

TOULMIN ARGUMENT

- I. Stephan Toulmin developed a method of argumentation that requires the writer to use logical structure, not in an attempt to prove any point, but in the hopes of convincing one's readers of the validity of the points used in the argument. Using claim, because clause, grounds, warrant, backing, rebuttal, and qualifiers, the writer hopes to convince the reader to accept the claim of the argument.
- II. Within Toulmin's schema, the writer must first choose a topic and then form an opinion about the topic. This information is written in one sentence, which is called the claim.

One might argue, *Drugs should not be legalized* or *Drugs should be legalized*. These sentences are claims.

- III. A because clause is added to a claim as a reason that supports the claim.
* Many papers will include more than one.

Drugs should not be legalized *because the legalization of drugs would increase the number of drug addicts*.

- IV. Grounds are evidence in the form of facts, data, or any information that supports the claim. Grounds answer the question, "How do you know?"

If police officers no longer arrest drug dealers, confiscate the drugs, and punish drug dealers and buyers, *then there will be more drugs available to the people*.

- V. A warrant is the unstated assumption underlying a claim, which should be a value, belief, or principle the audience agrees with.

The underlying belief for the statement above is: *Increasing the number of drug addicts would be bad*.

- VI. Backing is support for the warrant and answers the question, "Why do you believe that?"

Increasing the number of drug addicts would be bad *because a person who is doing drugs can hurt others when he/she is driving*.

- VII. A rebuttal acknowledges the limitations of the claim. Under some circumstances, the claim may not be true. Also, one who is opposed to the writer's claim may find ways to attack the reasons, grounds, warrant, or the backing.

Perhaps legalizing drugs *would not increase the number of drug addicts because the government would regulate the sale and use of drugs*.

Note: You must rebut the rebuttal!

- VIII. Qualifiers are words or phrases that limit the force of the writer's claim.

Perhaps, In many cases, Often, Probably