**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Reading: *Conversations in American* *Literature***

**pp. 120-130 on Analyzing Claims**

**ACTIVITY**

For each of the following statements, identify the assumption that would link the claim to its support. Use the following format to discover the assumption: “Because/If [support], [claim]; [underlying assumption] because [backing]. This is the case unless (reservation).” Decide whether each of the statements would require a qualifier or reservation—not all have to have one.

Example:

1. Grades should be abolished because they add stress to the learning experience.

Because they add stress to the learning experience, grades should be abolished; stress is destructive to learning, on account of the anxiety it produces. (optional). This is the case unless we can modify our grading system so as to diminish the anxiety that grades cause.

[Note: Here we have a perfectly reasonable assumption underlying a very strong claim. A reader might ask, “Should all grades be abolished?” Perhaps a qualification might effect a stronger and more reasonable ethos. For example, perhaps grades should be limited, or some grades should be abolished. The backing for the assumption is, in this case, the phrase “on account of the anxiety it produces.” The backing itself contains the assumption that anxiety interferes with learning. This claim might well include a reservation: “unless we can modify our grading system so as to diminish the anxiety that grades cause…”.]

2. Abortion should be illegal because it is murder.

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3. Everyone should read novels because they make us more understanding of human foibles and frailties.

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**continued on reverse…**

4. If we want to decrease gang violence, we should legalize drugs.

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5. WiFi should be available to everyone without cost since the Internet has become a vital part of our lives.

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6. Because improving the educational system in this country is essential to competing with the other industrialized nations, we need to equip all classrooms with the latest computer technology.

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 NOTE: You can also word-process and print out this exercise if your handwritten version isn’t legible or needs more space. The assignment is available on my webpage, www.culliton.org. It is called **Analyzing Claims Activities. Include the questions, not just your answers.**