

A WORKBOOK FOR ARGUMENTS

A Complete Course in Critical Thinking

Second Edition

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Critical Thinking Activities: Argument mapping workshop

group share their definition of the word. After everyone has shared their definition for a given word, vote on the best definition. Optionally, see if you can combine definitions to make an even better definition.

Final Product: The final product of this assignment should be a list of words that are difficult to define, and proposed definitions for those words.

Argument mapping workshop

Objective: To give you practice mapping arguments and thinking about argument maps.

Instructions: Read Appendix III and complete Exercise Sets 12.1 and 12.2 before beginning this activity. Then, complete each of the following steps in order.

1. *Form a group of two to five people.* Find out from your instructor whether you may choose your own group or whether you will be assigned to a specific group.
2. *Write out a paragraph-length argument in plain English.* As a group, construct an argument on any topic that interests you. Write out your argument in plain English—that is, in the style in which the arguments from the exercise sets in Appendix III are written. Your argument should be about the length of a medium-sized paragraph. It should be simple enough that someone else could read it and draw an argument map of it in five or ten minutes.
3. *Draw an argument map of your argument on a separate piece of paper.* As a group, draw an argument map of the argument from Step 2. Draw your map on a different piece of paper than the one containing your written argument.
4. *Put your argument map in an envelope and pass the envelope and your argument to another group.* Place the argument map from Step 3, but not the written argument itself, in an envelope. Write your group members' names on the envelope, but do not seal it. Pass your written argument and the envelope to another group in the class. Be sure that your group receives an argument and envelope from another group.

Critical Thinking Activities: Argument mapping workshop

5. *Draw an argument map of the argument you received in Step 4.* As a group, draw an argument map for the argument that you received in Step 4. Don't look at the argument map that's already in the envelope.
6. *Add your argument map to the envelope, and pass the argument and envelope to another group.* Add your argument map from Step 5 to the envelope that you received in Step 4. Then, pass the argument and envelope on to another group. Be sure that your group receives a new argument and envelope from another group.
7. *Repeat Step 6 as many times as you can in the time allotted.* Find out from your instructor how much time you have. Repeat Step 6 as many times as you can in that time.
8. *Return the envelopes and arguments to their creators.* Return each envelope and written argument to the group that originally wrote the argument.
9. *Compare the various argument maps of your argument.* Compare the other groups' maps of your argument. If the argument maps are not all identical, figure out how many different maps there are. Decide which argument maps are accurate representations of your argument and which are not. Choose one argument map as the best representation of your argument.
10. *(Optional) Draw the argument map of your argument on the board.* Choose one person to draw your group's map of your argument on the board. Choose another person to explain why your group mapped the argument as it did and how other groups mapped it (if they mapped it differently).

Final product: The final product of this activity is a written version of your argument and an envelope containing several different maps of the argument.

Variation: Instead of creating an argument together during Step 2, have each member of your group write his or her own argument before class. As a group, choose your favorite argument and then proceed to Step 3.

Developing your own arguments using argument maps

Objective: To give you practice mapping arguments and using argument maps to develop your own arguments.

Instructions: Read Appendix III and complete Exercise Sets 12.1 and 12.2 before beginning this activity. Then, complete each of the following steps in order.

1. *Choose an argumentative essay of your own to use for this activity.* This might be an essay that you wrote for the “Compiling a draft of an argumentative essay” activity (p. 474), an essay that you wrote for another class, or an essay you wrote for some other purpose.
2. *Draw an argument map for each of the major arguments in your essay.* If your essay contains only one, large argument, draw a single argument map. If your essay contains multiple arguments, draw a separate argument map for each argument.
3. *Highlight all of the premises on the argument maps that are not supported by other premises.* On each argument map, circle or highlight the numbers representing premises that are not supported by other premises—that is, premises that are not also subconclusions.
4. *Identify the unsupported premises that need more support.* Of the premises that you highlighted in Step 3, identify those that need more support (e.g., because they are controversial or because most readers might not know whether they are true).
5. *Develop and map arguments for each of the premises that need more support.* Develop an argument for each of the premises that you identified in Step 4. Add those arguments to your argument maps.
6. *Repeat Steps 3–5 until there are no more premises in need of more support.*

Final product: The final product of this activity is a (set of) argument map(s), along with new arguments devised to support selected premises in the original arguments.