

## Rules for Putting Arguments into Standard Form

1. Identify the conclusion and put it at the bottom, with a line drawn just above it.
2. Identify the premises, and put one premise per line above the conclusion. The premises need not be put in any particular order.

When you do this, do not change the meaning of the original argument. Logic requires you to understand the argument given and to make its structure clear without changing either the structure or the meaning of the arguments.

For example, if the argument says: “Animals have moral rights,” you should not say “Animals have rights.” Those are actually different claims because not all rights are moral rights.

If the argument says: “Therefore, either they will not take courses that are interesting and rewarding, or they will not have a job when they graduate,” do not write “Students will major in either liberal arts or business.” This latter claim may be a logical consequence of the argument, but it is not part of the argument you are given.

In addition, do not add or subtract premises or conclusions. Use only the material you are given.

Finally, the following statement includes two separate premises, not one:

“If college students want courses that are interesting and rewarding, then they must major in liberal arts; but if they want a job when they graduate, then they must major in business.”

You need to indicate that there are two premises by putting each individual premise on a separate line. If you put the entire statement, with coordinating conjunction on one line, it is not clear that you understand how many premises the argument actually has. Here’s what this claim should look like when put in standard form:

If college students want courses that are interesting and rewarding, then they must major in liberal arts.  
If college students want a job when they graduate, then they must major in business.