

Persuasion- Argument

What is an argument?

We all use arguments. What is and isn't an argument? Toddlers and teenagers sometimes get so caught up in emotion that they can struggle to analyze their own or others' arguments. The frontal cortex in the brain isn't fully developed until age 25 and that is the part of the brain that processes consequences, plans for the future and can make long term goals. SO... what can we do? We can help each other and help ourselves by learning to analyze arguments- both our own and other people's.

So. What are the elements of an argument?

Claims

Reasons

Assumptions

Counterclaims?

Arguments that use the claim as the reason sound like a toddler. "I want a cookie because I want a cookie".

Video from Sherlock (BBC Sherlock) when he meets Watson and makes claims about him. What reasons and assumptions does he make? (netflix)

Can we analyze the strength of these arguments?

Where do our reasons and assumptions come from? Values. What do we value? Even if we have a valid/strong argument, if it isn't argued from the foundation of the audience's values it will probably not seem strong to them.

What do you value?

Example: Story of when I lost an argument arguing from my own values. Then argued from my audience's values and we came to an agreement.

What is a conflict "conflict" in your own life? What are your values? What are the values of your audience? Have you attempted to argue from their own values? What is the result? Lay out an argument from your own values. Lay out an argument from your "opposition's" values.

PRACTICE:

Watch Taylor Swift music video “Wildest Dreams” and discuss arguments made in it. Google “Taylor Swift is Dreaming of a Very White Africa” to scroll through backlash a little bit. Read through opinion editorial and discuss their analysis of the argument. Whose perspective are these arguments made from? What was the intention? Example of boy from my class from a country in africa’s response. He thought it was fine if Taylor Swift wanted to make a video about Africa. His one criticism was that no one should ever stand that close to a lion. Interesting.

Your turn:

What is a movie you love? What arguments is it making? How? Do you agree with the claims? Diagram and test counterclaims.

What is a song you love? What argument is it making? How? Do you agree with the claims? Diagram and test counterclaims.

What is a book you love? What argument is it making? How? Do you agree with the claims? Diagram and test counterclaims.