

CS103  
WINTER 2025



Lecture 04:

# First-Order Logic

Part 1 of 2

Recap from Last Time

# Recap So Far

- A ***propositional variable*** is a variable that is either true or false.
- The ***propositional connectives*** are as follows:

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*implication (“if **P**, then **Q**”)*

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*conjunction (“**P** and **Q**”)*

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*truth*

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*negation (“not **P**”)*



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*disjunction (“**P** or **Q**”)*

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*falsity*

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*biconditional (“**P** if and only if **Q**”)*

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$p$	$q$	$p \rightarrow q$
F	F	—
F	T	—
T	F	—
T	T	—



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$p$	$q$	$p \rightarrow q$	negation of $p \rightarrow q$ ?
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Answer at

<https://cs103.stanford.edu/pollev>

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Negation of  
 $p \rightarrow q$



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F	F	T	F
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Negation of  
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# Operator Precedence

- How do we parse this statement?

$$\neg x \rightarrow y \vee z \rightarrow x \vee y \wedge z$$

- Operator precedence for propositional logic:

$\neg$

$\wedge$

$\vee$

$\rightarrow$

$\leftrightarrow$

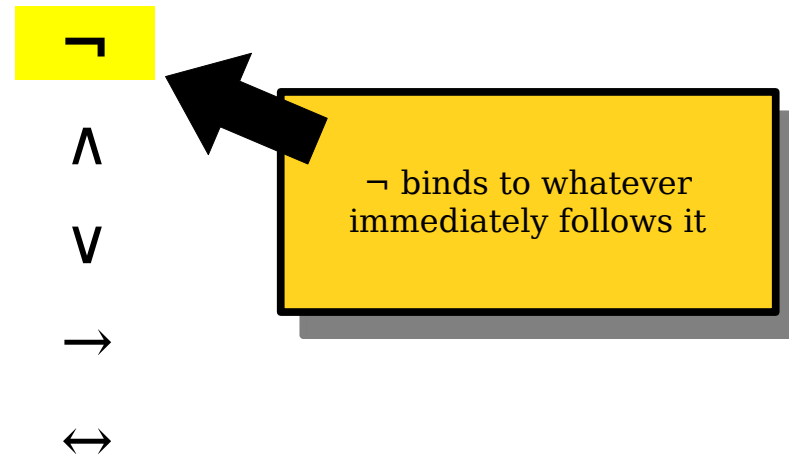
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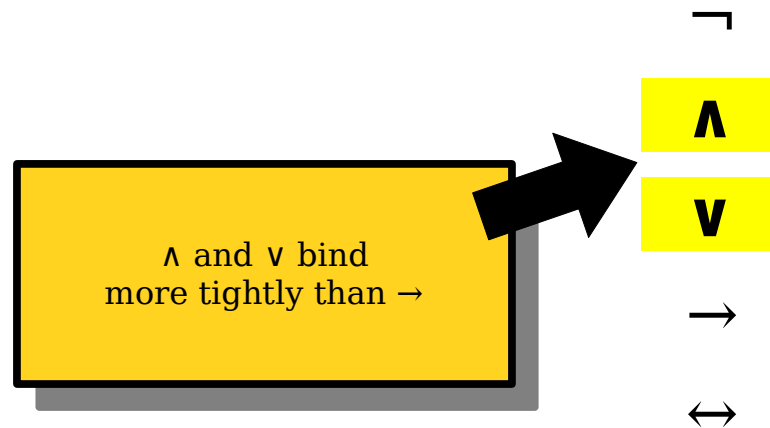
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“If  $x < 8$  and  $y < 8$ , then  $x + y \neq 16$ ”

**Theorem:** If  $x + y = 16$ , then  $x \geq 8$  or  $y \geq 8$ .

**Proof:** We will prove the contrapositive, namely, that if  $x < 8$  and  $y < 8$ , then  $x + y \neq 16$ .

Pick  $x$  and  $y$  where  $x < 8$  and  $y < 8$ . We want to show that  $x + y \neq 16$ . To see this, note that

$$\begin{aligned}x + y &< 8 + y \\ &< 8 + 8 \\ &= 16.\end{aligned}$$

This means that  $x + y < 16$ , so  $x + y \neq 16$ , which is what we needed to show. ■

# Why All This Matters

(See end previous lecture's slides for additional examples and practice.)

New Stuff!

# First-Order Logic

# What is First-Order Logic?

- ***First-order logic*** is a logical system for reasoning about properties of objects.
- Augments the logical connectives from propositional logic with
  - ***predicates*** that describe properties of objects,
  - ***functions*** that map objects to one another, and
  - ***quantifiers*** that allow us to reason about multiple objects.

# Some Examples

*Likes(You, Eggs)  $\wedge$  Likes(You, Tomato)  $\rightarrow$  Likes(You, Shakshuka)*





*Likes(You, Eggs)  $\wedge$  Likes(You, Tomato)  $\rightarrow$  Likes(You, Shakshuka)*

*Learns(You, History)  $\vee$  ForeverRepeats(You, History)*

*In(MyHeart, Havana)  $\wedge$  TookBackTo(Him, Me, EastAtlanta)*

*Likes(You, Eggs) ∧ Likes(You, Tomato) → Likes(You, Shakshuka)*

*Learns(You, History) ∨ ForeverRepeats(You, History)*

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These blue terms are called *constant symbols*. Unlike propositional variables, they refer to objects, not propositions.

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The red things that look like function calls are called *predicates*. Predicates take objects as arguments and evaluate to true or false.

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What remains are traditional propositional connectives. Because each predicate evaluates to true or false, we can connect the truth values of predicates using normal propositional connectives.

# Reasoning about Objects

- To reason about objects, first-order logic uses ***predicates***.
- Examples:

*Cute(??)*





# Reasoning about Objects

- To reason about objects, first-order logic uses ***predicates***.
- Examples:

*Cute(Quokka)*

*ArgueIncessantly(Democrats, Republicans)*

- Applying a predicate to arguments produces a proposition, which is either true or false.
- Typically, when you're working in FOL, you'll have a list of predicates, what they stand for, and how many arguments they take. It'll be given separately than the formulas you write.

# First-Order Formulas

- Formulas in first-order logic can be constructed from predicates applied to objects:

$Cute(a) \rightarrow Quokka(a) \vee Kitty(a) \vee Puppy(a)$

$Succeeds(You) \leftrightarrow Practices(You)$

$x < 8 \rightarrow x < 137$

The less-than sign is just another predicate. Binary predicates are sometimes written in *infix notation* this way.

Numbers are not "built in" to first-order logic. They're constant symbols just like "You" and "a" above.

# Equality

- First-order logic is equipped with a special predicate  $=$  that says whether two objects are equal to one another.
- Equality is a part of first-order logic, just as  $\rightarrow$  and  $\neg$  are.
- Examples:

*TomMarvoloRiddle = LordVoldemort*

*MorningStar = EveningStar*

- Equality can only be applied to **objects**; to state that two **propositions** are equal, use  $\leftrightarrow$ .

Let's see some more examples.

*FavoriteMovieOf(You) ≠ FavoriteMovieOf(Date) ∧  
StarOf(FavoriteMovieOf(You)) = StarOf(FavoriteMovieOf(Date))*

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These purple terms are *functions*. Functions take objects as input and produce objects as output.

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StarOf(FavoriteMovieOf(You)) = StarOf(FavoriteMovieOf(Date))*

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# Functions

- First-order logic allows **functions** that return objects associated with other objects.
- Examples:

*ColorOf(Money)*

*MedianOf(x, y, z)*

$x + y$

- As with predicates, functions can take in any number of arguments, but always return a single value.
- Functions evaluate to **objects**, not **propositions**.

# Objects and Propositions

- When working in first-order logic, be careful to keep objects (actual things) and propositions (true or false) separate.

- You cannot apply connectives to objects:

*Venus*  $\rightarrow$  *TheSun*

- You cannot apply functions to propositions:

*StarOf(IsRed(Sun)  $\wedge$  IsGreen(Mars))*

- Ever get confused? *Just ask!*

# The Type-Checking Table

	... operate on ...	... and produce
Connectives ( $\leftrightarrow$ , $\wedge$ , etc.) ...	propositions	a proposition
Predicates ( $=$ , etc.) ...	objects	a proposition
Functions ...	objects	an object



One last (and major) change

Some bear is curious.

Some bear is curious.

$\exists b. (Bear(b) \wedge Curious(b))$

Some bear is curious.

$\exists b. (Bear(b) \wedge Curious(b))$

$\exists$  is the **existential quantifier** and says "there is a choice of  $b$  where the following is true."

# The Existential Quantifier

- A statement of the form

**$\exists x.$  *some-formula***

is true when there exists a choice object where ***some-formula*** is true when that object is plugged in for  $x$ .

- Examples:

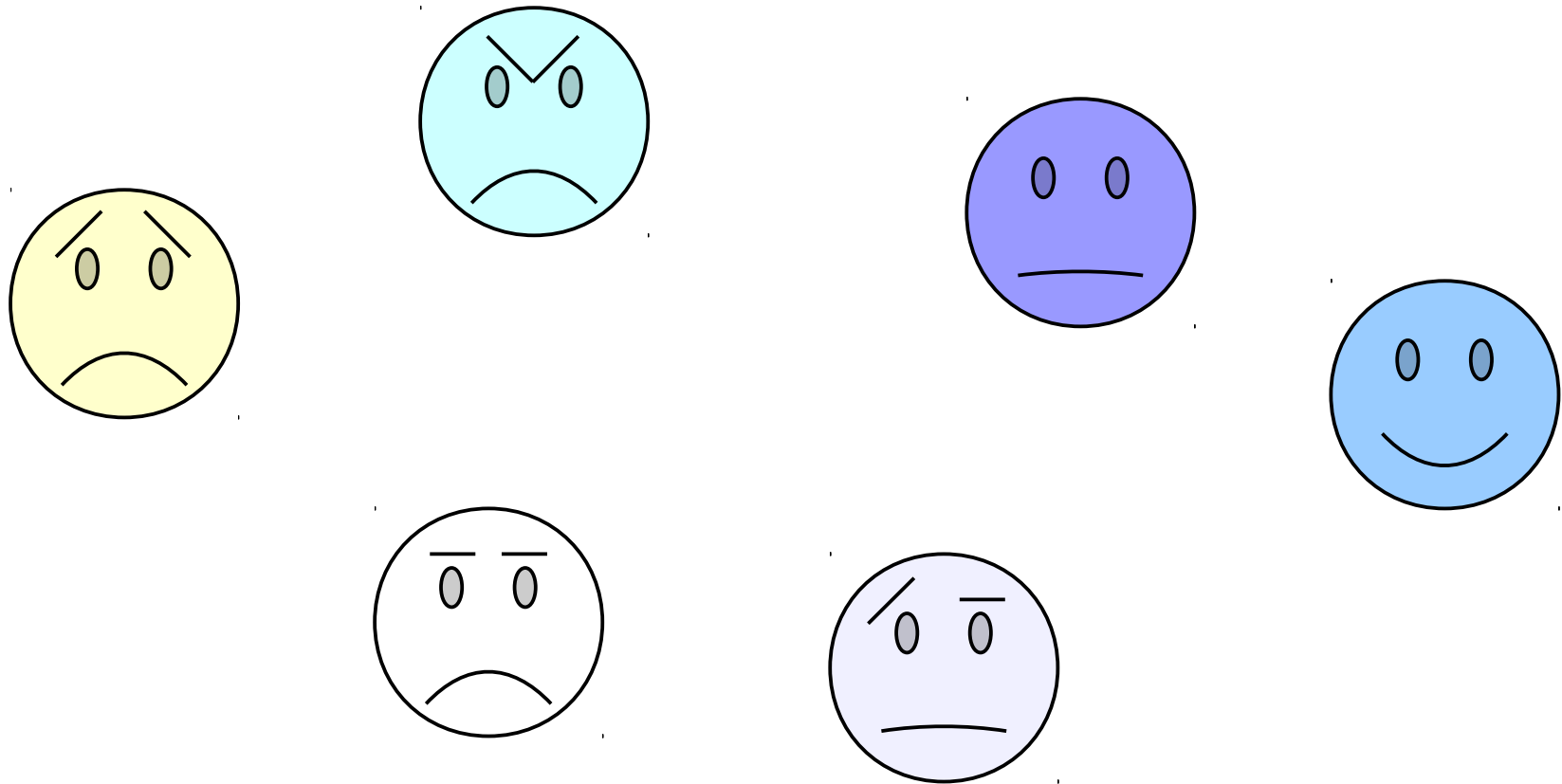
$\exists x. (Even(x) \wedge Prime(x))$

$\exists x. (TallerThan(x, me) \wedge WeighsLessThan(x, me))$

$(\exists w. Will(w)) \rightarrow (\exists x. Way(x))$

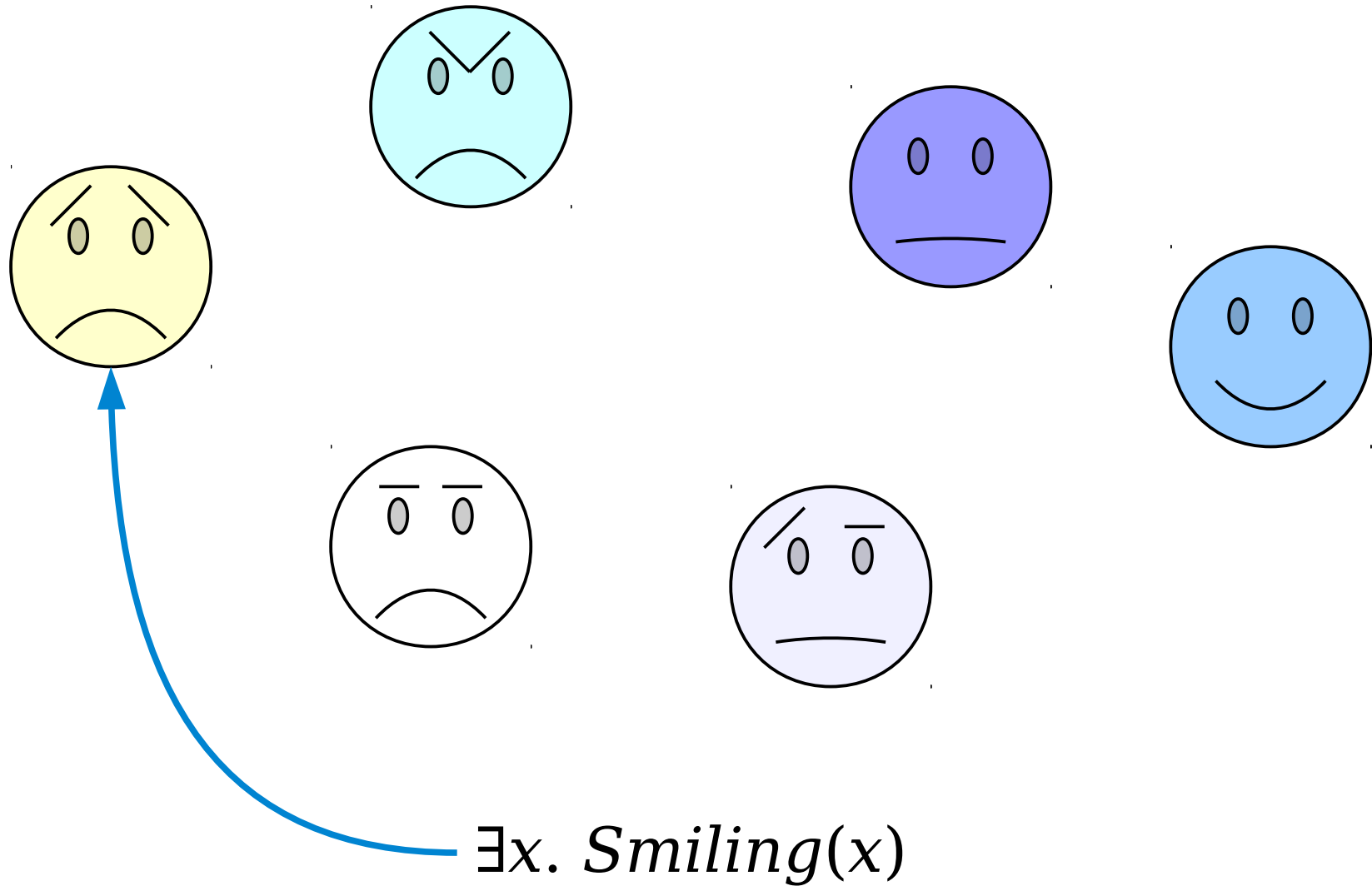
- Note the two ways of applying the  $\exists$ !

# The Existential Quantifier

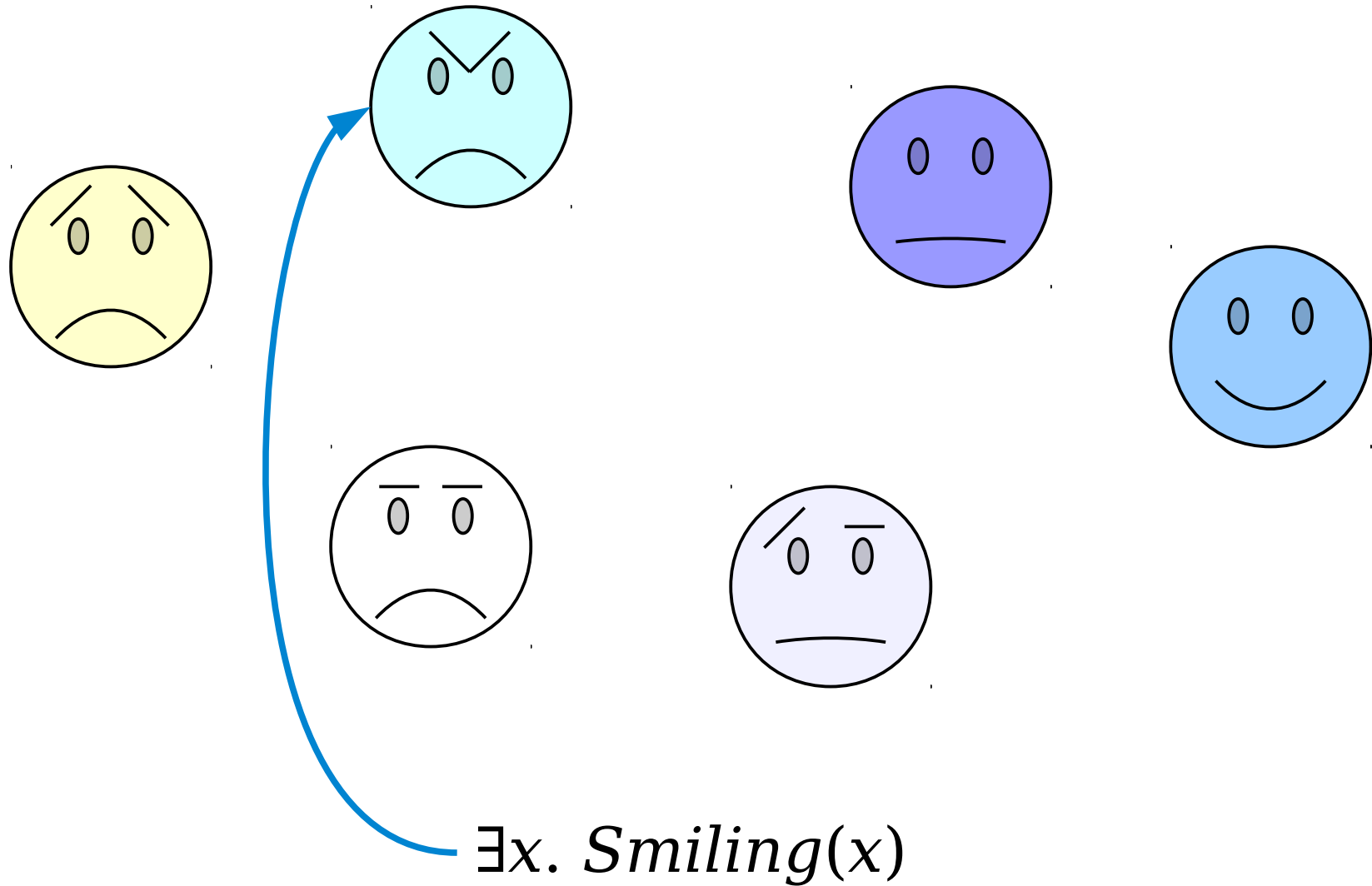


$\exists x. \textit{Smiling}(x)$

# The Existential Quantifier

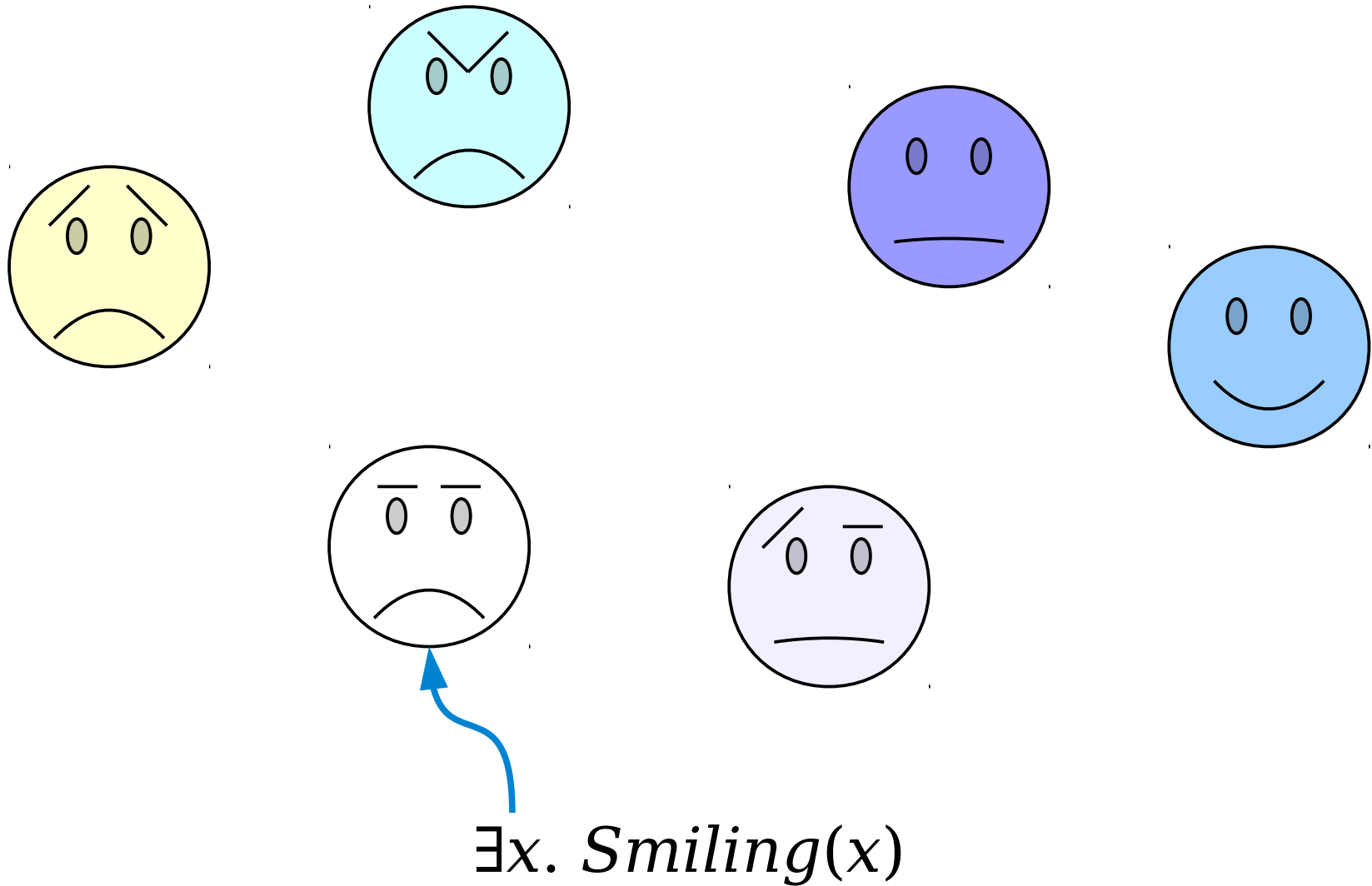


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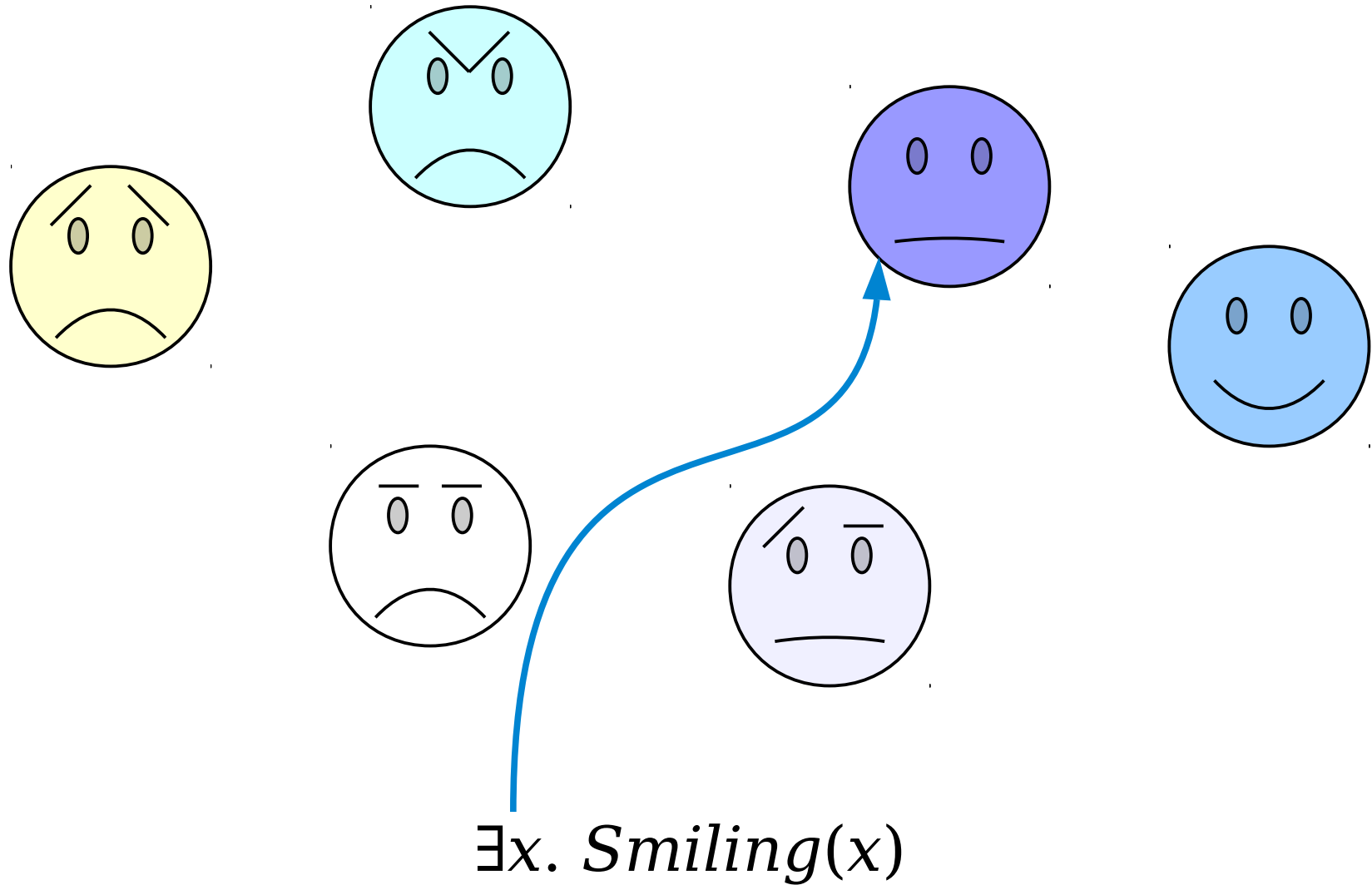




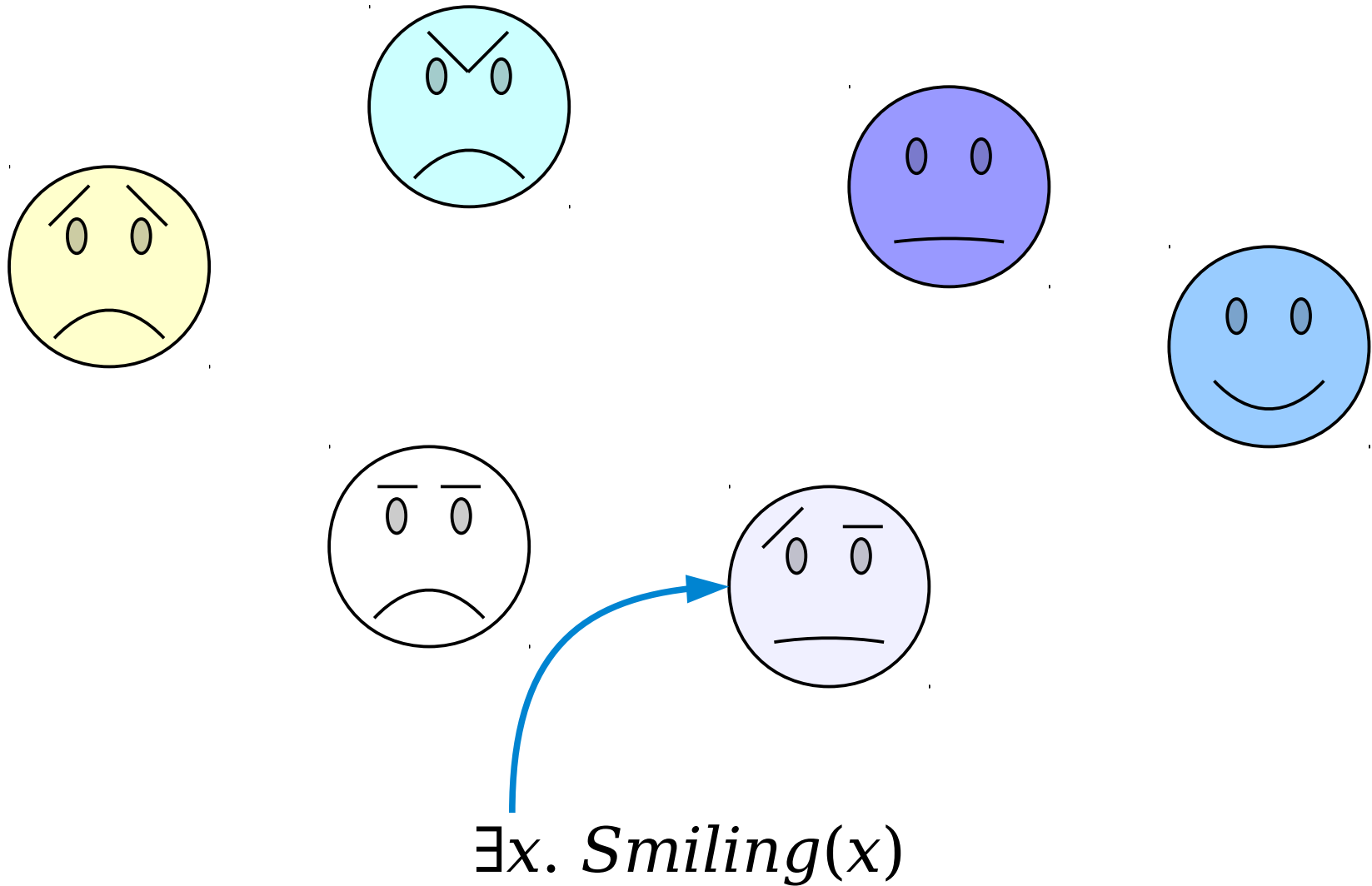
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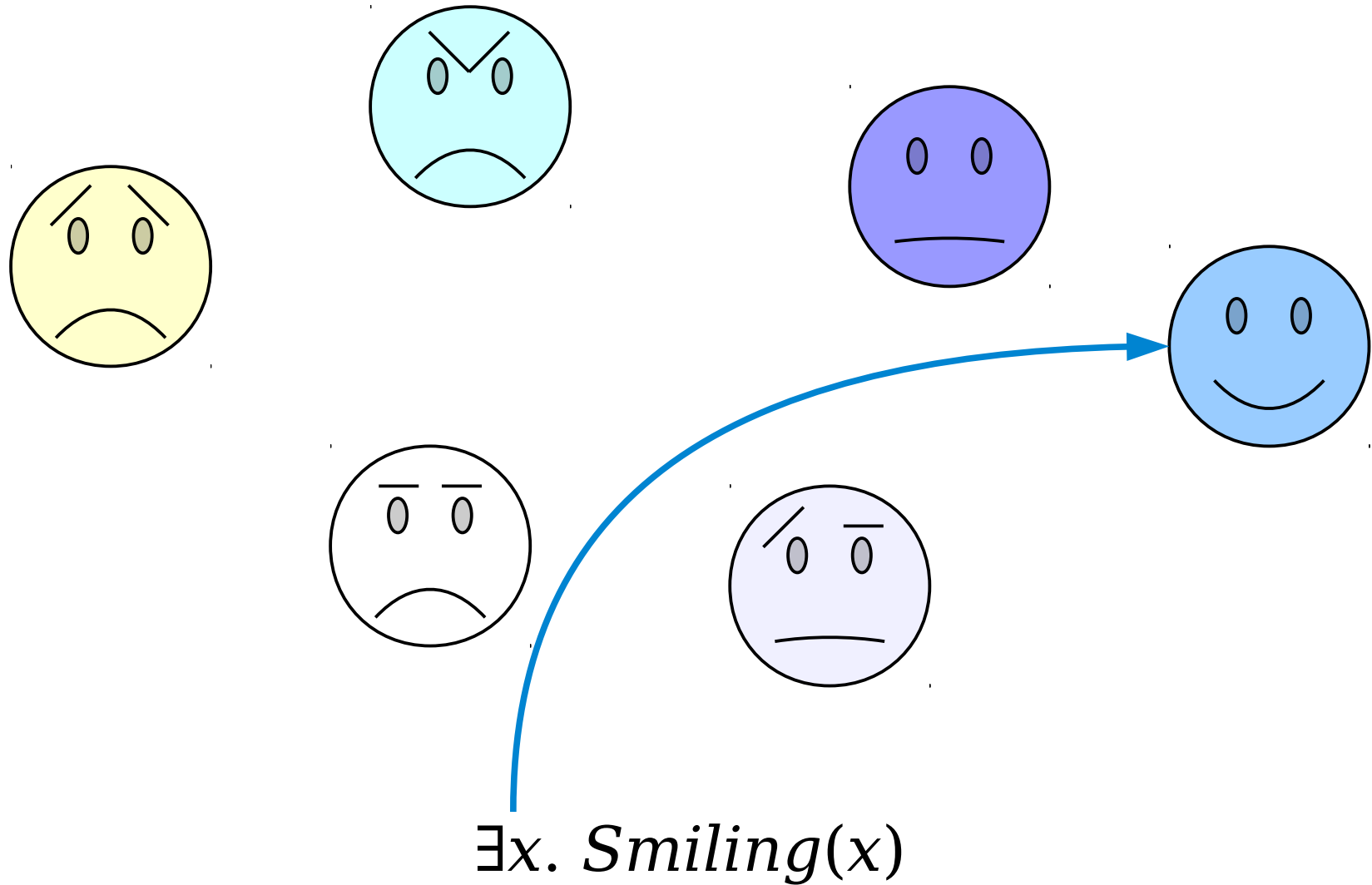
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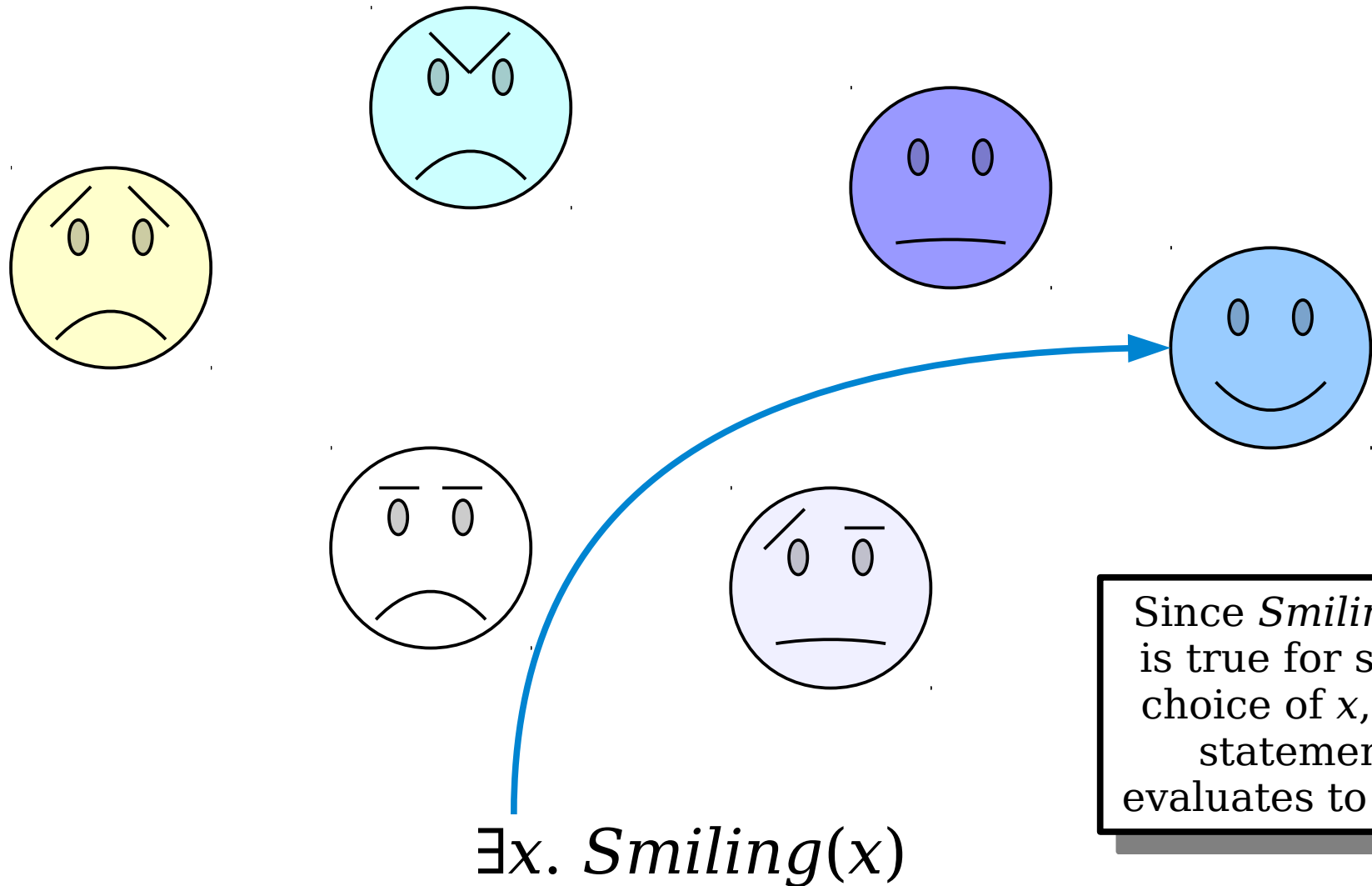
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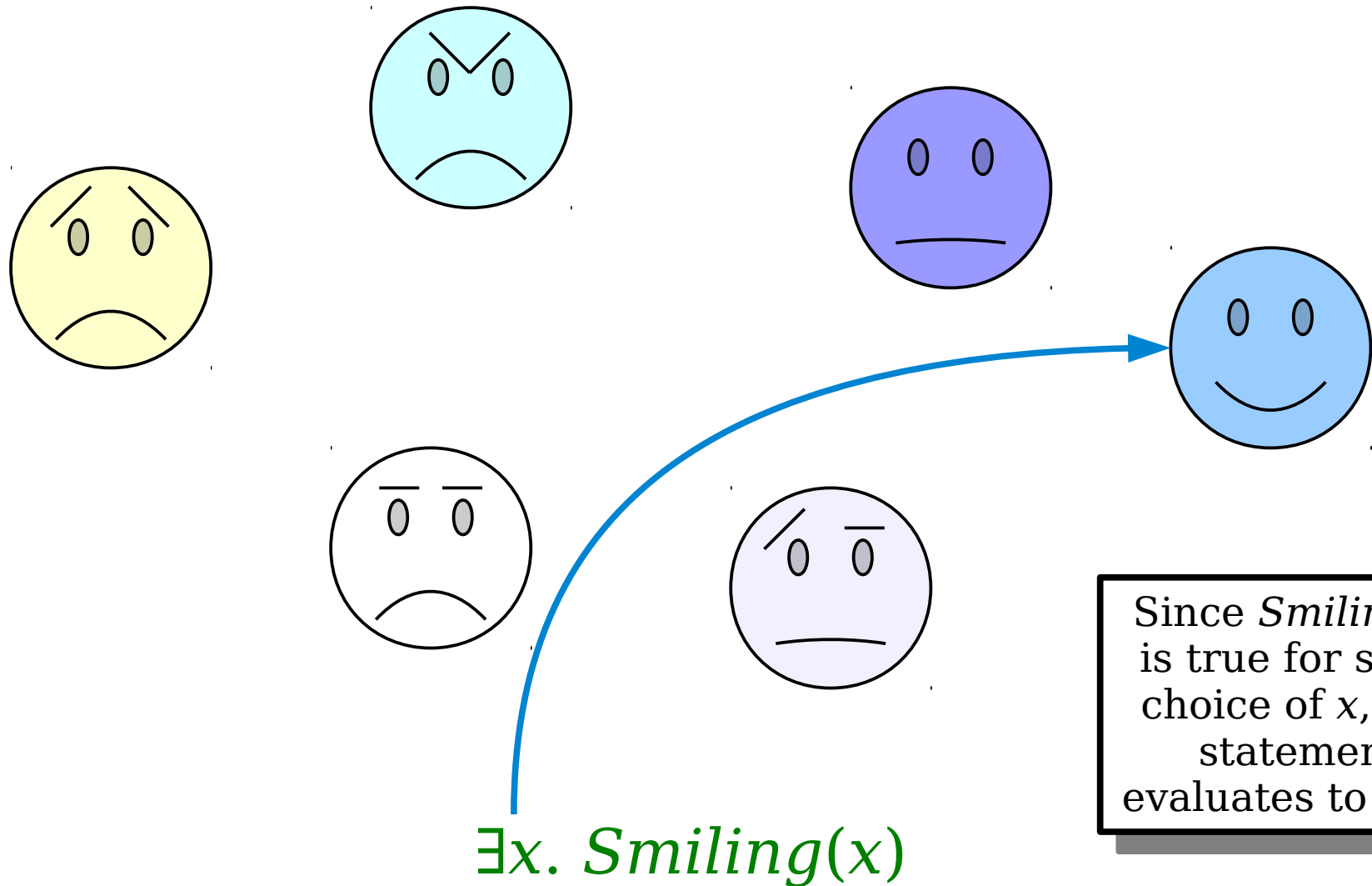
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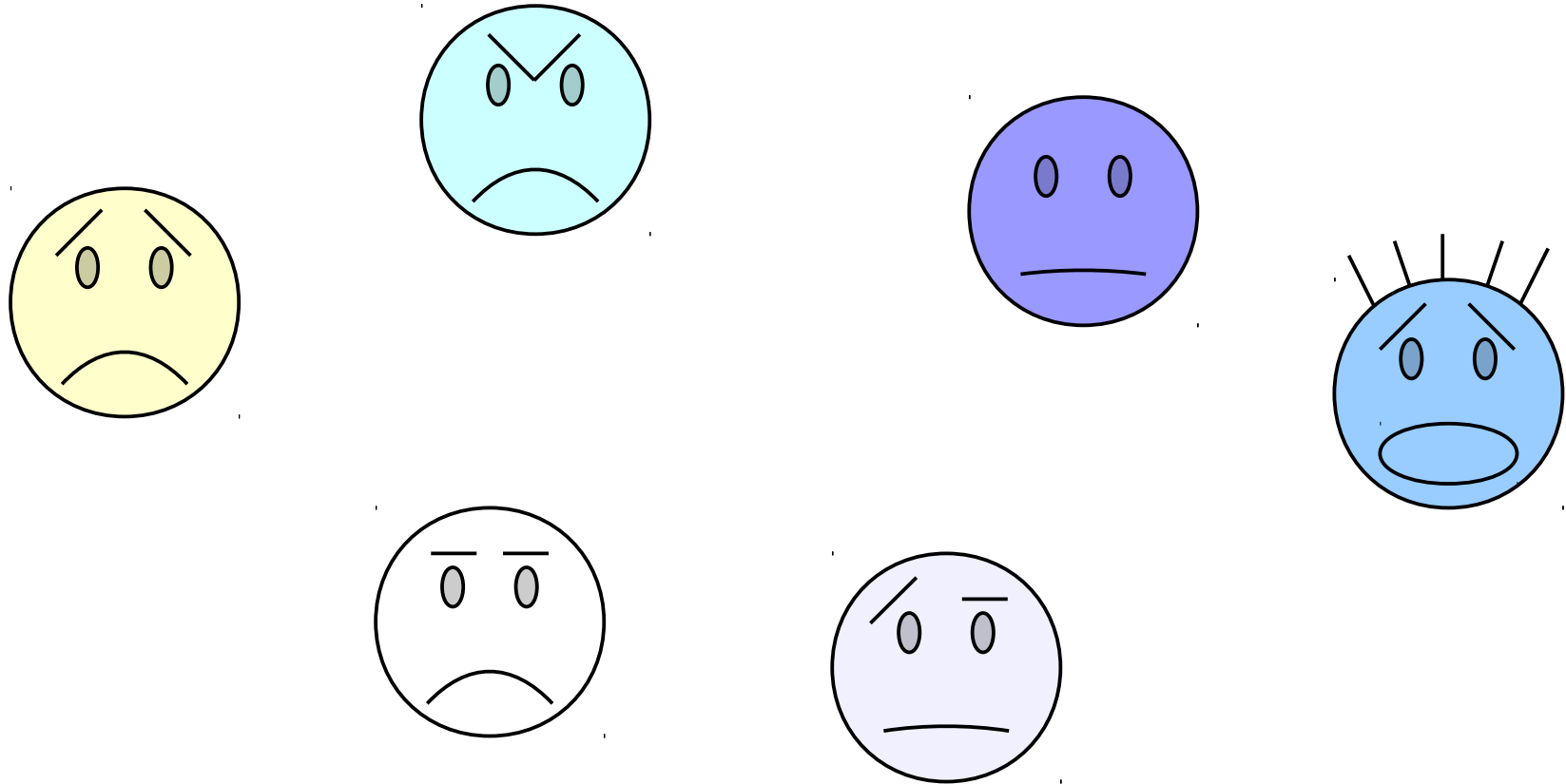
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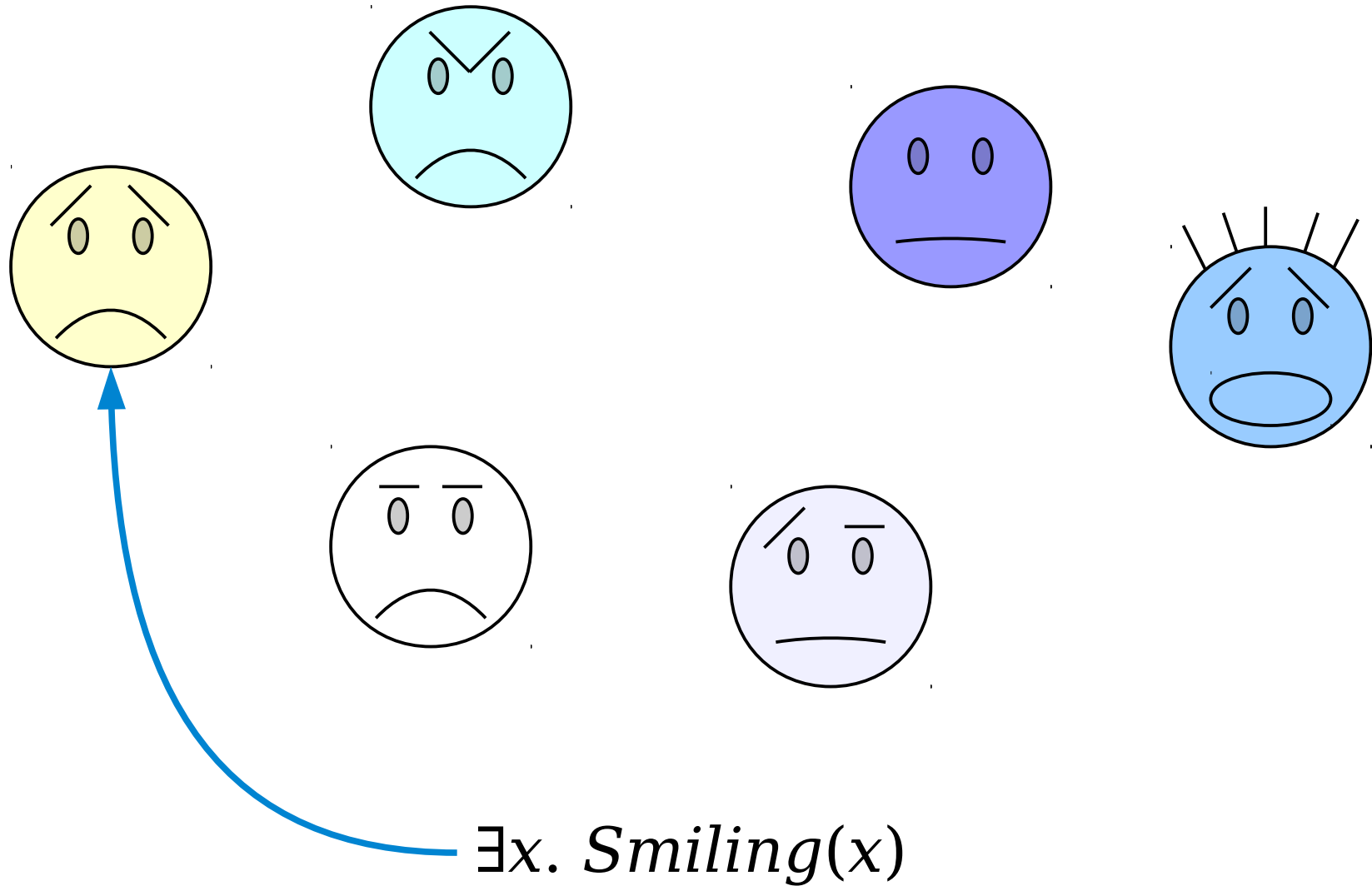


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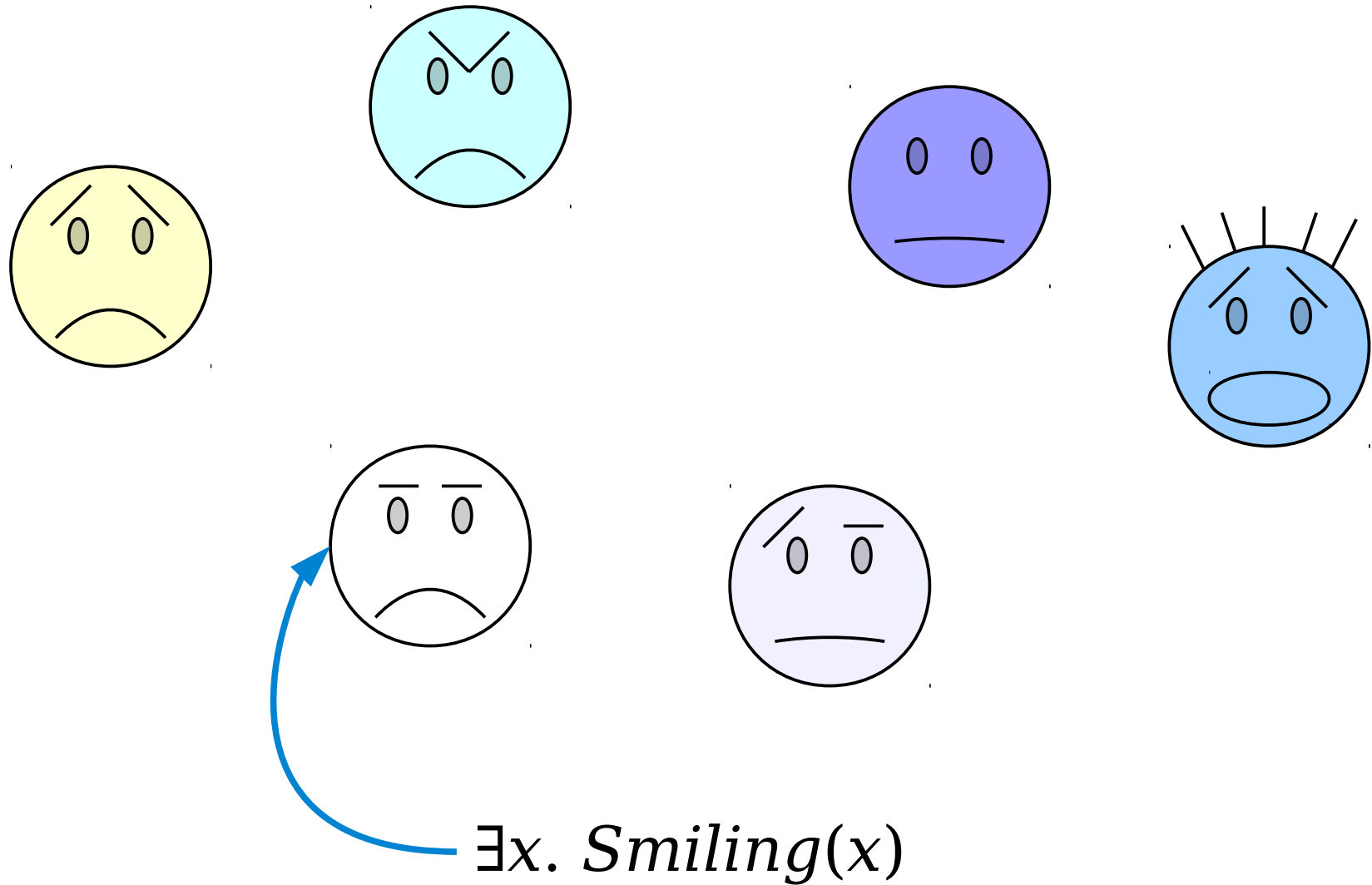
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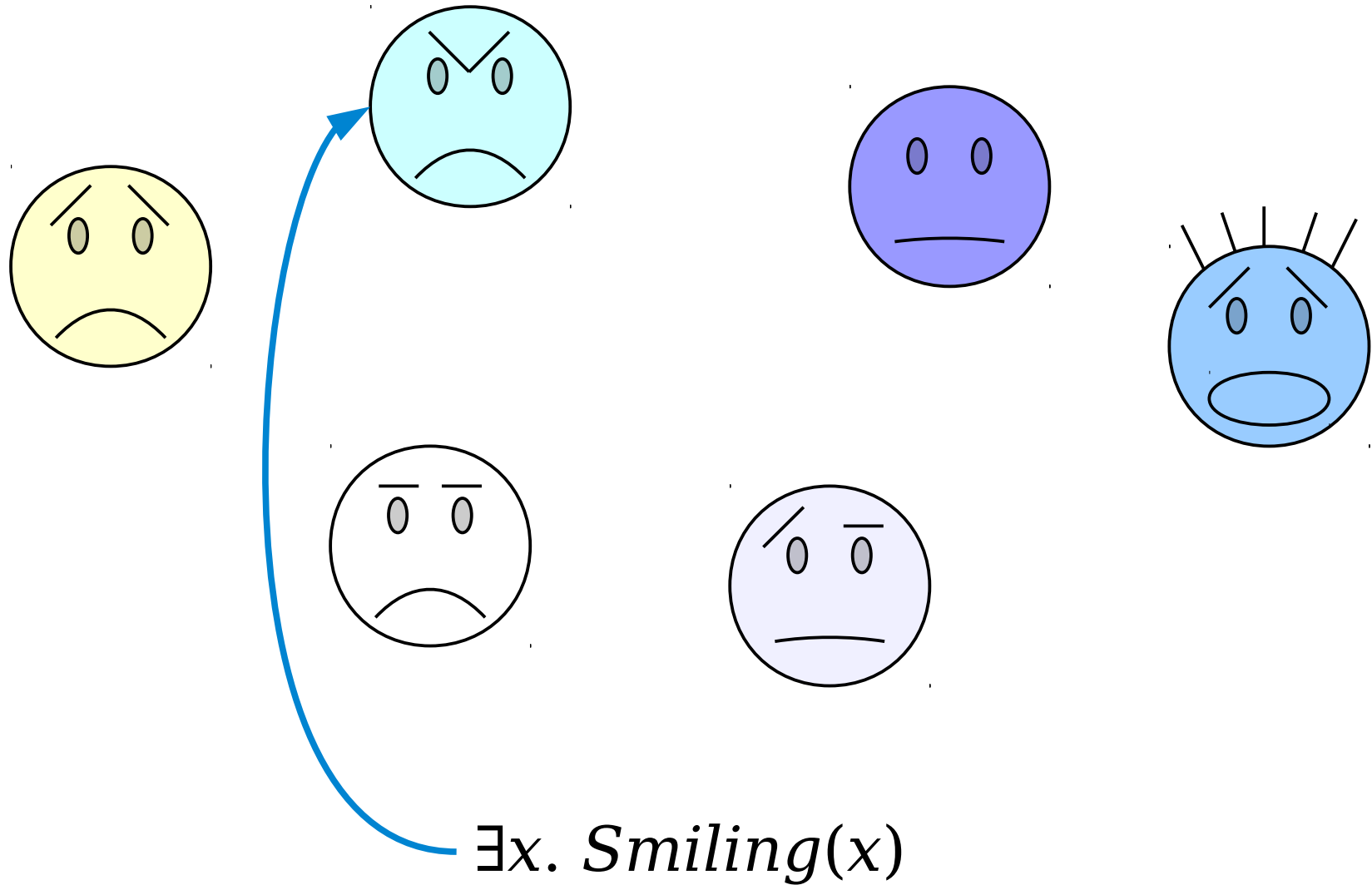




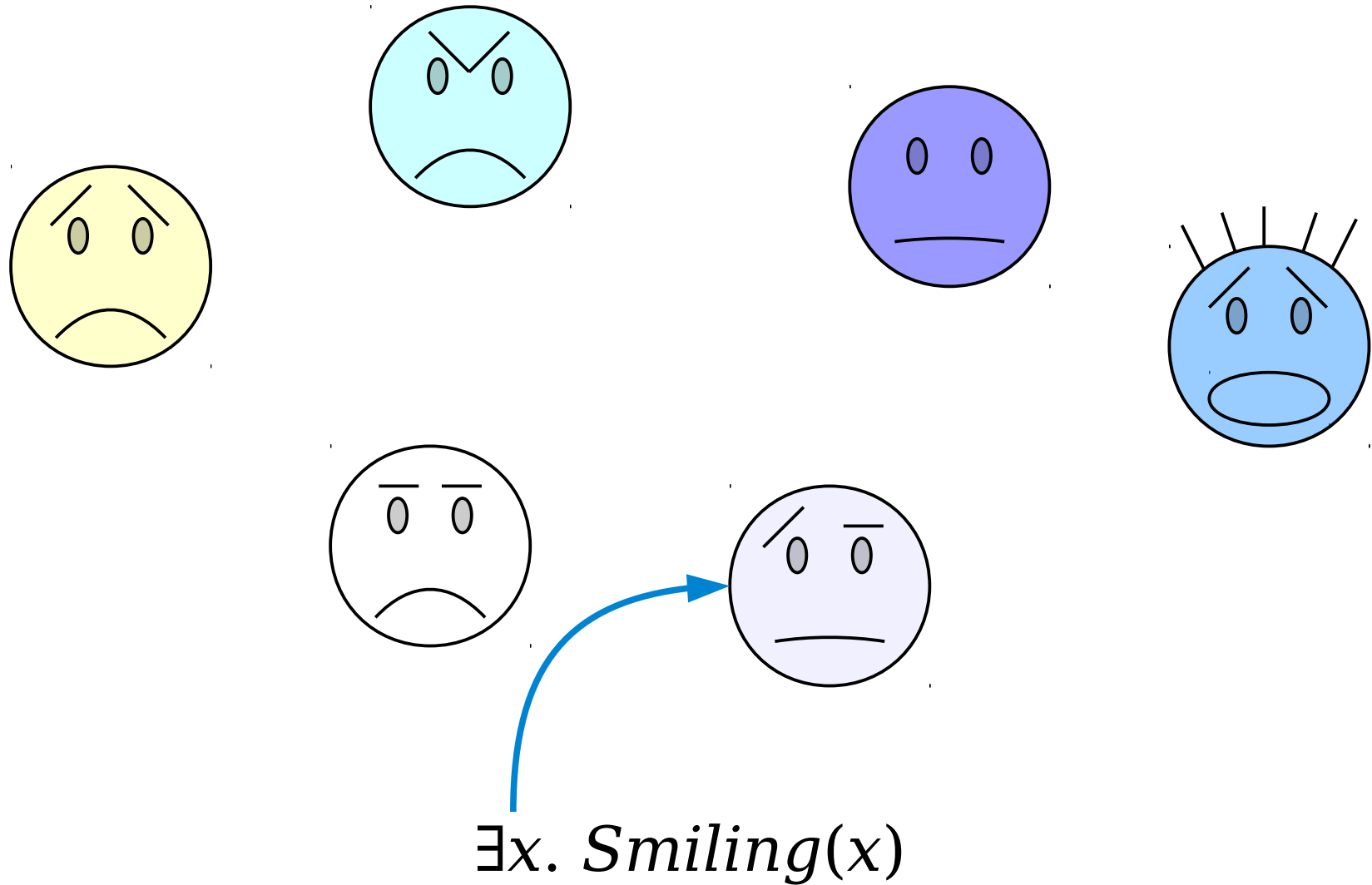
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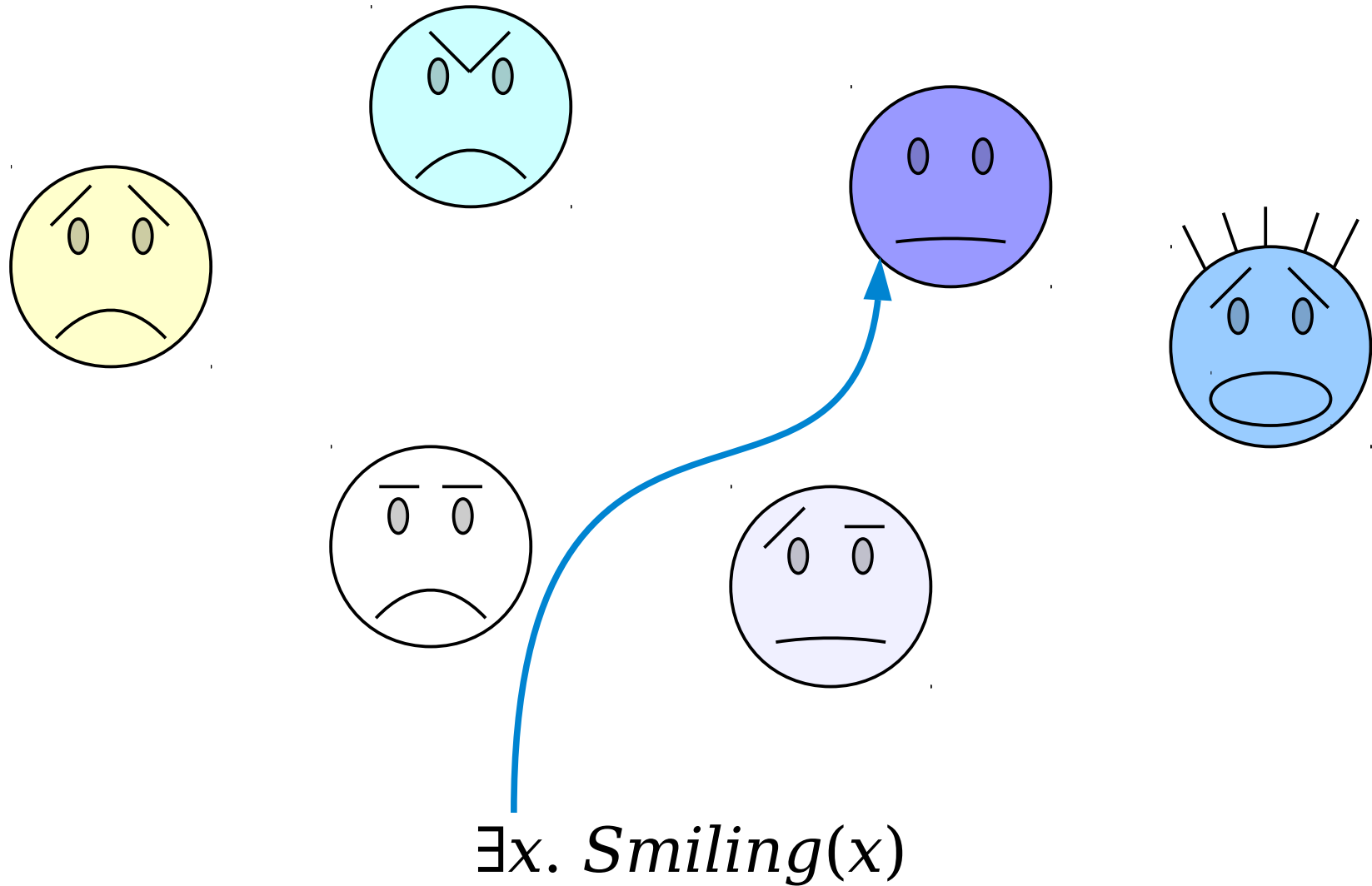
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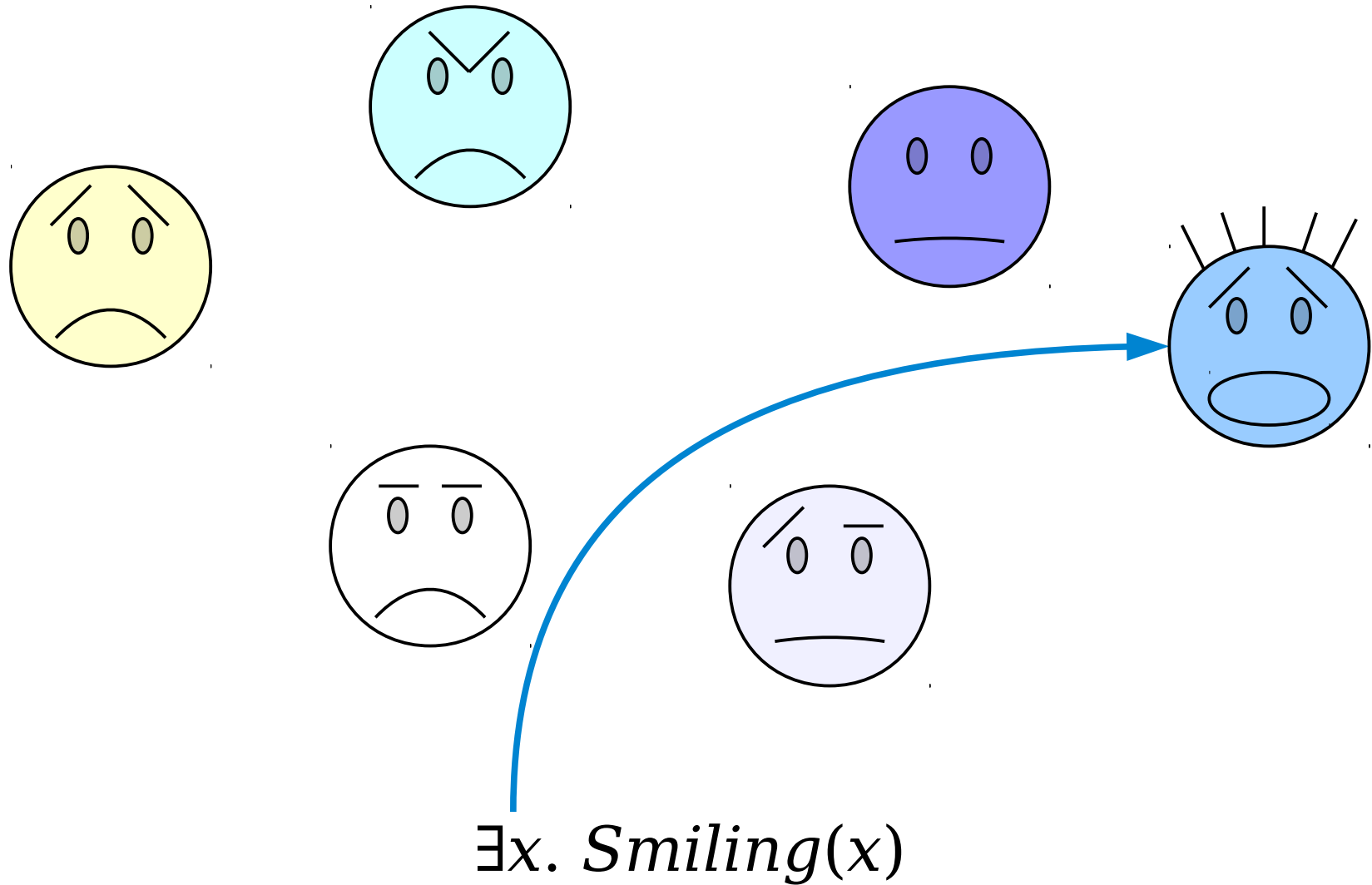
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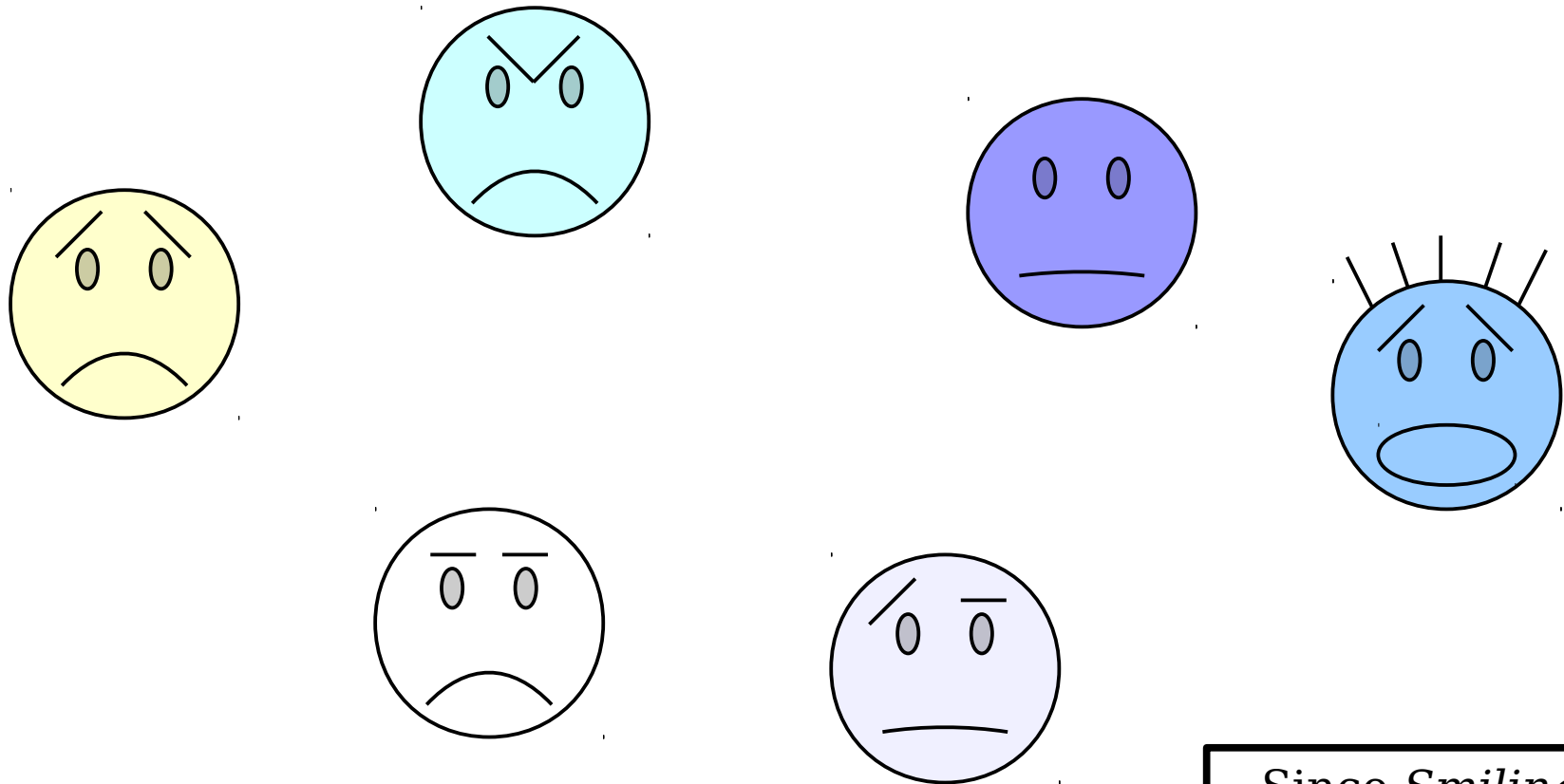
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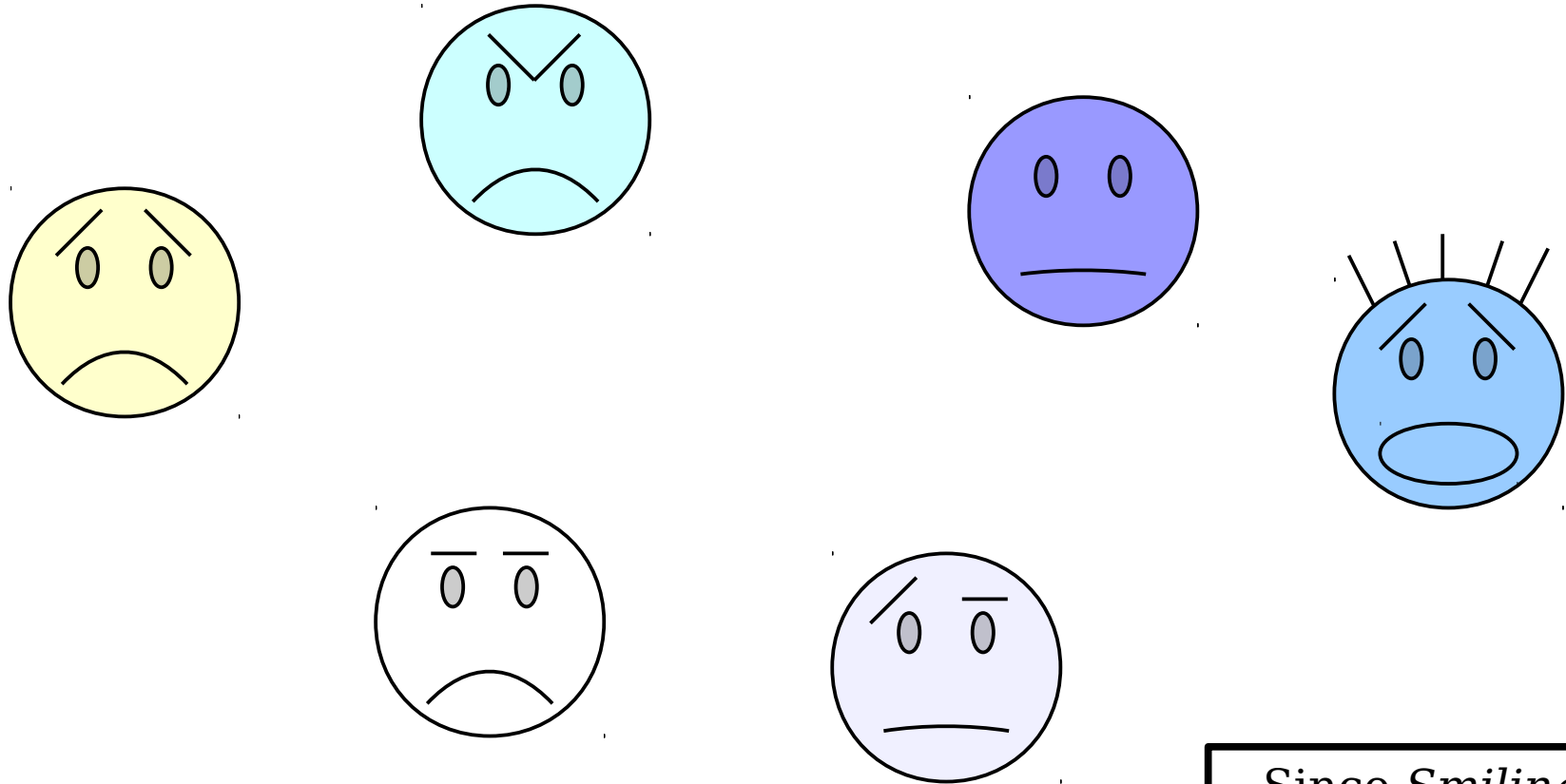
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$\exists x. \textit{Smiling}(x)$

Since *Smiling*( $x$ ) is not true for any choice of  $x$ , this statement evaluates to false.

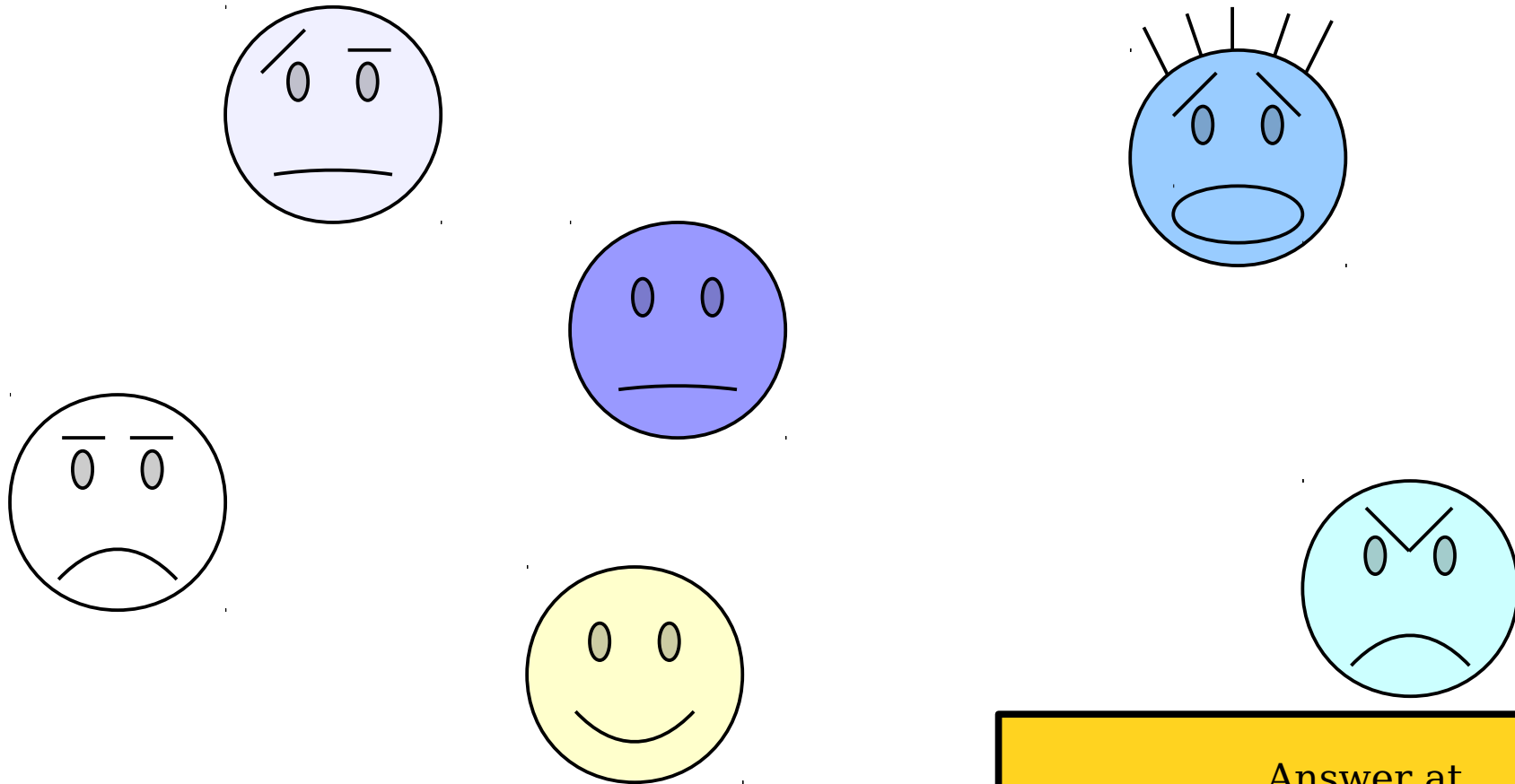
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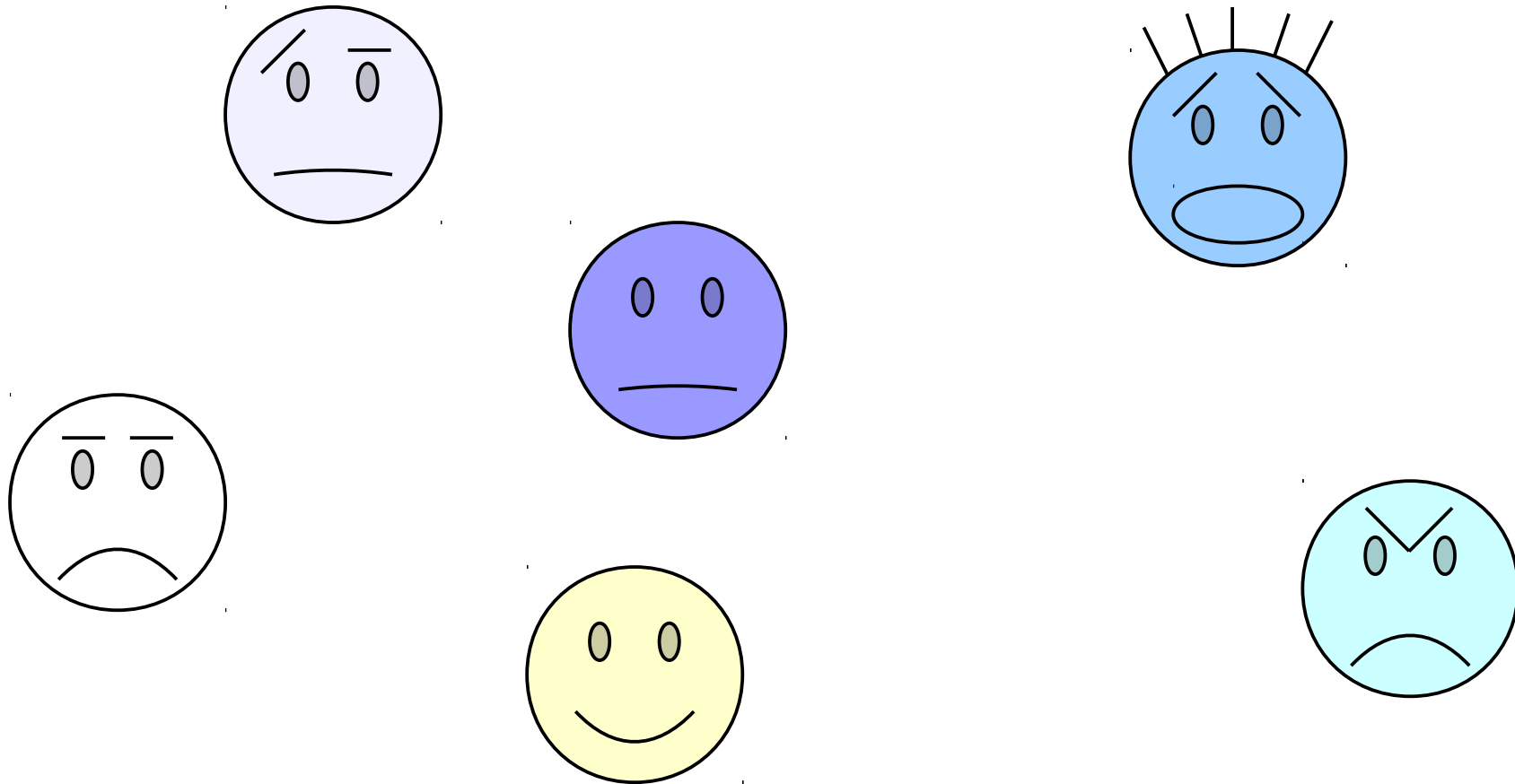


Answer at  
<https://cs103.stanford.edu/pollev>

$$(\exists x. \textit{Smiling}(x)) \rightarrow (\exists y. \textit{WearingHat}(y))$$

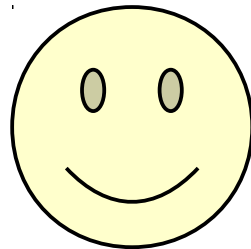
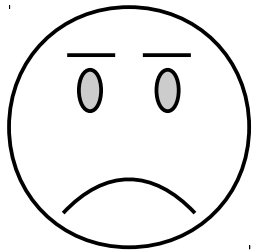
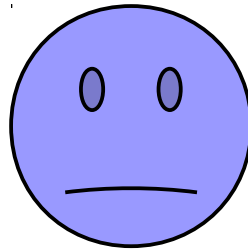
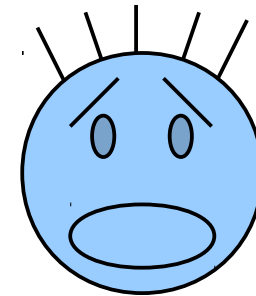
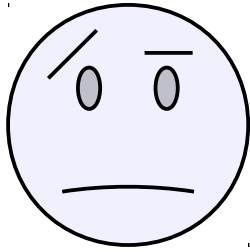


# The Existential Quantifier



$(\exists x. \textit{Smiling}(x)) \rightarrow (\exists y. \textit{WearingHat}(y))$

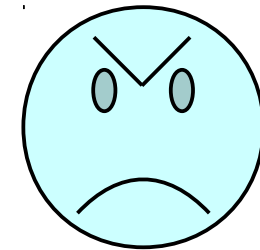
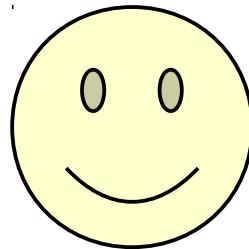
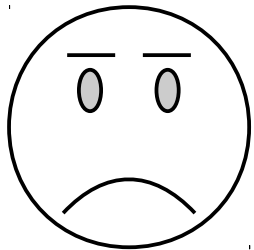
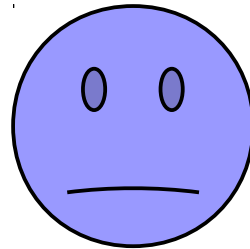
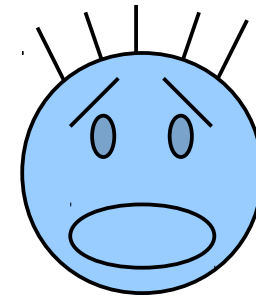
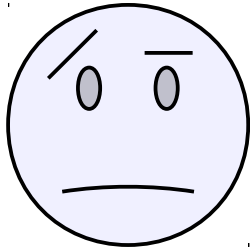
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Is this part of the statement true or false?

$$(\exists x. \textit{Smiling}(x)) \rightarrow (\exists y. \textit{WearingHat}(y))$$

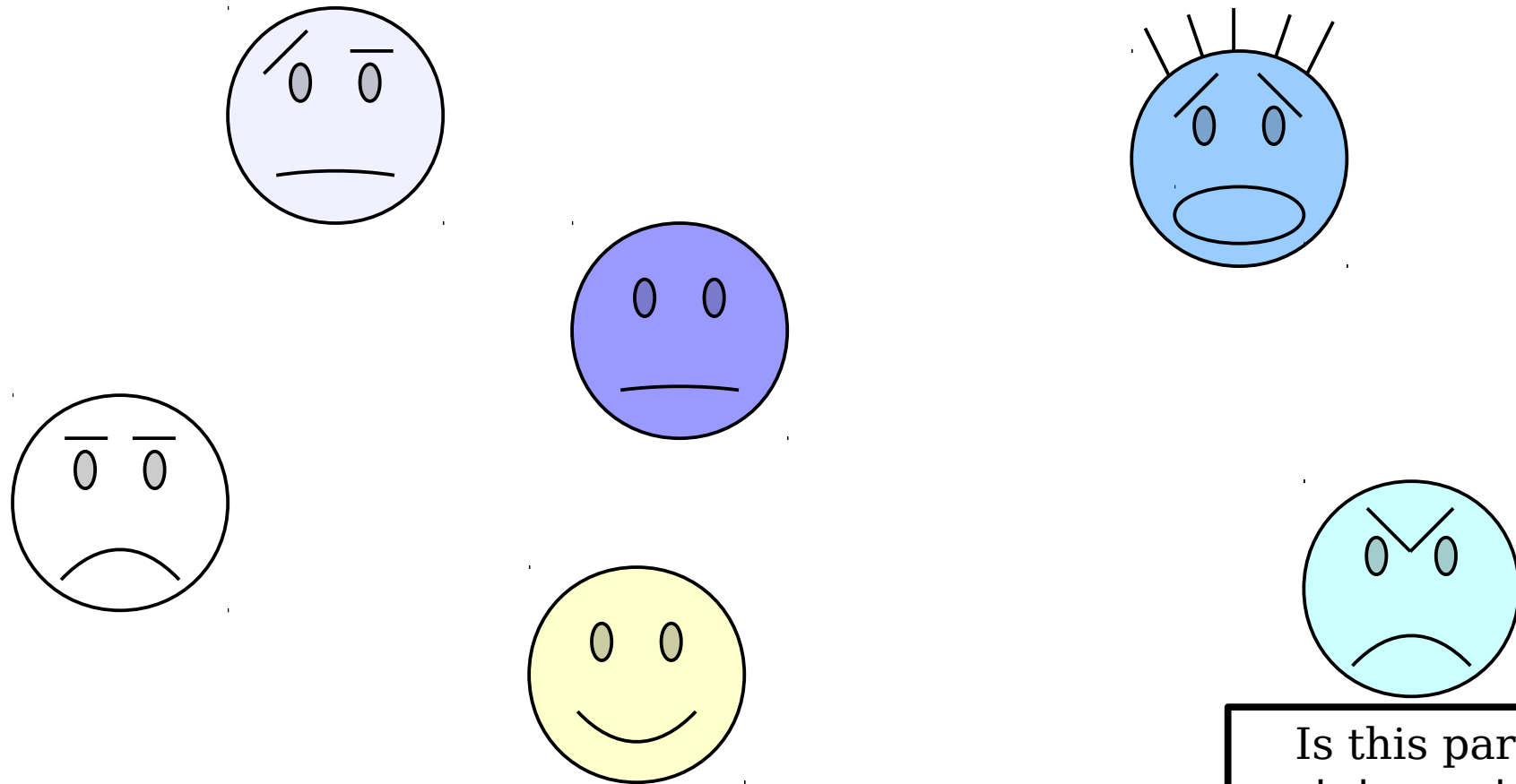
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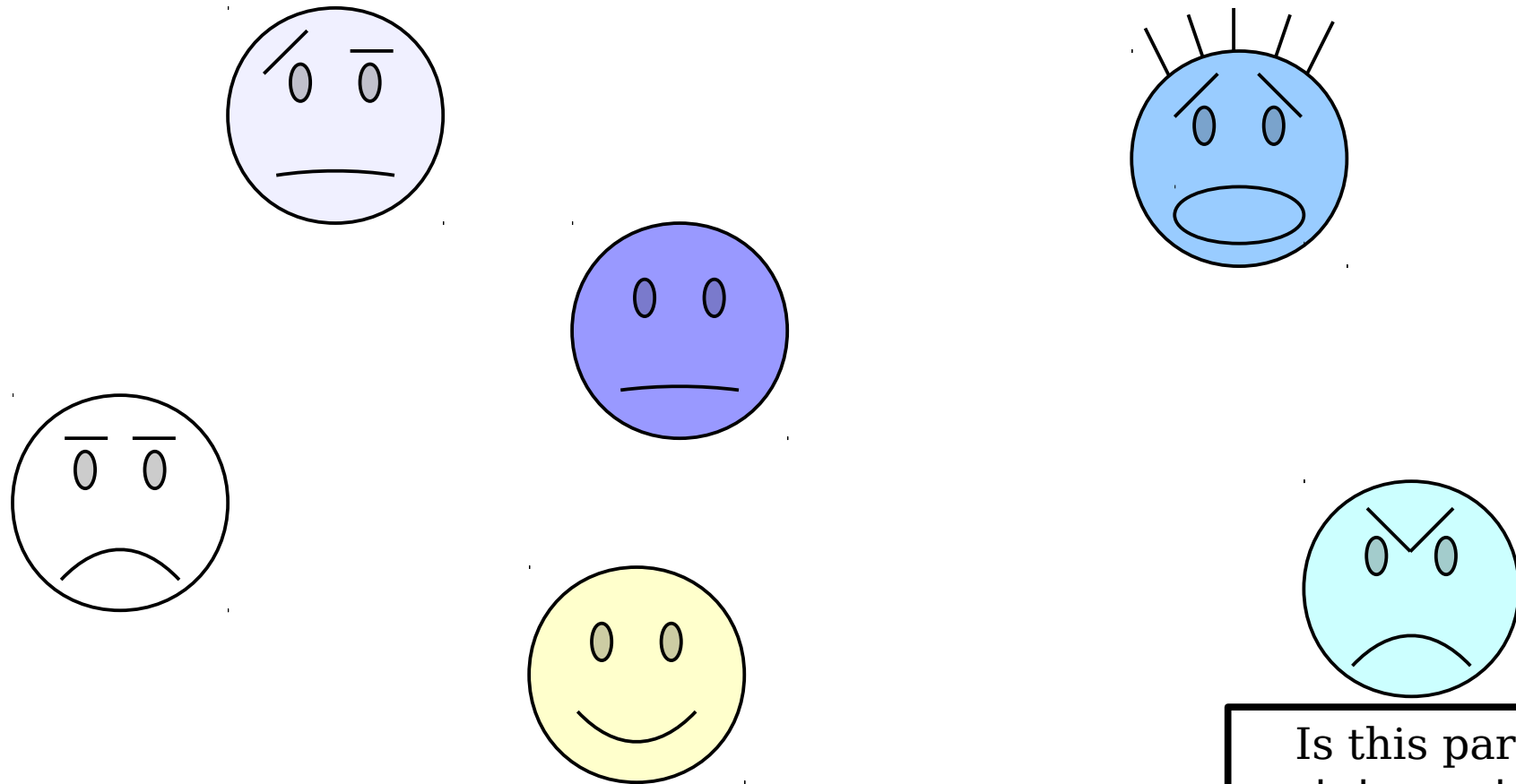
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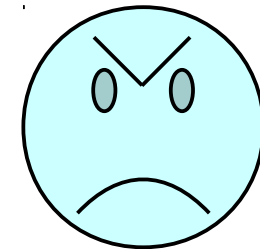
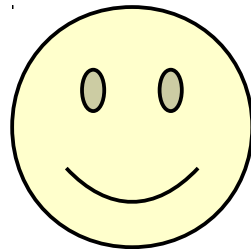
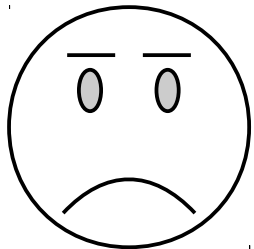
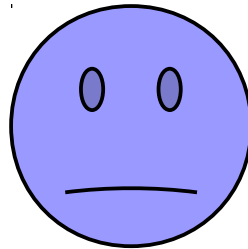
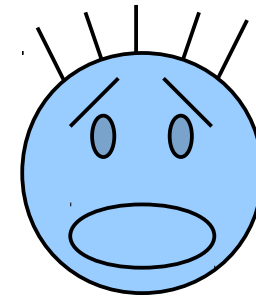
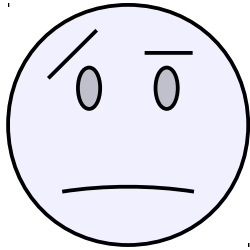
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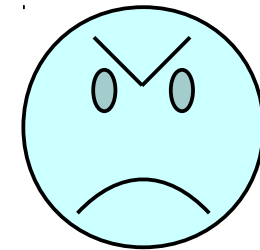
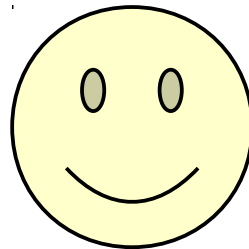
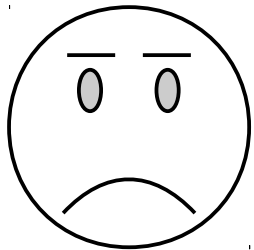
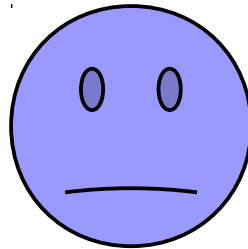
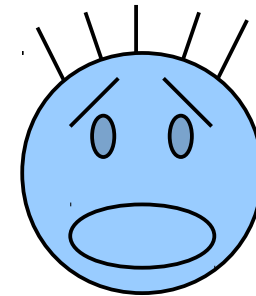
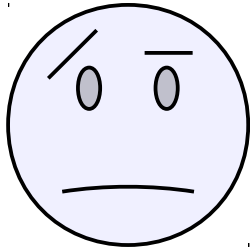
# The Existential Quantifier



Is this overall  
statement true or  
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$$(\exists x. \textit{Smiling}(x)) \rightarrow (\exists y. \textit{WearingHat}(y))$$

# The Existential Quantifier



Is this overall  
statement true or  
false?

~~$(\exists x. \textit{Smiling}(x)) \rightarrow (\exists y. \textit{WearingHat}(y))$~~

# Fun with Edge Cases

$\exists x. \textit{Smiling}(x)$



# Fun with Edge Cases

Existentially-quantified statements are false in an empty world, since nothing exists, period!

~~$\exists x. \textit{Smiling}(x)$~~

# Some Technical Details

# Variables and Quantifiers

- Each quantifier has two parts:
  - the variable that is introduced, and
  - the statement that's being quantified.
- The variable introduced is scoped just to the statement being quantified.

$(\exists x. \text{Loves}(\text{You}, x)) \wedge (\exists y. \text{Loves}(y, \text{You}))$

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The variable  $x$   
just lives here.

The variable  $y$   
just lives here.

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$(\exists x. \text{Loves}(\text{You}, x)) \wedge (\exists x. \text{Loves}(x, \text{You}))$

The variable  $x$   
just lives here.

A different variable,  
also named  $x$ , just  
lives here.

# Operator Precedence (Again)

- When writing out a formula in first-order logic, quantifiers have precedence just below  $\neg$ .
- The statement

$$\exists x. P(x) \wedge R(x) \wedge Q(x)$$

is parsed like this:

$$(\exists x. P(x)) \wedge (R(x) \wedge Q(x))$$

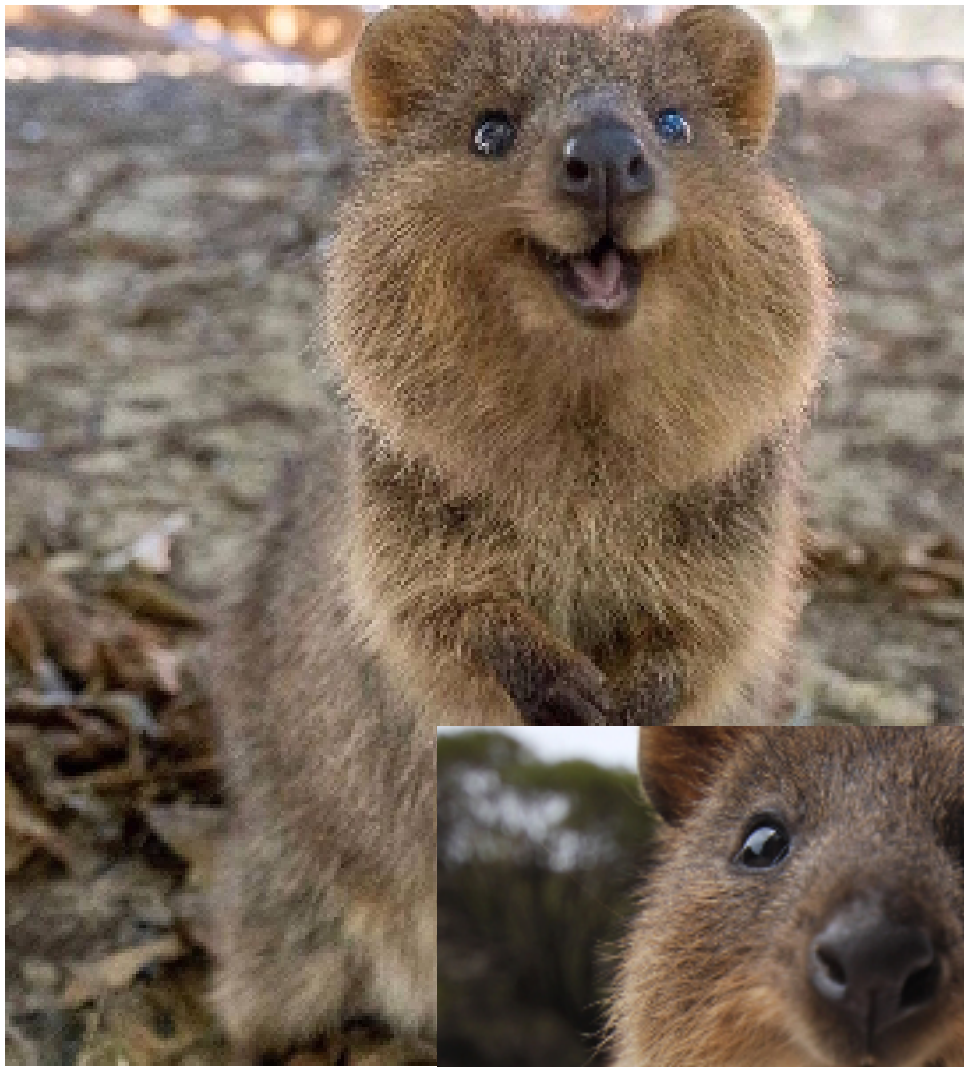
- This is syntactically invalid because the variable  $x$  is out of scope in the back half of the formula.
- To ensure that  $x$  is properly quantified, explicitly put parentheses around the region you want to quantify:

$$\exists x. (P(x) \wedge R(x) \wedge Q(x))$$



**THIS IS A LOT!!**

Time out for cuteness overload.



Okay, back to CS103!

“For any natural number  $n$ ,  
 $n$  is even if and only if  $n^2$  is even”

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$\forall n. (n \in \mathbb{N} \rightarrow (Even(n) \leftrightarrow Even(n^2)))$

“For any natural number  $n$ ,  
 $n$  is even if and only if  $n^2$  is even”

$\forall n. (n \in \mathbb{N} \rightarrow (Even(n) \leftrightarrow Even(n^2)))$

$\forall$  is the **universal quantifier**  
and says “for all choices of  $n$ ,  
the following is true.”

# The Universal Quantifier

- A statement of the form

**$\forall x$ . *some-formula***

is true when, for every choice of  $x$ , the statement ***some-formula*** is true when  $x$  is plugged into it.

- Examples:

$\forall p. (Puppy(p) \rightarrow Cute(p))$

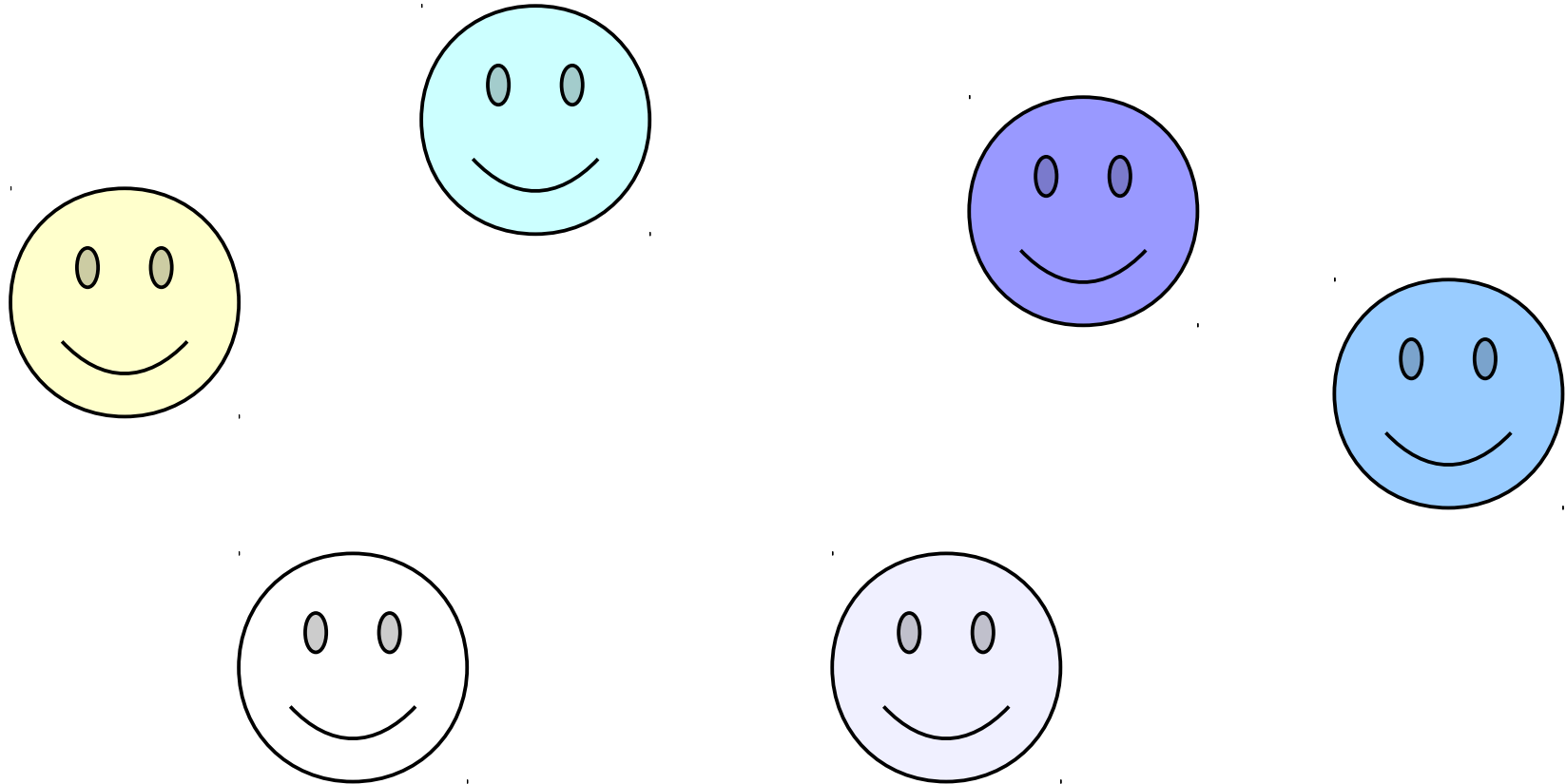
$\forall a. (EatsPlants(a) \vee EatsAnimals(a))$

$Tallest(SultanKösen) \rightarrow$

$\forall x. (SultanKösen \neq x \rightarrow ShorterThan(x, SultanKösen))$

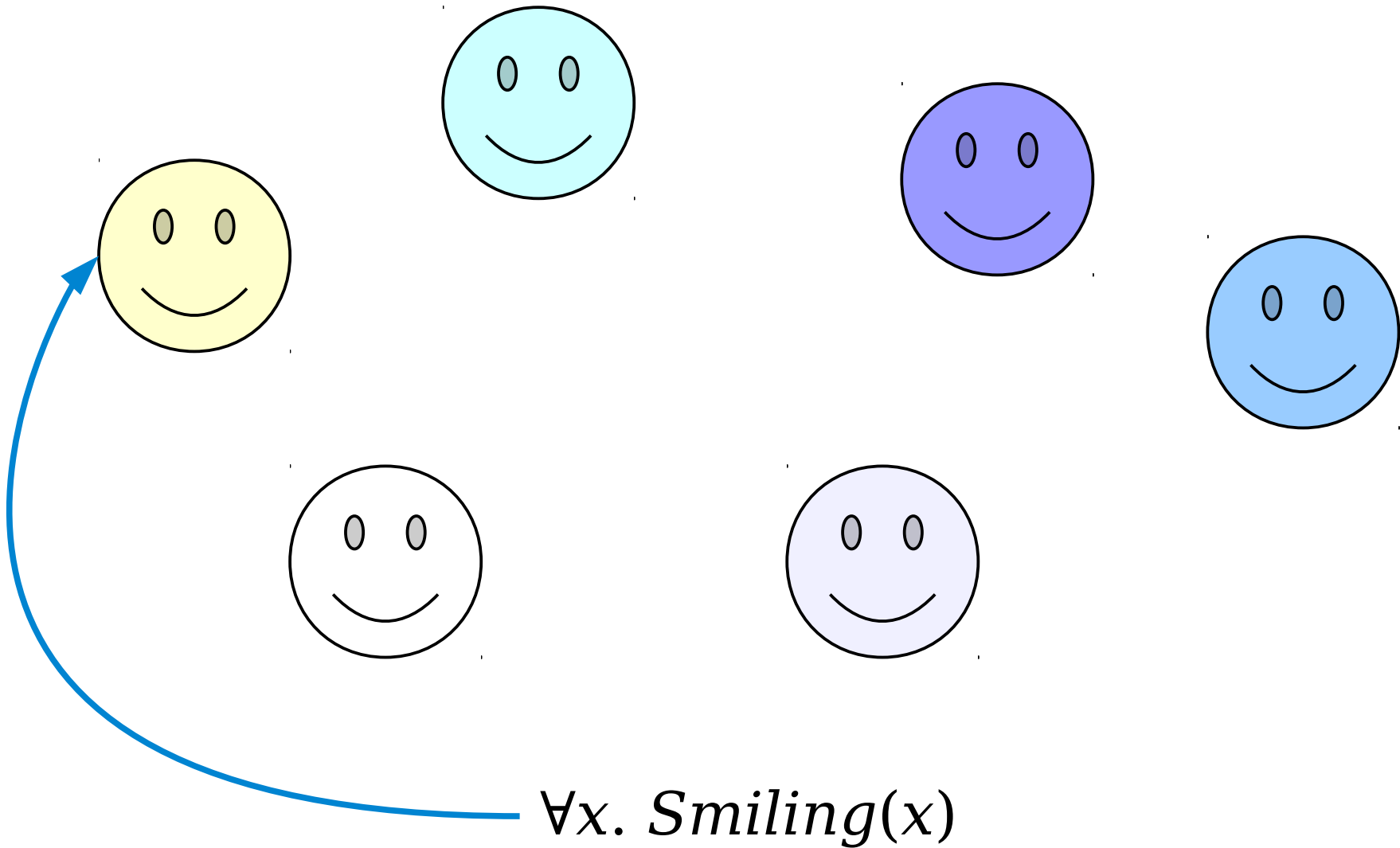


# The Universal Quantifier

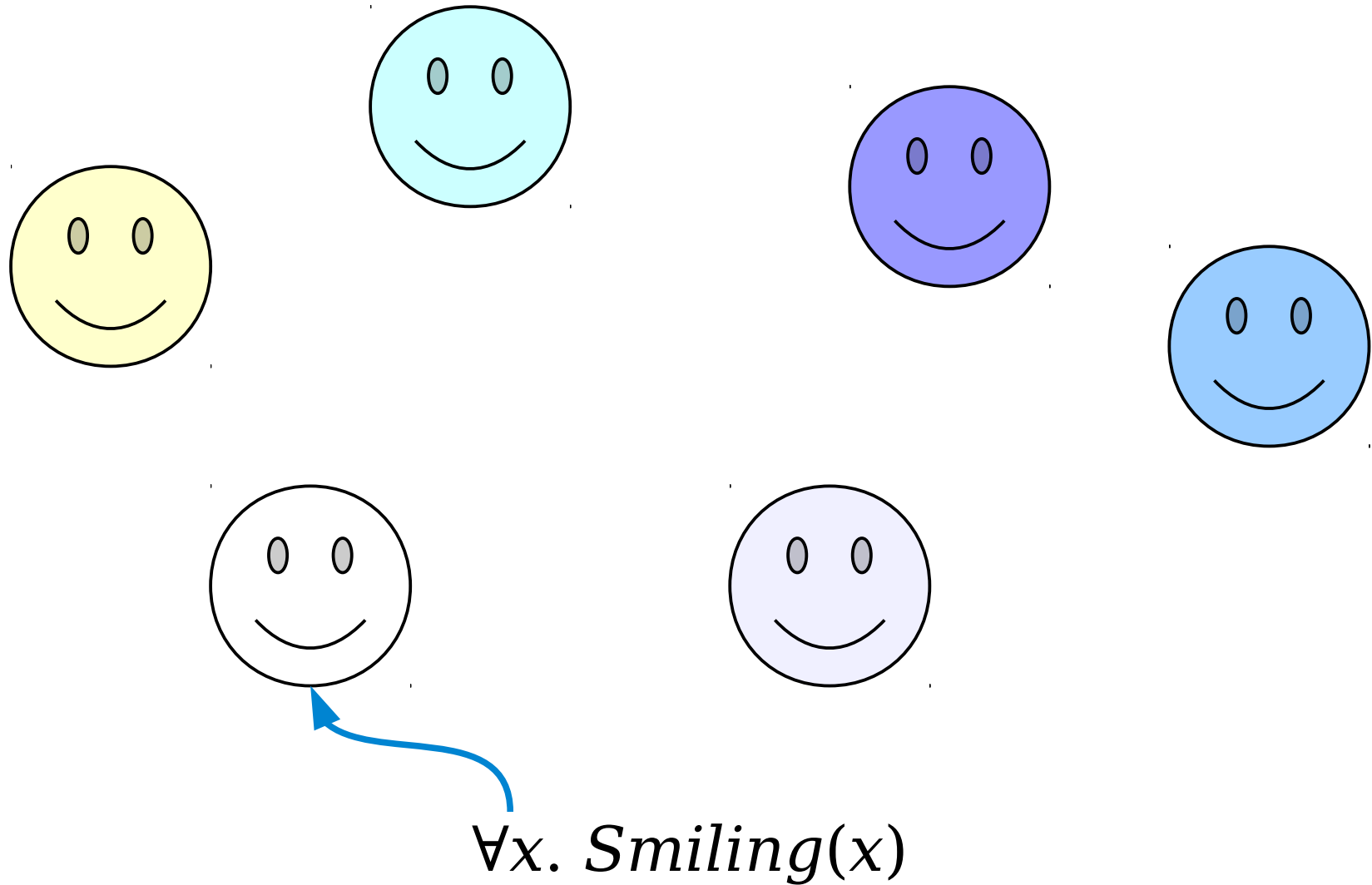


$\forall x. \textit{Smiling}(x)$

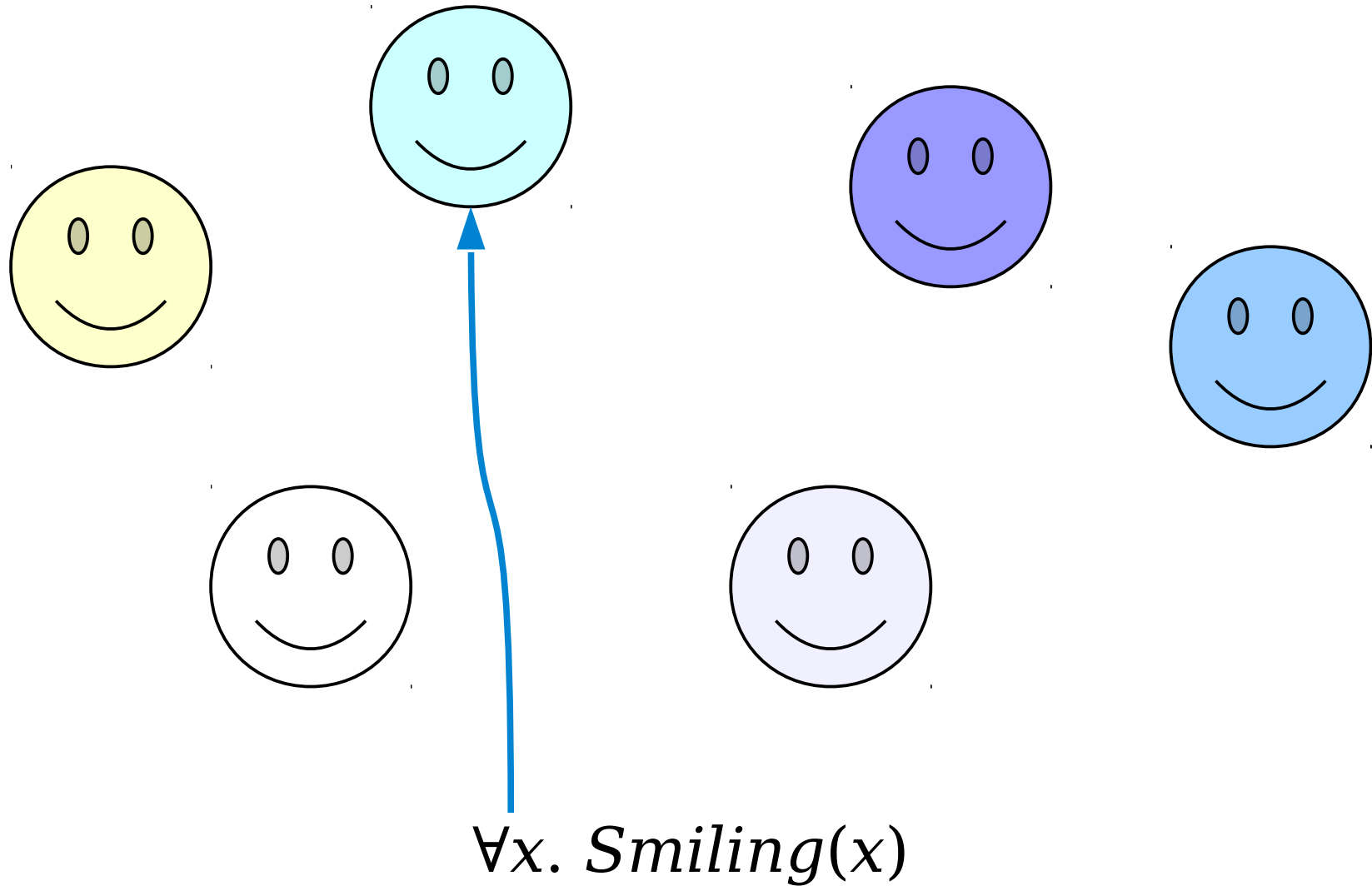
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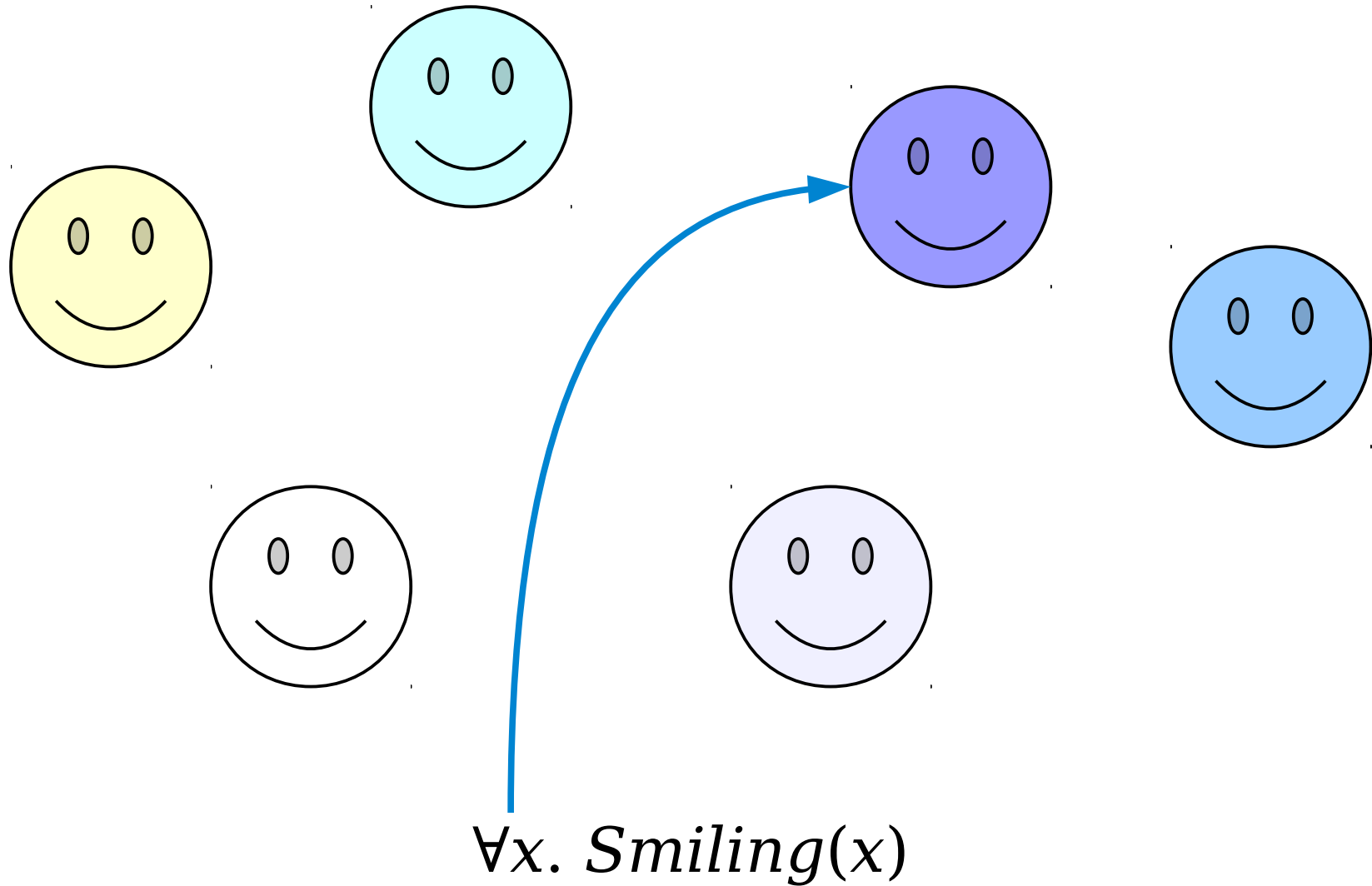
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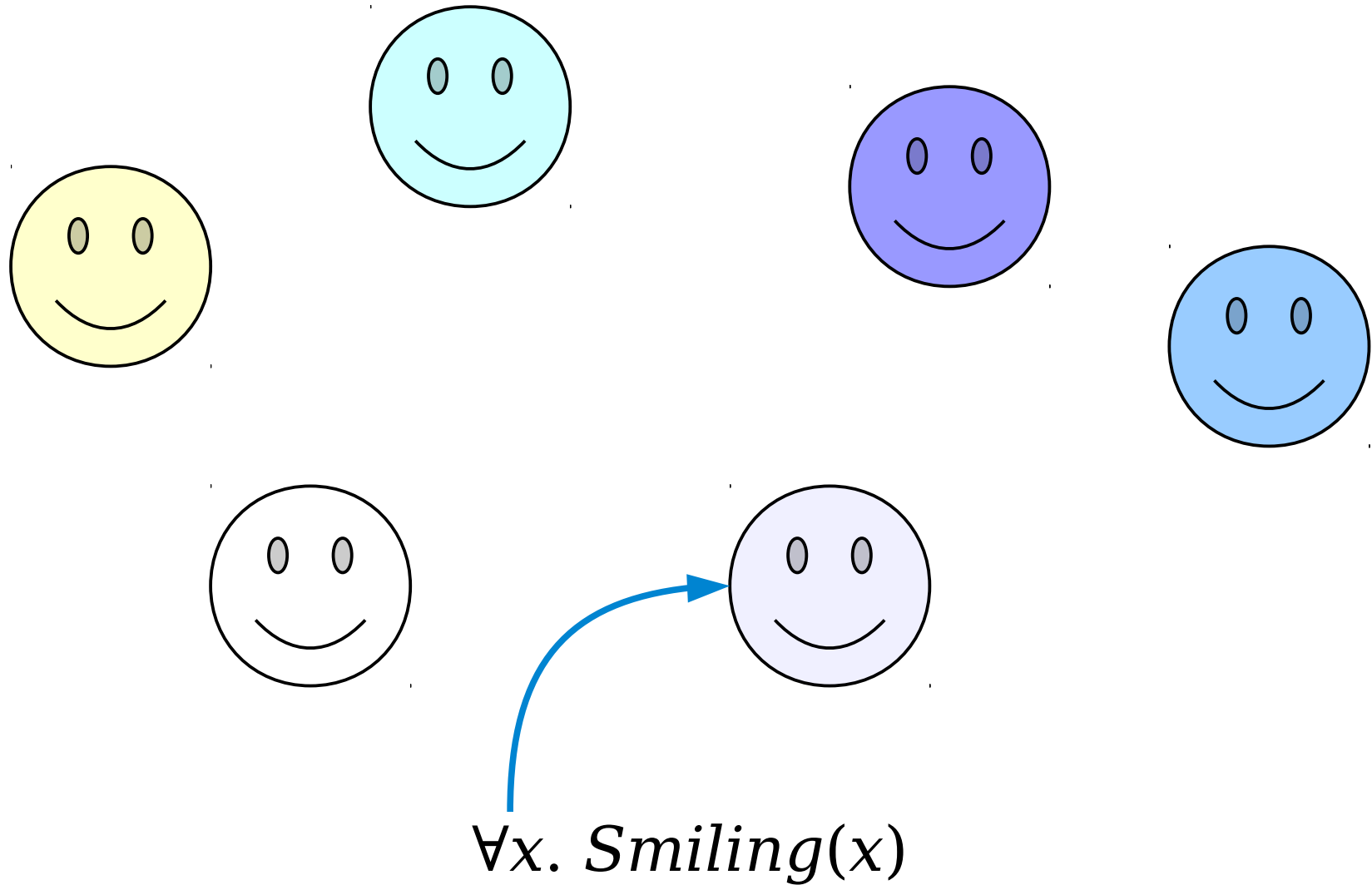
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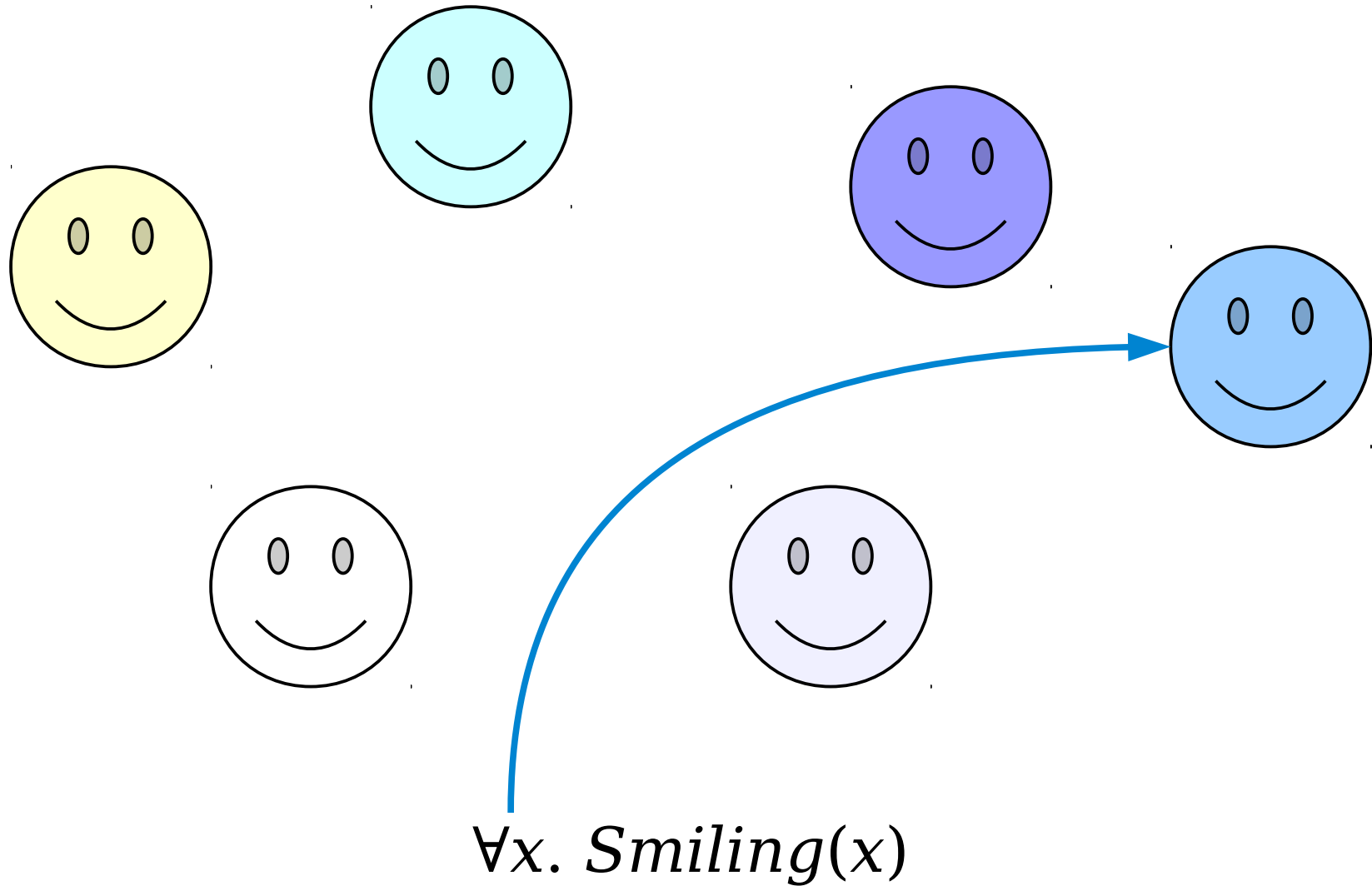
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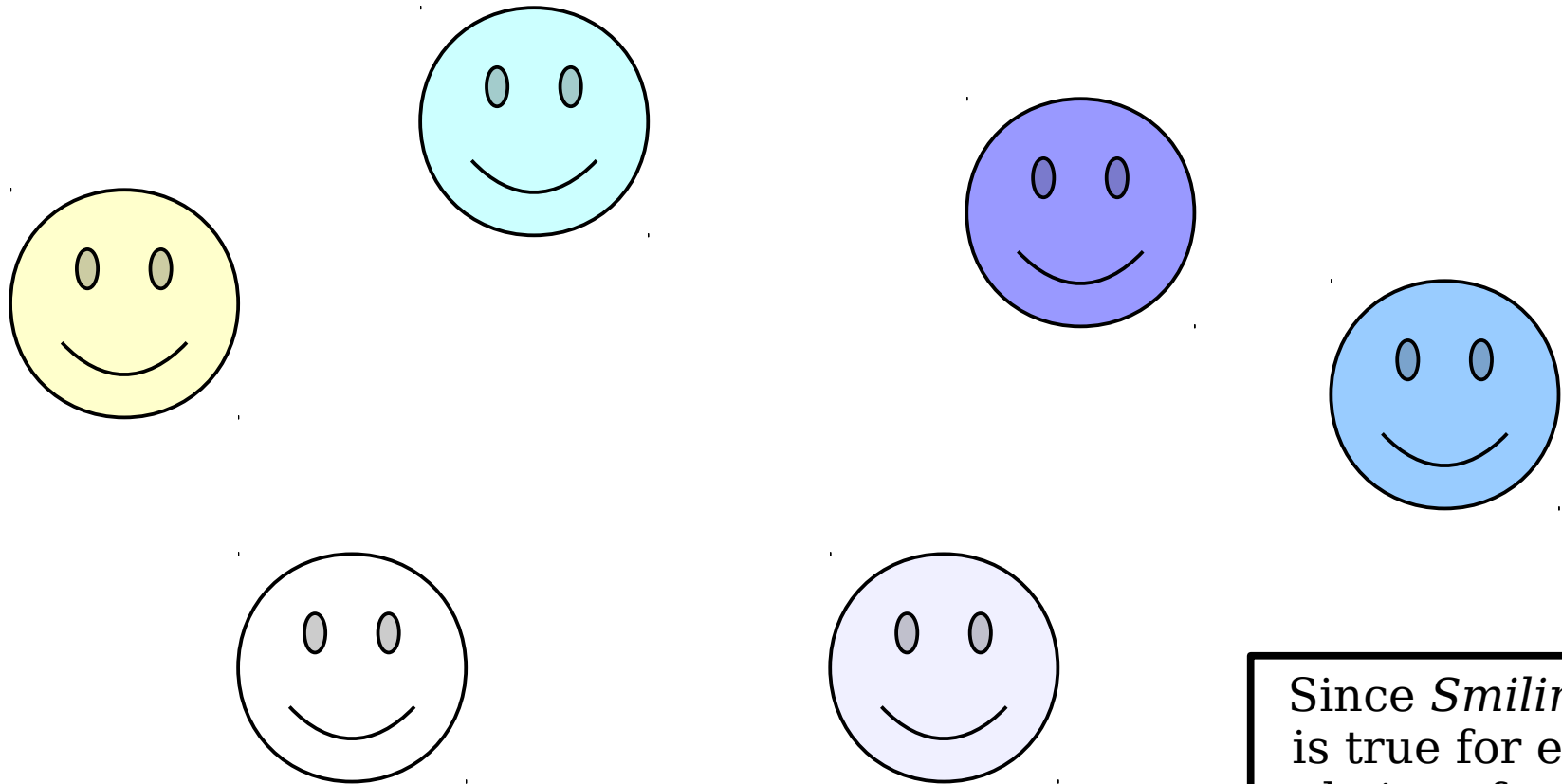
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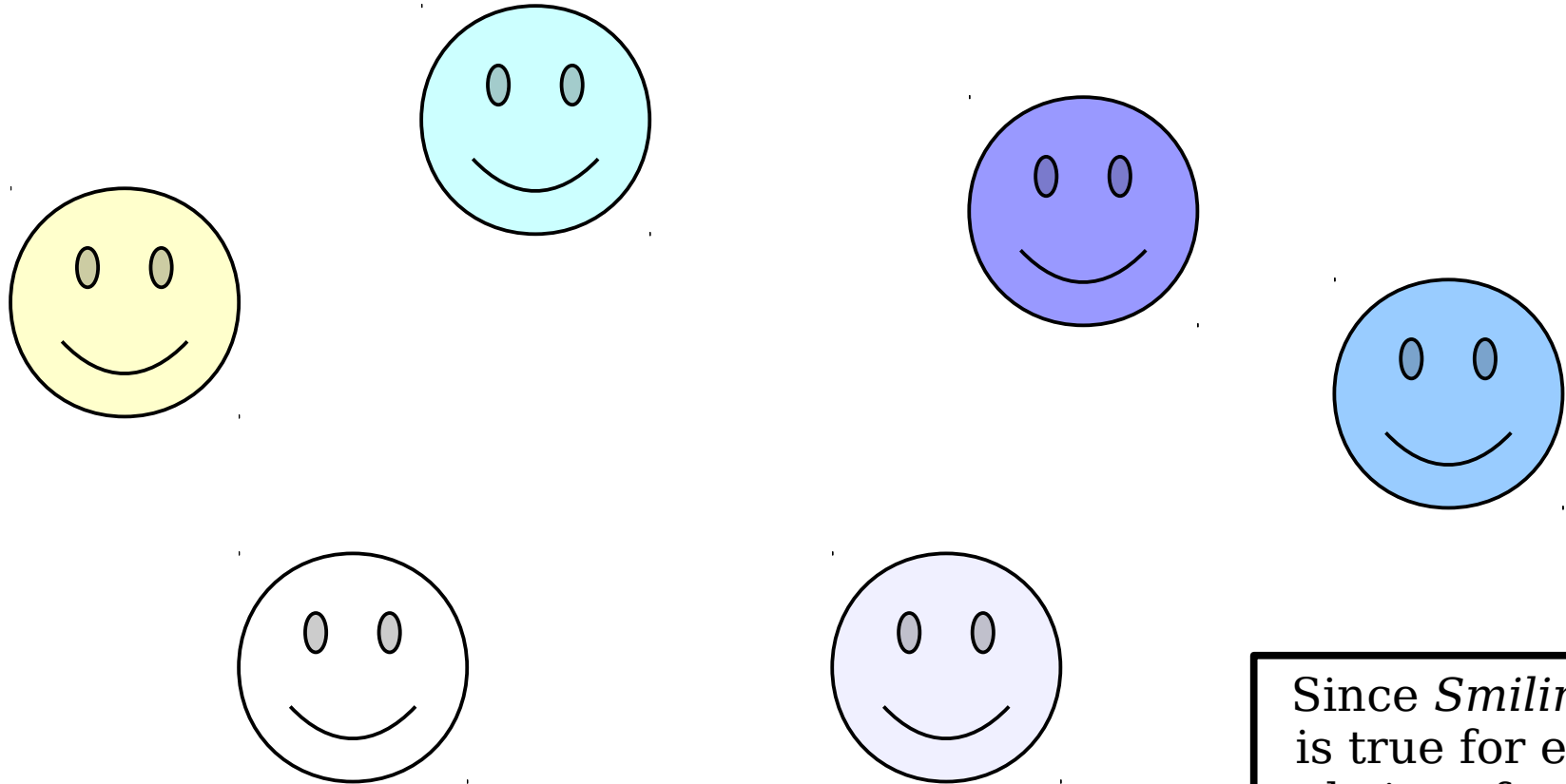


$\forall x. \textit{Smiling}(x)$

Since *Smiling*( $x$ )  
is true for every  
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statement  
evaluates to true.



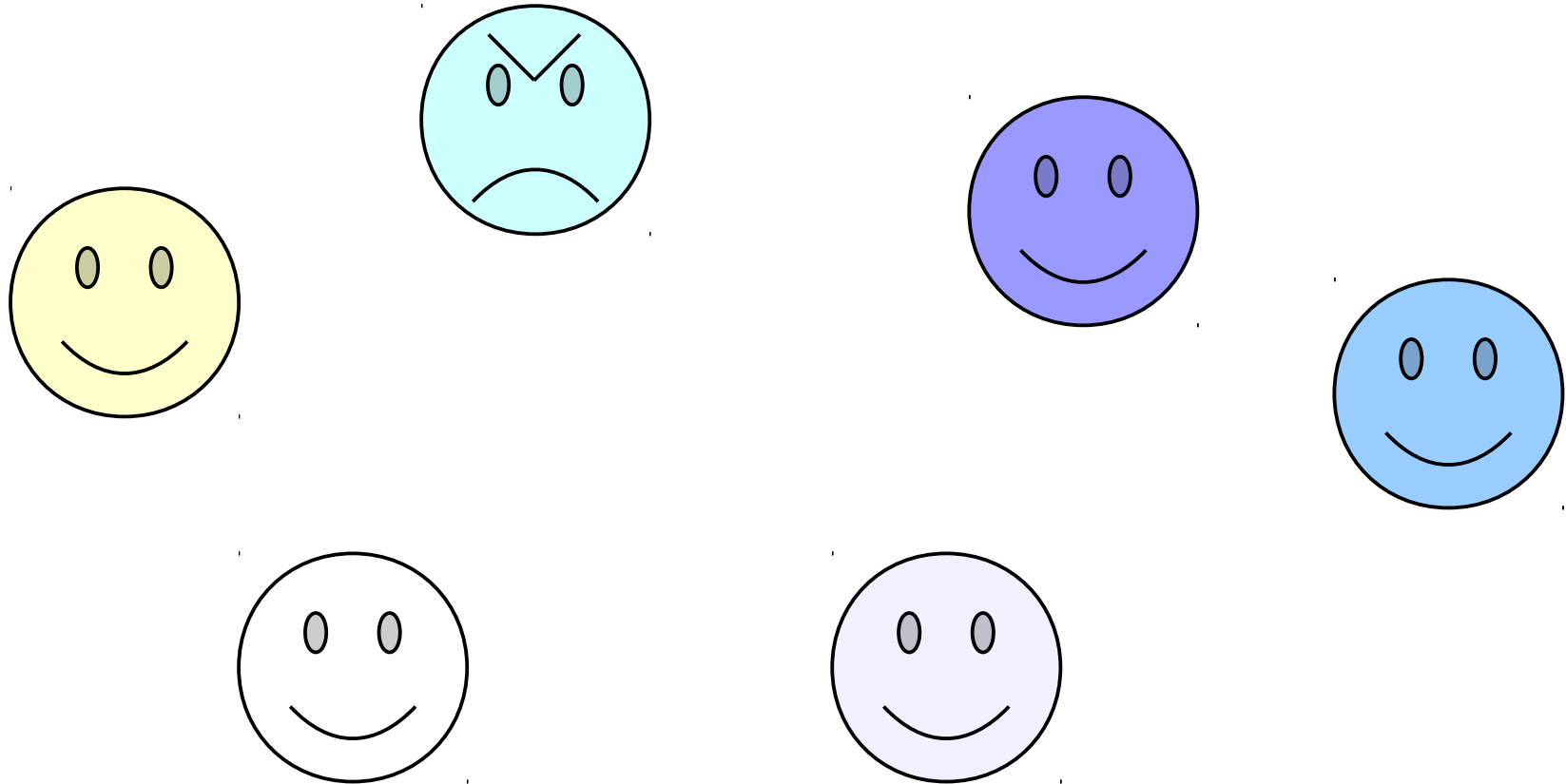
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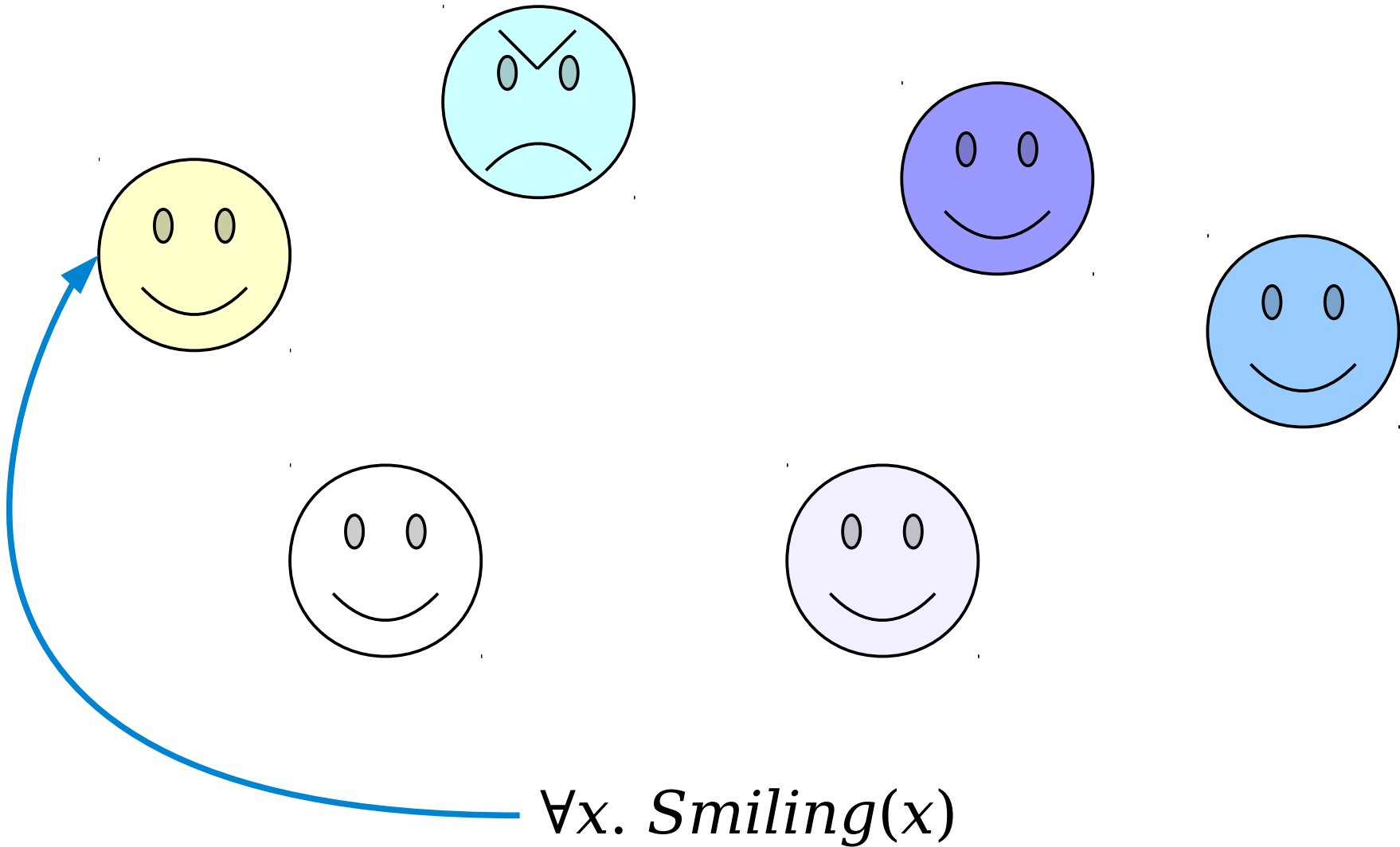
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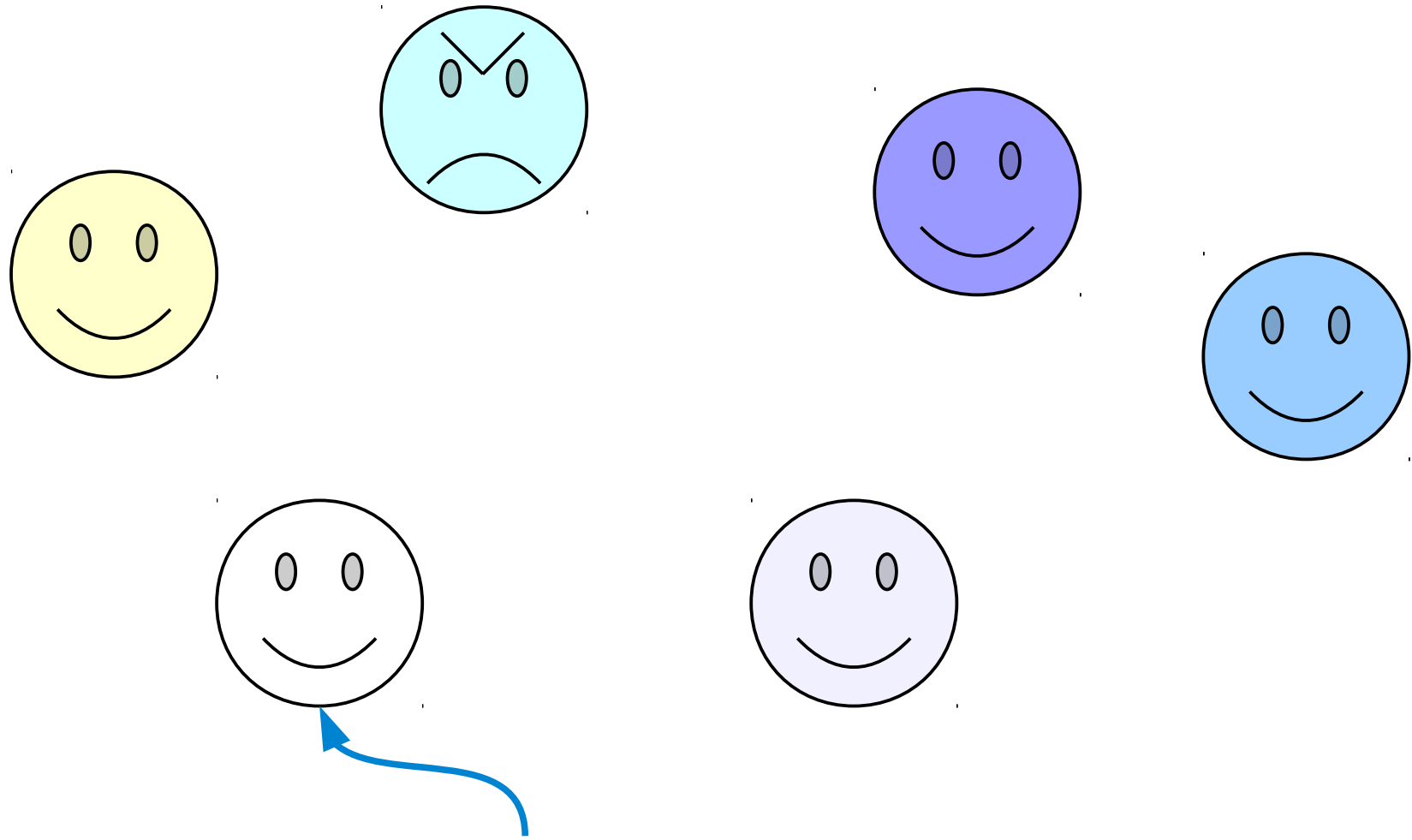


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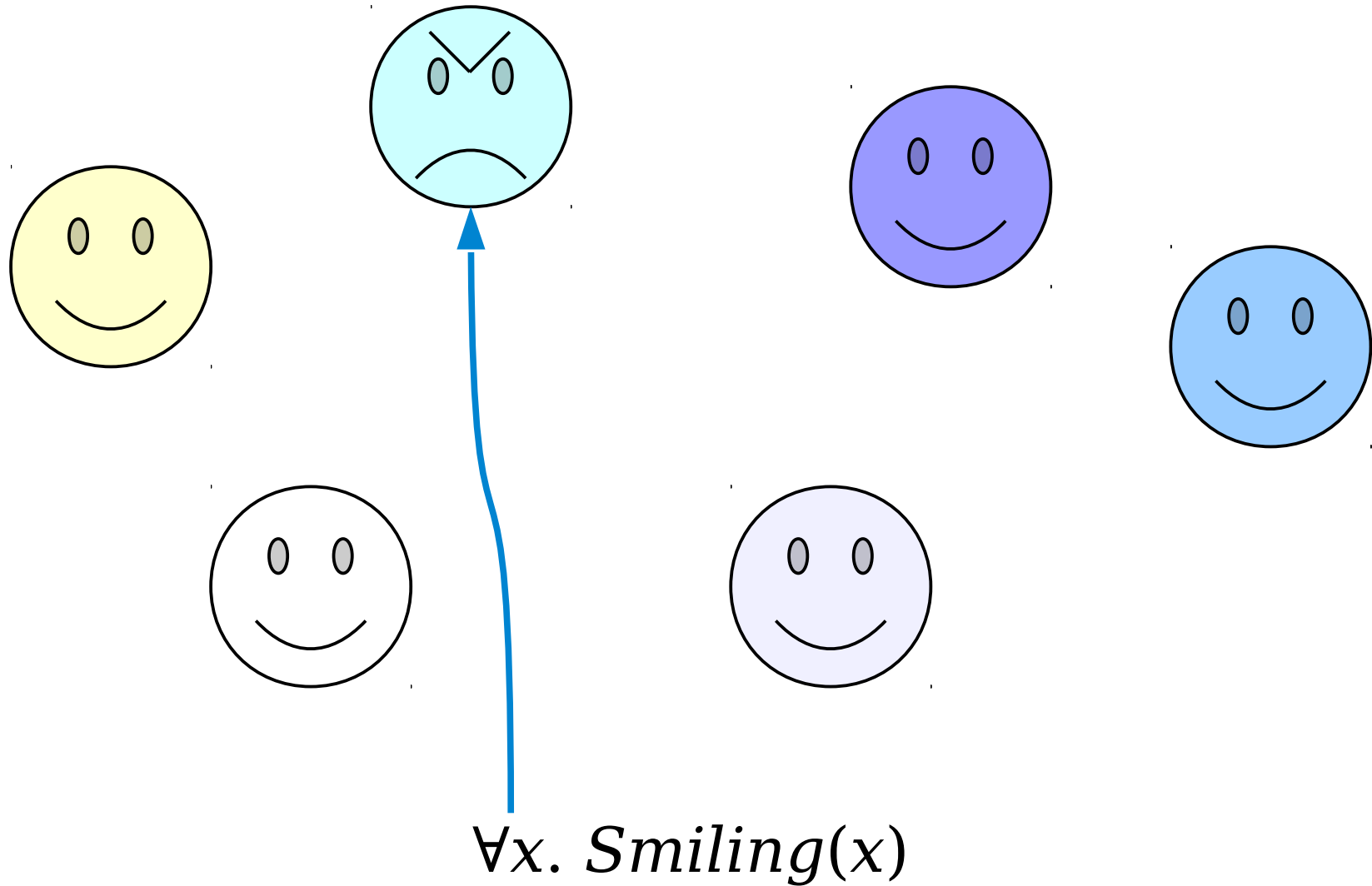


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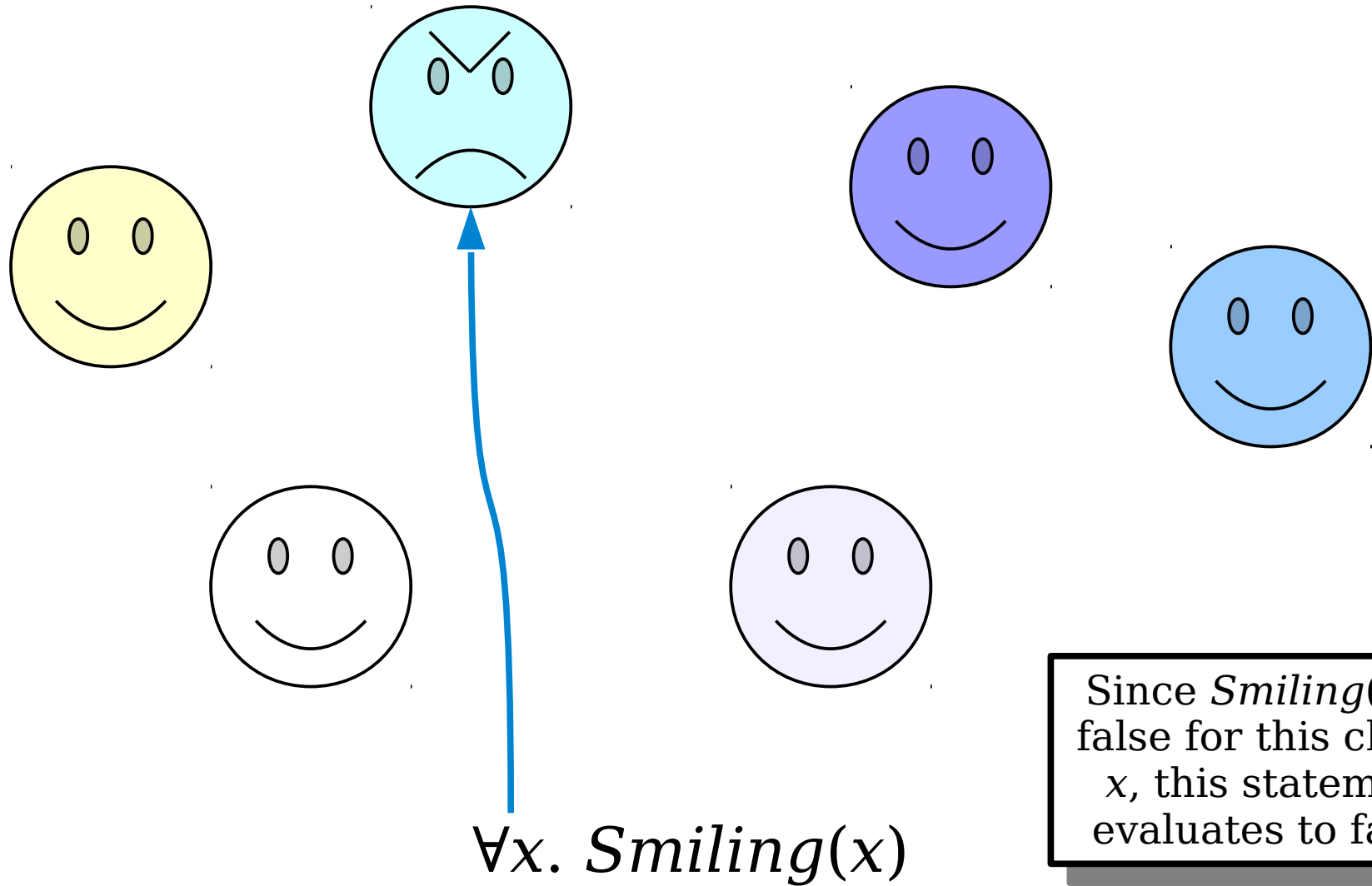


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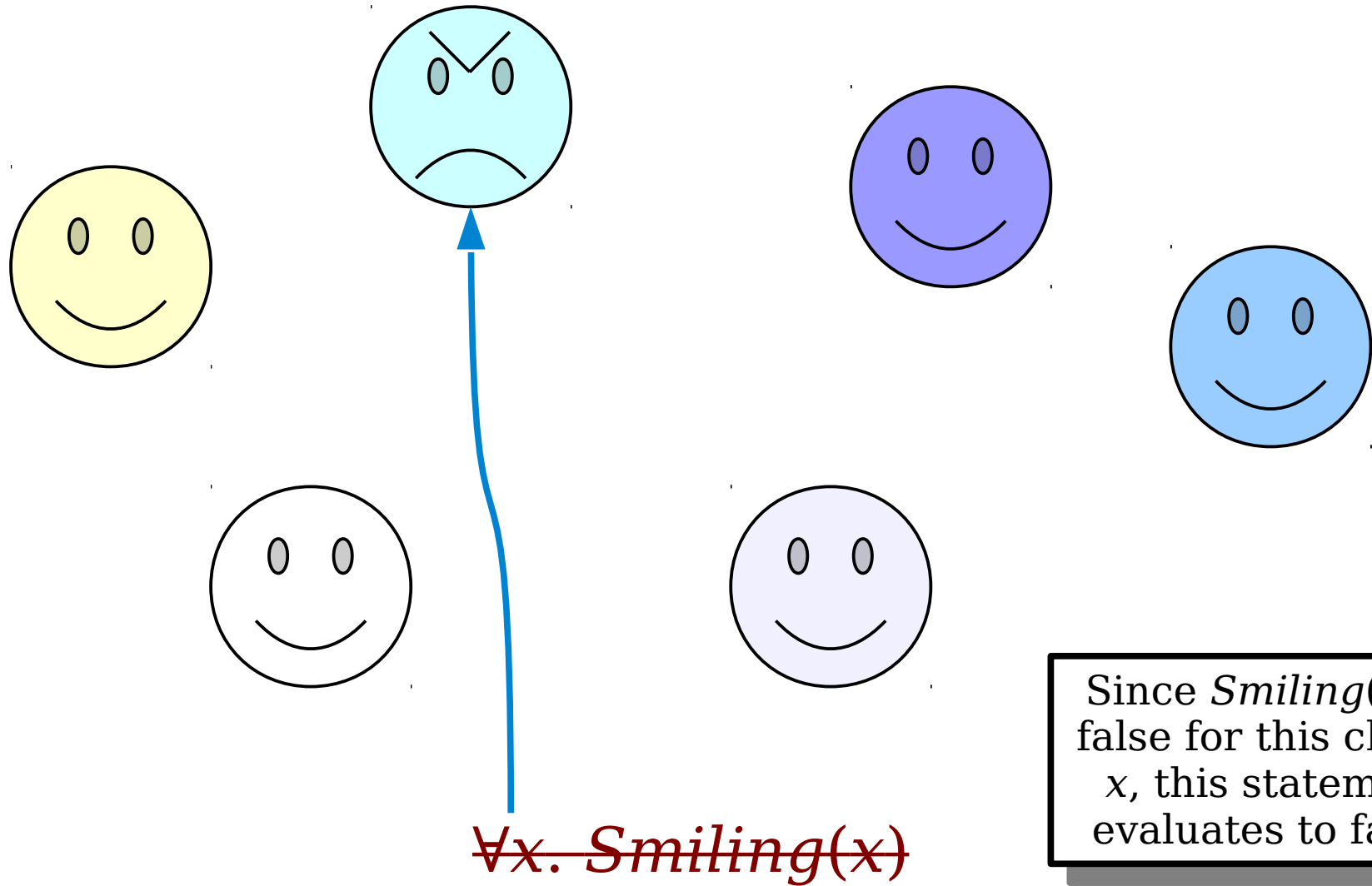
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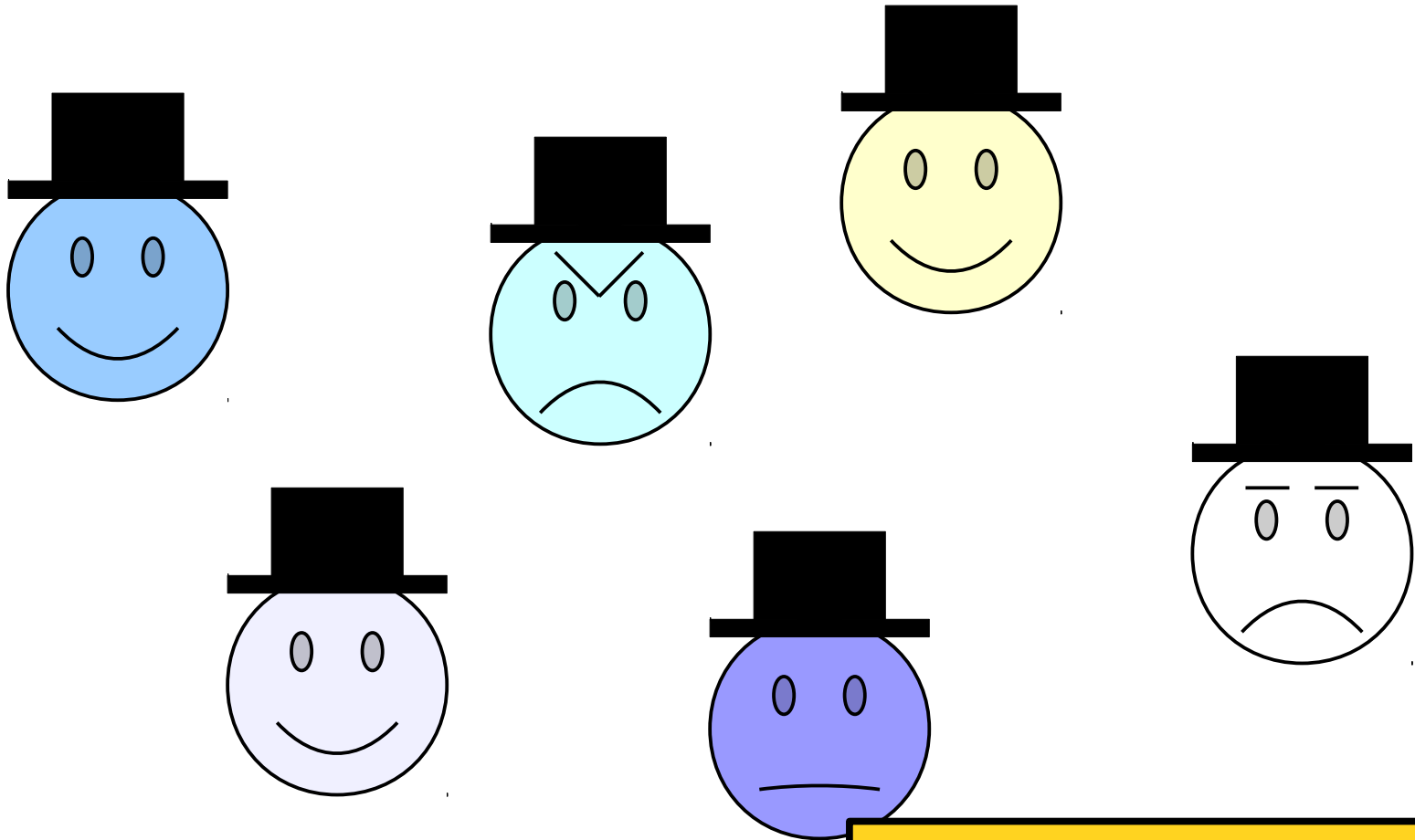
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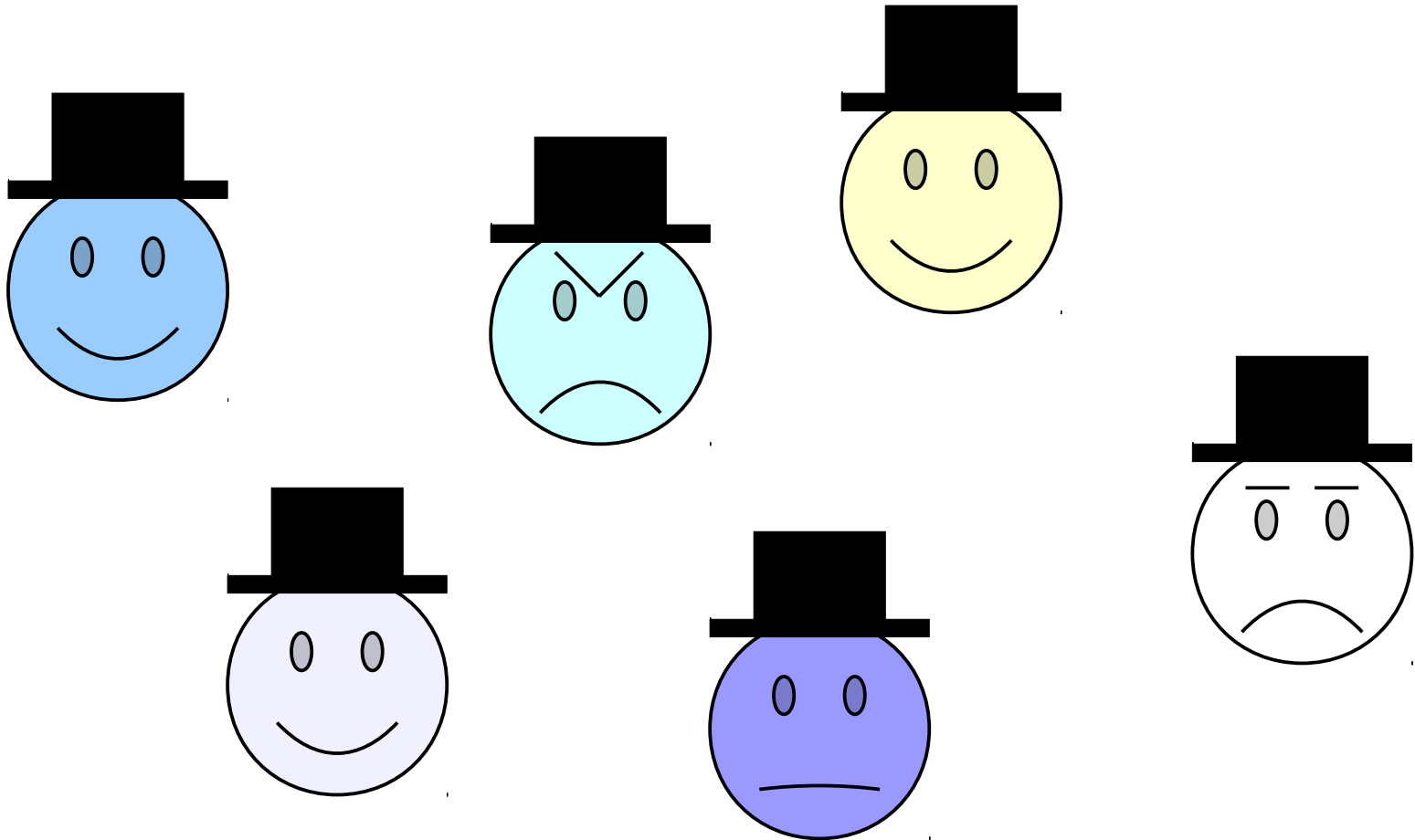


Answer at  
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$(\forall x. \textit{Smiling}(x)) \rightarrow (\forall y. \textit{WearingHat}(y))$

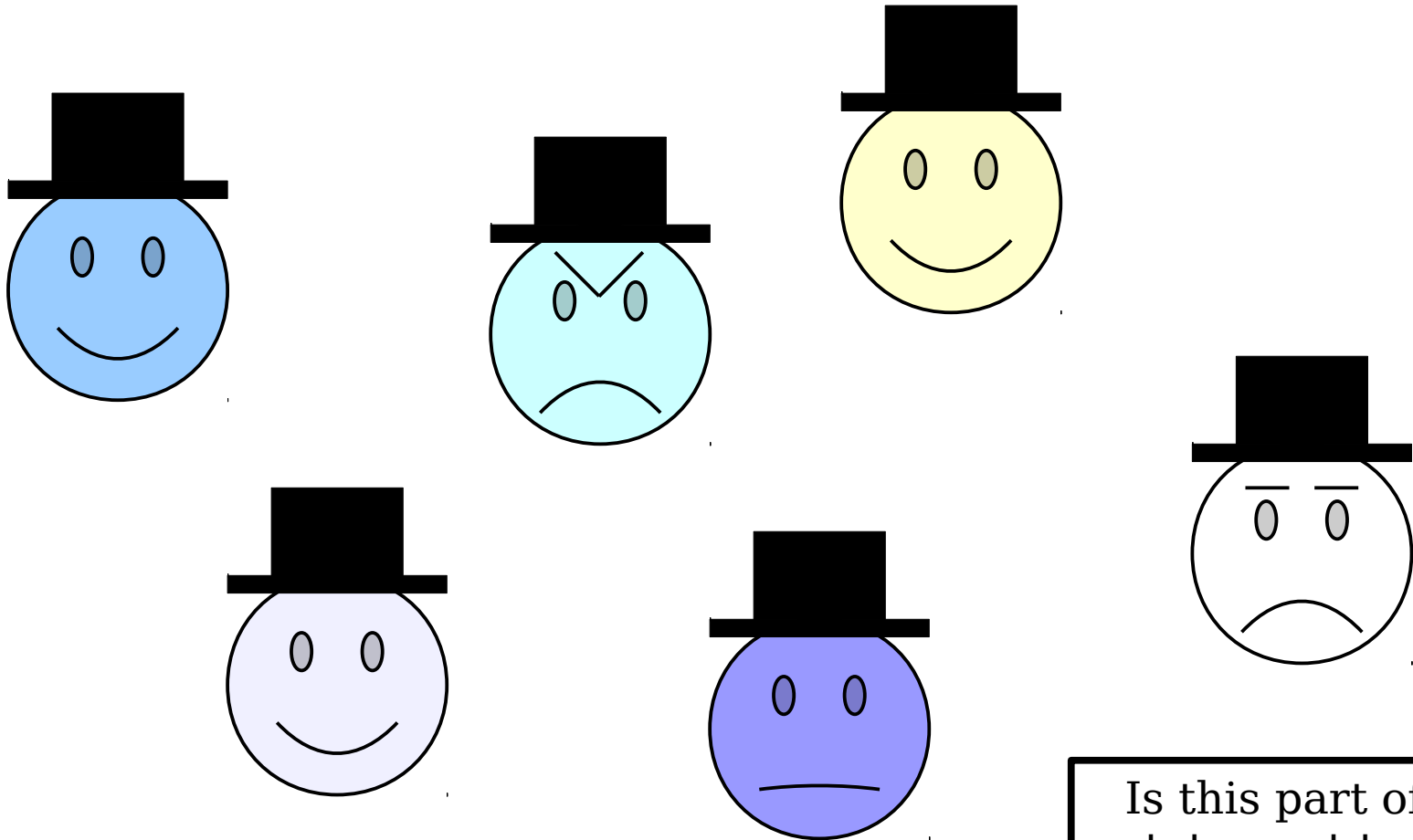


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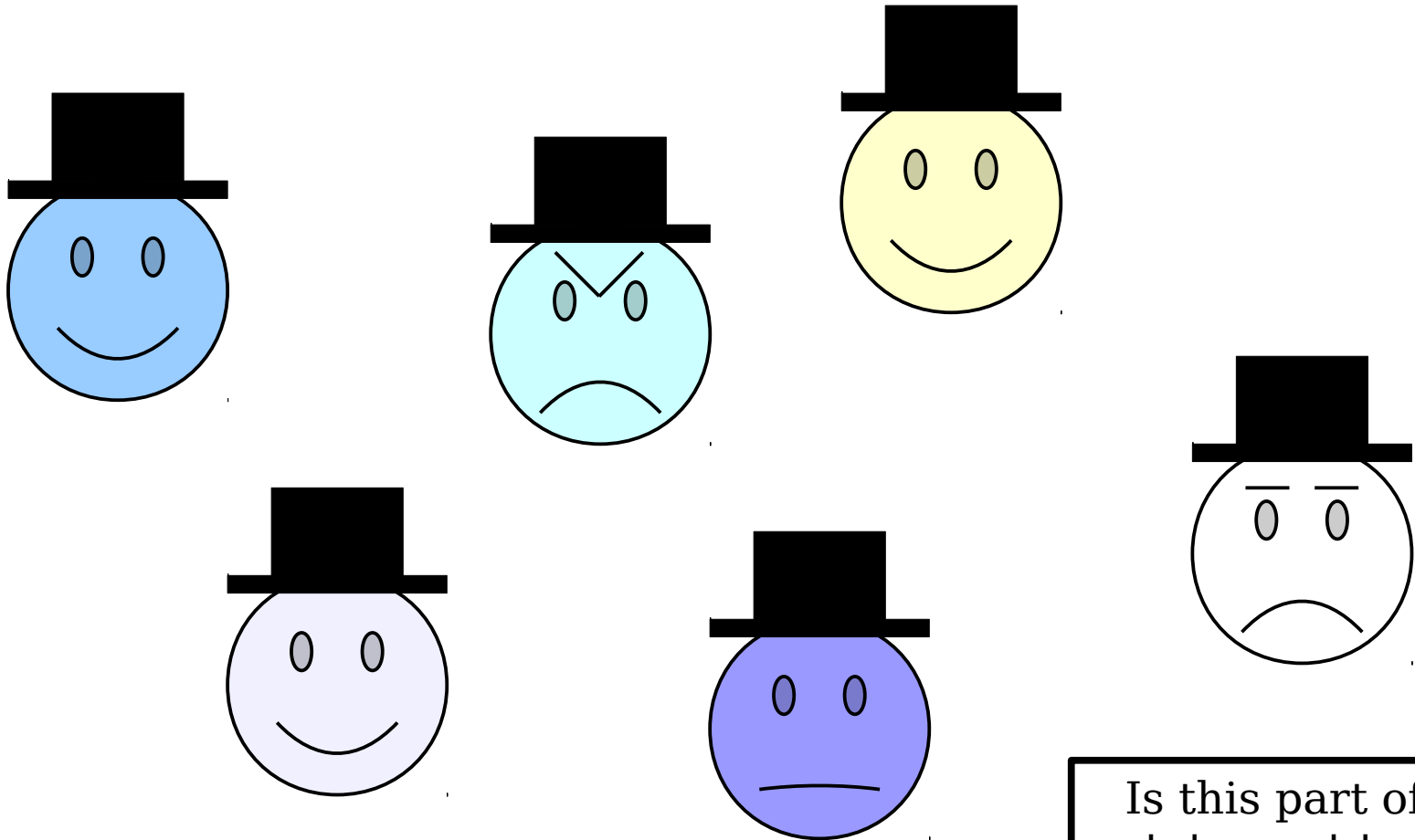
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Is this part of the statement true or false?

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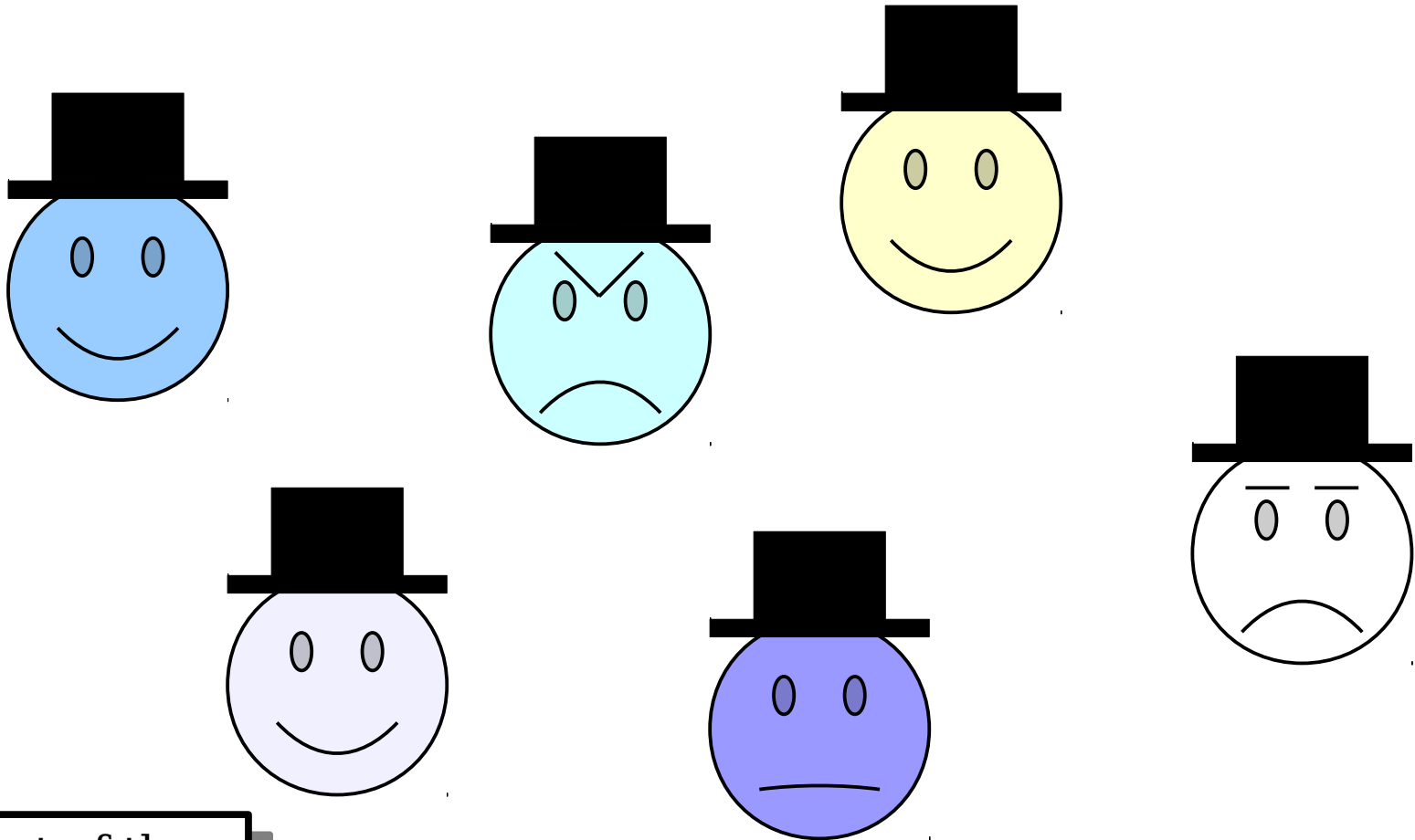
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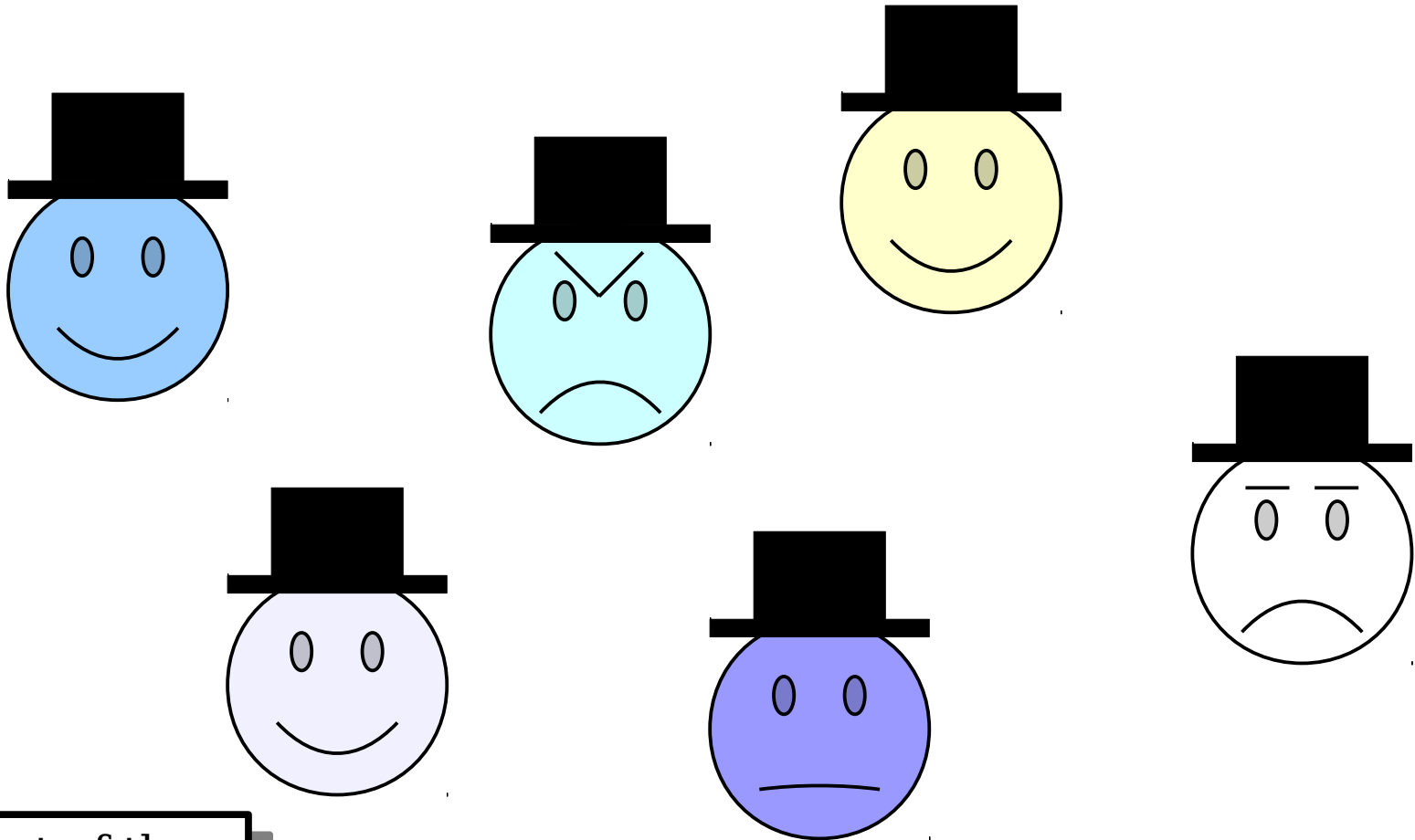
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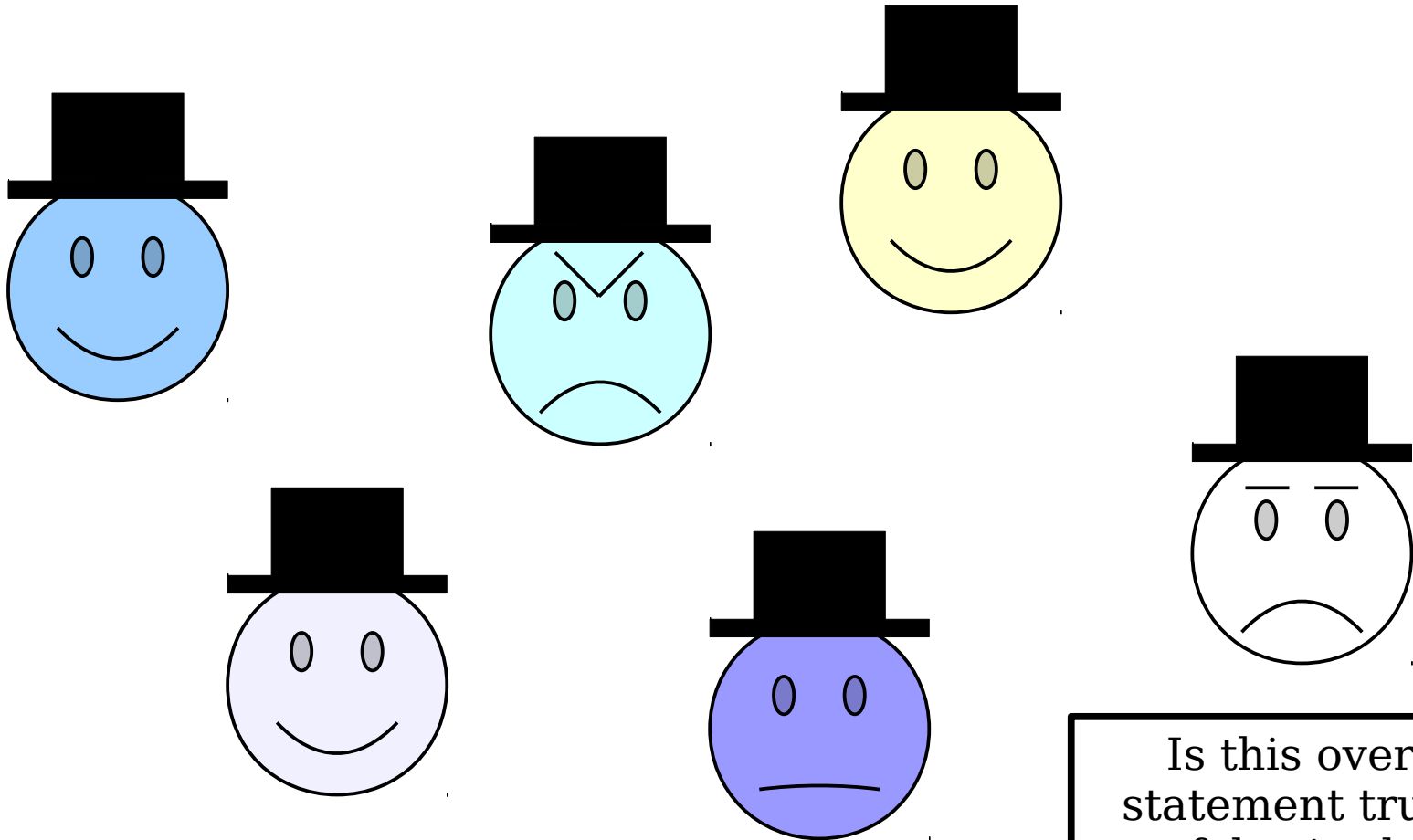
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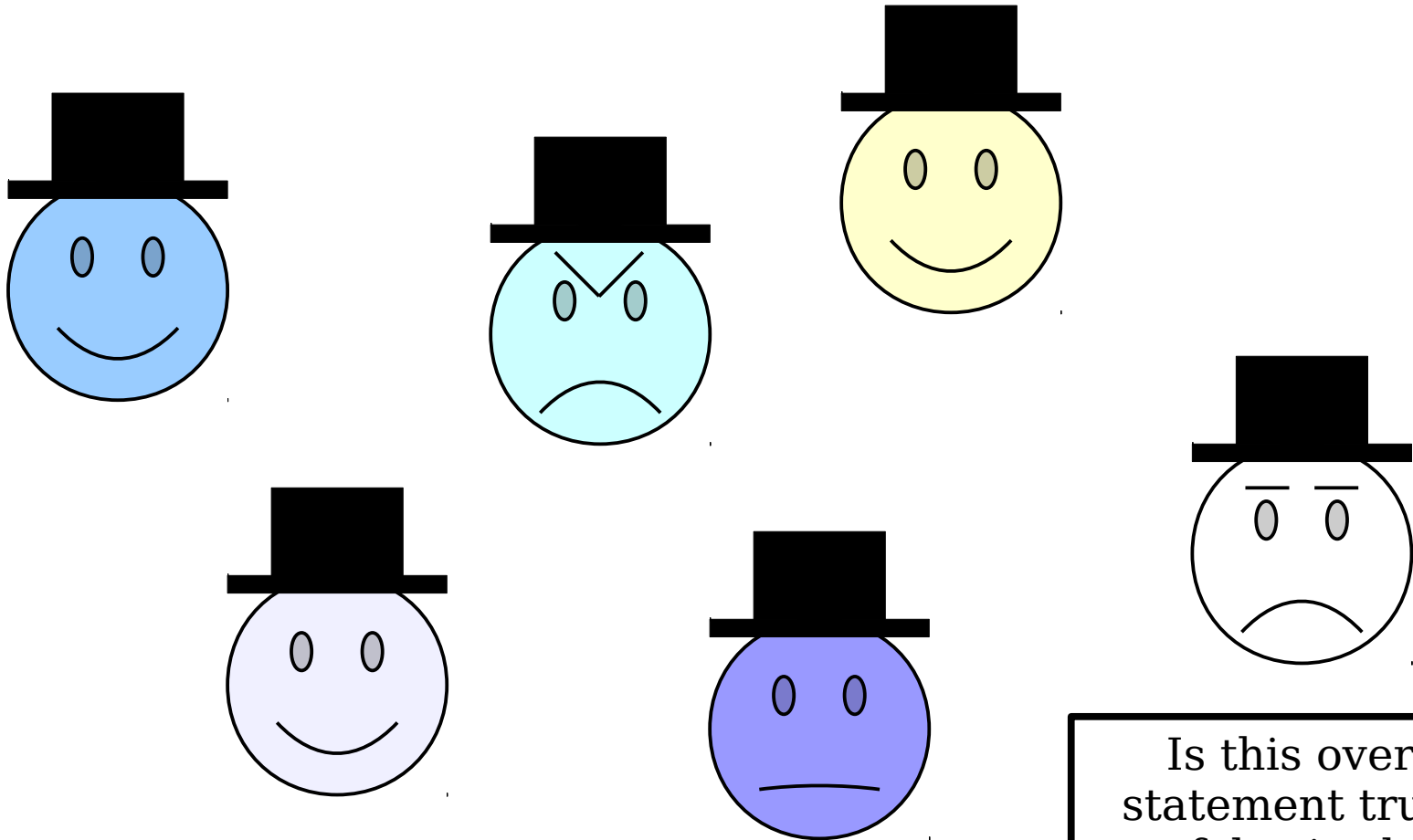
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Is this overall statement true or false in this scenario?

~~$(\forall x. \textit{Smiling}(x))$~~   $\rightarrow$   $(\forall y. \textit{WearingHat}(y))$

# The Universal Quantifier



Is this overall statement true or false in this scenario?

$(\forall x. Smiling(x)) \rightarrow (\forall y. WearingHat(y))$

# Fun with Edge Cases

$\forall x. \textit{Smiling}(x)$



# Fun with Edge Cases

Universally-quantified statements are said to be *vacuously true* in empty worlds.

$\forall x. \textit{Smiling}(x)$

# Translating into First-Order Logic

# Translating Into Logic

- First-order logic is an excellent tool for manipulating definitions and theorems to learn more about them.
- Need to take a negation? Translate your statement into FOL, negate it, then translate it back.
- Want to prove something by contrapositive? Translate your implication into FOL, take the contrapositive, then translate it back.

# Translating Into Logic

- When translating from English into first-order logic, we recommend that you ***think of first-order logic as a mathematical programming language.***
- Your goal is to learn how to combine basic concepts (quantifiers, connectives, etc.) together in ways that say what you mean.

Using the predicates

- *Smiling*( $x$ ), which states that  $x$  is smiling, and
- *WearingHat*( $x$ ), which states that  $x$  is wearing a hat,

write a formula in first-order logic that says

***some smiling person wears a hat.***

How would you represent this in first-order logic?

Answer at

<https://cs103.stanford.edu/pollev>

Using the predicates

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- $WearingHat(x)$ , which states that  $x$  is wearing a hat,

write a formula in first-order logic that says

***some smiling person wears a hat.***

Which of the following are correct translations?

- (A)  $\exists x. WearingHat(Smiling(x))$
- (B)  $\exists x. (Smiling(x) = WearingHat(x))$
- (C)  $\exists x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$
- (D)  $\exists x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$

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Using the predicates

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- $WearingHat(x)$ , which states that  $x$  is wearing a hat,

write a formula in first-order logic that says

***some smiling person wears a hat.***

Which of the following are correct translations?

- (A)  ~~$\exists x. Smiling(Person(x))$~~
- (B)  ~~$\exists x. (Smiling(x) = WearingHat(x))$~~
- (C)  $\exists x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$
- (D)  $\exists x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$



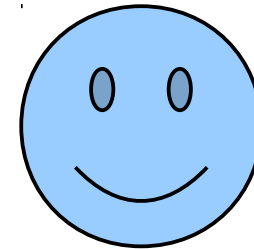
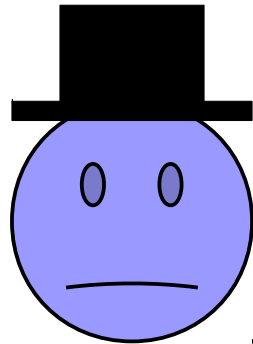
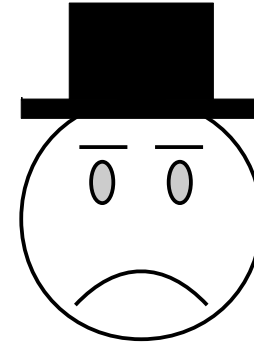
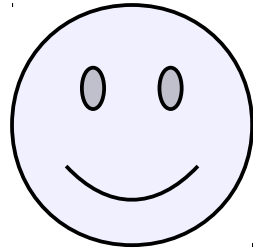
“Some smiling person wears a hat.”

---

$\exists x. (\textit{Smiling}(x) \wedge \textit{WearingHat}(x))$

---

$\exists x. (\textit{Smiling}(x) \rightarrow \textit{WearingHat}(x))$



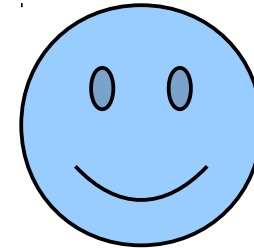
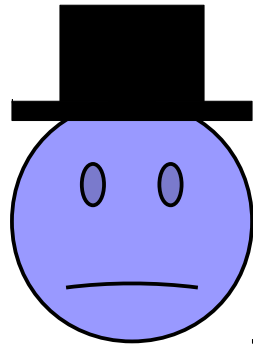
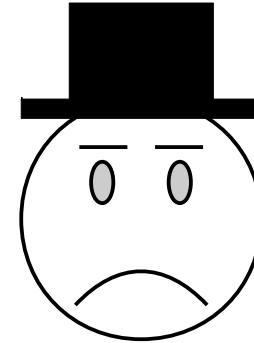
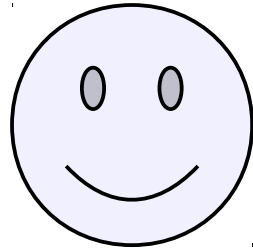
“Some smiling person wears a hat.”

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$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$

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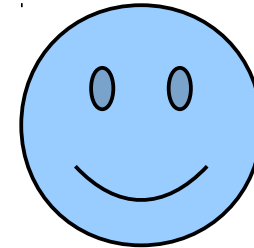
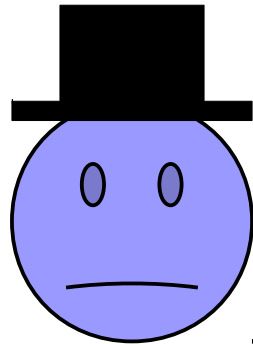
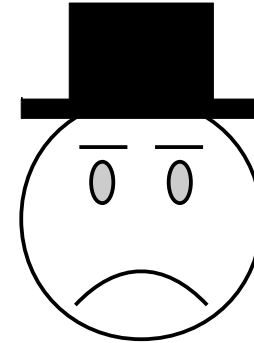
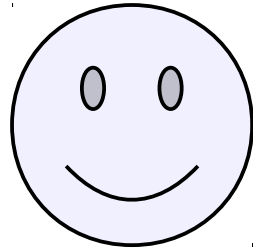
$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$



“Some smiling person wears a hat.”

$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$

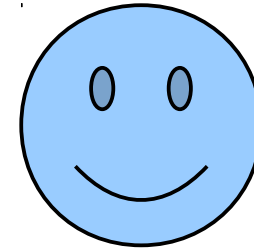
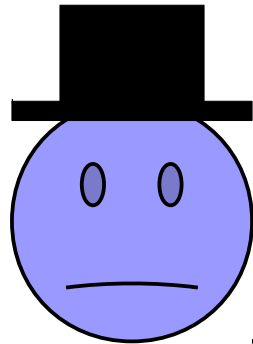
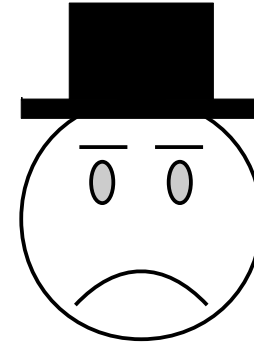
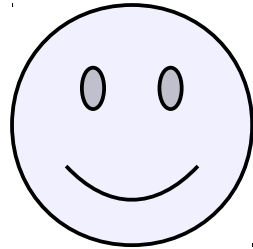
$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$



“Some smiling person wears a hat.” *False*

$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$

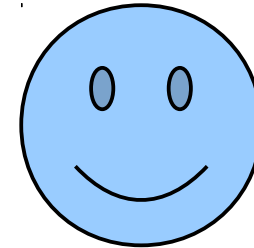
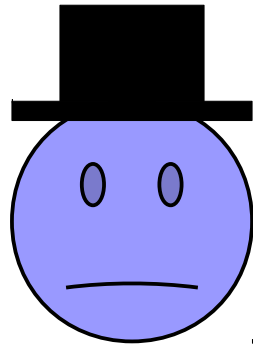
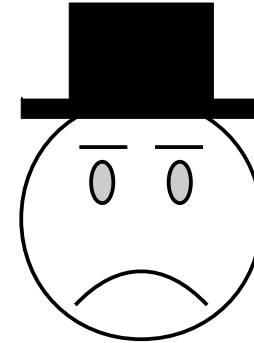
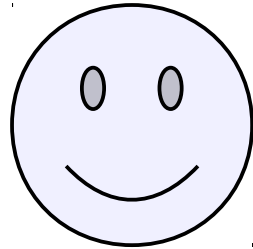
$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$



“Some smiling person wears a hat.” *False*

$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$

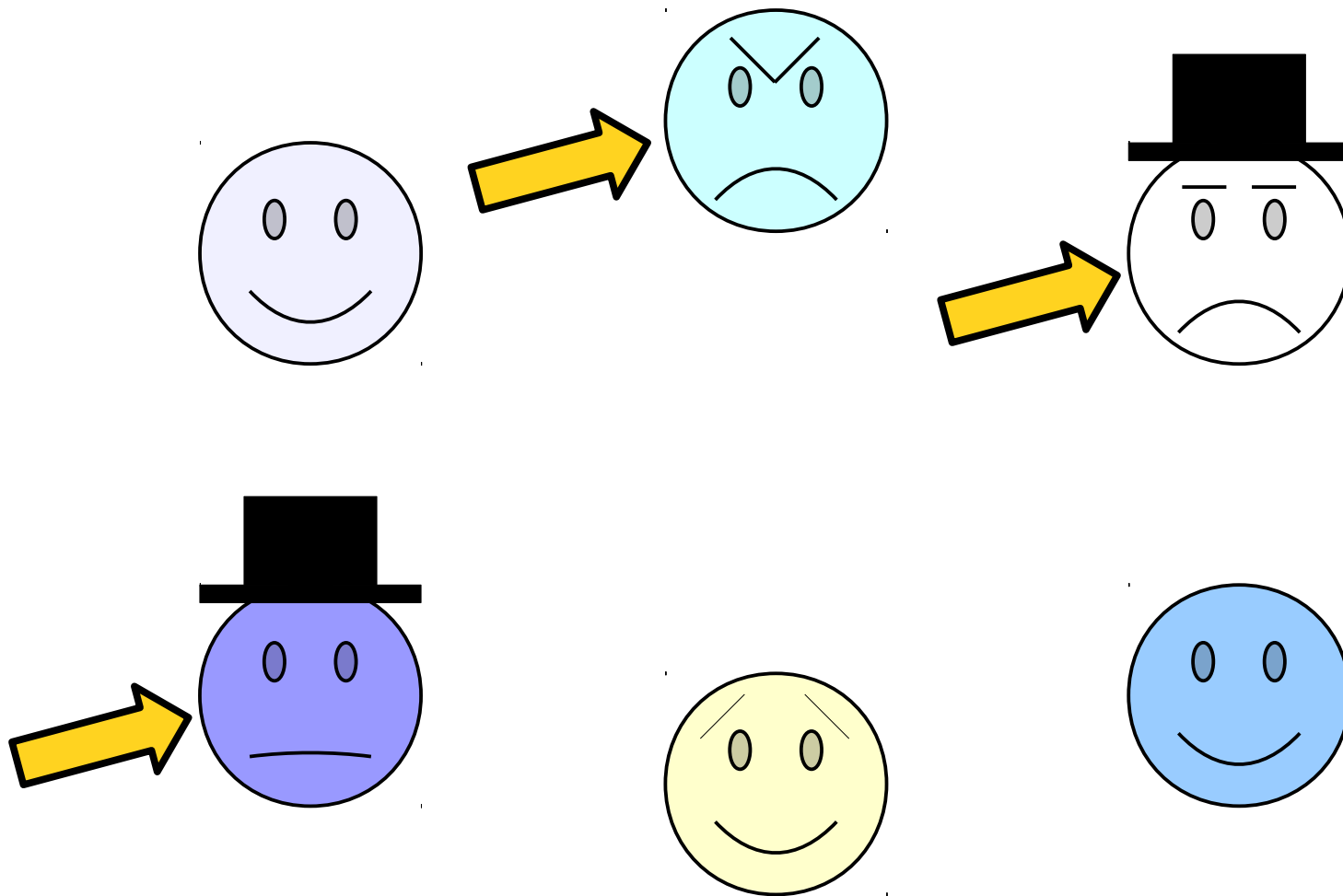
$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$



“Some smiling person wears a hat.” ***False***

$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$  ***False***

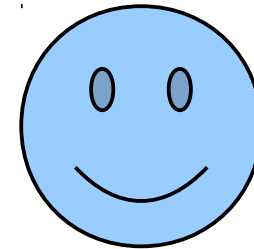
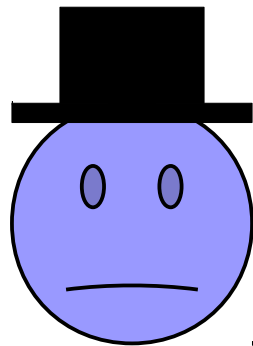
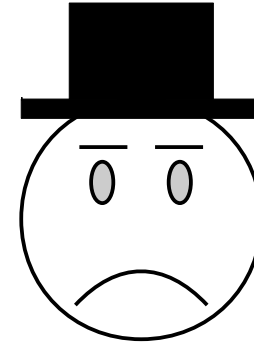
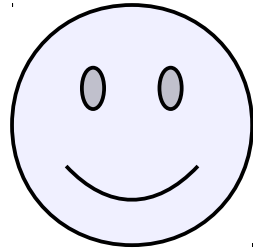
$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$



“Some smiling person wears a hat.” **False**

$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$  **False**

$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$  **True**



“Some smiling person wears a hat.” ***False***

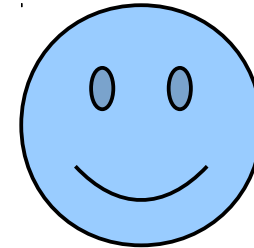
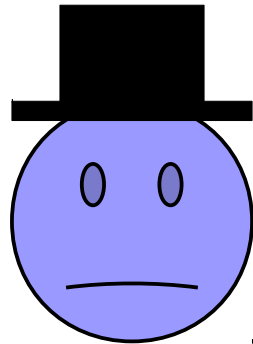
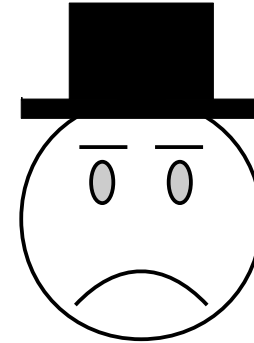
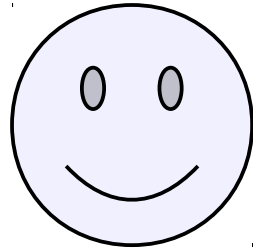
---

$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$  ***False***

---

$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$  ***True***





“Some smiling person wears a hat.” ***False***

---

$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$  ***False***

---

~~$\exists x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$~~  ***True***

**“Some  $P$  is a  $Q$ ”**

translates as

**$\exists x. (P(x) \wedge Q(x))$**

## ***Useful Intuition:***

Existentially-quantified statements are false unless there's a positive example.

$$\exists x. (P(x) \wedge Q(x))$$

If  $x$  is an example, it must have property  $P$  on top of property  $Q$ .

Using the predicates

- $Smiling(x)$ , which states that  $x$  is smiling, and
- $WearingHat(x)$ , which states that  $x$  is wearing a hat,

write a sentence in first-order logic that says

***every smiling person wears a hat.***

Which of the following are correct translations?

- (A)  $\forall x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$
- (B)  $\forall x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$

Answer at

<https://cs103.stanford.edu/pollev>

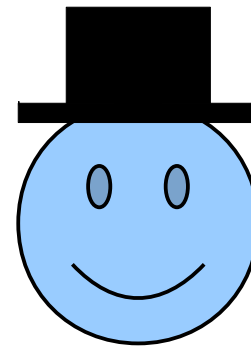
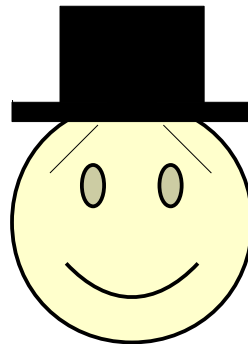
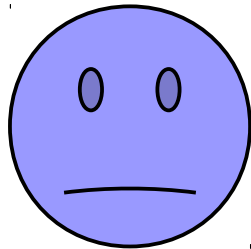
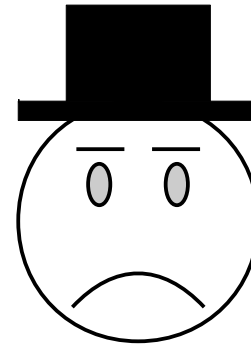
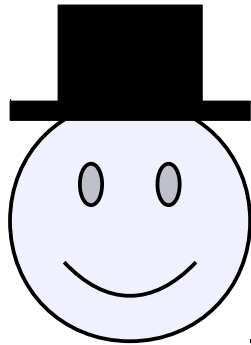
“Every smiling person wears a hat.”

---

$\forall x. (\textit{Smiling}(x) \wedge \textit{WearingHat}(x))$

---

$\forall x. (\textit{Smiling}(x) \rightarrow \textit{WearingHat}(x))$



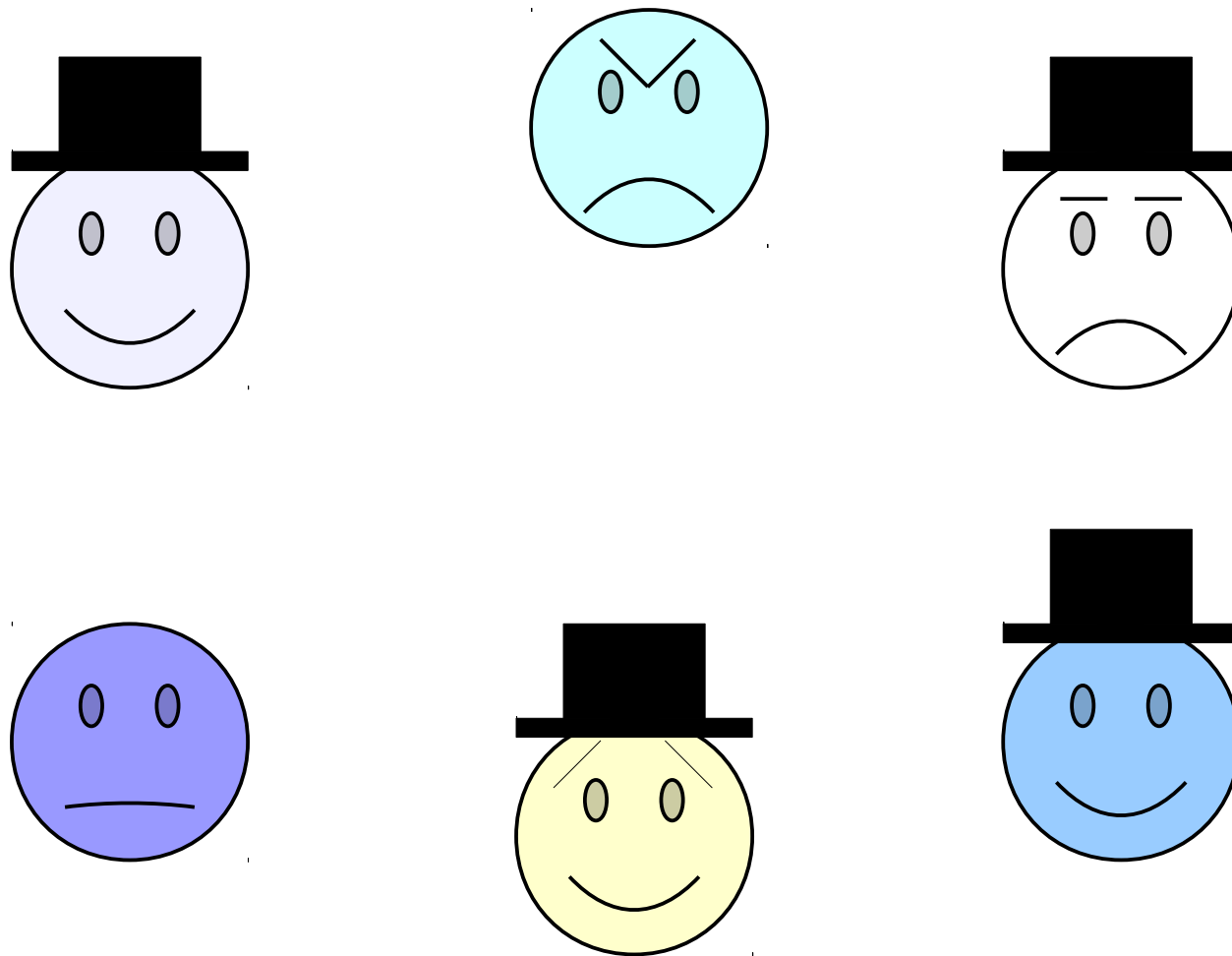
“Every smiling person wears a hat.”

---

$\forall x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$

---

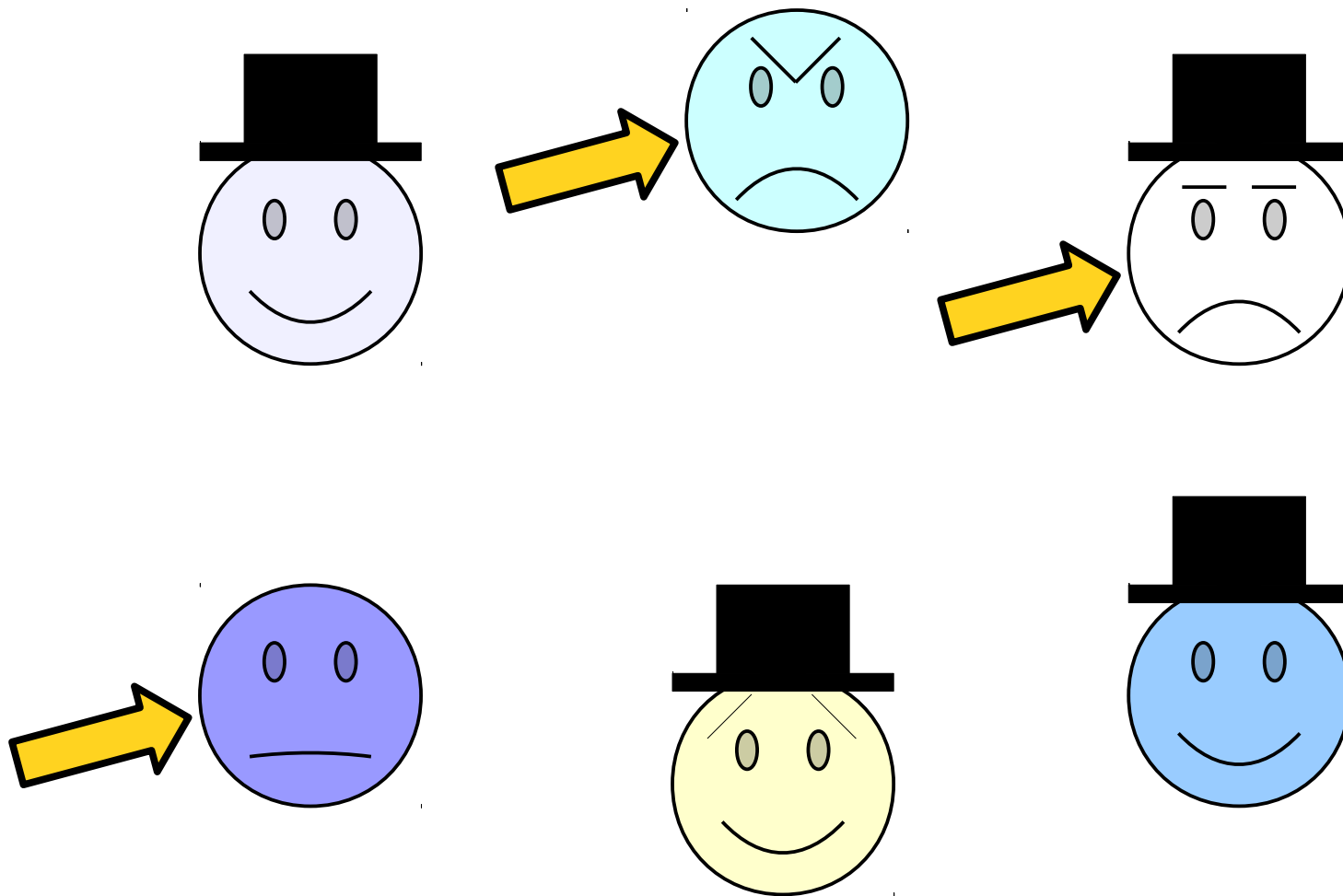
$\forall x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$



“Every smiling person wears a hat.” *True*

$\forall x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$

$\forall x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$

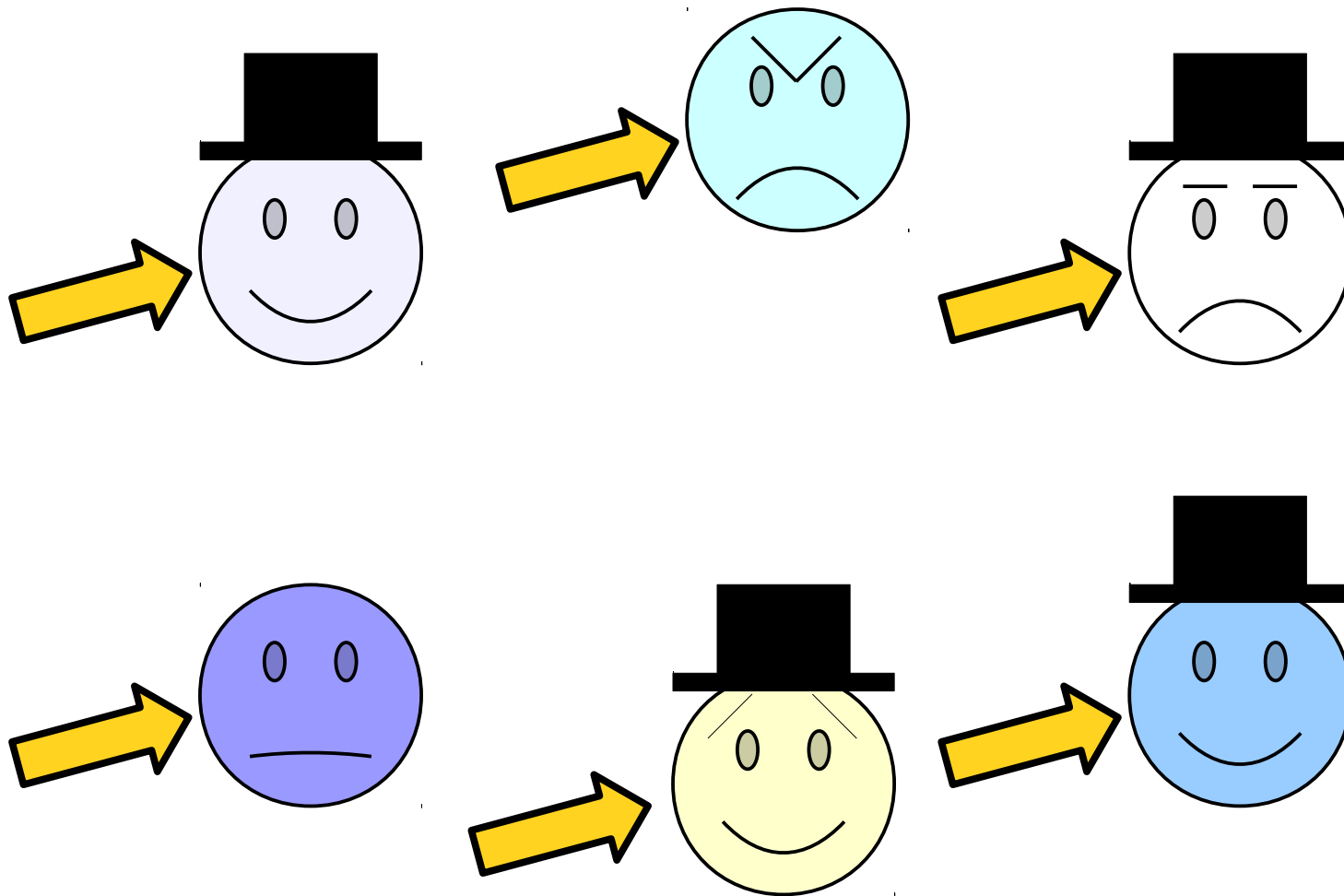


“Every smiling person wears a hat.” *True*

$\forall x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$  *False*

$\forall x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$

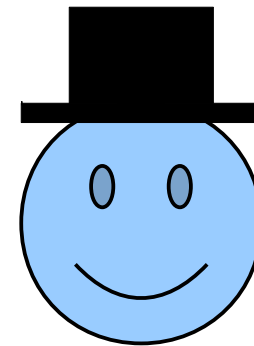
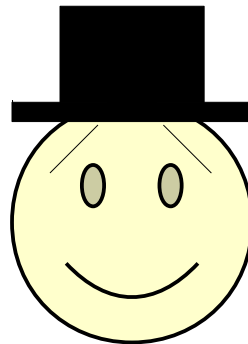
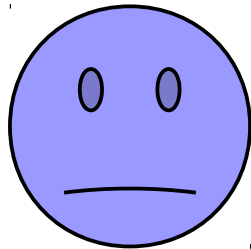
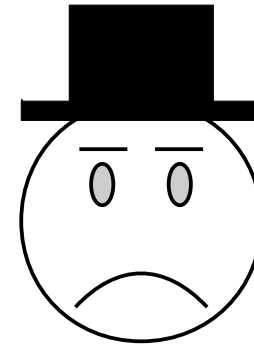
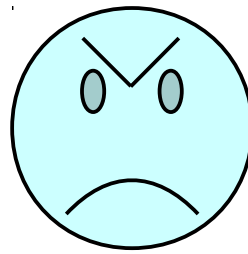
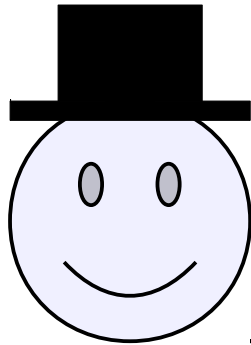




“Every smiling person wears a hat.” **True**

$\forall x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$  **False**

$\forall x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$  **True**



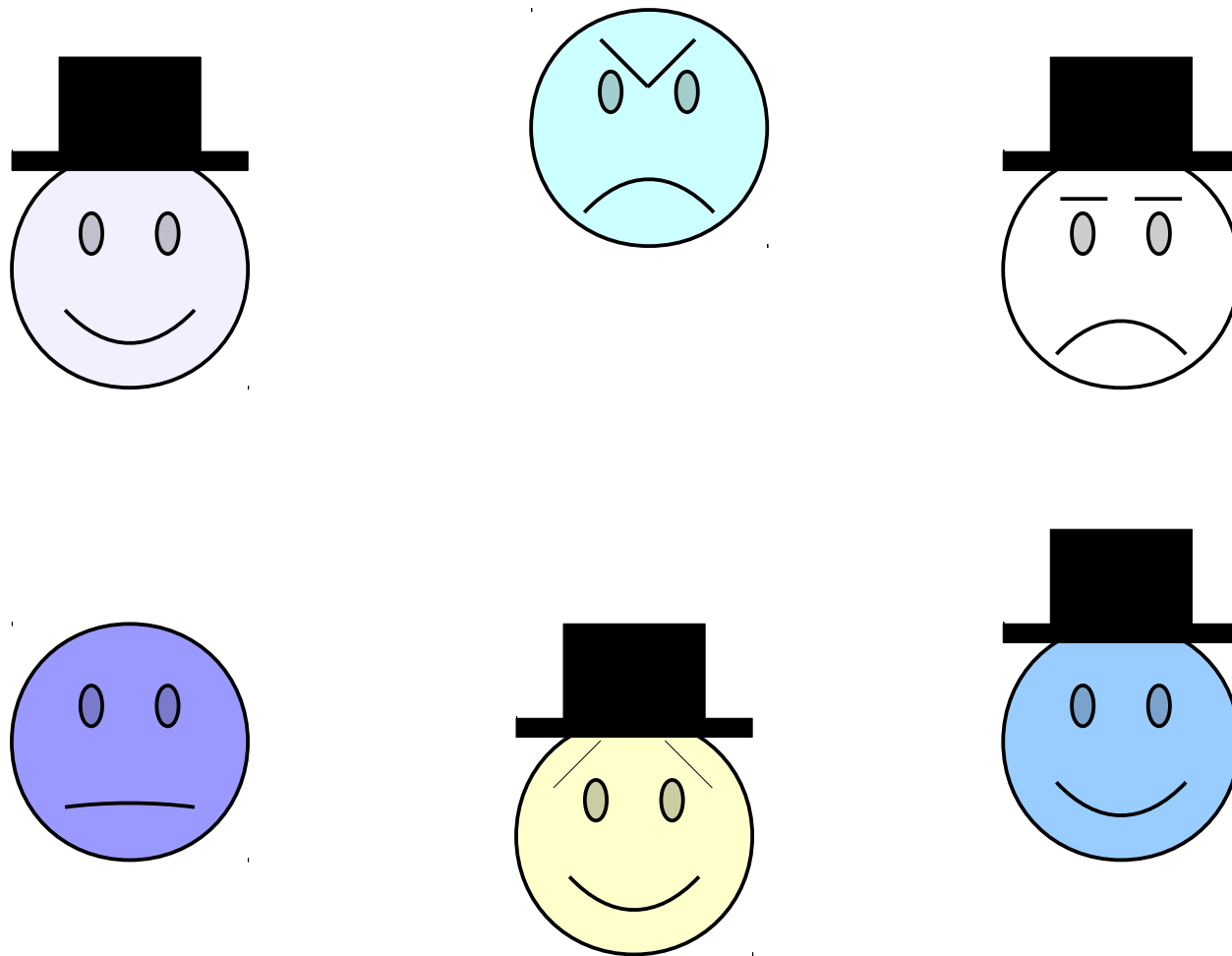
“Every smiling person wears a hat.” **True**

---

$\forall x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$  **False**

---

$\forall x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$  **True**



“Every smiling person wears a hat.” **True**

~~$\forall x. (Smiling(x) \wedge WearingHat(x))$~~  **False**

$\forall x. (Smiling(x) \rightarrow WearingHat(x))$  **True**

**“All  $P$ 's are  $Q$ 's”**

translates as

**$\forall x. (P(x) \rightarrow Q(x))$**

## ***Useful Intuition:***

Universally-quantified statements are true unless there's a counterexample.

$$\forall x. (P(x) \rightarrow Q(x))$$

If  $x$  is a counterexample, it must have property  $P$  but not have property  $Q$ .

# Good Pairings

- The  $\forall$  quantifier *usually* is paired with  $\rightarrow$ .

$$\forall x. (P(x) \rightarrow Q(x))$$

- The  $\exists$  quantifier *usually* is paired with  $\wedge$ .

$$\exists x. (P(x) \wedge Q(x))$$

- In the case of  $\forall$ , the  $\rightarrow$  connective prevents the statement from being *false* when speaking about some object you don't care about.
- In the case of  $\exists$ , the  $\wedge$  connective prevents the statement from being *true* when speaking about some object you don't care about.

# Quantifiers in the Wild



Center for Automated Reasoning at Stanford University



theorem prover

# Next Time

- ***First-Order Translations***
  - How do we translate from English into first-order logic?
- ***Quantifier Orderings***
  - How do you select the order of quantifiers in first-order logic formulas?
- ***Negating Formulas***
  - How do you mechanically determine the negation of a first-order formula?
- ***Expressing Uniqueness***
  - How do we say there's just one object of a certain type?