**Argumentative Techniques**

1. **State a clear topic sentence:** Take an obvious stand. Use “must,” ought,” and “should.”
2. **Use examples:** Providing a good example for each of your main points helps make a much stronger argument.
3. **Use opinions from recognized authorities to support your claims:** One of the oldest methods of supporting an argument is to use one or more authorities to support your particular position. People usually believe what well-known experts claim. \*Celebrities / polar bear example.
4. **Answer your critics in advance.** When you point out beforehand what your opposition is likely to say in answer to your argument, you are writing from a position of strength. You are letting your reader know that you are aware that there is another side to the argument you are making. By pointing out this other side and then answering its objections in advance, you are strengthening your own position.
5. **Point out results:** Help your reader see what will happen if your argument is (or is not believed) or acted upon as you think it should be. You should be specific and rationale when you point out results, making sure you avoid exaggeration of any kind.
6. **Define certain terms that are central to the argument:** Often there is disagreement where there shouldn’t be because society does not use the same definition to the item it is arguing. For example, the term religion is potentially quite controversial in itself. Does it mean an organized system of beliefs that might be political and spiritual? Is it an expression of a belief in the divine? Is it about the reconciliation with the paradoxes of human life?
7. **Avoid common fallacies:** Use critical skills in analyzing the fallacies of others.

* **Ad hominem:** A personal attack, or literally, an attack “on the man.” Often, someone resorts to the ad hominem attack, in desperation, because he or she may not be able to find evidence to support a claim.

For example, Kim Campbell, the first and only female prime minister of Canada, ran for election against Jean Chretien of the liberal party. The following was an argument made against her:

“Kim Campbell is a divorcee. If Kim Campbell couldn’t manage her marriage, how could she possibly manage the country?” This is a dangerous assumption. Marriages end in divorce for many reasons.

* **Democratic Fallacy:** The person making an argument takes advantage of a common point of view to persuade the reader of another point of view. The danger here is the assumption that the will of the majority determines what is right and wrong. Mahatma Gandhi of India, on the other hand, once said that history will judge a country not on the basis of how it treats its majority, but how it treats its minority.

For example, the teacher asks the students, “Is it okay to lie?” One student responds, “Lying is okay because most people do it.” This is a dangerous assumption. The student cannot prove everyone lies. Even if they do, does that make it fine?

* Straw Man: “Putting words in someone’s mouth”). This fallacy consists of an attack on an argument that is similar to, but not exactly the one your opponent holds. It is a weaker, distorted image of the original argument made by the opposition.

For example:

* **Argument made by opposition**: Since cycling is a very viable mode of transportation, bicycle infrastructure should be expanded.
* **Straw man argument**: If bike lanes are built, cyclists get an opportunity to run red lights and endanger pedestrians. Hence, bike lanes should not be built.

This is a dangerous misrepresentation. This straw man argument is based on the minority cyclists who do not follow traffic rules and completely ignores the positive aspects of having good bicycle infrastructure.

* **False Analogy:** This is an unfair comparison. Two things are so different, they cannot be compared, but someone tries anyway.

For example, guns don’t kill people. People kill people. Guns are like cars. Therefore, it should be just as easy to get a gun as it is to get a car.

The fact is, guns are not like cars. This is a dangerous assumption. A car is a vehicle. A gun is a weapon.

**Je t'aime, Papa: Justin Trudeau's eulogy to his father**

Justin Trudeau

*This speech first appeared in The Globe and Mail on Oct. 4, 2000, the day after Justin Trudeau delivered his eulogy at the state funeral for his father, Pierre Trudeau, at Notre-Dame Basilica in Montreal.*

Friends, Romans, countrymen.

I was about 6 years old when I went on my first official trip. I was going with my father and my Grandpa Sinclair to the North Pole. It was a very glamorous destination.

But the best thing about it, was I was going to be spending lots of time with my dad. Because in Ottawa he just worked so hard.

One day, we were in Alert, Canada's northernmost point. [A] Scientific, military installation that seemed to consist entirely of low, shed-like buildings and warehouses.

Let's be honest: I was 6. There were no brothers around to play with. And I was getting a little bored because Dad still somehow, had a lot of work to do.

I remember a frozen, windswept Arctic afternoon.  
And I was bundled up into a jeep and hustled out on a special, top-secret mission.

I figured I was finally going to be let into the reason for the existence of this high-security Arctic base.

I was exactly right.

We drove slowly through and past the buildings, all of them very gray and windy. And we rounded a corner, and came upon a red one.

We stopped. I got out of the jeep and started to crunch across toward the front door, but I was told — no, to the window.

So I clambered over the snowbank, boosted up to the window, rubbed my sleeve across the frosty glass to see inside, and as my eyes adjusted to the gloom, I saw a figure, hunched over one of many worktables that seemed very cluttered.

He was wearing a red suit with a furry white trim. And that's when I understood just how powerful and wonderful my father was.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau. The very words convey so many things to so many people.

Statesman, intellectual, professor, adversary, outdoorsman, lawyer, journalist, author, prime minister.

But more than anything, to me he was dad.

And what a dad.

He loved us with a passion and a devotion that encompassed his life. He taught us to believe in ourselves. To stand up for ourselves. To know ourselves, and to accept responsibility for ourselves.

We knew we were the luckiest kids in the world, and that we had done nothing to actually deserve it.

It was instead something that we would have to spend the rest of our lives to work very hard to live up to. He gave us a lot of tools.

We were taught to take nothing for granted. He doted on us but didn't indulge. Many people say he didn't suffer fools gladly. But I'll have you know he had infinite patience with us.

He encouraged us to push ourselves, to the limits. To challenge anyone and anything, but there were certain basic principles that could never be compromised.

As I guess it is for most kids, in Grade 3, it was always a real treat to visit my dad at work. As on previous visits, this particular occasion included a lunch at the parliamentary restaurant, which always seemed terribly important and full of serious people that I didn't recognize.

But at 8, I was becoming politically aware. And I recognized one whom I knew to be one of my father's chief rivals.

Thinking of pleasing my father, I told a joke about him. A generic, silly little grade school thing.

My father looked at me sternly, with that look I would learn to know so well.

And said: Justin, [in translation] we never attack the individual. We can be in total disagreement with someone, without denigrating them as a consequence, and, saying that, he stood up, took me by the hand and brought me over to introduce me to this man.

He was a nice man, who was eating there with his daughter, a nice-looking blond girl, a little younger than I was.

He spoke to me in a friendly manner for a bit, and it was at that point that I understood that having opinions that are different from another does not preclude being deserving of respect as an individual.

Because simple tolerance, mere tolerance, is not enough.

We need genuine and deep respect for each and every human being, notwithstanding their thoughts, their values, their beliefs, their origins.

That's what my father demanded of his sons, and that's what he demanded of his country. He demanded this out of a sense of love. Love of his sons. Love of his country, and that's why we love him so. The letters, the flowers, the dignity shown by the crowds in bidding their farewells — all of this as a thank you for having loved us so much.

My father's fundamental belief in the sanctity of the individual never came from a textbook. It stemmed from his deep love for and faith in all Canadians and over the past few days, with every card, every rose, every tear, every wave and every pirouette, you returned his love. It means the world to Sacha and me. Thank you.

We have gathered from coast to coast to coast. From one ocean to another, united in our grief to say goodbye. But this is not the end. He left politics in '84, but he came back for Meech, he came back for Charlottetown, he came back to remind us of who we are and what we're all capable of.

But he won't be coming back any more. It's all up to us — all of us — now.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep. He has kept his promises and earned his sleep.

Je t'aime, Papa.