Overview of the Toulmin Diagram

Claim
Answers the question: “What are you trying to establish?”

Grounds
Provide the evidence that supports your claim.
The grounds are the common ground from which you can build your argument.
If the audience does not already agree with your “common ground,” you do not have a shared foundation upon which to build your argument.

Warrant
Shows how the grounds are relevant (provide reasonable support) to the claim.
The warrant provides the reason (or reasons) that link the grounds – i.e., show that they are “relevant” – to the claim.
The warrant connects the grounds to the claim.

Four Basic Questions
Is it?  ➔  Fact
What is it?  ➔  Definition
Of what value is it?  ➔  Value
What should be done?  ➔  Policy

Deductive Warrants Defined
Conditional: If . . . then
Disjunctive: Either . . . or
Syllogism: Three terms (a subject, a predicate, and a middle term) and two premises and a conclusion.

All M are P.
All S are M.
All S are P.
Inductive Warrants Defined

Causal: Reasons from a cause to effect (or effect to cause) to link the grounds and the claim.

Generalization: Reasons from a small number (a sample) to a larger amount (all or most) to link the grounds and the claim.

Analogy: Reasons from similar attributes to link between the grounds and the claim.

Sign: Reasons from an indication (literal or figurative) to link the grounds and the claim.

Rebuttal

The rebuttal challenges the capability of the warrant to provide reasonable support for the claim.

Why bother?

- Exploring all sides of a policy will make the presentation truly well rounded
- To understand what is being done on both sides is to understand the topic as a whole
- Your audience wants to know why they should take your side and not the opponent’s side

Backing

Provides additional information in support of the warrant.

Modal Qualifier

The modal qualifier identifies the degree of probability of the claim. It is a function of the strength of the rebuttal as well as the quality and strength of the backing.

An argument with a strong rebuttal would have a modal qualifier that indicated the claim was not very likely – such as: “It seems somewhat likely.”

Overview of the Toulmin Diagram
Drinking requires more maturity than these other acts. Such a change would prompt even younger persons to drink. It would encourage behavior we should discourage.

The United States should change the drinking age to 18.

If I am old enough to drive, to vote and to be drafted in the event of a war, then, the state should change the drinking age.

By 18 a U.S. citizen is old enough...to drive, to vote and to be drafted in the event of a war.

It is hypocritical of a society to allow one age requirement for such acts but to deny it for another.

The United States culture is unique in respect to drinking -- for example we had prohibition, but European countries and Canada did not. Those countries have an established norm that is responsible and the U.S. lacks this tradition.

The United States should change the drinking age to 18.

European countries and Canada legalized the drinking age at 18 or lower.

European countries and Canada are a lot like the United States.

By 18 a U.S. citizen is old enough...to drive, to vote and to be drafted in the event of a war.

It is hypocritical of a society to allow one age requirement for such acts but to deny it for another.

The United States should change the drinking age to 18.

The United States is a country with a drinking problem.

The status quo promotes irresponsible drinking and functions as a challenge to drink.

Leaving the drinking age will reduce or eliminate the incentive.

The United States should lower the drinking age to 18.

The law isn't the cause! Lowering the age would result in even younger people drinking underage.

The United States has a drinking age of 21.

All countries with a drinking age of 21 are countries with a drinking problem.

The United States should lower its drinking age to 18.

Unless there are some countries that do not have a problem and still have a drinking age of 21.

Examples of countries that lowered the age and reduced or eliminated the drinking problem.

The United States is a country with a drinking problem.

All countries with a drinking problem are countries that should lower their drinking age.

Unless the problem is not really a result of the drinking age.

Evidence to support claim: Facts, Expert testimony, Statistics, Other evidence

The warrant states a prescribed pattern of reasoning.

Addition information to support the warrant: Arguments that counter the rebuttals

The United States is a country with a drinking problem.

Reasoning Patterns: Inductive - Analogy, Cause, Generalization, Sign

Degree of probability

Arguments that counter the rebuttals