

Western Governors University (WGU) PHIL1020 D265 Critical Thinking: Reason and Evidence Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

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1. What reasoning process might not always lead to beneficial outcomes if overused?
 - A. Intuitive thinking
 - B. Deliberative reasoning
 - C. System 1 thinking
 - D. Systems thinking
2. Explain the difference between correlation and causation.
 - A. Correlation indicates one variable causes another
 - B. Correlation shows a relationship, while causation implies one variable causes the other
 - C. Correlation is always stronger than causation
 - D. Correlation and causation are interchangeable terms
3. What is the ultimate goal of presenting an argument?
 - A. To entertain the audience with interesting facts
 - B. To persuade others to accept a conclusion based on premises
 - C. To confuse the audience about the topic
 - D. To establish authority over the subject matter
4. What is an example of a premise that serves as a generalization in a logical argument?
 - A. A specific case that applies a rule
 - B. A broad statement about a category
 - C. A condition that must be met
 - D. A hypothesis that cannot be tested
5. Which fallacy involves drawing a conclusion too quickly based on insufficient evidence?
 - A. Cherry-Picking Evidence
 - B. Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc
 - C. Hasty Generalization
 - D. Indirect Support

6. What fallacy occurs when someone attacks the person making an argument rather than the argument itself?
- A. Genetic fallacy
 - B. Ad hominem fallacy
 - C. Straw man fallacy
 - D. Red herring fallacy
7. What characterized indirect support in an argument?
- A. A direct relationship between premises and conclusion
 - B. A premise that offers indirect support for the main conclusion
 - C. A logical fallacy in the presented argument
 - D. A rebuttal to the main conclusion
8. What is an essential trait of someone who thinks critically?
- A. They accept conclusions without questioning
 - B. They are open to exploring various viewpoints
 - C. They always choose one side of an argument
 - D. They avoid interaction with opposing views
9. Which fallacy occurs when an argument is diverted to an irrelevant issue, distracting from the original issue?
- A. Red herring fallacy
 - B. Straw man fallacy
 - C. Ad hominem fallacy
 - D. Genetic fallacy
10. What is an example of a conclusion indicator?
- A. However
 - B. Therefore
 - C. Additionally
 - D. Since

Answers

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1. B
2. B
3. B
4. B
5. C
6. B
7. B
8. B
9. A
10. B

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Explanations

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1. What reasoning process might not always lead to beneficial outcomes if overused?

- A. Intuitive thinking
- B. Deliberative reasoning
- C. System 1 thinking
- D. Systems thinking

Deliberative reasoning involves a careful, analytical approach to decision-making where individuals weigh evidence, consider multiple perspectives, and deliberate on the best course of action. While this method is generally sound and can lead to effective outcomes, overusing it can lead to "analysis paralysis," where the individual becomes so bogged down in weighing options and possibilities that they are unable to make a decision or take action. This careful consideration can sometimes inhibit quick responses that are necessary in fast-paced situations. In contrast, intuitive thinking and System 1 thinking represent quicker, more instinctive forms of decision-making that can be beneficial in scenarios requiring rapid judgments. Systems thinking, which involves understanding interconnections and dynamics within complex systems, can also provide significant benefits but is distinct from the deliberative process. Over-reliance on deliberative reasoning can stifle creativity and responsiveness, suggesting that while it is a valuable tool, it should be balanced with other forms of reasoning.

2. Explain the difference between correlation and causation.

- A. Correlation indicates one variable causes another
- B. Correlation shows a relationship, while causation implies one variable causes the other
- C. Correlation is always stronger than causation
- D. Correlation and causation are interchangeable terms

The distinction between correlation and causation is fundamental in critical thinking and research. When we say that two variables are correlated, we mean that they show a statistical relationship or pattern with one another. This can manifest in various forms—whether they increase together, decrease together, or have some other form of interdependence. On the other hand, when we refer to causation, we imply a more definitive relationship where one variable directly influences or causes a change in the other. Causation indicates a direct link that leads to changes, whereas correlation merely suggests that a relationship exists but does not provide evidence that one variable causes the other. Understanding this distinction helps avoid errors in reasoning, such as assuming that because two variables are correlated, one must necessarily result from or cause the other. This is why the statement that correlation shows a relationship, while causation implies one variable causes the other is accurate and highlights the critical nuances in interpreting data and establishing evidence in various fields of inquiry.

3. What is the ultimate goal of presenting an argument?

- A. To entertain the audience with interesting facts
- B. To persuade others to accept a conclusion based on premises
- C. To confuse the audience about the topic
- D. To establish authority over the subject matter

The ultimate goal of presenting an argument is to persuade others to accept a conclusion based on premises. This involves laying out a structured reasoning process that connects observations, evidence, and logic to lead the audience toward a specific viewpoint. Successful arguments do not merely present information; instead, they engage the audience's critical thinking abilities, providing them with reasons and justifications that make the conclusion compelling. The effectiveness of an argument is measured by how well it influences the beliefs or actions of others, making persuasion the cornerstone of argumentative discourse. Engaging the audience rationally and emotively fosters an environment conducive to acceptance of the conclusion, showcasing the power of sound reasoning in argumentation.

4. What is an example of a premise that serves as a generalization in a logical argument?

- A. A specific case that applies a rule
- B. A broad statement about a category
- C. A condition that must be met
- D. A hypothesis that cannot be tested

In logical reasoning, a premise that serves as a generalization is a broad statement about a category, which is often used to establish the foundation for an argument. Generalizations draw from observed patterns or evidence to make a claim about a larger group based on a representative subset. For example, if one observes that birds generally have feathers and then concludes that a newly encountered feathered creature is likely a bird, the initial statement about birds is a generalization. This type of premise allows for logical deductions that can support further conclusions or specific claims within the argument. It creates a framework that highlights relationships between various concepts and helps in reaching conclusions about individual cases based on broader trends or patterns. The ability to work from a generalization is vital for reasoning processes, as it provides a basis from which to extrapolate and apply findings to specific instances within the category discussed.

5. Which fallacy involves drawing a conclusion too quickly based on insufficient evidence?

- A. Cherry-Picking Evidence
- B. Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc
- C. Hasty Generalization
- D. Indirect Support

The correct answer is hasty generalization, which refers to the fallacy of making a broad conclusion based on a limited or inadequate set of evidence. This fallacy often occurs when one observes a few instances and then extrapolates those observations to a larger population or scenario without enough data to support that conclusion. For example, if someone meets a few rude individuals from a particular city and then concludes that everyone from that city must be rude, they're committing a hasty generalization. By focusing only on a small subset of evidence, the reasoning fails to consider the broader context or the possibility that the few examples are not representative of the larger group. This type of fallacy undermines logical reasoning because it relies heavily on insufficient data rather than a comprehensive examination of evidence, leading to sweeping claims that are often erroneous. This understanding is crucial in critical thinking as it emphasizes the importance of gathering adequate evidence before forming conclusions, ensuring that our reasoning is sound and well-supported.

6. What fallacy occurs when someone attacks the person making an argument rather than the argument itself?

- A. Genetic fallacy
- B. Ad hominem fallacy
- C. Straw man fallacy
- D. Red herring fallacy

The ad hominem fallacy is characterized by the focus on the individual presenting an argument rather than the substance of the argument itself. In this scenario, an ad hominem attack undermines the credibility of the person instead of engaging with their ideas. For example, if someone dismisses an argument solely based on the speaker's personal traits, affiliations, or behavior, they are employing an ad hominem approach. This fallacy detracts from logical discourse because it does not address whether the argument is valid or supported by evidence; rather, it shifts attention to irrelevant personal characteristics, which can distort the assessment of the argument's merit. In contrast, the genetic fallacy relates to dismissing an argument based on its origin rather than its content, while the straw man fallacy involves misrepresenting someone's argument to make it easier to attack. The red herring fallacy diverts attention from the topic at hand to focus on an unrelated issue. Each of these fallacies differs fundamentally from the ad hominem approach, which directly targets the individual making the argument, revealing the problematic nature of dismissing ideas based on personal attacks.

7. What characterized indirect support in an argument?

- A. A direct relationship between premises and conclusion
- B. A premise that offers indirect support for the main conclusion
- C. A logical fallacy in the presented argument
- D. A rebuttal to the main conclusion

Indirect support in an argument is characterized by a premise that offers indirect support for the main conclusion. In this context, indirect support means that although a premise may not directly lead to the conclusion, it still contributes to strengthening the overall argument in a more subtle way. This can occur when a premise provides background information, context, or aligns with other premises that ultimately back the conclusion. Such premises help to establish a framework that makes the main conclusion more plausible or acceptable, even if they don't lead to it in a straightforward manner. This concept is foundational in critical thinking because it highlights the complexity of how arguments are constructed. Understanding that support can be indirect allows for a deeper analysis of how different pieces of evidence and reasoning work together to form a coherent argument.

8. What is an essential trait of someone who thinks critically?

- A. They accept conclusions without questioning
- B. They are open to exploring various viewpoints
- C. They always choose one side of an argument
- D. They avoid interaction with opposing views

An essential trait of someone who thinks critically is their openness to exploring various viewpoints. Critical thinking involves evaluating information, considering alternative perspectives, and being willing to engage with different arguments. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues, as it encourages individuals to analyze evidence and reasoning from multiple angles before arriving at a conclusion. Critically thinking individuals do not accept conclusions blindly; instead, they question assumptions and explore a range of options. This characteristic helps them to refine their ideas and develop more informed and nuanced conclusions that take into account the validity and relevance of differing opinions. By actively seeking out diverse perspectives, critical thinkers can strengthen their arguments and anticipate counterarguments, thereby enhancing their overall reasoning process.

9. Which fallacy occurs when an argument is diverted to an irrelevant issue, distracting from the original issue?

- A. Red herring fallacy
- B. Straw man fallacy
- C. Ad hominem fallacy
- D. Genetic fallacy

The red herring fallacy occurs when an argument is deliberately diverted to an irrelevant issue, leading the discussion away from the original topic at hand. This tactic shifts the focus from the main argument or issue, often creating confusion or obscuring the truth. It is used to distract the audience and can derail meaningful discussion by introducing unrelated concerns that seem relevant but ultimately detract from the points being made. For example, during a debate about environmental policies, if one party begins discussing unrelated personal anecdotes or shifts the subject to unrelated historical events, that would represent a red herring. This tactic is particularly problematic in logical discourse, as it prevents the audience from engaging with the actual argument posed, rendering productive debate difficult.

10. What is an example of a conclusion indicator?

- A. However
- B. Therefore
- C. Additionally
- D. Since

A conclusion indicator is a word or phrase that signals the presence of a conclusion being drawn from previous premises or statements. The word "therefore" serves specifically to convey that what follows is the result or inference of the preceding argument. It effectively suggests a logical connection between the premises and the conclusion, indicating that the speaker or writer is summarizing or wrapping up their reasoning. In contrast, other options such as "however," "additionally," and "since" function differently in arguments. "However" typically indicates a contrast or opposition to what has been previously stated, "additionally" is used to introduce new information that complements what was already mentioned, and "since" generally indicates a premise or reason that supports an argument rather than leading to a conclusion.