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Section Three : Verbal Ability

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Topic Break Down

Topic	No. of Questions
Topic 1, Reading Comprehension Questions	81
Topic 2, Critical Reasoning Questions	590
Topic 3, Sentence Correction Questions	88
Total	779

QUESTION NO: 1

A program instituted in a particular state allows parents to prepay their children's future college tuition at current rates. The program then pays the tuition annually for the child at any of the state's public colleges in which the child enrolls. Parents should participate in the program as a means of decreasing the cost for their children's college education.

Which of the following, if true, is the most appropriate reason for parents not to participate in the program?

- A. The parents are unsure about which public college in the state the child will attend.
- B. The amount of money accumulated by putting the prepayment funds in an interest-bearing account today will be greater than the total cost of tuition for any of the public colleges when the child enrolls.
- C. The annual cost of tuition at the state's public colleges is expected to increase at a faster rate than the annual increase in the cost of living.
- D. Some of the state's public colleges are contemplating large increases in tuition next year.
- E. The prepayment plan would not cover the cost of room and board at any of the state's public colleges.

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

The statement that "The amount of money accumulated by putting the prepayment funds in an interest-bearing account today will be greater than the total cost of tuition for any of the public colleges when the child enrolls" provides a direct financial reason not to prepay. The program's proposed benefit is locking in today's tuition price, thereby avoiding future tuition increases. However, this statement establishes that parents can do better by retaining the same money and investing it in an interest-bearing account. By the time the child enrolls, the account's balance would exceed even the full tuition cost at every eligible public college. Parents could therefore pay the future tuition when due and still have money remaining, producing a lower net cost than surrendering the funds to the prepayment plan now. This conclusion applies regardless of which state public college the child ultimately chooses because the comparison explicitly covers tuition at any of those colleges. The relevant economic principle is that a present sum may grow through interest over time; the plan is advantageous only when its tuition protection delivers more value than the alternative use of the funds. See the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission's overview of [compound interest](#) and GMAC's [GMAT Exam](#) information.

QUESTION NO: 2

One analyst predicts that Hong Kong can retain its capitalist ways after it becomes part of mainland China in 1997 as long as a capitalist Hong Kong is useful to China; that a capitalist Hong Kong will be useful to China as long as Hong Kong is prosperous; and that Hong Kong will remain prosperous as long as it retains its capitalist ways.

If the predictions above are correct, which of the following further predictions can logically be derived from them?

- A. If Hong Kong fails to stay prosperous, it will no longer remain part of mainland China.
- B. If Hong Kong retains its capitalist ways until 1997, it will be allowed to do so afterward.
- C. If there is a world economic crisis after 1997, it will not adversely affect the economy of Hong Kong.
- D. Hong Kong will be prosperous after 1997.
- E. The citizens of Hong Kong will have no restrictions placed on them by the government of mainland China.

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

The prediction "If Hong Kong retains its capitalist ways until 1997, it will be allowed to do so afterward" follows by linking the analyst's conditional claims. If Hong Kong retains its capitalist ways at the point it becomes part of mainland China, the analyst predicts that it will remain prosperous. Its prosperity, in turn, means that a capitalist Hong Kong will be useful to China. Finally, because it is useful to China, Hong Kong can retain its capitalist ways after 1997. Thus, retaining capitalism through 1997 initiates a complete chain that supports continued retention afterward.

This is a standard conditional-reasoning pattern: where one condition leads to a second, the second leads to a third, and the third leads back to the outcome at issue, the links may be combined to derive the conclusion. The conclusion does not require an independent prediction about external economic events or governmental policy; it follows from the stated relationships among capitalist practices, prosperity, and usefulness to China. For background on evaluating arguments and drawing conclusions in GMAT verbal reasoning, see [GMAT Verbal Reasoning](#) and the [GMAT preparation resources](#).

QUESTION NO: 3

Psychological research indicates that college hockey and football players are more quickly moved to hostility and aggression than are college athletes in no contact sports such as swimming. But the researchers' conclusion — that contact sports encourage and teach participants to be hostile and aggressive — is untenable. The football and hockey players were probably more hostile and aggressive to start with than the swimmers. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the conclusion drawn by the psychological researchers?

- A. The football and hockey players became more hostile and aggressive during the season and remained so during the off-season, whereas there was no increase in aggressiveness among the swimmers.
- B. The football and hockey players, but not the swimmers, were aware at the start of the experiment that they were being tested for aggressiveness.
- C. The same psychological research indicated that the football and hockey players had a great respect for cooperation and team play, whereas the swimmers were most concerned with excelling as individual competitors.
- D. The research studies were designed to include no college athletes who participated in both contact and non-contact sports.
- E. Throughout the United States, more incidents of fan violence occur at baseball games than occur at hockey or football games.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

The statement that “The football and hockey players became more hostile and aggressive during the season and remained so during the off-season, whereas there was no increase in aggressiveness among the swimmers” most strongly supports the researchers' causal conclusion. The objection claims that the contact-sport athletes merely differed from swimmers before participation: they may have been selected into football and hockey because they were already more aggressive. Evidence of a measurable rise in hostility and aggression during the season addresses that concern by introducing a change over time within the contact-sport group. Their aggression is not simply presented as a preexisting, fixed trait; it increases while they are participating in the contact sport. The absence of a comparable increase among swimmers further supports the inference that the change is associated with the contact-sport experience rather than with college athletics generally or the passage of a season. Persistence into the off-season also indicates that the increased aggressiveness was learned or reinforced, rather than being only a momentary response during a game. This follows the Critical Reasoning strengthening approach of supplying evidence that makes the stated causal explanation more likely, especially by addressing an alternative explanation. See the [GMAT Exam overview](#) and GMAC's [preparation guidance](#).

QUESTION NO: 4

With Proposition 13, if you bought your house 11 years ago for \$75,000, your property tax would be approximately \$914 a year (1 percent of \$75,000 increased by 2 percent each year for 11 years); and if your neighbor bought an identical house next door to you for \$200,000 this year, his tax would be \$2,000 (1 percent of \$200,000). Without Proposition 13, both you and your neighbor would pay \$6,000 a year in property taxes (3 percent of \$200,000).

Which of the following is the conclusion for which the author most likely is arguing in the passage above?

- A. Proposition 13 is unconstitutional because it imposes an unequal tax on properties of equal value.
- B. If Proposition 13 is repealed, every homeowner is likely to experience a substantial increase in property taxes.
- C. By preventing inflation from driving up property values, Proposition 13 has saved homeowners thousands of dollars in property taxes.

D. If Proposition 13 is not repealed, identical properties will continue to be taxed at different rates.

E. Proposition 13 has benefited some homeowners more than others.

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

The passage's central point is that Proposition 13 causes otherwise identical homes to receive substantially different property-tax bills when their owners purchased them at different times. The example supplies the factual basis: the long-time owner's tax is tied to the earlier \$75,000 purchase price, subject only to limited annual increases, while the new owner of an identical \$200,000 home is taxed based on the much higher recent purchase price. Thus, as long as the system remains in place, comparable properties can continue to bear different tax burdens solely because their ownership changed at different times. The stated contrast with a repeal—under which both houses would be taxed at the same current value—reinforces that this unequal treatment is a continuing consequence of keeping Proposition 13. Proposition 13 generally limits annual assessed-value increases for property that has not changed ownership and reassesses property at current market value when it is sold. This framework is described by the [California State Board of Equalization](#) and in the [California Supreme Court's discussion of Proposition 13](#).

QUESTION NO: 5

This year the New Hampshire Division of Company X set a new record for annual sales by that division. This record is especially surprising since the New Hampshire Division has the smallest potential market and the lowest sales of any of Company X's divisions. Which of the following identifies a flaw in the logical coherence of the statement above?

A. If overall sales for Company X were sharply reduced, the New Hampshire Division's new sales record is irrelevant to the company's prosperity.

B. Since the division is competing against its own record, the comparison of its sales record with that of other divisions is irrelevant.

C. If this is the first year that the New Hampshire Division has been last in sales among Company X's divisions, the new record is not surprising at all.

D. If overall sales for Company X were greater than usual, it is not surprising that the New Hampshire Division was last in sales.

E. Since the New Hampshire Division has the smallest potential market, it is not surprising that it had the lowest sales.

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

The correct answer is *Since the division is competing against its own record, the comparison of its sales record with that of other divisions is irrelevant*. The statement says that the New Hampshire Division set a new annual-sales record *by that division*. Thus, the relevant comparison is between this year's New Hampshire sales and that division's sales in its own previous years. A division can establish its personal best even if it remains the company's smallest division, has the lowest current sales among divisions, and serves the smallest potential market. Those facts compare New Hampshire with other divisions, but they do not establish what New Hampshire had sold before or whether exceeding its earlier maximum should be surprising. The reasoning therefore shifts between two different benchmarks: an internal historical record and a cross-division ranking. Identifying such a mismatch in the evidence's relevance to the conclusion is central to Critical Reasoning flaw questions. The GMAT's official preparation materials describe Critical Reasoning questions as requiring test takers to analyze and evaluate arguments, including the relationship between stated evidence and conclusions. See the [GMAT exam format and content overview](#) and the [official GMAT exam page](#).

QUESTION NO: 6

Investing in real estate would be a profitable venture at this time. A survey in House magazine revealed that 85% of the magazine's readers are planning to buy a second home over the next few years. A study of the real estate industry, however, revealed that the current supply of homes could only provide for 65% of that demand each year.

Which of the following, if true, would undermine the validity of the investment advice in the paragraph above?

- A. Some home owners are satisfied with only one home.
- B. About half of the people who buy homes are investing in their first home.
- C. About half of the people who buy homes have to take out a mortgage to do so.
- D. Only a quarter of the homes that are built are sold within the first two weeks.
- E. Only a quarter of those who claim that they want a second home actually end up purchasing one.

ANSWER: E

Explanation:

“Only a quarter of those who claim that they want a second home actually end up purchasing one.” most directly undermines the investment advice because the argument’s prediction of profitable real-estate investment depends on a substantial gap between anticipated demand and available supply. The survey reports intentions: 85% of the magazine’s readers say they are planning to buy a second home. But stated plans do not necessarily become actual purchases. If only one quarter of these respondents ultimately buys, actual demand will be far lower than the demand figure used to compare against the current supply of homes. Consequently, the apparent shortage of homes—and the implied opportunity for investors to profit from it—may not materialize. The evidence therefore weakens the key assumption that readers’ reported intentions are a reliable measure of future market demand. This is a standard critical-reasoning issue: a conclusion based on survey responses is vulnerable when the connection between what respondents say they intend to do and what they actually do is called into question. For guidance on evaluating survey claims and the limitations of self-reported intentions, see the [Pew Research Center’s discussion of what surveys can and cannot tell us](#) and the [OECD guidance on interpreting subjective survey measures](#).

QUESTION NO: 7

Considerable debate exists in the self-perception literature over the impact of positively biased self-perceptions on social and psychological functioning. Positively based self-perceptions are those in which an individual has a more positive opinion of himself than objective indicators warrant. One view suggests that positive perceptual biases are characteristic of normal human thought across a variety of domains and correlate positively with good mental and psychological health. Certain researchers and clinicians have even proposed that by boosting self-concepts, symptoms of depression and levels of aggression may be reduced.

Investigators on the other side of the debate maintain that when most positive self-perceptions are compared to an objective criterion, they appear neither positively biased nor adaptive. In fact, Baumeister, Smart, and Boden suggest that positively biased self-concepts may have a ‘dark side’. They proposed that it is persons with very positive self-views who are prone to be aggressive. As a result, building up individuals’ self-perceptions may serve only to increase levels of aggression rather than curb them.

According to Baumeister et al., not all individuals with positive self-perceptions are going to be interpersonally aggressive. Rather, individuals who are extremely positive in their perceptions of themselves and their functioning are proposed to be the most likely to become angry and potentially violent. The mechanism that triggers aggressive behavior by these individuals has been suggested to be negative social feedback that challenges their positive self-views. Such threats to positive self-esteem give rise to anger and hostility.

If negative social information is encountered that challenges established positive self-perceptions, Baumeister et al. propose that individuals must choose to either accept the feedback and lower their self-perceptions or reject the feedback to maintain their positive self-views. The chosen reaction then influences their subsequent affective states and behavioral expressions. By accepting the external appraisals and adjusting self-perceptions downward, dysphoric feelings and social withdrawal may result. Conversely, the rejection of the validity of the unfavorable feedback results in feelings of anger and resentment toward the source of the threat. Dodge and colleagues demonstrated that children who interpret social cues as threatening direct their anger and aggression at the peers who gave the negative evaluations. Anger stemming from the receipt of social criticism is a way to deny the legitimacy of the negative information. By directing hostile reactions toward the source of the negative feedback, the influx of disconfirming information may end. Unless individuals react against the self-esteem threat, they may be compelled to revise their self-concepts negatively, in line with the information provided. By discounting the negative social feedback, individuals can protect themselves from dysphoric feelings and maintain their positively biased self-perceptions, but they may be setting themselves up to become interpersonally aggressive.

Although positively biased self-perceptions may place individuals at risk for negative social feedback and subsequent increases in aggressive behavior, not all positive self-concepts are suggested to be harmful. The relationship between positive self-perceptions and aggression may depend on the degree of perceptual distortion (i.e., moderate vs. extreme distortion). Baumeister (1989) and Baumeister et al. (1996) proposed that an optimal range of moderate bias might exist within which mental health is encouraged. Maladjustment in psychological and social functioning is suggested to occur when the degree of bias of self-perceptions shifts from moderate to extreme levels. Extremely negative and positive perceptual bias would be related to different but equally harmful difficulties.

According to the passage, which of the following is mentioned as a factor in determining whether an individual with positively biased self-perception would actually be likely to perform an act of violence?

- A. The gap between what the individual thinks about himself and how good he really is
- B. The gender of the individual
- C. The anger level of the individual's peers
- D. The individual's ability to ignore dysphoric feelings
- E. The validity of the unfavorable feedback

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

The gap between what the individual thinks about himself and how good he really is is correct because the passage identifies the *degree of perceptual distortion* as central to the possible link between positive self-perception and aggression. It does not treat all favorable self-views as dangerous. Instead, it distinguishes a potentially healthy, moderate positive bias from an extreme discrepancy between a person's self-appraisal and objective indicators of functioning. Individuals whose self-views are extremely inflated are described as especially vulnerable when negative social feedback challenges those views. If they reject the criticism in order to preserve an unrealistically positive self-concept, that threat can produce anger, hostility, and potentially aggressive behavior toward the feedback source. Thus, the relevant factor is not merely having high self-esteem or a positive self-view; it is how far that view departs from reality. This conclusion tracks the passage's final emphasis that maladjustment may emerge as bias shifts from moderate to extreme levels. The underlying account is associated with Baumeister, Smart, and Boden's analysis of threatened egotism and aggression, available through [Psychological Review](#). A related overview of the distinction between self-esteem and aggression is available from [Psychological Science](#).

QUESTION NO: 8

Recent audits revealed that BanqueCard, a credit service, has erred in calculating the interest it charges its clients. But BanqueCard's chief accountant reasoned that the profits that the company shows would remain unaffected by a revision of its clients' credit statements to correct its previous billing errors, since just as many clients had been overcharged as undercharged.

Which of the following is a reasoning error that the accountant makes in concluding that correcting its clients' statements would leave BanqueCard's profits unaffected?

- A. Relying on the reputation of BanqueCard as a trustworthy credit service to maintain the company's clientele after the error becomes widely known
- B. Failing to establish that BanqueCard charges the same rates of interest for all of its clients
- C. Overlooking the possibility that the amount by which BanqueCard's clients had been overcharged might be greater than the amount by which they had been undercharged
- D. Assuming that the clients who had been overcharged by BanqueCard had not noticed the error in their credit bills
- E. Presupposing that each one of BanqueCard's clients had either been overcharged or else had been undercharged by the billing error

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

The correct answer is *Overlooking the possibility that the amount by which BanqueCard's clients had been overcharged might be greater than the amount by which they had been undercharged*. The accountant treats an equal number of overcharged and undercharged clients as sufficient to establish that correcting all statements would produce no net effect on reported profits. That conclusion requires more than equal client counts: it requires the total overcharges to equal the total undercharges. Each client's billing error could differ in size because interest calculations may involve different balances, rates, periods, or compounding effects. For example, if one group's aggregate overcharges exceed the other group's aggregate undercharges, reimbursing the overcharged clients and collecting the undercharged amounts would reduce BanqueCard's profits. Conversely, a larger aggregate of undercharges could increase profits after correction. Thus, the number of affected clients does not determine the financial total; the relevant issue is the aggregate dollar amount on each side. This is a classic quantitative reasoning flaw in which numerical equality in one measure—the number of clients—is mistakenly used to infer equality in another measure—the monetary value of the errors. The GMAT Verbal section tests the ability to identify such unsupported assumptions in arguments; see the [GMAT exam overview](#) and [GMAT preparation resources](#).

QUESTION NO: 9

The people who are least likely to be audited by the Internal Revenue Service this year are those who have been audited since 1985 and who were found to have made no mistakes in filing their returns during that audit.

Of the following people, who is MOST likely to be audited by the IRS?

- A. A person who was audited in 1986 but was not found to have made any mistakes in filing his return.
- B. A person who was audited in 1986 and whose lawyer corrected several mistakes in the tax return prior to the filing deadline.
- C. A person whose spouse was convicted of tax fraud in 1987, who was then audited and found to have made no mistakes.
- D. A person who was last audited in 1984, and had no mistakes uncovered by the IRS during that audit.
- E. A person who was audited in each of the past five years, but was found to have made no mistakes in any of the filings.

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

The correct answer is “**A person who was last audited in 1984, and had no mistakes uncovered by the IRS during that audit.**” The stated rule identifies a particular group as least likely to be audited this year: people whose prior audit occurred *since 1985* and found no filing mistakes. The decisive detail is therefore the date of the person's last audit. An audit in 1984 falls outside the specified period, so this person does not receive the reduced likelihood associated with a clean audit conducted since 1985. The fact that no mistakes were uncovered is not enough by itself; the prior audit must also meet the stated timing condition. Thus, based strictly on the information supplied, this person has the greatest audit likelihood among the listed individuals. In actual administration, the IRS uses a variety of methods and factors when selecting returns for examination, but this question requires applying its stated comparison rule rather than inferring additional real-world criteria. See the IRS overview of [IRS audits](#) and its [topic page on examinations](#).

QUESTION NO: 10

Most consumers do not get much use out of the sports equipment they purchase. For example, seventeen percent of the adults in the United States own jogging shoes, but only forty-five percent of the owners jog more than once a year, and only seventeen percent jog more than once a week.

Which of the following, if true, casts most doubt on the claim that most consumers get little use out of the sports equipment they purchase?

- A. Joggers are most susceptible to sports injuries during the first six months in which they jog.
- B. Joggers often exaggerate the frequency with which they jog in surveys designed to elicit such information.
- C. Many consumers purchase jogging shoes for use in activities other than jogging.

D. Consumers who take up jogging often purchase an athletic shoe that can be used in other sports.

E. Joggers who jog more than once a week are often active participants in other sports as well.

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

“Many consumers purchase jogging shoes for use in activities other than jogging” most strongly weakens the conclusion because it identifies a major gap between the evidence and the claim. The argument treats how often shoe owners jog as though it directly indicates how much they use their jogging shoes. But shoes marketed or categorized as jogging shoes can also be worn for walking, casual exercise, gym workouts, errands, or other athletic activities. If many owners use the shoes frequently in such activities, then their infrequent jogging does not show that the equipment receives little use. Thus, the reported jogging frequencies would be an incomplete measure of actual use of the purchased equipment, substantially undermining the broad conclusion about consumers’ use of sports equipment. This is a classic Critical Reasoning issue: the evidence measures one behavior, while the conclusion makes a wider claim about equipment usage. Effective evaluation requires asking whether the stated measure captures all relevant ways the item may be used. See the GMAT’s guidance on evaluating arguments and identifying assumptions in [GMAT Exam overview](#) and the Critical Reasoning preparation resources from [Khan Academy’s GMAT Verbal Reasoning materials](#).

QUESTION NO: 11

If A, then B.

If B, then C.

If C, then D.

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

A. If D, then A.

B. If not B, then not

C. If not D, then not A.

D. If D, then E.

E. If not A, then not D.

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

If not D, then not A. must be true because the three given conditional statements form a valid chain: whenever A occurs, B follows; whenever B occurs, C follows; and whenever C occurs, D follows. Therefore, the combined implication is “If A, then D.” This result follows through hypothetical syllogism, the valid inference pattern in which the consequent of one conditional supplies the antecedent of the next.

The contrapositive of a conditional statement is logically equivalent to the original statement. Thus, once the chain establishes “If A, then D,” its contrapositive is “If not D, then not A.” In practical terms, if D did not occur, A could not have occurred; otherwise A would necessarily have led through the stated sequence to D. This conclusion does not require assuming that any of the letters actually occur, only that the stated conditional relationships hold. For a discussion of conditional reasoning and contraposition, see [Encyclopaedia Britannica: Conditional propositions](#) and [OpenStax: Deductive Arguments](#).

QUESTION NO: 12

In order for us within our society to be able to make decisions about the kinds of punishments we impose upon those criminals who are convicted of crimes, we must first understand why we punish criminals.

- A. In order for us within our society to be able to make decisions about the kinds of punishments we impose upon those criminals who are convicted of crimes, we must first understand why we punish criminals.
- B. To make decisions about the kinds of punishments we impose upon criminals, we must first understand why we punish criminals.
- C. In order for us to be able to decide about the kinds of punishments we impose upon people convicted of crimes, we must first understand why people should be punished.
- D. Beginning with understanding why we punish, we can then as a society make decisions about the kinds of punishments we impose upon criminals.
- E. Deciding upon the kinds of punishments we impose upon criminals, as a society, we must first understand why punishment is imposed upon criminals.

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

To make decisions about the kinds of punishments we impose upon criminals, we must first understand why we punish criminals. is correct because it expresses the intended logical relationship clearly and economically: understanding the purpose of punishment must come before selecting appropriate punishments. The opening infinitive phrase, “To make decisions,” directly states the purpose of the main clause and clearly identifies what requires prior understanding. The sentence also retains a consistent, active point of view through “we impose” and “we punish,” so its subject and action remain easy to follow.

This revision removes unnecessary layers of wording while preserving the original meaning. In particular, the central ideas are simply making decisions about punishments and understanding the reasons for punishment; the concise construction foregrounds those ideas instead of burying them in introductory phrasing. Effective GMAT-style sentence revision favors clarity, directness, and logical grammatical connections, especially where an introductory phrase must modify the action that follows. This sentence meets those standards by placing the purpose first and making the required sequence—understanding first, decision-making afterward—unambiguous. For guidance on concise, clear sentence construction, see the [Purdue OWL guide to conciseness](#) and the [UNC Writing Center's advice on eliminating wordiness](#).

QUESTION NO: 13

When hypnotized subjects are told that they are deaf and are then asked whether they can hear the hypnotist, they reply, “No.” Some theorists try to explain this result by arguing that the selves of hypnotized subjects are dissociated into separate parts, and that the part that is deaf is dissociated from the part that replies.

Which of the following challenges indicates the most serious weakness in the attempted explanation described above?

- A. Why does the part that replies not answer, “Yes”?
- B. Why are the observed facts in need of any special explanation?
- C. Why do the subjects appear to accept the hypnotist's suggestion that they are deaf?
- D. Why do hypnotized subjects all respond the same way in the situation described?
- E. Why are the separate parts of the self the same for all subjects?

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

The strongest challenge is “*Why does the part that replies not answer, ‘Yes’?*” The proposed account says that the self has split into a deaf part and a separate part that produces the reply. But the reply-producing part must somehow receive and understand the hypnotist's spoken question in order to answer it. If that part can hear the question, then it should have access to the fact that the hypnotist is speaking and would seemingly be positioned to answer “Yes.” Simply assigning deafness to a different, dissociated part therefore does not explain why the responding part denies hearing. The explanation shifts the phenomenon from the whole person to one part of the person, but leaves the central fact—the verbally appropriate yet apparently false “No” response—unaccounted for. This is a key weakness because a good explanatory hypothesis must

address the specific observation it was introduced to explain, rather than merely redescribing the subject as containing different components. Evaluating whether a conclusion or explanation actually follows from, and accounts for, the stated evidence is central to critical-reasoning analysis; see [LSAC's Logical Reasoning overview](#) and the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy discussion of critical thinking](#).

QUESTION NO: 14

Potato cyst nematodes are a pest of potato crops. The nematodes can lie dormant for several years in their cysts, which are protective capsules, and do not emerge except in the presence of chemicals emitted by potato roots. A company that has identified the relevant chemicals is planning to market them to potato farmers to spread on their fields when no potatoes are planted; any nematodes that emerge will soon starve to death. Which of the following, if true, best supports the claim that the company's plan will be successful?

- A. Nematodes that have emerged from their cysts can be killed by ordinary pesticides.
- B. The only part of a potato plant that a nematode eats is the roots.
- C. Some bacteria commonly present in the roots of potatoes digest the chemicals that cause the nematodes to emerge from their cysts.
- D. Trials have shown that spreading even minute quantities of the chemicals on potato fields caused nine-tenths of the nematodes present to emerge from their cysts.
- E. The chemicals that cause the nematodes to emerge from their cysts are not emitted all the time the potato plant is growing.

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

Trials have shown that spreading even minute quantities of the chemicals on potato fields caused nine-tenths of the nematodes present to emerge from their cysts. This directly supports the proposed strategy because its success depends on the identified chemicals reliably inducing dormant potato cyst nematodes to hatch even when potato plants are absent. Once the nematodes emerge in an unplanted field, they cannot feed on potato roots and therefore will die, reducing the number of pests available to damage a later potato crop. The trial result also provides empirical evidence that the treatment works at a practical application level: very small quantities trigger emergence in a very large proportion of the resident nematode population. In effect, the chemicals act as a "false signal" of a host plant, causing the cysts to release nematodes at a time when no food source is available. This is consistent with the recognized management approach called suicidal hatch, in which hatching stimulants can reduce cyst nematode populations between susceptible crops. See the [UK Fera overview of potato cyst nematodes](#) and [American Phytopathological Society material on potato cyst nematodes](#).

QUESTION NO: 15

Lewis and Clark were not the first white men to cross the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific north of Mexico, and they did not visit places not already seen and mapped by generations of native people.

- A. and did not visit places not already seen and mapped by generations of native people.
- B. and they did not visit places not already seen and mapped by generations of native people.
- C. and they had not visit places not already seen and mapped by generations of native people.
- D. nor had they visited places not already seen and mapped by generations of native people.
- E. nor did they visit places not already seen and mapped by generations of native people.

ANSWER: E

Explanation:

nor did they visit places not already seen and mapped by generations of native people. correctly coordinates a second negative fact with the preceding negative statement, “were not the first.” In formal written English, *nor* continues a negative idea and is followed by subject–auxiliary inversion: “nor did they visit,” rather than the ordinary declarative word order. The auxiliary *did* also correctly establishes the simple past tense for *visit*, matching the completed historical actions being described. The main verb consequently remains in its base form, *visit*, after *did*. This construction is concise and creates a clear parallel relationship between the two claims about Lewis and Clark: they were not the first to make the crossing, nor did they encounter places unknown to Native peoples. Guidance on negative coordination and inversion after negative expressions is available from the [Purdue OWL discussion of parallelism](#) and the [Cambridge Grammar entry on neither and nor](#).

QUESTION NO: 16

With more and more classes being offered online, more and more students will earn their degrees in virtual universities. Students in California will graduate from schools in New York without ever leaving their state. Because online courses offer flexibility without geographic boundaries, virtual degrees will be in greater demand, and colleges and universities should invest the bulk of their resources in developing online degree programs.

All of the following, if true, are valid objections to this argument EXCEPT

- A. online courses are more time consuming for faculty to develop than regular courses.
- B. many students need the ability to attend class outside of regular classroom hours.
- C. some students prefer the traditional classroom to the virtual classroom.
- D. not every course is suitable for an online environment.
- E. there is no way to ensure the authenticity of a student’s work in an online environment.

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

“many students need the ability to attend class outside of regular classroom hours” is the correct choice because it reinforces the argument’s central premise that online courses provide valuable flexibility. Students whose jobs, family responsibilities, commuting limitations, or other commitments prevent them from attending a conventional scheduled class have a practical reason to seek courses that can be accessed at nontraditional times. If many students have that need, the pool of potential online learners increases, making the prediction of greater demand for virtual degrees more plausible. That increased demand, in turn, provides support for the recommendation that institutions devote substantial resources to online degree-program development. The statement therefore functions as evidence in favor of the conclusion rather than as a concern that would undermine it. In an “EXCEPT” critical-reasoning question, the required selection is the statement that does not object to the argument; here, the stated need for scheduling flexibility directly supports the claimed advantage of online education. This reflects the standard critical-reasoning approach of identifying whether new information strengthens the connection between the premises and the conclusion. See [GMAT Exam Content](#) and [ETS Verbal Reasoning guidance](#).

QUESTION NO: 17

Corporate officers and directors commonly buy and sell, for their own portfolios, stock in their own corporations. Generally, when the ratio of such inside sales to inside purchases falls below 2 to 1 for a given stock, a rise in stock prices is imminent. In recent days, while the price of MEGA Corporation stock has been falling, the corporation’s officers and directors have bought up to nine times as much of it as they have sold. The facts above best support which of the following predictions?

- A. The imbalance between inside purchases and inside sales of MEGA stock will grow even further.
- B. Inside purchases of MEGA stock are about to cease abruptly.
- C. The price of MEGA stock will soon begin to go up.
- D. The price of MEGA stock will continue to drop, but less rapidly.
- E. The majority of MEGA stock will soon be owned by MEGA’s own officers and directors.

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

The price of MEGA stock will soon begin to go up. The passage supplies a general predictive relationship: when insiders' sales relative to their purchases fall below a two-to-one ratio, an increase in that stock's price is imminent. For MEGA, corporate officers and directors have purchased as much as nine times the quantity they sold. Expressed as sales-to-purchases, that ratio is at most one-to-nine, which is far below the stated two-to-one threshold. Therefore, MEGA satisfies the condition associated in the passage with an imminent price rise. The fact that the share price has recently been falling provides the setting in which the insiders are making these unusually purchase-heavy transactions, but it does not alter the stated generalization. The warranted prediction is consequently a near-term upward movement in MEGA's stock price. This is a Critical Reasoning inference question: the task is to apply the rule supplied in the stimulus to the particular facts, rather than introduce an unsupported claim about future insider trading volume or stock ownership. GMAT Critical Reasoning questions assess conclusions that are logically supported by the information presented; see [GMAT Exam Explained](#) and the SEC's overview of [reporting and insider-related Exchange Act obligations](#).

QUESTION NO: 18

The Florida panther, known for its distinctive characteristics, including a kinked tail and cowlicks, is nearing extinction with the help of scientists and government officials. Though once abundant in Florida, by the end of the twentieth century, only approximately 30 Florida panthers remained. Efforts to preserve the panthers had focused on shielding them from human encroachment with the hope that they could develop sustainable numbers to survive as a species. However, pressure from development caused officials to grow impatient and shift their strategy and goals.

In 1995, new breeds of female panthers were brought to Florida from Texas to bolster the population. The change has been dramatic. In 1990, 88% of the panthers in Florida had the distinct kinked tail. By 2000, five years after the introduction of the Texas panthers, not a single kitten born to the Texas females had a kinked tail. The breed known as the Florida panther is now on an expedited, ineluctable road to extinction — with the assistance of wildlife protection agencies.

If the goal was to have any kind of panther in Florida, it has been realized. Since the introduction of the Texas panthers, the panther population in

Florida has risen to approximately 80 mixed-breed panthers. However, this “success” could portend a tragic trend in wildlife management in the United States. We cannot and should not create genetically mixed species as a means of achieving a compromise between the needs of development and a species' survival. This type of species tampering is a perversion of the ideal of wildlife management and will irrevocably transform our national landscape.

The passage suggests that the author

- A. is a former member of the Wildlife Protection Agency.
- B. is willing to compromise if it means the survival of a species.
- C. is afraid that species tampering will become the norm in wildlife preservation management.
- D. believes the government has encouraged species tampering as a means of conducting genetic experiments
- E. believes that “sustainable numbers” statistics are not realistic and lead to the expedited extinction of species.

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

The author is afraid that species tampering will become the norm in wildlife preservation management. The final paragraph moves beyond the particular Florida panther case and explicitly warns that the apparent population increase “could portend a tragic trend in wildlife management in the United States.” That wording signals concern about a future pattern: officials may treat genetic mixing as an acceptable, repeatable management strategy whenever development pressures conflict with preservation goals.

The author's use of quotation marks around “success” further shows that the increased number of mixed-breed panthers does not satisfy the author's conservation standard. In the author's view, preserving merely “any kind of panther” sacrifices the distinctive Florida panther lineage. The passage therefore frames the Texas-panther introduction not as a one-time solution, but as a troubling precedent that could reshape wildlife policy more broadly. The concluding statement that such

tampering “will irrevocably transform our national landscape” reinforces the prediction that this practice may spread and produce lasting consequences.

This concern is grounded in the passage’s distinction between increasing population numbers and maintaining the identity of a protected population. For context on Florida panther recovery and management, see the [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s Florida panther profile](#) and its [Florida Panther Recovery Plan](#).

QUESTION NO: 19

Traditionally, decision-making by managers that is reasoned step-by-step has been considered preferable to intuitive decision-making. However, a recent study found that top managers used intuition significantly more than did most middle- or lower-level managers. This confirms the alternative view that intuition is actually more effective than careful, methodical reasoning. The conclusion above is based on which of the following assumptions?

- A. Methodical, step-by-step reasoning is inappropriate for making many real-life management decisions.
- B. Top managers have the ability to use either intuitive reasoning or methodical, step-by-step reasoning in making decisions.
- C. The decisions made by middle- and lower-level managers can be made as easily by using methodical reasoning as by using intuitive reasoning.
- D. Top managers use intuitive reasoning in making the majority of their decisions.
- E. Top managers are more effective at decision-making than middle- or lower-level managers.

ANSWER: E

Explanation:

The argument moves from a difference in the decision-making approaches used by two managerial groups to a conclusion about which approach is more effective. For that inference to work, the greater use of intuition by top managers must be meaningful evidence of superior decision quality rather than merely a difference in job title, responsibilities, or personal preference. The necessary connecting assumption is that top managers are more effective at decision-making than middle- or lower-level managers. If top managers are generally the more effective decision makers, then their significantly greater reliance on intuition supports the claim that intuition is more effective than methodical reasoning. Conversely, if their decisions were not more effective, their heavier use of intuition would not establish anything about intuition’s comparative effectiveness. This is the classic Critical Reasoning assumption structure: an observed correlation between a group’s characteristic and a proposed outcome requires a premise linking that group to the outcome. The GMAT emphasizes evaluating arguments by identifying evidence, conclusions, and the unstated assumptions required to bridge them. See the [official GMAT Exam overview](#) and GMAC’s [GMAT preparation guidance](#).

QUESTION NO: 20

Some commentators complain that a “litigation explosion” in the past decade has led to unreasonably high costs for U.S. businesses by encouraging more product liability suits against manufacturers. However, these complaints are based mainly on myth. Statistics show that the number of successful product liability suits has remained almost the same, and the average sum awarded in damages has grown no faster than the inflation rate.

Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the argument above?

- A. The number of unsuccessful suits has skyrocketed, imposing huge new legal expenses on businesses.
- B. Several of the largest awards ever made in product liability cases occurred within the last two years.
- C. The rise of the consumer movement has encouraged citizens to seek legal redress for product flaws.
- D. Lawyers often undertake product liability cases on a contingency basis, so their payment is based on the size of the damages awarded.
- E. Juries often award damages in product liability suits out of emotional sympathy for an injured consumer.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

The number of unsuccessful suits has skyrocketed, imposing huge new legal expenses on businesses most weakens the argument because it identifies a major category of business cost that the cited statistics do not measure. The argument treats two facts—roughly stable numbers of successful product-liability suits and damage awards rising no faster than inflation—as sufficient evidence that litigation has not caused unreasonable new costs. Yet defending a lawsuit can require substantial spending on attorneys, discovery, expert witnesses, document review, insurance administration, and court-related work even when the manufacturer ultimately wins. Thus, a sharp increase in unsuccessful suits could create exactly the increased litigation burden alleged by the commentators, while remaining fully consistent with unchanged successful-suit totals and inflation-adjusted awards. The new information therefore undermines the argument's implicit assumption that successful cases and damages paid capture the relevant financial impact of product-liability litigation. This follows the critical-reasoning weakening approach of supplying a fact that makes the conclusion less well supported by its stated evidence. See the GMAT critical-reasoning guidance at mba.com and the Legal Information Institute's overview of litigation at Cornell Law School.

QUESTION NO: 21

They were in mind, of a like manner about how to handle Carson's breach of contract.

- A. in mind, of a like manner
- B. likened of mind
- C. in a likened mind
- D. of a like-mindedness
- E. of a like mind

ANSWER: E

Explanation:

The correct completion is **"of a like mind"**, producing the sentence: "They were of a like mind about how to handle Carson's breach of contract." This established idiom means that two or more people share the same opinion, attitude, intention, or way of thinking about a particular matter. In this context, it clearly conveys that the people involved agreed on the appropriate response to Carson's breach of contract.

The phrase functions naturally after the verb "were" and before the prepositional phrase "about how to handle" Its singular noun, "mind," is used idiomatically to represent a common viewpoint rather than an individual person's mind. Standard dictionaries record the expression as "of like mind" or "of a like mind," with the meaning of being in agreement or having similar opinions. See the [Cambridge Dictionary entry for "of like mind"](#) and the [Merriam-Webster entry for "like-minded"](#). Thus, "of a like mind" is the grammatically sound and idiomatically appropriate wording for the intended meaning.

QUESTION NO: 23

Mainline Airways was bought by its employees six years ago. Three years ago, Mainline hired QualiCo Advertising Agency to handle its promotions and advertising division. Today Mainline's profits are over 20 percent higher than they were five years ago and 10 percent higher than they were three years ago. Employee ownership and a good advertising agency have combined to make Mainline more profitable.

Which of the following best describes the weak point in the argument above?

- A. It fails to establish a causal connection between the change in ownership at Mainline Airways and the hiring of QualiCo, on the one hand, and the rise in Mainline's profits, on the other.
- B. It presents no evidence showing that employee-owned airlines are any more profitable than other airlines.
- C. It assumes that the profits of Mainline Airways will continue to rise.

- D. It gives no exact figures for the current profits of Mainline Airways.
- E. It fails to explain how the profits of Mainline Airways are calculated.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

The correct answer is **“It fails to establish a causal connection between the change in ownership at Mainline Airways and the hiring of QualiCo, on the one hand, and the rise in Mainline’s profits, on the other.”** The premises establish only a sequence of events: employee ownership began, QualiCo was hired later, and profits subsequently rose. From that timing, the argument concludes that those two developments *combined to make* the airline more profitable. That conclusion requires evidence that the ownership change and the agency’s work actually caused the profit increase, rather than merely occurring before it.

For example, profitability could have risen because of changes in fuel costs, ticket demand, route availability, competition, economic conditions, management decisions, or numerous other factors. The argument supplies no comparison, financial analysis, or other information that isolates the effects of employee ownership and advertising from such possible influences. In critical-reasoning terms, it treats correlation or temporal succession as sufficient proof of causation. Sound causal reasoning needs evidence that the proposed cause produced the observed result and that relevant alternative causes have been addressed. This is a recognized logical concern in arguments that infer causation from coinciding events; see Purdue OWL’s discussion of causal fallacies at [Purdue OWL](#) and the overview of causal reasoning at [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#).

QUESTION NO: 24

In Spartans territory, archaeologists discovered charred bone fragments dating back 1 million years. Analysis of the fragments, which came from a variety of animals, showed that they had been heated to temperatures no higher than those produced in experimental campfires made from branches of white stinkwood, the most common tree around Spartans.

Which of the following, if true, would, together with the information above, provide the best basis for the claim that the charred bone fragments are evidence of the use of fire by early hominids?

- A. The white stinkwood tree is used for building material by the present-day inhabitants of Swartkans.
- B. Forest fires can heat wood to a range of temperatures that occur in campfires.
- C. The bone fragments were fitted together by the archaeologists to form the complete skeletons of several animals.
- D. Apart from the Swartkans discovery, there is reliable evidence that early hominids used fire as many as 500 thousand years ago.
- E. The bone fragments were found in several distinct layers of limestone that contained primitive cutting tools known to have been used by early hominids.

ANSWER: E

Explanation:

The bone fragments were found in several distinct layers of limestone that contained primitive cutting tools known to have been used by early hominids. This information creates the necessary connection between the charred bones and early hominids: the burned remains occur repeatedly in the same geological contexts as tools attributable to those hominids. The original evidence already indicates that the bones were exposed to heat within the range achievable by small wood-fueled campfires. Finding the bones alongside hominid tools in several separate layers makes it reasonable to infer that the repeated burning was associated with hominid activity rather than being merely an isolated occurrence at the site. The variety of animal bones also fits a context in which animals were processed or consumed near a controlled fire. Archaeological interpretation relies heavily on such contextual association—especially stratigraphic association—to connect artifacts and remains to the people who used or produced them. Repetition across distinct layers further supports that this relationship persisted over time. For background on how archaeological strata establish contextual relationships, see the [U.S. National Park Service’s overview of stratigraphy](#). The [Smithsonian Human Origins Program’s discussion of fire evidence](#) also describes why associations among burned material, artifacts, and site context are central to identifying early fire use.

QUESTION NO: 25

Harper's Pencils manufactures and sells the same pencils as Johnson's Supply. Employee wages account for forty percent of the cost of manufacturing pencils at both factories. Harper's is seeking a competitive edge over Johnson's supply. Therefore, to promote this end, Harper's should lower employee wages.

Which of the following, if true, seriously weakens the argument above?

- A. Because they make a small number of specialty artist's pencils, pencil manufacturers cannot receive volume discounts on raw materials.
- B. Lowering wages would reduce the quality of employee work and this reduced quality would lead to lowered sales.
- C. Harper's Pencils has taken away twenty percent of Johnson's Supply business over the last year.
- D. Johnson's Supply pays its employees, on average, ten percent more than does Harper's Pencils.
- E. Many people who work for manufacturing plants live in areas in which the manufacturing plant they work for is the only industry.

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

"Lowering wages would reduce the quality of employee work and this reduced quality would lead to lowered sales." seriously weakens the recommendation because it identifies an important harmful consequence that the argument fails to consider. Harper's seeks a competitive edge, not merely a lower manufacturing cost. Although reducing wages could decrease the wage portion of each pencil's cost, the resulting reduction in work quality could make the pencils less desirable or less reliable. If customers respond by purchasing fewer pencils, Harper's could lose revenue, market share, and its competitive position. Thus, the cost savings assumed by the argument may be offset—or exceeded—by the sales decline caused by poorer-quality production. This information directly challenges the argument's central assumption that lower wages will advance Harper's competitive goal. In Critical Reasoning questions, a strong weakening statement often shows that a proposed action has an overlooked consequence that undermines the stated objective. GMAT's Verbal section includes Critical Reasoning questions that require evaluating the logic connecting evidence to a conclusion; see [GMAT Exam Structure](#) and [About the GMAT Exam](#).

QUESTION NO: 26

No nation can long survive unless its people are united by a common tongue. For proof, we need only consider Canada, which is being torn asunder by conflicts between French-speaking Quebec and the other provinces, which are dominated by English speakers.

Which of the following, if true, most effectively challenges the author's conclusion?

- A. Conflicts over language have led to violent clashes between the Basque-speaking minority in Spain and the Spanish-speaking majority.
- B. Proposals to declare English the official language of the United States have met with resistance from members of Hispanic and other minority groups.
- C. Economic and political differences, along with linguistic ones, have contributed to the provincial conflicts in Canada.
- D. The public of India, in existence since 1948, has a population that speaks hundreds of different, though related, languages.
- E. Switzerland has survived for nearly a thousand years as a home for speakers of three different languages.

ANSWER: E

Explanation:

“Switzerland has survived for nearly a thousand years as a home for speakers of three different languages.” most effectively challenges the conclusion because it provides a direct counterexample to the claim that a nation cannot survive for a long time unless its people share a common language. A country that has endured for centuries while encompassing multiple linguistic communities demonstrates that linguistic unity is not a necessary condition for national survival. The point directly addresses the conclusion’s universal wording—“No nation can”—rather than merely supplying additional examples of language-related tension or identifying other possible causes of conflict in Canada. Switzerland’s multilingual structure is well established: the federal government recognizes German, French, Italian, and Romansh as national languages, while linguistic arrangements are protected through its federal system. This long-term political stability despite linguistic diversity shows that nations can maintain cohesion through institutions, shared civic commitments, and accommodation of regional language communities rather than through one common tongue. See the [Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs overview of Switzerland’s languages](#) and the [Encyclopaedia Britannica overview of Switzerland](#).

QUESTION NO: 27

Which of the following best completes the passage below?

The more worried investors are about losing their money, the more they will demand a high potential return on their investment; great risks must be offset by the chance of great rewards. This principle is the fundamental one in determining interest rates, and it is illustrated by the fact that _____

- A. successful investors are distinguished by an ability to make very risky investments without worrying about their money
- B. lenders receive higher interest rates on unsecured loans than on loans backed by collateral
- C. in times of high inflation, the interest paid to depositors by banks can actually be below the rate of inflation
- D. at any one time, a commercial bank will have a single rate of interest that it will expect all of its individual borrowers to pay
- E. the potential return on investment in a new company is typically lower than the potential return on investment in a well-established company

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

The correct completion is “lenders receive higher interest rates on unsecured loans than on loans backed by collateral.” It directly illustrates the stated risk-and-return principle as applied to interest rates. A lender making an unsecured loan has no specific pledged asset that can readily be claimed and sold if the borrower fails to repay. The lender therefore faces a greater possibility of not recovering the principal. By contrast, collateral gives the lender an additional source of repayment and reduces the expected loss if default occurs. Because an unsecured loan exposes the lender’s funds to more risk, the lender generally requires compensation in the form of a higher interest rate. This is the risk premium: the additional return demanded for accepting a greater chance of loss. Thus, the comparison holds the central issue constant—lending money—while varying the degree of protection against loss, making it a precise illustration of the passage’s claim. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau explains that collateral can secure a loan and may be taken if the borrower does not repay; see [CFPB: What is collateral?](#). For a broader description of how credit risk affects borrowing costs, see [Federal Reserve consumer-credit guidance](#).

QUESTION NO: 28

Studies of fatal automobile accidents reveal that, in the majority of cases in which one occupant of an automobile is killed while another survives, it is the passenger, not the driver, who is killed. It is ironic that the innocent passenger should suffer for the driver’s carelessness, while the driver often suffers only minor injuries or none at all.

Which of the following is an assumption underlying the reasoning in the passage above?

- A. In most fatal automobile accidents, the driver of a car in which an occupant is killed is at fault.
- B. Drivers of automobiles are rarely killed in auto accidents.
- C. Most deaths in fatal automobile accidents are suffered by occupants of cars rather than by pedestrians.
- D. Auto safety experts should increase their efforts to provide protection for those in the passenger seats of automobiles.

E. Automobile passengers sometimes play a contributing role in causing auto accidents.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

The statement that the passenger is “innocent” and suffers because of the driver’s “carelessness” requires the assumption that the driver is responsible for most of the fatal accidents being discussed. The evidence establishes only a pattern of outcomes: when one vehicle occupant dies and another survives, the passenger is more often the person killed. By itself, that outcome does not establish who caused the accident. To characterize the result as ironic because an innocent passenger bears the consequence of a careless driver, the reasoning must connect the driver’s conduct to the occurrence of the accident. Thus, it must presume that, in most relevant fatal accidents, the driver of the car containing the killed occupant is at fault. This is a classic Critical Reasoning assumption: it supplies an unstated link needed to support the author’s evaluative conclusion. GMAT verbal questions commonly require identifying such necessary connections between stated evidence and a conclusion; see the GMAT’s [official exam overview](#) and its [preparation guidance](#).

QUESTION NO: 29

Read each passage carefully and then choose the best answer to each question. Answer the questions based upon what is stated or implied in the reading passage.

For many years, there has been much hand-wringing over the fate of Social Security once the baby boomers reach retirement age. Baby boomers, people born between 1946 and 1964, represent the largest single sustained growth of population in the history of the United States. It is the sheer enormity of this generation that has had economists worried as retirement beckons. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2020, an estimated 80,000,000 Americans will have reached or surpassed the conventional age of retirement. With so many boomers retiring and drawing benefits but no longer paying into Social Security, many fear that the Social Security fund itself could go bankrupt.

However, a study released by the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP) that examined baby boomers’ plans for retirement found that for the most part, this generation is not expected to adhere to the conventional retirement scheme, a fact that may please the worriers in Washington, DC. In its survey, the AARP broke baby boomers into different categories based on their financial standing, degree of preparedness for retirement, and optimism toward the future. The AARP found that of all groups surveyed, only 13% planned to stop working altogether once they reached retirement age; the remaining 87% planned to continue working for pay. The reasons to continue working varied among the different groups. For some, the plan to continue working is a financial decision. Between 25% and 44% of respondents reported they are not financially prepared to retire and will therefore continue working past retirement age. For the remainder of those planning to work past their mid to late 60s, the decision is based on long-held goals to start a business and/or the desire to stay active in their industry or community.

Eventually, most baby boomers will need to stop working as they progress into their 70s, 80s, and beyond. But with such large numbers planning to continue working, thereby continuing to pay into the Social Security fund, perhaps Social Security will be able to withstand the end of the baby boom and continue to be a safety net for future generations.

It can be inferred from the AARP survey results that

- A. many baby boomers do not have adequate savings.
- B. many baby boomers are afraid of retirement.
- C. most baby boomers are unaware of the actual cost of retirement.
- D. few baby boomers are realistic about their retirement goals.
- E. politicians do not understand the baby boom generation.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

The inference that many baby boomers do not have adequate savings is directly supported by the survey finding that between 25% and 44% of respondents were not financially prepared to retire and consequently expected to continue working beyond retirement age. Although the passage does not use the precise phrase “inadequate savings,” financial

unpreparedness for retirement reasonably implies that a substantial number of respondents lack sufficient accumulated financial resources to stop earning employment income at the customary retirement point. The passage also distinguishes this financially motivated group from people who intend to keep working because they want to start businesses or remain active. That distinction reinforces that continued work is, for many respondents, a necessity tied to retirement readiness rather than merely a preference. This is a valid reading-comprehension inference because it stays close to the stated evidence and does not extend beyond what the survey data can support. The passage's concern with continued payroll contributions also fits the general Social Security framework: workers contribute through payroll taxes while employed, as described by the [Social Security Administration's trust-fund FAQ](#). For broader context on retirement-income preparedness, see the [U.S. Department of Labor retirement resources](#).

QUESTION NO: 30

Any combination of overwork and stress inevitably leads of insomnia. Managers at HiCorp, Inc., all suffer from stress. A majority of the managers — despite their doctors' warnings — work well over 60 hours per week, whereas the other managers work no more than the normal 40 hours per week.

HiCorp gives regular bonuses only to employees who work more than 40 hours per week. Which of the following conclusions is most strongly supported by the statements above?

- A. Managers at HiCorp work under conditions that are more stressful than the conditions under which managers at most other companies work.
- B. Most of the employee bonuses given by HiCorp are given to managers.
- C. At HiCorp, insomnia is more widespread among managers than among any other group of employees.
- D. No manager at HiCorp who works only 40 hours per week suffers from overwork.
- E. Most of the managers at HiCorp who receive regular bonuses have insomnia.

ANSWER: E

Explanation:

"Most of the managers at HiCorp who receive regular bonuses have insomnia." is the conclusion most strongly supported by the facts. The key is to connect the stated conditions in the correct direction. A manager who receives a regular bonus must work more than 40 hours per week, because HiCorp gives such bonuses only to employees meeting that condition. The managers are divided into two stated groups: those working well over 60 hours and those working no more than 40 hours. Therefore, any bonus-receiving manager must belong to the group working well over 60 hours per week. Working well over 60 hours supports the characterization of overwork in the passage, and every manager is explicitly said to suffer from stress. The opening rule then supplies the final link: a combination of overwork and stress inevitably results in insomnia. Thus, managers who receive regular bonuses fall within the overworked-and-stressed group and consequently have insomnia; this supports the stated conclusion about most such managers. This reasoning follows the conditional-language principle that "only" identifies a necessary condition for receiving the bonus. For additional guidance on analyzing evidence and drawing supported conclusions in GMAT Verbal questions, see [GMAT Exam: About the Exam](#) and [GMAT Exam Preparation](#).

QUESTION NO: 31

Typically, people think of genius, whether it manifests itself in Mozart composing symphonies at age five or Einstein's discovery of relativity, as having a quality not just of the supernatural but also they are eccentric.

- A. as having a quality not just of the supernatural but also they are eccentric.
- B. as having two qualities, being that they are both supernatural as well as eccentric
- C. as having a quality not just of the supernatural but also of the eccentric
- D. as having a quality not just of the supernatural but also another quality, that is, eccentricity
- E. as it has two qualities, not only supernatural but as well eccentric

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

The correct completion is “**as having a quality not just of the supernatural but also of the eccentric**” because it preserves the grammatical parallelism required by the correlative construction *not just . . . but also*. Within the phrase describing genius, both parts have the same structure: *of the supernatural* and *of the eccentric*. Each is a prepositional phrase beginning with *of* and each functions as a complement to *quality*. This balanced construction allows the sentence to state smoothly that genius is commonly perceived as possessing qualities associated with both supernatural ability and eccentricity. The introductory *whether* clause provides examples of how genius may manifest itself, but it does not alter the grammatical role of the phrase beginning with *as having*. In formal sentence-correction questions, paired expressions such as *not just . . . but also* should connect matching grammatical units so that the comparison is clear and idiomatic. Guidance on parallel construction is available from the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) and the [UNC Writing Center](#).

QUESTION NO: 32

Sales taxes tend to be regressive, affecting poor people more severely than wealthy people. When all purchases of consumer goods are taxed at a fixed percentage of the purchase price, poor people pay a larger proportion of their income in sales taxes than wealthy people do. It can be correctly inferred on the basis of the statements above that which of the following is true?

- A. Poor people constitute a larger proportion of the taxpaying population than wealthy people do.
- B. Poor people spend a larger proportion of their income on purchases of consumer goods than wealthy people do.
- C. Wealthy people pay, on average, a larger amount of sales taxes than poor people do.
- D. The total amount spent by all poor people on purchases of consumer goods exceeds the total amount spent by all wealthy people on consumer goods.
- E. The average purchase price of consumer goods bought by wealthy people is higher than that of consumer goods bought by poor people.

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

Poor people spend a larger proportion of their income on purchases of consumer goods than wealthy people do.

This follows directly from the stated fixed-rate structure of the sales tax. If every consumer-good purchase is taxed at the same percentage, an individual's sales-tax burden as a share of income equals that tax rate multiplied by the share of income that the individual spends on taxable consumer goods. Therefore, for poor people to pay a larger proportion of their income in sales taxes, they must spend a larger proportion of their income on those purchases than wealthy people spend.

This is the defining mechanism behind a regressive consumption tax: the rate applied to each taxable purchase does not vary by income, but households with lower incomes devote more of their available income to consumption. The conclusion concerns proportions of income rather than total dollars spent, total tax paid, population sizes, or the prices of individual goods. The Congressional Budget Office discusses how federal tax burdens are commonly assessed as shares of household income in its [distributional analysis of household taxes](#). For a general economic explanation of regressive taxation, see [Encyclopaedia Britannica's overview of regressive taxes](#).

QUESTION NO: 33

A law requiring companies to offer employees unpaid time off to care for their children will harm the economic competitiveness of our nation's businesses. Companies must be free to set their own employment policies without mandated parental-leave regulations. Which of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the conclusion of the argument above?

- A. A parental-leave law will serve to strengthen the family as a social institution in this country.
- B. Many businesses in this country already offer employees some form of parental leave.

- C. Some of the countries with the most economically competitive businesses have strong parental-leave regulations.
- D. Only companies with one hundred or more employees would be subject to the proposed parental-leave law.
- E. In most polls, a majority of citizens say they favor passage of a parental-leave law.

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

The statement “Some of the countries with the most economically competitive businesses have strong parental-leave regulations” most seriously weakens the argument because it directly challenges the argument’s central causal assumption: that mandated parental leave makes a nation’s businesses less economically competitive. If countries whose businesses are already among the most competitive can maintain strong parental-leave requirements, then such regulations are not inherently incompatible with competitiveness. This evidence makes it substantially less credible that requiring unpaid leave will necessarily harm the nation’s firms or that complete employer freedom from parental-leave mandates is required to remain competitive.

The point is especially relevant because the conclusion concerns national business competitiveness, not merely an individual company’s short-term administrative costs. International comparisons can therefore provide meaningful evidence about whether parental-leave rules can coexist with successful, productive business environments. A country may sustain competitiveness through skilled workers, employee retention, stable labor markets, innovation, or other institutional advantages while also protecting employees’ ability to care for children. The OECD provides comparative information on family-leave policies across countries at [OECD Family Database](#), and the World Bank discusses the role of legal and regulatory environments affecting women’s work and family-related protections at [Women, Business and the Law](#).

QUESTION NO: 34

Large national budget deficits do not cause large trade deficits. If they did, countries with the largest budget deficits would also have the largest trade deficits. In fact, when deficit figures are adjusted so that different countries are reliably comparable to each other, there is no such correlation.

If the statements above are all true, which of the following can properly be inferred on the basis of them?

- A. Countries with large national budget deficits tend to restrict foreign trade.
- B. Reliable comparisons of the deficit figures of one country with those of another are impossible.
- C. Reducing a country’s national budget deficit will not necessarily result in a lowering of any trade deficit that country may have.
- D. When countries are ordered from largest to smallest in terms of population, the smallest countries generally have the smallest budget and trade deficits.
- E. Countries with the largest trade deficits never have similarly large national budget deficits.

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

“Reducing a country’s national budget deficit will not necessarily result in a lowering of any trade deficit that country may have” is properly inferred because the stimulus denies the asserted causal connection between large budget deficits and large trade deficits. Its evidence is the absence of the expected cross-country correlation after the figures have been adjusted to make comparisons reliable. If budget deficits were a cause of trade deficits in the stated way, countries with especially large budget deficits would be expected to exhibit especially large trade deficits as well. Since that pattern does not appear, the proposed causal relationship is unsupported.

The conclusion uses appropriately limited language: “will not necessarily” means that reducing a budget deficit does not guarantee a corresponding reduction in a trade deficit. This follows from the lack of a demonstrated causal link. It does not claim that reductions can never occur together; rather, it recognizes that a trade deficit may be influenced by factors other than the national budget deficit. This is a standard Critical Reasoning inference: distinguish evidence that fails to establish a

cause-and-effect relationship from a conclusion that merely rejects a guaranteed effect. For guidance on Critical Reasoning skills, see [GMAT Exam: Section by Section](#) and [GMAT Exam Preparation](#).

QUESTION NO: 35

Parasitic wasps lay their eggs directly into the eggs of various host insects in exactly the right numbers for any suitable size of host egg. If they laid too many eggs in a host egg, the developing wasp larvae would compete with each other to the death for nutrients and space. If too few eggs were laid, portions of the host egg would decay, killing the wasp larvae.

Which of the following conclusions can properly be drawn from the information above?

- A. The size of the smallest host egg that a wasp could theoretically parasitize can be determined from the wasp's egg-laying behavior.
- B. Host insects lack any effective defenses against the form of predation practiced by parasitic wasps.
- C. Parasitic wasps learn from experience how many eggs to lay into the eggs of different host species.
- D. Failure to lay enough eggs would lead to the death of the developing wasp larvae more quickly than would laying too many eggs.
- E. Parasitic wasps use visual clues to calculate the size of a host egg.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

The size of the smallest host egg that a wasp could theoretically parasitize can be determined from the wasp's egg-laying behavior. This conclusion follows from the stated relationship between host-egg size and the number of wasp eggs that can be laid successfully. A viable host egg must be large enough to support the necessary number of developing larvae while also allowing those larvae to consume the host resources without leaving material that decays. Because the wasps lay the exact number required for each suitable host-egg size, their egg-laying pattern provides evidence of the lower boundary at which successful parasitism is possible. In principle, examining the smallest host eggs into which a wasp deposits a viable number of eggs would identify the minimum suitable size. The conclusion is appropriately limited: it says the threshold *can be determined* from observed behavior, rather than claiming that a particular minimum size is supplied in the passage. This is a sound inference because the passage explicitly makes successful egg number dependent on host size and survival conditions. For background on evaluating conclusions strictly from stated premises, see the [GMAT exam overview](#) and the [Encyclopaedia Britannica overview of parasitoids](#).

QUESTION NO: 36

Industrialists from the country Distopia were accused of promoting the Distopian intervention in the Arcadian civil war merely to insure that the industrialists' facilities in Arcadia made substantial profits during the war. Yet this cannot be the motive since, as the Distopians foresaw, Distopia's federal expenses for the intervention were eight billion dollars, whereas, during the war, profits from the Distopian industrialists' facilities in Arcadia totaled only four billion dollars.

Which of the following, if true, exposes a serious flaw in the argument made in the second sentence above?

- A. During the Arcadian war, many Distopian industrialists with facilities located in Arcadia experienced a significant rise in productivity in their facilities located in Distopia.
- B. The largest proportion of Distopia's federal expenses is borne by those who receive no significant industrial profits.
- C. Most Distopian industrialists' facilities located in Arcadia are expected to maintain the level of profits they achieved during the war.
- D. Distopian industrialists' facilities in Arcadia made substantial profits before the events that triggered the civil war.
- E. Many Distopians expressed concern over the suffering that Arcadians underwent during the civil war.

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

The largest proportion of Distopia's federal expenses is borne by those who receive no significant industrial profits. This exposes the argument's key error: it treats the intervention's total federal cost as though it were a cost incurred by the same industrialists who stood to gain from the Arcadian facilities. The relevant comparison for assessing the alleged motive is not between the nation's overall eight-billion-dollar expenditure and the industrialists' four-billion-dollar profit. Instead, it is between the industrialists' own share of the costs, such as the taxes or other financial burdens they personally bear, and the profits available to them. If most federal expenses fall on people who do not receive industrial profits, the industrialists could receive substantial gains while personally paying only a relatively small portion of the intervention's cost. Their support for intervention could therefore still be financially self-interested, despite the government's total expenditure exceeding the facilities' profits. This is a classic Critical Reasoning flaw involving an unsupported assumption that costs assigned to a larger group are borne proportionally, or at all, by the particular subgroup whose motive is under discussion. For an overview of GMAT Verbal Critical Reasoning skills, see [GMAT Verbal Reasoning](#) and [GMAT Exam](#).

QUESTION NO: 37

Today, children whose parents are deemed incapable of caring for them are put into foster care. These children are moved into strangers' homes, where they are cared for until their own parents can regain custody, which may not happen for years, if it happens at all. Although it means well, the current foster care program is so poorly funded, staffed, and managed that it cannot ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children in the system. The laudable idea behind foster care is that children will fare best if placed in a family setting until they can be reunited with their parents, even if it is a family of strangers. However, while in foster care, children typically get shuffled between many different foster homes, preventing them from developing long-term, supportive relationships with their foster families. Foster care placements can also force siblings to be separated, further isolating these vulnerable children. When a child is moved to a new foster home, he or she may also have to enroll in a new school, a disruptive process that has a negative impact on the child's education. The bureaucracy that oversees this system is overwhelmed to the point that social workers are unable to adequately screen potential foster parents and keep accurate track of the children placed in foster care. There must be a better means of caring for these children. Perhaps it is time to consider creating special group homes as a means of providing these children with stable and safe environments. A child could live in one group home for the duration of his or her time in foster care and be supervised by a team of social workers and other lay people. Children would receive proper meals and healthcare, attend the same school, and develop relationships with others experiencing the trauma of being separated from their parents. In addition, social workers and staff would have daily access to these children, enabling them to better determine if a child has a special physical or psychological need and arrange for the necessary services. Would this approach be perfect? No, but it would solve many of the problems that plague the current system. For some, the idea of a government agency housing, clothing, and feeding needy children may sound extreme, but it only suggests that we provide these children with the same basic necessities that we give to prison inmates. It can be inferred from the passage that the author

- A. was once in prison.
- B. believes foster care parents are often too lenient.
- C. was a foster child.
- D. believes prison inmates are treated better than some children in foster care.
- E. believes group homes are essentially prisons for children.

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

The author believes prison inmates are treated better than some children in foster care. This inference follows from the closing comparison between the basic necessities supplied to inmates—housing, clothing, and food—and the inadequate protection and consistency the author says many foster children receive. The author has already described a system affected by insufficient funding, staffing, and oversight, with children experiencing repeated moves, school disruption, sibling separation, and limited monitoring. Against that backdrop, the statement that group homes would merely give children the same essentials provided to inmates is deliberately forceful: it emphasizes that children in state care should reliably receive at least safe shelter, nourishment, clothing, healthcare, and attention to their needs. The passage's proposed group-home model is intended to make those basic supports more stable and accessible through continuous residence and daily staff contact. This interpretation is also consistent with child-welfare guidance recognizing placement stability, continuity, and safety as central concerns for children in out-of-home care. See the [Child Welfare Information Gateway overview of foster care](#) and the U.S. Administration for Children and Families' [foster care resources](#).

QUESTION NO: 38

Some anthropologists study modern-day societies of foragers in an effort to learn about our ancient ancestors who were also foragers. A flaw in this strategy is that forager societies are extremely varied. Indeed, any forager society with which anthropologists are familiar has had considerable contact with modern non forager societies.

Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the criticism made above of the anthropologists' strategy?

- A. All forager societies throughout history have had a number of important features in common that are absent from other types of societies.
- B. Most ancient forager societies either dissolved or made a transition to another way of life.
- C. All anthropologists study one kind or another of modern-day society.
- D. Many anthropologists who study modern-day forager societies do not draw inferences about ancient societies on the basis of their studies.
- E. Even those modern-day forager societies that have not had significant contact with modern societies are importantly different from ancient forager societies.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

"All forager societies throughout history have had a number of important features in common that are absent from other types of societies" most weakens the criticism because it establishes a stable basis for comparison across forager groups. The criticism maintains that contemporary foragers may be poor models for ancient foragers: modern groups are highly diverse and have been influenced through contact with nonforaging societies. But if every forager society, including those from the past and present, shares important defining features that distinguish it from nonforager societies, anthropologists can still examine those common features to draw informed conclusions about ancient foraging life. Contact with modern nonforagers might affect certain practices, but it need not erase the shared characteristics central to a foraging mode of life. Thus, substantial variation among individual forager societies is less damaging to the research strategy when meaningful cross-historical similarities remain. This follows the standard Critical Reasoning approach of identifying the conclusion's key assumption and supplying information that reduces the force of the stated objection. See the GMAT's overview of [GMAT exam skills](#) and the [official GMAT preparation resources](#).

QUESTION NO: 39

Arthur: Do animals have rights? Well, they have feelings, and I think if you can feel pain, you do have some rights, particularly the right not to have pain inflicted on you.

Brandon: Animals like lions would kill me if they were hungry for food. That inflicts pain on me, all right! Which of the following is the best criticism of Brandon's response?

- A. He assumes that because some animals kill humans, humans have a right to kill those animals.
- B. He does not give specific examples to support his position.
- C. He attacks Arthur rather than addressing the issue.
- D. He takes an absolute position without allowing for exceptions.
- E. He brings in a different issue rather than addressing the question of whether or not animals have rights.

ANSWER: E

Explanation:

"He brings in a different issue rather than addressing the question of whether or not animals have rights." is the best criticism because Brandon's statement does not engage with Arthur's actual principle. Arthur argues that an animal's capacity to feel pain supports recognizing a right not to have pain unnecessarily inflicted on it. To respond effectively, Brandon would need

to challenge the connection between sentence and rights, question whether the proposed right has limits, or explain why human conduct toward animals is not governed by that principle.

Instead, Brandon shifts attention to a hypothetical threat posed by hungry lions and to the pain that he might experience. Whether a lion might kill a person for food concerns an animal's natural survival behavior; it does not answer whether animals can possess moral rights or whether people should refrain from inflicting avoidable pain on them. The response therefore introduces an irrelevant consideration, commonly called a red herring, rather than supplying reasoning relevant to the claim under discussion. Guidance on identifying this kind of diversion in an argument appears in the [Purdue OWL discussion of logical fallacies](#) and the [Logical Fallacies explanation of red herrings](#).

QUESTION NO: 40

The Competitive Civil Service system is designed to give applicants fair and equal treatment and to ensure that federal applicants are hired based in objective criteria.

- A. are hired based in
- B. are hired on
- C. are hired based on
- D. are hired based by
- E. are hired through employment of

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

The correct wording is "are hired based on" because *based on* is the standard English phrase used to state the facts, evidence, standards, or criteria that determine a decision. In this sentence, "objective criteria" are the standards used to make federal hiring decisions, so the complete and idiomatic construction is: "federal applicants are hired based on objective criteria." The preposition *on* correctly connects the decision-making process to its supporting criteria. This phrasing also precisely conveys the intended principle of a competitive civil-service system: hiring decisions should rest on objective, job-related measures rather than subjective or arbitrary considerations. Major dictionaries define *based on* as having something as its foundation or source, which fits the relationship between hiring decisions and evaluation criteria in the sentence. See the [Cambridge Dictionary entry for "based on"](#) and the [Merriam-Webster definition of "based on"](#).

QUESTION NO: 41

A manufacturer of men's dress socks sought to increase profits by increasing sales. The size of its customer pool was remaining steady, with the average customer buying twelve pairs of dress socks per year. The company's plan was to increase the number of promotional discount-sale periods to one every six months.

Which of the following, if it is a realistic possibility, casts the most serious doubt on the viability of the company's plan?

- A. New manufacturing capacity would not be required if the company were to increase the number of pairs of socks sold.
- B. Inventory stocks of merchandise ready for sale would be high preceding the increase in the number of discount-sale periods.
- C. The manufacturer's competitors would match its discounts during sale periods, and its customers would learn to wait for those times to make their purchases.
- D. New styles and colors would increase customers' consciousness of fashion in dress socks, but the customers' requirements for older styles and colors would not be reduced.
- E. The cost of the manufacturer's raw materials would remain steady, and its customers would have more disposable income.

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

The statement “The manufacturer’s competitors would match its discounts during sale periods, and its customers would learn to wait for those times to make their purchases” most seriously undermines the plan because it directly challenges the assumption that more discount periods will produce additional profitable sales. The customer pool is stable, and each customer already purchases an average of twelve pairs per year. If customers merely postpone purchases until a sale, the company may sell the same annual quantity of socks at lower prices rather than selling more socks overall. Competitors’ matching discounts intensify this problem: the manufacturer does not gain a meaningful price advantage or attract substantial new business from rivals. Instead, discounting can become the expected market condition, reducing revenue per pair across the market. Thus, the proposed increase in sales periods could lower profit margins without increasing total demand, making the strategy commercially unviable. This reasoning reflects the distinction between shifting the timing of purchases and generating incremental demand, a central consideration in pricing and promotional decisions. See the [Investopedia discussion of price wars](#) and the [OpenStax overview of price-setting and promotional pricing](#).

QUESTION NO: 42

Bank depositors in the United States are all financially protected against bank failure because the government insures all individuals’ bank deposits. An economist argues that this insurance is partly responsible for the high rate of bank failures, since it removes from depositors any financial incentive to find out whether the bank that holds their money is secure against failure. If depositors were more selective, then banks would need to be secure in order to compete for depositors’ money.

The economist’s argument makes which of the following assumptions?

- A. Bank failures are caused when big borrowers default on loan repayments.
- B. A significant proportion of depositors maintain accounts at several different banks.
- C. The more a depositor has to deposit, the more careful he or she tends to be in selecting a bank.
- D. The difference in the interest rates paid to depositors by different banks is not a significant factor in bank failures.
- E. Potential depositors are able to determine which banks are secure against failure.

ANSWER: E**Explanation:**

The argument assumes that potential depositors can, in practice, identify which banks are secure against failure. The economist claims that deposit insurance removes depositors’ incentive to investigate a bank’s financial soundness and that, without this protection, more selective depositors would pressure banks to become secure in order to attract their funds. This reasoning requires that depositors’ investigation and selection can meaningfully distinguish safer banks from less secure ones. If depositors lacked the ability to assess bank security, restoring their financial incentive would not reliably make their choices more selective in a way that disciplines banks. Thus, the claimed competitive pressure on banks depends on potential depositors being able to determine which institutions are secure against failure. This is an assumption because it connects the proposed change in depositor incentives to the predicted effect on banks’ behavior. The argument does not need to establish that every depositor will make a perfect assessment; it needs the basic premise that such assessments are sufficiently possible for depositors’ preferences to influence competition. The concept reflects the role of market discipline, in which informed depositors can affect banks’ incentives by choosing where to place funds. For background on deposit insurance and its purpose, see the [FDIC’s deposit-insurance resources](#) and the [IMF overview of bank failures](#).

QUESTION NO: 43

The lobbyists argued that because there is no statistical evidence that breathing other people’s tobacco smoke increases the incidence of heart disease or lung cancer in healthy nonsmokers, legislation banning smoking in workplaces cannot be justified on health grounds.

Of the following, which is the best criticism of the argument reported above?

- A. It ignores causes of lung cancer other than smoking.
- B. It neglects the damaging effects of smoke-filled air on nonsmokers who are not healthy.

- C. It fails to mention the roles played by diet, exercise, and heredity in the development of heart disease.
- D. It does not consider the possibility that nonsmokers who breathe smoke-filled air at work may become more concerned about their health.
- E. It does not acknowledge that nonsmokers, even those who breathe smoke-filled air at work, are in general healthier than smokers.

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

The best criticism is that the argument neglects the damaging effects of smoke-filled air on nonsmokers who are not healthy. Its evidence claim is expressly limited to *healthy* nonsmokers and to two specified diseases: heart disease and lung cancer. Yet workplace health legislation can reasonably protect all employees and visitors, including people with asthma, cardiovascular conditions, respiratory disease, compromised immune systems, or other health vulnerabilities. The absence of the stated statistical evidence for one restricted population does not establish that secondhand smoke poses no health risk to people outside that population. Thus, the conclusion that a workplace smoking ban cannot be justified on health grounds reaches beyond the scope of the premise. Public-health authorities recognize that secondhand smoke exposure is harmful and that there is no safe level of exposure. The CDC notes that secondhand smoke can cause serious health problems in adults and children, while the U.S. Surgeon General's report documents the health consequences of involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke. These sources support treating protection of vulnerable nonsmokers as a legitimate health-based rationale for workplace restrictions. See the [CDC's secondhand-smoke health information](#) and the [U.S. Surgeon General's report on involuntary tobacco-smoke exposure](#).

QUESTION NO: 44

In the United States in 1986, the average rate of violent crime in states with strict gun-control laws was 645 crimes per 100,000 persons — about 50 percent higher than the average rate in the eleven states where strict gun-control laws have never been passed. Thus one way to reduce violent crime is to repeal strict gun control laws.

Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the argument above?

- A. The annual rate of violent crime in states with strict gun-control laws has decreased since the passage of those laws.
- B. In states with strict gun-control laws, few individuals are prosecuted for violating such laws.
- C. In states without strict gun-control laws, many individuals have had no formal training in the use of firearms.
- D. The annual rate of nonviolent crime is lower in states with strict gun-control laws than in states without such laws.
- E. Less than half of the individuals who reside in states without strict gun-control laws own a gun.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

The annual rate of violent crime in states with strict gun-control laws has decreased since the passage of those laws most weakens the conclusion because it provides evidence about the effect of adopting strict gun-control laws over time. The argument treats the higher 1986 crime rate in states that have such laws as proof that the laws cause violent crime and therefore should be repealed. But a comparison of current averages does not establish what crime rates would have been in those states without the laws. States may have enacted strict laws in response to previously high or rising violent-crime rates. If violent crime declined after the laws were passed, the laws may have helped reduce crime despite those states still having higher overall rates than other states in 1986. That evidence directly challenges the claim that repeal would reduce violent crime: removing a policy associated with a subsequent decline could instead eliminate a contributing deterrent or protective measure. This follows the critical-reasoning principle that correlation alone cannot demonstrate causation and that before-and-after evidence can reveal an alternative causal interpretation. See [Khan Academy's Logical Reasoning overview](#) and [OpenStax's discussion of correlation and causation](#).

QUESTION NO: 45

Instead of blaming an airline accident on pilot error, investigators should find out why the error was made by analyzing airplane design, airline management, and pilot-training programs. For only then can changes be made to ensure that the same type of error does not recur and cause another accident.

Which of the following is a presupposition of the argument above?

- A. Pilot error is not a contributing factor in most airline accidents.
- B. Airline companies themselves should be the agents who investigate airline accidents.
- C. Stricter government regulation of airline companies will make air travel significantly safer.
- D. Investigators of airline accidents should contribute to the prevention of future accidents.
- E. Most pilots who make errors in flying will repeat their errors unless they are retrained.

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

The presupposition is that investigators of airline accidents should contribute to the prevention of future accidents. The argument recommends a particular kind of investigation: rather than stopping at the finding that a pilot made an error, investigators should examine the underlying conditions that helped produce it, such as aircraft design, management practices, and training. Its stated reason is that understanding those conditions permits changes intended to prevent the error from recurring. This recommendation therefore takes for granted that accident investigation has a forward-looking safety purpose, not merely a retrospective purpose of assigning blame or documenting what happened. If preventing later accidents were not an appropriate objective of an investigation, the appeal to making preventive changes would not support the proposed investigative approach. This is a necessary underlying principle linking the proposed analysis of systemic causes to the conclusion about what investigators should do. In Critical Reasoning terms, a presupposition is an assumption required for the argument's reasoning to function; GMAT preparation resources describe assumption questions as identifying unstated ideas on which an argument depends. See [GMAT Exam Overview](#) and [GMAT Exam Preparation](#).

QUESTION NO: 46

Gene therapy offers a new treatment paradigm for curing human disease. Rather than altering the disease phenotype by using agents that interact with gene products, or are themselves gene products, gene therapy can theoretically modify specific genes resulting in disease cure following a single administration. Initially gene therapy was envisioned for the treatment of genetic disorders, but is currently being studied for use with a wide range of diseases, including cancer, peripheral vascular disease, arthritis, Neurodegenerative disorders and other acquired diseases.

Certain key elements are required for a successful gene therapy strategy. The most elementary of these is that the relevant gene be identified and cloned. Upon completion of the Human Genome Project, gene availability will be unlimited. Once identified and cloned, the next consideration must be expression of the gene. Questions pertaining to the efficiency of gene transfer and gene expression remain at the forefront of gene therapy research, with current debates revolving around the transfer of desired genes to appropriate cells, and then to obtaining sufficient levels of expression for disease treatment. With luck, future research on gene transfer and tissue-specific gene expression will resolve these issues for the majority of gene therapy protocols.

Other important considerations for a gene therapy strategy include a sufficient understanding of the pathogenesis of the targeted disorder, potential side effects of the gene therapy treatment, and a more in depth understanding of the target cells which are to receive gene therapy.

Gene transfer vector is the mechanism by which the gene is transferred into a cell. Currently there are at least 150 clinical gene therapy protocols worldwide. Since the approval process for these protocols is not as public outside the U.S., it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of worldwide protocols. As of December 1995, 1024 patients had been treated with either a gene transfer or gene therapy protocol. Much controversy exists regarding how many of these patients have benefited from their gene therapy, and no one has yet been cured.

Public controversy in the field of human gene therapy is driven by several factors. Ordinary citizens as well as scientists easily understand the enormous potential of gene therapy, but the former may not appreciate all the pitfalls and uncertainty that lie in the immediate future. The financial interests of biotechnology firms and, some have asserted the career interests of some gene therapists have encouraged extravagant, or at least verily optimistic public statements about contemporary gene

therapy. In spite of the proliferation of protocols, the actual number of patients treated remains small, and only one genuinely controlled study of human gene therapy has been published as of this date.

In the passage, the author anticipates which of the following as a possible obstacle to the introduction of gene therapy to mainstream medicine?

- A. Overly optimistic public statements given by scientists who have a vested interest
- B. The general public's difficulty in grasping gene therapy's vast potential.
- C. Unchecked financial interests of biotechnology firms.
- D. The relatively small number of controlled studies of human gene therapy published as of this date.
- E. Hazards of which the general public is currently unaware.

ANSWER: E

Explanation:

"Hazards of which the general public is currently unaware" is the best answer because the author identifies a gap between public enthusiasm and an informed understanding of the treatment's near-term limitations. The passage says that ordinary citizens, like scientists, can readily see gene therapy's enormous potential. However, it immediately qualifies that optimism by observing that ordinary citizens may not appreciate the "pitfalls and uncertainty" ahead. This lack of awareness can obstruct movement into mainstream medicine: broad adoption requires realistic public expectations about safety, effectiveness, uncertainty, and the time required for adequate clinical evidence to develop.

The author's concern is not simply whether people can recognize the promise of gene therapy; rather, it is whether they understand its risks and unresolved practical issues. When expectations are driven by promise without comparable awareness of hazards, controversy and disappointment may undermine acceptance of an emerging medical approach. This reasoning remains consistent with modern gene-therapy oversight, which emphasizes assessing potential risks and communicating them during clinical development. See the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's [cellular and gene therapy products](#) information and the National Human Genome Research Institute's overview of [gene therapy](#).

QUESTION NO: 47

Crimes are mainly committed by the young, and for this reason merely increasing the number of police officers or expenditures on police services has little effect on reducing the crime rate. In fact, the only factor associated with a crime-rate drop is a decrease in the number of people in the community aged fourteen to thirty.

The findings above can best serve as part of an argument against

- A. the likelihood that any law enforcement program will be effective in reducing the crime rate within a short time
- B. increasing prison terms for young people found guilty of crimes
- C. introducing compulsory military conscription for people aged seventeen to nineteen
- D. raising the age at which students are permitted to leave school
- E. a community's plan to increase the number of recreational and educational activities in which young adults can participate

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

The findings best support an argument against *the likelihood that any law enforcement program will be effective in reducing the crime rate within a short time*. The evidence identifies the size of the community's population aged fourteen to thirty as the only factor associated with a lower crime rate. A change in that population's size is fundamentally demographic: it ordinarily occurs gradually rather than as the immediate result of a new enforcement policy. The passage also specifically states that adding police officers or spending more on police services has little effect on crime. Together, these points support the conclusion that an intervention focused on law enforcement should not be expected to produce a prompt reduction in crime. This is an appropriate use of the evidence because the conclusion is limited to short-term effectiveness

and to law-enforcement programs, matching both the stated ineffectiveness of increased policing and the slow-moving nature of the one associated factor. In critical-reasoning questions, the task is to identify the conclusion that the premises most directly support, rather than to infer an unstated solution to the underlying social problem. See GMAC's overview of the GMAT verbal section at [GMAT Exam Format](#) and its guidance on evaluating arguments at [GMAT Verbal Reasoning](#).

QUESTION NO: 48

Mannis Corporation's archival records are stored in an obsolete format that is accessible only by its current computer system; thus they are inaccessible when that system is not functioning properly. In order to avoid the possibility of losing access to their archival records in the case of computer malfunction, Mannis plans to replace its current computer system with a new system that stores records in a format that is accessible to several different systems.

The answer to which of the following questions would be most helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the plan as a means of retaining access to the archival records?

- A. Will the new computer system require fewer operators than the current system requires?
- B. Has Mannis Corporation always stored its archival records in a computerized format?
- C. Will the new computer system that Mannis plans ensure greater security for the records stored than does Mannis' current system?
- D. Will Mannis' current collection of archival records be readily transferable to the new computer system?
- E. Will the new computer system be able to perform many more tasks than the current system is able to perform?

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

Will Mannis' current collection of archival records be readily transferable to the new computer system? is the most useful question because the proposed solution can preserve future access only if the existing archival material can actually be moved into the new, interoperable format. Mannis's stated problem concerns records already held in an obsolete format and dependent on a single current system. Replacing that system may create a more resilient environment for records after migration, but it does not by itself establish that the present archive will remain available during or after the change. If the records cannot be transferred readily, Mannis could lose practical access to some or all of the archive despite purchasing a system whose format works across several systems. Conversely, ready transfer would provide strong support for the plan's ability to address the identified vulnerability. This is a standard plan-evaluation issue: test the necessary link between the proposed action and the intended result, here the successful migration of the existing data. Guidance on digital preservation similarly emphasizes planning for migration and maintaining access as formats and systems become obsolete; see the [Library of Congress Digital Formats](#) resource and the [U.S. National Archives digital preservation guidance](#).

QUESTION NO: 49

In Asia, where palm trees are non-native, the trees' flowers have traditionally been pollinated by hand, which has kept palm fruit productivity unnaturally low. When weevils known to be efficient pollinators of palm flowers were introduced into Asia in 1980, palm fruit productivity increased — by up to fifty percent in some areas — but then decreased sharply in 1984.

Which of the following statements, if true, would best explain the 1984 decrease in productivity?

- A. Prices for palm fruit fell between 1980 and 1984 following the rise in production and a concurrent fall in demand.
- B. Imported trees are often more productive than native trees because the imported ones have left behind their pests and diseases in their native lands.
- C. Rapid increases in productivity tend to deplete trees of nutrients needed for the development of the fruit-producing female flowers.
- D. The weevil population in Asia remained at approximately the same level between 1980 and 1984.
- E. Prior to 1980 another species of insect pollinated the Asian palm trees, but not as efficiently as the species of weevil that was introduced in 1980.

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

“Rapid increases in productivity tend to deplete trees of nutrients needed for the development of the fruit-producing female flowers” best explains the sharp decrease because it supplies a credible delayed causal mechanism linking the initial improvement to the later decline. The introduced weevils increased pollination efficiency, allowing the palms to produce substantially more fruit soon after 1980. Producing fruit at that unusually high level can require significant nutritional resources. If this surge depleted nutrients essential to forming female flowers, the trees would subsequently produce fewer of the flowers from which fruit develops. A sharp decline in fruit productivity by 1984 therefore follows naturally: the initial gain created the biological condition that limited later output. This resolves the timing in the facts, rather than merely describing circumstances associated with palm cultivation or pollination. In Critical Reasoning questions, the strongest explanation accounts directly for the surprising outcome and establishes a logical connection between the stated events. For general guidance on GMAT verbal reasoning and evaluating arguments, see [GMAC's GMAT exam overview](#) and [GMAC's preparation guidance](#).

QUESTION NO: 50

George Bernard Shaw wrote: “That any sane nation, having observed that you could provide for the supply of bread by giving bakers a pecuniary interest in baking for you, should go on to give a surgeon a pecuniary interest in cutting off your leg is enough to make one despair of political humanity.”

Shaw's statement would best serve as an illustration in an argument criticizing which of the following?

- A. Dentists who perform unnecessary dental work in order to earn a profit
- B. Doctors who increase their profits by specializing only in diseases that affect a large percentage of the population
- C. Grocers who raise the price of food in order to increase their profit margins
- D. Oil companies that decrease the price of their oil in order to increase their market share
- E. Bakers and surgeons who earn a profit by supplying other peoples' basic needs

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

Dentists who perform unnecessary dental work in order to earn a profit is correct because Shaw's comparison concerns the danger of attaching a financial incentive to a medical intervention. A baker earns money by supplying bread, so the baker's interest in producing bread ordinarily aligns with the customer's need. A surgeon, however, earns money when performing an operation; if the operation is unnecessary, the professional's financial interest can conflict directly with the patient's interest in avoiding needless harm. Shaw uses the extreme image of cutting off a leg to emphasize that medical treatment should be guided by clinical necessity and patient welfare, rather than by the provider's opportunity to profit from doing more procedures. The same reasoning applies to a dentist who recommends and performs dental work that the patient does not need. The dentist's compensation creates precisely the kind of problematic “pecuniary interest” Shaw identifies: earning more by carrying out an intervention that may not benefit the person receiving it. Shaw's quotation appears in the preface to *The Doctor's Dilemma*, available through [Project Gutenberg](#). Modern medical-ethics guidance likewise recognizes the importance of ensuring that financial incentives do not compromise professional judgment or patient welfare; see the [American Medical Association's guidance on financial incentives in health care](#).

QUESTION NO: 51

Record companies defend their substitution of laser-read compact discs (CD's) for the much less expensive traditional long-playing vinyl records in their catalogs by claiming that the audio market is ruled by consumer demand for ever-improved sound reproduction rather than by record manufacturers' profit-motivated marketing decisions. But this claim cannot be true, because if it were true, then digital audiotape, which produces even better sound than CD's, would be commercially available from these same record companies, but it is not.

Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the argument against the record companies' claim?

- A. When CD's were first introduced in the audio-reproduction market, prices were high and selection was poor.
- B. Record companies are reluctant to attempt commercial production of digital audiotape until profits from the sales of CD's have enabled them to recover their investments in compact-disc manufacturing technology.
- C. Some CD's have been so much in demand that consumers have experienced long delays in obtaining copies.
- D. Because CD's work according to principles very different from those that govern conventional recordings, commercial production of CD's requires new kinds of manufacturing technology.
- E. Any valid comparison of CD audio reproductions to digital audiotape reproductions must be based on identical performances played back on the highest quality disc or tape player.

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

"Record companies are reluctant to attempt commercial production of digital audiotape until profits from the sales of CD's have enabled them to recover their investments in compact-disc manufacturing technology." most strongly supports the argument because it directly identifies a profit-based marketing reason for withholding the superior-sounding format. The companies' stated position is that consumer demand for progressively improved sound, rather than their own profit motives, determines which formats reach the market. This statement supplies evidence that the decision not to offer digital audiotape is governed by the companies' financial interest in recovering their CD-related investment. Thus, even if consumers might value the improved sound available through digital audiotape, the companies have an incentive to delay its release to protect or maximize CD profits. That is precisely the sort of consideration the companies deny is driving their format decisions, so it reinforces the conclusion that their claim about consumer demand cannot fully explain the market outcome. This follows the standard Critical Reasoning strengthening approach: add a fact that makes the argument's conclusion more likely by supporting its key causal interpretation. See the GMAT critical-reasoning preparation guidance from mba.com and the argument-analysis overview from [Khan Academy](http://KhanAcademy.com).

QUESTION NO: 52

State X's income-averaging law allows a portion of one's income to be taxed at lower rate than the rate based on one's total taxable income. To use income averaging, the taxpayer must have earned taxable income for a particular year that exceeds 140 percent of his or her average taxable income for the previous three years. People using income averaging owe less tax for that year than they would without income averaging.

Which of the following individuals would be most seriously affected if income averaging were not permitted in computing the taxes owed for current year?

- A. Individuals whose income has steadily decreased for the past three years
- B. Individuals whose income increased by 50 percent four years ago and has remained the same since then
- C. Individuals whose income has doubled this year after remaining about the same for five years
- D. Individuals who had no income this year, but did in each of the previous three years
- E. Individuals who are retired and whose income has remained about the same for the past ten years

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

Individuals whose income has doubled this year after remaining about the same for five years would be most seriously affected because their current-year income is far above their recent income baseline. If income was roughly stable for the preceding five years and then doubled in the current year, the average taxable income for the previous three years would be approximately the former, lower annual amount. Current income would therefore be about 200 percent of that three-year average, comfortably exceeding the required 140 percent threshold for income averaging.

That sharp one-year increase is precisely the circumstance in which income averaging provides its greatest practical value. Without averaging, the entire doubled amount is taxed according to the rates applicable to the unusually high current-year total. With averaging, a portion can receive the lower treatment allowed by State X's rule, reducing tax on income that

represents an exceptional spike rather than a continuing income level. Progressive income-tax structures generally impose higher marginal rates as taxable income rises, so moving a portion of a one-time increase into a lower-rate calculation can materially reduce the current-year liability. See the [Tax Policy Center's explanation of marginal tax rates](#) and the [IRS overview of income-tax rates and brackets](#).

QUESTION NO: 53

The strand fills with water during the rainy season that the peat then holds and keeps it humid, all of which creates conditions enabling trees to grow.

- A. enabling trees to grow.
- B. for the trees to grow.
- C. for growing trees.
- D. that enable the trees to grow.
- E. that the trees can grow.

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

The correct completion is **“that enable the trees to grow.”** The sentence describes several preceding causes: the strand fills with water, the peat holds that water, and the peat remains humid. Together, these circumstances create *conditions*. Because *conditions* is plural, the relative verb must also be plural: “conditions that enable.” The relative clause directly and clearly modifies “conditions,” specifying what those conditions make possible.

The definite article in “the trees” is also appropriate because the sentence concerns the particular trees growing in the peatland or strand being described, rather than making a broad claim about trees everywhere. This produces a precise, idiomatic statement: the water-retaining, humid environment creates the particular conditions needed for the local trees’ growth. Clear modifier placement and agreement between a plural antecedent and a plural verb are central principles of standard written English and are frequently tested in sentence-correction questions. For guidance on subject–verb agreement, see [Purdue OWL’s Subject–Verb Agreement overview](#). For additional discussion of restrictive relative clauses beginning with “that,” see [Merriam-Webster’s guide to “that” and “which”](#).

QUESTION NO: 54

As one who has always believed that truth is our nation’s surest weapon in the propaganda war against our foes, I am distressed by reports of “disinformation” campaigns by American intelligence agents in Western Europe. In a disinformation campaign, untruths are disseminated through gullible local journalists in order to damage the interests of our enemies and protect our own. Those who defend this practice say that lying is necessary to counter Soviet disinformation campaigns aimed at damaging America’s political interests. These apologists contend that one must fight fire with fire. I would point out to the apologists that the fire department finds water more effective. The author’s main point is that

- A. although disinformation campaigns may be effective, they are unacceptable on ethical grounds
- B. America’s moral standing in the world depends on its adherence to the truth
- C. the temporary political gains produced by disinformation campaigns generally give way to long-term losses
- D. Soviet disinformation campaigns have done little to damage America’s standing in Europe
- E. disinformation campaigns do not effectively serve the political interests of the United States

ANSWER: E

Explanation:

The correct answer is *disinformation campaigns do not effectively serve the political interests of the United States*. The author begins by identifying truth as the nation's "surest weapon" in propaganda conflicts and then expresses distress at reports that American agents are deliberately disseminating untruths. Most importantly, the final analogy supplies the central conclusion: although defenders claim that Soviet falsehoods must be answered with American falsehoods—"fight fire with fire"—the author says that the fire department uses water because it is more effective. In context, "water" represents truth, while "fire" represents disinformation. Thus, the author's point is not merely that lying is objectionable, but that it is an inferior and ineffective strategy for protecting U.S. political interests. The argument directly contrasts the claimed necessity of disinformation with the asserted greater practical effectiveness of truth. This reflects the critical-reasoning task of identifying the conclusion supported by the author's premises and analogy, a skill assessed in GMAT Verbal reasoning. See the GMAT's official overview of the Verbal Reasoning section at [GMAT Exam Structure](#) and its guidance on evaluating arguments at [GMAT Preparation](#).

QUESTION NO: 55

A new law gives ownership of patents—documents providing exclusive right to make and sell an invention—to universities, not the government, when those patents result from government-sponsored university research. Administrators at Logos University plan to sell any patents they acquire to corporations in order to fund programs to improve undergraduate teaching.

Which of the following, if true, would cast most doubt on the viability of the college administrators' plan described above?

- A. Profit-making corporations interested in developing products based on patents held by universities are likely to try to serve as exclusive sponsors of ongoing university research projects.
- B. Corporate sponsors of research in university facilities are entitled to tax credits under new federal tax-code guidelines.
- C. Research scientists at Logos University have few or no teaching responsibilities and participate little if at all in the undergraduate programs in their field.
- D. Government-sponsored research conducted at Logos University for the most part duplicates research already completed by several profit-making corporations.
- E. Logos University is unlikely to attract corporate sponsorship of its scientific research.

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

"Government-sponsored research conducted at Logos University for the most part duplicates research already completed by several profit-making corporations" most seriously undermines the plan because the plan depends on Logos obtaining patents that corporations will find valuable enough to buy. If corporations have already completed substantially the same research, they are unlikely to need to purchase rights to Logos's results. Moreover, previously completed research may constitute prior art: publicly available earlier knowledge that can prevent a later development from meeting the novelty requirements for patent protection. Thus, the university may have few commercially attractive patents—or potentially no enforceable patents—to sell, leaving the proposed source of funding unreliable.

The central issue is not whether Logos can conduct research, but whether its government-sponsored work will produce distinct, legally protectable inventions that create exclusive commercial opportunities for buyers. Duplication of work already completed by potential purchasers directly calls that condition into question. Patent rights are valuable because they can exclude others from making, using, or selling a qualifying invention; where the relevant work is already known or already accomplished by the intended buyers, that exclusivity and corresponding market value are greatly reduced. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office discusses novelty and prior art in its [Manual of Patent Examining Procedure](#), and the university ownership framework is summarized by [NIST's Bayh-Dole Act resource](#).

QUESTION NO: 56

Mr. Lawson: We should adopt a national family policy that includes legislation requiring employers to provide paid parental leave and establishing government-sponsored day care. Such laws would decrease the stress levels of employees who have responsibility for small children. Thus, such laws would lead to happier, better-adjusted families.

Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the conclusion above?

- A. An employee's high stress level can be a cause of unhappiness and poor adjustment for his or her family.
- B. People who have responsibility for small children and who work outside the home have higher stress levels than those who do not.
- C. The goal of a national family policy is to lower the stress levels of parents.
- D. Any national family policy that is adopted would include legislation requiring employers to provide paid parental leave and establishing governmentsponsored day care.
- E. Most children who have been cared for in daycare centers are happy and well adjusted.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

"An employee's high stress level can be a cause of unhappiness and poor adjustment for his or her family." most strengthens the conclusion because it supplies the crucial causal link between the stated intermediate effect and the claimed final outcome. Mr. Lawson's reasoning already asserts that paid parental leave and government-sponsored day care would reduce stress for employees raising small children. To infer from that reduction in stress that families will become happier and better adjusted, the argument needs support for the idea that an employee's stress affects the well-being and adjustment of that employee's family. This statement directly establishes that connection: high employee stress can cause family unhappiness and poor adjustment. Therefore, if the proposed laws reduce this stress, they can help remove a cause of those adverse family outcomes, making happier and better-adjusted families more likely. This is a standard strengthen-the-argument pattern in which new evidence links an argument's premise to its conclusion through a relevant causal relationship. For additional guidance on identifying the conclusion and evaluating evidence that supports an argument's reasoning, see [GMAT Exam Section Overview](#) and [GMAT Exam information](#).

QUESTION NO: 57

A 20 percent decline in lobster catches in Maine waters since 1980 can be justifiably blamed on legislation passed in 1972 to protect harbor seals. Maine's population of harbor seals is now double the level existing before protection was initiated, and these seals are known to eat both fish and lobsters.

Which of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the argument above?

- A. Harbor seals usually eat more fish than lobsters, but the seals are natural predators of both.
- B. Although harbor seals are skillful predators of lobsters, they rarely finish eating their catch.
- C. Harbor seals attract tourists to Maine's coastal areas, thus revitalizing the local economy.
- D. Authors of the 1972 legislation protecting harbor seals were convinced that an increase in that animal's numbers would not have a measurably negative impact on the lobster catch.
- E. The record lobster harvests of the late 1970's removed large numbers of mature lobsters from the reproductive stock.

ANSWER: E

Explanation:

The record lobster harvests of the late 1970's removed large numbers of mature lobsters from the reproductive stock most seriously weakens the claimed causal link because it supplies a direct, biologically plausible alternative explanation for the later decline in catches. Mature lobsters are the breeding portion of the population. Removing many of them during unusually large harvests can reduce the number of eggs produced and, after the time required for young lobsters to develop, lead to fewer lobsters available to be caught in subsequent years. Thus, a decline beginning after 1980 could be a delayed consequence of depletion caused by the late-1970s harvests rather than a consequence of increased harbor-seal protection or seal predation. The argument relies mainly on a sequence of events—seal protection, more seals, then lower catches—but that sequence alone does not establish that the seals caused the reduction. Fisheries science recognizes that reproductive stock and fishing pressure are central influences on future stock abundance and harvest. NOAA Fisheries discusses lobster population and fishery management information at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/american->

[lobster](#), and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission describes management focused on sustaining the American lobster resource at <https://asmfc.org/species/american-lobster/>.

QUESTION NO: 58

Despite growing evidence of global warming; 34 different states plan to develop nearly 100 new coal burning electric plants in the next decade.

- A. warming; 34 different states
- B. warming; Thirty-four different states
- C. warming: 34 different states
- D. warming, 34 different states

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

The correct revision is “**warming, 34 different states**” because “Despite growing evidence of global warming” is an introductory prepositional phrase that establishes a contrast with the main clause, “34 different states plan to develop nearly 100 new coal-burning electric plants in the next decade.” A comma should follow an introductory phrase when it clearly separates that opening context from the independent clause that follows. The comma makes the sentence’s logic immediately readable: evidence of global warming is increasing, yet states are planning additional coal-burning plants. This construction also preserves the intended concessive relationship expressed by “despite.”

In standard written English, punctuation should reflect the grammatical structure and relationship of ideas. Here, the introductory phrase is not a complete sentence and does not independently state an action; it modifies the main assertion about what the states plan to do. Setting it off with a comma is therefore the conventional and clearest choice. The [Purdue Online Writing Lab guidance on commas after introductory elements](#) explains this use of a comma. For additional guidance on commas and sentence structure, see the [GrammarBook comma rules](#).

QUESTION NO: 59

The program to control the entry of illegal drugs into the country was a failure in 1987. If the program had been successful, the wholesale price of most illegal drugs would not have dropped substantially in 1987.

The argument in the passage depends on which of the following assumptions?

- A. The supply of illegal drugs dropped substantially in 1987.
- B. The price paid for most illegal drugs by the average consumer did not drop substantially in 1987.
- C. Domestic production of illegal drugs increased at a higher rate than did the entry of such drugs into the country.
- D. The wholesale price of a few illegal drugs increased substantially in 1987.
- E. A drop in demand for most illegal drugs in 1987 was not the sole cause of the drop in their wholesale price.

ANSWER: E

Explanation:

The argument treats a substantial drop in wholesale drug prices as evidence that the entry-control program did not succeed. This reasoning requires the assumption that reduced demand was not, by itself, sufficient to produce the observed price drop. If a fall in demand alone could completely explain lower wholesale prices, then prices could have fallen substantially even if the program had successfully restricted the entry of drugs into the country. In that circumstance, the price movement would not establish anything reliable about the program’s effectiveness.

By assuming that a demand decrease was not the sole cause, the argument preserves the evidentiary connection between lower wholesale prices and the availability of drugs in the wholesale market. Basic supply-and-demand analysis recognizes that equilibrium prices can change because of shifts in either supply or demand; the stated assumption ensures that the price decrease retains significance for assessing a program intended to affect supply through entry restrictions. See [OpenStax, Demand, Supply, and Equilibrium](#) and [Encyclopaedia Britannica, Supply and Demand](#).

QUESTION NO: 60

Read the passage carefully and then choose the best answer to each question. Answer the question based upon what is stated or implied in the reading passage.

In Ursula LeGuin's short story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," everyone in the city of Omelas is happy — everyone, that is, except the child who is kept locked in a basement closet. The child is left entirely alone and neglected except for occasional visits from the citizens of Omelas. They come at a certain age as a rite of initiation, to learn the secret of the happiness they enjoy. They come to learn that their happiness has a price: the suffering of an innocent child. In the end, most people stay in Omelas; but a few, unable to bear the fact that they are responsible for the suffering of that child, reject this utopia built upon a utilitarian morality.

Utilitarianism is an ethical theory based upon the belief that happiness is the ultimate good and that people should use happiness as the measure for determining right and wrong. For utilitarian, the right thing to do is that which will bring about the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people. Furthermore, utilitarianism argues that the intention of people's actions does not matter; only the consequences of their actions are morally relevant, because only the consequences determine how much happiness is produced.

Although many useful social policies and much legislation are founded on this "greatest good" philosophy, utilitarianism can be problematic as a basis for morality. First, happiness is not so easy to quantify, and any measurement is bound to be subjective. Second, in a theory that treats everything except happiness as instrumentally rather than intrinsically valuable, anything — or, more importantly, anyone — can (and should) be treated as a means to an end, if it means greater happiness. This rejects the notion that human beings have their own intrinsic value. Further, utilitarianism puts the burden of the happiness of the masses on the suffering of the few. Is the happiness of many worth the suffering of a few? Why do those few deserve to suffer? Isn't this burden of suffering morally irresponsible? This is the dilemma so brilliantly illustrated in LeGuin's story. The author summarizes LeGuin's story primarily to

- A. show how good the story is.
- B. get readers interested in the story.
- C. illustrates the power of words.
- D. illustrate the central problem with utilitarianism.
- E. illustrates a utilitarian utopia.

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

The author summarizes LeGuin's story primarily to **illustrate the central problem with utilitarianism**. The passage introduces Omelas as a society whose widespread happiness depends on the extreme suffering of one innocent child. That arrangement gives a concrete narrative form to the ethical concern developed in the final paragraph: a morality focused exclusively on maximizing aggregate happiness may permit people to be treated merely as instruments for producing benefits for others. The author explicitly connects the example to this concern by stating that utilitarianism can place "the burden of the happiness of the masses on the suffering of the few," then identifies this burden as "the dilemma so brilliantly illustrated in LeGuin's story." Thus, the story is not included simply as literary background; it functions as evidence and illustration for the passage's critique of a greatest-happiness calculation that overlooks an individual's intrinsic value. This use aligns with standard discussions of utilitarianism, which characterize it as evaluating actions by their consequences for overall well-being, while also recognizing concerns about justice and individual rights. See the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy's overview of utilitarianism](#) and the [text of "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas"](#).

QUESTION NO: 61

Among the era's triumphs were the Civil Rights Act of 1964, barring segregation in public places; the 24th Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1964, prohibiting the poll tax; and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which ordered the state should abolish literacy tests as a requirement for registering to vote.

- A. should abolish literacy tests as a requirement for registering to vote.
- B. would abolish literacy tests as a requirement for registering to vote.
- C. to abolish literacy tests as a requirement for registering to vote.
- D. abolishing of literacy tests as a requirement for registering to vote.
- E. the abolishing of literacy tests as a requirement for registering to vote

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

The correct completion is "to abolish literacy tests as a requirement for registering to vote." In the relative clause, the verb *ordered* takes an object followed by an infinitive: "ordered the state to abolish." This construction clearly expresses that the Voting Rights Act imposed a required action on state governments. The infinitive *to abolish* identifies the action mandated by the law and creates a concise, idiomatic parallel with the earlier descriptions of legal measures: the Civil Rights Act barred segregation, the constitutional amendment prohibited the poll tax, and the Voting Rights Act ordered states to eliminate literacy tests for voter registration.

This grammatical structure also accurately reflects the historical function of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The Act addressed discriminatory voting practices, including literacy tests that had been used to deny eligible citizens the ability to register and vote. The U.S. Department of Justice describes the Act as a landmark federal statute protecting voting rights, while the National Archives provides the statutory text and historical context. See the [U.S. Department of Justice Voting Section](#) and the [National Archives overview of the Voting Rights Act](#).

QUESTION NO: 62

Juror anonymity was unknown to American common law and jurisprudence in the country's first two centuries. Anonymity was first employed in federal prosecutions of organized crime in New York in the 1980's. Although anonymous juries are unusual since they are typically only empanelled in organized-crime cases, its use has spread more recently to widely publicized cases, such as the federal prosecution of police officers accused of beating Rodney King and the trial of those accused of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

In these cases, attorneys selected a jury from a panel of prospective jurors whose names, addresses, ethnic backgrounds and religious affiliations remained unknown to either side. This unorthodox procedure, designed to protect jurors from outside influence and the fear of retaliation, has occasionally been employed in New York federal courts since the trial of drug kingpin Leroy "Nicky" Barnes. Despite apparent benefits, critics assail anonymous juries on the grounds that they are an infringement of the sixth amendment guarantee of an impartial jury and because they present a serious and unnecessary erosion of the presumption of innocence.

Since many attorneys believe trials are frequently won or lost during jury selection, any procedure diminishing the role of counsel in the procedure necessitates close scrutiny and criticism. Opponents of anonymous juries argue that the procedure restricts meaningful voir dire, (questioning of the jury panel), and thereby undermines the defendant's sixth amendment right to an impartial jury. Critics also claim that jurors interpret their anonymity as proof of the defendant's criminal proclivity, thereby subverting the presumption of innocence.

However, consistent with due process and the sixth amendment, the trial judge may refuse to ask prospective jurors any questions not reasonably calculated to expose biases or prejudices relevant to the case. Although addresses and group affiliations may indicate significant potential for bias, attorneys do not have an unfettered right to this information in every circumstance. Denying access to these facts may indeed constrain an attorney's ability to assemble an ideal jury, but it violates no constitutional right One function of the fourth paragraph of the passage is to

- A. Qualify the extent to which a previously introduced viewpoint may be relevant
- B. Expose the flaw in a criticism put forth in a previous paragraph
- C. Introduce information that supports a theory put forth in a previous paragraph

- D. Support an argument in favor of a given interpretation of a situation
- E. Show the chain of reasoning that led to the conclusions of a specific study

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

“Expose the flaw in a criticism put forth in a previous paragraph” correctly describes the function of the fourth paragraph. The preceding paragraph presents the critics’ constitutional objection: anonymous-jury procedures allegedly restrict meaningful voir dire and therefore impair the accused person’s right to an impartial jury. The fourth paragraph directly addresses that contention, beginning with “However” and explaining the legal limitation on counsel’s questioning of prospective jurors. A trial judge may decline questions that are not reasonably designed to reveal case-relevant bias or prejudice. Thus, the passage establishes that counsel’s access to jurors’ addresses and affiliations is not an unlimited constitutional entitlement.

The paragraph concedes a practical consequence—less information can make it harder for an attorney to form an ideal jury—but distinguishes that consequence from a constitutional violation. This distinction identifies the weakness in the criticism: reduced access to potentially useful juror information does not itself establish that the Sixth Amendment has been infringed. The passage therefore uses the fourth paragraph as a rebuttal to the earlier constitutional argument against anonymity. The Sixth Amendment’s jury-trial guarantee is available in the [Constitution Annotated](#), and the federal framework governing examination of prospective jurors appears in [Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 24](#).

QUESTION NO: 63

Continuous indoor fluorescent light benefits the health of hamsters with inherited heart disease. A group of them exposed to continuous fluorescent light survived twenty-five percent longer than a similar group exposed instead to equal periods of indoor fluorescent light and of darkness. The method of the research described above is most likely to be applicable in addressing which of the following questions?

- A. Can industrial workers who need to see their work do so better by sunlight or by fluorescent light?
- B. Can hospital lighting be improved to promote the recovery of patients?
- C. How do deep-sea fish survive in total darkness?
- D. What are the inherited illnesses to which hamsters are subject?
- E. Are there plants that require specific periods of darkness in order to bloom?

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

“Can hospital lighting be improved to promote the recovery of patients?” is correct because the described research method is a controlled comparative experiment testing whether differing light-exposure schedules affect a health outcome. The investigators hold the type of indoor light constant while varying the presence or absence of periods of darkness, then compare survival between similar groups. That basic design can be adapted to a hospital setting: comparable patient groups could receive different carefully defined lighting regimens, while researchers measure recovery outcomes such as length of stay, sleep quality, functional improvement, or clinically appropriate recovery indicators. The question asks where the *method*, rather than the particular hamster finding, can be applied. Research using animal models and controlled exposure conditions is commonly used to identify interventions worth examining in human clinical environments, provided that subsequent patient research follows appropriate ethical review, informed consent requirements where applicable, and safeguards. The National Institutes of Health describes animal-model research as a means of advancing understanding relevant to human health, and clinical research guidance emphasizes structured study designs for evaluating health interventions. See the [NIH overview of animal research](#) and the [ClinicalTrials.gov study basics](#).

QUESTION NO: 64

Certain messenger molecules fight damage to the lungs from noxious air by telling the muscle cells encircling the lungs' airways to contract. This partially seals off the lungs. An asthma attack occurs when the messenger molecules are activated unnecessarily, in response to harmless things like pollen or household dust.

Which of the following, if true, points to the most serious flaw of a plan to develop a medication that would prevent asthma attacks by blocking receipt of any messages sent by the messenger molecules referred to above?

- A. Researchers do not yet know how the body produces the messenger molecules that trigger asthma attacks.
- B. Researchers do not yet know what makes one person's messenger molecules more easily activated than another's.
- C. Such a medication would not become available for several years, because of long lead times in both development and manufacture.
- D. Such a medication would be unable to distinguish between messages triggered by pollen and household dust and messages triggered by noxious air.
- E. Such a medication would be a preventative only and would be unable to alleviate an asthma attack once it had started.

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

Such a medication would be unable to distinguish between messages triggered by pollen and household dust and messages triggered by noxious air. This identifies the central and most serious problem because the messenger molecules have a useful protective function as well as a harmful role in asthma attacks. When noxious air is present, their messages cause airway muscles to contract, partially sealing the lungs against damaging airborne substances. A medication that blocks receipt of *any* messages from these molecules would not selectively prevent the unnecessary responses to harmless triggers. It would also block the protective responses that occur when the lungs encounter genuinely harmful air.

Thus, the proposed treatment could leave the lungs less able to defend themselves against noxious air. The flaw concerns the plan's fundamental mechanism, not merely an unanswered research question, a delay in development, or the fact that the drug is preventive. In critical-reasoning terms, the plan assumes that eliminating the signaling pathway has only the desired effect, while the passage explicitly establishes an important beneficial effect that would also be eliminated. For background on the airway constriction involved in asthma, see the [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's asthma overview](#). GMAT critical-reasoning questions similarly require assessing whether a proposed action has consequences that undermine its intended goal; see [GMAC's GMAT exam overview](#).

QUESTION NO: 65

An annually conducted, nationwide survey shows a continuing marked decline in the use of illegal drugs by high school seniors over the last three years.

Which of the following, if true, casts most doubt on the relevance of the survey results described above for drawing conclusions about illegal drug use in the teen-age population as a whole?

- A. Because of cuts in funding, no survey of illegal drug use by high school seniors will be conducted next year.
- B. The decline uncovered in the survey has occurred despite the decreasing cost of illegal drugs.
- C. Illegal drug use by teen-agers is highest in those areas of the country where teen-agers are least likely to stay in high school for their senior year.
- D. Survey participants are more likely now than they were three years ago to describe as "heroic" people who were addicted to illegal drugs and have been able to quit.
- E. The proportion of high school seniors who say that they strongly disapprove of illegal drug use has declined over the last three years.

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

"Illegal drug use by teen-agers is highest in those areas of the country where teen-agers are least likely to stay in high school for their senior year." is correct because it identifies a serious mismatch between the surveyed group and the broader population about which the conclusion is to be made. The survey measures high school seniors, so it necessarily excludes many teenagers who have already left school and those who are unlikely to remain enrolled through senior year. If drug use is especially high in areas with low senior-year retention, the surveyed seniors may systematically omit a substantial portion of teenagers with relatively high rates of illegal-drug use. Consequently, even a real decline among enrolled high school seniors would not reliably establish a similar decline among all teenagers. This is a sampling-representativeness problem: a nationwide survey is useful for the population it actually samples, but its relevance to a larger population depends on whether the sample adequately represents that population's important subgroups. The National Center for Education Statistics distinguishes enrolled students from youth who have dropped out in its reporting on school status and dropout measures, illustrating why these populations cannot automatically be treated as interchangeable. See [NCES: High School Graduation Rates](#) and [NCES: High School Dropout Rates](#).

QUESTION NO: 66

To prevent some conflicts of interest, Congress could prohibit high-level government officials from accepting positions as lobbyists for three years after such officials leave government service. One such official concluded, however, that such a prohibition would be unfortunate because it would prevent high-level government officials from earning a livelihood for three years.

The official's conclusion logically depends on which of the following assumptions?

- A. Laws should not restrict the behavior of former government officials.
- B. Lobbyists are typically people who have previously been high-level government officials.
- C. Low-level government officials do not often become lobbyists when they leave government service.
- D. High-level government officials who leave government service are capable of earning a livelihood only as lobbyists.
- E. High-level government officials who leave government service are currently permitted to act as lobbyists for only three years.

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

The conclusion that the proposed three-year lobbying ban would be unfortunate rests on the stated concern that it would prevent former high-level officials from earning a livelihood during that period. For that concern to establish the conclusion, the official must assume that these individuals have no viable way to earn a livelihood other than working as lobbyists. If they could earn a livelihood through other employment, consulting, teaching, business, or another lawful occupation, then being unable to lobby for three years would not itself prevent them from earning a livelihood. Thus, the necessary bridge between the proposed prohibition and the claimed inability to earn a living is that former high-level officials can earn their livelihoods only as lobbyists. This is a classic necessary-assumption structure: the premise identifies a restriction on one type of job, while the conclusion treats that restriction as eliminating the ability to make a living. The needed assumption supplies the missing link by making the restricted job indispensable. This approach follows the critical-reasoning practice of identifying an unstated claim that must be true for an argument's evidence to support its conclusion; see [GMAC's GMAT exam structure overview](#) and [Khan Academy's logical-reasoning overview](#).

QUESTION NO: 67

Mechanicorp's newest product costs so little to make that it appears doubtful the company will be able to sell it without increasing the markup the company usually allows for profit: potential clients would simply not believe that something so inexpensive would really work. Yet Mechanicorp's reputation is built on fair prices incorporating only modest profit margins. The statements above, if true, most strongly support which of the following?

- A. Mechanicorp will encounter difficulties in trying to set a price for its newest product that will promote sales without threatening to compromise the company's reputation.
- B. Mechanicorp achieves large annual profits, despite small profits per unit sold, by means of a high volume of sales.

- C. Mechanicorp made a significant computational error in calculating the production costs for its newest product.
- D. Mechanicorp's newest product is intended to perform tasks that can be performed by other devices costing less to manufacture.
- E. Mechanicorp's production processes are designed with the same ingenuity as are the products that the company makes.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

"Mechanicorp will encounter difficulties in trying to set a price for its newest product that will promote sales without threatening to compromise the company's reputation" is most strongly supported because the passage establishes a direct pricing dilemma. The product's exceptionally low manufacturing cost means that a price based on Mechanicorp's usual modest markup may be so low that customers infer the product is ineffective. To overcome that perception and encourage sales, the company may need to apply a substantially higher markup. However, doing so would conflict with the company's established reputation for fair pricing and modest profit margins. Thus, Mechanicorp must balance two competing commercial needs: choosing a price high enough to make customers view the product as credible, while keeping the price sufficiently consistent with its public identity and customer expectations. This is a standard critical-reasoning inference: the stated facts do not establish a particular pricing decision, but they do establish that arriving at a price that protects both sales prospects and reputation will be difficult. For background on identifying conclusions and inferences from stated premises in GMAT-style Critical Reasoning, see [GMAC's GMAT exam structure overview](#) and [GMAC's GMAT exam information](#).

QUESTION NO: 68

An Australian group named Action Council on Smoking and Health (ACSH) has recently lobbied to make warnings on cigarette packets more graphic. The council proposed that striking visual photos of diseased organs should be put on at least 50% of outside packaging, in conjunction with health warnings outlining smoking hazards enumerated in a separate leaflet placed inside the cigarette packet. The ACSH claim that bland and ineffectual warnings like "Smoking is a health hazard" currently found on cigarette packets are not nearly sufficient.

Substituting those inadequate admonitions with explicit photos will provide a powerful visual stimulus to help smokers relinquish their habit. The current cautions on cigarette packets have little or no impact on smokers who have grown immune to the warnings that focus on abstract tobacco related risks and illnesses from which smokers can easily disassociate themselves. The proposed new tactics would concentrate on the perspective of the individual smoker through a demonstration of what is occurring in his body each time he reaches for a cigarette, rather than a generic cautionary word of advise. The ACSH cited the results of recent studies conducted by psychologists at McKean University confirming that evidence related to one's own experience is more effective at influencing future behavior than a presentation of facts and figures. A further rationale for the addition of pictures to cigarette packages is the finding that smokers handle their packets 20-30 times a day, on average, thus, if graphic pictures on cigarette packets were introduced, smoker would have 20-30 chances to face the harsh reality of what damage they are doing to themselves each time they light up.

Even more essential than the pictures on the outside label, ACSH strongly advocate including warnings and helpful information in a leaflet inserted into the packet of cigarettes. Even an analgesic, ACSH adds, found in every bathroom cabinet has all possible side effects enumerated in the insert. How much more imperative is it then when the substance in question is tobacco, a dried weed that contains highly noxious nicotine that society still accepts even though it kills one of every two of its users.

Fundamentally, what is at stake here is consumer rights. Smokers should know what substances they are inhaling, and what damage they are inflicting to their bodies, though surprisingly, even today, many do not. For this reason alone, the recommendation for more graphic pictures and warnings on cigarette packets, which many seem excessive, is being seriously considered.

It can be inferred from the passage

- A. That cigarette manufacturers would comply with regulations ordering them to add graphic pictures of diseased organs to their outside packaging.
- B. That society will not continue to condone smoking if it is proven even more dangerous than was previously assumed.
- C. That smoking cigarettes causes damage to the internal organs of the body.
- D. That if the written warnings were less bland and ineffectual, smokers would not take more notice of them.

E. That smokers look at their cigarette packages each time they take out a cigarette.

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

“That smoking cigarettes causes damage to the internal organs of the body” is supported by the passage’s central rationale for graphic package warnings. The proposed images are specifically described as photographs of diseased organs, intended to show smokers the physical harm occurring in their own bodies whenever they smoke. The passage also refers repeatedly to smoking-related illnesses, bodily damage, hazardous substances inhaled by smokers, and tobacco’s deadly consequences. These details establish the necessary inference that smoking harms internal organs; otherwise, diseased-organ imagery would not serve the stated purpose of making the risks concrete and personally relevant.

The inference does not require medical details about every organ or disease. It follows directly from the passage’s depiction of graphic images as truthful evidence of damage caused by smoking and from its emphasis on informing consumers about that damage. This interpretation is consistent with established public-health evidence: the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) states that cigarette smoking harms nearly every organ of the body, and the [World Health Organization](#) identifies tobacco use as a major cause of serious disease and death. Thus, the statement is a sound inference from the passage.

QUESTION NO: 69

In the past year, there has been a large drop in the number of new cars sold, due to harsh economic conditions in the marketplace and high taxes. At the same time, the average price paid for a new car has risen dramatically.

Which of the following, if true, best explains the increase in the average price of a new car?

- A. The price of used cars has climbed steadily over the past ten years.
- B. There will be a tax reduction later in the year which is expected to aid moderate and low income families.
- C. The market for expensive car has been unaffected by the current economic conditions.
- D. Economic conditions are expected to get significantly worse before the end of the year.
- E. Low demand for trucks and vans has led to lower production in the factories.

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

The market for expensive car has been unaffected by the current economic conditions best resolves the apparent contradiction because an average price depends not only on the prices of individual vehicles, but also on the mix of vehicles that buyers purchase. Harsh economic conditions and high taxes can sharply reduce purchases in price-sensitive segments, particularly lower- and middle-priced new cars. If sales of expensive cars remain stable while total new-car sales fall, expensive vehicles become a larger proportion of all new cars sold. That shift in the composition of sales raises the average transaction price, even if the listed or transaction price of any particular model has not increased. For example, if many economical cars are no longer being purchased but roughly the same number of luxury vehicles continue to sell, the remaining set of purchases will have a higher average price. This directly supplies the missing link between lower overall sales and a dramatic rise in the average price paid. The reasoning reflects the Critical Reasoning task of identifying information that explains an apparent discrepancy, as described in the [GMAT Exam sections overview](#) and the [GMAT preparation guidance](#).

QUESTION NO: 70

On the basis of a decrease in the college-age population, many colleges now anticipate increasingly smaller freshman classes each year. Surprised by a 40 percent increase in qualified applicants over the previous year, however, administrators at Nice College now plan to hire more faculty for courses taken by all freshmen.

Which of the following statements about Nice College’s current qualified applicants, if true, would strongly suggest that the administrators’ plan is flawed?

- A. A substantially higher percentage than usual plan to study for advanced degrees after graduation from college.
- B. According to their applications, their level of participation in extracurricular activities and varsity sports is unusually high.
- C. According to their applications, none of them lives in a foreign country.
- D. A substantially lower percentage than usual rate Nice College as their first choice among the colleges to which they are applying.
- E. A substantially lower percentage than usual list mathematics as their intended major.

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

“A substantially lower percentage than usual rate Nice College as their first choice among the colleges to which they are applying” strongly indicates that the larger applicant pool may not produce a larger freshman class. The administrators infer a need for additional faculty teaching freshman-wide courses from the 40 percent increase in qualified applicants. That inference depends on an unstated assumption: a sufficiently normal proportion of those qualified applicants will accept an admission offer and enroll at Nice College. If an unusually small share identifies Nice College as its first-choice institution, many may be applying as a backup while intending to attend another college if admitted there. Consequently, Nice College’s admission yield—the percentage of admitted students who actually enroll—could decline enough that the incoming freshman class remains unchanged or becomes smaller despite the application increase. Hiring more faculty for courses required of all freshmen would therefore be based on an unreliable estimate of actual enrollment demand, not merely on the number of applications received. This is a classic Critical Reasoning issue of distinguishing evidence about a preliminary stage, applications, from the outcome relevant to the plan, enrolled freshmen. See the GMAT critical-reasoning preparation guidance at mba.com and the overview of college enrollment yield at [NCES](http://nces.gov).

QUESTION NO: 71

Informed people generally assimilate information from several divergent sources before coming to an opinion. However, most popular news organizations view foreign affairs solely through the eyes of our State Department. In reporting the political crisis in foreign country B, news organizations must endeavor to find alternative sources of information.

Which of the following inferences can be drawn from the argument above?

- A. To the degree that a news source gives an account of another country that mirrors that of our State Department, that reporting is suspect.
- B. To protect their integrity, news media should avoid the influence of State Department releases in their coverage of foreign affairs.
- C. Reporting that is not influenced by the State Department is usually more accurate than are other accounts.
- D. The alternative sources of information mentioned in the passage would probably not share the same views as the State Department.
- E. A report cannot be seen as influenced by the State Department if it accurately depicts the events in a foreign country.

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

The alternative sources of information mentioned in the passage would probably not share the same views as the State Department. The argument establishes a standard for forming well-founded opinions: informed people consult several *divergent* sources before reaching a conclusion. It then criticizes news organizations for viewing foreign affairs solely through the State Department’s perspective and concludes that, when covering the crisis, those organizations should seek alternative sources. In this context, “alternative” is not merely a different outlet repeating the same official position. To serve the stated purpose of avoiding a single perspective and moving toward the practice associated with informed judgment, the additional sources would likely offer perspectives that differ from the State Department’s view. The word “probably” is appropriately cautious: the passage supports an expectation of differing viewpoints, rather than guaranteeing disagreement on every fact or conclusion. This is a sound inference because it follows the argument’s central contrast between reliance on

one viewpoint and the use of divergent information sources. GMAT Critical Reasoning questions test the ability to identify what an argument logically supports; see the [GMAT Exam format overview](#) and Purdue OWL's discussion of [logic in argumentative writing](#).

QUESTION NO: 72

A certain mayor has proposed a fee of five dollars per day on private vehicles entering the city, claiming that the fee will alleviate the city's traffic congestion. The mayor reasons that, since the fee will exceed the cost of round-trip bus fare from many nearby points, many people will switch from using their cars to using the bus.

Which of the following statements, if true, provides the best evidence that the mayor's reasoning is flawed?

- A. Projected increases in the price of gasoline will increase the cost of taking a private vehicle into the city.
- B. The cost of parking fees already makes it considerably more expensive for most people to take a private vehicle into the city than to take a bus.
- C. Most of the people currently riding the bus do not own private vehicles.
- D. Many commuters opposing the mayor's plan have indicated that they would rather endure traffic congestion than pay a five-dollar-per day fee.
- E. During the average workday, private vehicles owned and operated by people living within the city account for twenty percent of the city's traffic congestion.

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

The cost of parking fees already makes it considerably more expensive for most people to take a private vehicle into the city than to take a bus is the best evidence because it tests the mayor's central assumption about commuters' behavior. The reasoning assumes that making driving cost more than a bus trip will cause many drivers to abandon their cars. Yet this statement establishes that, for most people, driving is already substantially more expensive once parking is included, while many nevertheless continue to drive. Thus, the proposed five-dollar fee does not supply a persuasive basis for predicting a large shift to bus travel: the relevant price difference is already present without producing the claimed behavioral result. The statement therefore directly weakens the causal link between an added driving cost and a meaningful reduction in congestion. This is a classic Critical Reasoning approach: identify the conclusion, isolate its necessary behavioral assumption, and assess whether evidence undermines that assumption. GMAT verbal questions commonly require evaluating arguments by focusing on the connection between stated evidence and the conclusion, as described in the [GMAT Exam overview](#) and the [official GMAT preparation resources](#).

QUESTION NO: 73

An overly centralized economy, not the changes in the climate, is responsible for the poor agricultural production in Country X since its new government came to power. Neighboring Country Y has experienced the same climatic conditions, but while agricultural production has been falling in Country X, it has been rising in Country Y.

Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the argument above?

- A. Industrial production also is declining in Country X.
- B. Whereas Country Y is landlocked, Country X has a major seaport.
- C. Both Country X and Country Y have been experiencing drought conditions.
- D. The crops that have always been grown in Country X are different from those that have always been grown in Country Y.
- E. Country X's new government instituted a centralized economy with the intention of ensuring an equitable distribution of goods.

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

The correct answer is “*The crops that have always been grown in Country X are different from those that have always been grown in Country Y.*” The argument treats Country Y’s rising agricultural production under the same climatic conditions as evidence that climate cannot explain Country X’s falling production. That comparison is persuasive only if the two countries’ agriculture would be expected to respond similarly to a given climatic change. Different crops can have substantially different tolerances for rainfall, temperature, growing-season length, pests, and soil moisture. Therefore, the same climate conditions could be relatively favorable for the crops grown in Country Y while being harmful to the crops grown in Country X. If so, Country Y’s production increase does not provide a sound basis for ruling out climate as a cause of Country X’s decline. The central comparison has a relevant difference that may account for the different outcomes, weakening the conclusion that the centralized economy, rather than climate, is responsible. This is a standard Critical Reasoning approach: identify whether the evidence used for a comparison rests on an unstated assumption that the compared cases are sufficiently alike in the relevant respect. See the GMAT preparation overview at [GMAT Exam](#) and guidance on evaluating argument assumptions at [Purdue OWL](#).

QUESTION NO: 74

A milepost on the towpath read “21” on the side facing the hiker as she approached it and “23” on its back. She reasoned that the next milepost forward on the path would indicate that she was halfway between one end of the path and the other. However, the milepost one mile further on read “20” facing her and “24” behind.

Which of the following, if true, would explain the discrepancy described above?

- A. The numbers on the next milepost had been reversed.
- B. The numbers on the mileposts indicate kilometers, not miles.
- C. The facing numbers indicate miles to the end of the path, not miles from the beginning.
- D. A milepost was missing between the two the hiker encountered.
- E. The mileposts had originally been put in place for the use of mountain bikers, not for hikers.

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

The statement “The facing numbers indicate miles to the end of the path, not miles from the beginning” resolves the apparent inconsistency because the two sides of each marker measure distance in opposite directions. At the first milepost, the side facing the hiker reads 21 because she is 21 miles from the end toward which she is walking; its reverse reads 23 because she is 23 miles from the starting end. Thus, the entire path is 44 miles long. After she walks one mile forward, she is one mile closer to her destination and one mile farther from the starting end. The next marker therefore correctly reads 20 on the side facing her and 24 on the reverse side. Her expectation of seeing matching values depended on treating both numbers as though they measured distance from the same endpoint. Instead, the changing pair of values consistently reflects reciprocal distances to the two ends of a fixed-length route. This is an explanatory critical-reasoning task: the credited statement must make every stated observation fit into one coherent model, rather than merely provide a related fact. See GMAC’s overview of [GMAT exam reasoning skills](#) and its [GMAT preparation guidance](#).

QUESTION NO: 75

Contrary to the statements of labor leaders, the central economic problem facing America today is not the distribution of wealth. It is productivity. With the productivity of U.S. industry stagnant, or even declining slightly, the economic pie is no longer growing. Labor leaders, of course, point to what they consider an unfair distribution of the slices of pie to justify their demands for further increases in wages and benefits. And in the past, when the pie was still growing, management could afford to acquiesce. No longer. Until productivity resumes its growth, there can be no justification for further increases in the compensation of workers.

Which of the following statements by a labor leader focuses on the logical weakness in the argument above?

- A. Although the economic pie is no longer growing, the portion of the pie allocated to American workers remains unjustly small.

- B.** If management fails to accommodate the demands of workers, labor leaders will be forced to call strikes that will cripple the operation of industry.
- C.** Although productivity is stagnant, the U.S. population is growing, so that the absolute size of the economic pie continues to grow as well.
- D.** As a labor leader, I can be concerned only with the needs of working people, not with the problems faced by management.
- E.** The stagnation of U.S. industry has been caused largely by factors — such as foreign competition — beyond the control of American workers.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

“Although the economic pie is no longer growing, the portion of the pie allocated to American workers remains unjustly small.” correctly identifies the argument’s unsupported assumption: that a lack of overall economic growth eliminates every possible justification for increasing workers’ compensation. A pie that is not growing can still be divided differently. If workers currently receive an unfairly small share, their wages and benefits could be increased through a reallocation of the existing pie rather than through additional growth in total output. Thus, stagnant productivity may limit the availability of new wealth, but it does not by itself establish that the current distribution is fair or that compensation cannot justifiably change. The labor leader’s statement directly engages the argument’s shift from a factual claim about the pie’s size to a normative conclusion about what workers should receive. In Critical Reasoning, a strong response to an argument often exposes an unstated assumption necessary for its conclusion; here, the necessary assumption is that the existing allocation of wealth is already equitable. See the GMAT’s overview of critical-reasoning skills at [MBA.com](https://mba.com) and the discussion of assumptions in arguments at [Purdue OWL](https://www.purdue.edu/owl).

QUESTION NO: 76

Pop singer Clive Jones has been nominated for six Grammy Awards and his new album is enjoying its eighth consecutive week at number one on the charts. It is safe to say that Jones is today’s best pop artist.

Which of the following assumptions is most pivotal to this argument?

- A.** Jones’s previous albums were also chart-toppers.
- B.** Jones’s next album will outsell his current release.
- C.** Grammy nominations and record sales are accurate measures of an artist’s greatness.
- D.** Jones will win several of the Grammy Awards for which he has been nominated.
- E.** Jones is popular with both fans and music critics.

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

The argument concludes that Clive Jones is today’s best pop artist based on two facts: his six Grammy nominations and his album’s eight-week run at the top of the charts. For those facts to establish artistic superiority rather than merely recognition or commercial success, the argument must assume that Grammy nominations and record sales are reliable indicators of an artist’s greatness. This assumption supplies the essential bridge between the evidence presented and the claim that Jones is the best artist. If nominations and chart performance do measure artistic greatness accurately, then Jones’s exceptional performance on both measures provides substantial support for the conclusion. Assumption questions test whether an unstated idea is necessary for an argument’s evidence to support its conclusion; here, the needed idea is the validity of the criteria used to judge “best.” The [Recording Academy’s Grammy Awards information](https://www.grammy.com) describes the awards and nomination process, while [Billboard’s charts](https://www.billboard.com/charts) illustrate the type of commercial-ranking evidence invoked by a number-one chart position.

QUESTION NO: 77

Wheat has more nutritional value than rye. But since oats have more nutritional value than rice, it follows that wheat has more nutritional value than rice.

Any of the following, if introduced into the argument as an additional premise, makes the argument above logically correct EXCEPT:

- A. Wheat and oats have the same nutritional value.
- B. Rye has more nutritional value than oats.
- C. Rye has more nutritional value than rice.
- D. Rye and oats have the same nutritional value.
- E. Oats have more nutritional value than wheat.

ANSWER: E

Explanation:

The correct answer is *Oats have more nutritional value than wheat*. The question asks for the added premise that does **not** guarantee the stated conclusion. The original statements establish only two separate comparisons: wheat exceeds rye, and oats exceed rice. Adding that oats exceed wheat places oats above wheat, but it still does not establish whether wheat exceeds rice. For example, oats could have a nutritional value of 10, wheat 8, and rice 9. In that case, oats have more value than wheat and than rice, while wheat does not have more value than rice. Thus, the added statement is compatible with the premises and with the conclusion being false, so it cannot make the reasoning logically valid. This is a standard conditional-sufficiency task: the relevant test is whether the extra premise forces the conclusion in every possible ordering, rather than merely making it plausible. GMAT verbal reasoning questions assess the ability to evaluate relationships among claims and determine what follows logically; see the GMAT overview at mba.com and GMAC's preparation resources at mba.com.