

Suggested Responses: How do weak arguments differ from strong ones?

Discussion Link: [Should environmental conservation take precedence over economic growth?](#)

Category	Claim (Click the link to view in the discussion)	Explanation
Logical ordering of premises and conclusions	<p>Statement: Economic growth leads to prosperity and improves our quality of life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premise 1: Key sectors which improve our quality of life depend on natural resources. • Premise 2: Exploitation of natural resources can disrupt these key sectors and cause shortages. • Premise 3: The World Bank has warned that the global economy will face losses if more is not done to protect and restore nature. • Conclusion: There are economic risks to environmental degradation. To protect the prosperity and quality of life that economic growth promises, we need to prioritize protecting the environment. 	<p>This is a well-made argument that is clear, coherent, and supported by specific examples.</p> <p>The premises provide evidence, reasons, and grounds for the conclusion.</p>
Logical ordering of premises and conclusions	<p>Statement: Infinite economic growth is not possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premise 1: If society can achieve decoupling, whereby economic growth is separated from environmental degradation, then infinite economic growth may be theoretically possible. • Premise 2: Many countries are implementing circular economy policies to promote long-term sustainable economic growth. • Premise 3: Creating a circular economy on a global scale is incredibly difficult and will require a significant change to consumerism and global supply chains. • Conclusion: Ultimately, it would appear that to allow for sustainable growth, overcoming the challenges of implementing a circular economy is crucial. Thus, in practical terms, infinite economic growth is not currently feasible. 	<p>This is a well-made argument that is clear, coherent, and supported by specific examples.</p> <p>The premises provide evidence, reasons, and grounds for the conclusion.</p>

Assumption	The basic principles of economics state that economic growth leads to prosperity and improves our quality of life.	This claim assumes all economic growth is beneficial or leads to prosperity for all.
Assumption	Environmental protections always lead to job losses.	This claim doesn't consider situations where such protections can create jobs or stimulate economic growth.
Assumption	New technologies will address climate change without needing significant changes to our lifestyle.	This claim assumes that technological advancements alone can solve climate issues
Opinion	We have a better understanding of environmental issues than previous generations; it is society's responsibility to act on that knowledge.	This claim has no supporting evidence and is therefore simply an opinion presented by the author.
Falsehood	Analysis by the IMF suggests that periods of slow economic growth, lasting four years or more, can push up income inequality within countries by almost 40 percent.	The correct figure from the source is 20 percent.
Falsehood	Around half of the global population is at risk of being forced to move due to rising temperatures making their homes unlivable, which could cause mass migration.	The correct figure from the source is one-third of the global population.
Misinformation	Recycling our clothes would prevent them from ending up in landfill and make the fashion industry more sustainable.	"According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, less than 1% of fiber used to produce clothing is recycled to make new clothing. Garments that are recycled are mainly downcycled (recycling something so that the resulting product is of a lower value than the original item) into items like insulation, mattress stuffing and industrial wipes, which surprise, surprise, ultimately ends up in the landfill." Source
Off-topic arguments	The fundamental values upon which the EU is founded - human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights - are essential to our quality of life and do not depend on economic growth.	While these values are important, the claim is not addressing the thesis, whether economic growth should be secondary to environmental protection. The argument is brought back on track in a later claim, though.

Off-topic arguments	<u>It's important to promote economic growth to remain competitive globally.</u>	This claim doesn't relate to improving quality of life, instead offering an off-topic reason for economic growth.
Appeal to tradition	<u>Previous generations did not care about the state of the world they left future generations. Therefore, current generations should not care about future ones.</u>	<p>This implies that following the example set by previous generations is acceptable, indicating a belief that tradition should guide current behavior.</p> <p>This is explicitly stated in <u>the related con.</u></p>
Appeal to tradition	<u>We've always relied on fossil fuels for energy; a transition to renewable energy would be too disruptive.</u>	This claim suggests that because fossil fuel reliance has been the norm, it should continue, without considering the benefits or necessity of change.
Appeal to fear	<u>If society doesn't support drastic environmental policies right away, there will be catastrophic consequences for humans; they will suffer from chaos, more widespread disease, and more frequent natural disasters.</u>	<p>This highlights catastrophic consequences that will occur if drastic environmental policies are not taken immediately.</p> <p>There is no specific evidence provided that drastic actions need to be taken immediately - though there may be truth to it.</p>
Slippery slope fallacy	<u>If governments keep imposing more and more restrictions on businesses to protect the environment, businesses will eventually stop making any profit and the economy will collapse.</u>	This suggests that an extremely negative outcome/worst-case scenario will result from increasing environmental protections which isn't supported by evidence here.
Appeal to authority	<u>Elon Musk said, "Now that we've become profitable, we expect that other manufacturers will get into the electric car market." This will result in economic growth, while protecting the environment.</u>	<p>The argument relies on Elon Musk's status as a prominent figure in the electric vehicle (EV) industry. The author uses the quote to support their argument that economic growth is possible while protecting the environment without reference to any further evidence.</p> <p>The quote has also been cut, to make it support the argument.</p>

Appeal to authority	Arnold Schwarzenegger said, "The future is green energy, sustainability, renewable energy."	The statement implies that his opinion on energy and sustainability should be accepted as valid due to his experience and public role. This assumes that his insights are based on informed perspectives. This quote is also over 10 years old.
Circular argument	To uphold moral standards, we must avoid actions that cause harm to innocent individuals.	This reiterates the previous claim, without adding any new reasoning.
Circular argument	By recognizing this impact, parents are motivated to alter their behaviors to protect their children, reinforcing the idea that changing habits is essential for their children's well-being.	This reiterates the previous claim, without adding any new reasoning.
Circular argument	Protecting endangered species is essential because we need to protect endangered species.	This restates the conclusion as its premise without adding additional reasoning or evidence.