

Chapter 1 – The basic tools of reasoning

Getting familiar with . . . arguments

For each of the following sets of sentences, identify whether it is most likely intended as an argument or as something else (a narrative, list, or informational statement). If it is intended as an argument, try to identify the premises and conclusion.

1. "There is a stain on this rug. The dog was the only one in this room today, and the rug wasn't stained last night. So, the dog must have stained the rug."
2. "Soldiers are the backbone of this country. They stand for the freedom we respect so highly. I support soldiers."
3. "There's a concert on Tuesday. We're going to a party on Wednesday. And I have a work function on Thursday night. I wish I had more time in my week."
4. "There are only two options on the ballot: Republican and Democrat. You're not one of those liberal Democrats. So, you can only vote Republican."
5. "We left early, around 8 PM, and went to Sue's house. Immediately after that, we went to open mic night at the café. By the time we left, got gas, and got home, it was after midnight."
6. "We left early, around 8 PM, and went to Sue's house. Immediately after that, we went to open mic night at the café. By the time we left, got gas, and got home, it was after midnight. So, there is no way you could have seen us at the restaurant at 9:30."
7. "She's 21, she has an excellent driving record, and she doesn't drink. It is safe to trust her with your car."
8. "We only need three things from the store: arugula, butter, and a bag of potatoes."
9. "After the sermon, Reverend Harris drove home and found his front door open. He was astonished to find that nothing was out of place. He surmised that he simply forgot to close the door when he left."
10. "There is a standard protocol for politicians in this situation. They simply change the subject and act as though they are being unfairly accused. This is not the way responsible leaders act."
11. "There is a long line of railroad workers in my family. On my dad's side, they stretch back to the early 1800s. On my mom's side, they go back to the 1840s."
12. "We can trust that the ancient text is reliable. Several linguists trace its writing patterns to the time it claims to have been written. Historians have identified other texts that corroborate the story. Plus, according to classicists, no one in the ancient world seems to doubt its authenticity."
13. "The story he told was a long one. First, he explained every detail of his childhood home. Then, he described his extensive family lineage. And what seemed to take the longest is when he began describing all his childhood pets."

14. "When she left this morning, I told her to take three things: her umbrella, her book bag, and her lunch. She forgot all three."

15. "Detective Rogan carefully sifted through all the evidence before finding what he was looking for. The bellhop was the only person with motive, but there was no evidence. But now he knew that the gun in the bellhop's locker fired the bullet that killed the victim. Since there were no other suspects, Rogan concluded that it must have been the bellhop."

16. "It was the bellhop. I know because the victim was shot with the gun found in the bellhop's locker, the bellhop had motive to kill the victim, and there are no other potential suspects."

17. "Don't you remember? I told you I only want three things for Christmas: a computer, a wool sweater, and new music for my Kindle. Jamie remembers; he can tell you."

18. "One way to argue that the Big Bang occurred is to point to the inflation of the universe and to the background microwave radiation."

19. "Yes, you should believe that the Big Bang explains our universe. Edwin Hubble discovered that all galaxies are moving away from one another, which suggests that the universe is inflating. And Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson discovered cosmic microwave background, which suggests that the energy in the universe used to be much more dense than today."

20. "There are only three ingredients needed for making good Scotch: water, barley, and yeast. These are aged together in oak barrels for many years."