



# Champion Press

## Foundations of Debate Public Forum & Congressional Debate For Grades 5 - 8

### Sample Chapter

This packet includes a complete chapter as a sample of the Foundations of Debate Flexbook! The combination textbook and workbook includes all the basics for new debaters.

As you'll see in this sample, every chapter includes explanations of concepts paired with application activities, exercises and drills, review questions, discussion prompts, and more. Many chapters include videos and other content that helps students understand the material.

The Foundations of Debate: Public Forum & Congressional Debate Flexbook includes lessons on:

- Public Speaking Skills
- Argumentation Structure
- Research Methods
- Refutation and Defense
- Case Writing
- Rules and Norms
- Judge Adaptation
- Strategies for Success

The Flexbook model allows students to complete activities within the book as they learn new speech and debate skills. This edition is the result of contributions from 10+ nationally acclaimed debate educators with 100+ years of combined classroom experience.

If you have any questions, please contact us at [Team@TheChampionPress.com](mailto:Team@TheChampionPress.com)

# Chapter 5:

## Everything Is An Argument



Core Question: How can I effectively construct and present persuasive arguments for competitive debate and beyond?

### Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- ✓ Use the Toulmin Model to make solid arguments
- ✓ Show your ability to structure arguments for a debate
- ✓ Change your arguing strategies for different debate styles and formats

We've all had informal arguments with our friends and family, but learning how to structure an argument in a debate setting is a different process.

### 5.1 What Is An Argument

**An argument** is a structured reason to agree or disagree with something. Being able to build strong arguments will help you use the power of words to shape people's views, win debates, and make a lasting impression on your judge and audience.

In debate, you'll make arguments for or against the topic. In this chapter, we'll dive into the process of making and framing strong arguments. As debaters, we know that the strength of our ideas doesn't just depend on what we say, but also how we say it.

The way you shape and form your arguments can impact whether or not you're able to change people's minds.

Arguments use persuasive speaking, logic, and strong facts to change minds and earn support.

Arguments in debate serve many roles:

- Arguments give structure and organization, letting you present your ideas and facts in a clear way.
- Arguments are building blocks that hold up your overall position, supporting or disagreeing with the debate topic.
- Arguments are a key way to persuade, aiming to clearly explain your side to the audience.



## Champ's Work: Creating Basic Arguments

I'm trying to figure out some basic arguments before we learn how to structure them. Can you help me come up with some arguments that support this topic and some arguments that oppose this topic?

*Resolved: Compulsory voting should be implemented in the United States.*

Support 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Support 2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Support 3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Oppose 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Oppose 2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Oppose 3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Concept Checkpoint



1. Why are arguments considered the building blocks of a debate?
2. In what ways do arguments provide structure and organization to a debate?

## 5.2 Argument Construction

Making good arguments can be challenging, and it involves more than just expressing opinions.

### Structure of An Argument

Many people’s ideas about arguments in debates come from the Toulmin Model, created by British philosopher Stephen Toulmin. His model created a clear plan for making and examining arguments.

A simpler version of the Toulmin model is often used in debate competitions, and it can help you build strong arguments. This version includes a Claim, Data, Warrant, and Impact. We’ll refer to this format as the CDWI model throughout this Flexbook. Once you understand the structure of an argument in this way, you might start seeing parts of the Toulmin Model all around you.

**Claim:** The *claim* is the main point or idea you want to prove or back up. It’s the main argument or stance that you put forward. A claim should be easy to understand and specific, capturing the heart of the argument. Think of this like the topic sentence in a paragraph.

**Data:** The *data*, also known as grounds or evidence, are the facts, data, examples, or expert opinions that back up the claim. These are pieces of information from a trusted source who is not you, the debater. Data should be trustworthy, related to the topic, and convincing, making the claim stronger and more persuasive.

**Warrant:** The *warrant* explains how the data supports your claim. The warrant may use logical reasoning, cause-and-effect relationships, general principles, or other ways of thinking that prove the claim based on the evidence.

**Impact:** The *impact* is the reason why the argument matters. It often talks about who or what the claim affects, taking the warrant a step further and giving a strong reason why the argument is important in the debate and beyond.

Learning and using these parts (Claim, Data, Warrant, and Impact) will help you build well-structured and persuasive arguments.

### Applying The Structure

Now, let’s look at an example of the CDWI model with our sample topic, *Resolved: Compulsory voting should be implemented in the United States.*

**Claim:** Compulsory voting strengthens democracy. **This gives a clear and easy-to-understand summary of the argument.**

**Data:** The foundation of a working democracy is citizens taking part in elections. According to the United States Census Bureau, voter turnout was only about 66.8% in the 2020 presidential election. Even though this was the highest turnout in over a hundred years, it means that 33.2% of eligible voters didn’t vote. **This gives clear evidence to show why a world without compulsory voting is flawed and what might get better if we make voting mandatory.**

**Warrant:** By requiring everyone to vote, we can increase voter turnout to almost 100% by giving a real reason for the millions of Americans who don't normally vote to show up. We can strengthen democracy by making sure all citizens take part. **This gives a logical explanation of how the claim is proven by the data.**

**Impact:** If more people vote, our government will better represent all American voters, not just those who showed up to vote. By creating a more representative government, we increase the chances that politicians listen to and implement ideas based on what the majority of people want. **This shows how the claim being true would affect people's lives.**



## Champ's Work: Identifying Argument Parts

I'm working on arguments for the compulsory voting topic, but I'm having trouble identifying the parts of the argument. Can you help me by circling the claim, underlining the data, boxing the warrant, and double underlining the impact?

Compulsory voting improves political equality. Compulsory voting encourages and requires every citizen, regardless of their income level, education level, or political understanding, to take part in elections. This is different from voluntary voting systems where studies have shown that the wealthy, educated, and politically involved are more likely to vote. By making voting mandatory, we are making sure that every citizen's voice is heard, promoting greater political equality. All citizens, from all backgrounds and ways of life, have their viewpoints considered equally in elections. This can lead to fairer policy decisions that reflect the needs and interests of all citizens, not just those who vote voluntarily.

Here's another one I need your help with! This one is on the opposite side of the topic.

Compulsory voting infringes on personal freedom. Freedom is defined as the right to make personal choices without being forced. According to political scientists, in a democratic society, freedom includes the right to take part or not take part in elections. Many countries, like the United States, value absolute freedom and see it as a key part of our society. Requiring everyone to vote would undermine this freedom by creating a legal obligation to vote. This forces individuals to take part in a process they might not want to be a part of for many good reasons, like political protest. This forced participation could lead to increased dissatisfaction with the government.

## **Champ's Work: Finding CDWI in the Real World**



This activity will help you better understand the CDWI model and recognize it in real-world applications.

1. Go to your favorite news source and find an article.
2. See if you can identify the claims, data, warrants, and impacts used by the writer to convey their points.
3. Imagine if one of these components was missing. Would the article still be as informative?
4. Summarize the article below by summarizing a claim and its associated data, warrants, and impacts.

**Claim:**

**Data:**

**Warrant:**

**Impact:**

## Watch Some Examples

Choose an episode of Open To Debate and listen to the opening speeches.

How do the speakers structure their arguments?

Can you think of ways an argument would be improved through better usage of public speaking techniques

Can you think of ways an argument would be improved through better structuring in the CDWI model?

## Open To Debate Videos

[www.debatetextbook.com/open-debate](http://www.debatetextbook.com/open-debate)



## Open To Debate Notes



## Concept Checkpoint

1. What does each part of the simplified Toulmin Model (Claim, Data, Warrant, Impact) do to help build an argument?
2. Why are a clear claim and relevant data crucial for building a strong argument?
3. How does a warrant connect the claim and its supporting data in an argument?
4. What is the role of impact in an argument, and how does it help establish its broader relevance?

## 5.3 Putting Argumentation Into Practice

Now that we have a strong understanding of persuasive language and the ways to build your arguments, it's time to put these elements into action!

### Arguments in Debate

As a debate competitor, you will participate in many rounds of debate, whether these are at tournaments or in your classroom. We'll guide you through each step of a debate round in future chapters, but for now, let's keep building on what you've learned about arguments.

In every debate round, you'll make two or three arguments as part of your case. This gives you multiple chances to make powerful arguments that persuade your audience.

Remember, all arguments should be in the CDWI (claim, data, warrant, impact) structure that we just learned.

## Tips For Strong Arguments

In addition to using the CDWI model, here are some more ways you can construct strong arguments.

**Clear Thinking:** Clear arguments start with clear thinking. Before you make your argument, take the time to understand the topic well. Be sure of your own position and identify the main points you want to share. This clear thinking will help you create a well-organized and understandable argument.

**Logical Reasoning:** Clear arguments depend on logical reasoning to create a flow of ideas that makes sense. Make sure your argument follows the structure you just learned, with each point building on the one before it. Use phrases like "therefore," "because," or "in conclusion" to guide your audience through your argument.

You can't assume that the judge or audience will follow your logic without guidance. You should clearly walk your audience from point to point.



**Organization and Signposting:** A clear argument is organized and easy to follow. Use clear and to-the-point language to explain your points, and use signposting techniques to guide your audience through your argument. Signposting means using words like “first,” “next,” “in addition,” or “finally” to signal when you’re moving from one point to the next. This helps your audience follow your argument and understand how your ideas connect.

**Conciseness:** Be succinct.

Just not that succinct. Conciseness is important in debate, where time limits often dictate the length of your presentation. Strive to eliminate unnecessary or repetitive information. Focus on delivering the most impactful and relevant points in a concise manner, avoiding any information unrelated to supporting and explaining your argument.

By following these tips and continually sharpening your arguing skills, you can create clear and brief arguments that grab your audience’s attention and effectively share your point of view.

Remember, these tips can also help you in every aspect of your life! Whether you’re writing an essay for school, coming up with a story, writing a letter to apply for a college or job, or any other form of communication, you can use what you’ve learned about arguments and being persuasive.



## Concept Checkpoint



1. What are the key principles to develop arguments that are both clear and concise in the context of a debate?
2. Why is supporting evidence important in debate, and how should you use it to strengthen your arguments?
3. How does organization help your audience better understand your argumentation?

# Chapter 5 Review



## Applying Key Ideas

Want to practice your skills? Here are a few exercises to help you improve:

1. Watch your favorite TV show and find a couple of examples of how the claim, data, warrant, impact structure is used in regular conversations. Does the plot of the show have a structure that you can recognize?
  2. Find an article or op-ed piece related to a topic of your interest. Identify the claims, data, warrants, and impacts used by the author. Discuss how strong their arguments are and discuss whether you agree or disagree with their viewpoint.
  3. Write a persuasive letter to a local politician or community leader arguing for a change in your community. Use persuasive techniques and the Claim, Data, Warrant, Impact model to construct your argument.
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## Discussing Key Concepts

Here are some key concepts to discuss that will help you better understand what you've learned:

1. What makes the Claim, Data, Warrant, Impact structure effective at helping to organize arguments?
2. Think of a time that you witnessed a particularly bad argument. How could this have been improved by either the use of persuasive devices or the Claim, Data, Warrant, Impact structure?
3. Who are some of the greatest speakers in history and why do you think they earned that status?