



Learning Targets

1. Read and listen carefully to arguments for positions you disagree with
2. Rephrase explicit claims in the most plausible way
3. Be able to identify claims that require charitable interpretation, make the most sense in the argument, and are most likely to be true
4. Identify problems with them very closely



ThinkerAnalytix

The Charity Principle





Interpret Statements Charitably

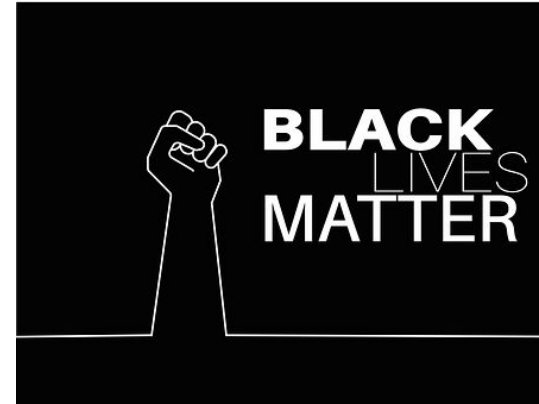
How should we interpret this phrase?

An **uncharitable** interpretation:

- ❖ Black lives matter more than other lives.

A **more charitable** interpretation:

- ❖ Black lives have been devalued throughout America's long history of racial injustice.





How We Argue: The Charity Principle

- Notice when a statement requires charitable interpretation (controversial, vague, or overstated)
- Interpret statements in the way that makes the most sense in context, and is most likely to be true
 - Don't commit authors to unnecessarily bold or controversial claims
 - Choose a more modest interpretation



Why Practice Charity?

- Believe true things
- People will like you
- You'll be more persuasive

Interpret Statements Charitably

What is the most charitable interpretation of this phrase?

- Racism is not a significant problem in the U.S.
- We should value all lives equally, regardless of race.
- Every life counts equally, including the lives of plants and animals.
- We should support police.



Interpret Statements Charitably

What is the most charitable interpretation of this phrase?



- Racism is not a significant problem in the U.S.
- **We should value all lives equally, regardless of race.**
- Every life counts equally, including the lives of plants and animals.
- We should support police.



Recognize the Need for Charity

[A] Climate change contributes to many serious problems, such as food insecurity and increased natural disasters. [B] People should make an effort to reduce their carbon footprint. [C] Scientists have concluded that climate change is caused by humans.

Which statement in the argument above requires charitable interpretation?

- A
- B
- C



Recognize the Need for Charity

[A] Climate change contributes to many serious problems, such as food insecurity and increased natural disasters. [B] People should make an effort to reduce their carbon footprint. [C] Scientists have concluded that climate change is caused by humans.

Which statement in the argument above requires charitable interpretation?

- A
- B
- C



Interpret Statements Charitably

[A] Climate change contributes to many serious problems, such as food insecurity and increased natural disasters. [B] People should make an effort to reduce their carbon footprint. [C] Scientists have concluded that climate change is caused by humans.

What is the most charitable interpretation of the underlined statement above?

- All scientists are 100% in agreement that climate change is caused by humans.
- Scientists believe that humans are the only cause of climate change.
- Most scientific studies show that climate change is caused by humans.
- Some scientists think global warming is caused by humans.



Interpret Statements Charitably

[A] Climate change contributes to many serious problems, such as food insecurity and increased natural disasters. [B] People should make an effort to reduce their carbon footprint. [C] Scientists have concluded that climate change is caused by humans.

What is the most charitable interpretation of the underlined statement above?

- All scientists are 100% in agreement that climate change is caused by humans.
- Scientists believe that humans are the only cause of climate change.
- **Most scientific studies show that climate change is caused by humans.**
- Some scientists think global warming is caused by humans.



How We Argue: Intellectual Charity

- **Humility:** Some of the things I believe could be (probably are) wrong, and other people know valuable things that I do not.
- **Truth-seeking:** (All else being equal) It is helpful to have my mistaken beliefs corrected.
- **Open-mindedness:** Other people's arguments against my beliefs are one way I can find out that some of my beliefs are mistaken and correct them. Even when they do not show I am mistaken, those arguments can give me insights I lack.



Evaluate Arguments Charitably

It would be a good idea to build a wall along the U.S. southern border. We can't allow undocumented people to just come into our country, as they will use up resources that should go to good, law-abiding citizens. If other people want to come to our country, they can do it legally at a port of entry so that we know who's here.

What, if anything, is wrong with this argument? (Select all that apply.)

- The author assumes that immigrants are more likely to be criminals than citizens.
- The author assumes that a wall would keep out all undocumented immigrants.
- The author implies that we should support conservative politicians on the basis of weak evidence.
- The author pretends to care about fairness when in fact they do not.
- None of the above.



Evaluate Arguments Charitably

It would be a good idea to build a wall along the U.S. southern border. We can't allow undocumented people to just come into our country, as they will use up resources that should go to good, law-abiding citizens. If other people want to come to our country, they can do it legally at a port of entry so that we know who's here.

What, if anything, is wrong with this argument? (Select all that apply.)

- The author assumes that immigrants are more likely to be criminals than citizens.
- The author assumes that a wall would keep out all undocumented immigrants.
- The author implies that we should support conservative politicians on the basis of weak evidence.
- The author pretends to care about fairness when in fact they do not.
- **None of the above.**



Charity Bites

How should we interpret this ad?

Uncharitable interpretations:

- ❖ We should aspire to literally not see or notice race
- ❖ We should aspire to make all people racially homogenous

More charitable interpretation:

- ❖ We should aspire to heal racial divisions and universally recognize our common humanity

