

Argument Construction Handout 1

The most fundamental element of all debate events is the construction of solid arguments. This reading will explore the process of argument construction.

Elements of an Argument

Arguments may take many forms, but successful arguments share a specific set of elements. A complete argument contains:

- a claim, or the basic idea of the argument;
- a warrant, or an explanation why the claim is true;
- data, or evidence; and
- an impact, or a reason why the argument is important.

These elements should be present in all forms of argumentation. They are especially important in verbal argumentation because the audience must be able to follow the argument. In written argumentation, readers may absorb and process the argument at their own pace; if they are confused, they can reread a passage or sentence.

Structure of an Argument

Claim	The main point of the argument; what the debater seeks to prove true.
Warrant	The logical justification for the claim; why the claim is true.
Data	The information or evidence used to bolster the warrant.
Impact	The reason the argument should matter to the audience.

Example of Each Element of an Argument

Claim	Police departments often receive a disproportionate amount of funding, leaving little for other community services.
Warrant	An unequal distribution of funds between equally important services shows that rebudgeting is needed.
Data	According to USA Today, June 26, 2020 for the city of Miami, 23.4% of the total budget for fiscal year 2020 went toward funding the Police Department which is 7 th out of the 50 largest cities.
Impact	Community services benefit the public and help at-risk individuals get the support they need, reducing crime for a safer community. Thus, community services are equally important to policing, but receive much less funding. Therefore, rebudgeting is needed.

Florida B.E.S.T Standards Addressed: [ELA.5.R.2.4](#); [ELA.5.C.3.1](#); [ELA.5.C.4.1](#)