

Getting familiar with . . . argument strength

For each of the following inductive arguments, explain whether the conclusion is (a) highly likely, (b) somewhat likely, (c) somewhat unlikely, or (d) highly unlikely.

1.

1. Rover the dog bit me last year when I tried to pet him.
2. Rover has been castrated and has been much calmer in the past three months.
3. Rover will bite me when I try to pet him today.

2.

1. Jones had sex with Brown's wife.
2. Brown told Jones he was going to kill Jones.
3. Jones was murdered.
4. Brown is the murderer.

3.

1. Watches are complex, and they have watch-makers.
2. The universe is complex like a watch.
3. The universe has a universe-maker.

4.

1. The sign on Interstate 95 says the town is 1 mile away.
2. The town is, in fact, 1 mile away.

[Consider: Would the argument be stronger if we added the premise: "Road signs are usually accurate?"]

5.

1. Frank loves Jane.
2. Jane loves Tom.
3. Frank loves Tom.

6.

1. My friend knows a person of type X who is rude.
2. My sister knows a person of type X who is rude.
3. So, all people of type X are rude.

[Note how quickly such arguments motivate racism, sexism, and ageism.]

7.

1. Almost all of the beans in this bag are red.
2. Hence, the next one I pull out definitely will not be red.

8.

1. The Tigers beat all of the other teams during the season.
 2. The Tigers have the best overall stats of any team.
 3. The championship game is about to begin, and all of the Tiger teammates are in good health.
 4. It is very likely that the Tigers will win the championship game.
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9.

1. The Tigers beat all of the other teams during the season.
 2. The Tigers have the best overall stats of any team.
 3. The championship game is about to begin, and all of the Tiger teammates are in good health.
 4. The Tigers ' quarterback just broke his leg.
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5. But the Tigers will still probably win the championship game.

10.

1. Frank is a Democrat.
2. In the past, many Democrats have voted for bill X.
3. So, Frank will vote for bill X.