I. Philosophy and Philosophical argument:

    A. Most concerned with reasons for believing various positions and views regarding the issues they address:

        1. Not too interested in arguments from authority:

            a. Assumption: If these authorities are to be trusted, we can look at their reasons for accepting what they accept.

            b. Certain limited exceptions:

                i. Scientific results based on relatively widely accepted standards of evaluation and peer review can sometimes be used as (provisional) premises in arguments.

                ii. Testimony of witnesses to matters no longer verifiable, can also provide such premises.

        2. Are interested in valid arguments from true or at least plausible premises.

            a. Wherever it matters, the plausibility of premises in arguments can be questioned and examined.

    B. This means that when we read philosophy we will be very interested in identifying the premises of the arguments, the structure of the argument in which they are used, and whether the premises are true and the structure of the argument valid.

II. Definitions of validity and soundness.

    A. Validity and soundness (as we are using them) are properties of **arguments**, not of individual premises in an argument. (Though those premises may themselves have been arrived at through arguments which could be valid and sound.) A premise can **make** an argument unsound by being untrue, but it won't itself **be** unsound.

        1. **Validity** - An argument is valid if the conclusion has to be true if its premises are. Or to put it another way: One of its premises must be false if its conclusion is false.

            a. Example:

                Premise 1: All Nebraskans are tall.
                Premise 2: Emily is a Nebraskan.
                Conclusion: Emily is tall.

            b. Example:

                Premise 1: Frogs are all creatures who like to ride bikes.
                Premise 2: Creatures who like riding bikes like to eat ice-cream.
                Conclusion: Frogs like to eat ice-cream.

            c. Moral: An argument with a false conclusion can be valid if its premises are false.

Validity concerns a relation between premises and conclusions, not the overall acceptability of the conclusions.

        d. Invalidity - an argument that is not valid is invalid.

    2. **Soundness** - An argument is sound if it is valid **and** its premises are all true.

        a. Unsoundness: An argument that is not sound is unsound.

            i. What was wrong with the second example was that the premises were untrue, and hence the argument was unsound even though valid.

        b. An invalid argument, even with true premises will also be unsound.

  B. So the possible kinds of argument can be divided like this:

	True Premises:	*At Least One False Premise*:
Conclusion Follows From Premises:	**Valid** and **Sound**	**Valid** but **Unsound**
Conclusion Doesn't Follow From Premises:	**Invalid** and *therefore* **Unsound**	**Invalid** and **Unsound**

III. Reading philosophy and looking for arguments:

IV. Normative Arguments: Ethical arguments with practical conclusions generally include both statements regarding:

  A. Normative Principle. (You might want to think of this as a kind of relatively fundamental moral principle.)

    1. Has one of two forms (Statement of rightness, or prescription):

        a. Actions of kind A are right.

        b. Do actions of kind A.

    2. Clause regarding the kind of circumstances it applies to may be left out for limiting case of principle applicable in any circumstances.

  B. Bridging claims connecting the circumstances with the normative principles cited.

    1. Tells you enough about the circumstances you are in to connect them up with the normative principles cited, by

        a. telling you that the conditions you are in are ones to which the principle applies, and/or

            i. Many normative principles are hypothetical (When in Rome, ...) and

hence we need information of the first kind to follow those.

   b. telling you how to satisfy the requirements of the principle.

         ii. Many normative principles will recommend actions of a kind that require more information to know how to accomplish. For example, a requirement to save someone's life will require information on how to save lives to carry out.

   2. Bridging principles tend to be of two kinds:

      a. Often, these are empirical matters, meaning that they require evidence from experience. Thus, it would be the kind of thing you could learn from scientists or by opening one's eyes to the world around you, or from talking to someone who had.

      b. Sometimes a relevant fact about the circumstances is conceptual, such as the claim that knowingly saying something false is a lie.

      c. Some arguments will require both empirical and conceptual information.

   3. Example:

      a. Lying is wrong. (   )

      b. Saying something knowing that it is likely to be false while intending the listener to believe it is to lie. (   )

      c. "_____," will be false if I say it. (   )

      d. Saying, "_____,"while intending to get someone to believe it is wrong.

C. Together, the parts (normative claims and connecting empirical or conceptual claims) determine a practical conclusion for action.

D. General point: To know how to act you need to know both what kinds of things are right and wrong, and how the world is.