

CR Strategies

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1. Formal logic

1.1 Conditional Statement -> If X Then Y:

If Y Then X -> Converse

If not X, Then not Y -> Inverse

If not Y, Then not X -> Contra positive

Converse **reverses** a statement.

Inverse **negates** a statement.

Contrapositive **negates and reverses** a statement.

- Under rules of classical logic, **if a statement is true, Its contrapositive is also true.**
- *Converse and negation of a statement are not necessarily true.*

2. Must be True Question Type

2.1 Strategy for " Must be true " question type :

a. Read Question stem & remind yourself the strategy you will follow for that question type.

b. While Reading the Stimulus,

- *Note any modifier and quantity words. They helps us to identify tone of the stimulus.*
- *Predict an logical consequence by combining two or more statements in stimulus . (if it is not easy to predict an logical sequence dont bother, rather don't waste time on it)*

c. While reading Answer choices,

- *Read every answer choice and go back to relevant section of stimulus - to see if the answer choice can be proved by stimulus (Fact Test).*
- *If the answer choice consists of modifier, strong or quantity words - beware and go back to relevant stimulus section to verify it it passes the Fact Test.(These words help us to identify tone of*

the passage & helps to eliminate answer choices that don't agree with the tone of the passage.)

- *If the answer choice consists of an idea similar to one raised in stimulus but a single word within it changes the whole statement, then such an answer fails the Fact test. So eliminate such answers.*
- *If new information is given in answer choice , got back to relevant section of stimulus to see :*
 - If new info falls within scope
 - If new info is the logical consequence of combining stimulus elements (New test)

2.2 Correct Answer Choice - Characteristics :

- Paraphrased answers that restate a portion of stimulus in different terms.
- Combination answers or logical consequence

Note that, either of the above should be passing the Fact test.

2.3 Wrong answer Analysis :

Remember **CENSOR** - acronym for incorrect answer choices.

- **C** - stands for Answers that are possible but not certain. Our final answer choice (correct answer) is something that must be CERTAIN, not POSSIBLE.
- **E** - Exaggeration or not sticking to tone of the passage
- **N** - New info. see above. Also, Answer choices that represent true information, but are not a direct inference from the stimulus (They fail the NEW Test) i.e presenting a new information are wrong.
- **S** - Shell (see above)
- **O** - Opposite. It states the reverse of what's true reverse the causality i.e/ Instead of saying "X caused Y" (as stated in stimulus) the answer choice might say "Y caused X". This is also a trap.
- **R** - Reverse or Relationship. Familiar elements from stimulus are re-arranged to give anew unsupported information. There might be a relationship between two events that are mentioned in the stimulus but the answer choice would indicate a definite relationship that's NOT mentioned in the stimulus.

2.4 More on wrong answer analysis :

- Assumptions are wrong answer choices. In a inference question , verify if an answer choice is actually an assumption and not an inference, so that you can eliminate it.
- If there is an conditional statement in argument, Use formal logic to eliminate converse and negated statements. A contrapositive statement is actually True.

- If author repeats opinions of others & never makes an assertion of his own, eliminate any answer choice that makes a flat assertion without making a reference to these opinions.

3. Main Point Question Type

3.1 Strategy for " Main Point " question type :

- Identify the conclusion.
- Scan each answer choice & look which one has a rewording of the conclusion.
- Be on the lookout for answer choices that have information presented in the stimulus but does not capture the conclusion. They are correct answers for " must be true " but incorrect for a "main point" question type.

3.2 Correct Answer Choice - Characteristics :

Every Correct answer should pass FACT Test and it should capture author's point .
Author's point is nothing but the conclusion that the author advocates.

3.3 Wrong answer Analysis :

- Answers that are true (Passes FACT test) but do not encapsulate author's point. Infact they encapsulate any one of the premise's idea ! (or they are closer to a premise that supports the conclusion). In other words answer choice is MUST-BE-TRUE type but does not capture / reflect the main point of the author.
- Answers that repeat premises of the argument.
- Unstated premise that supports the conclusion (Assumption).
- Re-phrase a premise so that meaning of that premise itself is changed and therefore it is no longer referred by stimulus and hence fails the FACT TEST.
- Counter to conclusion or counter to a premise.
- Out of scope due to lack of evidence in stimulus to support information in an answer choice.

4. Weaken Question Type

4.1 Strategy for " Weaken " question type :

- Identify conclusion
- Identify main premises that support conclusion
- Identify author's line of reasoning. How?
 - *Understand how author arrives at the conclusion or*
 - *Pre-think what has author assumed wrongly while arriving at the conclusion*
 - *Pre-think what has author ignored/not considered while arriving at the conclusion.*
 - *Some common errors of reasoning discussed below might help you in narrowing down your process of pre-thinking the assumptions used by the author.*
 - *Also, sometimes knowing about the common CR passage structures help you predict what type of reasoning will be used in the stimulus.*
- Attack the error in author's line of reasoning to weaken the argument. How?
 - *Once you identified the incorrect assumption used by the author, you are clear about the error in author's line of reasoning. So, attack it.*

Some common errors of reasoning discussed below also help you identify how to attack them.

4.2 Some common errors of reasoning in an argument :

- Not all possibilities considered . Conclusion need not be true if other possibility is considered - **So attack using this perspective.**
- Conclusion need not be true if other possibility is considered - **So attack using this perspective.**
- Evidence
 - *If evidence is given by a person - **So attack by questioning his credibility.***
 - *If evidence is from a study, we cannot question the validity of the study - **So attack by thinking in the lines of "whether the evidence from study is relevant to the conclusion "***
- Improper Comparison. Author compares two or more items that are essentially different - **Attack it from this perspective.**
- Qualified conclusion .Conclusion is achieved once certain things are done or certain criteria is met ! **This makes the argument open for attack !**
- Causality is assumed or explicitly stated by the author - **Attack the causality.**

Understand author's line of reasoning and identify an error in it. Errors in author's line of reasoning are not only limited to above things. An error is generally an misguided or incorrect assumption in which author ignores certain things or facts in arriving at the conclusion.

4.3 Wrong Answer Analysis :

- Opposite Answer - Strengthens the argument rather than weakening.
- Shell game - Attack a conclusion that is similar but slightly different than the one presented in stimulus.
- Out of scope -
 - *Does not address conclusion at all !*
 - *Does not address reasoning of how author has arrived at the conclusion. Hence doesnot affect conclusion.*

5. Causality in weakening question type

5.1 How to recognize causality :

A cause and effect relationship is one in which - ***the cause makes the effect happen***. We can identify such a relationship through some indicator words.

Causal statements can be found in the premise or in conclusion.

- *If causality is present in conclusion, then the reasoning is flawed*
- *If causality is present in premises, argument may be flawed but not neccesarily beacuse of the causality present in the statement.*

5.2 When does a classic cause and effect reasoning error occur ? :

It occurs when,

- *When a causal assertion is made in conclusion or*
- *When the conclusion presumes a causal relationship.*

5.3 Two Scenarios where causality is wrongly assumed or expressed :

- Causality is assumed when one event occurs before another
- Causality is assumed when two or more events occur at the same time - wrong beacuse
 - *A third event might have caused both the events*
 - *Two events could be correlated without one causing the other.*

5.4 Ways to attack a causation :

1. Find an alternate cause for the stated effect
2. show that even if cause occurs, the effect does not occur
3. Show that although the effect occurs, the cause did not occur.
4. Show that the stated relationship is reversed
5. Show that a statistical problem exists with the data used to make the casual statement.

6. Strengthen Question Type

6.1 Strategy for " Strengthen " question type :

- Identify conclusion.
- Identify the premises that lead to conclusion or support conclusion.
- Using the above, find the reasoning of the author. In other words, find out what did the author assume to arrive at the conclusion.
- If there is an error in author's reasoning,
 - *look for an answer choice that eliminates / closes the gap.*
- If not, you already know the author's assumption in arriving at his conclusion, (Bring that Assumption to light. How ?)
 - *Look for an answer choice, whose reasoning is built on an assumption most similar to the one assumed by the author.*
- If Argument contains analogies or surveys,
 - An answer choice that may strengthen their credibility, or establish their soundness actually validates the survey. That is, therefore the correct answer choice.

6.2 Correct Answer Choice - Characteristics :

- An correct answer choice strengthens the argument by 1% or 100 % or anything between that !
- An correct answer simply helps the argument in some way. It need not necessarily justify the argument.
- It strengthens the conclusion thereby strengthening the argument.
- Correct answer strengthens a little or lot. But it just strengthens !

6.3 Wrong Answer Analysis :

- Opposite answers - directly related to conclusion but actually weaken it.

- Shell game - support a conclusion similar to, but slightly different than the one given. A single word may change the conclusion to a different one.
- Out of scope -
 - a. Do not address conclusion
 - b. support issues not related to argument & hence doesnot affect argument.