

BEL 313 Introduction to Critical Thinking
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SIMPLE ARGUMENTS by *Teech Airil*

Q. What are arguments in the first place?

A. Technically, arguments are made up of two main linguistic parts namely the **contention/claim**, followed by the **support/reason** which is **FOR** the contention/claim **OR** the **objection/opposition** which is **AGAINST** the contention/claim.

To restate the above:

FIRST, an argument must first have a contention/claim.

SECOND, the contention/claim is followed by support/reason (**for**) **OR** objection/opposition (**against**).

From this point onwards, please use this terminology in your tests or any lecture discussions...

A. Contention/claim or C/C.

B1. Support/reason or S/R.

B2. Objection/opposition or O/O.

As a final note, please understand that in an argument the same contention can have both an S/R plus an O/O (but don't worry about that too much at this point, okay).

Q. And just how do you 'map' out a simple argument, please?

A. Follow the steps below exactly:

FIRST, find the C/C, which is a full sentence from an article. *If possible*, paraphrase some of the words and make sure all the pronouns in the sentence is fully explained.

CORRECT way: Semaoncit the Boroy was a notorious pirate who lived in the Malay Archipelago in the 1500s.

WRONG way: He was a pirate who lived there in the 1500s.

SECOND, decide whether the C/C has an S/R that supports it or and O/O that is against it – from the actual article.

EXAMPLE of S/R: Recent archaeological findings on three sunken ships in the South China Sea pointed to the existence of a group of pirates based on weapons and loot from different areas in the Malay Archipelago.

EXAMPLE of O/O: According to the ancient text Semalaon Semalukot written in ancient Sanskrit around the 1500s, a seaman was famous for uniting the people of the Malay Archipelago and his real name was Semaoncit , which means ‘macho hero guy’ in Malayalam language.

THIRD, if you still cannot decide whether the C/C has an S/R that supports it or and O/O that is against it – re-read and find actual points written by the writer(s) in the article.

If you are still blur, talk to a friend. And if that friend is also blur, talk to someone else who is not too blur. Why? Because in learning, we must never be shy to find help!

FOURTH, to avoid redundancy and to not overdo yourself please do not use the same C/C with another S/R or O/O and vice versa.

This will also ensure that you are forced to think critically about the article and you must extract all relevant arguments in the article!

-THE END-