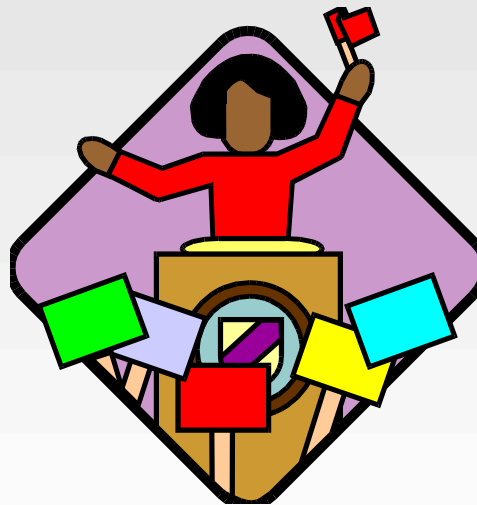




Reading and Evaluating Arguments

Learning Objectives:

- To recognize the elements of an argument
- To recognize types of arguments
- To evaluate arguments
- To recognize errors in logical reasoning



**An argument presents logical reasons
and evidence to support a viewpoint**



Parts of an Argument

- **ISSUE** - problem or controversy about which people disagree
 - **CLAIM** - the position on the issue
 - **SUPPORT** - reasons and evidence that the claim is reasonable and should be accepted
 - **REFUTATION** - opposing viewpoints
-

Types of Claims

- **CLAIM OF FACT** - statement that can be proven or verified by observation or research
- *“Within ten years, destruction of rain forests will cause hundreds of plant and animal species to become extinct.”*



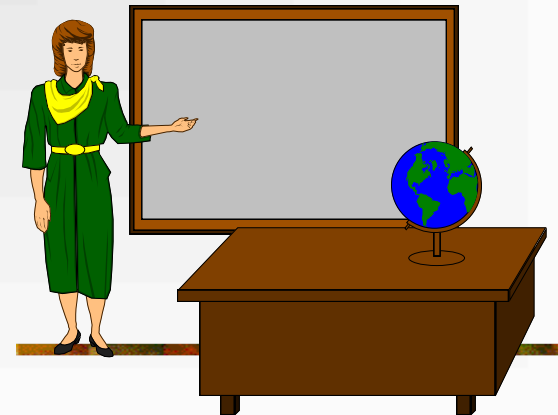
Types of Claims

- **CLAIM OF VALUE** - states that one thing or idea is better or more desirable than another.
- *“Requiring community service in high school will produce more community-aware graduates.”*



Types of Claims

- **CLAIM OF POLICY** - suggests what should or ought to be done to solve a problem.
- *“To reduce school violence, more gun and metal detectors should be installed in public schools.”*

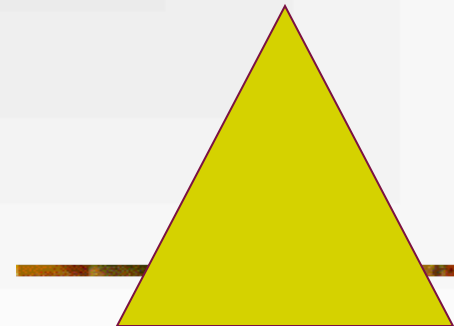


Types of Support

- **REASON** - a general statement that supports a claim.
 - **EVIDENCE** - consists of facts, statistics, experiences, comparisons, and examples that show why the claim is valid.
 - **EMOTIONAL APPEALS** - ideas that are targeted toward needs or values that readers are likely to care about.
-

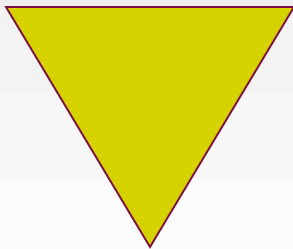
Inductive and Deductive Arguments

- **INDUCTIVE** - reaches a general conclusion from observed specifics.
- “By observing the performance of a large number of athletes, you could conclude that athletes possess physical stamina.”



Inductive and Deductive Arguments

- **DEDUCTIVE** - begins with a major premise and moves toward a more specific statement or minor premise.
- “Athletes possess physical stamina. Because Anthony is an athlete, he must possess physical stamina.”



Strategies for Reading an Argument

Think Before You Read

- What does the title suggest? Preview!
 - Who is the author, and what are his or her qualifications?
 - What is the date of publication?
 - What do I already know about the issue?
-

Strategies for Reading an Argument

Read Actively

- Read once for an initial impression.
 - Read the argument several more times.
 - Annotate as you read.
 - Highlight key terms.
 - Diagram or map to analyze structure.
-

Strategies for Evaluating Arguments

- Evaluate Types of Evidence - Is it sufficient to support the claim?
 - Personal Experience - may be biased, so do not accept it
 - Examples - should not be used by themselves
-

Strategies for Evaluating Arguments

- **Statistics** - can be misused, manipulated or misinterpreted.
 - **Comparisons and Analogies** - reliability depends on how closely they correspond to the situation.
 - **Relevancy and Sufficiency of Evidence** - is there enough of the right kind to support the claim?
-

Strategies for Evaluating Arguments

- **Definition of Terms** - should be carefully defined and used consistently
 - **Cause-Effect Relationships** - evidence that the relationship exists should be present
 - **Implied or Stated Value System** - are they consistent with your personal value system?
-

Strategies for Evaluating Arguments

- Recognizing and Refuting Opposing Viewpoints
 - Question the accuracy, relevancy or sufficiency of the opponent's evidence.
 - Does the author address opposing viewpoints clearly and fairly?
 - Does the author refute the opposing viewpoint with logic and relevant evidence?
-

Strategies for Evaluating Arguments

- Unfair Emotional Appeals
 - Emotionally Charged or Biased Language
 - False Authority
 - athletes endorsing underwear
 - movie stars selling shampoo
 - Association
 - a car being named a Cougar to remind you of a sleek animal
 - a cigarette advertisement featuring a scenic waterfall
-

Strategies for Evaluating Arguments

■ Unfair Emotional Appeals

■ Appeal to “Common Folk”

- an ad showing a product being used in an average household
- a politician suggesting he is like everyone else

■ Ad Hominem - attack on the person rather than his/her viewpoint

■ “Join the Crowd” Appeal or Bandwagon

For Each Argument:

- Identify the claim.
 - Outline the reasons to support the claim.
 - What types of evidence are used?
 - Evaluate the adequacy and sufficiency of the evidence.
 - What emotional appeals are used?
 - Does the author recognize or refute counter arguments?
-