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**Argument Writing**

**When writing anything: You must consider the following:**

* **Speaker/Writer:** person who creates the text
* **Audience**: Listener, viewer, reader of the test or performance. There may be multiple audiences.
* **Subject:** Topic of the text. It is not the purpose.
* **Purpose:** Goal the speaker wants to achieve.

**The Elements of Argument:**

* **Goal:** To get reader to acknowledge that your side is valid and deserves consideration as another point of view.
* **General Technique:** Offers the reader relevant reasons, credible facts, and sufficient evidence to support the writer's perspective as valid and worthy.
* **Starting Point:** *Research* a topic and *then* align with one side.
* **Viewpoint Presented:** Acknowledge that opposing views exist, not only to hint that you are a fair-minded person, but to give you the opportunity to counter these views tactfully in order to show why you feel that your own view is the more worthy one to hold. Writer presents multiple perspectives although the perspective is clearly for one side.
* **Audience:** Doesn't need an audience to convince. The writer is content with simply putting it out there.
* **Attitude:** Simply to get the reader to consider that you have an idea worthy of listening to. The writer is sharing a conviction whether the audience ends up agreeing or not.

**Start with a claim:** The thesis statement for an argumentative paper clearly states your side of the argument and why you hold that position. The thesis statement should also:

* Take a position on a topic (claim)
* Be arguable/controversial
* Be logical and reasonable
* Be provable
* Be an opinion
  + 3-parts, parallel
  + Elevate diction
  + Syntax

**Thesis Statement Template**

1. (practice with Macbeth content) Although many may argue that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ does not demonstrate leadership qualities, a closer examination shows that he/she exhibits \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ making him/her a good leader.

**Sample Thesis Statement**

Although some students may argue that Mrs. Beery does not demonstrate leadership qualities, a closer examination shows she exhibits a devotion to her student’s success, communicates instructions clearly, and treats each student with respect making her a good leader.

You will choose a topic to argue or use a created idea from Mrs. Beery---If you choose your topic, you will show that you can go above and beyond. If you choose a created idea, you can still show mastery, but with assistance.Choose how you would like to proceed knowing your skill level in writing. What will be beneficial for you to grow the most?

Claim:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Consider your counterargument/counterclaim:

One way to strengthen your argument and show that you have a deep understanding of the issue you are discussing is to anticipate and address counterarguments or objections. By considering what someone who disagrees with your position might have to say about your argument, you show that you have thought things through, and you dispose of some of the reasons your audience might have for not accepting your argument.

Who is your opposition?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What information would opposition want you to acknowledge?

1.

2.

3.

Once you have thought up some counterarguments, consider how you will respond to them—will you concede that your opponent has a point but explain why your audience should nonetheless accept your argument? Will you reject the counterargument and explain why it is mistaken? Either way, you will want to leave your reader with a sense that your argument is stronger than opposing arguments.

How will you respond to opposition?

When you are summarizing opposing arguments, be charitable. Present each argument fairly and objectively, rather than trying to make it look foolish. You want to show that you have seriously considered the many sides of the issue and that you are not simply attacking or caricaturing your opponents.

It is usually better to consider one or two serious counterarguments in some depth, rather than to give a long but superficial list of many different counterarguments and replies.

**You need credible evidence to support an argument:**

Appeals: Try to triangulate your argument. Each element of the rhetorical triangle impacts the others.

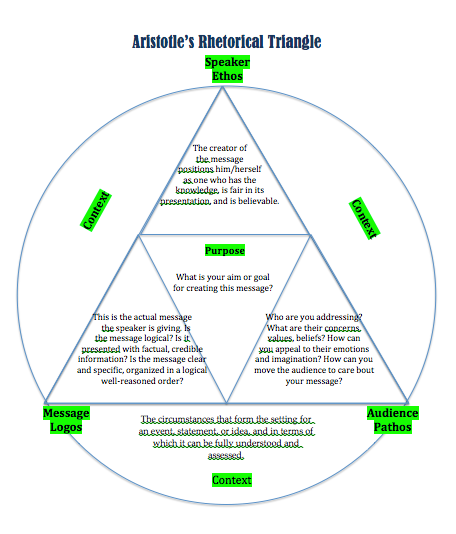
**Logos** or the appeal to reason relies on logic or reason. Logos often depends on the use of inductive or deductive reasoning.

**Pathos**, or emotional appeal, appeals to an audience's needs, values, and emotional sensibilities.

Argument emphasizes reason, but used properly there is often a place for emotion as well. Emotional appeals can use sources such as interviews and individual stories to paint a more legitimate and moving picture of reality or illuminate the truth. For example, telling the story of a single child who has been abused may make for a more persuasive argument than simply the number of children abused each year because it would give a human face to the numbers.

Only use an emotional appeal if it truly supports the claim you are making, not as a way to distract from the real issues of debate. An argument should never use emotion to misrepresent the topic or frighten people.

**Ethos** or the ethical appeal is based on the character, credibility, or reliability of the writer. there are many ways to establish good character and credibility as an author:



* **Avoid Fallacy**

Fallacies are inappropriate emotional appeals and flaws in reasoning.

Inductive reasoning – moves from the particular to the general. Ex. I burn myself on the stove three times, so I conclude that stoves burn.

Deductive reasoning – moves from the general to the particular. Ex. I know that all stoves burn. I see a particular stove, and I conclude that the stove will burn me.

* **Hasty generalizations**: an inductive conclusion that leaps to include all instances when at best only *some* instances provide any evidence. Hasty generalizations form some of the worst stereotypes.

Physically challenged people are mentally challenged, too.

African Americans are good athletes.

* **Oversimplification**: an inductive conclusion that ignores complexities in the evidence that, if heeded, would weaken the conclusion or suggest an entirely different one.

The newspaper went out of business because it couldn’t compete with the Internet.

(Although the Internet may have taken some business from the newspaper, other newspapers continue to thrive; thus the Internet could not be the only cause of the newspaper’s failure.)

* **Begging the question**: assuming a conclusion in the statement of a premise, and thus begging readers to accept the conclusion – the question – before it is proved.

We can trust the president not to neglect the needy because he is a compassionate man.

(This statement shows circular reasoning. It asserts that the president is not uncompassionate because he is compassionate. He may be compassionate, but the statement does not address what he will do for the needy that demonstrates that he is compassionate.)

* **Ignoring the question**: introducing an issue or consideration that shifts the argument away from the real issue. Offering an emotional appeal as a premise in a logical argument is a form of ignoring the question.

The superintendent was badly used by people he loved and trusted, so we should not blame him for the corruption in his administration.

(The sentence appeals to pity, not to logic.)

* **Ad hominem (**Latin for “to the man”): a form of ignoring the question by attacking the opponents instead of the opponents’ arguments.

O’Brien is married to a convict, so her proposals for prison reform should not be taken seriously.

* **Either**-**or**: requiring that readers choose between two interpretations or actions when in fact the choices are more numerous.

Either we imprison all drug users, or we will become their prisoners.

(The factors contributing to drug addiction, and the choices for dealing with it, are more complex than stated in the sentence. However, not all either-or arguments are invalid, for sometimes the alternatives include all the possibilities. When all the possibilities are not covered by the either-or statement, then the argument is false.)

* **Non sequitur** (Latin for “it does not follow”): a conclusion derived illogically or erroneously from stated or implied premises.

The printer is not working, so I couldn’t complete the assignment.

(The premise does not support the claim. In other words, a broken machine might prevent someone from printing finished work, but it has nothing to do with the ability to do the work in the first place.)

* **Post Hoc** (from the Latin *post hoc, ergo propter hoc,* “after this, therefore because of this”): assuming that because one thing preceded another, it must have caused the other.

After the town banned smoking in closed public places, the incidence of vandalism went up.

(Many things may have caused the rise in vandalism, including improved weather conditions and a rise in the unemployment rate. It does not follow that the ban on smoking, and that alone, caused the rise.)

Source: Repetto, Ellen Kuhl and Jane E. Aaron. *Common Threads: Core Reading by Methods and Theme.* Boston: Bedford’s/St. Martin, 2014. 369 – 373.

* **Research text or outside sources**
* **Support with credible evidence:**
* **Be consistent** with your evidence. Unlike negotiating for the use of your parents’ car, a college paper is not the place for an all-out blitz of every type of argument. You can often use more than one type of evidence within a paper, but make sure that within each section you are providing the reader with evidence appropriate to each claim. So, if you start a paragraph or section with a statement like “Putting the student seating area closer to the basketball court will raise player performance,” do not follow with your evidence on how much more money the university could raise by letting more students go to games for free. Information about how fan support raises player morale, which then results in better play, would be a better follow-up. Your next section could offer clear reasons why undergraduates have as much or more right to attend an undergraduate event as wealthy alumni—but this information would not go in the same section as the fan support stuff. You cannot convince a confused person, so keep things tidy and ordered.

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Structure of argument essay:**

An argument essay has a minimal five-part structure. It has an introduction, a conclusion, and a main body that itself contains at least three distinct arguments. The three distinct arguments are the main argument (or claim), an objection (counter-claim), and a reply (defense of the original claim).

The main argument of the essay is a distinct argument, but you also have to consider the strongest objections that you can think of and offer replies to those objections. Each of these are distinct arguments as well.

The organization of the logical elements of the main body can vary. You can present a whole argument, then proceed to list objections and consider replies, or you can consider objections as you work through the main argument. ( I will model the second method in this assignment)

The essay must include:

* Choose arguable topic (go to website and there are over 300 from NYTimes listed)
* 5 paragraph structure
* 5-6 different sources
* Works cited page
* MLA format
* Must not exceed 7 pages
* Claim---3 parts parallel (see rubric and packet)
* Sophisticated TE from Credible sources (see rubric and packet)
* Developed Commentary that analyzes why TE supports claim (see rubric and packet)
* Acknowledge opposition (refute or accommodate) in each body paragraph (see rubric and packet)
* The conclusion summarizes the arguments presented in the main body of the essay.
* \*\*\*\*\*\*\*if you want a chosen prompt---see me for claim\*\*\*\*\*\*(posted online on my website)

**Essay of Argument Outline**

Introduction paragraph

Hook/Lead

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Background information

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Claim (TS)

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Body Paragraph (3xs)

TS

Text Evidence (Research)

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Commentary (CM)

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Text Evidence (Research)

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Commentary (CM) ---or also called in argument writing---**Warrant** Explanation of why or how the data supports the claim, the underlying assumption that connects your data to your claim.

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Counterclaim & Evidence (Opposing View)

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Reply to Counterclaim (Refutation)

Including a well-thought-out warrant or bridge is essential to writing a good argumentative essay or paper. If you present data to your audience without explaining how it supports your thesis your readers may not make a connection between the two or they may draw different conclusions.

Don't avoid the opposing side of an argument. Instead, include the opposing side as a counterclaim. Find out what the other side is saying and respond to it within your own argument. This is important so that the audience is not swayed by weak, but unrefuted, arguments. Including counterclaims allows you to find common ground with more of your readers. It also makes you look more credible because you appear to be knowledgeable about the entirety of the debate rather than just being biased or uniformed. You may want to include several counterclaims to show that you have thoroughly researched the topic.

Conclusion:

Conclusions wrap up what you have been discussing in your paper. After moving from general to specific information in the introduction and body paragraphs, your conclusion should begin pulling back into more general information that restates the main points of your argument. Conclusions may also call for action or overview future possible research. The following outline may help you conclude your paper:

In a general way,

* Restate your topic and why it is important,
* Restate your thesis/claim,
* Address opposing viewpoints and explain why readers should align with your position,
* Call for action or overview future research possibilities.