



Argumentation Toolkit

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Argumentation as defined by Oxford Dictionary, "is the action or process of reasoning systematically in support of an idea, action, or theory." It is also the action of constructing and interchanging ideas and reasons, to defend and/or support claims that are in doubt (Novaes, 2021).

Argumentation improves listening, critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision making skills (Cankaya & Aydogan, 2022).

The main purpose of argumentation is to persuade others to believe in a certain topic, be it a person, a belief, or a cause. This entails adhering to substantial claims backed with pieces of evidence, to gain audience adherence.

The reason we argue is for us to:

- Clarify thinking within a certain group,
- Explain or defend actions or beliefs, and
- Solve problems to create an informed judgment.

Characteristics

Argumentation refers to the concept held within the mind of an individual. It is reasoning expressed in words. **Reasoning** is the act or process of deriving judgments (conclusions) from other judgments (premises). The mental expression of argumentation takes the form of a **sylogism**.

A **sylogism** represents a type of deductive reasoning in which the conclusion logically stems from the truth of two (or more) premises.

Sylogism has 3 premises:

1. **Major premise** - a premise that is general or universal (broad)
2. **Minor premise** - a premise that is about a particular instance of the major premise (specific)
3. **Conclusion** - logical result between the two premises

Example:

1. All mammals are animals. (Major Premise)
2. Camels are mammals. (Minor Premise)
3. Therefore, camels are animals. (Conclusion)

Notice how the premises moved from a general topic to specific, then from the specific topic to general. This is because **deductive arguments** proceed from the broader, general statements to the more specific ones, contrasting with **inductive arguments** that move from specific instances to general principles. If the major and minor premises are true, then the conclusion is guaranteed to be true.



Key Ideas

Toulmin Model of Argument & 3M's of Debate

There are models that you may use in an argument. The Toulmin Model of Argument and the 3M's of Debate.

THE TOULMIN MODEL OF ARGUMENT

- This model is used to identify the argument's claim, reasons, and evidence, and evaluate the effectiveness of each.

There are three (3) major parts of the model:

1. Claim

- This is the main point, thesis, or the controlling idea
- May be explicitly stated or implied
- You may find this by asking the question, "What is the author trying to prove?"
- May also be stated at the first or at the end of the text.

There are five (5) categories of claims:

- **Claims of fact** - these are the facts, examples, and statistics to prove that the claim is factual and existing.
- **Claims of definition** - this is used to argue for a particular definition. This usually entails what the claim is, what it is like, how it should be classified, defined, interpreted, or if it has any other meaning in a different context.
- **Claims of cause** - this claim seeks to establish a link between the cause and its implications which are usually supported with facts, statistics, and analogies from similar circumstances.
- **Claims of value** - this appeals to people's sense of value whether it is good or bad, moral or immoral, and what value system will be used to judge. This normally appeals to authorities.
- **Claims of policy** - this is to figure out what course of action is needed to solve a particular problem. The basis for this is from the variety of motivational appeals, value proofs, analogies, facts and statistics, cause and-effect, and appeals to authorities.

2. Support

- These are the reasons given to support the claim.
- These are usually pieces of evidence, proof, data, arguments, or grounds and usually are in the form of facts and statistics, expert opinions, related examples, explanations, and logical reasoning.
- You may find this by asking, "What does the author say to persuade the reader of the claim?"

3. Warrants

- These are the assumptions or presuppositions underlying the argument.
- Are generally accepted beliefs and values, common ways our culture or society views things by the author and audience and is sometimes conflicting with each other's beliefs, cultural norms, and values.
- Almost always unstated and implied.
- The common ground of the author and the audience
- Shared warrants unconsciously invite audience in supplying parts of the argument



There are some additional parts to the Toulmin Model of Argument. These are:

1. **Qualifiers** - are more about probability and possibility, not about certainty. The speaker should not use superlatives like all, every, absolutely or never, none, or no one. In arguments, the speaker must also qualify with expressions like many, many times, some or rarely, or few, to possibly tone down the claims.
2. **Rebuttals** - are the contradictory statements answered during the exchange of ideas. There are times that rebuttal will be directed to opposing claims; other times rebuttal will be directed at alternative interpretations of evidence or new evidence.
3. **Backing** - the warrant itself needs evidence to support it, to make it more believable, and to further "back up" the argument.

The Toulmin Model of Argument is useful in determining parts of the argument that may need improvement. In this systematic way, the parts could be evaluated thoroughly so they could still be aligned in a logical way along with their supporting pieces of evidence.

3M'S OF DEBATE

- There is another method you may use in argumentation, the 3M's of Debate. The 3M's stands for manner, matter, and method. These are the three (3) criteria in scoring which determine who wins a debate.



1. **Manner** - the way that the argument is presented. This usually makes up 40% of the total score.

Manner skills include:

- **Eye contact** - this is not limited to simply looking at the audience, but it also places importance on one's connection with them.
- **Confidence** - confident execution of knowledge about the subject matter.
- **Body language** - includes posture, movement, and hand gestures.
- **Voice** - includes the pace of speech, variation of speech, and voice projection.
- **Expression** - integrates both body language and voice. It includes speaking and moving expressively in a way that engages, convinces, and connects with the audience.

2. **Matter** - the content and structure of the speech. This is worth 40% of the total score.

Matter skills include:

- **Defining** the topic.
- Start and end your debate with a **clear structure**.
- Fulfilling the requirements of a debate's speaker **role** - each speaker has a different role in a debate.
- Having an **effective introduction and conclusion**.
- Having **effective points and examples** to illustrate each point.
- **Presenting evidence** to support your arguments.
- Researching skills.
- Signposting.
- Rebuttal.



3. Method - the teams' approach to the topic. This is where a good team dynamic comes in handy. The method contributes 20% to the final score.

Method Skills include:

- The team's **interpretation** of the topic.
- **Cohesion** of the debate between all team members.
- **Teamwork and collaboration.**
- **Team theme** (when relevant).
- The way the team has **planned to approach** the debate.
- **Knowledge** of each other's arguments.

The 3M's of Debate are effective ways in developing students' mastery of argumentation and debating. It is important to encourage the students throughout the process for them to gain confidence and be open to points for improvement.

SYLLOGISM

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Syllogism

Deductive Reasoning - the type of reasoning in which the truth of the premises provides an assurance of the truth of the conclusion.

Example:

- All humans are mortal.
- Jason is human.
- Therefore, Jason is mortal.

These types of arguments derive their justification from their structure rather than specific experiences. These are predominantly used in the field of philosophy.

Inductive Reasoning - in this type of reasoning, the truth of the conclusion is not necessarily ensured by the truth of the premises.

Example:

- In the past, exposure to fur did not cause me to have an allergic reaction.
- Therefore, in the future, I will never have an allergic reaction to fur.

In inductive reasoning, the conclusion may be false even though the premises are generally considered true.

SYLLOGISTIC FALLACY

- It is a mistake in logic in which the conclusion does not follow the premises.

Example:

- No behavioral scientists are sharks.
- Sharks are not mammals.
- Therefore, no behavioral scientists are mammals.

As you may notice, the premises are true, but the conclusion is false. This deductive argument suffers from a **sylllogistic fallacy**.

Enthymemes - an argument in which one premise is not explicitly stated (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.).

1. All humans are mortal.
2. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

The premise that was not explicitly stated is that Socrates is a human.

Valid - an argument is valid if it is impossible for the conclusion to be false. The conclusion backed with both true premises.

1. All birds can fly.
2. Penguins are birds.
3. Therefore, penguins can fly.

This example is considered invalid because the 1st premise is false



Sound - an argument is sound if it is valid, and its premises are all true.

1. All humans are mortal.
2. Aristotle is a human.
3. Aristotle is mortal.

This example is logically sound since both premises are true

CATEGORICAL SYLLOGISM

- "The categorical syllogism is the process in which, the premises relate two terms with a third (middle), and the relationship is expressed in the conclusion that either unites or separates the first two terms. In this case, the conclusion will either be in the affirmative or in the negative, depending on how the terms are related in the premises" (Espartinez, 2011)

Rules of Categorical Syllogism

Rule 1: The middle term must always be taken in the same sense. Otherwise, the syllogism would contain more than three (3) terms.

Example:

- Mouse is a small rodent that has relatively large ears and eyes and a long tail;
- But a mouse is a small hand-held device dragged to move a cursor on a computer screen;
- A small hand-held device dragged to move a cursor on a computer screen is a small rodent that has relatively large ears and eyes and a long tail.

Rule 2: The major term and the minor term cannot have a greater extension in the conclusion than in the premise; otherwise, the effect (conclusion) becomes greater than the cause (premise) which is impossible.

Example:

- All hammers are tools (affirmative)
- But no chisels are hammers;
- Therefore, no chisels are tools (negative)

Illicit Major - means the predicate is universal in the conclusion, not in the major premise.

Illicit Minor - the subject is universal in the conclusion but not in the minor premise.

Example:

- All birds have wings;
- But all birds are animals (particular)
- Therefore, all animals (universal) have wings.



Rule 3: The middle term should not occur in the conclusion.

Example:

- A steward is a flight attendant;
- But a steward is a male;
- Therefore, a steward is a male flight attendant



Rule 4: The middle term must be distributed universally, at least once in the premises.

Example:

- All stewardesses are female.
- But all mothers are female.
- Therefore, all mothers are stewardesses.

Rule 5: Two affirmative premises cannot give a negative conclusion.

Example:

- All pets are domestic animals;
- Some turtles are pets;
- Therefore, some turtles are not domestic animals

Rule 6: From two negative premises, nothing follows

Example:

- A spoon is not a fork;
- But a fork is not a knife;
- Therefore, a knife is not a spoon



Rule 7: From particular premises, nothing follows. One of the premises must be universal for the middle term to validly connect the major and minor terms.

Example:

- Some men are gays;
- But some gays are artists;
- Some artists are men.

Some wives are not naggers
Some wives are not mature
Then, what?

Some cats are pets;
But some pythons are not cat;
Some pythons are not pets.

Some horseback riders are not males;
But some drivers are horseback riders;
Some drivers are not males

Rule 8: The conclusion follows the weaker premise. If one premise is universal and the other is particular, the conclusion should be particular.

Example:

All those who have down syndrome are mentally retarded;
But some people who have down syndrome are special children;
All special children are mentally retarded.

All swimmers are athletes;
But some scholars are not athletes;
Some scholars are swimmers

HOW TO EXECUTE AN ARGUMENT EFFECTIVELY

- Prerequisites
 - Before you can structure a solid argument, you must first find a topic/state the problem at hand. To do this, you must first prepare yourself with the form of argument that you may encounter. These are the prerequisites that you may want to prepare before you start with your argument.



1

Matter loading - Here, students are tasked to research and brainstorm about the topic/motion being discussed. This is to avoid misconceptions and false matters especially when discussing vague and equivocal terms (e.g., international bonds may be construed as relationships among nations, but their real essence is monetary bonds).

2

Writing Skills - arguments take the form of speaking and writing. Sometimes, students may be assigned argumentative papers or essays that would help develop their argumentation skills. Writing skills are beneficial in an argument so the students may examine their own and others' ideas in a careful, methodical way.

3

Speaking Skills - the manner of your delivery affects how your argument would be received. If you speak in a confident, passionate, and convicted manner, your argument may be perceived as convincing and valid.

4

Listening Skills - always remember to listen well during oral arguments such as debates, or even in simple class discussions. When you listen, you can better understand what is being said and what is not being said. This will help you to respond to what the other person is saying.

Steps on how to Structure your Argument

1. Determine your claim(s) regarding the given topic/motion

Determining your claim on the given topic gives you a sense of perspective on a certain issue. Your claim must be concise and easily understandable by your audience.

Steps on how to Structure your Argument

2. Gather your reasons and substantiate them with evidence

This is to convince your audience. To convince them, you must find all the necessary information that you need to support your claim. By adding factual information, it builds the validity of your claim. Present facts that are backed up by research, statistics, and other studies to support your claim.

3. Establish the warrant between and among claims and evidence/reasons

As stated in the Toulmin Model of Argument, warrants are the assumptions or presuppositions underlying the argument. This creates a connection between you and the audience since there is a common ground between the warrant that was implied. It makes the claim more relatable and understandable to the audience.

4. Rebuttals/Refutations

a. Foresee the opponent's possible refutations to full proof the claims.

Research every possible statement/claim from the opposition to prepare your counterargument. This is essential in defending and solidifying your claim even more

b. Rebut opponents' claims to win the argumentation

This is where the listening skills could be in use. Make sure to listen to their arguments and prepare your rebuttal. To win the argument, make sure that this is also backed up with pieces of evidence



Examples:

Animal Rights

(Extracted from Newman, D., & Woolgar, B. (2014). *Pros and cons: A debater's handbook*. Routledge)

There are numerous debates about animal rights, ranging from vegetarianism to the testing of cosmetics or medicines, to laws against animal cruelty in bullfighting. However, many of them share a common and underlying question: what rights, if any, do animals have? It is important to note that denying animal rights does not necessarily equate to saying that unrestrained cruelty to animals is acceptable; rather, it is the denial that they have the particularly strong moral weight afforded by rights. What a right constitutes a difficult question, and partly one which the debate will inevitably focus on; that said, both teams must be careful to be precise about exactly what having certain rights would entail, rather than using the concept loosely.

Pros	Cons
Although animals cannot verbally express their choices, they do form deep and lasting bonds with each other – relatively complex emotions such as grief, affection and joy. To argue that animals are simple beings not worthy of rights aimed to protect their well-being is a deep misunderstanding of their rich emotional life.	A core function of having a right is to be allowed to make autonomous choices, and to have those choices respected. When we say we have a right to 'free speech', what we really mean is that we can choose what we say and we cannot be forced to say something else. The choices we make define our individuality, and allow us to shape our own lives. Animals do not have the capacity to make choices; they are beings driven by basic urges, and do not have any level of reflective capacity to decide how to live their lives. It would simply be utterly pointless to give animals rights.
Rights are not only granted to beings that contribute to society. They are deeper and more universal than that. For instance, people with severe disabilities, young children and visiting foreigners do not contribute to the state or society that gives and protects rights, but we still afford them certain protections. Similarly, we do not harm individuals who would not be able to protest that harm, such as people with mental disabilities, or patients in a coma. On those grounds, animals, who are not part of social life and do not uphold civic duties, should not be excluded from having rights.	Animals do not share in the network of duties and responsibilities that give people rights. Rights are, after all, a human construct, and depend on others observing them; for that reason, to get rights, you must put something into the system that gives you those rights, and that requires contributions to society in the form of taxes, voting and so on. Animals do none of that, so cannot expect to benefit from it. It is simply misguided to think that the way in which we should relate ourselves to animals is to grant them rights in the same way as we grant rights to humans.
One of the reasons for granting rights is the desire to protect sentient beings from cruel and unnecessary pain. Pain is a universally acknowledged bad state of being that we all seek to avoid. Animal pain, as experienced, is no different from human pain. The ability to feel pain, however, varies according to the development of the nervous system of the sentient being. Granting rights can be perfectly compatible with that notion. To see this, consider that almost no one thinks that fish and seafood should have the same rights as mammals or birds; that is because their nervous systems are far less developed, so they simply do not feel pain in the same way. However, granting rights can be perfectly compatible with the level of potential pain experience and the rights necessary for protection from unnecessary pain.	Some say that what is relevant is not whether an animal can reason, but whether it can suffer. Whatever the case, animals do not feel pain in the same way as humans; their nervous systems are less developed, and so their pain counts for less than ours. That is particularly important given that animal rights are usually sacrificed to do some good for humans; for instance, to test potentially life-saving medicines. The pain we inflict on an animal through animal testing, for example, is far less devastating to a life than the pain we seek to cure in a human being's life. The animal's pain is 'worth it'. If granting rights to animals means we can no longer test medication on them, we are not weighing up harms and benefits in the right way.



Examples:

Argumentation Toolkit Worksheet 1

Instructions: read the article provided and determine its claims, support, and warrants. After which, present your counterargument by following the prescribed outline.

A nation obsessed with titles?

By: Gideon Lasco

The affliction is an obsession with titles, form and optics. You will find a professor introducing himself: My name is professor so-and-so. Or an engineer: I'm engineer so-and-so. But would it not sound odd if we heard Noam Chomsky, who teaches at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a premier crucible for life-changing technical and ideatic innovation—and who is arguably the greatest linguist in history—introduce himself as Professor Noam Chomsky? ..."

"Here, professors who have never developed any great ideas or theories will be tripping over their own titles because the titles precede them and their work ... For people like Chomsky, the title is a 'by-the-way' appellation; what is important and what precedes him is the work he has done. Likewise, legislators in other regions of the world let the reputation of their revolutionary and transformative agendas say who they are."

The above words were made by the Kenyan commentator Tee Ngugi as a critique of his country's politics and society—but he may well be talking about the Philippines.

What can we say about this "affliction"?

First—and this is the reason why I began with Ngugi—is that this is not particular to one country. We have a tendency to look down on ourselves and feel that we are uniquely doomed, but many of our problems are shared with other people (Several years ago, I wrote a piece entitled "Not only in the Philippines," 7/30/15, to point out what I call "negative exceptionalism"). In our region alone, we have Malaysia, where my colleagues joke about having "too many Datuks."

Thus, I do not agree that the blame lies on "the fundamental contradiction of the American colonial project," as my good friend, the historian Lisandro E. Claudio, once wrote. "Through education," he had argued, "the American colonial state bred a new elite of Filipinos trained in a new, more 'modern,' American system. People with advanced degrees like law or engineering were at the apex of this system. Their prestige, as such, not only rested on their purported intelligence, but also their mastery of the colonizer's way of life."

It's worth pointing out that even before the Americans came, Jose Rizal was already making fun of the title-consciousness of "Doctora Doña Victorina de los Reyes de Espadaña."

Claudio's broader point about professionals, however, is spot on and can speak for experiences of the Philippines, Kenya, Malaysia, and elsewhere: "We linguistically privilege professionals because our colonizers made us value a certain kind of white-collar work."

But here, too, we must add a layer of ethnographic nuance. At a personal level, people are proud of their titles because it represents not just them but their families, who worked hard for those titles. Some Filipino parents refer to children not as "Anak"—but as "Atty." or "Doc"; in a way, the titles are theirs—unlike in the United States where parents don't think they owe their children college education.

I must add that the difficulty of getting a professional degree, makes it much more a point of pride than in other settings where such challenges are not the case. In Cuba and Mexico, for instance, because medical education is much more accessible, "Doctor" does not carry the same gravitas as in the Philippines.

Examples:

Finally, I will argue that especially when speaking or writing in English, the use of titles allows us to convey respect in a way that we can easily do in Filipino by adding honorifics like “po” or using pronouns like “ninyo.” When I was an anthropology graduate student, I had two supervisors—Professor Anita Hardon from the Netherlands and Professor Michael Tan from the Philippines; when emailing both at the same time, I end up addressing them as “Dear Anita and Sir Mike”—I could never bring myself to just say the first name of my esteemed mentor.

Perhaps the importance of titles will change, if not already changing, as our professions become less and less central to our identities, as more and more Filipinos are able to obtain once-unreachable degrees, as we get exposed to other “first-name basis” societies, and as we learn to interrogate the undeserved use of terms starting with “Honorable.”

Perhaps titles will continue to be used but not so much to reflect a social hierarchy, but—as in Mexico—simply to show respect and regard. Philippine mountaineers, for instance, have long called each other “Ma’am” and “Sir” and when I once sought an explanation from the late hiking veteran Edwin Gatia, he simply replied: “In the mountains we are all equal.”

In any case, I look forward to a future where regardless of titles, status, or educational attainment, our first names would be good enough to command the respect that all of us deserve.

Extracted from <https://opinion.inquirer.net/161280/a-nation-obsessed-with-titles>

Part 1

Author’s main claim: _____

Supporting evidence:

Supporting evidence:

Supporting evidence:

Conclusion: _____

Part 2

Counter Claim: _____

Evidence 1 and warrant:

Evidence 2 and warrant:

Evidence 3 and warrant:

Conclusion: _____

Examples:

Argumentation Toolkit Worksheet 2

In this worksheet, you need to pick one topic/motion/statement from the list below. Then, build your argument (pro or against) following the given outline.

Topics/Motions/Statements:

1. The government should legalize abortion.
2. The government should require prospective parents to have a parental license before allowing them to have a child.
3. The government should ban K-drama and K-pop.
4. The government should bring back the death penalty.
5. Universities must ban artificial intelligence.
6. Universities must abolish the numerical grading system.
7. University clinics should provide free condoms to their students.
8. Advocating for women and LGBTQIA+ rights promote misandry.
9. "Religion is the root cause of all evil."
10. "Sex work is work."

Claim: _____

Evidence 1 and warrant:

Evidence 2 and warrant:

Evidence 3 and warrant:

Conclusion: _____



MATERIALS FOR FURTHER READING

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