

TUTORIAL 18: “THE CAT IN THE HAT” — CONSTRUCTING YOUR ARGUMENT

ICONS TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE THE COURSE HANDOUTS



Whole class
discussion



Teams/Groups
discussion



Take/make notes



Impromptu talk topic
(speak for 1 min)

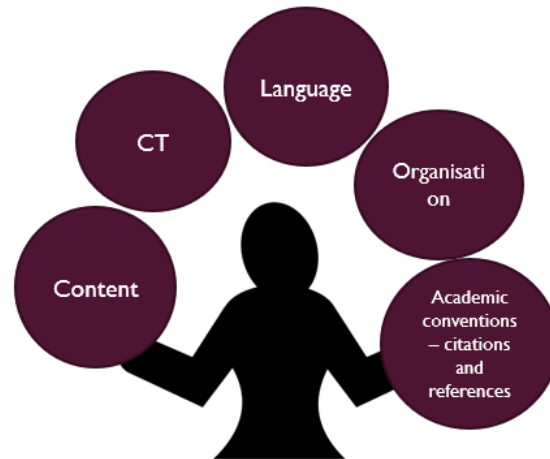
Learning Objectives:

By the end of this Tutorial, you will learn to:

- Put all the skills together to build a written argument:
 - Analyse
 - Brainstorm
 - Choose content
 - Draft
 - Edit
 - Finalise
- Use CT skills and dispositions
- Be original
 - Engaging with sources
 - Avoiding patch writing
 - Internal debate with texts
- Be clear
 - Definitions
 - Thesis statements
- Use organisational structure to plan clear arguments
 - Argumentative essays
 - Concept paper - 4Ps
- Use a line of reasoning deductive or inductive to make an argument more persuasive
- Identify author surnames

1. JUGGLING ARGUMENT CONSTRUCTION BALLS

JUGGLING ARGUMENT CONSTRUCTION BALLS



An argumentative essay is pretty much any sort of essay where you are communicating an idea that you hope others will find convincing enough to accept your views on, persuasive enough to accept your take on or recommendations for, or at the very least, be unable to poke many holes in. Some example of argumentative writing are:

- Summary of achievements for annual appraisal purposes
- CVs and job application cover letters
- Higher order exam answers written in continuous prose
- Extended essay writing prompts such as honours theses, dissertations, doctoral theses
- Grant proposals
- Funding applications

You can probably think of a few other forms of argumentative writing. In order to present a really convincing argument, you will have to juggle all those argument construction balls with aplomb. You cannot let any ball drop.

You need to be very clear about what you are writing, so let's start with the preparation:

- What's your research interest/question in topic X?
- What do you want to say about topic X?
- What's your particular angle? (or specific focus of topic)
- What did you find out or what do you know? (Make sure you record what information you have, where it is from and what you think about it (your CT value add)).
- What do you think about the evidence you have?
- What's your hypothesis or thesis?

2. START CONSTRUCTING THE ESSAY

The basics of construction are as easy as ABC.

- Analyse topic, prompt, points of view
- Brainstorm – read and think, summarise, synthesise and critique
- Choose stand, points
- Draft line of argument, argumentative text
- Edit for fallacies, fluff, irrelevance
- Finalise – revise and complete

3. BEING ORIGINAL

- What does it mean to be original?
- What's your definition of originality?
- What's so great about originality?
- What do you think of this definition and explanation of original and originality?
<http://motionographer.com/2015/01/21/what-it-takes-to-be-original/>



WILD CARD PRACTICE #8

- Can you speak for just two minutes on “originality” ?
OR
- Can you speak for just two minutes on how can anything be original anymore when everything is known?

3.1 PRESENTING VALUE-ADDED INFORMATION

Richard Dawkins said that at university we learn how to think and going off to the library to research on a topic for the twice weekly essays for the Oxford Tutorials was how he learned to think about his own take on various concepts and topics in his chosen subject major of biological sciences, and that was the ‘making’ of him. What may be inferred from this is that there is a premium put on that ability to think through ideas and information until you internalise it into some form of knowledge and that you have ownership of those ideas.

In presenting these ideas we refer to our sources of information. As there is a way of expressing and articulating such information in spoken contexts such as the panel discussion, there are also ways of doing so in written discourse, such as essays. In order to show how original you are, you have to distinguish between what your source says and what you think of the source. So building on what we said last tutorial about citing sources, let's now ensure that your value add (here marked by XXX) is clearly distinguished from what your sources say.

1. Blah, blah blah,(N, YYYY). N's point about blah interests me because XXXXXXXXXXXX
2. The point raised by various experts about blah, blah,blah, (N,YYYY, N1,YYYYY, N3YYYYY) begs the question of XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.
3. Blah, blah, blah, (N, YYYY) XXXXXX?
4. While N1,YYYYY holds POV1 and N2YYYYY opposes with POV2, I argue XXXXXXXX drawing from evidence 1 and evidence 2.
5. Perhaps what is really important about blah, blah, blah is *blah (italics added by me)*, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX (in this example, something said by your source has been highlighted using italics and you then elaborate on the reasons why this is a significant point.

When you read over your essay, you should ask yourself if you have made your CT value add clear and obvious to your reader.

3.2 AVOIDING PATCH WRITING

Patch writing is a term coined by Rebecca Howard Moore in 2005 for inept attempts at paraphrasing. In one famous or perhaps infamous incident, a journalist for the Spectator was fired after patch writing from an article originally from the NY Times had been discovered. This is an excerpt from the infamous case.

EXAMPLE OF PATCH WRITING

Original Quote	Patchwriting
<i>"New tracks aside, the challenge is at the bare minimum to bring light and air into this underground purgatory and, beyond that, to create for millions of people a new space worthy of New York, a civic hub in the spirit of the great demolished one, more attuned to the city's aspirations and democratic ideals." - Michael Kimmelman, The New York Times</i>	Besides replacing the railroad tracks, "the challenge is at the bare minimum to bring light and air into this underground purgatory." Travelers need a new space in which they start and end their commutes in New York. They are deserving of a new environment, "a civic hub in the spirit of the great demolished one, more attuned to the city's aspirations and democratic ideals."

One question you might ask yourself is why patch writing occurs. Is it due to language proficiency skills or a lack of comprehension?

- **Categories of paraphrasing – categories 1 – 4**

An academic study of proficient (first language users of English or L1) and less proficient (second language or L2) students (Keck, 2006), found that L1 students could substantially paraphrase or at least mostly paraphrase, whereas L2 students tended to have “near copy” or “minimal” paraphrases. If there is minimal paraphrasing then a writer skates very near to the charge of plagiarism. On the whole, it is better to use your own words even if there are grammar or other errors in the sentence structure. Where assessment is concerned, honesty is definitely the best policy.

- **Dealing with comprehension – Barrett’s Taxonomy of Comprehension Levels**

Moore thought patch writing occurred because students had poor comprehension skills and did not understand the source information enough to really paraphrase and use it. If that is the case, use a systematic way to mine for meaning. Let me reproduce Tan Wang Leng’s take on how to use Barrett’s taxonomy which you may find useful.

BARRETT AND ENNIS ON CONCLUSIONS ABOUT TEXTS – THE LINK

Level 1: Ensure that you actually read the content correctly. You might create inferences that were unintentionally wrong because the version of the story inside your brain doesn’t match the version on the paper.

Level 2: To make it easier to spot patterns that might be meaningful or intended by the author but not explicitly stated by him/her, which allow us to generate hypotheses later.

Level 3: To explain what the patterns may imply, which will help us in informing of the author’s assumptions and biasness, and creating inferences based on what he may or may not intend us the readers to know.

Level 4: Are the inferences valid? How do I feel about the inferences made? At this level, we question the meaning of the content.

Level 5: To connect the content with our own experiences and experiences of others that we obtained through other readings. Develop our own meaning.

By kind permission, Tan Wang Leng

Whatever, the reason for patch writing previously, make sure it is never because of being intellectually laziness in using your own words!

3.3 INTERNAL DEBATE WITH TEXT

The ability to engage with your sources and have, as it were, a mini internal debate with them, is a pretty sophisticated way of presenting your original take on something. This is an example from an academic journal.

ENGAGING WITH SOURCES

(12) Even if **we** assume that protoplasm began evolving by selection on mineral surfaces long before it became bounded in protocells, this model only helps **us** explain the origin of cellular life if neighborhood selection would favor the evolution of protocells. But why should it? Wouldn't **we** just end up with mineral surfaces being coated in more and more complex mixes of chemicals, with newly exposed surfaces being colonized more and more quickly? Why would selection acting on surface-bound protoplasm ever result in the formation of lipid-bounded protocells? (Bio)

- From K. Hyland, F. and K. Jiang / Journal of English for Academic Purposes 24 (2016) 29e42
- After presenting some source information or just information, then the writer posits rhetorical questions that draw the reader into the argument =>engagement with information + element of debate => warranted conclusion later.
- Involve reader + engage with sources more

Here is an example from Chan Yun Juan, used with kind permission.

ENGAGING WITH SOURCES

"Originality as defined in the dictionary is the state of being original or novelty of an idea, which occurs when something is created for the first time.

For example even if a scientist were to come up with a scientific theory as inspiration or by studying and building up on other's theory, **would it be considered as an original theory? Or would that be considered as a copy or an extension to the original theory?** If the latter is true, then all theories that build on previous theories would be copied as well and only the first theory would be original. I personally feel that originality should be considered in a case by case basis and it depends on the person in question when they are developing the item. In a book called Creative thinking and problem solving for young learners by Karen S. Meador. They gave an example stating that if children were given a paper and they drew oval shape on it, then one of them turns the shape into a clown's face, **would that be considered original?** **Even though adults may have seen many arts of clowns with a oval face, but what if the child had never seen it before and drew it? It would actually be considered as original for that child at that time, though it might not be considered as original for the general public or consumers in the case of a product.**

As mentioned before, I feel that originality is something that is defined on a case by case basis. In fact in the eyes of law, the intellectual property, as long as it is modified to more than a certain % from an original idea and original idea is properly referenced, is considered original on the time of the first patent, despite the time of creation. For example, even if a product is created by someone but not patented, but idea is stolen by 2nd guy and patent is filed by them, the IP would be known to belong to the second person.

People from the past had been creating ideas and people afterwards have also been building on them, occasionally creating new ideas and such innovations has led our world to this stage today." Chan Jun Yuan, used with kind permission.

This kind of engagement, although a sign of sophistication in academic writing, is within the abilities of a student writer. Here is an example from a wild card speech from a student who has kindly agreed to share. I have highlighted in blue the questions that show internal debate. I have also highlighted the CT valued add to the summary of the source information. The conclusion in bold red font is thus original and warranted. Do please note the actual paraphrase or reference to the text in black is truly minimal. Hence there is maximum source voice and maximum authorial voice, this is a decidedly good thing, because it shows the author is successfully making meaning from the sources.

Essays and other university writing assignments are designed for you to "clearly connect critical thinking and writing" and not merely communicate that you understand what your source material says (Graves & White, 2016). **The really important thing to show is that you are making meaning of your learning/reading.**

4. THESIS STATEMENT

A thesis statement is the central idea of your text. It answers the question, “what is your essay about?” or “what’s your claim?” You should be able to answer the question in **one minute** if you are asked this question verbally and in your text it appears in the introduction as **one sentence**. If it is not contained in one minute or in one sentence, chances are the thesis is not as clearly focused as it ought to be. It is important to start off on the right foot. If the thesis lacks focus, the essay or text may well lack focus or be confusing, or both.

While you may have started with a research question, such as “will automation radically change the way humans work?”, your thesis statement is your answer or response to the original research question that you set yourself. So the thesis statement might read like this:

“Automation will not radically change the way humans work because the nature of our work usually evolves to becoming ever more productive: ‘plus ça change plus c’est le meme chose’- the more things change the more they stay the same.

So in this example, there is some controversy in the thesis to tickle the reader, but it is formulated in such a way as to fit in with academic etiquette, that is it is not brusque or offensive sounding. Think of your thesis statement as a more cultured version of click bait.

For more information on how to write good thesis statements, please read:

<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/thesis-statements/> (University of North Carolina) and <http://writing.msu.edu/how-to-write-a-good-thesis-statement/> (Michigan State University Writing Centre).

5. DEFINITIONS

It is important to start off on the right foot, so in addition to making sure the thesis statement is accurate and focused, definitions of keywords should also be precise and accurate in how you mean to use them.

Recall the definitions of cake, biscuit and potato chips in the last tutorial. If you think that those definitions are too specific and legal and that you as a writer do not need to define your key terms yourself, there is the definition of the word “job”. It is a common enough term, you may think, and something you can use a dictionary definition for. However, a dictionary definition is a general definition, which does not necessarily fit your purpose exactly. Ennis (2011) says that critical thinkers should be able to define terms appropriate for the context. We saw in our last tutorial how the changing definition of “job” actually propelled the entire argument favouring the liberation of workers in a gig economy.

6. ORGANISATION OF AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

This is one model, it is not the only one but it works and is useful to beginning writers or those who feel they have not entirely mastered how to write argumentatively.

CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY – A FRAMEWORK		
Organization	Content	Language
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background/context to controversy• Thesis• Outline• Transition to first main point	Objective tone Accurate word choice Rhetoric used judiciously Cohesive devices
Body #1 Paragraph #2 Paragraph 3# Paragraph	Each body paragraph should develop the thesis <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic sentence• Supporting details + in-text citation + CT value add• Counter argument +in-text citation + CT value add• Refutation +in-text citation + CT value add• Recap/link back to thesis• Transition to next point	
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summary of main points• Reiteration of thesis• Final word that ties everything together-no new material	
End of text references, APA style – see work bin or Owl Purdue website		

Remember to document your sources so that you can give in-text as well as end-of-text references. Make sure you know how to identify the surname of the writer. See section 9.

An argumentative essay might benefit from using deductive reasoning (see section 8).

7. ORGANISATION OF A CONCEPT PAPER

This is something you might write for your boss or to get grant funding. One useful organizational structure is known as the 4Ps: Position, Problem, Possibilities and Proposal.

CONCEPT PAPER E.G. AUTOTUTOR TO REPLACE TUTORIALS	
4Ps	This section covers
Position (aka purpose)	What is the purpose of your paper? What is the current position regarding the topic of your paper? How are students taught in SOC? How much time does this take in the average student time table. How much are teaching assistants paid? How many are employed to teach first years? What is the total cost?
Problem	What is the problem/s with the current system? Is it hard to find dedicated teaching assistants of uniformly good quality? Is it difficult to train teaching assistants? Is it difficult to schedule teaching assistants as they have their own classes?
Possibilities	What are some solutions? A training day? Autotutor by Google? (Solutions should be researched, not mere opinions)
Proposal	Which do you propose (recommend) and why? What is the most compelling evidence you can use? In your conclusion , you might consider a call for action.

8. DEDUCTIVE VS INDUCTIVE REASONING

DEDUCTIVE REASONING

- Introduction + Thesis (answer to research question) → Points Evidence Elaboration Link back to thesis (PEEL) → Conclusion

Deductive reasoning is known as the top down approach because you have done all your reading or research and actually already know the “answer” to the research question you started out with. Your essay then shows the thinking process that underlies your thesis.

Deductive Essay

Main point in first paragraph

Supporting points throughout the rest of the paper

In conclusion, restate premise



My Essay

This is the first paragraph of my essay. I have researched night and day and mixed all of the facts of the universe in order to put this together. I hope you enjoy it. Now I will attempt to add a quote to this essay. I'm not sure where I want to put it, but, here goes.

This is the second paragraph of my essay, otherwise known as the "body" of the essay. In all actuality I am just making this up as I go. But for all intents and purposes, I will pretend to know what I am talking about. I have researched night and day and mixed all of the facts of the universe in order to put this together. I hope you enjoy it. Now I will attempt to add a quote to this essay. I'm not sure where I want to put it, but, here goes.

This is the last paragraph of my essay. I have researched night and day and mixed all of the facts of the universe in order to put this together. I hope you enjoy it. In the words of my expert, "Now I will attempt to add a quote to this essay. I'm not sure where I want to put it, but, here goes." Okay, that wasn't so bad.

Inductive reasoning is known as the bottom up approach, you start with the research question and you then show how you tried to answer it. The focus is more on the problem and why it needs to be solved and then suggests your answer or solution. This approach is useful when making recommendations, for instance, because your reader needs to be convinced of the need to solve a problem first, or it may be because you are in a subordinate position and want to make a tentative but considered recommendation, e.g. in a concept paper for your boss.

Inductive Reasoning

Start with the facts

Gradually form a conclusion

My Essay

This is the first paragraph of my essay. I have researched night and day and mined all of the facts of the universe in order to put this together. I hope you enjoy it. Now I will attempt to add a quote to this essay. I'm not sure where I want to put it, but, here goes.

This is the second paragraph of my essay, otherwise known as the "body" of the essay. In all actuality I am just making this up as I go. But for all intents and purposes, I will pretend to know what I am talking about. I have researched it rather well and have used some of it all of this.

Choose whether to use inductive or deductive reasoning in your writing depending on the purpose or context that you are writing for. This could be due to considerations of who the reader is, or why you are writing, e.g. under exam conditions, I would recommend deductive reasoning as the thesis is given at the beginning, as well as the entire outline of the essay, so it is a 'safer' method in case you don't finish the essay.

9. IDENTIFYING SURNAMES

SOURCE REFERENCES

STANFORD
BUSINESS

[Experience](#)
[Programs](#)
[Research](#)

Insights by Stanford Business
Topics ▾
Q

How do you refer to this source?

In text and end of text?

Career & Success

Matt Abrahams: A Good Question Can Be the Key to a Successful Presentation

A Stanford GSB lecturer and expert on public speaking explains how you can become a more compelling and confident presenter by asking – not telling – in the right situations.

July 25, 2014 | by Matt Abrahams

<https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/matt-abrahams-good-question-can-be-key-successful-presentation>

The rule of thumb for identifying surnames is this:

Far Eastern; Chinese, Japanese and Korean surnames	European and white and most black American surnames, South American surnames, Caribbean, some Middle Eastern surnames	Other Asian, some African surnames, other Middle Eastern surnames
LEE Kuan Yew HONDA Michiko PARK Shin Hye	Chinua ACHIBEE Donald TRUMP Oprah WINFREY Hosni MUBARAK	SUHARTO Devi d/o Subramaniam Salleh bin Jonas Osama bin Laden

10. CONCLUSION

There is probably more that can be said about the theory of writing. However, there is nothing like learning by practice. So in the immortal words of the Nike sound bit, “Just do it”. We will pick up on further key learning points after you have written, presented and discussed your essays.

11. REFERENCES

- Graves, R. and S. White. (2016). Undergraduate assignments and essay exams in *The Routledge Handbook of English for Academic Purposes*, Ken Hyland and Philip Shaw, (eds). Oxon: Routledge.
- Howard, R.M. (2005). “Plagiarism: What Should a Teacher Do?” *Guiding Students from Cheating and Plagiarism to Honesty and Integrity: Strategies for Success*. Ed. Ann Lathrop and Kathleen Foss. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2005. 174.
- Hyland, K. & Jiang, K. (2016). “We must conclude that...”: A diachronic study of academic engagement. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*. 24: 29-42.
- Keck, C. (2006). “The use of paraphrase in summary writing: A comparison of L1 and L2 summarization practices.” *Journal of Second Language Writing*, vol.14.No.2, pp 261-278.

Credits and Penalties

- 600-800 words, excluding references. **Tutor will stop reading after 880 words.**
- Submission of draft into the work bin:
 - 48 hours or more in advance – credit 1 mark
 - 12 to 24 hours in advance – deduct 1 mark
 - less than 12 hours in advance – deduct 2 marks
- Submission of final essay into the work bin:
 - Late submission of essay – deduct 2 marks