

Chapter 1 Classwork

Exercise 1-7

Instructions: Determine which of the possible premises would be most relevant to the conclusion provided.

1)

1. _____
Thus, every college student should learn practical life skills in addition to abstract academic skills.

Possible Premises:

- a. Trade schools are superior to academic schools.
- b. Employers are complaining more and more about the lack of common sense in recent college graduates.
- c. Employers are complaining more and more about the abstract reasoning skills of recent college graduates.
- d. People with a college degree tend to earn more money than people who have not completed a college degree.

2)

1. _____
As we can see, Joan is a very trustworthy person.

Possible Premises:

- a. Joan has a track-record of telling the truth.
- b. People who know Joan claim that she is trustworthy.
- c. Joan's parents are very trustworthy.
- d. One of Joan's coworkers once saw Joan tell a lie.

Exercise 1-8

Instructions: create your own premise to turn the following into arguments.

1)

1. _____
So college is a waste of time.

2)

1. _____
Thus, morality is relative to cultures, there are no objective right and wrong answers to moral questions.

3)

1. _____
Thus, morality is *not* relative, there *are* objective right and wrong answers to moral questions.

4)

1. _____
(Some species) type of (dog, cat, or other animal) is the best pet.

5)

1. _____
It's very clear now, that Johan ate the cherry pie.

Exercise 1-9

Instructions: Determine which of the following are **arguments**, and which are not arguments.

1) Cognitive biases exist in human beings in all cultures. One of the most common biases is the availability heuristic, which happens when we believe that an event or occurrence is probable based only on how often we think of it.

2) Freedom of the press is the most important of our constitutionally guaranteed freedoms. Without it, our other freedoms would be immediately threatened. Furthermore, it provides the fulcrum for the advancement of new freedoms.

3) If public education fails to improve the quality of instruction in both primary and secondary schools, then it is likely that it will lose additional students to the private sector in the years ahead.

4) One of the best reasons to take a critical thinking class is that it can help you be more aware of the errors in reasoning you make (like cognitive biases) so that you can make better decisions in general.

5) Let me be more precise. When I say that human nature is selfish, I mean that our minds contain a variety of mental mechanisms that make us adept at promoting our own interests, in competition with our peers. When I say that human nature is also groupish, I mean that our minds contain a variety of mental mechanisms that make us adept at promoting our group's interests, in competition with other groups.

6) And what's more, identical twins reared in separate households (because of adoption) usually turn out to be very similar, whereas unrelated children reared together (because of adoption) rarely turn out similar to each other, or to their adoptive

parents; they tend to be more similar to their genetic parents. Genes contribute, somehow, to just about every aspect of our personalities.

7) Atoms are the basic building blocks of all matter. They can combine to form molecules, whose properties are very different from those of constituent atoms. Table salt, for example, a simple chemical compound formed from chlorine and sodium, resembles neither the poisonous nor the highly reactive metal.

8) At the level of their literary and historical character we have good reason to treat the Gospels seriously as a source of information on the life and teaching of Jesus.... Indeed many ancient historians would count themselves fortunate to have four such responsible accounts (as the Gospels), written within a generation or two of the events, and preserved in such a wealth of early manuscript evidence. Beyond that point, the decision to accept the record they offer is likely to be influenced more by openness to a supernaturalist worldview than by strictly historical considerations.

9) Lucinda is too short to ride on the ride with the other kids.

10) There is trouble in the Middle East, there is a recession at home, and all economic indicators are trending downward. It seems likely, then, that the only way the stock market can go is down.

Exercise 1-10

Instructions: If choices are provided, determine which choice best represents the **issue** in the passage. If no choices are provided, determine the issue in the passage.

1) The big problem with computers in elementary schools isn't their minimal educational value but the fact that they often replace science in the budget and curriculum. Our local Parent Teachers Association is throwing away science equipment as fervently as it raises money for more computers. I use computers extensively in the college physics class I teach, so I appreciate their value in communications and advanced computation. But in elementary schools, too much is being sacrificed so that children can have all those pricey beige boxes.

2) The pace of reading, clearly, depends entirely on the reader. He may read as slowly or rapidly as he can or wishes to read. If he does not understand something, he may stop and reread it, or go in search of elucidation before continuing. The reader can accelerate his pace when the material is easy or less than interesting, and can slow down when it is difficult or enthralling.

3) Donald Trump wants to build a wall to keep out illegal immigrants from Mexico, he wants to racially profile Muslims, and he has no foreign policy experience. He is ignorant and not qualified to lead.

4) I like Bernie Sanders and he's passionate, but he knows very little about how to fund the policies he's proposing. He wants to give everyone free education and raise the minimum wage, but when asked where the money will come from he never gives a specific response, and dodges the question.

5) There is no link between atheism and immoral behavior. First of all, I am an atheist and have nothing against anyone, and have never hurt anyone or wanted to. But more importantly, there are historical and current examples of societies that did not or do not address the question of God or a higher power, and still had or have moral codes. One current example is Sweden, where most people are atheists and yet they have very little crime and are a thriving society.