

REVIEW

Arguments are sets of statements (premises) that are meant to provide reasons to accept another statement, the conclusion.

Deductively valid arguments prove their conclusions, if their premises are true (i.e., the arguments are **sound** and **non-circular**)

To show that the premises of our arguments are true (or at least, acceptable to the intended audience of our arguments), we can either directly argue for those premises, or

- (i) **assure** our audience of their truth
- (ii) **guard** our premises
- (iii) **discount** objections to our premises

We cannot support our arguments or evaluate those of others, unless we better understand the elements of these arguments

Language is a collection of tools designed to perform many communicative functions, but the same “tool”—e.g. an indicative sentence or question, can be used to perform different tasks, depending on context

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Linguistic Act: When what we say conforms to semantic and syntactical conventions (when the words used have conventional meaning and are combined according to standard rules), we perform a **linguistic act**.

Speech Act: The particular linguistic action performed with a given linguistic act, e.g., stating, asserting, concluding, promising, urging, ...

Explicit performative: A speech act named by the verb used, as illustrated by the “thereby” test:

e.g. If I say, “I sympathize with you,” I thereby sympathize with you.

“sympathize” is here a *performative verb*

While giving descriptions or making statements or assertions are important speech acts, there are many others—e.g. promising, resigning, questioning, refusing, ...

Conversational Act: “... [the] act of using a speech act to cause a standard effect in another” (UA, p. 32)

Some conversational acts: informing, persuading, alerting, frightening, and so on.

e.g., “He informed her of the dangers lurking in the alley to frighten her into taking a safer route.”

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Grice's Rules for Cooperative Conversational Acts

1. **Quantity:** Give enough info (for the conversational purpose)
2. **Quality:** Give good quality info (likely to be true)
3. **Relevance:** Response should be on the same topic
4. **Manner:** Response should be clear and easy to follow

We can sometimes (cooperatively) break these rules to achieve greater or different conversational effects. E.g., through

- a. rhetorical questions
- b. irony and sarcasm
- c. hyperbole or understatement
- d. metaphor

Evaluative statements: Much argument is devoted to defending statements of value; so we need to recognize such statements and the standards appropriate to evaluating them

The common role of “too”

Recognizing and coping with euphemism and spin-doctoring

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CHAPTER 4: CLOSE ANALYSIS

In the “close analysis” of an argumentative passage, we attempt to identify, in the passage, the argumentative elements we’ve studied, so that we can more clearly identify the point and effectiveness of the argument.

That is, first we look for terms that play the role of:

argument markers	AM
assuring terms	A
guarding terms	G
discounting terms	D
argumentative performatives	AP
evaluative terms	E(+ or -)
rhetorical devices	R

Note: “R” refers to any rhetorical device, such as irony, metaphor or rhetorical questions.

Then we reflect on the points made and their logical worth

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“Ward system would balance neighbourhood interests with the city’s”
LARRY CAMPBELL

“More than 200 Broadway and Arbutus area residents *jammed* [] City Hall Tuesday night to *demand* [] new planning guidelines to *protect* [] their neighbourhood from a Home Depot.”

Implied claim?

“All 10 councillors present were sympathetic, especially when one activist tabled a 5,000-name petition. *But* [] not one has to give the community a second thought after council decides the issue.

Why? []

Because [] not one councillor is accountable to any city neighbourhood under Vancouver’s at-large voting system.

Once the delegations have gone home, the councillors can move on confident that no single community is *likely* [] to muster enough votes to *turf them out* [] at the next election.

That’s the system Non-Partisan Association Councillor Sam Sullivan wants to defend from public scrutiny.”

What is Campbell trying to achieve here?

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"That *could* [] change when Vancouver heads to the polls for a *historic* [] referendum on wards on Oct. 16 (2004).

The *issue* []: Do citizens agree it is time to abolish the at-large system in favour of a ward system that *reflects* [] our city's neighbourhoods?
After a lengthy public consultation, former B.C. Supreme Court Justice *Berger* has advised council [] that citizens believe

(Berger's report and a map of the 14 wards can be found on the city's website at www.city.vancouver.bc.ca under the Electoral Reform Commission link.) [?]

If voters agree, Vancouver's next election *could* [] see each of the city's 14 main neighbourhoods sending a representative to City Hall.

That's a far cry from today's system which *muffles* [] minority voices and favours the candidates of city-wide *political machines* []."

What is Campbell implying about today's system? What proof does he give?

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"(COPE needed that kind of machine to win the election in 2002, *but* [] we're *delivering* [] on our *commitment* [] to pursue *democratic* [] change.)"

No wonder Sullivan is *terrified* [] at the prospect. Initiatives are concerned that the ward system would mean that a disabled person would not get elected. *But* [] Councillor Tim Louis who also has disabilities, welcomes a ward system.

What objections does Campbell anticipate? Does he respond successfully?

Next Sullivan announced that he would not run if Vancouver had a ward system. *Petulance* [] or *bravado* []?

Because [] he lacks any *factual* [] arguments, he *resorts* [] to *distortion* []. Using Sullivan's own figures [], the cost of this *modest* [] expansion in *civic democracy* [] will be about \$400,000 a year, not his *wildly exaggerated* [] \$4 million figure.

As *Berger* found in his consultations and his research [], at-large systems produce bloc voting. A ward system would change that. With an average 29,000 voters in each of the proposed wards, local candidates could become *competitive* [] at a *reasonable* [] cost.

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Our Indo-Canadian community *could* [] finally break into City Hall. Vancouver's Chinese-speaking residents have never had more than two out of 10 councillors under the at-large system. That *could* [] change dramatically with wards. *At least* [] six of the proposed wards have immigrant populations of more than 50 per cent.

Does that mean an end to the *citywide vision* [] that has made Vancouver so *successful* []?

Not at all. []

As *Berger* found in his hearings [], citizens feel that city-wide problems grow from neighbourhood problems. Solutions must be found at the neighbourhood level.

"The call for wards is not to fix potholes," he wrote, "but to deal with local causes." Issues like the missing women, the fate of the Woodward's property, rapid transit, affordable housing, homelessness, crime and redevelopment of major sites may begin at the community level, *but* [] they have city-wide implications.

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Vancouver's *success* [] has been built on its commitment to *sustainable* [] communities. We *value* [] community policing, community planning, local business improvement associations, community centres — *but* [] deny this community reality in our city council.

I'm sure [] that ward councillors will be able to find the *right balance* [] between the city's interest and neighbourhood concerns. *If not*, [] the voters will be able to hold them accountable.

The question is straightforward: Are you in favour of electing members of city council by a ward system?

Strengthen democracy []. Vote yes.

The “no” side actually won the plebiscite, with 66,317 participants out of a possible 293,263 eligible voters.

Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Winnipeg have ward systems.

Campbell was a popular mayor. Why did his side lose the vote?

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GLOBAL ANALYSIS: We try to identify

(a) the *purpose of the argument* to find the appropriate way to evaluate it.

Does the argument seek to explain some point, excuse some behaviour, refute another's argument, or justify some claim?

What is Campbell's purpose in his argument?

To persuade people that the ward system would better serve their own and the city's interests.

(b) Next, we find the *audience* of the argument.

Knowing the audience will tell us what premises they are likely to find acceptable without further argument.

To whom is Campbell addressing his argument?

(c) Finally, we identify the *standpoint* of the arguer.

How does the arguer portray themselves? Is this portrayal apt?

Does this identification put others at a disadvantage?

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Some plays:

(A) Identify oneself with the moderate, “middle ground” position: e.g., “the intelligent person of good will”

(B) Take an extreme position, but portray others as wishy-washy, fence-sitters, cowardly, etc.

One powerful manoeuvre: Justify a radical position by a traditional document or source

More devices: (p75)

The disinterested person: Though I have nothing to gain here, ...

The reasonable person: By now it should be obvious to everyone...

The voice in the wilderness: I suppose no one will notice if I point out that ...

The world-weary cynic: Not again.

Uplifter: You know, deep down, that I'm right

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Debaser: Let's face it (come on), everybody's doing it...we're all out for number one...you wouldn't do anything different, if you stepped out of your ivory tower, etc.

Usually, such tactics irritate people who initially disagree with the arguer
Which standpoint devices does Larry Campbell use in his argument?

IN CLASS/HOMEWORK: Do the questions (##1-97) on the Cuomo piece.

Read handout sheet

argument markers AM

assuring terms A

guarding terms G

discounting terms D

argumentative performatives AP

evaluative terms E(+ or -)

rhetorical devices R