

Box 1.3

Twelve Tests of an Arguable Issue.

Do You Have an Arguable Issue?

If you cannot answer yes to all of these questions, change or modify your issue.

Your issue (phrased as a question): _____

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| Yes _____ | No _____ | 1. Is this an issue that has not been resolved or settled? |
| Yes _____ | No _____ | 2. Does this issue potentially inspire two or more views? |
| Yes _____ | No _____ | 3. Are you willing to consider a position different from your own and, perhaps, even modify your views on this issue? |
| Yes _____ | No _____ | 4. Are you sufficiently interested and engaged with this issue to inspire your audience also to become interested? |
| Yes _____ | No _____ | 5. Do other people perceive this as an issue? |
| Yes _____ | No _____ | 6. Is this issue significant enough to be worth your time? |
| Yes _____ | No _____ | 7. Is this a safe issue for you? Not too risky? Scary? Will you be willing to express your ideas? |
| Yes _____ | No _____ | 8. Can you establish common ground with your audience on this issue—common terms, common background, and related values? |
| Yes _____ | No _____ | 9. Will you be able to get information and come up with convincing insights on this issue? |
| Yes _____ | No _____ | 10. Can you eventually get a clear and limited focus on this issue, even if it is a complicated one? |
| Yes _____ | No _____ | 11. Is it an enduring issue, or can you build perspective by linking it to an enduring issue? |
| Yes _____ | No _____ | 12. Can you predict one or more audience outcomes? (Think of your classmates as the audience. Will they be convinced? Hostile? Neutral? Attentive? Remember that any outcomes at all can be regarded as significant in argument.) |