




Philosophy 4 Critical Thinking

Quiz 11: Weak reasons



1. One difference between a weak reason and a weak principle is:

- a. weak reasons provide strong support for their conclusions, but weak principles don't.
- b. weak reasons are obviously false, but weak principles are usually true.
- c. false reasons are always weak reasons, but false principles are not always weak principles.
- d. weak reasons occur only in explanations, but weak principles can occur in arguments or explanations.



2. To say that a reason in an explanation is weak is to say that:

- a. a rationale providing evidence for that reason is needed.
- b. the reason has not been adequately explained.
- c. it is possible for the reason to be false.
- d. the chain of reasoning in the explanation is not long enough.
- e. the explanation does not succeed in proving the conclusion to be true.



3. In an argument a weak reason will normally:

- a. be present about half of the time.
- b. be a reason directly supporting the conclusion.
- c. be connected to its conclusion by a weak principle.
- d. be the terminal reason in the chain.
- e. be the reason that is inadequately explained.

4. Francine: Wilbur says Fred left Martha because Martha lost interest in sex. I find that rather hard to believe, though. I mean they're both in their *eighties* for crying out loud!

Ana: Well, I'll tell you what. I work at the nursing home and I know some pretty frisky octogenarians. Just yesterday I surprised a couple of them in the broom closet. Both of them were cheating on spouses they've been married to for over *fifty years*!

- In this exchange:
 - a. Francine thinks Wilbur has given a weak reason.
 - b. Francine thinks Wilbur has given a weak principle.
 - c. Ana thinks Francine has given a weak reason.
 - d. Francine thinks Wilbur has committed an argument from ignorance.
 - e. Ana thinks Francine has committed a contradiction.

5. Damien: I think I've decided to take Sandy to the winter ball.

Roy: Yeah, and I've decided to take Britney Spears. What makes you think she'll go out with you?

Damien: Well, she's never turned me down yet.

Roy: That's because you've never even asked her before, dumbass.

Damien: Right, and you've never asked Britney Spears, either. See what I mean?

In this example:

- a. Roy has committed an ad hominem.
- b. Damien has committed a contradiction.
- c. Roy has committed a red herring.
- d. Damien has committed a straw man.
- e. Roy has committed abuse of principle.

6. Dolly: I just can't leave Jason. It's wrong. He loves me too much. He will just be devastated.

Toni: Dolly, a guy who goes out drinking every night then comes home and beats the snot out of you does not love you.

Dolly: He does love me. You just don't know him like I do. He always feels terrible in the morning. He cries like a baby and begs for my forgiveness.

Toni: But he keeps *doing* it, darling. Don't you see? Just because someone feels bad when he hurts you doesn't mean he loves you. Come on, you're not stupid. You know this.

- In this example:
 - a. Toni argues that Dolly has a weak reason.
 - b. Toni argues that Dolly has a weak principle.
 - c. Toni argues that Dolly has a weak reason and a weak principle.
 - d. Toni is pointing out that Dolly has committed an argument from ignorance.
 - e. Toni is pointing out that Dolly has committed a logical contradiction.