

Statement & Argument

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we are going to study arguments. In fact, this is the study what we call the basics of all logic. Do you know what do we do in logic? In logic, we advocate certain point of view with the help of some evidences and certain assumptions and that is called argumentation. This is a fact that almost all segments of analytical reasoning are somehow associated with argumentation and this is the reason why study of argumentation is so important for the examinees preparing for various competitive examinations.

CONCEPT OF ARGUMENT

A sequence of two or more sentences (or statements)/ phrases/ clauses that includes a conclusion (or claims), is called an argument. The conclusion of the argument is based on one or more than one statement and these statements may be called premises (propositions). Apart from this, arguments may also have some hidden premises. Which may be called assumptions. Let us see the following example:

Example 1. Mr. Sharma bought a large quantity of sweets, he must have celebrated some occasion.

Sol. The foregoing example has two parts:

Part I: "Mr. Sharma bought a large quantity of sweets."

Part II: "He must have celebrated some occasion."

Here, 'Part II' is the conclusion part of the given argument. How has this conclusion (part II) been arrived at? In fact, this conclusion has come out with the help of supporting evidence or premise that is part I of the argument. Did you notice that in this argument part I and part II (Premise and conclusion) are connected by a hidden premise which is not explicitly stated. That hidden premise is "a large quantity of sweets is bought only on occasions" and this premise may be called an assumption. Hence, in reality the given argument has three parts.

Part I: (Premise) Mr. Sharma bought a large quantity of sweets.

Part II: (Assumption or hidden premise) A large quantity of sweets is bought only on occasions.

Part III: (Conclusion) He must have celebrated some occasion. Point to be noted is that part II is an assumption (a hidden premise) that connects part I (premise) and part III (conclusion) and hence, it is a missing link between part I and part III of the given argument.

No doubt that above mentioned example brings to us the basic characteristics of argumentation but it also leaves some questions before us like:

Example 2. Is the assumption or hidden premise always present in an argument?

Sol. Just consider an argument given as "Mr. Sharma bought a large quantity of sweets. A large quantity of sweets is bought on occasions only. Hence, he must have celebrated an occasion".

Here, we see that this argument has no assumption (hidden premise) because the premise or supporting evidence (Mr. Sharma bought a large quantity of sweets) and conclusion (Hence, he must have celebrated an occasion) are connected by an explicit statement (A large quantity of sweets is bought on occasions only). Remember, an assumption is a hidden premise. It does mean assumption is a missing link in the chain of logic. Therefore, if an argument is complete in itself and does not have any missing link, then it will not have any assumption. In the given argument, the explicit statement (A large quantity of sweets is bought on occasions only) connects premise or supporting evidence and conclusion to make the argument assumption less.

Example 3. Is the number of premise only one in an argument?

Our answer for both the questions will be a big 'No'. Why so? Let us see the explanations for both the questions given below:

Sol. Just consider the argument given as "Vandana is tall. She is slim and has beautiful eyes. She has long hair and charming face as well. So, Vandana is a beautiful girl."

Here,

1st premise: Vandana is tall.

2nd premise: She is slim and has beautiful eyes.

3rd premise: She has long hair and charming face as well.

Conclusion: So, Vandana is a beautiful girl.

This proves that an argument can have more than one premises. Further this explanation is also a reply for question (i) as the given argument has no missing link. This argument is complete in itself and hence, it is free of hidden premise or assumption.

WAYS OF ARGUMENTATION

So far, you must have understood the basic concept of argumentation and come to the conclusion that an argument is usually made to make strong a particular point of view in order to convince someone about something.

(i) Argument Based on Analogy

Analogy based arguments are often used to make strong a particular point of view. In fact analogy is an inference drawn out of a resemblance between particular things, occasion or events (that are known) to a further (unknown) resemblance. For example, if we find a fat-woman eating very much and meet in another woman who is also fat then, by analogy, we expect that the other fat woman would also be eating very much.

Example 4.

Sachin scored a century in the 1st test against Australia and so did Dhoni; Sachin scored more than 150 runs in the 2nd test against Australia and so did Dhoni; Sachin has scored a double century in the 3rd test against Australia. So, Dhoni will also hit a double century in this 3rd test match against Australia.

Example 5.

Australia and England have both lost to India in football and hockey. So, India should defeat both the countries in cricket.

Findings : In Example 4, Sachin and Dhoni performed very well in the 1st two matches against Australia. In fact, it seems that Dhoni did the same thing what Sachin did in the 1st and 2nd test. As Sachin has played a great inning scoring a double century in the 3rd test match, hence on the basis of similar situation the conclusion has been made that Dhoni will also make a double century.

We also know that performing good or bad is a matter of chance. It is also a matter of chance that two players (Sachin and Dhoni) performed equally good in the last two test matches. Therefore, we cannot say definitely that Dhoni will make a double century because Sachin has done so. In fact, we can say that he may or may not hit a double century. It can also be said that future performances can not be predicted on the basis of past performances. Thus, it is clear that this analogical argument does not seem strong. Similarly, in case of example (5) we can say that India may or may not defeat Australia and England in the game of cricket only because India has defeated both the countries in two different games (Football and Hockey). Hence, the argument given in example (5) also seems to be a weak argument.

Final comment: Analogy based arguments are weak arguments.

(ii) Argument Based on Cause

Such arguments relate a cause with a result. Let us see the examples given below:

Example 6.

India will win the world cup this year because it is the most balanced one day team in the world in present day cricket.

Example 7.

He came back home late night. He must have gone to watch a movie.

Findings: We see in the foregoing examples that effects have been related with causes. In example (6), the cause (the most balanced one day team) well supports the effect (India will win the world cup) and hence, it is a good argument. But in Example

(7) it is argued that since the effect (coming home late night) has taken place, the cause (watching movie) must have occurred. But the point to be noted that effect may occur (he may come home late night) because of the other reason as well. Hence, the argument given in the Example (7) is not a good argument or it may be called a weak argument.

Final Comment: Arguments based on causes may be strong or weak or fallacious.

(iii) Argument Based on Example

Sometimes an argument is given by citing some example/ examples as premise/ premises. Let us see the following examples that will illustrate the concept:

Example 8.

We should use X brand of cold cream because X brand is used by 'Madhuri Dixit', the famous bollywood actress.

Example 9.

We must like Roses because Chacha Nehru loved Roses.

Findings: In example (8) we have arrived at the conclusion (we should use X brand of cold cream) by using the premise as example (X brand is used by Madhuri Dixit). In example (9) the conclusion (we must like roses) has come out by using the premise as example (because Chacha Nehru loved it). Here, we can say in case of Example-8 that using certain brand by a particular actress, does not mean that X brand will be liked by all people as likes and dislikes are the personal choices. In example (9), the case is also the same. Everyone cannot like the roses only because Chacha Nehru loved roses.

Final comment: Example based arguments are either weak or fallacious.

Note

In Example-8 and 9, conclusion part is the start of the arguments. Sometimes you can also see that conclusion is given in the middle. It does mean that conclusion part is not always in the last. But it depends on the style of writing of different writers/authors.

(iv) Argument Based on Blind Advocacy

Such argument is like a salesman's argument who argues only for the purpose of selling a particular product. He speaks of the advantages and the benefits of his product. Hence, a salesman argument is one where a conclusion comes out because of the positive points and the benefits that it leads to. Such types of arguments are very common in day to day life.

EXERCISE

DIRECTIONS (Qs. 1-5) : In making decisions about important questions, it is desirable to be able to distinguish between 'strong' arguments and 'weak' arguments. 'strong' arguments are those which are both important and directly related to the question. 'Weak' arguments are those which are of minor importance and also may not be directly related to the question or may be related to a trivial aspect of the question.

Each question below is followed by three arguments numbered (A), (B) and (C). You have to decide which of the arguments is a 'strong' argument and which is a 'weak' argument.

1. **Statement :** Should there be a cap on drawing groundwater for irrigation purposes in India ?

Arguments :

- (A) No, irrigation is of prime importance for food production in India and it is heavily dependent on groundwater in many parts of the country.
- (B) Yes, water tables have gone down to alarmingly low levels in some parts of the country where irrigation is primarily dependent on groundwater, which may lead to serious environmental consequences.

(C) Yes, India just cannot afford to draw groundwater any further as the international agencies have cautioned India against it.

- (a) Only (A) and (B) are strong
- (b) Only (B) and (C) are strong
- (c) Only (A) and (C) are strong
- (d) All (A), (B) and (C) are strong
- (e) None of these

2. **Statement :** Should there be complete ban on setting up of thermal power plants in India ?

Arguments :

(A) Yes, this is the only way to arrest further addition to environmental pollution.

(B) No, there is a huge shortage of electricity in most parts of the country and hence generation of electricity needs to be augmented.

(C) No, many developed countries continue to set up thermal power plants in their countries.

- (a) None is strong
- (b) Only (A) is strong
- (c) Only (B) is strong
- (d) Only (C) is strong
- (e) Only either (A) or (B) is strong

3. **Statement:** Should there be a restriction on the construction of high rise buildings in big cities in India.

Arguments :

(A) No, big cities in India do not have adequate open land plots to accommodate the growing population.

(B) Yes, only the builders and developers benefit from the construction of high rise buildings.

(C) Yes, the Government should first provide adequate infrastructure facilities to existing buildings before allowing the construction of new high rise buildings.

- (a) Only (B) is strong
- (b) Only (C) is strong
- (c) Only (A) and (C) are strong
- (d) Only (A) is strong
- (e) None of these

4. **Statement :** Should road repair work in big cities be carried out only late at night ?

Arguments :

(A) No, this way the work will never get completed.

(B) No, there will be unnecessary use of electricity.

(C) Yes, the commuters will face lot of problems due to repair work during the day.

- (a) None is strong
- (b) Only (A) is strong
- (c) Only (C) is strong
- (d) Only (B) and (C) are strong
- (e) Only (A) and (B) are strong

5. **Statement :** Should all the deemed universities be derecognised and attached to any of the central of state universities in India ?

Arguments :

(A) Yes, many of these deemed universities do not conform to the required standards of a full – fledged university and hence the level of education is compromised.

(B) No, these deemed universities have been able to introduce innovative courses suitable to the requirement of various industries as they are free from strict Government controls.

(C) Yes, many such universities are basically money spinning activities and education takes a backseat in these institutions

- (a) Only (A) and (B) are strong
- (b) Only (B) and (C) are strong
- (c) Only (A) and (C) are strong
- (d) All (A), (B) and (C) are strong
- (e) None of these

DIRECTIONS (Qs. 6-8) : Read the following statements carefully and answer the questions which follow.

6. The ministry of sports has been advised by a committee to take the highest award in the field of sports back from two players who were allegedly-involved in match fixing.

Which of the following statements would **weaken** the argument put forward by the committee to the sports ministry?

(a) A good conduct in the past and a lack of evidence against the players make the case against them very weak.

(b) The ministry of sports has never declined the recommendations made by the committee earlier.

(c) Taking the award back from the players would set a good example to other players for avoiding such actions in the future.

(d) There have been past cases where the award had to be taken back from the players owing to some misconduct later on.

(e) The committee is constituted of some of the most respected from the fields of sports and politics.

7. Many organizations have been resorting to recruitment based upon performance at graduate post-graduate level exams rather than conducting exams for the same purpose.

Which of the following statements would **strengthen** the argument given in the above statement?

(a) A recent study shows no link of past performance with the performance in recruitment exams.

(b) The graduate/post-graduate exams are considered to be severely deficient in training in job related environment

(c) Organisations which had undertaken recruitment on the basis of graduate/post-graduate exams report a significant drop in the quality of the recruited employees.

(d) Such policies would add to unemployment amongst students having below average performance in graduation or post-graduation.

(e) Such policies could save time, money and resources of the organisation which are wasted in the conduct of recruitment examinations.

8. According to a recent government directive, all bank branches in rural areas should be computerized. Which of the following statements would **weaken** the government's argument?
- (a) Computerisation of bank branches in urban areas has helped in making their performance more efficient and fast.
 - (b) Lack of skilled and qualified manpower has been suitably substituted by computers in banks.
 - (c) Non-computerised bank branches in the rural areas have been proved to be as efficient as their computerized counterparts.
 - (d) The government has introduced a special test for computer knowledge in all recruitment exams for banks.
 - (e) Unemployment in the rural areas could be controlled by training more and more professionals in computers.

DIRECTIONS (Qs. 9-10) : *In making decisions about important questions, it is desirable to distinguish between 'strong' argument and 'weak' argument. A 'strong' argument must be both important and directly related to the question. A 'weak argument may not be directly related to the question and may be of minor importance or may be related to the trivial aspect of the question. Each question below is followed by two arguments, numbered I and II. You have to decide which of the arguments is 'strong' and which is 'weak'*

Give answer

- (a) if only argument I is strong
 - (b) if only argument II is strong
 - (c) if either I or II strong
 - (d) if neither I nor II is strong and
 - (e) if both I and II are strong.
9. **Statement** Keeping in consideration the longevity of life in India, should the age limit for retirement in government jobs be increased?
- Argument**
- I. Yes, other countries have decided so long before.
 - II. Yes, it is the actual demand of lakhs of employees.
10. **Statement** Should the admission to professional courses in India be given only on merit without any concession to any particular group of students?
- Argument**
- I. Yes, this will improve the quality of the professionals as they will be able to complete the courses successfully.
 - II. No, this will keep large number of socially and economically backward students out of the reach of the professional courses.

DIRECTIONS (Qs.11-20) *Each: question given below consists of a statement, followed by two arguments numbered I and II. You have to decide which of the arguments is a 'strong' argument and which is a 'weak' argument.*

Give answer

- (a) if only argument I is strong.
- (b) if only argument II is strong.

- (c) if either I or II is strong.
 - (d) if neither I nor II is strong.
 - (e) if both argument I and II are strong.
11. **Statement:** Should girls learn art like judo and karate?
- Arguments:**
- I. Yes, it will enable them to defend themselves from rogues and ruffians.
 - II. No, they will lose their feminine grace.
12. **Statement:** Should the educated unemployed youth be paid "unemployment allowance" by the Government?
- Arguments:**
- I. Yes, it will provide them some monetary help to either seek employment or to kickstart some 'self-employment' venture.
 - II. No, it will dampen their urge to do something to earn their livelihood and thus promote idleness among the unemployed youth.
13. **Statement:** Should all the practising doctors be brought under Government control so that they get salary from the Government and treat patients free of cost?
- Arguments:**
- I. No, How can any country do such an undemocratic thing?
 - II. Yes, despite many problems, it will certainly help minimize, if not eradicate, unethical medical practices.
14. **Statement:** Should there be more than one High Courts in each state in India?
- Arguments:**
- I. No, this will be a sheer wastage of taxpayers' money.
 - II. Yes, this will help reduce the backlog of cases pending for a very long time.
15. **Statement:** Should there be concentration of foreign investment in only few states?
- Arguments:**
- I. No, it is against the policy of overall development of the country.
 - II. Yes, large number of states lack infrastructure to attract foreign investment.
16. **Statement:** Should India engage into a dialogue with neighbouring countries to stop cross border tension?
- Arguments:**
- I. Yes, this is the only way to reduce the cross border terrorism and stop loss of innocent lives.
 - II. No, neighbouring countries cannot be relied upon in such matters, they may still engage in subversive activities.
17. **Statement:** Should system of offering jobs only to the wards of government employees be introduced in all government offices in India?
- Arguments:**
- I. No, it denies opportunity to many deserving individuals and government may stand to lose in the long run.

II. No, it is against the principle of equality. Does not government owe its responsibility to all its citizens?

18. **Statement:** Should government jobs in rural areas have more incentives?

Arguments:

- I. Yes, incentives are essential for attracting government servants there.
- II. No, rural areas are already cheaper, healthier and less complex than big cities. So, why offer extra incentives!

19. **Statement:** Should there be only one rate of interest for term deposits of varying duration in banks?

Argument:

- I. No, people will refrain from keeping money for longer duration resulting into reduction of liquidity level of banks.
- II. Yes, this will be much simple for the common people and they may be encouraged to keep more money in banks.

20. **Statement:** Should all refugees, who make unauthorized entry into a country, be forced to go back to their homeland?

Arguments:

- I. Yes, they make their colonies and occupy a lot of land.
- II. No, they leave their homes because of hunger or some terror and on human grounds, should not be forced to go back.

DIRECTIONS (Qs. 21-25): *In making decisions important questions it is desirable to be able distinguished between strong arguments and Weak arguments Strong arguments must be both importance and directly related to the question. Weak arguments may not be directly related to the question and may be minor importance or may be related to the trivial as of the question. Each question below is followed by these arguments numbered I, II and III. You have to decide which of the argument (s) is/are strong and indicate your answer accordingly.*

21. **Statements:** Should the Government restrict use of electricity for each household depending upon the requirement?

Arguments:

- I. Yes, this will help Government tide over the problem of inadequate generation at electricity'.
 - II. No, every citizen has right to consume electricity as per their requirement as they pay for using electricity.
 - III. No, the Government does not have the machinery to put such a restriction on use of electricity.
- (a) Only I is strong (b) Only II is strong
(c) I and II are strong (d) II and III are strong
(e) All are strong

22. **Statements:** Should the Government order closure of all educational institutions for a month to avoid fast spreading of the contagious viral infection?

Arguments:

- I. No, closure of educational institution alone is not the solution for curbing spread of viral infection.

II. No, students will visit crowded places like mails, markets, playgrounds etc, in more numbers and spread the disease, as they will have lot of spare time at their disposal.

III. Yes, young persons are more prone to get affected by the viral infection and hence they should remain in doors.

- (a) None is strong (b) Only I is strong
(c) Only III is strong (d) I and II are strong
(e) All are strong

23. **Statements:** Should the Government ban export of all types of food grains for the next one year to tide over the unpredicted drought situation in the country?

Arguments:

- I. Yes, there is no other way to provide food its citizen during the year.
- II. No, the Government does not have its jurisdiction over private exporters for banning exporters.
- III. Yes, the Government should not allow the exporters to export foodgrains and procure all the foodgrains held by such exporters and make it available for home consumption.

- (a) I and II are strong (b) II and III are strong
(c) I and II are strong (d) All are strong
(e) None of these

24. **Statements:** Should there be a common syllabus for all subjects in graduate courses in all the universities across the country?

Arguments:

- I. Yes, this is the only way to spring in uniformity in the education system in the country.
- II. Yes, it will help standardize the quality of graduation certificates being given by different universities in the country.
- III. No, each university should have the autonomy to decide its syllabus based on the specific requirement of the university.

- (a) None is strong (b) Only I is strong
(c) Only II is strong (d) I and II are strong
(e) II and III are strong

25. **Statements:** Should all those students who failed in one or two subject in HSC be allowed to take admission in degree courses and continue their study subject to their successfully passing in the study subject to their successfully passing in the supplementary examination?

Arguments:

- I. Yes, this will help the students to complete their education without a break of one year.
- II. Yes, this is a forward looking strategy to help the students and motivate them for higher studies.
- III. No, such students do not choose to continue their studies without having passed in all the subjects in HSC.

- (a) Only I is strong
(b) Only II is strong
(c) Only III is strong
(d) Either II or III and I are strong
(e) None of the above

Hints & Solutions

1. (a) Both argument (A) and (B) are strong. Which clearly show the importance of irrigation and environmental consequences of reducing groundwater level. Argument (c) is not strong.
2. (c) Only Argument (B) is strong because thermal power plants in India are one way to increase environmental pollution so cannot be completely banned. Argument (C) is based on example which is a bad argument.
3. (d) Argument (A) is strong because due to shortage of space in big cities in India high rise building should be encouraged.
4. (c) Only Argument (C) is strong because to avoid the inconvenience of commuters, repair work is advisable in night only.
5. (c) Only Argument (A) and (C) are strong because compromise with level of education cannot be done.
6. (a) Option (a) would weaken the argument put forward by the committee to the sports ministry.
7. (e) Option (e) would strengthen the argument.
8. (c) Option (c) would strengthen the argument of government.
9. (d) Both the arguments are weak. Other countries have different conditions. And in India population of youth is increasing so, for the benefits of youth age limit for retirement should not be increased in government jobs.
10. (b) Our country seeks to support educationally and economically backward classes for their overall growth and development. Therefore, argument I is not strong, in Indian context.
11. (a) Learning martial arts is necessary for girls for self-defence. So, argument I holds. However, arguments II is vague since a training in these arts has nothing to do with their feminine grace.
12. (e) Young people, who do not get employment due to the large number of applicants in all fields, must surely be given allowance so that they can support themselves, so, argument I is valid. However, such allowances would mar the spirit to work, in them and make them idle. So, argument II also holds.
13. (b) A doctor treating a patient individually can mislead the patient into wrong and unnecessary treatment for his personal gain. So, argument II holds strong. Also, a policy beneficial to common people cannot be termed 'undemocratic'. So, I is vague.
14. (b) Clearly, an increase in the number of High Courts will surely speed up the work and help to do away with the pending cases. So, argument II holds strong.
15. (b) In light of this, the expenditure incurred would be 'utilization', not 'wastage' of money. So, argument I does not hold.
15. (b) An equitable distribution of foreign investment is a must for uniform development all over the country. So, argument II holds. Also, no backward state ought to be neglected, rather such states should be prepared and shaped up to attract foreign investment as well. So, I does not hold.
16. (a) Clearly, peaceful settlement through mutual agreement is the best option, whatever be the issue. So, argument I holds strong. Moreover, the problem indicated in II can be curbed by constant check and vigilance. So, II seems to be vague.
17. (e) Merit, fair selection and equal opportunities for all - these three factors, if taken care of, can help government recruit competent officials and also fulfil the objectives of the Constitution. Thus, both the arguments hold strong.
18. (a) Clearly, government jobs in rural areas are underlined with several difficulties. In lieu of these, extra incentives are needed, so, only argument I holds strong.
19. (a) Clearly, the proposed scheme would discourage people from keeping deposits for longer durations (the rate of interest being the same for short durations) and not draw in more funds. So, only argument I holds.
20. (b) Clearly, refugees are people forced out of their homeland by some misery and need shelter desperately. So, argument II holds. Argument I against the statement, is vague.
21. (c) Argument I is strong because, if saving is going on, then it will reduce the power problem. Argument II is also strong because people needed the electricity and power and for that they are paying enough. Argument III is not strong because government can make rules and regulation to reduce the consumption.
22. (b) Argument I is strong but II is not strong because to close the school one cannot stop infections and virals.
23. (e) Argument I is weak, II is also weak but argument III is strong.
24. (e) Argument I became weak because of the work only used but II and III are strong.
25. (d) Argument I is strong because one previous year of students will save. If this move is implemented, then it is possible that students might not concentrate on HSC exams because they think that they will be promoted, whether they pass HSC or not but it will motivate those students who failed in one or two subjects by a small margin. So, either II or III follows.