

Argumentation: Developing an Argument

Modified from <http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/reading/toulmin/>

Toulmin Method—based on work of philosopher Stephen Toulmin

Effective way of getting to the *how* and *why* levels of arguments

Claim—Evidence—Anticipated Objections/Rebuttal—Draw Conclusions

The Claim—the most general statement in argumentation (the thesis)

- Recognize Qualifiers and Exceptions—used by writer to limit claim
- Identify Qualifiers—terms that make a claim more flexible (words like *some, most, many, in general, usually, typically, almost, frequently, often, in most cases, likely, maybe, might, often, probably, sometimes, usually, if...then...*).
- Identify Exceptions (situations where claim doesn't apply)

The Reasons—First line of development in argumentation

- Determine Relevance and Effectiveness of Reasons
- Relevance—Are they relevant to the claim?
- Effectiveness—Does this invoke a value judgment? Be careful with subjectiveness.

The Evidence—Must be sufficient, credible, and accurate

- Sufficient—Is there enough evidence to support the reasons and claim?
- Credible—Is the evidence from believable and authoritative sources? Does it match the writer's experience or is it from a more knowledgeable or authoritative source?
- Accuracy—Are the statistics verifiable from credible sources? Are quotations complete and used in context? Are facts verifiable from multiple sources?

Anticipated Objections & Rebuttal—Must be sufficient, credible, and accurate

- Objections—Refute or rebut objections using evidence
- Counter-arguments—Identify and use evidence to support your rebuttal of counter-arguments

Drawing Conclusions—Overall, coherent statement about effectiveness of the claim

A Toulmin Model Outline for Analyzing Arguments

(modified from Timothy W. Crusius and Carolyn E. Channell, *The Aims of Argument*, p. 34)

Claim:

Qualifier?

Exceptions:

Reason 1

What makes this reason relevant?

What makes this reason effective?

What evidence supports this reason?

Is this evidence sufficient?

Is this evidence credible?

Is this evidence accurate?

Source:

Objection:

Rebuttal:

Reason 2

What makes this reason relevant?

What makes this reason effective?

What evidence supports this reason?

Is this evidence sufficient?

Is this evidence credible?

Is this evidence accurate?

Source:

Objection:

Rebuttal:

Reason 3

What makes this reason relevant?

What makes this reason effective?

What evidence supports this reason?

Is this evidence sufficient?

Is this evidence credible?

Is this evidence accurate?

Source:

Objection:

Rebuttal: