



What is an Argument?



Intro

- This is a PowerPoint derived from the DebateDrills Academy course “Intro to Argument Structure.”
- To see more (including a video), check it out [here](#).



Definition

- Grounded in formal logic
- A series of premises intended to support a conclusion
- Ex: “Luke is a Jedi, so he is awesome”



Refuting Arguments

- Many options to challenge arguments:
 - Luke is not a Jedi
 - Jedis are not awesome
 - Being awesome is irrelevant
- Can deny a premise, or attack link between premise and conclusion



Deduction and Induction

- Deduction: A conclusion follows with necessity from the premises
 - (i) Socrates is a man; (ii) Men are mortal; (iii) Socrates is mortal
- Induction: A conclusion follows with probability from the premises
 - (i) The sun has risen every day; (ii) it will rise tomorrow



Soundness and Validity

- Valid: If the premises are true, the conclusion is true
- Soundness: The premises are true, and the argument is valid
- When might these diverge?
 - “The moon is made of cheese. Lactose intolerance is caused by cheese. The moon causes lactose intolerance.”



When are arguments used?

- Nearly everything in debate is an argument
- Arguments support your position, and attack your opponent's position



What isn't an argument?

- Statements that lack premises and/or conclusions
 - “Patricia went to work”
 - “Jim is tall”

These are observations, but lack argumentative structure

- Arguments are the core building block for debate



The structure

- Traditional logic: Premises and conclusion
- In debate, we use a more specialized set of words to describe arguments
- Complete arguments have 3 parts: (1) Claim, (2) Warrant, (3) Impact

An Example



The sun is going to shine tomorrow. The meteorologist has said it will be sunny, and they're always right. If we know the weather, we can plan our clothing for school the next day appropriately.



Claim

- Purpose: What the argument sets out to prove
- “The sun is going to shine tomorrow.”



Warrant

- The meat of the argument - why is the claim correct?
- “The meteorologist has said it will be sunny, and they’re always right.”



Impact

- Why should we care that this is true?
- “If we know the weather, we can plan our days appropriately.”



Conclusion

- Arguments are the core building blocks for debate rounds
- Argument Structure: Claim, Warrant, Impact

Thank you for watching!