



Arguing in  
Communities



GARY LAYNE HATCH

SECOND  
EDITION

# Arguing in Communities

Second Edition

**Gary Layne Hatch**  
*Brigham Young University*



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# Preface

**O**UR CULTURE HAS TAUGHT US to view arguing as something negative, the equivalent of quarreling or fighting, a view which—unfortunately—closely reflects the quality of arguing we are most familiar with. Despite the efforts of those who teach argumentation and critical thinking, much of the arguing in our communities is simply contentious bickering. Often, people think they are arguing productively when they are really just contradicting one another or expressing their opinions forcefully without supporting those opinions with thoughtful reasons. Even many so-called experts have never advanced beyond the strategies we learn as small children to get what we want.

Arguing productively, however, should be an important part of living in any community. Without effective arguing, a community has difficulty making decisions, coming to consensus, living with and negotiating difference, and simply getting things done. And when arguing breaks down, people must usually resort to some sort of force to accomplish their goals, whether it's physical violence or the force of law. Rather than using the power of language to live with one another, it seems as though many people would rather fight out their differences, either in the streets or in the courts.

I'm not certain that a class in argumentative writing can actually make communities more productive at resolving their differences, but this book is my attempt. I found, as a teacher, that many of my students saw no connection between the kind of arguing I was teaching in class and the arguing they practiced every day outside of class. Of course, some students would begin to identify a few logical fallacies or go around tormenting their classmates and families by forcing them to define their terms, state their assumptions, and back up their beliefs. Still, for most students, arguing was still an academic game rather than a way of living. I realized that I was partly to blame for my students' inability to

make connections between my class and their lives. I had often displayed arguments as though they were zoological specimens: neatly dissected, arranged, and analyzed, but so removed from their native habitats that they no longer had any connection to the real world.

This book, then, is an attempt to take students where arguments live, to their habitats, so to speak, the communities where we live and argue every day. My central premise is that arguing is an essential part of living with others; my central goal is to improve arguing and, with luck, to improve communities in the process.

I have divided the book into three parts. The first emphasizes arguing as a means of rational persuasion within communities. I describe the means of persuasion from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and the structure of arguments based on a model adapted from Franz van Eemeren's social theories of argumentation, a model that is essentially a simplified form of Stephen Toulmin's model for reasoning as it is usually taught in writing courses. Although I have not relied on Toulmin's terms exclusively in this text, I have included them at appropriate points for those instructors and students who may be familiar with them. In this first part, I also teach students to identify the communities in which they live and to record, analyze, and evaluate the conversations that take place in their communities so that they can begin to make useful contributions to these conversations.

The second part of the book focuses on arguing different kinds of claims: claims about existence, causality, language, values, and actions. This second part is an adaptation of classical stasis theory. Stasis theory involves asking a set of standard questions in order to identify what is at issue in a particular debate or disagreement, what kind of claims are being made, and how one can evaluate and respond to these claims. In addition to the examples and readings I have provided, I encourage students, throughout the book, to identify and evaluate examples from the conversations that surround them so that they can productively join these conversations and make a difference in the life of their communities.

Part Three is an anthology of readings, a collection of arguments providing differing viewpoints on a range of controversial social issues.

## IMPORTANT FEATURES

This text includes the following features to help students understand how arguing works in communities.

- *An easily understood model of the structure of arguments*, based on the classical enthymeme, Toulmin's model of reasoning, and Franz van Eemeren's theories of social argumentation. Through this model, I present arguing as part of a social process, a conversation that takes place within communities. This model of argumentation will help students identify, record, and evaluate such conversations. In Part One, students learn how to identify and

- evaluate claims, reasons, and assumptions. In Part Two, students learn how to critically analyze different types of claims: claims about existence, causality, language, values, and actions.
- *An emphasis on studying arguments where they live.* I use the classical principle of *kairos* to explain how arguments occur at particularly appropriate times and places. Students then learn how to identify and reconstruct the contexts in which arguments occur. This approach stresses that different communities have different customs, conventions, and potential fallacies when arguing. Understanding these community differences helps students to think contextually and read and write arguments more effectively.
  - *A description of how ethos and pathos are integrated with logical appeals* with particular advice on how to use these appeals effectively and ethically. As a social process, arguing cannot be reduced to “logic.” In particular, I acknowledge the logic within emotion—that psycho-physiological phenomenon that is usually discredited as “illogical” or “irrational.” To move people to action, arguing must include appropriate ethical and emotional appeals, but students must also learn how these appeals may be misused.
  - *Advice on how to adapt arguments to the needs of different audiences.* I describe how to analyze an audience and provide several models for organizing arguments in addition to the “classical” form most frequently used in academic writing. These other models include delayed thesis, conciliatory argument, Rogerian argument, “option three,” and motivated sequence.
  - *An overview of research both in the library and beyond.* While much research is the process of recording conversations in academic communities, the academic community is only one among the many communities students belong to, and academic writing is only one form of arguing that students participate in (and certainly not the most common form). Students will learn not only an efficient process for finding source material in the library, but also ways of finding useful information on the Internet.
  - *Sample student essays using both MLA and APA documentation* for a variety of sources.
  - *Examples of MLA and APA documentation* for a variety of sources, including current citation forms for online material.
  - *Readings that provide contrasting points of view.* The readings not only present models of argumentative writing or topics for student discussion, but also relate to the issues discussed in each chapter. Each chapter offers at least two and usually three or more readings of differing views on the same topic to encourage students to think beyond simply taking a position “for” or “against” an issue. The same is true for the issues-related readings in Part Three.
  - *An extensive discussion of fallacies of reasoning.* Often called “logical fallacies” or “informal fallacies,” the 18 fallacies of reasoning presented in Chapter 5 weaken or invalidate arguments in both student writing and public discourse. In this chapter, I explain how these fallacies work and how they can be revised into more legitimate arguments.

- *An abundance of collaborative activities.* Consistent with the emphasis in this book on community, I have tried to provide several activities for each chapter that engage students as individuals and groups with the communities they live in.

## WHAT'S NEW IN THE SECOND EDITION

Instructors who have used the previous edition of this text will recognize several new features.

- *Additional readings in new Part Three,* a collection of arguments about important social issues. This anthology will provide instructors with models for analysis as well as topics for class discussion and for research.
- *The addition of eleven new readings to Parts One and Two.*
- *“Explorations” at the end of each chapter.* These activities (usually collaborative) invite students to try out the concepts they have learned in each chapter and to interact with the communities they live in.
- *More and improved visuals.* Several sections of the text now begin with visuals illustrating the nature of the concepts taught in these sections. In addition, some diagrams have been redrawn, and one new diagram has been added illustrating an additional principle for understanding causality.
- *Expanded coverage of ethics.* The discussion of ethics, moved to Chapter 11, now includes medical ethics along with ethics in business and law.
- *Expanded coverage of local issues in the national context.* The case of the Utah Wilderness Debate in Chapter 2 now addresses the national government’s involvement through the formation of the Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument. This case now invites students to consider the relationship between local and national issues.
- *More thorough discussion of electronic communities.* The importance of the Internet has grown considerably since the first edition of this text appeared, and the second edition reflects that increased importance with an expanded discussion of electronic communities, not just as a separate chapter (new Chapter 7), but also integrated throughout the text.

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# Brief Contents

Preface iii

- **PART 1 *Arguing and Living in Communities*** 1
    - 1 *Arguing as Rational Persuasion: Logos* 3
    - 2 *Ethos and Pathos* 33
    - 3 *Communities and Conversation* 67
    - 4 *Identifying and Recording a Conversation* 89
    - 5 *Evaluating Arguments* 163
    - 6 *Joining the Conversation* 209
    - 7 *Arguing in Electronic Communities* 281
  - **PART 2 *Types of Claims*** 313
    - 8 *Arguing Claims about Existence* 315
    - 9 *Arguing Claims about Causality* 347
    - 10 *Arguing about Language* 383
    - 11 *Arguing about Values* 433
    - 12 *Arguing about Actions* 465
  - **PART 3 *Continuing the Conversation: An Anthology of Arguments*** 491
    - 13 *Arguing about Concealed Weapons* 493
    - 14 *Arguing about Access to the Internet* 505
    - 15 *Arguing about Affirmative Action* 517
    - 16 *Arguing about Managed Health Care* 539
    - 17 *Arguing about Immigration* 555
    - 18 *Arguing about Global Issues in the 21st Century* 575
- Glossary 603  
Credits 609  
Index 613

# Contents

Preface iii

## PART 1

*Arguing and Living in Communities* 1

**1** *Arguing as Rational Persuasion: Logos* 3

■ ■ WHAT IS ARGUING? 3

■ ■ LOGOS: PERSUASION THROUGH REASONING 5

What Is Logos? 5

The Structure of an Argument: Claims 6

Identifying Claims 7

Types of Claims 7

*Arguing about Existence* 8

*Arguing about Causality* 8

*Arguing about Symbols* 9

*Arguing about Values* 9

*Arguing about Actions* 10

The Structure of an Argument: Reasons 11

Identifying the Reasons 11

Chains of Reasons 12

Non Sequiturs 12

The Structure of an Argument: Assumptions 13

Identifying Assumptions 13

Assumptions in a Chain of Reasoning 14

■ ■ APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES 16

Analyzing Logos 16

CHRISTOPHER LASCH, *The Lost Art of Political Argument* 17

Another Voice 23

WALTER LIPPMANN, *The Indispensable Opposition* 24

■ ■ EXPLORATIONS 30

Reflecting on the Nature of Arguing 30

Finding Claims, Reasons, and Assumptions 30

Finding Arguments All Around 30

Finding the Opposition 30

2 Ethos and Pathos 33

■ ■ ETHOS: PERSUASION THROUGH CREDIBILITY 33

What Is Ethos? 33

Creating Ethos 34

Sharing Personal Information 34

Sounding Credible 34

Identifying with the Reader 35

Point of View 35

Word Choice 36

Ethos and Status 36

■ ■ PATHOS: PERSUASION THROUGH EMOTION 37

What Is Pathos? 37

Creating Pathos 38

Concrete Examples 38

Word Choice 38

Locating Appeals to Emotions 40

■ ■ APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES 40

Analyzing Ethos 40

The Utah Wilderness Debate: Letters to the *Deseret News* 40

A. DERK BECKSTRAND (Provo), *Wilds Designation Benefits Few* 41

DAVID CARMAN (Salt Lake City), *Don't Tag Too Much Land for Wilds* 43

DAWN B. BRIMLEY (Provo), *Support Wilds for Sake of Beauty* 44

GLENN C. ANDERSEN (Vernal), *Don't Lock Up the Lands as Wilds* 45

TERRY BREWER (Salt Lake City), *Do the Right Thing: Protect Earth* 46

F. T. GARDINER (Provo), *Wilderness Is for the Elite* 46

AMY S. MELLING (Salt Lake City), *Wilderness More Than "Resource"* 47

CARL CHINDRIN (Salt Lake City), *We Must Protect Our Wilds—Now* 48

RAINER HUCK, *Everyone Should Have Access to Wilds* 49

WAYNE OWENS, *Wilderness Bill Offers No Protection* 51

- The Utah Wilderness Debate in the National Context 53  
 BILL CLINTON, *Remarks by the President at Grand Canyon National Park* 54
- Analyzing Pathos 57  
 GRETCHEN LETTERMAN, *Tiny Fighters Are Victims of Mothers' Smoke* 57
- Analyzing Pathos in Advertisements 60  
*Dakin Toy Advertisement* 61  
*American Red Cross Advertisement* 63  
*Humane Farming Association Advertisement* 64

#### ■ ■ EXPLORATIONS 65

- Recalling Moments of Trust 65  
 Recalling Moments of Emotion 65  
 Reading for Ethos and Pathos 65  
 Finding Ethos and Pathos in Everyday Objects 65  
 Finding Ethos in Letters to the Editor 66  
 Keeping Track of Arguments 66  
 Is Television Watching You? 66

### 3 Communities and Conversation 67

#### ■ ■ COMMUNITIES 67

- Defining "Community" 67  
 Identifying Communities 68  
 Language and Community 69  
 The College Community as a Language Community 70

#### ■ ■ THE ORGANIZATION OF COMMUNITIES 71

- Understanding How Communities Are Structured 71  
 The Organization of a College Community 73  
 My University Community 73  
 Your College or University Community 74

#### ■ ■ KAIROS: THE RIGHT TIME AND PLACE 74

- What Is Kairos? 75  
 Identifying Kairos 75  
 Real Times and Places 75  
 Virtual Times and Places 77  
 Virtual Communities and Power 78  
 The Library: An Abundance of Times and Places 78  
 Analyzing Library Resources 80  
 Journals 80  
 Books 81

■ ■ APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES 82

- Understanding Communities 82
- J. B. PRIESTLY, *Wrong Ism* 83

■ ■ EXPLORATIONS 86

- Comparing Communities 86
- Mapping the Organization of Your College 86
- Reading the Organization of Your College 86
- Observing Kairos 87

**4** *Identifying and Recording a Conversation* 89

■ ■ IDENTIFYING A CONVERSATION 89

■ ■ RECORDING THE CONVERSATION 90

- Recording Real Conversations 90
- Recording Virtual Conversations 92
  - Documenting Sources 92
    - Quotation* 93
    - Summary* 96
    - Paraphrase* 97
  - Deciding When to Quote, Summarize, or Paraphrase 99
  - Taking Research Notes 99
  - Avoiding Plagiarism 101

■ ■ APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES 102

- The Process of Library Research 102
- Stage One: Finding Background Material 104
  - The Library of Congress Subject Headings Guide* 104
  - Encyclopedias 105
  - Specialized Encyclopedias 107
- Stage Two: Narrowing Your Topic 108
  - Identifying a Controversial Issue 108
  - Forming an Issue Question 108
- Stage Three: Finding Research Material 109
  - Library Reference Systems 109
  - Subject Area Indexes 110
  - Internet Subject Guides 111
  - Internet Search Engines 115
- The Working Bibliography 118
- Evaluating Sources: Print and Electronic 118
- Citing and Documenting Sources 120

- Sample Entries for a Works Cited Page: MLA Style 120
- Books 120
  - Periodicals 122
  - Electronic Sources 123
  - Legal References 124
  - Other Sources 125
- Sample Paper, MLA Style 128
- WILL BRYSON, *Free Press vs. Fair Trial: The Right of a Defendant to Keep Pre-Trial Activities Private* 128
- Sample Entries for a References Page: APA Style 137
- Books 137
  - Periodicals 138
  - Electronic Sources 139
  - Other Sources 141
- Sample Paper: APA Style 143
- JESSICA MISKIN, *Children Testifying in Sexual Abuse Trials: Right to Emotional Safety vs. Right to Confrontation* 143
- ■ EXPLORATIONS 155
- Becoming Familiar with Your Library's Community 155
  - Studying the Background of a Topic 155
  - Gathering Folklore 160

## 5 Evaluating Arguments 163

### ■ ■ ARGUING IN COMMUNITIES 163

- Difference 163
- Responding to Difference 164
- Arguing in Academic Communities 166
- A General Method for Arguing in Communities 167

### ■ ■ ANALYZING AND EVALUATING ARGUMENTS 169

- Evaluating Ethos 169
- Evaluating Pathos 169
- Evaluating Logos 170
- Fallacies in Reasoning 171
  - Hasty Generalization/Sweeping Generalization 171
  - Guilt by Association 171
  - False Dilemma 172
  - Non Sequitur 172
  - Fallacious Appeal to Emotion 172

Begging the Question	173
Appeal to Ignorance	173
Stacking the Deck	173
Dicto Simpliciter	173
Personal Attack	173
Poisoning the Well	174
Appeal to Force/Appeal to Reward	174
Ad Populum	174
Complex or Loaded Question	174
Post Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc	174
Oversimplified Cause	174
Red Herring	175
False Analogy	175

■ ■ APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES 175

Evaluating Statistical Arguments	175
STEPHEN BUDIANSKY, <i>The Numbers Racket: How Polls and Statistics Lie</i>	177
WILLIAM LUTZ, <i>from Doublespeak</i>	184
Identifying Logical Fallacies	190
MAX SHULMAN, <i>Love Is a Fallacy</i>	191
RAY PERKINS, JR., <i>Bad Logic Is Bad News</i>	199
STEVEN DOLOFF, <i>Let the Listener Beware</i>	205

■ ■ EXPLORATIONS 207

Fallacies in the Letters to the Editor	207
Eavesdropping	207
Name That Fallacy	207
Curing the Fallacy	207
The Numbers Don't Lie	208

**6** *Joining the Conversation* 209

■ ■ FINDING PLACES TO ENTER THE CONVERSATION 209

■ ■ ADAPTING TO THE COMMUNITY 213

Finding Community-Based Reasons	213
Following the Conventions	215
Organizing the Argument	216
Classical Argument	216
Delayed Thesis	218
Conciliatory Argument	219
Motivational Arguments	220

Rogierian Argument 222  
 Option Three 223

## ■ ■ CHALLENGING THE COMMUNITY 226

### ■ ■ APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES 227

An Invitation to Join the Conversation 227

Joining a Community 228

BILL WODRASKA, *The Gentle Art of Hunkering* 228

ROBERTA MAYNARD, *Help Newcomers Learn the Ropes* 231

Examples of Adapting to the Community 234

*Public Statement by Eight Alabama Clergymen* 236

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., *Letter from Birmingham Jail* 237

PAUL ALAN COX, *from Nafanua: Saving the Samoan Rain Forest* 250

Examples of Challenging the Community 258

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR., *The Charmer* 259

SALLIE TISDALE, *We Do Abortions Here: A Nurse's Story* 270

### ■ ■ EXPLORATIONS 277

Variations on a Brief Argument 277

Writing a Letter to the Editor 277

Writing a Member of Congress 277

Telling a Fable 278

Finding a Context for Arguments: *Harper's Magazine* 279

## 7 Arguing in Electronic Communities 281

### ■ ■ COMPUTERS AND COMMUNITY 281

### ■ ■ IDENTIFYING ELECTRONIC COMMUNITIES 282

Electronic Mail 282

Mailing Lists and Newsgroups 285

Joining an E-Mail List or Newsgroup 285

Lurking and Netiquette 286

*Assume Publicity* 287

*Remember the Emotional Distance of Writing* 287

*Remember the Human* 287

*Be Ethical* 287

*Learn the Customs of the Community* 287

*Respect Peoples' Time and Bandwidth* 287

*Remember Principles of Good Persuasion* 288

*Don't Flame* 288

*Be Forgiving* 288



- Chat Lines, MOOs, and MUDs 288  
An Invitation to Join an Electronic Community 289
- ■ APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES 290
- The Nature of Electronic Communities 290  
    HOWARD RHEINGOLD, *The Virtual Community: Introduction* 291  
    AMY BRUCKMAN, *Finding One's Own in Cyberspace* 294
- Brain Tennis: An Example of Arguing in an Electronic Community 302  
    BILL HENDERSON AND TIM BARKOW, *Luddite vs. Fetishist* 303
- ■ EXPLORATIONS 311
- You've Got Mail! 311  
Homesteading the Frontier 311  
Playing in the MUD 311  
Tennis Anyone? 312

---

## PART 2

### Types of Claims 313

#### 8 Arguing Claims about Existence 315

■ ■ OUR DIFFERENCES ABOUT EXPERIENCE 316

- Fact and Opinion 316  
Past, Present, and Future 316  
Questions about Experience 317

■ ■ QUESTIONS ABOUT EXISTENCE 317

- Arguing about Existence and the Nature of Reality 318  
Experience as Evidence in Scholarly Writing 320  
Reported Experience 321  
Making Inferences about Experience 324

■ ■ APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES 325

- Two Views of Eyewitness Testimony 325  
    ELIZABETH F. LOFTUS, *Eyewitnesses: Essential but Unreliable* 326  
    BARRY WINSTON, *Stranger Than True: Why I Defend Guilty Clients* 330
- Three Views of the Media and Reported Experience 333  
    NEIL POSTMAN AND STEVE POWERS, *What Is News?* 334  
    MORGAN STRONG, *Portions of the Gulf War Were Brought to You by . . . the  
    Folks at Hill and Knowlton* 340  
    JACK G. SHAHEEN, *The Media's Image of Arabs* 342