

Developing an argument & outlining

Week 8

Agenda

- Create and develop your argument
- Outlining

What is an argument?

Academic writing is almost always about argument.

beginning paragraph



supportive paragraphs



ending paragraph

Thesis statement

Argument 1

Argument 2

Argument 3

...

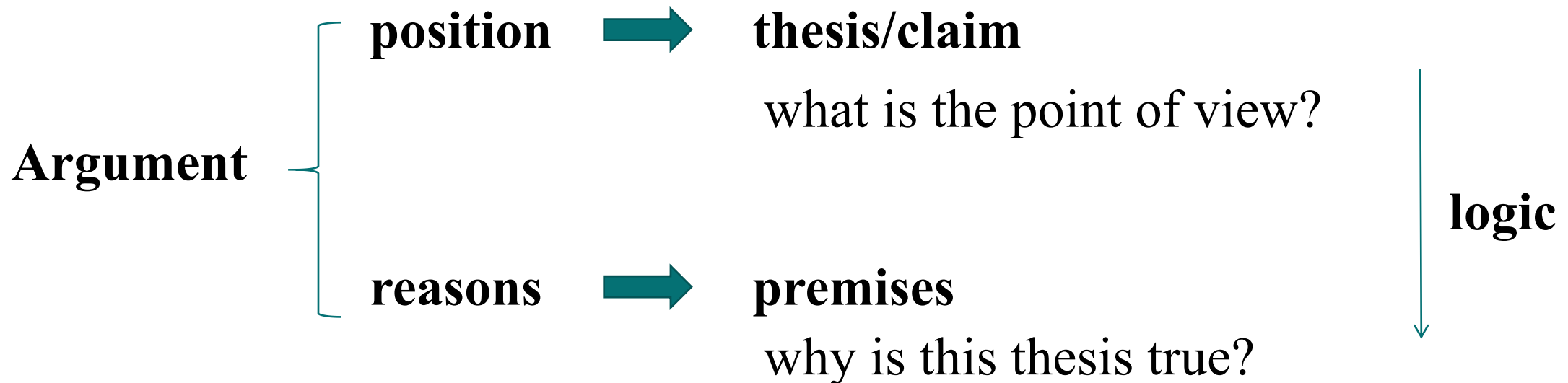
Summary/Conclusion

What is an argument?

- An argument includes:

a **position** or point of view;

reasons given to support the point of view.



Create your argument

- The core of a research argument:



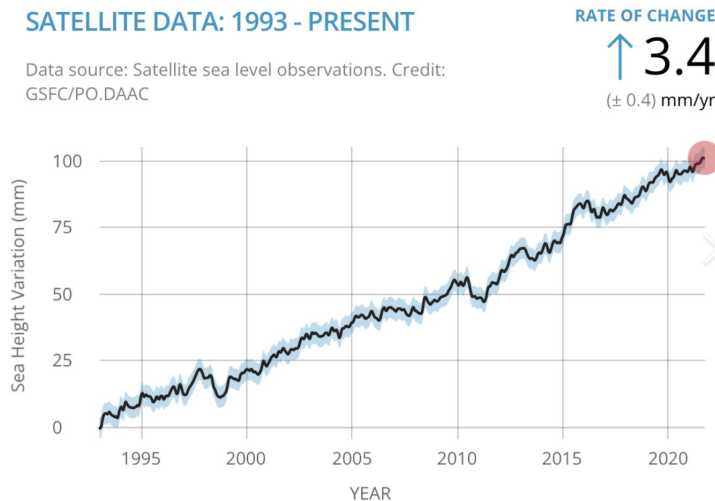
- A **claim** is an assertion (which can be a single sentence or more) that demands support. Your main claim is the assertion your whole research argument supports. Some call this assertion your thesis.
- A **reason** is an assertion that supports a claim.
- **Evidence** is data deployed to support a reason.

Create your argument

- The core of a research argument:



- **Thesis:** *Climate change is threatening coastal cities.*
- **Reason:** *[Because] climate change is causing ocean levels to rise.*
- **Evidence:**



Create your argument

The following **four steps** will assist you with building arguments:

1. Formulate your thesis statement.

You can start by drafting a claim, a hypothesis or a position on an issue.

This may be based on the findings in an experiment, or on your analysis of claims made by authors in your sources.

What makes a thesis statement?

Thesis: *Climate change is threatening coastal cities.*

Issue

Position

1. Establish an issue.
2. Take a strong position.

Every qualified thesis statement must have both!

- 
- Good thesis

Reading is an important element in young person's well-rounded education.

More than anything else in our society, video games are responsible for the “dumbing” of America.

- Bad thesis

In this essay, I'll talk about reading.

People are dumb.



- 
- We need to take **a strong position**.

Go for it or Against it

*There are both **advantages** and **disadvantages** in study abroad.*

No clear attitude



There are both advantages and disadvantages in study abroad.



Study abroad benefits students in the long run, if **the financial cost** can be properly covered.



Sending students abroad promotes **the home country's development** if education about social responsibility and patriotism is effectively carried out among students.

Take a side and respond to the other side.

Types of theses



Critical thinking is
beneficial for one's
development.

evaluating

- **Theses of value**

More examples:

1. College education is definitely worth it.
2. Grades measure achievements.
3. The best time for a student to take a gap year off is before going into graduate school after completing undergraduate study.

Types of theses



Vehicle exhaust gases are the chief cause of smog.

cause -
effect

- **Theses of cause and effect**

More examples:

1. Short-form videos shorten people's attention spans.
2. Grades create anxiety for students.
3. Rap music makes its audience prone to violence.

Types of theses



Cellphones **should** be banned from classrooms.

“should”

- **Theses of policy**

More examples:

1. Grades should be eliminated altogether.
2. The public needs to have a basic understanding of science.
3. To be a writer, one must have an elite understanding of diction, syntax and tone.


Create your argument

2. Bring together your reasons and evidence.

You should consider the reasons and evidence that support your main claim, as well as those against it. To do this, you will need to develop a **synthesis** of how your main claim fits in with other perspectives, claims, reasons and evidence.



Create your argument

- You often need more than one reason to support a claim, and in a complex argument, your reasons themselves will usually require further support:
- 

Create your argument

Elementary schools should make teaching foreign languages a priority claim 1 because we acquire languages best and most easily when we are young. reason 1 supporting claim 1/claim 2 In fact, those who begin second languages as adults rarely attain the level of fluency of those who learn them as children. reason 2 supporting reason 1 and claim 2/claim 3 Teaching foreign languages at the elementary- school level also contributes to children's ethical development, reason 3 supporting claim 1/claim 4 because it fosters an awareness of cultures and societies beyond their own. reason 4 supporting reason 3 and claim 4/claim 5.

Create your argument

3. Structure your argument.

Establish the key themes and supporting claims around which your main claim revolves. Then determine each **line of reasoning and its structure**.

This process can resemble putting together a jigsaw puzzle, as you will need to **piece together evidence, reasons and claims** to create a logical and coherent argument.

Reasoning

- What is the problem of the following statement?

冬天流感爆发期要多吃VC。有篇论文说VC能增强抵抗力。

<为什么抵抗力重要？>

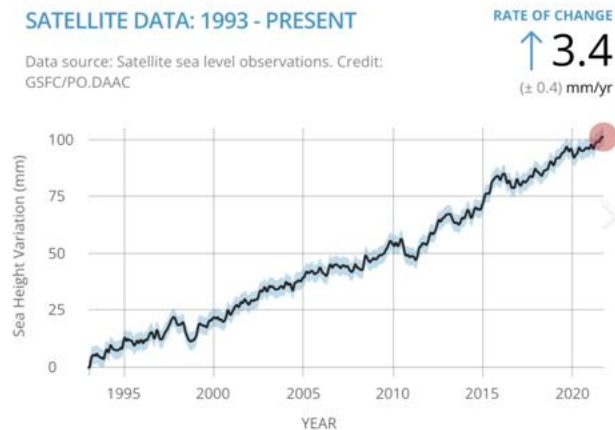
- Reasoning is not a sentence, it is an act!

Pattern of Reasoning

- Pattern of reasoning #1

Thesis - reason - evidence

- **Thesis:** *Climate change is threatening coastal cities.*
- **Reason:** *[Because] climate change is causing ocean levels to rise.*
- **Evidence:**



Pattern of Reasoning

- Pattern of reasoning #2

Thesis - reason / evidence

- Spring is a wonderful season._{thesis} People can enjoy the warm weather. Children will have fun in the Easter egg hunting. The April showers and May flowers make dating more romantic. And we can always enjoy a picnic without the annoying bugs._{reason/evidence}

Pattern of Reasoning

- [Life on the farm] is a self-reliant sort of life. **thesis** We grow nearly all of our fruits and vegetables. Our hens keep us in eggs, with several dozen left over to sell each week. Our bees provide us with honey, and we cut enough wood to just about make it through the heating season. **reason/evidence**

(Para. 2, Unit 1, College English Integrated Course 3)

Pattern of Reasoning

- Pattern of reasoning #3

Thesis - evidence - reason

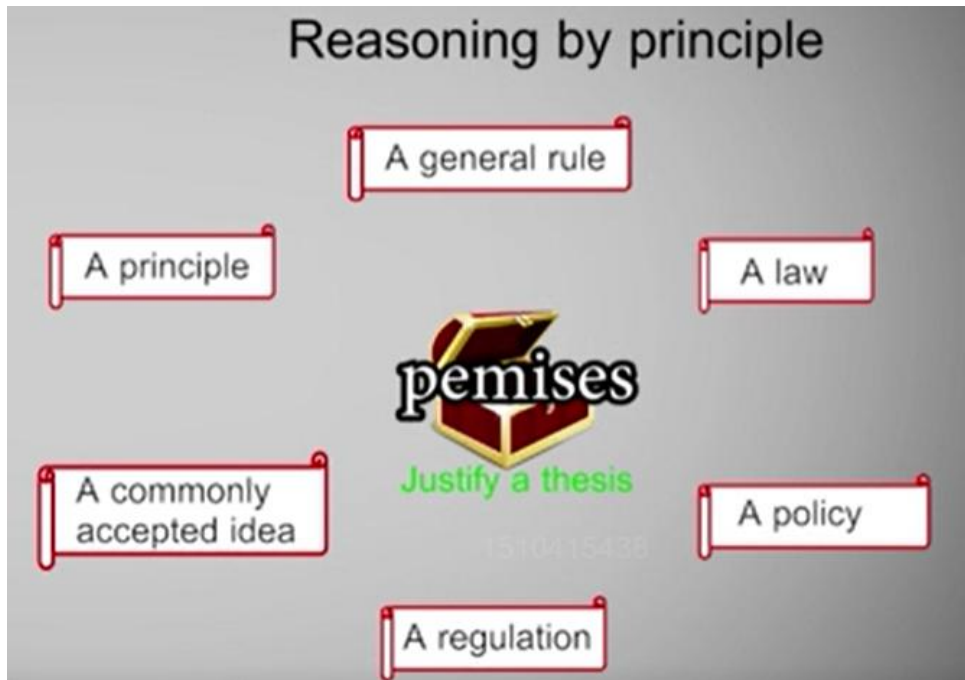
Even simply paying attention is very difficult:^{thesis} People can listen at a rate of four hundred to six hundred words a minute, while the most spirited professor talks at scarcely a third of that speed.^{evidence} This time lag between speech and comprehension leads to day dreaming.^{reason}

Deductive arguments in writing

- Depending on the types of premises used, deductive arguments are applied to writing in two major ways:
 - Reasoning by principle
 - Reasoning by definition

Deductive arguments in writing

- **Reasoning by principle**
 - Use principle as premises



Deductive arguments in writing

- **Reasoning by principle**

- Whether same-sex marriage should be legalized?

Thesis: specific case

Same-sex marriage should be considered legal, because an individual has the right to marry the person of his or her own choice.

Reasoning: principle

Deductive arguments in writing

- **Reasoning by principle**
 - Whether same-sex marriage should be legalized?

Thesis: specific case

Same-sex marriage should be illegalized. There is no denying the fact that people of the state have the right to amend the state's Constitution by majority vote. Now the majority of people voted against same-sex marriage. Therefore, the State legislation should take immediate action to amend the state's Constitution and disapprove same-sex marriage

Reasoning:
principle

Deductive arguments in writing

- **Reasoning by definition**
 - To justify an argument with definitions as its premise.
- People may have distinct definitions of a same thing
 - *What a beautiful car!*
 - *What?! This car is not beautiful at all!*
- If the definition is not made clear at the very beginning, the discussion will be pointless.
- A clear definition is the basis for further discussion.

Deductive arguments in writing

- **Reasoning by definition**
 - Peking University is a world-class university?

good teachers?

wonderful students?

cutting-edge research?

What exactly is a world-class university?

First present the definition of ‘a world-class university’ as premise,
and then examine Peking University against the criteria listed in the definition.

Deductive arguments in writing

- **Reasoning by definition**
 - Peking University is a world-class university?

Peking University is a world-class university. According to Dr. Jamil Samli, who has done the most authoritative work on creating world-class universities, **world-class university is a university which has a high concentration of talent, consisting of faculty, students, and researchers; favorable governance that encourages leadership, strategic vision, innovation, and flexibility; and abundant resources to offer a rich learning environment and to conduct advanced research, with these resources coming from the public budget, endowment revenues, tuition fees and research grants.** When examined against these criteria, Peking University satisfies all of them.

Inductive arguments in writing

- **Inductive argument:** If the premise is true, the thesis is likely to be true.
 - Make predictions about the future based on past or present events.
- Three techniques to make inductive arguments in writing
 - Making generalizations.
 - Reasoning by analogy.
 - Reasoning by cause and effect

Inductive arguments in writing

- **Making generalizations**

Imitation of business methods, practices and strategies should not be considered plagiarism. Here the imitation I said refers to the one within the limitation of law and with great integrity and honesty, while plagiarism is literally taking away others' answers, inventions or creations without getting permission and for selfish purposes. There are many **examples** of legal and well-intentioned business imitations around us. MP3 players copied the basic structure and fundamental functions of Walkman, and yet it aimed touring more convenience with larger storing capability and smaller sizes mart phones imitated the elemental use and preliminary functions of phones, but they are intended to be more helpful and modern with their fashionable designs and multi-functional ability; audible books are also books with the same content and chapters, while they are more user-friendly and beneficial to the disabled. These imitations are approved by laws and seek technological innovation.(《“外研社杯”全国英语写作大赛参赛指南》)

Inductive arguments in writing

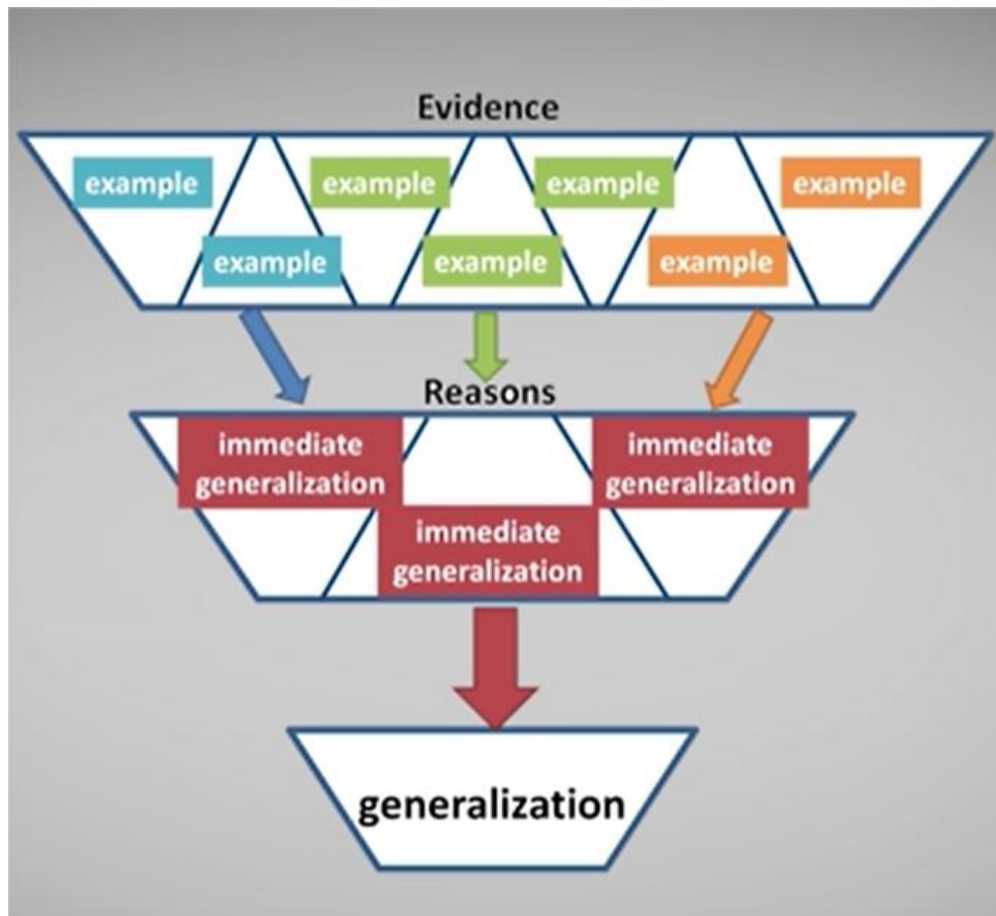
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Use **specific cases** to support **the generalized thesis**.

Inductive arguments in writing

- **Making generalizations**



Inductive arguments in writing

- **Reasoning by analogy**
 - What is an analogy?
 - A comparison between things which have similar features in certain respects.

Inductive arguments in writing

- **Reasoning by analogy**

You all know the threat that cancer holds on your life, but it needn't be scary. It is something you can handle. Think of **living a healthy lifestyle** as similar to **owning a new automobile**. **Just as** you want to keep the insides clean, you want to avoid smoking to keep your insides clean. **Just as** you want to make sure all the fuel and other liquids you put into your car are exactly what the manufacturer's warranty requires, **you, too**, want to make certain you only take in drinks and foods known to be good for you. And just as you want to drive your car with care, **you, too**, want to use proper physical activity. If you take care of the insides, what you put into it, and how you drive it, you can keep your car in new condition. If you avoid smoking, poor diet, and physical inactivity, you can prevent half of all the cancers and thus your life as if in new condition.

Inductive arguments in writing

- **Reasoning by cause and effect**
 - “Why did that happen?”
- Purposes of using causal reasoning in writing:
 - To uncover causes or effects
 - To propose some suggestions

Inductive arguments in writing

- **Reasoning by cause and effect**

Thesis: suggestion

Trainers should discourage sportspeople from taking performance enhancement drugs as these can have serious effects upon their health. Some of these drugs have resulted in distorted body shapes, skin conditions, and increased aggression. The long-term effects of some of these drugs are unknown.


bad consequences



Create your argument


4. Test and refine your main claim.

After you have structured and drafted your argument, it is important that you make sure it addresses different perspectives on the question, issue or problem. Then take a step back and consider how your thinking might apply to a broader context.





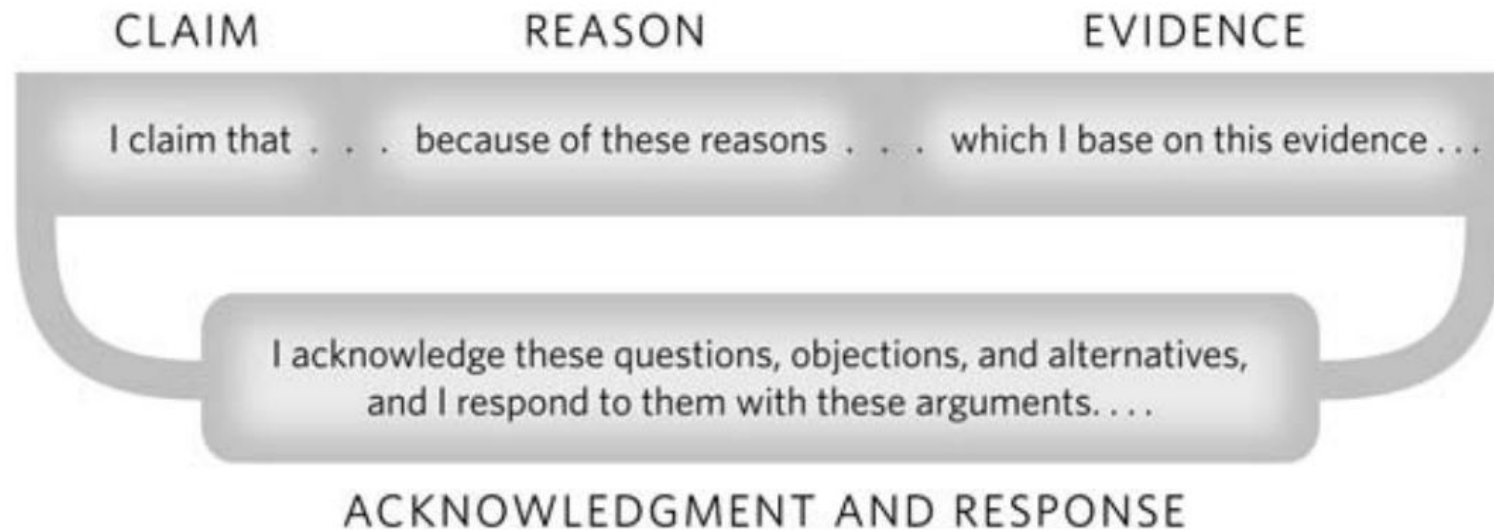
Create your argument

1. Formulate your thesis statement.
 2. Bring together your reasons and evidence.
 3. Structure your argument.
 4. Test and refine your main claim.
- 

Create your argument

- Anticipate readers' questions.

Counter-argument



The diagram of elements of research argument (Booth et al., 2016)

Acknowledgment and response

- Can you think of possible counter-arguments towards *Elementary schools should make teaching foreign languages a priority?*
- Are you ready to acknowledge and respond to them?

Acknowledgment and response

Elementary schools should make foreign languages a priority **claim 1** because we acquire languages best and most easily when we are young. **reason 1**

supporting claim 1 / claim 2 . . . **Of course**, if schools increase the attention they give to foreign languages, quality of instruction in other subjects might decline. **acknowledgment** **But** little evidence exists to support that fear and much dispels it. . . . **response**

The vocabulary of acknowledgment and response

- **Acknowledging objections and alternatives**

1. You can downplay an objection or alternative by introducing it with *despite, regardless of, notwithstanding, or although, while, and even though*:

[Despite/Regardless of/Notwithstanding] Congress's claims that it wants to cut taxes,acknowledgment the latest budget proposals suggest that . . . response

[Although/While/Even though] Hong Kong is experiencing economic problems,acknowledgment Southeast Asia remains a strong . . . response

The vocabulary of acknowledgment and response

- **Acknowledging objections and alternatives**

2. You can signal an acknowledgment indirectly with *seem*, *appear*, *may*, or *could*, or with an adverb like *plausibly*, *justifiably*, *reasonably*, *surprisingly*, or even *certainly*:

This proposal [**may have/plausibly has**] some merit,_{acknowledgment} but
we . . . _{response}

The vocabulary of acknowledgment and response

- **Acknowledging objections and alternatives**

3. You can attribute an objection or alternative to a generic interlocutor, giving it more weight:

Although [**some researchers/critics/scholars**] have argued that . . . ,**acknowledgment** our research shows **response** . . .

The vocabulary of acknowledgment and response

- **Responding to objections and alternatives**

1. If an alternative seems obviously flawed, you can respond more forcefully, claiming the acknowledged position is irrelevant or unreliable:

But as insightful as that may be, **acknowledgment** it [**ignores/is irrelevant to/does not bear on**] the issue at hand.**response**

The vocabulary of acknowledgment and response

- Responding to objections and alternatives

2. We usually should say so civilly:

That explains some of the problem,_{acknowledgment} but it is too complex for a single explanation._{response}



The vocabulary of acknowledgment and response

- **Responding to objections and alternatives**

You have to decide how blunt your response should be. Focus on the work rather than the person.



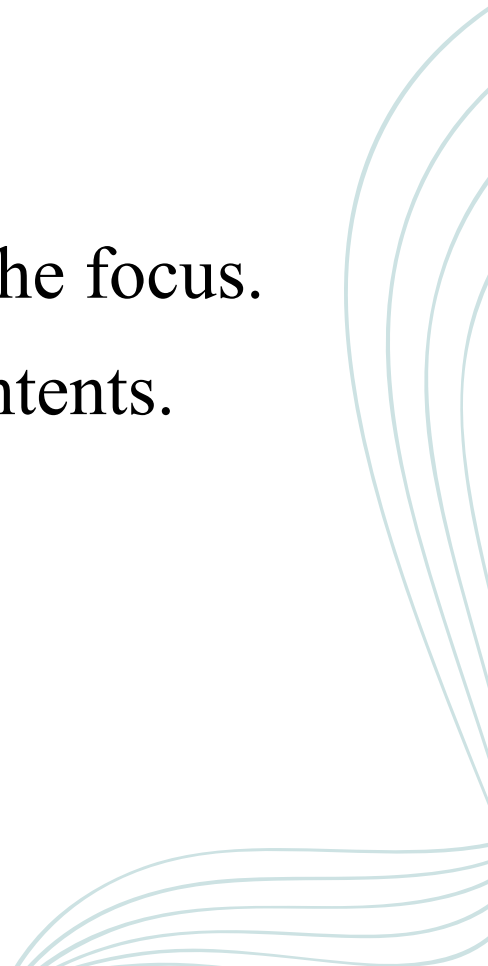
Agenda



- Create and develop your argument
- **Outlining**



Outline

- An ordered list of the topics/ideas covered in a paper.
 - An outline can be useful to both writers and readers.
 - A preliminary guide (a tentative organization).
 - A writer writing from an outline is less likely to stray from the focus.
 - A reader benefits from the outline in the form of table of contents.
- 


Outline

- Visual conventions of a formal outline
 - **Main ideas** designated by Roman numerals (I, II, III, IV, etc.),
 - **Sub-ideas** under the main ideas → capital letters (A,B,C,etc.);
 - **Subdivisions** of the sub-ideas → Arabic numerals (1,2,3,etc.);
 - **Minor ideas** → lowercase letters (a,b,c,etc.).

- I. Main idea
 - A. Sub-idea
 - B. Sub-idea
 - 1. Division of a sub-idea
 - 2. Division of a sub-idea
 - a. Minor idea
 - b. Minor idea
- II. Main idea



Three types of outline

- Topic outline
 - Sentence outline
 - Paragraph outline
- 

Three types of outline

- **Topic outline**

- Each entry as a phrase;
- Useful for outlining relatively simple subjects;
- Thesis as a separate entry;
- Introduction and conclusion omitted.

Rasputin's Other Side

Thesis: After six decades of being judged a demoniacal libertine, Rasputin now deserves to be viewed from another point of view--as a man who was intensely religious, who passionately desired peace, and who was deeply devoted to his family and friends.

- I. The ambiguity of the real Rasputin
 - A. His birth
 - B. Popular historical view
 - 1. His supporters
 - 2. His detractors
- II. Rasputin's religious feelings
 - A. His vitality and exuberance
 - B. His simple peasant faith
- III. Rasputin's desire for peace in Russia
 - A. His concern for the Russian underdog
 - 1. His loyalty to the peasantry
 - 2. His opposition to anti-Semitism
 - B. His opposition to all wars
- IV. Rasputin's gentle, compassionate side
 - A. His kindness to the Romanovs
 - B. His love for family

Three types of outline

- **Sentence outline**
 - A complete sentence for each entry;
 - Well-suited for complex subjects.

Rasputin's Other Side

Thesis: After six decades of being judged a demoniacal libertine, Rasputin now deserves to be viewed from another point of view--as a man who was intensely religious, who passionately desired peace, and who was deeply devoted to his family and friends.

- I. The real Rasputin is difficult to discover.
 - A. The birth of Rasputin coincided with a shooting star.
 - B. The popular historical view of Rasputin portrays him as primarily evil.
 1. Supporters called him a spiritual leader.
 2. Detractors called him a satyr and charged that his depraved faithful were merely in awe of his sexual endowments.
- II. Rasputin had intense religious feelings.
 - A. He was both vital and exuberant.
 - B. He had a simple peasant faith in God.
- III. Rasputin's passionate desire for peace in Russia revealed itself in several ways.
 - A. He was concerned for the Russian underdog.
 1. He wanted a tsar who would stand up for the peasantry.
 2. He spoke out boldly against anti-Semitism.
 - B. Because of his humanitarian spirit, he was opposed to all wars.
- IV. Rasputin had a gentle, compassionate side.
 - A. He showed great kindness to the Romanovs.
 - B. Maria Rasputin tells of her father's love for his family.

Three types of outline

- **Paragraph outline**
 - Each entry as a complete paragraph;
 - A condensed version of the paper,
 - Useful for longer writing projects.

Rasputin's Other Side

Thesis: After six decades of being judged a demoniacal libertine, Rasputin now deserves to be viewed from another point of view--as a man who was intensely religious, who passionately desired peace, and who was deeply devoted to his family and friends.

- I. Rasputin himself always attached great significance to the fact that at the time of his birth, a shooting star was seen streaking across the horizon. He considered the phenomenon to be an omen that he was fated to have influence and special powers. The popular historical view of Rasputin paints him primarily as evil. In his day, however, he attracted numerous supporters, who thought of him as their spiritual leader. But he also had many detractors who called him a satyr and accused his followers of sexual depravity.
- II. Rasputin had intense religious feelings. He was so filled with vitality and exuberance that he could stay awake until the early hours of the morning, dancing and drinking in frenzied religious fervor. He did not have the theology of a sophisticated church cleric; instead he expressed his religion in the simple terms of a Russian peasant.
- III. Rasputin's passionate desire for peace in Russia revealed itself in several ways. For instance, he was concerned for the Russian underdogs, for the peasants and the Jews, always encouraging the tsar to protect these unfortunate groups. And, his humanitarian and pacifist nature made him a determined opponent of all wars.
- IV. Rasputin had a gentle, compassionate side. He was completely devoted to the tsar's family and was known to have had a calming influence on the hemophiliac son of the tsar. Maria Rasputin gives a glowing report of her father's kindness and love.



Assignment 2 Outlining

Assignment 2

- Essay outlining
- Due: 21 Apr, 11:59 p.m.

1) Class 1:

<https://disk.pku.edu.cn/link/AA86D66DC6977B44D7A4E6D8DAB4A0931F>

2) Class 2:

<https://disk.pku.edu.cn/link/AA93EB1529FE5F4D508E195E7CBFE590EA>

A series of approximately ten thin, teal-colored wavy lines that flow from the top left towards the right side of the image, creating a sense of movement and fluidity.

Have a nice week!