

SECOND EDITION

# PERSPECTIVES ON ARGUMENT

Nancy V. Wood

1998  
MLA  
Guidelines  
Included

# Perspectives on Argument

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Nancy V. Wood

*The University of Texas at Arlington*



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# Preface

## PURPOSE

The most important purpose of this book is to teach students strategies for critical reading, critical thinking, research, and writing that will help them participate in all types of argument both inside and outside of the classroom. A basic assumption is that argument exists everywhere and that students need to learn to participate productively in all forms of argument including those they encounter in school, at home, on the job, and in the national and international spheres. Such participation is critical not only in a democratic society, but also in a global society in which issues become more and more complex each year. Students who use this book will learn to identify controversial topics that are “at issue,” to read and form reactions and opinions of their own, and to write argument papers that express their individual views and perspectives.

A central idea of this book is that modern argument is not always polarized as right or wrong, but that instead it often invites a variety of perspectives on an issue. Another idea, equally important, is that not all argument results in the declaration of winners. The development of common ground and either consensus or compromise are sometimes as acceptable as declaring winners in argument. Students will learn to take a variety of approaches to argument, including taking a position and defending it, seeking common ground at times, withholding opinion at other times, negotiating when necessary, and even changing their original beliefs when they can no longer make a case for them. The perspectives and abilities taught here are those that an educated populace in a world community needs to coexist cooperatively and without constant destructive conflict.

## SPECIAL FEATURES

Both instructors and students who pick up this book have the right to ask how it differs from some of the other argument texts that are presently available. They deserve to know why they might want to use this book instead of another. This text, which is targeted for freshmen and sophomores enrolled in argument or argument and literature classes in two-year and four-year colleges, is both a reader and a rhetoric. Within this reader and rhetoric format are a number of special features that when taken together, make the book unique.

- **Reading, critical thinking, and writing** are taught as integrated and interdependent processes. Comprehensive chapters on the reading and writing processes show how they can be adapted to argument. Extensive instruction in critical reading and critical thinking appear throughout. Assignments and questions that invite critical reading, critical thinking, and original argumentative writing appear at the end of every chapter in “The Rhetoric” and at the end of every section of “The Reader.”
- **Cross-gender and cross-cultural communication styles** are presented in a unique chapter that provides for a classroom in which every student can find a voice. Students learn to identify and develop their own unique styles of argument and to recognize how their styles may have been influenced by family background, gender, ethnic background, or country of origin. Also included are international students’ perspectives on the argument styles of their countries. Many readings in the book are by authors of varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- **Explanations of the elements and structure of argument** include the **Toulmin model of argument**, the **classical modes of appeal**, the **traditional categories of claims** derived from classical stasis theory, and the **rhetorical situation**. Theory is integrated and translated into language that students can easily understand and apply. For example, students learn to apply theory to recognize and analyze the parts of an argument while reading and to develop and structure their own ideas while writing.
- **Audience analysis** includes the concepts of the familiar and the unfamiliar audience as well as Chaim Perelman’s concept of the universal audience.
- **Productive invention strategies** help students develop ideas for papers.
- **Library and on-line research is presented as a creative activity** that students are invited to enjoy. Workable strategies for research and note taking are provided. Students are taught to document researched argument papers according to both **MLA and APA style**.
- **Exercises, class projects, and writing assignments at the ends of the chapters invite individual, small group, and whole class participation.** Collaborative exercises encourage small groups of students to engage in critical thinking, and whole class projects invite students to participate in activities that require an understanding of argument. Classroom-tested **writing assignments** include the **exploratory paper**, which teaches students to explore several different perspectives on an issue, the **critical analysis paper**, which teaches students to analyze and evaluate a written argument, and the **researched position paper**, which teaches students to take a position on an issue and defend it. **Examples of student papers** are provided for each major type of paper. The writing assignments in this book are models for assignments that students are likely to encounter in their other classes.
- **Summary charts at the end of the rhetoric section present the main points of argument** in a handy format. They also integrate the reading and writing processes for argument by placing strategies for both side by side and showing the interconnections.

- **A total of 123 different readings** in the rhetoric section and “The Reader” provide students with multiple perspectives on the many issues presented throughout the book. Fifteen of these readings are argument papers written by students.
- **The readings in “The Reader” are clustered under nineteen subissues** that are related to the seven major general issue areas that organize “The Reader.” This helps students focus and narrow broad issues. Furthermore, the readings in each subissue group “talk” to each other, and questions invite students to join the conversation.

## NEW TO THIS EDITION

- **Two new chapters** teach special applications of argument theory.
  - **“Rogerian Argument and Common Ground”** teaches an alternate strategy to use when the traditional confrontational style of argument is not working.
  - **“Argument and Literature”** teaches students to recognize argument in literature and to write arguments of their own about literature.
- **Sixty-five percent of the reading selections are new.** A total of 80 of the 123 reading selections in this edition appear for the first time.
- **Two new issue areas** that explore the issues associated with **Modern Electronic Media** and **Social Responsibility** appear in “The Reader.”
- **Nine new issue questions**, each accompanied by sets of 3–6 essays to provide different perspectives on the questions, appear in “The Reader.” These questions include, **“Do Men and Women Students Learn Differently in the Classroom?”** **“What Is a Family? Does It Have to Be Traditional?”** **“How Much Should Schools Change to Help Students Succeed?”** **“What Should Be Done With Young Offenders?”** **“Should the Internet Be Censored or Screened to Protect Users?”** **“What Effect Do Computers Have on Their Users?”** **“Who Should Share Responsibility for the Children?”** **“Who Should Take Responsibility for the Poor?”** and **“Who Should Be Responsible for the Life and Death Decisions That Affect the Terminally Ill?”**
- **Examples of how to locate and cite Internet materials and use on-line databases** appear in the chapter on invention and research.
- **Nine new examples of student writing** provide models for an issue proposal, a Toulmin analysis, Rogerian argument (one is written in letter format), an analysis of an argument made by a literary character, a position paper that demonstrates how to use argument theory for invention, and an annotated bibliography.
- **Nine new whole class projects** include debates, symposia, literary debates, critical reading and analysis sessions, and class reporting sessions. All create opportunities for students to participate in major argument activities.



- **New Questions on the Chapter and Questions on the Essays for Analysis** appear at the end of each of the twelve chapters. These can be used as reading quizzes and as questions for discussions.
- **Revised exercises and writing assignments** appear throughout the book. Many small changes have been made in response to advice from instructors who taught with the first edition.
- **Films and literature related to “The Reader” issues** are listed in the introductions to each issue area and invite students to extend their perspectives on the issues through these art forms.
- **An Alternate Table of Contents** provides (1) an alphabetical listing of all of the issues in the book to help students discover paper topics and related essays, (2) an annotated list of the **major writing assignments** that include clear instructions and models to help students complete them, (3) an annotated list of the **class projects** along with clear instructions for organizing and executing them, and (4) **examples of some of the argument strategies** that appear in the essays in “The Reader.” Students may consult these to increase their understanding of argument theory.

## ORGANIZATION

The book is organized into four parts and, as much as possible, chapters have been written so that they stand alone. Instructors may thus assign them either in sequence or in a more preferred order to supplement their own course organization.

**Part One: Engaging with Argument for Reading and Writing.** This part introduces students to issues and the characteristics of argument in Chapter 1, helps them begin to develop a personal style of argument in Chapter 2, and provides them with processes for reading and writing argument in Chapters 3 and 4. Writing assignments include the issue proposal, the argument style paper, the analysis of the rhetorical situation paper, the summary-response paper, and the exploratory paper.

**Part Two: Understanding the Nature of Argument for Reading and Writing.** This part identifies and explains the parts of an argument according to Stephen Toulmin’s model of argument in Chapter 5, explains the types of claims and purposes for argument in Chapter 6, and presents the types of proofs along with clear examples and tests for validity in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 teaches students to use Rogerian argument strategies to achieve common ground when traditional strategies are not working, and Chapter 9 explains how to use argument theory to gain new perspectives in reading imaginative literature. Writing assignments include the Toulmin analysis, the position paper based on “The Reader,” the Rogerian argument papers, the argument and literature papers, and the critical analysis paper.

**Part Three: Writing a Research Paper That Presents an Argument.** This part teaches students to write a claim, clarify purpose, and analyze the audience in Chapter 10, to use various creative strategies for inventing ideas and gathering research materials in Chapter 11, and to organize, write, revise, and prepare the final manuscript for a researched position paper in Chapter 12. Methods for locating and using resource materials in the library and on-line are presented in Chapters 11 and 12.

**Part Four: The Reader.** This part is organized around the broad issues of men's and women's roles, education, crime and the treatment of criminals, freedom of speech, racism in America, modern electronic media, and social responsibility. Strategies and questions to help students explore issues and move from reading and discussion to writing are also included.

## THE INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

In preparing the Instructor's Manual, my coauthors and I have included chapter-by-chapter suggestions for using the book in both the traditional and the computer classrooms. We have also included sample syllabi. Two instructors have written day-by-day teaching journals in which they detail how they worked with this book in class and how the students responded. Also included in the manual are strategies for teaching students to use electronic data bases, the Internet, and other resources for conducting on-line and library research. Another chapter suggests how student argument papers can be developed with the help of tutors in a writing center and by on-line moos and chat groups. A set of class handouts ready for photocopying is also provided. Copies of this manual may be obtained from your Prentice Hall representative.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My greatest debt is to my husband, James A. Wood, who has also taught and written about argument. He helped me work out my approach to argument by listening to me, by discussing my ideas, and by contributing ideas of his own. The process renewed my faith in peer groups and writing conferences. Most writers, I am convinced, profit from talking through their ideas with someone else. I was lucky to find someone so knowledgeable and generous with his time and insights.

I also owe a debt to the freshman English program at The University of Texas at Arlington. When I joined the department a few years ago, I found myself caught up in the ideas and controversies of this program. It provided me with much of the interest and motivation to write this book.

For the past several years I have trained the graduate teaching assistants in our department who teach argument. An exceptionally alert group of these stu-



dents volunteered to meet with me and recommend revisions for this second edition. They include Lynn Atkinson, J. T. Martin, Kimberly Ellison, Corri Wells, Steve Harding, Barbara Chiarello, Collin G. Brooke, Tracy Bessire, Cheryl Brown, Matthew Levy, Alan Taylor, and Deborah Reese. I hope they will be pleased when they see that I have followed many of their suggestions for improvement. Many other graduate teaching assistants in our program have also taught with this book and have made useful recommendations and suggestions. I am grateful to them for their insight and enthusiasm.

I am also indebted to other colleagues and friends who have helped me with this book. James Kinneavy is the originator of the exploratory paper as it is taught in this book. Audrey Wick, Director of Freshman English at our University and a seasoned teacher of argument, read and critiqued every essay in the present Reader. No essay is included that does not bear her stamp of approval. She also provided me with one of her favorite class projects, the literary debate that appears at the end of Chapter 9 on argument and literature. My colleague Tim Morris helped me think through some of the ideas in Chapter 9, and he provided me with many excellent examples of poems and other literary works that make arguments. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Samantha Masterton who provided research assistance and other types of creative help for this edition. She made a thorough critique of all of the chapters, she classroom tested all of the class exercises and writing assignments, and she contributed many excellent suggestions for improving chapters and exercises. I have followed her suggestions throughout. She also contributed materials to some of the chapters and to the Instructor's Manual, and she helped locate and organize articles for "The Reader." Beth Brunk, Corri Wells, Deborah Reese, Cheryl Brown, Samantha Masterton, and Leslie Snow have all either provided chapters or have co-authored chapters in the Instructor's Manual. Beth Brunk formatted and typed it. It has been a constant pleasure to work with these bright, energetic, and creative colleagues, and I am grateful to all of them for the contributions they have made to this second edition.

I wish I had the space to acknowledge by name the many students from argument classes, including my own, who read the first edition and made recommendations for this second edition. Some of them also contributed their own essays to be used as examples, and their names appear on their work. I paid particularly close attention to these student's comments, and I know their suggestions and contributions have made this a better book for other argument students throughout the country.

At Prentice Hall, my greatest debt is to Phil Miller, President, Humanities and Social Sciences, who got me started with this project. I also thank Kara Hado, assistant development editor, and Charlyce Jones Owens, Editorial Director of Humanities and Social Sciences. These individuals provided excellent help with all of the various stages of writing and final editing. Thanks also to Rob Mejia, Marketing Manager, who helped me develop some of the more user-friendly features of the book. Patty Sawyer of Pine Tree Composition, Inc. did a thorough and conscientious job of seeing the book through all phases of production. Fred

Courtright did a superb job of obtaining all of the permissions for this edition. I have felt very fortunate to work with such conscientious, reliable, and capable professionals.

Other colleagues around the country provided additional ideas and recommended changes that have helped improve both the first and second editions of this book. They include Margaret W. Batschelet, University of Texas at San Antonio; Linda D. Bense-Meyers, University of Tennessee; Gregory Clark, Brigham Young University; Dan Damesville, Tallahassee Community College; Alexander Friedlander, Drexel University; William S. Hockman, University of Southern Colorado; James Kinneavy, University of Texas at Austin; Elizabeth Metzger, University of South Florida; Margaret Dietz Meyer, Ithaca College; Susan Padgett, North Lake College; Randall L. Popken, Tarleton State University; William E. Sheidley, United States Air Force Academy; Diane M. Thiel, Florida International University; and Jennifer Welsh, University of Southern California. I am grateful to them for the time and care they took reviewing the manuscript.

Finally, I thank all of you who use this book. I would like to hear about your experiences with it, and I am especially interested in your ideas for improving the chapters and readings. My e-mail address is woodnv@utarlg.uta.edu.

This book has been a genuinely collaborative effort, and I expect that it will continue to be. I hope students will profit from the example and learn to draw on the expertise of their instructors and classmates to help them write their papers. Most writing is more fun and more successful when it is, at least partly, a social process.

N. V. W.

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