Arguing a Position
Controversial Issues

- Matters of opinion and judgment
- No absolute proof
- Based on Reasoned Argument
Reasoned argument

• Reasons not raised voices
• Assertions must be supported
• Right to disagree respected
• Anticipate reader objections/ opposing arguments
• Concede reasonable objections
• Accommodate objections
• Refute those not reasonable
• (Axelrod and Cooper p. 232-235)
Basic Features

• Well Presented Issue
• Well Supported Position
• Effective Counter Argument
• Readable Plan
• Purpose
• Audience
• (Axelrod and Cooper p. 231-236)
Well Presented Issue

• Controversial and clearly arguable
• Based on facts and reasons not just beliefs
• Frame the issue to “promote” the author’s position
• Strong thesis
• (Axelrod and Cooper p.232-233)
Well Supported Position

• Strong thesis
• Logical reasons
• Examples and anecdotes representative and sufficient
• Authorities and Statistics credible and representative
• Evidence appeals to reader: Logos, Ethos, Pathos
• (Axelrod and Cooper p. 233-234)
Effective Counter Argument

- Acknowledge reader concerns
- Concede objections and accommodate, or concede- refute
- Refute
- (Axelrod and Cooper p. 234-235)
Clear Logical Organization

- Thesis that guides
- Forecasting statement
- Key words from the thesis repeated
- Strong guiding topic sentences
- Repeated words and synonyms throughout
- Clear transitions
- (Axelrod and Cooper p. 235-236)
Purpose

• Change minds
• Confirm reader’s opinions
• Supply evidence to support writer’s position
• Look at issue in a new way
• Get readers to take action
• Establish common ground or get reader respect for new position
• (Axelrod and Cooper p. 231)
Audience

• What do they know?
• Do they care? Those who support the issue
• Are they supportive?
• Do they oppose?
• (Axelrod and Cooper p. 231)
Works Cited