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Decisions and Conclusions

Decision

A decision is anything you choose to do or believe.



Examples of Decisions

- I decided to do my homework after dinner.
- I chose to go out for the swimming team.
- After looking at the gray clouds, I decided to wear my raincoat.
- I decided to try to kick the ball over the head of the goalie.

Conclusion

A conclusion is a decision made after thinking about something.



Examples of Conclusions

- After looking at the cloudless sky, I concluded it was going to be a hot day.
- My mom looked angry so I concluded this was not the best time to ask for candy.
- I concluded this had to be a large animal after listening to it move through the brush.
- I concluded from the ringtone that my dad was calling.

Expert Knowledge

When we evaluate evidence, we know that some evidence is more important than other evidence. The evidence given to us by an expert is always more important than evidence from someone with limited knowledge of the subject. For example, if you are sick and a friend tells you that it's nothing to worry about, but a medical doctor tells you that you have a serious illness, who would you believe?

You are probably going to believe the medical doctor because the doctor is an expert. Your friend might know something about health and medicine, but unless he is a medical doctor, he probably knows less than the doctor.

Example

Read the story below and then answer the questions on the next page.



The Mushroom

¹Stuart and his mom Kari were picking blackberries in a field. ²Kari was a mycologist. ³Mycologists are scientists who study fungi, such as mushrooms. ⁴As Stuart was picking blackberries, he came across some mushrooms. ⁵Stuart loved the taste of mushrooms. ⁶His mom likes to put them in salads she makes for their family. ⁷He also likes the taste of mushrooms on his pizza. ⁸Stuart picked a few of the mushrooms and then brought them to his mom so he could show her what he found before taking them home to wash and eat. ⁹When his mom saw the mushrooms, her eyes opened wide and she told him, “Never eat any mushroom you find unless you are with an expert who knows it is safe to eat!” ¹⁰Stuart looked at the mushrooms and told her that they looked like the mushrooms that he had seen in one of her salads. ¹¹His mom took the mushrooms in her hand and told him that many mushrooms look alike, but some mushrooms are deadly poisonous. ¹²She then pointed to the mushroom in her hand and exclaimed, “The mushroom in my hand could kill you if you ate it!”

Looking at the updated lists of evidence, we still have a little more evidence that the red car did hit the blue car, but how would you rate the strength of our evidence?

The evidence that the red car hit the blue car is still stronger than the evidence it did not, but are you as sure now as you were after Part 1 that the driver of the red car hit the blue car?

Most people would rate the strength of this evidence as strong, but no longer very strong. What makes this evidence strong is that:

- Two people say they heard the accident and saw the red car shake after the accident.
- There are dents in both cars.
- The driver of the red car says she did not hit the blue car and pointed out a hole in the road that she drove over that made her car shake.

Based on the evaluation—the weight and quality of each group of evidence—what conclusion does the evidence support?

The evidence still supports the witnesses' claim that the **red** car hit the **blue** car, but we are a little less certain after learning that the witnesses didn't actually see the accident and learning that there is a hole in the road behind the blue car.

Now read the final part of the story to see if the evidence changes.



The Accident (Part 3)

The policewoman looked at the hole in the road, but then asked the driver to explain the dents in both cars. The driver said that she couldn't explain the dent in the blue car, but the dent in her car was an old dent from her running into a tree on an icy day last winter. Just then, a woman from the store who had been walking by and heard the policewoman talking to the driver of the red car, stopped and told the policewoman that the store had a video camera that filmed everything that happened in the parking lot. The policewoman and the driver of the red car went into the store and asked to see the video. As they watched the video, it showed the red car already had a dent in it when it entered the parking lot. It also showed the red car made a big bang and shook when it hit the hole in the road before it was parked. Finally, the video showed the red car never hit the blue car.

More Fact and Opinion Practice

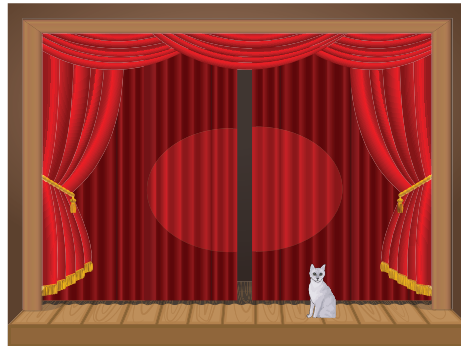
Facts are things that have been proven true. Opinions are things that cannot or have not been proven true.

Write “F” for fact and “O” for opinion next to each sentence.

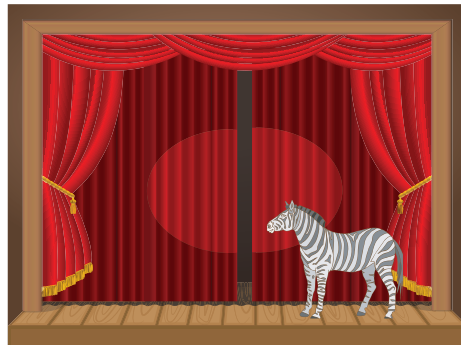
1. _____ Most ducks can swim.
2. _____ Ducks are the coolest birds.
3. _____ Solar is the best heat.
4. _____ Girls are more fun than boys.
5. _____ The sun is larger than Earth.
6. _____ The sun is a star.
7. _____ Most professional basketball players are above average height.
8. _____ Snakes do not have legs.
9. _____ Someone over 6 feet, 8 inches is too tall.
10. _____ I will win next week’s race.
11. _____ Mars is farther from the sun than Earth.
12. _____ Some toads live in North America.
13. _____ Some tigers live in Asia.
14. _____ LeBron James is the best basketball player ever.
15. _____ The Mississippi River has more water in it than the Ohio River.
16. _____ The largest sharks live in the ocean.
17. _____ Earth is the most important planet in our solar system.
18. _____ Taylor Swift is the best pop star.
19. _____ Some lions live in Africa.
20. _____ LeBron James played in the NBA in 2014.
21. _____ Part of the Mississippi River runs through Louisiana.
22. _____ Some octopuses have eight legs.
23. _____ Mercury is the prettiest planet in our solar system.
24. _____ Rats make better pets than guinea pigs.

Logical Connectives Practice

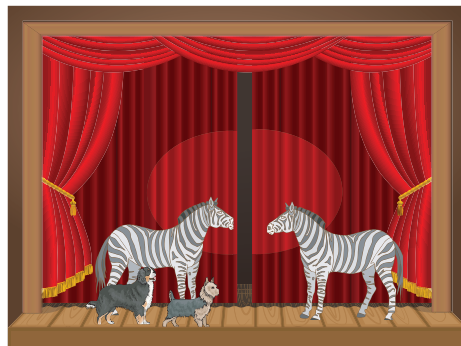
Use the evidence from the pictures and your knowledge of the logical connectives to write if the sentence is T (true), F (false), or U (unknown).



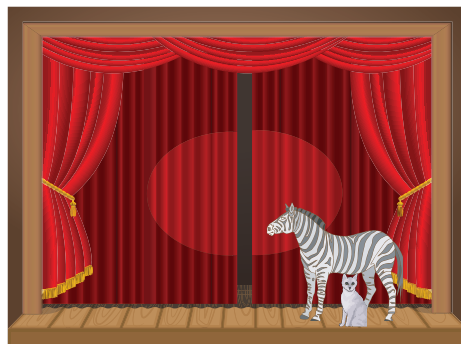
1. ____ There is **a** cat in front of the curtain on the left and an elephant behind the curtain.



2. ____ There is **a** zebra in front of the curtain on the right and an elephant behind the curtain.

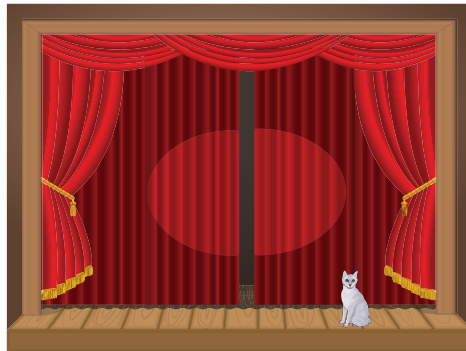


3. ____ There **are** one or more zebras in the picture.

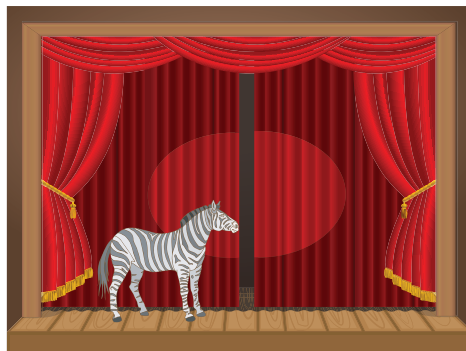


4. ____ If you can see a zebra in the picture, then it is not behind the curtain.

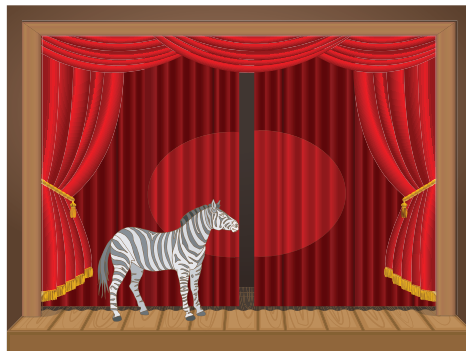
Use the evidence from the pictures and your knowledge of the logical connectives to write if the sentence is T (true), F (false), or U (unknown).



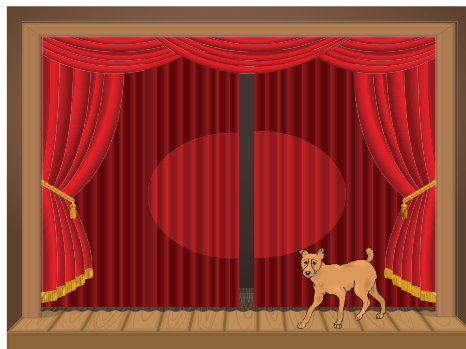
5. ____ If there is a cat in front of a curtain, then there is dog in front of a curtain.



6. ____ There is either a dog behind a curtain or an animal on the left.

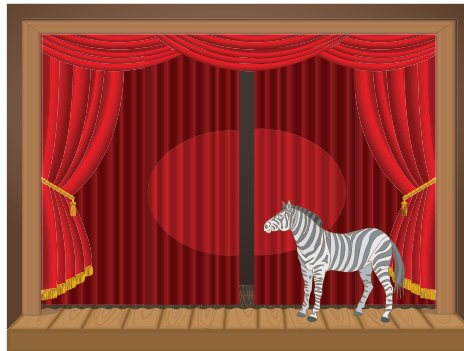


7. ____ There is a pig behind the curtain on the left or a zebra in front of one of the curtains.

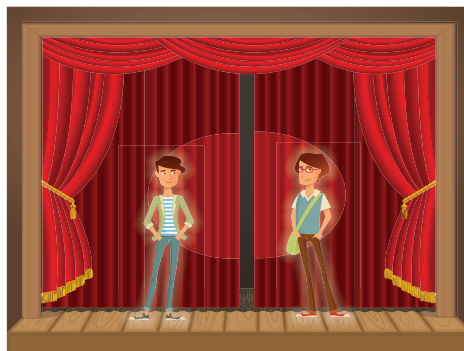


8. ____ If there is a boat behind a curtain, then there is dog in front of a curtain.

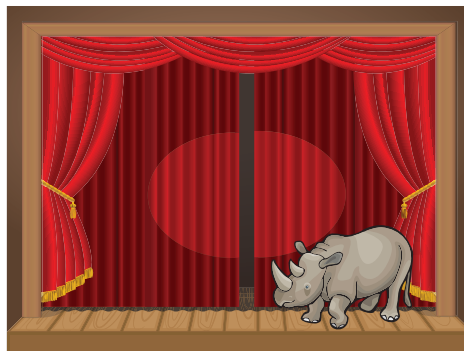
Use the evidence from the pictures and your knowledge of the logical connectives to write if the sentence is T (true), F (false), or U (unknown).



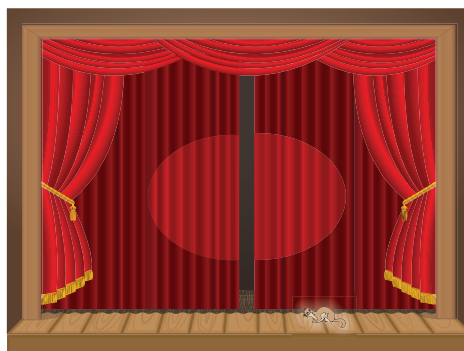
13. ____ There is a pig behind the curtain on the right and a moose behind the curtain on the left.



14. ____ If there is a man in front of a curtain, then he is not behind the curtain.



15. ____ If there is a rhino in front of a curtain, then there is horse in front of a curtain.



16. ____ There is a weasel in front of a curtain and a cougar behind the curtain on the right.



Whose Friend Are You?

¹ Kyle was standing in line to buy movie tickets with his best friends, Graham and Augie, when they saw Brigham and Mitch in front of them. ² Brigham had beaten out Kyle for the starting goalie position on the soccer team, which Kyle had really wanted. ³ When Kyle saw Brigham and Mitch get in front of them, Kyle suggested that the three of them not talk to Brigham. ⁴ Augie agreed to Kyle's suggestion, but Graham told Kyle he was friends with Brigham, so he didn't want to be mean to him. ⁵ Kyle and Augie looked at Graham with surprise that he wouldn't go along with the two of them, and then Kyle asked Graham, "Who are your best friends?"

⁶ Graham answered, "You two are my best friends."

⁷ Kyle then nodded his head at Graham and asked, "So you are going to choose to be friends with Brigham instead of remaining best friends with Augie and me?"

1. Which sentence is an example of a group trying to use peer pressure to get someone to do what they want?

2. Explain why you think Kyle and Augie tried to use peer pressure to get Graham to be mean to Brigham.
