

# Writing Argument

FOURTH EDITION

A RHETORIC WITH READINGS

JOHN D. RAMAGE  
JOHN C. BEAN

*f o u r t h   e d i t i o n*



# Writing Arguments

## A Rhetoric with Readings

John D. Ramage

*Arizona State University*

John C. Bean

*Seattle University*

Allyn and Bacon

*Boston ■ London ■ Toronto ■ Sydney ■ Tokyo ■ Singapore*

*Vice President:* Eben W. Ludlow  
*Editorial Assistant:* Linda M. D'Angelo  
*Marketing Manager:* Lisa Kimball  
*Editorial Production Administrator:* Susan Brown  
*Editorial-Production Service:* Matrix Productions  
*Text Designer:* Denise Hoffman  
*Composition Buyer:* Linda Cox  
*Manufacturing Buyer:* Suzanne Lareau  
*Compositor:* Omegatype Typography, Inc.  
*Cover Administrator:* Linda Knowles  
*Cover Designer:* Susan Paradise



Copyright © 1998, 1995, 1992, and 1989 by Allyn & Bacon  
A Viacom Company  
160 Gould St.  
Needham Heights, Mass. 02194  
Internet: abacon.com  
America Online: keyword: College Online

All rights reserved. No part of the material protected by this copyright notice may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the copyright owner.

### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ramage, John D.

Writing arguments : a rhetoric with readings / John D. Ramage,  
John C. Bean. — 4th ed.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-205-26917-6

1. English language—Rhetoric. 2. Persuasion (Rhetoric)  
3. College readers. 4. Report writing. I. Bean, John C.

II. Title.

PE1431.R33 1997

808'.0427—dc21

97-18531

CIP

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

RRDV 01 00 99 98

 *p r e f a c e*

## Overview

Through its first three editions, *Writing Arguments* steadily emerged as the leading college textbook on the art of writing arguments. In this fourth edition, we have revised and streamlined the book to clarify and enliven its message and to reflect our own evolving understanding of the theory and practice of argumentation. In either its regular edition, which includes an anthology of readings, or in its brief edition without the anthology, *Writing Arguments* has been used successfully at every level, from freshman writing to advanced argumentation courses.

As in previous editions, our aim is to integrate a comprehensive study of argument with a process approach to writing. The text treats arguments as a means of clarification and truth seeking as well as a means of persuading audiences. In both its treatment of argumentation and its approach to teaching writing, the text is rooted in current research and theory.

The fourth edition retains the following successful features from the third edition: The text has an extensive treatment of invention that includes use of the Toulmin system of analyzing arguments combined with use of the enthymeme as a discovery and shaping tool. To aid invention, it also has explanations of *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*, and a major section treating five categories of claims. It focuses on both the reading and the writing of arguments and also includes a copious treatment of the research paper, including two student examples—one using the MLA system and one using the APA system. Among the book's distinguishing features are numerous "For Class Discussion" exercises designed for collaborative groups, a full sequence of writing assignments, and an extensive appendix on working in groups. The fourth edition contains sixteen student essays of varied length and complexity as well as sixty professional essays aimed at producing discussion, analysis, and debate. Fifteen of the professional selections appear in the rhetoric portion of the text (Parts I–IV) and forty-five in the anthology.

## Improvements in the Fourth Edition

Following the recommendations of many users of the third edition at both four-year and two-year institutions, we have substantially strengthened *Writing Arguments* through the following additions and changes.

- Larger format and new design, which allow for a more open, more readable page and invite better use of annotations.
- More consistent treatment of argument as multisided conversation rather than as pro-con debate. Throughout the text we show how issues are embedded in a context of subissues, side issues, and larger issues that resist reduction to a simple pro-con focus. To this end, we have removed the pro-con pairs from the beginning of the anthology and have organized the anthology by topic areas rather than by already formulated issues. We have also eliminated such combative terms as *opponents* or *adversaries* in order to treat argument as a truth-seeking inquiry among alternative views instead of a win-lose debate between two sides.
- Extensive rewriting of Chapter 1. New to this chapter are an explanation of the difference between implicit and explicit arguments, enriched discussion of the truth-seeking dimension of argument, and clearer explanations of the tension that arguers always feel between truth seeking and persuasion.
- More interesting and substantive examples throughout the text. For instance, a hate speech example replaces the third edition's dorm room carpets example in Chapter 3, and the provocative issue of women in combat replaces the teenage job issue used for illustration in Chapters 4–6.
- Fuller explanation of how the strategies of this text can be applied to reading arguments as well as to writing arguments.
- A greatly expanded discussion of numerical and statistical evidence incorporated into Chapter 6.
- Enriched discussions of *pathos* (derived from the Greek for *suffering*) as an appeal to the imaginative sympathies of an audience rather than more narrowly as an appeal to emotions.
- Extensive rewriting of Chapter 8 to explain how writers can vary the tone and structure of an argument to accommodate audiences along a scale of resistance from sympathetic to hostile. The third edition's extended example of the "group writing controversy" has been replaced by a range of more interesting and relevant examples to explain refutation, concession, and Rogerian argument.
- Much fuller treatment of electronic databases, computerized searches, and the Internet and World Wide Web in our discussions of research writing in Part IV.
- Inclusion in the anthology of eighteen new professional arguments as well as three new topic areas: Censorship on the Internet, Recycling and Garbage, and Gay Marriage. To make room for these new topics, the third edition's Political Correctness, Gun Control, and Global Warming topics have been dropped. Throughout the anthology we have continued our policy of mixing shorter, op-ed arguments with longer, research-based arguments taken from scholarly journals or serious public affairs magazines.

## Our Approaches to Argumentation

Our interest in argumentation grows out of our interest in the relationship between writing and thinking. In writing arguments, writers are forced to lay bare their thinking processes in an unparalleled way. In an effort to engage students in the kinds of critical thinking that argument demands, we draw on four major approaches to argumentation:

- *The enthymeme as a rhetorical and logical structure.* This concept, especially useful for beginning writers, helps students “nutshell” an argument as a claim with one or more supporting because clauses. It also helps them see how real-world arguments are rooted in probabilistic assumptions granted by the audience rather than in universal and unchanging principles.
- *The three classical types of appeal*—logos, ethos, and pathos. These concepts help students place their arguments in a rhetorical context focusing on audience-based appeals; they also help students create an effective voice and style.
- *Toulmin’s system of analyzing arguments.* Toulmin’s system helps students see the complete, implicit structure that underlies an enthymeme and develop appropriate grounds and backing to support the claim. It also highlights the rhetorical, social, and dialectical nature of argument.
- *Stasis theory on categories of claims.* This approach stresses the heuristic value of learning different patterns of support for different categories of claims and often leads students to make surprisingly rich and full arguments.

Throughout the text these approaches are integrated and synthesized into generative tools for both producing and analyzing arguments.

## Structure of the Text

The text has five main parts plus two appendixes. Part I gives an overview of argumentation. These first three chapters present our philosophy of argument, showing how argument helps writers clarify their own thinking. Throughout we link the process of arguing—articulating issue questions, formulating propositions, examining alternative points of view, and creating structures of supporting reasons and evidence—with the processes of reading and writing.

Part II examines the principles of argument. Chapters 4 through 6 show that the core of an argument is a claim with reasons. These reasons are often stated as enthymemes, the unstated premise of which must sometimes be brought to the surface and supported. Discussion of Toulmin logic shows students how to discover both the stated and unstated premises of their arguments and to provide structures of reasons and evidence to support them. Chapters 7 and 8 focus on the rhetorical context of arguments. These chapters discuss the writer’s relationship with an audience, particularly with finding audience-based reasons; with using

*pathos* and *ethos* effectively and responsibly; and with accommodating arguments to different kinds of audiences, from sympathetic to neutral to hostile.

Part III discusses five different categories of argument: definitional arguments, causal arguments, resemblance arguments, evaluation arguments, and proposal arguments. These chapters introduce students to two recurring strategies of argument that cut across the different category types: *criteria-match arguing*, in which the writer establishes criteria for making a judgment and argues whether a specific case does or does not meet those criteria; and *causal arguing*, in which the writer shows that one event or phenomenon can be linked to others in a causal chain. The last chapter of Part III deals with the special complexities of moral arguments.

Part IV shows students how to incorporate research into their arguments. It explains how writers use sources, with a special focus on the skills of summary, paraphrase, and judicious quotation. Unlike standard treatments of the research paper, our discussion explains to students how the writer's meaning and purpose control the selection and shaping of source materials. Part IV explains both the MLA and the APA documentation system, which are illustrated by two student examples of researched arguments. Throughout Chapters 16 and 17, we incorporate new discussions of electronic searching and uses of the Internet.

The appendixes provide important supplemental information useful for courses in argument. Appendix 1 gives an overview of informal fallacies, and Appendix 2 shows students how to get the most out of collaborative groups in an argument class. Appendix 2 also provides a sequence of collaborative tasks that will help students learn to peer-critique their classmates' arguments in progress. The numerous "For Class Discussion" exercises within the text provide additional tasks for group collaboration.

Finally, Part V, the anthology, provides a selection of professional arguments covering eleven provocative topics. The anthology selections are now grouped by topic rather than by issue question to encourage students to see that any conversation of alternative views gives rise to numerous embedded and intertwined issues. Formulating the issue question is part of the writer's task. Additional readings—both student and professional—are placed throughout Parts I–IV to illustrate concepts and strategies under discussion. Many of the issues raised in Parts I–IV (for example, illegitimacy and single parenthood from Chapter 2, recycling and garbage from Chapter 8, the mentally ill homeless in Chapters 10 and 14, and gay marriage in Chapter 13) are treated more fully in the anthology.

## Writing Assignments

The text provides a variety of sequenced writing assignments, including expressive tasks for discovering and exploring arguments, "microthemes" for practicing basic argumentative moves (for example, supporting a reason with statistical evidence), cases, and numerous other assignments calling for complete arguments. Thus, the text provides instructors with a wealth of options for writing assignments on which to build a coherent course.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are happy for this opportunity to give public thanks to the scholars, teachers, and students who have influenced our approach to composition and argument. We would especially like to thank Jeffrey Cain and Stephen Bean for their research assistance in preparing the fourth edition. We also thank the following reviewers who gave us unusually helpful and cogent advice on this revision: Linda Bensel-Meyers, University of Tennessee–Knoxville; Beth Daniell, Clemson University; Charles Watterson Davis, Kansas State University; Judith Ferster, North Carolina State University; Christy Friend, University of Texas–Austin; Mary Anne Reiss, Elizabethtown Community College; and Linda Woodson, University of Texas–San Antonio.

We would also like to thank our editor Eben Ludlow, whose unflagging good humor and faith in our approach to both composition and argument have kept us writing and revising for the better part of twelve years. Eben called forth this book and kept it going. For that we are grateful. Additional thanks go to Daniel Anderson of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Daniel Anderson contributed the chapter on electronic writing and research in our 1997 text *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing*, and we have again drawn on his expertise to bring Chapters 16 and 17 up to the minute in these important areas.

Finally, we would like to thank our families. John Bean: Thanks to Kit, Matthew, Andrew, Stephen, and Sarah for their love, support, good humor, rich conversation, and willingness to discuss argument in any context at any time. John Ramage: Thanks to my siblings for their extended support—brother Steve and sisters Carol Flinders, Wendy Hawkins, and Mary Beth Smith—and to my parents Gib and Jeanne Ramage for a lifelong dialectic. May the final synthesis never be achieved.

John D. Ramage  
John C. Bean



# *b r i e f c o n t e n t s*

## PART I OVERVIEW OF ARGUMENT 1

CHAPTER 1 Argument: An Introduction 3

CHAPTER 2 Reading Arguments 24

CHAPTER 3 Writing Arguments 52

## PART II PRINCIPLES OF ARGUMENT 79

CHAPTER 4 The Core of an Argument:  
A Claim with Reasons 81

CHAPTER 5 The Logical Structure of Arguments 95

CHAPTER 6 Evidence in Argument 113

CHAPTER 7 Moving Your Audience:  
Audience-Based Reasons, *Ethos*, and *Pathos* 145

CHAPTER 8 Accommodating Your Audience:  
Treating Differing Views 166

## PART III ARGUMENTS IN DEPTH: FIVE CATEGORIES OF CLAIMS 189

CHAPTER 9 Using the Categories of Claims to Generate Ideas 191

CHAPTER 10 Definition Arguments: X Is/Is Not a Y 198

CHAPTER 11 Causal Arguments: X Causes/Does Not Cause Y 228

CHAPTER 12 Resemblance Arguments: X Is/Is Not Like Y 264

CHAPTER 13 Evaluation Arguments: X Is/Is Not a Good Y 281

CHAPTER 14	Proposal Arguments: “We Should/Should Not Do X”	304
CHAPTER 15	Ethical Arguments	339
PART IV WRITING FROM SOURCES:		
THE ARGUMENT AS A FORMAL RESEARCH PAPER		355
CHAPTER 16	Finding and Selecting Sources: The Library and the Internet	357
CHAPTER 17	Using and Documenting Sources	380
APPENDIXES 421		
APPENDIX 1	Logical Fallacies	421
APPENDIX 2	The Writing Community: Working in Groups	435
PART V AN ANTHOLOGY OF ARGUMENTS		453
CREDITS		709
INDEX		713

 *c o n t e n t s*

Preface      xxv

---

 PART I  
OVERVIEW OF ARGUMENT      1

CHAPTER 1    Argument: An Introduction      3

What Do We Mean by Argument?	3
Argument Is Not a Fight or a Quarrel	3
Argument Is Not Pro-Con Debate	4
Arguments Can Be Explicit or Implicit	4
The Defining Features of Argument	7
Argument Requires Justification of Its Claims	7
Argument Is Both a Process and a Product	9
Argument Combines Truth Seeking and Persuasion	10
Argument and the Problem of Truth	12
When Does Argument Become Propaganda?	
The Debate Between Socrates and Callicles	12
What Is Truth? The Place of Argument in Contemporary Life	13
A Successful Process of Argumentation: The Well-Functioning Committee	17
<i>"Petition to Waive the University Math Requirement"</i> —Gordon Adams	19
Conclusion	23

CHAPTER 2    Reading Arguments      24

Why Reading Arguments Is Important for Writers of Argument	24
Suggestions for Improving Your Reading Process	24
Strategies for Reading Arguments: An Overview	26

Strategy 1: Reading as a Believer	26
<i>"The Coming White Underclass"</i> —Charles Murray	27
Summary Writing as a Way of Reading to Believe	31
Incorporating Summaries into Your Writing	37
Suspending Doubt: Willing Your Own Belief in the Writer's Views	38
Strategy 2: Reading as a Doubter	39
Strategy 3: Seeking Out Alternative Views and Analyzing Sources of Disagreement	42
Disagreement about Facts or Truth	42
Disagreement about Values, Beliefs, or Assumptions	42
<i>"Letter to the Editor" in Response to Charles Murray</i> —Patricia Bucalo	44
<i>"Letter to the Editor" in Response to Charles Murray</i> —Pamela J. Maraldo	45
Excerpt from <i>"New Cultural Conscience Shifts the Welfare Debate"</i> —John Leo	46
<i>"Wrong Way to Reform Welfare"</i> —Dorothy Gilliam	46
Writing an Analysis of a Disagreement	48
<i>"An Analysis of the Sources of Disagreement between Murray and Gilliam"</i> (A Sample Analysis Essay)	48
Strategy 4: Evaluating the Conflicting Positions	50
Conclusion	51

## CHAPTER 3 Writing Arguments 52

A Brief Description of Writers' Process	52
Strategies for Improving Your Writing Process	54
Using Expressive Writing for Discovery and Exploration	56
Freewriting	56
Idea-mapping	58
Playing the Believing and Doubting Game	58
Brainstorming for Pro and Con <i>Because</i> Clauses	61
Brainstorming a Network of Related Issues	62
Shaping Your Argument	63
Classical Argument as an Initial Guide	63
The Power of Tree Diagrams	66

## Using Expressive Writing to Discover and Explore Ideas:

Two Sets of Exploratory Tasks	71
Set 1: Starting Points	71
Set 2: Exploration and Rehearsal	73
✦ Writing Assignments for Chapters 1–3	75



## PART II PRINCIPLES OF ARGUMENT 79

### CHAPTER 4 The Core of an Argument: A Claim with Reasons 81

The Rhetorical Triangle	81
Issue Questions as the Origins of Argument	83
Difference Between an Issue Question and an Information Question	83
Difference Between a Genuine Argument and a Pseudo-argument	85
Pseudo-Arguments: Fanatics and Skeptics	85
Another Source of Pseudo-Arguments: Lack of Shared Assumptions	86
Frame of an Argument: A Claim Supported by Reasons	88
What Is a Reason?	88
Advantages of Expressing Reasons in Because Statements	90
Application of this Chapter's Principles to Your Own Writing	92
Application of this Chapter's Principles to the Reading of Arguments	93
Conclusion	94

### CHAPTER 5 The Logical Structure of Arguments 95

Overview to <i>Logos</i> : What Do We Mean by the "Logical Structure" of an Argument	95
Adopting a Language for Describing Arguments: The Toulmin System	99
Using Toulmin's Schema to Determine a Strategy of Support	106
Evidence as Support	107
Chain of Reasons as Support	110
Conclusion	112

## CHAPTER 6 Evidence in Argument 113

Using Evidence from Personal Experience	113
Using Personal Experience Data Collected from Memory	113
Using Personal Experience Data Collected from Observations	114
Using Evidence from Interviews, Surveys, and Questionnaires	115
Conducting Interviews	115
Using Surveys or Questionnaires	116
Using Evidence from Reading	117
Facts and Examples	117
Summaries of Research	118
Testimony	118
Using Numerical Data and Statistics	118
Representing Numbers in Tables, Graphs, and Charts	119
Line Graphs	121
Bar Graphs	122
Pie Charts	124
Using Graphics for Effect	124
Using Numbers Strategically	127
What to Do When the Experts Disagree	128
Coping with Uncertainty	131
Writing Your Own Argument: Using Evidence Persuasively	133
When Possible, Select Your Data from Sources Your Reader Trusts	133
Increase Persuasiveness of Factual Data by Ensuring Recency, Representativeness, and Sufficiency	134
In Citing Evidence, Distinguish Fact from Inference or Opinion	135
To Use Evidence Persuasively, Position It Effectively	136
Conclusion	137
✎ Writing Assignments for Chapters 4–6	138
“Choose Life”—Dao Do (student)	143

## CHAPTER 7 Moving Your Audience: Audience-Based Reasons, *Ethos*, and *Pathos* 145

Starting from Your Readers’ Beliefs: The Power of Audience-Based Reasons	145
Difference Between Writer- and Audience-Based Reasons	146
Finding Audience-Based Reasons: Asking Questions about Your Audience	149

<i>Ethos</i> and <i>Pathos</i> as Persuasive Appeals: An Overview	151
How to Create an Effective <i>Ethos</i> : The Appeal to Credibility	153
Be Knowledgeable about Your Issue	153
Be Fair	153
Build a Bridge to Your Audience	154
How to Create <i>Pathos</i> : The Appeal to Beliefs and Emotions	154
Use Concrete Language	155
Use Specific Examples and Illustrations	155
Use Narratives	156
Choose Words, Metaphors, and Analogies with Appropriate Connotations	158
The InterRelatedness of <i>Logos</i> , <i>Ethos</i> , and <i>Pathos</i> : Where Should I Reveal My Thesis?	159
“Minneapolis Pornography Ordinance”—Ellen Goodman	160
Our Rewrite of the Same Essay into the Classical Argument Structure	162
Conclusion	165

## CHAPTER 8 Accommodating Your Audience: Treating Differing Views 166

Opening Exercise	166
One-Sided Versus Multisided Arguments	169
Determining Your Audience’s Resistance to Your Views	170
Appealing to a Supportive Audience: One-Sided Argument	172
Appealing to a Neutral or Undecided Audience: Classical Argument	173
Summarizing Opposing Views	173
Refuting Opposing Views	174
Strategies for Rebutting Evidence	178
“Abstract Versus Representational Art” (student essay)	179
Conceding to Opposing Views	181
Appealing to a Resistant Audience: Delayed Thesis or Rogerian Argument	182
Delayed Thesis Argument	182
Rogerian Argument	183
“Letter to Beth Downey” (student essay)	185
Conclusion	186
✍ Writing Assignments for Chapters 7 and 8	187



## PART III

### ARGUMENTS IN DEPTH: FIVE CATEGORIES OF CLAIMS 189

#### CHAPTER 9 Using the Categories of Claims to Generate Ideas 191

What Is a Truth Argument?	191
What Is a Values Argument?	192
Three-Step Strategy for Developing Values Arguments	193
An Argument from Definition or Principle	194
An Argument from Consequence	195
An Argument from Resemblance	195

#### CHAPTER 10 Definition Arguments: X Is/Is Not a Y 198

The Special Nature of a Definitional Issue	199
✦ Writing Assignment for Chapter 10	
Extended Definition/Borderline Case: Is This X a Y?	200
The Criteria-Match Structure of Definitional Arguments	201
Conceptual Problems of Definition	203
Language as a Way of Ordering the World	203
Why Can't We Just Look in the Dictionary?	203
Definitions and the Rule of Justice:	
At What Point Does X Quit Being a Y?	204
Conducting a Criteria-Match Argument	206
Defining the Y Term (Establishing Criteria for Y)	206
Aristotelian Definition	206
Effect of Rhetorical Context on Aristotelian Definitions	208
Operational Definitions	209
Conducting the Match Part of a Definitional Argument	209
Writing Your Definitional Argument	210
Starting Points: Finding a Definitional Controversy	210
Exploration Stage I: Developing Criteria for Your Y Term	212

Exploration Stage II: Exploring Your Match Argument	214
Writing the Discovery Draft—A Possible Organizational Structure for Your Essay	215
Revision Stage	215
Conditions for Rebuttal: Testing a Definitional Argument	217
Attacking the Criteria	217
Attacking the Match	218
<i>“Oncore, Obscenity, and the Liquor Control Board”</i> —Kathy Sullivan (student)	220
A series of photographs in a gay bar should not be considered obscene because they do not violate the community standards of the patrons of the bar, because they do not appeal to prurient interests, because children are not apt to be exposed to them, and because they promote an important social purpose of safe sex to prevent AIDS.	
<i>“How to Save the Homeless Mentally Ill”</i> —Charles Krauthammer	221
The United States should rebuild its system of asylums to care for the mentally ill homeless, who need to be involuntarily institutionalized if necessary. The criteria should include the conditions of being degraded or made helpless by mental illness.	
<b>CHAPTER 11 Causal Arguments:</b>	
<b>X Causes/Does Not Cause Y</b>	<b>228</b>
The Frequency of Causal Arguments	229
The Nature of Causal Arguing	230
Describing the Logical Structure of a Causal Argument:	
Because Clauses and the Toulmin Schema	233
❖ Writing Assignment for Chapter 11:	
An Argument Involving Surprising or Disputed Causes	236
Three Methods for Arguing that One Event Causes Another	237
First Method: Explain the Causal Mechanism Directly	237
Second Method: Use Various Inductive Methods to Establish a High Probability of a Causal Link	239
Third Method: Argue by Analogy or Precedent	243
Glossary of Terms Encountered in Causal Arguments	244
Writing Your Causal Argument	247
The Starting Point: Finding a Causal Issue	247
Make a List of People’s Unusual Likes and Dislikes	247
Make Lists of Trends and Other Puzzling Phenomena	247
Exploration Stage	248