

## The good argument checklist (course goal 1)

A good argument is CLEAR. It's easy to follow. (Review "One Minute Eloquence")

- The speaker takes a powerful and specific stand right up front.
- The speaker uses indicator words ("because, therefore, first, next...") within her argument to help her audience understand how her statements fit together.
- The speaker draws her conclusion at the end of the argument.

A good argument has strong SUPPORT. It meets all doubts and objections.

- The speaker consistently supports her claims, answering HDYKT? questions.
- The speaker answers *all* the HDYKT? questions—not just the first question, but also the questions that are asked about her first answers, and so on. There are no gaps in her argument.
- The speaker relies on diverse, reliable sources as starting points for her argument.
- The speaker cites her sources fully as she uses them.
- The speaker makes use of appropriate commonsense assumptions, and especially value assumptions.
- The speaker uses the critical questions for example arguments, arguments about causes and analogy arguments, where appropriate.
- The speaker consistently answers SO WHAT? questions, explaining how her information supports her claims.
- The speaker consistently answers MORE? questions, developing several lines of reasoning converging on her claim.

A good argument is RELEVANT. It fits with other arguments to make a strong case.

- The speaker uses the stock issues to identify the central question she has to answer.
- The speaker's argument is part of an overall case that is strategically designed to meet the refutations the opponent can make.

A good argument is ELOQUENT. It's powerful and personal.

- The speaker is conspicuously well prepared.
- The speaker establishes her credibility through good oral delivery or good paper form.
- The speaker's language is simple, unambiguous and accurate.
- The speaker avoids "I think" and "I believe," since an argument is about what the audience should think and believe.
- The speaker uses language that is as strong as her argument permits, but no stronger.
- The speaker shows conspicuous respect for her audience and opponent.
- The speaker adopts a distinct personal style, and also adapts it to her audience.

**This argument is:**    **excellent**    **good**    **close**    **needs work**    **far from adequate**