

# PLAN YOUR RESEARCH AROUND THE QUESTIONS OF ARGUMENT

Every argument must answer the three questions that define the core of an argument (claim, reasons, evidence), but cooperative arguments must answer a fourth (acknowledgment and response).

c o r e	1. What's the answer to your research question?	Claim or Thesis
	2. Why should I believe that?	Reasons
	3. How do you know that reason is true?	Evidence
	4. But have you considered this view (or this evidence, complication, objection, etc.)?	Acknowledgment & Response

Create a plan to search for and read sources so that you have good answers to each of these questions.

- Claim:** If you begin without a plausible claim that answers your research question, start by reading general articles about your topic in order to get ideas for possible answers.
- Reasons:** Once you have a claim that can serve as a hypothesis, make a list of the reasons why you think that claim is true. If you think of too few plausible reasons, do some more general reading. If you still can't find any, look for another claim.
- Evidence:** Once you have a list of reasons, search for specific data that might serve as evidence to support each one. Depending on the kind of reason, that evidence might be statistics, quotations, observations, or any other facts. If you cannot find evidence for a reason, then you have to replace that reason. If you find evidence that goes against a reason, keep the evidence. You may need to acknowledge it in your paper.
- Acknowledgment & Response:** As you read for claims, reasons, and evidence, keep a record of anything that might complicate or contradict your argument. You will need to acknowledge and respond to it, through rebuttal, counterclaim, reflection, or concession—if you think it might also occur to your readers.