

Introduction to Logical Reasoning

Dispute Analysis

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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

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 the statement “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

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 the statement “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.

Analyzing a Dispute

Remember, a dispute is always about something!

So when analyzing a dispute, the first thing to do is determine the statement that is in dispute. This is the statement that one party is affirming while the other party is denying it.

With this statement identified, the dispute will be much easier to analyze because your analysis will constantly refer back to that statement.

Disagreement 1

Analyze the following dispute:

A: Absence makes the heart grow fonder.

B: Out of sight, out of mind.

Disputes and Ambiguity

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

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

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

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 the statement “**B** must take Introduction to Logical Reasoning to graduate from the journalism program”, 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

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.

In this dispute, **A** and **B** disagree over the statement “Qatar is the most prosperous country in the world”, 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.

Disagreement 2

Analyze the following dispute:

A: Maha from logic class is a freshman business student from Carnegie Mellon .

B: No she isn't! Maha is one of the Northwestern TAs for the course!

Disagreement 3

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...

We will have an in-class review session for **exam #1**.

The exam itself is this Thursday (September 27TH), so keep practicing on this material!