

## Inductive Argument

The Inductive argument seems to come to its conclusion only after it has considered all of the facts. Once the thinker has enough evidence s/he makes the “inductive leap” and produces a conclusion. Trial attorneys, for example, use induction to put the evidence together to make the case. If the jury agrees with the lawyer’s logic, they will agree that his/her conclusion is correct/accurate. Dr. House compiles test results and other facts until the diagnosis is made.

eg. As a teacher, I collect “facts” as I teach a unit, and then I make conclusions: they liked task X more than task Y; they yelled less often; they remained focused longer-----conclusion: they loved the Shakespeare unit!

Once people reach a conclusion through inductive reasoning, they can use the general rule for themselves.

eg. They loved the Shakespeare unit last time. If I do the same things next time, the students will love the Shakespeare unit again.

**Note:** If you wish to challenge an inductive argument, you can only challenge the conclusion; the facts that lead to the conclusion are obviously beyond dispute (or they wouldn’t be called “facts”)

### Inductive Essay Model

The pollution in Beijing makes it 3.7% harder to breathe than “normal”.

Older people find it harder to breathe in polluted air than do younger people.

Young people adapt more quickly to changes in atmosphere than do older people.

The average age of the Canadian Olympic team is 2.1 yrs. younger than the players with whom they expect to be competing

Conclusion: *The Canadian Olympic team won more than “usual” because its younger players found it easier to breathe than did its opponents.*

→ Notice that these are not premises (claims which can be challenged); they are simply facts. The significance my argument attaches to these facts is what might be challenged. In fact, many people might challenge the conclusion. Where might the conclusion be flawed?

→ This conclusion’s ability to convince readers is dependent on whether they feel I have interpreted the significance of the facts correctly. For instance, somebody might doubt my conclusion, and wonder how the younger Canadian players’ performances compared with those of its older players. It might also be pointed out that:

- a. the measure of performance is flawed, because the quality of our opponents isn’t specified (we may have been competing against small countries in less important sports)
- b. The age at which older people experience breathing difficulty greatly exceeds the age, and aerobic capacity of even the oldest Olympic athlete

**Task:** For each of the following, use between 4 and 6 building blocks (facts for induction, premises for deduction)

- a. Use inductive reasoning to show that we must spend more money to protect the environment.
- b. Use inductive reasoning to show that Burlington is a good place to live.
- c. Use deductive reasoning to show that cell phones are harmful to high school students' well being.
- d. Use deductive reasoning to show that students would be happier if they played more extra-curricular sports.