

Logic 09 Reading – Qualitative Rules for Categorical Syllogisms

_____ **Introduction.** We now turn to the qualitative rules for categorical syllogisms. In the last chapter, we discussed quantitative rules and in the chapter before that, terminological rules. Just as terminological rules have to do with how terms were arrayed in a syllogism and quantitative rules have to do with the quantity of the statements in the syllogism, qualitative rules have to do with the quality of the statements in the syllogism.

Let us once again review all seven of the rules :

Terminological Rules:

- I. There must be three and only three terms.
- II. The middle term must not occur in the conclusion.

Quantitative Rules:

- III. If a term is distributed in the conclusion, then it must be distributed in the premises.
- IV. The middle term must be distributed at least once.

Qualitative Rules:

- V. No conclusion can follow from two negative premises.
- VI. If the two premises are affirmative, the conclusion must also be affirmative.
- VII. If either premise is negative, the conclusion must be negative.

Once again, a syllogism must comply with all of these rules in order for it to be considered valid. The three rules we discuss in this chapter are called **qualitative** because they have to do with the quality of the statements in a syllogism. The quality of a statement, remember, has to do with whether it is affirmative or negative.

_____ **Rule V: No Conclusion Can Follow from Two Negative Premises.** This rule prevents us, as several other rules do, from trying to say more in the conclusion that is contained in the premises. When we have two negative premises, we cannot establish a connection between the major and minor term.

Let's look at an example of a syllogism that violates Rule V:

- (E) No plants are animals
- (O) Some minerals are not animals.
- (O) Therefore, some minerals are not plants.

Here you can see that both premises are true, as well as the conclusion. But does the conclusion follow from the premises? No, it does not. From the fact that no plants are animals and the fact that some minerals are not animals, it does not logically follow that some minerals are not plants. The reason, in this case, that the argument is invalid is that both of its premises are negative.

This syllogism complies with all the other rules, but it does not comply with Rule V. When this rule is broken, we say it commits the ***Fallacy of Exclusive Premises***.

_____ **Rule VI: If the Two Premises are Affirmative, the Conclusion Must Also be Affirmative.**

No matter how hard we try, we cannot logically derive a negative conclusion from two affirmative premises. An example of how this rule can be violated is as follows:

All men are mortals.

All mortals make mistakes.

Therefore, some things that make mistakes are not men.

Again, this argument complies with all other six rules. But although the conclusion in this syllogism is true, it goes beyond what the premises justify. There may be some other premises that justify it, but not these two.

A syllogism that violates this rule is said to commit the ***Fallacy of Drawing a Negative Conclusion from Affirmative Premises***.

_____ **Rule VII: If Either Premise is Negative, the Conclusion Must**

Also be Negative. An example of a violation of Rule VII would be as follows:

All cannibals are bloodthirsty.

Some accountants are not bloodthirsty.

Therefore, some accountants are cannibals.

Again, this syllogism complies with all the other rules. This says that some accountants are not bloodthirsty. But the conclusion assumes that only some accountants are not bloodthirsty. But if all accountants are not bloodthirsty (which is perfectly consistent with saying that some of them are), then the argument falls apart. Just because we say that some are excluded from a group, it does not preclude the possibility that all may be.

Syllogisms that break this rule are said to commit the ***Fallacy of Drawing an Affirmative Conclusion from a Negative Premise***.

_____ **Summary.** This chapter concerns the last set of the seven rules with which syllogisms must comply in order to be considered valid. This last set of rules are called **qualitative** rules .

Rule V says that ***no conclusion can follow from two negative premises***. When we violate this rule we commit the ***Fallacy of Exclusive Premises***.

Rule VI says that ***if the two premises are affirmative, the conclusion must also be affirmative***. When we violate this rule we say we commit the ***Fallacy of Drawing a Negative Conclusion from Affirmative Premises***.

Rule VII says that ***if either premise is negative, the conclusion must also be negative***. When we violate this rule we are said to have committed the ***Fallacy of Drawing an Affirmative Conclusion from a Negative Premise***.