

## What is a philosophical 'argument'?

= "... a verbal attempt to persuade someone as to the truth of a claim by providing reasons (evidence) why they should accept the claim." (Robert C. Solomon)

## What are the functions of an argument?

1. Though not everyone can be persuaded **to change their view and accept a claim** based upon a good argument, **some people can be persuaded about some things** by argument.

*(Question: WHY is it so difficult for some people to change their views / accept a claim when they are given a good argument?)*

2. An argument may **confirm a view that a person already accepts** – but now they have good reasons for accepting that view. (= One **tests, articulates, and justifies** a view that one already holds.)
3. One may **acquire a belief** on an issue about which one previously had no particular belief, by means of argument.
4. One may **appreciate and respect the difficulty and complexity of an issue** when confronted with arguments from both sides of the issue.
5. One may **appreciate the limits of argument and the limits of reason** (practical and theoretical).

## What are the components of an argument?

In 'standard form':

1. One or more **premises**  
= statement(s) that constitute one's evidence / reasons for one's claim – conclusion.
2. A logical **inference**
  - A. **Inductive** inference / logic of induction
    - conclusion is established as **probably true**
    - goal = '**strong**' inductive argument
  - B. **Deductive** inference / logic of deduction
    - conclusion is established as **necessarily true**
    - goal = '**valid**' form plus **all true premises** = '**sound**' deductive argument
3. A **conclusion**
  - 'non-standard': conclusion may be stated at the beginning of the argument as the thesis / claim of the argument.
  - 'non-standard': conclusion may be unstated, but implied, at the conclusion of the argument.