



## **The Rogerian Argument**

### **What is a Rogerian Argument?**

The Rogerian form of argument was created by Carl Rogers, a psychologist, and is one of several models or philosophies. Rogers's theory of argument was that the arguer who wishes to convince another person should minimize any possibility of hostility to the argument. His goal was that the two sides should solve the problem together. Both arguers should qualify their arguments and understand the validity of the other side.

Those who are in favor of this kind of argument usually contrast it with the Toulmin, based on the Aristotelian, which is more confrontational and refutes the other side as unacceptable. The Rogerian model respects and accepts other truths and is particularly useful when the topic has the possibility of becoming emotional and/or hostile. The ultimate goal is to reach a compromise based on common ground between the sides.

### **How Do I Write a Rogerian Argument?**

Most Rogerian arguments for college writing are organized in the following way:

1. The introduction should begin by catching the reader's interest. Then the writer immediately states the issue or problem and how it impacts both sides, using totally neutral language. The introductory paragraph/s should be comprehensive and long enough to cover the topic and both sides thoroughly.
2. In the next part, the writer describes the opposing side, still using neutral language in order not to misrepresent the opposition. The primary purpose of this section is to acknowledge the validity of the opposing side's support and evidence.
3. In this part, the writer finally has a chance to present his or her argument. However, he or she must again maintain a fair and balanced tone, dispassionately presenting his or her evidence and support. This section of the Rogerian is crucial to the acceptance of the writer's point of view as valid.



4. The final step in the Rogerian process is to find common ground between the opposing sides. The writer should consider alternative solutions on both sides of the problem in order to find a way to compromise. The writer's primary purpose in this part is to combine the positive ideas for solutions from each side and creatively convince the reader that each side will move toward the middle and meet in a beneficial compromise.

## **What does a Rogerian Argument Look Like?**

A brief outline of a Rogerian argument might look like this:

1. Catch the reader's interest. Introduce the issue or problem. Mention the two sides, but do so without bias or influence on the writer's side.
2. Give the point of view of the opposing side, always in nonjudgmental language.
3. Address the writer's point of view and reasons for supporting this side.
4. Find common ground between the two sides and then reach a compromise.

## **Internet Resources**

This **YouTube** video is a good and concise explanation of a Rogerian argument:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9knvRXU8zQ>

If you are having trouble choosing a topic for your Rogerian argument, try the **Essay Tips** website for a list of topics:

<http://tipsforresearchpapersandessays.blogspot.com/2008/11/rogerian-argument-topics.html>