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# Designing Arguments for Academic, Public, and Professional Audiences

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## for Academic, Public, and Professional Audiences



Expository Writing Program
Department of English
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# What Is English 200: Expository Writing II?

English 200 ("Expository Writing II") will introduce you to persuasive writing. Often when we think about persuasion, we think about winning an argument. Yet, as you'll see in this textbook, theories and practices of persuasion are much broader than that. In fact, throughout the semester you'll work to think of persuasion in terms of moving a reader in a number of different ways: helping a reader more fully understand a complex issue, making it easier for a reader to better hear you and your perspective, encouraging a reader to consider a different viewpoint, and asking a reader to take a particular action. You will also learn how to analyze and build different kinds of arguments, using some of the most useful and common tools of the trade, including rhetorical appeals, the Toulmin model, and Rogerian communication. Throughout all of these processes, we'll ask you to pay particular attention to your audience, continually keeping an audience's values, beliefs, and needs in mind.

Indeed, if there is a key phrase in English 200, it is "audience-based reasoning." Focusing on your readers will allow you to make decisions about what evidence to choose, what organizational patterns to employ, and what tone and style to use. Importantly, this course enhances your ability to imagine the needs and values of your readers and to understand the reasons for why they might hold differing viewpoints. In doing so, you will also be asked to consider the sources of your own knowledge, examining your own values, beliefs, and needs to determine how to best build bridges between you and your readers. This will require what rhetorical theorist Krista Ratcliffe calls "rhetorical listening." Instead of simply listening to other perspectives to find a way to respond, or even to understand the content of what someone is saying—although both of those are important skills—Ratcliffe encourages people to approach listening with understanding, with the intent to understand other perspectives and to better understand the people who hold differing viewpoints.[1]

We believe that the ability to understand a variety of perspectives and then add your educated voice to that conversation is essential to being an engaged and productive citizen. In order to do that, you will need to do quite a bit of research. Before crafting an argument, you must determine your primary research question(s); learn as much as possible about the multiple aspects of your topic; research the values, concerns, and beliefs of your audience; and determine how best to respond. The process of research will often cause you to change your own opinion on a topic; being open to change in the face of new research is a valuable part of the learning process and a critical skill in and of itself.

Finally, we want to note that this is one of the most practical and useful courses you are likely to take during your college career. The very act of writing regularly, of engaging in writing as a practice, will help you improve. Doing this practice with the guidance of your instructor, your peers, and this textbook will further strengthen your ability to express yourself on the page—a requirement for many classes throughout the university. Additionally, employers in nearly all fields consistently report that one of the primary qualifications they look for in employees is good written communication skills. The skills you learn in ENGL 200, then, can literally help you get (and keep) a good job.

### ENGL 200 Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students should have completed at least 20 pages of revised and edited prose. Below, you will find the English 200 course objectives. By the end of the course, you should be able to do the following:

- Adopt effective process writing strategies, including invention, drafting, analyzing their own drafts and those of others, revising, and editing.
- Construct an argumentative claim and develop and adequately support audience-based reasons.
- Demonstrate ability to respond thoughtfully to peers' drafts.
- Identify and apply the core concepts of an explicit argument: claims and audience-based reasons, evidence, assumptions/warrants, credibility, conditions of rebuttal, as well as ethos, pathos, and logos.
- Anticipate and rebut counterarguments to their claims, reasons, warrants, or use of evidence.
- Locate and evaluate appropriate outside research sources and effectively integrate and cite them in their arguments.
- Analyze specific audiences.
- Produce a broad range of arguments for various contexts and audiences: evaluations, proposals, letters to the editor, etc.

## Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes[2]

Kansas State University strives to create an atmosphere of intellectual curiosity and growth, one in which academic freedom, breadth of thought and action, and individual empowerment are valued and flourish. We endeavor to prepare citizens who will continue to learn and will contribute to societies in which they live and work.

Students share in the responsibility for a successful university educational experience. Upon completion of their degree and regardless of disciplinary major, undergraduates are expected to demonstrate ability in at least five essential areas.

### Knowledge

Students will demonstrate a depth of knowledge and apply the methods of inquiry in a discipline of their choosing, and they will demonstrate a breadth of knowledge across their choice of varied disciplines.

### Critical thinking

Students will demonstrate the ability to access and interpret information, respond and adapt to changing situations, make complex decisions, solve problems, and evaluate actions.

### Communication

Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly and effectively.

### Diversity

Students will demonstrate awareness and understanding of the skills necessary to live and work in a diverse world.

### Academic and professional integrity

Students will demonstrate awareness and understanding of the ethical standards of their academic discipline and/or profession.

## Principles of Community[3]

Kansas State University is a land-grant, public research university, committed to teaching and learning, research, and service to the people of Kansas, the nation, and the world. Our collective mission is best accomplished when every member of the university community acknowledges and practices the following principles:

We affirm the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain an atmosphere of justice based on respect for each other.

We affirm the right of each person to freely express thoughts and opinions in a spirit of civility and decency. We believe that diversity of views enriches our learning environment and we promote open expression within a climate of courtesy, sensitivity, and mutual respect.

We affirm the value of human diversity for community. We confront and reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, economic status, or any other differences that have led to misunderstandings, hostility, and injustice.

We acknowledge that we are a part of the larger Kansas community and that we have an obligation to be engaged in a positive way with our civic partners.

We recognize our individual obligations to the university community and to the principles that sustain it. We will each strive to contribute to a positive spirit that affirms learning and growth for all members of the community.

## Your Role as a Student in an Academic Community

Now that you have joined Kansas State University as a student, you are part of a larger intellectual community: students, instructors, and professors are researching, creating, and sharing knowledge and ideas. For instructors and professors, ideas are their livelihood. In a university environment—also known as academia—ideas are considered intellectual property. Therefore, as members of this academic community you need to be respectful and responsible with another's ideas and give credit where credit is due. To help you respectfully work with outside ideas in your papers, we will be learning how to cite sources in this course. In addition, in an intellectual community, you need to make sure that all of the work you do for all of your classes is your own. You can review the Kansas State University Honor Code in the *Student Life Handbook*.

### A Word on Plagiarism...

The Council of Writing Program Administrators defines plagiarism as something that "occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source."

Your *Student Life Handbook* also includes definitions of plagiarism and gives you advice for when you need to provide appropriate citations:

- Whenever you quote another person's actual words
- Whenever you use another person's idea, opinion, or theory, even it if is completely paraphrased in your own words
- Whenever you borrow facts, statistics, or other illustrative material—unless the information is common knowledge (William W. Watt, An American Rhetoric 8)

Talk to your instructor if you have any questions on how to cite properly. Please also check K-State's Honor & Integrity System website for more information: www.k-state.edu/honor.

If it is proven that you have deliberately plagiarized a paper in an Expository Writing class, the Honor Council will be notified. Consequences could be severe, including failure of the class, required enrollment in a Development and Integrity course, or, in particularly severe offenses, expulsion from the university.

## Introductory Assignment

The start of the semester, before the major assignments begin, is a useful time to get to know each other a little better through a brief writing assignment. The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate your awareness of argumentation while also introducing yourself as a writer to your instructor and to the rest of your writing community (your classmates). While this assignment is ungraded, you should view it as an opportunity to showcase your critical thinking and writing skills before the graded work of the semester begins.

To complete the activity, write a 600-900 word (typed, double-spaced) essay that explores a situation in which you either were or were not successful in persuading an audience (a parent, a friend, a co-worker, etc.) to act upon, agree with, or believe a particular idea. Or perhaps you convinced someone to simply consider the validity of a viewpoint that they've generally resisted. You should think of your essay as an argument, too: you're making and supporting a claim that you were or not successful in the situation you describe. Remember to include clear evidence that illustrates your main claim.

Here are some invention ideas to help you get started:

- What formal and informal groups/organizations/communities do you belong to?
- What controversies/disagreements/issues exist within these groups?
- What were/are your ideas about these issues? Did you participate in any discussions about them? What opinions, facts, and/or other reasons did you offer in those discussions?
- Whom did you try to persuade?
- Were these attempts formal (addressed to governing bodies, for example) or informal, addressed to family, friends, or colleagues?
- Were you successful in your argument? Why or why not?

## What is Argumentation?

In this textbook and throughout ENGL 200, we are going to challenge the definitions of this meme by Peace Maker's Life:


Figure 1: "Discussion is Always Better." Facebook MemeSource: Facebook, Peace Maker's Life, July 18, 2017. https://www.facebook.com/pg/PeacemakersLife/posts/

We are not going to separate discussion from argument or define argument as only a way of sorting out winners—"who is right"—from losers. Instead, we hope to present a view of argumentation that is a process of discussion, research, and inquiry.

In ENGL 200, we focus on the audience, our readers. Instead of expressive, informative, or imaginative writing, our main purpose will be argumentative writing. In short, you will be making argumentative claims and supporting them with reasons and evidence to shape the thinking of your readers and, quite possibly, move them to action.

As you progress through ENGL 200, you will become aware of all of the arguments that saturate your everyday life. Companies, government entities, non-profits, educational institutions, advertisers, websites, social media sites, and public citizens—not to mention your own friends and family members—will be vying to get your attention, trying to get you to agree with them, to change your mind, to identify with them and their causes, and to move you to act (e.g., to vote in a certain way or to donate money).

In the following three images, you will find examples of grassroots arguments that point to issues important to large communities and audiences. Each of these arguments, moreover, have a larger social and cultural context.


Figure 2. "Sisterhood, Not Cis-terhood."
Graffiti, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

What are the characteristics of these three arguments? The authors in all three have a persuasive purpose. Instead of simply expressing themselves, informing their readers, or making a literary contribution, they are attempting to persuade their audiences. That is, they want to persuade their readers to pay more attention to an issue (e.g. the refugee crisis in Europe), to change their minds, or to move them into action.


Figure 3. "Refugees Welcome." Graffiti, Venice, Italy

These arguments are also attempting to initiate a conversation; they are not combative and angry. They are also reaching out to a public audience, which could be supportive (they agree with the position), neutral (they are undecided about the issue), or resistant (they hold an alternative position). Importantly, these arguments refer to larger social contexts that these public audiences will be invested in. However, this is not to say that all people will respond to or care about these arguments. The "Policy & Change" yard sign, for example, restricts itself to adult audiences in the United States and may attempt to provoke a religious-based audience. "The Sisterhood, Not Cis-terhood" argument invokes those with particular interests in gender identity rights, feminist and transgender studies, and LGBTQ issues.


Figure 4. "Policy & Change." Yard Sign, Manhattan, Kansas, United States

To clarify this discussion, let's list the four main features that reflect how argumentation will be defined in this textbook:

## Persuasion & Dialogue

Argumentation consists of a rich interplay between persuasion and dialogue. On the one hand, your purpose is to shape the thinking of your readers, to change their minds, and to move them into action. The "authors" of the "Policy & Change" yard sign, for example, are hoping that their audiences will consider gun reform legislation. On the other hand, you should use argumentation as a way to learn more about your issue, your message, the writing strategies available to you, and your audience's needs and values. In short, instead of a "fight" or a pro/con debate, you are encouraged to regard argumentation as a dialogue with your readers and as a process of truth seeking. You should work toward a fuller understanding of the issues you are addressing and be willing to change your mind about them and consider alternative claims and reasons.

## Explicit Claims and Reasons

As you work on arguments in this class, you will offer explicit claims and reasons. Unlike the authors of the three arguments that we discussed above, you will be asked to highlight your main claim for your readers—this is the position that you are supporting about the issue. You will then support this main claim with reasons–statements that support and justify (explain "why?") your position. Instead of "Refugees Welcome," therefore, your argument would more clearly specify your claim and reasons:

Claim: We should welcome all refugees to Italy.

Reason #1: Because they are human beings deserving of a better life.

Reason #2: Because we need to create a world that is more sustainable and equitable for all.

Reason #3: Because Europe has the wealth and capacity to care for all refugees.

When you make your argument explicit, you are trying to make it as easy as possible for your readers to understand your position and the reasons why you have taken that position. Here are some more examples of explicit arguments:

- K-State Libraries should not feature a café in its first-floor space because it makes the library appear too much like a place for shopping and entertainment.
- The online class I took last semester was a disaster because the instructor stopped communicating with everyone halfway through the semester.

In both of these examples, the writers have clearly indicating what they were arguing, a proposal not to do something in the first case or a negative evaluation in the second; the writers have then supported and justified their positions with an obvious reason.

## Public Audiences

Your arguments should have a "public" audience—that is, there needs to be a reasonably large public community or communities that are invested in the issue and are interested in exploring it. The issue should not require a great deal of technical knowledge or expertise for members of these public communities to participate in it. Similarly, the issue should not be of interest only to one small community that is not connected to the larger interests of public life.

Issues surrounding parenting are a good example of public arguments. Not only do many people become parents, and thus find themselves having to confront these issues, but all people as children will be affected by these arguments. Here are several parenting issues that are commonplace: parenting styles, breastfeeding, types of punishment, use of television and digital devices, and homeschooling. Similarly, the issues related to vaccinations and "anti-vaxxer" parents who refuse to have their children vaccinated are now frequent arguments with many consequences for healthcare and schooling.

Unfortunately, there are some audiences for which it is impossible to generate a persuasive, successful, and ethical argument. These are audiences who may resist your attempts at creating a dialogue and searching for the truth and good solutions. Here are three audiences to avoid:

- *Polarized audiences*: When writers attempt to appeal to audiences who may be resistant or openly hostile, they may encounter rhetorical situations in which effective argumentation becomes impossible. In these cases, the polarized audiences reject the assumptions and values held by those with alternative perspectives and, in effect, refuse to listen to reasoned arguments. Issues related to abortion, gun rights, and conspiracy theories may include highly polarized audiences.
- *Audiences who do not want to change*: If your readers refuse to consider the possibility of changing their minds or agreeing to compromise, then the conditions of successful argumentation are no longer possible. Similarly, as the writer and arguer, you must also open yourself up to the possibility of changing your mind about the issue.
- *Audiences who hold no basis of agreement with the writer*. If the writer and their audiences refuse to grant their reasons and evidence any validity, then there is also no basis for successful argumentation. For example, writers who craft arguments based upon conspiracy theories or readers who disregard all evidence as "fake news" will not be able to participate in argumentation in the ways in which it has been defined here.

## Controversial Issue

The issue you choose to explore should be "controversial," which, in this case, means a topic that includes at least two perspectives or two ways of thinking about it. In other words, you need to conceive of at least two groups of readers who would hold alternative views about the issue and position themselves differently.

When we discuss controversial issues, it is important to distinguish between issues – topics on which at least two groups of people disagree or have different perspectives – and informational questions, those research questions and answers that most (reasonable) people will agree with. In other words, you *won't* be arguing about informational questions, such as the following:

- When has the warmest temperature been recorded in Antarctica?
- What percentage of high-school students in the United States has reported eating disorders?
- According to voter data in 2020, how many voters identify themselves as "white nationalists"?
- What are the differences in standardized language test scores between different demographic groups?

Instead, as you approach arguments, you'll be thinking in terms of issues:

- Why has the U.S. government been slower than Scandinavian countries in recognizing the relationship of climate change and growing temperatures in Antarctica?
- What role does the fashion media have to play in eating disorders among adolescent women in the United States?
- Why do so many young white men now call themselves "white nationalists"?

How can we help support the lower test scores of young males when it comes to language development?

## Activity: Defining Argumentation

Discuss whether these following argumentation scenarios meet the ways in which argumentation is defined in ENGL 200. If they are not arguments that fit the specific contexts of ENGL 200, consider how you would revise them to better reflect the approach to argument we've been outlining.

1. In this Unit 3 persuasive research paper, I am going to finally prove to all that the 9-11 attacks on the Twin Towers were part of a right-wing conspiracy to entangle the United States in the Middle East for decades and make owners of oil fields and weapons factories wealthier.
2. In the Midwest of the United States, temperatures in the wintertime have been increasing over the past ten years.
3. The Obama-era restrictions on lunches in public schools need to be modified to help offset food waste.
4. Nothing will ever get me to change my mind that the United States is a nation of immigrants, and all immigrants—no matter how they arrived in the country—should have the chance of becoming citizens.

## Activity: Example Bstroy Hoodie Argument

Based upon this discussion on argumentation, look at this list of tweets that respond to a new clothing line by Bstroy, in which hoodies show the names of schools involved in mass shootings and include "bullet holes." Choose three of the tweets and present the argument that they make in your own words. Then, discuss whether these tweets meet the definition of a viable argument for ENGL 200.


Figure 5. "Columbine." Bstroy Hoodies.
Source: Twitter, #bstroy, 2019.
https://twitter.com/hashtag/bstroy?

- Dragon Poo @StarkAssNaked: Creativity can (and should) be original, sometimes brash, and sometimes controversial. #bstroy school shootings hoodies are none of those…just a selfish gimmick from a couple of hacks better suited to selling fake Rolexes in Times Square.
- John Harvey @digitallywired: Despicable. Designers of 'Sandy Hook' and 'Columbine' hoodies made an awful blunder (Opinion).
- Julia Mayhem @pipzt3r: If #Bstroy said "hey all of these funds are going toward supporting the victims, family of victims, and communities affected by these tragedies," I'd be so down because these images, and art in general, can be used to send a powerful message.
- Reina Sanchez @ReinaSa43116912: Trying to make a "statement" in the hopes of achieving a pay day using the souls of innocents is truly despicable. Your brand turns my stomach and shows the worst of humanity. #bstroy
- CSMingus @CSMingus #mediawhorespotlight: And how much money is being made? Their T-shirts sell for $135. Their hoodies range from $180 to $410 each. Proof that "fashion" is overrated and a complete joke.

## Activity: Local Arguments

Find and photograph as many arguments that you see in your immediate "linguistic landscape," the public space in the local area that you interact with and walk through every day. While doing so, make sure that you are paying attention to all of the possible genres in this landscape: bumper stickers, T-Shirts, pins and badges, sidewalk chalk art, flyers, billboards, graffiti, yard signs, company signs, and other possibilities. Be prepared to talk about the claims and reasons that appear in these arguments and whether they fit the ways in which argumentation has been defined above.

Here are two examples of local arguments:


Figure 6. Political Poster During 2020 Election, Manhattan, KS


Figure 7. Murdered & Missing Indigenous Women, Train Graffiti, Manhattan, KS

## Rhetorical Situation of an Argument

The basic rhetorical situation of an argument consists of three major components: the writer/arguer, the message/text, and the reader/audience. The *writer* crafts an

argumentative *message* that they want to get across to the *audience*. The relationship of these three interlocking terms is often visualized as a triangle, sometimes called the "rhetorical situation triangle."

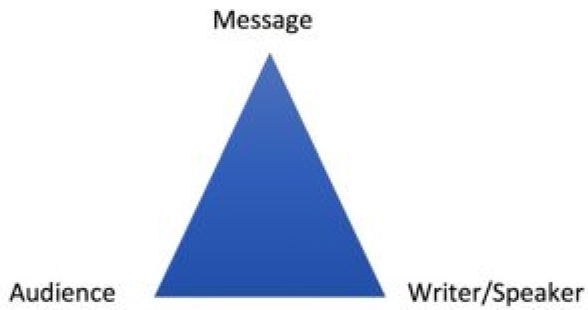


Figure 8. Rhetorical Situation Triangle

To show the rhetorical situation in action, consider the ubiquitous example of the bumper sticker. This is a highly visible and mobile argument—one that you come across a lot. In this case, the driver or owner of the car becomes the "writer" of the argument: even though they didn't produce the bumper sticker itself, they are the ones who are taking responsibility over its message. For example, here is a bumper sticker that was found after 2016:


Figure 9. "I Stand for the National Anthem." Bumper StickerSource: Ebay. https://www.ebay.com/itm/I-STAND-FOR-THE-NATIONAL-ANTHEM-anti-NFL-decal-BUMPER-STICKER-Conservative-GOP-/142573167503

The message of the bumper sticker is intriguingly simple. It has two meanings: the "writer" of the bumper sticker claims that they literally stand up for the patriotic event of the national anthem; they also claim that they are supporters of the values that they see clustered around the national anthem. We might almost want to consider this an informative statement: the writer is simply informing their audience about something they do (stand up) and believe in (a particular form of patriotism). Yet, given the events of 2016, in which Colin Kaepernick and other NFL football players protested police violence against African Americans by kneeling during the national anthem at the beginning of NFL games, this claim certainly becomes an argumentative one. The writer is declaring a position, aligning themselves with others who have the same values and distancing from others who reject this claim.

The audience? It is tempting to think of the audience as all possible readers who may see this bumper sticker, yet it's often more useful, especially in this age of viral online arguments, to consider the *intended* rhetorical audiences: the readers who were imagined when the bumper sticker was created and, of course, when the bumper sticker was stuck to the back of the car. The question you have to ask yourself is whether the writer conceived of their audience as one of supporters (of people who would affirm the message) or, quite possibly, if the writer has in mind a resistant audience—they are trying to confront the views of those who would sneer at this patriotic statement. Of course, the writer may be holding both of these audiences in mind at the same time.

Again, it is important to recognize the issues surrounding the national anthem, which cluster around such contrasting key values as patriotism, respect, the sacrifices of members of the military, U.S. militarism, police violence, and diversity. Since 2016, the national anthem has become saturated with new meanings, arguments, and rhetorical possibilities.

## Unpacking Rhetoric

The issues and approaches we've been detailing so far fall within the realm of *rhetoric*. In fact, ENGL 200 is, at heart, a class in rhetoric; in other words, it is a class devoted to having you consider the ways in which you—and others—are purposefully using language and other symbols to influence readers, viewers, and listeners. Researchers in rhetoric study a wide variety of things: from tattoos to speeches, building design to Reddit threads, and clothing to sidewalk chalk. For example, some rhetorical scholars study how museums and memorials affect participants by analyzing architectural forms, messages, digital instillations, display objects and artifacts, and images. Researchers in technical communication and rhetoric may examine how medical instructions and packaging downplay the risks for consumers. Likewise, other scholars in the field may examine how architecture students learn to enact the values of architecture through design proposal assignments.

### Rhetoric in Action: Word Choice and Filtering/Emphasis

One important dimension of rhetoric is the way that people use language to shape the world for themselves and for others. Read this following scenario:

A high-school teacher receives an angry email from a parent who accuses the teacher of "confronting" her son in the hallway after class and "scolding" him on the quality of his recent homework assignment.

Confronted? Scolded? Although the teacher recalls briefly meeting with the student after class and suggesting that the student revise his homework to enhance his semester grade, she is worried about how her interaction has been represented. It definitely does not fit into the model of teaching and teacher-student interactions that she has tried to foster throughout the semester.

What is going on here? Well, rhetoric is going on. The mother—and student (after all, we need to know more about how and why the student depicted this event to his mother)—held a different model or schema in their heads about how teachers and students typically interact with each other; in this case, they held an adversarial model, in which teachers "confront" students (not "approached" or "engaged in a brief conversation with," etc.) and "scold" students (not "remind" or "suggest" or "encourage"). In this case, according to the mother's email, the teacher has taken over the role of the authoritarian parent. In her email, the mother has chosen particular words, perhaps unconsciously, in order to emphasize certain aspects of the teacher- student interaction and to filter or shape the reality of what happened for the teacher and, presumably, others.

### Rhetoric as Manipulation?

Unfortunately, rhetoric has a popular (mis)understanding as an unethical form of persuasion, in which the rhetor (or arguer) is interested in manipulating audiences, using such strategies as lying, obfuscation, *ad hominem* attacks, exaggeration, and appeals to conspiracy theories, among other possibilities. Whenever anyone claims that something is just "rhetoric," they are pointing to this narrow popular definition, which means something similar to "spin," "propaganda," and ornate words covering untruths. Although it is important to be mindful of these ways of defining rhetoric, you should also be aware that rhetoric has a long history of engaging writers and speakers with ethical ways to present themselves, contribute to their communities, and to use language intentionally to help shape their audience's beliefs and actions.

## Rhetorical Appeals

Traditionally, those who study rhetoric sometimes do so within the framework of the three major rhetorical appeals, drawn from the rhetorical situation: the writer/speaker, message, and audience. These are the three main ways in which writers can make themselves appear persuasive to their readers. They can appeal through their *ethos*—their ability to present themselves as credible and trustworthy for their readers; or, they can emphasize their *logos*, the reasonability of their message, their use of evidence, as well as the coherence of their overall argument; finally, they can be persuasive by appealing to *pathos*, the emotions and imagination of the readers. We discuss each of these appeals in more detail in the following sections.

Below, we can see the ways that the rhetorical appeals align with the three points of the rhetorical situation to help us complete what's sometimes known as the "rhetorical triangle":

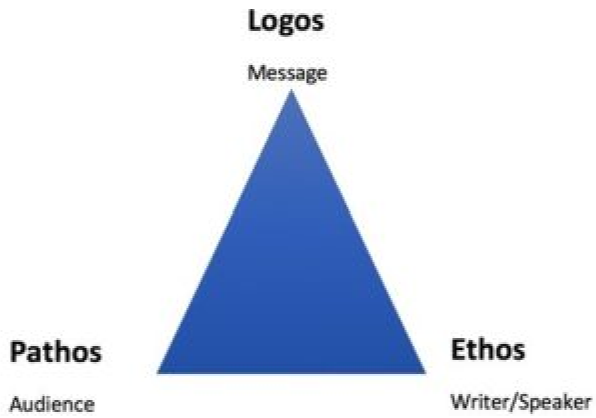


Figure 10. The Rhetorical Triangle

## Ethos

The "ethos" of the argument points to the writer, speaker, rhetor, or designer. When it comes to a successful ethos-based argument, the audience is sympathetic towards it because they find the writer to be credible, likeable, friendly, smart, impressive, or any other of a long list of qualities.

Writers can present their ethos by having credentials that audiences will respect. If the writer is arguing about a medical issue, for example, readers may respond well if the writer has identified themselves as a medical doctor. When trying to figure out whether to vote for an increase in the local education budget, some voters might appreciate hearing from teachers as opposed to politicians.

Writers can enhance their ethos by appearing to be open-minded, well-organized, and knowledgeable. In fact, writing teachers may be judging their own students' ethos or credibility when they come across typos, formatting problems, citation glitches, faulty paraphrasing, and sloppy citation or references sections. These problems will certainly diminish the ethos of the student writer. Other writers may choose to enhance their ethos by demonstrating their knowledge of the issue and showing that they understand the different sides of the argument. They will need to do this by reading and listening, conducting research, and talking with peers and experts, among other possibilities.

Writers, through their use of language, can also shape the ways in which their readers accept them as credible, trustworthy, and even likeable people. Writers may use

- Inclusive pronouns (e.g., "we") or other linguistic devices, to make it seem like the writer is including the reader in their argument
- Create a "bridge" between themselves and their readers; for example, if a university athletic director was

arguing to cut a sports program, she might create more sympathy for her position by talking about her experiences as a student athlete

- Use specifics and concrete details to show that they have "done their homework"
- Show that they are willing to compromise and listen

Interestingly enough, in contemporary politics across the globe, ethos has become regarded as the most important rhetorical appeal. In the United States, the United Kingdom, and many other countries, citizens are voting for candidates who they like, admire, and respect—yet with very little thought about what these candidates are actually saying or doing.

## Logos

Logos points to the soundness of the rhetorical message: What is the core argument that the writer is offering? What is the main claim? What are the ways that they support and justify the main claim with reasons? What are the ways in which the reasons logically relate to the claim? What assumptions, values, and beliefs does the audience have to hold in order to accept the core argument?

In short, logos is the reasonableness of the argument. Will it make sense to the readers? Will they accept it? Will they be able to follow it? Will they grant it as acceptable, appropriate, and logical?

Evidence also makes up a component of logos. To what extent does the writer support their main points or reasons? How satisfying will the readers find this evidence and the ways in which it is used?

Though we will discuss the different components of logos in more detail below, take a quick look at two examples of a core argument. Many readers will accept the logos of the first example.

However, most readers will not accept the logos of the second example.

> Example #1: "We should buy a Subaru Outback because it has high safety ratings." Claim: We should buy a Subaru Outback.
>
> Reason: Because it has high safety ratings. Assumption: Safety is an important concern.
>
> Example #2: "He's Brazilian; of course, he's going to be good at soccer." Claim: He is going to be good at soccer.
>
> Reason: Because he is Brazilian.
>
> Assumption: All Brazilians are good soccer players.

In Example #1, this argument makes intrinsic sense because of the fact that safety is an important value and concern for many possible audiences (of course, you might find particular audiences in which safety would be less desirable than other qualities about cars, such as speed and sportiness). In Example #2, the logos is based upon a stereotype. Almost all readers would hesitate to accept the logic of this argument.

## Pathos

Pathos points to the audience and, in particular, the feelings, sympathies, and imagination of the audience. Oftentimes, we can consider pathos as the "heart" of the argument, as we are interested in how readers feel because of what the writer or speaker is doing rhetorically.

Writers may use heart-wrenching stories to appeal to the sympathies and emotions of the readers. They may, conversely, use statistics and images to stoke the fears of audience members.

Obvious examples of pathos are easy to find, especially in the images used by non-profits or charitable organizations.

Figure 11. "We Need 'Cuddlers.'" Kansas Humane Society, 2019.Source: Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/kshumane/photos/

## Kairos

Though not a part of the traditional rhetorical appeals, *kairos* refers to the timeliness of the argument. In other words, to what extent will readers consider the argument or issue to be timely and relevant to them?

There are many examples of people with important claims to make who were not listened to because the "advocacy window" (see also the "Overton window") or the time was not the appropriate one. For example, many environmentalists have been trying to get politicians and the mass public galvanized around issues of plastics and carbon usage since the 1970s. Yet, they found themselves with few audiences who cared because the effects of climate change were not quite yet part of the everyday experiences of people

On the other hand, seatbelt safety campaigns in the United States are no longer considered to be urgent or necessary. Attitudes towards seatbelt usage have changed dramatically in the past three decades, especially among young men. Because most people in the U.S. now regularly wear their seatbelts, there is little reason to make arguments urging people to do so. In other words, it is no longer the kairotic moment for such arguments.

As a writer, you can enhance your argument by considering *kairos* and making clear its urgency and immediate importance. In proposals, for example, you may find yourself writing a "Call to Action" section, in which you are highlighting the reasons why your audience needs to act immediately on your proposal to solve the solution. You would be combining both *kairos* and pathos, as you may be trying to worry your reader about the negative consequences that could happen if they fail to act in a timely manner.

The list below summarizes the three main rhetorical appeals and *kairos*.

### Ethos

- Writer/speaker
- ("character"; credibility)
- Appeal to the trustworthiness and credibility of the writer

### Logos

- Message/Argument
- ("word"; logic, discourse)
- Appeal to the logic and reasonability of the argument, the consistency of the reasons, and the convincing use of support.

### Pathos

- Audience
- ("suffering"; emotion)
- Appeal to the imagination, emotions, and sympathies of your readers.

### Kiaros

- ("time"; timeliness)
- Appeal to the timeliness and relevance of the argument for the audience.

Figure 12. Summary of Rhetorical Appeals

Even though these rhetorical appeals appear in separate columns in Figure 10, please be aware that in practice they can blend together; moreover, when analyzing a specific feature of an argument, you might be able to explain it by referring to more than one of the appeals. For example, consider the use of statistics. During the Covid-19 outbreak, Anthony Fauci, one of the most visible of the scientific advisors in the Trump administration, used the statistic of 240,000 potential coronavirus deaths to galvanize the political action needed to enforce social distancing and isolation policies. As ethos, the use of this statistic shows that Fauci was aware of the scientific data and the modeling that had been conducted; as logos, Fauci used this statistic as evidence to support his claim (social distancing and isolation policies are necessary) and his reason (because they will save lives); finally, as pathos, this frightening statistic affected audiences emotionally; they were persuaded out of fear.


Figure 13. "Men Have Died For Your Freedom." Bumper Sticker Source: Ebay. http://www.ebay.com

Using the concepts of the rhetorical appeals, examine the following bumper sticker. In terms of the rhetorical appeals, how is it different from the "I Stand for the National Anthem" bumper sticker?

**Ethos**: What can you say about how this bumper sticker represents its "writer" as well as the relationship between the "writer" and the "readers"?

**Logos**: What is the explicit claim of the message? The reason? What is the unstated assumption that readers have to hold to make the connection between the claim and the reason understandable and reasonable?

**Pathos**: Who is the *intended or target* audience of this bumper sticker? How do you know? How are members of the intended audience meant to feel? What particular details can you select to show how pathos is working?

**Kairos**: Is the "national anthem" still an important issue for Americans? In what ways?

## A Brief Noteon Conspiracy Theory Thinking

Although conspiracy theories certainly predate the arrival of Facebook, YouTube, and other social media platforms, as a particular form of argumentation and public discourse, conspiracy theory thinking – what former President Obama has referred to as "truth decay"[4] – has become quite powerful, even commonplace and mainstream. Elite lizard people running the United States? Top Democratic Party representatives involved in a global child sex-trafficking ring? Bill Gates inventing Covid-19 to enable him to implant computer chips into people? 5G Networks sending out signals to sicken or enslave the population?[5] Internment camps underneath the Denver Airport?[6]

Admittedly, the examples above have been chosen because they appear so ludicrous, yet we cannot forget that even these beliefs have real effects. In December 2016, a man opened fire at a pizzeria in Washington D.C., one of the supposed centers of the sex-trafficking ring.[7] 5G towers have been burnt down in Great Britain by "truth seeking" activists. Closer to home, in Manhattan, Kansas, drivers with painted QAnon symbols on their vehicles challenged bystanders after the 2020 presidential election.[8] Another example: traumatized parents of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting have been accused of faking the massacre as a way to sway public opinion against gun rights.[9]

Conspiracy theory thinking has spread as a way to shape the reality – and to resist government policies and official explanations – of traditional political processes such as elections, well- established medical procedures, and public policies, including that of mandating masks during the coronavirus epidemic. Additionally, we should be troubled by the similarities that many conspiracy theories, in particular QAnon, have with anti-Semitic discourse.1[10]

A conspiracy theory argument consists of the same elements as the public arguments that we will be exploring in ENGL 200. It consists of **ethos**– in this case, appeals to an "insider" who has special knowledge (e.g., QAnon) or who may possess academic credentials (e.g., Vanessa Beeley[11]). It is also framed within an audience-focused **pathos**, using such emotions as fear and disgust, and, more importantly, providing readers and listeners with the satisfying feeling that they are in the presence of the truth and can empower themselves by having the meaning of the world unlocked for them. Finally, conspiracy theory thinking is a form of **logos**, yet an internal, pseudo-sort of logos: conspiracy theorists do make claims and use evidence to support their reasons, yet they cannot defend their evidence, find credible and external sources of information, objectively examine their own views, and consider other possibilities or alternatives. In fact, it becomes impossible to argue with conspiracy theory thinking. Your criticisms, challenges, and appeals to more credible sources are immediately used to strengthen their claims. British writer James Meek, when he attempted to discuss his concerns with a conspiracy theorist, made this discovery: "I was reminded of one of the reasons it's so difficult to argue with conspiracy theorists: you're faced with a choice between challenging limitless errors one by one, or denouncing an entire edifice of belief, which usually means calling the conspiracy theorist mad [i.e., insane] or stupid, at which point conspiracy theory has won" (21).[12]

How can you help to challenge the growing power of conspiracy theory thinking? As a student of argumentation and persuasion, keep on honing your ability to distinguish between fact and fiction and to make judgements about the credibility of evidence; seek out opportunities to share ideas with those who may disagree with you – but who will do so reasonably, productively, and civilly; recognize that the world is far more complicated than these simple conspiracy theories may lead you believe; understand that you nor anyone else holds 100% of the truth – yet at the same time that you can make judgements without falling into the trap of denying everything and claiming everything is "fake news"; support legislation to regulate social media; and, among other strategies, pay attention to the labels, symbols, rhetorical appeals, and other components of arguments that you encounter.

## More on Logos: Introduction to the Toulmin Model

ENGL 200 uses the Toulmin Model, named after the British philosopher, Stephen Toulmin, who was interested in showing how logic could become a powerful way for people to unpack issues, argue, and make decisions. The Toulmin Model was popularized in one of the most successful writing textbooks, *Writing Arguments*.

The Toulmin Model consists of these following terms, some of which we've been using already:

### Claim

Your main thesis or point; the message you are focusing on.

- E-cigarettes should be banned immediately!
- The iPhone 11 is the best cell phone ever.

## Reason

A statement or point that supports, backs up, and justifies your claim.

- Because they have caused the deaths of many adolescents.
- Because it includes the most powerful camera with the fastest processing speeds.

## Assumptions

These are the beliefs, values, or philosophical positions that logically connect the claim and the reason; although the speaker/writer may not explicitly state the assumption, the readers need to accept this assumption in order for the claim and reason to make sense and sound reasonable.

- Products that cause the deaths of adolescents should be banned.
- The most important criteria of a cell phone are the camera and processing speed.

When we consider an argument to be sound and valid, it is because we share the same assumptions as the person who is making the argument. In the two examples above, many readers would accept the first claim and reason (though, consumers and producers of e- cigarettes may dispute how dangerous these products are). Many readers, when looking at the second example, would dispute this claim and reason; instead, they would assume that other criteria are more important, such as digital security, size, and cost.

## Evidence

Evidence includes all of the types of research sources that you are familiar with: academic articles, statistical reports, interview data, testimonies by trustworthy people, stories and anecdotes, and test data, among many other possibilities.

In the Toulmin Model, we can support and develop the claim and reason with evidence, which Toulmin called "grounds." In the example above about the dangers of e-cigarettes, the writer might provide evidence of deaths and hospital visits of teenagers that were reported in newspaper articles and in editorials. The writer might also include a personal story from a victim or an important testimony from a respected doctor as evidence that the claims and reasons are true.

Evidence can also be used to support and develop the assumption, which Toulmin called "backing." In the iPhone example, the writer may support the criteria about the camera and processing speed by finding user reports on the Internet or by finding statistics that show that most consumers use the photography option of cell phones most often. In short, the writer is looking for whatever evidence there is to support the importance that has been placed upon cell phone cameras and processing speed. This writer might benefit from searching the Internet and finding such articles as Chase Buckle's "Which Smartphone Features Really Matter to Consumers?"

The Toulmin Model can be used to analyze your own arguments and those of others. Read the following article; afterwards, you will find a "reverse outline," one way of putting this argument into the Toulmin Model.

## Toulmin Outline Practice[13]

Please take a look at this following advocacy letter, which is a template produced by the American Veterinary Medical Association. Veterinarians are asked to send in this letter to local governments that may be considering Breed-Specific Legislation as a way to reduce the risk of dog bites; in short, the American Veterinary Medical Association is against banning certain types of dogs – such as pitbulls – from communities.[14] They are hoping to use the credibility of local veterinarians to help counter this type of legislation.

### Breed-Specific Legislation Sample Letter from Veterinarian

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in opposition to the breed-specific legislation currently under consideration by the <*insert agency*> as a proposed strategy to prevent dog bites. Policies that target specific dog breeds for increased regulation or outright bans have proven ineffective in improving public safety. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) is opposed to breed-specific legislation and instead advocates for specific strategies that have proven effectiveness in reducing the incidence of dog bites.

**While breed-specific laws may look good on the surface, they are an overly simplistic approach to a complex social problem.** There are several major problems with breed-specific legislation:

> **Breed-specific laws can be difficult to enforce, especially when a dog's breed can't easily be determined or if it is of mixed breed.** It is extremely difficult to determine a dog's breed or breed mix simply by looking at it. Studies show that even people very familiar with dog breeds cannot reliably determine the primary breed of a mutt. Because of this, breed-specific legislation frequently focuses on dogs with a certain appearance or physical characteristics, instead of an actual breed, making the laws inherently vague and difficult to enforce.
>
> **Breed-specific legislation is discriminatory against responsible owners and their dogs.** Breed bans assume all dogs of a specific breed are likely to bite, instead of acknowledging that most dogs are not a problem. Breed-specific laws can lead to the euthanasia of innocent dogs that fit a certain "look," and to responsible pet owners being forced to move or give up dogs that have never bitten or threatened to bite. Furthermore, breed-specific ordinances may be in violation of a dog owner's right to equal protection.
>
> **Breed bans do not address the social issue of irresponsible pet ownership.** Any dog can bite, regardless of breed. Dogs are more likely to become aggressive when they are unsupervised, unneutered, and not socially conditioned to live closely with people or other dogs. But breed bans rarely assign appropriate responsibilities to dog owners. Breed-specific legislation deemphasizes the importance of responsible pet ownership, and diverts attention and resources away from proven solutions, such as socialization and training, and licensing and leash laws.
>
> **It is not possible to calculate a bite rate for a breed or to compare rates between breeds because the data is often inconsistent or incomplete.** Statistics on injuries caused by dogs are often used to demonstrate the "dangerousness" of particular breeds. However such arguments are seriously flawed because: 1) the breed of a biting dog is often not known or is inaccurately reported; 2) the actual number of bites that occur in a community is not known, especially if they did not result in serious injury; 3) the number

of dogs of a particular breed or combination of breeds in a community is not known because it is rare for all dogs in a community to be licensed; 4) statistics often do not consider multiple incidents caused by a single animal; and 5) breed popularity changes over time, making comparison of breed-specific bite rates unreliable.

Governmental policies aimed at reducing the incidence of dog bites need to look far beyond breed to identify effective solutions. **The AVMA recommends the following strategies:**

1. Enforcement of generic, non-breed-specific dangerous dog laws, with an emphasis on chronically irresponsible owners
2. Enforcement of animal control ordinances such as leash laws, by trained animal care and control officers
3. Prohibition of dog fighting
4. Encouraging neutering for dogs not intended for breeding
5. School-based and adult education programs that teach pet selection strategies, pet care and responsibility, and bite prevention

Please feel free to contact me if you'd like additional information about dog bite prevention or breed-specific legislation.

Sincerely,

Veterinarian

## Toulmin Outline

The following outline shows one way of rendering "Breed-Specific Legislation Sample Letter from Veterinarian" in the Toulmin Model, which is a letter rich in logos. This outline only addresses the main reason highlighted in the template letter.

### Claim:

The local government should not consider breed-specific legislation as a strategy to make citizens safer from dog bites.

### Reason:

Because these breed-specific policies are not effective.

### **Assumption**: It is important for lawmakers to base their policies on effectiveness.

### Evidence for Reason:

- States that effectiveness is a problem because it is difficult to determine the breed of dogs; cites research stating that even experts may find it difficult to determine the primary breed of a dog.
- Provides support that these policies are ineffective because they can be regarded as discriminatory, against both dog owners and the dogs themselves.
- Claims that effectiveness is a problem because it does not get to the heart of the problem – the responsibility of owners.
- Argues that effectiveness is also challenged because it is difficult to generalize a "bite rate" based upon the specific type of dog.

### Evidence for Assumption:

- The writers of the AMVA template letter for veterinarians do not develop or justify the assumption, as they will consider "effectiveness" to be a commonsensical belief that their government audience will accept. The AMVA writers are careful to point out that Breed-Specific Legislation and the safety of citizens are complicated issues.

## Conclusion: Summary of Key Rhetorical Concepts

**Assumption:** The belief, value, or philosophical principle that the audience needs to hold in order for the argument to be reasonable and persuasive. Also known as a "warrant."

**Claim:** The main stance or message of the writer or speaker; their thesis, perspective, or opinion on an issue.

**Controversial:** A quality of an issue in which at least two reasonable people disagree and have differing and opposing or alternative perspectives.

**Ethos:** The ways that writers demonstrate their own credibility and character to persuade readers.

**Logos:** The logical structure of the argument, including the claim, reasons, assumptions, and evidence.

**Evidence:** The strategies and sources in which writers support their claims, reasons, and assumptions.

**Pathos:** The ways in which writers appeal to the feelings and emotions of readers to be persuasive.

**Kairos:** A persuasive quality of an argument, depending on how timely the issue is for the audience.

**Public Audience:** Readers and listeners (and viewers and users, etc.) who participate in a broad range of issues and communities.

**Reason:** A statement that supports or justifies the claim; it explains why the writer holds the claim.

**Rhetoric:** The intentional use of language and symbols to communicate something.

**Rhetorical Situation:** The context of the argument, which includes the writer, their readers, the writer's message and purpose, the genre (the type of writing), and other social and cultural factors.

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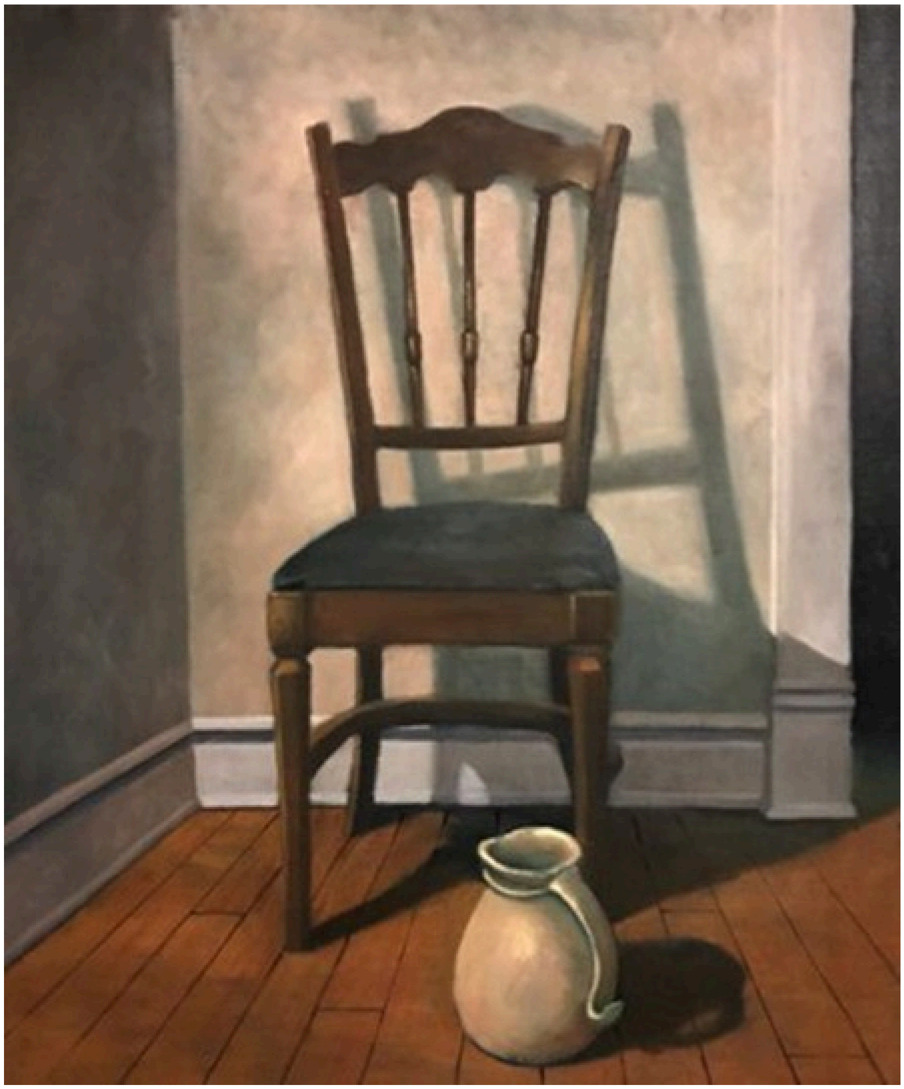
# 1.

# EVALUATING ARGUMENTS



Christopher Brennan, “Chair and Water Vessels”

Arguments, or attempts at persuading audiences to think or act in certain ways, are part of our everyday culture, yet we don’t always stop to consider how they work. To gain a stronger understanding of persuasion, and to become stronger persuasive writers, this rhetorical evaluation assignment asks you to learn the basic components of rhetoric and to analyze how those components work in a written argument. Understanding how an argument works and studying how rhetorical appeals function (in sometimes subtle ways) within that argument, will allow you to not only strengthen your critical thinking and reading skills, but also to eventually write your own effective argument in response as well.

Once you have identified the various relationships between an article's intended audience, its overall claim, and its rhetorical appeals, this assignment then asks you to make a claim about what makes the argument particularly successful or unsuccessful for that specific audience. Your own rhetorical evaluation will then focus on your analytical and argumentative claim: is this piece effective *for its target audience?* In what ways?

As you develop this rhetorical evaluation, you will need to focus on *how* the argument applies rhetorical appeals; you should *not*, however, include your own feelings or opinions about the topic or the content of the article. You will write this analytical argument for a supportive audience that is interested in your perspective and ideas. For instance, you could imagine your classmates or peers as your willing audience. Because your audience is supportive, and therefore unlikely to need as much convincing as a resistant audience, a clear, direct tone is expected. Overall, your essay should be 1200-1500 words, or the equivalent of 4-5 typed, double-spaced pages, with standard 1-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman or Calibri font.

Further, as you organize your argument for this assignment, consider this classic approach to the essay:

- provide a brief background about the central issue of the topic of the original argument
- identify the primary, intended audience of the argument and any challenges this audience presents to the argument of the ad due to its specific views and/or values
- present a focused claim with reasons about how successful (or unsuccessful) the original piece is in persuading the target audience
- explain *how* the rhetorical appeals (logos, ethos, pathos, and Kairos) in the text work (or fail to work) to persuade the target audience
- develop your claim and reasons by explaining how structure and content of the argument work in terms of the rhetorical appeals. For example, you may analyze and evaluate the argument's use of analogy to indicate how the article successfully emphasizes its pathos

## Objectives

By the end of the Unit, your Rhetorical Evaluation will meet these objectives:

- develop and support an argumentative claim
- analyze and evaluate how arguments attempt to appeal to and persuade specific audiences
- demonstrate awareness of the rhetorical moves that writers make when creating arguments

- properly apply the terminology of argumentation

**Beware of these common Rhetorical Evaluation weaknesses:**

- The writer engages with the content of the argument, expressing their own beliefs about the topic itself rather than analyzing the effectiveness of the argument in persuading the target audience
- The writer does not demonstrate awareness of the primary intended audience of the argument
- The writer does not demonstrate a clear and thorough understanding of the original text and argument
- The writer does not evidence an understanding of the various beliefs and values that members of the target audience hold in relation to the issue
- The writer only describes the original argument instead of supporting an argumentative analytical claim of their own
- The writer doesn't explain how and why the rhetorical appeals are (or are not) persuasive to the target audience
- The writer gets stuck dealing with the surface/obvious aspects of the original argument, over-looking more in-depth, rhetorical moves and features
- The writer analyzes the original argument based on their own perception of it instead of the intended audience's likely perception
- The writer does not evidence a working knowledge of the language of argument
- The writer uses an inappropriate and/or dismissive tone

## Reading Strategies: Getting to Know the Text

In order to write an effective rhetorical evaluation, you'll first need to demonstrate that you have a strong understanding of your text's original argument. Here are several active reading strategies to use to help you become a better critical reader, both for this particular assignment and for any other complex texts.

### Says & Does Statements

One way to get to know a text is to generate "says" and "does" statements for paragraphs that you find especially challenging. (You may also find that writing "says" and "does" statements for your own writing can help you figure out organizational problems or anticipate revision opportunities.)

"Says" statements answer the question: what is the paragraph saying? What is its main point? What is the gist of the paragraph?

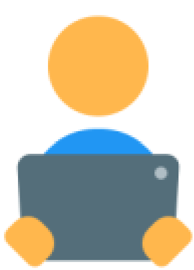
"Does" statements, on the other hand, answer the question: what is the paragraph doing? These statements are related to the paragraph's function as a whole, including how it is related to the paragraphs around it and to the text's main claim. The following list provides a sample of some of the useful terms for determining what a paragraph does:

- Introduces a topic
- Explains a complex issue
- Provides a transition
- Rebuts an opposing argument or perspective
- Provides an example
- Provides background
- Summarizes an opposing argument or perspective
- Provides a call to action

## Notetaking and Active Reading

Another way to get to know a text is to take notes *as* you read. In the margins or on a separate sheet of paper, pose questions, find interesting quotations or phrases, or identify other interesting aspects of the article that relate to the rhetorical appeals. Make sure that you can identify the main points (e.g., main claims and reasons). The list below includes some especially important questions that you should consider responding to:

- What motivated the author to write? What conversation are they joining?
- What was the author's purpose for writing? Who was the primary audience?
- What "angle of vision" does the writer have? What organization or political stance, if any, is the author affiliated with? Where has the author been published, both for this particular text and elsewhere?
- What can you say about the logos, ethos, pathos, and kairos of this argument?
- What do you find striking about the construction of the argument?



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## Reading Activity: Locating Rhetorical Moves in an Essay in

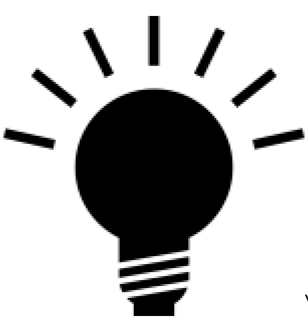
## Order to Summarize

Writers make choices about words, evidence, organization, and tone/style that are often discussed as rhetorical moves. These rhetorical moves often demonstrate the relationship between the writer and the audience as well as the relationships between ideas in the writer's argument. One way such moves can be identified is by paying attention to language choices the writer makes. Reading an argument requires careful attention to these choices in order to fairly and accurately understand the text. Use the steps below to guide your reading and to identify the relationships between ideas in the argument.

- Identify the main idea of the article by reading it through once.
- Then, read the paragraphs more closely and carefully, and identify the main idea of each. (Hint: look for topic sentences.)
- Next, identify key words that provide structure and reveal how ideas relate to each other, such as:
    - *Linking relationships*: So, therefore, also, as well as, too, and, additionally, similarly
    - *Contrasting relationships*: But, however, on the other hand, whereas, nor
    - *Conditional relationships*: If, then, in that case, consequently, resulting in
- Finally, compare the main points of each paragraph to the known central claim. Where does the writer make connections?

Fairly summarizing the article is an excellent way to show your credibility and enable your readers to become more aware of the argument. For the purpose of a rhetorical evaluation, your summary does not need to be overly formal or long. Oftentimes, you can embed a full summary in your introduction and/or include shorter, more focused, summaries in the body of your paper to develop your evaluation. You will want to make sure that your own readers have a clear idea of what the writer's main purpose, claim, and reasons are, making sure that you focus only on the key points from the article.

Using your active reading notes from the previous rhetorical reading activity, write a summary that demonstrates a concise, objective, and fair understanding of the text.



# Invention Activity: How to Read for Performing a Rhetorical Evaluation

Use these questions as you read the text chosen for your own rhetorical evaluation. You might also employ these questions for "practice" texts to help strengthen your reading skills before turning to the assignment itself.

## Analyzing and Evaluating Logos

### Main Claim

- What is the argument's overall claim?
- Is it explicit or implied?
- Who is the intended audience? How do you know?
- Is the claim of the argument clear for the intended audience? What makes it so?

### Reasons

- What are the main reasons presented in support of the claim?
- Are the reasons audience-based? How can you tell?
- In what ways do the reasons logically connect to, or support, the claim?

### Assumptions, Beliefs, and Values

- What are the assumptions (the beliefs and values of the intended audience) that complete the logic of each of the argument's claim + reason statements?
- Does the argument depend on assumptions the audience may not share? How do you know?
- How do the argument's reasons and evidence build on the audience's values/beliefs?

### Evidence

- What evidence does the writer use?
- How effective is the writer's use of evidence? What makes you think so?
- How does the writer connect the evidence to the argument's reasons and claims?

### Alternative/Opposing Views

- Is the argument one-sided, multi-sided, or dialogic?
- What alternative/opposing views are presented?
- What is the writer's response to each alternative/opposing view?
- Does the response to the opposing view take the audience's perspective into consideration?
- What alternative/opposing views are omitted from the argument?

## Analyzing and Evaluating Ethos

### Writer & Their Credentials

- Who is the writer?
- What are the writer's credentials?
- Where are the writer's credentials presented?
- What does the writer do in the argument to highlight her/his credentials?
- How does the writer present him/herself to the audience?
- How important is the character of the writer in this argument?

### Publication

- What is the original source for the argument?
- What is the original genre of the argument?
- What is the argument's original medium of publication (journal, online newspaper, etc.)?
- How does the genre and place of publication influence the argument's content, structure, and style?
- How popular/scholarly or formal/informal is the publication?
- How is the argument's scope limited given its genre/publication?

### Audience & Tone

- What attitude does the writer have toward the subject and/or audience (formal, informal, friendly, aggressive, satirical, humorous, etc.)?
- What words, phrases, and/or sentences illustrate that attitude?
- If you are convinced of the writer's credibility, what specifically about the crafting of the argument has earned your respect as a reader? How about that of the intended readers?
- If you are skeptical about this writer's credibility, what in the text has caused you to question them? Why would the author's intended readers doubt them?
- What is the relationship between the writer and the audience (i.e., supportive, skeptical, or resistant)?

- What words, phrases, and/or sentences establish that relationship?
- What effect might the writer-audience relationship have on the audience's response to the claim of the argument?
- How does the writer's language bring the writer and audience together?

### Alternative/Opposing Views

- Where does the writer present and respond to alternative/opposing views?
- How knowledgeable does the writer seem on these different views?
- How fairly does the writer respond to alternative/opposing views?

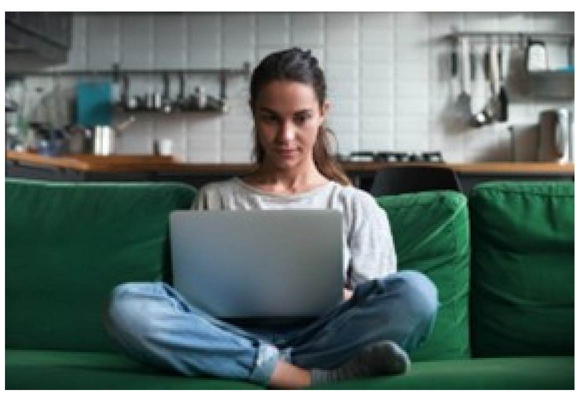
## Analyzing and Evaluating Pathos

### Audience

- What is the audience's position on the issue (resistant, neutral, favorable/willing)?
- What are the central values of the intended audience?
- What are the central belief systems of the intended audience?
- What are the emotions that this audience might express towards this issue and argument?

### Tone & Style

- What examples, connotative language, and uses of narrative or analogy stand out in the argument?
- How do the writer's language choices tap into the audience's emotions, values, and imagination?



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# Drafting Activity: Working Claim

A “working claim” is a tentative claim that you expect to change or adjust as you write the paper. Rather than a definitive, permanent concept, a working claim is just a starting point for your writing process. When the paper is finished, the final claim may be significantly different from the initial working claim.

**Tension Claim Structure:** The models below illustrate the move a writer needs to make from being informative to being persuasive. The more interesting and stronger claim models demonstrate how a writer can build rhetorical complexity into his/her own argument.

## Dull/Weaker Claim Models

Informative: Argument X uses ethos, logos, and pathos. Persuasive: Argument X has some strengths and some weaknesses. **Interesting/Stronger Claim Models**

Persuasive: While argument X successfully employs pathos and ethos, it struggles with logos.

This makes it less persuasive than it could be to the target audience.

Persuasive: Although argument X struggles to develop pathos, it successfully manages logos, which is all that this specific audience really needs to be persuaded.

## Model Claim Statements:

### *Example #1*

By using “Stop Googling. Let’s Talk” as her medium, Sherry Turkle argues that there is a conversational disconnect amongst people of all ages with strong appeals to logos, ethos, kairos, and pathos, successfully convincing her audience that technology is harming our ability to further our relationships, to have sufficient capacity for solitude, and to empathize with one another.

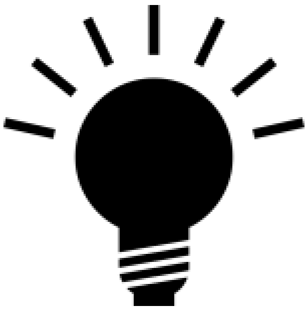
### *Example #2*

Although the NHTSA successfully utilized logos and pathos to convey a memorable message and connect it to the audience, they failed to back up their argument with ethos.

## Questions:

1. With which claim structure do the examples above most align?

2. Which example is most interesting?
3. Use the claim information above to generate a working claim for your evaluation



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## Invention Activity: Identifying and Justifying the Intended Audience

One objective of this unit is that you analyze and evaluate an argument in terms of a specific audience. In other words, no argument will appeal and be effective for all readers.

While reading and re-reading the argument you want to evaluate, attempt to create a portrait of the rhetorical audience—the readers that the author imagines when they write. Although writers may occasionally explicitly identify their audiences, more than likely you will have to make an educated guess; furthermore, you might discover that there are primary audiences and secondary audiences.

In your argument evaluation, you should identify the intended audience and then, at least briefly, justify why you have come up with this audience. Try not to fall into the trap of referring to generic or universal audiences—all of the readers—and don't simply assume that you are the member of the audience yourself.

Use the questions below to help you with these steps of identifying and justifying the intended audience.

1. If applicable, where does the author speak directly to or refer to their readers?
2. Consider the gender/sex, race, education level, income level, geographic region, political and religious affiliation, and other social factors of the audience.
3. Based upon the medium and the publication source, what can you say about the audience? For example, is there any demographic information available?
4. Given the topic and main claim of the author, what can you say about the values and beliefs of the audience?
5. Are there any important secondary audiences to consider? How do you know? How are they different

from the primary audiences?

6. What particular appeals—ethos, logos, and pathos—will be the most persuasive for this intended audience? Why?
7. What makes the primary audience a difficult one to write for and persuade? What constraints will the author have to face when it comes to dealing with the intended audience?
8. Will the intended audience be supportive, neutral, skeptical, or resistant to the writer's message?

## Drafting Activity: Focus on Logos

Writing about logos is challenging, as you have to keep in mind the purpose and message of the writer – their overall main claim, reasons, and other persuasive strategies – as well as the beliefs and values of their intended readers. Although logos does include how writers use statistics, personal experience, examples, comparisons, testimonies, and other types of evidence, this rhetorical focus on research only tells part of the story about logos.

As you learn how arguments work, you also have to be mindful of how logos works to bring writers and readers together. Logos operates when writers link reasons to a claim, and readers find this core part of the argument (i.e., the claim and reasons) reasonable, understandable, and commonsensical. Another way of stating this is if writers use claims and reasons that match the assumptions – the beliefs and values – of the intended readers, they make themselves more persuasive.

**Example**: The United States should consider lowering the legal drinking age from 21 to 18 to enable young people to make better lifelong choices and foster more responsible drinking habits.

**Claim**: The United States should consider lowering the legal drinking age from 21 to 18.

**Reason #1**: (Because it would) enable young people to make better lifelong choices.

**Reason #2**: (Because it would) foster more responsible drinking habits.

Is this a successful use of logos? Perhaps. This claim and two reasons may appeal to readers who share these assumptions: it's important to have laws in place that help adults make good life choices, and it's important for a society to try to instill good drinking habits. The readers, nonetheless, may not see the logical connection between lowering the drinking age and these two good consequences. They would challenge the logical cause-and-effect relationship of drinking ages and better decision making and habits and counter with examples of poor and dangerous drinking habits when the drinking laws were set at 18.

As you analyze the logos of the argument you are evaluating, keep on thinking about these following questions:

- What is the main claim that the writer is making? What is their overall argument or message?
- What are their main reasons? How are they justifying and supporting their main claim?
- What types of evidence are they using? (Remember to use an inclusive definition of evidence, including anything from scientific reports to case studies, personal stories, interviews, and much more.)
- What is the most valuable piece of evidence that the writer uses? Why?
- Who are the primary and secondary intended readers of the argument? How do you know?
- To what extent will these readers be positive, neutral, or resistant? How do you know?
- What are the main values and beliefs of the intended audience, especially when it comes to the issue being explored?
- How likely will the intended audience accept the main claim? Why? How do you now?
- How likely will the intended audience accept the reasons? Why? How do you know?
- How likely will the intended audience accept the evidence? Why? How do you know?

Freewriting can be a good invention strategy for you to start exploring how you are analyzing your ideas about logos. Using the questions above, take several of them and then, for 5-10 minutes each, time yourself and write quickly, trying to generate as much language as possible. Do not worry about mistakes or getting stuck – just force yourself to keep on writing. Afterwards, you'll find that you have generated a lot of material, some of which you'll be able to use to start crafting a rough draft.

Another strategy is to look at how someone else has analyzed logos. Though you'll find more student examples in the back of this chapter, David McCune's rhetorical evaluation is included here. McCune is a K-State Salina student, who took his ENGL 200 with Kaleen Knopp. What is different about McCune's evaluation than the other student examples is that he focuses solely on logos. McCune analyzes several different logos strategies that the writer, Brad Polumbo, uses to build his argument that ultimately challenges age-based restrictions for adults. Look out for the "Rhetoric Alerts!" to guide you through McCune's logos-based rhetorical moments.

Evaluation: "18 or 21? Time to Make Our Mind Up on The Age of Adulthood"

Brad Polumbo argues that the current state of affairs regarding the age of adulthood in the United States is illogical and impossible to justify in his 2019 article, "18 or 21? Time to Make Our Mind Up On The Age of Adulthood" published in the *Washington Examiner*. Polumbo claims that with new legislation being passed that restricts the age to buy tobacco products from eighteen to twenty-one-year-olds, it is time to decide what should be the age of adulthood. He expresses that at the age of eighteen, citizens gain the right to vote, enlist in the military, marry without parental permission, and consent to sex. However, Polumbo asserts that those same citizens who are adults in the eyes of the law cannot be trusted with tobacco products, alcohol products, or the second amendment right to self-defense until they are twenty-one years of age. He argues that rolling everything back to the age of eighteen is not the solution because of compelling reasons to keep age restrictions at twenty-one: the human brain doesn't finish developing until age twenty-five, pushing the alcohol and tobacco age to twenty-one keeps the harmful products out of the hands of fourteen-year-olds who might otherwise have unrestricted access through their eighteen-year-old friends. Polumbo contends that while the restrictions on adults are inconsistent, they are simultaneously well warranted and that the only option forward to make a logical age of adulthood is to raise that age to twenty-one rather than eighteen. Polumbo recognizes that changing the age of adulthood to twenty-one would be no small feat and require a constitutional amendment, certain grandfathering clauses for those in the military under twenty-one, and other numerous acts. Polumbo assumes that his readers already know – and agree – with the following: they are familiar with the current system of adulthood in the United States, understand the implications of the age of adulthood, believe in small government, and do not want more restrictions.

**Rhetoric Alert!** McCune is making an important move here at the end of the first paragraph, as he is revealing that the editorial writer is basing his arguments off of his understanding of the audience; in other words, the editorial writer is crafting his argument for these particular values and beliefs of his conservative audience.

As a twenty-year-old living in the United States today, it is easy to see that the age of adulthood is more of a grey area than a definitive demarcation. It is hard to understand how somebody that is legally an adult in the eyes of the law is not granted the same privileges as an adult that is three years older. Why should someone be allowed to enlist in the military or make other life- changing decisions like getting married at the age of eighteen but not be allowed to buy alcohol or tobacco? Polumbo illustrates the hypocrisy of the current system in the United States. However, Polumbo seemingly weakens his argument by his exclusion of evidence. He argues that the age of adulthood should be twenty-one rather than eighteen but fails to give any real reasoning behind his proposal. It certainly is a tragedy that minors are obtaining alcohol and tobacco products, but that will not stop them from doing so even if the age of adulthood is twenty-one.

Polumbo does not want his argument taken at face value; he used his argument for two purposes. The first purpose is to illustrate the illogical and unjustifiable restrictions on the age of adulthood in the United States. The second reason for his argument is that he wanted it to easily have holes poked into it so that the audience would be critical of his surface-level argument and ultimately agree with his libertarian views and values. Polumbo proposed a radical solution rather than a logical one to make a point about how the current restrictions on alcohol, tobacco, and other laws are inexcusable.

**Rhetoric Alert!** McCune is now summarizing his overall analysis of what the editorial writer is doing. What McCune is doing is showing that Polumbo's argument is sophisticated – he is arguing something that he knows his readers will disagree with as a way to strengthen his overall point that the U.S. should not put restrictions that limit the rights and opportunities of citizens.

The article was published in December 2019 in the *Washington Examiner*. The genre is an op-ed piece that is full of author commentary. This article fits the genre, which typically has stylistic flair, undocumented sources or no sources, and short paragraphs totaling about 500-1000 words. The complexity and appearance of the article are unsophisticated and simple to read. Brad Polumbo is a libertarian journalist and deputy commentary editor for the *Washington Examiner*. Previously he was an editor for the libertarian media, *Young Voices.* Polumbo's readers are typically conservative or libertarian.

The Kairos for this article is the recent law passed in the U.S. that raised the age to buy tobacco products from eighteen to twenty-one. Polumbo uses the moment to grab the attention of his audience and present an argument that excites his readers about the current situation on the age of adulthood. The *Washington Examiner* is a right-leaning source that often is critical of democrats and the U.S. Government. Polumbo's perspective caters to his audience with his style and tone of writing. Many of Polumbo's articles call the U.S. government a "nanny-state," which is to say that the government is overprotective and interferes with citizens' personal choices. Without background on the author, readers can infer that Polumbo is making a pseudo argument, in which the goal is to persuade readers of the opposite of what is directly stated. Polumbo (2019) creates a compelling argument in "18 or 21? Time to Make Our Mind Up On The Age of Adulthood" because he purposefully strengthens his argument by including or excluding appropriate evidence at specific times while maintaining a clear and logical claim, combined with the awareness of multiple perspectives and opposing views.

**Rhetoric Alert!** In the previous two paragraphs, McCune is establishing the rhetorical situation of the editorial and emphasizing his overall rhetorical evaluation: Polumbo's editorial is good ("compelling") because of these three reasons all related to logos: use of evidence, use of a clear claim, and use of multisided argument (being aware of different perspectives and opposing views). McCune is also aware of the overall strategy of the editorial writer: to create an argument that is doomed to fail – what McCune calls here a "pseudo argument" – to make Polumbo's message about his libertarian beliefs more persuasive.

First, Polumbo is very precise in his use of evidence. On the surface, it would seem that Polumbo is sincerely arguing to raise the age of adulthood to the age of twenty-one. However, through his tone and purposeful exclusion of evidence, his argument has no support, which opens it up for attack from his audience. Polumbo wants his audience to be skeptical and critical of the article because then it allows him to present his underlying argument, which is to remove restrictions on adults who turn eighteen. He claims, "There are simply far fewer 19-year-olds living and working on their own today, with many of that age still at least somewhat dependent on their parents." But he fails to provide any statistics or evidence for his claims, despite this being a key component to his surface-level argument. He purposefully includes the difficulty that raising the age of adulthood would require, such as changing a constitutional amendment and raising the age for military enlistment. It is not so much that Polumbo is making a strong argument, but more that he is making a straw man argument, which is a weak opposition set up to be easily refuted. The straw man argument in this context impels Polumbo's readers to be critical of the article and its argument, which in turn leads them to agree with Polumbo's underlying argument.

**Rhetoric Alert!** McCune is guiding us through what the editorial writer is doing in his use of logos – in this case, his use of research and support for his reasons; yet, McCune reminds us that Polumbo is aware of what he is doing: he is demonstrating a poor use of research, yet as a way to make a larger point about age restrictions.

Polumbo also presents a clear and logical claim for his underlying argument. He claims, "The years between 18 and 21 are defined by an odd hodgepodge of rule and regulations, the rights of adulthood only partially bestowed by those legally recognized as adults but, culturally, often still treated as children." Of course, he is referring to the newly established tobacco law as well as other laws that place the twenty-one-year-old restriction on buying certain products. He argues that "philosophically, morally, and just sensibly, it only makes sense to keep these restrictions in place if we raise the age of adulthood to 21." Polumbo is not arguing that the government should raise the age of adulthood; rather, he is critical of the restrictions on the age of adulthood. Then, Polumbo asserts, "The new restriction will only lead to more confusion about what we consider the age of legal adulthood and what rights adults are entitled to under the law." Polumbo's clear claims allow his readers to understand his position on the topic better. The driving force behind his argument is that the restrictions in place are already illogical and adding new ones will only create more confusion on who should be considered an adult. Polumbo uses his clear and logical claims effectively by stating them outright. His readers are taken by surprise when he proposes an illogical solution to his claims, which leads them back full circle to question the legitimacy of his surface-level argument.

**Rhetoric Alert!** McCune now turns to a second logos strategy, as he shows Polumbo's use of his consistent claim to persuade readers. McCune's attention to the editorial writer's intended audience is highlighted in these following phrases: "…allows his readers to understand his position…" and "His readers are taken by surprise… which leads them back full circle…"

Last, Polumbo maintains awareness of multiple perspectives and opposing views. He admits, "the solution isn't quite as simple as just rolling back everything to age 18. While the inconsistency is puzzling, there are compelling reasons to keep some of these age restrictions at 21." By admitting the complexity of the situation and showing his understanding that not everything can be solved by just rolling back age restrictions to eighteen, he opens another side of the debate. He continues with the assertion "the human brain doesn't finish developing until age 25." Polumbo mentions this fact ironically while still maintaining his awareness of multiple views. In the debate of the age of adulthood, brain development is an argument that is always brought up, but Polumbo is truly mentioning this to show the hypocrisy that eighteen and twenty-one are both younger than twenty-five. Polumbo also argues that "Keeping the alcohol age at 21 is effectively all that keeps 14-year-old high schoolers from having unrestricted access to hard liquor through their 18-year-old friends in the senior class." Polumbo knows and assumes that his readers also know that statement is not valid, seeing as high school students already have access to products they should not, even though the age to buy the products is set at twenty-one. He is able to use the idea of opposing views and multiple perspectives to highlight opposing arguments and simultaneously shut them down without refuting them with evidence. He relies on his audience to remain critical readers and thinkers and decipher the argument he is making.

**Rhetoric Alert!** McCune now turns to the editorial writer's awareness of his intended reader's assumptions and alternative or opposing viewpoints. McCune uses specific examples from the editorial and then explains how these examples are working rhetorically. McCune underscores how thoughtful Polumbo has been when it comes to crafting his argument for his conservative readers: "He relies on his audience to remain critical readers and thinkers and decipher the argument he is making."

Brad Polumbo (2019) presents an effective argument because he can rely on his readers to interpret his underlying argument. His exclusion of evidence in his surface-level argument is apparent to his readers and leads them to search for more. His clear and logical claim persuades his readers to agree with his libertarian values and ideas, and his use of multiple perspectives and opposing views allows him to refute shallow arguments without evidence.

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## Drafting Activity: Focus on Ethos

If pathos persuades through emotions and logos persuades through evidence and reasons, ethos persuades by the ways in which authors present themselves. Will the intended audience trust the writer? Will they find them to be credible? Will they like the writer? Does the writer demonstrate their awareness of the concerns, values, and beliefs of the audience?

Below, you will see a series of ethos strategies that you can look for while you are analyzing the argument and building your evaluation. As you pursue your own arguments in ENGL 200, you may also want to utilize some of these strategies to enhance your ethos.

**Rhetoric Alert!** Do not confuse ethos with ethics. Although both of these concepts ultimately derive from "ethos," the classical Greek word for "character," ethics is the study of "moral character" (*ethikos*), whereas we can use ethos more generally to analyze the ways in which writers or orators represent themselves to audiences to make themselves more persuasive. Of course, writers may want to demonstrate how ethical (i.e., moral) they are, and they might do so by associating themselves with symbols and props that their audience may find to be pillars of ethics.

## Ethos based on the author or the source:

Strategy #1: The author's name is clearly attributed in the byline. Readers will typically find clearly attributed authors to be more credible. Note: When looking at an editorial from a newspaper, you may run across the convention of an article with the byline of "The Editorial Board." You should consider this to be a highly credible source, as the editors of the newspaper are taking responsibility for the points that appear in the editorial.

Strategy #2: The author clearly states their credentials or does so indirectly. For example, a K- State student writing about student debt may use this strategy when she writes, "As a college student at K-State who has racked up over $20,000 in student debt, I completely understand the concerns about the high price of university-level education." The author may also refer to books they have written, job titles they have held, or educational experiences.

Strategy #3: The author identifies their ideological perspective. For example: "As a middle-aged, white male, it was at first difficult for me to feel sympathetic towards…"

## Ethos based on the argument and the use of evidence:

Strategy #1: The author uses evidence (statistics, examples, quotations of important authorities on the subject, legal precedents, analogies, science or political reports, etc.) that the audience will find persuasive. Note: Here, the use of evidence can be a moment in which ethos, logos, and pathos intersect.

Strategy #2: The author references or cites their sources; yet, be aware that most journalists and editorial writers are not expected to adhere to the citation systems that you may be expected to use as college students in a writing course.

Strategy #3: The author shows awareness of the multiple sides that make up the argument; the author shows their ability to concede and understand other perspectives.

### Ethos based on language choices:

Strategy #1: The author uses pronouns, phrases, or a particular style to create a bridge between themselves and their readers.

Strategy #2: The author uses humor or sarcasm to entice their intended audience.

Strategy #3: The author uses inclusive pronouns ("we") and words/phrases. For example: "As we have all experienced in our daily lives as residents of Manhattan, Kansas, the prairie burnings in the spring cause..."

Strategy #4: The author uses specific words and phrases (e.g., computer jargon) that demonstrate they know what they are talking about; of course, if the intended audience are laypeople, who may be turned off by or afraid of this specialized vocabulary, then this would not be an effective strategy.

Strategy #5: The author's style is appropriate for their readers; for example, they match the level of formality that the readers would expect, given the rhetorical context.

Based upon these strategies, create an ethos-based reason that supports your overall claim about how persuasive (or unpersuasive) the argument is for the intended audience. Use these strategies to help you come up with specifics from the argument.

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## Drafting Activity: Outlining the Logos of Your Own Argument

The **working claim** you have developed provides the focus for your argument. You are writing an evaluation claim, which means that you are asserting whether the editorial is a good or bad argument. For example, Jarrod Moore, whose evaluation argument you can find at the end of this chapter, writes this evaluation claim about Terry Tempest Williams' "Will Our National Parks Survive the Next 100 Years?": "While this opinion piece has a weak appeal to logos, it is ultimately successful in persuading an already supportive audience with strong appeals to pathos, ethos, and kairos."

Your main evaluation claim will be supported by **reasons** that help justify the position you have taken. In this case, you are going to use the rhetorical appeals of ethos, logos, pathos, and (possibly) kairos to serve as your reasons. You can assume that your readers are going to agree that these rhetorical appeals are essential qualities of a good argument.

You will then find **evidence** from the editorial you are analyzing to support the evaluation claim and the reasons you are asserting. Returning to Moore's evaluation argument, he uses a reason about the importance of pathos as primary strategy for the author to appeal to her intended readers. Moore then supports his evaluation claim and pathos-based reason by finding examples from the editorial, such as the "strong use of imagery and idyllic language" as well as "warm feelings of beauty and nostalgia."

Use this following outline to help you begin to map out your main claim, reasons, and evidence.

Main Evaluation Claim:

Reason #1: Because...

Evidence:

Reason #2: Because...

Evidence:

Reason #3: Because...

Evidence:

Reason #4: Because...

Evidence:

## Drafting Activity: Organizing Your Rhetorical Evaluation

This evaluation argument will have three basic sections: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. Each of these sections can—and should—be made up of many different paragraphs. The information below outlines several different functions each section might perform for this particular paper. You are encouraged to experiment with your own organizational choices as you work to build your own ethos as a writer.

### Introduction

- Establish the significance and timeliness of the issue. What is at stake with this issue, and who is arguing? Why is it controversial? What are the consequences?
- Identify the primary audience of the argument and show understanding of the audience's values and beliefs.
- Summarize the argument, including its main claims, reasons, and warrants.
- Provide a forecasting statement that presents your overall claim and reasons: How do the rhetorical appeals work to make this argument persuasive for the target audience? What particular aspects of the article make this argument successful or unsuccessful in persuading the intended audience? What key rhetorical moves are you going to focus on?

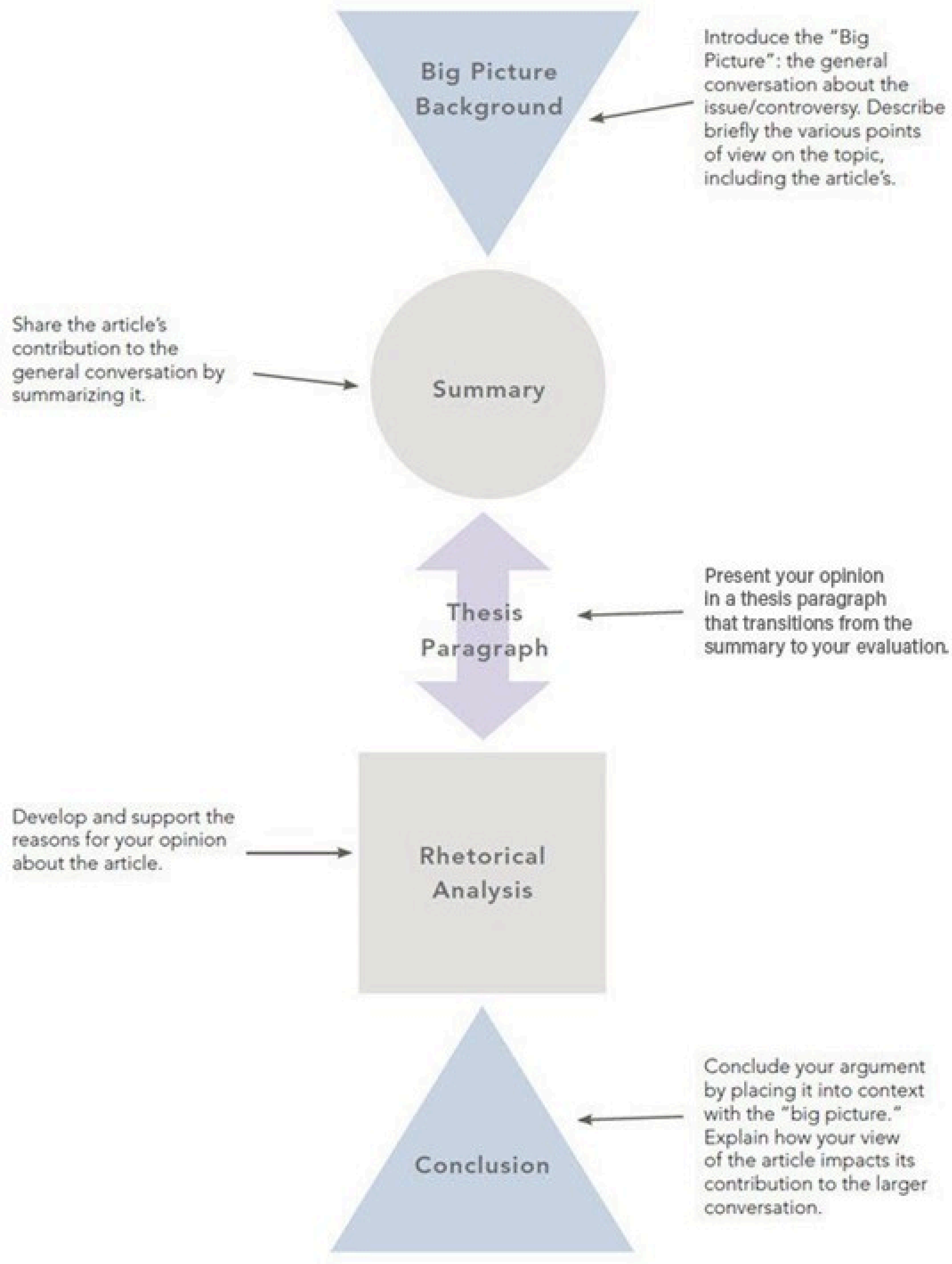
### Body of Evaluation/Analysis

- Focus on different rhetorical appeals (*logos*, *ethos*, *pathos*, and *kairos*) and how the argument works rhetorically. In other words, rather than simply saying that the author uses these appeals, show how the appeals are working and how and why they're persuasive (or not) for the target audience.
- Support your points with specific evidence from the argument and make clear how your evidence illustrates your points.
- Solidify your credibility by correctly applying the vocabulary of argumentation.
- Show awareness of the rhetorical challenges: What about the particular target audience makes them resistant to the issue or claim of the argument? How do the rhetorical moves meet (or fail to meet) these challenges?

## Conclusion

- Reinforce the main claim.
- Connect to your audience and rhetorical purpose.

# Another Potential Organization Strategy




## Closed-Form Writing & The 3-Ex Guide

This evaluation argument provides you with an opportunity to review closed-form writing strategies, which are used in many classroom-based types of writing to enable you to demonstrate your understanding of important concepts. The overall quality of closed-form writing is that it is highly explicit: you clearly signal to your readers your purpose and main claim; you then, throughout the essay, signpost your points and sub-points. Unlike open-form writing, in which readers may have to work more to interpret your overall point and purpose, you are presenting and organizing your ideas openly for your readers.

Here are the typical features of closed-form writing:

- **Clear Introduction**: In this initial feature of closed-form writing, you include an introduction to build background for your readers, showcase the main claim or thesis statement, and provide, perhaps, a "blueprint statement," which tells your readers how the draft will be organized.
- **Explicit claim and reasons** (thesis and sub-points): Early on, you forecast to your readers exactly what your main message or position will be.
- **Explicit topic sentences**: For your main body paragraphs, the first sentence, sometimes referred to as the topic sentence, focuses your readers on what the paragraph's main purpose will be. In a closed-form piece of writing, you should be able to read just the first sentence of each body paragraph and still have a good idea what the writer is doing and saying.
- **Unity of paragraphs**: You focus each paragraph around one main reason or point, which is announced in the topic sentence; in other words, you are not trying to do too much in one paragraph.
- **Transitions**: Your transitions shift readers from one main reason or point to the next; you are keeping your readers in mind and guiding them through the organization of your draft with words and sentences that clearly mark the relationship between ideas.
- **Readerly cues**: These are words or phrases that, similar to transitions, tell your readers how they should read your draft. Here are some examples of readerly cues:
    - In other words,
    - For example,
    - In short,
    - On the one hand,
- **Clear conclusion**: Your conclusion should emphasize your overall main point and reasons and, quite possibly, the overall significance of your argument.

At the paragraph level, closed-form writing guides the readers through the topic sentence (the main point or purpose of the paragraph), supporting examples or illustrations, and an explanation of the ways in which those examples connect to the main point and are significant for the readers. As a way to remember these different functions of sentences, you can refer to it as the 3-Ex Guide: Exposition, Example, and Explanation.[2]

> **Exposition** sentences *state your claim(s) or reason(s)*. If at the start of a paragraph (i.e., a topic sentence), exposition sentences can also introduce a paragraph's point by explaining how it connects to the preceding paragraph.

> **Example** sentences *provide support for the exposition in the form of evidence*. Evidence can be summarized, paraphrased, or presented as quoted sources; it might also come from personal experiences.
>
> **Explanation** sentences explain how your example(s) illustrate your exposition and how your paragraph's ideas are significant to your overall claim. Well-developed paragraphs are focused on explanation.

Take a look at one paragraph of Ryan Donnelly's "From Practice Stems Success" (please see Donnelly's student example at the end of this chapter) and look for the ways that Donnelly uses exposition, example, and explanation:

> Another appeal to logos Oakley utilizes is through the sound structure of her argument. Her claim is clear (it's even the title of her editorial!): parents should have their daughters practice math routinely. Oakley ensures her audience is well aware of the importance of her claim by continuing to relate every topic in her editorial back to the main claim. The audience, now focused on the claim, can clearly understand her reasoning. Oakley reasons that "to create a full set of options for [girls] in STEM is to ensure she has a solid foundation in math" (par. 2) and that "some learning just plain requires effortful practice, especially in the initial stages" (par. 11). With this, the audience creates the warrant that STEM career options are good from Oakley's claim, based on their clear understanding of her reasons and evidence that backs up her claim. Because of Oakley's careful attention to the structure of her argument, she increases the likelihood of her audience becoming convinced of her claim.

## Exposition:

- Another appeal to logos Oakley utilizes is through the sound structure of her argument. Her claim is clear (it's even the title of her editorial!).
- Oakley ensures her audience is well aware of the importance of her claim by continuing to relate every topic in her editorial back to the main claim.

## Example:

- Oakley reasons that "to create a full set of options for [girls] in STEM is to ensure she has a solid foundation in math" (par. 2) and that "some learning just plain requires effortful practice, especially in the initial stages" (par. 11).

## Explanation:

- The audience, now focused on the claim, can clearly understand her reasoning.

- With this, the audience creates the warrant that STEM career options are good from Oakley's claim, based on their clear understanding of her reasons and evidence that backs up her claim. Because of Oakley's careful attention to the structure of her argument, she increases the likelihood of her audience becoming convinced of her claim.

# 3-Ex Activity

Choosing a body paragraph from one of the student examples, label each sentence by its 3-Ex functions within the paragraph. Note how the writer might strengthen the paragraph's exposition, example, and/or explanation.

## Rhetorical Evaluation Workshop

- Exchange your draft with your workshop partner. Use the points below to engage with the draft and offer the writer feedback. You can write directly on the draft and/or create notes on a separate sheet of paper.

## Focus/Purpose

- What is the claim for this essay? Underline it, keeping in mind that it might not be in the introduction. If you cannot locate the claim in at least one clear moment in the essay, make a note for the writer.
- This essay is meant to analyze how the article's argument works for the target audience. Do you find places where the writer engages the ideas or content of the article instead? If so, label those areas.

## Development

- What are the main points that support the claim? If these points are not clear, make a note for the writer and offer an explanation as to why you found them unclear.
- Where do you think the writer should say more? What questions can you ask that might help the writer say more about these points? Write them in the margins.
- Is the writer making clear and explicit connections between the way the appeals function and why those appeals are (or are not) persuasive for the target audience? If so, draw their attention to where this is working well. If not, draw their attention to places where they need to develop this important connective information.
- If you had to argue *against* this essay's points, what would you say? How might the writer incorporate your counter-argument(s) into the essay and still support its thesis?

## Organization

Where does the topic seem to jump without warning within a paragraph? Between which paragraphs does the topic shift abruptly? (Sometimes these sudden shifts cause the reader to go back and re-read; where do you have to re-read to follow the essay's shifts?) Mark these areas with a note for the writer.

- Does the order in which information is presented make sense with the essay's thesis? Circle any text/sections that seem out of place or that might be more effective elsewhere, and make a note explaining your idea for revision.

## Tone/Style

- Are there moments where the writer is sarcastic, dismissive, or in any way rude to the reader (you), the original article's writer or their ideas? Mark these areas with a note to the writer.
- Where is the essay's language cumbersome or overly wordy? Make a note for the writer next to such an area; if possible, provide an example of how the same idea can be said more simply.

## Rhetorical Evaluation Workshop: Checklist

Writer: Write down 2-3 questions that you want your workshop partner to focus on.

Workshopper: Use the checklist below to guide your reading of your partner's draft. Whenever you select "No" or "Somewhat," write down a revision suggestion or question on your partner's draft. Meet with your partner and discuss the questions that they posed about their drafts and, at the bottom of this form, contribute one overall successful point and one main revision point.

| | Yes | Somewhat | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The writer summarizes and provides some context about the argument they are analyzing and evaluating. | | | |
| 2. The writer identifies the intended audience of the editorial and briefly explains how they know this is the intended audience. | | | |
| 3. The writer explicitly states a strong evaluation claim that takes a stance on whether the argument is good (successful, effective, persuasive, appealing, etc.) or bad (unsuccessful, ineffective, unpersuasive, unappealing, etc.); the writer includes reasons that are based on the rhetorical appeals. | | | |
| 4. The writer includes body paragraphs that focus on ethos, logos, and pathos (and perhaps kairos). | | | |
| 5. The writer uses topic sentences in the body paragraphs to focus readers on the reasons and rhetorical appeals. | | | |
| 6. The writer uses evidence from the editorial to support their reasons and explain the rhetorical appeals. | | | |
| 7. The writer explains why each rhetorical appeal is effective (or ineffective) for the intended audience. | | | |
| 8. The writer uses the language of argumentation (rhetorical appeals, assumptions, evidence, etc.). | | | |
| 9. The writer uses readerly cues and transitions to guide readers. | | | |
| 10. The writer includes a conclusion that emphasizes the importance of the evaluation and shows how it links the argument to the "big picture" or issue. | | | |

One overall strength:

One overall revision suggestion:

Using Student Examples

At the end of each of the first four chapters, you will find several student examples. Please use these to motivate your own writing and to examine how other students have interpreted the assignments and met the various rhetorical challenges in each chapter.

As you read these examples, you can also keep in mind the five major criteria in the Expository Writing Program. Please use this following chart to guide you.

| **Criteria** | **Description** | **What to look for in the Rhetorical Evaluation** |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose & Focus | Your draft meets the overall purpose of the assignment; you effectively clarify and emphasize the main points to your readers; you stay on topic in each part of the draft. | Does the writer analyze and evaluate instead of responding? Does the writer provide an explicit evaluation claim? Does the writer support their claim with reasons connected to the major rhetorical appeals? Does the writer focus on how the argument is successful (or not) for the intended audience? |
| Development | You effectively use and explain different forms of evidence (e.g., personal anecdotes, analogies, secondary research, primary research research) to present and support your main ideas to your readers. | Does the writer provide specifics (e.g., examples, quotations) from the argument they are evaluating? Does the writer explain how they are using these specifics? Does the writer explain their reasons—how ethos, logos, and pathos are working (or not) on the intended audience? |
| Organization | You demonstrate awareness of the genre of the paper, your purpose, and your audience by the way you order your points and your evidence for your readers. You may demonstrate the organization criterion by your use of topic sentences, transitions, headings, and cues for the readers, among other strategies. You consider the organization of the overall shape of the paper as well as the shape of individual paragraphs. | Does the writer guide their readers with clear topic sentences and transitions? Does the writer use different sections (i.e., introduction, body, conclusion) to guide readers? |
| Style & Tone | You interest, engage, and meet your readers' expectations by making particular language decisions regarding word choice, sentence length and structure, grammar, and citation style. Similarly, you make language decisions to indicate your attitude towards your topic, ideas, and readers. | Does the writer fairly summarize and represent the author of the argument they are evaluating? Does the writer find ways to interest their own readers? |
| Editing & Proofreading | This final criterion focuses on accuracy. You should edit and proofread carefully to meet your readers' expectations regarding spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, formatting, citation style, and other aspects of your draft. | Does the writer demonstrate that they have re-read and carefully edited their work? Have they made their citations accurate and consistent? |

## Student Example

*Ryan Donnelly wrote this Rhetorical Evaluation for Brenda Martin's ENGL 200 class.*

### From Practice Stems Success

Occupations in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) are becoming ever-increasingly important in the modern world. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average projected growth for all STEM occupations in the U.S. from the years 2014-2024 is 6.5%, which will add on to the nearly 8.6 million jobs already out there (Fayer, et al.). And, parents who want their children to have the option of pursuing STEM careers should be aware that succeeding in STEM requires a solid foundation in mathematics ("Building…"). Considering this, it is worth knowing that girls face a disadvantage when compared to boys in securing this strong base in mathematics.

In her editorial "Make Your Daughter Practice Math. She'll Thank You Later," Barbara Oakley shines light on this issue and offers a solution to the problems girls face. She claims girls can become discouraged at their skills in mathematics because girls "are often relatively better at [reading and writing] than they are at math" (par. 4), resulting in girls thinking they just aren't good at math. And, "thinking you're not very good at something can be a quick path to disliking and avoiding it," which leads to "a genuine lack of competence" (par. 6) in the subject. So, Oakley argues that parents of daughters should have their girls practice math routinely if they want their daughters to have STEM career options in their futures.

Throughout her editorial, Oakley successfully convinces her audience that they should have their daughters practice math more. She does this through her strong appeals to ethos and logos, despite her lesser appeals to pathos. This is primarily because her editorial is focused on being logical and rational; a large amount of appeals to pathos is unnecessary. Additionally, her appeals to ethos and logos are strong enough to successfully convince the audience of her claim without a similar amount of appeals to pathos.

Oakley's appeals to ethos are by far her strongest rhetorical device. Oakley's goal is to convince parents to have their daughters practice more math (even though they might hate math). What better way to establish credibility than how she does when telling parents to "[t]ake it from someone who started out hating math and went on to become a professor of engineering" (par. 12)? Even though she started out hating math, she tells parents specifically that practicing math has immense benefits, the proof being she is now a professor in engineering. Additionally, it is mentioned under the title of the editorial that she is also an author on a book of learning, lending more credibility to any claims she puts forward. Who better to listen to than someone with enough knowledge to write an entire book about how children learn when you're a parent interested in helping your daughter become a better math student?

Oakley also establishes ethos with her audience throughout her editorial by providing her audience with a wide range of sources for any claims she makes. This demonstrates to the audience that she is a trustworthy source of information, as all her claims are backed up and well-researched. For instance, Oakley references the international PISA test to back up her claim that "the United States ranks near the bottom among the 35 industrialized nations in math" (par. 10). Another example can be found when Oakley is demonstrating to parents that repeatedly practicing math truly makes you better at it, rather than just understanding math conceptually. She cites researcher K. Anders Ericsson for this claim, giving it substance. By backing up her claims with viable evidence, Oakley proves her trustworthiness to her audience, increasing the likelihood of convincing them to listen to her.

Oakley's appeals to ethos do not end here. Oakley appeals to ethos yet again by showing she genuinely cares about girls' futures, making her appear as a good person. In the beginning of her editorial, she writes "to create a full set of options for [girls] in STEM is to ensure she has a solid foundation in math" (par. 2). This quotation shows her audience she truly wants girls to have the best set of options for their futures, causing her audience to realize that she has good intentions and making her appear as a good person in their eyes. This appeal is an especially important one; after all, her target audience includes parents of girls. If parents believe that Oakley genuinely cares about their daughters' success, then they will be more likely to be convinced to have their daughters routinely practice math.

In addition to ethos, Oakley also has many strong appeals to logos throughout her editorial. One important way she appeals to logos is through her use of rational thinking. Oakley allows the reader to follow along with her thoughts logically, granting the reader a better understanding of what she is trying to communicate. For instance, Oakley logically explains the problems girls face in math when compared to boys in paragraph four. Her explanation has a logical flow, includes a rhetorical question, and has "if-then" statements, all of which make it extremely easy for her readers to understand what she is saying. This strategy goes quite far when trying to convince an audience of a claim because if the audience coherently understands Oakley's stance, her chances of successfully persuading them increase significantly (as compared to the audience not understanding what she has to say). If the audience can't logically understand her claim, then what is going to make them agree with her?

Another appeal to logos Oakley utilizes is through the sound structure of her argument. Her claim is clear (it's even the title of her editorial!): parents should have their daughters practice math routinely. Oakley ensures her audience is well aware of the importance of her claim by continuing to relate every topic in her editorial back to the main claim. The audience, now focused on the claim, can clearly understand her reasoning. Oakley reasons that "to create a full set of options for [girls] in STEM is to ensure she has a solid foundation in math" (par. 2) and that "some learning just plain requires effortful practice, especially in the initial stages" (par. 11).

With this, the audience creates the warrant that STEM career options are good from Oakley's claim, based on their clear understanding of her reasons and evidence that backs up her claim. Because of Oakley's careful attention to the structure of her argument, she increases the likelihood of her audience becoming convinced of her claim.

Unlike her appeals to both ethos and logos, Oakley's appeals to pathos aren't nearly as strong. This isn't because Oakley struggles at connecting with her audience; it's primarily because her paper isn't meant to be emotionally appealing. Her editorial is mainly meant to logically convince her readers to act by having their daughters practice mathematics, so pathos is all but unnecessary. However, she does appeal to pathos well in a couple instances that help her persuade her audience. To appeal to pathos, Oakley paints a picture of the unfortunate scenario that girls face. Simply because girls "are often relatively better at [reading and writing] than they are at math" (par. 4), their futures can be harmed. Girls might end up disliking math, and as mentioned earlier, this could lead to a "a genuine lack of competence [in mathematics]" (par. 6), harming their total future career options in STEM fields. Readers' emotions will be evoked due to this unfair scenario girls face. Oakley's audience becomes compelled to act; after all, parents are the ones who have the power to solve this problem for their own daughters. By appealing to pathos even in a tiny way, Oakley causes the audience to sympathize for girls and aim to help girls' futures by having them practice math more.

One more appeal to pathos Oakley utilizes is her use of analogies. Analogies are a great way to bridge the gap of understanding between an expert and a non-expert and elicit the audience's emotions. Oakley does this by comparing practicing musical instruments to practicing mathematics (par. 8). It can be reasonably assumed that Oakley's audience knows that the only way to get better at a musical instrument is by constantly practicing that musical instrument.

Additionally, the idea of children practicing musical instruments at a young age is generally seen as something positive, such as a good use of time or a good hobby to have. This positive connotation associated with children practicing instruments evokes positive emotions in the audience. This guides the audience towards seeing practicing math in the same light as practicing musical instruments. Oakley stresses "that simply *understanding* how a chord is constructed isn't the equivalent of being able to *play* the chord" (par. 8). So, Oakley claims, why should math be any different? By bridging the gap between her and her audience in a positive way by using analogies, Oakley is able to successfully convince members of her audience who might have *not* thought that rote practice was the best way to learn mathematics. With this, the "why" to the "why should my daughter practice math more?" is concretely answered and the audience can readily agree with her claims.

Overall, Oakley successfully convinces her audience to have their daughters practice math routinely. By skillfully combining strong appeals to ethos and logos, Oakley gains the trust of her audience and proceeds to make the logical case that having girls practice math comes with immense benefits. Oakley's lesser appeals to pathos also help win over her audience; she ensures the audience feels sympathy for girls who might end up disliking math, inspiring them to help them out, starting with their own daughters. Because the audience trusts her and believes she has good intentions, and because her thought process comes across as logical and well- researched, Oakley wins over her audience to make a small, but impactful, step to better her audience's daughters' futures by practicing math routinely.

## Works Cited

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Oakley, Barbara. "Make Your Daughter Practice Math. She'll Thank You Later." *The New York Times,* 7 Aug. 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/08/07/opinion/stem-girls-math- practice.html.

## Student Example

*Alex Vontz wrote this rhetorical evaluation in Molly Burt's ENGL 200 class.*

### Rhetorical Evaluation of "Hey Computer Scientists! Stop Hating on the Humanities"

As data technology and analytics have developed and prevailed in modern society, so has the abilities of its users. With the help of our technological tools, humanity has been able to do amazing things like to send people to the moon, map out the entire human genome, and even record evidence of gravitational waves sent from lightyears away. These feats of such great magnitude begin to beg the question: What is to stop anybody from using the power of technology and data analytics to do things that aren't so morally correct? The answer is virtually nothing. This rationale has sparked a debate about whether computer scientists and data analysts need to be more ethically responsible and about who should be held accountable for instituting such regulations.

Emma Pierson discusses the matter in her 2017 *Wired*Op-Ed article, "Hey Computer Scientists! Stop Hating on the Humanities," aimed at computer scientists and data analysts themselves. With a background in computer science herself, Pierson highlights the raw power of unchecked information technology, noting how this power can be dangerous when combined with ethical ignorance. She argues for integration of ethical responsibility into the computer science field and cites many experiences in which she has seen ethical boundaries crossed. To back her claim with reason, Pierson suggests the computer science field lacks consideration for human implications and consequences, noting how ignorant programming is often of unethical programming.

While Pierson's argument for more sensitivity to ethics in computer science favorably applies kairos, ethos, and pathos, her writing lacks strength in logos, ultimately yielding her argument unsuccessful to a target audience of computer scientists and analysts. Although she brings in many experiences to back her claims emotionally, Pierson fails to present empirical and credible evidence to her logic-based target audience, thereby weakening her appeal to logos.

Pierson published the article in a 2017 issue of *Wired* magazine, an information technology news outlet, bringing a strong appeal to kairos to her argument. *Wired* publishes articles across all platforms, including online, in-application, and print magazines, highlighting the latest information and ideas in the technology industry. Computer scientists and data analysts, the target audience, are likely to be frequent readers and subsequently encounter Pierson's article. In addition, the information technology and data analytics field grew quickly as ever in 2017, making the rhetorical situation for an argument on the issue all the more ideal.

With this ideal rhetorical situation, Pierson relies heavily on ethos as a device to deliver reasoning first-hand and attempt to unite herself with the audience. While she opts out of citing outside credible sources, Pierson takes the alternative approach of building her own credibility to convey her own ideas and evidence. She clearly states her expertise to the audience and begins the article, "As a computer science PhD student." Also, she later refers to her especially prestigious alma mater, Stanford University (par. 1). These appeals to expertise and intelligence boost her credibility, setting precedents for Pierson to present arguments about ethical responsibility in the field. In addition, she unites herself with her audience, establishing a common ground as members of the computer science community. This move communicates that her argument is worth considering because of who she is as both a computer scientist and an intellectual. She reinforces her expertise, and henceforth ethos, with her select use of elevated language and field-specific jargon. Incorporating phrases like "statistical desiderata" and "algorithmic bias in word embeddings," Pierson delivers more evidence for her computer science credibility with purposeful use of jargon (par. 5, 6). This proves she brings more to the argument than mere academic and career titles by showing the audience she is a true member of the computer science field. When Pierson proves herself to be credible with such evidence, she invokes trust in her audience and in turn makes the ideas for ethical responsibility more persuasive and believable. Because of this strong base of credibility built by her appeals to ethos, Pierson is able to write the article in the first-person point of view and integrate her own experiences as reasoning.

Through these first-hand experiences, Pierson brings her strongest rhetorical appeal to the argument—pathos. She continuously presents personal narratives of situations that demonstrate the risks of unchecked computer science and analytics. For instance, she cites how Stanford provided her "as a teenager" with "algorithms that could pick out the terrorists most worth targeting" and "detect someone's dissatisfaction with the government" (par. 1). The thought of an ignorant teenager possessing so much power invokes feelings of uneasiness about the current lack of ethical responsibility in the information technology field. Pierson purposely provides this specific first-hand example of just how far removed programming can *feel* from extremely vivid, dangerous, real-world consequences. In doing so, she allows the audience to make this emotional connection about her situation and, consequently, situations they may have encountered themselves. Feeling discomfort about the current state of ethical responsibility in the field sets up readers to be more receptive and conscious of new ethical boundaries. Pierson plays on more emotions with her specific use of word choice and juxtaposition of phrases, calling algorithms "weapons both elegant and lethal" and referring to scientists as presenting "lethal innovations with child-like enthusiasm" (par. 2). These phrases purposefully juxtapose words of opposing connotative feelings in a way that demonstrates positive feelings of appreciation for information technology as field, but negative feelings about the potential dangers of ethical ignorance. By doing this, Pierson connects emotionally with her audience with positive feelings and simultaneously warns the audience why ethical responsibility is important with negative feelings. This wording also acts to apply humanistic and aesthetic ideas like elegance and enthusiasm to analytical and scientific topics, just as integrating ethical responsibility would to computer science.

Although she targets computer scientists and data analysts, Pierson fails to bring strong appeals to logos as she crafts her argument, likely causing her audience to be skeptical of her overall claim. While she institutes a fair amount of logical reasoning, her claims can be bold and insulting to her target audience. Furthermore, Pierson provides no statistical or scientific evidence to back these claims, but rather relies on personal experiences and her own credibility. The sub claim, "Computer science is wondrous. The problem is that many people in Silicon Valley believe that it is all that matters," is a bold, negative accusation about members of her target audience (par. 2). When Pierson presents her reasoning in these statements, she directly accuses computer scientists, representatives of her target audience, of being ignorant as logical reasoning for her claim. She moves this idea farther by incorporating a string of repetitive parallel experiences beginning with "You see this when…" and "I've watched…" (par. 2). Even if the reader is not insulted by the controversial initial statement, they will unlikely be persuaded of any claim solely by unclear references to anecdotes with no proof or data. A data-driven audience of computer scientists and data analysts who professionally draw conclusions from statistics and evidence likely require statistics and evidence to be persuaded in the argument. This lack of empirical evidence occurs in almost every other sub claim Pierson makes, and often, the only evidence provided is mostly theoretical. Pierson cites a string of ethical questions she's personally encountered, asking herself whether she should download messages from a teen anorexia support website or "write a program to post anonymous, suicidal messages" on college forums to gather data. She completes the idea, stating, "My answer to these questions, incidentally, was 'no'" (par. 5). In these statements, Pierson attempts to support her main claim that computer scientists need to be more ethically responsible with situations that were prevented by good ethical responsibility. She provides an example of ethical responsibility already preventing a dangerous situation in the current state of the field, discrediting the need for anything to change. Again, the data-driven target audience will likely identify this logical fallacy and fail to be persuaded to add more ethics into their work. These logical issues weaken the effectiveness of her claim to her target audience and ultimately make her argument unsuccessful.

In her argument to integrate more ethical responsibility in the information technology field, Pierson appeals effectively to kairos, ethos, and pathos. However, she fails to consider the target audience's background in weak appeals to logos, making her overall argument ineffective.

Pierson's ideas may successfully convince a more general target audience that computer science and data analysis need more ethics, given her successful foundation of credibility-based and emotion-based arguments. However, the article targets computer scientists and data analysts specifically, who likely identify the flawed reasoning and fail to be persuaded without real-world evidence. In a well-crafted argument, the rhetor should appeal to all rhetorical areas with careful consideration and subjectivity to the target audience. Given Pierson and her audience are both experts on the subject, special consideration of logos should have been enacted to make her argument more successful. Although the argument itself proves unsuccessful, Pierson still raises awareness for ethics sensitivity in the information technology field and all fields simply by presenting the issue. In a modern society with so much power to freely access, it is almost always relevant to consider ethical questions in what we do and, more importantly, answer these questions correctly.

### Work Cited

Pierson, Emma. "Hey, Computer Scientists! Stop Hating on the Humanities." *Wired*, Conde Nast, 3 June 2017, www.wired.com/2017/04/hey-computer-scientists-stop-hating- humanities/.

## Student Example

*Jarrod Moore wrote this evaluation argument in Caitlin Radonich's ENGL 200 class.*

## Rhetorical Evaluation: Will Our National Parks Survive the Next 100 Years?

The land of the United States is vast and geographically diverse, with many places having scenic appeal or historic significance. As the young nation developed, concerns arose about whether the wonders of the western frontier would be diminished due to economic exploitation. To prevent this, national parks were established by acts of congress to protect certain areas as property of the federal government. According to Terry Tempest Williams, these parks are a cornerstone of life not just for Americans, but for people the world over. Concerned about the future of these parks, Williams wrote an opinion piece in the *Los Angeles Times* entitled, "Will Our National Parks Survive the Next 100 Years?" which seeks to persuade her readers to take action to preserve them. Her concern, as stated in the article, stems from the state and corporate interests as well as support from the GOP that have been steadily and silently selling off the nation's public lands, and increasingly so with the cover of noise from the 2016 presidential election.

While this opinion piece has a weak appeal to logos, it is ultimately successful in persuading an already supportive audience with strong appeals to pathos, ethos, and kairos. Terry Tempest Williams' success in persuasion has much to do with her choice of audience and how she appeals to them. The decision to publish this piece in the *Los Angeles Times* is not insignificant, as the readership of the *Los Angeles Times* is primarily adults from metropolitan areas who lean left politically. In the United States, this group is largely supportive of environmentalism, especially notable in how they talk about the hot-button issue of climate change. It is no stretch to assume that this audience will already be in favor of protecting national reserves. Knowing this, Williams sets her sights not merely on persuading this audience to adopt her viewpoint but to persuade them to act on those beliefs and change the situation. To convince this supportive audience to proceed from belief to action, an emotional connection must first be established.

Williams' usage of pathos as her primary vehicle of persuasion is immediately apparent in the opening two paragraphs. The article begins with a personal account of a visit to the Great Falls, which makes strong use of imagery and idyllic language to convey the beauty of nature. An example of pathos comes from the opening paragraph: "The cascading rapids and dramatic pour-offs were mesmerizing and soul-restoring in the extreme heat of McLean, Va., where high humidity and temperatures in the upper 90s were drawing larger crowds than usual at this 800- acre national park, only 15 miles from our nation's capital" (1). Many references and allusions to history are also made, from personal childhood memories of Utah's wildlife to significant historical figures such as George Washington. These warm feelings of beauty and nostalgia connected to history are then threatened with a hypothetical question: What if national parks and nature were stripped from the country? Williams answers this hypothetical with a world that is hollow and lonely, with no escape from the continual grind of modern life—this is very distressing for the target audience. The romanticization of history and nature, contrasted with the threat of an artificial and colorless world, is used elegantly to connect with the target audience's value of beauty and the non-material over corporate or economic interests. Williams understands her audience very well, and she connects well with them as a fellow person who stands to lose as much as they do from the loss of natural parks.

Pathos in the article is supported and strengthened by the writer's ethos. While not as strong or prevalent as pathos, the relationship between Williams and her readers does much to aid persuasion. Terry Tempest Williams is an established author whose work is deeply tied to national park preservation, and while this is not directly flaunted in the article, her knowledge and expertise is tastefully used to bring credibility to her argument, with a notable example being the history of the Great Falls. The personal accounts of the writer's numerous visits to national parks do well to connect with the audience who have likely admired the beauty of a national park themselves at some point. What is also notable is the usage of "we" as Williams speaks on behalf of all people worldwide, with an example being the following: "The centennial of the National Park Service reminds us of history, both human and wild, and why we need our public lands more than ever ina changing world" (11). In the second paragraph, Williams mentions that she stood viewing the Great Falls alongside friends and strangers from foreign countries, which adds a global element to "we." The target audience of the article values unity and multiculturalism, so creating a sense of solidarity through story and language does much to get the audience on Williams' side.

While pathos and ethos drive the article with a great understanding of the audience, the appeal to logos is less prevalent. This is expected to some degree as the piece is clearly labelled as an "Op-ed," and the primary audience is already supportive; however, the lack of data will limit the article's appeal to outside audiences. Historical context is used, most notably in the reference to George Washington, although this lacks a strong follow-up point connected to any reasoning. Figures of how many people visit national parks are brought up a couple of times, with an example being "Over 300 million visits to our national parks last year tells me I am not alone" (10), which suggests that national parks are undervalued by those who seek to privatize them. Aside from these points of evidence, there is not much else to shield the reasons from counterarguments. The claim, being that action should be taken to preserve national parks, and the reason, being that natural beauty is invaluable to society and could be lost without national parks, make a solid argument so long as the audience shares the warrant that nature is integral to the emotional and physical well-being of people. Some might not share the warrant, or they may believe that benefits due to economic growth outweigh the downsides of privatizing national parks. There is no attempt to speak to those with an alternative viewpoint, and the corporatist opposition to keeping national parks public is left alone, implied to be self-evidently bad. It is unlikely this article will reach resistant readers due to its preoccupation with the already supportive core audience. Nonetheless, the weaker appeals to logos will not diminish the appeal for the primary audience as they are already supportive of the claim and reasons, even without extensive data.

What the article lacks in logos, it makes up for in Kairos or the relevance to present-day society. The cause for concern over losing national parks is what powers this article. Losing natural land to private interests is, by its nature, almost irreversible. Williams brings up recent events to animate this: "What I read are headlines like this: 'GOP Platform Endorses Disposing of Federal Lands.' What I find is a bipartisan outrage over the selling off of our public lands, be it to the states or the highest bidder at the Bureau of Land Management's quarterly oil and gas leasing auctions, beginning at $2 an acre" (10). There is a sense of urgency in protecting public land, which is especially noticeable in the concluding paragraphs that put forth the hypothetical situation of a future without national parks. This is important enough to occupy even the title of the article. This "act now" attitude is vital in encouraging the target audience to act in support of public land, and it energizes an audience who, despite already being supportive of national parks, may have been inactive in advocating for their continued support by the government. Kairos is what amplifies the other rhetorical appeals, most notably pathos, to energize the audience.

Ultimately, Terry Tempest Williams' "Will Our National Parks Survive the Next 100 Years?" is successful in appealing to and persuading the *Los Angeles Times'* audience to take action to preserve national parks: "Here is what we must promise the future: a legacy of care" (11). While the suggested action is left vague, the audience is animated by a sense of urgency through kairos, an emotional connection through vivid pathos, and a sense of solidarity through ethos. Nature precedes us and will almost certainly supersede us, but the lingering question for our modern world is whether we can enjoy and find solace in nature instead of wringing it out for every penny. In our fast-paced, largely digital, and currently isolated world, it can be easy to forget the threats facing the natural world, and Williams' article sheds an important spotlight on these dangers—it is just a little unfortunate that it makes no effort to convince those complicit in the destruction through dialogue.

**Work Cited**

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## Considering Revision

In a foundational research study conducted by Nancy Sommers[3] over forty years ago, student writers and experienced writers were interviewed to ascertain their attitudes towards revision. The student writers used such words and phrases as "scratching out," "reviewing," "cleaning up," and "marking out." In short, they regarded revision as a final opportunity to delete words they found to be inappropriate or repetitive and to substitute new words.

The experienced writers, on the other hand, took a more holistic, meaning-based approach, consistently referring to their revision as "rewriting," a process of re-reading and re-considering their work as a way to focus on their purpose and meaning and to reveal the overall argument or structure of their writing.

You are encouraged to view revision more like these experienced writers, as a process to clarify your thinking and purpose and to reach your intended readers more effectively. In addition to your teacher's comments, keep in mind the assignment guidelines, your class discussions, the five-point criteria (purpose/focus, development, organization, style/tone, and proofreading/editing), and your classmates' peer comments. When reviewing your teacher's comments, look for the "big picture," especially in terms of purpose, development, and organization. Remember as well that your writing is yours—not your teacher's nor an outside reader's. If your teacher diagnoses a concern in a particular part of your draft, anticipate these similar concerns in other parts.

In the following two examples, you will find Jessica Smallfield's presentation draft and revised draft for her evaluation argument. First, look for what Smallfield is doing successfully in the first draft; additionally, note down possible weaknesses or important revision moments. To get you started, here are some typical concerns in first drafts:

- Student writers do not provide an explicit evaluation claim.

- Student writers do not indicate the intended audience of the source argument.
- Student writers do not showcase the rhetorical appeals—their reasons—as topic sentences that are accessible to their readers.
- Student writers do not explain how the source argument is persuasive or successful for the intended audience.

Second, take a look at Smallfield's revision. Keeping in mind your revision suggestions, what has Smallfield accomplished in her revision? What else has she revised successfully? What are some revision suggestions you would still have for her?

## First Presentation Draft

*Jessica Smallfield wrote this rhetorical evaluation in Rachel Schaller's ENGL 200 class.*

### Rhetorical Evaluation of "Is College Too Easy?"

The general rule of thumb regarding college studying is that students should spend about 2-3 hours studying outside of class for every hour they spend in class. Many students fall short of this mark by half. In the article, "Is College Too Easy? As Study Time Falls, Debate Rises," by Daniel de Vise, the writer discusses the recent, startling trend of study times falling in college. The article was found on The Washington Post website and published in May of 2012. The people that get their news from this source are mostly high-income earning, college and post college graduates, meaning they are smart, educated, and well off financially ("Audience Research"). The target audience for this specific article are college students but may also include postgraduates who are intrigued by the article's title. The audience's position will most likely depend upon their major; STEM majors tend to study more than liberal art majors. Vise communicates that students are as busy as ever focusing on school, work, and other activities, and that studies fail to address key components like the ones mentioned above. These factors explain why students' study times have taken a plunge over the past 50 or so years. This claim is explicitly stated in the article because the writer conveys why study times have fallen while providing counter claims throughout the article. Vise logically connects the reasons to support the claim by utilizing statistics like how many students work off campus. However, he lacks ethical appeal, and his use of emotional appeal is insufficient.

Vise successfully utilizes logos and limited emotional appeal to convince the audience that college students are busier than ever. Vise uses statistics that support the claim that students are pre-occupied with jobs, commuting, volunteering, and other extracurricular activities. He provides evidence like how study times vary depending upon the major, the percentage of students maintaining jobs, and how technological advancements in recent years have made completing schoolwork more efficient. The evidence is somewhat effective; some of the audience may remained unchanged on their opinion by the end of the article. They may believe that students remained unchallenged in college and that is why their study times have fallen. The arguments presented throughout the article seem to be multi-sided; there is evidence that supports the writer's main claim and evidence that goes against it. The writer includes opposing views throughout the article to show that he acknowledges the opposing views people may have. Vise understands that people may believe students are learning less in college and becoming distracted by campuses that resemble resorts. However, Vise refutes this claim by stating that students have better technology compared to past times which decreases study time because of how much more effective it makes completing schoolwork.

The ethical appeal is implicit in this article. Daniel de Vise is an author and writer who works for *The Washington Post*, but does not explicitly state that. This shows that Vise has experience in writing articles and paper and has college experience, which is important in an article involving college studies. There is no mention of his educational background within the article, so it was something that had to be searched. The credentials of the writer has somewhat importance for the claim he is making because an article about college should be written by someone who not only provides sufficient evidence but has experienced college struggles; it helps to strengthen his main claim.

Vise attempts to use emotional appeal in the beginning of the paper. His word choice suggests that he is backing the idea that study times have fell and college students have gotten lazy. His word choice in the following sentence suggests a negative connotation: "declining study time is a discomforting truth about the vaunted U.S. higher-education system." The words "declining," "discomforting," and "vaunted" are used in an unfavorable way. The word "vaunted" is seemingly used sarcastically, poking fun at how the United States should have a great and highly valued education system but appears not to. The resemblance of college to a resort suggests that students have grown lazy because they are distracted by numerous activities and new experiences that deflect studying.

Vise employs logical appeal when he includes statistics throughout the article. According to George Mason University, "seventy percent of seniors hold off-campus jobs," which is a majority of that class. What undermines this piece of evidence is the fact that Vise does not state which study the statistic came from. Having an assertion and a refutable source can make an argument stronger. In one of his attempts at logical appeal, Vise uses evidence from the National Survey of Student Engagement, which is a respected source. According to the survey, students only study one hour outside each class they take, which misses the goal by half. This shows the audience that students are studying less, but Vise provides evidence throughout the article to show potentially why. Studying can also vary by major; architectural degrees are known for being more time consuming and intensive while marketing degrees are laid back. The latter major averages 24 hours a week dedicated to studying while the former is only 12 hours. These variations in a student's major can affect study results.

Vise provides the hourly study time for various schools in Virginia. Howard University reported as little as 13 hours a week towards studying while Sweet Briar College, a private women's school, reported 19 hours of study in an average week. Until 2010, evidence of declining study time has been ignored; two University of California economists brought the issue to attention in a paper called "Leisure College, USA." Vise included data from a 1961 study that shows students studying about 24 hours a week, significantly higher than what students are studying now. The writer mentions that some academicians dispute the acquired evidence of study times dwindling; they say findings are based on different surveys and the accounts given by students can be fallible. Although some people may still believe the findings are sound.

Towards the end of the article, Vise states that college students are as busy as ever, just with things other than schoolwork. This is his main claim for "Is College Too Easy?". Students are working full time and going to college full time, so they have less time to study for classes. Vise backs up this statement with quotes from students who work and are pre-occupied with various activities. Students have also become more efficient in their schoolwork because technology makes research more effective and efficient. Instead of going to the library and looking up information in books, students have everything they need in the palms of their hands. However, this can also harm students and serve as a distraction. Study times can vary across universities depending on how committed their students are, what the majority of students are studying, and whether they work, commute, or do other activities.

Overall, Vise used many instances of logos and some emotional appeal. He ends the article in a significant way; he uses a quote from McCormick, the director of a student engagement survey, that says, "every one of these colleges has some students who are studying quite a bit and, to balance things out, students who are studying very, very little." Ending the article with this quote leaves the audience with the writer's main claim: that the studies involving study times are not entirely accurate and there are other variables besides students becoming lazier and studying less that affect this data.

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## Revised Draft

### Rhetorical Evaluation of "Is College Too Easy?"

According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the general rule of thumb regarding higher education is for students to spend about 2-3 hours studying outside of class for every hour they spend in class. However, many students fall short of this standard (McCormick). In the article, "Is College Too Easy? As Study Time Falls, Debate Rises," Daniel de Vise discusses the recent startling trend of study times falling in college. De Vise communicates that students are as busy as ever focusing on school, work, and other activities and that studies fail to address key components like the ones mentioned above. These factors might explain why students' study times have taken a plunge over the past 50 or so years. Undergraduates are expected to be a full-time student and a part-time employee and to be involved on campus simultaneously in order to be well rounded, which leaves less time for studying (de Vise). The article was found on *The Washington Post* website and published in May of 2012. According to *The Washington Post*, the majority of people who get news from their website are high-income earning, college and post college graduates, meaning they are smart, educated, and well off financially ("Audience Research"). The target audience for this specific article are college students but may also include postgraduates who are intrigued by the article's eye-catching title. De Vise's claim is explicitly stated in the article because he conveys why study times have fallen while providing counter claims throughout the article. De Vise effectively utilizes logical appeals to connect the reasons that support the claim by applying studies and statistics, like the percentage of students that work off campus. However, he lacks an appeal to creditability in the form of background and education because he does not explicitly state why he is qualified to discuss this topic. In addition, de Vise's use of pathos in the form of appealing to the audience's emotions by word choice is adequate.

De Vise successfully utilizes logos and limited emotional appeal to convince the audience that college students are busier than ever. De Vise uses statistics that support the claim that students are pre-occupied with jobs, commuting, volunteering, and other extracurricular activities. He provides evidence like how study times vary depending upon the major, the percentage of students maintaining jobs while going to college, and how technological advancements in recent years have made completing schoolwork more efficient. Within the article, de Vise says that "academic leaders counter that students are as busy as ever but that their attention is consumed in part by jobs they take to help make ends meet" (de Vise). So, it is not that the coursework in college has gotten easier, it is that students have focused their attention on other things such as part time jobs. The evidence and reasonings are pretty effective in supporting de Vise's main claim. The writer is fair when presenting evidence and uses arguments that both support and counter his point of view. The writer includes opposing views throughout the article to show that he acknowledges the contrasting views readers may have. De Vise understands that his readers may believe students are learning less in college and becoming distracted by campuses that resemble resorts. In the article, De Vise says that the decline in study times over the past 50 years "has led some critics to question whether college is delivering on its core mission: student learning" (de Vise). However, de Vise refutes this claim by stating that students have more resources and better technology compared to the past, which decreases study time because of how much more efficient and effective it makes completing schoolwork.

The appeal to credibility is implicit in this article because the writer does not state why he is qualified to write about this topic. De Vise is an author and writer who works for *The Washington Post*, but the article does not explicitly state that. This background information shows that de Vise has experience in writing articles and has a college degree, which is important in an article involving college studies. Since there is no mention of his educational background within the article, it was something that had to be searched. According to his website, de Vise has written "more than one hundred front-page stories for *The Washington*

*Post*" ("Daniel De Visé"), which means this article is not the first one he has written, and Vise has done many other articles involving colleges and universities. The credentials of the writer hold some importance for the claim he is making because an article about college should be written by someone who not only presents sufficient evidence in a concise way but has experienced the struggles of college; this background helps to strengthen his main claim.

De Vise attempts to use emotional appeal in the beginning of the editorial by articulating his diction carefully. His word choice suggests that he is backing the idea that study times have fallen and college students have grown lazy. His diction in the following sentence in the article suggests a negative connotation: "Declining study time is a discomforting truth about the vaunted U.S. higher-education system" (de Vise). The adjectives, "declining," "discomforting," and "vaunted," are used in an unfavorable way. The word "vaunted" is seemingly used sarcastically, poking fun at how the United States should have a great and highly valued education system but appears not to. The comparison of college to a resort suggests that students have grown lazy because they are distracted by numerous activities and new experiences that deflect studying. The use of these words draws readers in to see where the rest of the article is going. Towards the end of the article, de Vise chooses to use a specific quote from a college sophomore, who exclaims, "My planner is a wreck" and goes on to list why. De Vise continues this fraught mood in the hopes the audience will sympathize with her by mentioning that students from a couple other colleges report the "same stressful pace" (de Vise). Dixon is a tourism major, works 23 hours a week at an information desk, volunteers at church, and commutes up to two hours a day to and from school (de Vise). Her college experience is similar to others mentioned in the article and students from universities like Kansas State.

De Vise effectively employs a logical appeal when he includes statistics from various sources, like George Mason University, Sweet Briar College, and DePauw University, throughout the article. According to George Mason, Virginia's largest public university, "seventy percent of seniors hold off-campus jobs," which is a majority of that class (de Vise). When students hold part time jobs and take a full load of courses, that leaves them with less time to study throughout the week. In another one of his attempts at logical appeal, de Vise uses evidence from the National Survey of Student Engagement, which is a respected source. The national survey was devised in 1998 as a new approach to gathering information on the quality of universities. Since 2000, approximately 6 million students and over 1,650 schools have participated in the survey (NSSE). According to the survey, students only study one hour outside each class they take, which misses the goal by half (de Vise). This statistic shows the audience that students are studying less; however, de Vise provides evidence throughout the article to show potentially why this is. He includes data on how study times can vary by major; architectural majors are known for being more time consuming and intensive while marketing majors are laid back. The former major averages 24 hours a week dedicated to studying while the latter is only 12 hours (de Vise). These variations in a student's major can skew a survey's data. If a school is known for its liberal arts program, they are more likely to report less study time than a technical college. De Vise also provides the hourly study time for various schools in Virginia. Howard University reported as little as 13 hours a week towards studying while Sweet Briar College, a private women's school, reported 19 hours of study in an average week (de Vise). Depending upon the school and what they offer, students' weekly study times can differ. Apparently, until 2010, evidence of declining study time has been ignored; two University of California economists, Philip Babcock and Mindy Marks, brought the issue to attention in a paper called "Leisure College, USA" (de Vise). De Vise includes data from a 1961 study that shows students studied about 24 hours a week, significantly higher than what students are studying now (de Vise). The logical appeals the writer presents in the article are concise and effective in convincing the audience how much study times have dropped and why.

Overall, de Vise effectively utilizes several instances of logical appeal in the form of statistics and data, and somewhat effectively uses emotional appeal in the form of carefully chosen diction. He ends the article in a significant way; he employs a quote from McCormick, the director of a student engagement survey, who says, "Every one of these colleges has some students who are studying quite a bit and, to balance things out, students who are studying very, very little" (de Vise). Ending the article with this quote leaves the audience with the writer's main claim: that the studies involving study times are not entirely accurate and there are other variables instead of students becoming lazier and studying less that affect this data. Students are working part time, or even full time, and going to college full time, so they have less time to study for classes. Study times can also vary across universities depending on how committed their students are, what the majority of students are majoring in, and whether the individuals work, commute, or do other activities.

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## Conclusion: Summary of Key Rhetorical Concepts

- **Criteria:** The qualities or standards that writers use in order to evaluate something.
- **Evaluation:** A type of argument in which writers make a value judgement about something, arguing that it is either good or bad.
- **Example:** The evidence that the writer refers to as a way to build their argument and support their reasons.
- **Explanation:** An aspect of development, in which writers discuss their use of sources and research, make connections to their points, and explain the significance of their points and examples.
- **Exposition:** These are moments in which writers are focusing readers on their main points (claims) and sub-points (reasons).
- **Intended Audience:** The readers that the writer imagines when they are planning and writing the argument.
- **Readerly Cues:** Words or phrases that writers use to signal how they want readers to interpret what they are writing.
- **Rhetorical Appeals:** The ways in which writers use ethos, logos, and pathos to persuade their audiences. Topic Sentence: The sentence, usually at the top of the paragraph, that focuses readers on the main point or purpose of the paragraph.

# Chapter 1 Appendix

## Rhetorical Evaluation of “A Teacher’s Case Against Summer Vacation”

### Sarah Snyder

*Sarah Snyder wrote this evaluation argument in Jefferson Storms’ ENGL 200 class.*

On the subject of summer vacation, debate swirls in the educational world on whether summer vacation is overall successful in its purpose or if it places a detriment on student learning abilities. One side of educators continue to believe that summer vacation offers students a relatively decent amount of time for reflection and relaxation before they begin studying again during the fall semester. However, more and more educators are starting to see the negative sides of summer vacation – particularly when it comes to student learning loss and declines in important educational skills. In this regard, educators have posed the question, “Is summer vacation worth the possibility of learning detriments, or are there alternative options that would better aid students throughout the year?”

In “A Teacher’s Case Against Summer Vacation,” educator Cristina Duncan Evans falls on the latter side of the argument. She argues that school districts should find alternative vacation policies for students that still foster opportunities for rest and enrichment while seeking to address the harsh realities of summer learning loss. Since the article was published in *Ed Week*, an online resource targeted towards educators, Evans’ intended audience is made up of fellow educators – particularly those who are open to alternative viewpoints and methods that will best support their students. While Evans’ use of pathos on its own is rare, her article creates a persuasive argument for the intended audience through her successful appeals to both ethos and logos. By relying on the use of logical and credible examples, rather than emotional ones, Evans’ argument is more successful in making fellow educators think about the rationality and complexity surrounding the issue of summer vacation.

From the beginning of her argument, Evans’ appeals to logos are found to be particularly effective in resonating with her intended audience because they provide reasonable alternatives and suggestions for how to best logically solve the summer vacation issue. In paragraph three, Evans writes, “Students, especially low-income students, without access to enriching activities stand to lose meaningful knowledge and skills in the eight weeks each year that they’re away from instruction.” While this statement is rather broad in its depiction of learning loss, Evans is providing the audience with a reasonable representation of what research has noted as well as what fellow educators tend to notice about student understanding after extended break periods.

By mentioning low-income students, too, Evans is creating an overlap between logos and pathos, even though logos is still the stronger of the two. Since there are no individual appeals to pathos, Evans, occasionally, intertwines it throughout her other rhetorical appeals. In this example, she is appealing to the audience’s sympathy by assuming that educators have a desire to ensure all students have access to enriching materials.

In addition to her description of learning loss, Evans notes that different countries, like Germany, where there are significantly shorter summer vacations often have more “high academic performers” in comparison to the United States (par. 4). These countries also tend to have the same amount of break time as one whole summer vacation; however, they spread these periods throughout the year in order to provide students with more opportunities to refresh their minds. Not only is Evans appealing to fellow educators’ desire to see their students achieve academically, but she is providing the audience with a logical alternative to summer vacation.

Instead of ridding students of an 8-week period entirely, she is suggesting that this period be adjusted in order to provide students with more opportunities to get away from school. Evans continues to draw on the idea of adjusting student break periods by establishing her main claim in the next paragraph. She writes, “I think that shorter 2-4 week breaks, spread throughout the year, would give students a balance of time to rest, reflect, and experience enriching activities without the potential harm of undoing the work of the rest of the school year” (par. 5). By further clarifying her alternative suggestion, Evans is reasonably addressing the circumstances educators might be concerned about. While most educators want time for students to rest, they also want break periods to be times of enrichment that will further student educational abilities and comprehension. Through this claim, Evans is addressing the main issues of summer vacation by appealing to the particular goals of educators and providing suggestions that will still foster student improvement. Even though Evans does not include much research, her references to her own opinions and experiences make up for what would, normally, strengthen the argument further.

While there are numerous additional appeals to logos throughout the remainder of her argument, one of the strongest comes in Evans' last two paragraphs. Up to this point in the essay, Evans mainly discussed the positive aspects of changing summer vacation. Here, however, she addresses the limits of policy changes and solutions, especially when most school districts continue to value a traditional vacation policy. In paragraph twelve, she mentions that there needs to be a foundation for national dialogue and a start to "conversation around summer vacation." In this sense, Evans is rationally putting forth a call to action that educators will be able to slowly start implementing in their own schools and districts.

In addition to her effective appeals to logos, Evans utilizes ethos by establishing her credibility as an educator and showcasing her understanding of educator emotions. Evans states that she "often feels as if [she] is teaching in an age of uncertainty," which falls directly under the description of her as a secondary social studies teacher in Maryland (par. 2). While her statement is personal, the intended audience of fellow educators have, more than likely, had similar experiences related to this feeling of uncertainty, which somewhat contributes to another overlap with pathos. For example, even though the article was written in 2014, it serves as a very timely resource for many who have had to learn to teach in the pandemic and transition from their main role as educators to their additional role as learners. Because of this timeliness, the audience is most likely intrigued by Evans' standpoint on summer vacation. While she strongly appeals to her own experience as an educator, she also relates this back to the fear or anxiety most educators have in times of uncertainty.

Furthermore, Evans' use of pronouns such as "we" and "our" places her and fellow educators on the same playing field. Due to this, both Evans and the audience are able to take into account the similar choices or beliefs they share. By using her credibility in such a way, Evans is showing the audience that their experiences are not that much different from each other and that they may have similar thoughts for change. She writes, "Changing the school calendar is one of many potential reforms that could have big positive impacts for our students" (par. 11). In this example, they are not just her students, but the audience's as well, making ethos successful in its depiction of Evans' character and her, overall, understanding of the audience. By providing this example, Evans is convincing the audience to do what is most beneficial for "our" students as a whole compared to a singular sector of students.

Even though Evans does not establish pathos on its own, her overlap between rhetorical appeals and main use of ethos and logos creates a persuasive argument for fellow educators that is both credible and rational, while also, occasionally, sympathetic and relatable. Evans' ability to rely on her own opinions and understanding is effective in relating her back to the audience as well as in establishing a logical argument based around trends she has observed in her time as an educator. In closing her argument, she leaves her intended audience with how she wants her students to solve problems, through being "relentless, resourceful, creative, and rational" (par. 12). The use of words with positive connotations is meant to stir the audience to action and ignite their desire for change. In this regard, Evans is leaving the audience with a push to adopt these same traits, and an opportunity to begin creating a new vacation policy that is mostly reflective of student needs.

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## "The Case for a Universal Basic Income" Rhetorical Analysis

### Alex Bartlett

*Alex Bartlett wrote this evaluation argument in Riley O'Mearns's ENGL 200 class.*

A universal basic income is the idea that the government should provide all its citizens with enough money to meet their basic needs, and accessing these funds doesn't come with any stipulations. Due to its controversial nature, the subject of how to implement a universal basic income has been transformed into a hotly debated political issue as time has gone by. In his 2017 article published by the *LA Times*, "The Case for a Universal Basic Income," author Sebastian Johnson's overall argument is that implementing a universal basic income (UBI) will stabilize and even improve the lives of the American people on average. Johnson encourages progressive states to set the trend in adopting this idea for their own betterment. He claims that a UBI will stabilize the job market, provide better conditions to those in poverty, and give American workers more time to spend with their families. Johnson utilizes ethos, pathos, and logos to bolster his claims, making the support for his overall argument well rounded. But due to the nature of the reader, the most effective appeals to his audience are pathos-centric. By the end of the article, an audience of progressives should take away that instating a UBI will be revolutionary in bettering the lives of Americans overall. This impression is key since a core value of progressives is being the trailblazers in launching positive change in a kind and mutually beneficial way. By imparting this feeling to the audience, Johnson drives his argument home effectively.

Johnson demonstrates how the rhetorical appeals of logos and pathos can be blended to make his overall argument about UBI persuasive for his progressive readers. At this moment, the American job market hangs in a precarious balance. Johnson points to what economists call the "rise of the precariat" as evidence to this claim (2). A category of workers who rely on odd jobs and have minimal benefits, Johnson relies on the audience's fear of becoming one in this growing number in order to strengthen his overarching argument. This use of emotional manipulation is very effective, since fear is arguably one of the strongest emotions a person can feel, and everyone relates to it. Johnson goes on to bolster his claim with an alarming statistic: "47% of Americans are at high risk of losing their jobs to automation," as stated in an Oxford University study (2). This verifiable stat puts a number to how any American, through no fault of their own, can lose their job at any given moment. Though it's not implicitly stated, Johnson assumes that his audience realizes how easily this can become themselves or anyone they know. It leaves the audience wondering: if they lose their source of income, what options are available to help them provide for their loved ones? In turn, how will their loved ones be able to cope if they themselves lose their jobs? If a universal basic income is established, that will significantly reduce the amount of pressure for anyone who finds themselves in this situation. Therefore, through this statistic specifically, his argument resonates soundly with his entire audience. This use of logos is doubly effective, as it's also an appeal to pathos. The senses of fear and insecurity provided by this statistic will ultimately force Johnson's audience to put themselves in a financial predicament. Empathy is another emotion brought out by this claim, which is an emotion that the assumed "more humanitarian" progressives will latch on to. The thought is that a universal basic income will provide Americans with an additional sense of stability, which improves their overall quality of life in the long run.

Johnson continues to demonstrate his ability to bring logos and pathos together to persuade his readers. At the beginning of the article, there's a picture of a homeless encampment in Los Angeles, California. The tag underneath the photo says that these people are going about their "daily lives" in their community under the First Street Bridge (Johnson 1). The implication that the lives of these unhoused people could be dramatically improved if they had the money to take care of their basic needs is obvious. This image serves to make the audience think about how implementing a universal basic income will not only be potentially beneficial to them, but also how there will be immediate relief from suffering for many other people—further supporting his underlying argument. Johnson mentions how child poverty experts are urging the government to "consider a child allowance" in increasing numbers (3). The use of the phrase "child poverty experts" adds significant weight to the rest of the claim: a universal basic income for kids will "help level the playing field for low-and middle income-families" (3). Johnson relies on the value of wanting to help and protect the most vulnerable population— children—being universal, which is almost always accurate regardless of political party affiliation. America as a country has a very family-centric culture, the idea of a nuclear family specifically, so this is a logical assumption for Johnson to make about his audience. The appeal to the audience's sense of empathy is very proficient in bolstering Johnson's claim, especially to what is commonly—and stereotypically—known as a "bleeding heart liberal." Pathos is once again used very effectively in this manner. It also helps that by appealing to the audience's sense of justice, the audience feels secure in the belief that a universal basic income will improve lives. A common stereotype of progressives, for better or worse, is that they tend to have a stronger than average sense of justice, so much so that it occasionally borders on self- righteousness. Humans like to think of themselves as good people, and Johnson, under the assumption that this feeling is stronger in more liberal people, uses this human condition to strengthen his argument in the mind of his audience.

Johnson is very tactical in getting his audience to trust his word and, despite a few missteps, shape his ethos. As a senior consultant at Freedman Consulting, a firm that develops new technology for the public interest, Johnson is an influential figure and no stranger to advocating for the average American. Having given a TED Talk, which has the same title as this article, on the premise of instilling a universal basic income, the audience can trust that Johnson has done his research and is well versed on this subject (Johnson 4). Although not directly, he's backed by household names such as Elon Musk, who stated to world leaders in Dubai that "some kind of universal income is going to be necessary" (Johnson 2). Surely if someone as successful as Elon Musk is in favor of a universal basic income, it can only be a net benefit to society, right? Johnson relies on the audience's respect for Musk in order for this association to benefit his argument. But Elon Musk is somewhat of a controversial figure. As of late, people are starting to find some of his views, such as his stance on pronouns, offensive. The idea of respecting pronouns is a key pillar of progressivism, so bringing in Musk may have hurt Johnson's claim more than it helped it. Johnson recovers the respect of his audience, somewhat, by bringing up how Martin Luther King, Jr., an obviously highly respected figure, supported the idea of a universal basic income in an attempt to fight poverty (2). In mentioning Martin Luther King, Jr. in this way, Johnson connects a figure known to the public for overwhelmingly positive, revolutionary change as a supporter of a UBI. As previously stated, a huge factor in swaying this particular audience is making them feel as though they are pioneers in an exciting, beneficial new endeavor. Therefore, Johnson's allusion to Martin Luther King Jr. and his stance on a UBI is highly effective at convincing his audience. In order to show that universal basic income is not a new concept, Johnson brings up the fact that "a basic income for poor families almost became law under President Nixon" in 1971 (2). Key word: "almost." He fails to elaborate on this any further, which leaves several important questions—such as the potential governmental and economic benefits of a universal basic income—unanswered, undermining his argument, especially in the eyes of progressives who are known to want broad, wide scale change. All in all, however, Johnson uses ethos in an effective manner in convincing his audience to trust his opinion.

Johnson's article, "The Case for a Universal Basic Income," presents an argument that is on the whole cohesive by appealing to his audience's strongest emotions. He himself is also a very credible source, which helps his argument significantly. The only potential flaw is that in his use of appeals in his argument, he is relying heavily on his audience being able to interpret various pieces of evidence, which can be difficult to do objectively with a controversial topic such as this one. Overall, his claim that a universal basic income will stabilize and improve conditions for Americans nationally is fairly well supported and can ultimately shift the opinions of his audience.

### Work Cited

Johnson, Sebastian. "The Case for a Universal Basic Income." *LA Times,* June 29, 2017, 1-4, https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-johnson-universal-basic-income-20170629-story.html.

## Notes

1. The Writing Icon was designed by Luis Prado, Wikimedia Commons, https://thenounproject.com/search/?q=writing&i=397851.
2. Deborah Murray created the 3-Ex Guide.
3. Sommers, Nancy. "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers." College Composition and

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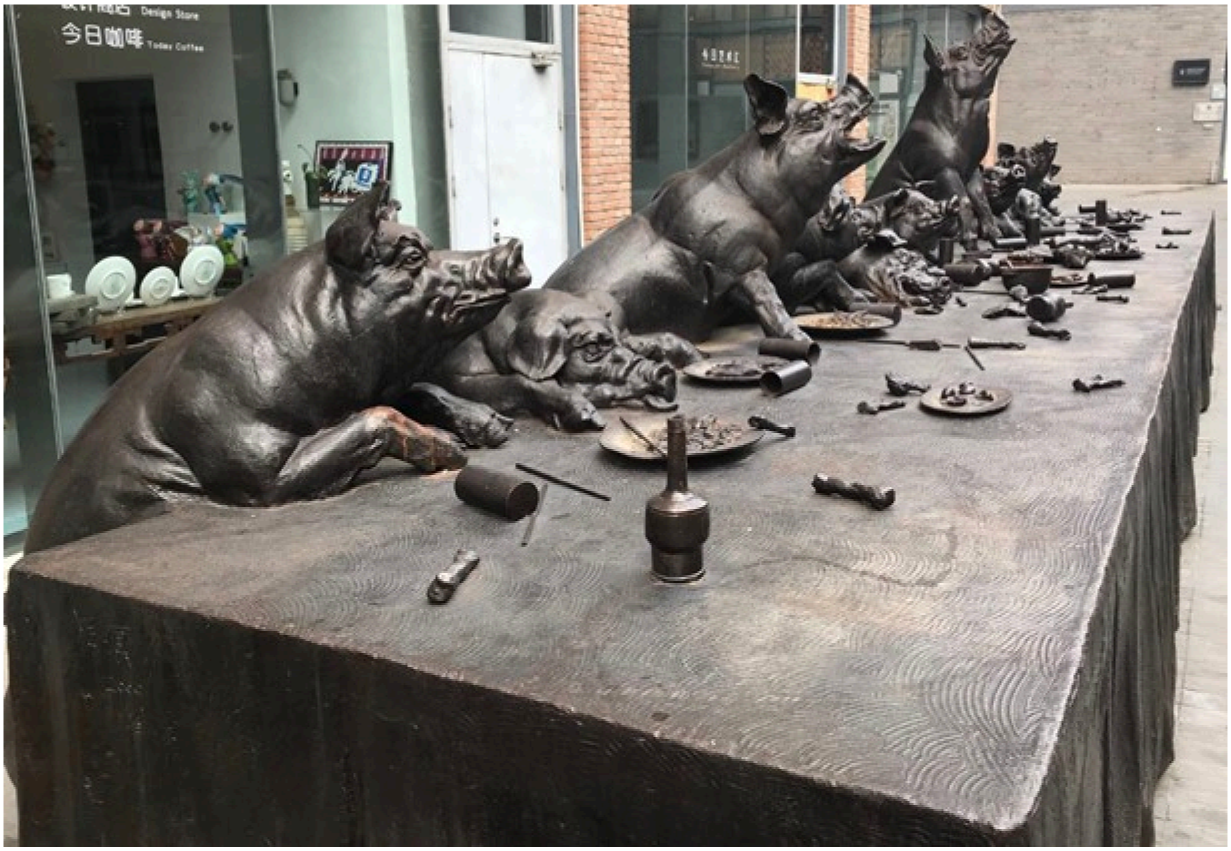
# 2.

# RESPONDING TO ARGUMENTS




For the previous assignment, you analyzed the rhetorical strategies employed by a writer in an argument. This writer presented a perspective on a topic that many other writers have also written about. All arguments exist within broader conversations, with writers presenting their claims, reasons, and evidence in response to ideas and concepts from others. For this next assignment, you will participate in the conversation by responding to the *content* of the argument you analyzed in Chapter 1; you will present your own argument, responding directly to the ideas presented in the original text and moving the conversation forward.

To effectively respond to the argument, you will need to move beyond explaining *how* the argument works (which you did in Chapter 1) to engaging with *what* the writer says. Your essay should apply a response strategy that presents your views in relationship to the original article; you can agree, disagree, or agree and disagree simultaneously with its claim, reasons, and/or support. ***Additionally, in order to effectively respond, you will be required to incorporate two credible outside sources into your response.***

When entering the conversation, you'll need to be mindful of your audience. For the first assignment, you presented information without much concern for your own ethos because you were writing to a supportive audience. For this assignment, however, you will write to a neutral or undecided audience, which will require you to present yourself as fair and knowledgeable on multiple sides of the issue. Therefore, you will write a *multisided argument*, which requires your own argumentative claim, an awareness of alternative or opposing views, and fair and respectful responses to those views.

## Response Strategies

If you agree with the original article, you're in a position where you'll need to move the conversation forward. Your response needs to distinguish itself from the original, providing your neutral audience a reason to read your paper as opposed to simply reading the original article. You might think of this as a "yes, and" response; your essay should build on the original argument, expanding or shifting the focus from the claim of the original to your own argumentative perspective. You might provide new kinds of evidence that the original author overlooked, provide a different perspective that develops an affirmative stance on the topic, or develop connections that the original writer did not.

If you disagree with the original article, you will need to identify exactly what you disagree with and why that disagreement is significant to the larger conversation. Your response needs to present your views in a manner that is appealing to your undecided/neutral audience. Therefore, you'll need to be respectful to the original writer and his/her ideas as you articulate why those ideas are problematic and why your perspective should be considered instead. Remember that you will focus on why your own perspective is different than the original author's, supporting your own counter-argument with clear and persuasive evidence.

Alternatively, you may agree with some parts of the original article yet disagree with others. In this case, your response needs to present both perspectives, articulating the relationship between the ideas with which you agree and disagree. In effect, this perspective automatically creates a multisided argument, allowing your audience to see your fairness and knowledge on different sides of the issue. Again, keep in mind that you are forwarding your own ideas about the *topic* itself, thereby entering the larger conversation around the issue.

## Handling Alternative/Opposing Views

Whichever response strategy you employ, your paper will need to take into account views that oppose your own or are an alternative perspective on the issue. Handling alternative/opposing views demonstrates your fairness and knowledge to your neutral audience. You may provide brief summaries of views held by others in the larger conversation and/or you may quote or paraphrase views directly from the original article. Once you have fairly presented alternative/opposing views, you will need to respond to those views. You can refute central claims, rebut the evidentiary support, or concede to a strong idea. If you do concede, you may want to provide exceptions to your concession or emphasize other aspects of your own argument that outweigh the points that you have conceded.

As you develop your Response Essay into a 1300-2000 word (the equivalent of 4-6 typed, double-spaced pages, with standard 1-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman or Calibri font) document, keep in mind these standard essay conventions:

- provide a brief background about the conversation and the original article's ideas.
- address a neutral or undecided audience in a fair and respectful manner.
- present a focused claim with reasons that respond directly to the ideas in the original argument.
- develop your claim and reasons by presenting and responding to ideas from the original argument.
- develop your argument by presenting alternative/opposing views and handling those views in an effective manner.

## Objectives

By the end of this Unit, your Response Essay will meet the following objectives:

- argue a claim supported by reasons that a neutral audience will find persuasive
- present a multisided argument and apply rebuttal strategies
- identify weaknesses in an argument's reasons, warrants, and evidence
- consider tone when responding to an argumentative text.

Beware of these common weak areas in Response Essays:

- The writer creates another rhetorical analysis rather than engaging the issue and creating her own argument.
- The writer does not consider his own ethos and uses offensive tone, language, or descriptions of the opposition.
- The writer shares from only one perspective without considering opposing/alternative views.
- The writer does not provide sufficient evidence to support her own claims.

## Invention Activity: Analysis versus Response

In this activity, read the following paragraph from David Langley's "'Half-Criminals' or Urban Athletes?" (pp. 106-107 in *Writing Arguments, 6th ed.*), which argues the claim: "cities need to change their unfair treatment of skateboarders." Then, look at the differences between analyzing this paragraph, which is what you did in Unit 1, and responding to it, which is what you will do for Unit 2. Ask yourself these questions when looking at the analysis and the response:

- What are the main differences when writing a rhetorical analysis as opposed to writing a response?
- In what ways does the role of the writer differ when analyzing as opposed to responding?
- How can writers use a rhetorical analysis to help them generate ideas for the response?

> Possibly because to the average eye most skateboarders look like misfits or delinquents, adults think of us as criminal types and associate our skateboards with antisocial behavior. But this view is unfair. City dwellers should recognize that skateboards are a natural reaction to the urban environment. If people are surrounded by cement, they are going to figure out a way to ride it. People's different environments have always produced transportation and sports to suit the conditions: bikes, cars, skis, ice skates, boats, canoes, surfboards. If we live on snow, we are going to develop skis or snowshoes to move around. If we live in an environment that has flat panels of cement for ground with lots of curbs and stairs, we are going to invent an ingeniously designed flat board with wheels. Skateboards are as natural to cement as surfboards are to water or skis to snow. Moreover, the resulting sport is as healthful, graceful, and athletic. A fair assessment of skateboarders should respect our elegant, nonpolluting means of transportation and sport, and not consider us hoodlums.

# Rhetorical Analysis Ideas

## *Rhetorical Purpose*

Langley's purpose is to change his audience's ways of defining and viewing skateboarders.

## *Rhetorical Audience*

Langley appears to address an audience of middle-class "adults" and "city dwellers"; these are the people who appear to be most concerned about skateboarders in city areas.

## *Logos*

Langley supports his reason that skateboarders are not "antisocial misfits" by showing how natural skateboarding is; the skateboard fits in naturally with the urban landscape of concrete.

Langley compares the skateboard to other modes of transportation ("bikes, cars, skis, ice skates," etc.) that the audience will not object to.

Langley hopes that his audience will accept his warrant that if people are doing something that is natural (skateboarding), then they should not be seen as "misfits."

Langley redefines skateboarding with qualities that the audience will not object to ("healthful, graceful, athletic" and "elegant, nonpolluting")

## *Ethos*

Langley tries to find common ground by making comparisons with different modes of transportation.

Langley tries to connect to the audience's values, especially by emphasizing that skateboarding is "nonpolluting."

Langley is writing from an insider's standpoint—he is a skateboarder himself—but he himself does not appear to be an "antisocial misfit."

## *Pathos*

Langley uses strong words to show how skateboarders are demonized ("misfits," "delinquents," and "hoodlums").

## Response Ideas

### *Points of Agreement*

Skateboarders certainly are not "misfits" or "delinquents."

Skateboarding may not add to air pollution.

### *Points of Disagreement*

There are other forms of "pollution" involved, including noise pollution (the scraping of the skateboard wheels) and damage to city streets and parks.

Despite what Langley says, there is nothing "natural" about skateboarding; they do not fit into the environment as gracefully as snowshoes, skis, or bikes.

Skateboarders can be intimidating and dangerous for pedestrians; they are going too fast and are out of control.

Because of skateboarders, public areas of American cities become off limits to pedestrians.

### *Synthesis: Focusing my Response*

Langley is focused on how people view skateboarders and is bothered by their negative stereotypes. I don't think skateboarders are bad, but I still don't like people riding skateboards on the streets/sidewalks.

My concern is the fact that skateboards do not fit into public spaces in the city and do

not coexist with pedestrians, children, pets, etc.

### *Possible Response Strategies*

If I agree and disagree with the original article, I will develop my agreement with Langley's ideas about skateboarder stereotypes. I will also develop my disagreement with the impacts skateboarders make on the public environment and how they do not coexist well with other people in these public spaces.

If I disagree with the original article, I could concede the idea that skateboarders are not all "misfits" or "delinquents," while asserting that they are still problematic for other people in the public environment/spaces.

# Entering the Conversation

**"Reasoning is itself a communal process, not just because we reason together but because we reason in response to others' views."[1]**

Unlike in Chapter 1, in which the rhetorical situation of the evaluation asks writers to remain objective and analyze and evaluate an argument, this chapter encourages you to "enter the conversation"—that is, you will need to directly engage with the issue, take a stand on it, and address and cite writers, researchers, readers, and anyone else who has a stake in the issue.

The extended metaphor of the "conversation" comes from a well-known twentieth-century rhetorical and literary scholar, Kenneth Burke:

> Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress.[2]

As this metaphor suggests, you are going to be entering the conversation connected to the issue you are interested in. For example, how about the conversations swirling around single-use plastics (e.g., bottles, bags, and straws) and their impact on the oceans? Even if you only hope to focus on advocacy groups that are interested in this issue, you'll find that the conversation you are entering into will be very heated:

- Our Last Straw (https://www.ourlaststraw.org): A Washington D.C.-based group advocating for the removal of all single-use plastic straws from area restaurants, bars, hotels, and event spaces.
- The Earth Day Network (https://www.earthday.org): Similarly, this organization is spreading images and information about the amount of plastics in the environment.
- Competitive Enterprise Institute (https://cei.org): This organization counters the environmental impact of single-use plastics, as an argument on their website makes clear: "Counterpoint: Plastic Bans Won't Solve Ocean Plastic Problem."
- International Bottled Water Association (bottledwater.org): This organization, devoted to advancing the interests of the bottled water industry, affirms the industry's commitment to the environment and claims that "bottled water's environmental footprint is the lowest of *any* packaged beverage."

- Center for Disability Rights (http://cdrnys.org): This organization, an advocacy group for people with disabilities, is concerned that some able-bodied people are ignoring the necessity of straws for people with disabilities and chronic illnesses. For example, Erin Vallely in "Grasping at Straws: The Ableism of the Straw Ban," writes: "The latest push to ban single-use plastic straws is well-intentioned but does not take into consideration that such straws are a tool disabled people rely on, rather than a frivolous, planet-killing item that can easily be done away with without impacting consumers."

Regardless of what position you hold on single-use plastics, you'll want to become knowledgeable about the arguments that make up the several sides or perspectives of this issue. By conducting research, and understanding the logos of the various positions, you will be able to better position your own argument about single-use plastics, shape your audience's views, and respond to the other researchers, writers, or others who disagree with you.

## Multisided Arguments & Undecided Audiences

As the Audience Continuum Chart below indicates, the audience for the Response Argument is neutral: they are neither strong advocates of your position nor are they antagonistic to what you have to say. They may be newcomers to the issue, or they may have good reasons to be ambivalent: they can appreciate the benefits, arguments, and values of multiple sides of the argument.


When writing for these undecided audiences, you'll want to try multisided argument strategies, in which you demonstrate understanding of the different sides and positions that constitute the issue. Returning to the rhetorical appeals from Chapter 1, you can enhance your **ethos** by appearing fair, objective, and knowledgeable; your readers may feel uncomfortable if you are "preaching to the choir"—that is, you are addressing them with a one-sided argument as if they already agree with your position. Additionally, audiences might feel resistant if you attack positions that aren't your own.

For example, consider the proposal to tax snack foods with high sugar content. Imagine that you agree with this position because you have read research that shows how this type of tax helped reduce diabetes and obesity in the United Kingdom, Hungary, and Mexico. Yet, when writing for neutral audiences, you'll still want to be tuned into other participants in the "snack tax" issue, including

- the National Association of Convenience Stores (https://www.convenience.org/), which will be concerned about the effects of higher taxes on their consumers
- SNAC International (Snacking, Nutrition, and Convenience [https://www.snacintl.org/]), which will provide counterarguments about the importance of these food items in smaller retail stores
- major corporations that produce high-sugar foods

In addition to these perspectives, you'll want to consider the concerns of your neutral readers. What if they are made up by people who are consumers of sugary snacks? Or, if they hold negative assumptions of the "tax" label? Or if they see this as the government's attempt to regulate dietary choices and don't believe that's something the government should do?

See the following chart as a reminder for how to shape different arguments depending upon the level of accord or disagreement of your intended audience.

| Type of Argument | Type of Audience | Rhetorical Startegy |
|---|---|---|
| Monological (One-Sided) Argument | Supportive audience, who is already in agreement with your position. You are "preaching to the choir." | You can directly and explicitly announce your position, aware that your audience will already be in total agreement with you. You can choose evidence that is biased towards your readers' perspective. You do not have to carefully consider opposing or different views from your own. |
| Multisided Argument | Neutral or undecided audience. You are trying to get your readers "off the fence" and commit to your position. | You'll need to show your understanding of your own position as well as that of others who are making claims about the issue. Consider these other positions, either through summarizing, rebutting, and/or conceding points, and treat them respectfully. Include sources your audience will find reliable and fair. Provide evidence to counter alternative viewpoints and support your own. |
| Dialogical Argument | Skeptical or even resistant readers. You are attempting to find moments of common ground to open them up to the possibility of persuasion. | Though you have taken a stand on an issue, you are addressing an audience that you know disagrees with you; therefore, you are less likely to use direct approaches of persuasion. Instead, you might find yourself inviting your audience to the possibility of persuasion, perhaps by providing an intriguing story, asking questions, and trying to make yourself likeable and trustworthy for your readers. You may delay your claim as a way to keep your audience engaged in your points. You will need to choose your sources carefully, making sure that your resistant audience will find the sources credible and reliable. You might have to provide more research and reasons to support the underlying assumptions than you might in other forms of argument. Tone will be especially important in a dialogic argument. |

## Multisided Argument Strategies

When crafting a multisided argument, you are paying attention to those alternative perspectives that your neutral readers might hold—or the authors' arguments in the sources that you are using or responding to. Though you may be fearful that acknowledging these alternative views may hurt the chances of your own argument succeeding, remember that these strategies are also giving you the opportunity to identify weaknesses in your own argument and in those of the sources you are responding to. If you have a good grasp over the concerns that your readers will have, you can anticipate these concerns and then begin to plan for ways to rebut or concede to these concerns. It also shows readers/listeners that you have considered these viewpoints and are able to speak back to them. For example, if you are working on an argument attempting to get restaurant owners and customers to stop using single-use plastic straws, you'll need to work through the concerns expressed by such groups as the Center for Disability Rights (please see above) and address these issues in your response.

In this section, three multisided argument strategies will be explored:

- Summarizing
- Rebutting
- Conceding

## Summarizing

One initial step for responding to another writer's position is to summarize it — fairly and respectfully — for your own readers. Using Margaret Woodworth's "Rhetorical Précis" strategy,[3] you can summarize keeping these four parts in mind:

- **The main point that the author is arguing**; highlight the author's name and the title of the source, and then fit this statement into a sentence frame such as, "The writer argues that < >." Avoid using "about," which will allow you only to describe the general issue, not the specific argument that the writer is making.
- **Important sub-points and vital specifics**; list, in order of importance, the main reasons or sub-points that the author uses; only refer to specifics (statistics, examples, etc.) when they clarify the argument for your neutral readers.
- **The goals or main purpose of the author**; as you approach the end of your summary, consider a more general statement about what the author is attempting to do with their argument; what is their overall rhetorical purpose?
- **The intended audience of the source and the ways in which the author is interacting with those readers**; consider the intended readers for the argument and then think about tone and style: what is the relationship that the author is building with their readers? (Thinking back to the ethos and pathos appeals from the Introduction and Chapter 1 may be helpful for you here.)

Below is an example of these four parts of this summary strategy, which focuses on Alison Malmon's "Creating a Culture of Caring," a blog addressing college faculty and raising their awareness of mental health concerns in their students:

- **The main point that the author is arguing**: In "Creating a Culture of Caring" on the *ACUE Community* blog, Alison Malmon argues that professors and instructors are one of the most important intervention strategies for students struggling with depression.
- **Important sub-points and vital specifics**: Malmon summarizes the programs at four major universities that have been training faculty how to work with students who are experiencing serious mental-health issues.

- **The goals or main purpose of the author**: Malmon's main goal is to raise awareness about the role that professors can take in intervening with the mental- health concerns of college students.
- **The intended audience of the source and the ways in which the author is interacting with those readers**: Malmon addresses an audience of college professionals with honest and proactive strategies.

Put together, this is how this small summary (88 words) reads:

> In "Creating a Culture of Caring" on the *ACUE Community* blog, Alison Malmon argues that professors and instructors are one of the most important intervention strategies for students struggling with depression. Malmon summarizes the programs at four major universities that have been training faculty how to work with students who are experiencing serious mental-health issues. Her main goal is to raise awareness about the role that professors can take in intervening with the mental-health concerns of college students. She addresses an audience of college professionals with honest and proactive strategies.

After you have summarized the author's alternative position, you can then focus your readers on how your position differs: given your summary, what are the key ways in which you see the issue differently? As you'll see in the two following sections, you can counter the author's argument or position through rebuttal strategies and/or concession. For example, returning to Malmon's "Creating a Culture of Caring," perhaps you are arguing that a faculty member's main role is to be an educator and a subject matter expert, not a counselor. You could then find ways to counter Malmon's overall main claim, reasons, assumptions, and evidence. Or, you could concede to several of Malmon's points, accepting that student mental health is a rising concern on U.S. campuses; yet, then after this concession, you would shift your readers back to your own main concerns.

## Rebuttal Strategies: Rebutting Reasons, Assumptions, and Evidence

Thinking in terms of the Toulmin Model, you can rebut or criticize several aspects of alternative positions in order to enhance your credibility and make your position stronger:

| | |
|---|---|
| Reasons (the "because" statements that support and justify the main claim(s)) | What about the core features of the argument do you disagree with? Why should your neutral readers feel dissatisfied with or concerned about these supporting reasons? What reasons can you provide that your neutral readers will find more compelling? |
| Assumptions (the values or beliefs that the readers need to hold for the claim and reason to logically link together) | What are the assumptions from the alternative position that your neutral readers will struggle with? Clarify how the values and beliefs of your own position better accommodates the views of your readers. |
| Evidence (research, examples, and other types of information that support the claim and reasons or the assumptions) | What doubts should your neutral readers have about the use of research in the source you are rebutting?<br><br>• Bias & Fairness – is the use of research obviously ideologically slanted? Are the evidence and statistics being used unfairly?<br>• Currency – is the research too dated?<br>• Comprehensiveness – is the evidence based on examples or samples that are too small?<br>• Credibility – is the source author using evidence from sources who lack authority and credibility?<br>• Ethics – is the source author using evidence in ways that are attempting to mislead readers? |

For example, if you were to rebut Michael Wilbon's 2011 editorial, "College Athletes Deserve to be Paid,"[4] you might start with one of his reasons: College football and basketball players at revenue-producing schools deserve to get paid because of the fact that they are the key elements in the money that is being made by the NCAA and the universities. Wilbon writes, "How could anybody stand on principal and argue against paying the people who make the events possible in the first place?"

Yet, you could rebut this reason by raising a concern: as Wilbon emphasizes revenue-generating schools, what happens to all of those men's football and basketball programs across the country that do not make any money? Will what Wilborn proposes end up creating even more of an unequal playing field among college teams and conferences and, in the end, a less attractive — and less lucrative – sport?

Wilbon's editorial is largely based on the assumptions of capitalism: he explicitly says that he is not writing about fairness but about how capitalism works: "That's right, football and men's basketball players get paid; lacrosse, field hockey, softball, baseball, soccer players get nothing. You know what that's called? Capitalism." Here, you could focus on a critique of capitalism – it may work well in the professional sports world, but what role should it play in the university? Universities are, for the most part, institutions that are based on different economic values. Capitalism plays less of a role in the classroom, where popularity and consumption may be downplayed in favor of rigor, integrity, and excellence. Additionally, you may want to point out that Wilbon's assumptions may have unintended consequences, such as resentment against elite athletes at a university, more of an imbalance between male and female athletics, and less of a feeling of community among all student athletes.

Two more obvious examples of rebuttal appear in Kitty Richards and Joseph E. Stiglitz's *New York Times* editorial, "Doesn't Feel Like a Recession? You Should Be Paying More in Taxes," published on September 3, 2020. This editorial is directed toward the affluent, highly educated, and liberal readers of the New York Times, and it reminds these readers that they probably have not suffered financially from the recession caused by the coronavirus epidemic; therefore, they should be willing to pay higher taxes to help support those who have suffered

In both cases, you will see what Richards and Stiglitz do: They start off each paragraph voicing a concern that readers or others invested in this issue might have with this increase in taxes. Then, they rebut these perspectives either with statistics (Rebuttal #1) or with explanation (Rebuttal #2).

**Rebuttal #1:**

Some worry that state residents and businesses can't afford a tax increase during the pandemic, but the truth is that many can, and it's easy to target them through progressive taxation. Tens of millions of workers have lost their jobs since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, but almost half of Americans report that their household has not lost any employment income at all, according to Census Bureau data. That figure jumps to two-thirds for households bringing home more than $200,000 per year.

**Rebuttal #2:**

Some will argue that states can't raise taxes by themselves because of interstate competition, but economic evidence shows that even in boom times progressive state tax increases don't harm state economies or lead rich people to flee. Now, with education and public health on the chopping block without higher taxes, moving to a low-tax, low-services state is likely to be still less appealing, even for the wealthy: States that institute ruthless cutbacks will prove to be far less attractive places to live.

## Concessions

Another strategy that you have in your "multisided argument toolbox" is the concession. In this case, you acknowledge the strength of an alternative argument, one that you don't think you can ethically and adequately rebut. Instead of rebutting it, therefore, you concede the point and then quickly shift your readers back to the overall strengths of your argument and to the ways in which your reasons benefit them. In other words, despite the strength of this one part of the alternative viewpoint, you argue that your own view is still stronger for the reasons you explain to your readers.

Thinking back to the argument that single-use plastic straws should be banned, you may need to acknowledge that these straws will no longer be available to those with disabilities. That being said, you would want to shift your readers back to your own argument focused on the environment and single-use plastics yet in ways that are sensitive to your readers' values and needs: you could discuss how the environmental impact of single-use plastics will also have detrimental effects on people with disabilities.

When planning for this concession strategy, you might want to imagine that you are in a dialogue with readers who are questioning you. For example, if we were to consider the environmental issue of carbon tax, here's what this imagined dialogue might look like:

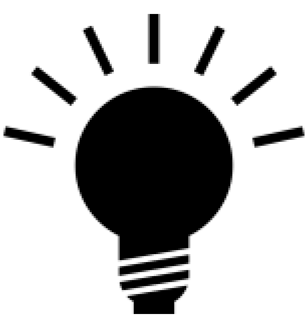
Writer's Claim: The United States and other developed economies need to take the lead and impose a significant carbon tax on industries that still rely on fossil fuels.

Neutral Reader's Response: But, won't that increase the costs for driving and transporting goods across the United States?

Writer's Concession: Yes, carbon taxes will be eventually felt by consumers. Yet, this is a necessary part of our efforts to make consumers less reliant on fossil fuels. We want to encourage taxpayers to consider other alternatives.

# Activity: Student Examples

Examine the Student Examples at the end of this chapter. In the margins, identify the different multisided argument strategies that the students are using and how they function within the larger argument.



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Here is how Peter Elbow, in his "The Believing Game—Methodological Believing,"[5] has described these two positions:

> **The believing game** is the disciplined practice of trying to be as welcoming or accepting as possible to every idea we encounter: not just listening to views different from our own and holding back from arguing with them; not just trying to restate them without bias; but actually trying to believe them. We are using believing as a tool to scrutinize and test. But instead of

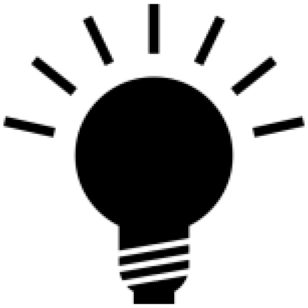
scrutinizing fashionable or widely accepted ideas for hidden flaws, the believing game asks us to scrutinize unfashionable or even repellent ideas for hidden virtues. Often we cannot see what's good in someone else's idea (or in our own!) till we work at believing it. When an idea goes against current assumptions and beliefs—or if it seems alien, dangerous, or poorly formulated—we often cannot see any merit in it.

**The doubting game** represents the kind of thinking most widely honored and taught in our culture. It's sometimes called "critical thinking." It's the disciplined practice of trying to be as skeptical and analytic as possible with every idea we encounter. By trying hard to doubt ideas, we can discover hidden contradictions, bad reasoning, or other weaknesses in them—especially in the case of ideas that seem true or attractive. We are using doubting as a tool in order to scrutinize and test.

A. Individual Work: Play the "Believing and Doubting Game" for the text you analyzed in Chapter 1. Then, create either an idea map or written paragraphs in response.

B. Small Group Work (as directed by your instructor):

1. Share your "Believing and Doubting" idea maps/paragraphs.
2. As a group, identify ideas that group members see in a "believing" manner: What points showed up in the believing game for more than one group member? What points were only mentioned once? Even if you didn't write about an idea yourself, can you see it in a "believing" manner?
3. As a group, identify ideas that group members see in a "doubting" manner: What points showed up in the doubting game for more than one group member? What points were only mentioned once? Even if you didn't write about an idea yourself, can you see it in a "doubting" manner?
4. What ideas did group members see differently? (Perhaps someone can see it in a "believing" manner while someone else sees it in a "doubting" manner.) Explore these different perspectives. Politely challenge or complicate each others' ideas, remembering that practicing a respectful tone is a crucial aspect of this assignment.
5. How can these believing and doubting perspectives lead to framing a reasonable response? With which ideas do you agree? Disagree? What ideas can you concede?Which ideas can you rebut? Which ideas can you rebut?



## Invention Activity: Developing Your Response Ideas

Now that you have the “big picture” of your topic in mind, you can begin to situate yourself as a writer in the argument. Choose a paragraph from the original text that you analyzed in Unit 1 and fill in the chart below with your own ideas about the *content* of that paragraph. If you need a model, see “Analysis Versus Response” in the preceding pages. You may find it useful to repeat this activity for each body paragraph of the original article.

- Points of Agreement
- Points of Disagreement
- Synthesis: Focusing my Response
- Possible Response Strategies

## Drafting Activity: Summarizing and Handling Opposing/ Alternative Views

In a brief paragraph, fairly and accurately summarize one of the opposing/alternative views that you have identified. Remember to use a professional tone and to not misrepresent this perspective.

In another brief paragraph, draft a response to the above viewpoint. Remember that you'll need to rebut the viewpoint without offending someone who holds that view. Make sure to use a professional and appropriate tone and craft your response for an undecided reader.

## Drafting Activity: Developing Your Logos

Answer the questions below to develop your own response claim, reasons, and warrants.

**What is your main claim in response to the original argument within the text?** Consider your *Synthesis* and *Response Strategies* from the "Developing Your Response Ideas" Activity. How are your ideas different from the original argument? What perspective differentiates you within the larger conversation? Articulate your position in 1–3 sentences to draft a working thesis.

**What key reasons support your main claim?** What key responses to the original argument will the audience need to understand in order to see your point of view? What other ideas would help your audience see the issue from your perspective? What assumptions/warrants will these reasons rely upon? Will you need to develop support for those assumptions/warrants?

**What alternative/opposing views should you consider?** What points would your audience raise in response to your reasons? What other perspectives have you considered and refuted when developing your own points? How might the writer of the original article respond to your ideas?

## Research Information: Incorporating Sources—The Source Sandwich

Evidence is an important component of your argument's logos, ethos, and pathos. Evidence is necessary to support your reasoning, demonstrate your awareness of others' ideas, and connect your audience's values to your perspective. Therefore, you need to appropriately incorporate sources in a rhetorically effective manner by attributing authorship of ideas, quoting accurately, and connecting the source content to your own points. (Remember, too, that you're required to include at least two credible outside sources for your response.) The concept of the "Source Sandwich" is one strategy to help you incorporate sources. The "Source Sandwich" metaphor is composed of three parts: the top slice (of bread), the filling of the sandwich, and the bottom slice.

### The Top Slice:

The first time you use a source, you should introduce it to your reader with an introductory lead- in statement. This statement should present the author's full name, their credentials, and the full title of the source.

> *Example:*
>
> **In the textbook *Writing Arguments*, authors and composition and rhetoric scholars John Ramage, John Bean, and June Johnson state:** "Because undecided audiences are like jurors weighing all sides of an issue, they distrust one-sided arguments that caricature other views. Generally the best strategy for appealing to undecided audiences is the classical argument" (102).
>
> Once a source has been introduced, the next time you use it, you do not need a full introduction, but you still need to make clear that the information is coming from that outside source. To do this, you can use an attributive tag. Keep in mind, too, that you should *never* refer to an author solely by first name. The first time you introduce a source, use the author's full name; after that, use the author's last name.

## Some Templates for Attributive Tags

- X states, "_________________ ."
- According to X, "______________ ."
- X writes, "____________________ ."
- In her editorial, ______________________ , X maintains that
- X argues that ____________ .
- In X's view, "_________ ."

## Sandwich Filling:

Once you have introduced and/or made clear the source of information, you can present the information as a paraphrase, a summary, or a direct quote. A direct quotation needs to be exactly word-for-word from the source; you must also use quotation marks around the source text, with the last quotation mark before the parenthetical citation. Put the sentence punctuation after the parenthetical citation. (Note: the punctuation and formatting for block quotes is slightly different).

> *Example:*
>
> In the textbook *Writing Arguments*, authors John Ramage, John Bean, and June Johnson state: "Because undecided audiences are like jurors weighing all sides of an issue, they distrust one-sided arguments that caricature other views. Generally the best strategy for appealing to undecided audiences is the classical argument" (102).

## The Bottom Slice:

To completely incorporate the idea from the source, you need to include an explanation of what the quote means, as well as how the source information relates to your own ideas and what implications it has for your argument. These explanations are essential to fully develop your points.

## Templates for Explaining Quotations

- Basically, X is warning that the proposed solution will only make the problem worse.
- In other words, X believes _______________ .
- In making this comment, X urges us to _______________ .
- X is corroborating the age-old adage that ________________ .
- X's point is that ________________ .
- The essence of X's argument is that _________________ .

- Essentially, X is saying that ______________________ .
- This illustrates my point that _____________________ .
- The evidence that X provides here contradicts Y's claim that ____________________.

# Drafting: Organizing Your Response

Your response includes three sections: the introduction, body, and conclusion. Each of these sections can, and likely should, be made up of many different paragraphs. The outline below lists several different functions each section might perform. Remember, the outline below simply provides the larger functions of different sections within a response; it is not a hard-and-fast template for how to write an effective response essay. We encourage you to continue to experiment with different organizational approaches as you build your argument.

## Introduction (in one or more paragraphs)

- Provide relevant background information
- Interest and engage your readers in the issue (e.g., explain why the issue is controversial, why it might impact them, etc.)
- Inform your readers whom you are responding to; summarize this previous position fairly, accurately, and respectfully
- Tell your readers your explicit purpose and main claim and reasons
- Provide a "blueprint" statement for what your readers should expect

## Body

Provide your position

- Organize according to your main reasons on the issue
- Provide and explain evidence
- Make connections to your readers
- Enhance your ethos

Summarize alternative or opposing views

- Anticipate objections from your readers or from others who have a stake in the issue
- Fairly summarize views that are different from yours

Rebut or concede to these alternative or opposing views

- Question or challenge the alternative reasons, use of evidence, or assumptions
- Question the validity and credibility of the opposing research, when appropriate
- Concede to opposing points that are strong and reasonable, if necessary

### Conclusion

- Summarize your overall main argument
- Enhance your own credibility
- Leave your audience with a strong impression of yourself as a writer
- Encourage your readers to act

## Revision Activity: Topic Sentences

When revising an early or discovery draft, one of the quickest strategies to enhance your draft is to focus on your topic sentences—typically, these will be the first sentences of body paragraphs.

You can use topic sentences

- To remind your readers what your overall main claim is
- To focus your readers on your reason or sub-point
- To state the purpose of the paragraph

Take a look at this paragraph, which is from a response argument to Marty Nemko's 2014 "Legalize Pot? You Must Be High."

> In Nemko's article, he makes a point about marijuana use and the workplace. According to Nemko, "Legalize pot and you have a workforce that is worth not more, but less— more likely to suffer from the poor memory, reduced motivation and emotional problems cited above." I disagree with this completely. If marijuana is legalized more, it will be important for companies to treat marijuana use similar to how it treats alcohol. You're not allowed to drink on the job and get away with it, right? Companies will need to expand their current policies. Nemko also brings up a story about workers who "pull such pranks as deliberately dropping a bolt into a car's axle so that, when driven, the car

would rattle." I disagree with this. There are going to be bored workers who are also trying to entertain themselves by doing stupid stuff like this. Marijuana doesn't have to be involved.

Offer this writer some revision advice:

- What main response points are they trying to make in this paragraph.
- What is their main reason to support their overall claim?
- How could they revise their topic sentence to focus their readers on this claim and reason?

Then, consider your own draft and revise several of the topic sentences in order to better reflect the goals above.

## Response Workshop: Self-Evaluation Revision Rubric

Carefully reread your response draft and then, considering the questions in the rubric below, evaluate yourself. When you are finished, write up a brief revision plan keeping the rubric criteria and questions in mind.

| | Excellent | Average | Developing |
|---|---|---|---|
| Focus/Purpose | | | |
| In your response, do you identify the original article and its author? | | | |
| Do you focus on a clear main claim? | | | |
| Do you present a multisided argument? | | | |
| Development | | | |
| What are your reasons for supporting the main claim? What types of evidence do you use?<br>What alternative/opposing views do you consider? | | | |
| Do you offer enough of your own explanation and interpretation of your sources? | | | |
| Organization | | | |
| Do you present your position in relationship to the original argument and/or the larger conversation in an appropriate place given your audience and purpose? | | | |
| Do you use easy-to-follow transitions that guide your readers? | | | |
| Does each paragraph present a focused point? | | | |
| Are your reasons presented in a logical manner? | | | |
| Are shifts within paragraphs made using internal transitions? | | | |
| Are your sources (summaries, paraphrases, and direct quotes) integrated effectively? | | | |
| Tone/Style | | | |
| Is your tone appropriate for a neutral/undecided audience? | | | |
| Are opposing views presented and rebutted respectfully? | | | |

## Response Essay Workshop: Peer Scavenger Hunt

Carefully read your partner's draft and then, either on a hard copy or an electronic version of the draft, mark it up with these following questions in mind:

1. Underline the writer's main claim in the paper. (Remember, the main claim might not be at the end of the first paragraph.)
2. Find the response strategy your partner is using and mark it: is your partner agreeing, disagreeing, or agreeing and disagreeing simultaneously?
3. Find and number every reason that supports the main claim.

4. For each numbered reason, put brackets around your partner's use of evidence to support those reasons. (You can highlight if you are working on an electronic draft.)
5. Find a moment where your partner uses alternative or opposing views effectively and mark this spot in the draft.
6. For this moment of alternative or opposing views, indicate how your partner responds to these views (rebut, refute, concede)?
7. Find an especially good moment of tone. Then, find an example of tone that is inappropriate for a neutral/undecided audience. Where might the tone become combative, sarcastic, dismissive, aggressive, offensive, or insensitive?
8. Find a moment where your partner effectively integrates a secondary source and uses, possibly, the "quote sandwich." Find a moment where your partner could enhance their integration of secondary sources.
9. Write down two overall strengths that you see in your partner's draft.
10. Write down one overall revision suggestion.

## Revision Activity: Direct Quote Workshop

Direct quotations are most effective in these four circumstances:

1. When writers need testimony from an authority
2. When you want to reproduce a source's voice, particularly if the language is striking or memorable
3. When you intend to analyze or critique the quotation
4. When the flavor and language of testimonial evidence is important

Using this information, follow the workshop steps below to check your own use of direct quotes:

1. Label each quotation with corresponding number (1-4) from the circumstances listed above. a. If the quotation use does not match one of these 4 points, ask yourself why the quotation is necessary. b. If your paragraphs do not contain any quotations, try to identify an appropriate place where one might be useful in developing the point, again, paying attention to the numbered reasons above. c. Reflect on the numbers you listed: are you using quotations largely in the same ways throughout your essay? Do you need to vary how you use quotations?
2. At the end of each paragraph, and in reflection of your peers' feedback from workshop, consider these

final questions:

- Where might more evidence be necessary to persuasively make your point?
- How might you use quotes more effectively?
- Where should you explain evidence more thoroughly or convincingly?
- How can you use attributive tags more rhetorically?


## Student Examples

*Carter Jones wrote this response in Molly Burt's ENGL 200 class.*

### Counterargument to Grade Inflation

Society has altered education in many ways over time, including technology, curriculum, and funding. These adjustments and advances have had significant impacts on how education affects students, their subsequent careers, and society at large. However, the way in which we evaluate students, grading, has not altered much since its foundation. The letter grades that students received in 1918 are the same types of grades that students receive in 2018—to an extent. Many researchers claim that grades have been changing in the form of grade inflation—an increase in average grade point average of students over time without an increase in actual student achievement. Opponents of grade inflation such as George C. Leef (the director of research at the John W. Pope Center for Higher Education Policy) contend that the phenomenon hurts students, professors, and the entire education system. However, there is clear indication that grade inflation is not harmful to our education system because its statistics are substantially flawed, its prevalence and impacts are limited, and the grading system itself is more detrimental to students.

In his article "Grade Inflation Eats Away at the Meaning of College," Leef contends that grade inflation harms students by devaluing grades overall and allowing them to believe that they are more competent than in reality. Primarily, grade inflation tends to occur because of administrative pressures on faculty. Leef claims that "low grades can delay student graduation" thus "undermining state funding and faculty salaries" at universities (par. 8). Therefore, professors must allow for students to graduate by enhancing their scores. Additionally, Leef argues that students do not deserve the grades they are receiving because their study time has decreased. Students spent "only about two thirds as much time [in 2010] as they did some fifty years ago," which is "hardly consistent with the notion that students today are really earning all those A grades" (par. 20). Because students do not utilize the equivalent amount of time on studying for exams, they are not be achieving as much as past generations. As a result, higher grade point averages for students are undeserved, according to Leef. He makes meritorious points against grade inflation, and it is certainly understandable why he and other educational researchers are concerned by supposed increases in grade inflation. However, there are multiple flaws with his argument, including statistical discrepancies.

Leef and other researchers have contended that grade inflation is an issue, yet their statistical methods may be flawed. According to Evangeleen Pattison, a research fellow at the National Science Foundation and a graduate student in the department of sociology at the University of Texas, multiple studies have highlighted how grade inflation is a nonissue (e.g., Kohn). Unlike sources supporting grade inflation, these emphasize "the necessity of using representative, transcript-based data" (Pattison et al. 2013). Likewise, per Nathan R. Kuncel, an assistant Professor of Industrial and Organizational Psychology at the University of Illinois, student-reported results distort the data "with nearly a third of college students reporting inflated estimates of their grades" (Kuncel et al. 2005). Utilizing self-reported data harbors numerous possibilities for response bias. Primarily, some students might feel embarrassed about sharing inadequate grades with others. As a result, studies contending that grade inflation is an ever-increasing problem overstate the extent of the inflation, meaning that its potential harms are drastically limited. Additionally, there are other statistical limitations that hamper these studies' conclusions. “Low response rates or biased samples” of students can contribute to “compressed distributions of grades or lead to inflated estimates of GPA” (Pattison et al.). Low response rates lead to a bias in the results because only certain types of students, such as highly successful ones that might want their grades to be known, would answer the survey. The issue of grade inflation has its potential impacts limited by significant statistical errors. In conjunction with data-collection methods, grade inflation’s overall prevalence is actually heavily limited.

Grade inflation is not as pervasive as Leef and others arguing against it claim. In fact, the opposite phenomenon could be occurring. Pattison et al. analyzed whether average education scores have increased and what economic outcomes correlated. While average high school GPA has increased from 1972 to 1992, “the mean GPA among students who attend a 4-year college dropped gradually” as well as “students who attend a selective 4-year college” (Pattison et al.). This significant decline contradicts findings that grades have been increasing for decades on end for every level of education. Additionally, the economics results from grades have not shifted at 4-year colleges. Grades there are “consistently associated with occupational prestige” and the small decrease in earnings is not “statistically significant evidence of attenuation in [their] signaling power” (Pattison et al.). Thus, the impact of mean grade adjustments has not had a substantial impact on students’ economic outcomes. Grade inflation is clearly not prevalent as Leef and others say; moreover, even if it were, it would not have an impact on student occupation. Finally, the potential impacts of grade inflation do not matter when compared to the value of grades in general.

Grading used as a tool for evaluation is highly flawed and leads to many detrimental effects that outweigh those of grade inflation. While high grades still correlate with occupational attainment, they are not the direct cause. Mark Oppenheimer contends that “GPA was seventh out of eight factors employers considered in hiring” because there is “‘a clamor’ from employers ‘for something more meaningful’ than the traditional transcript” (Oppenheimer). While Leef asserts that employers disregard grades because of grade inflation, it is clear that grades themselves are to blame. Employers ignore high GPAs because students cannot be distinguished primarily by their objective performance. Therefore, as Alfie Kohn (American author and lecturer in education) writes in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, we must challenge the view that grades are the most correct and ethical method to evaluate academic achievement. The idea that there is an objective way of analyzing student success “reflects a simplistic and outdated view of knowledge and of learning” that restricts our perspective to one of “inputs and outputs, incentives, resource distribution, and compensation” (Kohn). Researchers such as Leef who argue against grade inflation have a narrow, pre-disposed belief that grades are ultimately the most effective tool for assessing student accomplishment. To fully understand the significance of student achievement and how to evaluate it, our minds must transcend the tunnel vision that grade inflation discussions create. Most importantly, it is not the professors' primary job to sort out students for the workforce. Instead of "[rating] students like blenders for the convenience of corporations" educators should be offering "feedback that will help students learn more skillfully and enthusiastically" (Kohn). In essence, professors should not be primarily evaluating students on the basis of grades nor test scores; students should be subjected to qualitative feedback that opens their minds to specific strengths and weaknesses. Scores say nothing about the quality of a student's learning or effort. A student could spend arduous hours each day studying hard for a concept they want to master. Another student may spend all night partying with his friends and then cramming the studying in at the last minute. While both might receive the same exam score, which one is the better student, the better learner? Grades do not reflect what each student deserves, and they never will, because some students can give their best effort towards a class while others disregard any struggle while still receiving the same unwarranted grade. Thus, the grading system exponentially increases student inequality and destroys real effort in learning, undermining the importance of grade inflation.

While grade inflation has been a widespread topic of discussion among educational researchers, there are statistical flaws in studies arguing against it, its effects and extent among university institutions are significantly limited, and the grading system itself has much more detrimental impacts. In order to alter education for the better, we must not necessarily analyze what grades students are getting on average, but why they are getting grades at all, and how we should better evaluate their successes and failures.

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*Mary Winzer wrote this response in Maia Carlson's ENGL 200 class.*

## Response to "The Myth of Police Reform"

Michael Brown. Walter Scott. Alton Sterling. Tony Robinson. Eric Garner. Anthony Hill. How many of these names spark some recognition? Or, at this point, do the victims of police brutality all blur together, lost in an ongoing stream of case after case? There is no question that, in recent years, police conduct and credibility has become a controversial theme in most news outlets and across social media platforms. The typical result of outrage is to point fingers at the police directly involved in such incidents, but while officers using unnecessary amounts of force should see consequences, there are deeper roots to this issue that run beneath the surface. In Ta-Nehisi Coates' article, "The Myth of Police Reform," published in *The Atlantic* on April 15, 2015, Coates claims that the real issue is that people believe police are always well-equipped when in fact their skillset only effectively facilitates the use of force, yet we still send them in to de-escalate problems they may not be trained to understand. In response, I agree with Coates' claim that police should not be deployed to solve every situation and that we, as a society, place too much overall trust in our criminal justice system, but I disagree with Coates' points that body cameras and direct officer accountability are not steps in the right direction.

Coates' primary overarching claim in his article is that police officers are not equipped to appropriately handle every situation they are sent to fix because they are not trained in all the intricacies of social work required to effectively de-escalate issues such as homelessness, drug abuse, mental illness, etc.—a point in which I wholeheartedly agree. Before I wrote my full support into this claim, though, I felt obligated to discuss it with someone in my life who could offer insight into the training practices of police departments. My father, Ken Winzer, who was a police officer for the Kansas City, Kansas Police Department for 27 years, explained his experiences to me in a personal phone interview. An important thing to note is that police departments across the country vary greatly, but Winzer insisted that extended training was becoming "the trendy thing right now in law enforcement"—that is, many departments were suddenly beginning to employ it before he retired about three years ago. He cited something called the Critical Incident Training (CIT) Program that was put in place to better help officers understand issues such as homelessness, drug addiction, and mental illness, but he also mentioned that while this was an effective program, he did not believe, from a police officer's standpoint, that he or his colleagues could always offer the best solutions to certain situations— and his department agreed. The KCK police department hired actual social workers to ride with police officers on call in order to provide a second skill set. While the profession requires a certain level of empathy, Winzer stated that these additions to the team were invaluable in de- escalating confrontations. "Sometimes people just need someone to talk to," he said. "Sometimes arresting them will just make the situation worse." In other words, if officers were to answer a call regarding someone with one of the complications discussed above, and these officers had the agency to arrest and even incarcerate said individuals, but lacked the understanding to effectively approach the situation from a place of social insight, no problem is actually solved. Winzer, at the end of our discussion, made sure to emphasize that even without such programs and employment practices, police departments still tell their officers that they *are* everything—social workers, law enforcers, meter maids… They must wear many different hats in order to do their jobs effectively. But while many officers and citizens may believe that they are trained in a wide range of skills and are capable of approaching a whole range of situations with the required amounts of both empathy and force, I would still counter with Coates' idea that this mindset is actually a sign of a concerning problem in the criminal justice system. No matter how much training or experience is currently being given to officers, there are situations that they should simply not be present in at all—and yet we keep sending them.

Last year in Oklahoma City, 35-year-old Magdiel Sanchez was shot and killed at his own home by police officers. Sanchez was deaf, as well as developmentally disabled, and the officers who showed up because Sanchez's father was allegedly involved in a hit-and-run gave only verbal commands for Sanchez to put down the pipe he held to ward off dogs before opening fire (Perry). Situations like this happen far too often—people with disabilities or impairments being injured or killed by law enforcement. This sort of pattern reinforces the criminalization of certain behaviors that should absolutely not be criminalized. Another example cited in David Perry's article “4 Disabled People Dead in Another Week of Police Brutality,” published in *The Nation*, is Conner Leibel, an autistic teenager walking by himself in Buckeye, Arizona while stimming with a length of string who was tackled by officers and sustained multiple injuries. Stimming should certainly not be criminalized behavior, and noncompliance should not be repeatedly used as an excuse for violent escalation in these encounters. Programs like Critical Incident Training certainly have their place in encouraging education amongst those with authority, but the root issue is that they run on the idea that disabilities/impairments themselves are the problems rather than extreme escalation. Programs and registries amongst departments are not enough; what Coates is calling for is the reframing of policework. He encourages the idea that police should simply by removed from as many situations as possible, and while anyone could easily counter that this solution is just a setup for more risk of crime and unsafety in communities, I would argue that the biggest concern of any community should be ensuring that everyone has equal civil rights. The power the criminal justice holds now has continuously displayed trends of being misused, of targeting certain demographics. A study conducted by Stanford University analyzing traffic stops in major North Carolina cities showed that police were repeatedly more likely to search black and Hispanic (mostly from lower socio-economic backgrounds) motorists with a lower threshold of suspicion than they exercised with white drivers, while those searches yielded less discover of illegal drugs or weapons than when they searched white drivers’ vehicles. Coates’ claim is that the criminal justice system, as it exists now, holds *power* over these marginalized communities rather than *authority,* or control with consent, and the data exemplifies this. Not everyone is treated equally by law enforcement, and that should be more than enough reason to start considering ways to adjust the system overall. Removing officers from certain situations could easily result in a safer, more equitable criminal justice system.

Coates points out towards the end of “The Myth of Police Reform” that body cameras are a flawed solution, that they are the “least divisive and least invasive step” towards reform. He believes that they are tool to avoid a deeper conversation about the major flaws of the criminal justice system, and while I agree that body cameras are absolutely not a panacea, I would disagree with Coates that they are not an important step in the right direction because I believe the accountability they provide is a step towards regulating excessive uses of force in criminal situations. With the swaths of misconduct amongst law enforcement confrontations, body cameras are a typically reliable source of evidence when these issues are brought to light. Being able to have that insight at what dangerous escalation looks like is important not only to raise awareness amongst officers and citizens alike, but it provides a constant reminder of accountability which is, ultimately, a democratic idea. Video evidence of an encounter between an officer and 15-year-old Jordan Edwards in Balch Springs, Texas provided proof that was inconsistent with the officer's initial statement. The officer was then fired and faced with murder charges (Wiley). That kind of accountability is invaluable to those seeking justice. It curbs misconduct amongst officers who may have unjustified prejudices that corrupt their work decision. It pushes an unsafe system in a safer direction. While police departments, at the moment, lack comprehensive guidance for proper structured use of such recording devices, this tool has the capacity to be employed nationwide and encourage more understanding of proper law enforcement practices, instead of further cultivating a culture that typically likes to shove every problem into the hands of the criminal justice system without looking further into which situations should really be under its power as opposed to, as Coates puts it, "the authority of other branches of civil society."

Ultimately, while I disagree with Coates' points about the ineffectiveness of body cameras and similar accountability tactics, I agree completely with his overall claim, and believe his call for a more restrained criminal justice system that exercises authority over its citizens rather than power is justified. In order to ensure everyone, no matter than physical or mental ability, socio-economic status, or race, is treated with equal rights in criminal situations, the reform should not begin and end with the police themselves, but should rather run deep into the roots of unjust practices in the criminal justice system as a whole.

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*Jana Kellogg wrote this Response Essay in Fortune Lavie's ENGL 200 class.*

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ENGL 200

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## Chuck The Bucket List

Everyone has created a bucket list in one way or another, because we have all at one point set goals in life that we want to accomplish, and what is a bucket list but a grouping of our more meaningful goals? In her article, "Why You Should Swap Your Bucket List for A "Chuck-It List," Valerie Tiberius, a philosopher and author, claims that pursuing bucket list items fails to contribute to happiness, and instead, creates stress and dissatisfaction. Tiberius further argues that bucket lists are unattainable due to financial barriers, physical barriers such as getting older, and other barriers to human skill. Instead of forcing ourselves to pursue unrealistic goals, Tiberius proposes that we take bucket list items and add them to a "chuck-it list:" a list of goals we once had but are now freeing ourselves from pursuing so that we can focus on the more important things in life. While I agree with Tiberius that bucket list items can be unattainable and expensive, I believe that there are ways that we can make our goals realistic and adapt them to our lifestyles to make them accessible; moreover, I believe it is important to set goals in our lives so that we have motivating factors to look forward to, and that goals are an essential aspect of our mental and emotional wellbeing.

I agree with Tiberius that bucket list items can be unattainable if there are physical or financial constraints, but instead resigning ourselves to putting our goals on our "chuck-it list" due to these constraints, I propose that instead we choose to make our goals more realistic. Many people will find that there are things they cannot accomplish in life due to their own limitations, and it would not be fair or realistic to set a goal to try an accomplish something outside of the range of possibility. As a person with a disability that affects the mobility in my legs, there are many things I cannot do and will never be able to accomplish. I have a relapsing and remitting form for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, and even during times of remission, walking across K-State campus can be difficult. If I were to add running a marathon to my bucket list, I would be setting myself up for failure, because that goal is not within my limitations. That does not mean, though, that I need to add running to my chuck-it list. Instead, I can change my goal to someday running a mile again, which is reasonable and within my abilities. We don't need to move all our big goals in life to a "chuck-it list," maybe we simply need to modify them to make them more accessible to our abilities.

Some may wonder how to modify our goals to make them realistic, and the answer is quite simple. In her article, "How To Write SMART Goals," Kat Boogaard walks the reader through a common exercise used by therapists during goal-setting exercises: "SMART" goals, which is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. Boogaard explains that this exercise can be used to modify our goals "to help ensure that objectives are clearly defined and attainable within a certain timeframe." Through using SMART goals, we can make our bucket list items achievable. Goals can be modified without giving up on them. While Tiberius argues that goals are "oppressive, irritating reminders," I argue that our goals are only oppressive or irritating if we choose to make them that way. With a good understanding of our limits and constraints- physical, financial, and emotional- we can set realistic goals that can be put on our bucket lists and reasonably achieved through our lifetimes.

Tiberius argues that we can achieve happiness through making our "chuck-it" lists and taking the burden of achievement off our shoulders; however, I disagree with this statement and believe that it is through goal setting that we can find happiness and motivation. Tiberius makes a point that bucket lists do not contribute to our happiness in a meaningful way, writing, "Focusing on pursuing our goals often leaves us running on a treadmill of desire and frustration." In her article, "The Importance, Benefits, and Value of Goal Setting," (2019) Leslie Riopel disproves this argument by showing how goal setting, such as making a bucket list, is essential to our lives. Referencing Edward Locke and Gary Latham's (1991) research, Riopel writes, "Goals not only affect behavior as well as job performance, but they also help mobilize energy which leads to a higher effort overall. Higher effort leads to an increase in persistent effort." Instead of goals being burdens to our happiness, Riopel shows how setting goals is an essential component of our jobs and lives. Without them, we are unmotivated, unfocused, and have nothing to help us maintain perspective and see how much we have grown. These factors together contribute significantly to human happiness, proving that goal setting exercises such as creating a bucket list can positively influence our levels of satisfaction.

While Tiberius argues that travel — an item represented on many people's bucket lists — might be something to add to the "chuck-it list," there are many benefits to traveling and several methods to making travel a doable bucket list item. Psychologist Todd B. Kashdan, in his article, "The Mental Benefits of Vacationing Somewhere New," (2018) discusses several reasons why we should choose to travel. He writes that travel can help one to "get out of your comfort zone, expose yourself to uncertainty, and eschew rest for exploration and learning. The result is personal growth — greater emotional agility, empathy, and creativity." Do we really want to put such a valuable experience to the side? Kashdan writes about more opportunities for personal growth, stating, "By spending time in unfamiliar towns, cities, or countries, you become tolerant and even accepting of your own discomfort and more confident in your ability to navigate ambiguous situations." According to Kashdan, through travel, we can expose ourselves to new experiences which will lead to great amounts of human growth and development. So, how can travel be made attainable? The answer is simpler than one might think; choosing to stay at hostels over expensive hotels, trying backpacking or camping, and booking flights early are just a few simple ways to make travel more accessible.

Goal setting is an important aspect of our mental health. As a case manager at a crisis clinic, I incorporate goal-setting activities into many therapeutic sessions with my clients. When my clients are in states of hopelessness, I encourage them to set goals to redirect their mind towards creating a better future for themselves. Together, we create meaningful, attainable goals for the client to work on that helps them reframe their life and develop a sense of purpose- the exact thing that Tiberius said her "chuck-it list" would achieve. Other therapists and clinicians have similar techniques. Published in the American Psychological Association, research by Tamir et al. in their article, "Emotional Regulation Is Motivated" (2020) highlights how our emotional regulation is closely knit with our ability to set proper goals, writing, "…consequences of emotion regulation depend on goal setting, goal striving, or their interaction." Tamir et al. not only recognizes the importance of setting goals but addresses the way in which a deficit of goals can negatively impact our mental health. They write, "Regarding mental health, dysfunctional emotion regulation may result from deficits in goal setting." Clearly, without goals, our mental health will suffer. Tiberius argues that goals are overpowering and oppressive, but research and my own experience in the mental health field show that goal setting is an essential tool for our wellbeing and happiness.

Tiberius argues that the "chuck-it list" is key to finding happiness and satisfaction in our lives. She claims that pursuing difficult goals can leave us frustrated and burdened. While it must be acknowledged that people do have imitations in what we can achieve, I believe that if we modify our goals to be realistic, then achieving them will be of great benefit to our lives. Instead of adding goals to a "chuck-it list," as Tiberius argues, I think we can find a way to incorporate goals into our lives without the burden of not being able to achieve them. Moreover, goals are an important part of our mental health, and without them we will be unfocused, unhappy, and unable to progress in life.

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*Nicholas Sixbury wrote this response essay in Christina Hauck's ENGL 200 class. Please note how Sixbury uses section headings to focus readers on different parts of the response.*

# The Andrew Jackson Courthouse Statue in Jackson County Should be Removed

### *Introduction*

In June 2020, a statue of Andrew Jackson outside a courthouse in Jackson County, Missouri in Kansas City was vandalized, leading to a wider political discussion about whether the statue should stay up. After the statue was vandalized, Jackson County Executive Frank White, Jr. released a statement advocating for the removal of the statue (Greenstein 4), stating that as long as both the Andrew Jackson statue which was vandalized (and the other Andrew Jackson statue in front of a different nearby courthouse) stay up, "our words about fairness, justice and equality will continue to ring hollow for many we serve" (Greenstein 5). Art conservationist Karri Vaughn released an article the next month in *The KC Star,* titled "Don't Remove KC's Andrew Jackson Courthouse Statue. Create New Art to Challenge It," in which she argued against removing the statue. Ultimately in November of the same year, the issue was taken to a vote amongst residents of Jackson County, a county named after Andrew Jackson in 1826, nearly three years before he was elected president (Cruz 16). Voters in Jackson County decided to keep the statue up in a "72-23 majority" (Cruz 1). Instead of removal, the statue will have a plaque placed upon it, explaining why the county chose Andrew Jackson as a symbol (Cruz 6). Despite the vote, there are still those who think the statue should eventually be removed. After the results of the vote had taken place, White, Jr. expressed disappointment at the outcome, stating, "I remain committed in my belief that the statues of a man who owned slaves, caused thousands of Native Americans to die and never stepped foot in our County should be removed from our public facilities" (Cruz 9). Vaughn argues that the Andrew Jackson statue in KC shouldn't be moved because of its artistic merit.

### *Summary of Source Editorial*

In Karri Vaughn's "Don't Remove KC's Andrew Jackson Courthouse Statue. Create New Art to Challenge It," she argues that the Andrew Jackson statue in front of the Jackson County Courthouse shouldn't be moved from its current location because it would ignore the history of the statue and the artist's intent in making the statue to be put there. She doesn't mention the other statue, which stands "outside the Historic Truman Courthouse in downtown Independence" (Greenstein 7), perhaps because it wasn't vandalized. Her reasoning as to why the statue shouldn't be removed is that the statue itself has great artistic merit, which makes it relevant to artists today, and the original intent of the artist is an important part of the current production of art, so moving it would diminish positive effects it has on art today. The main goal of the author is to conserve the art we have today and ensure the production of new art. She writes to a local, educated audience who likely already have their own opinions on the potential removal of the statue.

While the statue might have great merit as a piece of art, the statue should be moved because that merit would not be diminished by relocation to a museum, art gallery, or similar facility, and its current location puts the efficacy of the local government into question.

### *Why Artistic Merit Isn't an Issue*

While the statue may have great artistic merit, that merit does not overshadow the public reception of the statue, and moving the statue would not significantly harm that merit. First off, the claim that because "artists use works from the past to contextualize contemporary pieces[,]... art conservation is essential to the current production of art" is dubious (Vaughn 3). While artists may imitate or be inspired by past works, plenty of them create original artwork; it would certainly be absurd to claim that no original artwork is created. After all, if all artwork requires a past reference, then where did the original reference come from? The definition of art itself is also rather vague, as Vaughn herself acknowledges when she contends that "art has a slippery definition and is no longer limited to high-quality, handmade or even material objects" (Vaughn 3). Many things not even created by humans could very well be considered art (or at least artful), such as beautiful landscapes, for instance. Vaughn also argues for the importance of the original artist's intent, as "by upholding the artist's intent, new artists can incorporate others' work into their own" (Vaughn 4). She states that "if a conservator damages the artist's original intent, viewers begin engaging with a facsimile" (Vaughn 4). It's not clear exactly what she means the significance of viewers engaging with a facsimile (meaning an exact copy) to be, as she doesn't clarify, but from context it's clear that this is something negative.

This argument doesn't really work for art created by natural processes, as there arguably isn't intent behind the processes that created them. Instead, the humans who view such sights determine the significance and beauty for themselves. It's also not clear what exactly it would mean to "damage the artist's original intent" (Vaughn 4), but if understanding the original intention of the artist when they made a piece of art is so important, then the relocation of a piece to a museum shouldn't be an issue. Within a museum, viewers can be educated on the context of the time when the artist created the piece, and this is already quite normal. Often when learning about a literary piece from a different time, it's standard to learn about the history behind the writer and what was going on historically at the time that might influence their views. The same can be done for other pieces of art, including the statue. In fact, even before the statue became controversial, there were plans to put a plaque on the statue specifically to give context as to why the statue is there (Cruz 3). Given the fact that the reasoning why the statue is still up was considered unclear enough that it needed a plaque to provide explanation, the statue's current location probably isn't doing much to inform viewers of the artist's original intent, but moving it to a museum where its context and history can be explained to the public would likely give people a better idea of the artist's intent. Vaughn argues that moving the statue somewhere else would damage the artist's intent, and that that would be a bad thing, but she fails to properly establish why moving the statue would be bad.

### *Why Andrew Jackson Is A Bad Symbol*

The artistic merit of the statue also doesn't overshadow the figure depicted by the statue itself. Vaughn largely ignores who the statue depicts until she briefly mentions his past in the second-to-last paragraph, but the person who the statue depicts should also be a consideration (Vaughn 11). The courthouse is meant to be a place of justice, where cases are tried fairly under the law without prejudice, but a figure of Andrew Jackson right outside puts that into question. Andrew Jackson is an individual who flaunted the law and put policies into effect that killed thousands based on his own prejudiced ideas, and a statue of him on government property calls into question the efficacy of the system that a courthouse is meant to carry out. In the article "Andrew Jackson was a Slaver, Ethnic Cleanser, and Tyrant. He Deserves No Place on Our Money," Dylan Matthews, a writer at *Vox*, states that "Andrew Jackson deserves a museum chronicling his crimes and dedicated to his victims, not commemoration" (Matthews 6). Jackson is a particularly bad symbol to be put in front of a courthouse because of the way he has flaunted rule of law. In terms of the Indian Removal Act which started the Trail of Tears, Jackson believed that instead of negotiating with Native Americans, "the government should simply impose its will on them" (Matthews 12). In addition to this, Jackson committed war crimes while he was in the military. In 1818, he ordered "two British subjects, Robert Ambrister and Alexander George Arbuthnot, executed during the First Seminole War in Spanish Florida" (Matthews 32) without having sufficient evidence of them actually doing anything wrong. In fact, he "carried both sentences out the next day so there would be no chance of an appeal" (Matthews 34). In addition to this and "kill[ing] his own men for petty infractions" (Matthews 35), he was also fined by the government for behaving tyrannically when he took New Orleans in part because "he defied a writ of habeas corpus, the legal privilege recognized by the Constitution which allows someone being detained to insist that a judge look into his case" (Matthews 30). Someone who illegally prevents another person who is detained from seeing a judge is an awful symbol for a courthouse. Jackson not only has a horrific past, but his flaunting of the law and fair process makes him a particularly bad symbol for a courthouse.

## *Why Government Image Matters Now*

With recent events like the murder of George Floyd and the now-canceled building of the Dakota Access Pipeline, public perception matters more now than it might have previously, as events like these make people doubt the effectiveness of the system they are largely forced to live in. It can be seen from the fact that "in a vote for Kansas City, Missouri, 60% voted to take the statues down" that at least in Kansas City as a whole, public opinion is on the side of taking the statue down (Harris 4). When George Floyd was murdered, the issue of police brutality was brought to public attention, bringing the system's failure to reform into focus for many people that might not have been as aware of things before. The Dakota Access Pipeline represents another instance of the government showing its prejudice. Originally, the pipeline was designed to go through Bismark, North Dakota, but the citizens there rejected it because they didn't want to risk contaminating their drinking water (Anubias 10). As such, the pipeline was diverted through Standing Rock (a Native American Reservation) even though it would contaminate their drinking water *and* damage sacred burial sites (Anubias 10). The Native Americans didn't want the pipeline going through their land either, with "an estimated 10,000 people… in the region to join in the demonstrations," including "hundreds of US military veterans," "Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein and Democratic presidential contender Bernie Sanders," and "Robert Kennedy Jr., environmental activist and nephew of former president John F Kennedy" (*BBC* 26). Even so, their protests were dismissed and met with "excessive force, including dousing crowds with pepper spray and freezing water as well as firing sound cannons, bean bag rounds and rubber bullets" (*BBC* 29). Police action against the protesters was bad enough that the United Nations spoke out about the excessive use of force against protesters (*BBC* 33). And yet, all of that was not enough to stop the building of the pipeline until recently when a change of administration was made after the election, and the building was canceled by presidential order. Events like these make people (very understandably) doubt that the government is really fair, or even that it has its citizens' best interests at heart. This is worsened further when a county decides to keep up a memorialization of someone who is known for committing genocide against Native Americans, not only on public property, but in front of a building that is meant to carry out the law, ostensibly without prejudice.

## *Conclusion*

The treatment of minorities by our current system of justice is an ongoing problem. Citizens are murdered in public by officers of the law without provocation. Indigenous people are exploited by corporations and the government for profit. And statues commemorating a figure who committed genocide against those he should have protected as people living in the nation he led are upheld in public. Vaughn argues that such a statue should stay up, not only on public display, but right in front of the courthouse where it has been for years. Largely ignoring the larger context of why people want the Andrew Jackson statue taken down, she argues the statue should stay up because, among other things, it "contextualize[s] contemporary pieces" (Vaughn 3). She says, "We should begin our evaluation of the Andrew Jackson statue with a historical backdrop," but perhaps the history which should be focused on in this situation is the proposal to continue memorializing such a problematic figure in front of a courthouse after a history of abuse of native peoples both by the modern government and Andrew Jackson himself, the figure which the statue depicts (Vaughn 4).

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## Conclusion: Summary of Key Rhetorical Concepts

**Alternative/Opposing Views:** Positions, arguments, and messages on the issue that differ from those of the writer.

**Concession:** A rhetorical move when writers anticipate objections to their claim and reasons and accept these objections. Dialogical Arguments: Arguments in which writers are responding to potentially hostile audiences; they need to be mindful of these readers' positions and beliefs/values to make the conditions of persuasion possible.

**Monological Arguments:** Arguments in which writers focus only on their particular position; they do not acknowledge other positions. Multisided Arguments: Arguments in which writers are aware of their position and those of other writers and arguers.

**Neutral Audiences:** Audiences who do not hold a strong stance on the issue or claim.

**Rebuttal Strategies:** Ways in which writers anticipate other arguments and perspectives and then use points and evidence to counter them. Also referred to as "counterargument."

**Response:** Taking a stand and making a significant contribution on an issue.

**Summarizing:** Acknowledging other perspectives and arguments on the issues by fairly representing them to readers.

## Notes

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3.

# WRITING PERSUASIVE RESEARCH ESSAYS OR OPEN LETTERS

The purpose of the persuasive research essay is to focus on a controversial issue and then write a *multisided* argument that attempts to persuade a resistant, or at least highly skeptical, audience to consider accepting your claim. Why will your argument be multisided rather than just one that reflects only your point of view? As a member of a diverse society, you'll often encounter moments of disagreement and misunderstanding. It's crucial in these moments that you're able not only to simply voice your opinion, but also to understand the viewpoints of those who do not agree with you. Doing so helps us avoid unproductive disagreements. At a more structural level, those in power (whether a supervisor at job site, the head of a local governing committee, or even the president of the United States) must listen to a number of credible points of view in order to make the most just and fair decisions about policies and procedures.

On all levels, a multisided argument is simply more persuasive for a resistant audience than a one-sided argument is. One-sided arguments are good at rallying support for those who already agree; multisided arguments, and especially delayed-thesis arguments, are much better at persuading those who hold different views than the rhetor. Multisided arguments often work toward consensus and compromise, focusing on being partners in dialogue with those who hold alternative views, seeking common ground that lessens the risk (or threat) of disagreement. This assignment provides a platform to explore a compelling social or political issue that matters to you and to gain experience in a type of persuasive writing that likely will have practical benefits to your professional and civic life.

While this chapter will take you through more detailed steps to help you write your persuasive research essay, here are a few guidelines to consider at this beginning stage:

***Audience***—Make sure that you identify an audience that is resistant to, or at the very least skeptical of, the claim you are making about a controversial issue. You may want to imagine that you are writing to an organization or community group that has something at stake with the issue you are raising so that you are able to hold a specific and vivid impression of them as you write. **We'll ask, too, that you list your resistant audience at the top of your research essay submission.**

***Significance and Focus***—Controversial topics are ones that present complex issues that hold more than a "yes" or "no," or "right" or "wrong," response, and ones whose outcomes matter deeply to your audience (and to you). You will need to narrow your issue, though, to an angle that is manageable for a short research paper. Huge topics, such as "American Foreign Policy" or "Technology," are much too broad for the scope of this essay. However, finding a manageable angle to explore, like "America's use of diplomacy in Iran" or "driverless cars and highway safety," might work.

***Rebuttal Strategies and Audience-Based Reasoning***—Because your audience is resistant, you will need to work harder than in previous assignments to demonstrate that you understand their position, and to anticipate what their objections might be to your claim, reasons, assumptions, and source use. You'll need to make sure you're using *audience-based* reasoning throughout your essay in order to most effectively persuade your resistant/skeptical reader.

***Research and Documentation***—Your outside sources will be important for building your own ethos and for helping to control the development of your argument. So, just as you have been doing in the previous essays, carefully evaluate the credibility of your sources and integrate them into your essay. You should be prepared to undergo an extensive research process since you'll be working to understand your issue from many perspectives. **While your instructor will set their own requirements about the number and type of sources, it's hard to imagine being successful in this assignment with fewer than five credible outside sources; indeed, you might be required to include far more.**

It might be helpful here to consider some examples of a multisided argument. Here's one from the professional academic world: Katherine Hayhoe, a professor of atmospheric sciences at Texas Tech, hopes to persuade conservative, evangelical groups that climate change is real and that action needs to be taken immediately. Hayhoe reports that approximately 65% of the evangelical audience that she is trying to persuade does not believe in climate change. In order to start to persuade this skeptical audience, Hayhoe emphasizes the need to take care of the planet—what she calls the "stewardship message"—as well as the values she holds in common with them: "We all want a better world for our children, we all think it's good to conserve our natural resources and not be wasteful, we all want to be able to invest in our economy and not be held hostage to foreign oil." These values will act as the starting points for her to create reasons that her resistant audience will be willing to listen to.

Another example is from an ENGL 200 class. A student writing an essay for a local restaurant association hopes to persuade restaurant owners to require that nutritional information be added to their restaurant menus. Several members of the restaurant association may be skeptical or resistant about this idea because it means more work for them, including the need to redesign their menus, and they also may be worried about a drop in profits if customers are aware of how unhealthy certain popular menu items are. The writer, therefore, needs to find reasons that will allow for some common ground between him and the skeptical members of the restaurant association. As he formulates his reasons, he decides that his audience will be interested in presenting an image of healthy and wholesome food for customers as that will demonstrate care for their patrons. His persuasive research essay will argue that the restaurant association will not lose money because they will be able to attract more customers with the transparency of their menus' nutritional information.

As you think about potential audiences and topics, keep in mind that your persuasive research essay will be **between 1500-2000 words** (the equivalent of 5-7 double-spaced pages, in standard 12-point font). Additionally, we'll encourage you to use a **delayed-thesis structure** for this multisided argument, as this form is typically the most effective for persuading a resistant audience. Finally, as you may be asked to write a formal proposal later, in which you ask an audience member to take a particular action, for this assignment, while you might include a brief call to action at the end of your essay, your focus should be broader than that of a specific problem for a workplace or local community; your purpose, moreover, will be more focused on changing minds at the policy level.

When you submit your persuasive research essay, it is a good idea to identify your intended audience explicitly for your readers (e.g., by writing your intended audience down at the top of the first page); identifying your intended audience will not only help your instructor and colleagues evaluate the effectiveness of your audience-based reasoning but will also serve as a good reminder to you that you are reaching out to your resistant and skeptical audience and negotiating differences in values and beliefs.

## The Open Letter

Alternatively, your instructor may ask you to write an open letter, an intriguing way to deliver your persuasive research goals to a skeptical audience. The open letter can be especially effective in that you are imagining that you are writing to only one reader or a small group of readers, which allows you to become more personal and interactive. At the same time, an open letter, even though it may be addressed to only one reader, is designed to be read by the larger public. Famous open letters like Émile Zola's famous "J'Accuse..!" (accusing the French government of anti-Semitism and corruption in the 1890s) or Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (emphasizing the need for nonviolent action) helped shape public attitudes and political debates. More recently, CEOs of large American corporations, such as Steve Ells of Chipotle and John Schnatter of Papa John's, have taken to the open letter to mollify angry customers and defuse company crises (these corporate open letters can also serve as elegant forms of advertising).

When writing an open letter, find a stakeholder audience, someone who is prominently connected to an issue and who presents a skeptical or resistant position to yours. While writing to this specific reader, you will then imagine that you are also writing to many more readers who you will need to persuade. For example, if you are hoping to reduce the influence of the National Football League, given the violence of the game, you might address Roger Goodell, the NFL Commissioner, but you must also consider football fans across the nation as you craft your argument. If you are writing about the need to regulate social media companies to deal with cyber-bullying among adolescents, you might consider Mark Zuckerberg, the co-founder of Facebook, but must also keep in mind all those users of Facebook, as well as people who do not believe in these forms of regulation.

Objectives

By the end of this unit, your Persuasive Research essay will be able to:

- Explore multiple perspectives of a controversial issue
- Summarize fairly a resistant audience's perspective on a controversial issue
- Provide common ground between the writer's views and the audience's
- Develop persuasive claims with reasons, assumptions, and evidence/research
- Identify, evaluate, and integrate credible research sources
- Document and consistently cite research sources

### Beware of these common Persuasive Research essay weaknesses:

- The writer chooses an issue or topic that is not controversial, or that is too broad for the scope of the assignment, or that is not significant to either the writer or reader.
- The writer chooses an issue or topic that is too controversial and therefore will be unable to find common ground or persuade the resistant audience.
- The writer does not demonstrate understanding of the intended audience, and therefore does not anticipate how that audience will resist the essay's claims.
- The writer uses reasons and evidence/research that are not based on the values and interests of the resistant audience.

## Writing to Persuade Skeptical or Resistant Audiences

Writing for audiences already in agreement with you is a relatively easy task: you can rely on one-sided arguments, choose research that your audience already expects and respects, and easily accommodate the beliefs and values of your readers or listeners. In many ways, you are not actually arguing but stoking your audience's enthusiasm for the issue and your position.

However, if you are thrown into a rhetorical situation in which you have to consider skeptical or resistant audiences, you'll need to contend with many significant rhetorical constraints. To start off with, you need to grapple with the various perspectives on the issue (multisided argumentation); understand your audience's positions, beliefs, and values; consider research that counters your position and find ways to respond to that information; shape your ethos to make you a more trustworthy and sympathetic writer for your readers; find moments of common ground and compromise; and imagine ways to use pathos-based appeals to reach your readers.

The difficulty of addressing skeptical and resistant audiences can be found in popular adages or sayings. If we are "preaching to the choir" in one-side arguments (with audiences that are in accord with our positions), what are the similar sayings for dialogical arguments?

A few have negative connotations of the audience: "Casting pearls to swine" (imagining your arguments as "pearls" and your audience as "swine" may not be the best way to plan for persuading them); similarly, "Talking to a fence post" and "Banging your head against a wall" may depict opposing audiences in ways that are not useful for you. "Leading a horse to water" is a good possibility, as it shows that good persuasion is similar to good teaching. "Winning hearts and minds," meanwhile, summarizes pathos- and logos-based persuasive strategies. All of these phrases make clear, though, that persuading a resistant audience is more difficult than addressing an audience who already agrees with you.

Here is one recent example of an attempt to approach skeptical readers. Alarmed by the competition of plant-based meat substitutes, meat producers have been grappling with ways to reach resistant consumers through appeals to organic and natural values: in short, eating meat is more "natural" than eating plant-based meat alternatives. The conservative consumer organization, The Center for Consumer Freedom, addresses readers who may be tempted by these plant-based substitutes:

> Are the chemicals in fake meat harmful? Probably not. But many people want to avoid them anyway. So if fake meat companies or their marketing surrogates tell you fake meat is natural and healthy for you and your family—make up your own mind about whether that's true.[1]

In this example, The Center for Consumer Freedom is reaching out to, quite possibly, more liberal consumers and parents, those who may be looking for meat alternatives for environmental reasons; these very same readers, though, will be interested in healthy, "natural," and "organic" alternatives; they may find the focus on "chemicals" a good rationale for steering away from plant-based substitutes.

Depending upon the level of resistance of your audience, you may decide that persuasive strategies will not be useful. For especially hostile audiences, you can only hope to make them more open for persuasion in the future. Therefore, instead of offering an argument that they will immediately reject, you might use a dialogical or invitational approach: you pose questions, tell stories, and try to get them to reflect on their own values and beliefs and to at least better understand alternative viewpoints, even if they don't agree with them.

And, here's some bad news. According to Ezra Klein in *Why We're Polarized* (2020), Americans are getting more and more entrenched in their own views and becoming more unwilling to listen to views and opinions that are different from their own. Consequently, the rhetorical strategies of this chapter and in ENGL 200 are extremely important for you to consider. Learning how to communicate across difference is a crucial skill, not only in college, but in the workplace and in society more broadly.

## Invention Activity: Finding a Topic

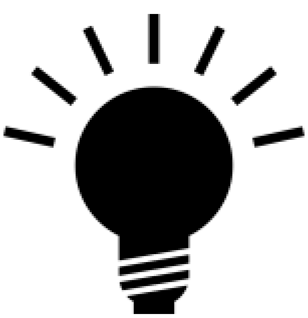
Let's begin with how this assignment relates to you. With your classmates, think about everything you know about controversial issues in the world on the local, state, national, and global level, and generate a class list.

Using that class list as a reference, think about each topic from an individual level (as a student, as an employee, etc.). What are some topics that you relate more to on an individual level? Which do you want to find out more about? What are some potential angles of vision you might bring to those topics?

Then, with that same list, think about each topic from the public level (as a citizen, as a political activist, etc.). What are some topics that you relate more to on a public level?Which do you want to find out more about? What are some potential angles of vision you might bring to those topics?

What two topics do you *most* want to find out more about? Write them down. Then, use the four following questions to challenge these topics. If you answer negatively to any of these questions, then you should strongly consider revising or changing your issue.

1. As the writer, would you be willing to change your mind about your position?
2. Is your issue a controversial one? Does a skeptical or resistant audience exist?
3. Is there the possibility to establish some common ground between your position and that of your skeptical readers?
4. Does the argument have significance for a larger public audience?



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## Invention Activity: Exploring and Narrowing an Issue through Research

Once you have decided upon your potential issues, you'll want to read a variety of credible sources to help familiarize yourself with the issues more comprehensively. Keep careful notes, such as in a reading log, and try to find ways to find connections or patterns in these sources and, ultimately, put them into conversation with each other.

While you are researching, track the ways that you see different researchers agreeing and disagreeing with each other. Based upon what we already know about logos, your sources may

- agree or disagree about the facts, definitions, statistics — anything about the "reality" of the issue
- agree or disagree about the underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions of the issue

Use your research notes to track these moments of agreement and disagreement and to clarify your understanding of the issue as a whole. Be sure to record your research citations as you will be expected to cite your sources later in the writing process.

While you are taking notes on your research, these are questions you can ask yourself:

1. What would writer A say to writer B? To C? D?
2. After I read writer A, I thought _____; however, after I read writer B, my thinking on this issue has changed in these ways: .
3. To what extent do writer A and writer B disagree about facts and interpretations of facts? Writer C and D? Or C and B? D and A?
4. To what extent do writer A and writer B disagree about underlying beliefs, assumptions, and values? Writer A and C? B and D?
5. Can I find any areas of agreement, including shared values and beliefs, between writer A and B (and C and D and E)?
6. What new, significant questions do these texts raise for me?
7. After I have wrestled with the ideas in these texts, what are my current views on this issue?

As you explore your issue, you may find it useful to discuss your findings and ideas with other people. Such discussions often reveal insights of your own and provide access to new information and suggestions.

Reviewing your research notes will help prepare you to introduce your issue, define/describe it, and explain why you find it a significant matter. Your classmates, instructor, tutors, and others are good people to dialogue with.

## Invention Activity: Choosing and Analyzing Your Audience

Once you have settled on a topic, you must identify a specific resistant audience for your essay. This audience might be one who has a prominent voice in your issue's conversation and whom you would like to engage directly (similar to Chapter 2) or it might be a collective set of readers who belong to an organization representative of your opposing view (PETA members, for example, would be a resistant audience for someone advocating luxury furs). While you likely already have that reader in mind from your initial research—maybe a particular text or author from your bibliography, or a key organization or group that your research has already revealed— take a minute to reflect and make sure that it is a person engaged in your issue who holds a sharply different perspective than you but one with which you believe you can find some common ground. Then, conduct any additional research on this audience so that you can find enough information to answer these questions:

1. What does your audience have at stake when it comes to your issue? Why is it important to them? Why would they be interested, therefore, in reading what you have to say?
2. What position does your audience hold regarding this issue? How is this position different from yours? Why do you think they hold this position? That is, what reasons do they have, or what values or assumptions do you need to be aware of? (Note: if possible, you may want to find a mission statement or some evidence of what your audience values.)
3. List at least two reasons with which your audience supports their main viewpoint about this issue. How can you respond to these reasons? How will your audience accept your rebuttals?
4. What assumptions underlie the audience's own argument regarding this issue? What evidence does the audience rely on to support those assumptions? What are points of agreement, or areas of common ground, that you share with your audience? (Note: if you hold nothing in common, your essay will be impossible to construct.)
5. What type of research and outside sources do you think your audience expects and respects?

## Audience Analysis

These questions will help you analyze your audience and enable you to plan your persuasive draft more effectively. Take notes on the following questions to get a better sense of your readers:

- What is the exact purpose of my argument?
- What is my audience's purpose in reading my argument?
- Am I writing to a single or multiple audience?
- Exactly who are my readers?
- Do my readers belong to any definable groups: age, sex, race; socioeconomic or educational level; geographic, religious, occupational, or political background?
- What identifiable characteristics or values do my readers share?
- Which of these group memberships, characteristics, or values are relevant to the purpose of my argument?
- What is the extent of my readers' knowledge about my subject?
- Given my readers' level of expertise, what information must I include and what should I withhold?
- What are readers' likely beliefs about my subject?
- What are the likely causes of these beliefs?
- Must my communication reinforce or counter these beliefs?
- With what predictable expectations are my readers likely to approach my argument?
- Are these expectations positive or negative, and what allowances must I make for these expectations in my argument?
- How credible am I likely to appear to my readers?
- Must I make a special effort to improve my credibility?
- What are my readers' precise interests?
- How can I best write to my readers' interest in order to achieve my purpose?
- What rhetorical and organizational choices must I make based on this information about my audience?

## Logos: Audience-Based Reasoning

The most important rhetorical strategy in this chapter is to understand your skeptical or resistant audience:

- Why do they think differently from you?
- What reasons do they find persuasive, and why?
- What assumptions do they make—what values, beliefs, principles, and attitudes do they hold that you need to be aware of?
- What kind of evidence and sources do they find appealing and trustworthy?

For example, imagine that you watched Joaquin Phoenix in *Joker*, and you thought it was one of the best films that you've ever seen. Yet, when you look at some of the reviews online, you discover that many viewers hated this film. If you were going to try to persuade them to think again about *Joker* and recognize its greatness, you would need first to consider what drew them to this negative evaluation of the film. Just conceiving of your audience as "people who didn't like *Joker*" won't be helpful for you.

Instead, you'll want to read and listen for their reasons and assumptions for why they evaluated this film so negatively, which could be:

- *Joker* glorified violence
- *Joker* made a direct correlation between mental health and criminality, which is an unethical position
- *Joker* was marketed as part of the DC Comics franchise, yet it had little to do with the comic book series and the previous versions of Batman

You then may come up against three different types of audiences, each of whom are resistant to your positive evaluation of *Joker* for different reasons—and, these audiences may each hold far different values and beliefs. For example, the skeptical readers who felt that *Joker* was not treated enough as a comic book villain may have no qualms about comic-book violence or about the depiction of characters with mental health problems. You'd therefore need to construct your argument—your reasons, your evidence, your assumptions—differently for each audience.

## Activity: Matching Claims with Resistant Audiences

When you are conceiving of your skeptical or resistant audience, try to fully understand who this audience might be comprised of.

Example Claim: Video games can make teenagers violent and aggressive.

Who would be a skeptical or resistant audience for this typical argument? In short, who would question or dispute whether video games have this connection to violence and aggression?

- Programmers and video game company executives (obviously)
- The video-game-playing teenagers themselves?
- Many parents and sociologists who claim that the sources of violence and aggression are much more complicated and deep-seated
- Academic researchers who dispute the link between video games and violent behavior; indeed, they may claim that video games actually make a society safer— as they keep young males off of the streets.

For these following issues and claims, try to come up with a few skeptical or resistant audiences. Then, justify your choices. Who are these people, what are their values, and what organizations or communities might they belong to?

Issue: Community bans on certain breeds of dogs

Claim: We should allow all breeds of dogs (e.g., pit bulls) into our community.

Skeptical or Resistant Audiences:

Issue: Public school lunches

Claim: Though well intentioned, the Obama-era regulations on public school lunches need to be loosened to lower costs and reduce food waste.

Skeptical or Resistant Audiences:

Issue: Diversity and inclusivity training

Claim: All K-State students should be required to take at least one three-credit-hour course on raising their awareness to diversity and inclusivity.

Skeptical or Resistant Audiences:

## Audience-based Reasoning & Assumptions

Again, a powerful component of attempting to persuade skeptical or resistant audiences is that you may be confronting different values, beliefs, attitudes, and worldviews. In order to open your audience for the possibility of persuasion, you may need to target some of these assumptions. In other words, you need to find common ground, the ways in which you and your skeptical audience agree—the values that you hold together.

According to the Toulmin Model, the assumptions—what Toulmin calls "warrants"—are those values or beliefs that serve as a "bridge," linking the reason and the claim together. Oftentimes, these assumptions are left unstated; that is, readers will accept them because they are commonsensical — they see the link between the claim and the reason to be a natural and reasonable one:

**Claim & Reason**: I have started knitting to reduce stress because it was suggested to me by my doctor.

**Assumption?** In this case, the assumption is that personal doctors are a credible source of information regarding health-related concerns. (Hint: Try fitting in substitutes for "my doctor" to identify some assumptions that may not be so reasonable and commonsensical.)

**Claim & Reason**: Give your nine-year-old child a smart phone because all of their friends already have one.

**Assumption?** Many readers may not find this argument to be convincing or reasonable because they will not share the assumption, which is that parents should make parenting decisions based upon their children's friends' practices.

**Claim & Reason**: Don't read *American Dirt* because its author isn't Mexican, and she doesn't know anything about the immigrant experience!

**Assumption?** As you will discover, complicated arguments may have more than one assumption; that is, different sets of beliefs and values come into play for readers to make sense of the argument. In this case, one prominent assumption may be that books should be valued according to whether they fit the life experiences and social identity of the author. Whether you hold this assumption or not – and many people are divided on this issue – will dictate the degree to which you will accept this claim and reason.

Finally, take a look at this visual argument, in which an activist is protesting mandatory mask policies by holding up this sign, which reads, "My Body, My Choice" and includes this symbol:

Figure 1. Anti-Mask Protest Sign, "My Body, My Choice"

**Claim & Reason**: Governments should not impose mandatory mask policies because mask wearing should be an individual choice.

**Assumption?** A libertarian, individual-focused belief system links together this claim and reason. According to this belief system, the desires and rights of individuals should be promoted above anything else, even the public good. Many readers would not agree with this position, and they would promote the role of medical science above these libertarian views; in this case, mask wearing is not an individual choice because the spread of diseases such as Covid-19 has consequences for others beyond individuals themselves.

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## Activity: Unpacking Claims, Reasons, and Assumptions

In the following statements, be able to distinguish the claim from the reason. Then, supply the assumption that the audience would need to hold in order for the claim and reason to make sense. If you feel there is more than one assumption, please include those as well.

The movie version of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* was awful; it had nothing to do with the book.

Claim:

Reason:

Assumption(s):

I can tell that she is not a very good student because she says nothing in class.

Claim:

Reason:

Assumption(s):

I certainly don't agree with the alt right, but I just don't feel comfortable tearing down all those Confederate statues. Aren't we erasing history when we do that?

Claim:

Reason:

Assumption(s):

The expository writing program should offer more online classes because they are easier to fit into students' busy schedules.

Claim:

Reason:

Assumption(s):

For these examples, who might represent a skeptical or resistant audience? Would they hold these assumptions? If not, how can the claim and reason be modified to make it more reasonable and convincing for these skeptical readers?

## Logos: Claim Types

As you explore your issue, different claims and reasons, as well as tentative skeptical or resistant audiences, consider the rhetorical strategy of "claim types" to help you. It provides you with several different categories to place your own argument. You might find it useful to focus your argument and consider the ways in which you and your skeptical readers differ.

Here is a brief description of the different claim types:

## Claims about the reality of your world

**Definitional or Categorical:** You are arguing that something fits into a particular definition or category.

> *Star Wars* is more than just a science-fiction movie; it is actually a Western.
>
> The debate about gun control really has nothing to do with the constitution.

**Resemblance:** You are arguing that something is similar to something else.

> The Percy Jackson series shares the same motifs and themes as the Harry Potter books.
>
> Millionaire teenage TikTok stars are similar in many ways to gold miners from the nineteenth century: they have made a lot of money, yet with little talent to show for it.

**Causal:** You are arguing that something will cause something else to happen—which may or may not be beneficial for the audience.

> In my opinion, reducing the size of the menu and simplifying the number of ingredients will bring in more customers.
>
> I am going to argue in this presentation that the *Harry Potter* series helped stimulate interest in reading by diverse young people throughout the first decade of this century.

## Claims about policy

**Proposal:** You are arguing that your readers should do something because it will be good for them and/or will help solve a problem. In this case, you are implying a value judgement about what your audience should do.

> As teachers, we should consider making our grading practices more rigorous.
>
> In order to stop the phenomenon of towns dying out in Western Kansas, we should stimulate new growth in organic farming.

## Claims about values or judgments

**Evaluation or Ethical:** You are arguing that something is good (or bad), or, similarly, that it is ethically right (or ethically wrong). Unlike definitional/categorical, resemblance, or causal claims, you are not arguing about the "truth" or "reality" of something; instead, you are implying a judgement, basing your decision of what is "good" or "bad" on criteria that you have assumed to be important.

France has the best cuisine in the world.

Eating meat is wrong.

## Activity: Identifying Claim Types

In the list below, figure out the type of each claim:

- Even though many viewers may see it as yet another comic book or Superheroes adaptation, *Joker* actually fits in the movie genre of the 1970s drama because…
- Eating meat harms the environment because…
- You should become a vegetarian because…
- Not allowing transgender people to use the bathrooms of their gender identity is similar to laws that instituted segregated bathrooms based upon race because…
- Cheerleading is the same as gymnastics because…
- Eating meat is the same thing as abusing animals because…
- Waterboarding is a form of torture because…
- Allowing guns on campus will increase the suicide rate of young men because…
- Guns should not be banned on campus because the right to bear weapons is enshrined in the constitution.

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## Invention Activity: Using Different Claim Types

One strategy to analyze the logos of your persuasive research essay is to identify the type of claim you are making and then consider other possible claim types. Here is an example based around the issue of cheerleading:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Definitional**: | Cheerleading is a sport because… |
| **Resemblance**: | Cheerleading is similar to gymnastics because… |
| **Causal**: | Cheerleading causes body image problems in young women and men. |
| **Evaluation**: | Cheerleading is a good extracurricular activity for young women because… (your reason will be based upon what features makes up a "good extracurricular activity for young women") |
| **Proposal**: | Cheerleading should become a recognized college sport because… |

You can use the claim types strategy to clarify audience-based reasons and to consider the differences between your claim and those of your skeptical readers. Looking through these differences may allow you to figure out a point of common ground.

Here is another example based on the issue of whether all expository writing classes should be offered online.

| | **Your position** | **Your skeptical reader's position** |
|---|---|---|
| Definitional | Online learning is a type of education. | Online learning is a form of training, not education. |
| Resemblance | For students, taking online expository writing classes is similar to how they use social media. | Online learning is the same as correspondence courses from the 1960s. |
| Causal | Online expository classes will enhance students' twenty-first- century digital literacy skills. | Online classes will lead to more plagiarism. |
| Evaluation | Making all expository writing classes online is a good policy for K-State. | Making all expository writing classes online is a bad policy for K- State. |
| Proposal | We should make all expository writing classes go online, | We should reserve expository writing classes only for students who are not local. |

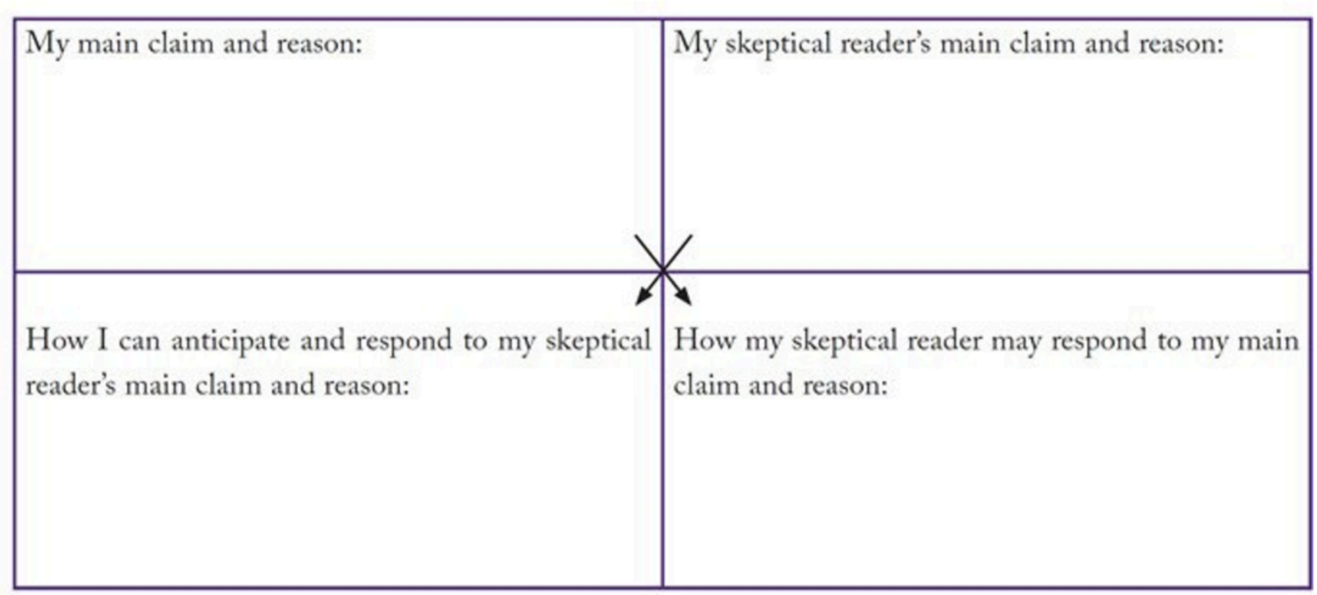
The student writer, when looking at this chart, may be able to consider ways to qualify their argument and make it more persuasive for their skeptical reader. For example, they may concede the importance of establishing teaching policies that offset plagiarism; they may also consider finding common ground in the particular type of students who should be allowed to take these courses and, moreover, the types of classes that may best utilize online learning.

Use a chart like the one below and fill out your own claim types as well as those of a skeptical reader. Then, look for ways to clarify your own position and the common ground.

## Your Issue:

| Claim Types | Your position | Your skeptical reader's postion |
|---|---|---|
| Definitional | | |
| Resemblance | | |
| Causal | | |
| Evaluation | | |
| Porposal | | |

After you have a good grasp on your position and that of your audience, fill out this following table. It may enable you to help create a strategy to write for your skeptical audience and anticipate their concerns.




## Dialogical and Invitational Strategies

You have several rhetorical strategies that you can experiment with to craft your message to make sure that your skeptical or resistant readers keep on listening to you and keep themselves open for persuasion. You can think of these strategies as "dialogical," as many of them ask you to engage your readers as if you are having a dialogue with each other; in this case, you may provide questions, enabling readers to respond and include themselves in the conversation. You can also think of these strategies as "invitational,"[2] as you are inviting your readers to consider the issue with you and trying to find common ground with them. Finally, some researchers may call these approaches "nonthreatening" or "nontraditional," as you are being empathetic with your readers, trying to understand their point of view and not necessarily trying to win. Overall, you are establishing trust and common ground and attempting to understand what separates your values from those of your audience.

As Carl Rogers suggests, though, these types of dialogical, nonthreatening approaches can be unsettling for writers:

> If you really understand another person in this way, if you are willing to enter [their] private world and see the way life appears to [them], without any attempt to make evaluative judgments, you run the risk of being changed yourself. You might see things [their] way; you might find that [they] have influenced your attitudes or your personality.[3]

Remember the challenge of this rhetorical situation: if you hope that your readers will consider changing their mind on the issue, then you as well have to be willing to change and compromise.

In this section, you will encounter several strategies to help you promote this dialogical approach. Here is one example, from the University of Oklahoma, in which the former university president, David Boren, informs his readers, OU students, that he is going to have to raise their tuition. Though only the first six paragraphs have been included, you will be able to detect several strategies Boren uses to connect to his resistant audience.

> Dear OU Students:
>
> I am writing to bring you up to date on the status of our University budget and on the recommendations which I will make in regard to tuition to the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents. As a family, I believe that we should have candid and frank discussions of our financial situation.
>
> As you have read, the national recession has forced budget cuts in more than 40 states across the nation this year. Oklahoma is in that number. The Oklahoma state government revenues declined this year by more than $300 million from last year.
>
> The bad news is that to make up for the shortfall the budgets of state agencies have to be cut. The good news is that the governor and the Legislature have placed a priority on support for education and are cutting education even less than other units of state government.
>
> At OU our operating budget has already been cut by about $4 million. In addition to these cuts, we will also have approximately $6 million – $8 million in increased costs which we cannot control. These include items like the rising cost of health care, books and periodicals at the library, and carryover payments for faculty and staff salary increases which took place last year.

> It is now clear that the Legislature will have no additional funds to help us pay for these added costs. In short, our budget has been hit by a problem in the neighborhood of $10 million – $12 million.
>
> It is also now clear that we cannot solve this financial problem without raising tuition. To try to close the deficit solely with more cuts would harm the quality of education at the University. It would force us to compromise the standard of excellence our students have a right to expect. Even with tuition increases, we will not be able to provide raises for our faculty and staff. All of us will be sharing in the effort to keep up our high standards during this tough budget year.
>
> I have waited as long as I can wait in conscience to make this difficult decision. Other universities in Oklahoma including OSU have already announced increases. I wanted to raise our tuition as little as possible and have been working at the State Capitol to try to find other sources of funds.

What are some of these strategies?

- Boren provides a "buffer"; instead of delivering the bad news about the tuition increase directly, he first builds a rapport with his resistant readers, provides background, and makes it appear that they are a part of this decision-making process.
- Boren delays his main thesis until the fifth paragraph, easing readers into the bad news.
- Boren uses pronouns such as "we" and "our," emphasizing the fact that he and the students are in this together.
- Boren uses a family analogy, with himself as the father and the students as children that he cares about.
- Boren avoids explicitly stating who is making this tuition increase decision.

As you draft and revise your persuasive research argument, consider the following strategies. They will be organized in three groups:

- Ethos- or Pathos-based Strategies
- Research Strategies
- Organization Strategies

## Ethos- or Pathos-Based Strategies

Connect to your readers by building a relationship with them (ethos) or appealing to their emotions (pathos):

- Consider using pronouns, such as "we" and "you," that help connect you to your readers.
- Flatter your resistant readers and show that you are working hard to understand their side.
- Narrate a vivid story, one that highlights the issue and that appeals to your readers emotionally; in other words, make your readers care about the people in the story and less about their own claims, reasons, and assumptions.
- Make the issue personal for your resistant readers, again possibly through a story or an anecdote.
- Pose questions and show your desire to interact with your readers and get their input.
- Show your humility (another understated type of ethos); share a story of how your thinking on the issue has changed: "I used to feel just like you until…"
- Accurately and fairly summarize your audience's position and values to show that you respect them.
- Gently show the risks for your audience if they maintain their position.
- Use humor when appropriate; try to get your resistant readers to laugh.

## Rhetorical Research Strategies

Rebecca Moore Howard, in her *The Citation Project* (see http://www.citationproject.net/), reported several concerns with how college student writers used research. For example, students cited material from the first page of their research sources 46% of the time, suggesting that they were not reading these sources carefully and comprehensively. Of their sources, 56% of them were cited only once in their drafts. Furthermore, 52% of the sources involved "patchwriting" in some way—an indication that student writers were paraphrasing and/or quoting these sources in ways that would concern their instructors.

Another concern that students show in their research is their tendency to only choose sources that confirm their ideas and perspectives. In short, these are sources that their skeptical readers may not find persuasive and credible. As a 2014 PEW Research study on political polarization shows, these student writers are acting similar to Americans in general: they prefer to read or view media sources that confirm their worldviews. For example, the PEW study found that 47% of conservative viewers watch a single news source, Fox News.

As this chapter asks you to consider argumentation as taking on risks — after all, you are making yourself vulnerable and allowing for the possibility that your ideas about the issue will change — you should also look for research sources that your own skeptical or resistant readers will find persuasive. In other words, you want to make sure you're using research *rhetorically*: with consideration for your audience, message, and persuasive purpose.

We will look at these three strategies for using research rhetorically:

- Consider the credibility and bias of your research sources
- Use different types of research that your skeptical readers will find credible and persuasive

- Shape your research sources to fit your skeptical readers' assumptions and values

## Consider the Credibility and Bias of Your Research Sources

As you choose sources, you'll want to determine how credible they will be for your readers. Use criteria such as the following to judge how credible your sources are:

- **Currency**: How recent are your research sources? (Be mindful that certain audiences will expect far more recent research than others.)
- **Authority**: How easy is it to determine who the author or sponsoring organization is of the source? (If you are using a website, domain names indicated by .gov, .org, or .edu may have more credibility.)
- **Comprehensiveness**: Does the source include evidence and information that is complete and satisfying for your readers?
- **Accuracy**: Does the information and evidence in the source appear to be accurate?

In addition to these criteria, you should also be aware of the ideological slant or bias of the source you are considering. You can get an idea about the bias of your sources by going to a website such as AllSides (allsides.com/media-bias), which categorizes many media sites according to a "left" (liberal), center, and "right" (conservative) continuum. For example, the following figure shows how a few well-known media sources are categorized:

| **Left** | **Left-Leaning** | **Center** | **Right-Leaning** | **Right** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Huffington Post | The Atlantic | USA Today | The Wall Street Journal | Breitbart |
| Mother Jones | BuzzFeed News | Bloomberg | The Washington Times | National Review |
| MSNBC | The New York Times | Reuters | | The New York Post |
| The New Yorker | The Washington Post | AP | | |
| The Daily Beast | | | | |

Though you don't necessarily need to stay away from media sources that have an ideological bias—all sources in some way will favor a particular ideology or worldview—you do have to be aware of these ideological and political sources, especially when you are using them for evidence to persuade your own readers.

To get better at examining sources, you might want to develop your strategy of "lateral reading." Unlike "vertical reading," in which you literally read closely through a single source, lateral reading asks you to jump to different online media sources to quickly determine what they are saying about the site you are interested in. The author of the online text, *Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers*, Michael A. Caulfield, describes the process of lateral reading:

> When presented with a new site that needs to be evaluated, professional fact-checkers don't spend much time on the site itself. Instead they get off the page and see what other authoritative sources have said about the site. They open up many tabs in their browser, piecing together different bits of information from across the web to get a better picture of the site they're investigating.[4]

In other words, twenty-first century reading requires intensive and careful reading of sources and, at the same time, scanning of similar sources to figure out how one source fits into a larger network of sources.

For example, imagine you find a source from this organization, the James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal (www.jamesgmartin.center)? How will you know if this organization has a strong ideological bias or not? How can you tell if your readers will consider it to be credible?

You can find a little bit about this organization's political position if you go to its "About Us" page on its website. Here is the statement of the organizational goals:

Our goals are to improve colleges and universities, especially in North Carolina. We want to:

- Increase the diversity of ideas taught, debated, and discussed on campus
- Encourage respect for the institutions that underlie economic prosperity and freedom of action and conscience
- Increase the quality of teaching and students' commitment to learning so that they graduate with strong literacy and fundamental knowledge
- Encourage cost-effective administration and governance

These are goals that many groups, regardless of ideological conviction, may champion, yet two phrases stand out: "diversity of ideas" and "economic prosperity." These are concepts that more conservative groups will often be committed to.

By searching about this organization and looking at what other sources say about it, you can begin to get a better portrait of the politics of this organization. You will find that it is linked to the *National Review*, a traditionally conservative publication, and to the National Association of Scholars, a conservative academic think tank. SourceWatch, a website curated by the Center for Media and Democracy, defines this organization as a "right-wing 501(c)3 nonprofit and associate member of the State Policy Network," itself a "web of right-wing 'think tanks' and tax-exempt organizations."

## Use Different Types of Research That Your Skeptical Readers Will

## Find Credible and Persuasive

As you conduct library- and Internet-based research, consider the types of research that your audience will value. Although you want to avoid stereotyping your audience, you can make some good educated guesses regarding, for instance, whether your readers will gravitate towards personal stories or towards statistics. Other audiences will be more accepting of information sources such as company blogs, whereas others will expect peer-reviewed academic research articles.

Here is a list of some possible research sources, which is far from complete:

- Primary research sources, including field research, observations, interviews, and surveys
- Peer-reviewed articles from library databases
- Statistics
- Government white papers
- Editorials and commentary
- Human-interest stories or examples from newspaper or Internet sources
- Internet blogs
- Social media sources, including user comments and chat room transcripts
- Personal stories or anecdotes
- Textbooks and class notes

One research strategy, coming from the social sciences, is that of “triangulation”—to find different types of research sources to satisfy your readers. For example, you might find yourself blending several different types of research sources together to enhance your persuasiveness, such as starting off your introduction with a personal story related to the issue, then reviewing alternative perspectives by using library-based research, and then supporting your own position with an interview of a professor, statistics that come from a textbook, and a statement from a company press release.

## Shape Your Research Sources to Fit Your Skeptical Readers' Assumptions and Values

Your research will take on several different purposes. Among many possibilities, it will

- Support your main reasons
- Support your assumptions
- Show your understanding of alternative perspectives
- Reach your audience emotionally
- Emphasize strengths in your argument and subordinate weaknesses

- Rebut the reasons, assumptions, or evidence of alternative or oppositional sources
- Provide an example of the issue
- Demonstrate your commitment to the issue

You should use readerly cues and explain your use of the research to help guide your readers and shape their reading experience. (If you look up "Transitional Devices" on the Purdue Online Writing Lab, you'll find a substantial list of these readerly cues.) In fact, rhetorically researching and using research rhetorically implies that you are thinking about your readers and how they will be interacting with the information, and, hopefully, being persuaded by how you are using the research.

Here is one example of how Kelsey Reith uses research rhetorically in her essay, "Bathroom (In)Security" (please see the Student Example in the back of this chapter):

> <u>Next, safety is not only a concern for those that would support the strict sex- assignment use of public restrooms; safety is a huge issue for the transgender community. Imagine a woman, who would for all intents and purposes appears to be woman, but perhaps her birth certificate says otherwise. What might happen to her if she were to follow her sex-assignment, and walk into the men's bathroom? This is the reason that harassment is frequently reported by the transgender community</u>. The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey found that in the past year 59% of those surveyed had avoided the bathroom out of fear of conflict, 12% had been verbally harassed, and 1% had been physically and sexually harassed while using public restrooms (Barnett). <u>The way transgender people are politically and socially treated in bathrooms is an issue of discrimination. This treatment has been shown in several studies to lead to violence, poverty, and isolation. Which puts transgender people's quality of life at risk</u>. Between 2003 and 2016, there has only been 1 case of a transgender individual committing sexual assault in a public restroom, while there have been 19 cases of cis-gender men pretending to be transgender in order to enter women's bathrooms and commit sexual assault. There has been no evidence to suggest a connection between laws that permit transgender people to use their preferred bathrooms and an increase in cases of assault by cis-gender men disguised as transgender women (Barnett). <u>What this means is that predators have been committing sexual assault under the guise of the transgender identity for a significant time and there hasn't been a rise of these occurrences in areas where restroom facility policy is favorable to the transgender community. When it comes to sexual assault in bathroom, laws that allow transgender people to use their preferred restroom are not the problem, and not allowing them to do so is not the solution to the behavior of cis-gender predators.</u>

Importantly, although Reith is only using one research source here, she is paraphrasing the statistics from this source and introducing, contextualizing, and explaining her use of the sources (the chunks that have been underlined). She asks her readers interactive questions, and she explicitly tells them what the research is doing or showing:

- "This treatment has been shown in several studies to lead to violence, poverty, and isolation."
- "What this means is that predators have been committing sexual assault under the guise of the transgender identity for a significant time…"

Finally, shaping your research sources might also entail having to explain or qualify your use of them. For example, what should you do if you have found the "perfect research source," yet it's one that you are fearful will not meet the ideological worldview of your readers? In this case, instead of hiding the ideological angle of the source, admit it and then qualify your use of the source:

- Although the United States Interior Secretary David Bernhardt is well connected to the petroleum industry, we shouldn't immediately discount his rejection of environmental regulations.
- Undoubtedly, many conservative readers will wonder why I have cited statistics from a study that PETA sponsored. Although, like you, I do not accept some of the advocacy work that PETA does, I think we can all agree that dangerous conditions of farm animals need to be looked at—to increase the safety of meat consumers and relieve the suffering of animals.

## Organizational Strategies

Importantly, your organizational decisions—the order in which you arrange your reasons as well as those that represent the alternative positions—are powerful ways to interact with your readers.

A "traditional" or classical approach to organization tends to include an introduction in which you identify the issue and explicitly state your main claim and reasons; the body of the essay in which you summarize the major alternative or oppositional positions and then attempt to rebut or concede them, providing your own reasons and support; and finally, a conclusion in which you restate your main claim and reasons. However, we encourage you to use a delayed-thesis or dialogic approach to this assignment, as it tends to reduce threat in your resistant or skeptical reader. However, you if you choose a more traditional organizational approach, you'll need to be very mindful that your explicit claim, so early in the argument, is likely to make your skeptical readers even more resistant and defensive. You will want to use some of the strategies from this chapter to invite these readers to understand your own views and values.

## Delayed-Thesis Approach

One way around highlighting your position early on in your persuasive research essay – and, consequently, running the risk of losing your audience at the start – is to delay your claim until later in the essay. Like the dialogic approach that we will explore next, you can show sympathy towards your readers' views, create common ground, and use questions or other strategies before then contributing your own position on the argument. Hopefully, by that point, you will have created a good relationship with your readers, and they will be more willing to listen to your side.

## The Dialogic Approach

The dialogic approach to multisided arguments draws attention to the give-and-take nature of discussions on complex topics. It is similar to the psychological therapy models developed by Carl Rogers, who emphasized value-neutral conversations and empathic listening to understand alternative or opposing ideas. In other words, as the writer, you do not pass judgments on your readers' views—especially if they are different than yours; instead, you demonstrate that you are listening to your readers' perspectives, values, and concerns. Your main aim is to build common ground between you and your readers with the ultimate goal that you are going to lower their resistance and open themselves up to persuasion.

Those using this strategy take pains to illustrate that they understand the varied positions on a topic and have considered others' perspectives. Writers will use the delay-thesis approach, as it allows the writer to connect to their resistant readers before acknowledging their own position. Dialogic argument approaches commonly follow this outline:

Introduction

Dialogic Discussion

Delayed Thesis and Support

Conclusion

Maxine Hairston[5] offers another way of organizing dialogic arguments:

1. An introduction that fairly, honestly, and objectively identifies the issue.
2. An explanation of the positions that oppose that of the writer. In this section, the writer is demonstrating they understand the alternative positions and the values and beliefs of skeptical or resistant readers.
3. An explanation of the position that the writer holds.

4. An attempt to clarify the common ground between the writer's position and the alternative positions. For example, what are the key beliefs or assumptions that the writer shares with their skeptical readers?
5. An attempt to find a way to resolve the issue that attempts at a compromise between the writer's position and those of their skeptical readers.

Note: A challenge of the dialogical approach is that because it undercuts the differences between the writer and alternative or oppositional perspectives, many writers end up writing exploratory, informative, or non-persuasive texts. If you choose this approach, you should still acknowledge that you do hold a position on the issue, even though you are attempting to build common ground and maintain a good rapport with your readers.

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# Drafting Activities

## Summarizing Your Audience's Views

Using the summarizing skills we've been practicing, write a fair and objective summary of your reader's views on the topic you've chosen. You'll want to think here about what it means to write a general summary over a larger topic rather than a specific summary over one text: What is the main problem behind your issue? What is your audience's stance on that problem?

Remember, you need to summarize the reader's views in a way that your resistant audience would read it and say "yes, that's what I believe." You'll also need to maintain a respectful and professional tone.

## Establishing the Conversation

Once you feel as though you have a clear sense of the overall conversation, as well as the views of your resistant reader, you can begin drafting the early parts of your research essay where you explain the issue more broadly as well as the multiple viewpoints present in response to the topic. Remember, for this essay we're asking you to experiment with a delayed-thesis argument. That means that your thesis statement—your own position—will not be located at the beginning of the essay. Instead, it's likely to be either near the middle of the essay (if you're using a version of a dialogic argument structure) or closer to the end of the essay, if you're using a more traditionally delayed-thesis structure.

As you think about drafting the earlier parts of your essay, then, you might find that it looks somewhat different than the kinds of research essays you've been asked to do in the past. You'll find an organizational plan for both a delayed-thesis argument and a dialogic argument in the Organizational Strategies section above. These plans can help you structure your research essay in a way that will be most effective for your resistant/skeptical audience.

In each case, you'll notice that the first few paragraphs of your essay will focus on establishing the broader context for the topic itself and summarizing other viewpoints. With that in mind, and given what you now know from your research about the topic and about alternative viewpoints on this issue, begin drafting the early parts of your essay. How do you want to establish the conversation? What kind of context for the issue is immediately required for your reader?

Your instructor might then ask you to share these drafts with your peers, checking for objectivity and accuracy in the summaries, clarity and thoroughness of establishing the conversation, professional and respectful tone, and overall purpose and structure.

## What Is Your Position?

By this stage of the writing process, you should be well on your way to a thorough understanding of your issue; you have written a complete summary of your audience's perspective on the topic, and you've begun to establish the larger conversation around the issue. You should have read a lot of credible sources about your topic and considered multiple viewpoints. You're now likely ready to begin building your own claim.

Consider the ways that your thinking on the issue has changed as you have research and have analyzed your resistant audience. Then, freewrite your own stance or position on the issue; eventually, this will become the main claim that you will offer to your readers.

Here are a few examples that appear in the student examples at the end of this chapter:

- I understand why one might feel that letting transgender people use the bathroom of their gender identity would create more problems than solutions. Nonetheless, I have to disagree with this stance. I believe transgender people should be able to use which ever bathroom they feel best reflects their gender identity. For me the issues of human rights, safety, and the evolution of bathroom policies make it clear how the transgender community should be treated when it comes to public facilities. (Kelsey Reith, "Bathroom (In)Security")
- It is important to recognize that the moral concerns about encouraging drug use, as well as the safety concerns of needle-stick accidents and increased crime rates are valid. However, Needle Exchange Programs are used because they have benefits as well. While critics and proponents of NEPs disagree on whether or not they should be used, both groups are concerned with the safety and health of their communities. (MacKenzie Gwinner, "Should the U.S. Use Needle Exchange Programs?")
- I am excited about these initiatives and am eager to see what the planning groups develop. I am writing, however, to propose that the overall Visionary Plan could be strengthened and that present financial and enrollment challenges could better be addressed by drawing these initiatives together with a common purpose that is aligned with K-State's mission, vision, and values: addressing climate change. (Sarah Inskeep, "Sustainability & K-State: A Letter to President Myers")

In each of these three claims, you will find that they start from the perspectives of their resistant audience and then shift to the position of the writer.

## Connecting Your Position to Your Audience

To help you plan and develop the *audience-based reasons* that will make your persuasive research essay effective, use this activity to test whether your reasons, assumptions, and research will be persuasive for your intended resistant/skeptical audience (and repeat for as many reasons as you have):

### Claim:

### Reason:

Evidence or research to support the reason:

What type of source would have this information?

### Assumption(s):

Which assumptions might the audience resist?

Evidence or research needed to support resisted assumptions: What types of sources would have this information?

## Outlining & Freewriting Opportunities

As you continue drafting your persuasive argument, experiment with several of these outlining and freewriting strategies. Because of the sophistication and complexity of the persuasive research argument, you'll want to break it down into distinct drafting opportunities or sections.

### Outlining

Consider these following organizational components below and create a more specific outline for your argument to help guide you and break up your drafting goals. You'll need to think about where you are going to place your main claim — without challenging your resistant readers too early — how you are going to deal with your readers' opposing views, and in what order you are going to organize your own reasons that support your main claim. Here are some generic organizational components you can use:

- Introducing your issue
- Inviting your audience to the conversation
- Summarizing opposing views
- Countering or conceding to opposing views
- Establishing your main clam
- Finding common ground with your resistant readers
- Supporting your main reasons
- Concluding your argument

### Freewriting

Use several of these following questions to help you generate more ideas. When you are finished, you will want to go back, reread, and then revise and shape these early freewrites.

#### *Establishing the Conversation*

- What are the most important positions that make up this issue?
- Why do people care about this issue? How is it significant for the public?
- Why do people disagree about this issue? What is at the heart of this disagreement?

### *Resistant Readers' Perspectives*

- What is your resistant readers' most persuasive reason? Why is it persuasive or challenging for you? How will your rebut or concede this point?

### *Common Ground*

- At the heart of the issue, with what do you and your audience both agree?

### *Your Claim & Reason*

- What is your most important reason? Why? How will your readers react to this reason? To what extent will this main claim and reason satisfy their beliefs, assumptions, and values?
- What specific research, personal experience, examples, statistics, expert testimonies, and other types of evidence will your audience find the most compelling? Why?

### *Your Conclusion*

- What main idea do you want to leave your readers with? How do you want to make them feel?
- What is the "bigger picture" of your argument? What other larger issues or concerns can you connect your audience to?
- How can you reaffirm your common ground and your positive relationship with your resistant readers?

## Revision: Avoiding Dropped-In Quotations

A common usage concern in papers that use the outside voices of secondary sources is the "dropped-in quotation," sometimes called a "dropped quote," in which the quotation is inserted into the paragraph without enough of an introduction or context. Readers will find the quotation to be too abrupt, and, additionally, they will require more explanation to understand why the quotation is being used. Readers will also be worried that the secondary voice of the quotation is dominating the paragraph—doing the work that the writer should be doing.

Here is an example of a dropped-in quotation:

> Another reason that Manhattan High School should develop a vaping awareness program for students is because vaping companies have been directly marketing teenagers. "As recently as 2017, as evidence grew that high school students were flocking to its sleek devices and flavored nicotine pods, the company

> refused to sign a pledge not to market to teenagers as part of a lawsuit settlement" (Cresswell and Kaplan). Companies like Juul should not be allowed to market directly to high-school students.

To avoid the dropped-in quotation usage problem, experiment with these strategies:

## Introduce the quotation

In the underlined passage below, the writer has provided some more context and directly introduced the quotation:

> Another reason that Manhattan High School should develop a vaping awareness program for students is because vaping companies have been directly marketing teenagers. For example, one company that has attracted a lot of attention has been Juul, which has been marketing to teenagers for several years. According to a *New York Times* article, "As recently as 2017, as evidence grew that high school students were flocking to its sleek devices and flavored nicotine pods, the company refused to sign a pledge not to market to teenagers as part of a lawsuit settlement" (Cresswell and Kaplan). Companies like Juul should not be allowed to market directly to high-school students.

## After the quotation, provide a summary or explanation in your own words

This strategy further develops the use of the quotation, emphasizing to readers why the quotation was used and how it meets the persuasive goals of the writer.

> Another reason that Manhattan High School should develop a vaping awareness program for students is because vaping companies have been directly marketing teenagers. For example, one company that has attracted a lot of attention has been Juul, which has been marketing to teenagers for several years. According to a *New York Times* article, "As recently as 2017, as evidence grew that high school students were flocking to its sleek devices and flavored nicotine pods, the company refused to sign a pledge not to market to teenagers as part of a lawsuit settlement" (Cresswell and Kaplan). In other words, Juul has not been doing what cigarette companies have been doing for decades. Juul has not been telling young consumers the health risks associated with vaping.Companies like Juul should not be allowed to market directly to high-school students.

### Tell your reader why you used the quotation or why the quotation is important

Similarly, this strategy asks you to directly respond to the "So What?" question. Why did the writer actually decide to use this quotation?

Another reason that Manhattan High School should develop a vaping awareness program for students is because vaping companies have been directly marketing teenagers. For example, one company that has attracted a lot of attention has been Juul, which has been marketing to teenagers for several years. According to a *New York Times* article, "As recently as 2017, as evidence grew that high school students were flocking to its sleek devices and flavored nicotine pods, the company refused to sign a pledge not to market to teenagers as part of a lawsuit settlement" (Cresswell and Kaplan). In other words, Juul has not been doing what cigarette companies have been doing for decades. Juul has not been telling young consumers the health risks associated with vaping. This quotation shows that Juul's main marketing strategy has been to market to young consumers. Companies like Juul should not be allowed to market directly to high-school students.

### Shift the quotation to a paraphrase and/or use a fragment of the quotation in your paraphrase

A final strategy asks writers to decide whether they actually need the full quotation; they may opt instead for a paraphrase, which they cite, or for a fragment of the quotation. The benefit of this approach is that it allows writers to more smoothly connect their position to that of the secondary source.

Another reason that Manhattan High School should develop a vaping awareness program for students is because vaping companies have been directly marketing teenagers. For example, one company that has attracted a lot of attention has been Juul, which has been marketing to teenagers for several years According to a *New York Times* article, from 2017, lawmakers have learned that high school teenagers have been attracted by Juul's "sleek devices and flavored nicotine pods," but Juul refused to acknowledge the importance of teenage consumers in its overall marketing plan (Cresswell and Kaplan). In other words, Juul has not been doing what cigarette companies have been doing for decades. Juul has not been telling young consumers the health risks associated with vaping. In fact, as Cresswell and Kaplan have pointed out, Juul's main marketing strategy has been to market to young consumers. Companies like Juul should not be allowed to market directly to high-school students.

## Workshop Option #1: Peer Review

Use these workshop questions to evaluate your own persuasive research argument or a classmate's argument:

### Focus/Purpose

- Where has the writer clearly identified the topic/issue/problem? How do they explain why that topic is controversial and timely?
- Who is the resistant audience? What does the writer do to engage that audience with their argument?

### Development

- What are the various perspectives on the issue? Does the writer represent those perspectives fairly?
- Where does the writer invite the audience to consider *with them* other viewpoints?
- How well does the writer integrate research sources and explain how that evidence supports their overall claim?

### Organization

- Is the writer using a delayed-thesis or Rogerian organizational structure in order to best persuade the resistant audience? Which structure does the writer seem to be using? Is it effective?
- Is the presentation of the argument consistent with its thesis and general organizational approach?
- Where does the writer utilize topic sentences, transitions, and/or other writing choices that help guide the reader from one idea to the next (both within individual paragraphs and within the essay as a whole)? Where are these necessary "signposts" missing in the draft?

### Tone/Style (and Focus)

- Evaluate the essay's overall rhetorical effect by assessing its use of *logos*, *pathos*, *ethos*, and *kairos*.
- What is that overall effect and what comments/suggestions would you offer the writer to strengthen how those appeals work for the resistant audience?

## Workshop Option #2: Peer Review Using Role Play

For this workshop, work in small groups and take on one or more of these following workshop roles. Each role will be responsible for examining a different aspect of your classmate's persuasive research essay draft. Make sure you jot down useful notes for your classmate.

## 1. Controversy Pulse Checker and Opposing View Finder

Make sure that the writer has actually chosen a multisided controversial issue that's manageable for this assignment's length. If the topic seems more informative than persuasive, or too broad, alert the writer and brainstorm ways to create a more controversial or tighter claim.

Also, make sure the writer has summarized the possible alternative/opposing views and then rebutted those views to strengthen their argument.

## 2. Significance and Source-Control Detector

Look for the significance of the issue, the "*so what?*" factor: why is this topic important for the writer, the public, or the audience? If the significance is not clear throughout the essay, ask the writer why they are invested in the issue and why it is an important one for the audience.

Check, too, that the writer is not simply stringing sources together. Point out places where the writer does not integrate, or loses control of, their sources. Note places, too, where the writer *is* making clear and explicit connections between points and sources.

## 3. Claim Confirmer and Support Supporter

Underline the sentence(s) that provide(s) the writer's claim. If you cannot find a clear claim, let the writer know that they need to be more explicit. (Remember, the claim is likely to come in the middle or at the end of the essay).

Additionally, examine the writer's "because" reasons that support the claim. Each of these reasons should be developed by specific examples and other types of evidence and explanation. If there is little support, indicate the places where more support and explanation is needed.

## 4. Audience Analyzer and Organizational Engineer

Make sure that the writer indicates a specific audience, one that should *at least* be slightly resistant to or uncomfortable with the writer's claim.

Then, assess the "because" reasons and make sure that they are based upon the audience's values and beliefs. Do you find those reasons to be effective at persuading the audience? Why or why not?

Finally, make sure that the organization plan is appropriate for a multisided argument. Are transitions or other cues useful to guide readers? Do the sections of the writer's essay make sense and help enhance the argument?

## Student Example

*Kelsey Reith wrote this persuasive research essay in Brenda Martin's ENGL 200 class. Kelsey's target audience are those who are skeptical of allowing transgender people to use the bathroom that aligns with their gender identity.*

### Bathroom (In)Security

Often when there is debate over a political issue, Americans will look to the Constitution for guidance. But how can a solution be reached when that legislation is vague or incomplete in the context of today's society? There are many factors that the politicians of our past would have never even considered when making the policy to govern their future country. Even something as seemingly straightforward as policy on public restrooms is now under question. It is no longer as simple as men use the men's room and women use the women's room, because the people's general conception of sex and gender are no longer that simple. A glaring question has been raised against public policy: which bathroom are transgender people supposed to use? When one's sex assigned at birth is different from their current gender identity or expression, which bathroom are they to use, the bathroom that matches their birth certificate, their genitals, or their identity?

Many who think transgender people should use public restrooms according to their birth sex-assignment are reasonably worried about several issues. They may be concerned about their personal privacy rights, protecting them from having to use bathrooms with those of the opposite sex. A mother in Oregon is suing her school district over the "uncomfortable," "embarrassing," and "awkward" encounter her son experienced when a transgender peer entered the bathroom while he was using it. She first responded by asking the school to take action and perhaps have the transgender student use a single stall bathroom. The school consulted the law and decided to continue to let the transgender student use the men's bathroom. Concerned for her son's privacy rights, she filed a lawsuit (Cegavske). Law professor Eugene Volokh argues that it's unconstitutional to let transgender people use bathrooms of their identity rather than their biological sex. Under the Equal Protection Clause persons must be protected from being observed partially clothed by the opposite sex. This idea has been supported in several court cases over the years. York v. Story (1963) stated that "the desire to shield one's unclothed figure from view of strangers, and particularly strangers of the opposite sex, in impelled by elementary self-respect and personal dignity." Sepulveda v. Ramirez (2012) stated that "the right to bodily privacy is fundamental… common sense and decency protect a parolee's right not to be observed by an officer of the opposite sex while producing a urine sample" and many more (Volokh). We are all put in a vulnerable position when using public bathrooms and showers, and it's laws like these that protect us from humiliation and loss of dignity.

Another concern is that of safety. There is a possibility that a transgender person could sexually assault someone in the bathroom, but it's even more worrisome that cis-gender men that are sexual predators will dress as a woman, pretending to be transgender, in order to enter women's bathrooms and commit assault. Mike Huckabee, a former governor of Arkansas, once joked, "Now I wish that someone told me that when I was in high school that I could have felt like a woman when it came time to take showers in PE," highlighting the very mindset that would strike fear into any woman (Barnett). The threat of a predator taking advantage of the transgender identity is simply too high of a risk.

Finally, this group may feel that what isn't broke shouldn't be fixed. Bathrooms have been separated by sex since the 19th century. Law professor Terry Kogan theorizes that sex-separated facilities were originally created as a way to protect women for purposes of sanitation and privacy during the Industrial Revolution when more men and women worked side by side (Barnett). Bathrooms as they stand are sufficient in creating a safe environment for the larger population. Why change it now and take the unnecessary risks of privacy violation and sexual assault?

I understand why one might feel that letting transgender people use the bathroom of their gender identity would create more problems than solutions. Nonetheless, I have to disagree with this stance. I believe transgender people should be able to use which ever bathroom they feel best reflects their gender identity. For me the issues of human rights, safety, and the evolution of bathroom policies make it clear how the transgender community should be treated when it comes to public facilities.

First, transgender people's ability to use the correct bathroom is not simply a matter of transgender rights, but human rights. There is a misconception that transgender people are people who used to be one gender and are now another, or somewhere in between. A transgender man, for example, is not a man who used to be a woman, he is a man, and he would like to be treated as a man and to be able to use the bathroom as such. Tyler, the transgender student involved in the lawsuit discussed earlier explains this idea, "See it like this, why do we call a musician a musician? It's because that's what they are. They don't 'feel' that way they 'are' that way" (quoted in Cegavske). This distinction is vital to continue a conversation on the treatment of the transgender community. It is often forgotten that transgender rights are in fact human rights and humans have a right to use public restroom and facilities. A suit filed by the Justice Department states that not allowing transgender people their human right of using public bathrooms of their identity "results in their isolation and exclusion, and perpetrates a sense that they are not worthy of equal treatment and respect" (Berlinger). The transgender community is a marginalized group in the U.S., and they will continue to be an oppressed group if they are continued to be treated as if their rights are not equal to all human rights.

Next, safety is not only a concern for those that would support the strict sex-assignment use of public restrooms; safety is a huge issue for the transgender community. Imagine a woman, who would for all intents and purposes appears to be woman, but perhaps her birth certificate says otherwise. What might happen to her if she were to follow her sex-assignment, and walk into the men's bathroom? This is the reason that harassment is frequently reported by the transgender community. The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey found that in the past year 59% of those surveyed had avoided the bathroom out of fear of conflict, 12% had been verbally harassed, and 1% had been physically and sexually harassed while using public restrooms (Barnett). The way transgender people are politically and socially treated in bathrooms is an issue of discrimination. This treatment has been shown in several studies to lead to violence, poverty, and isolation. which puts transgender people's quality of life at risk. Between 2003 and 2016, there has only been 1 case of a transgender individual committing sexual assault in a public restroom, while there have been 19 cases of cis-gender men pretending to be transgender in order to enter women's bathrooms and commit sexual assault. There has been no evidence to suggest a connection between laws that permit transgender people to use their preferred bathrooms and an increase in cases of assault by cis-gender men disguised as transgender women (Barnett). What this means is that predators have been committing sexual assault under the guise of the transgender identity for a significant time and there hasn't been a rise of these occurrences in areas where restroom facility policy is favorable to the transgender community. When it comes to sexual assault in bathroom, laws that allow transgender people to use their preferred restroom are not the problem, and not allowing them to do so is not the solution to the behavior of cis-gender predators.

Finally, bathrooms policy isn't nearly as stagnant as many would believe. A long history exists of reconsidering and changing the laws that dictate public restrooms. Policies and social standards surrounding bathrooms have been questioned, rallied for, and adapted numerous times. It wasn't until 1954 that laws were instated that prevented bathroom to be segregated by race, and it wasn't until 1990 that laws were made that protected bathroom discrimination against those with disabilities (Killermann). Policies for public facilities have and are meant to evolve with the changing times. The inclusion of a transgender population growing in numbers and voice is the next logical step in bathroom equality.

As an advocate for equality of all, and consequently an ally of the LGBTQ+ community, I want to know all I can about the issues that concern and affect transgender people. While I understand the concerns against more permissive restroom laws, I believe the best course of action would be to allow transgender people to use the bathroom which matches their gender identity. The importance of human rights, safety, and progressive law-making reveal to me what I believe would be best for our society.

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## Student Example

Yusuf Ciftci wrote this persuasive research essay in Caitlin Hymans' ENGL 200 class. It won first place in the 2021 Expository Program Writing Awards. Ciftci's audience is legislative leadership in states that have not expanded to Medicaid.

### Healthcare Equity and Social Justice

The ideals of the American Revolution were founded on the concept of unalienable rights, described as "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" in the Declaration of Independence. The inclusion of an endowed right to life is rather interesting. What constitutes the right to life? How can the government ensure a right to life among constituents? These difficult questions have dominated political discourse surrounding American healthcare since the early 20th century. In recent decades, rising healthcare costs, barriers to healthcare access, and deteriorating health outcomes among the general population have threatened this fundamental right to life. In response, legislative reforms have focused on mending inequalities within the American healthcare system. Most notably, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), colloquially known as Obamacare, significantly altered the structure of American healthcare in the past decade. A critical, yet controversial, component of the ACA focused on increasing healthcare coverage through Medicaid expansion, the premier federal safety net for socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals.

To explore why some legislators oppose Medicaid expansion, I will initially analyze the short-term fiscal impact of Medicaid expansion, barriers to healthcare delivery, and limitations on patient autonomy. Following this analysis, I will explore research on health outcomes, long-term health expenditures, and healthcare delivery reforms in Medicaid to understand the positive impacts of expansionary policies.

Many legislators who oppose Medicaid expansion are concerned about inefficiencies in Medicaid, directing attention to high tax rates and excessive spending throughout the years to maintain the program. Bryce Ward, a researcher on health economics with a Ph.D. from Harvard University, states that the median cost of Medicaid expansion for each state is approximately $100 million each year. Moreover, the federal government only covers the cost of expansion for the first three years of implementation, followed by incremental increases in state responsibility for the cost of expansion in successive years (2020). The substantial cost of Medicaid expansion, at $100 million each year, is concerning for legislators who are tasked with allocating limited funds to improve their communities. As a result, legislators may view opposing such large amounts of government spending as an appealing prospect to garner support among constituents.

Additionally, some are worried about the fiscal burden of Medicaid expansion on states after the three-year grace period. Given legislative term limits and recurrent election cycles, there is limited political incentive to undertake such a burdensome expansion in the view of some policymakers. Instead, legislators may focus on policies that are more likely to provide tangible short-term benefits to their communities. Rising tax rates introduce another dimension of complexity on the issue of Medicaid expansion. Ward (2020) states that "several states have explicitly raised taxes and fees to cover their share of Medicaid expansion." Therefore, legislators who value limited government interference may be unwilling to adopt government- subsidized healthcare coverage and leverage their opposition to high tax-rates for constituent support. The fiscal impact of Medicaid expansion is a challenge that must be addressed if the ACA is to succeed in its goal of increasing access to healthcare.

Opponents of Medicaid expansion are also worried that expanding Medicaid may not improve short-term health outcomes because of barriers to healthcare delivery. Gordon et al. (2018), a group of health policy professors in leading medical schools across the nation, explored this endogenous relationship between healthcare delivery and health outcomes. According to their study, relatively low Medicaid reimbursement rates and the "administrative burden of navigating a state-run insurance program" led to historically low provider participation rates in 2018. Physicians are confronted with several barriers that prevent them from providing care for those in need. These include both bureaucratic restrictions on scope of practice and insurance companies requiring prior authorization for treatments. Moreover, providers interviewed as part of the study explicitly stated that inadequate investment placed a strain on providers and was not feasible in the short-term (Gordon et al., 2018). Thus, legislators may believe that Medicaid expansion negatively impacts healthcare workers who are reluctant to undertake the additional administrative burden of Medicaid expansion without adequate compensation.

On the other hand, such policies introduce an additional barrier to healthcare delivery and reinforce detrimental health outcomes among at-risk communities. One pediatrician specifically addressed barriers to mental healthcare, stating that "They [patients] have very poor access…[to] mental health services. The mental health services they do have, on paper don't seem to solve the problems" (Gordon et al., 2018). Barriers to healthcare delivery place an undue burden on physicians, ultimately reflecting on patients in the form of disparate health outcomes. Presumably, a majority of legislators are concerned with public service and improving the lives of their constituents. As a result, some legislators may be hesitant to endorse Medicaid expansion without fundamental changes in healthcare delivery.

Finally, some legislative opponents of Medicaid expansion argue that the policy limits patient autonomy, the intrinsic right of patients to decide on medical care. In 2012, the Supreme Court reached a landmark decision ruling that critical parts of the ACA, including the Medicaid expansion mandate, were constitutional (National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius, 2012). However, on the question of whether Congress exceeded its power in withdrawing federal funds for states refusing to expand Medicaid, the Supreme Court ruled that "the Medicaid expansion provisions were unconstitutionally coercive as written." Therefore, the federal government exceeded its power in leveraging federal funds to incentivize Medicaid expansion. This apparent overreach of power by the federal government may be worrying for some legislators who oppose Medicaid expansion. Among policymakers who value individual autonomy, the prospect of the federal government dictating medical care and coercing individuals to enroll in government-subsidized health coverage is likely to elicit strong opposition. As a result, legislators may appeal to constituents by publicly opposing "coercive" Medicaid expansion mandates and appearing to advocate for the common citizen in the face of government overreach.

I understand why some legislators may oppose Medicaid expansion as a mandate of the ACA because of its fiscal burden on constituents, inefficient healthcare delivery, and constraints on patient autonomy. However, I respectfully disagree with these arguments for several reasons. I believe that Medicaid expansion will decrease long-term healthcare costs, incentivize the development of efficient healthcare delivery models, and ultimately increase patient autonomy by resulting in a healthier population.

Medicaid expansion will lead to improved long-term health outcomes, effectively reducing healthcare costs and compensating for short-term costs. In his article “The Long-term Health Impacts of Medicaid and CHIP,” Owen Thompson, a professor of health economics, longitudinally tracked health outcomes among children benefitting from Medicaid coverage. The study suggests that “an additional year of public health insurance eligibility during childhood... substantially reduces health limitations, chronic conditions and asthma prevalence while improving self-rated health” (2017). The results indicate that healthcare coverage in early childhood translates to improved health outcomes and lower rates of chronic illness in adulthood. Essentially, Medicaid expansion serves to improve the health and lives of children. These long-term impacts may serve as an incentive for legislators who value intrinsic concepts like “the American Dream” and equality of opportunity. Essentially, children will have the opportunity to succeed and contribute to society as healthy individuals without experiencing burdensome health disparities. By endorsing Medicaid expansion, legislators will position themselves as advocates for future generations and demonstrate their investment in the long-term success of the communities they represent, an appealing prospect for any policymaker across the country.

Conversely, improved long-term health outcomes will reduce the fiscal burden of disease on individuals and the healthcare system, lowering healthcare costs as a result. The Centers for Disease Control, the leading public health institute in the nation, reports that treatment costs for individuals with chronic conditions constitute roughly 90% of all healthcare expenditures in the United States. Moreover, approximately 42% of the general population is diagnosed with a chronic condition (Buttorff, Ruder, and Bauman, 2017). Given that the United States spends $3.5 trillion on healthcare each year, chronic conditions represent a tremendous financial burden on patients, providers, and taxpayers alike. Additionally, the annual cost of Medicaid expansion is estimated at 100 million each year, a significantly smaller amount compared to the healthcare cost of treating chronic illness (Ward, 2020). As established by Thompson (2017), Medicaid expansion is correlated with improved long-term health outcomes and reduced rates of chronic disease. Therefore, reduced healthcare expenditures to treat chronic illness in the long-term will offset the short-term fiscal impact of Medicaid expansion on constituents. Once again, endorsing Medicaid expansion allows legislators to entrench themselves as advocates concerned with long-term success in communities they represent. Moreover, legislators concerned about the fiscal impact of Medicaid may view the long-term payoffs in the form of improved health outcomes and reduced expenditures as appealing factors.

Medicaid expansion has also benefited from flexibility at the state level, where different states have implemented various programs to improve Medicaid. States are commonly referred to as laboratories of democracy, as they often practice innovative or controversial programs before such policies are implemented on a federal level. Medicaid expansion is no exception to this trend. The State Innovation Models Initiative, sponsored by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), offers grants for states to implement innovative healthcare delivery models. For example, Maine and Minnesota have utilized these grants to implement the Patient-Centered Medical Homes (PCMH) primary care model for Medicaid recipients. This innovative healthcare delivery model coordinates patient care among providers, including primary care physicians, specialty providers, and long-term care specialists, among others (Van Vleet and Paradise, 2014).

Moreover, the PCMH model incorporates community and personalized wellness coaching into healthcare. According to a longitudinal study on the effect of PCMH on health outcomes, researchers found that patients receiving care under this coordinated care model had lower mortality rates, decreased rates of chronic illness, and lower numbers of visits to the emergency room (Jackson et al., 2013). These key indicators of long-term patient health outcomes may be encouraging for legislators who desire to improve the lives of their constituents and communities. Considering that the PCMH is one aspect of flexibility in healthcare delivery, there exists tremendous potential to implement other innovative models of healthcare delivery and improve healthcare outcomes across the nation through Medicaid expansion.

Another key provision of Medicaid integrates social determinants of health (SDOH) into healthcare, ultimately leading to reduced healthcare disparities and increased patient autonomy. The SDOH are commonly defined as socioeconomic and environmental factors that influence individual health. These include income, education, housing, and transportation (Alderwick and Gottlieb, 2019). According to a study by Braveman and Gottlieb (2014), socioeconomic status "follows a stepwise gradient pattern, with health improving incrementally as social position rises." Moreover, this same study reported that "the number of U.S. deaths in 2000 attributable to low education, racial segregation, and low social support was comparable with the number of deaths attributable to myocardial infarction, cerebrovascular disease, and lung cancer, respectively." The SDOH are a significant systemic barrier to healthcare access and negatively impact health outcomes among individuals.

Furthermore, these determinants limit patient autonomy, as patients are forced to choose between healthcare and essential expenses like food and rent. Thus, individuals are not afforded the right to choose medical care for themselves simply because they are unable to access healthcare. Provisions of Medicaid expansion integrate programs targeting SDOH inequalities with healthcare delivery, demonstrating tremendous potential to alleviate these systemic barriers to patient autonomy. This is an appealing prospect for legislators who value patient autonomy and desire to portray themselves as advocates of limited government interference.

Like many issues that impose significant challenges on the status quo, Medicaid expansion remains a controversial issue among legislators across the nation. There are legitimate concerns with the fiscal impact of Medicaid expansion, inefficient models of healthcare delivery, and possible limitations on patient autonomy among legislators who oppose Medicaid expansion. Nonetheless, I believe that the beneficial impacts of Medicaid expansion warrant its consideration as a tool to reduce healthcare disparities in the American healthcare system. Expansionary policies can achieve this goal by decreasing long-term health expenditures, incentivizing flexibility to develop efficient healthcare delivery models, and ultimately increasing patient autonomy. These outcomes represent important progress toward achieving the Declaration of Independence's ideals of "right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

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## Student Example

*MacKenzie Gwinner wrote this persuasive research essay in Jonathan Blake's ENGL 200 class. Gwinner's resistant readers are police officers.*

### Should the U.S. Use Needle Exchange Programs?

Needle Exchange Programs, also known as Syringe Exchange Programs, provide free syringes to people without a prescription. These are mostly used by people who use intravenous drugs. Many Needle Exchange Programs (NEPs) also provide access to and information about medical professionals and rehabilitation facilities and require one needle turned in for every needle given. Needle Exchange Programs are a controversial topic in America. Critics cite moral and safety concerns. Many people see Needle Exchange Programs as promoting drug abuse, increasing criminal activity, and creating unsafe communities. Law enforcement in particular may see these programs as contradictory to their job and the "War on Drugs." Proponents point out the role of NEPs in decreasing the spread of HIV/AIDS, preventing improper disposal of dirty needles, and connecting people to medical personnel. For whatever reason that people are opposed to or in favor of NEPs, the bottom line appears to be safety and health.

One of the main reasons that people oppose Needle Exchange Programs is the concern that they support and encourage drug abuse. Danny Jones, Mayor of Charleston, West Virginia, in an article published in *The New York Times*, opposes NEPs and had the program in this town shut down, “citing…what he saw as a weekly influx of people using drugs” (Katz). Jones is not the only public official rallying against these programs. Miami police chief Javier Ortiz believes that the program enables people who abuse drugs and labels drug abuse as acceptable behavior (Wright). The police are on the frontlines of the issue with Needle Exchange Programs. Not only is their support necessary to create an effective program, they are also placed in danger when interacting with people who are addicted to drugs from needle stick injuries.

A second concern against Needle Exchange Programs is that they will increase the prevalence of improperly discarded needles, which would increase the danger of a needle stick accident. Miami police chief Ortiz spoke out against NEPs after one of his officers was pricked with a used needle while making an arrest (Wright). The immediate concern for that officer is if that needle was infected, he has a chance of contracting HIV. The concern for safety does not only apply to police officers; adults and children in the community can be put at risk if they come into contact with an infected needle. This is one of the reasons that Mayor Jones shut down the NEP in his town: a five-year-old girl received a needle stick injury while using a McDonald’s restroom (Katz). These accidents have the potential to result in devastating outcomes and are a major safety concern for areas with a high population of people who abuse drugs. Needle stick accidents are not the only concern community members and officials have about needles.

An unexpected consequence of Needle Exchange Programs was the creation of a community-funded black market for syringes, where people pick up dirty syringes to exchange for clean ones which they sell (Jacobs). Reselling syringes is illegal; however, it is easy because the needles are free and obtained in a legal way. This consequence is another reason that people may oppose Needle Exchange Programs, particularly those in law enforcement. In areas with NEPs, needle possession is not considered illegal. This fact makes their job more difficult since they must be caught selling the needles to arrest them; moreover, law enforcement may see an uptick in crime related to Needle Exchange Programs.

It is important to recognize that the moral concerns about encouraging drug use, as well as the safety concerns of needle-stick accidents and increased crime rates are valid. However, Needle Exchange Programs are used because they have benefits as well. While critics and proponents of NEPs disagree on whether or not they should be used, both groups are concerned with the safety and health of their communities.

HIV/AIDS is a major public health and safety concern, and decreasing its prevalence is one area that both critics and proponents of Needle Exchange Programs support. Over 1.1 million people in the United States are living with HIV, and in 2014 over 6,500 people died from the disease (HIV.gov). Decreasing the prevalence of HIV is important to protect people who are not infected and make it less likely that they will contract the disease in the future, no matter how it is transmitted.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Needle Exchange Programs have been associated with a 70% decrease in new HIV cases among people who inject intravenous drugs as well as a decrease in persons at risk for HIV (CDC). This is one of the main reasons that NEPs are used in the first place. The current Surgeon General of the United States, Dr. Jerome Adams, advocates for these programs and convinced then-Governor of Indiana Mike Pence to legalize Needle Exchange Programs in 2015 (Forman). They were legalized in Indiana following what was called a public health emergency, where cases of HIV rose from 26 to 158 in only 8 months (Forman). Needle Exchange Programs discourage the reuse and sharing of needles, which is how they decrease the prevalence of HIV. The benefits of Needle Exchange Programs are not limited to disease prevention amongst intravenous drug users, but cause other positive outcomes.

A scientific study in Baltimore, Maryland completed in 1997 concluded that Needle Exchange Programs have not been found to increase the amount of improperly disposed of needles (Doherty et al., "Discarded Needles"). When that study was followed up two years later, the researchers found that the number of improperly disposed of needles had decreased in the areas surrounding NEPs and were unchanged in areas far from the site (Doherty et al., "Effect"). Consequently, fewer syringes are on the ground in areas with Needle Exchange Programs, which would also decrease the likelihood of someone accidentally being stuck by a needle. A study done in 1992 in Connecticut found that needle stick injuries among police officers were decreased once the possession of syringes without a prescription was decriminalized (Groseclose et al.). Needle Exchange Programs can increase the safety of a community by decreasing the amount of syringes discarded on the streets and decreasing the amount of injuries received by police officers due to those syringes. In addition to the decrease in accidents, Needle Exchange Programs can also help decrease the amount of people using intravenous drugs.

Needle Exchange Programs are credited with helping people who have addictions enter rehabilitation facilities. A 2000 study in Seattle found that people who used NEPs were more likely to reduce or stop their drug abuse and five times as likely to enter treatment compared to people with drug addictions that had never used a NEP (Hagan et al.). People with addictions are still members of the community, and they also need to be protected. The face-to-face interactions with health care professionals and referrals to rehabilitation facilities can help them conquer their addiction and return to being a functional member of the community. This approach helps to reduce criminal activity and increase the safety in communities.

There has been research on the effect of Needle Exchange Programs on crime levels. A study of arrests made in Baltimore in areas where there were and were not NEPs revealed that there were not more arrests made near NEPs than far away (Marx et al.). This finding helps to dissuade the fear that Needle Exchange Programs will increase the rate of criminal activity. There is also evidence that shows NEPs do not encourage drug use. The Foundation for AIDS Research released a fact sheet that cites studies demonstrating that NEPs do not cause people to begin using drugs or those who already use to increase their frequency of drug abuse (amfAR). The current research shows that the presence of Needle Exchange Programs in a community do not increase crime or drug abuse. Thus, it is unlikely that police officers would make more arrests and could still spend the same amount of time on other aspects of community protection.

After researching the positive and negative outcomes of Needle Exchange Programs, I believe that these programs are an important tool that should be used in the United States due to their ability to decrease the prevalence of HIV, decrease the number of improperly disposed needles and accidents caused by them, and to help people with drug addictions enter a treatment facility; in addition to these benefits, little evidence supports a correlation between NEPS and increased level of crime or drug abuse. It is important to still remember that not every community will have the same outcome. There may be instances where NEPs are producing the opposite result. I believe that in these cases, rather than ending the program, it would be worthwhile to discover why the program is failing and to take steps to remedy it. The controversy surrounding Needle Exchange Programs is centered around the issue of safety and health, and how that can be improved in communities. With the proper resources, Needle Exchange Programs have the ability to increase the safety of law enforcement, people with addictions, and community members as a whole.

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## Student Example

*Emily Schwein wrote this persuasive research essay in Brenda Martin's ENGL 200 class. The intended audience are politicians and others who would be against exempting feminine products from taxation.*

### Go with the Flow

One quality that many find valuable in leadership is relatability. It provides one with a sense of security knowing that their leaders have had similar life experiences as them and have their best interest in mind. Some argue that this is not the case for women in the US today. Women have been a part of Congress since 1917, and the number has gradually increased as the years go by.

In Kansas Legislature, 26% of the seats are filled by women, leaving 74% to men (Shorman). Some would say that this is harmful to women because those who haven't experienced all that comes with being a woman are making decisions that have an impact on their health and well-being. Menstruation has been a constant in women's lives, but only just recently have women spoken up about the tax that comes along with it in Kansas.

When nature calls, should women have to literally pay the price?

Those who believe that feminine hygiene products should be taxed have reasonable claims. They bring up something that is difficult to define: necessity. To some, necessity could mean a certain brand, absorbency, or ingredients, and to others, it could mean the cheapest version that would get them by. Like many issues in the US, the tax on tampons also falls in the grey area because as simple as it sounds, "[I]t is surprisingly hard to define the place where toiletries end, and medication begins" (Barro). For example, in Illinois, the Department of Revenue has to verify that "medicated lip balm is not medication, and neither is dandruff shampoo" (Barro). How can you tax exempt something on the basis of a subjective topic? This is a valid argument because it is impossible to have women from all walks of life come to a consensus on what they deem a necessity.

Another logical concern of those who believe that feminine hygiene products should be taxed has to do with budgetary concerns. Because sales tax varies from state-to-state and each state has a different budget, it is difficult to make feminine hygiene products tax exempt everywhere. For example, "[I]n California, it is estimated that exempting tampons and pads from tax will reduce revenue by $20 million a year and in Utah, by $1 million" (Durkin). Money is a valid reason for wanting to keep the tax on tampons. Not only would Kansas lose money from removing the tax on feminine hygiene products, but it would also "open the flood gates for toilet paper or soap" to be tax exempt as well (Durkin). If the tax on feminine hygiene products were to be removed, the lost money would have to be made up somewhere and Kansas citizens will be paying either way.

I hear and understand that necessity is subjective to the individual and that exempting feminine hygiene products from sales tax would financially burden Kansas, but I have to disagree with the taxation. I believe that this discussion should be centered around the human life on the other side of the cash register. Regardless of the subjectivity of necessity, all people who experience menstruation can't just ignore it. The argument about money makes it even clearer to me why feminine hygiene products should be tax exempt: because it shouldn't be about money. Feminine hygiene products are an unquestionable necessity, and decisions regarding them should be made by those who have experienced menstruation.

Menstruation is natural and unavoidable, but the government doesn't treat it as such. Various states exempt necessity items from sales tax, but "the majority of states impose a general sales tax on tampons, pads, reusable menstrual cups, and other menstrual hygiene products," meaning they deem feminine hygiene products as a luxury item (Bennett). While I understand that the line between necessity and luxury items can be blurred, I still believe that tampons should be treated as an unquestionable necessity. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, one's physiological and safety needs must be met before any other progress in life can be made. For example, when girls reach the age of menstruation, school attendance begins to drops because according to the Department of Education Deputy Chancellor Elizabeth Rose, "[H]aving access to feminine care products is essential to ensuring that girls have the support they need to focus on learning and feel comfortable during class" ("Free Feminine Hygiene"). Imagine sitting in class and being expected to pay attention while constantly worried about getting blood on your seat. This is a reality for many young girls whose parents can't afford feminine hygiene products. Tampons are not a luxury; they are a necessity not only for comfort but for the health of women. Women all across the world who either aren't provided with or can't afford feminine hygiene products are forced to "use rags or soil their clothes because they don't have the access to appropriate hygiene products" (Rabin). Even when they do have access to tampons or sanitary napkins, it's not enough to last through their entire cycle. Women "on average have their period every 28 days, for 4.5 days and [are] advised to change [their] tampon or pad every four to eight hours." When this four to eight-hour requirement is not met, women could contract toxic shock syndrome, "an infection causes by bacteria associated with tampon use," and become very ill or even die (Durkin). Feminine hygiene products aren't just necessary for comfort, but for health and well-being as well; therefore, they should not be taxed.

Furthermore, while women are involved in Congress, they are far outweighed by their male counterparts. Only 26% of Kansas Legislature consists of females (Shorman). This fact is an issue when it comes to laws being passed that effect the reproductive and overall health of women. Men haven't experienced all that comes with being a woman and shouldn't be put in a position that impacts their well-being. When asked about the tax put on tampons, many men, including former President Barack Obama, respond with the following: "I have no idea why states would tax these as luxury items. I suspect it's because men were making the laws when these were passed" (Sahadi). Obama's statement solidifies many women's frustration. Men simply have never experienced a period and shouldn't be making decisions that impact those who do. These taxation laws were made during a time when women didn't have as much of a voice in Congress, so why should they continue to reign true without the opinion of women?

As a menstruating woman, I am intrigued and want to learn about the monetary concerns and the experiences of other women. While I understand that necessity is difficult to establish and that taxes are seemingly set in stone by mostly male legislatures, I believe that feminine hygiene products should be tax exempt in Kansas. The concerns of the opposing side are valid and deal with logistical issues, but I believe that it is more important to care for other human lives than it is to put a label on necessity and profit from an unavoidable bodily function.

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## Student Example

*Libby Couture wrote this persuasive research argument in Mary Cook's ENGL 200. Note how Couture uses her own academic major – architecture – to motivate her issue. Couture's audience are architects who prefer to demolish structures instead of repurposing them.*

### Adaptive Reuse in Architecture

Within architecture there are many smaller niches to focus on. One such niche is adaptive reuse, which has grown in popularity over the past few decades. Due to the changing needs of society and, consequently, the changing goals of architecture, the term "adaptive reuse" has also been redefined. Today, adaptive reuse is defined as "the act of modifying a building to accommodate uses that are different from those originally intended" (Rayman 140). Further, adaptive reuse achieves such results by changing the "capacity, function and performance" of the building through a "process of upgrading and enhancing [...] while retaining most of the original building" (De Silva 1). Although there is still some ambiguity in regard to how much of the original building must be kept and to what extent the purpose changes, this definition provides us with a much better understanding of adaptive reuse and its intentions, processes, and results.

Early in the history of architecture, adaptive reuse was not as prevalent due to the amount of untouched, accessible land to build on. However, as areas became more populated and open land increasingly difficult to come by, new building sites often came with preexisting structures on them. From here the architects, builders, engineers, and anyone else involved in the project had two decisions: demolish the preexisting structure and build from the ground up or incorporate the building into the new design with the idea of repurposing the structure. This latter idea is known as adaptive reuse.

The advantages and disadvantages of demolishing or repurposing buildings should both be viewed through the lens of the architect and the values they wish to uphold. While there are many differing and more specific values architects hold, there are a few overarching themes as mentioned by the American Institute for Architects (AIA), which is a leading organization for architects in the United States. One of the most important values is that of equity and human rights, which is demonstrated through the "accessibility to the built environment for all" ("Where Architects Stand"). In addition to equity, it is the goal of architects to strengthen the community by building relationships with community members, providing an opportunity for cultural expression, and working to solve problems by bringing about social change. AIA also mentions that environmental sustainability and protection from climate change are ways architects can and should approach projects ("Where Architects Stand"). These various goals and values of designers are taken into consideration in the design of a building and are one way to measure the success of a completed design. In analysis of adaptive reuse, it is important to consider these goals, especially in relation to the benefits and drawbacks. Evaluating adaptive reuse in the context of values that architectural designers hold helps gain a better understanding of how this approach lines up with the larger goals of architecture.

Some architectural designers don't see the benefit in adaptive reuse because it can be considered a little more constraining in the way to design, contradicting the value for more freedom and control over the building. Because adaptive reuse starts with a preexisting structure, there are some limitations to what can be changed due to structural integrity and feasibility of moving or removing components. The inability to move certain walls, columns, or floor slabs can lead to more restricted floor plans and sections. Additionally, material choice is sometimes limited as the materials of the old structure must be considered, rather than having the ability to develop a material pallet from scratch (De Silva 3). This, among other factors, influences the aesthetic of the building and limits the design options for the architect. Because of these obstacles an architect might encounter during an adaptive reuse project, using this approach might become less ideal and can contribute to the decision to demolish a building, rather than repurpose it. The aforementioned claims are extremely valid points to be made and should definitely be considered in analysis of this architectural method. However, we can also consider these values in a different light and rethink how they can be successfully applied to adaptive reuse. Although there are many different ways to evaluate the effectiveness and success of a design, three factors will be examined: economics, the environment, and the surrounding culture. Many individuals believe that adaptive reuse comes at a high cost, especially for the firms and individuals carrying the project out. Such high of costs are due to remediation, maintenance, and renovation, which are all important to address in the repurposing of an old building.

Sufficient measures must be taken at a cost to ensure a stable and well-maintained structure as to keep all users safe and healthy (De Silva 3). While these costs do add up, there are many other costs architects and builders must factor in when building from the ground up. Two main costs include demolition and extensive material costs, both of which are minimized when using adaptive reuse. Additionally, many of the high costs associated with finding skilled individuals to restore structures are lowered when adaptive reuse takes place at larger scales and when the economic activity in an area increases (Stas 30). Ultimately, the savings for developers outweigh the costs associated with adaptive reuse. In order to fully analyze the economic impacts of adaptive reuse, multiple perspectives must be taken into consideration. By repurposing buildings, more space becomes available for business to occupy and the area becomes much more desirable for economic activity to occur. As such, there are extensive opportunities for economic growth in the community including new jobs, higher incomes, increased tax revenues, and higher property values (Stas 38). Also, many areas see an increase in heritage tourism, often bringing in millions of dollars annually to various communities (Stas 30). Adaptive reuse provides many economic benefits for the individuals involved in the design and construction process as well as for the public and local community following installment.

Aside from the economic benefits, there are numerous reasons to apply adaptive reuse to projects because of its environmentally sustainable nature. There are three main factors contributing to the environmental sustainability of adaptive reuse: material use and waste, land conservation, and energy consumption. Because adaptive reuse preserves as much of the building as possible, including structure, infill, and even ornament, there is a considerate reduction of material production and waste. Not only are less materials required to complete the project because some can be reused, but less materials are also sent to the landfill upon demolishing a structure (De Silva 2). By reusing materials and not requiring as much new material, adaptive reuse is advantageous in minimizing waste and limiting use of valuable resources. Even in the case of building from the ground up without demolishing structures, a new plot of land is necessary to build. When adaptive reuse is implemented however, land can be reused and is conserved, proving to be environmentally equitable (De Silva 3). Another aspect to consider in environmental sustainability is energy consumption. In the case of demolishing and rebuilding a new structure, extensive amounts of energy are needed for the demolition and construction.

Because demolition and construction are minimal in adaptive reuse, the associated energy use is also minimized, making this method more environmentally sustainable (De Silva 2). In a world that needs to solve climate change and protect the environment, architects must reflect these ideals in the projects and designs they make. Adaptive reuse provides architects with the opportunity to address the value of environmental sustainability and should therefore be a more prominent design solution.

One misconception about adaptive reuse is its inability to move communities forward and allow for growth; instead, many believe that it focuses too much on the old. Because of this preconceived idea, building from the ground up is seen to be more culturally advantageous.

Contrary to this belief, adaptive reuse can be extremely beneficial in terms of the cultural impact it has on the surrounding community. Adaptive reuse allows for the recognition of cultural heritage and provides decaying areas with an opportunity to be revived. Because adaptive reuse preserves old structures, the process “allows for these buildings to remain historically relevant in a modern context” (Smallwood). The older architectural styles display the area’s history and authenticity and begin to tell a story of its past. However, rather than having an overwhelming number of historical structures, adaptive reuse allows for the integration of contemporary architecture. This balance between historic and modern creates a unique atmosphere and environment, reviving the local area and making it a much more attractive destination. Such changes provide a new sense of place and are integral in the societal and cultural advantages of adaptive reuse.

As land and structures are becoming more valuable, adaptive reuse should become more of a focus for architects because it benefits both the society and architectural designer. Adaptive reuse is economically beneficial, environmentally sustainable, and culturally rewarding. Adaptive reuse provides architects with an amazing opportunity to integrate the foundational values into a design and make an even greater impact on the community they are serving. Because of the increasing number of buildings and decreasing amount of open land, adaptive reuse will only continue to grow in popularity. These changing conditions result in a need to change the way we find solutions. As architects, whose jobs are to solve problems and strengthen communities, implementing adaptive reuse is one step towards being successful and making a difference. Practicing adaptive reuse demonstrates the architect's ability to adjust to the changing demands from society and shows care of economic, environmental, and cultural sustainability, benefitting the architect, developers, and local community. Adaptive reuse's advantageous nature makes it an excellent candidate for future projects and should be a design method that architects highly value.

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## Student Example: Persuasive Research Open Letter

*Sarah Inskeep wrote this persuasive research open letter in Rachel Schaller's ENGL 200 class. As you'll see, K-State's President Myers is the intended audience.*

### Sustainability & K-State: A Letter to President Myers

May 22, 2020

Dear President Myers,

To begin, as a student, I would like to thank you for your steadfast leadership and encouragement through the uncertainty and changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. I am immensely grateful for the efforts that have been made both to support students during these difficult times and to continue providing education and opportunities.

This spring, I graduated with a major in physics and a minor in conflict analysis and trauma studies. I am proud to be a part of the K-State family and am passionate about our role in bettering our community and our world. Being a part of two quite different academic programs has made clear to me the diversity of K-State's strengths and inspired me to get involved with the review process of the 2025 Visionary Plan.

I understand that, at present, planning groups are focused on three strategic initiatives: innovation in education; global food, health, and biosecurity; and becoming a cyber land-grant university (2025 Visionary Plan). I am also aware that additional areas of emphasis—data science, research, and resilience—were proposed by the College of Arts and Sciences (Sustainability Meetings). I am excited about these initiatives and am eager to see what the planning groups develop. I am writing, however, to propose that the overall Visionary Plan could be strengthened and that present financial and enrollment challenges could better be addressed by drawing these initiatives together with a common purpose that is aligned with K-State's mission, vision, and values: addressing climate change.

Sustainability, I know, was addressed by the 2025 Sustainability Strategic Action (2025 SSAP) in the original 2025 Visionary Plan and is a common element in 2025 Refresh. I believe we should instead make it a *defining* element—something explicitly and intentionally integrated into each strategic initiative as well as into the mission and vision of the university—not because the other goals are unimportant, but because it is what brings them together. Global food, health, and biosecurity are inextricably tied to climate change, as detailed in the IPCC's *Global Warming of 1.5 ºC*, in reports from the US Department of Defense, and in research presented by K-State faculty. There is a need, both locally and globally, for a better understanding of how to mitigate and adapt to changes in our food and health systems due to climate change. As the first land grant school in the nation with expertise in many fields, close ties to agricultural communities, and a dedication to maintaining dialogue on difficult topics, we are perfectly equipped to take the lead in developing that understanding. Then, through innovation in teaching and strengthening our presence as a cyber land-grant, we could also ensure it is available to all who need it. Doing so would create a brand for K-State, making us known as a place that develops holistic solutions to the most complex and pressing problems.

That K-State is uniquely equipped to take on the challenges of climate change is not a new idea. The team that created the 2025 SSAP shared it, too. Since last fall, I have been a part of a new team of students, faculty, and staff from across the university voluntarily working to review that plan. From that work, I understand the primary concerns of administration at present are related to enrollment and to finances. As a student, I have worked with state and national organizations through the conflict studies program and do not at all intend to downplay the significance or complexity of those issues. They are not, however, issues that inhibit us from moving forward with the 2025 SSAP. On the contrary, I believe they are issues that may be remedied by moving forward with it. Reducing energy use and improving efficiency is becoming increasingly cost- effective, especially in places like Kansas where we have plenty of wind and, according to NOAA, more sunny days per year than Florida. Though solar and wind projects may have an intimidating price tag, they often have short payback periods and save money after that. Furthermore, they provide a living laboratory for students to work in and learn from, giving them concrete experience in the growing renewable energy sector.

Big projects aside, much of the plan requires no additional investment because we already have the personnel and expertise we need on campus. Just as our campaign for diversity and inclusion has largely emerged from existing faculty and staff, a campaign for sustainability could be created through collaboration among those who are already a part of the K-State family. Scientists like Jesse Nippert, director of the National Science Foundation's Konza Prairie Long Term Ecological Research Network, have been researching the effects of a changing climate on native prairie plants and food crops. Agronomists like Chuck Rice, Noble Prize Laureate for his work with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, have been studying how we can mitigate agricultural emissions and adapt our agricultural systems to changing environments.

The National Science Foundation also chose K-State for a National Research Traineeship to support collaborative research on water conservation and renewable energy generation by faculty and graduate students in agronomy, engineering, anthropology, and sociology. There are numerous other projects also already underway, from an interdisciplinary environmental sciences major, to pollution prevention and biodiesel development, to natural landscaping and studies in sustainable design. Why not take advantage of this emerging theme?

In last fall's survey for the 2025 Refresh process, respondents were asked about the changes made to the university's visionary goal. One respondent wrote that the problem with the previous goal was that it "provided no vision to rally around" and that it "reflected a lack of understanding of KSU's potential to help Kansas and the world." The respondent was supportive of the new goal but suggested more specificity. Becoming a Top 50 Research University may not be within our reach, but we don't need it to be to succeed. "KSU can't do everything, but it could do some things very well, if only we commit to areas that we can impact (food security, prosperity in rural communities, stewardship of natural resources)," they wrote. "The current proposal would be more powerful if it acknowledged the particular scope over which KSU could be held accountable" (2025 Visionary Plan).

This response is well worth consideration. Increasingly, young people identify climate change as the challenge of our times and are searching for ways to make a difference. According to recent Gallup polls, 70% of people age 18-34 are "worried a great deal/fair amount" by climate change (Reinhart). These groups of people are looking for ways to contribute, to learn how they can help create a brighter future, and we have the resources and the expertise to provide a world-class education regarding these issues in a way no other school can. If we commit to sustainability, to addressing climate change, we will attract those young people and thereby realize our vision of preparing "each generation to advance society and enrich the world for those who follow" (2025 Visionary Plan).

As for the concern, presented to me by faculty and administration, that overtly addressing climate change would be taking too political a stance: it's true that climate change has become a politicized issue, but it is first and foremost a scientific one. With a careful approach we could help remind society that this is the case. Time and again, we at K-State have made clear our commitment to maintaining dialogue and opportunities for free speech about typically divisive topics. Our reputation on this can aid us in depoliticizing climate change for the betterment of all. At present, because climate change is seen as an issue associated with a certain political party, the problem is not taken seriously by many and there is a severe lack of innovation in figuring out what can be done to address it. The same dilemma is playing out with COVID-19.

As a result, 93,800 people have died in the United States as of May 21, and each day there are 1,000-2,000 more deaths. With crises like these, we must change the perspective so that people of different ideologies can agree on the scientific basis of the problem and engage in constructive dialogue about solutions. This is exactly the kind of "Republic of Science" approach upheld by one of our lead donors, Charles Koch. Through it, creative tension allows for much swifter progress. K-State can play a leading role in creating this change in perspective. We are only one school, but we are nestled in the heartland of the United States, and our family is made up of brilliant people from around the world. Our actions and our words ripple out into our community, to our state, to other land-grant schools, and on from there. We may not be able to see those more distant effects, but that does not mean we should ignore them.

As our seal reminds us, we can only rule by obeying nature's laws. As stewards of the land, air, and water, we have made a commitment to doing so—to protecting our future, to ensuring the health and prosperity of communities at home and across the globe. It is both our legacy and our responsibility to uphold that commitment, even when it is not easy, even when doing so requires facing problems more complex than any we have known before. Already the health and prosperity of communities and ecosystems around the world are declining, but through research and creativity, through harnessing the power of innovative learning and discovery, we may yet find answers to today's questions and solve the problems of tomorrow. That is why we should move forward with the 2025 Sustainability Strategic Action Plan and make sustainability an overarching part of our mission and vision as a university.

We cannot overlook our ability to make a difference.

Sincerely,

Sarah Inskeep

Physics | Conflict Analysis & Trauma Studies

Kansas State University

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## Student Example: Persuasive Research Open Letter

*Lilly Holthus wrote this persuasive research open letter in Wendy Matlock's ENGL 200 class.*

### Living with Physician-Assisted Suicide

November 6, 2020

Dear Government Officials of Kansas:

I am coming to you as a student from Kansas State University who is passionate about healthcare and bettering the lives of others. As a student who is studying integrative physiology, I have an understanding of the type of care that is provided to patients, and I am further interested in broadening the minds of the Kansas legislature about providing more options to a specific group of patients: the terminally ill.

Physician-assisted suicide is the act of a doctor prescribing a lethal drug to a terminally ill patient. The patient then administers the drug by dissolving it in a glass of water and then drinking it, placing the drug in their feeding tube, or taking the drug intravenously (Gather). The act of physician-assisted suicide was first legalized in the United States in the state of Oregon in 1997. This law, also known as the Death with Dignity Act, states that a terminally ill patient who has less than six months to live can request self-administering drugs (Plaisted). Physician-assisted suicide is now legal in more states including Washington, Vermont, California, Colorado, Montana, and the District of Columbia (Legault). Despite physician-assisted suicide already being legalized in these states, it is a highly debated topic amongst others, weighing ethics and the rights of terminally ill patients to the type of care they receive. Because of the importance of this upcoming topic in the state of Kansas, it is necessary to discuss and view the impact that it could have on the future of healthcare.

Some are worried that if physician-assisted suicide becomes normalized for terminally ill patients, it has the potential to devalue the patient and put the patient at risk. A common belief of physician-assisted suicide is that it devalues the patient's life because it is a suggestion to end their life just because of an illness. It is also believed that because a patient is already in a vulnerable state due to the high degree of their illness, they are more prone to fall victim to suggestions such as physician-assisted suicide (Goligher). These fears and concerns are relevant to the fact that taking one's life is a serious matter, but statistics have shown that this option is specifically designed for the mentally capable, terminally ill patients. Data that was taken from Oregon between 1998 and 2015 and Washington between 2009 and 2015, show that only 0.4% of deaths in the two states were a result of physician-assisted suicide. 75% of those physician-assisted suicides were made by cancer patients who had less than six months to live. The remaining 15% had a neurodegenerative disease (Emanuel). These statistics tell us that patients' lives are not being devalued, nor are they being put at risk. Because of the predicted time-period a patient has left, they are fully aware that death is coming for them and choosing to participate in speeding the process up does not devalue their life. We can also see that these patients are not being subjected to vulnerability as they account for so little of deaths in total, and the decision is completely autonomous.

Although a patient has the right to determine their care, many see that a physician's job is to improve the well-being of an ill patient, and physician-assisted suicide contradicts that goal. An article in CMHJ stated that physician-assisted suicide is detrimental to the trust in the doctor-patient relationship (Smith). This is because patients or family members viewed the situation as the physician not trying to save the patient. One article also indicated that "the physician's most basic tasks and considerations are to 'always bear in mind the obligation to respect human life' and 'the health and well-being of the patient'" (Goligher). While it is true that it is a physician's job to provide the patient with the utmost care, 85% of patients were able to trust a physician who participated in assisted suicide just as much as a physician who had not (Smith). This goes to show that having the option of physician-assisted suicide provided does not damage the relationship. Although it is not a physician's choice to determine whether a patient receives physician-assisted suicide, a 2014 survey showed that 54% of physicians in the United States supported physician-assisted suicide and their patient's decision to partake in the process (Emanuel). Even with the high amount of support from physicians, they are not obligated or required to participate to take part in the process or give permission (Smith). This proves that it does not contradict a physician's goal of improving their patient's well-being because they are supporting their patients in the type of treatment that they choose to receive.

Due to the seriousness of deciding to end one's life because of terminal suffering, patients are required to go through a series of interviews and psychological evaluations to determine if they are in the right mind frame to make the decision. A patient must first prove that they have less than six months to live with at least two physicians' predictions (Smith). They must also show that they can make an autonomous decision. This means they must be able to make a choice, understand their illness and the treatment they are currently receiving, appreciate that they have been affected and are receiving treatment, and finally be able to rationalize and process the information and look at the consequences or other alternative treatments (Gather). The patient must then request the lethal drug on multiple accounts with consent from a physician, receive an opinion from a second physician, participate in a psychiatric evaluation, and wait 15 days between the physician's consent and the actual administration of the drug (Smith). Because of the strict protocol, we can assure that a patient is only being influenced by their own opinion. This process ensures a patient genuinely wants to go through with physician-assisted suicide and determines that they have the mental capacity to willingly accept the outcome of physician-assisted suicide.

Because of the suffering that a terminal illness entails, physician-assisted suicide allows a patient to pass with dignity and autonomy. As mentioned before, physician-assisted suicide was first passed as a law called the Death with Dignity Act, and many other states have followed in suit. Lawmakers first decided on this name because their goal was to provide terminally ill patients with an option that allowed them to speed up the slow dying process, and instead die with dignity and meaning (Smith). This leads to a complete, autonomous choice of the patient to make this decision. Many patients who know they are dying prefer to make that last decision confidently before they lose control of their own body (Plaisted). There are even some religions, such as the United Methodist, who believe that God has granted them "the right of personal choice and that this authority must extend to matters of life and death" (Thobaben 1997), and express that they should be able to exercise this ability within physician-assisted suicide (Burdette). Autonomy is a moral right that we as humans have, and we should respect any autonomous decision that a patient makes including their choice to participate in physician- assisted suicide. Although it is currently not legalized in the state of Kansas, this shows that we are stripping terminally ill patients of an option that could relieve them of their misery and allow the control to be in their hands.

As someone who is passionate about caring for others and wants to provide the best options for patients, I believe that it is important for the state of Kansas to consider moving forward with the rising option of physician-assisted suicide and at least allow the terminally ill a second choice. Many of us are aware and respect that human life is valuable and important, but if a terminally ill patient is suffering and is aware that a slow, and painful death is upon them, should we not give them the right to autonomously decide to end their pain? One defender of physician-assisted suicide and the Death with Dignity Acts stated, "Aiding an autonomous person at his or her request to bring about death is, from this perspective, a way of showing respect for the person's autonomous choices. Similarly, denying the person access to other individuals who are willing and qualified to comply with the request shows a fundamental disrespect for the person's autonomy" (Plaisted). With this in mind, I ask of you to acknowledge and respect that patients have the right to determine the care they receive, and we should consider allowing terminally ill patients to exercise this right through the option of physician-assisted suicide.

Let us make a difference in a patient's suffering.

Sincerely,

Lilly Holthus

Kansas State University

Integrative Physiology | Pre-Occupational Therapy

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## Conclusion: Summary of Key Rhetorical Concepts

- **Audience Analysis:** A pre-drafting activity to learn as much as possible about the beliefs and values of the audience. Audience-based Reasoning: Identifying reasons that match with the beliefs and values of the audience. Causal Claim: An argument that shows readers the cause- effect consequences of the issue.

- **Common Ground:** The attempt by writers to find places of agreement and compromise with their resistant readers. Conversation: The discussion and previous research that has gone into the issue. The multiple perspectives that constitute the issue.
- **Definitional Claim:** An argument that focuses on how to define or categorize something.
- **Dialogical:** A quality of an argument in which you are attempting to involve the reader. Delayed Thesis: A strategy to delay the main claim to better engage a resistant audience. Evaluation/Ethical Claim: A claim that argues a particular judgement about something.
- **Invitational:** The quality of being open and vulnerable to an audience and of being interested in listening to alternative views.
- **Proposal Claim:** A claim that tells readers that they should do something.
- **Resemblance Claim:** A claim that compares something to something else that is meaningful to the audience.

# Chapter 3 Appendix: Additional Student Examples

## Parental Leave in the United States

### Emily Frakes

*Emily Frakes wrote this persuasive research argument in Natalie Liptak's ENGL 200.*

For many Americans, having to take time off work can be a big hassle. For new parents, however, it can become a massive anxiety. Along with having to balance the new responsibilities of parenthood, so many parents are not given enough time off work to adjust to the new life changes and spend needed quality time with their new child. According to an analysis of the World Policy Analysis Centre Adult Labor Database, "The United States is the only high-income country that does not mandate paid leave for mothers of newborns" (Gault et al.). Every other developed country in the world has recognized the need for paid maternity leave, but the United States has failed to help these new mothers. New parents also must worry about financially supporting a child. If their parental leave is not paid, like it is for most Americans, a great deal of stress gets burdened on the parents. So many employers do not want to offer a lengthy, paid leave because of fears over the financials of their business. It can be difficult for anyone to part with their money, and this proves to be especially true for business owners. As a result of the employers' actions, parents are put under unnecessary strain mentally, physically, and financially. I believe that the United States needs to implement paid family leave policies countrywide and make it accessible for everyone regardless of pay.

The main reason an employer would not support a long PFL (paid family leave) policy is because they believe that it will hurt their businesses' financials and productivity. Currently, the only national family leave policy in the United States is the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), "which offers 12 weeks annually of unpaid, job-protected sick leave that can be used for newborn or newly adopted children" (O'Neill Hayes and Barnhorst). The FMLA Act has strict employee work requirements that only cover about 60 percent of all workers and "those not eligible for the FMLA do not have a guarantee of a job at the end of the leave period" (Gault et al.). Many employees who do qualify for this unpaid, job-protected leave cannot take advantage of the opportunity because of personal financial problems. Those who do not qualify for FMLA cannot afford to take an extended leave from work either without going into serious financial ruin. Workplace morale can especially take a hit if an employee must worry about financial issues on top of not having enough time off work to spend with their child. This forces so many new mothers to go back to work just weeks after their child is born so they can continue to make money and support their families. A paid family leave policy was put in place in California in 2004 at the State level—becoming the first state to do so. Since this paid leave policy was enacted, California businesses have reported a decrease in "per-worker wage bill and a lower turnover rate today than it did before California's paid family leave program was introduced" (Stearns and Rossin-Slater). Instead of companies being harmed under this law, they ended up reaping the benefits from it. If more state-wide policies are implemented across the country like the one in California, companies will inevitably profit along with their employees.

Employers may also worry that giving a long leave for new mothers will hurt their attachments to their jobs and it will be less likely they come back to work. In 2004, authors Lawrence Berger and Jane Waldfogel found that "women with access to leave are about 40 percent more likely to return to work at any time after giving birth than those who do not have access" (Gault et al.). Mothers who are offered any type of job protection after leave, paid or not, are more likely to be attached to their jobs. When the mother comes back after work, it will save the employer time and effort from trying to find a replacement. If employers want to keep their employees at work after they have had a baby, then offering paid family leave will greatly increase those chances. Along with increased job attachment, paid family leave also increases employment. A study conducted by Charles L. Baum II and Christopher J. Ruhm on the effects of the paid family leave policy in California found that "CA-PFL [California Paid Family Leave] is estimated to raise employment by 5 to 10 percent during the four months before the birth and work by around 5 percentage points for most of this period" (Baum II and Ruhm). Again, offering job-protected leave will keep mothers at work longer before their delivery. Expecting mothers will no longer have to quit their jobs in fear of being laid off just for having a child. If an employer's priority is getting parents back to work, then offering paid leave proves to be the best option.

No mother should have to worry about their image and security at their place of employment being tarnished over their desire to have a family. Unfortunately, evidence has been found that "the longer new mothers are away from work, the less likely they are to be promoted, move into management, or receive a pay raise once their leave is over" (Hideg et al.). The issue of a mother's devotion to work while balancing a family can be a tough issue to tackle. The problem needs to start at the top level, the CEOs and employers who make the decisions. Some solutions to this problem have been presented, though; for example, "'keep-in-touch' programs [...] allow parents on leave to stay in contact with their workplace and colleagues while they are away" (Hideg et al). These "keep-in-touch" programs have been shown to help keep the relationship between working mothers and employers strong after leave and have reduced the number of layoffs. The program has also helped increase the number of pay raises and promotions given to working mothers because they were allowed to take time to be with their family while still proving to their employers that they intend to come back to work once their leave ends. If this program can be implemented along with PFL, then companies may be more willing to offer more paid leave for their employees.

So many researched benefits have been shown through PFL policies including the lessened stress levels of expecting parents. When an expecting mother experiences unnecessary stress during a pregnancy, it can lead to poor mental health, which can ultimately harm the mother after the birth of a child. According to an article written by Tara O'Neill Hayes and Margaret Barnhorst on the benefits children receive from family leave policies, "PFL [paid family leave] policies that allow mothers to wait at least 12 weeks before returning to work after childbirth reduce the likelihood of depressive symptoms and stress in the mother" (O'Neill Hayes and Barnhorst). A lessened chance of developing postpartum depression can help ensure the mother can take the best possible care of her child. A new mother will likely do better at her job after returning from leave because of good mental health, which in turn benefits her employers. Not only does decreased maternal stress rates benefit the mother, but it can have a positive impact on the baby's health as well. A mother battling with her mental and physical health can affect a baby's birth weight. A large-scale study showed that "paid leave decreased the rate of low birth weight infants by 3.2 percent and decreased the likelihood of pre-term births by 6.6 percent" (O'Neill Hayes and Barnhorst). When the child has a greater chance of being born healthy, it can lessen the amount of time new parents and babies will have to spend in the hospital. Less time spent in the hospital directly affects the amount of medical bills the parents will have to pay. Allowing these parents paid leave time will help them prepare for any financial burdens that may arise. If the child spends less time in the hospital, the quicker mom and dad can get back to work.

Along with PFL benefitting the mother, it can greatly benefit the father as well. Having the father at home with both mom and baby can have so many excellent outcomes. Paternal leave can allow the father to spend quality time with their child, time that is often taken away when a father must go back to work very soon after birth. Not only can fathers spend more time with their child if offered more paternity leave, but it can "increase the chances that the mother is able to return to full-time work, increasing female participation in the labor force and usually increasing household income" (O'Neill Hayes and Barnhorst). Getting parents back to work full time after parental leave may be a priority for many employers. Giving paid time off to fathers will benefit the employment and turnover rates within their business.

By allowing parents to stay home with their child after birth, it can help with the child's health and development. With lengthened PFL comes the increased likelihood of a mother breastfeeding for longer. A variety of studies have shown the positive effects of breastfeeding a baby for as long as possible. According to the World Health Organization, those positive effects include "strengthening an infant's immune system, stimulating positive brain development, and decreasing the risk of infections" (O'Neill Hayes and Barnhorst). Along with keeping the child as healthy as possible—which proves crucial for a young infant—comes decreased medical costs burdened on the parents. When a child can remain relatively healthy, it generally means fewer doctor visits which can help ease any financial anxieties the new parents may have. If the parents can avoid doctor visits, especially as the child grows up, it means less time they must take off work in the future. This, of course, will make their employers happy. A parent must be able focus on the health of their child. They also want to be able to focus on the child's mental development and continued education. Based on data taken after Norway implemented their PFL program in 1977, a study found that "high school graduation rates increased by 2 percentage points, college attendance rates increased by 3.5 percent and [...] earnings at age 30 rose by 5 percent" (O'Neill Hayes and Barnhorst). These data prove to be so important because when kids graduate and get an education, they are on their way to benefitting society. Just by giving more paid family leave, a larger amount kids will finish their education, whether that be at the high school or college level. A college education can be so important especially in the United States where much of the workforce requires a degree to reach higher-level jobs.

As a young woman who eventually wants to be able to balance a family and a career, I believe that offering paid family leave should be a top priority in the United States. While there have been steps taken in recent years to give leave to parents, it still is not enough. Mothers' careers are being harmed because of poor maternal leave policies. Even though a father's feelings about leave may be overlooked more than their female counterparts, they deserve to have time off with their families as well. Children's health and development will continue to pay the price for a lack of paid leave policies if change does not happen soon. So many different aspects of the workforce are affected by PFL policies, and it is clear to see the positive effects will not shine through without immediate action.

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## The Kroger-Albertsons Proposed Merger: How Should the Federal Trade Commission Rule?

### Tyler Tiede

*Tyler Tiede wrote this persuasive research essay in Cindy Debes's ENGL 200 class. It won first place in the 2023 Expository Writing Program Essay Awards. Tiede wrote for a resistant audience who believes the merger between Kroger and Albertsons violates antitrust laws and subsequently leads to a monopoly of the grocery industry.*

Writing for the *HuffPost*, Al Franken, a former Democratic United States Senator from Minnesota, said, "Antitrust law isn't about protecting competing businesses from each other, it's about protecting competition itself on behalf of the public." I agree with Senator Franken and believe the best way to achieve this objective is through robust market competition.

Consumers benefit when they have more choice of where to purchase regardless of the product or service sought. However, governments should use caution when enforcing antitrust laws to ensure that their regulatory actions do not unintentionally reduce competition. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the agency charged with enforcing antitrust laws, including the Sherman Antitrust and Clayton Acts, is being called on to evaluate the merger proposed on October 14, 2022, by two major grocery retailers, Kroger and Albertsons Companies, Inc. As Nathaniel Meyersohn, consumer reporter for CNN Business, said, "If approved by regulators, the nearly $25 billion deal would be one of the biggest in U.S. retail history," causing many consumer protection experts across the country to sound the alarm. "Antitrust advocates say the merger would force out the competition and concentrate power among the largest chains, driving up prices" (Meyersohn).

Sarah Miller, Executive Director of the American Economic Liberties Project, is among those calling for regulators to intervene. Millers says, "There is no reason to allow two of the biggest supermarket chains in the country to merge—especially with food prices already soaring," and many Americans agree with her ("Kroger-Albertsons Merger"). Miller believes the FTC should block this proposed merger due to the volatility of the grocery market and the critical role these stores have on the public's ability to purchase food at affordable prices. Miller and many others find the merger especially concerning since it would combine two of the largest companies in the grocery industry and split sixty percent of all sales between just five corporations ("Kroger-Albertsons Merger"). In Miller's professional opinion, "This merger is a cut and dry case of monopoly power, and enforcers should block it" ("Kroger-Albertsons Merger"). Miller's position is based on the premise that allowing Kroger and Albertsons to merge will reduce market competition, create a monopoly, and result in all retailers increasing prices. She is also disturbed by the trend of grocery retailers seeking to consolidate in recent years, noting that previous mergers in the industry have "been mismanaged by antitrust enforcers."

Many people share Miller's concerns, and for a good reason, because, throughout history, this country has experienced instances when monopolies harmed consumers due to the lack of competition and innovation. Andrew Beattie, a former managing editor at Investopedia, an online financial information platform, says a monopoly reduces competition and "tends to lead to higher prices and inferior products" (Beattie). There is no question the merger of Kroger and Albertsons will form a major conglomerate in the retail grocery industry. The companies acknowledge their combined forces will allow them to "deliver fresh and affordable food to approximately 85 million households with a premier omnichannel experience" operating in 48 states and the District of Columbia ("Kroger and Albertsons"). While the proposed merger will certainly bolster Kroger-Albertsons' size and market reach, we must ask ourselves whether it meets the enforcement standards of forming a monopoly and whether this newly formed entity will help or harm consumers.

I recognize the importance of antitrust regulation to ensure fair and adequate competition in any market. I agree that a lack of industry competition allows companies to sit back and raise prices on everyday items because there is little to no motivation to lower them. Most importantly, I understand the views of those who oppose the merger, like Stacy Mitchell of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, who argues, "Americans don't need another mega-grocer. Kroger and Albertsons together would control 20% of grocery sales in the U.S." (Redman). That said, I respectfully disagree with those who oppose the proposed merger of Kroger and Albertsons because I do not believe the transaction meets the regulatory standards of a monopoly, will not impede competitiveness, and therefore does not violate antitrust laws. By evaluating how the merger may benefit consumers, the grocery market's current segmentation, and these companies' ability to remain viable competitors in a changing retail landscape, I will demonstrate how this transaction may prove beneficial to consumers and should be approved by government regulators.

It is crucial to consider how the merger may improve supply chain challenges and how the companies' increased purchasing power after the merger may benefit consumers. Supply chain issues have impacted virtually every industry since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The ability for Kroger and Albertsons to leverage a combined "66 distribution centers and 52 manufacturing plants" means the combined entity can "optimize its supply chain to deliver the freshest products from field to table to more customers more quickly" ("Kroger and Albertsons"). The merger provides the companies the ability "to better negotiate supply chain relationships, and to invest in technology to run a more efficient (distribution) operation" (Cheng).

In addition to getting products on the store shelves more effectively, the combined market share would allow these companies greater purchasing power, which in turn would help control prices. Reuters, a respected source for business news, reports, "Kroger and Albertsons would together have an edge over negotiations on product prices with suppliers, including consumer goods companies, at a time when prices of groceries and essentials are soaring in the country" (Venugopal). In their announcement, Kroger set forth a plan to lower prices by "reinvest[ing] approximately half a billion dollars of cost savings from synergies (realized from the merger) to reduce prices for customers" ("Kroger and Albertsons"). Allowing Kroger and Albertsons to merge will introduce a significant competitor to Walmart and Sam's Club, Costco, and Amazon, incentivizing them to keep prices low for consumers. Many people think the merger will cause Kroger-Albertsons and the other retailers to increase prices. Considering the companies' combined purchasing power and desire to become a retail leader in the industry, I believe the transaction may help drive down prices, which would be highly beneficial to consumers especially given this period of sustained inflation.

As noted above, many are concerned that the proposed merger of Kroger and Albertsons will create a monopoly and want the FTC to block the transaction as a violation of antitrust laws. Jeff Wells with *The Grocery Dive*, an online publication dedicated to analyzing trends affecting the grocery industry, opined that the FTC's decision on the proposed merger would be determined based on how they define the market and how the companies deal with divestitures. I argue these retailers are not setting out to form a monopoly but merging to gain the leverage needed to remain competitive in a changing market. The market has seen a sizable shift toward big-box stores like Walmart, Costco, Sam's Club, and Target, and the emergence of new online grocery options like Amazon. Therefore, the root of the debate on whether the merger of Kroger and Albertsons violates antitrust laws will rest on how the FTC defines the market and if they agree efficiencies can be achieved through the merger that will enhance competition. Daniel Rubinfeld, a law professor at New York University and a former deputy assistant attorney general for antitrust with the Department of Justice, explains the significance of how the FTC segments the market. If the FTC sees Kroger and Albertsons as "the first- and second-largest supermarket chains in the U.S.," then Rubinfeld believes the merger will undoubtedly be halted for creating a monopoly because "it would effectively mean those two companies have cornered the market" (Wells). Rubinfeld acknowledged, "If this were 20 years ago when I was still working in the government, I would expect the FTC would try to block this deal" (Wells). However, defining the competition narrowly to include only supermarkets does not fully capture the diverse nature of today's grocery retail options. For this reason, I contend that regulators should consider how the market has expanded over the past two decades when evaluating the legality of this merger.

While that industry landscape of twenty years ago may have dictated that a merger of Kroger and Albertsons would create a monopoly, companies have evolved and adapted to meet customers' needs. The grocery industry has seen significant expansion in recent decades that has shifted how consumers purchase food. The grocery market segment can no longer be seen to include only conventional supermarket chains. Therefore, the view of what constitutes the grocery market must evolve to account for the expansion of big-box and online retailers. The

*Wall Street Journal* sets forth projections of estimated food sales in the United States among the top ten retailers in the grocery industry. In their projection, Kroger has the second largest market share at 9 percent of sales, while Albertsons is the fourth largest with 5 percent of sales (Kang). Assuming the merger is approved, and the combined Kroger-Albertsons company maintains its current market share of 14 percent, which is unlikely given the divestiture "of between 100 and 375 stores, which the companies have agreed to identify" as part of this transaction, the percentage of sales would still be far less than the largest market share holder, Walmart, with 22 percent of all sales (Kang). Simeon Gutman, an equity analyst for Morgan Stanley, noted, "The inclusion of Walmart as a competitor could be a key swing factor" regarding the retail food market (Wells). While some may argue that this merger would place too much market control with too few organizations, the data do not support that position.

Even if we assume Kroger-Albertsons retain a market share of 13 percent following the merger, given generously by the *Wall Street Journal,* the top five companies would barely hold a majority of the market share. If we examine the existing nine companies and add the next largest supplier, the top ten companies would only hold 59 percent of all food sales in the United States. These projections do not include new grocers that have recently come on the scene, including natural grocers, which alter how consumers procure their groceries (Kang). As one analyzes all the data, this transaction looks less like two major grocers attempting to create a monopoly and more like two medium-sized retailers trying to gain efficiencies to remain competitive and viable in an ever-changing market.

Despite the many well-founded concerns expressed by consumers and market experts who believe the merger of Kroger and Albertsons will reduce competition, this proposed merger may allow these companies to remain viable in a changing grocery retail environment. Without a merger, consumers may lose one or both retailers from the market, thus reducing competition overall. Today's grocery store looks much different than ten to fifteen years ago. These differences are due to the expansion of groceries in big-box stores, new alternative stores, online grocery shopping, and several other innovations, including drive-thru pickup, contactless delivery, self-checkout stations, and loyalty shopper programs to name just a few. Also, the growing popularity of German-based Aldi and Trader Joe's has further impacted how consumers shop for groceries. While these stores offer fewer options and alternative brands, many consumers favor these retailers to purchase food at lower prices and find the smaller store size easier to navigate than searching through the thousands of products on shelves at conventional supermarkets. Many consumers purchase from Costco and Sam's Club to buy items in bulk, saving them from frequenting the grocery store as often and, at times, saving them money on a per unit purchase basis. Finally, alternate stores like Dollar Tree, Dollar General, and Family

Dollar have come onto the grocery scene, offering both freezer and shelf- stable foods at affordable prices. These retail alternatives, combined with the impact Amazon has had in online grocery sales, have significantly altered where people buy food.

Understanding grocery store innovations and the expanding marketplace is crucial to see why Kroger and Albertsons must merge to remain competitive and viable. The traditional supermarket is no longer conducive to evolving consumer demands, and retailers who fail to adapt may soon become extinct and forced to go out of business. If that happens, we will find fewer retailers and place more of the market share in the hands of Walmart, Sam's Club, and Costco, losing vastly more than the competition many feared.

Regulators responsible for evaluating the proposed merger of Kroger and Albertsons have an important task before them. Every household in America purchases groceries, so this regulatory decision will affect much of the population. Given that groceries are a staple and a sizable portion of people's earnings are allocated for food, this decision will significantly impact individuals' budgets and the overall economy of the United States. The goal for regulators is to ensure the ongoing competitiveness of the grocery market. The initial reaction of consumers, consumer advocates, business experts, and regulators may be to view the proposed merger as creating a monopoly. These individuals should analyze changes in the grocery industry, relevant market data, and input from industry experts to determine whether the Kroger-Albertsons merger will impede competitiveness or instead benefit consumers. I believe the merger will allow these companies to better compete with large-scale retailers and help them to survive this changing retail environment. The merger may not only keep one or both companies from going out of business but allow them to thrive while keeping prices affordable and enhancing the customer experience, which positively affects market competitiveness. Therefore, the FTC should allow the merger to occur because the transaction does not meet the regulatory standards of a monopoly, will not impede competitiveness, and does not violate antitrust laws.

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# 4.

# WRITING PROPOSALS


Proposals are one of the most important genres in professional and technical communication. They're used to solve problems, request funding, and win bids. In a proposal, you need to convince your audience about the seriousness of a problem, describe a specific solution, and then try to persuade your audience that your solution is a sound and feasible one. The proposal, then, consists of two arguments: first, you must convince your audience that your problem needs to be solved; second, you must persuade them to choose your particular solution. At heart, proposals are a call to action: you/we should do X because...

In this assignment, you will identify and describe a *local and practical problem*, one that impacts a K-State, Manhattan, or another home community. You will first need to make sure that this problem is a significant and important one. It also needs to be a problem that can be solved at the local level. In other words, someone in your community must have the power to enact the change that you are proposing; therefore, audience selection is very important for this assignment. You will need to choose the appropriate specific audience to whom to address your proposal; a successful proposal will be addressed to a specific person, not simply to a position or title. Determining the appropriate audience is one kind of research that you will have to do for this assignment. Make sure that your audience will care about this problem, be invested in helping you solve it, and have the power to make the proposed change. If you're having a hard time coming up with a topic, you may want to check *The Collegian* or *The Manhattan Mercury*.

After determining a problem that can be solved at a local level and identifying the correct audience to whom to direct your proposal, you'll need to describe an appropriate and feasible solution. As you research possible solutions, make sure that you are aware of the various costs that may be involved. What will materials and labor cost? What will be the cost of regular maintenance once the solution has been implemented? Similar to your problem description, make sure that your research of the solution demonstrates your credibility. One way to enhance your ethos is by illustrating your thorough research of the issue and its associated costs.

You will then justify to your intended audience why your solution is the best available. This section should be the most developed of your proposal, as this is the moment in which you argue why your readers should adopt this particular solution. In this section, remember not to provide reasons for why the problem is a problem—that is information that should be included in the problem description section; instead, focus here on why, exactly, your solution is the solution that the audience should choose to act upon. This is another place where you will need to make clear to your audience that you understand the costs of your proposal solution, but you believe that the potential benefits outweigh those costs. As you craft your justification, remember to keep audience-based reasoning in mind; your reasons and research should appeal to the interests, values, needs, and concerns of your intended audience, not simply to you.

In fact, throughout your proposal, you will need to demonstrate your ability to see the problem and solution from your audience's perspective. For example, what doubts might your readers have about the problem? How can you counter your audience's skepticism or questions about the solution you have identified? You will also need to include sufficient and relevant research to demonstrate your credibility and knowledge about the problem and the solution.

Your proposal will consist of the following sections:

## Transmittal Letter

Your proposal will include a transmittal letter, which will introduce your proposal and persuade your audience to consider it. A secondary purpose of the letter is to enhance your ethos by establishing your relationship with the intended audience and introducing the audience to your ideas. The letter should persuade this audience to read and consider the submitted proposal by briefly describing the proposal's claim and the positive benefits that would result from enacting your proposal. The tone of the letter should be professional, and the style should be concise and familiar (i.e., use familiar, natural language). The letter should follow the standard business letter block format, which includes the following features: heading, inside address, salutation, body paragraphs, complimentary close, signature, and author name. The proposal transmittal should be single-spaced within blocked paragraphs and be only 1 full page in length with one- inch margins.

## Introduction

Interest your readers in your particular problem and solution. Provide a brief overview of the problem and your proposed solution. You should directly forecast your main claim and reasons: "We should do X because __________ ." (*Note: Your reasons will form the justification*.)

## Problem Description

Describe your problem vividly and specifically. You will likely want to find some local research sources to support your description and your explanation for why this problem is an important one. Keep your audience in mind: make sure that you indicate how the problem affects your readers (not just how it affects you) and why they should care about it. Audience-based reasoning is *crucial* to a successful proposal.

## Solution Description

Describe your solution in detail. You will need to provide sufficient research and specific details in order to illustrate how your solution is both believable and feasible. It is often a good idea to include alternative solutions and explain why these alternatives were (or should be) rejected. This information demonstrates to your readers that you are aware of other possible solutions and that you have compared the feasibility of your solution with these alternatives. (*Note: some writers choose to include this information in their solution description section while others construct a separate section for alternatives. In either case, you will also want to illustrate that you have researched the costs and potential problems associated with your solution, as well as with the alternative solutions.*)

## Justification

Using *audience-based reasons,* explain why your solution is a good one and is, in fact, better than other possible solutions. Show how your proposal is in the best interests of your intended audience and address their concerns. Some students find researching the values of their audience, such as examining K- State's Mission Statement, helpful for refining their audience-based reasons. Your work on warrants this semester should also help you determine your audience's values and concerns. (*Note: The justification section should be the largest and most developed one in your proposal; make sure that you provide enough information to support your reasons*.)

## Conclusion

Try to leave your readers with a final impression of why your problem is an important one. Provide a final call to action urging your readers to consider and address your proposal. You might also remind them, briefly, how your solution benefits them.

Your instructor will give you suggestions for how to structure and format the proposal. Typically, as proposals are formal (and formalized) professional documents, it will be in extended memo format and will include subheadings to make it more accessible and readable.

For the proposal genre, make sure that these sections can stand alone. You should not, for example, mix additional description about the problem in your solution description. Although your instructor might give you different guidelines, the proposal is usually will be between 1700- 2800 words (the equivalent of 5-8 double-spaced pages, in standard 12-point font) and must include at least five relevant, integral, credible outside sources.

### Objectives

By the end of this Unit, your Proposal will meet the following objectives:

- identify and argue for the significance of a local problem or concern
- identify and describe a reasonable and feasible solution
- apply audience-based reasoning to convince an appropriate audience to act on your solution
- conduct research for practical and local topics
- use research to support your proposed solution
- apply organizational and stylistic strategies to a professional-technical communication genre

#### Beware of these common Proposal weaknesses:

- The solutions are unrealistic and unfeasible (e.g., "The campus bookstore should lower textbook prices because they cost too much." Or, "The university should provide a helicopter to help students get to off-campus lab sites more quickly and efficiently.")

- The intended audience is not in the position to solve the problem (e.g., a proposal that is written to students about solving the parking problems on campus.)
- The reasons are based on the interests and concerns of the writer, not on audience-based ones (e.g., "We should build another parking garage because I can never find a parking spot.")
- The justification is under-developed and/or is the smallest section in the proposal. This often means that the student has not thoroughly explained why the proposed solution should be implemented.
- The problem is a national or policy issue, not a local one.
- The justification section provides reasons for why the problem is a problem; it does not provide reasons for why the audience should consider the solution and take action.
- The problem has been written a great deal by students and therefore it is difficult to provide any new or persuasive information to your audience (e.g., parking and campus-wide smoking bans).

## Extended Example of a Proposal

To get a better grasp of how proposal writers move through the different stages of a proposal, please read this section, which will focus on a ride-sharing proposal at the University of Utah.

### Problem Description

According to Richard Johnson-Sheehan in *Writing Proposals*, a problem manifests itself because of a change—something has changed, either socially, culturally, economically, or technologically, which now makes people far more aware of the problem. For example, at the University of Utah, there has been a change in students' perceptions about their safety, in particular when traveling home at night on foot or by one of the ride-hailing companies, such as Uber or Lyft. These University of Utah students may be aware of attacks that have occurred on other college campuses by drivers—or by drivers whom were mistaken as Uber or Lyft employees.[1]

As you explore your problem, you'll want to come to grips with the change: What has been the cause of the problem? Also, what are the consequences of the problem? Whom does it affect? What will happen if the problem is not addressed?

In your Problem Description, you will briefly describe what the problem is, but also craft an argument: The problem is one significant enough to require action. You will want to use strategies of pathos and ethos to emphasize the importance of the problem to your readers. You'll also want to make sure that you are focusing your readers on the problem itself, and not mistaking the problem for its causes or its consequences. For example, a poor WiFi signal in a classroom may be a cause of a problem, yet what actually is the problem? Perhaps the lack of a consistent WiFi signal—the cause—may reduce students' ability to access digital learning resources; this becomes the problem, then, that you can consider addressing.

## Solution

You will offer a solution to your readers to enable them to confront the problem. Your knowledge of the solution, and your ability to describe it specifically, will enhance the persuasiveness of your overall proposal.

For example, the solution in this case is as follows: in order to address the feelings of insecurity of University of Utah students, the university proposed and then accepted the SafeRide program, which operates from 6:00 AM to 12:30 AM, Monday through Friday. This program also hired University of Utah college students, paying them over $15/hour. The university partnered with the application, TapRide, created a SafeRide website, and published the new program as well as the process for using this service.

To show your ethos, you may also provide additional solutions, which you will then reject and explain the basis of rejecting these alternative solutions to your readers. For example, the University of Utah could have easily decided to outsource the SafeRide program to such companies as Uber and Lyft. However, they rejected this alternative solution because the university had no control over hiring and doing background checks on the drivers; they were worried that students' insecurity traveling home at night would not be offset by choosing an Uber or Lyft driver.

## Justification

The third of the core proposal sections is the justification, in which you fully develop your audience-based reasons for supporting the solution you have described. You will want to make sure that your reasons match the beliefs and values of your audience and you'll want to take their concerns into consideration. Focusing again on the University of Utah SafeRide solution, here could be some possible ways to justify this proposal:

Proposal Claim: The University of Utah should introduce a new in-house SafeRide program…

- Because the program will make students more secure when they are traveling home at night. (This reason is a causal one—you are telling readers that there will be a positive benefit or consequence because of the introduction of this solution; as the reason matches the problem, you can be confident that most readers will accept it as a legitimate one.)

- Because the program is easy to use and relatively cheap. (For this reason, you are placing the solution into two categories—ease of use and low cost—that you feel your audience will agree with.)
- Because the program offers employment to low-income students. (This is another causal reason, and it is one that university leaders may feel is an important one. It is a beneficial, yet possibly unintended, consequence of the new SafeRide program.)

For each of these reasons, the writer will want to develop the justification, referring to the "Why?" and "How?" questions. Why will this program make students feel more secure? What evidence is there from other universities that created their own in-house ride programs? How do these types of program fare better than those universities who use the cheaper Uber, Lyft, or Via applications? Why is providing a program that gives a salary to low-income students a good idea?

## Stakeholder Audience

As you are exploring your local problem and coming up with a solution, you'll need to be aware of your intended audience. In this case, your audience needs to be a stakeholder—they need to have some investment in the problem and be able to act on the solution. In the University of Utah example, the intended audience of the new SafeRide program was the Presidential Task Force on Campus Safety, a group of faculty and administrators who were asked to address the problem by the university president. This group was empowered to make changes and to allocate resources, time, and money. Of course, the members of the Presidential Task Force on Campus Safety were not directly affected by the problem—they were not college students feeling anxious about getting home safely at night. Yet, they did have a "stake" or investment in the problem: they care about the university community and about students' perceptions about their safety; they are also aware of the image of the University of Utah and the need to enhance the university's reputation for safety and for responding to students' concerns.

As you have already practiced in previous units, you'll also have to figure out the degree to which your audience will be pre-disposed to your proposal. Are you writing to a sympathetic audience? A neutral audience? Or, a more skeptical, resistant audience?

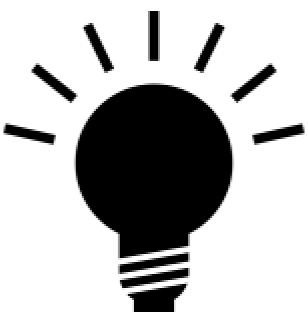
## Ethos, Logos, Pathos, and Kairos

Your **ethos** is an important quality of the proposal. As you are asking your readers to make a change happen and likely to take a risk by spending money and resources, you will want to make sure that they trust you and find you to be knowledgeable about the problem and the solution (and alternative solutions that you have rejected). You will want to conduct practical research to develop the problem (especially its causes and its consequences), the solution (and, if applicable, alternative solutions that you will reject), and the justification.

For your **logos**, you will want to make sure that you have selected audience-based reasons to justify why your readers should adopt your solution to solve the problem. You will want to make sure that your proposal claim and your justifying reasons match the values and beliefs of your stakeholder readers; moreover, you will want to anticipate concerns and objections that they will have. For example, at the University of Utah, if the private ride-hailing applications are free for the universities (indeed, they may even make money off of these agreements), then you will have to make sure to defend why a costlier program outweighs the problems of supporting an application like Uber or Lyft.

Your **pathos** may be an important way to give your problem presence. Although your stakeholder readers will probably not be directly affected by the problem, you may want to use student anecdotes and data to stir their emotions and showcase the problem for your readers.

Finally, you can address **kairos** by urging your audience to act immediately. In your conclusion and introduction, you can call your readers to action, urging them to take a stand against the problem and adopt your solution. You can tell your readers what negative things may occur if action is not taken—or if there is too long of a delay in taking action.



## Invention Activity: Finding a Topic

The first step in crafting your proposal is to find an appropriate problem to which you'll pose a feasible solution. Remember that the problems need to be *local* and *practical*, meaning that they can be solved at the local level. While there are likely many things at the state and national level that you believe should be changed, those are not the kind of problems you should research and address for this assignment. Instead, think about those things in your day-to-day interactions on campus, in Manhattan, and/or in your hometown that you would like to see modified. Here are some questions to help you get started on that invention process.

1. Think through your day today, from the time you woke up until this very moment. What problems did you encounter throughout your day that seem, to you, to have been outside of your control? Was the line too long at the dining hall? Were there no vegetarian food options? Were you unable to find a seat in your classroom? Did the technology in your classroom fail during your presentation? Make a list of moments throughout your day today that might point toward topics for your proposal.
2. Now think through the last week. Were there any additional problems or frustrations that might make for productive proposal topics? Perhaps you walked from the parking lot after work last night and none of the safety lights were lit. Or maybe you waited for what seemed like an inordinate amount of time for SafeRides to show up on Thursday night. List any similar concerns below.
3. Remember that your proposal must be a local one, but that locality can be your hometown. The last time you were home, did you notice any irritating local problems? Were you reminded of the lack of handicapped parking at the grocery store? Or perhaps you noticed that the park is covered in dog poop, making it nearly impossible for children to play there. In the space below, list any local problems you've noticed in your hometown.
4. Below, list any other local, practical problems that you've encountered at K-State, in Manhattan, or in your home community.
5. Read back through your above lists. A) Cross out any problems seem too small for a 5-8 page proposal. B) Cross out any problems that seem too large for a 5-8 page proposal. C) Cross out any problems for which a solution does not seem feasible.
6. Get together with one or two classmates and discuss the problems that remain on your lists. Can you imagine possible solutions? Can you imagine possible impediments to those solutions? Try to help each other narrow down these lists to a few potential topics for the proposal assignment. Once you've completed your discussion, list 2-3 possible proposal topics in the space below.

## Invention Activity: Testing Proposal Topics[2]

The three scenarios below ask you to consider the scope and feasibility of proposal topics. In small groups, read each of them and then respond to the questions. Keep these discussions in mind as you clarify your own proposal topic.

## Scenario 1:

Sue Ann lives in a large apartment complex near Bill Snyder Family Stadium. The rules of the complex state that tenants may have one small pet, no larger than 15 lbs. Sue Ann's next door neighbors, a couple who both work for XYZ Electronics, have a Chihuahua, a breed that she finds annoying. Since most of tenants in the complex are K-State students, like Sue Ann, she decides to write to the complex manager and propose that the neighbors' annoying dog be removed as soon as possible because it bothers her.

Would Sue Ann's topic be suitable for the proposal unit? Why or why not?

## Scenario 2:

Jordan lives in a six-unit apartment building on Ratone Street, just off campus. Three times this semester his guests could not park because the dumpster where the tenants discard their trash blocked the only two designated guest slots. Jordan then decides to ask his neighbors in the other five units if they also think the lack of guest parking is a problem. He finds out that they do consider the lack of parking to be an inconvenience, especially since there is still enough space near the storage shed where the dumpster was previously located. Jordan decides to write to the building manager to propose that the dumpster be permanently moved back to the space near the shed to free up the two guest parking spaces.

Would Jordan's topic meet the requirements for the proposal unit? Why or why not?

## Scenario 3:

Mark works part-time at PDQ Restaurant. When he was hired, he received a handbook explaining safety policies all employees are expected to follow. One of those policies covers the types of shoes to be worn on the job. Because there is a lot of grease and often times other liquids spilled on the floor, only closed toe, black, non-skid shoes are to be worn on the job. Mark purchased the required shoes with his first pay check but noticed that since Spring has arrived, many of his co-workers, especially the new hires, are wearing sandals or other casual shoe styles.

Discuss with your partners how could Mark develop a proposal to address this problem. Consider his target audience, problem, claim and solution, reasons, opposing views, and possible sources of evidence.

## Invention Activity: Evaluating Potential Topics

A strong proposal topic is one that is local, practical, and has a feasible solution. It is also one that considers the benefits of a solution to the larger community, rather than simply the benefits to the writer. Use the activity below to help you evaluate your potential proposal topics in order to determine which one is likely the best choice for this assignment.

### Potential Topic #1

- Describe the problem
- How does this problem affect the larger community (not just you)?
- What are some potential (feasible) solutions to this problem?
- What do you imagine might be some potential problems with the above solutions?
- How will the solutions benefit the larger community (not just you)?

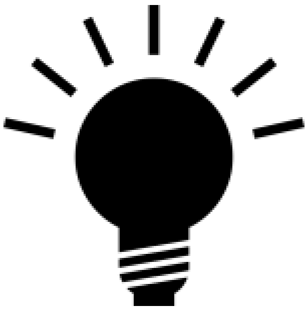
### Potential Topic #2

- Describe the problem
- How does this problem affect the larger community (not just you)?
- What are some potential (feasible) solutions to this problem?
- What do you imagine might be some potential problems with the above solutions?
- How will the solutions benefit the larger community (not just you)?

Based on your answers in these two charts, which topic seems more appropriate for this assignment? Now, check to make sure that the topic is

- local (is situated within one of your K-State, Manhattan, or home communities).
- practical (can be solved at the local level and is not a national policy issue).

- feasible (seems as though it can be solved somewhat easily).



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## Invention Activity: Researching Your Proposal

You have been practicing your researching skills all semester, but the kinds of research you'll need for your proposal might be a bit different. In order to craft a persuasive proposal, you will need to research topics such as (but not necessarily limited to) the following:

- Why the problem exists
- The appropriate audience member who can implement the proposed solution
- The values and concerns of the audience
- What solutions, if any, have already been proposed (and why they've been rejected)
- Potential costs associated with proposed solutions (this might include materials, labor, etc.)
- The benefits of the proposed solution
- The results of similar solutions in other communities

In order to find appropriate information on these topics, you may need to investigate sources such as

- city, university, and/or organization homepages and mission statements
- census and demographics information
- local police department webpages
- company and sales pages (for product pricing)
- city or university municipal sites
- local newspaper articles
- advocacy groups
- community outreach organizations

Keep in mind, though, that despite your focus on local issues, you might still need to do some national research. You might want to consider whether or not this problem is common throughout the country as well as how other communities have dealt with the problem. You might look at national trends, larger impacts, and common concerns. The majority of your information, however, will likely need to be tied specifically to your local community.

Remember, if you're not sure how to get started researching, you can always talk to your instructor. Additionally, you can make an appointment with a research librarian in Hale Library. They'll sit down with you and help you find exactly the kind of research you need. If you do make an appointment with a research librarian, remember to bring your textbook with your supplement so that the librarian has a clear sense of your assignment guidelines.

## Drafting Activity: Thinking about Audience

One of the key aspects of this assignment—of this entire course, in fact—is audience-based reasoning. In order to persuade your audience to implement your proposal, you will first need to determine who that audience is. Who can actually enact the change you are proposing? Finding the answer to that question is part of the research required for this assignment. Once you know to whom to direct your proposal, you will need to keep your audience's values, concerns, and prior knowledge in mind in order to match your reasons to those values. A successful proposal must explain why the problem is a problem *for the audience* and not just for the writer. Additionally, it must use reasons that will be persuasive for that specific audience, and the justification for implementing the proposal must, again, illustrate the benefits for the audience, not (simply) for the writer.

It can be helpful, then, to try to view your proposal from the point of view of your audience and to imagine that your audience is somewhat skeptical of your proposal. As your target audience is the person who is in a position to enact change, that also means that this person will have the responsibility of implementing whatever suggestion or solution you propose. Try to imagine the problems your audience might see with your proposal and illustrate that you've considered those concerns. Anticipate alternative views on your proposal and predict the potential pitfalls of enacting this kind of change. Showing that you've thought through your proposal from the perspective of your audience, and illustrating that you can address the possible concerns, not only makes your proposal more persuasive overall, it highlights your own ethos as a writer and researcher.

Here are a few questions to help you think more about your audience:

1. Who can enact the change you're proposing?
2. What might a person in that position most value? How do you know?
3. What concerns might a person in that position have about your proposal?
4. Why might they have those concerns?
5. Why might a person in that position be excited about your proposal? What might that person, or the community which that person represents, value from your proposal?
6. What are the warrants (either explicit or implicit) of your proposal? Will your audience accept those warrants? Why or why not? How do you know?

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## Drafting Activity: Avoiding Problematic Reasons in Audience-Based Reasoning

Below are examples of problematic claims and reasons that past students have included in drafts of their justification sections. Using the questions that follow, explain why the claims and reasons are problematic and help these students revise with their audience more clearly in mind.

### Problematic Reasons

1. The campus bookstore should lower their textbook prices because they are too expensive for students.
2. The Derby Dining Hall needs to extend its hours because I am tired of having to miss my dinners.

3. K-State needs another parking garage because most K-State students can't find parking after 10:00 and are then late for their classes.
4. The Expository Writing Program shouldn't have an attendance policy because I'm an adult and should be able to decide if I want to come to class or not.
5. The Math Department shouldn't have any international GTAs because they're hard to understand.

- What is the intended audience of each of the above claims and reasons? What assumptions is the writer making about these audiences? How could the writer change the claim and reasons to better match the audience's values?
- What are the warrants or assumptions expressed in these claims and reasons? Is the audience likely to accept these warrants? How can the claim and reasons be changed in order to produce warrants that are more acceptable to the audience?
- What is the purpose of these reasons? In what ways do these reasons help justify the solution for the audience? What revisions can the writer make in order to craft reasons that better suit the purpose of justifying why the audience should accept the solution and act upon it?

## Logos: Reason Types

The proposal has an obvious claim type: you are proposing that your readers should or ought to do something. However, when you are supporting your proposal claim in the justification section, you may want to use different types of reason types. As we explored earlier, thse are the types that are available to you:

**Definitional or Categorical:** You are supporting your proposal by putting it into a particular definition or category that your audience will find persuasive.

- Northwestern University should adopt Via as a ride-hailing application because it is the cheapest solution.
- The Aggieville Business Association should create a pedestrian-only zone on Moro Street because it is a community-engaged solution.

**Resemblance:** You are supporting your proposal by comparing it to something else that your readers will find persuasive.

- Northwestern University should adopt Via as a ride-hailing application because other large urban universities, such as the University of Southern California, have had success with Uber and Lyft partnerships. (In this case, you are assuming that your Northwestern University stakeholder audience finds what other large universities have done to be appealing and persuasive.)

- The Aggieville Business Association should create a pedestrian-only zone on Moro Street because these pedestrian-friendly areas have been successful in several other Big XII communities.

**Causal:** You are supporting your proposal by showing how it will cause positive benefits for your readers or for those who are affected by the problem.

- Northwestern University should adopt Via as a ride-hailing application because it will reduce the incidences of driving while intoxicated.
- The Aggieville Business Association should create a pedestrian-only zone on Moro Street because a pedestrian-friendly area will attract more visitors and customers.

**Evaluation or Ethical:** You are supporting your proposal with value-based reasons. You are telling your readers that they should do something because it is the right thing to do. For example, perhaps you would remind your stakeholder audience of their own ethical values and positions by quoting for them points from their own mission statements.

## What if your readers may not accept your reasons and justification?

You may need to provide additional evidence to explain why the benefits of the solution outweigh the risks and fears that you readers may feel.

In the previous University of Utah example, if you were fearful that the stakeholder audiences may not understand how providing low-income students with a 15$/hour part-time job was connected to the problem of students' feelings of insecurity, you would need to develop your explanation of how this unintended consequence can have beneficial outcomes to other students and to the stakeholder audience. For example, the students who are feeling anxious about going home at night may be reassured that a fellow student is the one who is driving them home, as this student has a closer connection to the university and understands the college community; moreover, this unintended consequence may raise the morale on campus, affecting other types of attitudes of students and, quite possibly, allowing for a better university recruitment potential and learning environment.

# Drafting Activity: Proposal Questions

Below are the types of questions you should ask yourself in order to better organize and develop the different sections of your proposal.

## Introduction

Who is your audience?

What is your overall problem or topic?

Why does your audience care about the topic? Why is your audience reading this proposal?

What should they expect in your proposal?

What is your overall claim and reasons? (*Note: Your claim and reasons should match your overall claim and reasons in your justification section.*)

## Problem Description: What?

What is the problem?

Whom does the problem affect? In what way does it affect your target audience, in particular?

What is the cause of this problem?

What will happen if this problem is not solved?

Why does this problem need to be solved?

Why hasn't this problem been solved in the past?

What are the negative effects of this problem?

## Solution Description: How?

What is your specific solution?

What does this solution require?

Who will implement the solution?

How will the solution affect the target audience?

What are the costs associated with the solution?

What resources will be necessary to pursue this solution?

What are other possible solutions?

## Justification: Why?

*(Note: This should be the longest and most developed section.)*

Why is your solution one of the best ones available?

Why should your audience choose your solution?

What are your audience-based reasons?

How does your solution benefit your target audience?

How does your solution benefit the larger community?

Why is enacting the solution better than remaining with the status quo?

What are your audiences' concerns?

How do the benefits of the solution outweigh the costs?

What are the strengths of the solution?

What evidence do you have that your solution will work?

## Conclusion

What are the most important points of your overall proposal?

What does your target audience need to do now?

Why should your target audience act?

What might happen if your target audience doesn't enact your proposal quickly?

## Drafting Activity: Applying Audience-Based Reasons

Now look at your own claim and reasons (from the previous questions or from your drafting process) and spend some time analyzing the effectiveness of your audience-based reasoning. Based on your analysis here, you may need to reject some of your reasons and develop others that are more audience-based. Consider the possibilities of different types of reasons from the earlier section in this chapter, Logos: Reason Types.

Reason 1:

- Why would this reason be persuasive to your audience?
- How does this reason reflect your audience's values, beliefs, or expectations?
- What evidence might you need to provide in order to convince your audience of the validity of this reason?

Reason 2:

- Why would this reason be persuasive to your audience?
- How does this reason reflect your audience's values, beliefs, or expectations?
- What evidence might you need to provide in order to convince your audience of the validity of this reason?

Reason 3:

- Why would this reason be persuasive to your audience?
- How does this reason reflect your audience's values, beliefs, or expectations?
- What evidence might you need to provide in order to convince your audience of the validity of this reason?

Reason 4:

- How does this reason reflect your audience's values, beliefs, or expectations?

- Why would this reason be persuasive to your audience?
- What evidence might you need to provide in order to convince your audience of the validity of this reason?

## Revision: Proposal Introductions and Conclusions

Although you want to focus a great deal of your persuasive energy in the three core sections of the proposal—the problem description, solution description, and justification—your introduction and conclusion are important places in which to establish your credibility and approach your readers directly.

### Introductions

Here are two examples of problematic introductions:

#### Example #1

> For the history of mankind, people have felt the need for safety. This is no different than college students nowadays, in which safety ranks high on the "wish lists" when it comes to choosing prospective colleges...

#### Example #2

> Imagine that you are walking home late one night. You begin to feel the back of your neck tighten. What was that noise? You see a couple of shadows flickering close to you, and you hear a couple of footsteps. Your breath quickens. You begin to walk faster. The steps behind you speed up, echoing. You start to run, straight out, until you reach the front door of your apartment.

Obviously, these students are trying to connect to their readers, yet the first one is going with the "since-the-dawn-of-time" type intro, which is crafted for composition-class instructors and not for stakeholder readers interested in dealing with the local campus problem of student security. In the second example, the writer is experimenting with pathos, through the emotion of fear. Yet, again, stakeholder readers will likely find this narrative approach to be inappropriate. It is too informal for the purposes of your stakeholder audience.

Here are some options that these two writers—and you—can consider. When it comes to the issue of campus security, proposal writers can

- Showcase a relevant and recent news story
- Find some statistics about attitudes and perceptions (especially with how they have changed)

- Provide more background or context
- Explain what has changed to make this problem more visible or important
- Explain what makes you a credible person to bring this problem to your readers
- Provide an overview of your problem, solution, and justification
- Give your readers a brief preview of your overall explicit claim and reasons

## Conclusions

The proposal conclusion is brief, yet it is important: it is your last opportunity to appeal to your readers and leave a lasting impression with them. As the four questions from the earlier section, Drafting Activity: Proposal Questions, indicate, you are emphasizing your most important reasons in the conclusion and you are trying to make your proposal kairotic—you want your readers, in other words, to act now. In order to encourage them to do so, you might consider the following in your conclusion:

- What are the most important points of your overall proposal?
- What do your readers need to do now?
- What may happen if your readers do not act promptly?

Additionally, here are four typical ways of appealing to your readers in the conclusion:

- **Reinforce your credibility**: "As a student in apparel design, I understand the problems that students in this program have to face every day…"
- **Restate and emphasize your claim and reason**: "As I have shown in this proposal, you should consider ________________________________in order to _________________________and ____________ ."
- **Show your understanding of your readers' concerns, values, and doubts**: "Although you may have concerns about the cost of this proposal, the benefits will…"
- **Make your proposal more urgent**: "You should act now on this proposal in order to…"

# Proposal Workshop

Author: Write down two specific questions you have for your reader. What do you most want your reader to pay attention to as they read your proposal draft? Your questions should focus on higher order concerns, such as focus, purpose, development, and organization.

1.

2.

Reader: As you read the draft, pay attention to the questions above. Additionally, note the following issues.

1. Who is the audience for the proposal? Is this audience in a position to solve the problem? If not, who might you suggest as another, more appropriate, audience?
2. What is the writer's main claim? In other words, what is the action that the writer is proposing?
3. Take on the role of the proposal target reader. What potential problems can you anticipate with the proposed solution? Are there costs or unintended consequences that the writer has not considered? Are there feasibility problems?
4. How has the writer addressed the target audience's concerns?
5. What are the main *reasons* that the author provides for enacting that change?
6. For each reason you listed, explain how it will appeal to the target audience (listed in #1). If you cannot explain how it will appeal to the audience, note that as well.
7. What is one overall strength in the proposal? What is one thing the writer needs to revise before submitting the proposal?

## Workshop: Mini-Workshop Section Checklists

For the core sections of the proposal, you and your partners can consult these checklists to determine whether you are meeting the basic requirements.

| **Introduction** | **Yes** | **Somewhat** | **No** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Does the writer provide the larger context of the problem? | | | |
| Does the audience have the authority and power to solve this problem? | | | |
| Does the writer explain why the readers should be interested or invested in this proposal? | | | |
| Does the writer provide a brief overview of the problem, solution, and justification? | | | |
| Does the writer emphasize their own ethos—the reason why they are in a good position to bring this proposal to the reader? | | | |
| Does the writer emphasize the main claim (solution) and include several reasons? | | | |

What is one strength of the introduction?

What is one area for revision?

| Problem Description | Yes | Somewhat | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| Is the problem meaningful and appropriate for the stakeholder audience? | | | |
| Has the writer described the causes of this problem? | | | |
| Has the writer explained whom this problem affects? | | | |
| Has the writer described the negative consequences of this problem? | | | |
| Has the writer provided enough detail and evidence to make the readers care about the problem? | | | |
| Has the writer appealed to the readers through pathos? | | | |

What is one strength of the problem description?

What is one area for revision?

| Solution Description | Yes | Somewhat | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| Is the justification the longest section of the proposal? | | | |
| Does the justification explain why the proposal is a good way or the best way to solve the problem? | | | |
| Does the justification include several reasons that the target audience will find persuasive? | | | |
| Are the reasons in the justification the same as those that were addressed in the introduction? | | | |
| Does the writer use different types of reasons (e.g., definitional, resemblance, causal, evaluation)? | | | |
| Does the justification include evidence and explanation that the target audience will find persuasive? | | | |
| Does the writer use strong topic sentences to focus readers on the main reasons? | | | |

What is one strength of the solution description?

What is one area for revision?

| Justification | Yes | Somewhat | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| Is the justification the longest section of the proposal? | | | |
| Does the justification explain why the proposal is a good way or the best way to solve the problem? | | | |
| Does the justification include several reasons that the target audience will find persuasive? | | | |
| Are the reasons in the justification the same as those that were addressed in the introduction? | | | |
| Does the writer use different types of reasons (e.g., definitional, resemblance, causal, evaluation)? | | | |
| Does the justification include evidence and explanation that the target audience will find persuasive? | | | |
| Does the writer use strong topic sentences to focus readers on the main reasons? | | | |

What is one strength of the justification section?

What is one area for revision?

| Conclusion | Yes | Somewhat | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| Does the writer use a "call to action" to emphasize the importance and urgency of the proposal? | | | |
| Does the writer emphasize their own ethos? | | | |
| Does the writer restate the main components of the proposal? | | | |
| Does the writer leave the reader with a positive impression? | | | |

What is one strength of the conclusion?

What is one area for revision?

## Drafting Activity: Transmittal Letter Content and Structure

For this letter you will need to use business letter block format, which includes the following features: heading, date, inside address, salutation, body paragraphs, complimentary close, signature, and author name. This format is used for most business letters and would likely be familiar to your audience. Following a conventional format makes reading your document easy for your reader and enhances your ethos. Each feature of the block format is described below:

## Heading:

Block one includes the address of the writer. Do not abbreviate any words other than the two-letter state abbreviation (capitalize both letters). Do not include writer's name.

### Example:

102 Whigham Drive
Toledo, OH 43615

## Date:

Type the date on which the letter is sent. Use the date style with which your audience will be familiar:

### Examples:

Day Month Year → 2 September 2006

Month Day Year→ September 2, 2006

## Inside Address:

This block provides the name and address of the person or institution to whom the letter is addressed. If you do not know the name of the person you want to reach, begin with the job title or name of the department. If you don't know the job title or department, address a high-level executive.

### Example:

Ms. Leslie Washington Tennwear Corporation 606 Carter Avenue
Urbana, IL 61802

## Salutation:

The greeting is followed by a colon, not a comma. Common titles—such as Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr.—are abbreviated, but others are usually spelled out in full (Dean, President, Professor, Reverend, etc.). Use Ms. when addressing a woman unless you have been otherwise informed.

### Examples:

Dear Ms. Green:

Dear Dr. Espinoza:

Reverend Lester:

## Body:

Arrange the body content to highlight why the audience should consider your proposal.

*Introduction Paragraph:* Introduce the writer, state the letter's purpose, and forecast the body paragraphs.

*Content Paragraphs(s):* In one or two paragraphs, develop reasons for why the audience should consider your proposal. Develop only one reason per paragraph, keeping in mind ethos, pathos, and logos.

*Concluding Paragraph:* Provide contact information and respectfully request that the audience consider the proposal.

## Complimentary Close:

Like the greeting, the complimentary close is a conventional expression. Only the first word in the closing is capitalized; the expression is always followed by a comma.

### Examples:

Sincerely, Best wishes, Regards,

## Signature:

Keeping parallel to the letter text, include your full name.

## Enclosure Notation:

Indicate that another document, your proposal, accompanies the letter.

# Drafting Activity: Tone and Style Tips for the Transmittal Letter

With such a short piece of writing, tone and style become extremely noticeable and important. Often, because business letters are considered formal, writers attempt to create a style and tone that conveys formality. Creating formality can feel awkward if you haven't written business documents before, but the key is being straightforward and concise. Unnatural language results in a lack of credibility and conciseness, so avoid artificial attempts to sound impressive.

Elaborately polite expressions that make the writing stiff, stuffy, and distant are unnecessary. Below are a collection of phrases to avoid and their possible substitutions.

| **Avoid** | **Stubstitute** |
|---|---|
| in view of the fact that/due to the fact that/on the grounds that | because |
| had the effect of causing | caused |
| I want to take this opportunity to thank you | thank you |
| in the event that | if |
| personally, I believe | I believe |
| I want to make it clear that | [simply state what you what known] |
| as a means of | to |
| at the present time | now |
| during the course of | during |
| has the ability to | can |
| in light of the fact | since |
| is reflective of | reflects |
| it is my desire that | I hope |
| regardless of the fact that | although |

## Student Example

*Matthew Rodrigues wrote this transmittal letter and proposal in Jonathan Blake's ENGL 200 class. It won first place in the 2019 Fountainhead Press Expository Program Writing Essay Awards.*

2101 N. Crescent Ct.
Kansas City, MO 64152

6 December 2018

Mr. Dan Fowler Councilman
2nd District City Hall, 22nd Floor
414 East 12th Street
Kansas City, MO 64106

Dear Councilman Fowler:

The purpose of this letter is to request that you read the attached proposal and assist with the implementation of the suggested infrastructure improvement. Located in your district at the dangerous intersection of North Ambassador Drive and Northwest Old Tiffany Springs Road, an ineffective four-way stop is the current system in place to control the movement of traffic. I suggest changing this intersection into a multi-lane roundabout in order to improve community and motorist safety and to enhance roadway efficiency.

The addition of a roundabout will increase the safety for all Kansas Citians by decreasing the number of accidents at this intersection, a common problem caused by this four-way stop and the unusual layout of the roadway. Roundabouts reduce the severity of crashes, decrease the number of possible vehicular conflicts, and force drivers to slow down. Pedestrians also benefit from the roundabout due to the splitter island refuge area which simplifies crossing the street. Motorist and pedestrian safety would be greatly improved with this infrastructure upgrade.

Another benefit of the installation of a roundabout is improved traffic flow. The continuous circular flow of traffic around a roundabout will handle a larger volume of traffic and reduce delays, an important aspect to consider for this developing part of Kansas City. Since cars are not required to stop at a roundabout if no conflicts present themselves, this intersection will be more efficient for the nearby shopping centers, local businesses, and community members.

As one of your constituents and a frequent driver of this intersection, I understand the safety concerns of this road. The addition of this roundabout will make Kansas City safer and more efficient and will fulfill our city's mission to improve public safety and to provide infrastructure improvements. As an elected official, it is your obligation to ensure the safety and well-being of all Kansas Citians. Please view the attached proposal for more benefits. Thank you for your consideration and feel free to contact me at mr@gmail.com with any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Matthew Rodrigues

Enclosed: Proposal

To: Dan Fowler, Councilman 2nd District; Heather Hall, Councilwoman 1st District Cc: Bob Heim, Department Director of Platte County Public Works
From: Matthew Rodrigues
Date: 15 November 2018
Subject: A Proposal for the Addition of a Roundabout to the Intersection of N Ambassador Drive and NW Old Tiffany Springs Road

As a longtime resident of Platte County in Kansas City, Missouri, I often find myself driving through the intersection of N Ambassador Drive and NW Old Tiffany Springs Road. With each visit, I am constantly reminded of the dangers this intersection poses and the high amount of traffic located in this popular part of town. There have been several occasions of slamming on my brakes to avoid a fellow motorist who did not proceed through this intersection correctly and other times trying to avoid the broken glass on the road from a recent accident. In its current condition, this intersection is not contributing to the well-being of residents of Kansas City.

Located at the intersection of N Ambassador Drive and NW Old Tiffany Springs Road, a four-way stop is the current system in place to control the movement of traffic. However, road dividers located in between the lanes of traffic cause the intersection to be larger than usual. As a result, the uncommon layout of this four-way stop confuses drivers as it is hard to determine who arrived at the intersection first in order to follow the right-of-way rules. Not only does this confusion lead to more accidents, but it also causes a slower movement of traffic due to cautious drivers in fear of reckless motorists proceeding through this intersection. I propose that the city of Kansas City improve the functionality of this intersection by replacing the current four-way stop with a multi-lane roundabout. The addition of a roundabout would improve community and motorist safety by reducing the number of accidents, enhance the efficiency of the roadway by improving traffic flow, and also provide benefits to the environment.

## Problem Description

The typical four-way stop consists of four stops signs directing traffic for four lanes, two lanes in each direction. However, at the intersection of N Ambassador Dr and NW Old Tiffany Springs Rd, the four-way stop is actually over eight lanes due to dividers positioned in between the different directions of traffic. Due to its large size and unique layout, this confusing intersection poses a safety threat due to the increased number of accidents at this location. According to the Missouri State Highway Patrol Statistical Analysis Center, there have been five reported accidents investigated by the Kansas City Police Department over the past three years at this particular intersection. In addition to the safety concerns of this accident-prone intersection, the increased need for precaution causes cars to drive slowly and for traffic to accumulate. This intersection is located on the corner of the Tiffany Springs MarketCenter, a popular shopping mall and is also just two miles from Zona Rosa Town Center, an upscale shopping center. New stores and developments are constantly being built in this area, such as the almost finished senior care & living facility located on the other corner of this intersection and is reported by the *Kansas City Star* newspaper to consist of “300 units and include more than 300,000 square feet of space when completed” (Ridder par. 6). New developments around this intersection, such as this large assisted living facility, will increase the concentration of residents in this area and will further hinder traffic flow and the movement of cars. There is also a new concern of having these elderly members of the community living right next to this dangerous intersection. The safety risks and high volume of traffic at this intersection contributes to the lack of an efficient roadway, and the need for an improved and more organized intersection in this popular part of town is apparent. The addition of a roundabout would alleviate these problems currently being faced and improve the Kansas City Northland community constituents you represent.

## Solution Description

In order to improve the safety and efficiency of the intersection at N Ambassador Dr and NW Old Tiffany Springs Rd, I propose constructing a multi-lane roundabout to replace the current four- way stop. As defined by Jing Bie, an assistant professor at the University of Twente, along with other professors in the department of civil engineering, a “traffic roundabout is an unsignalized intersection where all vehicles travel in the same direction around a central island”

(378). TheU.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration states that the average construction cost of a roundabout is $250,000 and takes approximately six months to build ("Intersection Safety" pars. 28-29). Although this cost is slightly high, it would be manageable using funds allocated in our city budget. Costs should be covered using the Kansas City's 2018-19 fiscal year $1.66 billion budget, which was adopted to focus on increases to "public safety expenditures" ("2018-19 Budget" 1). This infrastructure improvement would enhance the safety of the intersection, and therefore it would be appropriate to use the money in this budget that was dedicated to increase public safety. Since this intersection already has multiple functioning roads in place, all that will need to be constructed is the central island to provide circularization of the roadway and the splitter islands to divide the different directions of traffic and to provide curvature of the roadways. For the short time needed to construct the roundabout, detours can easily be placed around this intersection using the nearby NW 88th St and N Mattox to direct traffic.

## Justification

An alternative solution for the replacement of the four-way stop would be the installation of traffic signals. According to the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the cost for a traffic signal can range from "$50,000 to more than $200,000 based on the complexity of the intersection" ("Traffic Signals" 2). Although traffic lights might end up being cheaper than the installation of a roundabout, this does not provide the best solution to this problem. The Washington State Department of Transportation has stated that "studies have shown that roundabouts are safer than traditional stop sign or signal-controlled intersections" ("Roundabout Benefits" par. 1). As elected officials, you should want what is best for our community and should choose the solution that will provide the safest results. In addition, "roundabouts eliminate hardware, maintenance and electrical costs associated with traffic signals, which can cost between $5,000 and $10,000 per year" ("Roundabout Benefits" par. 11). The addition of a roundabout would also provide a better return of investment compared to traffic signals. When considering the 20-year service life of roundabouts, for every dollar spent "there was a return of approximately $13 to be realized through crash reduction" ("Intersection Safety" par. 30). Roundabouts would be more effective compared to traffic signals by providing a safer intersection and would actually save the city money by cutting costs associated with accidents and the maintenance of traffic lights.

One major benefit of converting the four-way stop intersection of N Ambassador Dr and NW Old Tiffany Springs Rd to a multi-lane roundabout is the reduction of accidents and the increase to motorist safety. A study conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety has found that "roundabouts reduced injury crashes by 75 percent at intersections where stop signs or signals were previously used for traffic control" ("Roundabout Benefits" par. 2). This improvement in safety is mainly a result of the reduction of possible points of vehicular conflicts compared to a traditional intersection. A two-lane roundabout has eight vehicle-to-vehicle conflicts while a two-lane road intersection has 32 vehicle-to-vehicle conflicts. Additionally, the "geometric curvature ensures that travel speeds on the circulatory roadway are typically less than 30 miles per hour" ("Intersection Safety" par. 6). This lane curvature forces drivers to slow down before entering a roundabout, resulting in fewer accidents. The curvature also requires drivers to travel in one direction, which limits the severity of crashes and helps to "eliminate the possibility for T- bone and head-on collisions" ("Roundabout Benefits" par. 7). The addition of a roundabout would provide major benefits to the safety of motorists by reducing the severity and number of accidents, decreasing the number of conflict points, and by forcing drivers to drive slower.

Not only does the addition of a roundabout improve motorist safety, but also pedestrian safety. Alfonso Montella, associate professor in the department of civil, architectural and environmental engineering at the University of Naples Federico II, along with other researchers found that "due to the reduction of vehicle speed, roundabouts improve pedestrian crossing opportunities and safety" (1222). One important key feature of roundabouts for pedestrians is the splitter island refuge area, which is in agreeance with the policy considerations from the U.S. Department of Transportation. This provided space allows pedestrians to pause on the splitter island, where they "can consider one direction of conflicting traffic at a time, which simplifies the task of crossing the street" ("Policy Considerations" 32). The ability to take a break in between crossing different directions of traffic would allow pedestrians to take their time and to be safer. The addition of this roundabout would improve public safety and is supported by the mission statement of the city that you as an elected official serve and represent. As stated on the Kansas City, MO government website, "The mission of the City of Kansas City, Missouri is to deliver quality, customer-focused municipal services with an emphasis on public safety,…[and] infrastructure improvements" ("Budget Process" par. 3). These are the goals that you strive to abide by each day to make Kansas City a better place for all. This infrastructure improvement would increase the overall well-being and public safety for motorist and pedestrians and reduce the number of accidents at this intersection.

Another benefit of installing a roundabout is the improvement of traffic flow. With the continuous and circular movement around a roundabout, "it is unnecessary for traffic to come to a complete stop when no conflicts present themselves" ("Policy Considerations" 28). Since traffic is not required to stop, roundabouts can handle more traffic which would greatly improve the movement of cars through this intersection. Additionally, studies from Kansas State University measured the traffic flow at intersections before and after the addition of a roundabout and found that "installing a roundabout led to a 20 percent reduction in delays" ("Roundabout Benefits" par. 10). The ability for less congestion and a quicker movement of traffic in this busy part of town would be widely appreciated by members of the community. In accordance with the mission of Platte County Public Works, "The Platte County Department of Public Works continually strives to provide superior performance of infrastructure services to our citizens in order for them to enjoy an enhanced quality of life" ("Platte County" par. 2). The addition of a roundabout would improve the infrastructure of this part of Kansas City, and enhance the quality of life by increasing the efficiency of this intersection with less delays and a better flow of traffic.

Not only do roundabouts enhance public safety and traffic flow, they provide benefits to the environment. Roundabouts are able to provide a reduction in delays because "even when there are heavy volumes, vehicles continue to advance slowly in moving queues rather than coming to a complete stop" ("Policy Considerations" 29). The continuous movement of traffic allows for a reduction in noise and air pollution. Cars are able to consume less fuel from having to stop and go due to complete stops, which also produces less emissions ("Policy Considerations" 29). Improvements to the environment are also in agreeance with the mission of Kansas City. This city is to deliver services with an emphasis on "public health, and the environment" ("Budget Process" par. 3). A roundabout would fulfill the mission of Kansas City by providing a healthier and cleaner environment for the community through its increase in public health and its reduction of emissions and air pollution.

## Conclusion

The intersection of N Ambassador Dr and NW Old Tiffany Springs Rd is a dangerous four-way stop that needs to be improved. This intersection is frequently the cause of car accidents and also generates traffic problems for this developing part of Kansas City. With the conversion of the current four-way stop to a multi-lane roundabout, the concerns over safety and traffic flow will be resolved. As studies have found a large reduction of traffic accidents and delays after the installation of a roundabout, the community will greatly benefit from this infrastructure improvement. Roundabouts have also been found to make our community healthier with additional benefits to the environment. As elected officials and representatives of Kansas City, it is your obligation to ensure the safety and well-being for all residents of Kansas City. It is your responsibility to be aware of community problems and where there is need for improvements. With your involvement in committees dealing with transportation and public safety, you hold the power to make this change for the community. If you truly strive to follow the mission of Kansas City, we can achieve these goals by improving this intersection. With your help, the addition of a roundabout at the intersection of N Ambassador Dr and NW Old Tiffany Springs Rd will ensure that Kansas City residents are safe, efficient, and healthy.

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## Student Example

*Lilli Heinen wrote this transmittal letter and proposal in Monica Kopenhaver's ENGL 200 class.*

Lilli Heinen
XXXX Claflin Road
Manhattan, KS 66504

13 December 2019

Mary Hale Tolar, Interim Vice President of Student Success Kansas State University
101 Holton Hall 1101 Mid-Campus Drive
Manhattan, KS 66506

Dear Ms. Tolar:

My name is Lilli Heinen, and I am a sophomore studying pre-veterinary medicine at Kansas State University. I am writing you today to propose a solution which would address a problem are likely aware of: freshmen from small-town, rural communities drop out at a higher rate than their suburban and urban counterparts. As a result, K-State's retention and graduation rates are not as high as they could be. My proposal for a peer mentorship program for small- town freshmen will not only address this issue but will also help achieve several goals of the Office of Student Success.

Office of Student Success has one of the most important jobs on campus: easing the transition to university and ensuring success throughout the completion of a college degree. The Office also desires to increase the retention rate from freshman to sophomore year. My proposal will help the Office accomplish both of these goals. A peer mentorship program will make it easier for small-town freshmen to begin their college careers at K-State, thus leading to more freshmen returning for their sophomore year.

In addtion, the peer mentors will bridge the academic and student services operations at K-State, achieving yet another of the Office's goals. Peer mentors will act as a navigation system for their mentees by addressing the specific concerns that may arise amongst their group of freshmen whether they be academic, financial, or social. Upon starting their first semester at K-State, small-town freshmen with no previous college-related experience might not know where to turn to for help. Peer mentors will be able to point freshmen toward the program(s) that will best benefit them and, therefore, serve as the bridges that guide small-town freshmen to success.

I urge you to consider my proposal for a peer mentorship program for small-town freshmen as it will not only benefit the students it impacts directly, it will also benefit the Office of Student Success and K-State. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time.

Best wishes,
Lilli Heinen

Enclosed: A Proposal for a Peer Mentorship Program for Small-Town Freshmen

To: Interim Vice President of Student Success Mary Hale Tolar From: Lilli Heinen
Cc: Monica Kopenhaver
Date: 13 December 2019
Subject: A Proposal for a Peer Mentorship Program for Small-Town Freshmen

The transition to university is a difficult one no matter the background of the student. This big change is something all freshmen have in common. K-State has wonderful programs, such as the Office of Student Success, in place to ease the transition for those groups of freshmen who have a particularly hard time adjusting to campus life. However, there is one group whose struggles are not specifically addressed by K-State: small-town rural students. Although these students have access to all the programs available to assist them, these freshmen struggle to adapt to the hustle and bustle of a large university and therefore might not always actively seek out the help they need. These students, if they fail to adapt, could drop out of college and thus, lower K- State's retention and graduation rates. As a result, the Office of Student Success should create a peer mentorship program for small-town freshmen because such a program will increase the well-being and academic success of these freshmen in addition to connecting academic and student service operations at K-State.

## Problem Description

Universities across the nation have implemented outstanding programs to help minority and first-generation students. K-State is no exception. Countless clubs and organizations, in addition to numerous academic resources, specifically target these groups in order to make the transition into university life easier. However, new students from small, rural towns have experienced the same difficulties as the groups mentioned above, but do not receive the same help. In a National Public Radio (NPR) article, authors Elissa Nadworny and Jon Marcus describe this issue as a nationwide one. The article summarizes the sources of the struggles these rural, small-town students face. They range from financial troubles, due to the lower incomes associated with small towns, to academic troubles, caused by lack of exposure to college courses in their small high schools. The article also reports that only 59% of rural students go straight to college in comparison to the 67% of suburban students (Nadworny, 2018). At first glance, this issue may seem to be one that does not impact the university as a whole but rather impacts only a slice of the student population. However, this problem has far-reaching implications at the university. The difficulty these students experience adjusting could be linked to lower retention rates from freshman to sophomore year.

A page on the K-State website is dedicated to reporting graduation and retention statistics for the university. A graph of the freshman-to-sophomore retention rate shows the percent of undergraduate students who have returned to K-State following the completion of their freshman year. In the fall of 2019, K-State had an 85.8% freshman-to-sophomore retention rate (Kansas, 2019). This is a high rate but is lower than the retention rates at other universities. The same page compares the retention rates of K-State to other universities. For example, Auburn University and North Carolina State University both had retention rates of 92% and 94%, respectively, in the fall of 2016. In comparison, K-State's retention rate was only 85% that year (Kansas, 2019). This discrepancy indicates that something must change about K-State's approach to helping first-year rural students. The discrepancy also demonstrates that a program focused on targeting the struggles first-year rural students face will increase the freshman-to-sophomore retention rate at K-State.

## Solution Description

In order to improve the retention rate of small-town students, I propose that the Office of Student Success implement a peer mentorship program for these small-town freshmen. The mentors will be older students from similar small-town backgrounds assigned to a group of freshmen. All small-town freshmen will be assigned to a mentor for the entirety of their first year at K-State. Mentors will organize one mandatory meeting per semester but will be encouraged to engage their advisees in activities outside of these meetings. In addition, mentors should make themselves available to their mentees via email or groupchat to ensure a meaningful connection. Mentors will be a guide to all the resources available to students and a role model that freshmen can look up to. The resources in question are all the programs that the Office of Student Success and other offices around campus already provide such as tutoring, financial aid counseling, and first-generation student support. They will be working on a volunteer basis, but the program could attract mentors by advertising the benefit of having this experience on a resume. Advertisement can include posters, emails, and promotions on social media. Additionally, advising faculty will be asked to inform their advisees about the opportunity to become peer mentors.

The training for mentors could be covered by the funding allotted to the Office of Student Success for Educational Supportive Services (ESS) as the peer mentorship program will act as an extension of ESS. Funding for ESS comes from the United States Department of Education as well as the university itself (Educational, 2019). The major cost for the volunteers and the Office itself will be the time required to make this program a success. Training will take place during break periods. The training will consist of workshops that give mentors the skills and knowledge to create lasting relationships and provide their mentees with the best resources K-State has to offer.

## Justification

The issue of high drop-out rates among rural students is a nationwide one. Other solutions have been implemented by other universities to remedy this problem. In the NPR article mentioned previously, the authors mention a solution implemented by the University of Michigan to help rural students. The university began to extend its Kessler Presidential Scholarship Program to rural students instead of keeping the program exclusive to first-generation urban students (Nadworny, 2018). While this solution, if implemented at K-State, is sure to assist small-town students with the costs associated with attending university, it does not address the issue of the academic gap between rural and suburban or urban students due to lack of access to college- level material in high school. My solution will address this problem because the peer mentors will be able to point their mentees in the direction of the phenomenal tutoring services already provided by K-State. My solution is attractive to the Office of Student Success and the university as a whole for several other reasons.

Firstly, the community born out of a peer mentorship group will increase feelings of well-being and belonging among students. Students who feel welcome and happy at their university are more likely to do well and continue their education, which is the goal of the Office of Student Success. An article from Harvard's Graduate School of Education written by Victoria Jones summarizes the findings of a study by Professor Christina Hinton on the effect of happiness on student performance. Hinton found that happiness among students is strongly correlated with the culture of the school and relationships with teachers and their peers (Jones, 2015). The peer mentorship program, if implemented at K-State, would provide meaningful connections among members of the group as well as a connection with the student mentor. The Office of Student

Success strives to increase retention and graduation rates. Both goals would be met following a successful implementation of this program. Small-town freshmen will be motivated by their peers and mentors to not only stay at K-State but to complete their degrees successfully. Although successful implementation will require lots of time and effort from the Office and the peer mentors, the rewards are enormous because increased retention and graduation rates make K-State more appealing to potential students across the globe.

Second, peer mentorship programs are known to increase academic achievement and improve grades. A research study lead by Dr. Birgit Leidenfrost on the impact of peer mentoring on university students was conducted in 2014. Leidenfrost and others concluded that not only did such programs increase social well-being among students, they also found that freshmen that participated achieved a higher GPA and completed more credit hours than non-participants (Leidenfrost, 2014). The findings of this study show that not only are peer-mentored-freshmen happier, they also do better in school. This is incredibly important to the Office of Student Success and K-State in general. Higher academic achievement may not only lead to higher retention rates but may also increase graduation rates. As mentioned before, these are goals of the Office of Student Success that would be reached with the implementation of my solution.

Finally, the peer mentors are older students who will be trained by the Office of Student Success to point their mentees in the direction of programs already available that are designed to address the struggles of new students. In this way, no new major programs have to be created and implemented at the university, which would cost lots of both time and money. As mentioned in the solution description section, peer mentors will work on a volunteer basis so only an investment of time is required in addition to small costs incurred during training which will be adequately covered by funding for ESS. A peer mentorship program is beneficial to the Office of Student Success because it will achieve the Office's goal of bridging academic and student service operations. Peer mentors will be the bridges between their freshmen mentees and all the services the university has to offer. As an example, a small-town freshman approaches their mentor about how to email a professor. This particular freshman has never had to write an email following formal guidelines. The freshman asks their mentor to proofread the email. Since the mentor is an upperclassman, they understand how professors should be addressed in a formal email. In addition, because of their background, the mentor understands the struggles all of their freshmen mentees face when coming to university, such as writing formal emails to professors.

## Conclusion

Implementing a peer mentorship program to ease the transition to university life for small-town freshmen would ultimately increase retention and graduation rates. Additionally, such programs have been proven to increase GPA and the well-being of the freshmen who participate. A peer mentorship program will also complete the Office of Student Success's goal of bridging academic and student service operations at K-State. Small-town freshmen will be under the guidance of an older student familiar with the struggles that freshmen like them face. The peer mentor will be able to navigate their mentees through their first year at K-State. If no action is taken, this issue could be exacerbated, leading to declining retention and graduation rates at K-State. The Office of Student Success already provides incredible services designed to help K-State students prosper and a peer mentorship program for small-town freshmen will expose more students to all the Office and K-State has to offer.

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## Student Example

*Neeley Bowden wrote this transmittal letter and proposal in Gehric Milton's ENGL 200 class*

810 Sparrow Ct.
Manhattan, KS 66504

10 December 2019

Mike Dodson Mayor of Manhattan, Head of Manhattan City Commission
1101 Poyntz Ave.
Manhattan, KS 66502

Dear Mr. Dodson:

As a member of the Manhattan community and a Feed Science student at Kansas State University, I have become aware that students are facing issues regarding safe and affordable housing in your city. Therefore, I ask that you read the enclosed proposal on revamping the current legislature on rental properties in Manhattan. By improving the current policies, students will face less financial stress and in turn contribute more to the community. My proposal will maintain high property values and low vacancy rates, the ultimate goal of any city with a large population of renters.

In this proposal, students will get the protection from exploitative landlords that they deserve as members of the Manhattan community. They will not have to worry about facing food insecurity to afford a decent house or living in unsafe conditions to afford the basic necessities of life. In turn, these students would be more willing and better able to contribute more to organizations and businesses in town. They could shop more locally, spend more time volunteering, and ultimately give back to the town that simultaneously supports them.

Reworking the current policies surrounding rental properties, specifically those rented by students, can easily be done through the enactment of rent controls and further legislation. Not only will students feel more like a part of the Manhattan community, the community will greatly benefit from this proposal as well. If you have any questions, please contact me at nb@ksu.edu. I ask that you take my proposal into consideration as you move forward to improve housing in our city.

Sincerely,

Neeley Bowden
Enclosed: Proposal

To: Manhattan City Commissioners and Mike Dodson, Mayor
From: Neeley Bowden
Date: November 11, 2019
Subject: Price Gouging and Negligence of Student Rental Properties in Manhattan, Kansas

According to data published by Kansas State University, almost 25,000 students call K-State and the City of Manhattan home every year. They spend time and money at local businesses, volunteer in the community, and generally become a key piece of the town culture. However, they also face some challenges to integration into the city. As a current student at K-State, I have personal experience with the struggles that students face in becoming a part of Manhattan. One of which is the sky-high rent prices and exploitative landlords due to the lack of control of rental properties by the city. The City Commission should support the enactment of rent control and more legislature regarding rental properties because it would maintain property value, ensure low vacancy rates, improve K-State graduates' willingness to stay in Manhattan, and improve the community amenities and schools.

## Problem

The tribulations students typically face while in college are immense. A large contributor is the struggle to find affordable and comfortable housing, an issue created by the price gouging and property negligence of exploitative landlords. This problem primarily affects college students, but also has a secondary effect on low-income families who rely on affordable rental housing to keep a roof over their heads. When property managers unnecessarily raise the prices of their properties, the entire market price for rental properties increases, which can cause decent properties to become unaffordable for these families. Ultimately, landlords are able to get away with taking advantage of students in this manner because there is very little regulation of rental properties by the City of Manhattan.

The City of Manhattan has generally been opposed to the idea of further regulations for a couple of reasons. For one, rental properties generate tax revenue for the City. If legislation were passed to place a ceiling on rent prices, the City would lose some of the revenue generated by rentals. Additionally, the City does not count students in the census population, nor do they consider students to be actual citizens of Manhattan. Because of this, the City is not inclined to make any special accommodations for students at Kansas State.

However, the problem of high rent and low maintenance seriously affects students whether they recognize it or not. The Department of Housing and Urban Development uses a statistic called the Fair Market Rent (FMR) to gauge how expensive a city is to live in. The FMR measures the 40th percentile rent price in the area, meaning 60% of rental properties in the area are priced above the FMR rate per bedroom. According to RentData.org, the FMR for Manhattan is higher than 89% of other cities in the US despite having a relatively low population compared to other cities with similar FMRs. This statistic illustrates the intense scope of the problem that affects the town's students.

But why has this affected our town in the first place? The reason is that landlords are able to charge a higher rent price to students because they usually rent per room rather than the entire house. According to Jason Hartman, a real estate consultation company, a home that would rent to a family for $1,000 could be rented to students by the room for almost $2,000. Because of this, landlords have an incentive to charge exorbitantly high prices due to the high demand for student housing. Without many affordable housing options, students are forced to go homeless and sleep in their vehicles or surf their friends' couches, rent an affordable place in hardly livable conditions, or rent a high-priced property in good condition and risk facing food insecurity or other major financial stress. The culmination of these situations has a negative effect on student performance and university dropout rates. If the city does not put a stop to the exploitative behavior of landlords in Manhattan, these consequences will continue to collect and become a larger problem that is much more laborious to solve than simply implementing further regulations.

## Solution

The solution to the exploitation of students by landlords in Manhattan is simple: enact legislation to prevent it from happening in the first place. This legislation would have multiple facets to address the different issues that surround the issue of price gouging and property negligence. A major component of the legislation would be the imposition of rent control in Manhattan. According to an article by Amy Bergen, writer for *Money Under 30*, rent control is a policy that limits how much landlords can charge in rent and may include limitations on the grounds for eviction and the timing of rent price increases. The goal of rent control is to keep housing at an affordable price and is specifically designed to benefit low- and middle-income renters, like students, which is why it is a great solution to the problem of price gouging.

Another component of the proposed legislation is an ordinance to ensure that properties rented by students are properly inspected for city code enforcement on a regular basis. Currently, city code inspections for low income properties rented by students are few and far between, which has allowed some of these properties to fall into desperate need of proper maintenance. Take Tuttle Terrace for example. Tuttle Terrace is a rental neighborhood with many student inhabitants that is owned and managed by a sole company. As reported by *Renters Together MHK*, Tuttle Terrace is riddled with broken windows, slumping roofs, and crumbling exterior walls, yet many still choose to live there because the rent is cheap. This level of disarray has only been achieved because the city has neglected to properly enforce housing ordinances on the property management company; however, this is not an issue specific to Manhattan. An article by Karen Black, professor at the University of Pennsylvania, describes how a Pennsylvania town solved this issue with an increase in city code inspections for student housing. The city of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania made a deal with the local college to split the cost of code enforcers specifically dedicated to inspecting and enforcing student rental properties to ensure that students are living in healthy, safe homes. A system like this would greatly benefit the students of Kansas State by ensuring that landlords maintain their properties in good condition and students are not forced to live in houses that are falling apart. For this reason, it is a great solution to prevent landlords from taking advantage of student's need for affordable housing.

An alternative to this solution is to have the City Commission incentivize the construction of new housing. By the laws of supply and demand, an increased supply of housing will decrease the demand for it and, subsequently, the rent price. However, there are many issues associated with this solution that prevent it from being the best option. An article by Alan Greenblatt, writer for *Governing*, states that apartment construction – as well as vacancy rates – reached a peak in 2017. The new construction was mainly focused in large cities with high costs of living. Since vacancy rates are increasing, people are simply moving from one house to another and not filling the additional housing. A higher vacancy rate means less tax revenue for the City and possibly lower economic growth for the area because of the decreased amount of rent being paid into property management companies. Furthermore, in cities that have seen a rise in new construction, there may now be a great surplus of housing. Jonathan Spader, a researcher for Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies, states that so many houses and apartments have become available that now demand is starting to taper off and have no direct effect on pricing (Greenblatt). Because new construction can be easily overdone due to the long timeline it takes to complete, this solution is not the best.

Additionally, the apartments and houses that are being built are not affordable to the average student or low-income family. Most of them are in the luxury tier because they bring in the most money to property managers and cities. The national supply of rental units costing less than $1,250 per month is ever decreasing as the supply for high end apartments has skyrocketed (Greenblatt). This solution would likely only bring about more luxury housing in Manhattan; therefore, it is not a good solution to address the problem of student housing.

## Justification

Further legislation and rent controls stand out as the optimal solutions to exploitative landlords and rent gouging because of the benefits they will offer to those affected by the problem. Not only will legislation mandating code inspections of student housing ensure that students are living in adequate conditions, it will require property managers to properly maintain their homes and subsequently keep property values in the area from dipping when older homes are allowed to fall apart. The stability of property values created by these policies should be a great inventive to the city to enact them. Additionally, by placing rent controls on student housing, the City of Manhattan can be certain it will maintain a low vacancy rate by becoming more affordable for students. Every year, enrollment rates continue to decline as the costs of attending a four-year college are ever-increasing. If the city were to place a ceiling on rent prices, more students would likely be able to attend Kansas State due to the decreased cost of attendance, in turn filling more rental properties and generating more revenue for Manhattan. The increase in revenue generated from a lower vacancy rate would likely outweigh the costs of lost revenue from the imposition of a rent ceiling. For this reason, rent controls and further legislation are the optimal solutions for the City of Manhattan.

Furthermore, if rent controls were imposed, the quality of life would increase, and more Kansas State students would be willing to stay in Manhattan after graduation and contribute to the local economy. By limiting the amount of money students have to shell out for rent, they are likely to experience less financial stress and enjoy their time in Manhattan much more. A study of college students done by Jonas Annell and Felix Terman of Kristianstad University found that place satisfaction, or how much a person enjoys being in a certain place, and cost-efficiency were the top determinants of how willing recent college graduates were to stay in their college town. If students were more satisfied with Manhattan and did not have to pay as much to live here, more recent graduates would stay here for good. An influx of ambitious, educated new graduates would lead to the creation of new businesses, attraction of new talent, an increase in tax revenue for the city, and possibly a new generation of potential leaders of Manhattan (Annell). These things would only benefit Manhattan, which is why the City Commission should support legislation and rent controls in support of students.

However, the City Commission should not support rent controls and further legislation for their sole benefit. They should also support this solution because of the effects, both direct and indirect, this solution would have on the community of Manhattan. The direct effect on the citizens on Manhattan, students and not, would be the decrease in financial strain due to rent controls and an increased sense of personal security and autonomy from new policies in support of renters rather than the landlords. These benefits of the proposed solution would have the collective effect of increasing the quality of life and satisfaction in Manhattan, in turn increasing the attractiveness of the city to others looking to move here. The indirect effect of the proposed solution results from the increased revenue generated by the city as property, income, and other taxes associated with rental housing and property management. With more revenue, the city of Manhattan can contribute more money into bettering the community. They could build more parks and green spaces, sponsor more community-wide events, and invest more money into the local school district. The community, not just college students, would greatly benefit from a solution such as the one proposed, which is why the City Commission should support it.

## Conclusion

Overall, the City Commission should support rent control and further rental policies in Manhattan because it will greatly benefit the students and the community. Doing so will help maintain property values of houses around campus, keep the vacancy rates low by increasing the demand for housing, make more Kansas State graduates willing to stay, and allow advancements to be made in amenities and schools funded by the city. After all, students are a large and important part of the Manhattan community and deserve to be treated as so.

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## Conclusion: Summary of Key Rhetorical Concepts

- **Call to Action:** Strategies that proposal writers use, especially in conclusions, to persuade their readers to act immediately.
- **Feasibility:** An important quality of solutions in that they meet the intended audience's concerns about costs, time, and resources.
- **Justification:** When proposal writers explain why their readers should act and why their solution is effective.
- **Stakeholders:** For proposals, intended readers who have a stake in the problem or opportunity and who have the power to make change.

# Chapter 4 Appendix: Additional Student Examples

## Proposal: Kansas State Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness

RJ Salmen

*RJ Salmen wrote this proposal in Joseph Frasco's ENGL 200 class. The intended audience is Thomas Lane, Vice President and Dean of Students at Kansas State.*

To: Thomas Lane, Vice President and Dean of Students, Kansas State University
From: RJ Salmen
CC: Joseph Frasco
Subject: KSU Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness

In late September and early October, protests against sexual assault at the University of Kansas and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln sparked conversations on campuses around the nation. On October 5, Kansas State students added their voices to those of the neighboring institutions. The Center for Advocacy, Response, and Education and Wildcats Against Sexual Assault held a walk to protest sexual assault and address Title IX at K-State. During the protest, students walked from Anderson Lawn to President Myers' residence. Students expressed their clear anger and concern with sexual assault at K-State, calling on President Myers and you, Dr. Lane, to reduce sexual assault and violence and ensure the safety of K-State students.

Students' calls for change are more than warranted, but they do lack concrete action steps the university can take to address sexual assault and violence. I, along with my peers in the Student Governing Association, brainstormed, researched, and formulated specific action steps we believe to be effective in combatting sexual violence. Thus, I propose a four-tiered solution backed by evidence-based frameworks and qualified methods to prevent sexual assault and violence at Kansas State University. The solutions will individually promote prevention and awareness of sexual assault and violence but more crucially build on and within one another to create an infrastructure of comprehensive prevention and targeted awareness.

## Problem Description

Sexual assault on campus is pervasive and constant. According to RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network), 13% of all students experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence, or incapacitation (among all graduate and undergraduate students) (RAINN, 2021). Among undergraduate students, 26.4% of females and 6.8% of males experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence, or incapacitation (RAINN, 2021). Additionally, 23.1% of TGQN (transgender, genderqueer, nonconforming) college students have been sexually assaulted (RAINN, 2021). Needless to say, sexual assault is extremely prevalent on college campuses, specifically for individuals of marginalized communities. What's more worrying, though, is the overwhelming lack of university sexual assault prevention and awareness policies that are meant to address sexual assault and sexual violence. Kansas State University struggles with these issues as well. First, K-State has only *one* non-institutionalized Sexual and Relationship Violence Prevention Specialist Jessica Henault, who is the first prevention specialist at K-State (Leonard, 2021). KU in comparison has *six* permanent prevention specialist positions that serve uniquely important roles. K-State University has not made a commitment nor given a timeline to if or when they will institutionalize and fund this position. Second, Greek organizations' unaffiliated status with K-State means that their self-governance extends to cases of sexual assault happening between Greek community members. When a member of a sorority or fraternity experiences sexual assault, their assailant is not held accountable by the university, but rather judged by a jury of fellow Greek life members— an arguable conflict of interest and intense responsibility to place on students. Finally, K-State students have regularly presented their concerns with sexual assault issues and the need for greater sexual assault prevention and awareness. Most recently, students protested the significant lack of sexual assault prevention at K-State on Anderson Lawn and in front of the President's house. It was made clear to President Richard Myers and Vice President Thomas Lane that students have been and are fed up with sexual assault at K-State. To put it lightly, something must change soon. Otherwise, rates of sexual assault will continue to rise at K-State, decreasing student trust in administration and campus. Students will be less likely to come to K-State out of fear and resentment. And for those who do come? They will be subjected to a culture where the possibility for sexual assault is an ever looming threat.

## Solution Description

In order to improve Kansas State University (KSU) sexual assault prevention and awareness strategies, and thereby decrease sexual assault and sexual violence, I propose a four-tiered solution that focuses on primary prevention, or preventing violence before it occurs, and follows the CDC's four-level social ecological model (Figure 1) (Dills et al., 2016). The overlapping rings in the model illustrate how factors at one level influence factors at another level. The model demonstrates the connection between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors (Dahlberg et al., 2002). On the individual level, the Office of Student Life and Office of the Chief Financial Officer and Budget Office provide a timeline regarding funding and institutionalizing the position of Sexual and Relationship Violence Prevention Specialist for Fiscal Year 2023. On the relationship level, Kansas State University should mandate that all incoming students complete the Wildcats Make a Pact bystander intervention training at Orientation and Enrollment. Wildcats Make a Pact is a bystander intervention training that provides participants with the skills to help them intervene safely when they see behavior that puts others at risk for violence, victimization, or perpetration (Kansas State University, 2021). On the community level, the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) and the Center for Advocacy, Response, and Education (CARE) Office collaborate with the KSU Student Governing Association (SGA) to create an informational campaign that promotes and educates students about available resources, including, but not limited to, informational flyers inside all campus bathroom stalls, utilizing social media to exhibit and explain the process of reporting an instance of sexual or relationship violence, encouraging instructors to promote resources at least once per semester, and including a permanent link to resources on the sidebar of the K- State Today publication. On the societal level, an administrative framework for investigating Independent Student Organizations, especially for violations of Title IX, harassment, or discrimination, should be developed. The CDC asserts that:

> For a campus to have a comprehensive approach, strategies should be in place to prevent violence as well as respond to violence after it has occurred. Primary prevention of sexual violence should complement secondary prevention strategies that address the immediate needs of a survivor after an assault, and tertiary prevention strategies that address longer-term follow up and support. (Dills et al., 2016)

These four initiatives individually serve a unique role in sexual assault prevention and awareness at K-State. In conjunction, though, they build on and within one another to create an intersectional, comprehensive prevention program that fulfills primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategy needs, making certain the audience receives messages multiple times to ensure a sufficient dose of and exposure to the intervention.

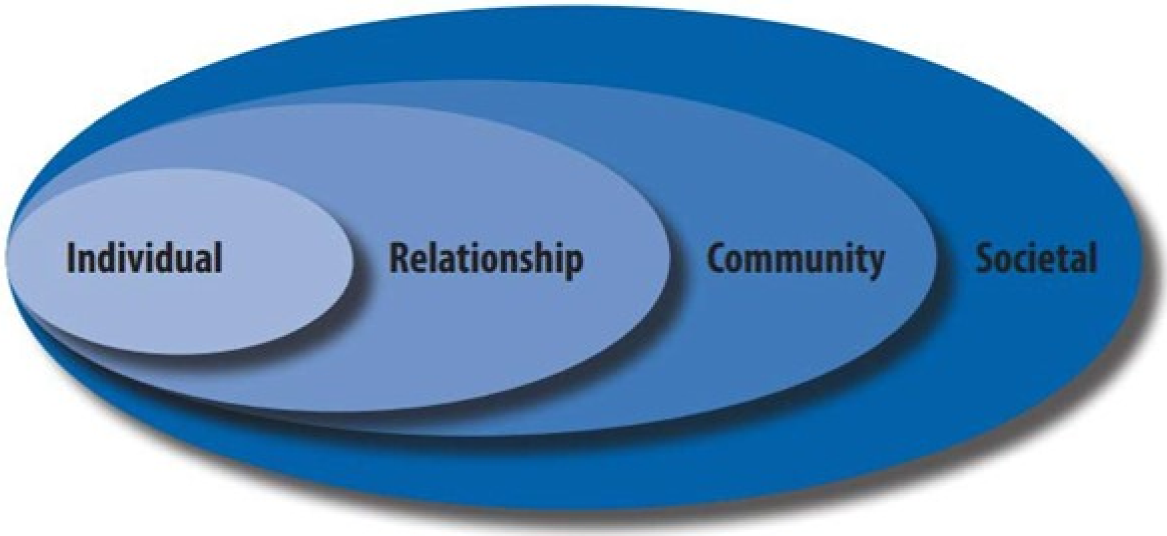


Figure 1. Social Ecological Model

## Justification

First, the funding and institutionalization of Sexual and Relationship Violence Prevention Specialist Jessica Henault, a critical position for sexual assault prevention and awareness at K-State, would reassure students of K-State's commitment to sexual assault prevention and awareness, produce concrete improvements to campus climate and safety, and position K-State to employ more individuals dedicated to resolving sexual assault and violence issues. The CDC emphasizes that universities must "identify champions" throughout different sectors and communities on campus who can make and keep prevention visible (Dills et al., 2016). Specialist Jessica Henault is that champion. She has done an extraordinary job in her position thus far through education of K-State members, advocacy for survivors, response to sexual assault when it occurs, and overall prevention efforts. K-State must institutionalize the Sexual and Relationship Violence Prevention Specialist to ensure students observe demonstrable commitment to sexual assault prevention and awareness from K-State. Corey Bowman, Associate Vice Provost for Student Services/Title IX Coordinator at the University of Central Missouri, explains that:

> Students who have experienced sexual or gender-based violence are more likely to be retained and graduate if they have ongoing access to a trusted, primary campus contact who can act as both a knowledgeable guide and empowered "barrier buster" on a wide range of academic and non-academic challenges. (Bowman, 2016)

K-State will also put itself on track to fund and institutionalize a number of prevention specialists comparable to that of other colleges such as KU who, as stated earlier, have six specialists. A wider team of specialists means greater reach and effectiveness across campus, something that K-State requires to improve upon its current sexual assault prevention and awareness infrastructure.

Second, expanding the proven Wildcats Make a Pact (WMAP) bystander intervention training model to Orientation and Enrollment will exponentially increase its reach and effectiveness, particularly in getting sexual assault prevention and awareness information in front of first-year students when they first arrive at K-State. WMAP has already reached hundreds, if not thousands of students, particularly individuals from Greek organizations, and will continue to reach hundreds more as the CARE office works diligently to support and educate students.

However, program institutionalization through Orientation and Enrollment would exponentially increase the impact WMAP has on students, staff, and faculty. The CDC expresses that prevention messages across different audiences must be consistent and reinforced over time (Dills et al., 2016). Prevention training should be provided to incoming K-State students during both enrollment and throughout their time here at K-State. WMAP expansion to yearly orientation and enrollment would also ensure leadership buy-in, a key aspect of effective and sustained prevention efforts according to the CDC (Dills et al., 2016). A litany of extraordinary individuals who serve in ideation and creation of orientation would be included in the expansion and support of WMAP. They would not only foster innovative implementation ideas, but also advocate for greater prevention and awareness efforts in other areas of K-State, having realized WMAP's positive impact up until now and possible positive effect it could have on our campus climate in the future.

Third, a multi-faceted informational campaign created by the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) in collaboration with the Kansas State University Student Governing Association will provide valuable information and resources and empower students, staff, and faculty to get involved in sexual assault prevention and awareness measures. Stephanie Lott, the recently appointed Director of OIE and Title IX Coordinator, has dramatically improved OIE processes to support incidences of gender discrimination such as sexual harassment and violence. However, they have expressed to me and other students on multiple occasions the need for improved marketing of information and resources. Student Governing Association role as a liaison between students and administration means they are uniquely positioned to develop and promote a multidimensional informational campaign that fills that need. Student leaders have a meaningful role to play in the development, implementation, and evaluation of prevention programming. They can create messages that resonate and can be heard by different campus audiences, serve as an accountability measure to administration, and spread information to student populations that need it most. Student encounters with these resources on a daily basis will obviously provide education, but, more importantly, create a culture of advocacy and safety. K-State students, who merely perceive resources created by their campus for the specific purpose of improved knowledge and responsibility, will feel safer existing in their various spaces, perhaps becoming advocates for sexual assault prevention and awareness and possibly even encouraging other students to attend K-State.

Finally, an administrative framework for investigating Independent Student Organizations (ISO), especially for violations of Title IX, harassment, or discrimination, would create consistent investigative processes for members of ISOs who sexually assault or harass other individuals and hold them accountable for their actions – a policy whose nonexistence has permitted acts of sexual assault and sexual violence by students at K-State. Lindsey Reid, a writer for the University of Alabama Institute for Human Rights, asserts in the context of Title IX procedures, "Colleges must have systems in place to deal with sexual assault, since it can have a serious impact on an individual's educational experience. They should investigate every reported incident and make any necessary accommodations" (Reid, 2018). Currently, that is not the case. Kansas State University does not have a framework for investigating ISOs because they fall outside what K-State has chosen to define as its jurisdiction. Students of ISOs are left to prosecute their own peers on matters of sexual assault and sexual violence, which results in traumatization and bias and further perpetuates a culture of sexual assault at K-State. The Student Governing Association published the Title IX Management Satisfaction Survey and solicited at each sorority house to gather student feedback on changes like this one to the current internal investigation structure. These changes garnered overwhelmingly positive feedback from both sorority members and non-Greek affiliated members at the university. The data show that students want and need changes to current models of investigation. An investigative framework is *the* change we need to significantly reduce, if not resolve, sexual assault and support students on the societal level, which is a key role of your position as the Vice President and Dean of Student Life.

These four initiatives individually provide unique and effective approaches to reducing sexual assault and sexual violence and fostering a healthier campus climate at K-State. It is necessary, however, to implement all four for the greatest results. As stated previously, these strategies build on and within one another to create an intersectional, comprehensive prevention program, making certain the audience receives messages multiple times to ensure a sufficient dose of and exposure to the intervention. Although evidence for sexual assault prevention is still emerging, the CDC's "STOP SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence" outlines strategies and approaches for preventing sexual violence in communities (Dills et al., 2016). The acronym "STOP SV" stands for the following: promote *social norms* that protect against violence, *teach* skills to prevent sexual violence, provide *opportunities* to empower and support girls and women, create *protective* environments, and *support victims*/survivors to lessen harms (Dills et al., 2016). The framework, applied to Kansas State University, substantiates my multifaceted solution proposition and its overall effectiveness. Actions fail to solve, or, at the very least, help prevent sexual assault when they are one-dimensional in nature. My four action steps work appropriately in conjunction to establish, develop, and expand prevention and awareness strategies that productively function within themselves and within their larger systems.

Opponents of these sexual assault prevention and awareness strategies understandably have questions and concerns regarding their necessity and effectiveness. I believe their concerns can encapsulated in three main points. First, opponents believe a multi-tiered approach is unnecessary to effectively combat sexual assault and sexual violence. The Social Ecological Model provided in the solution description is one of the best models to promote understanding of the potential effect of violence prevention strategies. As the CDC explains, activities across the social ecology can complement and reinforce each other… it is best to not limit prevention to one type of activity [as] stand-alone activities are ineffective and not supported by evidence" (Dills et al., 2016). Second, opponents may believe these specific solutions will be ineffective at combatting sexual assault and sexual violence. In reality, these solutions are an application of the CDC's exceptionally qualified sexual assault prevention and awareness recommendations to the context of K-State. K-State has committed to following the CDC's COVID-19 guidelines, and sexual assault prevention and awareness should be no different. Finally, opponents may even posit these solutions as entirely unworkable due to costs associated with prevention and awareness efforts. These four solutions have a couple themes that refute this argument. The Sexual and Relationship Violence Prevention Specialist and the Wildcats Make a Pact already exist and will simply be institutionalized to affect a greater audience under my solution proposition. The implementation of an informational campaign and creation of an administrative framework for investigating Independent Student Organizations utilize current K-State entities and individuals to develop community and societal solutions. In essence, all four solutions would require little or no additional financial resources than are currently being used. Instead, they institutionalize existing K-State sexual assault and prevention strategies and bring together creative thinkers to design further programs and procedures.

Ultimately, the increased safety and security of students as a result of sexual assault prevention and awareness processes contributes to a healthier campus image overall and improves enrollment at Kansas State University, providing dollars for future university development and further prevention and awareness efforts. Lorin Tredinnick, an individual in the School of Social Work at State University of New Jersey, in their article “Sexual Assault Prevention with Student- Athletes: Exploring Perceptions of the Campus Climate and Awareness of Sexual Assault Policies and Resources” corroborates earlier points made in this proposal and builds on them. They explain that their findings demonstrate that “delivering consistent messaging and engaging campus staff in sexual assault prevention provides a foundation for building a positive campus climate which, in turn, may reduce campus sexual assault” (Tredinnick, 2020). When sexual assault prevention and awareness lacks comprehensive, intersectional strategies, as in the case of K-State, campus climate improvement cannot be manifested. Sexual assault plays a substantial role in shaping campus climate and, subsequently, student perceptions of and enrollment at said campus. Tony Bankston, the dean of admissions at Illinois Wesleyan University and a member of the Admission Practices Committee of the National Association for College Admission Counseling, concludes, “If you have increased publicity about mismanagement [or] sexual assault… it may have a snowball effect on application numbers” (Haven, 2014). For example, 2014 applications to two elite colleges – Dartmouth and Amherst – fell by 14% and 8%, respectively, after recent high-publicity sexual assault cases on their campuses” (Haven, 2014). Enrollment drops of that level would be disastrous for K-State, whose enrollment numbers have been steadily declining from 23,229 students in 2014 to 20,229 students in 2021 (Kansas State University, 2021).

When it comes down to it, Kansas State University is a business – just like any other college – whose main goal is to increase enrollment numbers and tuition through positive public imaging and marketing. Stephanie Haven, a writer for the news outlet McClatchy DC Bureau, explains that “‘buyers’ – prospective students and parents – have become more informed about sexual assault as an issue on college campuses, [and] with that savvy has come increased demand for accountability” (Haven, 2014). For parents and students alike, if they perceive a university as being untrustworthy or having a bad record, they are far more likely decide to go somewhere else. Therefore, when Kansas State University commits to supporting students affected by sexual assault and preventing sexual assault from occurring in the first place through my four-tiered solution proposition, they will create a campus climate where students *want* to and feel safe to call K-State *their* university. Tracey Vitchers, with Students Active for Ending Rape, sums it up well, saying, “Schools that are very proactive about being open and honest, those schools, I think, over time will become more favorable than schools that are more about risk reduction for themselves" (Haven, 2014). Then, and only then, will Kansas State University be able to attract increased numbers of students, improve enrollment, and continue to develop as a progressive university committed to its student's safety and well-being.

## Conclusion

Sexual assault and violence at Kansas State University means students, specifically women and other individuals from marginalized communities, feel unsafe and unwelcome. Attending meetings, hanging out with friends, and even just existing as a student at K-State can feel dangerous. With the implementation of my four-tiered solution, student concerns over sexual assault and violence and calls for greater university commitment to prevention and awareness will be reduced significantly. All four solutions – individually and collectively – will contribute to a campus climate of support, safety, and transparency. As a university who prides itself on being a family, we often overlook student concerns. To *say* we are a family is to listen to student concerns without bias and condescension. To *show* we are family is to – in words and in actions – commit to resolving those student concerns with passion and efficiency. To *be* a family is to live these principles day in and day out through informed advocacy, unremitting dedication, and impassioned progress. With your help, these solutions can create a Kansas State that we claim and strive to be.

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# A Proposal for Presentations to Improve Health Literacy in Decatur County

Rachel Thurman

*Rachel Thurman wrote this proposal in Anne Longmuir's online ENGL 200 class. It won second place in the 2023 Expository Writing Program Essay Awards.*

## Transmittal Letter

8 November 2022

Terri Gager, Practice Manager, UPMC DCRHC; Chair, The Endeavor Foundation

208 Thinve Road
Riley, PA 14822

Dear Ms. Gager:

My name is Rachel Thurman. I am currently the Medical Receptionist for the Riley Physical Therapy office, located within the UPMC Endeavor Decatur County Rural Health Clinic. I am writing to you today to propose a solution which I feel would address a commonly overlooked issue in Decatur County: Health Literacy. Health literacy is defined, per the CDC, as "the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others." You may not be aware of this, but according to research, Decatur County actually ranks in the lowest percentile of health literacy levels in Pennsylvania ("National Health," 2014). Low health literacy has many negative health outcomes, such as repeated readmissions, higher mortality rates, and underutilization of health services, especially preventive care. I am proposing a solution to address this issue. This solution consists of forming a roster of providers and other healthcare professionals within the UPMC network, who would volunteer to give bi-monthly presentations in the clinic's multipurpose room. Each month there would be two presentations on a themed topic. The subject matter of the presentations would be relevant to improving health literacy, and the source of the information would come from UPMC-approved sources, such as the resource library or UPMC healthcare providers themselves. There would be very minimal costs associated with this endeavor, as, again, the speakers and presenters would be on a volunteer- basis. The Endeavor Foundation would assume any costs that do arise, but they would be minimal, I can assure you.

As both the Practice Manager of the UPMC CDRHC and the Chair of the Endeavor Foundation, your collaboration with this project is crucial. The Endeavor Foundation aims to serve UPMC's community engagement efforts and has funds specifically for improving the wellbeing of the local community, so I feel this proposal would be a perfect opportunity to accomplish both of these goals. The clinic cannot utilize the multi-purpose room without the practice manager's approval, so your input and endorsement are essential. I would urge you to consider my proposal for these presentations, as it would be beneficial to both patients and the clinic, for both outcomes and economic factors, which I detail more in the following pages.

Thank you so much,

Rachel Thurman

Encl. A Proposal for Presentations to Improve Health Literacy in Decatur County

## Introduction

A 2019 article in *Cardiology Magazine* ("Recognizing," 2019) details the story of a patient, a middle-aged man with heart failure. To manage this condition, he had been prescribed a beta-blocker, metoprolol succinate. Recently, however, his medication had been swapped to carvedilol. After some startling side effects, such as extreme fatigue and a reduced heart rate, the patient ceased taking any of his heart medication. When a pharmacist asked him why, the patient cited the two symptoms. The pharmacist immediately realized the issue upon looking at his medication list: the patient was still taking the metoprolol in addition to his newly swapped carvedilol. When the pharmacist asked why he hadn't stopped taking the metoprolol, the patient told him, "Nobody told me I was supposed to." This is a prime example of the consequences of low health literacy.

## Problem

Health Literacy is defined by the CDC (2021) as "the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others." According to a Health Literacy map created by UNC Chapel Hill, 38% of Decatur County residents have basic, or below basic, levels of Health Literacy ("National Health," 2014). This ranking places them in Quartile 1, which accounts for the lowest literacy levels in the state. Not only does this result have negative health impacts for our patients, but it can also have negative impacts on the UPMC Endeavor Decatur County Rural Health Center, economic and otherwise. As a longtime employee of UPMC, I have seen many different examples, from missed appointments, to noncompliance, and even to a situation of a patient putting himself at risk for a blood clot because he was confused about post-operative procedures following a knee replacement. Most of the time, these examples are not signs of irreverence, but simply of ignorance. Low health literacy can be costly; according to many studies, low health literacy is correlated with many negative health outcomes. Some examples are higher mortality, being unable to interpret labels (prescription and nutrition), incorrectly taking medicine, and being less likely to utilize preventative services (Berkman et al., 2011).

There is also an increased risk of unnecessary hospitalization and readmission (Berkman et al., 2011). Patients, right here in our own community, have low health literacy. This means that they are, at times, afraid to ask questions. They could be more likely to be confused by treatment plans and can jeopardize their wellbeing by jumping to conclusions or making assumptions about their own health. The question is—what can we, as a clinic, do to combat this problem? The answer is bi-monthly, patient-centered presentations, with a focus on topics that enhance health-literacy.

## Solution

I propose that the Decatur County Rural Health center partner with The Endeavor Foundation, the committee that is responsible for community engagement and community wellbeing. Any funds necessary would be provided by The Endeavor Foundation, as this is their purpose, but most of the program would be conducted through a volunteer basis and would not incur a significant cost. The Decatur County Rural Health center would be responsible for using the multipurpose room to conduct bi-monthly presentations. This room can accommodate approximately 46 individuals. Topics would be presented by various providers, healthcare professionals, and other relevant community members within the UPMC system. Topics and related information could be acquired using many sources: UPMC's online resource library or the knowledge of the UPMC professionals themselves. All these resources, found within the online library, are free and available to UPMC Healthcare providers. This access would ensure that the information is accurate, evidence based, and unbiased. This would also ensure that the information is coming directly from UPMC and will be representative of their ideals and brand. Subject matter will be relevant to health literacy and will be patient-centered. Patient-centered care is defined as "[p]roviding care that is respectful of, and responsive to, individual patient preferences, needs and values, and ensuring that patient values guide all clinical decisions" (Brewer). These topics could be tailored to fill many of the gaps that are found in low Health Literacy levels. Should UPMC choose to provide refreshments to those that attend the presentations, this would cost The Endeavor Foundation approximately $11.00 per month. The Endeavor Foundation would also be responsible for the management of the roster of providers and other volunteer-presenters, the schedule of topics, and identifying the specific gaps found in Decatur County to aid in determining what the topics will be. This roster will be comprised of familiar faces, those who are present within the clinic and the main UPMC campus in Coudersport, Pennsylvania. This way, patients are familiar with the person who is presenting. Additionally, this program will count toward the mandatory volunteer hours required by each provider, which would be a good incentive for them to participate.

Your colleague, Destiny Amur, PT, DPT, Endeavor Foundation committee member, has already volunteered to take responsibility for these tasks. An example of a typical month would be as follows: Consider October, which is Breast Cancer awareness month. Session 1, the first week, would consist of the local oncologist discussing topics such as cancer itself, progression, and the process of chemotherapy and radiation in language that is simple for the attendees to understand. The second month could be a technician or a representative of Oncology, providing information on where to find treatment centers or support groups, explaining the insurance-aspect of receiving cancer treatment, etc. Again, it would be done in very simple language, at an appropriate pace. These topics could change monthly, or even biweekly, depending on the schedule Destiny creates. These topics could focus on medication management, chronic disease, nutrition, or family medicine.

## Justification

Obviously, the main goal for these efforts is to improve health literacy in Decatur County for our patients. It is simple to say that we could, and should, do this for no other reason than the positive health outcomes. A 2011 systematic review published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* by Berkman et al. states higher levels of health literacy are directly correlated with decreased mortality, hospitalizations, and readmissions, and increased overall health status. Elderly patients with advanced health literacy are also more likely to interpret their medication labels correctly, meaning they can understand how and when to take (or stop) a medication (Berkman, et al., 2011). However, the implementation of bi-monthly, patient-centered, Health Literacy presentations at the UPMC Endeavor Decatur County Rural Health Clinic would be beneficial for a plethora of other reasons. Firstly, such a program is a direct representation of UPMC's vision and core values. It would increase the level of community engagement, forging new connections and nurturing existing ones with patients and non-patients alike. Most importantly, this solution will generate positive economic value for the clinic itself.

One segment of UPMC's model calls for "redefining health care" by "serving the underserved and disadvantaged, and advancing excellence and innovation throughout health care" (UPMC, n.d.). Individuals with low health literacy are among the most disadvantaged there are within the healthcare system. Research has shown that low health literacy is more of a predictor of disparities in healthcare than race or even socioeconomic status. UPMC's fight to redefine healthcare includes these individuals. By making every effort possible to raise these numbers, UPMC will be adhering to several of its 5 Core Values. This includes, but is not limited to, "Responsibility and integrity" and "Excellence and innovation" (UPMC, n.d.).

Another beneficial aspect of implementing this solution is that it would enhance community engagement and community visibility. Not only would it engage the citizens of Decatur County, but it would market the program. Ever since Clearfield-Jefferson County Primary Care

Associates opened their Decatur County location, UPMC has been losing patients at an exponential rate. In a personal conversation with you, Terri, you told me that we have lost a total of 128 patients from our caseload, which is a huge number considering we are one of the smallest counties in Pennsylvania. Community engagement is essential to expose the residents of Decatur County to not only UPMC Providers but also to our services and our values. This solution would give our patients a clear picture of who cares and why. We could distribute literature and business cards at these meetings for patients as well, provided for free from the Marketing department. This marketing opportunity will allow us to potentially improve numbers in areas such as new-patient acquisition (as the providers build rapport and trust with these individuals) and current caseload retention. Sending familiar faces out into the community and talking *directly* to our patients are going to be the most appealing methods.

Decatur County is full of citizens that want someone local—they're more likely to trust someone they've worked with before and more willing to listen to what they have to say.

This benefit directly brings me to my final point: the economic impacts of health literacy. Ever since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, Centers for Medicare Services have been penalizing hospitals for "unnecessary readmissions," especially when a patient is returning to the ER and utilizing services within 30 days after a previous emergency room discharge. As many as 82% of hospitals were penalized by Medicare. In addition to steep penalties, Medicare reimbursement is being reduced by as much as 3%, which can add up very quickly considering how many patients have Medicare (Stinebuck, 2022). In a 2021 blog post, Brian Brewer points out that patients with low health literacy are more likely to have more hospital stays and emergency room visits, and this factor can cost the healthcare system as much as 280 million dollars alone. He also highlights other negative financial benefits that come from low health literacy, such as gaps in care and the lack of service utilization. These gaps mean that patients with low health literacy levels are less likely to seek preventative care and preventative services, such as getting vaccinations or wellness exams, and are also more likely to skip or no show for appointments (Brewer, 2021). This also is very costly to the healthcare system: missed appointments account for more than 150 billion dollars in accrued costs, with each no-show appointment, on average, costing individual clinics over 200 dollars per incident (Brewer, 2021). Conversely, according to the Health Resources & Services Administration, patients possessing higher levels of health literacy are more likely to exhibit adherence to care plans and medications and are much more likely to utilize preventative and specialty services offered by healthcare systems. It also reduces the risk of hospital readmissions (Health Resources & Services Administration, 2017).

There have been other solutions proposed to address these issues. Recently, attempts have been made to address low health literacy rates by focusing entirely on physicians' direct interactions with patients. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this includes encouraging physicians to use basic language, create a welcoming environment, and ask simple questions to verify understanding (CDC, 2021). However, this should be less of a methodology to improve health literacy but more of a baseline expectation for all providers. Furthermore, this alternative solution negates addressing health literacy at the source: the patients themselves. Many of the negative outcomes are going to impact the patient, rather than the physician, so it makes more sense to address the issue with a patient-centered approach. 82% of patients claim that high-quality customer service is the leading influence in choosing care or choosing to continue care with a provider (Brewer, 2021). Any attempt to prioritize the individual patient is going to be crucial in both acquisition and retention.

## Conclusion

As I have shown you, low health literacy can have a huge negative impact from many perspectives. The implementation of such a program aligns perfectly with UPMC's mission statement and core values, which include innovation and representation of undeserved communities. Patients, first and foremost, can have negative health outcomes, such as increased mortality, increased hospitalization, and increased risk of disease development. Secondly, there is also a huge economic burden to the healthcare system. Hospitals can be penalized by Medicare for unnecessary readmissions, which are more prevalent in patients with lower health literacy levels. Clinics can also lose money from no-show appoints, care gaps, and underutilization of healthcare services. However, by implementing bi-monthly, patient-centered presentations given by UPMC providers on varying topics meant to improve health literacy, there will be a mutually beneficial outcome. First, patients will be given the tools and information necessary to improve health literacy rates in Decatur County, thus accounting for positive health outcomes, such as reduced admissions and the increased utilization of preventative services. This benefit has the potential to increase revenue for the clinic and could also decrease the risk of unnecessary readmissions, liberating UPMC from subsequent penalty from Medicare. Finally, this endeavor will also increase community engagement and visibility, allowing patients to connect with the providers personally. I urge you to consider this proposal for the well-being of our patients, our company, and, perhaps more importantly, ourselves.

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# A Proposal for Installation of Soil Moisture Sensor

# Systems

## Clayton Mombello

*Clayton Mombello wrote this proposal in Sarah Morgan's ENGL 200 class. It won second place in the 2024 Expository Writing Program Essay Awards.*

To: K-State Landscape Superintendent Shad Hufnagel
Cc: Sarah Morgan
From: Clayton Mombello
Date: 7 December 2023
Subject: A Proposal for Installation of Soil Moisture Sensor Systems

Water conservation is a priority for the region encompassing K-State, the region has been suffering from one of the longest droughts in the history of Kansas. This hasn't gone unnoticed among the K-State Research and Extension Service. Water efficiency has been at the forefront of horticultural and agricultural research here at K-State and it has shown that there is plenty of room for improvement when it comes to turfgrass irrigation efficiency. Almost all of their research points to lawn sprinklers being made more efficient with the addition of a soil moisture sensor that only turns on the sprinkler system when the soil is dry. As a student of K-State Horticulture, a soil moisture sensor system is a topic we have discussed in most of our required courses as a means of promoting plant, soil and environmental health. While K-State has a high standard for the appearance of the landscape, water usage can be reduced without sacrificing the aesthetics of the campus. Installing these soil moisture sensors will save the department lots of money by preventing turf damage and allowing the grounds crew to devote their time to other, more important tasks. K-State needs to invest in a soil moisture sensor system in order to conserve water, apply their own research to the field and promote turfgrass health. I urge you as the Superintendent of the Landscape Services, to consider installing these cost-saving systems to the K-State campus.

**Problem Description**

Walking around campus some mornings, you might notice wet sidewalks and muddy areas near them. While most students will brush this off as the morning dew, this moisture is being caused by something far easier to control. Inefficient sprinklers on the K-State campus may seem like an insignificant issue, however it can cause lasting environmental effects. Inefficient sprinklers waste water by spraying onto paved sidewalks, or areas that receive high amounts of foot traffic.

Wasting water is of high environmental concern within the region due to limited water resources. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, 76% of the state is experiencing some level of drought while 22% of the state is suffering from extreme drought (Drought.gov). This statistic should create a stark notice that changes need to be made. Wasting a couple inches of irrigation water per sprinkler doesn't seem like it would worsen a region facing drought, however every drop counts especially when talking about the massive irrigation system that K-State has in place.

Inefficiencies can be created through a host of methods: spraying at the wrong time of day, spraying at the wrong time of year, spraying the wrong amount or spraying onto the wrong areas. Each of these can have an outsized effect on resource efficiency and promoting conservation practices. Promoting soil integrity is a major concern when it comes to this issue. When walking around campus, pedestrians may notice that there are dirt patches near sidewalks and areas of high foot traffic. When this is sprayed with water, it causes the rich clay soil native to the region to become compacted. Soil compaction is of large environmental concern as it becomes very difficult to grow grass in compacted soil. Having bare dirt exposed to the elements without a cover plant could lead to soil erosion, further worsening the environmental effects.

While there are numerous environmental reasons to fix inefficiencies in the lawn irrigation system, having inefficient sprinklers is also a nuisance to pedestrians. During a time of high traffic such as during a passing period, you might notice students walking around wet areas of sidewalk or even side stepping into the dirt in order to not step on wet concrete. Students most likely find this annoying as well as the people responsible for maintaining the grass that is being damaged. Fixing this grass can be a costly endeavor, especially considering it can be prevented all together. The K-State landscape department could devote more of its labor hours and dollars to projects other than turf repair caused by inefficient sprinklers.

This problem hasn't been addressed due to the focus on other problems affecting the K-State campus such as stormwater management, maintaining current infrastructure and protecting the threatened species that provide environmental and aesthetic value to the campus. In addition to this, methods of increasing water efficiency have recently been receiving focus from researchers as the problem has been plaguing the west coast and we are just now beginning to see the tangible effects of drought in the midwest region.

## Solution Description

Inefficient sprinklers can be maximized in a plethora of ways. However, the best option for K-State is to install soil moisture meters around campus in order to utilize irrigation only when the grass needs it. By installing moisture meters underground, sprinklers will automatically turn on when the soil hits a certain level of dryness instead of turning on just because it is a Wednesday. The EPA describes the soil moisture sensor (SMS) savings in their WaterSense program, "Installing a WaterSense labeled SMS can save an average home with an automatic landscape irrigation system more than 15,000 gallons of water annually" (EPA 5). 15,000 gallons is a lot of water, but this statistic is at the residential level. Imagine how much water could be saved when this is scaled up to the institutional level that K-State operates at.

A soil moisture module approved by the EPA costs $150 (Hunter Industries), each module can operate four sensors within a thousand feet. While the exact number of soil moisture sensors to be used is up to departmental budgets, I recommend having at least two sensors in each zone of campus. This would cost $1500 dollars. In comparison to the water savings as well as the chemical input savings, the $1500 would earn itself back quickly. Installation won't take long either. It only takes one person thirty minutes to install a meter. This means that if the grounds crew were to install the sensors, it would take one crew member five hours to install the entire system. The soil moisture sensor has to be placed around eight inches underground and doesn't require any special maintenance or skillset to use.

Another possible solution to conserving water would be to let the grass become dormant during the hottest weeks of the year. According to K-State Research and Extension, "While dormant, lawns may go two to three weeks or more without water. After that, it's important to keep the crowns of dormant grass plants alive by applying about 1/4 inch of water every couple of weeks" (KSRE 2). This approach saves considerably more water than any other approach and also prevents soil erosion, soil compaction and weed growth. However, dormant grass turns browner and has less aesthetic value. As a result, it is not desirable by K-State leadership. Especially since this would be happening when students and prospective students are arriving to begin class in the fall. Installing soil moisture sensors would be the better solution as it reduces water usage while maintaining the same level of turf quality. The solution of letting the grass go dormant would reduce usage, but it would be at the cost of greatly reduced turf quality.

## Justification

Installing soil moisture sensors is the best solution for K-state because it reduces spending on water. Soil moisture sensors are very cost effective as they only cost $150 and will earn their worth in water savings very quickly. Comparing the cost of a soil moisture sensor system to the water savings, would make this device one of the top water saving measures, beating efficient toilets and sinks. According to the EPA, a SMS can save about 15,000 gallons of water per year on a residential landscape (EPA 5), when this is scaled up to the gargantuan K-State landscape, the rewards will be prevalent for years to come. Soil moisture sensor systems also take into account precipitation, turning sprinklers off when the rainwater is sufficient. This furthers the savings as it can save the university water resources equivalent to the rainfall of the season. Furthermore, according to Micheal Dukes, a turfgrass researcher and professor at the University of Florida, “the soil moisture sensors tested reduced irrigation by 42% to 72% on average, while maintaining good turf quality” (Dukes 6). This study was done on a larger scale similar to the scale on which K-State operates. This shows that if the grounds crew were to install soil moisture sensor systems, it could cut the water bill in half when it comes to irrigation. Efficiently using university’s allotted funds for landscaping is of high priority because it can allow for more improvement of the campus’s landscape rather than just maintenance and repair of the landscape.

K-State should install soil moisture sensors because it is what the university teaches its students to do when they enter the landscape industry. K-State is known across the region as being a leading horticulture research university with a reliable and extensive research and extension program. K-State has one of the top turfgrass programs in the nation and is constantly researching methods to make lawns better. In a publication by K-State Research and Extension, they advocate for the use of soil moisture meters. They write, “An automatic timer does not account for changing water requirements unless there is a sensor attached that automatically turns the sprinkler system on and off according to the moisture in the soil. A moisture sensor saves money by reducing unnecessary water applications” (KSRE 3). If K-State research shows that a moisture sensor is more efficient, it makes sense for them to apply this research and install soil moisture sensors on campus. It can also be used as a demonstration of irrigation techniques for students taking irrigation management courses ranging from the agronomy department to the conservation department. The relevance of this technology spans past just the horticulture department. The educational benefit of installing soil moisture sensors on campus will leave an impression on generations of students and show that K-State applies their research to the betterment of the area. K-State practices reflecting K-State research also provides validation of our quality programs and can be used as an example of what other large institutions should do regarding their lawn maintenance practices.

K-State's landscape provides an amazing environment for students that allows them to focus on their studies and the landscape crew is tasked with maintaining this outdoor aesthetic. K-State's high standards for the appearance of the landscape makes plant health a top priority for the landscape department. Thick green grass is foundational to having the best landscape and it all starts with healthy turf. Soil moisture systems improve turf health greatly because it gives the grass water when it needs it, not because of a predetermined routine. Currently, K-State sprinklers run on a mechanical timer meaning they turn on during specific times of the day. This is inefficient because the grass doesn't always need to be watered on a routine schedule. Prior to the introduction of soil moisture sensor systems, turf health and water usage had an inverse relationship meaning one had to be sacrificed to promote the other. This belief is still held among many landscape superintendents. However, according to research done by Mary Shedd, a researcher and professor at the University of Florida, having good turf health doesn't necessarily mean that water conservation is sacrificed when it comes to soil moisture sensor systems. She writes, "The medium threshold setting soil moisture sensor-based and both of the ET-based treatments produced good turf grass quality while reducing irrigation water use. Savings for the medium soil moisture sensor-based systems ranged from 11–28%" (Shedd 12). This demonstrates that irrigation, when used at the correct time, can be reduced with little effect on overall turf health. The grass will still meet K-State standards for appearance, with less water usage brought on by soil moisture sensor systems. Healthier grass means less money has to be used to repair it when the turf is damaged and that it uses all inputs such as water, fertilizer and pesticides more efficiently, ultimately saving the department more money.

## Conclusion

K-State needs a soil moisture sensor system installed on campus because it will improve water efficiency, promote plant health and put K-State funded research into practice around campus. The water conservation crisis is only going to grow over time, as a public land grant university, K-State should be leading the charge on solving the water crisis plaguing this region. Being a K-State Horticulture student, I know that K-State has the knowledge, skillset and resources to implement this solution. As the Superintendent of Landscape Services, I urge you to be the change for the region and install a soil moisture sensor system on campus. While installing a soil moisture sensor system to just K-State won't solve the crisis, it will demonstrate to the community what can be done in order to ease the worst of the symptoms and show that Kansas State University stands for solutions. To not act upon this solution would be straying from K-State's mission of advancing the well-being of Kansas and only postponing the problems ofthe looming consequences that a drought-stricken region will have to face.

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## Notes

1. If you are interested in reading more about the debates surrounding ride-hailing applications and universities, read Kathryn Palmer, "Why Some Colleges Have Abandoned In-House Safe-Ride Programs in Favor of Uber, Lyft, or Via." Chronicle of Higher Education, September 18, 2019.
2. Brenda Martin helped develop this activity.

# 5.

# WRITING PRACTICAL ARGUMENTS


One of the main purposes of this unit is to show you how important the rhetorical concepts of ENGL 200 are for you in your daily and professional lives. You will be asked to complete three brief, practical documents, all of which will help you develop your ability to be persuasive, use audience-based reasoning, and be mindful of the major rhetorical appeals (ethos, logos, and pathos).

First, you will write a professional development document, one that argues why you are a good candidate for a scholarship, educational opportunity, internship, or job. Some of these genres may include the following:

- A formal statement for a scholarship application
- An application letter for an internship
- A personal statement for an application to a graduate or professional program

You will be able to demonstrate awareness of your readers' needs and perspectives. When you're applying for a job, for example, you won't argue why the job will be a good opportunity for you—but why you will be an asset for that particular company. You will emphasize your ethos and produce a document that is free of errors.

Second, you will write a letter that delivers "bad news" to the readers: you will complain about a problem, poor service, or a bad product. You will need to use your rhetorical skills and strategies in order to refocus your irritation about the problem and to make yourself more persuasive for your readers. Your main focus will not be to express your frustration but to make sure that action is taken on your complaint.

In the final document, you will write a performance review: a memo to your instructor that evaluates the strengths of your two documents, describes their rhetorical situations, and evaluates and justifies the rhetorical strategies that you used. You'll need to explain your use of at least two of the three major rhetorical appeals.

### Objectives

By the end of this unit, you should be able to

- Consider the needs and perspectives of your intended readers
- Consider and implement different strategies for being persuasive
- Deliver "bad news" to a reader in a persuasive manner
- Evaluate your own performance and reflect on your rhetorical situation and use of rhetorical appeals
- Read a scholarship, internship, or job announcement rhetorically
- Follow the formatting expectations of typical letter and memo documents
- Edit closely to enhance your ethos

## Reader Focus: "You Attitude"

When focusing upon practical communication with real people, you will still be able to use the audience-based reasoning that you have practiced in other assignments and activities. Anytime that you consider your readers as real people and you can see the communication from their perspective, you are using a version of audience-based reasoning.

In practical terms, you can think of it as the difference between a "me attitude" and a "you attitude." When a writer uses the "me attitude," there is little recognition of the reader: the entire message is based upon the writer's needs and perspective. When the writer uses a "you attitude," they are now seeing the message from the readers' needs and perspectives.

Here are three examples to demonstrate the unfortunate "me attitude."

## An example from a job application letter:

> I'm interested in this position because it can be a good stepping stone for my future career.

Ask yourself: How is the reader connected to this statement? How will they feel to be considered a "stepping stone"? What is this statement suggesting about the value of the company?

## An example from an email from a student to an instructor:

> I'm going to be absent from class on Friday because something really important has come up. Please tell me what I've missed.

Again, what is this email signaling about the importance of the class and the role of the instructor?

## A complaint email:

> This is the second time that I've received the wrong part. You and your employees obviously don't know what you are doing!

Obviously, this writer is irritated, as the complaint email shows. The reader will feel insulted— and therefore may not be interested in helping out the writer.

The "you attitude" strategies ask you to consider the message in terms of the reader. What benefits or connections can the writer make with the reader? How can they imagine themselves *as* the reader? Additionally, what common ground can they build between themselves and their readers?

Let's look at three ways of revising those me-based messages:

| Me Attitude | You Attitude |
|---|---|
| I'm interested in this position because it can be a good stepping stone for my future career. | I'm interested in this position because I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to your company's mission and practice what I've been learning in my Entrepreneurship courses. |
| I'm going to be absent from class on Friday because something really important has come up. Please tell me what I've missed. | Though I am sorry that I am going to have to miss Friday's class, I have a conflict with an important career opportunity that I scheduled before the start of the semester. I will make sure to check with a classmate regarding the notes for class. |
| This is the second time you've sent me the wrong part. You and your employees obviously don't know what you are doing! | Unfortunately, for the second consecutive time, I have received the wrong part. As I'm confident that you are interested in strong customer relationships, I have attached an image of the part for your reference. Please see my correspondence on February 2 if you need additional background. |

Importantly, though the "You Attitude" versions are indeed politer, they also are more rhetorically sophisticated. In the complaint email, for example, the writer is still firm about the problem and does expect action. The student in the absence email also does not provide the instructor with an opportunity to insist on their attendance.

The "You Attitude" practices several of the same rhetorical moves as the rhetorical appeals of pathos and ethos. As far as pathos is concerned, writers using a you-attitude approach are more likely to consider the feelings and emotions of the reader. The writer is not looking to insult or pick fights with the reader. As for ethos, the you-attitude writer comes across as more fair, likeable, and relatable—someone whom readers may be more willing to empathize with and help out.

Here are two more examples of me-attitude messages. Consider ways to revise them and, at the same time, reflect on how these strategies relate to ethos and pathos:

- An inquiry email from a student to a government researcher: Can you please share with me all of your research on first-generation students? This information will really help me out in a paper I'm working on for my ENGL 100 clas
- An email to a professor: Can you please look at the description of a similar course to yours that I took at Kentucky State? I really think it meets the same objectives, and I'm trying to save as much money, time, and effort as possible this semester.

Professional Development DocumentYour professional development document responds to a particular educational or professional opportunity, such as an internship. You'll want to find an opportunity that has stated expectations for the candidates. You can consider, among other possibilities, the following:

- Scholarship announcements
- Applications to enter academic or professional programs

- Internship and job advertisements

In your professional development document, you should emphasize the ways you want to represent yourself to your readers: how do you want them to think about you? What are your key experiences, academic training, and skills that relate to the opportunity? Additionally, you'll want to utilize the reader-based "you attitude," in which you show your understanding of your audience's position, needs, and interests. Make sure to underscore the ways in which you meet the opportunity's required or desired skills and qualities.

## How to Rhetorically Read Scholarship, Internship, or Job Announcements

When you are looking to apply to a job, internship, scholarship, or some other opportunity, make sure that you carefully read the announcement. You'll want to read it rhetorically — meaning that the announcement will give you important clues for the type of candidate the organization envisions and privileges. If you have a good idea what these key traits are, you can then make sure you highlight them in your own application letter.

Let's look at one internship example. Read it and mark the most important keywords or "buzz terms" that you see emphasized and repeated. Come up with 3-4 important keywords that you could then return to in your application letter.

### IN-17010 Private Sector Engagement Intern, Communications

### Job description

World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the world's leading conservation organization, seeks a Communications Intern to support our Private Sector Engagement team at our Washington, DC office. In close collaboration with the Communications Manager, the intern will support the planning and implementation of communications activities (with a significant emphasis on written communications) related to WWF's corporate partnerships.

This internship provides an opportunity to learn more about environmental sustainability by working with the team that advances sustainable business practices with leading US corporations.

### Key Responsibilities

Supports the Private Sector Engagement team through written communications and administrative tasks that contribute to the successful management of existing corporate partnerships and written materials that further business development.

- Participates in the development of key materials including blog posts, reports, PowerPoints, talking points, partnership activity summaries, and web copy related to WWF's sustainability initiatives with corporate partners.
- Drafts, reviews, and updates select Private Sector Engagement communications materials including digital platforms and collateral (brochures, presentations, one-pagers).
- Provides administrative support to Supervisor including meeting scheduling, note-taking, and event planning
- Attends calls and meetings with WWF staff, stakeholders and corporate partners, summarizing key points and action items in collaboration with Supervisor.
- Provides additional communication and strategic support as needed.
- A bachelor's degree in Communications, Marketing, Journalism or related discipline or equivalent work experience is required.
- Excellent writing and research skills, particularly with ability to write, deliver and evaluate communications for specific audiences and outcomes. Strong editing and proofreading skills.
- Ability to prioritize projects, manage details, and meet deadlines with limited supervision
- Excellent interpersonal skills with a willingness to work in a team environment across institutional and reporting lines to contribute toward larger goals and projects
- Basic understanding of HTML (for web updates) and working knowledge of MS Office tools
- Demonstrated history of leadership, initiative and accountability
- Experience in conservation or sustainability a plus

Did you write down "sustainable" or "sustainability"? This keyword appeared five times.

How about "communications"? This keyword appeared ten times.

"Partner" or "partnership"? This one appeared four times. You could also connect this keyword to "team environment," "leadership," and all of the activities that go on while working in teams.

Consequently, given our keyword analysis here, the successful candidate would need to emphasize any connections from their coursework or previous experiences and interests that

- Show their interest in the environment and sustainability
- Demonstrate their ability to communicate with others
- Demonstrate their ability to work effectively in teams

Considering the internship announcement, what else might you consider to be important for an applicant?

Finding Your Own OpportunitiesStart searching for local, college-level, campus-wide, state, regional, national, and international scholarships, opportunities, and internships. At K-State, the Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry, the Career Center, the Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy, and many others may be a good place to start.

Here are several local examples at K-State:

***Rebecca and Aaron Graham Scholarship for International Education and Understanding.*** This scholarship offers student funding to travel abroad, "engaging in studies that are directly connected with people and cultures outside of the United States." The scholarship asks for students to respond to five questions in "essay form":

1. What are the dates of the international travel experience you are interested in?
2. Where will you be going? Give a brief description of your travel plans.
3. What are you hoping to learn/study during your international experience?
4. What are your estimated travel costs?
5. Are you receiving any other travel abroad grants or scholarships?

***Undergraduate Research Opportunity Application, College of Arts and Sciences.*** This scholarship provides funding for undergraduates in Arts and Sciences and has two major prompts:

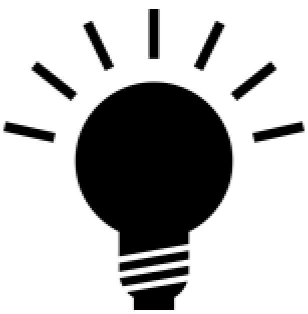
1. Brief project description (limited to 500 words):
2. Brief description of your interest in and qualifications for the project. Include how this experience will advance your future professional aspirations (limited to 500 words):

***Graduate Programs, M.S. Program in Horticulture Statement of Purpose.*** Though graduate school may be far on the horizon for many of you, it doesn't hurt to acquaint yourself with the ways in which you have to represent yourself for graduate programs. This program describes their statement of purpose in this fashion: in 1-2 pages, indicate “your area(s) of research interest, your long-term goals, and why you are interested in graduate study at K-State.”

***Cargill Fellows, Staley School of Leadership Studies.*** In addition to a $1,000 scholarship, this program offers internship and mentoring opportunities. Here are the essay questions that they ask candidates:

Why are you interested in the Cargill Fellows program?

Access Cargill’s Twitter or LinkedIn Account and find an article they posted within the past 90 days. After reading the article, please comment on the following questions: What corporate values were evident in the article? What energizes you about the work Cargill does in the global food industry?



## Invention Activity: Freewriting Questions

While you are looking for some opportunities to write for, you can consider several of these following questions as ways to start writing about your academic and professional interests, your contributions, as well as your skills and experiences.

1. How can you differentiate yourself from other applicants? (Can you come up with three things that make you different from others who will be applying for the same opportunity?)
2. What key terms or attributes do you ascribe to yourself? Isolate two or three of them and develop them with explanation and specific examples.
3. What do you see yourself doing in five years? In ten years? What are your long- term goals?
4. What do you know about the departments, sponsoring groups, companies, or organizations that you are applying to? What connections can you make with them based upon your own experiences, academic training and interests, and skills?

5. List all of your academic accomplishments (classes, levels, projects, etc.), work or volunteer experiences, soft skills, technical and linguistic skills, and other related professional experiences. How can you turn these skills and experiences into possible opportunity ideas?

## Style: Avoiding Overwriting

Practical arguments, in which you are communicating with and representing yourself professionally to readers who are in positions of authority, are challenging rhetorical situations. In an application letter, for example, you are attempting to enter a new community — a new workplace or organization — yet you, unsurprisingly, may not yet feel comfortable in this new role.

When you overwrite, a broad term for language choices that attempt to inflate your writerly ethos, you may end up doing exactly the opposite of what you are intended. When overwriting, you are attempting to sound intelligent and passionate, yet your readers may perceive you as coming across as naive or disingenuous. You may be overwriting to demonstrate that you belong in this new community — yet your language choices, unfortunately, signal that you are an outsider. Moreover, overwriting is not allowing you to meet your rhetorical purposes. Readers will have to wade through generalizations, cliches, platitudes, and other forms of overwriting to get at your specific and concrete message and explanation.

Here are several examples of overwriting:

- I am writing this letter in my determined endeavor to enter on the path of this new journey of my life.
- In the procurement of more knowledge, I have taken several classes at Kansas State University.
- As you will perceive as you gaze upon my resume, it sparkles with relevant skills and experiences.
- My experiences reflect my deep and committed passion to the world of library science and all that it entails.
- If you decide to employ me, I promise to make sure to knock it out of the park every single day.

Similar to the "You Attitude," you should reread your writing carefully and look for these moments, in which you are trying hard to make a good impression on your readers and yet not expressing yourself usefully and meaningfully for your intended audience. Look for Hallmark Card language (e.g., "new journey"), cliches ("knock it out of the park"), and other examples of overwriting (e.g., "procurement of more knowledge" and "perceive as you gaze") and try to revise to make your message more concrete, specific, vivid, concise, and direct for your readers.

The following table will show some ways to revise several of the previous examples of overwriting:

| Over Writing Examples | Revised Examples |
|---|---|
| I am writing this letter in my determined endeavor to enter on the path of this new journey of my life. | I am applying for this internship to contribute to your company and enhance my skills in customer relations. |
| In the procurement of more knowledge, I have taken several classes at Missouri University. | In order to enhance my ability to work with older patients, I have taken several courses at Missouri University related to gerontology, such as HDFS 7257, Aging in the Family Setting. |
| As you will perceive as you gaze upon my resume, it sparkles with relevant skills and experiences. | As my resume shows, my educational experiences and job skills make me an ideal candidate for this position. |

## Traditional Letter Formatting

A traditional business letter, one that was meant to be printed or typed out and mailed as a physical copy, has several formatting options. In the table below, you'll find tips on writing in a full-block letter style, in which all of the items are aligned along the left margin of the page.

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| As you will perceive as you gaze upon my resume, it sparkles with relevant skills and experiences. | As my resume shows, my educational experiences and job skills make me an ideal candidate for this position. |

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| | |
|---|---|
| 1234 St. Simeon Lane<br>Manhattan, KS 66502 | Include your return address at the top left. Alternatively, you could use letterhead. |
| December 25, 2020 | Include a space and then write the date next. Spell out the month and use cardinal numbers (1, 2, 3, not 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) |
| Shawn Lu Operation Manager China Visa Solutions<br>101 W. Grand Ave., Suite 200<br>Chicago, IL 60654 | After a space, include the inside address. Try to find a contact person and the full address of the company or organization to which you are writing. |
| Subject: Concern about Delay in Visa Processing | Include a concise yet rhetorically meaningful subject line that should help focus your readers. Some letter also include an RE: line, which tells readers the previous document that this correspondence is referring to:<br>RE: Article in Asian Travel Magazine<br>RE: Your April 13, 2020 Inquiry |

## Professional Development Evaluation Criteria

Here are the main criteria on which your professional development document will be evaluated:

**Persuasiveness & Purpose**: You have used the "You Attitude" and the rhetorical appeals to represent yourself successfully for an educational or professional audience. You have met your application purpose.

**Development**: You have focused your readers on your background, including your previous academic professional experiences, your coursework, and your skills; you have also explained how these are relevant. You satisfy your readers with your level of specificity.

**Organization**: You guide your readers skillfully through the professional development document, using topic sentences, readerly cues, and other typical ways of organizing a brief document. You use an introduction, body paragraph(s), and a conclusion to help focus your readers.

**Style & Tone**: Your language and other rhetorical decisions showcase your credibility and enhance your professionalism. Your writing is concrete, specific, vivid, and active; you avoid cliches, platitudes, and other forms of overwriting.

**Accuracy & Formatting**: You meet the formatting expectations of your readers and the business letter genre, and you have proofread closely to enhance your credibility.

# Complaint Letter

Unlike the first professional document, in your complaint letter you will be communicating “bad news,” yet you will be doing so in a persuasive manner. You will write a letter that describes a problem you have encountered with a product or service and asks for some action from the reader. Use this opportunity to use your “you attitude” approach, express your concerns, and build goodwill with your reader. Because of the formal expectations of this rhetorical situation, you will be asked to complete this assignment as a business letter.

One challenge you may have is finding the appropriate person to write to. Do not use, “To Whom It May Concern,” as that is a good way to ensure that your letter will not be read. Look up the company or organization with whom you have the concern and try to figure out who is involved in dealing with customers or the public. You might want to use an ATTN: (for ATTENTION) and SUBJECT: line to make sure that your letter is routed to the appropriate person or department.

> SUBJECT: Yahoo Sports Internet Package No Longer Valid
>
> ATTN: Yahoo Customer Care

## Organization

Use this following outline as a way to help you get started on your complaint letter:

- *Problem Description*
  - Describe the product or service that you are writing about to complain; be concise yet complete and specific
  - Provide enough background so the reader understands your problem
  - Consider your tone carefully, as you don’t want to appear that you are attacking your readers

- *Negative Consequences of Problem*
  - State why the problem was a problem—how did it inconvenience you? What were some negative consequences because of the problem
- *Action*
  - State what you want to be done to address the complaint
  - Provide a timeline or ask the reader to act promptly
  - Continue to build a rapport with your readers and move toward a common goal
- *Conclusion*
  - Leave your readers with a good impression and your willingness to work with them

# Activity: Detecting Rhetorical Moves in a Complaint Letter

Given your knowledge of the rhetorical situation of the complaint letter and the possible organizational strategies, take a look at the example complaint letter below. Identify at least three rhetorical "moves" that the writer is making in this letter in order to persuade the reader to act.

309 Cowan Road
Edinburgh EH11 1RH
UNITED KINGDOM

December 23, 2019

Moore Clements, Customer Relationship Center
HSBC Bank USA
PO Box 2013
Buffalo, NY 14240

SUBJECT: INQUIRY ABOUT ACCOUNT #XXXX8882

Dear Ms. Clements:

My wife and I opened up an HSBC account (#XXXX8882) in June, and we were particularly attracted by the ease of making international money transfers as we were going to be living in the United Kingdom for the next 12 months. Unfortunately, despite the fact that we held a sufficient balance and were active users, our account was summarily closed by HSBC this month.

To date, we have yet to receive official notification of the closing of our account, nor do we have any idea as to the status of the balance that was in the account. Additionally, two direct deposits of $750 each were made on December 20; at this time, we have no idea what has happened to those deposits. Altogether, I estimate that our closing balance was approximately $4500.

Within one week of receipt of this letter, can you please email me (drapaulf@gmail.com) or mail me at my temporary UK address the following:

- The official notification that the #XXXX8882 account has been closed.
- A copy of the closing balance of the account.
- An explanation for how the remaining balance, including the December 20 direct deposits, will be distributed to us.

After conducting some Internet research, I have come to understand that the closing of accounts and, more importantly, the poor communication between HSBC and the customers of these closed accounts are problems that are plaguing the reputation of HSBC. I am confident that you are concerned about the poor customer relationship that HSBC has built with me and others and will expedite my inquiry immediately.

Regards,

Dr. Alexander Paul

Consider these two questions:

- What "you attitude" strategies do you see at play in this complaint letter?
- Imagine that you are the reader. What image of the writer do you see? Have they built a successful enough relationship with you to encourage your sympathy and action?

For this following example, what revision suggestions would you have for the writer who wrote this complaint email:

To: Riley County Treasurer
From: Marsha Riley
Subject: Late Property Taxes!!!

I couldn't believe it when I received a late notice from you about my property tax! And, on top of that, you expect me to pay $45 in interest payments, which to me is nothing but a rip off.

First of all, I have never had any notice about the property taxes and the payment deadlines. I am in the process of changing my mortgage account with my bank, and they have paid it the past five years as part of my escrow account.

This is clearly not my fault, and I certainly do not want to pay the additional payment. I expect you to look into this as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Marsha

## Invention Activity: Finding a Complaint Rhetorical Situation

Think back to a recent problem that you encountered with

- An item that you bought online that you were disappointed with
- An item that was damaged
- A piece of technology that was not working correctly
- Service at a restaurant, in a company, or online
- An experience on campus (advising, academics, accessibility, etc.)
- An overcharge

Make sure that the problem is significant enough to warrant a formal complaint letter. List several possibilities and discuss them with a couple of classmates.

## Activity: Applying Criteria to a Complaint Letter

Use the criteria above to examine the following complaint letter. How successfully has the writer met the criteria?

> 841 Houston St.
> Manhattan, KS 66502
>
> March 12, 2019
>
> Mr. John Crown
> Regional Sales Representative, Tek Supply
> 1440 Field of Dreams Way
> Dyersville, IA 52040

Dear Mr. Brown:

I have been a customer of Tek Supply for ten years and have always been pleased with your products and customer service. In July of 2018, I ordered 10 twin-wall polycarbonate sheets, Stock # 104620C, at a cost of $54.63 each, for a total of $546.30. I installed these as walls for a small greenhouse in my backyard.

In February of 2019, I noticed that the sheets were beginning to yellow. Then, after a rainstorm on March 10, 2019, I saw that the rain had punched small holes in the sheets, causing rain to leak inside the greenhouse. Closer inspection showed that the sheets in fact had become brittle. I am enclosing two photos showing the damage: one showing the holes in the greenhouse walls, and the other a closeup showing the brittleness of a broken piece of a sheet.

These polycarbonate sheets have a 10-year warranty. I believe these sheets were probably from a defective batch. I would like for you to send me replacements for these 10 sheets. I can send you some pieces of the sheets from my greenhouse, if that would help your customer service department to determine the underlying cause of this damage. If indeed an entire batch of sheets were defective, you may be hearing from other customers who may experience the same deterioration of these sheets soon.

I would appreciate receiving the replacement sheets as soon as possible, since the spring growing season will be upon us very soon and we will want to use the greenhouse. My telephone number is 785-211-0060, and my customer number at Tek Supply is 021051.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Amanda Renier

## Complaint Letter Evaluation Criteria

You can evaluate your own complaint letters and those of your classmates by using the following criteria:

### *Persuasiveness*

- To what degree have you used rhetorical strategies to appeal to your audience in order to induce cooperation and maintain a strong relationship?
- Have you used “you attitude” strategies to reach your readers despite the “bad news” of this rhetorical situation?

### *Purpose*

- Does your reader understand why you are writing to them? Have you provided enough information and context? Does your purpose really require the formality of a letter?

### *Development*

- Have you included the appropriate amount of detail (evidence, background, facts, etc.) to meet your purpose and to enable your audience to decide on your case?
- Have you sufficiently supported why the problem was a significant inconvenience for you?

### *Organization*

- Have you guided your readers smoothly through the basic steps of the complaint letter by using transitions, reader cues, and a logical progression? Have you used the different sections and paragraphs of the complaint letter to guide your readers?

### *Accuracy & Formatting*

- Have you enhanced your ethos by closely proofreading your letter?
- Have you met the formatting expectations of a formal business letter?

## Performance Review

The performance review is a formal and professional document that asks writers to describe their accomplishments and evaluate them. In this case, you will be asked to write about your performance on the two documents that you wrote in this chapter; importantly, you will be asked to evaluate them according to the three major rhetorical appeals: ethos, logos, and pathos.

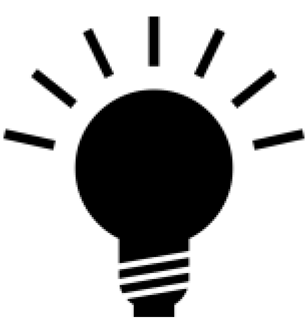
Write your performance review as a memo to your instructor, bearing in mind the following formatting expectations:

- Include the typical memo header elements (To:, From:, Date:, Subject:)
- Make your subject line specific and focused on your rhetorical purpose
- Use single-spacing with a space between paragraphs
- Use headings to help focus your readers on the different major chunks of the memo
- Keep your memo under two pages

## Organization

As you write your memo, consider this following organizational strategy:

- Introduction
    - Introduce your two documents to your instructor
    - Announce the purpose or goal of this memo (e.g., what will you be doing in this memo—and why?)
    - State an argument about your performance and/or about yourself as a writer and student of rhetoric: how well do you believe you used the rhetorical appeals to persuade the readers of the two documents? what do these two documents show about you as a student and writer?
- Body
    - Describe the rhetorical situations of the two documents, including
        - Your rhetorical goals in the two documents
        - Ÿ Your messages
        - Ÿ Your genres
        - Ÿ Your intended audiences
        - Ÿ The rhetorical challenges of these audiences and rhetorical situations
    - Analyze the success (or, any possible weaknesses) of your documents in how they met your rhetorical goals and were persuasive for your intended readers
        - Ÿ Refer to your two documents and bring in examples
        - Ÿ Focus on ethos, logos, and pathos
        - Ÿ Explain how your documents make good (or bad) ethos-, logos-, or pathos-based appeals
        - Ÿ Explain, if necessary, what you would do differently if you had more time
- Conclusion
    - Leave a strong image of yourself (ethos) with your instructor
    - Emphasize your rhetorical strengths



## Invention Activity: Linking Examples to Rhetorical Appeals

As you begin to examine the two documents that make up your performance review, consider this three-part process:

- Create a chart with three columns for the different rhetorical appeals: ethos, logos, and pathos
- For each column, list as many specific examples from your two documents as possible
- Create statements that connect the specific examples to the rhetorical appeals: given your intended audience and the rhetorical situations of these documents, why are these good examples of ethos, logos, and pathos?

| Ethos | Logos | Pathos |
|---|---|---|
| Ask yourself: In my two documents, how am I making myself more credible, fair, and trustworthy for my readers? In what ways do my documents reflect my care and my "you attitude"? | Ask yourself: How clear have I made my purpose, goals, and main message to two my readers? How reasonable are my main points? Have I provided enough information and specifics for my readers? | Ask yourself: When appropriate, do I appeal to the emotions of my audience and their feelings about themselves and their organization? How do I make my readers feel better about themselves? |

| Ethos | Logos | Pathos |
|---|---|---|
| I show how I have been an active participant in K-States Park Management program (esp. in the collaborative projects)<br>In the complaint letter, I talk about how I had used the All Ready HVAC/Plumbing company before. | I've clearly connected my main goal for entering the Park Management Program with my previous experiences (summer camp<br>counselor)<br><br>I have shown how the summer camp counseling position is similar to the mission of the Park Management Program<br><br>I have indicated the academic classwork that connects to this program (esp. my courses in biology)<br><br>In the complaint letter, I provided the specifics about the problem, the costs ($450), and the fact that a new gas valve for the wall heater was not actually necessary | I tell a story from my childhood that relates to my overall goal of entering the Park Management Program<br><br>In the complaint letter, I assure my readers that my previous All<br>Ready HVAC / Plumbing experiences have been good ones; I indicate that I would be happy to use them again in the future and recommend them to my friends and family |

In your memo, you could also consider changes you would make to your documents: If you had additional time, or were to complete the revisions for these two documents, what would you do differently—and why? Which of the rhetorical appeals would you be able to enhance—and how?

# Typical Memo Format

The following table details the formatting expectations for the professional memo.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Memorandum** | Typically, memos announce what they are at the top: Memo or Memorandum. |
| TO: Katherine Schlagel<br>FROM: Student's Name<br>DATE: December 22, 2020 | Include the memo header items. For the date, spell out the month and include the cardinal number of the date. |
| SUBJECT: Performance Review of Practical Arguments | Make your subject line both concise yet useful and meaningful for your reader. Treat it like a title and capitalize the initial letters of all major words. |
| In this memo, I…<br><br>*Body Section Header #1*<br><br>*Body Section Header #2*<br><br>*Conclusion* | Leave a space and then begin your memo. After your introduction, you can use descriptive headings to help break up your points and focus your reader on the different sections. Here are two examples for this particular performance review assignment:<br><br>*Rhetorical Strategies in Application Letter*<br><br>*Rhetorical Strategies in Complaint Letter* |

# Performance Review Evaluation Criteria

You can use the following criteria and questions to evaluate your own performance review as well as those of your classmates.

## Purpose

- Have you evaluated your performance on the practical arguments, including your rhetorical strengths and weaknesses?
- Have you showcased a "big picture" claim about yourself as a writer and as a student of rhetoric, given your practical arguments?
- Have you demonstrated your knowledge of and comfort with the rhetorical appeals and other strategies and concepts?

## Development

- Do you summarize the rhetorical situations of the practical arguments?
- Do you identify and use specifics from your practical arguments?
- Do you match these specifics with the the appeals or rhetorical concepts that you are using?

- Do you explain why your language and rhetorical choices have been effective (or not) for your intended audiences?
- If necessary, have you explained what you would do differently if you had more time and an opportunity to revise?

## Organization

- Do you focus readers by including an introduction, body paragraph(s), and a conclusion?
- Do you navigate for your readers what appeals or rhetorical concepts you are using?
- Do you use topic sentences, readerly cues, transitions, and other strategies to guide your readers?

## Style & Tone

- Do you maintain a confident, active, and professional style and tone with your intended reader?

## Accuracy & Formatting

- Do you meet the expectations of the memo genre?
- Have you carefully proofread to enhance your credibility?

### Student Example

*Liz Oltjen wrote these practical arguments in Phillip Marzluf's online ENGL 200 class.*

## Application Letter

211 Nacon Lane
Manhattan, KS 66502

November 10, 2020

UMKC Office of Admissions 5000 Holmes St
Kansas City, MO 64110

SUBJECT: DDS Reserved Admission Program Application

Dear UMKC Admissions Coordinator:

I am writing to express my strong interest in your Reserved Admissions Program for pre-dental undergraduate students. It is with eager desire that I hope to navigate my dental journey through such a qualified and well-respected institution. I have extensive experience working as a sterilization technician in oral surgery and orthodontics, and I am confident that I am ready to take the next step in furthering my knowledge and skill set in the world of dentistry.

I believe I am a strong candidate because I have spent the past few years committed to the development of my understanding of dentistry, both through shadowing and working for professionals in different areas of the dental field including: general dentistry, pediatric dentistry, orthodontics, and oral surgery. From my experiences in these offices, I've had the privilege of learning and furthering my insight on the responsibilities of a dentist, and I'm certain that I have the skills necessary to eventually take on this role.

Aside from my dedication to hands-on experience, I have held myself to strong academic standards as evidenced by my completion of the required 15 hours per semester and 4.0 GPA. I understand that intellectual growth is of high priority in your program, and I feel fully prepared to meet its challenging expectations. Outside of studying, I've devoted much of my time to community service working with Kansas State's special needs cheerleading team, serving as Director of Community Service for my sorority, and volunteering for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. I am passionate about giving back to my community, and I hope to one day be able to do this through dentistry.

Given my qualifications, I feel strongly that I am not only the right fit for UMKC but would excel in your program. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration, and I hope to have the opportunity to speak with you directly regarding my application.

Sincerely, Liz Oltjen

## Complaint Letter

211 Nacon Lane
Manhattan, KS 66502

November 10, 2020

Chester E. Peters Recreation Complex 1831 Olympic Street
Manhattan, KS 66506

SUBJECT: Complaint About Mask Policy

Dear Kansas State University Recreational Services:

The purpose of this letter is to address the decision that, in response to COVID-19, masks be worn at all times inside the Recreation Complex. I understand that minimizing public exposure to coronavirus is your top priority, and I cannot stress enough how much I appreciate your dedication to the safety of all who utilize your facility. However, when it comes to working out, there are multiple factors to consider when determining the safest course of action. Based on current research, it is arguably more unsafe to wear a mask while working out in some instances, specifically those involving high intensity cardio.

First, as someone who uses the Rec on a daily basis, I feel very strongly that we take expert advice into consideration when creating policies around safety due to the serious nature of this issue. The World Health Organization argues against wearing masks during exercise, especially in cases of high-intensity cardio; this is due to the fact that masks can make breathing more difficult while working out. In addition, side effects such as dizziness and light-headedness are also increased, putting some people at higher risk for heart attack and other serious medical conditions.

Second, the Center for Disease Control recommends wearing a mask when social distancing cannot be maintained. Yet, as you know, the cardio equipment in the Rec has been rearranged to meet social distancing requirements. Because of this, I propose that students only be required to wear a mask when not using one of the aforementioned machines, as they would still be in compliance with the CDC's recommended social distancing guidelines.

Thank you for hearing my concern, and I appreciate your thoughtful consideration in reevaluating whether your current mask policy is the best option concerning students' health.

Sincerely, Liz Oltjen

## Performance Review

### Memorandum

TO: Phillip Marzluf
FROM: Liz R. Oltjen
DATE: November 22, 2020
SUBJECT: Performance Review of Application Letter and Complaint Letter

For our final task in ENGL 200, we were assigned to review our growth in this class by showcasing our newfound knowledge and strengths in both an application and complaint argument. As a writer and as a student, I would first like to express sincere gratitude for the opportunity to reflect on my learning through such an unprecedented semester in this way. Although I wasn't expecting my composition skills to both develop and flourish in an online environment, I couldn't have been more wrong, and I feel that my two letters are strong evidence of such.

At the beginning of this semester, I couldn't provide a solid definition of ethos, logos, and pathos; I'd heard them in the past, but my ability to apply them was lacking. This may come as a surprise considering my current writing, as I make strong appeals to each rhetorical element in both letters, which are equally effective in working together to persuade my intended audiences. Thus, as my predominant area of growth, I argue that my usage of rhetorical strategies has not only improved significantly over the course of this class but become very strong.

First, I would like to begin by focusing on how I incorporated ethos into my work, establishing my credibility as an author. Ethos was a critical component in both my application and complaint letter, as it was pivotal in each case that my audience take me seriously. For instance, when writing to the UMKC DDS reserved admissions coordinator, I purposely stress my "extensive experience" shadowing and working in the dental field; in doing so, I not only prove my commitment, but portray myself as an equipped candidate. Later on, I reference, "… my completion of the required 15 hours per semester and 4.0 GPA," further displaying my familiarity and fulfillment of their core program requirements, again validating my credibility.

In my complaint letter, I took a different approach in terms of ethical appeals. Because I'm not a COVID-19 expert, I chose not to focus on my own knowledge of the virus itself; instead, I felt it would be more effective to establish why wearing a mask during high intensity exercise is relevant to me, saying, "As someone who uses the Rec on a daily basis…" Along with this, I work to earn my audience's respect by acknowledging the "serious nature of this issue" and concern for "the safest course of action." Through the aforementioned appeals in both letters, I am confident that my understanding of ethos is both clear and telling of my progress in ENGL 200.

Next, I feel it is important to review my use of logos in each practical argument, playing on the logical assumptions of my audience as a mechanism to persuade. For example, right off the bat in the introduction of my application letter, I intentionally refer to UMKC as, "such a well-respected and qualified institution," alluding to the research I've done on the program's credentials. I further build on this appeal in the body of my writing by acknowledging UMKC's widely known "challenging expectations." Yet, I don't stop at simply meeting the logical assumptions of my audience; I meet my own as well. I say, "I understand that intellectual growth is of high priority in your program," using my own rational thinking as another way of painting myself as a sensible applicant.

Logos, however, is more often used in the form of hard evidence and statistics — and while I didn't feel this type of logical appeal was fitting in my application letter, it worked very effectively in my complaint scenario. I would even argue that the most persuasive aspect of my complaint letter is through my purposeful presentation of "expert advice," quoting both the World Health Organization and the Center for Disease Control. By employing facts "based on current research," I guide my audience to the logical assumption that because the cardio equipment has already been properly socially distanced, wearing a mask while using them isn't necessary. Further, I don't present this information as my own opinion, but as a matter of fact.

The last rhetorical appeal I want to consider in both of my letters is that of pathos, analyzing how I evoke emotion from my intended audiences. In my application letter, I do this primarily through eloquent word choice, using phrases such as "strong interest.. eager desire… passionate…dedication…" — the list goes on. I do this so that the UMKC admissions coordinator gets a strong feeling of how important the opportunity is to me. I also appeal to selflessness, citing my love for community service and helping others. By incorporating this pathetic component, I further my audience's respect for me not only as a candidate, but a person as well. The main way in which I appeal to pathos in my complaint letter is through my expression of gratitude for the Rec's staff, primarily for being "dedicated to safety." As in my application letter, I am very careful with word choice, characterizing my audience as caring individuals who only want the "best option concerning students' health," rather than people who wander around aimlessly at work enforcing a pointless policy. Going about the former uses the "You" attitude, which I've learned is a much more effective persuasive strategy.

Lastly, in both my application and complaint letter conclusions, I demonstrate my genuine nature by thanking my readers for their "thoughtful consideration." In both cases, I keep a calm and respectful tone, as I understand the importance of leaving a positive final impression on my readers.

That said, I would like to do the same for this assignment; thank you, Dr. Marzluf, for guiding my writing this semester. Your commitment to students' success is evident, and I appreciate the work you've put in to making online learning feel as close to normal as possible. I hope you enjoy your time off, and I wish you all the best.

## Conclusion: Summary of Key Rhetorical Concepts

- Bad News: Arguments in which the audience will perceive the message and purpose as negative.
- Good News: Arguments that imply positive audiences, purposes, and messages.
- Goodwill: A rhetorical quality in which writers attempt to build productive relationships with their readers.
- Overwriting: A quality of writing in which the writer is trying too hard to impress their readers.
- Practical Arguments: Arguments that writers make to persuade more local and specific audiences for personal purposes.
- You Attitude: A writing style in which the writer takes on the perspective of their readers.

6.

# REVISING AND EDITING

## Punctuation Made Simple by Gary A. Olson, Ph.D.

Some people write well but allow themselves to be disabled by a fear of punctuation and grammar. They know how to prewrite, organize, and revise, but proofreading for punctuation and grammar causes them difficulties. There's no need to fear these conventions of standard written English. In fact, these conventions can help you become a more effective communicator.

### Punctuating Your Prose

Before discussing specific punctuation marks, we want you to know one important fact: punctuation is simple. Many people believe that punctuation rules are rigid commandments and that only the "experts" know all the rules. You may be surprised to learn, however, that it is not the "experts" but rather educated speakers and writers, such as yourself, who have established the practices that we know as the "'rules of punctuation." In other words, over the years good writers have used punctuation in ways that have made their messages especially clear to their readers. Writers have agreed to follow these practices because they have proved to be so effective.

As an analogy, think of the traffic signs that govern the rules of the road. When you see a red blinking light or an octagonally shaped red sign, you bring your vehicle to a full stop; when you see a blinking yellow light, you proceed with caution. These traffic rules help make driving safe and efficient. But there's no reason why a red blinking light signifies a complete stop; it well could have been any other color. The caution light, too, could very well have been another color. The important fact to remember is that drivers have agreed to follow these signals and to do certain things when they come upon them. The same is true with punctuation marks. Writers have agreed that certain marks will signify things in written communication.

The rules of punctuation are not static; they have changed throughout the years and will continue to change. What once might have been considered improper punctuation may now be considered correct. The rules of punctuation are created and maintained by writers to help make their prose more effective, and their exact meaning changes through time, just as traffic rules evolve with time. (For example, in many states it is now acceptable to make a right turn at a red light if no other vehicles are in sight.) At any point in time, a particular punctuation mark means what writers agree it means; as consensus shifts, so will its meaning.

If you approach punctuation with this understanding of its origin and flexibility, you will not be intimidated by the conventions of punctuation.

In the panels that follow, we discuss several of the most useful punctuation marks that you will use as a communicator. Instead of listing many rules as a grammar book might, we discuss these various marks in general so that you can get a sense of how to use them in your own prose. Of course, every communicator should own and use a grammar handbook as a reference tool. You will still want to refer to such a book when you come upon a particularly difficult punctuation problem. Here, however, we are most concerned with helping you develop a feel for the way punctuation works. We begin with the easiest of these marks and move to the most difficult.

## The Colon

You might be surprised to learn that the colon is one of the most helpful and easiest to use of all the punctuation marks. You don't need to remember six or seven rules to understand how a colon works. In prose, a colon really does only one thing: it introduces. It can introduce just about anything: a word, phrase, sentence, quotation, or list. You'll notice that we have used colons in the two preceding sentences to introduce a sentence, in the first case, and a list, in the second case. This is how simple the colon is. Let's look at some other examples:

Joe has only one thing on his mind: profit.

Joe has only one thing on his mind: his stock portfolio.

Joe has only one thing on his mind: he wants to get rich.

Joe has only one thing on his mind: stocks, bond, and certificates of deposit.

We have used a colon in these four sentences to introduce various kinds of things: a word, a phrase, a sentence, and a list. You can use a colon in your prose in any place where you must directly introduce something. A colon gives special emphasis to whatever you're introducing because readers must first come to a stop, and so they pay more attention to it. For example, let's say you are writing a letter describing a product, and you want to emphasize above all that this product, a Jacobsen lawn mower, is reliable. You could very well write:

The Jacobsen lawn mower beats its competitors especially in the key area of reliability.

While this sentence gets the point across, it doesn't place much emphasis on reliability. A sentence using a colon is much more emphatic:

The Jacobsen lawn mower beats its competitors especially in one key area: reliability.

Notice that the second example places clear emphasis on the point that the writer is trying to communicate to his or her reader: that the Jacobsen lawn mower is above all reliable. The writer of this sentence has used the colon effectively.

Perhaps the most common way to use a colon is to introduce a list of items, as in this sentence:

This report reviews five main criteria to determine whether to purchase the IBM PC: hardware, software, maintenance agreements, service, and customer support.

If you aren't sure whether you need a colon in a particular sentence, here is a handy test: read the sentence, and when you reach the colon, substitute the word namely; if the sentence reads through smoothly, then there's a good chance that you do need a colon. For example, you can read any of the example sentences above with the word namely in the place of the colon:

Joe has only one thing on his mind (namely) profit.

Joe has only one thing on his mind (namely) his stock portfolio. Joe has only one thing on his mind (namely) he wants to get rich.

Joe has three things on his mind (namely) stocks, bonds, and certificates of deposit.

This test may not work 100 percent of the time, but it is a fairly reliable indicator of whether you need a colon.

One word of caution: do not place the colon after the verb in a sentence, even when you are introducing something, because the verb itself introduces and the colon would be redundant. For example, you would **not** write:

> My three favorite friends are: Evelyn, Marlyne, and Ronni.

The colon is not necessary in the sentence above because the verb does the work of introducing the three friends. You can check this sentence by using the test we just mentioned. It would seem awkward to read this sentence, "My three favorite friends are, namely, Evelyn, Marlyne, and Ronni." The fact that the sentence is awkward when you read it with namely is an indication that the colon is unnecessary. Remember, the colon shows emphasis and, therefore, you want the reader to stop at the colon before proceeding on to whatever it is you are introducing.

## The Semicolon

The semicolon is another important tool you can use when you write. There are two ways to use this punctuation mark: as a connector between two sentences and as a supercomma.

### *1. To Connect Two Sentences*

The semicolon is most often used to connect two sentences. Obviously, the sentences ought to be relatively close in content, but other than that you can connect any two sentences with a semicolon. The diagram below may help you remember this usage:

> Sentence ; Sentence

As a communicator, you are always putting together complex ideas in your prose and showing how they relate to one another. A semicolon is an economical way to join two sentences, and therefore two ideas, so that your reader sees the relationship. For example, you may write any of the following sentences:

> Jim is a good typist; he makes few mistakes.

> The MFC Corporation is an excellent company to invest in; its dividends have risen sharply and steadily over each of the last ten years.

> Ms. Sanchez is a good real estate salesperson; however, she was unable to sell her own house.

Each of the three examples above contains two sentences glued together by a semicolon. The second part of each sentence makes a comment on the first. Certainly, each sentence could be written as two sentences, but you wouldn't be expressing the close relationship between the two parts that you do when you use a semicolon. With two separate sentences, the reader must stop at the period of the first sentence and then begin to read the second; with two sentences connected by a semicolon, the reader does not come to a full stop and, therefore, the relationship seems that much closer. Also, this type of sentence allows you to express your ideas economically.

The important point to remember is that you must have a complete sentence on both sides of the semicolon. If your second sentence begins with a conjunction (and, but, or, etc.), you do not need a semicolon because the conjunction and the comma that usually goes with it are equivalent to a semicolon. Instead, combine two full sentences with the semicolon.

Sometimes a sentence may begin with words like however, therefore, and nevertheless. If your second sentence begins with one of these words, and if it is indeed a full sentence, you still must use a semicolon to connect the two. The sentence about Ms. Sanchez illustrates this use.

A word of caution: never glue two sentences together with only a comma. Grammarians call this sentence error a comma splice. Here is an example of two sentences connected with only a comma:

> The banking community became quite upset at the rise in the prime rate, bankers felt that they would ultimately lose a considerable amount of money.

A comma splice is considered ungrammatical because the reader begins reading the second sentence before realizing that the first sentence is completed. Readers are used to stopping at the end of a sentence, and they become disoriented when they find that they have unknowingly left one sentence and entered a new one. This is why effective writers avoid the comma splice. Here are two additional examples of comma splices:

> Ms. Linccini is a fine worker, she meets all her deadlines.

> Our sales have increased by twenty percent, our inventory has been reduced by thirty percent.

Each of the examples above constitutes two sentences glued together with a comma. You can correct a comma splice by inserting a semicolon between the two sentences, by adding a comma to your conjunction, or, of course, by punctuating them as two sentences. Whichever way you choose, however, you must make sure your final drafts do not contain comma splices.

There is one instance in which a comma splice is considered acceptable. Occasionally, you may have a list of items that could stand alone as full sentences. You may use commas to attach these items so long as it is clear to the reader that this is a list of relatively equal items. Here is an example:

I opened the safe door, I took out the money pouch, and I concealed it in my desk drawer.

The example above shows a list of three items and illustrates a step-by-step process. Even though the items all constitute full sentences, it is acceptable to use commas to attach them but only because they are members of a larger list. If you are unsure about using commas to connect sentences in a list, perhaps it is best to rewrite the sentence. Do, however, stay alert for any two sentences in your prose that are connected by only a comma.

Related to the comma splice is the run-on sentence. Run-on sentences, often called fused sentences, are two sentences punctuated as if they were one. In other words, a run-on is a comma splice without the comma—two sentences smashed together with no punctuation between them. Here are two sample run-ons:

Chu Lie is the foreman Joseph Garcia is the line boss.

I knew that the new personnel policy would cause problems the union is reacting quite vehemently.

As you can see, each of the two samples is composed of two sentences. The writer should have connected the sentences with a semicolon or punctuated them as separate sentences. Again, you don't have to worry about such matters until the proofreading stage, but you must make sure your final draft doesn't contain run-on sentences.

### *2. As a Supercomma*

As you know, you normally separate the members of a list with commas, as in this sentence: I have just bought shares in IBM, USAG, and ITT.

The commas let the reader know where one item ends and the next begins. Sometimes, however, you have a list of complex items and one (or more) of the items already contains a comma. In such a case, the reader is likely to get confused about what is really a member of the list and what is not. You can avoid this confusion by making the semicolon a sort of "supercomma." Look at the sentence below to see how the supercomma works:

Suncom Corporation has subsidiaries in four cities: New York, New York, Wilmington, Ohio, Houston, Texas, and San Francisco, California.

This sentence contains so many commas, both between the members of the list and within them, that readers are likely to become confused. Instead, you can make the semicolon a supercomma between each of the members so that your meaning is clear:

Suncom Corporation has subsidiaries in four cities: New York, New York; Wilmington, Ohio; Houston, Texas; and San Francisco, California.

The second sentence is clearer than the first because the reader knows exactly where members of the list begin and end. You probably will not need to use a semicolon as a supercomma often, but if your sentence contains a list of items, one (or more) of which already contains a comma, you can clarify your meaning by using the supercomma.

## The Comma

The comma tells the reader to pause, just as the blinking yellow light tells a driver to slow down and to proceed with caution. Some writers can tell where a comma is needed by reading their prose aloud and inserting a comma where there seems to be a clear pause in the sentence. This may work much of the time if you read the sentence carefully and accurately. However, this procedure is not the most precise way to approach comma usage. Below are four general ways to use commas with a reasonable degree of certainty.

### *1. Between Items in a Series*

When you are listing three or more items in a sentence, simply place a comma between each member of the list. Here are two examples:

> Mr. Sanchez used the money that he won from the sweepstakes to buy a house, a car, and a small yacht.
>
> We will purchase the stock if the price is lowered to $30 per share, if we are allowed to buy a block of over 10,000 shares, and if we receive a guarantee that no new shares will be created in the next fiscal year.

The commas clearly mark where one member of the list leaves off and the next one begins. There is no mystery in how to use the comma in these kinds of sentences. What is often unclear, however, is whether to include the comma between the last and second-to-last items in a list. In the past, it was considered improper to omit the final comma in a series, but modern writers believe that the conjunction (and, but, or) does the same thing as a comma: it marks the place between two items in the set. These writers have argued that a sentence is more economical without an unneeded comma. As a result, you now have the option to choose whether to include the final comma. Nevertheless, many people still follow the old rule and expect to see the final comma. Also, if your list is rather complex, omitting the comma may confuse the reader about where the second-to-last item leaves off and the last begins. In this case, of course, you would want to include the comma in order to avoid confusion. Perhaps it is best to get into the habit of always using the comma between the last two items in order to avoid all controversy.

You do, however, have the option to omit it.

### *2. Between Two Sentences*

You'll remember that a semicolon is used to connect two sentences. However, more often we glue two sentences together with a comma and conjunction (such as *and* or *but*). In fact, if you examine a document you have written recently, you are likely to find many such sentences; they are so common that you don't even realize you are writing them. When you do put two sentences together with a conjunction, you must also include a comma. That is, the conjunction and comma are equivalent to a semicolon when you're connecting sentences. Here are three examples:

> The Suncom Corporation has just acquired the OILCO company, and it has agreed to sell OILCO's oil-drilling rights in Texas as soon as possible.

> I knew that the price of IBM stock would increase after it entered the home computer market, but I had no idea that the price would skyrocket.

> I first conducted a thorough audit of the company, and I then interviewed the manager to try to determine how much money was missing.

Each sentence above is made up of two sentences glued together with a comma and conjunction. For example, the first sentence is made up of the following:

> The Suncom Corporation has just acquired the OILCO company.

> It has agreed to sell OILCO's oil-drilling rights in Texas as soon as possible.

All you need remember is this: when you're connecting two sentences with a conjunction, you must also include a comma because the conjunction and comma work together as a team.

Perhaps this diagram will help you remember:

> Sentence , Conjunction Sentence

Often you may use a conjunction but not have a complete sentence on both sides of it. In this case you do not need a comma. For example, you could easily rewrite the above sentences so that one part of each sentence is not a full sentence:

> The Suncom Corporation has just acquired the OILCO company and has agreed to sell OILCO's oil-drilling rights in Texas as soon as possible.

> I knew the price of IBM stock would increase after it entered the home computer market but had no idea that the price would skyrocket.

> I first conducted a thorough audit of the company and then interviewed the manager to try to determine how much money was missing.

Because in the above examples you do not have full sentences on both sides of the conjunction, there's no need to include a comma.

One last bit of advice: if your sentence is very short (perhaps 5 to 10 words), you do have the option of omitting the comma if you wish. You have this option because your reader can usually understand a short sentence more readily than a long one, and therefore you would not need a comma for readability. Here is an example:

> Mr. Santana is old and he is senile.

This sentence is so short that you may omit the comma. Remember, punctuation is meant to help the writer and the reader, not to make their jobs more difficult. That's why you may opt to omit the comma between these two short sentences.

### 3. To Attach Words to the Front or Back of Your Sentence

Most of the sentences we compose really consist of a short core sentence with many details added to that core sentence. Frequently, we add information to sentences by attaching one or more words to the front or back of the core sentence. You don't need to memorize seven or eight rules naming each of the different structures you can add to your sentence. Instead, remember that when you add information to the front or back of a sentence, you want readers to know that you are doing so, in order to help them clearly under- stand your message. Here are four examples:

> Certainly, Joan is a successful salesperson.
>
> Although she flunked chemistry and barely passed math, Joan is a good student.
>
> In order to help save the company from bankruptcy, we sold shares in the company at discount prices.
>
> Joan is a good student, although she flunked chemistry and barely passed math.

If you examine the sentences above, you will see where the writer has attached words to the front or back of each core sentence. Even when you add one word, such as certainly in the first example, you want your reader to know where the real sentence begins. This is why you place the comma there. If you read the sentences carefully, you'll also notice a natural pause where the comma is situated.

### 4. On Both Sides of a Nonessential Component

The three uses of the comma just discussed are quite easy. You should be able to tell when those commas are needed or not. When you are proofreading your own prose, it will be clear to you whether you have a list of items or not, whether you are attaching two sentences with a conjunction or not, and whether you are tacking words onto the front or back of your sentence or not. The fourth use of the comma, however, is a little more complex because you must make a judgment call. Nevertheless, even this fourth way to use a comma is relatively simple.

Often, you will insert a group of words into the middle of a sentence. Sometimes this group of words will need to be set off by commas from the rest of the sentence, and sometimes you will not need commas. In order to tell whether you need commas, you must make a judgment about whether the added words are essential to the meaning of the sentence or whether they simply provide extra detail. Let's use an analogy to illustrate this concept. The modern stereo system is what we call a component system, in that it is made up of many different components: an amplifier, receiver, turntable, tape deck, and various speakers. With most stereo systems, you have the option of removing certain components and adding new ones. For example, you may decide to unplug your tape deck but retain the turntable. The various components are optional or nonessential to the system itself. Similarly, you often add or delete components from your sentences. If a component (a group of words in this case) is added to a sentence but does not affect the meaning of the sentence when it is removed, then that component is not essential.

In order to tell a reader that a group of words is a nonessential component, you place commas in front and in back of the group of words. However, if omitting the group of words would drastically change the meaning of the sentence, then those words are not a component; rather, they are essential to the meaning of the sentence. In that case, you would not want to put commas on either side of the component so that the reader knows that those words are absolutely important to the meaning of the sentence. For example, look carefully at the following sentences:

> Ms. Johnson, who is the company president, will present the awards at our annual dinner.

> Banks which hold over a billion dollars in assets are rare.

In the first sentence, the information about Johnson being the company president has no bearing on the main idea of the sentence: that she will present the awards at the annual dinner. Since this information is added or extra, we let the reader know it is an interchangeable component (like the stereo's tape deck) by placing commas on either side of it. In contrast, the second sentence contains information that is absolutely essential to the meaning of the sentence: "which hold over a billion dollars in assets." If you were to place commas around these words, you would be erroneously telling the reader that the words constitute a nonessential component. For example, look at this sentence:

> Banks, which hold over a billion dollars in assets, are rare.

This sentence tells the reader that the main idea is that "banks are rare." Certainly, banks are far from rare, but by enclosing the information in commas you have said that they are. Although we've spent some time discussing this use of the comma, it isn't very difficult to master. Simply remember that when you are proofreading you should check your sentences for essential and nonessential components.

## The Dash

The dash—typed as two hyphens side by side with no space between the dash and the words on either side of it—is used to connect groups of words with other groups. Generally, the dash does this in two ways: it separates words in the middle of a sentence from the rest of the sentence, or it leads to material at the end of a sentence.

As you know, writers often place a component in a sentence and set the component off with commas. Sometimes, however, you might wish to place special emphasis on the component, but commas are too weak to serve this purpose. If this is the case, you may wish to use dashes for added emphasis. For example, look at these two pairs of sentences:

1. Linda Simpson, the president's most trusted economic advisor, will resign her office during today's press conference.
2. Linda Simpson—the president's most trusted economic advisor—will resign her office during today's press conference.
3. Simpson's prescription for the economy, lower interest rates, higher employment, and less government spending, was rejected by the president's administration.
4. Simpson's prescription for the economy—lower interest rates, higher employment, and less government spending—was rejected by the president's administration.

All four examples are correct, but numbers 2 and 4 place more emphasis on the component within them because of the dashes. Also, you have probably noticed that number 4 is much clearer than number 3 because the dashes clearly mark where the component begins and ends, whereas the reader might become confused by all the commas in number 3. In other words, you can use the dash to make sure your reader clearly understands your point.

In addition, you have an added advantage when using dashes over commas: you can use a full sentence as a component. For example, examine these sentences:

> Linda Simpson—her enemies call her the author of our nation's economic woes—has resigned her office with the present administration.

> The present economic condition—Linda Simpson calls it an economic disaster—will require stringent fiscal measures before improving.

Notice how economical your sentence is when you can interject another entire sentence into the middle of it.

Combining sentences in this way accentuates the relationship between the ideas and helps you draw attention to the component within the dashes.

You can also use a dash to attach material to the end of your sentence when there is a clear break in the continuity of the sentence. Here are two examples:

> The president will be unable to win enough votes for another term of office—unless, of course, he can reduce unemployment and the deficit simultaneously.
>
> Generally, the president's economic policies have proved ineffective—although, it's true that he has lowered inflation considerably.

These two samples show how you can attach added material to the end of your sentence.

Use dashes sparingly—only for those occasions when you wish to show special emphasis. They can help you communicate effectively in certain situations, but you don't want to clutter your prose with too many of them.

## The Apostrophe

An apostrophe is a signal telling the reader that a word is either a possessive or a contraction. As you know, a contraction is simply two words contracted into one. You use contractions most often in informal or personal types of writing but usually not in more formal types. When you speak, you use contractions every day. Here are some common contractions:

> Cannot → Can't
>
> do not → Don't
>
> it is → it's
>
> will not → won't
>
> you are → you're

The apostrophe in the contractions above tells the reader that you have omitted a letter or two from the word—o in three of the cases above. Undoubtedly, you have already mastered contractions, so we won't go into detail. However, we will mention one common mistake.

Remember that the apostrophe marks the missing letter. Don't make the common mistake of placing the apostrophe between the two words, such as in these cases: should'nt, do'nt, etc.

The apostrophe is also used to mark the possessive. The possessive tells the reader that someone or something owns or possesses the thing that comes after the possessive. Here are five examples:

Ronni's word processor

the nation's GNP

the banker's log book

the year's end

the bank's holdings

we're

The possessive noun in each of the examples above (Ronni's, banker's, bank's, nation's, year's) indicates to the reader that something is owned by something or someone else. In most cases, to make the possessive you simply add an 's to the end of the noun. This is quite easy. The problem arises when a noun is both plural and possessive. Certainly there can be more than one Ronni, and they both can own the word processor. Or more than one banker can own the log book. In such cases, you simply place the apostrophe after rather than before the s:

Ronnis' bankers' banks' nations'

Some writers become confused when they must make a possessive of singular nouns that already end in s. As usual, you make the possessive by adding 's to the word; however, some writers and editors argue that the two s's are redundant and that therefore you can eliminate the second s, ending up with the s'. That is, they argue that there is really no need to include an s after the apostrophe, since the apostrophe already tells readers that the word is possessive.

Others argue that you should drop the final s only on words of several syllables but retain it on short words. Since there is no agreement on this difficult problem, you must make your own choice. However, regardless of which option you choose, do remember to be consistent. Here are three nouns which already end in s and their corresponding possessive forms:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| James | James's | James' |
| Jones | Jones's | Jones' |
| class | class's | class' |

Finally, the apostrophe is used in one other way. Although the apostrophe is never used to make a word plural, it is used to make letters and numerals plural:

> Although I received C's and D's in many of my college classes, I always received A's in my business classes.
>
> My sister received straight A's throughout her college career.
>
> My ROTC marksmanship score showed that I had six 5's and three 4's.