

Analyzing and Writing Arguments

*Argument is an ethically powerful way of using conflict to conduct learning and inquiry, and to create change and newness.**

—James Crosswhite

Should U.S. cities follow Paris's example in becoming a bicycle zone with thousands of bikes to rent inexpensively? Should the United States grant more visas to highly educated immigrants? Can the Internet drive political and social change for social justice around the world? How can the global community prepare for pandemics? Global issues like these, as you will discover as you read this book, are producing many public arguments.

Because arguments seek to shape readers' views of controversial issues, they can best be understood in rhetorical terms. The terms **rhetoric** and **rhetorical** refer to the persuasive use of language to accomplish certain ends in specific situations. Aristotle explained rhetoric as "the faculty of discovering in any particular case all the available means of persuasion." Scholar and rhetorician Lloyd Bitzer has expanded on Aristotle's definition and elaborated on the power and importance of rhetoric: "Rhetoric is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action."[†]

What these and many other definitions of rhetoric have in common is a focus on the use of language to persuade, to mold the way people see the world. Because rhetoric is enlisted all around us in arguments attempting to "change our reality," as a citizen and a student you will benefit from acquiring rhetorical skills to interpret and produce arguments.

To study arguments rhetorically means to realize that arguments are always produced in contexts. Reading rhetorically involves attending

*James Crosswhite, *The Rhetoric of Reason: Writing and the Attractions of Argument* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 9.

[†]Quoted in Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric: The Quest for Effective Communication* (Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Blackwell, 2004), 8.

closely to the writer, the writer's purpose, the audience, and the genre or type of writing. When we think of an argument rhetorically, we think of it as written by someone who has a stake in the issue, to an audience, for a purpose, in a genre (for example, op-ed pieces, policy analyses, advocacy fliers and open letters). Writers of arguments tailor their arguments to change readers' views and move them to action. However, these arguments can be skillfully, shoddily, responsibly, or deceptively constructed. Thinking rhetorically will enable you to examine arguments to determine how and why they are persuasive.

This chapter will introduce you to the main tools of civic and academic argument. First, it will explain the elements of an argument and the features to examine in analyzing an argument rhetorically. The second part of the chapter will provide some steps and strategies you can use to summarize arguments, write rhetorical analyses, and generate and structure your own arguments in response to the arguments you are reading. Knowing how to analyze arguments rhetorically will help you become a stronger, more sophisticated reader. Knowing how to speak back to texts and to construct your own reasoned and audience-based arguments will help you become a more confident, versatile writer.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO ARGUMENT

The first step in understanding arguments rhetorically is to move beyond a casual understanding of argument. In everyday conversation, argument often refers to an opinion, a disagreement, or a fight. However, the discipline of writing and rhetoric has a more specialized and complete meaning for **argument**: a persuasive text that makes a claim and develops it with reasons and supporting evidence. In addition, argument is multisided, not merely two-sided. Usually, there are many positions that can be argued on any issue, not simply a pro and a con. Global issues tend to generate multiple views because these issues are complex and touch the lives of many people, groups, and institutions, all of whom have stakes in these issues.

Issue Questions, Claims, and Stakeholders

Arguments originate in issue questions. Unlike an information question, which merely calls for an explanation, an **issue question** is a controversial question that could have many contestable answers. These controversial questions are behind every argument: no controversy, no argument. Writers form claims in answer to issue questions. You can think of a **claim** as a statement that asserts an arguable answer to an issue question.

Global issues are highly controversial and generate many issue questions. For example, urban farming is a controversial issue globally. Even though cities around the world—Vancouver, Canada; Beijing, China; Rosario, Argentina; Kyoto, Japan; and many others—are practicing urban

farming, support for urban farming and systematic planning are lacking in many cities. Some cities have outlawed agriculture and others consider it unimportant. Here are two issue questions related to urban farming: Can urban farming meet the world's growing need for food? What are the most effective ways to encourage urban farming? Notice how each question can be answered with different claims that would lead to different arguments.

Issue Questions	Claims
Can urban farming meet the world's growing need for food?	Urban farming cannot contribute substantially to feeding the world's growing population. Urban farming can be a partial solution in feeding the world's growing population. Urban farming can be a main solution in feeding the world's growing population.
What are the most effective ways to encourage urban farming?	In order for urban farming to succeed, the rate of growth for cities must be slowed by helping people continue living in more rural areas. In order to promote urban gardening as a source of food, city planners and politicians must set aside land in cities for urban gardening. To encourage urban farming, all new city buildings should be designed for roof-top gardens.

To think about arguments rhetorically means to think in terms of who is arguing and who cares—in other words, who are the **stakeholders**, or people who have investments in the answers to these questions. Issue questions become claims when people who care about them—stakeholders—decide to take a stand on them. The stakeholders in any argument include the people who are motivated to write about the issues and the people affected by the issues. The following stakeholders are people who have stakes in the arguments about urban farming:

- city dwellers who stand to benefit from growing their own food or buying locally produced food
- environmentalists who want to preserve the environment by using it wisely

- urban planners who could help make this farming possible
- businesses and city residents buying land and buildings in cities
- politicians who make city laws

For each argument you read, try to state the issue question behind the claim and identify the writer's stake and others' stake in the issue: To whom does this argument matter?

Discussing and Writing

Determining Issue Questions, Possible Claims, and Stakeholders

We frequently buy new electronic gadgets to replace broken or outdated ones. Where should we dispose of these old computers, televisions, cell phones, digital cameras, and game systems? Can these be recycled in environmentally friendly ways? Currently, some of this electronic trash (e-waste), much of it containing toxic chemicals, is dumped in poor developing countries. The reading that follows argues that disposal of e-waste plunges us into environmental, legal, economic, and human rights problems.

Read the following advocacy statement posted on the Web site for Basel Action Network (BAN), an environmental watchdog group dedicated to alerting American consumers about the problems of e-waste. After reading this campaign piece, follow these steps:

1. State at least five issue questions related to e-waste.
2. List at least five stakeholders—people involved in these issue questions in one way or another.
3. Formulate at least five possible claims, answers to these issue questions that stakeholders might want to argue.

Remember that an issue question should have at least two different answers, and a claim should be a controversial, arguable statement. (Later in this chapter, we will return to this article and these issues.)

The e-Waste Crisis

Basel Action Network

Every year, an estimated 400 million units of obsolete electronics are scrapped. Four billion pounds of electronic waste, or e-waste, was discarded in the United States in 2005, accounting for between 2% and 4% of the municipal solid waste stream. As much as 87.5% of this was incinerated or dumped in landfills. Of the remaining 12.5% collected for "recycling," industry sources claim that about 80% is exported to developing countries where it is processed in primitive conditions,

severely endangering the environment, workers and communities. Pollution created by irresponsible e-waste processing can also come back to haunt those in the exporting countries as well in the form of air pollution fallout via long-range transport.

The world faces an e-waste crisis because of the following factors:

- **Huge volumes:** The dual forces of rapid obsolescence of electronic gadgetry combined with astronomically burgeoning use have created mountains of e-waste—the largest growing waste stream our economy produces.
- **Toxic design:** Electronic equipment contains some of the most toxic substances known: mercury, lead, cadmium, arsenic, beryllium, and brominated flame retardants, among others. Thus, when this equipment becomes waste, it is toxic waste. When burned, even worse toxins can be formed such as dioxins and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons that can cause cancer and birth defects. Until recently, far too little emphasis has been placed by manufacturers on eliminating toxic materials.
- **Poor design and complexity:** E-waste is full of many different materials (such as multiple kinds of metals, plastics, and chemicals) that are mixed, bolted, screwed, snapped, glued, or soldered together. This makes separation for recycling difficult. Further, little attention has been paid to designing equipment for recycling. Therefore, recycling either requires intensive labor or sophisticated and costly technologies.
- **No financial incentive to recycle:** There's usually not enough value in most electronic waste to cover the costs of responsibly managing it in developed countries unless laws require such management as a service industry. For this reason it is exported to countries where workers are paid low wages and the infrastructure and legal framework are too weak to protect the environment, workers and communities.
- **Reuse abuse:** Sending equipment and parts for reuse—an important solution—can easily be abused by falsely labeling scrap as reusable or repairable equipment. Often this "reusable" equipment ends up getting dumped in countries lacking any infrastructure to properly manage it.
- **Policy of "free trade in toxic waste":** In the U.S. and Canada, the laws governing export of trade in hazardous electronic waste are tragically inadequate, and thus these two countries are the primary sources of the global crisis. The U.S. is the only developed country in the world that has failed to ratify the 1989 Basel Convention, an international treaty controlling trade in hazardous waste from richer to poorer countries. In 1995, that treaty adopted a full ban on exports from rich to poorer

countries. Both the U.S. and Canada actively oppose this prohibition. In Canada, the Basel Convention is not properly implemented, allowing almost all e-waste to flow abroad freely. In both countries, then, it is perfectly legal for businesses to maximize profit by exporting toxic electronics to developing countries, even when this export is a violation of the laws of importing countries. The export of toxic electronic waste to developing countries disproportionately burdens them with a toxic legacy and allows for externalization of real costs.

- **Prison laborers employed to process e-waste:** Unlike other countries in the world, the U.S. sends much of its hazardous e-waste to U.S. prisons to process in less-regulated environments without the worker protections and rights afforded in the private sector. Moreover, such operations amount to government subsidies, undermining the development of responsible private-sector recycling infrastructure and distorting the economics of recycling.
- **Private data is imbedded in electronic devices:** Computers, PDAs, mobile phones, and even printers and fax machines hold private data such as social security, bank account, and credit card numbers and private emails. These can be used by criminals involved in identity theft to hijack bank accounts and conduct blackmail and extortion if this data is not completely eradicated. Loss of confidential data is another form of liability and irresponsibility stemming from improper e-waste disposal.
- **Lack of regulation requiring proper management:** U.S. regulations mostly exempt the electronic waste stream from environmental laws and active OSHA* oversight. Further, according to the laws of Canada and the U.S., most toxic electronic waste is still perfectly legal to dispose of in nonhazardous waste landfills and incinerators.

DOCUMENTED HARM

In 2002, the Basel Action Network (BAN) and the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition released the ground-breaking report and film *Exporting Harm: The High Tech Trashing of Asia*, which exposed the toxic "recycling" of discarded electronics in China. A second film and report released in 2005 by BAN, *The Digital Dump: Exporting Reuse and Abuse to Africa*, showed similar tragic results happening in Africa, this time in the name

*OSHA is the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, part of the United States Department of Labor. It was created in 1971 to protect workers on the job.

of 'reuse' and 'bridging the digital divide.' Images of men, women, and children burning tons of toxic circuit boards, wires, and plastic parts exposed the fast-cheap-and-dirty side of our consumption of computers, televisions, faxes, printers, etc. Furthermore, BAN analyzed hard drives from exported computers collected in Africa and found massive amounts of private data freely available for criminal exploitation. We have also discovered that when U.S. prisoners are used as cheap labor, they are exposed to these poisons as well. The Federal Prison Industries' UNICOR, which processes much of the e-waste in the U.S., is now the focus of a Department of Justice investigation for the toxic exposures prisoners suffer. Finally as much as 87 percent of discarded toxic e-waste is simply dumped in municipal landfills or incinerators, ill equipped to contain or destroy such toxic waste.

Unfortunately this grossly irresponsible waste mismanagement and toxic trade is the norm in the North American recycling industry. It is still all too commonplace for recyclers and even electronics manufacturers, aided by the inadequate or non-existent policies of the Canadian and U.S. governments, to leave the dirty and dangerous work of managing our toxic waste to the poorest of the poor in developing countries. The resulting environmental hazards and social injustice ravage the land and people in these developing nations. Furthermore, these poisons come back to our shores and into our bodies via long-range air and ocean pollution, toxic imports, and contaminated food.

GOVERNMENT FAILURE: EXTERNALIZING OUR TOXIC IMPACTS

To date, unlike the 27 member countries of the European Union, the United States and Canada have failed to create legislation providing a national system to finance and responsibly deal with toxic e-waste. Instead, an e-waste anarchy is sanctioned, where we can exploit the cheap and dirty 'solutions' that 'externalize' (or pass on) the real toxic impacts and their costs to others—poor communities in developing countries, disempowered prisoners in this country, or local municipalities and taxpayers who suffer from this material getting dumped in local landfills or incinerated, polluting soil, air and water. Further, the U.S. and Canada have failed to ratify or properly implement the Basel Convention that prescribes international rules to prevent such toxic waste trade.

U.S. Congress' watchdog agency, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), recently published a report entitled, "Electronic Waste: EPA Needs to Better Control Harmful U.S. Exports through Stronger Enforcement and More Comprehensive Regulation." The GAO report describes, in no uncertain terms, the complete inadequacy of legislation

to control e-waste exports and the lack of EPA enforcement of the minimal regulations that do exist, resulting in a flood of toxins to the developing world.

Instead of properly regulating electronic waste management and trade, the EPA has tried to bring interest groups together to create voluntary solutions. These efforts have ended in failure or have produced little more than minimalist, 'lowest-common denominator' standards, which seemingly please everyone, including waste exporters, but result in continued abuse to the environment and human health. One of these efforts is the recently released "R2" Standard for Responsible Recycling.

Meanwhile, in lieu of an appropriate federal response, states and municipalities must cope with the national failure by passing a variety of local laws and state laws. However, the U.S. Constitution forbids these local governments from legislating international trade, so states and municipalities are helpless to prohibit the flood of e-waste leaving our shores. It is in this unregulated landscape that responsible electronics recycling companies are challenged to compete against unscrupulous brokers and exporters and those who deceptively call themselves "recyclers." These bad actors simply load up seagoing containers and ship U.S. hazardous electronics to the highest bidders globally. Almost always, this results in the wastes shipped to a developing country to be processed by cheap, unprotected labor to maximize profits. These "low road" operators are thriving while the responsible companies, with their safer, more expensive methods, struggle.

The Core of an Argument: A Claim with Reasons

To move from a claim to an argument, you need reasons to support the claim. We say that the core of an argument consists of a claim with **reasons**. A claim answers an issue question and becomes an argument when it is supported implicitly or explicitly by reasons. In reconstructing the core of arguments you read and in creating your own arguments, it is helpful to state reasons as *because* clauses. *Because* clauses help show the logical and arguable reasons justifying the claim. In order for arguments to be persuasive, the claims and reasons that writers craft should be tailored to the values, assumptions, and interests of their chosen audience; in other words, they should be audience-based reasons. What reasons would make this audience consider this claim?

Let's take the example of the controversies over bottled water. People are arguing about how the corporate bottling of water—taking it from the ground and selling it in bottles—is exploiting sources of water in rural regions, including in developing countries like Kenya. They are also arguing about the production, recycling, and disposal of tons of plastic bottles. The following chart presents some examples of claims and audience-based

reasons in response to this issue question: Should universities and college students continue to buy bottled water? Notice how the reasons change depending on the audience.

Issue question: Should universities and college students continue to buy bottled water?	
Audience and Stakeholders	Argument Cores: Claim and Reasons
Audience: University administration considering getting rid of vending machines with bottled water Stakeholders: The university administration, college students, and bottled water companies	Claim: Universities and college students should continue to purchase bottled water. Reasons: Because bottled water conveniently fits students' on-the-go schedules. Because students think bottled water tastes better than tap water.
Audience: University administration considering reducing the use of bottled water on campus Stakeholders: College athletic departments, college athletes, the university administration, and bottled water companies	Claim: College athletic departments should continue to purchase bottled water for athletic teams. Reasons: Because bottled water provides an ever-ready beverage that athletes especially need while engaged in strenuous physical activity. Because bottled water comes with good financial deals between the companies and universities purchasing bottled water in bulk.
Audience: Residence halls exploring ways to promote the university's commitment to global sustainability and healthy living Stakeholders: Student environmentalists, other college students, university administrations	Claim: College students should not continue to purchase bottled water. Reasons: Because the bottled water industry is producing tons of plastics that are damaging the environment worldwide. Because bottled water is often less healthful and safe than publicly regulated tap water.

These examples show a few of the argument cores that could be constructed in response to this issue question. Each argument core would lead to a different argument with different reasons that would appeal to a different audience. Note that an argument core could have one or many reasons.

Assumptions in Argument

Besides claims and reasons, there are other parts of arguments to consider when thinking of arguments rhetorically. In addition to choosing audience-based reasons related to the beliefs, values, and interests of their intended audience, writers should think out the assumptions behind their reasons and determine if the audience shares these assumptions. You can think of **assumptions** as the principles behind the reasons. These principles are usually connected to values (for example, priority on convenience, low costs, environmental protection, human rights, humane treatment of animals, free speech, and so forth). Does the audience share the writer's values? If yes and if these principles are acceptable to the audience, then the reasons will seem good and logical and will function as strong justification for the claim.

Example of a claim and reason: We should have mandatory labeling stating the country of origin for all imported foods because such labeling would improve the monitoring of food safety in the global food system.

Assumption/principle: Monitoring food safety in the global food system is important and beneficial.

Assumptions may be buried inside the argument or overtly discussed. Thinking out these assumptions and figuring out if they, too, need to be argued and supported often makes the difference between a successful argument and an unpersuasive one. In the following examples, the rationale explains possible problems with the argument that might emerge related to the assumptions behind the reasons.

Audience: University administration considering getting rid of vending machines with bottled water. Claim: Universities and college students should continue to purchase bottled water.	
Audience-Based Reasons	Thinking Out Assumptions
Because bottled water conveniently fits students' on-the-go schedules	Assumption 1: Convenience for busy students is a high priority for the university.
Because students think that bottled water tastes better than tap water	Assumption 2: Providing products that appeal to students' tastes is important to the university. Rationale: If the university administration does not value student convenience and satisfaction above other things, then the reasons will not be workable, or the writer will need to justify the assumptions as well as support the reasons.

Audience: University administration considering reducing the use of bottled water on campus.
Claim: College athletic departments should continue to purchase bottled water for athletic teams.

Audience-Based Reasons	Thinking Out Assumptions
Because bottled water provides an ever-ready beverage that athletes especially need while engaged in strenuous physical activity	Assumption 1: Conveniently meeting the physical needs of university athletes is important to the university.
Because bottled water comes with good financial deals between the companies and universities purchasing bottled water in bulk	Assumption 2: Saving money is important to the university. Rationale: If the needs of university athletes and the finances of the university are not top priorities, then other reasons would be more persuasive, or these reasons will require justification and supporting evidence.

Audience: Residence halls exploring ways to promote the university's commitment to global sustainability
Claim: College students should not continue to purchase bottled water.

Audience-Based Reasons	Thinking Out Assumptions
Because the bottled water industry is producing tons of plastics that are damaging the environment worldwide	Assumption 1: Producing tons of plastic and damaging the environment are undesirable consequences.
Because bottled water is often less healthful and safe than publicly regulated tap water	Assumption 2: Choosing the most healthful and safe water is important. Rationale: Most likely the audience would agree that these consequences are negative. This argument, then, would concentrate on establishing exactly <i>how</i> bottled water's tons of plastic hurt the environment, and on <i>how</i> bottled water is unsafe and unhealthful, not on whether these effects and qualities are bad.

When you analyze an argument, determining the assumptions behind the reasons, which will often be implied and not stated, can help you understand how well an argument is constructed. Writers can build stronger arguments by adjusting their reasons and assumptions to their audience and in some cases, by defending and developing the assumptions as well as the reasons—in effect, carrying on a two-tier argument.

Discussing and Writing

Thinking Out Argument Cores and Assumptions

Working individually or in groups, take three of the claims that you formulated in the exercise on page 17 in response to the e-waste article. For each of these claims, do the following tasks:

1. Develop at least two reasons that would support the claim.
2. For each reason, state what you think is the assumption—the principle behind the reason that an audience would have to accept to find the reason persuasive.

The Development of an Argument: Evidence

Another important part of an argument is the kind, amount, and quality of supporting evidence that writers use to make their arguments persuasive. **Evidence** can take the form of examples, facts, numerical data, testimonies and quotations, or further reasoning. Writers choose their evidence to meet the needs of their audience. What constitutes good evidence? Rhetorician Richard Fulkerson offers helpful criteria for evaluating the evidence in an argument, which he calls the **STAR criteria**.*

STAR CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING EVIDENCE IN AN ARGUMENT

- **Sufficiency:** Is there enough evidence for this audience?
- **Typicality:** Is the evidence typical or is it extreme and deceptively chosen?
- **Accuracy:** Is the evidence accurate and current?
- **Relevance:** Is the evidence related to the claim, reasons, and assumptions?

*Richard Fulkerson explains these criteria in more detail in his book *Teaching the Argument in Writing* (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1996), 44–50.

Applying the STAR criteria to evidence in the arguments you read and later to your own arguments will help you assess the effectiveness of the arguments. The key rhetorical question, though, is "For whom is the evidence persuasive?" As with the other parts of an argument, evidence is also rhetorical in that what an audience considers persuasive evidence depends on its values, interests, and beliefs. Arguments that succeed with their audiences include appropriate audience-based evidence. As we saw in the charts on pages 23–24, writers may need to create additional subarguments to support their assumptions with evidence; in other words, other parts of the argument, besides the reasons, may call for evidence to make the whole argument persuasive.

Responses to Alternative Views

The final structural part of an argument is the writer's recognition of alternative or opposing views. Although not all arguments acknowledge opposing views, the presence or absence of these acknowledgments and responses to these views often makes the difference between a persuasive argument and a weak one. Because arguments are controversial and arguers most likely will be writing to an audience who is uninformed, undecided, or opposed, it is important for writers to show their awareness of alternative views and respond logically and authoritatively to them. Writers may either concede to those views by accepting their validity and then shift the focus back to their own case, or they may rebut them with counterreasoning and counterexamples (see the chart on page 27). For example, if a writer is arguing the claim that her university should stop supplying bottled water in vending machines, she would need to anticipate objections that students and the university might make. She could either concede and admit that these objections do make sense and then shift back to her own views, or she could argue directly against these objections in a rebuttal, using her own reasons and examples. How much space a writer devotes in an argument to opposing views also depends directly on the audience.

Arguments Tailored to Audiences

The whole construction of an argument—its degree of edginess and development—is a function of the writer's relationship to his or her purpose, audience, and choice of the type of argument (flier, formal researched argument, editorial, and so forth). We can think of arguments as ranging on an argument continuum, with positions on the continuum representing the writer's specific purpose and relationship to the audience. On one end of the continuum, the arguer would have an exploratory purpose and would imagine a cooperative or collaborative relationship with the audience. In effect this writer says, "Think this issue out with me." On the other end of the

continuum, the arguer is basically writing propaganda with a hard-sell purpose that blasts the audience, denying any space or value to audience members. This writer says, "You have to see this issue my way, the only way." The more the writer engages in dialogue with the audience and seeks to see the issue from this alternative perspective, the more the argument will convey a problem-solving, inquiry approach. When writers are assured of their audience's agreement, they may choose not to include alternative views.

The argument continuum shown on pages 28–29 demonstrates the range of possible purposes and relationships with the audience. All arguments fall somewhere on this continuum. When you are reading an argument, determine the purpose of the argument and the stance the writer is taking toward the audience. Is the writer trying to solve a problem of interest to the audience? Is the writer mostly in an inquiring mode, entertaining differing perspectives on the issue question, or is the writer shoving a view at the audience? How firmly and aggressively is the arguer asserting a claim? How does the engagement with alternative or opposing views enrich the argument?

Now that we have examined the structure of arguments in some detail, you may be wondering, Does everyone who writes and publishes an argument plan the argument as systematically as this explanation suggests? The answer is no. However, writers who construct successful arguments for their audiences have most likely thought carefully about their issues in ways that reflect the deep structure of their arguments. You will have the greatest success with your own arguments if you think of planning them in terms of claims, reasons, assumptions, evidence, and acknowledgment of alternative views. (The last section of this chapter offers suggestions to help you with this planning.)

RESPONSES TO ALTERNATIVE OR OPPOSING VIEWS

Claim: The university should stop selling bottled water in vending machines.

Example of Concession

It is true that busy students are often racing around campus to classes and activities. I know that sometimes fountains are difficult to find, might not work, or might be dirty. I also recognize that being thirsty can impair a student's ability to concentrate. One day when bad traffic made me late to campus and I had to run to class, all I could think about during my class was Gatorade, Pepsi, and water. Nevertheless, it is easy to carry aluminum reusable water bottles, which are inexpensive.

Example of Rebuttal

Although students get thirsty amidst their busy schedules, the university could try harder to maintain drinking fountains in clean, working order, and students could carry water in reusable aluminum containers, reducing their need to buy bottled water.

Truth Seeking

Exploration
Exploratory
essay
examining
many sides of
an issue as writer
shares process of
reaching
understanding

Argument as
inquiry, asking
audience to
think out
issue with
writer

Dialogic
argument,
problem-solving,
negotiating,
seeking common
ground with
an opposed
audience

Classical
argument
aimed at neutral
or possibly skeptical
audience

The Argument Continuum: From Exploration to Problem-Solving
and Persuasion

Discussing and Writing

Analyzing an Argument's Structural Parts

The following argument presents a citizen's and consumer's perspective on the problem of sweatshop-made goods. The writer is addressing the issue questions, *Should we care whether our goods are made in sweatshops, and how can we reduce companies' use of sweatshops?* Sweatshops are highly exploitive factories with extremely long working hours and days, unsafe conditions, low and/or unreliable wages, and management control of workers. As you study this argument, you will see that the writer, Ed Finn, proposes that we change our buying habits for three main reasons.

Working individually or in groups, read the following example of a well-crafted argument and analyze it by identifying these parts of the argument:

1. the claim
2. the reasons
3. the assumptions behind the reasons
4. several pieces of evidence used to support each reason
5. the alternative/opposing views; and the writer's response to these views

This argument first appeared in June 2003 in the *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Monitor*, a progressive monthly journal focusing on social and economic justice. According to its Web site, this organization's motto is "Think again," and it seeks to inform people of alternatives "to the message that we have no choice about the policies that affect our lives." Ed Finn is the senior editor of this publication.

Persuasion

One-sided
argument
aimed at a
friendly
audience
(often for fund-
raising or calls
to action)

Aggressive
one-sided
arguments

Outright
propaganda

Harnessing Our Power as Consumers: Cost of Boycotting Sweatshop Goods Offset by the Benefits

Ed Finn

Being follicly challenged, I can't venture out in the noonday sun without a cap. So I went looking for one. My shopping foray took nearly two weeks. Not because headgear was hard to find in Ottawa, but because I wanted a cap made by workers who were fairly paid and well-treated—and that kind of headgear is hard to find.

Had I been content to buy a cap made in a sweatshop in China, Haiti, Malaysia, or some other Third World nation, it would have been easy. The stores were full of them. But I wanted a cap made preferably by a unionized worker in Canada, or, failing that, in another country with decent labour standards.

After visiting a score of clothing shops, I finally located such a cap. It was made in England. I had to pay nearly \$40 for it, four or five times more than a comparable cap from an Asian sweatshop would have cost. But the Brit beanie was far more comfortable and durable. It comes out of the washing machine looking as good as new. I bought it four years ago and it still shows no sign of wearing out. So, even from an economic standpoint, I didn't suffer for sticking to my "buy non-sweatshop" principles.

Most Canadians, sad to say, don't make any effort to find domestic apparel. Or they give up after visiting their third or fourth clothing store, where the racks are crammed with shirts, pants, sweaters and jackets sewn by underpaid and abused workers in Asia or Latin America.

Imported outfits do cost less. They appeal to anyone looking for the cheapest item and indifferent to how and where it was made. Even when reminded that millions of children under the age of 14—the

UN estimates they number at least 25 million—are being inhumanly exploited in Third World sweatshops, most Canadians find the lure of a “bargain” irresistible.

They should be more concerned—not just because they want to help mistreated workers overseas, but because they want to help themselves. The exploitation of cheap foreign labour is part of a vast global strategy designed ultimately to force wages down in Canada and other Western nations. This strategy is already well advanced. Freed from national restrictions by free trade, deregulation, and instant global communications systems, the transnational corporations can now relocate production to countries and regions where wages, taxes, and environmental laws are the lowest.

This corporate mobility has eroded the power of Canadian workers and their unions to protect their jobs, benefits, and working conditions.

As consumers, however, we are far from powerless. We can refuse to buy the products of child labour, prison labour, and sweatshop labour in the Third World. In the short term, this will unavoidably increase our living expenses, but in the long term it could save our jobs and prevent our wages from plummeting further.

The corporations are counting on us to keep our needs as consumers entirely separate from our needs as workers. And, unfortunately, up to now, most of us have done just that—in the process unthinkingly worsening our own financial security. The more sweatshop goods we buy, the more we reward the corporations for their downsizing here and their cheap labour strategy abroad. And—contrary to some right-wing pundits—we aren’t doing any favours to oppressed foreign workers, either. We are in effect perpetuating their serfdom.

Some politicians, business leaders and academics argue that, if we boycotted goods made by underpaid foreign workers, we would be depriving them of their livelihood, as meagre as it may be.

But this claim is as spurious today as it was in Victorian times, when it was advanced to rationalize the use of child labour. (“Take away these kids’ jobs and they’ll starve to death or turn to lives of crime.”)

The same flawed reasoning was trotted out by conservatives to oppose the economic boycott of the apartheid regime in South Africa. Had their arguments been heeded, that country would still be ruled by a brutal and racist government, and Nelson Mandela would still be in prison.

The leaders of opposition movements in developing nations ruled by dictators know that boycotts of sweatshop goods would temporarily add to their people’s woes. But they also know that, in the long run, such boycotts offer the best hope of toppling the dictators and thereby vastly improving their people’s lives.

One such leader is Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi, who heads the National League for Democracy in Burma. Like Mandela, she too was jailed by that country’s ruthless military rulers and still endures their harassment. She favours the same kind of economic sanctions that

finally got rid of apartheid in South Africa, even if they temporarily cause more hardship for Burma’s sweatshop workers.

“All profits from business enterprises in my country,” she said recently, “go to a small privileged elite. Companies that continue to invest here only serve to prolong the agony of my country and its people by encouraging the military regime to persevere in its atrocities.”

She could have said the same thing about consumers in Canada and other developed nations, who also prop up Burma’s dictatorship when they buy made-in-Burma merchandise.

It’s time for us to look at the labels of the goods we buy. If we stopped buying sweatshop products, we would accomplish three things: 1) we would be helping to slow down and eventually stop the export of jobs from Canada; 2) we would be helping the oppressed people in the Third World to throw off the yoke of military and corporate tyranny; and 3) we would be effectively challenging the corporations’ global low-wage strategy.

Granted, such a change in our shopping habits would involve some additional costs to us as consumers. But these costs would eventually be offset by the gains we would derive as workers—and the gains that would be made by brutally mistreated workers in the Third World.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

As you read in the introduction to this chapter, to analyze a piece of writing—a verbal or a visual text—rhetorically means to examine closely how the text is put together to create a specific effect. Although any text—a billboard, a course syllabus, a personal ad, a sermon, a travel brochure, a phone book—can be analyzed rhetorically, this section of the chapter will prepare you to analyze the arguments on global issues you will encounter in this book.

The Importance of Thinking and Reading Rhetorically

Before we look at how to read rhetorically, let’s consider two important principles about rhetoric.

1. **Language plays an important part in constructing reality.** Language presents visions of what is real and shapes how we see the world. Taking a rhetorical approach to reading and writing emphasizes the knowledge-making, constructive potential of language and argument. As rhetorician James Berlin explains, “truth is dynamic and dialectical” and “truth is always truth for someone standing in relation to others” in a context that is shaped by language.*

*James Berlin, “Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories,” *College English* 44, no. 8 (December 1982): 774.

2. **Every argument you read is actually a voice in a larger, ongoing public conversation.** No argument represents a complete answer or total view, and knowledge grows through these many contributions.

These two principles show that rhetoric is not decorative, static, or extraneous but part of our ongoing effort to make sense of the world. As contributions to larger conversations, arguments are moments of meaning-making in that effort. To take a rhetorical approach to arguments is to think about each argument as a part of an ongoing, situated conversation.

The rhetorical tools you will learn in this section will help you understand how arguments grow out of and contribute to these specific global conversations. These tools will help you evaluate the usefulness and value of these arguments for you and others. When rhetoricians talk about argument, they think, as rhetorician John T. Gage explains, in terms of "the sequence of moves which the writer has controlled for the purpose of leading the reader to assent." Rhetorical reading, then, becomes a useful process for you as a citizen, student, and later a professional, of determining when an argument is well constructed and when it deserves your "assent" because it has legitimately persuaded you. In addition, when reading and analyzing an argument, you will be able to determine when the writer is trying to solve a problem and when he or she is mostly selling his or her views, or even more, foisting them on you as if they were the only views possible.

In the next sections, you will learn how to apply your understanding of the structural parts of arguments and of some additional rhetorical principles to the analysis of arguments. For every argument you read, consider these key questions:

- How is this argument constructed to have certain effects on readers?
- For whom would this argument be persuasive? What values, beliefs, and assumptions would an audience have to hold to find it persuasive?
- Why is (or is not) this argument persuasive for you?

Becoming adept at answering these questions for the arguments you read will spur your growth as a reader and writer. The following sections explain the foundational rhetorical concepts to help you examine the arguments you read. The examples of these concepts draw on the variety of stakeholders, views, and arguments on the problem of illegal immigration in the United States.

Identifying the Writer and the Writer's Angle of Vision

When you read an argument, you need to consider who is arguing. Begin with the writer of the argument. Figure out the writer's identity and

*John T. Gage, "Freshman English: In Whose Service?" *College English* 44, no. 5 (September 1982): 472.

background. In every argument, the writer expresses an **angle of vision**, which is the lens of values through which he or she is interpreting the issue.

CONSIDERING THE WRITER'S IDENTITY AND ANGLE OF VISION

Rhetorical Concept and Working Definition	Example Using the Illegal Immigration Issue
Writer: Who is the writer or creator of the text? What is his or her background, profession? What knowledge or authority does he or she have?	Policymaker, immigration lawyer, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Jesuit priest, film celebrity, advocacy organization in favor of immigrant rights
Angle of vision: All arguments have an angle of vision. Angle of vision refers to the selective seeing of the writer; the writer's angle of vision determines how the argument is framed and what is emphasized and what is omitted. The writer's stance on the subject is influenced by his or her values, beliefs, background (family history, education, gender, religion, age, class), ethnicity, political leanings.* For every argument, we can ask, What is the writer's angle of vision, lens, filter, or perspective? How much does the angle of vision control or dominate the argument?	A Border Patrol agent "sees" illegal immigration differently from the way an economic analyst or the owner of a construction company sees it. A nativist organization wanting to restrict all immigration, especially illegal immigration, focuses on social problems such as crime rates and public costs and connects these to immigration. An environmental organization sees immigration through the lens of population growth and use of natural resources. For example, an environmental angle of vision might stress the damage to the desert plants and animals (including fires and garbage) caused by the many people illegally crossing the deserts on the border.

Often, as in this book, introductory material for each argument provides information about the writer of the argument and helps you determine the writer's angle of vision. The writer's angle of vision can be perceived in every choice the writer has made in the argument: from the claim to the reasons and evidence; the way this evidence is presented to look positive or negative; the points emphasized; the consideration of alternative views; and the fairness or extremism of the language. Some arguments will not let you forget for a minute what the writer thinks of the issue and will make a conscious effort to shape your views at every point. Others will sequence and frame the evidence but also maintain a less insistent and aggressive presence. If the angle of vision of a writer does not coincide with your own values and views, you may find it more difficult to listen to the argument and find yourself talking back to the writer.

*The Global Positioning Profile activity at the end of Chapter 1 asks you to explore your angle of vision.

Identifying the Rhetorical Context

Another key part of thinking rhetorically is realizing that texts grow out of and operate in social contexts; therefore, we need to approach arguments as voices in controversial conversations. Arguers are moved to write by **motivating occasions**; they may be responding to a specific public event, private circumstance, or experience. Identifying the motivating occasion—the event, occasion, problem, or condition that prompts the arguer to speak out—can help you understand the argument. Related to the motivating occasion is the timeliness of the argument, what rhetoricians call the *kairos* or “why now” of the argument. You should also try to determine the specific **purpose** of the argument. Is the writer trying to change people’s view of the issue, move them to action, or search for and work out an answer to a problem? Another part of the rhetorical context is the **audience** the writer has in mind, the people to whom he or she is directing the argument, sometimes called the target audience. Often, arguments have a primary and secondary audience, as in the genre of the open letter, which is written to a specific person although it will be read by a larger reading public. The audience—whether neutral, friendly, or antagonistic, uninformed or knowledgeable—influences the argument. Finally, the **genre** or type, kind, or category of argument also is related to the audience and purpose. Is this argument an editorial in a big city newspaper, a policy statement, a blog, an advocacy advertisement, a scholarly argument in a journal in a discipline, or is it a visual argument?

EXAMINING RHETORICAL CONTEXT

Rhetorical Concept and Working Definition

Example Using the Illegal Immigration Issue

Audience. Who are the intended readers? What does the writer know about these readers’ background knowledge, their interest in the subject, and their values, beliefs, and assumptions? Beyond the target audience, who might read this text?

Is the text directed toward a large, general audience of newspaper readers or toward scholars with years of background in the field? For example, does the audience already share the writer’s belief that a strong physical barrier at the border will not solve the illegal immigration problem?

Writer’s motivating occasion and purpose. What is the occasion or event (also called exigency), the external or internal cause, that compelled the author to write? What is the change the writer wants to bring about in the readers?

Is Congress voting on an immigration reform bill? Does the writer want to influence voters? What has the news reported on how many illegal immigrants have died recently crossing the border through the desert?

Kairos. *Kairos*, a term from classical rhetoric, refers to the “rightness” of the argument for the moment and the situation—its timeliness and appropriateness. What is the kairotic moment for the argument? Why is this argument being written now for this audience?

Luis Alberto Urrea wrote his book *The Devil’s Highway* after the incident of the Wellton 26, when fourteen “walkers” died hideous deaths trying to cross the border in the desert. He wanted to give readers a deeper understanding of the immigrants who risk their lives to enter the U.S. and of the Border Patrol whose job it is to intercept them.

Genre. Genre refers to the category/kind/form of the text (for example, news report, editorial, political cartoon, formal speech, and so forth). Genres have conventions (rules) that bring readers’ expectations and that are intended to have social effects. Genre determines length, formality, treatment of sources, style and document design. What is the genre of an argument?

Is this text an op-ed piece (short, provocative, urgent) in the local newspaper about deported immigrants? Or is it a policy proposal for a think tank (researched, thorough, supported by statistics and studies)? Is the genre personal or public, entertaining or motivational?

Examining the Use of Classical Appeals to *Logos*, *Ethos*, and *Pathos*

Some final basic concepts to consider when reading an argument are the arguer’s use of the classical appeals to *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*. The Greek philosopher Aristotle outlined the importance of these appeals to the rhetorical effectiveness of arguments.

- **Appeals to *logos*** refer to the logical structure, consistency, and development of an argument.
- **Appeals to *ethos*** refer to the ethical character of the writer that comes across in the argument. For the writer to convey an ethical, positive *ethos*, he or she must be fair to opposing views, be credible and knowledgeable, and use evidence in a reliable manner.
- **Appeals to *pathos*** refer to how the writer engages the emotions and imaginations of the audience by evoking sympathy and how the writer taps into the audience’s values. Writers can use case studies, extended examples, narratives, quotations, descriptions, figurative language, and images to make issues real and meaningful to the audience.

The role that these appeals play in particular arguments can vary enormously. For example, it is possible for an argument to be dominated by *logos* with few appeals to *pathos*, making the argument very intellectual, complex, or even dry or dull. Conversely, an argument can emphasize appeals

to *pathos* and have little logical substance, trying only to work the audience's emotions. An argument can rest on the authority and reputation of the writer, relying on appeals to *ethos*. It can gain persuasiveness through a writer's use of reliable evidence, or it can lose persuasiveness through a writer's unfair attack on opponents or use of scanty or unverifiable evidence.

The following chart summarizes the classical appeals and how they can be used to explore the effectiveness of an argument.

EXAMINING THE USE OF CLASSICAL APPEALS	
Rhetorical Concept and Working Definition	Example Using the Illegal Immigration Issue
Logos of the Argument (the logical appeal): What is the logical structure of the argument? What is the main claim? What reasons support this claim and how are they tailored to the audience? Is the evidence sufficient and accurate to make the claim and reasons persuasive? Are opposing views recognized and answered persuasively with counterreasoning?	A policy analyst at a research institute might argue that only a thorough overhauling of U.S. hiring and labor practices will address the illegal immigration problem. She might cite studies and statistics.
Appeal to Ethos (the ethical appeal): The writer's <i>ethos</i> is shown in how he or she presents himself or herself as knowledgeable about the subject, treats alternative views responsibly, and reaches out to the audience by grounding the argument in shared values and assumptions. Has the writer given signs of having listened to other views? How well does the writer gain the readers' trust? How authoritative, credible, and fair is the writer?	If the writer is arguing about changes in policies at the border, has he or she lived or worked in Arizona or Texas on the border? Has the writer researched problems with illegal immigrants and quoted and cited verifiable sources?
Appeal to Pathos (emotional, imaginative appeal): How does the writer appeal to readers' emotions, imaginations, beliefs, and values? Has the writer used audience-based reasons? How prominent and effective is the writer's use of specific, vivid language; narratives and illustrations; humor? How much has the writer humanized the argument?	In the book <i>The Devil's Highway</i> , Urrea devotes fifteen pages to describing in detail what it is like to die of hyperthermia. He uses the pronoun "you" throughout to put the reader in place of the illegal immigrant whose blood is boiling and skin melting in the desert. The reader cannot remain detached. This scientifically accurate, graphic description evokes intense compassion for the immigrants risking their lives in the desert.

A Consideration of Style

Style is an elusive quality that is often noticed by readers but is difficult to describe in words. It is related to the writer's *ethos* and closely related to genre, which often dictates features of the style. The style of an argument can be very formal or very casual and conversational; it can be very intellectual and discipline-specific (suited to one field such as psychology or economics), using terminology from the field; or it can be very readable and suited to a popular audience. The following chart shows additional points that help create and distinguish the style of a piece of writing.

Rhetorical Concept and Working Definition	Example Using the Illegal Immigration Issue
Style: Style refers to the level of formality of the writing, the complexity, the tone of the text (humorous, serious, mocking, ironic), and the use of language. It includes the length and complexity of sentence structure and the sophistication of the vocabulary. Style is closely related to genre because many genres dictate style: for example, the appealing readability of editorials in general circulation newspapers or the authoritative declarations of a policymaker in a white paper sketching out an organization's view of an issue.	Does the editorial writer attack opponents using colloquial language or use many Spanish words to convey the immigrants' culture? Is the policy statement packed with complicated statements in legal jargon, calling for a reform of the laws governing visas, or complex economic terms about remittances (the money immigrants send back to their communities and families in their countries of origin)?

Style can make an argument readable or tough going for readers. It can enhance the effectiveness of an argument, highlighting points in humorous, memorable, or powerful ways, or it can call attention to itself and distract readers.

Although you may not have time methodically to answer each of the questions about rhetorical features for each argument you read, the more attention you pay to these features, the more you will find yourself understanding the arguments and how they work. Furthermore, a sound rhetorical understanding of an argument will enable you to assess how much influence this argument should have over your own views—how much "assent" it merits. The following activity will give you an opportunity to practice what you have learned about the main features of arguments and rhetorical analysis.

Discussing and Writing

Conducting a Rhetorical Analysis

Working individually or in groups, return to the argument written by Ed Finn, "Harnessing Our Power as Consumers" on pages 29–31. Using the questions for rhetorical analysis in the charts on pages 33–37 take notes on how you think the writer's identity and angle of vision, the rhetorical context, argumentative strategies, and style are working in this text. Also, determine how well the appeals to *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* are working in this argument: How logical, well structured, and well supported is the argument? How ethical, responsible, and reliable is the writer? How does the writer appeal to readers' emotions and values? Sum up your rhetorical analysis by writing a paragraph explaining the appeal of this argument to its target audience. What specifically makes it persuasive? Then comment briefly on how persuasive this argument would be for other audiences.

WRITING A SUMMARY

You will find that writing summaries is a key part of writing both rhetorical analysis essays and arguments. In fact, summary writing is one of the most useful writing skills you can learn for academic and professional success. Many other academic and professional genres, such as papers to be presented at conferences and proposals for grants or projects, also draw on summary writing skills.

Using Summaries in Rhetorical Analyses

Before you can critique an argument to determine how well it is written and why it is persuasive for certain audiences, you need to have a sound understanding of the argument. This kind of understanding can be fostered through writing a summary of the argument. In writing a summary, you listen carefully to the argument, withholding your own views and judgments, simply trying to grasp what the argument is saying. In a rhetorical analysis essay, you can use your summary to ground readers in the argument, to build a base from which to launch your rhetorical critique. You usually include your summary, which can range from one or two sentences to a full paragraph, early in your essay to give readers a basic understanding of the argument so they will be able to follow and appreciate your analysis.

Using Summaries in Arguments

The process of summarizing and the summaries you produce also play a major role in writing arguments. Listening carefully and sympathetically to the arguments of others represents a critical step in entering argumentative

conversations. Your understanding of multiple perspectives should inform the claims and reasons that you develop in your own arguments. Often, you will summarize views you are applying or enlisting in support of your position. You will also summarize opposing views that you are conceding to or refuting. In addition, incorporating a fair and accurate summary of a text into your own argument helps establish your positive *ethos*.

How to Write a Summary

As you are learning to write summaries, you should follow a deliberate and methodical process. Later you may develop your own effective shortcuts. The following chart proposes steps and strategies to write a summary of an argument.

STRATEGIES FOR WRITING A SUMMARY

- Read the article you are summarizing at least two times.
- Either in your head or on paper, map out the shape or structure of the article by determining how each paragraph and section of the article functions.
 - How many paragraphs are introductory?
 - What is the thesis-claim—if it is stated?
 - Which paragraphs develop the writer's reasons?
 - Is there an alternative views section? Or are opposing points and objections woven throughout the article?
 - How many paragraphs make up the conclusion?
- Go back through the article, paragraph by paragraph or section by section, and translate the writer's ideas into your own words. Try to state in one sentence the main point of each section or paragraph.
- Take stock of the length of the summary you will be writing. Choose the drafting approach that works best for your needs.
 - To produce a summary of 200–350 words, draft your summary by combining your point statements from each paragraph. Once you have strung together these sentences, experiment with ways to combine and condense them into clear, concise, coherent statements.
 - For a one- to two-sentence summary, you can condense your paragraph summary down to the overall thesis-claim of the argument. Alternatively, you can try to identify, extract, and reformulate that main idea after achieving a good understanding of the article.

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- Begin your summary by identifying the writer, the title of the article, and your own statement of the writer's overall thesis-claim.
- In revising your summary, be sure you have used **attributive tags** (Finn argues ... , Finn asserts ... , According to Finn, ...) every few sentences to indicate that the ideas you are expressing belong to the writer, not to you.
- In revising your summary, check it for these features:
 - neutrality (you should keep your own views and judgments out of a summary)
 - fair and balanced coverage (your summary should be true to the importance of the ideas in the original article)
 - conciseness (you should use language economically—use the most direct, clear language with no wasted words)
 - coherence with smooth, logical movement from sentence to sentence
 - minimal or no quotations (quote only if you want to give the flavor of the article or if you can't do justice to the writer's ideas otherwise) and citation of page numbers using the documentation system your instructor specifies (Modern Language Association, American Psychological Association, or *Chicago Manual of Style*)

Test of a good summary: Would the writer of the article accept your summary as an accurate and fair abstract of his or her argument?

The following example is a summary of the article "The e-Waste Crisis." The annotations help identify the features of an effective summary.

Example of a Summary

First sentence identifies the article and author and states the main idea.

Attributive tag focuses on the author.

Attributive tag focuses on the author.

In the article "The e-Waste Crisis," Basel Action Network claims that the United States and Canada lead the world in the environmental destruction and social injustice caused by the dangerous dumping and exporting of toxic electronic waste. According to BAN, four billion pounds of e-waste, the largest single type of waste, were produced in 2005. Over 85% of it was burnt or deposited in landfill and 12% of what was recycled ended up in developing countries. The toxins in this waste endanger the environment and communities where it is dumped, the workers handling it, and even the rest of the world through polluted air, water, and food. BAN asserts that many complex factors are compounding the e-waste crisis. First, electronic gadgetry is made up of highly toxic substances

such as lead, mercury, and arsenic. This gadgetry, which rapidly goes out of date, is labor intensive to take apart to recycle parts, and the market for this equipment is growing, creating more e-waste. Second, lack of regulation also removes any incentive to recycle this waste and falsely labeled recycling hides the disposal methods. The biggest problem, according to BAN, is that the United States is the only developed country that did not ratify the 1989 Basel Convention, controlling trade of e-waste and prohibiting the exporting of hazardous waste from rich to developing countries. The Basel Action Network and the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition have documented on film the exporting of this waste to poorer countries in Southeast Asia and Africa where children and adults are exposed to dangerous toxins as they cheaply and primitively disassemble and burn this waste. BAN calls for legislation and a national system to confront this crisis. Finally, BAN argues that states, cities, U.S. prisons where the waste is often handled, poor countries around the world, and a few responsible companies, responding to the EPA's weak voluntary solutions, should not have to bear the brunt of the e-waste problem. (321 words)

Transitions help organize the summary.

Additional transitions and attributive tags keep the focus on the main points.

Concluding sentence wraps up the summary.

Example of a One-Sentence Summary

In its Web article "The e-Waste Crisis," Basel Action Network claims that the United States, which has refused to adopt global regulations, leads the world in the discarding of toxic electronic waste in municipal dumps and the exporting of this toxic waste to poorer countries, and consequently contributes substantially to environmental destruction and social injustice.

Discussing and Writing

Summarizing an Argument

Working individually or in groups, return to Ed Finn's argument "Harnessing Our Power as Consumers" on pages 29–31. Follow the steps and strategies for writing a summary explained in this section.

1. Write a 250–300 word summary.
2. Then write a one-sentence summary that captures the main claim of the article.
3. **Reflective Writing.** Write a short reflective paragraph discussing the challenges you faced writing these summaries. What was difficult? How did you solve any problems?

WRITING A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

This section discusses the main thinking and writing moves of a rhetorical analysis essay. Particularly, it explains how to find a focus and formulate a thesis statement for your essay. It concludes with an example of a student's rhetorical analysis, an essay by Lydia Wheeler analyzing the rhetorical effectiveness of an argument by Ha-Joon Chang (in Chapter 3, pages 100–104).

The Purpose and Audience of a Rhetorical Analysis

A rhetorical analysis is basically an interpretive argument, written for an audience who is assumed to be neutral or uninformed yet receptive, rather than hostile and antagonistic. Because a rhetorical analysis essay is an interpretation—your interpretation of someone else's argument—it has a persuasive purpose. Your main strategy is to make your interpretation persuasive by providing textual evidence and good discussions of all your points. Your goal is to make your audience see the argument you are analyzing your way. However, your essay may be as heavily analytical as it is persuasive.

Purpose. Your motivation and specific purpose for writing a rhetorical analysis may be described in one of several ways:

1. You may be writing as a student producing an academic essay critiquing an argument to show your understanding of the argument and how it works rhetorically.
2. You may be writing as a citizen or student trying to make sense of an argument as you develop your own views on the issue in preparation for joining the public conversation on the issue with your own argument.

Audience. The usual audience for a rhetorical analysis is other people who are seeking a deeper understanding of the argument and who want to know what it contributes to the public conversation on this controversy. Your audience might be other citizens and students who like yourself want to sort out the various public arguments to choose the most reasonable, informed view. Or occasionally, you may have a more specific audience in mind, such as a defined group of stakeholders (potential volunteers with refugees in the community, potential vegetarians, commuters who drive cars to campus, and so forth).

The Structure of a Rhetorical Analysis

In envisioning a structure for your rhetorical analysis, think of your essay as having these main parts:

- An **introduction** providing a brief context for the argument and perhaps for your analysis (a statement explaining your interest in the article and its timeliness and relevance for you and your audience)

- A **brief summary of the argument** to provide your readers with a foundation and basic understanding of the argument you are analyzing
- A **thesis statement** that indicates the focus of your analysis and perhaps maps out the points you will discuss
- A **well-developed main section** devoted to your analysis of the article and evaluation of the rhetorical strategies, perhaps considering the article's rhetorical context, purpose, and target audience
- A **brief conclusion** that wraps up your analysis and possibly comments on the significance of the article's argument

Analyzing the Argument

A rhetorical analysis essay should reflect your close examination of and deep thought about a piece of writing. Here are some strategies that will help you engage thoughtfully with an argument. Note how these strategies incorporate the summary writing strategies from the preceding section of this chapter.

STAGE 1: STRATEGIES FOR ANALYZING AN ARGUMENT

1. **Reach a thorough understanding of the article you are analyzing.** Familiarize yourself with the article and its argument by reading it several times.
2. **Follow the strategies for writing a summary on pages 39–40.** Map out the shape of the argument, identify its main points, and try to get inside the argument to grasp the writer's perspective. Write a summary of the argument, perhaps both a longer summary of 150–250 words and a short one-sentence summary.
3. **Examine the article's presentation of its argument.** Using your understanding of the main elements of an argument, ask yourself questions and jot down notes:
 - What is the question-at-issue? What is the writer's core argument? What reasons and evidence does the writer present?
 - Because all stakeholders are driven to present their views to change readers' perspectives, the question is not, Is this writer biased or passionate? (Of course, arguers are passionate!) Ask instead, Is this writer arguing rationally with evidence to support reasons or only ranting and name calling, skewing evidence? Is the writer aware of alternative views and fairly representing and refuting them?
 - How responsibly does the writer develop the *logos* of the argument and use appeals to *pathos*?

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4. **Examine your response to the construction or ideas of the argument by freewriting answers to these questions:**

- What features stand out as most important to the way this argument makes its appeals to readers?
- Where does your interest shift to a higher gear, or where do you disengage in frustration or disagreement?
- What will you remember about this argument? What leaves you thinking?

Now that you understand what argument the writer is making and have explored your response, you can dig deeper into its rhetorical construction.

Choosing a Focus for Your Rhetorical Analysis and Writing a Thesis Statement

Your goal at this point is to reach a thorough understanding of this article and to discover some independent perceptions that you can share with your readers. As you apply the rhetorical concepts and the questions presented in the charts in the section “A Brief Introduction to Rhetorical Analysis” (pages 31–38), try to refine your thinking about the argument you are analyzing and zero in on a focus. A typical focus for a rhetorical analysis essay is either (a) why and how an argument works for its target audience or (b) why and how the argument works for you or others who are not part of its target audience. Basically, *how* does this argument contribute to the public conversation on this issue?

STAGE 2: STRATEGIES FOR FOCUSING YOUR RHETORICAL ANALYSIS AND WRITING A THESIS STATEMENT

1. **Think about the rhetorical context of the argument:** the writer, the writer’s angle of vision, the motivating occasion and writer’s purpose, the *kairos* of the argument, and the target audience.
 - Analyze how rhetorically effective the argument is. Most writing on global issues in the public sphere has a civic component, appealing to readers as citizens, voters, or consumers. How is the argument working to persuade them?
 - Who are the stakeholders in this argument?
 - What values and assumptions would readers have to hold to be moved by this argument?

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- Think about how this argument fits in the larger public conversation on the issue. How is the writer framing the issue or articulating the problem? How does this argument intersect with other arguments you have read on the same issue?
2. **Think about your relationship to the target audience and the argument’s effectiveness for you.** If you are not part of the target audience (for instance, not a supporter of the advocacy group or not a regular reader of the news commentary journal where the argument appears), ask yourself questions like these:
 - What features of this argument make it a reliable, responsible view on this issue?
 - Where do the reasons, evidence, or argumentative strategies (for example, handling of alternative views) seem effective and persuasive to you?
 - What points need more development or verification?
 3. **Choose several important features of the article that you want to discuss in depth in your essay.** Identify points that grow out of your rhetorical thinking about the argument. These points should go beyond the obvious and should bring something fresh and insightful to your readers that will help them see this argument with new understanding. You may want to list your ideas and then look for ways to group them together around main points.
 4. **Write a thesis statement for your analysis.** Given that you cannot discuss every rhetorical feature of the argument, select main points from your notes and freewriting to be the focus for your analysis.
 - Which points do you think shed important light on the rhetorical effectiveness of the argument you are analyzing?
 - For your audience, which features of this article’s argument merit interpretation and discussion?

In your thesis statement, you may choose to map out two or more points that you will explore in your essay. You may need two sentences to present these points.

Here are some examples of thesis statements for a rhetorical analysis essay.

Three Sample Thesis Statements

1. Ed Finn’s editorial “Harnessing Our Power as Consumers” works beautifully to persuade an audience sympathetic to social justice issues by using Finn’s personal experience to build a positive *ethos* and by making points about historical labor struggles, boycotts, and the causal link between cheap products and overseas labor.

2. Ed Finn's editorial "Harnessing Our Power as Consumers" will not reach dissenting readers because he fails to acknowledge opposing views of sweatshops, relies heavily on his own experiences as a consumer, and does not address readers' real financial need for cheap products.
3. Although PETA's (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) YouTube video *Meet Your Meat* makes powerful verbal and visual appeals to *pathos*, the film fails to persuade meat eaters to change their ways because it distorts its evidence and disregards all other perspectives.

Drafting a Rhetorical Analysis

Once you have drafted a strong working thesis statement, you are ready to write a complete draft of your rhetorical analysis essay following the suggested structure on pages 42–43. The main writing moves that will make your rhetorical analysis essay persuasive as well as engaging are (1) setting up your points clearly and delivering on your readers' expectations by following through with lively explanations of them; and (2) using specific textual evidence, both examples and quotations, to give validity and credibility to your points.

An Example of a Rhetorical Analysis Essay

The following rhetorical analysis essay by student writer Lydia Wheeler examines an argument that is an excerpt from a book by Ha-Joon Chang, *Bad Samaritans: The Myth of Free Trade and the Secret History of Capitalism* (2008). The chapter excerpt that Lydia analyzes, "My Six-Year-Old Son Should Get a Job: Is Free Trade Always the Answer?" appears in Chapter 3 of this book, pages 100–104. Lydia's rhetorical analysis represents one of the most frequently assigned types of academic writing assignment. Notice how the title sets up her focus. Other features of Lydia's analysis are identified by annotations.



STUDENT VOICE: Ha-Joon Chang's Vital Discussion of Free Trade and Developing Nations: A Rhetorical Analysis by Lydia Wheeler

Since the highly controversial North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect in January 1994, the United States has signed into law eleven other free trade agreements (FTAs) and the massive South Korea–United States FTA (KORUS), which may go into effect in early 2012, could be the twelfth. In addition, the United States is currently in talks to create or join more than fifteen free

Writer addresses the *kairos* or timeliness of the issue.