

ARGUMENTS BY ANALOGY

IMPORTANT TERMS

Analogy

A comparison between two or more things that said to be similar in one or more ways.

Inductive argument

An argument that demonstrates the probability of its conclusion

Argument by Analogy (ABA)

An inductive argument that uses an analogy to infer a conclusion. In other words, we say that an argument is analogical when the inference is based on the assumption that because two or more things are similar in one way, they are also similar in another way.

Analogies by themselves are not arguments. Rather, analogies can help us better conceptualize and understand things.

EXAMPLES

AN ANALOGY IS NOT ALWAYS AN ARGUMENT

“My momma always said, ‘life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you’re going to get’”.

-Forrest Gump

This is not an argument. The analogy is that, like a box of chocolates, life also has an element of unpredictability, no matter what we choose.

EXAMPLE OF INDUCTIVE ARGUMENT

I have consistently enjoyed espresso shots from Linnea’s café. So, I will probably enjoy my next espresso shot.

This is a simple inductive inference about the future.

EXAMPLE OF ABA

I have consistently enjoyed espresso shots from Linnea’s café. The owner has just opened a similar café in Pismo Beach. I will probably enjoy the espresso from the new café

WHEN DO WE USE ABA?

All the time. Most of us use ABA to make basic decisions that determine what we buy, what movies we watch, what books we read, etc.