

PARADOX QUESTIONS

Ø6 2017

Q549

During the earliest period of industrialization in Britain, steam engines were more expensive to build and operate than either windmills or water mills, the other practicable sources of power for factories. Yet despite their significant cost disadvantages, steam-powered factories were built in large numbers well before technical improvements brought their cost down. Furthermore, they were built even in regions where geographical conditions permitted the construction of wind- and water-powered factories close to major markets.

Which of the following, if true, most helps to explain the proliferation of steam-powered factories during the earliest period of industrialization in Britain?

- (A) In many areas of Britain, there were fewer steam-powered factories than wind- or water-powered factories in the earliest period of industrialization.
- (B) Unlike wind- or water-powered factories, steam-powered factories were fueled with coal, which sometimes had to be transported significant distances from the mine to the site of the factory.
- (C) It was both difficult and expensive to convert a factory from wind power or water power to steam power.
- (D) In the early period of industrialization, many goods sold in towns and cities could not be mass-produced in factories.
- (E) In Britain, the number of sites where a wind- or water-powered factory could be built was insufficient to provide for all of the demand for factory-produced goods at the time.

Q551

Suncorp, a new corporation with limited funds, has been clearing large sections of the tropical Amazon forest for cattle ranching. This practice continues even though greater profits can be made from rubber tapping, which does not destroy the forest, than from cattle ranching, which does destroy the forest.

Which of the following, if true, most helps to explain why Suncorp has been pursuing the less profitable of the two economic activities mentioned above?

- (A) The soil of the Amazon forest is very rich in nutrients that are important in the development of grazing lands.
- (B) Cattle-ranching operations that are located in tropical climates are more profitable than cattle-ranching operations that are located in cold-weather climates.
- (C) In certain districts, profits made from cattle ranching are more heavily taxed than profits made from any other industry.
- (D) Some of the cattle that are raised on land cleared in the Amazon are killed by wildcats.
- (E) The amount of money required to begin a rubber-tapping operation is twice as high as the amount needed to begin a cattle ranch.

Q554

In order to reduce the number of items damaged while in transit to customers, packaging consultants recommended that the TrueSave mail-order company increase the amount of packing material so as to fill any empty spaces in its cartons. Accordingly, TrueSave officials instructed the company's packers to use more packing material than before, and the packers zealously acted on these instructions and used as much as they could. Nevertheless, customer reports of damaged items rose somewhat.

Which of the following, if true, most helps to explain why acting on the consultants' recommendation failed to achieve its goal?

- (A) The change in packing policy led to an increase in expenditure on packing material and labor.
- (B) When packing material is compressed too densely, it loses some of its capacity to absorb shock.
- (C) The amount of packing material used in a carton does not significantly influence the ease with which a customer can unpack the package.
- (D) Most of the goods that TrueSave ships are electronic products that are highly vulnerable to being damaged in transit.
- (E) TrueSave has lost some of its regular customers as a result of the high number of damaged items they received.

Q555

Parland's alligator population has been declining in recent years, primarily because of hunting. Alligators prey heavily on a species of freshwater fish that is highly valued as food by Parlanders, who had hoped that the decline in the alligator population would lead to an increase in the numbers of these fish available for human consumption. Yet the population of this fish species has also declined, even though the annual number caught for human consumption has not increased.

Which of the following, if true, most helps to explain the decline in the population of the fish species?

- (A) The decline in the alligator population has meant that fishers can work in some parts of lakes and rivers that were formerly too dangerous.
- (B) Over the last few years, Parland's commercial fishing enterprises have increased the number of fishing boats they use.
- (C) The main predator of these fish is another species of fish on which alligators also prey.
- (D) Many Parlanders who hunt alligators do so because of the high market price of alligator skins, not because of the threat alligators pose to the fish population.
- (E) In several neighboring countries through which Parland's rivers also flow, alligators are at risk of extinction as a result of extensive hunting.

Q557

While many people think of genetic manipulation of food crops as being aimed at developing larger and larger plant varieties, some plant breeders have in fact concentrated on discovering or producing dwarf varieties, which are roughly half as tall as normal varieties.

Which of the following would, if true, most help to explain the strategy of the plant breeders referred to above?

- (A) Plant varieties used as food by some are used as ornamentals by others.
- (B) The wholesale prices of a given crop decrease as the supply of it increases.
- (C) Crops once produced exclusively for human consumption are often now used for animal feed.
- (D) Short plants are less vulnerable to strong wind and heavy rains.
- (E) Nations with large industrial sectors tend to consume more processed grains.

Q566

Plan: Concerned about the welfare of its senior citizens, the government of Runagia decided two years ago to increase by 20 percent the government-provided pension paid to all Runagians age sixty- five and older.

Result: Many Runagian senior citizens are no better off financially now than they were before the increase.

Further information: The annual rate of inflation since the pension increase has been below 5 percent, and the increased pension has been duly received by all eligible Runagians.

In light of the further information, which of the following, if true, does most to explain the result that followed implementation of the plan?

- (A) The majority of senior citizens whose financial position has not improved rely entirely on the government pension for their income.
- (B) The Runagian banking system is so inefficient that cashing a pension check can take as much as three weeks.
- (C) The prices of goods and services that meet the special needs of many senior citizens have increased at a rate much higher than the rate of inflation.
- (D) The pension increase occurred at a time when the number of Runagians age sixty- five and older who were living below the poverty level was at an all-time high.
- (E) The most recent pension increase was only the second such increase in the last ten years.

Q567

Hollywood restaurant is replacing some of its standard tables with tall tables and stools. The restaurant already fills every available seat during its operating hours, and the change in seating arrangements will not result in an increase in the restaurant's seating capacity. Nonetheless, the restaurant's management expects revenue to increase as a result of the seating change without any concurrent change in menu, prices, or operating hours.

Which of the following, if true, provides the best reason for the expectation?

- (A) One of the taller tables takes up less floor space than one of the standard tables.
- (B) Diners seated on stools typically do not linger over dinner as long as diners seated at standard tables.
- (C) Since the restaurant will replace only some of its standard tables, it can continue to accommodate customers who do not care for the taller tables.
- (D) Few diners are likely to avoid the restaurant because of the new seating arrangement.
- (E) The standard tables being replaced by tall tables would otherwise have to be replaced with new standard tables at a greater expense.

Q569

Only a reduction of 10 percent in the number of scheduled flights using Greentown's airport will allow the delays that are so common there to be avoided. Hevelia airstrip, 40 miles away, would, if upgraded and expanded, be an attractive alternative for fully 20 percent of the passengers using Greentown airport. Nevertheless, experts reject the claim that turning Hevelia into a full-service airport would end the chronic delays at Greentown.

Which of the following, if true, most helps to justify the experts' position?

(A) Turning Hevelia into a full-service airport would require not only substantial construction at the airport itself, but also the construction of new access highways.

(B) A second largely undeveloped airstrip close to Greentown airport would be a more attractive alternative than Hevelia for many passengers who now use Greentown.

(C) Hevelia airstrip lies in a relatively undeveloped area but would, if it became a full-service airport, be a magnet for commercial and residential development.

(D) If an airplane has to wait to land, the extra jet fuel required adds significantly to the airline's costs.

(E) Several airlines use Greentown as a regional hub, so that most flights landing at Greentown have many passengers who then take different flights to reach their final destinations.

Q587

Rainwater contains hydrogen of a heavy form called deuterium. The deuterium content of wood reflects the deuterium content of rainwater available to trees during their growth. Wood from trees that grew between 16,000 and 24,000 years ago in North America contains significantly more deuterium than wood from trees growing today. But water trapped in several North American caves that formed during that same early period contains significantly less deuterium than rainwater in North America today.

Which of the following, if true, most helps to reconcile the two findings?

- (A) There is little deuterium in the North American caves than the deuterium in the water trapped there.
- (B) Exposure to water after a tree has died does not change the deuterium content of the wood.
- (C) Industrialization in North America over the past 100 years has altered the deuterium content of rain.
- (D) Trees draw on shallow groundwater from rain that falls during their growth, whereas water trapped in caves may have fallen as rainwater thousands of years before the caves formed.
- (E) Wood with high deuterium content is no more likely to remain preserved for long periods than is wood with a low deuterium content.

Q596

To reduce productivity losses from employees calling in sick, Corporation X implemented a new policy requiring employees to come into work unless they were so sick that they had to go to a doctor. But a year after the policy was implemented, a study found that Corporation X's overall productivity losses due to reported employee illnesses had increased.

Which of the following, if true, would best explain why the policy produced the reverse of its intended effect?

- (A) After the policy was implemented, employees more frequently went to the doctor when they felt sick.
- (B) Before the policy was implemented, employees who were not sick at all often called in sick.
- (C) Employees coming into work when sick often infect many of their coworkers.
- (D) Unusually few employees became genuinely sick during the year after the policy was implemented.
- (E) There are many other factors besides employee illness that can adversely affect productivity.

Q614

When trying to identify new technologies that promise to transform the marketplace, market researchers survey the managers of those companies that are developing new technologies. Such managers have an enormous stake in succeeding, so they invariably overstate the potential of their new technologies. Surprisingly, however, market researchers typically do not survey a new technology's potential buyers, even though it is the buyers—not the producers—who will ultimately determine a technology's commercial success.

Which of the following, if true, best accounts for the typical survey practices among market researchers?

- (A) If a new technology succeeds, the commercial benefits accrue largely to the producers, not to the buyers, of that technology.
- (B) People who promote the virtues of a new technology typically fail to consider that the old technology that is currently in use continues to be improved, often substantially.
- (C) Investors are unlikely to invest substantial amounts of capital in a company whose own managers are skeptical about the commercial prospects of a new technology they are developing.
- (D) The potential buyers for not-yet-available technologies can seldom be reliably identified.
- (E) The developers of a new technology are generally no better positioned than its potential buyers to gauge how rapidly the new technology can be efficiently mass-produced.

Q615

In order to withstand tidal currents, juvenile horseshoe crabs frequently burrow in the sand. Such burrowing discourages barnacles from clinging to their shells. When fully grown, however, the crabs can readily withstand tidal currents without burrowing, and thus they acquire substantial populations of barnacles. Surprisingly, in areas where tidal currents are very weak, juvenile horseshoe crabs are found not to have significant barnacle populations, even though they seldom burrow.

Which of the following, if true, most helps to explain the surprising finding?

- (A) Tidal currents do not themselves dislodge barnacles from the shells of horseshoe crabs.
- (B) Barnacles most readily attach themselves to horseshoe crabs in areas where tidal currents are weakest.
- (C) The strength of the tidal currents in a given location varies widely over the course of a day.
- (D) A very large barnacle population can significantly decrease the ability of a horseshoe crab to find food.
- (E) Until they are fully grown, horseshoe crabs shed their shells and grow new ones several times a year.

Q622

When there is less rainfall than normal, the water level of Australian rivers falls and the rivers flow more slowly. Because algae whose habitat is river water grow best in slow-moving water, the amount of algae per unit of water generally increases when there has been little rain. By contrast, however, following a period of extreme drought, algae levels are low even in very slow-moving river water.

Which of the following, if true, does most to explain the contrast described above?

(A) During periods of extreme drought, the populations of some of the species that feed on algae tend to fall.

(B) The more slowly water moves, the more conducive its temperature is to the growth of algae.

(C) When algae populations reach very high levels, conditions within the river can become toxic for some of the other species that normally live there.

(D) Australian rivers dry up completely for short intervals in periods of extreme drought.

(E) Except during periods of extreme drought, algae levels tend to be higher in rivers in which the flow has been controlled by damming than in rivers that flow freely.

Q630

As a construction material, bamboo is as strong as steel and sturdier than concrete. Moreover, in tropical areas bamboo is a much less expensive construction material than either steel or concrete and is always readily available. In tropical areas, therefore, building with bamboo makes better economic sense than building with steel or concrete, except where land values are high.

Which of the following, if true, most helps to explain the exception noted above?

- (A) Buildings constructed of bamboo are less likely to suffer earthquake damage than are steel and concrete buildings.
- (B) Bamboo is unsuitable as a building material for multistory buildings.
- (C) In order to protect it from being damaged by termites and beetles, bamboo must be soaked, at some expense, in a preservative.
- (D) In some tropical areas, bamboo is used to make the scaffolding that is used during large construction projects.
- (E) Bamboo growing in an area where land values are increasing is often cleared to make way for construction.

Q648

In the country of Veltria, the past two years' broad economic recession has included a business downturn in the clothing trade, where sales are down by about 7 percent as compared to two years ago. Clothing wholesalers have found, however, that the proportion of credit extended to retailers that was paid off on time fell sharply in the first year of the recession but returned to its prerecession level in the second year.

Which of the following, if true, most helps to explain the change between the first and the second year of the recession in the proportion of credit not paid off on time?

- (A) The total amount of credit extended to retailers by clothing wholesalers increased between the first year of the recession and the second year.
- (B) Between the first and second years of the recession, clothing retailers in Veltria saw many of their costs, rent and utilities in particular, increase.
- (C) Of the considerable number of clothing retailers in Veltria who were having financial difficulties before the start of the recession, virtually all were forced to go out of business during its first year.
- (D) Clothing retailers in Veltria attempted to stimulate sales in the second year of the recession by discounting merchandise.
- (E) Relatively recession-proof segments of the clothing trade, such as work clothes, did not suffer any decrease in sales during the first year of the recession.

Q664

An experiment was done in which human subjects recognize a pattern within a matrix of abstract designs and then select another design that completes that pattern. The results of the experiment were surprising. The lowest expenditure of energy in neurons in the brain was found in those subjects who performed most successfully in the experiments.

Which of the following hypotheses best accounts for the findings of the experiment?

- (A) The neurons of the brain react less when a subject is trying to recognize patterns than when the subject is doing other kinds of reasoning.
- (B) Those who performed best in the experiment experienced more satisfaction when working with abstract patterns than did those who performed less well.
- (C) People who are better at abstract pattern recognition have more energy-efficient neural connections.
- (D) The energy expenditure of the subjects' brains increases when a design that completes the initially recognized pattern is determined.
- (E) The task of completing a given design is more capably performed by athletes, whose energy expenditure is lower when they are at rest.

OG 2016

Q39

A study of ticket sales at a summer theater festival found that people who bought tickets to individual plays had a no-show rate of less than 1 percent, while those who paid in advance for all ten plays being performed that summer had a no-show rate of nearly 30 percent. This may be at least in part because the greater the awareness customers retain about the cost of an item, the more likely they are to use it.

Which of the following would, if true, best serve as an alternative explanation of the results of the study?

- (A) The price per ticket was slightly cheaper for those who bought all ten tickets in advance.
- (B) Many people who attended the theater festival believed strongly that they should support it financially.
- (C) Those who attended all ten plays became eligible for a partial refund.
- (D) Usually, people who bought tickets to individual plays did so immediately prior to each performance that they attended.
- (E) People who arrived just before the performance began could not be assured of obtaining seats in a preferred location.

Q51

Contrary to earlier predictions, demand for sugarcane has not increased in recent years. Yet, even though prices and production amounts have also been stable during the last three years, sugarcane growers last year increased their profits by more than 10 percent over the previous year's level.

Any of the following statements, if true about last year, helps to explain the rise in profits EXCEPT:

- (A) Many countries that are large consumers of sugarcane increased their production of sugarcane-based ethanol, yet their overall consumption of sugarcane decreased.
- (B) Sugarcane growers have saved money on wages by switching from paying laborers an hourly wage to paying them by the amount harvested.
- (C) The price of oil, the major energy source used by sugarcane growers in harvesting their crops, dropped by over 20 percent.
- (D) Many small sugarcane growers joined together to form an association of sugarcane producers and began to buy supplies at low group rates.
- (E) Rainfall in sugarcane-growing regions was higher than it had been during the previous year, allowing the growers to save money on expensive artificial irrigation.

Ø6 2015

Q16

In Washington County, attendance at the movies is just large enough for the cinema operators to make modest profits. The size of the county's population is stable and is not expected to increase much. Yet there are investors ready to double the number of movie screens in the county within five years, and they are predicting solid profits both for themselves and for the established cinema operators.

Which of the following, if true about Washington County, most helps to provide a justification for the investors' prediction?

- (A) Over the next ten years, people in their teenage years, the prime moviegoing age, will be a rapidly growing proportion of the county's population.
- (B) As distinct from the existing cinemas, most of the cinemas being planned would be located in downtown areas, in hopes of stimulating an economic revitalization of those areas.
- (C) Spending on video purchases, as well as spending on video rentals, has been increasing modestly each year for the past ten years.
- (D) The average number of screens per cinema is lower among existing cinemas than it is among cinemas still in the planning stages.
- (E) The sale of snacks and drinks in cinemas accounts for a steadily growing share of most cinema operators' profits.

Q40

Crowding on Mooreville's subway frequently leads to delays, because it is difficult for passengers to exit from the trains. Subway ridership is projected to increase by 20 percent over the next 10 years. The Mooreville Transit Authority plans to increase the number of daily train trips by only 5 percent over the same period. Officials predict that this increase is sufficient to ensure that the incidence of delays due to crowding does not increase. Which of the following, if true, provides the strongest grounds for the officials' prediction?

- (A) By changing maintenance schedules, the Transit Authority can achieve the 5 percent increase in train trips without purchasing any new subway cars.
- (B) The Transit Authority also plans a 5 percent increase in the number of bus trips on routes that connect to subways.
- (C) For most commuters who use the subway system, there is no practical alternative public transportation available.
- (D) Most of the projected increase in ridership is expected to occur in off-peak hours when trains are now sparsely used.
- (E) The 5 percent increase in the number of train trips can be achieved without an equal increase in Transit Authority operational costs.

Q49

Maize contains the vitamin niacin, but not in a form the body can absorb. Pellagra is a disease that results from niacin deficiency. When maize was introduced into southern Europe from the Americas in the eighteenth century, it quickly became a dietary staple, and many Europeans who came to subsist primarily on maize developed pellagra. Pellagra was virtually unknown at that time in the Americas, however, even among people who subsisted primarily on maize.

Which of the following, if true, most helps to explain the contrasting incidence of pellagra described above?

- (A) Once introduced into southern Europe, maize became popular with landowners because of its high yields relative to other cereal crops.
- (B) Maize grown in the Americas contained more niacin than maize grown in Europe did.
- (C) Traditional ways of preparing maize in the Americas convert maize's niacin into a nutritionally useful form.
- (D) In southern Europe many of the people who consumed maize also ate niacin-rich foods.
- (E) Before the discovery of pellagra's link with niacin, it was widely believed that the disease was an infection that could be transmitted from person to person.

Q105

The cost of producing radios in Country Q is 10 percent less than the cost of producing radios in Country Y. Even after transportation fees and tariff charges are added, it is still cheaper for a company to import radios from Country Q to Country Y than to produce radios in Country Y.

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

- (A) Labor costs in Country Q are 10 percent below those in Country Y.
- (B) Importing radios from Country Q to Country Y will eliminate 10 percent of the manufacturing jobs in Country Y.
- (C) The tariff on a radio imported from Country Q to Country Y is less than 10 percent of the cost of manufacturing the radio in Country Y.
- (D) The fee for transporting a radio from Country Q to Country Y is more than 10 percent of the cost of manufacturing the radio in Country Q.
- (E) It takes 10 percent less time to manufacture a radio in Country Q than it does in Country Y.

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