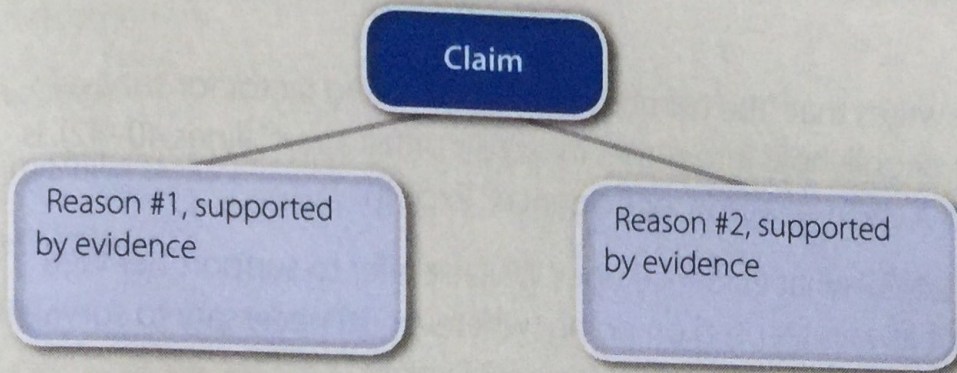


In an **argument**, the author expresses a position on an issue and then attempts to support that position. A successful argument persuades readers to agree with the author's position. To **evaluate** whether an argument is successful, you must first **delineate**, or outline, its basic parts. The diagram shows a simplified outline.



- The **claim** is the author's position on the topic or issue. It is the central idea around which the argument is structured.
- **Reasons** are explanations that support the claim by answering the question *Why does the author hold that opinion?* An author's reasoning must be clear and logical to create a valid argument.
- **Evidence** includes facts, statistics, personal experiences, statements by experts, and other information. The evidence supports the reasons and, ultimately, the author's claim.

Most arguments begin by stating a claim and then present reasons and evidence for the claim. To be convincing, an argument must include evidence that is valid, relevant, and sufficient. Use this checklist to evaluate evidence presented in "Is Survival Selfish?"

Evaluating Evidence Checklist

Evidence is valid if

- it is well known or common knowledge
- the author identifies the source
- the source appears to be trustworthy
- research shows the source to be reliable

Evidence is relevant if

- it is closely related to the topic or issue
- it supports the claim

Evidence is sufficient if

- there is enough of it
- it comes from a variety of sources