Summary of MGMAT Sentence Correction

Introducing examples:

♦ Use *such as* and <u>not</u> *like* to introduce examples

And vs. additive phrases:

♦ Only the word *and* can change a singular subject into a plural one

♦ Singular subjects followed by additive phrases remain singular

♦ Examples of additive phrases: *along with, in addition to, as well as, together with*, etc

Examples:

a) Joe and his friends ARE going to the beach.

b) Joe, as well as his friends, IS going to the beach.

a) Mathematics, history AND science are mandatory high-school subjects.

b) Mathematics, in addition to history and science, is a mandatory high-school subject.

Or, either…or & neither…nor:

♦ Verb has to agree with the nearest noun

Examples:

a) Neither the coach nor the players ARE going to the beach.

b) Neither the players nor the coach IS going to the beach.

Collective nouns:

♦ Noun that looks singular but can refer to a group of people or objects

♦ Examples of collective nouns: team, crowd, committee, baggage, citrus, fruit, furniture

Examples:

a) The crowd IS cheering loudly.

b) Our army of fifty thousand soldiers IS attacking the enemy.

Each and every:

♦ Requires a singular verb form

Examples:

a) Every dog HAS pawns.

b) Every dog and cat HAS pawns.

c) Each of these shirts IS pretty.

But…

d) They each ARE great tennis players.

Quantity words and phrases:

- ♦ *The number of* + singular

- ♦ *A number of* + plural

- ♦ The words *majority, minority*, and *plurality* are either singular or plural depending on the context. If you want to indicate the many individual parts of the totality, use plural. If you want to emphasize the totality itself, use singular.

Examples:

a) The number of hardworking students in this class IS quite large.

b) A number of students in this class ARE hard workers.

c) The majority of students ARE hard workers.

d) In the Senate, the majority HAS coalesced into a unified voting block.

Requirements for Pronouns:

Make sure that…

- ♦ *…the antecedent to which pronoun refers exists in the sentence and is functioning as a noun*

Example: The park rangers discussed measures to prevent wildfires, which would be devastating to IT (it must refer to the park, but park is used as an adjective and not as a noun in this sentence)

- ♦ *…the antecedent makes sense instead of the pronoun*

Example: Although the term "supercomputer" may sound fanciful, IT is simply an extremely fast mainframe (IT refers to the term instead of "supercomputer", which doesn't make sense)

- ♦ *…every pronoun has only one possible antecedent*

- ♦ *…the antecedent and the pronoun agree in number*

Third person personal pronouns:

- ♦ Whenever you see a *it, its, they, them* or *their* check whether it agrees with the pronoun

Examples:

Wrong: Whenever a student calls, take down THEIR information

Right: Whenever a student calls, take down HIS or HER information

Right: Whenever students call, take down THEIR information

That or *those* indicating any new copy must agree in number with the previous version. If you change the number, repeat the noun.

Examples:

Wrong: Her company is outperforming THOSE of her competitors.

Right: Her company is outperforming THE COMPANIES of her competitors.

Adjectives vs. adverbs:

♦ An *adjective* modifies only nouns or pronouns

♦ An *adverb* modifies almost anything but a noun or pronoun

♦ Linking verbs such as *to be* or *to feel* are followed by an adjective, rather than an adverb

Examples:

Amy is feeling good (good is an adjective that modifies the noun Amy)

Amy is feeling well (well is an adverb that modifies the noun Amy)

Modifiers:

♦ A modifier describes or modifies someone or something in the sentence

Example: Tired from playing basketball, Charles decided to take a nap. (underlined part is the modifier of Charles)

♦ A noun and its modifier should touch each other (i.e. stand next to each other)

Example:

Wrong: Jim biked along an old dirt road to get to his house, which cut through the woods.

Correct: To get to his house, Jim biked along an old dirt road, which cut through the woods.

♦ Noun we want to modify is not even in the sentence => *dangling modifier*

Example:

Wrong: Resigned to the bad news, there was no commotion in the office.

Right: Resigned to the bad news, the office workers made no commotion.

♦ Unlike a noun modifier, a verb modifier does not have to touch the subject (see further below for cases where the noun modifier does not have to the noun)

♦ Use *which* to modify things and *who* to modify people

Example:

Wrong: The scientists that made the discovery were rewarded.

Right: The scientists who made the discovery were rewarded.

♦ Use the pronoun *where* to modify a noun place, such as *area, site country, etc*; use the pronoun *in which* to modify a metaphorical place such as *condition, situation, case, circumstances* or *arrangements*.

Example:

Wrong: We had an arrangement where he cooked and I cleaned.

Right: We had an arrangement in which he cooked and I cleaned.

Essential and non-essential modifiers:

♦ Essential modifiers provide essential information (i.e. information, which cannot be left out)

♦ Non-essential modifiers provide additional information. You do not need this information to identify the noun

♦ For essential modifiers:

    o Put *commas* between non-essential modifiers and their noun

    o If you have the choice btw that and which, you *which*

♦ For non-essential modifiers:

    o *No commas* between non-essential modifiers and their noun

    o If you have the choice btw that and which, you *that*

Examples:

Non-essential: This mansion, which has been recently painted red, is owned by the Lees.

Essential: The mansion that has recently been painted read is owned by the Lees.

♦ Use WHICH only to refer to the noun immediately preceding it – never to refer to an entire clause.

Examples:

Wrong: Crime has recently decreased in our neighborhood, which has lead to a rise in property values.

Right: Crime has recently decreased in our neighborhood, leading to a rise in property values.

Verb tense:

♦ Do <u>not</u> use present progressive for general definitions

Example:

Wrong: Cherenkov radiation is the light that particles ARE EMITTING when they ARE TRAVELING faster than the effective speed of light in any medium.

Right: Cherenkov radiation is the light that particles EMIT when they TRAVEL faster than the effective speed of light in any medium.

♦ Do <u>not</u> use the present progressive to indicate future actions (too colloquial)

Example:

Wrong: Quentin IS MEETING Harvey tomorrow for lunch.

Right: Quentin WILL MEET Harvey tomorrow for lunch.

♦ Verbs that express a general state (*state verbs)* such as *know, signify, love, mean* etc. do not generally take possessive forms

Example:

Wrong: This inscription IS SIGNIFYING the emperor's birth.

Right: This inscription SIGNIFIES the emperor's birth.

♦ Use perfect tenses only if one action precedes another, and you need to clarify or emphasize the time sequence. Otherwise, stick to simpler tenses.

Example:

Wrong: Joe LEARNED about an epoch in which dinosaurs HAD WALKED the earth.

Right: Joe LEARNED about an epoch in which dinosaurs WALKED the earth.

(sequence of time does not need to be clarified or emphasized)

Command subjective:

♦ Command subjective is used with certain bossy verbs (e.g. require or propose). Bossy verbs tell people to do things.

♦ Command subjective takes the form: Bossy Verb + That + Subject + Command Subjective

Example:

Right: We propose that the school board disband.

Wrong: We propose the school board disband. (*that* is not optional)

Wrong: We propose that the school board disbands.

Wrong: We propose that the school board should disband.

♦ Some of the bossy verbs do <u>not</u> use command subjective (see below)

♦ Common verbs that take ONLY the COMMAND SUBJECTIVE: *demand, dictate, insist, mandate, propose, recommend, request, stipulate, suggest*

Example: We demand that he be there.

♦ Common verbs that take ONLY the INFINITIVE: *advise, allow, forbid, persuade, want*

Example: We advise you to be here.

♦ Verbs that take EITHER the COMMAND SUBJECTIVE OR the INFINITIVE: ask, beg, intend, order, prefer, urge, require

Example: We require that he be there. OR We require him to be there.

Like vs. As:

Examples:

Right: LIKE her brother, Ava aced the test.

Wrong: LIKE her brother DID, Ava aced the test. (Like must be followed by nouns, pronouns, or noun phrases)

Right: AS her brother DID, Ava aced the test.

Right: AS her brother, Ava aced the test.

♦ Like can also be followed by gerund (-Ing forms used as nouns): LIKE swimming, skiing is great exercise.

Idioms:

♦ Review idiom list (chapter 9)

♦ *Both…and*

Example:

Right: The conflict started BOTH because of ethic tensions AND because of economic dislocations.

Wrong: The conflict started BOTH because of ethic tensions AS WELL AS because of economic dislocations.

Wrong: The conflict started BOTH because of ethic tensions BUT ALSO because of economic dislocations.

♦ *Can* is generally preferred to *be able to* because the latter is wordier

Example:

Right: The manager can run the plant.

Suspect: The manager is able to run the plant.

♦ *To* or *in order to* is generally preferred to *so as to*

Example:

Right: She drank coffee TO / IN ORDER TO stay awake.

Suspect: She drank coffee SO AS TO stay awake.

♦ *Order* is followed by *noun + to do* or *that + noun + subjunctive mood*

Example:

Right: The state orders the agency to collect taxes (order + noun + to do)

Right: The state orders that the agency collect taxes (that + noun + subjunctive mood)

Wrong: The state orders that the agency should collect taxes.

Wrong: The state orders the collection of taxes by the agency. (!)

♦ *And...also* tends to be wrong

Example:

Wrong: Many places are called Naples – the cities in Italy and in Florida, AND ALSO a town in South Dakota.

Right: Many places are called Naples – NOT ONLY the cities in Italy and in Florida, BUT ALSO a town in South Dakota.

♦ *Forbid + to* and *prohibit + from*

Example:

Right: The law forbids anyone to vote twice.

Right: The law prohibits anyone from voting twice.

Use of commas:

♦ Non-essential modifiers are separated by commas, essential modifies are not

Right: This car, purchased last year, is a BMW. (non-essential modifier)

Right: The car purchase last year is a BMW. (essential modifier)

♦ Do <u>not</u> use a comma before *and* to separate two verbs that have the same subject

Wrong: Earl walked to school, and later ate his lunch.

Right: Earl walked to school and later ate his lunch.

Right: Earl walked to school, and he later ate his lunch.

♦   A comma cannot connect two main clauses

Wrong: Earl walked to school, he later ate his lunch.

Right: Earl walked to school; he later ate his lunch.

Use of semicolons:

♦   The semicolon connects two closely related statements.

♦   Each statement must be able to stand alone as an independent sentence.

Wrong: Andrew and Lisa are inseparable; doing everything together.

Right: Andrew and Lisa are inseparable; they do everything together.

♦   Semicolon often follows expressions such as *however, therefore* or *in addition*

Wrong: Andrew and Lisa are inseparable, THEREFORE, we never see them apart.

Right: Andrew and Lisa are inseparable; THEREFORE, we never see them apart.

♦   Semicolon is used to separate items that themselves contain commas.

Wrong: I listen to Earth, Wind & Fire, Wow, Owls, and Blood, Sweat & Tears.

Right: I listen to Earth, Wind & Fire; Wow, Owls; and Blood, Sweat & Tears.

Use of colons:

♦   Colon provides further explanation to what comes before it.

♦   It should be possible to insert *namely* or *that is* after the colon

♦   What comes before the colon must be able to stand alone as sentence

Wrong: I love listening to: classical, rock and pop music.

Right: I love listening to many kinds of music: classical, rock and pop.

Right: I love listening to many kinds of music: namely, classical, rock and pop.

Quantity:

♦   Use *between* only with 2 things or people. When talking about 3 or more things or people, use *among*

Wrong: I mediated a dispute between Maya, Logan, and Kalen.

Right: I mediated a dispute among Maya, Logan, and Kalen.

Countable modifiers	Uncountable modifiers
MANY hats	MUCH patience
NOT MANY hats	NOT MUCH patience

FEW hats	LITTLE patience
FEWER hats	LESS patience
FEWEST hats	LEAST patience
NUMBER of hats	AMOUNT of patience
FEWER THAN 10 hats	LESS THAN a certain AMOUNT of patience
NUMEROUS hats	GREAT patience
MORE NUMEROUS hats	GREATER patience

Concision: Specific Patterns of Wordiness

♦ Generally follow the V-A-N pattern, i.e. <u>V</u>erb > <u>A</u>djective (or Adverb) > <u>N</u>oun

♦ Note, however, the V-A-N patterns do not always hold. Be wary of shortcuts.

♦ **Pattern 1: Prefer a verb to an action noun**

Wordy: The townpeople's REVOLUTION WAS AGAINST the king.

Better: The townpeople REVOLTED AGAINST the king.

♦ **Pattern 2: Prefer a *that*-clause (with verbs) to a series of phrases (with nouns)**

Wordy: The hypothesis ABOUT the COMPOSITION OF the universe AS largely dark energy seems strange.

Better: The hypothesis THAT the universe IS largely COMPOSED OF dark energy seems strange.

♦ **Pattern 3: Prefer a verb to an adjective**

Wordy: The signal IS INDICATIVE of a problem.

Better: The signal INDICATES a problem.

♦ **Pattern 4: Prefer an adjective to a noun**

Wordy: He is IN ISOLATION.

Better: He is ISOLATED.

♦ **Pattern 5: Prefer an adverb to a preposition phrase**

Wordy: Oil prices have fallen TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT.

Better: Oil prices have fallen CONSIDERABLY.

Pattern 6: Prefer an adjective to an adjective clause with *be* (i.e. get rid of any unnecessary form of *to be*)

Wordy: Marcos is a professor WHO IS ADMIRABLE.

Better: Marcos is an ADMIRABLE professor.

Wordy: John, who is a firefighter, works in Boston.

Better, John, a firefighter, works in Boston.

♦ **Pattern 7: Remove *it is…that* (caution this construction is grammatically correct. Only remove it is…that if there is a more concise, <u>grammatically correct </u>answer choice).**

Wordy: IT IS without fear THAT children should play.

Better: Children should play without fear.

Concision: Don't make it too short

♦ **Pattern 1: Keep the prepositional phrase if you need to**

Too short: I talked to the BOSTON SOLDIER. (unclear meaning)

Better: I talked to the SOLDIER FROM BOSTON.

♦ In many cases, when you have a noun modified by a prepositional phrase, you can turn the phrase into a Noun-Adjective and put it in front of the first noun

Right: A wall of stone

Right: A stone wall (stone is Noun-Adjective)

♦ Doesn't work for places or locations

Too short: Danube River access

Better: Access to the Danube River

♦ Doesn't work for time periods, quantities or other measurements

Too short: the merger year

Better: the year of the merger

Too short: Memorial Day week

Better: the week of Memorial Day

♦ **Pattern 2: Keep *that* or *those* if you have to**

Too short: The face I see every day is a famous actor.

Better: The face I see every day is that of a famous actor.

♦ **Pattern 3: Keep *that* after a reporting verb**

♦ Gmat will insist on a *that* after most reporting verbs

♦ Common reporting verbs: *agree, claim, contend, declare, find, indicate, reveal, rule, show*

Too short: The study indicates the problem has vanished.

Better: The study indicates that the problem has vanished.

♦ However, the GMAT doesn't require a *that* after the verb *say*

Right: The water was so cold that people said polar bears would shiver.

Reciprocal pronouns

♦ *One another* and *each other* are not interchangeable with *themselves*

Wrong: The guests at the party interacted with THEMSELVES.

Right: The guests at the party interacted with ONE ANOTHER.

Noun modifiers: exceptions to the touch rule

1. **A "mission-critical" modifier falls between**

Right: He had a way OF DODGING OPPONENTS the impressed the scouts.

Wrong: He had a way that impressed the scouts OF DODGING OPPOINTENS.

(Best: His way OF DODGING OPPONENTS impressed the scouts.)

2. A very short predicate falls between, shifting a very long modifier back

Right: A new <u>CEO</u> has been hired <u>who will transform the company by decentralizing authority to various division heads while increasing their accountability through the use of public scorecards.</u>

Wrgon: A new <u>CEO how will transform the company by decentralizing authority to various division heads while increasing their accountability through the use of public scorecards</u> has been hired.

3. A short non-essential phrase intervenes and is set off by commas

Right: Our system of Presidential elections favors <u>states,</u> such as Delaware, <u>that by population are over-represented in the Electoral College.</u>

Possessive nuances

♦ Don't choose OF X's on the GMAT. Choose either OF X or X's

Wrong: The orca, a relative <u>of the blue whale's</u>, is found throughout the globe.

Right: the orca, a relative <u>of the blue whale</u>, is found throughout the globe.

♦ Avoid the plural possessive form (-s') (wrong in 80-90% of tested cases)

Subgroup modifiers

Right: This model explains all known subatomic particles, SOME OF WHICH WERE only recently discovered.

Right: This model explains all known subatomic particles, SOME OF THEM only recently discovered.

Right: This model explains all known subatomic particles, SOME only recently discovered.

Wrong: This model explains all known subatomic particles, OF WHICH SOME WERE only recently discovered.

Wrong: This model explains all known subatomic particles, SOME OF WHICH only recently discovered.

Helping verbs

♦ You can use helping verbs (be, do, have) to stand for longer verbs or verb phrases

Wordy: I have never seen an aardvark, but my father <u>has seen an aardvark.</u>

Better: I <u>have</u> never <u>seen</u> an aardvark, but my father <u>has.</u>

♦ However, if you need to change tenses, repeat the whole verb in the new tense

Wrong: I <u>have</u> never <u>seen</u> an aardvark, but last year my father <u>did.</u>

Right: I <u>have</u> never <u>seen</u> an aardvark, but last year my father <u>saw</u> one.

When to use which verbal or verb

Present participle: Investors sold the stock rapidly, CAUSING panic.
=> Here, the present participle expresses a **result**: the rapid sale of the stock caused panic.

Infinitive: Investors sold the stock rapidly TO CAUSE panic.
=> Here, the infinitive expresses **intention**: the investors wanted to cause panic

Present participle: A technique ALLEVIATING pain is growing popular.
=> The technique alleviates pain. Technique is meant to be the subject of the action *alleviate*.

Relative clause: A technique THAT ALLEVIATES pain is growing popular.
=> The technique alleviates pain. Technique is meant to be the subject of the action *alleviate*.

Infinitive: A technique TO ALLEVIATE pain is growing popular.
=> This sentence means that you (or someone else) can alleviate pain by means of this technique.

Numbers in comparisons

♦ If you want to relate quantities by multiplication, use *times* and *as…as* together

Right: The man is five times as old as his grandson.

Wrong: The man is five times older than his grandson. (Means technically that the man is six times as old as his grandson).

GMAT Prep sentences

Rock samples have been dated at 5 million years old.

Summary of POWER SCORE Critical Reasoning

CHAPTER 2: THE BASICS OF CRITICAL REASONING

Primary objective #1: Determine whether the stimulus contains an argument or if it is only a set of factual statements

♦ Premise: A fact, a proposition, or statement from which a conclusion is made

♦ Conclusion: A statement of judgment that follows from one or more reasons

♦ Fact sets: Collection of statements without a conclusion. Fact sets usually do not cause a strong reaction in readers.

Example: The Jacksonville area has just over one million residents. The New York area has almost twenty million residents.

♦ Arguments: Set of statements wherein one statement is claimed to follow from or be derived from the others

Example: All professors are ethical. Mason is a professor. So Mason is ethical. (First two sentences give the premises for the conclusion of the argument, i.e. that Mason is ethical.

Premise indicators	Conclusion indicators
Because	Thus
Since	Therefore
For	Hence
For example	Consequently
For the reason that	As a result
In that	So
Given that	Accordingly
As indicated by	Clearly
Due to	Must be that
Owing to	Shows that
This can be seen from	Conclude that
We know this by	Follows that
	For this reason

Primary objective #2: If the stimulus contains an argument, identify the conclusion of the argument. If the conclusion contains a fact set, examine each fact.

♦ **Additional premises** support the conclusion but are <u>sometimes</u> non-essential to the conclusion. They are often introduced by the following words: *furthermore, moreover, besides, in addition, what's more*

♦ **Counter premises** bring up points of opposition or comparison. They are often introduced by the following words: *but, yet, however, on the other hand, admittedly, in contrast, although, even though, still, whereas, in spite of, despite, after all*

♦ **Complex arguments** take an initial conclusion and then use it as premise for another conclusion Example: Because the Vikings have the best quarterback in football *(premise)*, they therefore have the best offense in football *(sub-conclusion / premise for following conclusion)*. Therefore, they will win the Super Bowl next year *(main conclusion)*.

Primary objective #3: If the stimulus contains an argument, determine whether the argument is strong or weak.

♦ Check whether the conclusion follows logically from the premises

Primary objective #4: Read closely and know precisely what the author said. Do not generalize!

CHAPTER 3: THE QUESTION STEM AND ANSWER CHOICES

Primary objective #5: Carefully read and identify the question stem. Do not assume that certain words are automatically associated with certain question types.

Question family #1

♦ Consists of the following question types:

– Must Be True

– Main Point

– Method of Reasoning

– Flaw in the Reasoning

– Parallel Reasoning

♦ The following rules apply:

– Use the stimulus information – even if it contains an error of reasoning – and use it to prove that one of the answer choices must be true

– Any information in an answer choice that does not appear either directly in the stimulus or as a combination of items in the stimulus will be incorrect

Question family #2

♦ Consists of the following question types:

– Assumption

– Strengthen/Support

– Resolve the Paradox

♦ The following rules apply:

– The information in the stimulus is suspect. There are often reasoning errors present, and depending on the question, you will help **shore up** the argument in some way.

– The answer choices are accepted as given, even if they include "new" information. Your task is to determine which answer choice best **meets** the question posed in the stem.

Question family #3

♦ Consists of the following question type:

    – Weaken

♦ The following rules apply:

    – The information in the stimulus is suspect. There are often reasoning errors present, and depending on the question, you will help **weaken** the argument in some way.

    – The answer choices are accepted as given, even if they include "new" information. Your task is to determine which answer choice best **attacks** the question posed in the stem.

Evaluate the Argument Question

♦ Mixture between question families #2 and #3

Meaning of MOST, EXCEPT and LEAST in Question Stem:

♦ Which one of the following, if true, MOST weakens the argument above?
=> only 1 answer choice weakens the argument, other 4 answer choices don't weaken <u>at all</u>

♦ Each of the following weakens the argument above EXCEPT…
=> 4 answer choices weaken the argument, 1 answer choices <u>has no effect</u>

♦ Word LEAST should be treated in the same way as EXCEPT when it appears in the question stem
=> Each of the following weakens the argument above EXCEPT…has the same meaning as…Which of the following weakens the argument LEAST...

Primary objective #6: Prephrase: after reading the question stem, take a moment to mentally formulate your answer to the question stem.

Primary objective #7: Always read each of the five answer choices.

Primary objective #8: Separate the answer choices into contenders and losers. After completing this process, review the contenders and decide which answer is the correct one.

Primary objective #9: If all five answer choices appear to be losers, return to the stimulus and re-evaluate the argument.

♦ Review pages 71-72

CHAPTER 4: MUST BE TRUE QUESTIONS

♦ One or both of the features described below appear frequently on must be true questions:

    – The stem often indicates the information in the stimulus should be taken as true

    – The stem asks you to identify a single answer choice that is proven or supported

♦ Question stem examples:

    – If the statements above are true, which of the following must be true?

    – Which of the following conclusions is best supported by the statements avove?

    – The statements above, if true, best support which of the following assertions?

    – Which of the following can be correctly inferred from the statements above?

– Which of the following is most strongly supported by the information above?

♦ Most must be true stimuli are fact sets

♦ The following two types of answers will <u>always</u> be correct in a must be true question:

    – PARAPHRASED ANSWERS: answers that restate a portion of the stimulus in different terms

    – COMBINATION ANSWERS: Any answer choice that would result from combining two or more statements in the stimuli

♦ The following types of answers will be incorrect in a must be true question:

    – Could be true or likely to be true answers

    – Exaggerated answers

    – "New" information answers. To avoid incorrectly eliminating a new information answer take the following two steps:

    (1) Examine the scope of the argument to make sure the "new" information does not fall within the sphere of a term or concept in the stimulus

    (2) Examine the answer to make sure it is not the consequence of combining stimulus elements

    – The shell game: an idea or concept is raised in the stimulus, and then a very similar idea appears in the answer choice, but the idea is changed just enough to be incorrect but still attractive

    – Opposite answers (complete opposite of the facts of the stimulus)

    – Reverse answers

    o Stimulus: Many people have some type of security system in their home

    o Incorrect answer: Some people have many types of security systems in their home

♦ Review pages 88-89

CHAPTER 5: MAIN POINT QUESTIONS

♦ Subcategory of must be true questions, and thus part of question family #1

♦ Correct answer will be a rephrasing of the main conclusion of the argument

♦ Conclusion is often stated in the beginning or the middle of the stimulus

♦ Examples of questions stems:

    – Which of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the argument?

    – Which one of the following most accurately expresses the conclusion of the jounalist's argment?

    – Which one of the following most accurately restates the main point of the passage?

    – The main point of the argument is that…

♦ Incorrect answer types:

    – Answers that are true but do not encapsulate the author's point

    – Answer that repeat premises of the argument

♦ Review page 106

CHAPTER 6: WEAKEN QUESTIONS

♦ Appear most frequently on GMAT CR

♦ The following rules hold true:

   – An argument will always be present

   – Focus on the conclusion: Literally all correct GMAT weaken questions leave the premises untouched. The correct answer often shows that the conclusion does not necessarily follow from the premises even if the premises are correct.

   – The information in the stimulus is suspect

   – Weaken questions often yield strong prephrases

   – The answer choices are accepted as given, even if they include new information

♦ Question stem examples:

   – Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument above?

   – Which of the following, if true, most calls into question the claims above?

   – Which of the following, if true, is most damaging to the conclusion above?

   – Which of the following, if known, is evidence that contradicts the hypothesis above?

   – Which of the following, if discovered, would be evidence against the speculation above?

♦ Common weakening scenarios:

   – Incomplete information: The author fails to consider all of the possibilities, or relies upon evidence that is incomplete.

   – Improper comparison: comparing apples with oranges

   – Qualified conclusion: The author qualifies or limits the conclusion in such a way as to leave it open to attack.

♦ Incorrect answer choices that appear frequently on weakening questions:

   – Opposite answers

   – Shell game answers

   – Out of scope answers

CHAPTER 7: CAUSE AND EFFECT REASONING

♦ The following terms often introduce a cause and effect relationship:

caused by	determined by
responsible for	Produced by
because of	product of
reason for	played a role in
leads to	was a factor in

induced by	is an effect of
promoted by	

♦ Causal conclusions: the author takes two events that occur together and concludes that one causes the other. This conclusion is in error. Example:

  – Premise: In North America, people drink a lot of milk.

  – Premise: There is a high frequency of cancer in North America.

  – Conclusion: Therefore, drinking milk causes cancer.

♦ Scenarios that tend to lead to causal conclusions:

  – One even occurs before another

  – Two (or more) events occur at the same time: correlation vs. causality

♦ When a GMAT speaker concludes that one occurrence caused another, the speaker also assumes that the stated cause is the *only* possible cause of the effect and the consequently the stated cause will *always* produce the effect. => very powerful assumption different from real world

♦ Attacking a causal conclusion in a weakening question:

  – Find an alternate cause for the stated effect

  – Show that even when the cause occurs, the effect does not occur: find a counterexample

  – Show that although the effect occurs, the cause does not

  – Show that the stated relationship is reverse: effect is in fact the cause

  – Show that a statistical problem exists with the data used to make the causal statement

♦ Review page 141

CHAPTER 8: STRENGTHEN, AND ASSUMPTION QUESTIONS

♦ Fundamental rules in strengthen and assumption questions:

  – Stimulus contains an argument

  – Focus on the conclusion of the argument

  – The information in the stimulus is suspect

  – The questions often yield strong prephrases

  – The answer choices are accepted as given, even if they include "new" information

Strengthen questions:

♦ Ask you to identify the answer choice that best supports the argument

♦ Two features of strengthening questions:

  – The stem uses the word *strengthen* or a synonym such as *support*, *help, most justify*

  – The stem indicates that you should accept the answer choices as true: *Which of the following, if true,…*

♦ Use the following points to effectively strengthen arguments:

  – Identify the conclusion

- Personalize the argument: look at the argument from an involved perspective

- Look for weaknesses in the argument: If you see a weakness or a flaw in the argument, look for an answer that eliminates the weakness.

- Remember that the correct answer can strengthen the argument just a little or a lot.

♦ Incorrect answers:

- Opposite answers

- Shell game answers

- Out of scope answers

♦ In strengthen questions, supporting a cause and effect relationship almost always consists of performing one of the following tasks:

- Eliminate any alternate causes for the stated effect

- Show that when the cause occurs, the effect occurs

- Show that when the cause does not occur, the effect does not occur

- Eliminate the possibility that the stated relationship is reversed

- Show that the data used to make the causal statement are accurate, or eliminate possible problems with the data

♦ Review page 165

Assumption questions:

♦ Use assumption negation technique, i.e. logically negate answer choices of an assumption question to turn it into a weaken question.

1. Logically negate the answer choices under consideration. Example:

- Answer choice: The congressman always votes for gun control.

- Logical opposite: The congressman does NOT always vote for gun control.

2. The negated answer choice that attacks the argument will be the correct answer.

♦ Two patterns of assumption questions on the GMAT:

1. Answer choices starting with "at least one" or "at least some" are often correct

2. Answer choices that claim an idea was the most important consideration for the author are wrong.

♦ The correct answer choice to an assumption question will normally fit one of the following categories:

- Eliminate any alternate causes for the stated effect

- Show that when the cause occurs, the effect occurs

- Show that when the cause does not occur, the effect does not occur

- Eliminate the possibility that the stated relationship is reversed

- Show that the data used to make the causal statement are accurate, or eliminate possible problems with the data

♦ Review pages 192-193

CHAPTER 9: RESOLVE THE PARADOX QUESTIONS

♦ Stimulus contains the following features:

1. No conclusion

2. Language of contradiction => but, however, yet, although, paradoxically, surprisingly

♦ Examples of questions stems:

– Which of the following, if true, most helps to resolve the apparent paradox?

– Which of the following, if true, most helps to explain the discrepancy described above?

– Which of the following hypotheses best explains the contrast described above?

♦ Correct answer choice:

– Will allow both sides to be factually correct

– Will either explain how the situation came into being or add a piece of information that shows how the two ideas or occurrences can coexist

CHAPTER 10: METHOD OF REASONING AND FLAW IN THE REASONING QUESTIONS

♦ Rare question type but occur more frequently if tester is doing well on the exam

♦ Part of first family of questions, hence…

– You can use only the information in the stimulus to prove the correct answer choice

– Any answer choice that describes an element or a situation that does not occur in the stimulus is incorrect

♦ Examples of question stems:

– Which of the following describes the technique of reasoning used above?

– Which of the following is an argumentative strategy employed in the argument?

– The argument employs which one of the following reasoning techniques?

♦ Flaw in the reasoning questions are same as method of reasoning questions except that question stem indicates that the reasoning in the stimulus is flawed

♦ Use the fact test to eliminate answer choices: If an answer choice describes an event that did not occur in the stimulus, then the answer choice is incorrect

♦ Incorrect answers:

– New element answers

– Half right, half wrong answers

– Exaggerated answers

– The opposite answer

– The reverse answer

CHAPTER 11: PARALLEL REASONING QUESTIONS

- ♦ Rare question type but occur more frequently if tester is doing well on the exam
- ♦ Ask you to identify the answer choice that contains reasoning most similar in structure to the reasoning in the stimulus
- ♦ Time consuming
- ♦ Part of first family of questions, hence…
- – You can use only the information in the stimulus to prove the correct answer choice
- – Any answer choice that describes an element or a situation that does not occur in the stimulus is incorrect
- ♦ Question stem examples:
- – Which one of the following is most closely parallel in its reasoning to the reasoning in the argument above?
- – Which one of the following arguments is most similar in its logical features to the argument above?
- – The structure of the reasoning in the argument above is most parallel to that in which one of the following?
- ♦ Parallel reasoning stimulus flawed => parallel flaw question
- ♦ Elements that do NOT need to be parallel:
1. Topic of the stimulus: e.g. stimulus is about baking, correct answer choice does not have to involve baking. In fact, if the answer choice involves that same topic it is very likely to be wrong.
2. The order of presentation of the premises and conclusion in the stimulus
- ♦ Elements that have to be parallel:
1. Method of reasoning: e.g. causal reasoning or conditional reasoning
2. Validity of the argument: if the stimulus contains valid reasoning eliminate answer choices that contain invalid reasoning, and vice versa
3. Conclusion: match the certainty level or intent of the conclusion. E.g. a stimulus conclusion containing absolutes ("must", "never", "always") will be matched by a correct answer choice using similar absolutes.
4. Premises: premises in the correct answer choice must match the premises in the stimulus. Check premises after checking conclusion.
- ♦ Four tests to evaluate answers, in rough order of usefulness:
1. Match the method of reasoning
2. Match the conclusion
3. Match the premises
4. Match the validity of the argument
- ♦ If the four tests fail create a short statement that summarizes the "action" in the argument. Then, take the abstraction and compare it to each argument

CHAPTER 12: NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES

♦ The following rules for must be true questions in combination with numbers and/or percentages hold:

1. If the stimulus contains percentages or proportion information only, avoid answers the contain hard numbers

2. If the stimulus contains only numerical information, avoid answers that contain percentage or proportion information

3. If the stimulus contains both percentage and numerical information, any answer choice that contains numbers, percentages, or both *may* be true.