

SEVENTH EDITION

ELEMENTS OF ARGUMENT

A TEXT AND READER



ANNETTE T. ROTTENBERG

Elements of Argument

A Text and Reader

Annette T. Rottenberg

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Preface for Instructors

PURPOSE

Argumentation as the basis of a composition course should need no defense, especially at a time of renewed pedagogical interest in critical thinking. A course in argumentation encourages practice in close analysis, use of supporting materials, and logical organization. It encompasses all the modes of development around which composition courses are often built. It teaches students to read and to listen with more than ordinary care. Not least, argument can engage the interest of students who have been indifferent or even hostile to required writing courses. Because the subject matter of argument can be found in every human activity, from the most trivial to the most elevated, both students and teachers can choose the materials that appeal to them.

Composition courses using the materials of argument are, of course, not new. But the traditional methods of teaching argument through mastery of the formal processes of reasoning cannot account for the complexity of arguments in practice. Even more relevant to our purposes as teachers of composition is the tenuous relationship between learning about induction and deduction, however helpful in analysis, and the actual process of student composition. The challenge has been to find a method of teaching argument that assists students in defending their claims as directly and efficiently as possible, a method that reflects the way people actually go about organizing and developing claims outside the classroom.

One such method, first adapted to classroom instruction by teachers of rhetoric and speech, uses a model of argument advanced by Stephen Toulmin in *The Uses of Argument*. Toulmin was interested in producing a description of the real process of argument. His model was the law. "Arguments," he said, "can be compared with lawsuits, and the claims we make and argue for in extra-legal contexts with claims made in the courts."¹ Toulmin's model of argument was based on three principal elements: claim, evidence, and warrant. These elements answered the questions, "What are you trying to prove?" "What have you got to go on?" "How did you get from evidence to claim?" Needless to say, Toulmin's model of argument does not guarantee a classroom of skilled arguers, but his questions about the parts of an argument and their relationship are precisely the ones that students must ask and answer in writing their own essays and analyzing those of others. They lead students naturally into the formulation and development of their claims.

¹ *The Uses of Argument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 7.

In this text I have adapted—and greatly simplified—some of Toulmin’s concepts and terminology for first-year students. I have also introduced two elements of argument with which Toulmin is not directly concerned. Most rhetoricians consider them indispensable, however, to discussion of what actually happens in the defense or rejection of a claim. One is motivational appeals—warrants based on appeals to the needs and values of an audience, designed to evoke emotional responses. A distinction between logic and emotion may be useful as an analytical tool, but in producing or attacking arguments human beings find it difficult, if not impossible, to make such a separation. In this text, therefore, persuasion through appeals to needs and values is treated as a legitimate element in the argumentative process.

I have also stressed the significance of audience as a practical matter. In the rhetorical or audience-centered approach to argument, to which I subscribe in this text, success is defined as acceptance of the claim by an audience. Arguers in the real world recognize intuitively that their primary goal is not to demonstrate the purity of their logic, but to win the adherence of their audiences. To gain this adherence, students need to be reminded of the necessity for establishing themselves as credible sources for their readers.

I hope *Elements of Argument* will lead students to discover not only the practical and intellectual rewards of learning how to argue but the real excitement of engaging in civilized debate.

ORGANIZATION

In Part One, after two introductory chapters, a chapter each is devoted to the chief elements of argument—the claims that students make in their arguments, the definitions and support they must supply for their claims, the warrants that underlie their arguments, the language that they use. Popular fallacies, as well as induction and deduction, are treated in Chapter 8; because fallacies represent errors of reasoning, a knowledge of induction and deduction can make clear how and why fallacies occur. Each chapter ends with an advertisement illustrating the element of argument treated in that chapter.

I have provided examples, readings, discussion questions, and writing suggestions that are, I hope, both practical and stimulating. With the exception of several student dialogues, the examples are real, not invented; they have been taken from speeches, editorial opinions, letters to the editor, advertisements, interviews, and news reports. They reflect the liveliness and complexity that invented examples often suppress.

The forty selections, two Web pages, and ten advertisements in Part One support the discussions in several important ways. First, they illustrate the elements of argument; in each chapter, one or more essays have been analyzed to emphasize the chapter’s principles of argument. Sec-

ond, they are drawn from current publications and cover as many different subjects as possible to convince students that argument is a pervasive force in the world they read about and live in. Third, some of the essays are obviously flawed and thus enable students to identify the kinds of weaknesses they should avoid in their own essays.

Part Two takes up the process of writing, researching, and presenting arguments. Chapter 9 explains how to find a topic, define the issues that it embraces, organize the information, and draft and revise an argument. Chapter 10 introduces students to the business of finding sources and using these sources effectively in research papers. The chapter concludes with two annotated student research papers, one of which employs the Modern Language Association (MLA) documentation system, the other of which represents research in the social and natural sciences and uses a modified American Psychological Association (APA) documentation style. Chapter 11 provides guidelines for presenting an argument orally.

Part Three, Multiple Viewpoints, exhibits arguers in action, using informal and formal language, debating head-on. The subjects of its fifty-seven selections and seventeen cartoons capture headlines every day, and despite their immediacy, they are likely to arouse passions and remain controversial for a long time. Whether as matters of national policy or personal choice, they call for decisions based on familiarity with competing views.

Part Four, Classic Arguments, reprints eight selections that have stood the tests of both time and the classroom. They are among the arguments that teachers find invaluable in any composition course.

The instructor's manual, *Resources for Teaching Elements of Argument*, provides additional suggestions for using the book, as well as for finding and using the enormous variety of materials available in a course on argument.

A companion Web site at <www.bedfordstmartins.com/rottenberg> includes annotated links for students and instructors looking for further information on controversial topics, online debates, and rhetorical theory. It also includes sample syllabi and exercises.

A briefer edition, *The Structure of Argument*, Fourth Edition, is available for instructors who prefer a shorter text with fewer readings. It presents only Parts One and Two, an appendix of Classic Arguments, and the appendix, Arguing about Literature, from the longer edition.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

Revising a successful textbook—the publisher says that *Elements of Argument* is the best-selling book of its kind—presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is to avoid undoing features that have been well received in the earlier editions. The opportunity is to tap into

the experiences of instructors and students who have used the earlier editions and to make use of their insights to improve what needs improvement. For instance, the sections on critical reading, evaluating electronic sources, note-taking, and summarizing have been revised, and a sample analysis of a Web site has been added.

The principles and concerns of the book have not changed. Rather, I have included a greater breadth of material to increase the book's usefulness as a teaching tool. Also, in response to instructor requests, we have redesigned the book with a second color for a more lively look to appeal to today's visually oriented students.

For the short debates, we have retained two popular topics from the sixth edition—the necessity of animal research and the question of human cloning—and have added four familiar and timely subjects: the possibility of extraterrestrial life, God as the creator of the universe, the ethics of the genetic enhancement of children, and whether national identification cards will help to combat terrorism. Updated annotated Web links accompany these debates, encouraging students to conduct further research online.

Part Three, Multiple Viewpoints, retains four popular topics from the sixth edition—Corporate Responsibility, Freedom of Speech, Privacy in the Information Age, and Sex and Violence in Popular Culture—with many new selections that reflect the changes in law and public opinion. The four new topics—Criminal Justice: Trial by Jury, the Family, Reparations for Slavery, and Responding to Terrorism—are not only among the most controversial and newsworthy subjects engaging American society today, but they are also subjects that interest and affect college students at school, at work, and at home. Each of the selections in the Multiple Viewpoints section is now preceded by a prereading question that provides direction for students and will help stimulate class discussion. Part Four, Classic Arguments, now includes a provocative essay by Rachel Carson on environmental pollution.

Sixty-one of the 111 selections in the seventh edition are new. Taken as a whole, the changes in this edition should enhance the versatility of the book, deepen students' awareness of how pervasive argument is, and increase their ability to think critically and communicate persuasively. The newly expanded online study guide at <www.bedfordstmartins.com/rottenberg> offers sample syllabi for instructors. It will help students to understand argument by offering them annotated research links and additional information and exercises on fallacies and warrants.

This book has profited by the critiques and suggestions of reviewers and instructors who responded to a questionnaire. I appreciate the thoughtful consideration given to previous editions by Nancy E. Adams, Timothy C. Alderman, Yvonne Alexander, John V. Andersen, Lucile G. Appert, William Arfin, Alison K. Armstrong, Karen Arnold, Angel M. Arzán, Mark Edward Askren, Michael Austin, David B. Axelrod, Jacquelyn A. Babush, Peter Banland, Carol A. Barnes, Tim Barnett, Marilyn Barry,

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Brief Contents

PREFACE FOR INSTRUCTORS v

PART ONE The Structure of Argument 1

1. Understanding Argument 3
2. Responding to Argument 25
3. Claims 57
4. Definition 111
5. Support 155
6. Warrants 194
7. Language and Thought 237
8. Induction, Deduction, and Logical Fallacies 275

PART TWO Writing, Researching, and Presenting Arguments 323

9. Writing an Argumentative Paper 325
10. Researching an Argumentative Paper 346
11. Presenting an Argument Orally 412

PART THREE Multiple Viewpoints 429

12. Corporate Responsibility 431
13. Criminal Justice: Trial by Jury 453
14. The Family 490
15. Freedom of Speech 513
16. Privacy in the Information Age 531
17. Reparations for Slavery 562
18. Responding to Terror 588
19. Sex and Violence in Popular Culture 609

PART FOUR Classic Arguments 633

APPENDIX: ARGUING ABOUT LITERATURE 711

GLOSSARY AND INDEX OF TERMS 747

INDEX OF AUTHORS AND TITLES 751

Contents

PREFACE FOR INSTRUCTORS v

PART ONE

The Structure of Argument 1

1. Understanding Argument 3

The Nature of Argument 3

Why Study Argument? 6

Why Write? 8

The Terms of Argument 9

The Audience 13

SAMPLE ANALYSIS

The Declaration of Independence 17

THOMAS JEFFERSON

When revolutionaries resolved to throw off their king and form their own government, they turned to the eloquent Jefferson for a defense of their audacious plan.

Exercises 23

2. Responding to Argument 25

Responding as a Critical Reader 26

SAMPLE ANNOTATED ARGUMENT

The Pursuit of Whining: Affirmative Action circa 1776 32

JOHN PATRICK DIGGINS

A history teacher charges that affirmative action advocates have inherited a troubling emphasis on hereditary right and privilege from American's founding fathers.

Responding as a Writer 35

SAMPLE ANNOTATED ANALYSIS

No-Win Situations 35

ALFIE KOHN

The author of *No Contest: The Case against Competition* discusses the psychologically damaging effects of competitive sports and asserts that "recreation at its best does not require people to triumph over others."

Responding as a Critical Listener	40
Responding to a Visual Argument	43

SAMPLE ANALYSIS OF AN ADVERTISEMENT

An after-school lesson in simple mathematics
[advertisement] 46

SAMPLE ANALYSIS OF A WEB SITE

The Hungersite.com [Web page] 49

Responding Online	53
-------------------	----

<i>Exercises</i>	54
------------------	----

3. Claims 57

Claim of Fact	57
---------------	----

SAMPLE ANNOTATED ANALYSIS: CLAIM OF FACT

A Reassuring Scorecard for Affirmative Action 62

MICHAEL M. WEINSTEIN

This *New York Times* editorial explains why affirmative action has benefited not only women and minorities, but the economy as well.

A Note on Causal Argument	66
---------------------------	----

Writer's Guide to the Causal Paper: Writing an Essay
of Cause and Effect 67

Claims of Value	68
-----------------	----

Writer's Guide to the Evaluation Paper: Defending a Claim
of Value 70

SAMPLE ANNOTATED ANALYSIS: CLAIM OF VALUE

Kids in the Mall: Growing Up Controlled 71

WILLIAM SEVERINI KOWINSKI

A journalist evaluates the lessons teens learn in "universities of suburban materialism."

Claims of Policy	77
------------------	----

Writer's Guide to the Proposal Paper: Defending a Claim of Policy 78

SAMPLE ANNOTATED ANALYSIS: CLAIM OF POLICY

Dependency or Death? Oregonians Make a
Chilling Choice 79

WESLEY J. SMITH

The author of *Culture of Death: The Assault on Medical Ethics in America* looks at the consequences of Oregon's legalization of assisted suicide. He writes that it "is bad medicine and even worse public policy."

READINGS FOR ANALYSIS

***Happiness Is a Warm Planet* 83**

THOMAS GALE MOORE

A senior fellow at the Hoover Institution contends that global warming would be beneficial to most Americans and most of humanity.

***A White Woman of Color* 86**

JULIA ÁLVAREZ

Warning Latinos not to adopt America's limiting racial paradigms, a noted author and poet recounts her early years as a recent Dominican immigrant in the United States when some of her fellow countrymen refused to recognize her as a "real" Dominican because of her light skin.

***College Life versus My Moral Code* 93**

ELISHA DOV HACK

A student at Yale argues that the school's dorm-residency requirements threatens his religious way of life.

***The Right to Bear Arms* 95**

WARREN E. BURGER

A former chief justice of the United States examines the historical roots of the Second Amendment to construct an appeal for gun control.

***The "MCAS" Teens Give Each Other* 98**

JEFF JACOBY

Examining the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test that students must pass in order to graduate from high school, a nationally syndicated columnist for the *Boston Globe* questions why students are able to memorize pop culture ephemera—but not facts about English, math, science, or history.

Numbers don't lie [advertisement]* 102**GE: The initials of a friend [advertisement]* 103*****Cease Fire [advertisement]* 104****DEBATE: IF THERE IS LIFE HERE ON EARTH, WHY NOT ELSEWHERE?*****Get Set to Say Hi to the Neighbors* 105**

JOHN NOBLE WILFORD

A Pulitzer Prize-winning science writer suggests that given the vastness of the universe, there's no reason to think that life is unique to Earth.

***Left the Light on, but Nobody Came* 106**

MALCOLM W. BROWNE

Another Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist bets that "the 21st century will pass without anyone finding conclusive evidence of extraterrestrial life."

Taking the Debate Online* 108**Exercises* 109**

4. Definition 111

The Purposes of Definition 111

Defining the Terms in Your Argument 113

Methods for Defining Terms 116

The Definition Essay 120

Writer's Guide to the Definition Paper: Writing a Paper That Defines
Terms 121

A Note on Comparison and Contrast 122

Writer's Guide to the Comparison Paper: Writing an Essay of Comparison
or Contrast 123

SAMPLE ANNOTATED ANALYSIS

***Addiction Is Not a Disease* 124**

STANTON PEELE

A psychologist stipulates that, contrary to current popular thought, people are “*active agents* in—not passive victims of—their addiction.”

READINGS FOR ANALYSIS

***The Nature of Prejudice* 138**

GORDON ALLPORT

Identifying other people's prejudice is easy, observes a Harvard psychologist, but sometimes it takes a careful definition to help us spot our own.

***The Hard Questions: Beyond Consent* 140**

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN

A scholar questions society's reliance on the narrow concept of consent in sexual matters, suggesting that the consequences impoverish our morality.

***Waterman Pens [advertisement]* 143**

DEBATE: HOW DID THE UNIVERSE BEGIN?

***God May Be the Creator* 144**

ROBERT JASTROW

The founding director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies claims that science will never be able to discover how the universe was created, suggesting that the answer may instead be found in the Bible.

***God Is Not the Creator* 147**

ISAAC ASIMOV

A renowned writer rejects Jastrow's idea that the universe was created by God—claiming instead that it was created “through the operation of the blind, unchanging laws of nature—the same laws that are in operation today.”

Taking the Debate Online 152

Exercises 153

5. Support 155

Types of Support: Evidence and Appeals to Needs and Values 155

Evidence	157
Evaluation of Evidence	163
Appeals to Needs and Values	170
Evaluation of Appeals to Needs and Values	176

SAMPLE ANNOTATED ANALYSIS

***Single-Sex Education Benefits Men Too* 177**

CLAUDIUS E. WATTS III

The former president of the Citadel in South Carolina asserts that male students, like their female counterparts, deserve to reap the benefits of single-sex education.

READINGS FOR ANALYSIS

***Race by the Numbers* 181**

ORLANDO PATTERSON

Using recent Census Bureau data, a prominent scholar of race relations in the United States disputes the widespread idea that the white population in America is fast on its way to becoming a minority.

***A New Look, an Old Battle* 184**

ANNA QUINDLEN

A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and best-selling novelist writes that those who oppose abortion may support beneficial but controversial stem-cell research, which uses cells taken from human embryos.

***Gas heat makes me nervous.* [advertisement] 188**

DEBATE: IS ANIMAL RESEARCH NECESSARY TO SAVE HUMAN LIVES?

***Animal Research Saves Human Lives* 189**

HELOISA SABIN

The honorary director of Americans for Medical Progress claims that without animal research "polio would still be claiming thousands of lives."

***Why We Don't Need Animal Experimentation* 190**

PEGGY CARLSON

Animal research, says the research director of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, is costly, unreliable, and unnecessary.

***Taking the Debate Online* 192**

***Exercises* 192**

6. Warrants 194

Types of Warrants 201

SAMPLE ANNOTATED ANALYSIS

***The Case for Torture* 202**

MICHAEL LEVIN

A philosophy professor reasons that if torture is the only way to squeeze life-saving information from a kidnapper or terrorist, we should overcome our repugnance and apply the electrodes.

READINGS FOR ANALYSIS

***A Proposal to Abolish Grading* 206**

PAUL GOODMAN

The author of *Growing Up Absurd* argues that if the goal of higher education is education, we should use tests that foster learning, not competition.

***An Unjust Sacrifice* 209**

ROBERT A. SIRICO

A Roman Catholic priest argues that the separation of cojoined twins—an operation that will result in the death of one of the babies—is wrong, and shows a dangerous way of measuring the value of a life.

***Computers and the Pursuit of Happiness* 211**

DAVID GELERNTER

A professor of computer science at Yale asks a simple question: Are computers good for mankind? His answer may surprise you.

Perhaps the most beautiful thing about using energy more efficiently isn't the fuel it can save.**[advertisement] 221**

DEBATE: SHOULD WE FEAR THE CLONING OF HUMAN BEINGS?

***Cloning Misperceptions* 222**

LEE M. SILVER

An expert in behavioral genetics argues that there is little reason to fear human cloning because human personality is shaped by environment and cannot be genetically cloned. Thus, a clone would simply be a later-born twin.

***The Risks of Human Cloning Outweigh the Benefits* 226**

NATIONAL BIOETHICS ADVISORY COMMISSION

A report from the National Bioethics Advisory Commission warns of the health risks involved in somatic cell nuclear transfer cloning in humans and concludes that cloning is unethical—appealing to human vanity, narcissism, and avarice.

Taking the Debate Online 234*Exercises* 234**7. Language and Thought 237**

The Power of Words 237

Connotation 239

Slanting 242

Picturesque Language 245

Concrete and Abstract Language 247

Short Cuts 250