



This exercise sheet accompanies my video: “Controlling your argument”. In the video, I show how to make a clear, consistent, convincing case throughout the essay, where each section follows logically from the preceding one.

PART A: To write a controlled argument, you need to be ruthless about cutting background information if it doesn't contribute *directly* to the case you are making. For the following questions, identify the most promising opening sentence (a, b, or c). Explain your answer.

1. What are the consequences of partisan polarization in Congress for Presidential power?
  - a. Congress is the legislative branch of the United States government.
  - b. The current US President is Donald J. Trump.
  - c. Polarization takes both affective (dislike) and positional (issue-based) forms, each with distinct effects upon Presidential power.
  
2. Is Wittgenstein's private language argument a defence or attack on behaviourism?
  - a. The private language argument was articulated by Ludwig Wittgenstein in his seminal work *Philosophical Investigations*, which was published posthumously in 1953.
  - b. Wittgenstein constructs neither an attack nor a defence of behaviourism but rather an approach to agreed practices.
  - c. Wittgenstein was an Austrian philosopher who worked on philosophy of language, including the private language argument.
  
3. Is psychoanalytic theory a useful approach in modern psychology?
  - a. Psychoanalytic theory is more useful to therapists than to scientists.
  - b. Psychoanalytic theory was founded by Sigmund Freud.
  - c. Psychoanalytic theory came to prominence in the latter third of the twentieth century and is linked to psychoanalysis.

4. Why are the failures of the US Constitution not remedied by amending the Constitution?
  - a. The first ten amendments to the Constitution are collectively known as The Bill of Rights.
  - b. Failure implies non-fulfilment of expectations, but the Constitution has not 'failed' because its procedures operate as the Founding Fathers anticipated.
  - c. The US Constitution is the supreme law of the United States, a large country in the western hemisphere with 50 states and more than 320 million inhabitants.

PART B: You must give away your punchline at the beginning. If you are familiar with the following stories, summarize the main argument or take-home as a single grammatical sentence. Eg: *Little Red Riding Hood*'s take-home could be: 'children should always follow directions'; 'the grandmother has already been eaten'; or simply: 'never trust wolves'.

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|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 5. The Three Little Pigs            | 8. Hansel and Gretel    |
| 6. Biblical account of Adam and Eve | 9. The Myth of Sisyphus |
| 7. The Sixth Sense                  | 10. Jurassic Park       |

PART C: Extract the core take-home from the following introduction (on the question 'What price does the US pay for its exceptionalism?') Write the take-home as a single grammatical sentence.

'To answer the question of what price the United States pays for its exceptionalism, it is important to first understand what is meant in this case by "its exceptionalism". Obviously, the asking of this question implies an assumption that the United States is in fact exceptional, and if one accepts that assumption, then one must understand how the United States is exceptional, or rather, what specifically, be it culture or material wealth, makes the United States exceptional. Of course, one does not have to accept this assumption, and can argue that the United States is not in fact exceptional, and is just another country. It is also important to focus on the former half of the question. Is the price something that must be paid by all, or something that must be paid by some? That this imbalance exists, that this exceptionalism is something that is fueled by the suffering of particular people, particular groups in the United States, is what I will be arguing in this essay.'