

Arguments of Evaluation

- ★ Evaluations are everyday arguments. Before leaving home in the morning you've made several evaluations: what clothes to wear, food to pack for lunch, music to listen to on the ride...
- ★ In each case, you've applied **criteria** to a particular problem and then made a decision.
- ★ *Epideictic*: A ceremonial mode of ancient rhetoric devoted entirely to speeches of praise and blame.
- ★ Making evaluations is a form of entertainment in America, and in fact, generates big audiences (awards shows, beauty pageants, fashion police, literary prizes, American Idol...).

Arguments of Evaluation

Standards/Criteria: Arguments of evaluation can produce simple rankings and winners or can lead to profound decisions about our lives, but they always involve **standards**.

The particular standards we establish for judging anything--whether an idea, a work of art, a person, or a product--are called *criteria of evaluation*.

- ★ Sample criteria: *What constitutes a living wage? What makes a professional referee effective? What features make a song a classic? How do we measure a successful college career?*
- ★ Criteria of evaluation aren't static; they differ according to time and audience.

To Characterize an Evaluative Argument...

We study and create arguments of evaluation based on **quantitative** or **qualitative** evidence (or possibly both).

- ★ *Quantitative arguments of evaluation* rely on criteria that can be measured, counted, or demonstrated in some mechanical fashion (something is taller, faster, smoother, quieter, or more powerful than something else).
- ★ *Qualitative arguments of evaluation* rely on criteria that must be explained through words, relying on such matters as values, traditions, and emotions (something is more ethical, more beneficial, more handsome, or more noble than something else).

General Advice for Developing the Evaluative Argument

Establish your **claim**, and then explore the implications of your belief, drawing out the **reasons**, **warrants**, and **evidence** that might support it:

Claim: *Citizen Kane* is the finest film ever made by an American director...

Reason: ...because it revolutionizes the way we see the world.

Warrant: Great films change viewers in fundamental ways.

Evidence: Shot after shot, *Citizen Kane* presents the life of its protagonist through cinematic images that viewers can never forget.

General Advice for Developing the Evaluative Argument

- ★ Formulating **criteria** is crucial, and can make or break a piece. If you claim, "This band sucks," then you must provide reasonable criteria.
- ★ When stating your **claim**, a direct evaluative claim with the statement carefully qualified works best. The point of qualifying a statement is to make it responsible and reasonable. For example, which is easier to defend:
 - *Margaret Cho is the most outrageous comedian around today.*
 - *Margaret Cho may come to be regarded as one of the most outrageous comedians of her time.*
- ★ The more **evidence** in an evaluation the better, provided that the evidence is relevant and likely to impress your readers. Arrange your argument to build toward your best material.

Key Features of Evaluations

In drafting an evaluation, you should consider three basic elements:

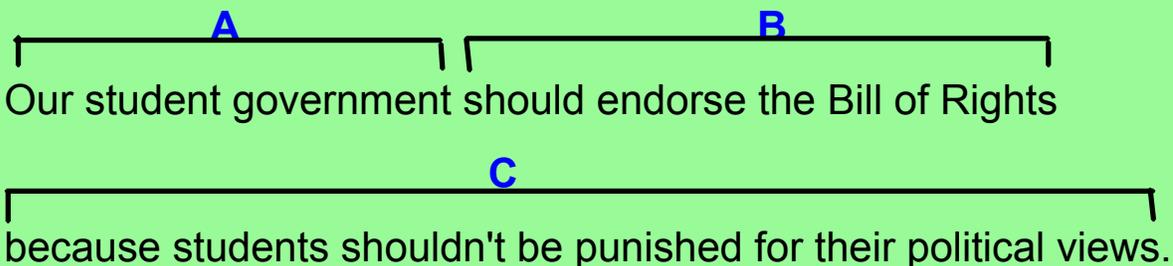
- ★ An evaluative **claim** that makes a judgment about a person, and idea or an object.
- ★ The criterion or **criteria** by which you'll measure your subject.
- ★ **Evidence** that the particular subject meets or falls short of the stated criteria.

~Tell readers why they should care about your subject and take your opinion seriously.

Arguments of Proposal

- ★ Arguments of proposal, whether casual or formal, are important in all of our lives. Sample every day proposals include: suggesting to a neighbor that you clean up the park together, offering to collaborate on a project to save time and effort, calling your best friends to invite them to see a movie...
- ★ A proposal implies that some action should take place and suggests that there are sound reasons why it should.

A should do B because of C.

- ★ 

Our student government should endorse the Bill of Rights

because students shouldn't be punished for their political views.



Think of proposal arguments as divided roughly into two kinds--those that focus on **practices** and those that focus on **policies**.

Practices *The college should allow students to pay tuition on a monthly basis.

* San Francisco should erect a more effective suicide-prevention barrier on the Golden Gate Bridge.

Policies *The college should adopt a policy guaranteeing a 'living wage' to all campus workers.

* The police department should institute a policy to train officers in intercultural communication.

3 Main Characteristics of Proposals

- ★ They call for action or response, often in response to a problem.
- ★ They focus on the future.
- ★ They center on the audience.

Proposals always call for some kind of action. They aim at getting something done--or sometimes at *preventing* something from being done. Proposals marshal evidence and arguments to persuade people to choose a course of action.

Ethos is important; establish a credible voice.

Proposal arguments focus on the future--what people, institutions, or governments should do over the upcoming weeks, months, or even decades. Therefore, you must offer the best evidence available to convince your audience of action.

Proposals have to focus on particular audiences, especially on people who can get something done. Identifying your potential audiences is critical to the success of any proposal.

To Develop a Proposal:

Start by showing that a problem needs a solution or that some need is not being met. Then make a proposal that addresses the problem or meets the need.

To make a proposal to solve a problem or meet a need, first establish that a need or a problem exists.

Cite some authorities and statistics to prove that the problem you're diagnosing is real and that it touches everyone likely to read your argument.

Follow these Steps:

- ★ Paint a picture of the need or problem in concrete and memorable ways.
- ★ Show how the need or problem affects the audience for the argument as well as the larger society.
- ★ Explain why the need or problem is significant.
- ★ Explain why other attempts to address the issue may have failed.

*****Visit pages 383-384 for how to make a strong and clear claim.***

★ To be effective, proposals must be *feasible*--that is, the action proposed can be carried out in a reasonable way.

Demonstrating feasibility calls on you to present **evidence**--from similar cases, from personal experience, from observational data, from interview or survey data, from Internet research, or from any other sources--showing that what you propose can indeed be done with the resources available.

★ Be careful. If a proposal seems crafted to serve mainly your own interests, you won't get far.

Key Features of Proposals

- ★ A description of a problem that needs a solution.
- ★ A claim that proposes a practice or policy that addresses a problem or need, is oriented toward action, is directed at the future, and is appropriate to your audience.
- ★ Statements that clearly relate the claim to the problem or need.
- ★ Evidence that the proposal will effectively address the need or solve the problem and that it's workable.