

## The Argument Clinic (by Monty Python)

*A reception desk in an office building.*

**Receptionist:** Yes, sir?

**Man:** I'd like to have an argument please.

**Receptionist:** Certainly, sir, have you been here before...?

**Man:** No, this is my first time.

**Receptionist:** I see. Do you want to have the full argument, or were you thinking of taking a course?

**Man:** Well, what would be the cost?

**Receptionist:** Yes, it's one pound for a five-minute argument, but only eight pounds for a course of ten.

**Man:** Well, I think it's probably best if I start with the one and see how it goes from there. OK?

**Receptionist:** Fine. I'll see who's free at the moment... Mr. Du-Bakey's free, but he's a little bit conciliatory... Yes, try Mr. Barnard -- Room 12.

**Man:** Thank you.

*[...] The man knocks on the door.*

**Mr Vibrating:** *(from within)* Come in.

*The man enters the room. Mr Vibrating is sitting at a desk.*

**Man:** Is this the right room for an argument?

**Mr. V.:** I've told you once.

**Man:** No you haven't.

**Mr. V.:** Yes I have.

**Man:** When?

**Mr. V.:** Just now!

**Man:** No you didn't.

**Mr. V.:** Yes I did!

**Man:** Didn't.

**Mr. V.:** Did.

**Man:** Didn't.

**Mr. V.:** I'm telling you I did!

**Man:** You did not!

**Mr. V.:** I'm sorry, is this a five minute argument, or the full half-hour?

**Man:** Oh, just a five minute one.

**Mr. V.:** Fine. *(makes a note of it; the man sits down)* Thank you. Anyway I did.

**Man:** You most certainly did not.

**Mr. V.:** Now, let's get one thing quite clear ... I most definitely told you!

**Man:** You did not.

**Mr. V.:** Yes I did.

**Man:** You did not.

**Mr. V.:** Yes I did.

**Man:** Didn't.

**Mr. V.:** Yes I did.

**Man:** Didn't.

**Mr. V.:** Yes I did!!

**Man:** Look this isn't an argument.

**Mr. V.:** Yes it is.

**Man:** No it isn't, it's just contradiction.

**Mr. V.:** No it isn't.

**Man:** Yes it is.

**Mr. V.:** It is not.

**Man:** It is. You just contradicted me.

**Mr. V.:** No I didn't.

**Man:** Ooh, you did!

**Mr. V.:** No, no, no, no, no.

**Man:** You did, just then.

**Mr. V.:** No, nonsense!

**Man:** Oh, look, this is futile.

**Mr. V.:** No it isn't.

**Man:** I came here for a good argument.

**Mr. V.:** No you didn't, you came here for an argument.

**Man:** Well, an argument's not the same as contradiction.

**Mr. V.:** It can be.

**Man:** No it can't. An argument is a connected series of statements intended to establish a definite proposition.

**Mr. V.:** No it isn't.

**Man:** Yes it is. It isn't just contradiction.

**Mr. V.:** Look, if I argue with you, I must take up a contrary position.

**Man:** But it isn't just saying "No it isn't".

**Mr. V.:** Yes it is.

**Man:** No it isn't, an argument is an intellectual process ... contradiction is just the automatic gainsaying of anything the other person says.

**Mr. V.:** No it isn't.

**Man:** Yes it is.

**Mr. V.:** Not at all.

**Man:** Now look!

**Mr. V.:** *(pressing the bell on his desk)*  
Thank you, good morning.

**Man:** What?

**Mr. V.:** That's it. Good morning.

**Man:** But I was just getting interested.

**Mr. V.:** Sorry the five minutes is up.

**Man:** That was never five minutes just now!

**Mr. V.:** I'm afraid it was.

**Man:** No it wasn't.

**Mr. V.:** I'm sorry, I'm not allowed to argue any more.

**Man:** What!?

**Mr. V.:** If you want me to go on arguing, you'll have to pay for another five minutes.

**Man:** But that was never five minutes just now... oh come on! *(Mr. V. looks round as though the man was not there)* This is ridiculous.

**Mr. V.:** I'm very sorry, but I told you I'm not allowed to argue unless you've paid.

**Man:** Oh. All right. *(pays)* There you are.

**Mr. V.:** Thank you.

**Man:** Well?

**Mr. V.:** Well what?

**Man:** That was never five minutes just now.

**Mr. V.:** I told you I'm not allowed to argue unless you've paid.

**Man:** I've just paid.

**Mr. V.:** No you didn't.

**Man:** I did! I did! I did!

**Mr. V.:** No you didn't.

**Man:** Look I don't want to argue about that.

**Mr. V.:** Well I'm very sorry but you didn't pay.

**Man:** Aha! Well if I didn't pay, why are you arguing... got you!

**Mr. V.:** No you haven't.

**Man:** Yes I have... if you're arguing I must have paid.

**Mr. V.:** Not necessarily. I could be arguing in my spare time.

**Man:** I've had enough of this.

**Mr. V.:** No you haven't.

[From "Monty Python's Flying Circus: Just the Words, Volume 2", episode 29. Methuen, ISBN 0-413-62550-8 (hardback). ]