

Template for Analyzing the Logic of an Article

1. The main purpose of this article is-----
(State as accurately as possible the author's purpose for writing the article)
2. The key question that the author is addressing is-----
3. The most important information in this article is-----
4. The main inferences/conclusions in this article are-----
5. The key concept(s) we need to understand in this article are-----
6. The main assumption(s) underlying the author's thinking is (are)-----
7. If we take this line of reasoning seriously, the implications are-----
8. If we fail to take this line of reasoning seriously, the implications are-----
9. The main point(s) of view presented in this article is (are)-----

Criteria for Evaluating Reasoning

1. Purpose: What is the purpose of the reasoner? Is the purpose clearly stated or clearly implied? Is it justified?
2. Question: Is the question at issue well stated? Is it clear and unbiased? Does the expression of the question do justice to the complexity of the matter at issue? Are the questions and purpose directly relevant to each other?
3. Information: Does the writer cite relevant evidence, experiences, and/or information essential to the issue? Is the information accurate? Does the writer address the complexities of the issue?
4. Concepts: Does the writer clarify key concepts when necessary? Are the concepts used justifiably?
5. Assumptions: Does the writer show sensitivity to what he or she is taking for granted or assuming? (Insofar as those assumptions might reasonably be questioned?) Does the writer use questionable assumptions without addressing problems which might be inherent in those assumptions?
6. Inferences: Does the writer develop a line of reasoning explaining well how s/he is arriving at her or his main conclusions?
7. Point of View: Does the writer show a sensitivity to alternative relevant points of view or lines of reasoning? Does s/he consider and respond to objections framed from other relevant points of view?
8. Implications: Does the writer show a sensitivity to the implications and consequences of the position s/he is taking?

(Paul and Elder)

