

Introduction to Logical Reasoning

Workshop on Argument Parsing

Part I: Each of the following problems presents an argument. For each argument, (1) underline any conclusion indicators, (2) circle any premise indicators, (3) circle and denote with a C the argument's conclusion, and (4) underline and number each premise. These arguments should be fairly straightforward to parse.

1. Campaign finance reform is needed because many contributions to political campaigns are morally equivalent to bribes.
2. In spite of the fact that electrons are physical entities, they cannot be seen. For electrons are too small to deflect photons.
3. The defendant is guilty. The reasons being he confessed to stealing the jewels, he was present at the scene of the crime, and his fingerprints are on the safe.
4. If Qatar wins the Asian Cup, then the fans from Bahrain will shout obscenities. So you should leave your children at home because Qatar is going to win it!

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Part II: Each of the following problems presents an argument. For each argument, (1) underline any conclusion indicators, (2) circle any premise indicators, (3) circle and denote with a C the argument's conclusion, and (4) underline and number each premise. Some of these arguments may require a little more thought.

1. The newest news dispenser, the runaway Internet, makes a journalist out of anybody who has a modem. It values speed and sensation above accuracy. New media will not accept our standards. We are foolish to treat them as if they have. This is a grim time for newspapers.

—Sandra Mims Rowe, Editor, *Portland Oregonian*,
Keynote Address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1 April 1998.

2. Either the Internet is killing journalism or journalists are adapting. But the Internet has widened the audience of news consumers and put more news at people's fingertips, and if these two things are true then the Internet is not killing journalism. So the Internet is not killing journalism. Therefore journalists are adapting.

3. It is the non-Internet media that have made the most notorious journalistic errors of late: the bogus eyewitness account of a Monica-Clinton tryst, the incrimination of Richard Jewell [falsely accused by the media for bombing the 1996 Summer Olympics], the digital capping of [septuplets father] Bobbi McCaughey's teeth, the serial publication of plagiarized and fictional stories in The New Republic and, just three days after the Drudge speech, [American comedian] Bob Hope's "death." It's past time to retire the Internet as a scapegoat for journalistic ills. It's a medium, not a message, and it can be used as irresponsibly or as honorably as a printing press or a TV network can.

—Frank Rich, Opinion, *New York Times*, 10 June 1998.