

TOULMIN METHOD



BACKGROUND

- ▶ British philosopher **Stephen Toulmin** (1922–)
- ▶ method for **critical reading & writing**
- ▶ *more than* initial, emotional response to an argument
- ▶ analyzing the argument
 - breaking down the argument into its key components
 - raising questions of the text

BACKGROUND

▶ PURPOSE:

- to identify the **thesis**
- to analyze the **evidence**
- to determine the **relationship** between the thesis and each piece of evidence (reason)

CLAIMS

- ▶ identify and evaluate the authors'
 - thesis
 - main point
 - central argument
- ▶ the Thesis Statement
 - typically conveys the “Claim”
- ▶ the Topic Sentences
 - relate the supportive “Sub-Claims”

CLAIMS

▶ types of claims:

- **arguments for/against laws & policies**
 - (“there oughta be a law ’gainst that!”)
- **arguments on reality, facts**
 - (argue what’s real, true, historical)
 - (CSI: scenario, hypothesis)
- **arguments on values, morals, taste**
 - (art, aesthetics, beauty, religion, behaviors, beliefs)

CLAIMS

- ▶ as writers:
 - you will clearly state your **Claim** in a **Thesis Statement** (or Thesis Question)
 - at the end of the Introduction
 - and state your **Sub-Claims** in the **Topic Sentence**
 - at the start of each paragraph

GROUNDNS

- ▶ evaluate their **support, proof, evidence**
- ▶ analyze the **sources** they rely upon for that evidence
- ▶ note authorial **credentials, qualifications**
- ▶ note if they have included rebuttals, refutations
 - the opposing side
 - Rogerian Method

GROUNDNS

▶ types of proof:

- reasons, facts,
- witnesses (expert, first-hand)
- examples, anecdotes, illustrations,
- data, evidence, statistics
- historical, medical, legal records and documents

GROUNDS

▶ as writers:

- you will utilize evidence that is
 - relevant, germane
 - timely
 - unequivocal
 - accurate
- you will rely on **authors** that are
 - dependable
 - credentialed
 - qualified

WARRANTS

- ▶ determine relationship between each piece of evidence *and* the thesis
 - between the Grounds and the Claim
 - (relevance, justification)

WARRANTS

- ▶ Warrants make sure that writers do *more than merely supply* evidence
- ▶ They make sure that **the Grounds are related to the Claim AND that the Claim is justified by the Grounds**
- ▶ It may be useful to consider the term's antonym, with which we are more familiar



WARRANTS

▶ “UNWARRANTED”

- unjustified
- unprovoked
- unsubstantiated
- unproven
- unsupported
- uncalled-for
- unreasonable
- indefensible
- unnecessary

WARRANTS

▶ questions to ask:

◦ Is the evidence –?

- **relevant, germane, on–point**
 - to the current argument, issue
 - to the author’s Claim
- **reliable**
- **accurate**
- **based on assumptions or inferences OR precedent, fact, proof**
- **ample, sufficient, adequate**

WARRANTS

▶ questions to ask:

- Do the Grounds support *this* Claim?
- Is the reasoning sound or fallacious?
- By the evidence given, is the point being made
 - warranted
 - justified
 - merited
 - proven

WARRANTS

▶ as readers:

- ascertain if the authors support their claims
 - with **ample, accurate, and relevant** evidence
 - via reliable sources
- they should put the evidence into some context
- justify the Grounds, relate the evidence to the Claim
- determine if they take their ideas to the next level
 - in the Conclusion
 - they should make recommendations and/or suggestions
 - fodder for future essays
 - they should do more than just gripe

WARRANTS

- ▶ as *writers*:
 - answer the above questions for the readers
 - support your claims
 - with **ample, accurate, and relevant** evidence
 - using **reliable** sources
 - justify your Grounds
 - relate your evidence to your Thesis
 - take your ideas to the *next level* in the Conclusion
 - that is, you should make recommendations and/or suggestions—fodder for the next essay

WARRANT STATEMENTS

- ▶ What this usually entails is a “**Warrant Statement**”
 - if not after each supporting detail
 - then at the end of each paragraph
 - as a way to bring the paragraph to a close
 - as a way to bring us *full-circle* to the paragraph's opening point
 - a “**Clincher Sentence**” for the paragraph

WARRANT STATEMENTS

- ▶ Thus, these **Warrant Statements** usually begin with a transition such as
 - "**thus**" or "**therefore**"
 - even a transitional phrase such as "**As the previous examples clearly illustrate**," followed by the paragraph's main point.

WARRANT STATEMENTS

- ▶ “THUS,” “THEREFORE”:
 - After using some evidence (*such as a quote*), answer:
 - SO WHAT?!
 - reiterate your main point
 - relate the evidence to your main point
 - draw conclusions, put it into context, tie it all together, spell it out
 - make suggestions, recommendations, conclusions, inferences, policies,
 - formulate principles, generalizations
 - (INDUCTION = from specific → general)
 - *more than* just griping

WARRANT STATEMENTS

- ▶ “THUS,” “THEREFORE”:
 - **NEVER** end a paragraph with someone else’s words or ideas
 - *you*essay = *your*analysis
 - add your proverbial “2 cents”
 - (1) name your point
 - (2) explain it
 - (3) illustrate it
 - (4) justify it

TOULMIN METHOD

- ▶ You see how its "**claims**" & "**grounds**" are synonymous with "thesis" & "support."
 - Pot-ay-to, po-tah-to.
 - He's got to call them something new, different.
- ▶ ***As critical readers***, we look for the main point ("gist") of a source & see how well or poorly that stance is supported.
- ▶ ***As critical writers***, we need to make clear our claim/thesis and support it with ample, relevant, unambiguous proof.
- ▶ The trickiest part of Toulmin's method is the "**warrant**" part. Think relevance & justification.

TOULMIN METHOD

- ▶ Claims = Thesis
- ▶ Grounds = Evidence, Proof
- ▶ Warrant = Relevance, Justification