

Persuasion- Rogerian Argument

A Rogerian Argument is often associated with skills like reflective listening, understanding the other side first and then presenting personal views, etc.

A rogerian argument begins by discussing the opposing viewpoint in empathetic, understanding, non-confrontational terms.

Your goal with the first third of your paper is to explain the opposition's point of view so well that people with those views would feel completely understood and validated. You want those who disagree with you, to read the first third of your paper and feel that they would be comfortable having you represent their views and opinions.

The first step in being able to write this way, is to identify someone who holds opinions and viewpoints opposite your own on your topic.

For this assignment, you will be finding someone who disagrees with you on your topic and conducting an interview. Then you will answer a few questions about it.

REMEMBER that this interview is ONLY for you to ask questions and seek to understand the interviewee's point of view WITHOUT ARGUING. DO NOT PRESENT YOUR OWN FACTS OR OPINIONS etc. This interview is NOT A DEBATE. No matter how much you are tempted to argue, correct, or point out flaws you see in what the person says, ONLY ASK QUESTIONS THAT WILL HELP YOU EMPATHIZE AND UNDERSTAND.

Good questions look like the following:

"I am writing a paper on [insert your topic]. Would you mind telling me about your views on the subject?"

"That is so interesting, would you mind explaining to me more about why you believe those things?"

"Can you remember when you started believing these things?"

"What would you say are the experiences in your life that have caused you to hold these beliefs?"

"What do you think people should think about this topic and why?"

"What do you think people should do differently about this topic and what would the difference be if people did what you think they should?"

A caution: Depending on your topic and the intensity of the emotion involved on each side, it may not be a good idea to interview someone in your family. You are allowed to interview family members but please be aware of your own feelings and those of your

family members. It can be difficult to disagree with family. People are more than their opinions and viewpoints. It can be harmful to relationships to let what others believe affect how we feel about them as family or close friends. Please keep in mind that unless you are very prepared (with lots of prior practice) to separate what people believe from your relationship with them, then I would highly recommend interviewing a relative stranger or casual acquaintance. It can work well to interview someone in this class if you wish. When there is less of a relationship at stake, it can be easier to remain objective and focus on trying to understand the person rather than trying to convince or persuade the person to convert to your point of view.

The second part of your paper will be an opportunity for you to present your own viewpoint and opinion. The last section of your paper will be where you present a possible compromise, solution, or plan for further research.

For this assignment, after you interview someone with the opposite perspective from your own for your Rogerian Argument/Conference Paper, come to this assignment and analyze the following:

1. What are the underlying values influencing this person's beliefs and opinions? Are any of those values similar to your own? In what way?
2. What experiences would you have needed to have in your own life in order to agree with this person? Can you imagine having those experiences and how that would feel? Elaborate.
3. After thinking about these questions, how do you want to try to explain your perspective to this person and attempt to persuade them to either believe what you do, or at least consider it as a valid perspective? (This will be what you do in the second part of your paper).