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Preface

Nothing you learn in college will prove to be more important to you than the ability to create an effective argument.

As a student you are already aware that campus life is itself filled with arguments. There are hot-button public issues that engage the academic community—how to deal with binge drinking, for example, or make the university more environmentally sustainable, or improve campus housing or study-abroad opportunities. Meanwhile, in the classroom and in research programs, you and your peers will present arguments on current controversies such as climate change and economic policy as well as on scholarly topics such as the structure of the human brain, the cultural achievements of ancient Egypt, or the means of determining the material composition of the planet Mercury.

After college, you will continue to need to communicate effectively your ideas and points of view. Your livelihood and your successful engagement in the life of your community will depend on it. Sometimes, as a citizen, you will be moved to register your views on how to improve your local school system or enhance local development; or as a member of a neighborhood group or a civic organization, you will be suggesting ways of making a positive difference. And certainly in the workplace you will often be making arguments to support your recommendations and to refute the flawed recommendations of others.

What This Book Offers You

For a number of years, we have studied arguments, taught students how to argue, and listened to others talk and write about the art of persuasion. Although there is no simple recipe for cooking up effective arguments (for changing people’s minds is not easy), we’ve discovered there are definite strategies and tactics that writers can rely on in any situation to ensure that their ideas are considered seriously. However, we also know that regardless of the value of its content, a text will be ineffective if it cannot present its ideas in a way that is engaging, easy to use, and comprehensive. It has been our aim to create such a text in Good Reasons.

Lively, nontechnical language. We’ve pointedly avoided technical jargon in order to explain concepts and techniques as clearly as possible. Explanations, examples, captions, and exercises are all written with the goal of keeping language straightforward and accessible.

Emphasis on attractive design and visual arguments. Good Reasons is notable for its attention to visual as well as verbal arguments. In addition, the book itself demonstrates the value of visual argument in its attractive design that is liberally illustrated with graphics, photos, and other visuals.

Annotated student writing samples and numerous other examples. In line with our philosophy of showing rather than telling, chapters covering types of arguments include annotated student essays as well as annotated professional essays illustrating six basic types of arguments: definition, causal, evaluation, narrative, rebuttal, and proposal arguments.

Fresh, timely readings on current issues. These readings demonstrate how complex conversations develop around important issues of interest to students today. Readings span a range of material from canonical essays to contemporary journal articles. We’ve also taken care to select readings that give different points of view on issues such as the food industry, plagiarism, obesity, and the “American Dream.”
New to This Edition

- New emphasis on inquiry as an important aspect of argument throughout Parts 1–3
- New projects at the end of the chapters in Part 3 offer opportunities for students to practice each argument strategy and develop persuasive essays and multimedia texts of their own
- Updated MLA coverage in Chapter 20 reflects the new guidelines in the *MLA Handbook, Eighth Edition*, including how to cite social media and various online-only sources
- A new student sample analysis in Chapter 7 demonstrates how to analyze visual and multimedia arguments
- New coverage of audio media in Chapter 14, “Designing Multimedia Arguments”

Resources for Teachers and Students

INSTRUCTOR’S MANUAL

The Instructor’s Manual that accompanies this text was revised by, and is designed to be useful for, new and experienced instructors alike. The Instructor’s Manual briefly discusses the ins and outs of teaching the material in each text chapter. Also provided are in-class exercises, homework assignments, discussion questions for each reading selection, and model paper assignments and syllabi.

Acknowledgments

We are much indebted to the work of many outstanding scholars of argument and to our colleagues who teach argument at Texas, Penn State, and Maryland. In particular, we thank the following reviewers for sharing their expertise: Greg Hammond, Everett Community College; Krista Jackman, University of New Hampshire; Danen Jobe, Pikes Peak Community College; April Kinkead, Texas A&M University; Patrick Mello, University of New Hampshire; Joel Murphy, College of the Desert; Trisha Travers, The Pennsylvania State University, Abington; and Ivan Wolfe, Arizona State University. We are also grateful to the many students we’ve taught in our own classes, who have given us opportunities to test these materials in class, and who have taught us a great deal about the nature of argument. Special thanks go to the students whose work is included in this edition.

We are privileged to work once again with Lynn Huddon, our senior development editor, who has collaborated with us from the third edition onward. She has contributed many great ideas while coordinating the work of four authors and paying close attention to the details of bringing the book to fruition. She is the best. We also thank those at Ohlinger Publishing Services, who have guided the book through production, and Brad Potthoff, many of whose suggestions are reflected throughout the book. Michael McGranaghan at SPI Global did a splendid job in preparing our book for publication.

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