
Using Patterns for Argument

Argument and exposition have many things in common. They both use the basic patterns of exposition; they share a concern for the audience; and they often deal with similar subjects, including social trends (changing social relationships, the growth of the animal rights movement), recent developments (the creation of new strains of plants through genetic manipulation, developments in health care), and issues of widespread concern (the quality of education, the effects of pollution). As a result, the study of argument is a logical companion to the study of exposition. Yet the two kinds of writing have very different purposes.

Expository writing shares information and ideas; it explores issues and explains problems. Argumentative writing has a different motivation. It asks readers to choose one side of an issue or take a particular action, whether it is to choose a career, vote for a candidate, or build a new highway. In exposition we select facts and ideas to give a clear, interesting, and thorough picture of a subject. In argument we select facts and ideas that provide strong support for our point of view and arrange this evidence in the most logical and persuasive order, taking care to provide appropriate background information and to acknowledge and refute opposing points of view.

The evidence we choose for an argument is determined to a great extent by the attitudes and needs of the people we are trying to persuade. For example, suppose you want to argue successfully for a new approach to secondary education in your community—an approach that enrolls students in “mini-schools” according to their interests. Your essay would need to provide enough examples, facts, and reasons to convince parents and community leaders that the approach would be best for their children, not just for children in general. You would need to show that the community could afford the approach and that the benefits would justify the added expense. To be effective, moreover, your essay would also need to answer possible objections to the proposal and demonstrate that it is preferable to other approaches a reasonable school board and community might consider.

Your argumentative writing needs to focus on your thesis: the opinion you wish readers to share, the action you want them to undertake, or the assertion you wish them to endorse. The twin poles of argumentative writing—your thesis and the needs and values of your readers—need to be linked by evidence and reasoning. Evidence and reasoning extend your thesis to readers, and they bring readers closer to it.

WHY USE ARGUMENT?

Argumentative writing responds to situations in which there are two or more conflicting points of view. An argument attempts to resolve or at least modify disagreements by encouraging people to agree upon an action or a point of view. You can recognize an argumentative thesis and an argumentative essay by the writer’s evident awareness of opposing perspectives. When readers are likely to require good reasons before they will agree with your thesis or when they are likely to resist your point of view, your situation is one that calls for argumentative writing.

In addition, a simple argumentative essay can serve one of three purposes. Some essays ask readers to agree with a value judgment (“The present day care system is inadequate and inefficient”). Others propose a specific action (“Money from the student activity fee at this college should be used to establish and staff a fitness program available to all students”). And still others advance an opinion quite different from that held by most people (“The supposed ‘revolution’ of Internet shopping is no more than the logical next step in catalog retailing”).

In situations calling for more complex arguments, however, you should feel free to combine these purposes as long as the relationship among them is made clear to the reader. In a complex argument, for instance, you might first show that the city government is inefficient and corrupt and then argue that it is better to change the city charter to eliminate the opportunities for the abuse of power than it is to try to vote a new party into office or to support a reform faction within the existing political machine.

Some people draw a distinction between situations calling for logical argument (usually called, simply, argument) and persuasive argument (usually termed persuasion). Whereas logical argument appeals to reason, persuasive argument appeals to the emotions. The aim of both, however, is to convince, and they are nearly always blended into whatever mixture seems most likely to do the convincing. After all, reason and emotion are both important human elements. The two often work together, with reason helping to change minds and emotion helping to prompt action.

CHOOSING A STRATEGY

Argument begins with an issue, moves to a thesis (or assertion) addressing the issue, and concludes with evidence and reasoning to convince readers and deal with opposing perspectives. This is an admittedly oversimplified view of the components of an argument (and the process of composing), yet it serves to point out that choosing strategies for an argumentative essay calls for a number of different activities.

First, you need to identify an issue that you can effectively address through argument. Without an issue—a difference in point of view—you have nothing to argue about. Some issues will take a clear shape before you begin writing: matters of social justice, environmental regulation, civil and criminal law, education, community relationships, and the like are filled with familiar and significant matters of disagreement and difference. In preparing to address such an issue, you need to make sure that you understand them well enough to present them in clearly defined form to readers and to provide appropriate background. You should be ready to stress the significance of an issue and the need to make a judgment or take an action.

Some familiar issues have been argued so often that readers are not likely to be receptive to further argument; others are matters of taste that are beyond argument. For instance, no amount of reasoning is likely to convince people who dislike action movies to begin enjoying them. And some issues involve matters of deeply held religious or ethical beliefs that are difficult, if not impossible, to address through logical argument.

Many issues will take a clear shape only when you think and write about them, however. Perhaps you have been irritated for some time by the concert arrangements at a local civic center, and you believe other people share your irritation. Your irritation is not itself an issue, but it can point to one. If you propose changing the arrangements, and you realize that your proposals are not the only ones that ought to be considered, then you have begun to shape an issue. As you write, you need to be ready to explain the issue to your readers, perhaps drawing on their own irritation with the arrangements to stress the importance of considering changes. Of course, when an issue takes shape in your writing, the opposing points of view are probably not well developed, if at all. For instance, you may not be aware of any alternate concert arrangements that other people have proposed, but you can probably think of some plausible alternatives to your own. In exploring them for readers, however, you identify the opposing points of view that create the issue.

Next, you need to articulate your stance. At the heart of an argumentative essay is the opinion you want readers to share or the action you are proposing they undertake. Being able to state this thesis (or proposition) concisely and clearly to yourself is essential to developing your strategy for an argumentative essay. Conveying your thesis in convincing form is, after all, the main purpose of the essay. Expressing your stance concisely and clearly in a thesis statement is perhaps the best way to alert readers to the point of your argument.

Some writers like to arrive at a sharply focused thesis statement early in the process of composing and use it to guide the selection and arrangement of evidence, for example,

The inconvenience and discontent that accompanies concerts at the Civic Center can be greatly reduced by moving the box office further away from the main entrance doors, doubling the number of rest rooms, improving the lighting, and removing the temporary seating that partially obstructs the central aisles.

Other writers settle on a tentative (“working”) thesis, which they revise as an essay takes shape. In either case, checking frequently to see that factual evidence and supporting ideas or arguments are clearly linked to the thesis is a good way for writers to make sure their finished essays are coherent, unified arguments.

Finally, you need to develop evidence and reasoning that supports your thesis and arrange it in ways that readers will consider clear and convincing. Variety in evidence gives writers a chance to present an argument fully and persuasively. Examples, facts and figures, statements from authorities, personal experience, or the experience of other people—all these can be valuable sources of support. The basic patterns of exposition, too, can be supporting strategies. For example, to persuade people to take driving lessons at an automobile racing school, you might tell the story of someone whose life was saved through the evasive maneuver she learned in her first day at such a school. Or you might follow this narrative example with a classification of the most common kinds of accidents, comparing them, in turn, with the parallel kinds of safety lessons the schools provide.

The expository patterns can also be easily adapted to argumentative purposes. Writers frequently turn to example, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, definition, and induction or deduction to organize arguments. A series of examples can be an effective way of showing that a government social policy does not work and in fact hurts the people it is supposed to serve. Comparison and contrast can guide choices among competing products, among ways of disposing toxic waste, or among ways of revising student loan policies. Cause and effect can organize an argument over who is to blame for a problem or over the possible consequences of a new program. Definition is helpful when a controversy hinges on the interpretation of a key term or when the meaning of an important word is itself the subject of disagreement. Induction and deduction are useful in argument because they provide the kind of careful, logical reasoning necessary to convince many readers, especially those who may at first have little sympathy for the writer's opinion.

An argument need not be restricted to a single pattern. The choice of a pattern or a combination of patterns depends on the subject, the specific purpose, and the kinds of evidence needed to convince the audience to which the essay is directed. Some arguments about complicated, significant issues use so many patterns that they can be called complex arguments.

In arranging your evidence and reasoning, you should also consider the potential impact on readers. Three common and effective arrangements from which you can choose are ascending order, refutation-proof, and pro-con. In an ascending order arrangement, the strongest, most complex, or most emotionally moving evidence comes last, where it can build on the rest of the evidence in the essay and is likely to have the greatest impact on readers, as in the following example.

Introduction: The issue—some people are trying to have genetically altered farm products banned while others are arguing for an increase in the number of such products.

Tentative thesis: Despite a few drawbacks, genetically altered farm products are a great benefit to us all.

Support 1: The regulations governing genetic alteration and extensive testing means the products are generally quite safe; problems have been minor and worries have not been warranted by experience.

Support 2: Genetic alteration can create crops that are less resistant to disease and that are easier to cook and digest.

Support 3: Genetic alteration can make farms more productive and in so doing lower food costs, make more food available, and help fight undernourishment throughout the world [strongest, most moving support; even if there are some problems, these benefits may outweigh them].

Conclusion: Sums up, restates, and reinforces the thesis and the evidence.

In a refutation-proof arrangement, the writer acknowledges opposing points of view early in the essay and then goes on to show why the author's outlook is superior.

Tentative thesis: Genetically altered farm products benefit farmers and consumers.

Opposing points of view: Genetically engineered products are often less tasty and less nutritious; they can have unintended health consequences for farmers and consumers.

Refutation: The products can be engineered to be both tasty and nutritious—the choice is up to the producers and consumers; all natural products can have unintended consequences, and we

forget this when dealing with “scientific products”; more extensive testing can help us deal with any unfortunate consequences.

Support 1: Genetically altered products can be more disease and pest-resistant, reducing the dangers of exposure to pesticides and other chemicals.

Support 2: Genetically altered products provide greater variety for consumers and choices for farmers looking for products appropriate for their soil and climate.

Support 3, 4, 5....

Conclusion

A pro-con arrangement allows the writer to present an opposing point of view and then refute it, continuing until all opposition has been dealt with and all positive arguments voiced. This strategy is particularly useful when there is a strong opposition to the writer’s thesis.

Tentative thesis: The benefits of genetically altered farm products far outweigh the liabilities.

Con 1: The engineered products may end up replacing “natural” ones.

Pro 1: Some “natural” products may be less common, but the success of organic and other specialty products indicates that there will be a demand for both “new” and “natural” foods.

Con 2: Genetically altered products are often designed for the needs of large corporate farms and will contribute to the demise of smaller, family farms.

Pro 2: The shift to larger farms and agribusinesses has been occurring for many reasons other than genetic engineering of crops; the new crops will have only a small effect, if any.

Con 3, 4, 5....

Pro 3, 4, 5....

Conclusion

DEVELOPING ARGUMENTS

In developing an argument, you need to pay attention to your choice of evidence and to make sure your reasoning is clear and logical. It is never possible to arrive at absolute proof—argument, after all, assumes that there are at least two sides to the matter under discussion—yet a carefully constructed case will convince many readers.

One way to construct arguments is to follow the pattern of data-warrant-claim reasoning as outlined by the philosopher Stephen Toulmin. Data correspond to your evidence and claim to your thesis or assertion. Warrant refers to the mental process by which a reader connects the data to the claim. To argue effectively, you need to show your readers how the warrant connects the data to your claim, as in the following sequence.

Data: Children’s books are relatively expensive, generally costing between ten and 30 dollars.

Warrant: Buying children a variety of books can be very expensive.

Warrant: Children learn to love books by reading; playing with books on a regular basis is something that helps them become good readers.

Warrant: Children get easily bored with a book, so they need a variety of books to keep them occupied—though the book that bores them today will interest them tomorrow and the day after.

Claim: The high cost of children’s books keeps many children from learning to love books and becoming better readers.

At the same time, a flaw in logic can undermine an otherwise reasonable argument and destroy a reader’s confidence in its conclusions. The introduction to Chapter 12, “Reasoning by Use of Induction and Deduction,” discusses some important errors to avoid in reasoning or in choosing evidence. Here are some others:

Post hoc ergo propter hoc (“After this therefore because of this”)—Just because one thing happened after another does not mean that the first event caused the second. In arguing without detailed supporting evidence that a recent drop in the crime rate is the result of a newly instituted anticrime policy, a writer might be committing this error, because there are other equally plausible explanations: a drop in the unemployment rate, for example, or a reduction in the number of people in the 15–25 age bracket, the segment of the population that is responsible for a high proportion of all crimes.

Begging the question—A writer “begs the question” when he or she assumes the truth of something that is still to be proven. An argument that begins this way, “The recent, unjustified rise in utility rates should be reversed by the state legislature,” assumes that the rise is “unjustified,” though this important point needs to be proven.

Ignoring the question—A writer may “ignore the question” by shifting attention away from the issue at hand to some loosely related or even irrelevant matter: for example, “Senator Jones’s plan for encouraging new industries cannot be any good because in the past he has opposed tax cuts for corporations” (this approach shifts attention away from the merits of Senator Jones’s proposal). A related problem is the ad hominem (toward the person) argument, which substitutes personal attack for a discussion of the issue in question.

Student Essay

In recent years, many new foods have been developed, including some that are substitutes for “natural foods.” The development of these products has gone hand-in-hand with growing controversies over their safety, with most people willing to at least listen to the criticisms on the grounds that food safety is one of the most important public health issues all of us face. In the face of such controversy, Julie Richardson sets out to defend an “artificial” food, olestra, in her essay, “The Fight on Fat Controversy.”

The Fight on Fat Controversy by Julie Richardson

Today, Americans are realizing the importance of a healthy lifestyle, which includes exercising and following a balanced diet. Reducing fat in the diet decreases the risk of health problems such as heart disease and obesity and is a vital step in achieving an improved lifestyle. Food manufacturers are responding to the consumer’s needs by adding more reduced-fat foods to product lines. A trip down the grocery aisle is evidence of the increased “better-for-you” products, tempting the consumer with less salt, less sugar, and sugarless, lower fat, and nonfat items.

After nine years of research, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) approved a fat-free cooking oil known as olestra to be used in frying savory snacks. Olestra has been hailed as a breakthrough solution for millions of Americans who are looking to reduce fat and calories from the foods they want to eat without sacrificing the quality of taste. Excitement, curiosity, and confusion have followed the new lineup of products made with olestra. This new discovery is slowly, yet dramatically changing food processing, and consumers need to educate themselves on the facts surrounding this innovative alternative to fat.

Olestra, marketed by Procter & Gamble as Olean, is made from vegetable oil and sugar, then used in place of regular cooking oils or fats. This revolutionary fat substitute does not break down like other fats; instead, it passes through the stomach and intestines without being digested or absorbed by the body. As a result, olestra provides all the taste of vegetable oil but none of the calories or harmful saturated fats of regular vegetable oils. The results are snacks that taste great with no fat and half of the calories.

Heralded as a waistline-whittling savior by millions of consumers, olestra has been condemned by others as a nutritional saboteur with distressing gastrointestinal side effects. The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) believes there are serious health risks when products made with olestra are consumed. This nonprofit health group believes the FDA should ban olestra or, at the very least, require a prominent warning label on the front of packages stating that olestra can cause severe side effects. Currently there is only a small warning on the back of packaging, warning consumers that they could experience soft stools when consuming olestra.

Challengers of olestra also advocate that the body is robbed of vitamins or carotenoids (found in fresh fruits and vegetables) that have already been digested. Michael Jacobson, executive director of CSPI, reveals that carotenoids protect against chronic diseases. Jacobson also states that long-term use of olestra in snack foods is likely to cause thousands of cases of cancer and heart disease each year. Opponents of olestra believe additional research should be completed to ensure the protection of consumers' health.

Proponents of olestra, including Procter & Gamble and the FDA, are quick to point out the fallacy of olestra "robbing" the body of vitamins and carotenoids that have already been digested, as Jacobson implies. Olestra can only interact with vitamins or carotenoids that are in the digestive system at the exact same time as the olestra; and even then, the level of interaction has not been outside the acceptable range. Results from the FDA Advisory Committee review in June 1998 determined there is no direct evidence that carotenoids are responsible for lower risk of disease, which disproves Jacobson's theory that carotenoids protect against chronic diseases. These results also show the absurdity of Jacobson's claim that long-term use of olestra causes cancer.

Frito-Lay has been allowed to fortify their WOW! Chips with extra vitamins to insure there is no net loss or reduction in vitamin levels due to normal absorption. However, the FDA is preventing Frito-Lay from adding extra carotenoids to their WOW! Chips because the jury in the scientific community is still out as to whether or not carotenoids are actually good or bad. In a study conducted in Sweden, a compelling argument raises the possibility of carotenoids actually causing cancer.

Michael Jacobson's research is anecdotal and unscientific. Most of his research is obtained through questionnaires completed on the CSPI website, not in a laboratory by scientists. In contrast, P&G has spent 25 years and \$200 million researching olestra, in one of the most comprehensive reviews of any food additive in history. The FDA received 150,000 pages of data from studies of 8,000 adults and children. Results from a follow-up study were reviewed in June 1998 by a FDA panel of leading health, medical, and nutrition experts who overwhelmingly reaffirmed the safety of Olean. The committee also discussed the possibility of removing or rewording the warning label on Frito-Lay's WOW! Chips.

Another issue of concern with olestra rivals is the labeling of "fat-free" on snacks made with olestra. Opponents feel the packaging is misleading to consumers since olestra is an indigestible fat. I do understand the dispute over labeling, even though olestra technically is a fat substitute and does not have the same effect as regular fat in the body.

Side effects from olestra in some people have given way for public scrutiny. Olestra's larger and tighter molecules pass through the body undigested. Since the olestra is mixed in with other food products in the digestive system, it may physically soften the stool, similar to adding oil or water to bread dough. The symptoms experienced may depend on consumption, other eaten foods, and the individual body reaction.

Prior to olestra's approval, it was determined that digestive symptoms were common among the general population. As recorded in the FDA's report on olestra in 1996, 40 percent of adults noted that they experienced some digestive effect within the past month. Also, a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (January 1998) said that potato chips made with Olean are no more likely to cause digestive changes than potato chips made with regular vegetable oil.

Common digestive symptoms are caused by a range of other foods, such as beans, some milk products, and fruit, especially in those who eat too much. Usually when people determine that certain foods do not agree with them, they avoid them. To ban olestra since it may cause diarrhea in some instances is like banning milk because it causes illness for those that are lactose intolerant.

Opponents of olestra, namely the CSPI group, have fought loud and hard at attacking the new fat substitute by relying on the media to circulate their allegations. They have become the nation's most familiar nutrition watchdog group; however, some people may view CSPI's intentions as being more interested in publicity rather than protecting the public's interest. Let's face it, the media loves drama brought on by interest groups representing "victims," and CSPI is good at digging out victims from their website. According to a Reader's Digest article titled, "Attack of the Food Police," Jacobson has not only thrashed olestra, but has also attempted bans on movie theater popcorn and Chinese food.

CSPI has also petitioned the Federal Trade Commission to stop deceptive multimillion-dollar advertising campaigns for Olean and products made with it. As a result, Michael Jacobson persuaded The New England Journal of Medicine to pull Olean advertisements on the basis that NEJM was biased and had received funds from manufacturer, Procter & Gamble, for its support.

The truth of the matter is that NEJM elected to discontinue the Olean ad because it did not want to compromise its position while receiving advertising money from P&G. It is common for prestigious magazines to make decisions such as this to protect their interests; however, it was even more critical with Olean. The backlash and rhetoric the magazine would receive from Jacobson if it were to publish a positive report on olestra while still accepting ad funds from P&G would be damaging to its credibility. This is a good example of the effectiveness of Jacobson's scare tactics and persuasiveness.

Since Olean's approval, tens of millions of people have eaten over half-a-billion servings of new snacks made with this ingredient. These consumers have avoided more than 10 million pounds of fat and 40 billion calories, fat and calories they would have eaten in full-fat snacks. That's particularly noteworthy, considering the country's struggle with obesity and concern for cardiovascular diseases.

Procter & Gamble is continuing to study olestra, including possible nutrient depletion, and will report its findings to the FDA. The company has signed agreements with 12 other firms interested in making olestra snacks. P&G has tested olestra in several other foods, such as ice cream and mayonnaise, and states it will submit another application to the FDA for olestra's use within a year.

I believe the protests made by opponents of olestra to be exaggerated, unfounded, and sensationalized. The Center for Science in the Public Interest is leading the crusade against olestra in its typical melodramatic fashion by twisting and eliminating the true facts. Consumers owe it to themselves to be aware of the organizations supporting olestra, such as The Food & Drug Administration, The American Medical Association, The American Dietetics Association, The American Academy of Pediatrics, and The National Consumer League.

The evidence from years of research has proven that olestra can be worked into a healthy diet, just like any other food. Olestra has confirmed its safety and effectiveness to the medical and scientific community as well as gained momentum in the consumer's "fight on fat" battle. Olestra alone is not the answer to trim the fat off America's belly; however, it is a safe and effective way to enjoy favorite foods without sacrificing the taste. Olestra has opened the doors; now it's up to the American people to open their eyes to the truth. As Abraham Lincoln said "Truth is generally the best vindication against slander," and the truth of olestra's safety will prevail over Michael Jacobson and the CSPI group.

Issues and Ideas

Current Controversies

- Christopher B. Daly, *How the Lawyers Stole Winter*
- Mike Rose, *Extol Brains as Well as Brawn of the Blue Collar*

- **Stephanie Mills, *Could You Live with Less?***

- Gregg Easterbrook, *All This Progress Is Killing Us, Bite by Bite*
- Anna Quindlen, *The Drug That Pretends It Isn't*
- David Quammen, *Who Swims with the Tuna*
- Barbara Lawrence, *Four-Letter Words Can Hurt You*
- Sarah Min, *Language Lessons*

An issue is a subject on which there is more than one point of view. Since arguments address differences and disagreements, they necessarily begin with an issue. When an issue disappears, however, so does the usefulness and relevance of an argument—unless, of course, the argument is expressed in language so moving and effective or with reasoning so precise and convincing that it remains admirable even though the immediate concerns of the author and the audience may pass away.

The essays in this chapter address contemporary questions, though the issues themselves have been around in some form for quite a while and are likely to remain with us in coming years. Christopher B. Daly's "How the Lawyers Stole Winter" focuses not only on concerns about children's safety and legal liability, but also on the much larger issue of personal responsibility. Mike Rose's "Extol Brains as Well as Brawn of the Blue Collar," focuses on the stereotypes we impose on blue collar workers that cause us to fail to notice their real abilities. Stephanie Mills's "Could You Live with Less?" and David Quammen's "Who Swims with the Tuna" both focus on issues resulting from our current ways of living and interacting with nature and our environments. Gregg Easterbrook's "All This Progress Is Killing Us, Bite by Bite," calls into question an important definition that many of us take for granted, and in so doing argues that the effects of progress may be less beneficial than we think. Anna Quindlen's "The Drug That Pretends It Isn't" redefines a behavior that many resist labeling as extreme because it is something they enjoy. Barbara Lawrence's essay, "Four-Letter Words Can Hurt You," was first published a little more than 20 years ago. Nonetheless, although the particular words we use may have changed somewhat, the issues are still alive. Sarah Min, in "Language Lessons," takes a personal and refreshing approach to the issue of bilingualism.

ARGUMENT THROUGH COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

CHRISTOPHER B. DALY

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How the Lawyers Stole Winter

In this essay, which appeared first in *Atlantic Monthly*, Daly uses comparison to make the case that in our attempts to prevent dangerous accidents, we (and, in particular, the lawyers among us) have not only stolen some enjoyment from our lives but also lessened responsibility for our own actions. He suggests that the result may be more danger, not less.

When I was a boy, my friends and I would come home from school each day, change our clothes (because we were not allowed to wear “play clothes” to school), and go outside until dinnertime. In the early 1960s in Medford, a city on the outskirts of Boston, that was pretty much what everybody did. Sometimes there might be flute lessons, or an organized Little League game, but usually not. Usually we kids went out and played.

In winter, on our way home from the Gleason School, we would go past Brooks Pond to check the ice. By throwing heavy stones onto it, hammering it with downed branches, and, finally, jumping on it, we could figure out if the ice was ready for skating. If it was, we would hurry home to grab our skates, our sticks, and whatever other gear we had, and then return to play hockey for the rest of the day. When the streetlights came on, we knew it was time to jam our cold, stiff feet back into our green rubber snow boots and get home for dinner.

I had these memories in mind recently when I moved, with my wife and two young boys, into a house near a lake even closer to Boston, in the city of Newton. As soon as Crystal Lake froze over, I grabbed my skates and headed out. I was not the first one there, though: the lawyers had beaten me to the lake. They had warned the town recreation department to put it off limits. So I found a sign that said DANGER. THIN ICE. NO SKATING.

Knowing a thing or two about words myself, I put my own gloss on the sign. I took it to mean When the ice is thin, there is danger and there should be no skating. Fair enough, I thought, but I knew that the obverse was also true: When the ice is thick, it is safe and there should be skating. Finding the ice plenty thick, I laced up my skates and glided out onto the miraculous glassy surface of the frozen lake. My wife, a native of Manhattan, would not let me take our two boys with me. But for as long as I could, I enjoyed the free, open-air delight of skating as it should be. After a few days others joined me, and we became an outlaw band of skaters.

What we were doing was once the heart of winter in New England—and a lot of other places, too. It was clean, free exercise that needed no StairMasters, no health clubs, no appointments, and hardly any gear. Sadly, it is in danger of passing away. Nowadays it seems that every city and town and almost all property holders are so worried about liability and lawsuits that they simply throw up a sign or a fence and declare that henceforth there shall be no skating, and that’s the end of it.

As a result, kids today live in a world of leagues, rinks, rules, uniforms, adults, and rides—rides here, rides there, rides everywhere. It is not clear that they are better off; in some ways they are clearly not better off.

When I was a boy skating on Brooks Pond, there were no grown-ups around. Once or twice a year, on a weekend day or a holiday, some parents might come by with a thermos of hot cocoa. Maybe they would build a fire (which we were forbidden to do), and we would gather round.

But for the most part the pond was the domain of children. In the absence of adults, we made and enforced our own rules. We had hardly any gear—just some borrowed hockey gloves, some hand-me-down skates, maybe an elbow pad or two—so we played a clean form of hockey, with no high-sticking, no punching, and almost no checking. A single fight could ruin the whole afternoon. Indeed, as I remember it, thirty years later, it was the purest form of hockey I ever saw—until I got to see the Russian national team play the game.

But before we could play, we had to check the ice. We became serious junior meteorologists, true connoisseurs of cold. We learned that the best weather for pond skating is plain, clear cold, with starry nights and no snow. (Snow not only mucks up the skating surface but also insulates the ice from the colder air above.) And we learned that moving water, even the gently flowing Mystic River, is a lot less likely to freeze than standing water. So we skated only on the pond. We learned all the weird whooping and cracking sounds that ice makes as it expands and contracts, and thus when to leave the ice.

Do kids learn these things today? I don't know. How would they? We don't let them. Instead we post signs. Ruled by lawyers, cities and towns everywhere try to eliminate their legal liability. But try as they might, they cannot eliminate the underlying risk. Liability is a social construct; risk is a natural fact. When it is cold enough, ponds freeze. No sign or fence or ordinance can change that.

In fact, by focusing on liability and not teaching our kids how to take risks, we are making their world more dangerous. When we were children, we had to learn to evaluate risks and handle them on our own. We had to learn, quite literally, to test the waters. As a result, we grew up to be savvier about ice and ponds than any kid could be who has skated only under adult supervision on a rink.

When I was a boy, despite the risks we took on the ice no one I knew ever drowned. The only people I heard about who drowned were graduate students at Harvard or MIT who came from the tropics and were living through their first winters. Not knowing (after all, how could they?) about ice on moving water, they would innocently venture out onto the half-frozen Charles River, fall through, and die. They were literally out of their element.

Are we raising a generation of children who will be out of their element? And if so, what can we do about it? We cannot just roll back the calendar. I cannot tell my six-year-old to head down to the lake by himself to play all afternoon—if for no other reason than that he would not find twenty or thirty other kids there, full of the collective wisdom about cold and ice that they had inherited, along with hockey equipment, from their older brothers and sisters. Somewhere along the line that link got broken.

The whole setting of childhood has changed. We cannot change it again overnight. I cannot send my children out by themselves yet, but at least some of the time I can go out there with them. Maybe that is a start.

As for us, last winter was a very unusual one. We had ferocious cold (near-zero temperatures on many nights) and tremendous snows (about a hundred inches in all). Eventually a strange thing happened. The town gave in—sort of. Sometime in January the recreation department “opened” a section of the lake, and even dispatched a snowplow truck to clear a good-sized patch of ice. The boys and I skated during the rest of winter. Ever vigilant, the town officials kept the THIN ICE signs up, even though their own truck could safely drive on the frozen surface. And they brought in “life-guards” and all sorts of rules about the hours during which we could skate and where we had to stay.

But at least we were able to skate in the open air, on real ice.

And it was still free.

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. Summarize in your own words the issue the author is addressing in this essay. In what ways is this issue representative of similar issues in other settings and climates? Explain. Does this “representativeness” make the argument significant and interesting for people who are not worried about thin ice and have no interest in skating? Why, or why not? (See “Guide to Terms”: Evaluation.)
2. Daly presents his examples of growing up in the early 1960s as illustrations of a good way to teach children responsibility and to allow them to have healthy fun. Does he succeed in doing so? If so, what details in the examples or statements of interpretation are most convincing? If not, what keeps the examples from being successful?
3. What opposing points of view, if any, does Daly acknowledge? Would the essay be more (or less) effective if he spent more time dealing with possible objections to his argument? Make a list of possible objections to his argument and evidence that could be used to support them.
4. Does the writer offer possible answers to the problem he identifies? If so, what are they? Does the essay make a clear case that lawyers are to blame for the problem? If not, does this weaken the essay? Why, or why not?

ARGUMENTATIVE TECHNIQUES

1. Why does the writer wait until Paragraph 6 to offer an argumentative proposition (thesis)? What role(s) do the opening paragraphs play? Do they explain an issue or problem? Do they provide evidence that can be used to support the thesis? Be specific in your answer, and point to specific evidence to support your conclusions. (Guide: Introductions.)
2. Which sentence or sentences state the argumentative proposition (thesis)? (Guide: Thesis.) Restate it in your own words. Are all parts of the essay clearly related to this thesis? If not, what are the functions of any parts not clearly related to the thesis? (Guide: Unity.) How is the comparison-contrast pattern related to the thesis? Explain. Would another arrangement of ideas and evidence be likely to provide more convincing development and support for the thesis? What arrangement, and why?
3. In what ways does the concluding sentence “echo” the beginning of the essay? Which paragraphs should be considered the conclusion of the essay? What functions do they perform? (Guide: Closings.)

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. The effectiveness of this essay depends to a considerable extent on the writer’s ability to make the account of his childhood experiences seem like a realistic ideal and not merely a sentimental, nostalgic excursion. How does the diction in Paragraphs 1–2 and 7–9 aid him in staying away from too much sentimentality while at the same time making the experience seem attractive and worth reclaiming? If you think the examples are overly sentimental, explain why. (Guide: Sentimentality.)
2. What words with positive connotations does Daly associate with skating and playing hockey (see Pars. 4 and 8)? (Guide: Connotation/ Denotation.) How do the connotations of these words help support his thesis?
3. If you do not know the meaning of some of the following words, look them up in a dictionary: gloss, obverse (Par. 4); high-sticking, checking (8); meteorologists, connoisseurs (9); liability, construct (10); vigilant (15).

READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Working in a group, make a list of other valuable childhood activities that have been curtailed, limited, or threatened by legal concerns. Should we ignore these concerns, find a way to accommodate them, or come up with different and less dangerous activities? Consider making an issue from this general subject area the focus of an argumentative essay.
2. Considering Audience: Using Daly’s essay as a model, argue that in an attempt to deal with a problem, threat, or danger, we have taken steps that create more problems and dangers by taking away the need to be responsible for our actions. In developing the essay, acknowledge that many readers have legitimate fears, and avoid being too critical of such readers.
3. Developing an Essay: Begin an argumentative essay of your own with examples of how things should be, then develop your argument by contrasting how they are with how they ought to be.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by ARGUMENT are on pp. 601–602 at the end of this chapter.)

ARGUMENT THROUGH COMPARISON

MIKE ROSE teaches in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA. For most of his career, he has been concerned with how students learn to read and write and how these skills can transform their lives. His books include *Lives on the Boundary: The Struggles and Achievements of American's Underprepared* (1989), *Possible Lives* (1999), and *The Mind at Work: Valuing the Intelligence of the American Worker* (2004).

Extol Brains as Well as Brawn of the Blue Collar

In this essay, Rose introduces the contrast between white collar work and blue collar work that is typical in our society—and attempts to undo it, at least partly. One key point in his argument is suggested in the title: blue collar work takes considerable intelligence and ought to be given credit for it. In undoing the contrast, he suggests that the two kinds of work are comparable in many ways.

I am watching a carpenter install a set of sliding French doors in a tight wall space. He stands back, surveying the frame, imagining the pieces as he will assemble them.

What angle is required to create a threshold that will shed water? Where might the sliding panels catch or snag? How must the casings be remade to match the woodwork in the rest of the room? And how can he put it all together fast enough and smart enough to make his labor pay?

This isn't the usual stuff of a Labor Day tribute. Our typical tributes spotlight the economic contribution that the labor force has made to the country, the value of the work ethic. But what about the intelligence of the laborer—the thought, the creativity, the craft it takes to do work, any work, well?

Over the last six years, I've been studying the thinking involved in what is often dismissed as manual labor, exploring the way knowledge is gained and used strategically on job sites, in trade schools and in businesses such as beauty salons and restaurants, auto factories and welding shops. And I've been struck by the intellectual demands of what I saw.

Consider what a good waitress or waiter has to do in a busy restaurant. Remember orders and monitor them, attend to an ever-changing environment, juggle the flow of work, make decisions on the fly. Or the carpenter: To build a cabinet, a staircase or a pitched roof requires complex mathematical calculations, a high level of precision. The hairstylist's practice is a mix of scissors technique, knowledge of biology, aesthetic judgment and communication skills. The mechanic, electrician and plumber are troubleshooters and problem-solvers. Even the routinized factory floor calls for working smart. Yet we persist in dividing labor into the work of the hand and the work of the mind.

Distinctions between blue collar and white collar do exist. White-collar work, for example, often requires a large investment of money and time in formal schooling. And, on average, white-collar work leads to higher occupational status and income, more autonomy and less physical risk. But these distinctions carry with them unfair assumptions about the intelligence of the people who do physical work. Those assumptions have a long history, from portrayals of 18th century mechanics as illiterate and incapable of participating in government to the autoworkers I heard labeled by one supervisor as "a bunch of dummies."

Such beliefs are intensified in our high-tech era. Listen to the language we use: Work involving electronic media and symbolic analysis is "neck up" while old-style manufacturing or service work is "neck down."

If society labels whole categories of people, identified by their occupations, as less intelligent, then social separations are reinforced and divisions constrict the kind of civic life we can create or imagine. And if society ignores the intelligence behind the craft, it mistakes prejudice for fact.

Many Labor Day tributes will render the muscled arm, sleeve rolled tight. How many also will celebrate the link between hand and brain? It would be fitting, on this day especially, to have a truer, richer sense of all that is involved in the wide range of work that surrounds and sustains us. We need to honor the brains as well as the brawn of American labor.

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. What kinds of work does the author present as examples of blue collar work?
2. According to the author, what do most people consider the differences between blue collar and white collar work?
3. In your own words, state the argumentative thesis presented and supported in this essay.
4. State the reasons you think the author is successful or unsuccessful in presenting and supporting this thesis. (See "Guide to Terms": Thesis.)

ARGUMENTATIVE STRATEGIES

1. What is the purpose of the rhetorical questions in paragraph 2? ("Guide": Rhetorical Questions.)
2. Does the rhetorical question at the end of paragraph 3 state the thesis of the essay? If not, where is the thesis stated? ("Guide": Thesis.)
3. What strategy does the author use to begin the essay? (Guide: Introductions.)
4. What strategy does he use to conclude the essay? (Guide: Closings.)

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. Identify the terms the writer uses in paragraphs 3 and 5 to emphasize the intelligence involved in blue-collar work. (Guide: Diction.) Which terms rely on denotation alone, and which involve connotation as well. (Guide: Denotation and Connotation).
2. If you do not know the meaning of some of the following terms, look them up in a dictionary: pitched, aesthetic (par. 5); autonomy (6); symbolic (7).

READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Working with fellow students, make a list of as many blue collar occupations as you can, and for each, list two special skills or forms of intelligence involved in the occupation.
2. Considering an Audience: One assumption Rose seems to make about his readers is that they will consider blue collar work as more a matter of physical effort than mental effort. Prepare a paragraph in which you discuss and define what you believe to be typical views of blue collar work and blue collar workers.
3. Developing an Essay: We often underestimate (and sometimes overestimate) the intelligence, imagination, and skill involved in different occupations – blue collar, white collar, or professional. Prepare an essay in which you argue that a particular occupation or profession takes more (or less) skill and ability than most people think.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by ARGUMENT are on pp. 601–602 at the end of this chapter.)

ARGUMENT THROUGH EXAMPLE

STEPHANIE MILLS is an activist and writer. She has written and edited a number of books on environmental and social issues, including *In Praise of Nature* (ed.) (1991); *In Service of the Wild: Restoring and Reinhabiting Damaged Land* (1995); *Turning Away from Technology: A New Vision for the 21st Century* (ed.) (1997); and *Epicurean Simplicity* (2002).

Could You Live with Less?

The examples in this essay, first published in *Glamour* magazine, are drawn from Mills's experience and, she suggests, are arguments intended primarily to justify her frugal, natural lifestyle. It should be clear to most readers, however, that she intends them to encourage readers to take seriously the choices she has made and perhaps even make similar choices themselves. What helps make this essay more than a statement of personal belief is the time Mills spends dealing with potential objections to her reasoning. In appearing to deal with objections, she is actually arguing in favor of her outlook—and addressing these arguments to readers, hoping to persuade them to agree with her.

Compared to the lifestyle of the average person on Earth, my days are lush with comfort and convenience: I have a warm home, enough to eat, my own car. But compared to most of my urban American contemporaries, I live a monastically simple life.

Since 1984 I've made my home outside a small city in lower Michigan, where the winters are snowy but not severely cold. My snug 720-square-foot house is solar- and wood-heated. No thermostat, just a cast-iron stove. There's electric lighting, indoor plumbing, a tankless water heater, a secondhand refrigerator and range—but no microwave oven, no dishwasher, no blow-dryer, no cordless phone. My gas-sipping compact station wagon has 140,000 miles on it and spreading patches of rust. I've never owned a television set. My home entertainment center consists of a thousand books, a CD-less stereo system, a picture window and two cats.

Part of the reason I live the way I do is that as a freelance writer, my income is unpredictable and at best fairly unspectacular. Thus it behooves me to keep in mind the difference between wants and needs. Like all human beings, I have some needs that are absolute: about 2,500 calories a day, a half a gallon of water to drink, a sanitary means of disposing of my bodily wastes, water to bathe in, something muscular to do for part of the day and a warm, dry place to sleep. To stay sane I need contact with people and with nature, meaningful work and the opportunity to love and be loved.

I don't need, nor do I want, to complicate my life with gadgets. I want to keep technology at the periphery rather than at the center of my life, to treat it like meat in Chinese cuisine—as a condiment rather than as a staple food. Technology should abet my life, not dominate or redefine it. A really good tool—like a sharp kitchen knife, a wheelbarrow or a baby carrier, all of which have been with us in some form for thousands of years—makes a useful difference but doesn't displace human intelligence, character or contact the way higher technologies sometimes do. Working people need the tools of their trade, and as a writer, I do have a fax, but I've resisted the pressure to buy a personal computer. A manual typewriter has worked well for me so far. Noticing that the most computer-savvy people I know are always pining for more megabytes and better software, I've decided not to climb on the purchasing treadmill of planned obsolescence.

Doing with less is easier when I remember that emotional needs often get expressed as material wants, but can never, finally, be satisfied that way. If I feel disconnected from others, a cellular phone won't cure that. If I feel like I'm getting a little dowdy, hours on a tanning bed can't eradicate self-doubt.

Why live in a snowy region when I don't use central heat? I moved here for love several years ago, and while that love was brief, my affection for this place has grown and grown. I like the roots I've put down; living like Goldilocks, moving from chair to chair, seems like not much of a life to me.

Being willfully backward about technology suits my taste—I like living this way. Wood heat feels good, better than the other kinds. (Central heating would make my home feel like it was just anywhere.) Fetching firewood gets me outdoors and breathing (sometimes gasping) fresh air in the wintertime when it's easy to go stale. It's hard, achy work to split and stack the eight or 12 cords of stove wood I burn annually. I've been known to seek help to get it done. But the more of it I do myself, the more I can brag to my city friends.

My strongest motivation for living the way I do is my knowledge, deep and abiding, that technology comes at a serious cost to the planet and most of its people. Burning fossil fuels has changed the Earth's climate. Plastics and pesticides have left endocrine-disrupting chemicals everywhere—in us and in wildlife, affecting reproductive systems. According to Northwest Environment Watch in Seattle, the “clean” computer industry typically generates 139 pounds of waste, 49 of them toxic, in the manufacture of each 55-pound computer.

I refuse to live as if that weren't so. In this, I'm not unique. There are many thousands of Americans living simply, questioning technology, fighting to preserve what remains of nature. We're bucking the tide, acting consciously and succeeding only a little. Yet living this way helps me feel decent within myself—and that, I find, is one luxury worth having.

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. To what extent does the title of this essay act as a statement of the argumentative thesis (admittedly an indirect statement)? Is the thesis stated anywhere else in the essay? If not, does it need to be? (See “Guide to Terms”: Unity.)
2. Summarize in your own words the issue the author is addressing in this essay. What evidence is there in the essay that the writer's purpose is to take a stand on the issue rather than simply to make a statement of personal belief? (Guide: Purpose.)
3. What opposing points of view does Mills acknowledge? Identify each and tell how effective you think she is at rebutting it. (Guide: Evaluation.) Do you think other readers are likely to agree with your estimate of Mills's success or failure? Why? What kinds of readers would be likely to disagree with you, if any?

ARGUMENTATIVE TECHNIQUES

1. Why does the writer not announce her argumentative proposition (thesis) clearly in the opening paragraphs of the essay? What role(s) do the opening paragraphs play? Do they explain an issue or problem? Do they provide evidence that can be used to support the thesis? Be specific in your answer, and point to specific evidence to support your conclusions. (Guide: Introductions.)

2. Examine the opening sentences of Paragraphs 3–8. How are they related to the argumentative thesis? Which parts of the essay, if any, do not support or explain the thesis? Could the essay be revised in any way to make it more unified? (Guide: Thesis; Unity.)
3. In what ways does the concluding paragraph sentence “echo” or refer to the beginning of the essay? What appeal to readers to agree with her does Mills offer in the conclusion? (Guide: Closings.)

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. The effectiveness of this essay depends to a considerable extent on the writer's ability to make her way of living seem like a realistic ideal and not merely an impractical, foolish, or sentimental exercise. How do the diction and the details in Paragraphs 3–4 and 7–8 emphasize the realistic and practical side of her way of living and help her stay away from too much sentimentality or nostalgia in portraying a lifestyle many will see as pointing back to the “good old times”? If you think the examples are overly sentimental, explain why. (Guide: Sentimentality.)
2. What words with positive connotations does Mills associate with her lifestyle (see Pars. 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8)? (Guide: Connotation/Denotation.) How do the connotations of these words help support her thesis?

READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Working in a group, list other ways of living that most people might not endorse immediately. Decide with your group which patterns of development might be used for an essay defending one of these ways of living.
2. Considering Audience: Envision yourself as a modern suburban or urban dweller reading Mills's essay (this will not be much of a stretch for many people). Write a letter to the editor of the magazine in which it appeared (Glamour), responding to the issue from your perspective.
3. Developing an Essay: Mills clearly lets her readers know how she feels without excessive moralizing. Choose a controversial issue and write an essay similar to Mills's in which you share your belief without judging harshly or openly criticizing those in opposition.

(NOTE: Suggestions for essays requiring development by ARGUMENT are on pp. 601–602 at the end of this chapter).

ARGUMENT THROUGH CAUSE AND EFFECT

GREGG EASTERBROOK

GREGG EASTERBROOK received a bachelor's degree from Colorado College and a master's degree from Northwestern University. He is a senior editor of *The New Republic* and has also written on sports for *Slate*, *ESPN.com*, and *NFL.com*. He is the author of a book *The Progress Paradox: How Life Gets Better While People Feel Worse* (2003).

All This Progress Is Killing Us, Bite by Bite

Most people assume that progress is always (or almost always) good; the term progress itself is seldom associated with negative ideas or feelings. But any cause can have unintended as well as intended effects. Easterbrook looks at the unintended (and negative) effects of progress to encourage readers to change their outlooks.

Your great-great grandparents would find it hard to believe the Boeing 747, but perhaps they'd have a harder time believing last week's news that obesity has become the second-leading cause of death in the United States. Too much food a menace instead of too little! A study released by the federal Centers for Disease Control ranked "poor diet and physical inactivity" as the cause of 400,000 United States deaths in 2000, trailing only fatalities from tobacco. Obesity, the C.D.C. said, now kills five times as many Americans as "microbial agents," that is, infectious disease.

Moon landings might seem less shocking to your great-great grandparents than abundance of food causing five times as many deaths as germs; *OutKast* might seem less bizarre to them than the House passing legislation last week to exempt restaurants from being sued for serving portions that are too large.

Your recent ancestors would further be stunned by the notion of plump poverty. A century ago, the poor were as lean as fence posts; worry about where to get the next meal was a constant companion for millions. Today, America's least well-off are so surrounded by double cheeseburgers, chicken buckets, extra-large pizzas and supersized fries that they are more likely to be overweight than the population as a whole.

But the expanding waistline is not only a problem of lower-income Americans who dine too often on fast food. Today, the typical American is overweight, according to the C.D.C., which estimates that 64 percent of American citizens are carrying too many pounds for their height. Obesity and sedentary living are rising so fast that their health consequences may soon supplant tobacco as the No. 1 preventable cause of death, the C.D.C. predicts. Rates of heart disease, stroke and many cancers are in decline, while life expectancy is increasing—but ever-rising readings on the bathroom scale may be canceling out what would otherwise be dramatic gains in public health.

O.K., it's hard to be opposed to food. But the epidemic of obesity epitomizes the unsettled character of progress in affluent Western society. Our lives are characterized by too much of a good thing—too much to eat, to buy, to watch and to do, excess at every turn. Sometimes achievement itself engenders the excess: today's agriculture creates so much food at such low cost that who can resist that extra helping?

Consider other examples in which society's success seems to be backfiring on our health or well-being.

PRODUCTIVITY Higher productivity is essential to rising living standards and to the declining prices of goods and services. But higher productivity may lead to fewer jobs.

Early in the postwar era, analysts fretted that automation would take over manufacturing, throwing everyone out of work. That fear went unrealized for a generation, in part because robots and computers weren't good at much. Today, near-automated manufacturing is becoming a reality. Newly built factories often require only a fraction of the work force of the plants they replace. Office technology, meanwhile, now allows a few to do what once required a whole hive of worker bees.

There may come a point when the gains from higher productivity pale before the job losses. But even if that point does not come, rapid technological change is instilling anxiety about future employment: anxiety that makes it hard to appreciate and enjoy what productivity creates.

TRAFFIC Cars are much better than they were a few decades ago—more comfortable, powerful and reliable. They are equipped with safety features like air bags and stuffed with CD players, satellite radios and talking navigation gizmos. Adjusted for consumers' rising buying power, the typical powerful new car costs less than one a generation ago.

But in part because cars are so desirable and affordable, roads are increasingly clogged with traffic. Today in the United States, there are 230 million cars and trucks in operation, and only 193 million licensed drivers—more vehicles than drivers! Studies by the Federal Highway Administration show that in the 30 largest cities, total time lost to traffic jams has almost quintupled since 1980.

Worse, prosperity has made possible the popularity of S.U.V.'s and the misnamed "light" pickup trucks, which now account for half of all new-car sales. Exempt from the fuel-economy standards that apply to regular cars, sport utility vehicles and pickup trucks sustain American dependence on Persian Gulf oil. A new study in the *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* showed that the rise in S.U.V.'s and pickup trucks "leads to substantially more fatalities" on the road.

So just as longevity might be improving at a faster clip were it not for expanding waistlines, death rates in traffic accidents might show a more positive trend were it not for the S.U.V. explosion.

The proliferation of cars also encourages us to drive rather than walk. A century ago, the typical American walked three miles a day; now the average is less than a quarter mile a day. Some research suggests that the sedentary lifestyle, rather than weight itself, is the real threat; a chubby person who is physically active will be O.K. Studies also show that it is not necessary to do aerobics to get the benefits of exercise; a half-hour a day of brisk walking is sufficient. But more cars, driven more miles, mean less walking.

STRESS It's not just in your mind: Researchers believe stress levels really are rising. People who are overweight or inactive experience more stress than others, and that now applies to the majority. Insufficient sleep increases stress, and Americans now sleep on average only seven hours a night, versus eight hours for our parents' generation and 10 hours for our great-grandparents'.

Research by Bruce McEwen, a neuroendocrinologist at Rockefeller University in New York, suggests that modern stress, in addition to making life unpleasant, can impair immune function—again, canceling out health gains that might otherwise occur.

Prosperity brings many other mixed blessings. Living standards keep rising, but so does incidence of clinical depression. Cellphones are convenient, but make it impossible to escape from office calls. E-mail is cheap and fast, if you don't mind deleting hundreds of spam messages. The Internet and cable television improve communication, but deluge us with the junkiest aspects of culture.

Americans live in ever-nicer, ever-larger houses, but new homes and the businesses that serve them have to go somewhere. Sprawl continues at a maddening pace, while once-rustic areas may now be gridlocked with S.U.V.'s and power boats.

Agricultural yields continue rising, yet that means fewer family farms are needed. Biotechnology may allow us to live longer, but may leave us dependent on costly synthetic drugs. There are many similar examples.

Increasingly, Western life is afflicted by the paradoxes of progress. Material circumstances keep improving, yet our quality of life may be no better as a result—especially in those cases, like food, where enough becomes too much.

"The maximum is not the optimum," the ecologist Garrett Hardin, who died last year, liked to say. Americans are choosing the maximum, and it does not necessarily make us healthier or happier.

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. What different kinds of progress does the writer offer as evidence to support his opinion? Which do you find particularly effective, and why? (See "Guide to Terms": Evaluation.)
2. Is it possible that some readers will consider the positive effects of some of the developments cited in the essay as far more important than the negative effects? If so, which ones are most likely to get such a response. Is such a reaction likely to undermine the author's argument? Why, or why not? Or is it simply necessary for the author to undermine readers' beliefs in the positive nature of progress in order to succeed in convincing readers to share his outlook? Please explain your answer.
3. In your own words, state the argumentative thesis of this essay.

ARGUMENTATIVE STRATEGIES

1. In which paragraph does the author first state clearly his argumentative thesis? Why does he wait so long to do so?
2. The author offers a wide range of examples to support his opinion. What are the different kinds of examples he uses?
3. In what ways does the variety of examples make the essay more effective or less effective? (Guide: Evaluation.)
4. Discuss the way the surprising twist (or reversal) the writer adds to many otherwise positive examples is a major strategy for persuading readers, and identify paragraphs that employ this strategy.

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. Describe how the writer uses the connotation of words to encourage readers to view the effects of progress negatively. Choose three paragraphs from the essay for examples to use in your answer. (Guide: Denotation and Connotation.)
2. If you do not know the meaning of some of the following words, look them up in a dictionary: sedentary (par. 3); affluent (4); productivity (6); longevity (12).

READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Working with a group of classmates, identify ten recent developments you (or most people) are likely to consider examples of “progress.” Then list several reasons why each might also be viewed as having negative as well as positive effects.

2. Considering an Audience: What is progress for some people might be an unpleasant or objectional new development for others. Prepare a brief essay in which you look at two different ways of viewing a recent social, cultural, or political development from two contrasting viewpoints, one positive, one negative.

3. Developing an Essay: Take a recent social, cultural, or political development that most people are likely to view in a similar light (positive or negative) and develop an essay in which you argue that readers ought to take the opposite view.

(NOTE: Suggestions for essays requiring development by ARGUMENT are on pp. 601–602 at the end of this chapter).

ARGUMENT THROUGH DEFINITION

ANNA QUINDLEN

ANNA QUINDLEN has been a reporter and columnist for the New York Times and a columnist for Newsweek. She has written four novels: *Blessings* (2002), *Black and Blue* (1998), *One True Thing* (1994), and *Object Lessons* (1991). Her books of nonfiction essays include *Living Out Loud* (1988), *Thinking Out Loud* (1993), *How Reading Changed My Life* (1998), and *Loud and Clear* (2004).

The Drug That Pretends It Isn't

In this essay, Quindlen employs a particularly useful (and flexible) argument strategy: choose a definition about which most people agree, and then show that a controversial subject or issue fits within the definition. Quindlen begins by pointing out that most people see illegal drug use as a big problem, and then argues that we need to view alcohol as a drug and its misuse as a significant problem. She builds on this framework, too, paying attention to arguments and evidence likely to be most persuasive to her readers.

Spring break in Jamaica, and the patios of the waterfront bars are so packed that it seems the crowds of students must go tumbling into the aquamarine sea, still clutching their glasses. Even at the airport one drunken young man with a peeling nose argues with a flight attendant about whether he can bring his Red Stripe, kept cold in an insulated sleeve, aboard the plane heading home.

The giggle about Jamaica for American visitors has always been the availability of ganja; half the T-shirts in the souvenir shops have slogans about smoking grass. But the students thronging the streets of Montego Bay seem more comfortable with their habitual drug of choice: alcohol.

Whoops! Sorry! Not supposed to call alcohol a drug. Some of the people who lead antidrug organizations don't like it because they fear it dilutes the message about the "real" drugs, heroin, cocaine, and marijuana. Parents are offended by it: as they try to figure out which vodka bottle came from their party and which from their teenager's, they sigh and say, "Well, at least it's not drugs." And naturally the lobbyists for the industry hate it. They're power guys, these guys: The wine guy is George W.'s brother-in-law, the beer guy meets regularly with House majority whip Tom DeLay. When you lump a cocktail in with a joint, it makes them crazy.

And it's true: Booze and beer are not the same as illegal drugs. They're worse. A policy research group called Drug Strategies has produced a report that calls alcohol "America's most pervasive drug problem" and then goes on to document the claim. Alcohol-related deaths outnumber deaths related to drugs four to one. Alcohol is a factor in more than half of all domestic violence and sexual assault cases. Between accidents, health problems, crime, and lost productivity, researchers estimate alcohol abuse costs the economy \$167 billion a year. In 1995 four out of every ten people on probation said they were drinking when they committed a violent crime, while only one in ten admitted using illicit drugs. Close your eyes and substitute the word blah-blah for alcohol in any of those sentences, and you'd have to conclude that an all-out war on blah-blah would result.

Yet when members of Congress tried to pass legislation that would make alcohol part of the purview of the nation's drug czar, the measure failed. Mothers Against Drunk Driving faces opposition to both its education programs and its public service ads from principals and parents who think illicit drugs should be given greater priority. The argument is this: Heroin, cocaine, and marijuana are harmful and against the law, but alcohol is used in moderation with no ill effects by many people.

Here's the counterargument: There are an enormous number of people who cannot and will never be able to drink in moderation. And what they leave in their wake is often more difficult to quantify than DWIs or date rapes. In his memoir *A Drinking Life*, Pete Hamill describes simply and eloquently the binges, the blackouts, the routine: "If I wrote a good column for the newspaper. I'd go to the bar and celebrate; if I wrote a poor column, I would drink away my regret. Then I'd go home, another dinner missed, another chance to play with the children gone, and in the morning, hung over, thick-tongued, and thick-fingered, I'd attempt through my disgust to make amends." Hamill and I used to drink, when we were younger, at a dark place down a short flight of stairs in the Village called the Lion's Head. There were book jackets covering the walls that I used to look at covertly with envy. But then I got older, and when I passed the Head I sometimes thought of how many books had never been written at all because of the drinking.

Everyone has a friend/an uncle/a coworker/a spouse/a neighbor who drinks too much. A recent poll of seven thousand adults found that 82 percent said they'd even be willing to pay more for a drink if the money was used to combat alcohol abuse. New Mexico and Montana already use excise taxes on alcohol to pay for treatment programs. It's probably just coincidence that, as Drug Strategies reports, the average excise tax on beer is nineteen cents a gallon, while in Missouri and Wisconsin, homes to Anheuser-Busch and Miller, respectively, the tax is only six cents.

A wholesale uprising in Washington against Philip Morris, which owns Miller Brewing and was the largest donor of soft money to the Republicans in 1998, or against Seagram's, which did the same for the Democrats in 1996, doesn't seem likely. Homeschooling is in order, a harder sell than even to elected officials, since many parents prefer lessons that do not require self-examination. Talking about underage drinking and peer pressure lets them off the hook by suggesting that it's all about sixteen-year-olds with six-packs. But the peer group is everywhere, from the frogs that croak "Bud" on commercials to those tiresome folks who behave as if wine were as important as books (it's not) to parents who drink to excess and teach an indelible life lesson.

Prohibition was cooked up to try to ameliorate the damage that drinking does to daily life. It didn't work. But there is always self-prohibition. It's not easy, since all the world's a speakeasy. "Not even wine?" Hamill recalls he was asked at dinner parties after he stopped. Of course, children should not drink, and people who sell them alcohol should be prosecuted. Of course, people should not drink and drive, and those who do should be punished. But twenty-one is not a magic number, and the living room is not necessarily a safe place. There is a larger story that needs to be told, loud and clear, in homes and schools and on commercials given as much prominence and paid for in the same way as those that talk about the dangers of smack or crack: that alcohol is a mind-altering, mood-altering drug, and that lots of people should never start to drink at all. "I have no talent for it," Hamill told friends. Just like that.

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. Summarize the reasons why, as this essay claims, people resist viewing alcohol as a drug.
2. Summarize the arguments and evidence the essay offers in favor of viewing alcohol as a drug.
3. Where in this essay does the writer offer readers a definition of illegal drugs, and in what ways does she provide this definition? Will the definition be precise enough so that most readers will be able to follow the argument? Why, or why not? (See "Guide to Terms": Evaluation.)

ARGUMENTATIVE TECHNIQUES

1. Identify the thesis statement in this essay. Tell why you find it either clear, focused, and appropriately limited in scope or unclear, vague, and too broad (or too narrow). (Guide: Thesis.)
2. What strategy does the writer employ to introduce opposing points of view? What strategies does she employ to introduce her refutation of the opposing points of view?
3. Identify the elements of this essay that are consistent with a refutation proof organization (see p. 566). Does the essay, in general, follow a refutation-proof pattern? Why, or why not?
4. Can this essay be said to combine strategies of definition and refutation-proof? If so, why? If not, why not?

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. Discuss how the author’s choice of words in Paragraphs 3 and 8 is a strategy for criticizing people and groups unwilling to take strong measures against alcohol use and abuse. (Guide: Diction.)
2. Analyze the use of the words "blah-blah" in Paragraph 4 as a strategy consistent with the author’s use of definition for purposes of argument.
3. What words or phrases in Paragraph 7 are used ironically? (Guide: Irony.)
4. If you do not know the meaning of some of the following words, look them up in a dictionary: aquamarine (Par. 1); lobbyists (2); purview (5); eloquently, amends, covertly (6); excise (7).

READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Working in a group, focus on drinking or some other activity some people may regard as "recreational" and others as "dangerous." List as many reasons as you can for each judgment. Summarize these pro and con perspectives in a brief informative essay.
2. Considering Audience: The range of responses to Quindlen’s essay is likely to be broad, depending on a reader’s experiences, values, and background. Identify four kinds of people likely to have differing responses, and summarize briefly the likely responses from each kind of reader as well as reasons for the responses.
3. Developing an Essay: Using Quindlen’s essay as a model, develop an argumentative essay of your own about how a particular activity generally regarded in either a positive or negative light should be redefined as the opposite.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by ARGUMENT are on page 601–602, at the end of this chapter.)

#

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

Choosing a Strategy #

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

Choosing a Strategy #

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

Developing Arguments #

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

Developing Arguments #

Background

Importance of topic for readers

Information about specific issue/
disagreement

“Confusion” suggests potential disagreements

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

Concise statement of issue

Arguments against the product

More arguments against

Arguments and evidence for the product—refuting opponents of olestra

Developing Arguments #

Admits to some validity in worries about the product

Direct refutation of major objections supported by statistics and authoritative testimony

Agrees with objections to packaging of product

Another objection

Followed by two paragraphs of refutation

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

Questions motivation of opponents

Developing Arguments #

Refutes the reasoning of criticisms of the product

Pro-evidence of safety (facts)

Evidence of trustworth-iness of the manufacturer

Argumentative proposition implied throughout—now stated directly

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

Summarizes evidence for and ends with a quotation summing up the writer's opinion of critics

Issues and Ideas #

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

Daly / How the Lawyers Stole Winter #

1

2

3

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

Daly / How the Lawyers Stole Winter #

10

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

Daly / How the Lawyers Stole Winter #

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

1

2

3

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Rose / Extol Brains as Well as Brawn of the Blue Collar #

5

6

7

8

9

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

Mills / Could You Live with Less? #

1

2

3

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

4

5

6

7

8

Mills / Could You Live with Less? #

9

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

Easterbrook / All This Progress Is Killing Us, Bite by Bite #

1

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Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

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Easterbrook / All This Progress Is Killing Us, Bite by Bite #

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Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

19

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21

Easterbrook / All This Progress Is Killing Us, Bite by Bite #

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

1

2

3

Quindlen / The Drug That Pretends It Isn't #

4

5

6

7

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

8

9

Quindlen / The Drug That Pretends It Isn't #

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

ARGUMENT THROUGH DEFINITION

DAVID QUAMMEN has won several National Magazine Awards for his writing on scientific and natural subjects. He has written regularly for *Outside* magazine and is the author of three novels and other books, including the award-winning *The Song of the Dodo* (1996). His essays have been collected in *The Flight of the Iguana* (1988), *Wild Thoughts from Wild Places* (1988), *Natural Acts* (1991), and *The Boilerplate Rhino* (2000).

Who Swims with the Tuna

This essay was first published in 1990 in *Outside* magazine, yet its subject and Quammen's approach remain fresh and relevant today. Quammen makes use of several patterns of argument, including, most obviously, comparison and contrast. Yet the heart of his argument lies in his attempt to redefine tuna so that they elicit our sympathy and action in their behalf just as dolphins do.

The yellowfin tuna is not celebrated for its intelligence. It's celebrated for its flavor. The spotted dolphin, on the other hand, is famously brainy and no one will tell us how it tastes. The killing of dolphins is a national outrage; the killing of tuna is a given. I keep asking myself why. There are some good reasons and some bad reasons, I think, which haven't been closely examined, or even sorted apart.

One of these animals breathes air. The other doesn't. One is a mammal, one isn't. And so on: Among the possible ways of describing dolphins and tuna, though not the only way, is to recite a litany of such invidious comparisons. One is homoiothermic and one isn't. One seems to have an elaborate system of social behavior, and one doesn't. One has performed altruistic and astonishing rescues of human swimmers; the other is prized for sushi. One shrieks with terror and squeals with pain. The other maintains a stoic piscine silence. Furthermore, on our grocery shelves nowadays we find cans of a product called dolphin-safe tuna. But no tuna-safe dolphin.

There are other differences. Entangled in a net, unable to swim backward, panicked, hampered from raising its blowhole clear of the water, a dolphin will drown. The sight is pathetic and gruesome—as I can attest, having once watched a certain videotape of dolphin misfortunes at the hands of tuna fishermen during a purse-seining operation. To be more precise, I did not watch this videotape once—I watched it over and over in the course of a week, immersing myself in ugly visions of drowning dolphins, crushed dolphins, bleeding dolphins. I froze frames, rewound, and jabbed the play button again to see large dolphin bodies, mashed and twisted beyond hope of recovery, being tossed back into the ocean like so much offal. It's an important document, this particular tape, potently distressing yet eloquent on the subject of humankind's wasteful, abusive treatment of other creatures. It was shot by a young man named Sam LaBudde, at serious personal risk, while he worked for some months on a tuna boat in the Eastern Tropical Pacific, that zone of ocean encompassing the warm waters along the west coast of Latin America.

During the past thirty years, dolphins of several different species have died in great number because commercial tuna fishermen found it convenient and cost-effective, at least in the Eastern Tropical Pacific, to catch one kind of animal by setting their nets around another. By a conservative estimate, purse-seining for tuna has caused more than six million dolphin deaths. Although U.S. tuna fishermen claim that they are more careful than their foreign competitors, that they safely release almost all the dolphins they net, those same U.S. fishermen have fought stubbornly for a legal provision that lets them continue killing up to 20,050 dolphins each year.

The dolphins are netted because they serve as a marker: encircle them and chances are good that you've also got tuna. Despite all their differences, the fish and mammal tend to associate closely. Maybe that connection is symbiotic, or maybe it's just coincidence. We humans don't know. We aren't privy. Trapped in a huge corral of floating net, along with their tuna associates, the dolphins can in some cases be released unharmed. In other cases they turn hysterical, or the boat captain simply ignores them; the net is hauled, the dolphins tangle themselves and flail desperately, like antelope caught in the web of a gigantic spider; a few are lifted high, to be crushed in the power block (the huge spool) that gobbles up the net; more than a few, still trapped in the water beneath doubled-over netting, drown. Drowning is ugly; drowning makes four minutes seem like eternity. A tuna will not drown, though it will suffocate inconspicuously while it flops around on a deck.

For all the value of the LaBudde tape, something is missing. At least it's missing from the edited version, supplied to me by Earth Island Institute, the organization with which LaBudde is affiliated. There's no footage, not so much as a glimpse, of dead or dying tuna.

Tuna are not the point, I know. Canned tunafish is the given; dolphin-safe or dolphin-unsafe is the point. But it still seems to me odd that tuna, as living and dying creatures, have so completely disappeared. Not just from the videotape. From our minds.

Are we concerned with humanity's relationship with nature, or are we merely concerned about Man's Special Friend at Sea, the dolphin? These are two different things.

A few years ago, Kenneth Brower published in *The Atlantic* a long, excellent article about the destruction of dolphins by tuna fishermen in the Eastern Tropical Pacific, and about the daring gambit of Sam LaBudde. The article is full of facts, full of fair-minded argument, but its most subtle effect is achieved by another method—point of view. It begins:

Of the thirty-odd species of oceanic dolphins, none makes a more striking entrance than *Stenella attenuata*, the spotted dolphin. Under water spotted dolphins first appear as white dots against the blue. The beaks of the adults are white-tipped, and that distinctive blaze, viewed head-on, makes a perfect circle. When the vanguard of the school is "echolocating" on you—examining you sonically—the beaks all swing your way, and each circular blaze reflects light before any of the rest of the animal does.

Brower describes the habitat of these dolphins—clear, deep, tropical ocean—and the sensation of floating within it. A blue void, he calls it, seemingly sterile as a desert. Then:

Five or six quick strokes of the flukes and they are upon you, sleek, fast, graceful legions. They come a little larger than life, for water magnifies. They animate the void. With barrages of clicks and choruses of high-pitched whistling, with speed and hydrodynamic perfection, with curiosity, mission, agenda, and something like humor, they fill up the empty blue.

You are surrounded by dolphins, caressed by their clicking voices. And then: "The last dolphin of the last wave pumps by, glances at you in passing, hurries to catch up." Kenneth Brower has been in the water with these animals, obviously, and before even mentioning tuna boats or purse seines, he deftly pulls the reader in there with him. He offers a vicarious opportunity to look dolphins in the face and share the sensation of being explored, known, by their sonar and their big liquidy eyes. Why? Because he wants us—you and me and whoever else might pick up *The Atlantic*—to feel especially bonded with dolphins, and he evidently believes that direct physical acquaintance (or even a literary rendition of it) is the best way to generate such a bond.

Later in the article, he makes that premise explicit. Alluding to the doom awaiting a certain newborn dolphin calf that LaBudde saw pitched back into the water, where without its mother it faced starvation and sharks, Brower declares: "Anyone who has swum with wild dolphins can imagine how it went."

Ani H. Moss, a former fashion model living in Los Angeles and latterly a conservation activist, broke into public view about the same time as Brower's article, representing a physical embodiment of the anyone-who-has-swum-with-them premise. Like Brower, she harbors a warm and specific affinity for dolphins. One newspaper photograph shows her, afloat, in a life jacket, kissing a pleased-looking dolphin on the side of its beak. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Ani Moss has swum with dolphins in Bermuda, Florida, and Hawaii. This fact merits newsprint because she is one of the cluster of people—including Sam LaBudde, David Phillips of Earth Island Institute, Anthony J. F. O'Reilly of the H. J. Heinz Company, and Ani's husband, a music-industry executive named Jerry Moss—most responsible for a great triumph won in the crusade to protect dolphins. On April 12, 1990, Heinz announced that its StarKist subsidiary, the world's largest tuna-canning business, would no longer purchase any tuna caught by methods that were harmful to dolphins.

Behind that decision lay a domino chain of persuasion that went roughly like this: Ani Moss saw LaBudde's videotape and talked with her husband; Mr. and Mrs. Moss talked with Phillips about dolphin conservation and Earth Island's consumer boycott against Heinz; Jerry Moss then talked honcho-to-honcho with Anthony J. F. O'Reilly; the Heinz people eventually talked with Phillips and even, it seems, with Sam LaBudde. Behind the boardroom doors at H. J. Heinz, there was "an epic debate, almost theological in tone," as O'Reilly himself later told the *New York Times*. At last, with a suddenness that startled everyone on the outside and probably more than a few people on the inside, Heinz decided to leap acrobatically from one side of the issue to the other. Seldom in the history of conservation politics has jawboning proven so concretely effective.

The announcement caused an abrupt revolution in the international tuna trade. That same afternoon, StarKist's two main competitors, Chicken of the Sea and Bumble Bee, vowed that they also would cease their complicity in the death of dolphins; StarKist had seized what appeared to be the moral high ground, and in this case the moral high ground was so good for public relations, perhaps also for business, that Chicken of the Sea and Bumble Bee were compelled to scramble up-slope in the same direction. Before long, tuna canners in Thailand, France, and Italy made similar announcements. Some of the U.S. tuna boats in the Eastern Tropical Pacific immediately applied for clearance to move westward, into waters where tuna and dolphins don't associate. Heinz began printing "dolphin-safe" labels, while Earth Island Institute declared victory and offered peace with honor.

Anthony J. F. O'Reilly, the man who effected (or at least accepted) this sea change, is a hardheaded Irish millionaire and a fancier of racehorses. If he has ever jumped into a tank or an ocean and swum with dolphins, the newspaper accounts don't mention it. But the calculus of the businessman has its own heartfelt power.

Back when the Earth Island boycott was in force, before the Heinz capitulation, Sam LaBudde said: "The reason this issue remains an issue, and the reason that it's not going to go away, is that human beings have a very special kinship with dolphins." It's an honest and accurate statement, so far as it goes, and one with which Anthony J. F. O'Reilly came to agree.

The LaBudde videotape does not diminish in grisliness with repeated viewing. While the information content becomes familiar, while the words and the numbers blur away, the moving images come forward more vividly. Like the photographer played by David Hemmings in the movie *Blowup*, you start noticing nasty details that you had missed. You see the flying bits of flesh from some anatomical breakage—a fin ripped away, maybe, or a beak—when a tangled dolphin suddenly falls from the hoisted net. You see an animal pass through the power block, like wet laundry through a wringer, and you recognize that its thrashing has turned into twitching. On the fourth replay, as you stare at the sleek dark shapes in a pocket of tightened seine, big animals bunched like sprawling salmon, you realize that they are all floating limp with their blowholes submerged. Watching the crewmen work, you begin to distinguish between when they're releasing live dolphins and when they're disposing of carcasses. Mostly it's the latter. Then there's the scene with the knife.

The captain of LaBudde's ship, a burly man wearing only a pair of soaked shorts, is stooping over the body of a dolphin, filleting it deftly. With quick slashes, he strips off a long panel of muscle. He glances up into the camera—once, then back to his work, then up again. The tape ends.

This scene with the knife is hard to watch and tricky to contemplate. It's a crux at which the emotional import of the LaBudde videotape diverges (for some of us, anyway) from the philosophical import. The captain's knife cuts through more than flesh; it also divides attitudes. It divided my own, clarifyingly, into two successive but contradictory reactions. First reaction: My God, he's slicing that dolphin into meat. My God, they're going to eat it. Witnessing the butchery, you feel a surge of horrified outrage to which you may not be entitled. I know I felt one to which I'm probably not entitled. Butchery, not as a metaphor but the literal fact, is just what brings animal parts—including, occasionally, a bit of mammal—to my kitchen counter. Sam LaBudde, when he made the tape, was a vegetarian; so arguably he was entitled. Maybe he also felt some outrage at the notion of eating tuna. Or maybe not. Second reaction: Who am I, a confirmed carnivore, to say that they shouldn't eat dolphin flesh? If the creature is dead, better to eat it than to discard it. Both these reactions have merit, I think, and the dichotomy between them helps untangle that confusion of good logic and bad logic, earned emotion and specious emotion, surrounding the subject of dolphin-unsafe tuna.

A person might object to the killing on grounds that dolphins are big-brained mammals. If that were my position, I'd want also to know more than I know about the size of the brain of a Hereford, and I'd be uncomfortable with reports of high intelligence among octopuses and pigs. A person might object on the grounds that dolphins are charming and communicative creatures capable of forming exceptional bonds with our species. That position is admirably loyal. But if it were mine I'd feel forced to admit that my view of nature was rigidly anthropocentric, and that I was therefore prevented from arguing that a hectare of beetle-infested rainforest might be more valuable than a hectare of slash-and-burn rice. A person might object on grounds that the death of six million dolphins in thirty years—as a by-product of purse-seining, merely to bring us cheap tuna, with most of those six million carcasses dumped back into the ocean—has been unconscionably wasteful; and that just such contemptuous, self-indulgent wastefulness is the greatest sin that our species commits against nature. This is my position. But probably it's no more consistent than the others.

Or a person might object, as some have, that the drownings of dolphins are slow and cruel, much worse than the quick death of a cow or a chicken in a slaughterhouse. If that were my position, I'd deserve to be haunted by a nightmare of suffocating tuna, big fish flopping paroxysmally on a deck, their sticky-dry gills unable to extract oxygen from the air. And I'd need to swear off live-boiled lobster.

Mix all these positions together and what you don't get is a single, unassailable ethical stance. What you do get is a successful consumer boycott against one kind of canned fish. The fight to protect dolphins from tuna fishermen brought a great victory for mammalian empathy, but not for clear thinking about humanity's responsibility within the wider diversity of life.

There's no question that *Stenella attenuata* and the other dolphins have an unmatched appeal to us humans. From our point of view, as Sam LaBudde said, it's a special kinship. They are bright, sophisticated, cheery, generous, perceptive, affectionate, and yet mysterious—all the things that we value in our friends. They seem to possess important secrets. They seem to reciprocate our infatuation. Plus they consent to let us swim with them.

On the other hand, who swims with the yellowfin tuna? The answer is that dolphins do.

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. Where in the essay does the writer describe the issue he is addressing? Summarize it in your own words.
2. What is Quammen's argumentative thesis, and where does he present it to readers? (See "Guide to Terms": Thesis.)
3. What criticisms does the writer offer of those who have campaigned in favor of saving dolphins? Is his purpose to undermine their efforts? If not, what is his purpose? (Guide: Purpose.)
4. What strategies of definition does Quammen employ in arguing for a new definition of tuna and a new attitude toward the species? (See Chapter 6, "Definition.")

ARGUMENTATIVE TECHNIQUES

1. How does Quammen manage to encourage readers to develop sympathy for tuna and to urge readers to take action without arguing against sympathy for dolphins and action on their behalf?
2. Quammen employs several patterns of development in advancing his argument. What are they? Which are particularly effective? (Guide: Evaluation.) Is it accurate to say that definition (or redefinition) is the dominant pattern? Why, or why not?

3. How does Quammen shift readers' attention from dolphins to tuna (Pars. 6–7)?

4. What role does the rhetorical question in Paragraph 8 play in the overall organization of the essay and in the logic of Quammen's argument? (Guide: Rhetorical Question.)

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. How do the connotations and denotations of the words Quammen uses to describe dolphins caught in nets (Pars. 3, 5, 16) and tuna caught in nets (20) help develop sympathy for them? (Guide: Denotation/Connotation.)
2. If you do not know the meaning of some of the following words, look them up in a dictionary: litany, invidious, homoiothermic, altruistic, piscine (Par. 2); purse-seining, offal (3); symbiotic (5); gambit (9); grisliness (16); dichotomy (18); Hereford, anthropocentric, hectare, contemptuous (19); paroxysmally (20).

READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Working in a group, list as many environmental or wildlife policies you can think of that harm one group of animals or people or one ecological setting at the expense of another. Write an argumentative essay of your own on one or more of the issues suggested by the group's list.
2. Considering Audience: Are most readers likely to agree with Quammen that tuna have been treated unfairly? Or are they likely to think that Quammen has treated dolphin advocates unfairly? Write a brief essay analyzing the essay and answering these questions.

3. Developing an Essay: Is Quammen justified in his criticism of LaBudde and others campaigning for saving dolphins? Do some research on the subject and develop a thesis of your own regarding the current and future efforts to save dolphins and tuna from needless destruction. Then write an essay defending this thesis.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics to be developed by means of ARGUMENT are on page 601-602, at the end of this chapter.)

ARGUMENT THROUGH DEFINITION

BARBARA LAWRENCE

BARBARA LAWRENCE was born in Hanover, New Hampshire. After receiving a B.A. in French literature from Connecticut College, she worked as an editor on *McCall's*, *Redbook*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and the *New Yorker*. During this period she also took an M.A. in philosophy from New York University. Currently a professor of humanities at the State University of New York's College at Old Westbury, Lawrence has published criticism, poetry, and fiction in *Choice*, *Commonweal*, *Columbia Poetry*, the *New York Times*, and the *New Yorker*.

Four-Letter Words Can Hurt You

"Four-Letter Words Can Hurt You" first appeared in the *New York Times* and was later published in *Redbook*. In arguing against the "earthy, gut-honest" language often preferred by her students, Lawrence also provides a thoughtful, even scholarly, extended definition of obscenity itself. To accomplish her purpose, the author makes use of several other patterns as well.

Why should any words be called obscene? Don't they all describe natural human functions? Am I trying to tell them, my students demand, that the "strong, earthy, gut-honest" – or, if they are fans of Norman Mailer, the "rich, liberating, existential" – language they use to describe sexual activity isn't preferable to "phony-sounding, middle-class words like 'intercourse' and 'copulate'?" "Cop You Late!" they say with fancy inflections and gagging grimaces. "Now, what is that supposed to mean?"

Well, what is it supposed to mean? And why indeed should one group of words describing human functions and human organs be acceptable in ordinary conversation and another, describing presumably the same organs and functions, be tabooed – so much so, in fact, that some of these words still cannot appear in print in many parts of the English-speaking world?

The argument that these taboos exist only because of "sexual hangups" (middle-class, middle-age, feminist), or even that they are a result of class oppression (the contempt of the Norman conquerors for the language of their Anglo-Saxon serfs), ignores a much more likely explanation, it seems to me, and that is the sources and functions of the words themselves.

The best known of the tabooed sexual words, for example, comes from the German *ficken*, meaning "to strike"; combined, according to Partridge's etymological dictionary *Origins*, with the Latin sexual verb *futuere*: associated in turn with the Latin *fustis*, "a staff or cudgel"; the Celtic *buc*, "a point, hence to pierce"; the Irish *bot*, "the male member"; the Latin *battuere*, "to beat"; the Gaelic *batair*, "a cudgeller"; the Early Irish *bualaim*, "I strike"; and so forth. It is one of what etymologists sometimes called "the sadistic group of words for the man's part in copulation."

The brutality of this word, then, and its equivalents ("screw," "bang," etc.) is not an illusion of the middle class or a crotchet of Women's Liberation. In their origins and imagery these words carry undeniably painful, if not sadistic, implications, the object of which is almost always female. Consider, for example, what a "screw" actually does to the wood it penetrates; what a painful, even mutilating, activity this kind of analogy suggests. "Screw" is particularly interesting in this context, since the noun, according to Partridge, comes from words meaning "groove," "nut," "ditch," "breeding sow," "scrofula" and "swelling," while the verb, besides its explicit imagery, has antecedent associations to "write on," "scratch," "scarify," and so forth – a revealing fusion of a mechanical or painful action with an obviously denigrated object.

Not all obscene words, of course, are as implicitly sadistic or denigrating to women as these, but all that I know seem to serve a similar purpose: to reduce the human organism (especially the female organism) and human functions (especially sexual and procreative) to their least organic, most mechanical dimension; to substitute a trivializing or deforming resemblance for the complex human reality of what is being described.

Tabooed male descriptives, when they are not openly denigrating to women, often serve to divorce a male organ or function from any significant interaction with the female. Take the word “testes,” for example, suggesting “witnesses” (from the Latin *testis*) to the sexual and procreative strengths of the male organ; and the obscene counterpart of this word, which suggests little more than a mechanical shape. Or compare almost any of the “rich,” “liberating” sexual verbs, so fashionable today among male writers, with that much-derived Latin word “copulate” (“to bind or join together”) or even that Anglo-Saxon phrase (which seems to have had no trouble surviving the Norman Conquest) “make love.”

How arrogantly self-involved the tabooed words seem in comparison to either of the other terms, and how contemptuous of the female partner. Understandably so, of course, if she is only a “skirt,” a “broad,” a “chick,” a “pussycat” or a “piece.” If she is, in other words no more than her skirt, or what her skirt conceals; no more than a breeder, or the broadest part of her; no more than a piece of a human being or a “piece of tail.”

The most severely tabooed of all the female descriptives, incidentally, are those like a “piece of tail,” which suggests (either explicitly or through antecedents) that there is no significant difference between the female channel through which we are all conceived and born and the anal outlet common to both sexes—a distinction that pornographers have always enjoyed obscuring.

This effort to deny women their biological identity, their individuality, their humanness, is such an important aspect of obscene language that one can only marvel at how seldom, in an era preoccupied with definitions of obscenity, this fact is brought to our attention. One problem, of course, is that many of the people in the best position to do this (critics, teachers, writers) are so reluctant today to admit that they are angered or shocked by obscenity. Bored, maybe, unimpressed, aesthetically displeased, but—no matter how brutal or denigrating the material—never angered, never shocked.

And yet how eloquently angered, how piously shocked many of these same people become if denigrating language is used about any minority group other than women; if the obscenities are racial or ethnic, that is, rather than sexual. Words like “coon,” “kike,” “spic,” “wop,” after all, deform identity, deny individuality and humanness in almost exactly the same way that sexual vulgarisms and obscenities do.

No one that I know, least of all my students, would fail to question the values of a society whose literature and entertainment rested heavily on racial or ethnic pejoratives. Are the values of a society whose literature and entertainment rest as heavily as ours on sexual pejoratives any less questionable?

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. Explain the meaning of irony by use of at least one illustration from the latter part of this essay. (See “Guide to Terms”: Irony.)
2. Inasmuch as the selection itself includes many of the so-called “strong, earthy, gut-honest” words, could anyone logically call it obscene? Why, or why not? To what extent, if at all, does the author’s point of view help determine your answer? (Guide: Point of View.)
3. Compose, in your own words, a compact statement of Lawrence’s thesis. (Guide: Thesis.) Are all parts of the essay completely relevant to this thesis? Justify your answer.
4. Evaluate this composition by use of our three-question system. (Guide: Evaluation.)

ARGUMENTATIVE TECHNIQUES

1. What is the purpose of this essay? (Guide: Purpose.)
2. What objection to her opinion does the author refute in Paragraph 3, and how does she refute it? (Guide: Refutation.) Where else in the essay does she refute opposing arguments?
3. Are the evidence and supporting arguments in this essay arranged in a refutation-proof pattern? If not, describe the arrangement of the essay.
4. Which of the methods “peculiar to definition alone” (see the introduction to Chapter 9) does the author employ in developing this essay? What other patterns of exposition does she also use?
5. Which of the standard techniques of introduction are used? (Guide: Introductions.) Which methods are used to close the essay? (Guide: Closing.)

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. How, if at all, is this discussion of words related to connotation? (Guide: Connotation/Denotation.) To what extent would connotations in this matter depend on the setting and circumstances in which the words are used? Cite illustrations to clarify your answer.
2. In view of the fact that the author uses frankly many of the “gut-honest” words, why do you suppose she plainly avoids others, such as in Paragraphs 4 and 7?
3. The author says that a “kind of analogy” is suggested by some of the words discussed (Par. 5). If you have studied Chapter 6 of this book, does her use of the term analogy seem in conflict with what you believed it to mean? Explain.
4. Study the author’s uses of the following words, consulting the dictionary as needed: existential, grimaces (Par. 1); etymological, cudgel (4); sadistic (4–6); crotchet, scrofula, explicit, antecedent, scarify (5); denigrated (5–7, 10–11); aesthetically (10); pejoratives (12).

READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Why do people use obscene language? Are these reasons satisfactory enough to keep from stigmatizing it or considering it impolite? Have our views of obscene language undergone any recent changes? Should we discourage the use of obscene language in more social situations than we currently do? Working in a group, continue this list of questions until you have identified several possible topics for an essay. Words characterizing ethnic groups are likely to get strong responses from readers.
2. Considering Audience: Does the author make a justifiable comparison between obscene words and ethnic pejoratives? Using illustrations for specificity, carry the comparison further to show why it is sound, or explain why you consider it a weak comparison.
3. Developing an Essay: Following Lawrence’s lead, discuss some other closely related group of terms and its significance, and suggest ways we should alter the way we use these terms.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by ARGUMENT are on pp. 601–602 at the end of this chapter.)

ARGUMENT THROUGH NARRATIVE

SARAH MIN

SARAH MIN works at Glamour magazine.

Language Lessons

Issues of bilingualism and bilingual education along with proposals for “English Only” in government and schools have drawn much interest over the past decade. Sarah Min takes a somewhat different, and personal, approach to bilingualism, arguing for its importance through her own story.

Even though I could understand only snippets of their conversation, I comprehended enough to know that the manicurists at the nail salon were talking about me.

What a shame! Another Korean who cannot speak the language, the woman filing my fingernails said to her colleague, both of them shaking their heads in disapproval. Her remark hit me, and I stumbled for the right words to defend myself.

The fact is, I traded my own Korean voice to give my parents their English ones: My mom and dad came to this country 27 years ago with an English vocabulary dominated by brand names like Tropicana and Samsonite. But they were determined to master the language of their new home. When I was in grade school, my dad read my English textbooks and asked me to give him the same lessons I had learned that day. On long car trips, my parents spent the confined hours in our Impala station wagon practicing their pronunciation aloud. My brother and I, captive tutors, led them in oral exercises, repeating the difficult distinction between ear and year, war and wore.

As my parents’ fluency increased, their use of Korean dwindled. Though they spoke to each other in their native tongue, with my brother and me they used only one language: English. They didn’t want us to speak Korean, they said, because they didn’t want even a trace of an accent to infect our American-style speech.

Still, I absorbed bits and pieces of Korean, important phrases like “Oh-mo-mo” and “Whey-goo-deh?” – the equivalent of “Oh no!” and “What’s your problem?” – subtleties that can’t be precisely translated but are understood as readily as “oy vey” or “cool.” In private, I’d practice the sound effects – the gasps and clucks that are a part of the Korean language.

In public, though, I was reluctant to speak. My words sounded clunky, choppy, unlike the rhythmic cadences of my mother’s voice. Once when I attempted conversation with a Korean-speaking woman in my neighborhood, my efforts were clearly unimpressive: She snickered at my accent and answered me in English. By the time I was in college, I had stopped trying to speak Korean, a decision only I noticed. No one expected me to speak the language anyway.

Yet I always felt that a part of me had been silenced. As I got older and moved to a city where I met more Koreans, I began to feel as the women in the nail salon did: That those of us who didn’t speak Korean had something to be ashamed of, that we were distancing ourselves from our cultural heritage. Language, after all, involves much more than the ability to communicate. It conveys a desire to understand and participate in a culture, to make it one’s own. Could I ever fully understand and appreciate my heritage if I couldn’t speak the language of my ancestors?

So I registered for a course in Korean at an adult education school. I expected my classmates to be Americans who were going abroad, but I discovered most of the students had come for the same reason that I had: to find their Korean voices.

To my surprise, I picked up the language quickly. Even though my vocabulary was limited and my grammar was rough, I realized I knew quite a bit, as if the Korean words had been lurking somewhere in a quiet corner of my brain. The teacher taught phrases that sounded familiar and came to me effortlessly; I practiced the new tongue placements and inflections to hide my American accent. The first time I called my parents and said, in flawless Korean, “Hello, we haven’t spoken in such a long time,” I was 24 years old, but they reacted as proudly as if I were a toddler who had just uttered her first words. And when I walked into a Korean restaurant and casually greeted the waiter, who responded in Korean that I could sit anywhere I liked, I knew he took me for the genuine article.

Now whenever I visit my parents, I ask them to speak Korean with me at least some of the time. Although I’m still struggling, still studying so I can become more fluent, I know enough now that my parents can tell me stories, jokes and proverbs that would otherwise have gotten garbled in the static of translation. Eagerly, I listen, laugh and nod in full understanding.

Being able to speak Korean has some surprising bonuses: In American restaurants, my dad and I figure the tip right in front of the waiter. And among Koreans, knowing the language forges an almost instant camaraderie.

That day at the nail salon, when I finally worked up the courage to respond to the manicurist, I spoke slowly, but confidently: I understand you and yes, it is shameful that I can only speak a little.

The young woman polishing my fingernails paused. She looked up at me and smiled, as if she were seeing me for the first time. And, for the first time, I too was seeing a new part of myself: a proud Korean American who could finally hear her own voice.

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. Min devotes much of Paragraphs 3 and 4 in her essay to a discussion of her parents’ efforts to learn English and to encourage their children to speak English. Explain why her parents may have felt they needed to do this. As a young girl, how does Min react to her parents’ effort?
2. What feelings inspired Min to take adult education courses in Korean (Par. 8)? Is she justified in her concerns about heritage? How important are these cultural issues in the contemporary America?

ARGUMENTATIVE TECHNIQUES

1. The anecdote in Min’s introduction (Pars. 1 and 2) is readdressed in her conclusion. What element of surprise does she incorporate into this story? Does she convince her reader of the importance of her conversation with the manicurists?
2. Much of Min’s argument is in the form of narrative. How effective is this technique? Why do you think she chose a first-person narrative for this topic?

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. Are there any words in this essay with which you are unfamiliar? Why might Min have used a basic vocabulary for this piece? Who might her target audience include?
2. Min writes this as an autobiographical narrative. Point to specific uses of transitions, dialogue, and other techniques that help the narrative have a storylike quality.

READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Working in a group, list the native languages of your ancestors. How many of you still speak that language? Discuss with your teammates the reasons why you feel that your family no longer speaks in the native tongue, or if your family still does, why the members have chosen to continue. Compare your reasons and look for underlying cultural connections regarding the maintenance of native tongues. Keeping in mind your group discussions, write an individual paper in a style similar to Min’s discussing your use or lack of use of your family’s native tongue. If your ancestry is of English-speaking people, write about a friend or someone you know who has had this issue arise in his or her family.
2. Considering Audience: Min says, “And among Koreans, knowing the language forges an almost instant camaraderie” (Par. 11). Would non-Korean readers identify with this statement? Does her point apply to others besides Koreans? Write a short analysis explaining your response.

3. Developing an Essay: Min's essay clearly encourages the maintaining of a native tongue, but not at the sacrifice of learning English when living in the United States. This is one facet of a debate on language. Research the question of whether or not the United States should have a unified language and the impact of maintaining a native tongue in some capacity. Consider the unifying qualities of language both inside and outside of the cultural boundaries. Write an argumentative essay employing multiple patterns of development in which you address the issue of either the adoption of a national language, the use of native languages in the household, or the acceptance of bilingualism or multilingualism in society.

(NOTE: Suggestions for essays requiring development by use of ARGUMENT follow.)

Writing Suggestions for Chapter 13

ARGUMENT

Choose one of the following topic areas, identify an issue (a conflict or problem) within it, and prepare an essay that tries to convince readers to share your opinion about the issue and to take any appropriate action. Use a variety of evidence in your essay, and choose any pattern of development you consider proper for the topic, for your thesis, and for the intended audience.

1. Gun control
2. The quality of education in American elementary and secondary schools
3. Treatment of critically ill newborn babies
4. Hunting
5. Euthanasia
6. Censorship in public schools and libraries
7. College athletics
8. The problem of toxic waste or a similar environmental problem
9. Careers versus family responsibilities
10. The separation of church and state
11. Law on the drinking age or on drunk driving
12. Evolution versus creationism
13. Medical ethics
14. Government spending on social programs
15. The quality of television programming
16. The impact of divorce
17. The effects of television viewing on children
18. Professional sports
19. Violence in service of an ideal or belief
20. Scholarship and student loan policies
21. Low pay for public service and the “helping” professions
22. Cheating in college courses
23. Drug and alcohol abuse
24. Product safety and reliability
25. Government economic or social policy

COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

As you prepare an essay on one of the given topics (1–25) or on some other topic, make a list of the evidence for your opinion. Share the list with one or more readers. Ask the reader to rank each piece of evidence for persuasiveness, using a scale of 1 (unpersuasive) to 5 (very persuasive).

Quammen / Who Swims with the Tuna #

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Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

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Quammen / Who Swims with the Tuna #

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Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

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Quammen / Who Swims with the Tuna #

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Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

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Quammen / Who Swims with the Tuna #

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

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Lawrence / Four-Letter Words Can Hurt You #

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Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

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Lawrence / Four-Letter Words Can Hurt You #

Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

Lawrence / Four-Letter Words Can Hurt You #

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Chapter 13 / Using Patterns for Argument

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Min / Language Lessons #

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Min / Language Lessons #

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