

The Enthymeme

Communications & Media

The argument with its premise left out, because the audience already supplies it.

An enthymeme is a syllogism with a premise suppressed because the audience is expected to hold it.

- It is the standard unit of everyday persuasion.
- The missing premise is where the values sit.
- Audiences complete it themselves, which strengthens it.
- Making the premise explicit is the fastest critique.
- Advertising and slogans run almost entirely on it.

LOOK FOR IT

She is a local candidate, so she will understand us. The suppressed premise is that local people understand local needs.

To analyse any slogan, write out the premise it needs you to already accept. Stated plainly, many will not survive.