

In today's ever-changing society, schools are called upon to give each child a complete education, and to do so with very limited resources; therefore, corporate sponsorship within schools provides the best avenue through which necessary funds become available. People who have a deep interest in the education of young people have long debated the ethics of sponsorship, but in the end finances always win out. The money that comes from sponsorship is vital to continuing that sports team that gives Johnny a reason to come to school every day or the school newspaper that allows Jennifer to express her complicated emotions. Without corporate sponsorship many schools would be forced to do without, and that is what would be unfair to the students. Adults making decisions, based on what they believe, affecting programs that students are actively involved in is dangerous territory that must be tread upon carefully. Everyone values a rich education, and corporate sponsorship is just a means to accomplish that shared goal.

Supporting, Developing, and Confirming Your Thesis

As we suggested earlier, a good writer learns how to craft the best arrangement for an argumentative essay. When you're successful at making a good argument, you know both the small component parts and the whole shape of the argumentative piece. Even more important, you know how the small parts work to reinforce and develop the whole shape. So you need to know what goes into these parts and how to put them into an effective order for your readers.

Once you have established your argumentative position, created a thesis, formulated a method for developing your argument, and decided the arrangement pattern you'll develop, you need to concentrate on figuring out which reasons, examples, data will best support and affirm your developing argument. You will have at this point been reading and considering claims and data, and some of what you've used to develop your thesis will become part of the supporting material you will use as support. There are two large categories that describe how you'll want to use these specifics to develop your thesis:

- **Details.** Facts or statistics, examples from reading or experience, and hypothetical cases are all strategies of detail that make your argument persuasive.
- **Reasons and Explanations.** Explanations offer logical guidance to readers making decisions about a topic. Comparisons that help readers understand your issue in other terms are helpful; *analogies* allow readers to make connections themselves and are also logically persuasive.

And, of course, you can combine the two categories, offering a range of details, reasons, and explanations in support of your thesis.

Generating Supporting Material

How do you generate this good supporting material for your arguments, specific, appropriate details, reasons, and explanations? As we have argued throughout this book (using lots of details and reasons ourselves!), in general you need to be an avid, curious, active reader. You need to read not only books but also good newspapers and news magazines (most of which you can get free online or in your school's library). You need to watch high-quality current-affairs programs on television—the kind that allow people to express and explain their ideas fully, not the kind where people shout at each other and the host rudely interrupts their answers. You need to have conversations with your fellow students and with others—friends, parents, teachers, people in the community—who will listen to your ideas and respond to them and to whom you should listen and respond with equal attentiveness. Cicero wrote in his treatise *On the Orator* that the ideal statesman–rhetorician needs to know not only philosophy but also law, history, and psychology; needs to be able to move smoothly from the general to the specific and back to the general; needs a good sense of humor. In short, the best arguer is the one who has the widest, deepest education, the one who reads and writes a lot. You'll find details, reasons, and analogies from the world around you in school and outside it. And don't forget Cicero's advice about humor: your voice, your ability to play with words and ideas, is part of your sense of assurance and good humor that readers respond to. For the particular task of developing an argument, you begin the process of generating material by considering what you believe and know, by finding out more, by developing a beginning idea and considering more in order to confirm or alter it, and then by locating data that best makes the case you now believe you want to make.

Ordering Details and Explanations

In addition to knowing how to generate effective material to support, develop, and confirm your thesis, you also need to give considerable thought to how you order and introduce details and explanations. Too often writers simply insert specifics into the essay in the order it comes into their minds. Better by far is to make decisions about order by considering your argument and your readers. Which detail suggests another one? Which is easiest for a reader to understand or agree with? Which takes the longest to explain? Which is most interesting or fun? These questions suggest that you're thinking about your reader: what order works best to help readers believe me, understand me, stay attentive? If your topic has a chronological or historical dimension, you might order your supporting points by time: first this happened, then this, then this. If your topic has a geographical or spatial dimension, you can use location as your ordering device: here you see this point, there you see the other, and there you see yet another.