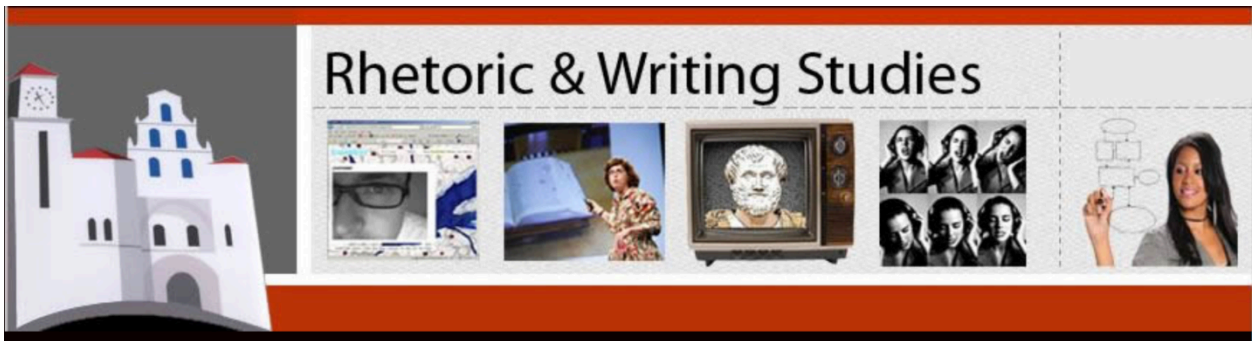


DIGITAL TEXTBOOK

RWS100

READING, WRITING & EVALUATING ARGUMENT

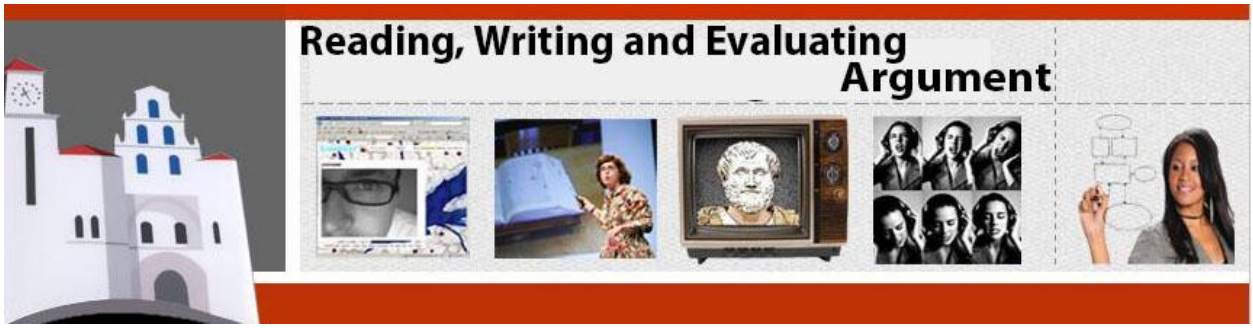


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Department of Rhetoric & Writing Studies, San Diego State University, 2018.



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Introducing the Study of Argument

Scholars, professionals, writers, and people in everyday conversation use a variety of terms to describe arguments. This can be confusing as these terms often conflict or overlap. Thus it is useful to start by outlining the terms we will use to describe the main elements of an argument. Once we have established this common vocabulary we can then consider how the parts of an argument fit together, how we can generate analyses of arguments, and how we can evaluate strengths and weaknesses.

An argument is a form of communication intended to persuade an audience, change an audience's attitudes/ideas, or move an audience to action. Arguments can be expressed in written, spoken, visual, and "multimodal"[1] form. Arguments exist where there is controversy and uncertainty, and they include support or justification for a position. We do not argue over what is self-evident or agreed on. Of course, what is controversial - and thus arguable - changes over time. In the early twentieth century it was controversial to suggest women should be allowed to vote. Obviously, this is no longer the case, but the issue of whether people with a criminal record should be able to vote is something that still generates controversy and thus arguments. Wherever decisions have to be made, problems solved, knowledge created, or people moved to action, there is argument.

When teachers talk about "analyzing an author's argument," they usually mean analyzing the main elements of the argument, and explaining how these elements work together to persuade a particular audience in a particular rhetorical situation (don't worry if at this point you aren't sure what all these terms mean). Here is a brief overview of the elements of argument that we will explore in the sections and chapters that follow.

1. **The Rhetorical Situation**. The rhetorical situation is the combination of author, audience, context, purpose, and genre. It is the situation shaping the text and that the text responds to. We will usually begin our analysis of a text by examining the rhetorical situation.

[1] "Multimodal" texts combine a combination of forms – images, video, writing, audio, etc. Digital tools make this combination of forms easier to achieve.

2. **The (overall) Argument.** This is the overall position or conclusion advanced by an author. We abstract this from the entirety of the text to arrive at the position or conclusion the author wants us to accept.[2]
3. **Claims**. The claims are the "engine" of an argument. They are the primary assertions or main lines of reasoning advanced by the author.
4. **Evidence.** The facts, data, examples, and other elements that support a claim.
5. **Strategies.** This refers to the tactical choices authors make when crafting language to have a persuasive effect on readers. One can identify strategic choices in almost any element of a text, from the way an author organizes her text, addresses the reader, frames an issue, deals with opposing views, or makes particular use of style and tone. To start exploring strategies it can be useful to ask why a particular element was included, how it was presented, and what persuasive effects were likely intended. Examining strategies can help us understand the rhetorical appeals**.**
6. **Rhetorical Appeals.** The philosopher Aristotle described three methods or "appeals" commonly used to persuade audiences: *ethos*, *logos,* and *pathos*. *Ethos* describes the way an author builds credibility and trustworthiness; *logos* refers to logic and reasoning, and *pathos* refers to the way an author connects to an audience's feelings and imagination.
7. **Rebuttal.** This is the part of an argument where the author addresses objections, opposing arguments, and questions that skeptical readers may have. Authors don't just make claims to advance their own position, they often defend and contrast their argument with competing ones.
8. **Qualifier.** Some arguments will describe the limits to what they are saying. They will acknowledge exceptions, uncertainty, and degrees of probability. The author may state how far their argument goes, where it does not apply, or emphasize what they are *not* saying. We call this part of the argument the "qualifier," and we differentiate between "unqualified" claims (sweeping, broad, certain claims that admit few limits or exceptions) and "qualified" claims. Scholars often use qualifiers in their writing to be as precise as possible about degrees of confidence and about the exact limits of their findings. Qualified claims are usually easier to defend, and can help build an author's ethos, suggesting the author is being careful, precise, and reasonable.
9. **Assumptions and Implications**. Assumptions are beliefs, values, and ways of seeing the world that an author takes for granted and expects her audience to share. We examine an author's assumptions in order to better understand the argument but also to evaluate strengths and weaknesses. Implications are what follow, or can be inferred from an author's position. Assumptions *underlie* an argument, while implications are what *follow from* an argument.

[2] Note that some people abbreviate "the overall argument" to "the argument." This can cause confusion between two senses of the word "argument." One sense of the word means "all the elements of the argument – the claims, evidence, strategies, etc." The other sense refers to the overall point or assertion. It is usually clear from context which is meant. In this text we will differentiate between "the argument" (all the parts) and "the overall argument" (the main assertion or claim).

Exercise 1. Here is a short sample argument that addresses the issue of school shootings. Read the text and identify the main elements of the argument. This is not a terribly "sophisticated" argument (it is invented), but the main elements are fairly clearly signaled.

"We Can Find Sensible, Common-Ground Solutions to the Horror of Mass Shootings." Dr. S Snape. *The Daily Prophet*, May 20, 2018.

[1] In recent years we have witnessed a series of horrifying mass-shootings in the nation's schools. We have watched as teenagers use their phones to record terrifying scenes of slaughter, and as parents desperately try to make contact with their children, unsure if they have survived the latest massacre. Despite the urgent need to do something, we seem unable to agree on solutions. My argument is that the best way forward is to combine several practical solutions recently offered by both gun safety advocates and gun rights groups. These solutions are sensible, feasible, and relatively uncontroversial. They are thus our best hope of implementing policies that have widespread support. They are not the only solutions we can consider, but they are the best place to start.

[2] First, and most importantly, we should require universal background checks on all gun sales. A 2018 study by the American College of Physicians found that 22 percent of guns are obtained without a background check. This makes it much easier for criminals and troubled individuals to purchase guns. Polls consistently find that over 90 percent of the public, including most NRA members, supports making these background checks universal.

[3] Second, we need to require safe storage of all guns, and pass "red flag laws" that allow a judge to order the temporary removal of a gun from a person who makes threats or seems particularly troubled. Friends, family and teachers who notice such behavior can make this request. Again, this measure is supported by gun safety advocates, but also by many gun rights groups. Some gun rights advocates support this measure as it allows due process, and the removal is temporary (it can be lifted after a set amount of time or after certain conditions are met). Recent school shootings revealed that in some cases people had reported disturbing behavior by the shooter, but authorities had no legal means to remove the weapons, and thus few options to deal with the emerging danger.

[4] Lastly, we can provide increased safety at schools. State and federal funding can be made available to schools that request this. There are many practical measures that can be implemented to "harden" schools, but this must be decided by local communities, as schools vary enormously, and there is no one-size-fits-all way of doing this (indeed, some schools may elect not to increase security). This measure is supported by gun rights groups, and also by gun safety advocates.

[5] Some have argued that any attempt to change gun laws is pointless, as the real drivers of mass shootings lie elsewhere. They claim shootings are caused by violent media, mental illness, or the decline of religious belief. But almost all developed countries allow violent media, and some allow far more of it than we do. All countries have people with mental illness, and the United States has far higher rates of religious observance than any other Western country. Yet American teens are 20 times more likely to be murdered with guns than their peers in other advanced nations.

[6] This is not to suggest that guns should be banned, or that law abiding citizens should be unable to purchase firearms, or that the 2nd amendment should not be adhered to. It is merely to suggest that background checks, waiting periods, red flag laws, licensing and training should be more strictly regulated and enforced, and (where appropriate and requested) schools be allowed to take measures to increase armed security.

[7] On the day of the shooting at Santa Fe High School on May 18, 2018, a teen survivor was asked if she was surprised such a horrible event could happen at her school. In tears, she replied she was not surprised. A TV reporter asked her why, and the teen said, "It's been happening everywhere. I've always felt it would eventually happen here too." We cannot allow a generation of our children to go to school expecting to see their classmates murdered. We need to act now, and we need to begin with solutions that have a good chance of being implemented.

Exercise 2: create your own argument on a topic of your choice. It does not have to be a "serious" topic. Try to include as many of the main elements of argument as you can. Exchange this with someone else (or with a group), and work on identifying the elements. Do you agree? Where do you disagree? Share with the class.

Some Common Forms of Argument

Arguments take many forms. Here is an overview of some common types of argument.

***Explicit versus Implicit Arguments*.** Some arguments make their case explicitly and directly. They may explicitly use the language of argument ("claims," "evidence," "reasons," etc.) and be very clear about what they want people to believe, value, or do. The argument above on gun control is a good example of an explicit argument.

However, some texts advance an implicit argument. This may be because the issue being addressed is sensitive, the audience resistant, or because the author wishes to use aesthetic resources to reach the audience. Some texts persuade indirectly through narrative, association, inference, and suggestion. They may invite an audience to draw certain conclusions or inferences. Consider, for example, the song and music video, "This is America," by the musician Childish Gambino. This song appears to make implicit claims about the pervasiveness of violence in America, the value assigned to African American lives, the persistence of racism, and the contradictions of pop culture. Or think about all the monuments and memorials that exist in cities across the country. Some scholars argue that these monuments and memorials make implicit arguments. The controversy surrounding whether to remove, relocate or alter confederate war memorials hinges to some extent on the implicit arguments advanced by these monuments. Those who call for removing or relocating these monuments suggest that they embody implicit historical arguments that are damaging and unrepresentative. Their opponents suggest that they embody a different set of historical arguments.

One-sided and "Balanced" Arguments. We have all encountered arguments that seem one-sided. They may draw on a very narrow selection of sources, evidence, research, and

authorities, and they may ignore opposing arguments. By contrast, more "balanced" arguments present a broader range of views, voices and sources into consideration.

***Common Ground and Adversarial Arguments**:* Some authors will focus more on establishing common ground with an audience than on attacking those who disagree. The author may strategically build from the beliefs and values shared by her audience, and then try to use these as a bridge to more contested terrain. In some situations an author may try to persuade a resistant audience that an issue can be reframed in terms of shared values. For example, Shieh's "Smoking ban diminishes on-campus diversity" argues for allowing smoking at SDSU in designated areas (which many students may not support). Shieh argues that this new policy will promote inclusivity and tolerance, and help students deal with stress (goals that most students will support). By contrast, adversarial arguments focus on areas of disagreement and on demonstrating their weaknesses. Both approaches can be effective and appropriate depending on context.

***Broad/Narrow and Nuanced/Dogmatic Arguments*.** Arguments may vary widely in scope and certainty. Some arguments advance limited, carefully circumscribed positions. They may present claims that are cautious and tentative, acknowledging limits, uncertainty, and degrees of probability. Other forms of argument may advance very broad, wide, uncompromising positions that make little space for uncertainty or doubt.

"Conceptual" and Action-Oriented Arguments. Some arguments may focus on the concepts, definitions and terms used to discuss a particular issue. In some cases, the author's main purpose may be to stand back from a debate, discuss how it is being conducted, and suggest alternatives. Action-oriented arguments focus on persuading the audience to take a specific action. Such arguments may rouse an audience and describe concrete measures.

While the list above provides some useful distinctions, remember that such features arise from the particular rhetorical situation an author must work with. In particular, the audience, context, and author's purpose will play an important role in the forms arguments take. Thus a "one-sided" argument may be appropriate if a speaker is addressing a supportive audience, and the occasion calls for rallying support and moving people to action. In other contexts this might be inappropriate or ineffective.

One final distinction is worth making, and that is between **arguments focused on ethical, open persuasion, and those that use manipulation and deception.** Perhaps the simplest way of approaching this is to imagine a spectrum. On one end, we have arguments that make a good faith effort to persuade, carefully weigh evidence, acknowledge disagreement and uncertainty, and do their best to present an accurate, honest case. On the other end of the spectrum we have arguments that are manipulative, deceptive, and largely uninterested in truth. Such arguments are concerned with control, influence and outcomes. Persuasion becomes an end and not a means. Propaganda is often characterized by such forms of persuasion, as are certain

forms of advertising and marketing.

Exercise 3: have you encountered arguments that fit the descriptions above? Make a list of examples. If you cannot think of one based on your experience, compose some hypothetical examples. Are there other features of arguments that you think should be considered?

The Rhetorical Situation

We will often begin our analysis of an argument by "situating" it. This means figuring out who the author is, what kind of text we are dealing with, who it is trying to persuade, and when and where it was written. Experienced readers begin their analysis by asking big-picture questions about the *author*, the *audience* she addresses, the *context*, the *genre* of the text, the *purpose* of the text, and the *constraints* that exist.

Key Elements of the Rhetorical Situation

A) Author. Who is the author? When reading a text you should always take a few minutes to research who the author is. Who is she, what kind of writing does she do, what organizations does she belong to, what is her reputation?



B) Audience - who seems to be the intended audience? Who might be secondary audiences? How is the text shaped to target those people? Figuring out where the text was published, when it was published, what kind of text it is (speech, op-ed, article, song, etc.) and how it addresses readers can help provide clues to audience. We can also ask who is likely to find the text important, relevant, or useful.

Read the introduction. What do you have to believe/value/care about to get past the first line, paragraph or page? Who is not going to be able to read this?

Consider style, tone, diction, and vocabulary. What does this tell you about the potential audience for the text? Examine the other authors and works referred to in the text (if there are footnotes or a works cited page, look at what is listed there. Just as you can learn a lot about a person by the people around him, you can learn a lot about a text from all the other texts it references). What does the author assume her readers know? This can help identify the author's intended audience. What does the author assume about readers' age, education, gender, location, or cultural values?



C) Purpose - what is the author trying to achieve? What does the author want us to do, believe, or understand? All writing has a purpose. We write to bring awareness to a problem, make sense of

an experience, call people to action, contribute to an area of knowledge, criticize/defend a position, redefine a concept, complain, clarify, challenge, document, create a beautiful story, and entertain (to name just a few puposes for writing).



D) Context - context refers to situational influences that are specific to time, place, and occasion. When and where was the text written and where is it intended to be read/seen/heard? We can also consider the context of the author's life and work, texts referred to by the author (or that refer to the author) and the "conversation" the text is part of. How does the current context influence our reading of the text.



E) Genre – genres are types of communication that have become routine and "conventionalized." A poem, meme, lab report, op-ed, and magazine article are all examples of genres. Identifying the text's genre can tell us a lot about audience, purpose, and context. Genres give us clues about how we should read a text, what we can do with the text, and who the audience is. Consider the two images below.





The image on the right does not, by itself, give much guidance on how we should interpret it. But the image on the left is in a familiar genre – the road sign. Even if we have never seen a sign like this, we have a good idea of its purpose, intended audience, and meaning. Identifying a text's genre will often reveal much about the rhetorical situation.

The Overall Argument

When teachers ask a student to describe "the overall argument," what they usually mean is the main point, assertion, or conclusion to be found in the text. When we first read a text it is useful to figure out what the overall argument is so we can develop a "big picture" understanding of the author's position. This is often one of the first steps in developing an analysis of a text.

Here are some examples of overall arguments that address issues you may have encountered:

1. Social media is having a negative impact on students' writing and reading skills.
2. The opioid crisis in America is partly the result of over-prescription, but is primarily caused by the rise of inequality, economic dislocation, and community breakdown.
3. To combat "fake news" social media companies need to make serious efforts to limit its spread, and schools and universities must start teaching students how to identify and avoid fake news.
4. Children should not be allowed to play tackle football until they reach high school, as their brains are particularly vulnerable to damage from high impact sports.
5. While it is common to assume that our sense of morality comes from the culture we live in, there is growing evidence to suggest we are all born with a "moral instinct" that has evolutionary roots.

Each of the examples above advances a position that is contestable (it is easy to imagine people who disagree with some or all of the argument). Each statement invites the reader to see an issue from a particular point of view.

Here are a few things to consider when you read a text and try to sketch out the overall argument. The overall argument will sometimes be explicitly stated. For example, the author may write something like, "The main assertion advanced in this paper is that…" This may be presented at the start of the text, but sometimes it will appear at the end (usually when an author is facing a resistant audience, and needs to overcome resistance before sharing her main assertion.) However, you will need to read the text carefully, map out all the claims, and then work backwards to create your account of the overall argument. The overall argument should succinctly capture the main thing the author wants us to believe.

Claims

Claims are the "engine" of an argument. They are the main assertions or lines of reasoning advanced by an author.[3] Claims assert that something is the case, and (usually) provide some justification for this. Claims are contestable, and deal with matters on which there is disagreement and uncertainty.

In complex, multi-leveled arguments, there may be an overall argument, claims, and sub-claims.

[3] Note that claims are sometimes referred to as "thesis statements."

What is NOT a claim. Statements of preference or taste are not usually claims. If I say, "I prefer Kendrick Lamar to Drake," or "I hate artichokes," these are not claims. Similarly, facts (alone) are not claims. If you mention that you are 19 years old, that is (presumably) a fact rather than a claim. Descriptions and summaries are also not claims.

Some Rules of Thumb for Identifying Claims
To identify claims it can be helpful to look for the following elements:

1. **Question/answer patterns.** Sometimes authors will pose a question and then answer it, with their answer indicating a major claim. Question/answer pairs may be used to develop a claim while also drawing the reader in and creating a "conversational" tone. For example, Kristof's "Do We Have the Courage to Stop This?" makes the case for stronger gun safety laws. Kristof begins his text by asking, "Why can't we regulate guns as seriously as we do cars?" His "answer" is that we can and should regulate guns as seriously as we do cars. This question/answer pair points to one of his main claims.
2. **Problem/solution patterns**. Some authors will introduce one or more problems, and then present solutions to these problems. In many cases these "problem-solution" pairs are also major claims.
3. **Passages that contain evidence.** If you find evidence you can often work backward to the claim it supports, since evidence is usually there to support a claim.
4. **Self-identification and emphasis.** When an author uses phrases such as, "my point here is," or "what I really want to emphasize is the following," she is aligning herself with a position and signaling its importance. When you see such language there is a good chance you have found a claim.
5. **Metadiscourse that explicitly uses the language of argument.** Sometimes authors are kind enough to explicitly describe what they are doing. This is called "metadiscourse," and it occurs when authors take a pause from making a claim, presenting evidence, or quoting an author, and signal explicitly that they are now making a claim, presenting evidence, or quoting an author. For example, when an author says, "my argument consists of three main claims. First…, second…etc.," she is using metadiscourse. Always pay close attention when you come across such language.
6. **"Beginnings and ends." Skim through the** beginning and end of the introduction, major sections, and the entire text.
7. **Section heading titles.** These titles may indicate major claims. Some authors help readers follow the arc of their argument by dividing their text up into sections that also signpost key claims.

Exercise 4: Identifying Claims
Read Nicholas Kristof's, "Do We Have the Courage to Stop This?" (*New York Times*, December 15, 2012.) Use the "rules of thumb for identifying claims" to note examples of what seem to be claims. List them in the column on the right.

Nicholas Kristof, "Do We Have the Courage to Stop This?"	**Identifying Claims**

Op-ed, NYTimes, December 15, 2012	
[1] In the harrowing aftermath of the school shooting in Connecticut, one thought wells in my mind: Why can't we regulate guns as seriously as we do cars? [2] The fundamental reason kids are dying in massacres like this one is not that we have lunatics or criminals — all countries have them — but that we suffer from a political failure to regulate guns….. [3] **Continue filling out the chart**	[Questions like this often hint at a claim. If you put the question and answer together, can you find a claim?] ["The fundamental reason…" Here the author uses the language of argument. This often points to a claim. What seems to be the claim here?] **Continue filling out the chart**

Some Common Types of Claim

In later sections we will explore types of claims, and ways of evaluating claims, in more detail. For now, it is worth noting that some claim types occur frequently, and it is useful to have a sense of what they are.

1. **Claims about facts/existence** – whether particular facts are true and whether they are relevant. For example, many claim that an overwhelming consensus of scientists agree about human-induced climate change. Others deny such a consensus exists, or deny it is overwhelming. President Trump has claimed that between three and five million people voted illegally in the 2016 election. His critics claim this is not the case. This debate thus centers on questions of fact.

2. **Claims about definitions and categorization.** Many claims are concerned with how we should define something, or, more broadly, what category we should assign it. For example, some writers claim that waterboarding should be defined as "torture." Recently, a debate has emerged around a Colorado baker's refusal to make a cake for a gay couple's wedding (the debate went all the way to the Supreme Court, and seems likely to return there). Critics of the baker have defined his actions as bigotry and a violation of the couple's civil rights. Defenders of the baker define his decision as an example of religious freedom and free speech.

   A categorical claim takes up the question of which category we should assign a person, issue or object. For example, is the movie *Superbad* a coming of age story, a "bromance," or both?

3. **Comparison claims (analogy and precedent).** Some claims center on how, or to what degree, we can compare things. Many such claims draw on analogy. For example, in Kristof's "Do We Have the Courage to Stop This?" the author creates an extended analogy between auto safety and gun safety. Kristof claims that gun safety and car safety are comparable, and we can improve gun safety by adopting similar measures. In the legal profession, lawyers often make claims by establishing similarities between a past case and a current case (called "reasoning by precedent").

4. **Claims about Causes and Consequences**. Some claims concern causes and effects. Often they address what has caused a particular trend or outcome, or what might happen if a particular choice is made. For example, some writers claim that pornography, or violent video games, or violent movies, or a lack of prayer in schools, caused the recent increase in school shootings. Many writers advance claims about the causes of climate change, the "great recession," and the recent increase in authoritarian leaders in many countries. Authors have also made causal claims about what is behind the rise of fake news, and the trend toward political polarization.

5. **Claims about values and principles**. Many claims concern values and whether something (or someone) is good or bad. They may also invoke a moral or political principle.

6. **Proposal Claims/Calls to Action.** Proposal claims recommend some type of action or some solution to a problem. Such claims ask an audience to do something or solve some problem. Sometimes these claims will begin with the explanation of a particular problem, and then move to the solutions that are available to the audience.

Exercise 5: re-read Kristof's "Do We Have the Courage to Stop This?" as well as "Some Inconvenient Gun Facts for Liberals." List all the claims in the texts, then identify the *types* of claim.

An important Distinction: "Qualified" and "Unqualified" Claims

Claims vary in scope, strength, certainty and balance. Some claims advance limited, carefully circumscribed positions. They are cautious and tentative, acknowledging limits, exceptions, uncertainty, and degrees of probability. Other claims may advance very broad, wide, uncompromising positions that do not admit uncertainty or doubt. Scholars who study argument refer to this as the degree to which a claim is "qualified." (Note that this sense of the word does *not* mean possessing qualifications, and thus expertize. An author who makes an unqualified claim is not necessarily lacking qualifications).

Claims that include terms such as "always," "all," "every," "never," "universal," "only," "absolute," "greatest," etc., are often unqualified. Claims that include words such as "some," "most," "might," "perhaps," "could," "may" "to some extent," and that acknowledge limits and

exceptions, are usually "qualified" arguments. Scientists often use many qualifiers (or what they call "hedges") in their writing as they want to be as precise as possible about degrees of confidence and about the exact limits of their findings. Qualified claims are usually easier to defend. An unqualified claim may require a lot of support to be convincing. In some contexts a qualified claim can help build an author's ethos if it helps suggest the author is being careful, precise, and reasonable.

Evidence

Evidence is the main support for a claim. There are many types of evidence – examples, anecdotes, stories, personal experience, statistical data, facts, surveys, testimony, interviews, quotations, research results, expert authority, analogies, etc. Each form of evidence may be appropriate (or inappropriate) for a particular rhetorical situation and audience. To find evidence in a text, ask what the author has to go on. What is there to support this claim? Why should we believe this claim?

Note that some forms of evidence, such as quotations, statistics, and survey results, seem familiar and "concrete," while others may be more abstract. For example, an author may support her claim by presenting a thought experiment, a potential consequence, or an analogy. Most scholars define all of these things as "evidence," but some scholars give them separate names, such as "reasons" or "sub-claims." In this text we will follow the more traditional approach of defining all of these as "evidence."

EVIDENCE: TYPES, USES, AND STRENGTHS/LIMITS

Evidence Type	Uses, Strengths & Limits
Examples	Examples clarify and support claims. Sometimes examples work to illustrate a claim, engage the audience, and invite the reader to identify with the author. In such cases, concrete, specific, vivid examples bring a claim to life, help make the reader care, and create connections between reader and writer. Some claims contain a generalization (explicit or implicit) and the examples support this generalization. In such cases, we can ask if the examples are truly representative and able to support the "weight" and scope of the generalization. For example, consider a person who claims vaccinations damage kids and cause autism. If this person supports her claim by sharing an example of a child who was diagnosed with autism after receiving an inoculation, we can ask if this really substantiates such a large, strong claim. Examples are sometimes used to show that an opposing argument is NOT the case. These become "counterexamples." In such situations, one example can be very persuasive. If my opponent claims all football players who take a knee during the national anthem are unpatriotic, and I can present an example of a football player who is a veteran, and has steadfastly expressed support for his country, then

	this suggests the original claim may need to be revised. Aristotle divides examples into "factual" and "hypothetical." Factual examples describe real instances. Hypothetical examples are imaginary situations that ask the audience to visualize a scenario, or think about certain potential consequences. Hypothetical examples often have strong imaginative appeal. However, as readers we should be on our guard when presented with hypothetical examples, as they are open to creative manipulation. For example, after the horrific shooting of schoolchildren at Sandyhook, the head of the NRA (Wayne LaPierre) claimed we should not consider any measures to regulate guns or improve gun safety. To support this, he presented a hypothetical example: imagine it is 2.00 a.m., a person is breaking into your house, and you need to defend your children. Do you want a gun in your hand? This hypothetical example is emotionally effective, but sidesteps the larger issue of whether tighter gun safety laws could help reduce the overall number of people killed by guns. Jokes often advance a claim, followed by an example that undermines or reverses the audience's expectations. E.g.: "Baristas at Starbucks always screw up your name. When they asked for my name, I said 'Marc, with a C.' I was handed my coffee, which said 'Cark.' (If you want to sound super-sophisticated, the Latin word for "example" is "exemplum," and the plural is "exampla." Note that the common abbreviation "e.g." stands for *exempli gratia*, which translates to "for example.")
Anecdotes, stories, and personal experience.	Anecdotes, stories and personal experiences help illustrate a claim, bring an issue to life, or indicate that a claim may be correct. They may capture the imagination of an audience or help create a connection between writer and reader. These types of evidence can be moving, dramatic and powerful. They are often part of the way an author appeals to *pathos*. However, when an author makes strong claims, and supports this in large part through anecdotes, stories or personal experience *alone*, we should be skeptical. There is a famous saying that "the plural of anecdote is not data."[4] This means that while a few stories or anecdotes may be interesting, they are not the same as large amounts of carefully collected data. In some contexts, data may be less exciting than a story, but more reliable.
Facts and data	Facts are statements that can be verified. Data consists of collections of facts. Facts and data are very broad categories of evidence. In a sense, most of the types of evidence listed here could be described as

[4] The origin of this phrase is often attributed to Frank Kotsonis or Roger Brinner, but the exact provenance is unclear.

	facts or data.
Statistical data, surveys, and polls.	A lot of research relies on statistical data, polls, and surveys. Such evidence can quickly and clearly summarize large amounts of data, provide a useful snapshot of the weight of evidence, or point to significant trends. However, one must always ask critical questions about how the data was selected, research design, and interpretation of that data. Statistical data, surveys, and polls are usually used to build appeals to *logos*.
Testimony and interviews.	Testimony is a form of written or spoken evidence obtained from witnesses or experts who recount what they observed. (In a law court, testimony is usually made under oath). The persuasiveness of the testimony or interview may depend on the *ethos* of the person who gives it.
Research results and expert authority.	The results of research conducted by experts can help support a claim, particularly if the research is respected, credible, relevant, recent, and draws on a substantial body of evidence. It also helps if the expert is held in high regard by others in her field, and respected by the particular audience addressed.
Definitions and thought experiments.	Definitions and thought experiments are sometimes used as evidence (they are also sometimes part of a claim, rather than the evidence for it).
Analogies	Analogies may clarify or illustrate elements of a claim, as well as support the claim. Analogies can help create a bridge between facts or ideas the audience is familiar with and likely to accept, and the claim the author wishes to promote. To be persuasive the analogy must be relevant and closely aligned with the facts or claim the author wants the audience to accept. Analogies can also appear as part of claims and strategies.
Textual evidence	Quotations from respected, relevant sources are one of the most common forms of evidence used in scholarly writing. They are the author's "allies," showing that she is not alone in her claim and that others agree. Textual evidence must be carefully selected, framed and discussed in order to be effective.

Masquerading as Evidence

Sometimes writers present types of information that appear to be evidence lack certain important qualities. These are not verifiable facts but are more general statements. Do they

work? Well, yes, on some people. These kinds of "evidence" are very persuasive to people who already agree with the claim being made; they are not persuasive to an audience who disagrees with the claim or who doesn't have an opinion on the claim.

Generalized statements sometimes fail to persuade readers because they have no real specifics behind them. Statements like, "Well, everybody knows that apples are better for you than oranges" are a very weak attempt at evidence. They may work well on an audience who already agrees with you, but they cannot persuade an audience who doesn't agree. They are not among the "everybody" who already thinks this and the writer hasn't given them any idea about who that "everybody" is or why the reader should pay attention to those people's knowledge.

Descriptions of hypothetical events are sometimes weak forms of evidence. This is when a writer asks the reader to imagine something that hasn't actually happened and to agree that if such a thing had happened, there would have been some specific consequences. An audience who already agrees with the claim being "supported" by such a hypothetical example is likely to accept that evidence because they find it very easy to imagine this happening. But a more neutral audience will recognize that there is no real basis for accepting this assumption – that the event never really happened and thus gives no basis in fact for accepting that the imaginary "consequences" were inevitable.

Evaluating Evidence

When examining evidence we will want to consider how well it supports the claim. That is, we will *evaluate* the evidence, determining how strong or weak it is, and how effective/ineffective. The strength or weakness of a particular author's use of evidence will be determined in large part by the audience and rhetorical situation. There is thus no universal or absolute guide to identifying effective, ethical, persasuve evidence. However, there are general criteria that can guide us when evaluating evidence. (The question of evaluation will be explored more fully later.)

The rhetorical theorist Richard Fulkerson provides a handy acronym for evaluating evidence. He calls it the "STAR" criteria, which stands for *sufficiency*, *typicality*, *accuracy* and *relevance*. We can use STAR to ask some basic questions about evidence.

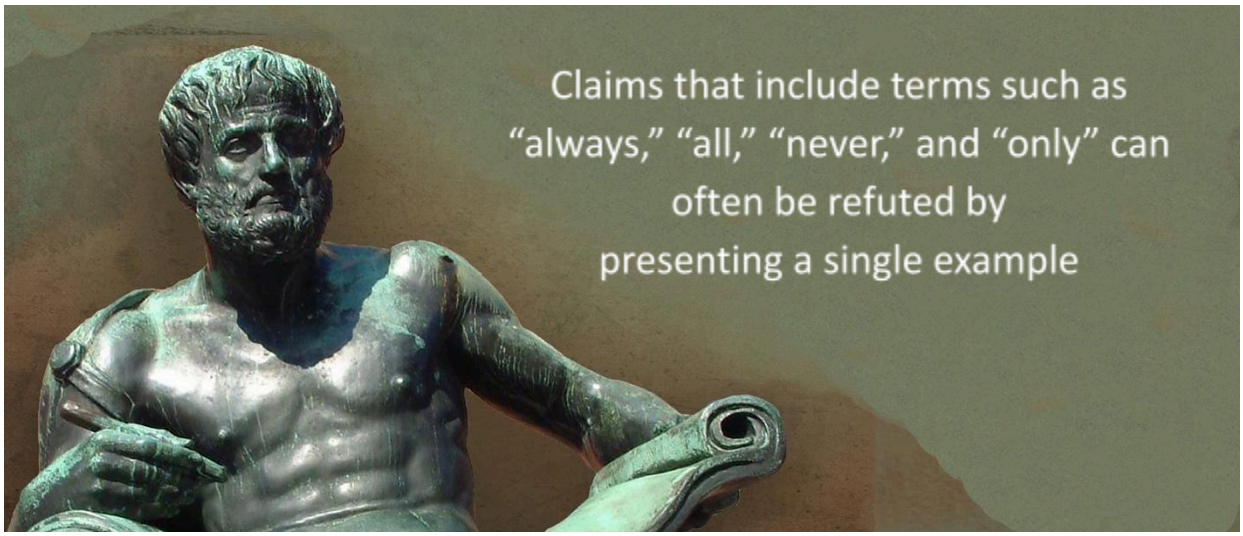
1. *Sufficiency*: does the author provide enough evidence to support her claim? Note that what is sufficient will vary. Obviously, a very large, sweeping claim will require more evidence than a small, modest claim. The context also matters. A resistant audience may require more evidence than a supportive audience.
2. *Typicality*: is the evidence typical? That is, has the author selected evidence that is representative? Some authors will "cherry pick" evidence, selecting only that which supports their position, ignoring all the rest. (The fallacy known as "stacking the deck" refers to this practice of skewing the selection and presentation of evidence).
3. *Accuracy:* is the evidence accurately presented and cited, and (where relevant) up to date?

4. *Relevance:* does the author provide evidence that is relevant to the claim and the particular rhetorical situation?

There are some other basic criteria we can consider.

5. How credible is the source from which the author collected the evidence?
6. Are alternative interpretations of the evidence possible, and do they complicate the author's claim?

One last comment on evidence before we consider strategies. If an author makes an enormously sweeping claim, or the claim contains a universal statement, then all that is required to undermine this claim is a single piece of evidence, or "counterexample." Claims that include terms such as "always," "all," "never," and "only" can often be refuted by presenting a single example or case. Aristotle made this point many years ago, and it has become widely accepted in discussions of logic and reasoning.[5]



[5] In Aristotle's discussions of logic and reasoning he notes that all that is required to show the invalidity of an argument that takes a "universal form" is a single example or instance. This is discussed further in the section on Aristotelian logic in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. See section 5.3, "Disproof: Counterexamples and Terms," https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/aristotle-logic/

Exercise 6: now that you have read about the main elements of an argument, return to the Snape text about gun control. Using the concepts and sections above as a lens, re-read the text. Work through each paragraph identifying the overall argument, claims, types of claim, evidence (and types of evidence), strategies, appeals, and rebuttals. You may wish to work in groups and focus on a particular concept (claims, evidence, appeals, rebuttals, etc.) then share your reading with others.

Below you will see that after each paragraph, in square brackets, some notes on elements of argument are listed. See how much more you can add to the list.

"We Can Find Sensible, Common-Ground Solutions to the Horror of Mass Shootings." Dr. S Snape. *The Daily Prophet*, May 20, 2018.

[1] In recent years we have witnessed a series of horrifying mass-shootings in the nation's schools. We have watched as teenagers use their phones to record terrifying scenes of slaughter, and as parents desperately try to make contact with their children, unsure if they have survived the latest massacre. Despite the urgent need to do something, we seem unable to agree on solutions.

> [Notes: We see strategic choices designed to grab the reader's attention, create a sense of urgency, and generate an emotional response. The choice of words such as "horrifying," "terrifying," "slaughter," and "massacre," and the invitation to imagine being a parent desperately trying to contact your child, attempts to create a feeling of emotional involvement in the reader. What else can you identify?]

[2] My argument is that the best way forward is to combine several practical solutions recently offered by both gun safety advocates and gun rights groups. These solutions are sensible, feasible, and relatively uncontroversial. They are thus our best hope of implementing policies that have widespread support. They are not the only solutions we can consider, but they are the best place to start.

> [Notes: here the writer seems to give us the overall argument in a nutshell, and signals this by explicitly stating "my argument is…" How does the author position himself? What kind of argument is this? Does the author try to establish common ground? What else can you identify?]

[3] First, and most importantly, we should require universal background checks on all gun sales. A 2018 study by the American College of Physicians found that 22 percent of guns are obtained without a background check. This makes it much easier for criminals and troubled individuals to purchase guns. Polls consistently find that over 90 percent of the public, including most NRA members, supports making these background checks universal.

> [Notes: here the writer seems to present a claim. What makes you think so? (See the guide to identifying claims in the section above.) What kinds of evidence can you identify? What else do you notice?]

[4] Second, we need to require safe storage of all guns, and pass "red flag laws" that allow a judge to order the temporary removal of a gun from a person who makes threats or seems particularly troubled. Friends, family and teachers who notice such behavior can make this request. Again, this measure is supported by gun safety advocates, but also by many gun rights groups. Some gun rights advocates support this measure as it allows due process, and the removal is temporary (it can be lifted after a set amount of time or after certain conditions are met). Recent school shootings revealed that in some cases people had reported disturbing behavior by the shooter, but authorities had no legal means to remove the weapons, and thus few options to deal with the emerging danger.

[Notes: What elements of argument can you identify? How persuasive do you find this section?]

[5] Lastly, we can provide increased safety at schools. State and federal funding can be made available to schools that request this. There are many practical measures that can be implemented to "harden" schools, but this must be decided by local communities, as schools vary enormously, and there is no one-size-fits-all way of doing this (indeed, some schools may elect not to increase security). This measure is supported by gun rights groups, and also by gun safety advocates.

[Notes: What elements of argument can you identify? How persuasive do you find this section?]

[6] Some have argued that any attempt to change gun laws is pointless, as the real drivers of mass shootings lie elsewhere. They claim shootings are caused by violent media, mental illness, or the decline of religious belief. But almost all developed countries allow violent media, and some allow far more of it than we do. All countries have people with mental illness, and the United States has far higher rates of religious observance than any other Western country. Yet American teens are 82 times more likely to be murdered with guns than their peers in other advanced nations.

[Notes: here the writer seems to address opposing views. Review the section on rebuttals. What kind of rebuttals can you identify? How well do they work? What else do you notice?]

[7] This is not to suggest that guns should be banned, or that law abiding citizens should be unable to purchase firearms, or that the 2nd amendment should not be adhered to. It is merely to suggest that background checks, waiting periods, red flag laws, licensing and training should be more strictly regulated and enforced, and (where appropriate and requested) schools be allowed to take measures to increase armed security.

[Notes: what seems to be the purpose of this paragraph? What is the writer doing? How does it help persuade readers?]

[8] On the day of the shooting at Santa Fe High School on May 18, 2018, a teen survivor was asked if she was surprised such a horrible event could happen at her school. In tears, she replied she was not surprised. A TV reporter asked her why, and the teen said, "It's been happening

everywhere. I've always felt it would eventually happen here too." We cannot allow a generation of our children to go to school expecting to see their classmates murdered. We need to act now, and we need to begin with solutions that have a good chance of being implemented.

> [Notes: what seems to be the purpose of this paragraph? What is the writer doing? Can you see the writer drawing on a particular appeal? How does it help persuade readers? What else do you notice?]



Close Reading, Analysis, Drafting

In the sections below we will introduce some close reading tips and techniques. These will help you identify persuasive choices and intended effects. There are also exercises, examples, and templates to help you analyze and compose arguments.

Questions to Ask Before You Read: Previewing, Skimming, Surveying

You can learn a lot about a text before you even begin reading by considering the following questions.

1. **What can I learn from the title and section headings?** While titles can sometimes be general or provide few clues to the content of the work, a critical reader can often learn a lot about a text based on its title. A title may indicate the author's point of view on the subject (e.g. "Keep the Borders Open") or reveal the author's argument (e.g. "A Change of Heart About Animals"). Skimming section headings can quickly give you an overview of the direction the argument will take.

2. **What do I know about the author?** In some academic texts, such as course readers and textbooks, publishers often include a short biographical sketch of the author. From this information a reader can gain insight into the author's background, credentials, project, argument, purpose, and more. Even when the editor of the course reader or text book doesn't give you an introduction, you can do a simple Google search to help determine the author's authority, credentials, background, etc. Many writers have web sites and social media accounts that will tell you a lot about them and the work they do.

   You can also use the San Diego State's online biography resources.

3. **Who is the publisher?** While a publisher's reputation is not an automatic indicator of the source's reliability, you can learn a lot by discovering who published a particular work. For example, university presses and academic journals tend to expect a high degree of scholarship and are usually peer reviewed to ensure a text's quality. When reading popular periodicals, you may discover that certain magazines and newspapers consistently reflect certain political positions, which can help you anticipate the political position of the text you are about to read. You may also be able to identify the target audience for this particular text, based on the publication source.

4. **When was the text written?** Locating the date of publication can provide useful information about the rhetorical context in which the writer developed their work.

5. **What can I learn from skimming the text?** Proficient readers often skim through a text before reading to gather important information.
    - Read the introduction and conclusion section of the text, and skim for major claims.
    - Survey the *organization* of the text, looking for text divisions, section headings, and subtitles, which may give important clues about the argument.
    - Note important signal words, such as *therefore, so, thus, but, however, for example, first, second,* etc. to learn more about the structure of the argument and the rhetorical work of the writer.
    - Look for head-notes, footnotes, the works cited page, and biographical information. Savvy readers skim these in order to find clues about the genre, author, context and purpose (rhetorical situation).
    - Try to glean the author's stance or perspective on the topic – is she concerned, critical, humorous, negative, or positive? Is she defending, challenging, explaining or presenting research?

Active & Critical Reading

Try to read a text twice. The first time you read, you read for content. The second time you look for major elements of argument (claims, evidence, strategies) and for "moves" the author makes. You look for relationships between sections of the text, and mark all this down as you read.

Always annotate. It is important you read with a pen in your hand, noting elements of argument, circling key words, words you don't know, identifying transition phrases that signal changes in direction ("therefore, furthermore, in contrast, in conclusion, etc."), parts that confuse you, that you disagree with, or that you find interesting.

Chart the text. Marking a text is a highly valuable reading skill. As opposed to being a passive recipient of the information a text conveys, proficient readers *actively engage with texts, as if in conversation with the author.* On the left margin summarize what each paragraph/group of paragraphs are *saying*. On the right margin, write what the other is *doing*.

- While you chart—in addition to looking for claims, evidence, strategies, context clues—note unfamiliar words or allusions (for example, with a squiggled line) and look them up. Write definition in the margin. Look up illusions. It may help you understand the context.
- Note signal words such as *therefore, so, thus, but, however, for example, first, second, etc*.

- Note when the author uses the word "I." This can help you see where the author has inserted themselves in the text (to explain position, what they are doing, the structure of their argument, clarify argument, etc.)
- Also, "speak" to the text – jot down questions, comments, rhetorical work being done, etc. Identifying when the author "shifts gears" can help you mark off sections of a text. We will talk more about this strategy in class.

Questions to Ask Any Text

These important questions can be posed to any text, and can help you identify the rhetorical situation and main elements of the argument. They help start the process of reading texts rhetorically, and generating an analysis of the argument.

THE BIG PICTURE

1. **Who is the audience?** Who does it appear the author is trying to reach? (age, gender, cultural background, class, etc.) Which elements of the text – both things included, and things left out – provide clues about the intended audience? How does the author address and imagine the audience?
2. **Who is the author, and where is she coming from?** What can you find out about the author? What can you find out about the organization, publication, web site, or source she is writing for?
3. **What is the author's purpose?** What seems to be the question at issue? Why has the author written this text? What is the problem, dispute, or question being addressed? What motivated her to write, what does she hope to accomplish?
4. **What is the context** - what is the situation that prompted the writing of this text, and how do you know? When was the text created, and what was going on at the time? Can you think of any social, political, or economic conditions that are particularly important?
5. **What "conversation" is the author part of?** It's unlikely the author is the first person to write on a particular topic. As Graff and Birkenstein point out, writers invariably add their voices to a larger conversation. How does the author respond to other texts? How does she enter the conversation ("Many authors have argued X, but as Smith shows, this position is flawed, and I will extend Smith's critique by presenting data that shows…") How does the author position herself in relation to other authors?
6. **How does the author claim "centrality,"** i.e. establish that the topic being discussed matters, and that readers should care?
7. **What is the author's "stance"?** What is his attitude toward the subject, and how does this come across in his language?
8. **What research went into writing the text, and what material does the author examine?** (project)

ARGUMENT & PERSUASION

1. **What is the most important sentence in this text**, to you? Why?
2. **What is the author's overall argument?** What are you being asked to believe, think, or do?
3. **What are the most important claims?**
4. **How does the author establish her authority/credibility?** (*ethos*)
5. **How does the author connect with your emotions?** (*pathos*)
6. **What evidence or reasons does the author provide, and do they convince you?** (*logos*)
7. **How is the text organized?** Why do you think the author organized the text this way? What effect does it have?
8. **Does the author respond to other arguments**, and if so, are they treated fairly? How does the author construct rebuttals, and what persuasive effects do these rebuttals seem likely to have on the audience?
9. **How do the author's stylistic choices reinforce or advance the argument?** How do word choice, imagery, metaphor, design, etc. help persuade?
10. **How does the author frame the issues?** Does the author's representation of the issue or problem invite the audience to see things from a particular perspective? How does this help persuade?
11. **How does the author define the central terms being discussed?** How does this help persuade?
12. **What assumptions can you identify?** What does the author take for granted, and what does this tell you about her argument?
13. **What implications follow from the author's argument?**
14. **Does the author use metadiscourse?** Are there moments when the author discusses what she is doing, or addresses the audience directly? Is this persuasive? How?

Argument Map

Building an "argument map" for a text can help you see the big picture, as well as identify the main parts of the text and how they are related. If you see areas that are "empty" that may also be instructive. For example, if you note that a claim is not supported by evidence, this may indicate a weakness, or it may suggest the author assumes the assertion will be accepted by the audience without support. This may in turn help you identify an assumption.

Rhetorical Situation				
Overall Argument				
Claim	**Claim**	**Claim**	**Claim**	**Claim**
Evidence for Claim	**Evidence for Claim**	**Evidence for Claim**	**Evidence for Claim**	**Evidence for Claim**
Strategies that support claim/arg	**Strategies that support claim/arg**	**Strategies that support claim/arg**	**Strategies that support claim/arg**	**Strategies that support claim/arg**

Sample Argument Map

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Rhetorical Situation: Kristof, “Do We Have the Courage?”</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Kristof’s text was published on December 15, 2012, the day after the mass shooting at Sandyhook Elementary school. A shooter killed 20 first and second grade students and 6 adults. Kristof is a journalist and opinion writer for the New York Times, a major newspaper with national reach. While read across the country, the audience tends to be educated, liberal, wealthy, and cosmopolitan (demographics from the publisher). The op-ed is one of many Kristof has written about gun violence. Op-eds, particularly those in major newspapers, present arguments on matters of public importance, and they sometimes help influence wider media coverage of issues. Kristof seems to want to reach concerned citizens who could be motivated, in the context of the recent shootings, to push for change. The text is quite “action-oriented,” laying out specific solutions. He seems to assume his audience has reached a tipping point (or kairotic moment) and so change is possible.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Overall Argument</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Kristof signals his main claim early, writing that “the fundamental reason kids are dying in massacres is not lunatics, or criminals…it’s political failure to regulate guns.” The other half of his overall argument is that there are sensible, practical measures we can take to reduce the number of mass shootings.</td></tr>
<tr><th>Claim</th><th>Claim</th><th>Claim</th><th>Claim</th></tr>
<tr><td>We should regulate gun safety with the same seriousness and care we do car safety.</td><td>We should adopt a “public health perspective” on gun safety, seeking to reduce harm with rules and methods common in other areas of life (building codes, cafeteria food, ladders, etc.)</td><td>The reason we have failed to implement common sense solutions is that politicians have failed, and are too cowardly to stand up to the NRA.</td><td>There are many practical solutions to the problem that can be found in common sense policy and regulatory changes, as well as examples from other countries.</td></tr>
<tr><th>Evidence</th><th>Evidence</th><th>Evidence</th><th>Evidence</th></tr>
<tr><td>He presents evidence (#19) that regulation of cars has led to big improvements in safety, and</td><td>Examples of regulations of food, building codes, toys, etc. that we accept when dealing with objects less dangerous than guns.</td><td></td><td>Long list of specific examples, from universal background checks, un-erasable serial numbers, to examples/statistics from other countries.</td></tr>
<tr><th>Strategies that support claim/arg</th><th>Strategies that support claim/arg</th><th>Strategies that support claim/arg</th><th>Strategies that support claim/arg</th></tr>
<tr><td>Analogy with cars easy to understand; creates a “frame” that (if accepted) does a lot to advance argument. If frame accepted much follows.</td><td>Contrast between rules we accept for everyday items vs. guns highlights problem. Examples also create a tactical framing of issue.</td><td>By blaming politicians from both parties K can stake out middle ground and seem “balanced.”</td><td>K selects reforms from countries that are quite similar to US (Australia, Canada). Simple set of practical solutions helps audience feel can take action. Data substantial.</td></tr>
</table>

Close Reading: Mapping Moves and Charting Choices

In the sections that follow we will introduce some close reading tips and techniques. These will help you notice persuasive choices, strategic "moves," and intended effects. This can help us move from a focus on content (summary) to a focus on analysis. These close reading tips require that you read slowly and carefully, "x-raying" the text in order to see patterns and relationships.

The scholar Richard Lanham states that to analyze a text, we should begin by looking "at" as well as "through" the language of the text. Looking "through" language means reading for content, and for what the text says (the usual way we read many texts). By contrast, looking "at" language means focusing less on what is said (content) and more on tactics, purpose, and intended effect. It means focusing on what texts "do" - on the moves, strategies, and choices authors make in particular rhetorical situations.

This may sound complicated, but isn't really. When we use language we are aware that there is often a tension between surface content, and the purpose or intended effect. We understand that when we say "how's it going?" to an acquaintance while rushing to class, what we are *doing* (usually) is acknowledging and greeting the person, not asking a question we expect an answer to. Similarly, consider the term "humblebrag." It was coined to call attention to situations in which there is a contrast between what people are *saying* and what they are *doing*. (A person who "humblebrags" appears to be expressing humility or complaining about some aspect of their lives, but what they are in fact *doing* is bragging.)



Or think back to the telemarketing "template" from the previous chapter. The words in bold describe what the telemarketer is *doing* at different points in his conversation with you. These

"moves" underpin the surface content of the call:

Pre-introduction: Ask to speak to the decision-maker.
Introduction: Introduce yourself and the reason for your call.
Attention Getter: Mention the key features of the offer and qualify them for eligibility
Probing Questions: Always ask for information that will be useful for rebuttals
Offer: Explain the product/service and terms of commitment
Close: Always ask for the sale
Rebuttal deal with objections and present rebuttals
Sales Continuation: Agree, use rebuttals, sell benefits, CLOSE
Up/down/cross-sell: If there is another product this is the time to sell it.
Confirmation Close: Review the terms of the offer.
Final Close: End on a positive note. Thank the customer and leave a number for customer support.

Lastly, consider this example from everyday life. There are a series of expressions some people use to emphasize the sincerity of their speech. They will use phrases like "Honestly…to be honest…frankly…to tell you the truth…"[6] When relatives from foreign countries come and visit me in San Diego they say they find such expressions odd, for if someone says, "to be honest," does that imply they were not being honest before? (Some of my relatives associate the U.S. with Hollywood, advertising, and sales pitches, and so this reinforces their suspicion that "insincere" speech is more common here). Mildly annoyed by such questions, I decided to consult scholarly research on this topic and discovered that when people use such expressions, they are not usually being insincere. Rather, they use these expressions for a particular set of effects. That is, they are using language to *do* certain things (even if they are not fully aware they are doing this). Here are the most common purposes associated with these expressions:

1. To establish intimacy or insider status (because we are close, I can confide something important to you).
2. To signal that you want to shift the conversation to a serious topic.
3. To establish emphasis and signal that you want your audience to pay particular attention to what comes next. (In his speeches President Obama would often do this with a slightly different technique, using the phrase, "Look, the reality is…" This phrase was meant to signal to his audience that he was speaking plainly and directly about a serious or difficult topic.)
4. To confess to a potentially unpopular view and to prepare your audience for your confession ("To be honest, I think Justin Bieber is the one of the most talented performers of the 21st century." Or, "to tell you the truth, I'm not going to make the deadline.")

[6] Scholars who study rhetoric use a technical name to describe such expressions of sincerity: *parrhesia*. From the time of Plato, rhetoricians have been interested in studying the persuasive uses and effects of this "sincere style."

5. False sincerity as part of a sales pitch. If you ever visit a used car lot you many encounter this. However, this use of sincerity expressions if actually quite rare.

So when someone says "to tell you the truth," they are *saying* they are being sincere. But what they are likely *doing* is making one of the moves described above.

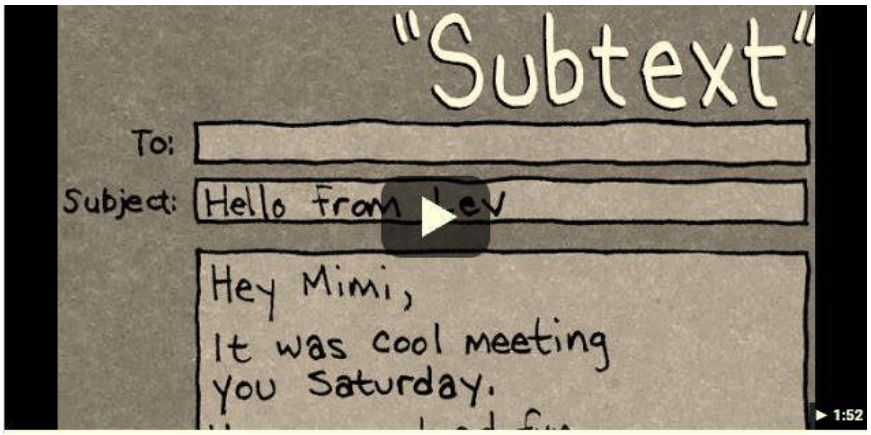
Example: Saying vs. Doing in Advertisements and Email Messages

Exercise 1: Watch the advertisement "So Obnoxious." This is an example of a self-referential, or "meta" advertisement that is about how advertising works. In this video the actor reveals what advertisers are doing when they try to persuade young women to buy tampons. How does this video represent what other advertisers "do"? What is *this* advertisement doing? Come up with other examples of advertisements or video texts you have seen that similarly reveal the tension between what a text says and what it does.



Exercise 2. Watch the video "Subtext" by the video artist Lev Yilmaz. Yilmaz created a video series called "Tales of Mere Existence," which frequently explores the tension between what we say and what we do when we communicate. In "SubText," the narrator (Lev) has met a woman he likes at a party, and composes an email asking her out on a date. In the video the narrator ponders how best to persuade the woman to go on a date, and how to present himself in a way that will make him seem appealing while minimizing his embarrassment if she declines. He "thinks aloud" as he writes, and so we glimpse what he is "doing" as he composes the email.

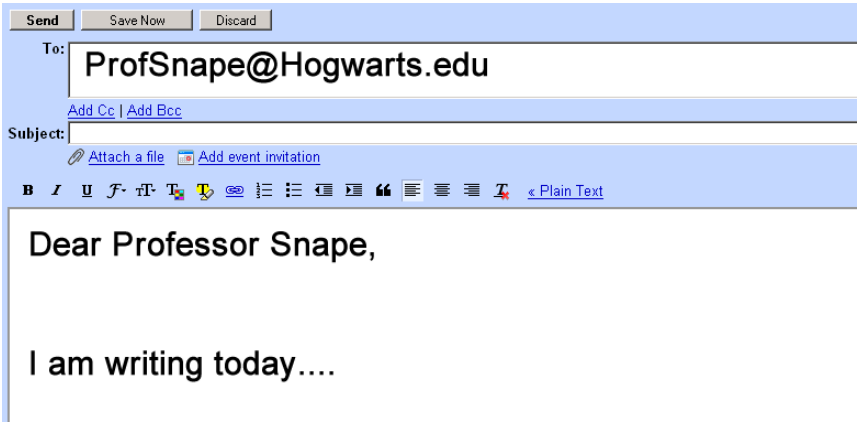
Watch the video. Grab a piece of paper and divide it into two columns. On one column write "This is what Lev is saying," and on the other "This is what Lev is doing." Fill out the columns and share your findings.



Using email is a little outdated these days. Brainstorm ways of asking someone out using social media, and reflect on what you are doing versus saying.

Exercise 3: Emailing your professor to ask for an extension. Imagine the following rhetorical situation. The syllabus says that your instructor does not accept late work and that if you miss class you will be penalized. Nevertheless, you miss three classes (out of 15 total) and try to hand in the second major assignment a week late. If the instructor doesn't accept your work you will fail the class. You need this class. You cannot fail this class. Write your instructor an email.

When you have finished, swap your message with the person next to you. Describe what your partner is saying and what s/he is doing. Swap back and discuss your findings. Do you agree?



We can also read academic texts in terms of what they say and do. Graff and Birkenstein's book *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* provides an excellent introduction to this. The concepts you have been introduced to in the previous chapters also provide a useful vocabulary for talking about purpose, persuasive intent, and thus what authors "do" when they make arguments. You can use them to identify when an argument advances a claim, presents evidence, constructs a rebuttal or uses a rhetorical appeal. However, these terms are rather

general and “high-level.” We can explore other, more fine-grained terms for talking in detail about purpose, intent and how elements of a text function in an argument.

Consider, for example, the introduction. Every text has one. Introductions set up and announce the topic they will discuss. But they usually do many other things. For example, they may generate interest by presenting a compelling example or story, define key terms, give an overview of the structure of the text, present an important problem or question, or subtly establish the author’s credentials. These are just a few of the “moves” authors make when crafting introductions.

See the table below for a useful “starter” list of verbs to help describe what authors do. Practice using these terms when you read texts. It can be useful to number the paragraphs in a text and use one of these verbs (or a verb you create) to describe what the paragraph is doing.

Terms that describe what a text does

- acknowledges
- analyzes
- anticipates objections
- appeals to authority
- assumes
- calls to action
- challenges
- complicates
- concedes
- concludes
- connects with the reader
- (constructs) an analogy
- contrasts
- (presents) counterexamples
- (establishes) credibility
- critiques
- defends
- defines
- divides
- dramatizes
- (appeals to) emotion
- emphasizes
- (presents) examples/evidence
- evaluates
- extends
- forecasts
- frames/reframes
- generalizes
- gets the reader's attention
- illustrates
- implies
- introduces investigates
- (appeals to) logic
- narrates
- parodies
- predicts
- (appeals to) principle or value
- problematizes
- proposes
- qualifies
- questions
- rebuts
- refines
- refutes
- ridicules
- satirizes
- shocks
- suggests
- summarizes
- supports
- synthesizes

Charting Choices. "Charting" involves annotating a text in order to show the "work" a sentence, paragraph, or section is doing. Charting helps identify what each part of the text is *doing* as well as what it is *saying*, and so helps us move from summary to analysis. It is a simple but useful form of close reading that focuses on the author's choices and purpose. It can also reveal how parts of the text connect to each other.

Charting is an open, exploratory process, and involves creative guessing. So don't agonize over it. When drafting papers it is very useful to chart sections of your own writing to help plan and revise your work. There are two strategies for charting that we'll look at: *macro*-charting and *micro*-charting.

MACRO-CHARTING

How do we do macro-charting?

- Break the text down into "chunks" that seem to work together to DO something for the overall argument.
- Draw lines between sections and label each one, annotating them with "doing" verbs: **provides evidence** for first claim**, summarizes** an opposing view**, makes an ethical** appeal**, rebuts** counterarguments**, defines a** key term, **uses an analogy** to clarify the claim in the previous paragraph, **personalizes the issue** with an anecdote, etc.

Why do we do macro-charting?

- Macro-charting helps understand the overall structure of argument, as well as locate claims, supporting evidence, and the main argument.
- Macro-charting helps identify relationships between ideas.
- Macro-charting brings awareness that behind every sentence there is an author with a purpose who makes strategic choices to achieve her aims.

MICRO-CHARTING

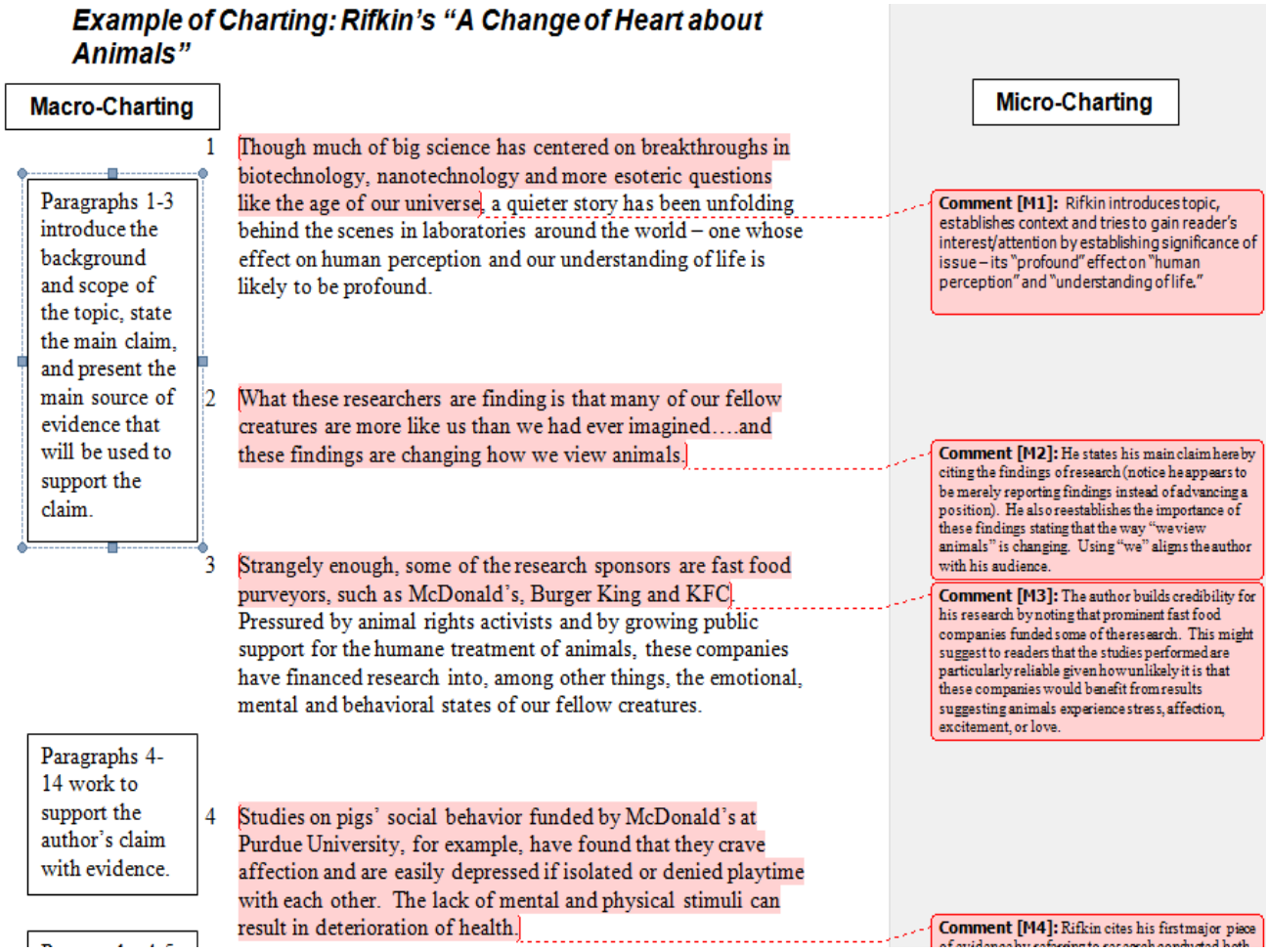
How do we do micro-charting?

- Break down sections of text by paragraph to analyze what each paragraph is *doing* for the overall argument.
- Detail the smaller "moves" and strategies made within paragraphs: note when, where, and how and author makes a claim, cites evidence, and/or supports the argument using a rhetorical strategy.

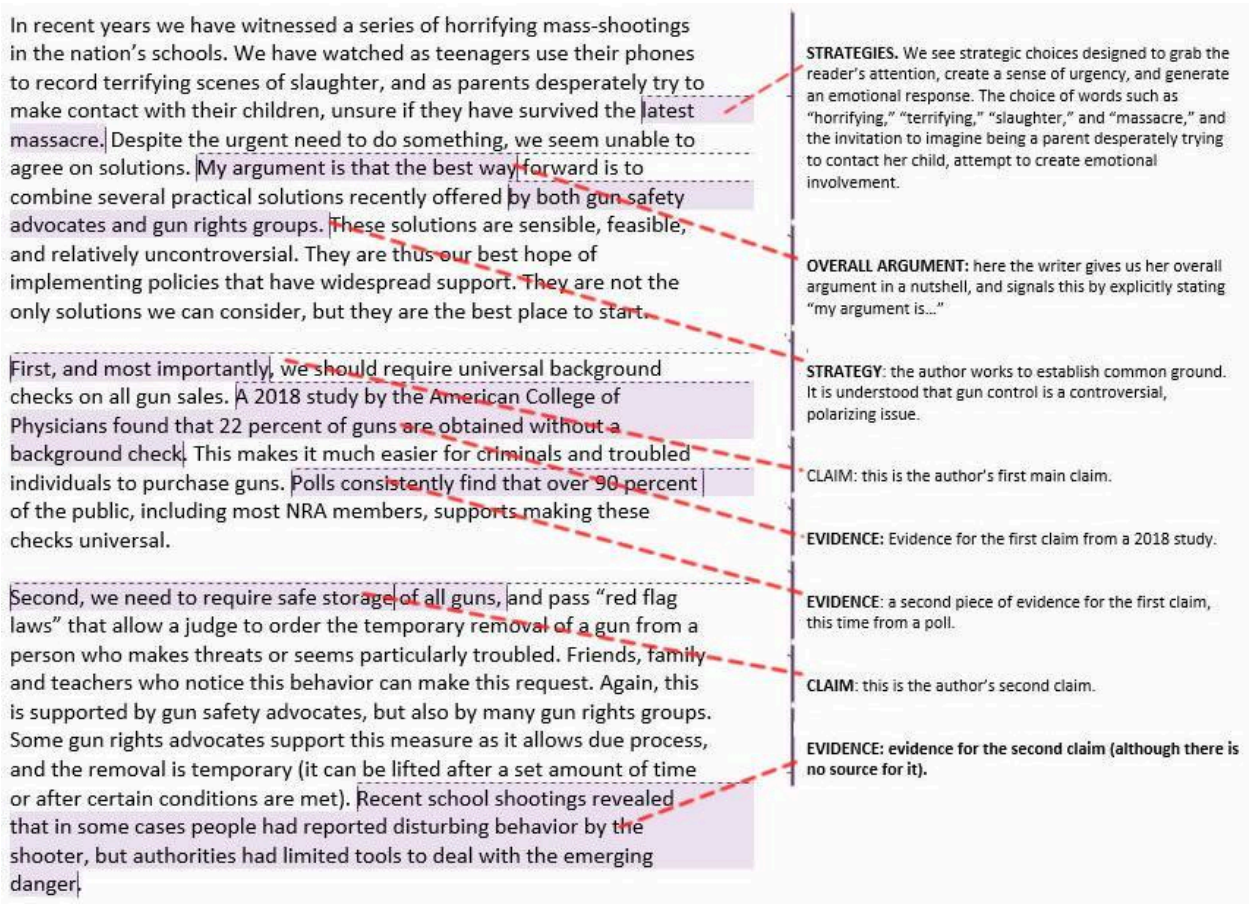
Why do we do micro-charting?

- Micro-charting can help understand the details of how a text is put together.
- Micro-charting encourages readers to look more carefully and closely at a text and prepare for analysis.
- Micro-charting fosters awareness of the specific rhetorical choices made throughout a text. Every sentence reveals tactical choices, persuasive intent, and an author trying to have an impact on a specific audience.

Examples of Charting



Charting Example: Snape's "We Can Find Sensible, Common-Ground Solutions to the Horror of Mass Shootings."



Charting Example: Read the paragraph below. It an excerpt from Professor Amy Chua's article "A World on the Edge." Chua is a Yale law professor, and the text is a very difficult one (especially if you are jumping in to the middle of it). But if you focus on what she is doing, and the purpose of this passage, you may notice a few things.

> The argument I am making is frequently misunderstood. I do not propose a universal theory applicable to every developing country. There are certainly developing countries without market-dominant minorities…Nor do I argue that ethnic conflict arises only in the presence of a market dominant minority…And, last, I emphatically do not mean to pin the blame for any case of ethnic violence – whether the mass killings perpetuated on all sides in the former Yugoslavia or the attack on America – on economic resentment, on markets, or any other single cause…The point, rather is this: In the numerous

> countries around the world that have pervasive poverty and a market dominant minority, democracy and markets - at least in the raw, unrestrained forms in which they are currently being promoted – can only proceed in deep tension with each other. (Chua, 2002, p. 78).

If we focus on content, we will note that this passage is a list of all the things Chua is *not* claiming, followed by her main point. But why do that? Her purpose – what she is doing – is clarifying key claims, qualifying her argument, making distinctions, dealing with counterarguments, and rebutting them. Chua is anticipating objections, demonstrating how nuanced her argument is, and heading off past misinterpretations of her argument. These moves help strengthen her argument and add to her credibility.

Charting Exercise

1. As you read, identify where the author shifts in purpose, moving from one idea to another.
2. For each paragraph or group of paragraphs which develops a single idea, note what the author *is saying* (the topic, content and details).
3. Considering what the author *is saying*, determine what the author *is doing* in the paragraph/s (i.e., what purpose the author intends the details to serve).
4. Accounting for everything that the author *is doing* in the text and considering the relationship among ideas, what do you think is the essay's main argument?
5. In pairs or small groups, discuss/negotiate how you have charted the essay and try to reach consensus regarding the essay's main argument.

¶ #	Saying	Doing

Reading Rhetorically

We have now introduced some concepts and ways of looking at texts that will help you "read rhetorically." It is worth pausing for a moment and revisiting what that means.

When we read a text rhetorically we focus on the following areas:

1. *The rhetorical situation*. That is, we consider who the author is, her purpose, the audience, and the context.
2. *The main elements of the argument.* Attention is paid to the overall argument, claims, evidence, strategies, appeals, rebuttals, and assumptions. We try to determine how these elements are organized and crafted to persuade an audience.
3. *What the text does as well as what it says*. When examining elements of the text we read for purpose, function and tactical "moves." How do these elements help persuade, and how do they relate to other elements of the text?
4. *The strategic choices the author makes*. When reading we keep in mind that every element of the text was consciously chosen to have a particular effect. We consider why that choice was made, its intended effect, and how different choices might have had different effects.
5. *Active and critical reading*. Rather than reading passively we ask questions, scrutinize evidence, test claims, examine chains of reasoning, evaluate assumptions, and search for counterexamples and counterarguments.
6. *How the author positions himself and constructs a persona*. We pay attention to the way the author positions himself in relation to the audience, as well as to other authors/texts. All texts are part of "conversations"; authors respond to what others have said and they use what others have said to advance their own argument. When positioning themselves, authors craft a persona. We examine the way positioning and persona-construction help persuade audiences.

When you read a text it is unlikely you will attend to all the areas described above. Depending on the kind of analysis you hope to do, or the question your instructor assigns, you will probably choose to focus on some of these aspects of the text.

These six ways of reading an argument are useful, but they direct our attention to fairly "high-level" elements of the text. We can also "zoom in" on elements of a text using a set of close reading strategies. These close reading strategies will focus on word choice, metaphor, grammar, definitions, and narrative. Looking at these elements of a text will deepen our understanding of texts and can also help illuminate how the six areas above achieve their persuasive effects.

In the section on close reading that follows we will explore strategies you can use to analyze arguments in more detail.

Close Reading: Word Choice, Style, Metaphor & Grammar

Examining word choice, metaphor, style, and grammar can help reveal how texts work, the effects they have, and the ways they persuade. These elements of language are used to get an audience to attend to certain aspects of a situation and ignore others. They construct "rhetorical frames," or particular ways of seeing an issue, event, person or group.

Consider the words used to name fish that have been introduced to consumers in recent years. As traditional fish stocks have declined, fishermen have begun catching less common species with unfamiliar names that live in deeper, harder to reach areas. This includes fish such as the "Patagonian Toothfish," the "Slimehead," and the "Goosefish." These names draw our attention to certain aspects of the fish; the Patagonian Toothfish is a large, globulous fish with alarmingly large teeth from the southern-most parts of South America, while the Slimehead has a large, slimy head. These two fish have been renamed "Chilean Sea Bass" and "Orange Roughy." These new names draw our attention to particular aspects of the fish, ignore other aspects, and sound much more appetizing when introduced by a waiter in an expensive restaurant. More importantly, these new names have proven extremely persuasive. These new names have helped sell enormous volumes of these unusual fish.



In an article called "The Art of Branding a Condition," Vince Parry describes how medical marketers give certain illnesses new names to help persuade consumers to buy drugs to treat these illnesses. Parry notes that medical marketers have worked to rename conditions that are embarassing in order to help make patients more willing to discuss them and ask doctors for a prescription. He describes the case of men who are unable to get erections. In the past this condition was called "impotence," and the term carried deeply negative, embarassing cultural associations. But when the condition was renamed "erectile dysfunction," or "E.D," this helped reduce the stigma associated with the condition. This renaming, and the associated reframing of the problem, also greatly helped boost sales of drugs like Viagra. Parry describes two other common forms of strategic renaming medical marketers use to reframe conditions. The first entails renaming something to *increase* the anxiety and concerns associated with an existing condition, and the other involves "developing a new condition to build recognition for an unmet market need." (Parry, 2003, p. 44).

The examples above of names for fish and medical conditions illustrate that word choice can have powerful persuasive effects. Word choice helps create frames that invite readers to understand things from a particular point of view. So it is important that we think carefully about this. Careful examination of word choice will help you become a more sophisticated, critical reader of texts, and can also help you compose more powerful and effective writing. To develop our understanding of word choice it is worth briefly considering the three main historical influences on English vocabulary.

The Historical Sources of the Words We Use

The particular effects of word choice are determined in large part by context – who we are talking to, when we are talking to them, and what our purpose is. However, it is possible to make some broad generalizations about word choice based on the three main "historical sources" of English vocabulary. As the rhetorician Jeanne Fahnstock notes, these three sources are 1) Old English, or Anglo Saxon, 2) Norman French, which dates from the French invasion of England in the eleventh century, and 3) Latin and Greek, which formed the language of the church and universities across Europe for many centuries.[7]

The Old English "core" consists of words that are the oldest and most commonly used, such as *life, death, friend, hand, food, water,house,land*, and *sleep*. They often describe concrete, everyday objects and activities. Norman French words reflect the areas of English life that the French controlled: the law, military, and government. Thus words associated with the law (*attorney, plaintiff, crime*, and *perjury),* the military (*soldier, garrison, lieutenant*, and *enemy*), and government (*parliament, court, chancellor, sovereign, revenue*, and *government*) derive from Old French. Many words associated with refinement, art and dining also come into English from French. Lastly, Latin and Greek words were the language of learning and religious worship for centuries, and were absorbed into English. Words such as *priest, altar, disciple, proposition, hypothesis, phenomenon, definition,* and *ethos* derive from Latin and Greek.

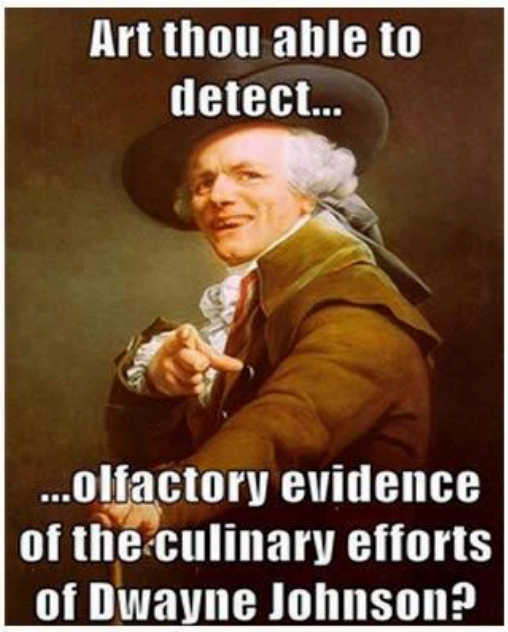
Fahnstock points out that words from these three sources cluster around "certain areas of meaning," connotation and use (39). They provide different persuasive resources that writers can use to reach audiences and construct rhetorical appeals. Broadly speaking, the three levels correspond with what is A) familiar, B) elevated, and C) erudite/scholarly, and are often associated with the following fields of meaning:

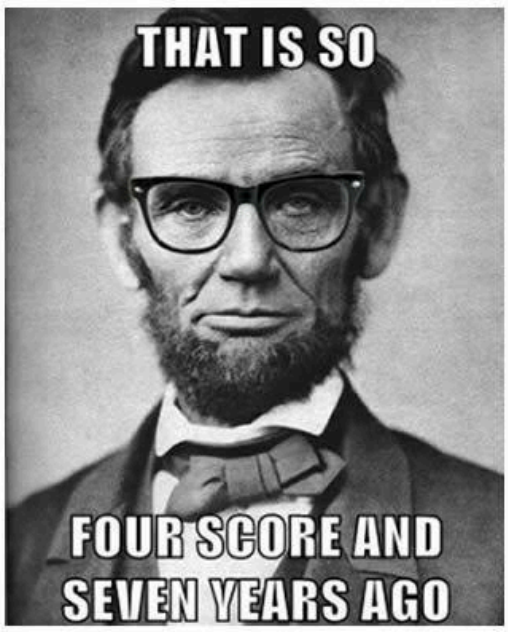
Historical Source	Areas of Connotation and Meaning Areas
Old English	Concrete, plain, sincere, direct, informal, down-to-earth
Norman French	Elevated, refined, dignified, formal, serious
Latin/Greek	Erudite, academic, abstract, complex, technical

[7] As the English language has spread across the world it has been invigorated by many other sources beyond these three. For example, American English has been enriched by African languages, Native American languages, and Spanish. However, as Fahnstock notes, the three historical sources described remain "core" influences.

Consider, for example the different connotations of *home* (Old English), *mansion* (French) and *domicile* (Latin). “Mansion” and “domicile” are more elevated and formal, and more likely to appear in writing rather than everyday speech. Or think about the kind of persona you create if you say “prevaricate” rather than “lie,” or “abdomen” instead of “belly,” or “amicable” rather than “friendly.”

Linguists and rhetoricians will sometimes begin their analysis of a text by calculating the proportion of words from these different layers of the lexicon. It is worth noting that the boundaries between these three levels are somewhat fluid, and people can play with them in creative ways. For example, in 1980s surfing culture the words “heinous” (Old French) and “tubular” (Latin) were used, but one suspects part of the appeal was using elevated, “high culture” words to describe an everyday, popular sport. Comedians sometimes play around with these different sources of language for humorous effect. The comedians Key and Peele wrote a series of skits that feature president Obama’s “anger translator.” A speech by president Obama was followed by Obama's anger translator, who restates in far more direct, concrete, colloquial terms what the actor playing the president had just said. Many internet memes also attempt to amuse by substituting colloquial language full of Old English words, with highbrow, Latinate or Norman French words (or vice versa). Consider the two examples below:





In the first image the phrase “Can you smell what the Rock is cooking?” (Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson’s catchphrase when a professional wrestling star) has been translated to “Art thou able to detect…olfactory evidence of the culinary efforts of Dwayne Johnson?” The original phrase consists entirely of Old English words, while the translated version features Latinate and Norman French words. (The visual incongruity between the self-portrait of an eighteenth

century French artist and dandy, and the words of a professional wrestler, adds to the humor.) In the image on the right a familiar phrase from president Lincoln has been remixed with Southern California slang for comedic effect. Comics play with layers of the lexicon to create humor, while writers constructing formal arguments use them for persuasive effect.

How Names Create Frames that Persuade

Consider how the names and phrases below invite readers to see an issue, event or problem from a particular perspective, or "frame." How do they nudge us to see the world? How do the perspectives differ?

Exercise: In groups, work on three or four of these word pairs and present your findings.

1. Cash advance instead of high interest loan
2. Home equity loan instead of second mortgage
3. Death tax instead of estate tax or inheritance tax
4. Ethnic cleansing instead of genocide
5. War on terror instead of war against Islamic extremists, or fight against Al Qaeda (consider scope, agents, action)
6. Letting someone go instead of firing someone
7. Transfer tubes instead of body bags
8. Defense of marriage instead of marriage equality
9. Civilian casualties instead of collateral damage
10. Put to sleep instead of euthanize
11. Male pattern baldness instead of hair loss
12. Halitosis instead of smelly breath
13. Erectile dysfunction instead of impotence
14. Doctor assisted suicide instead of death with dignity
15. Living on the streets instead of being homeless
16. Powder your nose instead of use the rest room
17. Between jobs instead of unemployed
18. Being economically disadvantaged instead of poor
19. Used instead of pre-owned
20. Partially proficient instead of unqualified
21. Overseas contingency operations instead of war
22. Homeland security instead of national security
23. Enhanced interrogation instead of torture
24. Habit forming instead of addictive

Grammar, Style, and Story as Strategy

The grammar we use to construct a sentence provides us with different ways of representing what happens, who made something happen, who it happens to, and how it happened. Consider the infamous phrase, "mistakes were made," or my son's similarly phrased "the vase broke." In both cases grammar is used to conceal agency. Who made the mistakes? Who broke

the vase? (Could the fact my son was kicking a soccer ball around be relevant?) In both examples the grammar of the sentence hides this information. Grammar provides us with many options for assigning what linguists call "agency." Agency describes who does what to whom, or what the principle agent causing an event was. For example, after the attacks of September 11, 2001, Osama Bin Laden claimed God caused the attacks in order to punish the U.S., and the men who hijacked and crashed the planes were merely God's instruments. He also claimed that the attacks were really acts of self-defense against the "evil" foreign policy of the U.S. This representation of agency seems rather obviously wrong, grotesque, and perhaps also contradictory. But it is designed to persuade his listeners that the terrorists were not the principle agents of the attack, and to redefine the attack as both justified and as defensive.

In many cases agency is complex and can be communicated in ways that are both subtle and hard to recognize. Rockmore's op-ed "How Texas Teaches History" discusses how high school history textbooks in Texas represent slavery. She argues that the grammar used reveals agency (who does what to whom) in some passages, but conceals it in others. Rockmore is concerned that descriptions of slavery emphasize agency when dealing with the "positive" acts of slave owners, but remove agency when torture, confinement and death are discussed. She claims this de-emphasizes who carried out these acts. She concludes that grammatical choices can involve important "moral choices." We agree, and would merely add that they also involve important "rhetorical choices."

Some Questions to Consider When Reading a Text

1. **Agency –** who is the primary actor, what are they doing, and to whom? How is agency (who does what, to whom) represented?
2. **Story/Narrative** - How are objects and events turned into stories? Who/what is the main character? What point of view is provided? What larger cultural narratives are drawn on?
3. **Positioning** - How are pronouns, categories, forms of address, and grammar used to establish relationships, roles, patterns of identification, and power relations?
4. **Categories, terms and definitions –** how do the categories, terms, and definitions used by the author create a "lens" onto an issue? What perspective, values and assumptions are built in?

Close Reading Tip: look carefully at word choice, categories, definitions, metaphor, narrative, grammar/agency, and point of view. They create "frames" that influence how we understand issues and events.

Exercise 1: how news headlines frame events. In 1996 California passed a referendum legalizing medical marijuana. This was followed by a series of legal challenges that went all the way to the Supreme Court. In 2005 the Supreme Court ruled against the California law. This decision was described in newspaper headlines across the country. Read the headlines below announcing the Supreme Court's decision. How do they frame the situation?

1. Salon Magazine “Court rules against pot for sick people”
2. New York Times: “Supreme Court Allows Prosecution of Medical Marijuana Users”
3. San Diego Union Tribune: “Court OKs Marijuana Crackdown”
4. L.A. Times: “Justices Give Feds Last Word on Medical Marijuana”
5. Washington Times: “Medical Marijuana Laws Don't Shield Users From Prosecution”

Consider the following headlines that describe the same event. How do they create different frames?

(A) Armed extremists take over lodge

(B) Land grievance sparks protest

Exercise 2: framing actions and events

Consider the following descriptions that describe the same event. How do they create different frames?

1. "An infant left sleeping in his crib was bitten repeatedly by rats while his 17-year-old mother went to cash her welfare check."
2. "An eight-month-old South End boy was treated yesterday after being bitten by rats while sleeping in his crib. Tenants said that repeated requests for extermination had been ignored by the landlord.
3. "Rats bit eight-month old Michael Burns five times yesterday as he napped in his crib. Burns is the latest victim of a rat epidemic plaguing inner-city neighborhoods. A Public Health Department spokesperson explained that federal and state cutbacks forced short-staffing at rat control and housing inspection programs." (from Charlotte Ryan, *Prime Time Activism*)

Exercise 3: News and Gender. In *The Feminist Critique of Language*, Deborah Cameron examines the rhetorical frames used in two British newspaper reports of an attack on a married couple in the 1980s. What do you notice about these two reports, and the frames they construct? Why might scholars like Cameron be critical of these frames?

- “A man who suffered head injuries when attacked by two men who broke into his home in Beckenham, Kent early yesterday was pinned down on the bed by intruders who took it in turns to rape his wife.” *Daily Telegraph.*
- “A terrified 19-stone husband was forced to lie next to his wife as two men raped her yesterday.” *The Sun.*

Exercise 4: Framing Questions. Imagine you want a letter of recommendation from a professor. Consider how these two ways of asking the question frame the request differently, and create different potential outcomes.

Strategy 1: Simply ask the professor, “will you write me a letter?” (It is possible she will agree out of professional courtesy, regardless of how well she knows you or whether she will in fact write a strong letter.)

Strategy 2: Frame the question this way: “Professor, do you think you know me well enough to write a strong letter of recommendation that mentions qualities X, Y and Z?” (Note that this way of asking the question gives the professor a potential “out” if she does not know

you well, or is not prepared to write a positive letter. If the professor accepts your request this way of framing things gives you some assurance that you'll get a positive letter.)

Stories as Strategy

Stories can have powerful persuasive effects and are also an important way that authors create frames. We create and consume stories all the time, varying details depending on the context, audience and purpose. Authors will sometimes include stories in their arguments to illustrate a point, show an issue from a particular point of view, appeal to our emotions, or craft a persona we can identify with. Todd May's short op-ed "The Stories We Tell Ourselves," provides a fascinating discussion of how we constantly use stories to represent ourselves and others, to make claims, to position ourselves, to explain things, and to persuade. May suggests that stories are infused with values, and are often used to represent the character of a person. In short, stories are deeply rhetorical.

Exercise: Read May's text. Describe a story that you or someone you know tells that resembles in some way those described by May. How does the story persuade? How does it position the author, and what is the intended effect? How does it represent particular values?

Metaphor

	"Are we not coming to see that whole works of scientific research, even entire schools, are hardly more than the patient repetition, in all its ramifications, of a fertile metaphor?" Rhetorician Kenneth Burke.

Our language is full of "metaphorical mappings" from one domain of meaning to another. In other words, we constantly use clusters of words from one "area" to talk about other areas – in fact we do it so much that these relationships can become invisible and naturalized, and we no longer even think of this as the use of figurative language. For example, we use directional metaphors to talk about feelings, associating happiness with being "up," and sadness with being "down." We associate anger with heat, and unfriendliness with cold. We live in a web of metaphors, and many scholars argue that these webs subtly shape our understanding of the world. Examining metaphors can tell us much about culture and values. It can also help us understand how authors use metaphors to produce particular effects on audiences.

Manipulated by Metaphors? Lera Boroditsky, professor of cognitive science at the University of California San Diego, writes about the effects of metaphors on reasoning. She notes that in one study substituting a few words in a text about a crime wave significantly changed readers' interpretation of it. The text gave an account of an increase in crime in an imaginary town. Comparing crime to a "beast" instead of a "virus" changed how readers responded to the

problem. People who read that crime was a beast were more likely to advocate putting more police on the streets or locking up criminals; people who read "virus" were far more likely to push for education and social reforms. And yet, when people cited the factors behind their decisions, no one mentioned the metaphor. Boroditsky concludes that "people love to think that they're being rational, and all of us love to think that we're basing our opinion entirely on facts. But in fact it was the metaphor that people overlooked."[8] Boroditsky's research suggests that metaphors can shape how we see things, and can persuade in subtle, invisible ways. For this reason it is important that we look carefully at the metaphors and other forms of figurative language that we encounter in texts.

Exercise 1: Examining Everyday Metaphors

What do these metaphors suggest about how we make sense of the following aspects of life?

1. **Spatial Metaphors** "The foot of the bed, the foot of the hill, the back of the house, the face of the mountain, the leg of the chair, the skin of the orange, the teeth of the comb."
2. **Metaphors for Arguments "**Your claims are indefensible…I attacked the weak points in his argument…She couldn't counter my criticisms…his criticisms were on target…she won the argument…his position is strong…his argument lacked support."
3. **Knowledge and Understanding:** "I see what you are saying (cf. "savoir" in French). She showed great insight. My view of this issue is…what is your outlook on the problem? The concept was clear to her."
4. **Life/Career:** "He saw no way of getting ahead. He felt he was falling behind. Where do you want to be in 5 years? His career path was working out well. She felt her life was finally on the right track. He was approaching his forties. Things were going well (note how the auxiliary verb "go" is often used to indicate the future, as in "I'm going to be a lawyer.")

Exercise 2: Framing Crises. Read the words below by President Bush, spoken shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. How do they frame the event and issues faced by Americans? How does this language invite Americans to understand the conflict, the enemy, and what we should do?

> "On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country…on September 11, this great land came under attack, and it's still under attack as we speak…Our war on terror begins with Al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group has been found, stopped and defeated…"
>
> "Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom, the great achievement of our time and the great hope of every time, now depends on us. Our nation, this generation, will lift the dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter and we will not fail..."

[8] The quotation from Boroditsky is in Britt Peterson, "The Power of Mental Pictures."

"We are at the beginning of what I view as a very long struggle against evil. We're not fighting a nation and we're not fighting a religion. We're fighting evil. And we have no choice but to prevail." (Extracts President Bush speech October 2001 (GWB-6/62-64). [37])

Writing about Arguments



Below are some tips on how to write about arguments. Your teacher will likely ask you to write an analysis of a text and will provide you with specific guidelines on how you should approach this task. However, these tips provide some general rules of thumb. Note that Graff and Birkenstein's little book, *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* is perhaps the best guide to writing about arguments, so we suggest you buy and work through their text. It covers how to summarize arguments, talk about claims and evidence, handle quotations, synthesize multiple texts, and present your own arguments.

A "starter" template for discussing claims

The template below can be used to make sure your account of a claim is well developed and works to "unpack" the claim. The template asks you to describe a major claim, explain it, provide a quotation to illustrate your interpretation, and then discuss how the quotation illustrates your account of the author's claim.

1. **One of Thompson's main claims i**s [*describe claim*]_____Thompson **asserts that**___[*describe claim further*]

2. **According to Thompson**, [explain claim further]...

3. **For example**, Thompson states that "...[give quotation/s]___

4. **What he means by this is**...[discuss quotation]_____. In other words,…..[explain quotation further]

Verbs for Describing Claims

The verbs below are frequently used to talk about claims.

Argues, asserts, claims, contends, suggests, advances the claim/position, advocates, holds, states, makes the case, maintains, proposes, insists, tries to convince readers that.

Verbs that Signal the Author's/Your Stance

When writing about an author's claims you can use verbs that allow you to signal the author's stance, and also signal your attitude to the author's claim. For example, you could write that the author "rejects" or "challenges" received wisdom. If you want to indicate that the author's claim is a passionate call to action, you could say she "advocates," "exhorts," "demands," or "strongly encourages." Perhaps the author seems uncertain and merely "estimates," "raises questions" or "raises the possibility." If the author's claim is angry and critical we might use verbs like "deplores," "challenges," or "critiques." If you agree with the author you might use verbs such as "clearly establishes," "reveals," or "presents a compelling case."

The list of verbs below provides you with many ways of precisely detailing an author's claim, and also of suggesting how you stand in relation to that claim.

Reveals, shows, *uncovers, makes clear that, confirms, points out*, *alleges*, *contends, implies*, *claims, states, argues, asserts, examines, analyzes, advances the claim that, maintains, suggests, avers*, *notes. proposes*, *suggests*, *raises the possibility*, *estimates, deplores, repudiates, denies, questions, challenges, complains, rejects, complicates, critiques, advocates, urges, exhorts, demands,*

Making a claim: argue, assert, claim, emphasize, insist, observe, remind us, report, suggest. [Notice some are stronger than others.]

Expressing agreement: acknowledge, admire, agree, celebrate the fact that, corroborate, endorse, extol, praise, reaffirm, support, verify.

Questioning or disagreeing: complain, complicate, contend, contradict, deny, deplore the tendency to, disavow, question, refute, reject, renounce, repudiate.

Verbs for claims that call for change: advocate, call for, demand, encourage, exhort, implore, plead, recommend, urge, and warn.

The Rhetorical Précis

A rhetorical précis is a template that helps you summarize key rhetorical elements of an argument. Writing a precis is a little like practicing musical scales. It helps you build core skills, but it is formulaic and is not something you would normally include in a final paper.

The précis is a four-sentence paragraph. It includes the name of the writer(s), the context or situation, the overall argument, the main support for the argument, the apparent purpose of

the text, and the relationship between the writer(s) and audience. The following is a breakdown of the information you should include in each one of the four sentences.

1. Name of the author, a phrase describing the author, the type and title of the work, the date (in parenthesis), a rhetorically accurate verb (such as "assert," "argue," "suggest," "question," etc.) that describes what the author is doing in the text, and a THAT clause in which you state the major assertion (argument statement) of the author's text.
2. An explanation of how the author develops and/or supports the argument—the rhetorical structure of the text (for instance, comparing and contrasting, narrating, illustrating, defining, etc.)
3. A statement of the author's apparent purpose, followed by an "in order" to phrase in which you explain what the author wants the audience to do or feel.
4. A description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.

Example 1

(1.) Emeritus professor of economic and social history at the University of London, Erick J. Hobsbawm, in his article, "Spreading Democracy," published in *Foreign Policy* magazine, argues that the belief that Western-style liberal democracy can be spread to the wider world through military coercion is "dangerous and illusory."
(2.) He supports this claim by presenting three factors that confound even the best intentions of states that would spread democracy, showing how and why such attempts have failed and will continue to fail. He also points out the dangers to the home democracies of Western governments that use military force to push democracy abroad.
(3.) Hobsbawm's purpose is to challenge commonly accepted models for promoting liberal democracy and to urge his readers to question the claims of those who promote such models.
(4.) He adopts a critical, concerned, yet authoritative tone for his audience, the readers of *Foreign Policy* and others interested in the topic of geopolitics.

Example 2:

(1.) Independent scholar Indur M. Goklancy, in a policy analysis for the Cato institute, argues that globalization has created benefits in overall "human well-being" by
(2.) providing statistics that show how factors such as mortality rates, child labor, lack of education, and hunger have all decreased under globalization.
(3.) His purpose is to show that the success of globalization should be judged by many measures of instead of just income inequality in order to rebut social critics of globalization.
(4.) He establishes a formal, scientific tone to convince the readers of the Cato Institute, policy makers, and interested citizens that we need to rethink common assumptions about globalization.

Words for Signaling Connections

Connecting words signal to the reader where your ideas are going or what you want the reader to focus on. Connecting words are used to organize the transitions in your writing. They can be compared to signs on the road – when you see a road sign showing men at work, or telling you an exit is coming up, this helps you know what to expect and how get to your destination.

Connecting words are important not only as a way of indicating where your ideas are going, but also as a way of adding variety to your style.

Here are some common words and phrases used to orient readers.

1. Develop

a) Furthermore,
b) Moreover,
c) In addition,
d) Additionally,
e) What's more,
f) Equally important

2. Connect

a) Correspondingly,
b) Similarly,
c) Equally,
d) Likewise,
e) In the same way,
f) Author A's argument is homologous with that of author B, who states…
g) Smith's argument parallels that of Jones, who claims that…
h) Jones' argument is congruent with/echoes/is aligned with that of Smith…

3. Change Direction or Establish Contrast

a) While Jones argues that media violence seriously affects children, Smith suggests that the risks of media violence have been vastly overstated.
b) Whereas Jones states that media violence seriously affects children, Smith suggests…
c) In opposition to Smith's claims regarding media violence, Jones argues…
d) Contrastingly, Jones argues….
e) Contrary to Jones' argument concerning media violence, Smith states…
f) On the other hand,…
g) Although this may be true…
h) By comparison
i) Where author X says Y...

4. To Illustrate

For instance…take the case of…to illustrate,…as an illustration of X…for example…

to demonstrate…consider the case of Y.

5. To Repeat or add Emphasis
As I have said…As mentioned previously…As we have seen…As noted previously…In other words… Indeed… Surprisingly…Certainly…Undeniably…Always… Unquestionably…Without doubt…

6. To Conclude
In conclusion…In sum…To conclude…Thus…Therefore…Hence…In brief…Summing up…Consequently…Finally.

7. To Concede/Qualify a Point
It must be acknowledged…It must be conceded that…It is of course true that…Granted…to be fair…there is some truth to…It's hard to argue with X that…

Signal Verbs and Transitional phrases
Try to use vivid and precise signal verbs to describe how an author makes a claim, and use transitions to explain relationships and avoid what Graff and Birkenstein call the "list of death."

Example of Weak signal verbs and poor transitional phrases:

> "**Rifkin says that** animals are in fact far more like humans than anyone has previously imagined. **He says that the** line dividing humans and their 'fellow creatures' is one of degree, not of kind, **and** there is significant similarity between animals and humans. **Rifkin writes** that human qualities that were once considered unique are in fact common in the animal world. **He says that** new research shows… **Rifkin thus asks us to believe that**…

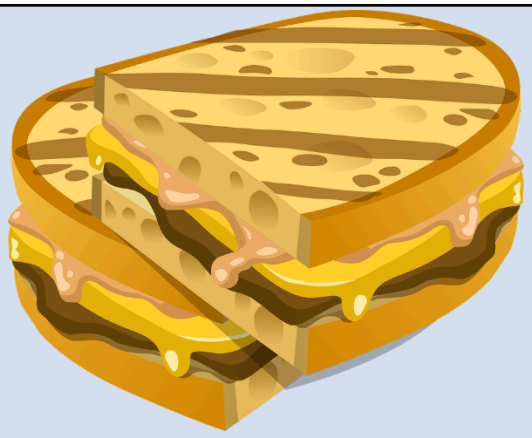
Example of strong signal verbs and good transitional phrases:

> "**Rifkin's main argument is that** animals are in fact far more like humans than anyone has previously imagined. **He advances the provocative claim that the** line dividing humans and their 'fellow creatures' is one of degree, not of kind, **and that** there are significant similarities between animals and humans. **Furthermore,** Rifkin argues that qualities that were once considered uniquely human are in fact common in the animal world. **For example, he notes that** new research shows…**What he means by this is that**…**In essence, Rifkin thus asks us to believe that**…

Quick Guide to Quotations

1. Choose Carefully	Choose what you want to use carefully. Make sure you need the quota to illustrate your point, and that it connects closely with the point you making.
2. Introduce or "frame"	You should 'set up' or introduce quotations – don't just insert them int your text without providing some background. This means they should introduced with your own words. You should use introductory phrases that provide context or say what the author is doing in the section of t text the quotation comes from– for example, "Author X is concerned about global warming, and describes her alarm in the following terms. writes, [insert quotation]…
3. Integrate	Make the quoted words fit the language (part of speech and verb tens of your writing. You may need to carefully select parts of the quotatior do this.
4. Explain and analyze	EXPLAIN the relevance of any direct quote you include to the analysis you're doing within that paragraph or section. Never just leave a quote hanging on its own (aka the "dangling" or "drive-by" quotation, as Gra and Birkenstein put it.)
5. Always Cite	Always cite the text, author, page number, etc. you are using..
6. Maintain Your Voice (handle attributions)	Sometimes when a writer is paraphrasing the ideas of others the viewpoints get mixed up and the reader finds it difficult to know who i saying what. The writer needs to provide good "cueing" so that the rea always knows the difference between what the writer believes and wh the source believes.

QUOTATION SANDWICH

Top slice = **introduction & framing** (advance your point or interpretation of the author's claim, or what the author is doing) **The meat/tofu** = **the actual quotation** **Bottom slice** = **explain, restate, discuss** significance. Why is it important, and what do you take it to say?	

Quotations and Punctuation

Commas and periods go INSIDE QUOTATIONS unless parenthetical citation follows, in which case the comma or period goes on the other side of the citation (note that in British English it's the opposite – punctuation goes outside the quotation).

"There is no excuse for aggressive behavior," the supervisor said. "It sets a bad example."

The period goes outside of the quotation mark when using a parenthetical reference.
"Animals have a variety of emotions similar to humans" (Erikson 990).

The colon and semicolon always go outside the closing quotation mark.
He referred to this group of people as his "gang": Heidi, Heather Shelley, and Jessie.

Block Quotations

When a quote is four lines or longer, it should be inset from the margin one inch. In a block quotation, no quotation marks are used and the period comes before the parenthetical citation.

> Chapter 12 of *The Hunger Games* concludes with Katniss deciding to fight back:
>
> > I want to do something, right here, right now, to shame them, to make them accountable, to show the Capitol that whatever they do or force us to do there is a part of every tribute they can't own. That Rue was more than a piece in their Games. And so am I. (92)

Brackets for Clarification

Sometimes you may want to insert something into a quotation for clarification. Place any additional information within square brackets [ ].

> Author Elliot Would argues that, "They [Western doctors] are too intent on medicating and not intent enough on fixing them [ailments]" (Heveronian, 29).

Ellipsis to indicate parts of the original you have deleted

An ellipsis, three spaced dots (. . .), indicate that part of a quotation has been left out. Ellipses are useful when you want to include only the most relevant words of a quotation; however, any omission must not distort the quotation's original meaning.

- For omissions in the middle of a sentence, use an ellipsis.

  > The character of Sammy was soft-spoken, but he believed strongly in "respect for women, love of country . . . and a bright, sunny day" (87).

- For omissions at the end of a sentence, use an ellipsis followed by a period.

  > According to Zephron Cochran, "Warp drive is a creation that will change multitudes of lives . . . ."

- If a parenthetical citation follows an omission at the end of a sentence, place the period after the final parenthesis.

  > Of the many fruits available, Abraham Lincoln thought "apples to be the most nutritious . . . " (47).

- Omissions immediately following an introductory statement do not need an ellipsis.

  In Harris' book, one-to-one conferences are "one of the most important aspects of teaching" (2)

Charting Your Writing

"Charting" involves annotating a text in order to show the "work" a sentence, paragraph, or section is doing. Charting helps identify what each part of the text is *doing* as well as what it is *saying*. In an earlier section we discussed charting an author's text. However, it is very useful to chart sections of your own writing to help plan and revise your work. It is also useful to partner with a fellow student and have that person chart your text.

In the section above on charting there is a list of verbs for describing what texts do. You can use this list to chart your writing. However, for many analysis papers you may find the shorter list below helpful when describing what your paragraph is doing.

Analyzing: Breaking an argument down into its constituent parts in order to explain, interpret, clarify or evaluate it.
Supporting: Providing evidence for your analysis.
Explaining a quotation: explaining how a quotation supports your analysis and connects with your interpretation.
Expanding: Stating more comprehensively an idea or assertion already expressed.
Critiquing/Challenging: Offering reasoning or evidence to demonstrate the falsehood of an assertion.
Summarizing: Restating the principal idea of an argument or point already introduced.
Metadiscourse: explaining what your paper will do, is doing, or has done.
Transitioning: Moving from one aspect of the analysis to another, and helping your reader understand this.
Comparing and contrasting: Examining objects alongside each other for the purpose of clarifying their features, evaluating them or noting differences and similarities.
Stating: Making an assertion.
Concurring: Agreeing with another author's assertion.
Qualifying: Restricting the scope or clarifying the meaning of an assertion already made.
Describing: Naming one or more features of an object or concept, to help the reader imagine it precisely or understand it fully.
Evaluating: Making judgment about something discussed previously
Synthesizing: Combining elements of previous paragraphs into a coherent whole; often this includes presenting a new perspective on the subject.

Describing relationships between texts

How texts "extend," "complicate," "illustrate," "challenge," or **"qualify" other texts**

Academic writing requires that you build arguments using multiple texts. To do this you will need to describe the relationships between these different texts. The concepts and language described below can help describe relationships between texts. They are particularly useful if you are synthesizing a set of texts, or putting them in "conversation" with each other. You can also use these verbs to describe the contribution you want to make when advancing your own argument.

Extend: When a source advances, develops, expands, or take further some element of an existing argument, we say that the source "extends" an argument.

- Extending an argument involves presenting additional evidence or reasons that are in line with the original argument but go beyond it.

Some verbs you might use to describe the way a source extends a text include:
"Gives additional evidence, develops, elaborates, expands, extrapolates, teases out, advances, takes further, provides additional evidence/support, supplements, etc."

Complicate: When a source presents evidence, arguments or claims that are at odds with an author's position, we say that one text "complicates" another.

- Complicating an author's argument is not quite the same as disagreeing with it, although disagreement may be involved.
- It usually involves suggesting that an author has not dealt with the full complexity of an issue, has failed to consider relevant evidence, or that there is a gap, shortcoming or limitation in an author's account.
- Complicating an argument may involve exposing problems, contradictions, or presenting counterexamples and counterarguments that challenge some part of the argument.

Some verbs you might use to describe the way a source complicates a text include:
"Challenges, contradicts, disagrees, locates problems with, identifies shortcomings, notes that X fails to account for, notes that X ignores A, suggests that X's account is exaggerated, is vulnerable to counterarguments/counterexamples, rests on several highly questionable assumptions."

Qualify: When a source presents evidence/claims that suggest an author's argument goes too far, is too strong, or overgeneralizes, we say it "qualifies" the author's argument. When a source limits the scope or extent of claims in an argument, we say that the source qualifies the argument.

Example of unqualified argument: All video games incite violence and should be banned.

Qualified argument: Miller asserts that certain extreme video games may desensitize impressionable young people to violence and advocates a ban on these types of games. However, Jenkins points to evidence from MIT demonstrating that most games are innocent fun and may even teach useful skills. Nevertheless, he acknowledges Miller's concerns and suggests that only games that realistically simulate murder should be banned. In addition, he limits the ban to children under the age of 14. Thus, Jenkins qualifies Miller's claims.

Challenge: when a source directly contradicts or challenges an author's position. This is similar to a direct refutation (see section on rebuttals) and involves directly challenging an opposing view, pointing to serious weaknesses and shortcomings, and demonstrating that the argument ought to be rejected.

Illustrate: When a source provides examples, additional evidence, cases or arguments that help explain a position we say that the source illustrates an argument.

- Illustrating an argument means to present additional examples that illustrate or support a claim or argument. The illustration may not be explicitly mentioned by the original author.

Some verbs you might use to describe the way a source clarifies or illustrates a text include: illuminates, exemplifies, explicates, confirms, supports, etc.

MLA Documentation Simplified

By Glen McClish

Parenthetical Citation:

1. Crediting a source when directly quoted and identified:
   Leonard Valverde has called mathematics "the most culture-free subject" (126).

2. Crediting a source when paraphrased or summarized and identified:
   Deborah Tannen argues that men and women respond differently to debate in classroom settings (124-26).

3. Crediting multiple sources when paraphrased or summarized and identified:
   Peter Marin (191) and John Morrison (174) maintain that our culture devalues men's lives.

4. Crediting unidentified sources:
   Most students confuse the semicolon with the colon (Smith 43).
   Mathematics has been called “the most culture-free subject” (Valverde 126).

5. Citing multiple sources by the same author requires employing abbreviated versions of the titles of the texts in your parenthetical citations. For example, suppose you have two sources by the author Gerald Graff: an article entitled "Teach the Conflicts" and a book entitled *Literature Against Itself*:

   Gerald Graff asserts that a pedagogy in which we focus on "teaching the conflicts" will give our curriculum structure and relevance ("Teach" 51). He argues primarily from a theoretical and global perspective that places educational discord in the framework of larger problems in academic culture (*Literature* 120-27).

   Educational discord can be contextualized within larger problems in academic culture (Graff, *Literature* 120-27).

6. Citing sources from the Web without page numbers requires a somewhat different approach. If you are citing such a work by Chris Werry that is unidentified, place his name in parentheses:

   With the advent of the Internet, composition pedagogy forever changed (Werry).

   If, on the other hand, you identify the text, provide no parenthetical citation:

   With the advent of the Internet, argues Chris Werry, “composition pedagogy forever changes.”

7. If the author or title is identified, single-page sources do not require a parenthetical page number.

   In “Why Try Zimmerman?” the *Los Angeles Times* declared, “Unless federal authorities uncover some new piece of evidence that suggests obvious racial animus . . . he should not be prosecuted again.”

8. Citing an unidentified, authorless source requires using its title (or a shortened version):

   At least one major newspaper discouraged further prosecution of Zimmerman (“Why Try Zimmerman?”).

Works Cited:

List sources in alphabetical order on a separate page under the heading “Works Cited.” Abbreviate Press with P, University with U, and University Press with UP. Please consult a style guide or see me if you will be citing a type of source not represented on this list.

A. a book by a single author:

   Griffin, Clifford S. *Their Brothers' Keepers*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1960. Print.

B. a book by multiple authors:

   Hand, Shaky, and Ima Klutz. *Surgery Made Easy*. Boston: Fly By Night P, 1991. Print.

   Bellah, Robert N., et al. *Habits of the Heart*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1985. Print.

C. an edited book:

   McClish, Glen. *Punctuation*. Ed. Ellen Quandahl. San Diego: San Diego State UP, 2003. Print.

D. a chapter in a book (usually a collection of essays):

   Golding, Alan C. "A History of American Poetry Anthologies." *Canons*. Ed. Robert von Hallberg. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984. 279-307. Print.

E. an article in a journal (accessed in print or online):

   Wright, Susan. "Private Language Made Public." *Poetics* 18.1 (1989): 549-78. Print.

   Wright, Susan. "Private Language Made Public." *Poetics* 18.1 (1989): 549-78. *ProQuest*. Web. 23 Nov. 2012.

F. an article in a newspaper or periodical (accessed in print or online):

Mangan, Katherine S. "Battle Rages Over Plan to Focus on Race and Gender in the University of Texas Course." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 27 Nov. 1990: A15. Print.

"Dr. W. J. Simmons." *Christian Recorder*, 20 Nov. 1890: n. pag. *Accessible Archives*. Web. 30 Oct. 2012.

G. an interview (conducted by the author of the essay):

Yeltsin, Boris. Personal interview. 1 Dec. 1994.

H. a text or page from a website (my example comes directly from the Purdue OWL Site):

"How to Make Vegetarian Chili." *eHow*. Demand Media, n.d. Web. 24 Feb. 2009.

author's and/or editor's names (if known); title of text, project or website in italics; document date and pages (if known); medium of publication (web); date of your visit; URL optional.

I. a website (my example comes directly from the Purdue OWL Site):

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue U, 2008. Web. 23 Apr. 2008.

Editor, author, or compiler name (if available). *Name of Site*. Version number. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher), date of resource creation (if available). Medium of publication. Date of access.

J. a source with no author (alphabetize by title):

"Why Try Zimmerman?" *Los Angeles Times*, 16 Jul. 2013: A10. Print.

Strategies, Appeals, Rebuttals, Assumptions and Implications

Strategies

Strategies are tactical choices authors make when crafting language to have a persuasive effect on readers. They are ways of using language to get readers' attention, engagement, and agreement. One can identify strategic choices in almost any element of a text, from the choice of title and opening sentence, to the way an author organizes her text, addresses the reader, frames an issue, deals with opposing views, or makes particular use of style and tone. We can look at small tactical decisions, such as word choice, or large tactical decisions, such as how claims are sequenced. Often, by examining patterns at the "micro" level we can identify large-scale strategies. For example, we may find that many small strategic choices in a text help make the author seem credible and trustworthy, and thus advance the author's *ethos*. The particular way the author addresses the audience, creates a persona that seems fair-minded and reasonable, presents a wide-range of evidence, cites respected authorities, and treats opposing views, are all strategic choices that build ethos. Or imagine an author addressing a hostile, resistant audience. We might notice that the main claim is deferred until the end of the argument, in order to have more time to establish a connection with the audience and set the stage for a claim they might at first reject. We might also notice the text spends a lot of time establishing common ground between writer and audience, and addresses the many objections a resistant audience is likely to have. The author might include a set of analogies and "frames" that take familiar ideas and values shared by the audience, and use them to "package" the controversial claim. All of these lower-level strategic choices contribute to a "high-level" strategy, namely overcoming the natural resistance the audience has to the author's argument.

Analyzing strategic choices can help prepare us to examine rhetorical appeals (*ethos, pathos and logos*). Sometimes, when students first try analyzing appeals they jump straight from the appeal to the first example that seems to fit. For example, the student may write that the author establishes ethos and thus credibility because she cites respected sources. But most serious authors try to cite respected sources, so this does not tell us much. This does not help us understand the specifics of what an author does to appear knowledgeable, trustworthy and credible. However, by looking at strategic choices we can build to a more sophisticated, detailed analysis of appeals.

Analyzing strategies takes practice. At first it may seem quite difficult, but the more you do it, the easier it gets. If an author addresses a topic you are unfamiliar with, or writes for a highly specialized audience, it can be very hard to identify strategies. The same is true of watching sports. Sports commentators will often talk about the tactics and strategies teams are using (or should use). When watching sports I am familiar with – such as tennis, cricket and rugby – I understand how the players make particular strategic choices at both the micro and macro level (focusing on defense when ahead, or assigning more players to guard a particularly dangerous player on the opposing team). I will note when the cricket captain removes the fast bowler and replaces him with a spin bowler who specializes in "googlies," or balls that weave impossibly

through the air, and bounce in exactly the opposite direction a batsman expects. By contrast, when I first started watching American football, I was completely unable to identify strategies. It seemed the enormous men in helmets and padding at the front of the line would pat each other furiously then collapse on each other, and entire teams seemed to come on and off the field at random moments. However, after learning more about the game, I can now see the strategies adopted by coaches and players (I usually do this while cheering the Steelers and waving my beloved "terrible towel.")

When exploring strategies it is useful to ask why a particular textual element was included, how it was presented, and what persuasive effects were likely intended. You could consider alternative strategic choices, and think about how they would work differently. It might be useful to consider what would happen if the element or strategy were not there– what difference would it make to the argument?

When discussing rhetorical strategies, try to do the following:

1. Identify the particular strategy or tactic
2. Describe *how* it works
3. Describe *why* it is used – what purpose does it accomplish?
4. Include discussion of how this strategy helps the author develop and support the argument.

Remember that any aspect of the language an author uses can be strategic. Thus word choice, sentence structure, style, tone, organization, and figurative language can operate strategically. Any element of an argument can also operate strategically. How an author addresses her audience, constructs claims, evidence, rebuttals, definitions, metaphors, analogies, organization, style and tone can involve strategy and tactics.

In a later section on close reading we will explore strategies in more detail. For now, look over the list below which describes some textual elements that are often used strategically.

Authorities or "big names." Frequently an author will quote from a famous person or well-known authority on the topic being discussed.

- How does this appeal to authority build trust in her argument that the consensus can be trusted?
- How does this appeal tap into assumptions about scientific method

Comparison and contrast. Discusses similarities and differences.

- Does the text contain two or more related subjects?
- How are they alike? different?
- What is the effect of the comparison or contrast – how does it help persuade the audience?
- How does this comparison further the argument or a claim?

Definition. When authors define certain words, these definitions are often constructed for a specific audience and specific persuasive purpose.

- Who is the intended audience?
- How has the speaker or author chosen to define these terms for the audience?
- What effect might this definition have on the audience, or how does this definition help further the argument?

Description. Details sensory perceptions relating to a person, place, or thing.

- Does a person, place, or thing play a prominent role in the text?
- Does the tone, pacing, or overall purpose of the essay benefit from sensory details?
- What emotions might these details evoke in the audience? (pathos)
- How does this description help the author further the argument?

Division and classification. The way an author divides concepts, categories, issues or sides in a debate.

Example: "The scientific method is divided into six steps: (1) ask a question, (2) do background research, (3) construct a hypothesis, (4) test the hypothesis, (5) analyze the data, and (6) share the results." In this sentence, the scientific method divides and classifies the scientific process into six steps, classifying each one.

Exemplification. Provides examples or cases in point.

- What examples, facts, statistics, cases in point, personal experiences, or interview questions does the author add to illustrate claims or illuminate the argument?
- What effect might these have on the reader?

Example: "Michael Jordan is the greatest basketball player of all-time because he has six championships and averaged over 30 PPG in his career." This sentence contains exemplification because the author provides facts (six championships) and statistics (Michael Jordan's career points per game) in order to support the claim that he is the best basketball player.

Ethos. Aristotle's term *ethos* refers to the credibility, character or personality of the speaker or author or someone else connected to the argument. *Ethos* brings up questions of ethics and trust between the speaker or author and the audience. How is the speaker or author building credibility for the argument? How and why is the speaker or author trying to get the audience to trust her or him? Aristotle says that a speaker builds credibility by demonstrating that he or she is fair, knowledgeable about a topic, trustworthy, and considerate.

- What specifically does the author do to obtain the reader's trust? How does he or she show fairness? Understanding of the topic? Trustworthy? Considerate of the reader's needs?
- How does she construct credibility for her argument?

Identification. This is rhetorician Kenneth Burke's term for the act of "identifying" with another person or group who shares your values or beliefs. Identification refers to the ways that authors develops a rapport with the audience, and establishes shared values, beliefs, experiences,

attitudes and cultural norms. Authors may use style, narrative, metaphor, analogy, cultural/historical reference and other linguistics devices.

- How does the author build a connection between himself or herself and the audience?

Logos. Loosely defined, *logos* refers to the use of logic, reason, facts, statistics, data, and numbers. Very often, *logos* seems familiar and tangible, so much more real and "true" than other rhetorical strategies that it does not seem like a persuasive strategy at all.

- How and why does the author or speaker chose *logos?*
- How does the author show there are good reasons to support his or her argument?
- What kinds of evidence does he or she use?

Metadiscourse. Metadiscourse can be described as language about language (or discourse about discourse – hence the "meta.") It announces to the reader what the writer is doing, often helping the reader to recognize the author's purpose or plan. (Example: "In my paper I argue X, and my argument consists of three main claims…First, A. Second, B . . .") Metadiscourse can be used both to announce the overall project or purpose of the text and to announce its argument. It also provides signposts along the way, guiding the reader to what will come next and showing how that is connected to what has come before.

- Metadiscourse can signal the tone the author wants to convey. What is the author's voice in this paper? How does she enter in and guide the reader through the text?
- What role does she adopt? What voice does she use?

Metaphors, analogies, similes. An analogy compares two parallel terms or situations in which the traits of one situation are argued to be similar to another—sometimes one relatively firm and concrete, and the other less familiar and concrete. This allows the author to use concrete, easily understood ideas, to clarify a less obvious point.

Similarly, metaphors and similes assign help an author frame the argument, to pay attention to some elements of a situation and ignore others or to assign the characteristics of one thing to another.

- What two things are being compared?
- How does this comparison help an audience view the argument in a new way? How does this frame shape the argument?

Narration. Recounts an event.

- Is the narrator trying to report or recount an anecdote, an experience, or an event? Is it telling a story?
- How does this narrative illustrate or clarify the claim or argument?
- What effect might this story have on the audience?
- How does this narrative further the argument?

Pathos. Pathos refers to feelings. The author or speaker wants her audience to feel the same emotions she is feeling, whether or not they agree on the actual topic. That way, because they feel the same emotions, they are more likely to agree with the author later on.

- What specific emotions does the author evoke?
- How does she do it?
- How does the author use these emotions as a tool to persuade the audience?

Prolepsis/Rebuttals. Anticipating objections or questions the reader may have and demonstrating that they can be addressed or resolved. (Prolepsis is very similar to rebuttal, and some writers consider it a particular kind of rebuttal.)

- Anticipating objections or questions a reader may have can help build ethos as it suggests the writer is fair-minded, aware of opposing views, and knowledgeable.
- Rebuttals/prolepsis can be used to engage the reader, show that the author understands his readers, and walk the reader through the author's reasoning.
- Authors can lessen the likelihood of disagreement by anticipating opposition and introducing it within the text. Rebuttals/prolepsis can be used to "inoculate" readers against opposing views.

Example: "In regard to San Diego being the best city in the world, the biggest opposition to my argument is perhaps those residents who live in Honolulu. To this objection I say…"

Rhetorical question – A question (usually) designed to have one answer and to lead the reader to that answer. It may be used to leads the reader into a position rather than stating it explicitly. Rhetorical questions can be used to create a conversational tone and invite involvement in the text, and they can be used to frame an issue in a particular way.

- What is the most obvious answer to this question?
- Why is it important to have the reader answer this question? How does it help the author persuade the audience?

Transitional questions – Lead the reader into a new subject area or area of argument. These are different from rhetorical questions as they are meant primarily to change the topic.

- What role do these questions play? How do these questions lead the direction of the argument?
- How is this helpful for the reader?

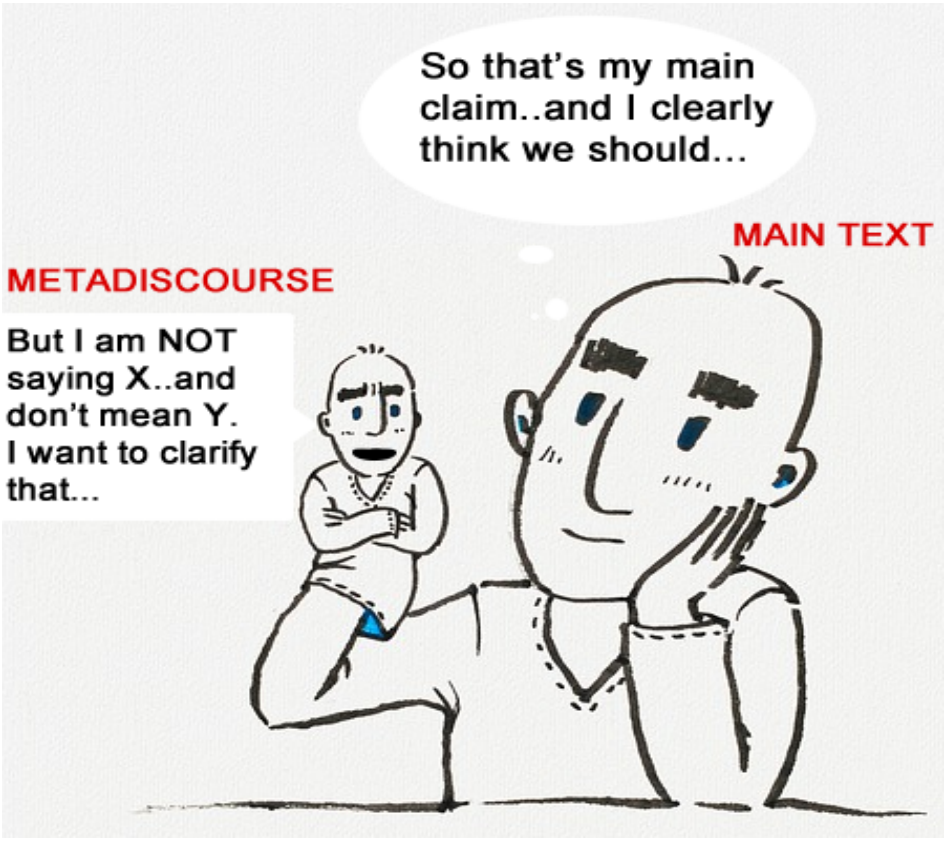
Example: "What evidence does the author provide for her claim? Well, for one she cites statistics from…" This example uses a transitional question to lead the reader into a new paragraph about evidence.

Structure and Organization

It is important to consider the organization of information and strategies in any text.

- How does this structure or organization help strength the argument?
- What headings or titles does the author use? How do these strengthen the argument?

The Rhetorical Strategy of Metadiscourse



Metadiscourse, or metacommentary, occurs when a writer steps outside the text for a moment and explains to the reader how to interpret the text. In such a case the author does not present a claim but explicitly tells and audience how to interpret what has already been said or is about to be said. Many forms of academic writing use metadiscourse.

- In academic texts, metadiscourse occurs when the author stops arguing, stands back and tells you how to interpret the argument.
- In this moment, the author reflects on what he or she is saying. This may involve making explicit a claim or strategy (the strategy of explaining a strategy).
- Metadiscourse is similar to the project statement or thesis in your papers. Metadiscourse is language about language (or discourse about discourse – hence the "meta.") It announces to the reader what the writer is doing, often helping the reader to recognize the author's purpose or plan. (Example: "In my paper I argue X, and my argument consists of two main claims…First, A. Second, B…") Metadiscourse can be used both to announce the overall purpose of the text and to announce the argument. It may also be used to provide signposts along the way, guiding the reader as to what will come next and showing how that is connected to what has come before ("In the first section I presented my main

claims, followed by some common objections to my position. Now I would like to go back to one of those claims and discuss why it is so often misinterpreted…")

Authors use metadiscourse to

1. Ward off potential misunderstandings.
2. Anticipate and respond to objections.
3. Orient the reader by providing a "map"– where the argument is going, where it has gone, etc.
4. Forecast and review structure and purpose
5. Qualify the nature, scope or extent of an argument
6. Alert readers to an elaboration of a previous idea.
7. Move from a general claim to a specific example.
8. Indicate that a claim is especially important

It is very useful to look for metadiscourse in a text as this will often give you shortcuts to understanding what the author is trying to do and how the text is organized. It is also very useful to practice metadiscourse when writing your own papers. It can help you develop your ideas, generate text, and get a better sense of both your paper's structure and how you might change direction. In clarifying things for your reader, you also clarify things for yourself. (For an excellent discussion of why and how authors' use metadiscourse, see Graff and Berkenstein's *They Say/I Say* p. 131 – 140.)

Note that movies sometimes use metadiscourse in two main forms: first, when the actor "breaks the fourth wall" by looking into the camera and speaking directly to the audience, and second, when the movie includes a voice-over or narrator who tells the audience how to interpret what is going on. The movies *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* and *Deadpool* are good examples of the former, while *Fight Club* and *Platoon* illustrate the latter. In both kinds of movie metadiscourse there is a form of "stepping-outside" the main text in order to shape the audience's understanding of this text/movie.[9]

Example: Metadiscourse in Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death.*
The passage below is from the introduction to Neil Postman's book *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business.* Examples of metadicourse are shown in italics, and the associated strategy or move is explained in square brackets.

> *It is my intention in this book to show* that a great shift has taken place in America, with the result that the content of much of our public discourse has become dangerous nonsense. [Here Postman outlines the purpose of his book and presents an overview of the main argument.]

[9] There are of course also many differences between the forms of metadiscourse that show up in movies and those in non-fiction arguments. One important difference is that the narrator in movies is often not "reliable."

With this in view, my task in the chapters ahead is straightforward. *I must, first, demonstrate how, under the governance of the printing press, discourse in America was different from what it is now* – generally coherent, serious and rational; *and then how*, under the governance of television, it has become shriveled and absurd. [Here Postman outlines the organization of his argument and maps out what will happen in the book.]

But to avoid the possibility that my analysis will be interpreted as standard-brand academic whimpering, a kind of elitist complaint against "junk" on television, *I must first explain that . . . I appreciate junk as much as the next fellow, and I know full well* that the printing press has generated enough of it to fill the grand canyon to overflowing. Television is not old enough to have matched printing's output of junk.
[First, Postman clarifies what he is about to do, what he is not saying, and then he identifies an anticipated objection to his argument. Next, he deals with the objection and further clarifies his position.]

Exercise: identify examples of metadiscourse in the following passage and try to figure out why they are in the text. Why are they included and how do they invite the reader to interpret the argument? The passage is an excerpt from Yale law professor Amy Chua's article "A World on the Edge."[10]

The argument I am making is frequently misunderstood. I do not propose a universal theory applicable to every developing country. There are certainly developing countries without market-dominant minorities…Nor do I argue that ethnic conflict arises only in the presence of a market dominant minority…And, last, I emphatically do not mean to pin the blame for any case of ethnic violence – whether the mass killings perpetuated on all sides in the former Yugoslavia or the attack on America – on economic resentment, on markets, or any other single cause…The point, rather is this: In the numerous countries around the world that have pervasive poverty and a market dominant minority, democracy and markets - at least in the raw, unrestrained forms in which they are currently being promoted – can only proceed in deep tension with each other.

Rhetorical Appeals: Ethos, Pathos and Logos

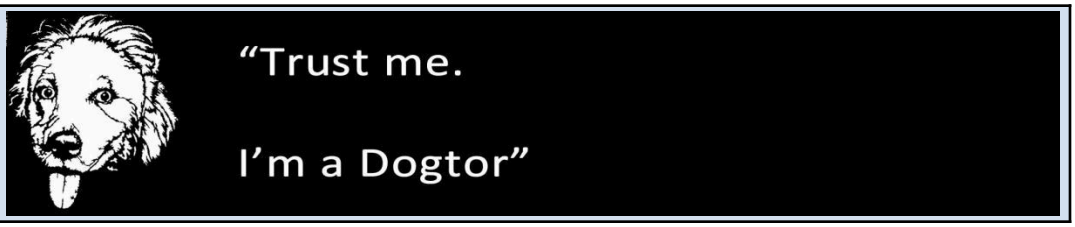
In the *Art of Rhetoric*, the Greek philosopher Aristotle described three methods or "appeals" commonly used to persuade audiences: *ethos*, *logos,* and *pathos*. *Ethos* describes the way an author builds credibility and trustworthiness; *logos* refers to logic and reasoning, and *pathos* refers to the way an author connects to an audience's feelings and imagination. Think about the times an argument persuaded you. Trust, logic and feeling probably played a role. This makes sense. To be persuasive, a writer usually needs to establish that she is credible (trustworthy, fair, caring, knowledgeable, and ethical). She can also persuade by appealing to an audience's

[10] Chua, Amy. "A World on the Edge." *Wilson Quarterly* 26(4), 2002, p. 78.

emotions, stirring pride, fostering resentment or fear, conjuring pity, making us care, or playing on the many other emotions we experience. Lastly, and in academic writing most importantly, writes persuade through the power of their reasoning, the tightness of their argument, and the strength of the evidence.

There are some important things to keep in mind when examining rhetorical appeals. First, they don't all appear to the same extent in all texts. A lab report is unlikely to contain a great deal of *pathos*. On the other hand, a personal narrative that argues for expanding the death penalty based on the author's experience of loss may lean heavily on *pathos*. Authors choose to use different "ratios" of these appeals depending on genre, context and audience. Secondly, the appeals overlap and are interconnected. They are not completely separate. For example, an author may seem credible (*ethos*) because she demonstrates expertize, and this expertize is apparent through the rigor of her reasoning and the strength of the data presented. Furthermore, as scholars Walker and Longaker suggest, trust (*ethos*) operates in part through *pathos* (feeling). It occurs when we sense the author is moral, genuine, and trustworthy; thus trust may be achieved when the author establishes an emotional connection with the audience. Furthermore, authors often give us reasons for an emotion. So when you carefully analyze elements of an argument, you may find these elements participate in more than one appeal.

Ethos



Ethos refers to the credibility, character, trustworthiness, or personality of the author. Trust and credibility are crucial to persuasion. In ancient Greece students studied the art of rhetoric to learn persuasion and good citizenship. Their teachers put the development of moral character at the center of rhetorical education. The impact of ethos is often called the argument's "ethical appeal" or the "appeal from credibility."

What makes a writer appear trustworthy? This will vary depending on audience and context. (Some people listen to president Trump's speeches and think they sound honest, authentic, unvarnished and trustworthy, while others have exactly the opposite reaction.) It helps if the author has a good reputation, and seems fair, reasonable, and honest. It may also help if he demonstrates expertize and good will. These qualities will become apparent through the writer's tone and word choice, the way he addresses the audience, and the manner in which he treats opposing views. Writers can also appear credible by drawing on values and beliefs important to the audience, or by finding ways of bridging different beliefs and values.

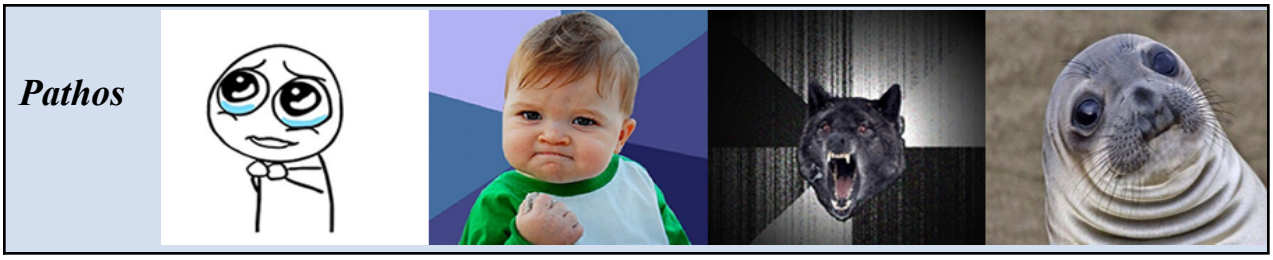
Aristotle suggests that ethos can be divided into three main parts: a) good character (*arête*), b) good sense (*phronesis*), and c) good will (*eunoia*). Each of these is important. For example, consider an expert witness in a law case. The witness might demonstrate expertise, and have a

strong reputation. But if the opposing lawyer can show the expert lacks good will (perhaps the expert is always hostile to certain kinds of defendants, or is paid a large amount of money to testify) then this may undermine his credibility.

Aristotle also makes a distinction between *situated ethos*, or the kind of credibility that comes from a speaker's role or reputation (for example, doctors, lawyers, scientists) and *intrinsic ethos,* which emerges purely from the author's use of language. These two forms of ethos often influence each other.

Some questions to guide analysis of ethos

1. Find out about the author's background, profession, previous work, etc.
2. Will the audience know who the writer is? If not, how does the writer signal her standing in a community or profession? How does the writer signal her expertize?
3. Does the writer seem knowledgeable? Honest? What makes you think so?
4. What/who does the writer like and dislike?
5. How might the writer's status (inherited or invented) affect the audience's willingness to believe, trust or identify with the writer?
6. Can you find places where the writer makes comments that indicate honesty, sincerity, fair-mindedness, expertise, likeability, moral vision etc.?
7. What does the author do to gain the respect and trust of the audience, and how well does she do this?
8. Can you find places where the writer makes concession to opposing arguments, indicating fair-mindedness, or an absence of this (indicating the author fails to acknowledge other points of view)?
9. Does the author explain how she came upon the evidence and support presented in her argument? (If she does not, this may undermine ethos).
10. Does the writer do things to show she shares values and background with the audience? How effective is this?
11. What seem to be the writer's biases?
12. What seems to be the writer's tone and mood? (angry, helpful, condescending, sarcastic, funny, etc.)
13. What would it be like to spend time in this writer's company?



Pathos refers to the way an author connects to an audience's feelings, values, and imagination.

Humans experience a familiar spectrum of emotions - pity, sympathy, fear, joy, hope, love, pride, humor, outrage, resentment, anger, shame, and envy. Skillful writers will use language that cultivates one or more of these emotions. Note that to connect to an audience's emotions, authors tend to use vivid, descriptive, concrete language, rather than abstract, complex, or technical language. When examining how an author connects to our feelings, look for words with emotionally charged connotations. Stories, cases, examples and personal accounts can take an audience inside a particular experience, revealing the emotional dimensions of an issue.

Some questions to guide analysis of *pathos*

1. What emotions does the author express?
2. How do word choice, examples, stories, categories, and descriptions express emotions?
3. What emotions does the author aim to cultivate in her audience in particular parts of the text?
4. How does she try to make us feel? How does this advance her purpose and her efforts at persuasion?

Examples of pathos are everywhere, although they are generally less frequent, or more muted, in academic writing. Pathos-based appeals are particularly common in advertising, political speeches, and emails to parents asking for extra money to get you through the end of the semester.

Consider the example below. Many years ago I signed up to donate to a couple of charities and then began receiving requests for donations from other organizations. This letter appeared in my mailbox ten years ago. It is a simple, powerful argument that draws heavily on a pathos appeal. What do you notice about this?



To begin with, note how well the letter understands the situation and anticipates audience reaction. If you receive a letter from an unfamiliar organization and it seems likely there is a request for money inside, your first impulse will probably be to throw the letter away. The

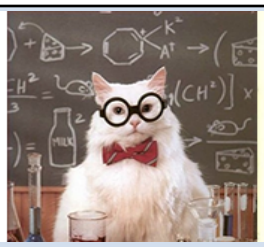
letter's designers predict this, and understand they cannot make their request if they do not clear this first, crucial hurdle. So they use personification to equate the letter with the life of a young girl, claiming that if you discard the letter you are throwing a young girl's life in the trash. Furthermore, the letter suggests that the young girl has already experienced being "discarded" many times, which is an emotionally painful (and guilt-inducing) thought. The child is pictured staring directly into the eyes of the recipient; there is the faint hint of a tear in her eye, and beads of sweat dot parts of her face and body. She is alone, completely isolated, a young child barely older than a toddler, her gaze imploring the viewer for help. The designers could have presented an image of several children or a family, but research on charitable giving suggests this makes it easier for readers to ignore, and we are more likely to tell ourselves the problem is too big and complex to deal with. But the letter shows just one child, and the absence of any surrounding detail distills the question into its simplest form: can you afford to help save the life of one child?

The envelope is still on my bookshelf. I did donate a small amount to this organization, but have not been able to throw the envelope away. Such is the power of *pathos*.

Exercise: Find an example of a short, persuasive text (advertisement, meme, video clip, etc.) that draws heavily on pathos. How does the appeal work? Why is it effective (or ineffective). Share your findings with the class.

Logos









Logos concerns the logic and reasoning in a text. The quality of the claims presented, their clarity, accuracy, rigor, cohesion and consistency, all help persuade an audience. The quality of logic and reasoning (logos) is also apparent in the extent to which claims are precise, qualified (their scope and limitations carefully noted) and supported by evidence. Texts that contain sufficient amounts of relevant, representative, carefully selected evidence are more likely to succeed in persuading an audience. Furthermore, texts that carefully respond to counterarguments, acknowledge areas of uncertainty, interrogate assumptions, and appear sensible and well-informed, demonstrate logical rigor and sophistication.

Logos is the most common appeal. Think of logos as the way an author builds a case and the logical force, rigor and persuasiveness supporting that case. The author's case will unfold paragraph by paragraph, reason by reason, claim by claim. The chains of reasoning presented by the author are an important part of *logos*. For example, if the argument is built around a set of

analogies, it is important the comparisons are accurate, compelling and appropriate, and there is a strong logical connection between parallel cases or situations.

Rebuttals

The rebuttal[11] is the part of an argument where the author addresses objections, opposing arguments, and questions that skeptical readers may have. Sophisticated authors will try to anticipate objections and show they can answer these objections. Sophisticated writers include opposing arguments that their readers may be familiar with and demonstrate that they can address or "refute" these opposing arguments. Rebuttal sections are more common when the topic being addressed is controversial, when the audience is likely to be aware of competing views, and when the audience is neutral or somewhat resistant to the author's argument.

Rebuttals are particularly common in academic writing. Academic arguments will often include discussions of possible objections and counterarguments to the position being advanced. This is because academic arguments typically take place in disciplinary communities in which a variety of competing or divergent positions exist. Academic writers usually "situate" their research in relation to prior work, including research that may disagree with theirs.

Why are rebuttals used, and what persuasive effects can they have? It might at first seem odd to include objections to your position. Why bring up opposing views that may complicate or challenge your own? But when handled well, rebuttals can achieve a number of persuasive effects that strengthen an author's argument (they are often an important rhetorical strategy). Here are some of the most common ways authors use rebuttals to influence audiences:

1. An author's use of rebuttals can suggest she has considered other points of view, is "fair-minded," and confident in her position (a less confident or reasonable author might ignore opposing views). In this way rebuttals can help establish the author's *ethos*. (As always, the success of such a strategy will depend on how well it is executed.)
2. Rebuttals may be used to demonstrate that the author is aware of opposing views and is therefore knowledgeable about an issue. Furthermore, by presenting a set of objections to her position, and then explaining why her argument is in fact the stronger one, the author can impress the reader with the strength of her reasoning (*logos*).
3. By presenting the reader with common objections to her position the author can "inoculate" the reader against future contact with opposing points of view. If the author merely stated her argument and did not address opposing views, then the reader might be persuaded by other texts encountered later on.

[11] Note that some scholars of argument refer to a rebuttal (or some kinds of rebuttal) as "prolepsis." This Greek term has essentially the same meaning as "rebuttal," but has a slightly narrower focus. It is usually used to describe "the anticipation of and answering of an argument before it has been made" (Trail, 2000., p. 144.) If you want to sound particularly sophisticated you can use *prolepsis* instead of "rebuttal."

4. Rebuttals can help clarify an author's position. By explaining what you are against you bring into focus what you are for. By contrasting your position with the arguments or lines of reasoning you oppose, you clarify the position you want your audience to share.
5. Rebuttals can be constructed to invite the audience to reason alongside the author, constructing a simulated "conversation" that can help the reader trust the author. The author may include phrases such as, "But what shall we make of the objection that….you may be thinking that this claim is vulnerable to...However, we can answer this objection by noting that…" This can give the reader the experience of participating in the author's reasoning process. Furthermore, if the author anticipates objections the reader has, and can defuse these objections, this suggests the writer understands the reader's perspective well and is attentive to her concerns.
6. Rebuttals can make an argument seem rigorous and "nuanced." If an author presents his argument, then offers the strongest possible case against his position, admitting to areas where his opponents make important points, but goes on to show that his own position is ultimately preferable, this can demonstrate that the author has presented a thorough, careful, complex case.

Rebuttals take many forms. However, some of the most common approaches are listed here.

1. *Strategic concession*: acknowledgment of some of the merits of an opposing view. In some cases, this may mean accepting or incorporating some components of an authors' argument, while rejecting other parts of it.
2. *Refutation*: this involves directly challenging an opposing view, pointing to weaknesses and shortcomings, and demonstrating that the argument/objection ought to be rejected.
3. *Demonstration of irrelevance*: showing that that opposing views, while perhaps valid in certain respects, do not meet the criteria of relevance that define the issue.
4. *Reframing*: this tactic involves inviting the audience to see the objection in a new way. It could mean suggesting that what seems at first like a weakness in the author's argument is really something else, or it could involve showing that the objection is true in general but not in this particular case.

Note that if an author constructs a weak or unethical rebuttal this can reveal to the reader flaws and weaknesses in both the argument and the author's ethos. A rebuttal that merely contradicts opposing views, or avoids the substance of the claims advanced by opponents, or merely calls the opponent names, is weak. These "pseudo-rebuttals" are, however, used fairly often by some people, so much so that there is a fallacy named after this practice. This is the "straw man" fallacy, and we will read more about this later.

Here is a sample argument about gun control we looked at earlier. Read it again and consider how the rebuttal section is presented. Is it effective? Can you imagine better rebuttals?
(You will note that directly following the rebuttal section there is a "qualification" section where the author clarifies the limits of her position and explains what she is *not* saying.)

See if you can come up with other rebuttals or with stronger counterarguments to the rebuttal.

Authors will often engage in a kind of imaginary back-and-forth with critics in order to refine their arguments. That is, they will draft their argument, imagine the strongest possible objections to their position, and then revise the initial argument accordingly.

> **Argument:** In recent years we have witnessed a series of horrifying mass-shootings in the nation's schools. We have watched as teenagers use their phones to record terrifying scenes of slaughter, and as parents desperately try to make contact with their children, unsure if they have survived the latest massacre. Despite the urgent need to do something, we seem unable to agree on solutions. My argument is that the best way forward is to combine several practical solutions recently offered by both gun safety advocates and gun rights groups. These solutions are sensible, feasible, and relatively uncontroversial. They are thus our best hope of implementing policies that have widespread support. They are not the only solutions we can consider, but they are the best place to start...
>
> **Rebuttal:** Some have argued that any attempt to change gun laws is pointless, as the real drivers of mass shootings lie elsewhere. They claim shootings are caused by violent media, mental illness, or the decline of religious belief. But almost all developed countries allow violent media, and some allow far more of it than we do. All countries have people with mental illness, and the United States has far higher rates of religious observance than any other Western country. Yet American teens are 82 times more likely to be murdered with guns than their peers in other advanced nations. A major difference between the U.S. and other countries is our gun laws, and they play a significant role in why gun deaths are so unusually high here. The other factors that critics point to are not plausible explanations for the crisis…
>
> **Qualification**: This is not to suggest that guns should be banned, or that law abiding citizens should be unable to purchase firearms, or that the 2nd amendment should not be adhered to. It is merely to suggest that background checks, waiting periods, red flag laws, licensing and training should be more strictly regulated and enforced, and (where appropriate and requested) schools be allowed to take measures to increase armed security.

Rebuttals are a common part of many other types of communication. For example, political groups will often create lists of counterarguments and objections that activists can expect to encounter, along with standard rebuttals. People selling things will often expect you to resist, and may be provided with "scripts" providing standard rebuttals (telemarketers are given software that provides standard rebuttals, with a window popping up at key points in the conversation.) For example, here is a sample telemarketing template:

Telemarketing Template

Pre-introduction: Ask to speak to the decision-maker.
Introduction: Introduce yourself and the reason for your call.
Attention Getter: Mention the key features of the offer and qualify them for eligibility
Probing Questions: Always ask for information that will be useful for rebuttals

Offer: Explain the product/service and terms of commitment
Close: Always ask for the sale
Rebuttal deal with objections and present rebuttals
Sales Continuation: Agree, use rebuttals, sell benefits, CLOSE
Up/down/cross-sell: If there is another product this is the time to sell it.
Confirmation Close: Review the terms of the offer.
Final Close: End on a positive note. Thank the customer and leave a number for customer support.

Here is a more detailed description of how rebuttals work in a telemarketing call. It is from a web site warning consumers against telemarketers who push "free trips to a hotel" which are really intended to sell a "timeshare" (a hotel unit or property that one owns for a few weeks a year). The writer describes the persuasive strategies used, noting that the rebuttal section is vital:

> Phase three is what telemarketers refer to as overcoming objections with rebuttals. Rebuttals are basically responses for every possible objection the telemarketer might receive. **The telemarketer literally breaks objections into three categories: spousal, credibility, and time-off-work**. For a spousal rebuttal the telemarketer will say things like 'why don't you surprise your wife or husband with a free getaway?', or **'doesn't your family deserve to get away**?,' or a defensive tactic **'aren't you allowed to make decisions?**' This is usually said if a male answers the phone…To overcome a credibility objection, the telemarketer will read the actual ballot the vacationer filled out. What could give more credibility than this? And the most common objection is not being able to get off work. This is when the telemarketer would say if we could fit this vacation in with your schedule would you take it? The purpose of the rebuttal is to reduce the objection down to just one problem.
>
> Once they have it narrowed down to a single objection, the telemarketer will turn the call over to a T.O. or turnover specialist, a supervisor who has been trained for years in persuasion marketing.[12]

When you encounter advertisers and salespeople it is worth remembering that they will likely have been prepared to anticipate and address potential objections or counterarguments you may have. Studying argument will not merely make you a better analyst of academic texts, but can also help you navigate the kinds of persuasion you will encounter in the wider world.

Exercise: the timeshare example above is rather dated (timeshare sales were most common in the 1990s and 2000s). Can you think of other, more recent examples of sales pitches that use rebuttals? (A quick google search may help). Or perhaps you can create your own rebuttals for

[12] From http://www.abfla.com/vacations/ripoffs.html.

an imaginary sales pitch for a product of your choice.

Assumptions and Implications

Assumptions are beliefs, values, and ways of seeing the world that an author takes for granted. Assumptions are sometimes explicitly stated, but are often unstated because authors expect their audience to share these beliefs or values. Analyzing an author's assumptions can help us do the following:

1. **Understand what holds an argument together**. Entire arguments often rest on a particular set of assumptions about what is real, relevant, true and ethical. Investigating assumptions can help us gain a deeper understanding of an argument and produce more incisive rhetorical analysis.
2. **Identify the writer's primary audience**. Examining an author's assumptions - the unstated beliefs, values and ways of seeing the world – may help you understand the intended audience. For example, you may discover the author assumes an audience that is young/old, conservative/liberal, scientifically trained/novice, religious/agnostic, etc. You may discover the author makes assumptions about the audience's beliefs and values that are reasonable or unreasonable.
3. **Evaluate and critique arguments**. Investigating assumptions can help you identify blind spots, weaknesses, and flaws in an author's argument. This can help you evaluate the text's strengths and weaknesses. If you are able to challenge or cast doubt on an author's assumptions then you may have identified a major flaw in the argument. If you can locate counter-examples that complicate the author's assumptions then this may point to a weakness in the argument. It may also help you build your own counter-argument.
4. **Become more aware of our own assumptions.** Identifying and analyzing others' assumptions can help make you aware of your own. Furthermore**,** identifying and examining your own assumptions can help you develop as a writer. It may also help you argue with more self-understanding and rigor.

Assumptions are everywhere, part of all arguments. They may be conscious or unconscious, explicit or implicit. Any part of a text can reveal assumptions - from the title, to the evidence, to the main chains of reasoning, to the tone. Assumptions can also be identified in visual texts. Consider how maps involve assumptions about what is "up" and "down," or what is central and peripheral. Scholars who study monuments such as the Washington memorial or the Vietnam War memorial note that their design reflects specific cultural assumptions. There is currently a debate over whether some monuments depicting leaders of the Confederacy should be removed from public spaces. This debate revolves around what these monuments symbolize, but it also concerns the historical assumptions they embody.

Identifying Assumptions

It is sometimes hard to identify assumptions. They are often unconscious, and must be patiently teased out of a text. To identify assumptions, try looking at texts from the following angles.

1. Look for assumptions the author makes about the audience's beliefs and values. Consider the author's treatment of his audience. What does the author assume his readers will find important, true, relevant, and moral? SDSU Professor Glen McClish suggests students address the following questions to help get at assumptions the author makes about the audience.[13]

A. Read the introduction of the text. What do you have to believe/value/care about to get past the first line, paragraph or page?
B. Who is going to check out right here? (examine a specific claim or piece of evidence)
C. How does the author attempt to bring in people who value X here? [Supply a relevant value]
D. Who is not going to be able to read this? [locate a specific claim or assumption]

For example, in Stephen Miller's "A Smoker's Plea," the author argues that campus anti-smoking policies are based on fake science, and are pushed by "special interest groups" whose real aim is to reduce freedom. Let us look at a couple of paragraphs from Miller's argument. Writing in the Duke University student newspaper, Miller claims the following:

> With countless dollars and the awesome force of political correctness behind it, the anti-smoking crusade is nearly impervious to truth or reason. But I shall nonetheless make an effort to dismantle a few of the major lies that have brought our society to its knees before the unrelenting health fascists….the real risks are the fascistic tendencies that prohibit smoking in even private establishments, violating our liberties and setting the groundwork for a future where any personal habit can be regulated when it is politically expedient. So, to all smokers and people who value their freedom, I say it is time to draw a line in the ash and defend our right to light up.

Miller appears to make several assumptions here. He assumes that anti-smoking policies are not widely supported, but have instead been forced on students by a small, powerful cohort of "health fascists" who spread lies about the health risks of smoking in an effort to reduce freedom. These assumptions may be hard for some readers to accept. Readers who believe most students prefer a smoke-free campus, and that scientific research on the health effects of smoking is valid, may find Miller's argument unpersuasive. Miller also assumes it is not worth trying to negotiate with, or find common ground with those who disagree with him. (He does not, for example, suggest that the university establish special areas where people can smoke). He assumes that those who disagree with him are both irrational and motivated by sinister impulses. This is suggested by his use of words like "unrelenting health fascists," "the awesome force of political correctness," and "crusade." Analyzing Miller's assumptions can help us

[13] This list is based on conversations with professor McClish and from page 80 of Jennifer Fletcher's *Teaching Arguments*.

understand how he imagines his audience. From this perspective, Miller's goal seems not (primarily) to persuade readers who disagree with him, but rather to rally readers who share his views to take action. Identifying these assumptions can help us better understand Miller's purpose, audience, and strategies, as well as the quality of his argument.

In contrast to Miller's argument, Simon Shieh ("Smoking Ban Diminishes On-Campus Diversity") writing in SDSU's *Daily Aztec*, assumes that common ground is possible and people who support smoking restrictions can be persuaded. Shieh concedes that smoking is harmful and second-hand smoke a concern, but he argues that smokers are part of the campus community and can be accommodated without harming non-smokers. Shieh argues that smoking bans limit diversity, and restrict smokers' ability to socialize and deal with stress. By appealing to diversity, tolerance, inclusion and community - widely shared values - and proposing a pragmatic compromise, Shieh assumes he can persuade readers on all sides of the debate to support his position.

Exercise: Read Miller's "A Smoker's Plea" and Shieh's "Smoking Ban Diminishes On-Campus Diversity." Can you find other important assumptions the authors make about their audiences?

2. Look for unstated values, beliefs and premises that are necessary for the author's claims to "hang together." Aristotle notes that authors often advance arguments that depend for their completeness on unstated assumptions or missing premises. We may not even notice the hidden assumptions if we are inclined to agree with them. For example, claims that take the form, "politician X's racist/sexist speeches show he is unfit for office" assume that racist and sexist statements are bad, and politicians should not make them. This assumption is widely shared by audiences today and thus likely to be persuasive. However, in the past such an assumption may have been less widely shared, and thus less persuasive.

Consider the following claims, each of which contains unstated assumptions or missing premises:

A. **"With a name like Smucker's, it has to be good."** This is an advertising slogan for Smucker's jams. The missing premise appears to be that food companies usually create catchy names to market their products, but "Smucker" (a family name) is an awkward, unappetizing name, and thus the quality of Smucker's products must be particularly good in order to compensate for this.

B. **"Needle exchange programs, which allow drug addicts to exchange dirty needles for clean ones, should be abolished because they will only cause more people to use drugs."** The unstated premise is that when you make risky behavior safer you encourage more people to engage in it.

C. **'"Light" is a Big Sean song, and so it is vulgar, sexist, and full of foul language.'** This claim contains an unstated assumption/premise, namely that most Big Sean songs

are vulgar, sexist, and full of foul language.

D. **"The gun has the defendant's fingerprints on the trigger. He must therefore be guilty of the crime."** This assumes that fingerprints found on guns used for criminal purposes typically belong to the person who committed the crime.

E. **Internet memes often rely for their humor on unstated assumptions that the reader must infer.** Consider this meme. The unspoken assumption in the image is that the speakers' friend is a dangerous driver.[14]



3. Try to find significant "absences," "silences," or gaps in an argument. Try to think who or what may be left out in a text, and then try to identify why. This may reveal assumptions the author makes. For example, in Miller's "A Smoker's Plea," he does not mention that some people prefer smoke-free environments not just for the health benefits, but also because they find sitting, eating, and studying in smoky environments uncomfortable, and consider the right to do so a "freedom." Miller's argument leaves this out, focusing solely on restrictions to smokers' freedoms. This absence may suggest he is not primarily concerned with persuading the audience of people who value smoke-free environments, and that he defines "freedom" rather narrowly.[15]

In Nicholas Kristof's "Do We Have the Courage to Stop This?" the author argues for stricter gun

[14] From www.reddit.com/r/absolutelynotmeirl/ filename: LIqPFuP.jpg, posted July 11, 2017.

[15] Note that authors cannot attend to every aspect of an issue, thus leaving some elements out is inevitable, and should not be used as an all-purpose criticism. But we can look at absences in order to identify assumptions, and use our analysis of these assumptions as part of an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the argument.

regulations in the wake of the Sandyhook tragedy. Kristof compares guns to cars, suggesting guns ought to be regulated and made to include safety features just as cars have been. However, Kristof leaves out mention of gun ownership as a constitutional right. This suggests he assumes an audience that shares his "consumer safety" perspective on guns, rather than an audience that thinks about guns primarily in constitutional terms.

In a 2015 op-ed, "How Texas Teaches History," Ellen Rockmore argues that new history textbooks in Texas use language to downplay the horrors of slavery by foregrounding the "positive" things slave owners did, while downplaying and sometimes leaving out the brutality of slavery. She writes, "There are no sentences, in these excerpts, anyway, in which slaves are doing what slaves actually did: toiling relentlessly, without remuneration or reprieve, constantly subject to confinement, corporal punishment and death." Rockmore suggests that this absence reveals assumptions about slavery that are incorrect and harmful, and that these assumptions may be passed to students who read these history textbooks.

4. **Look for assumptions embedded in the definitions, categories, and key terms of an argument**. This will often point to the existence of important assumptions. Consider the terms and categories Miller ("A Smoker's Plea") uses to describe people who support tobacco restrictions. He calls them "special interest groups" and "health fascists" on a "crusade" to impose "political correctness" and take away "liberty" and "freedom." These terms assume that people who support tobacco restrictions are authoritarian, undemocratic and unreasonable, seeking to force unpopular rules on people who do not want them. They suggest his opponents do not have good faith reasons for their position and are not interested in the public good; they are on a "crusade," driven by zealotry and the desire to diminish freedom. Miller's use of such terms suggests he assumes the stakes are extremely high (the future of freedom and liberty). Lastly, Miller's use of "fascism" reveals that he assumes a definition of the term that is idiosyncratic and rather broad.

The definitions authors use often reveal important assumptions. In debates over same sex marriage, people who oppose this often define their goal as the "defense of marriage." This definition assumes that gay people who wish to marry are "attacking" heterosexual (or "traditional") marriage. Conversely, gay marriage proponents define their project as "marriage equality," which assumes an extension of civil rights to those who have been unfairly denied them. A close reading of the categories, definitions and terms used in such debates can help reveal underlying assumptions, and this in turn can help reveal major areas of tension and disagreement.

After the September 11 attacks in 2001, politicians used a number of terms to describe the effort to find and defeat the attackers. These terms contained different assumptions about the attackers and the effort to defeat them. Consider the different assumptions entailed in these three expressions:

I. "War on Terror"

II. "War against Islamic extremists"
III. "Fight against Al Qaeda"

Exercise: What does each expression assume about the nature of the struggle, its scope, who is involved, and how victory might be defined?

Exercise: try to tease out some of the assumptions embedded in the following sets of terms:

I. Far East, Middle East, Near East
II. The Death Tax, the Estate Tax, the Inheritance Tax"
III. Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms.
IV. Negro, Black, African American
V. The Maori Wars, The New Zealand Wars, The Land Wars

5. Look for assumptions embedded in the rhetorical "frames" authors construct
Authors often construct "frames," or what the rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke calls "terminological screens." These frames encourage particular ways of seeing an issue. Authors establish frames by combining related terms, analogies, stories, definitions, or metaphors. Authors may also use style and syntax (grammar) and point of view to construct a frame. Frames can lead an audience to attend to certain elements of a situation and ignore others, and invite particular perspectives on issues. For example, some writers argue that the "war on drugs" frame adopted by many journalists, politicians and policy makers helped create a view of addiction that was overly narrow and punitive.

Analyzing the frames an author uses can help us discover key assumptions, and this can help us evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of an argument. For example, in "A Smoker's Plea" Miller frames the issue as a battle between supporters of freedom, liberty and truth on one side, and the forces of fascism, falsehood and political correctness on the other. If readers accept this frame and all that it assumes about the issue, they are likely to be persuaded. But a critical analysis of Miller's argument might ask whether this frame contains some faulty assumptions about the debate and the various stakeholders involved.

In Kristof's "Do We Have the Courage to Stop This?" the author brings together a set of stories, analogies and examples that construct a "consumer safety frame" on gun control. For example, he notes that everyday consumer goods such as toys, ladders, and food are carefully regulated, and have, over time, been made much safer. He also notes that the government requires drivers to be registered and pass tests, and has required manufacturers to add many effective safety features to cars. Kristof claims it is absurd that we do not take a similar approach to guns. Those readers who accept his "consumer safety frame," and the assumptions that accompany it, will likely be persuaded. However, those readers who do not accept this frame, and resist the assumptions entailed in it, will likely not be persuaded.

Scholars who study media are often interested in the frames journalists use when reporting news stories, and the assumptions these frames reveal. Take a look at the examples below. Each uses a different frame to represent a news story. Compare the frames and the assumptions associated with these frames.

Exercise 1*:* In 1996 California passed a referendum legalizing medical marijuana. This was followed by a series of legal challenges that went all the way to the Supreme Court. In 2005 the Supreme Court ruled against the California law. This decision was described in newspaper headlines across the country. Examine the different frames adopted in these headlines, and the assumptions identifiable in these frames.

1. Salon Magazine "Court rules against pot for sick people"
2. New York Times: "Supreme Court Allows Prosecution of Medical Marijuana Users"
3. San Diego Union Tribune: "Court OKs Marijuana Crackdown"
4. L.A. Times: "Justices Give Feds Last Word on Medical Marijuana"
5. Washington Times: "Medical Marijuana Laws Don't Shield Users From Prosecution"

Exercise 2: Examine the different frames and assumptions identifiable in these headlines.

1. Armed extremists take over lodge
2. Long-running dispute over federal lands sparks protest

Sample Analysis of Assumptions: Kristof's "Do We Have the Courage?"

Nicholas Kristof makes several assumptions about the readers of "Do We Have the Courage to Stop This?" (see p. 12). The first one appears in the introductory five paragraphs and can be called a *commonplace or hidden assumption*. Commonplaces appeal to hidden beliefs and ideologies, many of them unconscious, that groups of people hold in common. Kristof's repeated references to schools, schoolchildren, kids, or children appeals to the readers' emotions based on the commonplace that the majority of people almost instinctively will want to protect children, those members of the community who are considered most innocent and vulnerable, and feel the moral obligation to do so.

Kristof, writing for the mostly liberal audience of *The New York Times*, also assumes his readers' dislike for the NRA, which he *defines* as "extremists" against whom "politicians … won't stand up." Closely related to this is Kristof's comparison of guns and cars, suggesting guns ought to be regulated and made to include safety features just as cars have been. However, Kristof leaves out mention of gun ownership as a constitutional right. This suggests he assumes an audience that shares his belief in regulations and government control rather than an audience that thinks about guns primarily in constitutional terms and individual rights.

Kristof brings together a set of stories, analogies and examples that construct a "consumer safety" *frame* for guns. As he notes, everyday consumer goods such as toys,

> ladders, and food are carefully regulated, and have, over time, been made much safer. He also notes that the government requires drivers to be registered and pass tests, and has required manufacturers to add many effective safety features to cars. Kristof claims, it is absurd that we do not take a similar approach to guns. Those readers who accept his belief in government regulations to ensure individual safety will likely be persuaded. However, those readers who do not accept this frame will likely not endorse his argument.
>
> Yet, Kristof also assumes that his audience is generally disenchanted with politicians, regardless of party lines. He calls the lack of gun regulations a "political failure" and bemoans a lack of leadership by politicians, including then President Obama, who give "tearful statements" and "moving speeches" rather than enacting solutions.

Implications

While assumptions are beliefs and values the reader must agree with in order to accept an author's position, implications are what follow from that position. Assumptions *underlie* an argument, while implications are what *follow from* an argument.

Implications consist of what follows from an argument or set of assumptions, or what can be inferred from an argument or set of assumptions. Implications thus center on conclusions that can be extrapolated from an argument, and/or the potential consequences that follow from a given position.

Arguments are sometimes criticized for their implications. A common strategy is to A) describe what ought to follow from an argument, then point out problems or counterexamples to this, or B) show that negative or unintended consequences follow from a position or assumption. One must be careful when drawing implications that one does not extrapolate too far from the author's argument, engage in "creative interpretation," or fall into the "slippery slope" fallacy. That is, one should avoid constructing a set of implications that are only loosely based on an author's actual argument.

In "A Smoker's Plea," Miller argues against campus anti-smoking policies, claiming that they are based on weak science, and are pushed by "special interest groups" whose real aim is to reduce freedom. Miller criticizes the implications that follow from his opponents' position. He does this in two ways. First, he says that if one accepts the U.S. Center for Disease Control's data on smoking-related deaths and its use to justify campus anti-smoking regulations, this implies the university should be even more concerned with the effects of bad diet and lack of exercise. (Miller notes that nobody is trying to shut down McDonalds.) Miller targets an implication of his opponents' position to suggest the position is one-sided and leads to absurd results if followed consistently. Miller states,

> And get this-if one applies the same methodology the Centers for Disease Control uses to calculate smoking-related deaths to lack-of-exercise related deaths, failure to exercise

> kills over 100,000 more people than smoking. And bad dietary habits? Over 200,000 more people. Using the CDC's standards, smoking is healthier than getting too little exercise or eating poorly. So is the University going to shut down McDonald's?

Second, Miller suggests that those who seek to restrict smoking on campus are "setting the groundwork for a future where any personal habit can be regulated when it is politically expedient." That is, Miller claims that if political pressure can lead to one personal habit being regulated, this implies any personal habit can be regulated. This seems a rather weak challenge to the implications that can be drawn from his opponents' position as it leaves out the body of scientific research suggesting smoking is in fact harmful and a significant threat to public health, and thus not a whimsical "personal habit." (It seems unlikely *any* personal habit that carries no risk of public harm could be easily banned. For example, I doubt my personal habit of singing Justin Bieber songs in the shower could be so regulated, since it merely annoys and disturbs my children). However, Miller's text shows that writers who wish to challenge opposing arguments often target implications.

Example 1: *Gun Control & Implications.* John R. Lott Jr. is a well-known proponent of gun rights and staunch opponent of gun control. Lott wrote *More Guns, Less Crime* (1998), *The Bias Against Guns* (2003), and a number of research articles on the topic. Lott argues that permitting people to carry concealed weapons leads to a significant reduction in many different kinds of crime. Lott argues that concealed weapons significantly deter criminals and reduce violent crime (*More Guns, Less Crime*, p. 3)

There are several implications writers have drawn from Lott's arguments. First, states (and foreign countries) that make it easy for people to carry concealed weapons ought to have lower rates of violent crime than states that do not. Second, after a state (or country) passes legislation permitting or making it much easier for people to carry concealed weapons, rates of violent crime should decrease (assuming other contributory causes of violent crime can be accounted for.) If one can find counterexamples to the implications listed above, these could be used to problematize Lott's arguments.

Example 2: The Doctrine of "Preemption" in Debates about the Iraq War
One justification for the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq drew on the principle of "preemption" (the notion that it is justifiable to attack a country before it attacks your country if the regime poses a clear and present danger). One criticism of arguments for preemption focused on the potential implications of this position: if it is acceptable for the U.S. to attack a country before it has itself been attacked, then might not other countries be justified in adopting a similar policy? Conversely, some opponents of preemption, who argued that it is never justified to attack a sovereign country except in self-defense, were criticized for what could be inferred from their arguments regarding intervention. Opponents charged that this implied some past interventions many people now consider vital (Bosnia and Kosovo) and some interventions many think should have been made but weren't (for example, Rwanda and Burundi) would be ruled out of court.



Chains of Reasoning, Evaluation, and Fallacies

Authors advance their claims using many different kinds of reasoning. However, there are some distinctive chains of reasoning that are worth examining as they occur quite frequently and are an important part of many claims. Looking at these chains of reasoning can help us understand how claims are often built and give us clues as to how we can evaluate them. These chains of reasoning are

1. Definition
2. Generalization
3. Analogy
4. Causality
5. Authority
6. Principle

Six Common Chains of Reasoning

Definition

In some cases an author's main claim or even the entire argument will rest on a definition. Authors strategically define terms in order to advance their case and persuade readers. Sometimes authors will present an explicit, formal definition, but sometimes they will subtly slip a definition into their argument without announcing it as such. For example, in "A Smoker's Plea" Miller defines people who support tobacco restrictions as "special interest groups" and "health fascists" on a crusade to eliminate personal freedoms. This definition works to characterize people who support tobacco restrictions as authoritarian, unrepresentative, undemocratic, and unreasonable. In other situations authors will explicitly define a key term and build a claim around this. In debates over same sex marriage, people who oppose allowing this often define their goal as the "defense of marriage." They also state that marriage is, by definition, between one man and one woman, and so any attempt to change this is at odds with that essential, universal truth. Their definitions imply that gay people who wish to marry are

"attacking" heterosexual (or "traditional") marriage, and that to allow same sex marriage violates the inherent meaning of the term. Conversely, gay marriage supporters define their project as "marriage equality," which frames it as an extension of civil rights for those who have been unfairly denied them. Furthermore, their definition of marriage emphasizes that marriage has, historically, changed over time. They note that until fairly recently inter-racial marriage was banned in many states, and historically many other aspects of marriage were quite different than they are now. Proponents of gay marriage claim that the definition of marriage has always undergone change, and so further revision makes sense now.

Generalization

Generalization is a very common form of reasoning. It assumes that what is true of a few cases or a sample is likely to hold for a larger group or population. Sometimes a generalization will be explicit ("English majors are bad at math") but sometimes it will be implicit. In recent years some politicians have argued we must take special measures to limit immigration in order to protect ourselves from crime. There is often an implicit generalization that immigrants commit crime more often than non-immigrants (the data seems to suggest the opposite).

Evaluation: To evaluate a generalization we need to determine the *scope* of the generalization (some, many, the majority, most, all, etc.). The scope of the argument will determine the degree to which a sufficient amount of typical, accurate, relevant support is required (although the extent to which a generalization is accepted by your audience is also crucial here). We also need to consider the nature, uniformity and stability of the group, category or population being generalized about. For example, when *Consumer Guide* tests a single car, we expect to be able to generalize from the results with a high degree of certainty since cars are standardized objects. If the generalization provided is based on examples, we need to consider whether there are significant counterexamples.

Determining which group or population to base one's generalization on is often very complex, and as with categories and definitions, this is often highly contested. For example, a key question in the O.J. Simpson trial concerned which population ought to be used when generalizing about the likelihood of a wife-beater going on to murder his spouse. At the beginning of the trial the defense argued that O.J. Simpson's prior arrest for assaulting his wife should not mislead jurors into thinking that this made O.J. Simpson significantly more likely to have murdered his wife. They said that if you examined the population of men who had been arrested for beating their wives, only a very small percentage of this group went on to kill their spouse. Thus one could not generalize with any confidence about the likely guilt of O.J. Simpson based on this. However, some have pointed out that if you begin with the population of men who have a history of beating their spouses, who have been arrested for this, and whose wife turns up dead, then about 50% of the time the husband turns out to be the killer. Selecting a different population to generalize from may change the way an argument turns.

Analogy

An analogy involves comparing one situation, event or case to a similar one. This sometimes involves arguing from a specific case or example to another, reasoning that because the two are alike in many ways they are also alike in one further specific way. (This has links to 'case-based' and precedent-based reasoning used in the legal world.)

Evaluation: what is important here is the extent to which relevant similarities can be established between two contexts. Are there sufficient, typical, accurate, relevant similarities? If the analogy is based on similarities between two examples, we need to consider whether counterexamples exist. How strong is the claim? (The stronger the claim, the tighter the analogy must be). Are there counter-analogies that refute the original argument from analogy? Are there differences between the two situations that undermine the force of the similarity cited? How willing is the audience to accept that the two different examples/cases/situations you present are really similar?

Analogies can also be used critically. If you can draw an analogy between your opponent's argument and some other, generally unacceptable argument, this may undermine your opponent's case

Example 1: When I lived in Pittsburgh some elected officials wanted to bring river-boat gambling to Pittsburgh (state law made it illegal to have a casino on state land, but the waterways were at that time, defined as outside this rule). Some city leaders reasoned as follows: Las Vegas is the fastest growing city in the U.S. Its growth is fueled by gambling, and gambling has provided the city a huge revenue base. By analogy, if Pittsburgh has casinos, this will help it grow and provide it with more money. However, critics pointed out that the analogy was a poor one. Pittsburgh is different from Las Vegas in many important ways. Most importantly, people travel *to* Las Vegas to spend money. It seems unlikely many people will come to Pittsburgh to gamble. Instead, Pittsburghers will spend money at the casinos, which means there will be less money in circulation for other local businesses (differences in climate, geography, infrastructure and "attractions" also make the analogy a poor one.)

Example 2: The debate over gay marriage often centers on different analogies. Supporters of gay marriage use the analogy of equal rights for African Americans – they say African Americans were denied equal treatment under the law, and not so long ago anti-miscegenation laws banned interracial marriage. Just as these things were wrong and at odds with the constitution, so too is the denial of the right of gays to marry. Opponents of gay marriage often use the analogy of polygamy. They argue that polygamy was an attempt to expand "traditional" understandings of marriage, was declared illegal, and so too should gay marriage.

Example 3: In Miller's "A Smoker's Plea" the author uses this analogy: "A study in the British Medical Journal reports that men who quit smoking before the age of 30 live just as long as those who never smoked. **Indeed, it is safer for college kids to smoke than to drive**."

Does this hold up? What are some questions we could ask about it? First of all, "a study" seems

vague and the source unclear. It most likely refers to a study done by Doll, Sutherland, et al., which suggests that there while there are health benefits from quitting smoking at any age, these benefits are greatest if one quits while young. This is connected to an analogy with driving. But in what ways are driving and smoking similar/different? Driving is often necessary, while smoking isn't; students often have to drive to get to school and work, and ill health is not a byproduct of driving, but derives from accidents. But perhaps this analogy suggests we are inconsistent and don't ban driving because there is danger, yet driving kills more people. What do you think?

Causal

Arguing that a given outcome or event is the result of, or is influenced by some outside force, element, or factor. Causal reasoning is often the most complex form of reasoning. The big dangers with it are:

A) Mixing up correlation with causation
B) Falling into the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* trap. Closely related to confusing correlation and causation, this involves inferring 'after the fact, therefore because of the fact'.
C) Identifying one element as the main cause, when in fact there are multiple causes

We can evaluate it via the STAR criteria. That is, for an argument about cause to be reliable, we need a sufficient number of typical, accurate and relevant instances. Also important are questions concerning degree of correlation; the question of controls; elimination of other factors; the extent to which causes are partial, necessary or sufficient.

Example 1: In the nineteenth century Hungarian doctor Ignaz Semmelweis noticed a correlation between women dying in childbirth, and doctors who operated on them after dissecting corpses. Hospitals where midwives performed deliveries, by contrast, had much lower rates of death. He identified a crucial correlation, and discovered that handwashing radically reduced deaths in childbirth. But the cause he suggested was incorrect – "cadaveric contamination." Semmelweis's ideas were accepted only years after his death, when Louis Pasteur advanced the germ theory of disease.

Example 2: It has been observed that on the East coast, levels of crime go up as the sale of ice cream increases, and crime goes down as ice cream sales decrease. However, it would be silly to suggest that ice cream sales *cause* crime. That would be to confuse correlation with causation. Crime and ice cream sales are both influenced by the weather (who wants to shimmy up a drain pipe, mug someone, or buy ice cream when it is -30F?)

Example 3: Some people have suggested that the higher rate of cancer in industrialized countries, when compared to some developing countries, is caused by lifestyle –artificial lights, fast food, exposure to computers, etc. Stephen Jay Gould has argued this is too simple, and that one reason people in these developing countries have lower rates of cancer is that they tend to have lower life expectancies, and cancer occurs with more frequency the older one lives ("You

have to die of something!" Gould writes.) Gould does not claim that lifestyle differences have no impact, but rather that a major causal factor in cancer rate differences is life expectancy. This example shows the problem of confusing correlation with causation, and mistakenly identifying a single factor as the main cause.

Authority

Does person X or text X constitute an authoritative source on the issue in question? What political, ideological or economic interests does the authority have? Is this the sort of issue in which a significant number of authorities are likely to agree on? What kinds of audiences will be persuaded by a particular authority? What credentials or proof of expertise doe the authority have? What kind of peer recognition has the authority received?

Using STAR: can we find a sufficient number of authoritative sources, accurately cited with relevant knowledge, who are in broad agreement, and whose arguments are persuasive?

To what degree does an authority exhibit *logos, pathos* and *ethos* (good sense, good character and good will)?

Principle

Locating a principle that is widely regarded as valid and showing that a situation exists in which this principle applies.

Evaluation: Is the principle widely accepted? Does it accurately apply to the situation in question? Are there commonly agreed on exceptions? For example, refraining from killing others is generally considered an important principle. However, there are commonly agreed upon exceptions – self-defense, military combat, etc. Are there 'rival' principles that lead to a different claim? Are the practical consequences of following the principle sufficiently desirable in the context?

Evaluating Arguments

Learning how to evaluate arguments with care and sophistication is a key part of academic work. Evaluating arguments can also help prepare for many professional careers and improve our critical thinking skills. We usually evaluate an argument after we have first engaged in *interpretive and analytic work* that reveals what the argument means, how it was put together and how it persuades its audience. When you evaluate a text you will present your own argument as to why the text is strong/weak, effective or ineffective, persuasive or not, and this means you will need to give good reasons and support.

There is, sadly, no single, simple formula for evaluating arguments. This is because the strength or effectiveness of an argument is largely dependent on its *rhetorical situation*, which can vary enormously. In other words, we need to consider context, audience, purpose, and genre when evaluating arguments. A text that is effective for one situation and audience may not be

effective in another, so we must look carefully at the context to evaluate a text. Another reason there is no single rubric for evaluating arguments is that we are often interested in evaluating arguments *relationally,* in comparison with other arguments. Or as the authors of *They Say/I Say* would put it, we need to think about the conversation the argument is part of and the contribution it makes to that conversation. Lastly, our evaluation of an argument will depend in part on *the particular project and context we bring to a text.*

However, there are some common criteria, questions, and rules of thumb (or "heuristics") that can help guide us. The notes below list some of the most common criteria. Some may be useful for the particular text you are evaluating, and some may not, and you will need to determine this based on the particularities of the text you are examining, and the context (both your own and the author's).

Some General Criteria for Evaluating Arguments

The strength of an argument rests many things. Some of these are the reasons given to support a claim; the chains of reasoning involved (consistency, coherence, logical rigor, non-contradiction); the strength and type of evidence used (relevance, scope of applicability); the credibility of the authorities invoked; the degree of vulnerability to counter-arguments, etc. Some other important considerations are the assumptions that underlie an argument, the implications that follow from it, and its susceptibility to counterexamples.

We can start with familiar terms for identifying parts of an argument and use these for evaluation, terms such as the rhetorical situation, the overall argument, the main claims, evidence, appeals, assumptions, implications, etc.

Questions that relate to the rhetorical situation

How well does the author adapt her argument to the audience and context? For example, does she show a good understanding of the audience's values, beliefs, understanding, experience, and expectations? What kind of relationship does the author create with the audience. For example, does the author adopt the role of advisor, educator, expert, colleague, or confidant, and is this appropriate? Does the author gently persuade the audience, or take a more aggressive stance?[16] Given the context, how well does this author-audience relationship aid persuasion?

How well does the text advance the author's purpose? Does the author succeed in establishing that the issue is important and readers should care?

[16] I was once at a university debate in which the brilliant but acerbic writer Christopher Hitchens made an argument for abolishing the death penalty. In the discussion afterwards, a student tried to present Hitchens with an opposing view. He said he had lived in Saudi Arabia, where the death penalty was routinely practiced, and the country seemed to have little crime as a result. Hitchens' responded with a brutal, humiliating critique of the poor student's argument. While Hitchens' argument was far superior to the student's, it had the effect of alienating some in the audience, and the student left in a rage. A gentler, more generous challenge to the student's argument would likely have been more productive and more persuasive.

Questions that relate to the overall argument, the claims and the sub-claims
Is the overall argument based on sound premises and reasoning? Is the reasoning coherent, consistent and persuasive?

The overall argument is in some sense the "conclusion" of the argument. Do the claims and sub claims align with and support the overall argument? Is there enough supporting evidence for the argument? Does this evidence connect closely with the argument, and does it match the scope of the claim? How "ambitious" in scope and force are the argument and claims? If the scope of the claim is very wide or the assertion very strong, this will often require more support to be persuasive. Consider these two arguments:

1) All drugs should be decriminalized immediately as this will save hundreds of billions of dollars a year, and dramatically reduce both crime and addiction, and
2) A study of marijuana legalization in Colorado showed 10% fewer drug arrests, a 15% decrease in drug trafficking, and increased police resources for more serious crimes, therefore it is worth piloting marijuana legalization in Pennsylvania.

The argument in #1 is enormous in scope and force – it would require a huge amount of support to substantiate. By contrast, #2 is fairly modest, limited, and would be relatively easy to support.

Does the argument seem vulnerable to objections, counter-examples and counter-arguments? Does it (where relevant) demonstrate that it is aware of and can deal with opposing views?

Additional questions to help identify strategies and strengths/weaknesses
1. What qualities and values does the author associate with himself and his position?
2. What qualities and values does the author associate with his opponents?
3. How does the author define the issue?
4. What does the author assume about his/her audience? (See assumptions handout).
5. Framing/How is agency constructed. Who is doing what to whom, and how are the various actors defined? (E.g. are opponents represented fully and fairly in their diversity, or assembled into an amorphous enemy? Consider Miller – "The university, *under pressure from the Medical Center*, may stop selling cigarettes….Duke is being pushed to *join the growing collegiate trend*…. The anti-smoking crusade is powered by countless dollars and the awesome force of political correctness." These are "health fascists" who are "nearly impervious to truth" and spread lies.
6. What elements of the text contribute to construct ethos, pathos and logos?
7. How are questions used? Definitions? Categories?
8. How is evidence selected, presented, and used? (See handout)
9. Can you spot the GASACAP chains of reasoning? (Generalization, analogy, sign, causality, authority, principle).
10. Identify assumptions and implications. How do these point to strengths, weaknesses?

Sources

- Have appropriate sources been selected? Given the audience and context, are these sources well chosen to support and illustrate the author's claims?
- Are the sources up to date (where relevant)? What is the quality of these sources – if you are dealing with a scholarly argument, have the sources been peer reviewed, and is the source (journal) rigorous and respected?
- Have sufficient sources been presented, and are they accurately cited (where appropriate)? Are sources cited in a way that allows them to be verified?
- Are the sources representative or have they been "cherry picked"?
- How well do they support the author's overall argument?
- How has material from the sources been selected, framed, and represented? Has this been done fairly, accurately and appropriately?

Example: Miler writes, "A study in the British Medical Journal reports that men who quit smoking before the age of 30 live just as long as those who never smoked. Indeed, it is safer for college kids to smoke than to drive." (13) Does this hold up? What are some questions we could ask about it? First of all, "**a** study" seems vague. Does this mean most studies say something different? How representative is this study? Is it typical? What about meta-analyses?

The original source seems vague and unclear. It most likely refers to two studies done by Doll, Sutherland, et al., which suggests that while there are health benefits from quitting smoking at any age, these benefits are greatest if one quits while young.

a) Doll R, Peto R, Boreham J, Sutherland I. Mortality in relation to smoking: 50 years' observations on male British doctors. *British Medical Journal*. 2004; 1519–28.
b) Doll R, Peto R, Wheatley K, Gray R, Sutherland I. Mortality in relation to smoking: 40 years' observations on male British doctors. *British Medical Journal*. 1994; 901–11.

A quick scan of these two publications seems to suggest they arrive at conclusions that do not support Miler's thesis – at least not without torturing their meaning. This NIH/CDC study that discusses the British research suggests as much: "How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease: A Report of the Surgeon General." https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK53009/

Example: Miller writes, "As the Cato Institute Reports in "The Case Against Smoking Bans," **a forgotten study from the New England Journal of Medicine** in 1975 found that, "one would have to breathe smoke-filled air for 4,000 hours in order to inhale as much tobacco smoke as a smoker inhales in a single cigarette."

Miller's reference is to **"**The Case Against Smoking Bans," by Thomas A. Lambert. Regulation, Vol. 29, No. 4 (Winter 2006–2007). In the works cited section it lists the following, "Concentrations of Nicotine and Tobacco Smoke in Public Places," by W. C. Hinds and M. W. First. New England Journal of Medicine, Vol. 292 (**1975**). So perhaps this is the "forgotten

study"? If one goes to Google scholar and examines who cites it ("cited by"), it appears nobody does. Also, if one looks at the CATO article that Miller uses to get at the 1975 study, the references all seem to be to the same small number of people (cf climate arguments).

Some questions to guide analysis of ethos

1. Find out about the author's background, profession, previous work, etc.
2. Will the audience know who the writer is? If not, how does the writer signal her standing in a community or profession? How does the writer signal her expertize?
3. Does the writer seem knowledgeable? Honest? What makes you think so?
4. What/who does the writer like and dislike?
5. How might the writer's status (inherited or invented) affect the audience's willingness to believe, trust or identify with the writer?
6. Can you find places where the writer makes comments that indicate honesty, sincerity, fair-mindedness, expertise, likeability, moral vision etc.?
7. What does the author do to gain the respect and trust of the audience, and how well does she do this?
8. Can you find places where the writer makes concession to opposing arguments, indicating fair-mindedness, or an absence of this (indicating the author fails to acknowledge other points of view)?
9. Does the author explain how she came upon the evidence and support presented in her argument? (If she does not, this may undermine ethos).
10. Does the writer do things to show she shares values and background with the audience? How effective is this?
11. What seem to be the writers, biases?
12. What seems to be the writer's mood? (Angry, helpful, condescending, sarcastic, funny, etc.)
13. What would it be like to spend time in this writer's company?

Finally, how do the choices the author makes establish trust, respect, good will and credibility? If the author fails to do this, why does it happen?

Pathos

1. What emotions does the author express?
2. How do you see word choice, categories, definitions, and descriptions express emotions?
3. What emotions does the author aim to cultivate in his audience?
4. How does he try to make us feel? How does this advance his purpose and his efforts at persuasion?

An approach to analysis and evaluation is this list of questions derived from Glen Stillar's book, *Analyzing Everyday Texts,* a book which incorporates Halliday, Burke, and Bourdieu.

1. How does the writer construct the situation? What words in the text help define the situation? If there is a problem, what words are used to define who is responsible for it?

How are causes and consequences represented? (Look at the use of passive voice, how actions are represented in verbs, and how mental actions are represented.)

2. Who are the main players in the situation? What words are used to define their roles and the relationships between them? Do these words have negative or positive connotations? Are you comfortable in the role assigned to the reader? What is the reader supposed to think or do?
3. What attitudes—outrage, impartiality, fear, concern, amusement, sarcasm, irony, etc.—are represented in the text? What words create this impression?
4. What social values—justice, patriotism, love, diligence, morality, citizenship, freedom, etc.—are represented in the text? What words create this impression?
5. What distortions of the facts are present in the text? Do you think that the situation has been accurately represented, or has it been consciously constructed to favor the writer's purpose? What makes you think so? If the situation is not accurately represented, would you characterize it as a little biased, somewhat deceptive, or outright fraud? What are some other ways the situation might be represented?

Fallacies

Notes on Fallacies and the Evaluation of Argument

Talking about 'fallacies' as a laundry list of forms to avoid, or as an algorithm for finding weaknesses in authors' arguments, is not terribly useful. Instead, you can think of fallacies as a way of reflecting on the nature of chains of reasoning, for talking about the strengths and weaknesses of claims, evidence, support, assumptions etc. Fallacies should get you thinking about the criteria we use to evaluate arguments, and what kinds of arguments work in particular contexts.

Most fallacies are not strange or idiosyncratic forms of argument. Often they draw on perfectly valid and common forms of reasoning, but they do so in a way that is lacking in some respect. For example, sophisticated arguments often contain rebuttals and counterarguments that consider opposing views. If this is done well, it adds strength to an argument. However, if an author does not accurately represent an opponent's argument, or presents a weak, caricatured version of that argument, we can say s/he has committed the fallacy of creating "a straw man." Obviously, fallacies are matters of degree and involve interpretation and argument – you have to make the case that evidence exists for the fallacy. Note that when considering whether an argument contains a fallacy, you must consider questions of audience, purpose and context. Reasoning that is weak or "fallacious" in one context may be persuasive and credible in another.

(Note: for a fun, visually interesting perspective on fallacies visit the Book of Bad Arguments, https://bookofbadarguments.com/)

Fallacies Related to Common Chains of Reasoning

1. **Hasty Generalization** This involves a generalization from data that is inadequate in some important way. Usually, this means that the generalization fails the STAR test – the data on which the generalization is based is not *sufficient, typical, accurate or relevant*. One of the most common ways in which data fails to be sufficient is when the **sample size is too small**. For example, if I say smoking can't be bad for people since both my parents smoke and have lived to a ripe old age, the sample size I have based my generalization on is absurdly small – 2 people. A "hasty generalization" may be most obvious when the *scope* of a generalization is at odds with the amount of evidence presented – the stronger the generalization, the more evidence needed. **Anecdotal evidence** may also indicate a hasty generalization – this sometimes indicates that the arguer is using a small and unrepresentative (atypical) sample.

   Example: "Quebec environment minister Lise Bacon pledged the PCBs would be moved out and broken down somehow within 18 months. She also said that PCBs couldn't be all that dangerous because her father had washed his hands in PCBs but lived to an old age." (Merritt Clifton, "PCB Homecoming", *Greenpeace*, November/December, 1989, p. 21.

2. **False Analogy** Analogies involve parallels or comparisons between two cases, events or situations. They consist of comparing a specific case or example to another case or example, and reasoning that because the two examples are alike in many ways they are also alike in one further specific way.

   What is important here is the extent to which relevant similarities can be established between the two contexts, cases, events or situations. Are there sufficient, typical, accurate, relevant similarities? If not, the arguer may be employing a *false analogy.* If the analogy is based on similarities between two examples, we need to consider whether important counterexamples exist. We also need to consider how strong the claim is (The stronger the claim, the tighter the analogy must be).

   Example: "High-density development [doesn't] reduce congestion. The superficially appealing idea is that if we all live closer to where we work and shop, shorter car trips and mass transit will replace all those long car rides. But the real world doesn't work that way. Try this thought experiment. What happens at a cocktail party when a new wave of people shows up and the population density of the living room doubles? Is it harder or easier to get to the bar and the cheese tray? Is it harder or easier to carry on conversation and move around the room? As urban population density rises, auto-traffic congestion gets *worse*, not better, and commute times get *longer*, not shorter." (Steven Hayward, "Suburban Legends", *National Review*, March 22, 1999, p. 36. Quoted in The Fallacy Files website, by Gary N. Curtis)

3. ***Post Hoc ergo Propter Hoc*** (Latin for "after the fact, therefore because of the fact") This involves either a) confusing correlation and causation, or (and this is usually the same thing) inferring 'after the fact, therefore because of the fact').

We can evaluate this via the STAR criteria. For an argument about cause to be reliable, we need a sufficient number of typical, accurate and relevant instances. Also important are questions concerning degree of correlation; the question of controls; elimination of other factors; the extent to which causes are partial, necessary or sufficient. If the causal argument fails these tests, it may commit the post hoc fallacy.

Example 1: "In an interesting book about television called *The Plug in Drug*, the author, Marie Winn, claims that television is responsible for many contemporary social problems including the breakdown of traditional attitudes such as respect for authority. One of her arguments in support of her thesis involves the observation that the first generation to have been largely reared with television were old enough to go to college in the late Sixties. She then notes that the college students of the Sixties were very boisterous and disrespectful, staging demonstrations and sit-ins right and left. This evidence, she believes, supports her case that television causes disrespect for authority." (From the Fallacies Handbook).

Example 2: "*We need safe storage laws.*" False. States that passed "safe storage" laws have high crime rates, especially higher rates of rape and aggravated assault against women. ("The Media Campaign Against Gun Ownership", *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, Vol. 33, No. 11, June 2000. Quoted in The Fallacy Files website, by Gary N. Curtis)

4. **False Authority** Appeals to authority are common ways of supporting an argument. However, the strength of the appeal depends on the degree to which person X or text X constitutes an authoritative source on the issue in question. We can ask whether the arguer presents us with sufficient, typical, accurate, relevant authorities. We can also ask whether the issue is one that a significant number of authorities are likely to agree on. More broadly, we can ask if we have been presented with a sufficient number of authoritative sources, accurately cited with relevant knowledge, who are in broad agreement, and whose arguments are persuasive? If the answer to such questions is "no," the arguer's claim may involve the fallacy of "false authority."

   Example: a politician from a farm state once argued that CO2 is good for plants, thus greenhouse gases will help agriculture and should not be a problem. While this person may be a political authority, he is not an atmospheric scientist, and thus citing him as an authority is weak.

5. **Misapplied Principle** Appeals to principle involve locating a principle that is widely regarded as valid and showing that a situation exists in which this principle applies. To the extent that the following conditions are true, the appeal may be considered strong or weak: is the principle widely accepted? Does it accurately apply to the situation in question? Are there commonly agreed on exceptions? Has the general principle been misapplied? Have rebuttal conditions been ignored? Are the practical consequences of following the principle sufficiently desirable in the context?

Some Common Fallacies

1. *Straw Man* – when an author does not accurately represent an opponent's argument, or presents a weak, caricatured version of that argument.

   Example: consider the following silly analogy. Imagine that I claim that I am so tough and so good at boxing that I could easily beat Mike Tyson. To prove this, I construct a boxing ring in class. I set up a life-size cardboard picture of Mike Tyson, knock it over, and start jumping up and down shouting "I am the greatest!" You would probably point out that I have not in fact defeated Mike Tyson, but have merely knocked down his effigy. You note that if I had confronted the real Mike Tyson he would have beaten me like an old mule. This is analogous to the straw man fallacy – instead of taking on the full force of an opponent's argument, the author sets up a weak version of his opponent, knocks it down, and claims victory.

   Note: sometimes a writer may create a straw man by exaggerating the force of an opponent's claim. Since stronger evidence is required to support a more forceful claim, the writer can then attack the opponent by saying that her evidence does not support her claim.

2. *Slippery Slope* – when an author extrapolates from an opponent's position too "creatively." Often this involves drawing out implications from an opponent's position in a way that is only loosely based on the opponent's stated position, or which proceeds too far from the opponent's stated position. Claiming that certain things "follow" inevitably from an opponent's position (in a kind of "chain reaction") when in fact such an inference is difficult to sustain.

   ■ Silly example: some proponents of gun rights have proposed that any weakening of gun laws is an attack on the constitution, and if successful will likely to lead to attacks on other constitutional freedoms, which may in turn undermine democracy in America, and ultimately lead to UN control of the U.S. (complete with black helicopters flying over the capital.) This example is obviously an exaggeration (perhaps even an example of a "straw man".) The point to note is that one must be careful when talking about the implications of an opponent's argument, of arguing that certain (usually bad) things "follow" inevitably from an opponent's position.

   ■ Gay Marriage example: "If we allow gay marriage…what will be the next step? If gays are allowed to marry because they have made a lifestyle choice, what about polygamy? What about group marriages? What about marriage between family members? What about "marriage" being whatever I subjectively decide it is?" ("Caloblog husband,"February 17, 2004). Arguments opposing gay marriage sometimes argue that marriage is the foundation of our society, and any attempt to change the definition of marriage may shake those foundations and undermine the many other institutions of which marriage is a part.

■ When California debated legalizing medical marijuana, some opponents argued that we could not do this as it would lead down a slippery slope – soon doctors would be asked for "medical heroin," and "medical cocaine," and addiction would spiral out of control.

3. *Begging the Question/Leading Question* – this fallacy involves assuming something that it is the arguers responsibility to prove. It thus typically involves the assumptions that an arguer makes. This fallacy often takes the form of a question ("Have you stopped beating your wife yet," "Are you still as conceited as you used to be?") but can also be found in the definitions and categories used by an arguer ("the liberal/conservative media", "the death tax," etc.) Leading questions are attempts to force a respondent to accept a particular way of seeing an issue. Example: "will you protect our children's future by voting for the governor's recall?" Anyone who says "no," regardless of his or her reasons for not wanting to vote for a recall, is made to seem uncaring.

   Example: "A major problem in dealing with Irving as a cross-examiner lay in the fact that he would frequently build into his often lengthy and elaborate questions assumptions that themselves rested on his falsification of the evidence, and so had to be disputed before the question itself could be dealt with. This tactic, whether conscious or not, did not escape the attention of the judge. 'No, Mr. Irving, that will not do, will it?' he exclaimed on one such occasion: 'You cannot put a question which has as its premise a misstatement about the date when gas chambers began operating.... If you are going to ask that question, and it is a relevant question, you must premise it correctly.'" (Richard J. Evans, *Lying About Hitler: History, Holocaust, and the David Irving Trial*, Basic Books, 2001, p. 202. Quoted in The Fallacy Files website, by Gary N. Curtis.)

4. *False Dilemma/Dichotomy* – this involves oversimplifying an issue by declaring that only two alternatives or ways of viewing the issue exist. Often one of these alternatives is clearly bad, so it is implied that there is only one reasonable position to take. Sometimes people criticize such an argumentative strategy by saying that it is "reductive." Consider the bumper sticker "America – love it or leave it." This assumes there are only two choices. You must "love" America (and by extension, whatever policy its leaders carry out) or you should leave. There is no middle ground, no room for a more qualified, nuanced position (bumper stickers tend to simplify issues, perhaps in part because they can consist of only a few words).

   Example: "Either restrictions must be placed on freedom of speech or certain subversive elements in society will use it to destroy this country. Since to allow the latter to occur is unconscionable, we must restrict freedom of speech."

5. *Stacking the deck* – this involves favoring evidence that suits your claim, and ignoring evidence that does not support it. We can use the STAR criteria – sufficiency, typicality,

accuracy and relevance. For example, if you were writing an argument supporting legalization of marijuana, and you only cited scientific authorities who support the legalization of marijuana, you would be stacking the deck. You need to also consider authorities who do not support the legalization of marijuana.

6. *Genetic Fallacy*
   The genetic fallacy occurs when the premises in an argument for a proposition are evaluated based on the origin of the premises instead of their content. It can sometimes be misguided to either endorse or condemn an idea based on its' past--rather than on its present--merits or demerits, unless its' past is relevant to its present value. For instance, the origin of testimony, whether first hand, hearsay, or rumor, carries weight in evaluating it.

7. *Shifting the burden of proof*
   When something is at issue, the responsibility, or burden of proof, sometimes falls equally on both sides, but sometimes it falls more heavily on one side than on the other. For example, in a legal context the accused is "presumed innocent until proven guilty," which means that the burden of proof is on the prosecution not the accused. The accused does not have to prove his/her innocence – burden of proof lies with the prosecution. The prosecution must prove the guild of the accused "beyond a reasonable doubt."

   Example: if I think aliens are being held in Area 51, it is up to me to make the case. If I make my case by saying "unless you can show me evidence that aliens are *not* being held in Area 51, this must be true," this is obviously unfair. For it is often hard to prove a negative. Moreover, the burden of proof is with me – I have claimed aliens are being held in Area 51, therefore it is up to me to make the case, not you to disprove it. Arguments about religion sometimes proceed this way, for example when an atheist is asked to prove God doesn't exist.

8. *Argument ad Ignoratium* (from the Latin, "argument from ignorance")
   Proposing that a claim is true primarily because it hasn't been proved false, or that something is false primarily because it has not been proved true. Arguing that unless an opponent can prove otherwise, a claim must be true. Note that the problem with this way of arguing is that the arguer stakes his/her claim on the lack of support for a *contrary* or *contradictory* claim, rather than basing it on reasons and evidence. This fallacy sometimes overlaps with the fallacy of shifting the burden of proof.
   Example: Since you can't prove that the universe *was not* created by God, it must therefore have been created by God.
   Example: An often-cited example is this statement by Senator Joseph McCarthy, when asked for evidence to back up his accusation that a certain person was a communist: "I do not have much information on this except the general statement of the agency that there is nothing in the files to disprove his communist connections." (Cited in *A Rulebook for Arguments* by Anthony Weston,1992.)

As McCarthy's critics noted, the absence of evidence that someone is *not* a communist is a very poor argument that s/he *is* a communist. Using this logic one could accuse almost anyone of anything.

9. *Red Herring*: The name comes from a trick once used by prisoners to escape dogs tracking them. Prisoners would drag a fish along the path away from their escape route and thus throw off the scent. Red Herring involves bringing up irrelevant issues, or drawing attention away from the issue at hand by bringing up irrelevant considerations. *Example*: "The governor's economic program won't work. It does nothing to stop illegal streetcar racing in San Diego."

10. *Ad Hominem* ((from the Latin, "against the man") – attacking the arguer and her/his character rather than the question at issue. Note that there are contexts where the character of the arguer may be relevant to the issue. We may reasonably disbelieve the argument of a convicted embezzler who argues s/he should be put in charge of the finances of a soccer club. However, if this same person argued that he should play right wing on the soccer team, it would be an *ad hominem* attack to counter by saying he should not because he has been convicted of embezzlement.

    Note that it may be reasonable to bring into question a speaker's *ethos*. Aristotle suggests that the *ethos* of a speaker plays a crucial role in determining whether an argument is persuasive or not. It may also be fair and relevant to question the way an author has constructed his/her *ethos*.

    Abusive – directed at speaker
    Circumstantial – directed at some group. Similar to 'Poisoning the Well'
    Tu quoquo ('thou too')
    *"*You say I shouldn't become an alcoholic because it will hurt me and my family, yet you yourself are an alcoholic, so your argument can't be worth listening to."

11. *Non Sequitor* (from the Latin, "it does not follow")
    Refers to a conclusion that has no apparent connection to the premises. *Example*: "affirmative action will not work because someone stole my car." Many examples of this can be found in advertising. Consider advertisements that sell beer or car equipment by showing them next to a beautiful woman. The implied argument is often that you should buy this equipment/beer because the woman is there, or because doing so will make it more likely that a beautiful woman will "like" you.

12. *The Fallacy of Equivocation*
    This occurs when a word or phrase that has more than one meaning is used in a way that shifts erroneously (or misleadingly) between meanings. *Examples*:
    ■"Every society is, of course, repressive to some extent - as Sigmund Freud pointed out, repression is the price we pay for civilization." (John P. Roche- political columnist). In this

example, the word “repression” is used in two completely different contexts. "Repression" in Freud's mind meant restricting sexual and psychological desires. "Repression" in the second context does not mean repression of individual desires, but government restriction of individual liberties, such as occurs in a totalitarian state.

■ "Those noisy people object to racism because they believe it is discrimination. Yet even *they* agree that it is OK to choose carefully which tomatoes to buy in the supermarket. They discriminate between the over-ripe, the under-ripe, and the just right. They discriminate between the TV shows they don't want to watch and those they do. So, what's all this fuss about racism if they're willing to discriminate, too?”

■ “The world works according to natural laws, and for laws to work there must be a lawgiver.”

■ “Darwin's theory of evolution is just that, a theory. Theories are just ideas that are not certain or infallible. We don't want our children to believe that theories are certain or infallible, so we shouldn't teach the theory of evolution in school without mentioning this, and without including alternatives such as intelligent design.”

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Glossary of Rhetorical Terms

Ad Hominem — This fallacy is committed when the author is attacking the arguer and her/his character rather than the question at issue. ***Refer to page 97.***

Agency — Action or intervention, especially such as to produce a particular effect. It is also the capacity of a thing or person to act in a given environment, such as to what extent they may affect their environment. Within the context of rhetoric, it is important to consider how agency (who does what, to whom) is represented.

Analogy — One of six of the common chains of reasoning. Comparison of two parallel terms or situations in which the traits of one situation are argued to be similar to another. ***Refer to page 84.***

Argument — This is the overall position or conclusion advanced by an author. We abstract this from the entirety of the text to arrive at the position or conclusion the author wants us to accept. ***Refer to page 4.***

Argument ad Ignoratium (Argument from Ignorance)
This fallacy is proposing that a claim is true primarily because it hasn't been proved false, or that something is false primarily because it has not been proved true. Arguing that unless an opponent can prove otherwise, a claim must be true. ***Refer to page 97.***

Assumption — What the author assumes to be true about his audience and the topic, but may not necessarily be true. ***Refer to pages 4, 35-37.***

Audience — The audience is the reader, listener, or hearer of any work. We talk about two kinds of audience – real and intended. The *intended audience* is the group of people that the author expects and wants to read his or her work. The *real audience* is the actual group of people who does so.

Authoritative Quotation
Direct quote from a respected source. Used to build ethos.

Authority — One of six of the common chains of reasoning. This largely looks at the ethos (credibility) one person or text may have within the larger argument. ***Refer to page 86.***

Begging the Question/Leading Question
This fallacy involves assuming something that it is the arguer's responsibility to prove. It thus typically involves the assumptions that an arguer makes. This fallacy often takes the form of a question ("Have you stopped beating your wife yet," "Are you still as conceited as you used to be?") but can also be found in the definitions and categories used by an arguer ("the liberal/conservative media", "the death tax," etc.) Leading questions are attempts to force a respondent to accept a particular way of seeing an issue. ***Refer to page 95.***

Causal — One of six of the common chains of reasoning. Arguing that a given outcome or event is the result of, or is influenced by some outside force, element, or factor. ***Refer to page 85.***

Charting — Marking a text so as to actively engage with it, as if in conversation with the author. Similar to annotating an article, passage, or text, text charting also allows for readers to distinguish what the paragraph/group of paragraphs is *saying* versus what they are *doing*.
Refer to page 47.

Claims — Claims are the "engine" of an argument. They are the main assertions or lines of reasoning advanced by an author. They assert that something is the case, and (usually) provide some justification for this. Claims are contestable, and deal with matter on which there is disagreement and uncertainty. ***Refer to pages 10, 13-14.***

Context — The larger textual and cultural environment surrounding a text or other argument.

Definition — One of six of the common chains of reasoning. Authors strategically define terms in order to advance their case and persuade readers. Sometimes authors will present an explicit, formal definition, but sometimes they will subtly slip a definition into their argument without announcing it as such. ***Refer to page 83.***

Diction — Word choice. Authors choose certain words over others for deliberate reasons. ***Refer to page 62.***

Discourse — "Discourse" refers to the conventions of language that a particular group uses or adheres to. For example, the discourse of a football coach might be competitive, emotional, and loud. To the same degree, "academic discourse" refers to the conventions of language used within the academic setting.

Ethos — The character of the speaker or writer as it comes through in his or her words. For example, certain words or passages could create an ethos of trustworthiness, fair-mindedness, credibility, kindness, or humanity. Ethos is not a matter of who a writer really is, but is the character that emerges in his or her work. A writer could create a very different ethos in each of two different pieces of writing. Ethos is one category of rhetorical strategy and can overlap with pathos and logos. ***Refer to page 27.***

Evidence — Evidence is the main support for a claim. There are many types of evidence – examples, anecdotes, stories, personal experience, statistical data, facts, surveys, testimony, interviews, quotations, research results, expert authority, analogies, etc. To find evidence in a text, ask what the author has to go on. ***Refer to pages 15-19.***

Fallacies — A failure in reasoning that renders an argument invalid. Often they draw on perfectly valid and common forms of reasoning, but they fall short in completing or connecting the full argument. When considering whether an argument contains a fallacy, you must consider questions of audience, purpose, and context. Reasoning that is weak or "fallacious" in one context may be persuasive and credible in another. ***Refer to page 92.***

Fallacy of Equivocation

This occurs when a word or phrase that has more than one meaning is used in a way that shifts erroneously (or misleadingly) between meanings. ***Refer to page 98 in CR***

False Dilemma/Dichotomy

This fallacy involves oversimplifying an issue by declaring that only two alternatives or ways of viewing the issue exist. Often one of these alternatives is clearly bad, so it is implied that there is only one reasonable position to take. Sometimes people criticize such an argumentative strategy by saying that it is "reductive." ***Refer to page 96 in CR***

Generalization

One of six of the common chains of reasoning. It assumes that what is true of a few cases or a sample is likely to hold for a larger group or population. Sometimes a generalization will be explicit ("English majors are bad at math") but sometimes it will be implicit.
Refer to page 83 in CR

Genetic Fallacy

This fallacy occurs when the premises in an argument for a proposition are evaluated based on the origin of the premises instead of their content. It can sometimes be misguided to either endorse or condemn an idea based on its' past--rather than on its present--merits or demerits, unless its' past is relevant to its present value. ***Refer to page 96 in CR***

Genre — A type of written or spoken discourse, characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter. Literary technique, tone, content, or even length are taken into consideration to determine this.

Hyperbole — Exaggeration used to further an argument

Implication — Implications consist of what follows from an argument or set of assumptions, or what can be inferred from an argument or set of assumptions. Implications thus center on conclusions that can be extrapolated from an argument, and/or the potential consequences that follow from a given positions. ***Refer to pages 4, 42 in CR***

Irony — A discrepancy or incongruity (ex. a firestation on fire)

Logos — The argument itself; the reasoning that a writer uses. Claims and reasons are elements of logos. So are examples and evidence, information and data, and conclusions drawn from them. Logos is a broader term than logic; it may include logic, but does not equate with logic. Logos is one category of rhetorical strategy and can overlap with ethos and pathos. ***Refer to page 31 in CR***

Macro-Charting

This process allows for a better understanding of the overall structure of an argument, as well as locate claims, supporting evidence, and the main argument. The process includes: 1) Breaking the text down into "chunks" that seem so to work together to *do* something for the overall argument. 2) Draw lines between sections and label each one, annotating them with

"doing" verbs: provides evidence for first claim, summarizes an opposing view, makes an ethical appeal, rebuts counterarguments, defines a key term, uses an analogy to clarify the claim in the previous paragraph, personalizes the issue with an anecdote, etc. Looks at the text section by section as opposed to paragraph by paragraph with Micro-Charting. ***Refer to page 57.***

Metadiscourse

Language about language. Metadiscourse announces what the writer is doing, helping you to recognize the author's plan. (ex. In my paper, ….). Metadiscourse can be used both to announce the overall project or purpose of the paper and to announce its argument. Metadiscourse also provides signposts along the way, guiding the reader to what will come next and showing how that is connected to what has come before. ***Refer to pages 25-27.***

Micro-Charting

This process allows for a better understanding that details how a text is put together. The process includes: 1) Break down sections of text by paragraph to analyze what each paragraph is *doing* for the overall argument. 2) Detail the smaller "moves" and strategies made within paragraphs: note when, where, and how the author makes a claim, cites evidence, and/or supports the argument using a rhetorical strategy. Looks at text paragraph by paragraph as opposed to section by section with Macro-Charting. ***Refer to page 57.***

Motive — Why we should or shouldn't trust someone's argument— (ex. The CEO of Jack N' the Box is arguing against being vegetarian)

Non Sequitor (It does not follow)

This fallacy refers to a conclusion that has no apparent connection to the premises. ***Refer to page 98.***

Opposition — The counterargument, or anticipating what the opposition would say. When the author addresses the skeptical audience's doubts, it may strengthen his/her ethos.

Pathos — Words or passages that activate emotions, usually because they relate to readers' or hearers' deeply held values or beliefs. Pathos is not necessarily a strategy of writing about emotional subjects or of describing strong emotions. It is a strategy of using language in ways that evoke emotions in audiences. It is a strategy that may dispose the audience to have a certain attitude toward the writer, or to feeling that what the writer proposes is desirable or undesirable. Pathos is one category of rhetorical strategy and can overlap with ethos and logos. ***Refer to page 29.***

Point of view — A way the events of a text are conveyed to the reader, it is the "vantage point" from which the narrative is passed from author to the reader. In this class, we will analyze the main three: first, second and third person point of view.

Principle — One of six of the common chains of reasoning. Depending on the group of people or the intended audience, this is a widely accepted belief, attitude, or opinion that is regarded as valid. ***Refer to page 87.***

Purpose An author's purpose is the reason he or she is writing. It includes both the situation that impelled the author to write as well as what effect he or she wants the argument to have. An author's purpose is always to bring about some kind of change in an audience, and is never just to inform. A statement about the author's purpose with therefore include both an explanation of what the author is doing as well as the change that the author would like to create.

Qualification Typically following the rebuttal of an argument, the qualification section is where the author clarifies the limits of their position and explains what they are *not* saying.
Refer to page 33.

Quotation Sandwich
A "quotation sandwich" is a frame that allows for better quote integration within your writing. The "top slice" consists of introducing and framing the quote, the "meat" is the actual quote, while the "bottom slice" is the explanation, restatement, or discussion of the significance of the quote. ***Refer to page 75.***

Rebuttal The rebuttal is the part of an argument where the author addresses objections, opposing arguments, and questions that skeptical readers may have. Rebuttal sections are more common when the topic being addressed is controversial, when the audience is likely to be aware of competing views, and when the audience is neutral or somewhat resistant to the author's argument. ***Refer to pages 4, 31-33.***

Red Herring This fallacy involves bringing up irrelevant issues, or drawing attention away from the issue at hand by bringing up irrelevant considerations.

Rhetoric The term rhetoric refers to the study, uses, and effects of written, spoken, and visual language understood as socially situated action. The name comes from a trick once used by prisoners to escape dogs tracking them. Prisoners would drag a fish along the path away from their escape route and thus throw off the scent. ***Refer to page 97.***

Rhetorical Analysis
"An effort to understand how people within specific social situations attempt to influence others through language" (Jack Selzer). This work may include describing rhetorical strategies, textual arrangements, and ways of framing and contextualizing.

Rhetorical Appeals
The philosopher Aristotle described three methods or "appeals" commonly used to persuade the audiences: *ethos, logos,* and *pathos*. Ethos describes the way an author builds credibility and trustworthiness; logos refers to logic and reasoning, and pathos refers to the way an author connects to an audience's feelings and imagination. ***Refer to page 4 in CR***

Rhetorical Frame
When the author constructs a particular way of seeing an issue, event, person, or group.
Refer to page 62.

Rhetorical Précis

A rhetorical précis is a template that helps you summarize key rhetorical elements of an argument. The précis is a four-sentence paragraph, it includes a name of the writer(s), the context of situation, the overall argument, the main support for the argument, the apparent purpose of the text, and the relationship between the writer(s) and audience.
Refer to page 70-71.

Rhetorical Question

A question designed to have one correct answer that the author forces the reader to consider. It may be used to lead the reader into a position rather than stating it explicitly.
Refer to page 24.

Rhetorical Strategy

A particular way in which authors craft language so as to have an effect on readers. Strategies are means of persuasion: ways of using language to get readers' attention, interest, or agreement. ***Refer to pages 20-24.***

Shifting the burden of proof

This fallacy is when something is at issue, the responsibility, or burden of proof, sometimes falls equally on both sides, but sometimes it falls more heavily on one side than on the other.
Refer to page 99.

Slippery Slope

Demonstrating how an action or policy makes you slide down to a highly undesirable position (one thing leads to another or "the domino effect"). ***Refer to page 98.***

Stacking the Deck

This fallacy involves favoring evidence that suits your claim, and ignoring evidence that does not support it. ***Refer to page 98.***

Straw Man

When an author does not accurately represent an opponent's argument, or presents a weak, caricatured version of that argument. ***Refer to page 98.***

Text Relationships

Academic writing requires that you build arguments using multiple texts. To do this you will need to describe the relationships between these different texts. The concepts and language include things such as extend, complicate, qualify, challenge, or illustrate.
Refer to page 79.

Thesis

A thesis is a statement of the main idea that the argument will be centered around. A thesis should provide structure to your paper. This way the reader knows what's to come. It should also be specific and argue something that is not obvious.