

Page 4: Basics of Sentences

There are four types of sentences.

1. Statements A. Also known as claims or propositions. Arguments almost entirely consist of statements. These include premises and conclusions. B. Example: "There is a doggy in the window."

2. Questions

A. Example: "How much is that doggy in the window?" B. Issues raise questions which are answered by the process of reasoning.

3. Commands

A. Commands tell someone what to do. B. Example: "Buy the doggy today."

4. Exclamations

A. Expressions of emotion. B. Example: "My goodness!"

Basics of Arguments

A. An **argument** is a connected series of statements intended to establish a proposition.

B. **Issue:**

Critical thinker's question; "What is the issue at hand, or the problem to be solved?"

The purpose of an issue is to raise a question which is answered by the conclusion of an argument.

Issues are always questions.

Examples: "Should we buy that doggy in the window?"

Example: "Should highway 101 be widened from Santa Rosa to Petaluma?"

Example: "What causes AIDS?"

Example: "The issue is whether or not we should buy that doggy in the window."

Notice that the word "**whether**" indicates that a question is being asked, even though there is no question mark (?) at the end of the sentence.

C. Reasons or Premises

Critical thinker's question; "What evidence is given in support of the conclusion?" "Are the reasons adequate?"

Reasons give support for a conclusion. Without them, nothing could be proved.

The word "reason" and the word "premise" mean exactly the same thing. They are synonyms.

Types of reasons: Examples, statistics, metaphors, experiments, and analogies.

Things that are NOT reasons: Questions, disconnected statements (not associated with arguments or explanations), commands

Premise indicators: Learn to identify reasons. Certain indicator words are usually followed by reasons. Here is a partial list;

because, first-second, since, for, for one thing, in view of the fact that, for the reason that, is supported by, for example, also

Example: Since the Packers got off to a poor start, and because they now have injuries, it follows that they probably won't go to the Superbowl two years in a row.

Notice that the first two sentences are the reasons because they support the conclusion.

Related term: **Assumption**

An assumption is an unstated reason. It is a missing reason which is necessary in order to accept the conclusion. If you read an argument that featured an assumption and accepted the conclusion, then your brain filled in this unstated, but essential reason. It is important to identify key assumptions, because like all reasons, they are not always acceptable.

D. **Conclusions (Thesis)**

Critical thinker's question; "What is the author trying to prove?"

Every argument has one main conclusion. It is one sentence and it is the proposition that the author is trying to prove. The conclusion can appear anywhere in an argument. It does not have to appear at the end. Often it will be the first sentence.

Related term: Inference; An inference is a conclusion that the receiver draws. It is analogous to hearing.

Related term: Implication; An implication is a conclusion that is delivered by the sender. It is analogous to speaking.

Sometimes people wrongly think that implications and inferences must be unstated. They can be stated or unstated. Being stated or unstated is irrelevant in determining whether or not a claim is an inference or an implication. What matters is whether or not it is a receiver bound conclusion or a conclusion that is sent.

Conclusion indicators: Learn to identify conclusions. Certain indicator words are usually followed by conclusions. Here is a partial list.

therefore, thus, so, in short, it follows that, it is believed that, shows that, indicates that, suggests that, proves that, yet, we may deduce that, points to the conclusion that, the point I'm trying to make is, in my opinion, the most obvious explanation, it is highly probable that, in fact, the truth of the matter is, alas, as a result, it should be clear that