## Circular arguments - valid or not?

by <u>Norva Lo</u> - Monday, 22 October 2012, 12:01 AM

**(a)** What is a **circular argument**?

**(b)** Are all circular arguments **valid**? Why or why not?

**(c)** Give an **example** of an argument which is both circular and sound,
and also an **Yl Ua d`Y** of an argument which is both cirular and unsound.

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### Re: Circular arguments - valid or not?

by *Mai* - Monday, 22 October 2012, 12:51 AM

A circular argument is as the word suggests, the argument goes in a circle, where the conclusion is the same as the premise. it is a bad argument because the premise does not provide a ~~good~~ [independent] reason to the conclusion. the premise is the same as the conclusion.
they generally go in this form'"

" your dog is dead. Therefore, your dog is dead." or'"

" You are hungry, Therefore, you are hungry"'"

It may be a bad argument however it is stil an argument.'"

It is valid because the truth of the premise logically 100% gaurantees the conclusion. The official definition of valid is that'"
It is logically impossible for all premises to be true and the conclusion to be false at the same time.'"

And for the argument to be sound then, the argumnet needs to be valid and all the premises are true.'"

Therefore we can have a **j U`]X`i bgci bX`V¶fW`Uf`Uf[ i a YbH**"

eg; "I am a mermaid. Therefore I am a mermaid."'"

However the argument below is both **V¶fW`Uf`UbX`gci bX**.'"

"Most peolpe living in Australia speak English. Therefore most people living in Australia speak English."'"


(Edited by <u>Norva Lo</u> - original submission Monday, 22 October 2012, 12:50 AM)

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### Re: Circular arguments - valid or not?

by <u>Norva Lo</u> - Wednesday, 8 *Bcj Ya VYf* 201&, 4:00 PM

Well done!   I have made a correction (in BLUE) to your answer.

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## Sound argument - true conclusion?
*by Norva Lo - Monday, 22 October 2012, 1:10 AM*

If an argument is sound, then **does it follow** that it has a true conclusion? **Why or why not**?

Please provide an explanation!

## Re: Sound argument - true conclusion?
*by George ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ - Monday, 22 October 2012, 6:39 PM*

If an argument is sound, it follows that the argument has a true conclusion.

For an argument to be sound it must be valid, and all it's premises must be true.

Validity can be defined as "It being logically necessary that if all the premises are true then the conclusion is also true."

Therefore if an argument is sound, it must be valid; so, the premises of the argument must be true and its conclusion must be true.

## Re: Sound argument - true conclusion?
*by Norva Lo - Sunday, 23 October 2012, 10:54 AM*

Perfect!

**Subject:** Questions about A02+A02.6 examples      **Topic:** Lecture 3

**Author:** Laura      **Date:** 9 August 2010 6:44 PM

In Validity and Soundness reading, I am wondering whether if just by changing the wording of the premises can make into a valid argument? Ie:
All management consultants are bald.
Peter is bald.
So Peter is a management consultant.
Changed to:
All bald people are management consultants.
Peter is bald.
So Peter is a management consultant.

Also, I am bit confused with:
"Any valid argument with a true conclusion is sound." The tutorial page says that it doesn't necessarily have to be so, and I can't think of an exmaple that fits it.

Reply    Forward

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**Subject:** Re:Questions about A02+A02.6 examples      **Topic:** Lecture 3

**Author:** Ross Brady      **Date:** 10 August 2010 2:44 PM

Laura,
With your changes to the argument, you have changed it from an invalid one to a valid one, but it is a _different_ argument now.

A sound argument is a valid one with true premises. It is possible for a valid argument to have a false premise and a true conclusion. E.g. (P1) 3=6. (P2) 6=3. Therefore (C) 3=3. [by transitivity of identity]   Since this valid argument has a false premise, it is unsound - despite its true conclusion.
Ross.

In Reply to: Questions about A02+A02.6 examples

Reply

**Subject:** Lecture 9
**Author:** Laura

**Topic:** About Lectures
**Date:** 18 October 2010 5:31 PM

I was wondering whether cirucluar inferences and irrelevant could be counted as the same? I mean, if a premise is just the conclusion, or a paraphrasing of it, would that count as well as an irrelevant premise?

Reply   Forward

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**Subject:** Re:Lecture 9
**Author:** Ross Brady

**Topic:** About Lectures
**Date:** 19 October 2010 6:14 PM

Laura,
This a difference between circular and irrelevant premises. If a premise is the conclusion, one can deduce the conclusion from the premise and the argument is circular and not very useful. If the premise has nothing to do with the rest of the argument, it can be deleted without loss and the argument should be valid if it was valid before the deletion, or invalid if invalid before deletion.
Hope this helps.
Ross.
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Reply   Forward

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**Subject:** Re:Lecture 9
**Author:** Norva Y.S. Lo

**Topic:** About Lectures
**Date:** 5 December 2010 6:02 PM

"Circularity" is a term about inference. An inference is circular when the conclusion itself (or some close variation of it) appears as a premise.

"Irrelevant premise" means a premise whose truth/falsity will neither increase nor reduce the probability of the conclusion.

Norva

Reply

### Error?
by Michele - Tuesday, 23 August 2011, 12:27 PM

One example says "I want to smoke" and the other says "I want to be healthy", yet they are labelled in the example as being consistent.

Is this a typo and perhaps it should be inconsistent or say that "I do not want to smoke" in order to be consisent with "I want to be healthy?"

thanks

Michele

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### Re: Error?
by _Norva Lo_ - Friday, 26 August 2011, 04:21 PM

"I want to smoke" and "I want to be healthy" are statements are about **what a certain person wants**. The statements are indeed consistent with each other. For it is logically possible for a person to at the same time want to smoke and also want to be healthy. (Definition: Statement X and Y are consistent iff it is logically possible for both statement to be true at the same time).

The empirical fact that the two states of affairs (e.g., that I smoke, and that I am healthy) do not usually go together does not imply that people cannot at the same time want both to happen. In fact, people do often desire things that do not hold empirically. The two statements in questions are about what desires a person has - not about whether the things the person desired by the person are likely to happen. To the extent that it is logically possible for a person to at the same time desire health and cigerattes, the two statements "I want to smoke" and "I want to be healthy" are consistent. The two statements can both be true at the same time - for it is possible for me to at the same time desire those two things - regardless whether or not they can both be achieved given the empirical facts about the effects of smoking on the human body. Indeed, even if something is empirically impossible (e.g., that a human being can fly by simply flapping their arms up and down), it is still empirically possible (and certainly logically possible) for people to desire it to happen. So, we must distinguish the possibility for something to happen from the possibility of people wanting it to happen.

Another example, it is possible for an irrational person to believe "If A then B" and "not B" but also believes "A". This conjunction of the person's belief contents is self-contradictory, and shows that the person is irrational (note: rational people would not have beliefs the contents of which are consistent with each other). However, the **having of those beliefs** - the fact that a person holds those beliefs - is not in itself an inconsistent state of affair. Likewise, a person might have wants whose contents are inconsistent with each other, but the person's **having** such wants is itself a logical possibility and therefore not an inconsistent state of affair. Again, we must in principle distinguish the question whether the content of a desire or a belief is logically possible from the question whether the possession of the desire or belief is logically possible.