
Questioning as we learn: An introduction to critical thinking

Material for Higher Education students in Sierra Leone by INASP, UK



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Unit 3 - Snippet 70

Have you found out that the conclusion of the argument in snippet 69 is false? For example, turtles or snakes are also egg-laying animals, and they do not have feathers.

But what is the flaw in the argument? The argument is logically valid: If 'all egg-laying animals are birds and all birds have feathers then we certainly can conclude that 'all egg-laying animals have feathers'. But Premise 1 is of course wrong; not all egg-laying animals are birds as, for example, reptiles lay eggs too.



Q&A activity – Deductive argument

Now read this next argument.

Ask yourself again: Is the conclusion true? Why or why not?

Premise 1: All birds have feathers.

Premise 2: Bessie has feathers (as a trustworthy source confirms).

Conclusion: Therefore, Bessie is a bird.

Write down your answer to the questions above.