

obook
assess

ANALYSING

and

Presenting

ARGUMENT

RYAN JOHNSTONE

Sample
chapter

OXFORD



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SAMPLE

Chapter 2

Creating and developing arguments

This chapter focuses on the ways that arguments are constructed. Writers and speakers go to great lengths to craft compelling arguments based on strong ideas and a logical, thoughtful structure. Good persuasive texts will demonstrate a clear argument – that is, *what* is being conveyed – as well as a carefully chosen structure – that is, *how* the argument is being presented. A poorly articulated or awkwardly structured text will not win over many people!

In this chapter you will:

- consider the differences between **issues** and **events**, and between points of view and **contentions**
- reflect on the importance of identifying an author's contention and supporting arguments in order to better analyse their purpose
- identify and explain the significance of different argument structures, in terms of how they can influence audience opinion
- identify and explain the significance of an argument's development, in terms of how each idea connects to and builds upon others.

issue
important topic for debate or resolution

event
thing that takes place; specific news story or incident

contention
assertion; central or underlying argument

Chapter 2

2.1

ISSUES AND EVENTS

When analysing an argument of any kind, it is important to be able to distinguish between an *event* and an *issue*. An event is *something that happens*, such as the ‘incidents’ that are reported in news media. An issue, on the other hand, is a *contentious or complex problem, situation or concern*, and usually has its origins in one or more events.

For example, the injury of a specific horse during the running of the 2018 Melbourne Cup constitutes an *event*, which might be reported by the media.

MELBOURNE CUP: THE CLIFFSOFMOHER EUTHANASED ON TRACK AFTER SUSTAINING INJURY DURING RACE

ABC News

Animal activists might subsequently protest the treatment of race horses in general, arguing about *issues* of neglect, cruelty and exploitation.

WHY THE MELBOURNE CUP IS ACTUALLY ONE OF THE CRUELLEST DAYS ON AUSTRALIA'S CALENDAR

Laura Weyman-Jones, SMH

Many complex and contentious political issues, such as climate change or asylum seeker policy, have been debated for many years. However, each time a new event occurs (such as instances of asylum seekers on Nauru being taken to Australia for medical care or the release of the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report) new arguments and debates surface while old ones are revived in a fresh context.

If a journalist reports on the *events* that have occurred, as we would expect from a balanced news report, only the *facts* about what happened would be included. However, the *issues* that might be raised as a consequence of these events are many and varied, as people debate the ideas they feel most strongly about. For example, with the issue of duty of care for asylum seekers, some people feel that protecting Australia's borders outweigh humanitarian concerns. Others feel strongly about an individual's right to appropriate medical treatment, regardless of their social circumstance. It is differences of *opinion* such as these that create issues, as there is often no clear-cut solution.

It's Hotter than Hell in Australia Right Now

I'm sure this is all totally normal.

By Brad Esposito

The sun is hammering down on Australia this week and, frankly, it's all a bit much.

Temperature records have already been broken in South Australia (49°C in Tarcoola), bats are falling out of trees from the heat, and the country's health officials have warned of 'high ozone air pollution', which I'm sure is totally normal and nothing to worry about.

The temperature map of the country is marred with deep reds and oranges, as well as the return of purple: a colour that was added to maps in 2013 because, uh ... it be getting hot.

'Severe to extreme weather conditions are forecast for a large part of the country,' a recent update from the Bureau of Meteorology said.

'Temperatures are expected to climb into the low to high 40s, broadly 8–12 degrees above the average for this time of year.

'Whilst inland parts will see the highest temperatures, coastal locations will see an increase in humidity and the feels-like temperature will make for really oppressive conditions.'

Total fire bans are in place and humidity levels in Sydney are rising above 80%.

Western Australia, Tasmania, Canberra, Victoria, NSW, southern Queensland, the Northern Territory: It's gonna be hot everywhere.

Parts of greater Sydney could get to the mid-40s for four consecutive days, while it's likely Canberra and regional NSW will experience the same if not

worse. On Tuesday the town of Hay in west NSW almost reached 48°C.

NSW's Health Department says the state hasn't experienced heat this bad for a prolonged period since 2011, and the temperature could affect the mortality rate.

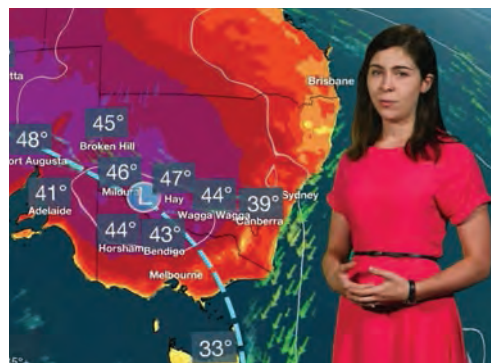
Meanwhile, South Australia's government has declared an ominous 'Code Red' heat emergency, allowing extra funding to help the most vulnerable, like elderly people and the state's homeless population, during the rough conditions.

All of this is happening while Australia hosts two of its biggest sporting events, the Tour Down Under cycle tour and the Australian Open.

Oh, and on Tuesday the 15 hottest places IN THE WORLD were all in Australia. Normal.

Sure, Australia is known worldwide for being 'hot' but this ... this is just ridiculous.

BuzzFeed News, 16 January 2019



A report from the Bureau of Meteorology on 15 January 2019 outlines 'heat intensifying over southern and central Australia'.

2.1 Your turn

- 1 Decide whether each of the following is an issue or an event, then match each event to its resulting issue or, if it's an issue, suggest a matching event. The first row has been done for you as an example.

		ISSUE OR EVENT?	CORRESPONDS TO ...
a	a principal suspends Year 12 students for poor behaviour on 'muck-up day'	event	(i) the issue of 'mob mentality' behaviour
b	sexual discrimination in the workplace		
c	the impact of technology on language		
d	Beijing authorities shut down a website that denounces the use of police violence on Tibetan monks		
e	the morality of the death penalty		
f	an English teacher asks students to write a poem in the language of text messages		
g	a woman is harassed after requesting a salary increase to match that of her male colleagues'		
h	human rights and freedom of expression		
i	'mob mentality' behaviour		
j	three Australian drug smugglers are executed after a string of unsuccessful appeals by lawyers		





- 2 Choose two events from the table and for each event, identify a second issue that might be debated as a result.

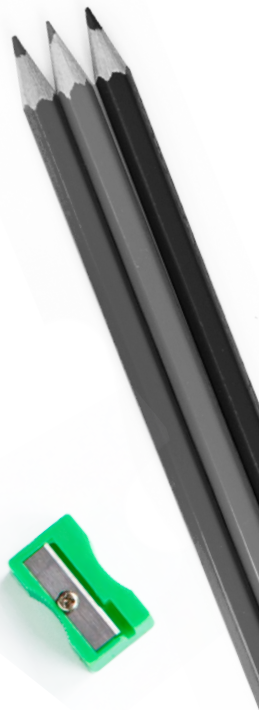
- 3 Now do the reverse: for two of the issues listed in the first activity, imagine one other specific event that might have sparked the debate.

- 4 Consider the BuzzFeed article on Australia's January 2019 heatwave in Source 1, then answer the following questions.

- a Highlight all of the facts in the article that are reported objectively.
- b Despite being a news article, some aspects of the text position readers to see the events and related issues from a particular perspective.
- i What is the perspective? What does the article imply?

- ii How many subjective – in other words, opinionated – features can you identify? Highlight them in a different colour from the facts you identified. How do they position readers to see the events in a particular light?

- iii Do you think this is an example of balanced (fair) or biased reporting? Why?





- 5 How many issues can you and a partner identify that might emerge from the events included in the BuzzFeed news report? Aim to identify at least five.

- 6 What is your opinion about one or more of the issues that you identified in Question 5? Write three to four sentences that explain your views and try to justify them with reasoning (logical supporting explanations). Alternatively, debate the issue with your classmates and teacher, establishing clear arguments in support of your views.

- 7 Select an event you have seen in the media recently that has sparked controversy.
- a Give a brief, 2-minute presentation to your class about the event and the range of issues it raised. Include your own opinion, and argue your beliefs by incorporating some supporting explanations or evidence.
- b Which class member offered the strongest point of view? Why? What does this tell you about how an argument can be constructed effectively and persuasively?



2.2

POINTS OF VIEW



Have you ever heard people arguing about an issue of public concern? Consider the following topics:

- the place of religion in government schools
- the increase of gambling advertising during sporting events
- live animal exports
- the links between social media and anxiety or depression.

Why do people argue about these topics? Usually they argue because they have contrasting opinions – or points of view – to share.

In a democratic country such as Australia, people have the right to freely express their point of view. As a society, we frequently debate issues of public concern in order to work through their complexities.

An issue will generally have at least two contrasting points of view that can be strongly supported, which is why easy solutions are rarely available. Debating an issue forces us to explain and justify the reasons behind our beliefs. Sometimes, when we come to understand that we have not considered all the aspects of an issue, we might even change our point of view as a result of a debate. Of course, this can only happen if we remain open-minded when considering other points of view.

➡ 2.2a Your turn

- 1 Think about the issue of gambling advertising during professional sporting matches. What different points of view do you often hear expressed? Outline them, and then compare with a partner or as a class.

- 2 Now, choose one of the other issues from the list above and consider which groups or individuals would be likely to debate the topic, what their viewpoints might be and why they might hold these views. Do this exercise with a partner and try to establish several different points of view for different groups of people.

TOPIC		
WHO MIGHT DEBATE THIS ISSUE?	WHAT VIEWPOINT MIGHT THEY HOLD?	WHY?



CONSIDERING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

reasoned

plausible, clearly developed and supported by strong logic

echo chamber

online environment in which a person encounters only ideas or opinions that reflect their own – as a result, existing views are reinforced, and alternative viewpoints are not considered

confirmation bias

tendency to interpret new evidence as confirmation of existing beliefs

When exploring an issue, consider the full range of views that might be expressed. By understanding and addressing other people's points of view, you can strengthen your own argument. Similarly, when your knowledge of a particular issue is broad, you will be able to evaluate the quality of another person's argument more effectively. Considering opposing viewpoints is a strategy applied during debates, but it can also be extended to any situation in which you must develop your own view. Considering the various points of view will help you construct a more **reasoned** response to a complex issue.

With the increase in online news consumption and its associated pitfalls of **echo chambers** and **confirmation bias**, being able to consider and address alternative perspectives will strengthen your own arguments, while also showing respect for different world views.



'THE END OF TRUMP': HOW FACEBOOK DEEPENS MILLENNIALS' CONFIRMATION BIAS

Facebook users are more likely to get news that fits political beliefs – but younger voters don't necessarily realize how much the echo chamber affects them

By Scott Bixby

Social media users often create 'walled gardens' online, which reflects a reluctance to interact with opposing political views.

[...]

Six out of every 10 millennials (61%) get their political news on Facebook, according to a survey conducted by Pew Research Center, making the 1.7 billion-user social behemoth (which includes more than 200 million in the United States) the largest millennial marketplace for news and ideas in the world. But within Facebook's ecosystem exists a warren of walled gardens, intellectual biomes created by users whose interest in interacting with opposing political views – and those who [hold] them – is nearly nonexistent.

[...]

According to another Pew Research Center survey from 2014, 'consistent conservatives' were twice as likely as the average Facebook user to say that posts about politics on Facebook were 'mostly or always' in line with their own views, and that four in 10 'consistent liberals' say they



have blocked or unfriended someone over political disagreements.

[...]

That confirmation bias – the psychological tendency for people to embrace new information as affirming their pre-existing beliefs and to ignore evidence that doesn't – is seeing itself play out in new ways in the social ecosystem of Facebook. Unlike Twitter – or real life – where interaction with those who disagree with you on political matters is an inevitability, Facebook users can block, mute and unfriend any outlet or person that will not further bolster their current worldview.

Even Facebook itself sees the segmentation of users along political lines on its site – and synchronizes it not only with the posts users see, but with the advertisements they're shown.

The Guardian website, 1 October 2016 (extracts only)

➡ 2.2b Your turn

- 1 Consider the three extracts from the article in Source 2 on the issue of confirmation bias. The author presents a view that a social media platform like Facebook 'deepens' this issue for millennials. What is your personal point of view in relation to this issue? Can you justify your position with reasons or arguments? In your notebook, write two to three sentences explaining your view.

- ## ARGUMENTS FOR THE VIEW THAT FACEBOOK ENCOURAGES OPEN ENGAGEMENT WITH NEWS REPORTS AND OTHER PERSPECTIVES

ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE VIEW THAT FACEBOOK ENCOURAGES OPEN ENGAGEMENT WITH NEWS REPORTS AND OTHER PERSPECTIVES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal grey ruling lines. A vertical dashed blue line runs down the center of the page, dividing it into two equal halves. The word "SAMPLE" is printed diagonally across the middle of the page in a large, bold, grey font.

- a What is your partner's view and what arguments did they offer in support?

§

- b** Can you add any new arguments to your table as a result of the conversation? If so, why do you think you were unable to identify these arguments yourself?

- c Which side of the debate appears stronger at this point? Can you suggest possible reasons why this might be the case? (Consider the demographic that you and your partner are part of.)

- d Look back at the sentences you wrote for Question 1. Has your viewpoint changed in any way? What new knowledge, if any, now influences your point of view? What benefit was there in sharing information with others?

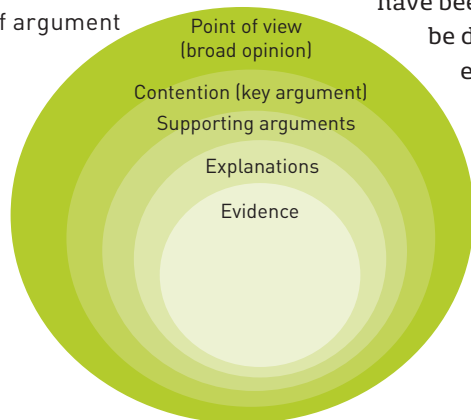


2.3 CONTENTIONS

The terms *point of view* and *contention* are often used interchangeably but it is possible to distinguish between them. A point of view is a broad opinion or belief, whereas a contention is a *specific* argument offered in support of that view. For example, your point of view may be that Australia's live export trade is wrong, and your contention might be that exporting live animals causes unnecessary distress when the meat could be transported after the animals have been killed. In a more complex or detailed argument, a contention will often be developed with a number of supporting arguments including appropriate explanations and evidence.

SOURCE 3

The different levels of argument



It is important to identify writers' and speakers' broad points of view as well as their specific contentions and supporting arguments. If you can do this accurately, you will find it easier to analyse the language used and explain how the writer or speaker is trying to influence opinion. You will also be able to identify how and why they use particular language features or strategies to support their arguments, and how they tailor their language to frame their arguments.

2.3a Your turn

- 1 Consider the example of Australia's live animal export trade. What is your broad opinion on this issue? Can you create a specific contention to support this view?

Opinion:

Contention:

- 2 Think of two more contentions for each of the points of view in the table, and write them in the appropriate space. An example contention for each point of view has been done for you.

POINT OF VIEW	CONTENTION 1	CONTENTION 2	CONTENTION 3
Australia's live animal export industry is wrong.	Exporting live animals causes them unnecessary distress when the meat could be transported after the animals have been killed.		
Australia's live animal export industry is important.	Our live animal export industry is critical to Australia's global reputation as a farming industry powerhouse.		

- 3 Look at the following excerpt from a letter to the editor. In the space provided and in your own words, summarise the writer's contention in one sentence.

The atmosphere at the Margaret Court Arena concert last Saturday was not dissimilar to that experienced at a wake for a distant relative. The square concrete box has all the charm of an abandoned museum and from my seat in the heavens I was experiencing, I would estimate, approximately 10% of the performance. Add on the astronomical price of the ticket and the lengthy queue for overpriced refreshments or the toilets, and it would appear that this overused concert space constitutes a blight on Victoria's reputation as a cultural mecca.

Contention:

- 4 Consider the following two issues. For each, write a sentence to outline your broad point of view and a sentence that provides a more specific contention in support of this viewpoint.

Lowering the voting age to 16

Point of view:

Contention:

Compulsory sport commitments for all Victorian school students

Point of view:

Contention:

- 5 Find a partner and, using your answers to Question 4, compare and discuss your points of view. Where your views differ, argue your case by offering a counter argument to your partner's point of view.

CREATING A STRONG CONTENTION

A good contention is reasoned: it is plausible, clearly developed and supported by strong logic. It should reveal an author's broad point of view but should also provide specific detail and a good level of insight into the issue at hand. Put simply, a good contention should make it clear that the author knows what they are talking about!

Poor contentions – such as those that do not seem reasoned or convincing – generally suffer from one or more of the following problems.

A poor contention might be:

- narrow-minded or simplistic – the author has not considered the various complexities of an issue or the range of valid viewpoints
- not grounded in facts or strong logic – the author might appear ignorant of important factual details, or of recent developments
- exaggerated or hyperbolic, and therefore unrealistic
- poorly phrased – offering an inarticulate or clumsily-worded viewpoint.

In your own persuasive writing or speaking, ensure that you avoid these pitfalls.

2.3b Your turn

- 1 Read the following contentions and explain exactly what is wrong with each one. Offer more than one criticism of each example. The first one has been done for you.

CONTENTION	WHY IT IS INEFFECTIVE
Online news sources are just trash (1) and if we keep consuming this rubbish, we'll lose all perspective and won't know what's real and what's not (2). They (3) should be offering us much more reliable options than this.	<p>1 This is a simplistic value judgement, not grounded in fact or logic; the language is also unsophisticated.</p> <p>2 This is exaggeration and unrealistic speculation; again, it is not based in fact or logic.</p> <p>3 Not specific. It does not clearly state at whom the criticism is aimed, and it shows a lack of insight.</p> <p>Overall, the contention is not clearly stated, the language lacks polish and no specific or workable alternatives are offered.</p>
The issue of genetic screening during pregnancy is a difficult and controversial one. Some say we must accept its inevitability and embrace the possibilities; others feel we should not make any rash decisions.	
Greenies need to get a grip and just accept the fact that coal-fired power is here to stay.	

- 2 Choose an issue that you feel strongly about. If you cannot think of one, choose from this list:

- voluntary euthanasia
- scientific whaling
- police corruption
- the establishment of a formal Indigenous voice in parliament
- genetically modified food
- the decline of open-mindedness in the age of online echo chambers.

Research your issue using news sites and other reputable research sites.

- a In your notebook, create a summary of the issue (about 100 words). Be sure to outline:
- the background – how did the issue arise or what events sparked it? What are people arguing about?
 - the major arguments on various sides of the debate
 - your own viewpoints and beliefs.

- b Summarise your viewpoint in a one-sentence contention. Make sure it is reasoned: factual, sensible and logical.

- c Finally, list at least three major arguments and the specific evidence you could use to support each one.

- d Present your issue to the class in the form of a brief oral presentation. Include the following in your presentation:
- the background and context of the issue
 - your overarching contention
 - your key supporting arguments, offering specific, reputable evidence in support of each one.

THE POWER OF AN IDEA

Originality and individuality are powerful weapons when it comes to persuasion. More than anything else, it is important to have an idea of value to share.

SOURCE 4 'Ideas are the most powerful force shaping human culture.' Chris Anderson, TED Curator





➡ 2.3c Your turn

- 1 Someone who knows about the power of an original idea is Chris Anderson, the head of TED, a not-for-profit organisation that provides idea-based talks watched around 1.5 million times per day by people around the world. Anderson has shared his own thoughts about what all great *TED Talks* have in common, in a video uploaded to the TED website in 2016.

Find and watch Anderson's video 'TED's secret to great public speaking' and answer the following questions.

- a Anderson asserts that an idea is the essential success factor in a *TED Talk*. How does he define an idea?

- b Anderson explains that our ideas work together to establish our world view. What metaphor does Anderson use to help describe what is created by our individual ideas? Why is this an appropriate metaphor?

- c According to Anderson, why are ideas 'the most powerful force shaping human culture'? What does this tell you about what you need to consider when developing a spoken or written argument of your own?

- d Account for Anderson's four rules for great public speaking and summarise the reason why each rule is important.

	RULE	REASON WHY IT IS IMPORTANT
1		
2		
3		
4		

2.4

ARGUMENT STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

orientation

an opening statement in, or section of, a text that offers important contextual information

emotional appeal

statement that is designed to arouse intense emotions by targeting specific areas of concern

rational

reasonable, logical, sensible

evidence-based

founded on or supported by appropriate research, facts or statistics

satirical

style that employs irony, sarcasm, criticism or similar in order to critique flaws or vices

anecdote

brief recount of a real incident or person, used in order to illustrate a point

cumulative

increasing or growing by the addition of successive parts or stages of an argument

When authors create persuasive texts, they can use many different approaches. An effectively structured point of view often has an introduction or **orientation**, with a clear contention and carefully sequenced supporting arguments and evidence, as well as a conclusion.

However, there are many other structural options available to authors. They might open with an **emotional appeal** to 'hook' the audience before moving on to a **rational** and **evidence-based** case with key arguments and evidence. Or, they might adopt a humorous or **satirical** approach in order to consistently critique, and in this way undermine, an idea or person. Another author might choose to bookend a piece with an **anecdote** designed to personalise the issue and make the facts more appealing, or to offer a 'problems and solutions' approach.

Good writing is often about manipulating established conventions rather than following them without question, but it is always useful to consider the structure of the argumentative approach. Establishing a plan for your own persuasive writing is critical.

Whatever the approach, there is often a multitude of purposes at play beyond the obvious intention of convincing the audience of the contention. An author might also aim to:

- embarrass a rival
- undermine an opposing viewpoint
- entertain the audience by making them laugh
- shock people into a new awareness of a particular problem
- infuriate or enrage the audience about a particular event.

In order to achieve these purposes, authors think carefully about the most effective structure for their argument. Ideas and language do not function separately – they mesh together to create an overall impact, which can be carefully manipulated with thoughtful planning.

For example, an author hoping to convince her readers that the Australian Government's desire to have greater access to our online data, for purposes of national security, might choose to structure her argument in the following way:

- 1 Open with a humorous anecdote about her online activities, to appeal to readers by making them reflect on their own digital habits.
- 2 Transition suddenly to describe the frightening case of an unsuspecting mother being incorrectly targeted by US authorities because they misinterpreted her online activity.
- 3 Compare this illustrative example to our own privacy protections in Australia, as a means of implying our 'superior' laws about accessing online data.
- 4 Conclude with a serious appeal to personal rights and liberties, as a means of cementing support for the status quo.

This particular sequence of arguments and language strategies works precisely because it is carefully planned and considered in terms of how the various stages of the argument work, in conjunction with one another, to establish a **cumulative** effect on the target audience.

argumentation

the process of developing or presenting an argument; reasoning

Aristotelian model of argumentation

style of argument developed by the Greek philosopher Aristotle, which uses a sequence of strategies and ethos, logos and pathos appeals to persuade

Rogerian model of argumentation

style of argument based on Carl Rogers's work in psychotherapy, which aims to find consensus, or common ground, with opponents

ethos

an appeal that relies on the credibility or authority of the writer/speaker

logos

an appeal to logic, supported by valid and relevant evidence

pathos

an appeal to emotions – motivating an audience through the emotional quality of the language and ideas

consensus

general agreement or majority of opinion

MODELS OF ARGUMENTATION

As illustrative examples of carefully structured **argumentation**, consider two well-established methods familiar to many people accustomed to arguing a point of view: the **Aristotelian** and the **Rogerian** models. Each offers an excellent method of structuring and developing an argument. They are certainly not the only options, but they are worth considering because they are so commonly used or adapted by authors.

The Aristotelian (classical) model

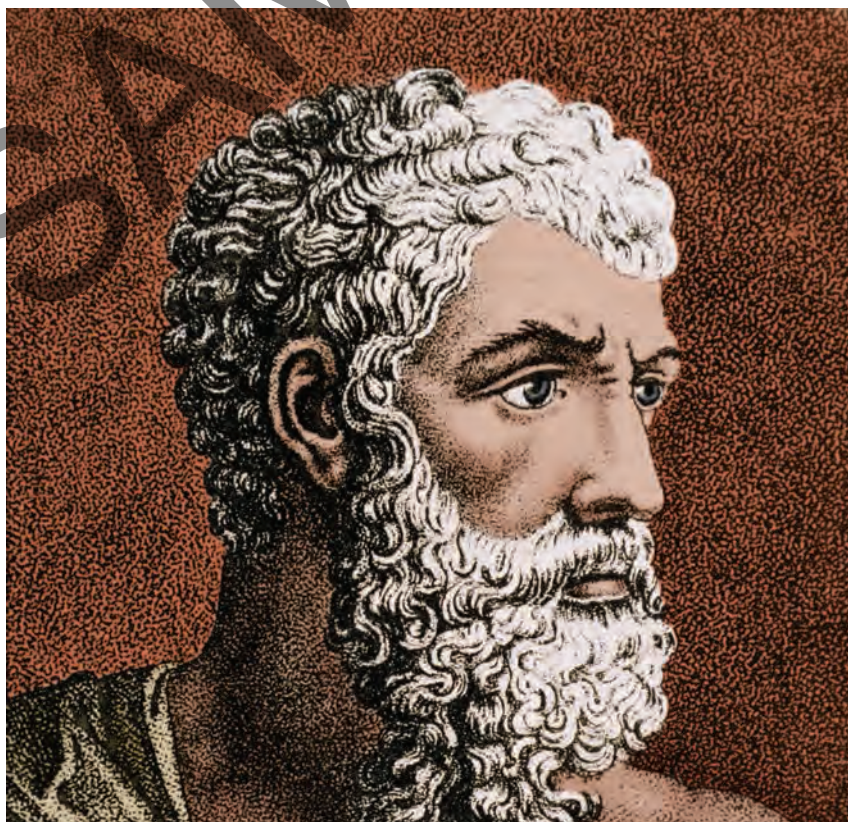
The classical approach to a well-constructed argument was devised by the Greek philosopher Aristotle. His method is commonly used in persuasive argument, even to this day. The Aristotelian model relies on the use of **ethos**, **logos** and **pathos** appeals:

- **ethos**: an appeal that relies on the credibility or authority of the writer/speaker
- **logos**: an appeal to logic, supported by valid and relevant evidence
- **pathos**: an appeal to emotions – motivating an audience through the emotional quality of the language and ideas.

The Rogerian model

The Rogerian model is based on Carl Rogers's work in psychology and uses the notion of **consensus**. When writers use this approach, they strive to find common ground with those who oppose their view. This fair-minded approach presents a balanced exploration of all aspects of a debate and accepts that people may disagree with elements of it. The Rogerian model is less argumentative than the classical model, but there are benefits to pursuing a measured approach, particularly when it comes to sensitive debates, for example those around abortion or sexuality.

SOURCE 5 Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BCE)



The following table gives an overview of the structure of the Aristotelian and Rogerian models.

ARISTOTELIAN (CLASSICAL)	ROGERIAN
Introduction – capture audience’s attention, introduce issue	Introduction – state problem to be resolved, raise possibility of positive change
Statement of background – supply context, give audience necessary backstory	Summarise opposing views – neutrally state opposition’s perspective; show non-judgmental fairness
Proposition – state contention (thesis), outline major points to follow	Statement of understanding – accept that, at times, opposing views are valid; show when, why
Proof – present reasons, supporting claims and evidence; explain and justify assumptions	Statement of position – state your personal position after showing consideration for opposing views
Refutation – anticipate and rebut opposing views; demonstrate thorough consideration of issue	Statement of contexts – explain why and in what context your position makes sense; acknowledge people won’t always agree
Conclusion – summarise most important points; make final appeal to audience’s values, emotions	Statement of benefits – appeal to self-interest of opponents by showing how they might benefit from your position

SOURCE 6

DOES MARIJUANA USE REALLY CAUSE PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS?

Alex Berenson says the drug causes ‘sharp increases in murders and aggravated assaults’. As scientists, we find his claims misinformed and reckless

By Carl L Hart and Charles Ksir

Does marijuana cause psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia, and do associated symptoms like paranoia lead to violent crimes? That’s what writer Alex Berenson is claiming. As part of his new book promotion, Berenson published a New York Times op-ed that also blames the drug for ‘sharp increases in murders and aggravated assaults’ purportedly observed in some states that allow adult recreational marijuana use.



Does marijuana cause psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia?

As scientists with a combined 70-plus years of drug education and research on psychoactive substances, we find Berenson’s assertions to be misinformed and reckless.

It is true that people diagnosed with psychosis are more likely to report current or prior use of marijuana than people without psychosis. The easy conclusion to draw from that is that marijuana

use caused an increased risk of psychosis, and it is that easy answer that Berenson has seized upon. However, this ignores evidence that psychotic behavior is also associated with higher rates of tobacco use, and with the use of stimulants and opioids. Do all these things 'cause' psychosis, or is there another, more likely answer? In our many decades of college teaching, one of the most important things we have tried to impart to our students is the distinction between correlation (two things are statistically associated) and causation (one thing causes another). For example, the wearing of light clothing is more likely during the same months as higher sales of ice-cream, but we do not believe that either causes the other.

In our extensive 2016 review of the literature we concluded that those individuals who are susceptible to developing psychosis (which usually does not appear until around the age of 20) are also susceptible to other forms of problem behavior, including poor school performance, lying, stealing and early and heavy use of various substances, including marijuana. Many of these behaviors appear earlier in development, but the fact that one thing occurs before another also is not proof of causation. (One of the standard logical fallacies taught in logic classes: after this, therefore because of this.) It is also worth noting that 10-fold increases in marijuana use in the UK from the 1970s to the 2000s were not associated with an increase in rates of psychosis over this same period, further evidence that

changes in cannabis use in the general population are unlikely to contribute to changes in psychosis.

Evidence from research tells us that aggression and violence are highly unlikely outcomes of marijuana use. Based on our own laboratory research, during which we have given thousands of doses of marijuana to people – carefully studying their brain, behavioral, cognitive and social responses – we have never seen a research participant become violent or aggressive while under the influence of the drug, as Berenson alleges. The main effects of smoking marijuana are contentment, relaxation, sedation, euphoria and increased hunger. Still, very high THC concentrations can cause mild paranoia, visual and/or auditory distortions, but even these effects are rare and usually seen only in very inexperienced users.

There is a broader point that needs to be made. In the 1930s, numerous media reports exaggerated the connection between marijuana use by black people and violent crimes. During congressional hearings concerning regulation of the drug, Harry J Anslinger, commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, declared: 'Marijuana is the most violence-causing drug in the history of mankind.' He was compelling. But unfortunately, these fabrications were used to justify racial discrimination and to facilitate passage of the *Marijuana Tax Act* in 1937, which essentially banned the drug. As we see, the reefer madness rhetoric of the past has not just evaporated; it continued and has evolved,

reinventing itself perhaps even more powerfully today.

There have been several recent cases during which police officers cited the fictitious dangers posed by cannabis to justify their deadly actions. Philando Castile, of St Paul, Minnesota, in 2016; Michael Brown, of Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014; and Keith Lamont Scott, of Charlotte, North Carolina, in 2016 were all killed by police who used some version of this bogus defense. Ramarley Graham, Trayvon Martin, Romain Brisbon and Sandra Bland all also had their lives cut short as a result of an interaction with law enforcement (or a proxy) initiated under the pretence of marijuana use suspicion.

Back in the 1930s, when there were virtually no scientific data on marijuana, ignorant and racist officials publicized exaggerated anecdotal accounts of its harms and were believed. Almost 90 years and hundreds of studies later, there is no excuse for these exaggerations or the inappropriate conclusions drawn by Berenson. Neither account has any place in serious discussions of science or public policy – which means Berenson doesn't, either.

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The Guardian, 20 January 2019

➡ 2.4a Your turn

- 1 Work with a partner. Take it in turns to speak about an issue of interest using both the Aristotelian and the Rogerian methods of argument. Speak for 2–3 minutes, without substantial preparation.

a Which method was easier to follow? Why?

b How well did you perform overall? What does this suggest about the role of planning and research in the development of an argument?

- 2 Read the opinion piece in Source 6, written by two professors of psychology on the issue of whether or not marijuana use causes psychotic disorders, and answer these questions.

a Work with a partner. Paragraph by paragraph, identify some of the key stages of either the Aristotelian or Rogerian models of argumentation exhibited in this piece. Annotate the text to indicate these stages.

b Which model does this text seem to most closely reflect? Justify your decision with evidence.

c Do any of the stages of this model appear to be missing? Discuss with a partner and then as a class.

d Draft an opinion piece offering your own opinion on whether or not marijuana should be legalised and regulated, as is the case with alcohol and tobacco. Plan your piece using either the Aristotelian or Rogerian model of argumentation, varying the model to suit your personal style and purposes.



CONSIDER THE 'WHOLE PACKAGE': CONTEXT, PURPOSE, AUDIENCE, FORM

The structure and development of an argument was noted in Chapter 1, based on the interplay of context, purpose, audience and form. A newspaper editorial for an audience of business enthusiasts is, necessarily, shaped and sequenced entirely differently to a website advertisement for a gap year product. The editorial would likely rely on a version of either the Aristotelian or Rogerian models, or another structured approach, to uphold the newspaper's reputation for intellectual rigour. The website advertisement has far more creative flexibility; it

SOURCE 7

Displays images of happy young adults in exotic locations to appeal to Year 12 students who are feeling 'trapped' by their studies.

Includes some 'satisfied customer' testimony to accompany these photographs, to convince the target audience of the validity and benefits of the product from the perspective of people similar to the target audience.

Makes an appeal to a sense of adventure to capitalise on this enthusiasm.

Uses flattery and exaggeration to generate enthusiasm and motivation in potential new customers.

Appeals to a sense of anxiety about employment prospects.

Deepens this sense of anxiety by focusing on the current challenges young people face in the job market. Uses economic data to deepen the sense of concern or anxiety about the future.

The screenshot shows a website for 'AllAbroad' with a navigation bar (Home, About Us, Sitemap, News, Projects, Sign Up, Testimonies, Contact us). The main heading is 'The ultimate gap year experience for young Australians'. Below this is a circular image of a young man and woman smiling. To the right of the image is a testimonial from Hayley, an AllAbroad gap year success story, which reads: 'What an amazing experience - words can't describe what this year has done for my self-confidence. Who would have thought that straight out of school I'd be teaching a class of 45 children, navigating remote magical jungles, camping under the stars by the ocean and riding a tuk-tuk through the throbbing streets of Bangkok... and all in the first month! Guys - put all of those uni plans on hold and get out there. I promise it will be the smartest decision you ever make.' Below the testimonial is a section titled 'Congratulations, and welcome Abroad!' which congratulates visitors and describes the gap year as a powerful act of goodwill. This is followed by a section titled 'Expand your horizons - get that all important life experience' which discusses the challenges of finding employment in Australia and how a gap year can help by providing work experience and improving CVs. The text mentions that youth unemployment has risen from 15.8% to 16.5% and that a gap year can help by providing work experience and improving CVs.

would likely engage with informality and visual aids, and the 'argument' would be driven more by an advertising model based on creating a need and appealing to values or emotions.

Part of your work in this Area of Study involves:

- carefully scrutinising the overall shape and direction of an author's argument
- explaining how and why a text is structured as it is
- analysing how the various arguments, stages or approaches work together to achieve a persuasive whole.

Consider this example of a web-based **infomercial** selling gap-year opportunities, which illustrates how argument and language features work together.

infomercial
combination of information and commercial; a lengthy advertisement or program that offers detail on a product

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the AllAbroad website. The page has a green header with navigation links: Home, About Us, Sitemap, News, Projects, Sign Up, Testimonies, and Contact us. The main content area is white with a green border. It features a section titled 'Make new friends – real social networking' with a paragraph about the benefits of a gap year. Below this is a section titled 'Help others, feel good about yourself' with a paragraph about the benefits of volunteering. At the bottom, there is a small image of two children and a call to action to sign up for the gap year experience. Annotations in yellow boxes point to specific parts of the text, highlighting rhetorical strategies like juxtaposition and complementation.

ALLAbroad
The ultimate gap year experience for young Australians

Make new friends – real social networking
So sure, you could spend the whole of next year slaving away at a university course, straight after the stresses of VCE and all those previous years of preparation for the all-important ATAR, talking to your high school friends on Facebook about how little time you have to see each other thanks to all those critical readings you get lumped with at the start of each semester but always seem to feel too tired to read... Or alternatively you could spend the year soaking up Vitamin D in the great outdoors, perhaps with some of those same friends and certainly with a whole host of new ones, connecting face-to-face and one-on-one with likeminded youths who share a passion for adventure and a desire to help others. That's *real* social networking. Nothing beats the thrill of meeting new people from exotic locations and learning first-hand the intricacies of their culture; and what better way to do this than with a gap year? You'll make friends and memories to last you a lifetime; and of course you'll need to visit those new-found friends every so often, so there's all the excuse you need to keep travelling the world in the years to come!

Help others, feel good about yourself
Of course the best thing about the **AllAbroad** gap year is that it makes you feel good – good about the choice you've made, good about your contribution to the global community, good about yourself. We guarantee that after hearing your first heartfelt 'thank you' – whether it's from a student mastering the English alphabet thanks to your tutelage, or an overwhelmed teacher who can now conduct lessons indoors because of the classroom you helped build, or a relieved farmer whose crops were planted on time because you and a dozen other volunteers got your hands dirty and helped him over the line – we know you'll feel 100% satisfied with the decision you made. Think back to the beginning of this year, when so much of Australia was ravaged by natural disaster – floods, cyclones, fires – and so many Australians carried on despite the tragedy, buoyed by the incredible spirit of generosity exhibited by family, friends and strangers alike. Think about how proud you felt at that moment; now imagine feeling like that for a whole year, knowing you are helping others so much less fortunate than yourself to carry on in a similar fashion. Well, don't imagine – do it!

To find out more about the AllAbroad gap year, click on one of the links below. All you need to get started is 100 points of identification and a sense of adventure...

**Sign up for the ultimate AllAbroad gap year experience [here](#).
Read our satisfied customer testimonies [here](#).
Explore our amazing array of packages [here](#).
Contact us for more information [here](#).**

Source: VATE 2011 Practice exam, © VATE

Strategically follows this with more expert testimony from a satisfied customer talking about how their gap year made them more employable. This alleviates a potential client's unemployment concerns and sells the travel product as a 'solution' to joblessness.

Juxtaposes 'slaving away at a university course' with 'soaking up Vitamin D in the great outdoors' to heighten the unattractiveness of the stay-at-home option.

Complements the earlier focus on self-interest with more-benevolent benefits.

Closes with a number of tempting hyperlinks, which uses imperatives - 'Sign up', 'Read', 'Contact us' - to capitalise on all of the strategies outlined above.

'Very High' scoring sample analysis

Introduction

In the middle of the 2011 school year, when many VCE students are starting to think about the world beyond their final exams, Australian gap year company 'AllAbroad' posted a webpage information sheet on their website in order to promote its 'ultimate gap year experience' to students and parents alike. The company argues the merits of a gap year in an enthusiastic sales pitch, seeking to convince future school-leavers and their families that a year overseas can be good for both the resume and the soul, offering as it does both real-world experience and the opportunity for 'invaluable and rewarding acts of charity'. Ultimately the 'AllAbroad' team hopes to convince this audience that their particular gap year product is the only one worth purchasing, and the page's glossy, feel-good language adopts the hyperbolic approach of the advertising industry – complete with testimonies from satisfied customers – in its hard sell of an apparently 'amazing experience'.

Body paragraph 1

By opening the page with upbeat testimony from a previous customer above the company's own official introduction, the AllAbroad team hopes to validate the authenticity of the product being sold. The speech bubble accentuates the fact that the opinion comes directly from the mouth of someone beyond the company itself, which works to validate or authenticate the product in the eyes of potentially sceptical students and parents. This authenticity is furthered through the inclusion of the photograph itself, which ensures that visitors to the site see Hayley as a 'real person' rather than a construction by a private business. Hayley's enthusiastic tone – 'What an amazing experience' – and the focus on the exotic details of a trip where she visited 'remote magical jungles' and rode 'a tuk-tuk' further validate the idea of a gap year as a viable option and establish the product as a genuine prospect rather than a scam or manipulative advertisement. Hayley's smiling face conveys a sense of joy which seeks to tap into students' own desires for a fun-filled post-Year 12 life, and her informal tone positions students to feel engaged with the prospect on their own level; her instruction 'Guys... get out there' amounts to a casual imperative which urges young people to take a leap into the unknown, and her emphatic conclusion which characterises the trip as 'the smartest decision' works to dispel concerns about the possible risks involved in such a bold venture. All of this positivity from a satisfied customer establishes the platform from which the company's own official introduction directly underneath can be launched with more authority, and the enthusiastic tone of the company's opening – 'Congratulations, and welcome Abroad', capitalises on Hayley's relaxed approach whilst also punning on the company's name to establish the all-important brand. Altogether these introductory elements are designed to seduce prospective customers to 'read on' and consider the product in more detail in the paragraphs which follow.

Body paragraph (topic sentence only)

The section of the website focused on 'life experience' taps into student anxieties about insecure job prospects, painting the gap year as a secure alternative.

[...]

Body paragraph 3 (topic sentence only)

Having established the employment benefits provided by their product, the company consolidates the appeal of the gap year by shifting the focus onto the personal and moral rewards they claim are on offer.

[...]



➡ 2.4b Your turn

1 Now, read Source 7, which is the Section C component of the Year 12 English practice exam – a mock-up of a webpage by Australian Gap Year company AllAbroad – and answer the questions.

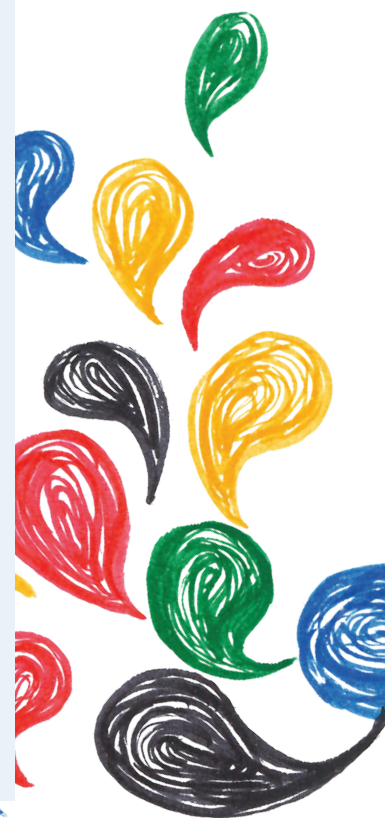
- a Why do you think the page opens with a testimonial from a previous gap year customer, rather than information from the AllAbroad company itself? (Think about the purpose of the webpage, and the target audience.)

- b This opening testimony is followed by a word of 'Congratulations' from the company itself, which claims that, simply by visiting the website, the visitor has 'taken the first step towards achieving the dream of a lifetime'. Explain the argument strategy from the company: what idea have they conveyed here, and how has it positioned the audience in terms of their perception of the gap year?

- c Reread the 'Expand your horizons' section. Why do you think the company included the paragraph about the 'technical recession' before the paragraph on how a gap year can make a person more employable, and then returned to 'Hayley', from the opening testimony? Explain carefully, in terms of the logic of this ordering of ideas.

- d Reread the final two sections of the webpage: 'Make new friends...', and 'Help others. Feel good about *yourself*'. Write 2–3 sentences to explain:

- i why the details are presented in this order
- ii how the argument stages work cumulatively to establish an overall impact.



2 Now, read the 'Very High' scoring sample analysis of the AllAbroad website in Source 8, and answer these questions.

- a To establish a sense of good-quality introduction writing in an analysis task, annotate the introduction to explain what each sentence is doing.
- b Highlight the specific arguments or ideas identified in the introduction, then compare with a partner and the whole class. Why is it important to include this information in the introduction?
- c Work with a partner. Explain which parts of the three topic sentences, in **bold**, help to show this student's awareness of (1) the author's key arguments and (2) the significance of the ordering and development of these arguments.

d Look at all of the underlined phrases. What do they have in common, and what does this tell you about one of the key indicators of a 'Very High' scoring analysis in this Area of Study?

e Working with a partner, carefully reread the first body paragraph and annotate each sentence to explain its focus. Then write a summary of what you would consider to be the key elements of a good analysis in this Area of Study.

FOR THE TEACHER

Check your obook assess for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension



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