# Toulmin's argument model

Stephen Toulmin, an English philosopher and logician, identified elements of a persuasive argument. These give useful categories by which an argument may be analyzed.

## Claim- A claim is a statement that you are asking the other person to accept. This includes information you are asking them to accept as true or actions you want them to accept and enact. *For example: You should use a hearing aid.*

Many people start with a claim, but then find that it is challenged. If you just ask me to do something, I will not simply agree with what you want. I will ask why I should agree with you. I will ask you to prove your claim. This is where grounds become important.

## Grounds-The grounds (or *data*) is the basis of real persuasion and is made up of data and hard facts, plus the reasoning behind the claim. It is the 'truth' on which the claim is based. Grounds may also include proof of expertise and the basic premises on which the rest of the argument is built. The actual truth of the data may be less that 100%, as all data are based on perception and hence there is some element of assumption about it. It is critical to the argument that the grounds are not challenged because, if they are, they may become a claim, which you will need to prove with even deeper information and further argument. *For example: Over 70% of all people over 65 years have a hearing difficulty.*

## Warrant-A warrant links data and other grounds to a claim, legitimizing the claim by showing the grounds to be relevant. The warrant may be explicit or unspoken and implicit. It answers the question '*Why* does that data mean your claim is true?' *For example: A hearing aid helps most people to hear better.*

**Examples**

**Claim:** Americans should cut back on work to spend more time with their families.

**Support:** Americans spend more hours than they used to on the job.  Parents depend more and more on outside caregivers.

**Warrant:** Family time is a priority over work.

**Claim:** Cigarettes are dangerous to one's health.

**Support:** The Surgeon General has issued warnings about the damage smoking does to

adult lungs and heart, and to developing babies.

**Warrant:** The surgeon general is reliable as a medical authority. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**1. Claims of Fact-** Is it real? Is it a fact? Did it really happen? Is it true? Does it exist?  
*Examples:* Global warming is occurring. Women are just as effective as men in combat. Immigrants are taking away jobs from Americans who need work.

**2. Claims of Value-** Is it good or bad? Beneficial or harmful? Moral or immoral? Who says so? What do these people value? What value system will be used to judge?   
*Examples:* Violent computer games are detrimental to children’s social development. *The Simpsons* is not a bad show for young people to watch. Dancing is good, clean fun.

**3. Claims of Policy*-*** What should we do? How are we to act? What policy should we take? What course of action should we take to solve this problem? *Examples:* We should spend less on the prison systems and more on early intervention programs. Every person in the United States should have access to federally-funded health insurance.