

Understanding The Nature Of Statements

**Come Let Us Reason Together: Learning
To Love God With All Thy Mind**

6/8/25

Statements: True Or False

- **Statement**—“is a particular kind of sentence that brings a message that can be said to be either true or false.” (57)
- True Statement:
 - “The apostle Paul wrote the book of Galatians.”
- False Statement:
 - “The apostle Paul wrote the book of Isaiah.”
- “In evaluating statements, we should be looking for their truth value.” (57)
- “If a sentence has no truth value, then it is not a statement at all.” (57)

Non-Statements

- Consider the following non-statements:
 - “Who wrote the book of I Timothy?”
 - “Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church.”
 - Why are these non-statements?
- “The first sentence is a **question**, and consequently has no truth value. It is neither true nor false, and therefore is not a statement.”(57)
- “The second sentence is a **command**. It also has no truth value, and is not a statement.” (57)

Nonsense Statements

- “There is another kind of sentence that requires a little more care. It has the form of a statement, but it is not a real statement. . . the instrument used to determine this is whether the sentence has a truth value.” (57)
- Example:
 - “The round square sweetly kicked the green yesterday.”
 - What is wrong with this statement?
- “This looks like a statement, but it cannot even be said to be false. It does not refer to anything. It is best described as nonsense.” (57)

Nonsense Statements

- Example:
 - “This sentence is false.”
- “Is this true? Then it is false, and therefore true. Is it false? It is therefore, true, and consequently false.” (58)
- “Again, there is no real truth value here. This sentence cannot be identified as either true or false. It is therefore, not a statement, at least not the kind of statement that we can legitimately use in logic.” (58)
- Caution— “ridiculously false statements, such as “The queen is a man” or “Dogs grow two heads when tickled” are not nonsense. They have a truth value—false—so they are statements.” (59)

Summary Statement

- “A statement is a sentence that is either true or false. Other kinds of sentences that have no truth value—such as questions, commands, and nonsense—are not statements.” (58)
- Work on the following practice examples with a partner.
- Jesus healed blind men. _____
- David was the 1st king of Israel. _____
- Who wrote Hebrews? _____
- The Great Pyramid is six feet high. _____
- The slithy toves did gyre and gimble. _____
- Children, obey your parents. _____

Self-Supporting Statements

- “Once we have determined that a sentence is a statement, a further distinction can be made between self-supporting statements and supported statements.” (61)
- “The distinction depends upon the means by which the truth value of the statement is determined. . . Self-supporting statements, which are statements that have immediately apparent truth values.” (61)
- Example:
 - “Any surface that is red is colored.”
 - Why is this statement self-supported?
- Statements such as these could also be called self-evident.

Self-Supporting Statements

- For self-evident statements “we do not need to consider information outside of the statement to determine their truth values.” (61)
- There are three types of self-supporting statements.
- Self-Reports— “a statement by a person concerning his or her own desires, beliefs, or feelings.” (61)
- Example:
 - “I believe that Jesus is the Son of God.”
- “The statement refers to the belief of the speaker; it does not primarily refer to whether Jesus is in fact the Son of God. In other words, the statement could be taken as true, even if Christianity were false.”
- Brainstorm some additional examples.

Self-Supporting Statements

- Tautology— “Statements that are true or false by logical structure. That is a statement that can be seen to be true or false by how the sentence is put together.”
- Example:
 - “Jesus is the Son of God, or He is not the Son of God.”
- “This statement is necessarily true. It cannot be false, because it covers all the possibilities. A statement which is true by logical structure is call a tautology.” (61)
- In contrast, other statements are necessarily false.
 - “Jesus is the Son of God, and He is not the Son of God.”
 - What is wrong with that statement?
- “This is an example of a self-contradiction, a statement that is false by logical structure.” (62)

Self-Supporting Statements

- Definitional—“Some statements are necessarily true or false because of the definitions of the words in the sentence.” (62)
- Example:
 - “All triangles are three-sided figures.”
 - Why is this correct?
- “This is necessarily true—it is true by definition.” (62)
- The following is “false by definition:”
 - This triangle is an octogen.
- “According to the definitions of triangle and octagon, the statement is necessarily false.” (62)

Summary Statement

- “Self-supporting statements are statements for which we need no outside evidence to determine their truth value. There are three types: self-reports (self-evident), statements that are true or false by logical structure, and statements that are true or false by definition.” (62)

Works Cited

Introductory Logic: The Fundamentals of Thinking Well. Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2014.