

Common argument forms

PHIL 715

Modus Ponens

1. If **A**, then **B**
2. **A**
- ∴ **B**

Example: *If I had a million dollars, I would buy you a big house. I have a million dollars. Therefore, I am buying you a big house.*

Modus Tollens

1. If **A**, then **B**
2. Not **B**
- ∴ Not **A**

Example: *If I had a million dollars, I'd buy a damn brewery and turn the planet into alcoholics. I am not buying a damn brewery and turning the planet into alcoholics. Therefore, I don't have a million dollars.*

Hypothetical Syllogism

1. If **A**, then **B**
2. If **B**, then **C**
- ∴ If **A**, then **C**

Example: *If you leave, don't look back. If you look back, I'll be running the other way. Therefore, if you leave, I'll be running the other way.*

Disjunctive Syllogism

1. **A** or **B**
2. Not **A**
- ∴ **B**

Example: *I should stay or I should go now. I should not stay. Therefore I should go now.*

CAUTION: The *fallacy* of affirming the consequent

1. If **A**, then **B**
2. **B**
- ∴ **A**

Example: *If you love me, you'll let me go. You let me go. Therefore, you love me.*

CAUTION: The *fallacy* of affirming the inverse

1. If **A**, then **B**
2. Not **A**
- ∴ not **B**

Example: *If I were a boy, I think I could understand how it feels to love a girl. I'm not a boy. Therefore, I could not understand how it feels to love a girl.*

CAUTION: The *fallacy* of not being an argument

1. **A**
2. **B**
3. **C**
- ∴ **D**

Example: *Love's strange so real in the dark. Think of the tender things that we were working on. Slow change may pull us apart. Therefore, when the light gets into your heart, baby, don't you forget about me.*