

Toulmin Logic

Toulmin logic is a model for creating a traditional argument that includes seven elements.

The Claim

The claim is your position statement or thesis statement. It is the idea you are trying to prove in the essay. In a Toulmin essay, think of your claim as the “should” statement. The claim must be debatable and/or controversial.

Example *People should ride their bicycles to work.*

The Reason(s)

The reason is why the position is true or should be true. You may have more than one reason.

Example *Riding a bicycle is good exercise.*

The Grounds

The grounds is the evidence that supports the claim and reason. It is the “meat” of the essay and proves that your claim is true.

Example *Bicycles exercise both the legs and the core because a person has to maintain balance while riding. In addition, bikes provide a great cardio workout.*

The Warrant

The warrant is the assumption (or assumptions) that connect the claim and reason. There could be more than one warrant. The warrant is the idea the readers have to “buy” or agree with in order for your claim to be true.

Example *People should get exercise.*

The Backing

The backing is the evidence that supports the warrant(s). It helps readers accept the underlying assumptions (warrant) behind your claim and reason.

Example *Regular exercise improves health, reduces the risk of many diseases, and leads to improved mood.*

The Rebuttal

The rebuttal is the counterargument—it is what the opposition believes. You should either refute the rebuttal or incorporate it into your qualifier.

Example *Not everyone is healthy enough or has the physical ability to ride a bicycle.*

The Qualifier

The qualifier limits the circumstances under which the claim is true. It narrows the claim so that it applies only to specific situations.

Example *Only people who are healthy enough for strenuous exercise should ride their bicycles to work.*

Note that not every argument includes each of these elements, so if you are writing a Toulmin essay for your class, find out from your teacher if you need to include each of these elements or not.