

RWS 100

Rhetoric of Written Argument

Course Reader: Fall 2017

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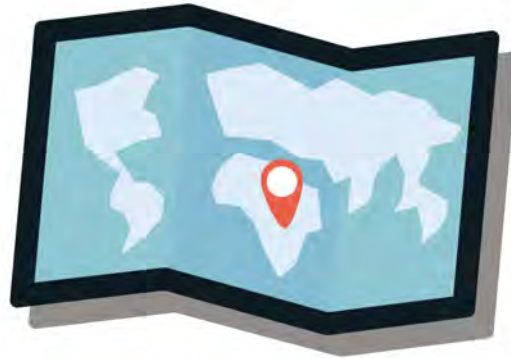
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Introduction



The RWS 100 and 200 course sequence is designed to strengthen your critical reading, writing, and thinking practices and to develop their application for your academic, professional, and civic life. These skills are critical to your success as a student and a future professional.

Our focus throughout this RWS 100 course is on developing your understanding of how arguments work to persuade. We will work on close reading practices so you can read texts of all types with a more critical eye. By analyzing the purpose, context, intended audience, genre, and other elements (the rhetorical situation) of a text, you will gain a clearer understanding of an author's choices and whether or not they were effective and persuasive for a particular situation.

That is, our discussions and reading assignments will help you learn to unpack the variety of rhetorical approaches and strategies writers use to shape and contribute to conversations surrounding public issues.

Although the texts we will read contain issues about which people will likely disagree, the real work of the course is strengthening your writing and rhetorical practices, not engaging in debate about specific issues per se. The sequence of writing assignments you will complete has been carefully crafted to help you build on your existing approaches to writing and to reinforce productive processes for researching, analyzing, drafting, offering critical feedback to others, and revising.

Importantly, the course curriculum also encourages you to analyze and/or produce digital texts and texts that aren't strictly word-based, when applicable. We will talk more about digital and multimodal issues later in the reader, but the point of attending to these kinds of texts is to help you to be better aware of how digital affordances and multimodal rhetorical choices can offer a wide range of possibilities for influencing an audience. Evaluating these texts can help readers to be more critical of what others are saying and can help writers to make use of these strategies in their own communications.

Assignment Sequence Overview

1

Analyzing an Argument

Identify an author's argument, claim, project, assumptions, and evidence. Analyze and evaluate the extent to which evidence and reasoning support the argument.

2

Analyzing Strategies and Sources

Identify rhetorical strategies used to support an argument(s) and analyze how these strategies contribute to the author's appeals (ethos, pathos, logos). Evaluate the extent to which the appeal(s) effectively persuades the intended audience, and analyze assumptions the author makes about that audience (can be comparative). Examine a source used by one of the authors. Examine the original source material, and analyze how the author makes use of it. Consider what was included and excluded, and why.

3

Analyzing and Evaluating Multiple Texts

Construct an account of an author's project and argument, focusing on its use of a significant source. Select other texts that connect with the target text. Draw connections between the texts, identifying the range of concerns, assumptions, appeals, and evidence presented. Evaluate the relative persuasiveness of these texts.

4

Analyzing and Evaluating Online Sources

For your final project you will read some short texts that describe ways of analyzing and evaluating online sources, and also some resources for identifying "fake news." (Your instructor will provide these materials.) You will use these materials to evaluate sample online texts and present your findings to the class. Your paper should describe your key findings, but also reflect on how well the materials you used foster the "critical digital literacy" that Boyd and others suggest young people need.

Note

These are general assignment types and will be adapted in more detail by individual instructors, including the possibility of three major assignments, group projects, presentations, or other approaches to achieve the RWS 100 Student Learning Outcomes. All courses will have similar workloads regardless of project specifics.

Student Learning Outcomes

During the 2016-2017 school year, a committee of RWS faculty met regularly (and usually on Friday afternoons!) to revise and refine the learning goals for RWS 100 and 200. We wanted to be sure that students in all sections had similar kinds of educational experiences to support their growth as writers and rhetoricians.

Another goal for our work was to be sure that our teaching and curriculum were in alignment with best practices in the fields of Rhetoric and Composition Studies.

A final goal was to ensure that what we teach will help students use their critical reading, writing, and persuasive skills throughout their academic, professional, and personal lives.

This year-long effort resulted in the following five standard student learning outcomes for RWS 100:



Analyze

Analyze a variety of texts to demonstrate rhetorical knowledge of an argument's project, claim, audience, genre, rhetorical appeals, rhetorical strategies (including evidence), and assumptions.



Evaluate

Evaluate arguments and their evidence through a process of critical inquiry.



Locate, Evaluate, Incorporate

Locate, evaluate, and incorporate material from sources into their writing projects.



Compose

Compose a variety of texts, employing flexible composing strategies and processes for invention, structure, drafting, reflection, collaboration, feedback, revision, and editing.



Apply

Apply conventions of academic writing, including genre choices, grammar, spelling, mechanics, and citation practices

Student Learning Outcomes

RWS 100

Revised for Fall 2017

1 Analyze



identify an author's project and claim



investigate audience and genre choices



utilize knowledge of rhetorical strategies, appeals, and assumptions

1 Analyze a variety of texts to demonstrate rhetorical knowledge of an argument's project, claim, audience, genre, rhetorical appeals, rhetorical strategies (including evidence), and assumptions.

2 Evaluate arguments and their evidence through a process of critical inquiry.

3 Locate, evaluate, and incorporate material from sources into their writing projects.

4 Compose a variety of texts, employing flexible composing strategies and processes for invention, structure, drafting, reflection, collaboration, feedback, revision, and editing.

5 Apply conventions of academic writing, including genre choices, grammar, spelling, mechanics, and citation practices.

SLO 1

This SLO focuses on helping students develop rhetorical knowledge and practices they will need to be critical and successful communicators in academic settings.

2 Evaluate

Evaluation of arguments and the evidence offered by authors is a crucial practice for successful readers and writers.

Being able to assess the relevance and effectiveness of sources for a given rhetorical situation is key to critical, informed communication.

Strong evaluation skills illustrate an author's understanding of what an audience will need and want to know and how that can be composed in a persuasive way for their target readers.



SLO 2

This SLO is concerned with assessing the persuasiveness of an author's argument based on the kinds of evidence offered as support, as well as on the overall structure and approach of the text.

3 Locate, Evaluate, Incorporate



All texts reference, participate in, or contribute to larger cultural conversations. Successful writers are able to locate texts relevant to these discussions, evaluate how that material intersects with their ideas, and incorporate it in the context of their own arguments.

SLO 3

This SLO focuses on finding, assessing, and incorporating relevant and persuasive source material into an author's own text.

4 Compose

While every composing process is individual, successful writers tend to develop a set of flexible composing strategies and processes. This often includes a recursive, process-based approach for invention, structuring, drafting, reflection, collaboration, feedback, revision, and editing.



Importantly, strong writers can adapt the process based on the rhetorical situation, time constraints, and other factors.

SLO 4

This SLO focuses on helping students to develop a composing process that suits the way they work while still drawing on traditional writing steps such as brainstorming, drafting, revision, editing, and reflection.

5 Apply



appropriate
genre
choices



relevant
academic
conventions,
including
citation
practices



competence
in grammar
and spelling

SLO 5

The final SLO calls on students to apply expected academic writing conventions to the texts they compose, including genre choices, spelling, grammar, and citations.

You might notice that we do not have a separate SLO for digital and multimodal writing. That's because these means of researching and writing are so central to our 21st century literacy practices.

As such, all RWS 100 and 200 courses strive to incorporate pedagogically relevant opportunities for students to explore and use digital tools and multimodal rhetorics. The point of attending to these kinds of texts is to help students to be better aware of how digital affordances and multimodal rhetorical choices can offer a wide range of possibilities for influencing an audience.

Learning to evaluate these texts can help readers to be more critical of what others are saying and can help writers to make use of these strategies in their own communications.

A Word about Digital & Multimodal Texts



Go to EVERY Class

Class sessions help you unpack readings, understand assignments, and give you a place to ask questions from your instructor and classmates. Attendance is critical! Save your absences for real illness or emergency.

Manage Your Time

Writing is a process that takes time to be done well. Work backwards from the due date to figure out when to research, draft, and revise. Don't expect that your first draft will be "good enough".

Value Writing

Every professional discipline values strong writing skills. The ability to communicate clearly, knowledgeably, and persuasively with professors, fellow students, employers, co-workers, and other audiences is essential to your success.

How to Succeed in this Course

Read Assigned Texts

Readings have been chosen carefully and purposefully to support the work of assignments, so be sure you read before going to class. More advice on active and critical reading is available later in this packet.

Be Engaged in Class

Learning is a social activity. We develop deeper, more critical understandings when we listen to a variety of perspectives. Listen to what your classmates have to say and add your voice to the discussion.

Go to Office Hours

Your instructor holds office hours to meet with students one-on-one to answer questions and provide help. Take advantage of this time if you are unsure about assignments or want to talk through some of your ideas.



How to Succeed in this Course

In today's digital and global world, every discipline values strong writing skills. The ability to communicate clearly, knowledgeably, and persuasively with professors, fellow students, employers, co-workers, and other audiences is essential to your success.

In your university courses, you will often be called upon to propose ideas, investigate materials from a variety of sources, and make convincing arguments supporting your perspective. At their core, all of these practices are rhetorical, requiring you to adjust your approach based on the rhetorical situation. That is, your writing is always shaped by your intended audience, your purpose in communicating, the context in which your work will be read, and the genre and structure that is expected by your readers. Our work will help you understand how other writers negotiate these elements in their texts and how you can best account for them in your own communications.

In other words, your RWS 100 instructor is here to help you develop and strengthen your practices of writing. Your instructor, along with your class Writing Fellow (if you have one), and the SDSU Writing Center are all committed to supporting your needs as a writer. Make use of these resources to get everything out of this learning experience that you can.

The theme of our readings and overall course will be digital literacy. Our assignments will help you unpack the issues surrounding this subject, but the real work of the course is strengthening your writing. You will develop critical strategies for analyzing, evaluating, and producing written argument. You will learn to make purposeful decisions about your use of sources, rhetorical appeals, and overall compositional structure to develop clear, informed, and persuasive arguments for your readers.



Where to Get Help

SDSU Writing Center

A free resource at SDSU where you can find support for the writing assigned for this course. Tutors can help you with your assignments at any stage of the writing process--from brainstorming to revision of in-process drafts.

Love Library 1103
(619) 594-3543

Schedule appointments at
writingcenter.sdsu.edu/appointment.html

Purdue OWL

Offers comprehensive information on research, citation styles, writing specific genres, and much more

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>



Why Write?

Kathleen Yancey

Chair, Conference on College Composition and Communication, "Literacy today is in the midst of a tectonic change. Even inside of school, never before have writing and composing generated such diversity in definition."

Doug Hesse

President, National Council of Teachers of English, "Students learn to write by writing, by getting advice and feedback on their writing, and then writing some more."

What can be told to college students about writing can probably be encapsulated in a lecture of two or three hours. It parallels what meaningfully can be told about playing piano — the music notation, the relationship between notation and keyboard, the hand and finger placement, the posture, the pedal functions.

But without sustained practice on systematically more complex pieces ("Chopsticks" is not a Rachmaninoff concerto), the world's best lectures will not — cannot — make a pianist. So, too, with writing."



Richard Young & Patricia Sullivan

Influential scholars in Rhetoric and Composition, "Why write? One important reason is that unless we do there are mental acts we cannot perform, thoughts we cannot think, inquiries we cannot engage in."

National Commission on Writing

"If students are to make knowledge their own, they must struggle with the details, wrestle with the facts, and rework raw information and dimly understood concepts into language they can communicate to someone else. In short, if students are to learn, they must write...The reward of disciplined writing is the most valuable job attribute of all: a mind equipped to think."

E. M. Forster

Author of *Passage to India* and other influential novels, "How do I know what I think until I see what I say?"

Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Pioneering aviator and author, "I must write it all out, at any cost. "Writing is thinking. It is more than living, for it is being conscious of living."

This is NOT a literature class, and it's probably different from all the English classes you've taken.

This semester, you will be studying rhetoric, writing, and argument.

Before we begin, it's probably a good idea to establish some definitions and goals, just so we're all on the same page.



What IS Rhetoric?

Rhetoric began in ancient Greece. Citizens studied rhetoric to learn how to argue, communicate and reason, mostly so they could use these skills to participate in public life. Rhetorical education was especially important in law, democratic debate, and political action. The Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle both wrote about rhetoric.

Modern rhetoric: the field of rhetoric has developed enormously over the centuries, drawing from and influencing other disciplines.

Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, respected scholars in Rhetoric and Composition and how to teach it to college students define it as follows:

"Rhetoric has a number of overlapping meanings . . . the use of language, written or spoken, to inform or persuade; the study of the persuasive effects of language; the study of the relation between language and knowledge; the classification and use of tropes and figures...Nor does this list exhaust the definitions that might be given. Rhetoric is a complex discipline with a long history."

The web site of the department of Rhetoric & Writing Studies describes rhetoric this way:

Rhetoric refers to the study and uses of written, spoken and visual language. It investigates how texts are used to organize and maintain social groups, construct meanings and identities, coordinate behavior, mediate power, persuade, produce change, and create knowledge.

Aristotle provided one of the most influential early definitions of rhetoric.

Aristotle noticed that some speakers in Athens were more effective in persuading the public than others. In *On Rhetoric*, a collection of those observations, he offered this definition:

“Let rhetoric be defined as the faculty of observing in any case all of the available means of persuasion.”



What ARE Arguments and What Do They Have to Do with Rhetoric and Writing?

Obviously, we're not talking about disagreements with parents, siblings, friends, or enemies.

In this case, an argument is a statement or idea that someone tries to persuade somebody else to believe. A reasonable person might disagree with that statement.

An argument may also center on a proposed piece of action, upon which reasonable people might disagree.

Arguments are everywhere. You'll find them in academic writing, advertisements, newspapers, and films. Politicians use arguments every single day.

In college, you will be asked to read, evaluate, and create arguments. Most of the time those arguments will be written.



Why Is Argument Important?

Christopher Lasch

"If we insist on argument as the essence of education, we will defend democracy not as the most efficient but as the most educational form of government, one that extends the circle of debate as widely as possible and thus forces all citizens to articulate their views, to put their views at risk, and to cultivate the virtues of eloquence, clarity of thought and expression, and sound judgment."

Gerald Graff

"Argument literacy is central to being educated."

Rolf Norgaard

"Universities are houses of argument."

Introduction to Argument

By Jaime Madden, San Diego State University

Reconsidering the Term “Argument”

The purpose of this section for San Diego State University students is to promote an understanding of and an increased skill in practicing the art of argumentation as it is practiced here in the Rhetoric and Writing Studies department here at SDSU. The art of argumentation is different from what you may have experienced many times as an argument. Most of us have been part of pointless arguments in which two people, rather than listening to other positions and seeking to persuade each other or come to some common ground, simply enjoy stating their own opinions as loudly and frequently as possible. This kind of bickering is common, but rarely useful. It produces neither understanding of one’s own position nor the position of others, and it allows no way forward when people disagree.

Argumentation, as we will use the term in this class, is very different. Argumentation is a process of stating what you believe to be true in a way that is meant to help others come to agree with you – a way of persuading people to take actions or adopt ideas that you want them to take or adopt. Thus, it is an important way for you to exert power in your community – to become a leader, to have a voice in your world. So argumentation is a key skill that you take from your education to use in virtually every part of your life – in school, certainly, but also in your profession, in your personal life, in your life as a member of religious groups, political groups, ethnic and geographical groups . . . are you a fan of Spiderman? Do you think he’s a better superhero than Superman? Then you can use argumentation to make your voice heard among of the community of graphic novel fans.

The study of this kind of argumentation is known as rhetoric, the study of the available means of persuasion for any given topic, audience, and occasion. You engage in rhetoric every day, both as a rhetor making the argument and as a listener deciding whether you agree with an argument. You try to persuade roommates to send out for pizza, try to convince somebody to go out with you on Saturday night, make a pitch to professors for more time to turn in a paper. And you listen to arguments in which others try to persuade you to buy products, vote for them, let them borrow your car.

However, it is our position that the study of rhetoric ought to concern itself with questions of both effectiveness and ethics. We contend that arguments can only be effective over the long term if they are also constructed in ways that are ethical, and this section is intended to give you the opportunity to explore what those methods are and how you might use them yourselves as well as recognize when they are employed by others. Our intention is not to demonstrate what particular positions are ethical. You must decide for yourself what you believe to be true and good, and this is a lifelong process that involves thinking about your experiences and questioning your assumptions and the assumptions of those around you. Rather, our intention is to demonstrate that once you have decided to speak out for an idea that you believe to be true and good, to try to persuade others that this idea is true and good, that there are ways of presenting that argument that are themselves ethical and should be incorporated into your argumentation.



What Is an Argument?

As stated in the section above, an argument is an attempt to persuade others to accept an idea. There are three main components to an argument: an arguable question, a persuadable audience, and an occasion for making the argument.

An arguable question is a question on which reasonable people can disagree. It is thus not an issue of fact for which a single answer is correct and can be identified and agreed upon by most reasonable members of a community. Of course, what is arguable may change over time and from one community to another. For instance, very few people in the 21st century would disagree that the earth is round – there is readily available and widely accepted evidence that this is simply a fact. So that question is not arguable now. But in the fifteenth century, it would have been an arguable question. It may also be treated as an arguable question today by members of a modern flat earth society! But overall, the easiest way to identify an arguable question is to ask yourself if you could imagine reasonable people answering the question in different ways. If so, it is likely an arguable question.

The next component of an argument is a persuadable audience. This means that you have a specific audience in mind, a group of people who do not necessarily agree with you already, for, after all, there is little point in trying to persuade an audience who already agrees with you. Instead, a persuadable audience is one who either has little opinion about the question and thus has an open mind to listen or an audience who is not on board with at least some element of your argument but is willing to listen and open to rethinking their own position.

Sometimes audiences are absolutely unwilling to listen to an argument, either because they hold their positions so strongly that they cannot listen to another idea or because they reject the authority of your evidence. Think, for instance, of two people arguing about politics. One person is arguing for a conservative position; the other person has spent their whole life as a progressive, living in a community of progressives, surrounded by family members who are staunch progressives. The speaker uses an example from Ronald Reagan's administration to support her argument, but the audience immediately says that Ronald Reagan was the worst president ever and rejects the example.

In the case of such an audience, it is still worth making the argument, of course, but you may not succeed in actually persuading them – your goal is more likely to be encouraging them to at least begin questioning some of their own assumptions.

The third component of an argument is an occasion, a specific moment and place in which the argument is made. Sometimes that is a real moment in time and space – like a wedding or a political rally or a meeting between yourself and your professor. These occasions are very different and call for different styles of argument, different kinds of arguable questions, different ways of presenting yourself as a speaker. Other times, the occasion occurs within the pages of a written or visual text, which both creates and responds to the moment in time in which was written and the moment in time in which it is read. Texts are in a way constantly recreating the occasion of their creation because they are "created" anew by each person who reads them.

Claims- Answers to an Arguable Question

So if the starting point of an argument as we are defining that term is an arguable question, the next part we need to understand is known as the claim.

The main claim of an author is the main idea that she or he wants the reader to accept as true. It answers the main arguable question and is supported by evidence and/or reasoning.

Kinds of Claims

Claims about definitions

explain what something means, obviously going well beyond the simple answers found in a dictionary. These claims answer questions such as “what is education?” They may also become claims about quality, in which the author considers whether something is good or not. For instance, a claim about quality may answer a question like “what is a good education?”

Claims about the causes of an event or situation focus on why something happened.

Claims about the consequences of an event or situation

focus on the results or potential results of that event or situation. They often take the form of describing a problem caused by that event. Often, claims like this are used in an argument structure known as the problem-solution argument, in which the author identifies the problems caused by an event and then describes actions that could solve these problems. Claims about consequences may involve a claim about seriousness, a claim that answers a question about how widespread or significant a situation is. For instance, a claim about seriousness could answer a question like “how important is a good education?”

Claims about policy focus on social and cultural implications of everyday personal, professional, and political interactions that require communities (or individuals) to take a specific action, often to solve a problem or to make a good situation even better or more permanent. Such a claim might be: “Student loans for college should have a lower interest rate.”

What Is NOT a Claim?

There are many elements commonly found in texts that readers sometimes mistake for claims when in fact they are not claims.

The first of these elements is evidence. Any time you are reading a statement that can be verified, a piece of factual information with which no reasonable person could disagree, you are reading evidence, not a claim. For instance, the Bureau of Labor Statistics numbers from the previous section are facts; they could be verified by checking their government website and further verified by examining other sources or even doing your own original research. These statistics are evidence, not claims.

Another element that is not a claim is a matter of taste. These are matters of personal preference that cannot be changed based on reasoning or evidence. Often, they are aesthetic preferences in which we determine that something looks good, sounds good, tastes, smells, or feels good. For instance, maybe Michael Jackson is your favorite singer from “back in the day.” Nothing is going to convince you that you should abandon Michael Jackson’s music in favor of the Beatles. You just plain like it better, don’t you?

The next element that is not a claim is an opinion. An opinion is an idea that a person believes to be true but for which there is no evidence or reasoning presented, or perhaps even no evidence or reasoning available. That sounds kind of like a claim, doesn’t it? Well, it’s on the way...

One of the things that people sometimes say when they agree to disagree is that “everybody is entitled to their opinion.” And that’s certainly true – everybody is entitled to hold an opinion.

The problem is that if you and I have different opinions, there is no way for you to even start convincing me to reconsider, to think about the possibility that your opinion is better in some way that mine is. If you want to convince people who don’t already share your opinion, you need to find a way to turn it into an actual claim by giving evidence and reasoning.

Let’s go back to Michael Jackson. Suppose you weren’t saying that you like his music better than The Beatles’ music. Suppose you wanted to persuade somebody else to see Michael Jackson the same way you see him, wanting to make an actual argument about his music.

You could make a main claim about quality, something like “Michael Jackson’s music is better than The Beatles’ music.” You could present sub-claims, such as “Michael Jackson is more popular than the Beatles” and support them with evidence like “Thriller has sold more copies than any other record in history and Jackson has five albums on the list of the top ten sellers, while The Beatles has only one.”

You could make sub-claims that Jackson has influenced the modern music industry more than the Beatles and provide support like statements from reviews by experts.

By doing this, you could start a reader on the path to reexamining their own earlier opinions because they would be able to see that there are good reasons to consider Jackson the better artist. You are no longer just a person with your own personal opinion in a world of people who all have their own opinions. You are now making an argument that can influence the thinking of others.

Sub-Claims- On the Way to the Main Claim

In a very simple argument, there would be just one main claim. But the world is not simple and neither are the arguments we make about that world. Instead, persuading a reader to accept a main claim that answers the main question of an argument tends to involve first convincing them to accept particular answers to a number of other questions first. We call these answers sub-claims.

Imagine we were asking how to solve poverty. We would first need to ask what poverty was, what caused poverty, what problems poverty caused, how serious those problems were. The answers to those questions would be sub-claims and would help persuade the reader to accept the final main claim, the idea the author has for solving poverty. (If you notice, each of these sub-claims, as well as the main claim, would correspond to the list of kinds of claims above – take a minute to see which ones are which.)

We would also need evidence to support those sub-claims. Evidence is factual information, capable of being verified by anybody through widely acceptable means. If an author were making an argument about poverty and making a sub-claim that poverty in a society causes increases in crime, she or he would need to provide facts to support that idea. For instance, the author may write that reports from researchers at Ohio State University state that serious crime is three times more prevalent in very economically disadvantaged neighborhoods than it is in more prosperous neighborhoods.

So we can think of arguments as having a kind of architecture that looks like this. And of course, there could be multiple subclaims.

Main claim: We can reduce poverty by making education more widely available

First Sub-claim: We need to solve poverty because poverty increases crime.

Evidence: Ohio State University research states that serious crime is three times more prevalent in very economically disadvantaged neighborhoods than it is in more prosperous neighborhood.

Second Sub-claim: Making college more affordable will help reduce poverty.

Evidence: The Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that high school dropouts earn an average wage of less than half the average wage of a college graduate.

Notice that by providing a chain of evidence, sub-claims, and the main claim, you are beginning to provide your readers with a sense of your reasoning, a group of statements that explain why you arrived at your ultimate conclusion, your main claim that we can reduce poverty by making education more widely available. Reasoning is very important to the process of persuading your audience. Without it, you are simply asking them to accept your argument based on nothing other than your word that you are correct.

For instance, remember when your parents told you to eat your vegetables? And they tasted nasty, so you said, "why?" This was the beginning to a potential argument, a moment when you introduced an arguable question, a question about which reasonable people could disagree, even when one of those people was, say, four years old.

If your parents said that you should eat your vegetables (made a claim) because they told you to, then your parents didn't make a real argument. They were simply imposing their authority on four-year-old-vegetable-despising you. And that wasn't very convincing, was it? Maybe you ate your veggies and maybe you found a way to sneak them to the dog, but you were not persuaded because the claim of an argument requires support in the form of evidence and/or reasoning. Imagine instead that your parents had said that you should eat your vegetables because they are good for you. Well, now that starts to sound more persuasive, doesn't it? That's because your parents were now providing a reason that supports their claim. Maybe you still didn't like your veggies, because it is not possible to make an argument about questions of taste like whether cauliflower is yummy. But you began to understand, maybe even agree, that you should eat them anyway.

Evidence- "Just the Facts Ma'am"

So as you can see, giving evidence is central to presenting an argument. This is the step that is crucial to persuading a reader who doesn't already agree with you. There are a number of different kinds of evidence.

Historical evidence presents facts from the past. The goal here is to take a peek forward into our future; if taking an action in the past turned out badly, it may well be that taking a similar action in the present would be a bad idea. Or, of course, if taking an action in the past had a good outcome, repeating that action in the present may have similar benefits.

However, this requires that we all agree that the historical situation is similar enough to the present to tell us something about the present. If there are too many differences between the historical situation that is being described and the present, an audience may well decide that the evidence isn't relevant and reject it.

Another potential issue is that your audience needs to accept your interpretation of historical evidence. If you want your audience to think that a historical event caused problems but they see that there were also benefits, they will likely reject your evidence and not accept the claim that the evidence supports.

Statistical or numerical evidence consists of specific numbers. It often tells us how widespread or serious an issue is and is intended to persuade a reader that a matter is worthy of attention. One weakness of numerical evidence is that it can seem rather cold and uninteresting. It tells us how widespread poverty is, for instance, but it may not persuade a reader that we should do anything about poverty – it may fail to convince a reader to actually care about an issue. Another question that readers may ask about numerical evidence is whether it was gathered properly. If there was a study, for instance, the readers want to know that there was an appropriate number of test subjects or that the information was gathered properly.

Research studies often involve numerical or statistical evidence but go into more detail about how that information was gathered. These studies are usually performed by academics or experts within fields such as the sciences. Writers may also want to think about using multiple pieces of numerical evidence or research studies that have different qualities. For instance, a writer may want to use a study of a very small group of people because it took place over a long period of time; she or he could then also present another study that looked at a much larger group of people over a much shorter period of time. This would give stronger support to the claim because the two kinds of evidence complement each other.

Anecdotal evidence looks at individual examples that are related to a claim. Such examples are best when used together with numerical evidence. Individual examples take the reader “inside” a situation; they help the reader feel what it’s like to walk in somebody else’s shoes, so the reader has a more emotional response and may even find such evidence more interesting, while statistical evidence can help the reader see how widespread the situation is.

In anecdotal evidence, writers are expecting readers to accept that the individual example represents the experience of others, even most others, who are in a similar situation. Like historical evidence, anecdotal evidence can be rejected if the reader decides that the example isn’t relevant. If the reader believes that the example isn’t representative of the experiences of others, the reader would reject the evidence.

Personal anecdotes are stories that the writer tells from her or his own experience. These work a lot like anecdotal evidence but also have another potential advantage. They can help the reader learn about the writer himself or herself, helping the reader learn to like and trust the writer, which makes the reader more likely to accept the writer’s claims. Like anecdotal evidence, the reader would need to believe that the author’s experience is typical, that it represents the experience of most other people in a similar situation. If they think that the author is so unique that this experience isn’t common, the reader will likely reject the evidence.

Expert testimony is statements from experts who agree with one or more of your claims. The reader needs to believe that the expert’s knowledge is relevant to the question being considered (who wants the opinion of an ophthalmologist on Michael Jackson’s music?).

Masquerading as Evidence

Sometimes writers present information that appears to be evidence but that actually cannot function effectively as evidence. These are not verifiable facts but are more general statements. Do they work? Well, yes, on some people. These kinds of “evidence” are very persuasive to people who already agree with the claim being made; they are not persuasive to an audience who disagrees with the claim or who doesn’t have an opinion on the claim.

Generalized statements fail to persuade readers because they have no real specifics behind them. Statements like, “Well, everybody knows that apples are better for you than oranges” are a very weak attempt at evidence. They may work well on an audience who already agrees with you, but they cannot persuade an audience who doesn’t agree. They are not among the “everybody” who already thinks this and the writer hasn’t given them any idea about who that “everybody” is or why the reader should pay attention to those people’s knowledge.

Descriptions of hypothetical events are also weak in persuading people. This is when a writer asks the reader to imagine something that hasn't actually happened and to agree that if such a thing had happened, there would have been some specific consequences. An audience who already agrees with the claim being "supported" by such a hypothetical example is likely to accept that evidence because they find it very easy to imagine this happening. But a more neutral audience will recognize that there is no real basis for accepting this assumption – that they event never really happened and thus gives no basis in fact for accepting that the imaginary "consequences" were inevitable. None of it happened, so it can't be evidence.

Evaluating Evidence

As readers, we need to carefully consider how strong the evidence is that writers provide in support of their claims. There are a few questions that we can generally ask of most kinds of evidence.

Keep in mind, also, that evidence needs to be evaluated not only on its own but also in connection with the other pieces of evidence in an argument. Maybe one specific research study only examined a small number of people and you initially see this as a problem – the evidence isn't sufficient, in your view. However, if the argument later provides some statistics that shows a more broad picture, then the two texts work together to support the argument more fully.

Historical Evidence: How is this historical example relevant to the current situation? Are there significant difference between the two situations that would suggest another possible claim? Is the evidence sufficient? That is, if there is one specific historical example of something happening, is that enough to support the claim? Does the historical evidence seem to come from a credible source? Does the historical evidence seem to have been interpreted correctly?

Statistical Evidence: Were the numbers specific? Does this information come from a credible source? Does the information appear to have been gathered in a way that's appropriate? Why are these numbers relevant to the claim being made? Are the numbers significant? (Keep in mind that this depends on a number of factors; a 3% decrease in heart disease may not seem like much, but if it is 3% in a nation of 150 million people, that's a very significant number.) Is the information recent relative to the time the argument was written?

Research Studies: Is the source of the study credible, meaning both are they experts in this field and are they unbiased? Was the study well-designed? How is the study relevant to the claim it supports? Are there other ways to interpret the research findings that have been ignored and that contradict or fail to support the author's claim? Is the research recent relative to the time the argument was written?

Expert Testimony: Is the source credible, that is, are they experts in a relevant field and do they seem to be unbiased? Dose the expert's opinion appear to be itself founded on strong evidence?

Anecdotal Evidence and Personal Anecdotes: Is the anecdote detailed enough to persuade a reader that it actually occurred? Does the anecdote appear to be representative of the experiences of a significant number of other people? How is the anecdote relevant to the claim

Rhetorical Analysis

Over the course of the semester, you will be asked to describe arguments, what they are, and how they are constructed. In order to do so, you will identify and discuss rhetorical concepts.

This type of writing is called rhetorical analysis.

Rhetorical analysis looks not only at what a text says, but at what it does. It includes consideration of the claims, devices, and strategic “moves” an author makes in hopes of persuading an audience.

Many claims and arguments within texts are implied rather than explicit; performing rhetorical analyses on texts helps us to get a better sense of how, why, and to what extent an argument is effective.

Consider how a text works to convince its audience of the argument at hand.

What, besides simply using logic, do authors use to help win a crowd? This work may include describing an author’s argument, use of evidence, rhetorical strategies, textual arrangement, or the complex relationships between author, audience, text, context, and purpose.

Terms that Describe What a Text Does

- argues
- appeals to
- authority
- assumes
- challenges
- complicates
- constructs an analogy
- contends
- contrasts
- presents
- counterexamples
- defines
- distinguishes (between)
- extends
- forecasts
- frames
- implies
- parodies
- problematized
- qualifies
- rebuts
- ridicules
- stresses
- supports
- synthesizes
- theorizes



P A C E S

Project, Argument, Claims, Evidence, Strategies

PROJECT



An author's project describes the purpose and method they use to create their work. It is the overall activity that the writer is engaged in--researching, investigating, experimenting, interviewing, documenting, etc.

ARGUMENT



In academic writing the argument often refers to the main point, assertion or conclusion advanced by an author. Arguments are concerned with contested issues where some degree of uncertainty exists (we don't argue about what is self-evident or agreed upon).

CLAIMS



To make a claim is to assert that something is the case. Claims in academic writing often consist of an assertion, the staking out of a position, the solution to a problem, or the resolution of some shortcoming, weakness or gap in existing research.

EVIDENCE



Evidence is the support, reasons, and/or data/information used to help persuade readers or prove an argument. To find evidence in a text, ask what the author has to go on. What is there to support this claim? Is the evidence credible?

STRATEGIES



Strategies are means of persuasion used to gain a readers' attention, interest, or agreement. Strategies can be identified in the way an author organizes their text, selects evidence, addresses the reader, frames an issue, presents a definition, establishes credibility, deals with opposing views, uses "meta-discourse," makes particular use of style and tone.

the Rhetorical Situation

and Persuasive Appeals

"Let us regard rhetorical situation as a natural context of persons, events, objects, relations, and an exigence which strongly invites utterance..."

– Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation"

We will often begin our analysis of a text by "situating" it. This means figuring out what kind of text we are dealing with, who it is trying to persuade, and when and where it was written.

Experienced readers begin their analysis by asking big-picture questions about who the author is, what kind of audience she addresses, the context, the genre of the text, the purpose of the text, and the constraints that exist.

1 AUDIENCE

the people or group(s) to whom the communication is directed or who could be persuaded by the communication



PURPOSE

the reason for which you are writing, speaking, or communicating



Bitzer calls this "exigence," meaning that there is a situation that requires or encourages some kind of response

3 CONSTRAINTS

anything outside the communication that affects the audience's reception

"Every rhetorical situation contains a set of constraints made up of persons, events, objects, and relations which are parts of the situation because they have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence"

CONTEXT

similar to constraints, context refers to the situational conditions for which a communication is developed

communication is always shaped by situational (contextual) influences that are specific to that time, place, and occasion

navigating a context can feel like trying to find the perfect balance



5 GENRE

the expected format and rhetorical choices for particular situations; conventions for the medium of communication



KAIROS

the opportune moment for making an argument; the best timed response for a particular situation



7 ETHOS

The trustworthiness and credibility of the speaker/writer/communicator

Ask yourself:
 * Is the author credible?
 * What specific features of the text support the author's ability to be believable or not?



PATHOS

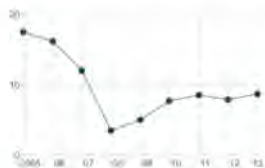
The use of emotional appeals to persuade an audience



Ask yourself:
 * What kinds of emotional appeals is the author using?
 * Are they relevant and persuasive in this situation?
 * Why or why not?

9 LOGOS

The use of logic, facts, and data to support an argument



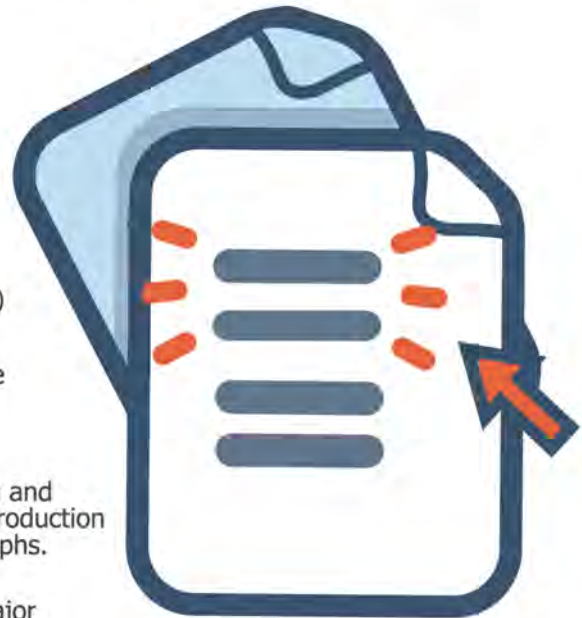
Ask yourself:
 * What kinds of logic, facts, or data are used to support an argument?
 * Are these appropriate and effective?
 * Why or why not?



Identifying Claims

A good rule of thumb for identifying claims is to look for the following clues:

- 1 Question/answer patterns. For example, Kristof begins his text by asking "Why can't we regulate guns as seriously as we do cars?" His "answer" is that we can and should regulate guns as seriously as we do cars, and this is also his main claim.
- 2 Problem/solution patterns. Some authors will structure their argument around one or more problems, and their "solutions" to these problems are often also their main claims.
- 3 Look for passages in which evidence is discussed and work backward to the claim this is intended to support.
- 4 Self-identification ("my point here is that...")
- 5 Emphasis/repetition ("it must be stressed that...")
- 6 Approval ("Olson makes some important and long overdue amendments to work on ...")
- 7 Metalinguage that explicitly uses the language of argument ("My argument consists of three main claims. First, that...")
- 8 Review "beginnings and ends" – the beginning and end of the entire text, the end of the text's introduction section, and the beginning and end of paragraphs.
- 9 Look for section heading titles that indicate major claims. Some authors help readers follow the arc of their argument by dividing their text up into sections that each tackle a different part of the overall argument



Questions to Ask a Text BEFORE You Read

Previewing, Skimming, Surveying

Your time is valuable. If you're like most students, you want to finish your reading as quickly as possible. You have other readings for other classes and a fair amount of homework. However, you can learn a lot about a text before you even begin reading and it's worth it to take a few extra minutes to ask these questions before you begin the reading assignment.

1 What can I learn from the title? While titles can sometimes be general or provide few clues to the content of the work, a critical reader can often learn a lot about a text based on its title. A title may indicate the author's point of view on the subject (e.g. "Keep the Borders Open") or reveal the author's argument (e.g. "A Change of Heart About Animals").

2 What do I know about the author? In many academic texts, such as course readers and textbooks, publishers often include a short biographical sketch of the author. From this information a reader can gain insight into the author's background, credentials, project, argument, purpose, and more. Even when the editor of the course reader or text book doesn't give you an introduction, you can do a simple Google search to help determine the author's authority, credentials, background, etc. Many writers (and most academics) have web sites that will tell you a lot about them and the work they do.

You can also use the San Diego State's online biography resources:
<http://infoguides.sdsu.edu/sub2.php?id=92&pg=13>

3 Who is the publisher? While a publisher's reputation is not an automatic indicator of the source's reliability, you can learn a lot by discovering who published a particular work. For example, university presses and academic journals tend to expect a high degree of scholarship and many of these works are peer reviewed to ensure a text's quality. When reading popular periodicals, you may discover that certain magazines and newspapers consistently reflect certain political positions, which can help you anticipate the political position of the text you are about to read. You may also be able to identify the target audience for this particular text, based on the publication source.

4 When was the text written? Locating the date of publication can provide useful information about the rhetorical context in which the writer developed their work.

5 What can I learn from skimming the text? Proficient readers often skim through a text before reading to gather important information.

- You can survey the organization of the text, looking for text divisions, section headings, and subtitles, which may give clues about the text.
- You can also note important signal words, such as therefore, so, thus, but, however, for example, first, second, etc. to learn more about the structure of the argument and the rhetorical work of the writer.
- Skim the visuals and note the relationship between the visual and written text.
- Look for head-notes, footnotes, and biographical information.

Active and Critical Reading Strategies

Throughout the semester, you will complete charting exercises and a number of rhetorical précis on the texts we'll read for this course. The best way to complete these exercises and understand the issues is to read actively and critically. Here are some tips.

Always Read a Text Twice

The first time you read, you read for content. The second time you read, you read for "moves." Students often think this takes too much time, but the second read goes much faster than the first, and the better you understand the text, the easier it will be to write your papers. It is time well spent.

Set a Purpose for Reading

Set a purpose for reading. What is the outcome of your reading? For example, if you are completing a précis, be sure to look for the author's argument, evidence, purpose/project, intended audience and tone/strategies toward that audience.

Flip through the Text before Reading

- Number your paragraphs. This is very helpful for class/group discussion, not to mention reference.
- Look for head-notes, footnotes, biographical information about the author, other explanatory material.
- Identify the author, date, publication venue, and genre.
- Identify the target audience.
- Survey the organization of the text; look for text divisions, section headings, and subtitles. Turn title and all section headings into questions. Answer these questions as you read.
- Read first and last paragraphs to possibly identify the author's topic and conclusion/central claim, and while reading, mark repeated terms and synonyms that point to central claim (Please note: this "first and last paragraphs" reading works for many, but not all texts because topic and central claim are not always specifically stated or placed in these locations)



Marking the Text

Marking a text is an incredibly valuable reading skill. As opposed to being a passive recipient of the information a text conveys, proficient readers actively engage with texts, as if in conversation with the author. On the left margin summarize what each paragraph/group of paragraphs are saying. On the right margin, write what the other is doing.

- While you chart—in addition to looking for claims, evidence, strategies, context clues—note unfamiliar words or allusions (for example, with a squiggled line) and look them up. Write definition in the margin. Look up allusions. It may help you understand the context.
- Note signal words such as therefore, so, thus, but, however, for example, first, second, etc.
- Note when the author uses the word "I." This can help you see where the author has inserted themselves in the text (to explain position, what they are doing, the structure of their argument, clarify argument, etc)
- Also, "speak" to the text – jot down questions, comments, rhetorical work being done, etc. Identifying when the author "shifts gears" can help you mark off sections of a text. We will talk more about this strategy in class.

Questions to Ask ANY Text

These questions can be posed to any text, and can help you start thinking about texts from a rhetorical perspective.

The Big Picture

- 1 Who is the audience? Who is the author trying to reach? (age, gender, cultural background, class, etc.) Which elements of the text – both things included, and things left out – provide clues about the intended audience? How does the author represent the audience?
- 2 Who is the author, and where is she coming from? What can you find out about the author? What can you find out about the organization, publication, web site, or source she is writing for?
- 3 What is the author's purpose? What is the question at issue? Why has the author written this text? What is the problem, dispute, or question being addressed? What motivated her to write, what does she hope to accomplish, and how does she hope to influence the audience?
- 4 What is the context - what is the situation that prompted the writing of this text, & how do you know? When was the text created, and what was going on at the time? Can you think of any social, political, or economic conditions that are particularly important?
- 5 What "conversation" is the author part of? It's unlikely the author is the first person to write on a particular topic. As Graff points out, writers invariably add their voices to a larger conversation. How does the author respond to other texts? How does she enter the conversation ("Many authors have argued X, but as Smith shows, this position is flawed, and I will extend Smith's critique by presenting data that shows...") How does the author position herself in relation to other authors?
- 6 How does the author claim "centrality," i.e. establish that the topic being discussed matters, and that readers should care?
- 7 What is the author's "stance"? What is his attitude toward the subject, and how does this come across in his language?
- 8 What research went into writing the text, & what material does the author examine? (project)



Questions to Ask ANY Text

Argument and Persuasion

- ❓ What is the most important sentence in this text, to you? Why?
- ❓ What is the author's overall argument, or central claim?
- ❓ What are the most important (sub) claims?
- ❓ How does the author establish her authority/credibility? (ethos)
- ❓ How does the author connect with your emotions? (pathos)
- ❓ What evidence or reasons does the author provide, and do they convince you? (logos)
- ❓ What are you being asked to believe, think, or do? (persuasion)
- ❓ How is the text organized? Why do you think the author organized the text this way? What effect does it have?
- ❓ Does the author respond to other arguments, and if so, are they treated fairly?
- ❓ How do the author's stylistic choices reinforce or advance the argument? How do word choice, imagery, metaphor, design, etc. help persuade?
- ❓ How does the author frame the issues? Does the author's representation of the issue or problem invite the audience to see things from a particular perspective? How does this help persuade?
- ❓ How does the author define the central terms being discussed? How does this help persuade?
- ❓ What assumptions can you identify? What does the author take for granted, and what does this tell you about her argument?
- ❓ What implications follow from the author's argument?
- ❓ Does the author use metadiscourse? Are there moments when the author talks about what he is doing, or addresses the audience directly? Is this persuasive? How?



"I know what it says, but what does it mean?"

Thoughtful use of verbs is about more than just skimming the thesaurus to change up your language. Intentional choices of verbs can help authors convey their ideas in more precise and nuanced ways.

In the kinds of analytical writing you'll do for this class, verb selection can be particularly useful in articulating what an author is arguing and how. This includes evaluation of an author's argument, claims, assumptions, and evidence, the kinds rhetorical strategies and appeals they use, and how they organize it to communicate it in a clear and persuasive way.

Verbs for Making a Claim

Argue
Assert
Believe
Claim
Emphasize
Insist
Observe
Remind us
Report
Suggest

Verbs for Questioning or Disagreeing

Complain
Complicate
Contend
Contradict
Deny
Deplore the tendency to
Disavow
Question
Refute
Reject
Renounce
Repudiate

Verbs for Expressing Agreement

Acknowledge
Admire
Agree
Celebrate the fact that
Corroborate
Do not deny
Endorse
Extol
Praise
Reaffirm
Support
Verify

Verbs for Making Recommendations

Advocate
Call for
Demand
Encourage
Exhort
Implore
Plead
Recommend
Urge
Warn



(From Graff et al., *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*.)

Charting a Text

Charting involves annotating a text in order to show the “work” each paragraph, group of paragraphs, or section is doing. Charting helps identify what each part of the text is doing as well as what it is saying—helping us move away from summary to analysis. There are two strategies for charting that we’ll look at: macro-charting and micro-charting.

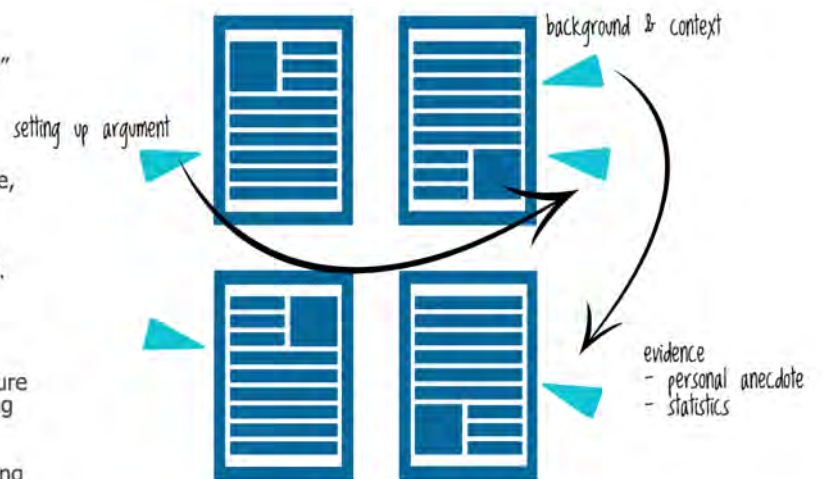
Macro-Charting: The Big Picture

How do we do macro-charting?

- Break text down into sections—identify “chunks” or parts of the text that seem to work together to DO something for the overall argument.
- Draw lines between sections and label each one, annotating them with “doing” verbs: providing context, making a claim, supporting a claim, rebutting counter argument, illustrating with personal anecdote, describing the issue, etc.

Why do we do macro-charting?

- Macro-charting helps with understanding structure of argument, as well as locating claims, supporting evidence, and main argument.
- Macro-charting guides students toward identifying relationships between ideas. Macro-charting brings awareness that behind every sentence there is an author with intent who makes rhetorical choices to achieve his/her aims.



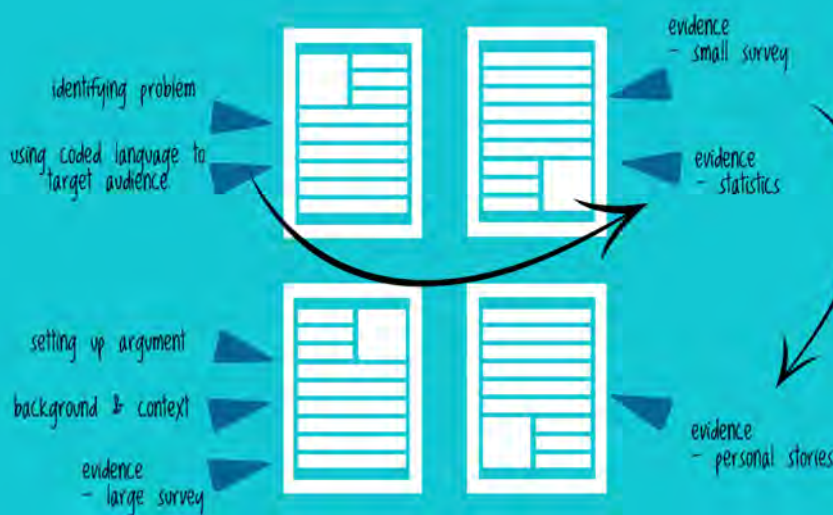
Micro-Charting: The Little Details

How do we do micro-charting?

- Break down sections of text by paragraph to analyze what each paragraph is doing for the overall argument.
- Detail the smaller “moves” and strategies made within paragraphs: note when, where, and how and author makes a claim, cites evidence, and/or supports his/argument using a rhetorical strategy.
- Draw lines between sections and label each one, annotating them with “doing” verbs: providing context, making a claim, supporting a claim, rebutting counter argument, illustrating with personal anecdote, describing the issue, etc.

Why do we do micro-charting?

- Micro-charting can serve as a way to thoroughly understand in a detailed way how a text is put together.
- Micro-charting encourages readers to look more carefully and closely at a text and helps us to focus our reading on tasks asked for in prompts.
- Micro-charting brings awareness of the specific rhetorical choices made throughout a text (addressing particular audiences by making deliberate moves).



Templates for Summary and Analysis

The Graff Template for Writing a Response:

The argument template that Graff describes helps students use the elements of an argument- claim, support, examples- to guide their reading and writing processes. Although it may be somewhat prescriptive, it provides a useful structure for students to follow until they internalize the process.

The general argument made by author X in her/his article,

(title) " _____ , " is that _____ .

More specifically, X contends that _____ .

She/he writes, " _____ " _____ .

In this passage, X is suggesting that _____ .

In conclusion, X's belief is that _____ .

More Templates for Organizing Your Discussion of Claims

Thompson claims [describe claim] ...

According to Thompson, [explain claim further] ...

For example, Thompson states that "[give quotation] ..."

What he means by this is [discuss quotation] ...

In other words, [explain quotation further or in your own words] ...



Quick Guide to Quotations



1. Choose Carefully!

Make sure you need the quotation to illustrate your point, and that it connects closely with the point you are making.



2. Introduce or "frame"

You should 'set up' or introduce quotations in your own words by providing context for the section of the text the quotation comes from.



3. Integrate

Make the quoted words fit the language of your writing.



4. Analyze & Explain

Explain the relevance of any direct quote you include. Never leave a quote hanging on its own without an explanation.



5. Cite the Source

Always cite the text, author, page number, etc. you are using.

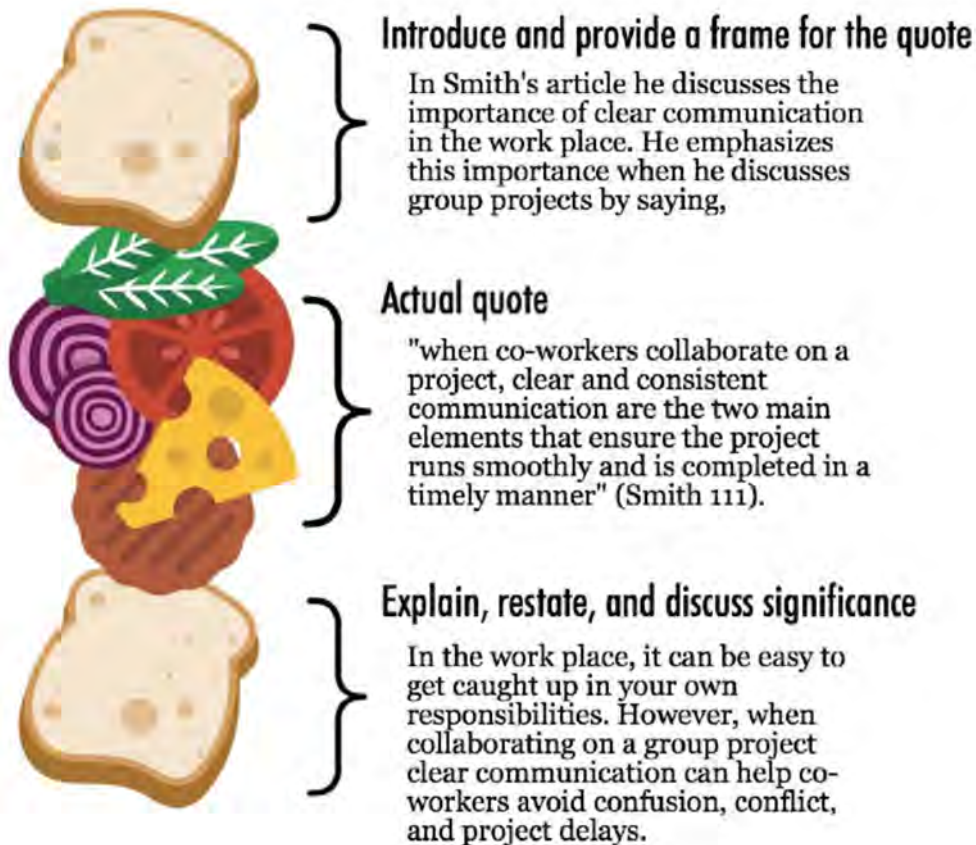


6. Maintain Your Voice

You should provide good "cueing" so that the reader always knows the difference between what the you believe and what the quoted source believes.

Quotation Sandwich

Have you ever tried to make a sandwich without any bread? You can't very well have a sandwich without two pieces of bread to hold the veggies, meat, and condiments together. It's the same thing when you use quotes in a paper, you can't properly insert a quote without introducing it first, and analyzing it after.



MLA Documentation Simplified

By Glen McClish

Parenthetical or In-Text Citations

1. Crediting a source when directly quoted and identified:

Leonard Valverde has called mathematics "the most culture-free subject" (126).

2. Crediting a source when paraphrased or summarized and identified:

Deborah Tannen argues that men and women respond differently to debate in classroom settings (124-26).

3. Crediting multiple sources when paraphrased or summarized and identified:

Peter Marin (191) and John Morrison (174) maintain that our culture devalues men's lives.

4. Crediting unidentified sources:

Most students confuse the semicolon with the colon (Smith 43).

Mathematics has been called "the most culture-free subject" (Valverde 126).

5. Citing multiple sources by the same author requires employing abbreviated versions of the titles of the texts in your parenthetical citations. For example, suppose you have two sources by the author Gerald Graff: an article entitled "Teach the Conflicts" and a book entitled *Literature Against Itself*:

Gerald Graff asserts that a pedagogy in which we focus on "teaching the conflicts" will give our curriculum structure and relevance ("Teach" 51). He argues primarily from a theoretical and global perspective that places educational discord in the framework of larger problems in academic culture (*Literature* 120-27).

Educational discord can be contextualized within larger problems in academic culture (Graff, *Literature* 120-27).

6. Citing sources from the Web without page numbers requires a somewhat different approach. If you are citing such a work by Chris Werry that is unidentified, place his name in parentheses:

With the advent of the Internet, composition pedagogy forever changed (Werry).

If, on the other hand, you identify the text, provide no parenthetical citation:

With the advent of the Internet, argues Chris Werry, "composition pedagogy forever changes."

7. If the author or title is identified, single-page sources do not require a parenthetical page number.

In "Why Try Zimmerman?" the Los Angeles Times declared, "Unless federal authorities uncover some new piece of evidence that suggests obvious racial animus . . . he should not be prosecuted again."

8. Citing an unidentified, authorless source requires using its title (or a shortened version):

At least one major newspaper discouraged further prosecution of Zimmerman ("Why Try Zimmerman?")

MLA Documentation Simplified

Works Cited or Bibliography

List sources in alphabetical order on a separate page under the heading "Works Cited." Abbreviate Press with P, University with U, and University Press with UP. Please consult a style guide or see me if you will be citing a type of source not represented on this list.

A. a book by a single author:

Griffin, Clifford S. *Their Brothers' Keepers*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1960. Print.

B. a book by multiple authors:

Hand, Shaky, and Ima Klutz. *Surgery Made Easy*. Boston: Fly By Night P, 1991. Print.

Bellah, Robert N., et al. *Habits of the Heart*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1985. Print.

C. an edited book:

McClish, Glen. *Punctuation*. Ed. Ellen Quandahl. San Diego: San Diego State UP, 2003. Print.

D. a chapter in a book (usually a collection of essays):

Golding, Alan C. "A History of American Poetry Anthologies." *Canons*. Ed. Robert von Hallberg. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984. 279-307. Print.

E. an article in a journal (accessed in print or online):

Wright, Susan. "Private Language Made Public." *Poetics* 18.1 (1989): 549-78. Print.

Wright, Susan. "Private Language Made Public." *Poetics* 18.1 (1989): 549-78. ProQuest. Web. 23 Nov. 2012.

F. an article in a newspaper or periodical (accessed in print or online):

Mangan, Katherine S. "Battle Rages Over Plan to Focus on Race and Gender in the University of Texas Course." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 27 Nov. 1990: A15. Print.

"Dr. W. J. Simmons." *Christian Recorder*, 20 Nov. 1890: n. pag. Accessible Archives. Web. 30 Oct. 2012.

G. an interview (conducted by the author of the essay):

Yeltsin, Boris. Personal interview. 1 Dec. 1994.

H. a text or page from a website (my example comes directly from the Purdue OWL Site):

"How to Make Vegetarian Chili." eHow. Demand Media, n.d. Web. 24 Feb. 2009.

author's and/or editor's names (if known); title of text, project or website in italics; document date and pages (if known); medium of publication (web); date of your visit; URL optional.

I. a website (my example comes directly from the Purdue OWL Site):

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue U, 2008. Web. 23 Apr. 2008.

Editor, author, or compiler name (if available). Name of Site. Version number. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher), date of resource creation (if available). Medium of publication. Date of access.

(Sources with no author (alphabetize by title).)

Assumptions and Implications

Assumptions are beliefs, values, and ways of seeing the world that an author takes for granted. Assumptions are sometimes explicitly stated, but are often unstated because authors expect their audience to share these beliefs or values. Analyzing an author's assumptions can help us do the following:

1

Understand what holds an argument together

Entire arguments often rest on a particular set of assumptions about what is real, relevant, true and ethical. Investigating assumptions can help us gain a deeper understanding of an argument and produce more incisive rhetorical analysis.

2

Identify the writer's primary audience

Examining an author's assumptions - the unstated beliefs, values and ways of seeing the world - may help you understand the intended audience. For example, you may discover the author assumes an audience that is young/old, conservative/liberal, scientifically trained/novice, religious/agnostic, etc. You may discover the author makes assumptions about the audience's beliefs and values that are reasonable or unreasonable.

3

Evaluate and critique arguments

Investigating assumptions can help you identify blind spots, weaknesses, and flaws in an author's argument. This can help you evaluate the text's strengths and weaknesses. If you are able to challenge or cast doubt on an author's assumptions then you may have identified a major flaw in the argument. If you can locate counter-examples that complicate the author's assumptions then this may point to a weakness in the argument. It may also help you build your own counter-argument.

4

Become more aware of your own assumptions

Identifying and analyzing others' assumptions can help make you aware of your own. Furthermore, identifying and examining your own assumptions can help you develop as a writer. It may also help you argue with more self-understanding and rigor.

Assumptions are everywhere, part of all arguments. They may be conscious or unconscious, explicit or implicit. Any part of a text can reveal assumptions - from the title, to the evidence, to the main chains of reasoning, to the tone. Assumptions can also be identified in visual texts. Consider how maps involve assumptions about what is "up" and "down," or what is central and peripheral. Scholars who study monuments such as the Washington memorial or the Vietnam War memorial note that their design reflects specific cultural assumptions. In some Southern states there is currently a debate over whether monuments depicting leaders of the Confederacy should be removed from public spaces. This debate revolves around what these monuments symbolize, but it also concerns the historical assumptions they embody.

Identifying Assumptions

It is sometimes hard to identify assumptions. They are often unconscious, and must be patiently teased out of a text. To identify assumptions, try looking at texts from the following angles.

1. Look for assumptions the author makes about the audience's beliefs and values. Consider the author's treatment of his audience. What does the author assume his readers will find important, true, relevant, and moral? SDSU Professor Glen McClish suggests students address the following questions to help get at assumptions the author makes about the audience.

- A. Read the introduction of the text. What do you have to believe/value/care about to get past the first line, paragraph or page?
- B. Who is going to check out right here? (examine a specific claim or piece of evidence)
- C. How does the author attempt to bring in people who value X here? [Supply a relevant value]
- D. Who is not going to be able to read this? [locate a specific claim or assumption]

For example, in Stephen Miller's "A Smoker's Plea," the author argues that campus anti-smoking policies are based on fake science, and are pushed by "special interest groups" whose real aim is to reduce freedom. Let us look at a couple of paragraphs from Miller's argument. Writing in the Duke University student newspaper, Miller claims,

With countless dollars and the awesome force of political correctness behind it, the anti-smoking crusade is nearly impervious to truth or reason. But I shall nonetheless make an effort to dismantle a few of the major lies that have brought our society to its knees before the unrelenting health fascists....the real risks are the fascistic tendencies that prohibit smoking in even private establishments, violating our liberties and setting the groundwork for a future where any personal habit can be regulated when it is politically expedient. So, to all smokers and people who value their freedom, I say it is time to draw a line in the ash and defend our right to light up.

Miller appears to make several assumptions here. He assumes that anti-smoking policies are not widely supported, but have instead been forced on students by a small, powerful cohort of "health fascists" who spread lies about the health risks of smoking in an effort to reduce freedom. These assumptions may be hard for some readers to accept. Readers who believe most students prefer a smoke-free campus, and that scientific research on the health effects of smoking is valid, may find Miller's argument unpersuasive. Miller also assumes it is not worth trying to negotiate with, or find common ground with those who disagree with him. (He does not, for example, suggest that the university establish special areas where people can smoke). He assumes that those who disagree with him are both irrational and motivated by sinister impulses. This is suggested by his use of words like "unrelenting health fascists," "the awesome force of political correctness," and "crusade." Analyzing Miller's assumptions can help us understand how he imagines his audience. From this perspective, Miller's goal seems not (primarily) to persuade readers who disagree with him, but rather to rally readers who share his views to take action. Identifying these assumptions can help us better understand Miller's purpose, audience, and strategies, as well as the quality of his argument.

In contrast to Miller's argument, Simon Shieh ("Smoking Ban Diminishes On-Campus Diversity") writing in SDSU's Daily Aztec, assumes that common ground is possible and people who support smoking restrictions can be persuaded. Shieh concedes that smoking is harmful and second-hand smoke a concern, but he argues that smokers are part of the campus community and can be accommodated without harming non-smokers. Shieh argues that smoking bans limit diversity, and restrict smokers' ability to socialize and deal with stress. By appealing to diversity and community - widely shared values - and proposing a pragmatic compromise, Shieh assumes he can persuade readers on all sides of the debate to support his position.

Exercise:

Read Miller's "A Smoker's Plea" and Shieh's "Smoking Ban Diminishes On-Campus Diversity." Can you find other important assumptions the authors make about their audiences?



2. Look for unstated values, beliefs and premises that are necessary for the author's claims to "hang together."

Aristotle notes that authors often advance arguments that depend for their completeness on unstated assumptions or missing premises. We may not even notice the hidden assumptions if we are inclined to agree with them. For example, claims that take the form, "politician X's racist/sexist speeches show he is unfit for office" assume that racist and sexist statements are bad, and politicians should not make them. This assumption is widely shared by audiences today and thus likely to be persuasive. However, in the past such an assumption may have been less widely shared, and thus less persuasive.

Consider the following claims, each of which contains unstated assumptions or missing premises:

Consider the following claims, each of which contains unstated assumptions or missing premises:

A. "With a name like Smucker's, it has to be good." This is an advertising slogan for Smucker's jams. The missing premise appears to be that food companies usually create catchy names to market their products, but "Smucker" (a family name) is an awkward, unappetizing name, and thus the quality of Smucker's products must be particularly good in order to compensate for this.

B. "Needle exchange programs, which allow drug addicts to exchange dirty needles for clean ones, should be abolished because they will only cause more people to use drugs." The unstated premise is that when you make risky behavior safer you encourage more people to engage in it.

C. "'Light' is a Big Sean song, and so it is vulgar, sexist, and full of foul language." This claim contains an unstated assumption/premise, namely that most Big Sean songs are vulgar, sexist, and full of foul language.

D. "The gun has the defendant's fingerprints on the trigger. He must therefore be guilty of the crime." This assumes that fingerprints found on guns used for criminal purposes typically belong to the person who committed the crime.

E. Internet memes often rely for their humor on unstated assumptions that the reader must infer. Consider this meme. The unspoken assumption in the image is that the speakers' friend is a dangerous driver.

friend: "I'll drive today"

me:



3. Try to find significant “absences,” “silences,” or gaps in an argument.

Try to think who or what may be left out in a text, and then try to identify why. This may reveal assumptions the author makes. For example, in Miller’s “A Smoker’s Plea,” he does not mention that some people prefer smoke-free environments not just for the health benefits, but also because they find sitting, eating, and studying in smoky environments uncomfortable, and consider the right to do so a “freedom.” Miller’s argument leaves this out, focusing solely on restrictions to smokers’ freedoms. This absence may suggest he is not primarily concerned with persuading the audience of people who value smoke-free environments, and that he defines “freedom” rather narrowly.

In Nicholas Kristof’s “Do We Have the Courage to Stop This?” the author argues for stricter gun regulations in the wake of the Sandyhook tragedy. Kristof compares guns to cars, suggesting guns ought to be regulated and made to include safety features just as cars have been. However, Kristof leaves out mention of gun ownership as a constitutional right. This suggests he assumes an audience that shares his “consumer safety” perspective on guns, rather than an audience that thinks about guns primarily in constitutional terms.

In a 2015 op-ed, “How Texas Teaches History,” Ellen Rockmore argues that new history textbooks in Texas use language to downplay the horrors of slavery by foregrounding the “positive” things slave owners did, while downplaying and sometimes leaving out the brutality of slavery. She writes, “There are no sentences, in these excerpts, anyway, in which slaves are doing what slaves actually did: toiling relentlessly, without remuneration or reprieve, constantly subject to confinement, corporal punishment and death.” Rockmore suggests that this absence reveals assumptions about slavery that are incorrect and harmful, and that these assumptions may be passed to students who read these history textbooks.

4. Look for assumptions embedded in the definitions, categories, and key terms of an argument.

This will often point to the existence of important assumptions. Consider the terms and categories Miller (“A Smoker’s Plea”) uses to describe people who support tobacco restrictions. He calls them “special interest groups” and “health fascists” on a “crusade” to impose “political correctness” and take away “liberty” and “freedom.” These terms assume that people who support tobacco restrictions are authoritarian, undemocratic and unreasonable, seeking to force unpopular rules on people who do not want them. They suggest his opponents do not have good faith reasons for their position and are not interested in the public good; they are on a “crusade,” driven by zealotry and the desire to diminish freedom. Miller’s use of such terms suggests he assumes the stakes are extremely high (the future of freedom and liberty). Lastly, Miller’s use of “fascism” reveals that he assumes a definition of the term that is idiosyncratic and rather broad.

The definitions authors use often reveal important assumptions. In debates over same sex marriage, people who oppose this often define their goal as the “defense of marriage.” This definition assumes that gay people who wish to marry are “attacking” heterosexual (or “traditional”) marriage. Conversely, gay marriage proponents define their project as “marriage equality,” which assumes an extension of civil rights to those who have been unfairly denied them. A close reading of the categories, definitions and terms used in such debates can help reveal underlying assumptions, and this in turn can help reveal major areas of tension and disagreement.

Exercise 1

After the September 11 attacks in 2001, politicians used a number of terms to describe the effort to find and defeat the attackers. These terms contained different assumptions about the attackers and the effort to defeat them.

Consider the different assumptions entailed in the following three expressions. What does each expression assume about the nature of the struggle, its scope, who is involved, and how victory might be defined?

1. “War on Terror”
2. “War against Islamic extremists”
3. “Fight against Al Qaeda”



Exercise 2

Exercise: Work to tease out some of the assumptions embedded in the following sets of terms:

1. Far East, Middle East, Near East
2. The Death Tax, the Estate Tax, the Inheritance Tax
3. Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms.
4. Negro, Black, African American
5. The Maori Wars, The New Zealand Wars, The Land Wars
6. Third world country, first world country, developing nation
7. Hispanic, Latino, Chicano
8. Indigenous, Indian, native, aboriginal, First Nation
9. Tree hugger, environmentalist, conservationist

5. Look for assumptions embedded in the rhetorical “frames” authors construct

Authors often construct “frames,” or what the rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke calls “terminological screens.” These frames encourage particular ways of seeing an issue. Authors establish frames by combining related terms, analogies, stories, definitions, or metaphors. Authors may also use style and syntax (grammar) and point of view to construct a frame. Frames can lead an audience to attend to certain elements of a situation and ignore others, and invite particular perspectives on issues. For example, some writers argue that the “war on drugs” frame adopted by many journalists, politicians and policy makers helped create a view of addiction that was overly narrow and punitive.

Analyzing the frames an author uses can help us discover key assumptions, and this can help us evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of an argument. For example, in “A Smoker’s Plea” Miller frames the issue as a battle between supporters of freedom, liberty and truth on one side, and the forces of fascism, falsehood and political correctness on the other. If readers accept this frame and all that it assumes about the issue, they are likely to be persuaded. But a critical analysis of Miller’s argument might ask whether this frame contains some faulty assumptions about the debate and the various stakeholders involved.

In Kristof’s “Do We Have the Courage to Stop This?” the author brings together a set of stories, analogies and examples that construct a “consumer safety frame” on gun control. For example, he notes that everyday consumer goods such as toys, ladders, and food are carefully regulated, and have, over time, been made much safer. He also notes that the government requires drivers to be registered and pass tests, and has required manufacturers to add many effective safety features to cars. Kristof claims it is absurd that we do not take a similar approach to guns. Those readers who accept his “consumer safety frame,” and the assumptions that accompany it, will likely be persuaded. However, those readers who do not accept this frame, and resist the assumptions entailed in it, will likely not be persuaded.

Scholars who study media are often interested in the frames journalists use when reporting news stories, and the assumptions these frames reveal. Take a look at the examples below. Each uses a different frame to represent a news story. Compare the frames and the assumptions associated with these frames.

Exercise 1

In 1996 California passed a referendum legalizing medical marijuana. This was followed by a series of legal challenges that went all the way to the Supreme Court. In 2005 the Supreme Court ruled against the California law. This decision was described in newspaper headlines across the country. Examine the different frames adopted in these headlines, and the assumptions identifiable in these frames.

1. Salon Magazine "Court rules against pot for sick people"
2. New York Times: "Supreme Court Allows Prosecution of Medical Marijuana Users"
3. San Diego Union Tribune: "Court OKs Marijuana Crackdown"
4. L.A. Times: "Justices Give Feds Last Word on Medical Marijuana"
5. Washington Times: "Medical Marijuana Laws Don't Shield Users From Prosecution"

Exercise 2

Examine the different frames and assumptions identifiable in these headlines

1. Armed extremists take over lodge
2. Long-running dispute over federal lands sparks protest
3. Oregon occupation unites Native american tribes to save their land
4. Oregon town tense amid dneling protests after wildlife refuge takeover
5. Militia takes over Malheur National Wildlife Refuge headquarters

Exercise 3

Examine the different frames and assumptions identifiable in these stories:

1. "An infant left sleeping in his crib was bitten repeatedly by rats while his 17-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)

Implications

While assumptions are beliefs and values the reader must agree with in order to accept an author's position, implications are what follow from that position. Assumptions underlie an argument, while implications are what follow from an argument.

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

Arguments are sometimes criticized for their implications. A common strategy is to A) describe what ought to follow from an argument, then point out problems or counterexamples to this, or 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, one should avoid constructing a set of implications that are only loosely based on an author's argument.

In "A Smoker's Plea," Miller criticizes the implications that follow from his opponents' position. He does this in two ways. First, he says that if one accepts the CDC's data on smoking-related deaths, and its use to justify campus anti smoking regulations accepts, this implies that the university should be even more concerned with the effects of bad diet and lack of exercise. (Miller notes that nobody is trying to shut down McDonalds.) Miller targets the implications of his opponents' position to show that it is inconsistent and lead to absurd results if followed consistently. Miller states,

And get this-if one applies the same methodology the Centers for Disease Control uses to calculate smoking-related deaths to lack-of-exercise related deaths, failure to exercise kills over 100,000 more people than smoking. And bad dietary habits? Over 200,000 more people. Using the CDC's standards, smoking is healthier than getting too little exercise or eating poorly. So is the University going to shut down McDonald's?

Second, Miller suggests that those who seek to restrict smoking on campus are "setting the groundwork for a future where any personal habit can be regulated when it is politically expedient." That is, Miller claims that if political pressure can lead to one personal habit being regulated, this implies any personal habit can be regulated. This seems a rather weak challenge to the implications that can be drawn from his opponents' position as it leaves out the body of scientific research suggesting smoking is harmful and a significant threat to public health, and thus not merely a whimsical "personal habit." (It seems unlikely any personal habit that carries no risk of public harm could be easily banned. For example, I doubt my personal habit of singing Justin Bieber songs in the shower could be so regulated, since it is merely annoying). However, Miller's text shows that writers who wish to challenge opposing arguments often target implications.

Example 1: Gun Control & Implications

Gun Control & Implications. control. Lott wrote *More Guns, Less Crime* (1998), *The Bias Against Guns* (2003), and a number of research articles on the topic. 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 (*More Guns, Less Crime*, p. 3)

There are several implications writers have drawn from Lott's arguments. First, states (and foreign countries) that make it easy for people to carry concealed weapons ought to have lower rates of violent crime than states that do not. Second, after a state (or country) passes legislation permitting or making it much easier for people to carry concealed weapons, rates of violent crime should decrease (assuming other contributory causes of violent crime can be accounted for.) If one can find counterexamples to the implications listed above, these could be used to problematize Lott's arguments. But if they cannot be found, or if the data

Example 2: The Doctrine of "Preemption" in Debates about the Iraq War

One justification for the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq drew on the principle of "preemption" (the notion that it is justifiable to attack a country before it attacks your country if the regime poses a clear and present danger). One criticism of arguments for preemption focused on the potential implications of this position: if it is acceptable for the U.S. to attack a country before it has itself been attacked, then might not other countries be justified in adopting a similar policy? Conversely, some opponents of preemption, who argued that it is never justified to attack a sovereign country except in self-defense, were criticized for what could be inferred from their arguments regarding intervention. Opponents charged that this implied 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.

Rhetorical Strategies

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 PACES terms, rebuttals and qualifiers, framing, rhetorical appeals, 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

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?

Commonplaces

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 refers to 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 question

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?

Some elements of structure to consider:

Types of Organization

- Topical: The argument is organized according to subtopics, like describing a baby's bubble bath first in terms of the soap used, then the water conditions, and lastly the type of towels.
- Chronological: The argument is organized to describe information in time order, like a baseball game from the first pitch to the last at-bat.
- Spatial: The argument follows a visual direction, such as describing a house from the inside to the outside, or a person from their head down to their toes.
- Problem – Solution: The argument presents a problem and a possible solution, such as making coffee at home to avoid spending extra money.
- Cause and effect: Describes the relationship between the cause or catalyst of an event and the effect, like identifying over-consumption of candy as the cause of tooth decay.

Logical Order of Information

- Inductive: Moving from one specific example to draw a general conclusion.
- Deductive: Moving from a generalized theory or assumption to decide the causes or characteristics of a specific example or event.
- Linear: The argument is told in linear order, scaffolding information or reasoning.
- Circular: Supporting the argument using assumptions or information from the argument itself.
- Recursive: The text consistently moves forward but circles back on specific points in the process.

*Portions of this discussion modified from "Rhetorical Strategies for Essay Writing," <http://www.nvcc.edu/home/lshulman/rhetoric.htm>

Some Questions to Guide Analysis of Ethos

1. Find out about the author's background, profession, previous work, etc.
2. Will the audience know who the writer is? If not, how does the writer signal her standing in a community or profession? How does the writer signal her expertise?
3. Does the writer seem knowledgeable? What makes you think so?
4. What/who does the writer like and dislike?
5. How might the writer's status (inherited or invented) affect the audience's willingness to believe, trust or identify with the writer?
6. Can you find places where the writer makes comments that indicate sincerity, fair-mindedness, expertise, likeability, moral vision etc.?
7. What does the author do to gain the respect and trust of the audience, and how well does she do this?
8. Can you find places where the writer makes concession to opposing arguments, indicating fair-mindedness, or an absence of this (indicating the author fails to acknowledge other points of view)?
9. Does the author explain how she came upon the evidence and support presented in her argument? (If she does not, this may undermine ethos).
10. Does the writer do things to show she shares values and background with the audience? How effective is this?
11. What seem to be the writer's biases?
12. What seems to be the writer's mood? (angry, helpful, condescending, sarcastic, funny, etc.)
13. What would it be like to spend time in this writer's company?



Finally, how do the choices the author makes establish trust, respect, good will and credibility? If the author fails to do this, why does it happen?

The Rhetorical Strategy of Metadiscourse

Many forms of academic writing utilize metadiscourse. These are moments in the text when the author explicitly TELLS you how to interpret her words.

- In academic texts, metadiscourse occurs when the author stops arguing, stands back and tells you how to interpret the argument.
- In this moment, the author reflects on what he or she is saying. This may involve making explicit the strategies (the strategy of explaining a strategy).
- Metadiscourse is similar to the project statement or thesis in your papers.



Practicing writing metadiscourse is useful. It helps you develop your ideas, generate more text, and get a better sense of both your paper's structure and how you might change direction.

In clarifying things for your reader, you also clarify things for yourself. Gerald Graff describes the way this works in his article, "How to Write an Argument: What Students and Teachers Really Need to Know," found in this reader. For specific examples, see They Say/I Say p. 126-30.

Authors use metadiscourse to:

1. Ward off potential misunderstandings.
2. Anticipate and respond to objections.
3. Orient the reader by providing a "map"—where the argument is going, where it has gone, etc.
4. Forecast & review structure and purpose
5. Qualify the nature, scope or extent of an argument
6. Alert readers to an elaboration of a previous idea.
7. Move from a general claim to a specific example.
8. Indicate that a claim is especially important

Examples of Metadiscourse from Amusing Ourselves to Death

Neil Postman, media theorist and professor of media ecology at New York University, utilized metadiscourse throughout his academic writing.

In this example of metadiscourse from his book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, you can see how metadiscourse might work in your own essays.

It is my intention in this book to show that a great . . . shift has taken place in America, with the result that the content of much of our public discourse has become dangerous nonsense.

In this example, Postman outlines both the project and the purpose of his book.

With this in view, my task in the chapters ahead is straightforward. I must, first, demonstrate how, under the governance of the printing press, discourse in America was different from what it is now – generally coherent, serious and rational; and then how, under the governance of television, it has become shriveled and absurd.

Here, he forecasts the organization of the arguments and maps out what will happen in the book.

But to avoid the possibility that my analysis will be interpreted as standard-brand academic whimpering, a kind of elitist complaint against "junk" on television, I must first explain that . . . I appreciate junk as much as the next fellow, and I know full well that the printing press has generated enough of it to fill the grand canyon to overflowing. Television is not old enough to have matched printing's output of junk.

First, Postman clarifies what he is about to do, and then he identifies anticipated objections to his argument. Next, he deals with the objection and once again clarifies his position.

Describing Relationships between Texts

How texts extend, complicate, illustrate, challenge, or qualify other texts

Academic writing requires that you build arguments using multiple texts. To do this effectively, you will want to describe the relationships between these different texts

Extend

When a source advances, develops, expands, or takes further some element of an existing argument, we say that the source extends an argument.

- Extending an argument involves presenting additional evidence or reasons that are in line with the original argument but go beyond it.

Some verbs you might use to describe the way a source extends a text include:

Gives additional evidence, develops, elaborates, expands, extrapolates, teases out, advances, takes further, provides additional evidence/support, supplements, etc.

Complicate

When a source presents evidence, arguments or claims that are at odds with an author's position, suggesting that the position needs to be qualified, we say that one text complicates another.

- Complicating an author's argument is not quite the same as disagreeing with it, although disagreement may be involved.
- It usually involves suggesting that an author has not dealt with the full complexity of an issue, has failed to consider relevant evidence, or that there is a gap, shortcoming or limitation in an author's account.
- Complicating an argument may involve exposing problems, contradictions, or presenting counterexamples and counterarguments that challenge some part of the argument.

Some verbs you might use to describe the way a source complicates a text include:

challenges, contradicts, disagrees, locates problems with, identifies shortcomings, notes that X fails to account for, notes that X ignores A, suggests that X's account is exaggerated, is vulnerable to counterarguments/counterexamples, rests on several highly questionable assumptions

Qualify

When a source presents evidence/claims that suggest an author's argument goes too far, is too strong, or overgeneralizes, we say it qualifies the author's argument. When a source limits the scope or extent of claims in an argument, we say that the source qualifies the argument.

Example of unqualified argument: All video games incite violence and should be banned.

Qualified argument: Miller asserts that certain extreme video games may desensitize impressionable young people to violence and advocates a ban on these types of games. However, Jenkins points to evidence from MIT demonstrating that most games are innocent fun and may even teach useful skills. Nevertheless, he acknowledges Miller's concerns and suggests that only games that realistically simulate murder should be banned. In addition, he limits the ban to children under the age of 14. Thus, Jenkins qualifies Miller's claims.

Challenge

When a source directly contradicts or challenges an author's position.

Illustrate

When a source provides examples, additional evidence, cases or arguments that help explain a position we say that the source illustrates an argument.

- Illustrating an argument means to present additional examples that illustrate or support a claim or argument. The illustration may not be explicitly mentioned by the original author.

Some verbs you might use to describe the way a source clarifies or illustrates a text include: illuminates, exemplifies, explicates, confirms, supports, etc.

Evaluating Evidence

Remember definition of evidence – factual information relevant to and supportive of the author's claim or sub-claims. This is a familiar concept to most students, so begin by listing things you see as types of evidence.

A list should include:

- Numerical (including statistics)
- Experimental/Research Study results/observations
- Historical and current events and examples
- Individual examples
- Physical evidence
- Expert testimony
- Personal anecdotes

As you compile the list, explain what you see as the strengths and weaknesses of different kinds of evidence. Statistics, for instance, gives us an idea of how widespread an issue is, but gives little sense of the lived experience of an issue. Personal experience gives a much better sense of how something affects an individual, but may be biased. This is why many arguments combine different kinds of evidence.

Next, identify some textual moves that are sometimes perceived as evidence but are actually not:

- Hypotheticals
- "Common sense" statements
- Bandwagon
- Generalizations

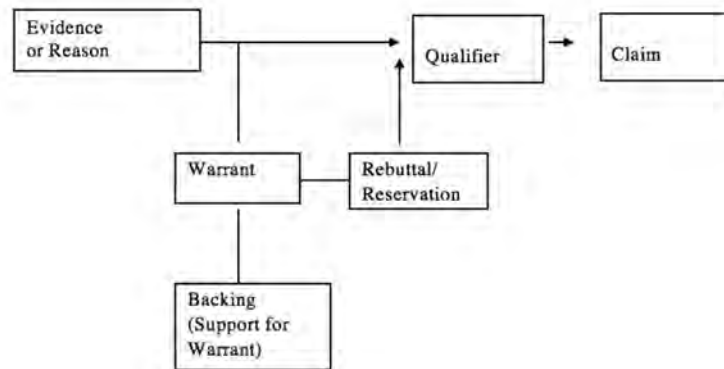
Next, evaluating evidence. We can also consider separately whether you judge the evidence as effective and ethical vs. whether the target audience might judge the evidence as effective and ethical.

Evaluating evidence for effectiveness and ethics:

1. Is the evidence actually evidence, and what type?
2. Is the evidence relevant to the subclaim being supported? How so?
3. Is the evidence relevant to the main argument?
4. Is the evidence specific?
5. Is sufficient detail provided?
6. Is the source reliable?
7. Is the evidence current, relative to the time in which the piece was written?
8. Is the evidence accurate? (This one is harder to get a grasp on unless the student has background in the topic, but it's still in my opinion an important question, one asked by the target audience of an argument.)
9. Is the evidence representative? (Also important; if the writer has cherry-picked evidence to support her or his claim and ignored other evidence that is more in line with the broad picture, then the use of evidence is weak even if that particular example seems persuasive.)
10. Is the evidence sufficient? (Pretty close to #9.)
11. Are there alternative interpretations to the evidence that are not given?

Toulmin, Argument, and Evaluation

In *The Uses of Argument* Stephen Toulmin proposes 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.



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 three other key parts of an argument

1. Assumptions
2. Counter-arguments/counter-examples
3. Implications

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 assumptions)

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.

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 does 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?

Notes on Fallacies and the Evaluation of Argument

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

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

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 a 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.

- 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 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 guilt 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 Ignoratum (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.

9

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."

10

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."

11

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.

12

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."

Appendix

Class Contact Info

Please write down the email address and/or phone number of three of your classmates. If you miss class, or can't remember what was assigned for homework, contact your classmates before asking me.

NAME: _____ CONTACT: _____

NAME: _____ CONTACT: _____

NAME: _____ CONTACT: _____

Agreement on Plagiarism

Policy statements and tutorials on plagiarism are provided by SDSU on these web pages:

<http://infotutor.sdsu.edu/plagiarism/consequences.cfm?p=graphic>
<http://infotutor.sdsu.edu/plagiarism/index.cfm?p=graphic>
<http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/conduct1.html>

I understand that teachers are required by SDSU policy to report cases of plagiarism. I understand that I must clearly mark other people's ideas and words within my paper. I understand it is unacceptable to do any of the following:

- Submit an essay written in whole or part by another person, and to present this as if it were my own.
- Download an essay from the internet, then quote or paraphrase from it, in whole or in part, without acknowledging the original source.
- Reproduce the substance of another writer's argument without acknowledging the source.
- Copy another student/person's homework and submit this as the product of my own work.

I understand that the consequences for committing any of the above acts can include failure in the class, a note on my permanent record, and even expulsion from the university. I will not plagiarize or cheat.

Name (Print Legibly): _____

Date _____

(Signature) _____

=====

Use of Student Work

Your teacher may occasionally wish to share sample student writing in class. She may also wish to share sample student writing as part of her teacher training. For example, your teacher may wish to show an example of a strong introduction, or discuss ways of revising a conclusion. Student writing will be made anonymous (student names will be removed). Is it OK to use your writing in this way?

YES NO

Name: _____