REASONATE

REASONING MOVES

Breaking Bridges

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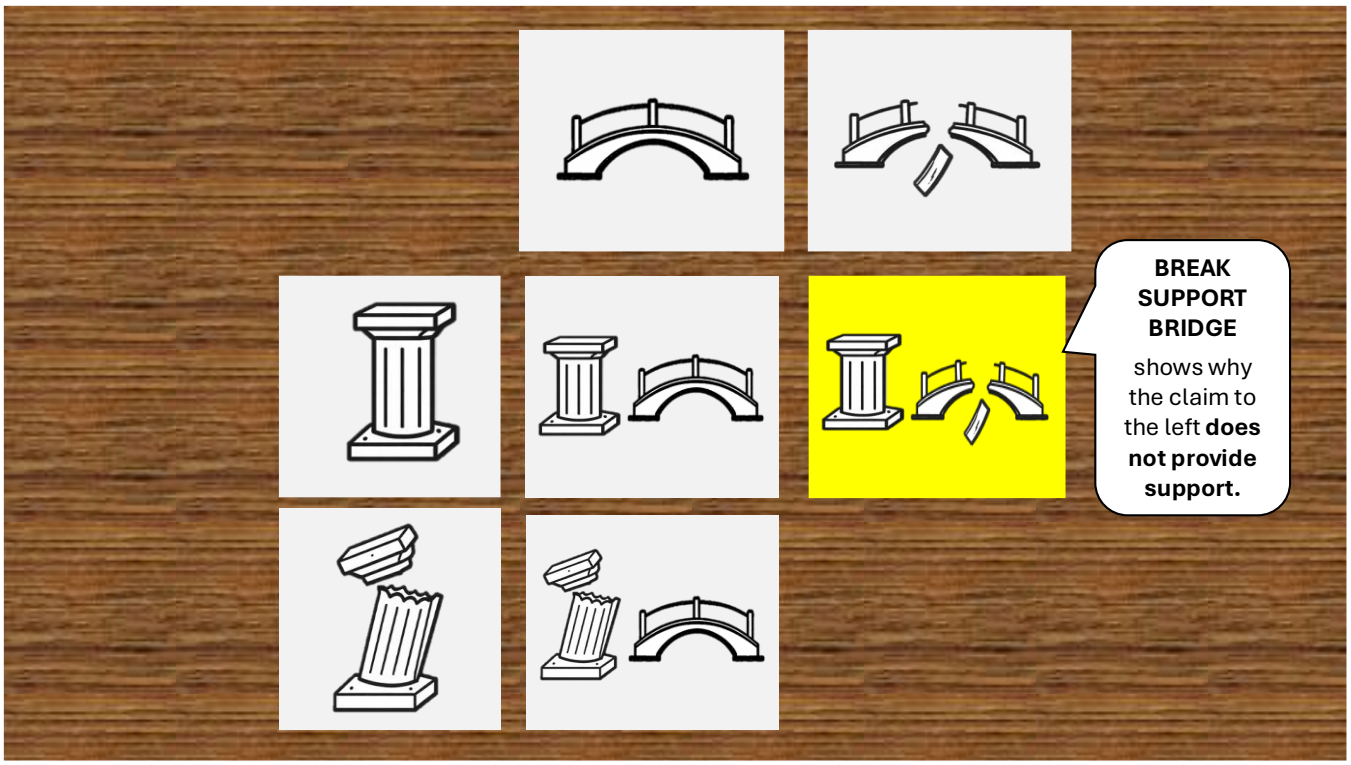
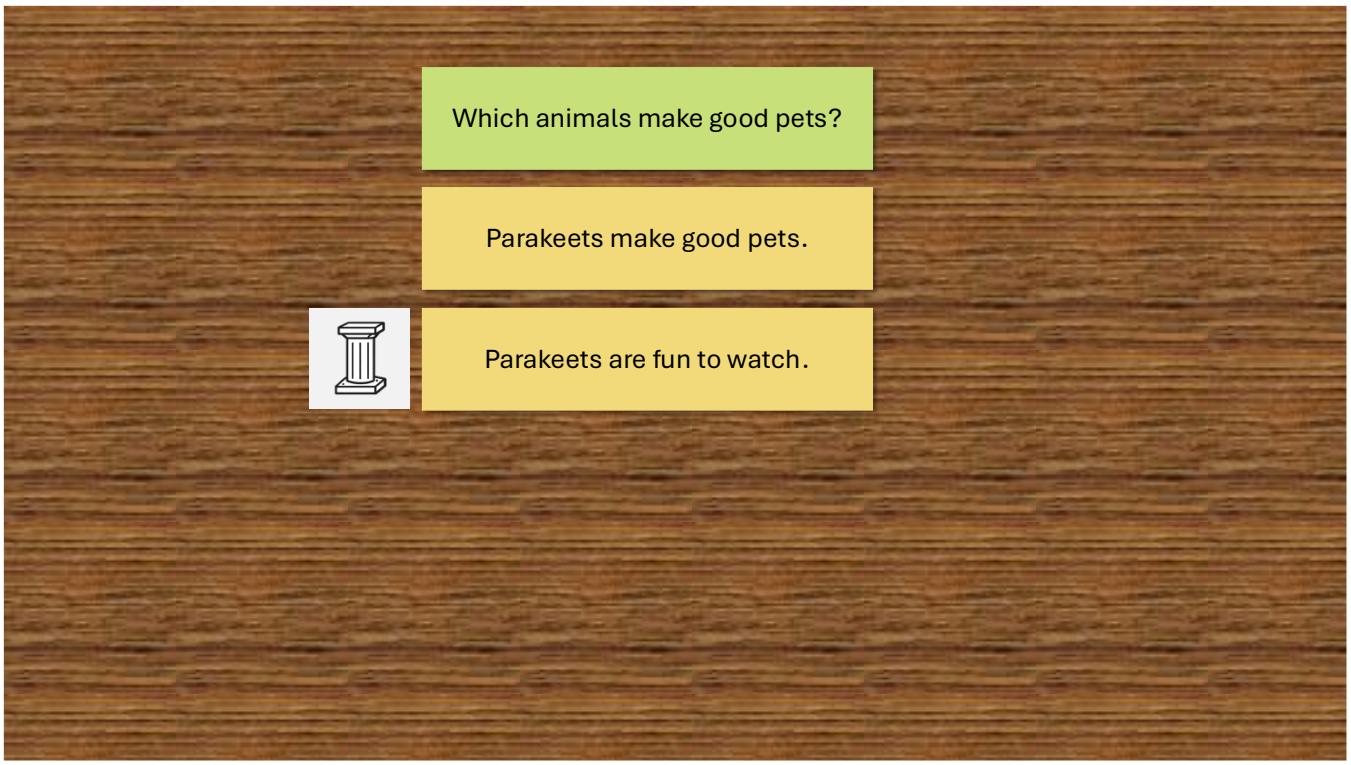
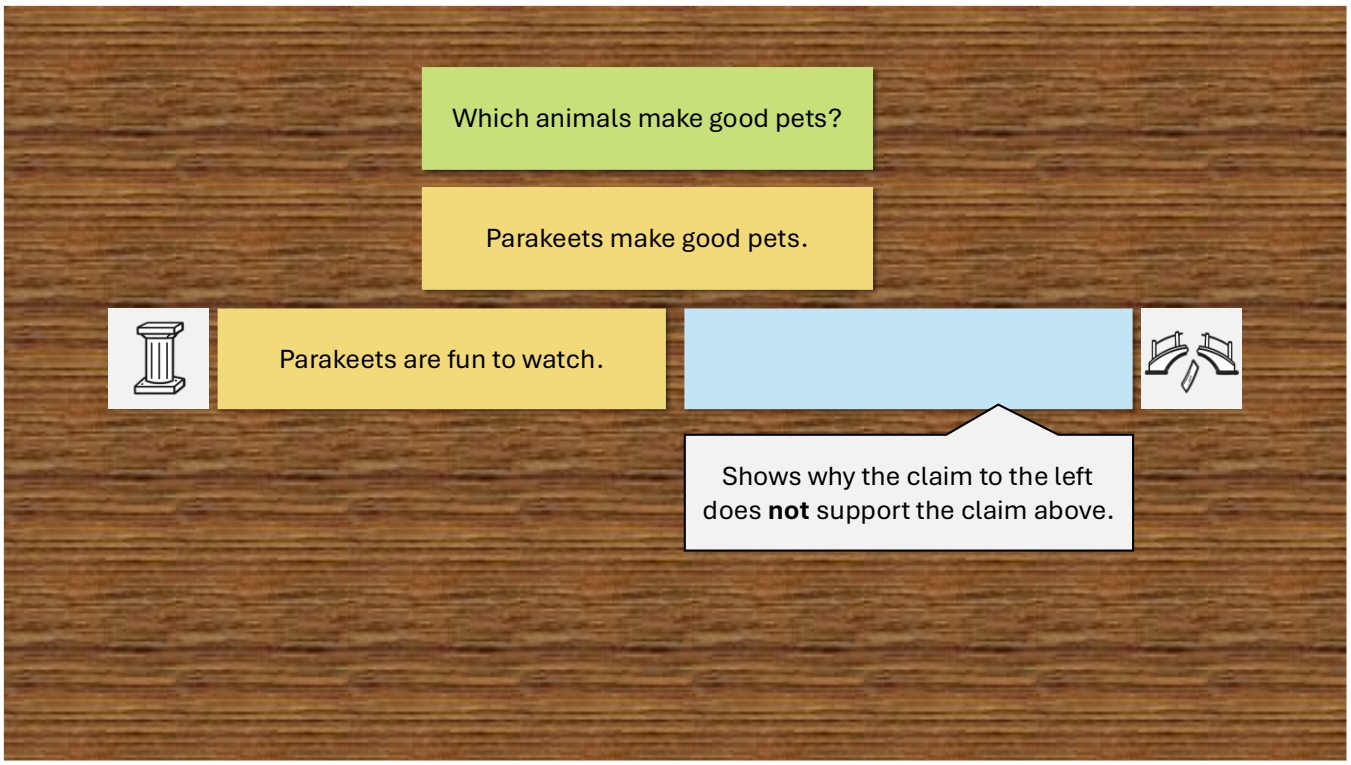
Let’s look at how to break bridges.



We'll start by breaking a support bridge. This will show why the claim to the left **fails** to support the claim above it.

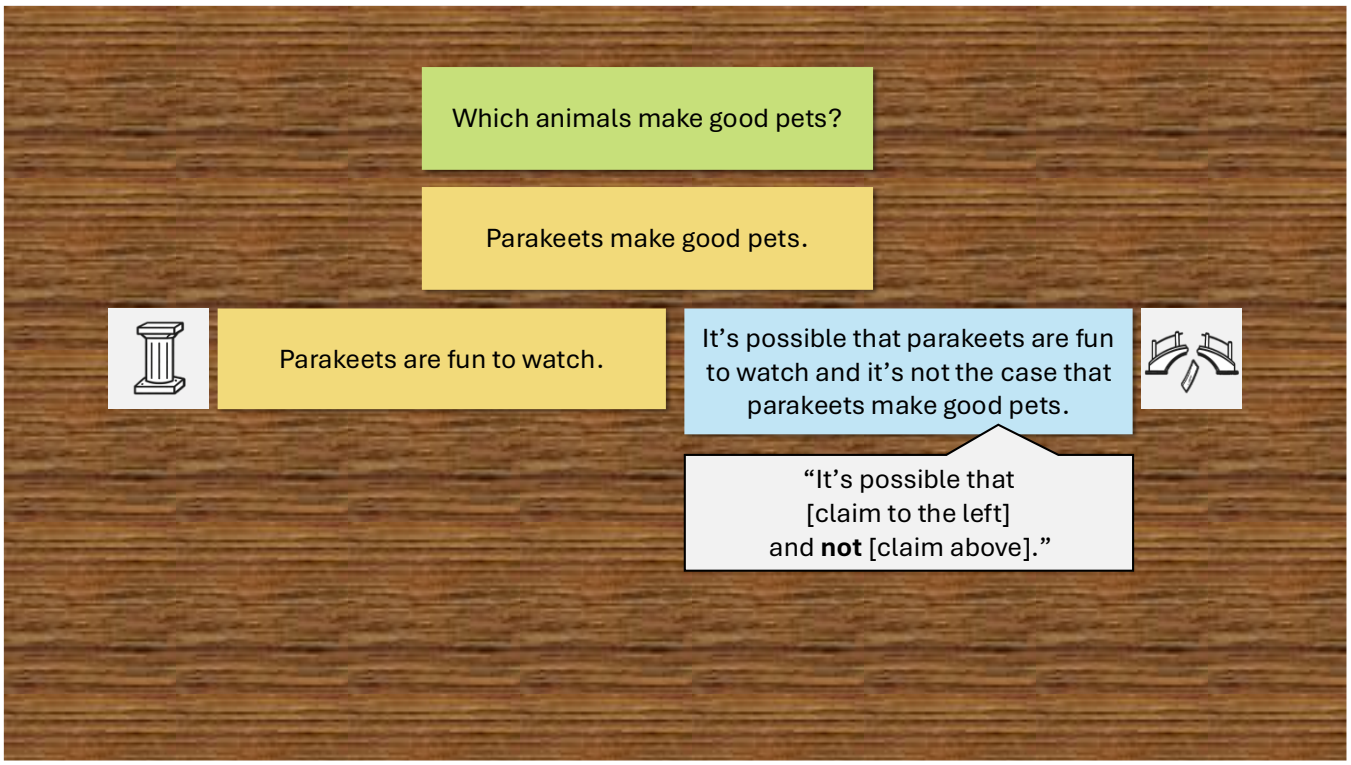


For instance, in this piece of reasoning, “Parakeets are fun to watch” is given as support for “Parakeets make good pets.”



If we put a different-color note to the right of “Parakeets are fun to watch,” we’ll be stating why “Parakeets are fun to watch” fails to support “Parakeets make good pets.”

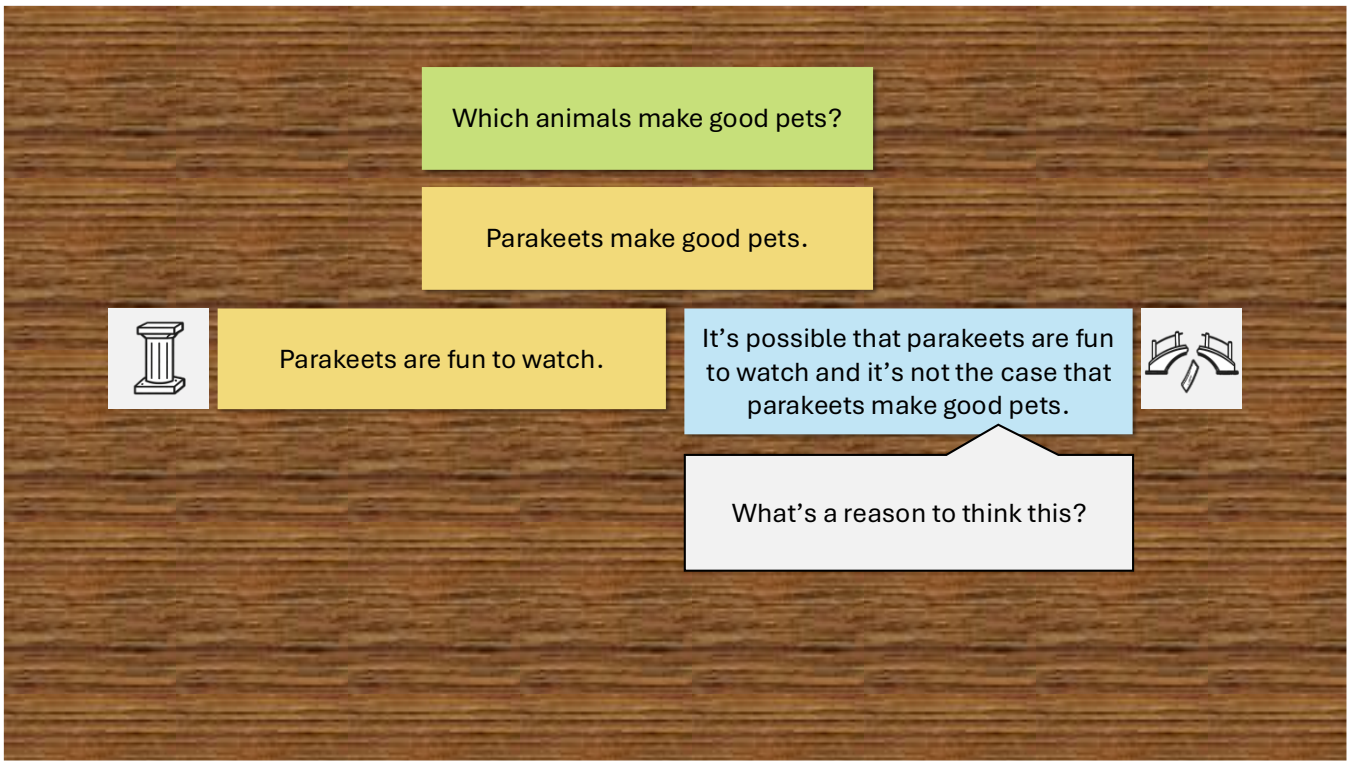
How can we decide what claim to put in that bridge-breaking note? There’s a procedure we can follow.



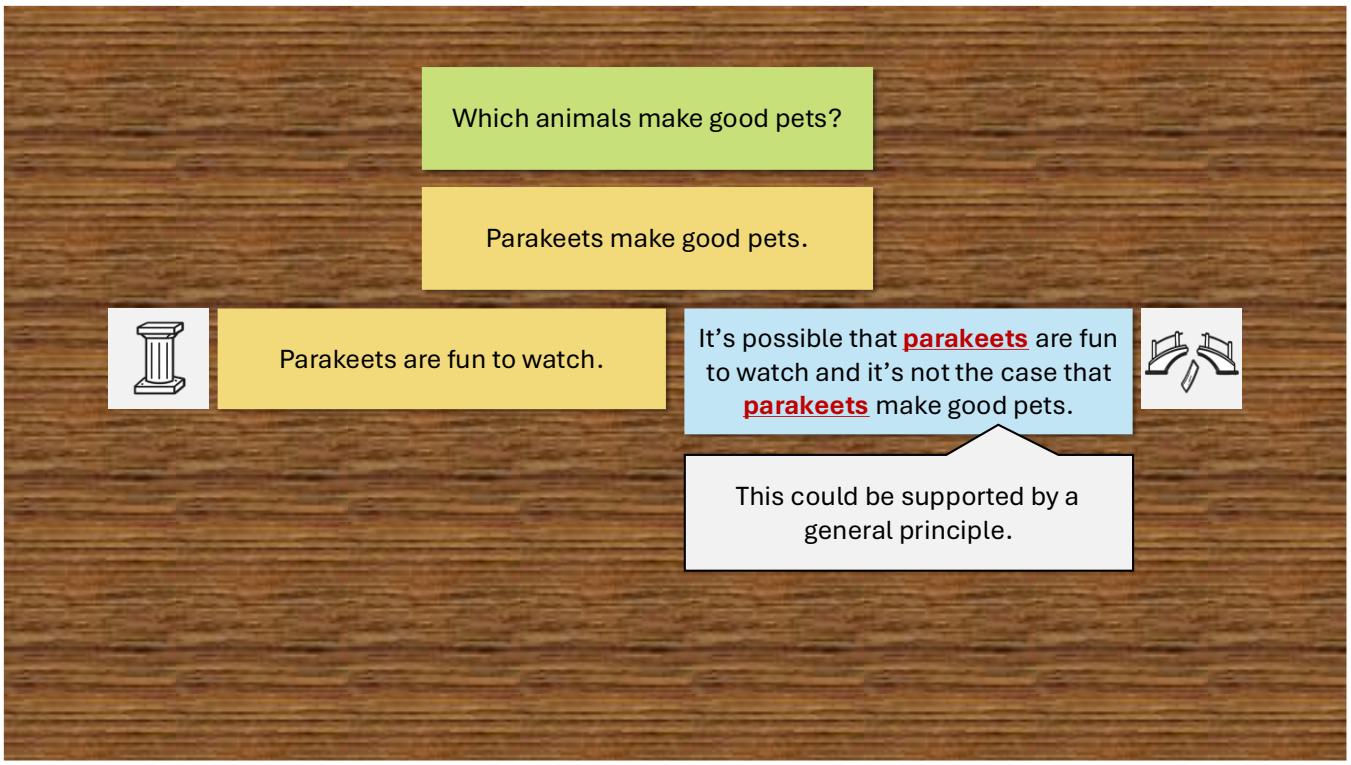
We'll start with the claim that we get when we write sentence of the form "It's possible that…and not…," putting the claim to the left behind the "It's possible that" and the claim above behind the "and not."

(Fun fact: When we build a bridge, we start with an "if… then…" sentence, but when we *break* a bridge, we start with an "and" sentence.)

In this case, that would be "It's possible that parakeets are fun to watch and it's not the case that parakeets make good pets."

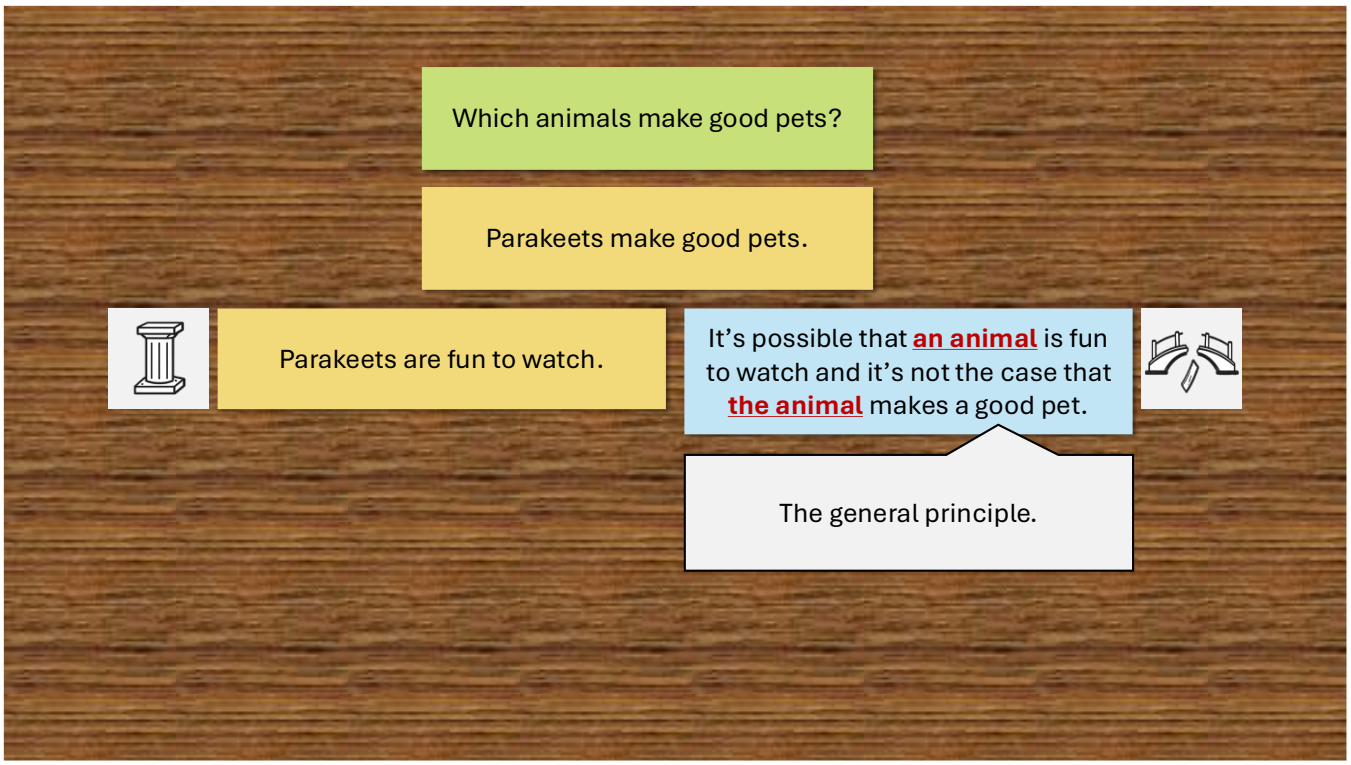


We can stop there, if we want to, but frequently it's useful to replace that sentence with the justification we have for accepting that sentence.

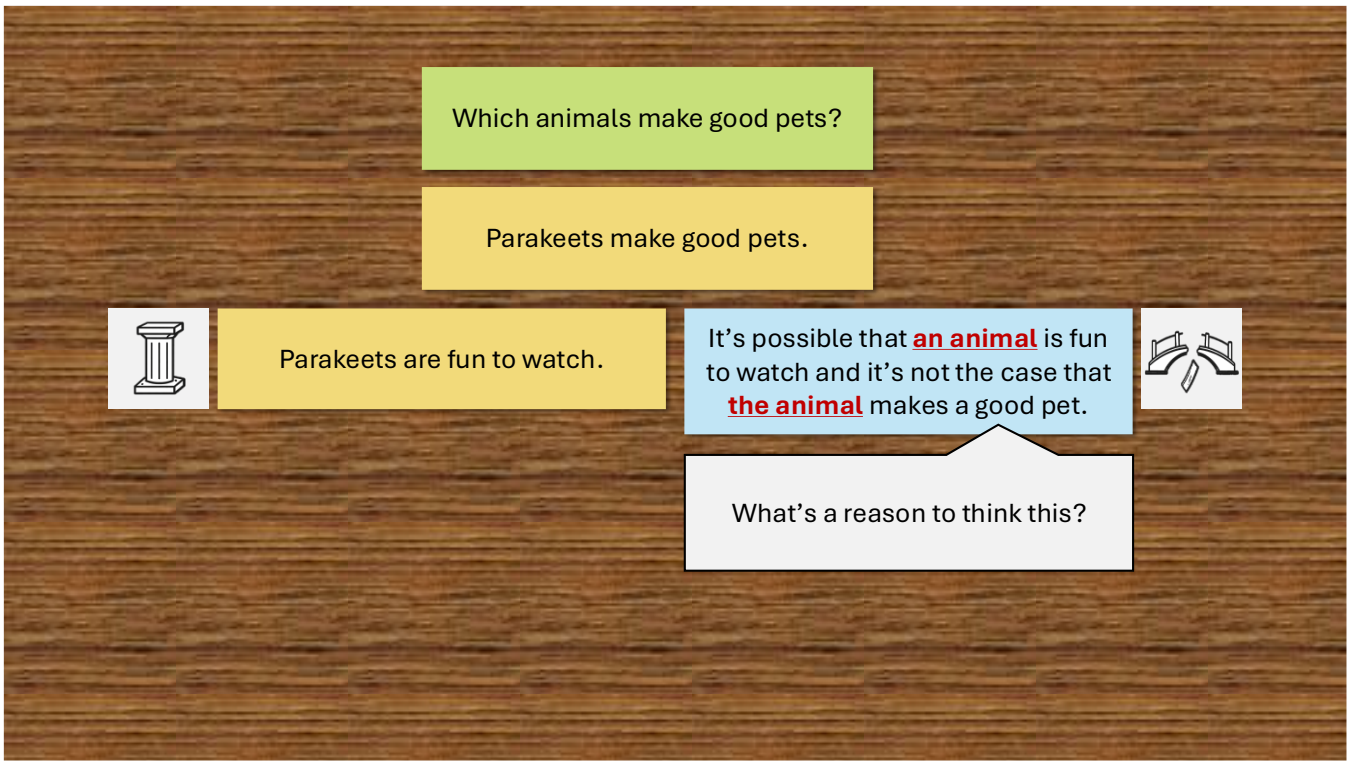


Sometimes, that justification is a general principle.

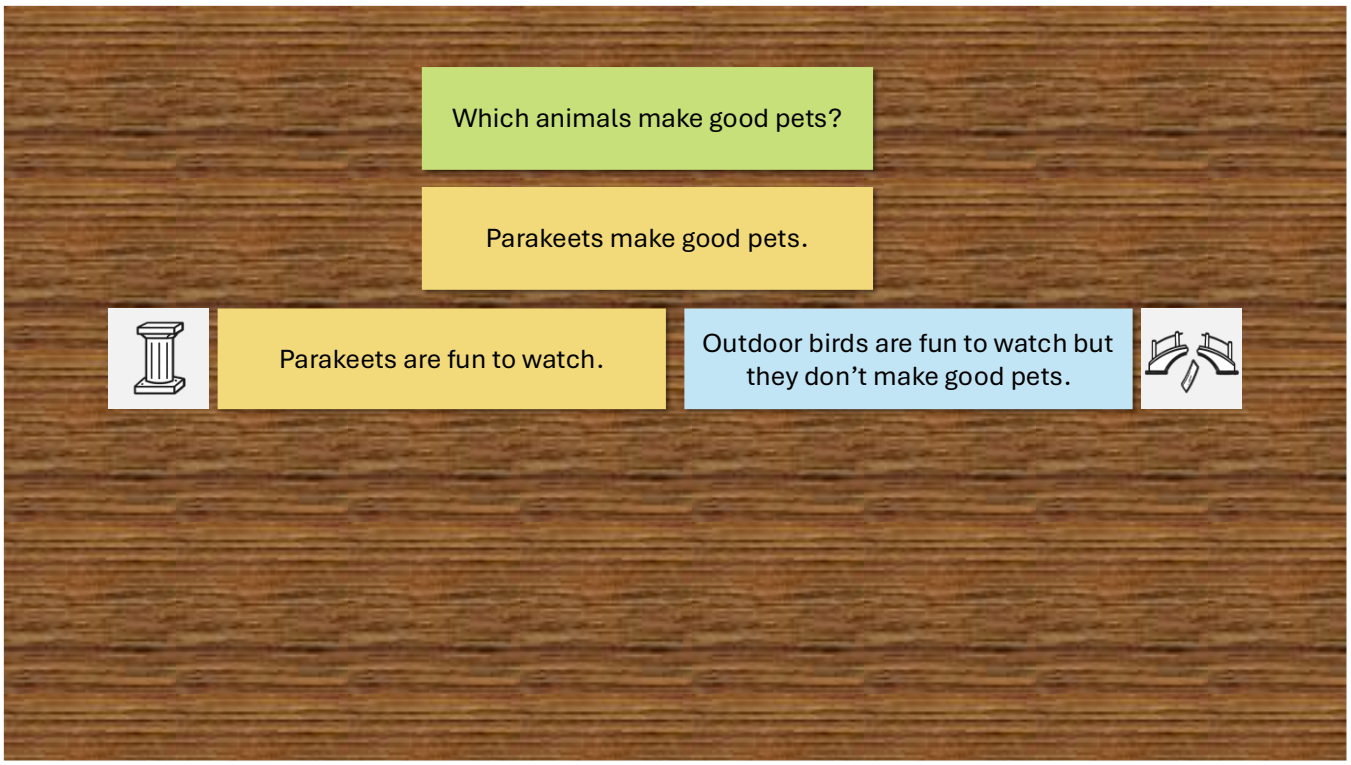
If the claim behind the "it's possible that" and the claim behind the "and not" have something in common – like "parakeets" in this case - we can formulate the general principle by replacing that common term with a broader category.



Here, this gives us the general principle that "It's possible that **an animal** is fun to watch and it's not the case that **the animal** makes a good pet."

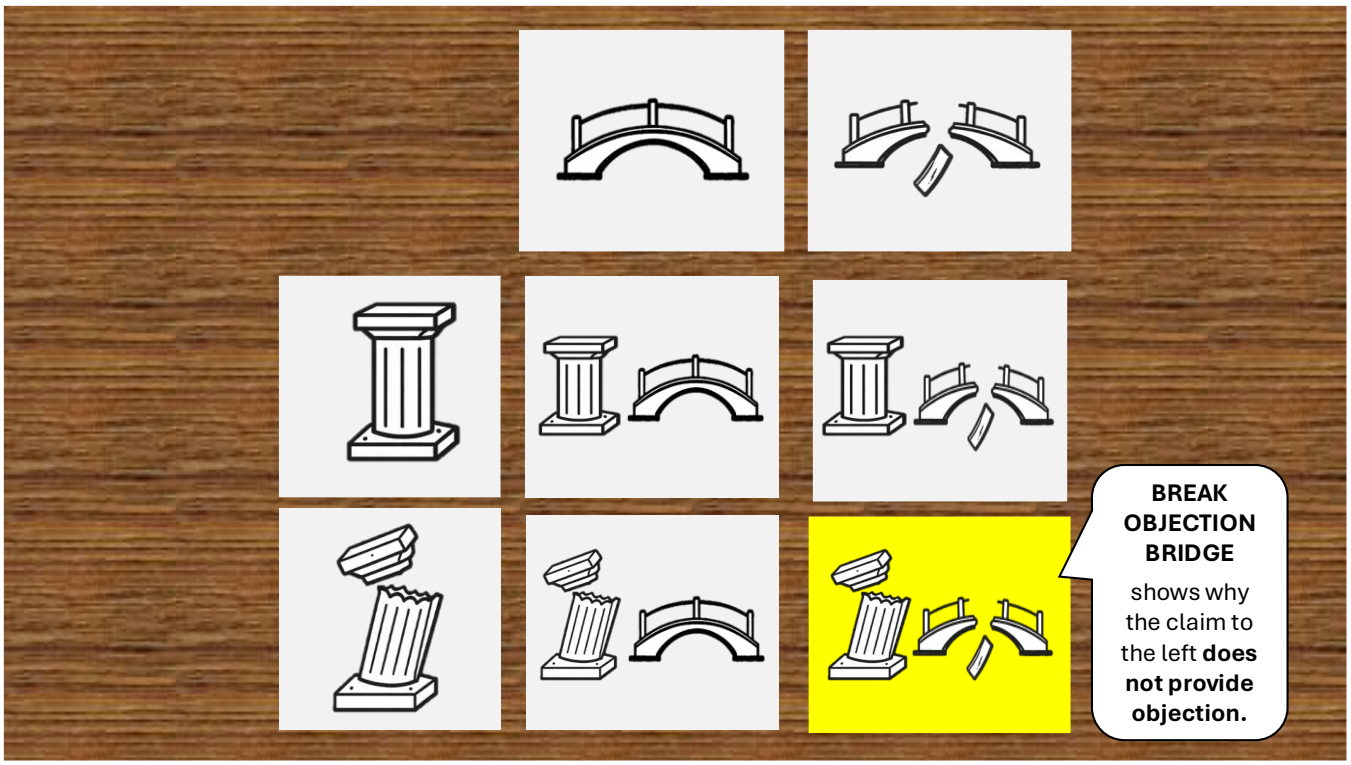


We can stop there, if we want, but sometimes it's useful to replace the general principle with a reason to think that the general principle is true.

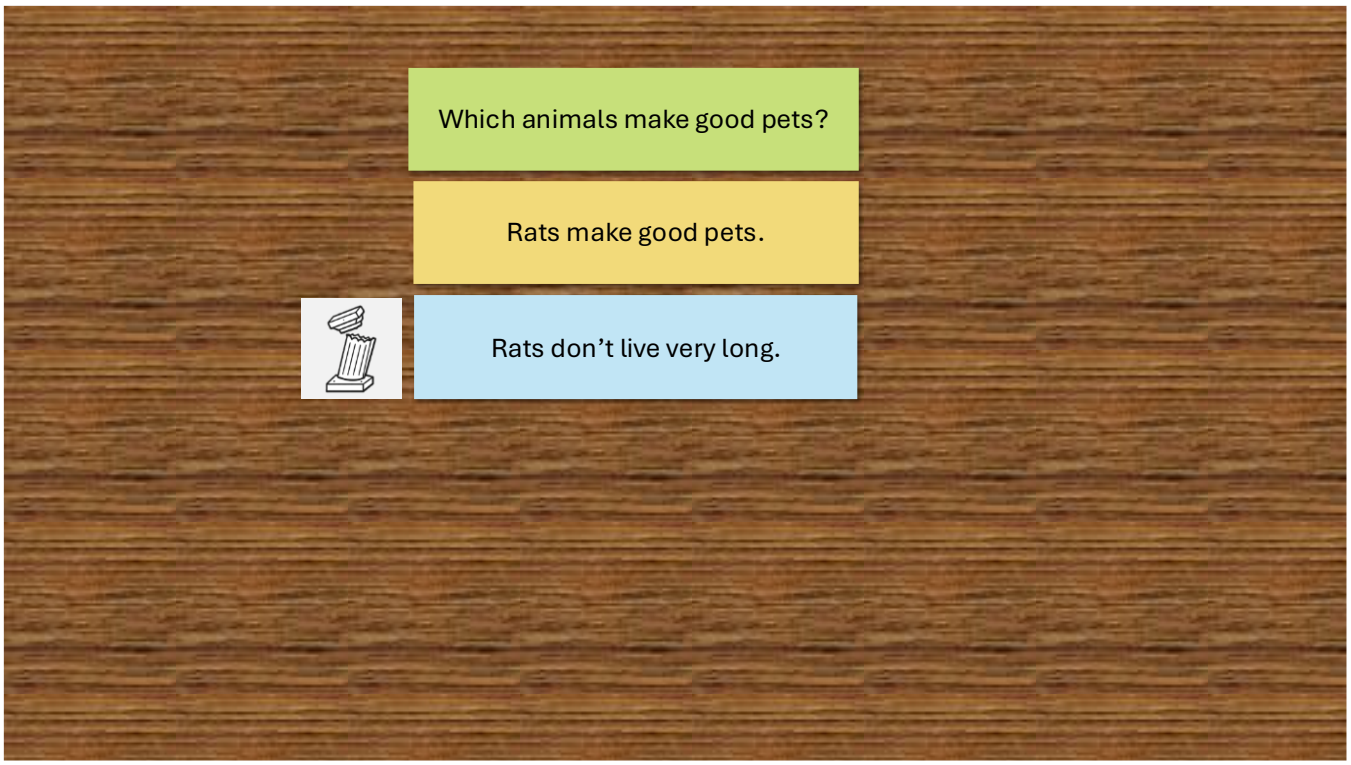


Such as "Outdoor birds are fun to watch but they don't make good pets."

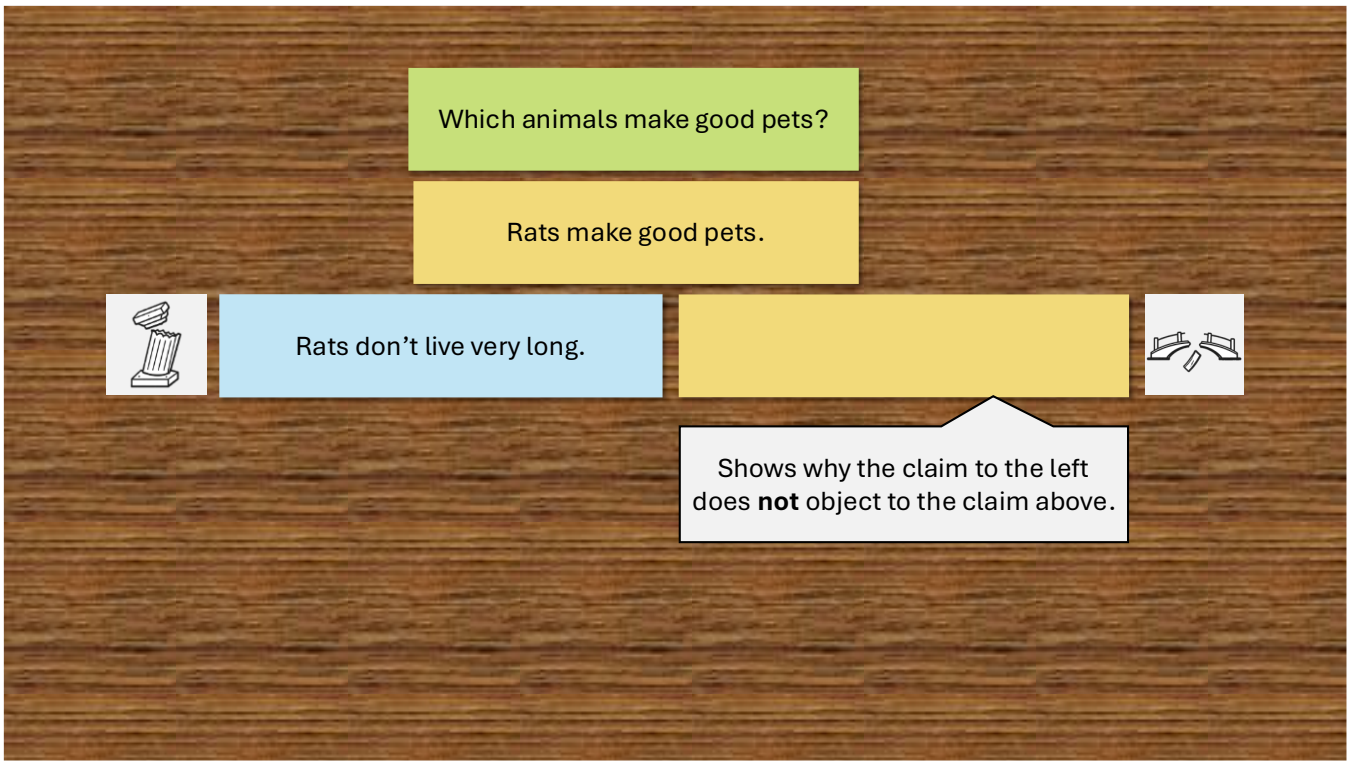
"Outdoor birds are fun to watch but they don't make good pets" helps us to see why "Parakeets are fun to watch" fails to support "Parakeets make good pets." It breaks that support bridge.



We can also break objection bridges. This will show why the claim to the left fails to object to claim above it.

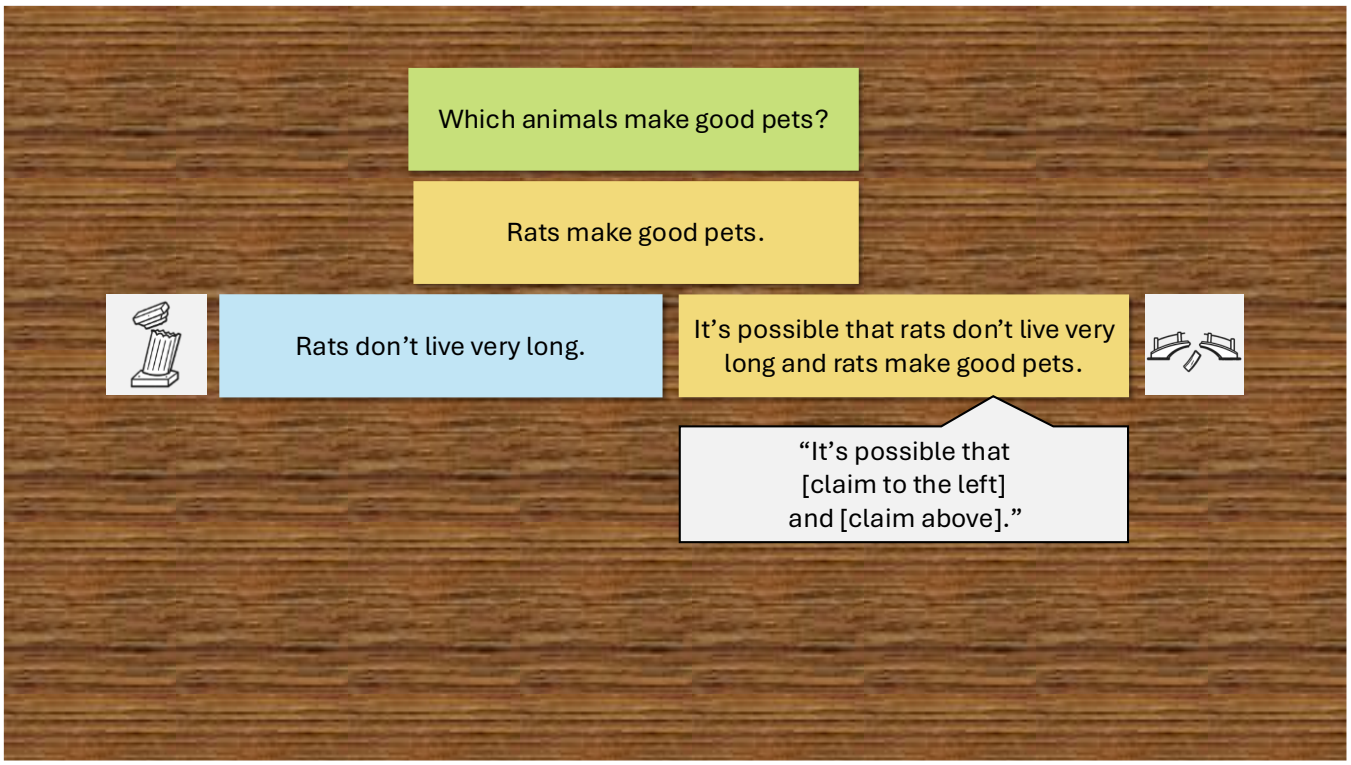


For example, suppose someone objects to “Rats make good pets” by saying “Rats don’t live very long.”



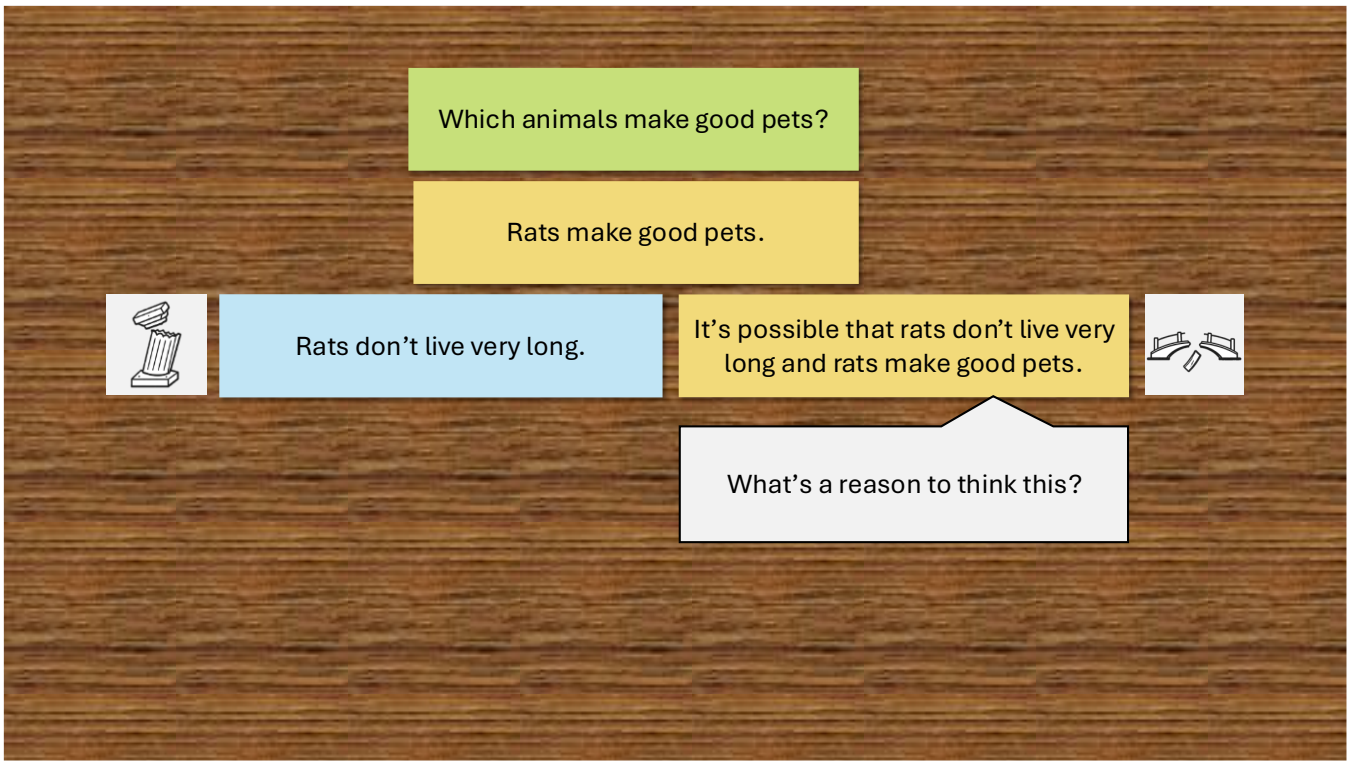
If we put a different-color note to the right of "Rats don't live very long," we'll be stating why "Rats don't live very long" fails to show that "Rats make good pets" is false.

How can we decide what claim to put in that bridge-breaking note? There's a procedure we can follow.



We'll start with the claim that we get when we write a sentence of the form "It's possible that...and ...," putting the claim to the left behind the "It's possible that" and the claim above behind the "and."

In this case, that would be "It's possible that rats don't live very long and rats make good pets."



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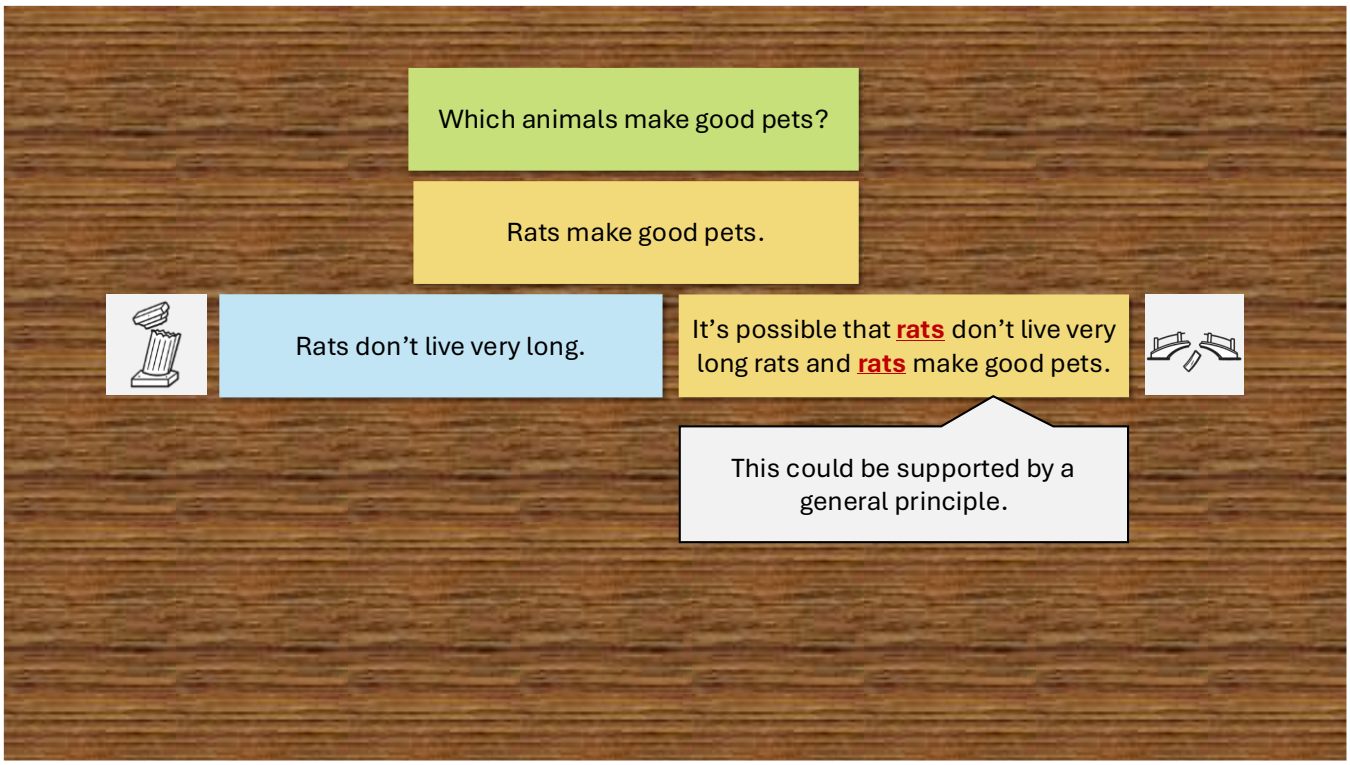
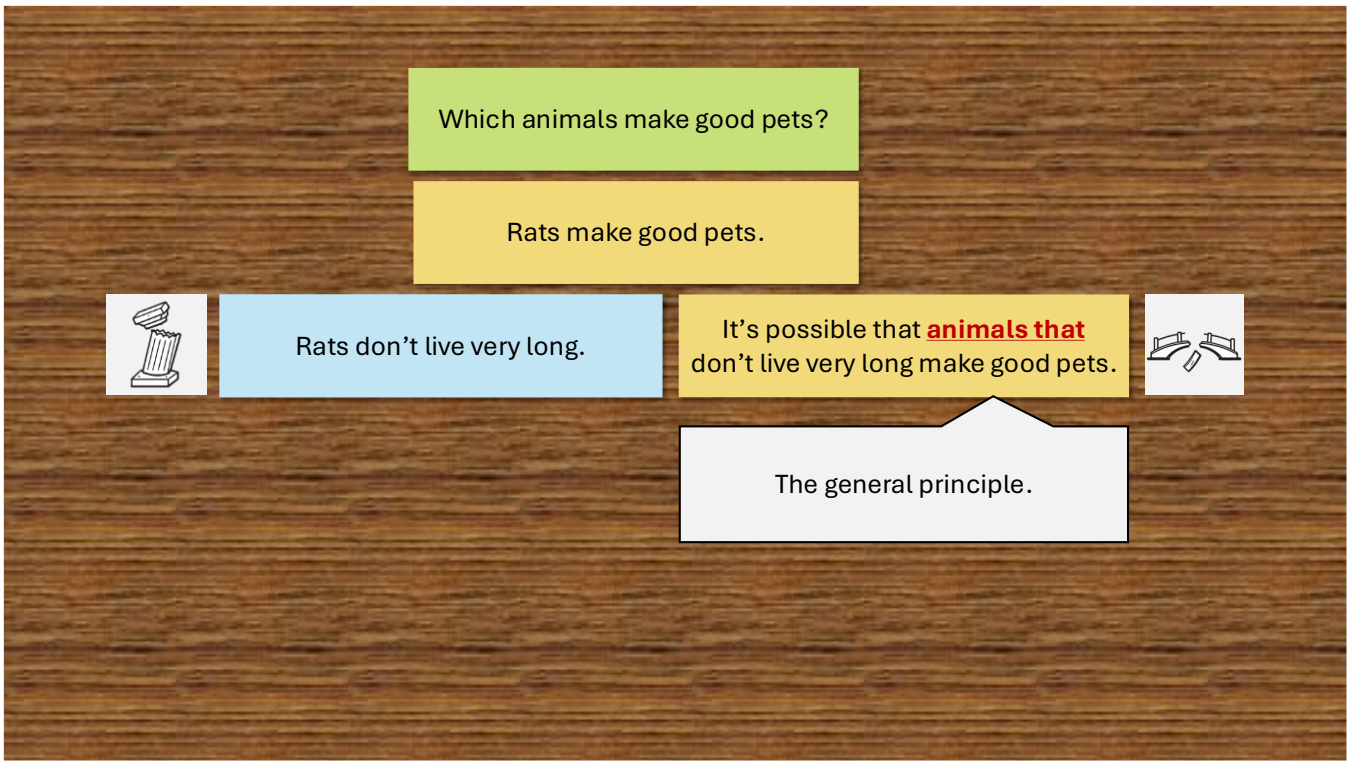
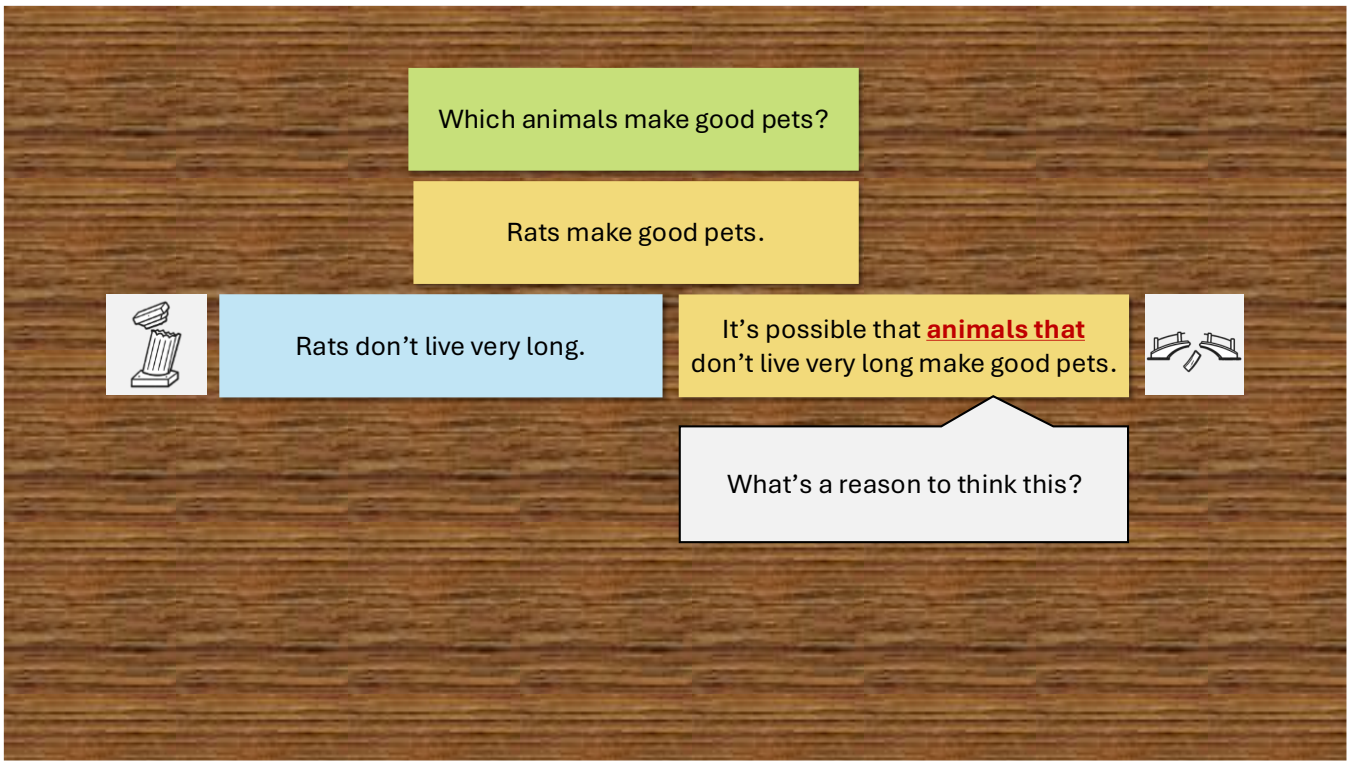


Sometimes, that justification is a general principle.

If the claim behind the "it's possible that" and the claim behind the "and" have something in common – like "rats" in this case - we can formulate the general principle by replacing that common term with a broader category.



Here, this gives us the general principle that "It's possible that **animals that** don't live very long make good pets."



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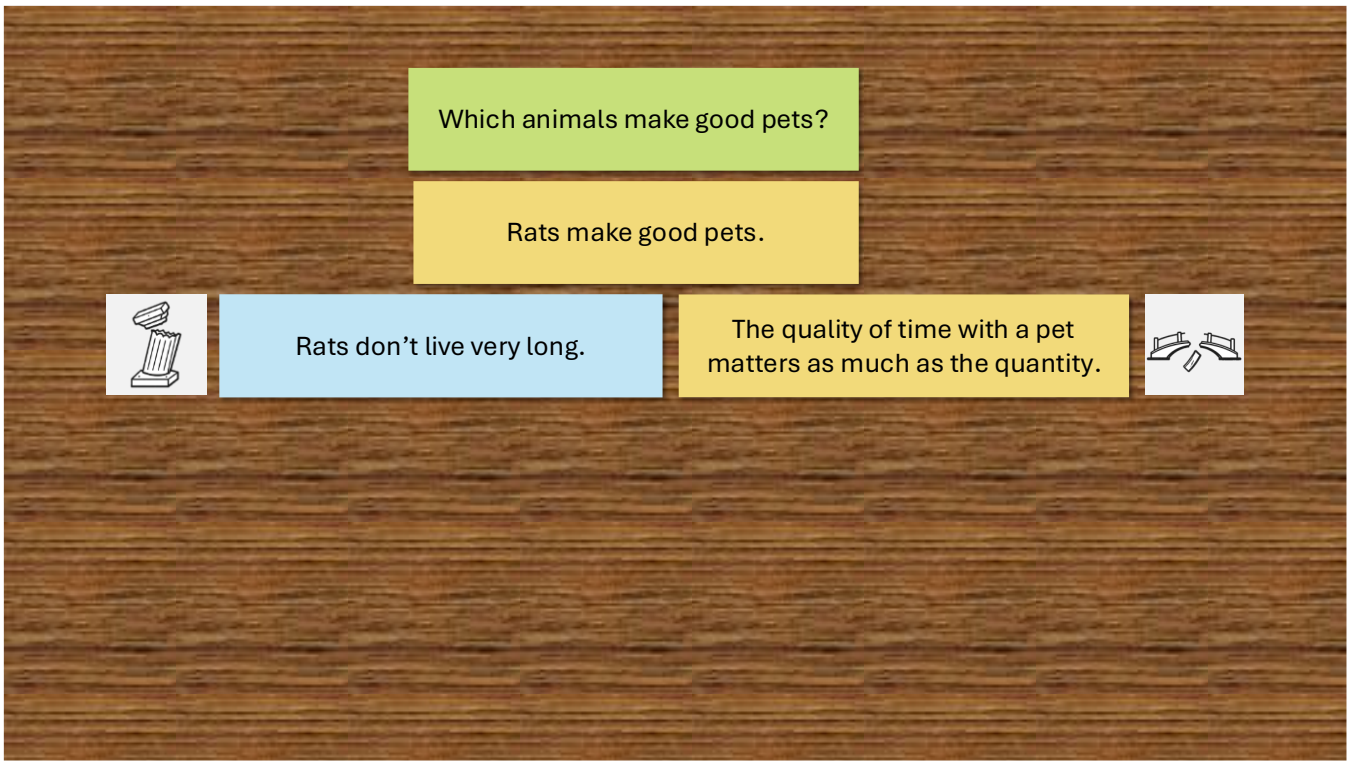

Such as "The quality of time with a pet matters as much as the quantity."

"The quality of time with a pet matters as much as the quantity" helps us to see why "Rats don't live very long" fails to object to "Rats make good pets." It breaks that objection bridge.