

Conclusion-indicators and Premise-indicators

In order to identify the *type* of argument, one must distinguish the conclusion from the premises. (That's because the different types of argument represent different ways that a conclusion can be supported by its premises.)

Here are some words/phrases that can help you identify which statement is the conclusion, and which statements are premises. A *conclusion-indicator* is a word/phrase that basically means "here comes a conclusion," whereas a *premise-indicator* means "here comes my premise(s)."

Conclusion-indicators

'Therefore'
'Thus'
'This implies/entails that'
'So'
'Hence'
'It follows that'

Premise-indicators

'After all'
'For' [when synonymous with 'After all']
'This is implied/entailed by'
*'The reason is that'
*'That's because'

Example 1: Rocky-road is the best ice-cream. *After all*, it has the best name.

(The second sentence is marked as a premise by 'After all'. Accordingly, the first sentence must be the conclusion.)

Example 2: Rocky-road ice-cream has the best name. *Thus*, it is the best ice-cream.

(The second-sentence is marked as the conclusion by 'Thus'. And so, the first sentence must be the premise.)

Note: The premise-indicators marked with "*" can also function as *conclusion*-indicators when the argument is *abductive*.

Also note: Even though these words are *sufficient* for an argument in English, they are not strictly *necessary* for an argument. For instance, it would be natural to interpret the following as an argument:

"Abortion is immoral. If you don't think so, you're a sinner."

This is naturally read as *an attempt to support* the conclusion that abortion is immoral. In which case, the passage is an "argument," even though there is no explicit premise-indicator nor conclusion-indicator.