



# Steps to Evaluation Argument

## Step 1 Make a claim

Make an evaluative claim based on criteria. . .

### Formula

- SOMETHING is good (bad, the best, the ve worst) \_\_\_ if measured by certain criteria (practicality, aesthetics, ethics).

### Examples

- Write a book review or a movie review.
- Write a defense of a particular kind of music or art.
- Evaluate a controversial aspect of sports (e.g., the current system of determining who is champion in Division I college football by a system of bowls and polls) or evaluate a sports event (e.g., this year's WNBA playoffs) or a team.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of an educational program (such as your high school honors program or your college's core curriculum requirement) or some other aspect of your campus.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a social policy or law such as legislating 21 as the legal drinking age, current gun control laws, or environmental regulation.

## Step 2 Think about what's at stake

- Would nearly everyone agree with you? If not, then your claim probably isn't interesting or important. If you can think of a few people who would disagree, then something is at stake.
- Who argues the opposite of your claim? Why?
- Why do they make a different evaluation?

## Step 3 List the criteria

- Which criteria make something either good or bad?
- Which criteria are the most important?
- Which are fairly obvious and which will you have to argue for?

#### Step 4 Analyze your potential readers

- Who are your readers?
- How familiar will they be with what you are evaluating?
- What are they likely to know and not know?
- Which criteria are they most likely to accept with little explanation, and which will they disagree with?

#### Step 5 Write a draft

##### **Introduction**

- Introduce the person, group, institution, event, or object that you are going to evaluate. You might want to announce your stance at this point or wait until the concluding section.
- Give the background that your intended readers will need.

##### **Body**

- Describe each criterion and then analyze how well what you are evaluating meets that criterion.
- If you are making an evaluation according to the effects someone or something produces, describe each effect in detail.
- Anticipate where readers might question either your criteria or how they apply to your subject.
- Address opposing viewpoints by acknowledging how their evaluations might differ and by showing why your definition is better.

##### **Conclusion**

- If you have not yet announced your stance, then you can conclude that, on the basis of the criteria you set out or the effects you have analyzed, something is good (bad, best, worst).
- If you have made your stance clear from the beginning, then you can end with a compelling example or analogy.

#### Step 6 Revise, edit, proofread

- For detailed instructions, see Chapter 12.
- For a checklist to use to evaluate your draft, see pages 217–222.