
SMALL GROUP WORKSHEET: ANALYZING AND ASSESSING ARGUMENTS

Reporter's Name: _____
(*report's the group's work to the class*)

Writer's Name: _____
(*does the writing on this worksheet*)

Organizer's Name: _____
(*watches the time; keeps the group on task*)

Proofreader's Name: _____
(*double-checks the writer's work for grammar, style, clarity, and readability.*)

Evaluator's Name: _____
(*double-checks the group's work before reporting to make sure all parts of the question have been answered, appropriate support has been given for the group's answer, etc.*)

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Everyone in the group must have at least one job.
- Mix it up. Try to avoid having the same job all the time. The instructor reserves the right to reassign jobs if the same people do the same jobs in group work over and over again.
- Being an effective member of your group contributes to your individual participation evaluation for the day.

IF YOUR GROUP HAS FEWER THAN FIVE MEMBERS

- The roles may be combined. For example, in a group of three, one person might do the work of the Proofreader and the Evaluator, and another the work of the Organizer and the Writer. There are no restrictions regarding which roles may be combined when a group has less than five members.
- Any person doing more than one job need not write their name twice. Simply write initials in the blank for the second job.

Purposes: The main purpose of this exercise is to practice professional collaboration skills, organization, and critical thinking in a group setting. This assignment particularly focuses on the critical thinking skills of:

- **analyzing arguments,**
- **assessing arguments,**
- presenting and **defending assessments,** and
- **constructing and responding to objections**

A second purpose of this exercise is to build on the work you did to prepare for class, correcting any errors or misconceptions you might have had, and clarifying key terms and concepts in our material. You are encouraged to take notes directly on your individual paper for this purpose!

Instructions:

The instructor has presented you with an argument. The group's task is to analyze the structure of this argument using the technique of argument mapping and then to assess the quality of the argument using the flow chart. After you have assessed the argument, identify what you believe is the premise most susceptible to attack, and imagine a possible objection to it. Once you have imagined your objection, imagine how a defender of the argument could answer the objection. Use the space provided below to complete these tasks.

1. Diagram the argument:

2. Assess the argument using the flow chart handout. CIRCLE the appropriate evaluation below, and support your assessment in the space below.

The argument is:

deductively sound cogent neither sound nor cogent (i. e. bad)

3. Which premise of the argument is weakest, i.e. most susceptible to attack?

4. Write an hypothetical objection to the weakest premise.

5. How could a defender of the argument respond to the hypothetical objection you raised?