



Essay #3: Writing a Rogerian Argument

College writing often is an "argument" in which you share knowledge you have gained from inquiring into a subject. These arguments are based upon—to a large degree—the knowledge you have gained from reading. Argument is often understood in terms of being an adversarial dispute in which one side is attempting to defeat the other. Our political system often falls into this winner-take-all approach to argument, and our legal system is set up this way. As Joseph Williams has stated in his [guide to college writing](#), academic argument does not follow this contentious model:

[In college, an argument] is a set of statements coherently arranged to offer three things that experienced readers expect in essays that they judge to be thoughtful:

- They expect to see a *claim* that would encourage them to say, "That's interesting. I'd like to know more."
- They expect to see *evidence, reasons* for your claim, evidence that would encourage them to agree with your claim, or at least to think it plausible.
- They expect to see that you've thought about *limits and objections* to your claim. Almost by definition, an interesting claim is one that can be reasonably challenged. Readers look for answers to questions like "But what about...?" and "Have you considered....?"

Rogierian Argument will still follow these principles of argument outlined by Joseph Williams; however, it seek to find a solution for an issue that is based upon common ground and that might be agreeable to both sides. Rather than seeking an end point of "win-lose," is seeks a resolution that is "win-win."

The Case For Rogerian Argument

Didactic argumentation after winning an argument often assaults the credibility and ego of the other side, resulting in the stifling of listening (on both sides). Strong arguments from one side trigger equally strong arguments from the other side, and the both sides become only interested in defending their opinion. In addition, strong and biased language heightens the assault and the resulting alienation between the two sides.

Rogierian argument is based upon facilitating trust and cooperation. Both sides need to be heard and understood and acknowledged. The use of neutral language reduces the threat and allows for listening. With the use of neutral language, intimidation is replaced by trust, critical thinking, and collaborative thinking. ("Let's figure out the best solution.") With the identification of common ground and values, the possibility for cooperative solutions emerges. (See [Using Neutral Language](#) as well as [An Introduction to Rogerian Argument](#).)

Outline for the Rogerian Argument

I. Introduction

Begin by defining the issue (or bone of contention) around which people disagree. End with a brief statement of the proposed solution.

II. Representing Side 1

The writer must first write a neutral analysis of the other side's position. This summary includes key arguments (reasons) along with the uncovering of any warrants for this reasoning.

III. Representing Side 2

The writer then does the same type of neutral analysis of the writer's side of the issue. Just as in the other section, key arguments (reasons) along with accompanying warrants should be examined.

IV. Common Ground

The next section identifies what the two position share.

V. Proposed Solution

The last section offers a proposal to resolve the issue, recognizing that both sides of the argument must be satisfied. This section argues for ways to compromise or for alternative solutions that would benefit both sides under more circumstances than either perspective alone accounts for.

Essay Topic/Task:

Your task is to write a Rogerian Argument on an issue related to illegal immigration in the USA from the website [ProCon](#) . To write this essay you will work with a "team" of four or five other peers, and you will compose this essay together (i.e. collaboratively). Your team's essay should follow the outline for Rogerian Argument detailed above. It should include the use of quotations and will correctly document these sources following MLA Documentation Style. The essay should be 1000 words minimum and should be formatted following MLA Formatting Style. Successful essays will go beyond the level of reasons and base their own proposal upon and understanding of the warrants beneath these claims.

Source Restrictions and Requirements:

You will be limited to the sources provided on the ProCon website; however, you will need to in cases where it is available (and for a substantial number of your sources) look up and find the original source from where the excerpted

text in the ProCon site came from. I anticipate that you may use *eight to ten sources from this ProCon site*. While this website will provide the majority of your sources to compose your arguments, you may include a limited number of arguments in your paper from other sources (including interviews).

Publishing:

Your collaborative essays will be published in a blog titled, "SAC Students Speak on the Illegal Immigration Debate."

Timeline for Essay Cycle:

10/14--Introduction to Rogerian Argument. Topic search. Team formation.

10/26--Draft E3-1 due (only section I, II, and III). Peer response.

11/2--Draft E3-2 due. Peer response

11/4--Final Draft due

Grading/Evaluation:

Like our other essays, this essay will not get a grade in a gradebook; however, I will count your participation and contribution to this project as part of your Daily Grade. This project will be worth 100 points of daily credit. 30 points is based solely on attendance. Missing class costs you -5 points per absence. The remainder of the grade will be assigned based upon a survey of participation as well as my own observations.

Influence on Portfolio:

You may decide to include this essay in your portfolio. You will be expected to revise this draft individually, and you will need to detail in your portfolio letter your contribution to the original composition of the essay (as well as what you did to revise the piece).

Additional Resources for This Essay

[Warrants and Toulmin's Argument Model](#)

Monash U "[referencing ideas of others](#)" site on verbs of attribution

--Basics of [Using Quotations](#)

--MLA Documentation: [MLA Formatting and Style Guide](#) (Purdue OWL). [Citing Electronic sources](#) (how to handle in-text citations for electronic sources) . See your Writer's Reference handbook too.

Two Parts to MLA Documentation

1--In-text (or parenthetical citation) after the quote or paraphrase.

2--Works cited page (with the full bibliographic reference) [example MLA paper](#)

Two Parts to In-text Citation

1--The author last name

2--The in-source location

>for a book it is the page #

>for a web source (if it doesn't have pg. #s) it is a subheading title

e.g. (Jones "Introduction")

>if no pg# or subheading title, no reference needed, only the author last name