

*(last updated 05/11/16)<sup>1</sup>*

**Argumentation** is the expression of a point of view on a subject and the support of that expression with evidence. Argumentation means more than simply presenting information you have gathered or regurgitating what was discussed in class. You need to select **your** perspective, provide evidence that supports your view, and offer an interpretation based on evidence. Professors often look for the following features as they evaluate your arguments:

1. Proof you understand the material
2. Demonstration of your ability to use or apply the material beyond what you read or heard.
3. Demonstration of your ability to support your ideas with academically credible evidence.
4. Indication of in-depth understanding of the issues at stake through a consideration of opposing viewpoints.

**Useful questions to ask yourself as you prepare your argument:**

<p><b>Evidence:</b> “What are the experts saying?”</p> <p>Once you have stated the reasons for your opinion, find evidence that proves your theory. Use other sources to back up your opinion. Quote experts and authorities on the topic; give statistics, facts, and examples. This means you will have to do some research on the topic.</p>	<p><i>Gzco riq&lt;'</i></p> <p>Dr. Joe Blow of the Imaginary Veterinary Clinic states, “Cats are very independent animals. For the most part, they prefer to be left to themselves” (“Non-Existent” 45).</p>
<p><b>Counter-arguments:</b> “What do people with differing viewpoints believe?”</p> <p>Counter-arguments strengthen your argument and build your credibility. By anticipating what the opposition may say or how people who disagree with you might respond to your views, you show that you have thought about the topic seriously and have done some research. Bringing up reasonable counter-arguments allows you both to test your ideas to make sure they are credible and to explain to your audience the weaknesses you see in those opposing ideas. You may want to respond to opposing viewpoints in one of these two ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accept the opposing viewpoint as credible, but explain why yours is better</li> <li>2. Reject the opposing argument altogether with an explanation as to why.</li> </ol> <p>Be fair and objective, not critical and rude. Show you have seriously considered both sides, but don't change sides (unless you discover that your position isn't as strong as you first thought!) One more tip: It is usually more effective to look at one or two counter-arguments in depth rather than to create a long list.</p>	<p><i>Gzco riq&lt;'</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Some people say cats are better pets. While cats do make good pets, dogs are better because they are more willing to play with their owners.</li> <li>2. Some people say cats are better pets, but they are not as playful as dogs. They are quite independent and oftentimes lazy.</li> </ol>