

A THOROUGH SAMPLE ARGUMENT ANALYSIS for ARQ chapters 3,4,5, and 6:

Outline the **conclusion**, **reasons**, **ambiguous terms**, **values** and **value conflicts**, and **briefly explain** whether the argument is well done or not. (**Do not** give your opinion about the issue of border control agents, but how well the writer argued.)

THE ARGUMENT:

"In order to make the border more secure, and reduce the threat to the economy, we will have to raise taxes and hire more border control agents."

MY RESPONSE OUTLINE:

1. **PRESCRIPTIVE CONCLUSION: RAISE TAXES!**

- A. **REASON 1:** So we can **"hire more border control agents."**
- B. **REASON 2:** It will **"make the border more secure."**
- C. **REASON 3:** It will **"reduce the threat to the economy."**

2. **AMBIGUOUS TERMS: EXPLAIN** the three or four most seriously ambiguous terms that hurt the argument. **EXPLAIN** the problems (don't just list the terms).

- A. **AMBIGUOUS TERM 1: "raise taxes,"** We are being asked to raise taxes, but we don't know how high, or which taxes, or who will pay.
- B. **AMBIGUOUS TERM 2: "more secure"** In what ways will the border be more secure? Secure *from* what? Secure *for* what? *How* secure? Will it *work* solve the problem?
- C. **AMBIGUOUS TERM 3: "reduce the threat to the economy"** What exactly is the threat? How serious is it to the economy? How, and how much will it reduce the threat? Will it be worth it?
- D. **"AMGIGUOUS TERM 4: "more border guards"** How many more? Where will they be stationed? Will it work?

3. **VALUES EVIDENT IN THE AUTHOR'S ARGUMENT: Safety and Security and Economy. VALUES NOT EVIDENT, BUT WHICH THE READER MAY HOLD AND WHICH MAY BE IN CONFLICT WITH THE AUTHOR'S: Welfare** of immigrants; **Benefits** of immigrants to the country and economy.

4. **DOES THE ARGUMENT SUCCEED OR FAIL?** **Do not** give your opinion for or against the issue, but provide an analysis of the effectiveness of the argument as presented.

5. **MY JUDGMENT:**

"The argument fails because both the conclusion and the supporting reasons have seriously ambiguous terms in them. They are easily understood words, but the author does not quantify and specify anything. I can't agree to something when I don't know what exactly what the author means the problem is, what exactly will be done, how much it will cost me, and what its effect is intended to be. I also might place a higher value on the welfare of immigrants and their families who would be prevented from coming, or the negative effects, economically, to some portions of the economy. A better argument would have to address these concerns and provide more specific information. Especially since his argument provides a chain of reasoning (A will cause B will cause C), a prediction for which he offers no support "

[By the way, as the student critic of this argument, I haven't revealed my opinion at all on what I believe should be done (if anything) regarding the border. I only explained why the argument cannot be understood clearly, and therefore cannot be accepted or definitely rejected.]