

Signposts; review

Homework

Submit all homework assignments on Canvas as a Word (.doc or .docx) file. So that I can grade anonymously, **please do not include your name** or any other identifying information.

In addition, some exercises include a word limit or word range. For these exercises, strive for concision and simplicity (while still using complete sentences), and **include a word count** for each of your answers.

Exercise 1. Carefully review my comments on your previous homework submission, as well as the answer key.

- (a) What are the most important mistakes that you made? If you did not make any mistakes on the homework, instead tell me the most important mistakes that you made in seminar. (Range: 30-60 words.)
- (b) What specific strategies can you use to avoid such mistakes in the future? Remember to apply these strategies to the rest of this homework! (Range: 30-60 words.)

Exercise 2. After completing the review exercises, decide which previous handout you most need to review. Re-read that handout carefully. Then tell me the topic (not the number) of the handout that you read.

I carefully re-read the handout on ____.

Exercise 3. On pp. 43-44 of *The Questions of King Milinda*, King Milinda (prompted by Nagasena) endorses an argument for the conclusion that chariots do not exist. Diagram this argument. Remember to include both a numbered list of claims and a picture with one or more arrows. *Hint:* The argument has 5 claims, including the conclusion.

Exercise 4. Using language that is precise, concise, and ordinary, fill in the blank below. (Range: 15-25 words, counting only the words in the blank.)

On pp. 43-44 of *The Questions of King Milinda*, King Milinda agrees with Nagasena that chariots do not exist. Milinda then concludes that the word “chariot” is a “generally understood term” or a “designation in common use” (p. 44). By this, Milinda means that even though, strictly speaking, chariots do not exist, ____.

Reading

A *signpost* is a device that indicates the relationships among ideas. A signpost may be a word or phrase – “and,” “in other words” – but it need not be. Many punctuation marks are signposts, as you can appreciate by considering the different roles of periods, semicolons, and colons. Similarly, the topic sentence of a paragraph may be marked simply by its position at the beginning of that paragraph, and the title of a work may be marked by font size; these devices, too, are signposts.

I encourage you to use signposts *very* generously in your expository writing. But I also encourage you to use *concise* signposts. Thus, I offer you a list of concise signposting expressions to suit various purposes.

To indicate evidential or explanatory relations:	since; because; so; therefore; thus; hence; for.
To indicate coordination:	and; moreover; further; also; too; in addition; as well.
To indicate contrast:	however; but; yet; nevertheless; nonetheless; although; despite; by contrast; on the one hand/on the other hand.
To indicate confidence:	surely; certainly. (Use these sparingly!)
To introduce an example:	for example; for instance; e.g.
To introduce an exact restatement:	that is; i.e.; in other words.
To introduce a more precise restatement:	in particular; specifically.
To introduce a concession:	to be sure; admittedly.
To attribute an idea to thinker <i>x</i> :	according to <i>x</i> ; <i>x</i> claims/holds/states that.

Typically, you should replace lengthy signposts with these concise ones. For example:

Replace:	With:
This is because	For
This shows that	Thus,
What <i>x</i> means by this is that	In other words,
<i>x</i> is evidence for <i>y</i> .	<i>x</i> , so <i>y</i> .

There are, however, two notable reasons for deliberately using lengthy signposts.

First, you may wish to use a lengthy signpost *for special emphasis*. For example, when introducing the thesis of a paper, you might say, “In this paper, I will argue that” However, you must reserve this technique for special occasions if it is to have its desired effect.

Second, you may wish to use a lengthy signpost *to make your writing feel more natural*. For example, you might introduce an explanation by saying, “The idea is this.” However, you should use this technique sparingly – for example, to introduce an especially long and complex thought – to ensure that your writing does not feel flabby.

But these are exceptions to the rule. As a default, you should use concise signposts.

Warm-up exercises (review)

First complete all but the last of these exercises on your own. Then check your answers against the answer key that is included at the end of this handout, and use what you have learned to complete the last exercise. Finally, submit all of your answers on Canvas as a Word (.doc or .docx) file.

Some exercises include a word limit or word range. On these exercises, strive for concision and simplicity (while still using complete sentences), and **include a word count**. So that I can grade anonymously, **please do not include your name** or any other identifying information.

Warm-up 1. Which of the argument forms below are good ones?

(a) 1. If x, then y.

2. x.

Therefore,

3. y.

(b) 1. If x, then y.

2. y.

Therefore,

3. x.

(c) 1. If x, then y.

2. Not-x.

Therefore,

3. Not-y.

(d) 1. If x, then y.

2. Not-y.

Therefore,

3. Not-x.

Warm-up 2. Revise the following imprecise and wordy sentence: “Basically, what Krishna is doing in 9.4 of the *Bhagavad Gita* is talking about how he infuses everything.” (Range: 25-40 words.)

Warm-up 3. What is our heuristic for identifying good evidence? Make sure not to use technical expressions in your answer. (Range: 10-20 words.)

Warm-up 4. Consider the following argument, which is inspired by chapter 14 of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Does it use one of the good argument forms that we have studied? Justify your answer.

1. Purity is not a good quality of nature.

2. Passion is not a good quality.

3. Dark inertia is not a good quality.

Therefore,

4. There is no good quality of nature.

Warm-up 5. Carefully review the answer key for the warm-up exercises. Then answer the following questions.

- (a) What are the most important mistakes that you made? If you did not make any mistakes, then instead reflect on the most important mistakes that you recently made in seminar. (Range: 30-60 words.)
- (b) What specific strategies can you use to avoid these mistakes in the future? (Range: 30-60 words.)

Sample answers to warm-up exercises

Warm-up 1. Which of the argument forms below are good ones?

Forms (a) and (d) are good. Forms (b) and (c) are bad.

Warm-up 2. Revise the following imprecise and wordy sentence: “Basically, what Krishna is doing in 9.4 of the *Bhagavad Gita* is talking about how he infuses everything.”

In 9.4 of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna claims that he is prior to all beings in the universe: he sustains all other beings, but no other being sustains him. (29 words)

Warm-up 3. What is our heuristic for identifying good evidence?

Our heuristic is that a good evidential claim is one that just about anyone can verify. (16 words)

Warm-up 4. Consider the following argument, which is inspired by chapter 14 of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Does it use one of the good argument forms that we have studied? Justify your answer.

- 1. Purity is not a good quality of nature.
 - 2. Passion is not a good quality.
 - 3. Dark inertia is not a good quality.
- Therefore,
- 4. There is no good quality of nature.

This argument does *not* use one of the good argument forms that we have studied. It is close to an argument by elimination, but it is missing a premise that lists all of the relevant possibilities. In particular, the missing premise should be expressed as follows: “If there is a good quality of nature, then purity, passion, or dark inertia is a good quality.”