

Major Types of Argumentation

When you take a position on an issue, you are engaging in an argument. Arguments can happen for many reasons. The three major reasons people argue: over choices, over values, and over past events. This chart describes these types of arguments and their features in terms of scientific and technical documents.

Types of Arguments	Rhetorical Moves and Devices	Appeals	Examples	Outcomes	Tense
<p>What is the purpose of this argument?</p> <p>Deliberative arguments are about choice, weighing one choice against the other. The goal of deliberative rhetoric is to make a decision.</p> <p>Examples of deliberative rhetoric: Recommendation reports, policy white papers</p>	<p>Which persuasive strategies does this argument often rely on?</p> <p>Ends with a call to action</p> <p>Includes concessions to opponents' points</p> <p>Could focus on human characters or objects</p> <p>Can include hyperbole</p> <p>Point of view: omniscient</p>	<p>Which values does this argument appeal to?</p> <p>Efficiency. Here's why this choice requires a minimum of resources.</p> <p>Practical wisdom. Here's why this choice will work.</p> <p>Self-preservation. Here's why this choice is politically advantageous.</p>	<p>Which questions lend themselves to this argument?</p> <p>Think about choices and a payoff in the future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should your company replace its computers on a three-year cycle instead of a two-year cycle? Should we institute formal computer recycling protocols for our company? <p>Should we close legislative loopholes allowing exportation of e-waste to emerging countries?</p>	<p>Why bother having this argument?</p> <p>Rhetoric promises a payoff. What is the most expedient or advantageous course of action? What ought to be done in the future?</p>	<p>Which period of time are we concerned with in this argument?</p> <p>Future. What should happen later?</p>
<p>Epideictic arguments are about values, separating distinguishing groups from other groups and individuals from each other. Notions of good and bad aren't universal. Deciding who or what meets a community's ideals or fails to do so are arguments about values.</p> <p>Examples of epideictic rhetoric: Popular science journalism (e.g., Scientific American), tech reviews</p>	<p>Narrative structures (mystery, discovery, detective stories)</p> <p>Rich characterizations of people involved</p> <p>Hyperbole, exaggeration, surprise</p> <p>Point of view: first and third</p> <p>Explicit, strong claims.</p> <p>Rich, evocative descriptions of context</p>	<p>Emotion. Here's why this discovery feels like it is or isn't in tune with this community's priorities.</p> <p>Sense of wonder. Here's why this discovery is amazing to our community.</p> <p>Utility. Here's how this discovery will greatly benefit our community.</p> <p>Curiosity. Here's why our community should pursue this discovery.</p> <p>Sense of morality. Here's why this discovery is right or wrong for our community.</p>	<p>Think about meeting or abusing group values in the present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the actions of non-formal e-waste recyclers in emerging countries entrepreneurial or unethical? Does the way we recycle e-waste reflect our community values? <p>Is shipping e-waste to emerging nations just and fair?</p>	<p>Rhetoric tends to finish with people bonding or separating. Groups form and splinter over community values. What do we believe in?</p>	<p>Present. What should things be like now?</p>
<p>Forensic arguments are about past events and the facts of the case.</p> <p>Examples: original scientific reports</p>	<p>Predictable structures built around methodologies (e.g. IMRaD)</p> <p>Focus on objects rather than human characters</p> <p>Absolute objectivity</p> <p>Highly qualified, careful, precise claims that allow for contingencies</p> <p>Passive voice</p>	<p>Disinterest. Here's why this explanation of past events is unbiased.</p> <p>Rigor. Here's why this explanation of past events is precise and thoughtful.</p> <p>Accuracy. Here's why the results of this explanation of past events are true.</p>	<p>Think about relaying what happened in the past:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What caused the spike in cancer rates in the communities surrounding the e-waste dump? 	<p>Rhetoric promises reliable knowledge. How valid are the observations we are reporting?</p>	<p>Past. What happened?</p>