

4.2. Arguing from and for alternatives

4.2.0. Overview

Because a disjunction normally says less than its components while a conjunction says more, the two connectives play very different roles in deductive inference.

4.2.1. Proofs by cases

Since a disjunction says only what is said by both its disjuncts, it entails only things that both of them entail.

4.2.2. Proving disjunctions

Since a disjunction makes a relatively weak claim, it is easy to state a sound rule to plan for it, but a safe rule that will cover all cases where it holds is more complex.

4.2.3. Further examples

There are now many choices to be regarding the order in which rules are applied and some differences in the length of derivations can result.

4.2.4. The duality of conjunction and disjunction

Conjunction and disjunction are, in a certain formal sense, mirror images of one another.

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4.2.1. Proofs by cases

The validity of the argument

Sam didn't praise the proposal without granting its significance
Sam didn't condemn the proposal without granting its significance
Sam either praised or condemned the proposal
Sam granted the proposal's significance.

can be accounted for by the validity of the following two arguments:

Sam didn't praise the proposal without granting its significance	Sam didn't praise the proposal without granting its significance
Sam didn't condemn the proposal without granting its significance	Sam didn't condemn the proposal without granting its significance
<u>Sam praised the proposal</u>	<u>Sam condemned the proposal</u>
Sam granted the proposal's significance	Sam granted the proposal's significance

Each replaces the disjunctive third premise of the original argument by one of its two components. This way of establishing an entailment is sometimes called a *proof by cases*. In this example, the two cases are Sam having praised the proposal and Sam having condemned it. Since the disjunction says all and only what is common to these two claims, what follows from the disjunction in isolation or in addition to other premises is what follows from each of these claims under similar circumstances.

More formally, the idea behind proofs by cases is captured by this principle:

LAW FOR DISJUNCTION AS A PREMISE. $\Gamma, \varphi \vee \psi \models \chi$ if and only if both $\Gamma, \varphi \models \chi$ and $\Gamma, \psi \models \chi$ (for any set Γ and sentences φ, ψ , and χ).

To see why this law is true note that to divide the members of Γ and $\varphi \vee \psi$ on the one hand from χ on the other, a possible world must make $\varphi \vee \psi$ and all members of Γ true while making χ false. To do this it must make at least one of φ and ψ true, so it must divide at least one of the arguments $\Gamma, \varphi / \chi$ and $\Gamma, \psi / \chi$. So, to say that the original argument is valid is to say that neither of these latter arguments can have its premises and alternatives divided—that is, that both are valid.

This idea appears in derivations by way of a rule we will call *Proof by Cases* (PC); it is shown in Figure 4.2.1-1.

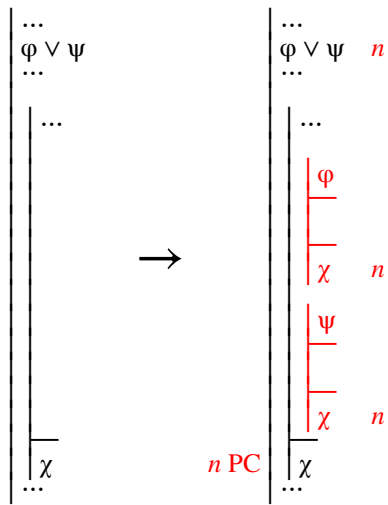


Fig. 4.2.1-1. Developing a derivation by exploiting a disjunction at stage n .

PC divides a gap into two new gaps. Each is a *case argument* that retains the original goal but adds one of the components of the disjunction as a supposition. The function of each supposition is to specify one of the two sorts of case in which the original disjunction is true. A supposition is required because, although our premises tell us that at least one of the disjuncts is true, we do not know which that is and the one that is true will vary among the possible worlds in which the premises are all true.

The safety and soundness (indeed, strictness) of this rule is shown by its effect on proximate arguments, which follows the pattern of law for disjunction as a premise understood as a rule for sequent proofs:

$$\text{disj. as prem.} \frac{\Gamma, \phi \vDash \chi \quad \Gamma, \psi \vDash \chi}{\Gamma, \phi \vee \psi \vDash \chi}$$

That is, moving from the root to the two branches, we exploit $\phi \vee \psi$ and thus drop it from the active resources, and we add assumptions ϕ and ψ by introducing suppositions ϕ and ψ with separate scope lines. The goal of the parent gap is carried over to each of its two children. The rule is safe because any interpretation dividing one of the children is bound to make the resources of the parent true because $\phi \vee \psi$ is implied by each of ϕ and ψ , and the requirement to make χ false remains unchanged as we move from the parent to the children. And the rule is strict because any interpretation dividing the parent must, in order to make $\phi \vee \psi$ true, make true at least one of ϕ and ψ .

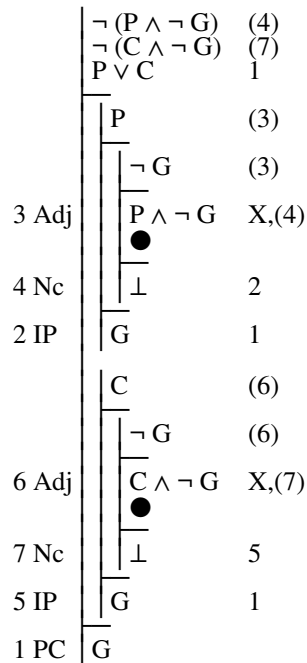
As in other cases, the use of numerical annotations in PC reflects the

corresponding rule for tree-form proofs:

$$\text{PC} \frac{\begin{array}{c} \phi \vee \psi \\ \chi \\ \chi \end{array}}{\chi}$$

The conclusion χ is based on three premises (two with assumptions that are discharged when we draw this conclusion), so in derivations the stage number appears on the right of three lines, the disjunction that is exploited and the goals of the two new scope lines.

Here is a derivation which uses derivation rule to provide a proof for the example with which we began.



C: Sam condemned the proposal; G: Sam granted the proposal's significance; P: Sam praised the proposal

In the two case arguments, we suppose first that Sam praised the proposal and then that he condemned it and, in each case, we show that he granted the proposal's significance (by showing that he could not have failed to grant it). Since at least one of these two cases must be true whenever the premises are all true, we know that the conclusion must be true also.

The rule for tree-form proofs displayed above shows that PC represents a new function for suppositions. Like Lem (or the special case LFR) on the one hand and RAA and IP on the other, we use suppositions in PC to consider the consequences of claims without asserting them. But, while we did this in RAA and IP in order to show the suppositions were false and in Lem and LFR in order to separate the proof of a claim from the investigation of its consequences, we do it here to consider separately the consequences of two alternatives without deciding which of the two is true.

The rule for tree-form proofs also makes it clear that, apart from the separation of ϕ and ψ , the form of PC is much like that of Lem, but there is an important difference in the way they are employed in proofs. The rule Lem would be used to initiate the search for a proof of its first premise. But, while the tree-form rule PC might be used in this way, we use PC in derivations

instead to derive consequences from a premise $\phi \vee \psi$ that has already been established, and that aspect of the derivation rule is better reflected in the rule for sequent proofs.

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4.2.2. Proving disjunctions

Now let us look at disjunctions as conclusions. An entailment $\Gamma \models \varphi \vee \psi$ will hold if and only if $\varphi \vee \psi$ is true in every possible world in which all members of Γ are true. But this is to say that at least one of φ and ψ is true in every such world, and that is a way of saying that Γ renders φ and ψ jointly exhaustive. So we can state the following principle:

$\Gamma \models \varphi \vee \psi$ if and only if $\Gamma \models \varphi, \psi$

Since the right-hand side has two alternatives, this is not a law concerning entailment alone, and we will not take the principle in this form as our account of the role of disjunctions as conclusions. However, we can use the basic law for conditional exhaustiveness to restate the right-hand side as claim of entailment. Indeed we have two ways of doing that. If φ and φ' are contradictory, we can say

$\Gamma \models \varphi \vee \psi$ if and only if $\Gamma, \varphi' \models \psi$

and if ψ and ψ' are contradictory, we can say

$\Gamma \models \varphi \vee \psi$ if and only if $\Gamma, \psi' \models \varphi$

In short, a disjunction is a valid conclusion from premises Γ if and only if adding to our premises a sentence contradictory to one disjunct enables us to validly conclude the other disjunct.

In stating a principle for disjunction we will limit ourselves to cases where a sentence and its negation are the pair of contradictory sentences. But, when the disjuncts are already negative, that leaves us with two choices for each of the pairs φ and φ' and ψ and ψ' since each of φ' and ψ' might be the result of either adding or dropping a negation. To avoid stating four principles to cover each of these possibilities, we will introduce some notation to capture the general idea of obtaining a contradictory sentence by either adding or dropping a negation. Let the sentence $\neg^\pm \varphi$ be the result of negating φ with an optional added step of deleting a double negation if φ was already negative. Then $\neg^\pm \varphi$ will stand for $\neg \varphi$ when φ is not a negation and, when φ is the negation $\neg \chi$, it will stand for either $\neg \neg \chi$ or χ . That is, $\neg^\pm \varphi$ is the result of either negating or, perhaps, de-negating φ , which means that $\neg^\pm \varphi$ will either be the negation of φ or have φ as its negation.

Then $\neg^\pm \varphi$ and φ form a contradictory pair consisting of a sentence and its negation in one order or the other, so we may formulate a principle to account for conclusions that are disjunctions with only two statements:

LAW FOR DISJUNCTION AS A CONCLUSION. (i) $\Gamma \models \varphi \vee \psi$ if and only if $\Gamma, \neg^\pm \varphi \models \psi$, and (ii) $\Gamma \models \varphi \vee \psi$ if and only if $\Gamma, \neg^\pm \psi \models \varphi$ (for any set Γ and sentences φ, ψ , and χ).

When these are implemented as derivation rules, they give us two ways of planning for a disjunctive goal.

The two rules are shown as alternative developments in Figure 4.2.2-1. We will refer to both forms of the rule as *Proof of Exhaustion* (PE) since it is a way of showing that φ and ψ , taken together, exhaust all possibilities left open by the premises.

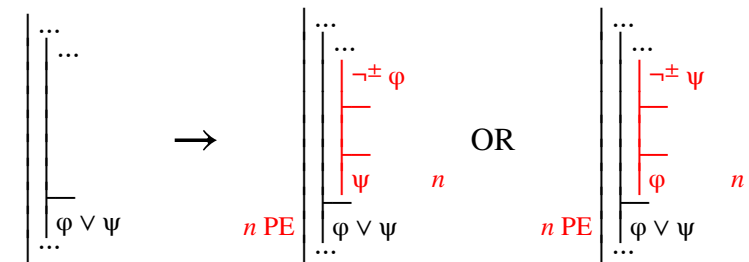


Fig. 4.2.2-1. Alternative ways of developing a derivation by planning for a disjunction at stage n .

In each way of developing a gap, we set one of the components of the disjunction as a new goal and add the negation or de-negation of the other component as a supposition. In each way of developing a gap, we set one of the components of the disjunction as a new goal.

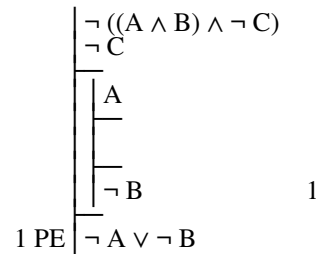
Both forms of planning will lead to the same answer in the end, but one or the other may be more efficient in a particular case. There is no simple way of predicting which choice is best but the following rules of thumb may help:

- (i) if only one component is a negation, choose it to form the supposition (by dropping its negation);
- (ii) if only one component is a non-negative compound choose it as the goal;
- (iii) if only one component seems likely to figure in closing the gap and it is not a negation, choose it as the goal.

In many cases none of these suggestions will apply; but, in most such cases, neither one of the two forms of the rule is better than the other.

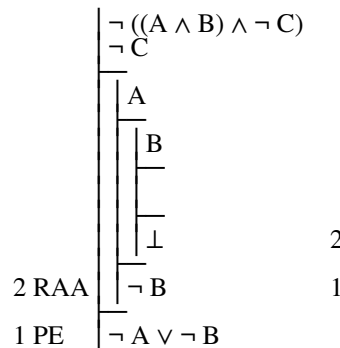
As an example of this rule, consider the argument below, understanding **X was out** to be the denial of **X was home**. The validity of this argument can be established by the English derivation whose first stage is shown at the right.

Ann and Bill were not both home
without the car being in the
driveway
The car was not in the driveway
Either Ann or Bill was out



The overall form is that of an argument that we will call “hypothetical” (for reasons discussed below) in which we suppose that Ann was at home (a supposition that is one of the two possibilities for $\neg \pm \neg A$) and establish under this supposition that Bill was out. This shows the connection between Ann being out and Bill being out that we claim when we state, outside the scope of the supposition, that at least one was out.

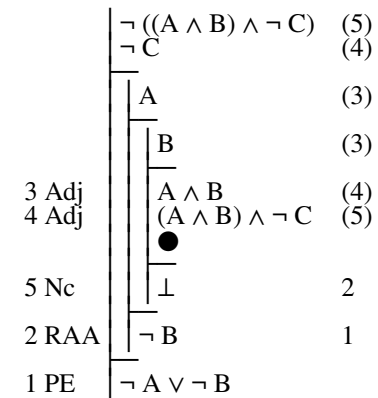
Notice that if we continue the derivation



we plan for the goal $\neg B$ by supposing B for *reductio*. And this example illustrates the different functions of the two sorts of supposition. We suppose that Ann is home in order to show that $\neg B$ (i.e., **Bill is out**) is true in all possible worlds in which $\neg A$ (i.e., **Ann is out**) is false. We go on to show that $\neg B$ is true in these cases by showing that to suppose further that B would rule out all possibilities—i.e., that this supposition would be absurd when added to our premises and the supposition A . From one point of view, both suppositions are merely added assumptions. But we add the first in order to show that to accept the second would be to go too far. That is, we add the second in order to show that we cannot accept it given the first, and we add the first to show that the second is related to it in this way.

To complete the derivation, we might exploit the first premise by CR, and this is the only way to proceed using basic rules. Doing this would make the conjunction $(A \wedge B) \wedge \neg C$ our goal; and, since its components are all

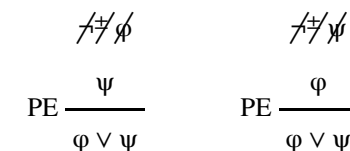
resources, it is clear that the gap would close. But, seeing this, we might choose instead to derive that conjunction by Adj.



Either way we are completing the *reductio*, in one case under the guidance of the rules and in the other under our own direction.

As noted above, the supposition in PE may be described as *hypothetical*, and this indicates the role it plays, a fourth role on top of those we have seen in Lem and LFR, in RAA and IP, and in PC. In RAA and IP, we make suppositions with the aim of showing that they are false. In Lem and LFR, we make a supposition to investigate the consequences of a claim that we plan to separately show to be true. In PC, we make a pair of suppositions, having already shown that at least one is true. In PE on the other hand, a supposition is made with no expectation of either truth or falsity. It is made instead simply to establish a connection between it and some other claim. As we argue within the scope of the supposition, we are making a *hypothetical argument*, an argument made “under a hypothesis.” The conclusion we draw when we discharge the supposition states a connection between the hypothesis and the conclusion of the hypothetical argument. This statement no longer falls under the supposition, and that can be indicated by saying that it is stated *categorically*.

In each of the two forms of PE, shown here as a rule for tree-form proofs,



the conclusion after the hypothetical argument says that at least one of two sentences is true. This is to say that, if one is false, the other is true. And this is

the connection established between the supposition and conclusion of the hypothetical argument in each form of the rule.

There is some danger of getting tangled in the terminology here, so let's pause and look at it more closely. The terms **hypothetical** and **categorical** derive from an ancient classification of sentences into the "categorical," the "disjunctive," and the "hypothetical." Since disjunctions and "hypothetical sentences" (the conditionals to be studied in the next chapter) are ways of hedging claims, the term **categorical** has acquired the meaning 'unhedged'. Now the disjunctive goal to which we applied this term above certainly hedges each of its components, so it does not state them categorically. But, while sentences along the scope line of the hypothetical argument are stated only "under a hypothesis"—that is, under the supposition of the hypothetical argument—the disjunction following the argument is no longer hedged in this way. That means it is stated categorically with respect to that supposition (though it may still fall in the scope of earlier ones). In short, when the scope line of a hypothetical argument ends, we move from hedged assertion of some claim (in the example above, the assertion of $\neg B$ under the hypothesis A) to unhedged assertion of a claim that incorporates a hedge (i.e., $\neg A \vee \neg B$ in the example).

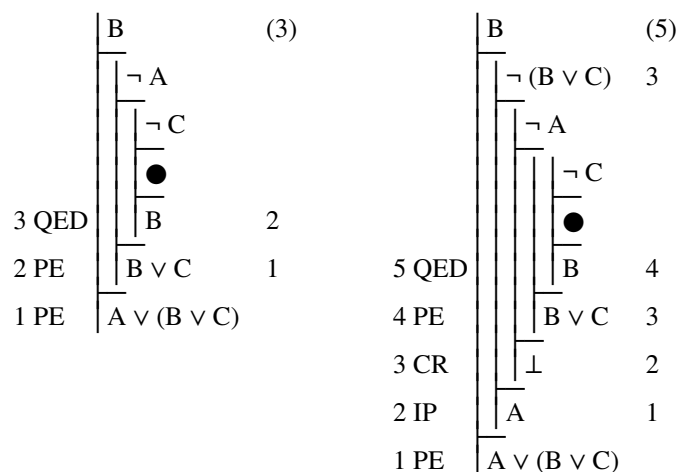
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4.2.3. Further examples

Both disjunction rules are illustrated by the derivation at the right, in which one grouping of a three-part disjunction is shown to entail the other. Choices between the two ways of planning for a goal disjunction were made at stages 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 in accordance with the rules of thumb given above. Each choice helped to shorten the derivation—though only by a few steps. The derivation is contrived to provide several examples of this rule; we might have instead planned for the initial goal at stage 1 before exploiting the premise rather than planning for it separately in each of three gaps.

	$A \vee (B \vee C)$		1
	A		(4)
	$\neg C$		
	$\neg B$		
	●		
4 QED	A		3
3 PE	$A \vee B$		2
2 PE	$(A \vee B) \vee C$		1
	$B \vee C$		5
	B		(8)
	$\neg C$		
	$\neg A$		
	●		
8 QED	B		7
7 PE	$A \vee B$		6
6 PE	$(A \vee B) \vee C$		5
	C		(10)
	$\neg (A \vee B)$		
	●		
10 QED	C		9
9 PE	$(A \vee B) \vee C$		5
5 PC	$(A \vee B) \vee C$		1
1 PC	$(A \vee B) \vee C$		

The two derivations below illustrate the scale of the difference you can expect a choice between the two forms of PE to make.



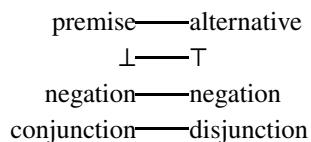
as an alternative and disjunction behaves as premise much as conjunction behaves as an alternative.

Since \perp and \top are paired as duals and so are conjunction and disjunction, you might wonder about negation. In fact, it is dual to itself. If we negate each of a pair of contradictory sentences, the results are contradictory; that is, we do not need to apply different operations to the two contradictory sentences in order for the results to be contradictory. And negations behavior as a premise is analogous to its behavior as an alternative.

$$\begin{aligned}\Gamma, \neg \varphi \vDash \Delta \text{ iff } \Gamma \vDash \varphi, \Delta \\ \Gamma \vDash \neg \varphi, \Delta \text{ iff } \Gamma, \varphi \vDash \Delta\end{aligned}$$

Having a negated premise or alternative is equivalent to having the unnegated sentence in the opposite role.

The term **duality** points to a certain sort of two-for-one principle. It is used when there is some way of associating vocabulary items as pairs so that replacing one member of a pair by the other throughout any truth will yield another truth. In our case, we have the associations



So, for example (and to deal only with informal statements of the principles), the principle

A conjunction as an assumption may be replaced by its components as separate assumptions

(the upper left in the table of principles for conjunction and disjunction above) turns into

A disjunction as an alternative may be replaced by its components as separate alternatives

(the lower right in that table). And the principle

A negation as an assumption may be replaced by its immediate component as an alternative

(the first of the principles for negation displayed above) turns into

A negation as an alternative may be replaced by its immediate component as an assumption

(the second of those principles). We will see more examples of such

transformations in the next section but we have already seen some further ones: each of the two forms of De Morgan's laws may be transformed into the other by this association.

Since these transformations treat assumptions and alternatives in a parallel way, not all will apply to entailment, which allows multiple premises but only a single alternative. However, we have also seen that principles for conditional exhaustiveness may be transformed still further into principles of entailment by the law alternatives *via* assumptions.

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4.2.s. Summary

- 1 A disjunction $\varphi \vee \psi$ is false only when its disjuncts are both false, and it thus says only what both of them say. The law for disjunction as a premise tell us that we can establish a conclusion using such a premise by showing that it is entailed by each of the disjuncts (given our other premises). This way of exploiting a disjunction is known as a proof by cases and it appears in our system of derivations as the rule Proof by Cases (PC) that leads us to divide a gap into two case arguments, each of which takes over the original goal and adds one of the two disjuncts as a supposition.
- 2 To show that a disjunction is a valid conclusion, we must show that its disjuncts are rendered jointly exhaustive by the premises. We can do this by showing that one of the disjuncts will follow if we add the contradictory of the other to our premises. We use the notation $\neg^{\pm} \varphi$ to indicate the result of either negating or de-negating φ . The law for disjunction as a conclusion then tells us that we can conclude a disjunction if we can conclude one disjunct provided we take the negation or de-negation of the other disjunct as a premise. The rule implementing this idea is Proof of Exhaustion; it enables us to conclude a disjunction from an argument that may be called hypothetical since it bases a disjunct on an assumption (of the negation or de-negation of the other disjunct) that we may not be prepared to assert categorically. It does not matter for the soundness or safety of PE which disjunct figures as the goal of this hypothetical argument and which is negated or de-negated in its supposition.
- 3 Derivations, especially those that have a disjunction as a goal as well as a premise can often be developed in different ways. Some of these can be significantly longer than others but the choice between forms of PE will usually have only a limited impact on the length.
- 4 Conjunction and disjunction are opposite in the sense of being dual. One manifestation of this relation is in De Morgan's laws, which tell how to restate the denial of a conjunction or disjunction as an assertion of the other form of compound. Another manifestation is a pattern in laws of conditional exhaustiveness which allows us to interchange conjunctions and disjunctions if at the same time we interchange \perp and \top and also premises and alternatives.

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4.2.x. Exercises

1. Use derivations to establish each of the claims of entailment and equivalence shown below. (Remember that claims of equivalence require derivations in both directions.)
 - a. $A \wedge B \vDash A \vee B$
 - b. $A \wedge B \vDash B \vee C$
 - c. $A \vee B, \neg A \vDash B$
 - d. $A \vee (A \wedge B) \vDash A$
 - e. $A \vee B, \neg (A \wedge C), \neg (B \wedge C) \vDash \neg C$
 - f. $A \wedge (B \vee C) \vDash (A \wedge B) \vee C$
 - g. $A \vee B, C \vDash (A \wedge C) \vee (B \wedge C)$
 - h. $A \vee B, \neg A \vee C \vDash B \vee C$
 - i. $A \simeq (A \wedge B) \vee (A \wedge \neg B)$
2. Use derivations to establish each of the claims of equivalence below.
 - a. $A \vee A \simeq A$
 - b. $A \vee B \simeq B \vee A$
 - c. $A \vee (B \vee C) \simeq (A \vee B) \vee C$
 - d. $A \vee (B \wedge \neg B) \simeq A$
 - e. $\neg (A \vee B) \simeq \neg A \wedge \neg B$
 - f. $\neg (A \wedge B) \simeq \neg A \vee \neg B$
3. Use derivations to check each of the claims below; if a derivation indicates that a claim fails, present a counterexample that divides an open gap.
 - a. $A \vee B, A \vDash \neg B$
 - b. $A \vee (B \wedge C) \simeq (A \vee B) \wedge C$
 - c. $\neg (A \vee B) \simeq \neg A \vee \neg B$

For more exercises, use the exercise machine.

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4.2.xa. Exercise answers

1. a.

	$A \wedge B$	1
1 Ext	A	
1 Ext	B	(3)
	$\neg A$	
	●	
3 QED	B	2
2 PE	$A \vee B$	

b.

	$A \wedge B$	1
1 Ext	A	
1 Ext	B	(3)
	$\neg C$	
	●	
3 QED	B	2
2 PE	$B \vee C$	

c.

	$A \vee B$	1
	$\neg A$	(3)
	A	(3)
	$\neg B$	
	●	
3 Nc	\perp	2
2 IP	B	1
	B	(4)
	●	
4 QED	B	1
1 PC	B	

d.

	$A \vee (A \wedge B)$	1
	A	(2)
	●	
2 QED	A	1
	$A \wedge B$	3
3 Ext	A	(4)
3 Ext	B	
	●	
4 QED	A	1
1 PC	A	

e.

	$A \vee B$	2
	$\neg (A \wedge C)$	3
	$\neg (B \wedge C)$	7
	C	(6),(10)
	A	(5)
	●	
5 QED	A	4
	●	
6 QED	C	4
4 Cnj	$A \wedge C$	3
3 CR	\perp	2
	B	(9)
	●	
9 QED	B	8
	●	
10 QED	C	8
8 Cnj	$B \wedge C$	7
7 CR	\perp	2
2 PC	\perp	1
1 RAA	$\neg C$	

f.

	$A \wedge (B \vee C)$	1
1 Ext	A	(5)
1 Ext	$B \vee C$	2
	B	(6)
	$\neg C$	
	●	
5 QED	A	4
	●	
6 QED	B	4
4 Cnj	$A \wedge B$	3
3 PE	$(A \wedge B) \vee C$	2
	C	(8)
	$\neg (A \wedge B)$	
	●	
8 QED	C	7
7 PE	$(A \wedge B) \vee C$	2
2 PC	$(A \wedge B) \vee C$	

g.

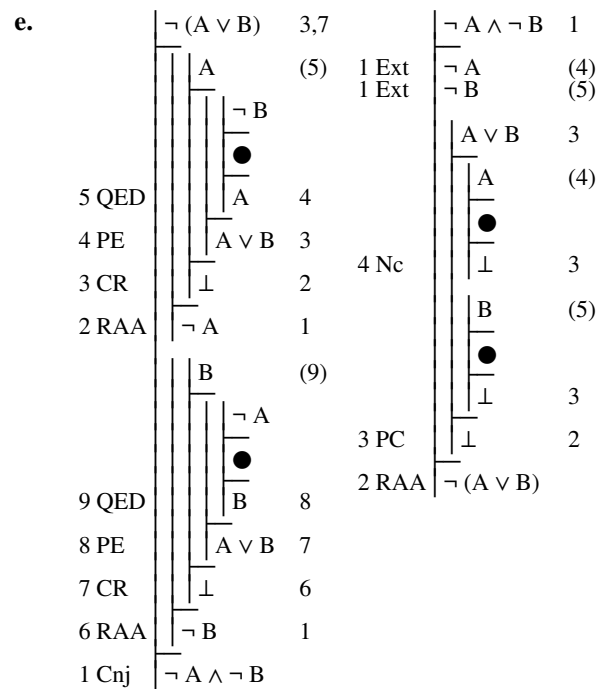
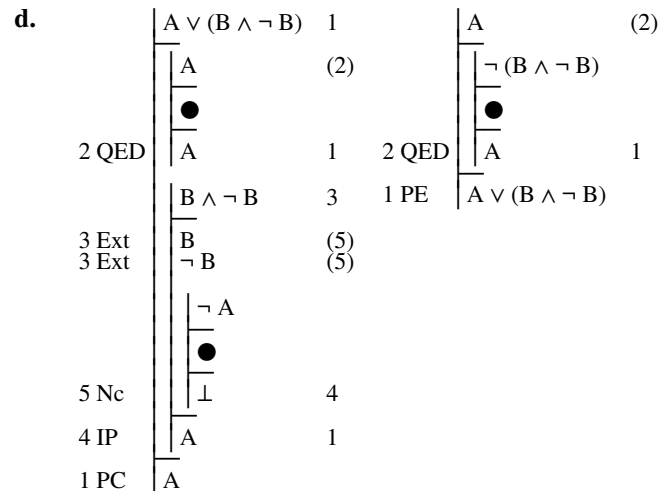
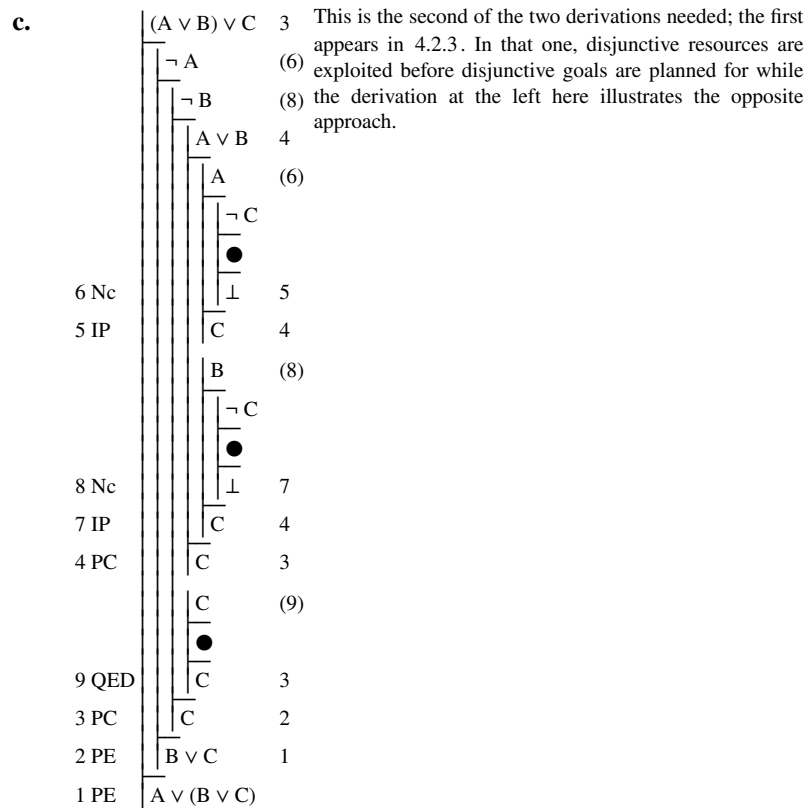
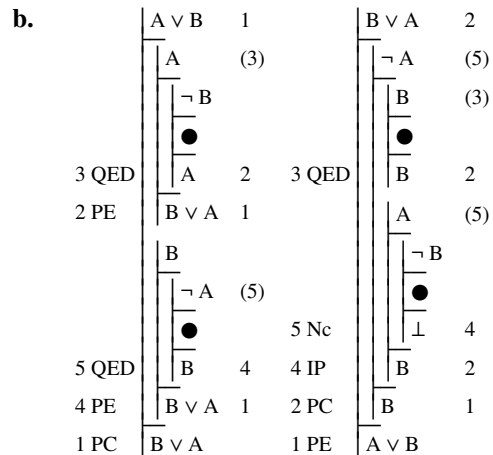
	$A \vee B$	1	h.	$A \vee B$	1
	C	(5),(9)		$\neg A \vee C$	2
	A	(4)		A	(5)
	$\neg(B \wedge C)$			$\neg A$	(5)
4 QED	A	3		$\neg B$	
	\bullet			$\neg C$	
5 QED	C	3	5 Nc	\perp	4
3 Cnj	$A \wedge C$	2	4 IP	C	3
2 PE	$(A \wedge C) \vee (B \wedge C)$	1	3 PE	$B \vee C$	2
	B	(8)		C	(7)
	$\neg(A \wedge C)$			$\neg B$	
8 QED	B	7	7 QED	C	6
	\bullet		6 PE	$B \vee C$	2
9 QED	C	7	2 PC	$B \vee C$	1
7 Cnj	$B \wedge C$	6		B	(9)
6 PE	$(A \wedge C) \vee (B \wedge C)$	1		$\neg C$	
1 PC	$(A \wedge C) \vee (B \wedge C)$			\bullet	
			9 QED	B	8
			8 PE	$B \vee C$	1
			1 PC	$B \vee C$	

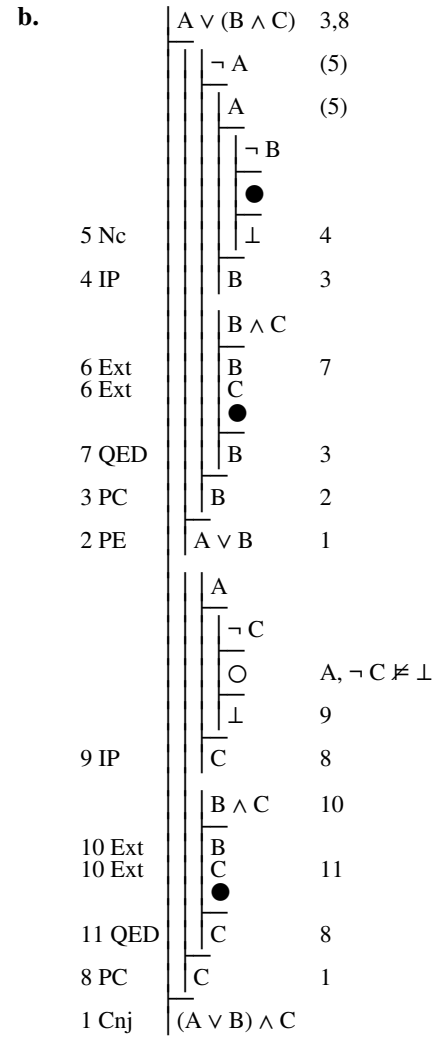
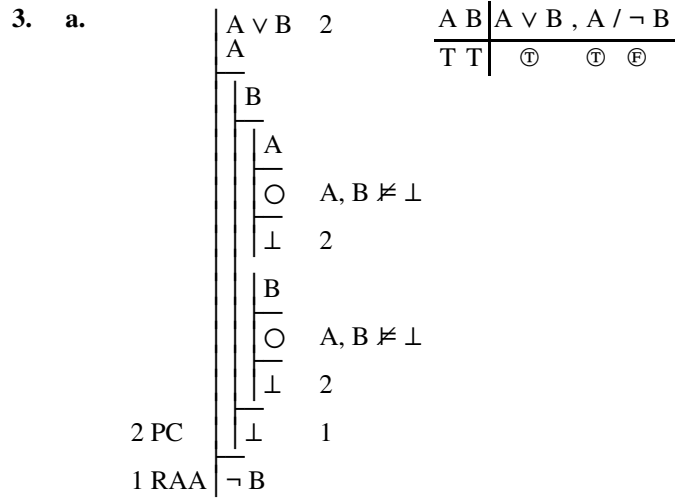
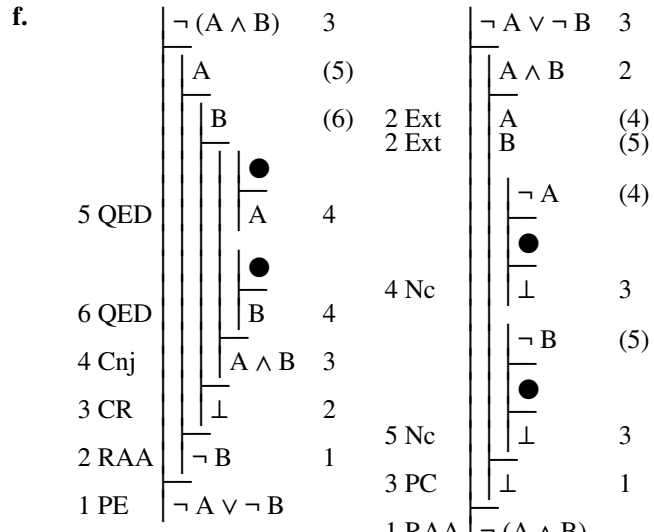
i.

	A	(3),(7)	$(A \wedge B) \vee (A \wedge \neg B)$	1	
	$\neg(A \wedge B)$	5	$A \wedge B$	2	
3 QED	A	2	2 Ext	A	(3)
	\bullet		2 Ext	B	
	B	(8)	3 QED	A	1
7 QED	A	6		$A \wedge \neg B$	4
	\bullet		4 Ext	A	(5)
8 QED	B	6	4 Ext	$\neg B$	
6 Cnj	$A \wedge B$	5	5 QED	A	1
5 CR	\perp	4	1 PC	A	
4 RAA	$\neg B$	2			
2 Cnj	$A \wedge \neg B$	1			
1 PE	$(A \wedge B) \vee (A \wedge \neg B)$				

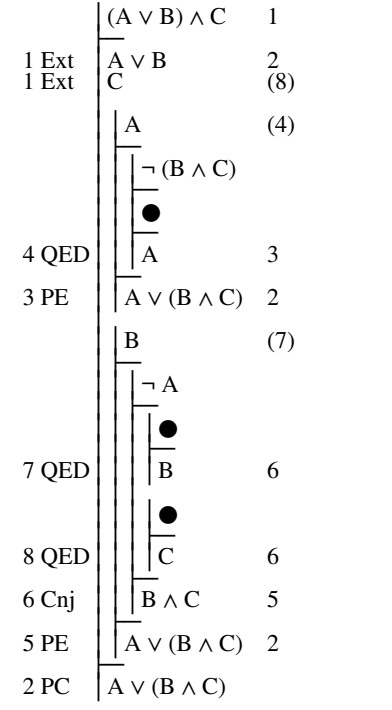
2. a.

	$A \vee A$	1	A	(2)	
	A	(2)	$\neg A$		
2 QED	A	1	\bullet		
	\bullet		2 QED	A	1
	A	(3)	1 PE	$A \vee A$	
3 QED	A	1			
1 PC	A				



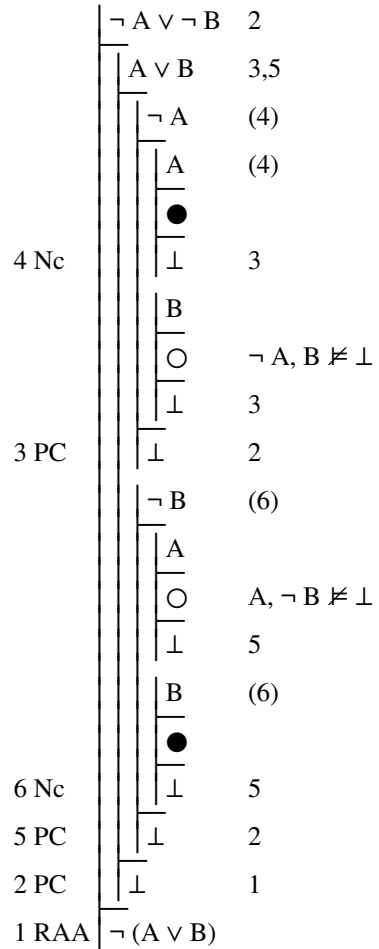
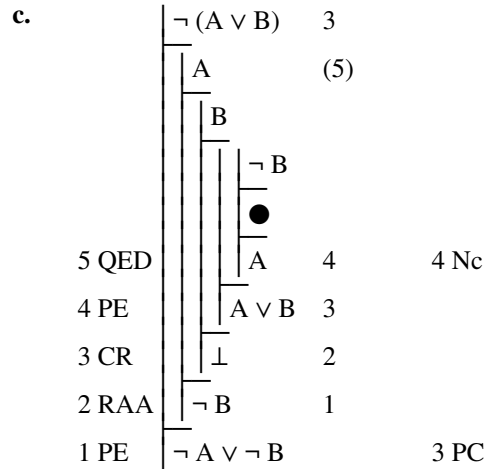


Since entailment fails in one direction, equivalence must fail, so a second derivation for entailment in the other direction need not be pursued; but that entailment does hold, as is shown below.



Each of the following divides the one open gap:

A	B	C	$A \vee (B \wedge C)$	$(A \vee B) \wedge C$
T	T	F	⊕	F
T	F	F	⊕	F
T	T	T	⊕	T
F	T	F	⊕	F
F	F	F	⊕	F



The following divide the first and second open gap, respectively:

A	B	$\neg A \vee \neg B$	$\neg(A \vee B)$
F	T	⊕ F	⊕ T
T	F	⊕ T	⊕ T