

Classical Argument: Veterans Issues

Mr. Eble, AP Language & Composition

Assignment: For this editorial, you'll select an issue surrounding veterans and develop a **classical argument** (see page two) based upon a claim. Though you have a vast array of issues to select based merely upon the subjects from this unit's texts (see below), you may go beyond the boundaries to select an issue we haven't discussed. Here's a list of potential topics:

- Find a particular city / area of the country in which veterans suffer from a suspension / delay in VA benefits due to budget issues caused by government cutbacks. Make a claim about the issue.
- Find a city where discussion for a veterans memorial is taking place; enter the conversation by making a claim about that memorial.
- Discuss the merits of veterans day assemblies; make a claim of fact/value/policy about the nature of Moeller's or any other celebration of veterans.
- Make a claim about treatment of PTSD, physical maladies as a result of combat.
- Make a claim about homeless veterans and the dispersal of benefits to them.
- Make a claim about the dispersal of benefits to veterans' families.
- Make a claim about society's / popular culture's depiction of veterans.

There are many more issues that you may choose, of course. Whatever claim you make, though, should center on a particular veterans issue, and you should direct it towards a particular audience / context.

Your support / evidence should be relevant, accurate, and sufficient. While you should draw from outside sources, please consider using all of the texts from this unit:

- *Seven Spots on the Sun*
- O'Brien, "On the Rainy River" and "The Things They Carried"
- Schmidle, "In the Crosshairs" from *The New Yorker*
- Finkel, "The Return" from *The New Yorker*
- "The VA's Shameful Betrayal" & "Homeless Veterans: Whose Responsibility?" from *The New York Times*
- Murray, "The Stranger in the Photo is Me"

You should also strive to find an interview with a veteran or someone related to veterans' issue as a means of bolstering your ethos. If you know a veteran, please feel free to contact that person; if you'd like some help finding someone, please let me know, and I'll help you find someone.

Finally, as always, you'll complete peer review and a post-writing analysis based upon the following questions:

1. Who is my audience? What is the context of this writing? How did I adjust my writing according to my audience/context?
2. With what did I struggle in the composition of this writing? How did I succeed?
3. What specific changes did I make after peer review? Why did I make them?

Resources for Composing this Editorial

[Harvard University Writing Center on Counterargument](#)

[A Winthrop University site on Classical Argument](#)

[Purdue OWL on Organizing Argument according to Toulmin](#)

[U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Website](#)

[U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Website on Homelessness](#)

Classical and Rogerian Arguments

Classical

Introduction (Exordium)	Capture the audience's attention. Introduce the issue and create exigence for your claim. Why is this an issue? Why do we need to pay attention?
Statement of Background (Narratio)	Supply the context needed to understand the case you present. What circumstances, occurrences, or conditions do we need to be made aware of?
Proposition (Partitio)	State your position (claim/thesis), based on the information you have presented, and outline the major points that will follow. The <i>partitio</i> divides the background information from the reasoning.
Proof (Confirmatio)	Present your reasons, subclaims, and evidence. Establish inferences between claim and support. Provide additional evidence for subclaims and evidence, where necessary. Explain and justify assumptions.
Refutation (Refutatio)	Anticipate and refute opposing arguments. In this section you demonstrate that you have already considered the issue thoroughly and have reached the only reasonable conclusion.
Conclusion (Peroratio)	Summarize the most important points. Make a final appeal to values, motivations, and feelings that are likely to encourage the audience to identify with your argument

Rogerian

Introduction	State the problem you hope to resolve. By presenting your issue as a problem you raise the possibility of positive change. Often opponents will want to solve the same problem.
Summary of Opposing Views	As accurately and neutrally as possible, state the views of the people with whom you disagree. By doing this you show that you are capable of listening without judging and have given a fair hearing to people who think differently from you.
Statement of Understanding	Also called the statement of validity. Show that you understand that there are situations in which these views are valid. Which parts of the opposing arguments do you concede? Under which conditions might you share these views?
Statement of Your Position	Now that readers have seen that you've given full consideration to views other than your own, they should be prepared to listen fairly to your views. State your position.
Statement of Contexts	Describe situations in which you hope your views will be honored. By showing that your position has merit in specific contexts, you recognize that people won't agree with you all of the time. However, opponents are allowed to agree in part and share common ground.
Statement of Benefits	Appeal to the self-interest of your opponents by showing how they would benefit from accepting your position; this concludes your essay on a hopeful, positive note.

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Introduction / Statement of Background & Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Gripping attention-grabber connects to audience, strongly appeals to pathos -Relative, encompassing background information -Excellent, gripping title -Conclusion reexamines the argument in light of the information presented, presents revealing / relative ideas for the future/reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -AG provided with some sense of pathos -Some background -Title provided -Author provides a title, but the title misses the mark -Basic conclusion restates ideas, presents ideas for the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -AG provided, but it's somewhat boring / doesn't related to audience -Little background provided -Boring, unrelated, general title -Conclusion lacks elements -No real larger implications reviewed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -AG is either irrelevant, boring, or absent. -No background about the issue being discussed. -No title / completely unrelated title -No real conclusion; editorial just ends...
Claim / Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Thesis is implicit or explicit claim of policy, value, or fact with strong support or strongly-worded and specific -Clear link between claim, assumptions, evidence; writing is free of fallacies -Author realistically anticipates the opposing side and depicts it with a source / example. -Author refutes the opposing argument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Thesis is present, somewhat vague -2 relatively relevant reasons provided -Reasons don't necessarily relate to the appropriate audience --Opposing argument addressed, with some / general semblance of refutation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Thesis vague, problematic -1/2 reasons are provided, but they're debatable / irrelevant -Reasons don't relate to the appropriate audience -Opposing argument is given lip service, no real refutation provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Thesis argumentative, follows five-paragraph structure with blueprint statement -Thesis not an arguable claim -No valid assumptions for thesis -Opposition is ignored / not mentioned -Writer commits fallacies
Evidence of Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essay demonstrates superior understanding of the subject matter. Thesis is amply supported with reasons, quotes, details, examples while avoiding summary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essay demonstrates understanding of the subject matter. Thesis is supported with reasons, examples, details, and quotes while avoiding summary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essay is short on the use of details and examples, or the essay demonstrates little understanding of the subject matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essay does not adequately demonstrate understanding of the text and subject matter, or it does not support the thesis with details, reasons, and examples.
SMUGSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Few to no MUGSS errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Some MUGSS errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Many MUGSS errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -MUGSS errors distract from the content of the argument
Style / Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Clear, well-constructed sentences in which the author utilizes various schemes -Carefully-selected words (specifically precise, active, direct verbs) and tropes help author establish and maintain tone -Author establishes a distinct voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Syntax, diction show some complexity, though some are awkwardly-phrased or vague -Some sense of voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Syntax and diction are haphazard, vague; author attempts to utilize schemes and tropes, but they miss the mark. -Little sense of voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Clunky, awkward syntax; little to no evidence of purposeful schemes / tropes -Writing is mechanical; no sense of voice