

Chapter 4: Arguments based on facts and reason—Logos

Logos arguments are based on facts—this gives readers good reasons to believe them

Aristotle was the first to write about persuasion. He divided proofs based on facts and reason into two kinds:

1. Hard evidence: facts, statistics, testimonies, witnesses, etc.
 - a. Cuban missile crisis of 1962--photos
2. Reason and common sense
 - a. Claim of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction in 2003—disturbing patterns of behavior

Providing hard evidence

Examples: DNA evidence, fingerprint, videotape, text message, email, etc.

The types of hard evidence you use depends on your argument

Aristotle all arguments consist of Statement + proof

This can also be Claim + supporting evidence

- Facts
 - Facts make strong arguments
 - People believe facts when they come from honest sources
 - Facts are respected above thinking in political thinking or ideology
 - Compelling facts can stand on their own in low- stake arguments
 - Be careful of how facts are presented or framed—FoxNews or MSNBC
- Statistics
 - Cliché: Figures lie and liars figure
 - It's is possible to lie with figures
 - Numbers rarely speak for themselves
 - Depends on how they are presented
 - 2011 South Dakota Youth Risk Survey
 - 19 percent of students said they drank alcohol before age 13
 - 81 percent of student said they had no alcohol before age 13
- Surveys and Polls
 - Surveys and polls are one of the most influential forms of statistics
 - They are persuasive because in a democracy, majority opinion offers a compelling warrant
 - They provide reason for action and intervention
 - The meanings of polls and surveys are affected by the way questions are asked
 - When asked if same-sex couples should eligible for the same inheritance and partner health benefits of heterosexual couples, the major of those polled said yes. When the word *marriage* appeared in the question, pollsters received a negative response.

- Testimonies, narratives, and interviews
 - Reliable witness accounts can cause a course for action, change, or sympathetic understanding

Using reason and common sense

- Without hard facts, you can support your argument with compelling reason
- Aristotle found that most people argue very well using informal logic—we are constantly stating claims, drawing conclusions, and making and questioning assumptions whenever we read and write.
- Logic is defined as the formal study of principles of reasoning
- Syllogism is a form of deductive reasoning involving three parts:
 - Major premise: All birds have feathers.
 - Minor premise: Penguins are birds.
 - Conclusion: Therefore, penguins have feathers.
- Undistributed middle term: an error in reasoning, such as the penguin example on p. 85 of *EA*.
- Enthymeme: sentence that contains both a claim and a reason but depends on the audience's agreement with an assumption that is left implicit rather than spelled out
 - We'd better cancel the picnic because it's going to rain.

Cultural assumptions

Some assumptions are based on shared values in culture in history

United States—fairness and equity

Providing Logical Structure for Argument

Logical arguments are ones your reader will understand without much explanation

- Degree
 - The most common argument
 - People don't pay much attention to them because they are self-evident (more of a bad thing is bad)
- Analogies
 - People understand comparisons intuitively
 - People habitually think in comparative terms
 - Similes: he is as slow as molasses in January
 - Metaphors: life is a highway
 - Analogy is an extended comparison

- Precedent
 - These are related to arguments of analogy
 - They both involve comparisons
 - What has been decided in the past often determines how things will be decided in the future—court cases