

## **Validity and Truth**

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Validity is a structural (formal) feature of argument. It has nothing to do with the *actual* truth or falsity (i.e., the content or substance) of the argument's premises or conclusion. A valid argument, by definition, is one in which the conclusion follows conclusively from the premises. Put differently, a valid argument has the following characteristic: *If* its premises are true, *then* its conclusion is true. The only combination of truth values that you will never find—because it's logically impossible—is T, T (for as many premises as there are), and F (for the conclusion). Every other combination is possible, as the following arguments demonstrate. All have the same valid form, which is (1) All A is B; (2) All B is C; therefore, (3) All A is C. I chose classes (spaniels, dogs, and so forth) that make the propositions either obviously true or obviously false.

1. All spaniels are dogs (T).
2. All dogs are animals (T).
- Therefore,
3. All spaniels are animals (T).

1. All spaniels are four-legged things (T).
2. All four-legged things are animals (F).
- Therefore,
3. All spaniels are animals (T).

1. All spaniels are dogs (T).
2. All dogs are snails (F).
- Therefore,
3. All spaniels are snails (F).

1. All spaniels are birds (F).
2. All birds are animals (T).
- Therefore,
3. All spaniels are animals (T).

1. All spaniels are Fords (F).
  2. All Fords are automobiles (T).
- Therefore,
3. All spaniels are automobiles (F).

1. All spaniels are Fords (F).
  2. All Fords are animals (F).
- Therefore,
3. All spaniels are animals (T).

1. All spaniels are Spaniards (F).
  2. All Spaniards are spelunkers (F).
- Therefore,
3. All spaniels are spelunkers (F).