**EXERCISES PHIL 1**

**WEEK 1**

**1.What is the conclusion in this argument?**

*There can’t be weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.  If there were, then the military forces would have found them by now, or some radicalized group of insurgents would have used them.  But the military forces haven’t found them and no insurgent groups have used any.*

ANSWER:   
There can’t be weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.”  is the conclusion.

**2. Individuate explicit and implicit premises in this argument**

"I think she's not home.  If she drove home, then her car would be in the driveway.  And it's raining, so she didn't walk home,"

ANSWER:

"If she drove home, then her car would be in the driveway," is an explicit premise.  "Her car is not in the driveway," is an implicit premise.

**3. Individuate the implicit premise in this argument**   
*"Positive thinking cannot help you win the lottery.  If it could, then lots of people would win."*

ANSWER:  
"Lots of people do not win."  is an implicit premise.

Notice that when we add it, the argument becomes valid and much clearer:

1.  If positive thinking could help you win the lottery, then lots of people would win the lottery.

2.  Lots of people do not win the lottery.

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3.  Therefore, positive thinking cannot help you win the lottery.

**4. Reconstruct this argument***The starter must be broken.  If the car won't start, then it's either the starter, the alternator, or the battery that's the problem.  It won't start.  And we've ruled out the alternator since we just put a new one in, and it can't be the battery because it's fully charged.*

ANSWER: The conclusion is "The starter must be broken."

One explicit premise is this conditional: "If the car won't start, then it's either the starter, the alternator, or the battery that's the problem."

Another explicit premise is "The car won't start."  (Notice that I've changed the language to match the previous sentence exactly.)

So, we can put together this reconstruction:

1.  If the car won't start, then either the starter is broken, the alternator is broken, or the battery is dead. (EP) (notice the editing)

2.  The car won't start. (EP)

3.  The alternator is not broken.  (IP) (notice the editing to match language in 1)

4.  The battery is not dead.  (IP)     (notice the editing to match the language in 1.

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5.  Therefore, the starter is broken.  (1,2,3,4)

**5. Reconstruct this argument***I’m pretty sure that if you get caught base jumping in a national park, it is a misdemeanor offense.  And if you get convicted of a misdemeanor offense, it's a parole violation.  I heard that while he was on parole, Fernando went base jumping in Yosemite and got caught.  And if Fernando violates his parole one more time, immigration services is going to deport him. So I think he is going to get deported.  That's too bad.  He was a great guy.*

ANSWER:  
The conclusion is "Fernando got deported."

The sentence:   I’m pretty sure that if you get caught base jumping in a national park, it is a misdemeanor offense. gets translated to this premise.

Notice that the language has been adjusted to match the other premises and words have been eliminated:

"If you get caught base jumping in a national park, then you get convicted of a misdemeanor offense."  And if you get convicted of a misdemeanor offense, it's a parole violation, becomes:  "If you get convicted of a misdemeanor offense, then you get a parole violation."And this premise is also explicit:  "If Fernando gets a parole violation, then immigration services is going to deport him."It is not stated, but it is clearly implied that "Yosemite is a national park."

1.  If a person gets caught base jumping in a national park, then that person is convicted of a misdemeanor offense. [EP]

2.  If a person gets convicted of a misdemeanor offense, then that person gets a parole violation.  [EP]

3.  If Fernando gets a parole violation, then immigration services is going to deport him. [EP]

4.  Yosemite is a national park.  [IP]  
5.  Fernando got caught base jumping in Yosemite.  [EP]  
6.  Fernando got caught base jumping in a national park.  [4,5]  
7.  Fernando got convicted of a misdemeanor offense.  [1, 6]  
8.  Fernando got a parole violation.  [2, 7]  
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9.  Therefore, Fernando is going to get deported.  [3,8

Notice that the implicit premise has been brought out, and all of the intermediate inferences have been stated in order to validly get to the conclusion.

**6. Evaluate the following argument**

1. If Idaho is larger than California, then it is larger than Alaska.
2. Idaho is larger than California.  
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3. Therefore, Idaho is larger than Alaska.

ANSWER:  
Evaluated in terms of its form, this is a good argument.  But it is nevertheless a bad argument.  After all, each of the sentences is false.  Sentences (2) and (3) are clearly false, but so too is (1), since if Idaho were larger than California, it could still be smaller than Alaska, given that Alaska is bigger than California.  What this demonstrates is that when it comes to argument quality, form isn't everything.  Content matters, and here the content is in bad shape.

The content of an argument is what the argument is *about*, and this is based on what the sentences that constitute the argument are about.  The primary measure of content quality is truth value.  If any of the sentences are false, then the argument will be weak.  If the sentences are true, then the argument will typically be strong, so long as it has good form.

**7. Evaluate the following argument**

1. Idaho is south of Canada.
2. Nevada is south of Idaho.  
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3. Therefore, Texas is south of Oklahoma.

ANSWER:  
All of the sentences in (III) are true, but it is still a bad argument. The truth values of (1) and (2) don't force (3) to be true because (1) and (2) have nothing to do with (3).  Thus, the reasons and conclusion should have content that is related.  This is often guaranteed by the form of the argument---in the case of (III), the argument has bad form, and this undermines the connection between the reasons and conclusion.