

**Chapter 1 : Rationalism vs. Empiricism (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)**

*The Approachable Argument is a critical thinking text that uses argumentation as a means of increasing independent and well-informed thinking, rather than an argumentation and debate text that assumes teaching certain forms automatically leads to critical thinking.*

Why would you include a counter-argument in your essay? Done well, it makes the argument stronger. It also shows that you are a reasonable person who has considered both sides of the debate. Both of these make an essay more persuasive. Top How should a counter-argument be presented? A counter-argument should be expressed thoroughly, fairly and objectively. Do not just write a quick sentence and then immediately rebut it. Give reasons why someone might actually hold that view. A few sentences or even a whole paragraph is not an unreasonable amount of space to give to the counter-argument. Again, the point is to show your reader that you have considered all sides of the question, and to make it easier to answer the counter-argument. Make sure you express the counter-argument fairly and objectively. Ask yourself if the person who actually holds this position would accept your way of stating it. Put yourself in their shoes and give them the benefit of the doubt. Readers see through that sort of thing pretty quickly. One of the most common purposes of counter-argument is to address positions that many people hold but that you think are mistaken. Therefore you want to be respectful and give them the benefit of the doubt even if you think their views are incorrect. Top How can a counter-argument be rebutted? One of the most effective ways to rebut a counter-argument is to show that it is based on faulty assumptions. Either the facts are wrong, the analysis is incorrect, or the values it is based on are not acceptable. Examples of each are given below. Furthermore, some counter-arguments are simply irrelevant, usually because they are actually responding to a different argument. And some counter-arguments actually make your argument stronger, once you analyze their logic. The examples below are ideas that you might use as a counter-argument to this claim, in a paper agreeing with Loewen. Then you would rebut, or answer, the counter-argument as a way to strengthen your own position. The factual assumption in this example is that racism is a thing of the past. One response would be to muster facts to show that racism continues to be a problem. The analytical assumption is that learning about racism can make you racist. The response would be that understanding the causes of a problem is not the same as causing or creating the problem. Faulty Values Who cares if students are racist? The key is to base your arguments on values that most readers are likely to share. Many students are, in fact, already familiar with racism. You might be very familiar with racism but still not know what causes it. This is a very common form of counter-argument, one that actually rebuts a different argument. Previous generations supposedly did function adequately in civic life. The response shows that that assumption is incorrect. Top When should a counter-argument be conceded? Sometimes you come up with a counter-argument that you think is true and that you think responds to your actual argument, not some other point. Then you are faced with a choice: Do you abandon your thesis and adopt the counter-argument as your position? The new version might look like this: So, studying racism might just make them want to be racist out of sheer contrariness. Then, you refine your original thesis to say something like this: This also takes away some of the reasons a reader might have to disagree with you. Top What makes a good counter-argument? Some counter-arguments are better than others. You want to use ones that are actually somewhat persuasive. Two things to look for are reasonableness and popularity. On the other hand, you may be quite sure of your position, which makes it harder to see other views as reasonable. They all look flawed to you because you can point out their errors and show why your view is better. In that case, look for ones that are popular, even if they are flawed. So you want to speak their language. Pick the arguments that you, or a lot of other people, feel are reasonable.

**Chapter 2 : Socratic method - Wikipedia**

*THE APPROACHABLE ARGUMENT* has 2 ratings and 1 review. Denise said: *I am absolutely appalled by the abundance of proofreading errors in this text, most co.*

References and Further Reading 1. The Structural Approach to Characterizing Arguments Not any group of propositions qualifies as an argument. The starting point for structural approaches is the thesis that the premises of an argument are reasons offered in support of its conclusion for example, Govier , p. Accordingly, a collection of propositions lacks the structure of an argument unless there is a reasoner who puts forward some as reasons in support of one of them. Letting  $P_1, P_2, P_3, \dots$ , and  $C$  range over propositions and  $R$  over reasoners, a structural characterization of argument takes the following form. A collection of propositions,  $P_1, \dots, P_n, C$ , is an argument if and only if there is a reasoner  $R$  who puts forward the  $P_i$  as reasons in support of  $C$ . The structure of an argument is not a function of the syntactic and semantic features of the propositions that compose it. Rather, it is imposed on these propositions by the intentions of a reasoner to use some as support for one of them. Typically in presenting an argument, a reasoner will use expressions to flag the intended structural components of her argument. Typical premise indicators include: Different accounts of the nature of the intended support offered by the premises for the conclusion in an argument generate different structural characterizations of arguments for discussion see Hitchcock Plausibly, if a reasoner  $R$  puts forward premises in support of a conclusion  $C$ , then i - iii obtain. If we judge that a reasoner  $R$  presents an argument as defined above, then by the lights of i - iii we believe that  $R$  believes that the premises justify belief in the truth of the conclusion. In what immediately follows, examples are given to explicate i - iii. John is an only child. John is not an only child; he said that Mary is his sister. If  $B$  presents an argument, then the following obtain. If the Democrats and Republicans are not willing to compromise, then the  $U$ . Therefore, it is unlikely that  $B$  puts forward the Democrats and Republicans are not willing to compromise as a reason in support of the  $U$ . The results of the test are in. Bill will be at the party, because Bill will be at the party. Suppose that  $B$  believes that Bill will be at the party. Trivially, the truth of this proposition makes it more likely than not that he will be at the party. Nevertheless,  $B$  is not presenting an argument. Clearly,  $B$  does not offer a reason for Bill will be at the party that is independent of this. Regarding iib , that Obama is  $U$ . This difference marks a structural distinction between arguments. Suppose that a reasoner  $R$  offers [1] and [2] as reasons in support of [3]. It is unreasonable to think that  $R$  offers [1] and [2] individually, as opposed to collectively, as reasons for [3]. Combining [1] and [2] with the plus sign and underscoring them indicates that they are linked. The arrow indicates that they are offered in support of [3]. To see a display of convergent premises, consider the following. These premises are convergent, because each is a reason that supports [3] independently of the other. The below diagram represents this. An extended argument is an argument with at least one premise that a reasoner attempts to support explicitly. Extended arguments are more structurally complex than ones that are not extended. The keys are either in the kitchen or the bedroom. The keys are not in the kitchen. I did not find the keys in the kitchen. So, the keys must be in the bedroom. The argument in standard form may be portrayed as follows: An enthymeme is an argument which is presented with at least one component that is suppressed. You should believe that abortion is immoral. That  $B$  puts forward [1]  $A$  is a Catholic in support of [2]  $A$  should believe that abortion is immoral suggests that  $B$  implicitly puts forward [3] all Catholics should believe that abortion is immoral in support of [2]. Note that [2] and [3] are linked. A premise that is suppressed is never a reason for a conclusion independent of another explicitly offered for that conclusion. There are two main criticisms of structural characterizations of arguments. One criticism is that they are too weak because they turn non-arguments such as explanations into arguments. Why did this metal expand? It was heated and all metals expand when heated.  $B$  offers explanatory reasons for the explanandum what is explained: It is plausible to see  $B$  offering these explanatory reasons in support of the explanandum. The reasons  $B$  offers jointly support the truth of the explanandum, and thereby show that the expansion of the metal was to be expected. The second criticism is that structural characterizations are too strong. They rule out as arguments what intuitively seem to be arguments. Kelly maintains that no explanation is an argument. One reason for her

view may be that the primary function of arguments, unlike explanations, is persuasion. But I am not sure that this is the primary function of arguments. We should investigate this further. B offers a reason, [1] the primary function of arguments, unlike explanations, is persuasion, for the thesis [2] no explanation is an argument. Since B asserts neither [1] nor [2], B does not put forward [1] in support of [2]. A contrary view is that arguments can be used in ways other than showing that their conclusions are true. For example, arguments can be constructed for purposes of inquiry and as such can be used to investigate a hypothesis by seeing what reasons might be given to support a given proposition see Meiland and Johnson and Blair , p. Such arguments are sometimes referred to as exploratory arguments. On this approach, it is plausible to think that B constructs an exploratory argument [exercise for the reader: Briefly, in defense of the structuralist account of arguments one response to the first criticism is to bite the bullet and follow those who think that at least some explanations qualify as arguments see Thomas who argues that all explanations are arguments. Given that there are exploratory arguments, the second criticism motivates either liberalizing the concept of support that premises may provide for a conclusion so that, for example, B may be understood as offering [1] in support of [2] or dropping the notion of support all together in the structural characterization of arguments for example, a collection of propositions is an argument if and only if a reasoner offers some as reasons for one of them. See Sinnott-Armstrong and Fogelin , p. The Pragmatic Approach to Characterizing Arguments The pragmatic approach is motivated by the view that the nature of an argument cannot be completely captured in terms of its structure. In contrast to structural definitions of arguments, pragmatic definitions appeal to the function of arguments. Different accounts of the purposes arguments serve generate different pragmatic definitions of arguments. The following pragmatic definition appeals to the use of arguments as tools of rational persuasion for definitions of argument that make such an appeal, see Johnson , p. One advantage of this definition over the previously given structural one is that it offers an explanation why arguments have the structure they do. In order to rationally persuade an audience of the truth of a proposition, one must offer reasons in support of that proposition. The appeal to rational persuasion is necessary to distinguish arguments from other forms of persuasion such as threats. One question that arises is: What obligations does a reasoner incur by virtue of offering supporting reasons for a conclusion in order to rationally persuade an audience of the conclusion? One might think that such a reasoner should be open to criticisms and obligated to respond to them persuasively See Johnson p. By appealing to the aims that arguments serve, pragmatic definitions highlight the acts of presenting an argument in addition to the arguments themselves. The field of argumentation, an interdisciplinary field that includes rhetoric, informal logic, psychology, and cognitive science, highlights acts of presenting arguments and their contexts as topics for investigation that inform our understanding of arguments see Houtlosser for discussion of the different perspectives of argument offered by different fields. For example, the acts of explaining and arguingâ€”in sense highlighted hereâ€”have different aims. This difference in aim makes sense of the fact that in presenting an argument the reasoner believes that her standpoint is not yet acceptable to her audience, but in presenting an explanation the reasoner knows or believes that the explanandum is already accepted by her audience See van Eemeren and Grootendorst , p. These observations about the acts of explaining and arguing motivate the above pragmatic definition of an argument and suggest that arguments and explanations are distinct things. It is generally accepted that the same line of reasoning can function as an explanation in one dialogical context and as an argument in another see Groarke and Tindale , p. Eemeren van, Grootendorst, and Snoeck Henkemans delivers a substantive account of how the evaluation of various types of arguments turns on considerations pertaining to the dialogical contexts within which they are presented and discussed. Note that, since the pragmatic definition appeals to the structure of propositions in characterizing arguments, it inherits the criticisms of structural definitions. In addition, the question arises whether it captures the variety of purposes arguments may serve. It has been urged that arguments can aim at engendering any one of a full range of attitudes towards their conclusions for example, Pinto For example, a reasoner can offer premises for a conclusion C in order to get her audience to withhold assent from C, suspect that C is true, believe that is merely possible that C is true, or to be afraid that C is true. The thought here is that these are alternatives to convincing an audience of the truth of C. A proponent of a pragmatic definition of argument may grant that there are uses of arguments not

accounted for by her definition, and propose that the definition is stipulative. But then a case needs to be made why theorizing about arguments from a pragmatic approach should be anchored to such a definition when it does not reflect all legitimate uses of arguments. Another line of criticism of the pragmatic approach is its rejecting that arguments themselves have a function Goodwin and arguing that the function of persuasion should be assigned to the dialogical contexts in which arguments take place Doury Deductive, Inductive, and Conductive Arguments Arguments are commonly classified as deductive or inductive for example, Copi, I. Cohen , Sinnott-Armstrong and Fogelin For a valid argument, it is not possible for the premises to be true with the conclusion false. That is, necessarily if the premises are true, then the conclusion is true. Thus we may say that the truth of the premises in a valid argument guarantees that the conclusion is also true. The following is an example of a valid argument:

**Chapter 3 : Aristotle's Ethics (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)**

*Acknowledged author LEIGH MICHAEL wrote THE APPROACHABLE ARGUMENT comprising pages back in Textbook and etextbook are published under ISBN and Since then THE APPROACHABLE ARGUMENT textbook was available to sell back to BooksRun online for the top buyback price or rent at the marketplace.*

Introduction The dispute between rationalism and empiricism takes place within epistemology, the branch of philosophy devoted to studying the nature, sources and limits of knowledge. The defining questions of epistemology include the following. What is the nature of propositional knowledge, knowledge that a particular proposition about the world is true? To know a proposition, we must believe it and it must be true, but something more is required, something that distinguishes knowledge from a lucky guess. A good deal of philosophical work has been invested in trying to determine the nature of warrant. How can we gain knowledge? We can form true beliefs just by making lucky guesses. How to gain warranted beliefs is less clear. Moreover, to know the world, we must think about it, and it is unclear how we gain the concepts we use in thought or what assurance, if any, we have that the ways in which we divide up the world using our concepts correspond to divisions that actually exist. What are the limits of our knowledge? Some aspects of the world may be within the limits of our thought but beyond the limits of our knowledge; faced with competing descriptions of them, we cannot know which description is true. Some aspects of the world may even be beyond the limits of our thought, so that we cannot form intelligible descriptions of them, let alone know that a particular description is true. The disagreement between rationalists and empiricists primarily concerns the second question, regarding the sources of our concepts and knowledge. In some instances, their disagreement on this topic leads them to give conflicting responses to the other questions as well. They may disagree over the nature of warrant or about the limits of our thought and knowledge. Our focus here will be on the competing rationalist and empiricist responses to the second question. Some propositions in a particular subject area, S, are knowable by us by intuition alone; still others are knowable by being deduced from intuited propositions. Intuition is a form of rational insight. Deduction is a process in which we derive conclusions from intuited premises through valid arguments, ones in which the conclusion must be true if the premises are true. We intuit, for example, that the number three is prime and that it is greater than two. We then deduce from this knowledge that there is a prime number greater than two. Intuition and deduction thus provide us with knowledge a priori, which is to say knowledge gained independently of sense experience. Some rationalists take mathematics to be knowable by intuition and deduction. Some place ethical truths in this category. Some include metaphysical claims, such as that God exists, we have free will, and our mind and body are distinct substances. The more propositions rationalists include within the range of intuition and deduction, and the more controversial the truth of those propositions or the claims to know them, the more radical their rationalism. Rationalists also vary the strength of their view by adjusting their understanding of warrant. Some take warranted beliefs to be beyond even the slightest doubt and claim that intuition and deduction provide beliefs of this high epistemic status. Others interpret warrant more conservatively, say as belief beyond a reasonable doubt, and claim that intuition and deduction provide beliefs of that caliber. Still another dimension of rationalism depends on how its proponents understand the connection between intuition, on the one hand, and truth, on the other. Some take intuition to be infallible, claiming that whatever we intuit must be true. Others allow for the possibility of false intuited propositions. The second thesis associated with rationalism is the Innate Knowledge thesis. The Innate Knowledge Thesis: We have knowledge of some truths in a particular subject area, S, as part of our rational nature. The difference between them rests in the accompanying understanding of how this a priori knowledge is gained. The Innate Knowledge thesis offers our rational nature. Our innate knowledge is not learned through either sense experience or intuition and deduction. It is just part of our nature. Experiences may trigger a process by which we bring this knowledge to consciousness, but the experiences do not provide us with the knowledge itself. It has in some way been with us all along. According to some rationalists, we gained the knowledge in an earlier existence. According to others, God provided us with it at creation. Still others say it is part of our nature through natural selection.

Once again, the more subjects included within the range of the thesis or the more controversial the claim to have knowledge in them, the more radical the form of rationalism. Stronger and weaker understandings of warrant yield stronger and weaker versions of the thesis as well. The third important thesis of rationalism is the Innate Concept thesis. The Innate Concept Thesis: We have some of the concepts we employ in a particular subject area, S, as part of our rational nature. According to the Innate Concept thesis, some of our concepts are not gained from experience. They are part of our rational nature in such a way that, while sense experiences may trigger a process by which they are brought to consciousness, experience does not provide the concepts or determine the information they contain. Some claim that the Innate Concept thesis is entailed by the Innate Knowledge Thesis; a particular instance of knowledge can only be innate if the concepts that are contained in the known proposition are also innate. Others, such as Carruthers, argue against this connection, pp. The content and strength of the Innate Concept thesis varies with the concepts claimed to be innate. The more a concept seems removed from experience and the mental operations we can perform on experience the more plausibly it may be claimed to be innate. Since we do not experience perfect triangles but do experience pains, our concept of the former is a more promising candidate for being innate than our concept of the latter. Two other closely related theses are generally adopted by rationalists, although one can certainly be a rationalist without adopting either of them. The first is that experience cannot provide what we gain from reason. The Indispensability of Reason Thesis: The knowledge we gain in subject area, S, by intuition and deduction, as well as the ideas and instances of knowledge in S that are innate to us, could not have been gained by us through sense experience. The second is that reason is superior to experience as a source of knowledge. The Superiority of Reason Thesis: The knowledge we gain in subject area S by intuition and deduction or have innately is superior to any knowledge gained by sense experience. How reason is superior needs explanation, and rationalists have offered different accounts. Another view, generally associated with Plato Republic ec, locates the superiority of a priori knowledge in the objects known. What we know by reason alone, a Platonic form, say, is superior in an important metaphysical way, e. Most forms of rationalism involve notable commitments to other philosophical positions. One is a commitment to the denial of scepticism for at least some area of knowledge. If we claim to know some truths by intuition or deduction or to have some innate knowledge, we obviously reject scepticism with regard to those truths. We have no source of knowledge in S or for the concepts we use in S other than sense experience. Insofar as we have knowledge in the subject, our knowledge is a posteriori, dependent upon sense experience. Empiricists also deny the implication of the corresponding Innate Concept thesis that we have innate ideas in the subject area. Sense experience is our only source of ideas. They reject the corresponding version of the Superiority of Reason thesis. Since reason alone does not give us any knowledge, it certainly does not give us superior knowledge. Empiricists generally reject the Indispensability of Reason thesis, though they need not. The Empiricism thesis does not entail that we have empirical knowledge. It entails that knowledge can only be gained, if at all, by experience. Empiricists may assert, as some do for some subjects, that the rationalists are correct to claim that experience cannot give us knowledge. The conclusion they draw from this rationalist lesson is that we do not know at all. I have stated the basic claims of rationalism and empiricism so that each is relative to a particular subject area. Rationalism and empiricism, so relativized, need not conflict. We can be rationalists in mathematics or a particular area of mathematics and empiricists in all or some of the physical sciences. Rationalism and empiricism only conflict when formulated to cover the same subject. Then the debate, Rationalism vs. The fact that philosophers can be both rationalists and empiricists has implications for the classification schemes often employed in the history of philosophy, especially the one traditionally used to describe the Early Modern Period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries leading up to Kant. It is standard practice to group the major philosophers of this period as either rationalists or empiricists and to suggest that those under one heading share a common agenda in opposition to those under the other. We should adopt such general classification schemes with caution. The views of the individual philosophers are more subtle and complex than the simple-minded classification suggests. See Loeb and Kenny for important discussions of this point. Descartes and Locke have remarkably similar views on the nature of our ideas, even though Descartes takes many to be innate, while Locke ties them all to experience. Thus, Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz are

mistakenly seen as applying a reason-centered epistemology to a common metaphysical agenda, with each trying to improve on the efforts of the one before, while Locke, Berkeley and Hume are mistakenly seen as gradually rejecting those metaphysical claims, with each consciously trying to improve on the efforts of his predecessors. One might claim, for example, that we can gain knowledge in a particular area by a form of Divine revelation or insight that is a product of neither reason nor sense experience. What is perhaps the most interesting form of the debate occurs when we take the relevant subject to be truths about the external world, the world beyond our own minds. A full-fledged rationalist with regard to our knowledge of the external world holds that some external world truths can and must be known a priori, that some of the ideas required for that knowledge are and must be innate, and that this knowledge is superior to any that experience could ever provide. The full-fledged empiricist about our knowledge of the external world replies that, when it comes to the nature of the world beyond our own minds, experience is our sole source of information. Reason might inform us of the relations among our ideas, but those ideas themselves can only be gained, and any truths about the external reality they represent can only be known, on the basis of sense experience. This debate concerning our knowledge of the external world will generally be our main focus in what follows. The debate raises the issue of metaphysics as an area of knowledge.

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Posted on November 2, by admin What are the necessary conditions for thought and discussion? Are there laws of thought? Is there common ground for discussion? Many of you have been asking me about my discussion with Spencer Hawkins on how to approach an argument. Below is the public dialogue I had in the comment section of this youtube video. The video itself is about unity among Christians and the role of general revelation. The original question is the standard one for philosophical skeptics: He initially wants to ask this about eternal being but in order to understand how epistemic horizons work we must first ask in what way they apply to us. I think 3 is wrong: So they could exist for an eternity and only know a finite number true propositions. Or an eternal person could lose knowledge as they gain it "they could forget or remember incorrectly. Since knowledge entails belief, if a person loses a belief they once had, then they no longer have it as a bit of knowledge. It seems to me the only way 3 is true is if we assume two things: Gangadean seems to be merely smuggling those assumptions in without justification. For instance, is what is eternal also the highest power? Spencer Hawkins 1 , 2 , 3 and 4 pretty clearly refer to the person reading or thinking about the premises. So what is implied is not a person with an infallible memory or one who is motivated to seek all true propositions in absolutely every domain of inquiry. Also, Gangadean seems to be unjustly assuming that no facts exist beyond his epistemic horizon. If his soul were eternal in time, it could still be the case that a set of undiscoverable facts exist, given his epistemic limitations. Owen Anderson Spencer Hawkins That raises a few different issues: Can we know anything outside of our experience? Given our human epistemic limitations, flawed memory, and erratic motivation to seek absolutely every domain of fact, it seems to me 3 is false. Gangadean or anyone who agrees with the argument has the burden to show why 3 is true. Can you prove it? Owen Anderson Spencer Hawkins We could add those as more issues, like: Does memory lapse affect my ability to know if I am eternal? Do I need to know everything before I can know anything? Here are the objections I originally had suggested: Human beings lack an interest or motivation to seek true propositions in absolutely every domain. So, even if you or I existed eternally in time, we could still lack some knowledge; thus, 3 is false. Thus, 3 is false. Yes premise 3 is true and the argument is sound. We are working through questions you have about that starting with 1 above in the list. Premise 3 is true if the finite and temporal self the reader or audience, as you say cannot also be eternal being. If the finite self has other limitations, like not seeking or incorrigible memory lapse, this only strengthens the premise. This premise is about whether or not we can know that we are not God. Christians agree, are united, that the self is not God. It is affirming that, given the nature of God and the nature of the self, we can indeed know that the self is not God. The question now seems to be, what is your proof for i? Can you show that the opposite of i is logically impossible? You must first demonstrate the truth of 3 to show that the conclusion of the argument follows by logical necessity. The same is true with i and ii as stated above: You keep adding new questions that we can add to the list: Can the perfect being be imperfect? Does God show malice in Genesis? In Genesis 6 did angels have sex with humans? What would a mind know after having existed from eternity? Can we cross an infinite past to get to the present? Its good to bring up the married bachelors as an example because I think it is similar to what we are facing here in our discussion. Are you going to answer? Same with i and ii? Or are you under the impression that philosophical proofs only come by way of Socratic dialogue? If so, I simply disagree. For instance, you could simply define your terms, state how you will evaluate the argument, state your premises, and prove them. I think human knowledge is fallible and the quest for a foundationalist internalist basis in incorrigible or infallible certainty is a lost cause. Nor have I missed your point about whether epistemic horizons apply to an eternal being. To address that question we need to first back up and figure out what are epistemic horizons and this includes finding out how they affect us. You were concerned in your first post about whether assumptions had been smuggled in, so we need to see if you are doing the same. Your assumptions have kept you from being able to assess what is going on in the argument and then in our

discussion. These specific questions can an eternal mind forget, be subject to decay are ones I also had and ones my students regularly ask me. I have no problem answering them. Additionally, you quoted from someone who regularly slanders me and others I know. This affects whether the question is one in good faith to pursue and answer together. On your end, I can imagine it would be difficult to understand why someone would think that an eternal being would have infinite knowledge given your fallibilism and empiricism. This has been a useful discussion to highlight when questioning becomes incoherent. I can use this dialogue as a resource for others to help to illustrate what happens to a discussion when someone demands an answer but cannot even affirm that an answer is an answer due to their prior commitment to fallibilism. What kind of answer does he want? We can watch and see if a skeptic can also have integrity with that profession. What would it look like to be consistent with saying each word in my sentence or question does not mean what it means? If you would like to discuss this with me, or why an eternal mind would have infinite knowledge and not be subject to memory loss or decay, follow my blog as I will update it. This seems not only fallacious but an attempt to rhetorically hijack the conversation to keep it under your complete philosophical control. And even if I was a hopelessly lost intellectual, you could still simply demonstrate the logical impossibility of the opposite of 3 and 1. I affirm that the sun remains the sun even after it has set. I think fallible is a predicate of people, not always propositions. You seem to be making this slide: For one thing, there are many kinds of fallibilism. In fact, your responses to my comments demonstrate that I am capable of carrying on a conversation! In other words, your standard of proof is too high. This seems to be the kind of sophistry that philosophers try to avoid. Or that only deductive proof is permissible. Or that we must prove the laws of thought. Or that we can only dialogue if you agree with me about everything. Much of these misrepresentations most likely trace to your original source that you quoted. It is his regular use of insults and misrepresentations that is the problem. You say philosophers want to avoid sophistry and that is right. They also want to avoid those types of behavior. What are our epistemic limits? How do we understand our own fallibility and limitations? This is far from stalling or failing to have a good proof. Nevertheless, making those kinds of assertions is precisely what is slowing this down and undermining your claim to just want to deal with the question. What I am asking is if we have the necessary conditions for thought and discourse in place to continue on together and assess this argument. Where we are at now in addressing that question of epistemic horizons is this: You seem to agree that reason is transcendental, but that you do not know if it is ontological applies to being as well as thought, is that right? You say there is still no proof. See my above comments about your example of the married bachelors: You can simply state your justification for 3 and 1. It feels like a cheap apologetic ploy, tbh. If I have misrepresented your view, I apologize. Moreover, the Public Philosophy podcast has several lectures that lay out the Gangadeanian philosophy.

**Chapter 5 : Dialogue: Necessary Conditions for Thought and Discussion | Renewal Philosophy**

*The Approachable Argument by Michael G. Leigh, May 30, , Kendall Hunt Pub Co edition, Paperback in English - 2 Spi Stu edition.*

The Latin form *elenchus* plural *elenchi* is used in English as the technical philosophical term. According to Vlastos, [5] it has the following steps: Socrates then argues, and the interlocutor agrees, that these further premises imply the contrary of the original thesis; in this case, it leads to: One elenctic examination can lead to a new, more refined, examination of the concept being considered, in this case it invites an examination of the claim: Most Socratic inquiries consist of a series of *elenchi* and typically end in puzzlement known as *aporia*. Having shown that a proposed thesis is false is insufficient to conclude that some other competing thesis must be true. Rather, the interlocutors have reached *aporia*, an improved state of still not knowing what to say about the subject under discussion. The exact nature of the *elenchus* is subject to a great deal of debate, in particular concerning whether it is a positive method, leading to knowledge, or a negative method used solely to refute false claims to knowledge. Guthrie in *The Greek Philosophers* sees it as an error to regard the Socratic method as a means by which one seeks the answer to a problem, or knowledge. Guthrie writes, "[Socrates] was accustomed to say that he did not himself know anything, and that the only way in which he was wiser than other men was that he was conscious of his own ignorance, while they were not. The essence of the Socratic method is to convince the interlocutor that whereas he thought he knew something, in fact he does not. Such an examination challenged the implicit moral beliefs of the interlocutors, bringing out inadequacies and inconsistencies in their beliefs, and usually resulting in *aporia*. In view of such inadequacies, Socrates himself professed his ignorance, but others still claimed to have knowledge. Socrates believed that his awareness of his ignorance made him wiser than those who, though ignorant, still claimed knowledge. While this belief seems paradoxical at first glance, it in fact allowed Socrates to discover his own errors where others might assume they were correct. This claim was known by the anecdote of the Delphic oracular pronouncement that Socrates was the wisest of all men. Or, rather, that no man was wiser than Socrates. Socrates used this claim of wisdom as the basis of his moral exhortation. Accordingly, he claimed that the chief goodness consists in the caring of the soul concerned with moral truth and moral understanding, that "wealth does not bring goodness, but goodness brings wealth and every other blessing, both to the individual and to the state", and that "life without examination [dialogue] is not worth living". It is with this in mind that the Socratic method is employed. Socrates rarely used the method to actually develop consistent theories, instead using myth to explain them. Instead of arriving at answers, the method was used to break down the theories we hold, to go "beyond" the axioms and postulates we take for granted. Therefore, myth and the Socratic method are not meant by Plato to be incompatible; they have different purposes, and are often described as the "left hand" and "right hand" paths to good and wisdom. Socratic Circles[ edit ] A Socratic Circle also known as a Socratic Seminar is a pedagogical approach based on the Socratic method and uses a dialogic approach to understand information in a text. Its systematic procedure is used to examine a text through questions and answers founded on the beliefs that all new knowledge is connected to prior knowledge, that all thinking comes from asking questions, and that asking one question should lead to asking further questions. The inner circle focuses on exploring and analysing the text through the act of questioning and answering. During this phase, the outer circle remains silent. Students in the outer circle are much like scientific observers watching and listening to the conversation of the inner circle. When the text has been fully discussed and the inner circle is finished talking, the outer circle provides feedback on the dialogue that took place. This process alternates with the inner circle students going to the outer circle for the next meeting and vice versa. The length of this process varies depending on the text used for the discussion. The teacher may decide to alternate groups within one meeting, or they may alternate at each separate meeting. In Socratic Circles the students lead the discussion and questioning. The structure it takes may look different in each classroom. While this is not an exhaustive list, teachers may use one of the following structures to administer Socratic Seminar: Students need to be arranged in inner and outer circles. The inner circle engages in

discussion about the text. The outer circle observes the inner circle, while taking notes. Students use constructive criticism as opposed to making judgements. The students on the outside keep track of topics they would like to discuss as part of the debrief. Participants of the outer circle can use an observation checklist or notes form to monitor the participants in the inner circle. These tools will provide structure for listening and give the outside members specific details to discuss later in the seminar. Pilots are the speakers because they are in the inner circle; co-pilots are in the outer circle and only speak during consultation. The seminar proceeds as any other seminar. At a point in the seminar, the facilitator pauses the discussion and instructs the triad to talk to each other. Conversation will be about topics that need more in-depth discussion or a question posed by the leader. Sometimes triads will be asked by the facilitator to come up with a new question. Only during that time is the switching of seats allowed. This structure allows for students to speak, who may not yet have the confidence to speak in the large group. This type of seminar involves all students instead of just the students in the inner and outer circles. Students are arranged in multiple small groups and placed as far as possible from each other. Following the guidelines of the Socratic Seminar, students engage in small group discussions. According to the literature, this type of seminar is beneficial for teachers who want students to explore a variety of texts around a main issue or topic. A larger Socratic Seminar can then occur as a discussion about how each text corresponds with one another. Simultaneous Seminars can also be used for a particularly difficult text. Students can work through different issues and key passages from the text. The seminars encourage students to work together, creating meaning from the text and to stay away from trying to find a correct interpretation. The emphasis is on critical and creative thinking. Furthermore, the seminar text enables the participants to create a level playing field “ ensuring that the dialogical tone within the classroom remains consistent and pure to the subject or topic at hand.

Chapter 6 : Pascal's Wager - Wikipedia

*The Approachable Argument W/cd by Michael G. Leigh A readable copy. All pages are intact, and the cover is intact. Pages can include considerable notes-in pen or highlighter-but the notes cannot obscure the text.*

As Laurent Thirouin writes: The celebrity of fragment has been established at the price of a mutilation. The unbeliever who had provoked this long analysis to counter his previous objection "Maybe I bet too much" is still not ready to join the apologist on the side of faith. He put forward two new objections, undermining the foundations of the wager: The conclusion is evident: Voltaire hints at the fact that Pascal, as a Jansenist, believed that only a small, and already predestined, portion of humanity would eventually be saved by God. Voltaire explained that no matter how far someone is tempted with rewards to believe in Christian salvation, the result will be at best a faint belief. Argument from inconsistent revelations Since there have been many religions throughout history, and therefore many conceptions of God or gods, some assert that all of them need to be factored into the Wager, in an argument known as the argument from inconsistent revelations. This, its proponents argue, would lead to a high probability of believing in "the wrong god", which, they claim, eliminates the mathematical advantage Pascal claimed with his Wager. Mackie notes that "the church within which alone salvation is to be found is not necessarily the Church of Rome, but perhaps that of the Anabaptists or members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or the Muslim Sunnis or the worshipers of Kali or of Odin. If a certain action leads one closer to salvation in the former religion, it leads one further away from it in the latter. Therefore, the expected value of following a certain religion could be negative. Or, one could also argue that there are an infinite number of mutually exclusive religions which is a subset of the set of all possible religions, and that the probability of any one of them being true is zero; therefore, the expected value of following a certain religion is zero. They have their ceremonies, their prophets, their doctors, their saints, their monks, like us," etc. If you care but little to know the truth, that is enough to leave you in repose. But if you desire with all your heart to know it, it is not enough; look at it in detail. That would be sufficient for a question in philosophy; but not here, where everything is at stake. And yet, after a superficial reflection of this kind, we go to amuse ourselves, etc. Let us inquire of this same religion whether it does not give a reason for this obscurity; perhaps it will teach it to us. Pascal says that unbelievers who rest content with the many-religions objection are people whose scepticism has seduced them into a fatal "repose". If they were really bent on knowing the truth, they would be persuaded to examine "in detail" whether Christianity is like any other religion, but they just cannot be bothered. If, however, any who raised it were sincere, they would want to examine the matter "in detail". In that case, they could get some pointers by turning to his chapter on "other religions". Those pagan religions which still exist in the New World, in India, and in Africa are not even worth a second glance. Nevertheless, Pascal concludes that the religion founded by Mohammed can on several counts be shown to be devoid of divine authority, and that therefore, as a path to the knowledge of God, it is as much a dead end as paganism. Who then can blame the Christians for not being able to give reasons for their beliefs, professing as they do a religion which they cannot explain by reason? This would be dishonest and immoral. In addition, it is absurd to think that God, being just and omniscient, would not see through this deceptive strategy on the part of the "believer", thus nullifying the benefits of the Wager. This hypothetical unbeliever complains, "I am so made that I cannot believe. What would you have me do? Explicitly addressing the question of inability to believe, Pascal argues that if the Wager is valid, the inability to believe is irrational, and therefore must be caused by feelings: Follow the way by which they began; by acting as if they believed, taking the holy water, having masses said, etc. Even this will naturally make you believe, and deaden your acuteness. What have you to lose? More specifically, Richard Carrier has objected by positing an alternative conception of God that prefers his creatures to be honest inquirers and disapproves of thoughtless or feigned belief: Suppose there is a god who is watching us and choosing which souls of the deceased to bring to heaven, and this god really does want only the morally good to populate heaven. He will probably select from only those who made a significant and responsible effort to discover the truth. Therefore, only such people can be sufficiently moral and trustworthy

to deserve a place in heaven " unless God wishes to fill heaven with the morally lazy, irresponsible, or untrustworthy. But if what I say is correct " and it is " then I will succeed, and you will be destroyed. This could be considered as an early version of the Wager. It is noteworthy that at the end of the tragedy *Dionysos*, the god to whom Kadmos referred, appears and punishes him for thinking in this way. Euripides, quite clearly, considered and dismissed the wager in this tragedy. Pascal stated that people could not simply choose to believe, but that they might develop a faith through their actions. Thus, we should seek value.

Chapter 7 : The Approachable Argument (May 30, edition) | Open Library

*Arguments in academic writing are usually complex and take time to develop. Your argument will need to be more than a simple or obvious statement such as "Frank Lloyd Wright was a great architect."*

Justices hint at categorical approach to correcting forfeited Sentencing Guidelines errors Posted Thu, February 22nd, Other times, the justices know who will win, and oral argument becomes an opportunity for the judges to use counsel as a sounding board as to how the opinion should be written. United States had the earmarks of the latter. The issue in this case is whether a plain Sentencing Guidelines error should normally be corrected, even when the defendant has failed to object in the district court. It appears that six or seven justices will vote in favor of petitioner Florencio Rosales-Mireles, convicted of illegal re-entry into the United States and sentenced to 78 months in prison. In fact, the pronounced sentence fell near the middle of the correct range, months. Because Rosales-Mireles had not objected to the error, Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 52 b required him to demonstrate four things: The 5th Circuit panel found that Rosales-Mireles had satisfied the first three criteria, but not the fourth, primarily because the actual sentence happened to fall within the correct range. There, Rosales-Mireles had seemed to argue for a presumption in favor of correcting forfeited Sentencing Guidelines errors, with a case-by-case inquiry into when that presumption had been sufficiently rebutted. Assistant Federal Public Defender Kristin Davidson was not far into her presentation when Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg encouraged her to take the further step of arguing for a categorical approach to Sentencing Guidelines errors. Booker holding that the federal Sentencing Guidelines are unconstitutional unless treated as advisory. Why is this different? Later, during the argument of Assistant to the Solicitor General Jonathan Ellis, the notion of empirical data came up again. But it was not Ellis who raised it. Justice Stephen Breyer "one of the principal architects of the Sentencing Guidelines system when he worked for Senator Edward Kennedy" did. When a defendant is sentenced to 78 months in a month range, as in this case, it creates different data than when a defendant is sentenced to 78 months in a month range. The integrity of the data set, which the commission then relies on for future adjustments, is compromised. Not all the justices who intend to vote for Rosales-Mireles may be prepared to treat forfeited guidelines miscalculations as automatically triggering a full remand. In his Molina-Martinez majority opinion, Kennedy mentioned a case in which a panel of the U. Evan Lee, Argument analysis:

**Chapter 8 : ENG - What is a Counter-Argument**

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Preliminaries Aristotle wrote two ethical treatises: In any case, these two works cover more or less the same ground: Both treatises examine the conditions in which praise or blame are appropriate, and the nature of pleasure and friendship; near the end of each work, we find a brief discussion of the proper relationship between human beings and the divine. Though the general point of view expressed in each work is the same, there are many subtle differences in organization and content as well. Clearly, one is a re-working of the other, and although no single piece of evidence shows conclusively what their order is, it is widely assumed that the Nicomachean Ethics is a later and improved version of the Eudemian Ethics. Not all of the Eudemian Ethics was revised: Perhaps the most telling indication of this ordering is that in several instances the Nicomachean Ethics develops a theme about which its Eudemian cousin is silent. The remainder of this article will therefore focus on this work. Page and line numbers shall henceforth refer to this treatise. It ranges over topics discussed more fully in the other two works and its point of view is similar to theirs. Why, being briefer, is it named the Magna Moralia? Because each of the two papyrus rolls into which it is divided is unusually long. Just as a big mouse can be a small animal, two big chapters can make a small book. A few authors in antiquity refer to a work with this name and attribute it to Aristotle, but it is not mentioned by several authorities, such as Cicero and Diogenes Laertius, whom we would expect to have known of it. No one had written ethical treatises before Aristotle. The Human Good and the Function Argument The principal idea with which Aristotle begins is that there are differences of opinion about what is best for human beings, and that to profit from ethical inquiry we must resolve this disagreement. He insists that ethics is not a theoretical discipline: In raising this questionâ€”what is the good? He assumes that such a list can be compiled rather easily; most would agree, for example, that it is good to have friends, to experience pleasure, to be healthy, to be honored, and to have such virtues as courage at least to some degree. The difficult and controversial question arises when we ask whether certain of these goods are more desirable than others. To be eudaimon is therefore to be living in a way that is well-favored by a god. But Aristotle never calls attention to this etymology in his ethical writings, and it seems to have little influence on his thinking. No one tries to live well for the sake of some further goal; rather, being eudaimon is the highest end, and all subordinate goalsâ€”health, wealth, and other such resourcesâ€”are sought because they promote well-being, not because they are what well-being consists in. But unless we can determine which good or goods happiness consists in, it is of little use to acknowledge that it is the highest end. One important component of this argument is expressed in terms of distinctions he makes in his psychological and biological works. The soul is analyzed into a connected series of capacities: The biological fact Aristotle makes use of is that human beings are the only species that has not only these lower capacities but a rational soul as well. The good of a human being must have something to do with being human; and what sets humanity off from other species, giving us the potential to live a better life, is our capacity to guide ourselves by using reason. If we use reason well, we live well as human beings; or, to be more precise, using reason well over the course of a full life is what happiness consists in. Doing anything well requires virtue or excellence, and therefore living well consists in activities caused by the rational soul in accordance with virtue or excellence. No other writer or thinker had said precisely what he says about what it is to live well. But at the same time his view is not too distant from a common idea. As he himself points out, one traditional conception of happiness identifies it with virtue b30â€”1. He says, not that happiness is virtue, but that it is virtuous activity. Living well consists in doing something, not just being in a certain state or condition. It consists in those lifelong activities that actualize the virtues of the rational part of the soul. At the same time, Aristotle makes it clear that in order to be happy one must possess others goods as wellâ€”such goods as friends, wealth, and power. Someone who is friendless, childless, powerless, weak, and ugly will simply not be able to find many opportunities for virtuous activity over a long period of time, and what little he can accomplish will not be of great merit. To some extent, then, living well requires good fortune; happenstance

can rob even the most excellent human beings of happiness. Nonetheless, Aristotle insists, the highest good, virtuous activity, is not something that comes to us by chance. Although we must be fortunate enough to have parents and fellow citizens who help us become virtuous, we ourselves share much of the responsibility for acquiring and exercising the virtues. Suppose we grant, at least for the sake of argument, that doing anything well, including living well, consists in exercising certain skills; and let us call these skills, whatever they turn out to be, virtues. Even so, that point does not by itself allow us to infer that such qualities as temperance, justice, courage, as they are normally understood, are virtues. They should be counted as virtues only if it can be shown that actualizing precisely these skills is what happiness consists in. What Aristotle owes us, then, is an account of these traditional qualities that explains why they must play a central role in any well-lived life. But perhaps Aristotle disagrees, and refuses to accept this argumentative burden. In one of several important methodological remarks he makes near the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he says that in order to profit from the sort of study he is undertaking, one must already have been brought up in good habits (1095a6). The audience he is addressing, in other words, consists of people who are already just, courageous, and generous; or, at any rate, they are well on their way to possessing these virtues. Why such a restricted audience? Why does he not address those who have serious doubts about the value of these traditional qualities, and who therefore have not yet decided to cultivate and embrace them? Addressing the moral skeptic, after all, is the project Plato undertook in the *Republic*: He does not appear to be addressing someone who has genuine doubts about the value of justice or kindred qualities. Perhaps, then, he realizes how little can be accomplished, in the study of ethics, to provide it with a rational foundation. Perhaps he thinks that no reason can be given for being just, generous, and courageous. These are qualities one learns to love when one is a child, and having been properly habituated, one no longer looks for or needs a reason to exercise them. One can show, as a general point, that happiness consists in exercising some skills or other, but that the moral skills of a virtuous person are what one needs is not a proposition that can be established on the basis of argument. This is not the only way of reading the *Ethics*, however. For surely we cannot expect Aristotle to show what it is about the traditional virtues that makes them so worthwhile until he has fully discussed the nature of those virtues. He himself warns us that his initial statement of what happiness is should be treated as a rough outline whose details are to be filled in later (1095a20). His intention in Book I of the *Ethics* is to indicate in a general way why the virtues are important; why particular virtues—courage, justice, and the like—are components of happiness is something we should be able to better understand only at a later point. His point, rather, may be that in ethics, as in any other study, we cannot make progress towards understanding why things are as they are unless we begin with certain assumptions about what is the case. Neither theoretical nor practical inquiry starts from scratch. Someone who has made no observations of astronomical or biological phenomena is not yet equipped with sufficient data to develop an understanding of these sciences. The parallel point in ethics is that to make progress in this sphere we must already have come to enjoy doing what is just, courageous, generous and the like. We must experience these activities not as burdensome constraints, but as noble, worthwhile, and enjoyable in themselves. Then, when we engage in ethical inquiry, we can ask what it is about these activities that makes them worthwhile. We can also compare these goods with other things that are desirable in themselves—pleasure, friendship, honor, and so on—and ask whether any of them is more desirable than the others. We approach ethical theory with a disorganized bundle of likes and dislikes based on habit and experience; such disorder is an inevitable feature of childhood. But what is not inevitable is that our early experience will be rich enough to provide an adequate basis for worthwhile ethical reflection; that is why we need to have been brought up well. Yet such an upbringing can take us only so far. We seek a deeper understanding of the objects of our childhood enthusiasms, and we must systematize our goals so that as adults we have a coherent plan of life. We need to engage in ethical theory, and to reason well in this field, if we are to move beyond the low-grade form of virtue we acquired as children. His project is to make ethics an autonomous field, and to show why a full understanding of what is good does not require expertise in any other field. There is another contrast with Plato that should be emphasized: In Book II of the *Republic*, we are told that the best type of good is one that is desirable both in itself and for the sake of its results (357a). Plato argues that justice should be placed in this category, but since it is generally agreed that it is desirable for its

consequences, he devotes most of his time to establishing his more controversial point—that justice is to be sought for its own sake. By contrast, Aristotle assumes that if A is desirable for the sake of B, then B is better than A<sup>14</sup>; therefore, the highest kind of good must be one that is not desirable for the sake of anything else. To show that A deserves to be our ultimate end, one must show that all other goods are best thought of as instruments that promote A in some way or other. He needs to discuss honor, wealth, pleasure, and friendship in order to show how these goods, properly understood, can be seen as resources that serve the higher goal of virtuous activity. He vindicates the centrality of virtue in a well-lived life by showing that in the normal course of things a virtuous person will not live a life devoid of friends, honor, wealth, pleasure, and the like. Virtuous activity makes a life happy not by guaranteeing happiness in all circumstances, but by serving as the goal for the sake of which lesser goods are to be pursued. That is why he stresses that in this sort of study one must be satisfied with conclusions that hold only for the most part<sup>11</sup>. Poverty, isolation, and dishonor are normally impediments to the exercise of virtue and therefore to happiness, although there may be special circumstances in which they are not. The possibility of exceptions does not undermine the point that, as a rule, to live well is to have sufficient resources for the pursuit of virtue over the course of a lifetime. Virtues and Deficiencies, Contenance and Incontinence Aristotle distinguishes two kinds of virtue<sup>1</sup>. Intellectual virtues are in turn divided into two sorts: He organizes his material by first studying ethical virtue in general, then moving to a discussion of particular ethical virtues temperance, courage, and so on, and finally completing his survey by considering the intellectual virtues practical wisdom, theoretical wisdom, etc. All free males are born with the potential to become ethically virtuous and practically wise, but to achieve these goals they must go through two stages: This does not mean that first we fully acquire the ethical virtues, and then, at a later stage, add on practical wisdom. Ethical virtue is fully developed only when it is combined with practical wisdom<sup>14</sup>. A low-grade form of ethical virtue emerges in us during childhood as we are repeatedly placed in situations that call for appropriate actions and emotions; but as we rely less on others and become capable of doing more of our own thinking, we learn to develop a larger picture of human life, our deliberative skills improve, and our emotional responses are perfected. Like anyone who has developed a skill in performing a complex and difficult activity, the virtuous person takes pleasure in exercising his intellectual skills. Furthermore, when he has decided what to do, he does not have to contend with internal pressures to act otherwise. He does not long to do something that he regards as shameful; and he is not greatly distressed at having to give up a pleasure that he realizes he should forego. Aristotle places those who suffer from such internal disorders into one of three categories: 1 Some agents, having reached a decision about what to do on a particular occasion, experience some counter-pressure brought on by an appetite for pleasure, or anger, or some other emotion; and this countervailing influence is not completely under the control of reason. Such people are not virtuous, although they generally do what a virtuous person does. 2 others are less successful than the average person in resisting these counter-pressures. The explanation of *akrasia* is a topic to which we will return in section 7.

## Chapter 9 : General Info for Writing an Argument Essay

*A Warning about Topics: Since this class is focused on academic writing and, thus, on academic argument, logical reasoning and the writer's ethos will prevail over emotional appeals.*

Write an argumentative essay on a controversial issue. Present the issue to readers, take a position, and develop a convincing, well-reasoned argument. This handout covers information about position papers, but the same information is applicable to other kinds of argumentative essays. Once you have chosen and explored your topic, you will be in a better position to determine which type of argumentative essay will best suit your purpose. Arguing a position is intellectually challenging. It requires you to think critically about your own assumptions, to separate fact from opinion, and to respect the right of others to disagree with you as you may disagree with them. Reasoned argument depends on giving reasons; it demands that positions be supported rather than merely asserted. Controversial issues are, by definition, issues about which people feel strongly and sometimes disagree vehemently. Writers cannot offer absolute proof in debates about controversial issues because they are matters of opinion and judgment. To some extent, people decide such matters by considering factual evidence, but they may also base their positions on less objective factors such as values and principles, assumptions and preconceptions about how the world works and how it should work. Although it is not possible to prove that a position on a controversial issue is right or wrong, it is possible through argument to convince others to accept or reject a position. To be convincing, a position paper must argue for its position and also counter opposing arguments. When arguing for a position, writers must do more than provide support. Counterarguing may involve not only refuting flawed arguments but also learning from reasonable opposing arguments and modifying your position to accommodate them.

**Facts About Argumentative Essays:** Writers cannot offer absolute proof in debates about controversial issues because they are matters of opinion and judgment; positions depend to some extent on factual evidence but depend as well on less objective factors like values and principles, assumptions and preconceptions about how the world works and how it should work. A convincing argument counterargues opposing arguments but also modifies its position to accommodate reasonable opposing arguments.

**Purpose and Audience Considerations:** You may have a variety of purposes for writing a paper that takes a position on a controversial issue. First and foremost, you will write to take a position. But you will do more than simply state what you think; you will also present an argument explaining and justifying your point of view. Although your position paper will nearly always be written for others to read, writing can also lead you to clarify your own thinking. They seek common ground in shared interests, values, and principles. They may show that they are reasonable by moderating their own views and urging others to compromise as well. Often, however, all that can be done is to sharpen the differences. Position papers written in these circumstances tend to be more contentious than compromising. Purpose and audience are thus closely linked when you write a position paper. In defining your purpose and developing an effective argumentative strategy, you also need to analyze your readers.

**Summary of Basic Features:** Position papers concern controversial issues, matters of policy and principle about which people disagree. These issues must be arguable and not subject to absolute proof. They may involve conflicting values and priorities or disagreements about current practices and procedures. How writers define the issue depends on what they assume readers already know and what they want readers to think about the issue. Therefore, they try to define the issue in a way that promotes their argumentative strategy. Defining an issue essentially means framing it in a particular context. In addition, sometimes defining the issue also involves marking its boundaries. Very often writers declare their position in a thesis statement early in the essay. This strategy has the advantage of letting readers know right away where the writer stands.

**A Convincing, Well-Reasoned Argument:** To convince readers, writers must develop an argumentative strategy that will enable them to achieve their purpose with their particular readers. The argumentative strategy determines how they will argue for their position and how they will counter opposing arguments.

**Arguing Directly for the Position:** Even when their arguments are complicated and subtle, writers try to make their reasoning simple and direct. They do not merely hint at their reasons, hoping that readers will figure them out. Instead, they make their reasons explicit and explain their

thinking in some detail. They usually also offer several reasons because they know that some will carry more weight with readers than others. As they argue for their positions, experienced writers also argue against the objections and alternative arguments that readers holding differing positions on the issue are likely to offer. More often, writers either 2 accommodate arguments by qualifying their own position, or 3 refute arguments. Counterarguing can enhance credibility and strengthen the argument. When readers holding an opposing position recognize that a writer takes their reasoning seriously, they are more likely to listen to what the writer has to say. Counterargument can also reassure readers that they share certain important values and attitudes with a writer, building a bridge of common concerns among people who have been separated by difference and antagonism. The challenge for writers, therefore, is to find a tone that adequately expresses their feelings without shutting down communication. Possible tones include calm and thoughtful, informal, or formal which is typical of academic arguments. Four Approaches to Argumentative Writing: There are several different types of argumentative essays, depending on the topic you choose and the approach you wish to take: A position paper is the most common type of argumentative essay. A proposal paper is the second most common type of argumentative essay. An evaluation paper is another very common type of argumentative essay. A causal-analysis paper is the fourth common type of argumentative essay. The writer can take two different approaches: Again, some of the topics above might work well with this approach e. A Warning about Topics: Choose a topic that will fit with the form of an academic argument.