

Commentary Arguments

- Contingency: Cause & Effect
 - What are the consequences and/or connections between the evidence and/or historical era?
 - Cause & effect/ Chronological completion
 - Examples:
 - If the Judeo-Christians truly practiced Rule of Law, then they would not have allowed slavery. As a result, they are not practicing true equality because they are denying certain people rights.
 - Since Socrates challenged the notion that democracy was the best form of government, he was declared a heretic and traitor by the ruling class of Athens. As a result, he was put on trial in order to “protect” the Athenian youth and to save democracy, a system that rested on people’s active participation for survival, for future generations. However, the government’s actions backfired because...
- Humanizing the argument-(Disney Effect)
 - How does the evidence relate to an everyday, universal experience?
 - Avoid using “I” statements
 - Example:
 - The plebians request for written rules and regulations from the patricians is like when a family decides on what to eat for dinner. The children, or plebians, should be able to voice their desire for pizza or hamburgers without fear that their parents, or patricians, will ignore them because the decision ultimately affects them.
- Bias/Point of View
 - How does the author, year, and/or medium affect the content of the evidence?
 - Does this make the evidence valid/true? How so?
 - Examples:
 - Since the author was from the city-state of Sparta, it makes sense that he was in support of war with Athens because the community valued military strength and war strategies.
 - John Smith constructed this argument before the plebians were granted equality under the *Twelve Tables*. As a result, it makes sense that he does not trust the patricians, or those in power, because there was nothing in place to protect the artisans, merchants, and farmers from abuse of the wealthy upper class.
- Prediction/ What if?
 - Are there any alternative endings and/or consequences?
 - Examples:
 - If Socrates had selected to not drink poison, then....
 - By not following Aristotle’s advice of giving power to the middle class, then...

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- Historical Context/Connections
 - What time era or current event does the evidence relate to? How so?
 - Does the evidence suggest a historical trend? Is there historical continuity?
 - Does the evidence suggest inevitability?
 - Consider events, people, and/or ideas
 - Examples:
 - The Roman senate is similar to Article I of the U.S. Constitution in that they both control the laws of the land.
 - The Judeo-Christians influenced the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution in that they promoted freedom of speech and religion.
- The Frankenstein Effect
 - Were there unintended consequences?
 - Did it solve a problem or create a new one? Both?
 - Example:
 - By promoting the notion of Rule of Law, the Judeo-Christians attempted to create man-made laws that reflected the Christian notion that all men are equal because they are made in the image of God. However, they could not have known that this ideal would inspire people to revolt, often times in violent ways, as seen in the Glorious, American, & French Revolution.
- Contradiction/Paradox/Phenomenon
 - Is the evidence different from historical trends or patterns? How so?
 - Does the evidence raise new questions?
 - Can the reader learn something interesting about a larger phenomenon by studying this smaller one?
 - Example:
 - Trial by jury, one of the main ideas found in the Roman's *Twelve Tables*, continued to be challenged as evidenced by its inclusion in *The English Bill of Rights* at the conclusion of the Glorious Revolution and by philosophe Beccaria's advocacy to protect it at all costs during the Enlightenment. This suggests that creating a law and enforcing it are often very different things.