



16 Tendencies

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Test Takers' Vulnerable Tendencies & GMAC's Attack Vectors

- Marty Murray's article on [differentiating between trap choices and a correct answer](#)

Tendency	Description	GMAC attack vectors	Comments						
T1	Read the passage not carefully enough		<input type="checkbox"/> Trust myself and execute <input type="checkbox"/> Read only once!						
T2	Skim answer choices and miss key modifiers on scope or concepts	GMAC usually adds seemingly benign modifiers that totally change the meaning of answer choices. These choices with confusing wording can be correct or incorrect answers - Extreme: <i>No, all, only</i> - <i>Kinds of conclusions that can be drawn from X</i> - <i>Unlikely to provide any indication of what inferences about X</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Examine each answer choice carefully						
T2.1	Test takers tend to eliminate answer choices with confusing wording. "These choices don't sound right" 	GMAC masks correct choices by using: - More generic terms - Synonyms of terms in a passage - Confusing wording (above)	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't eliminate a choice only because it has confusing wording <input type="checkbox"/> Be precise about my understanding of an answer choice >> See what is truly there						
T3	Get scared of strange topics Test takers tend to get confused when there are multiple filters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Location • Reality vs fictional world • Actions 	Example: With 4 filters, each with 2 potential outcomes, there are $2^4 = 16$ different (but related) entities. The key argument usually is about relationships between 2/16 entities. GMAC creates wrong choices out of the remaining 14/16 entities. These 14 entities are out of scope but related to in-scope entities	Steps <input type="checkbox"/> Pause and take a deep breath <input type="checkbox"/> Imagine a dragon and read on with awe, curiosity, and respect <input type="checkbox"/> Write down EXACT scope and filters <input type="checkbox"/> If don't understand, skip						
		20200501 GMAC creates wrong answers by messing up perception with reality. For example: <table border="1" data-bbox="743 1536 1224 1872"> <thead> <tr> <th>Content</th> <th>Meaning</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><u>Passage:</u> A study shows that for lower-priced restaurants, customers perceive service guarantees as a sign that these restaurants are worried about their service</td> <td>>> Customers perceive the worry</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Wrong answer choice:</u> Service guarantees show that restaurants are worried</td> <td>>> Restaurants actually worry</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Content	Meaning	<u>Passage:</u> A study shows that for lower-priced restaurants, customers perceive service guarantees as a sign that these restaurants are worried about their service	>> Customers perceive the worry	<u>Wrong answer choice:</u> Service guarantees show that restaurants are worried	>> Restaurants actually worry	
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T4	Mix up entities and their attributes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time: hypothesis in year 1992, revised opinion in 1995, etc. 		<input type="checkbox"/> Approach each passage like a dragon: read with care, curiosity, and respect <input type="checkbox"/> Mentally draw an ERD						

T5	<p>Fill in incorrect assumptions when reading passages and questions</p> <p>Test takers tend to (1) not pay attention to EXACT scope of an argument and (2) fill in their own assumptions about a specific entity</p>	<p>Create wrong choices out of a hidden segment</p> <p>E.g., Context: Allergies to chemicals (mostly at school but can be anywhere). When an argument mentions that children could be more exposed to certain chemicals, a test taker is usually lazy and doesn't think much.</p> <p>GMAC: Create a wrong choice out saying that exposure happens at home is also required as an assumption</p>	<p>[x2] If the passage compares A to B, I assume that a question will compare A to B. In fact, a question can compare B to A to mess up my thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Remind myself to internalize the EXACT scope of an argument. A choice has to directly affect the EXACT scope <input type="checkbox"/> Remind myself: A seemingly relevant choice can be wrong. A seemingly irrelevant choice can be right <input type="checkbox"/> Ask myself: Is the scope mentioned in a choice too narrow (just a subset) or too broad?
T6	<p>When a hypothesis is introduced, test takers tend to apply that hypothesis to other situations. This happens even when the passage does not bring up any evidence to support those specific situations</p>	<p>Attack spots: Inference questions</p>	
T7	<p>Ignore the level of importance or extent of an action / opinion (mild, medium, extreme)</p>		
T8	<p>Have a bias towards choice E once I eliminate choices A, B, C, and D</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pay extra attention to choice E once I eliminated the first 4 choices <p>20201030 20201031</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Principle: Evaluate each choice with equal care
T9	<p>Choose an opposite answer to what is asked</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion point: double negative. How can we weaken the argument to not increase taxes? 	<p>- Reverse direction of a relationship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Internalize the EXACT scope, filters, and attitudes
T10	<p>Have a bias towards choices with exact wording from a passage</p> <p>When test takers are confused, they tend to latch onto answer choices with exact wording from a passage (both CR and RC)</p> <p><i>"This choice sounds right"</i></p> 	<p>GMAC uses exact words from a passage in wrong answer choices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pause when I was about to pick a contender choice with exact wording <input type="checkbox"/> Internalize the EXACT scope, filters, and attitudes
T11	<p>CR: Test takers tend to believe that a conclusion is at the end of a passage</p>	<p>For 700-level CR passages, GMAC avoids putting conclusions at the end</p>	
T13	<p>Test takers tend to confuse a specific link</p>	<p>Create wrong choices by introducing different</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Internalize the EXACT scope,

	with somewhat related links (different entities, different processes, different time, etc.)	(but related) entities, processes, or impacts	filters, and attitudes
T14	When a question asks for a new detail (e.g., which of the following, if true) and 2 answer choices mention a similar (potentially new) detail, test takers may start to believe that this new detail is part of the right answer	Create 2 wrong choices that mention the same topic	<input type="checkbox"/> CR: If there are 2 choices that mention exactly the same (new) topic, stay away from rushing towards them <input type="checkbox"/> Internalize the EXACT scope, filters, and attitudes 20201226: Q - Weaken an argument: 3 choices mentioned a wrong new detail
T15	Forget the context (who, how many people, where, when)		<input type="checkbox"/> If an answer choice mentions a time period that is not mentioned at all in a passage, eliminate it
T16	On a few occasions, I've selected a choice about an example or a description of an argument as an answer for strengthening, weakening, or impacting an argument	A description or an example of an argument neither explains, confirms, strengthens, nor weakens an argument.	20201127, 20201230