

# HAVING YOUR SAY

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## SAMPLE CHAPTER

The pages of this Sample Chapter may have slight variations in final published form.

# PART I

## Critical Reading: Exploring a Point of View

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Critical reading means more than being careful to understand everything an author is saying. Critical reading means constructing an interpretation of why the author has chosen to write, whom she expects to address, why she included the points she did and expressed them as she did, and what effect she wants to have on the reader—in short, what the author is doing with an argument. Critical reading—reading for more than just surface understanding—is crucial for exploring points of view in depth. The chapters in Part I describe what to look for in interpreting and constructing arguments.



# CHAPTER 2

## Spans: Building the Segments of an Argument

The first step in exploring an issue is learning how authors typically set up their arguments. In this chapter, you will learn to find **spans**, the biggest segments that arch across an argumentative essay or article, and consider why the author constructed them as he did. The choice of segments and their lengths are clues to what the author thinks the audience needs to know. For example, an author who thinks that readers are completely unaware of an issue might spend most of the article establishing that it exists and that it is important.

In an argument about public policy topics such as environment or crime, the three most common spans are “seeing the issue,” “exploring the problem,” and “selecting a solution.”

In the remainder of the chapter, these spans will be described in more detail. Spans and other parts of an argument article will be illustrated throughout this text by referring to the environment and crime articles at the end of Part I. Before continuing, skim one of the following two articles:

- **Environment.** C. J. Chivers’s vivid argument about the effects of mobile fishing gear on sea-life habitats in “Scraping Bottom.”
- **Crime.** Michael Castleman’s personal stance toward crime prevention in “Opportunity Knocks.”

As you read, try to spot the places where the spans begin and end and compare your constructions with the ones presented here.

**TABLE 2.1 Spans and Their Functions**

<i>Span</i>	<i>Functions</i>	<i>Style and Content Options</i>
Issue	Raise awareness of the issue in concrete terms Generate concern	Narrative with vivid detail Appeal to reader to identify with those involved Create a reversal
Problem	Analyze the nature and causes of the problem Identify neglected or misunderstood aspect	Shift in scope: local to general or general to local Historical review Analysis of conflicts
Solution	Identify and describe available solutions Argue that a solution should or should not be adopted	Imperatives and future tense Analysis of feasibility, effectiveness, costs, benefits

## The Issue Span: Seeing the Issue

In the issue span, the author makes readers aware that something is wrong, trying to make them care enough to consider the underlying problems and solutions. If the span is effective, you will feel that you have something at **stake**, some value or goal that is at risk as long as the issue is unresolved. If the span doesn't move you, you will probably stop reading; you won't care much about whatever else the author has to say. Because it is designed to help readers see and care about the issue in general, the issue span comes at the beginning of an article.

Authors have more than one way to create interest in the issue; three common strategies are paradigmatic problem cases, ideal images, and value conflicts.

- **Paradigmatic Problem Case.** The article opens with the story of an incident in which a problem occurred. The story is told vividly with details of a provocative event or disaster in a real place, such as the giant oil spill in Alaska from the Exxon Valdez or the shootings at Littleton High School. For the author, this incident is “paradigmatic”; it illustrates exactly what is worst about this type of situation.
- **Ideal Image.** The opening of the article conjures up an image of a world that seems normal, as expected, or even ideal. The description or narration includes vivid details that help you project yourself imaginatively into the scene. Then the author undermines that image, showing that the situation is “too good to be true,” or that circumstances now threaten its existence.
- **Values Clash.** The article begins with a description of abstract principles or values (such as safety, justice, freedom) that are endangered in the current situa-

tion. Even if the language is more abstract, the author may ask you to imagine your feelings of loss or frustration if the situation stayed as it is.

Even though the language can be more dramatic and vivid than anything else in the article, the issue span does more than simply create a mood. This is where the author raises specific aspects of the issue that she will address in both the problem and solution spans. The incident described in the opening may be just one example of a larger problem that the author will analyze. Or the incident may serve as a standard, a case that any acceptable solution must address.

## Variations in the Issue Span

An issue span may be long (several paragraphs) or very short (a few sentences). If the issue is already in the public eye, an author might skip this span altogether or write only a few sentences about it. If the issue is being overlooked or underrated, the author is likely to devote much more space, or even the entire article, to inspiring readers to recognize the existence and importance of the issue.

Whatever its length, the span frequently has two parts. In one part, the reader is asked to identify with the people involved in an incident; in the other, the reader is surprised by a reversal.

In the identification move, authors often appeal to your senses or your imagination, asking you to “see” a situation as if you were an eyewitness. “Identification Moves” describes these moves in Castleman’s and Chivers’s issue spans.



### IDENTIFICATION MOVES

#### *Environment: Chivers’s Expected Image*

The opening of Chivers’s article is more like an adventure story than an argument. Chivers vividly describes being out in a fishing boat on a seemingly empty ocean, with all the sights, sounds, and smells. Anyone who has been on a boat can identify with the idea that the ocean looks empty.



#### *Crime: Castleman’s Ideal Image*

Castleman describes his seemingly tranquil, idyllic neighborhood in the first two paragraphs. As a reader, you might find yourself wishing you lived in a neighborhood just like his. He makes it easy to see why someone would assume, as a neighbor does, that the neighborhood is a great place to live and safe from crime.

The second part of the issue span, the reversal, conveys a sense of conflict or uneasiness or puzzlement, a sense that things are not as they should be: everything is not what it seems; the ideal is an illusion; expectations are confounded; tragedy

strikes; goals are at risk. “Reversal Moves” discusses these moves in Castleman’s and Chivers’s articles.

## REVERSAL MOVES



### *Environment: Chivers, “All is Not as it Seems”*

Chivers trumps the reader’s image of an empty ocean with the expertise of the boat’s captain, Peter Taylor (par. 3), who knows it is full of life and structure. Chivers wants readers to see the ocean floor as lively and valuable. Then, in par. 4–5, Chivers describes a conflict between traditional hook-and-line fishermen, like Captain Taylor, and people who fish “aggressively” with mobile gear that destroys the valuable parts of the ocean floor. As a result of dredging and trawling, many of Captain Taylor’s fishing spots are gone; the ocean floor is becoming as empty as it originally seemed. At this point, you might feel that you “see” the ocean differently, as a place where hidden treasures are in danger.



### *Crime: Castleman, “It’s Too Good to Be True”*

In par. 3, Castleman undermines the “naive” assumption that his town is idyllic. He introduces evidence that a startling number of crimes occur, reported to the police and recorded each month in the local newspaper. In par. 4, he vividly describes some close encounters he himself has had with crime near home. Then in par. 5, he argues that his neighborhood is not unique by describing crimes in nearby neighborhoods that also seem beautiful and safe. At this point, you might feel that you “see” Castleman’s neighborhood differently—and other neighborhoods like it, too.

## Recognizing the Boundaries of the Issue Span

To recognize the issue span, be alert for vivid details, the use of narrative, reversals of expectations, and appeals for a new “view” of an issue. “Words to Watch for” presents some typical phrases found in issue spans:



### WORDS TO WATCH FOR: ISSUE SPANS

“This is really happening every day . . . ”

“Imagine/picture this happening to you . . . ”

“How would it feel . . . ?”

“This is not the only case . . . ”

“One aspect has been overlooked . . . ”

“Things are not what they seem . . . ”

## The Problem Span: Understanding the Problem

Any issue spawns many kinds of problems. For public policy topics such as crime and environment, a problem can be thought of as a collection of similar incidents with bad outcomes. In the problem span, the author focuses on one key element that is shared by all the incidents that the author sees as problematic. The author develops an argument about what this element is, why it is significant, and how it contributes to the bad outcomes. “Problems Arising from an Issue” illustrates how different problems can emerge from the same issue.



### PROBLEMS ARISING FROM AN ISSUE

#### ***Environment: What Is the Problem with Diminishing Fish Stocks?***

The issue of diminishing fish populations is illustrated by Chivers with the image of a teeming ocean floor being swept bare. John Robinson, the author of another reading, is also concerned about people reducing wildlife populations. However, Chivers and Robinson diverge on what kind of problem this issue poses. Chivers focuses on the economic problem faced by fishermen who will be driven out of business if all the fish disappear. Robinson focuses on the ethical problem of whether humans have the right to change the environment in ways that affect the survival of other species.



#### ***Crime: What Is the Problem with Street Crime?***

The issue surrounding street crime can be vividly illustrated by the story of a violent assault; this approach is used in two of the readings, Castleman’s “Opportunity Knocks” and Bruce Shapiro’s “One Violent Crime.” However, even though Castleman and Shapiro are exploring the same issue, they diverge on the nature of the underlying problem. For Castleman, the problem is that residents who think they are safe fail to take steps to reduce opportunities for crime in the neighborhood. He doesn’t think the problem is poverty and social conditions. For Shapiro, the problem is that the story of his violent assault is being used to promote crime legislation that is counterproductive. He does think steps should be taken to strengthen the social safety net.

The issue span and problem span have similar functions. An author argues about the existence and significance of the issue in the issue span. The issue span often includes one incident or case that illustrates the way he or she sees the issue. In the problem span, the author chooses a problem related to the issue and argues in depth the existence, significance, causes, and other aspects of this problem.

The author’s main concern in the problem span may be to convince you that the problem he or she is focusing on is real and important, perhaps comparing it to other problems involved with the issue. If the problem is well known, the author

can devote most of the problem span to the causes of the problem. Because most public policy problems are complicated, the author has to convince you that his or her way of analyzing the problem picks out the most important aspects. The author directs your attention to aspects that might be changed to reduce or eliminate the problem. If the author is successful, at the end of this span you will want to consider solutions to the problem.

## Explaining the Tension

Authors use the problem span to identify and explain the **tension**, which is what makes the problem a problem. The tension is what bugs you about the situation, what nags at you to investigate and write about the problem. A simple cause of tension is having a goal (e.g., a well-paying job) but not achieving it because of some sort of gap (e.g., lack of experience) or obstacle (e.g., unfair treatment). Another cause of tension is having to choose between two desirable objects or goals when you can't have both (e.g., clean air and unlimited energy, secure borders and personal privacy).

Public policies affect large numbers of people in a society who may not see the same incidents as problematic; what is a major problem to you (e.g., a new ban on horses in national parks or a new system of handgun registration) may seem to be a minor inconvenience to someone else. For this reason, authors have to spell out the social values or goals that the problem jeopardizes.



### WORDS TO WATCH FOR: PROBLEM SPANS

<b>Values</b>	Efficiency, fairness, good health, justice, knowledge, morality, profits, reputation, safety, civil rights
<b>Problem</b>	Problem, difficulty, harm, challenge
<b>Tension</b>	But, however, unfortunately, frustrated, blocked, at risk, at stake, in jeopardy, tragic, inexplicable, intolerable

## Change in Scope: Separating the Issue and Problem Spans

Because the issue span and problem span are so closely related, it can be difficult to decide where one ends and the other begins. One clue is a change in the author's scope of attention, widening it to address a large number of similar incidents or narrowing it to address what to do about a particular local incident.

If an author begins the article by describing a specific local incident in vivid detail, she may widen the scope in the problem span to address the general problem that affects a larger area or a larger group of people. If the author opened with a more abstract discussion of the values at stake, she may narrow the scope to a specific instance of the problem that she wants readers to act on.

"Problems Spans" discusses these sections in Castleman's and Chivers's articles: how they change scope and how they argue for the existence and significance of the problem and its causes.



## PROBLEM SPANS

### ***Environment: Chivers, “What’s the Harm?”***

Chivers’s focus changes in par. 6–7 from Captain Taylor to dredging and trawl fishing in general. He describes the equipment in great detail, giving graphic details of its size, shape, and operation. In par. 8–9, Chivers reviews how these methods, which have been around for a long time, turned into such a big problem. Changes in technology made mobile gear safer, stronger, and less expensive. In par. 9–11, Chivers argues that dredging and trawling are now the most common method for catching fish worldwide, with lists of fish caught in different regions and statistics for how much of the ocean floor is dredged each year.

In par. 12–15, Chivers describes the growing significance of the problem as scientists and the public came to take it more seriously. The news media began reporting on drops in fish populations. Chivers also describes scientific studies that investigated the effects of dredging and trawling and their conclusions that dredging and trawling disrupt the habitats of underwater creatures.



### ***Crime: Castleman, “Why Does it Happen?”***

Castleman’s focus changes in par. 6 from his neighborhood to the United States as a whole. He addresses any Americans who think they can avoid crime in a “safe neighborhood.” The tension is that the illusion of safety keeps people from taking steps to prevent street crime. However, there are no safe neighborhoods (par. 7–8).

Castleman argues significance by citing the bad consequences of ignoring the problem. Ignoring street crime increases the danger of being a victim. Castleman also disputes the assumption that crime is going or has gone away. In par. 9–18, he gives two reasons why crime remains significant. In par. 11–12, he argues that crime will increase because the population of teenaged men is increasing. Men commit street crimes as teens because they haven’t learned how risky and unprofitable it is. Castleman also argues that crime is significant because people feel unsafe even when the crime rate is low (par. 15–16).

Castleman spends the most space (par. 17–32) arguing about the causes of street crime. He criticizes both liberals and conservatives who think that crime is caused by large social forces (par. 17–24). Starting in par. 25, he discusses three more immediate causes: impulse, alienation, and opportunity, supporting his reasoning with personal experience. Of these three causes, he ends up deciding that opportunity is the factor that people can do most about.

The problem span can take up a small or a very large proportion of the whole. Castleman spends two-thirds of his total space on the problem span (26 out of 39 paragraphs). For Chivers, the problem span represents less than half of the article (10 out of 23 paragraphs). The length of the span reflects the author’s decision about

where the real change needs to come, whether in the understanding of the problem or in the steps needed to solve it. Some problems have been around such a long time that the author can move quickly to talking about competing solutions. Other problems are so unfamiliar that it is a real contribution to bring readers to understand their nature. In some cases, clarifying the problem makes the solutions seem obvious. At other times, clarifying the problem is the first step toward a search for solutions that no one is ready to talk about yet.

## The Solution Span: Finding and Evaluating Options

At the solution span, the author turns to the question of whether a change in beliefs or action can make the situation get better. If nothing can be done, then everyone might just have to learn to live with the problem. But if an aspect of the situation can be changed, then the problem might be made less severe or eliminated altogether. Starting with the solution span, the author tries to convince readers to make a change in attitudes, beliefs, or actions. The solution may be an approach that has worked elsewhere or it might be something totally new. If more than one solution is possible, the author might argue that one solution is better than the others.

The solution span is easy to recognize because the language changes in predictable ways. Instead of talking about the past or present, the author shifts to talking about the future and what would, should, or must happen. Instead of talking about who caused the problem or who suffers from it, the author starts talking directly to the readers about what “we” must do.



### WORDS TO WATCH FOR: SOLUTION SPANS

<b>Solution</b>	Solve, approach, plan, steps, phase, action, remedy, reform
<b>1st or 2nd Person</b>	We, us, our, you, your
<b>Imperatives</b>	We must (not) . . . , we have to . . . , it's time to . . . , this will lead to . . . , we will not see results immediately
<b>Sequence</b>	First, second, before, next, then, after
<b>Values</b>	Costs, benefits, feasibility, effectiveness, advantages, side effects, proven, untested, successful, risky

“Solution Spans” describes these sections for Castleman and Chivers.



## SOLUTION SPANS

### *Environment: Chivers's Solution Span*

Chivers describes several proposals for reducing the harm to the ocean floor (par. 16–23), including regulating the size of catches, barring dredges and trawlers from specific places, regulating the size and power of dredging equipment, and setting aside fish sanctuaries. Chivers identifies the environmental and fishermen's groups that back each proposal, but he does not come out and state his own preference. In the last four paragraphs, Chivers again portrays Captain Taylor using traditional fishing methods on his boat. Chivers ends with a call to action, quoting Captain Taylor's question, "At what point do these people stop talking and start doing what needs to be done?"



### *Crime: Castleman's Solution Span*

Castleman shifts to the solution span in par. 32, where he promotes neighborhood action as a successful way to reduce opportunities for crime. His solutions include getting to know your neighbors, developing "street smarts," and using good locks. He argues that these elements are part of all proven crime prevention programs. Instead of telling people what they should do directly, Castleman simply describes his own practices and implies that others should adopt them.

## Is There Any Solution?

Not all authors offer solutions to the problems they raise. You may feel disappointed if an author convinces you that a problem is urgent and then stops short of telling you what to do about it. However, sometimes this is the best the author can do at the time. In the lifetime of an issue, solutions are rarely quick, obvious, or long-lasting. Important issues in the areas of environment and crime never go away. People will always argue about what should count as a crime, how to prevent it, and how to punish it. People will always argue about how to use and preserve our natural resources. Because issues last a long time and change over time, authors might enter the discussion at a point when the problem seems well understood or when it is a complete mystery. If authors had to wait until they had solutions completely worked out, they might never be able to speak.

## Drawing Lines Between the Spans

To understand a new author's argument, your first step should be to try to divide the entire article into three sections, one for each span. This is not as easy a task as it might seem. An author is not required to include all three spans. The spans may differ drastically in length. Understanding an author's argument is a matter of interpretation and judgment; there are no "answers in the back of the book" that

tell you where the spans “really” are. However, because policy articles so frequently include these spans, looking for all three spans is a useful starting assumption.

The best way to identify the spans in an article is to create a visual sketch, following these steps:

1. On a copy of the article, number all the paragraphs.
2. On a separate sheet, write a list of all the paragraph numbers. Beside each number write one word or phrase that captures the point of the paragraph.
3. Looking closely at the article, look for a place to draw one line between the final paragraph of the issue span and the first paragraph of the problem span. Draw another line between the final paragraph of the problem span and the first paragraph of the solution span.

There may be several plausible places to draw these two lines. The border between two spans is like the border between two states or countries. Sometimes it is easy to find because there is a geographic landmark, like the river between Ohio and Kentucky. But sometimes there is nothing on the ground at all and it is hard to tell when you have crossed over from one state to the next, from Colorado to New Mexico. Borders are matters of discussion and agreement. Likewise, some authors provide headings and subheadings that give you clues to where spans may begin and end. But even without headings, you can make educated guesses and draw lines where you think the spans begin and end.

It is usually easiest to spot where the solution span starts, so it is a good idea to draw that line first, after consulting the descriptions and “Words to Watch For.” Then highlight phrases within the span that describe what aspects of the situation the solution would change.

To find the problem span, look for the highlighted phrases earlier in the article. The problem span often discusses what those aspects are like now, without the solution. So then, working backwards, look for a place to draw the line between the problem span and the issue span.

Because the issue span is so changeable in size, the border between the issue and problem spans can be hardest to pin down. In one paragraph, you may see points that seem to be about both the issue and the problem. Identify any shifts in topic or specificity and decide which one works best as the boundary. Look for a shift in scope, from one case in one city to many cases across the country (or vice versa). Look for a shift in specificity from abstract, general language to concrete, detailed language. Look for a shift in tone from personal and descriptive to impersonal and formal. Or look for a shift in audience from people with a personal stake in the problem to a more general readership. Draw the line where the most significant shift takes place.

## Inferring the Author’s Starting Point

Once you have divided up the article into the spans, you will be able to step back and look at the overall shape of the argument. Which span takes the most space? Why did the author devote so much space there?



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## ALLOCATION OF SPANS



### *Environment*

Chivers devotes the most space to the problem but the spans are relatively close in size, suggesting that he believes his audience will need convincing on all aspects of the argument.



### *Crime*

Castleman devotes two-thirds of his space to the problem. The solution span is twice the size of the issue span. This distribution suggests that Castleman believes that his readers will agree quickly that street crime is an important issue but will resist his idea that opportunity is the key cause of the problem. Once he makes the case for opportunity, he can easily describe suggestions for reducing opportunity.

To test your hunches about the author's choices, you have to find out more about the author and the readership of the journal where the article appears. Most journals and many Web sites provide information about the author, either in a note attached to the article or in a listing of authors. You can also find information about the author by searching on the Web or in reference books. Many journals and their sponsoring organizations have Web sites that provide information about their goals and readership. Reference books and sites like *Ulrich's International* can also tell you about journals. Tips on using these sources are provided in Chapter 7. "Clues about Authors, Journals, and Readers" provides information from these sources about Castleman and Chivers.



## CLUES ABOUT AUTHORS, JOURNALS, AND READERS

### *Environment: Chivers and Wildlife Conservation*

#### *Author*

Chivers is a reporter who covers national and international topics for the *New York Times*. In this article, he is an active spectator because he is on the boat. He remains silent about any personal stake in the issue and which solution he prefers. But his sympathy for Captain Taylor and the traditional hook-and-line fishermen comes across clearly. He offers no arguments in favor of trawling and dredging, even to refute them. He assumes his readers are ordinary Americans who don't think much about where the fish they are eating comes from or how it was caught.

### Journal



*Wildlife Conservation* is published by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), based at the Bronx Zoo in New York City since 1895. The WCS's goal, stated on its Web site [wildlifeconservation.org](http://wildlifeconservation.org), is saving "wildlife and wild lands throughout the world" by combining the "resources of wildlife parks in New York with field projects around the globe to inspire care for nature, provide leadership in environmental education, and help sustain our planet's biological diversity."

### Readers

*Wildlife Conservation* readers are probably ordinary people who enjoy the outdoors, go to zoos, and watch wildlife programs on TV. They are not experts, so they probably need the description of the mobile gear and how it works. If the WCS's goal is to "save" wildlife, then these readers already support environmentalist positions. So Chivers may be safe to assume that they will reject dredging and trawling if he compares their effect to clear-cutting a forest. Since the WCS is based in New York, Chivers is wise to focus on a New England fisherman before widening to the global problem. To appeal to readers who are not committed environmentalists, Chivers would have to respond more to opponents. But focusing on the fishermen instead of the fish allows him to widen his appeal to people who value the economy more than the environment.



## Crime: Castleman and Mother Jones

### Author

Castleman is identified as an author of books about healthcare. He cares about crime because it affects his daily life. He uses personal experiences to support claims about the myths surrounding safety, the causes of the street crime, and the advantages of his solution. He identifies himself as on the left politically, but he criticizes both liberals and conservatives. He probably assumes his readers are on the political left, because he spends extra time on points that liberals might dispute.

### Journal



On its Web site [motherjones.com/mother\\_jones](http://motherjones.com/mother_jones), *Mother Jones* identifies itself as "a magazine of investigation and ideas for independent thinkers. Provocative and unexpected articles inform readers and inspire action toward positive social change. Colorful and personal, *Mother Jones* challenges conventional wisdom, exposes abuses of power, helps redefine stubborn problems and offers fresh solutions." *Mother Jones* was named after a labor organizer, so it may attract readers who identify with the political left. An orientation toward the political left is also associated with the goal of social change and the assumption that power is often abused.

### Readers

If *Mother Jones* really does publish arguments that are “fresh” and “provocative,” then readers of this magazine will probably accept Castleman’s casual, personal style. If they associate themselves with the political left, they will see Castleman as an insider when he also identifies himself as “a person of the left.” But if these readers really do pride themselves as being “independent thinkers,” they should tolerate Castleman’s criticisms of the left and occasional praise of the right. People on the political left are known for sympathizing with the problems of the disadvantaged, so they should not be repelled when Castleman admits that he has a “criminal past.” Castleman’s article seems appropriate for this magazine but it would have to be changed quite a lot if he wanted to publish it in a more mainstream outlet.

As you find out about authors and journals, you will find that both reflect political or social leanings. For example, *Mother Jones* is published and read by people with leftist politics; *Wildlife Conservation* is published and read by wildlife advocates. Other readings included in this book also have leanings: *National Review*, where Dave Shiflett’s “Parks and Wreck” appears, has a conservative outlook; *U.S. Catholic*, where George Brooks’s “Let’s Not Gang Up on Our Kids,” is read by Catholics. All these sources are “biased” in some way; so are their authors. This does not mean that you should dismiss these authors or these journals. Every argument is biased in some way or it wouldn’t be an argument. The central question is whether people with biases are still able to be fair to opponents and accurate on the facts.

## Using Spans to Analyze, to Explore, and to Guide

In this chapter, you learned about the major segments of a line of argument about public policy, the spans for seeing the issue, defining the problem and choosing a solution. In the next few chapters, you will learn about smaller segments of arguments that build up into the spans.

Thinking about different kinds of segments will help you write by reminding you of aspects you might need to investigate. The segments will also help you transform your experience of exploring your issue into a line of argument that readers will find convincing. Readers do not need or enjoy an exact play-by-play of your sequence of thoughts in exploring an issue. Instead, they expect you to make your argument in a sequence they can understand. For similar reasons, Lewis and Clark did not publish an exact tracing of their journey across the American frontier with all of its stops, starts, blind alleys, and wrong turns—instead their map was a much neater symbolic representation of the terrain, presented using conventions that mapmakers had been developing over time.

Similarly when writing to a specific audience, an author ends up leaving out points that she considered during the exploration. She may have started exploring by thinking about solutions, but decide to spend the whole article on the problem.

Learning to recognize and construct these segments will not give you a fool-proof formula for writing a convincing article. Even though you will learn about the segments in an order that makes sense (e.g., starting with seeing an issue and ending with choosing a solution), there are no rules requiring a specific sequence. Arguing is not like filling in a form. Authors are free to leave some segments out, repeat them, or rearrange them. Your own choices about what claims to make, how much to support them, and how to arrange and express them all have to be judged with a specific audience in mind. Learning to recognize the segments can be helpful both for exploring the issue and eventually writing your argument article.

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## EXERCISES

### Backtalk: What Do You Say?

What is your reaction to Castleman? Chivers? Do you agree about the seriousness of the problem? Why? Has the author offered a good enough solution? Why or why not? Provide examples of the language the author uses that show that there is a serious problem. If you agree that the author has offered a good solution, what do you find most convincing about his solution? If you disagree with his solution, where do you find gaps?

### Recognize/Evaluate

The following passages include phrases that typically signal the issue, problem, or solution span. For each one, identify which span it comes from.

1. As the first step to getting things right for the future, I urge all of us to reflect hard on what tough gang laws can mean to tomorrow's children.
2. On a recent hike into the high country, a friend of mine pulled out his cell phone at 13,000 feet, sat on the edge of a stunningly beautiful rock precipice and dialed his wife two states away. I didn't know that he had taken the phone, and was immediately torn by strong, opposing opinions. On one hand, the romance of it all. I mean, what woman wouldn't love to hear her lover's voice from a mountaintop? To know that amid such beauty he was thinking of her? But the pit in my stomach told me that deeper feelings prevailed; feelings that had to do with the cell phone's immediate transformation of the wilderness. (Christina Nealon, "In Wilderness, Don't Phone Home")
3. But, unlike the dozens of management trends—from teams to Total Quality Management—that come and go each year, successories have ignited a firestorm in the otherwise dreary field of human resources. In one camp is a group of academics and irritated employees called "The Hards," in light

of their endless demands for hard data to prove that successories work. In the other camp are corporate executives and a few business school professors called “The Sensors,” who maintain that not all information can be quantified and that people like Galloway prove successories work. (Stephen Glass, “The Writing on the Wall”)

4. Now, many of us would not approve of killing jet skiers, at least without a prior legal proceeding. We will also agree with manufacturers that snowmobiles and ATV’s allow handicapped Americans access to the outdoors they would not otherwise enjoy. We agree that some waivers should be granted, though recipients should have no more than one leg at most. But we remain adamant that these people are national pests and should be kept out of national parks. (Dave Shiflett, “Parks and Wreck”)
5. A national poll done by the research group Public Agenda in 1997 found that a solid majority of American adults—two-thirds—spontaneously describe adolescents in starkly negative terms: wild, rude, irresponsible. Half give those descriptions even to younger children. Granting that some young people deserve those descriptions, it also is demonstrably true that most do not. (Peter Scales, “The Public Image of Adolescents”)

## Detect

Read another essay and identify and write a description of the spans. Your instructor may assign you one or allow you to choose one yourself.

## Produce

Write a paragraph or so that imitates a passage from the Chivers or Castleman essay on a different issue. For example, write a Chivers-like passage with computer technology taking the place of trawling and dredging. Or write a Castleman-like passage about gossip instead of neighborhood crime. Choose a specific passage from the problem or solution span. Try to imitate the author’s reasoning, examples, and style.