

Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

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How to Win an Argument

Persuasion vs. Argument

- ▶ persuasion and argument are often used interchangeably
- ▶ persuasion is a broad term, which includes many tactics designed to move people to a position, a belief, or a course of action
- ▶ argument is a specific kind of persuasion based on the principles of logic and reasoning

The Importance of Argument and Persuasion

- ▶ **In everyday life...**
appealing a grade, asking for a raise, applying for a job, negotiating the price of a new car, arguing in traffic court
- ▶ **In academic life...**
defending your ideas, engaging in intellectual debate
- ▶ **On the job...**
getting people to listen to your ideas, winning buy-in, getting your boss to notice, getting cooperation, moving people to action
- ▶ **In writing...**
irrefutably making your point, writing to be read
- ▶ **In reading and listening...**
critically evaluating other's arguments, protecting yourself from unethical persuasive tactics, recognizing faulty reasoning when you see it

What Exactly is an Argument?

- ▶ an argument involves the process of establishing a claim and then proving it with the use of logical reasoning, examples, and research



The Essential Ingredients of an Argument

- ▶ An issue open to debate
- ▶ Your position on the issue
- ▶ Your reasons for that position
- ▶ Evidence to support your reasons
experience, expert opinion, research, statistics



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The Importance of Argument and Persuasion

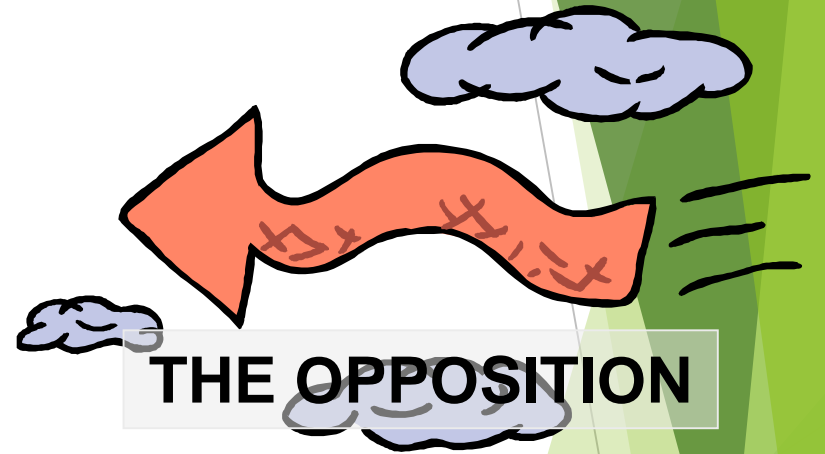
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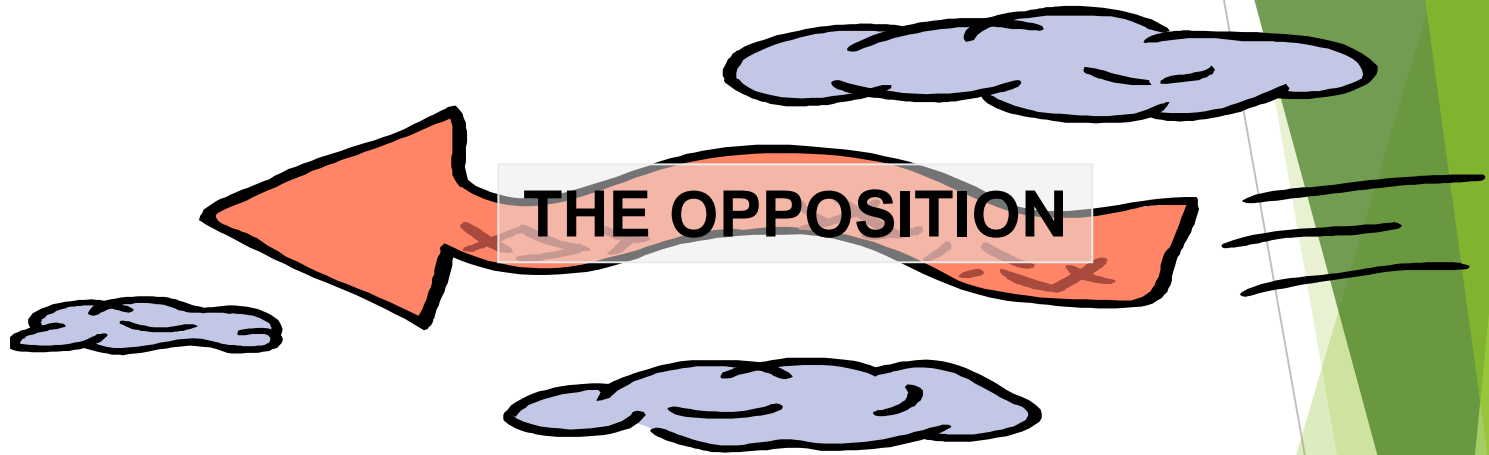
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The Architecture of Argument

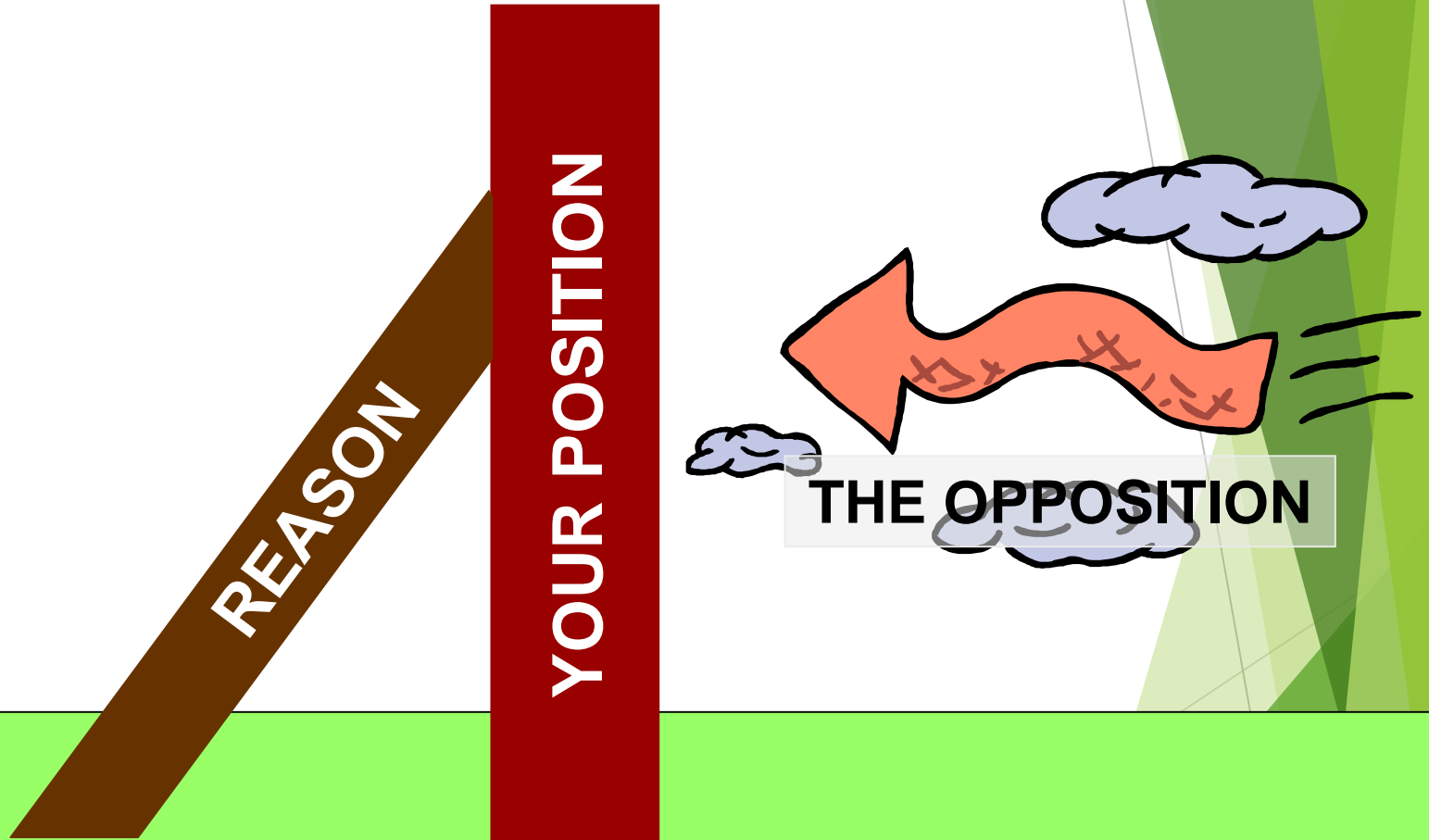
YOUR POSITION



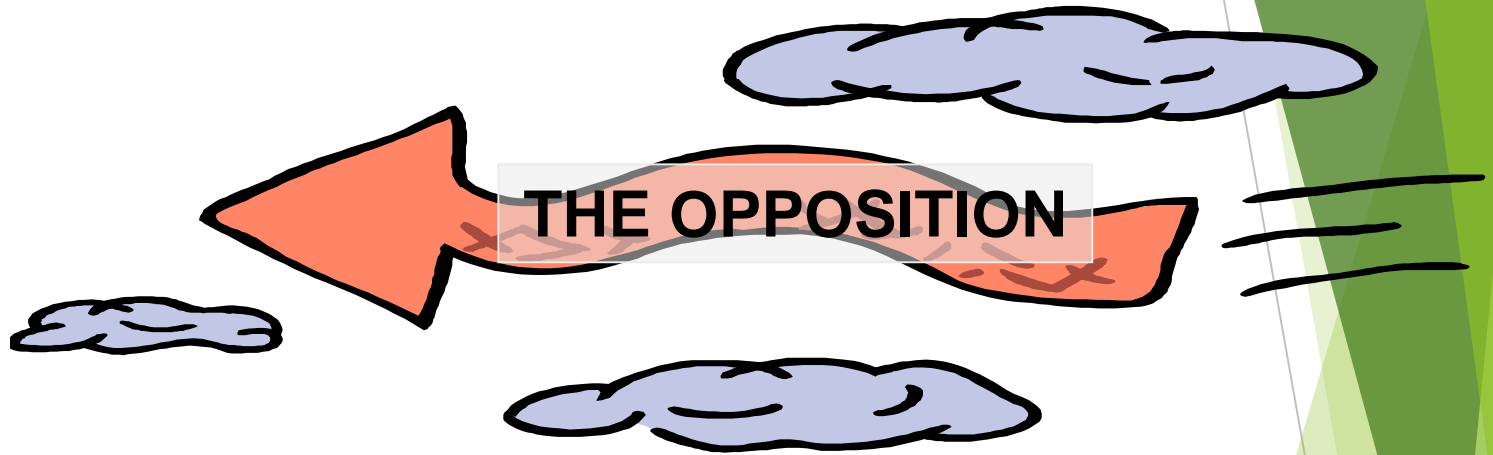
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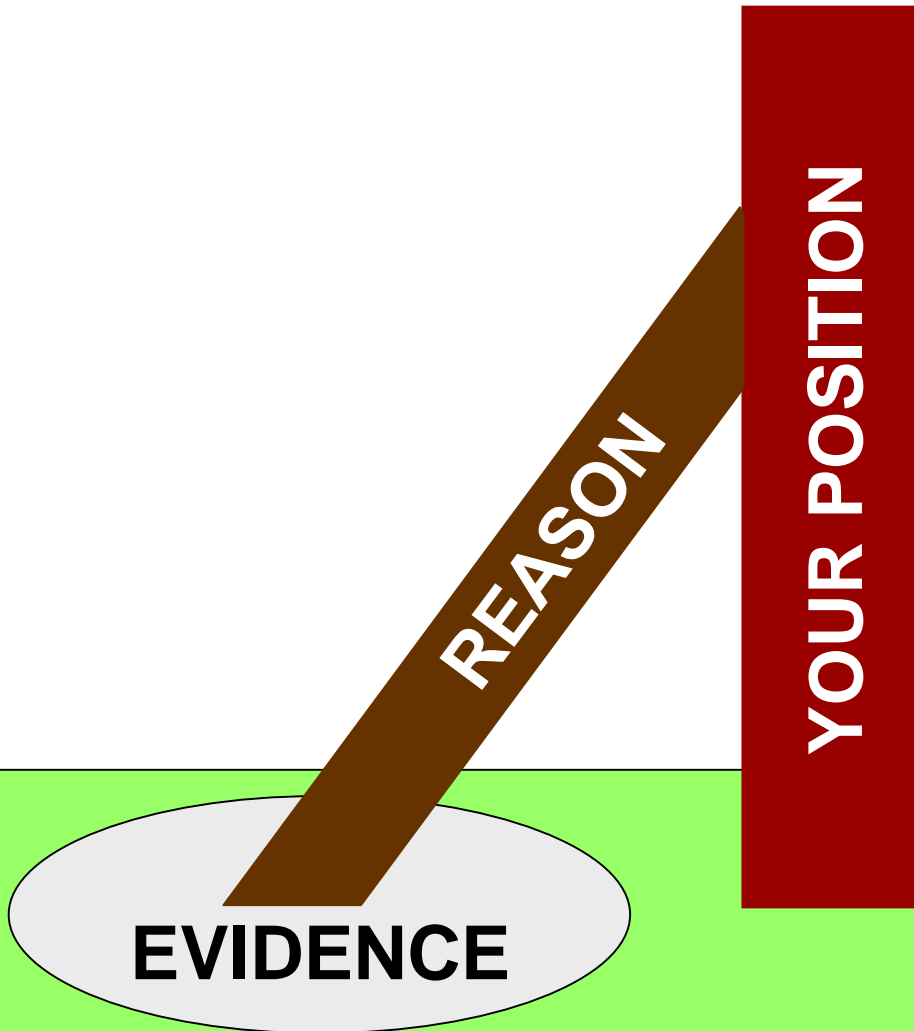
The Architecture of Argument



REASON

YOUR POSITION


The Architecture of Argument



The Role of Your Audience

- ▶ Understanding your audience is key to effective writing of all kinds, especially persuasive writing
- ▶ An argument is an implicit dialogue or exchange with your audience, so in writing arguments, assume there is a reader that will not agree with you
- ▶ Audience awareness is absolutely essential to successful persuasion and argument; therefore...
- ▶ Know your audience
 - ▶ What is their position on the issue?
 - ▶ How strongly do they feel about it?
 - ▶ Are they open-minded enough to consider other views?
 - ▶ What will their objections be to your argument?

The Structure of Classical Argument

- 
- ✓ Introduction
 - ✓ Thesis Statement
 - ✓ Background Information
 - ✓ Reasons and Evidence
 - ✓ The Opposing View and the Refutation
 - ✓ Conclusion

The Thesis Statement...

- ▶ is most important sentence in your paper
- ▶ is an assertion
- ▶ is contentious
- ▶ answers the question: “What am I trying to prove?”
- ▶ brings focus to the entire essay
- ▶ lets the reader know the main idea of the paper
- ▶ is not a factual statement or an announcement of purpose, but a claim that has to be proven throughout the paper

Which thesis statement is the most effective for an argument about the need for V-chips in television sets?

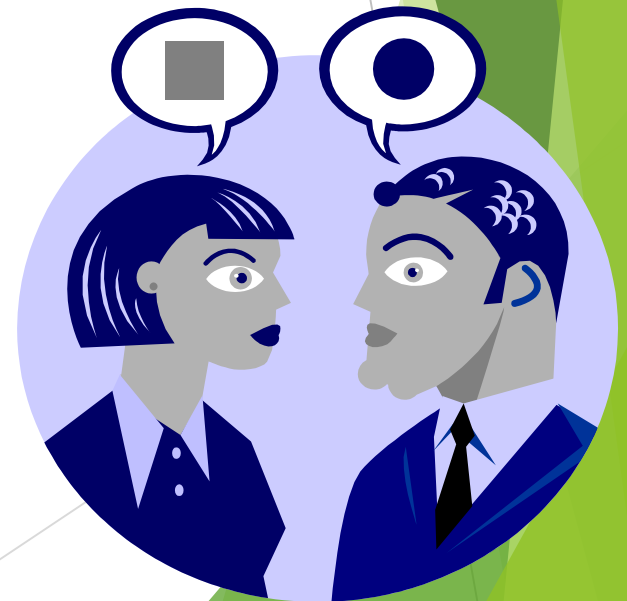
- ▶ Parents, often too busy to watch television shows with their families, can monitor their children's viewing habits with the aid of the V-chip.
- ▶ To help parents monitor their children's viewing habits, the V-chip should be a required feature for television sets sold in the U.S.
- ▶ This paper will describe a V-chip and examine the uses of the V-chip in American-made television sets.

Using a Reasonable Tone

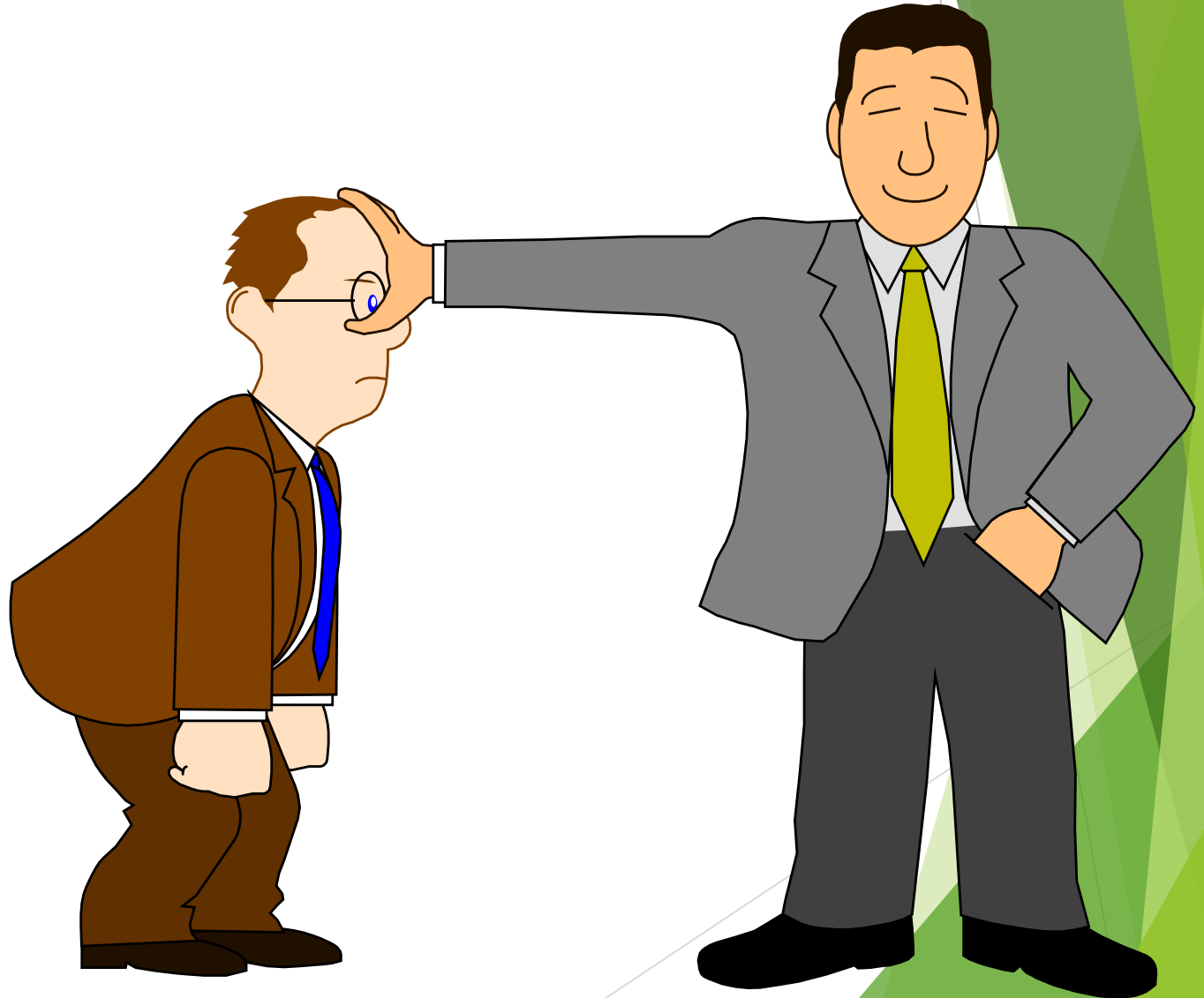
- ▶ Shows you are fair-minded and therefore adds to your credibility
- ▶ When you acknowledge the opposition with balanced language, it shows that you respect the opposing views
- ▶ No matter how passionate you are about the issue, don't resort to careless, harsh words; this would show more about you than the issue

Offering a Counterargument

- ▶ Addressing the opposition demonstrates your credibility as a writer
- ▶ It shows that you have researched multiple sides of the argument and have come to an informed decision
- ▶ Remember, keep a balanced tone when attempting to debunk the opposition

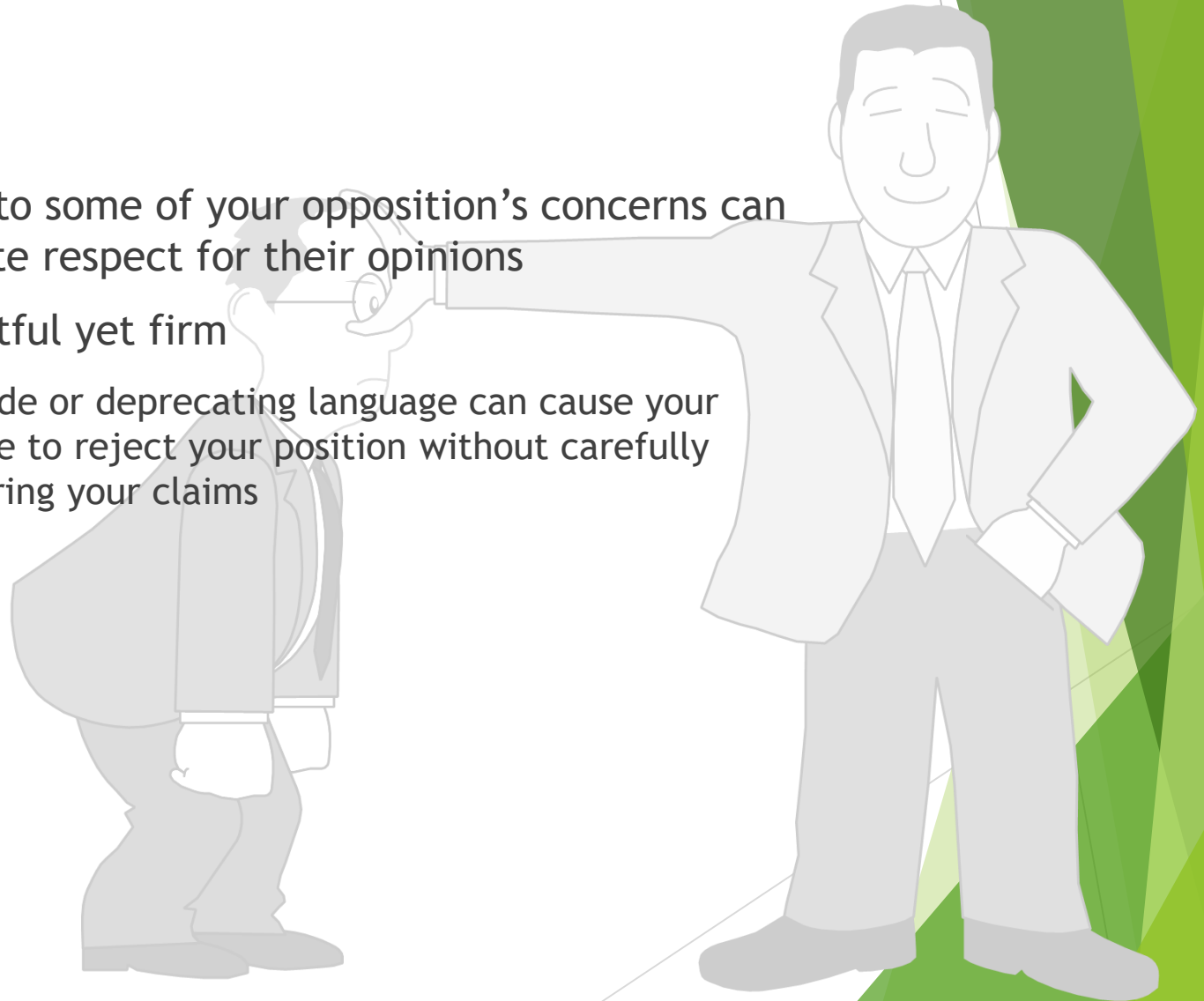


Counter-arguing Effectively



Counter-arguing Effectively

- ▶ conceding to some of your opposition's concerns can demonstrate respect for their opinions
- ▶ remain tactful yet firm
 - ▶ using rude or deprecating language can cause your audience to reject your position without carefully considering your claims

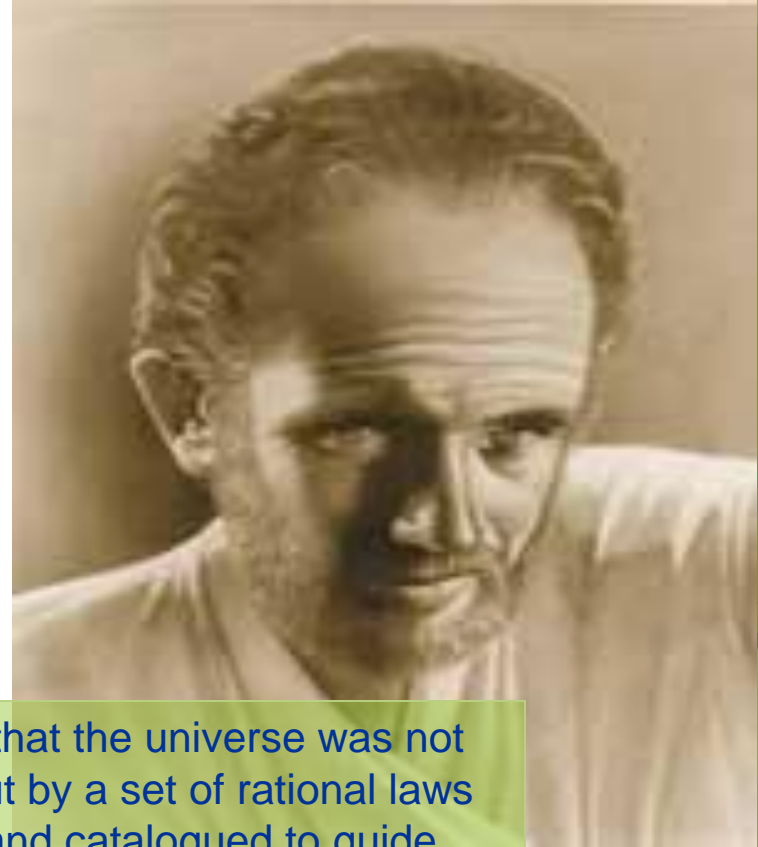


The Three Persuasive Appeals

Logos, Pathos, and Ethos

Aristotle (384-322 BC)

- ▶ philosopher
- ▶ author
(170 books; 47 surviving)
- ▶ teacher
- ▶ scientist



His primary gift to the world was proof that the universe was not controlled by blind chance or magic, but by a set of rational laws which could be discovered, analyzed, and catalogued to guide human behavior. **Aristotle gave mankind the gift of logic.**

Three persuasive appeals

- ▶ Logos (Logic)
 - ▶ The appeal to reason
- ▶ Pathos (Emotion)
 - ▶ The appeal to emotion
- ▶ Ethos (Credibility)
 - ▶ The appeal of one's character



All persuasive appeals are really about involving your audience.

Example of emotional appeal (Pathos)

“ For Brutus, as you know,
was Caesar’s angel. Judge,
O you gods, how dearly
Caesar lov’d him!
This was the most unkindest
cut of all”

– from *Julius Caesar*



Example of emotional appeal (Pathos)

“ ..But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land...”

– *Martin Luther King Jr.*



Leveraging your credibility (Ethos)



- ▶ credibility is the audience's response to you as the source of the message
- ▶ credibility has three sources:
 - ▶ knowledge
 - ▶ image
 - ▶ relationships

Questions to test credibility

- ▶ Has the reader been able to rely on what you have said in the past? If they are unfamiliar with you...
- ▶ Do you know what you're talking about? Are you familiar with all sides of the issue?
- ▶ Have you done your research on the issue?
- ▶ Have you documented your research thoroughly and accurately?
- ▶ Have you thoughtfully addressed the opposition?



Example of logical appeal (Logos)



“I think; therefore, I am.”

- ▶ There is no room for the clouds of emotion in this straightforward formula; it makes purely a logical appeal.

Logic is the most important and the most effective of the persuasive appeals.

Some Ways to Use the Three Appeals

Credibility	Logic	Emotion
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Show that you are fair- and open-minded■ Point to other “experts” or an authority other than yourself■ Cite research■ Show why people should listen to you and believe you	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Rely primarily on facts■ Use deductive or inductive reasoning to reach your conclusion■ Use classical argument, including reason and evidence to support your claim	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Use emotionally charged or highly connotative words■ Appeal to peoples fears, concerns, passions, vanity, sense of justice, and so forth■ Take advantage of rhythm and refrain in language

*If you wish to persuade me, you
must think my thoughts, feel my
feelings, and speak my words.*

—MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

Reference and sources

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