

## Chapter 1 – The basic tools of reasoning

### Getting familiar with . . . identifying arguments

For each of the following arguments, identify the conclusion and premises, underlining any indicating words and phrases you find.

1. “The project has been unsuccessful, and there is no hope that it will be successful. Plus, the money we are spending on it could be used better somewhere else. If these things are true, you should cut the program. Therefore, you should cut the program.”
2. “If there is some evidence of misconduct, you should investigate it. And since you now have some evidence, you should investigate.”
3. “In light of the fact that the first three experiments showed no positive results, and since the fourth experiment showed only slightly positive results, we must conclude that the drug is not effective for treating that illness. This is because experiments with drugs that do not yield overwhelmingly positive results suggest that those drugs are not effective.”
4. “Foreign policy is our number one concern. The incumbent has shown us time and again that he does not fully understand foreign policy. Mr. Brant, on the other hand, has extensive experience in foreign policy offices all over the world. Only someone who understands foreign policy is a rational choice. And since Mr. Brant is the only other candidate, Brant is the only rational choice.”
5. “There are three reasons you should not vote for candidate Williams. She is caustic and mean. She is lazy and irresponsible. And she has no experience managing people. You should not vote for people with these qualities.”
6. “I know you think the Supreme Court’s recent decision is sexist against women. But consider that none of the justices cited gender as a reason for his or her decision. Plus, many women support the ruling, which means they do not find it sexist. If there is no evidence for sexism, you should not believe the decision is sexist.”
7. “There are many people who were concerned that Descartes had become a Protestant sympathizer. In addition, he threatened the standard educational practices in the Jesuit universities. Anyone who raises such concerns could be a target for assassination. Therefore, it isn’t unreasonable to believe he was poisoned.”
8. “I know you think your free-throw shooting runs hot and cold, but your so-called streaks do not exceed the expectations of pure chance. If chance is the culprit, all your pre-game rituals are just wastes of energy. If they are wastes of energy, you shouldn’t do them. Hence, you shouldn’t do them.”
9. “[Women’s] inferiority [to men] is so obvious that no one can contest it for a moment . . . All psychologists who have studied the intelligence of women, as well as poets and novelists, recognize today that they represent the most inferior forms of human evolution and that they are closer to children and savages than to an adult, civilized man. They excel in fickleness, inconstancy, absence of thought and logic, and incapacity to reason” (from social psychologist Gustave Le Bon, 1879).
10. “After proper correction of the data, women have slightly larger brains than men. Those with larger brains have better prospects for education and success. Therefore, women are intellectually superior to men” (adapted from an argument by Maria Montessori, 1913).