



Logical Vocabulary

Vocabulary

Proposition

T or F in an argument, but not alone. Can be a premise or conclusion. Is not equal to a sentence.

Premise

Proposition used as evidence in an argument.

Conclusion

Proposition used as a thesis in an argument.

Argument

A group of propositions of which one is claimed to follow from the others.

Induction

A process through which the premises provide some basis for the conclusion.

Deduction

A process through which the premises provide conclusive proof for the conclusion.

Argument Indicators:	Premise Indicators:	Conclusion Indicators:
should	since	therefore
must	because	hence
ought	for	thus
necessarily	as	so
	in as much as	consequently
	for the reason that	it follows that
	first	one may infer
		one may conclude

When dealing with persuasive writing, it will be helpful for you to outline the argument by premises and conclusions. By looking at the structure of the argument, it is easy to spot logical error.

Example 1

"Universities are full of knowledge. The freshmen bring a little in, and the seniors take none away, and knowledge accumulates."

--Harvard President A. L. Lowell

- Premise 1** Freshmen bring a little (knowledge) in
- Premise 2** Seniors take none away
- Premise 3** Knowledge accumulates
- Conclusion** Universities are full of knowledge

Example 2

(Here, the conclusion of one argument is used as a premise in another. This is very common.)

"Even though there may be a deceiver of some sort, very powerful and very tricky, who bends all his efforts to keep me perpetually deceived, there can be no slightest doubt that I exist, since he deceives me; and let him deceive me as much as he will, he can never make me be nothing as long as I think I am something. Thus, after having thought well on this matter, and after examining all things with care, I must finally conclude and maintain that this proposition: I am, I exist, is necessarily true every time that I pronounce it or conceive it in my mind."

-- René Descartes, *Meditations*

Argument 1 Premise 1: To be deceived ... I must exist
Conclusion of Argument 1 When I think that I exist I cannot be
Argument 2 Premise 1: deceived about that
Conclusion: I am, I exist, is necessarily true

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