

A photograph of a man and a woman sitting at a wooden table in a cafe-like setting. The man, on the left, is looking at a laptop. The woman, on the right, is gesturing with her hands while talking. There are two mugs on the table, one dark and one white. The background is a wooden wall with a herringbone pattern.

DB

Dr. P. Bawa

The Art of Argument Writing

Writing a great persuasive piece is as much an art, as it is a skill set. In this presentation we will discover some key strategies of developing strong arguments, developing robust thesis and thesis statements, and strategic mapping of claims and warrants to optimize the impact of a persuasion.

Writing an Effective Title and Introduction

Thesis Statement

Claims and Warrants

Writing an Effective Title and Introduction

DB

Dr. P. Bawa

What's in a title?

We all know the phrase "A Rose by any name will still smell as sweet". While this may be true philosophically and even pragmatically, it may not be the way to go when it comes to writing.

A text's title is the very first impression that readers will get regarding it. That is why you must ensure that the title is not only eye catching, but also truly representative of your ideas. **You can lose an audience's attention with boring or lackluster titles as well as titles that are eye-catching.**

While creating eye catching titles are useful, it is equally useful to ensure that the title of your work truly and accurately identifies what your work is really about. If not, the first impression created will be misleading and you will most likely disappoint or anger your reader.

In a persuasive piece that can mean losing whatever you were hoping to gain through your persuasion. Let us play a guessing game about book titles.

The Living is Easy —

What it's really about: The living is not easy. Life is rough. Everything is not great. The book deals with the main character, Cleo, whose life is anything but easy. While it's quite simple to see the sarcasm in the title, it does make it misleading

Author: Dorothy West

The Art of Racing in the Rain —

This book tells a story from the vantage point of a dog, and how he understands the way humans function and live.

Author: Garth Stein

Watership Down —

The book is about bunnies who are intruded on by man and are forced to search for a new home.

Author: Richard Adams

What to include in titles

THE HOOK	TOPIC KEYWORDS	FOCUS AND SOURCE KEYWORDS	EXAMPLE
A creative way to introduce your subject argument to your readers. This is what draws your readers in.			



THE HOOK

TOPIC KEYWORDS

FOCUS AND SOURCE
KEYWORDS

EXAMPLE

These keywords are related to the important topics that you would be exploring further and detailing in your essay. This is majorly relying on the “what” part of your paper.



THE HOOK	TOPIC KEYWORDS	FOCUS AND SOURCE KEYWORDS	EXAMPLE
----------	----------------	---------------------------	---------

Focus and source keywords will help your readers understand a little more about the source of the argument and where the concepts that are to be discussed have originated from. These relate to the 'where' and 'when' of the content of your essay.



THE HOOK	TOPIC KEYWORDS	FOCUS AND SOURCE KEYWORDS	EXAMPLE
<p>Title: Hey, want to Play?' Kahooting' to win the learning game (Bawa, 2017).</p> <p>Hook: Hey, want to play?</p> <p>Topic Keywords: learning, game, win</p> <p>Source Keywords: Kahoot, play</p>			

Tips for writing effective titles

- It may be best to create your title after you have written the paper or at least the draft.
- Try to summarize your draft in one sentence and use that as a title.
- Write a title that is a question beginning with What, Who, When, Where, Why or How as well as Is/Are, Do/Does, or Will.
- Pick out of the essay some concrete image—something the reader can hear, see, taste, smell, or feel—to use as a title.
- Write a title beginning with an -ing verb or beginning with 'On'.
- Adapt a popular saying or phrase or word that aligns with your essay's theme and can act as an analogy.

Writing effective introductions

The introduction is the second place that provides readers with the first impressions of your paper. It is used to introduce the topic while drawing readers in and making them intrigued to know more.

It needs to make an impression on the reader so that they become interested, understand your paper's goal, and want to read on. The introduction usually ends with the thesis statement. The five segments of a persuasive introduction are discussed below.

The first one or two sentences of your essay are known as the essay hook and are meant to

Hook

generate interest in readers and get their attention. Writing a catchy hook is likely to increase your chances of scoring well.

Some ways to create a

1 of 5

Topic introduction

After writing an enticing hook, you need to go on to introduce your topic which includes what you're going to be writing about.

For example, if you're writing an argumentative essay on whether climate change claims are worth noticing or not, -

2 of 5

Topic value and purpose

Following the topic background, you will tell readers why the topic is valuable and important, the purpose behind choosing and most importantly, why should they bother reading it?

Are you touching upon an

3 of 5

Establish context and discuss
topic background

This is crucial to ensuring that
your readers have enough
exposition to the topic so that
they can better understand your
argument.

To establish context, provide
evidence-based information
regarding the key aspects of
your topic. Think of the

4 of 5

Present the thesis statement

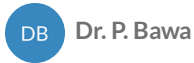
Coming to the final and most
important part of the introduction -
the thesis statement.

The argumentative essay's thesis
statement should be a crisp and
clear explanation of the main
argument of your essay.

5 of 5

CONTINUE

Thesis Statement



Difference between thesis and thesis statement

Before learning more about thesis statements, it is prudent to know the difference between the term 'thesis' and thesis statements.

Thesis is a broad term, usually used in the context of an exhaustive research compilation focused on centralized theme. Some examples of specific genres are dissertations and master's thesis. However, in the context of persuasive writing, thesis can also mean the core or central theme of the writing.

A thesis is the result of a lengthy thinking process. Before developing an argument on any topic, you have to collect and organize evidence, look for possible relationships between known facts (such as surprising contrasts or similarities), and think about the significance of these relationships. Once you do this thinking, you will probably have a “working thesis” that presents a basic or main idea and an argument that you think you can support with evidence.

Thesis statement is a 1-2 sentence description of what you will discuss in your paper, highlighting your stance and key claims. **The purpose of a thesis statement is to open your argument to the readers and provide them with a road map to your writing by outlining the key claim, source and evidence themes.**

Writing effective thesis statements

A thesis statement will include highlights of the following:

1. The claim or assertion
2. The reasons/evidence that support this claim
3. The order in which you will be presenting your reasons and evidence

Questions to ask yourself when writing an argumentative thesis statement:

- What is my claim or assertion?
- What are the reasons I have to support my claim or assertion?
- In what order should I present my reasons?

Attributes of an effective thesis statement

1. Debatable —

A persuasive thesis statement should be debatable. Your thesis summarizes the argument you'll be making in your paper, so you want to make sure that your point of view is clear and debatable. If your thesis simply states facts that someone couldn't disagree with, you may simply be summarizing an issue rather than presenting a clear point of view.

2. Strong conclusions about a subject —

Remember that your thesis needs to show strong conclusions about a subject. These conclusions should be tethered to viable claims and evidence

3. Contextual —

Your persuasive thesis statement should be placed within a viable and arguable context.

An argumentative paper makes a claim about a topic and contextualizes the claims by using multiple lenses such as an opinion, a policy proposal, an evaluation, a cause-and-effect statement, or an interpretation.

4. Specific —

A thesis statement is a specific statement. It should cover only what you want to discuss in your paper and must be supported with specific evidence. The scope of your paper will be determined by the length of your paper and any other requirements that might be in place.

5. Rationale —

The thesis statement must offer a rationale for the stance. This can be done using the 'because' or 'should' clauses.

7. Effective message framing —

How you frame your message can dramatically affect your ability to persuade others.

There are two types of framing: gain or loss.

A message framed as a gain has a positive outcome, such as, “Save money by quitting smoking.”

A message framed as a loss has a negative outcome, such as, “Smoking takes years off your life.”

Consider your audience and purpose to determine if it’s more effective to frame your message as a gain or loss.

Introduction

Let us take a look at some examples of thesis statement development. The topic is 'online education'.

Step 1

Opinion Points



Online education is easy for those who have full time jobs

Online education offers flexibility

Online education is not for everyone

Step 2

Questioning your opinions



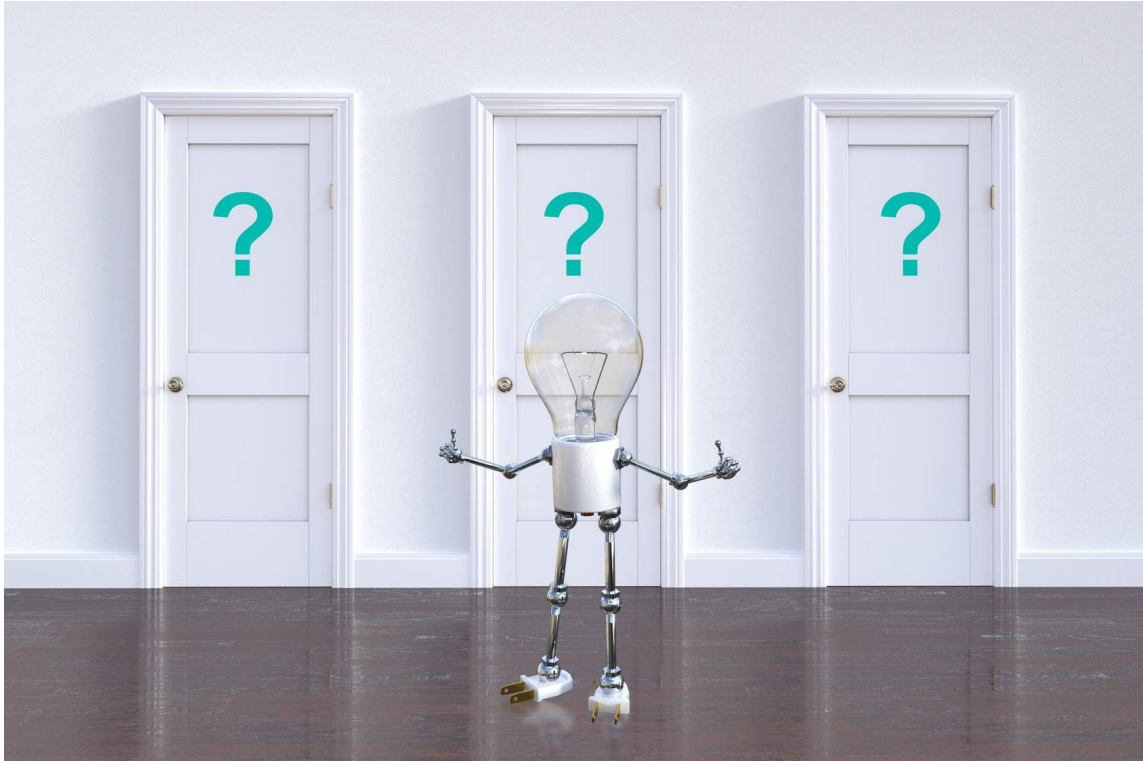
If online learning is that good, why are not all students wanting online education?

Are there issues with online learning? What are the issues involving online learning?

How can these issues be solved?

Step 3

Looking for answers



What are other people talking about online education?

Who are favoring online education and why?

Are there governmental policies or interventions involving online education?

Re-opinions



Online education is uniquely helpful for students from multiple backgrounds, but it may not be for all

Online education has retention and completion issues

Institutions are emphasizing on student completion in online courses and that is hitting the funding and bottom line of online programs

Step 5

Tentative claim

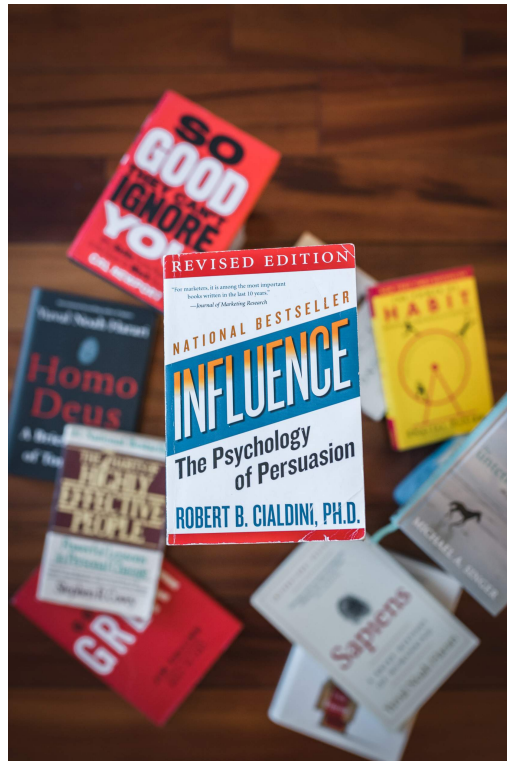


"Online education is useful, but it has its issues that need to be dealt with"

In its current form, this is not a debatable claim.

Step 6

Adding the debate



"While online education is useful, it has significant issues relating to retention and completion that need to be dealt with"

This is slightly debatable since people may argue that retention is not a significant issue. However, it is not a strong thesis statement in the absence of other elements such as 'how' and 'why'

Step 7

Keep adding weight to the debate



"While online education is useful due to its flexibility and universal reach and should be encouraged more robustly in this post Covid 19 era, the issues relating to retention and completion rates of students that it presents hampers institutional growth and sponsorship of eLearning. Thus, educational institutions should double their efforts for retention and completion in online programs, since that is the best way to encourage growth and support of online education"

Summary

Developing robust thesis statement requires close attention, critical thinking and brainstorming. The most effective persuasive thesis statements are those that have well defined debatable claims and strong evidentiary support.

Your thesis statement should answer one or both of two key questions: “how” and “why.”

For example, if you think that online learning is more effective for students than traditional instruction, then your thesis should tell readers how or why it’s more effective. If a reader can't determine the "how" or "why" from your thesis statement, your thesis might be too open-ended, and you may need to revise it to be more specific or to clarify your point of view.

Check your knowledge

You've learned about several ways to bolster your persuasive argument. While no one tactic is better than another, it's good to familiarize yourself with each. Check your understanding with these exercises.

The only purpose of a thesis statement is to provide a road map to a persuasive writing.

☐

True

☐

False

SUBMIT

Gains and losses are part of a thesis statement creation.

☐

True

☐

False

SUBMIT

Debatable

The internet improves lives by instantly connecting people across the world

Online education is definitely better than face to face

Fake news can lead to negative consequences

Not Debatable

The grey wolf is a timid creature that is being hunted and exterminated.

The number of homeless people in the USA are increasing

Fake news is real

Which of the following is the most effective persuasive thesis statement?

- ☐ Should dolphins be kept in captivity?
- ☐ Dolphins are social creatures
- ☐ Keeping dolphins in zoos is a cruel practice that should not be allowed because it impacts the natural balance of things and ruins the dolphins psychologically

SUBMIT

Which of the following is the most effective persuasive thesis statement?

- ☐ A significant percentage of the homeless population in USA are veterans
- ☐ Permitting veterans to be homeless is unpatriotic

☐

Homelessness is a problem for this country

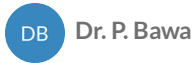
☐

The New York State council should fund shelters dedicated to the veteran population who need help.

SUBMIT

CONTINUE

Claims and Warrants



Claims

In its basic form, a claim is a debatable statement versus a statement of fact. In the context of persuasive writing, claims allow you to present the main idea of the document in the form of an argument that you will support with evidence throughout the document.




Claim is an assertion the writer makes, which can be backed with evidence and hence, goes beyond voicing personal opinions.

Argumentative claims have to be more than just a fact-based statement that is obviously true. Hence, claims should be statements that are up for debate. As a writer, your goal is to effectively argue in favor of your claim.

- Statement - If you say, "I am an online student who passionately believes that everyone should take an online class", it is not an example of a claim in persuasive writing. This is just a statement of fact. It is not something that is arguable.
- Claim - If you say, "Online learning is something everyone should try at least once, given that its benefits outweigh its limitations", it is a claim. This is not something that everyone agrees upon. Your paper will need to focus on supporting this claim with evidence.

Because a claim is a statement in which you take a stand on an issue, it has to be strongly debatable, with at least one valid counterargument—an opposite or alternative point of view that

is as sensible as the position that you take in your claim. In your thesis statement, you should clearly and specifically state the position you will convince your audience to adopt.

 Your claim answers the question: What do you want the reader to believe?

Types of Claims

Generally, there are four primary types of claims in an argument, also called persuasive claims:

- 1 • Claims of fact assert that something is true or not true.
- 2 • Claims of value assert that something is good or bad, or more or less desirable.
- 3 • Claims of policy assert that one course of action is superior to another.
- 4 • Claims of cause and effect assert that something is the cause of an issue or problem.

CLAIM OF FACT	CLAIM OF VALUE	CLAIM OF POLICY	CLAIM OF CAUSE AND EFFECT
A claim of fact makes an assertion about something that can be proved or disproved with factual evidence.			

However, any persuasive claim has to be debatable, and offer an assertion about an issue. So, a claim of fact for a logical argument cannot simply consist of a statistic or proven fact. Instead, it needs to focus on an assertion which uses facts to back it up, but for which the evidence might still be debatable.

Example:

Inappropriate claim of fact – a statistic or fact that is not debatable.

“the month of March 2017 was 1.03°C (1.9°F) above the 20th century average—this marked the first time the monthly temperature departure from average surpassed 1.0°C (1.8°F) in the absence of an El Niño episode in the tropical Pacific Ocean.” (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)

Appropriate claim of fact – makes a claim that is debatable using factual evidence

"Decreasing carbon dioxide emissions from car exhaust, manufacturing processes, fertilizers, and landfills, while slowing deforestation, may help slow the process of global warming".



CLAIM OF FACT

CLAIM OF VALUE

CLAIM OF POLICY

CLAIM OF CAUSE AND

A claim of value argues that something is good or bad, or that one thing is better than another thing.

Examples:

"It's better to apply good nutritional choices at home than teach them at school, because good nutrition then becomes ingrained in the child's experience".

"Although immunotherapy has produced some good results in fighting cancer, overall, it is less effective than chemotherapy".



CLAIM OF FACT

CLAIM OF VALUE

CLAIM OF POLICY

CLAIM OF CAUSE AND
EFFECT

A claim of policy argues that certain conditions should exist, or that something should or should not be done, in order to solve a problem.

Example:

"The city's board of education should institute an honors program not only for high school students, but for elementary and junior high school students as well".

"Just as smoking ads have been banned in order to decrease the urge to engage in an unhealthy behavior, soda ads should be banned for the same reason".



CLAIM OF FACT

CLAIM OF VALUE

CLAIM OF POLICY

CLAIM OF CAUSE AND
EFFECT

This type of claim argues that given causes lead to specific effects, such as watching too much television when young leads to obesity or poor school performance.

To make this claim, you would have to present evidence (scientific studies, for example) that show television leads to these outcomes.

Another debatable cause-and-effect claim would be that video games that depict violence can lead to real violence.



CLAIM OF FACT

CLAIM OF VALUE

CLAIM OF POLICY

CLAIM OF CAUSE AND
EFFECT

A claim of fact makes an assertion about something that can be proved or disproved with factual evidence.

However, any persuasive claim has to be debatable, and offer an assertion about an issue. So, a claim of fact for a logical argument cannot simply consist of a statistic or proven fact. Instead, it needs to focus on an assertion which uses facts to back it up, but for which the evidence might still be debatable.

Example:

Inappropriate claim of fact – a statistic or fact that is not debatable.

“the month of March 2017 was 1.03°C (1.9°F) above the 20th century average—this marked the first time the monthly temperature departure from average surpassed 1.0°C (1.8°F) in the absence of an El Niño episode in the tropical Pacific Ocean.” (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)

Appropriate claim of fact – makes a claim that is debatable using factual evidence

"Decreasing carbon dioxide emissions from car exhaust, manufacturing processes, fertilizers, and landfills, while slowing deforestation, may help slow the process of global warming".



CLAIM OF FACT

CLAIM OF VALUE

CLAIM OF POLICY

CLAIM OF CAUSE AND
EFFECT

A claim of value argues that something is good or bad, or that one thing is better than another thing.

Examples:

"It's better to apply good nutritional choices at home than teach them at school, because good nutrition then becomes ingrained in the child's experience".

"Although immunotherapy has produced some good results in fighting cancer, overall, it is less effective than chemotherapy".



CLAIM OF FACT

CLAIM OF VALUE

CLAIM OF POLICY

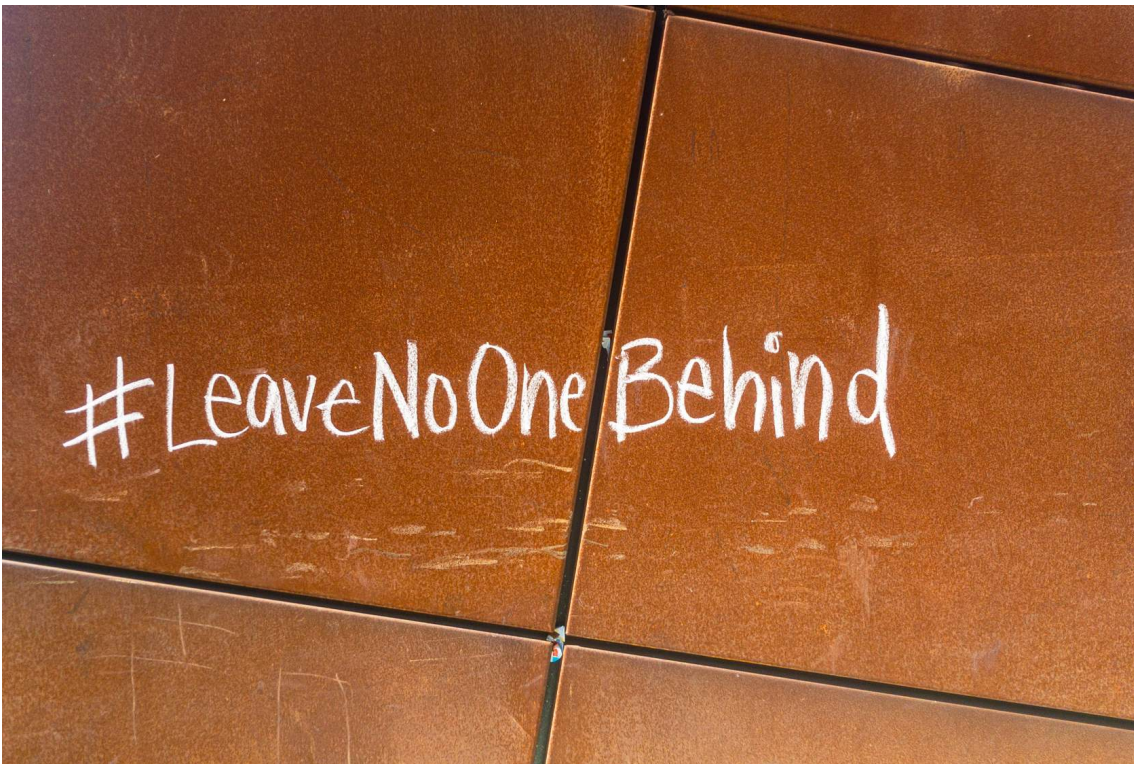
CLAIM OF CAUSE AND
EFFECT

A claim of policy argues that certain conditions should exist, or that something should or should not be done, in order to solve a problem.

Example:

"The city's board of education should institute an honors program not only for high school students, but for elementary and junior high school students as well".

"Just as smoking ads have been banned in order to decrease the urge to engage in an unhealthy behavior, soda ads should be banned for the same reason".



CLAIM OF FACT

CLAIM OF VALUE

CLAIM OF POLICY

CLAIM OF CAUSE AND
EFFECT

This type of claim argues that given causes lead to specific effects, such as watching too much television when young leads to obesity or poor school performance.

To make this claim, you would have to present evidence (scientific studies, for example) that show television leads to these outcomes.

Another debatable cause-and-effect claim would be that video games that depict violence can lead to real violence.



Warrants

Unlike 'warrants' for legal and law and order situations, persuasive warrants are the rationale the writer provides to show that the evidence properly supports the claim, with each element working towards a similar goal.



Warrant answers the question: Why should the reader accept your claim?

While warrants in an argument may not be used at all times, it will be needed under one or more of these situations:

1. If the audience is outside of the discourse community, so it is not (as) familiar with the topic and needs additional information.

2. If the reason is a new way of thinking or is heavily debated; and
3. If the audience is likely to be (highly) resistant to the reason.

Including a warrant when any of these apply can make the difference between whether the argument is successful or unsuccessful. A warrant is a general principal that serves as a bridge between your claim and your evidence; **it explains how your evidence is both accurate and relevant to your claim.**

Warrant Tips

Step 1

Tip 1

A warrant, simply put, is the assumption that your reader needs to agree with in order to find your evidence strong enough to support your claim.

Your warrant may be directly stated, or it might just be implied.

Step 2

Tip 2

An important way to ensure you are properly supplying warrants within your argument is to use “linking sentences” or a “link” that connects the particular claim directly back to the thesis.

Remember, the thesis statement is the driving force of organization in your essay, so each paragraph needs to have a specific purpose in proving or explaining your thesis; linking sentences complete this task.

Step 3

Tip 3

Place linking sentences after your textual evidence in a paragraph.

Step 4

Tip 4

Even if both your claim and your evidence are entirely accurate, it is possible to make a weak argument.

To avoid making a weak argument (even with good evidence), you must explain why the evidence you are presenting supports the claim you are making, which will establish a warrant between your claim and your evidence.

Summary

Warrants are used to justify/rationalize the link between your claims and the supporting evidence.



Michael Jordan is the greatest basketball player who ever lived.



He holds the NBA record for highest career regular-season scoring average (30.12 points per game) and highest career playoff scoring average (33.4 points per game).

Since regular-season scoring averages and playoff scoring averages are the best indicators we have of a player's greatness and no one beats Jordan in these statistics, he must be the greatest player of all time.





Michael Jordan is the greatest basketball player who ever lived.



He holds the NBA record for highest career regular-season scoring average (30.12 points per game) and highest career playoff scoring average (33.4 points per game).

Since regular-season scoring averages and playoff scoring averages are the best indicators we have of a player's greatness and no one beats Jordan in these statistics, he must be the greatest player of all time.

Claim

This is the claim you are making, which needs to be substantiated with evidence.



Michael Jordan is the greatest basketball player who ever lived.

He holds the NBA record for highest career regular-season scoring average (30.12 points per game) and highest career playoff scoring average (33.4 points per game).

Since regular-season scoring averages and playoff scoring averages are the best indicators we have of a player's greatness and no one beats Jordan in these statistics, he must be the greatest player of all time.



Warrant

This will answer the question: Why do you think that your proof is relevant to your claim?



Michael Jordan is the greatest basketball player who ever lived.



He holds the NBA record for highest career regular-season scoring average (30.12 points per game) and highest career playoff scoring average (33.4 points per game).

Since regular-season scoring averages and playoff scoring averages are the best indicators we have of a player's greatness and no one beats Jordan in these statistics, he must be the greatest player of all time.

Evidence

Even if your evidence is accurate, why should that lead the reader to believe your claim?

CONTINUE

Check your knowledge

Identify which type of claim the statement is making, then check the answer.

Vaping can lead to increased blood pressure, lung disease, and insulin resistance. —

Claim of fact

Exposure to violent media is a risk factor for violent behaviors. —

Claim of cause and effect

The college's career support network is an excellent resource for students. —

Claim of value

The college must prioritize more funding for its career services office programs. —

Claim of policy

Solar power will reduce dependence on fossil fuels, strengthening our security. —

Claim of cause and effect and/or fact

Quantum computing can be an excellent way to revolutionize machine learning —

Claim of value, cause and effect

