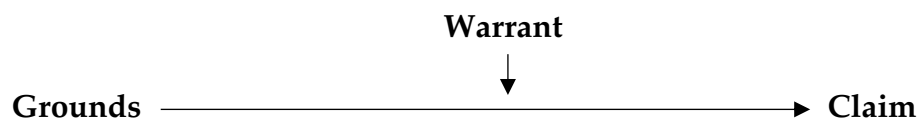


Toulmin Method for Argument Development & Revision¹

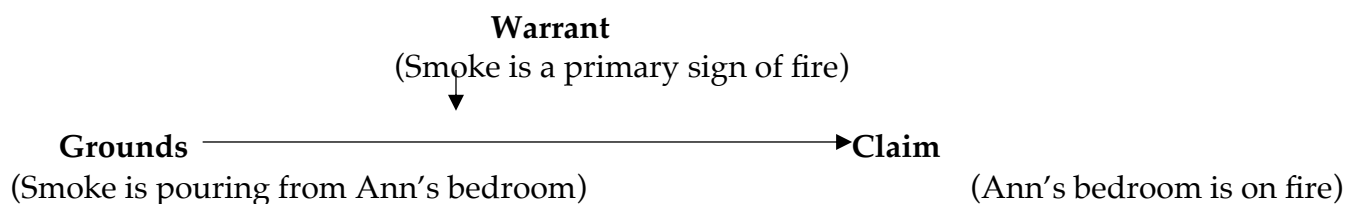
Stage 1

- A. **The Claim:** a thesis, assertion, or proposition. Answers: “What do I want to prove?”
- B. **The Grounds:** evidence in support of the claim. Answers: “What do I have to go on?”
- C. **The Warrant:** support that links the grounds to the claim. Answers: “How do I get from evidence to claim?”



Everyday Example²

- A. **Claim:** Ann’s bedroom is on fire.
- B. **Grounds:** Smoke is pouring from Ann’s bedroom.
- C. **Warrant:** Smoke is a primary sign of fire.



Academic Example

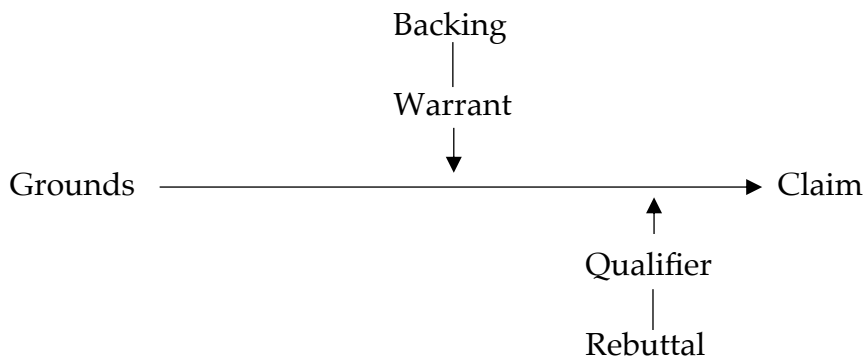
- A. **Claim:** Michel Foucault’s late work on ethical practices in Antiquity can form a basis for a contemporary philosophical art of living.
- B. **Grounds:** In numerous late works such as X, Y, & Z, Foucault convincingly argues for the intentional use of consistent practices as a means of transforming habits, decision-making processes, and actions that can be useful and relevant today.
- C. **Warrant:** Ethical approaches in Antiquity usually had an element of defining and using daily practices in some intentional way.

¹ Adapted from Toulmin, Stephen, Richard D Rieke, and Allan Janik. *An Introduction to Reasoning*. New York: Macmillan, 1979 & Karbach, Joan. “Using Toulmin’s Model of Argumentation.” *Journal of Teaching Writing* 6, no. 1 (1987): 81–91.

² Ibid, 82.

Stage 2

- D. **The Backing:** support for the reliability of the warrant. Answers: “Is the move from grounds to claim safe and reliable?”
- E. **The Rebuttal:** a fact, exception, or proposition that may invalidate the claim. Answers: “What possibilities might disrupt the argument?”
- F. **The Qualifier:** a qualification to hedge the argument based on the rebuttal. Answers: “Is a qualification necessary?”



Everday Example³

- D. **Backing:** Because, fires generally produce smoke
- E. **Rebuttal:** Unless, the smoke is a produce of a chemical reaction
- F. **Qualifier:** In certain ways,

Academic Example

- G. **Backing:** Epicureans and Stoics as well as recent scholars' interpretations, such as Pierre Hadot's, provide wide-ranging examples of daily ethical practice in Antiquity.
- H. **Rebuttal:** The socio-historical circumstances between Greco-Roman Antiquity and any person alive today are so dramatically different, it is not viable to transfer what was done then to contemporary contexts.
- I. **Qualifier:** In certain ways,

³ Ibid, 83.

Backing

(Epicureans and Stoics as well as recent scholars' interpretations, such as Pierre Hadot's, provide wide-ranging examples of daily ethical practice in Antiquity.)

Warrant

Grounds —————> Claim

Qualifier

(In certain ways,)

Rebuttal

(The socio-historical circumstances between Greco-Roman Antiquity and any person alive today are so dramatically different, it is not viable to transfer what was done then to contemporary contexts.)

Trial Run

1. Define your audience as specifically as possible (a professor, fellow scholars in your field, etc.):
2. Academic arguments are usually based off of what other scholars have written. What are some of the major pieces of previous scholarship related to your argument?
3. Draft your **claim** as clearly and comprehensively as you can:
4. Draft your **grounds** in as much detail as possible. What is the evidence for your claim?

5. Draft your **warrant**. How does the evidence support the claim?

6. Add **backing** to your warrant.

7. Brainstorm a strong counterargument (**rebuttal**) to your claim/overall argument.

8. **Qualify** your argument accordingly.

Key points to remember:

0. The method can be used to develop, revise, and strengthen your own arguments. It can also be used to analyze others' arguments.
1. Developing an argument with the Toulmin Method will often highlight the need for more arguments. In the example above, a new Toulmin should be done for the rebuttal, and an argument should be made for what is and is not viable to transfer between these two socio-historical contexts and why.
2. For longer projects, this process can guide the work that needs to be done. Always keep in mind the rhetorical situation of your writing: What is your writing's context? What is its purpose? Who is your audience? What are they expecting? How much do they know? How should you approach them to best get your point across, in terms of voice, style, genre, and type of evidence?