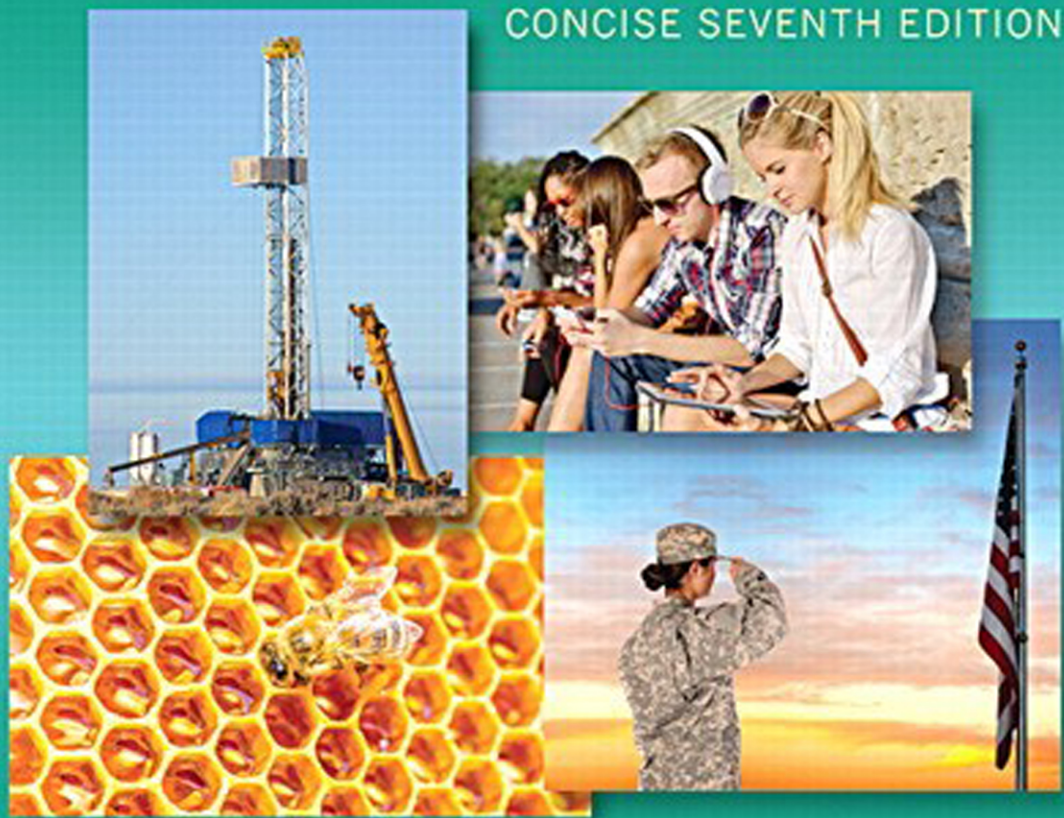


Writing Arguments

A RHETORIC WITH READINGS

CONCISE SEVENTH EDITION



John D. Ramage John C. Bean June Johnson

Writing Arguments

A Rhetoric with Readings

CONCISE EDITION

Seventh Edition

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Preface

Through many editions, *Writing Arguments* has established itself as a leading college textbook in argumentation. By focusing on argument as dialogue in search of solutions to problems instead of as pro-con debate with winners and losers, *Writing Arguments* treats argument as a process of inquiry as well as a means of persuasion. Users and reviewers have consistently praised the book for teaching the critical thinking skills needed for *writing* arguments: how to analyze the occasion for an argument; how to ground an argument in the values and beliefs of the targeted audience; how to develop and elaborate an argument; and how to respond sensitively to objections and alternative views. We are pleased that in this seventh concise edition, we have made many improvements while retaining the text's signature strengths.

What's New in the Seventh Edition?

- **An updated, revised, and streamlined Chapter 2 on “Argument as Inquiry,” exploring the “living wage” controversy.** Chapter 2 now has all new student examples, visual arguments, and professional readings on the timely issue of raising the minimum wage for fast-food workers or retail store clerks. A new annotated student exploratory essay models the process of rhetorical reading and dialogic thinking.
- **Six new student model essays, many of which are annotated.** New student model arguments, including newly annotated models, help demonstrate argument strategies in practice. Showing how other students have developed various types of arguments makes argument concepts and strategies easier for students to grasp and use themselves. New student essays address timely and relevant issues such as raising the minimum wage, analyzing the ethics of downloading films from person-to-person torrent sites on the Web, critiquing a school culture that makes minorities “invisible,” opposing women in combat roles, and evaluating the effect of social media on today's college students.
- **Expanded treatment of evidence.** A revised and expanded Chapter 5 explains with greater clarity the kinds of evidence that can be used in argument and shows students how to analyze evidence rhetorically. A new section shows students how to evaluate evidence encountered in secondary sources by tracing it back to its primary sources.
- **Expanded treatment of Rogerian communication and other means of engaging alternative views.** In Chapter 7, we expand our treatment of Rogerian argument by reframing it as Rogerian communication, which focuses more on mutual listening, negotiation, and growth than on persuasion. In addition, a new annotated student essay illustrates how a classical argument appealing to a neutral, undecided, or mildly resistant audience addresses alternative views.
- **Four new professional readings.** New readings about issues such as a living wage, the use of dietary supplements among athletes, and therapeutic cloning have been chosen for their illustrative power and student interest.
- **New visual examples throughout the text.** New images, editorial cartoons, and graphics throughout the text highlight current issues such as living wage, climate

change, bullying, sexual trafficking, date rape, rainwater conservation, fracking, and gender or racial stereotypes.

- **Streamlined organization of each chapter now keyed to learning outcomes.** Each chapter now begins with learning outcomes. Each main heading in a chapter is linked to an outcome, enhancing the explanatory power of the outcomes and helping students learn the high-level take-away points and concepts in each chapter.

What Hasn't Changed? The Distinguishing Features of Writing Arguments

Building on earlier success, we have preserved the signature features of earlier editions praised by students, instructors, and reviewers:

- **Integration of four different approaches to argument.** This text uses:
 - **The enthymeme as a rhetorical and logical structure.** This concept, especially useful for beginning writers, helps students “nutshell” an argument as a claim with one or more supporting *because* clauses. It also helps them see how real-world arguments are rooted in assumptions granted by the audience rather than in universal and unchanging principles.
 - **The three classical types of appeal—*logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*.** These concepts help students place their arguments in a rhetorical context focusing on audience-based appeals; they also help students create an effective voice and style.
 - **Toulmin’s system of analyzing arguments.** Toulmin’s system helps students see the complete, implicit structure that underlies an enthymeme and develop appropriate grounds and backing to support an argument’s reasons and warrants. It also highlights the rhetorical, social, and dialectical nature of argument.
 - **Stasis theory concerning types of claims.** This approach stresses the heuristic value of learning different patterns of support for different types of claims and often leads students to make surprisingly rich and full arguments.
- **Focus throughout on writing arguments.** Grounded in composition theory, this text combines explanations of argument with exploratory writing activities, sequenced writing assignments, and class-tested discussion tasks with the aim of helping students produce their own strong arguments. The text emphasizes the critical thinking that underlies effective arguments, particularly the skills of critical reading, of active questioning and listening, of believing and doubting, of negotiating ambiguity and seeking synthesis, and of developing effective reasons and evidence to support claims.
- **Emphasis on argument as a rhetorical act.** Analyzing the audience, understanding the real-world occasions for argument, appreciating the context and genre of arguments, and tying arguments to the audience’s beliefs and values are all treated as equally important rhetorical considerations.
- **Generous treatment of the research process.** Appendix 2 covers a variety of research skills, including reading and evaluating sources rhetorically, taking notes, integrating source material, avoiding plagiarism and patch writing, and citing sources using two academic citation systems: MLA and APA.
- **Well-sequenced writing assignments.** The text provides a variety of sequenced writing assignments that include an argument summary, a researched exploratory

essay, a “supporting-reasons” argument, a classical argument, a delayed-thesis argument or Rogerian letter, a rhetorical analysis of a written argument, a rhetorical analysis of a visual argument (an advocacy ad or poster), a definition argument, a causal argument, an evaluation or ethical argument, a proposal argument, and a speech with PowerPoint slides.

- **“For Class Discussion” exercises and “Examining Visual Arguments” exercises.** These class-tested informal activities, which teach critical thinking and build argumentative skills, are designed to produce active class discussion and debate. All “For Class Discussion” exercises can be used either for whole-class discussions or for collaborative group tasks.

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The Pearson eText app is a great companion to Pearson’s eText browser-based book reader. It allows existing subscribers who view their Pearson eText titles on a Mac or PC to additionally access their titles in a bookshelf on the iPad or an Android tablet either online or via download.

Instructor’s Manual, Tenth Edition

The Instructor’s Manual, tenth edition, includes suggestions for designing an argument course, sequencing writing assignments, and teaching each chapter, as well as sample syllabi and an introduction to Toulmin.

Acknowledgments

We are happy for this opportunity to give public thanks to the scholars, teachers, and students who have influenced our approach to composition and argument.

We are particularly grateful to our talented students—Trudie Makens, Lauren Shinozuka, Alex Mullen, Lorena Mendoza-Flores, and Ivan Snook—who contributed to this edition their timely arguments built from their intellectual curiosity, ideas, personal experiences, and research. We also thank Janie Bube for her environmental advocacy poster and Trey Tice for his film criticism. Additionally, we are grateful to all our students whom we have been privileged to teach in our writing classes. Their insights and growth as writers have inspired our ongoing study of rhetoric and argumentation.

We thank, too, the many users of our texts who have given us encouragement about our successes and offered helpful suggestions for improvements. Particularly we thank the following scholars and teachers who reviewed this revision of *Writing Arguments* in its various stages: Alicia Alexander, Cape Fear Community College; Elijah Coleman, Washington State University; Shannon Collins, Owensboro Community and Technical College; Veronda Hutchinson, Johnston Community College; A. Abby Knoblauch, Kansas State University; Beth Lewis, Moberly Area Community College; Layne Neeper, Morehead State University; Jessie Nixon, University of Alaska Anchorage; Thomas Riddle, Guilford Technical Community College; Dixie A. Shaw-Tillmon, The University of Texas San Antonio; Janice R. Showler, Holy Family University; Coreen Wees, Iowa Western Community College; and Stephen H. Wells, Community College of Allegheny County.

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John C. Bean

June Johnson

PART ONE

Overview of Argument

- 1 Argument: An Introduction
- 2 Argument as Inquiry: Reading and Exploring



Across the country, protests like this one in front of a Burger King in Boston are raising awareness of the poverty-level wages of fast-food workers, who are not represented by unions and who often depend on public assistance such as food stamps to get by every month. While protestors argue for a minimum wage of \$15 per hour, opponents argue that raising the minimum wage would increase food prices and reduce the number of jobs. If you were making a brochure or poster in favor of an increased minimum wage for fast-food workers, how effective would this realistic, low-keyed photo be in raising sympathy for the cause? Chapters 2 and 7 explore the issue of a living wage for unskilled workers.

Argument: An Introduction

1

What you will learn in this chapter:

- 1.1 To explain common misconceptions about the meaning of argument
- 1.2 To describe defining features of argument
- 1.3 To understand the relationship of argument to the problem of truth

At the outset of a book on argument, you might expect us to provide a simple definition of argument. Instead, we're going to explain why no universally accepted definition is possible. Over the centuries, philosophers and rhetoricians have disagreed about both the meaning of the term and about the goals that arguers should set for themselves. This opening chapter introduces you to some of these controversies.

We begin by showing some common misconceptions about argument while also explaining how arguments can be either implicit or explicit. We then discuss three defining features of argument: It requires writers or speakers to justify their claims, it is both a product and a process, and it combines elements of truth seeking and persuasion. Finally, we explore more deeply the relationship between truth seeking and persuasion by asking questions about the nature of "truth" that arguments seek.

What Do We Mean by Argument?

1.1 To explain common misconceptions about the meaning of argument

Let's begin by examining the inadequacies of two popular images of argument—fight and debate.

Argument Is Not a Fight or a Quarrel

The word *argument* often connotes anger, as when we say, "I just got in a huge argument with my roommate!" We may picture heated disagreements, rising pulse rates, and slamming doors. We may conjure up images of shouting talk-show guests or flaming bloggers.

But to our way of thinking, argument doesn't necessarily imply anger. In fact, arguing is often pleasurable. It is a creative and productive activity that engages us at high levels of inquiry and critical thinking, often in

conversation with people we like and respect. For your primary image of argument, we invite you to think not of a shouting match on cable news but of a small group of reasonable people seeking the best solution to a problem. We will return to this image throughout the chapter.

Argument Is Not Pro-Con Debate

Another popular conception of argument is debate—a presidential debate, perhaps, or a high school or college debate tournament. According to one popular dictionary, *debate* is “a formal contest of argumentation in which two opposing teams defend and attack a given proposition.” Although formal debates can develop our critical thinking powers, they stress winning and losing, often to the detriment of cooperative inquiry.

To illustrate the limitations of debate, consider one of our former students, a champion high school debater who spent his senior year debating prison reform. Throughout the year he argued for and against such propositions as “The United States should build more prisons” and “We must find innovative alternatives to prison.” One day we asked him, “What do you personally think is the best way to reform prisons?” He replied, “I don’t know. I’ve never thought about what I would actually choose.”

Here was a bright, articulate student who had studied prisons extensively for a year. Yet nothing in the atmosphere of pro-con debate had engaged him in truth-seeking inquiry. He could argue for and against a proposition, but he hadn’t experienced the wrenching process of clarifying his own values and taking a personal stand. As we explain throughout this text, argument entails a desire for truth; it aims to find the best solutions to complex problems. We don’t mean that arguers don’t passionately support their own points of view or expose weaknesses in views they find faulty. Instead, we mean that their goal isn’t to win a game but to find and promote the best belief or course of action.

Arguments Can Be Explicit or Implicit

Before proceeding to some defining features of argument, we should also note that arguments can be either explicit or implicit. An explicit argument directly states its controversial claim and supports it with reasons and evidence. An implicit argument, in contrast, may not look like an argument at all. It may be a bumper sticker, a billboard, a poster, a photograph, a cartoon, a vanity license plate, a slogan on a T-shirt, an advertisement, a poem, or a song lyric. But like an explicit argument, it persuades its audience toward a certain point of view.

Consider the striking photograph in Figure 1.1—a baby wearing a bib labeled “POISON.” This photograph enters a conversation about the safety of toys and other baby products sold in the United States, prompted in part by the discovery that a substance used to make plastics pliable and soft—*phthalates* (pronounced “thalates”)—may be harmful. Phthalates have been shown to interfere with hormone production in rat fetuses and, based on other rodent studies, may produce cancers and other ailments.



FIGURE 1.1 Baby and bib

Because many baby products contain phthalates—bibs, edges of cribs, rubber duckies, and other soft rubbery toys—parents worry that babies can ingest phthalates by chewing on these items.

The photograph of the baby and bib makes the argumentative claim that baby products are poisonous; the photograph implicitly urges viewers to take action against phthalates. But a skilled arguer would recognize that this photograph is just one voice in a surprisingly complex conversation. Is the bib in fact poisonous? An examination of explicit arguments about phthalates—that is, verbal arguments with stated reasons and evidence—reveals a number of disputed questions about the risk posed by phthalates. To what extent do studies on rats apply to humans? How much exposure to phthalates should be considered dangerous? (Experiments on rats used large amounts of phthalates—amounts that, according to many scientists, far exceed anything a baby could absorb by chewing on a toy.) Also at issue is the level of health risks a free market society should be willing to tolerate. A U.S. agency generally doesn't ban

a substance unless it has been *proven* harmful to humans, not merely suspected of being harmful. In defense of free markets, the toy and chemical industries accused opponents of phthalates of using “junk science” to produce scary—but inaccurate—data.

Our point in summarizing the toxic toy controversy is to demonstrate the persuasive roles of both implicit and explicit arguments in resolving civic disputes.

The Defining Features of Argument

1.2 To describe defining features of argument

We turn now to examine arguments in more detail. (Unless we say otherwise, by *argument* we mean explicit arguments that attempt to supply reasons and evidence to support their claims.) This section examines three defining features of such arguments.

Argument Requires Justification of Its Claims

To begin defining argument, let's turn to a humble but universal site of disagreement: the conflict between a parent and a teenager over rules. In what way and in what circumstances do such conflicts constitute arguments?

Consider the following dialogue:

YOUNG PERSON (*racing for the front door while putting coat on*): Bye. See you later.

PARENT: Whoa! What time are you planning on coming home?

YOUNG PERSON (*coolly, hand still on doorknob*): I'm sure we discussed this earlier. I'll be home around 2 A.M. (*The second sentence, spoken very rapidly, is barely audible.*)

PARENT (*mouth tightening*): We did *not* discuss this earlier, and you're *not* staying out till two in the morning. You'll be home at twelve.

At this point in the exchange, we have a quarrel, not an argument. Quarrelers exchange antagonistic assertions without any attempt to support them rationally. If the dialogue never gets past the “Yes-you-will/No-I-won't” stage, it either remains a quarrel or degenerates into a fight.

Let us say, however, that the dialogue takes the following turn:

YOUNG PERSON (*tragically*): But I'm *sixteen years old!*

Now we're moving toward argument. Not, to be sure, a particularly well-developed or cogent one, but an argument all the same. It's now an argument because one of the quarrelers has offered a reason for her assertion. Her choice of curfew is satisfactory, she says, *because* she is sixteen years old.

The parent can now respond in one of several ways that will either advance the argument or turn it back into a quarrel. The parent can simply invoke parental authority (“I don't care—you're still coming home at twelve”), in which case the argument ceases. Or the parent can provide a reason for his or her view (“You will be home at twelve because your dad and I pay the bills around here!”), in which case the argument takes a new turn.

So far we've established two necessary conditions that must be met before we're willing to call something an argument: (1) a set of two or more conflicting assertions and (2) the attempt to resolve the conflict through an appeal to reason.

But good argument demands more than meeting these two formal requirements. For an argument to be effective, the arguer must clarify and support the reasons presented. For example, “But I'm sixteen years old!” is not yet a clear support for the assertion “I should be allowed to set my own curfew.” On the surface, Young Person's argument seems absurd. Her parent, of all people, knows precisely how old she is. What makes it an argument is that behind her claim lies an unstated assumption—all sixteen-year-olds are old enough to set their own curfews. What Young Person needs to do now is to support that assumption.* In doing so, she must anticipate the sorts of questions the assumption will raise in the minds of her parent: What is the legal status of sixteen-year-olds? How psychologically mature, as opposed to chronologically

*In Chapter 4 we will call the assumption underlying a line of reasoning its *warrant*.

mature, is Young Person? What is the actual track record of Young Person in being responsible? Each of these questions will force Young Person to reexamine and clarify her assumptions about the proper degree of autonomy for sixteen-year-olds. And her response to those questions should in turn force the parents to reexamine their assumptions about the dependence of sixteen-year-olds on parental guidance and wisdom. (Likewise, the parents will need to show why “paying the bills around here” automatically gives them the right to set Young Person’s curfew.)

As the argument continues, Young Person and Parent may shift to a different line of reasoning. For example, Young Person might say, “I should be allowed to stay out until 2 A.M. because all my friends get to stay out that late.” (Here the unstated assumption is that the rules in this family ought to be based on the rules in other families.) The parent might in turn respond, “But I certainly never stayed out that late when I was your age”—an argument assuming that the rules in this family should follow the rules of an earlier generation.

As Young Person and Parent listen to each other’s points of view (and begin realizing why their initial arguments have not persuaded their intended audience), both parties find themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to examine their own beliefs and to justify assumptions that they have taken for granted. Here we encounter one of the earliest senses of the term *to argue*, which is “to clarify.” As an arguer begins to clarify her own position on an issue, she also begins to clarify her audience’s position. Such clarification helps the arguer see how she might accommodate her audience’s views, perhaps by adjusting her own position or by developing reasons that appeal to her audience’s values. Thus Young Person might suggest an argument like this:

I should be allowed to stay out until 2 A.M. on a trial basis because I need enough space to demonstrate my maturity and show you I won’t get into trouble.

The assumption underlying this argument is that it is good to give teenagers freedom to demonstrate their maturity. Because this reason is likely to appeal to her parent’s values (the parent wants the daughter to mature) and because it is tempered by the qualifier “on a trial basis” (which reduces some of the threat of Young Person’s initial demands), it may prompt productive discussion.

Whether or not Young Person and Parent can work out the best solution, the preceding scenario illustrates how argument leads people to clarify their reasons and provide justifications that can be examined rationally. The scenario also illustrates two specific aspects of argument that we will explore in detail in the next sections: (1) Argument is both a process and a product. (2) Argument combines truth seeking and persuasion.

Argument Is Both a Process and a Product

In the preceding scenario, argument functioned as a *process* whereby two or more parties sought the best solution to a question or problem. Argument can also be viewed as a *product*, each product being any person’s contribution to the conversation

at a given moment. In an informal discussion, these products are usually short, whatever time a person uses during his or her turns in the conversation. Under more formal settings, an orally delivered product might be a short, impromptu speech (say, during an open-mike discussion of a campus issue) or a longer, carefully prepared formal speech (as in a PowerPoint presentation at a business meeting or an argument at a public hearing on a city project).

Similar conversations occur in writing. Roughly analogous to a small-group discussion is an exchange of the kind that occurs regularly online through informal chat groups or more formal blog sites. In an online discussion, participants have more thinking time to shape their messages than they do in a real-time oral discussion. Nevertheless, messages are usually short and informal, making it possible over the course of several days to see participants' ideas shift and evolve as conversants modify their initial views in response to others' views.

Roughly equivalent to a formal speech would be a formal written argument, which may take the form of an academic argument for a college course; an online blog posting; a guest column for the op-ed* section of a newspaper; a legal brief; or an article for an organizational newsletter, popular magazine, or professional journal. In each of these instances, the written argument (a product) enters a conversation (a process)—in this case, a conversation of readers, many of whom will carry on the conversation by writing their own responses or by discussing the writer's views with others. The goal of the community of writers and readers is to find the best solution to the problem or issue under discussion.

Argument Combines Truth Seeking and Persuasion

In thinking about argument as a product, the writer will find herself continually moving back and forth between truth seeking and persuasion—that is, between questions about the subject matter (What is the best solution to this problem?) and about audience (What reasons and evidence will most persuade them?). Back and forth she'll weave, alternately absorbed in the subject of her argument and in the audience for that argument.

Rarely is either focus ever completely ignored, but their relative importance shifts during different phases of the argument's development. We could thus place arguments on a kind of continuum that measures the degree of attention a writer gives to subject matter versus audience (see Figure 1.2). At the far truth-seeking end might be an exploratory piece that lays out several alternative approaches to a problem and weighs the strengths and weaknesses of each. At the other end of the continuum would be outright propaganda, such as a political campaign advertisement that reduces a complex issue to sound bites. (At its most blatant, propaganda obliterates truth seeking; it will do anything, including distorting or inventing

*Op-ed stands for "opposite-editorial." It is the generic name in journalism for signed arguments that voice the writer's opinion on an issue, as opposed to news stories, which are supposed to report events objectively.

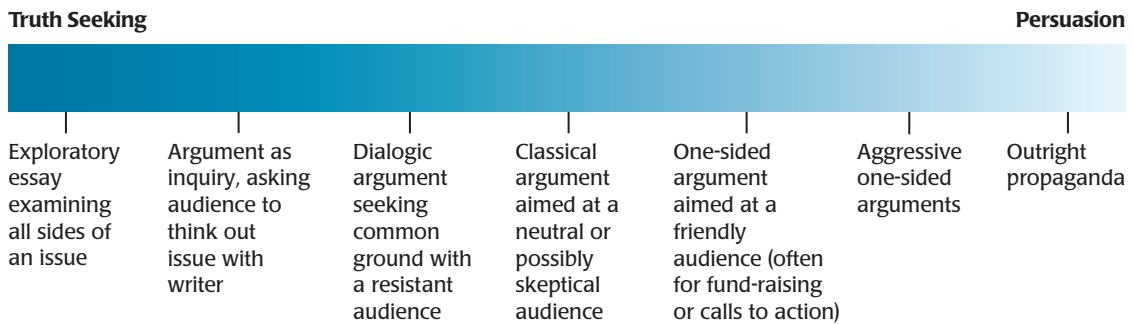


FIGURE 1.2 Continuum of arguments from truth seeking to persuasion

evidence, to win over an audience.) In the middle ranges of the continuum, writers shift their focuses back and forth between truth seeking and persuasion, but with varying degrees of emphasis.

As an example of a writer focusing primarily on truth seeking, consider the case of Kathleen who, in her college argument course, addressed the definitional question “Should American Sign Language meet the university’s foreign language requirement?” Kathleen had taken two years of ASL at a community college. When she transferred to a four-year college, her ASL proficiency was dismissed by the foreign language department chair. “ASL isn’t a ‘language,’” he said summarily. “It’s not equivalent to learning French, German, or Japanese.”

Kathleen disagreed, so she immersed herself in developing her argument. In her initial research she focused almost entirely on subject matter, searching for what linguists, neurologists, cognitive psychologists, and sociologists had said about ASL. She was only tacitly concerned with her audience, whom she mostly envisioned as her classmates and those sympathetic to her view. She wrote a well-documented paper, citing several scholarly articles that made a good case to her classmates (and her professor) that ASL is indeed a distinct language.

Proud of the big red A the professor had placed on her paper, Kathleen decided for a subsequent assignment to write a second paper on ASL—but this time aimed it directly at the chair of foreign languages, petitioning him to accept her ASL proficiency for the foreign language requirement. Now her writing task falls closer to the persuasive end of our continuum. Kathleen once again immersed herself in research, but this time focused not on subject matter—whether or not ASL is a distinct language—but on audience. She researched the history of the foreign language requirement at her college and discovered some of the politics behind it. She also interviewed foreign language teachers to find out what they knew and didn’t know about ASL. She discovered that many teachers thought ASL was “easy to learn” and would allow students to avoid the rigors of a “real” foreign language class. Additionally, she learned that foreign language teachers valued immersing students in a foreign culture; in fact, the foreign language requirement was part of her college’s effort to create a multicultural curriculum.

This new understanding of her target audience helped Kathleen reconceptualize her argument. Her claim that ASL was a real language (the subject of her first paper) became only one section of her second paper, much condensed and abridged. She added sections showing (1) that learning ASL is difficult (to counter her audience's belief that learning ASL was easy), (2) that the deaf community formed a distinct culture with its own customs and literature (to show how ASL met the goals of multiculturalism), and (3) that the number of transfer students with ASL credits would be negligible (to allay fears that accepting ASL would threaten enrollments in language classes). She ended her argument with an appeal to her college's emphasis—declared in its mission statement—on eradicating social injustice and reaching out to the oppressed. She described the isolation of deaf people in a world where almost no hearing people learn ASL, and she argued that the deaf community on her campus could be integrated more fully into campus life if more students could “talk” with them. Thus the ideas included in her new argument—the reasons selected, the evidence used, the arrangement and tone—all were determined by her primary focus on persuasion.

Our point, then, is that all along the continuum writers are concerned with truth seeking and persuasion, but not necessarily with equal balance. Kathleen could not have written her second paper, aimed specifically at persuading the chair of the foreign language department, if she hadn't first immersed herself in truth-seeking research that convinced her that ASL is indeed a distinct language. Nor are we saying that her second argument was better than her first. Both involved truth seeking and persuasion, but the first focused primarily on subject matter and the second primarily on audience.

Argument and the Problem of Truth

1.3 To understand the relationship of argument to the problem of truth

The tension that we have just examined between truth seeking and persuasion raises an ancient issue in the field of argument: Is the arguer's first obligation to truth or to winning the argument? And just what is the nature of the truth to which arguers are supposed to be obligated?

In Plato's famous dialogues from ancient Greek philosophy, these questions were at the heart of Socrates' disagreement with the Sophists. The Sophists were professional rhetoricians who specialized in training orators to win arguments. Socrates, who valued truth seeking over persuasion and believed that truth could be discovered through philosophic inquiry, opposed the Sophists. For Socrates, Truth resided in the ideal world of forms, and through philosophic rigor humans could transcend the changing, shadowlike world of everyday reality to perceive the world of universals where Truth, Beauty, and Goodness resided. Through his method of questioning his interlocutors, Socrates would gradually peel away layer after layer of false views until Truth was revealed. The good person's duty, Socrates believed, was not to win an argument but to pursue this higher Truth. Socrates distrusted rhetoricians because they were interested only in the temporal power and wealth that came from persuading audiences to the orator's views.

Let's apply Socrates' disagreement with the Sophists to a modern instance. Suppose your community is divided over the issue of raising environmental standards