

Exercise 1-1

Here are fifteen passages (the first six are from student papers and exams, modestly edited). Determine which contain arguments and which do not. Label the premises and conclusions of those that do, and explain your answers. Paraphrase if that makes things clearer. (Even-numbered items in most exercise sets are answered in a section at the back of the book.)

1. I don't like big-time college football. I don't like pro football on TV either. In fact, I don't like sports, period.
2. My summer vacation was spent working in Las Vegas. I worked as a waitress at the Desert Inn and made tons of money. But I guess I got addicted to the slots and didn't save too much. Next summer my friend Hal and I are going to work in Reno if we can find jobs there.
3. Well, I have a special reason for believing in big-time college football. After all, I wouldn't have come here if Ohio State's football team hadn't gone to the Rose Bowl, because that's how I heard about this place to begin with.
4. At the present rate of consumption, the oil will be used up in 20 to 25 years. And we're sure not going to reduce consumption in the near future. So we'd better start developing solar power, windmills, and other "alternative energy sources" pretty soon.
5. The abortion issue is blown all out of proportion. How come we don't hear nearly as much about the evils of birth control pills? After all, a lot more potential people are "killed" by the pill than by abortion.
6. I've often wondered how they make lead pencils. Of course, they don't use lead, they use graphite. But I mean, How do they get the graphite into the wood? That's my

problem. The only thing I can think of is maybe they cut the lead into long round strips and then cut holes in the wood and slip the lead in.

7. Punishment, when speedy and specific, may suppress undesirable behavior, but it cannot teach or encourage desirable alternatives. Therefore, it is crucial to use positive techniques to model and reinforce appropriate behavior that the person can use in place of the unacceptable response that has to be suppressed.
—Walter and Harriet Mischel, *Essentials of Psychology*
8. There was no European language that Ruth could not speak at least a little bit. She passed the time in the concentration camp, waiting for death, by getting other prisoners to teach her languages she did not know. Thus did she become fluent in Romany, the tongue of the gypsies.
—Kurt Vonnegut, *Jailbird*
9. The death of my brother was another instance in which I realized the inadequacy of the superstition of progress in regard to life. A good, intelligent, serious man, he was still young when he fell ill. He suffered for over a year and died an agonizing death without ever understanding why he lived and understanding even less why he was dying. No theories could provide any answers to these questions, either for him or for me, during his slow and painful death.
—Leo Tolstoy, *Confession*
10. To be sustained under the Eighth Amendment, the death penalty must "comport with the basic concept of human dignity at the core of the Amendment"; the objective in imposing it must be "consistent with our respect for the dignity of other men." Under these standards, the taking of life "because the wrongdoer deserves it" surely must fail, for such a punishment has as its very basis the total denial of the wrongdoer's dignity and worth.
—Justice Thurgood Marshall, Dissenting Opinion in *Gregg v. Georgia*
11. The electoral college should be abolished. Everyone's vote should count the same. With the electoral college the votes of those who live in small states count for more. That's how Bush won the election, even though Gore got more votes. So I think we should do away with it.
12. Every event must have a cause. Since an infinite series of causes is impossible, there must be a first uncaused cause of everything: God.
13. If God were all good, he would want his creatures to always be happy. If God were all powerful, he would be able to accomplish anything he wants. Therefore, God must be lacking in either power or goodness or both.
14. It is now some years since I detected how many were the false beliefs that I had from my earliest youth admitted as true, and how doubtful was everything I had since constructed on this basis: and from that time I was convinced that I must once for all seriously undertake to rid myself of all the opinions which I had formerly accepted, and commence to build anew from the foundation, if I wanted to establish any firm and permanent structure in the sciences.
—René Descartes, *Meditations*
15. If you can discover a better way of life than office holding for your future rulers, a well-governed city becomes a possibility. For only in such a state will those rule who are truly rich, not in gold, but in the wealth that makes happiness—a good and wise life.
—Plato, *The Republic*