

that way. For a claim to be *arguable*—worth arguing—it has to take a position that others can logically have different perspectives on. Likewise, an arguable claim can't simply be a statement of fact that no one would disagree with ("Violent video games earn millions of dollars every year"). And remember that in most academic contexts claims based on religious faith alone often cannot be argued since there are no agreed-upon standards of proof or evidence.

In most academic writing, you'll be expected to state your **claim** explicitly as a **thesis** and to position the thesis near the beginning of your text, often at the end of the introduction or the first paragraph. In most academic contexts in the United States, authors are expected to make their claims directly and get to the point fairly quickly.

When your claim is likely to challenge or surprise your audience, though, you may want to build support for it more gradually and hold off stating it explicitly until later in your argument, as Du Bois does. The same is true in many speeches and narratives, where a speaker or writer deliberately creates suspense or stimulates curiosity by withholding the thesis until a dramatic point in the text. In other situations, including some narratives and reports, you may not need to make a direct statement of your claim at all. But always make sure in such cases that your audience has a clear understanding of what the claim is.

EMOTIONAL, ETHICAL, AND LOGICAL APPEALS

While every argument appeals to audiences in a wide variety of ways, it's often convenient to lump such appeals into three basic kinds: *emotional* appeals (to the heart), *ethical* appeals (about credibility or character), and *logical* appeals (to the mind).

Emotional Appeals

Emotional appeals stir feelings and often invoke values that the audience is assumed to hold. The paragraph on Lincoln on p. 282, for example, offers a strong appeal to readers' emotions at the end when it represents Lincoln as "big" and "brave," invoking two qualities Americans traditionally value. Images can make especially powerful appeals to our hearts, such as these about the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown that devastated Ja-

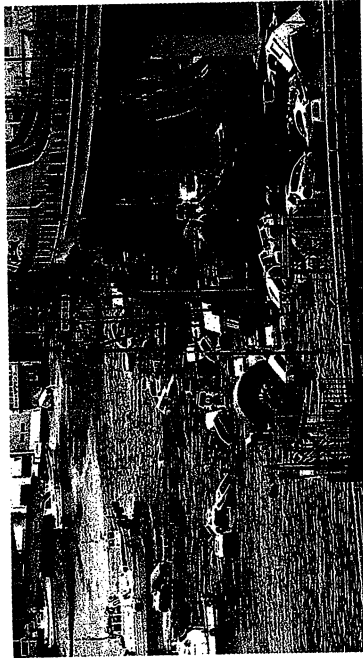


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An image of submerged cars from Japanese TV coverage of the earthquake that jolted Honshu, Japan's main island, in March 2011 (left). Many groups offered aid, from governments and international organizations to small local groups that united under the slogan "Hope Help Heal Japan" (right).



HOPE HELP HEAL
J A P A N

pan in 2011. The first image captures the staggering destruction unleashed on Japan by forces of nature, and the second argues that the world must now provide hope, help, and healing to the stricken country. As the first example suggests, images can appeal very strongly to emotions: In this sense, a picture truly is worth a thousand words. But words too can make a powerful emotional appeal, as the second example shows. As a reader, you'll want to consider how any such emotional appeals support the author's claim.

As an author, you should consider how you can appeal to your audience's emotions and whether such appeals are appropriate to your claim, your purpose, and your audience. And be careful not to overdo emotional appeals, pulling at the heartstrings so hard that your audience feels manipulated.

Ethical Appeals

Ethical appeals evoke the credibility and good character of whoever is making the argument. See how the blog kept by Lawrence Lessig, an advocate for reform of copyright laws and a critic of institutional corruption, includes information intended to establish his credibility and integrity. Here is part of his "bio" page:

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Lawrence Lessig is the Director of the Edmond J. Safra Foundation Center for Ethics at Harvard University, and a Professor of Law at Harvard Law School. . . .

For much of his academic career, Lessig has focused on law and technology, especially as it affects copyright. He is the author of five books on the subject—*Remix* (2008), *Code v2* (2007), *Free Culture* (2004), *The Future of Ideas* (2001) and *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace* (1999)—and has served as lead counsel in a number of important cases marking the boundaries of copyright law in a digital age, including *Eldred v. Ashcroft*, a challenge to the 1998 Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act, and *Golan v. Holder*. . . .

Lessig has won numerous awards, including the Free Software Foundation's Freedom Award, and was named one of *Scientific American's* Top 50 Visionaries. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society.

—Lessig 2.0

All of this information, including his position as director of a prestigious center at Harvard and his numerous awards, helps establish Lessig's credibility and helps readers decide how much stock they can put in his blog entries.

Citing scholarly positions and awards is only one way of establishing credibility. Here Lessig uses another approach in a keynote address to a 2002 convention devoted to discussion of free and open-source software:

I have been doing this for about two years—more than 100 of these gigs. This is about the last one. One more and it's over for me. So I figured I wanted to write a song to end it. But then I realized I don't sing and I can't write music. But I came up with the refrain, at least, right? This captures the point. If you understand this refrain, you're gonna understand everything I want to say to you today. It has four parts: Creativity and innovation always builds on the past. The past always tries to control the creativity that builds upon it. Free societies enable the future by limiting this power of the past. Ours is less and less a free society.

—LAWRENCE LESSIG, Keynote Address, 2002 Open Source Convention

In this brief opening, Lessig lets listeners know that he has a lot of experience with his topic—in fact, he has spoken on it more than a hundred times. His very informal tone suggests that he is a down-to-earth person who has a simple, direct message to give to the people in his audience. In addition, his self-deprecating humor (he can't sing or write music) underscores his



Lawrence Lessig

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self-confidence: He knows he can create the equivalent of a "good song" on a topic about which he has spoken so frequently.

Building common ground. Lessig's use of simple, everyday language helps establish credibility in another way: by building common ground with his audience. He is not "putting on airs" but speaking directly to them; their concerns, he seems to say, are his concerns.

While building common ground cannot ensure that your audience is "on your side," it does show that you respect your audience and their views and that you've established, with them, a mutual interest in the topic. Each party cares about the issues that you are addressing. Thus, building common ground is a particularly important part of creating an effective argument. Especially if you are addressing an audience unlikely to agree with your position, finding some area of agreement with them, some common ground you can all stand on, can help give the argument a chance of being heard.

No global leader in recent history has been more successful in building common ground than Nelson Mandela, who became the first black president of South Africa in 1994 after the country's harsh apartheid system of racial segregation ended. In *Playing the Enemy: Nelson Mandela and the Game That Made a Nation*, the basis for the 2009 film *Invictus*, author John Carlin recounts hearing Mandela say that "sport has the power to change the world . . . It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. . . . It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers." Carlin uses this quotation as an example of Mandela's singular ability to "walk in another person's shoes" and to build common ground even where none seems possible. He goes on to detail the ways in which Mandela, employing one of the appeals, used white South Africans' fervent love of rugby to build common ground between them and the country's black majority, which had long seen the almost all-white national rugby team, the Springboks, as a symbol of white supremacy:

He explained how he had . . . used the 1995 Rugby World Cup as an instrument in the grand strategic purpose he set for himself during his five years as South Africa's first democratically elected president: to reconcile blacks and whites and create the conditions for a lasting peace. . . . He told me, with a chuckle or two, about the trouble he had persuading his own people to back the rugby team. . . . Having won over his own people he went out and won over the enemy.

—JOHN CARLIN, *Playing the Enemy*

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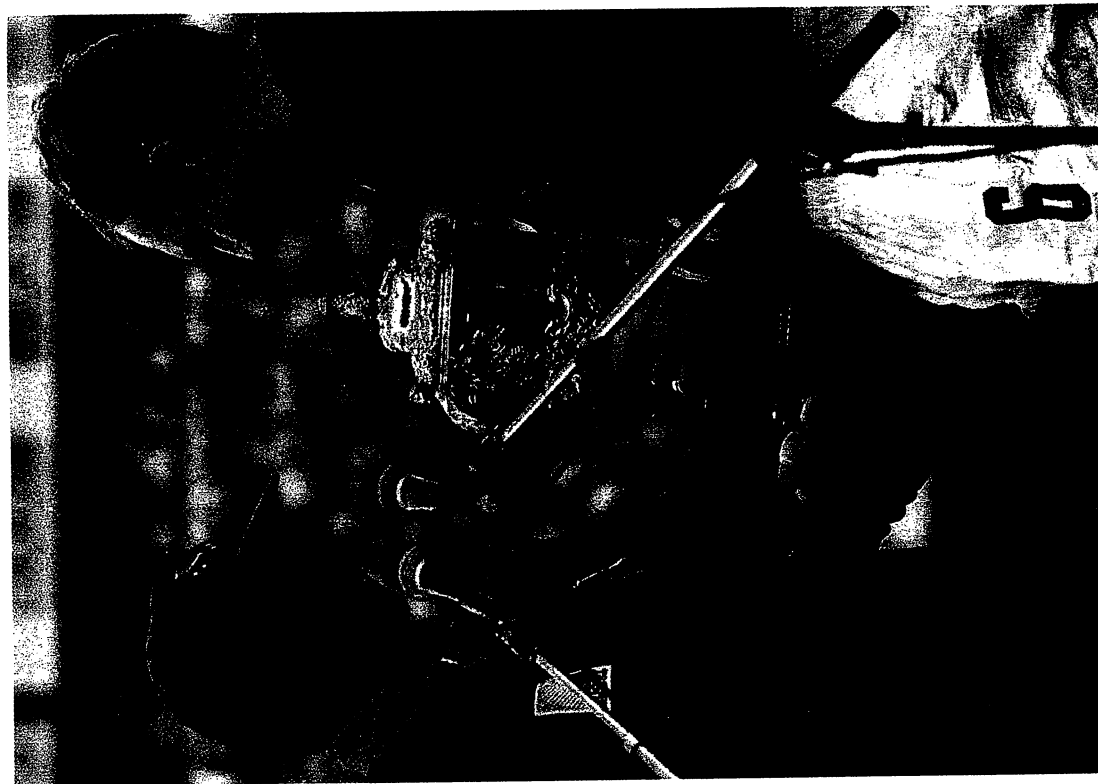
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President Nelson Mandela, wearing a Springboks cap and shirt, presents the Rugby World Cup to South African captain Francois Pienaar in June 1995.

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Mandela understood, in short, that when people were as far apart in their thinking as black and white South Africans were when apartheid ended, the only way to move forward, to make arguments for the country's future that both groups would listen to, was to discover something that could bring them together. For Mandela—and for South Africa—rugby provided the needed common ground. His personal meetings with the Springboks players and his public support for the team, including wearing a Springboks jersey to their matches, paid off to such an extent that when they won a stunning upset victory in the 1995 World Cup final in Johannesburg, the multiracial crowd chanted his name and the country united in celebration. And establishing that common ground, through an emotional appeal, contributed to Mandela's extraordinary ethical appeal—which he put to good use in the difficult arguments he had to make in the transition to a post-apartheid South Africa.

In all the arguments you encounter, you'll want to ask yourself how much you can trust the author. Does he or she seem knowledgeable? represent opposing positions fairly (or at all)? do anything to build common ground?

As an author, you need to establish your own authority: to show you know what you're talking about by citing trustworthy sources; to demonstrate that you're fair by representing positions other than your own even-handedly and accurately; and to establish some kind of common ground with your audience.

Logical Appeals

Appeals to logic have long been regarded as the most important of all the appeals, following Aristotle's definition of humans as rational animals. Recent research has made it increasingly clear, however, that people seldom make decisions based on logic alone and that emotion might actually play a larger role in our decision making than does logic. Nevertheless, in academic contexts, logical appeals still count for a lot. Especially when we make an argument, we need to provide **REASONS** and **EVIDENCE** to support our claims. Such evidence takes many forms, including facts and statistics, data from surveys and questionnaires, direct observations, testimony, experiments, interviews, personal experience, visuals, and more.

Facts and statistics. Facts and statistics are two of the most commonly used kinds of evidence. Facts are ideas that have been proven to be true—and that an audience will accept without further proof. Statistics are numerical data based on research. See how the Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz offers a number of facts and statistics as support for his argument that current levels of inequality are dangerous for the future of the United States:

Although the United States has always been a capitalist country, our inequality—or at least at its current high level—is new. Some thirty years ago, the top 1 percent of income earners received only 12 percent of the nation's income.¹³ That level of inequality should itself have been unacceptable; but since then the disparity has grown dramatically,¹⁴ so that by 2007 the average after-tax income of the top 1 percent had reached \$1.3 million, but that of the bottom 20 percent amounted to only \$17,800.¹⁵ The top 1 percent get in one week 40 percent more than the bottom fifth receive in a year; the top 0.1 percent received in a day and a half about what the bottom 90 percent received in a year; and the richest 20 percent of income earners earn in total after tax more than the bottom 80 percent combined.¹⁶

For thirty years after World War II, America grew together—with growth in income in every segment, but with those at the bottom growing faster than those at the top. The country's fight for survival brought a new sense of unity, and that led to policies, like the GI Bill, that helped bring the country even closer together.

But for the past thirty years, we've become increasingly a nation divided: not only has the top been growing the fastest, but the bottom has actually been declining. (It hasn't been a relentless pattern—in the 1990s, for a while, those at the bottom and in the middle did better. But then, as we've seen, beginning around 2000, inequality grew at an even more rapid pace.

—JOSEPH STIGLITZ, *The Price of Inequality*

The facts and statistics Stiglitz presents about the increasing inequality in the United States are documented in endnotes that explain the methods he used to calculate the data and cite authoritative sources supporting his conclusions. Statistics can provide powerful support for an argument, but be sure they're accurate, up-to-date, from reliable sources—and relevant to the argument. And if you base an argument on facts, be sure to take into account all the relevant facts. Realistically, that's hard to do—but you should be careful not to ignore any important facts.

Surveys and questionnaires. Surveys and questionnaires are methods of gathering information to support an argument. They involve asking a group of people the kinds of questions you want to know the answers to, and then gathering the information into a pie chart or a graph.

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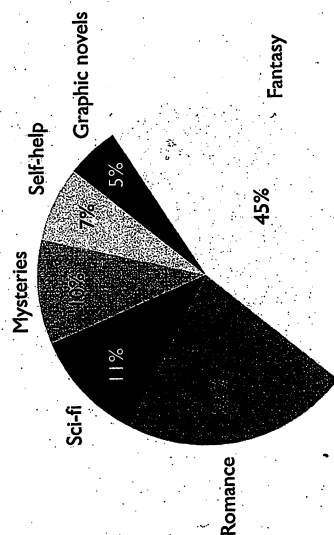
The information genre. The information genre is the most-read genre, and it includes a wide variety of genres, from graphic novels to nonfiction. Before you write, you want to ask some key questions: What methods of analysis will you use? (For example, historical analysis or a "mystery" or a "PowerPoint presentation"?) What do the results suggest?

Observations. A student can observe a phenomenon and then write about it. Researchers in Uganda, for example, have found that the socialization of the young is a key factor in the development of the country.

13 Analyzing Arguments

Surveys and questionnaires. You have probably responded to a number of surveys or questionnaires, and you will find them used extensively as evidence in support of arguments. When a college student wondered about the kinds of reading for pleasure her dormmates were doing, she decided to gather information through a survey. She distilled the information she gathered into a pie chart.

What Genres Students Are Reading



The information displayed in the chart offers evidence that fantasy is the most-read genre, followed by romance, sci-fi, mysteries, self-help, and graphic novels. Before accepting such evidence, however, readers might want to ask some key questions: How many people were surveyed? What methods of analysis did the student use? How were particular works classified? (For example, how did she decide whether a particular book was a “romance” or a “mystery”?) Whether you’re reacting to survey data in an essay or on a PowerPoint presentation, or conducting a survey of your own, you need to scrutinize the methods and findings. Who conducted the survey, and why? (And yes, you need to think about that if you conducted it.) Who are the respondents, how were they chosen, and are they representative? What do the results show?

Observations. A study reported in 2011 in *Science News* demonstrates the way direct observations can form the basis for an argument. In this study, researchers in Uganda observed the way young chimpanzees play, and their findings support arguments about the relative importance of biology and socialization on the way boys and girls play.

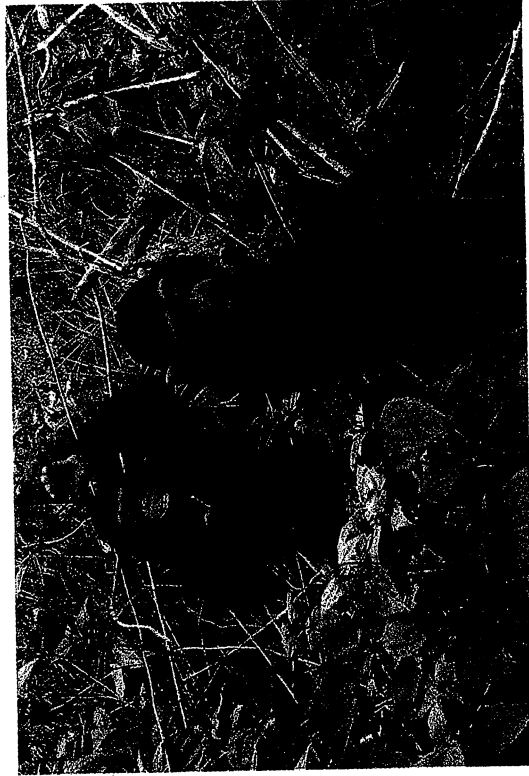
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A young chimp holds a stick in imitation of a mother caring for her child.

A new study finds that young females in one group of African chimpanzees use sticks as dolls more than their male peers do, often treating pieces of wood like a mother chimp caring for an infant. . . .

Ape observations, collected over 14 years of field work with the Kanyawara chimp community in Kibale National Park, provide the first evidence of a nonhuman animal in the wild that exhibits sex differences in how it plays, two primatologists report in the Dec. 21 *Current Biology*. This finding supports a controversial view that biology as well as society underlies boys' and girls' contrasting toy preferences.

—BRUCE BOWER, "Female Chimps Play with 'Dolls'"

As this study suggests, observations carried out over time are particularly useful as evidence since they show that something is not just a onetime event but a persistent pattern. As a college student, you won't likely have occasion to spend 14 years observing something, but in most cases you'll need to observe your subject more than once.

Interviews. Reporters often use information drawn from interviews to add authenticity to their reports by providing evidence "from the horse's mouth," so to speak. After Raúl Castro took over as leader of Cuba following

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13 *β* Analyzing Arguments

his brother Fidel's surgery in 2006, NPR reporter Tom Gjelten used material from an interview published in *Granma*, the Cuban Communist Party newspaper, to argue against the assumption that Castro would defer to his older brother and take few actions on his own:

In fact, he's been busy. As Defense Minister, Raúl put the Cuban military on alert in the first hours after Fidel's surgery was announced. He also told the *Granma* editor that he had ordered the mobilization of tens of thousands of army reservists and militiamen because, he said, we could not rule out the risk of somebody going crazy within the U.S. government.

—TOM GJELTEN, "Raúl Castro Reticent in Newspaper Interview"

Note that this interview, like many, depicts the subject largely as he wants to be seen. Reporters—and their audiences—would have had to look beyond the interview and track Raúl Castro's other actions to see whether they supported the claim Gjelten made on the basis of the interview. As an author, be sure that anyone you interview is an authority on your subject and will be considered trustworthy by your audience.

Testimony. Most of us depend on reliable testimony to help us accept or reject arguments: A friend tells us that *The Artist* is a great movie, and likely as not we'll go to see the film. Testimony is especially persuasive evidence when it comes from experts and authorities on the topic. When you cite authorities to support an argument, you help to build your own credibility as an author; readers know that you've done your homework and that you are aware of the different perspectives on your topic. In the example on p. 292 about gender-linked behavior among chimpanzees, for example, the *Science News* report notes testimony from the two scientists who conducted the research.

Experiments. Evidence based on experiments is especially important in the sciences and social sciences, where data is often the basis for supporting an argument. In arguing that multitaskers pay a high mental price, Clifford Nass, a professor of communications, based his claim on a series of empirical studies of college students, who were divided into two groups, those identified as "high multitaskers" and those identified as "low multitaskers." In the first studies, which measured attention and memory, the researchers were surprised to find that the low multitaskers outperformed high multitaskers in statistically significant ways. Still not satisfied that low multitaskers were more productive learners, the researchers designed a third



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test, hypothesizing that if high multitaskers couldn't do well in the earlier studies on attention and memory, maybe they would be better at shifting from task to task more quickly and effectively than low multitaskers.

Wrong again, the study found.

The subjects were shown images of letters and numbers at the same time and instructed what to focus on. When they were told to pay attention to numbers, they had to determine if the digits were even or odd. When told to concentrate on letters, they had to say whether they were vowels or consonants.

Again, the heavy multitaskers underperformed the light multitaskers. "They couldn't help thinking about the task they weren't doing," the researchers reported. "The high multitaskers are always drawing from all the information in front of them. They can't keep things separate in their minds." —ADAM GORLUCK, "Media Multitaskers Pay Mental Price"

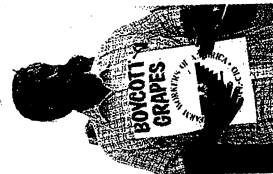
In writing up their results, these researchers had evidence to support their hypothesis; nevertheless, they realized the dangers of generalizing from one set of students to all students. Whenever you use data drawn from experiments, you need to be similarly cautious not to overgeneralize.

Personal experience can provide powerful support for an argument since it brings a kind of "eyewitness" evidence, which can establish a connection between author and audience. In an article for the *Atlantic* about the labor organizer César Chávez, Caitlin Flanagan—who grew up in the San Joaquin Valley, where Chávez's United Farm Workers movement began—recounts her mother's personal experience to support the argument that Chávez had a "singular and almost mystical way of eliciting not just fealty but a kind of awe."

Of course, it had all started with Mom. Somewhere along the way, she had met César Chávez, or at least attended a rally where he had spoken, and that was it. Like almost everyone else who ever encountered him, she was spellbound. "This wonderful, wonderful man," she would call him, and off we went to collect clothes for the farmworkers' children, and to sell red-and-black UFW buttons and collect signatures.

—CAITLIN FLANAGAN, "The Madness of César Chávez"

As an author, be careful that any personal experience you cite is pertinent to your argument and will be appropriate to your purpose.



César Chávez

Charts, images, and valuable evidence in literary genres favor female chimpanzee, including drawings, advertisements—certain kinds of evidence to take in the information by students in the member, though, the words—photos may the accompanying

As an author, keep in mind that evidence you choose has to be in the form of statistics, images, needs to be said or needs to be simple a or reread data). And be fully documented

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13 *B* Analyzing Arguments

Charts, images, and other visuals. Visuals of various kinds often provide valuable evidence to support an argument. Pie charts like the one of the literary genres favored in a college dorm, photographs like the one of the female chimpanzee cradling a stick, and many other kinds of visuals—including drawings, bar and line graphs, cartoons, screenshots, videos, and advertisements—can sometimes make it easier for an audience to see certain kinds of evidence. Imagine how much more difficult it would be to take in the information shown in the pie chart about the genres read by students in the dorm had the data been presented in a paragraph. Remember, though, that visual evidence usually needs to be explained with words—photos may need captions, and any visuals need to be referenced in the accompanying text.

As an author, keep in mind that the **MEDIUM** you're using affects the kind of evidence you choose and the way you present it. In a print text, any evidence has to be in the text itself; in a digital medium, you can link directly to statistics, images, and other information. In a spoken text, any evidence needs to be said or shown on a slide or a handout—and anything you say needs to be simple and direct—and memorable (your audience can't rewind or reread data). And in every case any evidence drawn from sources need to be fully **DOCUMENTED**.

Are There Any Problems with the Reasoning?

Some kinds of appeals use faulty reasoning, or reasoning that some may consider unfair, unsound, or demonstrating lazy or simplistic thinking. Such appeals are called fallacies, and because they can often be very powerful and persuasive, it's important to be alert for them in arguments you encounter—and in your own writing. Here are some of the most common fallacies.

Begging the question tries to support an argument by simply restating it in other language, so that the reasoning just goes around in circles. For example, the statement "We need to reduce the national debt because the government owes too much money" begs the question of whether the debt is actually too large, because the parts of the sentence before and after *because* say essentially the same thing.

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