

ExPhil

Understanding, examining and
constructing arguments



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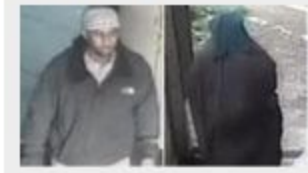
High Court orders two sisters must receive MMR vaccine



The background to the case

A judge has ruled that sisters aged 15 and 11 must have the MMR vaccine even though they and their mother do not want it, BBC Newsnight has learned.

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Denying the Holocaust

By Deborah Lipstadt

Last updated 2011-02-17



Deborah Lipstadt discusses how misinformation and false claims are used to question the reality of the Nazis' attempt to exterminate Europe's Jews.

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It never happened

Holocaust deniers are people who contend that the Holocaust - the attempt by Nazi Germany to annihilate European Jewry during World War Two - never happened. According to the deniers, the Nazis did not murder six million Jews, the notion of homicidal gas chambers is a myth, and any deaths of Jews that did occur under the Nazis were the result of wartime privations, not of systematic persecution and state-organised mass murder.

Deniers dismiss all assertions that the Holocaust took place as conscious fabrications, or as psychotic delusions. Some even claim that Hitler was the best friend the Jews had in Germany, and that he actively worked to protect them. According to deniers, Jews have perpetrated this hoax about the Holocaust on the world in order to gain political and financial

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Arguments

1. What is the definition of an argument?
2. How can one recognise an argument in a piece of text?

An argument is: a reason, or series of **reasons** in support of a conclusion (Thomson 1999)

Argument indicators:

Conclusion indicators:

“so; therefore; thus; hence; must; cannot...”

Reason indicators:

“because; since; as...”

Arguments?

1. Most manufactured baby milks have been found to contain chemicals which can cause infertility. So mothers of new-born babies should be advised to breast-feed their babies.
2. Most mothers want the best for their babies. Some people think that it is better to feed babies on breast milk rather than on manufactured baby milks. Not all mothers find it convenient to breast feed.
3. People who accept that it is sometimes right to go to war cannot really believe that killing is always wrong. War inevitably involves killing.

Task:

Provide an argument showing why Exphil is or is not an important part of a university degree. Ensure your argument has a conclusion supported by reasons.