

Chapter 1: *Everything's an Argument*

An argument can be any text (whether written, spoken, or visual) that expresses a point of view

The point of **argument** is to use evidence and reason to discover some version of the truth—lead an audience toward conviction.

The aim of **persuasion** is to change a point of view or to move others from conviction to action.

Writers/speakers argue to discover some truth; they persuade when they think they already know it.

Invitational Argument—invites others to explore or “enter a space of mutual regard” (not aiming to win).

Rogerian Argument—finding common ground and establishing trust with those who disagree (approaching audience in a non-threatening way)

An argument's effectiveness depends on:

- The purposes
- The context surrounding the plea
- The people it seeks most directly to reach

Purposes of Arguments:

- Inform
 - The purpose may be to inform an audience about something they did not know
 - Ex. movie posters, signs, bumper stickers, etc. give “name recognition”
- Convince
 - Used to merit attention to those already likely on the same side
 - Ex. reports
- Persuade
 - Used to move audiences enough to provoke action
- Explore
 - Often not an opponent--Could be the status quo, a current trend, serious problems in society, or something deeply personal
 - Ex. E.B. White's “Once More to the Lake” that reflects on time, memory, and mortality
 - “what might happen if...”

- Make Decisions
 - These arguments are closely allied to argument that explores as the result may be to argue for a particular decision
 - Examining the pros and cons
 - “should I or shouldn’t I...”
 - Ex. what college to attend or what major to pursue
- Meditate/Pray
 - The writer/speaker is most often hoping to transform something in him or herself or to reach a state of equilibrium or peace of mind.
- Academic Arguments
 - Held to the standards of a professional field or discipline
 - Ex. Journal articles or researched papers

Occasions for Argument:

Aristotle classified purposes of argument based on TIME—past, present, and future

- Arguments about the past—Forensic Arguments
 - What happened cases (business, government, and academia)
 - Rely on evidence and testimony, precedents, and analysis of cause and effects
 - Arguments about history (Columbus...1492?)
 - Allusions = effective tool
 - Ex. Did the defendant sexually harass her employee?
 - Ex. Did the company deliberately ignore evidence that its produce was deficient?
- Arguments about the future—Deliberative Arguments
 - Made by deliberative bodies because they establish policies for the future
 - What will or should happen?
 - Rely on prior forensic arguments
 - Draw on evidence and testimony
 - Advance by means of projections, extrapolations, and reasoned guesses
 - Ex. Should two people of the same sex be allowed to marry?
 - Ex. Should the United States build a defense against ballistic missiles?
- Arguments about the present—Ceremonial Arguments
 - Are often arguments about contemporary values (ethical premises and assumptions)
 - Heard at public gatherings (sermons, eulogies, graduation speeches, inaugural addresses)
 - Should be passionate and eloquent—rich in anecdotes and examples

- Sometimes called epideictic arguments or ceremonial arguments because they tend to be heard at public occasions

Kinds of Argument:

Stasis Theory--Consider the status or stasis—the kinds of issues the argument addresses. This system is called stasis theory. The theory explores the following questions:

1. Did something happen?
2. What is its nature?
3. What is its quality?
4. What actions should be taken?

Kinds of Argument:

- Arguments of fact—did something happen?
 - A statement that can be proved or disproved with specific evidence and testimony
- Arguments of definition—what is the nature of the thing?
 - Involves determining whether a known action/object belongs in a more contested category
- Arguments of evaluation and causality—what is the quality of the thing?
 - Qualifying the claim...advances by presenting criteria and measuring people, ideas, or things against those standards
- Proposal arguments—what actions should be taken?
 - Need all previous questions addressed to determine if action should be taken

Audience: Writers must intend to communicate to a particular audience considering context (social, cultural, linguistic, economic, geographic, and institutional)

Appealing to Audiences:

Ethos—ethical/based on writer's authority and credibility

- Presentation of the self
- Authoritative/trustworthy
- Demonstrating they are knowledgeable (mentioning qualifications without boasting)
- Highlight values they and their audience share

- Demonstrate they are fair, understanding, and empathetic
- Show respect

Logos—logical/appeals to reason

- Facts, statistics, credible testimony, cogent examples
- Assume general principle (major premise) using inductive and deductive reasoning

Pathos—emotional/appeals to the heart

- Needs to capture audience's attention
- Concrete, descriptive, and figurative language
- Powerful visuals

Rhetorical Triangle

Subject/Topic/Message

(logical appeals--logos)

Context

Audience/readers

(emotional appeals--pathos)

Rhetor/Speaker/Writer

(ethical appeals--ethos)