[Argument](http://writingcommons.org/rhetorical-analysis/argument)

Support your arguments with reasoning, library and Internet research, and original research, including questionnaires, interviews, and ethnographies. Employ emotional, ethical, and logical appeals to sway readers' opinions.

Arguments are persuasive texts. Writers make specific claims and support these claims with reasoning; library and Internet research; and original research, including questionnaires, interviews, and ethnographies.

#### Why Write an Argument?

On a daily basis, we all deal with family, friends, acquaintances, and strangers who try to persuade or even manipulate us. Buy me, trust me, believe in me—such is the chatter of routine life. According to some psychologists, we experiment with

persuasion from the moment we realize as babies that people respond to us when we cry.

As a student, citizen, and professional, you'll need to be adept at creating and critiquing arguments. Throughout your life, you will respond to persuasive arguments on a range of topics--from child-raising practices to more abstract arguments regarding our nation's foreign and social policies. Politicians will try to convince you of the need for tougher immigration restrictions, for more money for education, for improved roads. Much of what you read in newspapers, magazines, textbooks, research reports, procedural manuals, and sales catalogs was produced to influence you to do something or believe something. You will have to evaluate all these uses of persuasion.

#### Diverse Rhetorical Situations

Arguments are exceedingly common. As illustrated in the table below, people write arguments for many different reasons, addressing varied audiences, and employing diverse media. People argue in informal writing spaces (bumper stickers, post-it notes, junk mail, email, Instant Messages) and formal writing spaces (letters, speeches, business proposals).

#### Sampling of Rhetorical Situations

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Purposes | Audiences | Voices/Persona | Media |
| * Claims of fact * Claims of cause-and-effect relationships * Claims about best solutions * Claims about values | * Consumers Decision makers Clients Friends Family Voters Technicians | * Passionate Concerned Objective or scientific | * Sales * Letters Fact sheets Press releases Mission statements Research reports Interactive webs Video |