A Writer's Word Bank: Vocabulary for Argument

College-level papers typically require you to discuss a controversy and explain both your position and other authors' opinions. Use the words below to **decide** your position, **qualify** it, and **describe** it.

Deciding the Position

Perhaps you have to write a paper discussing a proposed gun control law.

Ask yourself questions like: Do I agree or disagree with the law? When compared to an existing law, does the proposed law seem more beneficial or harmful? Do I support one section of the proposed law? What do other people think about the law?

Then, use language from the word bank below to show your position. Look at the bold words from the bank in these examples:

1. **Compared to** the existing law, the proposed law protects more people.
   Position: When I have to choose between two options, I support the proposed law for one reason.

2. Senators **assert** that the proposed law will protect everyone; however, they have not **considered** gun shop managers.
   Position: I disagree with the senators because one group is not mentioned in the proposed law.

3. The president **questions** the proposed law when he **advocates** for more research.
   Position: I think the president disagrees with the proposed law because he asked for more research.

To add	To compare	To prove	To show time or sequence	To give an example	To summarize or conclude
And	Whereas	Because	Immediately	For example	In brief
Again	But	For	Thereafter	For instance	On the whole
And then	Yet	Since	Soon	In this case	Summing up
Besides	On the other hand	For the same	Finally	In another case	In summation
Equally important	However	reason	Then	On this occasion	To conclude
Finally	Nevertheless	Obviously	Later	In this situation	In conclusion
Further	On the contrary	Evidently	Previously	To demonstrate	As I have shown
Furthermore	By comparison	Furthermore	Formerly	To illustrate	As I have said
Nor	Where	Moreover	Next	As an illustration	Hence
Too	Compared to	Besides	Then	Take the case of	Therefore
Next	Although	Indeed	First, second, etc.	Consider	Accordingly
Lastly	Conversely	In fact			Thus
Moreover	Meanwhile	In addition			As a result
In addition	In contrast	In any case			Resulting in
First, second, etc.	In reference to	That is			Consequently
		Thus			

To repeat	To claim	To agree	To question or disagree	To recommend	To cast doubt
In brief	Argues	Acknowledges	Complains	Advocates	Seem
As I have said	Insists	Verifies	Complicates	Calls for	Appear to be
As I have noted	Believes	Agrees	Repudiates	Demands	Doubt
As has been noted	Asserts	Concurs	Contradicts	Encourages	Conceivably
As mentioned	Claims	Corroborates	Denies	Exhorts	Perhaps
To reiterate	Emphasizes	Endorses	Disavows	Implores	Possibly
	Observes	Extols	Questions	Recommends	Unclear
	Suggests	Praises	Refutes	Urges	
			Qualifies		

Qualifying and Describing the Position

Once you have decided your position, you can add strength, weakness, or a specific tone to your claims using modal verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

Ask yourself questions like: Do I agree completely, partly, or not at all? Do I disagree due to a possible problem or a proven downside? Do I want to acknowledge other views or prove that all other views are wrong? Do I want readers to support my position or respond to it with other ideas?

Then, use language from the second word bank below to further define your position. Look at the bold words in these examples. Which positions are stronger? Invite more discussion?

1. Compared to the existing law, the proposed law **will definitely** protect more people.
   Qualified Position: When I have to choose between two options, I *fully* support the proposed law for one *important, proven* reason.

2. Compared to the existing law, the proposed law **may** protect more people.
   Qualified Position: When I have to choose between two options, the proposed law *seems* better, but I am *not yet convinced*.

Read one more example. How do the bold words change the position?:

1. Furthermore, this law will **completely** limit **everyday** freedoms.
   Qualified Position: I disagree with the proposed law because it will take away freedoms we enjoy every day.

2. Furthermore, this law will **barely** limit **necessary** freedoms.
   Qualified Position: I support the proposed law because the freedoms we need will only be affected to a small degree.

To qualify	To describe value
Can	(in)accurate
Could	(in)complete
May	(in)effective
Might	Lacking
Must	(un)successful
Shall	Thorough
Should	Weak
Will	
Would	
Completely	
Somewhat	
Partially	
Barely	
Hardly	
Rarely	