

Week 4: Argumentation and Critical Thinking

STRENGTH OF ARGUMENT

Some arguments are stronger than others. I'm sure you've noticed that before. In one instance, a person might try to convince you to do or think something, but the person gets nowhere. In another instance, a person completely convinces you to do whatever he or she wanted you to do or think.

How is that? Why does one person convince you while another does not?

The two chapters this week focus on how arguments are made, what tools are used, and how they are employed to persuade people. This is the core of academic writing. Remember, in the academic world we have two goals:

1. DISCOVER THE TRUTH
2. PERSUADE OTHERS OF THE TRUTH

Unfortunately, for most of the world those are not the goals. For most of the world the goal is simple:

WIN THE ARGUMENT

For us in the academic world, truth is the ultimate goal. But after we have discovered the truth, we still need to persuade others of that truth. So we do want to "win the argument," but not at all costs. We want to win because we are right, not for the pure sake of winning. Make sense?

This week we will look at ethos, logos, and pathos, as well as how we need to think academically and avoid logical fallacies. These are two of my favorite chapters, because they really are the core of what we do in academic writing.

Enjoy!

READING

Chapters 5 and 6 in *The Super Compact Guide*

THE LOGICAL FALLACIES DISCUSSION FORUM

Once you've completed the reading, go to the Logical Fallacies Discussion Forum link. Review my opening question and respond, and then respond to at least TWO of your classmates throughout the week.

LOGICAL FALLACIES QUIZ

By midnight Sunday night, submit the logical fallacies quiz. Click the link under Topic 4 in the course and follow the instructions posted there. There is an MS Word document to download; this document has the questions for the quiz. Complete this quiz and attach the document in the assignment screen.