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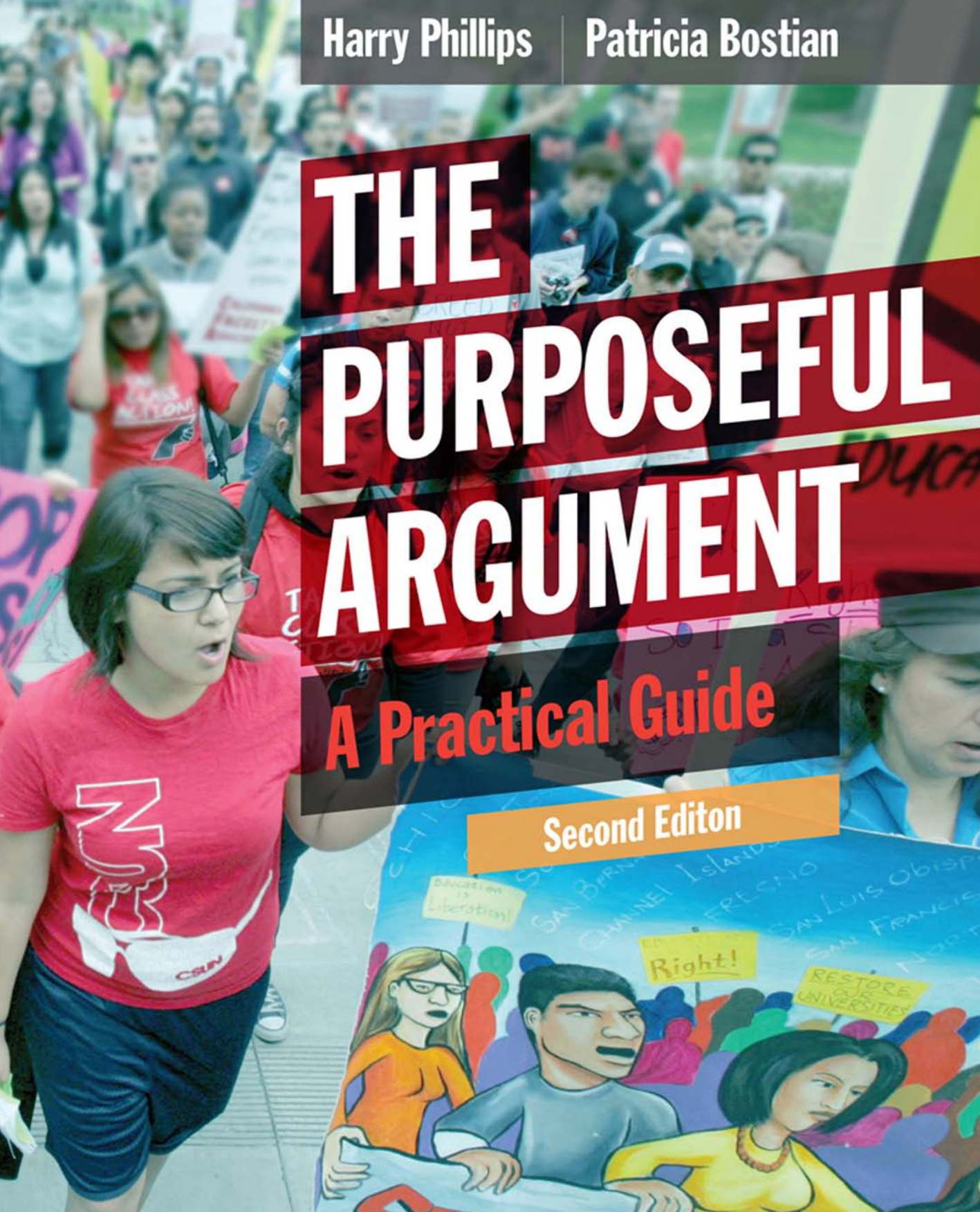

THE PURPOSEFUL ARGUMENT

A Practical Guide

Second Editon

The Purposeful Argument:

A Practical Guide

Second Edition

Harry R. Phillips

Patricia Bostian

Central Piedmont Community College

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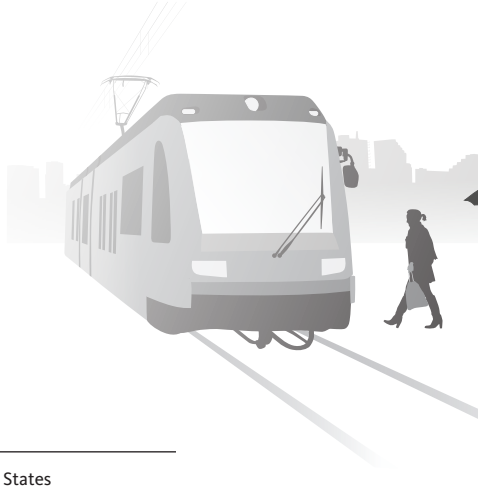

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The Purposeful Argument: A Practical Guide
Second Edition
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Text Designer: Shawn Girsberger
Cover Designer: Wing Ngan
Cover Image: © ZUMA Press, Inc. / Alamy
Compositor: Q2A/Bill Smith

Library of Congress Control Number:

Student Edition

ISBN-13: 978-1-285-43805-4

ISBN-10: 1-285-43805-1

Cengage Learning
200 First Stamford Place, 4th Floor
Stamford, CT 06902
USA

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Printed in the United States of America
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 17 16 15 14 13

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PREFACE

Purpose

Since our department first offered a course in argumentative writing in 1998, teachers at our community college have expressed frustration with the range of textbooks available for the course. This second edition of *The Purposeful Argument* continues to respond to this concern. Our textbook—aimed at freshman writers at two- and four-year colleges—delivers the essentials of argumentative writing in accessible, student-friendly language. The textbook allows writers to recognize where argument fits in their lives and how it can be a practical response both to the issues in everyday life and to academic and intellectual problems encountered in the classroom. In this way, the text meets student writers on their own terms, in their own lives, and demands that they determine what they argue about. Changes to this new edition reflect the suggestions of our students and those of veteran teachers of argument, who are sensitive to what makes a textbook genuinely useful.

The philosophical center of *The Purposeful Argument* rests with John Dewey's notion that public education can best serve a democratic culture when it connects classroom with community and by thinking of the classroom as a laboratory for intelligent democratic activity. Building on this idea, those who argue competently can become the lifeblood of local action and change. Put another way, a nation, state, or community that does not engage purposefully in regular discussion and informed argument cannot fulfill itself.

Accessibility is central to the purpose of this project, and this second edition includes a streamlining of many features of the textbook. From many students' perspectives, some current argument texts are dense and filled with examples apart from their worlds. In response to these concerns, *The Purposeful Argument* relies less on discussion via traditional academic language to get across a concept and more on cogent definition, explicit example, and practical exercises that guide student writers through the process of assembling an argument. Examples of student, local, and professional writing are in many cases annotated and color-coded so as to identify elements of argument structure.

From another perspective, *The Purposeful Argument* puts in place the groundwork for student writers to create possibilities for themselves in a culture that demands more and more from its citizens. When so much of what we encounter has to do with the lure of consumption, and when so much of our national discourse is riveted to economic conditions, job security, and terror and intervention, it can be tough for freshman writers to think of themselves as agents capable of meaningful change. But at its core, *The Purposeful Argument* argues this very position. In its purest moment, this guide enables student writers to establish rhetorical places for themselves that ideally can reinvigorate our democracy via responsible citizenship. Because communication is less local in advanced industrial nations, this project invites a return to a more traditional form of democratic participation with its attention to local engagement. And local engagement can begin with a writer's commitment to the idea that the private responsibility to argue is essential to the public good.

With this emphasis on local engagement, we have noticed stronger, more focused arguments in the past several years. In general, when students are encouraged to honor and respond to issues that matter to them, their investment becomes evident and the writing, purposeful. This kind of ownership, we believe, results from an approach that steers writers into issues originating in the larger worlds of political, economic, and social issues as well as into their own worlds and concerns. With some students, this means arguing on issues that are solidly academic and intellectual in nature; with others, it means tackling issues of immediate concern in everyday life. Thus, compelling writing has emerged on issues as varied as the U. S. Supreme Court's ruling on corporate personhood, student loan requirements, China's behavior at the climate change conference in Copenhagen, favoritism in the workplace, recent health care reform and its implications for students, social networking and employment, religious values and curriculum design in Texas, and American consumers' role in the mining of "conflict minerals" in the Republic of the Congo.

A central focus of *The Purposeful Argument* is our intention to write to our specific audience—first-year writers—and this means delivering the fundamentals of argument to many nontraditional students, to nonnative speakers of English, to parents, to students who work one or more jobs, often in excess of the traditional work week, and to students who may or may not have experience with conceptual material and its application in their academic careers. This book is structured to accommodate our students and the diverse life experience they bring to our classrooms. Following are features of *The Purposeful Argument* that, in our view, distinguish it from the many excellent argument textbooks currently on the market—textbooks that may, however, fall outside the lines of accessibility and usefulness to many college students.

Organization and Chapter Flow

Part One of this guide attends to how effective arguments work. Chapter 1 introduces readers to essential features of argument and their interrelatedness. The chapter's sections move students into thinking about argument as a practical response to both everyday and academic issues and briefly introduce them to the types of argument found in the book. In Chapter 2, the crucial need to separate issue from topic is treated early. As a way to recognize issues and where they arise, this chapter identifies communities we belong to and some issues within these communities. The chapter offers numerous prompts and strategies for exploring an issue, such as prewriting activities that help students make a topic they might initially see as "boring" interesting to them and their readers. Audience focus, emphasized throughout the chapters, is introduced here, and students are presented with practical ways to determine appropriate audiences for their arguments. Arguing at the right time and establishing credibility fill out this chapter.

Part Two begins with the essential work of building clear context for an issue, the focus of Chapter 3. It is here that students are introduced to sources and how to access and use them. We choose to bring in the research process earlier rather than later because building a knowledge base often can enlarge the way we think about an issue, and this can influence what a writer claims and the way an argument is structured. Chapter 4 is geared toward the important work of using resources and how to read and evaluate them critically. As well, this chapter is a primer for working responsibly with borrowed material and ideas. Learning how to recognize and avoid fallacies is the center of Chapter 5. This chapter organizes fallacies—common in advertising and politics—into categories of choice, support, emotion, and inconsistency. Chapter 6 is devoted to the opposition, why it matters, how to work responsibly with it, and finding points of overlap. This chapter, we feel, adds to conventional approaches to opposing points of view.

Part Three treats the how-to of argument building. Chapter 7 helps students develop their argument strategies based on definitions, causes or consequences, comparisons, solution proposals, and evaluations, concluding with a rubric for preparing an exploratory essay. Discussion of Toulmin-based argument makes up Chapter 8. Chapter 9 introduces Rogerian argument, in addition to two less traditional approaches to argument in American classrooms: Middle Ground and Microhistory. We are enthusiastic about students learning to argue from a middle-ground perspective, as this approach insists on a close knowledge of audience and opposition. The middle-ground approach has, in the past few years, been popular among writers looking to escape either–or thinking and instead craft practical positions on complex issues. We are equally enthusiastic about a fourth kind of argument discussed in this chapter—an argument based on a microhistory—where writers work with primary documents and then forge a position apart from conventional understanding of the period in which these documents originate. Chapter 10

is about building arguments. It is example-rich and orients writers to the building blocks of argument—claims, reasons, qualifiers, support, the warrant, backing, and audience reservations. We view this chapter as one writers will use frequently during the drafting process. We elaborate in Chapter 11 on how to use support effectively, and this involves establishing writer credibility, specific appeals to audience, and a rubric for evaluating support brought to an argument.

Part Five is centered in the ideal of ownership, that is, in ways writers can make arguments distinctly their own. Chapter 12 is a discussion of tactics—visual argument and humor, among others—that let writers vary their approaches to an audience. And Chapter 13 is devoted to writing style and editing. While material in this final chapter is typically relegated to textbooks designed for earlier writing courses, we present this material in the context of argument writing as what we feel are necessary refreshers.

All chapters in Parts One through Four begin with a narrative that describes a real-life issue and conclude with a "Keeping It Local" exercise, pointing out that argument is a practical way to negotiate purposefully issues in everyday and academic life.

Part Five is an anthology of arguments written by everyday people who have stakes in local issues and by professional writers whose commentary on a given issue can provide a larger critical frame. Arguments are followed by questions tied to argument structure, audience, comprehension, and ways to connect concerns in the local community with the broader geopolitical culture. Another level of questions prompts students to acknowledge issues in their own lives that are the same or similar to issues found in the readings.

Part Six is devoted to MLA and APA documentation systems. For each system, guidelines and examples are provided. The important work of documenting carefully material borrowed from other writers and sources is addressed in this section.

New Features

- New examples illustrate each of the four types of argument *The Purposeful Argument* covers. These argument types are now spread over two chapters, with Chapter 8 devoted to Toulmin-based argument and Chapter 9 focused on Middle Ground argument, Rogerian argument, and argument based on a Microhistory.
- New assignments in Keeping It Local boxes at the end of each chapter prompt students to try out the chapter's strategies on an issue relevant to their own communities.
- New checklists throughout consolidate for students the key features of particular kinds of argumentative writing and research.
- Research is now consolidated in Part Two, making it easier for instructors to assign whenever they prefer.

- Part Four, "How to Take Ownership of Your Argument: A Style Guide," now includes a guide for obtaining peer reviews of one's writing.
- Twelve new essays in the anthology, Part Five, demonstrate how contemporary writers build arguments in response to specific issues affecting the seven communities addressed in *The Purposeful Argument*: school, the workplace, family, neighborhood, social-cultural, consumer, and concerned citizen.
- Part Six, MLA and APA Documentation Systems, now contains a complete APA student essay to accompany the annotated MLA student essay.

Key Features

- Writers are encouraged to argue in response to issues in their everyday and academic environments—school, the workplace, family, neighborhood, social-cultural, consumer, and concerned citizen—and thus learn how argument can become an essential negotiating skill in their lives. This book emphasizes local and intellectual issues throughout and provides a methodology for connecting the local with global trends. Importantly, this allows writers to build a strong understanding of an issue by generating broad context.
- Argument structure is presented in practical, how-to ways, complete with exercises, charts, and real-life examples. Ways to organize an argument—Toulmin-based, Rogerian, Middle Ground, and Microhistory options—are fully defined and demonstrated.
- Simplified text format and page layout improve upon conventional argument textbook design by making information direct and accessible.
- Checklists throughout *The Purposeful Argument* provide support for writers as they craft their own arguments.
- Annotated examples of effective arguments illustrate strengths and weaknesses.
- "Your Turn" exercises consist of questions and prompts so that writers can apply argument structure to arguments they are building. "Internet Activity" prompts direct writers to online investigations that connect to the research process.
- "Tips" panels typically are clues for ways of thinking about a feature of argument during the planning process.
- Key terms are bolded throughout the text. A Glossary related to practical argument provides an alphabetized reference for these and other terms found in *The Purposeful Argument*. A term is defined with regard to its function and placement in an argument.

Teaching and Learning Aids

The supplements listed here accompany *The Purposeful Argument*. They have been created with the diverse needs of today's students and instructors in mind.

- MindTap for *The Purposeful Argument*, 2/e, is a personalized, fully online digital learning platform of authoritative Cengage Learning content, assignments, and services that engages your students with interactivity while also offering you choice in the configuration of coursework and enhancement of the curriculum via complimentary web apps known as MindApps. MindTap is well beyond an ebook, a homework solution or digital supplement, a resource center website, a course delivery platform or a Learning Management System. It is the first in a new category—the Personal Learning Experience.
- The instructor's manual provides course-specific organization tools and classroom strategies, including sample syllabi, designs for mapping the course, assignment flow, ways to utilize the book, suggestions for teaching the course online, and ways to best use electronic resources. The center of the guide is a series of rubrics and exercises that can be adapted to an instructor's work with each chapter.

In sum, *The Purposeful Argument* is a student-centered approach to argument. It is a guide that lets students determine how they can use argument in life and equips them with a concrete, how-to approach. It lets instructors play to their strengths by letting writers work with their strengths—their investment in issues that matter to them in daily and classroom life. From the beginning, the text presents argument in ways that can empower and enable writers to publicly validate what most concerns them.

The Purposeful Argument is designed to complement and not overwhelm. The language of *The Purposeful Argument* is friendly and direct. Short, concise paragraphs are the rule; paragraphs are followed immediately by real-life examples, checklists, charts, rubrics, exercises, and sample student writings.

Competent, informed argument is as important today in American life as it was during other crucial periods in our history. It was and is a way to be heard and, when conditions permit, to be granted a seat at the discussion table. While public memory has shaped the way we view extraordinary moments in our past—indigenous peoples' fate at the hands of colonizers and an aggressive government, debates over sacred and secular ideals, arguments for political independence, the rhetoric of abolition and women's rights movements, the voice of labor, and the Civil Rights Movement—it is crucial to remember that, in addition to the arguments of accomplished writers, activists, and orators associated with these moments, a turbulence of voices was audible. These were the sounds of everyday people moving the culture forward. Without their contributions, the figures we celebrate now would be footnotes only. The voice of the individual *does* matter. If we choose not to speak up, others will make decisions for us.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to many individuals for their help creating this edition. Development Editor Stephanie Pelkowski Carpenter has shown Olympian patience with this current edition. She's also offered dozens of insightful suggestions regarding changes and new features. Her grasp of the project's vision from the beginning has guided the revision process. We are grateful in no small way for her professionalism.

Margaret Leslie, Senior Product Manager, deserves special recognition for her continued encouragement and good cheer and her ability to steer the project in very positive directions. Leslie Taggart, Senior Content Developer, Lydia LeStar, Brand Manager, and Aimee Bear, Senior Content Project Manager have our gratitude for their expert guidance throughout the process. Cailin Barrett-Bressack, Editorial Assistant, also provided timely and useful assistance.

The astute reviewers for this second edition helped us to identify ways to reach first-year writing students more effectively. We are grateful for their advice and ideas:

James Allen
College of DuPage

Marsha Anderson
Wharton County Jr. College

Lynnette Beers-McCormick
Santiago Canyon College

Laura Black
Volunteer State Community College

Mary Chen
Tacoma Community College

Kathleen Doherty
Middlesex Community College

Cassie Falke
East Texas Baptist University

Karen Golightly
Christian Brothers University

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Kishwaukee College

Lauren Hahn
DePaul University

Betty Hart
The University of Southern Indiana

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University of San Francisco

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Volunteer State CC

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Amy Ratto Park
University of Montana

Deborah Ruth
Owensboro Community and Technical College

Dan Sullivan
Davenport University

Robert Williams
Grossmont College

We also wish to thank members of the Advisory Review Board and the more than 65 reviewers and focus group participants who contributed steadily to the first edition. Their thoughtful feedback allowed us to refine and improve a range of chapter-specific features of this textbook.

Susan Achziger
Community College of Aurora

Kara Alexander
Baylor University

Steve Anderson
Normandale Community College

Sonja Andrus
Collin College

Joseph Antinarella
Tidewater Community College

Brad Beachy
Butler Community College

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John Tyler Community College

Shanti Bruce
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Mary Chen-Johnson
Tacoma Community College

Scott Clements
Keiser College, Melbourne Campus

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Susan Davis
Arizona State University

James Decker
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Tamra DiBenedetto
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Connie Duke
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Angie Williams-Chehmani
Davenport University

Will Zhang
Des Moines Area Community College

Traci Zimmerman
James Madison University

Harry Phillips would like to thank Aron Keesbury, formerly acquisitions editor at Thomson Publishing and now with National Geographic Learning, for his steady encouragement and insightful feedback during the early stages of this project.

Patricia K. Bostian would like to thank her wonderful family for their generous support, particularly her husband Brad for his many wonderful textbook ideas, and her children Wyndham and Rhiannon for allowing her to talk about her ideas with them.

Finally, we want to acknowledge the steady interest our students have shown in argumentative writing over the last 15 years. In truth, it was their authentic interest in the course and their recognition that argument could serve them in daily life that fueled original interest in this project. As teachers, the course inspired us to regularly refine our approaches and, mostly, to listen closely to student writers who sensed, perhaps for the first time, that their private concerns could influence public thinking and decision making. In particular, we are grateful to Linda Gonzalez, Blaine Schmidt, and Ben Szany, among other students, for their willingness to contribute arguments to this textbook.

Harry R. Phillips

Patricia Bostian

PART ONE

How to Approach Argument in Real Life

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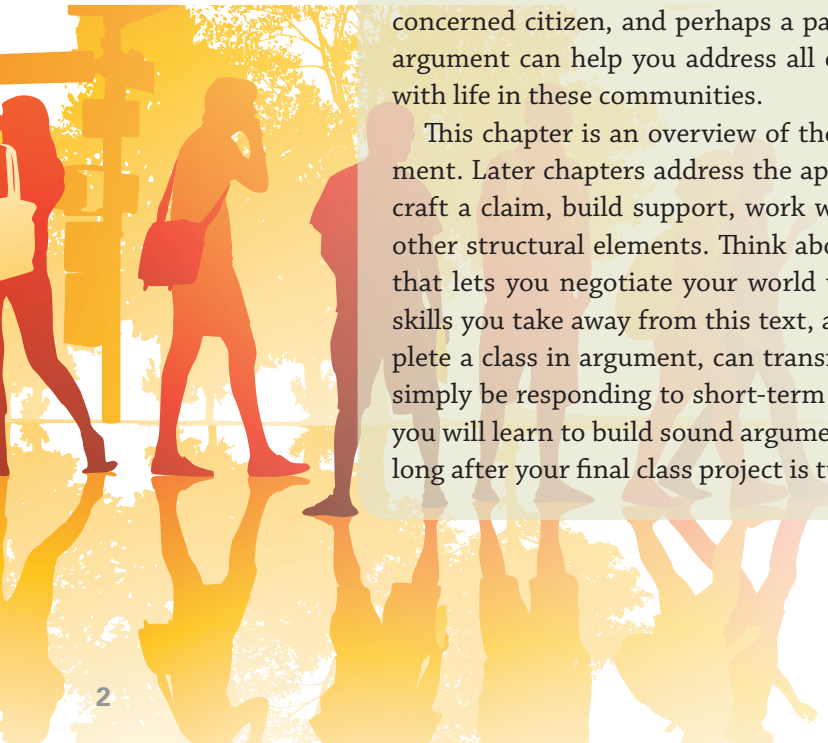
CHAPTER 1

Argue With a Purpose

This text introduces you to argument and how to use it in response to everyday issues—at school, in the workplace, at home, in your neighborhood, with people who matter to you, in the swirl of community politics, and on a national or global scale. You will be able to use the tools in the following chapters to build practical arguments that make your voice clear and direct on issues in which you have a stake. Skills in argument will help you in your life as a student, a member of the local labor force, a consumer, a concerned citizen, and perhaps a parent and homeowner; in fact, argument can help you address all of the many issues associated with life in these communities.

This chapter is an overview of the nature and purpose of argument. Later chapters address the apparatus of argument—how to craft a claim, build support, work with the opposition, and build other structural elements. Think about argument as a set of tools that lets you negotiate your world with clarity and purpose. The skills you take away from this text, and the work required to complete a class in argument, can transfer to the real world. You may simply be responding to short-term assignments, but in doing so, you will learn to build sound arguments—a skill that will be useful long after your final class project is turned in.



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In the sections that follow, you'll get a sense of what argument is and what argument is not, and you'll learn how to:

- Recognize where argument is appropriate in real life.
- Argue about issues that matter to you.
- Establish local context for an issue through the research process.
- Recognize why arguments break down.
- Match argument with purpose.

What Argument Is and What Argument Is Not

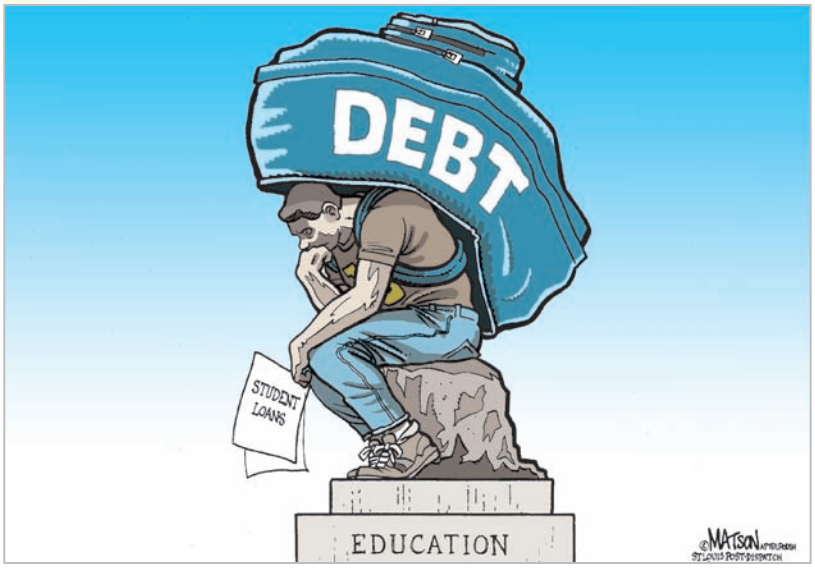
You are arguing when you claim a point of view on an issue, defend your claim with different kinds of support, and respond fairly to those with differing points of view. Argument is useful when you want to persuade others (decision-makers, fellow classmates, coworkers, a community agency or organization, a special interest group, elected representatives, business leaders, or an individual) to take seriously your point of view; when you want to find out more about something that matters to you; and when you want to establish areas of common interest among different positions. With nearly all arguments, it is essential to establish a clear context for your issue and to have a target audience.

Argument is not about putting yourself in uncomfortable, win–lose, either–or situations. It is not about fighting or trying to shame someone who holds a different point of view. Some people associate argument with anger, raised voices, and emotional outbursts. But when these people behave in competitive, angry, and overly emotional ways, communication is often sealed off and the people involved become alienated from one another. This is not the aim of argument. Argument creates a space where we can listen to each other.

The following essay by Thomas Frank is excerpted from "The Price of Admission." The full essay appears in the June 2012 issue of *Harper's*, a magazine that began publication in 1850 and today treats a wide range of issues in literature, politics, culture, finance, and the arts. In the essay, Frank includes a claim, various levels of support, and efforts to build his credibility as one taking a position on the issue of college tuition. Missing from the excerpt, but present in the longer essay, are attention to the opposition, reasons that support the claim, and a warrant, that is, attention to the values that motivate the writer to argue on this issue. The essay is accompanied by an editorial cartoon by R.J. Matson (see Figure 1.1).

Excerpt from "The Price of Admission"

by Thomas Frank



RJ Matson/Caglecartoons.com

Figure 1.1 Editorial cartoon by R.J. Matson

Massive indebtedness changes a person, maybe even more than a college education does, and it's reasonable to suspect that the politicos who have allowed the tuition disaster to take its course know this. To saddle young people with enormous, inescapable debt — total student debt is now more than one trillion dollars — is ultimately to transform them into profit-maximizing machines. I mean, working as a schoolteacher or an editorial assistant at a publishing house isn't going to help you chip away at that forty grand you owe. You can't get out of it by

bankruptcy, either. And our political leaders, lost in a fantasy of punitive individualism, certainly won't propose the bailout measures they could take to rescue the young from the crushing burden.

What will happen to the young debtors instead is that they will become *Homo economicus*, whether or not they studied that noble creature. David Graeber, the anthropologist who wrote the soon-to-be-classic *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*, likens the process to a horror movie, in which the zombies or the vampires attack the humans as a kind of recruitment policy. "They turn you into one of them," as Graeber told me.

Actually, they do worse than that. Graeber relates the story of a woman he met who got a Ph.D. from Columbia University, but whose $80,000 debt load put an academic career off-limits, since adjuncts earn close to nothing. Instead, the woman wound up working as an escort for Wall Street types. "Here's someone who ought to be a professor," Graeber explains, "doing sexual services for the guys who lent her the money."

The story hit home for me, because I, too, wanted to be a professor once. I remember the waves of enlightenment that washed over me in my first few years in college, the ecstasy of finally beginning to understand what moved human affairs this way or that, the exciting sense of a generation arriving at a shared sensibility. Oh, I might have gone on doing that kind of work forever, whether or not it made me rich, if journalism had not intervened.

It's hard to find that kind of ecstasy among the current crop of college graduates. The sensibility shared by their generation seems to revolve around student debt, which has been clamped onto them like some sort of interest-bearing iron maiden. They've been screwed — that's what their moment of enlightenment has taught them.

As for my own cohort, or at least the members of it who struggled through and made it to one of the coveted positions in the knowledge factory, the new generational feeling seems to be one of disgust. Our enthusiasm for learning, which we trumpeted to the world, merely led the nation's children into debt bondage. Consider the remarks of Nicholas Mirzoeff, a professor of media at New York University, who sums up the diminishing returns of the profession on his blog: "I used to say that in academia one at least did very little harm. Now I feel like a pimp for loan sharks."

Analyze this Reading

1. What is the writer's claim, the position the writer takes in response to the issue of student debt?
2. Identify examples the writer uses to support his claim.
3. How does the writer establish his credibility; that is, how does he build trust with readers regarding his competence to take a stand on this issue?

Respond to this Reading

1. The writer contends that political leaders won't make the effort to bail out today's college students from debt. Do you favor a legislative bailout? Explain, and if you don't favor such a bailout, what claim would you make to address the student debt problem?
2. What is your relationship to education and debt? What examples would you use to demonstrate this relationship?
3. If you were to argue on this issue, at what target audience would you aim? Would your audience be officials at your college, your state legislators, your peers, or the members of your community? Explain.

Recognize Where Argument Is Appropriate in Real Life

You'll get to know this guide as a student in a class, one class among many that you need to complete as you move toward your degree, but there is another, equally important way to think about your work with argument—the set of skills you'll acquire and take with you when class is over. Make these skills serve what matters to you, in and beyond the classroom. Whether it's a small group of coworkers, the author of a scholarly article, your local parent–teacher organization, the editor of an online magazine, a car mechanic, or the billing agency for your cell phone or broadband service, you'll have a better chance of being taken seriously when you support your point of view with credible information delivered through a variety of logical, ethical, and emotional appeals.

Vital issues in our lives occur both in the academic world and in the swirl of everyday life. When you have a clear point of view (a claim) about the quality of cafeteria food at your child's school and then justify your claim with effective support, thereby establishing your credibility as a concerned parent, your audience will listen. Similarly, if a teacher in one of your classes asks you to claim a position on the status of immigration reform in your state and you respond by drafting a claim based on thorough research, your argument is likely to fare well when it is evaluated. This is especially true when you come across as well informed and sensitive to those who might differ from you. And if conditions at work start to resemble positions that were recently outsourced, you're more likely to get the attention of your boss or coworkers when you present a balanced, fair-minded argument that takes into account those who view the issue differently.

In your life as a student, are there issues that involve tuition, lodging, the accessibility of your teachers, course policies, conflicts with your job, and loan opportunities? Are there also intellectual issues in your life as a student that you are asked to respond to, such as genetically engineered food, climate change, and representative government as practiced in our country? And outside the classroom, if your street lacks adequate storm-water facilities, if earlier public-school start times are proposed by the school board and you know

that this will affect your family's schedule, or if a family member has a contrary idea about what makes a sensible budget, a well-crafted argument allows you to move away from emotional arguments (a trap for many) and into the realm of reason, common sense, and community. An emotional argument, on the other hand, lacks the support of a rational approach to an issue and puts in jeopardy your credibility with your target audience. The exact change you want is never a guaranteed outcome of a good argument, but at the very least you will have made your voice audible before an audience that matters to you.

From another perspective, you affect and diversify the particular community you address with an argument. A well-organized argument gets you a seat at the discussion table, whether in the classroom or before your city council. This means that your position on an issue can matter in the local decision-making process (see Figure 1.2). If we say nothing, others will speak for us or make assumptions about us that may conflict with who we are and what we value.

Argue About Issues That Matter to You

Argue about what matters to you as a student and in everyday life. Some people associate argument with dry, abstract issues that may or may not directly affect their lives, but this is an attitude to stay away from. Good writing, and similarly, good argument, spring from the same place—from the effort of everyday people struggling to define and solve problems. A good argument will touch the reader in many ways: logically, because you provide real-life support for your point of view; emotionally, because you touch on something that the reader cares about; and ethically, because you establish your credibility as an informed community member whom your audience can trust.

One way to think about argument is as a practical tool for the regular challenges we face. For example, would it be helpful to know how to present your

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Figure 1.2 Speaking up in response to issues that matter to us is the heart of argument. In this photo, the figure speaking is responding to a workplace issue and delivering her ideas to coworkers.

point of view to city and county politicians when repairs on your street are neglected while streets in other areas are taken care of much sooner? Might it be helpful to compose an argument in the form of a letter to a son, daughter, parent, or in-law regarding an important family matter? Do you have an idea about how certain parts of your job can be improved, and would a logical, well-researched proposal directed to a supervisor be a reasonable first step? Do parking problems and a smoking ban at school disturb you, and do you want to find out more about these issues and formulate a claim that is reinforced by careful research? If you answer "yes" to these or similar everyday issues, then this guide can be useful as a way to represent yourself with integrity.

Let's look, for example, at the issue that begins this chapter and one that nearly all college students contend with these days—increasing tuition rates. Some of us may be compelled to argue on this issue because we're forced to work more hours during the week to pay for this semester's tuition, forced to take out loans that mean years of debt after college, and disturbed that our college seems to endorse lending practices that unfairly burden students heading into the world after graduation. A carefully arranged argument gives us the chance to claim a strong position on tuition rates, conduct research on the nature and history of the problem, listen to other points of view, and then propose a way to address the problem reasonably. After choosing to argue on this issue, a reasonable first step would be to establish context and determine your target audience, tasks discussed in the next section.

Another way to think about argument is as a practical tool for the intellectual and academic work you are asked to complete as a student. The steps in developing a good argument are the same, whether you are writing for a class assignment or about an issue in daily life. In both contexts you will need to evolve a precise point of view and then defend it. Successful arguments about the origins of our national debt, same-sex marriage, interpreting constitutional amendments, health-care policy, and the federal government's relationship with the banking industry are built on the same foundations as arguments responding to the everyday issues of life.

In fact, one measure of good arguments on issues like these is their ability to connect local and global contexts. So much of what comes to us through mainstream news—issues in the fields of medicine, technology, health care, and geopolitics, for example—has its origins beyond our immediate lives and communities. You can of course apply the tools of argument to these issues, and with good success, but argument on these issues can and should be connected to local contexts, too. The list below is a small sampling of large issues that have local impact.

Standardized testing
Gun laws
Video cameras and public schools
Promotion practices in the nursing profession
Bullying in schools and in the workplace
Choice and public schools
Benefits for same-sex partners
Taser guns in public schools

Immigration reform and local business
Cell phone use while driving
High school dropout rates
Local job outsourcing
The elderly and nursing home care
Eminent domain and home owners
Fossil fuels
Local road repairs
Campaign Finance Reform
Returning veterans and health care
Health care and non-native speakers
Payday lending
Big box construction and local business
Living wage proposals
Probation and oversight
Local transit
Crowded classrooms
Sex offenders in the community
Climate change
Photo-ID voting requirements
Locally grown food
Energy rate hikes
Teen crime and sentencing
Medicare and Social Security

In today's world, we all face multiple demands as we move through our day. Combine this busyness with the sheer scale of many of the issues we face—the economic recession, global warming, health care, security, terror, and military intervention—and it can be tough to believe that articulating our point of view on an issue is worth the effort or makes any difference. But it *can* make a difference, and building a good argument is a way to exercise some control over your life and establish your influence in the community. When your well-planned argument articulates your view on an issue in a thorough and compelling manner, you can generate confidence in yourself and respect from your audience. A sound argument does not, of course, guarantee that your issue will be resolved or that substantial change will result, but you can define for yourself exactly where you stand. For a democracy to remain healthy, it must function in large part by individuals responding to the forces that global environments put in our way.

Well-crafted argument is a way to represent yourself publicly with dignity and in an informed, fair, and open-minded way. Learn these skills now, and you'll have them forever.

your turn 1a

GET STARTED Acknowledge Issues That Matter to You

Make a list of issues that concern you today. Include issues in your personal life, your workplace, your school, your church, a group you belong to, your neighborhood, and your town or city. As you make your list, consider also national and global issues that affect your life, such as conflicts in other countries, environmental concerns, or fuel costs. As a way to narrow your focus to issues most important to you, respond to the following questions.