

Critical Reasoning Strategy Guide

(With CR Bird's Eye View)

By Veera Karthik Gonagundla
(GMAT: 710)

What do you want to read??

500 pages of LR Bible, and **1000s** of pages of other
books and online material

Or

50 pages of this book?

This is prepared based on the LSAT LR Bible; Sandeep Gupta's freely distributed material and many other online resources and books. This book is not for sale and is prepared only with an intention to enable a student revise all the concepts related to Critical Reasoning.

This book also contains '**CR Bird's Eye View**' prepared by Veera Karthik Gonagundla, a diagrammatic representation for all the strategies to all the question types.

Critical Reasoning Complete Notes

For some questions, more than one of the choices could conceivably answer the question. However, you are to choose the best answer; that is, the response that most accurately and completely answers the question. You should not make assumptions that are by commonsense standards implausible, superfluous, or incompatible with the passage. After you have chosen the best answer, blacken the corresponding space on your answer sheet.

In a question you can assume that the sky sometimes becomes cloudy, but you cannot assume that sky is always cloudy (unless stated explicitly by the question). GMAT questions will not require you to make assumptions based on extreme ideas (such as that it always rains in Seattle) or ideas not in the general domain of knowledge (such as the per capita income of residents of France).

Understanding the difference between 'most' and 'some' is also very much important.

Approaching the questions: (This is according to CR Bible. But I don't recommend reading the question first).

1. Check the question stem (Understand the type of question)
2. Read the stimulus accordingly
3. Read the question stem to confirm
4. Pre-phrase what the answer could be ...
5. Read all the 5 options each and select one, removing all the losers and evaluating the contenders.

Analysing the stimulus:

As you read the stimulus, initially focus on making a quick analysis of the topic under discussion.

Make sure to read the entire stimulus very carefully. The makers of the LSAT have extraordinarily high expectations about the level of detail you should retain when you read a stimulus. Many questions will test your knowledge of small, seemingly nitpicky variations in phrasing, and reading carelessly is GMAT suicide.

Finally, analyze the structure of the stimulus: what pieces are present and how do those pieces relate to each other?

You will not be asked to make calculations nor will you be assumed to understand esoteric terminology. Any element beyond the domain of general public knowledge will be explained for you.

Focus on understanding the relationship of the ideas and do not be intimidated by the terminology used by the author.

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Reading the stimulus is about seeing past the topic to analyze the structural relationships present in the stimulus.

Before solving any question, it is vital to understand the Argument Structure:

An Argument has 3 parts, Facts, Conclusions and Background Information.

Fact: Premise, Situation, Consideration, Circumstance, Evidence, Support, Describe, Explanation, Practice, Policy etc

Conclusion: Prediction, Position, Claim, View Point, Opinion, Content of the Conclusion etc

Background Information: Not every factual statement constitutes Premise. They have nothing to do with the Speaker's statement. No relevance to Conclusion. Their presence doesn't affect the conclusion.

Arguments versus Fact Sets

GMAT stimuli fall into two distinct categories: those containing an argument and those that are just a set of facts.

Fact sets rarely cause a strong reaction in the reader because no persuasion is being used. When an author attempts to persuade you to believe a certain conclusion, there tends to be a noticeable reaction.

Simple facts do not constitute an argument because no conclusion is present and an argument, by definition, requires a conclusion.

A premise can be defined as:

"A fact, proposition, or statement from which a conclusion is made"

To identify premises, ask yourself, "What reasons has the author used to persuade me? Why should I believe this argument? What evidence exists?"

A conclusion can be defined as:

"A statement or judgment that follows from one or more reasons"

To identify conclusions, ask yourself, "What is the author driving at? What does the author want me to believe? What point follows from the others?"

Because language is the test maker's weapon of choice, you must learn to recognize the words that indicate when a premise or conclusion is present.

A premise gives a reason why something should be believed.

A conclusion is the point the author tries to prove by using another statement.

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Arguments can contain more than one premise and one conclusion.

Premise Indicators

because
since
for
for example
for the reason that
in that
given that
as indicated by
due to
owing to
this can be seen from
we know this by

Conclusion Indicators

thus
therefore
hence
consequently
as a result
so
accordingly
clearly
must be that
shows that
conclude that
follows that
for this reason

To identify the premise and conclusion, identify what can be there on the left and right sides of an arrow mark.

If a statement seems to be confusing to identify whether it is a premise or a conclusion, check if that statement can be followed after certain reasoning. If any reasoning is provided, then it is a conclusion. And the reasoning is a Premise. A conclusion should at least have one premise.

The conclusion can appear at the beginning, the middle, or the end of the argument.

If a conclusion is present, you must identify the conclusion prior to proceeding on to the question stem.

One confusing Form:

Therefore, Since ...premise..., Conclusion.

Ex: Therefore, since higher debts have occurred, I don't have enough money to spend.

Additional Premise Indicators:

Sometimes the author will make an argument and then for good measure add another premise that supports the conclusion but is sometimes non-essential to the conclusion. These are known as additional premises:

Additional Premise Indicators

Furthermore
Moreover
Besides
In addition
What's more

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To determine the importance of the premise, examine the remainder of the argument.

Ex: Moreover, I heard Professor Jackson say she was teaching only a single class.

Counter-Premise Indicators:

Counter-premises can also be ideas that compare and contrast with the argument, or work against a previously raised point.

Counter-premises, also called adversatives, bring up points of opposition or comparison.

Counter-premise Indicators

But	Yet
However	On the other hand
Admittedly	In contrast
Although	Even though
Still	Whereas
In spite of	Despite
After all	

Conclusion Identification Method:

For recognizing conclusions without Indicators

Take the statements under consideration for the conclusion and place them in an arrangement that forces one to be the conclusion and the other(s) to be the premise(s). Use premise and conclusion indicators to achieve this end. Once the pieces are arranged, determine if the arrangement makes logical sense. If so, you have made the correct identification. If not, reverse the arrangement and examine the relationship again. Continue until you find an arrangement that is logical.

Complex Arguments:

Simple arguments contain a single conclusion.

Complex arguments contain more than one conclusion. In these instances, one of the conclusions is the main conclusion, and the other conclusions are subsidiary conclusions (also known as sub-conclusions).

In basic terms, a complex argument makes an initial conclusion based on a premise. The author then uses that conclusion as the foundation (or premise) for another conclusion, thus building a chain with several levels.

Thus, a statement can be both a conclusion for one argument and a premise for another.

One of the most commonly used complex argument forms is to place the main conclusion in the first sentence of the argument, and then to place the sub-conclusion in the last sentence of the argument, preceded by a conclusion indicator. This form is quite useful since it tends to trick students into thinking the last sentence is the main conclusion.

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A Commonly Used Construction:

One of the most frequently used constructions is to raise a viewpoint at the beginning of the stimulus and then disagree with it immediately thereafter. This efficiently raises two opposing views in a very short paragraph.

Truth versus Validity:

We are primarily concerned with validity. That is, what is the logical relationship of the pieces of the argument and how well do the premises, if accepted, prove the conclusion?

Logical Reasoning is primarily focused on whether the conclusion follows logically from a set of given premises.

You are only concerned about whether the conclusion is true relative to the premises, not whether the conclusion is true in an absolute, real world sense.

Argument Analysis:

To determine the strength of the argument, consider the relationship between the premises and the conclusion—do the premises strongly suggest that the conclusion would be true? Does the conclusion feel like an inevitable result of the premises? Or does the conclusion seem to go beyond the scope of the information in the premises? How persuasive does the argument seem to you? When evaluating argument validity, the question you must always ask yourself is: Do the given facts support the conclusion?

Take the conclusion and question do you think the author has proven his point?

An argument can be valid without being true. For example, the following has a valid argument structure but is not “true” in a real world sense: “All birds can fly. An ostrich is a bird. Therefore, an ostrich can fly.”

Even if we accept the premises as accurate, we still do not have to accept the conclusion.

The acceptability of the premises does not automatically make the conclusion acceptable. The reverse is also true—the acceptability of the conclusion does not automatically make the premises acceptable.

Note that the strength of the argument is based solely on the degree to which the premises prove the conclusion. The truth of the premises themselves is not an issue in determining whether the argument is valid or invalid.

Inferences and Assumptions:

In logic, an inference can be defined as something that must be true. Thus, if you are asked to identify an inference of the argument, you must find an item that must be true based on the information presented in the argument.

In argumentation, an assumption is simply the same as an unstated premise—what must be true in order for the argument to be true. Assumptions can often have a great effect on the validity of the argument.

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The difference is simple: an inference is what follows from an argument (in other words, a conclusion) whereas an assumption is what is taken for granted while making an argument.

In one sense, an assumption occurs “before” the argument, that is, while the argument is being made. An inference is made “after” the argument is complete, and follows from the argument.

What might be the author’s ‘assumption’ while making the argument?

What do you ‘infer’ by reading an argument?

The makers of the exam intentionally present flawed arguments because they want to test if you are easily confused or prone to be swayed by illogical arguments.

When examining arguments the likelihood is that the premises are not going to be in error and you should not look at them as a likely source of weakness in the argument.

One of the purposes of the GMAT is to test how closely you read.

One of the ways the GMAT tests whether you have this skill is to probe your knowledge of exactly what the author said.

Quantity Indicators

all
every
most
many
some
several
few
sole
only
not all
none

Probability Indicators

must
will
always
not always
probably
likely
should
would
not necessarily
could
rarely
never

Scope: An argument with a narrow scope is definite in its statements, whereas a wide scope argument is less definite and allows for a greater range of possibility.

Some Language Cues:

They know that when you see the word “thus” you will automatically be thinking “conclusion!” Sometimes the GMAT will attempt to fool you. All of this is to say that these cues are good helpers, but they are tendencies, NOT absolutes.

Conclusion Cues

The following words or phrases typically (not always) are indicators of opinions or claims. The GMAT will often use them to introduce a conclusion or an intermediate conclusion:

So, Thus, Therefore, Thereby, Consequently, Clearly, As a result, For this reason, This demonstrates that, They conclude that.

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Supporting Premise Cues

The GMAT will often use the following words or phrases to introduce a supporting premise:

Since, The reason is, Because, For (when it means 'because')

Opposing Point Cues

Opposing points often come at the start of a CR passage, and they are commonly introduced with the following type of language:

Some believe that, Most people claim that, Some say that, Experts have asserted that.

Transition Cues

Transition, or pivot, words are extremely common on the exam. They are used to indicate a change in direction, or a change in opinion (usually from an opposing point to a supporting premise or the main conclusion). Some common transition words and phrases are:

But, However, Nonetheless, Even, so, Despite this, Rather, Yet.

When there are only opinions in the argument, factual statements need not always be true. (generally for Assumption/Strengthening questions)

Question Stem and Answer Choices:

You must correctly analyze and classify every question stem because the question stem ultimately determines the nature of the correct answer choice.

The Thirteen Logical Reasoning Question Types

Each question stem that appears in the Logical Reasoning section of the GMAT can be classified into one of thirteen different types:

1. Must Be True/Most Supported
2. Main Point
3. Point at Issue
4. Assumption
5. Justify the Conclusion
6. Strengthen/Support
7. Resolve the Paradox
8. Weaken
9. Method of Reasoning
10. Flaw in the Reasoning
11. Parallel Reasoning
12. Evaluate the Argument
13. Cannot Be True

1. Must Be True/Most Supported

This category is simply known as "Must Be True." Must Be True questions ask you to identify the answer choice that is best proven by the information in the stimulus.

"If the statements above are true, which one of the following must also be true?"

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

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2. Main Point

Main Point questions are a variant of Must Be True questions. As you might expect, a Main Point question asks you to find the primary conclusion made by the author. Question stem example:

"The main point of the argument is that"

3. Point at Issue

'Point at Issue' questions require you to identify a point of contention between two speakers, and thus these questions appear almost exclusively with two-speaker stimuli. Question stem example:

"Larew and Mendota disagree about whether"

4. Assumption

These questions ask you to identify an assumption of the author's argument. Question stem example:

"Which one of the following is an assumption required by the argument above?"

5. Justify the Conclusion

Justify the Conclusion questions ask you to supply a piece of information that, when added to the premises, proves the conclusion. Question stem example:

"Which one of the following, if assumed, allows the conclusion above to be properly drawn?"

6. Strengthen/Support

These questions ask you to select the answer choice that provides support for the author's argument or strengthens it in some way. Question stems examples:

"Which one of the following, if true, most strengthens the argument?"

"Which one of the following, if true, most strongly supports the statement above?"

7. Resolve the Paradox

Every Resolve the Paradox stimulus contains a discrepancy or seeming contradiction. You must find the answer choice that best resolves the situation. Question stem example:

"Which one of the following, if true, would most effectively resolve the apparent paradox above?"

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8. Weaken

Weaken questions ask you to attack or undermine the author's argument. Question stem example:

"Which one of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?"

9. Method of Reasoning

Method of Reasoning questions ask you to describe, in abstract terms, the way in which the author made his or her argument. Question stem example:

"Which one of the following describes the technique of reasoning used above?"

10. Flaw in the Reasoning

Flaw in the Reasoning questions ask you to describe, in abstract terms, the error of reasoning committed by the author. Question stem example:

"The reasoning in the astronomer's argument is flawed because this argument"

11. Parallel Reasoning

Parallel Reasoning questions ask you to identify the answer choice that contains reasoning most similar in structure to the reasoning presented in the stimulus. Question stem example:

"Which one of the following arguments is most similar in its pattern of reasoning to the argument above?"

12. Evaluate the Argument

With Evaluate the Argument questions you must decide which answer choice will allow you to determine the logical validity of the argument. Question stem example:

"The answer to which one of the following questions would contribute most to an evaluation of the argument?"

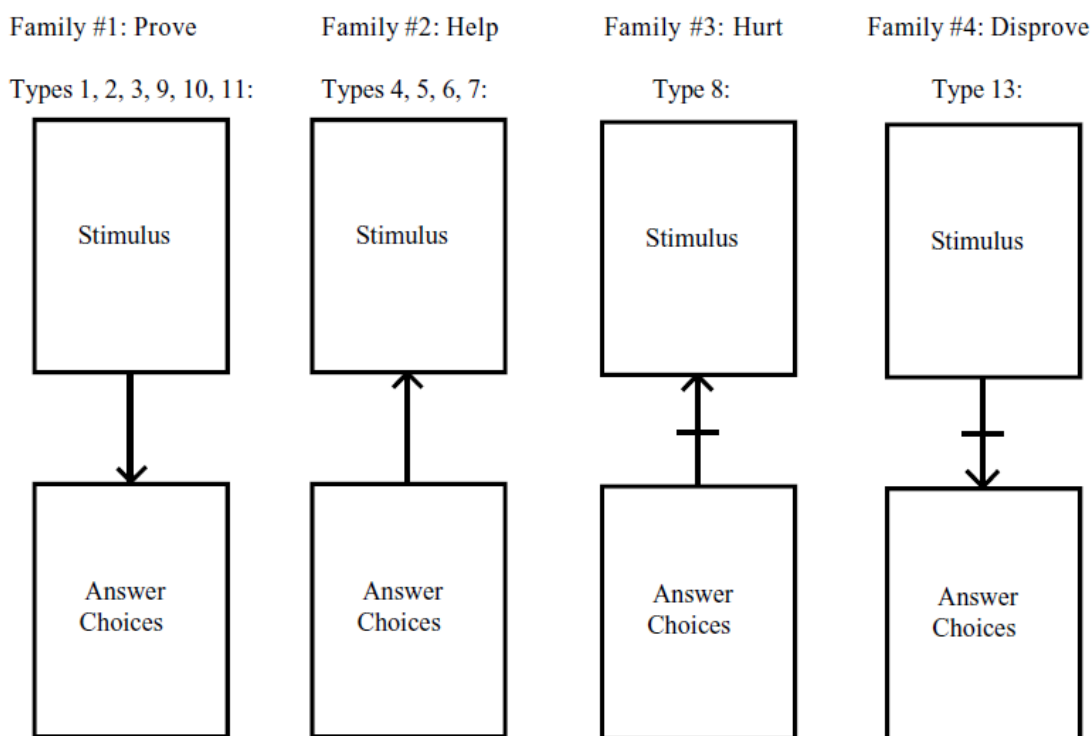
13. Cannot Be True

Cannot Be True questions ask you to identify the answer choice that cannot be true or is most weakened based on the information in the stimulus. Question stem example:

"If the statements above are true, which one of the following CANNOT be true?"

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Family #1, also known as the Must Be or Prove Family, consists of the following question types:

- (1) Must Be True
- (2) Main Point
- (3) Point at Issue
- (9) Method of Reasoning
- (10) Flaw in the Reasoning
- (11) Parallel Reasoning

Family #2, also known as the Help Family, consists of the following question types:

- (4) Assumption
- (5) Justify the Conclusion
- (6) Strengthen/Support
- (7) Resolve the Paradox

Family #3, also known as the Hurt Family, consists of the following question type:

- (8) Weaken

Family #4, also known as the Disprove Family, consists of the following question type:

- (13) Cannot Be True

There are two basic rules to follow when analyzing the diagrams:

1. The part (stimulus or answer choices) at the start of the arrow is accepted as is, and no additional information (aside from general domain assumptions) can be brought in.
2. The part (stimulus or answer choices) at the end of the arrow is what is affected or determined (for example, are you asked to Weaken the argument or determine which answer Must Be True?).

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The First Question Family

The First Question Family is based on the principle of using the information in the stimulus to prove that one of the answer choices must be true.

Whatever is stated in the stimulus is simply accepted as given, with no additional information being added. And, because the arrow points to the answer choices, the answer choices are “under suspicion,” and the information in the stimulus is used to prove one of the answer choices correct.

Because the stimulus is accepted as stated (even if it contains an error of reasoning), you cannot bring in additional information off the page—you can only use what is stated in the stimulus.

You start at the stimulus and then use only that information to separate the answers.

“The information above, if true, ...” (italics added). In this way the test makers are able to indicate that you should accept the statements in the stimulus as given and then use them to prove one of the answer choices.

The following rules apply to the First Question Family:

1. You must accept 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.
2. 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.

The Second Question Family

The Second Question Family is based on the principle of assisting or helping the author’s argument or statement in some way.

You must accept the answer choices as given, and the stimulus is under suspicion. Accepting the answer choices as given means you cannot dispute their factual basis, even if they include elements not mentioned in the stimulus (we often call this “new” or “outside” information).

“Which one of the following, if true,...” (italics added). By including this phrase, the test makers indicate that they wish you to treat each answer choice as factually correct.

Often there are errors of reasoning present, or leaps in logic, and you are asked to find an answer choice that closes the hole. When you encounter a question of this category, immediately consider the stimulus—were there any obvious holes or gaps in the argument that could be filled by one of the answer choices?

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The following rules apply to the Second Question Family:

1. 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.
2. 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.

The Third Question Family

Attack the author’s argument. Instead of strengthening or helping the argument, you attack or hurt the argument.

1. The information in the stimulus is suspect. There are often reasoning errors present, and you will further weaken the argument in some way.
2. The answer choices are accepted as given, even if they include “new” information. Your task is to determine which answer choice best attacks the argument in the stimulus.

The Fourth Question Family

Use the information in the stimulus to prove that one of the answer choices cannot occur.

Instead of using the information in the stimulus to prove one of the answer choices must be true; you instead prove that one of the answer choices cannot occur or that it disagrees with the information in the stimulus.

For the Fourth Question Family, the following rules apply:

1. You must accept the stimulus information—even if it contains an error of reasoning—and use it to prove that one of the answer choices cannot occur.
2. 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. The correct answer choice will directly disagree with the stimulus or a consequence of the stimulus.

Evaluate the Argument questions are a combination of the second and third question families.

“Most” in Question Stems

If a question stem says “most weakens,” the possibility is that every answer choice weakens the argument and you would be in the unenviable task of having to choose the best of a bunch of good answer choices. Fortunately, this is not how it works. Even though “most” will appear in many stems, you can rest assured that only one answer choice will meet the criteria. So, if you see a “most weakens” question stem, only one of the answers will weaken the argument.

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Of course, every once in a while two answer choices achieve the desired goal; in those cases you simply choose the better of the two answers. Normally, the difference between the two answers is significant enough for you to make a clear distinction as to which one is superior.

“Except” and “Least” in Question Stems

Because “except” means “other than,” when “except” is placed in a question it negates the logical quality of the answer choice you seek. Literally, it turns the intent of the question stem upside down.

While this could include a strengthening answer choice, it could also include an answer choice that has no effect on the argument. Thus, in a “Weaken EXCEPT” question, the four incorrect answers weaken the argument and the one correct answer does not weaken the argument (could strengthen or have no effect).

Strengthen X: Select the option that doesn’t strengthen.

Must be True X: Can’t be true

Resolve the paradox X: Doesn’t resolve the paradox.

The test makers simply make sure that exactly one answer choice does not resolve the paradox (and, because that answer choice does not resolve the paradox it automatically has the “least” effect possible).

Although “least” and “except” do not generally have the same meaning, when “least” appears in a question stem you should treat it exactly the same as “except.”

In practice, when “least” is used, all five answer choices do not resolve the paradox to varying degrees. Instead, four answers resolve the paradox and the one correct answer does not resolve the paradox.

Any time you encounter “least” in a question stem, simply recognize that four of the answers will meet the stated criteria (weaken, strengthen, resolve, etc.) and the one correct answer will not. Thus, you will not have to make an assessment based on degree of correctness.

‘NOT’ also works same as EXCEPT and LEAST.

Pre-phrasing Answers:

Pre-phrasing an answer involves quickly speculating on what you expect the correct answer will be based on the information in the stimulus.

Students who regularly pre-phrase find that they are more readily able to eliminate incorrect answer choices, and of course, many times their pre-phrased answer is correct.

Students who closely analyze the stimulus well can more easily pre-phrase an answer.

All high-scoring test takers are active and aggressive. Passive test takers tend to be less involved in the exam and therefore more prone to make errors.

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Correct Answer is most of the times Unique.

“Every correct answer has a unique logical quality that meets the criteria in the question stem. Every incorrect answer has the opposite logical quality.”

Rule: there is one correct answer choice; the other four answer choices are the opposite of correct, or incorrect.

The logical opposite of “wet” is “not wet.”

Essential GMAT truth: little things make a big difference.

Remember— the information needed to answer the question always resides in the stimulus, either implicitly or explicitly. If none of the answers are attractive, then you must have missed something key in the stimulus.

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

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

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

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

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

Primary Objective #6: Pre-phrase: 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 you complete 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.

As you attack each problem, remember that each question stem governs the flow of information within the problem:

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- The First family uses the stimulus to prove one of the answer choices must be true. No information outside the sphere of the stimulus is allowed in the correct answer choice.
- The Second Family takes the answer choices as true and uses them to help the stimulus. Information outside the sphere of the stimulus is allowed in the correct answer choice.
- The Third Family takes the answer choices as true and uses them to hurt the stimulus. Information outside the sphere of the stimulus is allowed in the correct answer choice.
- The Fourth Family uses the stimulus to prove that one of the answer choices cannot occur. No information outside the sphere of the stimulus is allowed in the answer choices.

By studying the actions of all past test takers, the makers of the exam can reliably predict where you will be most likely to make errors.

Concepts # Must Be True

The correct answer choice can be a paraphrase of part of the stimulus or it can be a logical consequence of one or more parts of the stimulus.

Fact Test: The correct answer to a Must Be True question can always be proven by referring to the facts stated in the stimulus.

Do not bring in information from outside the stimulus (aside from commonsense assumptions).

1. The stem often indicates the information in the stimulus should be taken as true, as in:

“If the statements above are true...”

“The statements above, if true...”

“If the information above is correct...”

This type of phrase helps indicate that you are dealing with a First Family question type.

2. The stem asks you to identify a single answer choice that is proven or supported, as in:

“...which one of the following must also be true?”

“...which one of the following conclusions can be properly drawn on the basis of it?”

“...most strongly support which one of the following?”

“Which one of the following can be properly inferred...”

Remember, “infer” means “must be true.”

The majority of the questions in the Reading Comprehension section are Must Be True questions.

To weaken or strengthen an argument, for example, you first need to be able to ascertain the facts and details. The same goes for every other type of question. Because every question type relies on the fact-finding skill used to answer Must Be True questions.

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Before looking into the options, think what the argumentation is all about.

The language of the options should not be too strong.

In Must Be True questions you are like the detective Sherlock Holmes, looking for clues in the stimulus and then matching those clues to the answer choices.

Words like “some,” “could,” and “many” encompass many different possibilities and are broad scope indicators. Words like “must” and “none” indicate a narrow scope.

Always keep an eye at the quantity, quality, time, probability indicators etc like entirely, some, but, could, leads to, may, many etc.

Read closely and pay strict attention to the modifiers used by the author. Even though you must read quickly, the test makers expect you to know exactly what was said, and they will include answer choices specifically designed to test whether you understood the details.

Many a times, the correct answers will be of 2 types:

Paraphrased Answers: Paraphrased Answers can be easy to miss. Paraphrased Answers are designed to test your ability to discern the author’s exact meaning.

Combination Answers: Any answer choice that would result from combining two or more statements in the stimulus.

Incorrect answers in Must be True Questions:

Could be true or likely to be true Answers:

Because the criteria in the question stem requires you to find an answer choice that Must Be True, answers that only could be true or are even likely to be true are incorrect.

Exaggerated Answers:

This form of answer is a variation of could be true answer since the exaggeration is possible, but not proven based on the information.

New Information Answers:

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.

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.

The Opposite answer:

Have the lines as that in the stimulus but is an opposite to the stimulus.

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The reverse answer:

The Reverse Answer is attractive because it contains familiar elements from the stimulus, but the reversed statement is incorrect because it rearranges those elements to create a new, unsupported statement.

Shell Game answers are exceedingly dangerous because, when selected, not only do you miss the question but you walk away thinking you got it right. This misperception makes it difficult to accurately assess your performance after the test.

When a stimulus contains only the opinions of others, then in a Must Be True question you can eliminate any answer choice that makes a flat assertion without reference to those opinions.

When you are reading a stimulus, keep a careful watch on the statements the author offers as fact, and those that the author offers as the opinion of others.

The tone of the author also plays more important role in determining the answer when the tone is clearly obvious in the options.

Concepts # Main Point Questions

Even if an answer choice must be true according to the stimulus, if it fails to capture the main point it cannot be correct.

Avoid assuming that the last sentence is the conclusion.

Expresses the main conclusion of the argument
Restates the main point of the passage

Incorrect answer types are:

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

Answers that repeat premises of the argument

The best way to find the Main point/Central Idea of the passage is to read it on an overall modulated speed and point out the Sub-conclusions and conclusions. Based on the main conclusion derived, the central Idea or the Main Point of the passage is made out.

Any answer that is a paraphrase of the conclusion of the argument will be the correct answer to a Main point Question.

Main Point Questions also appear as a fill in the blank question sometimes like "therefore, _____".

Logically drawn conclusions from the stimulus should be an answer for this.

A number of questions contain a stimulus that ends with a blank space. The question stem asks you to fill in the blank with an appropriate answer. No need to worry; these are almost always Main Point questions in disguise (and when they are not Main Point questions they are Must Be True questions).

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The correct answer choice must not only be true according to the stimulus, it must also summarize the author's point.

Fill in the Blank questions are simply Main Point questions in disguise.

Concepts # Weaken Questions:

Weaken questions require you to select the answer choice that undermines the author's argument as decisively as possible.

1. The stimulus will contain an argument. Because you are asked to weaken the author's reasoning, and reasoning requires a conclusion, an argument will always be present. In order to maximize your chances of success you must identify, isolate, and assess the premises and the conclusion of the argument. Only by understanding the structure of the argument can you gain the perspective necessary to attack the author's position.
2. Focus on the conclusion. Almost all correct Weaken answer choices impact the conclusion. The more you know about the specifics of the conclusion, the better armed you will be to differentiate between correct and incorrect answers.
3. The information in the stimulus is suspect. There are often reasoning errors present, and you must read the argument very carefully.
4. Weaken questions often yield strong pre-phrases. Be sure to actively consider the range of possible answers before proceeding to the answer choices.
5. The answer choices are accepted as given, even if they include "new" information. Unlike Must Be True questions, Weaken answer choices can bring into consideration information outside of or tangential to the stimulus. Just because a fact or idea is not mentioned in the stimulus is not grounds for dismissing an answer choice. Your task is to determine which answer choice best attacks the argument in the stimulus.

Most Weaken question stems tell you to accept the answer choices as true.

Words used for this are:

Weaken	attack
Undermine	refute
argue against	call into question
cast doubt	challenge
damage	counter
strongest logical counter	

Correct Answers attack either the premise or the conclusion.

Premise: One of the classic ways to attack an argument is to attack the premises on which the conclusion rests.

Conclusion: The conclusion is the part of the argument that is most likely to be attacked, but the correct answer choice will not simply contradict the conclusion. Instead, the correct answer will undermine the conclusion by showing that the conclusion fails to account for some element or possibility. In this sense, the correct answer often shows that the conclusion does not necessarily follow from the premises even if the premises are true. So many a times, the correct answer is the one which contradicts the assumption taken by the author to derive a conclusion from the premises.

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Answers that weaken the argument's conclusion will attack assumptions made by the author.

The stimuli for weaken questions contain errors of assumption.

If you see a gap or hole in the argument immediately consider that the correct answer might attack this hole.

As you consider possible answers, always look for the one that attacks the way the author arrived at the conclusion.

Common weakening Scenarios:

1. Incomplete Information. The author fails to consider all of the possibilities, or relies upon evidence that is incomplete. This flaw can be attacked by bringing up new possibilities or information.

2. Improper Comparison. The author attempts to compare two or more items that are essentially different.

3. Qualified Conclusion. The author qualifies or limits the conclusion in such a way as to leave the argument open to attack.

Incorrect Answer choice traps:

1. Opposite answers: It is always easy to make a mistake when you head in the exact opposite direction.
2. Shell Game answers: a Shell Game occurs when 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.
3. Out of scope answers

New information is acceptable in the answer choices.

In two-speaker stimuli where you are asked to weaken the argument of one of the speakers, the test makers often use misdirection and place an answer choice that weakens the argument of the other speaker.

Show how the conclusion still couldn't be reached in spite of the premises being true (Sometimes).

Don't make a broad interpretation of the conclusion and search for the one that weakens it.

Remember, one of the rules for weakening arguments is to focus on the conclusion, and knowing the details of the conclusion is part of that focus.

One point worth noting is that it is no accident that the most tempting wrong answer choice appears just before the correct answer. This is a classic GMAT trick, and one that is very effective because most test takers relax once they find an answer they feel is attractive. This makes them less likely to closely examine the answers that follow. Never relax during the GMAT.

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Weakening Conditional Reasoning:

To weaken a conditional conclusion, attack the necessary condition by showing that the necessary condition does not need to occur in order for the sufficient condition to occur. This can be achieved by presenting a counterexample or by presenting information that shows that the sufficient condition can occur without the necessary condition.

Concepts # Cause and Effect Reasoning

Causality occurs when one event is said to make another occur. The Cause must occur before the Effect. Cause makes the effect happen.

These introduce a Cause and effect relationship.

caused by	because of
responsible for	reason for
leads to	induced by
promoted by	determined by
produced by	product of
played a role in	was a factor in
is an effect of	

Difference between Causality and Conditionality

1. Chronology: The cause should happen first in Causality and there is no such thing in Conditionality. Sufficient condition can occur before, at the same time or after the necessary condition.
2. Connection between the events: The sufficient condition doesn't make the necessary condition happen, it just indicates that it must occur.
3. The Language used to introduce them.

If the causal statement is the conclusion, then the reasoning is flawed.

If a causal claim is made in the premises, however, then no causal reasoning error exists in the argument (of course, the argument may be flawed in other ways).

Situations that can lead to Errors of Causality:

1. One event occurs before another

When one event occurs before another event, many people fall into the trap of assuming that the first event caused the second event.

Ex: Every morning the rooster crows before the sun rise. Hence, the rooster must cause the sun to rise.

2. Two (or more) events occur at the same time

When two events occur simultaneously, many people assume that one event caused the other. While one event could have caused the other, the two events could be the result of a third event, or the two events could simply be correlated but one does not cause the other.

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The Central Assumption of Causal Conclusions

Most students assume that the GMAT makes basic assumptions that are similar to the real world; this is untrue and is a dangerous mistake to make.

When a GMAT speaker concludes that one occurrence caused another, that speaker also assumes that the stated cause is the only possible cause of the effect and that consequently the stated cause will always produce the effect.

How to attack a Causal Condition:

Attacking a cause and effect relationship in Weaken questions almost always consists of performing one of the following tasks:

- A. Find an alternate cause for the stated effect
- B. Show that even when the cause occurs, the effect does not occur
- C. Show that although the effect occurs, the cause did not occur
- D. Show that the stated relationship is reversed
- E. Show that the statistical problem exists with the data used to make the causal statement. If the data used to make a causal statement is in error, then the validity of the causal claim is in question.

Diagramming the causality and the conditionality helps a lot in analysing the stimulus as well as the options.

Two events occurring simultaneously are mistakenly interpreted to be in a causal relationship.

A good portion of the GMAT is about recognition of existing patterns. Recognizing these patterns in a stimulus will help you increase your speed and accuracy.

Most causal conclusions are flawed because there can be alternate explanations for the stated relationship: some other cause could account for the effect; some third event could have caused both the stated cause and effect; the situation may in fact be reversed; the events may be related but not causally; or the entire occurrence could be the result of chance.

Does the argument say there is more crime, or does it say there are more calls reporting crime? Recognizing the difference is critical for successfully solving this problem.

Concepts # Strengthen, Justify the Conclusion & Assumption Questions

These are all the second Family Questions.

1. The stimulus will contain an argument.
2. Focus on the conclusion. Almost all correct answer choices impact the conclusion.
3. The information in the stimulus is suspect. There are often reasoning errors present, and you must read the argument very carefully in order to know how to shore up the argument.
4. These questions often yield strong pre-phrases.
5. The answer choices are accepted as given, even if they include "new" information.

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Difference between the Strengthen, Justify the conclusion and Assumption Question types

Strengthen questions ask you to support the argument in any way possible. This type of answer has great range, as the additional support provided by the answer choice could be relatively minor or major. Speaking in numerical terms, any answer choice that strengthens the argument, whether by 1% or by 100%, is correct.

Justify the Conclusion questions ask you to strengthen the argument so powerfully that the conclusion is made logical. Compared to a Strengthen question, the answer to a Justify question must strengthen the conclusion so it is 100% proven; anything less and the answer choice is incorrect.

Logically speaking, **the correct answer to a Justify the Conclusion question is sufficient to prove the conclusion when added to the premises.**

Assumption questions ask you to identify a statement that the argument assumes or supposes. An assumption is simply an unstated premise— what must be true in order for the argument to be true. An assumption can therefore be defined as **what is necessary for the argument to be true.**

How to strengthen an Argument:

1. Identify the conclusion—this is what you are trying to strengthen!
2. Personalize the argument.
3. Look for weaknesses in the argument. If you see a weakness or flaw in the argument, look for an answer that eliminates the weakness. Close any gap or hole in the argument.

Many Strengthen questions require students to find the missing link between a premise and the conclusion. These missing links are assumptions made by the author, and bringing an assumption to light strengthens the argument.

4. Arguments that contain analogies or use surveys rely upon the validity of those analogies and surveys.
5. Remember that the correct answer can strengthen the argument just a little or a lot. This variation is what makes these questions difficult.

Incorrect answer types:

1. Opposite answers.
2. Shell Game answers
3. Out of scope answers

Place yourself inside the situation and think how you would react.

Causality and Strengthen Questions

Because Strengthen and Weaken questions require you to perform opposite tasks, to strengthen a causal conclusion you take the exact opposite approach that you would in a Weaken question. In Strengthen questions, supporting a cause and effect relationship almost always consists of performing one of the following tasks:

- A. Eliminate any alternate causes for the stated effect.
- B. Show that when the cause occurs, the effect occurs
- C. Show that when the cause does not occur, the effect does not occur

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- D. Eliminate the possibility that the stated relationship is reversed
- E. Show that the data used to make the causal statement is accurate, or eliminate possible problems with the data

Justify the Conclusion:

The correct answer will strengthen the argument so well that the conclusion must follow from the combination of the premises and the correct answer choice.

Premises + Answer Choice = Conclusion

The correct answer to a Justify the Conclusion question is sufficient to prove the conclusion. This is because Justify questions all conform to the following relationship:

Answer choice (Correct) $\rightarrow$ Conclusion (valid)

The correct answer is sufficient to make the conclusion follow logically.

Many Justify question stems use the word “assumed” or “assumption,” and this leads to confusion.

Most Justify the Conclusion question stems contain some of the following three features:

1. The stem uses the word “if” or another sufficient condition indicator. Because a Justify question stem introduces an answer that is sufficient to prove the conclusion, a sufficient condition indicator will often be present.
2. The stem uses the phrase “allows the conclusion to be properly drawn” or “enables the conclusion to be properly drawn.”
3. The stem does not lessen the degree of justification. 100% Justification required. In fact the answer choice alone should be sufficient to prove the Conclusion.

Thus, questions with the “most justify” construction are properly classified as Strengthen questions. Remember, a Strengthen question can support the argument anywhere from 1% to 100%. A Justify the Conclusion question must prove the conclusion 100%.

Solving Justify Questions mechanistically:

1. Any “new” element in the conclusion will appear in the correct answer.
2. Elements that are common to the conclusion and at least one premise normally do not appear in the correct answer.
3. Elements that appear in the premises but not the conclusion usually appear in the correct answer.

In a nutshell, the rules condense to the following: link new elements in the premises and conclusion and ignore elements common to both.

(Union of terminology) – (Intersection of terminology)

Ex: Premise: Every person who lives in Manhattan hates the subway.
 Conclusion: Joan hates the subway.

The mechanistically derived answer option would be “Joan lives in Manhattan”.

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Assumption Questions:

An assumption is simply an unstated premise of the argument; that is, an integral component of the argument that the author takes for granted and leaves unsaid.

You are faced with the difficult task of figuring out the author's mindset and determining what assumption he or she made when formulating the argument. This is not required.

Just as we did for a Justify questions in terms of conditional reasoning, we can do the same for assumption questions.

Conclusion (valid) $\rightarrow$ Assumption (True)

The statement must be something the author believed when forming the argument, assumption answer choices cannot contain extraneous information.

Assumption answers contain statements the author must believe in order for the conclusion to be valid.

Assumption question stems typically contain the following features:

1. The stem uses the word "assumption," "presupposition," or some variation.

"Presupposition" is another word for "assumes."

2. The stem never uses the word "if" or any other sufficient condition indicator.

Supporter/Defender Assumption Model:

The Supporter assumption, by definition, closes the hole by linking the elements together.

Defender assumptions protect the argument by eliminating ideas that could weaken the argument.

Supporter answer choices lend themselves well to pre-phrasing. Defender answers do not because there are too many possibilities to choose from.

The author assumes, every alternate cause doesn't exist.

If there is no obvious weakness in the argument and you are faced with an Assumption question, expect to see a Defender answer choice.

Supporter Assumption: These assumptions link together new or rogue elements in the stimulus or fill logical gaps in the argument.

Defender Assumption: These assumptions contain statements that eliminate ideas or assertions that would undermine the conclusion. In this sense, they "defend" the argument by showing that a possible source of attack has been eliminated.

Even if the correct answer is mentioned in the passage explicitly, it doesn't violate the argument. But if the other side (logically or polar opposite) of it does.

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Assumption negation technique:

Assumption Negation Technique to decide between Contenders or to confirm that the answer you have chosen is correct.

1. Logically negate the answer choices under consideration.
2. The negated answer choice that attacks the argument will be the correct answer.
3. Conclusion(Valid) $\rightarrow$ Assumption (True)

"If the conclusion is valid, then the assumption must be true." The contra-positive shows that when the assumption is not true, then the conclusion is not true.

Assumption (True) $\rightarrow$ Conclusion (Valid)

When you take away (negate) an assumption—a building block of the argument—it calls into question the integrity of the entire reasoning structure.

Negating Statements:

Negating a statement consists of creating the logical opposite of the statement.

The logical opposite is the statement that denies the truth of the original statement, and a logical opposite is different than the polar opposite.

I went to the beach every day last week.

The logical opposite is the statement requiring the least amount of "work" to negate the original statement:

I did not go to the beach every day last week.

The polar opposite typically goes much further:

I did not go to the beach any day last week.

Logical Opposite of All $\Rightarrow$ Not all

Logical Opposite of Some $\Rightarrow$ None

Always $\Rightarrow$ Not always

Everywhere $\Rightarrow$ Not everywhere

Sometimes $\Rightarrow$ never

Somewhere $\Rightarrow$ No where

To negate a conditional Statement: Show that the necessary condition is not in fact necessary.

To logically negate a conditional statement, negate the necessary condition.

$A \rightarrow B \Rightarrow A \rightarrow B'$ Mistaken negation: $A' \rightarrow B'$ (which is not implied)

Will $\Rightarrow$ Might not

Avoid answers that claim an idea was the most important consideration for the author. These answers typically use constructions such as "the primary purpose," "the top priority," or "the main factor." In every Assumption question these answers have been wrong. And, unless, the author specifically discusses the prioritization of ideas in the stimulus, these answers will continue to be wrong because an author can always claim

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that the idea under discussion was very important but not necessarily the most important idea.

The correct answer choice for an Assumption question will typically supply a missing link in the chain.

Premises: $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$; Conclusion: $A \rightarrow D$; Assumption: $C \rightarrow D$

If you see a conditional conclusion and then are asked an Assumption question, immediately look for an answer that confirms that the necessary condition is truly necessary or that eliminates possible alternatives to the necessary condition.

In an Assumption question, there can be only one answer that will hurt the argument when negated. If you negate the answers and think that two or more hurt the argument, you have made a mistake.

Assumption and Causality:

"When an GMAT speaker concludes that one occurrence caused another, that speaker also assumes that the stated cause is the only possible cause of the effect and that consequently the stated cause will always produce the effect."

Assumption answer choices tend to work exactly like Strengthen answer choices in arguments with causal reasoning. The correct answer to an Assumption question will normally fit one of the following categories:

- A. Eliminates any alternate cause for the stated effect
- B. Shows that when the cause occurs, the effect occurs
- C. Shows that when the cause does not occur, the effect does not occur
- D. Eliminates the possibility that the stated relationship is reversed
- E. Shows that the data used to make the causal statement are accurate, or eliminates possible problems with the data

Concepts # Resolve the Paradox:

Resolve the Paradox questions are generally easy to spot because of their distinctive stimuli: each stimulus presents a situation where two ideas or occurrences contradict each other.

Stimulus features:

Besides the discrepant or contradictory facts, most Resolve the Paradox stimuli contain the following features:

1. No conclusion
2. Language of contradiction; uses the words: But, However, Surprisingly, yet, although, paradoxically, etc.

Question stem features:

1. You must accept the answer choices as true and then see if they resolve the paradox.
2. Key words:

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Action	Problem
Resolve	Paradox
Explain	Discrepancy
Reconcile	Contradiction
	Conflict
	Puzzle

You should attempt to pre-phrase an answer; many students are able to successfully predict a scenario that would explain the situation.

A Resolve X question would present four incorrect answers that resolve or explain the situation. The one correct answer would either confuse the situation, or, more likely, have no impact on the situation.

Active Resolution will allow both sides to be factually correct and it 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.

Because you are not seeking to disprove one side of the situation, you must select the answer choice that contains a possible cause of the situation.

If an answer supports or proves only one side of the paradox, that answer will be incorrect. The correct answer must show how both sides coexist.

If the stimulus contains a paradox where two items are similar, then an answer choice that explains a difference between the two cannot be correct. Conversely, if the stimulus contains a paradox where two items are different, then an answer choice that explains why the two are similar cannot be correct.

Remember, you must look very closely at the circumstances in the stimulus and make sure that the answer you select matches those circumstances.

Many incorrect answers will try to lure you with reasonable solutions that do not quite meet the stated facts. These answers are incorrect. The correct answer must conform to the specifics of the stimulus otherwise how could it resolve or explain the situation?

You must accept that as true and then analyze what effect that would have.

Incorrect Answer Choices:

1. Explains only one side of the paradox.
2. Similarities explain differences or vice versa.

Causality doesn't occur in this stimulus.

Concepts # Method of reasoning Questions:

Identify the logical organization of the argument.

Features:

1. You can use only the information in the stimulus to prove the correct answer choice.
2. Any answer choice that describes an element or a situation that does not occur in the stimulus is incorrect.

Pre-phrasing in Method of Reasoning Questions

Method of Reasoning questions are challenging because they involve abstract thinking, which focuses on the form of the argument instead of the concrete facts of the argument. The answer choices will therefore describe the argument in abstract terms, and many students have difficulty because the test makers are experts at manipulating those terms to describe the argument in unexpected and deceptive ways.

Fact Test: If an answer choice describes an event that did not occur in the stimulus, then that answer is incorrect.

All parts of the answer must be identifiable in the stimulus.

If you cannot identify part of an answer as having occurred in the stimulus, that answer is incorrect.

Watch for the presence of the premise indicators and conclusion indicators in the argument and validate it as a valid or an invalid.

Incorrect answers:

1. "New" element answers.
2. Half right, Half wrong answers
3. Exaggerated answers
4. Opposite answers
5. Reverse answers

Method of Reasoning-Argument Part Questions

Argument Part (AP) questions are a subset of Method of Reasoning questions. In Method-AP questions, the question stem cites a specific portion of the stimulus and then asks you to identify the role the cited portion plays in the structure of the argument.

Before proceeding to the answer choices, make sure you know exactly what part of the argument you are being asked about.

Method-AP questions often feature two conclusions—a main conclusion and subsidiary conclusion—where the main conclusion is typically placed in the first or second sentence and the last sentence contains the subsidiary conclusion. In addition, the subsidiary conclusion is often preceded by a conclusion indicator such as "thus" or "therefore" while the main conclusion is not prefaced by an indicator.

One trick used by the test makers in Method-AP questions is to create wrong answers that describe parts of the argument other than the part named in the question stem.

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Concepts # Flaw in the reasoning:

Flaw in the Reasoning questions are exactly the same as Method of Reasoning questions with the important exception that the question stem indicates that the reasoning in the stimulus is flawed.

The correct answer will identify the error in the author's reasoning and then describe that error in general terms.

1. Identifying errors of reasoning made in the stimulus

If you learn the mistakes that are often made by authors, then you will be able to quickly identify the error in the argument and accelerate through the answer choices to find the correct answer.

2. Identifying answer choices that describe a common error of reasoning

Common errors of reasoning:

1. Uncertain use of term or concept (ambiguous usage)
2. Source Argument: Instead of attacking the argument, it attacks the source or the one who made it.
3. Circular Reasoning: Redundant usage of the sentence.
4. Errors of Conditional Reasoning: authors can either mistake a necessary condition for a sufficient condition, or mistake a sufficient condition for a necessary condition

When describing a Mistaken Negation or a Mistaken Reversal, the test makers must focus on the error common to both

5. Mistaken Cause and Effect: Assuming a causal relationship on the basis of the sequence of events. Assuming a causal relationship when only a correlation exists. Failure to consider an alternate cause for the effect, or an alternate cause for both the cause and the effect. Failure to consider that the events may be reversed.
6. Straw Man: This error occurs when an author attempts to attack an opponent's position by ignoring the actual statements made by the opposing speaker and instead distorts and refashions the argument, making it weaker in the process.
7. General Lack of relevant evidence for the conclusion: authors misuse information to such a degree that they fail to provide any information to support their conclusion or they provide information that is irrelevant to their conclusion.
8. Internal Contradiction: Self-contradicting
9. Appeal Fallacies: (Appeal to authority: Use of an a neurologist as an authority figure in an area of dentistry. Appeal to Popular opinion: An appeal to popular opinion doesn't present a logical reason for accepting a position. Appeal to emotion: when emotions or emotionally-charged language is used in an attempt to persuade the reader.)
10. Survey Errors: The makers of the LSAT believe that surveys, when conducted properly, produce reliable results. However, surveys can be invalidated when: The survey uses a biased sample, Survey questions are improperly constructed, respondents to survey give inaccurate responses.
11. Exceptional case/Overgeneralization: takes a small number of instances and treats those instances as if they support a broad, sweeping conclusion.

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12. Errors of composition and Division: Attributing a characteristic of part of the group to the group as a whole or to each member of the group (or) vice versa.
13. False Analogy: Using an analogy that too dissimilar to the original situation to be applicable.
14. False dilemma: A false dilemma assumes that only two courses of action (yes or no) available when there may be others too.
15. Errors in the use of evidence: a. Lack of evidence for a position is taken to prove that position is false. b. Lack of evidence against a position is taken to prove that position is true. c. Some evidence against a position is taken to prove that position is false. The introduction of evidence against a position only weakens the position; it doesn't necessarily prove the position is false. d. Some evidence for a position is taken to prove that position is true. The introduction of evidence for a position only provides support for the position; it doesn't prove the position to be undeniably true.
16. Time shift errors: Assumes that conditions will remain constant over time; Clearly, what has occurred in the past is no guarantee that the future will be the same.
17. Numbers and percentage errors: Improperly equating a percentage with a definite quantity.

Some question formats:

Questionable argumentative strategy employed in the argument.

Is most vulnerable to criticism

This is a critical moment: when the question stem indicates an error is present but you did not realize one exists, you must go back to the stimulus and look for the error. Do not proceed to the answer choices thinking that the answers will clarify or reveal the error to you! The answer choices are designed to subtly draw your attention toward side issues, and it is far preferable that you find the error first and then find the answer that correctly describes the error.

Concepts # Parallel Reasoning Questions:

Parallel Reasoning questions ask you to identify the answer choice that contains reasoning most similar in structure to the reasoning in the stimulus. This task requires you to first identify the method of argumentation used by the author and then to match that reasoning to the reasoning presented in each answer choice.

The stimulus for a parallel reasoning question can contain either a valid or invalid reasoning.

When a Parallel Reasoning stimulus contains flawed reasoning, we identify it as a Parallel Flaw question.

They are the most abstract type of question. Not only must you understand the structure of the argument in the stimulus, you must also understand the structure of the arguments in each of the five answer choices.

The details (Subject matter) of the stimulus and each answer choice are different. Instead, the structural basis of these questions forces you to compare the big picture elements of the argument: intent of the conclusion, force and use of the premises, the relationship of the premises and the conclusion, and the soundness of the argument.

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Answer choices with the same subject matter as the stimulus are almost always incorrect, and are generally used to lure students who fail to consider the reasoning in the stimulus. You should still consider answer choices with the same topic as the stimulus, but be wary.

The elements that do not need to be paralleled are:

Topic of the stimulus

The order of presentation of premises and conclusion in the stimulus

Use the below elements to eliminate the wrong answers:

1. The Method of Reasoning
2. The validity of the argument
3. The logical force of an argument
4. The conclusion: Parallel the sub-components
5. The controlling modifiers: must, could, many, some, never etc, Sometimes synonyms can be used in the answer choices, Sometimes opposite language too; like: Always present = never absent.
6. Match the premises too (conceptually or logically but not as it is)

When the order of premises and conclusion are jumbled, then the diagramming of the whole scenario is a better approach. Symbolize everything.

Match the skeleton of the reasoning provided in the stimulus with that of in the answer options.

If none of the four tests of analysis reveals the answer, or if nothing stands out to you when you examine the argument, you can always fall back on describing the stimulus in abstract terms.

“The bank teller had spotted a thief once before, so she was certain she could do it again,” turn that argument into an abstract description such as “she had done it once, so she knew it could be done again.” Then, take the abstraction and compare it to each argument.

Concepts # Numbers and percentages:

Study a few misconceptions.

Misconception #1: Increasing percentages automatically lead to increasing numbers.

Misconception #2: Decreasing percentages automatically lead to decreasing numbers.

Misconception #3: Increasing numbers automatically lead to increasing percentages.

Misconception #4: Decreasing numbers automatically lead to decreasing percentages.

Misconception #5: Large numbers automatically mean large percentages, and small numbers automatically mean small percentages.

Misconception #6: Large percentages automatically mean large numbers, and small percentages automatically mean small numbers.

Words that introduce numerical ideas:

Amount

Sum

Count

Quantity

Total

Tally

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Words that introduce percentage ideas:

Percent	Proportion
Fraction	Ratio
Incidence	Likelihood
Probability	Segment
Share	

Use the following general rules for Must Be True questions:

1. If the stimulus contains percentage or proportion information only, avoid answers that 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.

Use the following general rules for Weaken and Strengthen questions:

To weaken or strengthen an argument containing numbers and percentages, look carefully for information about the total amount(s) — does the argument make an assumption based on one of the misconceptions discussed earlier?

Market share is simply the portion of a market that a company controls. Market share can be measured either in terms of revenues (sales) or units sold. Regardless of the size of a market, total market share must always add up to 100%.

Concepts # Evaluate the argument Questions:

Imagine that you are examining an argument and you have to ask one question that - depending on the answer to the question—will reveal whether the argument is strong or weak. By this definition, there must be a flaw in each argument, and your question, if posed correctly, can reveal that flaw or eliminate the flaw. Please note that you are not being asked to prove with finality whether the argument is good or bad—rather, you must simply ask the question that will help best analyze the validity of the argument.

Select the best question that would contribute for its strength or weakness.

Variance Test: For a question chosen from the answer choices, if different responses produce different effects on the conclusion, then the answer choice is correct. If different responses do not produce different effects, then the answer choice is incorrect.

If it talks about the percentages, consider 0% on one end and 100% on the other. And check how the variance of the response would be. Consider the extreme responses and check how it evaluates the stimuli.

The extremes are like: Yes – No; 0 – 100; male – female; Consider the polar opposites.

If the answer choice is correct, one response should strengthen the argument and one response should weaken the argument.

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To determine the correct answer choice on a Evaluate the Argument question, apply the Variance Test TM by supplying two opposite responses to the question posed in the answer choice and then analyze how the varying responses affect the conclusion in the stimulus. If different responses produce different effects on the conclusion, the answer choice is correct. If different responses do not produce different effects, the answer choice is incorrect.

The Variance Test should only be applied to Contenders (to determine which one is correct) or to the answer choice you believe is correct (to confirm your selection).

Concepts # Cannot be true Questions:

In Cannot Be True questions your task is to identify the answer choice that cannot be true or is most weakened by the information in the argument.

Accept the stimulus information and use only it to prove that one of the answer choices cannot occur.

The correct answer choice will directly disagree with the stimulus or a consequence of the stimulus.

Weaken Questions: Answer choices are assumed to be true

Cannot be true: Stimulus is assumed to be true

From an abstract standpoint, Cannot Be True questions can be viewed in two ways:

1. Polar Opposite Must Be True Questions
2. Reverse Weaken Questions

You must mentally prepare yourself to eliminate answers that could be true or that are possible, and select the one answer choice that cannot be true or that is impossible.

You will not need to assess an argument and you can instead focus on the facts at hand.

Cannot Be True questions are worded in a variety of ways. The gist of the question type is to show that an answer cannot follow.

The question stem may seem to be: Stating that the answer cannot be true or doesn't follow; Stating that the answer could be true except; stating that the answer choice must be false.

Remember, when you encounter Cannot Be True questions featuring conditional relationships, actively seek the answer that violates the precept that when the sufficient condition occurs the necessary condition must also occur.

In problems featuring conditional statements, many different scenarios can occur, except the following:

The sufficient condition occurs, and the necessary condition does not occur.

Thus, when a conditional statement is made in a Cannot Be True question stimulus, you should actively seek the answer that matches the scenario above.

Concepts # Point at Issue Questions

'Point at issue stimuli' are comprised of two speakers who disagree about an issue that is generally ethical or decision-oriented in nature, not factual. The question stem directs you to choose the answer that describes the point of disagreement between the two speakers, or to identify a statement that the two speakers would disagree is true.

Incorrect answers in Point at Issue Questions:

These require you to examine the conclusion of each speaker.

Ethical versus Factual situations: When a stimulus addresses an issue that is ethical in nature, answer choices that are factual in nature cannot be true. Also vice versa.

Dual Agreement or Dual disagreement: Often, incorrect answer choices will supply statements that both speakers will agree with, or that both speakers will disagree with. These answer choices are typically quite attractive because they raise issues that are addressed in the stimulus and therefore they require some analysis. Remember, just because both speakers discuss the issue does not mean that it is an issue about which the two would disagree.

The View of One speaker is unknown: An answer where the view of only one of the speakers is known.

Agree/Disagree Test: The correct answer must produce responses where one speaker would say "I agree. The statement is correct." and the other speaker would say, "I disagree, the statement is incorrect." If those two responses are not produced, then the answer is incorrect.

Concepts # Principle Questions:

A principle is a broad rule that specifies what actions or judgments are correct in certain situations. For example, "Some companies are profitable" is not a principle because no rule is involved and no judgment can be drawn from the statement. "All companies should strive to be profitable" is a principle, and one that can be applied to any company.

Principle questions (PR) are not a separate question type but are instead an "overlay" that appears in a variety of question types. For example, there are Strengthen Principle questions (Strengthen-PR), Justify Principle questions (Justify-PR), and Cannot Be True Principle questions (Cannot-PR), among others. In a question stem, the key indicator that the Principle concept is present is the word "principle."

For the Must-PR questions – the principle is in the stimulus. For the Strengthen-PR questions – the principle is in the answer choices.

The word "principle" will be used in the questions. Also its synonyms "Proposition" or "Precept" can also be used in place of "principle".

Since a principle is by definition a broad rule (usually conditional in nature), the presence of the Principle indicator serves to broaden the scope of the question. The

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question becomes more abstract, and you must analyze the problem to identify the underlying relationships.

Because principles must retain broad applicability and must typically meet a condition to apply, they are often conditional statements. However, there are exceptions, such as with causal principles.

Must be true Principle Questions

Use the principle presented in the stimulus and then apply it to the situation in each answer choice. The answer choice can address a scenario not specifically included in the stimulus; your job is to find the answer that follows from the application of the principle.

Create an abstraction of the stimulus similar to one you would create in a Parallel Reasoning question. This approach can be useful since it creates an accurate representation of the principle.

When you are given a simple conditional statement and additional information:

1. If the sufficient condition is met in one of the scenarios in the answer choice, then it can be concluded that the necessary condition has occurred.

A simple conditional statement combined with a premise indicating that the sufficient condition has occurred allows the conclusion that the necessary condition will occur. This is the essence of the Repeat conditional argument form.

2. If the necessary condition is not met in one of the scenarios in the answer choice, then it can be concluded that the sufficient condition has not occurred.

A simple conditional statement combined with a premise indicating that the necessary condition has not occurred allows the conclusion that the sufficient condition will not occur. This is the essence of the contra-positive argument form.

3. If the sufficient condition is not met in one of the scenarios in the answer choice, you can conclude that the necessary condition may or may not have occurred (to believe otherwise is a Mistaken Negation).

4. If the necessary condition is met in one of the scenarios in the answer choice, you can conclude that the sufficient condition may or may not have occurred (to believe otherwise is a Mistaken Reversal).

Strengthen/Justify Principle Questions:

In these questions each answer choice contains a principle that acts as an additional, broad premise that supports or proves the conclusion. Functionally, five different principles are applied to the situation in the stimulus. While reading the stimulus, you must think in abstract terms and identify an underlying idea or belief that can be used to draw the conclusion in the stimulus. Then, as you analyze the answer choices, tie this idea or belief to the structure of the author's argument and ask yourself, "If this answer is true, does it support or prove the conclusion?"

When you encounter a Principle designator in the question stem, prepare to apply the principle to a situation that falls under the purview of the principle but is not necessarily directly addressed by the principle. This process of abstraction consumes

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more time that the average question and contributes to lengthening the problem completion time. Regardless, if you use the skills you developed while examining other question types (such as Must Be True and Strengthen), you can successfully navigate Principle questions.

Notes based on CR – Power Point Presentation by Sandeep Gupta (The best trainer for GMAT)

Facts include the following: Assertion, Evidence, Premise, Proof, Supposition, Data, Information, Research, Consideration, Pattern, Explanation, Justification, Situation, Circumstance, Reasoning, Line of Reasoning, Generalization, Observation, Support, Example, Finding, Phenomenon, Illustration, Reason, To Acknowledge, etc.

Conclusion include the following: Judgment, Opinion, Suggestion, View, Idea, Belief, Proposal, Warning, Forecast, Claim, Stand, Prediction, Hypothesis, POSITION, Stance, Point, Main Point, Inference, Implication, Generalization, Contention, Consequence, Argument, To Posit, etc.

If $X \rightarrow Y$, the only valid conclusion is Y (not) $\rightarrow X$ (not)

But *the following conclusions are wrong*:

1. $Y \rightarrow X$
2. $X \text{ (NOT)} \rightarrow Y \text{ (NOT)}$

Some quantifiers:

- All = 100
- Some = 1 to 99 or even 100
- Most = 51 to 99 or even 100
- Not all = 0 to 99
- None = 0
- Often = Not defined
- Many = Not defined
- Much = Not defined

Bold-faced Questions: Identify whether the bold faced lines are Facts/Conclusions. If a conclusion, check if it is a main conclusion or a sub-conclusion. Also identify if the Fact is supporting or opposing the conclusion.

Sometimes, there would be two conclusions, opposing with each other. Be cautious in such a scenario.

If one is a Fact: Check if it is supporting the main/sub conclusion or opposing the main/sub conclusion. And identify if the identified conclusion is a main or sub-conclusion. If it is a sub conclusion, check if it is supporting/opposing the main conclusion or any other sub conclusion present.

If both are Facts: Identify all the conclusions (Sub/main). Then check if each of the fact is supporting/opposing any of those identified conclusions.

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If both are Conclusions: Identify all the conclusions of the argument. Check if each of these conclusions is supporting/opposing the main/sub conclusions.

There might be a chance for a question to contain both the inference and an assumption among the answer options. In order to differentiate the inference from an assumption option, check if that option is stated in the argument in a round-about manner. Generally inferences are so. Anything mentioned in the argument indirectly is an inference.

Weaken Questions: We can never negate a fact. So all that we can do to weaken the argument is to state a fact that can negate either the conclusion or the reasoning.

F ✓ C ✗ OR F ✓ R ✗

Words used to introduce NUMBERS:

- Amount
- Quantity
- Sum
- Total
- Count
- Tally

Words used to introduce percentage ideas:

- Percent
- Proportion
- Fraction
- Ratio
- Incidence
- Likelihood
- Probability
- Segment
- Share

Market share is a comparative term, as opposed to an absolute term. Market share is simply the portion of a market that a company controls. The market share can be measured either in terms of revenues (sales) or units sold.

A company can gain market share (percentage) if the market shrinks and it maintains a constant size, or if it grows in an unchanging market.

However, a company losing market share does not mean that its sales decreased, only that they became a smaller entity in the market relative to the whole (the market grew and they stayed the same size, for example).

Similarly, a company could lose sales and still gain market share if the overall market became smaller.

The total market share must always add up to 100%.

Strengthen Questions:

We can never strengthen a fact. We can strengthen only the conclusion or the reason by providing some extra facts.

F ✓ C ✓ OR F ✓ R ✓

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Resolve the Paradox: One has to resolve (explain) the Paradox by choosing the most credible choice that explains both sides.

F1✓

F2✓

_ **Assumptions** – Approach: ID Conclusion, Negate Choices one by one. The negated choice must break the conclusion

_ **Weaken** - Approach: Facts respected. Break the Assumption → break the conclusion.

_ **Flaw** - Approach: The assumption is questionable... that itself is the flaw. Facts respected. Break the Assumption → break the conclusion.

_ **Strengthen** - Approach: Strengthen is either the same as the assumption (100%) or a diluted form of assumption (< 100%).

_ **Evaluate** - Approach: Put a question mark on the assumption. Immediately you will see 2 sides – One strengthens, and the other one weakens.

_ **Passage Completion** – the same as Strengthen Type

_ **Cause and Effect** – If the conclusion is A causes B, then there are only 2 assumptions:
C does not cause B OR B does not cause A

_ **Boldface** – these questions are all about finding the “Evidence” and the “Conclusion”.
The approach is similar to the one for Assumption questions.

Some Points to remember:

‘Tends’ means ‘most’ or ‘almost’

‘Often’ is not ‘most’.

‘Usually’ is ‘most’ but not ‘always’

‘greater’ means neither ‘less’ nor ‘equal’

Always question, ‘Can this be possible’ for ‘Cannot be true’ questions

‘I don’t deny’ means ‘it may be possible’

Be conscious of the difference between what is sufficient and what is necessary

Be conscious of the shell game answers by verifying word to word

When the argument seems to be very sound, then look for a defender assumption

The Answer to WHAT one wants to prove is the Conclusion

The Answer to WHY one feels that the Conclusion is valid is/are Premise(s)

In any CR Argument, A PREMISE is taken to be 100% TRUE; it can never be questioned, strengthened, or weakened; only the CONCLUSION can be questioned, strengthened.

$P + A = C$

Four Characteristics of good evidence: Sufficient, Relevant, Unbiased and Logical

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A stated premise backs up the argument's conclusion, while assumptions provide logically necessary connections between the stated premise and the stated claims. The conclusion is the core assertion—the thrust of the argument.

Many GMAT Arguments will be faulty because the author will assume that one of the paths to a certain outcome is the only path to that outcome.

Bert lost 15 pounds last summer. (Nothing else, aside from a diet, could have contributed to Bert's weight loss.) Bert must have been on a diet last summer.

(Assumption fills the whole gap)

Bert lost 15 pounds last summer. (Exercise did not account for Bert's weight loss.)

Bert must have been on a diet last summer. (Assumption fills only a partial gap; This is a necessary but not sufficient one)

If there are multiple conclusions (Intermediate conclusions), then use THEREFORE test to identify the main conclusion from the intermediate ones.

[Intermediate conclusions; THEREFORE, Final Conclusion]

P + IC _ FC

An Argument may have opposing points, complementary premises, Duplicate Premises (where one is a point, and the other is an illustrious point).

Strategies for each of the question types: (Recommended by Sandeep Gupta, the best trainer for GMAT)

Boldface:

First eliminate the options based on Fact/Conclusion. Then read the argument and do.

Conclusion is what the author tries to establish using facts. Also known as Judgment reached; Opinion, Suggestion, View, Idea, Belief, Proposal, Warning, Forecast, Claim, Stand, Prediction, Hypothesis, Position, Stance, Point, Main Point, Generalization (about future), Contention, Consequence, To Posit, etc.

Support to conclusion: also called Fact, Evidence, Premise, Proof, Supposition, Data, Information, Research, Consideration, Pattern, Explanation, Justification, Situation, Circumstance, Reasoning, Line of Reasoning, Generalization (about past or present), Judgment in support, Observation, Support, Example, Finding, Phenomenon, Illustration, Reason, To Acknowledge, etc.

If we can write "Because X so Y" then X is the supporting Premise or supporting reason or the sub conclusion and Y is the main Conclusion.

Complete the passage:

Untwist the conclusion. And rephrase it in a simple language. "CONCLUSION is true BECAUSE of Assumptions"

Weaken:

Negate the assumptions.

Support Fact and Weaken Conclusion/Assumption/Reasoning

Weaken doesn't mean destroying the argument. But it can only make it least convincing.

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Facts respected; Conclusion is weakened by breaking an assumption /by extra information/ by questioning the reason for the facts (Alternate logic)

We can still not question the premise. We can question only the usefulness of the premise for the given conclusion.

Strengthen:

Support the assumptions.

Strengthen doesn't mean Prove.

Facts Respected; Conclusion strengthened by supporting an assumption/by extra information/by supporting the reason(cause) given for the conclusion.

A strengthen answer doesn't have to make the argument perfect, and a weaken answer doesn't have to destroy the argument entirely.

Flaw:

Expose assumptions (Believe in assumptions)

Logical Flaws- Where assumptions are unwarranted or unlikely to be true.

Premise/Conclusion Mismatch – As in using 'daily' in Premise and 'regularly' in Conclusion.

Number Percentage Flaws

Correlation doesn't equal Causation

The first step to answering this type of question is to identify the assumption that is needed to connect the premise to the conclusion. Next try to think of what is wrong with this assumption and how it can be logically subverted.

Analogy Flaw: Argument assumes similar conditions imply similar results.

Words that introduce numbers – Amount, Quantity, Sum, Total, Count, Tally

Words that introduce %s – Percent, Proportion, Fraction, Ratio, Incidence, Likelihood, Probability, Segment, Share etc

In the Explaining a Result Questions, a situation (expected result) is presented and is countered immediately. Reasoning is expected to explain the contrast (second, unexpected result). Then the answer options would belong to any of these below buckets:

Bucket#1: Further evidence for the expected result (Wrong answers)

Bucket#2: Explains the unexpected Result (The right answer)

Bucket#3: Irrelevant to the discrepancy presented (Wrong answers)

Evaluate:

Be not-sure. Some more facts should help to agree/disagree.

Validating assumptions leads to Yes/No (extreme answers)

Identify the Conclusion; Take the choices to the extremes.

The Extremes Test: One extreme should weaken and the other should strengthen the conclusion or vice versa.

Question the necessary assumption.

Assumption Centrality Technique (ACT)/ Assumption Negation Technique (ANT):

- Identify the conclusion

- Negate the choices one by one

- If negated choice weakens the conclusion, it should be a right assumption.

Follow the Verbatim: CONCLUSION BECAUSE ASSUMPTION For assumption questions

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The Assumption in question is not just any assumption but a necessary assumption. Notice that the potential weakener can be strange and unpredictable, and that sometimes it seems completely unrelated to the argument—"out of nowhere," one might say.

Wrong Answer Characteristics: Premise Boosters, Conclusion Redundancy, Opposites, Out of Scope, Reversed Logic (answers that reverse the order of the desired logical statement)

Veera Karthik

Critical Reasoning

Bird's Eye View

Prepared by Veera Karthik Gonagundla

Instructions:

Small Circle: Argument

Big Oval: Answer options

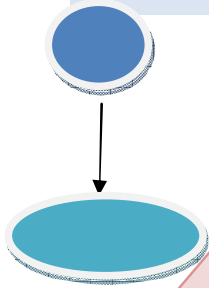
Arrow: The part (Argument or answer options) at the end of the arrow is affected by the part at the source of the arrow.

Green balloon: Possible Correct answers

Red Balloon: Possible incorrect answers

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1. Must Be True Questions:



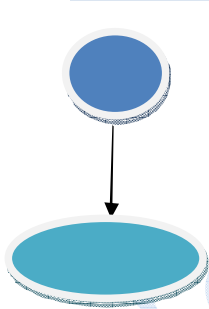
Correct Answers:

ParaPhrased Answers or
Combination Answers

Incorrect Answers

- Likely to be True
- Exaggerated
- New Information /Out of Scope
- Shell Game
- Opposite Answers
- Reverse Answers

2. Main Point Questions:



Expresses the main Conclusion of the argument

Restates the main Point of the passage

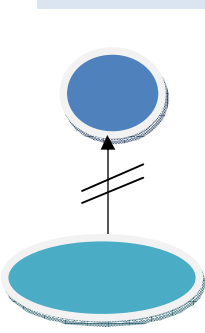
Based on all the Sub-Conclusions and Main
Conclusion of the passage

Options that state only about part of the passage;

Out of scope;

Extrapolated answers;

3. Weakening Questions:



Attack the Premise

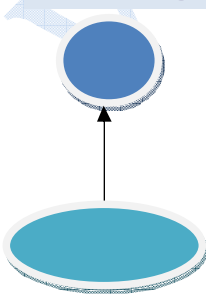
Attack Conclusion: Undermine Conclusion showing Conclusion doesn't follow from the premises. Or Attack the hole/gap on which the conclusion is built.

Weakening Scenarios: Incomplete Information, Improper comparisons, Qualified Conclusion etc

Cause & Effect: Prove that the events are independent; Simple Correlation rather than Cause & Effect; Find alternate Cause; Effect doesn't occur for the cause, Cause didn't occur for the effect, relationship is reversed, Some Statistical Problem exists.

Strengthening Answers; Shell Game Answers; Out of Scope Answers; Un-weakening options;
Weakening the other speaker's conclusion; weakening the wrong conclusion;

4. Strengthening & Justify the Conclusion Questions:



Close any gap or hole in the argument

Provide the missing link between the Premise and the Conclusion

Strengthen the validity of the analogies, Surveys or statistics assumed

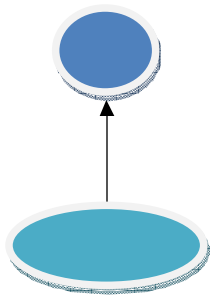
Can strengthen anywhere between 1% to 100%

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Causality: Eliminate alternate Cause, Effect occurs whenever Cause occurs, No cause – No Effect, Eliminate the reversed relationship, Statistical Data used is perfect

Weakening or non-strengthening answers, Shell game answers, Out of scope answers;

5. Justify the Conclusion Questions



Weakening answers

Non-Strengthening Answers

Shell Game answers

Out of Scope answers

Strengthen the argument so well that the conclusion must follow from the combination of the premises and the correct answer choice.
Premises + Answer Choice = Conclusion

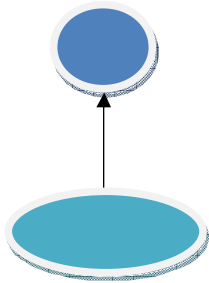
Answer choice (Correct) → → Conclusion (valid)
100% Justification required.

Mechanistic Approach:

1. Any "new" element in the conclusion will appear in the correct answer.
2. Elements that are common to the conclusion and at least one premise normally do not appear in the correct answer.
3. Elements that appear in the premises but not the conclusion usually appear in the correct answer.

(Union of terminology) – (Intersection of terminology)

6. Assumption Questions:



Answers with constructions such as “the primary purpose,” “the top priority,” or “the main factor.”

Any option that doesn't hurt the conclusion when negated

What is necessary for the argument to be true?

Unstated premise of the argument

Conclusion (valid) $\rightarrow$ Assumption (True) which means

Assumption Negation Technique:

Assumption (False) $\rightarrow$ Conclusion (Invalid)

Supporter assumption, by definition, closes the hole by linking the elements together. (Pre-Phrasing helps). Links together new or rogue elements in the stimulus or fill logical gaps in the argument.

Defender assumptions protect the argument by eliminating ideas that could weaken the argument. Eliminate ideas or assertions that would undermine the conclusion. Show that a possible source of attack has been eliminated.

Provide a missing link between the premises and the conclusion

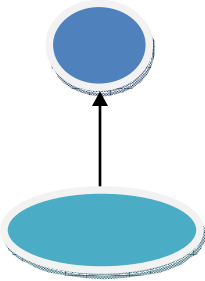
Conditional Conclusion: Show that the necessary condition is truly necessary and eliminate any alternative to the necessary condition

Only one answer option hurts the argument when negated.

Causality: All the conditions mentioned for Strengthen Questions

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7. Resolve the Paradox Questions:



Answer that supports only one side of the argument

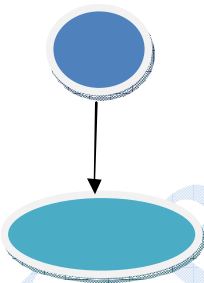
Similarities explain the differences or Vice versa

Out of Scope; Highlights the paradox; Parallel Paradox

Active Resolution will allow both sides to be factually correct and it 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.

The correct answer must conform to the specifics of the stimulus

8. Method of Reasoning Questions:



1. "New" element answers.
2. Half right, Half wrong answers
3. Exaggerated answers
4. Opposite answers
5. Reverse answers
6. AP- Other than that is mentioned in AP

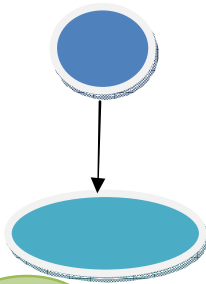
Involve Abstract thinking

Identify the logical organization of the argument.

Fact Test: All parts of the answer must be identifiable in the stimulus.

Argument Part (AP): Before proceeding to the answer choices, make sure you know exactly what part of the argument you are being asked about. Check even a few lines up and down, along with its logical connectors.

9. Flaw in the Reasoning Questions:



Mentioning the Wrong Flaw

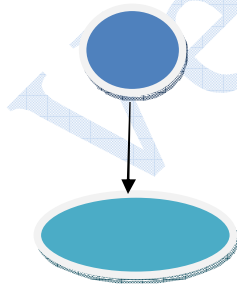
Unparalleled Flaw

Identify errors of reasoning made in the stimulus

Common Flaws:

Ambiguous usage; Attacking the Source Argument; Circular Reasoning; Errors of Conditional Reasoning; Mistaken Cause and Effect; Straw Man; General Lack of relevant evidence for the conclusion; Internal Contradiction; Appeal Fallacies: Appeal to authority, Appeal to Popular opinion, Appeal to emotion etc; Survey Errors; Exceptional case/Overgeneralization; Errors of composition and Division; False Analogy; False dilemma; Errors in the use of evidence; Time shift errors; Numbers and percentage errors.

10. Parallel Reasoning Questions:



Answer choices with the same subject matter as the stimulus are almost always incorrect, and are generally used to lure students who fail to consider the reasoning in the stimulus. You should still consider answer choices with the same topic as the stimulus, but be wary.

Unparalleled

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Identify the method of argumentation used by the author and then to match that reasoning to the reasoning presented in each answer choice.

The details (Subject matter) of the stimulus and each answer choice are different.

Instead, the structural basis of these questions forces you to compare the big picture elements of the argument: intent of the conclusion, force and use of the premises, the relationship of the premises and the conclusion, and the soundness of the argument.

The elements that do not need to be paralleled are:

- Topic of the stimulus

- The order of presentation of premises and conclusion in the stimulus

Use the below elements to eliminate the wrong answers:

1. The Method of Reasoning
2. The validity of the argument
3. The logical force of an argument
4. The conclusion: Parallel the sub-components
5. The controlling modifiers: must, could, many, some, never etc, Sometimes synonyms can be used in the answer choices, Sometimes opposite language too; like: Always present = never absent.
6. Match the premises too (conceptually or logically but not as it is)

Diagramming of the whole scenario is a better approach.
Symbolize everything.

Do the skeleton Match

Describe the Stimulus in abstract action terms and then match

11. Numbers and Percentages Questions

1. If the stimulus contains percentage or proportion information only, avoid answers that 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.

Misconception #1: Increasing percentages automatically lead to increasing numbers.

Misconception #2: Decreasing percentages automatically lead to decreasing numbers.

Misconception #3: Increasing numbers automatically lead to increasing percentages.

Misconception #4: Decreasing numbers automatically lead to decreasing percentages.

Misconception #5: Large numbers automatically mean large percentages, and small numbers automatically mean small percentages.

Misconception #6: Large percentages automatically mean large numbers, and small percentages automatically mean small numbers.

12. Evaluate the Reasoning Questions:

If different responses do not produce different effects, then the answer choice is incorrect.

Variance Test: For a question chosen from the answer choices, if different responses produce different effects on the conclusion, then the answer choice is correct.

13. Point at Issue Questions:

Factual Answer option for an ethical Stimuli and vice versa.

Option with Dual disagreement and Dual agreement

Option with the topic of the discussion

Option with the view of one speaker is unknown

If 2 different responses don't occur for Agree/Disagree Test, then the option is incorrect.

Agree/Disagree Test: The correct answer must produce responses where one speaker would say "I agree. The statement is correct." and the other speaker would say, "I disagree, the statement is incorrect."