Each thematic unit includes one student essay followed by a critical analysis of the essay and, in some cases, suggested revision strategies. Preceding each selection are several questions to stimulate thought, and a list of vocabulary words and their definitions. Following each selection are four discussion/activity sections: “Understanding the Content,” “Looking at Structure and Style,” “Evaluating the Author’s Viewpoints,” and “Pursuing Possible Essay Topics.” These aids derive from the reading and writing principles taught in Part One and, like the readings, are designed to accommodate a range of ability levels. Appendices include a minimal introduction to library research, a model research paper, and a brief style manual based on the new MLA documentation procedures. An accompanying thirty-six-page Instructor’s Guide offers approaches for teaching each selection in full-class and small discussion groups, and suggests minimal reading levels for most selections, ranging from fifth and sixth grade (Langston Hughes’ “Salvation”) through fifteenth grade (Coretta King’s “The Death Penalty Is A Step Back”).

Viewpoints is resourceful but not prescriptive, current but not trendy. The composition instructor who needs a congenial text for unmotivated students at any academic level might well consider it.


Reviewed by Marie J. Secor, Pennsylvania State University

The recent interest in argumentation among compositionists has been marked by the increasing number of textbooks and readers on the subject. The sources of this interest are varied. First, the writing-across-the-curriculum movement has led many to see argument as a unifying concept, a perspective that cuts across the disciplines and abstracts the elements shared by all academic writing situations. The principles governing effective argumentation are field-invariant and can be expressed in general terms, though their application and emphasis will vary from one discourse community to another. Second, the very notion of advanced composition as distinguishable from freshman or developmental composition precipitates a turn toward the study of argumentation. After all, if argumentation has traditionally been the last assignment in the conventional, modes-oriented composition course, it makes sense that it should be the starting point for the next semester of composition instruction. From this perspective, the study of argument seems to find its natural home in advanced composition.

Anthologies emphasizing argumentation, therefore, contribute to the development of advanced composition courses and are welcome additions
because they are not just compilations of the same chestnuts that have filled
modes readers for the past twenty years; they can do much to increase the
range and subject matter of appropriate reading material for composition
courses. At their best, they encourage critical reading and thinking and
enlarge students' understanding of discourse in a variety of genres and on a
range of subjects. To learn to read and write arguments is to learn that there
is more to short prose discourse than the personal, familiar essay.

Beene and Douglas' *Argument and Analysis* falls into the general cate-
gory of readers on argument. A substantial volume, it contains over sixty
essays on various subjects, including a number of essays by student writers
responding to issues raised by the professionals. The readings are grouped
into eight sections on education, dissent, business ethics, gender and culture,
literary analysis, environmental issues, science, and the arts. The volume is
introduced by a fifty-page unit on critical reading, critical thinking, and
persuasive writing, and it ends with a chapter on writing the research paper
and a glossary of terms. The structure and proportion of the book indicate that
it is meant to function as an anthology rather than a rhetoric, to be used in
conjunction with a fuller rhetoric if the instructor wants to elaborate on the
principles that govern reading, thinking about, and writing arguments.

As a collection of essays, the volume has some strengths. It contains a
substantial number of selections that have not been over-anthologized, and
the familiar selections are good ones that work in many contexts. The authors
have searched out appealing selections. There are some fresh essays and a
stimulating mixture of genres and points of view in the sections on business
ethics, on gender and culture, and on controversies in the sciences. I
especially like the contrast of Robert Thomas' "Is Corporate Executive
Compensation Excessive?" with the more familiar Benjamin Franklin essay
opposing the payment of salaries to employees of the executive branch of
government. The gender and culture section contains contemporary material
as well as Pearl Buck's 1937 essay, "America's Gunpowder Women," which
makes an interesting commentary on Dorothy Parker's "Good Souls" and
exposes the reader to earlier stances taken in the debate over gender and
cultural roles. In the science section, Stephen Jay Gould's defense of dinosaur
intelligence in "Were Dinosaurs Dumb?" raises questions about the definition
of intelligence that are answered rather differently in James Gould and
Carol Gould's "Can a Bee Behave Intelligently?" The authors have also
made good selections in the literary analysis section, where many of the short
stories raise issues related to those discussed in the essays. One could
certainly develop a number of writing assignments based on analysis and
response to the essays in this volume.

One could not, however, get much useful direction on how to teach
argument and analysis from this book. There are two places to look for such
direction: in the "Introduction to Reading, Thinking, and Writing" at the front
of the volume and in the discussion questions that follow each essay. Both fall
short of meeting the needs of teachers and students. The discussion questions tend to be brief and sketchy and show no trace of a rhetorical perspective on the essays. The ones on content ask for little besides summary and basic comprehension, and the ones on presentation do not reflect any clear assumptions about argument and critical thinking that students are expected to apply to the essays they read. Unfortunately, the notion of argument presented both in the apparatus and in the introduction is neither very sophisticated nor consistently developed. It consists mostly of the standard treatment: a discussion of induction, deduction, and logical fallacies both formal and informal. None of the advice offered about critical reading or persuasive writing is related to any clearly articulated notion of argument that structures and permeates the book. Here, in a book called Argument and Analysis, one finds no trace of the influence of Toulmin or Perelman or any recent research on argument; the authors offer some discussion (confusing and misleading) of the syllogism, but they do not even mention the enthymeme or the example. They present standard definitions of induction, deduction, and fallacy, but they never even attempt to use the questions on the essays to relate any of these concepts to the readings. The chapter on the research paper could have come from any reader; it has nothing to do with writing arguments. It is as if the authors took an anthology of readings grouped by subject matter and added an introductory section discussing argument as a branch of logic.

To meet the needs of courses that emphasize argument in the teaching of writing, an anthology needs to do three things. First, it must collect some lively and intelligent selections, good arguments that interact with each other in ways that will stimulate student response; this book does that. Second, it should be structured and presented so that it can be used easily. That means that the apparatus should demonstrate how to treat the selections as arguments for purposes of both analysis and invention. This book does not, and it has some other problems that also interfere with its usefulness, including a truly embarrassing preface directed to students that is guaranteed to make anyone cringe. (This preface was not written by the authors.) Finally, a good reader should reflect the current state of opinion on its subject. Not every reader on argument needs to offer an original perspective on the subject, but it should embody a thoughtful, accurate synthesis of existing attitudes. Many other readers do this job more effectively.