3.4: What are the Different Types of Argument in Writing?

Throughout this chapter, you have studied the definition of argument, parts of argument, and how to use logic in argument. This section brings all of the previous material together and tackles arguments in writing. Foremost on most students' minds when taking college composition courses is this question: "How do I write an argument paper?" The answer is not a simple one because, as mentioned previously, arguments come in a variety of packages. This means that written arguments—whether in essay or some other form—also come in many different types.

Arguments of the Rhetorical Modes

Most arguments involve one or more of the rhetorical modes. Once again, rhetoric is the study and application of effective writing techniques. There are a number of standard rhetorical modes of writing—structural and analytical models that can be used effectively to suit different writing situations. The rhetorical modes include, but are not limited to, narrative, description, process analysis, illustration and exemplification, cause and effect, comparison, definition, persuasion, and classification. These modes will be covered in detail in Chapter 5, “Rhetorical Modes.” They are mentioned here, however, to make clear that any and all rhetorical modes can be used to pursue an argument. In fact, most professors will insist upon it.

Tip

Remember that when writing arguments, always be mindful of the point of view you should use. Most academic arguments should be pursued using third person. For more on this issue, see Chapter 4, “The Writing Process.”

Arguments of Persuasion

One of the most common forms of argument is that of persuasion, and often standardized tests, like the SOL, will
provide writing prompts for persuasive arguments. On some level, all arguments have a persuasive element because
the goal of the argument is to persuade the reader to take the writer’s claim seriously. Many arguments, however, exist
primarily to introduce new research and interpretation whereas persuasive arguments expressly operate to change
someone’s mind about an issue or a person.

A common type of persuasive essay is an Op-Ed article. Included in the opinion section of a newspaper, these articles
are more appropriately called argument essays because most authors strive not only to make explicit claims but also to
support their claims, sometimes even with researched evidence. These articles are often well-designed persuasive
essays, written to convince readers of the writer’s way of thinking.

In addition to essays, other forms of persuasive writing exist. One common and important example is the job letter,
where you must persuade others to believe in your merits as a worker and performer so that you might be hired.

In a persuasive essay, you should be sure to do the following:

• Clearly articulate your claim and the main reasons for it. Avoid forming a thesis based on a negative claim. For
  example, “The hourly minimum wage is not high enough for the average worker to live on.” This is probably a true
  statement, but persuasive arguments should make a positive case because a negative is hard to prove. That is, the
  thesis statement should focus on how the hourly minimum wage is too low or insufficient.

• Anticipate and address counterarguments. Think about your audience and the counterarguments they would mostly
  likely have. Acknowledging points of view different from your own also has the effect of fostering more credibility
  between you and the audience. They know from the outset that you are aware of opposing ideas and that you are
  not afraid to give them space.

• Make sure your support comes in many different forms. Use logical reasoning and the rhetorical appeals, but also
  strive for concrete examples from your own experience and from society.

• Keep your tone courteous, but avoid being obsequious. In other words, shamelessly appealing to your readers’
  vanity will likely ring false. Aim for respectful honesty.

• Avoid the urge to win the argument. On some level, we all want to be right, and we want others to see the error of
  their ways. More times than not, however, arguments in which both sides try to win end up producing losers all
  around. The more productive approach is to persuade your audience to consider your claim as a sound one, not
  simply the right one.

Tip

Because argument writing is designed to convince readers of an idea they may not have known before or a side of an
issue they may not agree with, you must think carefully about the attitude you wish to convey as you advance your
argument. The overall attitude of a piece of writing is its tone, and it comes from the words you choose (for more on the
importance of word choice, see Chapter 10, “Working with Words”). In argument writing, strive for the following:

• Confidence—The reader needs to know that you believe in what you say, so be confident. Avoid hedgy and
  apologetic language. However, be careful not to cross the line from confidence to overconfidence. Arrogance can
  rebuff your readers, even if they agree with you.

• Neutrality—While you may advocate for one side or way of thinking, you still must demonstrate that you are being
  as objective as you can in your analysis and assessment. Avoid loaded terms, buzzwords, and overly emotional
  language.
• **Courtesy and fairness**—Particularly when dealing with any counterarguments, you want your tone to reveal that you have given other points of view due consideration. Avoid being smug, snide, or harshly dismissive of other ideas.

**Sample Writing Assignment 1**

Find an Op-Ed article from one of the major US newspapers: *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, or the *LA Times*. Then, do the following:

1. **Prewriting Work:** Read the article carefully, taking notes or annotating it. Be sure to find the main argument and map the support used by the author, i.e., how the author is trying to persuade you. Note any use of rhetorical appeals, expert testimony, and research. (For tips about note-taking and annotating reading material, see Chapter 1 for a review of the rhetorical appeals, see Chapter 2.)

2. **Write a paragraph summary of the article.** Include the main argument and its support. Explain the different types of support used by the author (rhetorical appeals, expert testimony, and research).

3. **In a paragraph, devise and explain your own counterargument(s) to the author’s thesis.**

4. **In a paragraph, explain what kind of support you would use for your counterargument.** What rhetorical appeals would you use? What experts might you call on? Do you think you would need to do research and if so, on what?

**Sample Writing Assignment 2**

Write a job letter. As you design it, be sure to do the following:

1. **Use formal letter format.** Be sure to include these elements: your address, the address of the job you’re applying to (or the department you are applying to), the date you send the letter, a greeting, the letter content in coherent paragraphs (single-spaced paragraphs with a double space in between paragraphs), a sign off, any additional information (your phone and/or email address). For some visual examples of what this would look like, do a Google image search for “job letter format.”

2. **Prewriting Work 1:** Imagine a job you would like to apply for. Ask yourself the following questions and brainstorm answers to them: “What skills would I need to have for this job, and which of those skills do I have?” “What educational background would be required, and can I show that I fulfill the requirements?” “What experience might the hiring committee want to me to have, and do I have any experience that would be relevant?”

3. **Prewriting Work 2:** Take the notes you have come up with and add as many specific details as you can. If you believe you do have relevant skills, what are they, specifically? Where did you get those skills, specifically? How long have you had those skills, specifically? Do you have examples where you have shown excellence with those skills, specifically?

4. **Drafting:** Shape your details into three paragraphs organized by issue: skills, education, and experience. Be specific, include a couple examples per paragraph, and be succinct in your delivery.

5. **Proofread carefully.** First of all, excellent sentence composition, punctuation, and spelling communicate your seriousness to those who might hire you. Mistakes make you look sloppy and make it easy for them to toss your letter...
on the rejection pile. Second, watch word choice. Choose specific over general words as much as possible (you say you are a hard worker, but what does that mean, practically speaking?). Make sure you avoid clichés and overly gushy sentiment ("I'm passionate about people!"). Finally, proofread for tone. Strive for courteousness and objectivity. Make it seem like you are being objective about your own abilities.

Arguments of Evaluation

If you have ever answered a question about your personal take on a book or movie or television show or piece of music, you have given a review. Most times, these reviews are somewhat hasty and based on initial or shallow impressions. However, if you give thought to your review, if you explain more carefully what you liked or didn’t like and why, if you bring in specific examples to back up your points, then you have moved on to an argument of evaluation. Reviews of film, books, music, food, and other aspects of taste and culture represent the most familiar type of argument of evaluation. The main objective of an argument of evaluation is to render a critical judgment on the merits of something.

Another common argument of evaluation is the performance review. If you have ever held a job, you know what it feels like to be on the receiving end of such a review; your timeliness and productivity and attitude are scrutinized to determine if you have been a good worker or need to worry about looking for another job. If you are in any sort of supervisory position, you will be the one writing and delivering those reviews, and your own supervisor will want to know that you have logical justification and evidence for your judgements.

For all types of reviews or evaluation arguments, make sure to plan for the following:

- **Declare your overall judgment of the subject under review**—good, bad, or somewhere in between. This is your conclusion or thesis.

- **Lay out the criteria for your judgment**. In other words, your review must be based on logical criteria—i.e., the standards by which you evaluate something. For example, if you are reviewing a film, reasonable criteria would include acting, writing, storytelling, directing, cinematography, music, and special effects. If you are evaluating an employee, that criteria will change and more likely involve punctuality, aspects of job performance, and overall attitude on the job.

- **Make sure to evaluate each criteria and provide evidence**. Draw your evidence from what you are reviewing, and use as many specific examples as you can. In a movie review in which you think the acting quality was top notch, give examples of a particular style that worked well or lines delivered effectively or emotions realistically conveyed.

- **Use concrete language**. A review is only an argument if we can reasonably see—from examples and your explanations—how you arrived at your judgment. Vague or circular language ("I liked it because it was just really good!") will keep your evaluation at the opinion level only, preventing it from being taken seriously as an argument.

- **Keep the tone respectful**—even if you ultimately did not like the subject of your review. Be as objective as you can when giving your reasons. Insulting language detracts from the seriousness of your analysis and makes your points look like personal attacks.
Roger Ebert (1942-2013), a movie reviewer for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, was once one of the most famous movie critics in America. His reviews provide excellent examples of the argument of evaluation.

Consider his review of the 2009 film *Avatar* and note how clearly he declares his judgements, how he makes his reader aware of just what standards he uses for judgement (his criteria), and how he uses a wealth of examples and reasons to back his critiques (although he is careful to avoid spoilers, the review went to print as the movie was coming out).

### Sample Writing Assignment 3

Write a brief review of your first job. How would you rate that experience, and what would your rating be based on?

1. Declare your overall judgment of your job experience. This is your main claim.
2. Come up with at least four criteria for evaluation. Give your judgment for each criteria. Include at least two specific examples to support each evaluation, and explain the logic of your support.
3. Proofread for tone, making sure to look for any words that would cause a reader to think your critique was unfair or hostile. For example, even if you loathed your first job, treat it dispassionately, like you are a social scientist putting that work experience under a microscope. (This might allow you to say, for example, that although the job was dull and repetitive, it gave you some useful experience.)

### Sample Writing Assignment 4

Evaluate a source that you plan to use for a research project. Explain what type of source you have (website? journal article? book? newspaper article?), and declare your source to be credible or not, using the following criteria:

1. Author’s credentials. First of all, are the authors named? Can you find out anything about them, like degrees and professional information? If you cannot find anything, how does that affect credibility? If you can find information, how does that information show credibility or lack of it?
2. Publication information and process. Was the article or book peer reviewed? Was it online or in print? Did you find it through a database or a Google search? Who funded publication? Explain what the results of these questions tell you about the source’s credibility.
Arguments of Fact and Explanation

In the beginning of this chapter, arguments were shown to be distinct from facts. Facts are not arguable, they do not have “two sides,” and they are not up for debate. However, as we well know, people disagree with facts all the time. We wouldn’t have a nonsense term like “alternative facts” otherwise. We do, however, have arguments that deal with this scenario: arguments of fact and explanation. Arguments of fact seek to establish, often in the face of doubters, that a fact is indeed true. Arguments of explanation establish why that fact is true. Not surprisingly, these arguments often go hand in hand, and they lie primarily in the domain of the research paper. For more detail on the research process, refer to Chapter 6, “Research”; this section will clarify these two types of argument.

Arguments of Fact: Many times, the goal of giving an argument is simply to establish that the conclusion is true. For example, to convince someone that obesity rates are rising in the US, the writer should cite evidence such as studies from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The studies cited would function as premises for the conclusion that obesity rates are rising:

Obesity is on the rise in the US because multiple studies carried out by the CDC and NIH have consistently shown a rise in obesity over the last four decades.

Putting this simple argument into standard form would look like this:

1. Multiple studies by the CDC and NIH have consistently shown a rise in obesity over the last four decades. (premises)
2. Therefore, obesity is on the rise in the US. (conclusion)

The standard form argument clearly distinguishes the premise from the conclusion and shows how the conclusion is supposed to be supported by the evidence offered in the premise. Again, the goal of this simple argument would be to convince someone that the conclusion is true. However, sometimes we already know that a statement or claim is true, and we are trying to establish why it is true rather than that it is true.

Arguments of Explanation: An argument that attempts to show why its conclusion is true is an explanation. Contrast the previous example with the following:

The reason that the rate of obesity is on the rise in the US is that the foods we most often consume over the past four decades have increasingly contained high levels of sugar and low levels of dietary fiber. Because eating foods high in sugar and low in fiber triggers the insulin system to start storing those calories as fat, it follows that people who consume foods high in sugar and low in fiber will tend to store more of the calories consumed as fat.

This passage gives an explanation for why obesity is on the rise in the US. Unlike the earlier example, here it is taken for granted that obesity is on the rise in the US. That is the claim whose truth the author must explain. The obesity explanation can also be put into standard form just like any other argument:

1. Over the past four decades, Americans have increasingly consumed foods high in sugar and low in fiber.
2. Consuming foods high in sugar and low in fat triggers the insulin system to start storing those calories as fat. (premise)

3. When people store more calories as fat, they tend to become obese. (premise)

4. Therefore, the rate of obesity is on the rise in the US. (conclusion)

Notice that in this explanation, the premises (1-3) attempt to explain why the conclusion is true, rather than a reason for thinking that the conclusion is true. That is, in an argument of explanation, we assume that what we are trying to explain (i.e., the conclusion) is true. In this case, the premises are supposed to show why we should expect that the conclusion is true. Explanations often give us an understanding of why the conclusion is true.

Arguments of Interpretation

Arguments of interpretation come mainly in the form of critical analysis writing. Scholars and students use critical analysis to understand a text more deeply; therefore, it is common in disciplines in which texts are the main objects of study—literature, philosophy, and history. However, we can also think of critical analysis as any analysis where someone takes raw data—from texts, from objects and images, from laboratory experiments, from surveys of people—and analyzes that data to come up with what they mean. The “what it all means” is an interpretation. The argument in critical analysis writing is the interpretation of the data. This must be a logical interpretation with the data also used to support the interpretation through reasoning and examples.

The guidelines for analyzing data are determined by the experts in those areas. Scholars of the life, earth, and physical sciences; the social sciences; and the humanities gather all sorts of different data. When writing up an interpretation of that data, writers and researchers should follow the models and standards provided by experts in those fields of study. In college, professors are important sources of these models and standards.

In the humanities, particularly in literature, there are generally four ways (or perspectives) for analyzing a text: writing from the perspective of a reader, writing as if the text were an object of study, writing about or from the perspective of an author, and writing about where a text fits into a particular context.

- Writing from the perspective of a reader: You seek to understand a text through your own experience, yet you also try to understand how others who may be different from you understand the same writing through their experience. This is characterized by noting down first impressions and lines or words that strike you in profound ways. This sort of analysis is common in journal or response paper assignments and can be a simple way to begin a discussion of a text.

- Writing about the text as an object of study: This is a perspective that highlights what makes up that text and what meaning we can find in it. Finding meaning relies on identifying the patterns, segments, and strategies (devices) in the writing you choose to analyze. This is one of the most common types of essay assignments in a literature class.

- Writing about the text’s author: Sometimes this provides another perspective with which to deepen an understanding of a piece of writing. Examining his or her life, thought processes, behaviors, and beliefs can help you to further understand an author’s work. This type of analysis can be the basis of a research paper on a work of history or literature.

- Writing about the text’s context: This approach usually has to do with how a text compares to other texts as well as how the text interacts with history and society. When historians analyze texts, studying context is crucial, but contextual analysis can also be the focus of a literature essay.
The process of critical analysis is dependent on **close reading** of the data or text and is an analytical process in which the writer moves from analyzing the details of the text to a broader conclusion that is logically based on those details. What can confuse a lot of students is that formal essay structure is must be framed by the conclusion, not the details: They must establish the main claim immediately, and then use the reasons for the claim to organize the details in each body paragraph. For more on close reading, see Chapter 1.

**From Analysis to Argument**

1. Analysis of a Text, Image, Object, or Data

   - Closely read a poem.
   - Take notes on details (words, lines, images, ideas) in the poem.
   - Analyze the details and find patterns that emerge.
   - Analyze the patterns and establish what the pattern reveals.
   - Formulate an argument about the poem based on that pattern analysis.

You may go through this pattern several times, but the goal is to find a central claim that you can support in an essay.

**Figure (PageIndex(2)) From Analysis to Argument**
2. Layout of Your Results in the Essay

Establish the argument/thesis about the poem in the introduction of the essay.

Organize the body paragraphs by supporting points.

Make sure each body paragraph has a main point and details from the poem and explanations of analysis to support that point.

Figure \(\PageIndex{3}\)) From Argument to Essay

Rogerian Argument

The Rogerian argument, inspired by the influential psychologist Carl Rogers, aims to find compromise or common ground about an issue. If, as stated in the beginning of the chapter, academic or rhetorical argument is not merely a two-sided debate that seeks a winner and a loser, the Rogerian argument model provides a structured way to move beyond the win-lose mindset. Indeed, the Rogerian model can be employed to deal effectively with controversial arguments that have been reduced to two opposing points of view by forcing the writer to confront opposing ideas and then work towards a common understanding with those who might disagree.
The following are the basic parts of a Rogerian Argument:

1. **Introduction**: Introduce the issue under scrutiny in a non-confrontational way. Be sure to outline the main sides in the debate. Though there are always more than two sides to a debate, Rogerian arguments put two in stark opposition to one another. Crucially, be sure to indicate the overall purpose of the essay: to come to a compromise about the issue at hand. If this intent is not stated up front, the reader may be confused or even suspect manipulation on the part of the writer, i.e., that the writer is massaging the audience just to win a fight. Be advised that the Rogerian essay uses an inductive reasoning structure, so do not include your thesis in your introduction. You will build toward the thesis and then include it in your conclusion. Once again, state the intent to compromise, but do not yet state what the compromise is.

2. **Side A**: Carefully map out the main claim and reasoning for the opposing side of the argument first. The writer’s view should never really come first because that would defeat the purpose of what Rogers called empathetic listening, which guides the overall approach to this type of argument. By allowing the opposing argument to come first, you communicate to the reader that you are willing to respectfully consider another’s view on the issue. Furthermore, you invite the reader to then give you the same respect and consideration when presenting your own view. Finally, presenting the opposition first can help those readers who would side against you to ease into the essay, keeping them invested in the project. If you present your own ideas first, you risk polarizing those readers from the start, which would then make them less amenable to considering a compromise by the end of the essay. You can listen to Carl Rogers himself discuss the importance of empathy on YouTube (https://youtu.be/2dLsgpHw5x0, transcript here).

3. **Side B**: Carefully go over your side of the argument. When mapping out this side’s claim and support, be sure that it parallels that of Side A. In other words, make sure not to raise entirely new categories of support, or there can be no way to come to a compromise. Make sure to maintain a non-confrontational tone; for example, avoid appearing arrogant, sarcastic, or smug.

4. **The Bridge**: A solid Rogerian argument acknowledges the desires of each side and tries to accommodate both. In this
part, point out the ways in which you agree or can find common ground between the two sides. There should be at least one point of agreement. This can be an acknowledgement of the one part of the opposition’s agreement that you also support or an admittance to a shared set of values even if the two sides come to different ideas when employing those values. This phase of the essay is crucial for two reasons: finding common ground (1) shows the audience the two views are not necessarily at complete odds, that they share more than they seem, and (2) sets up the compromise to come, making it easier to digest for all parties. Thus, this section builds a bridge from the two initial isolated and opposite views to a compromise that both sides can reasonably support.

5. The Compromise: Now is the time to finally announce your compromise, which is your thesis. The compromise is what the essay has been building towards all along, so explain it carefully and demonstrate the logic of it. For example, if debating about whether to use racial profiling, a compromise might be based on both sides’ desire for a safer society. That shared value can then lead to a new claim, one that disarms the original dispute or set of disputes. For the racial profiling example, perhaps a better solution would focus on more objective measures than race that would then promote safety in a less problematic way.

Sample Writing Assignment 5

Find a controversial topic, and begin building a Rogerian argument. Write up your responses to the following:

1. The topic or dilemma I will write about is…
2. My opposing audience is…
3. My audience’s view on the topic is…
4. My view on the topic is…
5. Our common ground—shared values or something that we both already agree on about the topic—is…
The Toulmin Argument Model

Stephen Edelston Toulmin (born March 25, 1922) was a British philosopher, author, and educator. Toulmin devoted his works to analyzing moral reasoning. He sought to develop practical ways to evaluate ethical arguments effectively. The Toulmin Model of Argumentation, a diagram containing six interrelated components, was considered Toulmin's most influential work, particularly in the fields of rhetoric, communication, and computer science. His components continue to provide useful means for analyzing arguments, and the terms involved can be added to those defined in earlier sections of this chapter.

The following are the parts of a Toulmin argument:

1. **Claim**: The claim is a statement that you are asking the other person to accept as true (i.e., a conclusion) and forms the nexus of the Toulmin argument because all the other parts relate back to the claim. The claim can include information and ideas you are asking readers to accept as true or actions you want them to accept and enact. One example of a claim:

   My grandfather should wear a hearing aid.

   This claim both asks the reader to believe an idea and suggests an action to enact. However, like all claims, it can be challenged. Thus, a Toulmin argument does not end with a claim but also includes grounds and warrant to give support and reasoning to the claim.

2. **Grounds**: The grounds form the basis of real persuasion and includes the reasoning behind the claim, data, and proof of expertise. Think of grounds as a combination of premises and support. The truth of the claim rests upon the grounds, so those grounds should be tested for strength, credibility, relevance, and reliability. The following are examples of grounds:

   Over 70% of all people over 65 years have a hearing difficulty.

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https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Composition/Book%3A_Let's_Get_Writing_(Browning%2C_DeVries%2C_Boylan%2…

Updated: Sat, 14 Sep 2019 22:17:47 GMT

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12
Hearing aids raise hearing quality.

Information is usually a powerful element of persuasion, although it does affect people differently. Those who are dogmatic, logical, or rational will more likely be persuaded by factual data. Those who argue emotionally and who are highly invested in their own position will challenge it or otherwise try to ignore it. Thus, grounds can also include appeals to emotion, provided they aren’t misused. The best arguments, however, use a variety of support and rhetorical appeals.

3. **Warrant**: A warrant links data and other grounds to a claim, legitimizing the claim by showing the grounds to be relevant. The warrant may be carefully explained and explicit or unspoken and implicit. The warrant answers the question, “Why does that data mean your claim is true?” For example,

A hearing aid helps most people hear better.

The warrant may be simple, and it may also be a longer argument with additional sub-elements including those described below. Warrants may be based on **logos, ethos, or pathos**, or values that are assumed to be shared with the listener. In many arguments, warrants are often implicit and, hence, unstated. This gives space for the other person to question and expose the warrant, perhaps to show it is weak or unfounded.

4. **Backing**: The backing for an argument gives additional support to the warrant. Backing can be confused with grounds, but the main difference is this: Grounds should directly support the premises of the main argument itself, while backing exists to help the warrants make more sense. For example,

Hearing aids are available locally.

This statement works as backing because it gives credence to the warrant stated above, that a hearing aid will help most people hear better. The fact that hearing aids are readily available makes the warrant even more reasonable.

5. **Qualifier**: The qualifier indicates how the data justifies the warrant and may limit how universally the claim applies. The necessity of qualifying words comes from the plain fact that most absolute claims are ultimately false (all women want to be mothers, e.g.) because one counterexample sinks them immediately. Thus, most arguments need some sort of qualifier, words that temper an absolute claim and make it more reasonable. Common qualifiers include “most,” “usually,” “always,” or “sometimes.” For example,

Hearing aids help most people.

The qualifier “most” here allows for the reasonable understanding that rarely does one thing (a hearing aid) universally benefit all people. Another variant is the reservation, which may give the possibility of the claim being incorrect:

Unless there is evidence to the contrary, hearing aids do no harm to ears.

Qualifiers and reservations can be used to bolster weak arguments, so it is important to recognize them. They are often used by advertisers who are constrained not to lie. Thus, they slip “usually,” “virtually,” “unless,” and so on into their claims to protect against liability. While this may seem like sneaky practice, and it can be for some advertisers, it is important to note that the use of qualifiers and reservations can be a useful and legitimate part of an argument.

6. **Rebuttal**: Despite the careful construction of the argument, there may still be counterarguments that can be used.
These may be rebutted either through a continued dialogue, or by pre-empting the counter-argument by giving the rebuttal during the initial presentation of the argument. For example, if you anticipated a counterargument that hearing aids, as a technology, may be fraught with technical difficulties, you would include a rebuttal to deal with that counterargument:

There is a support desk that deals with technical problems.

Any rebuttal is an argument in itself, and thus may include a claim, warrant, backing, and the other parts of the Toulmin structure.

Even if you do not wish to write an essay using strict Toulmin structure, using the Toulmin checklist can make an argument stronger. When first proposed, Toulmin based his layout on legal arguments, intending it to be used analyzing arguments typically found in the courtroom; in fact, Toulmin did not realize that this layout would be applicable to other fields until later. The first three elements—“claim,” “grounds,” and “warrant”—are considered the essential components of practical arguments, while the last three—“qualifier,” “backing,” and “rebuttal”—may not be necessary for all arguments.

Exercise 5

Find an argument in essay form and diagram it using the Toulmin model. The argument can come from an Op-Ed article in a newspaper or a magazine think piece or a scholarly journal. See if you can find all six elements of the Toulmin argument. Use the structure above to diagram your article’s argument.

Key Takeaways: Types of Argument

- **Arguments in the Rhetorical Modes**—models of writing that can be used for an argument, including the rhetorical modes: narration, comparison, causal analysis, process, description, definition, classification, and exemplification.
- **Arguments of Persuasion**—used to change someone’s thinking on a topic or person.
- **Arguments of Evaluation**—critical reviews based on logical evaluation of criteria and evidence for that evaluation.
- **Arguments of Fact and Explanation**—establishes that a fact is true (the former) or why it is true (the latter).
- **Arguments of Interpretation**—critical analysis writing in which one makes an argument about what data mean. Data can come from texts, objects, surveys, and scientific experiments.
- **The Rogerian Argument Model**—an argument model designed to bring about consensus and mutual understanding rather than conflict.
- **Toulmin’s Argument Model**—six interrelated components used to diagram an argument, drawn from both rhetorical and academic argument.