Argumentation

"Insults are the arguments employed by those who are in the wrong."

Jean-Jacque Rousseau

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Introduction

What is the importance of correct argumentation?

Communication is a basic part of our life. We live in a society, where we share our ideas, opinions, feelings, energy and power. This gives us a great strength, because every person can use the power of all members of the social group he lives with. We can create our world together, protect and help each other.

Argumentation means that we are able to **say** what we think and **explain** it. It is a really complicated process of making others **understand** your idea. We call this important process **REASONING**.

Q.1
If someone says: "I like going out. We should go out!" Is this a good argument - reason for you to go out?

Q.2
(Kelly:"Let's go out for diner."

Jack:"No, I'm tired today."

Kelly: You are always tired when I want to go out!)

Why don't people understand each other?

Q.3
Have you ever explained something and the other people didn't understand you or they understood you incorrectly?

If people use incorrect argument -> the other people don't understand and accept them -> it's their fault that the others don't understand them

Theory

Q.1
<u>What is an argument?</u>

Argument is a set of sentences. Basically an argument states **what** we believe and **why** we belie that. That is why every argument has two basic parts:

1. **Conclusion** - states WHAT we believe.
2. **Premises** - the reasons WHY we believe it.

Example - "I think we should stay at home today. Look at those nasty clouds. There will be a huge storm any minute. I'm also very tired, it would be hard to stay awake for me."

Conclusion - "I think we should stay at home today."

Premises - "Look at those nasty clouds. There will be a huge storm any minute."; "I'm also very tired, it would be hard to stay awake for me."

Q.2
<u>What is a good argument?</u>

A good argument should be **UNDERSTANDABLE** and **ACCEPTABLE** for **all** participants of a debate.

<u>Understandable</u> - the premises should be logical and clear.

Good - "Let's go for a dinner! We both are hungry and too tired to cook!"

Bad - "Let's go for a dinner! Louis XIV. was a great French king!" The explanation has no logical connection to conclusion.

<u>Acceptable</u> - the explanation should be agreed or approved by most participants of the debate.

Good - in Christian family - "We can order a good beef steak. It's tasty and full of proteins."

Bad - in Hindu family - "We can order a good beef steak. It's tasty and full of proteins." It's unacceptable for Hindu to eat beef.

Q3
What basic types of arguments do we know?

1. **Deductive arguments** - the truth of their premises **guarantees** the truth of their conclusion. "We never eat meat on Friday (truth). Today is Friday (truth). We won't eat meat today (truth)."

2. **Inductive arguments** - is reasoning in which the premises seek to supply strong evidence for (**not absolute proof of**) the truth of the conclusion. While the conclusion of a deductive argument is supposed to be **certain**, the truth of the conclusion of an inductive argument is supposed to be **probable**, based upon the evidence given. "We will maybe go with Paul today for dinner. He is a strong vegan. Probably we won't eat meat today."

   2.1. Arguments from analogy - A is like B, A is F, therefore B is F. "Yesterday was a similar day as today. Yesterday we went out for dinner. So today we will go for diner as well."

   2.2. Arguments from authority - if an expert thinks A, than A is truth. "The Harvard medical school released a new study about a balanced diet. We should order also more vegetables!" (http://cdn1.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/30/2013/04/HEPApr2013.jpg)
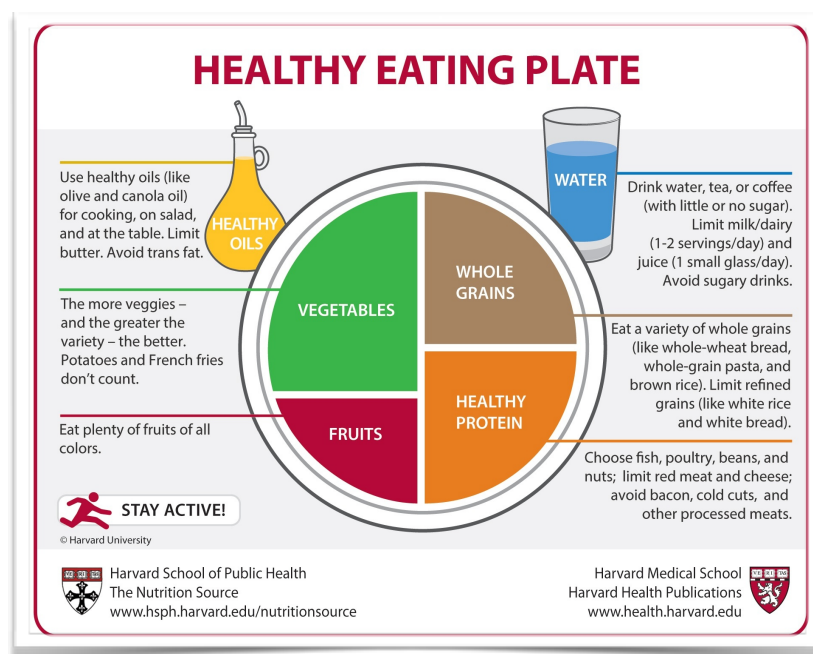
   2.3. Casual arguments - every time when A occurs a B also occurs. Therefore A causes B. "Every time we eat out we spend too much money. Eating out is too expensive for us."

Q.4

Why does every argument has an opposite argument?

Everything has advantages and disadvantages, therefore also every argument has certainly an opposite argument **of the same value**. The purpose of debate is **not to fight who is right and who not**, but to find as much important information as possible and then **decide** based on our priorities.

"We are too tired today to cook. Let's go out for dinner." - truth
"We are too tired to dress up and walk to the city. Let's stay at home." -truth

Q.5 What is a fallacy in argumentation?

A fallacy is the use of poor, incorrect or unacceptable reasoning for the argument. The argument **appears to be correct but is not.**

Why are these arguments wrong? Why?

"I ate in that restaurant once and the food was bad. All the food there is rubbish." (Since you didn't taste all the meals you cannot state that - not enough evidence)
"Everybody likes Thai food. We should go to Thai restaurant." (It's not true that everybody likes Thai food)
"Not many people I know like Thai food. It's not tasty." (Thai food can be tasty even though not everyone likes it)
"We went out yesterday and I slipped on the ice. We will stay at home cause I don't want to get hurt!" (Exception is not a rule)
"Yesterday we weren't out for dinner and we weren't hungry. We can stay at home today as well." (The circumstances of yesterday and today can vary)

Exercise

1. Remember/write down 5 arguments people will tell you tomorrow. Evaluate them - are they good or bad? Explain.
2. Find five argument in recent news. Evaluate them - are they good or bad? Explain.
3. Choose with your project group a topic. Divide into two groups. One group should present 3 good arguments for and the other 3 opposite arguments. Present them one by one. Evaluate every one of them. Try to find an opposite argument to every presented argument.