**Argument Mapping: Writing 150 Summary & Tasks**

* A **CLAIM** is *an idea that someone thinks is true.* It may be true or false. It is arguable. Your claims should be clean, simple, specific, and assertive.
* A **CONTENTION** is what we call a **claim supported by evidence** (whether the evidence is a reason OR an objection).
  + A **REASON** is a single piece of evidence in SUPPORT of a claim:

[**claim** + **reason** = **contention**].

* + An **OBJECTION** is a single piece of evidence REFUTING a claim:

[**claim** + **objection** = **contention**].

*For our purposes, both PRIMARY CLAIMS and CONTENTIONS will be shown using BLUE.*

**A well-constructed argument map is a SERIES of claims, each in its OWN box.**

* **Contentions, reasons,** and **objections** are all claims. Each has its own box.
* It is HOW a claim operates within the map that determines its FUNCTION—whether it is a **primary claim** (soon to be a **contention**), a **reason**, or **objection**.
* **No single box contains a WHOLE simple argument**. One box = one claim.

**Incorrectly mapped claim.** The entire simple argument is crammed into one box.

The Apollo astronauts could not have survived the trip through the Van Allen Belt, so they could not have been

to the moon.

**--------------------CORRECTLY MAPPED SIMPLE ARGUMENTS ----------------------**

**Contention**

**Contention**

The Apollo astronauts could not have been to the moon.

The Apollo astronauts could not have been to the moon.

*How do you know?*

*Wrong. Here’s why.*

The Apollo astronauts brought back 382 kilos of lunar material.

**REASON**

**OBJECTION**

The Apollo astronauts could not have survived the trip through the

Van Allen Belt.

**RE-CAP: RULES for Argument Mapping:**

1. **Write every claim as a complete declarative sentence.** Do not use abbreviations, do not use questions, and avoid pronouns or synonyms. (In other words, if you started with “Almond Snickers” and “Peanut Snickers,” don’t switch and refer to them as “New” and “Original” later.
2. **Every piece of reasoning/argument gets its own box.** Do not put an entire simple argument in one box. *Finding words like “so,” “but,” “because,” or “even though” in your primary claim usually means you’ve wedged supporting evidence into it.*
3. **A claim shouldn’t sound like a complaint.** This doesn’t mean that a complaint isn’t a legitimate starting place. We only change the world because something deserves changing! Just offer a *complete idea*.
4. **Avoid using the word “should” as a future imperative**, e.g., *somebody SHOULD do/fix/change (xyz).* This tends to sound like a complaint.

*PRACTICE MAPPING some sample contentions of your own. Indicate the TYPE OF CLAIM by shading or outlining the box in the corresponding color:*

*Primary claim =* ***blue****, reason =* ***green****, objection =* ***orange****.*

**Argument Mapping Homework 1:**

Create 6 simple arguments maps of your own. The ideas may be related to each other, but they do not need to be. [OPTION: You may create all 6 maps drawing on information found in the *Apollo Moon Landings* info packet.]

**Taking Argument Maps to the Next Level: PREMISES**

The goal of argument mapping is to ***fully reveal ALL of the reasoning***—to make the whole structure of an argument explicit using graphics like these boxes.

It is important to recognize ALL of the reasoning that goes into an argument.

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| --- | --- |
| **When one of your claims functions as a REASON or an OBJECTION,**  **it is called a *PREMISE. The primary claim (contention) on page 1 was,***  ***“The Apollo astronauts could not have been to the moon.”***  **We can summarize the PREMISES mapped on the first page like this:** | |
| **Supporting Premise (a reason):**  *The Apollo astronauts could not have survived the trip through the*  *Van Allen Belt.* | **Refuting Premise (an objection):**  *The Apollo astronauts brought back 382 kilograms of lunar material.* |

Looking again at the incorrectly mapped example on page one. It reads:

***The Apollo astronauts could not have survived the trip through***

***the Van Allen Belt, so they could not have been to the moon.***

There are multiple ASSUMPTIONS operating here:

1. There is something about the Van Allen Belt that is deadly to humans.
2. To get to the moon, one must travel through the Van Allen Belt.

When reasoning is rolled up and tucked inside a box, ***it goes unrecognized—by being either hidden away or otherwise ignored.*** We call these hiding or unrecognized pieces of information **ASSUMPTIONS, or HIDDEN PREMISES.**

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| --- |
| **NEW RULE: No contention has just ONE premise.**  **It’s the GOLDEN RULE of ARGUMENTATION.**  **Every simple argument has at least 2 co-premises.** |

***CO-PREMISES?* Here’s what we mean:**

**Primary claim: The Apollo Astronauts could not have been to the moon.**

**Premise 1:** The Apollo Astronauts could not have survived the trip

through the Van Allen Belt.

**Premise 2:** The Van Allen Belt presents deadly amounts of radiation.

**Premise 3:** The trip could not have avoided the Van Allen Belt.

**MAPPING CO-PREMISES**

You will map your co-premises just as you mapped your basic contention, with one significant difference: Include each of your co-premises in one large box beneath the primary claim. ***Co-premises are always related to EACH OTHER.***

Do not mix your REASONS and OBJECTIONS.

**3 SUPPORTING PREMISES:**

The Apollo Astronauts could not have been to the moon.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The Apollo astronauts could not have survived the trip through the Van Allen Belt. | The Van Allen Belt  presents deadly amounts of radiation. | The Apollo trips could not have avoided the Van Allen Belt. |

The Apollo Astronauts could not have been to the moon.

**2 REFUTING PREMISES:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The Apollo astronauts brought back 382 kilograms of lunar material. | Scientists around the world have confirmed the material is distinctly unlike earth material. |

**Argument Mapping Homework 2:**

Choose TWO contentions you might like to make when you write your OPINION EDITORIAL. These may be ones you used in Homework 1, or you may create entirely new ones.

Map EACH CONTENTION first with (1) a set of SUPPORTING CO-PREMISES [using at least 2 co-premises], and (2) then again with a set of REFUTING CO-PREMISES [again, using at least 2 co-premises].

You should have 4 separate maps when you are done.