

College Writing 101

Arguing a Position ...



Why Argue?

Video: Excerpt from The Great Debaters



Arguing a Position ...

CLASS OUTLINE:

I. Attendance

II. Video: *How To Disagree Productively ...*

III. Lecture: *Arguing a Position* (Chapter 13: pps 156-182)

IV. The Assignment Guidelines – Why Argue?

Arguing a Position ...

IV. Lecture: *Defining* – 388-397

V. Lecture: *Classifying and Dividing* –
374-378

VI. Lecture: *Explaining Processes* –
414-418

VII. Conclusion.

Video: How to Disagree Productively ...



Arguing a Position ...

Everything we do presents some kind of argument, takes some kind of position.

Overt positions :

- *Everyone in the United states is entitled to affordable healthcare...*
- *The University needs to offer more language courses ...*

Arguing a Position ...

In college coursework, you are often asked to argue positions:

- *English should not be made the official language of the United States.*



Arguing a Position ...



Arguing a Position ...

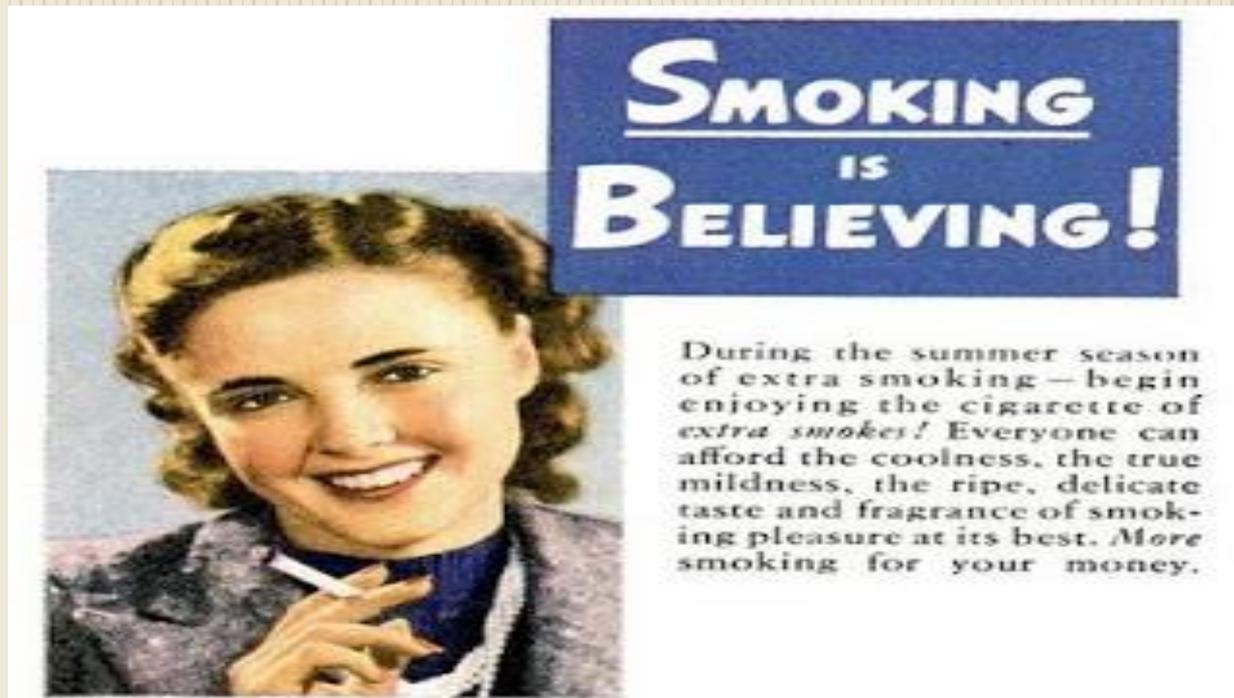
Review McKay's piece *Organ Sales Will*

Save Lives (pp. 156-161).

- McKay clearly states her position at the beginning of her text:
...Governments should not ban the sale of human organs; they should regulate it.

Arguing a Position ...

How well does she argue her position?



SMOKING
IS
BELIEVING!

During the summer season of extra smoking – begin enjoying the cigarette of *extra smokes!* Everyone can afford the coolness, the true mildness, the ripe, delicate taste and fragrance of smoking pleasure at its best. *More* smoking for your money.

Arguing a Position ...

Key Features of an Argument: **A Clear and Arguable Position-**

- At the heart of every argument is a claim with which people may reasonably disagree.
- To be arguable, a position must reflect one of at least two points of view, making reasoned argument necessary.

Arguing a Position ...

- In McKay's essay, she argues that *...selling human organs should be legal...* She could also have argued that it should be illegal.
- In college writing, you will often argue not that a position is correct but that it is **plausible (reasonable, supportable and worthy of being taken seriously)**

Arguing a Position ...

Necessary Background Information

We need to provide some background on a topic we are arguing so that readers can understand what is being argued.



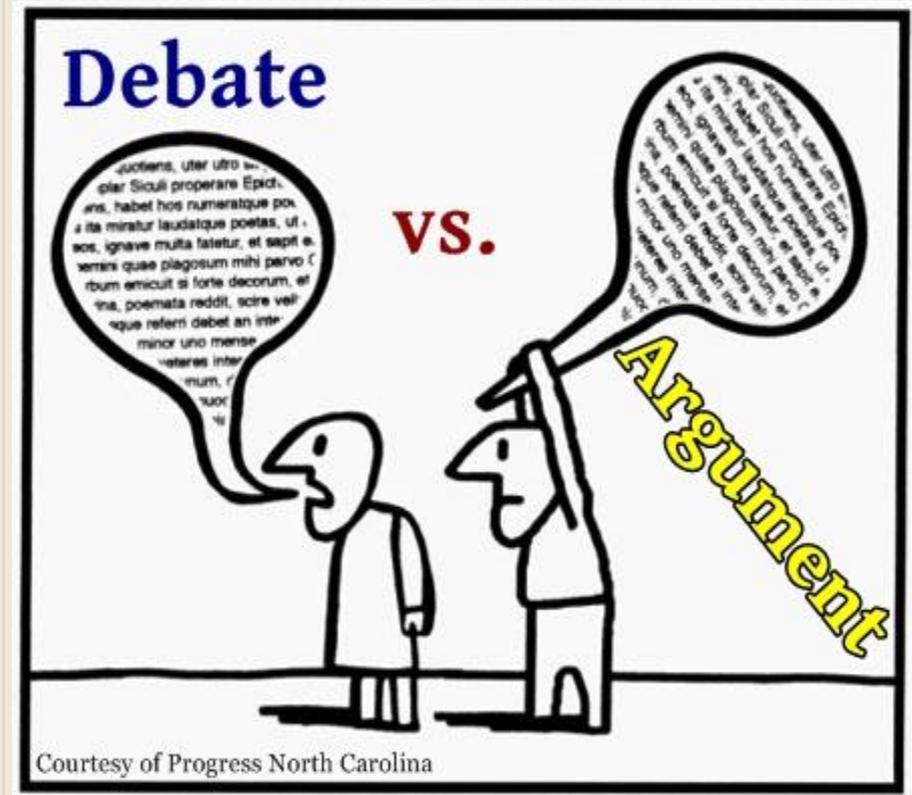
Arguing a Position ...

- *McKay* establishes the need for kidney donors before launching her argument for legalizing the selling of arguments.

Arguing a Position ...

Good Reasons –

- *A position does not make an argument; the argument comes when a writer offers (good) reasons to back the position up.*



Arguing a Position ...

- McKay bases her argument in favor of legalizing the sale of human organs on the fact that kidney transplants save lives and that regulation would protect impoverished people who currently sell their organs on the black market.

Arguing a Position ...

Convincing Evidence-

● Offer evidence for your reasons:

facts, statistics, expert testimony, anecdotal evidence, case studies and textual evidence.



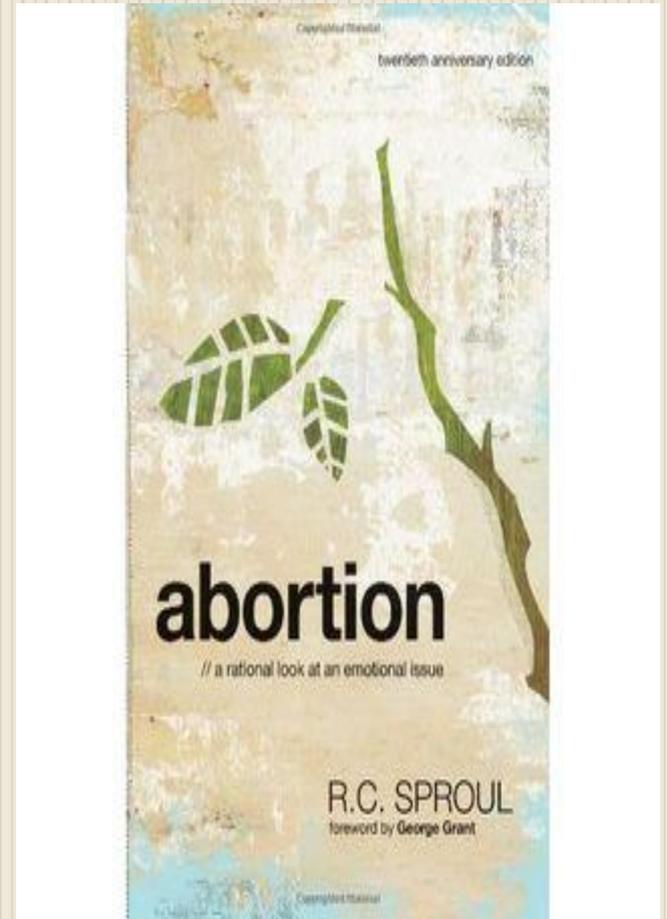
Arguing a Position ...

McKay cites statistics about Americans who die from renal failure to support her argument for legalizing organ sales.

Arguing a Position ...

Appeal to Readers' values-

- Effective arguments appeal to readers' values and emotions...
- Some of McKay's evidence appeals to emotions – her descriptions of people dying from kidney disease ...



Arguing a Position ...

and of poor people selling their organs are likely to evoke an emotional response in many readers.

Arguing a Position ...

Trustworthy Tone –

- Often, arguments stand or fall on the way readers perceive the writer.
- Readers need to trust the person making the argument.

Arguing a Position ...

- Demonstrate that you know what you are talking about...

- Show that you are fair, honest and have some experience with the subject



"I get my best ideas in airports, peeking at other people's laptops."

Arguing a Position ...

Demonstrate a careful consideration of other positions –

- Others may disagree, offer counterarguments or hold other positions. Consider other views by acknowledging and refuting (if possible) in your argument

Arguing a Position ...

- McKay acknowledges that some believe that selling one's organs is unethical, but she counters that it's usually healthy, affluent people who say this-not people who need the money they could get by selling one.

Arguing a Position ...

Writing Arguments:

Choosing a Topic

- Stay away from widely debated topics
- Choose a topic that interests you right now
- Choose a topic that is focused (not too narrowly)

A = argument

C = claim

E = evidence

S = summarize

Arguing a Position ...

- Choose a topic that has some personal connection to your life.
- One way to do so is to explore the roles in your life... pps 171-172 (personal, family, public and school)

Arguing a Position ...

Identify issues that interest you...

- (Select 4/5 roles from your list and identify the issues that affect you as a member of each of those roles).

Arguing a Position ...

Frame Your Topic as a Problem

- What causes the parking problem in our town?
- Why is the town's parking facility so limited?
- What might help to alleviate this shortage?

Choose one issue to write about

Arguing a Position ...

Consider the Rhetorical Situation.

- **Purpose** – What do you want to persuade your audience to do or think?
- Do you want to change their minds?
Consider alternative views?
- Accept your position as plausible?

Arguing a Position ...

- **Audience** – To what extent are they likely to agree or disagree with you? What common ground can you find with them?
- **Stance** – What is your attitude toward your subject (how would you like to be perceived)?
Calm, reasonable, angry?

Arguing a Position ...

- **Media/Design** –
consider font/text

Arguing a Position ...

Generating Ideas and Text (pps 173-177)

Once you have selected your topic, consider the following:

1. Explore what you already know about the issue
1. Do some research

Arguing a Position ...

3. Explore the issue strategically
4. Reconsider whether the issue can be argued.
5. Draft a thesis
6. Qualify the thesis

Arguing a Position ...

6. Come up with Good Reasons

7. Develop Support for Your Reasons

8. Identify other Positions

9. Acknowledge other Positions

10. Refute other Positions

Arguing a Position ...

Conclusion:

1. Review of Assignment Guidelines

2. Wednesday's Class Overview:

Lecture: Ways of Organizing an Argument.

*Discussion: Developing Your Introduction &
Writing out your Draft*

*Lecture: Synthesizing Sources: Quoting, Summarizing and
Paraphrasing.*

Overview: The Rough Draft Presentation Outline

Next Class:

Arguing a Position ...

CLASS OUTLINE-

I. Attendance

II. Essay #3 is being completed.

III. *Lecture*: Ways of Organizing an Argument

IV. *Writing Workshop*: Writing out your Draft /Developing Your Introduction

V. *Lecture*: Synthesizing Sources: Quoting, Summarizing and Paraphrasing.

VI. Rough Draft Presentation Outline

V. Conclusion

Arguing a Position ...

I. Ways of Organizing an Argument (pps177-178)

**See On line Textbook Visual*

Arguing a Position ...

II. Writing Out Your Draft – Developing Your Introduction...

**See On line Textbook Visual*

Arguing a Position ...

III. Synthesizing Sources*

**See On line Textbook Visual*

Arguing a Position ...

IV. The Rough Draft Presentation (Outline)

- A good oral presentation will:
- Summarize your research succinctly: stating your thesis, argument and purpose,
- Present the evidence that supports your thesis
- Point out any conclusions you have reached
- Explain the larger significance of your research for your field

<https://www.valpo.edu/undergraduate-research/resources/oral-presentation-guidelines/>

Arguing a Position ...

IV. The Rough Draft Presentation (Outline)

1. Topic/Title (1pt)
2. Thesis: Your Argument (2pts.)
3. Main Reasons(at least 3) used to Support your argument & Counterargument/s (4 pts.)
4. Sources Used (1pt)*Include 2-4 slides in your presentation to give students a visual of your work. (2 pts.)

Defining ...

- Defining something says what it is – and what it is not.
- Writers need to define any terms that their readers may not know. Sometimes, writers may want to ...

Defining ...

stipulate their own definition of a word in order to set the terms of an argument.

Types of Definitions:

Formal Definition – When using a technical term that readers are unlikely to know or if you are using it in a specific way, you need to say (then and there) what the word means.

Defining ...

To write a formal definition...

- Use words that readers are likely to be familiar with
- Don't use the word being defined in the definition
- Begin with the word being defined, include the general category to which the term belongs and the attributes that make it different than the others in that category

Defining ...

For example:

- **Term – Astronomers are**
- **General Category – scientists**
- **Distinguishing Attributes – who study celestial objects and phenomena.**

Defining ...

Extended Definitions -

Sometimes you need to provide a more detailed definition. Extended definitions may be several sentences long or several paragraphs long and may include pictures or diagrams

Defining ...

Sometimes an entire essay is devoted to defining a difficult or important concept

- Extended Definitions (pps 390-91).
- Explore the word's origins (pps 392)

Defining ...

- Provide Details (pps394)
- Compare it with other words (pps394)
- Give Examples (pps395)
- Classify it (pps396)

Defining ...

Stipulative Definitions -

Sometimes a writer will stipulate a certain definition, essentially saying, *This is how I am defining it.*

Defining ...

- Such definitions are not usually found in a dictionary – and at the same time are central to the argument the writer is making.
- Review Morrison's example of "Race Talk " on pp. 396-397

Defining ...

Consider the Rhetorical Situation:

- Would writing an extended definition help explain something (purpose)?
- Are there any terms your reader may not know (audience)?

Defining ...

- Does your genre require you to define terms?
- Do you need to define key terms to support your stance clearly?

Classifying and Dividing
Classifying and dividing
are ways
of organizing information.

- **Classifying** – when we classify something we group it with similar things (See pps 374-375).

Classifying and Dividing

- **Dividing/Division** - is a way of breaking something into parts, and a way of making information easy for readers to follow.
-
- See example of Children's Ways of Nagging (pps 375-376)

Classifying and Dividing

● **Creating Clear and Distinct Categories**

- When you classify or divide, you need to create clear and distinct categories.
- These categories must be distinct so that no information overlaps or fits into more than one category.

Explaining Processes ...

- When you explain a process, you tell **how something is or was done**, or you tell someone **how to do something**.

Explaining Processes ...

Explaining How Something is Done-

- When you explain how something is done, you describe each step, generally in order.

Explaining Processes ...

Explaining How to do Something-

- In explaining how to do something, you are giving instruction so that others can follow the process themselves.

Reminders

Conclusion:

In our next class we will discuss the research process.