

1.2 Are there hidden assumptions in the argument?

Hidden assumptions

Exercises

1. Identify the hidden assumptions in the following arguments:

1.1 The customer can't expect much consideration from a multinational like XXX.

1.2 This year Dishglow washing up liquid outsold its three nearest competitors combined. It's clearly the best washing up liquid on the market.

1.3 If you don't believe him, who *can* you believe? After all, he is a member of the clergy.

1.4 The incidence of obesity in small village communities is 30% lower than it is in large cities. Therefore, city councils should place stricter controls on the planning permission they give for the setting up of fast food outlets.

2. Assess the reasoning in the following arguments by framing the hidden assumptions. In some cases more than one will be necessary to show how the argument is developed. Are these assumptions true? Does the conclusion necessarily follow from them?

2.1 The weather forecast for the next three days says that there will be no snow. So we can go ahead with our plans to travel tomorrow?

2.2 I admit, I copied most of my essay from the Internet. What's the problem with that? Everybody does it!

2.3 Over the past year the manufacturer has recalled 50,000 of those cars, because of a problem with the steering. You won't get me buying one of those cars. They are obviously not safe.

2.4 There is no evidence that William Shakespeare was capable of writing the plays that are attributed to him. After all, he was just a minor Elizabethan actor. This proves that he didn't write them.

2.5 If it is possible for airlines to offer charter flights that are significantly cheaper than scheduled flights, it is clear that the ticket prices on scheduled flights are far too high and the airlines are making an extortionate profit from them.

2.6 The United Nations must do all it can to limit the birth rate in countries whose food supply is inadequate.

2.7 Although we can argue that most TV programmes are an insult to our intelligence, we ought not to blame the TV companies or the advertisers. They are just giving viewers what they want to see. Just take a look at the viewing figures for these programmes.

2.8 When universities introduce programmes designed to recognise and reward outstanding teachers, this usually involves conducting polls among students. But this is far from being the fairest or the most accurate way of doing it. This sort of thing always degenerates into a mere popularity contest.