Organizing Your Ideas: How to Write a Persuasive Argument
Moving from Question to Claim

1. **Claim**: What do you think?
Moving from Question to Claim

1. **Claim**: What do you think?
2. **Grounds:**
   - **Reasons**: Why do you think that?
   - **Evidence**: How do you know that’s true?
Moving from Question to Claim

1. **Claim**: What do you think?
2. **Grounds**:
   - **Reasons**: Why do you think that?
   - **Evidence**: How do you know that’s true?
3. **Warrant**: How do the reasons and evidence support your claim?
1. **Claim:** You should wear a coat.
2. **Grounds:**
   - **Reasons:** It is -5 degrees outside.
   - **Evidence:** The thermometer reads -5.
3. **Warrant:** When it is cold, people should dress warmly.
1. **Claim**: You should buy a taser.

2. **Grounds**:
   - **Reasons**: You live alone.
   - **Evidence**: You are the only person on the lease.

3. **Warrant**: When you live in insecure circumstances, you should protect yourself.
WARRANT
The principle or assumption that lets me connect my reason and claim is . . .

CLAIM
I claim that . . .

REASON
. . . because of these reasons

EVIDENCE
. . . which I base on this evidence

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & RESPONSE [COUNTERARGUMENTS]
I acknowledge these questions, objections, and alternatives, and I respond to them with these arguments. . .
Claims

• Specific
• Contestable
• Reasonable
• Significant
• Interpretive, NOT Descriptive
Reasons

- *Why* do you make your claim?
- MUST be relevant to claim
- Can even understood as a “sub-claim”
- Internal, supported by external evidence (next step!)
- this is **your voice, your path** through the resources
Evidence

• *How* do you know your reason is true?
• Facts gleaned from research, must be cited.
• Accurate and sufficient
• Representative and authoritative
Warrants

• State a general principle of reasoning
  • Appropriately limited
  • Clarifies reason/evidence and claim
  • Is persuasive for your readers
• When-Then is the simplest format:
  • Commonly held principles: When it is cold, you should dress warmly.
  • Claims to authority: When we drive without a license, we commit a misdemeanor.
Main Claim

Reason/Sub-claim

Evidence

Reason/Sub-claim

Evidence

Reason/Sub-claim

Evidence

Reason/Sub-claim

Evidence

Warrants
Poor Claim: Liturgical dance does not happen very often in individual Roman Catholic parishes, even though it is prominent in other denominational worship traditions.
Better Claim: The addition of liturgical dance can enrich the worship of Catholic parishes.
Reason 1: Liturgical dance is rooted in Biblical worship traditions.

- **Evidence**: Enumeration of Biblical references to dance (OT and NT).
- **Warrant**: The Bible is an authoritative witness to God’s plan for Christian communities.
**Reason 2**: Other Christian denominations make productive use of dance in liturgical spaces.

- **Evidence**: Exploration of liturgical dance in denominational worship.
- **Warrant**: Christian communities benefit from understanding the worship experience of other denominations.
Exercise and Discussion

• Evaluate the main argument by identifying (1) its claim, (2) grounds (reasons and evidence) and (3) warrant