

AP4CTE AP Seminar: Building a Dynamic Workforce

Research Strategies for Innovating and Problem-solving Across Career Paths

Module 6, Resource: The Toulmin Method of Argumentation Template

The Toulmin method is a very straight-forward, logical form of argumentation that marries logical rhetoric with something akin to the scientific method. The Toulmin method places emphasis on three aspects of argumentation: the claim (assertion to be proven), the grounds (evidence that supports the claim), and the warrants (implied or explicit reasoning that links the grounds to the claim). The method is often applied to *analyzing* arguments, and is an embedded part of the course activities provided throughout the modules. This structure applies well to argument types where no clear truths or solutions to a problem are immediate, as the goal of the method is to lay out the complexities emergent in the issues.

To use this method, students may consider completing the chart below for each sub-claim within the major argument, as each claim will require the proper consideration as enumerated below. This template provides only the structure for the body of the argument—written arguments should also include introductions which provide context, relevance, and the overall main claim, and should also include a conclusion that addresses the general implications and areas for additional research.

Claim	
Position on an issue; that which the author will aim to make true for the intended audience	
Grounds	
That which supports the claim above; includes reasoning, facts, data, etc.—general evidence supporting the claim made	
Warrant	
Justification for the logical connection between grounds and claim (can also come before grounds, to set the context)—can be built implicitly on assumptions about what the intended audience may know or already believe ¹	

¹ for AP Capstone, it is recommended that—where possible—students make explicit the warrants, rather than relying on implicit connections, or assumptions about their intended audience. However, it is good practice to have students consider “audience profiles” for each aspect of the task, including both High-stakes Tasks, and both parts of the End-of-course Exam.

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Backing	
Context, body of knowledge, and/or additional support for the claim relating to other perspectives, concepts, etc.; further discussion of the reasoning used in the warrant	
*Qualifier <i>The qualifier can come at any point within the structure of this argument, though it generally follows the initial claim, or what additional reasoning, and often aids in counter-claim and rebuttal</i>	
Limitations of the original claim; acknowledgement of anything that inhibits the original claim, such as frequency, strength, broader application, or any other limiting factors (e.g., other variables, the conditions of the experiment such as sample size, margin of error, etc.)	
Counter-claim	
Can follow from qualifiers, but generally acknowledges larger issues in relation to the claim or part of the reasoning—acknowledge multiple perspectives, divergent positions on the original problem or issue; counter-claim(s) addressed in the argument should be compelling and not trivial or anecdotal	

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Rebuttal	
<p>Should address opposing view acknowledged and reasoned in the counter-claim and should do so with sincerity, honesty, and integrity of position (may mean acknowledging the truly problematic aspect of the counter-claim)—see qualifiers above; should provide additional reasoning or evidence that warrants continuing to hold the original claim.</p>	