

PACES: Project, Argument, Claims, Evidence, Strategies

Project:



An author's project describes the kind of work she sets out to do – her purpose and the method she uses to carry it out. It is the overall activity that the writer is engaged in—researching, investigating, experimenting, interviewing, documenting, etc. Try to imagine what the author's goals or hypotheses were as she wrote the text. To articulate a project—and to write an account—you need a verb, such as “researches,” “investigates,” “studies,” “presents,” “connects A with B,” etc.

Argument:



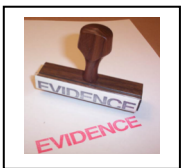
In the broadest sense, an argument is any piece of written, spoken, or visual language designed to persuade an audience or bring about a change in ideas/attitudes. Less broadly, in academic writing the argument often refers to the main point, assertion or conclusion advanced by an author, along with the evidence and reasoning by which this is established. Arguments are concerned with contested issues where some degree of uncertainty exists (we don't argue about what is self-evident or agreed upon).

Claims:



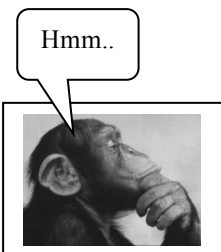
To make a claim is to assert that something is the case, and to provide evidence for this. Arguments may consist of numerous claims and sometimes also sub-claims. Claims in academic writing often consist of an assertion, the staking out of a position, the solution to a problem, or the resolution of some shortcoming, weakness or gap in existing research. Often comes with **self-identification** (“my point here is that...”) **emphasis** (“It must be stressed that...”) **approval** (“Olson makes some important and long overdue amendments to work on ...”) or a **problem/solution** or **question/answer framework**.

Evidence:



The component of the argument used as support for the claims made. Evidence is the support, reasons, data/information used to help persuade/prove an argument. To find evidence in a text, ask what the author has to go on. What is there to support this claim? Is the evidence credible? Some **types of evidence**: facts, historical examples/comparisons, examples, analogies, illustrations, interviews, statistics (source & date are important), expert testimony, authorities, anecdotes, witnesses, personal experiences, reasoning, etc.

Strategies:



Rhetorical Strategy: a particular way in which authors craft language—both consciously and subconsciously—so as to have an effect on readers. Strategies are means of persuasion, ways of gaining a readers' attention, interest, or agreement. Strategies can be identified in the way an author organizes her text, selects evidence, addresses the reader, frames an issue, presents a definition, constructs a persona or establishes credibility, appeals to authority, deals with opposing views, uses “meta-discourse,” makes particular use of style and tone, draws on particular tropes and images, as well as many of the other textual choices that can be identified.