

7C's for building a rock-solid argument

To build a strong argument, you need to follow a good plan. The 7 C's of argumentation can guide you. Follow these steps to convince others to accept your position.



Consider the Situation

- What is my topic?**
Choose a topic you have a strong feeling about.
- What is my purpose?**
Is it to persuade readers? To get readers to take action?
- Who is my audience?**
Predict what your potential audience will think about your topic.

#1

Use **perspective shifting** to get inside the mind of your audience.

I am (a/an)	What if I were (a/an)
Young student	Adult homeowner
Busy with school	Busy working, caring for kids, maintaining home
Worried about landfills and resources	Unconcerned about recycling
Careful to recycle paper and plastic	As likely to throw out as to recycle

#2

Use a **pro/con chart** to consider both sides of the issue.

Pro	Con
Why recycling habits need to change:	Why recycling habits don't need to change:
- Not enough people are recycling.	- We're recycling more than other countries.
- People are recycling the wrong materials.	- Recycling is a problem for the government, not me.
- It's too expensive.	- It's a hassle to change.

Clarify Your Thinking

- What is my opinion?**
An opinion is your own personal view or feeling about a topic.
- Why do I feel this way?**
- What other ideas should I consider before I am certain of my opinion?**

1+1=

Construct Your Claim

The claim is the main idea of your argument. It includes your topic and a special feeling you have about it. (See the formula.)

Create a claim that is believable and debatable.

- X Recycling is good for the environment.**
(Based on fact; no one will debate this.)
- ✓ America urgently needs to change its recycling habits.**
(Not everyone will agree.)

#3

Use a formula to state your claim:

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{Topic: Recycling in America} \\
 + \\
 \text{Special feeling about it: new habits needed right now} \\
 = \\
 \text{Claim: America urgently needs to change its recycling habits.}
 \end{array}$$

#4

Collect Reasons and Evidence

A reason is a special detail that supports your claim. Reasons explain why your claim is true or valuable.

Details that support your reasons are called evidence. Here are some effective types of evidence:

- Facts:** Statements that can be proven true
- Statistics:** Facts that contain numbers
- Examples:** How something works or what happens
- Quotations:** Specific words spoken or written by experts
- Anecdotes:** Brief stories that help explain a point

- Reason 1: Recycling rates are stalled.**
 - After increasing yearly for three decades, rates remain about the same in 2015 as they were in 2010. (FACT)
 - Today, only 34 percent of waste is recycled. (STATISTIC)
 - "This is crisis for the future of recycling," said David Steiner, the CEO of Waste Management. (QUOTATION)

- Reason 2: Current recycling programs are too costly.**
 - Most recycling facilities are losing money. (FACT)
 - In big cities such as New York, recycling glass, metal, and plastic costs up to double the amount of sending the material to landfills. (EXAMPLE)

- Reason 3: People aren't recycling properly.**
 - Recyclers too often place non-recyclable materials in their bins. (EXAMPLE)
 - My dad doesn't break down full boxes before throwing them in our bin. (ANECDOTE)

#5

Consider Key Objections

Consider other points of view and respond in one of two ways:

- Counter** Point out the objection's flaw (without belittling the objector).
- Concede** Recognize the value of the other viewpoint.

Objection: It's the government's fault that recycling is so expensive.

Objection: Americans already recycle at higher rates than almost all other nations.

Counter: Improper use of recycling bins by homeowners is a leading cause of increased expenses at recycling centers.

Concession: It's true that America is among the leaders, yet nearly two thirds of Americans don't recycle.

#6

Follow a pattern based on your audience.

Receptive Audience

Resistant Audience

State Claim	State Claim
Best Reason and Evidence	Objection and Response
Reason and Evidence	Reason and Evidence
Objection and Response	Best Reason and Evidence
Confirm Claim	Confirm Claim

Craft Your Argument

How you organize your argument depends on your audience. If you expect readers to be receptive, start with your reasons. For resistant audiences, address any objection right away.

Along with reasons and evidence, you can gain support by making appeals to your readers' wants and needs.

Confirm Your Main Point

Make a final appeal to your readers to act on your main point.

Use a command verb to make your call to action as clear as possible:

- Join Go
- Write Donate
- Support Call

#7

Support recycling reform for the good of current and future generations.



Source: *Inquire: A Student Handbook for 21st Century Learning*

Learn more about argumentation and persuasion at

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