

Logic & Truth

“The fundamentals of logic should be as transcultural as mathematics with which the principles of logic are associated. The principles of logic are neither Western nor Eastern, but universal.” – Mortimer J. Adler

Why do we study Logic & Truth?

In order to be an effective apologist, we must be able to take people back to the basic principles of thinking and agree on common ground, before proceeding forward. These basic principles of thinking are not only a common foundation we take, but tools in thinking to help determine what makes sense.

I. Logic

Logic is fundamental, and universal. It is so basic, that its validity is undeniable. It is an excellent tool to determine what is *false*, but not a tool to determine what is true. Everything that fails these laws *cannot* be true, but things that pass these laws *are not necessarily true*. Consequently, what is real or true must be logical, but what is logical is not necessarily real or true.

Law of Identity (LID) // A is B, or A = B

- Simple law that states something is what we say it is:
 - o Try it! _____

Law of Excluded Middle (LEM) // A is B or not-B, cannot be both or neither, or A = (B or ~B)

- Something is either B or non-B, but cannot be both or neither at a given time.
 - o Try it! _____
- In a more general sense, it means that a statement is either true or false. Think of it as claiming that there is **no middle ground** between being true and being false. Every statement has to be one or the other.
- This only works when the “non-B” by definition excludes “B.” In other words, they must be mutually exclusive.
 - o This tactic won’t work in fuzzy situations. For example, “Eusebius is good looking.” To prove this statement, we need to show that the opposite, “Eusebius is not good looking,” contradicts and is mutually exclusive to our first statement. However, to be “good looking” has no absolute meaning, since Eusebius is good looking compared to a dog, but not good looking compared to Laura.

Law of Non-Contradiction (LNC) // not-A is not-B, or $\sim A = \sim B$

- This law says that a statement cannot be both true and false at the same time.
- Also, for every statement there is a negative way of saying the same statement that always ties in with the LID statement.
 - o Try it! _____
- This law is self evident and unavoidable. It is even used in any attempt to deny it.
 - o “I deny the LNC” is the opposite of “I affirm the LNC,” therefore, LNC.
- Inherent in this law is that there exists a concept of truth. It doesn’t prove what the truth is, but that there exists a TRUTH. LNC basically infers true is the opposite of false.

These three laws are the basis of all Ethics, Philosophy, Law and Science. Without these basic and inherent pieces of logic, nothing would make sense.

Notice that Logic only validates that a statement *could* be true, not that it is true. An idea can be logical while being false. Logic is one of our most powerful tools to determine what can be true.

II. Truth

Truth is an accurate representation of reality.

We have four options for truth:

1. All views are false.
2. All views are true.
3. Some views are better.
4. There is one unchanging view.

Agnosticism is the belief that reality exists, but it is “not knowable.”

What does it mean to know that something exists? Existence is the most basic fact about something. Take away its existence and nothing is left. However many people believe that something exists, but also believe that it is impossible to know anything else about it.

- **Soft Agnosticism:** reality is not known. “I do not know.”
- **Hard Agnosticism:** reality is unknowable. “You cannot know.”

Pluralism is the belief that all views are true. It is a logical extension of Relativism.

- It teaches that all views are true, even opposing views.
- It is the logical conclusion of a relative view of truth

When is Pluralism appropriate?

- Pluralism is appropriate in matters of taste.
- Pluralism is not appropriate in matters of truth.

III. Using Logic to find Truth

Now, let's try to use these three laws to tackle some current day issues. We have broken up each issue into its foundations. Each of the foundations, or assumptions, is an LID statement. Think about the LEM and LNC laws and what each one would state to see if each of those still makes sense. For an issue to be credible, we must be able to validate each of its foundations by verifying that all three of the LID, LEM and LNC laws are upheld.

As a quick guide, here's a way to formulate the statements:

LID = the definition or statement in question.
X is <something>

LEM = the condition of the definition. This identifies the defining factors and excludes the middle.
X can't be <something> and <not something>. Must be one or the other, and cannot be both.

LNC = the negation of the statement. For every definition, there is an opposite way of saying the same thing.
The opposite of X is <not something>

Argument #1: What if all is nothing but an illusion – Basically, there is no reality. (Absolute illusion)

Those who argue this view have a few statements to prove. First, we need to define reality, since they deny it and say all is an illusion. Next, they have to argue that existence is dependent upon our awareness, and then define and argue illusion.

1. **To be real is to exist, and to exist is to be real.**
 - o Can you think of the LEM statements that must be upheld?
 -
 - o Can you think of the LNC statement?
 -
 - o All three statements generated by the law are logically sound. Remember, it doesn't make it true, but it at least has the potential to be true.
2. **All existence is dependent on our minds.**
 - o Can you think of the LEM statements that must be upheld?
 -
 - o Can you think of the LNC statement?
 -
 - o This is easy to disprove: Gravity existed even before Newton “discovered” it, and from above, by existing, it is real. Reality is, regardless of our knowledge of it.
 - o Therefore since we were able to disprove the LNC statement, likewise the original statement that “all existence is dependent on our minds” is illogical and stands no chance to be true.
3. **An illusion is defined as a misleading perception of reality. Absolute illusion states that no reality exists.**
 - o Can you think of the LEM statements that must be upheld?
 -
 - o Can you think of the LNC statement?
 -
 - o What rules, if any, does it violate?

Argument #2: What if there is no truth?

The first major assumption that needs to be made by everyone searching for answers is that true answers can be found! But, some believe that there is no truth, that every view we have of reality is false. Those who argue this view have the following statements and definitions to argue. Truth is an accurate representation of Reality and that all views or representations of Reality are false, which then implies that there is a truth.

1. **Truth is an accurate representation of Reality.**
 - Can you think of the LEM statements that must be upheld?
 -
 - Can you think of the LNC statement?
 -
 - Conclusion:

2. **All views of Reality are false (there is a Truth).**
 - Can you think of the LEM statements that must be upheld?
 -
 - Can you think of the LNC statement?
 -
 - Conclusion:

Argument #3: Relativism

Relativism describes that we all have views of reality, but that there are just different views, not one is better than the others. Relativists will first need to argue that there are multiple realities, and all views are true and all views are equal. They will also argue that there are no absolutes in realities.

1. **There are multiple views of realities, and all views are true.**
 - Can you think of the LEM statements that must be upheld?
 -
 - Can you think of the LNC statement?
 -
 - Conclusion:

2. **All views are equal.**
 - Can you think of the LEM statements that must be upheld?
 -
 - Can you think of the LNC statement?
 -
 - Conclusion:

3. **There are no absolutes in reality.**
 - Can you think of the LEM statements that must be upheld?
 -
 - Can you think of the LNC statement?
 -
 - Conclusion:

IV. Wrap Up

Note that true relativists will not argue their point. Why bother, if all views are different, and none is better. Your view of Religion and Truth is no better or worse than theirs. But they do argue, because, relativists will believe that their view is better!

Consider this quote from Joseph Fletcher, a famous relativist, in his book Situation Ethics:

“The situationist avoids words like ‘never’, and ‘perfect’ and ‘always’ and ‘complete’ as he avoids the plague, as he avoids ‘absolutely’”

But what he’s really saying is:

1. One should NEVER use the word never
2. One should ALWAYS avoid the word always
3. One should ABSOLUTELY deny all absolutes

Truth by its nature is:

- **Non-contradictory:** it does not violate the basic laws of logic.
- **Absolute:** it does not depend upon time, place, or condition.
- **Discovered:** it exists independently of our minds; we did not create it.
- **Descriptive:** it is the agreement of the mind with reality (correspondence).
- **Inescapable:** to deny its existence is to affirm it (we are bound by it).
- **Unchanging:** it is the firm standard by which truth claims are measured.