

**14.Statement - Arguments**

An argument is a sequence of two or more phrases, clauses, sentences or statements which includes a claim or a conclusion. This conclusion is arrived at with the help of one or more statements which may be called "premise" or "proposition". In addition, an argument may also take the help of hidden premise/s known as assumptions.

**E.g.** The courtyard is slippery; hence it must have been raining.

In the above example, the argument proposes a conclusion that "it must have been raining". This has been arrived at using the supporting evidence or premise that "the courtyard is slippery". The conclusion and the premise are connected by the assumption (which is not explicitly stated, but is hidden) that "the courtyard becomes slippery only when it rains".

In other words, the logic of the argument can be broken up as follows:

**Premise:** The courtyard is slippery.

**Assumption (hidden premise):** The courtyard becomes slippery only when it rains.

**Conclusion:** It must have rained.'

In this example, the argument needs the support of an assumption (a missing link in the chain of logic), and is a weak argument.

In fact, for an argument to be complete in itself, it should not have missing links i.e. assumptions. For instance, the following

**E.g.** "The courtyard is slippery. The courtyard could not have become slippery without rains. So it must have rained."

Let us consider another example to illustrate the point:

**E.g.** "If Ramesh watches TV, Ravi also watches TV. If Ravi watches TV, Sushil also watches TV, If Sushil watches TV, Madhu also watches TV. Ramesh watches TV. So, Madhu also watches Tv."

In the above example, the first three sentences provide the premises. The last sentences denote the conclusion. As there is no hidden assumption, thus the arguments do not contain any missing link.

Thus in order to tackle problems based on argument – based reasoning, you need to appreciate the following three step process:

- (A) Differentiate between premise/s and conclusions
- (B) Identify the assumptions/s made.
- (C) Understand the logic of the argument.

**Note:** With adequate practice, you will develop the ability to distinguish between a conclusion and a premise. Often the following list of words and phrases, enables you to identify a "conclusion" therefore, thus, so, hence, as a result, consequently, it can be inferred that, it follows that, suggests that, shows that, proves that, means that, etc.

When a certain premise provides support to reach a conclusion, it makes the argument strong. On the other hand, those premises which do not enable us to reach the conclusion result in weak arguments. In the exam, you are required to evaluate the forcefulness of the proposed arguments.

Note that strong arguments are often directly related to the question, whereas, weak arguments are either unimportant or peripherally related to the question. The following systematic approach will help you to save your precious time. These steps are:

### Step I.

#### Test for

- i) Weak argument/(i) Some arguments at first glance itself, give you Ambiguous argument impression of being weak, so that there is no need for further analysis. Certain arguments may not be very clear, thus confusing you and leaving you in considerable doubt. Hence they are ambiguous and are weak arguments.
- ii) Merely a simple argument/(ii) There are certain arguments which are clearly related to the statement but are not backed up by facts or established notions. Thus they are merely simple assertions, and as a result, are weak arguments.
- iii) Superfluous argument/(iii) There are arguments which merely give a fleeting "glance" at the theme without making a "deep" analysis of the issue. Hence they are superfluous arguments
- iv) Question - back argument/(iv) These arguments are in the form of question thrown back at the reader by the person supposedly making the argument. It basically lacks the "core" or substance of the "argumentation" process, and hence such arguments are considered to be weak.

**Step II.****Explanation****Test whether result follows or not?**

A result will follow a course of action if

- (a) It is an established fact, or universally acknowledged fact or
- (b) Previous experience predicts, or
- (c) Result is logically probable.

Whereas a result will not follow a course of action if

- (a) it is against established fact or
- (b) previous experience contradicts, or
- (c) result is logically not probable
- (d) examples, analogies
- (e) individual perceptions

After step II if a result follows, then go for Step III

**Step III.****Test for desirability of a result.**

Desirability of a result can be judged by your experience of day to day life and knowledge about certain facts. If a result is desirable then go for step (IV)

**Step IV.****Test for proper relation between the argument and course of action.**

If an argument directly deals with the main issue of statement and suggests balanced course of action. Then the argument and suggestion is said to be properly related.

**Ex.** Should education be given by the government free of charge?

**Arguments:**

- I. Yes, thus more people will be educated.
- II. No, there will be deficit in the budget of the government.

**Explanation**

Step I. Both arguments pass test since *none* of them is

- (i) Weak argument
- (ii) Ambiguous argument
- (iii) Very simple argument

- (iv) Superfluous argument
- (v) Question – back argument

Step II. Both arguments will follow because they are logically probable.

Step III. Both arguments are desirable.

Step IV. Both arguments are properly related with the course of action. In first argument free education has been advocated because it will make more people educated. In second argument free education has been discouraged because it will make deficit in the budget. Hence, both the arguments are strong.

This approach is not lengthy and cumbersome as it looks. It is very easy and simple, provided you do regular practice

**Ex.** Should smoking is strictly prohibited in public places?

**Arguments :**

- I. No, it will adversely affect the tobacco industry.
- II. No, it will be resented by smokers.

**Explanation**

First argument will not follow because ban on smoking will be at public places only but not everywhere. Second argument will also not follow because argument is based on assumption. Hence both arguments (I) and (II) are not strong arguments.

**Must remember the following tips to detect strong argument**

- (i) They are 'important and directly related to statement.
- (ii) They are not based on imagination.
- (iii) They are specific.
- (iv) They are not generalised.
- (v) They are ideal and true.

**Study the Instruction**

In making decisions about important questions it is desirable to be able to distinguish between "strong" arguments and "weak" arguments so far as they relate to the questions. "strong" arguments must be both important and directly related to the question and may be of minor importance or may be related to the trivial aspects of the question. Each question below is followed by two arguments numbered I and II. You have to decide which of the arguments is a 'strong'

**DIRECTIONS:** Study the alternative choices.

**Give answer:**

- (1) if only argument I is strong;
- (2) if only argument II is strong;
- (3) if either I or II is strong;
- (4) if neither I nor II is strong and;
- (5) if both I and II are strong.

1. Should there be a complete ban on manufacture of firecrackers in India?

**Arguments:**

I. No, this will render thousands of workers jobless.

II. Yes, the firecrackers use child labour to a large extent.

**Sol. Step I:** Argument II fails in test because it can be categorized as weak argument. Fire crackers manufacturers use child labour to a large extent but complete ban on the manufacture of fire crackers is not a right course to pursue. There are better courses of action to remove the employment of child labour in cracker industry.

Argument I passes test since it is not a

- (i) Weak argument
- (ii) Ambiguous argument
- (iii) Very simple argument
- (iv) Superfluous argument
- (v) Question - back argument

**Step II:** Argument I will follow because it is logically probable.

**Step III:** Argument I is desirable.

**Step IV:** Argument I is properly related with course of action. Here complete ban on manufacture of fire crackers is refuted because it will render thousands of workers jobless.

Hence only argument I is strong. So your right choice is **Ans.(I)**

2. Should the tuition fees in all post-graduate courses be hiked considerably?

**Arguments :**

I. Yes, this will bring in some sense of seriousness among the students and will improve the quality.

II. No, this will force the meritorious poor students. To stay away from post- graduate courses.

**Sol. Step I** Argument I fail to clear this test because it comes under superfluous

argument. The argument is related to trivial aspect.

Argument II passes test because it is not a

- (i) Weak argument
- (ii) Ambiguous argument
- (iii) Very simple argument
- (iv) Superfluous argument
- (v) Question back argument

**Step II** ∴ Argument II will follow since it is logically probable

**Step III** : Argument II is desirable.

**Step IV**: Argument II is properly related with the course of action. Here hike in fees for post- graduate courses has been opposed because this will force the meritorious poor students to stay away from post- graduate courses.

Hence only argument II is strong **Ans.(2).**

**DIRECTIONS:** Each question given below is followed by two arguments I and II. You have to decide which of the arguments is a 'strong' argument and which is

**Give answer:**

- (1) if only argument I is strong;
- (2) if only arguments II is strong
- (3) if neither I nor II is strong;
- (4) If both I and II are strong

3. **Statement** :Is paying ransom or agreeing to the conditions of kidnappers of political figures, a proper course of action?

**Arguments:**

I. Yes The victims must be saved at all cost.

II. No. It encourages the kidnappers to continue their sinister activities.

**Sol.** Clearly, both the arguments in for and against are strong and enough. The conditions have to be agreed to, in order to save the life of the victims, though actually they ought not to be agreed to, as they encourage the sinister activities of the kidnappers. **Ans.(4)**

4. **Statement**:Should telecasting feature films be stopped?

**Arguments :**

I. Yes. Young children are misguided by the feature films.

II. No. This is the only way to educate the masses.

**Sol.** The argument I in support is not valid because films also educate masses. Similarly argument II against the statement is weak because it is not the only way to educate the masses; there are other ways as well. **Ans.(3)**

**DIRECTIONS:** In making decisions about important questions it is desirable to be able to distinguish between "strong" and "weak" arguments so far as they are related to the question. "Strong" argument must be both important and directly related to the question. "Weak II argument may not be directly related to the questions and may be of minor. Importance or may be related to the trivial aspects of the question.

Each question below is followed by two arguments numbered (I) and (II). You have to decide which of the arguments a strong argument is and which a weak argument is. Then decide which of the options (1), (2), (3), (4) and (5) is the correct answer.

**Give answer:**

- (1) if only argument (I) is strong;
- (2) if only argument (II) is strong;
- (3) if either (I) or (II) is strong;
- (4) if neither (I) nor (II) is strong;
- (5) if both (I) and (II) are strong

5. Should more autonomy be given to the States in India?

(I) **Yes-** By giving more autonomy, States will have more freedom in utilizing their resources for the benefit of their State.

(II) **No** – By giving more autonomy, the Central Government is likely to lose its control over the States, thereby weakening the Union.

**Sol.** Statement (I) is a strong argument as welfare of state is very important. Strong union is also important but it is highly improbable that giving more autonomy to states will weaken the union. **Ans.(1)**

6. Should Government provide a support to the prices of Agricultural Products?

(I) Yes - This will assure the farmers about reasonably good returns, there by ensuring "balanced" production of agricultural products as also help curb the black-marketing practices

(II) No - Government has many other things to look after.

**Sol.** Only argument (I) is strong argument, as welfare of farmers is a duty of the

government. Argument (II) is a simple argument. **Ans.(I)**

In those days conditions were different. Also the

7. Should we re-adopt the custom "marriage at early age?"

(I) Yes - Our ancestors were wise enough to have adopted this.

(II) No - We must change.

**Sol.** Both arguments are weak. Our ancestors have adopted this custom but in those days conditions were different also the argument that we must change is a very simple argument

### Exercise

**Directions:** Each question given below is 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 ) either I or II is strong :**

**(D) if neither I nor II is strong, and**

**(E) if both I and II strong.**

**1. Statements:** Should a total ban be put on trapping wild animals?

**Arguments:** i. Yes. Trappers are making a lot of money.

ii. No. Bans on hunting and trapping are not effective.

**2. Statements:** Should military service be made compulsory in our country?

**Arguments:** i. No. it is against the policy of non-violence.

ii. Yes. Every citizen should protect his country.

**3. Statement:** Should all the remote parts of a country be connected by road?

**Arguments:** i. No. it will disturb peaceful simple life of the villagers.

ii. Yes. It must be done immediately.

**4. Statements:** 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 towns. So, why offer extra incentives.

**5. Statements:** should religion be taught in our schools?



**Arguments:** i. No. Ours is secular state.

ii. Yes. Teaching religion helps inculcate moral values among children.

**6. Statement:** Should non- vegetarian food be totally banned in our country?

**Arguments:** i. Yes. It is expensive and therefore beyond the means of most people in our country..

ii. No. nothing should be banned in the democratic country.

**7. Statements:** should films be included in the Concurrent Lists?

**Arguments:** i. Yes. It will give respect to the views of the states.

ii. No. it will deteriorate the standard of films.

**8. Statements:** Should there be only one university throughout India?

**Arguments:** i. Yes. This is the only way to bring about uniformity in educational standards.

ii. No. This is administratively impossible.

**9. Statement:** Should mercy death be legalized?

**Arguments:** i. Yes. Patients undergoing terrible suffering and having absolutely no chance of recovery should be liberated from suffering through mercy death.

ii. No. Even mercy death is a sort of killing and killing can never be legalized.

**10. Statement:** Should there be a world government?

**Argument:** i. Yes. It will help in eliminating tensions among the nations.

ii. No. Then only the developed countries will dominate in the government.

**11. Statement:** Should the institution of marriages be abolished?

**Arguments:** i. Yes. it is already showing cracks.

ii. No. it is necessary for the survival of society.

**12. Statement:** Should health care service be nationalized?

**Arguments:** i. Yes. It has been done elsewhere also.

ii. No. the quality of health care service will deteriorate

**13. Statement:** Should telecasting feature films be stopped?

**Arguments:** i. Yes. Young children are misguided by feature films.

ii. No. This is the only way to educate the masses.

**14. Statement:** Should agriculture in rural India be mechanized?

**Arguments:** i. Yes. It would lead to higher production.

ii. No. it would lead to rural unemployment

**15. Statement:** Should the illiterate be debarred from voting?

**Arguments:** i. Yes. They are easily misguided.

ii. No. it is their constitutional right.

**16.Statement:** Should luxury hotels be banned India?

**Arguments:** i. Yes. They are places from where international criminals operate.

ii. No. Affluent foreign tourists will have no place to stay.

**17.Statement:** Can pollution be controlled?

**Arguments:** i. yes, If everyone realizes the hazard it may create and cooperates to be rid of it, pollution may be controlled.

ii. No. the crowded highways, factories and industries and an ever-growing population eager to acquire more and more lands for constructing houses are beyond control.

**18.Statement:** Is governorship better than Chief ministership?

**Arguments:** i. Yes it is the highest post in a state.

ii. No. The chief Minister commands more power.

**19.Statement:** Should there be no place for interview in selection?

**Arguments:** i. Yes it is very subjective in assessment.

ii. No. it is the only instrument to judge the candidates motives and personalized

**20.Statement:** Should higher education be completely stopped for some time?

**Arguments:** i. No. it will hamper the country progress.

ii. Yes. it will reduce educated unemployment.

**21.Statement:** Should all news be controlled by the government in a democracy?

**Arguments:** i. Yes. Variety of news only confuses people.

ii. No. Controlled news loses credibility.

**22.Statement:** Should private companies be allowed to operate services in India?

**Arguments:** i. Yes. India private management usually give better services.

ii. No. we should not ape the western countries.

**23.Statement:** Should there be students union in college/University?

**Arguments:** i. No. this will create a political atmosphere in the campus.

ii. Yes. It is very necessary Students are the future political leaders.

**24.Statements:** Should new big industries be started in Bombay?

**Arguments:**i. Yes. It will create new job opportunity

ii. No. it will further add to the pollution of the city.

**25.Statements:** Should India manufacture atom bombs?

**Arguments:** i. Yes. It is imperative to protect the sovereignty and integrity of the country.

ii. No. this will create imbalance in the power of nations in this region.

**26.Statement:** Should computers be used in all possible sectors I India?

**Arguments:** i. **Yes.** it will bring efficiency and accuracy in the work.

ii. No. it will be an injustice to the monumental human resources which are at present underutilized.

**27.Statement:** Is paying ransoms or agreeing to the conditions of kidnappers of political figures, a proper course of action.

**Arguments:** i. Yes. The victim must be saved at all costs.

ii. No. it encourages the kidnappers to continue with their sinister activities.

**28.Statement:** Should India go in for computerization in industry?

**Arguments:** i. No. computerization demands a lot of money. We should not waste money on it.

ii. Yes. When advanced countries are introducing computers in various areas, how can we afford to lag behind?

**29.Statements:** I is monarchy better than democracy?

**Arguments:** i. Yes. if the chair has one confirmed ruler, there are no ambitious aspirants fighting for it.

ii. No. People are more contented and happy in a democracy.

**30.Statement:** Should doordarshan be given autonomous status?

**Arguments:** i. yes it will help Doordarshan to have fair and impartial coverage of all important events.

ii. The coverage of the events will be decided by a few who may not have a healthy outlook.

### Arguments ANSWERS :

1. D: None is strong. If trappers make money, they should not be stopped solely on this ground. And if bans are not effective, then care should be taken to enforce them strictly instead of not banning at all.
2. D: if non-violence is that strong a principle then we should not have any army either?! Second argument lacks proper relation (see step IV). None is strong.
3. D: None is strong. I is rejected because it may not happen (will not follow) ii is rejected because it is too simple and does not have argumentative substance.
4. E: Both are strong. Incentives do lure people. Second is also established fact.
5. B: Second is strong. First is not very clear. If the state is secular, it means it is against religious bias but not against religion as such. Second is in consonance with the prevailing notions of truth.
6. D: Both are weak. It is for the people to decide whether they want to eat expensive food. A ban should not be enforced upon them. Second is weak because it is not an

acceptable truth. Nobody has said that “democratic” means a country where nothing could be banned, however, harmful it was.

7. D: Both are weak. Is weak as it is not sure that including films in concurrent list would give respect to people’s views. Second will not follow (it seems), hence it is weak.
8. B: Second is strong. First is weak because it is not correct.(is it the only way?) second is perhaps correct, on logical thinking.
9. E: Both are strong. They mention a positive and a negative feature of mercy of death: both these features are desirable/harmful respectively and both are related with important aspects of topic of mercy death.
- 10.E: Both are strong. On logical thinking both look probable, both are desirable (harmful in the case of second) and both touch significant aspects of the issue
- 11.B: Second is strong. First is weak as you cannot abolish a system simply because it is showing crack. Second is an accepted truth.
- 12.D: None is strong. First is weak as I is based upon example. Second is weak as it is debatable.
- 13.A: First is strong. First is an acceptable piece of truth backed by evidence. Second is weak as it is not true.
- 14.E: Both are strong both are true (both will follow) the first is really desirable while the second is really harmful.
- 15.B: Second is strong. First talks of negative feature which does exist but is not sufficient enough to go for such drastic action as disallowing for vote. Second is an established fact.
- 16.B: Second is strong. Affluent foreign tourists tend to prefer luxury hotels. First is debatable and, even if it is true, then what is guarantee that criminals would not operate from other places.
- 17.E: Both are strong although both arguments contradict each other, yet both are based upon sound assumptions or facts and hence, independently both are strong.
18. E: Both are strong. Same explanations as in previous question.
- 19.E: I Is strong as a subjective mode of selection is not desirable. II is of course right.
- 20.D: None is strong. Temporary stopping of higher education will not hamper the nation progress. It will reduce educated employment but so what it will then increase uneducated unemployment.
- 21.B: Second is strong first argument is debatable while the second is an established fact.
- 22.A: First is strong as it is based upon on established facts. Second is based upon example: hence it is weak argument.

- 23.E: I is true as it is based on experiences. And political atmosphere in the campus is not really desirable as the campus is a place of learning, not politics, II is also true because tomorrow's leaders will come from today students and it is good that they get some political training early.
- 24.E: Both are correct and strong arguments.
- 25.A: I is strong as it is true that atomic power works as deterrent to possible invasions that thus enhances sovereignty. II is not strong argument as the imbalance would be only in India favour and that won't be an undesirable thing.
- 26.E: both are strong. Using computers does not have the positive feature as mentioned in I but the negative feature as mentioned in II.
- 27.E: Both are strong. Explanation same as in Q.26.
- 28.D: None is strong. We do not waste money if we invest in computers. The second is based upon example.
- 29.E: I talks of a positive feature of "absence of fight for power" in monarchy and this absence of fight is indeed, a desirable thing. II is a strong argument in the sense that it is in conformity with today prevailing nations of truth.
- 30.E: Both are strong arguments.

