

1.1 Premises and personhood: supported rehearsal

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 6 marks

Objective

Supported preparation: Distinguish a claim, premise and conclusion; Evaluate an argument about personal identity using a counterexample. This is original rehearsal, not completion of the assessed task.

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

A premise gives a reason; a conclusion is the claim those reasons aim to support. Validity concerns whether true premises would guarantee the conclusion. Soundness also requires true premises. A definition of personhood must be argued for and tested, not assumed from everyday wording.

Original source / task evidence

Task: “All persons can communicate verbally; this individual cannot communicate verbally; therefore this individual is not a person.” Evaluate without applying a harmful label to a real person.

Separate what is stated from the interpretation.
Premises and personhood

Task: “All persons can communicate verbally; this individual cannot communicate verbally; therefore this individual is not a person.” Evaluate without applying a harmful label to a real person.

The argument has the valid denying-the-consequent form if the first premise is accepted. The premise is highly contestable: temporary inability to speak is a counterexample to using verbal performance as a necessary condition. A valid form does not establish soundness.

2 Practice

2.1 For the worked case, identify the evidence and a conclusion it can support. Explain one material limit. [3]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Propose consciousness as a personhood criterion and identify a difficulty in applying it. Give a reasoned answer, evidence or method, and a relevant qualification. [3]

Solutions

2.1 The argument has the valid denying-the-consequent form if the first premise is accepted. The premise is highly contestable: temporary inability to speak is a counterexample to using verbal performance as a necessary condition. A valid form does not establish soundness. Authored points for identifying relevant evidence, explaining a supported inference and a material limit.

3.1 A consciousness criterion can link personhood to experience, but its necessity, sufficiency and meaning need argument. Temporary unconsciousness challenges a momentary test, and other minds raise evidential problems. Distinguish the concept from a performance proxy and consider a defensible revision. Authored points for a relevant judgement, reason tied to the case and justified qualification or method. Accept a supported alternative.