

IDENTIFY THE FLAW QUESTIONS

Ø6 2017

Q559

In virtually any industry, technological improvements increase labor productivity, which is the output of goods and services per person-hour worked. In Parland's industries, labor productivity is significantly higher than it is in Vergia's industries. Clearly, therefore, Parland's industries must, on the whole, be further advanced technologically than Vergia's are.

The argument is most vulnerable to which of the following criticisms?

- (A) It offers a conclusion that is no more than a paraphrase of one of the pieces of information provided in its support.
- (B) It presents as evidence in support of a claim information that is inconsistent with other evidence presented in support of the same claim.
- (C) It takes one possible cause of a condition to be the actual cause of that condition without considering any other possible causes.
- (D) It takes a condition to be the effect of something that happened only after the condition already existed.
- (E) It makes a distinction that presupposes the truth of the conclusion that is to be established.

Q565

Physician: The hormone melatonin has shown promise as a medication for sleep disorders when taken in synthesized form. Because the long-term side effects of synthetic melatonin are unknown, however, I cannot recommend its use at this time.

Patient: Your position is inconsistent with your usual practice. You prescribe many medications that you know have serious side effects, so concern about side effects cannot be the real reason you will not prescribe melatonin.

The patient's argument is flawed because it fails to consider that

- (A) the side effects of synthetic melatonin might be different from those of naturally produced melatonin
- (B) it is possible that the physician does not believe that melatonin has been conclusively shown to be effective
- (C) sleep disorders, if left untreated, might lead to serious medical complications
- (D) the side effects of a medication can take some time to manifest themselves
- (E) known risks can be weighed against known benefits, but unknown risks cannot

Q597

Rye sown in the fall and plowed into the soil in early spring leaves a residue that is highly effective at controlling broad-leaved weeds, but unfortunately for only about forty- five days. No major agricultural crop matures from seed in as little as forty- five days. Synthetic herbicides, on the other hand, although not any longer-lasting, can be reapplied as the crop grows. Clearly, therefore, for major agricultural crops, plowing rye into the soil can play no part in effective weed control.

The argument is most vulnerable to the objection that it fails to

- (A) consider that there might be minor, quick- growing crops that do mature in forty- five days or less
- (B) identify any alternative method of weed control that could be used instead of the method it rejects
- (C) distinguish among the various kinds of synthetic herbicides
- (D) allow for the possibility of combining the two weed-control methods it mentions
- (E) allow for the possibility that plants other than rye, handled the same way, might have the same effect

Q600

Politician: Hybrid cars use significantly less fuel per kilometer than nonhybrids. And fuel produces air pollution, which contributes to a number of environmental problems. Motorists can save money by driving cars that are more fuel efficient, and they will be encouraged to drive hybrid cars if we make them aware of that fact. Therefore, we can help reduce the total amount of pollution emitted by cars in this country by highlighting this advantage of hybrid cars.

Which of the following, if true, would most indicate a vulnerability of the politician's argument?

- (A) People with more fuel-efficient cars typically drive more than do those with less fuel-efficient cars.
- (B) Not all air pollution originates from automobiles.
- (C) Hybrid cars have already begun to gain popularity.
- (D) Fuel-efficient alternatives to hybrid cars will likely become available in the future.
- (E) The future cost of gasoline and other fuel cannot be predicted with absolute precision or certainty.

Q633

Debater: The average amount of overtime per month worked by an employee in the manufacturing division of the Haglut Corporation is 14 hours. Most employees of the Haglut Corporation work in the manufacturing division. Furthermore, the average amount of overtime per month worked by any employee in the company generally does not fluctuate much from month to month. Therefore, each month, most employees of the Haglut Corporation almost certainly work at least some overtime.

The debater's argument is most vulnerable to criticism on which of these grounds?

(A) It takes for granted that the manufacturing division is a typical division of the corporation with regard to the average amount of overtime its employees work each month.

(B) It takes for granted that if a certain average amount of overtime is worked each month by each employee of the Haglut Corporation, then approximately the same amount of overtime must be worked each month by each employee of the manufacturing division.

(C) It confuses a claim from which the argument's conclusion about the Haglut Corporation would necessarily follow with a claim that would follow from the argument's conclusion only with a high degree of probability.

(D) It overlooks the possibility that even if, on average, a certain amount of overtime is worked by the members of some group, many members of that group may work no overtime at all.

(E) It overlooks the possibility that even if most employees of the corporation work some overtime each month, any one corporate employee may, in some months, work no overtime.

OG 2016

Q6

Homeowners aged 40 to 50 are more likely to purchase ice cream and are more likely to purchase it in larger amounts than are members of any other demographic group. The popular belief that teenagers eat more ice cream than adults must, therefore, be false.

The argument is flawed primarily because the author

- (A) fails to distinguish between purchasing and consuming
- (B) does not supply information about homeowners in age groups other than 40 to 50
- (C) depends on popular belief rather than on documented research findings
- (D) does not specify the precise amount of ice cream purchased by any demographic group
- (E) discusses ice cream rather than more nutritious and healthful foods

Ø6 2015

Q4

According to a prediction of the not-so-distant future published in 1940, electricity would revolutionize agriculture. Electrodes would be inserted into the soil, and the current between them would kill bugs and weeds and make crop plants stronger.

Which of the following, if true, most strongly indicates that the logic of the prediction above is flawed?

- (A) In order for farmers to avoid electric shock while working in the fields, the current could be turned off at such times without diminishing the intended effects.
- (B) If the proposed plan for using electricity were put into practice, farmers would save on chemicals now being added to the soil.
- (C) It cannot be taken for granted that the use of electricity is always beneficial.
- (D) Since weeds are plants, electricity would affect weeds in the same way as it would affect crop plants.
- (E) Because a planting machine would need to avoid coming into contact with the electrodes, new parts for planting machines would need to be designed.

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