Everything’s an Argument

CHAPTER 17: ACADEMIC ARGUMENTS
Academic Argument

- Aka academic discourse
- Will be used this year, in college, in post-graduate work, and in most professional careers
Activity 1

- GREEN p. 392, RED p. 379
- Read the five passages

1. Decide which ones are academic arguments and which are not.
2. How would you describe each one and what are its key features?
3. Which are most formal and academic? Which is the least?
4. For the ones that are more informal, how might you revise them to make them more academic?
Activity 2

- GREEN p. 394, RED p. 381
- Read the three paragraphs, and then list changes that the writer might make to convert them into an academic argument.
Distinctive features

- Based on research and uses evidence that can be documented
- Written for professional, academic, or school knowledgeable audience
- Makes a clear and compelling point
- Written in formal, clear, and sometimes technical style
- Follows agreed upon conventions of format, usage, and punctuation
  - MLA style, traditional formal writing rules (i.e. no contractions)
- Is documented, using some professional citation style
  - MLA style
Understanding what academic argument is

- Cannot be composed quickly, casually, or off the top of one’s head
- Requires careful reading, accurate reporting, and a conscientious commitment to the truth
- Hasty research, reading, and writing will result in “patch writing”
Examples: migraine

- R:381, G:369 Goadsby v. R: 369,G: 381-2, Dodick, Gargus
- What are the similarities?
- What are the differences?
- Who might be the audience of each?
Example: Burning Man

- G: 382-383, R: 370
- Break down the argument with a neighbor:
  - What is the purpose of the argument?
  - What kinds of evidence will the argument present?
  - What activities support new forms of production?
Example: Chris Rock

- G: 384, R: 371
- What are the different opinions of this discourse?
Developing an Academic Argument

- Choose a topic you want to explore in depth
  - narrow enough to accomplish in given time and length
  - rich enough to sustain your interest
  - Search the internet to find topics that interest you
Get to know the conversation surrounding your topic
- Read, read, read!!
- Explore different kinds of sources
- Ask your librarian and teacher for help
Assess what you know and what you need to know

- Keep notes as you are researching!
  - We will be using a (graded) research log
  - This will help identify holes in your knowledge

- DO NOT RESEARCH ONLY ONE SIDE
  - Look at ALL legitimate perspectives on your claim (you may even change your mind after some research—it happens!)
  - Give visual and non-print materials the same scrutiny you would print sources
- **Take special care with documentation**
  - Utilize the research log
  - Keep a working bibliography
    - Most databases give you the MLA citation
    - If not, use Purdue OWL or your MLA Handbook to write down the information that will be used in the citation
  - Save materials (PDFs) to read carefully later
Think about organization

- Take a look at the questions on R: 376, G: 389
- Position strongest pieces of evidence in key places
  - Near the beginning of paragraphs
  - After/near the introduction
  - Toward the conclusion
- Balance between evidence and your own opinion
- Consider where visual evidence might be placed
Consider style and tone

- Reasonable, fair-minded, and careful thinker who is interested in coming as close to the truth about a topic as possible.
- Clear and direct, with some necessary jargon
- Favors denotative rather than connotative language
- Impersonal, never using first person or second person
- Some fields use passive voice; we want to AVOID IT
- Uses technical language, symbols, and abbreviations for efficiency.
- Avoids colloquialisms, slang, and contractions
Consider genre, design, and visuals

- Why does a paper need to be only black and white when we have so many options today?
- Create digital documents that integrate a variety of media and array data in strikingly original ways
- Utilize visuals that are compelling to your topic
- Always cite visuals correctly
Reflect on your draft and get responses
  ▶ Reverse outline
  ▶ Ask friends, classmates, etc.
  ▶ Be critical
  ▶ Look for confusing, unclear sections
**Edit and proofread**

- Do this at least THREE times!

1. Review for ideas, evidence, transitions, structure, MLA style,
2. Spelling, punctuation, quotations, apostrophes, abbreviations, etc.
3. Check that every source mentioned in your paper matches a citation on the works cited and all citations are correct. Reassess the overall design (it's your first impression/ethos)