PreAP Writing Tips

LOGIC and Syllogisms

Walters – Spring 2014

C.D.W. – Claim/Data/Warrant

According to Stephen Toulmin, the claim in a CDW argument is really its conclusion. For example, consider the following argument:

Claim: George Zimmerman deserves to go to prison.

Data: He shot an unarmed seventeen year-old teenager.

At first glance, this may appear to be valid. In a moment we will invert this argument and place it into a formal syllogism. For now, however, let us examine the “claim” or the conclusion: George Zimmerman deserves to go to prison. There are many people of all political stripes who feel this way. However, what is unstated is their WARRANT for this argument.

The unstated WARRANT for the conclusion is this: People who harm innocent people ought to be separated out from the rest of society. The DATA is: George Zimmerman is such person who harmed an innocent person. The CLAIM or CONCLUSION then would be: George Zimmerman deserves to go to prison.

If one accepts the truthfulness of both the warrant (Major Premise) and the truthfulness of the data (Minor Premise), the conclusion must follow necessarily from the first two. In short, if the Warrant is true and the Data is true, then the conclusion (CLAIM) must necessarily be true as well.

Let’s see how this works in a classical SYLLOGISM:

MAJOR PREMISE: All little boys love their mommy.

MINOR PREMISE: Timmy is a little boy.

CONCLUSION: Therefore, Timmy loves his mommy.

The validity of this argument is sound. There is a universal major premise with a distributed minor premise, with a valid conclusion that touches on both premises.

However, the truthfulness of this argument can be questioned. What about the little boy who DOESN’T love his mommy. Perhaps little Timmy neither loves nor even knows his mommy--perhaps Timmy’s mommy has abused Timmy! Perhaps Timmy has a rare personality disorder, who know? The bottom line is: if you can find instances of little boys who don’t love their mommy, the truthfulness of this claim at the very least can be questioned, if not refuted.

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| Toulmin’s Logic | Aristotilian Syllogism |
| CLAIM: Timmy loves his mother.  | MAJOR PREMISE: All little boys love their mothers.  |
| DATA: He’s a little boy.  | MINOR PREMISE: Timmy is a little boy.  |
| WARRANT: All little boys love their mother.  | CONCLUSION: Therefore, Timmy loves his mother. |

Perhaps this will be more clear if we scrutinize the George Zimmerman argument above juxtaposed with a classical syllogism. Examine this chart:

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| --- | --- |
| Toulmin’s Logic | Aristotilian Syllogism |
| CLAIM: George Zimmerman deserves to go to prison. | MAJOR PREMISE: Individuals who harm innocent kids deserve to go to prison.  |
| DATA: George Zimmerman shot and killed (harmed) an innocent kid.  | MINOR PREMISE: George Zimmermam shot and killed (harmed) an innocent kid.  |
| WARRANT: Individuals who harm innocent kids deserve to go to prison.  | CONCLUSION: Therefore, GZ should go to prison.  |

If you set these arguments side by side, you see immediately that they are really the same thing. The conclusion of a classical syllogism is the CLAIM of Toulmin’s logic. But a problem emerges when writers fail to do either one of two things:

* Validate the DATA or…
* Clarify the WARRANT

Thus, when a ***rhetor*** (speaker) uses an enthymeme (an argument that only has the claim and the data), he or she is really leaving out the warrant/rule, or the major premise of the syllogism. And that’s what an enthymeme is: a short argument that leaves out the warrant.

Lastly, before you practice some of this, remember that the warrant is the “rule” that one assumes to be true and that is a general statement, not a particular one. Thus, the statement, “I’m sure you want a new iPhone. You are a teenager, after all!” assumes a warrant or a rule: “All teenagers want the newest thing out there, especially when that thing improves one’s status.”

PRACTICE DIRECTIONS

In the following statements, establish the WARRANT for each CLAIM. Next, write the CDW as a syllogism. (Keep in mind that the warrant is the “rule” for each particular claim.) Next, fill out the CDW/Syllogism Charts for each number.

CDW 1.

1. CLAIM: Gilgamesh should continue to take other men’s wives as his own.

DATA: After all, he is the king. (Gilgamesh’s thinking, not this teacher’s)

WARRANT\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

CLASSICAL SYLLOGISM Version

Major Premise: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Minor Premise: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 CDW Version SYLLOGISM

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| --- | --- |
| Claim | Major Premise (MP) |
| Data | Minor Premise (mP) |
| Warrant | Conclusion |

CDW 2. CLAIM: We, the Sumerian gods, must stop Gilgamesh from abusing his subjects.

DATA: Gilgamesh forces men to give him their wives, and he’s taking young sons for his wars.

WARRANT: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

CLASSICAL SYLLOGISM

Major Premise: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Minor Premise: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

CDW

 CDW Version SYLLOGISM

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| --- | --- |
| Claim | Major Premise (MP) |
| Data | Minor Premise (mP) |
| Warrant | Conclusion |

CDW 3. CLAIM: America must stop Syrian President Bashar Assad from gassing his own people.

DATA: He used sarin gas to attack and murder rebels in his own country.

WARRANT: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

CLASSICAL SYLLOGISM

Major Premise: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Minor Premise: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 CDW Version SYLLOGISM

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| Claim | Major Premise (MP) |
| Data | Minor Premise (mP) |
| Warrant | Conclusion |

CDW 4. CLAIM: America should not get involved with the ongoing conflict in Syria.

DATA: Syrian forces will retaliate and turn to other countries for help against the US.

WARRANT: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

CLASSICAL SYLLOGISM

Major Premise: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Minor Premise: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 CDW Version SYLLOGISM

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| Claim | Major Premise (MP) |
| Data | Minor Premise (mP) |
| Warrant | Conclusion |

CDW 5. CLAIM: You, Eve, should eat from the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, although Yahweh hath said not to.

DATA: After all, the fruit looks really pretty and it probably tastes pretty darn amazing, too.

WARRANT: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

CLASSICAL SYLLOGISM

Major Premise: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Minor Premise: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 CDW Version SYLLOGISM

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Claim | Major Premise (MP) |
| Data | Minor Premise (mP) |
| Warrant | Conclusion |