

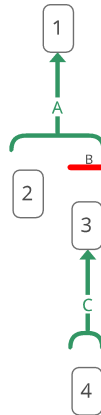
EXERCISES, QUESTIONS, AND ACTIVITIES

For each of the following passages, determine if it contains an argument, an explanation of why, or neither. If a passage contains an argument, analyze and evaluate it.

Note: pseudo-objections are highlighted yellow in the text.

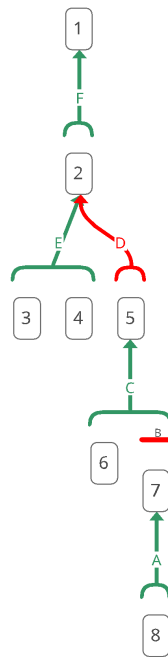
Taking Notes

I think that (1) you should handwrite your notes for class since (2) you remember material better when you handwrite it. But some people disagree with me and argue that, while you do remember material better when you handwrite it, (3) it is quicker to type your notes with a computer than to handwrite them, as (4) most people can write more words per minute with a keyboard than with a pen.



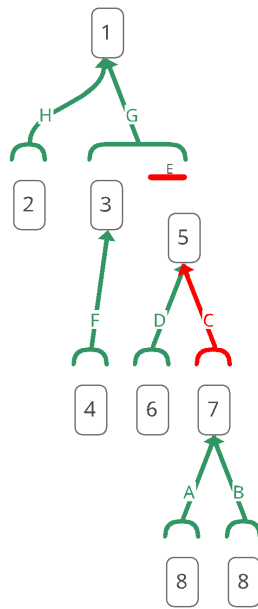
Colonizing Other Planets

I think that (1) humans should colonize other planets! (2) It would help our species to live and thrive, since (3) it would provide an alternative environment to Earth, (4) which is being devastated by climate change. Someone might object that, far from thriving, (5) humans would die if we tried to live on other planets. For example, (6) planets like Mars have an atmosphere about 100 times thinner than Earth's, which could cause ruptured lungs, dangerously swollen skin and body tissues, and ultimately death. But, I'm sure (7) future technologies will address these atmospheric concerns. Heck, I bet (8) scientists are already working on special space suits that would make the Martian atmosphere survivable for humans.



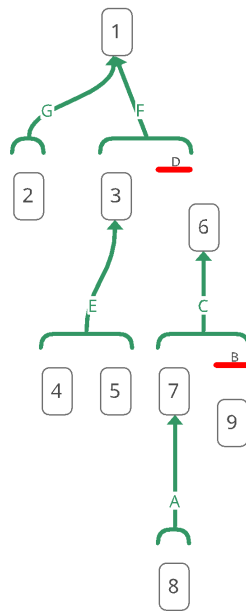
Cancel Culture

(1) Cancel culture is bad for society because (2) cancel culture leads to bullying. Also, (3) cancel culture is simply un-American as (4) it goes against the spirit of the constitutional right to free speech. I bet someone out there (probably a godless communist) is thinking that just because something is un-American, doesn't mean it is bad, since (5) America is not so great. After all, what about our (6) [America has a] history of slavery and racial oppression? While I won't deny that slavery was a blight on our nation's history, I still think (7) America is the greatest country in the world, given that (8) we were the first to put a man on the moon, and (9) we are the most powerful liberal democracy in the world today.



Meditation

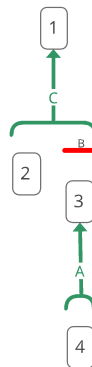
(2) Meditation helps develop positive traits like creativity, but that's not the only reason that (1) meditation is good for you. (3) Meditation can also help reduce stress, seeing as (4) meditation can improve your mindfulness, and (5) increased mindfulness can help alleviate stress. But I've also heard critics of meditation say that (6) stress is good for you because (7) stress makes people more successful in their careers, given that (8) stress motivates us to be efficient and productive. However, I think it's clear that, although stress may make people more successful in their careers, (9) stress also has serious negative effects on people's health in the long term.



Drugs

Bradley: (2) Consuming marijuana is unhealthy. Therefore, (1) it should definitely be illegal.

Coraline: But (3) it's wrong for the government to stop us from making unhealthy choices since (4) the government has an obligation to respect our personal autonomy.



Minimum Wage

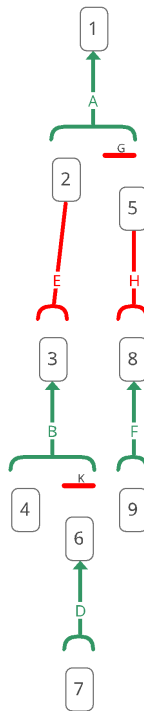
Coraline: (1) Our society should definitely raise the minimum wage. After all, (2) raising the minimum wage reduces poverty.

Bradley: I disagree. (3) The minimum wage raises the cost of labor and, as a result, (4) it causes employers to lay off workers. Consequently, (5) the minimum wage increases poverty.



Flag Burning

(1) We should ban flag burning because (2) flag burning is unpatriotic. But some critics will respond that (3) flag burning can be patriotic because (4) it's a dramatic way of highlighting injustice in our country. And critics will also object that it doesn't follow from the fact that flag burning is unpatriotic that it should be banned since (5) people have rights of free expression. Now, here's my response to those objections. First of all, even though burning an American flag can highlight injustice, (6) a true patriot should find another way of drawing attention to injustice, given that (7) the flag is a sacred symbol of our nation. Second of all, (8) it's false that people always have rights to freedom of expression, as (9) some forms of expression are extremely harmful.

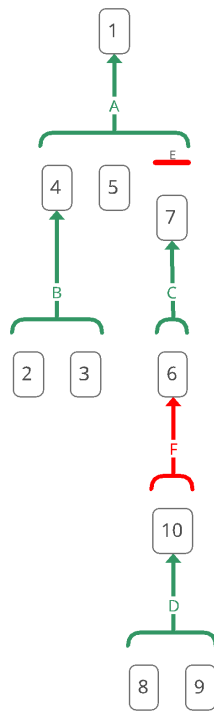


Aliens

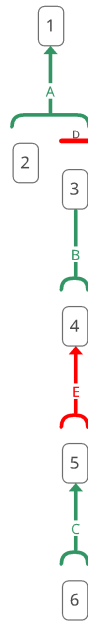
1) Bradley: (2) If there were alien civilizations, they would probably have colonized the whole galaxy by now. And (3), if they'd colonized the whole galaxy, they'd be in our solar system. We can thus conclude that, (4) if there were alien civilizations, they'd be in our solar system. But here's the thing: (5) we see no evidence that aliens have arrived in our solar system. (1) Aliens probably don't exist. It's sad but likely true! I wish we weren't alone in the universe.

Coraline: I don't buy it. (6) The aliens are probably just hiding from us. Thus, (7) there's a good reason why we don't see aliens.

Bradley: But why would they hide from us? (8) We're no threat to them. (9) Aliens have no reason to hide from beings that pose them no threat. So, (10) it's unlikely that the aliens are hiding from us.



2) I think that (1) aliens are visiting earth because (2) many pilots report seeing UFOs. Now, skeptics might dismiss this evidence. They'll maintain that, even though pilots report seeing UFOs, (3) we can explain these sightings in other ways. (4) Perhaps pilots are just confused by clouds, drones, or weather balloons. However, (5) it's ridiculous to claim that pilots are making mistakes since (6) pilots are trained observers.



Death

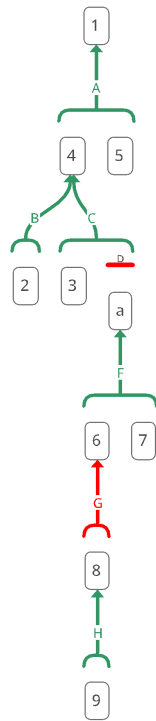
Some people argue that death isn't bad for the one who dies. How ridiculous! Of course, (1) death harms you. Just consider the fact that (2) death deprives you of all of the good that you would have experienced. Now, an objector might argue that (3) some people have no good in their futures because (4) their quality of life is very low. And, thus, (5) death doesn't deprive these people of future goods. However, I think that (6) even people with a very low quality of life have some good in their futures!



God

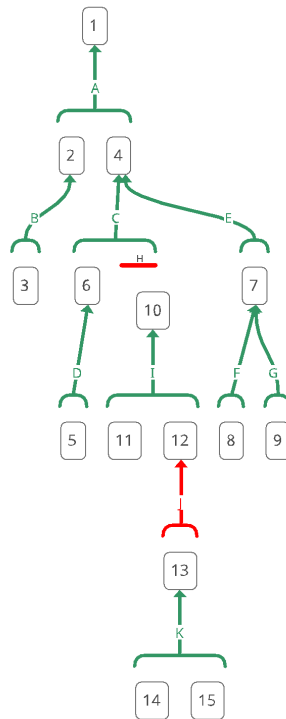
(1) It's false that God is all good and all powerful. Consider the fact (2) millions and millions of innocent people have suffered horribly throughout history. Or the fact that (3) countless billions of animals have died ghastly deaths. Thus, (4) immense evil exists. However, (5) if God were all good and all powerful, then this immense evil wouldn't exist. Now, an objector may contend that (6) animals do not have souls and (7), if animals do not have souls, then it is not evil for animals to have died painful deaths. In response, I contend that (8) animals do have souls. After all, (9) anything that can experience feelings and emotions has a soul.

a = 'it is not evil for animals to have died painful deaths'



Immigration

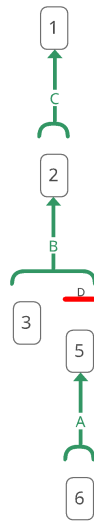
Immigration is an extremely contentious political issue. Conservatives and liberals sharply disagree about the immigration policies of the United States. In fact, some radicals even argue that we should open our borders to all foreigners. Here's what I think. It's evident that (2) it is the primary obligation of the government to protect the interests of American citizens because (3) voters elected their leaders to benefit citizens of the United States, not foreigners. And (4) immigration threatens the interests of American citizens. Think about it. (5) Immigrants compete with American citizens for jobs, which means that (6) immigration lowers the wages of American wages. Moreover, (7) immigration poses a grave threat to public safety. After all, (8) some immigrants become terrorists and (9) other immigrants commit theft. It follows from all of this that (1) the American government should substantially reduce the number of immigrants that the country admits. Now, you might object that, even though immigration lowers the wages of some citizens, (10) immigration provides economic benefits to Americans in other ways because (11) immigrants provide cheap labor and (12) cheap labor benefits most Americans. I disagree: (13) cheap labor doesn't benefit most Americans given that (14) most Americans are not employers and (15) cheap labor only benefits employers.



Guns

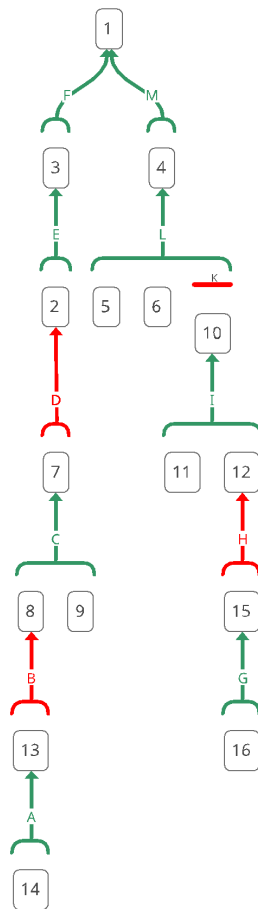
Sam: Do you think that the government should allow people to own guns? For my part, I think that (1) it is wrong to prohibit guns. After all, (2) people have rights to own guns, as (3) everyone has a right to self-defense.

Alex: I completely disagree. For one thing, I get the sense that (4) people who own guns to be creepy and scary, don't you? Anyway, (5) it is unnecessary to own a gun to protect herself from harm. Just think about it: (6) you can always call the police if a criminal threatens you.



Children

Should you have children? (1) Yes! Let's consider the reasons. First, (2) having children increases your satisfaction with your life. Thus, (3) having children will make you better off. Second, (4) having children is morally good. After all, (5) having children allows new people to experience the gift of life, and (6) allowing new people to experience the gift of life is, of course, good! Now, you might argue that (7) it's false that having children increases your satisfaction with life, as (8) children are expensive and (9) the stress of trying to provide for them will decrease your overall satisfaction. Moreover, one might argue that, even though having children allows new people to experience the gift of life and allowing new people to experience the gift of life is morally good, (10) having children can also have harmful consequences because (11) having children contributes to overpopulation and (12) overpopulation is a serious problem. In response, I'd say that (13) children are not in fact expensive in the long-run since (14) children will eventually help parents cover their expenses when they are older. In addition, (15) overpopulation isn't a serious problem given that (16) birth rates around the world are rapidly declining.

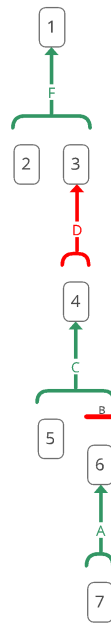


Ethics of Lying

Miriam: (1) It is never OK to lie. (2) Lying is immoral, and (3) it is never OK to act immorally. Period.

Alejandro: I think (4) it is sometimes OK to act immorally if doing so will bring about a greater good. For example, most people would agree that (5) it is OK to break traffic laws if you are driving someone to the Emergency Room to try to save their life.

Miriam: True, but I don't think that example really supports your point, since that (6) situation is very rare and very extreme compared to most real-life situations where people actually lie. (7) Most people lie about relatively unimportant things like other people's appearances.

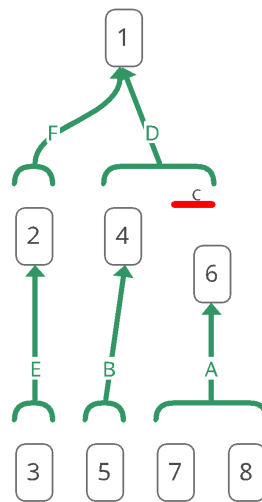


Animals

1) Tom: (1) Pit bulls should not be banned! (2) Banning pit bulls has historically not been an effective solution to increasing safety. (3) According to a case study from 1990, banning pit bulls only increased Rottweiler bites. Also, (4) banning pit bulls would be expensive. It is estimated that (5) banning pit bulls would cost \$476 million per year.

Alexis: But (6) sometimes we should do things even though they are expensive. (7) We need to do what is in the interest of public safety, and (8) sometimes what is best for public safety is the most expensive.

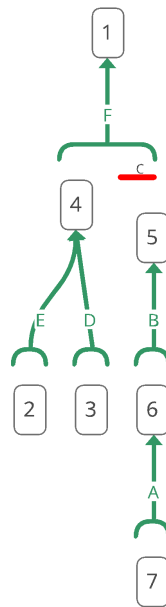
Tom: You're only saying that because your friend had a bad experience with a pit bull when they were a child. Just admit that you're biased.



2) Alejandro: Miriam, I know that you think it's wrong to eat animals. But think things through for a minute. (2) Wolves eat sheep. (3) Lions eat gazelles. Obviously then, (4) non-human animals eat each other. Therefore, it stands to reason that (1) it's not wrong for us to eat animals.

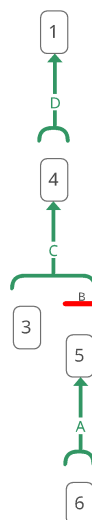
Miriam: Hold on a second. (5) Can't it be wrong for us to do what non-human animals do? Consider the fact that (6) human can have moral obligations while animals cannot, given that (7) humans are capable of understanding morality and of controlling our behavior.

Alejandro: Don't you volunteer at the local animal shelter? Of course, you'd think that it's wrong to eat animals! Your love for animals is blinding you to rational argument.



3) Leah: (1) It's morally wrong to take your kids to the zoo. (2) Zoos keep animals in captivity and (3) captivity is bad for animals' health, so (4) zoos are bad for animals.

Alan: I disagree. I'll grant that captivity is often bad for animals' health. Nonetheless, it doesn't follow that zoos are bad for animals. Consider the fact that (5) zoos can also help save species from extinction. For example, (6) zoos have historically saved eastern bongos and Panamanian golden frogs from extinction. Besides, the real reason you don't like zoos is that you had a bad experience at a zoo when you were younger.

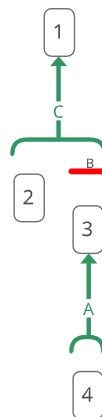


Charity

Raquel: (1) Donating to charity is bad for you, since (2) it decreases the amount of money you have to spend on your own well-being.

Tola: So what? It would be a mistake to infer that donating to charity is bad for you from the fact that it decreases the amount of money you have to spend on yourself. After all, (3) donating to charity increases your satisfaction with your life because (4) it is extremely satisfying to help other people.

Raquel: I feel that it is insensitive for you to brag about how much donating to charity makes you better off. Some people don't have the necessary funds to donate to charity. How do you think it would make these people feel if they heard you saying that only people who donate to charity can have a satisfying life?



Snow Days

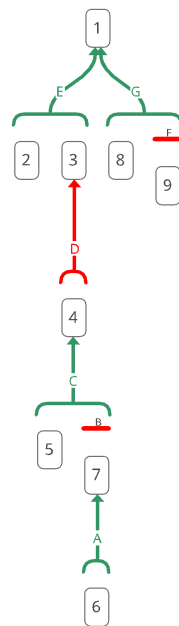
Tariq: Even though many people won't like when I say this, (1) what used to be snow days should become remote learning days. (2) The emergence of virtual learning during the pandemic enabled schools to function remotely, and (3) students should be in class for the maximum number of days possible.

Ariana: I disagree with your last point: (4) students shouldn't be in class for the maximum number of days possible. After all, (5) students perform and learn better when they have time to rest and take breaks.

Tariq: True, but (6) students can easily get enough rest and breaks after school and on the weekends, so (7) they don't need more days off. Besides, another reason snow days should become remote learning days is that (8) it's hard for parents when schools have snow days but their jobs do not.

Ariana: While that's true, I don't see how it counts as a reason in favor of remote learning. (9) Remote learning on snow days still does not enable parents to leave their children unsupervised.

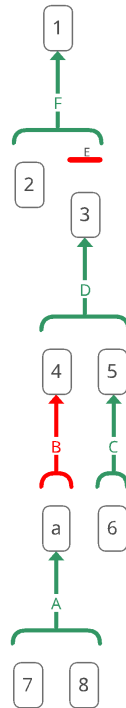
Tariq: Frankly, I think you are only against the idea of turning snow days into remote learning days because you are a public school teacher and, of course, you want an extra day off!



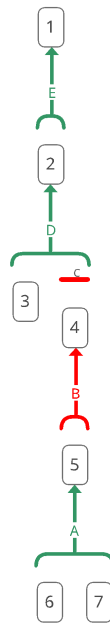
Abortion

1) Abortion is obviously a very sensitive issue. People disagree quite a bit about whether it can ever be ethical for someone to get an abortion. Here is what I think: (1) abortion is clearly wrong since (2) unborn fetuses have a right to life. However, a defender of abortion might counter by arguing that, while it's true that unborn fetuses do have a right a life, (3) abortion does not, in fact, violate a fetus's right to life. This is so because (4), when a woman gets an abortion, she merely withdraws her bodily services from the fetus. And, of course, (5) a fetus does not have a right to use a woman's bodily services. Just think about it: (6) you don't have a right to use another person's kidneys or lungs, right? But I think that this objection fails. (7) If

abortion is merely the withdraw of bodily services, then it is not the case that a woman is intentionally trying to kill a human being when she gets an abortion. But, obviously, (8) a woman is intentionally trying to kill a human being - the fetus - when she gets an abortion.
a = 'It is false that an abortion is merely a withdrawal of bodily services'

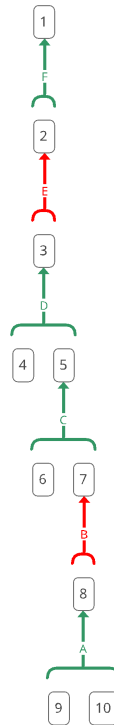


2) Some people believe that it is unethical to get an abortion. Can you believe it? (1) It is clearly permissible to get an abortion. That's because (2) a fetus does not have a right to life. Why? Well, (3) a fetus does not have the capacity for self-consciousness, rationality, or autonomy. Now, some pro-life advocates might respond by arguing that, although it's true that a fetus does not have the capacity for self-consciousness, rationality, or autonomy, this fails to establish that a fetus does not have a right to life. After all, consider the fact that (4) young infants have rights to life, even though young infants also do not have the capacity for self-consciousness, rationality, or autonomy. However, this objection to my argument is questionable. While this will be hard for some to stomach, I think that we need to bite the bullet and accept that (5) young infants also lack rights to life. (6) As a general rule, a creature only has a right to life if this creature has the capacity for self-consciousness, rationality, or autonomy. But (7) young infants lack these capacities, too.



Prioritizing Patients

There's a debate over whether or not hospitals should treat vaccinated patients for COVID before they treat unvaccinated patients. Personally, I think that (1) they should, since (2) the people who acted responsibly by getting a vaccine should be prioritized. Some people object to my position, however, claiming that (3) hospitals should not discriminate on the basis of responsibility. They say that (4) discriminating on the basis of responsibility means that hospitals are judging people's life decisions, which they say that (5) hospitals should not do. According to them, this is because (6) the sole job of hospitals is to save lives and (7) judging patients' life decisions undermines the process of saving lives. I would respond, however, that (8) hospitals judging people's life decisions is in the interest of saving lives. This is because (9) hospitals prioritizing good life decisions over bad ones will promote healthier lifestyles and (10) promoting healthier lifestyles will save lives.



Buying America

I think that (1) you should only buy American made products. While this may be an inconvenience, I think it is clear that (2) the moral benefit of buying American made products is far more important than any inconvenience it may cause you. This is because (3) buying American made products promotes American jobs, which (4) it is morally good to do, seeing as (5) we Americans have a special obligation to our fellow citizens. Some people, however, would say that (6) we do not have a special obligation to our fellow citizens since (7) we did not consent to be born in a given country and (8) obligations can only be incurred by consent. To them I would respond as follows. (9) If obligations can only be incurred by consent, then we wouldn't have obligations to look after our families, as (10) we certainly did not consent to being born into our families. But (11) we very clearly do have obligations to look after our families!

a = 'It's false that obligations can only be incurred by consent'

