



Critical Thinking

Analysing Arguments

Description	Analysing arguments
Task Type	In-class activity or tutorial. Works best with pre-reading.
Time	30 minutes
Level	Introductory
Class Size	Small or large class
Learning Outcomes	<p>Student should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Demonstrate an understanding of the good and poor arguments ✦ Evaluate an argument and counterargument
Method	<p>Choose a newspaper article that presents an argument (can also be used with a specially written piece). Make sure the argument includes good arguments and ones that are poorly justified in some way. An example is given in the article under additional materials.</p> <p>Give the article to the students as pre-reading if possible. If it is short then they can read it in class.</p> <p>Divide the students into groups of 3 or 4 and ask them to mark in the margins next to each paragraph: G = good argument, P = poor argument, C = counter argument, N = no argument.</p> <p>Go through the article with the students and discuss what makes a good or poor argument.</p>

Concluding Activity	<p>Link this back to writing an argumentative essay. Issues to address might be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✳ Ensuring good quality of supporting evidence ✳ Who is your audience? ✳ Presenting argument logically and clearly ✳ Avoid emotional language ✳ Consider opposing arguments ✳ Referencing and plagiarism
Tips	<p>Choice of the article is very important. It may be appropriate to write your own to demonstrate this effectively.</p> <p>Theoretical underpinnings should include theory on writing an argument and on flawed arguments. The concluding activity is very important to make the link between this and writing an essay for university.</p>
Student Instructions	<p>Read the article. What is the point that the author is trying to make?</p> <p>For each paragraph decide whether the paragraph is a good argument, poor argument, counter argument or no argument.</p> <p>Put a letter in the margin as follows:</p> <p>G = good argument, P = poor argument, C = counter argument, N = no argument.</p>
Additional Material	<p>Sample articles:</p> <p>Gross, D. (2008). Subprime Suspects: The right blames the credit crisis on poor minority homeowners. This is not merely offensive, but entirely wrong. [Link]</p> <p>Additional materials on writing of arguments can be found at: Chubb, J. (no date). Critical Thinking for business and human resource development. [Link]</p> <p>Empire State College (no date). Using evidence to prove your point in Business Writing. [Link]</p>