

# GOOD REASONS

WITH CONTEMPORARY  
ARGUMENTS

LESTER FAIGLEY  
JACK SELZER  
SEVENTH EDITION



# Good Reasons with Contemporary Arguments

Seventh Edition

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*In memory of James L. Kinneavy (1920–1999)*

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# Preface

Nothing you learn in college will prove to be more important to you than the ability to create an effective argument.

As a student you are already aware that campus life is itself filled with arguments. There are hot-button public issues that engage the academic community—how to deal with binge drinking, for example, or make the university more environmentally sustainable, or improve campus housing or study-abroad opportunities. Meanwhile, in the classroom and in research programs, you and your peers will present arguments on current controversies such as climate change and economic policy as well as on scholarly topics such as the structure of the human brain, the cultural achievements of ancient Egypt, or the means of determining the material composition of the planet Mercury.

After college, you will continue to need to communicate effectively your ideas and points of view. Your livelihood and your successful engagement in the life of your community will depend on it. Sometimes, as a citizen, you will be moved to register your views on how to improve your local school system or enhance local development; or as a member of a neighborhood group or a civic organization, you will be suggesting ways of making a positive difference. And certainly in the workplace you will often be making arguments to support your recommendations and to refute the flawed recommendations of others.

## What This Book Offers You

For a number of years, we have studied arguments, taught students how to argue, and listened to others talk and write about the art of persuasion. Although there is no simple recipe for cooking up effective arguments (for changing people's

minds is not easy), we've discovered there are definite strategies and tactics that writers can rely on in any situation to ensure that their ideas are considered seriously. However, we also know that regardless of the value of its content, a text will be ineffective if it cannot present its ideas in a way that is engaging, easy to use, and comprehensive. It has been our aim to create such a text in *Good Reasons with Contemporary Arguments*.

**Lively, nontechnical language.** We've pointedly avoided technical jargon in order to explain concepts and techniques as clearly as possible. Explanations, examples, captions, and exercises are all written with the goal of keeping language straightforward and accessible.

**Emphasis on attractive design and visual arguments.** *Good Reasons with Contemporary Arguments* is notable for its attention to visual as well as verbal arguments. In addition, the book itself demonstrates the value of visual argument in its attractive design that is liberally illustrated with graphics, photos, and other visuals.

**Annotated student writing samples and numerous other examples.** In line with our philosophy of showing rather than telling, chapters covering types of arguments include annotated student essays as well as annotated professional essays illustrating six basic types of arguments: definition, causal, evaluation, narrative, rebuttal, and proposal arguments.

**Fresh, timely readings—including academic readings—on current issues.** These readings demonstrate how complex conversations develop around important issues of interest to students today. Readings span a wide range of material from canonical essays to contemporary journal articles. We've also taken care to select readings that give different points of view on an issue.

## New to This Edition

- **New emphasis on inquiry as an important aspect of argument throughout Parts 1–3**
- **More than 40 new professional readings in Part 6**, including new selections by Bill McKibben, Hanna Rosin, Elizabeth Royte, Nicholas Carr, Clay Shirky, Maria Konnikova, George Will, and many others
- **New Chapter 23, “City Life,”** with readings that discuss green spaces in cities, smart cities, walkable cities, the urban farming movement, and how cities can be designed to better accommodate the diverse people who live in them
- **Deeply revised Chapter 26, “Regulating Bodies, Regulating Substances”** with selections that explore topics as diverse as the use of laptops in classrooms, legalizing marijuana, smoking, and drinking on college campuses
- **Deeply revised Chapter 27, now called “Brave New Gadgets,”** with readings that raise questions about the ways that technology is shaping our culture, invading our privacy, and making us both smarter and dumber
- **A new “Issue in Focus” case study about sustainability on college campuses in Chapter 22, “Sustainability”**
- **A new “Issue in Focus” case study about how students learn in Chapter 24, “Education,”** that debates the best practices for teaching college students
- **A new student sample analysis in Chapter 7** demonstrates how to analyze visual and multimedia arguments
- **New professional readings in Chapter 10, “Evaluation Arguments,” Chapter 11, “Narrative Arguments,” Chapter 12, “Rebuttal Arguments,” and Chapter 13, “Proposal Arguments”**
- **Updated MLA coverage in Chapter 20** reflects the new guidelines in the *MLA Handbook*,

*Eighth Edition*, including how to cite social media and various online-only sources

- **New projects at the end of the chapters in Part 3** offer opportunities for students to practice each argument strategy and develop persuasive essays and multimedia texts of their own
- **New coverage of audio media in Chapter 14, “Designing Multimedia Arguments”**

## Resources for Teachers and Students

### INSTRUCTOR’S MANUAL

The **Instructor’s Manual** that accompanies this text was revised by, and is designed to be useful for, new and experienced instructors alike. The Instructor’s Manual briefly discusses the ins and outs of teaching the material in each text chapter. Also provided are in-class exercises, homework assignments, discussion questions for each reading selection, and model paper assignments and syllabi.

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We are privileged to work once again with Lynn Haddon, our senior development editor, who has collaborated with us from the third edition onward. She has contributed many great ideas while coordinating the work of four authors and paying close attention to the details of bringing the book to fruition. She is the best. We also thank those at Ohlinger Publishing Services, who have guided the book through production, and Brad Potthoff, many of whose suggestions are reflected throughout the book. Michael McGranaghan at SPi Global did a splendid job in preparing our book for publication.

Finally, we thank our families, who make it all possible.

*Lester Faigley*

*Jack Selzer*

*Jessica Enoch*

*Scott Wible*

## Part 1

# READING AND DISCOVERING ARGUMENTS

### Chapter 1

Making an Effective  
Argument

### Chapter 2

Reading Arguments

### Chapter 3

Finding Arguments

### Chapter 4

Drafting Arguments

### Chapter 5

Revising and Editing  
Arguments

(Lester Faigley)



# Chapter 1

# Making an Effective Argument



## Quick Take

*In this chapter, you will learn to*

- 1.1** Recognize how written arguments differ from other writing
- 1.2** Identify the expectations for written arguments in college
- 1.3** Explain the role of inquiry in argument
- 1.4** Distinguish arguments as turns in an ongoing conversation
- 1.5** Describe how to make a credible argument



Bumper stickers frequently have divisive slogans. An exception is “Coexist,” spelled with the symbols of various religious and political movements.

## What Exactly Is an Argument?

### **1.1** Recognize how written arguments differ from other writing.

On the road, every day, we see bumper stickers like the one that opens this chapter. While this bumper sticker asks passersby to “Coexist,” others call audiences to “Be Green” or “Share the Road.” These short statements and even one-word appeals assume that audiences will be able to make sense of them and respond to them. But because they provide no supporting evidence or reasons for why anyone should do what they say, they also raise the question of how these goals

might be realized. How might we achieve peace and equality in a world where cultural and religious difference often drives fear and hate? What does it mean to “be green”? What rights should bikers have to the road? The people who put these bumper stickers on their cars are not taking up these more complicated questions. They are making an argument, but they are relying on readers to supply the reasons that support their argument. In other words, they assume the reasons that support these statements are self-evident and that everyone thinks the same way. They are counting on certain words and phrases to produce predictable responses.

In college courses, in public life, and in professional careers, however, written arguments cannot be reduced to signs or slogans. Writers of effective arguments do not assume that everyone thinks the same way or holds the same beliefs. They attempt to change people’s minds and influence their actions by convincing them of the validity of new ideas or the superiority of a particular course of action. Writers of such arguments not only offer evidence and reasons to support their position but also examine the assumptions on which an argument is based, address opposing arguments, and anticipate their readers’ objections.

Extended written arguments make more demands on their readers than most other kinds of writing. Like bumper stickers, these arguments often appeal to our emotions. But they typically do much more.

- They expand our knowledge with the depth of their analysis.
- They lead us through a complex set of claims by providing networks of logical relationships and appropriate evidence.
- They build on what has been written previously by providing trails of sources.

Finally, they cause us to reflect on what we read, in a process that we describe shortly as critical reading.

## Writing Arguments in College

### 1.2 Identify the expectations for written arguments in college.

Writing in college varies considerably from course to course. A lab report for a biology course looks quite different from a paper in your English class, just as a classroom observation in an education course differs from a case study report in an accounting class.

Nevertheless, much of the writing you will do in college will consist of arguments. Some common expectations about arguments in college writing extend across disciplines. For example, you could be assigned to write a proposal for a downtown light-rail system in a number of different classes—civil engineering, urban planning, government, or management. The emphasis of such a proposal would change depending on the course. In all cases, however, the proposal would require a complex argument in which you describe the problem that the light-rail system would solve, make a specific proposal that addresses the problem,

explain the benefits of the system, estimate the cost, identify funding sources, assess alternatives to your plan, and anticipate possible opposition. That's a lot to think about.

Setting out a specific proposal or claim supported by reasons and evidence is at the heart of most college writing, no matter what the course. Some expectations of arguments (such as including a thesis statement) may be familiar to you, but others (such as the emphasis on finding alternative ways of thinking about a subject and finding facts that might run counter to your conclusions) may be unfamiliar.

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**WRITTEN ARGUMENTS . . . WRITERS ARE EXPECTED TO . . .**

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<b>State explicit claims</b>	Make a claim that isn't obvious. The main claim is often called a <b>thesis</b> .
<b>Support claims with reasons</b>	Express reasons in a <b>because clause</b> after the claim (We should do something <i>because</i> _____).
<b>Base reasons on evidence</b>	Provide evidence for reasons in the form of facts, statistics, testimony from reliable sources, and direct observations.
<b>Consider opposing positions</b>	Help readers understand why there are disagreements about issues by accurately representing differing views.
<b>Analyze with insight</b>	Provide in-depth analysis of what they read and view. (see Chapters 6 and 7)
<b>Investigate complexity</b>	Explore the complexity of a subject by asking "Have you thought about this?" or "What if you discard the usual way of thinking about a subject and take the opposite point of view?" )
<b>Organize information clearly</b>	Make the main ideas evident to readers and to indicate which parts are subordinate to others. (see pages 45–47)
<b>Signal relationships of parts</b>	Indicate logical relationships clearly so that readers can follow an argument without getting lost.
<b>Document sources carefully</b>	Provide the sources of information so that readers can consult the same sources the writer used. (see Chapters 20 and 21)

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# What Does Inquiry Have to Do with Argument?

## 1.3 Explain the role of inquiry in argument.

Many times when confronted with an issue or a topic, you're not ready to formulate an argument. You might not yet know much about that issue. Your thinking on the topic might only come from your experience, or the arguments and perspectives you're familiar with might all come from one "side" of the debate. Effective and strong arguments are made when writers reflect on what they know, what they don't know, and what they need to find out. Asking good questions about the topic allows writers to think critically about an issue and arrive at persuasive arguments supported by good reasons.

This practice of asking and pursuing answers to questions about an issue is called inquiry, and inquiry is a critical part of the argument process. Before you set out a thesis and construct an argument, you want to pause and ask some important questions about the topic. These questions should range from your familiarity with the issue to ways to explore the issue with depth and complexity. There are several types of inquiry that can help you to begin building effective arguments.

### Questions About Personal Knowledge and Experience

- What do I know about this issue already?
- How did I come to this knowledge?
- What experiences do I have with this issue?
- How might these experiences shape my understanding of this issue?
- How do others experience this issue?
- What positions might they hold and why?
- What is my initial position on the issue, and why am I taking this position?

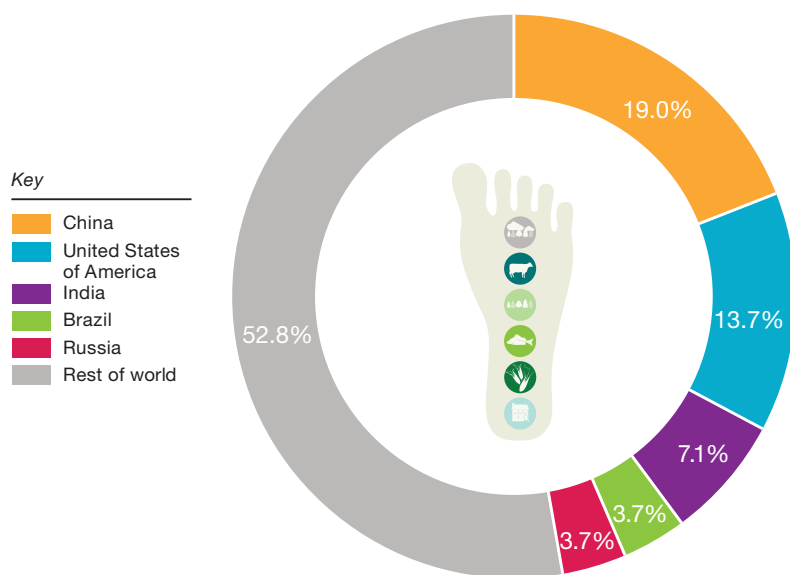
### Questions About the Issue

- How do people define this issue? What is the problem?
- How do people evaluate this issue?
- What do people see as good, bad, effective, ineffective, right, or wrong?
- What are the causes of the problem?
- What are the consequences of the problem?
- Whom does the problem affect, and how?
- What possibilities are there for change?
- What are possible solutions to the problem?
- Who would these changes affect, and how?
- What is the feasibility of this solution?

### Questions to Guide Additional Research About the Issue

- What do I need to learn about this issue?
- What research might I do about this issue?
- Where might I find information?
- Who might I talk with about this issue?

## Finding Good Reasons Visualizing the Ecological Footprint of Nations



**SOURCE:** WWF. 2014. Living Planet Report. WWF International, Gland, Switzerland.

In the *Living Planet Report* for 2014, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) studied the “ecological footprint” of countries around the world. Researchers calculate a country’s ecological footprint by measuring its population; the amount of food, timber, and other resources consumed by its average citizen; the area required to produce food; fishing grounds; and the area required to absorb CO<sub>2</sub> emissions minus the amount absorbed by oceans. In short, a country’s ecological footprint compares how many resources it consumes to how many resources it produces. The more resources that a country consumes in relation

to how many resources it produces, the larger its ecological footprint will be.

According to these calculations, five countries—China, the United States, India, Brazil, and Russia—make nearly half of the world’s ecological footprint, and just two of these countries, China and the United States, contribute to over 32 percent of this ecological footprint. This graphic specifically and the WWF’s *Living Planet Report* in its entirety, then, makes the argument that every nation—and in particular, these five nations—should live in balance with what their land, rivers, lakes, and seas can support.

## Write about it

1. What might be some of the causes for these five countries' larger ecological footprints?
2. What is likely to happen in the future if a small number of nations continues to demand a significant percentage of the world's resources?
3. Does the chart succeed as an argument on its own? Does it contain any of the features of written arguments?

## How can you argue responsibly?

As you move through this process of inquiry, you'll likely start to formulate your own position on the issue and craft an argument about it. As you begin to do so, you will want to make sure you are arguing responsibly. To understand what it means to argue responsibly, consider this situation: In Washington, D.C., cars with diplomatic license plates are often parked illegally. Their drivers know they will not be towed or ticketed. People who abuse the diplomatic privilege are announcing, "I'm not playing by the rules."

When you begin an argument by saying "in my opinion," you are making a similar announcement. First, the phrase is redundant. A reader assumes that if you make a claim in writing, you believe that claim. More important, a claim is rarely *only* your opinion. Most beliefs and assumptions are shared by many people. If a claim truly is only your opinion, it can be easily dismissed. If your position is likely to be held by at least a few other people, however, then a responsible reader must consider your position seriously. You argue responsibly when you set out the reasons for making a claim and offer facts to support those reasons. You argue responsibly when you allow readers to examine your evidence by documenting the sources you have consulted. Finally, you argue responsibly when you acknowledge that other people may have positions different from yours.

## How can you argue respectfully?

Our culture is competitive, and our goal often is to win. Professional athletes, top trial lawyers, or candidates for president of the United States either win big or lose. But most of us live in a world in which our opponents don't go away when the game is over.

Most of us have to deal with people who disagree with us at times but continue to work and live in our communities. The idea of winning in such situations can only be temporary. Soon enough, we will need the support of those who were on the other side of the most recent issue. You can probably think of times when a friendly argument resulted in a better understanding of everyone's views. And probably you can think of a time when an argument created hard feelings that lasted for years.

Usually, listeners and readers are more willing to consider your argument seriously if you cast yourself as a respectful partner rather than as a competitor.



The questions you ask as you're exploring possibilities for your argument should position you to think not only about the positions others might hold, but *why* they hold those positions. You want to speak with those people and consider those positions respectfully. Put forth your arguments in the spirit of mutual support and negotiation—in the interest of finding the *best* way, not “my way.” How can you be the person that your reader will want to join rather than resist? Here are a few suggestions both for your written arguments and for discussing controversial issues.

- **Try to think of yourself as engaged not so much in winning over your audience as in courting your audience's cooperation.** Argue vigorously, but not so vigorously that opposing views are vanquished or silenced. Remember that your goal is to invite a response that creates a dialogue and continuing partnership.
- **Show that you understand and genuinely respect your listener's or reader's position even if you think the position is ultimately wrong.** Remember to argue against opponents' positions, not against the opponents themselves. Arguing respectfully often means representing an opponent's position in terms that he or she would accept. Look for ground that you already share with your opponent, and search for even more. See yourself as a mediator. Consider that neither you nor the other person has arrived at a best solution. Then carry on in the hope that dialogue will lead to an even better course of action than the one you now recommend. Expect and assume the best of your listener or your reader, and deliver your best.
- **Cultivate a sense of humor and a distinctive voice.** Many textbooks about argument emphasize using a reasonable voice. But a reasonable voice doesn't have to be a dull one. Humor is a legitimate tool of argument. Although playing an issue strictly for laughs risks not being taken seriously, nothing creates a sense of goodwill quite as much as tasteful humor. A sense of humor can be especially welcome when the stakes are high, sides have been chosen, and tempers are flaring.

## Arguments as Turns in a Conversation

### 1.4 Distinguish arguments as turns in an ongoing conversation.

Consider your argument as just one move in a larger process that might end up helping you. Most times we argue because we think we have something to offer. In the process of researching what has been said and written on a particular issue, however, often your own view is expanded and you find an opportunity to add your voice to the ongoing conversation.

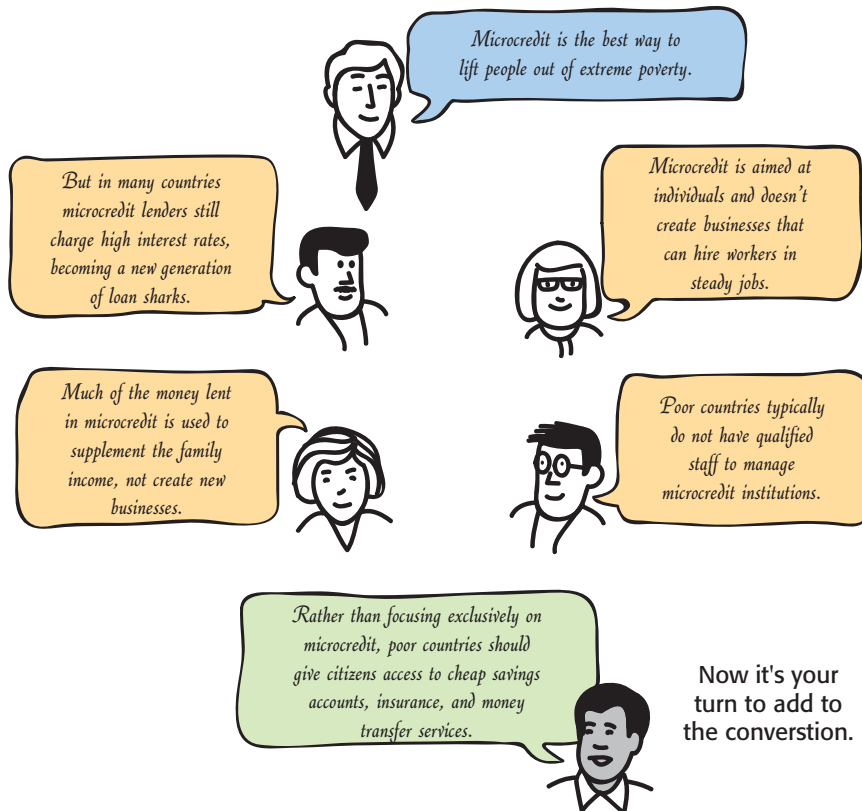
## A Case Study

### The Microcredit Debate

World Bank researchers reported in 2009 that 1.4 billion people—over 20 percent of the then 6.7 billion people on Earth—live below the extreme poverty line of \$1.25 a day, with 6 million children starving to death every year. One cause of continuing extreme poverty is the inability of poor people to borrow money because they have no cash income or assets. Banks have seldom made loans to very poor people, who have had to turn to moneylenders that charge high interest rates, sometimes exceeding 100 percent a month.

In 1976, Muhammad Yunus observed that poor women in Bangladesh who made bamboo furniture could not profit from their labor because they had to borrow money at high interest rates to buy bamboo. Yunus loaned \$27 to 42 women out of his pocket. They repaid him at an interest rate of 2 cents per loan. The success of the experiment eventually led to Yunus securing a loan from the government to create a bank to make loans to poor people. The Grameen Bank (Village Bank) became a model for other microfinancing projects in Bangladesh, serving 7 million people, 94 percent of whom are women. For his work with the Grameen initiative, Yunus received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006.

Microcredit now has many supporters, including Hollywood stars such as Natalie Portman and Michael Douglas, companies like Benetton and Sam's Club, and former President Bill Clinton. But the success in Bangladesh has not been replicated in many other poor countries. Many critics point to the shortcomings of microcredit. This debate can be better understood if you consider the different points of view on microcredit to be different voices in a conversation.



The conversation about microcredit has led others to put new ideas on the table.

*(continued)*