

Craft of Research (CoR): Chapter 11 – Warrants

The 10 salient sentence strings presented below are lifted from the chapter as is, without modification (except, perhaps, for a bit of punctuation here or there). They are presented in order of appearance in the chapter.

1. Warrants are important because readers may challenge not just the validity of a reason but the *relevance* as well.
2. First, academic warrants aren't just commonplaces we all share. They are specific principles of reasoning that belong to particular communities of researchers, and they are countless. A fact of life is that it just takes time for new researchers to grasp the warrants of their fields.
3. A warrant seems reasonable when readers can accept that its consequence follows from its circumstance. If readers don't accept that, you must first convince them to accept your warrant by treating it as a claim in its own argument, supported by its own reasons and evidence.
4. Most warrants are reasonable only within certain limits.
5. Your warrant may be reasonable, sufficiently limited, and superior to others, but your readers might still reject it if it is not appropriate to their particular research community.
6. You treat readers courteously when you state and support warrants to explain principles of reasoning that they may not recognize. But you make an equally strong (though less friendly) gesture when you keep silent about warrants you should state for readers not in the know. One way or the other, warrants significantly affect how readers perceive the ethos you project through your arguments.
7. Some readers may resist that claim because it threatens other strong convictions they hold. A writer confronting such readers might encourage them at least to consider that claim by giving them a warrant that they should be able to accept.
8. When readers accept a warrant is reasonable, that a reason is true, and that the reason and claim are good instances of the warrant's general circumstance and consequence, then they are logically obliged at least to consider the claim. If they don't, no rational argument is likely to change their minds.
9. All arguments rely on warrants, even if they aren't stated explicitly. You can test the soundness of an argument by trying to imagine a warrant for it.
10. The most difficult arguments to make are those that challenge not just the claims and evidence that a research community accepts, but also the warrants it embraces. No argumentative task is harder, because when you challenge a community's warrants, you ask readers to change not just *what* they believe but *how* they reason. To challenge a warrant successfully, you must first imagine how those who accept it would defend it.