

LESSON # 1

Arguments, Premises And Conclusions

Reading Assignment: 1.1 (pp. 1-7)

Click [here](#) to bypass the following discussion and go straight to the assignments.

Logic is the science that evaluates [arguments](#).

An **argument** is a group of statements including one or more [premises](#) and one and only one [conclusion](#).

A **statement** is a sentence that is either true or false, such as "The cat is on the mat." Many sentences are not statements, such as "Close the door, please" , "How old are you?"

A **premise** is a [statement](#) in an [argument](#) that provides reason or support for the conclusion. There can be one or many premises in a single argument.

A **conclusion** is a [statement](#) in an [argument](#) that indicates of what the arguer is trying to convince the reader/listener. What is the argument trying to prove? There can be only one conclusion in a single argument.

In this lesson you will need to be able to distinguish *premises* and *conclusions*:

The foolproof way to do this is to ask yourself what the author of the argument is trying to get you to believe. The answer to this question is the **conclusion**.

There must also be at least one reason and possibly many. These are your **premises**.

Your common sense will be of great help here.

You should also study very carefully the lists of premise and conclusion [indicator words](#) on page 3 in the text. There will not always be indicator words, though more often than not there are. You should note as well that the conclusion can often be identified as the statement directly before a premise indicator. Remember that these are **general** rules only. Think of indicator words as "red flags." They are positioned in the argument to signal the author's intent, but always check yourself by asking what's being proven, and what the proof is.

When you feel confident that you have mastered these concepts, do the True/False exercise on p. 13 in the textbook. (section IV) You can check your answers in the [appendix](#) of this study guide.

Then do exercises 1.1 I 1-22 on your Logic Coach Software. If you need more practice, feel free to do more. If you use up all the exercises in section I, you may do problems from II and send the answers to me to get checked (this section of the text isn't on Logic Coach)

When you are ready, complete the following assignments, using the book as little as possible. Hand in both of the following assignments together with a copy of your logic coach record screen. For more detailed instructions on doing this click [here](#).

ASSIGNMENT 1:

Rewrite the following arguments listing the [premise\(s\)](#) first and the [conclusion](#) last. Each line should be a single [statement](#) written as a complete sentence. Feel free to modify the sentences as you deem necessary, without changing their basic meaning. (after all you want to be restating *this* argument, not writing a new one!) Label the premise(s) P¹, P², P³, etc. and the conclusion C. Leave out any indicator words and any fluff (i.e., sentences which are neither the conclusion nor a premise). 10 points each.

EXAMPLE:

Cats with long hair shed all over the house so you should not get a long-haired cat.

I have heard that they also have lots of fleas.

P¹ Long-haired cats shed all over the house

P² Long-haired cats have a lot of fleas

C You should not get a long haired cat

1. Fairdale will win the championship because they have the best team.
2. Since the housing market is depressed and interest rates are low, it's a good time to buy a home.
3. China is guilty of extreme human rights abuses. Further, they refuse to implement democratic reforms. Thus, the U.S. should refuse to deal with the present Chinese government.
4. The revocation of the 55 mph speed limit has resulted in an increased number of auto fatalities. We must alleviate this problem with stricter speed limit enforcement.
5. We may infer that the U. S. military is both capable and competent from the results of the Persian Gulf War.
6. Scientific discoveries are continually debunking religious myths. Further, science provides the only hope for solving the many problems faced by humankind. Hence, science provides a more accurate view of human life than does religion.
7. Jesse is one year old. Most one-year-olds can walk. It follows that Jesse can walk.
8. I deserve a raise. I'm very good at my job.

ASSIGNMENT 2:

Write out two arguments you have encountered in the course of your day. First write them as you encountered them, then re-write in the format you practiced in assignment 1. Make sure they *are* arguments, with premises and conclusions. You'll get more practice distinguishing between arguments and other passages in the next lesson. For now just make sure there is a conclusion and at least one premise and you'll do fine. (10 points each.)

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