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Exercise Answers and Teaching Tips

Chapter 1: Introduction to Critical Thinking

Students enjoy the exercises in Chapter 1. Most are Socratic exercises, designed to ease students into the course and encourage self-reflection in dialogue with others. Instructors probably won't want to do all the exercises in this chapter. We generally do about half. Exercise 1.1 works well as an icebreaker. Students always enjoy Exercises 1.2 and 1.3, and Exercises 1.6.I and 1.6.III work well for instructors who stress writing.

Exercise 1.4

Discussion questions:

1. What can you consistently believe with regard to Culture A?

Answer: You must believe that it is right for Culture A to be a totally pacifist culture, and hence that it is right for Culture A to permit themselves to be conquered and enslaved by Culture B. (Assuming that this belief is consistent with what you must believe as a member of Culture C.)

2. What can you consistently believe with regard to Culture B?

Answer: You must believe that it is right for Culture B to be a militaristic and slaveholding culture, and hence that it is right for Culture B to conquer and enslave Culture A. (Assuming that this belief is consistent with what you must believe as a member of Culture C.)

3. What can you consistently do with regard to Culture A?

Answer: Since both Culture A and Culture B are doing what they consider to be morally right, you cannot do anything to interfere with the invasion. (Assuming that your noninterference is permitted by the values of Culture C.)

4. What can you consistently do with regard to Culture B?

Answer: You cannot do anything to interfere with Culture B's conquest of Culture A. (Assuming that your noninterference is permitted by the values of Culture C.)

Main Lesson of Case 1:

Moral relativism may commit us to certain beliefs or practices that, intuitively, seem to us to be terribly wrong. It makes it impossible for us to criticize the values and practices of other cultures that may seem to us to be clearly wrong or misguided.

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Critical Thinking 4th Edition Exercise Answers