

Philosophy 103: Introduction to Logic

Logic Exercise Answers: Arguments and Nonarguments

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Directions: Study the following passages. If the passage is an argument, diagram it using the numbered statements. If the passage is not an argument, explain why it is not.

1. (1) [T]he ideas in poetry are usually stale and often false and (2) no one older than sixteen would find it worth his while to read poetry merely for what it says. (George Boas, *Philosophy and Poetry* (Wheaton College, Mass.: 1932) 9.)

Answer: Nonargument—two statements.

2. (1) We artists must realize the truth that even small physical movements, when injected into ‘given circumstances,’ acquire great significance through their influence on emotion. (2) The actual wiping off of blood helped Lady Macbeth to execute her ambitious designs. (3) A small, physical act acquires an enormous inner meaning; the great inner struggle seeks an outlet in such an external act. (Adapted from Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares* (New York: Theatre Arts, 1936) 141.)

Answer: Argument.

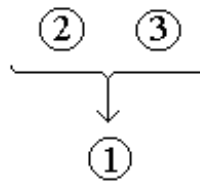


Figure 1: Argument

3. (1) The analyst may forget that artistic effect and emphasis are not identical with the mere frequency of a device. (2) Thus Miss Josephine Miles is misled by statistical evidence into stressing the Pre-Raphaelite element in Hopkins' diction. (René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1956) 182.)

Answer: Argument.



Figure 2: Argument

4. (1) The Roman Empire crumbled to dust (2) because it lacked the spirit of liberalism and free enterprise. (Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action* 1949 (Ludwig von Mises Institute, 1998), 763).

Answer: Nonargument—explanation since the purported conclusion is better known than the premise. If the lawlike statement “(3) All empires lacking the spirit of liberalism and free enterprise crumble to dust” were implicit, then the passage could be the deductive nomological method of explanation with the following structure.

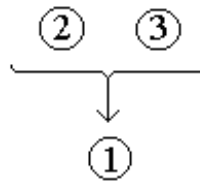


Figure 3: Deductive nomological method of explanation

5. (1) For the past few summers it has rained red African mud in Miami. (2) The showers wash down the iron-oxide-rich soil particles that have been carried on the winds across the Atlantic. (3) It's pretty dramatic when you drive to work some mornings and all the cars are covered with African mud spots. (“From Africa to Miami with Mud,” *Science News* (15 December 1984), 376.)

Answer: Nonargument—explanation.

6. (1) Go play with the towns you have built of blocks, the towns where you would have bound me! (2) I sleep in my earth like a tired fox, (3) And my buffalo have found me. (Stephen Vincent Benét, *The Ballad of William Sycamore*.)

Answer: Nonargument—Poetry, fiction.

7. (1) If you want to know what God thinks of money, (2) just look at the people he gave it to. (Dorothy Parker quoted in Judy Brown, *The Funny Pages* (Andrews McMeel, 2002), 160.)

Answer: Nonargument—conditional statement.

8. (1) Seeing things on a great scale, they [New Kingdom Egyptians] sought to create greatness, no longer after the manner of their ancestors, the Pyramid-builders, by the exaggerated bulk of their material, but by the reasoned immensity of their conceptions; (2) thus architects had arrived at the gigantic colonnades of Luxor and Karnak. (G. Maspero, *Art in Egypt* (New York: Scribner's, 1922), 207-8.)

Answer: Nonargument—explanation. The “thus” in this context means “this explains why.”

9. (1) Because Christians refused to acknowledge the state religion, which was the cult of the emperor, (2) and because they refused to participate in its rather perfunctory rites, (3) they were regarded as politically subversive and were bitterly persecuted. (Horst de la Croix and Richard G. Tansey *Gardner's Art Through the Ages* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1975) 245.)

Answer: Argument.

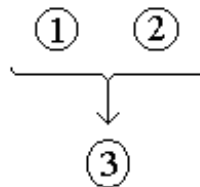


Figure 4: Argument

10. (1) Be careful what you pretend to be (2) because you are what you pretend to be. (Often misquoted by attributing to Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Mother Night*.)

Answer: Nonargument—command with a justification.

11. (1) The marching band on the football field is more of a show than a concert. (2) In such situations, the listener's relationship to music is a passive one. (3) He *hears* the music but does not actually *listen* to it, and (4) therefore, real appreciation does not exist in such conditions. (Hugh M. Miller, *Introduction to Music* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1958) 4.)

Answer: Argument.

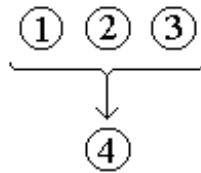


Figure 5: Argument

12. (1) Herbs which restore strength and tonify weakened tissues when the body is “empty”—deficient—are called “tonic.” (2) Clinically, tonics are used for two purposes. (3) One is to increase the body's resistance to disease when resistance has been impaired by excess “evil-*qi*. (3) The second clinical use is to restore energy and accelerate recovery in patients who have become weak and vulnerable due to long-standing chronic ailments. (4) Tonics are among the most useful of all drugs in Chinese herbal medicine. (Daniel P. Reid, *Chinese Herbal Medicine* (Boston, Mass: Shambhala, 1986) 143.)

Answer: Explanatory inductive argument—reasons are given for the usefulness of tonics.

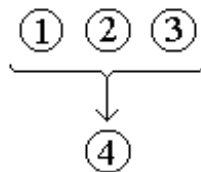


Figure 6: Argument

13. (1) Load three DNA samples in adjacent lanes in the gel, noting the order. (2) The entire contents of a sample tube should be loaded in a well. (3) This amount of DNA will look overloaded if stained with ethidium bromide, but works well for the transfer and detection. (Adapted from Carolina Biological Supply, *Southern Hybridization Experiment Kit* (Carolina Biological Supply Co., 1996) 4.)

Answer: Nonargument—imperative instructions.

14. (1) Why should it only be middle-class people who care about the language? (2) I come personally from a working-class background. (3) I went to a state school, and (4) there are many street traders in my immediate family. (5) Punctuation is no more a class issue than the air we breathe. (Lynne Truss, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* (New York: Gotham Books, 2004) xxvi.)

Answer: Argument—the first rhetorical question is intended as a statement.

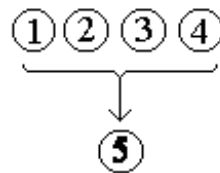


Figure 7: Argument

15. (1) [T]he mill wished to employ girls, (2) because girls never rebelled against the harder work, the stretching-out, the longer hours, or the cutting of pay. (Erskine Caldwell *God's Little Acre* (Franklin Center, Penn.: Franklin Library, 1979) 72.)

Answer: Explanatory argument.



Figure 8:

16. (1) The liberation of an individual, as he grows up, from the authority of his parents is one of the most necessary though one of the most painful results brought about by the course of his development. (2) It is quite essential that the liberation should occur and (3) it may be presumed that it has been to some extent achieved by everyone who has reached a normal state. (4) Indeed, the whole progress of society rests upon the opposition between successive generations. (Sigmund Freud, “Family Romances” in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works* trans. James Strachey, *et al* London: Vintage, 1953-1974) 9:237.)

Answer: Nonargument—explanation.

17. (1) Today, because of its etymology and much of the actual work of specialists, (2) philology is frequently understood to mean linguistics, especially historical grammar and the study of past forms of languages. (3) Since the term has so many and divergent meanings, (4) it is best to abandon it. (René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1965) 38.)

Answer: Argument.

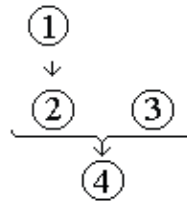


Figure 9:

18. (1)It’s extraordinary how we go through life with eyes half shut, with dull ears, and with dormant thoughts. (2) Perhaps it’s just as well; and it may be that it is this very dullness that makes life to the incalculable majority so supportable and so welcome. (3) Nevertheless, there can be but few of us who have never known one of these rare moments of awakening when we see, hear, understand every so much—everything—in a flash—before we fall back again into our agreeable somnolence. (Jospheh Conrad, *Lord Jim* (Chicago: R. R. Donnelley, 1991) 113.)

Answer: Nonargument—explanation

19. (1) If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
(2) If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you
(3) Yours is the Earth and everything that’s in it.
(Adapted from Rudyard Kipling, “If” in *Complete Verse* (New York: Anchor, 1988) 578.)

Answer: Nonargument—poetry, fiction.

20. (1) On the stage, do not suffer for the sake of suffering. (2) Don't act in general for the sake of action; (3) always act with a purpose. (Adapted from Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares* (New York: Theatre Arts, 1948) 37.)

Answer: Nonargument—imperatives, commands, instruction.