Exercise 1.1
Identifying & Analyzing Arguments

Determine whether each of the following passages contains an argument. If it does, identify the premises and the conclusion and then diagram the argument.

1. (1) Since the first cable companies increased the TV stations’ audience and (2) [the first cable companies increased] their advertising revenues, (3) broadcasters doubtless welcomed the growth of the new industry.

   argument
   \)
   (1)
   (2)
   (3)

2. The first cable companies served remote rural communities. These communities were too far from any broadcast station to receive a clear signal over the air. Tall towers, usually located on hills, picked up the signals and distributed them to individual homes.

   no argument

3. (1) It is rarely economical for two companies to lay cables in the same area and (2) it is rarely economical for two companies to compete directly. (3) This suggests that cable television is a natural monopoly, and (4) should be regulated by the government.

   (1) it is rarely econ. for 2 co. to lay cables in the same area
   (2) it is rarely econ. for 2 cable co. to compete directly
   \)
   (3)
   (4)

   OR

   (1) it is not economical for 2 companies to lay cable in the same area
   ↓
   (2) Therefore, it is not economical for 2 cable companies to compete directly

   new argument beginning with conclusion of preceding:
   [tacit: companies which cannot compete directly because of capital costs are natural monopolies]
   (3) Cable companies are natural monopolies.
   [tacit: Natural monopolies ought to be regulated.]
   (4)
4. (1) Annette must come from a wealthy family. (2) Last week she bought a diamond choker for her ocelot.

(2) + tacit premise: All persons who buy diamond chokers for their ocelots are from wealthy families.

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(1)
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5. (1) Key West, the southernmost city in the continental United States, is (2) located at the tip of the Florida peninsula. This means not only that (3) it enjoys year-round warm weather, but also that (4) it is vulnerable to Caribbean hurricanes.

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(1)  (2)               2 separate arguments
(3)  (4)
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6. "We should frankly recognize that] (1) there is no side of a man's life which is unimportant to society, for (2) whatever he is, does, or thinks may affect his own well-being, (3) which is and ought to be a matter of common concern, and (4) may also directly or indirectly affect the thought, action, and character of those with whom he comes in contact." [L.T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism*]

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(2) + (3) (4) (3) rewrite: Actions which affect others ought to be a matter of public concern.
(1)
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7. "The existence of biological predispositions toward crime means that [therefore, hence] circumstances that activate criminal behavior in one person will not do so in another, that social forces cannot deter criminal behavior in 100 per cent of a population, and that the distributions of crime within and across societies may, to some extent, reflect underlying distributions of constitutional factors." [James Q. Wilson and Richard Herrnstein, *Crime and Human Nature*]

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(1) rewrite: there are biological dispositions toward crime
(2) (3) (4) OR If there are biological dispositions toward crime, then . . . (2), (3), & (4)
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8. "I'm a sick man . . . a mean man. There's nothing attractive about me. I think there's something wrong with my liver. . . . I've been living like this for a long time, twenty years or so. I'm forty now. I used to be in government service, but I'm not any more. I was a nasty official. I was rude and enjoyed being rude. . . . When petitioners came up to my desk for information, I snarled at them and felt indescribably happy whenever I managed to make one of them feel miserable." [Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Notes from Underground*]

no argument
9. (1) [conclusion] "To a plant, breathing involves a built-in cost-benefit analysis. (2) The wider the gas-exchanging pores on the leaf surface are open, (3) the greater the supply of carbon dioxide for photosynthesis. (4) But wide-open pores also allow evaporation of water, (5) so [is a conclusion but not final conclusion] the plant must balance the benefits of increased carbon dioxide against the cost of water loss." [J.A. Miller, "Plant ‘Sight’ from Pores and Pumps," *Science News*, November 30, 1985]

\[
\begin{align*}
(2) & \quad (3) \text{ [treat as one statement]} + (4) \quad \text{OR} \quad (2) & \quad (4) \\
\downarrow & \quad \downarrow & \quad \downarrow \\
(5) & \quad (3) & \quad (5) \\
\downarrow & \quad \checkmark & \checkmark \\
(1) & \quad (1)
\end{align*}
\]

10. (1) "The [Rolling] Stones’ songs played at evil, but their lives embodied it. (2) Evil is the inability to acknowledge the suffering of others. (3) The destruction of life that seems to have followed the Stones (4) [the destruction of life] is a barometer of their indifference. (5) Illegitimate children are born and forgotten. (6) Their friends get hooked on drugs, (7) some of them die." [John Lahr, "Exiles on Easy Street," *The New Republic*, December 24, 1984]

\[
\begin{align*}
(6) & + (7) \quad (5) \\
\downarrow & \checkmark \\
(2) & \quad (3) & \quad (4) \text{ These are evil acts [where evil is defined as the inability to acknowledge the suffering of others & indifference to others].} \\
\downarrow & \checkmark \\
\text{Rephrase (4) as: The Stones were indifferent to this destruction.} \\
(1)
\end{align*}
\]

OR

\[
\begin{align*}
(5) & + (6) + (7) \\
\downarrow & \\
(3) & + (4) \text{ These acts reveal an insensitivity to the suffering of others} \\
& \quad + (2) \text{ Evil is the inability to acknowledge the suffering of others.} \\
\downarrow & \\
(1) \text{ therefore the lives of the Stones embodied evil.}
\end{align*}
\]

11. (1) "Human babies begin to babble at three or four months as a kind of preparation for speech, and (2) the babbling increased until they begin to form understandable words, after which it declines. (3) The intriguing point about babbling is that it is a spontaneous, self-generated activity and not an attempt to imitate adult speech, (4) the proof being that deaf children, too, babble." [Morton Hunt, *The Universe Within*] from Churchill, p. 20

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\begin{align*}
(1) & \quad & \text{& (2) are background information, not premises} \\
(2) & \\
\downarrow & \\
(1)
\end{align*}
\]
12. (1) Academic achievement is losing its meaning. (2) In the past ten years the American educational system has been wracked by declining student achievement and (3) rampant inflation of grades and (4) an overall lowering of academic standards. (5) The number of basic classes have been reduced; (6) graduation requirements have been weakened; and (7) electives, which are less demanding, are emphasized.

\[(2) + (3) + (4) + (5) + (6) + (7)\] OR leave out the pluses

\[\downarrow\]

(1)

13. "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said to-day." [Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance"]

no argument