

# Formulating Arguments

**8b – Gather and organize relevant information to formulate an argument.**

**8f – Recognize and evaluate propositions.**

**1.2m – Organize and depict information logically.**



## Mastery

You will know you are at the **Expert** level in the use of this ATL skill set when you can easily use relevant information to build a convincing logical argument taking into account both sides of any issue.



An *argument* is a structured discourse, either written or verbal, where evidence is provided to support a premise or series of premises which lead to a conclusion. Each premise is written in the form of a proposition – that is something which is either true or false – and then the evidence is provided to determine the truth of the premise. The logical sequence of truth will then lead to the conclusion.

## Exercise 1 – Work your way through the table below to create a valid argument

- What is the subject matter you are developing an argument about? Is it a topic for investigation, a question to be answered or a proposition or thesis to be defended?
- What do you know to be true about this subject?
- You build an argument to prove that a certain point is true. What is the point of your argument? What is the conclusion that your argument will support and ultimately lead to?

If you are not clear about this before you start it is OK to research all aspects of the topic until you decide on your point of view and your conclusion and then build your argument to support your desirable conclusion.

- What is the logical sequence of premises (claims, statements or propositions) which if proven true will lead to the desired conclusion?
- For each premise, do your research and find the evidence that supports each premise and that which is contrary, that which denies the premise or supports its opposite
- For each premise, develop an argument, a perspective, a specific example or a question that overcomes the contrary evidence and supports each premise
- When developing your argument be very careful to distinguish between correlation and causality:
  - Correlation is when two things occur together – useful to emphasise a particular point of view but does not prove any causal link between those two things
  - Causality is when you have proved that one thing causes, brings about, the other
- Work with a partner and explain your full argument and your conclusion to your partner. Ask them to try to find flaws in your argument:
  - “Yes, but ……………”
  - “What if ……………”
- If your partner was able to find areas where your argument was weak, go back and do more research until you can find data which supports your premise and your conclusion.

<b>Topic description, question or thesis</b>			
<b>What do you know to be true?</b>			
<b>Conclusion to be developed</b>			
<b>Sequence of premises that will lead to the conclusion</b>	<b>Supporting evidence</b>	<b>Contrary evidence</b>	<b>Argument to overcome contrary evidence and support premise</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			