

Evaluating Reasoning Worksheet #6

Exercise #11

Twenty percent of sixteen-year-old drivers have car accidents that are their fault within their first year of driving. Seventy-seven percent of the fatalities involving sixteen year olds happen because of errors that these young people make. In fact, these young drivers are involved in fatal crashes five times more frequently than drivers over the age of twenty. One stunning statistic shows that eighteen-year-old drivers without experience are better drivers than sixteen year olds with a year's experience. This data indicates that, in order to save lives, the legal driving age should be raised.

What would be the best evaluation of the reasoning in this passage?

- A. **Good reasoning.** Sixteen year olds are too immature to drive safely.
- B. **Good reasoning.** The data shows a correlation between a driver's age and driver safety.
- C. **Poor reasoning.** The automobile industry would be badly hurt by raising the driving age because so many cars are sold to young people.
- D. **Poor reasoning.** The driving age must align with the legal working age so that young people can get to work.

Exercise #12

People who collect coins usually do so out of love of collecting, rather than a desire to make a profit. While certain exceptionally rare coins have experienced spectacular appreciation (sometimes topping 10,000%), these cases are very rare. In fact, 99% of collectible coins appreciate in value less than 5% over a decade, whereas even a savings account will pay 1% to 2% annually. I would advise you, therefore, to take up coin collecting only as a hobby and not as an investment.

What would be the best evaluation of the advice?

- A. **Good reasoning.** Stocks are a better investment than coins.
- B. **Good reasoning.** The data indicates that coins appreciate too slowly to be a viable investment.
- C. **Poor reasoning.** Some people love coin collecting and should not be dissuaded from doing it.
- D. **Poor reasoning.** No one knows what the future holds; coins may become the best investment ever.

Evaluating Reasoning Worksheet #7

Exercise #13

Some people think that gun control will reduce crime. They reason that if it is more difficult to obtain guns, it will be more difficult to commit crimes with guns. Other people maintain that guns are not the problem, and that the answer to crime reduction is better law enforcement. Data from England indicates that guns are not the problem. England permitted its citizens to own guns for centuries; precisely when England passed laws prohibiting gun ownership among its citizens, it experienced a huge rise in armed robberies and murders. Today, despite strict gun control laws, England has a higher murder rate than the United States. The United States, therefore, should arm its citizens because citizens possessing guns deter violent attacks.

What would be the best evaluation of the reasoning in the conclusion of this passage?

- A. **Good reasoning.** The data indicates that guns are not the problem.
- B. **Good reasoning.** The data indicates that gun possession provides a viable solution.
- C. **Poor reasoning.** If no one had guns, no one could commit violent crimes.
- D. **Poor reasoning.** No data is presented that indicates that arms are a deterrent to violent crime.

Exercise #14

In the late 1960s, a baseball manager named Earl Weaver changed the way that baseball was played by rarely using the sacrifice bunt. He reasoned that it made no sense to voluntarily give up one of only three outs that a team gets in an inning in an effort to produce a single run. He reasoned that it would be better to use that out in an effort to produce multiple runs. Years later, a statistician named Bill James reached the same conclusion by analyzing data and using probability theory. This indicates that using a sacrifice bunt is generally a poor strategy in baseball.

What would be the best evaluation of the conclusion?

- A. **Good reasoning.** James' investigations confirmed Weaver's intuition.
- B. **Good reasoning.** Baseball is different from football and must be managed differently.
- C. **Poor reasoning.** You can prove anything by manipulating the numbers.
- D. **Poor reasoning.** To base a statistical study on a manager's hunch is a poor foundation for a research method.

Evaluating Reasoning Worksheet #8

Exercise #15

The United States is currently experiencing a great shortage of doctors. The reason for this is that experts badly underestimated the population growth of America and the life expectancy of Americans after the year 2000. Now we have a problem on our hands that needs to be solved. We must reduce immigration restrictions and allow foreign-born doctors to practice in the United States in order to solve this shortage.

What would be the best evaluation of the reasoning in the conclusion of this passage?

- A. **Good reasoning.** The United States needs doctors now.
- B. **Good reasoning.** The population of the United States will only continue to grow.
- C. **Poor reasoning.** There may be other viable solutions, such as using nurse practitioners.
- D. **Poor reasoning.** Reducing immigration restrictions will only cause more problems because of language difficulties.

Exercise #16

Consider the following conversation:

George: I need to do sit-ups to get rid of this belly of mine.

Martinique: George, there's no such thing as spot reducing.

George: What do you mean?

Martinique: I mean that you can't lose weight in a specific part of your body just by exercising that part of your body.

George: You're crazy! I know guys from the gym who do lots of sit-ups and they have abs like a six-pack!

Martinique: Well, they may have great abs, but if they don't have fat on their stomachs, it's because they don't have much fat on their bodies, not because they do sit-ups.

George: I don't care what you say. Sit-ups work.

What would be the best evaluation of George's reasoning?

- A. **Good reasoning.** Sit-ups help form solid abdominal muscles.
- B. **Good reasoning.** It makes sense that exercising an area of the body will produce results in that area of the body.
- C. **Poor reasoning.** George ignores Martinique's reasoning about fat loss.
- D. **Poor reasoning.** George's efforts won't work without diet and exercise.

Evaluating Reasoning Worksheet #9

Exercise #17

A mother of three children has a difficult decision to make: change jobs and receive a large pay raise, but move her children out of their school district where they are comfortable and have many friends; or, decline the job and keep her children in the school district where they are comfortable, and where they have friends. She reasons that her children are young, and therefore will adapt easily to new circumstances, while her promotion opportunity may not come along again. She also knows that the additional salary will allow her to buy a home where the children will have more privacy: something they do not have living in their cramped apartment. She decides to accept the job.

Disregarding all considerations except those mentioned here, what would be the best evaluation her choice?

- A. **Good reasoning.** The woman took several factors into consideration and made a choice that could help everyone.
- B. **Good reasoning.** The financial considerations of the whole family are more important than the social considerations of the children alone.
- C. **Poor reasoning.** There are no good reasons to move children away from friends and family.
- D. **Poor reasoning.** The woman is placing career over her children.

Exercise #18

A senator argues the following: "The environment is in a delicate balance. Once we start drilling for oil in these parts, we will drive out wildlife. Once we drive out wildlife, all the vegetation in the area will suffer. This can lead to climate changes and other natural disturbances. We run the risk of turning the entire area into a desert."

What would be the best evaluation of the senator's reasoning?

- A. **Good reasoning.** It follows logically from the facts presented that the region may become a desert.
- B. **Good reasoning.** Other such disasters have resulted from drilling for oil.
- C. **Poor reasoning.** There may be ways to drill for oil and lessen the impact on the environment.
- D. **Poor reasoning.** The senator has misrepresented the facts.

Evaluating Reasoning Worksheet #10

Exercise #19

There is a big problem on television with indecency. There is too much conspicuous sexual content, too much innuendo, and too much adult language. All of this emphasis on sex harms children and makes their minds susceptible to the wickedness and evils of sex. Children are pure and innocent and should not be subjected to adult themes that corrupt their minds. They should not have to worry about all the adult messages coming at them through the television. Without a doubt, the television and cable industries need to place stricter rules on television content that will control effectively the mature content of programming.

What would be the best evaluation of the reasoning in this passage?

- A. **Good reasoning.** There is too much adult content on television for children.
- B. **Good reasoning.** Adult content harms the minds of children.
- C. **Poor reasoning.** Everyone has a different definition of right and wrong.
- D. **Poor reasoning.** The author fails to provide evidence that children are harmed by adult content.

Exercise #20

In my opinion, tennis is the greatest sport in the world. It is the only sport in which two people play alone and directly against each other; it requires speed, stamina, hand-eye coordination, flexibility, strength, and tremendous concentration. Some sports require speed and strength, but allow a player to rely on his teammates. Some sports require hand-eye coordination, flexibility, and strength, but are not as grueling as tennis. Football lacks the attention on individuality; baseball lacks the need for stamina; basketball lacks the need for concentration because one is helped by teammates constantly on defense; golf lacks the need for strength and stamina. In a word, tennis is the best sport in the world.

What would be the best evaluation of the author's reasoning?

- A. **Good reasoning.** Golf, baseball, football, and basketball don't compare to tennis
- B. **Good reasoning.** While you might disagree with the author, he uses certain criteria before reaching a judgment.
- C. **Poor reasoning.** The author forgot to mention soccer.
- D. **Poor reasoning.** The author is obviously biased by the fact that he is a tennis player.

Answer Key

- 11. B
- 12. B
- 13. D
- 14. A
- 15. C
- 16. C
- 17. A
- 18. C
- 19. D
- 20. B