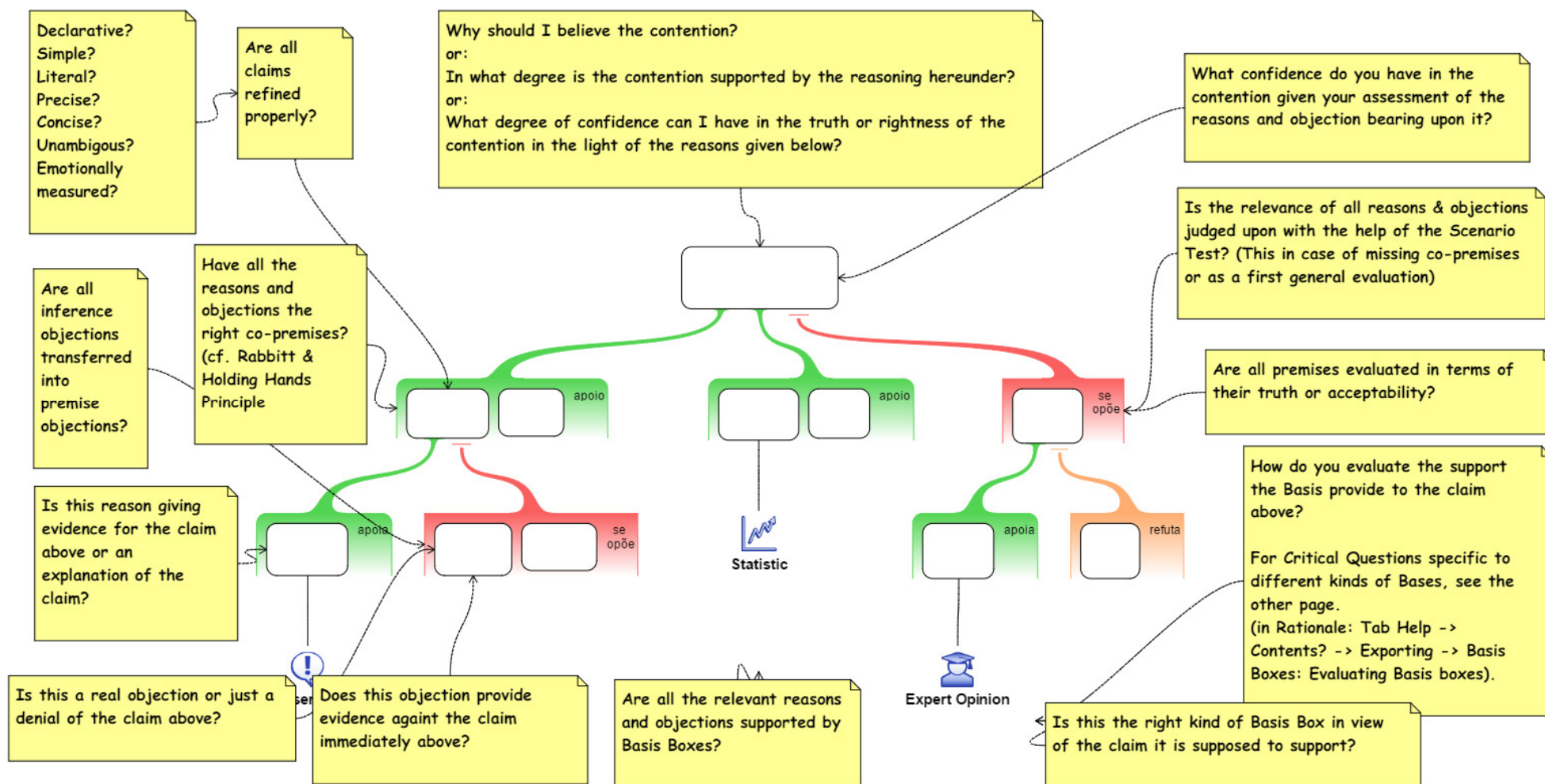


## Hand-out Critical Questions for Advanced reasoning / Analysing Maps

<https://www.rationaleonline.com/map/myxrma/critical-questions-for-analysing-maps/>



<p><b>Assertion</b> How reliable is the person who made this claim?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could that person be mistaken in some way? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Could they be misremembering?</li> <li>○ Are they in a position to know?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Is that person impartial? Could they have a reason to lie or misrepresent information?</li> <li>• How reliable is that person?</li> </ul> <p>Is the claim something that could count as knowledge, or is it merely someone's personal opinion?</p> <p><b>By Definition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the definition clear?</li> <li>• Does everyone agree with this definition?</li> <li>• Could two people mean something different by these expressions?</li> </ul> <p><b>Case Study</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the case study relevant?</li> <li>• Does the case study provide a good basis or analogy for the claim?</li> <li>• Do the results of the case study concur with the claim being made?</li> </ul> <p><b>Common Belief</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this belief true or is it just a popular opinion, common misunderstanding or stereotype?</li> <li>• Is this belief really held widely across the whole population?</li> <li>• Is this belief well founded?</li> <li>• Is this belief free of serious dispute?</li> <li>• If the claim is a common generalization, is it true or acceptable in this instance?</li> </ul> <p><b>Data</b> How reliable are the data?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How likely is it that the data could contain errors?</li> <li>• Could the data have been tampered with?</li> <li>• Were the data collected using a reliable and appropriate research method?</li> <li>• Are the data relevant, and do they really support the claim?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the event relevant?</li> <li>• Who reported the event and are they reliable?</li> <li>• Does the event support the claim or provide an appropriate analogy?</li> </ul> <p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How relevant is the example?</li> <li>• Is one example sufficient to establish the claim? (Sometimes a single example is enough to establish a claim; at other times it isn't.)</li> </ul> <p><b>Expert Opinion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the expert <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a genuine expert in an area relevant to the claim (i.e. do other experts recognize his or her expertise)?</li> <li>○ sincere?</li> <li>○ trustworthy and disinterested (i.e. free of conflicts of interest)?</li> <li>○ in a reasonable position to make this claim (e.g. if the claim is a prediction or hypothesis)?</li> <li>○ justifiably confident of the truth of this claim?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Is the claim seriously disputed by other experts in the field?</li> </ul> <p><b>Law</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this Act or precedent relevant to the claim?</li> <li>• Has the law been superseded?</li> <li>• Do the details of the claim in question match the requirements of the law?</li> </ul> <p><b>Media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this media report reliable?</li> <li>• Has the media report been manipulated in some way, for example, propaganda or commercial interest?</li> <li>• Is the media form a genuine information source or does it provide mere gossip and innuendo?</li> <li>• Does the media information provide a balanced view?</li> </ul> <p><b>Publication</b> How reliable is this publication?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How respected or respectable is the author in the relevant field?</li> <li>• How respected or respectable is the publisher?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the publication is on the internet, is it made available on a reliable institution's website?</li> <li>• If the publication is a journal, is it refereed or is everyone accepted for publication?</li> <li>• How recent is the publication? Could the information be out of date?</li> </ul> <p><b>Quote</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this quote genuine, or is the person being misquoted or quoted out of context?</li> <li>• Is the quote relevant to the claim above it?</li> <li>• Does the quote really support (e.g. substantiate or illustrate) the claim?</li> </ul> <p>Remember that when you are evaluating a quote as a basis for a claim, you are not just saying, for example, "It's true that this quote was made by Shakespeare in Macbeth"; rather you are saying, "This quote provides solid/shaky/nil support for the claim above".</p> <p><b>Statistic</b> How reliable is the statistical evidence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the statistics based on reliable data?</li> <li>• Was the sample used for the statistics sufficiently large and representative of the population about which it generalizes?</li> <li>• Are the statistics recent?</li> <li>• Are there other statistics in this area that show very different results?</li> <li>• Does the statistic come from a trustworthy, objective, unbiased and disinterested source (i.e. where there is no conflict of interests)? (E.g. who financed the study and why?)</li> <li>• How big is the leap from the analysis of the data to the conclusion or findings? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Does the interpretation of the data rely on questionable assumptions?</li> <li>○ If the claim is about a causal link, is there evidence of causation or merely correlation?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Web Resource</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the website provide reliable information for the claim being made? (Think about whether it is a .com, .edu or .org address).</li> <li>• Who operates this website? Are they a credible source?</li> <li>• Does this website provide balanced views or only one view?</li> </ul>
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