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01 Introduction

Welcome to Reasonate, a collaborative approach to dialogue.

REASONATE

ORDINARY CONVERSATIONS – EACH DEFENDING THEIR OWN POSITION & UNDERMINING OTHERS.

- ✚ Encourage people to share their reasoning.
- ▬ Can be adversarial, focused on "winning" instead of understanding or truth.

INTENTIONAL APPROACHES TO DIALOGUE – TELLING ONE'S STORY & ACTIVE LISTENING

- ✚ Build connection through mutual understanding.
- ▬ Risk discouraging engagement with the issues.

REASONATE

- ✚ Encourages people to share their reasoning.
- ✚ Build connection through collaboration and mutual understanding.

A collaborative table-top game.

As you've probably noticed, **ordinary conversations** about controversial issues often involve each person defending their **own** position and undermining others.

This isn't entirely bad. It *does* encourage people to share their reasoning, after all. But it isn't entirely good either. It can be adversarial and focused on "winning" at the expense of understanding and sometimes even at the expense of discovering the truth or deciding upon a common course of action.

Many **intentional approaches to dialogue** avoid confrontation by encouraging participants to tell their stories rather than defend a position, and to engage in active listening.

An advantage to this approach, of course, is that it can build connection by encouraging mutual understanding. Unfortunately, by avoiding the exchange of reasons, it can risk avoiding genuine engagement with the issues.

Reasonate is designed to offer the best of both approaches, encouraging people to share their reasoning in a collaborative environment designed to foster mutual understanding. In fact, we'll introduce Reasonate as collaborative tabletop game – although it can be used to address important issues and solve real problems.

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02 Materials and Directions

Here's how to get started with Reasonate.

MATERIALS

THREE DIFFERENT COLORS OF STICKY NOTES.

- One color for question notes.
- One color for PRO notes.
- One color for CON notes.

WRITING INSTRUMENTS.

- One pencil or pen per player.

To play Reasonate, you'll need three different colors of sticky notes. One color for question notes, one color for PRO notes, and one color for CON notes.

And you'll need some writing instruments. One pencil or pen per player is fine.

DIRECTIONS

1. **SET THE WIN CONDITION.**
   - Because this is a collaborative game, winning happens as a group—and the group decides what winning looks like.
2. **IDENTIFY A QUESTION.**
   - Participants choose or formulate a question and write it on a question-colored sticky note.
3. **SELECT AN ANSWER.**
   - Players select a specific answer to that question for evaluation.
   - Players write the answer on a PRO-colored sticky note and place it below the question.
4. **ASSIGN ROLES.**
   - Players divide into PRO and CON roles. PRO will defend the answer; CON will challenge it.
5. **EXCHANGE REASONING MOVES.**
   Reasoning moves lay out the claims made and show how they connect to one another.
   - PRO makes one or more Reasoning Moves to support the answer, using PRO-colored sticky notes.
   - CON makes one or more Reasoning Moves in response to PRO, using CON-colored sticky notes.
   - Turns alternate between PRO and CON, and PRO and CON may collaborate during any turn.
6. **ALLOW REQUESTS AND REFLECTIONS THROUGHOUT.**
   Requests deepen understanding of the reasoning. Reflections highlight points of agreement, disagreement, and uncertainty.
   - At any point, a player may make a Request or Reflection.
7. **CONTINUE UNTIL THE WIN CONDITION IS MET.**

Players begin by **setting the win condition**. Because this is a collaborative game, winning happens as a group—and the group decides what winning looks like. (We'll talk more about possible win conditions later.)

Players then **identify a question**, choosing or formulating a question and writing it on a question-colored sticky note. (We'll talk more about questions later, too.)

Once the question has been identified, players **select a specific answer** to that question for evaluation. They write the answer on a PRO-colored sticky note and place it below the question.

At this point, if not before, **players divide into PRO and CON roles**. PRO will defend the answer, and CON will challenge it. It might be the case that the PRO and CON players represent views they actually hold – that PRO is in fact in favor of the answer and CON is in fact opposed to it – but it doesn't need to be the case. Often, players feel able to occupy either role, and sometimes it's useful for people to assume the role that's contrary to their real-life position.

And now the fun starts! The players **exchange the reasoning moves** that lay out the claims being made and show how these claims connect to one another. PRO and CON alternate turns, and they are welcome to collaborate.

Throughout the process, players may make a **request** to deepen understanding of the reasoning, or **reflect** upon the reasoning to highlight points of agreement, disagreement, or uncertainty.

And the process continues until **the win condition is met**.

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03 Win Condition

Let’s talk about the ways that a game of Reasonate can end.

SETTING THE WIN CONDITION

TYPES OF WIN CONDITIONS

TRANSFORMATION – "We improved the inquiry."

- The players win if a claim or question is substantially revised in light of the dialogue.

UNDERSTANDING – "We learned something about the reasoning."

- The players win if all players can articulate something they learned about the reasoning that supports or opposes the position under discussion.
- The players win if the central points of agreement and disagreement have been surfaced.

CONVERGENCE – "We found meaningful agreement."

- The players win if the points of agreement and uncertainty outnumber the points of disagreement.
- The players win if they agree about a claim that they both PRO and CON identify as significant.

ACTION – "We decided what to do."

- The players win if they agree upon a course of action to take as a result of the dialogue.

The Win Condition can change as the dialogue progresses.

There are many ways to collaboratively win a game of Reasonate.

Winning might involve a **transformation** that improves the inquiry in some way. For example, players might substantially revise a claim or question in light of the dialogue.

Winning might involve an increase in **understanding**. For example, players might be able to articulate something they've learned, or they might surface central points of agreement and disagreement.

Winning might involve a **convergence** of views. Perhaps the points of agreement and uncertainty will outnumber the points of disagreement, or perhaps the players will agree about a claim that they all identify as significant.

Finally, winning might involve agreeing upon a course of **action**.

And, of course, the win condition can **change** as a dialogue progresses.

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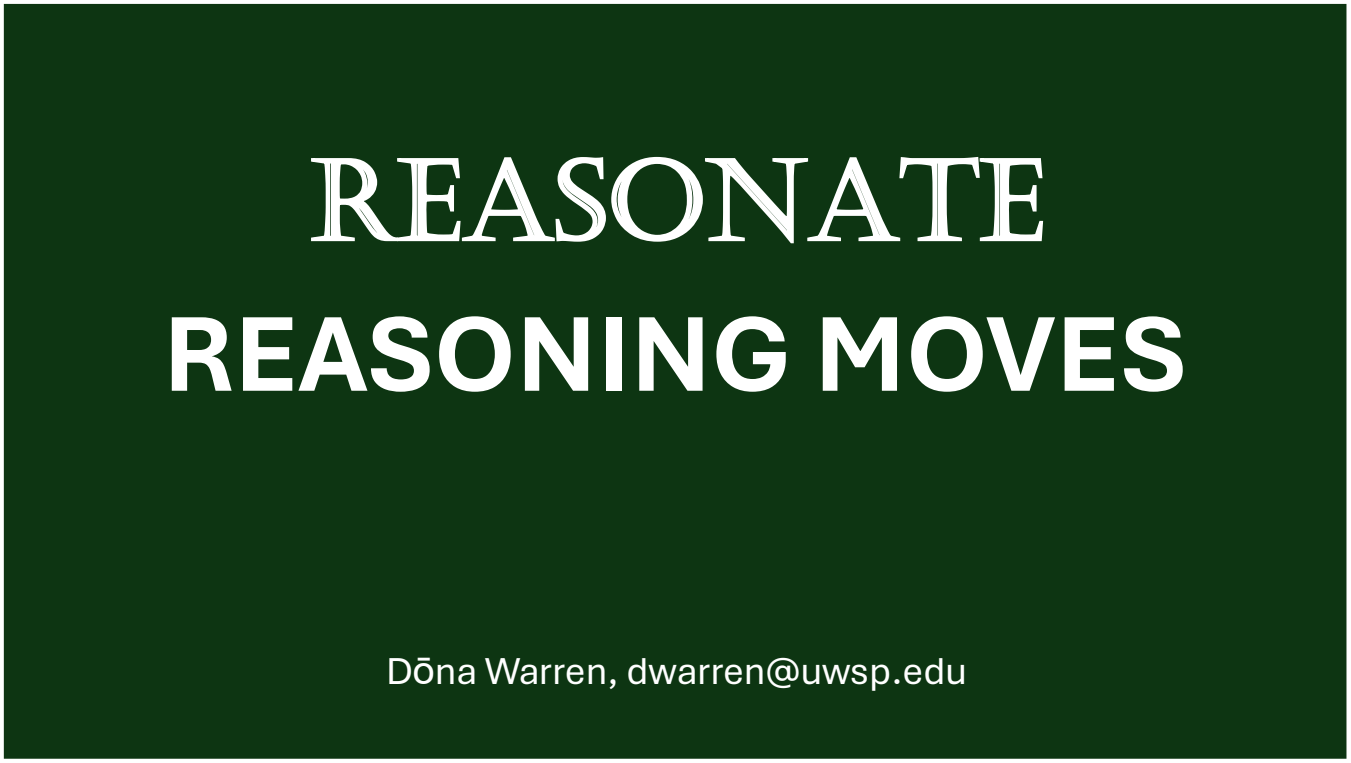
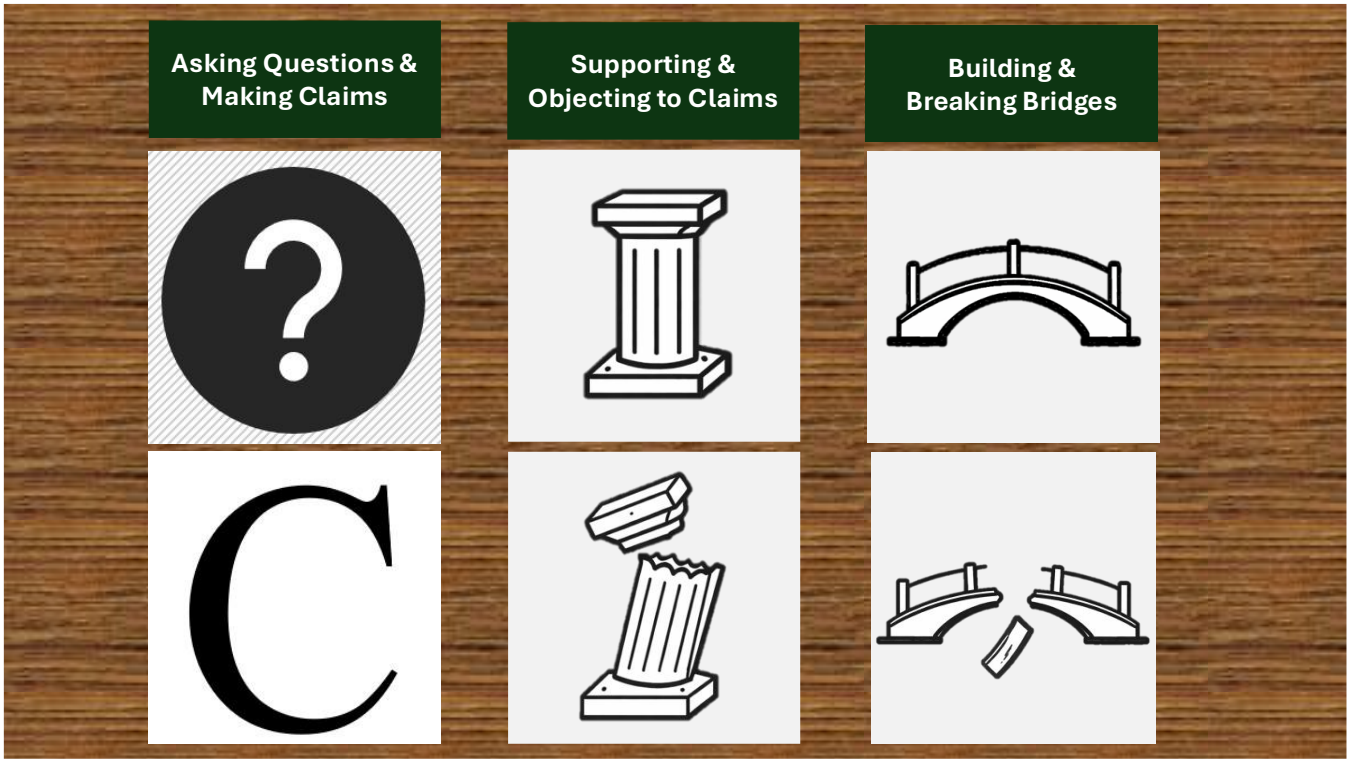
04 Reasoning Moves



The reasoning moves are the heart of Reasonate. They're what make Reasonate tick!

There are three main categories of reasoning moves.



Players can ask **questions and make claims**. Players can **support or object to claims**. And players can **build and break bridges**.

We'll talk more about each of these moves.

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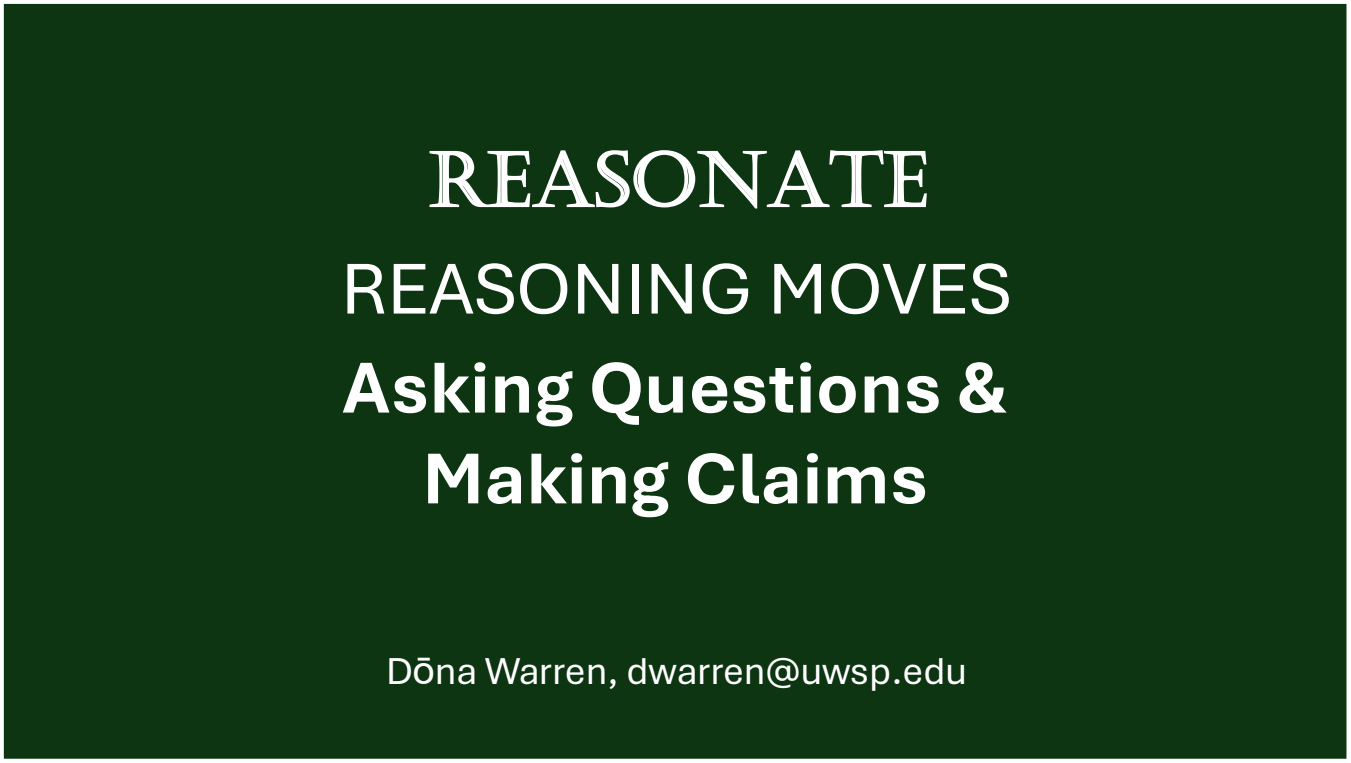
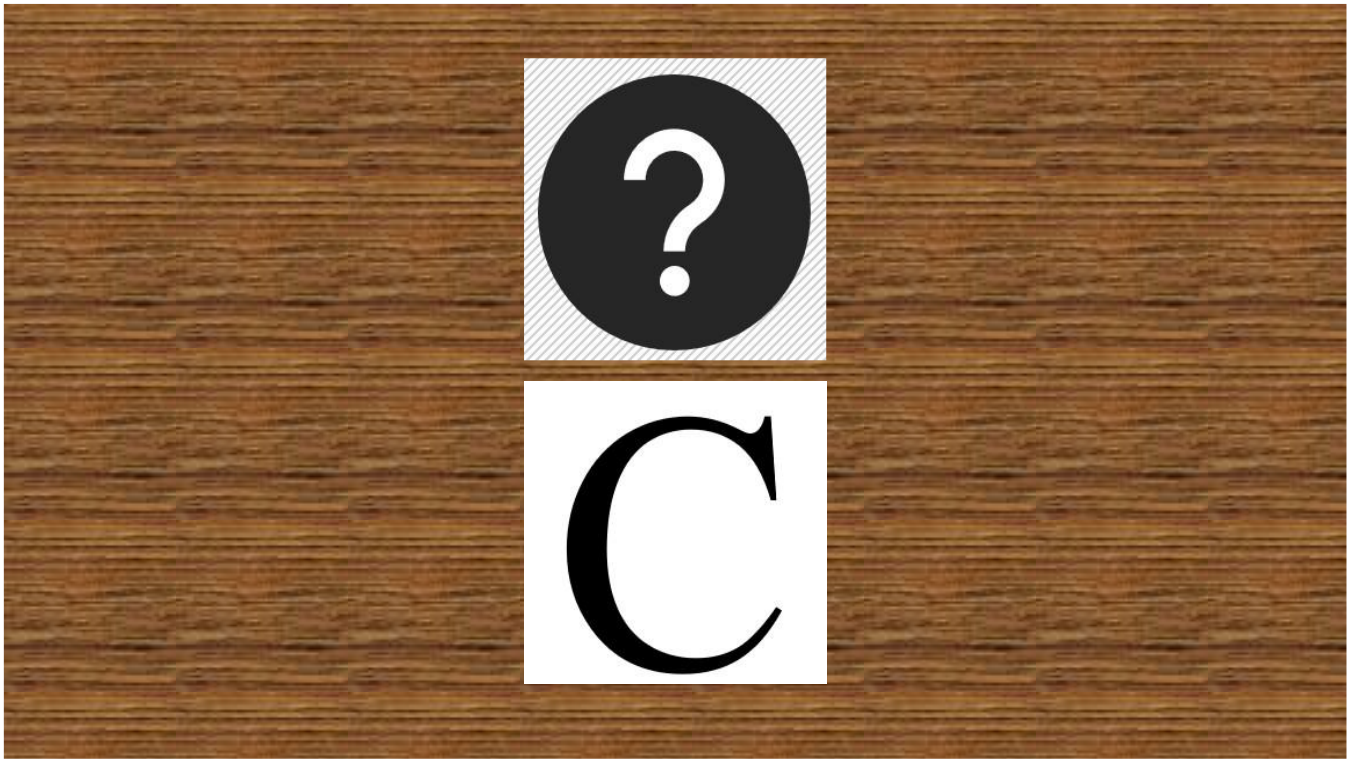
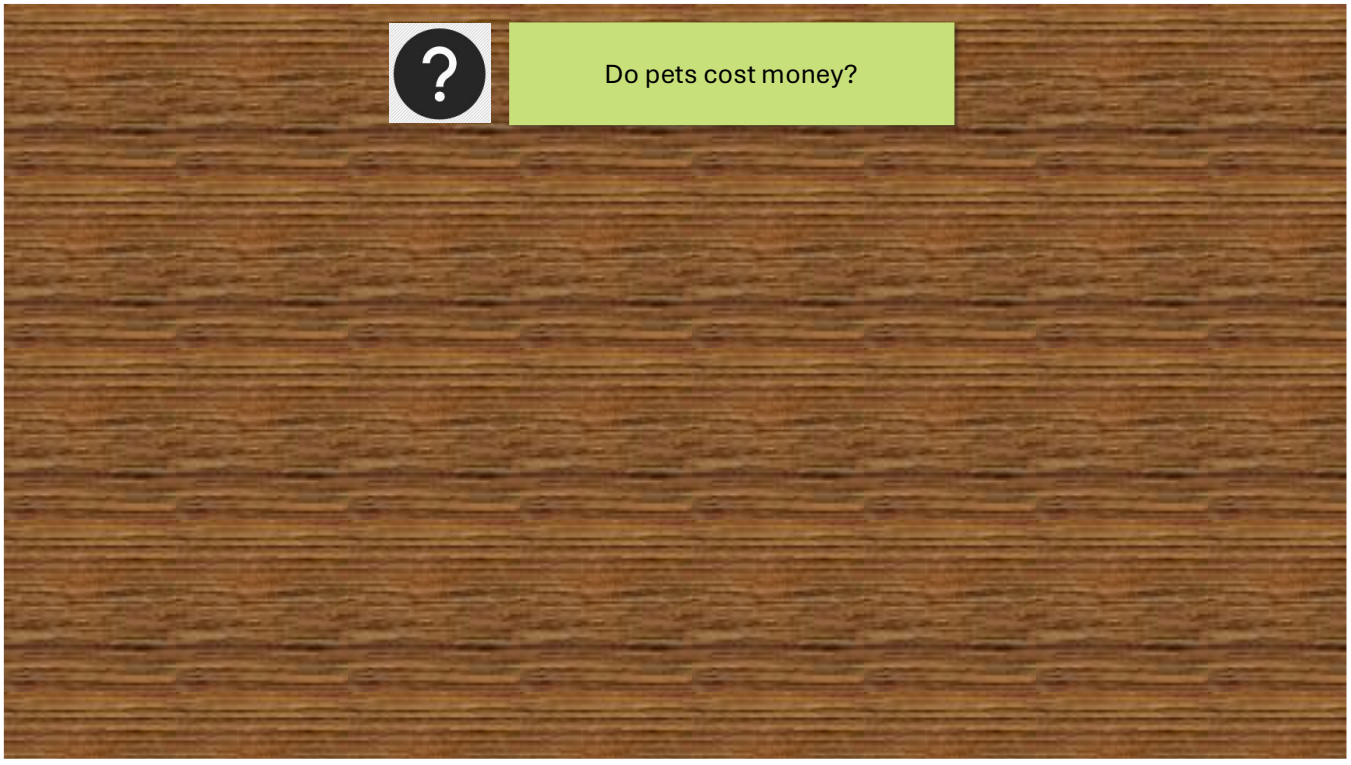
05 Questions and Claims



In Reasonate, players can ask questions and make claims.

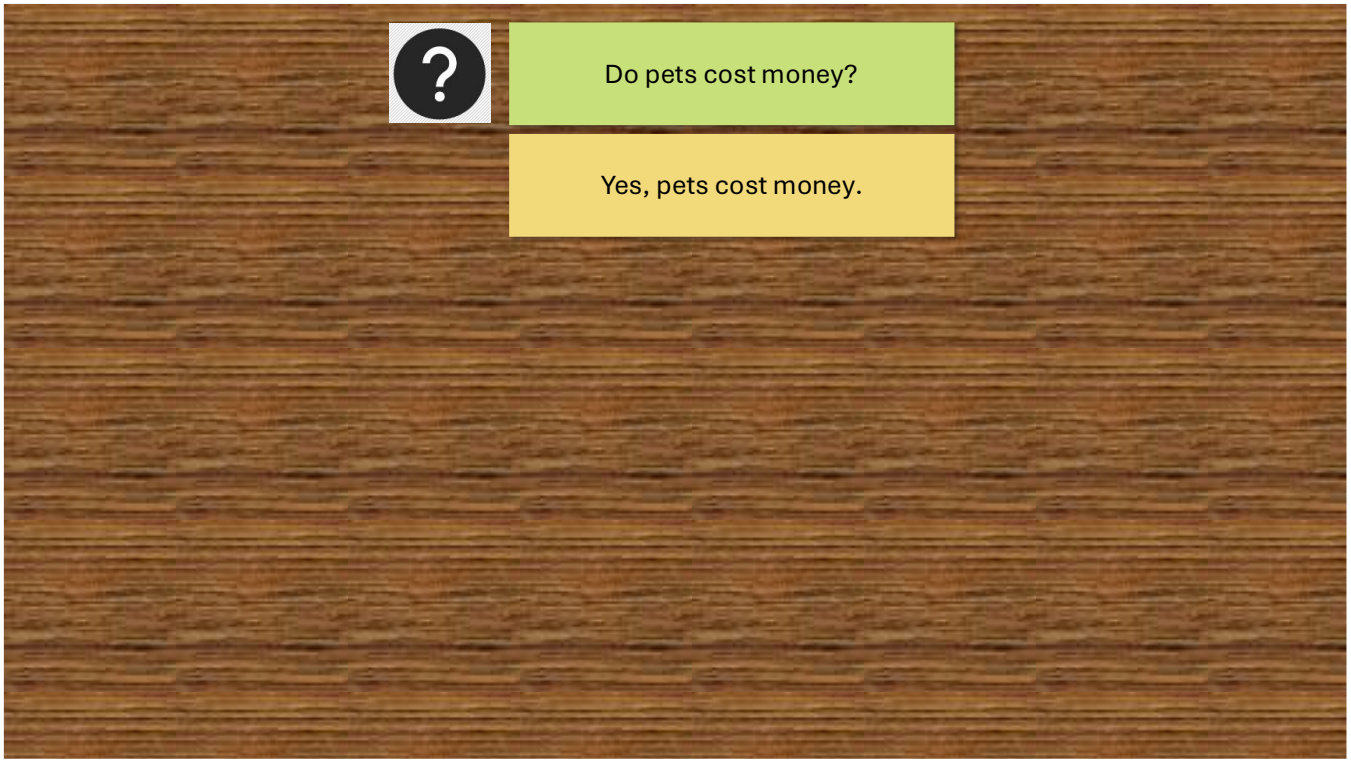


In fact, Reasonate always begins with a question and a claim.



The question that the players will answer is written on a question-colored sticky note.

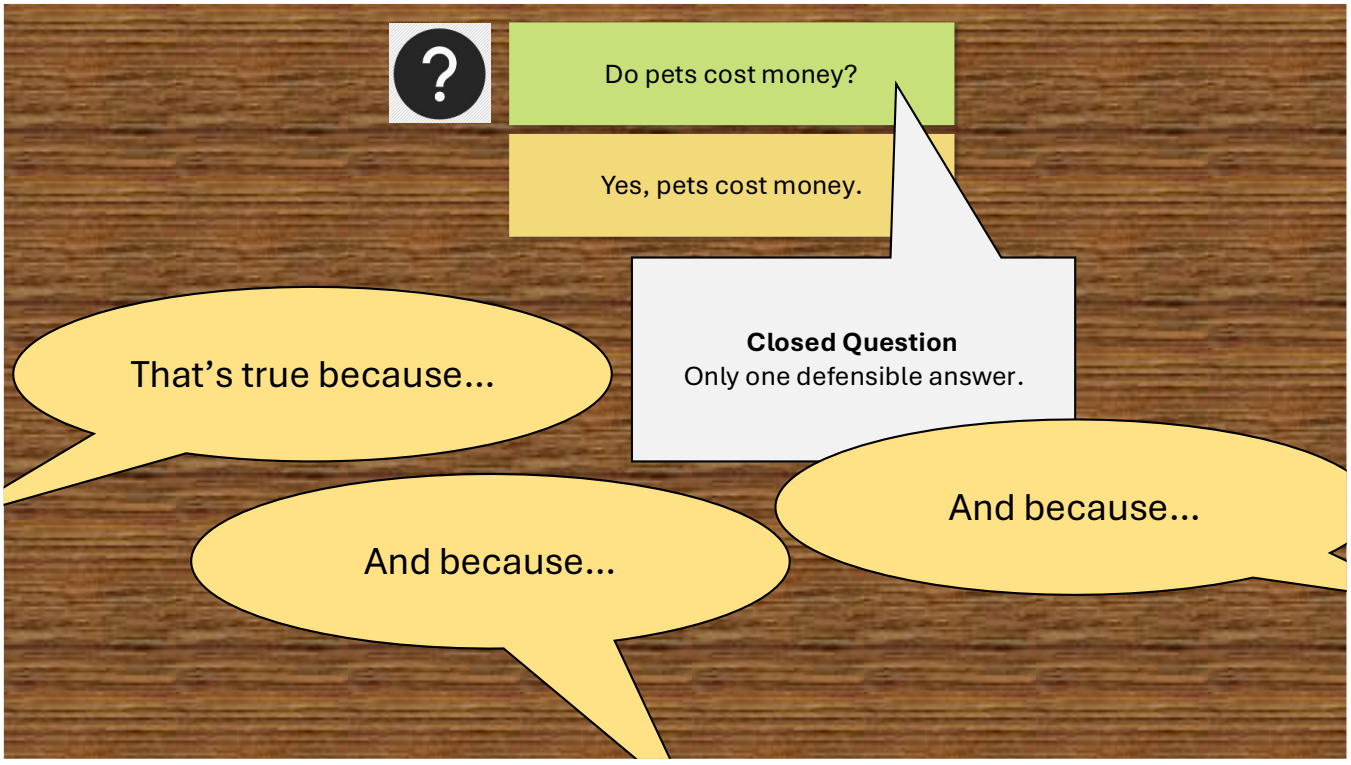
For instance, the players might decide to answer the question “Do pets cost money?”



Players then select a specific answer to that question for evaluation, and they write that answer on a PRO-colored sticky note which they place below the question.

In this case, the answer will probably be “Yes, pets cost money.”

Indeed, the fact that the answer to this question is *so obvious* should give us pause.

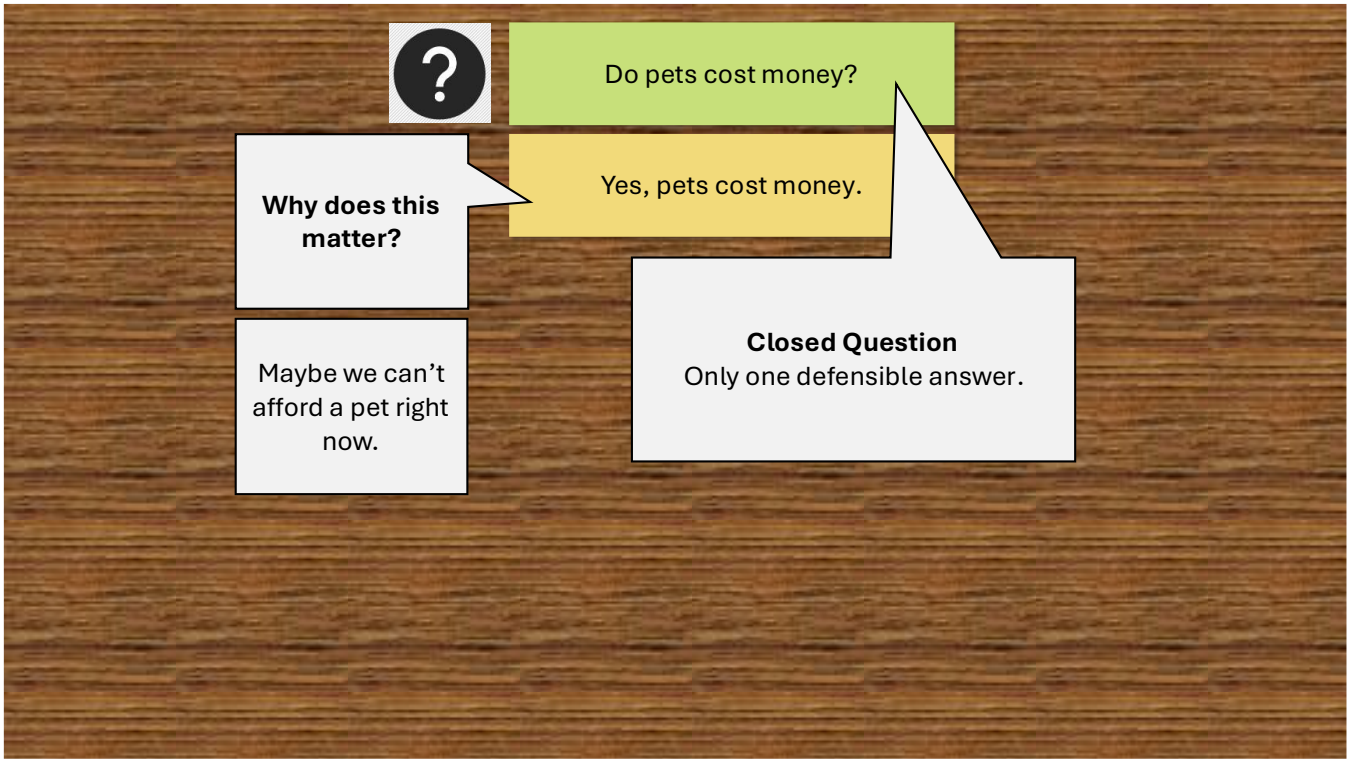


"Do pets cost money?" has only one defensible answer. We might call it a "**closed question**."

We can support that one defensible answer, of course. Maybe we can note that pets require food, which costs money. (Don't worry. We'll talk about this support relationship and how to place our sticky notes later.) But because it's hard to deny that the one viable answer is true, it's hard to generate any objections that would seriously challenge it.

This is why closed questions don't generate dialogue, just a chorus of agreement.

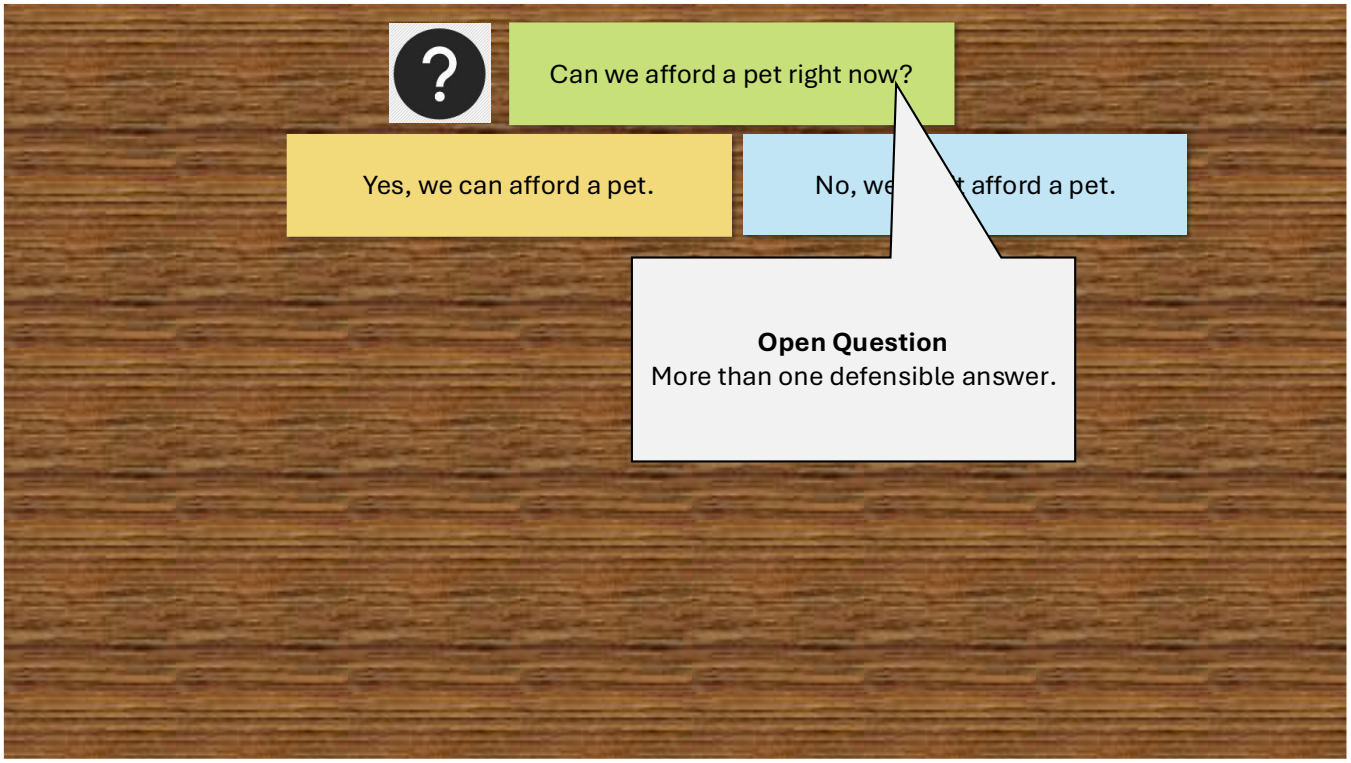
Because Reasonate is designed to capture dialogue, we'll want avoid asking closed questions.



If we discover that we've accidentally asked a closed question, we can work our way to an open question by asking why we care about the answer to the closed question in the first place.

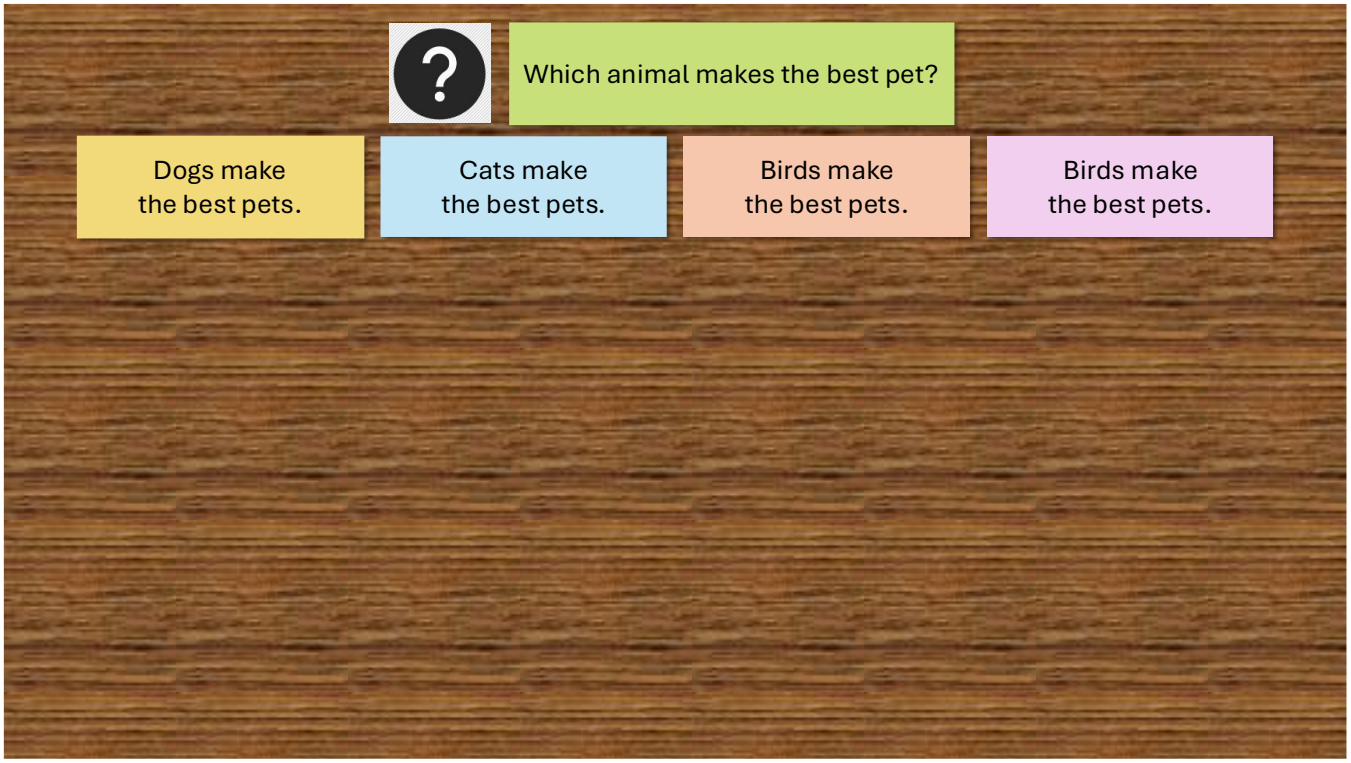
In this case, we might decide that we want to show that pets cost money because we are *really* concerned with whether we can afford a pet right now.

Once we see why we care about the only defensible answer to our closed question, we can more easily identify the real question at issue.



In this case, we're really wondering if we can afford a pet right now.

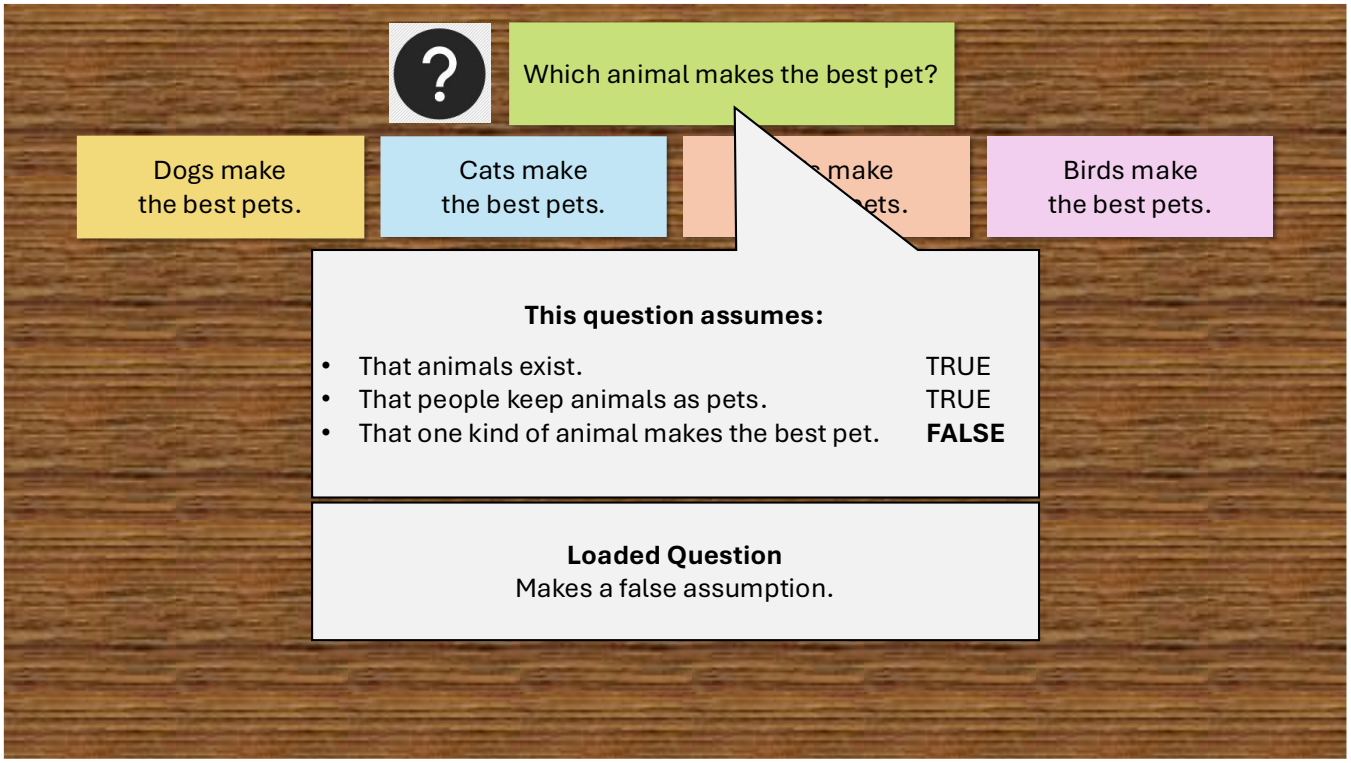
And because "Yes we can afford a pet," and "No we can't afford a pet" are both defensible answers, this is an open question, the sort of question that can surface genuine disagreements and so generate meaningful dialogue.



Let's consider another question: Which animal makes the best pet?

There are multiple defensible answers here, so this question is wide open. But it's unlikely that any of the answers will win out over the others. In fact, we might start to wonder if our question is unanswerable, and one reason a question might be unanswerable is that it makes a false assumption.

All questions assume things, so the fact that a question assumes *something* is never the problem. Problems arise when a question assumes something *false*.



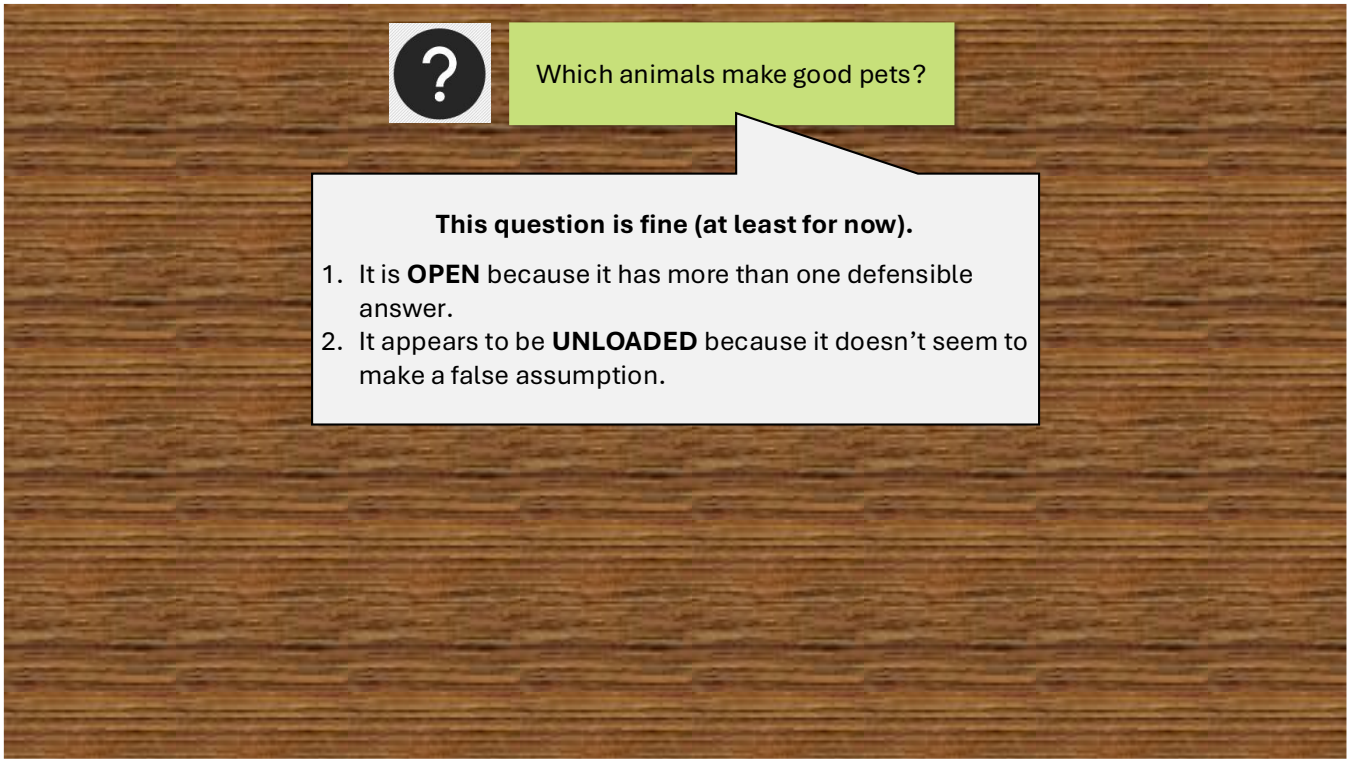
This question assumes that animals exist, that people keep animals as pets, and that one kind of animal makes the best pet.

The first two assumptions are true. Animals exist and people keep animals as pets. But the third assumption is certainly false. It's not the case that one kind of animal makes the objectively best pet.

Questions that make false assumptions are sometimes called "**Loaded Questions.**"

Loaded questions aren't answerable because any answer presupposes that the false assumption is true.

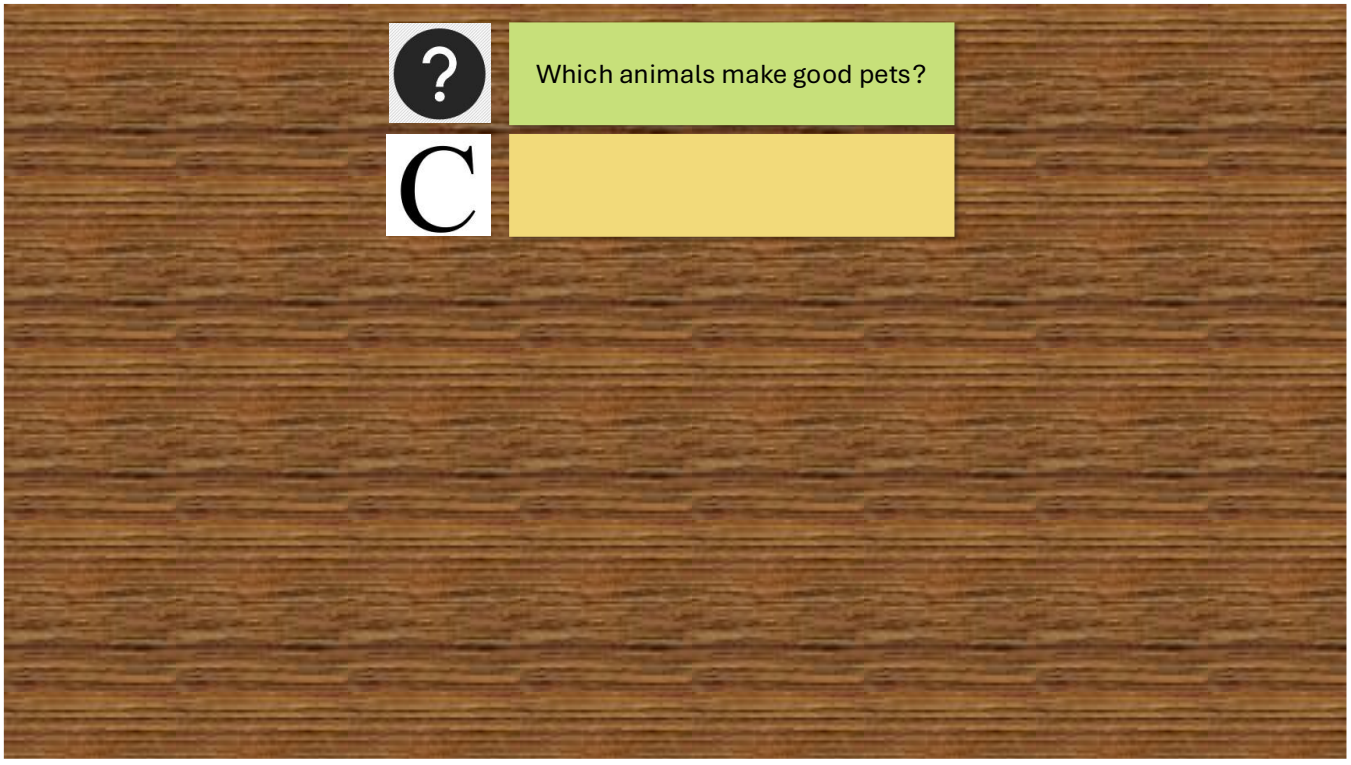
When faced with a loaded question, we should see what question emerges when we drop that false assumption.



In this case, we might get the question "Which animals make good pets?"

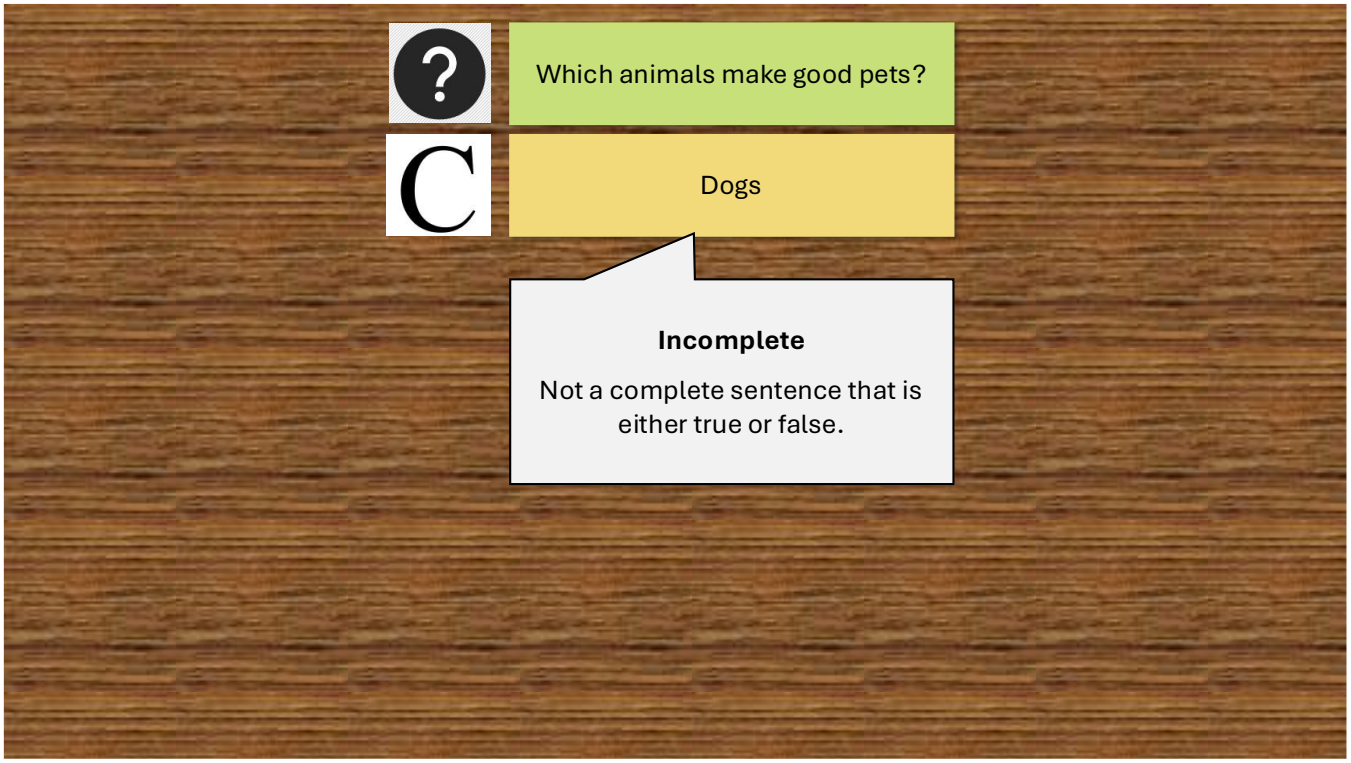
This question is fine (at least for now).

It is **open** because it has more than one defensible answer, and it appears to be **unloaded** because it doesn't seem to make a false assumption.



One a question has been determined, players select a specific answer for evaluation. They write that answer on a PRO-colored note (because PRO will be defending it) and place it below the question.

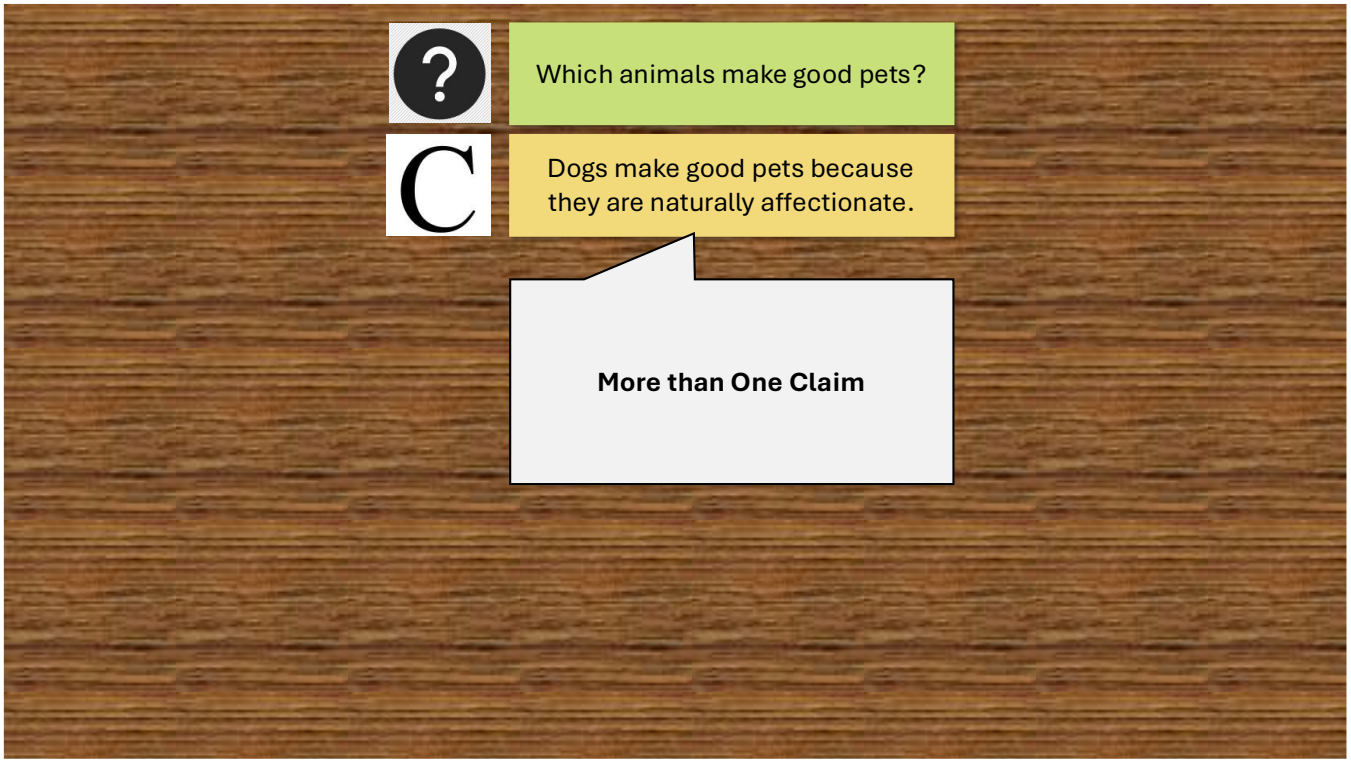
That sounds simple enough, and it is, but there are two things to watch out for: saying too much and saying too little.



For example, suppose these players decide that the answer is “Dogs.”

The problem here is that “Dogs” isn’t a claim because it isn’t a complete sentence and because a claim, for our purposes, is a complete sentence that is either true or false (although we might not know which it is). This note says *too little*.

The fix here is easy. The players simply write the complete sentence that they had in mind when they said “Dogs.”

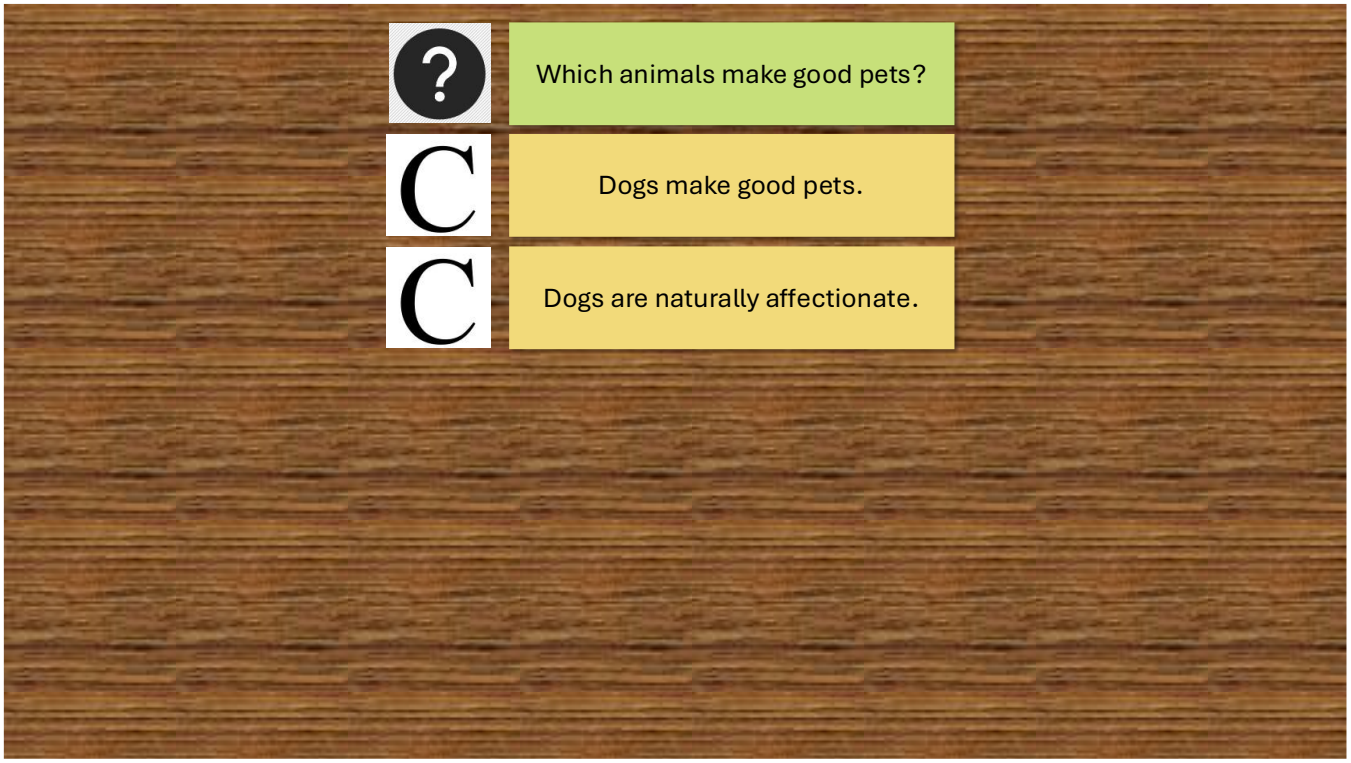


For example, in this case, the players might write “Dogs make good pets because they are naturally affectionate.”

That’s a complete sentence, so the players aren’t saying too little there. They are, however, saying *too much*.

They’re saying too much because this sentence asserts more than one claim.

Because we’ll want each note to assert only one claim, compound sentences will often need to be divided into multiple notes.



In this case, “Dogs make good pets because they are naturally affectionate” is divided into two notes, one saying, “Dogs make good pets” and the other saying, “Dogs are naturally affectionate.”

This allows us to represent the relationship between those claims by placing “Dogs are naturally affectionate” beneath “Dogs make good pets,” as support.

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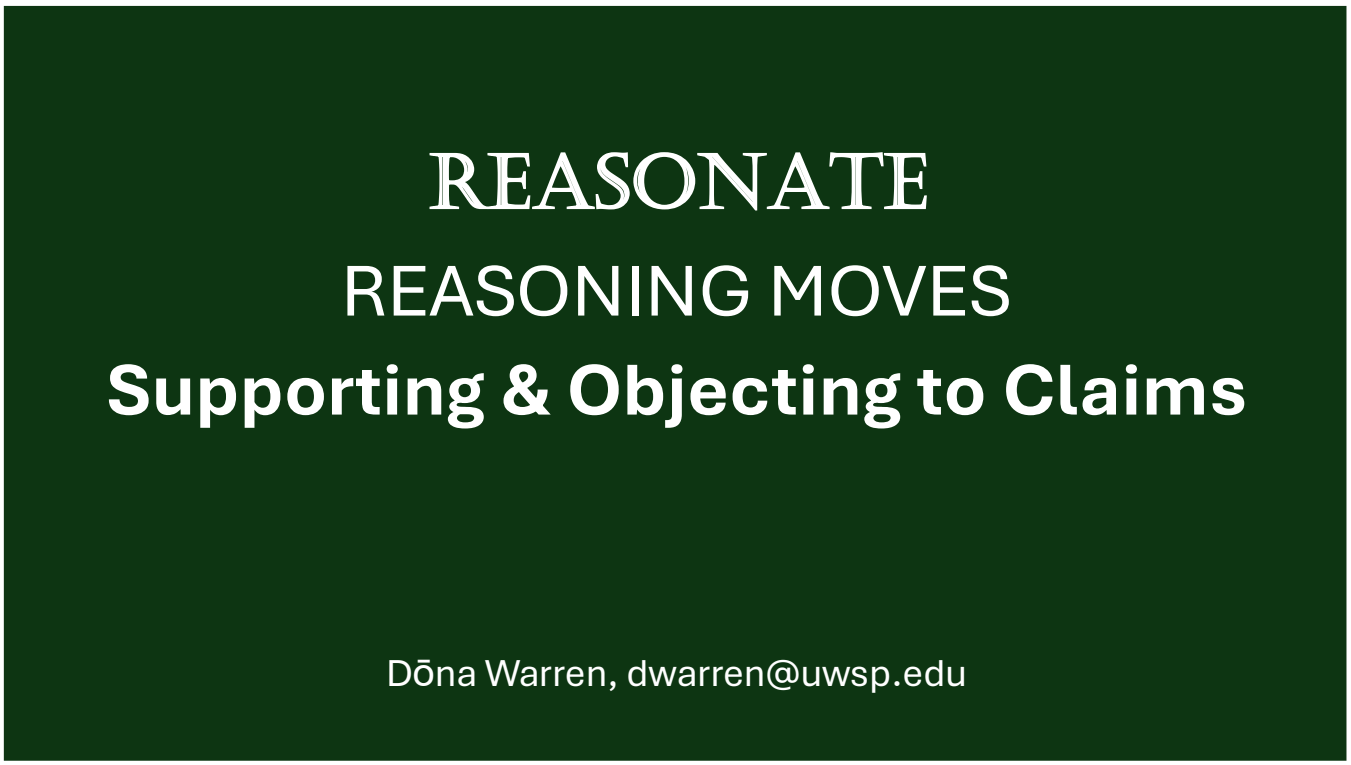
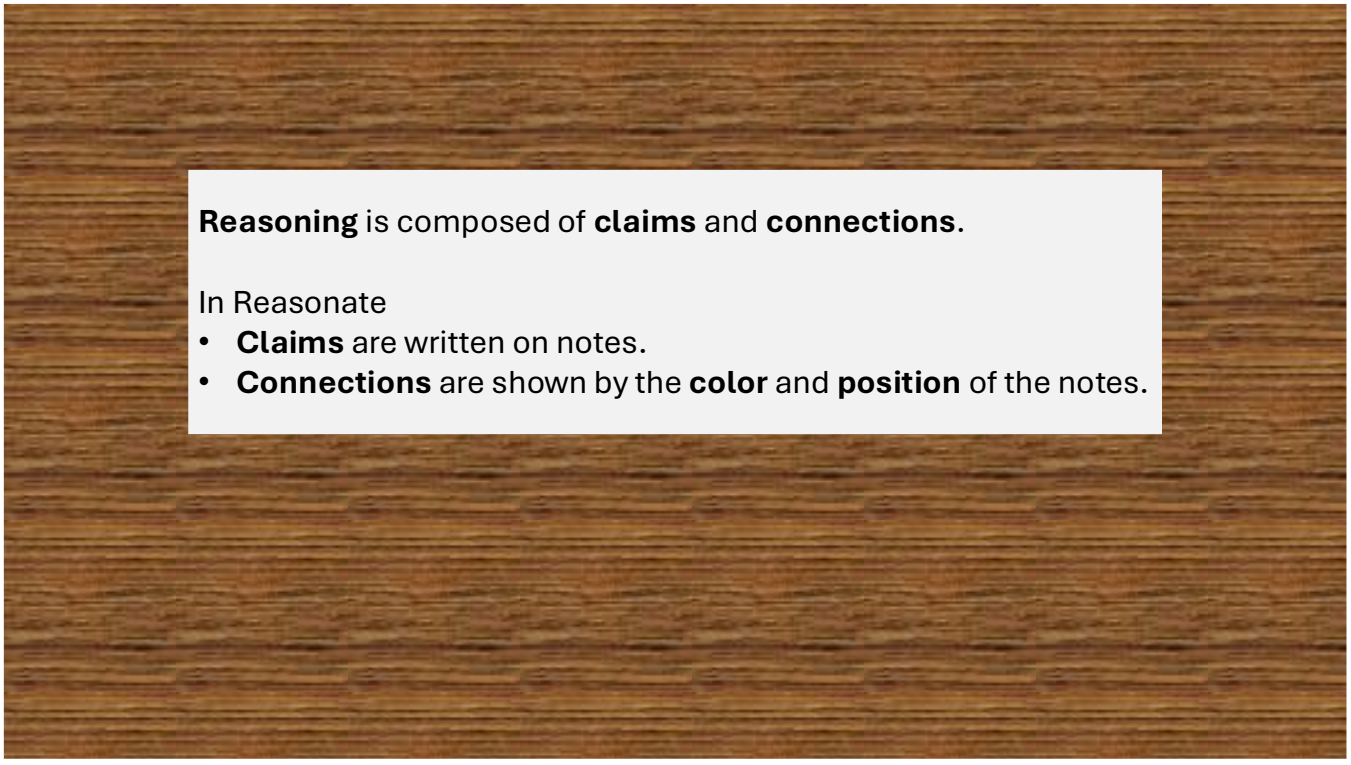
06 Supporting and Objecting



Reasonate is built to help players develop and understand the reasoning that bears upon an issue.



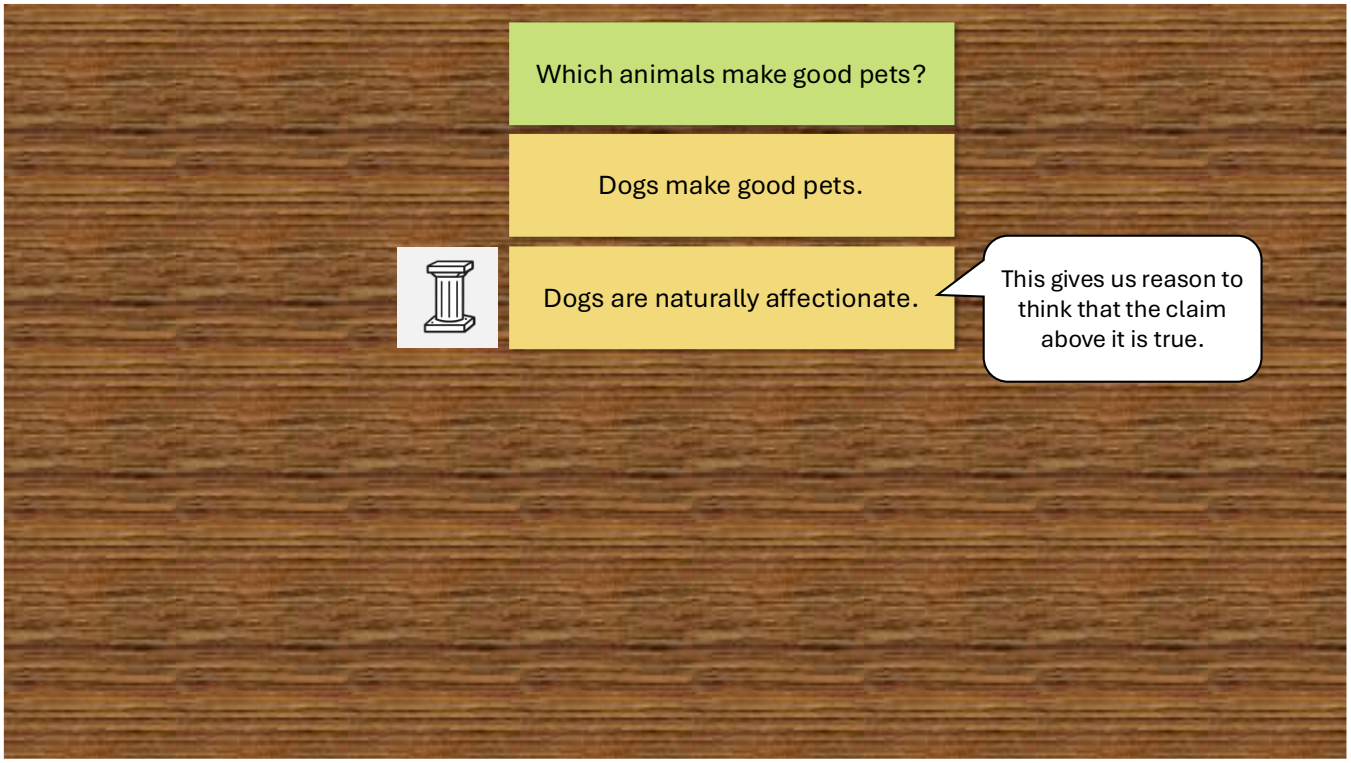
Reasoning is composed of **claims** and **connections**.

In Reasonate, **claims** are written on notes and **connections** are shown by the color and position of the notes.

SUPPORT		**Same** color note placed **below** a note. Gives reason to think the claim above is **true**.
OBJECTION		**Different** color note placed **below** a note. Gives reason to think the claim above is **false**.

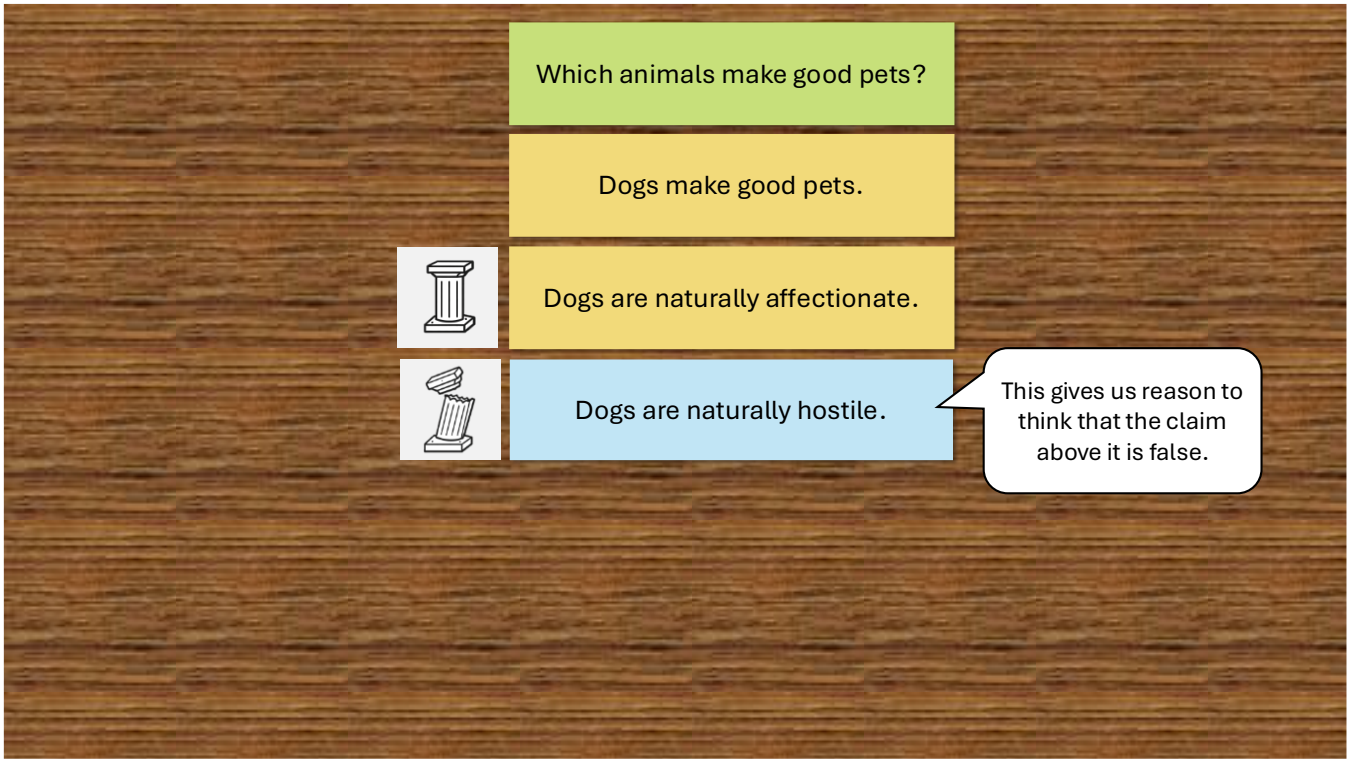
A **same color** note placed **below** a note gives us reason to think that the claim above it is **true**.

A **different color** note placed **below** a note gives us reason to think that the claim above it is **false**.



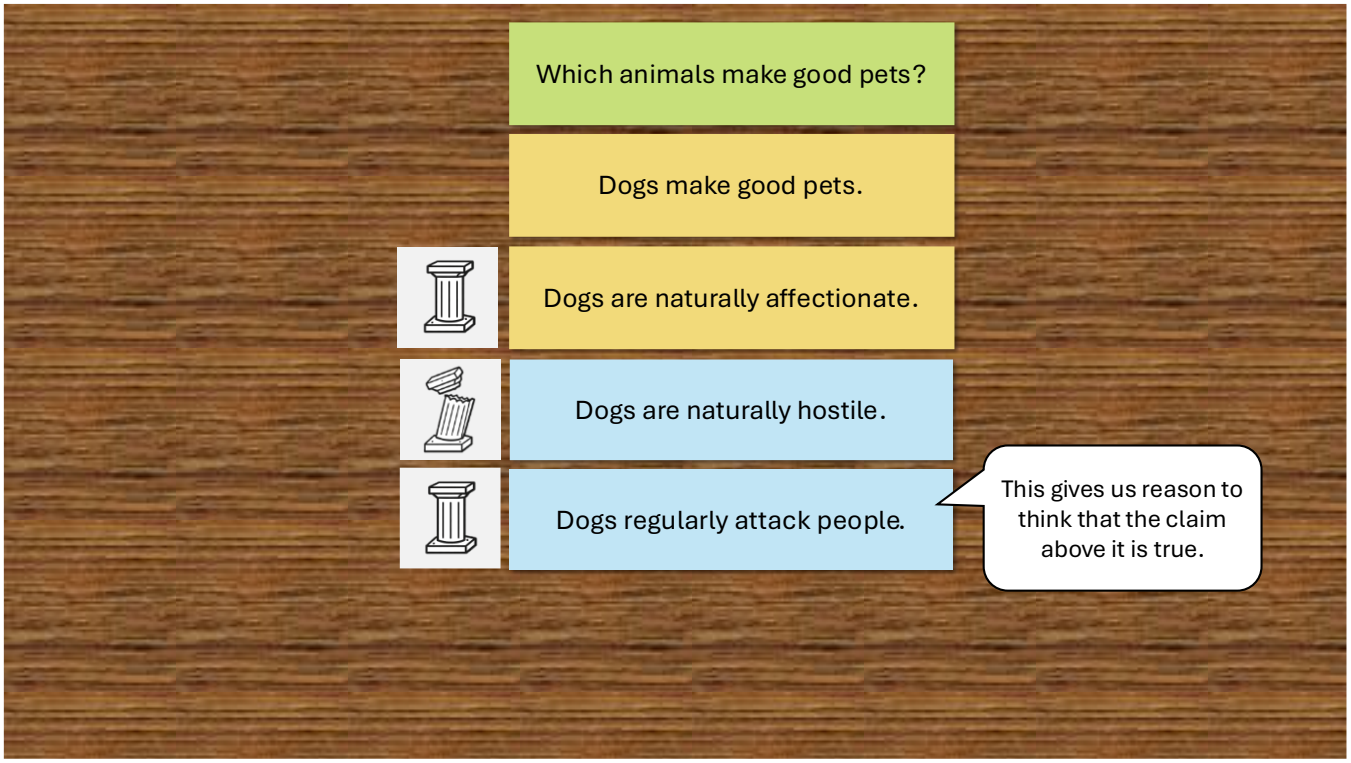
For example, “Dogs are naturally affectionate,” is a yellow note. It’s placed beneath a yellow note that says, “Dogs make good pets.”

Because the top note and the bottom note are the same color, the note on the bottom, “Dogs are naturally affectionate,” is being given as a reason to think that the claim on the note above it, “Dogs make good pets,” is true.



A blue note placed beneath a yellow note would give us reason to think that the claim above it is false, because the notes are different colors.

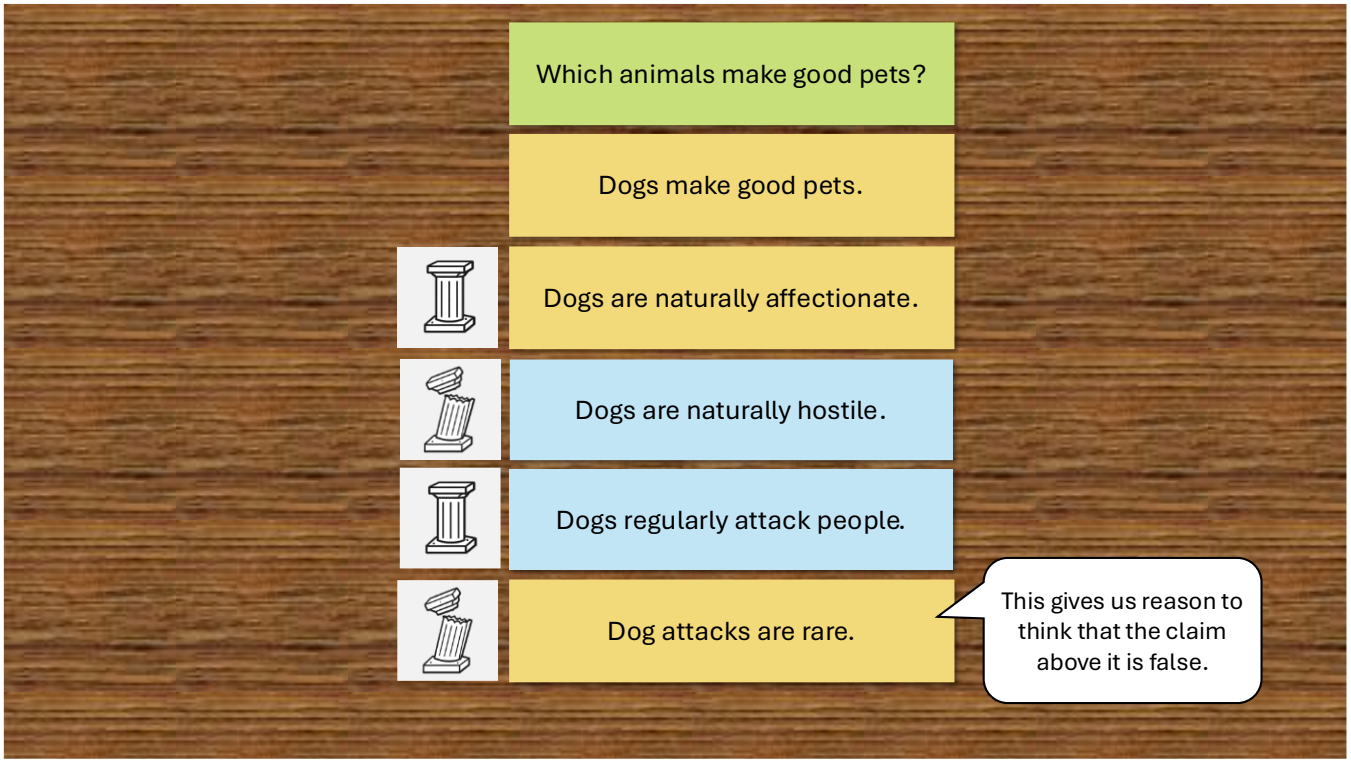
In this case, the blue note might say, “Dogs are naturally hostile.” That would certainly give us reason to think that the claim above it, “Dogs are naturally affectionate,” is false.



Now, what if we put a blue note beneath a blue note. What would that note be doing?

Well, because it's the same color as the note above it, that note would be giving us reason to think that the claim above it is *true*.

In this example, to support the claim that dogs are naturally hostile, we might assert that dogs regularly attack people.



If a player puts a yellow note beneath that blue note, what would that player be doing?

Because the note is a different color, that player would be giving a reason to think that the claim on the note above it is *false*.

Maybe that player will claim that dog attacks are rare, which would show that "Dogs regularly attack people," is incorrect.

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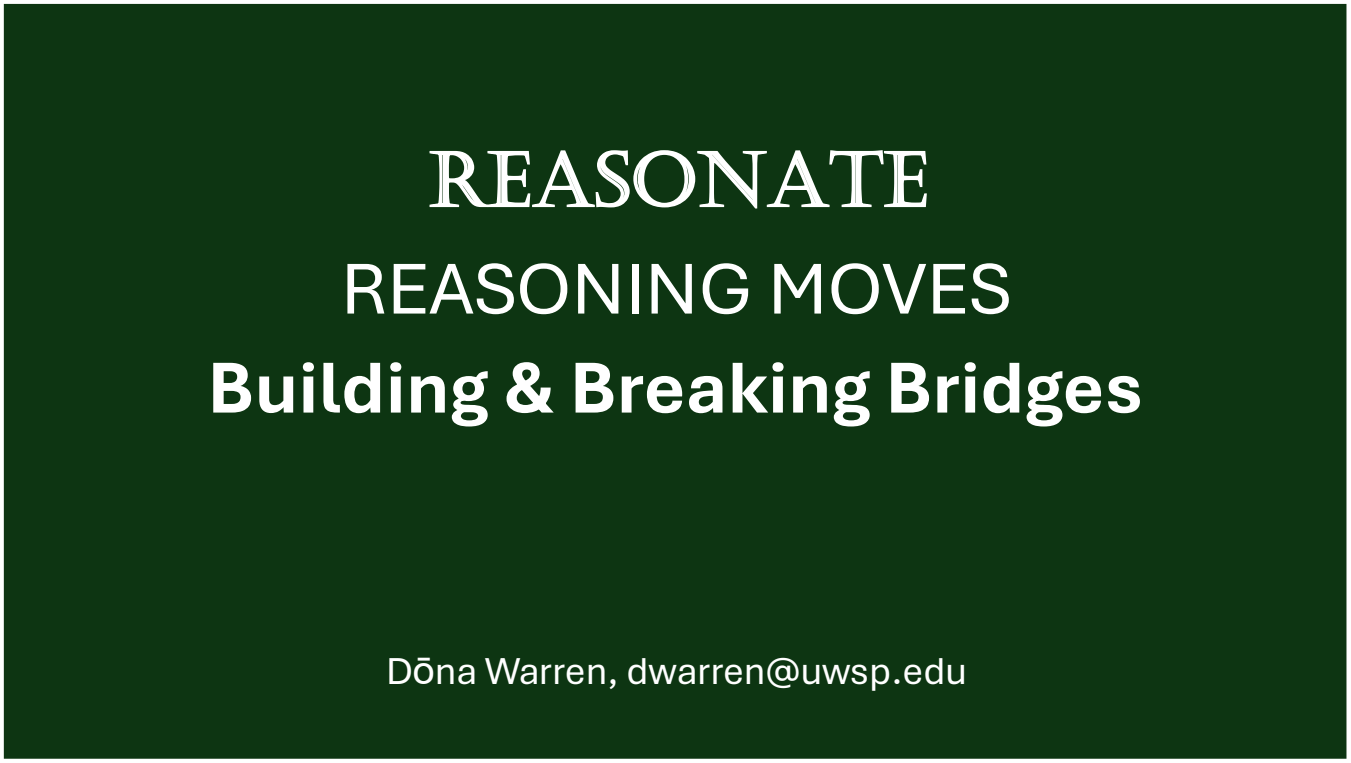
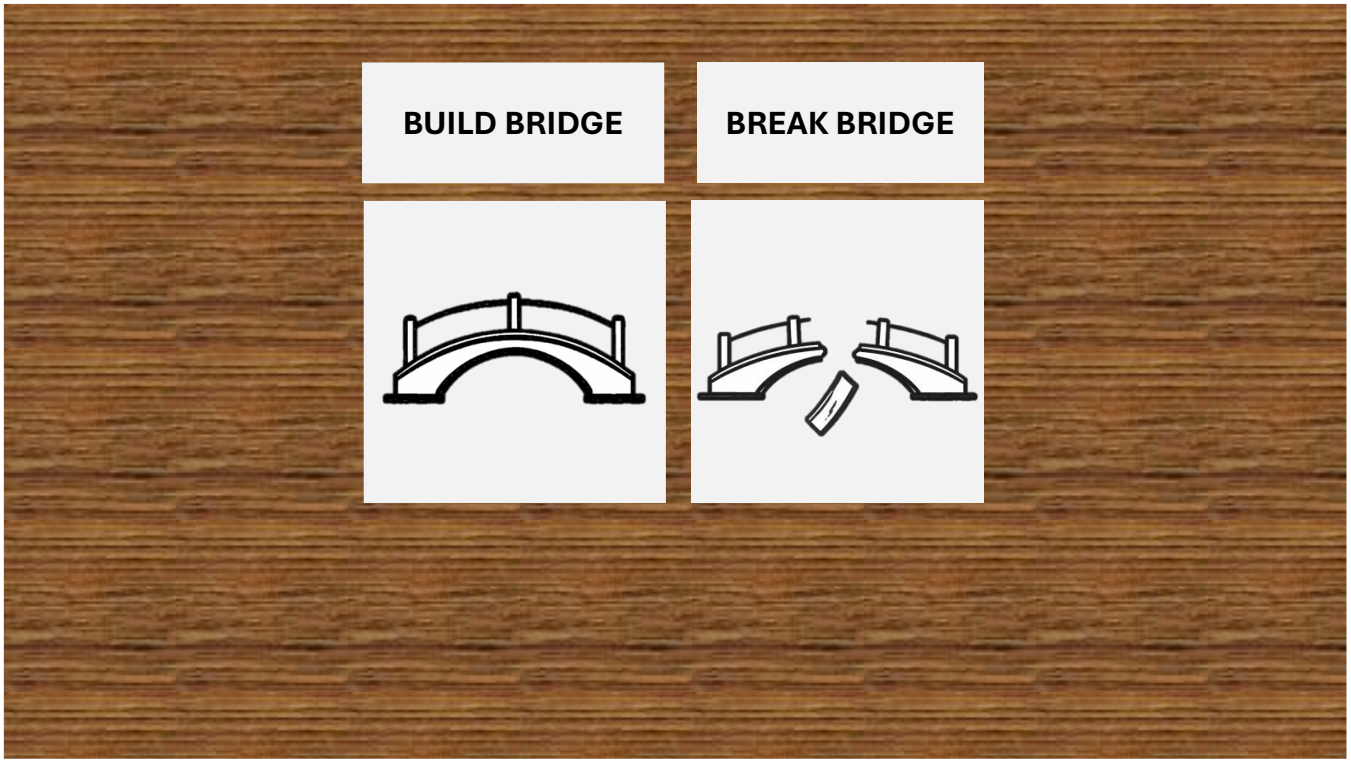
07 Bridges Introduction



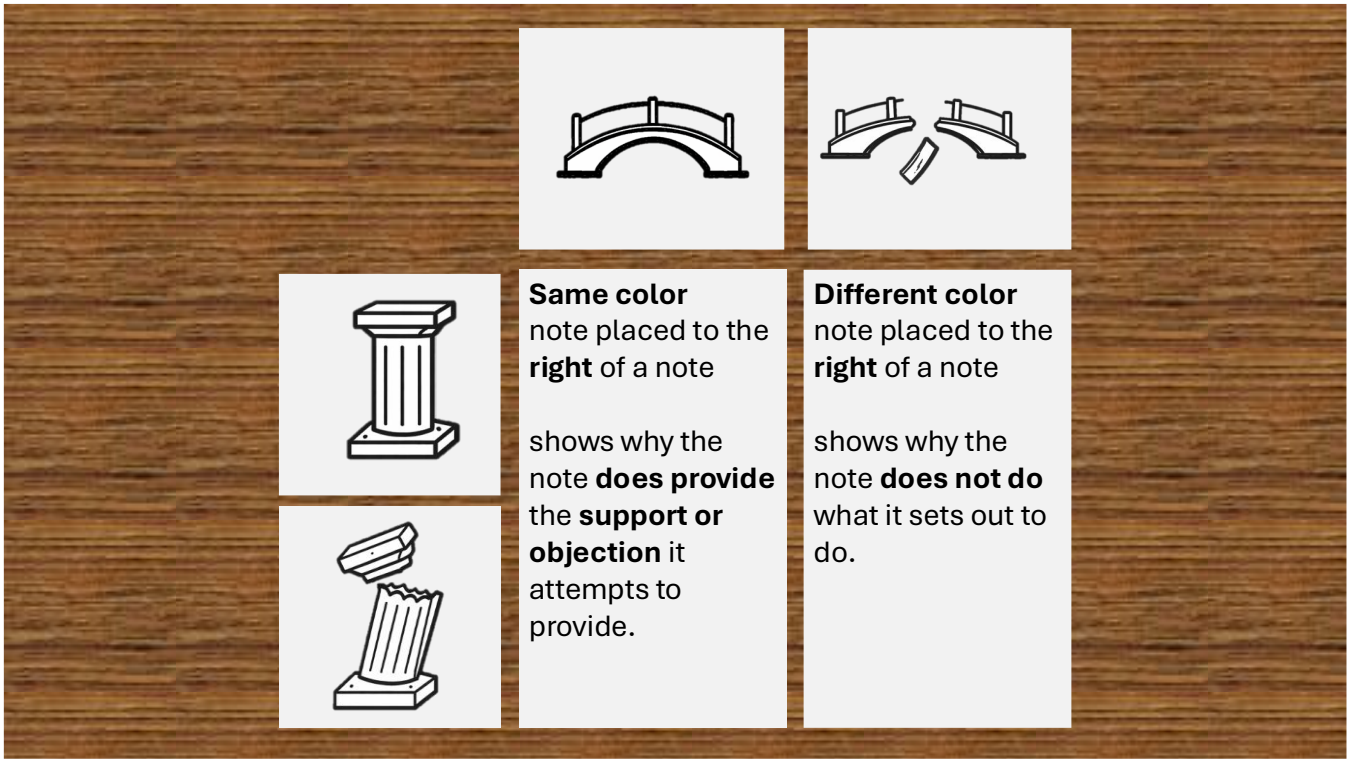
As we've already seen, reasoning is composed of claims and connections.

And we've seen two ways that claims can be connected: one claim can support another, and one claim can object to another.

Reasonate helps us identify the claims that bolster or undermine these connections of support or objection.



This is the process of building or breaking bridges.



If a note of the **same** color is placed to the **right** of a note, it shows why that note **does** what it sets out to do.

- If the note was attempting to provide support, the new same-colored note on the right shows why it *does* provide support.
- If the note was attempting to provide an objection, the new same-colored note on the right shows why it *does* provide an objection.
- This is **building** a bridge.

If a note of a **different** color is placed to the **right** of a note, it shows why that note **does not** do what it sets out to do.

- If the note was attempting to provide support, the new different-colored note on the right shows why it *does not* provide support.
- If the note was attempting to provide an objection, the new different-colored note on the right shows why it *does not* provide an objection.
- This is **breaking** a bridge.

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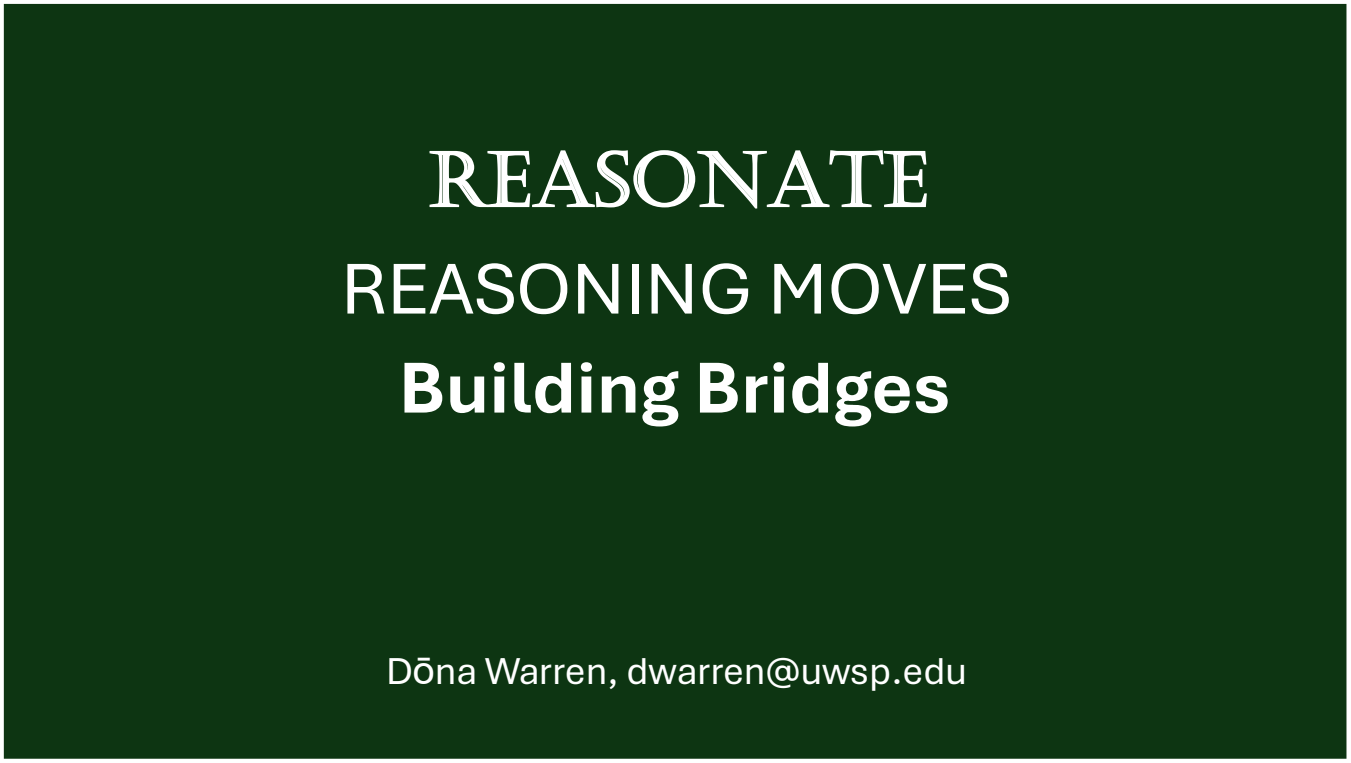
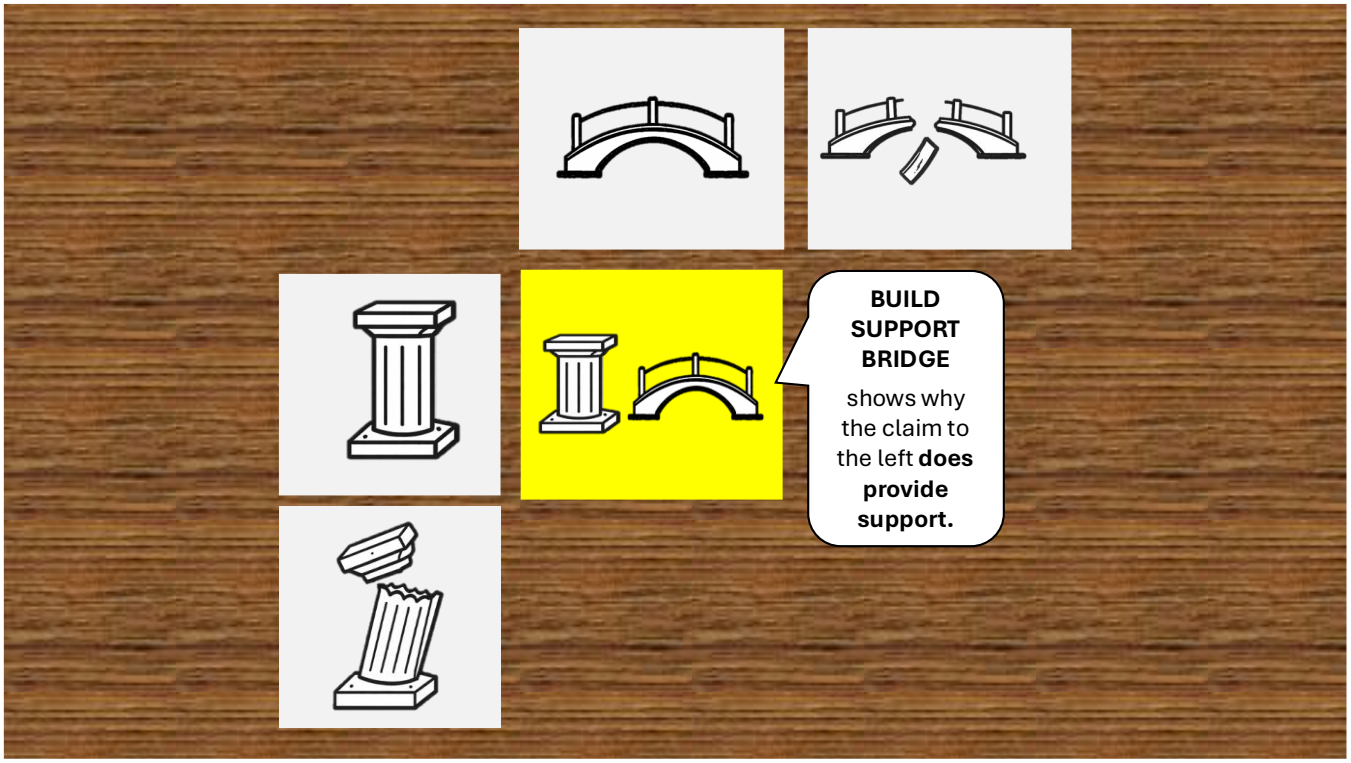
08 Bridge Building

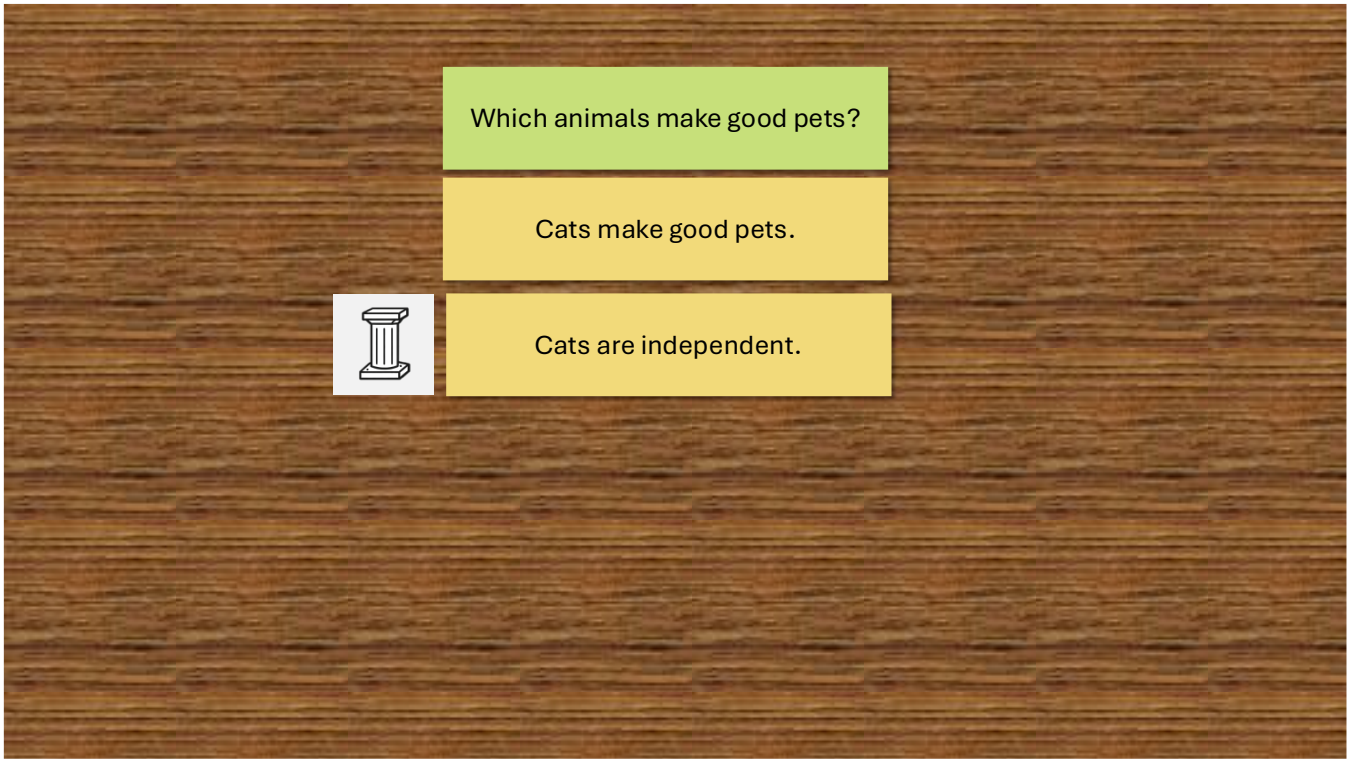


Let’s look at how to build bridges.

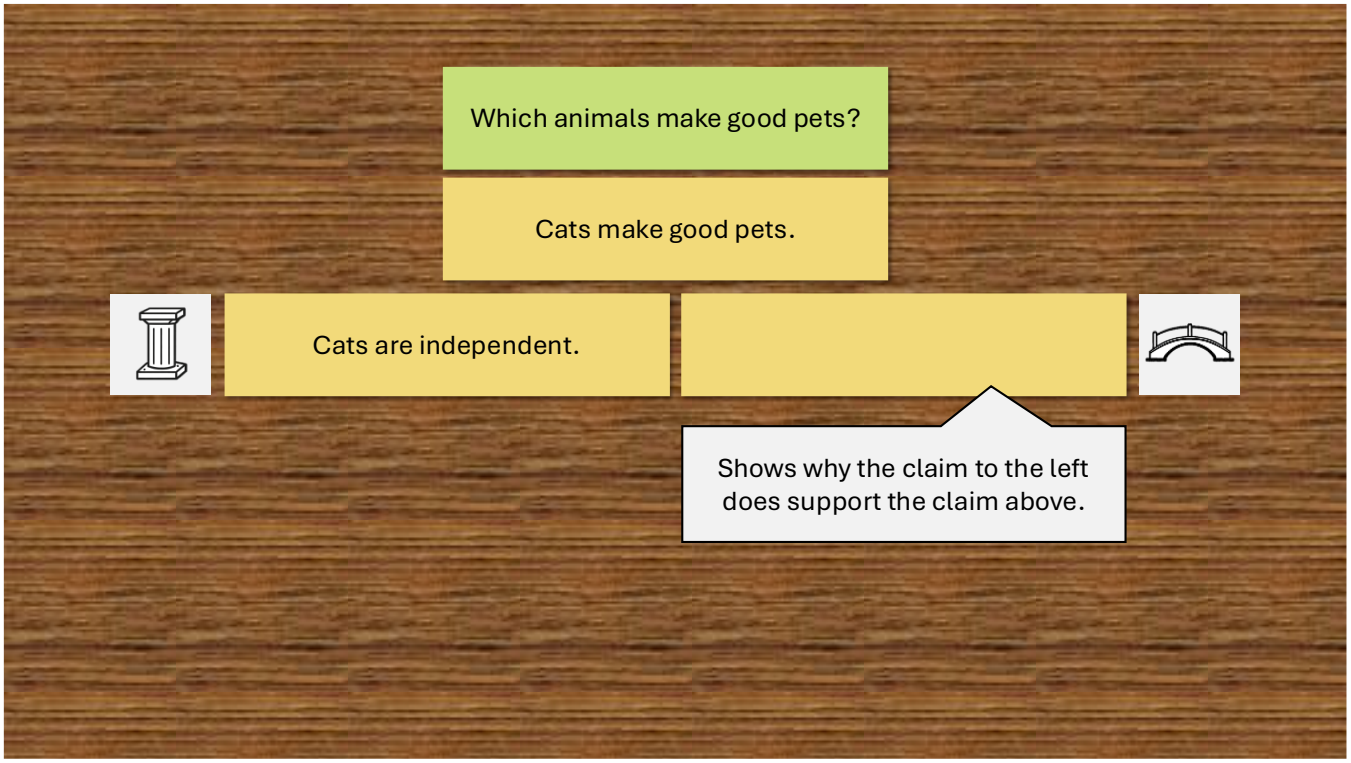


We'll start by building a **support bridge**.

This will show why the claim to the left does provide support for the claim above it.

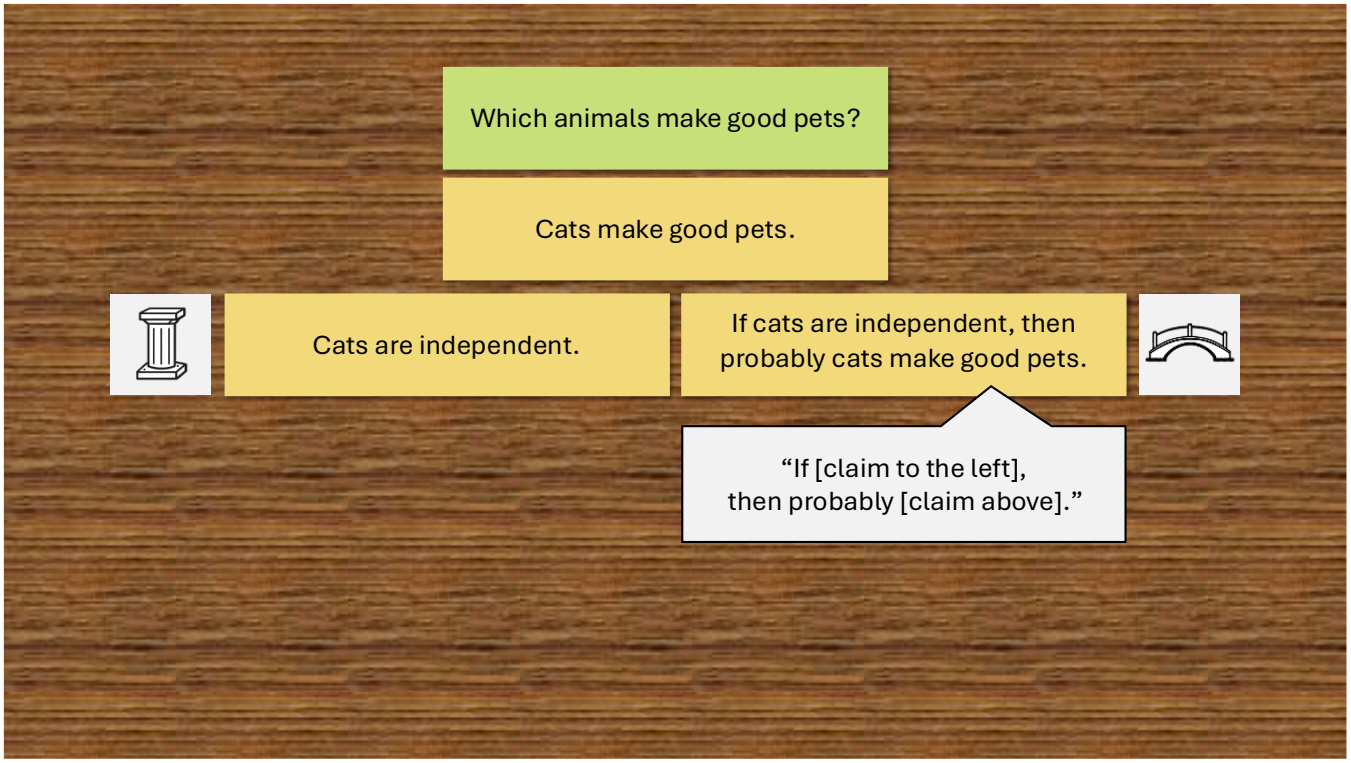


For instance, in this piece of reasoning, “Cats are independent” is given as support for “Cats make good pets.”



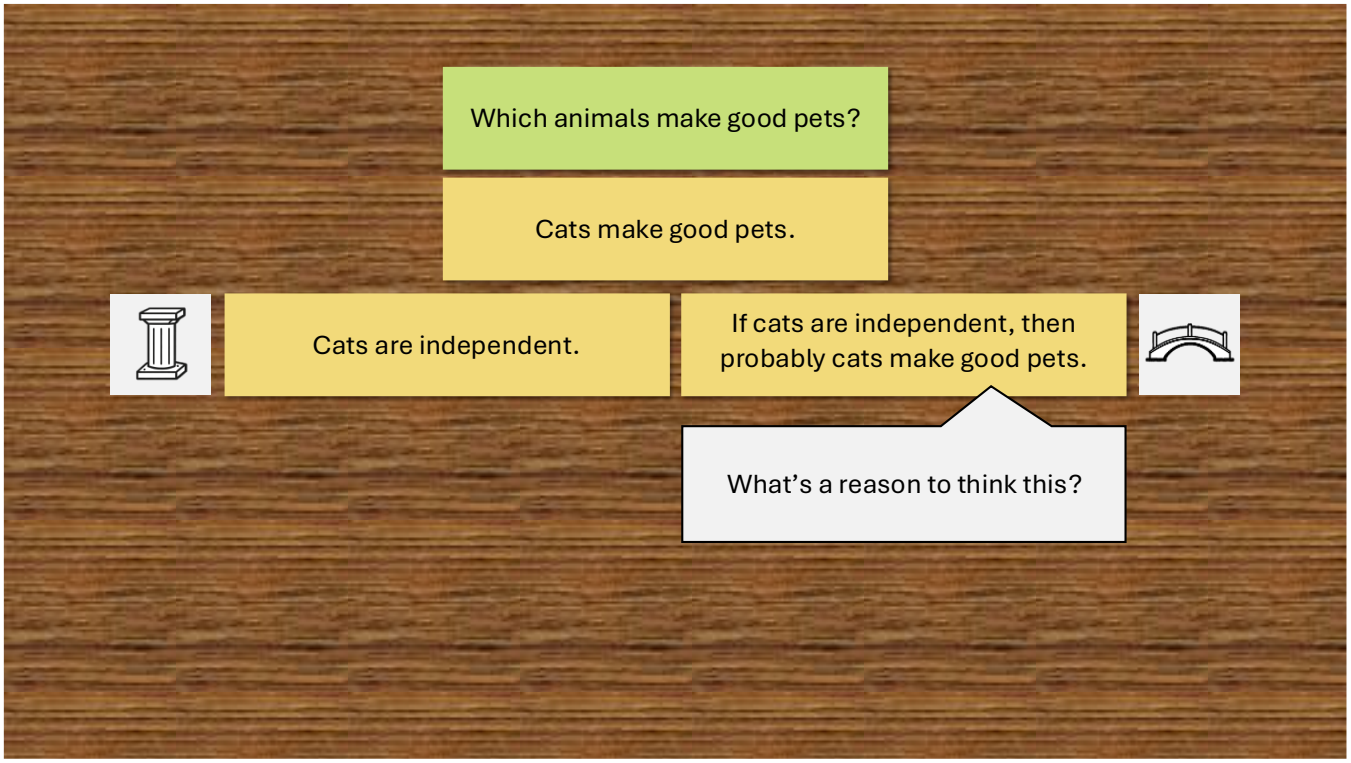
If we put a same-colored note next to “Cats are independent,” we’ll be stating why “Cats are independent” succeeds in supporting “Cats make good pets.”

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

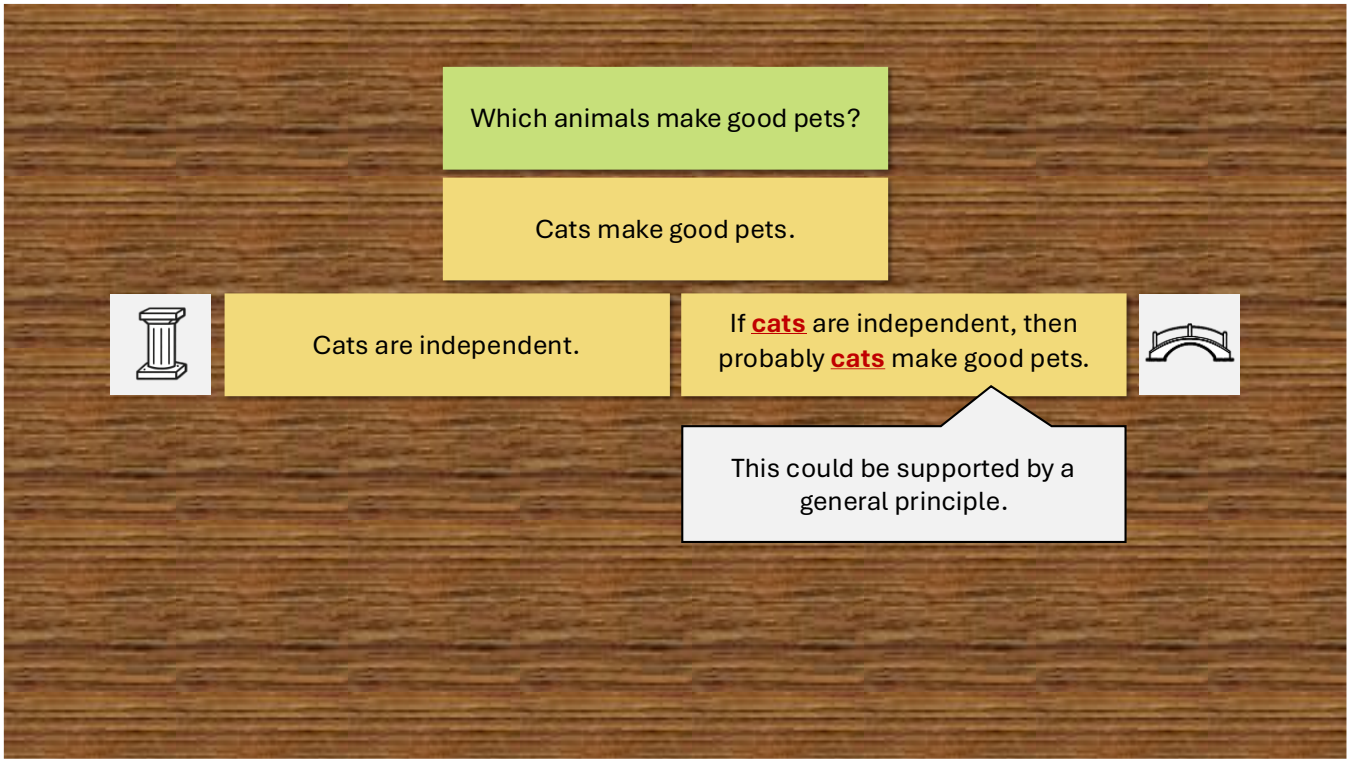


We’ll start with the claim that we get when we write a sentence of the form “if…then probably…,” putting the claim to the left behind the “if” and the claim above behind the “then probably.”

In this case, that would be “If cats are independent, then probably cats make good pets.”

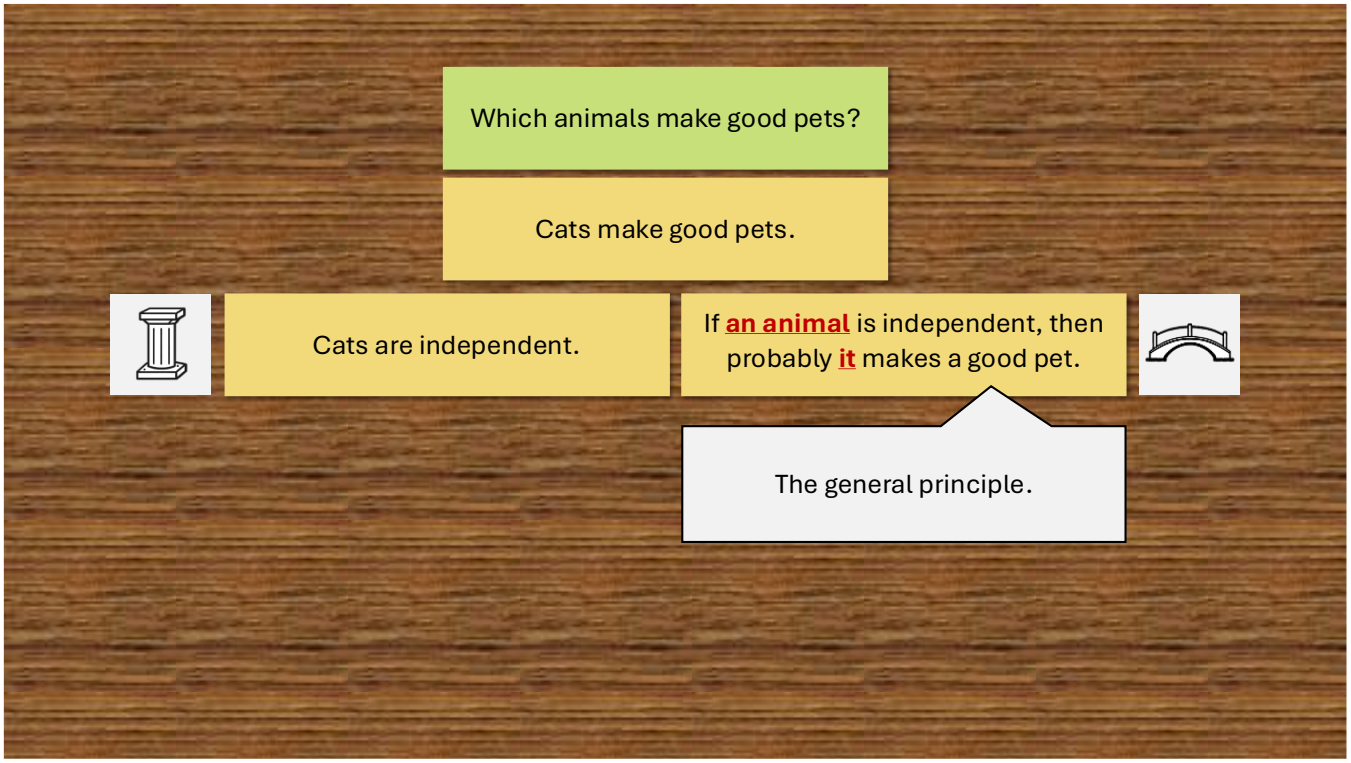


We can stop there, if we want to, but frequently it's useful to replace that sentence with the justification we have for accepting that "if... then probably..." sentence.

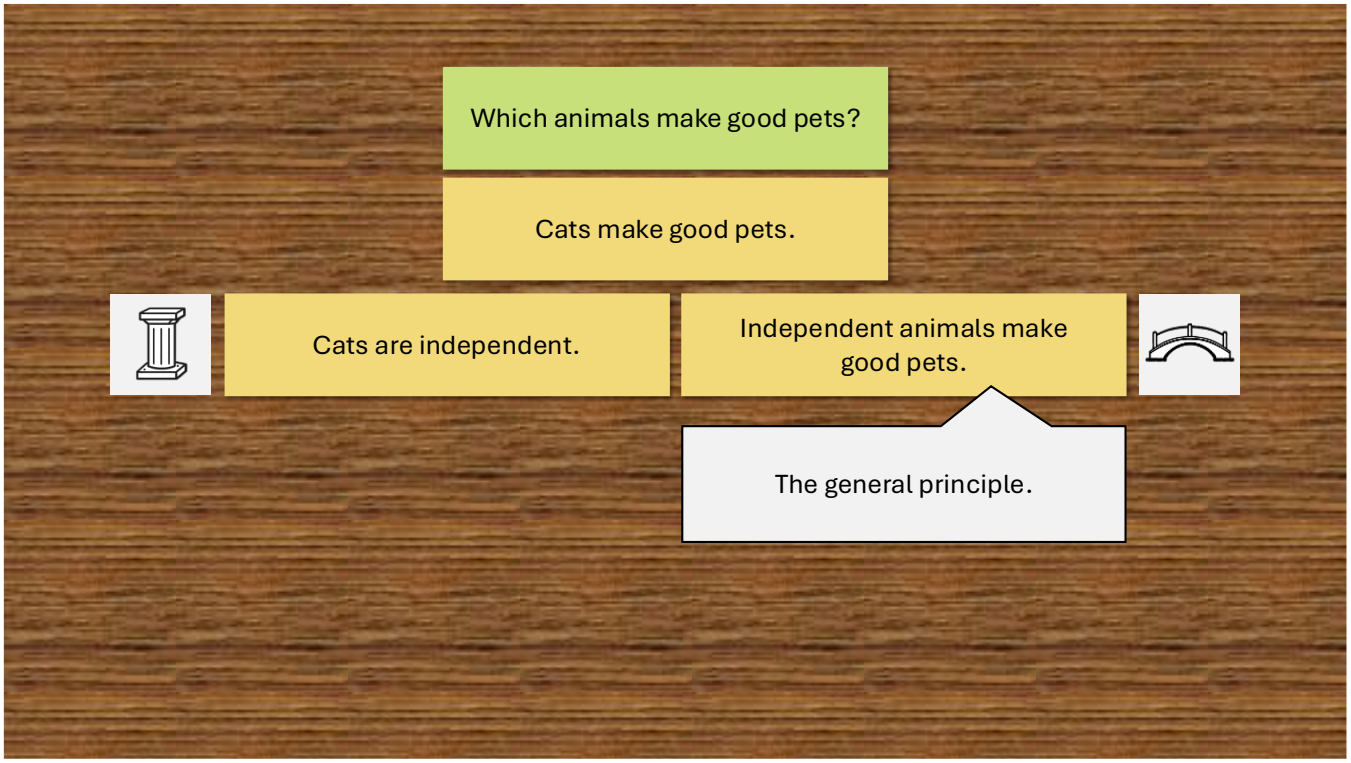


Sometimes, that justification is a general principle.

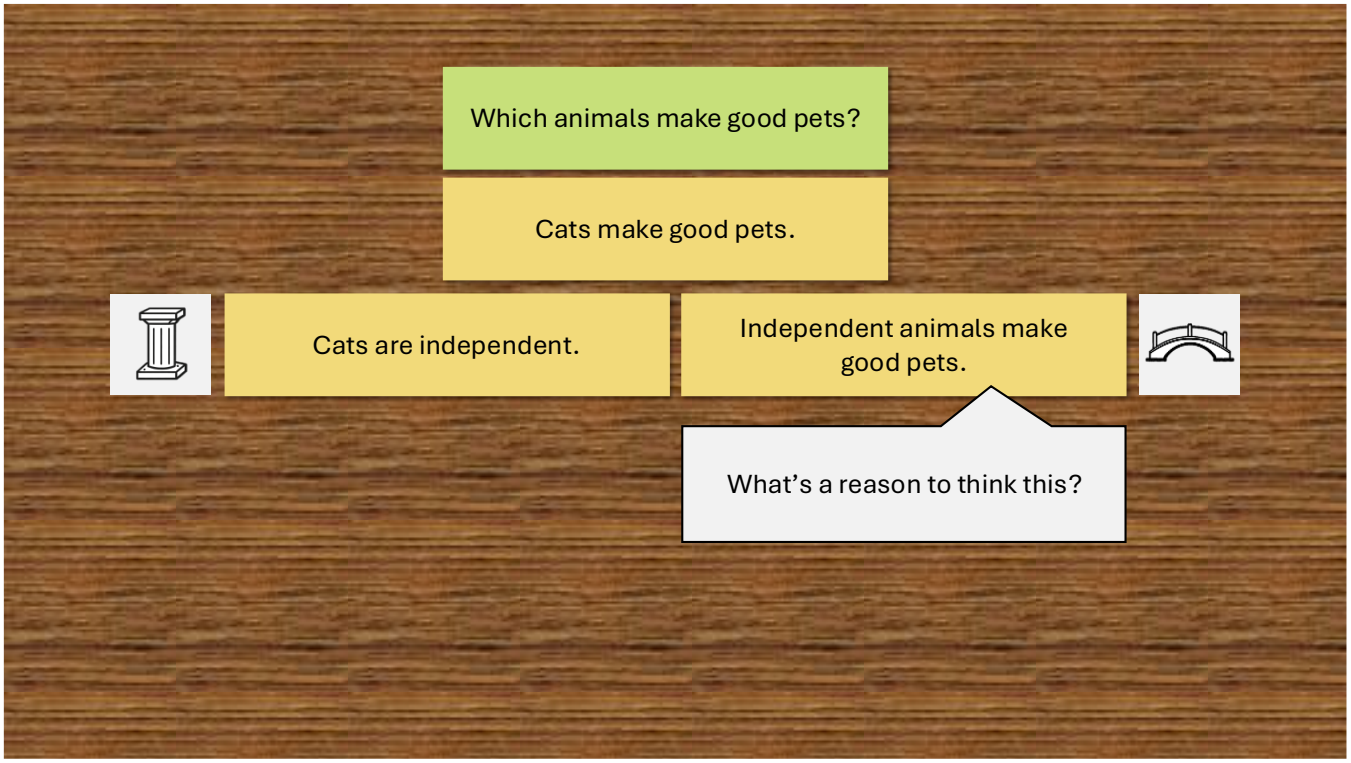
If the claim behind the “if” and the claim behind the “then probably” have something in common – like “cats” in this case - we can formulate the general principle by replacing that common term with a broader category.



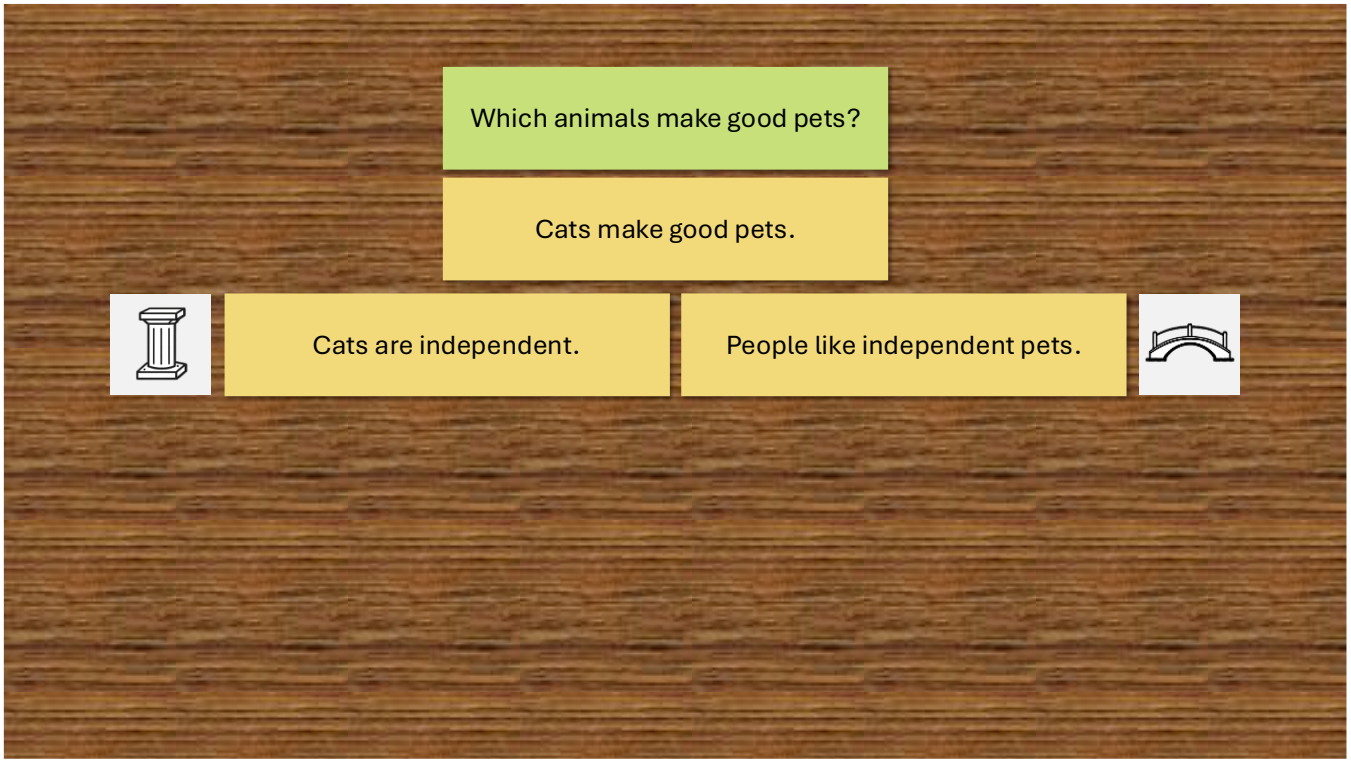
Here, this gives us the general principle that "If **an animal** is independent, then probably **it** makes a good pet."



Which we can rephrase as “Independent animals make good pets.”



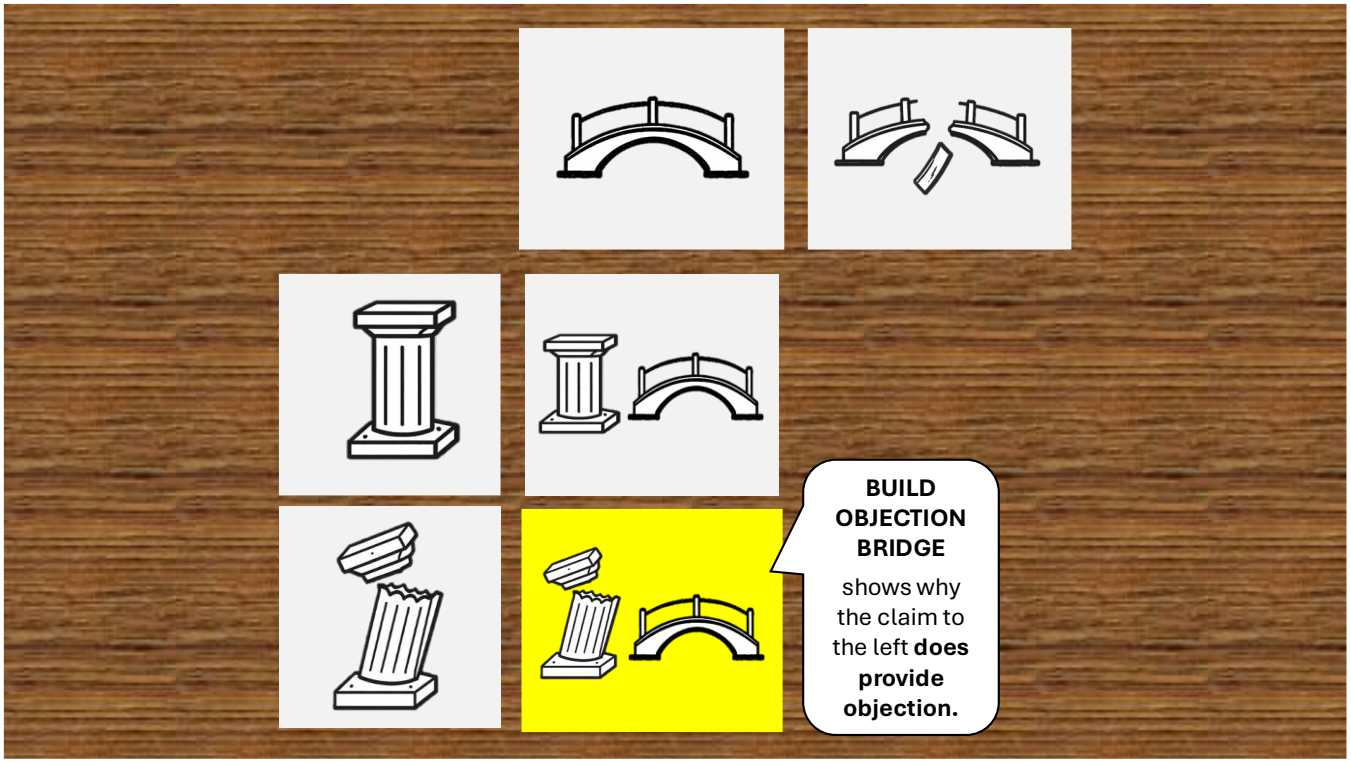
We can stop there, if we want to, but sometimes it's useful to replace the general principle with a reason to think that the general principle is true.



Such as “People like independent pets.”

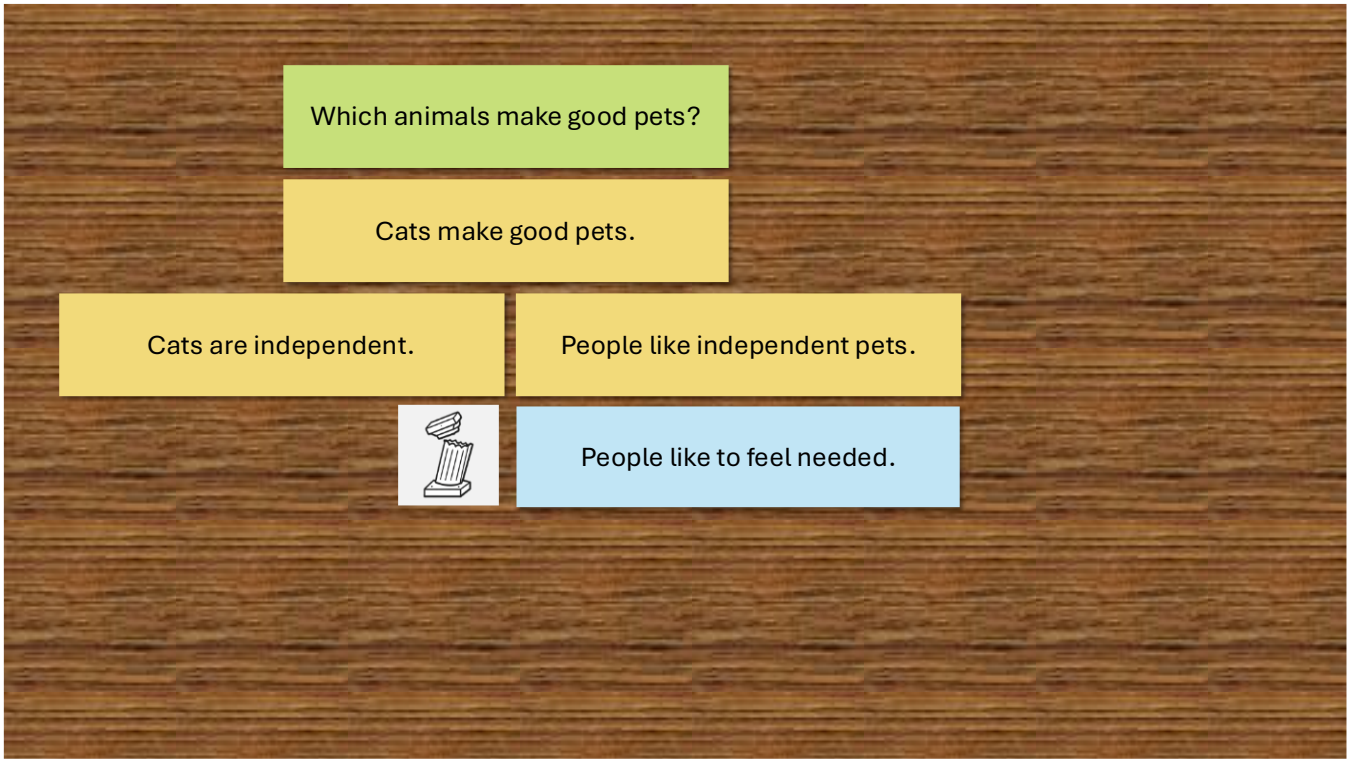
“People like independent pets” helps us to see why “Cats are independent” supports “Cats make good pets.” It builds that support bridge.

Taken together, the supporting claim and the bridging claim do a better job establishing “Cats make good pets” than either claim would do alone.

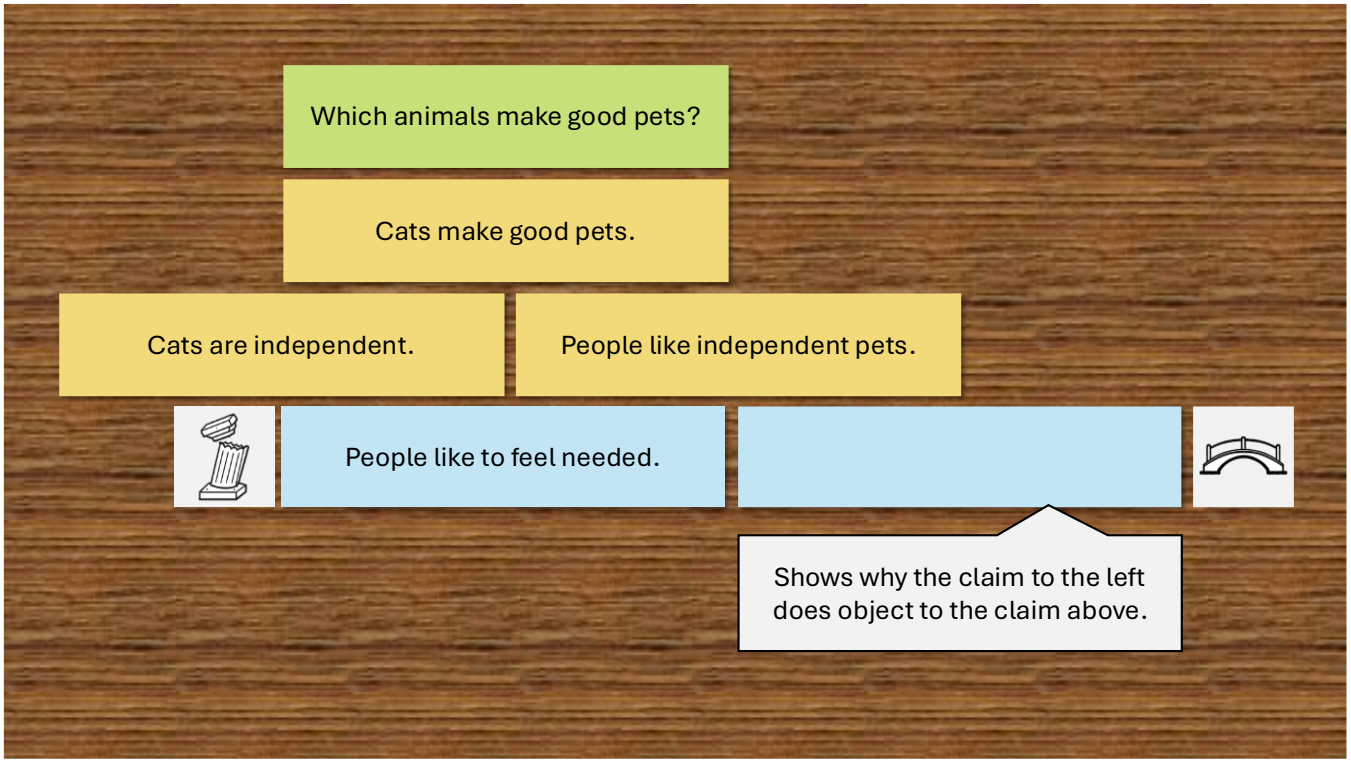


We can also build **objection bridges**.

An objection bridge shows why the claim to the left does object to the claim above it.

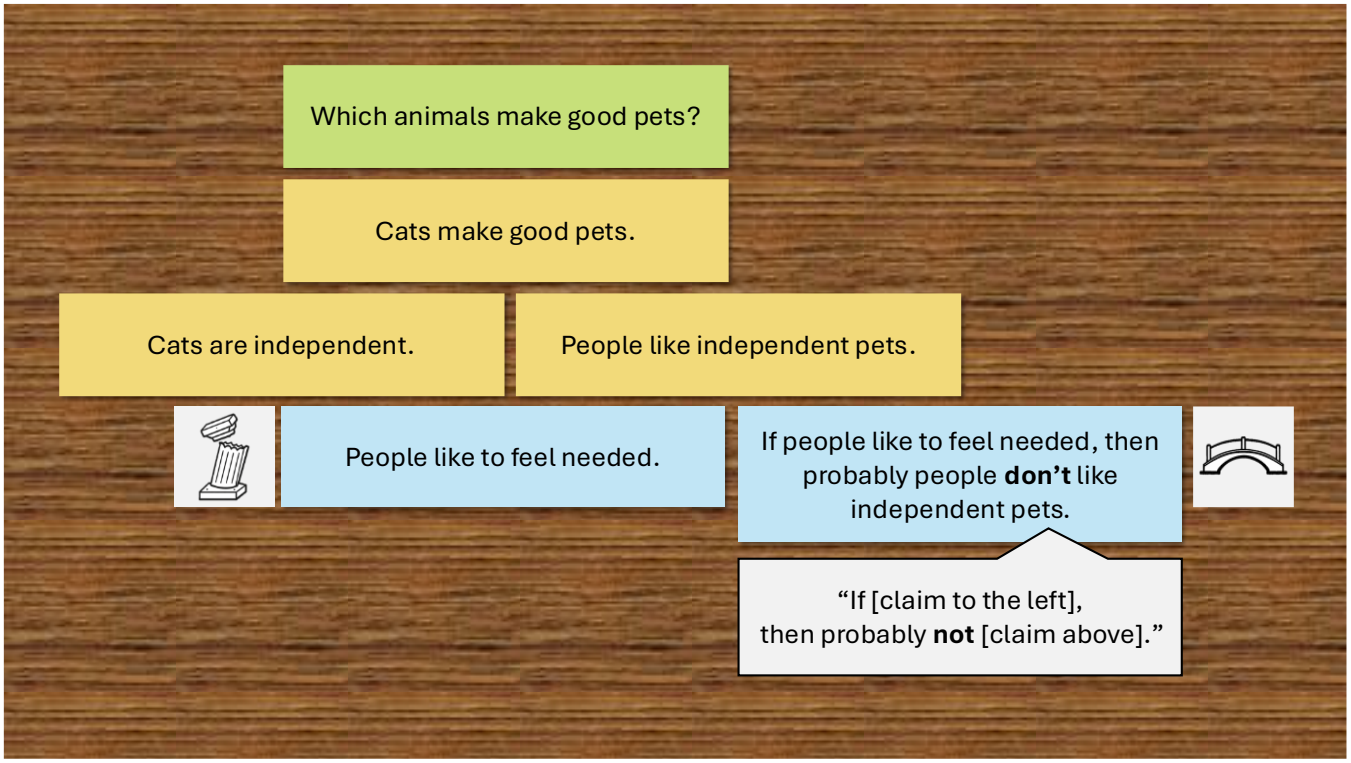


To continue our earlier example, suppose someone objects to “People like independent pets” by saying “People like to feel needed.”



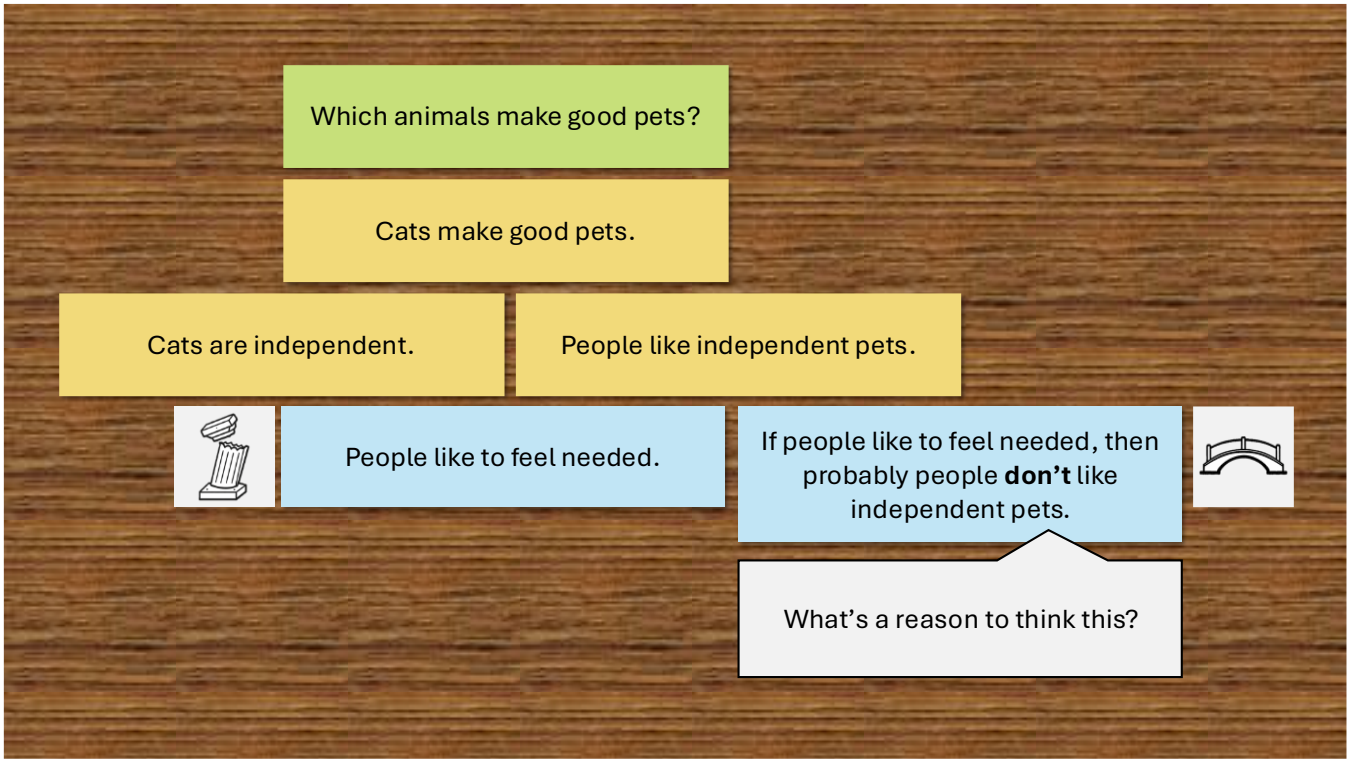
If we put a same-colored note next to “People like to feel needed,” we’ll be stating why “People like to feel needed” successfully objects to “People like independent pets.”

Once again, there’s a procedure we can follow to build that bridge.

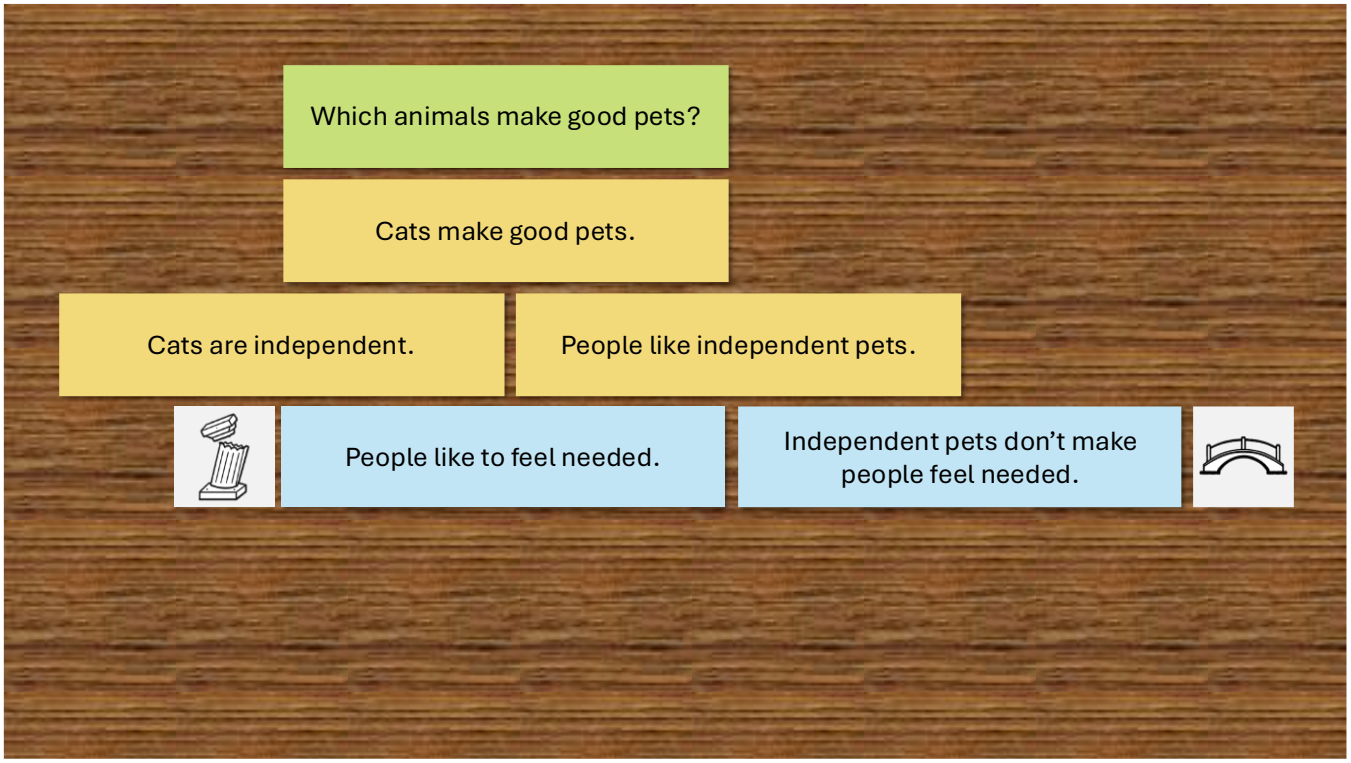


We'll start with the claim that we get when we write a sentence of the form "if…then probably not…," with the claim to the left behind the "if" and the claim above behind the "then probably not."

In this case, that would be "If people like to feel needed, then probably people **don't** like independent pets."



We can stop there, if we want to, but frequently it's useful to replace it with the justification we have for accepting that "if... then probably not..." sentence.



Here, that's probably something like "Independent pets don't make people feel needed."

"Independent pets don't make people feel needed" helps us to see why "People like to feel needed" objects to "People like independent pets." It builds that objection bridge.

Taken together, the objecting claim and the bridging claim do a better job disproving "People like independent pets" than either claim would do alone.

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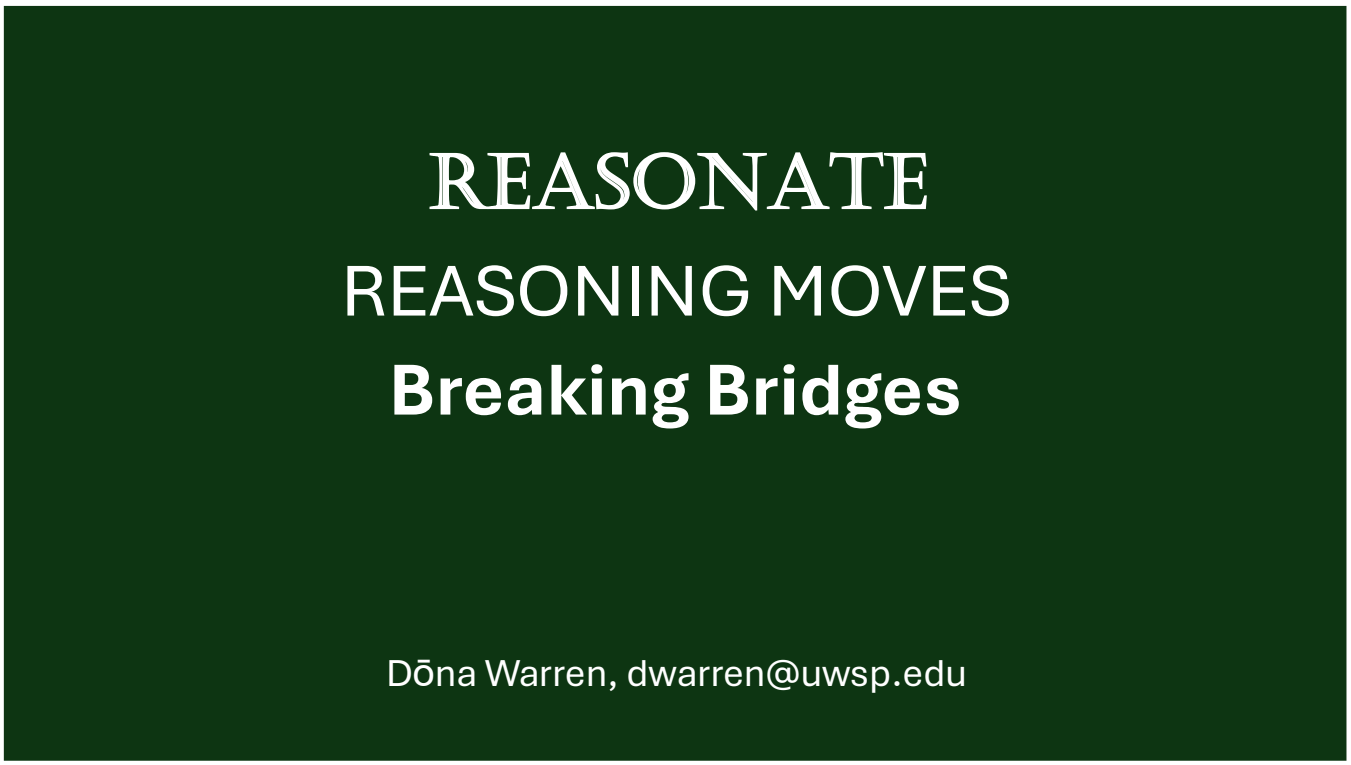
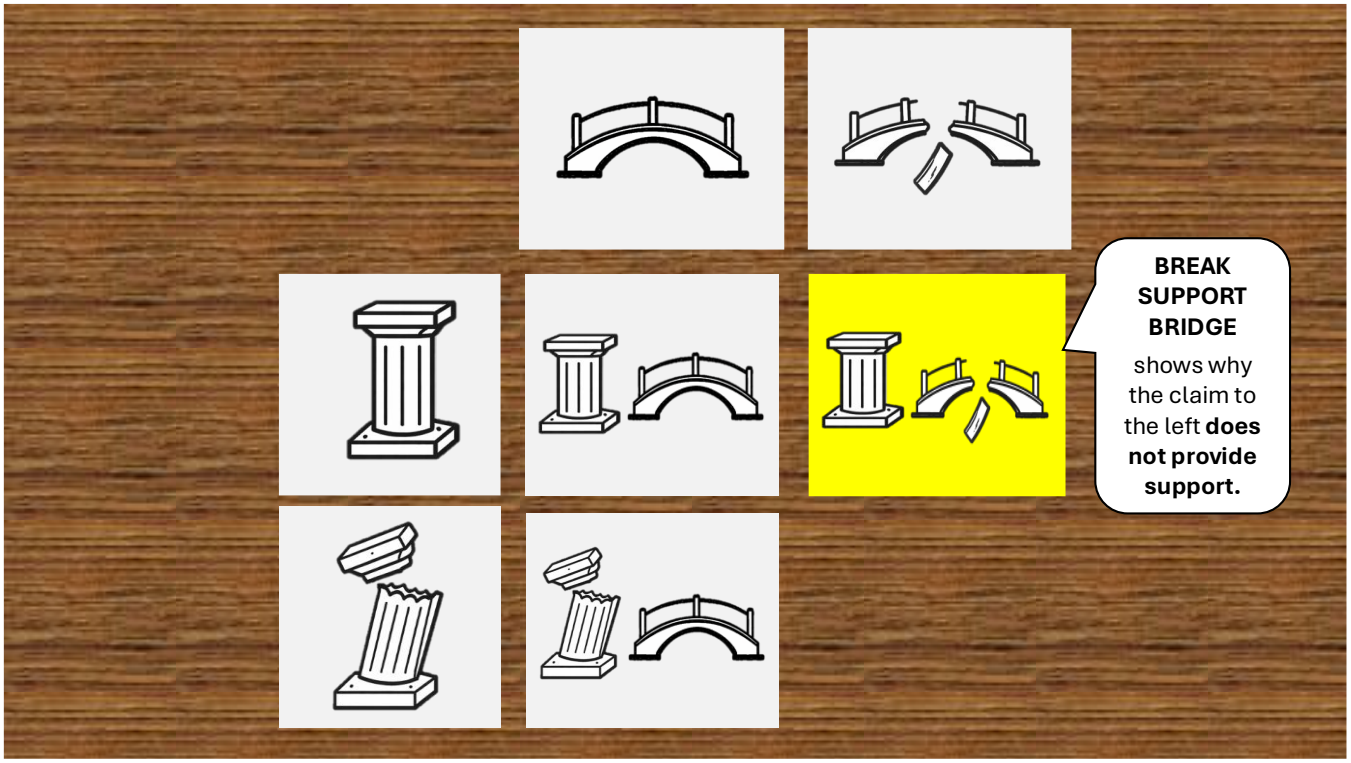
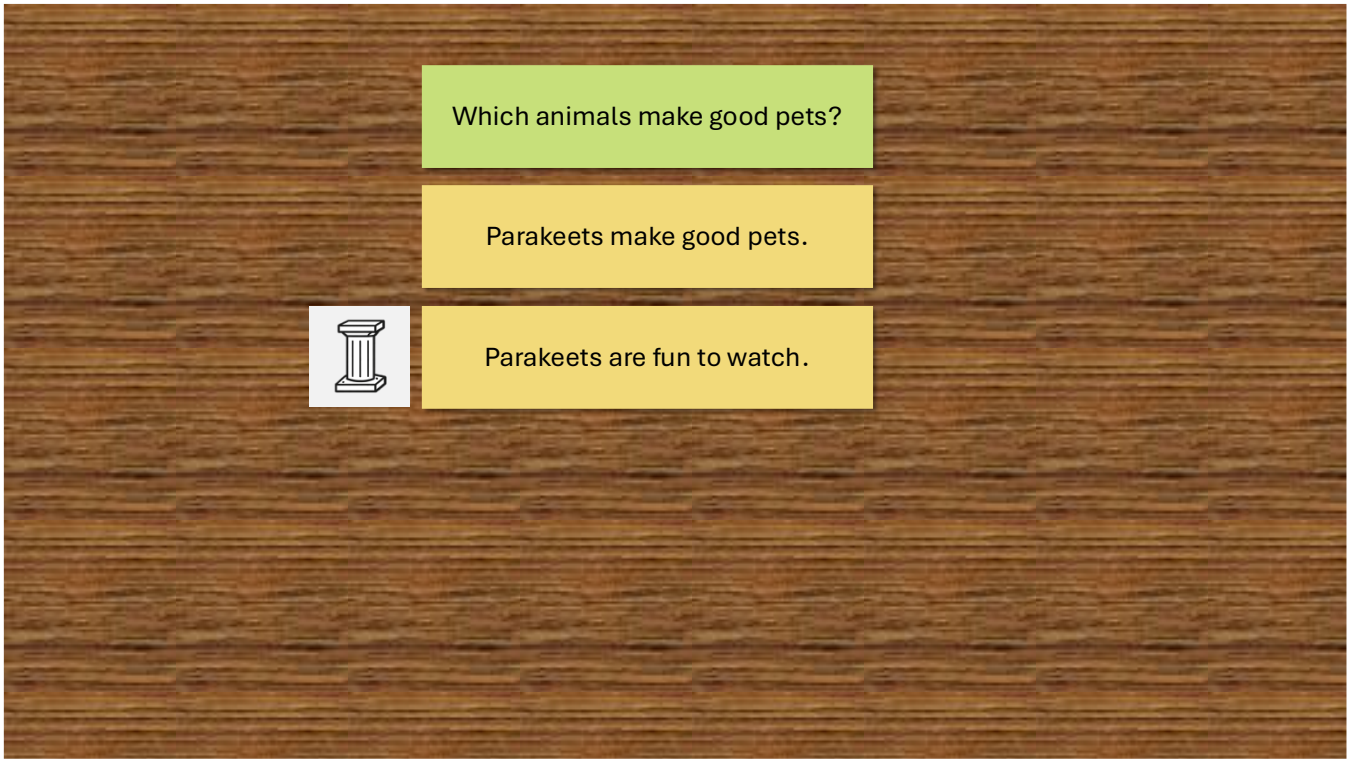
09 Bridge Breaking



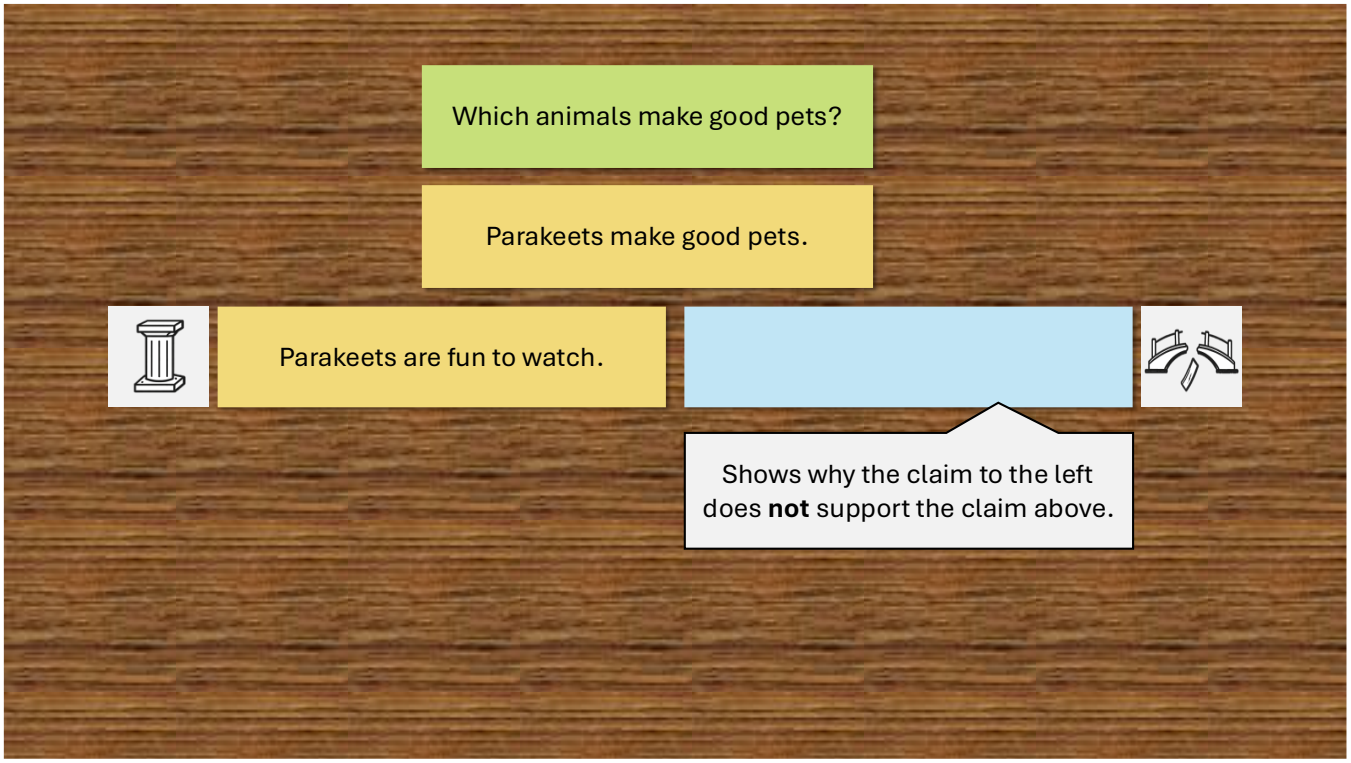
Let’s look at how to break bridges.



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

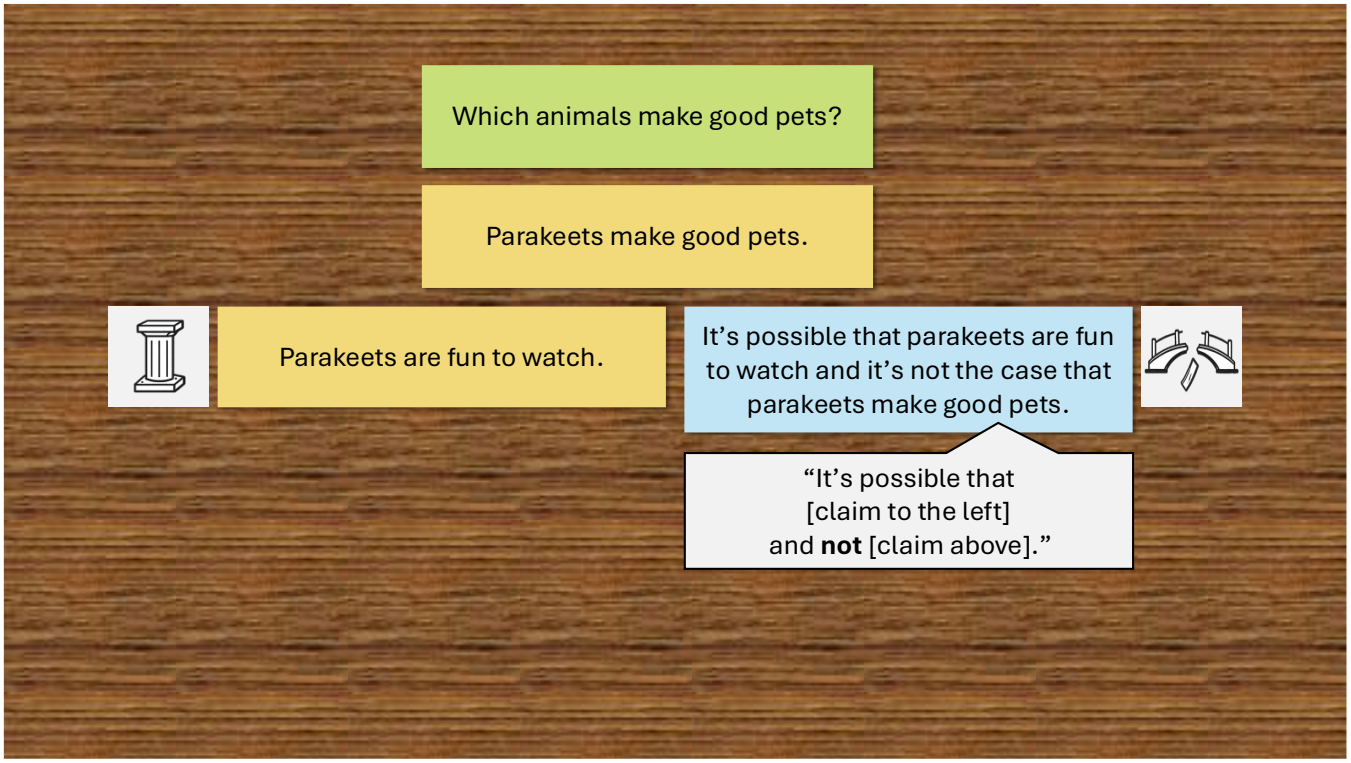


For instance, in this piece of reasoning, “Parakeets are fun to watch” is given as support for “Parakeets make good pets.”



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.”

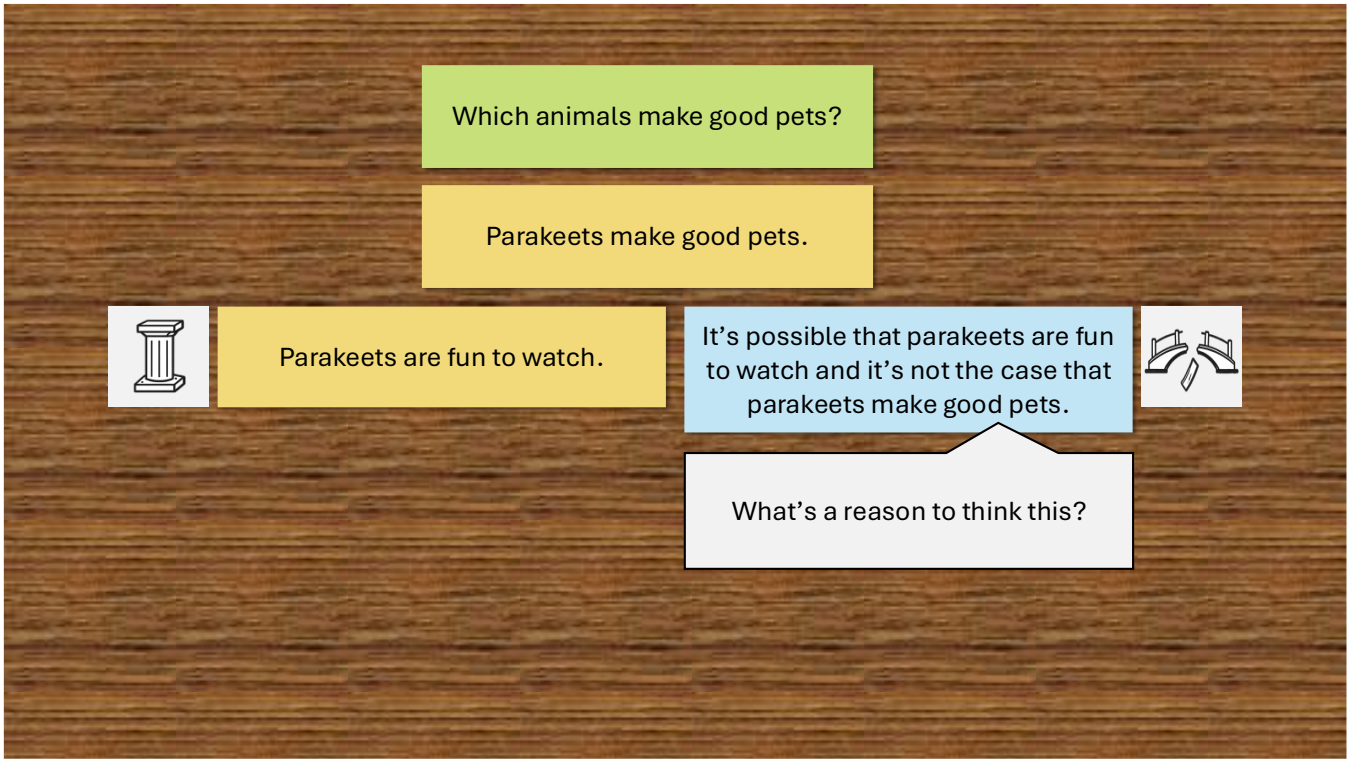
How can we decide what claim to put in that bridge-breaking note? There’s a procedure we can follow.



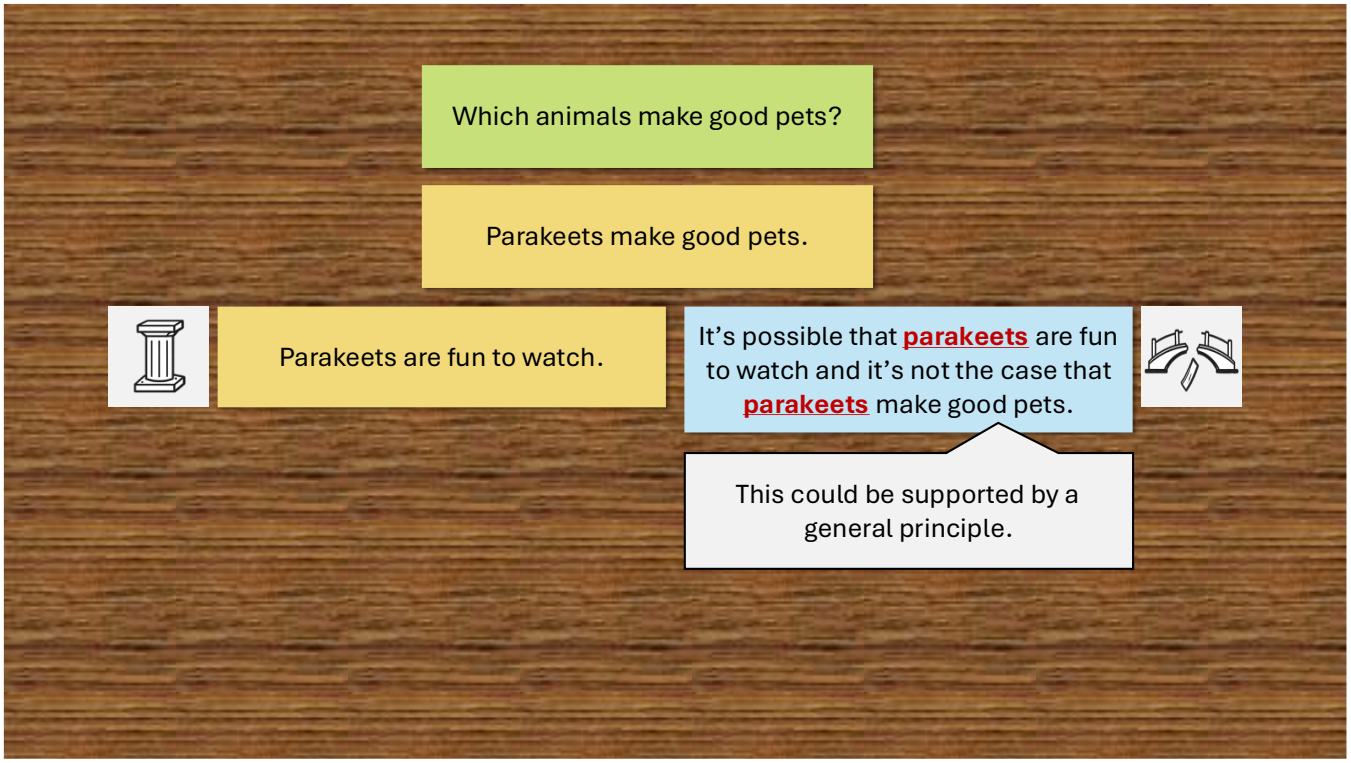
We'll start with the claim that we get when we write sentence of the form "It's possible that...and not...," putting the claim to the left behind the "It's possible that" and the claim above behind the "and not."

(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."

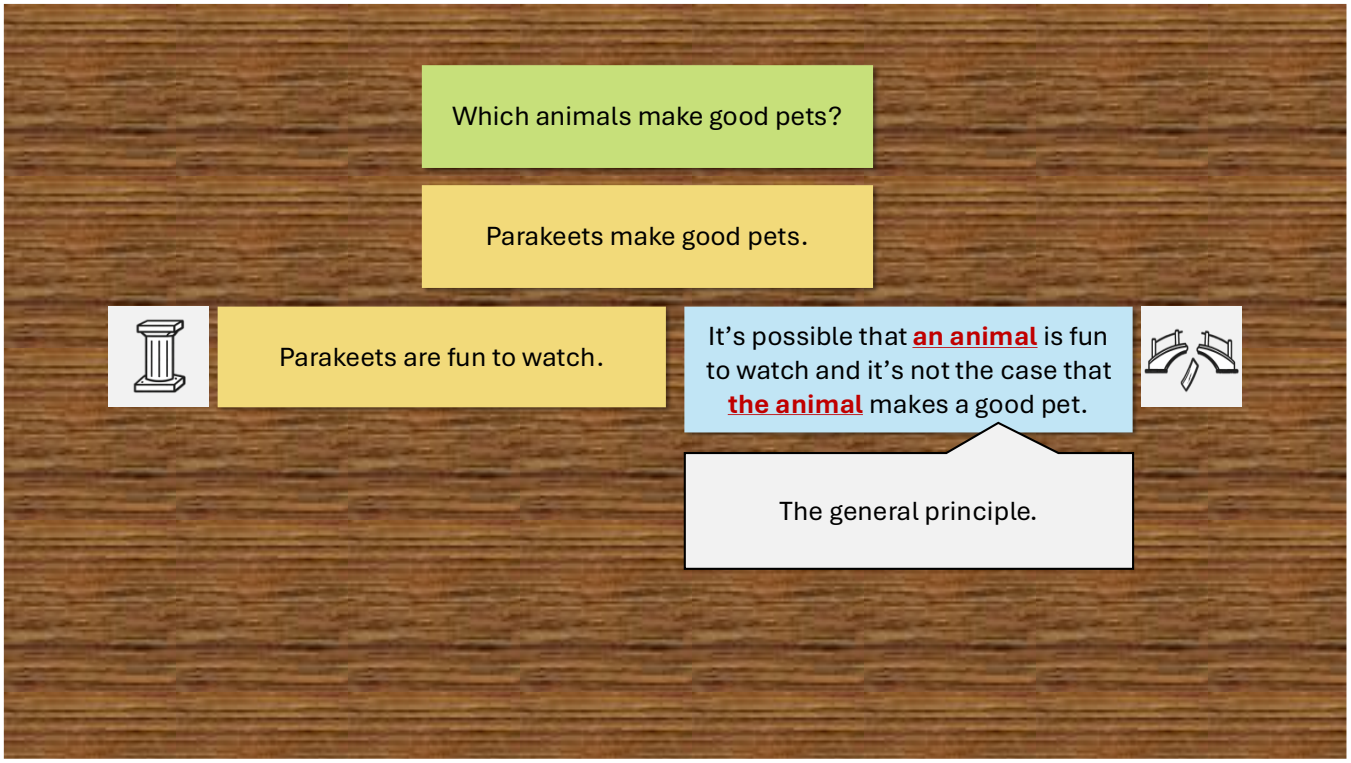


We can stop there, if we want to, but frequently it's useful to replace that sentence with the justification we have for accepting that sentence.

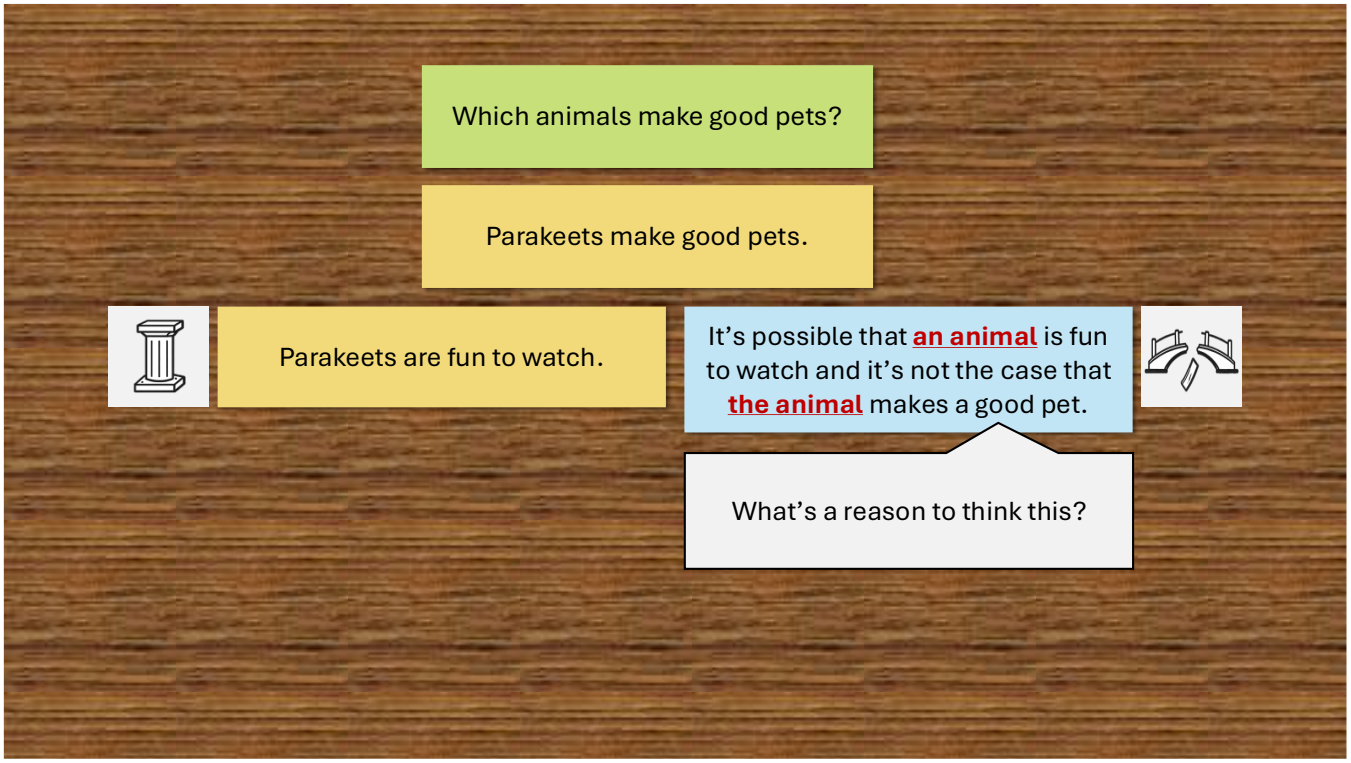


Sometimes, that justification is a general principle.

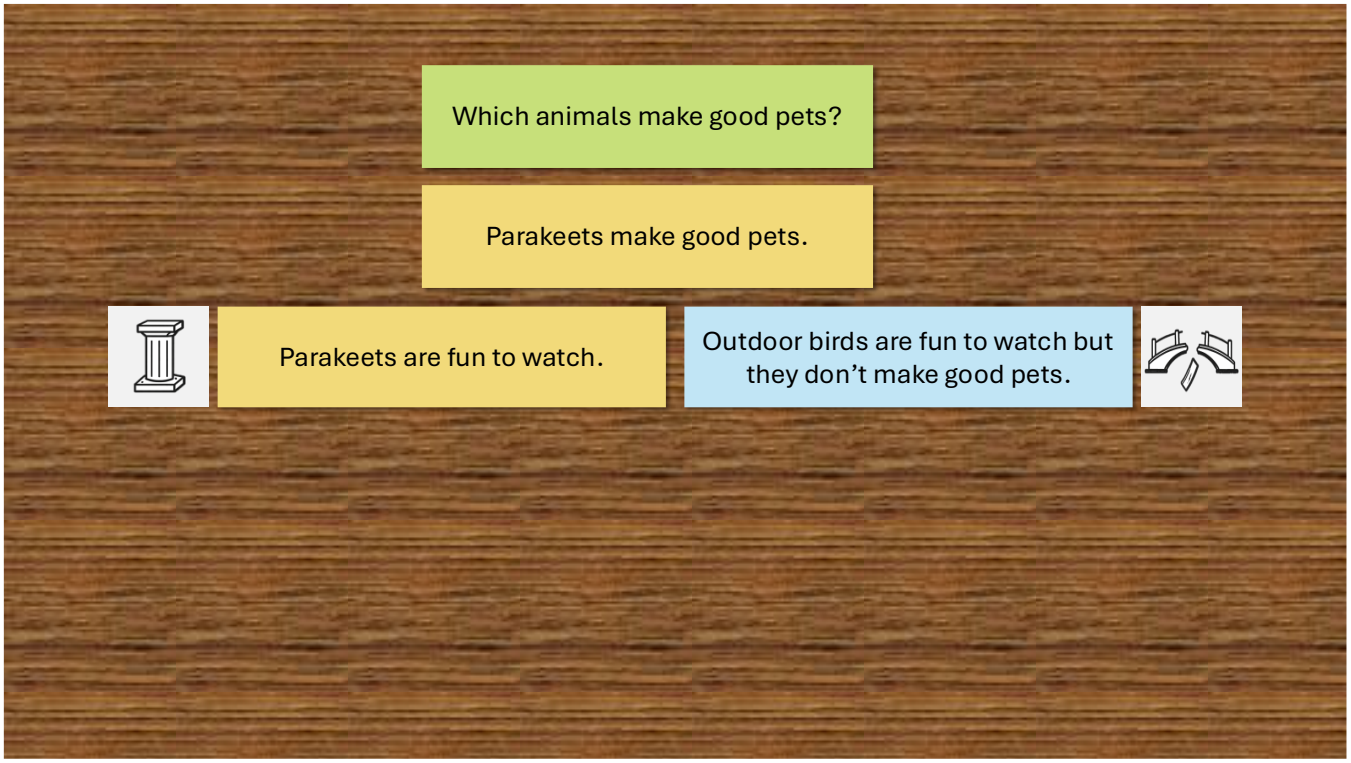
If the claim behind the "it's possible that" and the claim behind the "and not" have something in common – like "parakeets" in this case - we can formulate the general principle by replacing that common term with a broader category.



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."

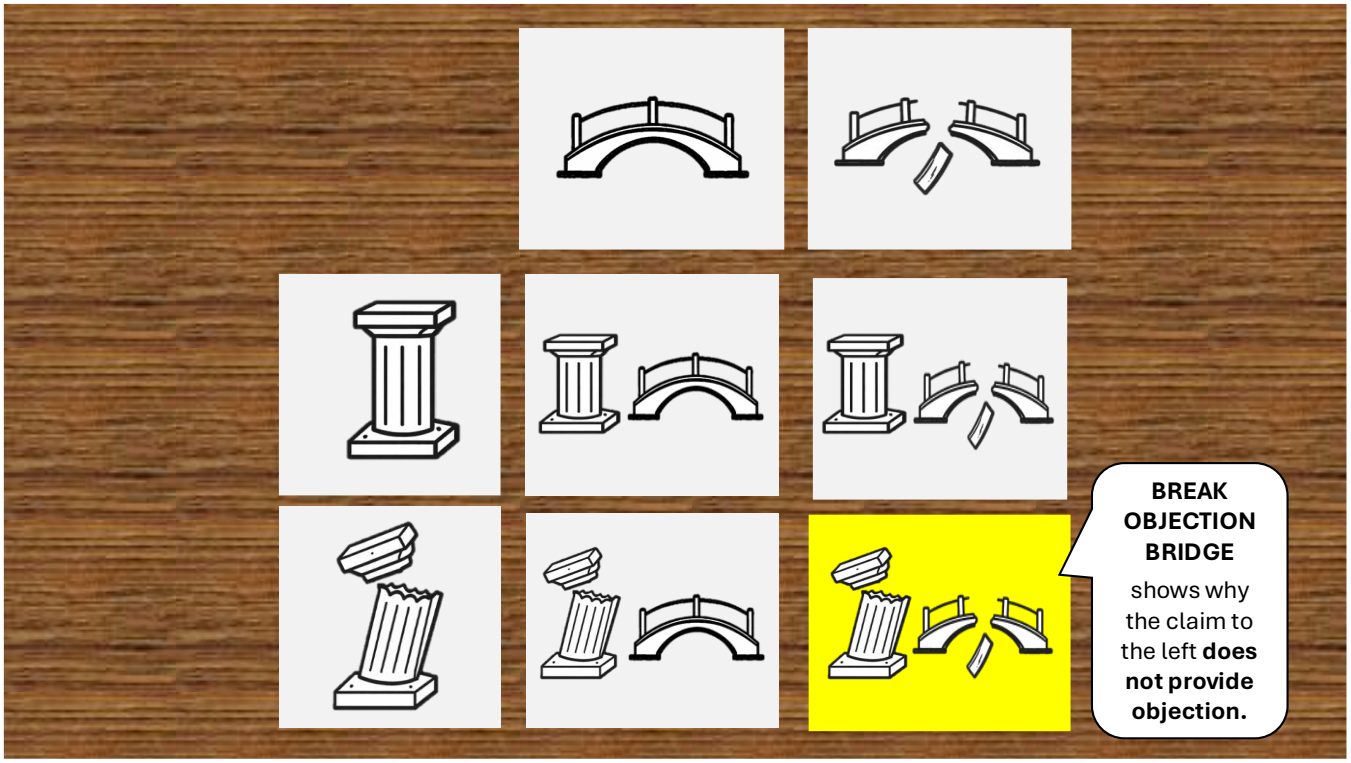


We can stop there, if we want, but sometimes it's useful to replace the general principle with a reason to think that the general principle is true.

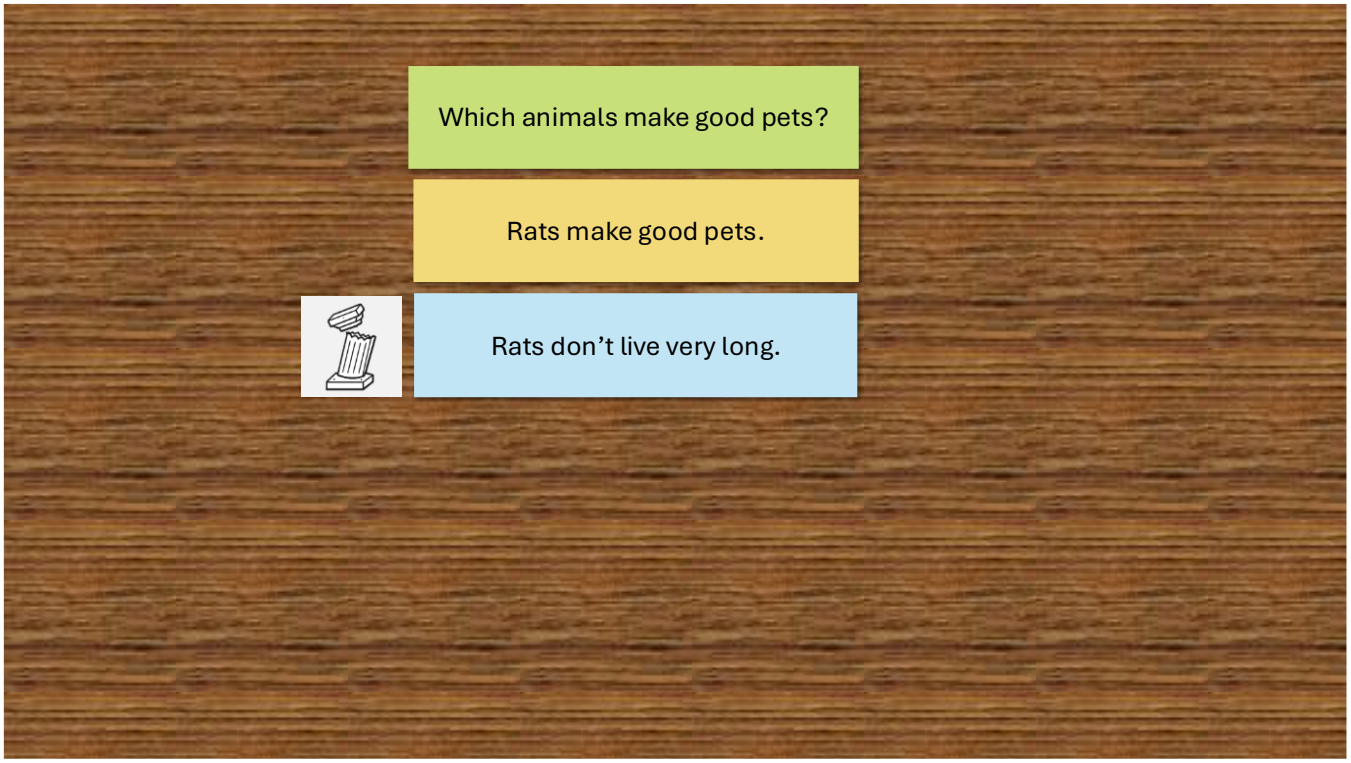


Such as "Outdoor birds are fun to watch but they don't make good pets."

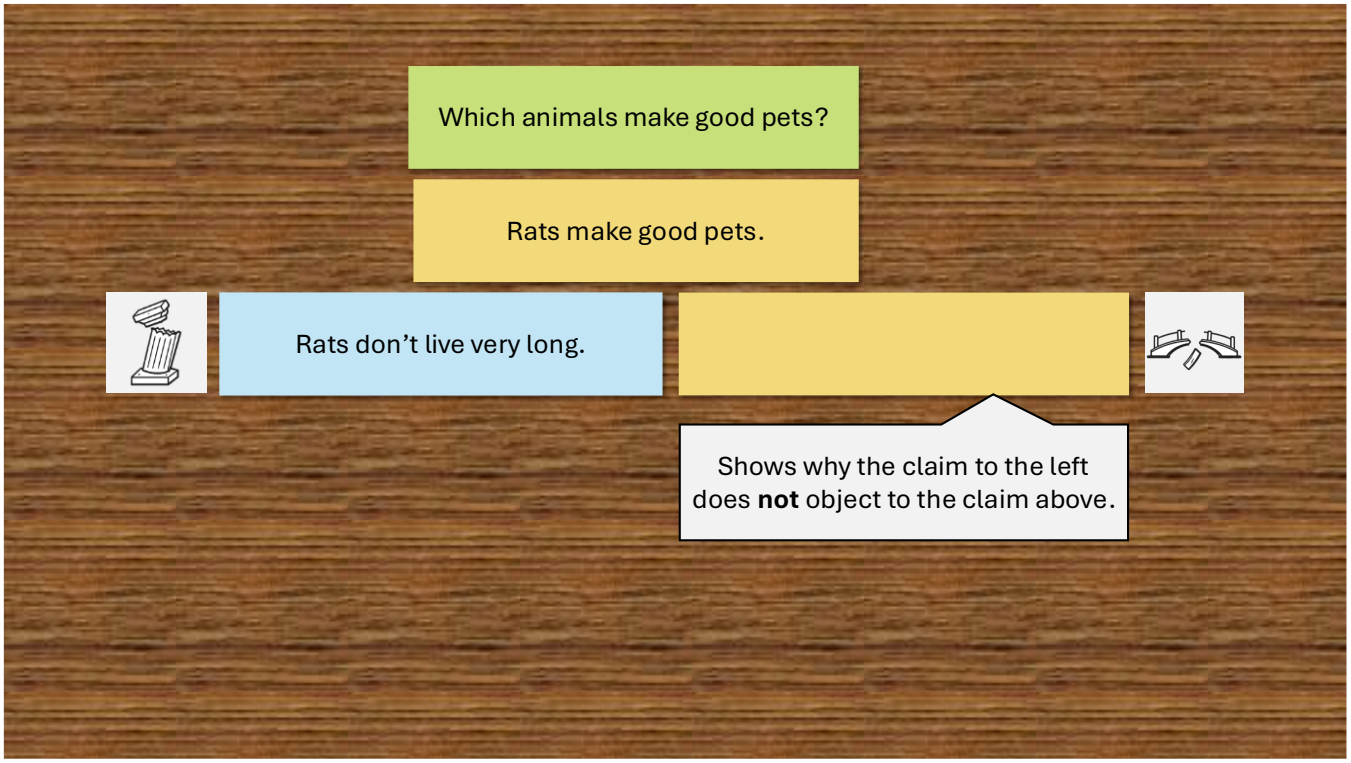
"Outdoor birds are fun to watch but they don't make good pets" helps us to see why "Parakeets are fun to watch" fails to support "Parakeets make good pets." It breaks that support bridge.



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

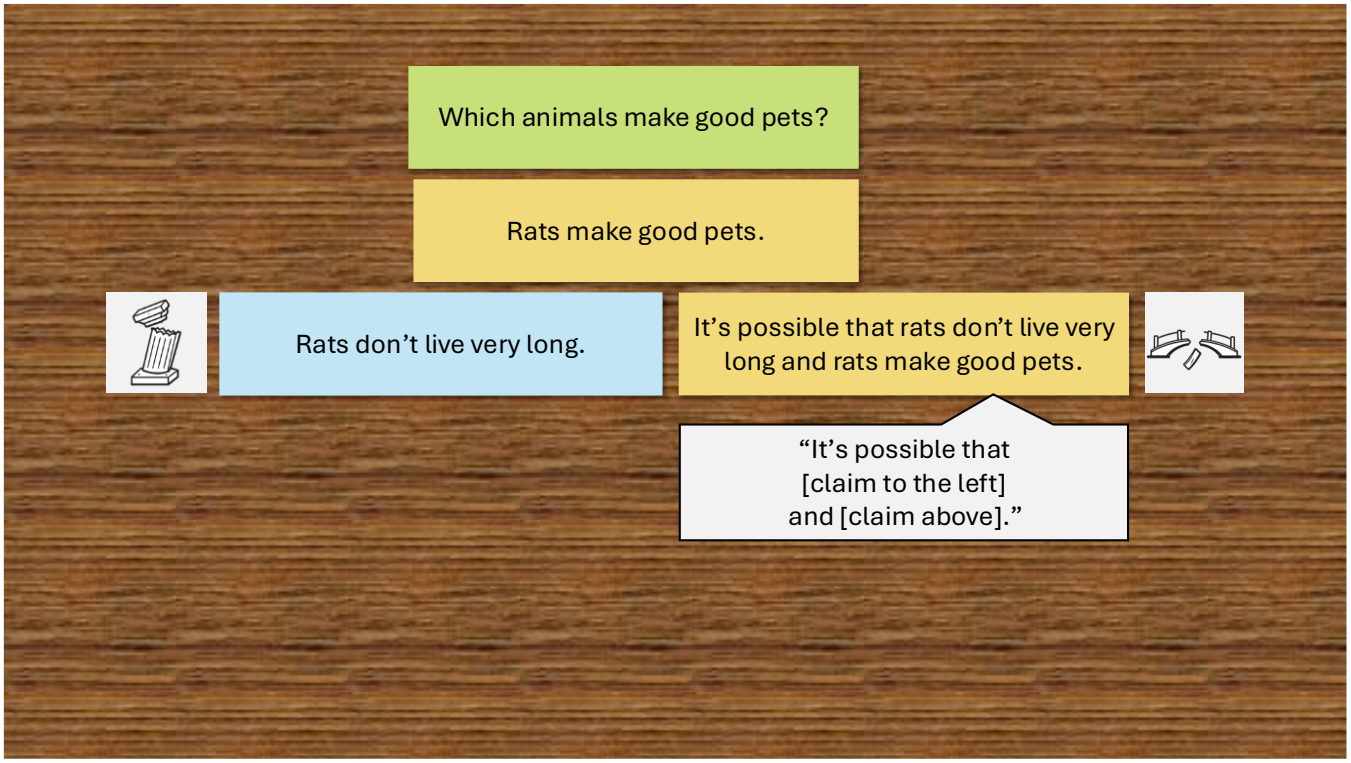


For example, suppose someone objects to “Rats make good pets” by saying “Rats don’t live very long.”



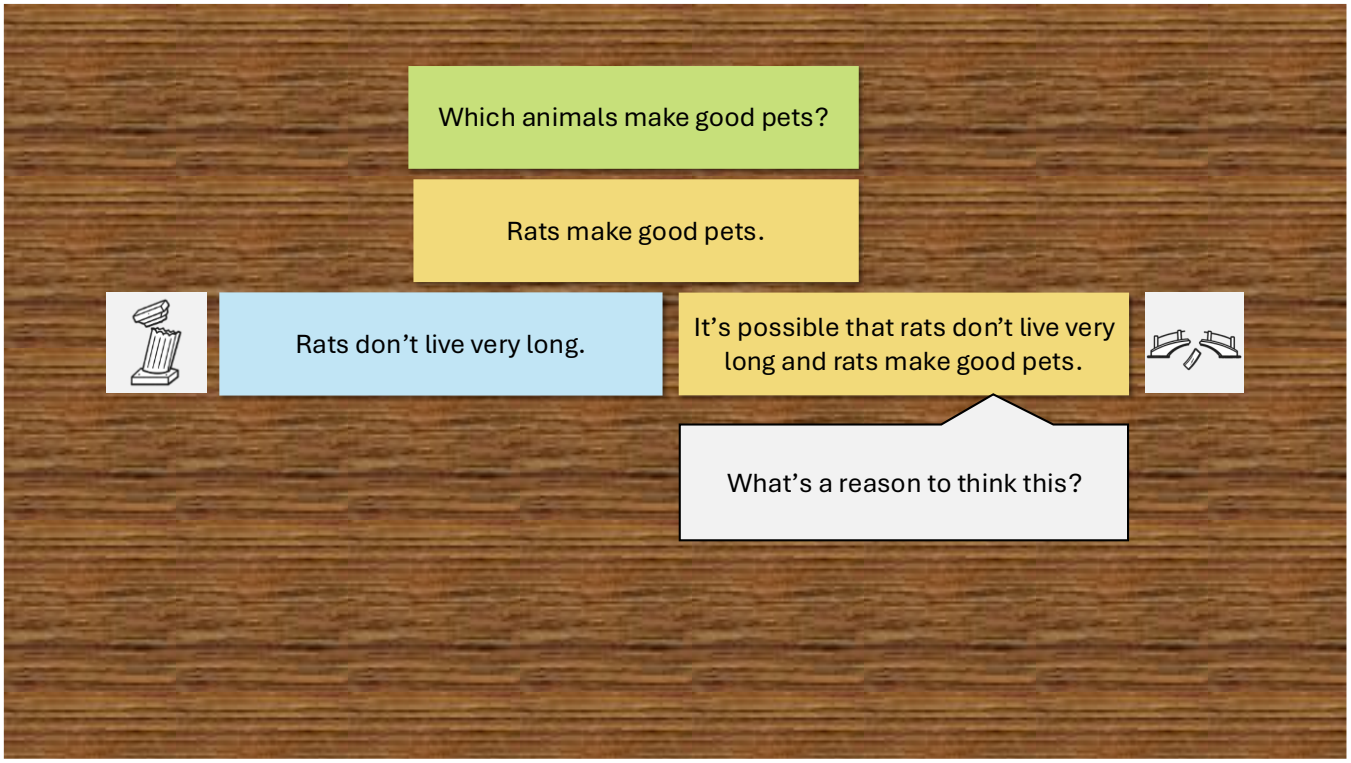
If we put a different-color note to the right of "Rats don't live very long," we'll be stating why "Rats don't live very long" fails to show that "Rats make good pets" is false.

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

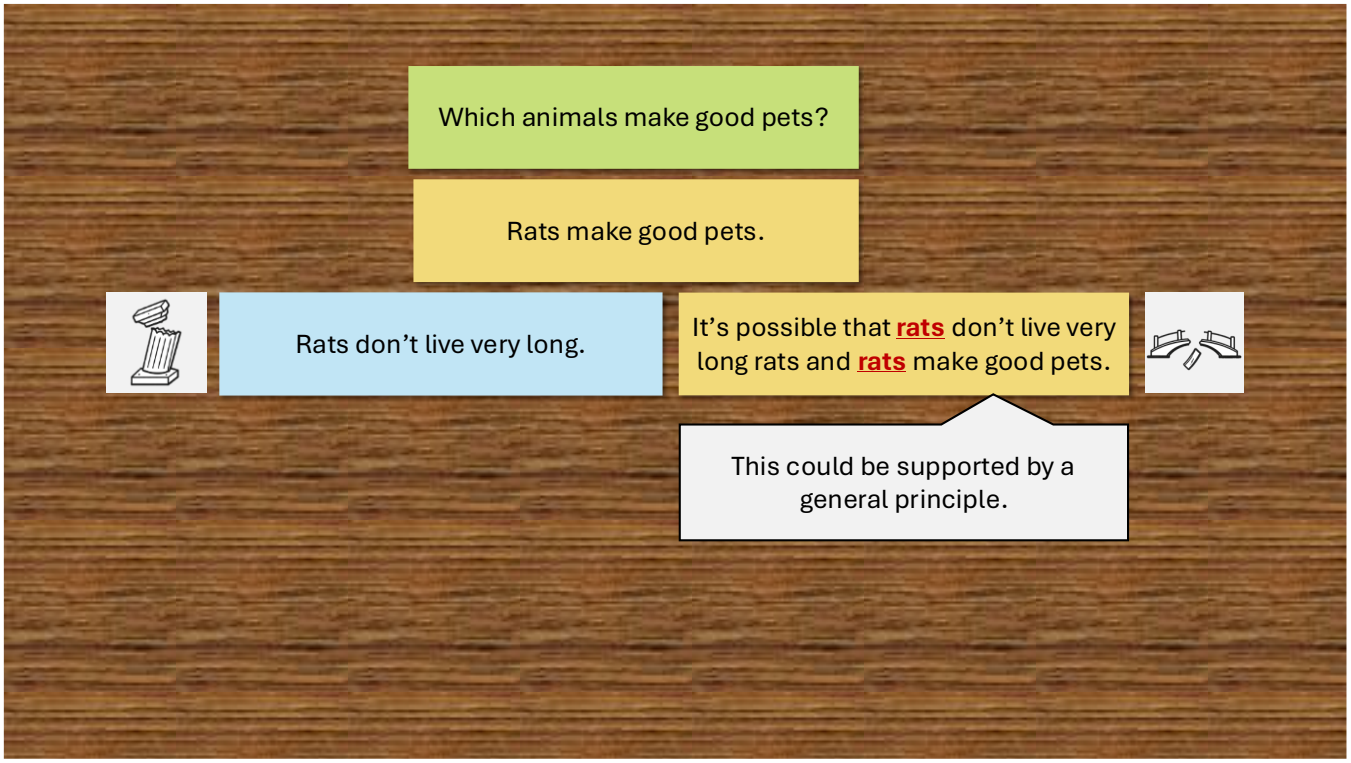


We'll start with the claim that we get when we write a sentence of the form "It's possible that...and ...," putting the claim to the left behind the "It's possible that" and the claim above behind the "and."

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

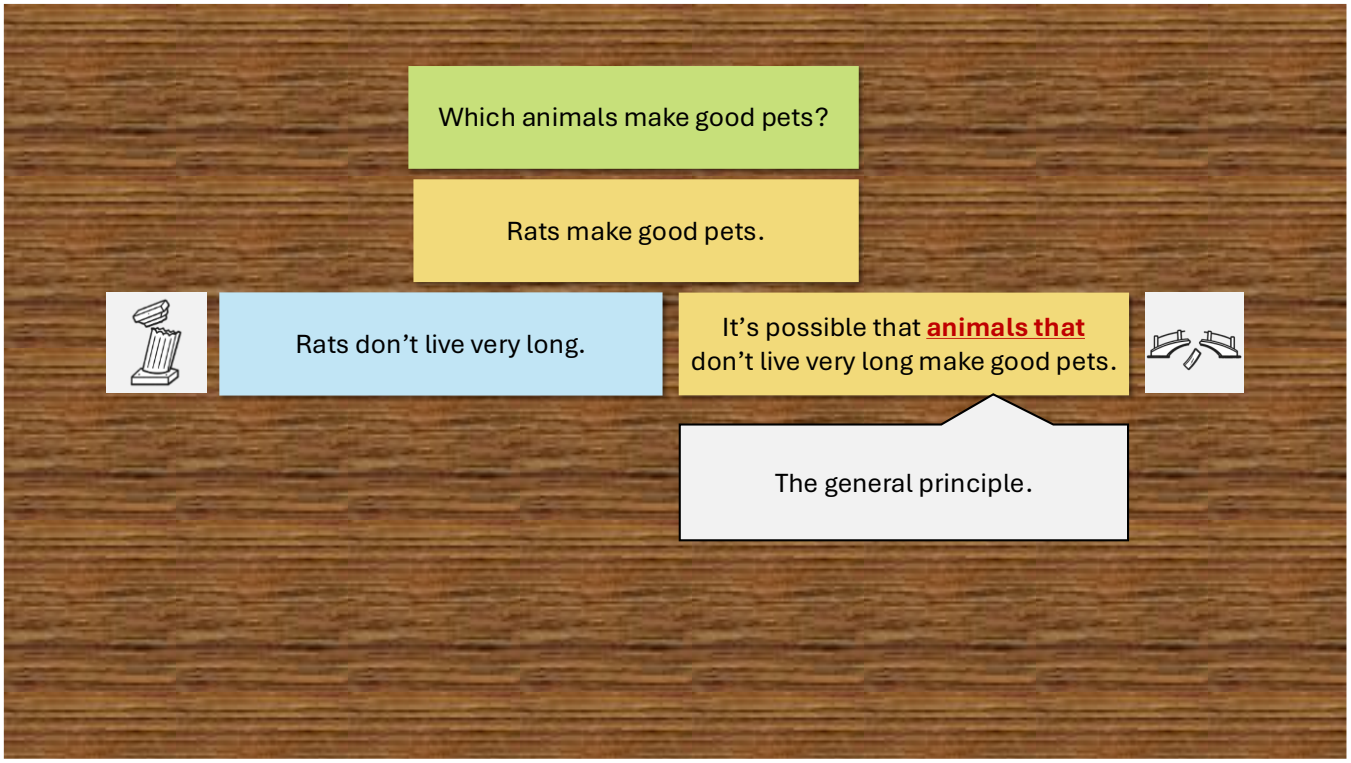


We can stop there, if we want to, but frequently it's useful to replace that sentence with the justification we have for accepting that sentence.

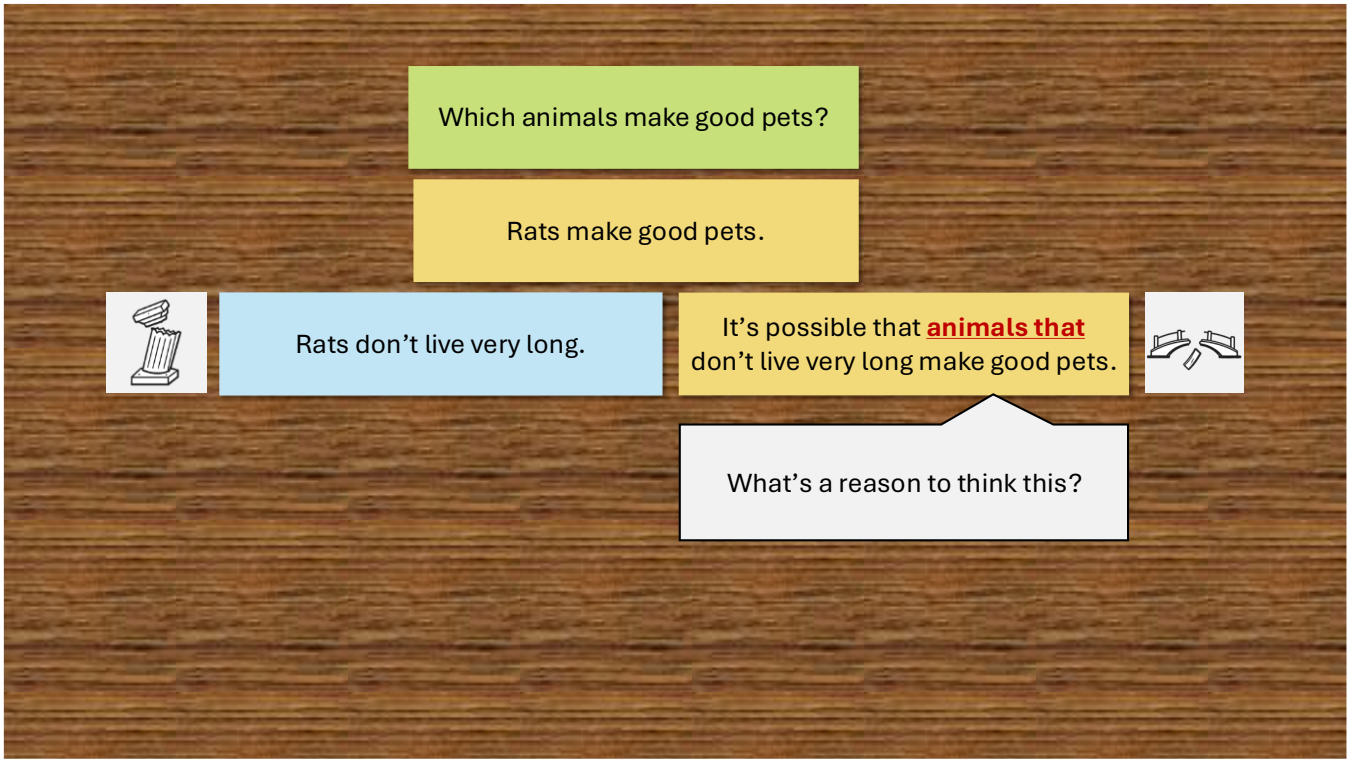


Sometimes, that justification is a general principle.

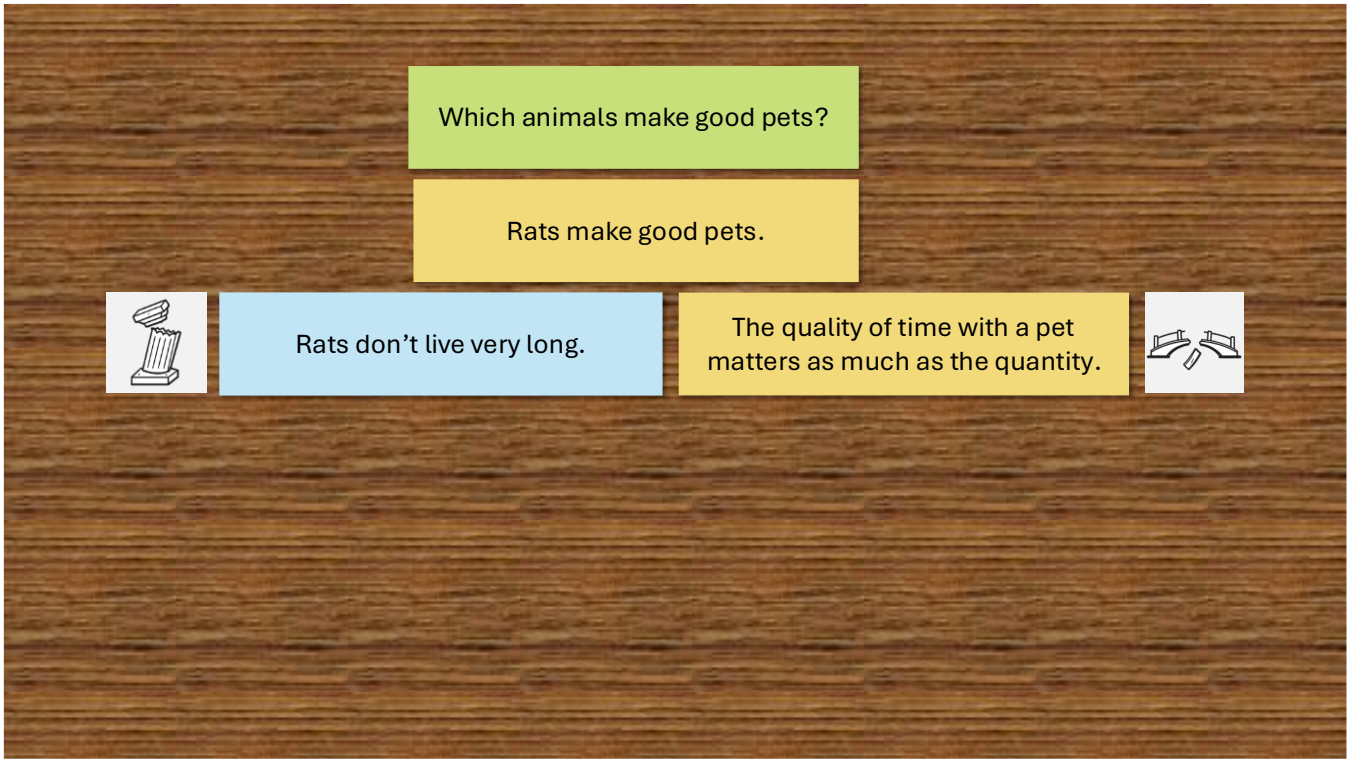
If the claim behind the "it's possible that" and the claim behind the "and" have something in common – like "rats" in this case - we can formulate the general principle by replacing that common term with a broader category.



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



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



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.

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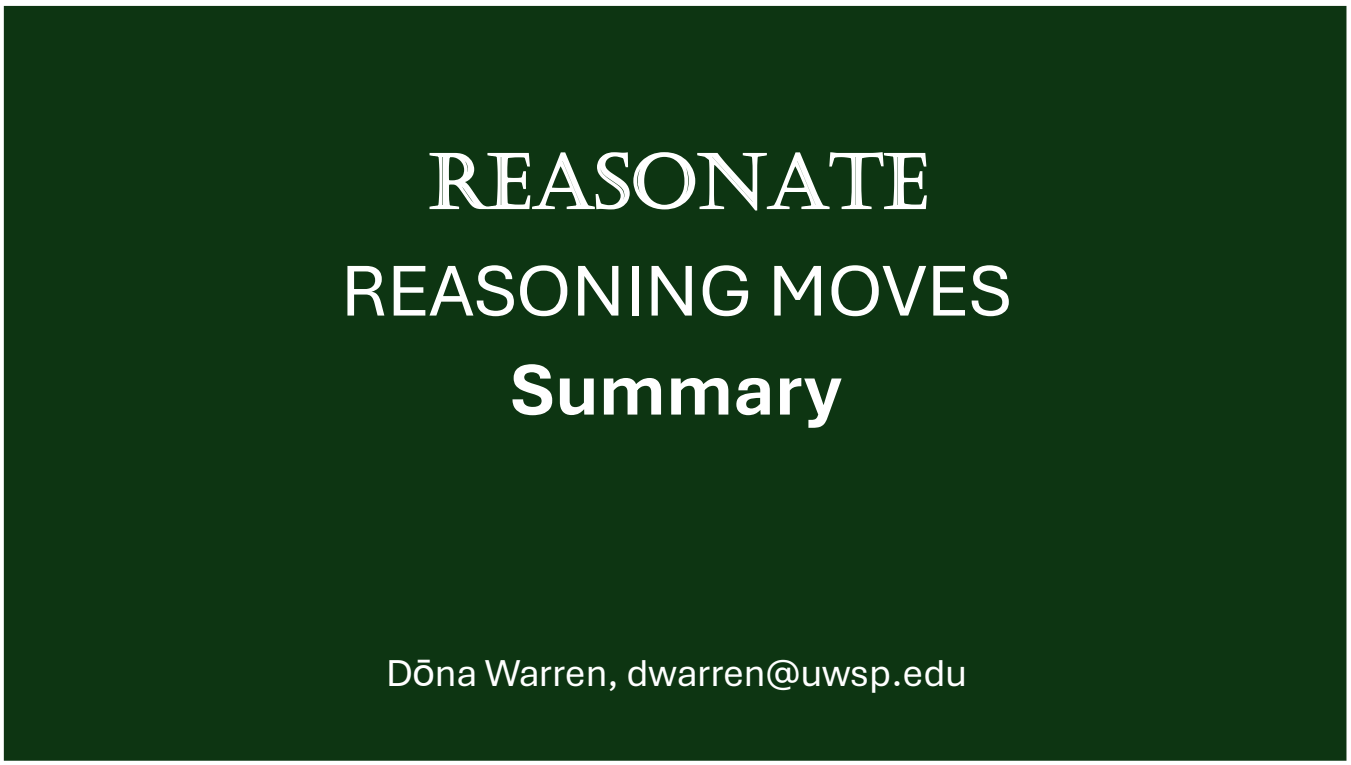
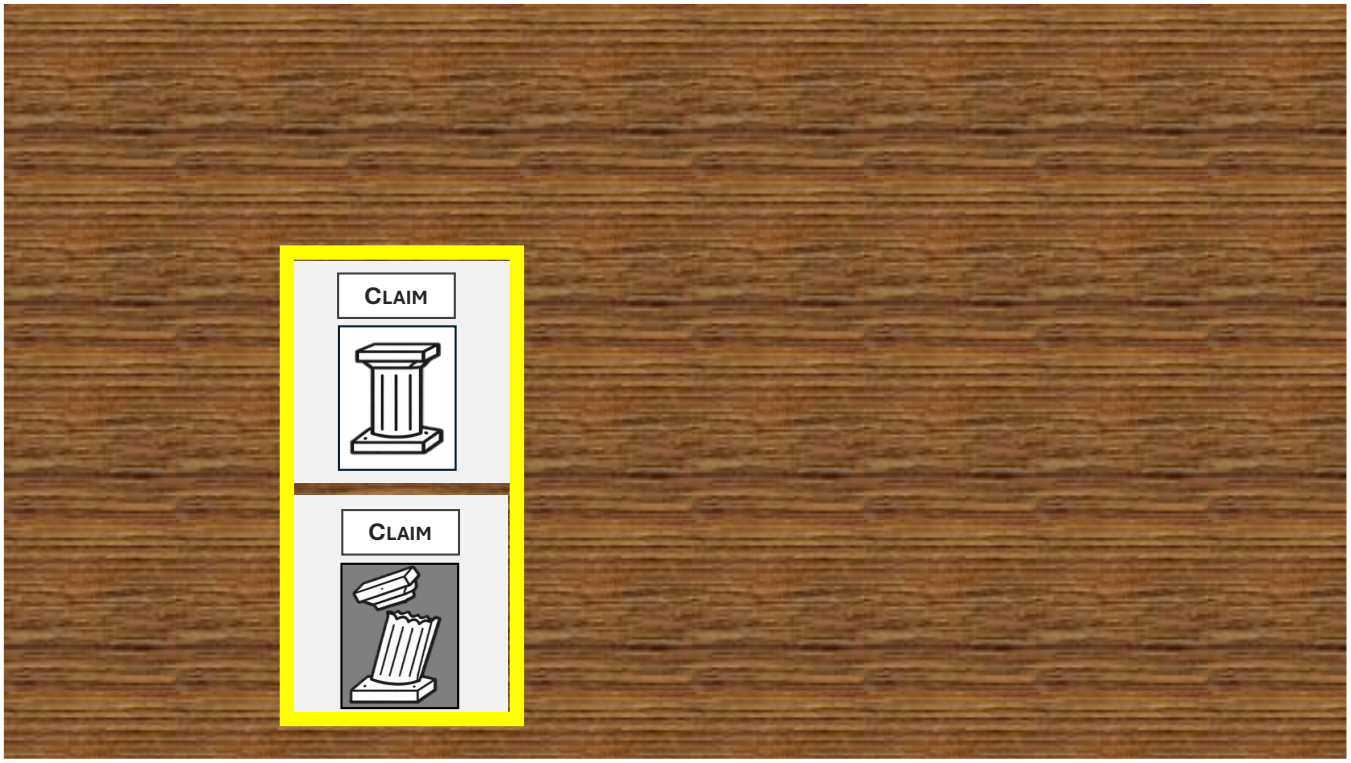
10 Reasoning Moves Summary

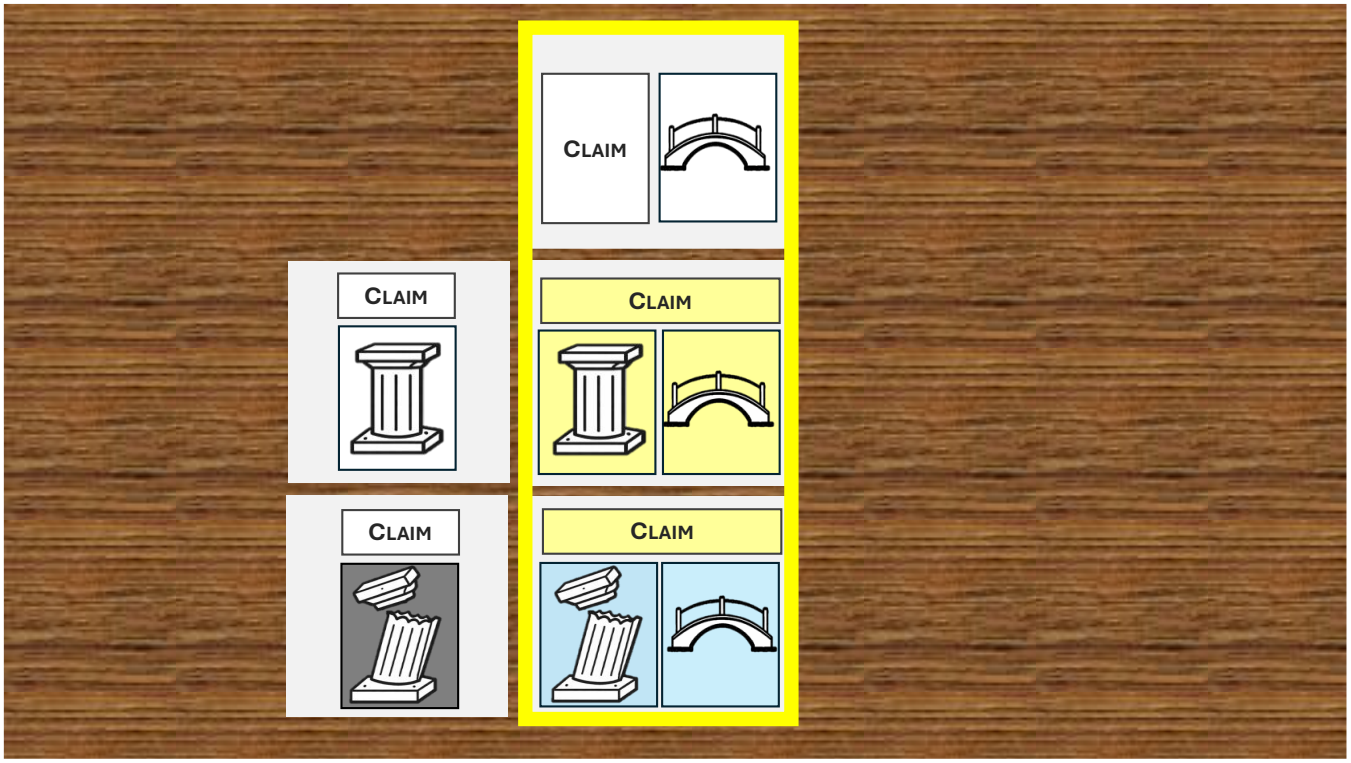


Because reasoning moves are the heart of Reasonate, it's worth summarizing them.

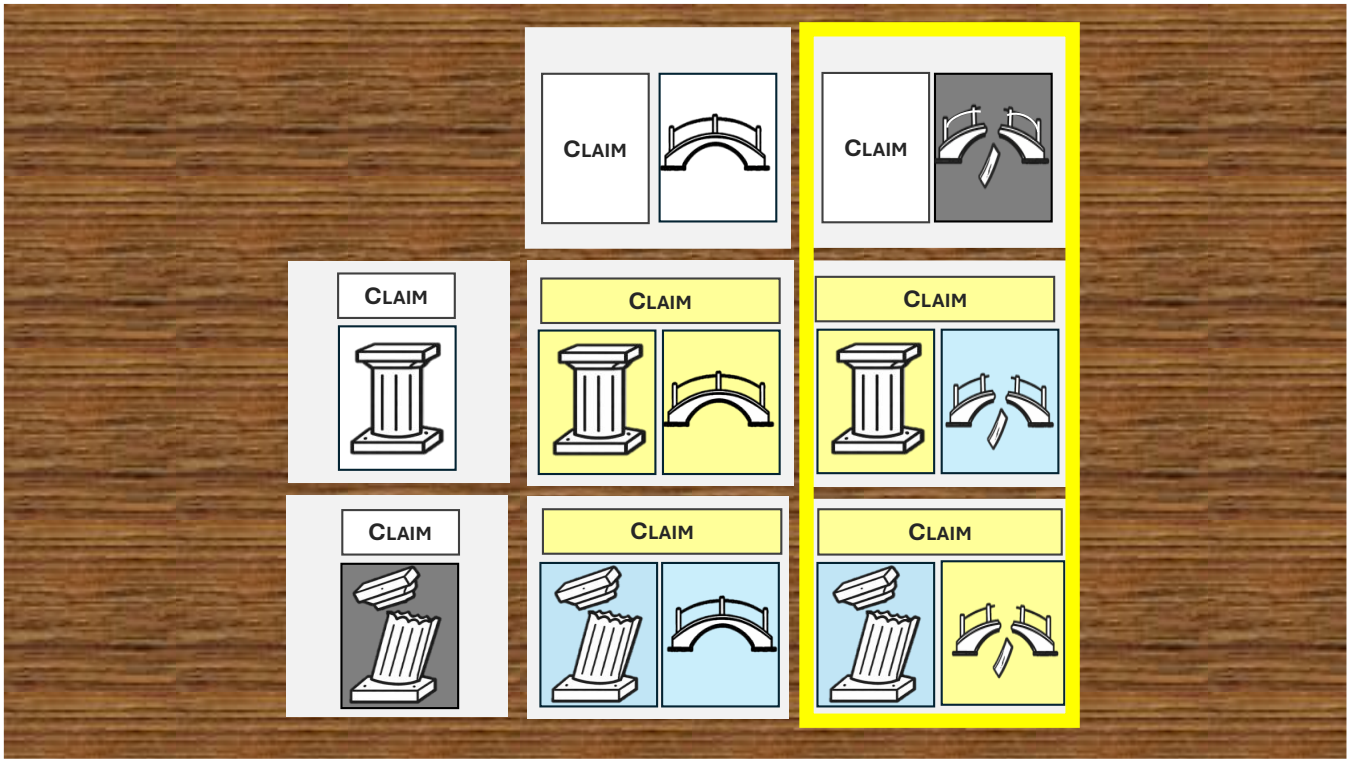


A **same color** note placed **below** a note gives us reason to think that the claim above it is **true**. That's the support relationship.

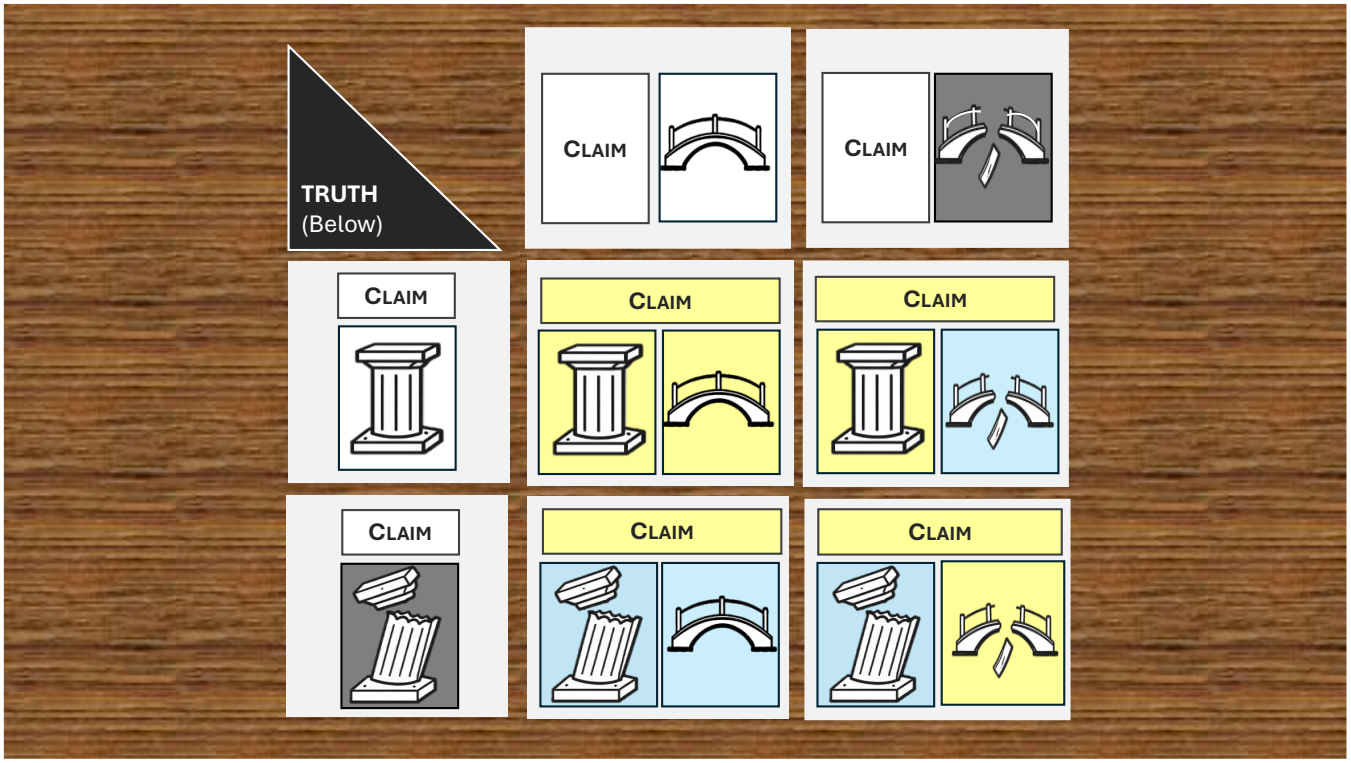
A **different color** note placed **below** a note gives us reason to think that the claim above it is **false**. That's the objection relationship.



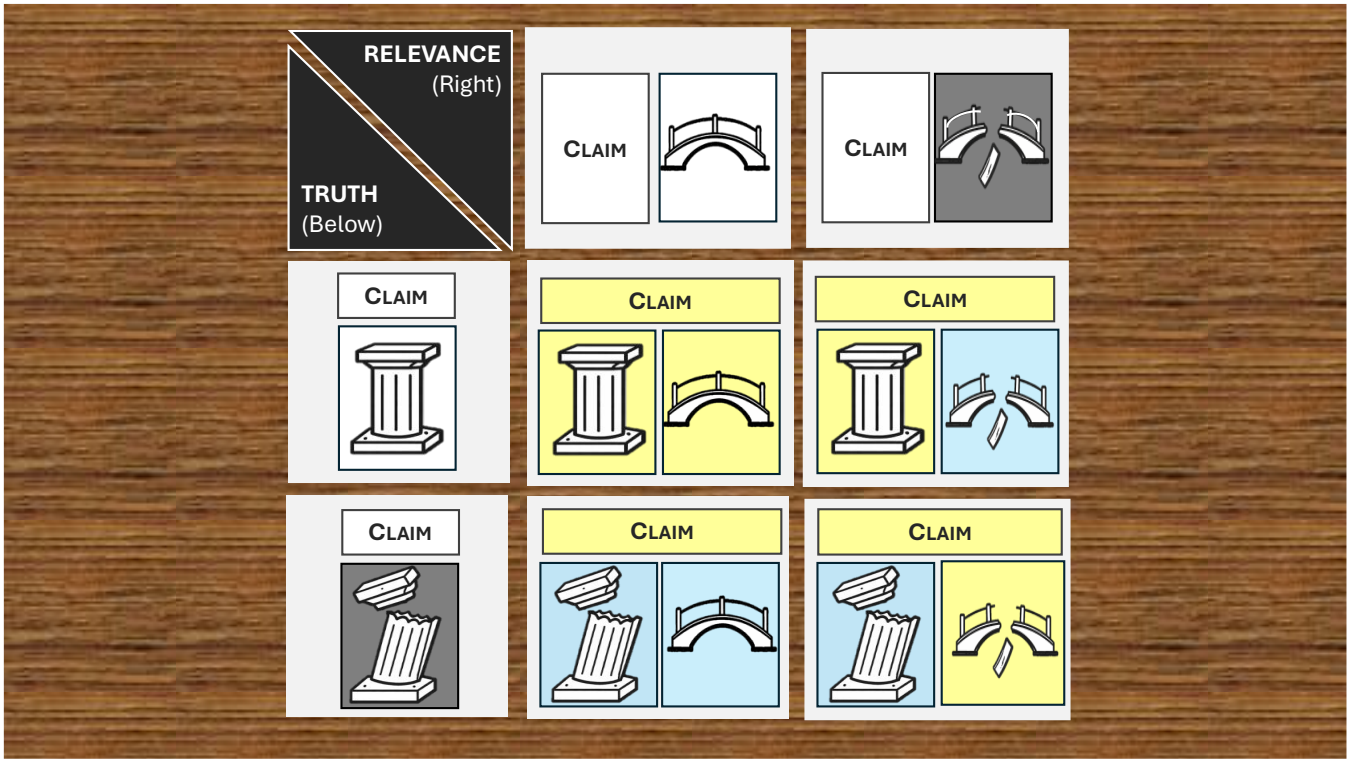
A **same color** note placed to the **right** of a note shows why the support or objection provided by that note **succeeds**.



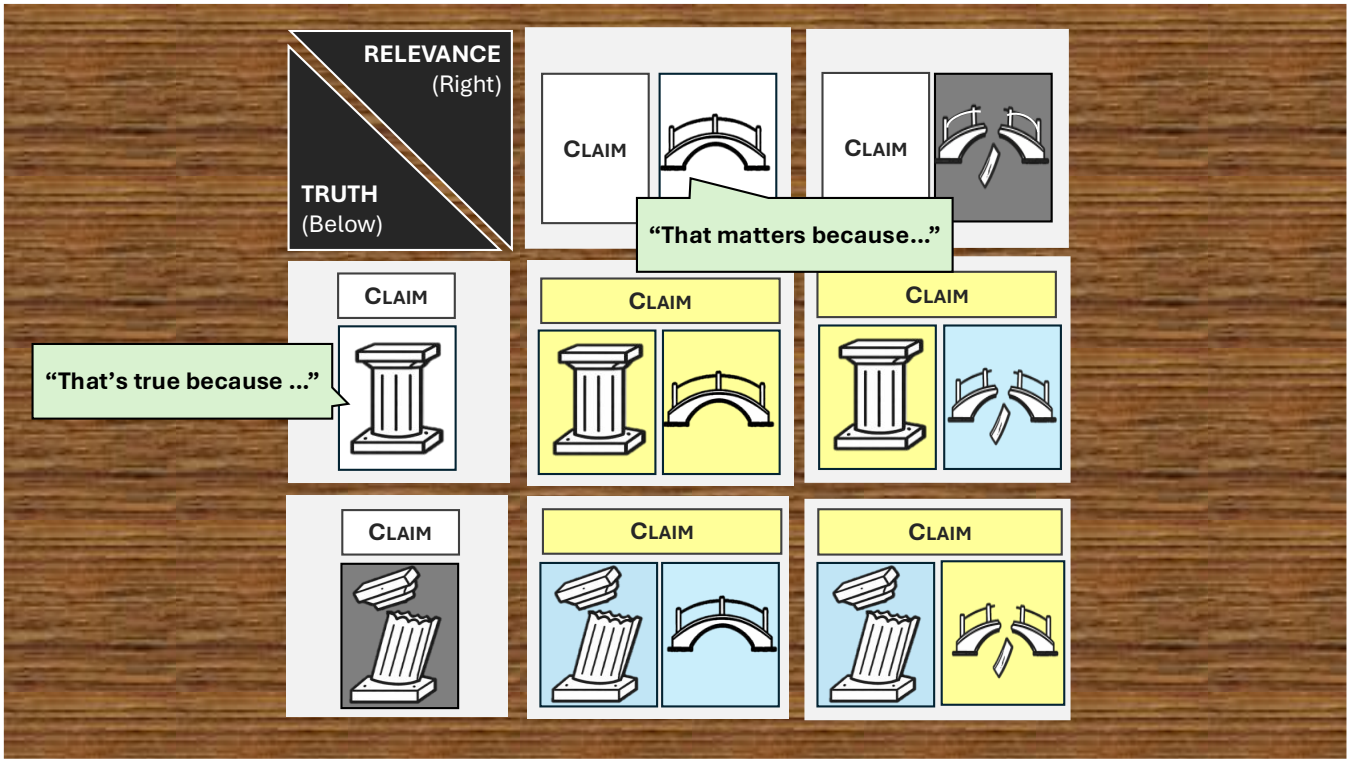
A **different color** note placed to the **right** of a note shows why the support or objection provided by that note **fails**.



We can see that a note placed *below* another note concerns that note's *truth*.



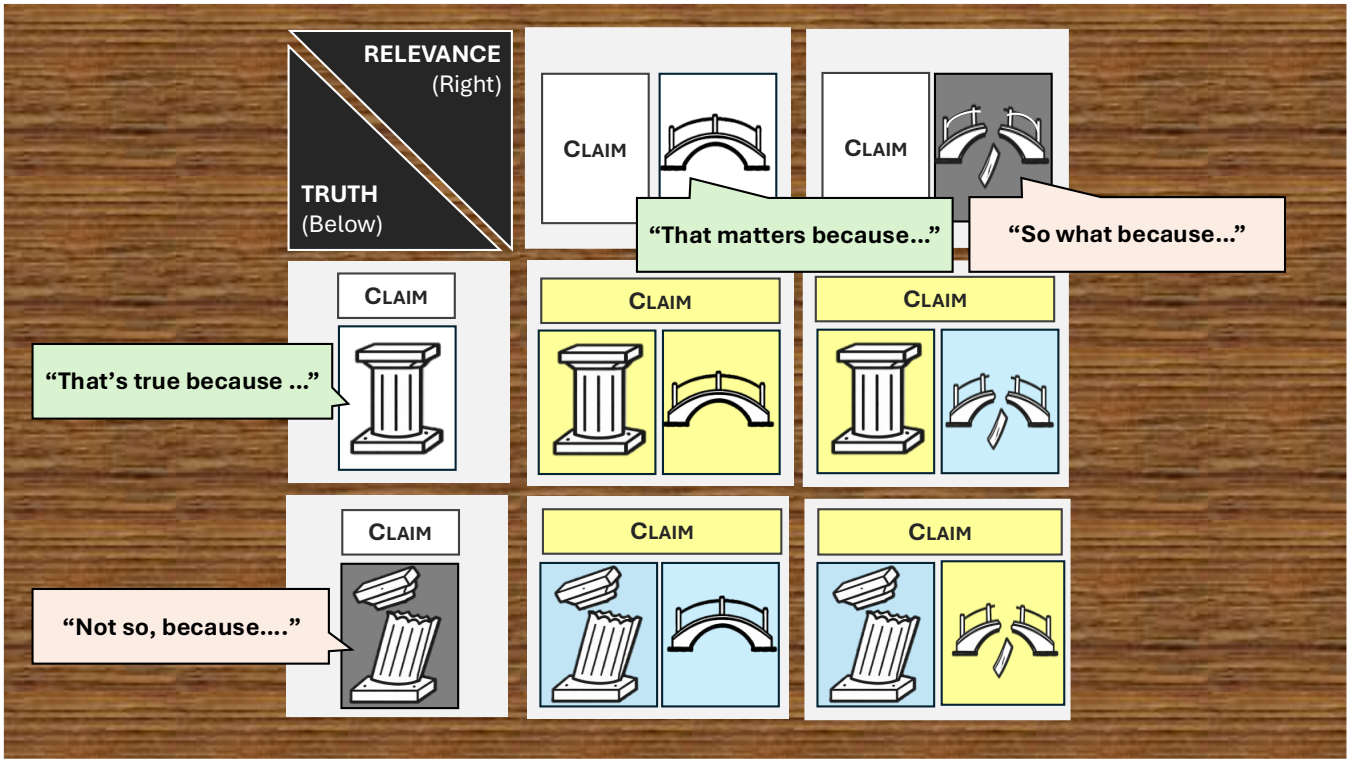
And a note placed to the *right* of another note concerns that note's *relevance*.



If the note is of the *same* color as the note above it or to its left, it supports the truth or relevance of that note.

If it's underneath, it's referring to the note above it and says, in effect "The note above is true because..."

If it's to the right, it's referring to the note to the left and says, in effect "The note to the left matters because..."



If the note is of a *different* color than the note above it or to its left, it undermines the truth or relevance of that note.

If it's underneath, it's referring to the note above it and says, in effect "Not so because..."

If it's to the right, it's referring to the note to the left and says, in effect "So what because..."

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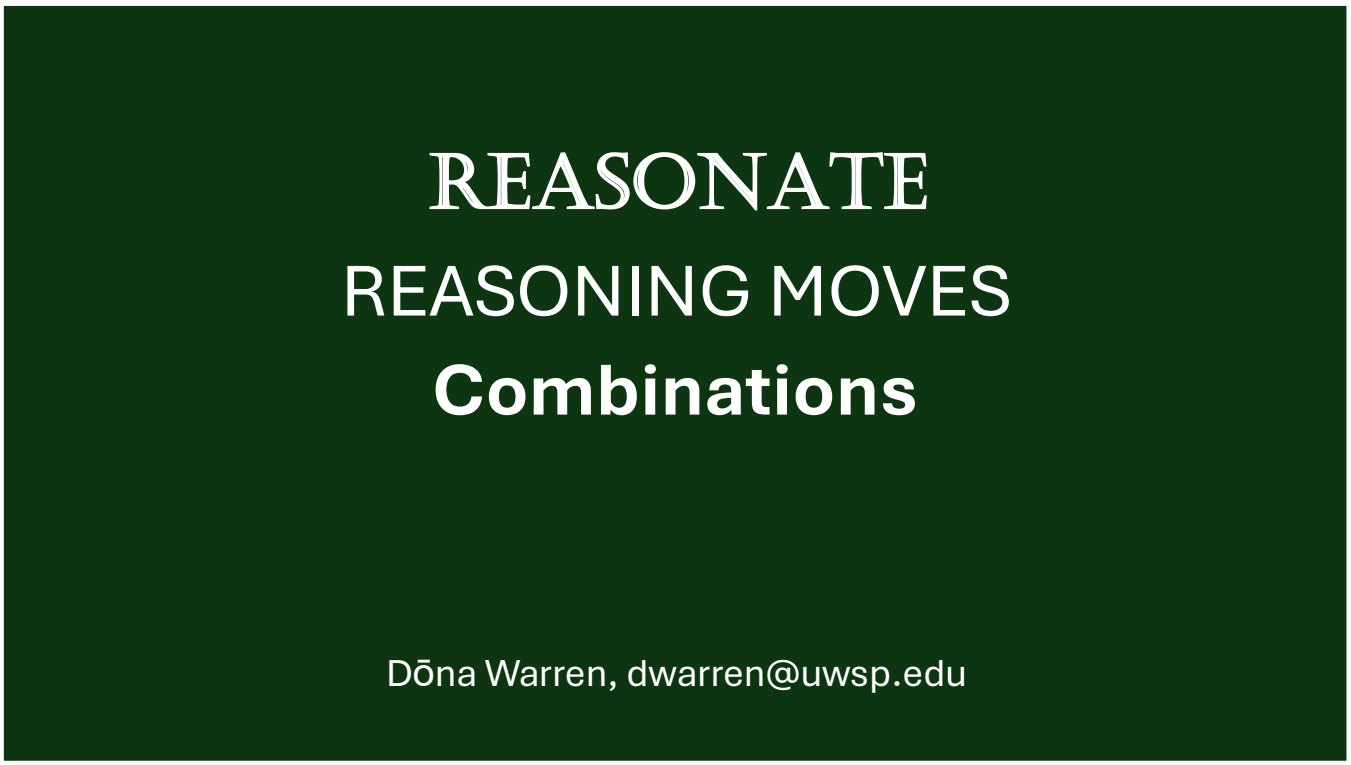
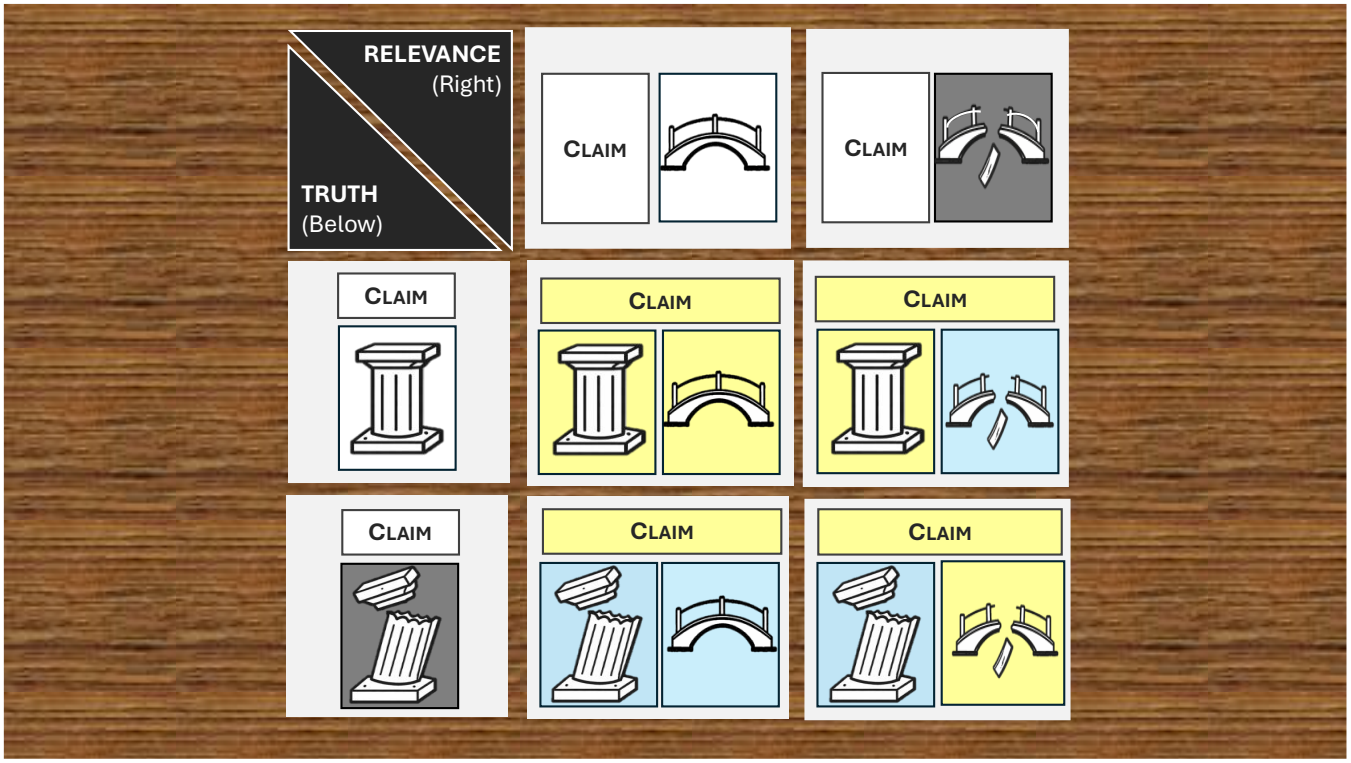
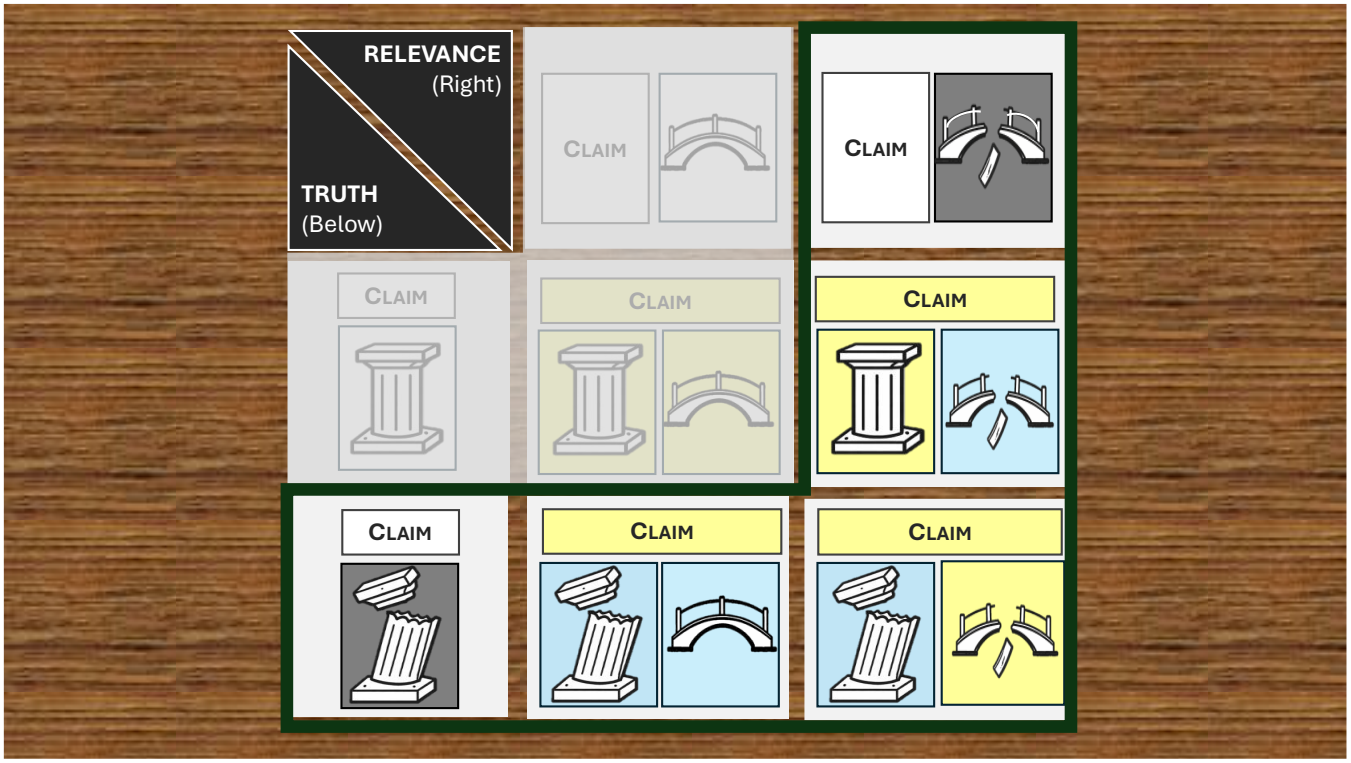
11 Reasoning Moves Combinations



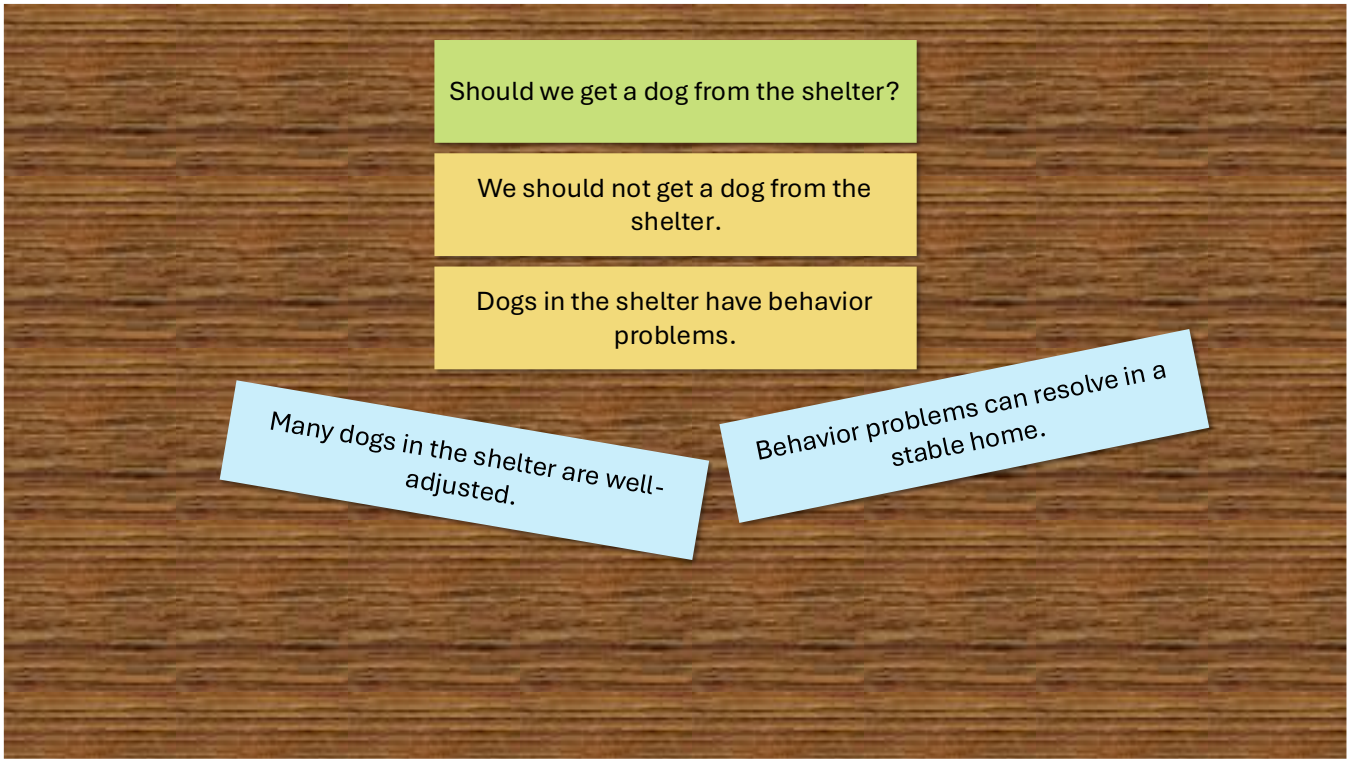
Now that we've explored the basic reasoning moves, let's see how they can be combined.



Because in real-life we sometimes make multiple moves so quickly that we need to slow down a bit to represent our reasoning.

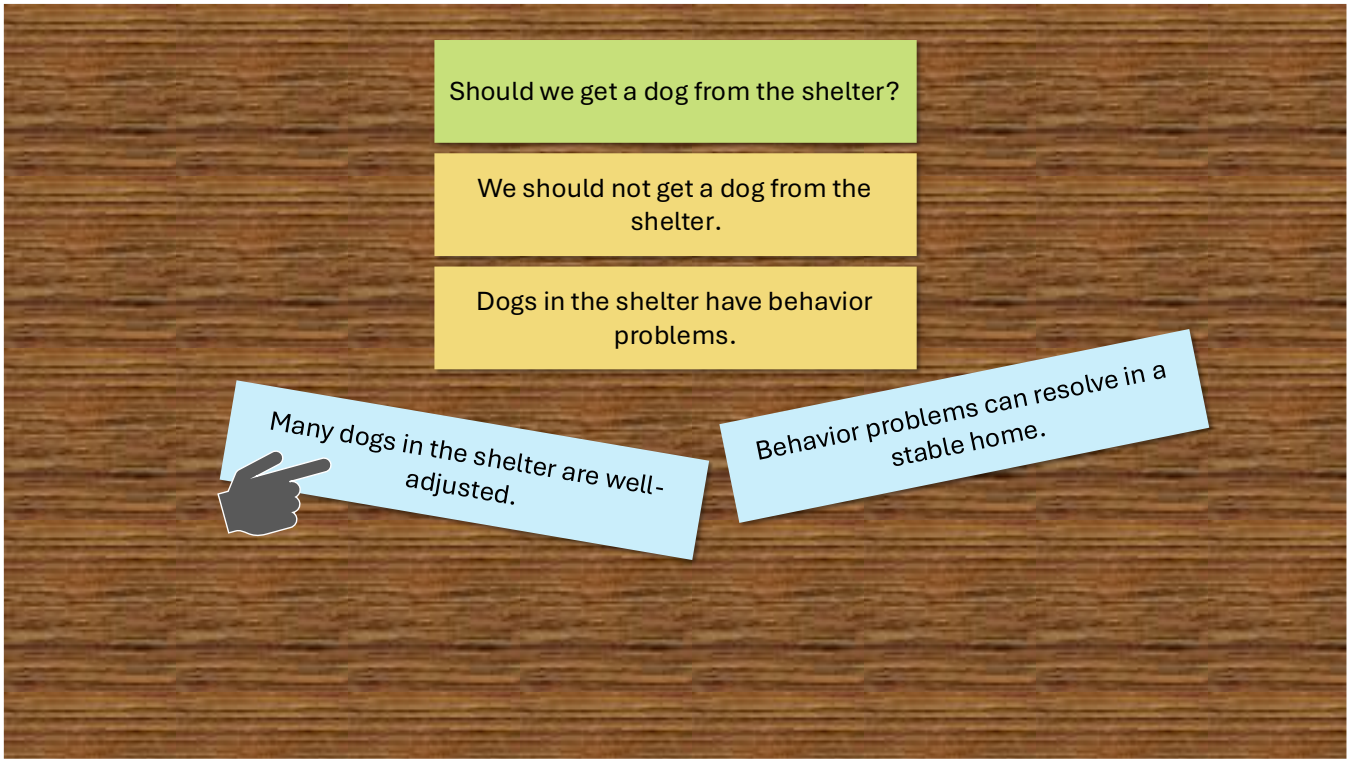


When we make objections, it's not unusual combine objecting to a claim (leveling a not-so objection) with breaking a bridge (leveling a so-what objection). Indeed that "Not-So / So-What" combination can be extraordinarily powerful.

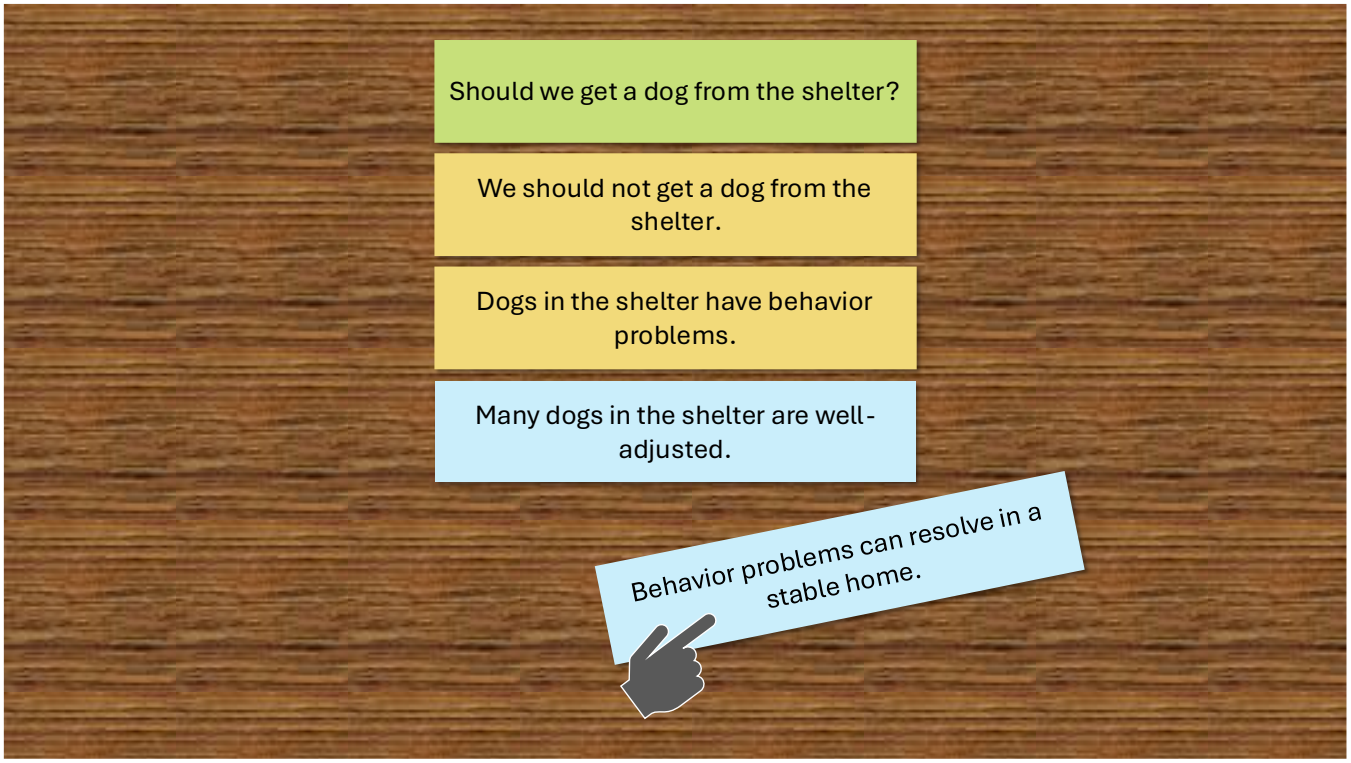


For example, suppose we're wondering if we should get a dog from the shelter, suppose the answer we're evaluating is "We should not get a dog from the shelter," and suppose PRO supports this answer by saying "Dogs in the shelter have behavior problems."

When it's CON's turn, and maybe CON's initial thoughts are "Many dogs in the shelter are well-adjusted" and "Behavior problems can resolve in a stable home." CON might start by writing those claims on sticky notes and then try to figure out how those claims respond to PRO.

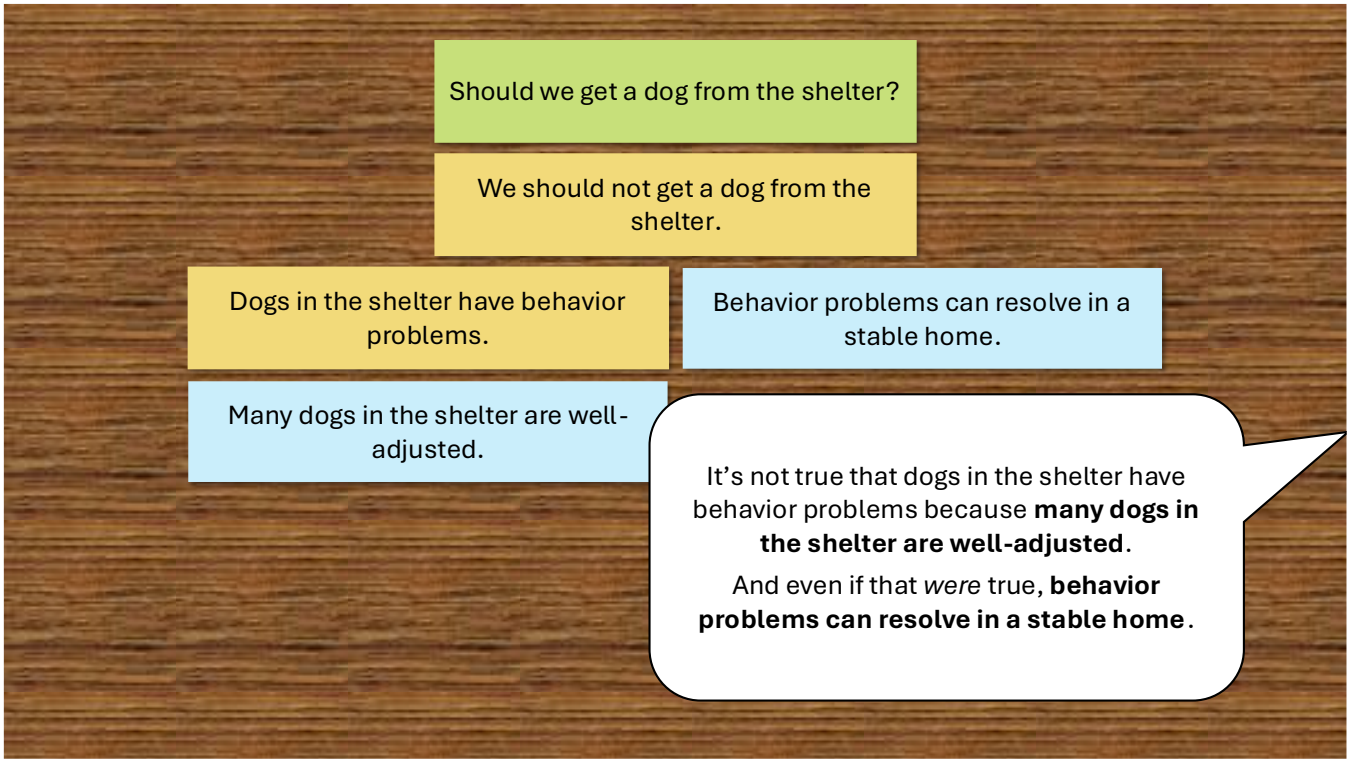


What role is “Many dogs in the shelter are well-adjusted” playing? Well, it seems to be related to PRO’s claim that dogs in the shelter have behavior problems, but how? Is it showing that PRO’s claim is *untrue*, or is it showing that PRO’s claim is *irrelevant*?



“Many dogs in the shelter are well-adjusted” is showing that the claim “Dogs in the shelter have behavior problems” is untrue, so it will go beneath that claim as a “not so” objection.

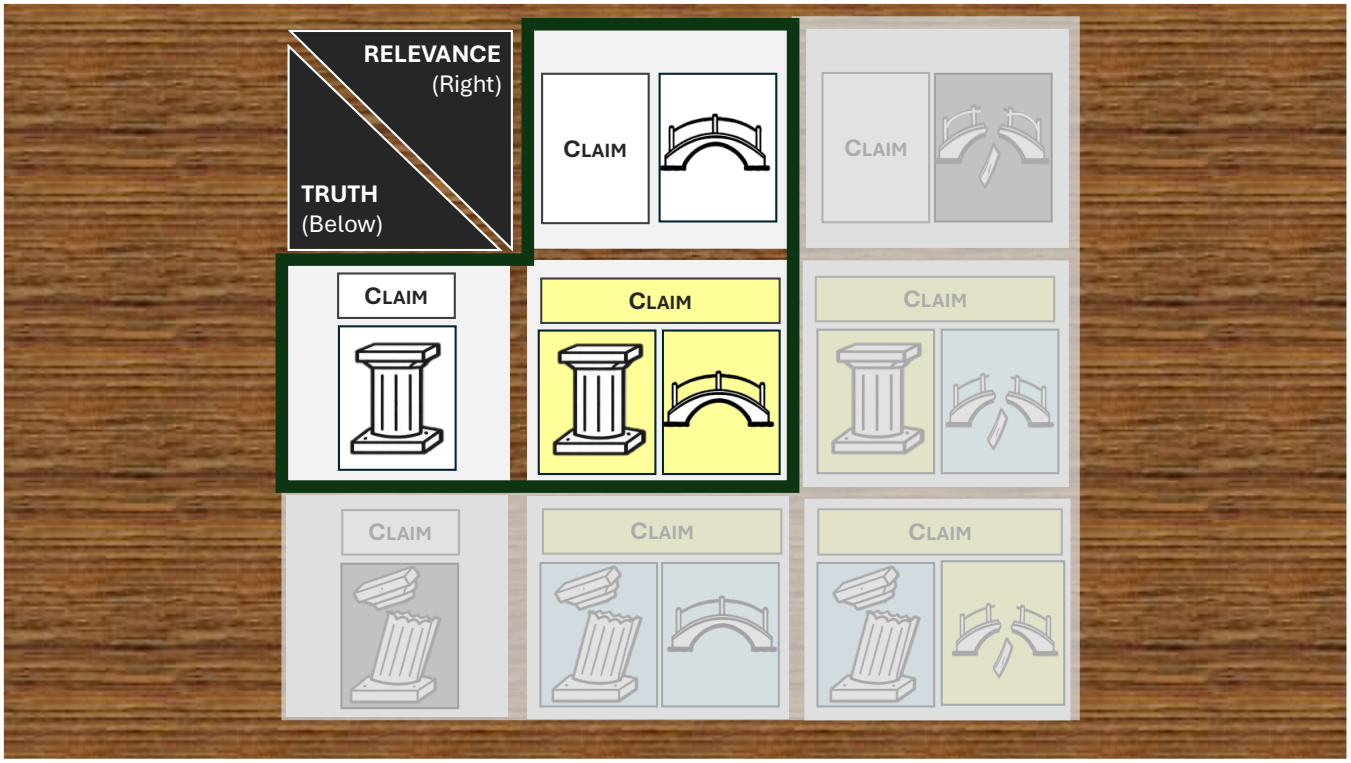
Now, where should we put “Behavior problems can resolve in a stable home”? What is that claim doing?



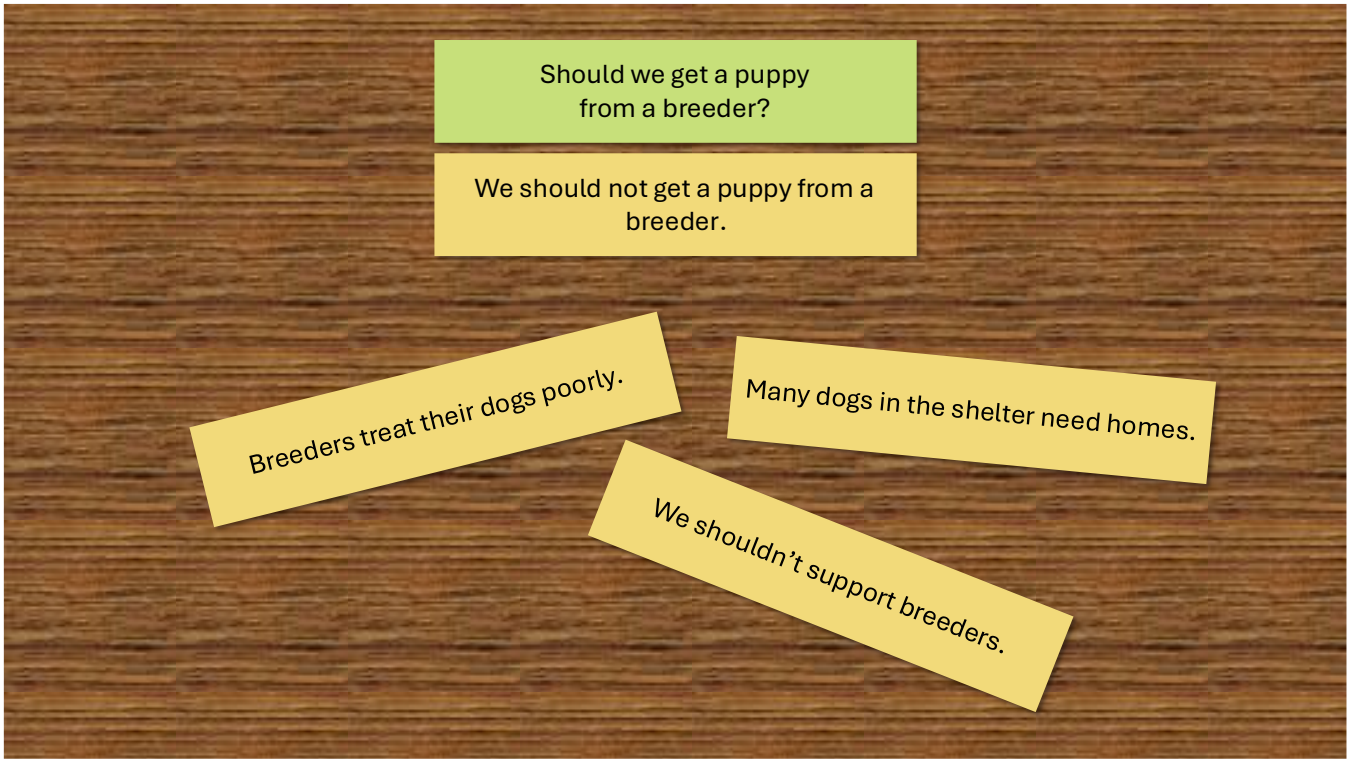
That claim is denying that "Dogs in the shelter have behavior problems" successfully establishes that we shouldn't get a dog from the shelter even if it happens to be true. It's a "so what" objection.

Now we can see why the "Not-So / So-What" combination works so well. In practice they're often expressed in "Not true / Even if" language, like this:

"It's not true that dogs in the shelter have behavior problems because many dogs in the shelter are well-adjusted. And even if that were true, behavior problems can resolve in a stable home."



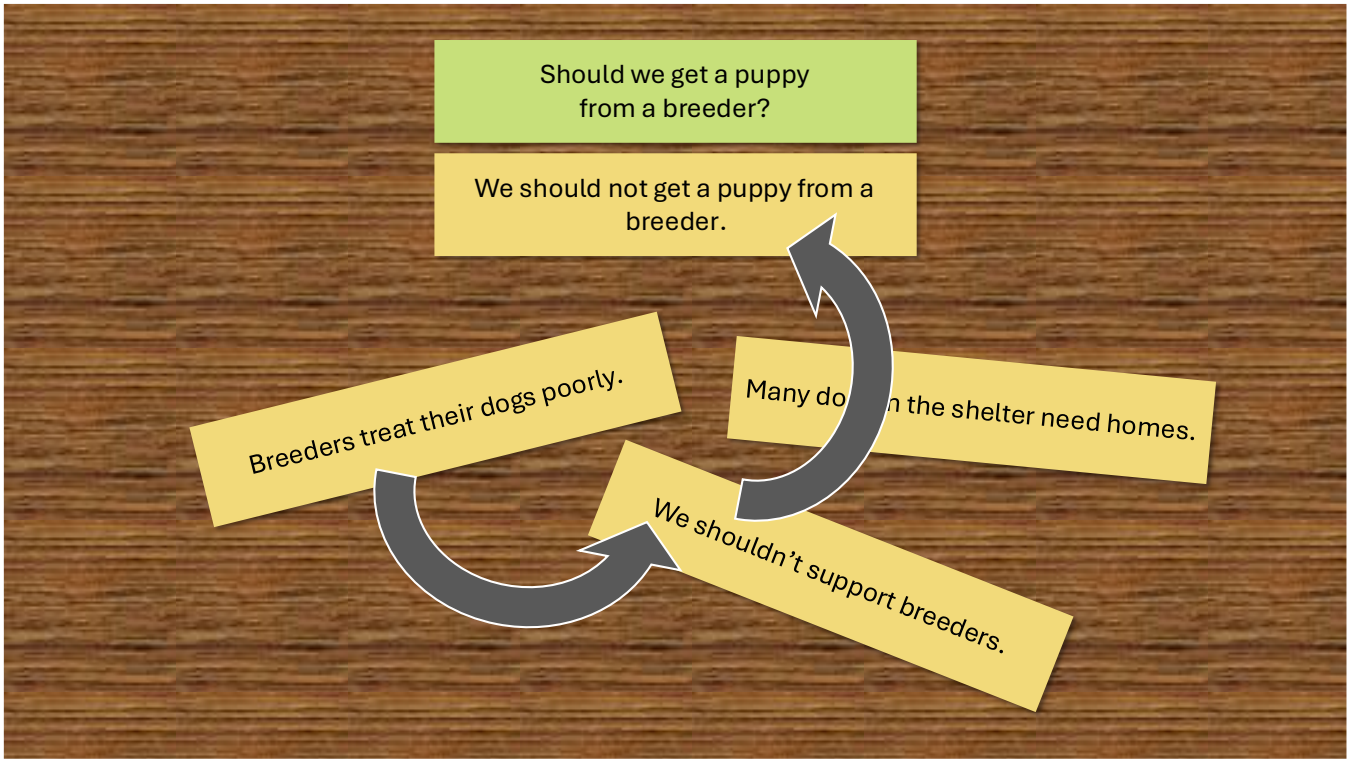
Like CON, PRO can make combination moves.



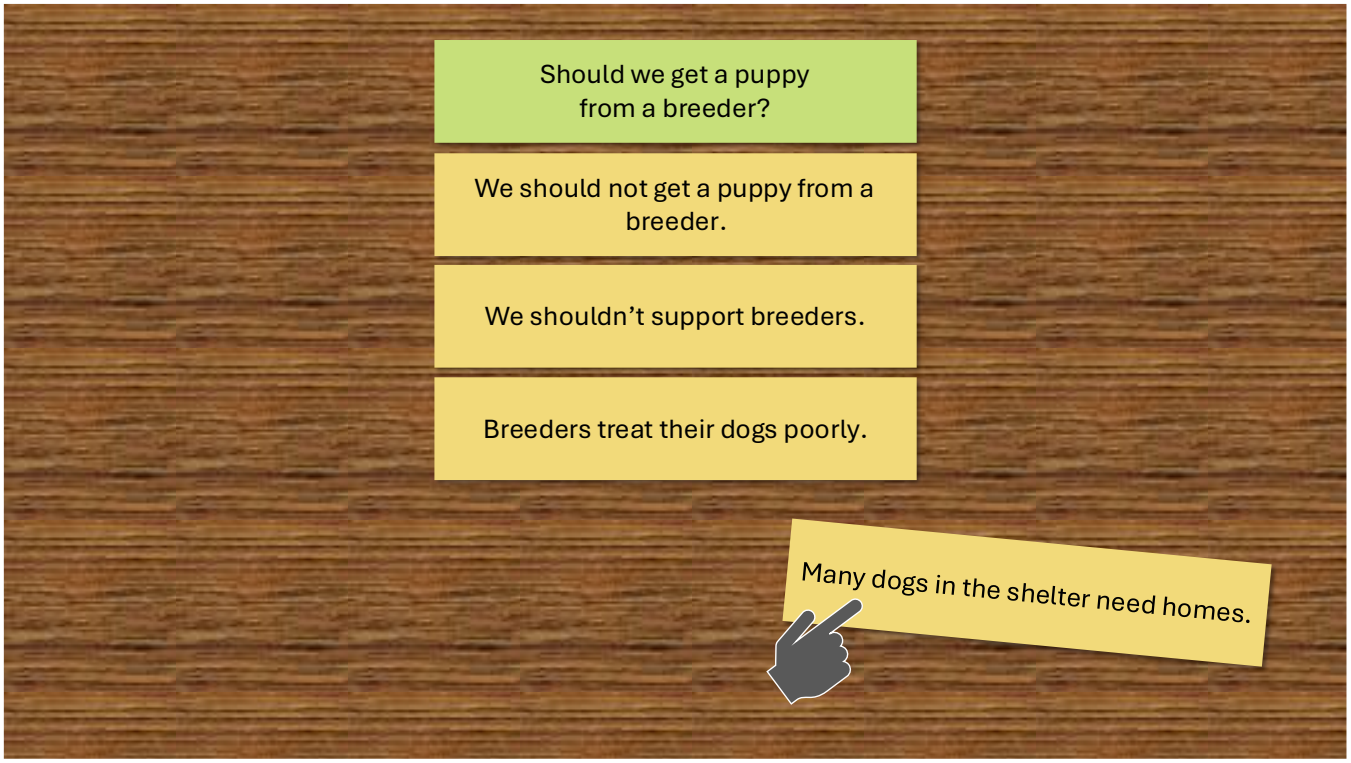
For example, suppose we're wondering if we should get a puppy from a breeder, suppose the answer we're evaluating is "We should not get a puppy from a breeder," and suppose that in support of this answer, PRO naturally wants to say three things. Knowing that each note should assert only one claim, PRO writes these claims on three different sticky notes.

"Breeders treat their dogs poorly." "We shouldn't support breeders." And "many dogs in the shelter need homes."

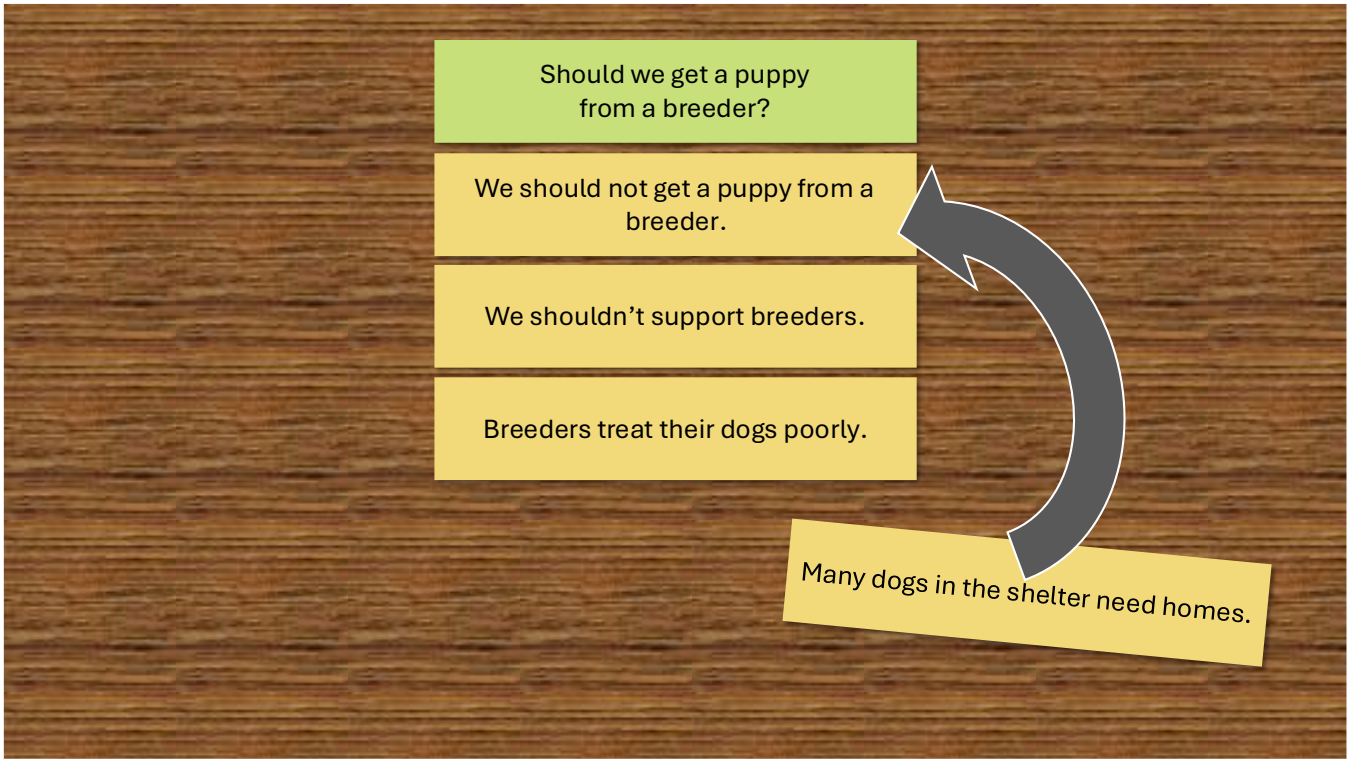
Now PRO can identify the relationships that these claims bear to one another.



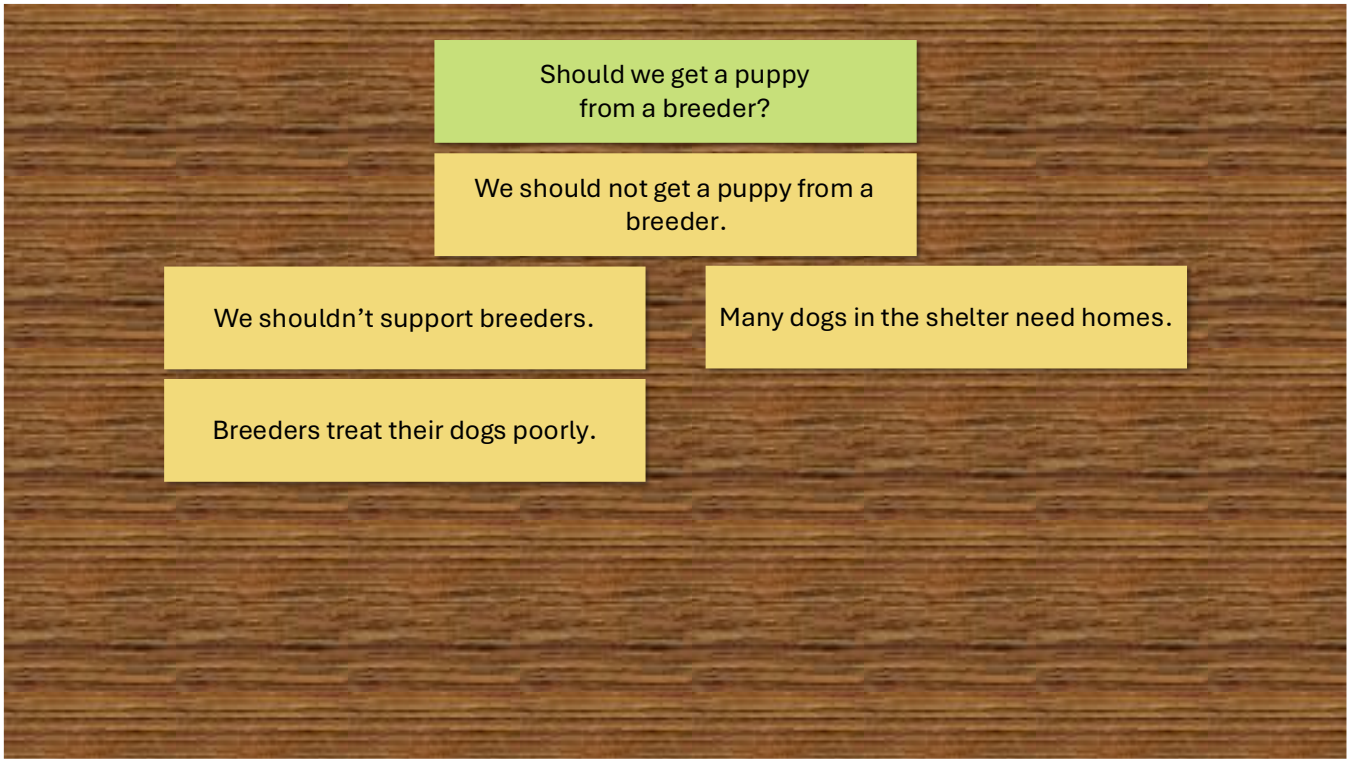
It looks like "Breeders treat their dogs poorly" is given as a reason to accept the claim "We shouldn't support breeders," and "We shouldn't support breeders," in turn, is given as a reason to accept the claim, "We should not get a puppy from a breeder."



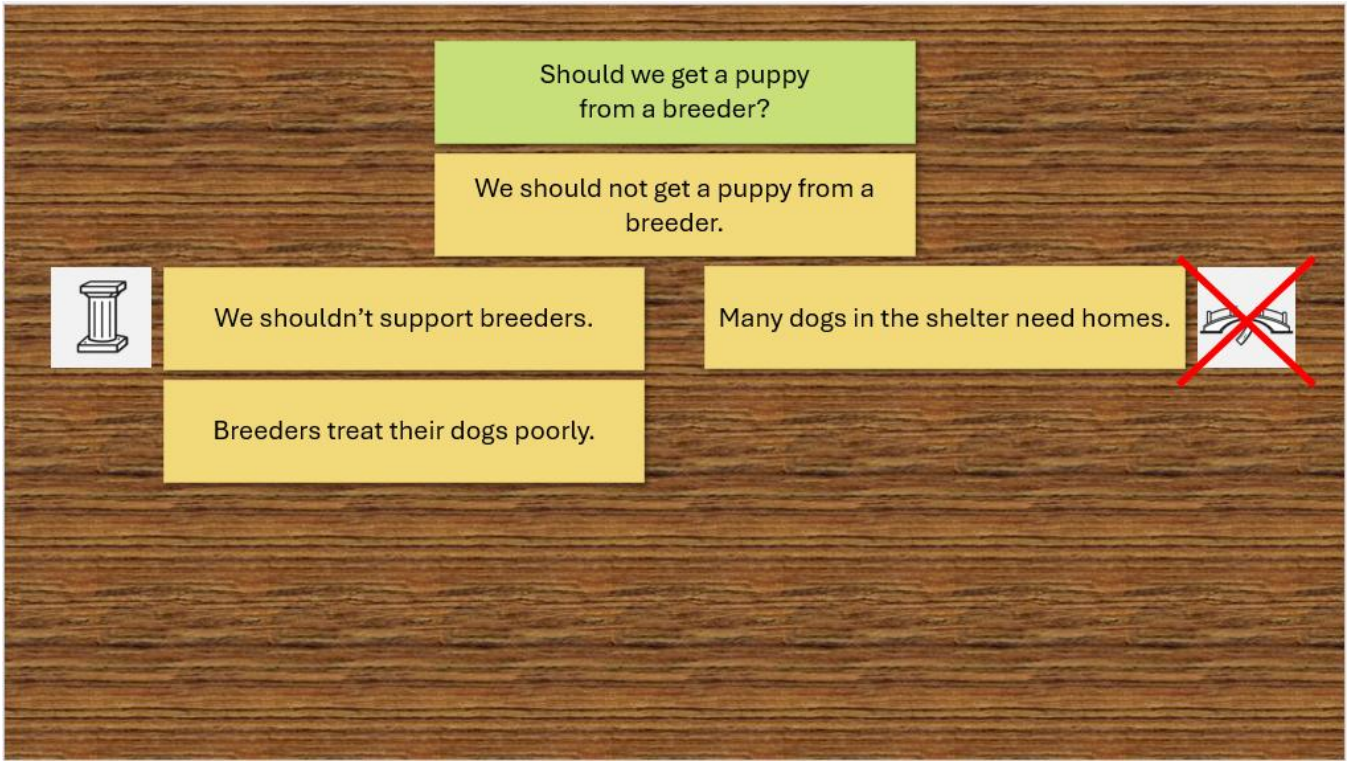
But now, what's to become of "Many dogs in the shelter need homes"?



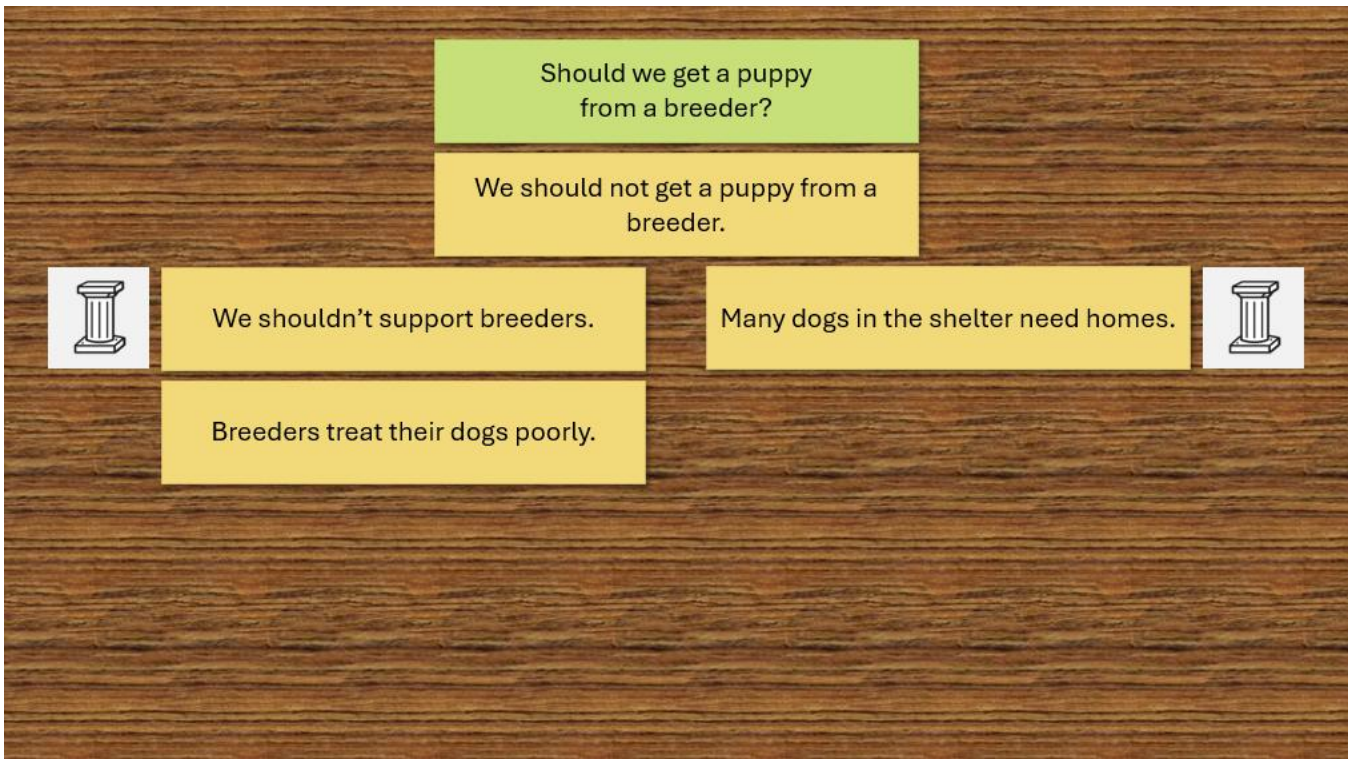
Well, it looks like that's *another* reason to think that we should not get a puppy from a breeder.



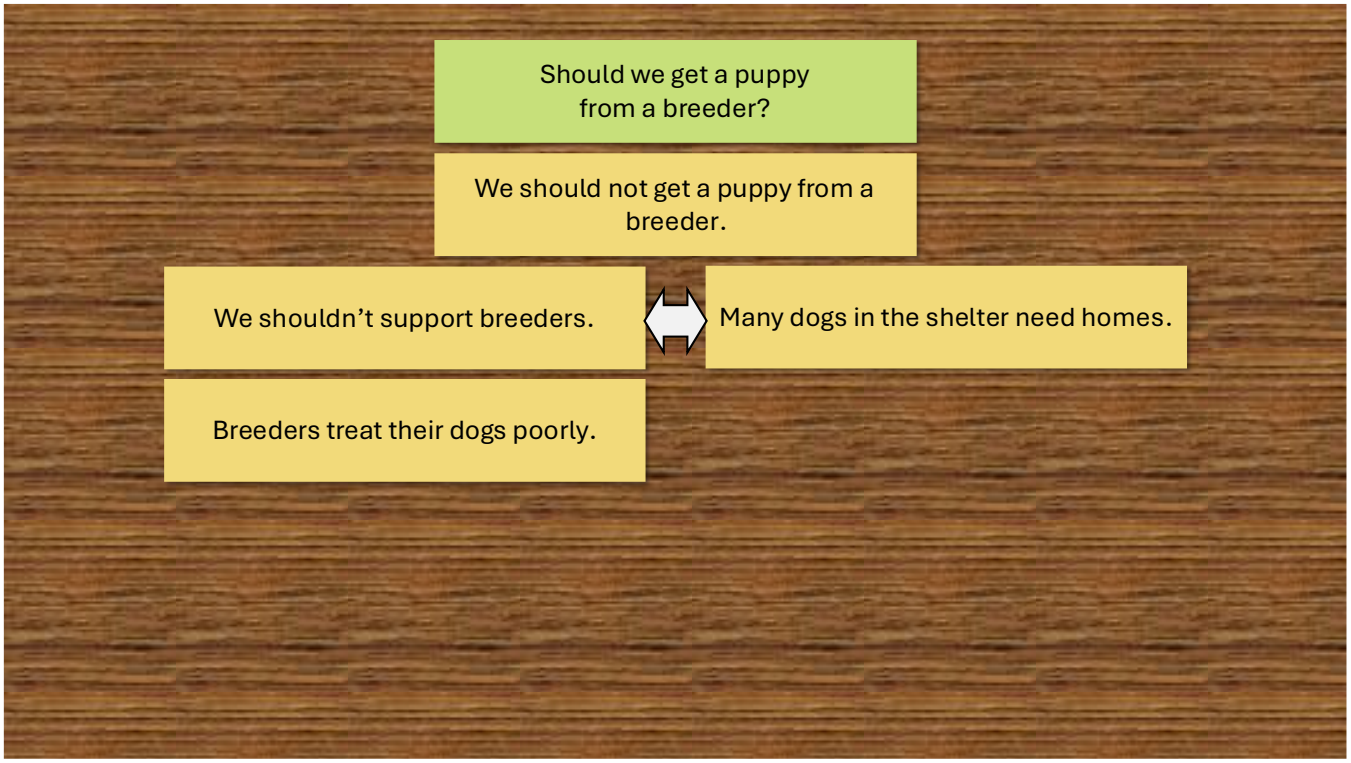
So we'll put it as another support for that claim.



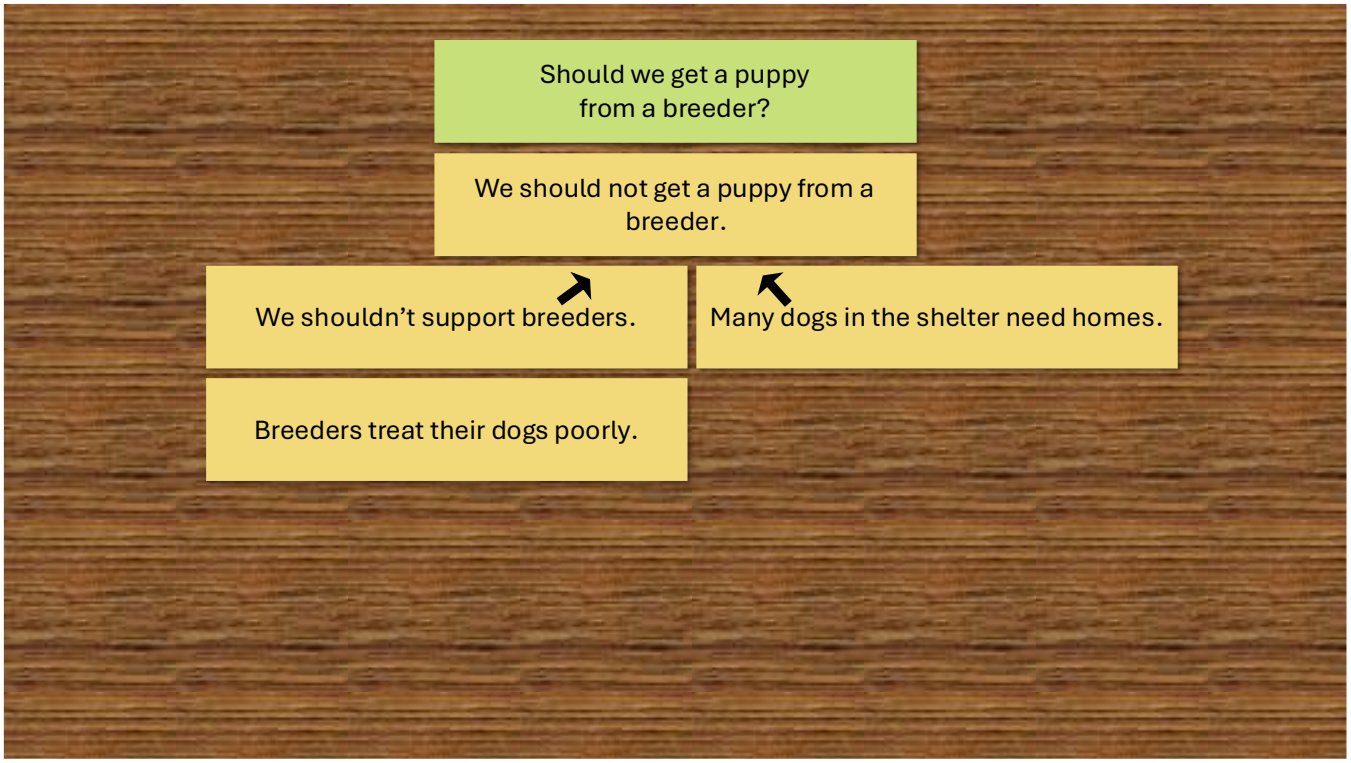
Note that "Many dogs in the shelter need homes" does **not** build a bridge from "We shouldn't support breeders" to "We should not get a puppy from a breeder."



Instead, it offers another, *separate support* for "We should not get a puppy from a breeder."



We can indicate that by leaving more space between the notes.

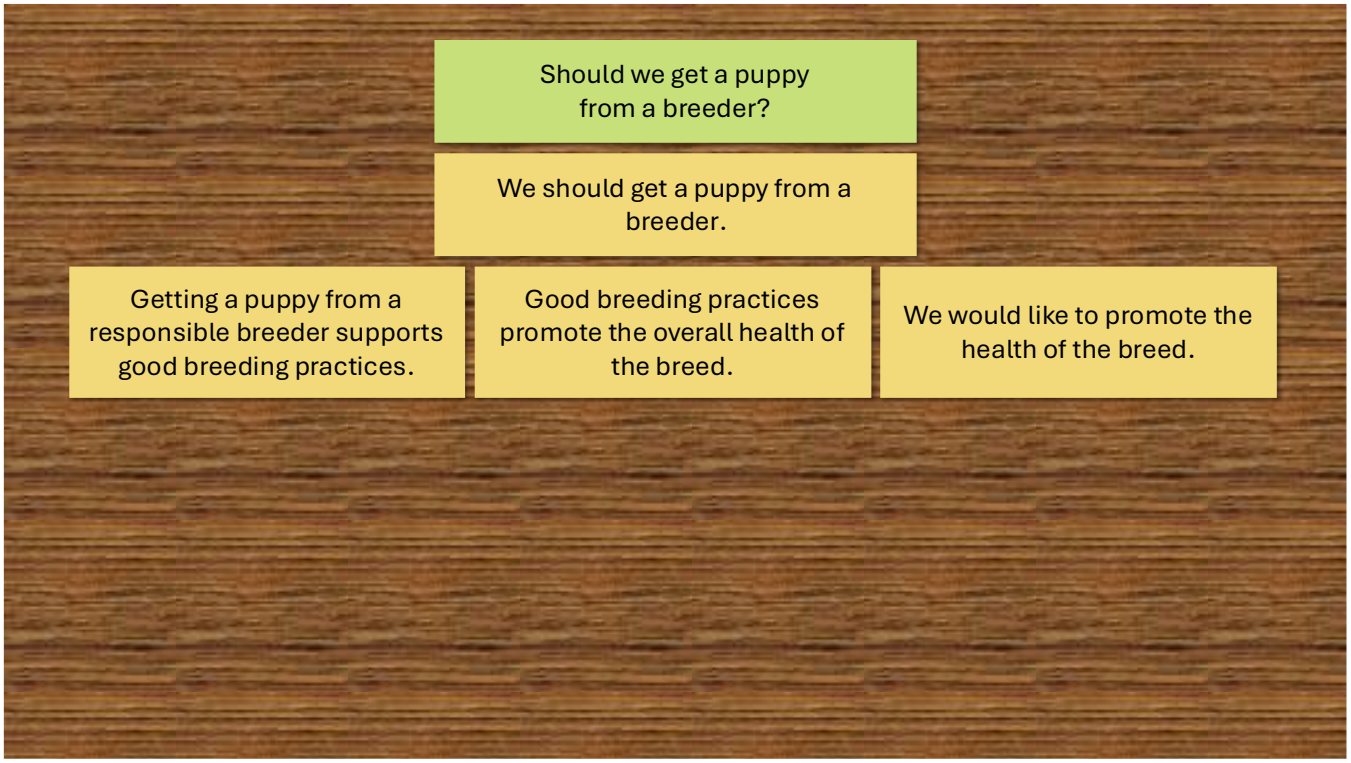


But if we don't have enough room on our playing surface to spread out our notes, we can show that two notes support a claim independently by writing an arrow on each note pointing to the note supported.

There's another interesting thing that can happen: Sometimes, organizing our claims can show us that we're drawing a conclusion we haven't taken the time to recognize.

For example, let's suppose we give a different answer to the question we've been considering, asserting that we should get a puppy from a breeder.

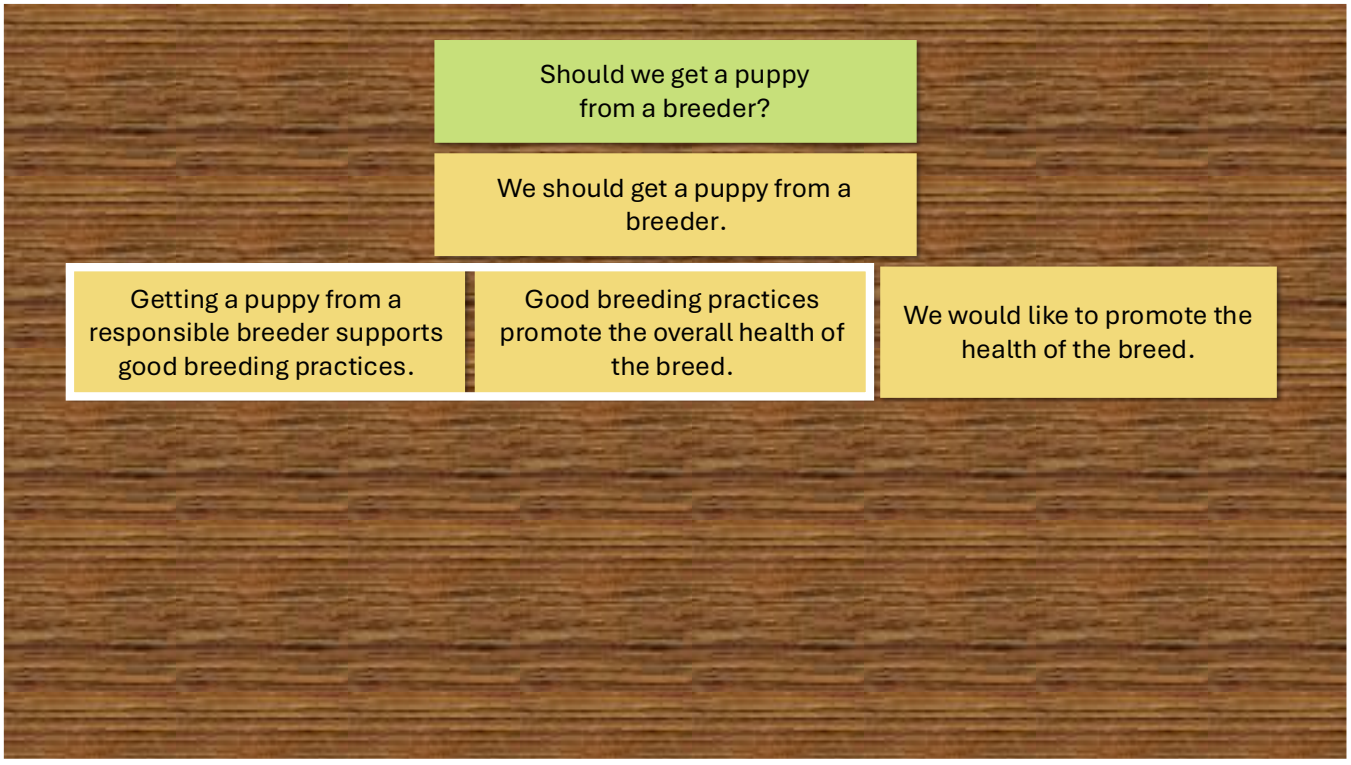
And let's suppose that three claims in support of that answer occur to PRO: "Getting a puppy from a responsible breeder supports good breeding practices," "Good breeding practices promote the overall health of the breed," and "We would like to promote the health of the breed."



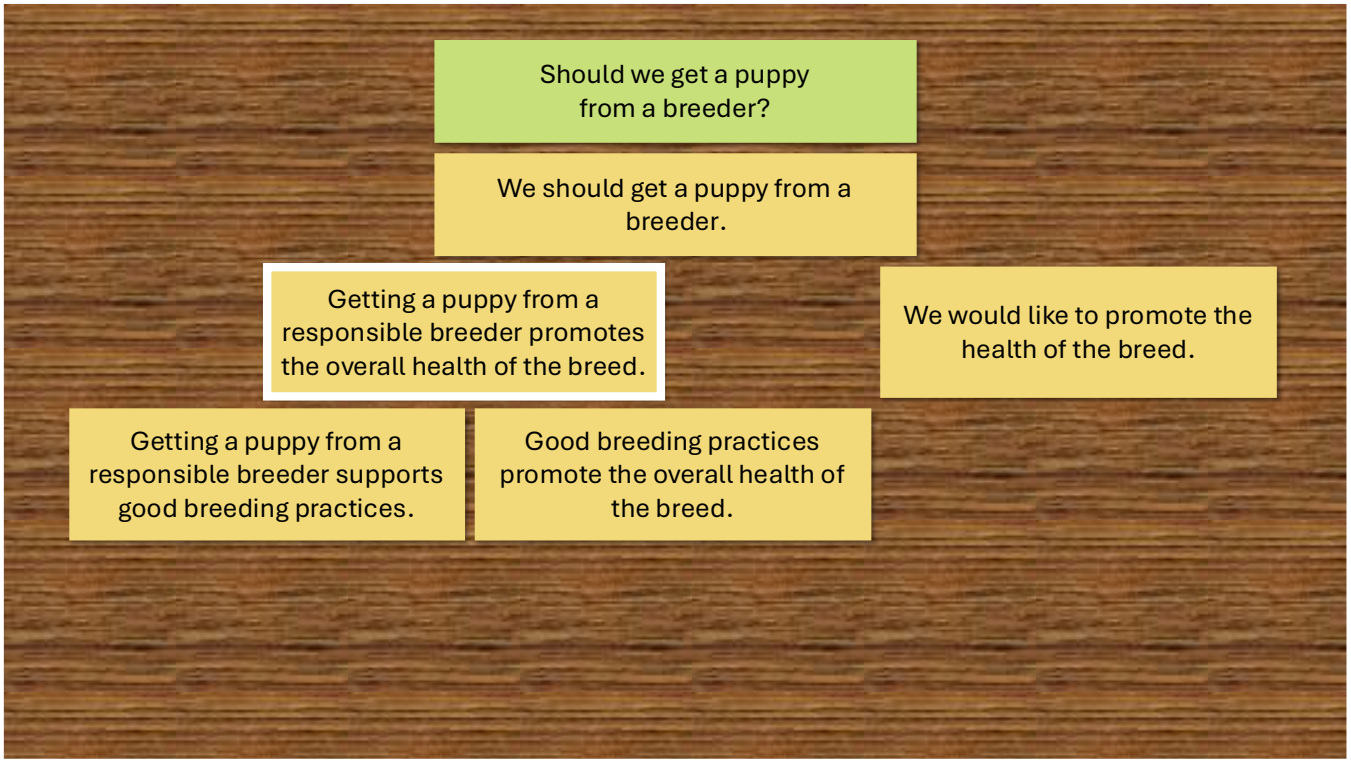
When PRO considers how those claims are connected to each other, PRO will see that they all work together.

We haven't seen three claims connecting like this, but it can happen. None of those claims is a reason to believe another one of the claims. Instead, they collaborate to support a different claim in exactly way that support and bridge claims work together.

If PRO wants to leave their reasoning like this, they can. But sometimes it's nice to think about how we can combine claims two at a time.

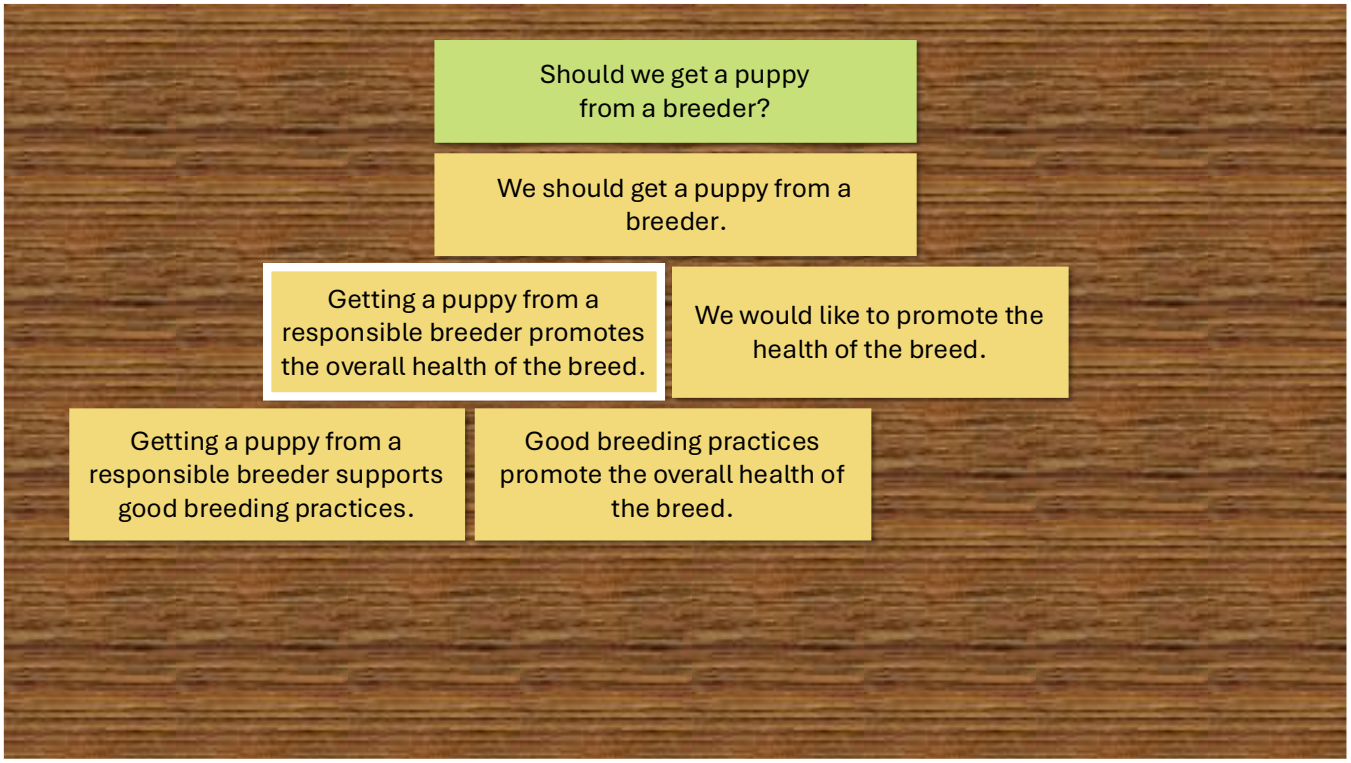


For instance, PRO might look at the first two claims, “Getting a puppy from a responsible breeder supports good breeding practices,” and “Good breeding practices promote the overall health of the breed,” and note that *another* claim follows from them.



The claim that "Getting a puppy from a responsible breeder promotes the overall health of the breed" follows from "Getting a puppy from a responsible breeder supports good breeding practices," and "Good breeding practices promote the overall health of the breed."

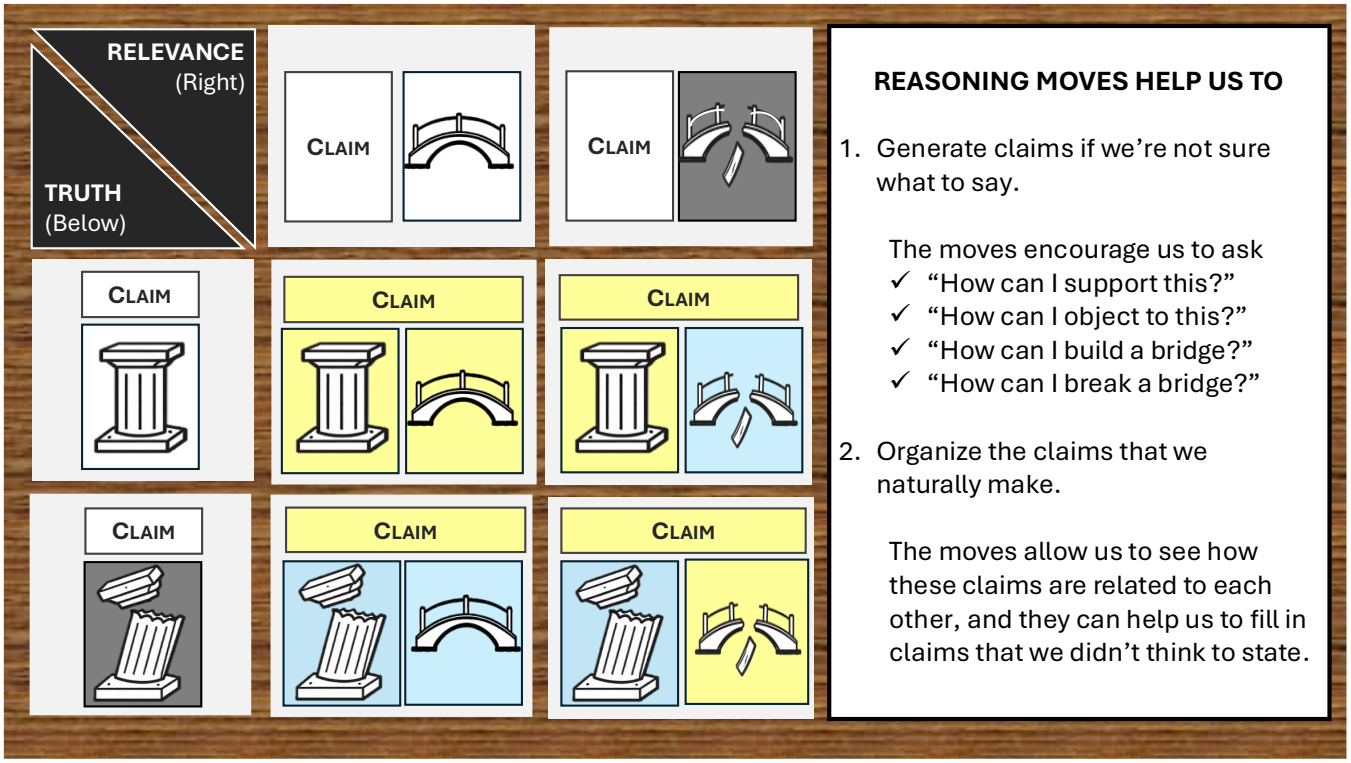
PRO is, in fact, committed to that claim and has probably had that claim in the back of their mind. They just didn't *state* it.



Once that claim is stated, PRO can see that it works directly with "We would like to promote the health of the breed" to support the assertion that we should get a puppy from a breeder.

Is it *required* to fill in an unstated claim that follows from the claims we made? No.

Is it *helpful* to fill in an unstated claim that follows from the claims we made? Yes. Sometimes. It can help us to slow down our thinking and see the intermediate steps we're making, and that can be illuminating.



Reasoning moves are powerful because they serve two important functions.

They can help us to **generate** claims if we're not sure what to say by encouraging us to ask, "How can I support this?" "How can I object to this?" "How can I build a bridge?" and "How can I break a bridge?"

They can also help us to **organize** the claims that we naturally make because they allow us to see how these claims are related to each other, and they can help us to fill in claims that we didn't think to state.

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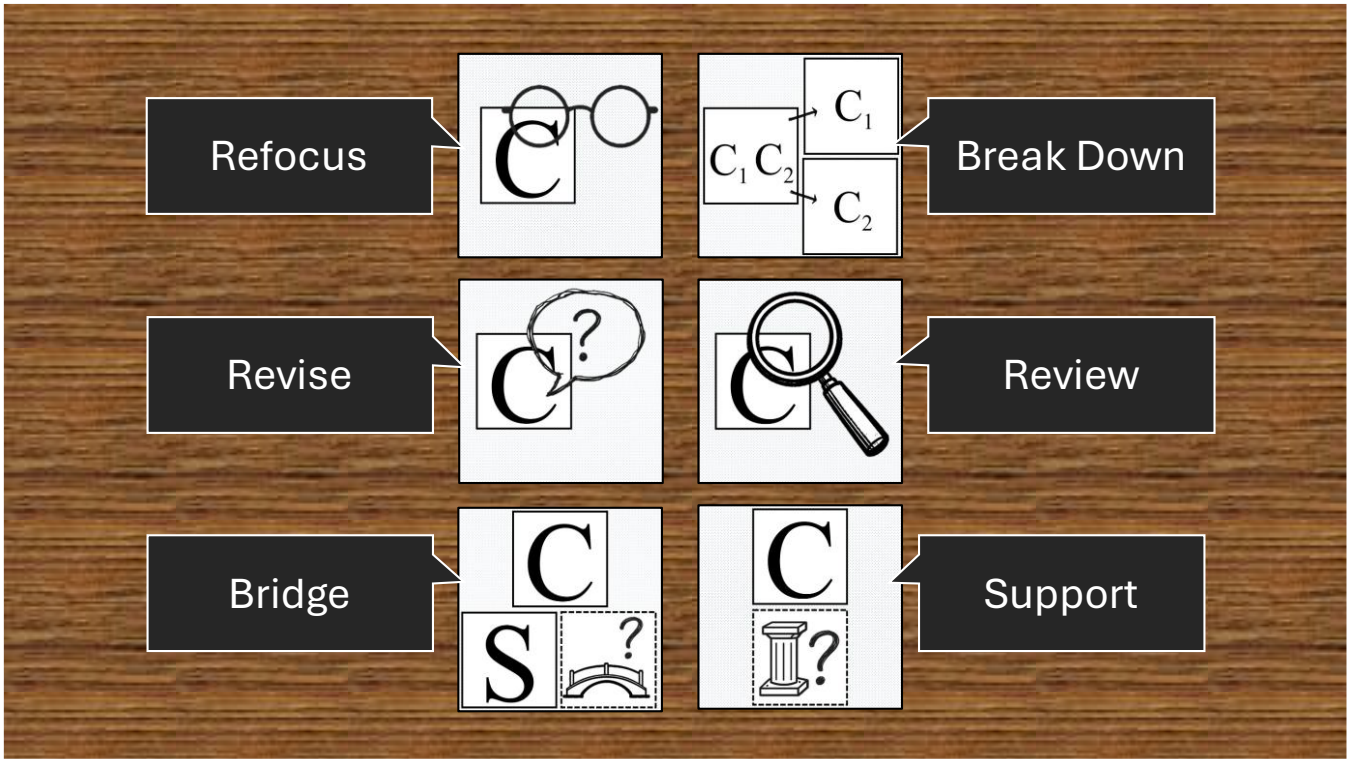
12 Requesting

REASONATE
REQUESTING

Dōna Warren, dwarren@uwsp.edu

At any point in a dialogue, a player may make a Request to deepen understanding of the reasoning. There are six such requests.



If the dialogue is straying from the topic or focusing on personalities or groups, a participant can request that the dialogue **refocus** on the claims.

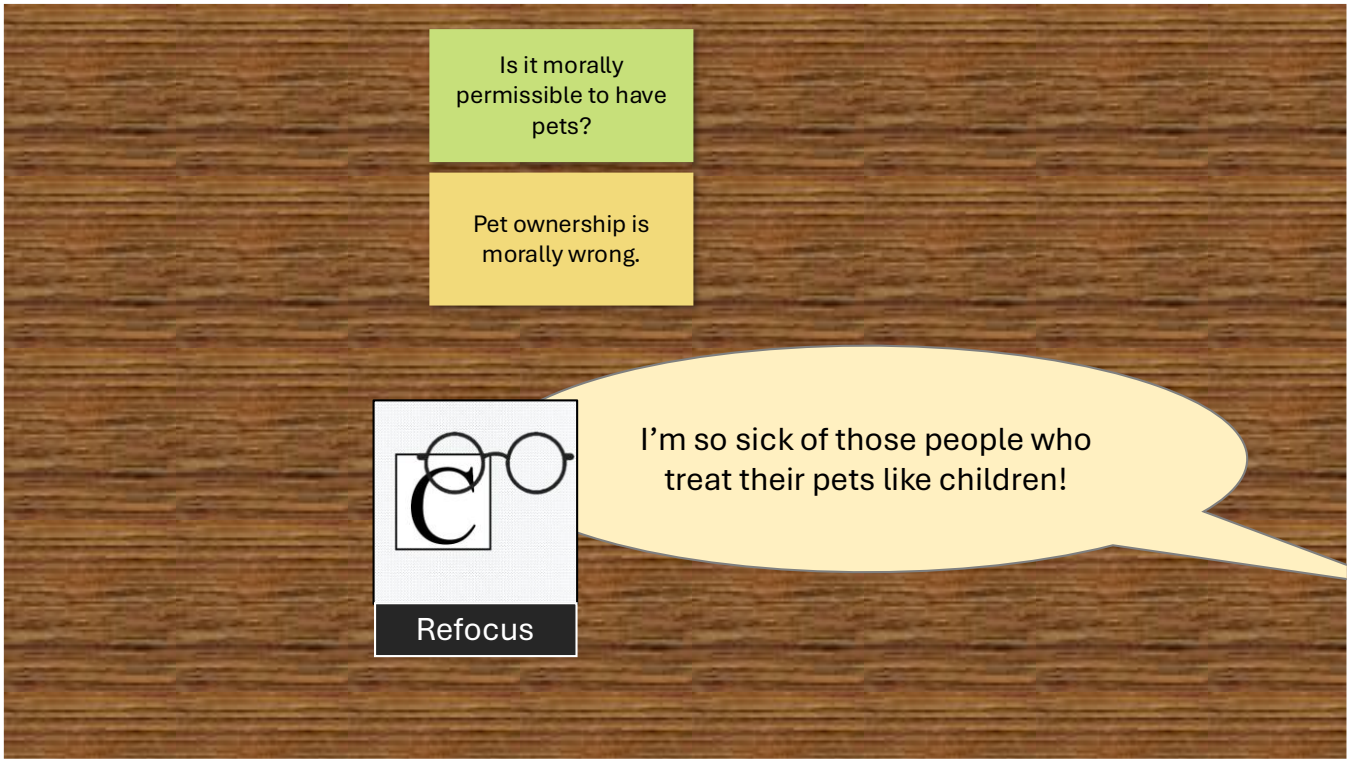
If a note contains more than one claim, a participant can request that the content of that note be divided over multiple notes, **breaking it down**.

If a claim or question is unclear, a participant can request that the claim or question be **revised**.

If a participant questions the truth of a claim, they can ask for the claim to **reviewed**, requesting that participants work collaboratively to identify the facts or to note that the facts will need to be checked later.

If a participant is curious about how another participant would connect two claims, they can request that the **bridge** be identified.

And finally, if a participant wonders how another participant would support one of their claims, they can request that the **support** be provided.

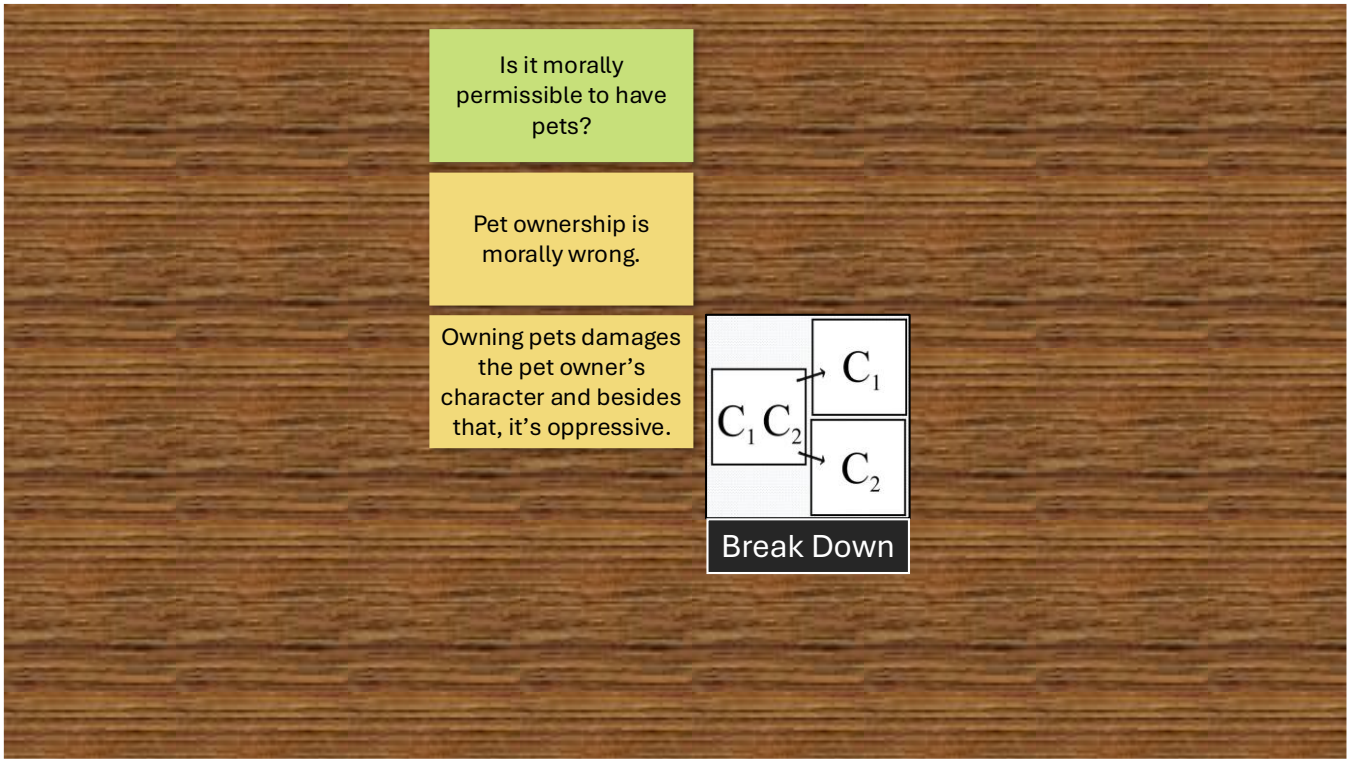


To see how this works, let's suppose that the question on the table is "Is it morally permissible to have pets?" and let's suppose that the answer under examination is "Pet ownership is morally wrong."

Furthermore, let's suppose that, when asked to defend this claim, PRO says "I'm so sick of those people who treat their pets like children!"

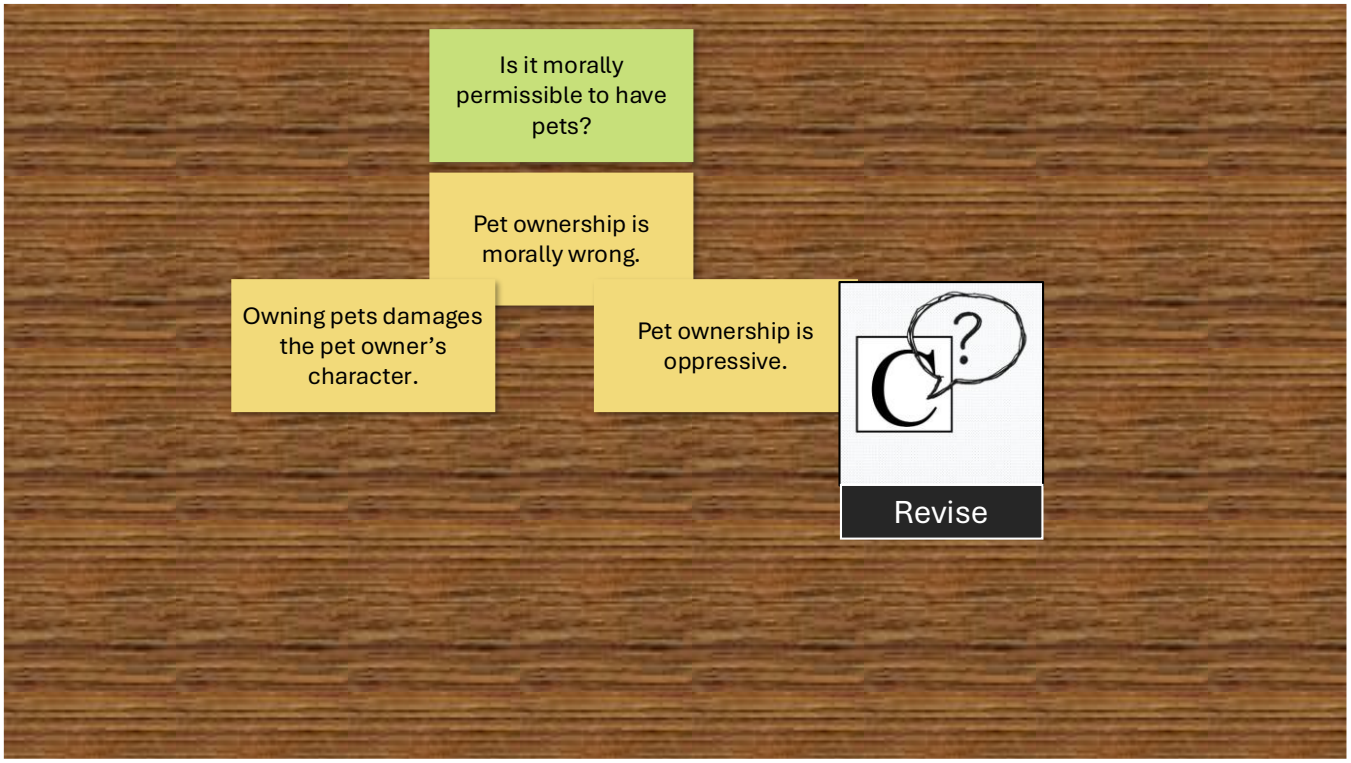
This would be a fine time for another player to make a "Refocus" request, encouraging PRO to focus on the claims, rather than personalities or groups.

A good moto here is "Positions, not People."



In response to this request, PRO might support the claim that pet ownership is morally wrong with a note that says, "Owning pets damages the pet owner's character and besides that, it's oppressive."

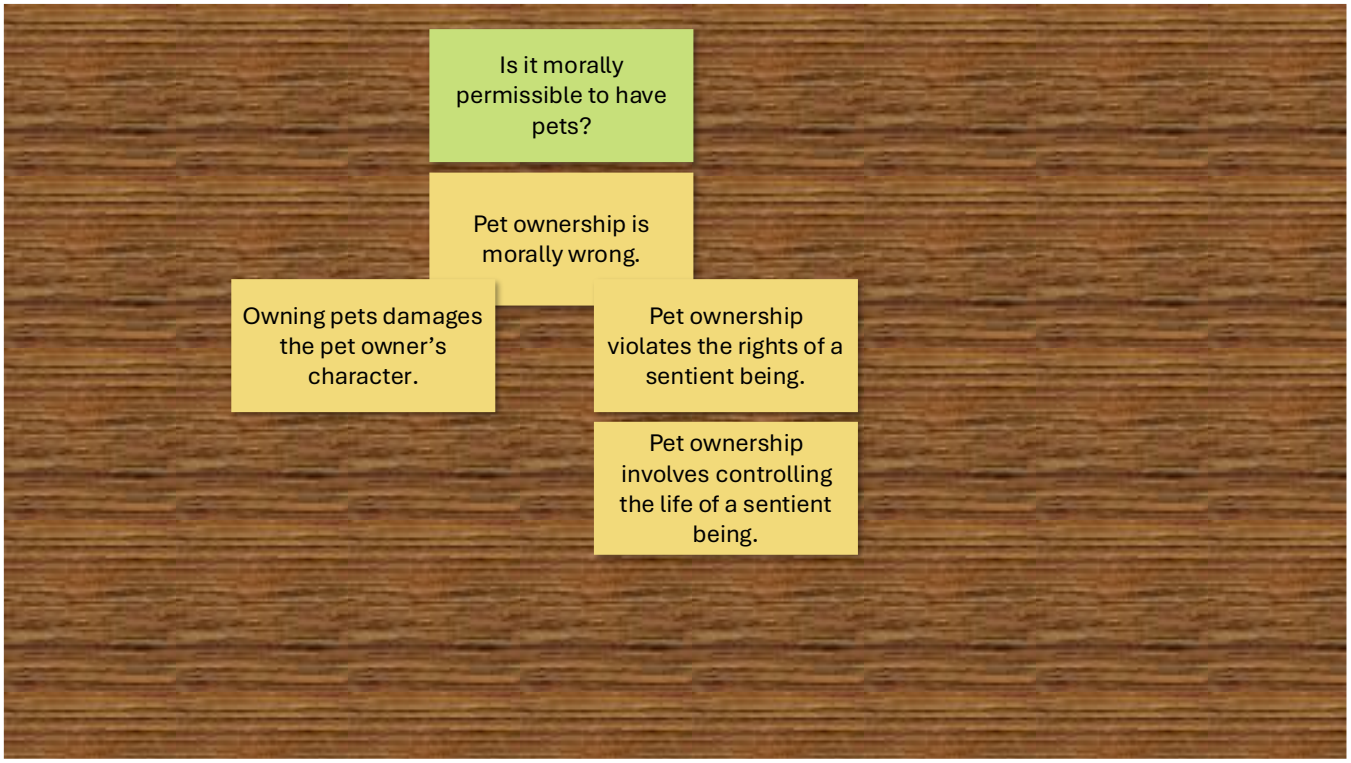
This is better, but that note asserts more than one claim, so another player can help to clarify the reasoning by requesting that the content of that note be divided over multiple notes.



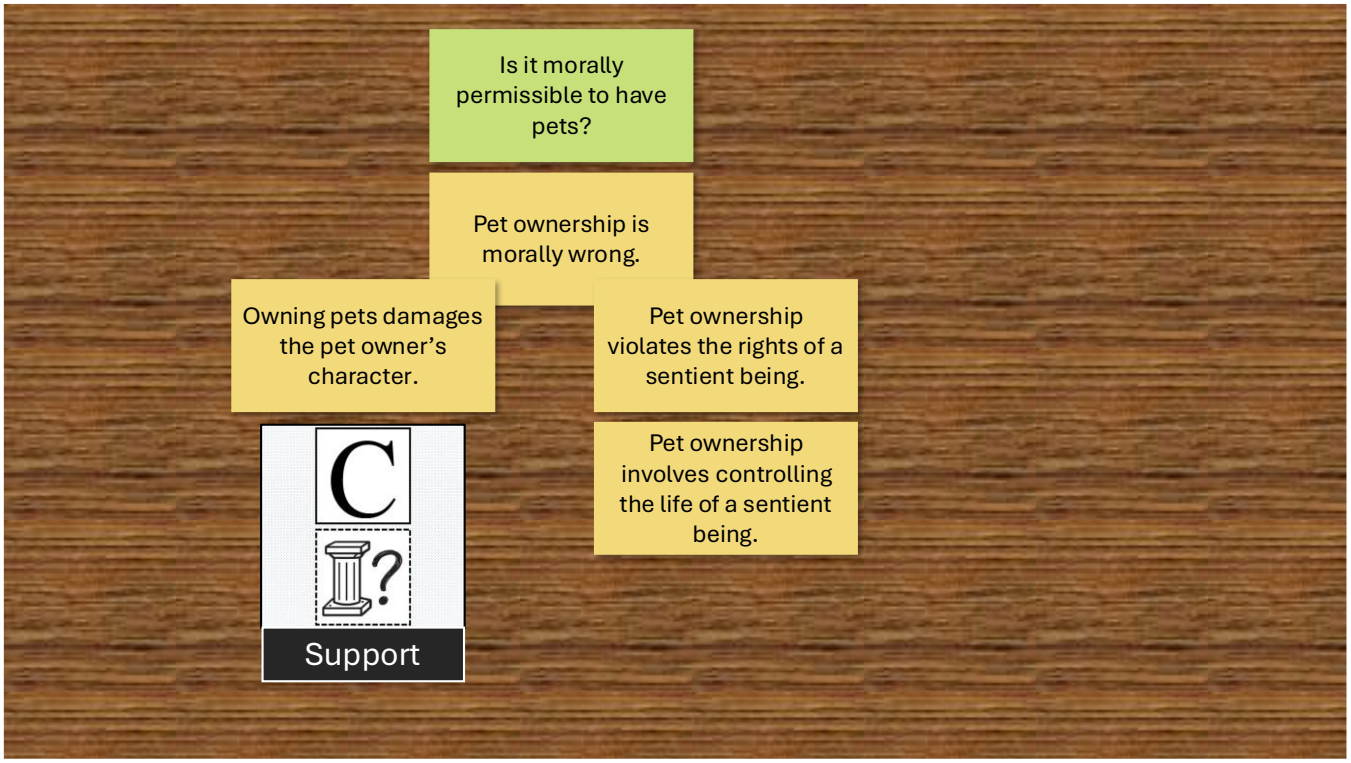
Once PRO does that, PRO will have two notes, one saying, "Owning pets damages the pet owner's character" and another saying, "Pet ownership is oppressive."

Because each of those claims provides its own support for "Pet ownership is morally wrong," PRO will put them underneath that claim and ensure that there's a fair amount of space between the notes.

At this point a player might wonder what PRO means by "oppressive" and make a revise request to get some clarification.



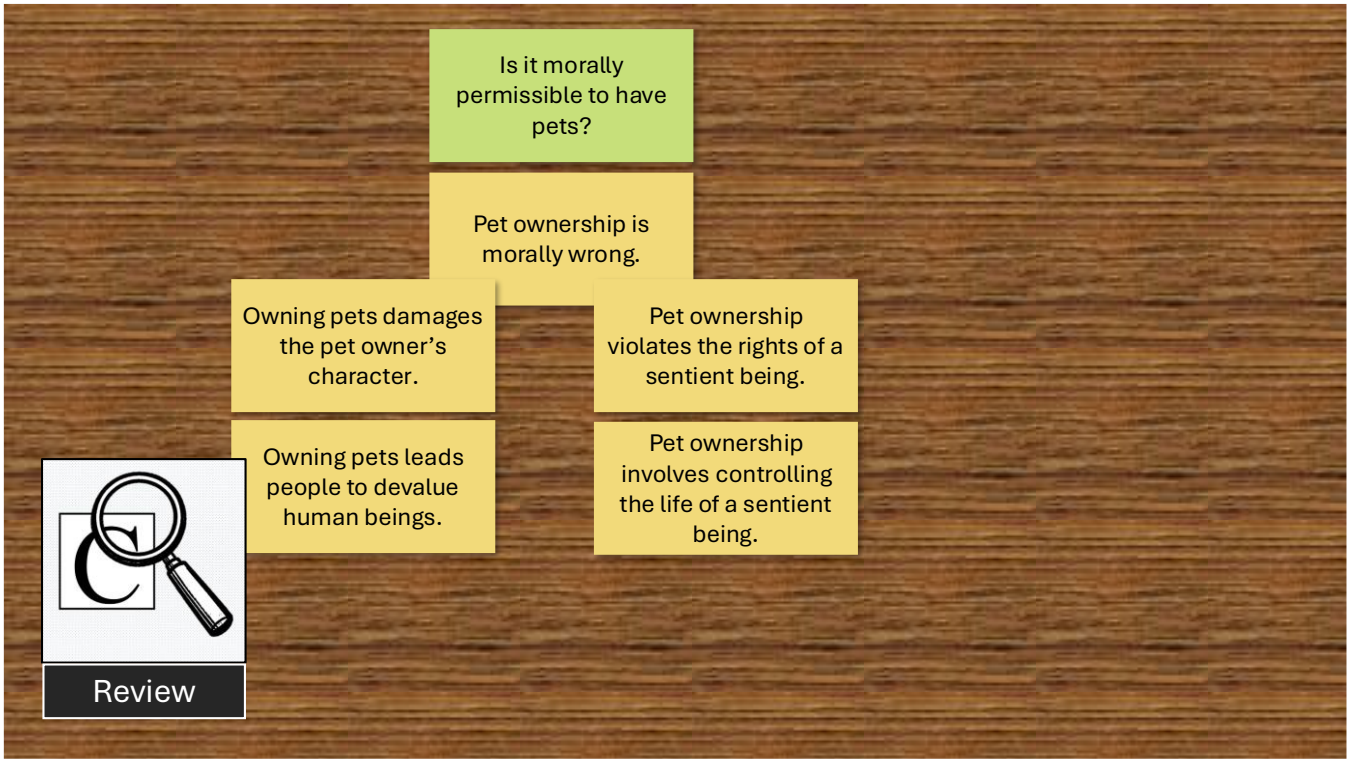
This might lead PRO to replace "Pet ownership is oppressive" with "Pet ownership violates the rights of a sentient being" supported by "Pet ownership involves controlling the life of a sentient being."



Looking at this reasoning as a whole, CON might doubt that "Owning pets damages the pet owner's character" is true.

CON could object to that claim, of course, or CON could request that PRO provide some support for it.

Let's suppose that's what CON does.

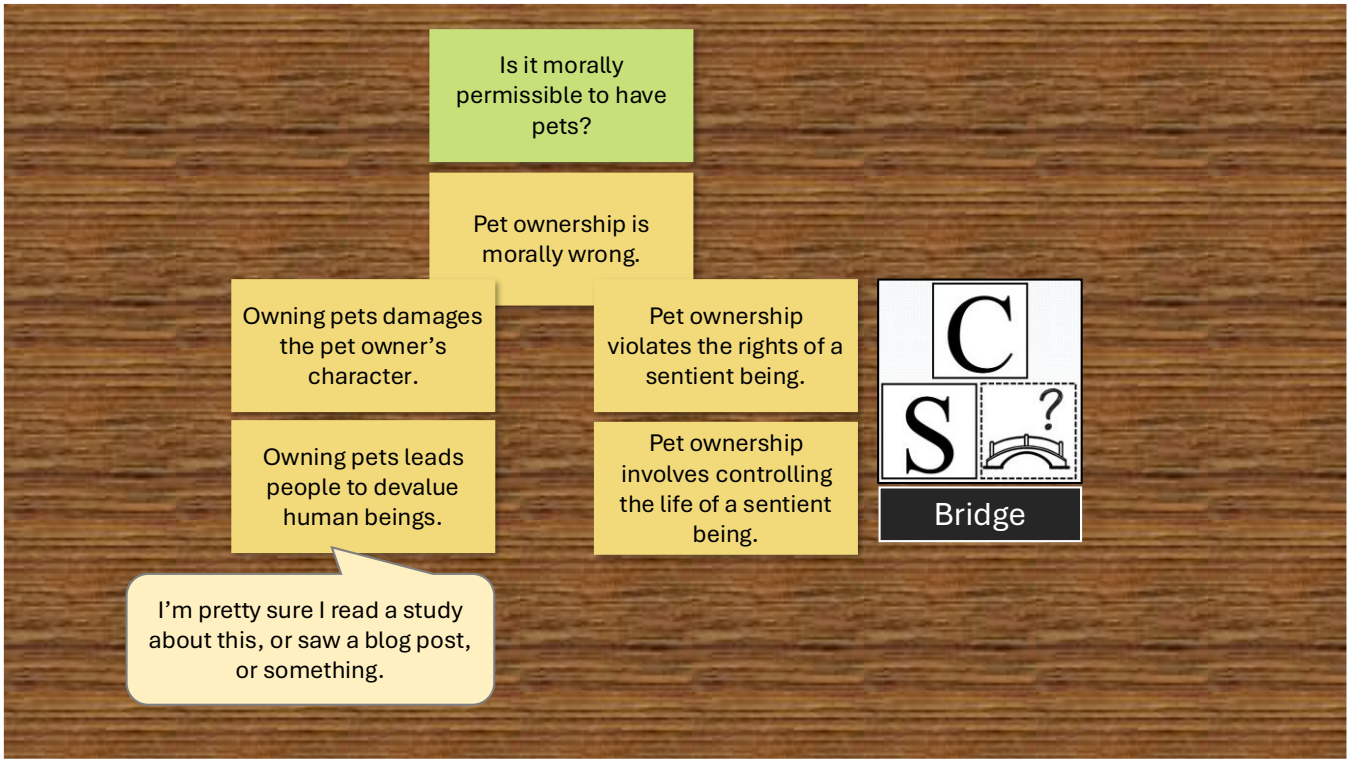


PRO might respond to the request for support by offering "Owning pets leads people to devalue human beings" as a reason to believe "Owning pets damages the pet owner's character."

CON would probably not be persuaded by this, of course.

CON could simply object to the claim that "Owning pets leads people to devalue human beings," or CON could make a Review request, inviting participants to work collaboratively to identify the relevant facts.

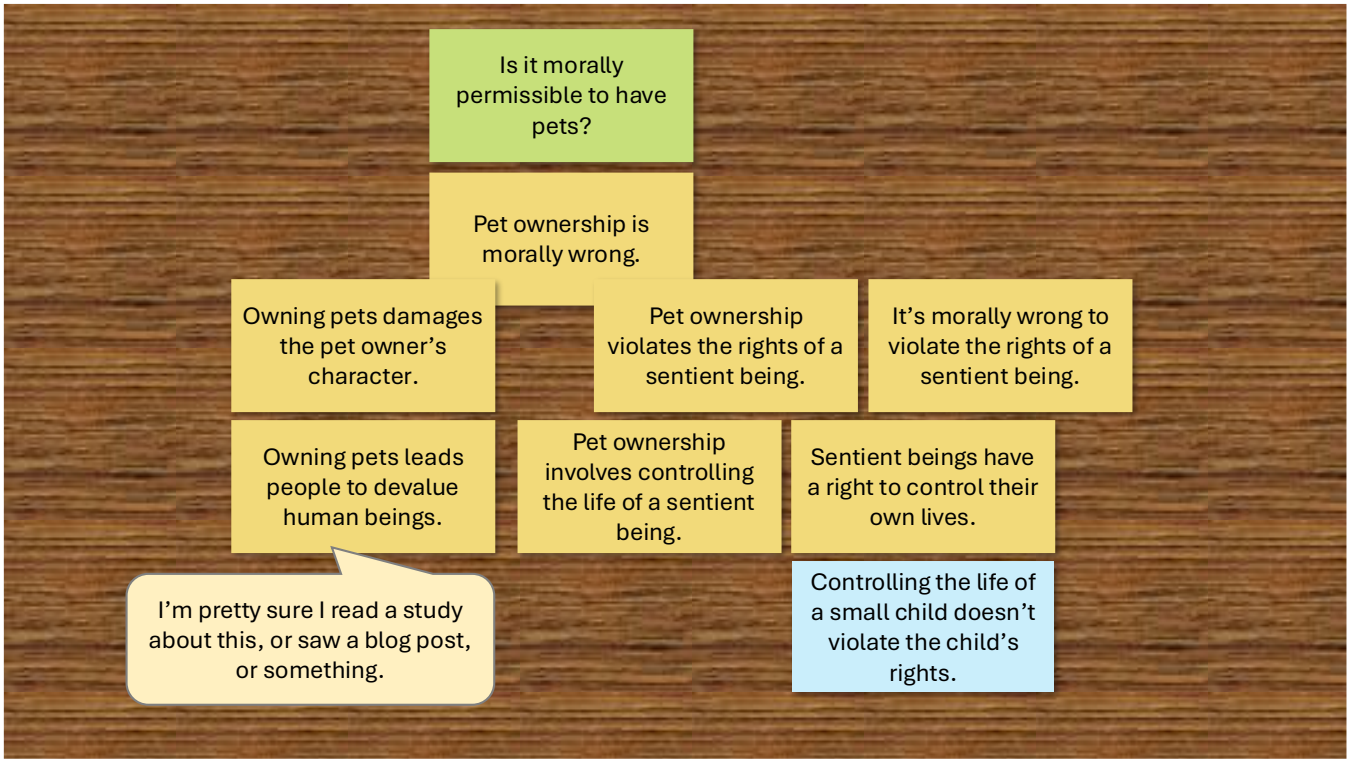
Let's suppose that's what CON does.



If all PRO can say is that they have some memory of reading a study or a blog post about the negative effects of pet ownership, players might agree to table this issue and check the facts later.

Looking at the other line of reasoning offered in support of the claim that pet ownership is morally wrong, CON might ask PRO to build the bridges connecting those claims.

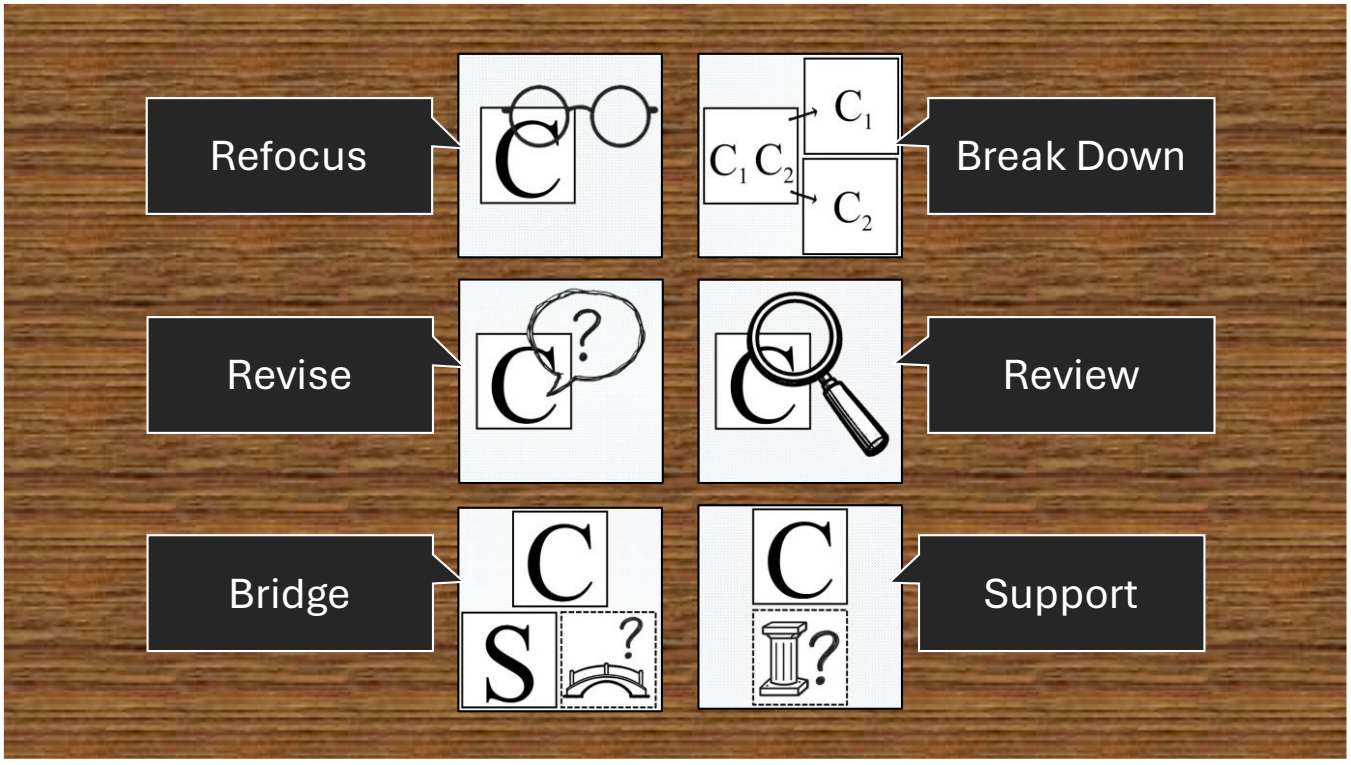
(This request can do wonders, as we'll see when we discuss the process of reflecting on the dialogue.)



In response to that request, PRO would probably bridge "Pet ownership violates the rights of a sentient being" and "Pet ownership is morally wrong," by stating "It's morally wrong to violate the rights of a sentient being."

And PRO would probably bridge "Pet ownership involves controlling the life of a sentient being" and "Pet ownership violates the rights of a sentient being" by stating "Sentient beings have a right to control their own lives."

At this point, CON might object to the claim that sentient beings have a right to control their own lives by asserting that controlling the life of a small child doesn't violate the child's rights.



And that's more or less how the six requests work.

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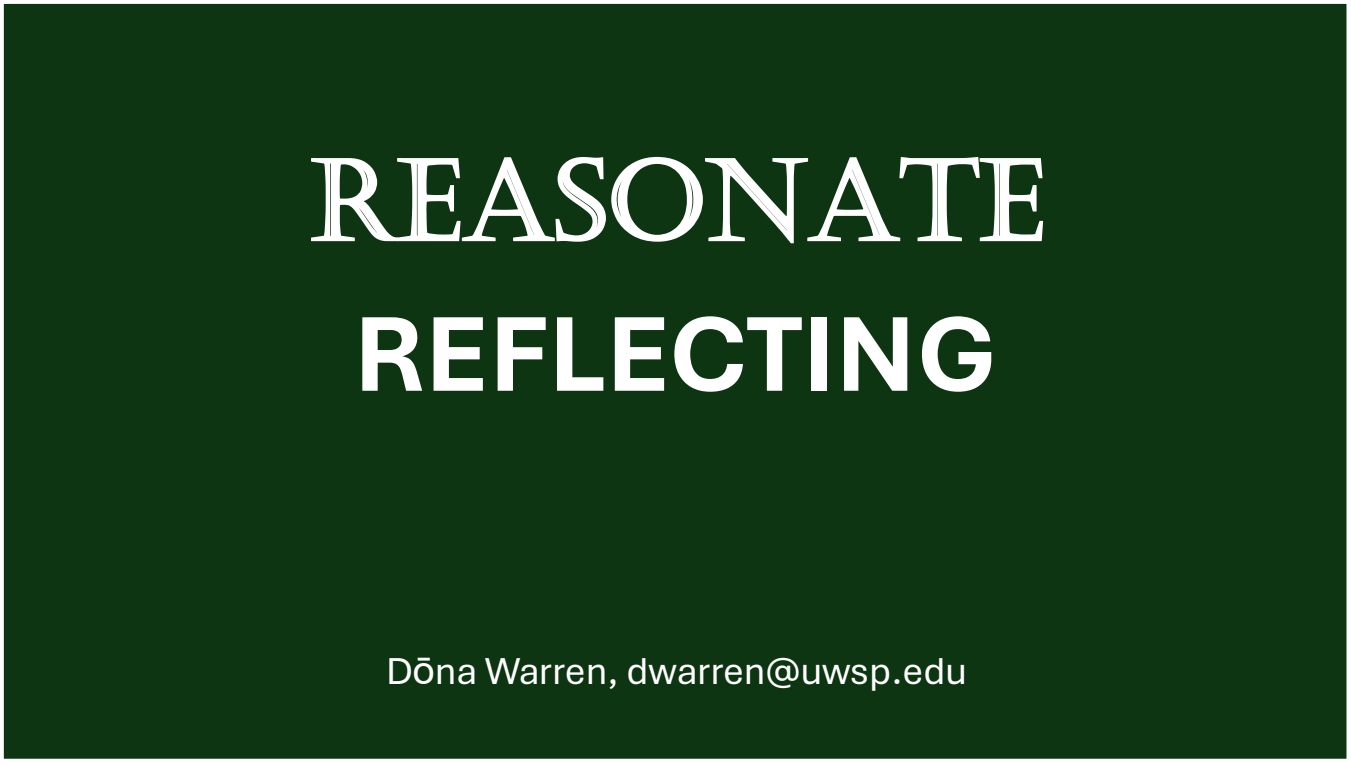
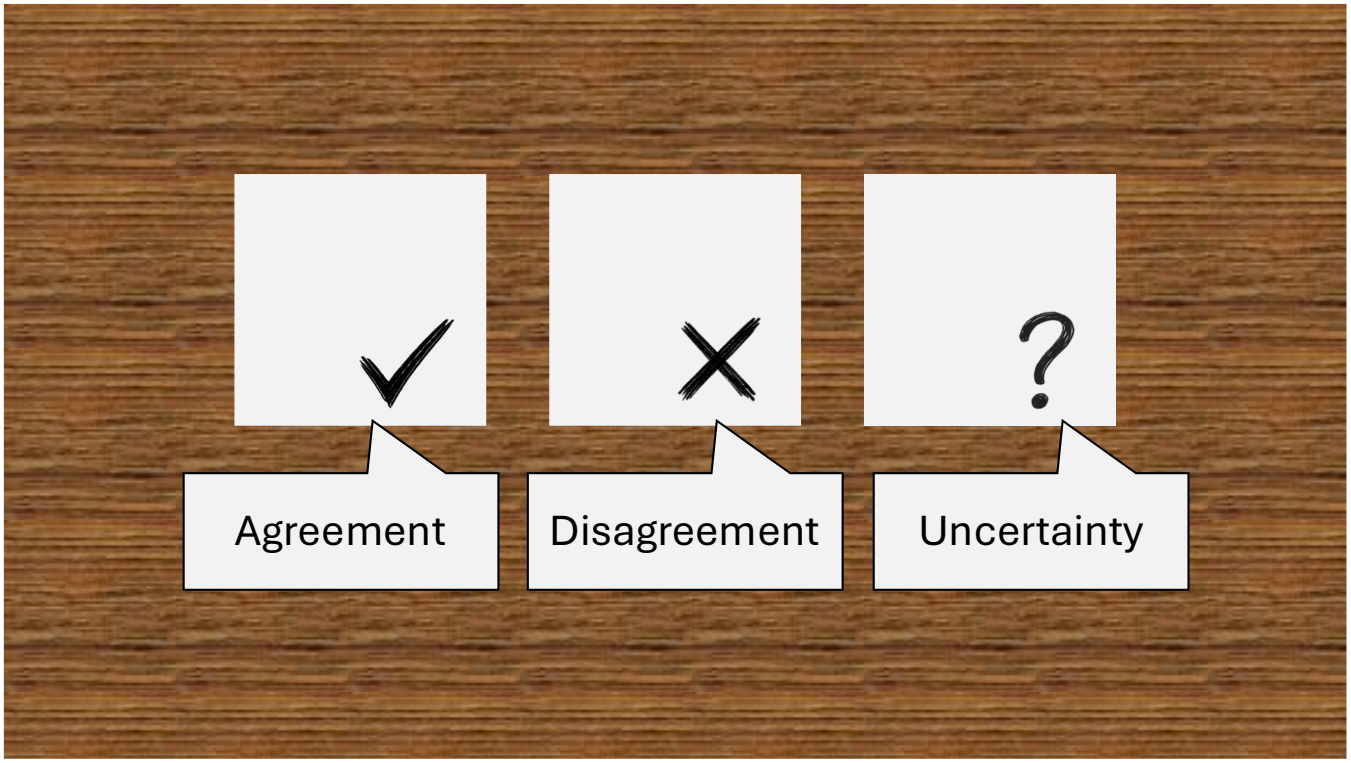
13 Reflecting



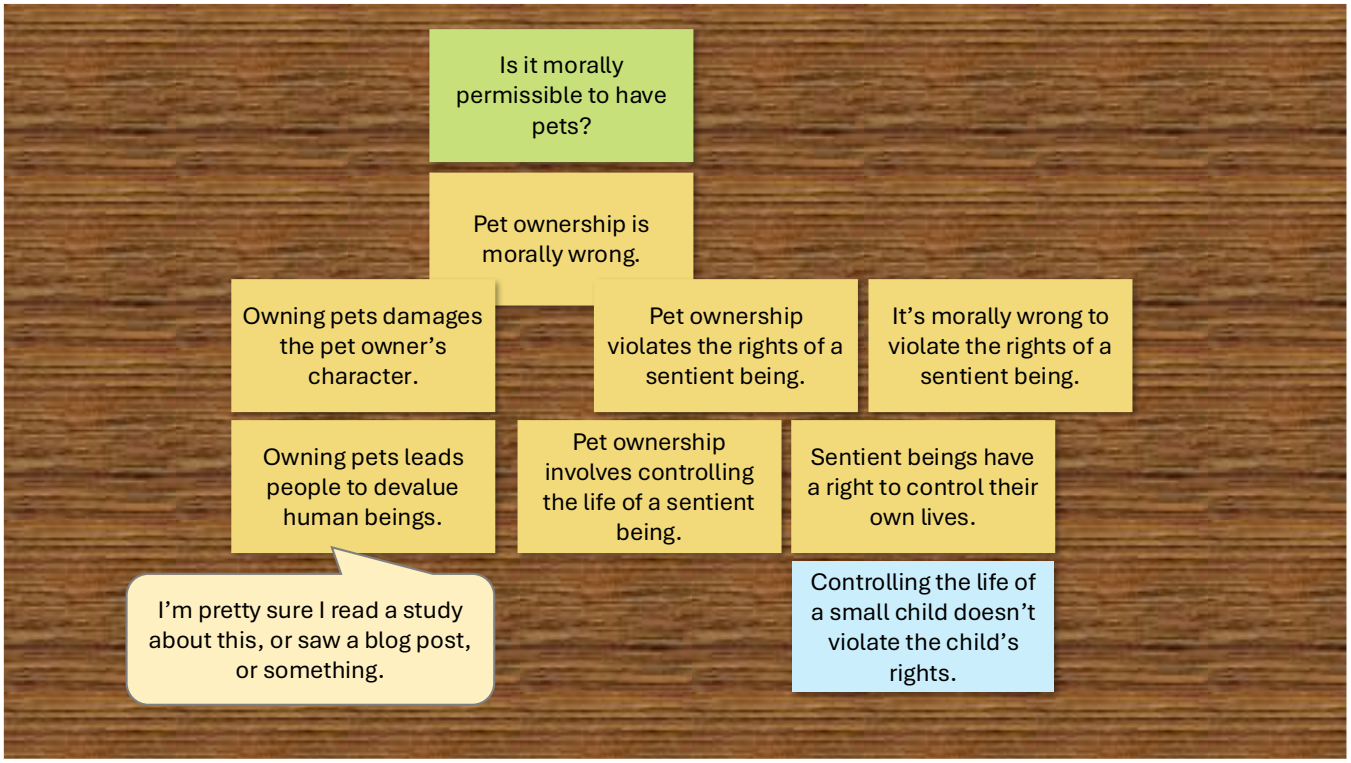
At any point in a dialogue, players may offer a reflection to highlight points of agreement, disagreement, or uncertainty.



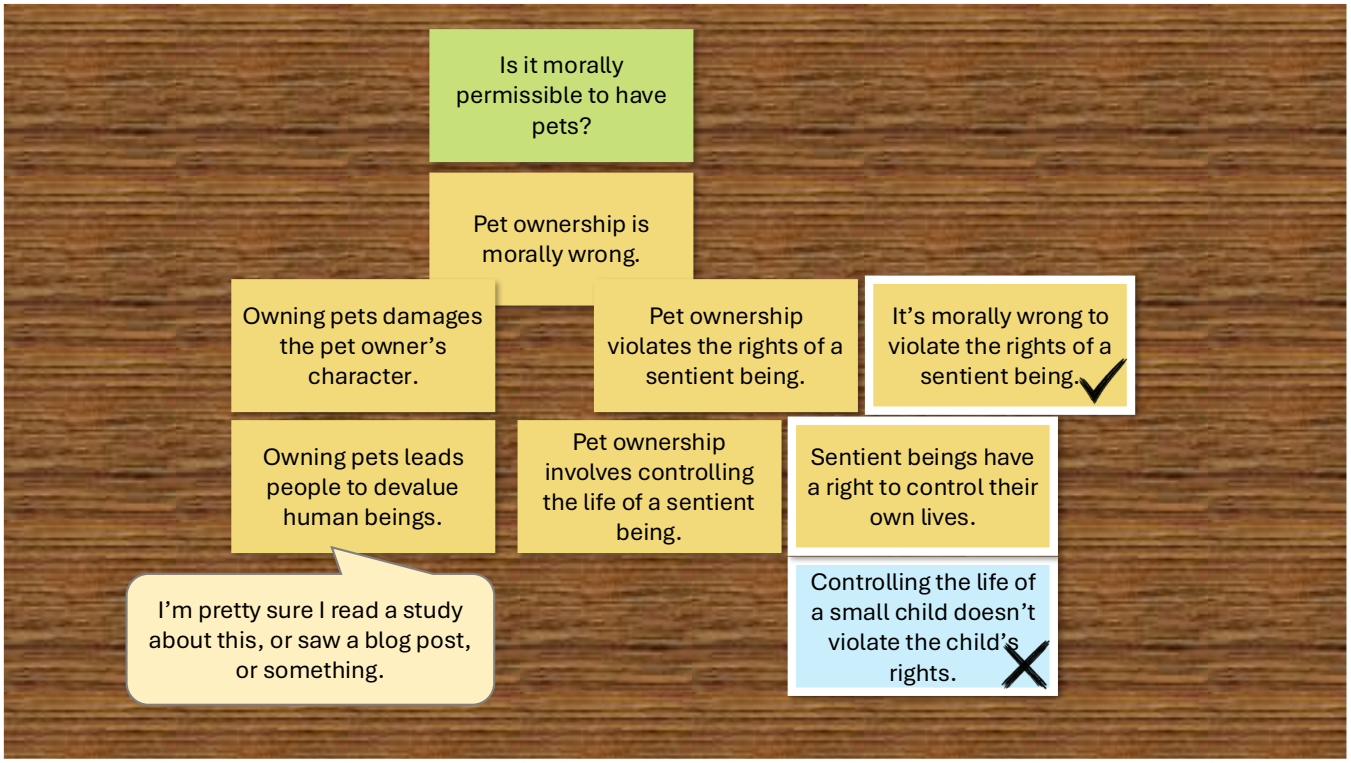
If all participants agree that a claim is true, they can mark that claim with a check.

If participants disagree about the truth of a claim, they can mark that claim with an X.

If participants aren't sure about the truth of a claim, they can mark that claim with a question mark.



For instance, let's consider the reasoning that emerged when we discussed requests.

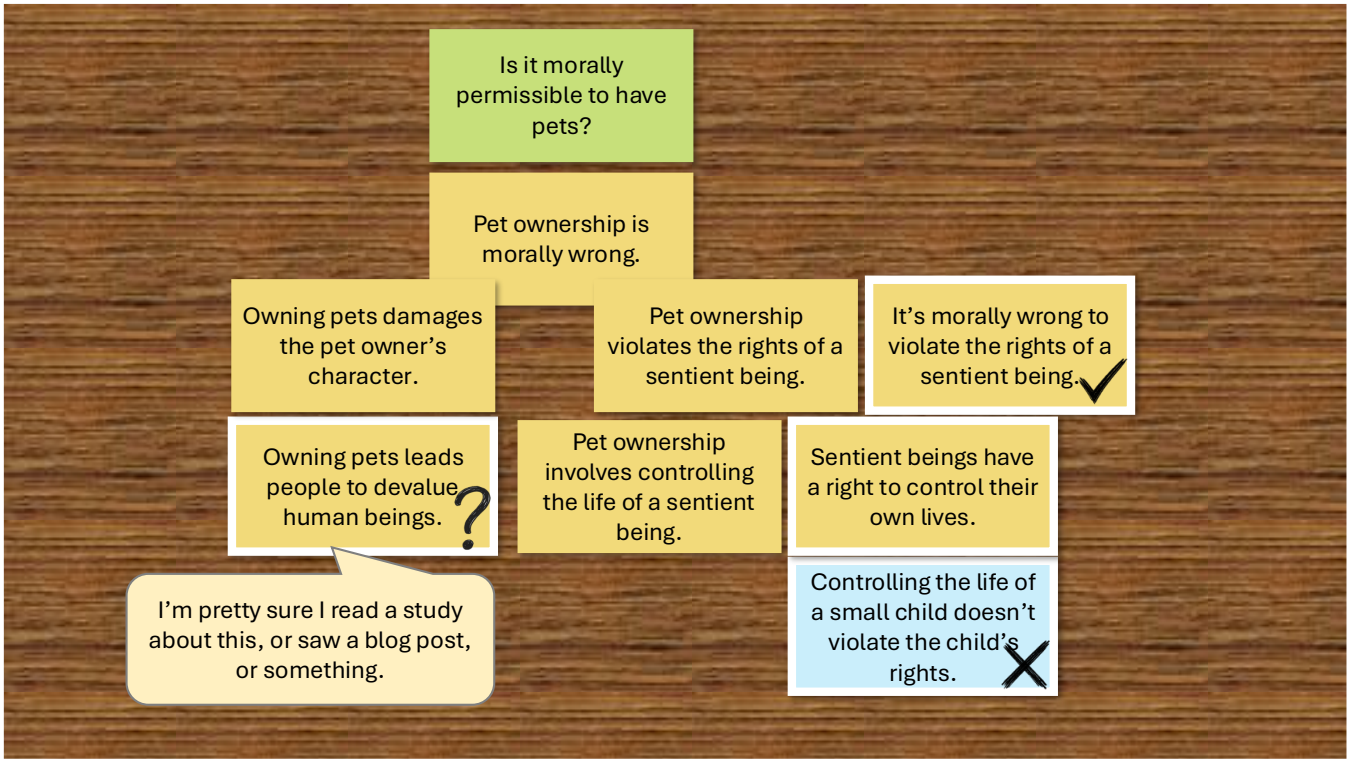


PRO's claim that it's morally wrong to violate the rights of a sentient being and the claim that sentient beings have a right to control their own lives resulted from the request that PRO build bridges connecting their claims.

It's not unusual for people to leave such bridging claims unstated, but it can be *incredibly* useful to fill them in because it can allow everyone to appreciate the points of agreement and disagreement.

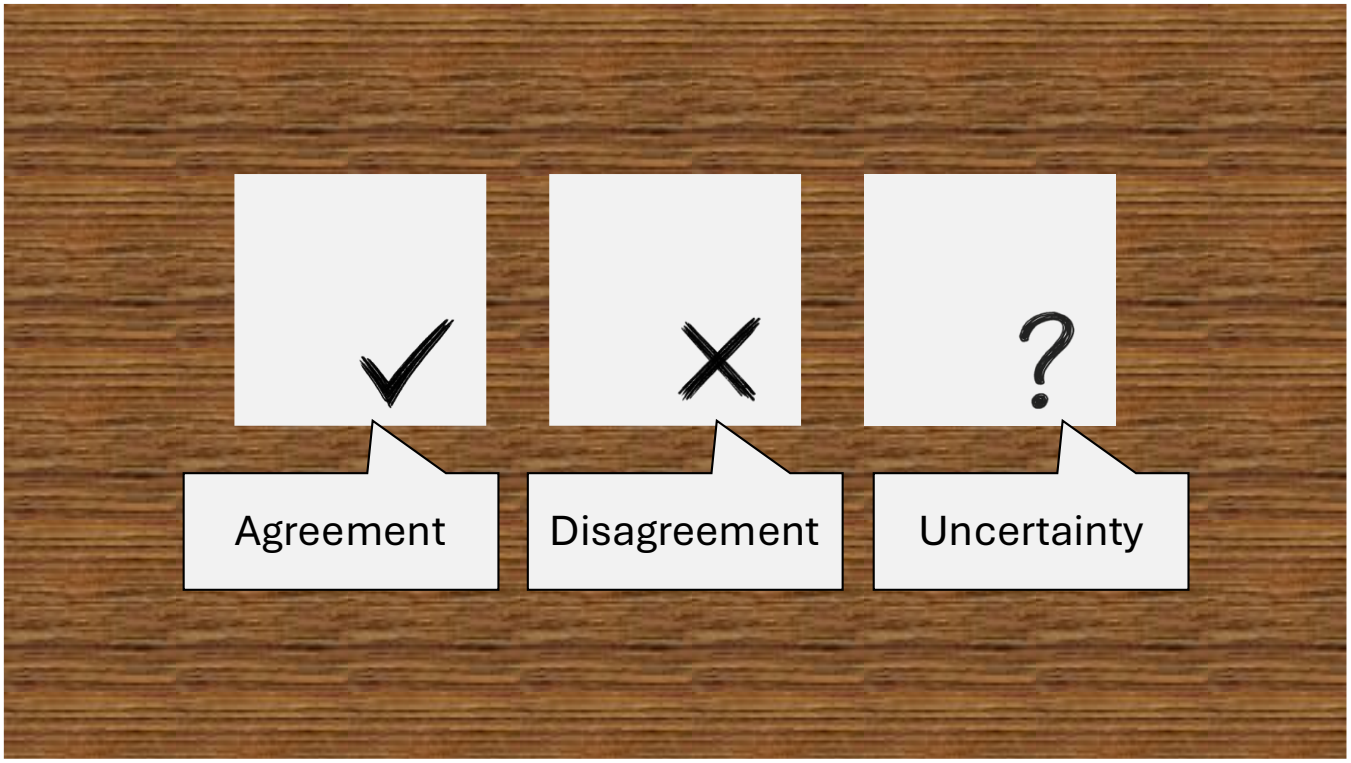
Here, PRO and CON might simply disagree about the extent to which controlling the life of a small child violates the child's rights. If they don't want to examine the reasoning for or against that claim – perhaps because they don't have time or don't think it would be productive – they can note the point of disagreement by marking it with an X.

Just as importantly, CON can acknowledge that they *agree* with PRO's bridging claim that it's morally wrong to violate the rights of a sentient being.



Finally, when PRO was asked for a review of the claim that pets leads people to devalue human beings, all PRO could say was that they had read a study or a blog post about the negative effects of pet ownership. In response, players agreed to table this issue and check the facts later.

If players eventually agree that they don't have the time, resources, or energy to investigate that issue, they can record their uncertainty about the claim by putting a question mark on the note.



By noting points of agreement, disagreement, and uncertainty, we can recognize commonalities, acknowledge real differences, and appreciate where the conversation might profitably go next.

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