# THE CRAFT OF ARGUMENT

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# The Craft of Argument

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# Preface for Teachers

In this book, we explain written arguments in a way that is not wholly new, but new enough to need some explanation. Readers looking for certain standard topics will not find them here:

- We offer no account of syllogistic reasoning because we can find no good evidence that teaching it improves the quality of anyone's thinking or writing.
- We do not treat "arguments about values" as a category distinct from fact or policy because we believe the traditional tri-part division obscures a more basic distinction. We do, however, show students how values influence both their arguments and their readers' responses to them.
- We give little attention to fallacies, though readers who want a list of them will find one in Appendix 1. We have instead tried to integrate critical thinking with our discussion of argument and writing in every chapter.

Readers will also find topics new to books on argument. We have brought together recent work in areas rarely visited by composition specialists: decision theory, cognitive biases, attribution theory, linguistic stylistics, text linguistics, problem formulation, and ordinary logic.

- In the last twenty-five years, research has flourished on the issue of "cognitive bias," which differs from fallacies as usually described. Cognitive biases are widely shared habits of mind that lead us astray, but that can be guarded against through the discipline imposed by careful argument.
- Cognitive scientists have also helped us understand how we actually interpret cause-and-effect relationships, assign responsibility to human agency, and categorize what we experience.
- We understand better how the structure of the problem occasioning an argument shapes it.

Though few if any of these insights have found their way into standard texts on written arguments, they are all relevant to rhetoric and critical thinking. We have integrated this work with more familiar work in composition so that it requires no expert knowledge to teach. Indeed, it supports a good deal of familiar common sense about thinking and arguing soundly.

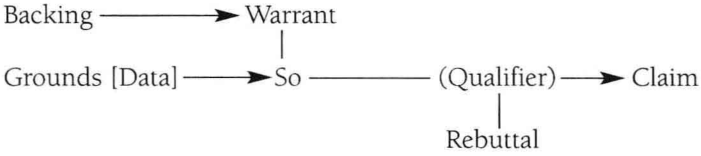
We have also tried to synthesize two aspects of argument usually kept distinct: dialectic and rhetoric. Since Aristotle, dialectic has been defined as seeking truth through questioning and answering, a topic now pursued by those characterizing their work as "pragma-dialectical." In contrast, rhetoric has been defined as the means to find persuasive ways to support a claim already known, expressed by a monologic voice that acknowledges other views only to rebut them.

We present a view of argument in which questions and answers not only seek truth, but also generate the means of persuasion that rhetoric seeks, a thread that may remind some readers of Bakhtin. We show students how to develop written arguments by drawing on speech genres they already know and use, encouraging them to create for their arguments the dialogues that mature writers have with readers, either real before they write or imagined as they draft and revise. To help students internalize that dialectic, we suggest ways that they can engage readers, classmates, and writing groups in conversations that develop and test their claims. We cover that ground in a section in early chapters called "Writing Collaboratively."

What we do share with many recent books on argument are some of Stephen Toulmin's central insights :

- All arguments are sustained by a logic of question and answer.
- Arguments differ in different fields but have a common family structure.
- That structure cannot be a syllogism, because an argument consists of a network of elements that include more than a claim and its premises.
- We best express those elements not as formal symbols but in ordinary language, as answers to a few questions such as "What are you claiming?" and "What do you have to go on?"

But as important as Toulmin's insights are, we believe that those who uncritically embrace his formal layout of arguments make a pedagogical and theoretical mistake. Recall that he represents the elements of an argument like this:



He intended that layout to explain how arguments in different fields differ. We aim to teach students how to make sound arguments, so we modified his layout in six ways, some minor, others major:

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1. **We removed the arrows from the diagram.** Toulmin designed his layout to represent how a mind reasons from grounds to a claim, guided by a warrant supported by backing and constrained by qualifiers and rebuttals. But that grounds-to-claim flow is psychologically unrealistic, particularly when we think abductively (as we do most of the time) from a hypothesis (a provisional claim), to a search for supporting grounds, and then back through the elements of the layout to confirm the hypothesis. And in any case, we want our layout to help students not only to understand the structure of arguments, but to create them and anticipate how readers experience them, particularly when those elements appear in different orders. Our layout does not represent "real time" reasoning, but only those relationships among the elements of argument that help us think about argument from the three perspectives of maker, reader, and critic.

2. **We dropped the element called "backing."** Toulmin needed "backing" to explain how arguments differ among different fields of study, because it is in their different ways of backing warrants that fields differ most significantly. In the law, a warrant is backed by statutes or tradition, in the sciences by detailed observation, in religion by revealed principles of faith, and so on. But we are not centrally concerned with distinguishing arguments in one field from those in another. Moreover, since a warrant is often a general claim derived from another argument, backing is just another term for the grounds supporting that claim used *as* a warrant. Backing is therefore redundant. (We discuss these matters more fully in the Teacher's Guide.)

3. **We dropped "qualifier" as a separate element.** We thought about this change a lot, because qualifications such as *probably* and *certainly, all, most,* and *some*, *can* and *may* are crucial not just to the substance of an argument, but to the experience of reading it and judging its writer's character, or *ethos*. But a qualifier is not, as Toulmin suggests, a discrete filter that assigns a level of probability to a claim. Rather, qualifiers appear everywhere in an argument: in claims, but also in evidence, reasons, warrants, and rebuttals. None of those considerations are relevant to his project, but they are to ours. So we treat qualification as a matter of precision and as a stylistic issue affecting ethos. We do not ignore qualification; we emphasize it by distributing it through every element of an argument.

4. **We replaced the single element called "grounds" (or "data") with two, reasons and evidence.** In arguments about significant issues, careful readers want more than mere reasons. They expect to see the "foundation" on which those reasons rest, what we call in ordinary language, "hard evidence." This distinction reflects a psychological and social imperative: Readers want to see how a claim rests on something outside of—and more "solid" than—mere assertion. And in many fields readers are conditioned not just to demand evidentiary support for reasons, but to test its solidity.

We also distinguish between evidence "itself" and reports of it used in an argument. To some students (and teachers), this will seem to split hairs, but students must recognize how their prototypical image of evidence—a smoking gun, fingerprints—differs from what in fact they can offer in its stead—a *description* of the smoking gun, an *image* of fingerprints. We want students to understand that writers offer not evidence itself but only reports of it so that they will realize that every representation of evidence, even numbers, "spins" it in some way, simplifying it, making it tidier than it is. They will then be more critical of what they read and, when they write, more careful to earn their readers' trust by reporting evidence accurately and citing its sources.

**5. We replaced "rebuttal" with "acknowledgment and response."** Many have noted that Toulmin's treatment of rebuttals is problematical. In ordinary language, a rebuttal is what we offer to oppose an objection. But Toulmin used the term to refer to constraints on the range of a claim:

> Since Harry was born in Bermuda, he is a British subject, *unless he has renounced his citizenship, or one of his parents was a diplomatic representative, or . . .*

Writers rarely state these constraints, because they are default conditions that readers usually assume. But writers often raise objections and offer rebuttals as we ordinarily understand them. They even raise alternative positions that they do not treat as objections to be rebutted.

So for *rebuttal* we substitute *acknowledgment & response,* a term more inclusive and less confrontational. No mature argument would be complete if it failed to acknowledge and respond to other points of view—objections, but also qualifications, alternative claims, alternative interpretations of evidence, and so on. And while the response might be a rebuttal as we usually understand it (a counterargument), it need not be: Mature arguers concede the force of valid alternatives. (Our term also covers the less common cases included in Toulmin's term: when a writer raises a default constraint as a possible objection that he rebuts.)

**6. We offer a new, quasi-formal account of how warrants work, and a common-sense means to test them not for truth, but for soundness.** It is common to assert that for an argument to work, its warrant must be true. But so far as we know, no one has explained how a warrant, reason, and claim can all be true but fail as an argument. For example,

> You should eat fish$_{\textit{claim}}$ because it does not raise your cholesterol$_{\textit{reason}}$ since, as we all know, we should eat foods that provide roughage.$_{\textit{warrant}}$

Each of those three elements is true, but the warrant does not link the reason and claim soundly.

We offer what we think is an intuitively satisfying explanation for how warrants bridge a reason and claim, and when they do not, why they fail—something that Toulmin did not address, even in his textbook with Riecke and

Janik.[1] In this discussion, we introduce a pattern of reasoning that some readers may think is merely a synthesis of categorical and conditional reasoning. We agree, except for the words "merely" and we would add, "which reflects naturalistic explanations of reasoning better than syllogisms."

7. **A final difference between this book and others is one of degree.** Just as we have emphasized the role of sound thinking in writing good arguments, we have also tried to demonstrate in every chapter how the writing process supports sound thinking. So rather than segregate advice about writing into separate chapters, we distributed it through every chapter, connecting specific advice about planning, drafting, and revising to related issues of sound reasoning and arguing.

Having emphasized our differences from standard argument texts, we should note what we share with them: We aim at helping students develop a public voice appropriate to a variety of civic, professional, academic, and other forums. We think that readers are likely to assent to a claim only when they see good reasons and evidence, when they understand the logical connections between reasons and claims, and when they see their concerns and questions acknowledged and answered. We view argument not as a coercive device, nor even as a product of human rationality (though it is), but as a competence by which rationality is shared.

We have been struck by how closely we tracked issues in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. As did he, we base our discussion of argument on the occasions that motivate it. He focused on public events: trials, funerals, and political deliberations—occasions that called for oral argument. That led him to categorize arguments by the typical problems that such occasions addressed: what people should believe, what they should value, and what they should do—the familiar categories of forensic, epideictic, and deliberative, which have come down to us roughly as fact, value, and policy.

But the more we thought about the problems that motivate argument, the more we were drawn to an account that we think is deeper and more general than the traditional tri-part distinction. We argue that the problems that motivate arguments are of two general kinds that we call *conceptual* and *pragmatic*. They may seem to match the traditional categories of fact and policy, but those categories are less distinct than they appear: arguments that seem to be about what to believe (fact) are often covert arguments about what to do (policy), and arguments about what to do always turn on embedded arguments about what to believe. And any argument categorized as one of values devolves into one of fact (belief) or policy (action).

But whatever kind of argument we make, we make it not just to gain adherence to a claim, but to solve the problem that occasioned the argument in the first place. How we build an argument to support a solution depends how we frame the problem it solves. So to understand how to make a sound argument, students first have to understand the problem that occasioned it.

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[1] Stephen Toulmin, Richard Rieke, and Allan Janik, *An Introduction to Reasoning* (New York: Macmillan, 1979).

We have been surprised by other links to Aristotle. We also focus on style and on the psychology of readers, neither of which claims much space in most current textbooks on argument. Not surprisingly, we discuss those issues differently, but we share his sense of their relevance. Our discussion of warrants turned out to track his discussion of special and general topics. And as he did, we exclude syllogistic logic from rhetoric, relying instead on warranted reasoning. To reach that end, he imported enthymemes, which are like syllogisms but, as he says, address matters that are only probable. Warrants are the typically silent member of an enthymeme.

As was his goal, ours is also relentlessly "how to." We present an analytical apparatus intended to answer the practical questions of readers and writers as they try to understand and discuss two questions:

- What elements of argument do readers need to reach a sound conclusion?
- How do we combine and arrange those elements so that readers experience our argument as we want them to?

We hope this book encourages students and teachers to think about argument more deeply than they otherwise might. But we have tried never to forget that this is a book about writing, written to students for whom writing may not come naturally. So we have included in each chapter a "Writing Process" section, sometimes as long as the chapter itself, that gives writers advice stated directly and explicitly.

## Some Thoughts on Teaching This Book

This book comprises five parts and two appendices.

- In Part 1, we survey argument and its relationship to problem solving.
- In Part 2, we look at the five elements of an argument in more detail.
- In Part 3, we discuss reasoning, particularly about meaning and causation.
- In Part 4, we discuss the role of language and its devices in arguments.

In the Readings, we include sample arguments that students can analyze and respond to with arguments of their own.

*This is important: After you finish Part 1, you can go directly to any of the other parts.* After Part 1, no part depends on any other, so you can teach them in any order. You can also teach the chapters within Parts 2 through 4 in whatever order best suits you and your students, or even assign chapters individually, so that particular students can work on particular issues.

In addition to the Writing Process sections, every chapter also includes a number of "Inquiries." You can tell your students to ignore these entirely, ask them to pick one or two to think about, or assign them as topics for papers. Some are even worth a research paper. Under no circumstances can students do all of them. Some are so difficult that we expect them merely to pique interest and stimulate thinking. None of them, so far as we know, has just one right answer.

You'll find more specific advice about teaching with this book in the Teacher's Guide, but we can summarize our approach here: Use this book not to create your syllabus but to support your students' experience of making arguments. If you have assignments that engage their interests and abilities, start by discussing them in class. (We'll suggest others in this book and the Teacher's Guide.) *Then* use the book to build on that experience. If students read chapters *after* a class of making and critiquing arguments, it will help them organize and consolidate knowledge and skills activated in classroom experience. Of the teachers who used earlier versions of this book, the most successful subordinated it to free-for-all exchanges in class. The least successful assigned chapters without the context of a dynamic experience of making arguments, thus turning the reading into empty memorization of lists and principles. So use this book to support rather than constrain your teaching.

# A Message to Students

## What Is Argument?

Our aim in this book is to help you do in writing what you do a dozen times a day speaking: settle a contested issue by reaching an agreement based on good reasons.

> You: Let's catch the Bruce Willis movie. I hear it's pretty wild.
>
> Friend: There's a party over at Jan's. Let's go there.
>
> You: Her parties always end up with the cops banging on the door.
>
> Friend: We'll go just for a while. Besides that only happened twice.
>
> You: But you said you wanted to see the Willis movie, and so do I.
>
> Friend: We can see it tomorrow.
>
> You: I have to work tomorrow.
>
> Friend: OK. Maybe I'll go to Jan's later.

Conversations like that are often about trivial matters, but not always:

> Friend: It's stupid for the government to sue cigarette companies over lung cancer and heart disease. People know what they're doing when they start smoking.
>
> You: Yeah, but they try to hook kids. Are you saying an 11-year-old can make that choice intelligently?
>
> Friend: Well, why don't their parents pay more attention to them?
>
> You: Because no one can watch kids every minute. Some parents work.
>
> Friend: You've got a point. But anyone can quit if they want to.
>
> You: That's not so. My uncle has emphysema and he still has to smoke.
>
> Friend: He could quit if he really wanted to. He just needs a little willpower. My mom quit.
>
> You: That's easy for you to say.

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On issues from what movie to see to the guilt of cigarette manufacturers to international terrorism, we make claims, offer reasons, and respond to questions, objections, and alternatives. These conversations let us find civil, rational ways to settle disputes, decide what to believe, conduct business, set public policy, and much more. It's how people in every society spend a good part of their day. In fact, it's part of what distinguishes us from the other creatures of the earth.

We call that universal social activity *argument*. That word sets off alarm bells for many people because it evokes images of quarreling or worse. But we hope to rehabilitate that image of argument by focusing not on its tone but on its form and intention. We'll show you how we use argument not to upset social relationships, but to establish and strengthen them.

We make an argument when we

- offer a claim and reasons to support that claim,
- to someone not inclined to accept what we say at face value,
- in order to solve the problem that motivated us to make the claim in the first place.

We can do that amiably or belligerently, but in either case we profit from an argument only when we know what problem we can solve by making one. Arguments are ways of solving problems.

An argument is different from two other kinds of writing that you may have done before, summary and expressions of personal opinion.

- *Summary:* When you summarize, you report others' ideas without coloring them with your own. You don't just mindlessly compress the original, of course. You have to decide what is relevant to your readers, then express it in your own words. When you write arguments, you may have to summarize background, evidence, or other arguments, but you use that summary as *part of* your argument, to support a claim based on what *you* understand and think. Summaries are useful, but not as important in sound decision making as good arguments.
- *Personal opinion:* An expression of opinion and an argument differ in how you treat your readers. In an opinion paper, you tell readers only what you think, not why they should think so too. You can ignore their views and make claims you don't support. That's why opinion papers have little place in academic, professional, or civil life (unless you are so important that your opinion counts for a lot, just because of who you are). If you want readers to take your opinions seriously, you have to support them; that is, you have to offer an argument that gives readers good reason to think they are sound.

In this book, we want to show you how experienced writers think about and make written arguments.

- They know that the point of an argument is not always to win, but to address a problem that can be solved only with the agreement of others.
- They know that they cannot verbally coerce others into that agreement, but must listen to their questions and objections and, when they write, acknowledge and respond to some of them, even if they have to imagine a voice asking those questions on their readers' behalf.
- They know that good arguments and good thinking go hand-in-hand, that the harder they think about the quality of their argument, the more they improve the quality of their thinking, and vice versa.
- They know that they cannot invent new forms every time they write a new argument, that readers expect to see familiar forms, and that writers can use those conventional forms not just to organize their arguments but to discover them.
- Most importantly, they know something so obvious that it escapes most of us: Even when they don't "win" their argument, they gain something just as important when they earn their readers' respect with an argument that seems amiable, reasonable, and thoughtful.

We want you to understand some other things as well:

- why the ethical dimensions of argument are important in making sound ones;
- how and why arguments differ in different fields;
- why making academic arguments is so difficult for students just entering the academic world;
- how you can use what you learn about making an argument to understand those of others.

People have been making arguments since humankind began to talk, and have been making arguments about making arguments for at least two or three thousand years. So you won't be surprised to learn that some aspects of making arguments are still today topics of intense study, discussion, and even more argument.

Some of those recurring questions are difficult to understand and explain. Many students have wondered why they need to distinguish between their evidence and the mere reports of it they include in their arguments. Every student who has ever tried to understand something we call *warrants* has found them tough going, whether they read about them in this book or in others. Our chapters on reasoning, meaning, and causation address issues that philosophers have argued over for 2,500 years. They demand close reading. The two of us wrangled over them at length, often getting into arguments, sometimes so heatedly that we later had to apologize to each other. When you are committed to an idea, it's not always easy to argue in the amiable way we recommend. But when you argue to solve a problem, not just to win, you can preserve the spirit of collaboration that good argument requires.

## Why Study Argument?

If you are reading this book in a first-year writing course, you might be surprised by what your teachers ask you to write. And if you don't understand how they judge what you write, you may be more surprised by their comments—and disappointed with your grades. We realize that some of you already know what to expect, especially if you've been in college for a while. But having worked with so many students who don't, the two of us decided we should talk about these issues anyway. If what we say is familiar, you can still learn by hearing it from a teacher's perspective.

In this class, your job is not just to build on writing skills you already have, but to use them in a new way. We've known many students, whether they just graduated high school or were out working for a while, who were surprised not just by how much they had to write, but by how it was judged. Most students begin college assuming that they can go on doing a kind of writing called "knowledge-telling": In high school, they told their teachers what they already knew, in correct English sentences, assembled into coherent paragraphs. In the best cases, students repeated what they had learned; in the worst, what they thought their teachers wanted to hear. So they think that in college they will do the same thing, only about more complicated topics.

In fact, your college teachers will expect you to do something different. We ask you to write papers for many reasons, but rarely just to report what you've read or heard in class. Most teachers, most of the time, will expect you to explain and support not *their* position, but *yours*. We want you to lay out a claim that *you* have come to believe and to explain why you believe it, in more detail than you may think necessary. That doesn't mean we expect your claim to be unique, only that you reached it because you thought through the reasons, evidence, and alternative views.

But you will be expected to write a paper that shows not just what you believe but what you can bring readers to accept. You do that in two ways:

- when you think about what you've read and heard long enough to draw your own conclusion, and
- when you show readers why they should accept your position, or at least respect it as thoughtfully plausible.

In making such arguments in writing, you do what you have done many times in conversation: you put your own ideas into dialogue with those of others. You enter into an imagined conversation with someone not inclined to accept your claim just because you make it. One of our aims is to show you how to create that kind of dialogue in your thinking and then represent it in writing.

We teachers expect something else. We won't be satisfied that you just support a claim. We expect you to make that claim in order to accomplish something: either to call for an action that solves a problem or to answer a puzzling question.

We'll explain why arguments that call for action are more common in the business and professional world and arguments that answer questions more common in the academic world. Your teachers will often ask you to make arguments about ideas that have no obvious connection to a problem in the "real world," except your understanding of it: Can chimps count? Where did weaving originate in the ancient world? How did the social structure of the South contribute to the Civil War? For many students, arguments like that seem airy exercises, theoretical speculation useful to no one. That's why we will discuss in detail what we call "conceptual problems," the kind you will increasingly be expected to pose and solve as you progress through your academic career. You won't understand how the academic world works until you understand why such questions are so important to your teachers and why they expect you to support your answers with a sound argument. We offer this discussion as a kind of primer in academic studies that you may not get elsewhere.

The two of us have known many students who find it difficult to accept the idea of making and supporting claims of their own. So, based on questions we have heard many times before, we want to anticipate those you might have and respond to them now, before they become an obstacle to your reading (we're trying to do what we will repeatedly advise you to do—think ahead about the questions and objections your readers might have, then acknowledge and respond to them).

Some students resist the notion that we actually care about their ideas:

> *You don't really expect me to build an argument around my own ideas, do you? If my ideas are right, you already know them. So why try to convince you of what you already know? I'm here to learn from you: just tell me what to say and I'll say it.*

There is a grain of truth in that concern if we're talking about take-home exams intended to measure what you have learned. For most other papers, though, while we care intensely whether you get the facts right, we care more about how you use them to make a plausible case for your views.

Other students, especially in literature classes, think they should write only about their personal responses:

> *Why do I have to support my ideas with reasons and evidence that satisfy you? My feelings and ideas are good enough for me.*

To be sure, it is better to have some ideas than none. And you do learn what you think by writing it out for no one but yourself. But as important as that may be, your teachers want to help you prepare for a time when people will read what you write not because they are paid to, as your teachers are, but because they think you have something to say that they should know. They will have little interest in knowing just your feelings and opinions. Even when you write about your most private thoughts, you have an opportunity to practice writing for readers who, you hope, will take your ideas seriously, whether they share your feelings or not.

Other students worry that they have nothing to say:

> *I can't solve important problems like abortion or gun control. And what do I know about what documents Thomas Jefferson used as models for the Declaration of Independence?*

Those who think that shortchange their intelligence. You may not now be able to change the mind of an experienced historian, but you can write an argument that she will respect and that encourages her to respect the quality of your mind.

Finally, some students shy away from argument altogether:

> *Arguments make me uncomfortable. I feel pushy trying to get people to change their minds. I don't like shouting or the idea of winners and losers. Besides, I don't think it's right to take sides all the time.*

That view of argument is widespread, but it defines argument too narrowly. You don't have to get into an argument every time you offer one. We two have been making an argument for the last several pages, giving you what we hope are good reasons to consider something that you might not be inclined to accept: that many, perhaps most of your papers in high school did not make arguments, and that most of the papers you write in college must. But we haven't shouted, and we hope you don't feel we've tried to push you around.

We do acknowledge the force of one concern that some students express:

> *Arguments rarely settle anything.*

On some recurring issues, that's true—most people have views on issues such as abortion and gay rights that are so deeply entrenched in their system of values that no argument can (or should) change them. But such intractable issues are rare. And even in those cases, argument has a place: When we all make the best, most reasonable arguments we can, we understand one another better and at least make it possible to respect one anothers' reasons for holding the beliefs we do. A good argument does not have to earn others' agreement to earn their respect.

There is a term for the image that you project in making an argument others respect: your *ethos*. Image has such a bad reputation these days that we hesitate to offer it as a reason for learning how to make sound arguments. But when the evidence is uncertain, when opposing points of view both seem to have force, when we aren't clear about what to think or do, we tend to give weight to those who project the ethos of someone reasonable, thoughtful, and mature. Over time, the ethos you project in individual arguments becomes your enduring reputation. And when you earn the reputation of someone who makes reasonable, thoughtful, mature arguments, you earn a fair hearing even from those inclined to disagree.

Now here's a final warning: Much of our advice about planning, drafting, and revising arguments may seem formulaic and mechanical. Some of you will think that an advantage: *Great! Just tell me what to do and I'll do it.* Others will bristle that it stifles your creativity: *I want my writing to be mine, not the product of your formulas.*

We hope that you will all learn both how to lean on our models when you need to and how to set them aside them when you can. You know how to do that if you've ever learned a sport such as golf or tennis or a performance art such as dance or music. You don't practice the whole skill all at one, but one part at a time: plant your feet this way, hold your hand that way. When you put the parts together in a game or performance, you at first seem to move by the numbers, more clunky than creative. But once you learn the parts well enough not to think about every conscious move, there comes a moment when you go with the flow, putting the moves and pieces together into a seamless, flowing performance.

That's how you'll learn to make arguments. You may at first feel you are writing by the numbers, that your arguments are mechanical and formulaic. But as you master the parts, they will disappear into the flow of drafting, and your arguments will seem more natural and organic. It's then that you can be as creative as you wish. With rare exceptions, creative people work within boundaries and forms that they *knowingly* adapt or even break. Shakespeare was perhaps the most creative person who ever wrote in English, but he worked within conventions that all his contemporaries recognized. When he broke those boundaries, he knew what they were and what he was doing.

We hope that you learn the forms of argument well enough to use them creatively. But when you struggle because time is short or the issue too complex, you'll have something to fall back on that will help you assemble the pieces into a seamless, flowing argument that puts your ideas—and you—in the best light.

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