

# Arguments

When people mean to give arguments, they typically often use words like "therefore" and "because." When analyzing an argument, the first thing to do is to separate the premises from the conclusion. Words like these are a clue to what the argument is supposed to be, especially if| in the argument as given| the conclusion comes at the beginning or in the middle of the argument.

- **Premise Indicators:** since, because, given that
- **Conclusion Indicators:** therefore, hence, thus, then, so

To be perfectly general, we can define an argument as a series of sentences. The sentences at the beginning of the series are premises. The final sentence in the series is the conclusion. If the premises are true and the argument is a good one, then you have a reason to accept the conclusion. Notice that this definition is quite general. Consider this example:

There is coffee in the coffee pot.  
There is a dragon playing bassoon on the armoire.  
∴ Salvador Dali was a poker player.

It may seem odd to call this an argument, but that is because it would be a terrible argument. The two premises have nothing at all to do with the conclusion. Nevertheless, given our definition, it still counts as an argument, albeit a bad one.