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Classical Argument

A (Very) Brief History of Rhetoric

The study of rhetoric has existed for thousands of years, predating even Socrates, Plato and the other ancient Greek philosophers that we often credit as the founders of Western philosophy. Although ancient rhetoric is most commonly associated with the ancient Greeks and Romans, early examples of rhetoric date all the way back to ancient Akkadian writings in Mesopotamia.

In ancient Greece and Rome, rhetoric was most often considered to be the art of persuasion and was primarily described as a spoken skill. In these societies, discourse occurred almost exclusively in the public sphere, so learning the art of effective, convincing speaking was essential for public orators, legal experts, politicians, philosophers, generals, and educators. To prepare for the speeches they would need to make in these roles, students engaged in written exercises called *progymnasmata*. Today, rhetorical scholars still use strategies from the classical era to conceptualize argument. However, whereas oral discourse was the main focus of the classical rhetoricians, modern scholars also study the peculiarities of written argument.

Aristotle provides a crucial point of reference for ancient and modern scholars alike. Over 2000 years ago, Aristotle literally wrote the book on rhetoric. His text *Rhētoriké* (*On Rhetoric*) explores the techniques and purposes of persuasion in ancient Greece, laying the foundation for the study and implementation of rhetoric in future generations. Though the ways we communicate and conceptualize rhetoric have changed, many of the principles in this book are still used today. And this is for good reason: Aristotle's strategies can provide a great guide for organizing your thoughts as well as writing effective arguments, essays, and speeches.

Below, you will find a brief guide to some of the most fundamental concepts in classical rhetoric, most of which originate in *On Rhetoric*.

The Rhetorical Appeals

To understand how argument works in *On Rhetoric*, you must first understand the major appeals associated with rhetoric. Aristotle identifies four major rhetorical appeals: ethos (credibility), logos (logic), pathos (emotion), and Kairos (time).

- **Ethos** – an appeal to credibility. This is the way a speaker (or writer) presents herself to the audience. You can build credibility by citing professional sources, using content-specific language, and by showing evidence of your ethical, knowledgeable background.

- **Logos** – an appeal to logic. This is the way a speaker appeals to the audience through practicality and hard evidence. You can develop logos by presenting data and statistics, and by crafting a clear claim with a logically-sequenced argument.
- **Pathos** – an appeal to emotion. This is the way a speaker appeals to the audience through emotion, pity, or passions. The idea is usually to evoke and strengthen feelings already present within the audience. This can be achieved through storytelling, vivid imagery, and an impassioned voice.
- **Kairos** – an appeal made through the adept use of time. This is the way a speaker appeals to the audience through notions of time. It is also considered to be the appropriate or opportune time for a speaker to insert herself into a conversation or discourse, using the three appeals listed above. A Kairotic appeal can be made through calls to immediate action, presenting an opportunity as temporary, and by describing a specific moment as propitious or ideal.

An easy way to conceptualize the rhetorical appeals is through advertisements, particularly infomercials or commercials. We are constantly being exposed to the types of rhetoric above, whether it be while watching television or movies, browsing the internet, or watching videos on YouTube.

Imagine a commercial for a new car. The commercial opens with images of a family driving a brand-new car through rugged, forested terrain, over large rocks, past waterfalls, and finally to a serene camping spot near a tranquil lake surrounded by giant redwood trees. The scene cuts to shots of the interior of the car, showing off its technological capacities and its impressive spaciousness. A voiceover announces that not only has this car won numerous awards over its competitors but that it is also priced considerably lower than comparable models, while getting better gas mileage. “But don’t wait,” the voiceover says excitedly, “current lessees pay 0% APR financing for 12 months.”

In just a few moments, this commercial has shown masterful use of all four appeals. The commercial utilizes pathos by appealing to our romantic notions of family, escape, and the great outdoors. The commercial develops ethos by listing its awards, and it appeals to our logical tendencies by pointing out we will save money immediately because the car is priced lower than its competitors, as well as in the long run because of its higher MPG rate. Finally, the commercial provides an opportune and propitious moment for its targeted audience to purchase a car immediately.

Depending on the nature of the text, argument, or conversation, one appeal will likely become most dominant, but rhetoric is generally most effective when the speaker or writer draws on multiple appeals to work in conjunction with one another. **To learn more about Aristotle's rhetorical appeals, click here.**

Components and Structure

The classical argument is made up of five components, which are most commonly composed in the following order:

- **Exordium** – The introduction, opening, or hook.
- **Narratio** – The context or background of the topic.
- **Proposito and Partitio** – The claim/stance and the argument.
- **Confirmatio and/or Refutatio** – positive proofs and negative proofs of support.
- **Peroratio** – The conclusion and call to action.

Exordium

Think of the exordium as your introduction or “hook.” In your exordium, you have an opportunity to gain the interest of your reader, but you also have the responsibility of situating the argument and setting the tone of your writing. That is, you should find a way to appeal to the audience’s interest while also introducing the topic and its importance in a professional and considerate manner. Something to include in this section is the significance of discussing the topic in this given moment (Kairos). This provides the issue a sense of urgency that can validate your argument.

This is also a good opportunity to consider who your intended audience is and to address their concerns within the context of the argument. For example, if you were writing an argument on the importance of technology in the English classroom and your intended audience was the board of a local high school, you might consider the following:

- New learning possibilities for students (General Audience Concerns)
- The necessity of modern technology in finding new, up-to-date information (Hook/Kairos)
- Detailed narrative of how technology in one school vastly improved student literacy (Hook/Pathos)
- Statistics showing a link between exposure to technology and rising trends in literacy (Hook/Logos)
- Quotes from education and technology professors expressing an urgency for technology in English classrooms (Hook/Ethos)

Of course, you probably should not include all of these types of appeals in the opening section of your argument—if you do, you may end up with a boring, overlong introduction that doesn’t function well as a hook. Instead, consider using some of these points as evidence later on. Ask yourself: *What will be most important to my audience? What information will most likely result in the action I want to bring about?* Think about which appeal will work best to gain the attention of your intended audience and start there.

Narratio

The narratio provides relevant foundational information and describes the social context in which your topic exists. This might include information on the historical background, including recent changes or updates to the topic, social perception, important events, and

other academic research. This helps to establish the rhetorical situation for the argument: that is, the situation the argument is currently in, as impacted by events, people, opinion, and urgency of some kind. For your argument on technology in the English classroom, you might include:

- Advances in education-related technology over the centuries
- Recent trends in education technology
- A description of the importance of digital literacy
- Statistics documenting the lack of home technology for many students
- A selection of expert opinions on the usefulness of technology in all classrooms

Providing this type of information creates the setting for your argument. In other words, it provides the place and purpose for the argument to take place. By situating your argument within in a viable context, you create an opportunity to assert yourself into the discussion, as well as to give your reader a genuine understanding of your topic's importance.

Propositio and Partitio

These two concepts function together to help set up your argument. You can think of them functioning together to form a single thesis. The propositio informs your audience of your stance, and the partitio lays out your argument. In other words, the propositio tells your audience what you think about a topic, and the partitio briefly explains why you think that way and how you will prove your point.

Because this section helps to set up the rest of your argument, you should place it near the beginning of your paper. Keep in mind, however, that you should not give away all of your information or evidence in your partitio. This section should be fairly short: perhaps 3-4 sentences at most for most academic essays. You can think of this section of your argument like the trailer for a new film: it should be concise, should entice the audience, and should give them a good example of what they are going to experience, but it shouldn't include every detail. Just as a filmgoer must see an entire film to gain an understanding of its significance or quality, so too must your audience read the rest of your argument to truly understand its depth and scope.

In the case of your argument on implementing technology in the English classroom, it's important to think not only of your own motivations for pursuing this technology in the classroom, but also of what will motivate or persuade your respective audience(s). Some writing contexts call for an audience of one. Some require consideration of multiple audiences, in which case you must find ways to craft an argument which appeals to each member of your audience. For example, if your audience included a school board as well as parents and teachers, your propositio might look something like this:

"The introduction of newer digital technology in the English classroom would be beneficial for all parties involved. Students are already engaged in all kinds of technological spaces, and it is important to implement teaching practices that invest students' interests and prior

knowledge. Not only would the marriage of English studies and technology extend pedagogical opportunities, it would also create an ease of instruction for teachers, engage students in creative learning environments, and familiarize students with the creation and sharing technologies that they will be expected to use at their future colleges and careers. Plus, recent studies suggest a correlation between exposure to technology and higher literacy rates, a trend many education professionals say isn't going to change.”

Note how the above paragraph considers the concerns and motivations of all three audience members, takes a stance, and provides support for the stance in a way that allows for the rest of the argument to grow from its ideas. Keep in mind that whatever you promise in your propositio and partitio (in this case the new teaching practices, literacy statistics, and professional opinion) must appear in the body of your argument. Don't make any claims here that you cannot prove later in your argument.

Confirmatio and Refutatio

These two represent different types of proofs that you will need to consider when crafting your argument. The confirmatio and refutatio work in opposite ways, but are both very effective in strengthening your claims. Luckily, both words are cognates—words that sound/look in similar in multiple languages—and are therefore are easy to keep straight. Confirmatio is a way to confirm your claims and is considered a positive proof; refutatio is a way to acknowledge and refute a counterclaim and is considered a negative proof.

The confirmatio is your argument's support: the evidence that helps to support your claims. For your argument on technology in the English classroom, you might include the following:

- Students grades drastically increase when technology is inserted into academics
- Teachers widely agree that students are more engaged in classroom activities that involve technology
- Students who accepted to elite colleges generally possess strong technological skills

The refutatio provides negative proofs. This is an opportunity for you to acknowledge that other opinions exist and have merit, while also showing why those claims do not warrant rejecting your argument.

If you feel strange including information that seems to undermine or weaken your own claims, ask yourself this: have you ever been in a debate with someone who entirely disregarded every point you tried to make without considering the credibility of what you said? Did this make their argument less convincing? That's what your paper can look like if you don't acknowledge that other opinions indeed exist and warrant attention.

After acknowledging an opposing viewpoint, you have two options. You can either concede the point (that is, admit that the point is valid and you can find no fault with their reasoning), or you can refute their claim by pointing out the flaws in your opponent's

argument. For example, if your opponent were to argue that technology is likely to distract students more than help them (an argument you'd be sure to include in your argument so as not to seem ignorant of opposing views) you'd have two options:

- **Concession:** You might concede this point by saying “Despite all of the potential for positive learning provided by technology, proponents of more traditional classroom materials point out the distractive possibilities that such technology would introduce into the classroom. They argue that distractions such as computer games, social media, and music-streaming services would only get in the way of learning.”

In your concession of the argument, you acknowledge the merit of the opposing argument, but you should still try to flip the evidence in a positive way. Note how before conceding we include “despite all of the potential for positive learning.” This reminds your reader that, although you are conceding a single point, there are still many reasons to side with you.

- **Refutation:** To refute this same point you might say something like, “While proponents of more traditional English classrooms express concerns about student distraction, it’s important to realize that in modern times, students are already distracted by the technology they carry around in their pockets. By redirecting student attention to the technology administered by the school, this distraction is shifted to class content. Plus, with website and app blocking resources available to schools, it is simple for an institution to simply decide which websites and apps to ban and block, thereby ensuring students are on task.”

Note how we acknowledged the opposing argument, but immediately pointed out its flaws using straightforward logic and a counterexample. In so doing, we effectively strengthen our argument and move forward with our proposal.

Peroratio

Your peroratio is your conclusion. This is your final opportunity to make an impact in your essay and leave an impression on your audience. In this section, you are expected to summarize and re-evaluate everything you have proven throughout your argument. However, there are multiple ways of doing this. Depending on the topic of your essay, you might employ one or more of the following in your closing:

- Call to action (encourage your audience to do something that will change the situation or topic you have been discussing).
- Discuss the implications for the future. What might happen if things continue the way they are going? Is this good or bad? Try to be impactful without being overly dramatic.
- Discuss other related topics that warrant further research and discussion.
- Make a historical parallel regarding a similar issue that can help to strengthen your argument.
- Urge a continued conversation of the topic for the future.

Remember that your peroratio is the last impression your audience will have of your argument. Be sure to consider carefully which rhetorical appeals to employ to gain a desirable effect. Make sure also to summarize your findings, including the most effective and emphatic pieces of evidence from your argument, reassert your major claim, and end on a compelling, memorable note. Good luck and happy arguing!

Deductive and Inductive Reasoning

PPT by Denise Gill

Created using: Kirszner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell. *Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader and Guide*. New York: Bedford St. Martins, 2003.

Most arguments use a combination of **inductive** and **deductive** reasoning.

Deductive Reasoning

Deductive reasoning starts with a general premise or assumption, and then moves to a specific conclusion.

Most people would call deductive reasoning formal logic.

Inductive Reasoning

Inductive reasoning moves the reverse way; it proceeds from individual observations to a more general conclusion. Induction has no strict form.

Syllogism

- The basic form of a deductive argument.
- A **syllogism** is a three-step argument consisting of a **major premise** which is usually a general statement; a **minor premise**, which is related but more specific statement; and a **conclusion**, which has to be drawn from those premises.

Classic Syllogism Example

- **Major premise: All men are mortal.**
- **Minor premise: Socrates is a man.**
- **Conclusion: Therefore, Socrates is mortal.**



A Generic Syllogism Example



- **Major premise: All CIF track finalists are fast.**
- **Minor premise: Natalie is a CIF finalist in the 400.**
- **Conclusion: Therefore Natalie is fast.**

Validity

When a conclusion follows logically from the major and minor premises, then the argument is said to be **valid**.

Valid?

Major premise: All rectangles are parallelograms.

Minor premise: All squares are parallelograms.

Conclusion: Therefore, all rectangles are squares.



Although both rectangles and squares are parallelograms, squares are not included in the major premise of the syllogism. Thus, the form of the syllogism is defective, and the argument is invalid.

Truth in Syllogisms

Even if the syllogism is valid, its conclusion will not necessarily be **true**. For example:

Major premise: All Asians are math geniuses.

Minor premise: Bartholomew is Asian.

Conclusion: Therefore, Bartholomew is a math genius.

Bartholomew is an artist who struggles in math. The conclusion is false because the major premise is false: ethnicity does not automatically determine academic success in a particular area.

Untrue Premises and Prejudice

Prejudice is frequently directly tied to untrue premises.

Major premise: All Asians are bad drivers.

Minor premise: Sally is Asian.

Conclusion: Sally is a bad driver.

Induction Explained

Induction does not have a distinct form; it is more of a gathering of information. As a result, its conclusions are less definitive than those of valid and true syllogisms.

Induction is necessary in argumentation, though, because very little may be absolutely narrowed to a syllogism.

1. First usually comes a question to be answered or especially in scientific work, a tentative answer to such a question, called a **hypothesis**.

2. Then you gather all the evidence you can find that is relevant to the question and that may be important to finding the answer.

3. Finally you draw a conclusion, often called an **inference**, that answers the question and takes the evidence into account.

(Kirszner 533)

For Example: How did that living room window break?

Evidence:

- There is a baseball on the living-room floor.
- The baseball was not there this morning.
- Some children were playing baseball this afternoon.
- They were playing in the vacant lot across from the window.
- They stopped playing a little while ago.
- They aren't in the vacant lot now.

Conclusion:

One of the children hit or threw the ball through the window. Then they all ran away.

Weaknesses in Inductive Conclusions

The conclusion seems obvious because it takes all of the evidence into account. BUT . . .

What if it turned out that the children had been playing softball?

And just because the conclusion is believable does not necessarily make it true. What if the ball had been in the living room all day, but nobody noticed it until after the window was broken?

These kind of arguments are frequently used in court cases.

More information= Better inductive argument

The more information you gather the better your chances of establishing your conclusion. One way to infer a conclusion is to think of as many conclusions as possible, then to choose the one you think is most believable and fits the evidence best.

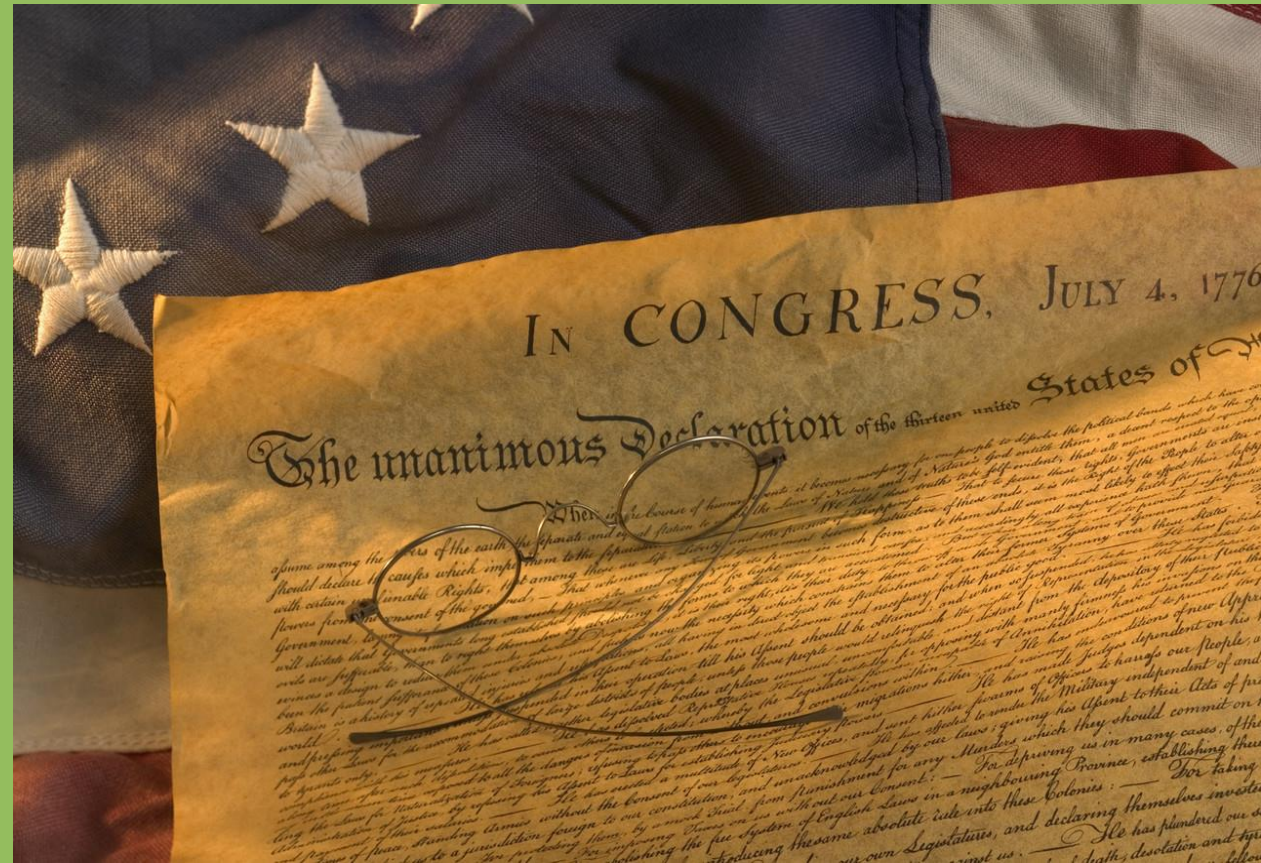
“Jumping to a conclusion” amounts to a premature inductive leap. In order to create an effective argument using inductive reasoning a speaker/writer should be sure that his or her personal bias has not influenced the conclusion.

Effective Arguments with Deductive and Inductive Reasoning: The Declaration of Independence

Major premise:

Tyrannical leaders deserve no loyalty

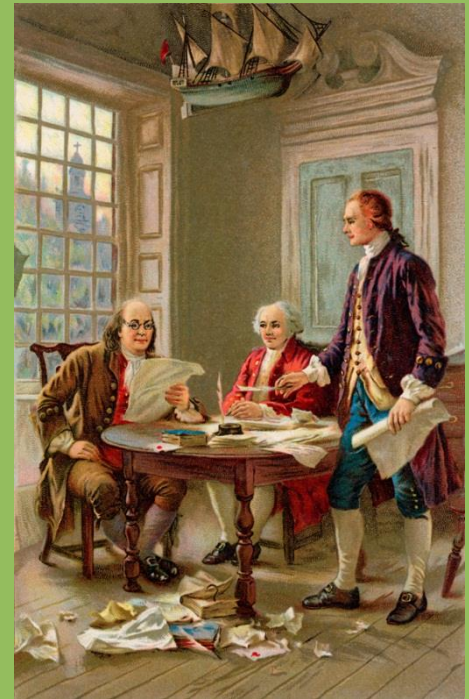
Jefferson states this as one of those Truths that is “self-evident.”



“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness . . . whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government . . . when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security . . . ”

Minor Premise: King George III is a tyrannical ruler.

The majority of the Declaration focuses on proving this. Jefferson uses inductive reasoning to prove this point, providing evidence of the King's transgressions to conclude he is tyrannical.



“He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people

”
.

[This is the beginning of an extensive list.]

Conclusion: Therefore, King George deserves no loyalty.

The conclusion of Jefferson's argument is logical and sound.

***To Kill a Mockingbird* and Reasoning**

The court case in *To Kill a Mockingbird* uses deductive and inductive argumentation.

Major premise: All black men are evil.

Minor premise: Tom Robinson is a black man.

Conclusion: Therefore Tom Robinson is evil.

Atticus uses his closing arguments to attack the false major premise.

Atticus also uses inductive reasoning to show that it was impossible for Tom to commit the crime.

How to Write an Effective Argument Essay:

Pre-Writing

- Choose an appropriate, focused topic (ex: Airport Security)
- Explore and decide your position for this topic
- Predict opposing arguments
- Consider your [audience and occasion](#) (REVIEW RHETORICAL SITUATION)
- Decide on which points you will argue (ex: Safe Traveler Card, etc.)
- Decide on which points you will refute in the concession (ex: Loss of privacy, etc.)
- Write a [thesis](#) (THREE PARTS: PROBLEM, REACTION, YOUR ARGUMENT) that is focused, arguable, and opinionated (ex: If every US citizen had a Safe Traveler Card, airlines could screen for terrorists more effectively than they do now and avoid procedures that single out individuals solely on the basis of race.)

Research & Evidence

Offer evidence that effectively supports the claims through evidence like

- personal experiences (in this instance, it's okay to use the *[1st person point of view](#)—I, me, etc. to briefly give the personal evidence, then return back to [3rd person point of view](#); to see an example of this, click [here](#); you may also want to see my [PowerPoint on Point of View](#)),
- the experiences of others,
- facts,
- statistics from current, reliable sources,
- hypothetical examples, and
- testimony from authorities and experts.

***BUT DO NOT WRITE “I THINK” OR “I BELIEVE” USE EVIDENCE AND QUOTED SOURCES TO MAKE THE ARGUMENT**

Decode Evidence

Analyze the [evidence for effectiveness](#).

- Select which of all the different gathered evidence you will use.
- Highlight and annotate your evidence. This will help you decide which parts of your evidence are strongest, and therefore appropriate for your essay.
- Decide what pieces of evidence you'd like to quote directly.
- Summarize and paraphrase the other pieces of evidence.

Drafting

- Consider **Rogerial** or **Traditional techniques**
- Create an [argumentative outline](#)
- Write the Essay!
 - Check to see how your instructor wants you to format your essay. **MLA formatting** may be required.

Revising

- Rethink the essay by:
 - Evaluate purpose/[thesis/audience](#)
 - Arguments in the **body paragraphs**
 - [Style](#), clarity, and evidence
- Edit the essay
 - Spelling
 - Punctuation
 - Mechanics
- Holistic Approach
 - Read it
 - Again
 - and again

Utah State University: "Introduction to Writing: Inductive and Deductive Reasoning"

Deduction

Deduction: In the process of deduction, you begin with some statements, called 'premises', that are assumed to be true, you then determine what else would have to be true if the premises are true. For example, you can begin by assuming that God exists, and is good, and then determine what would logically follow from such an assumption. You can begin by assuming that if you think, then you must exist, and work from there. In mathematics, you can also start with a premise and begin to prove other equations or other premises. With deduction you can provide absolute proof of your conclusions, given that your premises are correct. The premises themselves, however, remain unproven and unprovable, they must be accepted on face value, or by faith, or for the purpose of exploration. ¹

Examples of deductive logic:

All men are mortal. Joe is a man. Therefore Joe is mortal. If the first two statements are true, then the conclusion must be true. ²

Bachelor's are unmarried men. Bill is unmarried. Therefore, Bill is a bachelor. ³

To get a Bachelor's degree at Utah State University, a student must have 120 credits. Sally has more than 130 credits. Therefore, Sally has a bachelor's degree.

Induction

Induction: In the process of induction, you begin with some data, and then determine what general conclusion(s) can logically be derived from those data. In other words, you determine what theory or theories could explain the data. For example, you note that the probability of becoming schizophrenic is greatly increased if at least one parent is schizophrenic, and from that you conclude that schizophrenia may be inherited. That is certainly a reasonable hypothesis given the data. However, induction does not prove that the theory is correct. There are often alternative theories that are also supported by the data. For example, the behavior of the schizophrenic parent may cause the child to be schizophrenic, not the genes. What is important in induction is that the theory does indeed offer a logical explanation of the data. To conclude that the parents have no effect on the schizophrenia of the children is not supportable given the data, and would not be a logical conclusion. ¹

Examples of inductive logic:

This cat is black. That cat is black. A third cat is black. Therefore all cats are black. ²

This marble from the bag is black. That marble from the bag is black. A third marble from the bag is black. Therefore all the marbles in the bag are black. ²

Two-thirds of my Latino neighbors are illegal immigrants. Therefore, two-thirds of Latino immigrants come illegally.

Most universities and colleges in Utah ban alcohol from campus. That most universities and colleges in the U.S. ban alcohol from campus.

Deduction and induction by themselves are inadequate to make a compelling argument. While deduction gives absolute proof, it never makes contact with the real world, there is no place for observation or experimentation, no way to test the validity of the premises. And, while induction is driven by observation, it never approaches actual proof of a theory. Therefore an effective paper will include both types of logic. ¹

Sources

1. [More on Logic](#)
2. [Deduction and Induction](#)
3. [Good and Bad Arguments](#)

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Welcome to the Purdue OWL

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/establishing_arguments/organizing_your_argument.html

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Organizing Your Argument

How can I effectively present my argument?

In order for your argument to be persuasive, it must use an organizational structure that the audience perceives as both logical and easy to parse. Three argumentative methods—the **Toulmin Method**, **Classical Method**, and **Rogerian Method**—give guidance for how to organize the points in an argument.

Note that these are only three of the most popular models for organizing an argument. Alternatives exist. Be sure to consult your instructor and/or defer to your assignment's directions if you're unsure which to use (if any).

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Toulmin Method

The **Toulmin Method** ([../historical_perspectives_on_argumentation/toulmin_argument.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_paper_checkers_responsibly.html)) is a formula that allows writers to build a sturdy logical foundation for their arguments. First proposed by author Stephen Toulmin in *The Uses of Argument* (1958), the Toulmin Method emphasizes building a thorough support structure for each of an argument's key claims.

The basic format for the **Toulmin Method** is as follows:

Claim: In this section, you explain your overall thesis on the subject. In other words, you make your main argument.

Data (Grounds): You should use evidence to support the claim. In other words, provide the reader with facts that prove your argument is strong.

Warrant (Bridge): In this section, you explain why or how your data supports the claim. As a result, the underlying assumption that you build your argument on is grounded in reason.

Backing (Foundation): Here, you provide any additional logic or reasoning that may be necessary to support the warrant.

Counterclaim: You should anticipate a counterclaim that negates the main points in your argument. Don't avoid arguments that oppose your own. Instead, become familiar with the opposing perspective. If you respond to counterclaims, you appear unbiased (and, therefore, you earn the respect of your readers). You may even want to include several counterclaims to show that you have thoroughly researched the topic.

Rebuttal: In this section, you incorporate your own evidence that disagrees with the counterclaim. It is essential to include a thorough warrant or bridge to strengthen your essay's argument. If you present data to your audience without explaining how it supports your thesis, your readers may not make a connection between the two, or they may draw different conclusions.

Example of the Toulmin Method:

Claim: Hybrid cars are an effective strategy to fight pollution.

Data1: Driving a private car is a typical citizen's most air-polluting activity.

Warrant 1: Due to the fact that cars are the largest source of private (as opposed to industrial) air pollution, switching to hybrid cars should have an impact on fighting pollution.

Data 2: Each vehicle produced is going to stay on the road for roughly 12 to 15 years.

Warrant 2: Cars generally have a long lifespan, meaning that the decision to switch to a hybrid car will make a long-term impact on pollution levels.

Data 3: Hybrid cars combine a gasoline engine with a battery-powered electric motor.

Warrant 3: The combination of these technologies produces less pollution.

Counterclaim: Instead of focusing on cars, which still encourages an inefficient culture of driving even as it cuts down on pollution, the nation should focus on building and encouraging the use of mass transit systems.

Rebuttal: While mass transit is an idea that should be encouraged, it is not feasible in many rural and suburban areas, or for people who must commute to work. Thus, hybrid cars are a better solution for much of the nation's population.

Rogerian Method

The **Rogerian Method** (named for, but not developed by, influential American psychotherapist Carl R. Rogers) is a popular method for controversial issues. This strategy seeks to find a common ground between parties by making the audience understand perspectives that stretch beyond (or even run counter to) the writer's position. More so than other methods, it places an emphasis on reiterating an opponent's argument to his or her satisfaction. The persuasive power of the Rogerian Method lies in its ability to define the terms of the argument in such a way that:

1. your position seems like a reasonable compromise.
2. you seem compassionate and empathetic.

The basic format of the **Rogerian Method** is as follows:

Introduction: Introduce the issue to the audience, striving to remain as objective as possible.

Opposing View: Explain the other side's position in an unbiased way. When you discuss the counterargument without judgement, the opposing side can see how you do not directly dismiss perspectives which conflict with your stance.

Statement of Validity (Understanding): This section discusses how you acknowledge how the other side's points can be valid under certain circumstances. You identify *how* and *why* their perspective makes sense in a specific context, but still present your own argument.

Statement of Your Position: By this point, you have demonstrated that you understand the other side's viewpoint. In this section, you explain your own stance.

Statement of Contexts: Explore scenarios in which your position has merit. When you explain how your argument is most appropriate for certain contexts, the reader can recognize that you acknowledge the multiple ways to view the complex issue.

Statement of Benefits: You should conclude by explaining to the opposing side *why* they would benefit from accepting your position. By explaining the advantages of your argument, you close on a positive note without completely dismissing the other side's perspective.

Example of the Rogerian Method:

Introduction: The issue of whether children should wear school uniforms is subject to some debate.

Opposing View: Some parents think that requiring children to wear uniforms is best.

Statement of Validity (Understanding): Those parents who support uniforms argue that, when all students wear the same uniform, the students can develop a unified sense of school pride and inclusiveness.

Statement of Your Position: Students should not be required to wear school uniforms. Mandatory uniforms would forbid choices that allow students to be creative and express themselves through clothing.

Statement of Contexts: However, even if uniforms might hypothetically promote inclusivity, in most real-life contexts, administrators can use uniform policies to enforce conformity. Students should have the option to explore their identity through clothing without the fear of being ostracized.

Statement of Benefits: Though both sides seek to promote students' best interests, students should not be required to wear school uniforms. By giving students freedom over their choice, students can explore their self-identity by choosing how to present themselves to their peers.

Classical Method

The **Classical Method** ([./historical_perspectives_on_argumentation/classical_argument.html](#)) of structuring an argument is another common way to organize your points. Originally devised by the Greek philosopher Aristotle (and then later developed by Roman thinkers like Cicero and Quintilian), classical arguments tend to focus on issues of definition and the careful application of evidence. Thus, the underlying assumption of classical argumentation is that, when all parties understand the issue perfectly, the correct course of action will be clear.

The basic format of the **Classical Method** is as follows:

Introduction (Exordium): Introduce the issue and explain its significance. You should also establish your credibility and the topic's legitimacy.

Statement of Background (Narratio): Present vital contextual or historical information to the audience to further their understanding of the issue. By doing so, you provide the reader with a working knowledge about the topic independent of your own stance.

Proposition (Propositio): After you provide the reader with contextual knowledge, you are ready to state your claims which relate to the information you have provided previously. This section outlines your major points for the reader.

Proof (Confirmatio): You should explain your reasons and evidence to the reader. Be sure to thoroughly justify your reasons. In this section, if necessary, you can provide supplementary evidence and subpoints.

Refutation (Refuatio): In this section, you address anticipated counterarguments that disagree with your thesis. Though you acknowledge the other side's perspective, it is important to prove *why* your stance is more logical.

Conclusion (Peroratio): You should summarize your main points. The conclusion also caters to the reader's emotions and values. The use of pathos here makes the reader more inclined to consider your argument.

Example of the Classical Method:

Introduction (Exordium): Millions of workers are paid a set hourly wage nationwide. The federal minimum wage is standardized to protect workers from being paid too little. Research points to many viewpoints on *how much* to pay these workers. Some families cannot afford to support their households on the current wages provided for performing a minimum wage job.

Statement of Background (Narratio): Currently, millions of American workers struggle to make ends meet on a minimum wage. This puts a strain on workers' personal and professional lives. Some work multiple jobs to provide for their families.

Proposition (Propositio): The current federal minimum wage should be increased to better accommodate millions of overworked Americans. By raising the minimum wage, workers can spend more time cultivating their livelihoods.

Proof (Confirmatio): According to the United States Department of Labor, 80.4 million Americans work for an hourly wage, but nearly 1.3 million receive wages less than the federal minimum. The pay raise will alleviate the stress of these workers. Their lives would benefit from this raise because it affects multiple areas of their lives.

Refutation (Refuatio): There is some evidence that raising the federal wage might increase the cost of living. However, other evidence contradicts this or suggests that the increase would not be great. Additionally, worries about a cost of living increase must be balanced with the benefits of providing necessary funds to millions of hardworking Americans.

Conclusion (Peroratio): If the federal minimum wage was raised, many workers could alleviate some of their financial burdens. As a result, their emotional wellbeing would improve overall. Though some argue that the cost of living could increase, the benefits outweigh the potential drawbacks.

Deductive and Inductive Reasoning

PPT by Denise Gill

Created using: Kirszner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell. *Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader and Guide*. New York: Bedford St. Martins, 2003.

Most arguments use a combination of **inductive** and **deductive** reasoning.

Deductive Reasoning

Deductive reasoning starts with a general premise or assumption, and then moves to a specific conclusion.

Most people would call deductive reasoning formal logic.

Inductive Reasoning

Inductive reasoning moves the reverse way; it proceeds from individual observations to a more general conclusion. Induction has no strict form.

Syllogism

- The basic form of a deductive argument.
- A **syllogism** is a three-step argument consisting of a **major premise** which is usually a general statement; a **minor premise**, which is related but more specific statement; and a **conclusion**, which has to be drawn from those premises.

Classic Syllogism Example

- **Major premise: All men are mortal.**
- **Minor premise: Socrates is a man.**
- **Conclusion: Therefore, Socrates is mortal.**



A Generic Syllogism Example



- **Major premise: All CIF track finalists are fast.**
- **Minor premise: Natalie is a CIF finalist in the 400.**
- **Conclusion: Therefore Natalie is fast.**

Validity

When a conclusion follows logically from the major and minor premises, then the argument is said to be **valid**.

Valid?

Major premise: All rectangles are parallelograms.

Minor premise: All squares are parallelograms.

Conclusion: Therefore, all rectangles are squares.



Although both rectangles and squares are parallelograms, squares are not included in the major premise of the syllogism. Thus, the form of the syllogism is defective, and the argument is invalid.

Truth in Syllogisms

Even if the syllogism is valid, its conclusion will not necessarily be **true**. For example:

Major premise: All Asians are math geniuses.

Minor premise: Bartholomew is Asian.

Conclusion: Therefore, Bartholomew is a math genius.

Bartholomew is an artist who struggles in math. The conclusion is false because the major premise is false: ethnicity does not automatically determine academic success in a particular area.

Untrue Premises and Prejudice

Prejudice is frequently directly tied to untrue premises.

Major premise: All Asians are bad drivers.

Minor premise: Sally is Asian.

Conclusion: Sally is a bad driver.

Induction Explained

Induction does not have a distinct form; it is more of a gathering of information. As a result, its conclusions are less definitive than those of valid and true syllogisms.

Induction is necessary in argumentation, though, because very little may be absolutely narrowed to a syllogism.

1. First usually comes a question to be answered or especially in scientific work, a tentative answer to such a question, called a **hypothesis**.

2. Then you gather all the evidence you can find that is relevant to the question and that may be important to finding the answer.

3. Finally you draw a conclusion, often called an **inference**, that answers the question and takes the evidence into account.

(Kirszner 533)

For Example: How did that living room window break?

Evidence:

- There is a baseball on the living-room floor.
- The baseball was not there this morning.
- Some children were playing baseball this afternoon.
- They were playing in the vacant lot across from the window.
- They stopped playing a little while ago.
- They aren't in the vacant lot now.

Conclusion:

One of the children hit or threw the ball through the window. Then they all ran away.

Weaknesses in Inductive Conclusions

The conclusion seems obvious because it takes all of the evidence into account. BUT . . .

What if it turned out that the children had been playing softball?

And just because the conclusion is believable does not necessarily make it true. What if the ball had been in the living room all day, but nobody noticed it until after the window was broken?

These kind of arguments are frequently used in court cases.

More information= Better inductive argument

The more information you gather the better your chances of establishing your conclusion. One way to infer a conclusion is to think of as many conclusions as possible, then to choose the one you think is most believable and fits the evidence best.

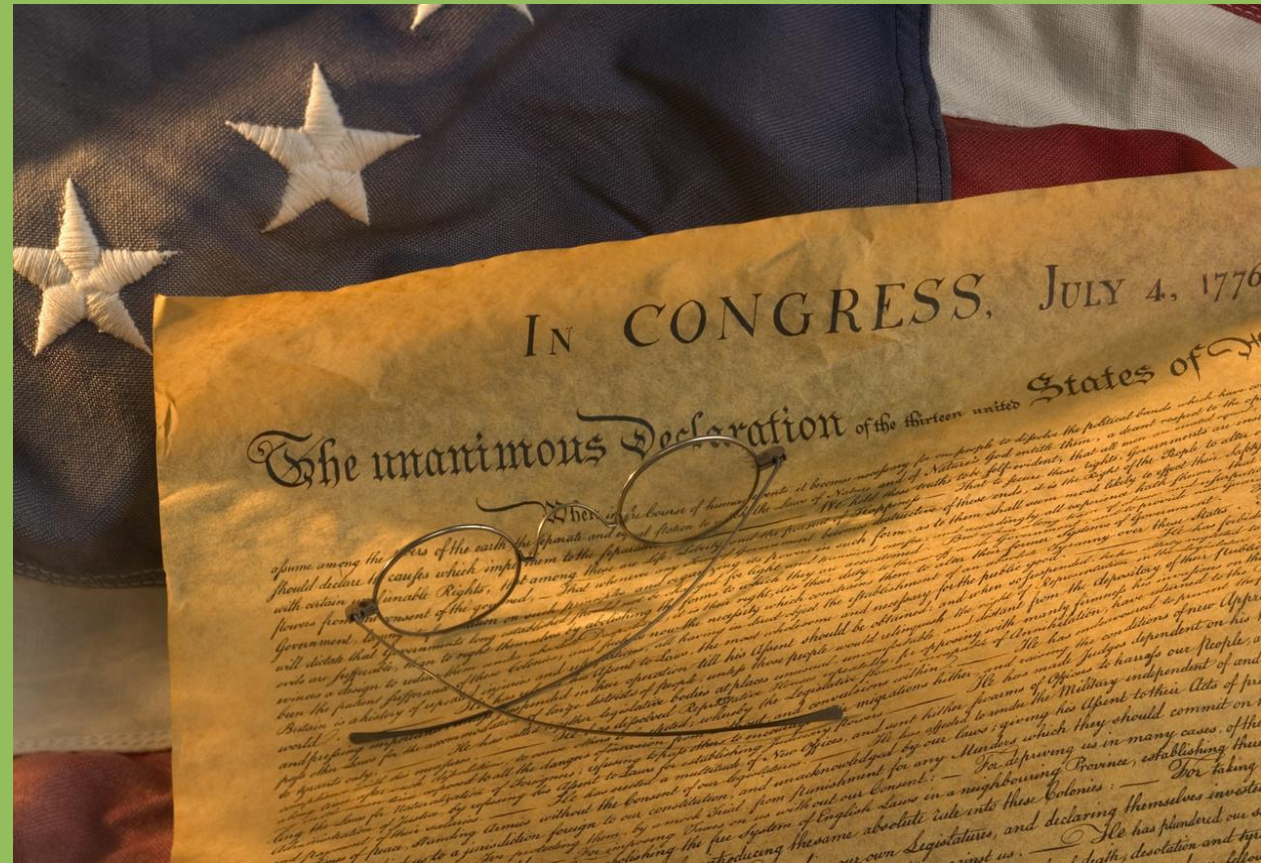
“Jumping to a conclusion” amounts to a premature inductive leap. In order to create an effective argument using inductive reasoning a speaker/writer should be sure that his or her personal bias has not influenced the conclusion.

Effective Arguments with Deductive and Inductive Reasoning: The Declaration of Independence

Major premise:

Tyrannical leaders deserve no loyalty

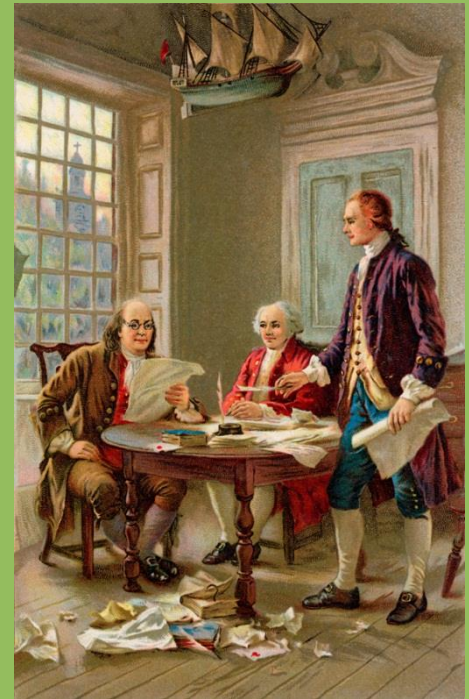
Jefferson states this as one of those Truths that is “self-evident.”



“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness . . . whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government . . . when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security . . . ”

Minor Premise: King George III is a tyrannical ruler.

The majority of the Declaration focuses on proving this. Jefferson uses inductive reasoning to prove this point, providing evidence of the King's transgressions to conclude he is tyrannical.



“He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people

”
...

[This is the beginning of an extensive list.]

Conclusion: Therefore, King George deserves no loyalty.

The conclusion of Jefferson's argument is logical and sound.

***To Kill a Mockingbird* and Reasoning**

The court case in *To Kill a Mockingbird* uses deductive and inductive argumentation.

Major premise: All black men are evil.

Minor premise: Tom Robinson is a black man.

Conclusion: Therefore Tom Robinson is evil.

Atticus uses his closing arguments to attack the false major premise.

Atticus also uses inductive reasoning to show that it was impossible for Tom to commit the crime.

Testing Inductive Reasoning

Though inductive reasoning leads to probable and not absolute truth, you can assess a conclusion's likely probability by asking three questions:

- (1) Is the evidence sufficient?
- (2) Is the evidence representative?
- (3) Is the evidence relevant?

CONCLUSION

The majority of students on our campus would volunteer at least five hours a week in a community organization if the school provided a placement service for volunteers.

EVIDENCE

In a recent survey, 723 of 1,215 students questioned said they would volunteer at least five hours a week in a community organization if the school provided a placement service for volunteers.

Testing Inductive Reasoning

1. Is the evidence sufficient?

That depends. On a small campus (say, 3,000 students), the pool of students surveyed would be sufficient for market research, but on a large campus (say, 30,000), 1,215 students are only 4 percent of the population. If that 4 percent were known to be truly representative of the other 96 percent, however, even such a small sample would be sufficient (see question 2).

Testing Inductive Reasoning

2. Is the evidence representative?

The evidence is representative if those responding to the survey reflect the characteristics of the entire student population: age, sex, race, field of study, overall number of extracurricular commitments, and so on. If most of those surveyed are majors in a field like social work, however, the researchers would be wise to question the survey's conclusion.

Testing Inductive Reasoning

3. Is the evidence relevant?

Yes. The results of the survey are directly linked to the conclusion. Evidence based on a survey about the number of hours students work for pay, by contrast, would not be relevant because it would not be about *choosing to volunteer*.