

Statements and Arguments

Introduction: In these questions a proposal followed by two arguments is given. One has to examine the arguments in the context of the given proposal so as to determine their strength. The statements given in these questions, normally, are of interrogative nature.

They are two important concepts:- “**Proposal**” and “**Argument**”.

Proposal: Most of the questions are based on a “Proposal”. A proposal, here means a course of action to be taken up.

Argument: A proposal is followed by two arguments. An argument maybe in favour of or against the proposal. One has to check the strength of the argument. This cannot be misconstrued as considering only favourable arguments.

Preliminary Screening:

Read the argument and discard it if it is:

a) Ambiguous

b) Disproportionate

c) Irrelevant

d) Comparative

e) Simplistic

a) Ambiguous:

The argument should have clarity in the reason suggested in it. The argument should be contextual and express its support or opposition to the given statement in explicit terms.

Example:

Statement: Should India wage war against Pakistan ?

Argument: No, both India and Pakistan are at fault.

Analysis: Here, though the argument refers to the subject in the statement, it has no clarity. Thus, the argument is ambiguous.

b) Disproportionate:

The reasons given in the argument, in support or against the given statement, should be comparable to the magnitude of the situation given in the statement.

Example:

Statement: Should every citizen be asked to use only pencil to write instead of pen?

Argument: Yes, usage of pencil leads to reduction in wastage of paper. This helps in protection of environment.

Analysis: The argument links usage of pencil to protection environment., because errors can be rectified on the same paper. This measure, in practice, makes little difference to the environment, hence, the argument is rejected.

c) Irrelevant

The argument should relate its reasoning to the context given in the statement.

Example:

Statement: Should the syllabus for primary classes be reduced, to enable the students to understand the concepts piece meal?

Argument:

1. No, it gives more leisure to students, which may lead to juvenile delinquency.
2. No, the syllabus should include subjects that help in increasing IQ levels of students.

Analysis: The reason given in argument (1) is out of context when compared to the statement. Hence, this argument is irrelevant.

d) Comparative

The argument should suggest why or why not the proposed action be implemented, basing on favourable or adverse results that follow after implementation.

Example:

Statement: Should India reform its taxation policy?

Argument:

1. Yes, it helps in rationalisation of taxes.
2. Yes, many countries are doing so.

Analysis: Argument (1) is a valid argument because it is based on a positive result that would follow the suggested action.

Argument(2) is not based on any resulting effect of the suggested action .

Hence, this is not a valid argument.

e) Simplistic:

These kind of arguments, though they are related to the statements, make a simple assertion or there is no substantiation to strengthen the argument.

Example:

Statement: Should India wage war against Pakistan?

Argument: 1. Yes, it should be done immediately.

Argument: 2. No, it is not going to help.

Analysis:

Argument (1) simply suggests that it should be done immediately. Hence, this argument is too simple.

Argument (2) does not show how it is not going to help. Hence, argument (2) is also simplistic.

Exercise Questions:

1) **Statement:** Should Yoga be introduced as a part of the curriculum by schools?

Argument 1: Yes: This will help students improve their mental ability.

Argument 2:No: This will not help students to improve studentship qualities but will burden them with extra school-hours.

Options:

- (1) if only argument I is strong.
- (2) if only argument II is strong.
- (3) if either I or II is strong.
- (4) if neither I nor II is strong.
- (5) if both I and II are strong.

Answer: Option (5)

Solution: Both the statements, if true, are valid and strong arguments.

2) **Statement:** Should we switch to a green fuel (fuel extracted from food grains)?

Arguments:

- I. Yes, it does not pollute the environment.
- II. No, it will increase the prices of food products.

Options:

- (1) if only argument I is strong.
- (2) if only argument II is strong.
- (3) if either I or II is strong.
- (4) if neither I nor II is strong.
- (5) if both I and II are strong.

Answer: Option (1)

Solution: I is based on a positive result and desirable. Hence I is strong. II is not strong because there can be separate production for this purpose. Only I is strong.

3) **Statement:** Should students pursue higher education?

Arguments:

- I. Yes, they would be able to earn more money.
- II. No, there is no need as such.

Options:

- (1) if only argument I is strong.
- (2) if only argument II is strong.
- (3) if either I or II is strong.
- (4) if neither I nor II is strong.
- (5) if both I and II are strong.

Answer: Option (1)

Solution: Earning more money is a desirable positive result. Hence I is strong. II is simple, and so substantial reason is given, hence II is not a strong argument. Only I is strong.

Exercise Questions

Each question given below consists of a statement, followed by two arguments numbered I and II. You have to decide which of the arguments is a 'strong' argument and which is a 'weak' argument.

Give answer:

- (a) If only argument I is strong
- (b) If only argument II is strong
- (c) If either I or II is strong
- (d) If neither I nor II is strong and
- (e) If both I and II are strong.

1. Statement: Should the health care service be nationalized?

Arguments: I. Yes. It has been done elsewhere also.

II. No. The quality of health care service will deteriorate.

2. Statement: Should cottage industries be encouraged in rural areas?

Arguments: I. Yes. Rural people are creative.

II. Yes. This would help to solve the problem of unemployment to some extent.

3.Statement: Should election expenses to Central and State Legislatures be met by the Government?

Arguments: I. Yes. It will put an end to political corruption.

II. No. It is not good in any country.

4.Statement: Is ragging in colleges a good practice?

Arguments: I. Yes. A sensible ragging helps the schoolboys to step into manhood and teaches them to take trifles in good humour.

II. No. The tortures inflicted in the name of ragging and the humiliation suffered by young boys and girls often go beyond limits.

5.Statement: Can pollution be controlled?

Arguments: I. Yes. If everyone realizes the hazard it may create and co-operates to get rid of it, pollution may be controlled.

II. No. The crowded highways, factories and industries and an ever-growing population eager to acquire more and more land for constructing houses are beyond control.

Answer & Explanations

1. Ans:d

Clearly, going in for something just because others have done it, is not a strong argument. Also, on the other hand, nationalization of health care service will only promote the service and not deteriorate it. So none of the arguments holds strong.

2. Ans:b

Clearly, cottage industries need to be promoted to create more job opportunities for rural people in the villages themselves. The reason that rural people are creative is vague. So, only argument II holds.

3. Ans:a

Clearly, the policy will end political corruption that is unleashed to extract these amounts. The second argument is vague. So, only argument I holds.

4. Ans:e

Clearly, sensible ragging makes students broad-minded and well acquainted with each other. So, argument I is valid. However, sometimes, these young boys and girls are tortured and humiliated too much in the name of ragging, which makes it an unhealthy practice. So, argument II also holds strong.

5. Ans:c

The control of population, on one hand, seems to be impossible because of the ever growing needs and the disconcert of the people but, on the other hand, the control is possible by a joint effort. So, either of the arguments will hold strong.