

Rogerian Argument

What is a Rogerian Argument

While a traditional argument relies on proving a position and disproving the counterargument, the Rogerian style of argument emphasizes compromise between two sides on an issue. The following is a description of the elements of a Rogerian argument:

The Problem (Issue)

Begin your essay by describing the problem (issue) at hand. Unlike a traditional argument, you are not allowed to criticize the opposing viewpoint. Instead, you must give background on the problem without bias. In this or the next paragraph, you should also establish common ground between yourself and the opposition. In other words, point out the values both sides share or the outcomes both sides desire.

Opposition (or Reader's) Point of View

Next, describe the opposition's point of view fairly and accurately. Do not criticize the opposition's point of view, and do not use biased language. In this section, you might also demonstrate your fair-mindedness by showing under what circumstances the opposition's argument is valid.

The Writer's Point of View

Now, it's your chance to describe your point of view. Again, be sure to use neutral language. This section might also show under what circumstances your position is valid.

Compromise

Explain how the two sides (yours and the opposition's) can reach middle ground by compromising your positions, or explain how it would benefit the opposition to move at least in part toward your position. Show how your solution meets both sides' shared values and/or achieves their shared objectives (described in the introduction).

Remember these tips for writing a Rogerian argument:

Do NOT use inflammatory or biased language.

Do NOT criticize the opposition's point of view.

Do NOT argue against the opposition in any way.

Be as objective as possible.

Avoid issues that you are so passionate about that you know you cannot be objective.

Do research about what the opposition actually believes; do not rely on your own perceptions about what you think the opposition believes.