

Argument



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NAEP Frameworks



	Persuasive Argument	Informative (Writing to Explain)	Narrative (Writing to Convey Experience)
2007	40%	35%	25%
2011	40%	40%	20%


CCSS on Argument



- ❧ An argument is a formal presentation of evidence that supports a particular claim or position regarding an issue of interest to a specific audience.
- ❧ Its persuasive strength rests on the rhetorical skills of the author-the art of wielding the rational, emotional and stylistic tools of language in a skillful and conscious effort to persuade.
- ❧ Its logic is built upon rational premises and follows to a conclusion reasonable people are willing to accept.

ELA CCSS

Why Argument is Important to the CCSS



“When teachers ask students to consider two or more perspectives on a topic or issue, something far beyond surface knowledge is required: students must think critically and deeply, assess the validity of their own thinking, and anticipate counterclaims in opposition to their own assertions.”

ELA CCSS

2009 ACT National Curriculum Survey



Faculty gave high ratings to such argument-related skills as:

- ✧ Develop ideas by using some specific reasons, details, and examples.
- ✧ Take and maintain a position on an issue.
- ✧ Support claims with multiple and appropriate sources of evidence.

(ACT, Inc., 2009),

Persuasive v. Argument



PERSAUSIVE

- ❧ Uses credibility or authority of writer to persuade reader.
- or
- ❧ Uses Emotions or identity of audience to persuade reader.

ARGUMENT

- ❧ Uses logic and reason to persuade reader.
- ❧ The Standards place special emphasis on writing logical arguments as a particularly important form of college- and career-ready writing.

2002 Survey of CA Composition Instructors



The most important skills expected of incoming students were:

- ❧ articulating a clear thesis;
- ❧ identifying, evaluating, and using evidence to support or challenge the thesis;
- ❧ considering and incorporating counterarguments into their writing.

Toulmin Method



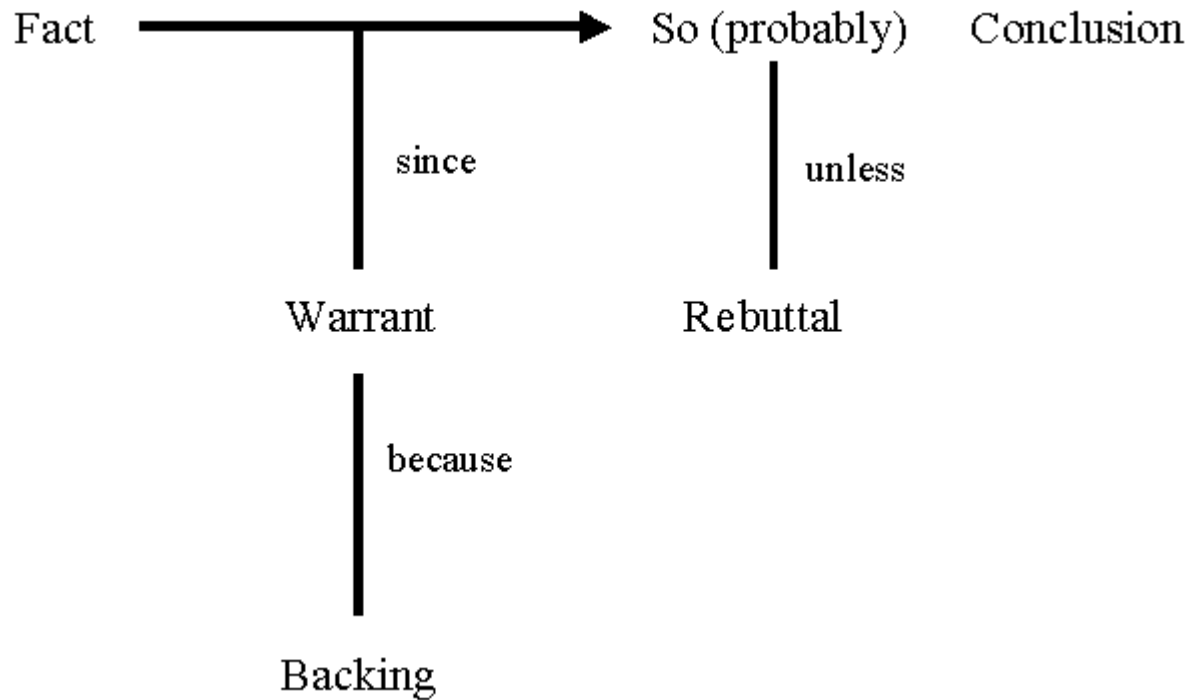
- ❧ The Toulmin method identifies the parts of an argument to allow for evaluation of the credibility and strength of the argument.
- ❧ The reader can better understand how and why the author is making the case for the claim of the argument.

Toulmin Model



- ❧ **Data:** The facts or evidence used to prove the argument
- ❧ **Claim:** The statement being argued (a thesis)
- ❧ **Warrants:** The general, hypothetical (and often implicit) logical statements that serve as bridges between the claim and the data. The principle, provision or chain of reasoning that connects the grounds/reason to the claim.
- ❧ **Qualifiers:** Statements that limit the strength of the argument or statements that propose the conditions under which the argument is true.
- ❧ **Rebuttals:** Counter-arguments or statements indicating circumstances when the general argument does not hold true.
- ❧ **Backing:** Statements that serve to support the warrants (i.e., arguments that don't necessarily prove the main point being argued, but which do prove the warrants are true.)

Toulmin Model



Data/Grounds



- ☞ Relevant
- ☞ Credible
- ☞ Accurate
- ☞ Sufficient
- ☞ Effective

Claims



- ❧ There are three basic types of claims:
- ❧ **Fact:** claims which focus on empirically verifiable phenomena
- ❧ **Judgment/Value:** claims involving opinions, attitudes, and subjective evaluations of things
- ❧ **Policy:** claims advocating courses of action that should be undertaken

Argument of Facts





Slip or Trip



Queenie, who met them at the door and said,
“Something terrible happened. Arthur slipped and fell on the stairs. He was coming down for another drink – he still had the glass in his hand – and I think he’s dead. Oh, my God – what shall I do?”

The autopsy conducted later concluded that Arthur had died from a wound on the head and confirmed that he’d been drunk.

Evidence / Rule



Evidence	Rule

Arguments of Judgement





J. G. Kneller del.

Pub. July 21 1792 by H. Humphreys, at the Old Swan

A VOLUPTUARY under the horrors of Digestion.

A Voluptuary Under the Horrors of Indigestion



- ❧ What do you think of the man?
- ❧ Define *voluptuary*. Why might this man be one?
- ❧ What makes a good king? (criteria)

Claim	Evidence	Warrant

Arguments of Policy



Warrants



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

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

Smoking in Public Places Should be Banned



Smoking in public places should be banned (**claim**) because it puts other people, especially children and pregnant women, at risk of breathing smoke from cigarettes (**ground**). Smoking in public places also endangers people who have respiratory ailments (**ground**). Recent studies show that almost (**qualifier**) 80% of those who ingest secondhand smoke from public smokers have a higher risk of getting respiratory problems than smokers themselves (**data**).

Banning an act that causes problems to innocent civilians is helpful in many ways (**warrant**). If smoking in public places is banned, we actually reduce or totally eradicate the danger of putting non-smokers at risk of developing lung and heart problems (**backing statement**). Moreover, if we ban smoking in public places, we also stop the smokers from further increasing their chances of acquiring health problems for themselves (**backing statement**).

While it can be said that not all people who smoke in public areas are always causing harm to others, it remains a fact that smoking per se is a cause of health problems (**rebuttal**). It is not enough to say that the size of affected people are relatively just a small fraction; plenty or few, one person put at risk is more than enough (**rebuttal**). It is only the case that smoking in public places, therefore, should be banned.

Warrant Strategies



- ❧ Six main argumentative strategies can be used to establish the relationship between evidence (data) and claim:
 - ❧ Generalization
 - ❧ Analogy
 - ❧ Sign
 - ❧ Causality
 - ❧ Authority
 - ❧ Principle

Generalization



Using facts about a smaller sample that is believed to be an exemplar of the greater population to infer characteristics or possible actions. A form of inductive reasoning.

Analogy



Using a situation or event to form inferences regarding a similar situation or event. The author must clearly establish that the comparison is “apples-to-apples.”

Sign/Clue



Using a particular piece of evidence to make a claim that it is indicative a larger principle or outcome.

Where there is smoke, there is fire.

Causal Argument



Using cause and effect to make the case. It is the most complex form of warrant.

It is important not to:

- ❧ Confuse causation with correlation
- ❧ Create the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* fallacy by inferring 'after the fact, therefore because of the fact'.
 - ❧ *There was no appreciable crime related to drugs when they were legal.*
 - ❧ *Crime rate has increased since they have been made illegal.*
 - ❧ *Therefore, drugs should be legal since legalization would improve the "quality of life" in the U.S.*

Argument from Authority



Using a person or a text as an authority on the subject at hand.

- ❧ What economic or other potentially self-serving interests may the authority have?
- ❧ Do a significant number of authorities agree on the issue?

Argument from Principle



Using a accepted, valid principle and illustrating how a situation exists where the principle is applicable.

The principle:

- ✧ Must be widely accepted.
- ✧ Must be accurately and appropriately applied.
- ✧ May have commonly agreed upon exceptions that should be noted.
- ✧ May have 'rival' principles that lead to a different claim.
- ✧ If used, does not lead to negative consequences.

Rebuttal Strategies



- ❧ Strategic concession
- ❧ Refutation
- ❧ Demonstration of irrelevance

Rebuttal Benefits



- ❧ Clarifies the argument
- ❧ Exhibits anticipation of readers' concerns
- ❧ The existence of rebuttals and the quality of the counterargument are critical elements to the how successful a given argument is perceived.

Text Resources



- ❧ *Teaching the Argument in Writing*
Richard Fulkerson
- ❧ *Teaching Argumentative Writing, Grades 6 -12*
George Hillocks, Jr.
- ❧ *If They Can Argue Well, They Can Write Well*
Dr. Bill McBride
- ❧ *Crime & Puzzlement*

Web Resources



- ⌘ http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~digger/305/toulmin_model.htm
- ⌘ <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/588/03/>
- ⌘ <http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/reading/toulmin/>
- ⌘ [http://www.suu.edu/hss/english/writingcenter/pdf/tipsheet_argumentation\(Toulmin\).pdf](http://www.suu.edu/hss/english/writingcenter/pdf/tipsheet_argumentation(Toulmin).pdf)
- ⌘ <http://www.heinemann.com/shared/onlineresources/E01396/introAndChapter1.pdf>