

How effectively does this author present his argument essay

[Business](#), [Management](#)



English

In his essay entitled *How to write an argument: what students and teachers really need to know*, Gerald Graff has attempted to convey a number of key tips to help students and teachers to write an effective argument. Graff utilises a number of techniques in order to get across his argument – most notably of which is the bulleted selection of tips which make up the body of his essay. This is quite an unusual way of writing an essay because usually it would be constructed of paragraphs rather than numbered points but in this instance, Graff has used this well. The effect of numbering his bullet points is to clearly mark out the various stages and considerations that need to be made whilst the author is writing their argument. In this sense, Graff presents his argument very effectively as he lays his work out simply and addresses his audience well through his use of language.

The most noticeable element of Graff's argument is its layout: he has bullet pointed each idea or consideration with a number which makes it easy to read and follow. Most of the bullet points read like a step-by-step guide which means that they lend themselves to the operational nature of his argument. Graff writes not just to advise his readers but to confidently assert himself as an authority; the bullet points are further evidence of this as they do not ramble or are overly verbose, but rather they are to the point and direct leaving the reader with a firm idea of how they should construct an argument in their future writing. This makes Graff's argument extremely effective as he grabs and holds the reader's attention whilst guiding them in a simple, uncomplicated manner. The essay and Graff's authority is also

reinforced by the introduction which immediately presents him as being a well-educated and experienced professor of English meaning that he and his thoughts are to be respected in an unquestioning sort of way. It goes on to state: “ Graff has also been an advocate for clear and purposeful prose, especially in academic settings” (Graff 124) which again, reinforces the idea that this is a man who knows what he is talking about and whose argument is lent a significant amount of kudos because of his experience and gravitas.

Another strategy used by Graff is his use of language: it is authoritative whilst still managing to be clear and simple to follow. He establishes his purpose which is to help students and teachers (also clearly stating his intended audience) develop their written argumentative skills. He continues to achieve this purpose by using clear, defined instructions; he uses imperatives such as “ Enter a conversation” and “ Make a claim” (Graff 124) at the beginning of his bullet point sentences. The effect of this is that the reader does not feel that Graff is merely suggesting these things but rather he is demanding that the reader carry these actions out in their own writing in order to procure success. He also uses language which does not seem intimidating to the reader: many academic texts use long and complicated language to make even the simplest of points and here, Graff does the opposite: using simple and clear language which allows him to lead by example in terms of how to write an effective argument. Equally as important as his clear and direct language, Graff has clearly given a lot of thought to his argument’s layout. As discussed earlier, his use of bullet points allows the paper to have a structured and easy to follow format. But,

more than that, Graff has also structured it so that the reader could read it alongside writing their own argumentative essay.

One area in which Graff could have improved his paper was to maybe use images to help further demonstrate his argument. The pages are all very heavy blocks of writing which can often be quite off-putting to a reader and the use of images would have helped to avoid this. Equally, Graff could have strengthened the strategies he has already put in place by making the bullet points even fewer in number. As it currently reads, Graff has given a step by step guide but has also mingled in various tips and advice along the way. This is extremely useful in terms of reinforcing his authority and strengthening his argument but if these had been presented in separate areas of the paper, they may have been even clearer to the reader and simpler to follow.

Graff has composed an extremely effective argumentative paper which clearly demonstrates his idea and points to the reader who can then accurately apply them to their own future work. Graff writes for his intended audience and uses language correctly to achieve this whilst maintaining his purpose and guiding his reader through his carefully constructed argument – structured effectively and composed simply in order to procure the greatest level of effectiveness for his argument.

References

Graff, Gerald. How to write an argument: what students and teachers really need to know. In Escholz, Paul, Alfred Rosa, and Virginia Clark (Eds).

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