VERBAL VS. FACTUAL DISPUTES

In the following disagreements decide whether the problem is factual or verbal. If factual, suggest a source of information which would settle the dispute; if verbal, identify the key terms and conflicting definitions of those terms.

1. Mary: “Leon is educated. In 1981 he graduated from Purdue University with a degree in business law, and since that time he has taken on over 150 cases.”
   Ellen: “Leon is not educated at all! Ask him any question about math or science or literature and he won’t be able to answer it! Sure, he knows all about law, but that doesn’t make him educated.”

2. Joe: “The human embryo, even at 14 days, has developed fingers and toes. My philosophy teacher told us that.”
   Jake: “That’s not true. At that point the embryo doesn’t even have limbs.”

3. Trish: “My dog is intelligent, and I can prove it. Watch him. He can fetch the newspaper when I say ‘Fetch’. He shakes hands and rolls over, and he brings me his leash when he wants to go out for a walk.”
   Troy: “I disagree. Your dog is merely well-trained. He can’t read, write, or solve math problems, so he’s not intelligent.”

4. Trudy: “Homosexuality is not natural, because the people who practise it represent a very small minority within the total population.”
   June: “But look at other animals. You often see male dogs mounting each other. That proves that homosexuality is natural.”

5. Ted: “Obesity is sometimes caused by genetics. In other words, people can be born with the tendency to store fat. So, regardless of how little they eat, they will still be fat.”
   Matt: “That’s not true. All fat people are fat because they eat too much.”

6. Stan: “If a tree falls in the forest where no conscious being is present to hear it, it makes no sound. There can be no such thing as a sound that is not heard.”
   Mark: “Absurd! What does the presence of conscious beings have to do with it? I’m sure that it makes a sound whether there’s someone to hear it or not. You could even make a recording of it, and a tape records sound.”

7. Nate: “Humanism is a religion, because it is a set of beliefs about reality and about how people should conduct their lives.”
   Connie: “You’re wrong. Humanism is not a religion, because it doesn’t embrace a belief in a Supreme Being.”
8. Leon: “Abraham Lincoln was a Catholic even though he didn’t attend church on a regular basis.”
   Kevin: “No, Lincoln wasn’t a Catholic. He was born a Presbyterian and remained one until he died.”

9. Kate: “The movie Deep Throat should be banned because it shows explicit sexual acts. It’s obscene.”
   Dave: “What’s wrong with the movie? The actors do nothing in that movie that millions of people don’t do every day and night without causing harm to anyone. To call that obscene is to call life itself obscene. If you want to see something really obscene, go look at some of the videos of people being blown apart in wars.”

10. Steve: “The United States is not a democracy, because the people do not govern themselves but are governed by elected representatives.”
    Bruno: “Actually, the United States is a democracy because the ultimate power of governing is retained by the people.”

11. Scientist 1: “Viruses are living things, because they are made up of DNA material and they invade living cells and use those cells to produce more viruses.”
    Scientist 2: “Viruses are not living things, because they can’t reproduce themselves and they can’t manufacture enzymes or any other proteins.”

12. Gerald: “Hitler is dead. He committed suicide, and his charred body was found towards the end of World War II.”
    Vivian: “That’s what most people think. Actually he isn’t dead at all. He escaped to South America where he’s been living since the war ended.”

13. Brad: “Gandhi was a true Christian because he believed in peace and justice through passive resistance.”
    Janet: “Gandhi was not a true Christian at all. He didn’t believe that Jesus was the only true son of God.”

14. Drake: “Paul is in the hospital, but he isn’t dead. His heart is still beating and his lungs are still breathing.”
    Gina: “Yes, but he has a flat EEG, so his brain is no longer functioning. Paul is dead.”