



Critical Reasoning Set 1

Question 1

Ann: All the campers at Camp Winnehatchee go to Tri-Cities High School

Bill: That's not true. Some Tri-Cities students are campers at Camp Lakemont.

Bill's answer can be best explained on the assumption that he has interpreted Ann's remark to mean that

- (A) most of the campers at Camp Lakemont come from high schools other than Tri-Cities
- (B) most Tri-Cities High School students are campers at Camp Winnehatchee
- (C) some Tri-Cities High School students have withdrawn from Camp Lakemont
- (D) all Tri-Cities High School students have withdrawn from Camp Lakemont
- (E) only campers at Camp Winnehatchee are students at Tri-Cities High School

Question 2

More than a year ago, the city announced that police would crack down on illegally parked cars and that resources would be diverted from writing speeding tickets to ticketing illegally parked cars. But no crackdown has taken place. The police chief claims that resources have had to be diverted from writing speeding tickets to combating the city's staggering drug problem. Yet the police are still writing as many speeding tickets as ever. Therefore, the excuse about resources being tied up in fighting drug-related crime simply is not true.

The conclusion in the passage depends on the assumption that

- (A) every member of the police force is qualified to work on combating the city's drug problem
- (B) drug-related crime is not as serious a problem for the city as the police chief claims it is
- (C) writing speeding tickets should be as important a priority for the city as combating drug-related crime
- (D) the police could be cracking down on illegally parked cars and combating the drug problem without having to reduce writing speeding tickets
- (E) the police cannot continue writing as many speeding tickets as ever while diverting resources to combating drug-related crime

Question 3

Dried grass clippings mixed into garden soil gradually decompose, providing nutrients for beneficial soil bacteria. This results in better-than-average plant growth. Yet mixing fresh grass clippings into garden soil usually causes poorer-than-average plant growth.

Which one of the following, if true, most helps to explain the difference in plant growth described above?

- (A) The number of beneficial soil bacteria increases whenever any kind of plant material is mixed into garden soil.
- (B) Nutrients released by dried grass clippings are immediately available to beneficial soil bacteria.
- (C) Some dried grass clippings retain nutrients originally derived from commercial lawn fertilizers, and thus provide additional enrichment to the soil.
- (D) Fresh grass clippings mixed into soil decompose rapidly, generating high levels of heat that kill beneficial soil bacteria.
- (E) When a mix of fresh and dried grass clippings is mixed into garden soil, plant growth often decreases.

Question 4

A gas tax of one cent per gallon would raise one billion dollars per year at current consumption rates. Since a tax of fifty cents per gallon would therefore raise fifty billion dollars per year, it seems a perfect way to deal with the federal budget deficit. This tax would have the additional advantage that the resulting drop in the demand for gasoline would be ecologically sound and would keep our country from being too dependent on foreign oil producers.

Which one of the following most clearly identifies an error in the author's reasoning?

- (A) The author cites irrelevant data.
- (B) The author relies on incorrect current consumption figures.
- (C) The author makes incompatible assumptions.
- (D) The author mistakes an effect for a cause.
- (E) The author appeals to conscience rather than reason.

Question 5

There is no reason why the work of scientists has to be officially confirmed before being published. There is a system in place for the confirmation or disconfirmation of scientific finding, namely, the replication of results by other scientists. Poor scientific work on the part of any one scientist, which can include anything from careless reporting practices to fraud, is not harmful. It will be exposed and rendered harmless when other scientists conduct the experiments and obtain disconfirmatory results.

Which one of the following, if true, would weaken the argument?

- (A) Scientific experiments can go unchallenged for many years before they are replicated.
- (B) Most scientists work in universities, where their work is submitted to peer review before publication.
- (C) Most scientists are under pressure to make their work accessible to the scrutiny of replication.
- (D) In scientific experiments, careless reporting is more common than fraud.
- (E) Most scientists work as part of a team rather than alone.

Question 6

Alice: Quotas on automobile imports to the United States should be eliminated. Then domestic producers would have to compete directly with Japanese manufacturers and would be forced to produce higher-quality cars. Such competition would be good for consumers.

David: You fail to realize, Alice, that quotas on automobile imports are pervasive worldwide. Since German, Britain, and France have quotas, so should the United States.

Which one of the following most accurately characterizes David's response to Alice's statement?

- (A) David falsely accuses Alice of contradicting herself.
- (B) David unfairly directs his argument against Alice personally.
- (C) David uncovers a hidden assumption underlying Alice's position.
- (D) David takes a position that is similar to the one Alice has taken.
- (E) David fails to address the reasons Alice cites in favour of her conclusion.

Question 7

Governments have only one response to public criticism of socially necessary services: regulation of the activity of providing those services. But governments inevitably make the activity more expensive by regulating it, and that is particularly troublesome in these times of strained financial resources. However, since public criticism of child-care services has undermined all confidence in such services, and since such services are socially necessary, the government is certain to respond.

Which one of the following statements can be inferred from the passage?

- (A) The quality of child care will improve.
- (B) The cost of providing child-care services will increase.
- (C) The government will use funding to foster advances in child care.
- (D) If public criticism of policy is strongly voiced, the government is certain to respond.
- (E) If child-care services are not regulated, the cost of providing child care will not increase.

Question 8

Advertisers are often criticized for their unscrupulous manipulation of people's tastes and wants. There is evidence, however, that some advertisers are motivated by moral as well as financial considerations. A particular publication decided to change its image from being a family newspaper to concentrating on sex and violence, thus appealing to a different readership. Some advertisers withdrew their advertisements from the publication, and this must have been because they morally disapproved of publishing salacious material.

Which one of the following, if true, would most strengthen the argument?

- (A) The advertisers switched their advertisements to other family newspapers.
- (B) Some advertisers switched from family newspapers to advertise in the changed publication.
- (C) The advertisers expected their product sales to increase if they stayed with the changed publication, but to decrease if they withdrew.
- (D) People who generally read family newspapers are not likely to buy newspapers that concentrate on sex and violence.
- (E) It was expected that the changed publication would appeal principally to those in a different income group.

Question 9

If retail stores experience a decrease in revenues during this holiday season, then either attitudes toward extravagant gift-giving have changed or prices have risen beyond the level most people can afford. If attitudes have changed, then we all have something to celebrate this season. If prices have risen beyond the level most people can afford, then it must be that salaries have not kept pace with rising prices during the past year.

Assuming the premises above to be true, if salaries have kept pace with rising prices during the past year, which one of the following must be true?

- (A) Attitudes toward extravagant gift-giving have changed.
- (B) Retail stores will not experience a decrease in retail sales during this holiday season.
- (C) Prices in retail stores have not risen beyond the level that most people can afford during this holiday season.
- (D) Attitudes toward extravagant gift-giving have not changed, and stores will not experience a decrease in revenues during this holiday season.
- (E) Either attitudes toward extravagant gift-giving have changed or prices have risen beyond the level that most people can afford during this holiday season.

Question 10

The “suicide wave” that followed the United States stock market crash of October 1929 is more legend than fact. Careful examination of the monthly figures on the causes of death in 1929 shows that the number of suicides in October and in November was comparatively low. In only three other months were the monthly figures lower. During the summer months, when the stock market was flourishing, the number of suicides was substantially higher.

Which one of the following, if true, would best challenge the conclusion of the passage?

- (A) The suicide rate is influenced by many psychological, interpersonal, and societal factors during any given historical period.
- (B) October and November have almost always had relatively high suicide rates, even during the 1920s and 1930s.
- (C) The suicide rate in October and November of 1929 was considerably higher than the average for those months during several preceding and following years.
- (D) During the years surrounding the stock market crash, suicide rates were typically lower at the beginning of any calendar year than toward the end of that year.
- (E) Because of seasonal differences, the number of suicides in October and November of 1929 would not be expected to be the same as those for other months.

Question 11

Learning how to build a nest plays an important part in the breeding success of birds. For example, Dr. Snow has recorded the success of a number of blackbirds in several successive years. He finds that birds nesting for the first time are less successful in breeding than are older birds, and also less successful than they themselves are a year later. This cannot be a mere matter of size and strength, since blackbirds, like the great majority of birds, are fully grown when they leave the nest. Thus, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they benefit by their nesting experience.

Which one of the following, if true, would most weaken the argument?

- (A) Blackbirds build better nests than other birds.
- (B) The capacity of blackbirds to lay viable eggs increases with each successive trial during the first few years of reproduction.
- (C) The breeding success of birds nesting for the second time is greater than that of birds nesting for the first time.
- (D) Smaller and weaker blackbirds breed just as successfully as bigger and stronger blackbirds.
- (E) Up to 25 percent of all birds are killed by predators before they start to nest.

Question 12

How do the airlines expect to prevent commercial plane crashes? Studies have shown that pilot error contributes to two-thirds of all such crashes. To address this problem, the airlines have upgraded their training programs by increasing the hours of classroom instruction and emphasizing communication skills in the cockpit. But it is unrealistic to expect such measures to compensate for pilots' lack of actual flying time. Therefore, the airlines should rethink their training approach to reducing commercial crashes.

Which one of the following is an assumption upon which the argument depends?

- (A) Training programs can eliminate pilot errors.
- (B) Commercial pilots routinely undergo additional training throughout their careers.
- (C) The number of airline crashes will decrease if pilot training programs focus on increasing actual flying time.
- (D) Lack of actual flying time is an important contributor to pilot error in commercial plane crashes.
- (E) Communication skills are not important to pilot training programs.

Question 13

Despite improvements in treatment for asthma, the death rate from this disease has doubled during the past decade from its previous rate. Two possible explanations for this increase have been offered. First, the recording of deaths due to asthma has become more widespread and accurate in the past decade than it had been previously. Second, there has been an increase in urban pollution. However, since the rate of deaths due to asthma has increased dramatically even in cities with long-standing, comprehensive medical records and with little or no urban pollution, one must instead conclude that the cause of increased deaths is the use of bronchial inhalers by asthma sufferers to relieve their symptoms.

Each of the following, if true, provides support to the argument EXCEPT:

- (A) Urban populations have doubled in the past decade.
- (B) Records of asthma deaths are as accurate for the past twenty years as for the past ten years.
- (C) Evidence suggests that bronchial inhalers make the lungs more sensitive to irritation by airborne pollen.
- (D) By temporarily relieving the symptoms of asthma, inhalers encourage sufferers to avoid more beneficial measures.
- (E) Ten years ago bronchial inhalers were not available as an asthma treatment.

Question 14 (Argument passage same as Question 13)

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Which one of the following is an assumption on which the argument depends?

- (A) Urban pollution has not doubled in the past decade.
- (B) Doctors and patients generally ignore the role of allergies in asthma.
- (C) Bronchial inhalers are unsafe, even when used according to the recommended instructions.
- (D) The use of bronchial inhalers aggravates other diseases that frequently occur among asthma sufferers and that often lead to fatal outcomes even when the asthma itself does not.
- (E) Increased urban pollution, improved recording of asthma deaths, and the use of bronchial inhalers are the only possible explanations of the increased death rate due to asthma.

Question 15

There is little point in looking to artists for insights into political issues. Most of them hold political views that are less insightful than those of any reasonably well-educated person who is not an artist. Indeed, when taken as a whole, the statements made by artists, including those considered great, indicate that artistic talent and political insight are rarely found together.

Which one of the following can be inferred from the passage?

- (A) There are no artists who have insights into political issues.
- (B) A thorough education in art makes a person reasonably well educated.
- (C) Every reasonably well-educated person who is not an artist has more insight into political issues than any artist.
- (D) Politicians rarely have any artistic talent.
- (E) Some artists are no less politically insightful than some reasonably well-educated persons who are not artists.

Question 16

Rita: The original purpose of government farm subsidy programs was to provide income stability for small family farmers. But most farm-subsidy money goes to a few farmers with large holdings. Payments to farmers whose income, before subsidies, is greater than \$100,000 a year should be stopped.

Thomas: It would be impossible to administer such a cut-off point. Subsidies are needed during the planting and growing season, but farmers do not know their income for given calendar year until tax returns are calculated and submitted the following April.

Which one of the following, if true, is the strongest counter Rita can make to Thomas' objection?

- (A) It has become difficult for small farmers to obtain bank loans to be repaid later by money from subsidies.
- (B) Having such a cut-off point would cause some farmers whose income would otherwise exceed \$100,000 to reduce their plantings.
- (C) The income of a farmer varies because weather and market prices are not stable from year to year.
- (D) If subsidy payments to large farmers were eliminated the financial condition of the government would improve.
- (E) Subsidy cut-offs can be determined on the basis of income for the preceding year.

Question 17

Modern physicians often employ laboratory tests, in addition to physical examinations, in order to diagnose diseases accurately. Insurance company regulations that deny coverage for certain laboratory tests therefore decrease the quality of medical care provided to patients.

Which one of the following is an assumption that would serve to justify the conclusion above?

- (A) Physical examinations and the uncovered laboratory tests together provide a more accurate diagnosis of many diseases than do physical examinations alone.
- (B) Many physicians generally oppose insurance company regulations that, in order to reduce costs, limit the use of laboratory tests.
- (C) Many patients who might benefit from the uncovered laboratory tests do not have any form of health insurance.
- (D) There are some illnesses that experienced physicians can diagnose accurately from physicians examination alone.
- (E) Laboratory tests are more costly to perform than are physical examinations.

Question 18

Oil analysts predict that if the price of oil falls by half, the consumer's purchase price for gasoline made from this oil will also fall by half.

Which one of the following, if true, would cast the most serious doubt on the prediction made by the oil analysts?

- (A) Improved automobile technology and new kinds of fuel for cars have enabled some drivers to use less gasoline.
- (B) Gasoline manufacturers will not expand their profit margins.
- (C) There are many different gasoline companies that compete with each other to provide the most attractive price to consumers.
- (D) Studies in several countries show that the amount of gasoline purchased by consumers initially rises after the price of gasoline has fallen.
- (E) Refining costs, distribution costs, and taxes, none of which varies significantly with oil prices, constitute a large portion of the prices of gasoline.

Question 19

A survey was recently conducted among ferry passengers on the North Sea. Among the results was this: more of those who had taken anti-seasickness medication before their trip reported symptoms of seasickness than those who had not taken such medication. It is clear then, that despite claims by drug companies that clinical tests show the contrary, people would be better off not taking anti-seasickness medications.

Which one of the following, if true, would most weaken the conclusion above?

- (A) Given rough enough weather, most ferry passengers will have some symptoms of seasickness.
- (B) The clinical tests reported by the drug companies were conducted by the drug companies' staffs.
- (C) People who do not take anti-seasickness medication are just as likely to respond to a survey on seasickness as people who do.
- (D) The seasickness symptoms of the people who took anti-seasickness medication would have been more severe had they not taken the medication.
- (E) People who have spent money on anti-seasickness medication are less likely to admit symptoms of seasickness than those who have not.

Question 20

Economic considerations colour every aspect of international dealings, and nations are just like individuals in that the lender sets the terms of its dealings with the borrower. That is why a nation that owes money to another nation cannot be world leader.

The reasoning in the passage assumes which one of the following?

- (A) A nation that does not lend to any other nation cannot be a world leader.
- (B) A nation that can set the terms of its dealings with other nations is certain to be a world leader.
- (C) A nation that has the terms of its dealings with another action set by that nation cannot be a world leader.
- (D) A nation that is a world leader can borrow from another nation as long as that other nation does not set the terms of the dealings between the two nations.
- (E) A nation that has no dealings with any other nation cannot be world leader.

Answer Key

Question No.	Answer
1	E
2	E
3	D
4	C
5	A
6	E
7	B
8	C
9	C
10	C
11	B
12	D
13	A
14	E
15	E
16	E
17	A
18	E
19	D
20	C