**How to Think**

**What to learn in college:**

* Think well
* Look at an argument
* Evaluate it
* Decide how reasonable it is
* Make one of your own

Understand that being educated is not the same as being well informed and that tolerance is just your willingness to listen ot others and does not mean you have to agree with them nor take them seriously.

**What is an argument?**

An argument is any statement that attempts to link causes and consequences, or to show that one thing must reasonably follow from another.

Arguments talk about:

* Who
* What
* Where
* When
* How
* Why

1. How to make an argument
   1. Induction
      1. Derive a broad principle from the observation of particular events or instances
         1. Example: If you raise minimum wage, how does it impact unemployment?
            1. Number of instances in which the minimum wage has been raised
            2. What the effect on unemployment has been

You might then conclude that raising the minimum wage leads to higher unemployment.

* 1. Deduction
     1. You begin with a known general principle and then explain an individual event by reference to the principle
        1. Example: Sherlock Holmes
           1. One hand is larger than the other because of manual labor
           2. The fish was from China so he must of gone to china
  2. A *fortiori*
     1. If a quality does not exist where it is more likely to exist, it certainly cannot exist where it is less likely.
        1. Example: If my father wouldn’t let me drive an hour to Wichita to see my boyfriend, he certainly won’t let me go with my boyfriend over Spring Break to the Bahamas.
        2. Example: If my boss wouldn’t approve a $10,000 budget for a new computer system, he certainly won’t approve a $50,000 budget for new carpeting
     2. This is also true in the inverse.
        1. If a quality exists where you least expect it, it will probably also exist where you most expect it.
     3. Robert Putnam
        1. “Bowling Alone”
           1. If you do not participate in community based associations you are less likely to participate in national stuff such as voting in national elections or having strong views on national politics or foreign policy
  3. Appeal to consequences
     1. Appeal to the consequent conclusions to which someone is committed in making his argument
        1. The goal of intervention is to create some sort of peace and order, but countries’ invading each other for their own moral purposes would hardly create a peaceful and orderly world
     2. Appeal to undesirable consequences that flow from the course of action advocated by someone else.
        1. Example: United States had a moral obligation to intervene in Bosnia and Kosovo because of the humanitarian disasters taking place there.
           1. Using this as an argument one could say that if this were true then America would always be on the brink of war
  4. Make a list
     + - 1. Make a list of why something is true and why something is false
  5. Critiquing arguments
     1. You can change your argument and come to agree with the other person
  6. Arguing self-evidently
     1. They are simply assertions, interjections, shouts or murmurs
        1. Example: The crime rate has increased because more blacks have moved into the neighborhood
           1. The color of a person’s skin is not an indicator of criminal intent, so claiming that crime rates increase only because African-Americans move into a community is simply false.
  7. Are the assumptions sound and correct?
     1. Are there assumptions?
     2. Can you back them up?
  8. Is there a clear connection?
     1. Are the two claims connected by these words really logically connected?
     2. Is there a clear relationship?
  9. Is the argument tautological?
     1. A tautological argument is otherwise known as a circular argument, that is, one that begins by assuming the very thing that is meant to be proven by the argument itself
        1. They are not really arguments at all; they appear to be, but they are really no more than a long drive that brings you right back to where you started.
        2. Example: Why do welfare programs not work? Welfare programs simply produce continued dependence on the state, rather than encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their own lives. Entire generations of welfare-sponsored families have lived on federal hand-outs, producing communities that have forgotten how to encourage the kind of civic responsibility crucial to a vibrant democracy. Hence, areas with large numbers of welfare recipient are a continual drain on government resources and encourage a pattern of continued dependence. Therefore, welfare programs clearly do not work.
           1. There are many assumptions made and the question of “why?” has not been answered.
  10. Is the argument parsimonious?
      1. A parsimonious argument is one in which the listener is asked to make as few assumptions as possible in order for the argument to be credible
         1. They can be simple but are not always.
            1. Example: John F. Kennedy was shot because of a CIA conspiracy
  11. Does the argument mistake correlation for causation?
      1. Just because A happen does not mean that B does.
         1. Example: Every time you go to a football game, they lose.
            1. Just because you went has nothing to do that they lost, they simply are just a bad team.
         2. Example: When raising minimum wage it causes higher unemployment
            1. While proven that when the minimum wage is increased, unemployment increased it simply isn’t because of minimum page. Rather, the increase in the cost of the labor force is the reason that unemployment goes up or that the economy slows down.
      2. Correlation does ***NOT*** mean causation.
  12. Dependent variables
      1. The thing you want to explain
         1. Effect
  13. Independent variables
      1. The thing that does the explaining
         1. Cause
         2. Use this as an example
  14. Is the argument falsifiable?
      1. A falsifiable argument is one that could potentially be shown to be wrong
      2. Falsifiable arguments are always superior to unfalsifiable ones
         1. There is no point in taking issue with an unfalsifiable argument, since its creator has made it impossible to attack
         2. Falsifiable arguments are always superior to unfalsifiable ones.
      3. How would I know if it were false? Make sure this is possible to answer!