



## **Communication Strategy for Argumentation: C-JAR Model for the Workplace**

### **Why are arguments important in the workplace?**

We all use arguments. People give it their best shot as they try to develop winning arguments when they talk politics with friends and neighbors. Parents struggle to develop arguments that persuade their children to eat their vegetables or clean their room. Couples may find themselves striving to develop an effective argument to justify buying a new car instead of a used one or traveling to one resort versus another. Many people do not think critically about these kinds of arguments. Sometimes these arguments succeed; sometimes they don't.

Yet, the expectations are different in the workplace. Organizations expect managers to be capable of reasoning carefully and cogently when they present arguments in meetings, emails, documents or presentations.

Successful leaders in organizations recognize that developing their abilities to craft arguments becomes key to helping them achieve their goals. In the workplace, people rely upon effective arguments to persuade a whole host of audiences that are central to conducting business in any organization, including boards, bosses, clients, customers, employees, senior management, investors, suppliers, union leaders, vendors, and other business stakeholders.

This strategic communication note examines the various parts or components of arguments and develops a model to allow you to systematically approach the preparation, organization, and presentation of arguments for the workplace. The educational goal here focuses on helping you apply an easy, common sense structure for developing more successful arguments.

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Dr. Thomas Hajduk prepared this strategy note as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either the effective or ineffective handling of a management situation.

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## What is argumentation?

Rhetoricians define argumentation as the rhetorical term for the common practice of thinking critically and reasoning systematically to persuade your audience of an idea, an action, a proposal, a recommendation, a plan, or some position you want your audience to accept. While several models for developing arguments exist, some people find the models to be either too general or too complex to provide practical guidance for day-to-day usage in the workplace. The traditional model, which stems from logic, sets out two distinct parts involved in arguments with all sentences falling into two categories. In this model, propositions are the conclusions that we draw based upon one or more statements that are called the premise or premises. An example often cited involves a noted philosopher: Premise #1: All men are mortal. Premise #2: Socrates is a man. Conclusion: Socrates is mortal. If we agree the two premises are true, then we must logically conclude that the last sentence or proposition holds true as well. (The logic is as follows: If  $A = B$ , and  $B = C$ , then  $A = C$ .) However, when trying to apply this traditional “Premise-Conclusion Argumentation Model,” in the workplace, some people find the model does not provide enough specific information or guidance on what constitutes the kind of viable premises that lead to good conclusions.

Pushing against the traditional model of argumentation above, Stephen Toulmin developed a very specific model that carefully describes a very specific number of parts necessary to develop good arguments. The parts or components the Toulmin Argumentation Model discusses include Claim, Data, Warrant, Backing, Grounds, Qualifiers, and Rebuttals. The Toulmin model provides very useful insight and guidance when compared with the traditional model. Nevertheless, some complain that applying the Toulmin model demands learning and remembering unconventional terminology as well as a process of usually diagramming an overly complex set of components or argument parts.

For workplace purposes, we can view effective persuasive arguments as containing distinct parts or components that provide the essential structure for comprehensive argumentation. The **CJAR Argumentation Model** discussed here—which stands for Conclusion, Justification, Assertion, Results—attempts to use plain language terms or labels to define the parts or components necessary for creating successful arguments.

In contrast to the two models described above, the C-JAR. Argumentation Model focuses on an important nuance of workplace arguments—results. People in the workplace tend to be quite focused on results. Thus, the C-JAR model pays special attention to the important role results (aka outcomes) play in workplace arguments.

Executives and decision-makers in the workplace tend to be results-oriented people. Many adopt the mantra: “Just give me the bottom line.” In organizations, self-interest drives people to assess and evaluate arguments with an eye on results. As key stakeholders they ask, “What’s in it for the organization?” Accordingly, when we look to persuade people in the workplace, we need to be prepared to discuss the results, benefits, or advantages for the organization should it approve our idea, action, proposal, recommendation, plan, or position. Because results (or outcomes) help persuade people and sell ideas or concepts in the workplace, when we ignore results, we weaken workplace arguments.

## How are the C-JAR Model components defined?

This segment of the instructional note explains and defines the different parts or components used to develop the C-JAR Model for workplace argumentation.

### CONCLUSION

Your conclusion is an assertion, judgment, recommendation, proposition, statement or decision reached by careful reasoning and involves stating what is true, or ought to be done, or asserting that something is the case. In the workplace, we make claims in presentations, emails, reports, proposals, or meetings—especially when we say something that encourages audiences to take some kind of action, as in accepting a position or approving a proposal. **For example:** “We recommend accepting the XYZ strategic plan for our organization.”

### JUSTIFICATION

Your justification, support, evidence, data or proof provides the available body of facts or information validating whether a conclusion, recommendation, or proposition is reasonable to accept. Successful arguments always include evidence, support, proof, justification, or verification. **Example:** “We found evidence that industry analysts project a steadily increasing demand of XX% every three quarters, which is based upon consumption data from the last ten years.”

### ASSUMPTIONS

Your assumption, presumption, warrant, or presupposition is knowledge or information typically accepted as true, or given, or certain to happen. Many mistakenly never bother to articulate assumptions. Yet, assumptions remain a fundamental, basic component of every argument. Audiences usually need to hear your assumptions because that knowledge or information is usually necessary for the audience to connect or link Conclusions & Justifications.

**Example:** “We need to increase our capacity to manufacture our two small car models (Conclusion or Assertion). The JD Powers group predicts an XX% increase in demand for smaller vehicles (Justification or Evidence). Buyers want small, fuel efficient cars when oil prices are high, and we assume oil will remain high (Assumptions).”

### RESULTS

Your results, outcomes, consequences, benefits or pain offer audiences good reasons for taking action to do something—or not taking an action to do something in unfavorable circumstances. In the workplace, people tend to be more inclined to be persuaded and accept a specific assertion when they readily understand the outcome, whether it be benefits or consequences, which the organization (or individual) will receive. So, show audiences the goodness or the pain they’ll get. **Example:** “By accepting the plan, we save \$XXX in the first quarter, and we project an ROI of XX% in 5 quarters. Plus, when you look at the track record, our products have increased market share in this segment by 50% in five years; no other department can claim that kind of clout.”

## **Why add Objections & Refutations components?**

Note that the C-JAR components alone provide a complete model for the components that need to be shared with your audience in a discussion, document, or presentation. However, the strongest argumentation strategy dictates that you review and analyze an argument looking for any weaknesses so that you can anticipate objections that will need to be addressed or refuted. Hence, the addition of the objections and refutations components reflects a move to strengthen your argumentation analysis and make your arguments more rigorous.

### **+OBJECTIONS**

Audiences will evaluate your arguments and raise an objection when they are uncertain or doubt a point that you state in your argument. Objections can range from something the audience questions as a possible concern to a point that the audience will challenge vigorously.

**Example:** “Wait a minute, we have several departments developing proposals that demand a capital expenditure, and two of them estimate a much higher ROI than the one you’re estimating.”

### **+REBUTTALS**

When your audience questions you about a point or raises an objection or challenges a statement you make, you need to defuse, refute, counter or annul the objection with statements designed to prove an objection or challenge to be inaccurate, misunderstood or wrong. **Example:** When you look at the track record, our products have increased market share in this segment by 50% in five years; no other department can claim that kind of clout.

## **How do I integrate Objections & Rebuttals into the main body of my argument?**

Once you’ve identified an objection and your refutation during the planning and building phase of your preparation, you typically want to address the objection and discount the concern or disprove the challenge BEFORE the audience has a chance to even articulate the objection. Usually, you will be more successful when you revise the four major components of your argument to address valid objections you discovered. In other words, once you’ve identified and anticipated a valid objection and developed a strong rebuttal, you’ll want integrate this new objection and refutation into the main body of the argument.

The process of anticipating audience objections and incorporating your refutations into the body of your argument is called rhetorical inoculation. Research suggests that audiences respond more favorably when you raise objections and refute the objections with sound reasoning BEFORE the audience raises the objection. Audiences tend to attribute higher ethos (i.e., credibility) to someone who takes the extra step and acknowledges challenges or concerns and takes the time to address them.

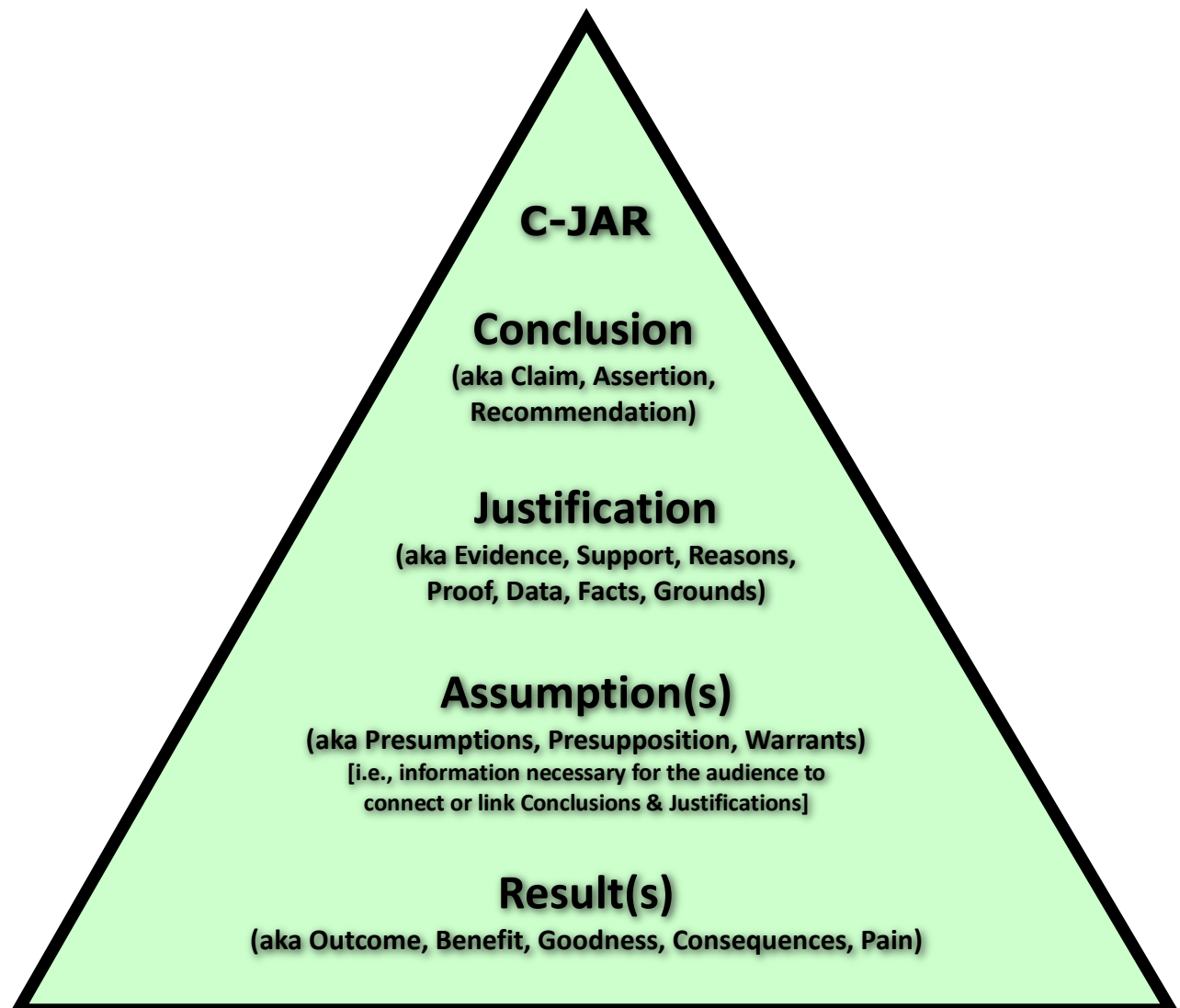
Conversely, waiting for the audience to think about, reflect upon, and then voice an objection allows the objection to grow firmer roots in the audience’s mind, making it sometimes more difficult to overturn. Frequently, audiences tend to suspect you have not been rigorous enough in

your critical thinking. Omitting one component or part of the argument leads to an incomplete or faulty argument, which audiences then tend to dismiss or reject.

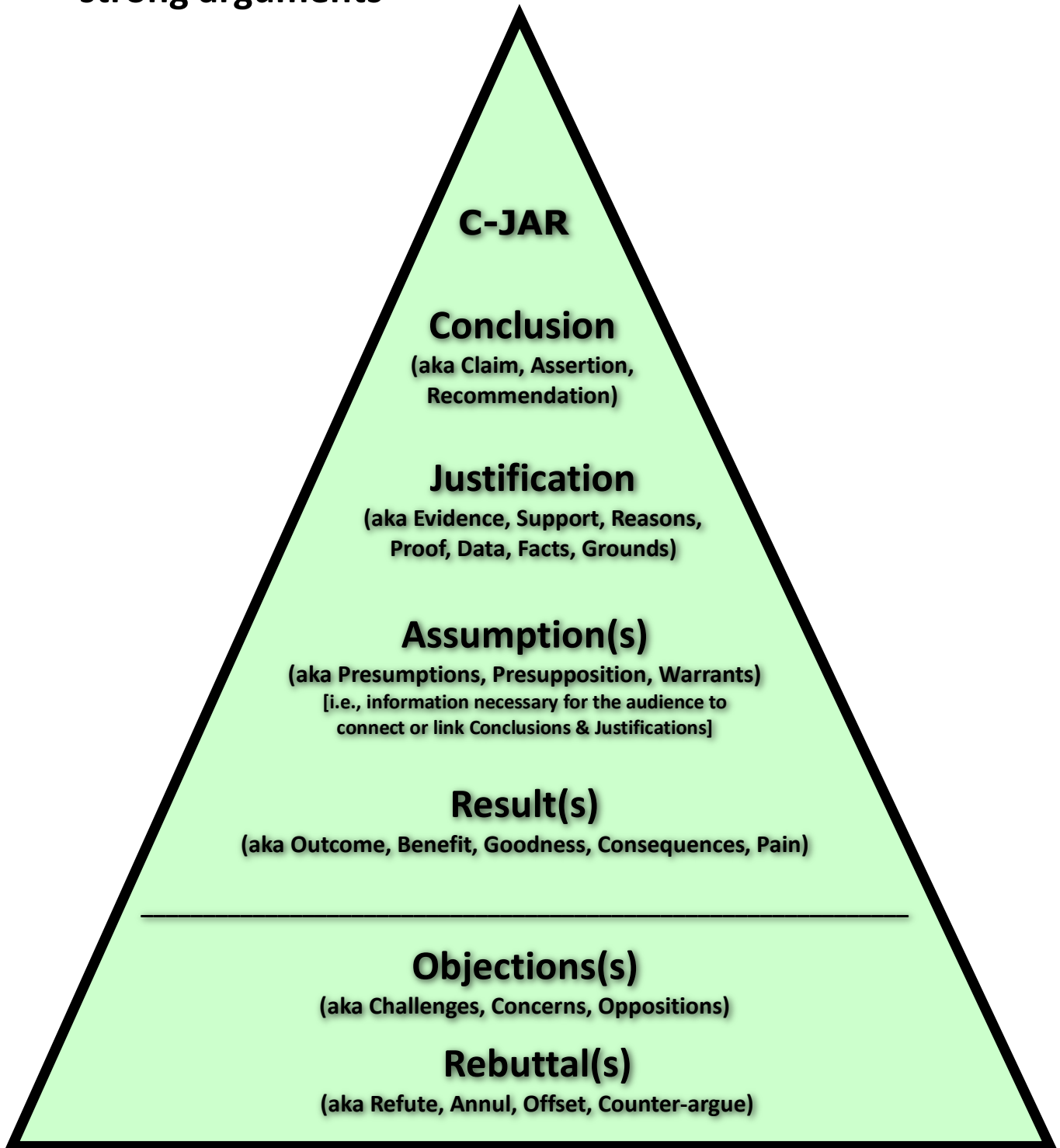
### **C-JAR PYRAMID**

To make it easier to visualize, recall, and apply the CJAR(+OR) Model, the illustration on the below adopts a pyramid icon structure to suggest that arguments need to be built upon a strong foundation. Unfortunately, people frequently offer only conclusions, claims, assertions or recommendations without stopping to take the time and build a solid foundation, and their incomplete arguments fail to persuade.

## **Use C-JAR Pyramid to deliver strong, complete arguments**



# Use C-JAR +OR Pyramid to analyze, plan & build strong arguments



## C-JAR Argumentation 1-page Printable Grid

Argument Parts	Definitions	Synonyms	Examples
<b>C</b> <b>Conclusion</b>	A judgment or decision reached by reasoning; asserting or recommending that something is the correct or incorrect, appropriate or inappropriate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action you want</li> <li>• Assertion</li> <li>• Claim</li> <li>• Offer</li> <li>• Proposition</li> <li>• Position</li> <li>• Recommendation</li> <li>• Statement</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We recommend accepting the XYZ strategic plan for our organization.</li> <li>2. The benefits in adopting option #4 outweigh the benefits of all the other options.</li> <li>3. We need to change the design to conform to the new ABC specs.</li> </ol>
<b>J</b> <b>Justification</b>	Compelling reasons, facts, justifications used to demonstrate whether an assertion or proposition offers value, truth, validity, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support or Proof</li> <li>• Reasons</li> <li>• Data or Facts</li> <li>• Premise</li> <li>• Substantiation</li> <li>• Verification</li> <li>• Grounds</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There's evidence that industry analysts estimate a steadily increasing demand of XX% every three quarters, which is based upon consumption data from the last ten years.</li> <li>2. The ABC agency confirms that costs for the raw material are projected to increase by 21% over the next 2 years.</li> </ol>
<b>A</b> <b>Assumption(s)</b>	Statement(s) generally accepted at face value. Usually, assumptions underpin each argument and link Conclusions & Justifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presumption(s)</li> <li>• Presupposition(s)</li> <li>• Warrant(s)</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Our proposal and financial projections are based on the two assumptions that completing the project on schedule and as budgeted continues to be our most critical concerns.</li> <li>2. Our plan to expand production facilities assumes that the demand for oil will continue, or increase, over the next two years.</li> </ol>
<b>R</b> <b>Result(s)</b>	Often, a good or beneficial outcome for taking action, making a decision, or doing something ----- Conversely, the pain or consequence of a problem. Also, the pain or consequence of a poor outcome or bad decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advantage(s)</li> <li>• Benefit(s)</li> <li>• Goodness</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Outcome</li> <li>• Value</li> <li>• WIIFM?</li> <li>-----</li> <li>• Consequences</li> <li>• Disadvantages</li> <li>• Downside</li> <li>• Pain</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By accepting the plan, we save \$XXX in the first quarter.</li> <li>2. We project an ROI of XX% in 5 quarters.</li> <li>3. This recommendation aligns with our strategy and increases our visibility.</li> <li>-----</li> <li>4. We will lose/waste an estimated \$XXX if we continue with the current strategic plan.</li> <li>5. We estimate we will lose XX employees with this move.</li> <li>6. We project losses of \$XXX if we approve option #2.</li> </ol>
<b>+O</b> <b>Objection(s)</b>	Any points, reasons, comments, benefits, etc. the audience will or is likely to resist or challenge. Identify and address objections in advance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern(s)</li> <li>• Challenge(s)</li> <li>• Conflicts</li> <li>• Opposing view(s)</li> <li>• Opposition(s)</li> <li>• Resistance</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We are concerned that the proposed timeline will not allow you to complete the project in time to meet the client's deadline.</li> <li>2. We have several departments developing proposals that demand a capital expenditure, and some of them estimate a better ROI than the one you're estimating.</li> </ol>
<b>+R</b> <b>Rebuttal(s)</b>	To prove an objection to be false or wrong. (The best arguments anticipate objections and address/refute them BEFORE the audience objects.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annul</li> <li>• Counter-argue</li> <li>• Disprove</li> <li>• Offset</li> <li>• Prove wrong/false</li> <li>• Refute</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We've established incentives and fines to motivate the contractor to complete the project ahead of schedule, and they're on track to finish 60 days before the deadline.</li> <li>2. When you look at the track record, our products have increased market share in this segment by 50% in five years; no other department can claim that kind of success.</li> </ol>

## **How should I sequence and deliver my arguments?**

The decision regarding which argument approach to use remains a choice you make with each audience you encounter, but in workplace situations, you always want to think strategically in selecting the way you sequence and deliver arguments. You can decide to organize or sequence your argument in one of two ways: You can either (1) use a direct argument approach or (2) use an indirect argument approach.

Direct Arguments: Most of the time when you deliver an argument where the action you want requires a decision such as an approval, acceptance or green light for a recommendation, plan, or proposal, you probably want to give your audience the bottom line (or conclusion) up front. In workplace arguments, the bottom line usually equates to the action you want—it's the part of the argument that states the conclusion, claim or assertion you're making and frequently can include the results as well. In a direct argument, you front-load your delivery of the conclusion (and often the results) in your argument. Then, after delivering the conclusion (and results), you proceed with the delivery of the parts that offer justification to support your conclusions and explain the assumptions that you used to reach your conclusion, claim, results, or outcomes. In other words, you front-load the C or R components of the C-JAR Argumentation Model and end-load the J or A components of the model.

Usually, a direct argument approach serves you well in workplace situations. Many of the argument structures in the workplace tend to be direct arguments for two reasons. First, most busy executives appreciate people getting to the bottom line (or conclusion) as quickly as possible. Second, all things being equal, most people in workplace situations tend to be receptive or open to new ideas and initiatives that benefit them or the organization—self-interest remains a powerful motivator. When arguments and pitches come from inside the organization itself, as is the case when you present an argument internally to a senior manager, executive, or board, everyone typically brings a team-player attitude and believes you have the best interests of the organization in mind. Even if you find yourself in a situation where you need to deliver an argument or pitch to an organization as an outsider, you frequently can benefit from using the direct argument approach. Salespeople understand that front-loading the conclusions and results can be a powerful way of grabbing a customer's attention. Consider the following statement: "I'd like to see you sign a contract for our new product, which will save your organization \$40,000 in the first month and allow you to increase revenue by an average of 6% per month." The bottom-line statement or conclusion here avoids wasting the customer's time, and the results statement generates self-interest by promising the potential for savings and new revenues.

Indirect Arguments: In every workplace, we sometime encounter situations where our audience might be reluctant initially to approve or accept a proposal, plan, or initiative. If you anticipate your audience may be, at least initially, reluctant to accept your assertion or recommendation you might consider adopting an indirect argument approach. Justification, support, evidence and proof can be very persuasive, and sometimes audiences need to hear or see the justification first. Sometimes when you deliver an argument, you want to front-load the justification and the assumptions and then end-load



the conclusions and the results. In other words, in an indirect argument you front-load the J or A components of the C-JAR Argumentation Model and end load the C or R components of the model. The indirect argument approach may be useful when you suspect your audience might be reluctant to buy into your assertion initially. We all know quite well how this approach works. A familiar courtroom example serves as a handy reminder of why indirect arguments can be powerful with reluctant audiences—audiences in court rooms are directed by a judge who tells the jurors to be reluctant and give the defendant the benefit of the doubt. Imagine a prosecutor saying something like this: “We know for a fact that the gun was registered to Pat. We also know that Pat’s fingerprints are the only prints found on the gun. Furthermore, the striations marks on the bullet taken from the body match the striations marks on bullets test fired from the gun that Pat owns. At the time of the victim’s death, Pat has no alibi. Pat and the victim were seen having a heated discussion just 30 minutes before the time of death.” Given the array of evidence and justification being presented, most audiences would be inclined to reach what the prosecutor hopes will be an inescapable conclusion when she makes her claim that Pat is guilty of the crime and calls for punishment (an outcome or results) that fits the crime.

For a variety of reasons in the workplace, we sometimes suspect a reluctant or resistant audience, and you could be more successful using an indirect approach. Still, most of the time you will find yourself organizing your business arguments using the direct approach.

Below is a matrix that allows you to compare the differences between the two different approaches.

Direct argument approach stronger with receptive audiences Indirect argument approach stronger with reluctant audiences		
	Direct Approach ↓	Indirect Approach ↓
<b>Front Load</b> →	Assertion (or)	Reason (or)
	Request (or)	Results (or)
	Claim (or)	Examples (or)
	Conclusion (or)	Support (or)
	Bottom Line	Evidence
<b>End Load</b> →	Reason (or)	Assertion (or)
	Results (or)	Request (or)
	Examples (or)	Claim (or)
	Support (or)	Conclusion (or)
	Evidence	Bottom Line

# Example C-JAR Argumentation Tool

Type of Document, Presentation, or Interview: Saturn Case Presentation  
 Name: (EXAMPLE) Date: Mid 1990s

<p><b>C</b></p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p>What conclusion, assertion, proposition, recommendation, idea, or position am I selling in this particular argument? [People frequently assert something in a conclusion: We need to... We ought to... We should consider... We believe option #3 will... Unless we change &lt;blank&gt;...]</p> <p>We concluded during our analysis that <u>Saturn needs to</u> increase plant capacity at a cost of \$900M, allowing it to double the number of units it manufactures every year and double our profits. [Note that this major or arch claim represents an action the Saturn executive team wants GM executives to approve/accept.]</p>
<p><b>J</b></p> <p><b>Justification</b></p>	<p>What evidence, support, proof, justification, facts, or verification can I offer to support my conclusion and reasons above that will persuade the audience to accept my argument?</p> <p>There's good evidence to support our requested action to increase the plant capacity to allow us to manufacture more cars. First, Saturn currently sells every small car it manufactures, leaving us with an empty apple cart in the market. Second, an industry report by J.D. Powers estimates (projects) that the worldwide demand in the small car market will increase 2.5%. With an empty apple cart, Saturn, GM's largest-selling small car, will not be able to capture any of that projected increase in demand because we currently sell every unit. Finally, the Saturn brand sells small cars for GM—the proof being that Saturn, in three short years, accounts for over 50% of all GM small-car sales. No other GM division has been able to come close to stealing market share away from the Japanese in the small-car market segment in the last ten years.</p>
<p><b>A</b></p> <p><b>Assumption(s)</b></p>	<p>What presumptions, assumptions, or presuppositions am I making in developing and presenting this argument above? What does this argument presume? What's the foundation for this argument that if changed could alter the acceptability of the argument?</p> <p>We assume [early 1990s] that trend of high oil prices will continue.</p> <p>[Note that the foundation for this argument rests upon the assumption that oil prices will remain high, which creates or maintains the customers' increased demand for smaller, fuel-efficient cars.]</p>

<p><b>R</b></p> <p><b>Result(s)</b></p>	<p>What results, advantages, benefits, goodness (or disadvantages, downsides, pain, drawbacks) can I provide to persuade the audience to accept my claim above? In other words, what reasons will I offer when the audience asks “What’s in it for me? (WIIFM?)”</p> <p>There are four benefits (results) if approved. First, approving our request to increase capacity will double our sales. Second, increased capacity will allow us to increase our market share by xx% given the expected increase in demand projected by J.D. Powers. Third, increased capacity will double our profits, increasing them from \$100M to \$200M in the first year. Fourth, increased capacity will also benefit GM by balancing C.A.F.É. requirements, reducing fines of \$xxxx and allowing increased profits on SUVs of \$5,000 per each additional unit sold. [Note that benefits include measurable financial objectives.]</p>
<p><b>+O</b></p> <p><b>Objection(s)</b></p>	<p>What statements, terms, numbers, etc. that I make in this argument will raise an objection from my audience? What points or statements in my argument will my audience most likely challenge?</p> <p>Our Chevy small-business unit believes that the money we pour into Saturn can be put to better use by investing in the Chevy. Where should we invest our limited resources?</p>
<p><b>+R</b></p> <p><b>Refutation(s)</b></p>	<p>What can I say that will refute, disprove, or counter the objections I anticipate above? [NOTE: Make sure you incorporate these refutations/proofs into the body of your argument (document, presentation, or interview) now that you’ve anticipated them.]</p> <p>The Saturn brand sells small cars for GM—the proof being that Saturn, in three short years, accounts for over 50% of all GM small-car sales. No other GM division has been able to come close to stealing market share away from the Japanese in the small-car market segment in the last ten years. [Note that once this refutation was developed to the anticipated objection above, it was immediately incorporated into the body of the argument to preempt objections regarding other GM manufacturing divisions.]</p>

# Blank C-JAR Argumentation Tool

Title of Document, Presentation, or Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Section/Group: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>C</b> <b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p>What conclusion, assertion, proposition, recommendation, idea, or position am I selling in this particular argument? [People frequently assert something in a conclusion: We need to... We ought to... We should consider... We believe option #3 will... Unless we change &lt;blank&gt;...]</p>
<p><b>J</b> <b>Justification</b></p>	<p>What justification, evidence, support, proof, facts, or verification can I offer to support my conclusion and reasons above that will persuade the audience to accept my argument?</p>
<p><b>A</b> <b>Assumption(s)</b></p>	<p>What presumptions, assumptions, or presuppositions am I making in developing and presenting this argument above? What does this argument presume? What's the foundation for this argument that if changed could alter the acceptability of the argument?</p>
<p><b>R</b> <b>Result(s)</b></p>	<p>What results, advantages, benefits, goodness (or disadvantages, downsides, pain, drawbacks) can I provide to persuade the audience to accept my claim above? In other words, what reasons will I offer when the audience asks "What's in it for me? (WIIFM?)"</p>
<p><b>+O</b> <b>Objection(s)</b></p>	<p>What statements, terms, numbers, etc. that I make in this argument will raise an objection from my audience? What points or statements in my argument will my audience most likely challenge?</p>
<p><b>+R</b> <b>Refutation(s)</b></p>	<p>What can I say that will refute, disprove, or counter the objections I anticipate above? [NOTE: Make sure you incorporate these refutations/proofs into the body of your argument (document, presentation, or interview) now that you've anticipated them.]</p>