

Here is how our potential argument about corporate sponsorship might be mapped out with the Toulmin Model:

The claim:	Corporations should be permitted and also encouraged to support libraries, the arts, and clubs in the schools that serve their communities.
The grounds, reasons, and/or evidence:	Corporate contributions already support school athletics, plus community libraries, arts, and service organizations.
The warrant:	It is wise for corporations to find highly visible ways to support schools that do good work in the corporations' communities.
The backing:	Corporations can create good will and, therefore, do more profitable business in communities and schools that they serve financially.
The rebuttal:	Some may argue that corporate sponsorships in schools might encourage students to develop unhealthy consumer practices and spend money on products that they neither need nor can afford. However, we should assume that students have the good sense to monitor their own spending habits.
The qualifier:	If corporate sponsorship should somehow interfere with the best practices of teaching and learning in the schools, it should be stopped.

The Toulmin Model is not nearly as complicated as it might appear on first examination. The easiest way to understand it is to compare it to the deductive model. The warrant in the Toulmin Model corresponds to the *general premise* in the deductive argument. The grounds, reasons, and/or evidence in Toulmin corresponds to the *specific evidence* in the deductive, and the claim in Toulmin corresponds to the *conclusion* in the deductive. The other parts of the Toulmin Model—the backing, the rebuttal, and the qualifier—help you flesh out the reasoning of your argument in greater detail.

4. The Rogerian Argument

Rogerian argument, effective for situations in which you want to establish close, friendly contact with your readers from the outset, is named for the twentieth-century American psychologist Carl Rogers, who emphasized the need for arguments to be based on what he called “common grounds” that the writer shares with his or her audience. Rogerian argument is less concerned with winning the case than establishing a solution that will accommodate more than one position. The writer gives a fair statement of the position, but also fairly states the alternative. The writer consciously plays out instances where the alternate position might work and then discusses reasons for the position being advocated. Sometimes the aim is to reach a compromise or to leave open the possibility of change.

A Rogerian argumentative essay may or may not have a distinctive thesis statement. In essence, the writer offers points in support of a position and then asks the readers, “What can we agree upon?”, “What might be the benefits of seeing the argument one way rather than another?”

Here are elements of Rogerian argument, using our sample topic:

- **Know your audience.** Let’s assume the audience as members of the board of education and other citizens who want students to have the best education possible.
- **Establish common ground.** You, the writer, are a student in the school, and you realize that better libraries, arts programs, and clubs can benefit students, several of whom are the children and grandchildren of audience members.
- **Introduce the premises that underlie your position.** Corporations have a responsibility to support their communities. The schools are an important part of the community. Libraries, the arts, and clubs add value to a student’s education. Students who have good libraries, arts organizations, and clubs are likely to become lifelong readers and learners and supporters of the arts and service organizations in the communities where they will eventually live.
- **Explain shared premises.** Parents, community members, and students have a vested interest in creating active, independent learners and citizens.
- **Introduce and develop your position.** Corporations should be permitted and also encouraged to support libraries, the arts, and clubs in the schools that serve their communities. Corporations are part of communities and act as citizens.
- **Consider possible objections.** Corporate support would limit the free expression of speech and thought in the schools, or encourage students to be unthinking consumers, buying items they neither need nor can afford.
- **Find places of agreement, compromise, contingency.** Explain how you and the audience can work together to be certain that these objections are observed, how alterations might occur if objections are observed, and how the benefits of your claim actually outweigh negative possible consequences.

Choosing an Argumentative Path

As a writer who has now developed a tentative thesis or main idea for your argument, read and thought through reasons and considered data, you decide on an argumentative path based on

- The strength of your opinion about the topic
- The knowledge, background, and attitude of your audience
- The amount or kind of data or reasons you have developed for your position
- The amount of space you have to devote to your discussion
- The persona you want to develop for persuasive effect