

How to Win Arguments

Opponents in an argument will often imply that you don't have your facts straight, or that your judgment is clouded. Sometimes they will say you're out of touch or stuck on your own agenda. Occasionally, they will claim that your approach is overly complex. All of these issues can be argued away, with proper preparation and the awareness of what's going on. Here are the five problems and their solutions.

Problem: you're too unrealistic

Solution: tell a story

1. Give sensory details
2. Connect to meanings
3. Tell a person's experience

(description)
(symbolism)
(narration)

Problem: you're too one-sided

Solution: compare with examples

1. Connect similar examples
2. Separate different examples
3. Organize the examples

(comparison)
(contrast)
(classification)

Problem: you're too complicated

Solution: break it down

1. Say what it is specifically
2. Separate out its aspects
3. Explain their relationships

(definition)
(division)
(analysis)

Problem: you're confused

Solution: argue with evidence

1. Indicate dependencies
2. Describe steps in a process
3. Add claims and evidence

(cause/effect)
(procedure)
(argument)

Problem: you're just wrong

Solution: judge with criteria

1. Perceive as a whole
2. Identify criteria
3. Make a judgment

(conceptualization)
(characterization)
(evaluation)