The images you remember...

the basics of argument

chapter 1

WHAT'S TO COME

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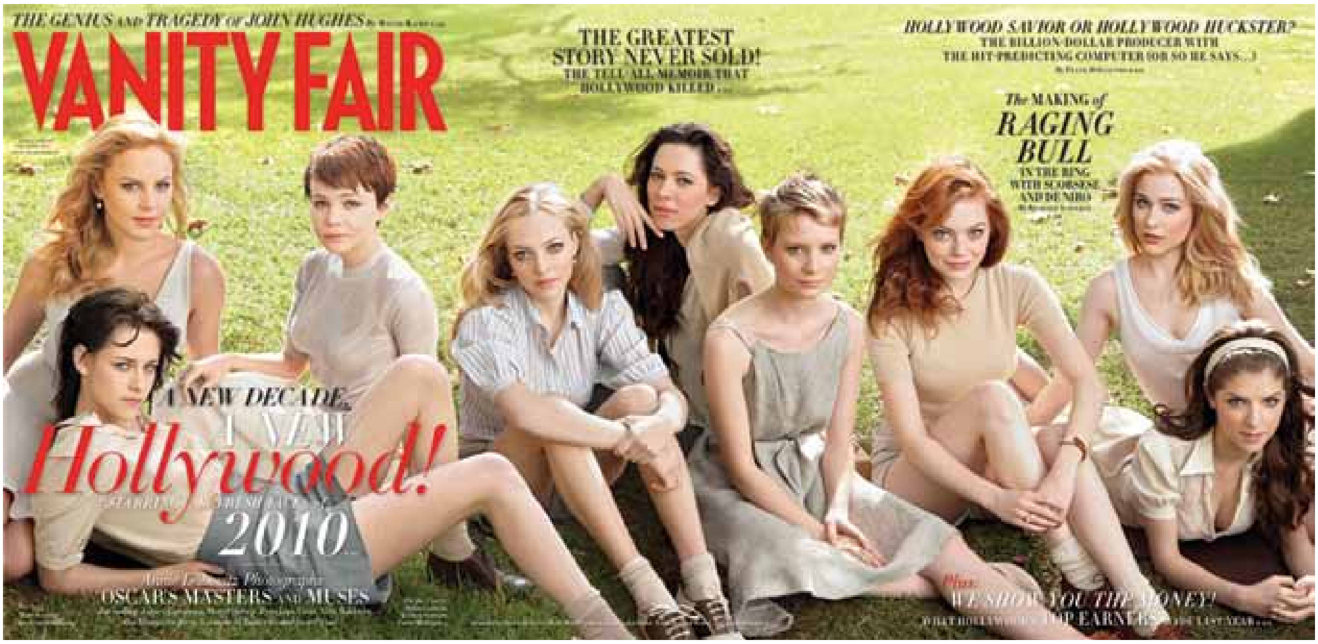

THE GENIUS AND TRAGEDY OF JOHN HUGHES
VANITY FAIR
THE GREATEST STORY NEVER SOLD!
THE TELL-ALL MEMOIR THAT HOLLYWOOD KILLED
HOLLYWOOD SAVIOR OR HOLLYWOOD HUCKSTER?
THE BILLION-DOLLAR PRODUCER WITH THE HIT-PREDICTING COMPUTER (OR SO HE SAYS...)
The MAKING of RAGING BULL
IN THE RING WITH SCORSESE AND DE NIRO
A NEW DECADE, A NEW Hollywood!
2010
Annie Leibovitz Photographs
OSCAR'S MASTERS AND MUSES
Plus: WE SHOW YOU THE MONEY!
WHAT HOLLYWOOD'S TOP EARNERS MADE LAST YEAR

What Does an Argument Look Like?

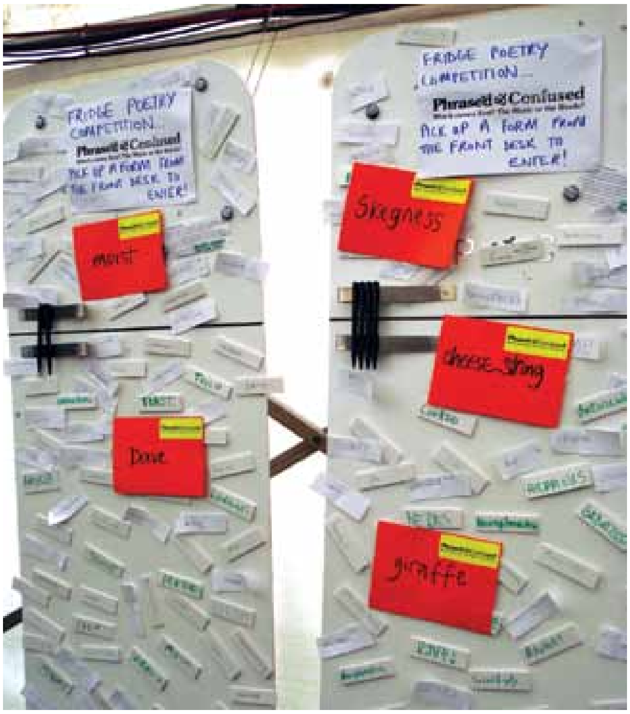
Many everyday arguments are easy to spot. Most readers can sense when an author has intentionally chosen words and images to convince them to adopt a certain position or stance. This March 2010 *Vanity Fair* cover, for example, can clearly be seen as an argument. Critics have labeled this cover racist because it lacks diversity—no Asian, African American, or Hispanic actresses appear in the image.

Similarly, most readers would easily identify the words spoken by New Jersey Governor Chris Christie in early 2011 as an argument:

> The argument you heard most vociferously from the teachers' union was that this was the greatest assault on public education in the history of New Jersey. Now, do you really think that your child is now stressed out and unable to learn because they know that their poor teacher has to pay 1½ percent of their salary for their health care benefits? Have any of your children come home — any of them — and said, "Mom." Pause. "Dad." Another pause. "Please. Stop the madness."
>
> From http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/27/magazine/27christie-t.html?_r=2&pagewanted=1

Although these examples seem rather straightforward, other everyday arguments are harder to spot. Consider this example of "refrigerator" poetry. Is this an argument? You might claim that this poem was written primarily to entertain and to present one person's emotional perspective, not to present an argument. This is true—to a degree. However, this poet has made specific choices about what words to use, what visuals to use, the physical setting of the work, and about how his or her audience should read the material. Even writing primarily designed to entertain, such as a blog entry, a social networking post, or even highway graffiti, says to readers: Do it my way! Think about these ideas as I would! Believe what I believe!

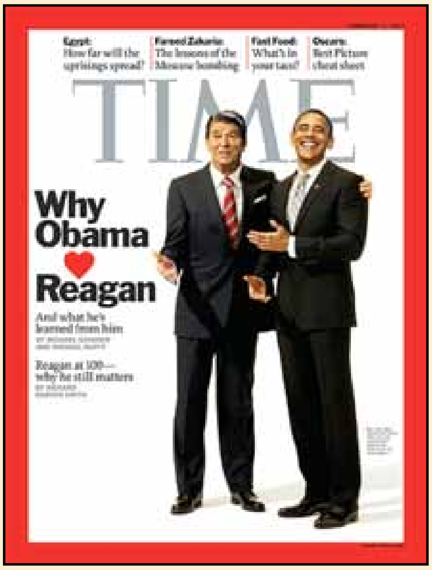
Surely the argument made by this artist is more subtle than the one made by the editors of *Vanity Fair.* The ideas about life and experience that appear in works we label "expressive" are often more subtle than the points we meet head-on in an overt argument. Still, expressive writing gives us new ways of seeing the world. Perhaps, then, we need to recognize that writ-


FRIDGE POETRY COMPETITION
Phrased & Confused
PICK UP A FORM FROM THE FRONT DESK TO ENTER!
moist
Skegness
cheese string
Dove
giraffe

SEEING THE ARGUMENT

This February 7, 2011, cover of *Time* magazine shows former U.S. President Ronald Reagan with his arm around President Barack Obama. Obama appears to be enjoying the company of Reagan, who held the president's office from 1981 until 1989 and who passed away in June 2004. However, Reagan, a Republican, adhered to a political philosophy presumably very opposed to that of Obama, a Democrat.

As you examine the *Time* cover, what do you notice? What ideas are suggested by the image of Presidents Reagan and Obama standing together? How do you think readers might view this cover? What makes this cover an argument? For what audience might this piece be targeted? How do you know?


Egypt: How far will the uprisings spread?
Fareed Zakaria: The lessons of the Moscow bombing
Fast Food: What's in your taco?
Oscars: Best Picture cheat sheet
TIME
Why Obama ♥ Reagan
And what he's learned from him
Reagan at 100— why he still matters

ing strategies and purposes spread along a continuum; they often overlap and do not fit into neat categories. Oftentimes, one image or piece of writing has several different purposes. Typically, however, if you look hard enough, an argument of some sort is being made.

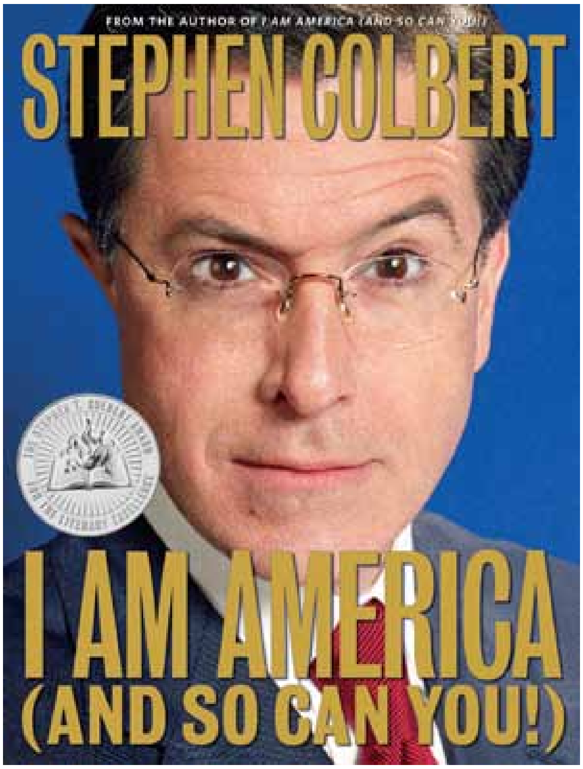
Recognizing Purpose in Everyday Arguments

Many pieces of communication that we do not think of as arguments still contain subtle elements of persuasion. For example, television personality Stephen Colbert's humorous book *I Am America (And So Can You!)* has the primary purpose of entertaining its readers, but we can also see this book as an attempt to make a more serious argument about how Americans see themselves and others in the global arena.

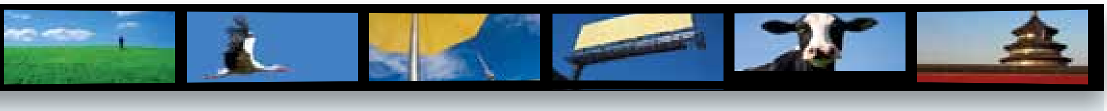
Although it may be fairly easy to identify a text's primary or general purpose (to entertain, to inform, to persuade), it is often more challenging to recognize the more subtle intentions of the author. Most texts have more than one purpose and most, in fact, attempt to persuade their readers to accept the positions and opinions of their authors. Much more about recognizing an argument's purpose will be covered in Chapter 3. For now, keep in mind that every piece of communication, whether written, visual, and or even oral, has at least one clear and distinct purpose.

Understanding Audience in Everyday Arguments

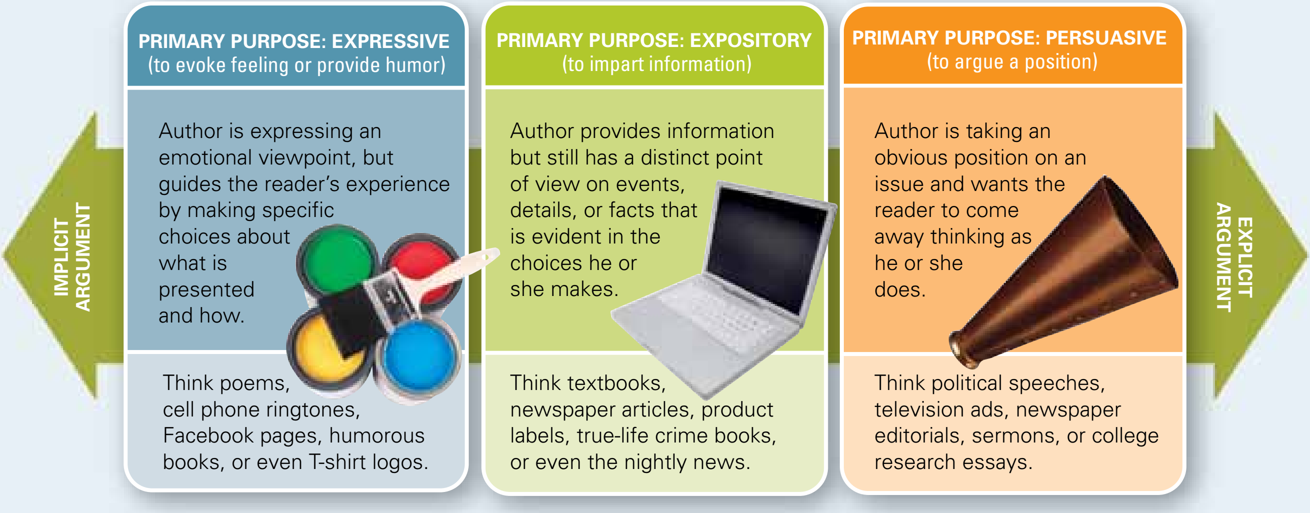
Just as every argument has a clear purpose (to persuade its readers), so too does it have an intended audience. An author must understand the needs of his or her readers if he or she hopes to connect with them and persuade them to accept his or her position. An author who writes without considering his or her audience runs the risk of alienating and offending readers who are not ready to accept the proposed position, or wasting time and energy "preaching to the choir," or trying to convince readers who already agree with the proposed position.


FROM THE AUTHOR OF I AM AMERICA (AND SO CAN YOU!)
STEPHEN COLBERT
I AM AMERICA
(AND SO CAN YOU!)

try it!



Can you think of other examples of texts with multiple purposes? Or can you think of something not typically considered an argument that actually is one? Find an everyday text, examine the continuum below, and decide where your piece might fall along it. Might your text actually include elements of all three purposes?



PRIMARY PURPOSE: EXPRESSIVE
(to evoke feeling or provide humor)

Author is expressing an emotional viewpoint, but guides the reader's experience by making specific choices about what is presented and how.

Think poems, cell phone ringtones, Facebook pages, humorous books, or even T-shirt logos.

PRIMARY PURPOSE: EXPOSITORY
(to impart information)

Author provides information but still has a distinct point of view on events, details, or facts that is evident in the choices he or she makes.

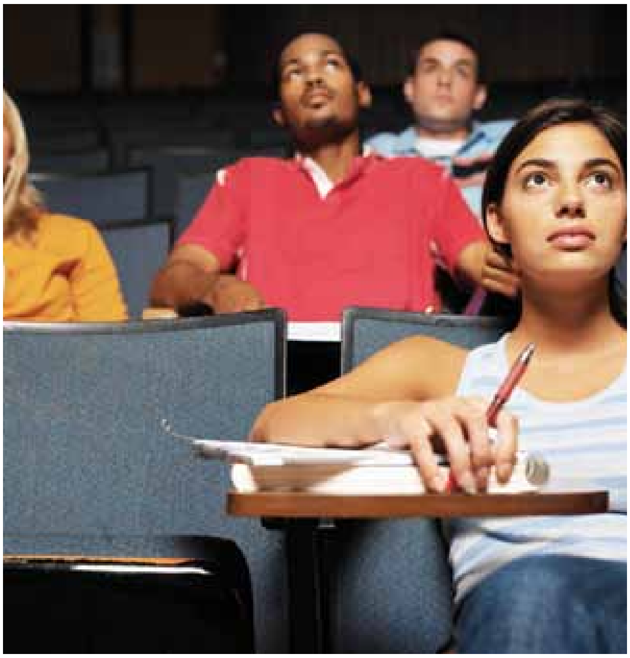
Think textbooks, newspaper articles, product labels, true-life crime books, or even the nightly news.

PRIMARY PURPOSE: PERSUASIVE
(to argue a position)

Author is taking an obvious position on an issue and wants the reader to come away thinking as he or she does.

Think political speeches, television ads, newspaper editorials, sermons, or college research essays.

Much more about analyzing audience needs, values, and expectations will be covered in Chapter 3. For now, keep in mind that the success of an argument depends on the author's understanding of his or her audience.



Why You Need to Learn to Read and Write Arguments. Right Now.

Now that you've come to see the larger scope of argument and that it exists in practically every piece of communication, it's time to narrow our focus a bit. You can most likely expect that in your current course on argument you probably will not be asked to write a short story, personal narrative, poem, or t-shirt logo. You might, though, be asked to write a summary, critique, research essay, or analysis, so you will need to think about how those writing tasks connect to the world of argument. Regardless of what specific assignments your professor gives you, you can count on one thing: You will be asked to write!

Why work on your writing skills? Here are some good answers to this question:

1. The better writer you become, the better reader you will become and vice versa.
2. The more confident a writer you become, the more efficiently you will handle written assignments in all of your courses.
3. The more you write, the more you will learn about who you are and what really matters to you. More colleges and universities are design-

did you know

Communication and writing skills are *the most important abilities* sought by employers. As evidence, you may want to consider the following article from *The New York Times.*

> The New York Times
> August 26, 2007
> **Young Workers: U Nd 2 Improve Ur Writing Skills**
> PHYLLIS KORKKI
>
> A generation ago, employers were still lamenting the poor technical abilities of their entry-level workers. Well, that's not much of an issue anymore, thanks to the omnipresence of computers, cellphones and the Internet.
>
> In a survey of 100 human resources executives, only 5 percent said that recent college graduates lacked computer or technology skills, according to Challenger, Gray & Christmas, the outplacement firm.
>
> The problem now is more basic. Nearly half the executives said that entry-level workers lacked writing skills, and 27 percent said that they were deficient in critical thinking.
>
> It seems that some young employees are now guilty of the technological equivalent of wearing flip-flops: they are writing company e-mail as if they were texting cellphone messages with their thumbs.
>
> In response, employers are sending a message of their own: When you're in the office, put on those dress shoes and start spelling your words correctly, and in full.
>
> From *The New York Times*, August 26, 2007. © 2007 The New York Times. All rights reserved. Used by permission and protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States. The printing, copying, redistribution, or retransmission of the Material without express written permission is prohibited.

PERSPECTI
ts? Free enterp

ing courses focused on critical thinking about personal values, ethics, and morals. Learning to write about your beliefs and to understand and accommodate the beliefs of others are great ways to be ready for future coursework in this area.

What You Can Expect from Your Writing Assignments

You are about to face a variety of writing assignments, each with its own specific audience and purpose. Pay close attention to each assignment sheet so that you will know what sort of writing your instructor expects. To help you learn the conventions of different types of writing for different audiences, this text includes a variety of argument forms: editorials, advertisements, articles from scholarly journals, photographs, book reviews, and of course, research essays.

While writing your own assignments, always think about what role you will play as the author and the expectations of that specific role. Are you expected to be a student demonstrating knowledge, a citizen arguing for tougher drunk-driving laws, or a scholar presenting the results of research? Any writer—including you—will take on different roles when writing for different audiences and will use different strategies to reach each audience. There are many kinds of argument and many ways to argue successfully.

Why Read and Respond to the Work of Others?

If this is a text about *writing* arguments, why does it contain so many readings, you may wonder. There are good reasons for the collection of readings you find here:

1. College and the workplace will demand that you learn complex information and ideas through reading. This text will give you practice in reading more challenging works.
2. You will need to read to learn and to think critically about what you read. In the world of argument, your reading will serve as a basis for writing.
3. Your writing will be based in some way on one or more sources you have been assigned or that you have selected in response to an assignment. The focus of attention will shift from you to your subject, a subject others have debated before you. You will need to understand the issue,

think carefully about the views of others on the issue, and only then develop your own response.

Critical Reading and the Contexts of Argument

In some contexts, the word *critical* carries the idea of harsh judgment: “The manager was critical of her secretary’s long phone conversations.” In other contexts, though, the term means “to evaluate carefully.” When we speak of the critical reader or critical thinker, we have in mind someone who reads actively, who thinks about issues, and who makes informed judgments. Here is a profile of the critical reader or thinker:

Traits of the Critical Reader/Thinker

- **Focused on the facts.** Give me the facts and show me that they are relevant to the issue.
- **Analytic.** What strategies has the writer/speaker used to develop the argument?
- **Open-minded.** Prepared to listen to different points of view, to learn from others.
- **Questioning/skeptical.** What other conclusions could be supported by the evidence presented? How thorough has the writer/speaker been?
- **Creative.** What are some different ways of looking at the issue or problem?
- **Intellectually active, not passive.** Willing to analyze logic and evidence. Willing to consider many possibilities. Willing, after careful evaluation, to reach a judgment, to take a stand on issues.

Active Reading: Use Your Mind!

Reading is not about looking at black marks on a page—or turning the pages as quickly as you can. Reading means constructing meaning from the marks on the page and getting a message. This concept is underscored by the term *active reading*. To be an active reader, not a passive page-turner, follow these guidelines:

- **Understand your purpose in reading.** Do not just start turning pages to complete an assignment. Think first about your purpose. Are you read-

GOOD ADVICE

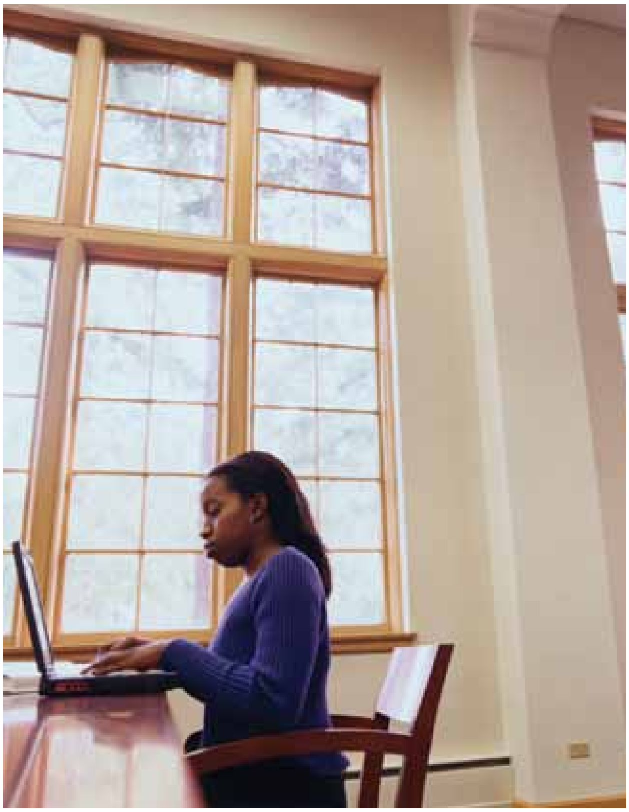
You might be asking, “Won’t my instructor be my audience?”

Yes, your instructor or TA is probably the actual audience for your paper. Your instructors read and grade your essays, and you want to keep their needs and perspectives in mind when you write. However, when you write an essay with only your instructor in mind, you might not say as much as you should or say it as clearly as you should, because you assume that your instructor knows more than you do and will fill in the gaps. This leaves it up to the instructor to decide what you are really saying, and she might decide that those gaps show that you don’t understand the material. If you say to yourself, “I don’t have to explain communism; my instructor knows more about that than I do,” you could get back a paper that says something like “Shows no understanding of communism.” That’s an example of what can go awry when you think of your instructor as your only audience.

Thinking about your audience differently can improve your writing, especially in terms of how clearly you express your argument. The clearer your points are, the more likely you are to have a strong essay. Your instructor will say, “You really understand communism—you’re able to explain it simply and clearly!” By treating your instructor *as an intelligent but uninformed audience*, you end up addressing her more effectively.

The Writing Center at UNC Chapel Hill, www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/audience.html ing for knowledge on which you will be tested? Focus on your purpose as you read, asking yourself, "What do I need to learn from this work?"

- **Reflect on the title before reading further.** Titles are the first words writers give us. Look for clues in the title that may reveal the work's subject and perhaps the writer's approach or attitude as well. The title "The Idiocy of Urban Life," for example, tells you both subject (urban or city living) and the author's position (urban living is idiotic).
- **Become part of the writer's audience.** Not all writers have you and me in mind when they write. As an active reader, you need to join a writer's audience by learning about the writer, about the time in which the piece was written, and about the writer's expected audience. For the readings in this text, you are aided by introductory notes; be sure to study them.
- **Predict what is coming.** Look for a writer's main idea or purpose statement. Study the work's organization. Then use this information to anticipate what is coming. For example, when you read "There are three good reasons for requiring a dress code in schools," you know the writer will list three reasons.
- **Concentrate.** Slow down and give your full attention to reading. Watch for transition and connecting words that show you how the parts of a text connect. Read an entire article or chapter at one time—or you will need to start over to make sense of the entire piece.
- **Annotate as you read.** The more senses you use, the more active your involvement. That means marking the text as you read (or taking notes if the material is not yours). Underline key sentences, such as the writer's thesis. Then, in the margin, indicate that it is the thesis. For a series of examples (or reasons), label them and number them. When you look up a word's definition, write the definition in the margin next to the word. Draw diagrams to illustrate concepts; draw arrows to connect example to idea. Studies have shown that students who annotate their texts get higher grades. Do what successful students do.
- **Keep a reading journal.** In addition to annotating what you read, you may want to develop the habit of writing regularly in a journal or creating a reading blog online. A reading blog gives you a place to note impressions and reflections on your reading, your initial reactions to assignments, and ideas you may use in your next writing.



Whether you are reading print material or online, be sure to create a quiet atmosphere in which you can concentrate.

Understanding the Arguments of Others

Readers expect accurate, fair, and sensitive uses of sources. An inaccurate summary does not serve its purpose. A passage that is misquoted or quoted out of context makes readers question your credibility. So, after reading and annotating, develop your understanding of each source and the author's argument by doing a preliminary analysis that answers the following questions:

1. **What is the work's primary purpose? Does it combine purposes?** Remember that texts can be classified as expressive (evoking feelings), expository (imparting information), or persuasive (arguing for a position). We can also distinguish between a serious purpose and a humorous one, although humor can be used to advance a serious topic. However, purposes shade into one another. Arguments appeal to emotions, and passionate fiction can teach us about human life and experience. You may assume that a textbook's primary purpose is to give information, but keep in mind that textbooks can take a position on various conflicts within their field.

2. **What is the thesis, or the main idea of the work?** Often the best way to understand a text's thesis is to first ask, What is the subject? Then ask, What does the author assert about that subject, or want me to understand about that subject? Stating the thesis as a complete sentence will help you move from subject to assertion. You may find one or two sentences that state the work's thesis, but keep in mind that sometimes the thesis is implied, not stated.

3. **How is the thesis developed and supported?** Does the writer present a series of examples to illustrate the main idea? Or blend reasons and evidence to develop an argument? Does the writer organize chronologically? Set up a contrast pattern or make an analogy? Explain causes? Observing both the type of support and its organization will help you see how the parts fit together. When you know what it says, you can write a summary or begin to analyze or judge the work.

try it!

Read the following selection from lehighvalleylive.com, noting the annotations that have been started for you. As you read, add your own annotations. Then write a journal or blog entry—four to five sentences at least—to capture your reactions to the following editorial.

Lehighvalleylive.com
Opinion
January 27, 2011

Find the Right Punishment for Teen-Age "Sexting"

This topic is timely and looks interesting.

I should find out more about the legislation in New Jersey and Pennsylvania as I conduct more research.

Legislators in New Jersey and Pennsylvania might want to double-back to their own teenage years as they consider bills to deal with the practice of sexting — teenagers sending nude photos of themselves to a boyfriend or girlfriend, friends sharing those photos with other friends, exfriends posting compromising photos to get back at someone, etc.

Two adolescent truths we hold to be self-evident:

- For teenage boys, there can never, ever be enough images of the opposite sex unclothed.
- Anything worth sharing is worth hitting the cell-phone button to feed each others' curiosity as long as parents and teachers don't find out about it.

It's with a cautious nod to those forces of nature that legislators must make the case against sexting, acknowledging that a voluntary expression of intimacy can quickly become an unwanted invasion of privacy with the entire online world, and that such images can quickly become fodder for pedophiles and child pornographers. Some prosecutors have wielded a heavy club to go after teenagers in these circumstances, charging them with transmitting child pornography.

The lack of a clear-headed law is still a gaping problem. Last year, a federal judge in Pennsylvania ruled that girls who had e-mailed nude photos of themselves to friends could not be charged as child pornographers.

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives passed a bill last year, proposing a second-degree misdemeanor charge against minors "who intentionally or knowingly record, view, possess or transmit images of sexually explicit conduct involving a minor above age 13." It didn't go anywhere in the Senate.

A bill now moving through the New Jersey Assembly seems to strike the right balance. Assemblywoman Pamela Lampitt, D-Camden, has proposed an educational program for "sexters" as an alternative to criminal prosecution. The bill cleared the Judiciary Committee and now heads to the full Assembly.

“When our children are in many different places doing many different things, we need to find a means and a mechanism not to send them off to jail … but to educate them,” Lampitt said.

Sexting isn’t always innocent; it can be a form of cyber-bullying and inflict real pain on young people. Under the bill, a juvenile court would assess whether a young offender would be harmed by prosecution and is unlikely to repeat the practice. Those who meet the criteria would be admitted to a program on the social consequences and potential criminal penalties of sexting. The programs would apply to teens, not adults, who would still face child pornography charges for such transmissions.

Given the rising tide of such incidents — a recent survey by The Associated Press and MTV found a quarter of American teenagers admitted to some form of sexting — it’s only right to give first-timers a heavy dose of educating and lecturing. It wouldn’t hurt to get parents involved, too. They should be laying down their own law, monitoring their kids’ phones and suspending their privileges.

That’s a lot more sensible than treating them as criminals.

http://www.lehighvalleylive.com/today/index.ssf/2011/01/opinion_find_the_right_punishm.html

Even everyday communications like Facebook profiles can be viewed as arguments.

Characteristics of Argument

When you begin to understand the basics of argument, you will start to look at the world around you in a new way. Facebook profiles, T-shirt logos, newspaper editorials, Web sites, and even junk mail all possess elements of persuasion. Have you ever considered how your own daily communications are actually arguments or attempts at persuading an audience? Look at any Facebook, MySpace, or similar web blog and think about what the author is trying to communicate to the world. Is there a purpose to the page? Is there an intended audience? If you can begin to look at even the most familiar forms of communication as arguments, you will soon begin to realize that arguments are everywhere.

Argument Is Conversation with a Goal

When you enter into an argument (as speaker, writer, or reader), you become a participant in an ongoing debate about an issue. Because you are probably not the first to address the issue, you need to be aware of the ways that the issue has been debated by others and then seek to advance the conversation, just as you would if you were having a casual conversation with friends about going to a movie. Once the time of the movie is set, the discussion turns to whose car to take or where to meet. If you were to just repeat the time of the movie, you would add nothing useful to the

GOOD ADV!CE

In this section, we will explore the processes of thinking logically and analyzing issues to reach informed judgments. Mature people do not need to agree on all issues in order to respect one another's good sense, but they do have little patience with uninformed or illogical statements masquerading as argument. (Just ask Judge Judy how frustrating this can be.) As you learn to read, respond to, and write arguments, you will need to take other opinions and logical opposing points of view (often called counterarguments) into account. After all, there are always more than two sides to every argument!

Judge Judy, the famously impatient TV judge, has learned to recognize illogical arguments in her courtroom.

conversation. Also, if you were to change the subject to a movie you saw last week, you would annoy your friends by not offering useful information or showing that you valued the current conversation. Just as with a conversation about a movie, you want your argument to stay focused on the issue, to respect what others have already contributed, and to make a useful addition to everyone's understanding of the issue.

Argument Takes a Stand on an Arguable Issue

A meaningful argument focuses on a debatable issue. We usually do not argue about facts. "Professor Jones's American literature class meets at 10:00 on Mondays" is not arguable. It is either true or false. We can check the schedule of classes to find out. (Sometimes, however, the facts change; new facts replace old ones.) We also do not debate personal preferences for the simple reason that they are just that—personal. If the debate is about the appropriateness of boxing as a sport, for you to declare that you would rather play tennis is to fail to advance the conversation. You have expressed a personal preference, interesting perhaps, but not relevant to the debate.

Argument Uses Reasons and Evidence

Some arguments merely look right. That is, conclusions are drawn from facts, but the facts are not those that actually support the assertion, or the conclusion is not the only or the best explanation of those facts. To shape convincing arguments, we need more than an array of facts. We need to think critically, to analyze the issue, to see relationships, and to weigh evidence. We need to avoid the temptation to argue from emotion only, or to believe that just stating our opinion is the same thing as building a sound argument.

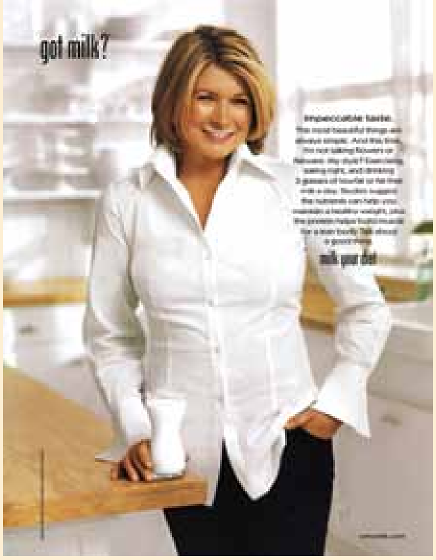
Argument Incorporates Values

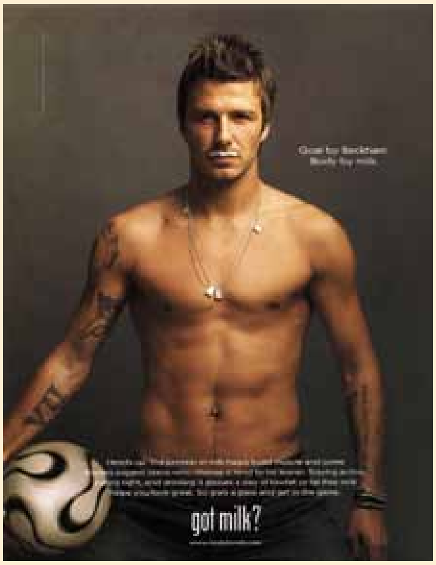
Arguments are based not just on reason and evidence but also on the beliefs and values we hold and think that our audience may hold as well. In a reasoned debate, you want to make clear the values that you consider relevant to the argument. For example, many people disagree about whether boxing should be banned as a sport.

A writer against a ban on boxing might argue that boxing teaches children about the importance of discipline, persistence, and motivation in sports. The writer thinks these things are worthwhile, which gives us insights into the values he or she holds.

SEEING THE ARGUMENT

Arguments incorporate the values of their writers and try to appeal to the values of their readers. The famous “got milk?” campaign attempts to appeal to specific values both visually and with text. Look at the ads here. What values does the milk industry seem to believe are important to their customers? Do you think these two ads are targeted at different audiences? If so, what makes you think so?


got milk?
Impeccable taste.
milk your diet



A writer for a ban on boxing might argue that fighters are promoting vicious and injury-producing violence to children in order to make money. (These points give us insights into the things this writer values or believes worthwhile.)

Argument Recognizes the Topic’s Complexity

Much false reasoning (the logical fallacies discussed in Chapter 4) results from a writer’s oversimplifying an issue. A sound argument begins with an understanding that most issues are complicated. The wise person approaches ethical concerns such as abortion or euthanasia or public policy issues such as tax cuts or trade agreements with the understanding that there are many philosophical, moral, and political perspectives that complicate discussions of these topics. Recognizing an argument’s complexity may also lead us to an understanding that there can be more than one “right” position. The thoughtful arguer respects the views of others, seeks common ground when possible, and often chooses a conciliatory approach.

GOOD ADV!CE

Writing an essay with the following thesis statement would not lead to an effective argument:

> ***The Office* is my favorite show.**

This statement is simply a personal preference and does not allow a rational reader to logically disagree with you. After all, what is the opposing position? This essay will most likely fall short of being an effective argument.

The Shape of Argument

The Aristotelian Model

One of the best ways to understand the basics of argument is to reflect on what the Greek philosopher Aristotle describes as the three “players” in any argument:

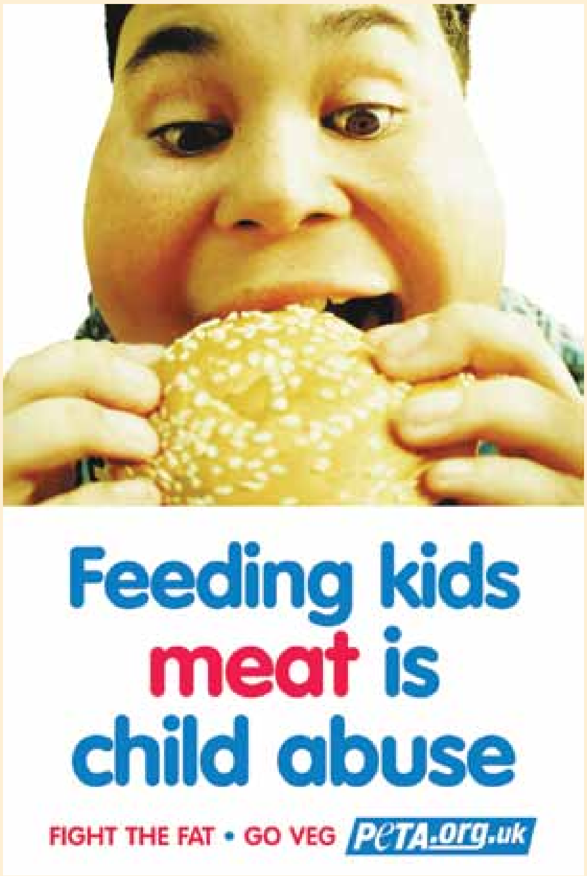
- the writer (or speaker),
- the argument itself, and
- the reader (or audience).

Aristotle explained that we can use three different artistic proofs to support our arguments. These proofs are logos, pathos, and ethos.

SEEING THE ARGUMENT

Even seemingly straightforward issues like vegetarianism can be complex and politically charged. Be sure that you understand the debate before you attempt to enter into it.

Does the author of this ad seem to understand and appreciate the complexity of this issue? Why or why not? Does this affect your reaction to this argument? Why do you think this author chose to handle the argument in this manner? What values does the author seem to hold?


Feeding kids meat is child abuse
FIGHT THE FAT • GO VEG
PETA.org.uk

Aristotle called the logic of the argument the *logos*—the assertion and the support for that assertion. A successful argument needs a logical and convincing logos. An argument also implies an audience, those whose views we want to influence. Aristotle called this part of argument *pathos*. Good arguers need to be alert to the values and attitudes of their audience and to appeal effectively to their emotions. However, Aristotle also explained that part of our appeal to an audience rests in the logos, our logic and evidence. An argument that is all emotional appeal will not move thoughtful audiences.

Finally (and for Aristotle the most important of the three players) is the writer/speaker, or *ethos*. No argument, Aristotle asserted, no matter how logical, no matter how appealing emotionally, will succeed if the audience rejects the arguer's credibility, the writer's "ethical" qualities. As members of the audience, we need to believe that the arguer is a person of knowledge, honesty, and goodwill.

We argue in a specific context of three interrelated parts. We present support for a concrete assertion, thesis, or claim to a specific audience whose demands, expectations, and character we have given thought to when shaping our argument. We also present ourselves as informed, competent, and reliable so that our audience will give serious attention to our argument. Your audience evaluates *you* as a part of their evaluation of your argument. Lose your credibility and you lose your argument.

did you know?

Aristotle, one of the most famous of the Greek philosophers, a student of Plato and a teacher of Alexander the Great, was also one of the earliest to recognize the power of visuals in the creation of meaning.

In his famous work *De Anima*, or *On the Soul*, he states,

> *". . . the soul never thinks without an image."*

http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/soul.3.iii.html

try it!

Read the following argument made by Steve Jobs, founder and CEO of Apple, during a speech to a senior team of a company. Does it successfully use all three of Aristotle's players? Does he possess credibility on this subject? Does his assertion seem logical? Does he understand to whom he is addressing his argument?

Killing bad ideas isn't that hard—lots of companies, even bad companies, are good at that. . . . What is really hard—and a hallmark of great companies—is that they kill a lot of good ideas. . . . For any single good idea to succeed, it needs a lot of resources, time, and attention, and so only a few ideas can be developed fully. Successful companies are tough enough to kill a lot of good ideas so those few that survive have a chance of reaching their full potential and being implemented properly.

http://blogs.bnet.com/bnet1/?p=680

Aristotle also explained that an argument can rely on *inartistic proofs*. Inartistic proofs include support for arguments that comes from outside sources. An attorney in a courtroom, for example, uses witness testimony to prove his or her case. Oftentimes, too, politicians employ statistical evidence in speeches to prove a point. A United States senator might cite a high unemployment rate of 10 percent as support for an argument in favor of expanding government jobs programs. Such statistics as well as citations from authorities, witnesses, and other fact-based evidence all constitute inartistic proof.

did you know?

Despite the fact that rhetoricians have used his model as the basis for much of their work for decades, Stephen Toulmin never intended to become one of the leading theorists in the field of rhetoric and writing.

In fact, he began his career as a philosopher and maintained a focus on ethics and moral reasoning for most of his career.

www.willamette.edu/cla/rhetoric/courses/argumentation/Toulmin.htm
www.giffordlectures.org/Author.asp?AuthorID=269
www.nytimes.com/2009/12/11/.../11toulmin.html

Topoi, or the common topics, provide another way we can construct arguments, according to Aristotle. An arguer can show *similarity and difference* (compare/contrast) to convince the audience that one option represents a superior choice over another. We see this approach applied in advertising all the time. Automobile commercials, for example, will acknowledge that Manufacturer A's car is similar in its features to Manufacturer B's model, but the commercial will quickly point out that Manufacturer A's car offers a superior feature that Manufacturer B's model does not. One could also argue the *division* of the parts: Manufacturer A, for example, could show how the separate and distinct features of the car make it a superior choice for consumers. In describing *cause and effect*, Manufacturer A could also argue that Manufacturer B's car has poor quality airbags that have failed to prevent fatalities on the road. Similarity and difference, division, and cause and effect represent three of a number of different common topics. These *topoi* – like the artistic and inartistic proofs – help us construct arguments and convince audiences of our positions.

The Toulmin Model

British philosopher Stephen Toulmin added to what we have learned from Aristotle by focusing our attention on the basics of the argument itself. First, consider this definition of argument: An argument consists of evidence and/or reasons presented in support of an assertion or claim that is either stated or implied. Here are two examples:

CLAIM: We should not go skiing today

EVIDENCE: because it is too cold.

EVIDENCE: Because some laws are unjust,

CLAIM: civil disobedience is sometimes justified.

Toulmin explained that the basics of a complete argument are actually a bit more complex than these examples suggest. Each argument has a third part, which is not stated in the preceding examples. This third part is the glue that connects the support—the evidence and reasons—to the argument's claim and thus fulfills the logic of the argument. Toulmin called this glue an argument's *warrants*. These are the principles or assumptions that allow us to assert that our evidence or reasons—what Toulmin called the *grounds*—do indeed support our claim. Warrants represent a chain of reasoning linking claims with grounds. Look again at the sample arguments to see what warrants must be accepted to make each argument work:

CLAIM: We should not go skiing today.

EVIDENCE: It is too cold.

GOOD ADV!CE

Placing such qualifiers as "I believe," "I think," or "I feel" in an assertion does not free you from the need to support that claim. The statement "I believe that President Bush was a great president" calls for an argument based on evidence and reasons.

ASSUMPTIONS (WARRANTS): When it is too cold, skiing is not fun; the activity is not sufficient to keep one from becoming uncomfortable.

AND:

"Too cold" means whatever is too cold for me.

CLAIM: Civil disobedience is sometimes justified.

EVIDENCE: Some laws are unjust.

ASSUMPTIONS (WARRANTS): To get unjust laws changed, people need to be made aware of the injustice. Acts of civil disobedience will get people's attention and make them aware that the laws need changing.

Assumptions play an important role in any argument, so we need to be sure to understand what they are. Note, for instance, the second assumption operating in the first argument: The temperature the speaker considers uncomfortable will also be uncomfortable for her companions—an uncertain assumption. In the second argument, the warrant is less debatable, for acts of civil disobedience usually get media coverage and thus dramatize the issue.

try it!

Collaborative Exercise: Building Arguments

With your class partner or in small groups, examine each of the following claims. Select two, think of one statement that could serve as evidence for each claim, and then think of the underlying assumptions that complete each of the arguments.

1. Professor X is not a good instructor.
2. Americans need to reduce the fat in their diets.
3. Tiger Woods is a great golfer.
4. Physical education classes should be graded pass/fail.
5. College newspapers should be free of supervision by faculty or administrators.

The Language of Claims and Support

What kinds of statements function as claims and as support? Philosopher Stephen Toulmin was particularly interested in the strength or probability of various arguments. Some kinds of arguments are stronger than others because of the language or logic they use. Other arguments must, necessarily, be heavily qualified for the claim to be supportable. Toulmin developed terminology to provide a strategy for analyzing the degree of probability in an argument and to remind us of the need to qualify some kinds of claims. You have already seen how the idea of warrants, or assumptions, helps us think about the glue that presumably makes an argument work. Additional terms and concepts from Toulmin help us analyze the arguments of others and prepare more convincing arguments of our own.

Types of Claims

A *claim* is what the argument asserts or seeks to prove. It answers the question, What is your point? In an argumentative speech or essay, the claim is the speaker's or writer's main idea or thesis. Although an argument's claim follows from reasons and evidence, we often present an argument—whether written or spoken—with the claim stated near the beginning. We can better understand an argument's claim by recognizing four types of claims: claims of fact, claims of value, claims of judgment, and claims of policy.

Claims of Fact

Although facts usually support claims, we do argue over some facts. Claims of fact state that a condition exists, did exist, or will exist. Historians and biographers may argue over what happened in the past, although they are more likely to argue over the significance of what happened. Scientists also argue over the facts, over how to classify an unearthed fossil, for example, or whether the fossil indicates that the animal had feathers.

CLAIM: The small, predatory dinosaur *Deinonychus* hunted its prey in packs.

This claim is supported by the discovery of several fossils of *Deinonychus* close together and with the fossil bones of a much larger dinosaur. Their teeth have also been found in or near the bones of dinosaurs that have died in a struggle.

S
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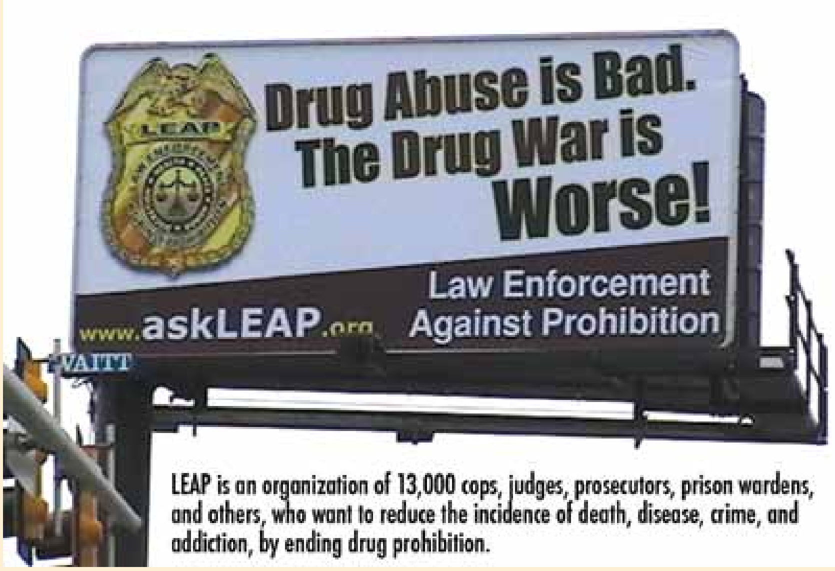
THE ARGUMENT

SEEING THE ARGUMENT

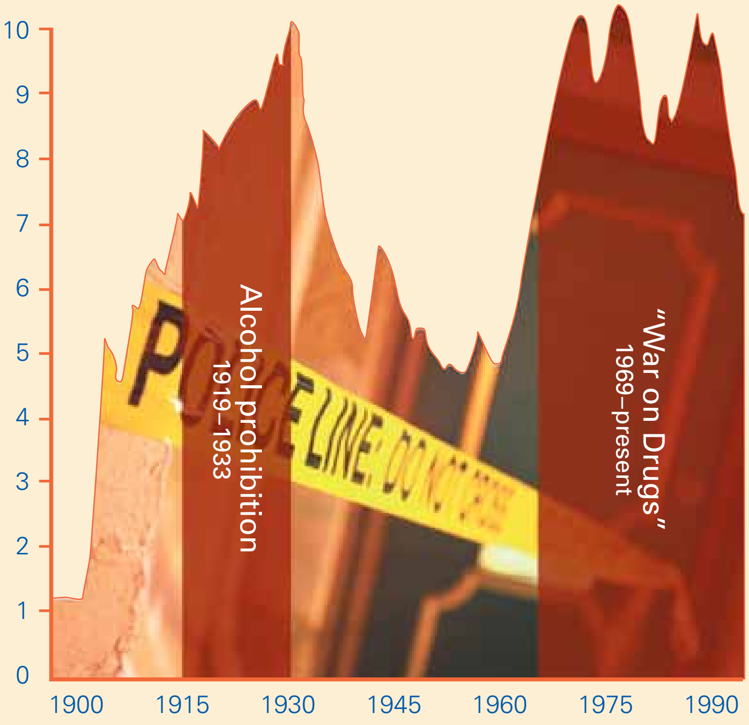
As you will learn in Chapter 10, visual images (e.g., graphics, charts, and photographs) can make claims just like written essays and speeches. These two images both make claims with support. The first image, a billboard, makes a statement about the "War on Drugs," while the second shows homicide rates during both Prohibition in the early 1900s and about 30 years of fighting the "War on Drugs." With regard to the billboard, what do you see as its claim? Who is making it? How could the homicide statistics shown in the second image be used as support for the billboard's claim?



LEAP is an organization of 13,000 cops, judges, prosecutors, prison wardens, and others, who want to reduce the incidence of death, disease, crime, and addiction, by ending drug prohibition.

Murder in America

Homicides per 100,000 population
1900–1997 (FBI Uniform Crime Reports)



Drug War Facts, 6th ed., p. 21. www.drugwarfacts.org.

Assertions about what will happen are sometimes classified as claims of fact, but they can also be labeled as inferences supported by facts. Predictions about a future event may be classified as a claim of fact:

> **CLAIM:** The United States will win the most gold medals at the 2014 Olympics.
>
> **CLAIM:** I will get an A on tomorrow's psychology test.

What evidence would you use today to support each of these claims?

Claims of Value

These include moral, ethical, and aesthetic judgments. Assertions that use such words as *good* or *bad, better* or *worse,* and *right* or *wrong* are claims of value. The following are all claims of value:

> **CLAIM:** *Family Guy* is a better show than *The Simpsons.*
>
> **CLAIM:** *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is one of the most significant American novels.
>
> **CLAIM:** Cheating hurts others and the cheater too.
>
> **CLAIM:** Abortion is wrong.

Support for claims of value often include other value statements. For example, to support the claim that censorship is bad, arguers often assert that the free exchange of ideas is good and necessary in a democracy. The support is itself a value statement. The arguer may believe, probably correctly, that most people will more readily agree with the support (the free exchange of ideas is good) than with the claim (censorship is bad).

Claims of Judgment

Judgments are opinions based on values, beliefs, or philosophical concepts. In other words, claims of judgment argue principles without necessarily asking an authority (e.g., a government) to take action. Calling for action suggests a claim of policy, which is discussed in the next section. (Judgments also include opinions based on personal preferences, but we have already excluded these from argument.) Judgments concern right and wrong, good and bad, better or worse, and *should* or *should not:*

> **CLAIM:** No more than twenty-six students should be enrolled in any English class.
>
> **CLAIM:** Cigarette advertising should be eliminated, and the federal government should develop an antismoking campaign.

To support the first judgment, we need to explain what constitutes overcrowding, or what constitutes the best class size for effective teaching. If we can support our views on effective teaching, we may be able to convince the college president that ordering more desks for Room 110 is not the best solution for the increased enrollment in English classes. The second judgment also offers a solution to a problem, in this case a national health problem. To reduce the number of deaths, we need to reduce the number of smokers, by encouraging smokers either to quit or not to start. The underlying assumption: Advertising does affect behavior.

As you evaluate and form your own judgments, be aware that ethical and moral judgments (those based on personal standards) may be more difficult to support because they depend not just on definitions and established criteria but on values and beliefs as well. If taking another person's life is wrong, why isn't it wrong in war? Or is it? These are difficult questions that require thoughtful responses rather than snap judgments.

Claims of Policy

Finally, claims of policy call for an action that a governing body should take or advance how it can best solve social problems. The words "should," "ought," and "must" signal these sorts of claims. Claims of policy debate, for example, college rules, state gun laws, and U.S. aid to Africans suffering from AIDS. The following are claims of policy:

> **CLAIM:** College newspapers should not be controlled in any way by college authorities.
>
> **CLAIM:** States should not have laws allowing people to carry concealed weapons.
>
> **CLAIM:** The United States must provide more aid to African countries where 25 percent or more of the citizens have tested positive for HIV.

Claims of policy are often closely tied to judgments of morality or political philosophy, but they also need to be grounded in feasibility. That is, your claim needs to be doable, to be based on a thoughtful consideration of the real world and the complexities of public policy issues.

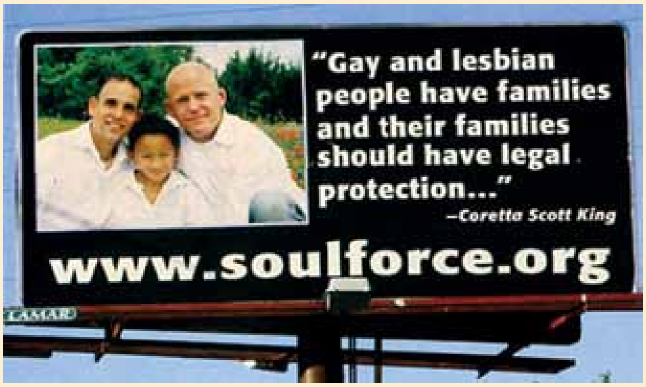
try it!

Exercise: Judgments

Go to your favorite Web site or pick up your favorite magazine. As you read through the content, compile a list of three claims of judgment. For each judgment listed, generate one statement of support, either a fact, an inference, or another judgment. Then state the warrant (underlying assumption) required to complete each argument.

SEEING THE ARGUMENT

The billboard shown here is an example of a claim of policy. But is simply making this claim enough to create an actual policy? The clear answer is no. In order to make a solid argument for a policy change, an audience member would expect this claim to be backed with evidence and convincing, logical support. What types of sources might this group use to support their claim that gay and lesbian couples should have equal protection, just as married couples do? Why do you think they used Coretta Scott King's quote here? Does it help their argument? If so, how?


"Gay and lesbian people have families and their families should have legal protection..."
–Coretta Scott King
www.soulforce.org
LAMAR

Support for Claims

Grounds (Reasons, Data, or Evidence)

The term *grounds* refers to the reasons and evidence provided in support of a claim. Although the words *data, reasons,* and *evidence* can also be used, *grounds* is the more general term because it includes logic as well as examples or statistics. We determine the grounds of an argument by asking, "Why do you think that?" or "How do you know that?" When writing your own arguments, you can ask yourself these questions and answer them by using a *because* clause:

> **CLAIM:** Smoking should be banned in restaurants
>
> **GROUNDS:** *because* secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard.
>
> **CLAIM:** Pete Sampras was a better tennis player than Andre Agassi
>
> **GROUNDS:** *because* (1) he was ranked number one longer than Agassi,
>
> (2) he won more tournaments than Agassi, and
>
> (3) he won more major tournaments than Agassi.

Let's consider what types of evidence are sometimes used as grounds for arguments and which are most effective and reliable.

Facts

Facts are statements that are verifiable. Factual statements refer to what can be counted, measured, or confirmed by reasonable observers or trusted experts and are often used as grounds for researched arguments.

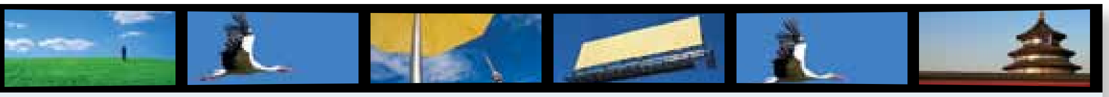
- There are 26 desks in Room 110.
- In the United States, about 400,000 people die each year as a result of smoking.

These are factual statements. We can verify the first by observation—by counting. The second fact comes from medical records. We rely on trusted record-keeping sources and medical experts for verification. By definition, we do not argue about the facts. Usually. Sometimes "facts" change, as we learn more about our world. For example, only in the last

GOOD ADV!CE

Get your facts from credible and reliable sources and critically analyze the information provided. Sometimes "facts" are false facts. These are statements that sound like facts but are incorrect. For example, if a writer were to read and then report a source's claim that the war in Iraq is "the most expensive war in American history" based on dollars spent, he or she would be mistaken. If proper research were done, taking inflation into account, he or she would learn that World War II cost far more than the war in Iraq.

try it !



Read the following article and then complete the exercise that follows. This exercise tests both careful reading and your understanding of the differences among facts, inferences, and judgments.

Paradise Lost

Richard Morin

Richard Morin, a journalist with *The Washington Post*, writes a regular Sunday column titled “Unconventional Wisdom,” a column presenting interesting new information from the social sciences. The following article was Morin’s column for July 9, 2000.

Here’s my fantasy vacation: Travel back in time to the 1700s, to some languid South Pacific island paradise where ripe fruit hangs heavy on the trees and the native islanders live in peace with nature and with each other.

Or at least that was my fantasy vacation until I talked to anthropologist Patrick Kirch, one of the country’s leading authorities on the South Pacific and director of the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley.

The South Seas islands painted by Paul Gauguin and celebrated by Robert Louis Stevenson were no Gardens of Eden, Kirch writes in his riveting new history of the South Pacific, *On the Road of the Winds.* Many of these islands witnessed episodes of environmental depredation, endemic warfare and bloody ritual long before seafaring Europeans first visited. “Most islands of the Pacific were densely populated by the time of European contact, and the human impact on the natural ecosystem was often disastrous—with wholesale decimation of species and loss of vast tracts of land,” he said.

Kirch says we can blame the French for all the loose talk about a tropical nirvana. “French philosophers of the Enlightenment saw these islands, especially Tahiti, as the original natural society where people lived in a state of innocence and food fell from the trees,” he said. “How wrong they were.”

French explorer Louis Antoine de Bougainville visited Tahiti for two weeks in 1769 and thought he discovered a paradise awash in social tolerance and carefree sex. Bougainville’s breathless description of Tahiti became the basis for Jean Jacques Rousseau’s concept of *l’homme naturel*—the noble savage.

Savage, indeed. Even as Bougainville poked around their craggy volcanic island, Rousseau’s “noble savages” were busy savaging each other. The Tahitians were in the midst of a bitter civil war, complete with ritual sacrifice to their bloodthirsty war god, Oro. On Mangaia in the Cook Islands, Kirch discovered ovens and pits filled with the charred bones of men, women, and even children.

And forget that free-love nonsense. Dating, mating, and reproduction were tricky business throughout the South Seas several hundred years ago. To keep the population in check, the residents of tiny Tikopia in the Santa Cruz Islands practiced infanticide. Abortion also was common. And to “concentrate” their bloodlines, Kirch said, members of the royal class in Hawaii married their brothers and sisters. If they only knew . . .

Not all South Seas islands were little cesspools. On some of the smaller islands, early Polynesians avoided cultural collapse by adopting strict population control measures, including enforced suicide. “Some young men were encouraged to go to sea and not return,” he said.

Perhaps the best example of the havoc wrought by the indigenous peoples of the South Pacific is found on desolate Easter Island, home of the monolithic stone heads that have gazed out from the front of a thousand travel brochures. Until recently, researchers believed that Easter Island’s open, grassy plains and barren knife-point volcanic ridges had always been, well, grassy plains and barren ridges.

Not true, says Kirch. The island was once covered with dense palm and hardwood forests. But by the 1700s, when the first Europeans arrived, these forests had been burned by the islanders to clear land for agriculture, transforming lush groves into semi-tropical tundra. "On Easter Island, the ultimate extinction of the palm and other woody plants had a further consequence: the inability to move or erect the large stone statues" because there were no logs to use as rollers to move the giant heads from the quarries, Kirch writes.

The stone carvers' society collapsed, as did Easter Island culture. By the time Dutch explorer Jacob Roggeveen arrived on Easter Sunday in 1722, residents had taken to living in underground caves for protection from the social chaos that had enveloped their island home.

When viewed today, Kirch says, the monoliths remain an "imposing stone text that suggests a thousand human sagas." They also carry a lesson to our age, he argues—warning us "to achieve a sustainable relationship with our planet"—or else.

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Label each of the following sentences as F (fact), FF (false fact), I (inference), or J (judgment).

_____ 1. In the 1700s native South Pacific islanders lived in peace and harmony.

_____ 2. It is foolish to romanticize life on South Sea islands.

_____ 3. French philosopher Rousseau based his idea of the noble savage on the Tahitians.

_____ 4. The stone statues on Easter Island suggest many stories.

_____ 5. In the past, noble Hawaiians married within their families.

_____ 6. Tahitians were savage people.

_____ 7. Some South Pacific islanders used to practice abortion and infanticide.

_____ 8. Easter Island has always had grassy plains and barren ridges.

_____ 9. Finding and using sustainable strategies will help preserve the environment.

_____ 10. People should not marry family members.

thirty years has convincing evidence been gathered to demonstrate the relationship between smoking and various illnesses of the heart and lungs.

Inferences

Inferences are opinions based on facts. Inferences are the conclusions we draw from an analysis of facts. If a proper and logical analysis is done, inferences can provide logical grounds for arguments.

- There will not be enough desks in Room 110 for upcoming fall-semester classes.
- Smoking is a serious health hazard.

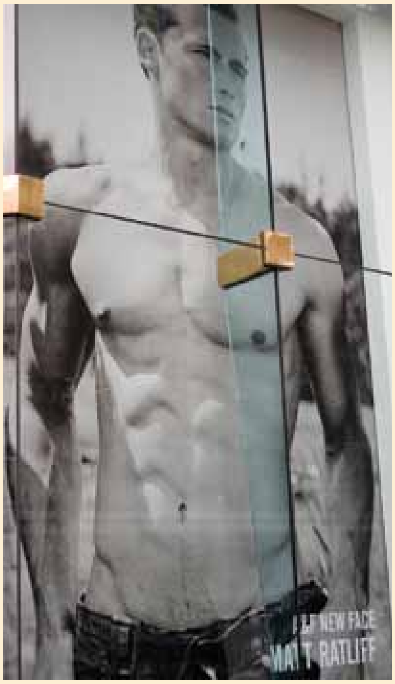
Predictions of an increase in student enrollment for the coming semester lead to the inference that most English classes scheduled in Room 110 will have several more students than last year. The dean should order new desks. Similarly, we infer from the number of deaths that smoking is a health problem; statistics show more people dying from tobacco-related illnesses than from AIDS, murder, or car accidents, causes of death that get media coverage but do not produce nearly as many deaths.

Inferences vary in their closeness to the facts supporting them. That the sun will rise tomorrow is an inference, but we count on its happening, acting as if it is a fact. However, the first inference stated above is

SEEING THE ARGUMENT

To create an effective argument, you need to assess the potential for acceptance of your warrants and backing. Is your audience likely to share your values, your religious beliefs, or your scientific approach to issues? If you are speaking to a group at your church, then backing based on the religious beliefs of that church may be effective. If you are preparing an argument for a general audience, then using specific religious assertions as warrants or backing probably will not result in an effective argument.

Consider this ad for Abercrombie & Fitch. What claims is the author making about the product (jeans)? Who is the target audience? Based on what you know about this target audience, are they likely to share the values and beliefs this ad demonstrates? What types of backing might this audience expect in support of this claim?



based not just on the fact of 26 desks but on another inference—a projected increase in student enrollment—and on two assumptions. The argument looks like this:

> **CLAIM:** There will not be enough desks in Room 110 for upcoming fall-semester classes.
>
> **FACT:** There are 26 desks in Room 110.
>
> **INFERENCE:** There will be more first-year students next year.
>
> **ASSUMPTIONS:**
> 1. English will remain a required course.
> 2. No additional classrooms are available for English classes.

This inference could be challenged by a different analysis of the facts supporting enrollment projections. Or if additional rooms can be found, the dean will not need to order new desks. Note that inferences can be part of the support of an argument, or they can be the claim of an argument.

Warrants

Why should we believe that your grounds do indeed support your claim?

Your argument's warrants answer this question. They explain why your evidence really is evidence. Sometimes warrants reside in language itself, in the meanings of the words we are using. If I am *younger* than my brother, then my brother must be *older* than I am.

In many arguments based on statistical data, the argument's warrant rests on complex analyses of the statistics—and on the conviction that the statistics have been developed without error.

In some philosophical arguments, the warrants are the logical structures (often shown mathematically) connecting a sequence of reasons. Still, without taking courses in statistics and logic, you can develop an alertness to the good sense of some arguments and the dubious sense of others. You know, for example, that good SAT scores are a predictor of success in college. Can you argue that you will do well in college because you have good SATs? No. We can determine only a statistical probability. We cannot turn probabilities about a group of people into a warrant about one person in the group. In addition, SAT scores are only one predictor. Another key variable is motivation.

Here is an example of how a claim, grounds (or evidence), and a warrant work together in forming a logical argument:

> **CLAIM:** Pete Sampras was a better tennis player than Roger Federer.
>
> **GROUNDS:**
> - He had a streak of 31 straight wins at Wimbledon.
> - Sampras won his first major tournament at 19, while Federer didn't win one until 21.
> - Federer is $18 million and 24 titles shy of Sampras' career records.

WARRANT: It is appropriate to judge and rank tennis players on these kinds of statistics. That is, the better player is the one who has the higher winning streak at Wimbledon, who won a major tournament earlier in his career, and who has won more and earned more than the other.

Backing

Standing behind an argument's warrant may be additional support. Backing answers the question, How do we know that your evidence is good evidence?

You may answer this question by providing authoritative sources for the data (for example, the Census Bureau or the U.S. Tennis Association). Or you may explain in detail the methodology of the experiments performed or the surveys taken.

When scientists and social scientists present the results of their research, they anticipate the question of backing and automatically provide a detailed explanation of the process by which they acquired their evidence. In criminal trials, defense attorneys challenge the backing of the assumptions or warrants underlying the prosecution's argument. They question the handling of blood samples sent to labs for DNA testing, for instance. The defense attorneys want jury members to doubt the *quality* of the evidence, perhaps even to doubt the reliability of DNA testing altogether.

Qualifiers

Some arguments are absolute; they can be stated without qualification.

If I am younger than my brother, then he must be older than I am.

Most arguments, however, need some qualification; many, in fact, need precise limitations. If, when playing bridge, I am dealt eight spades, then my opponents and partner together must have five spade cards—because there are thirteen cards of each suit in a deck. My partner probably has one spade but could have no spades. My partner possibly has two or more spades, but I would be foolish to count on it. When bidding my hand, I must be controlled by the laws of probability.

Look again at the smoking ban claim made earlier. Observe the absolute nature of both the claim and its support. If secondhand smoke is indeed a health hazard, it will be that in all restaurants, not just in some. With each argument we have to assess the need of qualification that is appropriate to a successful argument.

Sweeping generalizations often come to us in the heat of a debate or when we first start to think about an issue.

UNQUALIFIED CLAIM: Gun control is wrong because it restricts individual rights.

But, on reflection, surely you would not want to argue against all forms of gun control. (An unqualified assertion is understood by your audience to be absolute.) Would you sell guns to felons in jail or to children on the way to school? Obviously not. So, let's try the claim again, this time with two important qualifiers:

QUALIFIED CLAIM: Adults without a criminal record should not be restricted in the purchase of guns.

Others may want this claim further qualified to eliminate particular types of guns or to limit the number purchased or to regulate the process for purchasing. The gun-control debate is not about absolutes; it is about which qualified claim is best.

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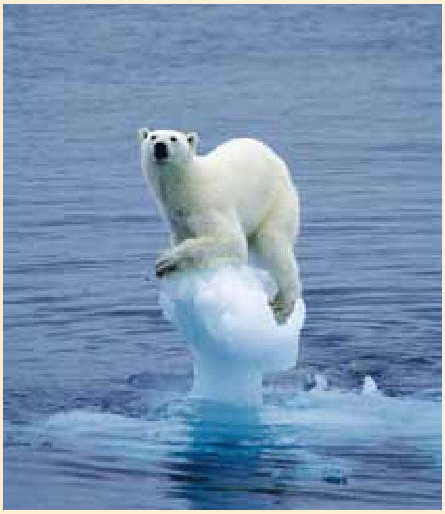
Counterarguments and Rebuttals

Arguments can be challenged. Smart debaters assume that there are people who will disagree with them. They anticipate the ways that opponents can challenge their arguments. When you are planning an argument, you need to think about how you can counter or rebut the challenges you anticipate. Think of yourself as an attorney in a court case preparing your own argument and a defense against the other attorney's challenges to your argument. If you ignore the important role of rebuttals, you may not win the jury to your side.

Writers can handle counterarguments in several effective ways. You may, in fact, partially concede certain facts. For example, if your opponent points out that marriage has a long history of being between a man and a woman (and attempts to use this to counter

SEEING THE ARGUMENT

WHAT IS A COUNTERARGUMENT?



This, simply stated, is the argument that could be made against your position. Don't be fooled, however, into thinking a counterargument is simply the opposite of your position. Many counterarguments are subtle and more complex than you might first assume.

For example, the image here is designed to present a clear argument against drilling for oil in Alaska based on the claim that it would harm the natural habitat of animals. But is the counterargument simply that the drilling would not cause this harm? Or is it more complex than that? Might your opponent concede that some harm may come to the habitat of the polar bear, but that the increase in oil production is worth that sacrifice? Might she claim that not nearly as much harm will come to the native wildlife as many believe? Or might she even claim that this is simply a scare tactic created by those with an interest in maintaining our foreign oil dependence?

When considering potential objections to your argument, you need to analyze your opposition's position fully. What might he raise as potential questions or problems with your position? By fully understanding the complexity of your opponent's position, you will more effectively be able to refute or rebut his objections

your argument that gay marriage should be legalized), you can acknowledge that this is a true statement without undermining your own argument. You can rebut the assertion, however, that this fact somehow supports the notion that marriage should continue to be viewed in this manner.

You may also want to use support (evidence, facts, data) to completely repudiate your opponent's counterargument. By bringing potential objections to the forefront and effectively negating them, you will strengthen your own credibility with your audience and will ultimately create a stronger argument.

Using Toulmin's Terms to Analyze Arguments

Terms are never an end in themselves; we learn them when we recognize that they help us to organize our thinking about a subject. Toulmin's terms can aid your reading of the arguments of others. You can see what's going on in an argument if you analyze it, applying Toulmin's language to its parts. Not all terms will be useful for every analysis because, for example, some arguments do not have qualifiers or rebuttals. But to recognize that an argument is without qualifiers is to learn something important about that argument.

First, here is a simple argument broken down into its parts using Toulmin's terms:

GROUNDS: Because Dr. Bradshaw has an attendance policy,

CLAIM: students who miss more than seven classes will

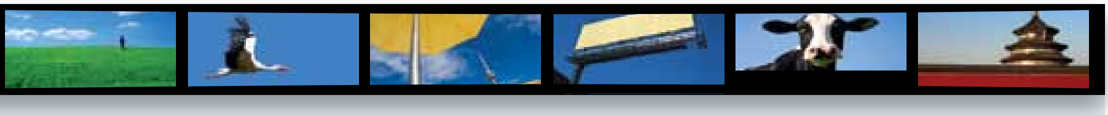
QUALIFIER: most likely (last year, Dr. Bradshaw did allow one student, in unusual circumstances, to continue in the class) be dropped from the course.

WARRANT: Dr. Bradshaw's syllabus explains her attendance policy,

BACKING: a policy consistent with the concept of a discussion class that depends on student participation and consistent with the attendance policies of most of her colleagues.

REBUTTAL: Although some students complain about an attendance policy of any kind, Dr. Bradshaw does explain her policy and her reasons for it the first day of class. She then reminds students that the syllabus is a contract between them; if they choose to stay, they agree to abide by the guidelines explained on the syllabus.

try it!



The argument in the example is brief and fairly simple. Let's see how Toulmin's terms can help us analyze a longer, more complex argument. Read actively and annotate the following essay while noting the existing annotations using Toulmin's terms. Then answer the questions that follow the article.

prereading questions

What are some good reasons to have zoos? What are some problems associated with them?

Let the Zoo's Elephants Go

Les Schobert

The author has spent more than 30 years working in zoos, primarily in care of elephants. He has been a curator of both the Los Angeles and North Carolina zoos. His argument was published October 16, 2005, in *The Washington Post*.

Claim

The Smithsonian Institution is a national treasure, but when it comes to elephants, its National Zoo is a national embarrassment.

In 2000 the zoo euthanized Nancy, an African elephant that was suffering from foot problems so painful that standing had become difficult for her. Five years later the zoo has announced that Toni, an Asian elephant, is suffering from arthritis so severe that she, too, may be euthanized.

Grounds

The elephants' debilitating ailments are probably a result of the inadequate conditions in which they have been held. The same story is repeated in zoos across the country.

Backing

When I began my zoo career 35 years ago, much less was known about elephants than is known today. We now understand that keeping elephants in tiny enclosures with unnatural surfaces destroys their legs and feet. We have learned that to breed naturally and rear their young, elephants must live in herds that meet their social requirements. And we have come to realize that controlling elephants through domination and the use of ankuses (sharply pointed devices used to inflict pain) can no longer be justified.

Claim

Zoos must change the concept of how elephants are kept in captivity, starting with how much space we allot them. Wild elephants may walk 30 miles a day.

Grounds

A typical home range of a wild elephant is 1,000 square miles. At the National Zoo, Toni has access to a yard of less than an acre. Zoo industry standards allow the keeping of elephants in as little as 2,200 square feet, or about 5 percent of an acre.

Grounds

Some zoos have begun to reevaluate their ability to house elephants. After the death of two elephants in 2004, the San Francisco Zoo sent its surviving elephants to a sanctuary in California. This year the Detroit Zoo closed its elephant exhibit on ethical grounds, and its two surviving elephants now thrive at the California sanctuary as well.

Rebuttal to counter-argument

But attitudes at other zoos remain entrenched. To justify their outdated exhibits, some zoos have redefined elephant longevity and natural behavior. For example, National Zoo officials blame Toni's arthritis on old age. But elephants in the wild reproduce into their fifties, and female elephants live long after their reproductive cycles cease. Had she not been captured in Thailand at the age of 7 months, Toni, at age 39, could have had decades more of life as a mother and a grandmother. Instead, she faces an early death before her 40th birthday, is painfully thin and is crippled by arthritis.

Claim, qualified (options explained). Grounds

The National Zoo's other elephants face the same bleak future if changes are not made. A preserve of at least 2 square miles—1,280 acres, or almost eight times the size of the National Zoo—would be necessary to meet an

continued

elephant's physical and social needs. Since this is not feasible, the zoo should send its pachyderms to a sanctuary. One such facility, the Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee, offers 2,700 acres of natural habitat over which elephants can roam and heal from the damage caused by zoo life. The sanctuary's soft soil, varied terrain, freedom of choice and freedom of movement have restored life to elephants that were suffering foot and joint diseases after decades in zoos and circuses.

The National Zoo has the opportunity to overcome its troubled animal-care history by joining progressive zoos in reevaluating its elephant program. The zoo should do right by its elephants, and the public should demand nothing less.

QUESTIONS FOR READING

1. What is the occasion that had led to the writing of this article?
2. What is Schobert's subject?
3. State his claim in a way that shows that it is a solution to a problem.

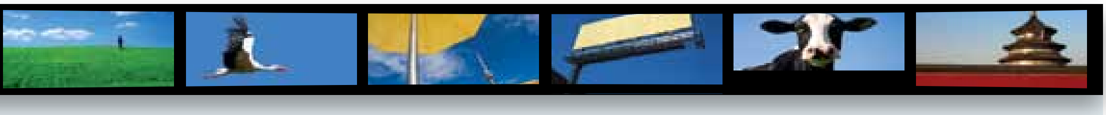
QUESTIONS FOR REASONING AND ANALYSIS

1. What type of evidence (grounds) does the author provide?
2. What are the nature and source of his backing?
3. What makes his opening effective?
4. What values does Schobert express? What assumption does he make about his readers?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTING AND WRITING

1. Are you surprised by any of the facts about elephants presented by Schobert? Do they make sense to you, upon reflection?
2. Should zoos close down their elephant houses? Why or why not?
3. Are there any alternatives to city zoos with small elephant houses besides elephant sanctuaries?

try it!



Using Toulmin's Terms to Structure Your Own Arguments

You have seen how Toulmin's terms can help you to analyze and see what writers are actually doing in their arguments. You have also observed from both the short and the longer argument that writers do not usually follow the terms in precise order. Indeed, you can find both grounds and backing in the same sentence, or claim and qualifiers in the same paragraph, and so on. Still, the terms can help you to sort out your thinking about a claim you want to support. The following exercises will provide practice in your use of these terms to plan an argument.

EXERCISES: USING TOULMIN'S TERMS TO PLAN ARGUMENTS

Select one of the following claims, or one of your own if your instructor approves, and plan an argument, listing as many grounds as you can and paying attention to possible rebuttals of counterarguments. Expect your outline to be one to two pages.

a. Professor X is (or is not) a good teacher.
b. Colleges should (or should not) admit students only on the basis of academic merit.
c. Americans need (or do not need) to reduce the fat in their diets.
d. Physical education classes should (or should not) be graded pass/fail.
e. Public schools should (or should not) have dress codes.
f. Helmets for bicyclists should (or should not) be mandatory.
g. Sales taxes on cigarettes should (or should not) be increased.
h. All cigarette advertising should (or should not) be prohibited.

making connections

let's review

After reading Chapter 1, you should understand the following:

- An argument of some sort is usually being made in any type of writing.
- Many pieces of communication that we do not typically think of as arguments still contain subtle elements of persuasion.
- An author must understand the needs of readers if he or she hopes to connect with them and persuade them to accept his or her position.
- Any writer—including you—will take on different roles when writing for different audiences and will use different strategies to reach each audience. There are many kinds of argument and many ways to argue successfully.
- When we speak of the critical reader or critical thinker, we have in mind someone who reads actively, who thinks about issues, and who makes informed judgments.
- Arguments take a stand on a debatable issue. Ask yourself whether a logical audience member, after reading your thesis, could take an opposing position. If not, your essay will most likely fall short of being a sound and effective argument.
- Arguments are based not just on reason and evidence but also on the beliefs and values we hold and think that our audience may hold as well.
- Much false reasoning (the logical fallacies discussed in Chapter 4) results from a writer's oversimplifying an issue. A sound argument begins with an understanding that most issues are complicated.
- For an argument to be its most persuasive, it must use logos, ethos, and pathos. If one or more elements is lacking, the writer runs the risk that his or her readers will not find the argument convincing.
- The Toulmin model explains that an argument consists of evidence and/or reasons presented in support of an assertion or claim that is either stated or implied. It offers us a method by which to both read the arguments of others and construct our own logical arguments.

connect

Form a peer group and complete the exercise below, taking into account the characteristics of an argument, Aristotle's "players," and Toulmin's model.

Construct a claim of judgment regarding the problems caused by college students' drinking. Then support your claim using your knowledge and experience. You may also want to go online for some statistics about college drinking and health and safety risks. Drawing on both experience and data, can you effectively support your claim? What counterarguments might your opposition (those who disagree with your claim) assert? What might your rebuttals be? Develop an outline of your argument using the Toulmin terms. Be prepared to compare your outline to others in your class. Compare and evaluate the various types of claims and the sorts of support each group used to support their claims.