PART 2
Reading and Responding to Arguments
Do Violent Media Images Trigger Violent Behavior?

In recent years, the popular media seem to have become increasingly violent. This is particularly true of visuals in video games and on some Internet sites, but graphically violent images also appear regularly in films, on TV, in comic books, and even in newspapers. Some research has suggested that these violent images can have a negative effect on those who view them, particularly on adolescents and young children. In fact, some media critics believe that these violent images have helped to create an increasingly violent culture, which in turn has inspired young people to commit violent crimes (including school shootings) such as the massacres at Virginia Tech in 2007 and Newtown, Connecticut, in 2012. Others, however, argue that violent media images are not to blame for such events—and that, in fact, they provide a safe outlet for aggression.

In this chapter and in the chapter that follows, you will be asked to read essays and study images that shed light on the relationship between media violence and violent behavior. In the process, you will learn critical-thinking and active reading strategies that will help you learn to examine and interpret texts and images.

Now that you understand the structure of an argumentative essay, you can turn your attention to reading arguments more closely. These arguments may be the subject of class discussion, or they may be source material for the essays you write. In any case, you will need to know how to get the most out of reading them.

For comprehension quizzes, see bedfordstmartins.com/practicalargument.
Thinking Critically

When you **think critically**, you do not simply accept ideas at face value. Instead, you question these ideas, analyzing them in order to understand them better. You also challenge their underlying assumptions and form your own judgments about them. Throughout this book, discussions and readings encourage you to think critically. The box below shows you where in this text to find material that will help you develop your critical-thinking skills.

**USING CRITICAL-THINKING SKILLS**

**Reading** *(see Chapter 2)*: When you read a text, you use critical-thinking skills to help you understand what the text says and what it suggests. You ask questions and look for answers, challenging the ideas you read and probing for information. *Previewing, highlighting,* and *annotating* are active reading strategies that require you to use critical-thinking skills.

**Analyzing Visual Texts** *(see Chapter 3)*: When you examine an image, you use critical-thinking skills to help you understand what you are seeing, using previewing, highlighting, and annotating to help you analyze the image and interpret its persuasive message.

**Writing a Rhetorical Analysis** *(see Chapter 4)*: When you write a rhetorical analysis of a text, you use critical-thinking skills to analyze its elements and understand how the writer uses various appeals and rhetorical strategies to influence readers. You also use critical-thinking skills to help you understand the argument’s context. Finally, you use critical-thinking skills to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the argument.

**Analyzing an Argument’s Logic** *(see Chapter 5)*: When you analyze an argument’s logic, you use critical-thinking skills to help you understand the relationships among ideas, to evaluate the form the argument takes, and to determine whether its conclusions are both valid and true. You also use critical-thinking skills to identify any **logical fallacies** that may undermine the argument.

**Writing an Essay** *(see Chapter 7)*: When you plan an essay, you use critical-thinking skills to probe a topic, to see what you already know and what you need to find out, to identify your essay’s main idea, and to decide how to support it—that is, which ideas to include and how to arrange them. As you draft and revise, you use critical-thinking
Reading Critically

When you read an argument, you should approach it with a critical eye. Contrary to popular opinion, reading critically does not mean arguing with every idea you encounter. What it does mean is commenting, questioning, and judging.

As a critical reader, you do not simply accept that what you are reading is true. Instead, you assess the accuracy of the facts in your sources, and you consider whether opinions are convincingly supported by evidence. You try to judge the appropriateness and reliability of a writer’s sources, and you evaluate the scope and depth of the evidence and the relevance of that evidence to the topic. You also consider opposing arguments carefully, measuring them against the arguments developed in your sources. Finally, you watch out for possible bias in your sources—and you work hard to keep your own biases in check.
Becoming an Active Reader

Reading critically means being an *active* rather than a *passive* reader. Being an *active reader* means participating in the reading process by taking the time to preview a source and then to read it carefully, highlighting and annotating. This process will prepare you to discuss the source with others or to respond in writing to what you have read.

**Previewing**

When you approach an argument for the first time, you *preview* it to form a general impression of the writer’s position on the issue, the argument’s key supporting points, and the context for the writer’s remarks.

You should begin by looking at the title, the first paragraph (which often contains a thesis statement or overview), and the last paragraph (which often includes a concluding statement or a summary of the writer’s key points). You should also look at the topic sentences of the essay’s body paragraphs. In addition, you should note any headings, words set in boldface or italic type, and bulleted or numbered lists in the body of the argument. If the argument includes visuals—charts, tables, graphs, photos, and so on—you should look at them as well. Finally, if an argument includes a headnote or background on the author or on the text, be sure to read this material. It can help you to understand the context in which the author is writing.

When you have finished previewing the argument, you should have a good general sense of what the writer wants to communicate.

**Careful Reading**

Now, you are ready to read through the argument more carefully. As you read, look for words and phrases that help to shape the structure of the
argument and signal the arrangement of the writer’s ideas. These words and phrases will help you understand the flow of ideas as well as the content and emphasis of the argument.

**COMPREHENSION CLUES**

- Phrases that signal emphasis (the *primary* reason, the *most important* problem)
- Repeated words and phrases
- Words and phrases that signal addition (*also, in addition, furthermore*)
- Words and phrases that signal time sequence (*first, after that, next, then, finally*)
- Words and phrases that identify causes and effects (*because, as a result, for this reason*)
- Words and phrases that introduce examples (*for example, for instance*)
- Words and phrases that signal comparison (*likewise, similarly, in the same way*)
- Words and phrases that signal contrast (*although, in contrast, on the other hand*)
- Words and phrases that signal contradiction (*however, on the contrary*)
- Words and phrases that signal a move from general to specific (*in fact, specifically, in other words*)
- Words and phrases that introduce summaries or conclusions (*to sum up, in conclusion*)

**EXERCISE 2.1**

“Violent Media Is Good for Kids” is an essay by Gerard Jones, a comic book writer and author of several books about popular media. In this essay, which begins on the following page, Jones argues that violent comic books and video games serve a useful function for young people.

In preparation for class discussion and other activities that will be assigned later in this chapter, preview the essay. Then, read it carefully, and answer the questions that follow it.
At 13 I was alone and afraid. Taught by my well-meaning, progressive, English-teacher parents that violence was wrong, that rage was something to be overcome and cooperation was always better than conflict, I suffocated my deepest fears and desires under a nice-boy persona. Placed in a small, experimental school that was wrong for me, afraid to join my peers in their bumptious rush into adolescent boyhood, I withdrew into passivity and loneliness. My parents, not trusting the violent world of the late 1960s, built a wall between me and the crudest elements of American pop culture.

Then the Incredible Hulk smashed through it.

One of my mother’s students convinced her that Marvel Comics, despite their apparent juvenility and violence, were in fact devoted to lofty messages of pacifism and tolerance. My mother borrowed some, thinking they’d be good for me. And so they were. But not because they preached lofty messages of benevolence. They were good for me because they were juvenile. And violent.

The character who caught me, and freed me, was the Hulk: overgendered and undersocialized, half-naked and half-witted, raging against a frightened world that misunderstood and persecuted him. Suddenly I had a fantasy self to carry my stifled rage and buried desire for power. I had a fantasy self who was a self: unafraid of his desires and the world’s disapproval, unhesitating and effective in action. “Puny boy follow Hulk!” roared my fantasy self, and I followed.

I followed him to new friends—other sensitive geeks chasing their own inner brutes—and I followed him to the arrogant, self-exposing, self-assertive, superheroic decision to become a writer. Eventually, I left him behind, followed more sophisticated heroes, and finally my own lead along a twisting path to a career and an identity. In my 30s, I found myself writing action movies and comic books. I wrote some Hulk stories, and met the geek-geniuses who created him. I saw my own creations turned into action figures, cartoons, and computer games. I talked to the kids who read my stories. Across generations, genders, and ethnicities I kept seeing the same story: people pulling
themselves out of emotional traps by immersing themselves in violent stories. People integrating the scariest, most fervently denied fragments of their psyches into fuller senses of selfhood through fantasies of superhuman combat and destruction.

I have watched my son living the same story—transforming himself into a bloodthirsty dinosaur to embolden himself for the plunge into preschool, a Power Ranger to muscle through a social competition in kindergarten. In the first grade, his friends started climbing a tree at school. But he was afraid: of falling, of the centipedes crawling on the trunk, of sharp branches, of his friends’ derision. I took my cue from his own fantasies and read him old Tarzan comics, rich in combat and bright with flashing knives. For two weeks he lived in them. Then he put them aside. And he climbed the tree.

But all the while, especially in the wake of the recent burst of school shootings, I heard pop psychologists insisting that violent stories are harmful to kids, heard teachers begging parents to keep their kids away from “junk culture,” heard a guilt-stricken friend with a son who loved Pokémon lament, “I’ve turned into the bad mom who lets her kid eat sugary cereal and watch cartoons!”

That’s when I started the research.

“Fear, greed, power-hunger, rage: these are aspects of our selves that we try not to experience in our lives but often want, even need, to experience vicariously through stories of others,” writes Melanie Moore, Ph.D., a psychologist who works with urban teens. “Children need violent entertainment in order to explore the inescapable feelings that they’ve been taught to deny, and to reintegrate those feelings into a more whole, more complex, more resilient selfhood.”

Moore consults to public schools and local governments, and is also raising a daughter. For the past three years she and I have been studying the ways in which children use violent stories to meet their emotional and developmental needs—and the ways in which adults can help them use those stories healthily. With her help I developed Power Play, a program for helping young people improve their self-knowledge and sense of potency through heroic, combative storytelling.

We’ve found that every aspect of even the trashiest pop-culture story can have its own developmental function. Pretending to have superhuman powers helps children conquer the feelings of powerlessness that inevitably come with being so young and small. The dual-identity concept at the heart of many...
superhero stories helps kids negotiate the conflicts between the inner self and the public self as they work through the early stages of socialization. Identification with a rebellious, even destructive, hero helps children learn to push back against a modern culture that cultivates fear and teaches dependency.

At its most fundamental level, what we call “creative violence”—head-bonking cartoons, bloody video games, playground karate, toy guns—gives children a tool to master their rage. Children will feel rage. Even the sweetest and most civilized of them, even those whose parents read the better class of literary magazines, will feel rage. The world is uncontrollable and incomprehensible; mastering it is a terrifying, enraging task. Rage can be an energizing emotion, a shot of courage to push us to resist greater threats, take more control, than we ever thought we could. But rage is also the emotion our culture distrusts the most. Most of us are taught early on to fear our own. Through immersion in imaginary combat and identification with a violent protagonist, children engage the rage they’ve stifled, come to fear it less, and become more capable of utilizing it against life’s challenges.

I knew one little girl who went around exploding with fantasies so violent that other moms would draw her mother aside to whisper, “I think you should know something about Emily...” Her parents were separating, and she was small, an only child, a tomboy at an age when her classmates were dividing sharply along gender lines. On the playground she acted out Sailor Moon® fights, and in the classroom she wrote stories about people being stabbed with knives. The more adults tried to control her stories, the more she acted out the roles of her angry heroes: breaking rules, testing limits, roaring threats.

Then her mother and I started helping her tell her stories. She wrote them, performed them, drew them like comics: sometimes bloody, sometimes tender, always blending the images of pop culture with her own most private fantasies. She came out of it just as fiery and strong, but more self-controlled and socially competent: a leader among her peers, the one student in her class who could truly pull boys and girls together.

I worked with an older girl, a middle-class “nice girl,” who held herself together through a chaotic family situation and a tumultuous adolescence with gangsta rap. In the mythologized street violence of Ice T, the rage and strutting of his music and lyrics, she found a theater of the mind in which she could be powerful, ruthless, invulnerable. She avoided the heavy drug use that sank many of her peers, and flowered in college as a writer and political activist.
I’m not going to argue that violent entertainment is harmless. I think it has helped inspire some people to real-life violence. I am going to argue that it’s helped hundreds of people for every one it’s hurt, and that it can help far more if we learn to use it well. I am going to argue that our fear of “youth violence” isn’t well-founded on reality, and that the fear can do more harm than the reality. We act as though our highest priority is to prevent our children from growing up into murderous thugs—but modern kids are far more likely to grow up too passive, too distrustful of themselves, too easily manipulated.

We send the message to our children in a hundred ways that their craving for imaginary gun battles and symbolic killings is wrong, or at least dangerous. Even when we don’t call for censorship or forbid Mortal Kombat, we moan to other parents within our kids’ earshot about the “awful violence” in the entertainment they love. We tell our kids that it isn’t nice to play-fight, or we steer them from some monstrous action figure to a pro-social doll. Even in the most progressive households, where we make such a point of letting children feel what they feel, we rush to substitute an enlightened discussion for the raw material of rageful fantasy. In the process, we risk confusing them about their natural aggression in the same way the Victorians° confused their children about their sexuality. When we try to protect our children from their own feelings and fantasies, we shelter them not against violence but against power and selfhood.

Identifying the Elements of Argument


2. What arguments does Jones present as evidence in support of his thesis?

3. What arguments against his position does Jones identify? How does he refute them?

4. Paraphrase Jones’s concluding statement.

Highlighting

After you read an argument, read through it again, this time highlighting as you read. When you highlight, you use underlining and symbols to identify the essay’s most important points. This active reading strategy will help you to understand the writer’s ideas and to see connections among those ideas when you reread.

How do you know what to highlight? As a general rule, you look for the same signals that you looked for when you read the essay the first time—for example, the essay’s thesis and topic sentences and the words and phrases that identify the writer’s intent and emphasis. This time, however, you physically mark these elements and use various symbols to indicate your reactions to them.
Here is how a student, Katherine Choi, highlighted the essay “When Life Imitates Video” by John Leo. Choi was preparing to write an essay about the effects of media violence on children and adolescents. She began her highlighting by underlining and starring the thesis statement (para. 2). She then circled references to Leo’s two key examples, “Colorado massacre” (1) and “Paducah, Ky.” (7) and placed question marks beside them to remind herself to find out more about them. In addition, she underlined and starred some particularly important points (2, 8, 9) as well as what she identified as the essay’s concluding statement (11).


**WHEN LIFE IMITATES VIDEO**

**JOHN LEO**

Marching through a large building using various bombs and guns to pick off victims is a conventional video-game scenario. In the *Colorado massacre*, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris used pistol-grip shotguns, as in some video-arcade games. The pools of blood, screams of agony, and pleas for mercy must have been familiar—they are featured in some of the newer and more realistic kill-for-kicks games. “With each kill,” the *Los Angeles Times* reported, “the teens cackled and shouted as though playing one of the morbid video games they loved.” And they ended their spree by shooting themselves in the head, the final act in the game *Postal*, and, in fact, the only way to end it.
Did the sensibilities created by the modern, video killing games play a role in the Littleton massacre? Apparently so. Note the cool and casual cruelty, the outlandish arsenal of weapons, the cheering and laughing while hunting down victims one by one. All of this seems to reflect the style and feel of the video killing games they played so often.

No, there isn’t any direct connection between most murderous games and most murders. And yes, the primary responsibility for protecting children from dangerous games lies with their parents, many of whom like to blame the entertainment industry for their own failings.

But there is a cultural problem here: We are now a society in which the chief form of play for millions of youngsters is making large numbers of people die. Hurting and maiming others is the central fun activity in video games played so addictively by the young. A widely cited survey of 900 fourth-through eighth-grade students found that almost half of the children said their favorite electronic games involve violence. Can it be that all this constant training in make-believe killing has no social effects?

Dress rehearsal. The conventional argument is that this is a harmless activity among children who know the difference between fantasy and reality. But the games are often played by unstable youngsters unsure about the difference. Many of these have been maltreated or rejected and left alone most of the time (a precondition for playing the games obsessively). Adolescent feelings of resentment, powerlessness, and revenge pour into the killing games. In these children, the games can become a dress rehearsal for the real thing.

Psychologist David Grossman of Arkansas State University, a retired Army officer, thinks “point and shoot” video games have the same effect as military strategies used to break down a soldier’s aversion to killing. During World War II, only 15 to 20 percent of all American soldiers fired their weapon in battle. Shooting games in which the target is a man-shaped outline, the Army found, made recruits more willing to “make killing a reflex action.”

Video games are much more powerful versions of the military’s primitive discovery about overcoming the reluctance to shoot. Grossman says Michael Carneal, the schoolboy shooter in Paducah, Ky., showed the effects of videogame lessons in killing. Carneal coolly shot nine times, hitting eight people, five of them in the head or neck. Head shots pay a bonus in many video games. Now the Marine Corps is adapting a version of Doom, the hyperviolent game played by one of the Littleton killers, for its own training purposes.

More realistic touches in video games help blur the boundary between fantasy and reality—guns carefully modeled on real ones, accurate-looking wounds, screams, and other sound effects, even the recoil of a heavy rifle. Some newer games seem intent on erasing children’s empathy and concern for others. Once the intended victims of video slaughter were mostly gangsters or aliens. Now some games invite players to blow away ordinary people who have done nothing wrong—pedestrians, marching bands, an elderly woman with a walker. In these games, the shooter is not a hero, just a violent sociopath. One
ad for a Sony game says: “Get in touch with your gun-toting, testosterone-pumping, cold-blooded murdering side.”

These killings are supposed to be taken as harmless over-the-top jokes. But the bottom line is that the young are being invited to enjoy the killing of vulnerable people picked at random. This looks like the final lesson in a course to eliminate any lingering resistance to killing.

SWAT teams and cops now turn up as the intended victims of some video-game killings. This has the effect of exploiting resentments toward law enforcement and making real-life shooting of cops more likely. This sensibility turns up in the hit movie Matrix: world-saving hero Keanu Reeves, in a mandatory Goth-style, long black coat packed with countless heavy-duty guns, is forced to blow away huge numbers of uniformed law-enforcement people.

“We have to start worrying about what we are putting into the minds of our young,” says Grossman. “Pilots train on flight simulators, drivers on driving simulators, and now we have our children on murder simulators.” If we want to avoid more Littleton-style massacres, we will begin taking the social effects of the killing games more seriously.

EXERCISE 2.2

Look carefully at Katherine Choi’s highlighting of John Leo’s essay on pages 62–64. How would your own highlighting of this essay be similar to or different from hers?

EXERCISE 2.3

Reread “Violent Media Is Good for Kids” (pp. 58–61). As you read, highlight the essay by underlining and starring important points, boxing or circling key words, writing question marks beside references that need further explanation, or drawing lines and arrows to connect related ideas. If you do not understand a word or a reference, circle it and put a question mark above it.

Annotating

As you highlight, you should also annotate what you are reading. Annotating means making notes—of your questions, reactions, and ideas for discussion or writing—in the margins of the essay or between the lines. Keeping this kind of informal record of ideas as they occur to you will prepare you for class discussion and provide a useful source of material when you write.

As you read an argument and think critically about what you are reading, use the questions in the following checklist to help you make useful annotations.
### Questions for Annotating

- What issue is the writer focusing on?
- Does the writer take a clear stand on this issue?
- What is the writer’s thesis?
- What is the writer’s purpose (his or her reason for writing)?
- What kind of audience is the writer addressing?
- Does the argument appear in a popular periodical or a scholarly journal?
- Does the writer seem to assume readers will agree with the essay’s position?
- What evidence does the writer use to support the essay’s thesis? Does the writer include enough evidence?
- Does the writer consider (and refute) opposing arguments?
- Do you understand the writer’s vocabulary?
- Do you understand the writer’s references?
- Do you agree with the points the writer makes?
- Do the views the writer expresses agree or disagree with the views presented in other essays you have read?

The following pages, which reproduce Katherine Choi’s highlighting of John Leo’s essay on pages 62–64, also include her marginal annotations. In these annotations, Choi put Leo’s thesis and some of his key points into her own words and recorded a few questions that she intended to explore further. She also added notes to clarify his references to the two school shootings. Finally, she identified arguments against Leo’s position and his refutation of these arguments.


**WHEN LIFE IMITATES VIDEO**

**JOHN LEO**

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But there is a cultural problem here: We are now a society in which the chief form of play for millions of youngsters is making large numbers of people die. Hurting and maiming others is the central fun activity in video games played so addictively by the young. A widely cited survey of 900 fourth-through eighth-grade students found that almost half of the children said their favorite electronic games involve violence. Can it be that all this constant training in make-believe killing has no social effects?

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**EXERCISE 2.4**

Reread Gerard Jones’s “Violent Media Is Good for Kids” (pp. 58–61). As you read, refer to the “Questions for Annotating” checklist (p. 65), and use them as a guide as you write your own reactions and questions in the margins of Jones’s essay. In your annotations, note where you agree or disagree with Jones, and briefly explain why. Quickly summarize any points that you think are particularly important. Look up any unfamiliar words or references you have identified, and write down brief definitions or explanations. Think about these annotations as you prepare to discuss the Jones essay in class (and, eventually, to write about it).

**EXERCISE 2.5**

Exchange essays with another student, and read his or her highlighting and annotating. How are your written responses similar to the other student’s? How are they different? Do your classmate’s responses help you to see anything new about Jones’s essay?

**EXERCISE 2.6**

The following two brief commentaries from readers of *USA Today* were published on April 17, 2007, following the massacre at Virginia Tech University. Read the readers’ comments, and highlight and annotate them. As you read, identify points that support or contradict Gerard Jones’s argument. Then, write one or two additional annotations in the margins of Jones’s essay to acknowledge these points.
Guns are not creating the problem in our society. Rather, it is our mentality (“33 dead after gunfire at dorm, in classrooms,” News, Tuesday).

Gratuitous violence is accepted as normal. Our television programs and movies are awash in mindless death and destruction, and that sickness spreads into the city streets. Every day, more U.S. soldiers, sailors, Marines, and helpless Iraqi and Afghani citizens die in the Middle East. Our culture implicitly believes that violence solves problems.

Politicians cannot solve this problem. They created it, with our consent. No law will be able to fix our broken world view.

To put an end to the violence, we must rethink our very relationship with the world. Would our society start to get better if every time we saw a violent TV program we changed the channel or, better yet, turned off the television? Would our collective sickness start to fade if every time a violent scene started in a movie, we walked out of the theater?

A careful observer would have noted that there hardly has been any commentary on the cause of the horrible Virginia Tech shootings: guns. Why? It probably is because many fear bringing on the wrath of the National Rifle Association and gun owners throughout the world. The NRA will toss out its old cry about our Constitution, a well-regulated militia and the right to bear arms.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives estimates that there are more than 215 million guns in the hands of private citizens. That’s a gun for almost every man, woman, and child in our country. The USA leads the world in gun ownership.

Why should we be surprised about what happened at Virginia Tech? We will continue to have horrible, tragic days like those at Columbine High School and Virginia Tech until we wake up and rid ourselves of guns. One disturbed
young man buys two guns and then kills 32 students and himself in his expression of his “right to bear arms.” When will we ever learn?

**EXERCISE 2.7**

The following letter to the editor of a college newspaper takes a position on the issue of how violent media—in this case, video games—influence young people. Read the letter, highlighting and annotating it.

Now, consider how this letter is similar to and different from Gerard Jones’s essay (pp. 58–61). First, identify the writer’s thesis, and restate it in your own words. Then, consider the benefits of the violent video games the writer identifies. Are these benefits the same as those Jones identifies?

In paragraph 4, the writer summarizes arguments against her position. Does Jones address any of these same arguments? If so, does he refute them in the same way this writer does? Finally, read the letter’s last paragraph. How is this writer’s purpose for writing different from Jones’s?

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This letter to the editor was published on October 22, 2003, in *Ka Leo o Hawaiʻi*, the student newspaper of the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

DON’T WITHHOLD VIOLENT GAMES

JESSICA ROBBINS

Entertainment and technology have changed. Video games today are more graphic and violent than they were a few years ago. There is a concern about children being influenced by the content of some of these video games. Some states have already passed laws which ban minors from the viewing or purchasing of these video games without an accompanying adult. I believe this law should not exist.

Today’s technology has truly enriched our entertainment experience. Today’s computer and game consoles are able to simulate shooting, killing, mutilation, and blood through video games. It was such a problem that in 1993 Congress passed a law prohibiting the sale or rental of adult video games to minors. A rating system on games, similar to that placed on movies, was put into place, which I support. This helps to identify the level of violence that a game might have. However, I do not believe that this rating should restrict people of any age from purchasing a game.

Currently there is no significant evidence that supports the argument that violent video games are a major contributing factor in criminal and violent behavior. Recognized universities such as MIT and UCLA described the law as misguided, citing that “most studies and experiments on video games containing violent content have not found adverse effects.” In addition, there actually
are benefits from playing video games. They provide a safe outlet for aggression and frustration, increased attention performance, along with spatial and coordination skills.

Some argue that there is research that shows real-life video game play is related to antisocial behavior and delinquency, and that there is need for a law to prevent children from acting out these violent behaviors. This may be true, but researchers have failed to indicate that this antisocial and aggressive behavior is mostly short-term. We should give children the benefit of the doubt. Today’s average child is competent and intelligent enough to recognize the difference between the digital representation of a gun and a real 28-inch military bazooka rocket launcher. They are also aware of the consequences of using such weapons on real civilians.

Major software companies who create video games should write Congress and protest this law on the basis of a nonexistent correlation between violence and video games. If the law is modified to not restrict these games to a particular age group, then these products will not be unfairly singled out.

Writing a Critical Response

Sometimes you will be asked to write a critical response—a paragraph or more in which you analyze ideas presented in an argument and express your reactions to them.

Before you can respond in writing to an argument, you need to be sure that you understand what the writer means to get across and that you have a sense of how ideas are arranged—and why. You also need to consider how convincingly the writer conveys his or her position.

If you have read the argument carefully, highlighting and annotating it according to the guidelines outlined in this chapter, you should have a good idea what the writer wants to communicate to readers as well as how successfully the argument makes its point.

Before you begin to write a critical response to an argument, you should consider the questions in the checklist on the facing page.

When you write your critical response, begin by identifying your source and its author; then, write a clear, concise summary of the writer’s position. Next, analyze the argument’s supporting points one by one, considering the strength of the evidence that is presented. Also consider whether the writer addresses all significant opposing arguments and whether those arguments are refuted convincingly. Quote, summarize, and paraphrase the writer’s key points as you go along, being careful to quote accurately and not to misrepresent the writer’s ideas or distort them by quoting out of context. (For information on summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, and synthesizing sources, see Chapter 9.) As you write, identify
arguments you find unconvincing, poorly supported, or irrelevant. At the end of your critical response, sum up your assessment of the argument in a strong concluding statement.

Katherine Choi, the student who highlighted and annotated “When Life Imitates Video” by John Leo (pp. 62–64), used her highlighting and annotations to help her develop the following critical response to Leo’s article.

RESPONSE TO “WHEN LIFE IMITATES VIDEO”

KATHERINE CHOI

1 In “When Life Imitates Video,” John Leo takes the position that “video kill games” (para. 2) can actually lead to violent behavior. In fact, he suggests a cause-and-effect connection between such games and the notorious 1999 murder spree at Colorado’s Columbine High School, which occurred shortly before Leo wrote his essay.

2 Although Leo acknowledges in paragraph 3 that there is no “direct connection” between video games and this crime and agrees that
parents bear the “primary responsibility” for keeping violent games out of the hands of their children, he insists that our culture is also responsible. He is very critical of our society’s dependence on violent video games, which he considers “training in make-believe killing” (para 4). This argument is convincing, up to a point. The problem is that Leo’s primary support for this argument is a reference to an unnamed “widely cited survey” (para. 4), for which he provides no date. In addition, his use of a weak rhetorical question at the end of paragraph 4 instead of a strong statement of his position does little to help to support his argument.

Leo cites an opposing argument at the beginning of paragraph 5—the “conventional argument” that video games are harmless because children can tell the difference between fantasy and reality. He refutes this argument with unsupported generalizations rather than with specifics, pointing out the possibility that the games will often be played by “unstable youngsters” who channel their “adolescent feelings of resentment, powerlessness, and revenge” into the games.

The key piece of supporting evidence for Leo’s claim that video games are dangerous comes in paragraph 6 with the expert opinion of a psychology professor who is also a retired army officer. The professor, David Grossman, draws an analogy between adolescents’ video games and military training games designed to encourage soldiers to shoot their enemies. Although this analogy is interesting, it is not necessarily valid. For one thing, the army training Grossman refers to took place during World War II; for another, the soldiers were aware that the games were preparing them for actual combat.

In paragraph 7, Leo goes on to cite Grossman’s comments about the young shooter in a 1997 attack in Paducah, Kentucky, and the Marines’ use of *Doom* to train soldiers. Again, both discussions are interesting, and both are relevant to the connection between video games and violence. The problem is that neither discussion establishes a cause-and-effect relationship between violent video games and violent acts.

It may be true, as Leo observes, that video games are becoming more and more violent and that the victims in these games are increasingly likely to be police officers. Still, Leo fails to make his point because he never establishes that real-life violence is also increasing; therefore, he is not able to demonstrate a causal connection. His concluding statement—"If we want to avoid more Littleton-style massacres, we will begin taking
the social effects of the killing games more seriously”—combines a frightening prediction and a strong recommendation for action. Unfortunately, although Leo’s essay will frighten many readers, it does not convincingly establish the need for the action he recommends.

Work Cited

**EXERCISE 2.8**
Write a one-paragraph critical response to Gerard Jones’s essay on pages 58–61. Use the following template to shape your paragraph.

**TEMPLATE FOR WRITING A CRITICAL RESPONSE**

According to Gerard Jones, violent media can actually have positive effects on young people because __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________. Jones also believes that violent media are a positive influence on children because __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________. Jones makes some good points. For example, he says that __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

___________________________. However, __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________. All in all, __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________.

**EXERCISE 2.9**
Consulting the one-paragraph critical response that you wrote above, write a more fully developed critical response to Gerard Jones’s essay on pages 58–61. Refer to the highlighting and annotations that you did for Exercises 2.3 and 2.4. (If you like, you can expand your response with references to recent news events involving violent acts.)
In Chapter 2, you read two essays focusing on whether violence on TV and in other popular media can be blamed (at least in part) for the violence in our society. Now, you will be introduced to a variety of visual texts that offer additional insights into this issue. At the same time, you will learn how to use the critical-reading strategies that you practiced in Chapter 2 to help you to decode, or interpret, visual texts and to use visuals as springboards for discussion and writing or as sources in your essays.

A visual argument can be an advertisement, a chart or graph or table, a diagram, a Web page, a photograph, or a painting. Like an argumentative essay, a visual argument can take a position. Unlike an argumentative essay, however, a visual argument communicates its position (and offers evidence to support that position) largely through images rather than words.

**Thinking Critically about Visual Arguments**

When you approach a visual argument—particularly one that will be the subject of class discussion or writing—you should do so with a critical eye. Your primary goal is to understand the point that the creator of the visual is trying to make, but you also need to understand how the message is conveyed. In addition, you need to evaluate whether the methods used to persuade the audience are both logical and fair.
Not every visual is an argument; many simply present information. For example, a diagram of a hunting rifle, with its principal parts labeled, tells viewers what the weapon looks like and how it works. However, a photo of two toddlers playing with a hunting rifle could make a powerful argument about the need for gun safety. Conversely, a photo of a family hunting trip featuring a teenager proudly holding up a rifle while his parents look on approvingly might make a positive argument for access to guns.

Using Active Reading Strategies with Visual Arguments

As you learned in Chapter 2, being a critical reader involves responding actively to the text of an argument. The active reading strategies that you practiced in Chapter 2—previewing, careful reading, highlighting, and annotating—can also be applied to visual arguments.

When you approach a visual argument, you should look for clues to its main idea, or message. Some visuals, particularly advertising images, include words (sometimes called body copy) as well, and this written text often conveys the main ideas of the argument. Apart from words, however, the images themselves can help you understand the visual’s purpose, its intended audience, and the argument that it is making.

COMPREHENSION CLUES

- The individual images that appear
- The relative distance (close together or far apart) between images
- The relative size of the images
- The relationship between images and background
- The use of empty space
- The use of color and shading (for example, contrast between light and dark)
- If people are pictured, their activities, gestures, facial expressions, positions, body language, dress, and so on
As you study a visual argument, you should consider the appeal (or appeals) that the visual uses to convince its audience.

- An ad produced by Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) that includes statistics about alcohol-related auto fatalities might appeal to logic (logos).
- Another MADD ad could appeal to the emotions (pathos) by showing photographs of an accident scene.
- Still another ad could appeal to authority (ethos) by featuring a well-known sports figure warning of the dangers of drunk driving.

(For more on these appeals, see the introduction to this book.)

When you have studied the visual carefully, you should have a good general sense of what it was designed to communicate. Look at the following image.
The visual on the preceding page uses the image of a young child holding a mutilated teddy bear to make an emotional appeal to those concerned about children’s exposure to television violence.

The visual includes three dominant images: the child, the teddy bear, and a giant TV screen projecting an image of a hand holding a knife. The placement of the child in the center of the visual, with the teddy bear on one side and the knife on the other, suggests that the child (and, by extension, all children) is caught between the innocence of childhood and the violence depicted in the media. The hand holding the knife on the television screen is an extension of the child’s actual arm, suggesting that the innocent world of the child is being taken over by the violent world of the media.

To emphasize this conflict between innocence and violence, the teddy bear is set against a dark background, while the TV, with its disturbing image, is paradoxically set against a light background. (The image of the child is split, with half against each background, suggesting the split between the two worlds the child is exposed to.) The child’s gaze is directed at his mutilated teddy bear, apparently the victim of his own violent act. The expression on the child’s face makes it clear that he does not understand the violence he is caught up in.

Because it treats subject matter that is familiar to most people—TV violence and children’s vulnerability to it—this visual is easy to understand. Its powerful images are not difficult to interpret, and its message is straightforward: TV violence is, at least in part, responsible for real-world violence. The visual’s accessibility suggests that it is aimed at a wide general audience (rather than, for example, child psychologists or media analysts).

The visual’s purpose is somewhat more complex. It could be to criticize the media, to warn parents and others about the threat posed by media violence, or to encourage the audience to take action.

Now, turn your attention to the graph on the facing page. This graph appeals to logic by using statistics as evidence to support its position. In so doing, it makes a powerful visual argument about the relationship between violent video games and crime. The visual uses accessible graphics and has an open, inviting design; its format is designed to make its information clear to most people who will look at it. The main idea that it conveys might be summarized as follows: “Although video games have become more and more violent, the number of crime victims has actually declined.”

This idea is likely to come as a surprise to most people, who might assume a causal relationship between violent video games and violent crime. But as the graph shows, in 1972—when video games did not exist—the crime rate was considerably higher than it was in 2004. Because the information in the graph is intended to contradict its audience’s probable assumptions, it seems to have been created to convince people to change the way they look at video games. In other words, it is an argument (and, in fact, it is structured as a refutation).
**United States Department of Justice, Crime Victims per 1,000 Citizens**

http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/glance/tables/viortrdtab.htm

**EXERCISE 3.1**

Look at the visuals on the pages that follow, and then answer the questions on page 82.

*Bill Watterson, *Calvin and Hobbes*, “Graphic Violence in the Media”*
This chart is from “Protecting Children from Harmful Television: TV Ratings and the V-chip,” parenthood.library.wisc.edu/Nathanson/Nathanson.html.

This graph appears in “Violence in the United States,” published at netwellness.org/healthtopics/domestictv/violenceUS.cfm.
Robert Mankoff, Killing It: Murders in *New Yorker* Cartoons (by decade)
Identifying the Elements of a Visual Argument

1. Are all of the visuals on pages 79–81 arguments, or do you think some were designed solely to present information? Explain.

2. What main idea does each visual communicate? State the main idea of each visual in a single sentence.

3. What elements in each visual support this main idea?

4. If the visual includes words as well as images, are the words necessary?

5. What purpose does each visual seem designed to achieve?

6. What kind of audience do you think each visual is aimed at?

7. Does the visual appeal primarily to *logos*, *pathos*, or *ethos*?

8. Do you think the visual is effective? That is, is it likely to have the desired effect on its intended audience?

Highlighting and Annotating Visuals

Now, it is time to look more closely at visuals and to learn how to *highlight* and *annotate* them. Unlike highlighting and annotating a written text, marking a visual text involves focusing your primary attention not on any words that appear but on the images.

Begin by identifying key images—perhaps by starring, boxing, or circling them—and then consider drawing lines or arrows to connect related images. Next, go on to make annotations on the visual, commenting on the effectiveness of its individual images in communicating the message of the whole. As in the case of a written text, your annotations can be in the form of comments or questions.

The image on the following page shows how a student, Jason Savona, highlighted and annotated an advertisement for *Grand Theft Auto IV*, a popular violent video game.
Rockstar North, Advertisement for *Grand Theft Auto IV*

- Top of gun = taller than tallest building
- Huge lone figure looking down on city
- "Liberty City" skyline (looks like NY)
- Hazy yellow sky
- Dark image stands out against lighter background
- Name of game centered; large type in contrasting black and white for emphasis

**EXERCISE 3.2**

Look at the visual or the following page, and then highlight and annotate it to identify its most important images and their relationship to one another. When you have finished, think about how the images work together to communicate a central message to the audience. What argument does this visual make?
EXERCISE 3.3
Interview a classmate about his or her experiences with video games—or with actual violence. Does your classmate see any links between the kinds of videos that are watched by friends and family members and the violence (or lack of violence) that occurs in his or her community? Write a paragraph summarizing your interview.

EXERCISE 3.4
Study the three visuals on the following page, all of which appear in Gerard Jones’s essay, “Violent Media Is Good for Kids” (pp. 58–61). Look at each visual with a critical eye, and then consider how effectively each one supports the central argument that Jones makes in his essay.
Responding Critically to Visual Arguments

As you learned in Chapter 2, a **critical response** analyzes the ideas in a text and expresses your reactions to them. When you respond in writing to a visual argument, you should rely on your highlighting and annotations to help you understand the writer’s ideas and see how the words and images work together to make a particular point.

As you prepare to write a critical response to a visual argument, you should keep in mind questions like those in the following checklist.

### Questions for Responding to Visual Arguments

- In what source did the visual appear? What is the target audience for this source?
- For what kind of audience was the visual created? Hostile? Friendly? Neutral?
- For what purpose was the visual created?
- Who (or what organization) created the visual? What do you know about the background and goals of this person or group?
- What issue is the visual addressing?
- What position does the visual take on this issue? How can you tell? Do you agree with this position?

(continued)
RESPONSE TO GRAND THEFT AUTO IV
JASON SAVONA

The advertisement for Grand Theft Auto IV presents a disturbing preview of the game. Rather than highlighting the game’s features and challenges, this ad promotes the game’s violence. As a result, it appeals more to those who are looking for video games that depict murder and other crimes than to those who choose a video game on the basis of the skill it requires.

The “hero” of this game is Niko Bellic, a war veteran from Eastern Europe who has left his country to build a new life in the fictional Liberty City. Instead of finding peace, he has found a new kind of war. Now, trapped in the corrupt world of organized crime, Bellic is willing to do whatever it takes to fight his way out. His idea of justice is vigilante justice: he makes his own rules. The ad conveys this sense of Bellic as a loner and an outsider by showing him as a larger-than-life figure standing tall and alone against a background of the Liberty City skyline.

In the ad, Niko Bellic holds a powerful weapon in his huge hands, and the weapon extends higher than the tallest building behind it,
dominating the picture. Clearly, Bellic means business. As viewers look at the picture, the dark image of the gun and the man who holds it comes to the foreground, and everything else—the light brown buildings, the city lights, the yellow sky—fades into the background. In the center, the name of the game is set in large black-and-white type that contrasts with the ad’s hazy background, showing the importance of the product’s name. This image, clearly aimed at young players of violent video games, would certainly be appealing to those who want to have a feeling of power. What it says is, “A weapon makes a person powerful.” This is a very dangerous message.

EXERCISE 3.5

Write a one-paragraph critical response to the visual you highlighted and annotated in Exercise 3.2 on pages 83–84. Use the following template to shape your paragraph.

TEMPLATE FOR RESPONDING TO VISUAL ARGUMENTS

A visual posted on the site mediaviolence.org shows ____________

This visual makes a powerful statement about ________________

The central image shows _______________________

The background enhances the central image because ________________

The visual includes words as well as images. These words suggest ______

The goal of the organization that posted the visual seems to be to ______

The visual (is/is not) effective because ____________________________

EXERCISE 3.6

Consulting the one-paragraph critical response that you wrote for Exercise 3.5, write a more fully developed critical response to the visual on page 84. Refer to the highlighting and annotating that you did for Exercise 3.2.
Is It Ethical to Buy Counterfeit Designer Merchandise?

The demand for counterfeit designer merchandise—handbags, shoes, and jewelry—has always been great. Wishing to avoid the high prices of genuine designer goods, consumers spend hundreds of millions of dollars per year buying cheap imitations that are made primarily in factories in China (and in other countries as well). According to United States Customs and Border Protection statistics, the amount of counterfeit goods seized in 2012 had a retail value of $1.5 billion. Naturally, much more counterfeit merchandise gets into the United States than is seized. However hard they try, law enforcement officials cannot stem the tide of counterfeit merchandise that is sold in stores, in flea markets, and by street vendors as well as through the Internet. As long as people want these illegal goods, there will be a market for them.

However, purchasing counterfeit designer goods is not a victimless crime. Buyers are stealing the intellectual property of legitimate businesses that, unlike the manufacturers of fakes, pay their employees fair wages and provide good working conditions. The result is that the sale of counterfeit products eventually drives up prices for legitimate consumers. In addition, because counterfeit goods are of low quality, they do not last as long as the genuine articles. This is not a serious problem when people are buying fake watches and handbags, but it can be life threatening when the counterfeit products include pharmaceuticals, tools, baby food, or automobile parts.

Later in this chapter, you will read a rhetorical analysis of an essay that takes a position on this issue, and you will be asked to write a rhetorical analysis of another essay on this topic.
What Is a Rhetorical Analysis?

In everyday use, the term *rhetoric* has distinctly negative connotations. When a speech is described as being nothing but *rhetoric*, the meaning is clear: the speech consists of empty words and phrases that are calculated to confuse and manipulate listeners. When writing instructors use the term *rhetoric*, however, it means something entirely different. Applied to argument, *rhetoric* refers to how various elements work together to form a convincing and persuasive argument.

When you write a **rhetorical analysis**, you systematically examine the strategies a writer employs to achieve his or her purpose. In the process, you explain how these strategies work together to create an effective (or ineffective) argument. To carry out this task, you consider the argument’s **rhetorical situation**, the writer’s **means of persuasion**, and the **rhetorical strategies** that the writer uses.

**OVERVIEW: “LETTER FROM BIRMINGHAM JAIL” BY MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.**

*Here and throughout the rest of this chapter, we will be analyzing “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King Jr., which can be found on page 799 of this book.*

In 1963, civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. organized a series of nonviolent demonstrations to protest the climate of segregation that existed in Birmingham, Alabama. He and his followers met opposition not only from white moderates but also from some African-American clergymen who thought that King was a troublemaker. During the demonstrations, King was arrested and jailed for eight days. He wrote his “Letter from Birmingham Jail” on April 16, 1963, from the city jail in response to a public statement by eight white Alabama clergymen entitled “A Call for Unity.” This statement asked for an end to the demonstrations, which the clergymen called “untimely,” “unwise,” and “extreme.” (Their letter was addressed to the “white and Negro” population of Birmingham, not to King, whom they considered an “outsider.”)

King knew that the world was watching and that his response to the white clergymen would have both national and international significance. As a result, he used a variety of rhetorical strategies to convince readers that his demands were both valid and understandable.
and that contrary to the opinions of some, his actions were well within the mainstream of American social and political thought. Today, King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail” stands as a model of clear and highly effective argumentation.
Considering the Rhetorical Situation

Arguments do not take place in isolation. They are written by real people in response to a particular set of circumstances called the rhetorical situation. The rhetorical situation consists of the following five elements:

- The writer
- The writer’s purpose
- The writer’s audience
- The topic
- The context

By analyzing the rhetorical situation, you are able to determine why the writer made the choices he or she did and how these choices affect the argument.

**ANALYZING THE RHETORICAL SITUATION**

To help you analyze the rhetorical situation of an argument, look for information about the essay and its author.

1. **Look at the essay’s headnote.** If the essay you are reading has a headnote, it can contain useful information about the writer, the issue being discussed, and the structure of the essay. For this reason, it is a good idea to read headnotes carefully.

2. **Look for clues within the essay.** The writer’s use of particular words and phrases can sometimes provide information about his or her preconceptions as well as about the cultural context of the argument. Historical or cultural references can indicate what ideas or information the writer expects readers to have.

3. **Search the Web.** Often, just a few minutes online can give you a lot of useful information—such as the background of a particular debate or the biography of the writer. By looking at titles of the other books or essays the writer has written, you may also be able to get an idea of his or her biases or point of view.

**The Writer**

Begin by trying to determine whether anything in the writer’s background (for example, the writer’s education, experience, race, gender, political beliefs, religion, age, and experiences) has influenced the content of the
argument. Also consider whether the writer seems to have any preconceptions about the subject.

**QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING THE WRITER**

- What is the writer’s background?
- How does the writer’s background affect the content of the argument?
- What preconceptions about the subject does the writer seem to have?

If you were analyzing “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” it would help to know that Martin Luther King Jr. was pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. In 1956, he organized a bus boycott that led to a United States Supreme Court decision that outlawed segregation on Alabama’s buses. In addition, King was a leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and strongly believed in nonviolent protest. His books include *Stride towards Freedom* (1958) and *Why We Can’t Wait* (1964). His “I Have a Dream” speech, which he delivered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963, is considered by scholars to be one of the most influential speeches of the twentieth century. In 1964, King won the Nobel Prize for peace.

In his letter, King addresses the injustices that he sees in America—especially in the South—and makes a strong case for civil rights for all races. Throughout his argument, King includes numerous references to the New Testament, to philosophers, and to political and religious thinkers. By
doing so, he makes it clear to readers that he is aware of the social, cultural, religious, and political implications of his actions. Because he is a clergyman, King suggests that by battling injustice, he is doing God’s work. This point is made clear in the following passage (para. 3):

But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their “thus saith the Lord” far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco-Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

**The Writer’s Purpose**

Next, consider what the writer hopes to achieve with his or her argument. In other words, ask yourself why the author wrote the argument.

**QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING THE WRITER’S PURPOSE**

- Does the writer state his or her purpose directly, or is the purpose implied?
- Is the writer’s purpose simply to convince or to encourage action?
- Does the writer rely primarily on logic or on emotion?
- Does the writer have a hidden agenda?

It is clear that Martin Luther King Jr. wrote “Letter from Birmingham Jail” to convince readers that even though he had been arrested, his actions were both honorable and just. To get readers to understand that, like Henry David Thoreau, he is protesting laws that he considers wrong, he draws a distinction between just and unjust laws. For him, a law is just if it “squares with the moral law or the law of God” (16). A law is unjust if it “is out of harmony with the moral law” (16). As a clergyman and a civil rights leader, King believed that he had an obligation both to point out the immorality of unjust laws and to protest them—even if it meant going to jail.

**The Writer’s Audience**

To analyze the writer’s audience, begin by considering whether the writer seems to see readers as friendly, hostile, or neutral. (For a discussion of types of audiences, see p. 15.) Also, determine how much knowledge the writer assumes that readers have. Then, consider how the writer takes into account factors like the audience’s race, religion, gender, education, age, and ethnicity.
Next, decide what preconceptions the writer thinks readers have about the subject. Finally, see if the writer shares any common ground with readers.

**QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING THE WRITER’S AUDIENCE**

- Who is the writer’s intended audience?
- Does the writer see the audience as informed or uninformed?
- Does the writer see the audience as hostile, friendly, or neutral?
- What values does the writer think the audience holds?
- What does the writer seem to assume about the audience’s background?
- On what points do the writer and the audience agree? On what points do they disagree?

In “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” King aims his letter at more than one audience. First, he speaks directly to eight clergymen from Birmingham, who are at worst a hostile audience and at best a skeptical one. They consider King to be an outsider whose actions are “unwise and untimely” (1). Before addressing their concerns, King tries to establish common ground, referring to his readers as “fellow clergymen” and “my Christian and Jewish brothers.” He then goes on to say that he wishes that the clergymen had supported his actions instead of criticizing them. King ends his letter on a conciliatory note by asking his readers to forgive him if he has overstated his case or been unduly harsh.

In addition to addressing clergymen, King also speaks to white moderates, who he assumes are sympathetic to his cause but concerned about his methods. He knows that he has to influence this segment of his audience if he is to gain wide support for his cause. For this reason, King uses a restrained tone and emphasizes the universality of his message, ending his letter with a plea that is calculated to console and inspire those people who need reassurance (50):

> Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.

**The Topic**

Try to learn why the writer has decided to write about a particular topic. Also consider how narrow or broad the topic is, and decide if an argument is sufficiently well developed for the topic.
QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING THE TOPIC

- What is the topic of the argument?
- Why did the writer decide to write about this particular topic?
- Has the writer developed the topic fully enough?

King addresses complex and emotional issues in “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” His topic is apparently racial segregation in Alabama, but he also addresses the problem of indifference among white moderates. In addition, he feels he needs to explain his actions (for example, engaging in nonviolent protests) and to answer those who are urging him to call off the demonstrations. Because of the complexity of his topic, his argument is long and somewhat difficult.

The Context

The context is the situation that creates the need for the argument. As you analyze an argument, try to determine the social, historical, economic, political, and cultural events that set the stage for the argument and the part that these events play in the argument itself.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING THE CONTEXT

- What situation (or situations) set the stage for the argument?
- What social, economic, political, and cultural events triggered the argument?
- What historical references situate this argument in a particular place or time?

The immediate context of “Letter to Birmingham Jail” is well known: Martin Luther King Jr. wrote an open letter to eight white clergymen in which he defended his protests against racial segregation. However, the wider social and political context of the letter is less well known. In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Plessy v. Ferguson that “separate but equal” accommodations on railroad cars gave African Americans the equal protection guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Well into the twentieth century, this decision was used to justify separate public facilities—including restrooms, water fountains, and even schools and hospitals—for blacks and whites.

In the mid-1950s, state support for segregation of the races and discrimination against African Americans had begun to be challenged. For example, Supreme Court decisions in 1954 and 1955 found that segregation
in the public schools and other publicly financed locations was unconstitutional. At the same time, whites and blacks alike were calling for an end to racial discrimination. Their actions took the form of marches, boycotts, and sit-ins (organized nonviolent protests whose participants refused to move from a public area). Many whites, however, particularly in the South, strongly resisted any sudden changes in race relations.

King’s demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama, took place within this larger social and political context. His campaign was a continuation of the push for equal rights that had been gaining momentum in the United States for decades. King, along with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, had dispatched hundreds of people to Birmingham to engage in nonviolent demonstrations against those who were determined to keep African Americans from gaining their full rights as citizens.

Considering the Means of Persuasion: 
**Logos, Pathos, Ethos**

In the introduction to this book, you learned how writers of argument use three means of persuasion—*logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*—to appeal to readers. You also saw how the *rhetorical triangle* represents the way these three appeals come into play within an argument. (See p. 13 for more information about the rhetorical triangle.) Of course, the degree to which a writer uses each of these appeals depends on the rhetorical situation. Moreover, a single argument can use more than one appeal—for example, an important research source would enhance both the logic of the argument (*logos*)
and the credibility of the writer (ethos). In “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” King uses all three appeals.

**The Appeal to Reason (Logos)**

In “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” King attempts to demonstrate the logic of his position. In paragraph 15, for example, he says that there are two types of laws—just and unjust. He then points out that he has both a legal and a moral responsibility to “disobey unjust laws.” In paragraph 16, King supports his position with references to various philosophers and theologians—for example, St. Thomas Aquinas, Martin Buber, and Paul Tillich. He also develops the logical argument that even though all Americans should obey the law, they are responsible to a higher moral authority—God.

**The Appeal to the Emotions (Pathos)**

Throughout “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” King attempts to create sympathy for his cause. In paragraph 14, for example, he catalogues the injustices of life in the United States for African Americans. He makes a particularly emotional appeal by quoting a hypothetical five-year-old boy who might ask, “Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?” In addition, he includes vivid images of racial injustice to provoke anger against those who deny African Americans equal rights. In this way, King creates sympathy (and possibly empathy) in readers.

**The Appeal to Authority (Ethos)**

To be persuasive, King has to establish his credibility or authority to speak on behalf of the African-American community. In paragraph 2, for example, he reminds readers that he is the president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, “an organization operating in every southern state.” In paragraph 3, he compares himself to the apostle Paul, who carried the gospel “to the far corners of the Greco-Roman world.” In addition, King attempts to show readers that what he is doing is well within the mainstream of American political and social thought. By referring to Thomas Jefferson, Henry David Thoreau, and the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision that outlawed segregation in public schools, he tries to demonstrate that he is not the wild-eyed radical that some believe him to be. Thus, King establishes himself in both secular and religious terms as a leader who has both the stature and the authority to present his case.

**Considering the Writer’s Rhetorical Strategies**

Writers use various rhetorical strategies to present their ideas and opinions. Here are a few of the elements that you should examine when analyzing and evaluating an argument.
Thesis
The thesis—the position that the argument supports—is of primary importance in every argument. When you analyze an argument, you should always ask, “What is the essay’s thesis, and why does the writer state it as he or she does?” You should also consider at what point in the argument the thesis is stated and what the effect of this placement is.

In “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” Martin Luther King Jr. begins by telling readers that he is “confined here in the Birmingham city jail” and that he is writing his letter to answer clergymen who have called his demonstrations “unwise and untimely.” King clearly (and unapologetically) states his thesis (“But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here”) at the beginning of the third paragraph, right after he explains his purpose, so that readers will have no doubt what his position is as they read the rest of his argument.

Organization
The organization of an argument—how a writer arranges ideas—is also important. For example, after stating his thesis, King tells readers why he is in Birmingham and what he hopes to accomplish: he wants unjust laws to be abolished and the 1954 Supreme Court ruling to be enforced. King then refutes—disproves or calls into question—the specific charges that were leveled at him by the white clergymen who want him to stop his protests.

The structure of “Letter from Birmingham Jail” enables King to make his points clearly, logically, and effectively:

- King begins his argument by addressing the charge that his actions are untimely. If anything, says King, his actions are not timely enough: after all, African Americans have waited more than 340 years for their “constitutional and God-given rights” (14).
- He then addresses the issue of his willingness to break laws and makes the distinction between just and unjust laws.
- After chiding white moderates for not supporting his cause, he addresses their claim that he is extreme. According to King, this charge is false: if he had not embraced a philosophy of nonviolent protest, the streets of the South would “be flowing with blood” (29).
- King then makes the point that the contemporary church must recapture the “sacrificial spirit of the early church” (42). He does this by linking his struggle for freedom with the “sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God” (44).
- King ends his argument by asserting both his humility and his unity with the white clergy.
Evidence
To convince an audience, a writer must support the thesis with evidence—facts, observations, expert opinion, and so on. King presents a great deal of evidence to support his arguments. For instance, he uses numerous examples (both historical and personal) as well as many references to philosophers, political thinkers, and theologians (such as Jesus, St. Paul, St. Augustine, Amos, Martin Luther, William Gladstone, and Abraham Lincoln). According to King, these figures, who were once considered “extremists,” were not afraid of “making waves” when the need arose. Now, however, they are well within the mainstream of social, political, and religious thought. King also presents reasons, facts, and quotations to support his points.

Stylistic Techniques
Writers also use stylistic techniques to make their arguments more memorable and more convincing. For example, in “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” King uses similes, metaphors, and allusions to enhance his argument.

Simile  A simile is a figure of speech that compares two unlike things using the word like or as.

Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, . . . before it can be cured. (24)

Isn’t this like condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery? (25)

Metaphor  A metaphor is a comparison in which two dissimilar things are compared without the word like or as. A metaphor suggests that two things that are very different share a quality.

Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct-action campaign that was “well-timed” in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. (13)

When you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty . . . (14)

Allusion  An allusion is a reference within a work to a person, literary or biblical text, or historical event in order to enlarge the context of the situation being written about. The writer expects readers to recognize the allusion and to make the connection to the text they are reading.

I would agree with St. Augustine that “an unjust law is no law at all.” (15)

Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a
higher moral law was at stake. (21) [King expects his audience of clergymen to recognize this reference to the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament.]

In addition to those stylistic techniques, King also uses parallelism, repetition, and rhetorical questions to further his argument.

**Parallelism** Parallelism, the use of similar grammatical structures to emphasize related ideas, makes a passage easier to follow.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action. (6)

Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection. (23)

I wish you had commended the Negro sit-inners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer, and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation. (47)

**Repetition** Intentional repetition involves repeating a word or phrase for emphasis, clarity, or emotional impact.

“Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?” “Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?” (8)

If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me. (49)

**Rhetorical questions** A rhetorical question is a question that is asked to encourage readers to reflect on an issue, not to elicit a reply.

One may well ask: “How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?” (15)

Will we be extremists for hate or for love? (31)

**Assessing the Argument**

No rhetorical analysis of an argument would be complete without an assessment of its effectiveness—whether the rhetorical strategies the writer uses create a clear and persuasive argument or whether they fall short. When you write a rhetorical analysis, you can begin with an assessment of
the argument as a whole and go on to support it, or you can begin with a
discussion of the various rhetorical strategies that the writer uses and then
end with your assessment of the argument.

After analyzing “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” you could reasonably
conclude that King has written an effective argument that is likely to con-
vince his readers that his presence in Birmingham is both justified and
necessary. Using *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*, he constructs a multifaceted argu-
ment that is calculated to appeal to the various segments of his audience—
Southern clergymen, white moderates, and African Americans. In addi-
tion, King uses similes, metaphors, and allusions to enrich his argument
and to make it more memorable, and he uses parallelism, repetition, and
rhetorical questions to emphasize ideas and to reinforce his points. Because
it is so clear and powerful, King’s argument—in particular, the distinction
between just and unjust laws—addresses not only the injustices that were
present in 1963 when it was written but also the injustices and inequalities
that exist today. In this sense, King has written an argument that has broad
significance beyond the audiences for which it was originally intended.

**CHECKLIST**

**Preparing to Write a Rhetorical Analysis**

As you read, ask the following questions:

- Who is the writer? Is there anything in the writer’s background that might influence what is (or is not) included in the argument?
- What is the writer’s purpose? What does the writer hope to achieve?
- What topic has the writer decided to write about? How broad is the topic?
- What situation created the need for the argument?
- At what points in the argument does the writer appeal to logic? To the emotions? How does the writer try to establish his or her credibility?
- What is the argument’s thesis? Where is it stated? Why?
- How does the writer organize the argument? How effective is this arrangement of ideas?
- What evidence does the writer use to support the argument? Does the writer use enough evidence?
- Does the writer use similes, metaphors, and allusions?
- Does the writer use parallelism, repetition, and rhetorical questions?
- Given your analysis, what is your overall assessment of the argument?

**Sample Rhetorical Analysis**

In preparation for a research paper, Deniz Bilgutay, a student in a writing class, read the following essay, “Terror’s Purse Strings” by Dana Thomas, which makes an argument against buying counterfeit designer goods.
Deniz then wrote the rhetorical analysis that appears on pages 104–106. (Deniz Bilgutay’s research paper, “The High Cost of Cheap Counterfeit Goods,” uses “Terror’s Purse Strings” as a source. See Appendix B.)


TERROR’S PURSE STRINGS
DANA THOMAS

Luxury fashion designers are busily putting final touches on the handbags they will present during the spring-summer 2008 women’s wear shows, which begin next week in New York City’s Bryant Park. To understand the importance of the handbag in fashion today consider this: According to consumer surveys conducted by Coach, the average American woman was buying two new handbags a year in 2000; by 2004, it was more than four. And the average luxury bag retails for 10 to 12 times its production cost.

“There is a kind of an obsession with bags,” the designer Miuccia Prada told me. “It’s so easy to make money.”

Counterfeiters agree. As soon as a handbag hits big, counterfeiters around the globe churn out fake versions by the thousands. And they have no trouble selling them. Shoppers descend on Canal Street in New York, Santee Alley in Los Angeles, and flea markets and purse parties around the country to pick up knockoffs for one-tenth the legitimate bag’s retail cost, then pass them off as real.

“Judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys shop here,” a private investigator told me as we toured the counterfeit section of Santee Alley. “Affluent people from Newport Beach.” According to a study by the British law firm Davenport Lyons, two-thirds of British consumers are “proud to tell their family and friends” that they bought fake luxury fashion items.

At least 11 percent of the world’s clothing is fake, according to 2000 figures from the Global Anti-Counterfeiting Group in Paris. Fashion is easy to copy: counterfeiters buy the real items, take them apart, scan the pieces to make patterns, and produce almost-perfect fakes.

Most people think that buying an imitation handbag or wallet is harmless, a victimless crime. But the counterfeiting rackets are run by crime syndicates that also deal in narcotics, weapons, child prostitution, human trafficking, and terrorism. Ronald K. Noble, the secretary general of Interpol,° told the House of Representatives Committee on International Relations that profits from the sale of counterfeit goods have gone to groups

° An international criminal police organization
associated with Hezbollah, the Shiite terrorist group, paramilitary organizations in Northern Ireland, and FARC, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

Sales of counterfeit T-shirts may have helped finance the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, according to the International AntiCounterfeiting Coalition. “Profits from counterfeiting are one of the three main sources of income supporting international terrorism,” said Magnus Ranstorp, a terrorism expert at the University of St. Andrews, in Scotland.

Most fakes today are produced in China, a good many of them by children. Children are sometimes sold or sent off by their families to work in clandestine factories that produce counterfeit luxury goods. Many in the West consider this an urban myth. But I have seen it myself.

On a warm winter afternoon in Guangzhou, I accompanied Chinese police officers on a factory raid in a decrepit tenement. Inside, we found two dozen children, ages 8 to 13, gluing and sewing together fake luxury-brand handbags. The police confiscated everything, arrested the owner, and sent the children out. Some punched their timecards, hoping to still get paid. (The average Chinese factory worker earns about $120 a month; the counterfeit factory worker earns half that or less.) As we made our way back to the police vans, the children threw bottles and cans at us. They were now jobless and, because the factory owner housed them, homeless. It was *Oliver Twist* in the 21st century.

What can we do to stop this? Much like the war on drugs, the effort to protect luxury brands must go after the source: the counterfeit manufacturers. The company that took me on the Chinese raid is one of the only luxury-goods makers that works directly with Chinese authorities to shut down factories, and it has one of the lowest rates of counterfeiting.

Luxury brands also need to teach consumers that the traffic in fake goods has many victims. But most companies refuse to speak publicly about counterfeiting—some won’t even authenticate questionable items for concerned customers—believing, like Victorians, that acknowledging despicable actions tarnishes their sterling reputations.

So it comes down to us. If we stop knowingly buying fakes, the supply chain will dry up and counterfeiters will go out of business. The crime syndicates will have far less money to finance their illicit activities and their terrorist plots. And the children? They can go home.

The people who lived during the reign of Victoria (1819–1901), queen of Great Britain and Ireland, who are often associated with prudish behavior in her *New York Times* essay, “Terror’s Purse Strings,” writer Dana Thomas uses the opening of New York’s fashion shows as an opportunity...
to expose a darker side of fashion—the impact of imitation designer goods. Thomas explains to her readers why buying counterfeit luxury items, like fake handbags, is a serious problem. Her first goal is to raise awareness of the dangerous ties between counterfeiters who sell fake luxury merchandise and international criminal organizations that support terrorism and child labor. Her second goal is to explain how people can be a part of the solution by refusing to buy the counterfeit goods that finance these criminal activities. By establishing her credibility, building her case slowly, and appealing to both logic and emotions, Thomas succeeds in writing an interesting and informative argument.

For Thomas’s argument to work, she has to earn her readers’ trust. She does so first by anticipating a sympathetic, well-intentioned, educated audience and then by establishing her own credibility. To avoid sounding accusatory, Thomas assumes that her readers are unaware of the problem posed by counterfeit goods. She demonstrates this by presenting basic factual information and by acknowledging what “most people think” or what “many in the West consider”: that buying counterfeit goods is harmless. She also acknowledges her readers’ high level of education by drawing comparisons with history and literature—specifically, the Victorians and *Oliver Twist*. To further earn the audience’s trust, she uses her knowledge and position to gain credibility. As the Paris correspondent for *Newsweek* and as the author of a book on luxury goods, Thomas has credibility. Showing her familiarity with the world of fashion by referring to a conversation with renowned designer Miuccia Prada, she further establishes this credibility. Later in the article, she shares her experience of witnessing the abuse that accompanies the production of fake designer handbags. This anecdote allows her to say, “I’ve seen it myself,” confirming her knowledge not just of the fashion world but also of the world of counterfeiting. Despite her authority, she does not distance herself from readers. In fact, she goes out of her way to identify with them, using informal style and first person, noting “it comes down to us” and asking what “we” can do.

In Thomas’s argument, both the organization and the use of evidence are effective. She begins her article with statements that are easy to accept, and as she proceeds, she addresses more serious issues. In the first paragraph, she simply asks readers to “understand the
importance of the handbag in fashion today.” She demonstrates the wide-ranging influence and appeal of counterfeit designer goods, pointing out that “at least 11 percent of the world’s clothing is fake.” Thomas then makes the point that the act of purchasing these seemingly frivolous goods can actually have serious consequences. For example, crime syndicates and possibly even terrorist organizations actually run “the counterfeiting rackets” that produce these popular items. To support this point, she relies on two kinds of evidence—quotations from terrorism experts (specifically, the leader of a respected international police organization as well as a scholar in the field) and her own personal experience at a Chinese factory. Both kinds of evidence appeal to our emotions. Discussions of terrorism, especially those that recall the terrorist attacks on the United States, create fear. Descriptions of child labor in China encourage readers to feel sympathy.

Thomas waits until the end of her argument to present her thesis because she assumes that her readers know little about the problem she is discussing. The one flaw in her argument is her failure to provide the evidence needed to establish connections between some causes and their effects. For example in paragraph 7, Thomas says that the sale of counterfeit T-shirts “may have helped finance the 1993 Word Trade Center bombing.” By using the word *may*, she qualifies her claim and weakens her argument. The same is true when Thomas says that profits from the sale of counterfeit goods “have gone to groups associated with Hezbollah, the Shiite terrorist group.” Readers are left to wonder what specific groups are “associated with Hezbollah” and whether these groups are in fact terrorist organizations. Without this information, her assertion remains unsupported. In spite of these shortcomings, Thomas’s argument is clear and well organized. More definite links between causes and effects, however, would have made it more convincing than it is.

**EXERCISE 4.1**

Chapter 4  Writing a Rhetorical Analysis

SWEATSHOP OPPRESSION
RAJEV RAVISANKAR

1 Being the “poor” college students that we all are, many of us undoubtedly place an emphasis on finding the lowest prices. Some take this to the extreme and camp out in front of a massive retail store in the wee hours of the morning on Black Friday,° waiting for the opportunity to buy as much as we can for as little as possible.

2 What often gets lost in this rampant, low-cost driven consumerism is the high human cost it takes to achieve lower and lower prices. Specifically, this means the extensive use of sweatshop labor.

3 Many of us are familiar with the term sweatshop,° but have difficulty really understanding how abhorrent the hours, wages, and conditions are. Many of these workers are forced to work 70–80 hours per week making pennies per hour. Workers are discouraged or intimidated from forming unions. They must fulfill certain quotas for the day and stay extra hours (with no pay) if these are not fulfilled. Some are forced to sit in front of a machine for hours as they are not permitted to take breaks unless the manager allows them to do so. Unsanitary bathrooms, poor ventilation, and extreme heat, upward of 90 degrees, are also prevalent. Child labor is utilized in some factories as well.

4 Facing mounting pressure from labor rights activists, trade unions, student protests, and human-rights groups, companies claimed that they would make improvements. Many of the aforementioned conditions, however, persist. In many cases, even a few pennies more could make a substantial difference in the lives of these workers. Of course, multinational corporations are not interested in giving charity; they are interested in doing anything to increase profits. Also, many consumers in the West refuse to pay a little bit more even if it would improve the lives of sweatshop workers.

5 Free-market economic fundamentalists have argued that claims made by those who oppose sweatshops actually have a negative impact on the plight of the poor in the developing world. They suggest that by criticizing labor and human-rights conditions, anti-sweatshop activists have forced companies to pull out of some locations, resulting in workers losing their jobs. To shift the blame in this manner is to neglect a simple fact: Companies, not the anti-sweatshop protestors, make the decision to shift to locations where they can find cheaper labor and weaker labor restrictions.

° The Friday after Thanksgiving, traditionally the biggest shopping day of the year

° A work environment with long hours, low wages, and difficult or dangerous conditions

“Corporations . . . are interested in doing anything to increase profits.”
Simply put, the onus should always be on companies such as Nike, Reebok, Adidas, Champion, Gap, Wal-Mart, etc. They are to blame for perpetuating a system of exploitation which seeks to get as much out of each worker for the least possible price.

By continuing to strive for lower wages and lower input costs, they are taking part in a phenomenon which has been described as “the race to the bottom.” The continual decline of wages and working conditions will be accompanied by a lower standard of living. This hardly seems like the best way to bring the developing world out of the pits of poverty.

So what can we do about it? Currently, the total disregard for human well-being through sweatshop oppression is being addressed by a number of organizations, including University Students against Sweatshops. USAS seeks to make universities source their apparel in factories that respect workers’ rights, especially the right to freely form unions.

According to an article in *The Nation*, universities purchase nearly “$3 billion in T-shirts, sweatshirts, caps, sneakers and sports uniforms adorned with their institutions' names and logos.” Because brands do not want to risk losing this money, it puts pressure on them to provide living wages and reasonable conditions for workers. Campaigns such as this are necessary if we are to stop the long race to the bottom.

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**TEMPLATE FOR WRITING A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS**

Ravisankar begins his essay by ________________________________

_____________________________. The problem he identifies is ________________________________

_____________________________. Ravisankar assumes his readers are ________________________________

_____________________________. His purpose in this essay is to ________________________________

In order to accomplish this purpose, he appeals mainly to ________________________________

_____________________________. He also appeals to ________________________________

In his essay, Ravisankar addresses the main argument against his thesis, the idea that ________________________________
Before Barack Obama and his team act on their talk about “labor standards,” I’d like to offer them a tour of the vast garbage dump here in Phnom Penh. This is a Dante-like vision of hell. It’s a mountain of festering refuse, a half-hour hike across, emitting clouds of smoke from subterranean fires. The miasma of toxic stink leaves you gasping, breezes batter you with filth, and even the rats look forlorn. Then the smoke parts and you come across a child ambling barefoot, searching for old plastic cups that recyclers will buy for five cents a pound. Many families actually live in shacks on this smoking garbage.

Mr. Obama and the Democrats who favor labor standards in trade agreements mean well, for they intend to fight back at oppressive sweatshops abroad. But while it shocks Americans to hear it, the central challenge in the poorest countries is not that sweatshops exploit too many people, but that they don’t exploit enough.
Part 2  Reading and Responding to Arguments

Talk to these families in the dump, and a job in a sweatshop is a cherished dream, an escalator out of poverty, the kind of gauzy if probably unrealistic ambition that parents everywhere often have for their children.

“I’d love to get a job in a factory,” said Pim Srey Rath, a 19-year-old woman scavenging for plastic. “At least that work is in the shade. Here is where it’s hot.”

Another woman, Vath Sam Oeun, hopes her 10-year-old boy, scavenging beside her, grows up to get a factory job, partly because she has seen other children run over by garbage trucks. Her boy has never been to a doctor or a dentist and last bathed when he was 2, so a sweatshop job by comparison would be far more pleasant and less dangerous.

I’m glad that many Americans are repulsed by the idea of importing products made by barely paid, barely legal workers in dangerous factories. Yet sweatshops are only a symptom of poverty, not a cause, and banning them closes off one route out of poverty.

At a time of tremendous economic distress and protectionist pressures, there’s a special danger that tighter labor standards will be used as an excuse to curb trade.

When I defend sweatshops, people always ask me: But would you want to work in a sweatshop? No, of course not. But I would want even less to pull a rickshaw. In the hierarchy of jobs in poor countries, sweltering at a sewing machine isn’t the bottom.

My views on sweatshops are shaped by years living in East Asia, watching as living standards soared — including those in my wife’s ancestral village in southern China — because of sweatshop jobs.

Manufacturing is one sector that can provide millions of jobs. Yet sweatshops usually go not to the poorest nations but to better-off countries with more reliable electricity and ports.

I often hear the argument: Labor standards can improve wages and working conditions, without greatly affecting the eventual retail cost of goods. That’s true. But labor standards and “living wages” have a larger impact on production costs that companies are always trying to pare. The result is to push companies to operate more capital-intensive factories in better-off nations like Malaysia, rather than labor-intensive factories in poorer countries like Ghana or Cambodia.

Cambodia has, in fact, pursued an interesting experiment by working with factories to establish decent labor standards and wages. It’s a worthwhile idea, but one result of paying above-market wages is that those in charge of hiring often demand bribes — sometimes a month’s salary — in exchange for a job. In addition, these standards add to production costs, so some factories have closed because of the global economic crisis and the difficulty of competing internationally.
The best way to help people in the poorest countries isn’t to campaign against sweatshops but to promote manufacturing there. One of the best things America could do for Africa would be to strengthen our program to encourage African imports, called AGOA, and nudge Europe to match it.

Among people who work in development, many strongly believe (but few dare say very loudly) that one of the best hopes for the poorest countries would be to build their manufacturing industries. But global campaigns against sweatshops make that less likely.

Look, I know that Americans have a hard time accepting that sweatshops can help people. But take it from 13-year-old Neuo Chanthou, who earns a bit less than $1 a day scavenging in the dump. She’s wearing a “Playboy” shirt and hat that she found amid the filth, and she worries about her sister, who lost part of her hand when a garbage truck ran over her.

“It’s dirty, hot, and smelly here,” she said wistfully. “A factory is better.”
You have taken my

PARKING space!

Would you like my disability also?
Have Colleges Gone Too Far to Accommodate Students with Disabilities?

In 1975, the United States Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA), later renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), to mandate special accommodations for students with disabilities. Currently, IDEA as well as other federal laws (the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, for example) require that disabled students between three and twenty-one years of age—regardless of the nature of their disability—be provided with the services they need in all publicly funded schools. Although colleges and universities are not held to the same strict standards as elementary and secondary schools, they are required to make appropriate academic adjustments—for example, to offer accessible housing and classroom buildings, extra time on exams, and access to tutors and note takers—for students who qualify.

In recent years, the number of college students claiming to have disabilities—especially learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders—has increased dramatically. This situation has caused some observers to claim that colleges too readily grant disability status and that some students manipulate the system to gain an advantage over other students. Advocates for the disabled disagree, pointing out that colleges are required by law to help all students with special needs. In addition, they contend that if the number of students with disabilities has increased, it is not because these individuals are dishonest but because they are more aware of their rights than they once were.

Later in this chapter, you will be asked to think more about this issue. You will be given several sources to consider and asked to write a logical argument that takes a position on whether colleges have gone too far to accommodate students with disabilities.
The word *logic* comes from the Greek word *logos*, roughly translated as “word,” “thought,” “principle,” or “reason.” *Logic* is concerned with the principles of correct reasoning. By studying logic, you learn the rules that determine the validity of arguments. In other words, logic enables you to tell whether a conclusion correctly follows from a set of statements or assumptions.

Why should you study logic? One answer is that knowledge of logic enables you to make valid points and draw sound conclusions, which in turn helps you to present your ideas clearly and effectively. An understanding of logic also enables you to evaluate the arguments of others. When you understand the basic principles of logic, you know how to tell the difference between a strong argument and a weak argument—between one that is well reasoned and one that is not. This ability can help you cut through the tangle of jumbled thought that characterizes many of the arguments you encounter daily—on television, radio, and the Internet; in the press; and from friends. Finally, knowledge of logic enables you to communicate clearly and forcefully. Understanding the characteristics of good arguments helps you to present your own ideas in a coherent and even compelling way.

Specific rules determine the criteria you use to develop (and to evaluate) arguments logically. For this reason, you should become familiar with the basic principles of *deductive* and *inductive reasoning*—two important ways information is organized in argumentative essays. (Keep in mind that a single argumentative essay might contain both deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning. For the sake of clarity, however, we will discuss them separately.)
What Is Deductive Reasoning?

Most of us use deductive reasoning every day—at home, in school, on the job, and in our communities—usually without even realizing it. **Deductive reasoning** begins with **premises**—statements or assumptions on which an argument is based or from which conclusions are drawn. Deductive reasoning moves from general statements, or premises, to specific conclusions. The process of deduction has traditionally been illustrated with a **syllogism**, which consists of a **major premise**, a **minor premise**, and a **conclusion**:

**MAJOR PREMISE** All disabled students should get the special help they need.

**MINOR PREMISE** Sarah is a disabled student.

**CONCLUSION** Therefore, Sarah should get the special help she needs.

A syllogism begins with a **major premise**—a general statement that relates two terms. It then moves to a **minor premise**—an example of the statement that was made in the major premise. If these two premises are linked correctly, a **conclusion** that is supported by the two premises logically follows. (Notice that the conclusion in the syllogism above contains no terms that do not appear in the major and minor premises.) The strength of deductive reasoning is that if readers accept the major and minor premises, the conclusion must necessarily follow.

Thomas Jefferson used deductive reasoning in the Declaration of Independence (see p. 770). When, in 1776, the Continental Congress asked him to draft this document, Jefferson knew that he had to write a powerful argument that would convince the world that the American colonies were justified in breaking away from England. He knew how compelling a deductive argument could be, and so he organized the Declaration of Independence to reflect the traditional structure of deductive logic. It contains a major premise, a minor premise (supported by evidence), and a conclusion. Expressed as a syllogism, here is the argument that Jefferson used:

**MAJOR PREMISE** When a government oppresses people, the people have a right to rebel against that government.

**MINOR PREMISE** The government of England oppresses the American people.

**CONCLUSION** Therefore, the American people have the right to rebel against the government of England.
In practice, deductive arguments are more complicated than the simple three-part syllogism suggests. Still, it is important to understand the basic structure of a syllogism because a syllogism enables you to map out your argument, to test it, and to see if it makes sense.

**Constructing Sound Syllogisms**

A syllogism is **valid** when its conclusion follows logically from its premises. A syllogism is **true** when the premises are consistent with the facts. To be **sound**, a syllogism must be **both** valid and true.

Consider the following valid syllogism:

**MAJOR PREMISE**  All state universities must accommodate disabled students.

**MINOR PREMISE**  UCLA is a state university.

**CONCLUSION**  Therefore, UCLA must accommodate disabled students.

In the valid syllogism above, both the major premise and the minor premise are factual statements. If both these premises are true, then the conclusion must also be true. Because the syllogism is both valid and true, it is also sound.

However, a syllogism can be valid without being true. For example, look at the following syllogism:

**MAJOR PREMISE**  All recipients of support services are wealthy.

**MINOR PREMISE**  Dillon is a recipient of support services.

**CONCLUSION**  Therefore, Dillon is wealthy.

As illogical as it may seem, this syllogism is valid: its conclusion follows logically from its premises. The major premise states that recipients of support services—all such recipients—are wealthy. However, this premise is clearly false: some recipients of support services may be wealthy, but more are probably not. For this reason, even though the syllogism is valid, it is not true.

Keep in mind that validity is a test of an argument’s structure, not of its soundness. Even if a syllogism’s major and minor premises are true, its conclusion may not necessarily be valid.

Consider the following examples of invalid syllogisms.

**Syllogism with an Illogical Middle Term**

A syllogism with an illogical middle term cannot be valid. The **middle term** of a syllogism is the term that occurs in both the major and minor
premises but not in the conclusion. (It links the major term and the minor term together in the syllogism.) A middle term of a valid syllogism must refer to all members of the designated class or group—for example, all dogs, all people, all men, or all women.

Consider the following invalid syllogism:

**MAJOR PREMISE**  All dogs are mammals.
**MINOR PREMISE**  Some mammals are porpoises.
**CONCLUSION**  Therefore, some porpoises are dogs.

Even though the statements in the major and minor premises are true, the syllogism is not valid. *Mammals* is the middle term because it appears in both the major and minor premises. However, because the middle term *mammal* does not refer to all mammals, it cannot logically lead to a valid conclusion.

In the syllogism that follows, the middle term does refer to all members of the designated group, so the syllogism is valid:

**MAJOR PREMISE**  All dogs are mammals.
**MINOR PREMISE**  Ralph is a dog.
**CONCLUSION**  Therefore, Ralph is a mammal.

**Syllogism with a Key Term Whose Meaning Shifts**

A syllogism that contains a key term whose meaning shifts cannot be valid. For this reason, the meaning of a key term must remain consistent throughout the syllogism.

Consider the following invalid syllogism:

**MAJOR PREMISE**  Only man is capable of analytical reasoning.
**MINOR PREMISE**  Anna is not a man.
**CONCLUSION**  Therefore, Anna is not capable of analytical reasoning.

In the major premise, *man* refers to mankind—that is, to all human beings. In the minor premise, however, *man* refers to males. In the following valid syllogism, the key terms remain consistent:

**MAJOR PREMISE**  All educated human beings are capable of analytical reasoning.
**MINOR PREMISE**  Anna is an educated human being.
**CONCLUSION**  Therefore, Anna is capable of analytical reasoning.
Syllogism with Negative Premise

If either premise in a syllogism is negative, then the conclusion must also be negative.

The following syllogism is not valid:

**MAJOR PREMISE** Only senators can vote on legislation.

**MINOR PREMISE** No students are senators.

**CONCLUSION** Therefore, students can vote on legislation.

Because one of the premises of the syllogism above is negative (“No students are senators”), the only possible valid conclusion must also be negative (“Therefore, no students can vote on legislation”).

If both premises are negative, however, the syllogism cannot have a valid conclusion:

**MAJOR PREMISE** Disabled students may not be denied special help.

**MINOR PREMISE** Jen is not a disabled student.

**CONCLUSION** Therefore, Jen may not be denied special help.

In the syllogism above, both premises are negative. For this reason, the syllogism cannot have a valid conclusion. (How can Jen deserve special help if she is not a disabled student?) To have a valid conclusion, this syllogism must have only one negative premise:

**MAJOR PREMISE** Disabled students may not be denied special help.

**MINOR PREMISE** Jen is a disabled student.

**CONCLUSION** Therefore, Jen may not be denied special help.

Recognizing Enthymemes

An **enthymeme** is a syllogism with one or two parts of its argument—usually, the major premise—missing. In everyday life, we often leave out parts of arguments—most of the time because we think they are so obvious (or clearly implied) that they don’t need to be stated. We assume that the people hearing or reading the arguments will easily be able to fill in the missing parts.

Many enthymemes are presented as a conclusion plus a reason. Consider the following enthymeme:

Robert has lied, so he cannot be trusted.

In the statement above, the minor premise and the conclusion are stated, but the major premise is only implied. Once the missing term
has been supplied, the logical structure of the enthymeme becomes clear:

**MAJOR PREMISE**  People who lie cannot be trusted.

**MINOR PREMISE**  Robert has lied.

**CONCLUSION**  Therefore, Robert cannot be trusted.

It is important to identify enthymemes in arguments you read because some writers, knowing that readers often accept enthymemes uncritically, use them intentionally to unfairly influence readers.

Consider this enthymeme:

Because Liz receives a tuition grant, she should work.

Although some readers might challenge this statement, others will accept it uncritically. When you supply the missing premise, however, the underlying assumptions of the enthymeme become clear—and open to question:

**MAJOR PREMISE**  All students who receive tuition grants should work.

**MINOR PREMISE**  Liz receives a tuition grant.

**CONCLUSION**  Therefore, Liz should work.

Perhaps some people who receive tuition grants should work, but should everyone? What about those who are ill or who have disabilities? What about those who participate in varsity sports or have unpaid internships? The enthymeme oversimplifies the issue and should not be accepted at face value.

At first glance, the following enthymeme might seem to make sense:

North Korea is ruled by a dictator, so it should be invaded.

However, consider the same enthymeme with the missing term supplied:

**MAJOR PREMISE**  All countries governed by dictators should be invaded.

**MINOR PREMISE**  North Korea is a country governed by a dictator.

**CONCLUSION**  Therefore, North Korea should be invaded.

Once the missing major premise has been supplied, the flaws in the argument become clear. Should all nations governed by dictators be invaded? Who should do the invading? Who would make this decision? What would be the consequences of such a policy? As this enthymeme illustrates, if the major premise of a deductive argument is questionable, then the rest of the argument will also be flawed.
Bumper stickers often take the form of enthymemes:
- Self-control beats birth control.
- Peace is patriotic.
- A woman’s place is in the House . . . and in the Senate.
- Ban cruel traps.
- Evolution is a theory—kind of like gravity.
- I work and pay taxes so wealthy people don’t have to.
- The Bible says it, I believe it, that settles it.
- No one needs a mink coat except a mink.
- Celebrate diversity.

Most often, bumper stickers state just the conclusion of an argument and omit both the major and minor premises. Careful readers, however, will supply the missing premises and thus determine whether the argument is sound.
EXERCISE 5.1

Read the following paragraph. Then, restate its main argument as a syllogism.

Drunk Driving Should Be Legalized

In ordering states to enforce tougher drunk driving standards by making it a crime to drive with a blood-alcohol concentration of .08% or higher, government has been permitted to criminalize the content of drivers’ blood instead of their actions. The assumption that a driver who has been drinking automatically presents a danger to society even when no harm has been caused is a blatant violation of civil liberties. Government should not be concerned with the probability and propensity of a drinking driver to cause an accident; rather, laws should deal only with actions that damage person or property. Until they actually commit a crime, drunk drivers should be liberated from the force of the law. (From “Legalize Drunk Driving,” by Llewellyn H. Rockwell Jr., WorldNetDaily.com)

EXERCISE 5.2

Read the following paragraphs. Then, answer the questions that follow.

Animals Are Equal to Humans

According to the United Nations, a person may not be killed, exploited, cruelly treated, intimidated, or imprisoned for no good reason. Put another way, people should be able to live in peace, according to their own needs and preferences.

Who should have these rights? Do they apply to people of all races? Children? People who are brain damaged or senile? The declaration makes it clear that basic rights apply to everyone. To make a slave of someone who is intellectually handicapped or of a different race is no more justifiable than to make a slave of anyone else.

The reason why these rights apply to everyone is simple: regardless of our differences, we all experience a life with its mosaic of thoughts and feelings. This applies equally to the princess and the hobo, the brain surgeon and the dunce. Our value as individuals arises from this capacity to experience life, not because of any intelligence or usefulness to others. Every person has an inherent value, and deserves to be treated with respect in order to make the most of their unique life experience. (Excerpted from “Human and Animal Rights,” by Animal Liberation.org)

1. What unstated assumptions about the subject does the writer make? Does the writer expect readers to accept these assumptions? How can you tell?

2. What kind of supporting evidence does the writer provide?
3. What is the major premise of this argument?

4. Express the argument that is presented in these paragraphs as a syllogism.

5. Evaluate the syllogism you constructed. Is it true? Is it valid? Is it sound?

**EXERCISE 5.3**

Read the following five arguments, and determine whether each is sound. (To help you evaluate the arguments, you may want to try arranging them as syllogisms.)

1. All humans are mortal. Max is human. Therefore, Max is mortal.

2. Alison should order eggs or oatmeal for breakfast. She won’t order eggs, so she should order oatmeal.

3. The cafeteria does not serve steak on Friday. Today is not Friday. Therefore, the cafeteria will not serve steak.

4. All reptiles are cold-blooded. Geckos are reptiles. Therefore, geckos are cold-blooded.

5. All triangles have three equal sides. The figure on the board is a triangle. Therefore, it must have three equal sides.

**EXERCISE 5.4**

Read the following ten enthymemes, which come from bumper stickers. Supply the missing premises, and then evaluate the logic of each argument.

1. If you love your pet, don’t eat meat.

2. War is terrorism.

3. Real men don’t ask for directions.

4. Immigration is the sincerest form of flattery.

5. I eat local because I can.

6. Don’t blame me; I voted for the other guy.

7. I read banned books.

8. Love is the only solution.

9. It’s a child, not a choice.

10. Think. It’s patriotic.
Writing Deductive Arguments

Deductive arguments begin with a general principle and reach a specific conclusion. They develop that principle with logical arguments that are supported by evidence—facts, observations, the opinions of experts, and so on. Keep in mind that no single structure is suitable for all deductive (or inductive) arguments. Different issues and different audiences will determine how you arrange your ideas.

In general, deductive essays can be structured in the following way:

**INTRODUCTION**
- Presents an overview of the issue
- States the thesis

**BODY**
- Presents evidence: point 1 in support of the thesis
- Presents evidence: point 2 in support of the thesis
- Presents evidence: point 3 in support of the thesis
- Refutes the arguments against the thesis

**CONCLUSION**
- Brings argument to a close
- Concluding statement reinforces the thesis

EXERCISE 5.5

The following student essay, “College Should Be for Everyone,” includes all the elements of a deductive argument. The student who wrote this essay was responding to the question, “Should everyone be encouraged to go to college?” After you read the essay, answer the questions on page 126, consulting the outline above if necessary.

COLLEGE SHOULD BE FOR EVERYONE

CRYSTAL SANCHEZ

1 Until the middle of the twentieth century, college was largely for the rich. The G.I. Bill, which paid for the education of veterans returning from World War II, helped change this situation. By 1956, nearly half of those who had served in World War II, almost 7.8 million people, had taken advantage of this benefit (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs). Even today, however, college graduates are still a minority of the population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 27.5% of Americans age twenty-five or older have a bachelor’s degree. In many ways, this

Overview of issue
situation is not good for the country. Why should college be just for the privileged few? Because a college education provides important benefits, such as increased wages for our citizens and a stronger democracy for our nation, every U.S. citizen should have the opportunity to earn a college degree.

Evidence: Point 1

One reason everyone should have the opportunity to go to college is that a college education gives people an opportunity to discover what they are good at. It is hard for people to know if they are interested in statistics or public policy or marketing unless they have the chance to learn about these subjects. College—and only college—can give them this opportunity. Where else can a person be exposed to a large number of courses taught by experts in a variety of disciplines? Such exposure can open new areas of interest and lead to a much wider set of career options—and thus to a better life (Stout). Without college, most people have limited options and never realize their true potential. Although life and work experiences can teach a person a lot of things, the best education is the broad kind that a college education offers.

Evidence: Point 2

Another reason everyone should have the opportunity to go to college is that more and more jobs are being phased out or shipped overseas. Americans should go to college to develop the skills that they will need to get the best jobs that will remain in the United States. Over the last few decades, midlevel jobs have been steadily disappearing. If this trend continues, the American workforce will be divided in two. One part will consist of low-wage, low-skill service jobs, such as those in food preparation and retail sales, and the other part will be high-skill, high-wage jobs, such as those in management and professional fields like business and engineering. According to a recent report, to compete in the future job market, Americans will need the skills that colleges teach. Future workers will need to be problem solvers who can think both critically and creatively and who can adapt to unpredictable situations. They will also need a global awareness, knowledge of many cultures and disciplines, and the ability to communicate in different forms of media. To master these skills, Americans have to be educated (“Ten Skills for the Future Workforce”). If they do not go to college, then they will not be prepared for the high-growth, high-skill jobs of the future.
Perhaps the best reason everyone should have the opportunity to go to college is that education is an essential part of a democratic society. Those without the ability to understand and analyze news reports are not capable of contributing to the social, political, and economic growth of the country. Democracy requires informed citizens who will be able to analyze complicated issues in areas such as finance, education, and public health; weigh competing claims of those running for public office; and assess the job performance of elected officials. By providing students with the opportunity to study subjects such as history, philosophy, English, and political science, colleges and universities help them to acquire the critical-thinking skills that they will need to participate fully in American democracy.

Some people oppose the idea that everyone should have the opportunity to attend college. One objection is that educational resources are limited. Some say that if students enter colleges in great numbers they will overwhelm the higher-education system (Stout). This argument exaggerates the problem. As with any other product, if demand rises, supply will rise to meet that demand. In addition, with today's extensive distance-learning options and the availability of open educational resources—free, high-quality, digital materials—it will be possible to educate large numbers of students at a reasonable cost (“Open Educational Resources”). Another objection to encouraging everyone to attend college is that underprepared students will require so much help that they will take time and attention away from better students. This argument is actually a red herring. Most schools already provide resources, such as tutoring and writing centers, for students who need them. With some additional funding, these schools could expand the services they already provide. This course of action will be expensive, but it is a lot less expensive than leaving millions of young people unprepared for jobs of the future.

A college education gave the returning veterans of World War II many opportunities and increased their value to the nation. Today, a college education could do the same for all our citizens. This country has an obligation to offer all students access to an affordable and useful education. Not only will the students benefit personally, but the nation will also. If we do not adequately prepare students for the future, then we will all suffer the consequences.
What Is Inductive Reasoning?

Inductive reasoning begins with specific observations (or evidence) and moves to a general conclusion. You can see how induction works by looking at the following list of observations:

- Nearly 80% of ocean pollution comes from runoff.
- Runoff pollution can make ocean water unsafe for fish and people.
- In some areas, runoff pollution has forced beaches to be closed.
Drinking water can be contaminated by runoff.

More than one third of shellfish growing in waters in the United States are contaminated by runoff.

Each year, millions of dollars are spent to restore polluted areas.

There is a causal relationship between agricultural runoff and waterborne organisms that damage fish.

After studying these observations, you can use inductive reasoning to reach the conclusion that runoff pollution (rainwater that becomes polluted after it comes in contact with earth-bound pollutants such as fertilizer, pet waste, sewage, and pesticides) is a problem that must be addressed as soon as possible.

Children learn about the world by using inductive reasoning. For example, very young children see that if they push a light switch up, the lights in a room go on. If they repeat this action over and over, they reach the conclusion that every time they push a switch, the lights will go on. Of course, this conclusion does not always follow. For example, the light bulb may be burned out or the switch may be damaged. Even so, their conclusion usually holds true. Children also use induction to generalize about what is safe and what is dangerous. If every time they meet a dog, the encounter is pleasant, they begin to think that all dogs are friendly. If at some point, however, a dog snaps at them, they question the strength of their conclusion and modify their behavior accordingly.

Scientists also use induction. In 1620, Sir Francis Bacon first proposed the scientific method—a way of using induction to find answers to
Unlike deduction, which reaches a conclusion based on information provided by the major and minor premises, induction uses what you know to make a statement about something that you don’t know. While deductive arguments can be judged in absolute terms (they are either valid or invalid), inductive arguments are judged in relative terms (they are either strong or weak).
You reach an inductive conclusion by making an inference—a statement about what is unknown based on what is known. (In other words, you look at the evidence and try to figure out what is going on.) For this reason, there is always a gap between your observations and your conclusion. To bridge this gap, you have to make an inductive leap—a stretch of the imagination that enables you to draw an acceptable conclusion. Therefore, inductive conclusions are never certain (as deductive conclusions are) but only probable. The more evidence you provide, the stronger and more probable your conclusions (and your argument) are.

Public-opinion polls illustrate how inferences are used to reach inductive conclusions. Politicians and news organizations routinely use public-opinion polls to assess support (or lack of support) for a particular policy, proposal, or political candidate. After surveying a sample population—registered voters, for example—pollsters reach conclusions based on their responses. In other words, by asking questions and studying the responses of a sample group of people, pollsters make inferences about the larger group—for example, which political candidate is ahead and by how much. How solid these inferences are depends to a great extent on the sample populations they survey. In an election, for example, a poll of randomly chosen individuals will be less accurate than a poll of registered voters or likely voters. In addition, other factors (such as the size of the sample and the way questions are worded) can determine the relative strength of the inductive conclusion.

As with all inferences, a gap exists between a poll's data—the responses to the questions—and the conclusion. The larger and more representative the sample, the smaller the inductive leap necessary to reach a conclusion and the more accurate the poll. If the gap between the data and the conclusion is too big, however, the pollsters will be accused of making a hasty generalization (see p. 140). Remember, no matter how much support you present, an inductive conclusion is only probable, never certain. The best you can do is present a convincing case and hope that your audience will accept it.

**Constructing Strong Inductive Arguments**

When you use inductive reasoning, your conclusion is only as strong as the evidence—the facts, details, or examples—that you use to support it. For this reason, you should be on the lookout for the following problems that can occur when you try to reach an inductive conclusion.

**Generalization Too Broad**

The conclusion you state cannot go beyond the scope of your evidence. Your evidence must support your generalization. For instance, you cannot survey
just three disabled students in your school and conclude that the school does not go far enough to accommodate students with disabilities. To reach such a conclusion, you would have to consider a large number of disabled students.

**Insufficient Evidence**
The evidence on which you base an inductive conclusion must be representative, not atypical or biased. For example, you cannot conclude that students are satisfied with the Office of Disability Services at your school by sampling just first-year students. To be valid, your conclusion should be based on responses from a cross-section of disabled students from all years.

**Irrelevant Evidence**
Your evidence has to support your conclusion. If it does not, it is irrelevant. For example, if you assert that many students with disabilities make substantial contributions to your school, your supporting examples must be students with conditions that substantially limit their activities, not those with minor or temporary limitations.

**Exceptions to the Rule**
There is always a chance that you will overlook an exception that may affect the strength of your conclusion. For example, not everyone who has a disability needs special accommodations, and not everyone who requires special accommodations needs the same services. For this reason, you should avoid using words like *every, all, and always* and instead use words like *most, many, and usually*.

**EXERCISE 5.6**
Read the following arguments, and decide whether each is a deductive argument or an inductive argument.

1. Freedom of speech is a central principle of our form of government. For this reason, students should be allowed to wear T-shirts that call for the legalization of marijuana. ____________

2. The Chevy Cruze Eco gets twenty-eight miles a gallon in the city and forty-two miles a gallon on the highway. The Honda Accord gets twenty-three miles a gallon in the city and thirty-three miles a gallon on the highway. Therefore, it makes more sense for me to buy the Chevy Cruze Eco. ____________

3. In Edgar Allan Poe’s short story “The Cask of Amontillado,” Montresor flatters Fortunato. He lures him to his vaults where he stores wine. Montresor then gets Fortunato drunk and chains him to the wall of a crypt. Finally, Montresor uncovers a pile of building material
and walls up the entrance to the crypt. Clearly, Montresor has carefully planned to murder Fortunato for a very long time. 

4. All people should have the right to die with dignity. Garrett is a terminally ill patient, so he should have access to doctor-assisted suicide.

5. Last week, we found unacceptably high levels of pollution in the ocean. On Monday, we also found high levels of pollution. Today, we found even higher levels of pollution. We should close the ocean beaches to swimmers until we can find the source of this problem.

EXERCISE 5.7

Read the following arguments. Then, decide whether they are deductive or inductive. If they are inductive arguments, evaluate their strength. If they are deductive arguments, evaluate their soundness.

1. *The Farmer’s Almanac* says that this winter will be very cold. The national weather service also predicts that this winter will be very cold. So, this should be a cold winter.

2. Many walled towns in Europe do not let people drive cars into their centers. San Gimignano is a walled town in Europe. It is likely that we will not be able to drive our car into its center.

3. The window at the back of the house is broken. There is a baseball on the floor. A few minutes ago, I saw two boys playing catch in a neighbor’s yard. They must have thrown the ball through the window.

4. Every time I go to the beach I get sunburned. I guess I should stop going to the beach.

5. All my instructors have advanced degrees. George Martin is one of my instructor. Therefore, George Martin has an advanced degree.

6. My last two boyfriends cheated on me. All men are terrible.

7. I read a study published by a pharmaceutical company that said that Vioxx was safe. Maybe the government was too quick to pull this drug off the market.

8. Chase is not very good looking, and he dresses badly. I don’t know how he can be a good architect.

9. No fictional character has ever had a fan club. Harry Potter does, but he is the exception.

10. Two weeks ago, my instructor refused to accept a late paper. She did the same thing last week. Yesterday, she also told someone that because his paper was late, she wouldn’t accept it. I’d better get my paper in on time.
EXERCISE 5.8

Read the inductive paragraph below, written by student Pooja Vaidya, and answer the questions that follow it.

Years ago, when my friend took me to a game between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Dallas Cowboys in Philadelphia, I learned a little bit about football and a lot about the behavior of football fans. Many of the Philadelphia fans were dressed in green and white football jerseys, each with a player’s name and number on the back. One fan had his face painted green and wore a green cape with a large white E on it. He ran up and down the aisles in his section and led cheers. When the team was ahead, everyone joined in. When the team fell behind, this fan literally fell on his knees, cried, and begged the people in the stands to support the Eagles. (After the game, several people asked him for his autograph.) A group of six fans sat without shirts. They wore green wigs, and each had one letter of the team’s name painted on his bare chest. Even though the temperature was below freezing, none of these fans ever put on his shirt. Before the game, many fans had been drinking at tailgate parties in the parking lot, and as the game progressed, they continued to drink beer in the stadium. By the beginning of the second half, fights were breaking out all over the stadium. Guards grabbed the people who were fighting and escorted them to a holding area under the stadium where a judge held “Eagles Court.” At one point, a fan wearing a Dallas jersey tried to sit down in the row behind me. Some of the Eagles fans were so threatening that the police had to escort the Dallas fan out of the stands for his own protection. When the game ended in an Eagles victory, the fans sang the team’s fight song as they left the stadium. I concluded that for many Eagles fans, a day at the stadium is an opportunity to engage in behavior that in any other context would be unacceptable and even abnormal.

1. Which of the following statements could you not conclude from this paragraph?
   a. All Eagles fans act in outrageous ways at games.
   b. At football games, the fans in the stands can be as violent as the players on the field.
c. The atmosphere at the stadium causes otherwise normal people to act abnormally.

d. Spectator sports encourage fans to act in abnormal ways.

e. Some people get so caught up in the excitement of a game that they act in uncharacteristic ways.

2. Paraphrase the writer’s conclusion. What evidence is provided to support this conclusion?

3. What additional evidence could the writer have provided? Is this additional evidence necessary, or does the conclusion stand without it?

4. The writer makes an inductive leap to reach the paragraph’s conclusion. Do you think this leap is too great?

5. Does this paragraph make a strong inductive argument? Why or why not?

**Writing Inductive Arguments**

Inductive arguments begin with evidence (specific facts, observations, expert opinion, and so on), draw inferences from the evidence, and reach a conclusion by making an inductive leap. Keep in mind that inductive arguments are only as strong as the link between the evidence and the conclusion, so the stronger this link is, the stronger the argument will be.
Inductive essays frequently have the following structure:

**INTRODUCTION**
- Presents the issue
- States the thesis

**BODY**
- Presents evidence: facts, observations, expert opinion, and so on
- Draws inferences from the evidence
- Refutes the arguments against the thesis

**CONCLUSION**
- Brings argument to a close
- Concluding statement reinforces the thesis

**EXERCISE 5.9**

The following essay includes all the elements of an inductive argument. After you read the essay, answer the questions on page 136, consulting the outline above if necessary.

This essay appeared in *Slate* on September 2, 2006.

**PLEASE DO NOT FEED THE HUMANS**

WILLIAM SALETAN

In 1894, Congress established Labor Day to honor those who “from rude nature have delved and carved all the grandeur we behold.” In the century since, the grandeur of human achievement has multiplied. Over the past four decades, global population has doubled, but food output, driven by increases in productivity, has outpaced it. Poverty, infant mortality, and hunger are receding. For the first time in our planet’s history, a species no longer lives at the mercy of scarcity. We have learned to feed ourselves.

We’ve learned so well, in fact, that we’re getting fat. Not just the United States or Europe, but the whole world. Egyptian, Mexican, and South African women are now as fat as Americans. Far more Filipino adults are now overweight than underweight. In China, one in five adults is too heavy, and the rate of overweight children is 28 times higher than it was two decades ago. In Thailand, Kuwait, and Tunisia, obesity, diabetes, and heart disease are soaring.

Hunger is far from conquered. But since 1990, the global rate of malnutrition has declined an average of 1.7 percent a year. Based on data from the World Health Organization and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, for every two people who are malnourished, three are now overweight or obese. Among women, even in most African countries, overweight has surpassed underweight. The balance of peril is shifting.

Fat is no longer a rich man’s disease. For middle- and high-income Americans, the obesity rate is 29 percent. For low-income Americans, it’s
35 percent. Among middle- and high-income kids aged 15 to 17, the rate of overweight is 14 percent. Among low-income kids in the same age bracket, it’s 23 percent. Globally, weight has tended to rise with income. But a study in Vancouver, Canada, published three months ago, found that preschoolers in “food-insecure” households were twice as likely as other kids to be overweight or obese. In Brazilian cities, the poor have become fatter than the rich.

Technologically, this is a triumph. In the early days of our species, even the rich starved. Barry Popkin, a nutritional epidemiologist at the University of North Carolina, divides history into several epochs. In the hunter-gatherer era, if we didn’t find food, we died. In the agricultural era, if our crops perished, we died. In the industrial era, famine receded, but infectious diseases killed us. Now we’ve achieved such control over nature that we’re dying not of starvation or infection, but of abundance. Nature isn’t killing us. We’re killing ourselves.

You don’t have to go hungry anymore; we can fill you with fats and carbs more cheaply than ever. You don’t have to chase your food; we can bring it to you. You don’t have to cook it; we can deliver it ready-to-eat. You don’t have to eat it before it spoils; we can pump it full of preservatives so it lasts forever. You don’t even have to stop when you’re full. We’ve got so much food to sell, we want you to keep eating.

What happened in America is happening everywhere, only faster. Fewer farmers’ markets, more processed food. Fewer whole grains, more refined ones. More sweeteners, salt, and trans fats. Cheaper meat, more animal fat. Less cooking, more eating out. Bigger portions, more snacks.

Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut are spreading across the planet. Coca-Cola is in more than 200 countries. Half of McDonald’s business is overseas. In China, animal-fat intake has tripled in 20 years. By 2020, meat consumption in developing countries will grow by 106 million metric tons, outstripping growth in developed countries by a factor of more than five. Forty years ago, to afford a high-fat diet, your country needed a gross national product per capita of nearly $1,500. Now the price is half that. You no longer have to be rich to die a rich man’s death.

Soon, it’ll be a poor man’s death. The rich have Whole Foods, gyms, and personal trainers. The poor have 7-Eleven, Popeye’s, and streets unsafe for walking. When money’s tight, you feed your kids at Wendy’s and stock up on macaroni and cheese. At a lunch buffet, you do what your ancestors did: store all the fat you can.

That’s the punch line: Technology has changed everything but us. We evolved to survive scarcity. We crave fat. We’re quick to gain weight and slow to lose it. Double what you serve us, and we’ll double what we eat. Thanks to technology, the deprivation that made these traits useful is gone. So is the link between flavors and nutrients. The modern food industry can sell you sweetness
without fruit, salt without protein, creaminess without milk. We can fatten you and starve you at the same time.

And that’s just the diet side of the equation. Before technology, adult men had to expend about 3,000 calories a day. Now they expend about 2,000. Look at the new Segway scooter. The original model relieved you of the need to walk, pedal, or balance. With the new one, you don’t even have to turn the handlebars or start it manually. In theory, Segway is replacing the car. In practice, it’s replacing the body.

In country after country, service jobs are replacing hard labor. The folks who field your customer service calls in Bangalore are sitting at desks. Nearly everyone in China has a television set. Remember when Chinese rode bikes? In the past six years, the number of cars there has grown from six million to 20 million. More than one in seven Chinese has a motorized vehicle, and households with such vehicles have an obesity rate 80 percent higher than their peers.

The answer to these trends is simple. We have to exercise more and change the food we eat, donate, and subsidize. Next year, for example, the U.S. Women, Infants, and Children program, which subsidizes groceries for impoverished youngsters, will begin to pay for fruits and vegetables. For 32 years, the program has fed toddlers eggs and cheese but not one vegetable. And we wonder why poor kids are fat.

The hard part is changing our mentality. We have a distorted body image. We’re so used to not having enough, as a species, that we can’t believe the problem is too much. From China to Africa to Latin America, people are trying to fatten their kids. I just got back from a vacation with my Jewish mother and Jewish mother-in-law. They told me I need to eat more.

The other thing blinding us is liberal guilt. We’re so caught up in the idea of giving that we can’t see the importance of changing behavior rather than filling bellies. We know better than to feed buttered popcorn to zoo animals, yet we send it to a food bank and call ourselves humanitarians. Maybe we should ask what our fellow humans actually need.

Identifying the Elements of an Inductive Argument

1. What is this essay’s thesis? Restate it in your own words.
2. Why do you think Saletan places the thesis where he does?
3. What evidence does Saletan use to support his conclusion?
4. What inductive leap does Saletan make to reach his conclusion? Do you think he should have included more evidence?
5. Overall, do you think Saletan’s inductive argument is relatively strong or weak? Explain.
Recognizing Logical Fallacies

When you write arguments in college, you are obligated to follow certain rules that ensure fairness. Not everyone who writes arguments is this fair or thorough, however. Sometimes you will encounter arguments in which writers attack the opposition’s intelligence or patriotism and base their arguments on questionable (or even false) assumptions. As convincing as these arguments can sometimes seem, they are actually not valid because they contain fallacies—errors in reasoning that undermine the logic of an argument. Familiarizing yourself with the most common logical fallacies can help you to evaluate the arguments of others and to construct better, more effective arguments of your own.

The following pages define and illustrate some logical fallacies that you should learn to recognize and avoid.

Begging the Question

The fallacy of begging the question assumes that a statement is self-evident (or true) when it actually requires proof. A conclusion based on such assumptions cannot be valid. For example, someone who is very religious could structure an argument the following way:

**MAJOR PREMISE**  Everything in the Bible is true.

**MINOR PREMISE**  The Bible says that Noah built an ark.

**CONCLUSION**  Therefore, Noah’s Ark really existed.

A person can accept the conclusion of this syllogism only if he or she also accepts the major premise, which has not been proven true. Some people might find this line of reasoning convincing, but others would not—even if they were religious.

Begging the question occurs any time someone presents a debatable statement as if it were true. For example, look at the following statement:

You have unfairly limited my right of free speech by refusing to print my editorial in the college newspaper.

This statement begs the question because it assumes what it should be proving—that refusing to print an editorial violates a person’s right to free speech.

Circular Reasoning

Closely related to begging the question, circular reasoning occurs when someone supports a statement by restating it in different terms. Consider the following statement:

Stealing is wrong because it is illegal.
The conclusion of the statement on the previous page is essentially the same as its beginning: stealing (which is illegal) is against the law. In other words, the argument goes in a circle.

Here are some other examples of circular reasoning:

- Lincoln was a great president because he is the best president we ever had.
- I am for equal rights for women because I am a feminist.
- Illegal immigrants should be deported because they are breaking the law.

All of the statements above have one thing in common: they attempt to support a statement by simply repeating the statement in different words.

**Weak Analogy**

An **analogy** is a comparison between two items (or concepts)—one familiar and one unfamiliar. When you make an analogy, you explain the unfamiliar item by comparing it to the familiar item. (For a discussion of argument by analogy, see Chapter 16.)

Although analogies can be effective in arguments, they have limitations. For example, a senator who opposed a government bailout of the financial industry in 2008 made the following argument:

This bailout is doomed from the start. It’s like pouring milk into a leaking bucket. As long as you keep pouring milk, the bucket stays full. But when you stop, the milk runs out the hole in the bottom of the bucket. What we’re doing is throwing money into a big bucket and not fixing the hole. We have to find the underlying problems that have caused this part of our economy to get in trouble and pass legislation to solve them.

The problem with using analogies such as this one is that analogies are never perfect. There is always a difference between the two things being compared. The larger this difference, the weaker the analogy—and the weaker the argument that it supports. For example, someone could point out to the senator that the financial industry—and by extension, the whole economy—is much more complex and multifaceted than a leaking bucket. To analyze the economy, the senator would have to expand his discussion beyond this single analogy (which cannot carry the weight of the entire argument) as well as supply the evidence to support his contention that the bailout was a mistake from the start.
Ad Hominem Fallacy (Personal Attack)

The ad hominem fallacy occurs when someone attacks the character or the motives of a person instead of focusing on the issues. This line of reasoning is illogical because it focuses attention on the person making the argument, sidestepping the argument itself.

Consider the following statement:

Dr. Thomson, I’m not sure why we should believe anything you have to say about this community health center. Last year, you left your husband for another man.

The above attack on Dr. Thomson’s character is irrelevant; it has nothing to do with her ideas about the community health center. Sometimes, however, a person’s character may have a direct relation to the issue. For example, if Dr. Thomson had invested in a company that supplied medical equipment to the health center, this fact would have been relevant to the issue at hand.

The ad hominem fallacy also occurs when you attempt to undermine an argument by associating it with individuals who are easily attacked. For example, consider this statement:

I think your plan to provide universal health care is interesting. I’m sure Marx and Lenin would agree with you.

Instead of focusing on the specific provisions of the health-care plan, the opposition unfairly associates it with the ideas of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, two well-known Communists.

Creating a Straw Man

This fallacy most likely got its name from the use of straw dummies in military and boxing training. When writers create a straw man, they present a weak argument that can easily be refuted. Instead of attacking the real issue, they focus on a weaker issue and give the impression that they have effectively refuted an opponent’s argument. Frequently, the straw man is an extreme or oversimplified version of the opponent’s actual position. For example, during a debate about raising the minimum wage, a senator made the following comment:

Those who oppose raising the minimum wage are heartless. They obviously don’t care if children starve.
Instead of focusing on the minimum wage, the senator misrepresents the opposing position so that it appears cruel. As this example shows, the straw man fallacy is dishonest because it intentionally distorts an opponent’s position to mislead readers.

**Hasty or Sweeping Generalization (Jumping to a Conclusion)**

A **hasty or sweeping generalization** (also called **jumping to a conclusion**) occurs when someone reaches a conclusion that is based on too little evidence. Many people commit this fallacy without realizing it. For example, when Richard Nixon was elected president in 1972, film critic Pauline Kael is supposed to have remarked, “How can that be? No one I know voted for Nixon!” The general idea behind this statement is that if Kael’s acquaintances didn’t vote for Nixon, then neither did most other people. This assumption is flawed because it is based on a small sample.

Sometimes people make hasty generalizations because they strongly favor one point of view over another. At other times, a hasty generalization is simply the result of sloppy thinking. For example, it is easier for a student to simply say that an instructor is an unusually hard grader than to survey the instructor’s classes to see if this conclusion is warranted (or to consider other reasons for his or her poor performance in a course).

**Either/Or Fallacy (False Dilemma)**

The **either/or fallacy** (also called a **false dilemma**) occurs when a person says that there are just two choices when there are actually more. In many cases, the person committing this fallacy tries to force a conclusion by presenting just two choices, one of which is clearly more desirable than the other. (Parents do this with young children all the time: “Eat your carrots, or go to bed.”)

Politicians frequently engage in this fallacy. For example, according to some politicians, you are either pro-life or pro-choice, pro–gun control or anti–gun control, pro-stem-cell research or anti-stem-cell research. Many people, however, are actually somewhere in the middle, taking a much more nuanced approach to complicated issues.

Consider the following statement:

> I can’t believe you voted against the bill to build a wall along the southern border of the United States. Either you’re for protecting our border, or you’re against it.

This statement is an example of the either/or fallacy. The person who voted against the bill might be against the wall but not against all immigration restrictions. The person might favor loose restrictions for some people (for
example, migrant workers) and strong restrictions for others (for example, drug smugglers). By limiting the options to just two, the speaker oversimplifies the situation and attempts to force the listener to accept a fallacious argument.

**Equivocation**

The fallacy of **equivocation** occurs when a key term has one meaning in one part of an argument and another meaning in another part. (When a term is used **unequivocally**, it has the same meaning throughout the argument.) Consider the following old joke:

> The sign said, “Fine for parking here,” so because it was fine, I parked there.

Obviously, the word *fine* has two different meanings in this sentence. The first time it is used, it means “money paid as a penalty.” The second time, it means “good” or “satisfactory.”

Most words have more than one meaning, so it is important not to confuse the various meanings. For an argument to work, a key term has to have the same meaning every time it appears in the argument. If the meaning shifts during the course of the argument, then the argument cannot be sound.

Consider the following statement:

> This is supposed to be a free country, but nothing worth having is ever free.

Politicians frequently engage in the either/or fallacy.
In this statement, the meaning of a key term shifts. The first time the word *free* is used, it means “not under the control of another.” The second time, it means “without charge.”

**Red Herring**

This fallacy gets its name from the practice of dragging a smoked fish across the trail of a fox to mask its scent during a fox hunt. As a result, the hounds lose the scent and are thrown off the track. The red herring fallacy occurs when a person raises an irrelevant side issue to divert attention from the real issue. Used skillfully, this fallacy can distract an audience and change the focus of an argument.

Political campaigns are good sources of examples of the red herring fallacy. Consider this example from the 2012 presidential race:

> I know Mitt Romney says he is for the middle class, but he and his wife own three homes. How can we believe his tax proposals will help the middle class?

The focus of this argument should have been on Romney’s tax proposals—not on the fact that he and his wife own three houses.

Here is red herring fallacy from the 2012 political campaign:

> Barack Obama wants us to vote for him, but his father was a Muslim. How can we possibly trust him with national security?

Again, the focus of these remarks should have been Obama’s qualifications, not the fact that his father was a Muslim.

**Slippery Slope**

The slippery-slope fallacy occurs when a person argues that one thing will inevitably result from another. (Other names for the slippery-slope fallacy are the foot-in-the-door fallacy and the floodgates fallacy.) Both these names suggest that once you permit certain acts, you inevitably permit additional acts that eventually lead to disastrous consequences. Typically, the slippery-slope fallacy presents a series of increasingly unacceptable events that lead to an inevitable, unpleasant conclusion. (Usually, there is no evidence that such a sequence will actually occur.)

We encounter examples of the slippery-slope fallacy almost daily. During a debate on same-sex marriage, for example, an opponent advanced this line of reasoning:

> If we allow gay marriage, then there is nothing to stop polygamy. And once we allow this, where will it stop? Will we have to legalize incest—or even bestiality?
Whether or not you support same-sex marriage, you should recognize the fallacy of this slippery-slope reasoning. By the last sentence of the passage above, the assertions have become so outrageous that they approach parody. People can certainly debate this issue, but not in such a dishonest and highly emotional way.

**You Also (Tu Quoque)**

The you also fallacy asserts that a statement is false because it is inconsistent with what the speaker has said or done. In other words, a person is attacked for doing what he or she is arguing against. Parents often encounter this fallacy when they argue with their teenage children. By introducing an irrelevant point—"You did it too"—the children attempt to distract parents and put them on the defensive:

- How can you tell me not to smoke when you used to smoke?
- Don’t yell at me for drinking. I bet you had a few beers before you were twenty-one.
- Why do I have to be home by midnight? Didn’t you stay out late when you were my age?

Arguments such as these are irrelevant. People fail to follow their own advice, but that does not mean that their points have no merit. (Of course, not following their own advice does undermine their credibility.)

**Appeal to Doubtful Authority**

Writers of research papers frequently use the ideas of recognized authorities to strengthen their arguments. However, the sources offered as evidence need to be both respected and credible. The appeal to doubtful authority occurs when people use the ideas of nonexperts to support their arguments.

Not everyone who speaks as an expert is actually an authority on a particular issue. For example, when movie stars or recording artists give their opinions about politics, climate change, or foreign affairs—things they may know little about—they are not speaking as experts; therefore, they have no authority. (They are experts, however, when they discuss the film or music industries.) A similar situation occurs with the pundits who appear on television news shows. Some of these individuals have solid credentials in the fields they discuss, but others offer opinions even
though they know little about the subjects. Unfortunately, many viewers accept the pronouncements of these “experts” uncritically and think it is acceptable to cite them to support their own arguments.

How do you determine whether a person you read about or hear is really an authority? First, make sure that the person actually has expertise in the field he or she is discussing. You can do this by checking his or her credentials on the Internet. Second, make sure that the person is not biased. No one is entirely free from bias, but the bias should not be so extreme that it undermines the person’s authority. Finally, make sure that you can confirm what the so-called expert says or writes. Check one or two pieces of information in other sources, such as a basic reference text or encyclopedia. Determine if others—especially recognized experts in the field—confirm this information. If there are major points of discrepancy, dig further to make sure you are dealing with a legitimate authority.

**Misuse of Statistics**

The misuse of statistics occurs when data are misrepresented. Statistics can be used persuasively in an argument, but sometimes they are distorted—intentionally or unintentionally—to make a point. For example, a classic ad for toothpaste claims that four out of five dentists recommend Crest toothpaste. What the ad neglects to mention is the number of dentists who were questioned. If the company surveyed several thousand dentists, then this statistic would be meaningful. If the company surveyed only ten, however, it would not be.

Misleading statistics can be much subtler (and much more complicated) than the example above. For example, in 2000, there were 16,653 alcohol-related deaths in the United States. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 12,892 of these 16,653 alcohol-related deaths involved at least one driver or passenger who was legally drunk. Of the 12,892 deaths, 7,326 were the drivers themselves, and 1,594 were legally drunk pedestrians. The remaining 3,972 fatalities were nonintoxicated drivers, passengers, or nonoccupants. These 3,972 fatalities call the total number into question because the NHTSA does not indicate which drivers were at fault. In other words, if a sober driver ran a red light and killed a legally drunk driver, the NHTSA classified this death as alcohol-related. For this reason, the original number of alcohol-related deaths—16,653—is somewhat misleading. (The statistic
becomes even more questionable when you consider that a person is automatically classified as intoxicated if he or she refuses to take a sobriety test.)

**Post Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc (After This, Therefore Because of This)**

The *post hoc* fallacy asserts that because two events occur closely in time, one event must cause the other. Professional athletes commit the post hoc fallacy all the time. For example, one major league pitcher wears the same shirt every time he has an important game. Because he has won several big games while wearing this shirt, he believes it brings him luck.

Many events seem to follow a sequential pattern even though they actually do not. For example, some people refuse to get a flu shot because they say that the last time they got one, they came down with the flu. Even though there is no scientific basis for this link, many people insist that it is true. (The more probable explanation for this situation is that the flu vaccination takes at least two weeks to take effect, so it is possible for someone to be infected by the flu virus before the vaccine starts working.)

Another health-related issue also illustrates the post hoc fallacy. Recently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) studied several products that claim to cure the common cold. Because the study showed that these medications were not effective, the FDA ordered the manufacturers to stop making false claims about their products. Despite this fact, however, many people still buy these products. When questioned, they say the medications actually work. Again, the explanation for this phenomenon is simple. Most colds last just a few days. As the FDA pointed out in its report, people who took the medications would have begun feeling better with or without them.

**Non Sequitur (It Does Not Follow)**

The *non sequitur* fallacy occurs when a conclusion does not follow from the premises. Frequently, the conclusion is supported by weak or irrelevant evidence—or by no evidence at all. Consider the following statement:

> Megan drives an expensive car, so she must be earning a lot of money.

Megan might drive an expensive car, but this is not evidence that she has a high salary. She could, for example, be leasing the car or paying it off over a five-year period, or it could have been a gift.
Non sequiturs are common in political arguments. Consider this statement:

Gangs, drugs, and extreme violence plague today’s prisons. The only way to address this issue is to release all nonviolent offenders as soon as possible.

This assessment of the prison system may be accurate, but it doesn’t follow that because of this situation, all nonviolent offenders should be released immediately.

Scientific arguments also contain non sequiturs. Consider the following statement that was made during a debate on global warming:

Recently, the polar ice caps have thickened, and the temperature of the oceans has stabilized. Obviously, the earth is healing itself. We don’t need to do more to address climate change.
Even if you accept the facts of this argument, you need to see more evidence before you can conclude that no action against climate change is necessary. For example, the cooling trend could be temporary, or other areas of the earth could still be growing warmer.

**Bandwagon Fallacy**

The bandwagon fallacy occurs when you try to convince people that something is true because it is widely held to be true. It is easy to see the problem with this line of reasoning. Hundreds of years ago, most people believed that the sun revolved around the earth and that the earth was flat. As we know, the fact that many people held these beliefs did not make them true.

The underlying assumption of the bandwagon fallacy is that the more people who believe something, the more likely it is to be true. Without supporting evidence, however, this form of argument cannot be valid. For example, consider the following statement made by a driver who was stopped by the police for speeding:

_Officer, I didn’t do anything wrong. Everyone around me was going the same speed._
Part 2  Reading and Responding to Arguments

As the police officer was quick to point out, the driver’s argument missed the point: he was doing fifty-five miles an hour in a thirty-five-mile-an-hour zone, and the fact that other drivers were also speeding was irrelevant. If the driver had been able to demonstrate that the police officer was mistaken—that he was driving more slowly or that the speed limit was actually sixty miles an hour—then his argument would have had merit. In this case, the fact that other drivers were going the same speed would be relevant because it would support his contention.

Since most people want to go along with the crowd, the bandwagon fallacy can be very effective. For this reason, advertisers use it all the time. For example, a book publisher will say that a book has been on the New York Times bestseller list for ten weeks, and a pharmaceutical company will say that its brand of aspirin outsells other brands four to one. These appeals are irrelevant, however, because they don’t address the central questions: Is the book actually worth reading? Is one brand of aspirin really better than other brands?

**EXERCISE 5.10**

Determine which of the following statements are logical arguments and which are fallacies. If the statement is not logical, identify the fallacy that best applies.

1. Almost all the students I talked to said that they didn’t like the senator. I’m sure he’ll lose the election on Tuesday.
2. This car has a noisy engine; therefore, it must create a lot of pollution.
3. I don’t know how Professor Resnick can be such a hard grader. He’s always late for class.
4. A vote for the bill to limit gun sales in the city is a vote against the Second Amendment.
5. It’s only fair to pay your fair share of taxes.
6. I had an internship at a government agency last summer, and no one there worked very hard. Government workers are lazy.
7. It’s a clear principle of law that people are not allowed to yell “Fire!” in a crowded theater. By permitting protestors to hold a rally downtown, Judge Cohen is allowing them to do just that.
8. Of course this person is guilty. He wouldn’t be in jail if he weren’t a criminal.
9. Schools are like families; therefore, teachers (like parents) should be allowed to discipline their kids.
10. Everybody knows that staying out in the rain can make you sick.
11. When we had a draft in the 1960s, the crime rate was low. We should bring back the draft.

12. I’m not a doctor, but I play one on TV. I recommend Vicks Formula 44 cough syrup.

13. Some people are complaining about public schools, so there must be a problem.

14. If you aren’t part of the solution, you’re part of the problem.

15. All people are mortal. James is a person. Therefore, James is mortal.

16. I don’t know why you gave me an F for handing in someone else’s essay. Didn’t you ever copy something from someone else?

17. First, the government stops us from buying assault rifles. Then, it limits the number of handguns we can buy. What will come next? Soon, they’ll try to take away all our guns.

18. Shakespeare was the world’s greatest playwright; therefore, *Macbeth* must be a great play.

19. Last month, I bought a new computer. Yesterday, I installed some new software. This morning, my computer wouldn’t start up. The new software must be causing the problem.

20. Ellen DeGeneres is against testing pharmaceutical and cosmetics products on animals, and that’s good enough for me.

**EXERCISE 5.11**

Read the following essay, and identify as many logical fallacies in it as you can. Make sure you identify each fallacy by name and are able to explain the flaws in the writer’s arguments.

This essay is from Buchanan.org, where it appeared on October 31, 1994.

**IMMIGRATION TIME-OUT**

**PATRICK J. BUCHANAN**

Proposition 187 “is an outrage. It is unconstitutional. It is nativist. It is racist.”—Al Hunt, *Capital Gang*, CNN

That outburst by my columnist colleague, about California’s Prop. 187—which would cut off social welfare benefits to illegal aliens—suggests that this savage quarrel is about more than just money. Indeed, the roots of this dispute
over Prop. 187 are grounded in the warring ideas that we Americans hold about the deepest, most divisive issues of our time: ethnicity, nation, culture.

What do we want the America of the years 2000, 2020, and 2050 to be like? Do we have the right to shape the character of the country our grandchildren will live in? Or is that to be decided by whoever, outside America, decides to come here?

By 2050, we are instructed by the chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley, Chang Lin-Tin, “the majority of Americans will trace their roots to Latin America, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Pacific Islands.”

Now, any man or woman, of any nation or ancestry can come here—and become a good American.

We know that from our history. But by my arithmetic, the chancellor is saying Hispanics, Asians, and Africans will increase their present number of 65 million by at least 100 million in 60 years, a population growth larger than all of Mexico today.

What will that mean for America? Well, South Texas and Southern California will be almost exclusively Hispanic. Each will have tens of millions of people whose linguistic, historic, and cultural roots are in Mexico. Like Eastern Ukraine, where 10 million Russian-speaking “Ukrainians” now look impatiently to Moscow, not Kiev, as their cultural capital, America could see, in a decade, demands for Quebec-like status for Southern California. Already there is a rumbling among militants for outright secession. A sea of Mexican flags was prominent in that L.A. rally against Prop. 187, and Mexican officials are openly urging their kinsmen in California to vote it down.

If no cutoff is imposed on social benefits for those who breach our borders, and break our laws, the message will go out to a desperate world: America is wide open. All you need do is get there, and get in.

Consequences will ensue. Crowding together immigrant and minority populations in our major cities must bring greater conflict. We saw that in the 1992 L.A. riot. Blacks and Hispanics have lately collided in D.C.’s Adams-Morgan neighborhood, supposedly the most tolerant and progressive section of Washington. The issue: bilingual education. Unlike 20 years ago, ethnic conflict is today on almost every front page.

Before Mr. Chang’s vision is realized, the United States will have at least two official languages. Today’s steady outmigration of “Anglos” or “Euro-Americans,” as whites are now called, from Southern Florida and Southern California, will continue. The 50 states will need constant redrawing of political lines to ensure proportional representation. Already we have created the first “apartheid districts” in America’s South.

Ethnic militancy and solidarity are on the rise in the United States; the old institutions of assimilation are not doing their work as they once did; the Melting Pot is in need of repair. On campuses we hear demands for separate dorms, eating rooms, clubs, etc., by black, white, Hispanic, and

“Ethnic militancy and solidarity are on the rise.”
Asian students. If this is where the campus is headed, where are our cities going?

If America is to survive as “one nation, one people,” we need to call a “time-out” on immigration, to assimilate the tens of millions who have lately arrived. We need to get to know one another, to live together, to learn together America’s language, history, culture, and traditions of tolerance, to become a new national family, before we add a hundred million more. And we need soon to bring down the curtain on this idea of hyphenated-Americanism.

If we lack the courage to make the decisions—as to what our country will look like in 2050—others will make those decisions for us, not all of whom share our love of the America that seems to be fading away.

**EXERCISE 5.12**

Choose three of the fallacies that you identified in “Immigration Time-Out” for Exercise 5.11. Rewrite each statement in the form of a logical argument.
Have Colleges Gone Too Far to Accommodate Students with Disabilities?

Go back to page 113, and reread the At Issue box that gives background on whether colleges have gone too far in accommodating students with disabilities. As the following sources illustrate, this question has a number of possible answers.

As you read this source material, you will be asked to answer questions and to complete some simple activities. This work will help you understand both the content and the structure of the sources. When you are finished, you will be ready to write an argument—either inductive or deductive—that takes a position on whether colleges have gone too far in accommodating students with disabilities.

SOURCES

California Polytechnic State University, “College Students with Learning Disabilities,” p. 153; University of Minnesota, “Do I Have a Disability?,” p. 157

Tamar Lewin, “Fictitious Learning-Disabled Student at the Center of a Lawsuit against College,” p. 161

Arne Duncan, “Keeping the Promise to All America’s Children,” p. 165

Charlotte Allen, “College for the Intellectually Disabled,” p. 172


Rachel Adams, “Bringing Down the Barriers—Seen and Unseen,” p. 178

For comprehension quizzes, see bedfordstmartins.com/practicalargument.
A Learning Disability (LD) Is:

- A disorder which affects the manner in which individuals with normal or above average intelligence take in, retain, and express information. It is commonly recognized as a significant deficit in one or more of the following areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematical calculation, or problem solving. Individuals with learning disabilities also may have difficulty with sustained attention, time management, or social skills.

- Presumably due to central nervous system dysfunction.

- Cross-cultural. It occurs regardless of racial or ethnic origin.

- Often inconsistent. A learning disability may persist throughout life but the problems manifested may change depending upon the learning demands and the setting. It may cause problems throughout grade school, seem to disappear in high school, and then resurface again in college. It may manifest itself in only one specific academic area, such as math or foreign language, or may impact an individual’s performance across a variety of subject areas and disciplines.

- Frustrating! Because a learning disability is not visible, teachers, parents, and peers often do not understand the challenges faced by individuals with learning disabilities. Consequently, many adults with learning disabilities often have to “prove” to others that their invisible impairments are disabling.

A Learning Disability Is Not:

- A form of mental retardation or an emotional disorder.

- Primarily due to other impairments, environmental, or cultural influences. It may occur concomitantly with other disabilities but is not the result of these conditions.

Characteristics of College Students with Learning Disabilities

Many college students with learning disabilities are intelligent, talented, and capable. Typically, they have developed a variety of strategies for compensating
for their learning disabilities. However, the degree of severity of the disability varies from individual to individual. Individuals who come from divergent cultural and language backgrounds may exhibit many of the oral and written language behaviors cited below but are not necessarily learning disabled by virtue of this difference alone.

**Reading Skills**

- Slow reading rate and/or difficulty in modifying reading rate in accordance with material’s level of difficulty.
- Uneven comprehension and retention of material read. Difficulty identifying important points and themes.
- Incomplete mastery of phonics, confusion of similar words, difficulty integrating new vocabulary.
- Skips words or lines of printed material.
- Difficulty reading for long periods of time.

**Written Language Skills**

- Difficulty planning a topic and organizing thoughts on paper.
- Difficulty with sentence structure (e.g., incomplete sentences, run-ons, poor use of grammar, missing inflectional endings).
- Frequent spelling errors (e.g., omissions, substitutions, transpositions), especially in specialized and foreign vocabulary.
- Difficulty effectively proofreading written work and making revisions.
- Compositions are often limited in length.
- Slow written production.
- Poor penmanship (e.g., poorly formed letters, incorrect use of capitalization, trouble with spacing, overly large handwriting).
- Inability to copy correctly from a book or the blackboard. Slow written production.

**Oral Language Skills**

- Inability to concentrate on and to comprehend spoken language when presented rapidly.
- Difficulty in orally expressing ideas that they seem to understand.

“Many college students with learning disabilities are intelligent, talented, and capable.”
Difficulty following or having a conversation about an unfamiliar idea.
Difficulty speaking grammatically correct English.
Trouble telling a story in the proper sequence.
Difficulty following oral or written directions.

**Mathematical Skills**
- Incomplete mastery of basic facts (e.g., mathematical tables).
- Reverses numbers (e.g., 123 to 321 or 231).
- Confuses operational symbols, especially $+$ and $\times$.
- Copies problems incorrectly from one line to another.
- Difficulty recalling the sequence of operational concepts.
- Difficulty understanding key concepts and applications to aid problem solving.
- Difficulty comprehending word problems.

**Organizational and Study Skills**
- Difficulty with organizational skills.
- Time management difficulties.
- Slow to start and to complete tasks.
- Repeated inability, on a day-to-day basis, to recall what has been taught.
- Difficulty interpreting charts and graphs.
- Lack of overall organization in written notes and compositions.
- Difficulty preparing for and taking tests.
- Inefficient use of library and reference materials.

**Attention and Concentration**
- Trouble focusing and sustaining attention on academic tasks.
- Fluctuating attention span during lectures.
- Easily distracted by outside stimuli.
- Difficulty juggling multiple task demands and overloads quickly.
- Hyperactivity and excessive movements may accompany the inability to focus attention.
Social Skills

- Some adults with learning disabilities have social skills problems due to their inconsistent perceptual abilities. These individuals may be unable to detect the difference between sincere and sarcastic comments or may be unable to recognize other subtle changes in tone of voice for the same reason that a person with visual perceptual problems may have trouble distinguishing between the letters b and d. Difficulties in interpreting nonverbal messages may result in lowered self-esteem and may cause some adults with learning disabilities to have trouble meeting people or working cooperatively with others.
DO I HAVE A DISABILITY?

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Is what I have a disability? How do I know what a disability is?

“How do I know what a disability is?”

Information about Disabilities

A disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as seeing, hearing, walking, learning, or self-care. While some disabilities are apparent, or visible, the majority of people have invisible disabilities. While an invisible disability may not be apparent, the impact of the condition is real. Some individuals may be reluctant to disclose a disability because of the stigma associated with having a disability. The following is a list of some of the disability conditions served by Disability Services. It is important to note that individuals may experience multiple conditions.

Psychiatric Disabilities

A psychiatric disability or mental illness is a health condition that impacts an individual’s thinking, feelings, or behavior (or all three) and causes the individual distress and difficulty in functioning. The course of a mental illness is unique for each person and may limit one or more major life activities such as learning or working. Examples of a psychiatric disability include major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety disorder, or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurological condition that affects learning and behavior. ADHD is the result of a chronic disturbance in the areas of the brain that regulate attention, impulse control, and executive functioning. Hyperactivity is not always a symptom. People with a formal diagnosis of ADHD may have difficulties with information processing and concentration. Individuals generally experience symptoms of ADHD in childhood and continue to experience symptoms as adults, but adult diagnoses are not uncommon for college-aged students.

Learning Disabilities

A Learning Disability (LD) affects the manner in which individuals acquire, store, organize, retrieve, manipulate, and express information. People who
have been diagnosed with a learning disability typically have average to above-average intelligence but exhibit a discrepancy between ability and achievement. Areas affected by LD may include reading, written expression, and math. People with learning disabilities may also experience difficulty with organizational skills, time management, or social/interpersonal skills.

**Mobility Impairments**

Mobility impairments include a broad range of disabilities that affect a person’s independent movement and cause limited mobility. Some mobility impairments are acquired at birth while accidents, illnesses, or the natural process of aging may cause others. Examples of mobility impairments may include paraplegia, multiple sclerosis, quadriplegia, amputation, cerebral palsy, and arthritis. Depending on the severity of the disability, individuals may have limitations related to stamina, manual dexterity, speech, and ability to stand or sit.

**Systemic Disabilities**

Systemic disabilities are medical conditions that affect one or more major body systems. These conditions constitute a disability if they significantly impact one or more major life activities, such as learning. The effects and symptoms of these conditions vary greatly; systemic conditions may include cancer, asthma, HIV/AIDS, epilepsy, chronic fatigue syndrome, or diabetes.

**Blind and Low Vision**

Few individuals are totally blind; many individuals have some useful vision that can be utilized through the use of adaptive devices. Individuals are considered to be legally blind when they meet specific criteria for their vision loss. Someone has low vision when they have decreased visual acuity or visual field that cannot be corrected with ordinary eyeglasses, contact lenses, or medical or surgical procedures.

Visual impairments may occur because of birth defects, inherited diseases, injuries, diabetes, glaucoma, cataracts, macular degeneration, and other conditions. Some individuals may use Braille, large print, various assistive technologies, or a combination of these for communication purposes.

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

The term *deaf* refers to those individuals who are unable to hear well enough to rely on their hearing and use it as a means of processing information. The term *hard of hearing* refers to those who have some hearing, are able to
use it for communication purposes, and who feel reasonably comfortable doing so. Hearing loss is categorized by its severity as mild, moderate, severe, or profound and may affect the hearing in one or both ears. Modes of communication (American Sign Language, captioning, lip reading, assistive listening devices) vary depending on the degree of hearing loss and age of onset. Two people with the same severity of hearing loss may experience it quite differently.

**Deaf/Blind**

This refers to a dual sensory loss that interferes with the ability of individuals to function effectively in the hearing-sighted world. This term does not necessarily mean total loss of hearing and vision; the range of hearing loss and vision loss varies with individuals. Please see additional descriptions on Deaf/ Hard of Hearing and/or Blind/Low-Vision.

**Head Injuries**

Some head injuries result in cognitive and behavioral impairments. A head injury may affect one or more of the following areas: information processing, memory, communication, motor skills, and other sensory, physical, and psychosocial abilities. There is great variation among individuals in the impact of a head injury.

**Brain Injuries**

A brain injury is damage caused by an internal or external trauma to the brain. Inflammation or swelling, bleeding, a blow to the head, or excessive force such as shaking or whiplash may cause a brain injury; these traumas may result in cognitive, physical, behavioral, and emotional changes. A brain injury can affect different areas of the brain depending on the type and severity of the accident; as a result, the effects vary widely from person to person. Major causes of brain injury include falls, motor vehicle accidents, violence, concussions, bicycle crashes, lack of oxygen from cardiac arrest, brain inflammation, aneurysms, strokes, and tumors.

**Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that is characterized by social interaction deficits, impaired communication skills, restricted interests, and stereotyped patterns of behavior. People with this disability may have difficulty with understanding social cues, breaks in routines, fine motor skills, stress management, and sensitivity to environmental stimuli. ASD may include high-functioning autism, Asperger’s syndrome, or Pervasive Developmental Disorder.
AT ISSUE: SOURCES FOR DEVELOPING A LOGICAL ARGUMENT

1. The two learning disabilities Web sites on the preceding pages give information to college students. How much knowledge does each site assume readers have? What preconceptions (if any) does each site assume readers have?

2. Which of these sites do you think is more helpful? Why?

3. The California Polytechnic State University site explains what conditions do not qualify as learning disabilities. Do you think this material is necessary? Why do you think the University of Minnesota site does not include this information? Should it be added?

4. Do the two sites provide enough information? Too much information? Are the definitions of the various disabilities listed on each site too broad, too narrow, or just right? Explain.

5. Is the purpose of each site just to give information, or do you think one (or both) has a different purpose? Explain.
Boston University had long been one of the nation’s leaders in helping learning-disabled students through the rigors of higher education. So two years ago, when Jon Westling, the provost, described “Somnolent Samantha” in a speech complaining of the extremes to which universities are being pushed to accommodate such students, there was every reason to believe that she was real.

Mr. Westling, now the president of Boston University, related how Samantha had told him after class that she had a learning disability “in the area of auditory processing” and would need copies of lecture notes, a seat in front, extra time on exams, and a separate room to take them in. And, he said, he was told that Samantha might fall asleep in class, so he should fill her in on material she missed while she dozed.

Mr. Westling spoke of Samantha on other occasions, too, affirming that the case was real in an interview with the New York Times last year and citing it, again as if it were real, in a letter to the mother of a child with a disability. But now, in documents related to a highly visible lawsuit, Mr. Westling has acknowledged that there was no such student as Somnolent Samantha, that the sleeping young woman was someone he had invented to make a point.

Even though Samantha is fictional, she and her inventor are at the heart of an academic debate over how much help, and what academic adjustments, learning-disabled college students are entitled to.

Lawyers for Mr. Westling say he is guilty only of daring to voice the politically incorrect view that the field of learning disabilities is still scientifically murky and that universities have the right to set their own academic requirements, even if some disabled students will have trouble fulfilling them.

But advocates for the learning-disabled say his dismissive words and his actions—he has tightened the university’s policy on handling requests for accommodations—amount to illegal discrimination against those with learning disabilities.

In a lawsuit, a class action that goes to trial today in Boston, learning-disabled students at Boston University are charging that the university and Mr. Westling have violated Federal laws requiring that educational institutions provide “reasonable accommodations” to those with learning disabilities.

In the last decade, the number of college students identified as having learning disabilities has grown rapidly. In the annual survey by the American Council on Education last fall, 3.1 percent of full-time college freshmen called themselves learning-disabled, compared with 2.2 percent in 1991, the first year...
the question was asked. Colleges across the nation are grappling with the question of what they must do to accommodate these students.

Learning disabilities are defined as the unexpected failure to learn, despite adequate intelligence, motivation, and instruction. Reading disorders, or dyslexia, are the most common. But both clinically and legally, the field of learning disabilities is evolving. New learning disabilities are still being identified, and there are no clear legal standards on what constitutes reasonable accommodation.

For many years, the Office of Learning Disabilities Support Services at Boston University had a national reputation for its summer program for learning-disabled students, the tutoring it offered, and its policy of helping such students get special assistance, like the aid of a note-taker, extended time on tests, or permission to substitute a course to meet a foreign language or math requirement.

But in 1995, Mr. Westling, then the provost, became suspicious of the diagnoses some students were declaring, the credentials of some of the experts making the diagnoses, and the accommodations the university was being asked to make. After reviewing the files, he said, he was troubled to find poor documentation, vague diagnoses, and evaluations that offered no evidence of any need for the accommodations that had been granted. Some files had no documentation or had documentation for the wrong students.

So Mr. Westling, a humanities professor with no expertise in learning disabilities, changed the policy in this area at the end of 1995, taking unto himself the authority that had rested in the Office of Learning Disabilities Support Services. He made himself the final arbiter of applications for accommodations, set up a blanket prohibition against course substitutions for foreign language or math requirements, and required every learning-disabled student receiving any accommodation to re-apply for such aid by submitting a diagnostic evaluation not more than three years old from a doctor or licensed clinical psychologist.

The change created turmoil at the learning-disabilities office, where top officials resigned in protest, and led to confusion at other schools that had looked to Boston University as their model. Many of the university’s learning-disabled students—480 of the university’s 29,000 students registered with the learning-disabilities office last year—said they felt betrayed since they had come to the college because of the support it offered.

“I was drawn to B.U. because I thought there would be an attitude of understanding about learning disabilities,” said Elizabeth Guckenberger, a third-year law student who was discovered to have auditory and visual dyslexia as a freshman at Carleton College in Northfield, Minn.

“I have always had to work very hard,” Ms. Guckenberger said. “Things take me much longer than they take my twin sister, who is not dyslexic. I’m doing well in law school, but I need my accommodations. I get a reduced caseload, which means I’m not going to finish in the usual three years, and I get extended time on tests and a quiet room to take them in.”
Lawyers for Ms. Guckenberger and the other plaintiffs say the Samantha story shows that Mr. Westling should not be making decisions on which accommodations to grant.

“That kind of language is evidence of an intent to discriminate,” said William Hunt, one of the students’ lawyers.

The university, however, says advocates for learning-disabled students are on a witch hunt, seeking to vilify Mr. Westling for daring to say what many other academics around the country think but do not dare express.

“The field of learning disabilities is still a very fluid field,” said Larry Elswit, the university lawyer handling the case, “and throughout the academic world, there is a great deal of questioning going on. Jon Westling’s cardinal sin was to talk about it.”

In the students’ original complaint, they charged that Mr. Westling and Boston University were maintaining a “hostile learning environment,” a legal concept borrowed from cases dealing with workplace discrimination and used recently in cases alleging sexual harassment at schools. Several leading advocacy groups for learning-disabled students joined the students as plaintiffs in the original complaint.

Judge Patti B. Saris of Federal District Court in Boston, in an order she issued in January to allow the case to proceed as a class action, refused to allow the advocacy groups to be parties in the case and dismissed the hostile-environment charge. Judge Saris warned that making an academic liable for expressing his general views would raise First Amendment concerns. Still, she said that if a “vociferous administrator with a concern about a perceived abuse of learning-disability protections” was involved in the daily administration of the policy being challenged, that might “be of some consequence in this court’s determination of the fairness of Boston University’s evaluation procedures.”

Since the lawsuit was filed, Boston University’s handling of learning disabilities has loosened somewhat: some waivers of the requirement for diagnoses every three years have been granted, and the range of acceptable credentials for evaluators has been slightly broadened. And the university has accepted a temporary standstill agreement that allows students to keep any accommodations that had been promised before Mr. Westling changed the policy. With the standstill agreement, Mr. Elswit said, the number of accommodations rose to 178 last fall, from 118 in 1995 and 117 the previous year. In January, the university hired a learning-disabilities expert to review applications for accommodations.

But other issues in the lawsuit remain, including the question of whether courses can be substituted for math and foreign language requirements, the students’ demand for an appeals process, and a claim of breach of contract.

“This case is not about Somnolent Samantha,” Mr. Elswit said. “It is about a university’s right to set academic standards. The university’s position is that the Americans with Disabilities Act does not prohibit us from having an academic
Have Colleges Gone Too Far to Accommodate Students with Disabilities?

 administrator involved in decisions about academic adjustments. If a student seeks an adjustment to his or her academic program, that is fundamentally an academic issue.”

He continued: “Everyone acknowledges, and we do at Boston University, that learning disabilities can make certain elements of learning difficult. As a result, we have in place a broad array of support, adjustments, and alternatives. Within our academic standards, we will do whatever we can to help students with learning disabilities over the bar. Time and a half on tests and note-takers can be fine efforts to help students over the bar. What we won’t do is lower the bar.”

At trial, both sides will present expert witnesses on learning disabilities. They are expected to address the question of who needs accommodations, how widely such help is used or abused, how well it works, and whether periodic retesting should be required for students reporting learning disabilities.

Ms. Guckenberger, for her part, remains convinced that Boston University’s policy is an expression of hostility to students with learning disabilities. The fact that they used a fictional story to illustrate the problems they were having, she said, means that they did not have any genuine complaints.

**AT ISSUE: SOURCES FOR DEVELOPING A LOGICAL ARGUMENT**

1. Why did Jon Westling, the provost of Boston University, invent “Somnolent Samantha”? What did he hope to prove? Do you think his tactics were justified? Were they fair?

2. Why are students with learning disabilities at Boston University suing Westling? Do you think their suit has merit? Why or why not?

3. Why did Westling become suspicious of the disabilities that some students were claiming? What did he think these students were hoping to gain?

4. In paragraph 12, Lewin says that Westling is “a humanities professor with no expertise in learning disabilities.” How significant is this information? Do you think it suggests that Lewin favors one side of the dispute over the other? Explain.

5. In paragraph 24, Larry Elswit, one of the university’s lawyers, says that the case is not about Somnolent Samantha. According to him, “It is about a university’s right to set academic standards.” Do you agree?

6. The essay ends with the following comment by one of the plaintiffs in the case: “The fact that [the university] used a fictional story to illustrate the problems they were having . . . means that they did not have any genuine complaints.” Does this statement seem logical, or is it an example of a logical fallacy? Explain.
President Obama and I believe that every child deserves a world-class education. When the president says every child, it is not just rhetoric—he means every child, regardless of his or her skin color, nationality, ethnicity, or ability. The truth is, however, that virtually everyone professes to believe that all children deserve a world-class education.

Yet today, a significant gap between our aspirations and reality persists. And here is the harder, unspoken truth. Subtle, unexpressed prejudices and lingering roadblocks still prevent children with disabilities from receiving the world-class education they deserve. No belief is more pernicious in education than the conviction that disabilities and demography are destiny—that the burdens of poverty, disability, and race mean the children cannot really succeed and should be treated with low expectations.

We should never forget the past. Even in my lifetime, public schools virtually ignored children with disabilities. Many children were denied access to public schools, and those who attended didn’t get the individualized instruction and appropriate services they needed and deserved.

Over the past 35 years, we’ve made great strides in delivering on the promise of a free, appropriate public education for children with disabilities. Thanks to the advocacy and hard work of people and organizations like the Council for Exceptional Children, six million students with disabilities are in school—and millions of them are thriving.

Yet unfortunately, many children with disabilities are not getting a world-class education. The President and I are committed to doing everything in our power to make that bedrock American promise of equal educational opportunity a reality. With the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, we have a historic opportunity to move closer to fulfilling that promise for all students.

The President has set a goal that, by the end of the decade, America once again will have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. That ambitious goal will require our educational institutions to produce eight million new graduates with two-year and four-year degrees. We simply cannot achieve that goal without Americans of all ages and abilities going to college and getting degrees in far greater numbers than they are today.

And we know, more than ever before, that in a global economy, a country’s economic security depends on the skills and knowledge of its workers. The country “America does not have expendable students.”
that out-educates us today will out-compete us tomorrow. America does not have expendable students.

But education for all is more than an economic issue. It’s a moral issue. I have often said that education is the civil rights issue of our time. In March, I had the opportunity to speak at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, on the 45th anniversary of one of the most important events of the Civil Rights movement. On that bridge, police savagely beat several hundred peaceful protesters with clubs, lashed them with bullwhips, and stung their eyes and throats with tear gas—all because the protesters wanted to secure the right to vote. Our nation wept with shame that day. Within months, Congress passed the landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The civil rights protesters on the Edmund Pettus Bridge weren’t in wheelchairs and they weren’t marching on behalf of students with dyslexia, learning disabilities, ADD, or other disabilities. But their spirit and commitment emboldened the disability rights movement. In education, no victory for disability advocates was bigger than the 1975 law that guaranteed students with disabilities the right to a free, appropriate public education. On the 35th anniversary of that law’s passage, it’s important to remember many students with disabilities were turned away from school altogether. Others were put in separate classrooms—sometimes a place as unwelcoming as a converted broom closet. Very few ever interacted with peers without disabilities. Today, six million students are guaranteed a free, appropriate public education.

Great advocates continue to work tirelessly on behalf of persons with disabilities. In Congress, we are fortunate the education committees are led by two great champions for students with disabilities—Senator Tom Harkin and Representative George Miller. As you know, Senator Harkin has dedicated much of his career to protecting the rights of people with disabilities. He was an author of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Representative Miller is a passionate advocate for people with disabilities. He takes a back seat to no one in his commitment to accountability for educating students with disabilities.

I look forward to working with both of them to reauthorize ESEA. We’ll be working closely with Republicans as well, including Senator Enzi, Senator Alexander, and Representative Kline.

Senator Harkin, Chairman Miller, and House Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey also have introduced legislation to save education jobs. In this tough economy, hundreds of thousands of education professionals could be facing layoffs. Maybe you are one of them—maybe one of your colleagues or friends is. I look forward to working with them to pass an education jobs bill. Education reform and saving education jobs go hand in hand.

Because of the leadership of Senator Harkin, Chairman Miller, and many others, the lives of children with disabilities are so much richer today than a generation ago. The nation has made significant progress for students with disabilities—but we have more work to do.
Today, 57 percent of students with disabilities spend at least 80 percent of their day within the regular school environment. Overall, 95 percent of students with disabilities attend a neighborhood school. We’re working to put an end to the days of students with disabilities being bused across town or put into a separate school solely because they have a disability. Students with disabilities are learning alongside their peers. They’re eating lunch with them. They’re making art with them. They’re becoming friends with them. And once they graduate they will be working side-by-side.

I know that you’ll be hearing from Tim Shriver on Friday. As the chairman and CEO of the Special Olympics, Tim is a strong advocate for including students with disabilities across community groups. He recounts story after story to illustrate how people with disabilities enrich the lives of all children.

One story he shared with me came in an essay by a girl named Kaitlyn Smith from Conifer High School in Colorado. She wrote about her best friend, Kathleen. Kaitlyn and Kathleen met while they were paired off as partners in P.E. class. They quickly became best friends and they do all of the things best friends do. They eat lunch together every day. When neither of them had a date for the Homecoming dance, they went together as friends.

Kaitlyn wrote that Kathleen taught her what truly matters. It’s not dressing well, doing your hair right, or making sure everyone likes you. In fact, when high school bullies made fun of Kathleen, her response was to look them in the eye, smile, and ignore them. Kaitlyn wrote about their friendship: “Right from the moment I met her, I knew my best friend was a blessing. I needed someone in my life that was going to change my perspective and give me a different outlook.”

Kathleen happens to have Down syndrome. But the story about Kaitlyn’s and Kathleen’s friendship shows how the inclusion of students with disabilities benefits more than just the student with the disability. Inclusion benefits the whole community. Sometimes, parents, students, and teachers fail to recognize the great leadership that students with disabilities can provide our school communities.

But I’m sure you can tell me hundreds of stories of how inclusion enriched the lives of everyone in a school. These are stories we need to tell, over and over again. So many students with disabilities have gone on to become insightful and effective leaders for children who followed in their wake.

Judy Heumann was the assistant secretary for special education and rehabilitative services under Secretary Riley. She contracted polio when she was 18 months old and grew up using a wheelchair. The New York City Public Schools refused to enroll her—not because she wasn’t smart enough, not because she couldn’t learn—simply because she used a wheelchair. When she was old enough for 4th grade, she was allowed to enroll in school. She went on to graduate high school and then college. She applied for a job as a teacher in the system and was turned away again. Once again, she didn’t give up. She eventually got a job as a teacher—but only after suing the school board.
Judy knows that a disability shouldn’t stop any child from attending school, pursuing a career, and making a difference in the lives of others. In addition to eight years of public service at the Department of Education, she has been a strong advocate for persons with disabilities. She has worked with the World Bank to ensure that it addresses disability issues in its work with countries throughout the world. Today, she is the director of the Department of Disability Services in the District of Columbia.

Her work and dedication are reminders of the power of determination and the time-honored truth that disabilities alone do not define us or our work and worth as human beings. Students like Kaitlyn and Kathleen—and adults like Judy—show us that disabilities are not destiny.

The work you do as special education leaders and teachers is vitally important for the students you work with—and our society as well. Children no longer have to fight to be enrolled in school. People who use wheelchairs no longer need to sue simply to have their job application considered by public school districts or other employers. And students like Kathleen can be important parts of a school community—learning with her peers and teaching her peers important lessons about respect, self-confidence, and friendship.

Those are civil rights victories truly worth celebrating. But we haven’t fulfilled the promise of education for students with disabilities. The struggle for equal opportunity in our nation’s schools and universities did not end with the passage of IDEA or at the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge. We will work with schools and enforce laws to ensure that all children, no matter what their race, gender, disability, or national origin, have a fair chance at a good future. We will make sure ESEA doesn’t lose track of these students, who in many cases are making significant progress.

The data show us that we’re making progress. In 2007, nearly 60 percent of students with disabilities graduated high school with a regular diploma, compared to 32 percent twenty years earlier. And a third of students with disabilities were enrolled in postsecondary education—up from just one in seven two decades ago. More adults with disabilities are employed than ever before. By just about every measure, students with disabilities are better educated today than they were a generation ago.

But while America can justly celebrate those successes, we have a long way to go before we rest on our laurels. The graduation rate, postsecondary enrollment rate, and employment rate are all increasing, but they’re still far too low. Too many students with disabilities are leaving school, without the knowledge and skills they truly need to succeed.

From Washington, we’re working hard to ensure that we have the right policies and incentives in place to help states and districts accelerate achievement for all students, including those with disabilities. This year, I’m working closely with Democrats and Republicans in Congress to fix the No Child Left Behind Act through the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We want the law to be fair, flexible, and focused on the right
goals. We want a law that ensures all students are prepared for success in college and careers. Our proposal will set a goal that all students graduate high school ready to succeed in college and careers. We want to make sure that students with disabilities are included in all aspects of ESEA, and to continue to measure achievement gaps and work to close them. We want to align ESEA with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act so that we create one seamless system that addresses the needs of each child.

Under our proposal, students with disabilities will continue to be full participants in accountability systems. One thing NCLB did right was hold schools accountable for all students and highlighted the achievement gaps between subgroups of students. We absolutely want to continue that. But NCLB doesn’t measure student growth. If students start the year two grade levels behind, and, through excellent teaching and strong supports, progress so much that they end the year just below grade level, their school is still labeled a failure instead of a success.

Our accountability system will be based mostly on student growth. Schools where students show large gains in learning over the course of the school year will be rewarded. And the emphasis on student growth will ensure that schools have an incentive to improve the academic performance of our highest-achieving students as well. While we will reward and recognize the best schools, the vast majority of schools will have more flexibility to implement locally designed plans to reach the benchmarks they set for themselves. But schools with chronically low performance and persistent achievement gaps will be required to take far-reaching steps to help students.

We’ll maintain that focus on achievement gaps from NCLB. Our proposal would continue to hold schools accountable for teaching students with disabilities but will also reward them for increasing student learning. Our proposal will also include meaningful district accountability. That means even where achievement gaps aren’t apparent in schools with small numbers of students with disabilities, we will see these gaps at the district level and ask districts to focus on closing them.

While we’re confident that our accountability system will be fair and flexible, we recognize it won’t be flawless. To build a first-rate accountability system, states have to significantly improve existing assessments used to measure our students’ growth and move beyond fill-in-the-bubble tests. Our ESEA Blueprint and Race to the Top Assessment Competition will invest in that next generation of tests to measure student growth and achievement. And it will enhance states’ use of technology and advances in the field of testing to evaluate a range of skills, including those that have traditionally been difficult to measure.

The Department plans to support consortia of states, who will design better assessments for the purposes of both measuring student growth and providing feedback to inform teaching and learning in the classroom. All students will benefit from these tests, but the tests are especially important for students with disabilities.
Today, we have a complicated set of rules around assessing students with disabilities. The majority of students with disabilities take the regular state tests based on the state’s standards for all students, with appropriate accommodations to ensure that their results are valid. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities can take alternate tests based on alternate standards, and other students with disabilities may take an alternate test based on modified standards.

Developing these alternate assessments requires specialized expertise. The Department intends to run an alternate assessments competition that will be managed by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, with a notice inviting applications later this year.

We need to move toward assessments that allow practically all students to take tests that report results tracking their progress toward college- or career-readiness. Our Blueprint also recognizes the uniquely transformative power of teachers on students. We will invest almost $4 billion in programs that recruit, prepare, develop, retain, and reward effective teachers. That’s an unprecedented amount. Our proposal goes further by bolstering traditional and alternative pathways to teaching—especially for those teaching in high-need areas—such as special education—and those teaching in high-need schools.

This reauthorized ESEA will provide the building block for the reauthorization of the IDEA that will follow. Alexa Posny will be leading our work in IDEA reauthorization, and she will be a strong advocate for students with disabilities in ESEA reauthorization as well. You’ll be hearing from her tomorrow morning. Alexa and I look forward to hearing your voices and working with you as Congress shapes this very important law.

Before I close, I want to issue a challenge to each of you individually and to the whole field of special education. Everything we do at the U.S. Department of Education is aimed toward meeting the President’s goal that by 2020 America once again will lead the world in college completion. We cannot get there unless students are earning postsecondary degrees at record levels. I know you’ve made tremendous progress over the decades, but there’s still significant work to be done. I want to challenge each of you to be personally responsible for the success of your students once they graduate. This will mean helping students not just in school but assisting them to plan their transition from high school to college or careers.

I know you already work hard on this, but I’m asking you to redouble your efforts. The success of your students, the well-being of our communities, and the economic prosperity of our nation depend on creating a cradle-to-career educational pipeline, not an education system that continues to function in its separate silos.

Working together, and with your courage and commitment to challenging the status quo, we can create an education system that delivers a world-class education to every learner. This is a promise we must keep to our nation’s students with disabilities, and to all of America’s children.
1. At what point in his speech does Duncan appeal to *ethos*? How effective is this appeal?

2. Duncan develops his argument with both deductive and inductive reasoning. Where does he use each strategy?

3. What does Duncan mean when he says that "education for all is more than an economic issue. It's a moral issue" (para. 8)? Do you agree?

4. In paragraphs 8 and 9, Duncan draws an analogy between civil rights protestors in the 1960s and those who are involved in the disability rights movement. How valid is this analogy? At what points (if any) does this comparison break down?

5. What evidence does Duncan present to support his thesis? Should he have included more evidence? If so, what kind?

6. Where does Duncan address arguments against his position? Does he refute these arguments? Are there any other arguments he should have refuted?
Here is a new trend: college for people who can’t read or write. And no, that doesn’t mean the one out of three freshmen whose literacy and numeracy skills are so poor that they have to take remedial courses before they are deemed ready to do college-level work. It means students who literally can’t read or write because they are severely cognitively impaired by Down syndrome or some other mental disability. Yet an increasing number of campus administrators have decided that even the “intellectually disabled” (as this group is now called) deserve a college education.

Well, not exactly a college education, since even the most egalitarian administrators concede that people with severe cognitive disabilities can’t handle even the most rudimentary of course offerings. Instead, what a host of new programs for the intellectually disabled offer is what the people who run them call “a college experience.”

Some 250 campuses around the country offer such courses. Students enrolled in the programs sit in on a class or two per semester that regular students are taking for credit, but they don’t receive grades, and their assignments are drastically tailored to fit their limited abilities. Batteries of counselors and tutors (the latter are typically volunteers from the regular student population) help them through, and they fill up the rest of their time with “life skills” seminars and workshops designed to help them use a debit card, take the bus, or get through a job interview, with internships at participating nonprofits, and, presumably, with making friends and soaking up the ivy-covered atmosphere. They don’t receive actual college degrees—indeed, according to the U.S. Department of Education, no student enrolled in any college program for the intellectually disabled has to date received even a two-year associate degree—but if they complete their programs in a process that can take years, they typically receive certificates of completion that they can show to prospective employers.

The “college experience” programs represent the latest step in the concept of “mainstreaming” the disabled, including the cognitively disabled, in a process that began in 1973. That’s when Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA), which established the right to a public-school education for disabled children. A companion law, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, along with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, outlawed discrimination against the handicapped. Many school districts accordingly dismantled...
their special-education classes for cognitively impaired youngsters and began seating those children in regular classrooms alongside children of normal abilities, all the way from kindergarten through high school. When those classmates went on to college, their cognitively impaired peers wanted to go, too. As Elise McMillan, codirector of the Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at Vanderbilt University, which began what it calls a “Next Step” program for intellectually disabled young people this year, told the Chronicle of Higher Education, “[T]hey have the same dreams and aspirations as their brothers and sisters and other students.”

Such sentimental linguistic trafficking in “dreams and aspirations” and “a college experience” in contrast to actual college can be viewed as a harmless if expensive exercise in philanthropy by university administrators—although it does help dilute the value and meaning of a college education, already threatened by grade inflation and the collapse of core curricula. It would be more honest to describe the programs as charity rather than college. The programs may also do some psychological good for the ultra-select group of people they serve (the Vanderbilt program, for example, enrolls only five students at a time). They also likely teach the volunteer tutors and classmates of the cognitively impaired important lessons in compassion for their less fortunate fellow human beings. But it is hard to assess their practical value. Although advocates cite studies showing that intellectually disabled students who complete some sort of postsecondary education earn 1.7 times more per week than their peers who receive no postsecondary education, no students or administrators interviewed by the Chronicle or other newspapers pinpointed any specific better-paying jobs offered to enrollees in the programs. One cannot help but wonder whether the programs simply help cognitively impaired students coast along at their parents’ (or university) expense in a respectable academic setting instead of going to work at the low-prestige jobs for which their limited abilities qualify them.

More alarmingly, although the programs in the past have been funded largely by state grants and private donations (as well as the tuition paid by their enrollees), the federal government is poised to dump large amounts of taxpayer money into them. In 2008 Congress extended federally guaranteed loans and Pell grants for low-income students to intellectually disabled students enrolled in transition, learning-skills, and other “college experience” programs. Another 2008 law provides for federal grants to institutions of higher learning that set up such programs.

Worst of all, the programs have generated a litigious entitlement mentality on the part of beneficiaries and their parents. Take the case of Micah Fialka-Feldman, who enrolled in 2003 in the “OPTIONS” program for the intellectually disabled set up by Oakland University in Rochester, Mich. By all accounts Fialka-Feldman, although an extroverted young man who participated in many high school activities as he was mainstreamed along, could neither read nor write. The Wall Street Journal described him as having “a cognitive impairment” that interfered with his ability to acquire literacy.
After four years of participating in OPTIONS and taking tutor-assisted classes without acquiring any sort of certificate, Fialka-Feldman decided in 2007 that he wanted to live in a dormitory on the Oakland campus instead of commuting the twenty miles from his home by bus (he said he was inspired by his younger sister’s move into a dormitory at Mt. Holyoke College). “I just wanted to be able to live with my friends and have the total college experience,” he later told a newspaper reporter.

When the university balked at this demand, saying that its dorms were reserved for full-time students enrolled in four-year degree programs rather than part-timers like Fialka-Feldman who typically lived in off-campus apartments, the young man sued the university under the 1973 Rehabilitation Act. He availed himself of free legal services provided by Michigan Protection and Advocacy Inc., a public-interest law firm. In December 2009 a federal judge ruled that Oakland had violated his rights under the 1973 law and ordered the university to allow him to move into a dorm room in January 2010. The judge also ordered Oakland to pay $102,000 in legal fees to Michigan Protection and Advocacy. By then Fialka-Feldman was 25 years old, well past the graduation age of most on-campus students. He completed the OPTIONS program in June after a single semester of dorm life and some seven years after enrolling at Oakland. The university is appealing the ruling.

The Fialka-Feldman lawsuit suggests that what began as a well-intentioned service for cognitively impaired young people who felt disappointed that they could not get into college has hardened into unrealistic expectations that can spell legal trouble for colleges who set up the programs. A recent article on the US News website about such programs was followed by angry comments from parents of intellectually disabled students taking issue with critics who questioned the programs’ usefulness or propriety.

“Should [my daughter] work at Walmart and live below the poverty level for the rest of her life?” wrote one mother. Wrote another: “Why should [my daughter] have to wait on me at McDonald’s?” Those comments said a lot—about upper-middle-class disdain for honest but entry-level service work and about the kind of employment for which those with severe cognitive disabilities can realistically qualify even with the best of “life-skills” coaching on a college campus. Such are the perils of deciding to offer a “college experience,” or indeed college itself, to people who lack the intellectual qualifications to benefit from higher education.

**AT ISSUE: SOURCES FOR DEVELOPING A LOGICAL ARGUMENT**

1. Do you understand the context of the problem that Allen discusses? Should she have provided more background information?

2. According to Allen, what is the difference between a college education and a “college experience” (para. 5)? Do you see college experience
programs as harmless—or even beneficial—or do you agree with Allen that they “help dilute the value and meaning of a college education” (5)? Explain.

3. Throughout her essay, Allen uses words and phrases that convey her feelings to readers. (For example, in paragraph 5, she refers to “sentimental linguistic trafficking,” and in paragraph 6, she uses the phrase “more alarmingly.”) List some other words and phrases like these. Would Allen’s essay have been more effective had she used more neutral language? Why or why not?

4. Does Allen ever establish that the programs she opposes are widespread enough to be a problem? Could she be accused of setting up a straw man?

5. In the first five paragraphs of her essay, Allen presents the arguments of those who support “college experience” programs. The rest of her essay is a refutation of these arguments. For example, in paragraph 5, she says that college experience programs do little actual good. In paragraph 6, she says that the federal government “is poised to dump large amounts of taxpayer money into them.” Finally, in paragraph 7, she says that the programs have encouraged “a litigious entitlement mentality.” Restate these arguments in your own words by filling in the following template.

   Some people defend college experience programs, saying _______
   
   ____________________________, but others point out that ________________
   
6. What does Allen want to accomplish with her essay? Is her purpose to convince readers of something? To move them to action? What is your reaction to her essay?
Have Colleges Gone Too Far to Accommodate Students with Disabilities?

As the only current undergraduate with a hearing impairment and one of a scarce number of students with physical or learning disabilities, I identify myself first as a Yale student and second as a student with a disability. However, that is not to say that having a hearing loss has not affected my college experience. It has undeniably shaped my college experiences—just in very subtle ways.

Although I have become part of the hearing world of Yale, I have had to accept some limitations. Lectures are difficult when the professor is talking on the stage or meandering around the classroom and not facing me, since I read lips more proficiently than I hear. When students in the class ask questions or make comments, it is difficult for me to find them in the crowd and understand what they are saying. Seminars with fast-paced discussions can also be frustrating, and plays, lectures, and concerts can be bewildering, because sometimes I cannot understand the performers. However, these frustrations are but a small part of my experiences and have not stopped me from taking advantage of all Yale has to offer.

After I presented documentation of my hearing loss, the Resource Office on Disabilities (ROD) has provided me with all the accommodations I have needed, such as real-time captioning: a court reporter sits next to me in class and types the lecture, almost verbatim. The lecture appears instantaneously on a laptop in front of me. While at first it was embarrassing to have to go to class with a stenographer sitting next to me, I eventually realized that it has its perks: all the professors know who I am, and so do most students in my classes. (Unfortunately, since the professors know who I am, I can’t cut class!)

After two semesters, I cannot recall a professor who was unwilling to allow the captioning or who would not meet with me during office hours to review the lectures if I had an especially difficult time understanding. The professors, along with ROD, have made the transition from the smaller, more intimate setting of high school to the larger setting of college fluid and easy. The University as a whole is supportive of disabled students and ensures that their lives are as unaffected by their disabilities as possible.

However, there are still flaws in the University’s treatment of students with disabilities. Although ROD has worked tirelessly to make the University handicapped accessible, many buildings are old and cannot accommodate wheelchair ramps or elevators. Mobility-impaired students cannot visit every dorm.
or college, and they cannot gain access to the facilities in all of the colleges. Even some of the newer buildings are not completely accessible.

It will take time before handicapped access is extended to more buildings around campus. Students—disabled and nondisabled alike—should not accept that a “ramp is unfeasible here,” or that “this book is too hard to change into Braille.” Such excuses are unacceptable. Students with disabilities need to challenge other Yale students, staff, and faculty to create greater access for the disabled. It is not that the University does not care, but when disabled students comprise such a small minority, their voices are not always heard.

**AT ISSUE: SOURCES FOR DEVELOPING A LOGICAL ARGUMENT**

1. Where does Felder appeal to *ethos*? Is this appeal effective? How could she make it more effective?

2. Felder suggests that she is managing well in college and that for the most part, Yale has provided her with the special services that she needs. Does her success at Yale undermine her argument in any way? Explain.

3. In paragraph 5, Felder suggests changes that she thinks Yale needs to make. Do you think her demands are reasonable? Is her statement that “excuses are unacceptable” (6) unduly harsh?

4. Does Felder use inductive or deductive reasoning to make her case? Why do you think she chose this strategy?

5. Felder’s argument rests on at least two unstated assumptions. First, she believes that disabled students are entitled to a very high degree of service from the university. She also believes that Yale has an obligation to make every facility on campus handicapped accessible. Do you think that these assumptions are self-evident, or could Felder be accused of begging the question?

6. Felder ends her essay by acknowledging that disabled students make up “a small minority” at Yale (6). Is this an effective conclusion, or does it undercut her argument? How else could she have ended her essay?
A colleague in a wheelchair goes into an underground passage connecting two campus buildings. Once the entrance locks behind him, he discovers that the door at the other end refuses to open with his swipe card. Although he is a vigorous man of middle age, the maintenance worker who comes to his rescue calls him Pops.

A student with a sensory-processing disorder needs to sit in the front row of class and take notes on a laptop computer, but the professor insists that laptops may be used only in the back of the room. After the student explains her situation, he announces to the entire class that he is making a “special exception” for her.

I heard these and other stories about broken elevators, stairs without handrails, and inaccessible bathrooms at a recent panel on disability and the university that I organized on campus for students, faculty, and staff from our Office of Disability Services.

The news wasn’t all so grim. One student with muscular dystrophy was welcomed into the marching band, and another described her professors as generous and accommodating. A professor who had been around since the 1980s insisted that conditions at our university are much better today than they were in the recent past. And the panelists and audience agreed that there was a general climate of acceptance and good will toward accommodating people with disabilities on campus.

They also agreed that good will is hardly enough. But neither are the requirements for accommodation mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act, which fall far short of making college campuses genuinely inclusive environments for people with disabilities. Recent news stories indicate that my university is hardly alone in confronting these problems. At County College of Morris, in New Jersey, a student was told not to participate in class discussions because the instructor found his severe stutter to be disruptive. And a student with epilepsy at Colorado Mountain College was asked to drop a class after she had a seizure that was deemed distracting to other students.

Of course, there’s another side to the accessibility story, one that’s rarely in the news. Wayne State University, Florida State University, Humboldt State University, and Binghamton University all receive glowing reviews of their services for people with disabilities from New Mobility, a magazine for wheelchair users. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has a
program to support study abroad for students with disabilities and what it says is the first collegiate wheelchair basketball teams for both men and women. The University of California at Berkeley, where the Independent Living movement got its start, continues to offer one of the most accessible campuses in the country. But these tend to be the exceptions rather than the rule.

The controversies that have been in the news lately point toward the emergence of newer and more difficult terrain in the struggle for disabled people’s rights. On campuses, considerable effort goes into material accommodations, such as building ramps and accessible bathrooms, providing note takers and sign-language interpreters, or securing extra time on exams. But, as important as these provisions are, they do little to meet the needs of students with invisible disabilities like bipolar disorder, chronic fatigue syndrome, epilepsy, or stuttering. And they do not mitigate the more subtle ways that people with disabilities are told that they are unwelcome: locating a ramp behind a Dumpster on a dark loading dock, holding parties and other extracurricular events at inaccessible locations, or offering accommodations only for talks specifically related to the topic of disability.

At Columbia, matters of accommodation are handled by our Office of Disability Services on an individual basis, with virtually no effort to inform faculty and staff about what it means to create a truly inclusive classroom. For example, every semester since the 2007 massacre at Virginia Tech, my colleagues and I have received an e-mail with a list of alarming behaviors that might indicate psychiatric disturbances in our students. We can all agree on the importance of campus safety, but in the absence of any broader effort to educate faculty, the memo creates the disturbing implication that students with psychiatric disabilities are liable to be violent or dangerous.

One problem noted by Lennard J. Davis in a recent article in the *Chronicle* is that universities don’t value disability as a form of diversity, as they do race and gender. While on most campuses there is a consensus about the value of including people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, genders, and sexual orientations, there is no such commitment to the inclusion of people with disabilities. Materials related to disabilities rarely appear on course syllabi; students and faculty with disabilities are almost never featured in promotional brochures and videos. As Davis suggests, there is something wrong with a discourse of diversity that doesn’t include people with disabilities, who make up around 10 percent of the world’s population.

But there’s another important point to be made here. Colleges stand to learn from the lessons of the universal-design movement, which showed that changes in the built environment intended to accommodate people with disabilities ended up benefiting everyone.

A genuine effort to include—not simply to accommodate—people with disabilities could have a radical effect on our teaching and our professional practices. What if the instructor who silenced the stutterer had instead taken his disability as an opportunity to examine the goals and purpose of class
Have Colleges Gone Too Far to Accommodate Students with Disabilities?

participation? What if a professor who was asked to give a disabled student extra time on an exam paused to think about whether 50 minutes was the ideal time for any student to complete the exam?

When our campuses tolerate, but do not welcome, people with disabilities, they undermine the values of democracy, justice, and intellectual freedom that are the core values of higher education. And when we regard students and colleagues with disabilities as nuisances or disruptions, we lose the opportunities they provide to think critically, with fresh eyes, about the assumptions on which our pedagogy and our intellectual projects are based.

(AT ISSUE: SOURCES FOR DEVELOPING A LOGICAL ARGUMENT)

1. This article begins with a series of examples. Based on these examples, what inductive conclusion does Adams reach? How strong (or weak) is this conclusion?

2. What kinds of evidence—for example, personal experience or statistics—does Adams present to support the various points she makes? Does she present enough evidence?

3. What is Adams’s purpose in writing her essay? For example, does she want to present information, change people’s ideas, or move readers to action? Is she appealing mainly to logos, ethos, or pathos?

4. According to Adams, what is the difference between making “a genuine effort to include” people with disabilities (para. 11) and simply accommodating them? Do you think that this distinction is valid, or is Adams splitting hairs?

5. In her conclusion, Adams says, “When our campuses tolerate, but do not welcome, people with disabilities, they undermine the values of democracy, justice, and intellectual freedom that are the core values of higher education.” Do you think she is overstating her case? Why or why not?

6. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, an employer or school must make “reasonable accommodation” for those who qualify. Do you think Adams’s requests are reasonable or unreasonable? Explain.
EXERCISE 5.13

Write a one-paragraph deductive argument in which you argue in favor of your school doing more to accommodate students with disabilities. Follow the template below, filling in the blanks to create your argument.

TEMPLATE FOR WRITING A DEDUCTIVE ARGUMENT

Each year, more and more students with disabilities are coming to college. All colleges should _________________. Everyone benefits when _________________. For example, _________________. By providing disabled students with all the help they need, _________________. Therefore, _________________. Not everyone agrees with this view, however. Some people argue that _________________. This argument misses the point. When colleges welcome and support students with disabilities, _________________. For this reason, colleges should _________________.

EXERCISE 5.14

Write a one-paragraph inductive argument in which you argue against your school doing more to accommodate students with disabilities. Follow the template on the next page, filling in the blanks to create your argument.
The number of college students claiming to have learning disabilities is increasing. Some students claim that [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]. These students request [ ] [ ] [ ]. Studies have shown that a number of these students do not really need the special services that they are requesting. For example, some students [ ] [ ] [ ]. As a result, [ ] [ ] [ ].

The best way for colleges to deal with this problem is to [ ] [ ] [ ]. Advocates for the disabled, however, argue that [ ] [ ] [ ]. Although this may be true, [ ] [ ] [ ]. For this reason, it is clear that [ ] [ ] [ ].

**EXERCISE 5.15**

Interview several of your classmates as well as one or two of your instructors about whether they think your school has gone too far to accommodate students with disabilities. Then, edit the deductive and inductive arguments you wrote for Exercises 5.13 and 5.14 so that they include some of these comments.

**EXERCISE 5.16**

Write an essay in which you take a position on the topic, “Have Colleges Gone Too Far to Accommodate Students with Disabilities?” Make sure that your essay is organized primarily as either a deductive argument or an inductive argument. Use the readings on pages 152–180 as source material, and be sure to document all information that you get from these sources. (See Chapter 10 for information on documenting sources.)
EXERCISE 5.17
Review the logical fallacies discussed on pages 137–148. Then, reread the essay you wrote for Exercise 5.16, and check to see if it contains any fallacies. Underline any fallacies you find, and identify them by name. Then, rewrite each statement so it expresses a logical argument. Finally, revise your draft to eliminate any fallacies you found.

EXERCISE 5.18
Review the four pillars of argument discussed in Chapter 1. Does your essay include all four elements of an effective argument? Add anything that is missing. Then, label the key elements of your essay.
Is Online Education as Good as Classroom Education?

Online education is a type of instruction designed to take place over a computer network. Beginning in the 1990s, increasing college costs and advances in technology made distance learning a practical and cost-effective option for educators. This method of instruction eventually evolved into the broader concept of online education.

Currently, many colleges and universities offer online courses, both undergraduate and graduate, that often lead to degrees. The National Center for Education Statistics found that from 2000 to 2008, the number of undergraduate students taking at least one online course expanded from 8% to 20%. The percentage of students participating in online education was highest among those enrolled in public two-year colleges, with older students participating in online education to a greater extent than younger students.

The advantages of online education are clear. For colleges and universities, online education programs are very profitable, allowing schools to reach new student populations both nationally and internationally. In addition, schools can provide instruction without the expense of classrooms, offices, libraries, and bookstores. For students, online education offers the freedom of flexible scheduling, creating extra time for work or family. Finally, students save the cost of commuting to and from school.

Despite the advantages of online education, however, questions remain about its effectiveness. Some educators wonder whether online courses can duplicate the dynamic educational atmosphere that face-to-face instruction provides. Others question whether students learn as well from education delivered by technology as they do from classroom instruction. Finally, because online education classes require more self-discipline than on-campus classes, students find it easy to procrastinate and fall behind in their work.

Later in this chapter, you will be asked to think more about this issue. You will be given several sources to consider and asked to write an argument—using one of the three approaches discussed in this chapter—that takes a position on whether online education is as good as classroom instruction.
Understanding Rogerian Argument

The traditional model of argument is confrontational—characterized by conflict and opposition. This has been the tradition since Aristotle wrote about argument in ancient Greece. The end result of this model of argument is that someone is guilty and someone is innocent, someone is a winner and someone is a loser, or someone is right and someone is wrong.

Arguments do not always have to be confrontational, however. In fact, the twentieth-century psychologist Carl Rogers contended that in many situations, this method of arguing can actually be counterproductive, making it impossible for two people to reach agreement. According to Rogers, attacking opponents and telling them that they are wrong or misguided puts them on the defensive. The result of this tactic is frequently ill will, anger, hostility—and conflict. If you are trying to negotiate an agreement or convince someone to do something, these are exactly the responses that you do not want. To solve this problem, Rogers developed a new approach to argument—one that emphasizes cooperation over confrontation.

Rogerian argument begins with the assumption that people of good will can find solutions to problems that they have in common. Rogers recommends that you consider those with whom you disagree as colleagues, not opponents. Instead of entering into the adversarial relationship that is assumed in classical argument, Rogerian argument encourages you to enter into a cooperative relationship in which both you and your readers search
for **common ground**—points of agreement about a problem. By taking this approach, you are more likely to find a solution that will satisfy everyone.

### Structuring Rogerian Arguments

Consider the following situation. Assume that you bought a camera that broke one week after the warranty expired. Also assume that the manager of the store where you purchased the camera has refused to exchange it for another camera. His point is that because the warranty has expired, the store has no obligation to take the camera back. As a last resort, you write a letter to the camera’s manufacturer. If you were writing a traditional argument, you would state your thesis—“It is clear that I should receive a new camera”—and then present arguments to support your position. You would also refute opposing arguments, and you would end your letter with a strong concluding statement.

Because Rogerian arguments begin with different assumptions, however, they are structured differently from classical arguments. In a Rogerian argument, you would begin by establishing common ground—by pointing out the concerns you and the camera’s manufacturer share. For example, you could say that as a consumer, you want to buy merchandise that will work as advertised. If the company satisfies your needs, you will continue to buy its products. This goal is shared by the manufacturer. Therefore, instead of beginning with a thesis statement that demands a yes or no response, you would point out that you and the manufacturer share an interest in solving your problem.
Next, you would describe in neutral terms—using impartial, unbiased language—the manufacturer’s view of the problem, defining the manufacturer’s concerns and attempting to move toward a compromise position. For example, you would explain that you understand that the company wants to make a high-quality camera that will satisfy customers. You would also say that you understand that despite the company’s best efforts, mistakes sometimes happen.

In the next section of your letter, you would present your own view of the problem fairly and objectively. This section plays a major role in convincing the manufacturer that your position has merit. Here, you should also try to concede the strengths of the manufacturer’s viewpoint. For example, you can say that although you understand that warranties have time limits, your case has some unique circumstances that justify your claim.

Then you would explain how the manufacturer would benefit from granting your request. Perhaps you could point out that you have been satisfied with other products made by this manufacturer and expect to purchase more in the future. You could also say that instead of requesting a new camera, you would be glad to send the camera back to the factory to be repaired. This suggestion shows that you are fair and willing to compromise.

Finally, your Rogerian argument would reinforce your position and end with a concluding statement that emphasizes the idea that you are certain that the manufacturer wants to settle this matter fairly.

EXERCISE 6.1

Read through the At Issue topics listed in this book’s table of contents. Choose one topic, and then do the following:

1. Summarize your own position on the issue.

2. In a few sentences, summarize the main concerns of someone who holds the opposite position.

3. Identify some common ground that you and someone who holds the opposite position might have.

4. Write a sentence that explains how your position on the issue might benefit individuals (including those who hold opposing views) or society in general.
Writing Rogerian Arguments

Rogerian arguments are typically used to address controversial or emotionally charged issues. By attempting to understand the audience’s concerns and by avoiding confrontational language, you demonstrate empathy and respect for the audience. In this way, you define the common ground between your position and that of the audience. By making concessions to the opposition, Rogerian argument tries to avoid an “I win/you lose” situation and reach consensus. Thus, the strength of a Rogerian argument rests on your ability to identify areas of agreement between you and your readers. The more successful you are in doing so, the more persuasive and successful your argument will be.

Although the Rogerian approach to argument can be used to develop a whole essay, it can also be part of a more traditional argument. In this case, it frequently appears in the refutation section, where opposing arguments are addressed.

In general, a Rogerian argument can be structured in the following way:

**INTRODUCTION**
Introduces the problem, pointing out how both the writer and reader are affected (establishes common ground)

**BODY**
- Presents the reader’s view of the problem
- Presents the writer’s view of the problem (includes evidence to support the writer’s viewpoint)
- Shows how the reader would benefit from moving toward the writer’s position (includes evidence to support the writer’s viewpoint)
- Lays out possible compromises that would benefit both reader and writer (includes evidence to support the writer’s viewpoint)

**CONCLUSION**
Strong concluding statement reinforces the thesis and emphasizes compromise

**EXERCISE 6.2**

The following student essay includes all the elements of a Rogerian argument. This essay was written in response to the question, “Is it fair for instructors to require students to turn off their cell phones in class?” After you read the essay, answer the questions on pages 192–193, consulting the outline above if necessary.
WHY CELL PHONES DO NOT BELONG IN THE CLASSROOM

ZOYA KAHN

Some college students think it is unfair for instructors to require them to turn off their cell phones during class. Because they are accustomed to constant cell phone access, they don’t understand how such a rule is justified. Granted, a strict, no-exceptions policy requiring that cell phones be turned off all over campus is not fair, but neither is a policy that prevents instructors from imposing restrictions (“Official Notices”). Both students and instructors know that cell phone use—including texting—during class can be disruptive. In addition, most would agree that the primary goal of a university is to create a respectful learning environment and that cell phone use during class undercuts this goal. For this reason, it is in everyone’s interest for instructors to institute policies that require students to turn off cell phones during class.

Many students believe that requiring them to turn off their cell phones is unfair because it makes them feel less safe. Students are understandably concerned that, with their phones turned off, they will be unreachable during an emergency. For example, text message alerts are part of the emergency response system for most universities. Similarly, cell phones are a way for friends and family to contact students if there is an emergency. For these reasons, many students think that they should be free to make their own decisions concerning cell use. They believe that by turning their phones to vibrate or silent mode, they are showing respect for their classmates. As one student points out, “Only a small percentage of students will misuse their phones. Then, why should every student have to sacrifice for someone’s mistakes?” (SchoolBook). After all, most students are honest and courteous. However, those few students who are determined to misuse their phones will do so, regardless of the school’s phone policy.
To protect the integrity of the school’s learning environment, instructors are justified in requiring students to turn off their phones. Recent studies have shown how distracting cell phones can be during a class. For example, a ringing cell phone significantly impairs students’ performance, and a vibrating phone can be just as distracting (End et al. 56–57). In addition, texting in class decreases students’ ability to focus, lowers test performance, and lessens students’ retention of class material (Tindell and Bohlander 2). According to a recent study, most students believe that texting causes problems, “including a negative impact on classroom learning for the person who is texting, and distraction for those sitting nearby” (Tindell and Bohlander 4). Even more disturbing, cell phones enable some students to cheat. Students can use cell phones to text test questions and answers, to search the Web, and to photograph exams. Although asking students to turn off their phones will not prevent all these problems, it will reduce the abuses, and this will benefit the majority of students.

Students have good reasons for wanting to keep their phones on, but there are even better reasons for accepting some reasonable restrictions. First, when students use cell phones during class, they distract themselves (as well as their classmates) and undermine everyone’s ability to learn. Second, having their cell phones on gives students a false sense of security. A leading cell phone company has found that cell phones can actually “detract from school safety and crisis preparedness” in numerous ways. For example, the use of cell phones during a crisis can overload the cell phone system and make it useless. In addition, cell phones make it easy for students to spread rumors and, in some cases, cell phone use has created more panic than the incidents that actually caused the rumors (“Cell Phones”).

One possible compromise is for instructors to join with students to create cell phone policies that take into consideration various situations and settings. For example, instructors could require students to turn off their phones only during exams. Instructors could also try to find ways to engage students by using cell phone technology in the classroom. For example, in some schools teachers take advantage of the various functions available on most cell phones—calculators,
cameras, dictionaries, and Internet browsers (“Cell Phones”). In addition, schools should consider implementing alternative emergency alert systems. Such compromises would ensure safety, limit possible disruptions, reduce the potential for academic dishonesty, and enhance learning.

It is understandable that students want instructors to permit the use of cell phones during class, but it is also fair for instructors to ask students to turn them off. Although instructors should be able to restrict cell phone use, they should also make sure that students understand the need for this policy. It is in everyone’s best interest to protect the integrity of the classroom and to make sure that learning is not compromised by cell phone use. To ensure the success of their education, students should be willing to turn off their phones.

Works Cited

Identifying the Elements of a Rogerian Argument

1. Where in the essay does the writer attempt to establish common ground? Do you think she is successful?
2. Where does the writer state her position? What evidence does she supply to support this position?
3. What points does the conclusion emphasize? Other than reinforcing the writer’s position, what else is the conclusion trying to accomplish?

4. Does the concluding statement reinforce agreement and compromise?

5. How would this essay be different if it were written as a traditional (as opposed to a Rogerian) argument?

**Understanding Toulmin Logic**

Another way of describing the structure of argument was introduced by the philosopher Stephen Toulmin in his book *The Uses of Argument* (1958). Toulmin observed that although formal logic is effective for analyzing highly specialized arguments, it is inadequate for describing the arguments that occur in everyday life. Although Toulmin was primarily concerned with the structures of arguments at the level of sentences or paragraphs, his model is also useful when dealing with longer arguments.

In its simplest terms, a Toulmin argument has three parts—the **claim**, the **grounds**, and the **warrant**. The **claim** is the main point of the essay—usually stated as the thesis. The **grounds** are the evidence that a writer uses to support the claim. The **warrant** is the inference—either stated or implied—that connects the claim to the grounds.

A basic argument using Toulmin logic would have the following structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLAIM</th>
<th>Online education should be a part of all students’ education.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GROUNDS</td>
<td>Students who take advantage of online education get better grades and report less stress than students who do not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WARRANT</td>
<td>Online education is a valuable educational option.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that the three-part structure above resembles the **syllogism** that is the backbone of classical argument. (See p. 115 for a discussion of syllogisms.)

**NOTE**

When you use Toulmin logic to construct an argument, you still use deductive and inductive reasoning. You arrive at your claim inductively from facts, observations, and examples, and you connect the grounds and the warrant to your claim deductively.
Constructing Toulmin Arguments

Real arguments—those you encounter in print or online every day—are not as simple as the three-part model on the preceding page implies. To be convincing, arguments often contain additional elements. To account for the demands of everyday debates, Toulmin expanded his model.

**CLAIM**

The **claim** is the main point of your essay. It is a debatable statement that the rest of the essay will support.

*Online education should be a part of all students’ education.*

**REASON**

The **reason** is a statement that supports the claim. Often the reason appears in the same sentence, with the claim connected to it by the word *because*. (In an argumentative essay, this sentence is the thesis statement.)

*Online education should be a part of all students’ education because it enables them to have a more successful and less stressful college experience.*

**WARRANT**

The **warrant** is the inference that connects the claim and the grounds. The warrant is often an unstated assumption. Ideally, the warrant should be an idea with which your readers will agree. (If they do not agree with it, you will need to supply **backing**.)

*Online education is a valuable educational option.*

**BACKING**

The **backing** consists of statements that support the warrant.

*My own experience with online education was positive. Not only did it enable me to schedule classes around my job, but it also enabled me to work at my own pace in my courses.*

**GROUNDS**

The **grounds** are the concrete evidence that a writer uses to support the claim. These are the facts and observations that support the thesis. They can also be the opinions of experts that you locate when you do research.

*Studies show that students who take advantage of online education often get better grades than students who do not.*

*Research indicates that students who take advantage of online education are under less stress than those who are not.*
QUALIFIERS

The **qualifiers** are statements that limit the claim. For example, they can be the real-world conditions under which the claim is true. These qualifiers can include words such as *most*, *few*, *some*, *sometimes*, *occasionally*, *often*, and *usually*.

*Online education should be a required part of most students’ education.*

REBUTTALS

The **rebuttals** are exceptions to the claim. They are counterarguments that identify the situations where the claim does not hold true.

*Some people argue that online education deprives students of an interactive classroom experience, but a course chat room can give students a similar opportunity to interact with their classmates.*

EXERCISE 6.3

Look through this book’s table of contents, and select an At Issue topic that interests you (ideally, one that you know something about). Write a sentence that states your position on this issue. (In terms of Toulmin argument, this statement is the **claim**.)

Then, supply as many of the expanded Toulmin model elements as you can, consulting the description of these elements above.

Reason:

Warrant:

Backing:

Grounds:

Qualifiers:

Rebuttals:
Writing Toulmin Arguments

One of the strengths of the Toulmin model of argument is that it emphasizes that presenting effective arguments involves more than stating ideas in absolute terms. Unlike the classical model of argument, the Toulmin model encourages writers to make realistic and convincing points by including claims and qualifiers and by addressing opposing arguments in down-to-earth and constructive ways. In a sense, this method of constructing an argument reminds writers that arguments do not exist in a vacuum. They are aimed at real readers who may or may not agree with them.

In general, a Toulmin argument can be organized in the following way:

**INTRODUCTION**
- Introduces the problem
- States the claim and the reason (and possibly the qualifier)

**BODY**
- Possibly states the warrant
- Presents the backing that supports the warrant
- Presents the grounds that support the claim
- Presents the conditions of rebuttal
- States the qualifiers

**CONCLUSION**
- Brings the argument to a close
- Strong concluding statement reinforces the claim

**EXERCISE 6.4**

The following student essay, which includes all the elements of a Toulmin argument, was written in response to the question, “Are cheerleaders athletes?” After you read the essay, answer the questions on page 199, consulting the outline above if necessary.

**COMPETITIVE CHEERLEADERS ARE ATHLETES**

**JEN DAVIS**

Recently, the call to make competitive cheerleading an official college sport and to recognize cheerleaders as athletes has gotten stronger. Critics of this proposal maintain that cheerleading is simply
entertainment that occurs on the sidelines of real sporting events. According to them, although cheerleading may show strength and skill, it is not a competitive activity. This view of cheerleading, however, misses the point. Because competitive cheerleading pits teams against each other in physically and technically demanding athletic contests, it should be recognized as a sport. For this reason, those who participate in the sport of competitive cheerleading should be considered athletes.

Acknowledging cheerleaders as athletes gives them the respect and support they deserve. Many people associate cheerleading with pom-poms and short skirts and ignore the strength and skill competitive cheerleading requires. Like athletes in other female-dominated sports, cheerleaders unfortunately have had to fight to be taken seriously. For example, Title IX, the law that mandates gender equity in college sports, does not recognize competitive cheerleading as a sport. This situation demonstrates a very narrow definition of sports, one that needs to be updated. As one women’s sports advocate explains, “What we consider sports are things that men have traditionally played” (qtd. in Thomas). For this reason, women’s versions of long-accepted men’s sports—such as basketball, soccer, and track—are easy for people to respect and to support. Competitive cheerleading, however, departs from this model and is not seen as a sport even though those who compete in it are skilled, accomplished athletes. As one coach points out, the athleticism of cheerleading is undeniable: “We don’t throw balls, we throw people. And we catch them” (qtd. in Thomas).

Recent proposals to rename competitive cheerleading “stunt” or “team acrobatics and tumbling” are an effort to reshape people’s ideas about what cheerleaders actually do. Although some cheerleading squads have kept to their original purpose—to lead fans in cheering on their teams—competitive teams practice rigorously, maintain impressive levels of physical fitness, and risk serious injuries. Like other sports, competitive cheerleading involves extraordinary feats of strength and skill. Cheerleaders perform elaborate floor routines and ambitious stunts, including flips from multilevel human pyramids. Competitive cheerleaders also do what all athletes must do: they compete. Even a critic concedes that cheerleading could be “considered a sport when cheerleading groups compete against one another” (Sandler). Competitive
cheerleading teams do just that; they enter competitive contests, are judged, and emerge as winners or losers.

Those in authority, however, are slow to realize that cheerleading is a sport. In 2010, a federal judge declared that competitive cheerleading was “too underdeveloped and disorganized” to qualify as a legitimate varsity sport under Title IX (Tigay). This ruling was shortsighted. Before competitive cheerleading can develop as a sport, it needs to be acknowledged as a sport. Without their schools’ financial support, cheerleading teams cannot recruit, offer scholarships, or host competitions. To address this situation, several national groups are asking the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) to designate competitive cheerleading as an “emerging sport.” By doing this, the NCAA would show its support and help competitive cheerleading to develop and eventually to flourish. This does not mean, however, that all cheerleaders are athletes or that all cheerleading is a sport. In addition, the NCAA does have reason to be cautious when it comes to redefining competitive cheerleading. Some schools have taken sideline cheerleading teams and recategorized them just so they could comply with Title IX. These efforts to sidestep the purpose of the law are, as one expert puts it, “obviously transparent and unethical” (Tigay). Even so, fear of possible abuse should not keep the NCAA from doing what is right and giving legitimate athletes the respect and support they deserve.

Competitive cheerleaders are athletes in every sense of the word. They are aggressive, highly skilled, physically fit competitors. For this reason, they deserve to be acknowledged as athletes under Title IX and supported by their schools and by the NCAA. Biased and outdated ideas about what is (and what is not) a sport should not keep competitive cheerleading from being recognized as the sport it is. As one proponent puts it, “Adding flexibility to the definition of college athletes is a common sense move that everyone can cheer for” (“Bona Fide”). It is time to give competitive cheerleaders the support and recognition they deserve.

Works Cited


**Identifying the Elements of a Toulmin Argument**

1. Summarize the position this essay takes as a three-part argument that includes the claim, the grounds, and the warrant.

2. Do you think the writer includes enough backing for her claim? What other supporting evidence could she have included?

3. Find the qualifier in the essay. How does it limit the argument? How else could the writer have qualified the argument?

4. Do you think the writer addresses enough objections to her claim? What other arguments could she have addressed?

5. Based on your reading of this essay, what advantages do you think Toulmin logic offers to writers? What disadvantages does it present?

**Understanding Oral Arguments**

Many everyday arguments—in school, on the job, or in your community—are presented orally. In many ways, an oral argument is similar to a written one: it has an introduction, a body, and a conclusion, and it addresses and refutes opposing points of view. In other, more subtle ways, however, an oral argument is different from a written one. Before you plan and deliver an oral argument, you should be aware of these differences.

The major difference between an oral argument and a written one is that an audience cannot reread an oral argument to clarify information. Listeners have to understand an oral argument the first time they hear it. To help your listeners, you need to design your presentation with this limitation in mind, considering the following guidelines:

- **An oral argument should contain verbal signals that help guide listeners.** Transitional phrases such as “My first point,” “My second point,” and “Let me sum up” are useful in oral arguments, where listeners do not have a written text in front of them. They alert listeners to information to come and signal shifts from one point to another.
An oral argument should use simple, direct language and avoid long sentences. Complicated sentences that contain elevated language and numerous technical terms are difficult for listeners to follow. For this reason, your sentences should be straightforward and easy to understand.

An oral argument should repeat key information. A traditional rule of thumb for oral arguments is, “Tell listeners what you’re going to tell them; then tell it to them; finally, tell them what you’ve told them.” In other words, in the introduction of an oral argument, tell your listeners what they are going to hear; in the body, discuss your points, one at a time; and finally, in your conclusion, restate your points. This intentional repetition ensures that your listeners follow (and remember) your points.

An oral argument should include visuals. Visual aids can make your argument easier to follow. You can use visuals to identify your points as you discuss them. You can also use visuals—for example, charts, graphs, or tables—to clarify or reinforce key points as well as to add interest. Carefully selected visuals help increase the chances that what you are saying will be remembered.

Planning an Oral Argument

The work you do to plan your presentation is as important as the presentation itself. Here is some advice to consider as you plan your oral argument:

1. **Choose your topic wisely.** Try to select a topic that is somewhat controversial so listeners will want to hear your views. You can create interest in a topic, but it is easier to appeal to listeners if they are already interested in what you have to say. In addition, try to choose a topic that you know something about. Even though you will probably do some research, the process will be much easier if you are already familiar with the basic issues.

2. **Know your audience.** Try to determine what your audience already knows about your topic. Also, assess their attitudes toward your topic. Are they friendly? Neutral? Hostile? The answers to these questions will help you decide what information to include and which arguments will most likely be effective (and which will not).

3. **Know your time limit.** Most oral presentations have a time limit. If you run over your allotted time, you risk boring or annoying your listeners. If you finish too soon, it will seem as if you don’t know much about your subject. As you prepare your argument, include all the information that you can cover within your time limit. Keep in mind that you will not be able to go into as much detail in a short speech as you will in a long speech, so plan accordingly.
4. **Identify your thesis statement.** Like a written argument, an oral argument should have a debatable thesis statement. Keep this statement simple, and make sure that it clearly conveys your position. Remember that in an oral argument, your listeners have to understand your thesis the first time they hear it. (See Chapter 7 for more on developing a thesis statement.)

5. **Gather support for your thesis.** You need to support your thesis convincingly if you expect listeners to accept it. Supporting evidence can be in the form of facts, observations, expert opinion, or statistics. Some of your support can come from your own experiences, but most will come from your research.

6. **Acknowledge your sources.** Remember that all of the information you get from your research needs to be acknowledged. As you deliver your presentation, let listeners know where the information you are using comes from—for example, “According to a 2012 editorial in the *New York Times* . . .” or “As Kenneth Davis says in his book *America’s Hidden History* . . . .” This strategy enhances your credibility by showing that you are well informed about your topic. (Including source information also helps you protect yourself from unintentional plagiarism. See Chapter 11.)

7. **Prepare your speaking notes.** Effective speakers do not read their speeches. Instead, they prepare speaking notes—usually on index cards—that list the points they want to make. (Some speakers write out the full text of their speech or make a detailed outline of their speech.
and then prepare the notes from this material.) These notes guide you as you speak, so you should make sure that there are not too many of them and that they contain just key information. (It is a good idea to number your note cards so you can be sure that they remain in the correct order.)

8. **Prepare visual aids.** Visual aids help you to communicate your thesis and your supporting points more effectively. Visuals increase interest in your presentation, and they also strengthen your argument by reinforcing your points and making them easier for listeners to follow and to understand. In addition, visuals can help establish your credibility and thus improve the persuasiveness of your argument.

You can use the following types of visual aids in your presentations:

- Diagrams
- Photographs
- Slides
- Flip charts
- Overhead transparencies
- Document cameras
- Handouts
- Objects

In addition to these kinds of visual aids, you can also use **presentation software**, such as Microsoft’s PowerPoint or the Web-based application Prezi (Prezi.com). With presentation software, you can easily create visually appealing and persuasive slides. You can insert scanned photographs or drawings into slides, or you can cut and paste charts, graphs, and tables into them. You can even include YouTube videos and MP3 files. Keep in mind, however, that the images, videos, or sound files that you use must support your thesis; if they are irrelevant, they will distract or confuse your listeners. (See pp. 210–212 for examples of PowerPoint slides.)

9. **Practice your presentation.** As a general rule, you should spend as much time rehearsing your speech as you do preparing it. In other words, practice, practice, practice. Be sure you know the order in which you will present your points and when you will move from one visual to another. Rehearse your speech aloud with just your speaking notes and your visuals until you are confident that you can get through your presentation effectively. Try to anticipate any problems that may arise with your visuals, and solve them at this stage of the process. If possible, practice your speech in the room in which you will actually deliver it. Bring along a friend, and ask for feedback. Finally, cut or add material as needed until you are certain that you can stay within your time limit.
EXERCISE 6.5

Look through the table of contents of this book, and select three At Issue topics that interest you. Imagine that you are planning to deliver an oral argument to a group of college students on each of these topics. For each topic, list three visual aids you could use to enhance your presentation.

Delivering Oral Arguments

Delivery is the most important part of a speech. The way you speak, your interaction with the audience, your posture, and your eye contact all affect your overall presentation. In short, a confident, controlled speaker will have a positive impact on an audience, while a speaker who fumbles with note cards, speaks in a shaky voice, or seems disorganized will lose credibility. To make sure that your listeners see you as a credible, reliable source of information, follow these guidelines:

1. **Accept nervousness.** For most people, nervousness is part of the speech process. The trick is to convert this nervousness into energy that you
can channel into your speech. The first step in dealing with nervousness is to make sure that you have rehearsed enough. If you have prepared adequately, you will probably be able to handle any problem you may encounter. If you make a mistake, you can correct it. If you forget something, you can fit it in later.

### DEALING WITH NERVOUSNESS

If nervousness is a problem, the following strategies can help you to relax:

- **Breathe deeply.** Take a few deep breaths before you begin speaking. Research has shown that increased oxygen has a calming effect on the brain.

- **Use visualization.** Imagine yourself delivering a successful speech, and fix this image in your mind. It can help dispel anxiety.

- **Empty your mind.** Consciously try to eliminate all negative thoughts. Think of your mind as a room full of furniture. Imagine yourself removing each piece of furniture until the room is empty.

- **Drink water.** Before you begin to speak, take a few sips of water. Doing so will eliminate the dry mouth that is a result of nervousness.

- **Keep things in perspective.** Remember, your speech is a minor event in your life. Nothing that you do or say will affect you significantly.

2. **Look at your audience.** When you speak, look directly at the members of your audience. At the beginning of the speech, make eye contact with a few audience members who seem to be responding positively. As your speech progresses, look directly at as many audience members as you can. Try to sweep the entire room. Don’t focus excessively on a single person or on a single section of your audience.

3. **Speak naturally.** Your presentation should sound like a conversation, not like a performance. This is not to suggest that your presentation should include slang, ungrammatical constructions, or colloquialisms; it should conform to the rules of standard English. The trick is to maintain the appearance of a conversation while following the conventions of public speaking. Achieving this balance takes practice, but it is a goal worth pursuing.

4. **Speak slowly.** When you give an oral presentation, you should speak more slowly than you do in normal conversation. This strategy gives listeners time to process what they hear—and gives you time to think about what you are saying.
5. **Speak clearly and correctly.** As you deliver your presentation, speak clearly. Do not drop endings, and be careful to pronounce words correctly. Look up the pronunciation of unfamiliar words in a dictionary, or ask your instructor for help. If you go through an entire speech pronouncing a key term or a name incorrectly, your listeners will question your competence.

6. **Move purposefully.** As you deliver your speech, don’t pace, move your hands erratically, or play with your note cards. Try to stand in one spot, with both feet flat on the floor. Move only when necessary—for example, to point to a visual or to display an object. If you intend to distribute printed material to your listeners, do so only when you are going to discuss it. (Try to arrange in advance for someone else to give out your handouts.) If you are not going to refer to the material in your presentation, wait until you have finished your speech before you distribute it. Depending on the level of formality of your presentation and the size of your audience, you may want to stand directly in front of your audience or behind a podium.

7. **Be prepared for the unexpected.** Don’t get flustered if things don’t go exactly as you planned. If you forget material, work it in later. If you make a mistake, correct it without apologizing. Most of the time, listeners will not realize that something has gone wrong unless you call attention to it. If someone in the audience looks bored, don’t worry. You might consider changing your pace or your volume, but keep in mind that the person’s reaction might have nothing to do with your presentation. He or she might be tired, preoccupied, or just a poor listener.

Michelle Obama projects confidence and control as she speaks.
8. **Leave time for questions.** End your presentation by asking if your listeners have any questions. As you answer questions, keep in mind the following advice:

- **Be prepared.** Make sure you have anticipated the obvious counterarguments to your position, and be prepared to address them. In addition, prepare a list of Web sites or other resources that you can refer your audience to for more information.

- **Repeat a question before you answer it.** This technique enables everyone in the audience to hear the question, and it also gives you time to think of an answer.

- **Keep control of interchanges.** If a questioner repeatedly challenges your answer or monopolizes the conversation, say that you will be glad to discuss the matter with him or her after your presentation is finished.

- **Be honest.** Answer questions honestly and forthrightly. If you don’t know the answer to a question, say so. Tell the questioner you will locate the information that he or she wants and send it by email. Above all, do not volunteer information that you are not sure is correct.

- **Use the last question to summarize.** When you get to the last question, end your answer by restating the main point of your argument.

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**Composing an Oral Argument**

The written text of an oral argument is organized just as any other argument is: it has an introduction that gives the background of the issue and states the thesis, it has a body that presents evidence that supports the thesis, it identifies and refutes arguments against the thesis, and it ends with a concluding statement.

In general, an oral argument can be structured in the following way:

**INTRODUCTION**

- Presents the background of the issue
- States the thesis

**BODY**

- Presents evidence: Point 1 in support of the thesis
- Presents evidence: Point 2 in support of the thesis
- Presents evidence: Point 3 in support of the thesis
- Refutes opposing arguments

**CONCLUSION**

- Brings the argument to a close
- Concluding statement restates thesis
- Speaker asks for questions
EXERCISE 6.6

The following oral argument was presented by a student in a speech course in response to the assignment, “Argue for or against the advantages of a ‘gap year’ between high school and college.” (Her PowerPoint slides appear at the end of the speech.) After you read this argument, answer the questions on page 212, consulting the outline above if necessary.

AN ARGUMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE “GAP YEAR”
CHANTEE STEELE

1 College: even the word sounded wonderful when I was in high school. Everyone told me it would be the best time of my life. They told me that I would take courses in exciting new subjects and that I’d make lifelong friends. [Show slide 1.] What they didn’t tell me was that I would be anxious, confused, and uncertain about my major and about my future. Although this is only my second year in college, I’ve already changed my major once, and to be honest, I’m still not sure I’ve made the right decision. But during the process of changing majors, my adviser gave me some reading material that included information about a “gap year.” A gap year is a year off between high school and college when students focus on work or community service and learn about themselves—something that would have benefited me. Although gaining popularity in the United States, the gap year still suggests images of spoiled rich kids who want to play for a year before going to college. According to educator Christina Wood, however, in the United Kingdom a gap year is common; it is seen as a time for personal growth that helps students mature (36). [Show slide 2.] In fact, 230,000 British students take a gap year before going to college. As the rest of my speech will show, a well-planned gap year gives students time to mature, to explore potential careers, and to volunteer or travel.

2 [Show slide 3.] Apparently I’m not alone in my uncertainty about my major or about my future. As Holly Bull, a professional gap-year counselor, explains, “The National Research Center for College and University Admissions estimates that over 50% of students switch majors...
at least once” (8). As they go from high school to college, most students have little time to think about what to do with their lives. A gap year before college would give them time to learn more about themselves. According to Wood, “Gap years provide valuable life experiences and maturity so students are more ready to focus on their studies when they return” (37). A year off would give some students the perspective they need to mature and to feel more confident about their decisions. Bull agrees, noting that the gap year helps students choose or confirm the area of study they want to pursue, that it makes them “instantly more mature,” and that it “boosts their excitement about learning” (7–8).

The gap year gives students many options to explore before going to college. [Show slide 4.] This slide shows just some of the resources students can use as they prepare for their gap year. As you can see, they can explore opportunities for employment, education, and volunteer work. There are even resources for students who are undecided. As David Lesesne, the dean of admissions at Sewanee, says, “Some students do very interesting and enriching things: hike the Appalachian Trail, herd sheep in Crete, play in a rock band, [or even] attend school in Guatemala” (qtd. in Wood 37). Many other students, especially in these economic hard times, use the gap year to earn money to offset the high cost of their education (Wood 35).

Taking a gap year can also help students to get into better colleges. According to an article by the dean of admissions at Harvard, “Occasionally students are admitted to Harvard or other colleges in part because they accomplished something unusual during a year off” (Fitzsimmons, McGrath, and Ducey). Depending on the scope of their service or work, a gap year could enable students to earn scholarships that they were not eligible for before. In fact, some colleges actually recommend that students take time off after high school. Harvard is one of several U.S. colleges that “encourages admitted students to defer enrollment for one year to travel, pursue a special project or activity, work, or spend time in another meaningful way” (Fitzsimmons, McGrath, and Ducey). Furthermore, evidence shows that a gap year can help students to be more successful after they begin in college. One Middlebury College admissions officer has calculated that “a single gap semester was the strongest predictor of academic success at his school” (Bull 7). Given this support for the gap year and given the resources that
are now available to help students plan it, the negative attitudes about it in the United States are beginning to change.

In spite of these benefits, parental concerns about “slackerdom” and money are common. Supporters of the gap year acknowledge that students have to be motivated to make the most of their experiences. Clearly, the gap year is not for everyone. For example, students who are not self-motivated may not benefit from a gap year. In addition, parents worry about how much money the gap year will cost them. This is a real concern when you add the year off to the expense of four years of college (Wood 37). However, if finances are a serious concern, students can spend their gap year working in their own communities or taking advantage of a paid experience like AmeriCorps—which, as the AmeriCorps Web site shows, covers students’ room and board and offers an educational stipend after students complete the program. [Show slide 5.] Additionally, parents and students should consider the time and money that is wasted when a student who is not ready for college starts school and then drops out.

After considering the benefits of a gap year, I have concluded that more students should postpone college for a year. Many students (like me) are uncertain about their goals. We welcome new opportunities and are eager to learn from new experiences and may find a year of service both emotionally and intellectually rewarding. Given another year to mature, many of us would return to school with a greater sense of purpose, focus, and clarity. In some cases, the gap year could actually help us get into better schools and possibly get more financial aid. If we intend to take the college experience seriously, spending a gap year learning about our interests and abilities would help us to become better, more confident, and ultimately more focused students. [Show slide 6.]

Are there any questions?

Works Cited

230,000 students between 18 and 25 take a Gap Year in the U.K.

—Tom Griffiths, founder and director of GapYear.com
(qtd. in Christina Wood, “Should You Take a ‘Gap Year’?,” Careers and Colleges Fall 2007)

50% of students change their major at least once.

—National Research Center for College and University Admissions
A Few Links for the Potential “Gapster”

Employment
Cool Works: CoolWorks.com (domestic jobs)
Working Abroad: WorkingAbroad.org (jobs overseas)

Education
Global Routes: GlobalRoutes.org (semester-long courses)
Sea-mester: Seamester.com (sea voyage programs)

Volunteer Work
AmeriCorps: AmeriCorps.gov
City Year: CityYear.org

Thoughtful Texts for Fence Sitters
Charlotte Hindle and Joe Bindloss, The Gap Year Book (Lonely Planet, 2005)
Identifying the Elements of an Oral Argument

1. Where does this oral argument include verbal signals to help guide readers?

2. Does this oral argument use simple, direct language? What sections of the speech, if any, could be made simpler?

3. Where does this oral argument repeat key information for emphasis? Is there any other information that you think should have been repeated?

4. What opposing arguments does the speaker identify? Does she refute them convincingly?

5. How effective are the visuals that accompany the text of this oral argument? Are there enough visuals? Are they placed correctly? What other information do you think could have been displayed in a visual?

6. What questions would you ask this speaker at the end of her speech?
Is Online Education as Good as Classroom Education?

Go back to page 185, and reread the At Issue box, which gives background about whether online education is as good as classroom instruction. As the following sources illustrate, this question has a number of possible answers.

After you review the sources listed below, you will be asked to answer some questions and to complete some simple activities. This work will help you to understand both the content and the structure of the sources. When you are finished, you will be ready to develop an argument—using one of the three alternative approaches to argument discussed in this chapter—that takes a position on whether online education is as effective as classroom learning.

**SOURCES**

- Bill Maxwell, “No Short Cuts in Long-Distance Learning,” p. 214
- Chris Bustamante, “The Risks and Rewards of Online Learning,” p. 217
- David Smith, “Reliance on Online Materials Hinders Learning Potential for Students,” p. 221
- Elena Kadvany, “Online Education Needs Connection,” p. 224
- John Crisp, “Short Distance Learning,” p. 226
- Rachel Farhi, “Online Education Innovators Should Be Wary,” p. 229
- Campus Explorer, “Online School Degree Programs,” p. 231
- Seattle Central Community College, “Distance Education and e-Learning,” p. 235
- “Two Views of Online Education,” p. 236
NO SHORT CUTS IN LONG-DISTANCE LEARNING

BILL MAXWELL

Distance learning is one of the national rallying cries of Republican politicians and state education officials seeking cheap ways to graduate more students attending public colleges. Community colleges, the old doormats of post-secondary learning that were founded on the sensible notion that anybody who wants an education should be able to get one, are major players in this Web-based instruction movement.

Economists and social scientists know that if the United States intends to remain an economic leader internationally, a much larger portion of the work force must be educated, including citizens who traditionally have been shunned by colleges: low-income students, working adults, select minorities, and those who need remediation before they can tackle college-level work.

Here is where community colleges come in. They enroll more students than their four-year counterparts. As such, many politicians, with the support of community college presidents and state officials, see these schools as ideal, cost-effective places to boost online learning.

Besides saving the colleges money, online courses reduce scheduling conflicts for students with families and jobs and other commitments. But according to a recent study released by the Community College Research Center at the Teachers College at Columbia University, Web-based instruction is not the magic bullet for educating more community college students. The research found, in fact, that community college students in online courses fail and drop out more often than students in classroom-based courses.

Researchers followed the academic history of 51,000 students in the state of Washington between 2004 and 2009 and found an 8 percent gap in completion rates between students in distance courses and those in face-to-face courses. Two other troubling findings of the study were that students with online credits did not graduate or transfer to four-year schools as often as those enrolled in traditional coursework, and those in online remedial courses fared far worse than remedial students in face-to-face courses.

A second study, conducted for the Virginia community college system, found similar gaps between students in distance courses and those in traditional courses.

Postsecondary online courses are here to stay and will play an increasingly critical role in educating a competitive U.S. work force of people who will
demand a lot of flexibility. But community colleges should not succumb to the lure of increased funding only to implement slipshod efforts that ill serve their students. While they are increasing their online offerings, community colleges must make student success in these courses a priority.

The very idea of the community college, open enrollment to residents with a high school diploma or its equivalent, sets many students up for failure. Add to that the enticement of distance learning—never having to leave home to take courses—and we get immature students who are in over their heads from the beginning.

What should community colleges do to improve online learning? The Virginia study suggests, among other strategies:

■ Students should be tested for their preparedness for online instruction.

■ Online students should be given a dose of reality about time management. They need to be taught from the outset that while working at home with the family around can be advantageous, it can become a trap.

■ Students need to be trained to navigate the online course-related computer systems necessary to complete their coursework.

■ Faculty members should be trained for online instruction so that they can competently guide their students.

■ Colleges should improve support services, offering, for example, 24/7 online tutoring.

As the studies show, distance learning is not a panacea for graduating more community college students. But if it is done effectively, it will become an essential part of sustaining the nation’s economic viability in the world.

**AT ISSUE: SOURCES FOR USING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ARGUMENT**

1. What assumptions does Maxwell make in paragraph 2? Are these assumptions self-evident, or should he have included evidence to support them?

2. According to Maxwell, what special niche do community colleges occupy?

3. What does Maxwell mean in paragraph 4 when he says, “Web-based instruction is not the magic bullet for educating more community college students”? Why not? According to Maxwell, what problems does research identify in online education for community college students?
4. According to the Virginia study Maxwell cites, what can community colleges do to address the problems that some students have with online education? How realistic are these suggestions?

5. Use Toulmin logic to analyze Maxwell’s argument, identifying the argument’s claim, its grounds, and its warrant. Does he include qualifiers and rebuttals? If not, should he have? Does Maxwell appeal only to *logos* in his argument, or does he appeal to *pathos* and *ethos* as well? Explain.

6. This newspaper column is an inductive argument, and Maxwell does not state his thesis until his last paragraph. Paraphrase this thesis statement by filling in the following template.

   Although online education ____________________________
   ____________________________, it can become ____________________________
   ____________________________.
In 2008, investors wanted to buy Rio Salado College, the nation’s largest online public community college headquartered in Tempe, Ariz. The offer was more than $400 million with plans to convert it into a national, for-profit, online school.

Rio Salado wasn’t for sale, but the offer proved how much demand exists for serving students who find traditional education systems inconvenient and need the flexibility of online formats.

Online learning may not be the first thing that comes to mind when community colleges consider providing support for student success. But that mindset is changing. It has to. The 2011 Sloan Survey of Online Learning reported that more than six million college students in the fall of 2010 took at least one online course, comprising nearly one-third of all college and university students. The growth rate in online course enrollment far exceeds the growth rate of the overall higher education student population.

Still, there is healthy skepticism about the proliferation of online learning and views still differ about its value. According to surveys by the Pew Research Center and the Chronicle of Higher Education, less than 30 percent of the public believes that online and classroom courses provide the same educational value. Half of college presidents share that belief.

Any way you look at it, online learning is an increasingly vital part of producing the number of qualified graduates needed to meet future workforce demands—when it is done correctly.

A Calculated Risk

In 1996, Rio Salado, one of 10 Maricopa Community Colleges, took a calculated risk and began offering courses online—16 to start—just when the Internet was taking off. Critics at the time challenged the quality of online education and claimed that students wouldn’t adjust well to such a radical change in their learning environment. But Maricopa and Rio Salado pushed ahead, determined to create an innovative, nontraditional, and nimble approach that is responsive to and supportive of changing student needs.

The risks have proven to be worth it. While no one could have predicted the economic environment that students and higher education face today, making the decision to move online proved to be provident for the college and students. Rio Salado extended educational access to students who found traditional college to be out of reach in Arizona, nationwide, and around the world.
The college currently serves nearly 70,000 students each year, with more than 41,000 enrolled in 600-plus online courses.

**Keeping Costs Down**

To keep costs down, Rio Salado supports more than 60 certificate and degree programs with just 22 residential faculty and more than 1,400 adjunct faculty. Our “one-course, many sections” model uses a master course approved by the resident faculty and taught by adjunct faculty in more than 6,000 course sections. The college’s cost to educate students is as much as 48 percent less than peer institutions nationwide.

Without the expense of a traditional campus, Rio Salado has been able to focus on building and improving its RioLearn platform, a customized learning management system that provides access to course-related resources, instructors, fellow students, and other support services.

**Focused on Student Support**

Meeting students’ needs means providing access to robust, comprehensive support services that are customized for their complex lifestyles, whether they are a working adult, an active military student accessing their coursework online, or someone taking in-person classes in adult basic education, incarcerated reentry, early college, or workforce training programs. Today’s students need the resources of round-the-clock instructional and technology helpdesks, tutoring, and virtual library services. Additionally, we never cancel an online class and offer the flexibility of 48 start dates a year.

Students also need real-time support to keep them on track. Predictive analytic technology allows the college to monitor online student engagement and predict by the eighth day of class the level of success students will have in a course. When needed, instructors facilitate interventions to minimize risks and support successful course completion.

Building a culture of unified support focused on completion won’t happen overnight. It took 30 years for Rio Salado to get to this point. Our upside-down faculty model has made it possible for the college to adapt a corporate “systems approach,” and all Rio Salado staff and faculty participate in a training program to instill a unified commitment to helping students complete their degree programs.

**Technical Challenges**

Staying ahead of the online curve comes with its share of challenges. Rio Salado had to build its own learning management system because there wasn’t one available that would support all of the features that our faculty and students wanted. In partnership with Microsoft and Dell, RioLearn was designed to be scalable to more than 100,000 students.

However, a few years ago, it didn’t fully support Mac users. Although students could access their coursework, they had to switch Internet browsers to
do so. A new version of RioLearn was launched in 2010 to help students access their courses, regardless of the platform they are using.

We’ve also learned that many of our students are co-enrolled in traditional colleges and universities. They come to Rio Salado for flexibility, affordability, and convenience to accelerate their degree on their terms. They bank credits and ultimately transfer those credits to complete their degrees at another institution.

A recent report examines Rio Salado’s efforts and the experience and perspectives of more than 30 institutions throughout the U.S. addressing similar challenges to ensure student success—especially for low-income, minority, and adult students—and pursuing promising approaches to increase college completion rates.

Reimagining the System

Our country can’t continue to allow millions of people who are college material to fall through the cracks. We must find new, convenient, and high-quality educational options for students who might otherwise have missed out on a college education. That means serving more students in more places—especially where college enrollments have been capped—through efforts such as online early college initiatives, by creating cohorts at the high-school level and developing open-source courses.

With tuition rising faster than the rate of inflation, and the best-paying jobs requiring some form of postsecondary degree, specialized certification, or licensure, we have to find solutions that lower costs for students. We need to innovate. We need new models of education to leverage public resources through private and public partnerships and increase the capacity to serve nontraditional students through productive and cost-efficient means.

It’s encouraging to see the rapid growth in affordable online learning. It has broken down the barriers of time, distance, and affordability without sacrificing high-quality academics. But shoring up its credibility and value for students means heeding some of the lessons learned over the past 15 years. The stakes for getting it right are certainly high and getting higher.

AT ISSUE: SOURCES FOR USING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ARGUMENT

1. According to Bustamante, “there is healthy skepticism about the proliferation of online learning” (para. 4). What does he mean? What reservations, if any, do you have about the rise of online education?
2. In this essay, where does the claim appear? How is this claim qualified? How does the qualifier set up the rest of the essay?

3. Bustamante’s article focuses on the development of one school’s online education program. Do you think the risks and rewards he discusses also apply to other schools’ online offerings? What factors might account for any differences in other schools’ experiences with online learning?

4. What is Bustamante’s purpose? What does he want readers to take away from his essay?

5. Does Bustamante ever address opposing arguments? If he does, where? If he does not, should he have addressed them? Explain.

6. What does Bustamante mean when he says that we must reimagine the system of higher education? What problems does he see with the current educational system? How will online education help solve these problems?
Students of today should be thankful for the ... plethora of ways available for them to learn. Compared to our grandparents, parents, and even older siblings, we have access to modes of communication and education that would not have been possible even 10 years ago.

Students today, not just in college but in high school, middle school, and elementary school, take in and process astounding amounts of information on a daily basis. We have access to TV and the Internet, social media outlets such as Twitter and Facebook, and a nearly inexhaustible supply of ways to keep in contact with and learn about one another.

This variety has begun to work its way into academia, as well; more and more, it seems, organized instruction is moving beyond the classroom and into cyberspace. Pencils and paper, once the sole staples of the educational experience, are slowly being ousted by keyboards, webcams, and online dropboxes.

Here at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, this growing prevalence is easy to see. Just look at Blackboard and how some courses are completely dependent upon it. Blackboard has everything from grade tracking and homework assignments to the administration of quizzes and exams.

Look at MyRED, which now handles everything from class enrollment and scheduling to residence hall contracts and meal plans.

Look at things such as the Love Library’s EBSCO search engine, which gives students access to a greater wealth of information than even the most practiced scholar would know what to do with, and online courses such as the Keller Plan, which allow students to complete coursework and earn credit without having to leave their dorm rooms.

It’s clear to even the most casual observer that taking in and processing information is far easier for the students of today than it was for the students of 100, 50, or even 10 years ago.

But it begs the question: While the Internet has certainly made learning easier, has it made it better? Not necessarily.

Think for a moment about the fundamental differences between a traditional course, taught in a classroom, and one conducted entirely via Blackboard’s online services.

“While the Internet has certainly made learning easier, has it made it better?”
In the former, students are bound by structure and organization. They must attend class on a regular basis or suffer the consequences, typically (though not always) complete regular homework assignments for points, and are constantly reminded of the work that needs to be done by the ever-present figure (or specter) of the professor.

Such is not the case with classes taken outside the classroom. The instructions for such courses are, at least in my experience, pared down to the following: “Read this by this date, this by this date, and this by this date. There are quizzes on Day X, Day Y, and Day Z, and the final exam can be taken at any time during finals week in the testing center. Have a nice semester.”

Now, I know that college is supposed to be a place of greater expectations, of increased responsibilities and better time management skills. I get that, I really do. But the sad truth is that all too often, giving a student that kind of freedom doesn’t end well.

By removing the sense of structure from a course, you remove the student’s notion that he or she is under any sort of pressure, any sort of time constraint. By removing a constantly present instructor, you remove what is, in many cases, the sole source of motivation students have to do well in a class. You take away the sense of urgency, the sense of immediate requirement, and by extension the student’s drive.

Readings are put off or forgotten, material review sessions (if there are any) are blown off or missed, and quizzes and exams are ultimately bombed. More often than not, the student will get caught up with work from the other, more traditional courses on their schedule—the ones they remember they have homework in because it was assigned in class this afternoon or the ones they have to study for because the professor reminded them about the upcoming exam the other day. Unfortunately, another marked difference between traditional and online courses is that the latters are typically far less forgiving when it comes to things such as deadlines and extensions, making it next to impossible for students to get out of the holes they dig themselves into.

The Internet is a powerful tool. It allows us to share, distribute, and absorb more information in a single year than our ancestors absorbed in a lifetime, and its capacity to do those things is constantly growing. What people, educators in particular, need to realize is that no matter how powerful a tool it becomes, the Internet should never become anything more than that: a tool.

There will never be an adequate online substitute for the watchful eye and the stern voice of a professor, or the pressure of an exam time limit that is about to expire, or the dismay and subsequent motivation to improve that can come from a handed-back assignment with a failing grade scrawled on it.

Now . . . off to class.
AT ISSUE: SOURCES FOR USING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ARGUMENT

1. Paragraph 8 expresses Smith’s thesis in the form of a question and answer. Paraphrase this thesis statement in one sentence.

2. Why does Smith spend his first seven paragraphs discussing the amount of information currently available to students?

3. In paragraph 8, Smith says that his previous statement “begs the question.” What does he mean? Is this statement actually an example of begging the question? Explain.

4. How, according to Smith, is online education different from classroom learning? What problems does Smith identify with online learning?

5. In paragraph 13, Smith says that online courses remove “the sense of structure from a course.” What evidence does he present to support this statement?

6. What does Smith mean in paragraph 15 when he says that what we “need to realize is that no matter how powerful a tool it becomes, the Internet should never become anything more than that: a tool”? What is he warning against here?

7. Where does Smith use the techniques of Rogerian argument? Does he use these techniques often enough? Does he use them effectively? Explain.

8. In paragraph 16, Smith says, “There will never be an adequate online substitute for the watchful eye and the stern voice of a professor.” Do you agree? Do you think this highlights a disadvantage of online education (as Smith intends) or an advantage?
From the most trivial of issues (who went to what party this weekend?) to the most traditional of society’s establishments (newspapers, music and book industries, Postal Service), the Internet has transformed our lives. But one area remains to be revolutionized digitally: education.

Online education is on the rise, pitting those who support the idea of a virtual university for its ability to increase access and revenue against those who believe there is no substitute for real-time, traditional educational experiences.

There’s one thing wrong with the entire conversation, however: Viewing online education as a new higher-education business model that must supplant the current system is a close-minded view. Why not look at it as a means by which we can strengthen and innovate education by blending digital and traditional elements?

Online education began mostly as distance-learning programs for graduate degrees that lend themselves to the medium like engineering or business.

USC’s Viterbi School of Engineering has a well-established Distance Education Network that offers more than 30 master’s degree programs.

Now, in times of financial crisis, schools across the country, especially in California, are searching for ways to reinvent themselves. This has led to an expansion of digital courses into the undergraduate sphere.

But there is a distinct danger in allowing finance-driven ideas to dominate the dialogue about schools’ futures and education in general, especially for undergraduates whose educational experiences and life tracks are so defined by their first four years on a campus.

This is not to say that universities should completely reject online learning. It’s great to be able to listen to lectures at home or gain access to classes you can’t physically attend or afford.

Higher learning, however, is about a level of personal interaction and commitment that can’t be re-created online.

Before transferring to USC, I spent a semester at the University of San Francisco, where I took a hybrid service-learning Spanish class. It combined conventional in-class instruction twice a week with a once-a-week class online with Blackboard, in addition to a requirement of outside community service hours.
This kind of blending shows the innovative potential universities should recognize and seize. The idea of a virtual university should not replace the traditional, but instead should merge with it.

For undergraduates, hybrid classes could be incredibly valuable and much more engaging for a generation that spends so much time online.

Some of the University of California schools have submitted courses in response to an online education pilot project proposed by the University’s Office of the President.

Sebastian Thrun, a professor at Stanford University renowned for leading the team that built Google’s self-driving car, now offers a free online course, “Introduction to Artificial Intelligence.” Enrollment in this class has jumped from 58,000 to 130,000 across the world in the past month, according to the New York Times. USC is lucky enough to have generous alumni that keep it more than afloat financially. But as many universities choose to go digital, USC might want to follow suit.

The potential of all things online is vast. And there’s no match for the value of real-time, person-to-person educational experiences.

There’s no reason universities can’t take advantage of both.

**AT ISSUE: SOURCES FOR USING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ARGUMENT**

1. In paragraph 2, Kadvany says that online education pits those who support virtual education against those who support traditional classroom education. Do the essays in this At Issue section confirm or challenge Kadvany’s point? Explain.

2. In paragraph 3, Kadvany says that it is wrong to view online education as a “higher-education business model” that will displace classroom education. Why does she use the term “business model”? Does she expect this term to have positive or negative connotations for her readers? How can you tell?

3. How has the financial crisis helped to promote the idea of online education? According to Kadvany, what is the danger of letting “finance-driven ideas” (7) dominate the conversation about education?

4. In paragraph 9, Kadvany says that the personal interaction and commitment that characterize higher learning “can’t be re-created online.” What evidence does she present to support this statement? How convincing is this evidence? What additional evidence could she have used?

5. Does Kadvany ever use the techniques of Rogerian argument? If so, where? If not, should she have used them?
The end of the semester at my college always inclines me toward reflection, relief, and mild melancholy. I suspect my students feel the same way, with more inclination, perhaps, toward relief. Five classes have met with me about 30 times each over the course of 15 weeks, five communities of individuals that materialize, coalesce, and disperse in a few months.

Whatever its merits, I’ve never developed much enthusiasm for online learning. Its proponents contend that a community of learners can develop among students scattered by geography but connected by the Internet, and I’m not in a position to say they’re wrong.

In fact, my purpose isn’t to disparage online education. Along with the trend toward a part-time professoriate, the proliferation of online education is probably the most prominent tendency in higher education during the last decade.

Still, I prefer the face-to-face classroom, which seems to me to preserve a fine touch of humanity that warrants reflection during this week of final exams.

Who was in my classes this semester? Many are traditional students, fresh from high school and on their way to a four-year college or university, after a sojourn at my community college. Many are bright, capable, and articulate. Others are shy and reserved. A few are sullen or downright surly. But they’re not always my most interesting students.

Consider the young woman who, a decade after high school, finds herself slogging through a developmental writing course before she can even attempt freshman composition. Pardon the cliché, but sometimes you do see a light go on in a student. She begins to listen to her instructor’s and classmates’ every word, to take notes and to think, to become absorbed in her writing, which over the course of the semester really does get better.

It doesn’t always work like that, by any means. Other students are taking my developmental writing class for the second or third time. I like them, but they miss too much class. Some of them have tattoos that betray their gangbanger history; some have been thieves and some have been in prison. And how well can you learn to write amid the violence and futility in the barrio?

Many of them say that’s all in the past now, and I believe them. Will they pass this semester? I’m not sure. If they don’t, what will become of them?
Momentous life passages occurred as the classes proceeded: At least two women in my five classes this semester were pregnant and one gave birth. Two students died. One young man, a veteran who had survived tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, was killed in the second week of the semester, hit by a car while out for his morning jog.

In mid-semester, a young woman in the same class lost control of her car on the way home from school and died in a one-vehicle rollover. When I told the class the next week that she wouldn’t be coming back, there were some tears. So we learned about more than just writing this semester.

A middle-aged woman expressed conservative religious beliefs then admitted that she spent two years in prison for marijuana possession. Several veterans can’t sleep at night and some of them drink too much. A young man came to class so depressed that I took him to one of the college’s counselors, and he never came back.

Another young man and a young woman sat on opposite sides of the class and never spoke up or spoke to anyone else. Then they began to sit together and talk to each other. A lot. Now I occasionally see them around the campus together. Does that happen in online classes?

In short, it’s all there, a rich mixture of human experiences in one ephemeral microcosm: birth, mating, sickness, death, frustration, laughter, storytelling, aspiration, failure, and learning.

Good luck, students; the pleasure was mine.

**AT ISSUE: SOURCES FOR USING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ARGUMENT**

1. Where does Crisp attempt to establish his credibility? How effective is this appeal to *ethos*?


3. In paragraph 3, Crisp says that his purpose “isn’t to disparage online education.” What is his purpose?

4. In paragraph 4, Crisp says that he prefers traditional classroom instruction because it preserves “a fine touch of humanity.” What does he mean? What evidence does he present in paragraphs 5–12 to support this point? How convincing is this evidence?

5. Draw a *rhetorical triangle* (p. 13) that represents the relative importance of the various appeals in this essay. Which appeal does the longest side of the triangle represent? Which does the shortest side represent? Do you think this is a good balance?
6. In paragraph 2, Crisp briefly addresses an opposing argument. Does he accurately characterize the case for online learning? Should he have spent more time addressing opposing arguments?

7. Crisp ends his essay with a single sentence. Is this sentence an effective concluding statement? Why or why not?

8. Suppose Crisp wanted to present his ideas in a speech. What parts of his essay would you suggest he expand? What parts would you advise him to condense or delete? What visuals would you suggest he include?
ONLINE EDUCATION INNOVATORS SHOULD BE WARY

RACHEL FARHI

Some professors at elite universities are trying to devise a more economical university model, and they are using the Internet to do it.

Sebastian Thrun, a Stanford professor, is an advocate of the online university and has ambitious goals: producing lectures and live, online discussions to thousands of students at a fraction of the cost, rewarding students for honed skills instead of “grades,” and eliminating the inefficiency of large campuses.

Thrun is now offering free, online courses on artificial intelligence to over 100,000 students around the world. These courses teach the same material for which Stanford students pay $50,000 per year. Thrun offers dynamic, live lectures that end in a “Statement of Accomplishment” but not Stanford credit. However, the opportunity to learn from the man who led the team that built Google’s self-driving car is probably incentive enough to take his course.

The high cost of a college education unfortunately perpetuates immobility between social classes; students from higher socioeconomic classes have almost automatic access, while students from disadvantaged neighborhoods have a much harder time.

Supplementing a student’s education with online classes reduces the amount of money he or she has to spend. If students attend class only two days a week and have online courses the other three days, they save on gas, food, university fees, and other costs.

However, what Thrun and other advocates of online universities do not consider are the non-academic skills and values that universities instill in students. Taking courses on a computer at home deprives students of a practical, social education that is necessary in most professions and not taught in high school.

How does somebody develop a personal relationship with a professor, or necessary networking skills, when he or she is only one in a class of five thousand, and the only method of communication with peers and professors is through online chat or a discussion board? Professionals, especially service providers, need social skills almost as much as they need qualifications.

Another problem with online courses is cheating from lack of supervision. Thrun portrays students with an idealism that is inspirational but seems to be ignoring reality. Anyone can sit behind a computer screen and take a course, including a friend of a person enrolled in that course. So how do we know who

“Taking courses on a computer at home deprives students of a practical, social education.”
is sitting behind that screen? Without a professor and teaching assistants, to whom is the student accountable?

Reducing the amount of money spent on a college education and increasing accessibility does not fix the problem of individual drive, appreciating the significance of one’s education, and whether or not students entering these classes can handle the material. Unequal opportunity and training in public schools also makes the “universal accessibility” dream unrealistic. To reap the benefits of these classes, students must have the proper training before they graduate. Otherwise, even a completely free education does no good.

Online courses are a great idea, they are already being used by some degree at most universities, but implementing the online change slowly may make room for constructive criticism and ensure that the system works as well as it could.

AT ISSUE: SOURCES FOR USING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ARGUMENT

1. Why does Farhi begin her essay by discussing Sebastian Thrun? How does this discussion prepare readers for the rest of the essay? Elena Kadvany also mentions Sebastian Thrun, in paragraph 14 of her essay “Online Education Needs Connection” (p. 224). Is the point Kadvany makes about Thrun similar to or different from the one Farhi makes?

2. Throughout her essay, Farhi makes statements that she assumes are self-evident. For example, in paragraph 1, she says that some professors are using the Internet to “devise a more economical university model,” and in paragraph 5, she says that taking online classes saves students money. Identify other statements that Farhi presents as self-evident. Are they really self-evident, or do they require support?

3. What does Farhi mean when she says that a college education “perpetuates immobility between social classes” (4)? According to her, how does online education address this problem?

4. Where does Farhi discuss opposing arguments? How effectively does she refute them?

5. In the first five paragraphs of her essay, Farhi presents arguments in favor of online education. The rest of her essay discusses the problems with online education, which, according to her, its advocates do not consider. Do these qualifications of her initial position make you more or less likely to accept her thesis, which appears in paragraph 10?
Find online degrees at online schools and learn more about the benefits of a distance learning program.

**What Is an Online School and Distance Learning?**

Online schools are academic institutions in which all or the majority of the coursework is completed through a distance learning program. Online schools offer a range of online degrees like online certificate programs, online career training, online bachelor’s degrees, and even online master’s degrees. An online school may refer to the online branch of a college or university that has a physical campus. It can also refer to schools that strictly offer online degree programs and online courses without a college campus or campuses.

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<th>Online Bachelor's Degree Programs</th>
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Online Schools Offering Certificate Programs

Ashworth College Online School
ATI Career Training Online School
Charter College Online School
DeVry University Online School
Fischler School of Education and Human Services Online School
Globe University/Minnesota School of Business Online School
Kaplan University Online School
Keiser University Online School
National American University Online School
Northcentral University Online School
Post University Online School
Rasmussen College Online School
Remington College Online School
Strayer University Online School
Sullivan University Online School
The Art Institute of Pittsburgh Online School
Ultimate Medical Academy Online School
University of Phoenix Online School
Villanova University Online School
See All Online Schools Offering Certificate Programs

Time Requirements for Online Schools

Course requirements and time commitments for online schools and distance learning programs vary depending in part on the type of online degree you’re getting, whether you choose to go full-time or part-time, and if you include summer classes in your schedule.

If you want to complete your online degree program as quickly as possible, you may find more flexibility at an online school than at a campus school. Because distance learning programs like online colleges cater to students with busy or inflexible schedules, some online colleges will allow students to accelerate their studies to complete their degree in less time than it would typically take at a campus school.

“"You may find more flexibility at an online school than at a campus school.""

Is an Online Degree Program Right for You?

Students are increasingly turning to online schools and distance learning over campus schools for many reasons; chief among them are flexibility and affordability. Here are some of the main reasons students seek out online programs for their degrees:

- **Increased flexibility in scheduling classes.** Many online schools offer more online courses in the evening and on weekends than campus schools do because these schools tend to cater to working students and students with other obligations outside the classroom.
- **Saving tuition money.** Enrolling at an online school means you don’t have to pay travel, relocation, or room and board cost at a college campus. Also, tuition at online schools may be less than campus schools, partly because schools with a campus need more money to fund items such as classrooms, which aren’t necessary with online courses.

- **Independent study.** Distance learning programs allow you to work on your own without the distractions you can find in school settings. You will still be able to interact with professors and other students, but most of this communication will take place online rather than in person.

- **Studying from home.** Online degrees can be completed mostly or completely via home computer, which is especially helpful for students without transportation or who are caring for kids or other family members.

- **To study on the go.** Enrolling in an online college requires access to a working computer with Internet access. If you have a laptop computer, you will be able to stay connected to your online classes and teachers anywhere you can connect to the Web.

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**What Types of Students Pursue Online Degrees?**

Because you can pursue an online degree in everything from certificate programs to master’s degrees, a broad variety of students enroll in online programs. Some are recent high school graduates looking for career training or for a more convenient, affordable alternative to a campus college. Others are professionals above the traditional college age who want to expand their skills or develop knowledge in a new area, and some are parents or caregivers who are seeking a degree for future employment or personal enrichment.

Online degrees and online colleges are becoming more prevalent and popular with students’ increased access to the Internet. A growing number of students enroll in at least some online courses while studying for their degree.

**How Do You Narrow Down Your Search of Online Schools?**

When choosing an online college, make sure it offers the type of certificate or degree you’re seeking, as well as the areas of study you’re interested in. You’ll then want to review each school’s accreditation and reputation, as well as the accreditation and reputation of the certificate or degree you’re pursuing.

While location tends to be less of a factor when selecting an online college than a campus school, find out if the programs you’re considering require any in-person training or tests as part of their degree requirements. Certain programs require hands-on training as part of the degree program, so if that is required by the schools you’re considering, be sure you have the time and financial means to travel to the required campus to complete the coursework.
AT ISSUE: SOURCES FOR USING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ARGUMENT

1. This Web page is from Campus Explorer, a site that promotes online learning. Do you think the site’s treatment of the pros and cons of online learning is balanced? Why or why not?

2. Can you think of any positive or negative aspects of online education that this Web page neglects to mention?

3. Assume you are writing an argument in favor of online learning. From the Campus Explorer Web page, identify the three strongest arguments against online education. How would you refute each of these opposing arguments?

4. Assume you are writing an argument against online learning. From the Campus Explorer Web page, identify the three strongest arguments in favor of online education. How would you refute each of these arguments?
This Web page, accessed January 15, 2013, explains the SCCC distance-learning program.

**DISTANCE EDUCATION AND e-LEARNING**

SEATTLE CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**AT ISSUE: SOURCES FOR USING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ARGUMENT**

1. What is the purpose of this Web page?
2. What kind of audience does this Web page seem to be addressing? How can you tell?
4. What additional information—if any—do you think should have been provided?
5. How do you think John Crisp (p. 226) would respond to this Web page?
Is Online Education as Good as Classroom Education?

The photo at left is by Andy Nelson. The photo at right is by Tanya Constantine.

TWO VIEWS OF ONLINE EDUCATION

AT ISSUE: SOURCES FOR USING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ARGUMENT

1. The photo at left above shows an instructor teaching in an online education program. What is your reaction to this picture? Does it present online education in a favorable or an unfavorable light? Explain.

2. The other photo—a student taking an online class—is from a university’s Web site that promotes its online education program. What advantages of online education does this picture try to show?

3. Do you think you would do well in an online education environment? Why or why not?
EXERCISE 6.7
Write a one-paragraph Rogerian argument in which you argue that the drawbacks of online education have to be addressed before it can be successful. Follow the template below, filling in the blanks to create your argument.

**TEMPLATE FOR WRITING A ROGERIAN ARGUMENT**

With more and more students taking online courses, both the students and the colleges benefit. For example, ________________
__________________________
__________________________
In addition, ________________
__________________________
__________________________
However, online education does have some drawbacks. For instance, 

__________________________

These problems could be easily solved. First, ________________
__________________________
Second, ________________

If these problems are addressed, both students and colleges would benefit because ________________
__________________________

EXERCISE 6.8
Write a one-paragraph Toulmin argument in which you argue in favor of online education. Follow the template below, filling in the blanks to create your argument.

**TEMPLATE FOR WRITING A TOULMIN ARGUMENT**

Many colleges and universities have instituted online education programs. These programs are the best way ________________
__________________________
If colleges are going to meet the rising demand for education, they __________
__________________________
The online course I took ________________
__________________________
Recent studies show that ________________
In addition, _________________. However, some people argue that _________________. They also say that _________________. These arguments _________________. For this reason, online education is _________________.

**EXERCISE 6.9**
Discuss your ideas about online learning with one or two of your classmates. Consider both the strengths and the limitations of this method of teaching. What types of classes do you think it is best suited for? Which classes do you think it would not work for? Then, edit the Rogerian and Toulmin arguments that you wrote for Exercises 6.7 and 6.8 so that they include some of these comments.

**EXERCISE 6.10**
Write an argumentative essay on the topic, “Is Online Education as Good as Classroom Education?” Use the principles of either Rogerian argument or Toulmin logic to structure your essay. Cite sources in the Reading and Writing about the Issue section on pages 213–236, and be sure to document the sources you use and to include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 10 for information on documenting sources.)

**EXERCISE 6.11**
Review the four pillars of argument that are discussed in Chapter 1. Does your essay include all four elements of an effective argument? Add anything that is missing. Then, label the elements of your argument.

**EXERCISE 6.12**
Assume that you have been asked to present the information in the essay you wrote for Exercise 6.10 as an oral argument. What information would you include? What information would you eliminate? Find two or three visuals that you would use when you deliver your speech. Then, make an outline of your speech and indicate at what points you would display these visuals.