

Structural Elements and Rhetorical Strategies

When learning to analyze or to create a written argument, it is helpful to know the devices that enable writers to aptly support their claims. Use this page as a **resource** to help in your analysis and writing of argument.

Structural Elements

- Introduction—the first section of the essay which opens the subject, sets the tone, and presents the thesis
- Body—the majority of the essay, occurring between the introduction and the conclusion, in which the writer develops the argument, using the rhetorical strategies listed below; provides support for the thesis
- Transition—word or expression designed to emphasize connections between ideas and to move the content of the essay from one section to the next
- Conclusion—the final section of the essay, intended to bring closure and leave a lasting impression

Rhetorical Strategies

Elements of Argumentation

- Call to Action—a request or petition by the writer to move the reader to take action on an issue
- Claim—a debatable or controversial statement the speaker or writer intends to prove with evidence
- Concession—a respectful acknowledgment of an opposing viewpoint. By recognizing and fairly summarizing an opposing viewpoint, the writer or speaker is seen as logical and fair-minded.
- Counterargument—follows a concession and strongly counters or refutes the opposition's evidence

Terms of concession and counterargument:

- I concede that...; however,...
- Yes,..., but...
- I recognize that..., but I must point out that...
- While I agree that..., I doubt that...
- While it is true that..., we must remember that...
- Although I understand that..., I still believe that...
- Qualifier—word or phrase that limits the claim, such as *usually*, *sometimes*, *in many cases*, etc.
- Rebuttal—showing the opposing argument to be weak or wrong
- Unspoken Assumption—the writer's belief about the attitudes, values, or knowledge possessed by readers or the audience (What does the writer *assume* to be true about these things?)

Methods of Exposition

- Analogy—an extended comparison
- Anecdote—a brief narrative or story
- Cause-and-Effect—identifying a result of an action
- Comparison/Contrast—placing differing points of an issue side-by-side
- Definition—an extended explanation of meaning
- Example—a detail supporting the claim

The Appeals

- **Logos (logic)**—The writer or speaker uses devices such as (but not limited to) facts, statistics, cause/effect, or comparison/contrast to appeal to the audience's (or reader's) logic by constructing a well-reasoned argument.
- **Pathos (emotion)**—The writer or speaker uses devices such as connotative diction, personal anecdotes, or imagery to evoke the audience's (or reader's) emotions by stirring strong feelings about the subject.
- **Ethos (trust)**—The writer or speaker uses devices such as using first person pronouns, citing authorities, or stating his qualifications or experience in order to establish himself as a credible or reliable person, one whose opinions can be trusted.