Writing a proposition

- Proposition = a statement of judgment that indicate the central issue in controversy
- must have 2 sides
Writing a proposition

- Controversial
- Clear
- Balanced
- Challenging
Controversial

- States a position not accepted or adhered to by significant part of the audience
  - R: Education is beneficial to society.
  - R: Public spending on education should be increased
Clear

- Precise statement of action / belief change
  - R: that the power of the president should be increased.
  - R: that the president should be permitted to veto individual items in appropriations bills.
1 central idea

- R: that this class deplores abortions and lotteries as immoral.
- R: that this class deplores abortions as immoral OR R: that this class deplores lotteries as immoral.
Balance

• Unemotional terms
  – R: that cruel, sadistic experimenters should be forbidden to torture defenseless animals pointlessly.
  – R: that vivisection should be illegal.
Challenging

• Affirmative form
  – R: that the jury system should be abolished.
  – R: that the jury system should be replaced by a panel of three judges.
Challenging

- Presumption should be to negate the proposition
- Viscount Falkland: “when it is not necessary to change, it is necessary not to change.”
- “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”
Writing a proposition

- Controversial
- Clear
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Classifying propositions

- Type
- Expression
- Emergence
Type

- Fact
- Value
- policy
Type - Fact

- Make inferences about past, present or future conditions or relationships
- Sometimes straightforward
  - Mary weighs more than John
  - Flight 876 cannot leave because of heavy fog
  - Central Airlines has the worst record for losing baggage of all U.S. airlines
• Sometimes is relational
  – Capital punishment deters crime
  – Smoking marijuana harms your health
  – Violence on TV affects children’s behavior
Types - Fact

- Sometimes predictive
  - A staffed space mission will reach Mars by 2020
  - Our economy is headed for massive depression
  - A severe shortage of teachers will occur by 2010
Types - Fact

• Sometimes is about historical fact
  – The Shroud of Turin was worn by Jesus in the tomb.
  – The author of *On the Sublime* was not Longinus
  – Lee Harvey Oswald was the sole assassin of JFK
Type - Value

- Assess the worth or merit of an idea, object or practice according to standards or criteria supplied by the arguer
  - Capital punishment is beneficial to society
  - Private schools provide better education than public schools
  - Degas’s paintings are beautiful
• Can be about moral issues
  – adherence to ethical means
  – altruistic motivation
  – attain ideal tenets
• e.g. R: that it is better for 1000 guilty men to go free than for an innocent person to be convicted.
Type - Value

- Political
  - constitutional principles
  - acquiring power
- e.g. R: that censorship of the press is permissible when national security is endangered
Type - Value

- Artistic
  - standards of performance
  - usually only to judge artistic products
- e.g. R: that Renoir better exemplifies the principles of Expressionistic painting than does Monet.
Type - Policy

- Call for a specific course of action and focus on whether a change in policy or behavior should take place
- Are in a complex of social, political, and economic factors that rely on an understanding of values and facts
- Imply a dissatisfaction with the status quo
• Athens County should legalize prostitution
• The state of Ohio should pass a 1% sales tax to fund schools
• You should not smoke cigarettes in public places
Expression

- Explicit
- Implicit
Expression - Explicit

- Stated clearly and publicly such that both the arguer and the recipient are equally aware of this meaning
  - R: schools should expel students who bring weapons to school
  - The drinking age should be reduced to 18
  - The U.S. should pass an amendment to eliminate the Electoral College
Expression - Implicit

• Not stated publicly and are understood by the participants engaged in the audience
• Kyle: I can’t believe you’re home late again. This is ridiculous!
• Minerva: Work has been really busy. I can’t help it.
• Kyle: Work shouldn’t define your life. You are already doing a 60-hour week.
• Minerva: I’ll try and do better, but I need a little patience right now.
Emergence

- Predetermined
- Emergent
Emergence - Predetermined

- Precede and guide an extended argument
- Courts provide clearest example
  - John Doe is guilty of murder
  - The Broadcast Decency Act is unconstitutional
  - An appeal should be granted because the evidence was tainted
Evidence - Emergent

- Develop within an exchange among advocates; they are NOT agreed to in advance
- Amy: I want to go to the movies.
- Amanda: Me too. What’s playing tonight?
- Amy: Lots. I heard that *Scary Movie 4* was pretty good. It's playing at the Grand. I also heard that *Thank You for Smoking* was fun.
- Amanda: I think I’d rather see *Smoking* than that other one.
- Amy: That works for me. Let’s go.