

Toulmin Method of Argumentation Outline

Project's Claim: a controversial statement

- **Reason #1:** the first argument (line of reasoning) supporting the claim
 - **Warrant/Principle:** the connection between the first reason and the claim: (typically an assumption and is implicit)
- **Objection #1:** the first argument against your claim (you can argue against the reason, the warrant, the backing, and/or the evidence)

Rebuttal: your argument against the first objection

- **Evidence #1:** evidence to support the first reason
- **Evidence #2:** evidence to support the first reason
- **Evidence #3:** evidence to support the first reason

Reason #2: the second argument (line of reasoning) supporting the claim

- **Warrant/Principle:** the connection between the second reason and the claim: (typically an assumption and is implicit)
 - **Backing:** evidence to support the second warrant
- **Objection #2:** the second argument against your claim
 - **Rebuttal:** your argument against the second objection
- **Evidence #1:** evidence to support the second reason
- **Evidence #2:** evidence to support the second reason
- **Evidence #3:** evidence to support the second reason

Reason #3: the third argument (line of reasoning) supporting the claim

- **Warrant/Principle:** the connection between the third reason and the claim: (typically an assumption and is implicit)
 - **Backing:** evidence to support the third warrant
- **Objection #3:** the third argument against your claim
 - **Rebuttal:** your argument against the third objection
- **Evidence #1:** evidence to support the third reason
- **Evidence #2:** evidence to support the third reason
- **Evidence #3:** evidence to support the third reason

REFERENCE

Toulmin, S. (1964). *The Uses of Argument*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Project's Claim: Juicy Fruit is the Best Gum Ever!

Reason #1: Juicy Fruit is the best tasting gum.

- **Warrant/Principle:** Good gum must taste good.
 - **Backing:** (This is a pretty “well duh” warrant that probably wouldn’t need any backing. In other words, would anyone disagree with this warrant?)
- **Evidence #1:** Consumer Reports survey compared the taste of Juicy Fruit with other types of gum.
 - **Warrant/Principle:** People trust research done by the Consumer Reports magazine
 - **Backing:** Consumer Reports is not invested in the research. They do not care which gum tastes best.
 - **Backing:** Consumer Reports uses research methods that are sound.
 - **Backing:** Consumer Reports studies usually include a lot of people in the research; in other words, they don’t just ask ten people what they thing about the taste of different gums.
- **Evidence #2:** Juicy Fruit uses real fruit juice in the recipe.
 - **Warrant/Principle:** Real juices taste better than artificial flavors. (Compared to the backing for the warrant connecting the reason to the claim, this warrant might be up for debate. People might argue artificial flavors are crisper, creative, etc.)
 - **Objection:** Real juices do not necessarily taste better than artificial flavors. Today’s technology allows for well developed and distinguished artificial flavors.
 - **Rebuttal:** Most artificial flavored gums are very sweet; too sweet most of the time.
- **Evidence #3:** The flavor lasts longer.

Reason #2: Juicy Fruit blows the biggest bubbles.

- **Warrant/Principle:** Gum must blow bubbles.
 - **Objection:** Not all gum is meant to blow bubbles. Some gum is just to provide fresh breath.
 - **Rebuttal:** Gum that is only meant to provide fresh breath might as well be a breath mint. Gum is supposed to be elastic enough to chew; therefore, elastic enough to blow bubbles.
- **Warrant/Principle:** Big is always better.
 - **Backing:** (This is a warrant that is always at work in American Culture; think of “biggie size” combo meals and such.)
 - **Objection:** Big bubbles usually burst and make a mess everywhere.
 - **Rebuttal:** That is a problem with the individual blowing the bubbles. The point is that Juicy Fruit can make the biggest bubbles.
- **Evidence #1:** Survey of 20 friends with different types of gum. Juicy Fruit bubbles were biggest 8 out of 10 times.
 - **Warrant/Principle:** The results of studies are to be trusted and valued over mere opinion.
 - **Objection:** What was your methodology for conducting this study?

- **Rebuttal:** You describe the methods of your study, maybe citing sources about how/why this method is sound and valid.
- **Evidence #2:** A competitive gum bubble blower says so.
 - **Warrant/Principle:** Professionals have authoritative opinions (another “well duh” warrant).

Reason #3: Juicy Fruit stays soft and pliable.

- **Warrant/Principle:** A person can chew “good” gum for a long time without getting sore jaws.
 - **Backing:** evidence to support the third warrant
- **Evidence #1:** The same survey conducted on the 20 friends for blowing bubbles also evaluated pliability.
 - **Objection:** How do you measure “pliability”?
 - **Rebuttal:** The persons in the test would time how long it took for their jaws to get tired.
- **Evidence #2:** Juicy Fruit is softer right out of its package than other gums.
 - **Objection:** How do you measure “softness”?
 - **Rebuttal:** After opening up the gum, Juicy Fruit can be folded four times before it breaks. All the other gums could only be folded three times.

Source: [://www.mc.maricopa.edu/~rrodrigo/lessons/arrangement/toulmin.htm](http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/~rrodrigo/lessons/arrangement/toulmin.htm)

TOULMIN ARGUMENT

- Begins with a claim – the viewpoint or thesis that you want the readers to accept
- To accomplish a claim, you must provide compelling data (grounds or evidence) either taken from results of experiments, close observations, analyses, etc. (scientific, legal, forensic, testimonial / experimental, scholarly, statistical)
- Next, construct a warrant – a guarantee that the data is based on valid, sound sense (logical / scientific, ethical / forensic-based, emotional / artistic-based)
- Use backing, or further support, to elaborate and add “backing” to your warrant
- Lastly, add qualifiers to your claim – make an exception to show you acknowledge the other viewpoint. This prevents the claim from losing touch in complex situations.

To get started, imagine a situation:

While attending your last class on a Friday night, you look around and notice a very good-looking boy across the room. You don't know his name, what type of friends he has, which dorm he lives in, or anything about him. All you know is you'd like to get to know him! ... After class, a friend asks you to come with her to a party. You get ready quickly and head out, hoping to have some fun and meet some new people... At the party, you glance around to find some familiar faces, when to your incredible luck, you notice that boy from class! You grab your friend and whisper who he is. She sees that you would really like to get to know him, and humors you as you formulate a plan to get his attention and leave the party with him. You wouldn't think that English class would come in handy at a time like this. You are about to formulate a Toulmin argument.

CLAIM – thesis, premise, central assumption; open to public scrutiny

What is the main idea or goal for the night?...

You want to get to know and leave the party with this boy. (unqualified)

You would like to get to know and hopefully leave the party with this boy, *unless* he turns out to be unfriendly. (qualified)

A qualified thesis contains a qualifier, or an exception. If he is unfriendly, you wouldn't like to continue meeting him.

DATA – ensures that the supporting evidence validates the claim

Any reasons that he would want to get to know you? Anything in common?

- You are both single and looking for someone to spend time with
- You notice he is wearing a Yankee hat, which happens to be your favorite team
- He is in your English class, showing he has the same academic interests
- He is at the same party, showing that he is also sociable and outgoing
- He has dark hair, bright eyes, and a nice smile, features you are attracted to
- You would like to meet new people since it is only your freshman year in college
- The brand of his shirt, Famous, is a brand you often wear

Present the data accurately and unambiguously, but be detailed and insightful. This example lists the reasoning as to why you'd like to get to know him.

WARRANT and BACKING – assurance that the evidence brought in to support the claim is reliable and contributes to the claim (may be grouped together since backing is only extra support). The 3 warrants (logical, ethical, emotional) are similar to the 3 appeals in a classical argument (logos, ethos, pathos).

At this point, you feel comfortable enough with your reasons (data) to approach and introduce yourself. But wait! Small talk will get you started, but be prepared with appeals in order to make sure you leave with this boy (unless, as stated in your claim, you decide that he is unfriendly).

LOGICAL – Consider telling him basic facts while getting to know him – your name, year, major, interests, hobbies, etc. These may seem dry but they are an important part in getting to know him as well as appealing to the warrants.

ETHICAL – After talking for awhile and getting basic facts out of the way, you move onto deeper personality traits. Tell him about your values or standards, including honesty, integrity, compassion, etc. (without, of course, coming off cocky or dominating ;))

EMOTIONAL – Now you're really getting into a discussion, perhaps about past relationships or a hope for future ones. Tell him what you love and hate about people and/or traits.

QUALIFIER – shows a limiting in the range of the claim, though you have probably already started out by revising your unqualified claim into a qualified claim.

You're almost there! But he is human too, and he suspects that you're not ALWAYS 100% honest and compassionate. Include qualifiers, or exceptions, to anticipate a counterargument and defeat it before it crosses his mind.

- (remember your qualified claim): You would like to get to know and hopefully leave the party with this boy, *unless* he turns out to be unfriendly.
- You are trustworthy *unless* it involves going behind someone's back.
- You are compassionate *unless* it involves going against your standards.

Do not use too many qualifiers, or you run the risk of turning your Toulmin argument into a Rogerian argument (finds a common ground, "wishy-washy").
You don't want to come off as too indecisive, do you? Show him you're confident.

That's it! Notice how each of the steps builds off of the one preceding it. This forms a strong argument as it creates power and confidence. Needless to say, you did not leave the party alone. Just remember – claim, data, warrant / backing, qualifiers.