

NAME: _____

LANGARA COLLEGE

Philosophy 1101: Introduction to Philosophy

Solutions to Practice Quiz #1

TIME: 20 minutes

1. For each of the following sentences, say whether it makes a *claim*, or gives an *argument*. (Just write 'claim' or 'argument' in the space provided.)

- (i) God is the creator of all living things. Claim
- (ii) God exists, since life could not exist without a supreme designer. Argument
- (iii) We are purely physical beings, so our sense of freedom is an illusion. Argument
- (iv) Consciousness is just a by-product of neural processes in the brain. Claim
- (v) Platonism is silly, because it just doesn't fit evolutionary biology. Argument

2. Identify each sentence in the arguments below as either a premise or the conclusion.

- (i) If a person has never tasted pineapple, then of course they'll have no knowledge of what it tastes like. So it's clear that knowledge comes only from experience. It's the same thing with colour – if a child were kept in a place where he never saw any colour but black and white, he would have no ideas of red or green.

	Premise/conclusion
If a person has never tasted pineapple, then they'll have no knowledge of what it tastes like.	Premise
Knowledge comes only from experience.	Conclusion
If a child were kept in a place where he never saw any colour but black and white, he would have no ideas of red or green.	Premise

- (ii) Many scientists have predicted new phenomena, before anyone ever observed them. This wasn't just luck. Clearly then, we have some source of knowledge other than experience.

	Premise/conclusion
Many scientists have predicted new phenomena, before anyone ever observed them.	Premise
This (the successful predictions) wasn't just by good luck.	Premise
We have some source of knowledge other than experience.	Conclusion

- (iii) Punishments handed out by the "justice" system are actually unfair in most cases. A key requirement of fairness is that you punish the same person who committed the crime. But a person is a purely material being, a collection of atoms, and the atoms in a person's body are constantly being replaced – 98% of the atoms are replaced in a single year. So, if the crime was committed more than a year ago, then you're punishing a different person!

	Premise/conclusion
Most punishments are unfair	Conclusion
A fair punishment must punish the person who committed the crime	Premise
A person is a purely material being, a collection of atoms.	Premise
The atoms in a person's body are constantly being replaced – 98% being replaced in one year.	Premise

3. "If materialism were true, then mathematics would be a mere human invention. But mathematics is fundamental to the universe, and no more a human invention than the stars and planets are. So obviously materialism is badly flawed."

- (i) Write the argument above in *standard form* (i.e. write the conclusion underneath the premises, with a horizontal line in between).

1. **If materialism is true, then mathematics is a human invention.**
2. **Mathematics is not a human invention**

∴ Materialism is false

- (ii) Is the argument sound (i.e. valid, with acceptable premises)? Briefly explain your answer.

The argument is certainly valid. But a materialist could deny one of the premises, especially premise 1, so they wouldn't see it as sound.

4. Describe any errors committed in each of the following passages. (If there are two speakers, focus on the one that speaks last.)

- (i) How does Hume criticise the design argument for God's existence? Who cares? Hume was an atheist, so his analysis is obviously biased.

Ad hominem. (Attacking Hume, not his reasoning)

- (iii) Descartes believes that a person has a spiritual soul as well as a body. Yeah, right! Are we really to believe in souls, angels, fairies and goblins?

Straw man. (Descartes didn't believe in fairies and goblins.)

- (iii) I see in your essay that you disagree with Kripke's causal theory of names. Wow, talk about arrogance! Don't you know that Kripke taught himself ancient Hebrew by the age of 6, and during his sophomore year at Harvard was teaching graduate-level logic courses at MIT? You think you know better than *Kripke*?

Appeal to authority (and verbal pressure)

- (iv) A – Believing in God isn't a rational option any more. The easiest way to see this is just to notice that no credible philosopher today argues that God exists.

B – Not true! What about Peter van Inwagen, Robert Adams, Al Plantinga and Bill Alston?

A – If these philosophers believe in God, then clearly they're religious nutjobs, with no credibility at all.

Circular argument (and verbal pressure)