

Toulmin's Advice for How to Construct an Argument

Claim—This is what you believe and what you want your readers to believe.

Example:

I believe that students should be issued laptops instead of textbooks.

Grounds—Data or facts on which your claim is based.

Example:

Books cannot be updated as easily as online information. Also, the cost of one laptop per student is comparable to seven or eight textbooks over the course of four years.

Warrant—Connects claim and grounds.

Example:

Schools are concerned with providing up to date education that is cost-effective.

Counterargument—Addresses what a person may say to the contrary of your argument.

- 1. Concede—note the potential disagreement/argument against your stance.**
- 2. Refute—minimize the argument against your stance by telling how it is ineffective or how key players might address the issue raised.**

Example:

Some might argue that laptops create too much temptation for students to check email or play games rather than focusing on the teacher. [Concede]

However, schools can use software to block distracting sites; besides, students today are drawn to technology and will appreciate teachers' attempts to teach to their learning style. [Refute]

Adapted from http://changingminds.org/disciplines/argument/making_argument/toulmin.htm

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Rotating Argument Organizer

Topic _____

Thesis (include grounds, major claim, and warrant)

Minor Claim 1

Minor Claim 2

Counterargument (concede and refute)

“Final Knockout Punch” for conclusion
