

Argument Structure

I) Introduction: Basic Concepts

At the end of this introduction, you will be able to

- ✓ State the definition of “argument”
- ✓ State the definition of “ultimate conclusion”
- ✓ Explain the importance of correctly understanding an argument’s internal structure

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I) Introduction – Slide 1

An argument is a unit of reasoning that attempts to prove that a certain idea is true by citing other ideas as evidence.

The ultimate conclusion is the idea that the argument is trying to prove.

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Ultimate Conclusion

Example: “[Leslie should get a dog.] After all, [Leslie needs company and a dog is good company. Besides, Leslie would take a dog for a walk every day so a dog would help Leslie to get more exercise.]”

Ideas Advanced as Evidence

The ideas that an argument advances as evidence for its ultimate conclusion are *related to each other* in a way that gives each argument a *precise internal structure*.

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It's important to understand the internal structure of an argument because...

- Understanding the internal structure of an argument is essential to correctly interpreting the argument.
- Correctly interpreting the argument is essential to correctly evaluating the argument.
- Correctly evaluating the argument is essential to knowing whether or not we should be persuaded by the argument.
- Knowing whether or not we should be persuaded by the argument is essential to deciding whether or not we should believe the ultimate conclusion.

Understanding the internal structure of an argument is essential to deciding what beliefs we should have, and sometimes that's very important.

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| Bad News | Good News |
|---|---|
| Identifying the internal structure of an argument can be difficult. | There are certain expressions that can help us to identify the internal structure of an argument. |

*“therefore” “because”
“and” “but” “besides”*

Goal of Lessons 1 – 4: Take advantage of these expressions to represent the internal structure of arguments.

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