

# Introduction to Logical Reasoning

## *Language and Disputes*

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# Neutral vs. Emotive Language

Compare the headlines:

**FATHER KILLS DAUGHTER**

**MUSLIM KILLS DAUGHTER**

Do these mean the same thing or are they different?

# Neutral vs. Emotive Language

**Denotation:** The literal or primary meaning of a word or phrase.

**Connotation:** The idea or feeling that a word or phrase invokes in a person.

# The Conjugation Game

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I am *firm*. You are *obstinate*. He is a *pig-headed fool*.

I am *righteously indignant*. You are *annoyed*. He is *making a fuss about nothing*.

I have *reconsidered it*. You have *changed your mind*. He has *gone back on his word*.

# Disputes: Beliefs and Attitudes

**Disputes over Beliefs (Facts):** When the parties disagree over what they take to be the *correct facts* of some given situation.

**Disputes over Attitudes (Values):** When the parties disagree in their *evaluations* of some given situation.

Of course, many disputes may involve disagreements over both beliefs (facts) and attitudes (values).

# Analyzing a Dispute

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**A:** Key West, Florida is much more beautiful than Doha, Qatar.

**B:** No it isn't. Doha is way more beautiful.

In this dispute, **A** and **B** disagree over a statement asserting that Key West is more beautiful than Doha, with **A** affirming it and **B** denying it. This is best described as a disagreement over attitudes (values), with **A** more positive about Key West than **B** is.

# Analyzing a Dispute

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**A:** Key West, Florida is further south than Doha, Qatar.

**B:** No, it is Doha that is further south.

In this dispute, **A** and **B** disagree over a statement asserting that Doha is further south than Key West, with **B** affirming it and **A** denying it. This is best described as a disagreement over beliefs (facts), since there is a fact of geography that could settle it.

# Problem 1

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Analyze the following dispute:

**A:** Absence makes the heart grow fonder.

**B:** Out of sight, out of mind.



# Disputes and Ambiguity

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**Merely Verbal Dispute:** When the disagreement between the parties rests primarily on different understandings of a word or phrase. The conflict is resolved by having them agree on how they should use this word or phrase.

# Disputes and Ambiguity

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**Obviously Genuine Dispute:** There is a very real disagreement between the parties (either in belief or in attitude or in both), and this disagreement does not rest on any confusion concerning ambiguous words or phrases.

# Disputes and Ambiguity

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**Apparently Verbal but Really Genuine:** There is not a shared understanding of some word or phrase, but resolving this disagreement is not likely to settle the deeper disagreement between the parties.

# Analyzing a Dispute

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**A:** You need to take Introduction to Logical Reasoning to graduate from the journalism program.

**B:** Actually, I can take a course on statistics instead.

In this dispute, **A** and **B** disagree over a statement asserting that journalism majors must take this course, with **A** affirming it and **B** denying it. This is best described as a obviously genuine dispute (no ambiguities to blame), and it a dispute over beliefs involving a factual matter.

# Analyzing a Dispute

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**A:** Qatar is the most prosperous country in the world, just look at its incredible GDP.

**B:** No, it is not. The life expectancy of the average Qatari is lower than that of the average Albanian (a poor country).

In this dispute, **A** and **B** disagree over a statement asserting that Qatar is the most prosperous country, with **A** for and **B** against. This is apparently verbal, with the word “prosperous” being used differently by **A** and **B**, but it is really genuine since there is a clear dispute over attitudes (values) concerning Qatar, with **A** seeming to approve of Qatar and **B** seeming to disapprove of it.

# Problem 2

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Analyze the following dispute:

**A:** Maha is a freshman journalism student at NU-Q.

**B:** No she isn't! She's a senior studying computer science at CMU-Q.

# Problem 3

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Analyze the following dispute:

**A:** The people who built the pyramids were slaves because they were forced to do the work.

**B:** No, they were not slaves. They were given food, clothing, and lodging while they worked.

# Next Class...

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We will have a review for **exam #1**. The exam itself is this Thursday.

In the meantime, practice, practice, practice!