WRITING AN ARGUMENT

SIP Workshop

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What is an arguable thesis?

- Structure: Claim + Reason(s)
- Does not have to be controversial
- Should have more than one possible side

What are the components of arguments?

- Motive
  - Why do you need to make this argument to this audience at this time?

- Claim
  - Your idea; what you want to persuade your audience to do or believe
  - Claims are not facts; they require support

- Support
  - What makes your reader believe your claim

What are the components of argument?

- Introduction
  - Establishes the situation (or problem)
  - Usually establishes the claim
- Body
  - Provides support for the claim
    - Reasons
    - Evidence
  - May address opposing views
- Conclusion
  - (Re-)establishes the claim in light of the reasons and evidence

How do you support a claim?

- Rhetorical appeals (Aristotle)
  - Ethos: appeal to the author's credibility
  - Pathos: appeal to the audience's values or emotions
  - Logos: appeal to facts and reason
- Academic writing privileges logos

How do you support a claim?

- Evidence
  - Quotation, paraphrase, and summary from other texts
  - Statistics
  - Facts
  - Analogies
  - Logical reasoning

How do you write a thesis statement?

- Claim + Reasons
- Claim: interesting, relevant point
- A reasonable person may well disagree with it
- It can be supported by reasoning and evidence
- Reasons: answer the question, "Why should I believe this claim?"

Sample thesis

- Claim:

- Reasons:

- Thesis:

- Your reasons might not be stated in your introduction; they should be re-iterated in your conclusion.

How do you draft the argument?

- Establish your claim

- Establish your reasons

- Develop or collect your evidence

  - This requires research!

- Connect your claim, reasons, and evidence in individual units

- Draft your sections

- Revise

How do you connect the evidence to the reasons?

Develop an argument matrix:

Reason	Evidence	Discussion
(Claim +) Reason 1	Examples	Explanation of how the evidence supports your claim and reason
	Statistics	
	Analogies or comparisons	
	Etc.	
(Claim +) Reason 2	Examples	Explanation of how the evidence supports your claim and reason
	Statistics	
	Analogies or comparisons	
	Etc.	

How do you deal with counter-arguments?

- Know your audience
  - What are their values?
  - What are their biases?
- Acknowledge their concerns; be respectful
- Explain, with evidence, why their concerns are outweighed other points
- or – Explain why their concerns are mistaken or irrelevant.

How do you draft the argument?

- Establish your claim

- Establish your reasons

- Develop or collect your evidence

    - This requires research!

- Connect your claim, reasons, and evidence in individual units

- Draft your sections

- Revise

How do you organize the argument?

Persuasive point

- Reason 1
  - Evidence
  - Discussion
- Reason 2
  - Evidence
  - Discussion
- …
- Conclude

Solution proposal

- Establish the problem
  - Evidence
  - Discussion
- …
- Introduce your solution (claim)
  - Reason 1
    - Evidence
    - Discussion
- …
- Conclude

How do you draft your sections?

- Topic sentence:
    - State the reason that supports your claim
- Body:
    - Present the evidence that supports your reason
    - Discuss how that evidence works to support your reason (and claim)
- Conclude

How do you draft your sections?

- In a short paper, each section may be a single paragraph.
- In a long paper, each section will be multiple paragraphs
  - Especially important to return to your claim and reason at the end of the section

How do you draft the introduction and conclusion?

- Introduction:
  - Establish your motive for writing
  - (Probably) introduce your claim
  - (Maybe) introduce your reasons
- Conclusion:
  - (Maybe) refer back to your motive
  - Re-state your claim and reasons
  - (Probably) end with a call to action

Questions for revision

- ☐ Do my reasons actually support my claim?

- ☐ Does my evidence actually support my reasons?

- ☐ Have I discussed my evidence and its connection to my reasons?

- ☐ Does every paragraph relate to my claim?
  - ☐ Is that clear from the topic sentence?

- ☐ Does every sentence in each paragraph relate to that topic sentence?