

BEL 313 Introduction to Critical Thinking  
Offprint 1, FOMAT, UiTM Perak, Malaysia

**SIMPLE ARGUMENTS** by *Teech Airil*

**Q. What are arguments in the first place?**

**A.** Technically, arguments are made up of two main linguistic parts namely the **contention/claim**, followed by the **support/reason** which is **FOR** the contention/claim **OR** the **objection/opposition** which is **AGAINST** the contention/claim.

To restate the above:

**FIRST**, an argument must first have a contention/claim.

**SECOND**, the contention/claim is followed by support/reason (**for**) **OR** objection/opposition (**against**).

From this point onwards, please use this terminology in your tests or any lecture discussions...

**A. Contention/claim or C/C.**

**B1. Support/reason or S/R.**

**B2. Objection/opposition or O/O.**

As a final note, please understand that in an argument the same contention can have both an S/R plus an O/O (but don't worry about that too much at this point, okay).

**Q. And just how do you 'map' out a simple argument, please?**

**A.** Follow the steps below exactly:

**FIRST**, find the C/C, which is a full sentence from an article. *If possible*, paraphrase some of the words and make sure all the pronouns in the sentence is fully explained.

**CORRECT way:** Semaoncit the Boroy was a notorious pirate who lived in the Malay Archipelago in the 1500s.

**WRONG way:** He was a pirate who lived there in the 1500s.

**SECOND**, decide whether the C/C has an S/R that supports it or and O/O that is against it – from the actual article.

**EXAMPLE of S/R:** Recent archaeological findings on three sunken ships in the South China Sea pointed to the existence of a group of pirates based on weapons and loot from different areas in the Malay Archipelago.

**EXAMPLE of O/O:** According to the ancient text Semalaon Semalukot written in ancient Sanskrit around the 1500s, a seaman was famous for uniting the people of the Malay Archipelago and his real name was Semaoncit , which means ‘macho hero guy’ in Malayalam language.

**THIRD**, if you still cannot decide whether the C/C has an S/R that supports it or and O/O that is against it – re-read and find actual points written by the writer(s) in the article.

If you are still blur, talk to a friend. And if that friend is also blur, talk to someone else who is not too blur. Why? Because in learning, we must never be shy to find help!

**FOURTH**, to avoid redundancy and to not overdo yourself please do not use the same C/C with another S/R or O/O and vice versa.

This will also ensure that you are forced to think critically about the article and you must extract all relevant arguments in the article!

-THE END-