

Principle of Relevance

In creating solid arguments, we must conform our arguments to several principles (or rules). One of them is the principle of relevance. The principle of relevance means that the main reasons that we give in our argument to persuade people to believe us supports the final conclusion of our argument.

Example of good examples that supports a strong conclusion.

Argument: I should be allowed to go to the movies tonight.

Reasons that I should be allowed to go to the movies: I did my homework, I got good grades, I cleaned the house.

Conclusion: Because I am such a good kid, you should allow me to go to the movies.

In the example above, the principle of relevance has not been broken. All of the reasons I gave to persuade the person to let me go to the movies fits into the final conclusion that I want.

Example of the Principle of Relevance being violated.

Argument: I should be allowed to go to the movies tonight.

Reasons that I should be allowed to go to the movies: Because the olympics is on tonight, because I need money to go, because I am sick, because I had the flu when I was six.

Conclusion: ????????

In the example above, the reasons that person is giving don't make a whole lot of sense. What conclusion should the other person in the argument come to? The reasons given to support the conclusion must be good reasons, strong supports to persuade the other person in the argument.

Practice

Fix the arguments below that have problems with the principle of relevance. Rewrite them to have stronger supports that do not violate the principle of relevance.

1. Hillary Clinton should not be president because she is a girl.
2. The Carolina Panthers are the best team in the NFL this year because Cam Newton is there quarterback.
3. PCHS is the best high school in the state because its new.
4. Horses are the best animals because people can ride them.
5. Ice cream is better than brownies because it is made of milk.