlation with causation

B) falling into the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* trap. Closely related to confusing correlation and causation, this involves inferring 'after the fact, therefore because of the fact').
C) Identifying one element as the main cause, when in fact there are multiple causes

We can evaluate it via the STAR criteria. That is, for an argument about cause to be reliable, we need a sufficient number of typical, accurate and relevant instances. Also important are questions concerning degree of correlation; the question of controls; elimination of other factors; the extent to which causes are partial, necessary or sufficient, etc.

*Example 1:* Hungarian doctor Ignaz Semmelweis noticed a correlation between high numbers of women dying in childbirth, and doctors who operated on them after dissecting corpses (hospitals where midwives performed deliveries, by contrast, had much lower rates of death). He identified a crucial correlation, and discovered that handwashing radically reduced deaths in childbirth. But the cause he suggested was incorrect – “cadaveric contamination.” Semmelweis's ideas were accepted only years after his death, when Louis Pasteur advanced the germ theory of disease. *Example 2*: It has been observed that on the East coast, levels of crime go up as the sale of ice cream increase, and crime goes down as ice cream sales decrease. However, it would be silly to suggest that ice cream sales *cause* crime. That would be to confuse correlation with causation. Crime and ice cream sales are both influenced by the weather (who wants to shimmy up a drain pipe, mug someone, or buy ice cream when it is 30 below?)

*Example 3*: Some people have suggested that the higher rate of cancer in industrialized countries (when compared to developing countries) is caused by our lifestyle – the artificial lights, food, chemicals in our food, exposure to computers, etc. Stephen Jay Gould has argued this is too simple, noting that the main reason people in developing countries have lower rates of cancer is that they tend to have lower life expectancies, and cancer tends to occur with more frequency the older one lives (“You have to die of something!” Gould writes.) Gould does not claim that lifestyle differences have no impact, but that the main cause of the difference in cancer rates relates to life expectancy.

## 5. ARGUMENT FROM AUTHORITY

Does person X or text X constitute an authoritative source on the issue in question? What political, ideological or economic interests does the authority have? Is this the sort of issue in which a significant number of authorities are likely to agree on? What kinds of audiences will be persuaded by a particular authority? What credentials or proof of expertise doe the authority have? What kind of peer recognition has the authority received?

Using STAR: can we find a sufficient number of authoritative sources, accurately cited with relevant knowledge, who are in broad agreement, and whose arguments are persuasive?

To what degree does an authority exhibit *logos, pathos* and *ethos* (good sense, good character and good will)?

## 6. ARGUMENT FROM PRINCIPLE

Locating a principle that is widely regarded as valid and showing that a situation exists in which this principle applies.

*Evaluation*: Is the principle widely accepted? Does it accurately apply to the situation in question? Are there commonly agreed on exceptions? For example, refraining from killing others is generally considered an important principle. However, there are commonly agreed upon exceptions – self-defense, military combat, etc. Are there 'rival' principles that lead to a different claim? In the war with Iraq, proponents argued for the principle of unilateral preemption, whereas others argued for the competing principle of multilateral containment/deterrence. Are the practical consequences of following the principle sufficiently desirable in the context?

# Assumptions, Implications and Counterexamples[[1]](#footnote-1)

The strength of an argument rests on a lot of things. Some of these are: the reasons given to support a claim; the chains of reasoning involved (consistency, coherence, logical rigor, non-contradiction); the strength and type of evidence used (relevance, scope of applicability); the credibility of the authorities invoked; the degree of vulnerability to counter-arguments, etc. Some other important considerations are the assumptions that underlie an argument, the implications that follow from it, and its susceptibility to counterexamples.

**Assumptions:**
Assumptions are fundamental, taken for granted ways of viewing the world. They are presuppositions, or (often) unstated premises that underlie an argument. Assumptions pervade all arguments in all disciplines, and exist at a number of different levels of generality. Assumptions can be identified in graphic representations (consider the case of maps) and in architectures (consider how the layout of a classroom reflects assumptions about pedagogy and the role of the teacher in classroom instruction.)

Formal logic deals with symbolic assertions that are certain and unchanging, such as 'P's are Q's'. It starts from principles or axioms that are absolute. By contrast, real world arguments deal with assertions that are debatable and probabilistic. They start not from axioms that are certain, but instead from assumptions, values, beliefs etc. granted by an audience. Looking closely at the assumptions that underlie an argument can help us understand it better, and to test its strength.

It is useful to analyze assumptions in order to:

1. Understand what holds the foundations of an argument together.
2. Better understand the strengths and weaknesses of an argument
3. To find possible sources of critique - one way of interrogating an argument is to identify counterexamples that do not fit with a set of assumptions.
4. Make you aware of your own assumptions when building an argument, so that you can argue with better self understanding and with better strategies for testing validity.

**Identifying Assumptions:**
It is often very hard to identify assumptions. They are in the air we breathe, or rather the language we use. Often we may feel 'ill at-ease' by the position advanced in a given argument, without really knowing why, or without really being able to put our fingers on our objections. This may be because the argument assumes the audience takes for granted values or beliefs that we are not comfortable with.

Some debates may be rooted in conflicting assumptions. An argument will go around and around without really making headway because different first principles are assumed. One cannot even reach principled disagreement in such cases. Debates about gun control, abortion, free speech etc. often fall into this category. Very often major assumptions are unconscious - they are not are not part of a self-consciously examined set of reasons. They are thus hard to identify and argue about.

To identify assumptions, the following strategies are often useful:

1. Try to find significant absences or gaps in an argument. Try to think who or what may be left out in a given position, and then try to identify why. This will often lead to a major assumption. It will help you identify what must be assumed in order for this absence or omission to exist.

*Example*: In the 1960s some American history textbooks came under attack for the historical experiences they left out. One controversial history textbook stated that historians could not be certain about what happened at the Battle of the Little Big Horn because “no-one survived.” Critics argued that this omission of the perspective of Native Americans, and of the oral histories they produced, pointed to a number of problematic assumptions about how Native Americans were represented in American history, and about how history should be written.

2. Invert an argument - try thinking about a position from the antithetical point of view, and imagine what is left out, what is emphasized, and why.

*Example*: In the article “Stop Pornographic Rock” the author states that certain types of rock music cause children to engage in “antisocial” behavior. We could invert this: children’s “antisocial” behavior may predispose them to listen to certain types of rock music. Since the opposite of the author’s claim seems plausible, this inversion suggests that the author assumes a very simplistic and “one-way” model of causality.

3. Try to 'denaturalize' what is taken for granted in an argument. Often, assumptions are preconceptions that have become fossilized or 'naturalized'. Sometimes these will be parts of an argument that the arguer, if questioned, would respond by saying 'well of course its only natural that x or y is the case/behaves this way'. Thus one can look for positions that use the language of 'nature', 'naturalness' or related terminology. De-naturalizing what is taken for granted may proceed by imagining oneself an 'alien', an outsider, or occupying a different position than usual. It may also proceed by taking an orientation that is somewhat 'social constructionist' in character.

*Example*: Media reports of job losses often talk about how the economy has “shed” a certain number of workers. This tends to assume unemployment is part of nature or of natural cycles.

4. Look carefully at the major categories, definitions, and concepts that an argument uses. This will often point to the existence of important assumptions. Consider, for example, the classifications used to assign journalists to news “beats,” or Stroud’s use of the categories “Pornographic Rock” and “healthy music.”

*Example*: Consider what is taken for granted in the following systems of categorization:

1. Far East, Middle East, Near East
2. Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms.
3. Negro, Black, African American
4. The Maori Wars, The New Zealand Wars, The Land Wars

5. Search for significant counterexamples/objections. If you can find an important counterexample to a given position, this will often help you understand what must have been assumed in order for the counterexample/objection to have gone unnoticed.

Example: writers who propose a “simplistic,” unidirectional model of media influence sometimes ignore conspicuous counterexamples. The case of Japan is one such counterexample. Japanese media is far more violent than U.S. media, yet Japanese rates of violence and violent crime tend to be far lower than U.S. ones. This may suggest that simple models of media influence do not consider the full range of factors that shape social problems.

   **Aristotle's Three Foundational Assumptions**
Aristotle, the ‘father’ of formal logic, held that logic, reason and argumentation must be underpinned by 3 primordial assumptions:

* The principle of Identity: A = A
* The principle of Non-Contradiction, A /= not A. A /=B and not B
* Law of excluded middle. A= A or not A.

For Aristotle, these assumptions cannot be contradicted - they are the basis of logic and argumentation. To engage in reasoned discourse, you have to grant these 3 assumptions. He admits that their validity cannot be proven directly. However, he believes it can be proved indirectly. You imagine an evil genius, a skeptic who doubts the validity of these 3 axioms. In expressing doubt the skeptic confirms the principles, since there is tacit acceptance of the law of non-contradiction, and perhaps also identity.

But note the following: 1. It may be that a different kind of coherence is in operation in the skeptic’s argument, and there is thus a circularity to Aristotle's position. Aristotle assumes in advance that disagreement must be couched in terms of the principles he wants to uphold. This isn't necessarily so. 2. Aristotle assumes that categories operate in a “closed,” detemporalized context. 3. Aristotle assumes an “essentialist” concept of identity. The identity of A is fixed, timeless, universal, and immanent. However, we can imagine identities that are relational, contextual, processual. Consider the difficulty of assigning 'race' the kind of identity that fits Aristotle's schema, or assuming that it can be assigned the place of 'A.'

This suggests that the principles Aristotle advances, while vitally important (especially in closed, formal systems) are not always as absolute or helpful as might be expected. The world of argument tends to involve categories whose identity is not easy to fix - in fact a lot of arguments turn precisely on what/whose categories will prevail in the debate. The world of argument does not always involve stable, clearly definable entities and clear logical relations. Instead, probability and contested categories tend to hold sway. To read more about “foundational” and “social constructivist” assumptions, see the course material on *Essentialism and Social Construction*.

 **Implications**

Implications consist of what follows or can be inferred from an argument or set of assumptions. Implications involve what can be extrapolated from an argument, and/or the potential consequences that follow from a given position.

Arguments are often attacked for what can be shown to follow from them -i.e. their implications. A common strategy is to a) describe what ought to follow from an argument, then point out counterexamples to this, b) show that negative or unintended consequences follow from a position or assumption. One must be careful when drawing implications that one does not extrapolate too far from the author’s argument, engage in “creative interpretation” of implications, or fall into the 'slippery slope' fallacy. That is, of constructing a set of implications that go beyond what the author plausibly had in mind.

*Example 1*: *Gun Control.*
John R. Lott Jr. is one of the best known academic proponents of gun rights. He is a staunch opponent of gun control. Lott is resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, has written *More Guns, Less Crime* (1998), *The Bias Against Guns* (2003), and a number of research articles. Lott argues that permitting people to carry concealed weapons leads to a significant reduction in many different kinds of crime. Lott argues that concealed weapons significantly deter criminals and reduce violent crime. He states that "98 percent of the time that people use guns defensively, they merely have to brandish a weapon to break off an attack" (*More Guns, Less Crime*, p. 3)

There are several implications we can draw from Lott’s arguments. First, states that permit people to carry concealed weapons ought to have lower rates of violent crime than states that do not. Second, after a state passes legislation permitting people to carry concealed weapons, rates of violent crime should decrease (assuming we can factor out other contributory causes of violent crime.)

If we can find counterexamples to the implications listed above, we will have succeeded in problematizing Lott’s arguments. As it happens, evidence exists that could be used to fashion counterexamples and counterarguments to both of these implications. Some states that do not permit concealed weapons have lower rates of crime than states that do. Some states that have passed legislation permitting people to carry concealed weapons have not seen rates of violent crime lessen. [[2]](#footnote-2)

*Example 2: The Doctrine of Preemption*
One criticism of the doctrine of “preemption” with regards to Iraq focuses on the potential implications of this position: if it is alright for the U.S. to attack a country before it has itself been attacked, then might not other countries adopt a similar policy? Conversely, opponents of war are sometimes criticized for what can be inferred from their arguments regarding intervention. Some authors argue that it is never justified to attack a sovereign country except in self-defense. However, opponents charge that this implies that some past interventions many people now consider vital (Bosnia and Kosovo) and some interventions many think should have been made but weren’t (for example, Rwanda and Burundi) would be ruled out of court.

*Example 3: BST/BGH*

A controversy has arisen over the injection of artificial hormones into cows in order to increase milk production (BST = bovine somatotrophin; BGH = bovine growth hormone). The process was pioneered by Monsanto, and was approved by the FDA in 1993. Milk from BST cows is not required to be labeled. However, there are some questions about the safety of this milk, and about the tests performed by Monsanto when determining its safety. Europe and Canada have put a moratorium on the use of the artificial hormone. Some small companies who produce milk in the U.S. have begun advertising that their milk is “BST-free.” Monsanto is suing these companies, claiming that by stating that their milk is “BST-free,” these companies are *implying* that milk with BST is unsafe.

**Implications:** Drawing implications can be related to the idea of transitivity.

Can give the example of sports teams. Let’s say the SDSU badminton team plays team A and narrowly wins. You discover that team A recently played team X, and team X crushed team A by a huge margin. This implies that team X is probably a very good team, and may be better than SDSU. **You are projecting into the future – extrapolating.**

# Notes on Fallacies & the Evaluation of Argument

**Chris Werry**

Talking about ‘fallacies’ as a laundry list of forms to avoid, or as an algorithm for finding weaknesses in authors’ arguments, is not terribly useful. Instead, you can think of fallacies as a way of reflecting on the nature of chains of reasoning, for talking about the strengths and weaknesses of argumentative claims and the evidence, support, backing, assumptions etc. associated with them. Fallacies should get you thinking about the criteria we use to evaluate arguments; to what extent an argument works according to a particular set of relevant criteria, and what kinds of arguments work in particular contexts.

Most fallacies are not strange or idiosyncratic forms of argument. Often they draw on perfectly valid and common forms of reasoning, but they do so in a way that is lacking in some respect. For example, sophisticated arguments often contain rebuttals and counterarguments that consider opposing views. If this is done well, it adds strength to an argument. However, if an author does not accurately represent an opponent’s argument, or presents a weak, caricatured version of that argument, we can say s/he has committed the fallacy of creating “a straw man.” Obviously, fallacies are matters of degree and involve interpretation and argument – you have to make the case that evidence exists for the fallacy. Note that when considering whether an argument contains a fallacy, you must consider questions of audience, purpose and context. Reasoning that is weak or “fallacious” in one context may be persuasive and credible in another.

**Fallacies Related to GASCAP Chains of Reasoning**
Take a look at the criteria by which we evaluate the GASCAP strategies. When the criteria are not adhered to, this may be evidence of a fallacy. For example, a “hasty generalization” may be identifiable when the scope of a generalization is at odds with the evidence presented, or when the sufficiency, typicality, accuracy and relevance of the evidence do not match the strength of the generalization.

1. **Hasty Generalization** This involves a generalization from data that is inadequate in some important way. Usually, this means that the generalization fails the STAR test – the data on which the generalization is based is not *sufficient, typical, accurate or relevant*. One of the most common ways in which data fails to be sufficient is when the **sample size is too small**. For example, if I say smoking can’t be bad for people since both my parents smoke and have lived to a ripe old age, the sample size I have based my generalization on is absurdly small – 2 people. A “hasty generalization” may be most obvious when the *scope* of a generalization is at odds with the amount of evidence presented – the stronger the generalization, the more evidence needed. **Anecdotal evidence** may also indicate a hasty generalization – this sometimes indicates that the arguer is using a small and unrepresentative (atypical) sample.

Example: “Quebec environment minister Lise Bacon pledged the PCBs would be moved out and broken down somehow within 18 months. She also said that PCBs couldn't be all that dangerous because her father had washed his hands in PCBs but lived to an old age.” (Merritt Clifton, "PCB Homecoming", *Greenpeace*, November/December, 1989, p. 21.
2. **False Analogy** Analogies involve parallels or comparisons between two cases, events or situations. They consist of comparing a specific case or example to another case or example, and reasoning that because the two examples are alike in many ways they are also alike in one further specific way.

What is important here is the extent to which relevant similarities can be established between the two contexts, cases, events or situations. Are there sufficient, typical, accurate, relevant similarities? If not, the arguer may be employing a *false analogy.* If the analogy is based on similarities between two examples, we need to consider whether important counterexamples exist. We also need to consider how strong the claim is (The stronger the claim, the tighter the analogy must be).

Example: High-density development [doesn't] reduce congestion. The superficially appealing idea is that if we all live closer to where we work and shop, shorter car trips and mass transit will replace all those long car rides. But the real world doesn't work that way. Try this thought experiment. What happens at a cocktail party when a new wave of people shows up and the population density of the living room doubles? Is it harder or easier to get to the bar and the cheese tray? Is it harder or easier to carry on conversation and move around the room? As urban population density rises, auto-traffic congestion gets *worse*, not better, and commute times get *longer*, not shorter. (Steven Hayward, "Suburban Legends", *National Review*, March 22, 1999, p. 36. Quoted in The Fallacy Files website, by Gary N. Curtis)
3. **Fallible Sign** The notion that certain types of evidence are symptomatic of some wider principle or outcome. For example, smoke is often considered a sign for fire. Some people think high SAT scores are a sign a person is smart and will do well in college.

*Evaluation*: 1. how strong is the relationship between the overt sign and the inferred claim? 2. Have sufficient, typical, accurate, relevant instances of this relationship been observed? 3. Have other potential influences been ruled out? If the appeal to sign is weak in any of these 3 respects, it may be a “sign” that the arguer has committed the fallacy of fallible sign.
4. ***Post Hoc ergo Propter Hoc***(Latin for “after the fact, therefore because of the fact”)
This involves either a) confusing correlation and causation, or (and this is usually the same thing) inferring 'after the fact, therefore because of the fact').

We can evaluate this via the STAR criteria. For an argument about cause to be reliable, we need a sufficient number of typical, accurate and relevant instances. Also important are questions concerning degree of correlation; the question of controls; elimination of other factors; the extent to which causes are partial, necessary or sufficient. If the causal argument fails these tests, it may commit the post hoc fallacy.

Example 1:  “In an interesting book about television called *The Plug in Drug*, the author, Marie Winn, claims that television is responsible for many contemporary social problems including the breakdown of traditional attitudes such as respect for authority. One of her arguments in support of her thesis involves the observation that the first generation to have been largely reared with television were old enough to go to college in the late Sixties. She then notes that the college students of the Sixties were very boisterous and disrespectful, staging demonstrations and sit-ins right and left. This evidence, she believes, supports her case that television causes disrespect for authority.” (From the Fallacies Handbook).

Example 2: *"We need safe storage laws."* False. States that passed "safe storage" laws have high crime rates, especially higher rates of rape and aggravated assault against women. ("The Media Campaign Against Gun Ownership", *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, Vol. 33, No. 11, June 2000. Quoted in The Fallacy Files website, by Gary N. Curtis)
5. **False Authority** Appeals to authority are common ways of supporting an argument. However, the strength of the appeal depends on the degree to which person X or text X constitutes an authoritative source on the issue in question. We can ask whether the arguer presents us with sufficient, typical, accurate, relevant authorities. We can also ask whether the issue is one that a significant number of authorities are likely to agree on. More broadly, we can ask if we have been presented with a sufficient number of authoritative sources, accurately cited with relevant knowledge, who are in broad agreement, and whose arguments are persuasive? If the answer to such questions is “no,” the arguer’s claim may involve the fallacy of “false authority.”

Example: a politician from a farm state once argued that CO2 is good for plants, thus greenhouse gases will help agriculture and should not be a problem. While this person may be a political authority, he is not an atmospheric scientist, and thus citing him as an authority is weak.
6. **Misapplied Principle** Appeals to principle involve locating a principle that is widely regarded as valid and showing that a situation exists in which this principle applies. To the extent that the following conditions are true, the appeal may be considered strong or weak: is the principle widely accepted? Does it accurately apply to the situation in question? Are there commonly agreed on exceptions? Has the general principle been misapplied? Have rebuttal conditions been ignored? Are the practical consequences of following the principle sufficiently desirable in the context?

For example, refraining from killing others is generally considered an important principle. However, there are commonly agreed upon exceptions – self-defense, military combat, etc. Are there 'rival' principles that lead to a different claim? In the war with Iraq, proponents argued for the principle of unilateral preemption, whereas others argued for the competing principle of multilateral containment/deterrence.

 **Some of the More Common Fallacies**

1. *Straw Man* – when an author does not accurately represent an opponent’s argument, or presents a weak, caricatured version of that argument.

Example: consider the following silly analogy. Imagine that I claim that I am so tough and so good at boxing that I could easily beat Mike Tyson. To prove this, I construct a boxing ring in class. I set up a life-size cardboard picture of Mike Tyson, knock it over, and start jumping up and down shouting “I am the greatest!” You would probably point out that I have not in fact defeated Mike Tyson, but have merely knocked down his effigy. You note that if I had confronted the real Mike Tyson he would have beaten me like an old mule. This is analogous to the straw man fallacy – instead of taking on the full force of an opponent’s argument, the author sets up a weak version of his opponent, knocks it down, and claims victory.

Note: sometimes a writer may create a straw man by exaggerating the force of an opponent’s claim. Since stronger evidence is required to support a more forceful claim, the writer can then attack the opponent by saying that her evidence does not support her claim.
2. *Slippery Slope* – when an author extrapolates from an opponent’s position too “creatively.” Often this involves drawing out implications from an opponent’s position in a way that is only loosely based on the opponent’s stated position, or which proceeds too far from the opponent’s stated position. Claiming that certain things “follow” inevitably from an opponent’s position (in a kind of “chain reaction”) when in fact such an inference is difficult to sustain.

■ Silly example: some proponents of gun rights have proposed that any weakening of gun laws is an attack on the constitution, and if successful will likely to lead to attacks on other constitutional freedoms, which may in turn undermine democracy in America, and ultimately lead to UN control of the U.S. (complete with black helicopters flying over the capital.) This example is obviously an exaggeration (perhaps even an example of a “straw man”.) The point to note is that one must be careful when talking about the implications of an opponent’s argument, of arguing that certain (usually bad) things “follow” inevitably from an opponent’s position.

■ Gay Marriage example: “If we allow gay marriage…what will be the next step? If gays are allowed to marry because they have made a lifestyle choice, what about polygamy? What about group marriages? What about marriage between family members? What about "marriage" being whatever I subjectively decide it is?” (“Caloblog husband,” <http://www.calblog.com/archives/003369.html>) Arguments opposing gay marriage sometimes argue that marriage is the foundation of our society, and any attempt to change the definition of marriage may shake those foundations and undermine the many other institutions of which marriage is a part.

■ When California debated legalizing medical marijuana, some opponents argued that we could not do this as it would lead down a slippery slope – soon doctors would be asked for “medical heroin,” and “medical cocaine,” and addiction would spiral out of control.
3. *Begging the Question/Leading Question* – this fallacy involves assuming something that it is the arguers responsibility to prove. It thus typically involves the assumptions that an arguer makes. This fallacy often takes the form of a question (“Have you stopped beating your wife yet,” “Are you still as conceited as you used to be?”) but can also be found in the definitions and categories used by an arguer (“the liberal/conservative media”, “the death tax,” etc.) Leading questions are attempts to force a respondent to accept a particular way of seeing an issue. Example: “will you protect our children’s future by voting for the governor’s recall?” Anyone who says “no,” regardless of his or her reasons for not wanting to vote for a recall, is made to seem uncaring.

*Example*: "A major problem in dealing with Irving as a cross-examiner lay in the fact that he would frequently build into his often lengthy and elaborate questions assumptions that themselves rested on his falsification of the evidence, and so had to be disputed before the question itself could be dealt with. This tactic, whether conscious or not, did not escape the attention of the judge. 'No, Mr. Irving, that will not do, will it?' he exclaimed on one such occasion: 'You cannot put a question which has as its premise a misstatement about the date when gas chambers began operating.... If you are going to ask that question, and it is a relevant question, you must premise it correctly.'" (Richard J. Evans, *Lying About Hitler: History, Holocaust, and the David Irving Trial*, Basic Books, 2001, p. 202. Quoted in The Fallacy Files website, by Gary N. Curtis.)
4. *False Dilemma/Dichotomy* – this involves oversimplifying an issue by declaring that only two alternatives or ways of viewing the issue exist. Often one of these alternatives is clearly bad, so it is implied that there is only one reasonable position to take. Sometimes people criticize such an argumentative strategy by saying that it is “reductive.” Consider the bumper sticker “America – love it or leave it.” This assumes there are only two choices. You must “love” America (and by extension, whatever policy its leaders carry out) or you should leave. There is no middle ground, no room for a more qualified, nuanced position (bumper stickers tend to simplify issues, perhaps in part because they can consist of only a few words).

Example: “Either restrictions must be placed on freedom of speech or certain subversive elements in society will use it to destroy this country. Since to allow the latter to occur is unconscionable, we must restrict freedom of speech.”
5. *Stacking the deck* – this involves favoring evidence that suits your claim, and ignoring evidence that does not support it. We can use the STAR criteria – sufficiency, typicality, accuracy and relevance. For example, if you were writing an argument supporting legalization of marijuana, and you only cited scientific authorities who support the legalization of marijuana, you would be stacking the deck. You need to also consider authorities who do not support the legalization of marijuana.
6. *Genetic Fallacy*
The **genetic fallacy** is occurs when the premises in an argument for a proposition are evaluated based on the origin of the premises instead of their content. It can sometimes be misguided to either endorse or condemn an idea based on its’ past--rather than on its present--merits or demerits, unless its’ past is relevant to its present value. For instance, the origin of testimony--whether first hand, hearsay, or rumor--carries weight in evaluating it.
7. *Shifting the burden of proof*
When something is at issue, the responsibility, or burden of proof, sometimes falls equally on both sides, but sometimes it falls more heavily on one side than on the other. For example, in a legal context the accused is “presumed innocent until proven guilty,” which means that the burden of proof is on the prosecution not the accused. The accused does not have to prove his/her innocence – burden of proof lies with the prosecution. The prosecution must prove the guild of the accused “beyond a reasonable doubt.”

*Example*: if I think aliens are being held in Area 51, it is up to me to make the case. If I make my case by saying “unless you can show me evidence that aliens are *not* being held in Area 51, this must be true,” this is obviously unfair. For it is often hard to prove a negative. Moreover, the burden of proof is with me – I have claimed aliens are being held in Area 51, therefore it is up to me to make the case, not you to disprove it. Arguments about religion sometimes proceed this way, for example when an atheist is asked to prove God doesn’t exist.
8. *Argument ad Ignoratium* (from the Latin, “argument from ignorance”)
Proposing that a claim is true primarily because it hasn't been proved false, or that something is false primarily because it has not been proved true. Arguing that unless an opponent can prove otherwise, a claim must be true. Note that the problem with this way of arguing is that the arguer stakes his/her claim on the lack of support for a *contrary* or *contradictory* claim, rather than basing it on reasons and evidence. This fallacy sometimes overlaps with the fallacy of shifting the burden of proof.

*Example*: Since you can’t prove that the universe *was not* created by God, it must therefore have been created by God.

*Example*: An often-cited example is this statement by Senator Joseph McCarthy, when asked for evidence to back up his accusation that a certain person was a communist:

I do not have much information on this except the general statement of the agency that there is nothing in the files to disprove his communist connections. (Cited in *A Rulebook for Arguments* by Anthony Weston,1992.)

As McCarthy’s critics noted, the absence of evidence that someone is *not* a communist is a very poor argument that s/he *is* a communist. Using this logic one could accuse almost anyone of anything.

1. *Red Herring*: The name comes from a trick once used by prisoners to escape dogs tracking them. Prisoners would drag a fish along the path away from their escape route and thus throw off the scent. Red Herring involves bringing up irrelevant issues, or drawing attention away from the issue at hand by bringing up irrelevant considerations. *Example*: “The governor’s economic program won’t work. It does nothing to stop illegal streetcar racing in San Diego.”
2. *Ad Hominem* ((from the Latin, “against the man”) – attacking the arguer and her/his character rather than the question at issue. Note that there are contexts where the character of the arguer may be relevant to the issue. We may reasonably disbelieve the argument of a convicted embezzler who argues s/he should be put in charge of the finances of a soccer club. However, if this same person argued that he should play wing on the soccer team, it would be an *ad hominem* attack to counter by saying he should not because he has been convicted of embezzlement.

Note that it may be reasonable to bring into question a speaker’s *ethos*. Aristotle suggests that the ethos of a speaker plays a crucial role in determining whether an argument is persuasive or not. It may also be fair and relevant to question the way an author has constructed his/her *ethos*.

*Abusive* – directed at speaker
*Circumstantial* – directed at some group. Similar to ‘Poisoning the Well’
*Tu quoquo* (‘thou too’)
*“*You say I shouldn't become an alcoholic because it will hurt me and my family, yet you yourself are an alcoholic, so your argument can't be worth listening to.”
3. Non Sequitor (from the Latin, “it does not follow”)
Refers to a conclusion that has no apparent connection to the premises. *Example*: “affirmative action will not work because someone stole my car.” Many examples of this can be found in advertising. Consider advertisements that sell beer or car equipment by showing them next to a beautiful woman. The implied argument is often that you should buy this equipment/beer because the woman is there, or because doing so will make it more likely that a beautiful woman will “like” you.
4. *The Fallacy of Equivocation*This occurs when a word or phrase that has more than one meaning is employed in different meanings throughout the argument.

■"Every society is, of course, repressive to some extent - as Sigmund Freud pointed out, repression is the price we pay for civilization." (John P. Roche- political columnist)
■ In this example, the word repression is used in two completely different contexts. "Repression" in Freud's mind meant restricting sexual and psychological desires. "Repression" in the second context does not mean repression of individual desires, but government restriction of individual liberties, such as that in a totalitarian state.
■ "Those noisy people object to racism because they believe it is discrimination. Yet even *they* agree that it is OK to choose carefully which tomatoes to buy in the supermarket. They discriminate between the over-ripe, the under-ripe, and the just right. They discriminate between the TV shows they don't want to watch and those they do. So, what's all this fuss about racism if they're willing to discriminate, too?”
■ “The World works according to natural laws, and for laws to work there must be a lawgiver.”

“Darwin's theory of evolution is just that, a theory.  Theories are just ideas that are not certain or infallible. We don't want our children to believe that theories are certain or infallible, so we shouldn't teach the theory of evolution in school without mentioning this, and without including alternatives such as intelligent design.”

# SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF DEMAGOGUERY[[3]](#footnote-3)

Demagoguery often “refers to a political strategy for obtaining and gaining political power by appealing to the popular prejudices, emotions, fears and expectations of the public — typically via impassioned rhetoric and propaganda, and often using nationalist or populist themes.” Key rhetorical elements = demonization, pathos, lack of “rhetorical fairness,” “unidimensionality.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

Demagoguery is a kind of discourse that undermines the quality of public argument, particularly by creating a situation in which dissent is dangerous + closing down discussion. It is sometimes a precursor to the ending or truncation of democracy. Demagogic discourse is often employed by authoritarian figures, authoritarian regimes, propagandists, and certain kinds of “populists.” Hitler is perhaps the most famous demagogue. Joseph McCarthy remains probably the most well-known demagogue in American history. Demagoguery can be used for most forms of political ideology. **1. Polarization** – dividing a diverse range of things, people, issues, etc. into 2 poles or camps. Typically, there is an “in-group” (good) and an “out-group” (bad), and there are only ever 2 options, policies, groups, etc. This is sometimes called “black or white thinking.” The in-group is differentiated and granted “interpretive generosity”; not the out-group. Opponents are “demonized” (see below) by being associated with qualities of the out-group.

**2. Oversimplification/Reduction and Simple Solutions**
Partly as a result of #1, demagogues rarely argue that a situation is complex, multi-determined, difficult to grasp. They may argue that implementation of the solution is hard, but the concept of the solution is typically simple.

**3. Scapegoating & Dehumanizing/Demonizing the Out-group**
This is a scare tactic, a unifying tactic, a displacement of guilt/anxiety, and helps construct a sense of righteousness. The out-groups’ characteristics tend to morph.

**4. A Rhetoric of Hate and Disgust**

**5. Loaded questions** - posing a question with an implied position that the opponent does not have, e.g. "When did you stop taking bribes?"

**6. Double Standards, Rejection of reciprocally binding rules, refusal to redeem claims**
E.g. bad behavior by some in the in-group becomes an exception, by the out-group = rule.

**7. Denial of Responsibility for situation** (related to #3)

**8. Ultra-nationalism (not patriotism)** – idea that one’s country/group is best and others are inferior. Nationalism = attachment to a mythic essence of one’s country, and membership is determined by belonging to in-group.

**9. Anti-intellectualism & Authoritarianism**. Claims constructed in ways that can’t be falsified

**10. Motivism** – the idea that people don’t have reasons for what they do, but rather can be explained primarily in terms of some dark motive (evil, lust, hatred, etc.)

**11. Pandering to popular stereotypes, criminalizing dissent, plus fallacious reasoning,** especially straw man, ad hominem, false dilemma, ad populum. **ALSO,** A) tendency toward conspiracy theories, B) metaphors of cleansing, disease and war – because war is such a powerful metaphor and motivator, and because it is assumed that “special” measures are justified in wartime, the more one can get one’s audience to think of things as war the more inclined many will be to follow what the demagogue says. The outgroup is often compared to disease and filth – association with them (or their defense) is **connected to treachery**.

NOTE: Aristotle warns about the dangers of demagoguery in the Politics: “When states are democratically governed according to law, there are no demagogues, and the best citizens are securely in the saddle; but where the laws are not sovereign, there you find demagogues. The people become a monarch... such people, in its role as a monarch, not being controlled by law, aims at sole power and becomes like a master.”

Note also that much of the design of the US political system can be seen as a guard against demagoguery.

“Let ambition counteract ambition” is Madison’s succinct statement of the principle at work in the Constitution. The bane of republican government throughout its history had been demagoguery, the incitement of the many against their own interest or against the few by a single clever speaker. The Federalist, with its auxiliary precautions, offers a remedy against demagogues that uses the few—perhaps other demagogues—to curtail them. They thus act one against the ambition of the other and, as a whole, on behalf of the true interest of the many. This is also a remedy for the inadequacy of elections. <http://www.hoover.org/publications/hoover-digest/article/138946>

# Some Ways of Examining Metaphors

**Metaphors We live (and think) by**

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue that underlying most of our fundamental concepts are several kinds of metaphor:

* *orientational metaphors* primarily relating to spatial organization (*up/down*, *in/out*, *front/back*, *on/off*, *near/far*, *deep/shallow* and *central/peripheral*);
* *ontological metaphors* which associate activities, emotions and ideas with entities and substances (most obviously, metaphors involving *personification*);
* *structural metaphors*: overarching metaphors (building on the other two types) which allow us to structure one concept in terms of another (e.g. *rational argument is war* or *time is a resource*). [from Chandler, “Rhetorical Tropes”]

**Our language is full of “metaphorical mappings” from one semantic domain to another

In other words, we constantly use clusters of words from one “domain” to talk about other domains – in fact we do it so much that these relationships become naturalized, and we no longer think of this as the use of figurative language – it’s just part of language, a transparent window onto our world.

However, examining the way figurative relationships are embedded in our language/thought can tell us much about culture and ideology.**

**Example:** “Thus, head for top or beginning; the brow and shoulders of a hill; the eyes of needles and of potatoes; mouth for any opening; the lip of a cup or pitcher; the teeth of a rake, a saw, a comb; the beard of wheat; the tongue of a shoe; the gorge of a river; a neck of land; an arm of the sea; the hands of a clock; heart for centre (the Latins used *umbilicus*, navel, in this sense); the belly of a sail; foot for end or bottom; the flesh of fruits; a vein of rock or mineral; the blood of grapes for wine; the bowels of the earth. Heaven or the sea smiles, the wind whistles, the waves murmur; a body groans under a great weight.” (Vico 1968, 129)

**How do these metaphors reveal basic cultural assumptions**?

1. Spatial Metaphors
The foot of the bed, the foot of the hill, the back of the house, the face of the mountain, the leg of the chair, the skin of the orange, etc.

2. Metaphors for Arguments

Your claims are indefensible…I attacked the weak points in his argument…She couldn’t counter my criticisms…his criticisms were on target…she won the argument…his position is strong…his argument lacked support

3. Knowledge & Understanding
I see what you are saying (cf. “savoir” in French). She showed great insight. My view of this issue is…what is your outlook on the problem? The concept was clear to her.

4. Life/Career

He saw no way of getting ahead. He felt he was falling behind. Where do you want to be in 5 years? His career path was working out well. She felt her life was finally on the right track. He was approaching his forties. Things were going well (note how the auxiliary verb “go” is often used to indicate the future, as in “I’m going to be a lawyer.”)
[Life is a journey (the person is a traveler, purposes are destinations, means are routes, difficulties are obstacles, counselors are guides, achievements are landmarks, choices are crossroads]

**Metaphors Create “Frames” and Involve “Entailments”**

Examples: “war on drugs”; society as machine/organism; society as Darwinian survival of fittest.
Social problems: some have argued that liberal and conservative positions on social problems tend to involve different assumptions. The more one explains problems such as crime, homelessness, unemployment etc. in terms of individual flaws, the less likely one is to support social service spending, and the more likely one is to support tough laws (three strikes) and the death penalty. The more likely one is to consider such problems in terms of social explanations, the more likely one is to support social service spending, and the more likely one is to be against the death penalty.

**The Significance of Metaphor**

“Are we not coming to see that the whole works of scientific research, even entire schools, are hardly more than the patient repetition, in all its ramifications, of a fertile metaphor? Kenneth Burke, *Permanence & Change”*

“What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms - in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are; metaphors which are worn out and without sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins.” Nietzsche, “On Truth and Falsity in Their Extra-moral Sense”

“Each major philosopher seems to take a small number of metaphors as eternal and self-evident truths and then, with rigorous logic and total systematicity, follows out the entailments of those metaphors to their conclusions wherever they lead. They lead to some pretty strange places. Plato's metaphors entail that philosophers should govern the state. Aristotle's metaphors entail that there are four causes and that there cannot be a vacuum. Descartes' metaphors entail that the mind is completely disembodied and that all thought is conscious. Kant's metaphors lead to the conclusions that there is a universal reason and that it dictates universal moral laws. These and other positions taken by those philosophers are not random opinions. They are consequences of taking commonplace metaphors as truths and systematically working out the consequences.” (Lakoff, Interview, 1999)

**Metaphor as Creative Resource in Scientific Writing**

*Example 1: Lakoff’s Neural Theory of Language*
Lakoff argues for a “neural theory of language,” and discusses the role that metaphors for cognition play in this theory. In a recent interview Lakoff reflects explicitly on the root metaphors he draws on in constructing theories of language, and of the uses and limits of these metaphors. Lakoff (1999) considers metaphors as a crucial creative resource:

Metaphors for the mind, as you say, have evolved over time -- from machines to switchboards to computers. There's no avoiding metaphor in science. In our lab, we use the Neural Circuitry metaphor ubiquitous throughout neuroscience. If you're studying neural computation, that metaphor is necessary. In the day to day research on the details of neural computation, the biological brain moves into the background while the Neural Circuitry introduced by the metaphor is what one works with. But no matter how ubiquitous a metaphor may be, it is important to keep track of what it hides and what it introduces. If you don't, the body does disappear. We're careful about our metaphors, as most scientists should be.

**ANALYZING METAPHORS: SOME RULES OF THUMB**

1. Look for the “root” metaphor in an argument or discourse, the “God term” (Burke) or “transcendental signifier” (Derrida) and the “entailments” the metaphor constructs. This will often tell you much about the conceptual logic governing an argument or discourse. Look for the interests, silences, ideologies and values identifiable in particular uses of metaphor.

*Example*: analyses of the visualism or “ocularcentrism of Western philosophy. See texts such as *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* by Richard Rorty, *Modernity & the Hegemony of Vision*, David Levin (ed), or *Downcast Eyes* by Martin Jay.
*Example*: The conduit metaphor for communication (Reddy)
*Example*: The “phonocentrism” of Western theoretical language (Derrida)
Example: The “desktop” metaphor could perhaps be thought of as the “root” metaphor for much personal computing. It is used to organize information in terms of files, file folders, a trash can, etc.

Burke undermines the foundational primacy of a “God term” by showing that it is a function of a particular terministic screen, that other screens are possible, and that other “ratios” of terms can be constructed. Social constructivists undermine the foundational primacy of a root metaphor by foregrounding its status as metaphor, by relativizing it in some way (culturally, historically, temporally, contextually, etc.)

Derrida undermines the foundational primacy of a root metaphor by showing how the self-sufficiency of this metaphor is illusory, and dependent on its “supplement.”

2. Identify a cluster or network of related metaphors and examine the “entailments” this constructs

*Example*: the conduit metaphor is often associated with a set of interlocking metaphors, such as the mind/language as mirror, the speech circuit metaphor, the knowledge as vision metaphor, etc.
*Example*: Chomsky’s account of language relies on a cluster of metaphors, which include language and the mind as computer; knowledge as vision, and the conduit metaphor.

Chomsky talks of the “rule-governed, algorithmic, digital character of syntax,” and states that “the human mind/brain developed the faculty of language, a computational-representational system based on digital computation with recursive enumeration and many other specific properties. The system appears to be surprisingly elegant, possibly observing conditions of nonredundancy, global least effort conditions, and so on.” Chomsky argues that “at some early stage of human evolution the capacity to deal with systems of discrete infinity by systems of recursive computational rules developed in the mind,” which in turn gave rise to “the language faculty’s computational capacity to generate an infinity of expressions, with compositionally determined structural properties, form, and meaning.”

ENTAILMENTS: The metaphor of language as computational machine promotes the idea that language functions in terms of design and production processes, systems of pre-existing units, interconnected parts and combinatorial operations. This foregrounds principles that are uniform, generative, autonomous and automatic. Sentences are considered primarily as sequences of rule-governed operations carried out on discrete, compositionally structured units. There is little place for reception, prosody, irregularity, variation, and the dialogic, interactive, rhetorical aspects of communication. There is no place for figuration, the non-literal, silence. Language is autonomous and decontextualized, constructed as conduit and code.

3. Examine how a particular metaphor is “inflected,” appropriated and contested by opposing interests. This can help you understand the ways in which cultural and political struggle are mediated in language.

Example: democracy, freedom, free market, etc.
Example: competing appropriations of frontier metaphors and narratives in the genesis of the Internet.

4. Examine shifts in metaphors that occur over time. This can tell you a lot about how an object or event is being constructed, and the forces, actors, and ideologies at play in that construction.

Example: the shift from visual to non-visual or “alternative” visions of knowledge in the move from structuralist to post-structuralist theory.

Example: The shift from visual metaphors to aural and other non-visual metaphors in legal discourse (see Bernard Hibbits, “Making sense of metaphors: visuality, aurality and the reconfiguration of American legal discourse.”)

Example: Shifts in the rhetorical construction of the internet and “netizens” from 1992-2000.

5. Consider how some new object of event is captured in metaphor; how metaphors can function as creative resources in imagining new visions of an object or event, or as a creative resource in constructing new knowledge.

Example: Neural Circuitry metaphor; network as immune system.

# Critical Discourse Analysis, Language & Power – The Quick ‘n Dirty Guide

1. Language naturalizes particular categorizations of the social world, and these categorizations are shaped by power, culture and ideology. (Language and the order of discourse [Foucault]; language as a “terministic screen” [Burke]).
2. Language and the construction of subject positions/identities. (Mr., Miss, Mrs., Ms., etc.)
3. Language as a site & stake in struggle (Bakhtin.) Example: standards constructed as “neutral,” the construction of “high” & “low” discourse/culture, [French/Latin; London English; middle class English] etc.
4. Language and cultural capital (Bourdieu)
5. Language and Silence/the Unsayable

*Useful Texts:* Huckin, Tom, “Critical Discourse Analysis & the Discourse of Condescension”
■ Fairclough, Norman. 1992. Discourse and social change. Cambridge: Polity.
■ Fairclough, Norman. 1995. Critical Discourse Analysis. London: Longman.

■ Fowler, R., B.Hodge, G.Kress, and T. Trew. 1979. Language and control. London: Routledge.

**CDA**: **Some principles**

1. There is not an external relationship between language and society, but an internal and dialectical one – social structures determine discourse and are the product of discourse. Discourse has effects on social structures, as well as being determined by them, and so contributes to social continuity and change. Each involves the other without being reducible to the other.
2. Language is a social practice through which the world is represented – it involves action, and it partakes of structure and agency. Language is socially conditioned; people internalize socially conditioned language; thus the forces that shape society have a foothold in the psyche.
3. Discourse/language use as a form of social practice in itself not only represents

and signifies other social practices but it also constitutes other social practices

such as the exercise of power, domination, prejudice, resistance and so forth.
4. Orders of discourse mediate social order and power, and shape actual discourse.
5. Linguistic features and structures are not arbitrary. They are purposeful whether or not the choices are conscious or unconscious.

6. Power relations are produced, exercised, and reproduced in part through discourse.

**CDA provides you with the resources to describe and analyze at the micro-level many issues that rhetoricians talk about in general terms.**

Example: In *The Feminist Critique of Language*, Cameron examines the patriarchal ideology inscribed in the language of two newspaper reports of an attack on a married couple.**[[5]](#footnote-5)** The newspaper reports begin with the following sentences:

A man who suffered head injuries when attacked by two men who broke into his home in Beckenham, Kent early yesterday was pinned down on the bed by intruders who took it in turns to rape his wife. *Daily Telegraph.*

A terrified 19-stone husband was forced to lie next to his wife as two men raped her yesterday. *The Sun.*

*How might we analyze this?*

**Some things CDA analysts look at:**

1. **Agency – who is the primary actor, what are they doing, and to whom?**
How is **agency** constructed through **tense**, **mood**, **syntax**, **aspect** and **foregrounding**, use of **nominalization**, **modality**, etc.
2. **Story/Narrative**
How are objects and events **emplotted**? Who/what is the main character, event, objects? What **point of view** is provided, what is **foregrounded**/**backgrounded**? What larger cultural narratives are drawn on?
3. **Subject positions**
How are pronouns, categories, forms of address, grammar, etc. used to establish subject positions, participant positions and roles, patterns of identification, power relations, etc.
4. **Categories and definitions**
5. **Coherence**
Patterns of coherence construct what is “presupposed,” and reveal assumptions and values.
6. **Lexis**
How word choice constructs ethos, authority, patterns of identification, etc.
7. **Point of view/Perspective**
8. **Evidentiality**
How the source and authority of information is indicated through tense, grammar, modality, indexicality, lexis, phrasealogical regularities
9. **Naturalization of social/political order**

*Example: Analyzing Newspaper headlines:*(1) MAORI ACTIVISTS TAKE OVER LODGE
(2)LAND GRIEVANCE SPARKS PROTEST

**Example: framing news events**.

1. "An infant left sleeping in his crib was bitten repeatedly by rats while his 16-year-old mother went to cash her welfare check."
2. "An eight-month-old South End boy was treated yesterday after being bitten by rats while sleeping in his crib. Tenants said that repeated requests for extermination had been ignored by the landlord.
3. "Rats bit eight-month old Michael Burns five times yesterday as he napped in his crib. Burns is the latest victim of a rat epidemic plaguing inner-city neighborhoods. A Public Health Department spokesperson explained that federal and state cutbacks forced short-staffing at rat control and housing inspection programs." (from Charlotte Ryan, *Prime Time Activism*)

**Extracts President Bush speech October 2001**

■ On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country…on September 11, this great land came under attack, and it's still under attack as we speak…Our war on terror begins with Al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group has been found, stopped and defeated.

■ Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom, the great achievement of our time and the great hope of every time, now depends on us. Our nation, this generation, will lift the dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter and we will not fail.

■ We are at the beginning of what I view as a very long struggle against evil. We're not

fighting a nation and we're not fighting a religion. We're fighting evil. And we have no choice but to prevail" (GWB-6/62-64). [37]

**Public Speech Cincinnatti, May 03.**
■ Tonight I want to take a few minutes to discuss a grave threat to peace and America’s determination to lead the world in confronting that threat. The threat comes from Iraq. It arises directly from the Iraqi regime’s own actions, its history of aggression and its drive toward an arsenal of terror….Since we all agree on this goal [disarming Saddam Hussein], the issue is how best can we achieve it. Many Americans have raised legitimate questions about the nature of the threat, about the urgency of action. Why be concerned now? About the link between Iraq developing weapons of terror and the wider war on terror. These are all issues we’ve discussed broadly and fully within my administration. And tonight I want to share those discussions with you.

■ Our immediate focus will be … defending the United States, the American people, and our interests at home and abroad by identifying and destroying the threat before it reaches our borders.

■ Forming coalitions of the willing and cooperative security arrangements are key to confronting these emerging transnational threats…We will defend this just peace against threats from terrorists and tyrants…America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.

# FRAMES & FRAMING

Frames are typically constructed through the use of metaphors, definitions, narratives, categories and metalinguistic commentary. They are used to get an audience to attend to certain elements of a situation and ignore others; to construct a particular way of seeing an issue, event, person or group, and to shape the way an audience understands the context of communication. They can have persuasive effects.

DRAMATISM/PENTAD – a way of exploring frames, motive and explanation
Do we stress 1. Act 2. Scene 3. Agent 4. Agency, 5. Purpose (What, Where, Who, How, Why?)
*Example*: Katrina. How do we frame *what* happened? What importance do we give to the *scene/context* (where it happened)? What role did the chief *actors* play in the event? What elements had the greatest agency/by what means did they act? Why did they act the way they did?

*Example*: how do we frame the homeless problem, and what “ratio” do we set up (what weight do we give one element of pentad over others?)

One Event: Three Frames, Three Solutions***[[6]](#footnote-6)***

Charlotte Ryan, author of Prime Time Activism, offers a good example of how one event can be framed in many ways, with a profound impact on the event's meaning. Consider the following three different versions of one news story:

1. "An infant left sleeping in his crib was bitten repeatedly by rats while his 16-year-old mother went to cash her welfare check."
2. "An eight-month-old South End boy was treated yesterday after being bitten by rats while sleeping in his crib. Tenants said that repeated requests for extermination had been ignored by the landlord. He claimed that the tenants did not properly dispose of their garbage."
3. "Rats bit eight-month old Michael Burns five times yesterday as he napped in his crib. Burns is the latest victim of a rat epidemic plaguing inner-city neighborhoods. A Public Health Department spokesperson explained that federal and state cutbacks forced short-staffing at rat control and housing inspection programs."

Each version of the story represents a different frame-in other words, each has a distinct definition of the issue, of who is responsible, and of how the issue might be resolved. The first version, by emphasizing the age and actions of the mother (leaving her baby to cash a welfare check), suggests that the problem is irresponsible teens having babies. The solution would be reforming welfare to discourage or punish such irresponsible behavior.

Most articles about low-income people use the first version news story frame. It illustrates a news story that is episodic in its approach to a specific problem.

In version two, the issue is a landlord-tenant dispute about responsibility for garbage. The solution depends on the reader's perspective: either stronger enforcement of laws related to a landlord's responsibilities, or laws that would make it easier for a landlord to evict irresponsible tenants.

Only the third version really gets into larger issues about the impact of funding cuts on basic services in low-income communities. It illustrates a news story that is thematic in its approach to a specific problem.

**[INSERT EXCERPT FROM BOOK – pages on framing –ONE ON WISDOM]**

# Metacommentary

**Abstract:** In this essay, I argue for four related claims. First, Richard Levins’ classic ‘‘The Strategy of Model Building in Population Biology’’ was a statement and defense of theoretical population biology growing out of collaborations between Robert MacArthur, Richard Lewontin, E. O. Wilson, and others. Second, I argue that the essay served as a response to the rise of systems ecology especially as pioneered by Kenneth Watt. Third, the arguments offered by Levins against systems ecology and in favor of his own methodological program are best construed as ‘‘pragmatic’’. Fourth, I consider **limitations** of Levins’ arguments given contemporary population biology. (The strategy of ‘‘The strategy of model building in population biology’’ Jay Odenbaugh *Biology & Philosophy* (2006) 21:607–621)

**Keywords:** Richard Levins ■ Robert MacArthur ■ Population biology ■ Ecology ■ Systems ecology ■ Model Building ■ Tradeoffs

# GMAT & EXERCISES

**SAMPLE** **GMAT Strategies/Fallacies Exercise**

1. Since you don't believe that the earth is teetering on the edge of destruction, you must believe that pollution and other adverse effects that man has on the environment are of no concern whatsoever.
2. The stock market declined shortly after the election of the president, thus indicating the lack of confidence the business community has in the new administration.
3. ln a recent survey conducted by Wall Street Weekly of its readers, 80% of the respondents indicated their strong disapproval of increased capital gains taxes. This survey clearly shows that increased capital gains taxes will meet with strong opposition from the electorate.
4. People should keep their promises, right? I loaned Dwayne my knife, and he said he'd return it. Now he is refusing to give it back, but I need it right now to slash up my neighbors' families. Dwayne isn't doing right by me.
5. People who oppose mandatory sentencing want convicted rapists and killers to get off scot-free.

**Identify Strategy and/or Fallacy**
1. “Those people object to racism because they believe it is discrimination. Yet even *they* agree that it is OK to choose carefully which tomatoes to buy in the supermarket. They discriminate between the over-ripe, the under-ripe, and the just right. They discriminate between the TV shows they don't want to watch and those they do. So, what's all this fuss about racism if they're willing to discriminate, too?”
2. Scripture is either God's pure, infallible word, free of any contradiction, error or inconsistency, or it is a purely human invention full of error, inconsistency and contradiction that can be dismissed as such. Since one can clearly find contradictions and errors, it can thus be dismissed.
3. “Darwin's theory of evolution is just that, a theory.  Theories are merely ideas that are not certain or infallible. We don't want our children to believe that theories are certain or infallible, so we shouldn't teach the theory of evolution in school without mentioning this, and without including alternatives such as intelligent design.”

**1. LSAT SAMPLE QUESTION**
“Premiums for automobile accident insurance are often higher for red cars than for cars of other colors. To justify these higher charges, insurance companies claim that, overall, a greater percentage of red cars are involved in accidents than are cars of any other colors. If this claim is true, then lives could undoubtedly be saved by banning red cars from the roads altogether.” **The reasoning in the argument is flawed because the argument:**

A) Accepts without question that insurance companies have the right to charge higher premiums for higher risk clients.

B) Fails to consider whether red cars cost the same to repair as cars of other colors.

C) Ignores the possibility that drivers who drive recklessly have a preference for red cars.

D) Does not specify precisely what percentage of red cars are involved in accidents.

E) Makes an unsupported assumption that every automobile accident results in some loss of life.

# Rhetorical Strategies – an introduction

**Rhetorical strategies** are tools that help writers craft language so as to have an effect on readers. Strategies are means of persuasion, a way of using language to get readers’ attention and agreement.

In your writing or your discussion, you will need to ask and answer certain questions. Why does the author choose to use that strategy in that place? What does he or she want to evoke in the reader? How do these strategies help the author build his or her argument? How do these strategies emphasize the claims the author makes or the evidence he or she uses?

When describing why a strategy is used, you may also want to consider alternative strategies, and think about how they would work differently. It might be helpful to consider what would happen if the strategy were left out – what difference would it make to the argument? This may help you figure out why the particular strategy was chosen.

Remember that any term we have looked at that can be used to describe an argument, can be used strategically. This includes evidence, definitions, metaphors, the GASCAP terms, rebuttals and qualifiers, framing, etc.

**When Discussing Rhetorical Strategies, Remember to:**

1. Identify rhetorical strategies in the text
2. Describe *how* they work
3. Describe *why* they are used – what purpose do they accomplish?
4. Always include a discussion of how this strategy helps the author develop and support the argument.

The following is a list of commonly used strategies and questions that will help you consider why the author may have chosen to use those strategies.

**Authorities or “big names” –** Frequently an author will quote from a famous person or well-known authority on the topic being discussed.

* How does this appeal to authority build trust in her argument that the consensus can be trusted?
* How does this appeal tap into assumptions about scientific method

**Cause and effect analysis**: Analyzes why something happens and describes the consequences of a string of events.

* Does the author examine past events or their outcomes?
* Is the purpose to inform, speculate, or argue about why an identifiable fact happens the way it does?

**Commonplaces –** Also known as hidden assumptions, hidden beliefs, and ideologies. Commonplaces include assumptions, many of them unconscious, that groups of people hold in common.

* What hidden assumptions or beliefs does the speaker have about the topic? How is the speaker or author appealing to the hidden assumptions of the audience?
* Who is the intended audience of this piece? What are some assumptions of this intended audience?

**Comparison and contrast**: Discusses similarities and differences.

* Does the text contain two or more related subjects?
* How are they alike? different?
* How does this comparison further the argument or a claim?

**Definition –**When authors define certain words, these definitions are specifically formulated for the specific purpose he or she has in mind. In addition, these definitions are crafted uniquely for the intended audience.

* Who is the intended audience?
* Does the text focus on any abstract, specialized, or new terms that need further explanation so the readers understand the point?
* How has the speaker or author chosen to define these terms for the audience?
* What effect might this definition have on the audience, or how does this definition help further the argument?

**Description**: Details sensory perceptions of a person, place, or thing.

* Does a person, place, or thing play a prominent role in the text?
* Does the tone, pacing, or overall purpose of the essay benefit from sensory details?
* What emotions might these details evoke in the audience? (See Pathos)
* How does this description help the author further the argument?

**Division and classification**: Divides a whole into parts or sorts related items into categories.

* Is the author trying to explain a broad and complicated subject?
* Does it benefit the text to reduce this subject to more manageable parts to focus the discussion?

**Exemplification**: Provides examples or cases in point.

* What examples, facts, statistics, cases in point, personal experiences, or interview questions does the author add to illustrate claims or illuminate the argument?
* What effect might these have on the reader?

**Ethos –** Aristotle’s term *ethos* refersto the credibility, character or personality of the speaker or author or someone else connected to the argument. *Ethos* brings up questions of ethics and trust between the speaker or author and the audience. How is the speaker or author building credibility for the argument? How and why is the speaker or author trying to get the audience to trust her or him? **See the discussion on Aristotelian Appeals in the textbook.**

* Aristotle says that a speaker builds credibility by demonstrating that he or she is fair, knowledgeable about a topic, trustworthy, and considerate.
* What specifically does the author do to obtain the reader’s trust? How does he or she show fairness? Understanding of the topic? Trustworthy? Considerate of the reader’s needs?
* How does she construct credibility for her argument?

**Identification –** This is rhetorician Kenneth Burke’s term for the act of “identifying” with another person who shares your values or beliefs. Many speakers or authors try to identify with an audience or convince an audience to identify with them and their argument.

* How does the author build a connection between himself or herself and the audience?

**Logos –** Loosely defined, *logos* refers to the use of logic, reason, facts, statistics, data, and numbers. Very often, *logos* seems tangible and touchable, so much more real and “true” than other rhetorical strategies that it does not seem like a persuasive strategy at all. **See the discussion on Aristotelian Appeals in the textbook.**

* How and why does the author or speaker chose *logos?*
* How does the author show there are good reasons to support his or her argument?
* What kinds of evidence does he or she use?

**Metadiscourse –** Metadiscourse can be described as language about language. It announces to the reader what the writer is doing, helping the reader to recognize the author’s plan. (Example: In my paper . . .) Metadiscourse can be used both to announce the overall project or purpose of the paper and to announce its argument. It also provides signposts along the way, guiding the reader to what will come next and showing how that is connected to what has come before. **See the discussion of Metadiscourse in the textbook for more details.**

* Metadiscourse can signal the tone the author wants to convey. What is the author’s voice in this paper? How does she enter in and guide the reader through the text?
* What role does she adopt? What voice does she use?

**Metaphors, analogies, similes** –An analogy compares two parallel terms or situations in which the traits of one situation are argued to be similar to another—often one relatively firm and concrete, and the other less familiar and concrete. This allows the author to use concrete, easily understood ideas, to clarify a less obvious point.

Similarly, metaphors and similes assign help an author frame the argument, to pay attention to some elements of a situation and ignore others or to assign the characteristics of one thing to another. **For example, see “The Power of Green” by Thomas Friedman in this reader.**

* What two things are being compared?
* How does this comparison help an audience view the argument in a new way? How does this frame shape the argument?

**Motive –** Sometimes an author may reference the motives of his or her opponents.

* Why we should or shouldn’t trust someone’s argument –(ex. if the CEO of Krispy Kreme doughnuts argues against nutritional information on product packaging)

**Narration**: Recounts an event.

* Is the narrator trying to report or recount an anecdote, an experience, or an event? Is it telling a story?
* How does this narrative illustrate or clarify the claim or argument?
* What effect might this story have on the audience?
* How does this narrative further the argument?

**Pathos –** Pathos refers to feelings. The author or speaker wants her audience to feel the same emotions she is feeling, whether or not they agree on the actual topic. That way, because they feel the same emotions, they are more likely to agree with the author later on.

* What specific emotions does the author evoke?
* How does she do it?
* How does the author use these emotions as a tool to persuade the audience?

**Precedent –** When an author or speaker argues from precedent, he or she references a previous situation, one that can be compared to the author’s situation.

* Does the author reference any historic instances that he or she claims are similar to the one being discussed?
* What details about this historic situation help the author’s argument?

**Prolepsis –** Anticipating the opposition’s best argument and addressing it in advance.

* Readers interact with the texts they read, and often that interaction includes disagreement or asking questions of the text.
* Authors can counter disagreement by answering anticipating the opposition and introducing it within the text. Authors then respond to it.

**Process analysis**: Explains to the reader how to do something or how something happens.

* Were any portions of the text more clear because concrete directions about a certain process were included?
* How does this help the author develop the argument?

**Rhetorical question –** A question designed to have one correct answer. The author leads you into a position rather than stating it explicitly.

* What is the most obvious answer to this question?
* Why is it important to have the reader answer this question? How does it help the author persuade the audience?

**Transitional questions –** Lead the reader into a new subject area or area of argument.

* What role do these questions play? How do these questions lead the direction of the argument?
* How is this helpful for the reader?

**Structure and Organization**

It is important to consider the organization of information and strategies in any text.

* How does this structure or organization help strength the argument?
* What headings or titles does the author use? How do these strengthen the argument?
1. By Chris Werry [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Of course as always, much depends on how one selects and interprets the data. Evidence exists that some states that do not allow concealed weapons have, over certain date ranges, had higher rates of violent crime than those that do. However, if one examines where the guns used in these violent crimes came from (typically from neighboring states with lax gun control laws) and if one takes into account the broad differences between states that permit the concealed carrying of guns and those that do not, Lott’s argument seems shaky at best. (Lott has been criticized for his selection of data from states. Lott compares data collected in the 1980s from rural states that were relatively unaffected by drug violence, with the spike in murders associated with the crack-cocaine epidemic of the late 1980s which was concentrated in specific urban areas, and tended to take place in states with restrictive gun laws.)

 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This draws from “Democracy, Demagoguery, And Critical Rhetoric”byPatricia Roberts-Miller, *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* Vol. 8, No. 3, 2005, pp. 459-476. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Note, Walton & rhetorical “fair-mindedness”: its demagogic opposite--unidimensionality--is characterized by the abdication of “critical doubt,” “‘due consideration’ to criticisms or arguments from an opposed viewpoint” and “desist[ance] from judging another viewpoint before fully understanding it.” In One-Sided Arguments: A Dialectical Analysis of Bias, Walton writes “there is supposed to be a genuine exchange of views,” which was another way of saying what Aristotle posited more than two-thousand years ago: that “rhetoric is the counterpart of dialectic.” Put simply, unidimensionality denies the synthetic benefit of the dialectic and therefore the necessary deliberative nature of an engaged, democratic society. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Cited in Knoblauch & Brannon *Critical Teaching & the Idea of Literacy*, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <http://www.c3.ucla.edu/toolbox/terms-concepts/strategic-frame-analysis/strategic-communication-terms> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)