

BA 203: ARGUMENT ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT 1

Read the two short arguments on page two of this document. Select one of the arguments to use in completing the following assignment. You should select the argument for which you feel more confident in identifying the claim, evidence, and warrant that argument presents.

NOTE 1: I realize that you have just been introduced to the Toulmin Method and you have virtually no experience working with it. You will not be graded harshly for this assignment. Your grade will be based primarily on the extent to which your essay shows a good acquaintance with the method and a serious attempt to offer an accurate analysis of the argument you choose.

NOTE 2: Not every statement in an argument has to function as some part of the argument (claim, evidence, etc.). A statement may offer background information or an opinion, or it may just be irrelevant and out of place. Don't feel like you have to force every statement into playing some function.

For this week's assignment you must submit a written report that addresses the following issues:

- Section 1: The Claim
 - Identify what you take to be the claim that the argument is making.
 - Write a one-two paragraph explanation of why you understand this statement to be the claim rather than any other statement in the argument.
 - Identify this claim as a claim of fact, value, or policy. Explain your choice.
 - If applicable, identify any statements you see to be offering a rebuttal of the claim
- Section 2: The Evidence
 - Identify the statement or statements you take to be the evidence the argument is offering in support of the claim.
 - If applicable, identify any statements you see to be backing for the evidence you have identified. Explain how the backing supports the evidence and explain why you think the author thought it necessary to provide the backing.
 - NOTE: Don't make the mistake of thinking every statement constitutes a different or distinct piece of evidence. There may be two or more statements that work together to make one evidential point.
- Section 3: The Warrant
 - If applicable, identify the statement or statements you take to be expressing warrant connecting some or all of the evidence to the claim.
 - If no statements express the warrant, explain what you take to be the warrant for this argument. Two things to keep in mind here:
 - You may need to express the warrant in two or more steps, rather than just a single connection.
 - If you have more than one type of evidence, you may have more than one warrant. Be sure to state clearly which evidence you understand the warrant to be connecting to the claim.

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- Section 4: Evaluation
 - Explain whether or not you think this argument offers a strong case for its claim.
 - If you do, explain what you think the argument does right. If you don't, explain what you think the argument does wrong.
 - NOTE: To say the argument is strong does not mean you find it convincing. You may disagree with the claim but still think the argument makes a good case. So even if you disagree with the claim, try to remain impartial and make a fair judgment about the merit of the argument.

REMEMBER: Argument analysis assignments are formal writing assignments. Be sure to follow the instructions for formal writing assignments in the syllabus (also available on the Canvas site).

ARGUMENTS FOR ARGUMENT ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT 1

ARGUMENT 1

Even though the properties of marijuana have been shown not to be physically addictive, one can become psychologically addicted. However, this is true of just about anything that can give one pleasure, such as chocolate, gambling, or shopping. No substance will be safe for everybody, under all circumstances, or when used in excessive amounts. For example, over-the-counter medications can be deadly for those who are allergic or who overdose. On the other hand, marijuana overdose has never been a sole reported cause of death: the amount of cannabis required to kill a person is more than 40,000 times the necessary dosage for intoxication, making it highly unlikely that people would be able to achieve such a concentrated amount in their bloodstreams. This is a severe contrast to alcohol, where one can very easily kill oneself with only four times the legal limit. There just doesn't seem to be any reason to keep marijuana illegal.

ARGUMENT 2

While human cloning might not offer great benefits to humanity, no one has yet made a persuasive case that it would do any real harm, either. Theologians contend that to clone a human would violate human dignity. That would surely be true if a cloned individual were treated as a lesser being, with fewer rights or lower stature. But why suppose that cloned persons wouldn't share the same rights and dignity as the rest of us? A leading lawyer-ethicist has suggested that cloning would violate the "right to genetic identity." Where did he come up with such a right? It makes perfect sense to say that adult persons have a right not to be cloned without their voluntary, informed consent. But if such consent is given, whose "right" to genetic identity would be violated? Many of the science-fiction scenarios prompted by the prospect of human cloning turn out, upon reflection, to be absurdly improbable. There's the fear, for instance, that parents might clone a child to have "spare parts" in case the original child needs an organ transplant. But parents of identical twins don't view one child as an organ farm for the other. Why should cloned children's parents be any different?

NOTE: This argument contains several rhetorical questions. These questions are an indirect way of making a statement. In your assignment, you'll need to convert those questions into the statements they are implying. E.g., a rhetorical question asking, "What possible explanation could she have for what she did?" is actually making the statement "There is no possible explanation for what she did."