a very brief informal but adequately comprehensive practical introduction to argument

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https://shemesh.larc.nasa.gov/arg/intro2argbycmh.pdf
Argument

an attempt to convince others to believe a conclusion through reasoning and one or more premises
**Argument**

Your attempt to convince others to believe a **conclusion** through **reasoning** and one or more **premises**.

**Conclusion**

The statement you want your audience to believe.

**Premise**

A statement you think your audience believes (Assumption: a premise you’re not prepared to justify if your audience does not believe it).

**Reasoning**

Why you think your premises should cause your audience to believe your conclusion.

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Argument

your attempt to convince others to believe a conclusion through reasoning and one or more premises

**Conclusion**
the statement you want your audience to believe

**Premise**
a statement you think your audience believes
(Assumption: a premise you’re not prepared to justify if your audience does not believe it)

**Reasoning**
why you think your premises should cause your audience to believe your conclusion

**Defeater**
a statement that may cause your audience to not believe your conclusion

definitions (very informal-ish)

**argument**: your attempt to convince others to **believe** a **conclusion** through **reasoning** from one or more **premises**

**conclusion**: the statement you want your audience to **believe**

**premise**: a statement you think your audience **believes**

  - **evidence**: a name you may give to a **premise** you’re certain your audience **believes**
  - **assumption**: a **premise** you are not prepared to justify if your audience does not **believe** it

**reasoning**: why you think the **premises** should cause your audience to **believe** your **conclusion**

**defeater**: a statement that may cause your audience to not **believe** your **conclusion**

**believe**: accept as true
Argument – example
you attempt to convince others to believe

Sam is eligible to run for President of the United States
Argument – example
you attempt to convince others to believe Sam is eligible ... given 3 premises

- Sam is 57 years old
- Sam was born in the Commonwealth of Virginia
- Sam has never lived outside of the U.S.
- Sam is eligible to run for President of the United States
Argument – example
you attempt to convince others to believe Sam is eligible ... through weak reasoning given 3 premises
Argument – example
you attempt to convince others to believe Sam is eligible ... through strong reasoning ...

- Sam is 57 years old
- Sam was born in the Commonwealth of Virginia
- Sam has never lived outside of the U.S.
- Eligibility requirements in Article II, Section I of the Constitution
- Sam is eligible to run for President of the United States
Argument – example
you attempt to convince others to believe Sam is eligible ... through strong reasoning ... but may be defeated
**Argument – example**
you attempt to convince others to believe Sam is eligible ... through strong reasoning ... but are defeated
Argument – example – variation 1

you attempt to convince others to believe **Sam is eligible** ... through **strong reasoning** ... with an assumption
Argument – example – variation 2
you attempt to convince others to believe Sam is eligible ... through strong reasoning ... with a false premise
other terms sometimes used

**conclusion:** claim, goal, thesis

**premise:** evidence, grounds, solution, data

**reasoning:** warrant, backing, argument *(unfortunately)*, strategy

**defeater:** rebuttal, counter-argument, counter-evidence
Premise(s) → Reasoning (warrant) → Conclusion

beware Defeaters
‘tis always possible someone will not be convinced by an ‘undefeated’, cogent, compelling argument

here’s a major reason why ...
Presuppositions
Pre-suppositions determine
Presuppositions determine plausibility
Presuppositions determine plausibility.
presuppositions (the propositions, ideas, perceptions, conjectures, beliefs, etc. you treat as true, whether explicitly or subconsciously, before evaluating an argument)

predetermine (establish in advance)

plausibility (the boundaries within which you judge the reasonableness, believability, credibility of an argument)
Example – presupposition negates cogent argument

you attempt to convince others to believe **Sam is eligible** ... through **strong reasoning** ...

- **Sam is 57 years old**
- **Sam was born in the Commonwealth of Virginia**
- **Sam has never lived outside of the U.S.**
- **Eligibility requirements in Article II, Section I of the Constitution**
- **Sam is eligible to run for President of the United States**
Example – presupposition negates cogent argument
you attempt to convince others to believe Sam is eligible ... through strong reasoning ... but ...
Example – presupposition negates cogent argument
you attempt to convince others to believe Sam is eligible ... through strong reasoning ... but ...
Suppositions
(the propositions, ideas, perceptions, conjectures, beliefs, etc. you treat as true, whether explicitly or subconsciously, before evaluating an argument)

Determine
(establish in advance)

Plausibility
(the boundaries within which you judge the reasonableness, believability, credibility of an argument)
Questions?