

## ARGUMENTATION & PERSUASION

The purpose of persuasive speaking and writing is to provide reasons, facts, details and examples to support a claim. Your goal is to convince the audience that your position is logical and reasonable. Persuasive pieces also convince the audience to take action to change beliefs & actions.

### Conventional Argumentation

- Arguments fall along a spectrum from **cool** (logical, objective, supported with facts) to **hot** (passionate, subjective, supported with personal experience and stories)
- We form most arguments **inductively** (draw a probable conclusion based upon a sufficient, representative, relevant array of facts/evidence).
- On rare occasions, we can draw conclusions **deductively** (draw a certain conclusion based upon a syllogism whereby the major premise is a generalization, the minor premise is a specific case, and both premises are true)

### Elements & Structure of an Inductive Argument:

1. **Make a Claim:** state the position or claim being argued for; the conclusion of the argument
2. **Backed by Reasons:** the justification, reasons to back up the claim's position
3. **Supported through Evidence:**
  - offer supporting evidence that bolsters the claim, including facts, statistics, examples, illustrations, analogies, and expert opinions
  - make only proper appeals to emotions through valid, relevant anecdotes, commonly held values, beliefs, traditions, and customs
4. **Limited by a Qualifier:** specify the limits to claim; conditions under which the claim is true
5. **Anticipate Opposing View's Counterarguments:**
  - acknowledge that reasonable people may disagree with an arguable thesis
  - fairly summarize opposing viewpoints by explaining the main argument of opponents' view; never choose their weakest argument to counter (straw man)
  - demonstrate to listener that your argument is 'balanced' and/or 'fair'
6. **Make Concessions:** (concede, acknowledge, or compromise) about the validity of certain aspects of an opponent's viewpoint to build **common ground** with listeners who may not agree with your argument initially, but whom you may win over with compelling reasons
7. **Make a Rebuttal against counterarguments:** (disprove through argumentation) the counterargument by demonstrating that the main aspects of the counterargument are less convincing than your position
8. **Call for Action** as final message of conclusion

### Strong Arguments:

- argue for an idea or plan of action and not merely against one
- **avoid universals** such as "all," "always," "no one," "none," "never;" instead, **use qualifiers** "some" "many" "often" )
- avoid platitudes and clichés (overused generalizations; language meant to sound grand and important but that is lacking in specific ideas, such as "The grass is always greener..." or "Boys will be boys.")
- avoid **logical fallacies** – unreasonable argumentative tactics that intentionally mislead and misrepresent legitimate argumentative strategies

## **Persuasive Argument Outline:**

### **Introduction**

- Hook that creates exigency (urgency – why is this issue important to me right now)
- Background scope of issue – briefly establish the two sides of the issue; why it's debatable
- Thesis that presents your angle/position on the issue (including a call to action); a qualifier (infers your counterargument); & preview of your 2 main reasons

### **Body**

- Reason #1 (first reason listed in thesis)
- Support evidence 1, 2, 3
- Reason #2 (second reason listed in thesis)
- Support evidence 1, 2, 3
- Counterargument (Inferred in thesis by qualifier)
- Counterargument, concession with evidence, and rebuttal with evidence

### **Conclusion**

- Restate thesis
- Restate main reasons
- Return to hook
- Call to action specific for what 9<sup>th</sup> graders can do to advance their overall CTA