

When is Something Essential?

Kory Matteoli,
bmatteoli@umass.edu

Principles

Sometime Possible If x is the case at some time, then it's possible that x is the case.

B If x is the case, then, necessarily, it's possible that x is the case.

Necessary Essences Necessarily, if being F is essential to being x , then at all times when x exists, x is F .

Necessary Always If x is necessarily the case, then x is always the case.

Always Possible If x is the case, then it's always possible that x is the case.

Past Possible If it was the case that x , then it's possible that x .

K If it's the case that x , then it's possible that x .

Future Possible If it will be the case that x , then it's possible that x .

Examples

- It's essential to Kal that he's a cat.
- Once Catie the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, she's essentially a butterfly.
- Kal exists, and being born in 2020 is essential to him.
- It was the case that it's 1776, but it's not possible that it's 1776.

Results

Non-timey essences are okay:

- Being a square.
- Being a cat.
- Being a tomato.

Timey essences aren't okay:

- Having been born in 1776.
- Being the son of Donna and Bob.
- Existing from 2020 to 2024.