

Argument Diagramming- Handout #1ⁱ

In our course reading assignments, we will follow these steps and use these conventions to diagram the argument. Please follow these steps for every reading. For the purposes of this course, the term argument has a precise definition: the author(s) will introduce us to their conclusion(s) by providing us with premises and sub-premises. Together, these elements comprise an argument.

Argument: a set of *statements*, one of which is the *conclusion*, and the others are *premises*, which are supposed to provide support for the conclusion.

We will create an image of the argument by diagramming it.

Argument Diagram: a visual representation of an argument in which the statements are enclosed in boxes, and the logical inferences are indicated by arrows.

Argument diagramming conventions: the parts of the argument (conclusion, premises, sub-premises) must be written inside boxes as simple, complete sentences. Arrows shows inferences between argument parts.

Reading Instructions:

1. Skim the reading first. Look for and circle indicator words.
2. Read the article. Using the indicator words, highlight, underline or otherwise identify which statements are premises, sub-premises, and the main conclusion. Identify the main conclusion if it is implied.
3. In the margins, on a separate sheet of paper, or in a new .docx, write down all the claims being made by the author *as complete sentences*.
4. Prioritize premises
5. Using *Popplet Lite*, (<http://popplet.com/>) put the statements in boxes, using arrows to connect them; blue arrows infer, red arrows refute.
6. Save your diagram to your group account. You will share it with your group and with the class. When instructed, save as a .pdf and submit to Blackboard for a grade.

Indicating words:

premise indicator words (a partial list, you may find others)

because	after all	given that	the reason that...is	in light of the fact
since	as	for	assuming that	based on the fact
consider that	take as evidence that	it is evident that	recall that	it is clear that

conclusion indicator words (a partial list, you may find others)

so	therefore	we may infer that	wherefore
thus	accordingly	implies that	which proves that
hence	consequently	shows that	it follows that

ⁱ All terms used are from: "Argument Diagramming Open and Free," Carnegie Mellon University, Open Learning Initiative, accessed May 17, 2018, <https://oli.cmu.edu/courses/argument-diagramming-open-free/>.