

Definition-Toulmin Argument - Sample Practice 1

The following appeared in a memorandum issued by a large city's council on the arts:

"In a recent citywide poll, 15 percent more residents said that they watch television programs about the visual arts than was the case in a poll conducted five years ago. During these past five years, the number of people visiting our city's art museums has increased by a similar percentage. Since the corporate funding that supports public television, where most of the visual arts programs appear, is now being threatened with severe cuts, we can expect that attendance at our city's art museums will also start to decrease. Thus some of the city's funds for supporting the arts should be reallocated to public television."

City funding should not be reallocated (**claim**) because there isn't **sufficient** evidence to prove that there's a correlation between viewership of visual arts programs on television and museum attendance that would justify the shift in funds (**reasoning**). "**Sufficient**" in this context means *enough*, and given the information we have (**qualifier**) we simply do not have enough data on which to base such a dramatic reallocation of funds (**warrant / definition**).

Although current city funding does support public television, moving additional funds needs additional research (**warrant**). Per city policy, reallocation of funds needs convincing evidence in order to be approved (**backing**). This calls to mind a similar reallocation of funds that proved disastrous for our city budget in fiscal year 2015 when we took all of the money earmarked for trash collection and dedicated it to e-waste removal. The city then lost 2.3 million dollars (**evidence**). This should serve as a cautionary tale when we have discussions about moving arts money.

Currently public television exposes new and existing audiences to the arts in our community. *Not* directly supporting that audience (by not funding arts programming on television) will negatively impact those who primarily receive their arts exposure via television (**rebuttal**). We think, however, that public television should be funded – but not by taking money away from arts programs (**response**). Based on the available data, we cannot yet justify robbing Peter to pay Paul until we have a better understanding of the strength of the correlation between television viewership of arts programming and museum attendance in our community (**claim**).