

What Is Argument?

The first word in our book's title may puzzle you. Why would we want you to *argue*? Are we really inviting you to yell or sneer? The word *arguing* may remind you of spats you regret. Most everyone has suffered arguments like these. They arise in the media all the time. Talk radio hosts and their callers mix strong opinion with insult. Television's political panels routinely lapse into squabbles; guests feel required to clash. Quarrels explode on daytime talkfests; couples fight over who's cheated on whom. Online forums are plagued by "trolls," writers who crudely mock others' posts. No wonder many people define *arguing* as combat. It often seems like war.

But our book is about *arguing* in a positive sense. We define it as a calm, courteous process in which you

- identify a subject of current or possible debate;
- analyze why you view the subject the way you do;
- address others who may not share your view; and
- try to persuade them that your view is worth accepting or at least makes sense.

This better kind of arguing occurs at various times and places. You may try to coax friends who dread horror films into joining you at *Saw 12*. In class, you may need to explain the logic of your stand on climate change. Beyond campus, you may advocate for social causes. For instance, you might petition your city to launch recycling sites.

Let's face it: to *argue* is to disagree, or to air views that not all may hold. Still, at its best, *argument* is an *alternative* to war. It's *not* a contest you try to "win" by insisting you're right. Ideally, *argument* is a form of *inquiry*, a process in which you *test your beliefs*, consider other views, and *stay open to changing your mind*. Rather than immediately attack your critics, you note principles you share with them. When their thinking differs from yours, you treat their positions fairly. If any of their ideas strike you as wise, you adjust your thinking. In the meantime, you recognize the limits of your knowledge and understanding. You admit, too, your inner conflicts: how your thoughts are divided, your values in conflict, your feelings mixed. Indeed, essayist Phillip Lopate observes that "the real argument should be with yourself." Columnist David

Brooks goes even further: "If you write in a way that suggests combative certitude," he warns, "you may gradually smother the inner chaos that will be the source of lifelong freshness and creativity." In their own fashion, these writers point to something important about argument: at its best, it teaches you about yourself and your world, while alerting you to what you still must learn.

Students regularly encounter this kind of arguing in college. Academic subjects aren't just pools of information. They go beyond proven facts. Disciplines grapple with uncertainties: problems, questions, and conflicts they haven't yet solved. Physicists disagree about the origins of the universe. Historians write conflicting accounts of Hitler's Germany; they debate how much his extreme anti-Semitism was traditional there. Two sociologists may scan the same figures on poverty and make different inferences from them. Typically, scholars draw conclusions that are open to challenge. They must explain why their judgments are sound. They expect to engage in reasoned debate with their colleagues. They see this as their field's best chance for truth.

In your classes, expect disagreements. They're crucial to learning in college. Often, classmates will voice ideas you don't immediately accept. Just as often, they'll hesitate to adopt some opinion of yours. Authors you read will deal with controversies, from their own points of view. As a writer yourself, you will enter debates and have to defend your stands.

No one naturally excels at this type of arguing. It takes practice. Our book is a series of opportunities to become skilled in this art. Our book's chief springboard for argument is works of literature. Those we include don't deliver simple straightforward messages. They offer puzzles, complications, metaphors, symbols, and mysteries. In short, they stress life's complexity. They especially encourage you to ponder multiple dimensions of language: how, for example, shifts of context can change a word's meaning. Each of our literary works calls for you to interpret. As you read the text, you must figure out various features of it. Then, other readers may not see the text as you do. So, next you'll argue for your view. Often you'll do this by composing essays and perhaps online posts. From Chapter 2 on, we offer strategies for you to argue about literature as a writer.

The Elements of Argument

This chapter is a general introduction to arguing. Let's start with an example: an article entitled "Disconnected Urbanism" by noted architecture critic Paul Goldberger (b. 1950). He wrote it for the February 22, 2003, issue of *Metropolis* magazine. Goldberger worries about cell phones. He believes they lead cities to lose a sense of community and place. At the time he wrote, these phones weren't yet packed with apps. Nor could they connect to the Internet. Still, they were a big development, which pained Goldberger. As you read, note his key points and his efforts to sway his readers to them. Afterward, we raise questions to help you study his text. Then, we refer to it as we explain the basic elements of argument.

PAUL GOLDBERGER Disconnected Urbanism

There is a connection between the idea of place and the reality of cellular telephones. It is not encouraging. Places are unique—or at least we like to believe they are—and we strive to experience them as a kind of engagement with particulars. Cell phones are precisely the opposite. When a piece of geography is doing what it is supposed to do, it encourages you to feel a connection to it that, as in marriage, forsakes all others. When you are in Paris you expect to wallow in its Parisness, to feel that everyone walking up the Boulevard Montparnasse is as totally and completely there as the lampposts, the kiosks, the facade of the Brasserie Lipp—and that they could be no place else. So we want it to be in every city, in every kind of place. When you are in a forest, you want to experience its woodiness; when you are on the beach, you want to feel connected to sand and surf.

This is getting harder to do, not because these special places don't exist or because urban places have come to look increasingly alike. They have, but this is not another rant about the monoculture and sameness of cities and the suburban landscape. Even when you are in a place that retains its intensity, its specialness, and its ability to confer a defining context on your life, it doesn't have the all-consuming effect these places used to. You no longer feel that being in one place cuts you off from other places. Technology has been doing this for a long time, of course—remember when people communicated with Europe by letter and it took a couple of weeks to get a reply? Now we're upset if we have to send a fax because it takes so much longer than e-mail.

But the cell phone has changed our sense of place more than faxes and computers and e-mail because of its ability to intrude into every moment in every possible place. When you walk along the street and talk on a cell phone, you are not on the street sharing the communal experience of urban life. You are in some other place—someplace at the other end of your phone conversation. You are there, but you are not there. It reminds me of the title of Lillian Ross's memoir of her life with William Shawn, *Here But Not Here*. Now that is increasingly true of almost every person on almost every street in almost every city. You are either on the phone or carrying one, and the moment it rings you will be transported out of real space into a virtual realm.

This matters because the street is the ultimate public space and walking along it is the defining urban experience. It is all of us—different people who lead different lives—coming together in the urban mixing chamber. But what if half of them are elsewhere, there in body but not in any other way? You are not on Madison Avenue if you are holding a little object to your ear that pulls you toward a person in Omaha.

The great offense of the cell phone in public is not the intrusion of its ring, although that can be infuriating when it interrupts a tranquil moment. It is the fact that even when the phone does not ring at all, and is being used quietly and discreetly, it renders a public place less public. It turns the boulevardier

into a sequestered individual, the flâneur into a figure of privacy. And suddenly the meaning of the street as a public place has been hugely diminished.

I don't know which is worse—the loss of the sense that walking along a great urban street is a glorious shared experience or the blurring of distinctions between different kinds of places. But these cultural losses are related, and the cell phone has played a major role in both. The other day I returned a phone call from a friend who lives in Hartford. He had left a voice-mail message saying he was visiting his son in New Orleans, and when I called him back on his cell phone—area code 860, Hartford—he picked up the call in Tallahassee. Once the area code actually meant something in terms of geography: it outlined a clearly defined piece of the earth; it became a form of identity. Your telephone number was a badge of place. Now the area code is really not much more than three digits; and if it has any connection to a place, it's just the telephone's home base. An area code today is more like a car's license plate. The downward spiral that began with the end of the old telephone exchanges that truly did connect to a place—RHineland 4 and BUTterfield 8 for the Upper East Side, or CHelsea 3 downtown, or UNiversity 4 in Morningside Heights—surely culminates in the placeless area codes such as 917 and 347 that could be anywhere in New York—or anywhere at all.

It's increasingly common for cell-phone conversations to begin with the question, "Where are you?" and for the answer to be anything from "out by the pool" to "Madagascar." I don't miss the age when phone charges were based on distance, but that did have the beneficial effect of reinforcing a sense that places were distinguishable from one another. Now calling across the street and calling from New York to California or even Europe are precisely the same thing. They cost the same because to the phone they are the same. Every place is exactly the same as every other place. They are all just nodes on a network—and so, increasingly, are we. [2003]

THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

1. Imagine that Goldberger could observe how people now use cell phones in places you ordinarily go, such as a college campus. To what extent would he see the kind of behavior that he worried about in his 2003 piece? How much evidence could he find for his argument that cell phones are diminishing people's sense of place and disconnecting them from one another?
2. Goldberger does not say much about the advantages of a cell phone. Which, if any, do you think he should have mentioned, and why? How, if at all, could he have said more about the advantages while still getting his readers to worry about these phones?
3. Goldberger wrote before smartphones came along, enabling use of apps and the Internet. In what ways, if any, does this newer technology affect your view of his argument?
4. As he indicates by including the word *urbanism* in his title, Goldberger is chiefly concerned with how cell phones affect their users' experiences of

do you think he would have changed his argument in some way? If so, in what respect?

5. It seems quite possible that Goldberger himself uses a cell phone. If this is the case, does it make his concern less valid? Why, or why not? Moreover, he does not end his piece by proposing that humanity abandon the technology. Why, conceivably, does he avoid making this recommendation? What might he want his readers to do instead?

Goldberger's article is an example of **rhetoric**. This is a term from ancient Greek. It means writing, speech, and visual images used for a certain purpose: to affect how people think and act. Rhetorical texts don't just convey a message. They aim to *shape* beliefs and conduct. Often they're efforts to *alter* these things. Probably several of Goldberger's readers are joyously addicted to cell phones; he nudges them to reconsider their overattachment.

A related term is the **rhetorical situation**. It's the specific context you have in mind when you engage in rhetoric. Major circumstances include the following:

- **The particular topic you choose.** It may already interest the public. The December 2012 massacre of children in Newtown, Connecticut, immediately provoked disputes over gun control, school safety, mental illness, and screen violence. But the topic needn't be a calamity. When Goldberger wrote, cell phones were booming as a trend, so their effects were debated a lot. He didn't have to alert his readers to this subject or remind them of it. Other writers must do one or the other. This was the situation for legal scholars Woodrow Hartzog and Evan Zelinger in 2013, when they posted an online argument about Facebook. At the time, people worried that Facebook's privacy protocols wouldn't securely protect users' personal data. Hartzog and Zelinger deliberately shift to another subject. They recommend thinking less about *privacy* and more about *obscurity*, which they note is a word "rarely used" in debates about Facebook's risks. To them, *privacy* is so vague a concept that brooding about how the site guards it is futile. They call for pushing Facebook to keep personal facts *obscure*: "hard to obtain or understand" when cyberstalkers hunt them.
- **The main readers, listeners, or viewers you decide to address; your audience.** Goldberger wrote for readers of the city-oriented magazine *Metropolis*. Its mission statement declares that it "examines contemporary life through design," publishing articles that "range from the sprawling urban environment to intimate living spaces to small objects of everyday lives." This magazine also seeks to put design in "economic, environmental, social, cultural, political, and technological contexts." Readers of *Metropolis* would expect it to probe cell phones' impact on cities. Perhaps Goldberger hoped his piece would someday circulate more widely, as it now does on the Web. But surely his target group loomed in his mind as he decided

■ **Possible “channels” for the text.** These include available institutions, media, and genres. Goldberger composed his article for a particular magazine. He used the medium of print. He resorted to a specific genre: the type of writing often called an opinion piece. Such choices do constrain an author. Writing for *Metropolis* forced upon Goldberger certain space limits; otherwise, he might have lengthened his argument. Today a critic like him might film a video for YouTube, perhaps showing callers so absorbed in their cell-phone conversations that they forget friends alongside them.

Current politicians fling the word *rhetoric* as an insult. They accuse their rivals of indulging in it. They treat the word with contempt because they think it means windy exaggeration. But before the modern age, it meant something nobler. Rhetoric was the valuable attempt to influence readers, listeners, or viewers. In this sense, almost all of us resort to rhetoric daily. We need to learn rhetorical strategies if we're to have impact on others. For centuries, then, schools have seen rhetoric as a vital art. They've deemed it important to study, practice, and teach. In ancient Greece and Rome as well as Renaissance Europe, it was a core academic subject. American colleges of the nineteenth century also made it central. This focus survives in many courses today, especially ones about writing or speech. Our book reflects their commitment to rhetoric, especially through our advice about writing.

Within the field of rhetoric, arguments are a more specific category. They involve eight basic elements. When you argue, you attempt to **persuade** an **audience** to accept your **claims** regarding an **issue**. To achieve this aim, you present **evidence**, explain your **reasoning**, rely on **assumptions**, and make other kinds of **appeals**. The boldfaced words play key roles in this book; we mention them often. Here we briefly explain them, using them to make suggestions for writing an argument. Taking Goldberger's piece as a sample, we begin with *issue* and then move to *claims*, *persuasion*, *audience*, *evidence*, *reasoning*, *assumptions*, and *appeals*. We'll return to these elements in Chapter 2, where we explain their role in arguments about literature.

ISSUES

An **issue** is a question not yet settled. People have disagreed—or might disagree—over how to answer it. Goldberger's question seems to be this: How are cell phones transforming culture? But he doesn't state his question flat out. He presumes his readers will guess it. Other writers of arguments put their questions plainly. They want to ensure their readers know them. This seems Jeremy Rozansky's goal in an argument he wrote for the January 19, 2013, issue of *The New Atlantis*. His article's topic is steroid-using athletes. To him, debates about men like Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens focus too much on whether they played “fair” or are naturally talented. Rozansky calls for thinking about something else: “What are athletes doing when they play sports, and what are we watching when we watch?” His own answer is “a certain kind of human

But notice that he bluntly announces his question to begin with. By doing this, he stresses it. He signals that it's the most important issue raised by the steroid scandals.

When you write an argument, readers should find your main issue significant. It must be a question they believe is worth caring about. Sometimes they immediately see its value. But often you'll need to explain what's at stake. Scholars of rhetoric describe the task as establishing the issue's exigence, the urgency or importance of the situation. Goldberger brings up exigence at the start of his fourth paragraph. There he states that on city streets, the use of cell phones “matters,” for “the street is the ultimate public space and walking along it is the defining urban experience.”

For another statement of exigence, let's turn to a 2013 piece from the online magazine *Slate*. It's about a strange topic: animals put on trial. Author James McWilliams points out that in 1457, a French village brought a sow and six piglets to court, charging them with killing a boy. The piglets were declared innocent; the sow was found guilty and hanged. McWilliams notes that this was just one of many animal trials in past ages. Then, he states his chief issue: “What are we to make of this evidence that our ancestors imputed to animals a sense of moral agency?” McWilliams realizes that his readers may find his question trivial. They may not see its relevance to the present. So he states the question's stakes: “These seemingly odd trials have much to teach us about how fundamentally our relationship with animals has changed and how, more poignantly, we've lost the ability to empathize with them as sentient beings.” McWilliams goes on to praise how courts of the past treated animals. Even guilty verdicts respected these creatures, he says. Putting them on trial credited them with powers of thought and the potential to act well. McWilliams wants modern humans to adopt the same attitude. At present, he believes, they treat animals as objects. Whether or not you agree with McWilliams, he resembles Goldberger in stating why his issue matters.

CLAIMS

Perhaps you associate the word claims with insurance companies. It's familiar as a term for the forms you fill out when someone bashes your car. You may not be used to calling other things you say or write *claims*. But even when you utter a simple observation about the weather—for instance, “It's beginning to rain”—you make a claim. A **claim** is a statement that is spoken or written so that people will think it true. With this definition in mind, you may spot claims everywhere. Most of us make them every day. Most claims are accepted as true by the people to whom we make them. Imagine how difficult life would be if the opposite were so. Human beings would constantly fret if they distrusted everything told them.

But claims may conflict with other claims. We've defined an *issue* as a question with various debatable answers. *Claims*, as we use the term, are the debatable answers. In this sense, most of Goldberger's statements are claims.

start of paragraph 6. There he argues that cell phones are prime forces in a pair of "cultural losses." These are "the loss of the sense that walking along a great urban street is a glorious shared experience" and "the blurring of distinctions between different kinds of places." Readers might object to Goldberger's view in various ways. Some might argue that neither of these losses has occurred. Others might say that these losses have happened but that cell phones didn't cause them. So, Goldberger has more work to do. Like all debatable statements, his requires support.

When you write a college paper, typically you'll raise an issue. Then, you'll make one main claim about it. This can also be called your thesis, a term you may know from high school. It won't be your *only* point. You'll make smaller claims as your essay continues. But stating your main claim, and remaining focused on it, will be important.

PERSUASION

It's commonly assumed that if two people argue, they are dogmatic. Each insists on being proclaimed correct. But at its best, argument involves efforts to **persuade**. You argue in the first place because you want others to accept your claims. Yet you can't expect them to applaud at once. To attempt **persuasion** is to concede that your claims need defense. Goldberger knew that much of his readership adored the phones that disturb him. He'd have to justify his stance.

Most likely he figured that he couldn't turn all the fans into critics. Such conversions can be hard to pull off. But he could pursue a more modest goal: showing that his claims merit study. Whether or not they gained approval from everyone, he could make them seem reasonable. Probably he'd be happy if a reader said, "I'm fonder of cell phones than Goldberger is, but I can't dismiss his criticisms. I'm willing to keep reflecting on them." A response like this can be your aim, too. Realistically, persuasion doesn't mean everyone eventually agrees with you. An argument you write may leave some readers maintaining another view. But you've done much if they conclude that your ideas are credible—worth their bearing in mind.

AUDIENCE

The word **audience** may first make you think of people at plays, concerts, movies, or lectures. Yet it also describes readers. Not everything you write is for other human eyes; in college courses, you may produce notes, journal entries, blog posts, and essays for yourself alone. But in most any course, you'll also do public writing. You'll try to persuade audiences to accept claims you make.

This task requires you to consider more than your subject. You must take your readers into account. McWilliams realized that his audience wouldn't know about animal trials. He'd have to begin with anecdotes explaining what these hearings were like. By contrast, Goldberger's average readers would be aware of cell phones. Also, he supposed that they had a certain vocabulary—that they knew "boulevardier" and "flaneur" meant someone who likes to ex-

background
knowledge
vocab

plore city streets. Evidently he saw his audience, too, as holding two beliefs about cell phones. One is that they help people connect. The other is that they make private life more public, for chatter on them is often overheard. Deliberately, Goldberger challenges both ideas. He argues that because cell phones distract people from their surroundings, they lead to "disconnected urbanism" and turn "a public place less public." Unfortunately, sometimes your audience will have a vaguer profile than his. You may have to guess what your target group knows, assumes, and values.

beliefs &
value

EVIDENCE

Evidence is support you give your claims so others will accept them. What sort of evidence must it be? That depends on what your audience expects. Disciplines differ in this respect. In literary studies, claims about a text seem more plausible if they're backed by quotations from it. (We discuss this standard more in Chapter 2.) Scientists must not only conduct experiments, but also describe them so that others can repeat them and see if the results are the same. Anthropologists feel pressured to base their conclusions on field research. Not that your audience will always be academic scholars. It can easily be more diverse. Goldberger's audience included experts in design, but also nonprofessionals with interests like theirs. In short, his readership was mixed.

To persuade this group, Goldberger offered two kinds of evidence. His climax is a personal tale, about a Hartford-based friend of his who called him from New Orleans and then from Tallahassee. Clearly Goldberger wanted his audience to find this story typical of modern life. He hoped it would serve as what rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke calls a *representative anecdote*. Its effect would be to reinforce his claim that cell phones ruin callers' sense of place. In addition, Goldberger presses his readers to consult their *own* experiences. He bids them recall how *they've* used cell phones on city strolls. At such moments, he seeks to remind them, they "are not on the street sharing the communal experience of urban life." Similarly, he prods them to remember how "increasingly common" it is "for cell-phone conversations to begin with the question, 'Where are you?' and for the answer to be anything from 'out by the pool' to 'Madagascar.'"

As a writer, you might have to guess your audience's standards of proof. You'll be influenced by experiences you've had with such readers. Perhaps you'll also have opportunities to review drafts with them.

REASONING

Philosopher Gary Gutting observes that "facts alone are necessary but not sufficient for a good argument. As important as getting the facts right is putting the facts into a comprehensible logical structure that supports your conclusion." This advice can help you as you strive to persuade others through writing. Besides evidence, your readers will expect you to show careful reasoning. Ideally, they'll come away feeling that your ideas truly connect. They should

sense that your main claim derives from your other ones. Goldberger's logic seems this:

People should sense the distinctiveness of a place and feel a bond with other people there.

These things should especially happen on a city street, which is "the ultimate public space."

For the last several years, these things have been threatened by faxes, computers, and e-mail, which speedily link people to some other place than the one where they actually are.

The cell phone is a more dramatic development in technology, however, for it can "intrude into every moment in every possible place."

Cell phones let people make contact with other places quickly and easily, so that one result is "the blurring of distinctions between different kinds of places." Indeed, these devices even render area codes meaningless. Furthermore, they prevent a city street from being "a glorious shared experience."

Therefore, cell phones are a "major" factor in two big "cultural losses."

Goldberger doesn't arrange these ideas as a list. He might bore readers if he did! Still, ideally readers will see his claims as a methodical sequence. When you write an argument, guide your audience step by step through your reasoning. Help them follow your logic. Make your essay seem an orderly train of thought.

ASSUMPTIONS

Already we've mentioned certain **assumptions** of Goldberger's. But other beliefs appear to have steered him. They include some that readers may reject. Assumptions behind an argument may be numerous and debatable. That's why we single them out as an element here.

One category is beliefs about the audience's *experiences*. As Goldberger asks his readers to imagine "When you are in Paris," he supposes that all of them have visited Paris or might go there some day. Another type of assumption concerns the writer's *values*. When Goldberger laments cities' loss of uniqueness, he assumes that uniqueness is good. A third type is what rhetorical theory calls *warrants*. This term refers to the writer's beliefs about what can serve as evidence. Recall that Goldberger climaxes his argument with a personal story. He relies on a warrant when he offers this tale. It's the assumption that the story is evidence for his argument's main claim.

We can imagine readers skeptical about these premises. If low-wage workers saw Goldberger's reference to Paris, they might grumble or scoff. How could they ever afford to go there? Others may believe that uniqueness isn't always a

benefit. Similarly, for some of Goldberger's audience, his personal story may lack weight. As author, Goldberger must decide which of his assumptions are *safe* or *trivial*—and which, if any, he has to state and defend.

When you write an argument, try to identify its assumptions. Detecting them isn't always easy. You may need to have friends and classmates read each of your drafts. But the effort pays. Growing alert to a premise helps you anticipate challenges to it. You can then revise to head off these criticisms.

APPEALS

To make their arguments persuasive, writers employ three basic kinds of appeals. Rhetorical theory calls them **logos**, **ethos**, and **pathos**, terms drawn from ancient Greek. In practice, they don't always play equal roles. An argument may depend on one or two of these strategies, not the entire trio. But all three are potential resources.

In a way, we've already introduced **logos**. The term refers to the logical substance of an arguer's case. When you rely on logos, you focus on showing your claims are sound. You do this by emphasizing your evidence and your reasons. Most audiences will demand anyway that these features be strong. No surprise, then, that logos is the most common type of appeal.

Ethos often operates, too. When applied to writing, this term refers to the image you project as an author. Actually, there are two types of ethos. One is your audience's image of you before you present your analysis. It's your prior reputation. Many readers of *Metropolis* know that Paul Goldberger is a leading, Pulitzer Prize-winning critic of architecture. Their awareness inclines them to respect his arguments, whether or not they agree with him. Advertisers have reputational ethos in mind when they hire celebrities for endorsements. The hope is that you'll join Weight Watchers because Jennifer Hudson did. This ethos also comes into play with self-help manuals. Often their covers boast that the writer is an academic. You're supposed to buy *How to Find Lovers by Loving Yourself* because its author has a Ph.D.

Most of us, however, aren't famous or highly credentialed. There remains a second kind of ethos: the picture of you that people form as they read your text. To gain their trust, you should patiently lay out your claims, reasons, and evidence. This is what Goldberger does. True, cell phones bother him enough that he uses the word *offense* and points out that their ring "can be infuriating." But he doesn't lash out against them. He avoids blatant, righteous anger. He signals that his argument won't become a "rant." He declares the phones' impact "not encouraging"—a fairly mild criticism. He doesn't demand they be smashed to bits. He simply mourns "losses" they cause.

When arguers are scornful, some of their audience may object. John Burt points out a problem that Stephen Douglas's ethos created in his famous debates with Abraham Lincoln. When the two men competed for a U.S. Senate seat in 1858, the main issue was slavery. On this topic, Douglas planned to come across as a seeker of compromise. But on stage he fiercely insulted Lincoln, showing nastiness and not tact. As Burt observes, "Douglas's own

management of his case was so intemperate, so inflammatory, and so personal that whatever case one could make for his position, he himself was the last person who could plausibly carry the day for that case.” Sometimes anger is right, especially when injustice must be noticed and stopped. But for much of your writing, especially in college, Goldberger’s tone will serve better.

Writers enhance their ethos through **concessions** and **qualifications**. Concessions are civil (or even kind or admiring) acknowledgments of views or experiences other than yours. One appears in Goldberger’s piece. Largely he claims that cell phones wreck people’s sense of place. But he does admit that unique geography survives to some extent. In paragraph 2, he notes that here and there you can find “a place that retains its intensity, its specialness, and its ability to confer a defining context on your life.” He’s quick to add that these settings fall short of an “all-consuming effect.” Nevertheless, he grants that they’ve somehow remained distinct. Most readers will like his recognizing this fact.

In rhetorical theory, qualifications aren’t credentials for a job. They are two kinds of words. One kind helps writers strengthen their claims. A common example is the word *very*, as in a sentence like “Cell phones are very bad for cities’ sense of community.” Yet many readers think terms of this sort are unnecessary. “Bad” is already emphatic; why stick “very” before it? The second kind of qualification has the opposite effect. Words in this category weaken a claim. They help writers sound cautious, often an attractive trait. Goldberger uses words of this type:

- In paragraph 1, where a more reckless writer might have simply declared “Places are unique,” he adds “or at least we like to believe they are.”
- In paragraph 3, he doesn’t just proclaim that *all* city dwellers have lost a sense of place. He makes use of the word *almost*, saying this is becoming the experience of “almost every person on almost every street in almost every city.”
- In paragraph 4, he resists generalizing about *every* inhabitant of a city. Instead, he asks “what if half of them are elsewhere, there in body but not in any other way?”
- In the next paragraph, he doesn’t claim that a cell phone’s ring is infuriating. Rather, he more softly notes that it “can be.”
- In paragraph 6, he doesn’t simply announce that an area code has become *just* a set of numbers. Rather, he laments that it “is really not much more than” them.

Such language makes Goldberger look careful. Similar terms include *probably*, *maybe*, *perhaps*, and *possibly*. These words suggest that the writer isn’t self-righteously certain. Take this claim from Hartzog and Zelinger’s article about Facebook: “Many contemporary privacy disputes are probably better classified as concern over losing obscurity.” With “probably,” the authors identify their claim as a hypothesis. They grant that it isn’t sure fact. Like Goldberger, they project restraint.

Pathos is an appeal to the heart. You find it in charities’ ads. Many show photos of suffering children—kids hungry, injured, or poor. These pictures are meant to rouse pity. If they succeed, viewers sob and donate. At other times, pathos stirs fear. Activists warn that if society ignores them, apocalypse will come. Pathos-filled arguments aren’t dry in tone. Their language expresses *moods*. Pathos targets its audience’s *emotions*. When you write such arguments, you push readers to *feel* the stakes of your issue. You hope they’ll *passionately* favor your claims. Sure, you risk sounding excessive: too sad, too mad, too scared, or too hurt. But pathos can be a respectable tool, as well as a powerful one. Plenty of subjects even demand an emotional tone. Readers expect essays on genocide to anguish over its victims. Further, pathos can join logos and ethos. Arguments that move readers may also awe them with logic; the author’s image may impress them, too.

Goldberger’s piece oozes despair and sorrow. He deeply regrets cell phones’ impact on cities and prods his audience to share his grief. He saves his most notable pathos for the end. There he claims that cell technology is turning all of us into “nodes on a network.” It’s a chilling final image. He wants to leave readers worried that cell phones will destroy their souls.

Developing an Effective Style of Argument

When you write an argument, you need to consider the elements we have discussed. Also good to study are features of an effective **style**. The words authors choose and the order they put them in are tools of style. Goldberger uses various tools to make his prose compelling. Try practicing these methods yourself:

Mark transitions. Readers want to know how each sentence relates to the ones immediately before and after it. Usually a word or two can show this. Goldberger’s second sentence starts with “It,” a pronoun that looks back to the previous sentence’s “connection.” Especially crucial is the language of shifts from one paragraph to the next. When Goldberger begins his third paragraph with “This is getting harder to do,” he builds on his second paragraph’s final point. Similarly helpful is the word that starts his third paragraph: “But.” It signals that this new paragraph turns from older technology to a new, more disturbing kind.

Create coherence by repeating words and by using similar words.

Readers appreciate signs that you have carefully focused and structured your argument. Through repeating its key words, you can show that it follows a coherent line of thought. Goldberger notably repeats “cell phones” and “places,” making clear that these are central concerns of his piece. More than once he uses “increasingly” when referring to cell phones’ impact. It pops up in paragraphs 2 and 3; then it appears twice in paragraph 7, his conclusion. By echoing this word, he stresses that he’s discussing an ongoing trend. Your audience will also sense organization if you use words related in meaning. Notice what Goldberger does in paragraph 1. Near its end, he uses “want” three times. But he previews this repetition with earlier language: what “we strive to experience”

and what “you expect to wallow in.” Together, these words stress that he’s consistently concerned with desire.

Balance the parts of a sentence. Look again at these two sentences from Goldberger:

When you are in a forest, you want to experience its woodsiness;
when you are on a beach, you want to feel connected to sand and surf. (para. 1)

It turns the boulevardier into a sequestered individual, the flaneur into a figure of privacy. (para. 5)

In each sentence, the parts balance. It’s an engaging feat. Readers like rhythmic symmetry. They won’t demand it of every sentence you write, but they’ll appreciate it when they see it.

Vary the lengths of sentences. A series of long sentences may confuse your readers, while also losing their attention. On the other hand, a series of short sentences may come across as choppy, obscuring how ideas connect. Usually, your audience will prefer variety. Try to mix sentence lengths, as Goldberger does here:

Once the area code actually meant something in terms of geography: it outlined a clearly defined piece of the earth; it became a form of identity. Your telephone number was a badge of place. Now the area code is really not much more than three digits; and if it has any connection to a place, it’s just the telephone’s home base. An area code today is more like a car’s license plate. (para. 6)

Even in long sentences, however, be as concise as possible. Don’t use more words than necessary; make each one count.

Use active verbs, not just passive ones. *Active* and *passive* are terms of grammar. When a verb is in active voice, the subject of that verb *performs an action*. When a verb is in passive voice, its subject is *acted upon*. The active tends to make a sentence more dramatic and concise. Also, it better identifies who or what is doing something. Interestingly, Goldberger uses active voice even when the verb’s subject is phone technology:

“the cell phone has changed our sense of place” (para. 3)

a cell phone “pulls you toward a person in Omaha” (para. 4)

“the cell phone has played a major role in both” (para. 6)

an area code “outlined a clearly defined piece of the earth” (para. 6)

“the old telephone exchanges that truly did connect to a place” (para. 6)

Notice, too, that at key points—the ends of paragraphs 3 and 5—he uses passive voice:

“the moment it rings you will be transported out of real space into a virtual realm” (para. 3)

“And suddenly the meaning of the street as a public place has been hugely diminished.” (para. 5)

In looking at these last two sentences, consider the alternatives: In active voice, “you” would *transport* something, rather than *be transported*. And something would *diminish* “the meaning of the street,” rather than that meaning’s *being* diminished. Goldberger’s use of the passive implies that we humans have lost control of our lives. Rather than *act*, we are *acted upon*. Specifically, we no longer take charge of “real space” or uphold “the meaning of the street.” When, by contrast, cell phones become subjects of his active verbs, Goldberger implies they rule us. Overall, his practice suggests that both kinds of voice are resources. Neither is *automatically* preferable. But of the two, active voice is of course more dynamic. And again, it identifies the action’s performer more clearly.

Use figurative language. Arguments may register more strongly with their audience if they explain ideas through figurative language. Such phrases can make concepts more vivid. Three main types are analogies, metaphors, and similes.

An **analogy** calls attention to a similarity between two things while still regarding them as largely distinct. Goldberger creates this analogy in paragraph 6: “An area code today is more like a car’s license plate.” He recognizes that an area code and a license plate are different in many ways. But he emphasizes what they have in common: both are numbers that fail to convey people’s current location. He also uses analogy in paragraph 1, when he explains how people can feel bonded to places. For him, this tie resembles marriage.

A **metaphor**, on the other hand, implies that two things are the same. An example appears in paragraph 6. Ordinarily, people assume that phone numbers and badges are quite different, but Goldberger blends them: “Your telephone number was a badge of place.” He resorts to metaphor, too, when he concludes by labeling all of us “nodes on a network.”

A **simile** also equates two things, but uses the word *like* or *as* to connect them. No similes appear in Goldberger’s text, but they might have:

Today, a cell phone is like a toothbrush. People think you’re uncivilized if you don’t own one, if you don’t use it daily, if you don’t think it fundamental to your health, and if you don’t replace it the moment it wears out.

Today, people walk along city streets gazing worshipfully down at their cell phone. This posture makes them look as if they are praying over rosary beads or a Bible.

Identify a word’s multiple meanings. Arguers perform a striking move when they seize upon a common word and show that it has more than one possible meaning. Goldberger does this in the middle of paragraph 3, with his sentence “You are there, but you are not there.” He has in mind two definitions of the ordinary word *there*. One deals with physical location. If a woman is walking through downtown Manhattan, she is literally “there.” The other

meaning is psychological connection. If the woman ignores her surroundings in favor of talking on her cell phone, to Goldberger she isn't "there" in Manhattan at all. He reinforces this distinction by noting that Lillian Ross's title implies there are also multiple meanings of the word *here*.

Create "perspectives by incongruity." This term, probably unfamiliar to you, was coined by Kenneth Burke. It refers to a certain means of provoking thought. To create a "perspective by incongruity" is to tamper with traditional oppositions. An example from Goldberger's text appears in paragraph 4. People assume that a typical city street is outdoors, but he describes it as a room. Specifically, he calls it a "chamber." With this metaphor, he presses his readers to associate the street with cozy domestic intimacy—an atmosphere he thinks is lost when walkers chat on their phones. He creates another "perspective by incongruity" at the end of the same paragraph. This one overthrows the usual contrast between what's small and what's powerful. Specifically, he imagines a scene on New York City's Madison Avenue. Even though you're walking there, "a little object"—a cell phone—"pulls you toward a person in Omaha." Ordinarily, people don't think little objects can exert such massive force. Goldberger stresses, however, that cell phones can spirit minds away. Actually, his whole article is a "perspective by incongruity," for it argues that phones *disconnect* people while supposedly linking them.

Sample Argument for Analysis

We've specified elements of argument and style. Now, try to spot their presence in the following opinion piece. "A New Moral Compact" was originally published in November 2012, right around Veterans' Day. The author, David W. Barno (b. 1954), is a retired lieutenant general. He served the U.S. Army in key leadership roles, his experiences including combat campaigns in Afghanistan, Grenada, and Panama. Barno is now Senior Advisor and Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security, a group whose mission is "to develop strong, pragmatic, and principled national security and defense policies." His article appeared simultaneously on the Center's Web site and in the digital edition of *Foreign Policy* magazine. Anyone might come upon his piece through a search engine. But probably he took his main audience to be elected officials, their staffs, other policy experts, military professionals, and academic scholars who study national defense.

As you read, consider the following questions:

- What is Barno's main *issue*, and what is his main *claim* about it?
- What smaller claims does he make as he develops his main one?
- Where in his article are you especially conscious of Barno's attempt-
ing *persuasion*?
- Where are you especially conscious of how Barno views his *audience*?
- What *evidence* does Barno offer?
- What are the steps in his *reasoning*?
- What are his major *assumptions*?

- To what extent does his argument rely on *logos*?
- To what extent might his *reputational ethos* matter to his readers?
- What sort of *ethos* does he create through his words?
- How much, and where, does his argument use *pathos*?
- What are some words he uses for *transitions*?
- What are some uses he makes of *repetition* and *words similar in meaning*?
- Which, if any, of his sentences strike you as *balanced* in their structure?
- To what extent does he *vary the lengths* of his sentences?
- What are some uses he makes of *active* and *passive* voice?
- Where, if anywhere, does he use *figurative language*, such as *analogies*, *metaphors*, and *similes*?
- Where, if anywhere, does he draw out a word's *multiple meanings*?
- Where, if anywhere, does he create a *perspective by incongruity*?

DAVID W. BARNO

A New Moral Compact

As our nation enters its second decade of armed conflict overseas, it is appropriate to reflect on the moral compact between our government, our people, and our soldiers. Eleven years of conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq, combined with the prospect for open-ended global warfare against terrorists, has blurred the lines between peace and war, perhaps forever. It has also effectively lowered our national threshold for decisions to conduct military operations or go to war. The reasons have as much to do with our declining personal stake in these conflicts as with the dangerous state of the world.

I recently attended an event honoring former Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge for his public service. Ridge came from a working class family, won a scholarship to Harvard, and went on to law school. Upon completing his first year, he unexpectedly received his draft notice from Uncle Sam. Tom Ridge did not seek to dodge his unwelcome summons. In his family, when you were called, you dropped whatever you were doing in your life and you went, as his father did in World War II. But as a Harvard grad and law student, he clearly had other options.

The Army decided to make Tom Ridge an infantryman. He soon became a sergeant and shipped out to Vietnam, where he joined the 101st Airborne for a year in combat from 1969 to 1970. None of the handful of young men he led in his small infantry rifle squad was a graduate of Harvard or any other college, but they were draftees from all social strata across the United States. Ridge observed: "The military is a great leveler. Nobody cares who you are, where you went to school, who your parents were. None of that mattered."

The only reason Ridge was in the Army and ultimately fought for a year in Vietnam was the draft lottery system. The Selective Service system randomly

assigned numbers to each draft age male by birth date in an annual “lottery”; depending on the needs of the war that year, if your number came up, you were called. Theoretically, your chances of being drafted as a college grad under the lottery system were equal to those of a high school drop-out born on the same date. In the real world, however, both college deferments (see: Dick Cheney, Bill Clinton) and clever manipulation of the system allowed many of the well-off and well-educated to avoid service altogether. And for each of those who side-stepped the call, some other, less fortunate young man was called up to take his place. Some of whom, of course, never came back—a sharp point little noted in discussions about the complex national legacy of the Vietnam War.

In the Vietnam era, draftees were called up for a maximum of two years of service, with one of those almost inevitably spent in Vietnam. And unlike in today’s “all-volunteer” military, no draftee was ever sent back to Vietnam for another tour unless he volunteered—probably with a voluntary re-enlistment for longer service. With draftees serving only two years in uniform, it would have been nearly impossible to send a soldier for a second 12-month combat tour within the scope of his two-year service obligation. It simply wasn’t done. If you were unfortunate enough to be drafted, you at least knew that the nation drew the line at one year of combat.

Contrast Tom Ridge’s world of 1969 with that of America’s combat soldiers today. In 2012, there is no draft, and our all-volunteer force has spent the last eleven years in prolonged, bloody ground wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Army of this era fields about 560,000 troops on active duty, in comparison to 1.2 million at the height of the Vietnam war. Nearly 3 million Americans are veterans of the post-9/11 wars, with large numbers having served multiple combat tours. It seems obvious that some of the stress on the force—manifested by unprecedented rates of suicide and creeping indiscipline—has come from these widespread repeat deployments, the likes of which no soldier of the Vietnam era ever involuntarily faced. In fact, even career officers and sergeants in the Vietnam-era force—distinct from the two-year draftees—rarely served more than two one-year tours in Vietnam over the entire course of that ten-year war.

In today’s military, it is not uncommon to see Army lieutenant colonels and senior sergeants deployed three or four times for 12- to 15-month combat tours over the past decade—a back-breaking, family-stressing commitment the likes of which we have never before asked of our men and women in uniform. Even in World War II, only a small fraction of our nearly 16 million uniformed men and women served more than three years in a combat zone, and the entire war was finished for the United States in 45 months. Our war in Afghanistan has lasted 134 months. It now has eclipsed the American Revolution and Vietnam as the longest war in U.S. history. Stuningly, sizable numbers of the very same sergeants and officers fighting the war today are the men and women that led the way into the earliest campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. If you are a career officer or NCO in today’s Army and Marines, by and large you either continue to deploy—or you leave the service. There are

few other options. Across our volunteer force, over 6,500 have been killed and more than 50,000 wounded since 2001. Consider the burden of that stark reality upon career military families.

Both of my sons have served one-year combat tours in Afghanistan. When our youngest son, an Army pilot, was called to go back after completing his first tour, I was suddenly angry. Not an anger that derived from misunderstanding our rotation system, nor from seeing the war as somehow unjust. My anger was visceral, unbidden, reflexive. And as I examined my unexpected reaction, it came down to this: my son was going back, yet 99 percent of his military age contemporaries were not—and never would, no matter how long the war lasted. Neither his civilian peers, their parents, nor their spouses or siblings would ever be exposed in any way to the gut-wrenching dangers of being in the middle of a lethal national enterprise. It simply wasn’t important enough for our nation to insist that all of us shared the sacrifice of unlimited liability that war demands from those who fight it. Having a cadre of admirably willing volunteers simply has made it too easy for us to go to war.

For we Americans as a people, that’s just wrong. There must be some limit to what we will ask of our men and women in uniform before the rest of us feel some moral obligation to step in. Tom Ridge—representing all of the people of the United States in 1969—got the telegram, put his life on hold, stepped forward and served in combat alongside a broad cross-section of America’s youth. Today, we call on no one to make this kind of sacrifice. We have even made that a matter of some pride, a nation that has moved beyond the dark days of “conscription.”

Yet at what point are we morally compelled to in some way expose every American family to our fights abroad, to invest some moral equity as a nation and a society into fighting our wars? Absent any prospect whatsoever for our current or future wars to touch any of us personally, where is the moral hazard—the personal “equity stake”—that shapes our collective judgment, giving us pause when we decide to send our remarkable volunteer military off to war? They are fully prepared to go—but they trust the rest of us to place sufficient weight and seriousness into that decision to ensure that their inevitable sacrifices of life and limb will be for a worthy and essential cause.

Throughout our history, American decisions on going to war have been closely connected to our people because they remain matters of life and death. And they were always seen as matters of deep import to the nation as a whole, since all could be called upon to fight. Today such profound decisions are all but free of consequences for the American people. When the lives and the deaths of our soldiers no longer personally impact the population at large, have we compromised our moral authority on war? How can our elites and our broader populace make wartime decisions in good conscience when those paying the price are someone else’s kids—but assuredly never their own?

The past ten years suggest that relying on a professional military comprised only of willing volunteers has eroded the core societal seriousness that we have always accorded to national decisions of war and peace. One wonders

if we would have entered our recent conflicts as quickly—or let them drag on so long—if our Army was filled with draftees, drawn from a random swath of families across all segments of America.

One policy to better connect our wars to our people might be to determine that every use of military force over 60 days would automatically trigger an annual draft lottery to call up 10,000 men and women. They would serve in every branch of service for the duration of the conflict, replaced by future draft tranches in limited, like-sized numbers. Ten thousand draftees would comprise only about 5 percent of the number of new recruits the military takes in each year, but they would signify a symbolic commitment of the entire nation. Every family in the country would now be exposed to the potential consequences of our wars and come to recognize in a personal way that they had a stake in the outcome. The national calculus on go-to-war decisions subtly changes when all families can be called upon to answer the call to arms.

In the last decade, war has become something done by “the 1 percent”—our rightly acclaimed force of volunteers—with 99 percent of America uninvolved, and sometimes seemingly uninterested. But with war becoming this easy, our historic caution in committing our troops abroad has frayed dramatically. Partly as a result, “America at war” is slowly becoming a permanent condition. We have gradually, almost imperceptibly, eroded the bonds of responsibility linking our soldiers, our people, and our government. It’s time to reestablish that moral compact between our people and our wars. [2012]

Writing a Response to an Argument

Often a college course will require you to read arguments. Just as often, you will respond to them by writing an argument yourself. As you compose your reactions to these texts, you will make, develop, and support claims. Here are some tips to help you:

- Before you write about the text, be sure you understand it in its entirety. Identify its main claim, its other claims, and how they all relate. In your essay, don’t treat these claims one by one in isolated fragments, stating your opinion of each. Instead, put in context any claim you discuss. Explain its role in the author’s overall reasoning process. You can begin to establish this larger framework in your introduction, by summarizing what the author basically argues.
- Perhaps you’ll disagree with the argument. Even then, show respect for its author. Avoid snarky remarks like “What planet is this guy on?” Audiences tend to prefer a more civil ethos. Calling the author stupid, evil, or crazy may drive your readers away. Let your tone suggest that you’re reflective, not mean.
- When you first read the argument, you may strongly approve or object. But don’t settle for extreme verdicts. Let your written response include concessions and qualifications, not just big evaluative claims. Your readers will appreciate learning what’s complex about the argument and how reactions to it can be mixed. Whatever your

attitude toward it, show the reasoning and evidence behind your view.

- When writing about the argument, refer to its author. Make this person the subject of several active verbs: for example, “Barno claims,” “Barno argues,” “Barno proposes,” “Barno calls for.” After all, the argument isn’t an orphan. Nor is it a random series of free-floating ideas. You’re studying an entire case put forth by a particular human being. Take opportunities to remind your readers—and yourself—of this fact. Start doing so with your introduction.
- For each sentence you write, make clear whose view it expresses. Are you conveying an idea brought up in the argument you’re analyzing, or is this your own idea? Help your readers distinguish between the two. If you write about Barno’s argument, for example, let them know when you’re reporting *his* claims and when you’re stating *yours*.
- Give your response a title that previews what you’ll say.

A Student Response to an Argument

The following essay demonstrates several of the strategies we’ve discussed in this chapter. The author, Justin Korzack, composed it for a course on debating social issues. Basically, he wrote an argument that reacts to Barno’s. To support his response, he investigated presidential history. Still, his essay isn’t a full-blown research paper, a genre we discuss in Chapter 6. Nor, probably, is it the finest response ever written. But it does perform moves worth adding to your rhetorical repertoire.

Justin Korzack

Professor Hartfield

English 111

10 April ----

How to Slow Down the Rush to War

In “A New Moral Compact,” David W. Barno worries about the United States’ current reliance on an all-volunteer military. He claims that this policy allows civilians to feel too complacent about the country’s committing itself to major hostilities. Barno is a retired lieutenant general with a substantial combat record. Therefore, you might assume that he himself is comfortable with war. But this is not so, at least with respect to our recent long-term conflicts. He feels that these engagements have had serious consequences for the professional soldiers required to carry them out. In his view, the public at large needs to become more aware of war’s human costs. To make all citizens more alert to these, he proposes “that every use of military force over 60 days would automatically trigger an annual draft lottery to call up 10,000