

Introduction to Philosophy:

Questions, Reasons, and Arguments



- Build practical reasoning skills for workplace and everyday decisions



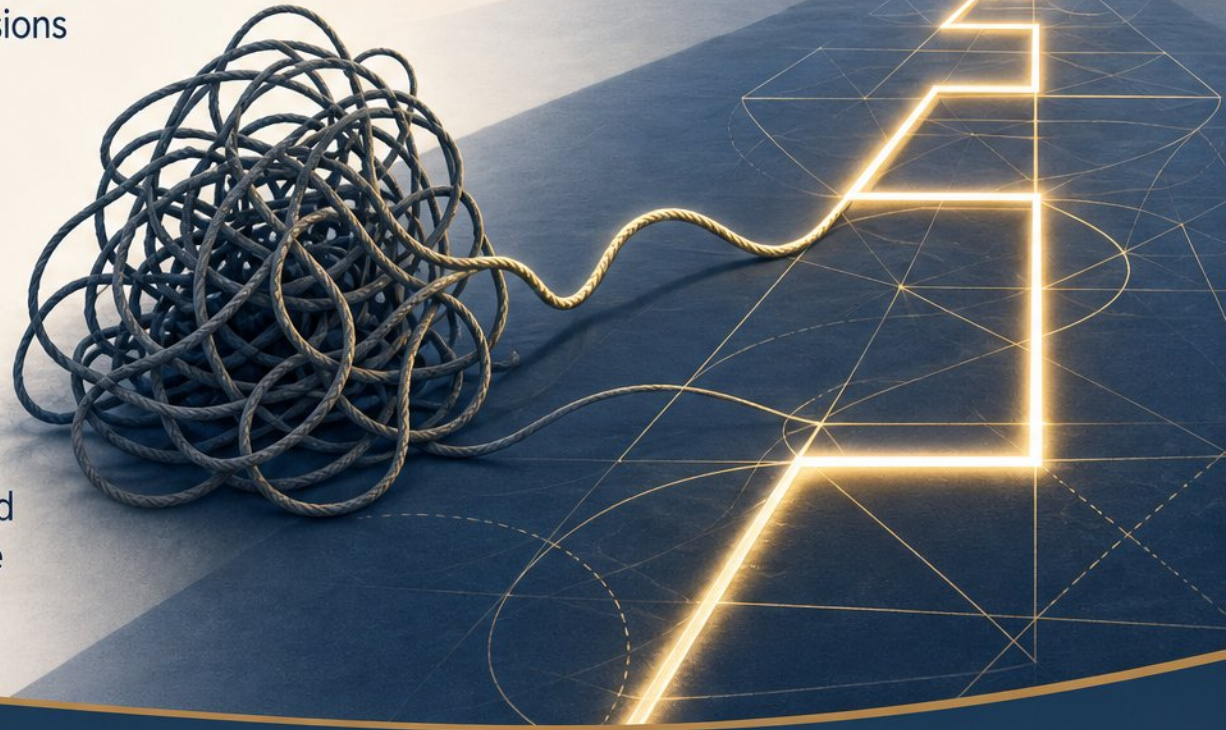
- Distinguish questions, claims, reasons, counterexamples, and inferences



- Avoid confusion: a simple everyday example of muddled thinking



- Philosophy as clear, structured thinking—not abstract debate



The Starting Point: What Makes a Good Question?



- **Define a question:** sentence seeking information, not stating or commanding



- **Grammatically closed:** yields yes/no; **conceptually open:** sparks inquiry



- **Grammatically open** invites depth but may lose focus quickly



- **The X-question technique:** ask closed, then "Can you say why?" to open up



- **Practice:** extract the hidden conceptual question behind a dispute



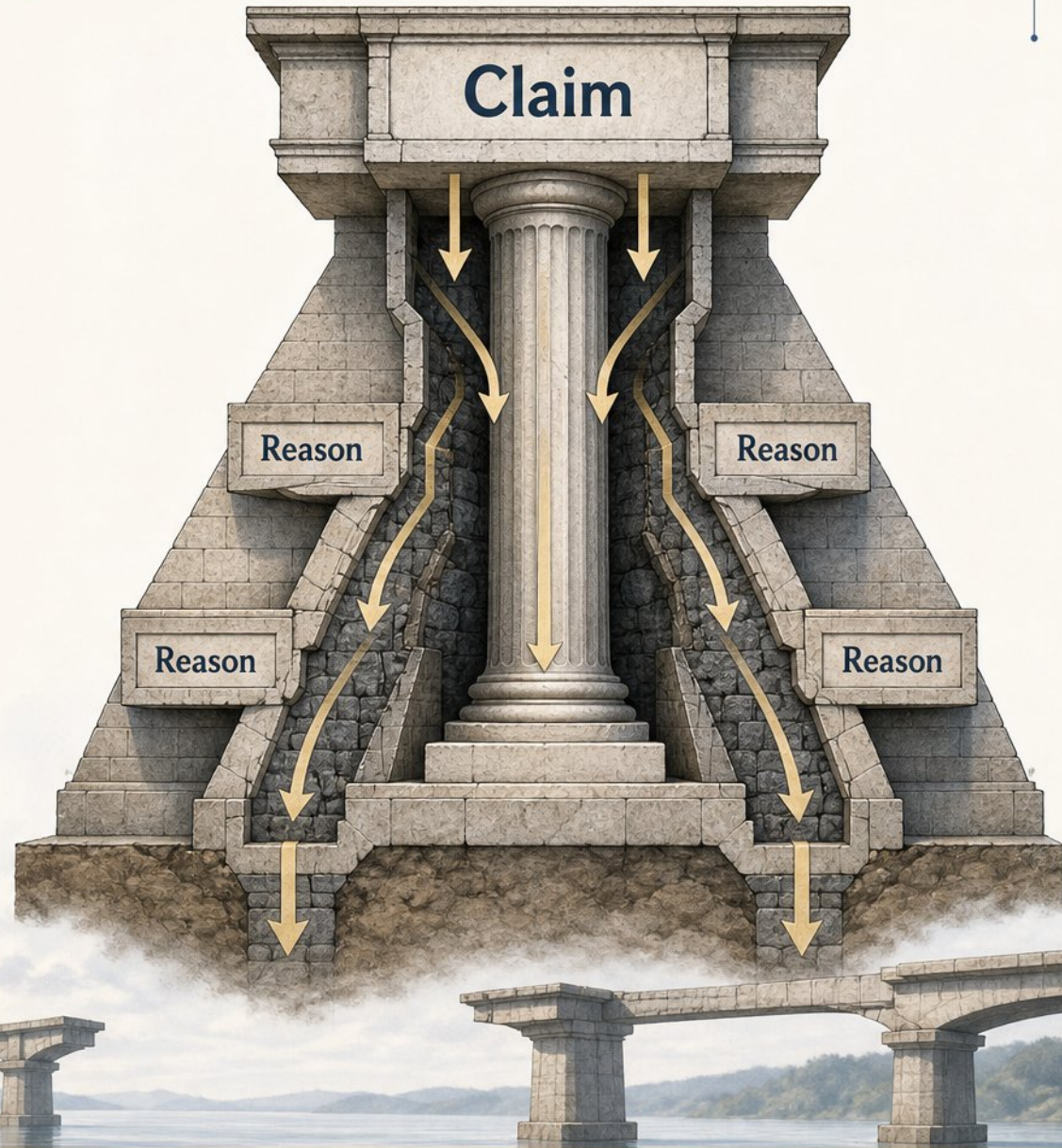
Claims: What Is Being Asserted

- A claim is a statement with truth value—it can be true or false [S1,S5]
- Questions, commands, and explanations are not claims [S1,S2]
- Isolate the main claim: "What is this trying to convince me of?" [S2]
- Rhetorical questions and disguised commands can be borderline claims [S1]
- Use indicator words like "therefore" and "so" to spot conclusions [S3]



Reasons: The Support Structure

- A reason is a claim that answers “Why do you say that?”
- Passes the “because” test; connects to a conclusion
- Look for indicators: because, since, for, given that
- Weak reasons: restatements, emotions, or irrelevant facts
- Use the ‘Why do you say that?’ challenge to test support



Practice: Separating Questions, Claims, and Reasons



- Label questions, claims, and reasons in short workplace scenarios



- Handle sentences that play two roles at once



- Mark up texts: separate main claim from supporting reasons



- Avoid common mistakes like confusing restatements with reasons



- Check answer keys to reinforce correct labeling logic



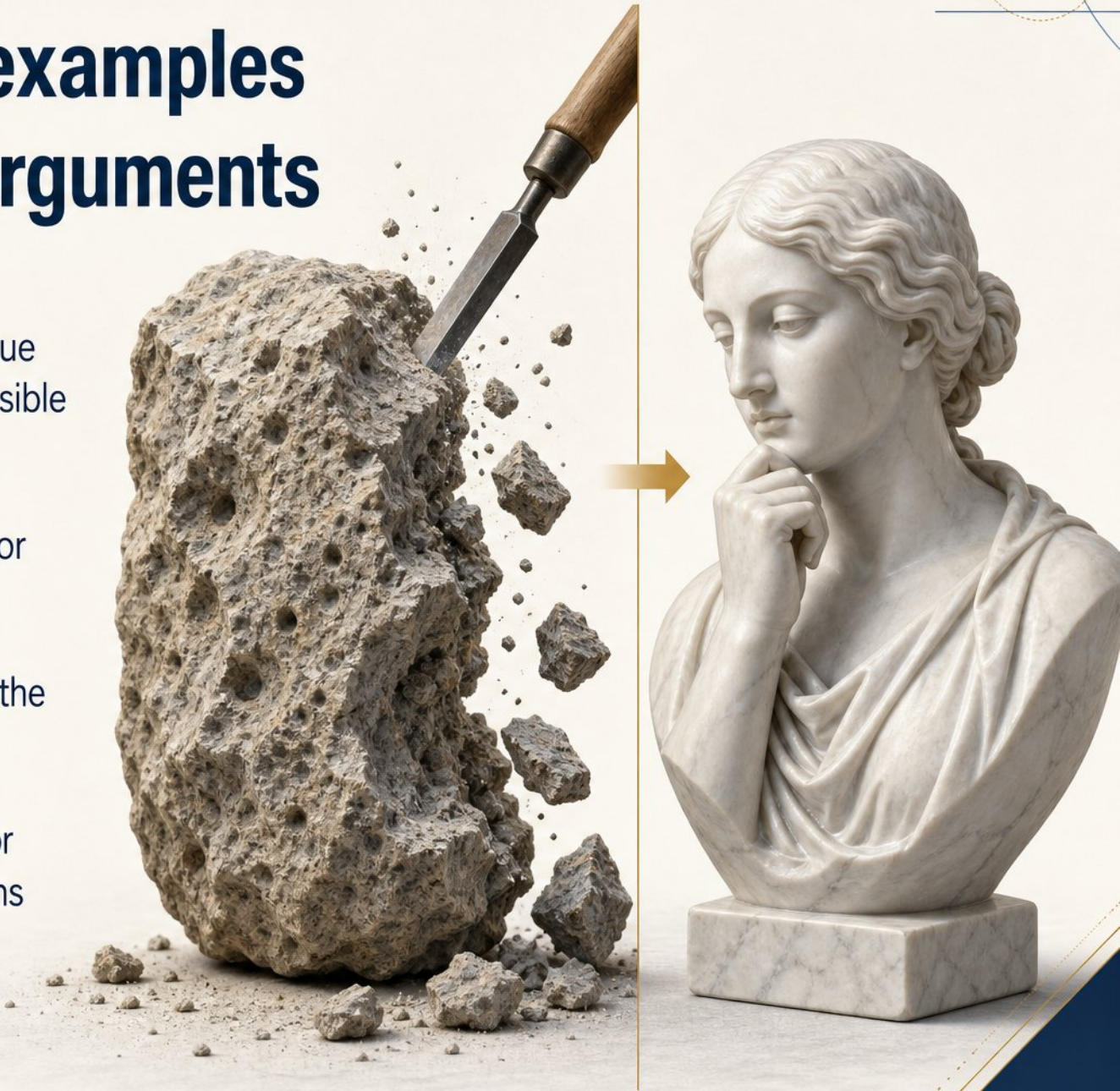
Counterexamples: Testing Claims with Exceptions

- A counterexample is a specific case that contradicts a general claim
- Differs from disagreement: it disproves universality, not just opposing views
- One well-chosen counterexample reveals weak thinking across science & ethics
- Propositional targets claims; argumentative targets invalid logical forms
- Use constructively: refine claims instead of just refuting them



Using Counterexamples to Strengthen Arguments

- Counterexamples test validity: true premises, false conclusion impossible in valid arguments
- Respond by revising, qualifying, or abandoning the original claim
- Avoid ad hoc changes; watch for the No True Scotsman fallacy
- Practice: find counterexamples for common workplace generalizations



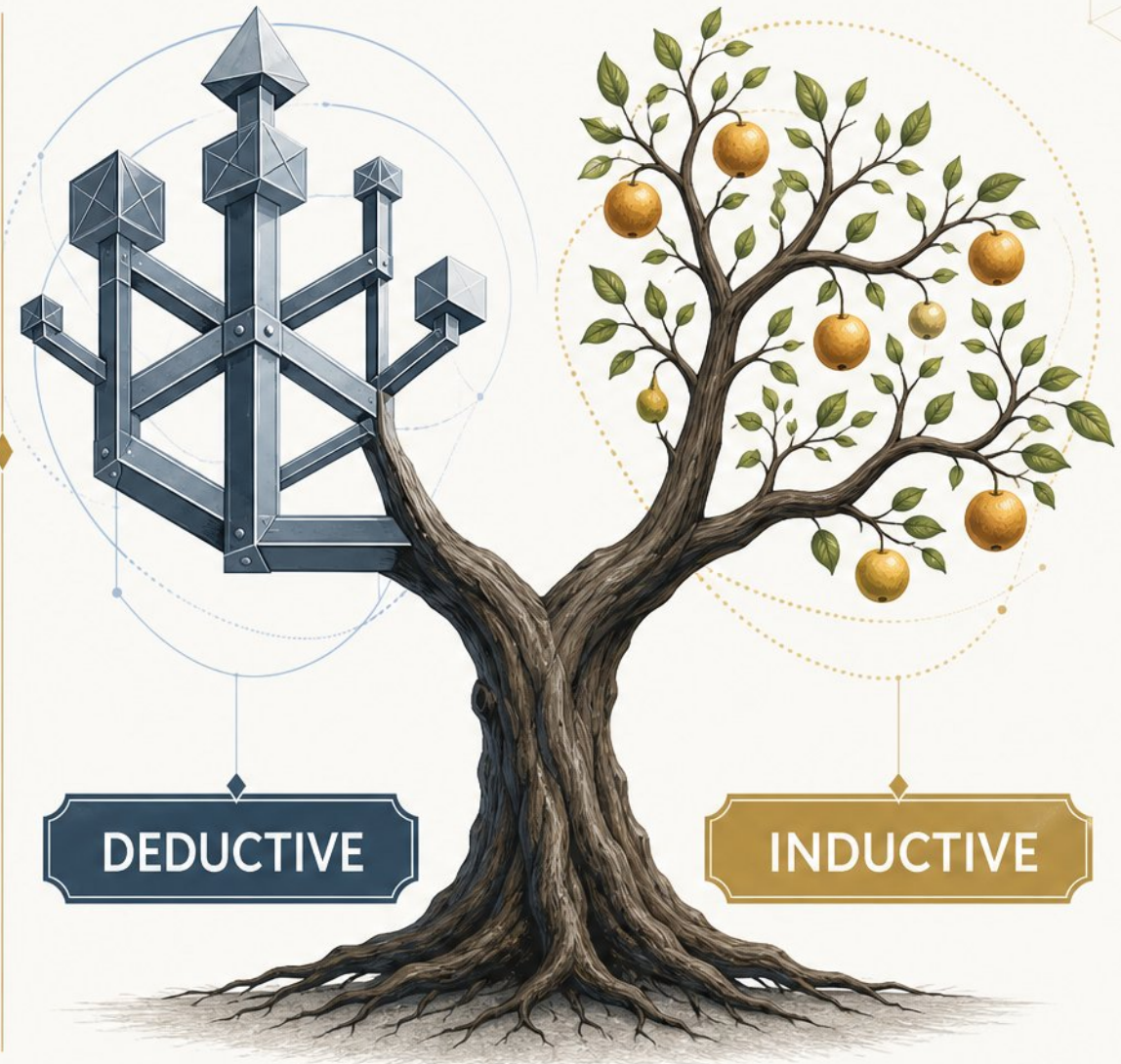
Inference: From Reasons to Conclusion

- **Inference:** moving from reasons (premises) to a claim (conclusion)
- **Deductive:** premises guarantee the conclusion with certainty
- **Inductive:** premises make the conclusion probable, not certain
- **Common indicators:** therefore, so, consequently, it follows that
- **Everyday uses:** predicting, diagnosing, generalizing, decision-making



Deductive and Inductive Arguments

- **Deductive:** premises aim to guarantee the conclusion with necessity
- **Inductive:** premises aim to make the conclusion probable
- **Validity/soundness** apply to deduction; **strength/cogency** to induction
- **Abductive:** inference to the best explanation for observed evidence
- Practice classifying arguments using business and everyday cases



Hidden Assumptions: What's Left Unsaid



- Hidden assumptions: unstated claims an argument relies on to reach its conclusion



- Use the completeness test: add premises until the reasoning logically connects



- Use the negative test: if negating a premise breaks the argument, it's a hidden assumption



- Evaluative conclusions require at least one evaluative premise (the is-ought gap)



- Exercise: identify hidden assumptions in policy and daily-life arguments



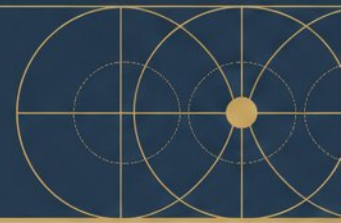


Putting It Together: The Full Reasoning Map

- Visual model linking question, claim, reasons, counterexamples, and hidden assumptions
- Reconstruct others' reasoning accurately using the principle of charity
- Evaluate your own arguments with the completeness and negative tests
- Worked example: identifying all elements in a workplace memo or opinion piece



Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them



- **Mistaking feelings for reasons:**
"I feel angry" isn't a counterexample.

- **Circular reasoning:** restating a claim doesn't supply a reason.

- **Treating inference as obvious** when the connection is missing (non sequitur).

- **Overlooking hidden assumptions:** missing evaluative or is-ought bridge premises.

- **Related fallacies:** false analogy, false cause (post hoc), slippery slope.

CIRCULAR REASONING



The argument that consumes itself.

EMOTIONAL REACTION



Beautiful to feel. Irrelevant as reason.

NON SEQUITUR



A leap without a landing.

HIDDEN ASSUMPTIONS



What's unseen can undermine the argument.

RELATED FALLACIES



Patterns that mislead, not persuade.

Applying the Framework in Real Contexts



- Use the five-element framework in meetings, news, and proposals



- Case study: analyze a workplace memo step by step



- Transfer strategies for independent use after training



- Self-check questions to test your own and others' reasoning



- Keep a reasoning journal to build the habit of structured thinking



Summary and Next Steps



- Philosophy is practical, structured thinking for clarity



- Core loop: Question → Claim → Reasons → Counterexamples → Inference



- Reveal hidden assumptions with the completeness test



- Use self-check questions to audit your own reasoning



PersonWise.

PersonWise • AI digital-human course platform



Scan the code or click anywhere to watch this course live, with voice Q&A

personwise.ai/t/d114cc5c/public