

APSU Writing Center

Toulmin Argument

Toulmin Argument

- The Toulmin Argument is a six component way in which to analyze arguments. It was created by Stephen Edelson Toulmin who sought to provide practical ways to evaluate arguments effectively.
- **Claim:** The thesis statement or overall topic the writer wants to discuss.
- **Grounds:** The foundation, data, proof, evidence, and proof to back up the claim or thesis statement.
- **Warrant:** A brief explanation on why the grounds (evidence) supports the claims (thesis).
- **Backing:** Additional reasons that support and give credit to the warrant.
- **Qualifier:** Measures the strength of the warrant by stating how strong the claims are. Consists of words such as “presumably,” “many,” “most,” “usually,” “always,” or “sometimes.”
- **Rebuttal:** An acknowledgement of an opposing view or exception to the claims.

Example:

- Claim: Students who schedule tutoring appointments with the writing center improve in their academic writing.
- Grounds: 53.5% more writing center users demonstrated greater writing gains, as reflected in thesis clarity and essay organization, than non-writing center users.
- Warrant: All students want to improve on their writing in order to succeed.
- Backing: Tutoring is offered for free for all currently enrolled students.
- Qualifier: Writing handouts help most students.
- Rebuttal: Students who use Purdue Owl improve their writing.

Example by Liza Long, Amy Minervini, and Joel Gladd:

- Claim: My grandfather should wear a hearing aid.
- Grounds: Hearing aids raise hearing quality.
- Warrant: A hearing aid helps most people hear better.
- Backing: Hearing aids are available locally.
- Qualifier: Hearing aids help most people.
- Rebuttal: There is a support desk that deals with technical problems.
 - if you anticipated a counterargument that hearing aids, as a technology, may be fraught with technical difficulties.

Example from the Judith G. Gardener Center for Writing Excellence:

- Claim: The Electoral College should be abolished.
- Grounds: The Electoral College gives small states undue influence.
- Warrant: No individual state(s) should have undue influence on presidential elections.
- Backing: Presidential candidates focus their campaigns on states with comparatively large electoral power and neglect many other states.
- Rebuttal: The Electoral College was created to ensure that presidential elections were limited to the main candidates instead of becoming chaotic.

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Context

Qualifier

Grounds

Claim

Warrant

Rebuttal

Backing



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References

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