

Baronett, *Logic* (4th ed.)
Chapter Guide

Chapter 10: Analogical Arguments

A. The Framework of Analogical Arguments

An analogical argument relies on an analogy to draw a conclusion.

An **analogy** is the assertion of similarities (or dissimilarities) between two or more things. When we reason analogically, we tend to use something well known to us to infer something about a lesser known object or event. The fact that we compare similarities between things tells us that we assume these things to be similar (or dissimilar) enough to make it probable that these similarities (or dissimilarities) carry over:

The basic form of an analogical argument looks like this:

Premise 1: X and Y have characteristics *a*, *b*, *c* ... in common.

Premise 2: X has characteristic *k*.

Therefore, *probably* Y has characteristic *k*.

B. Analyzing Analogical Arguments

When we analyze an analogical argument, we look for **relevant similarities** and **relevant dissimilarities** between the objects or events under comparison. The relevance of similarities and dissimilarities between objects or events is determined by their relation to the conclusion of the argument.

The conclusion of an analogical argument is related to or determined by the

1. **number** of things referred to in the first premise.
2. **variety** of things referred to in the first premise.
3. **number of characteristics** referred to in the first premise.
4. **relevance of the characteristics** of things referred to in the first premise.

C. Strategies of Evaluation

When evaluating an analogical argument, consider:

1. **Disanalogies:** These are differences between things, or ways in which things are not similar.

2. **Counteranalogy:** This is a new, competing argument which compares the conclusion object or event to something else.
3. **Unintended consequences:** When you can point to an undesirable consequence of the analogy someone has advanced, they will be less likely to maintain it.