

Philosophy 104

Chapter 1 Notes

Arguments

- An argument is not a quarrel or a squabble, it is...
- A set of statements that are supplied in order to justify some other statement.
 - The statement being justified is called the **conclusion**
 - The set of statements doing the justifying are called the **premises**

Premises

- The whole point of an argument is to show explicitly what reason there might be to believe some claim.
- For any quality argument, the premises **justify** belief in the conclusion.
 - The justification should be **normative** (that is, be a *good* justification)
 - The kind of justification can be either **personal**, or better, **impersonal**.

Explanations

- For any fact that is already established, an explanation seeks to answer a question of how or why that fact came to be the case.

Combinations

- Sometimes, we will explain what makes an argument good or bad, and sometimes we will argue about whether an explanation is good or bad.
- Sometimes, we will also explain why an explanation is good or argue that an argument is good.
- It is simply important to keep track of what you are doing, because argumentation and explanation are different activities, subject to different standards of quality.

Exercise I

Of course, your answers may differ from these in some respects...

1. A prime number is a number that cannot be divided without remainder by anything other than itself and 1. 9 can be divided without remainder by 3, so 9 cannot be prime.
2. A prime number is a number that cannot be divided without remainder by anything other than itself and 1. 7 cannot be divided by anything without a remainder, so 7 must be prime.
3. The chemical formula for water is H₂O. That means that each molecule of water has 2 Hydrogen atoms and one Oxygen atom. $2+1=3$.

Exercise I (continued)

4. Anything that is made of Carbon has a chemical formula with only C in it. Water's chemical formula is H₂O.
5. The White House is in Washington DC. The White House is the official residence of the current US President.
6. Every time the Earth passes between the sun and the moon, it casts a shadow on the moon. Every time the Earth casts a shadow on the moon, the shadow is curved. The only shape that always casts a curved shadow is a ball.

Exercise I (continued)

7. It is prohibitively unlikely that the photo, video, and eyewitness evidence that humans have walked on the moon is faked.
8. A bicycle, by definition, is a two-wheeled conveyance. If all of something has a feature, then most of that something has that feature.