

Prep Test 29

(8–15)

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29/01/01

(A)

A and B disagree about which point?

A and B disagree about which point questions always come after a two-speaker argument. Sometimes it will be the sole question, but just as often it is one of two questions associated with a two-speaker argument.

The politician concludes that the funding for the health campaign should be raised through increases in cigarette taxes. The politician bases this conclusion on the fact that cigarettes cause many health problems, and so it is reasonable to make the smokers pay the cost of the campaign. This seems logical enough. On what point does the smoker disagree? The smoker believes this conclusion is unreasonable, since eating high-fat foods also leads to many health problems, yet the politician doesn't propose taxing those people.

- (A) * Both the smoker and the politician focus on the "reasonableness" of the proposal.
- (B) "More aware" is a red-flag word. Neither of them cares how aware either group is of the effects of their behaviors.
- (C) "Greater health hazard" is also a red-flag word. The word "greater" makes this choice over-expansive. The smoker says that "as many" health problems are caused by the high-fat foods.
- (D) Neither speaker addresses this. Presumably, all the people would benefit from the programs.
- (E) Neither speaker addresses the efficiency of the proposal.

29/01/02

(A)

B criticizes A's conclusion by...

B criticizes A's conclusion questions always come after a two-speaker argument. Sometimes it will be the sole question, but just as often it is one of two questions associated with a two-speaker argument.

The politician concludes that the funding for the health campaign should be raised through increases in cigarette taxes. This conclusion is based on the fact that cigarettes cause many health problems, and so it is reasonable to make the smokers pay the cost of the campaign. This seems logical enough. How does B criticize A's argument? The smoker points out that unhealthy foods cause as many health problems as smoking, yet the politician is not proposing that the consumers of unhealthy foods should pay the full cost of the campaign. If unhealthy food is not being taxed to cover the burden created by smoking, why should smoking be taxed to cover the burden caused by unhealthy food? The smoker introduces a new fact (the unhealthy foods are not being taxed) to show that the reasoning behind the conclusion (that smokers should be taxed more) is indefensible because it is unfair.

- (A) * The smoker offered a counterexample—unhealthy foods, which aren't being taxed—to show that the reasoning of the politician is not defensible because it is inequitable, it does not treat all unhealthy substances equally.
- (B) The smoker does not offer any solutions, he merely complains about the unequal treatment.
- (C) The smoker does not argue that the campaign will be inadequate to raise health awareness.
- (D) The smoker does not question the accuracy of the politician's information; the smoker concedes that smoking causes many health problems.
- (E) The smoker does not argue that things will get worse if the cigarette tax is increased.

29/01/03

(B)

Strengthen or weaken the argument

With EXCEPT questions four choices strengthen the conclusion and one has a neutral effect, is off the subject, or weakens the conclusion.

Gasohol has higher octane and fewer emissions than normal gasoline. It adds no more carbon dioxide to the air than plants can remove. Therefore, gasohol should be used more often.

There are many new facts that one could add that would strengthen the conclusion, so don't waste time trying to think of them. Look for the information that does not strengthen the conclusion.

- (A) This would strengthen the conclusion, since cars work better with gasohol.
- (B) This also would be a reason to use gasohol; it makes energy shortages less likely.
- (C) * This would be a reason to not use gasohol; if fuel efficiency is worse for gasohol, this might offset some or all of the benefits of gasohol.
- (D) This would be another great reason for switching; gasohol is cheaper.
- (E) If gasoline is worse for the plants, this would be yet another reason for using gasohol.

29/01/04

(D)

Resolve the apparent contradiction

The correct answer choice will explain why the facts are not contradictory. The incorrect answer choices usually merely expand on the facts. This allows the test-maker to use the familiar facts in the answer choice.

Cats sleep a lot, and stretch and yawn. Yet cats have big muscles that most animals would not have without exercise.

The correct answer choice needs to show how these cats can have big muscles despite sleeping so much. There are many possibilities. Maybe the cats do get a lot of exercise when they are awake. Maybe their diet or physiology allows them to have big muscles without doing the exercise. Anyway, don't get caught up in creating "what ifs". Look at the answer choices for ideas.

- (A) This explains why cats need sleep. It doesn't explain how they can sleep so much and still have big muscles.
- (B) This one is tricky. Just because other animals are able to pull off the same trick as cats, this does not explain how cats can sleep so much and still have big muscles. The facts in the argument told us most animals need to exercise but that cats, and presumably some other animals, can sleep a lot and still have big muscles.
- (C) Who cares? This choice isn't even close.
- (D) * This would explain how cats can sleep a lot yet still get enough exercise to have big muscles.
- (E) Who cares why cats need big muscles? We want to know how cats can have big muscles.

29/01/05

(C)

Identify the assumption

The correct assumption will bridge the gap between the facts and the conclusion.

These newest employees are being paid more than would normally be paid to new employees, and they have duties that are too complex for inexperienced workers. Thus, they should be given less complex duties and paid less.

The gap in the argument is pretty obvious. The argument assumes that these two new hires are inexperienced workers. That is the only assumption that can make this conclusion logical. After all, if these new hires are top-level executives rather than summer interns, then the higher pay would be warranted.

- (A) Although this choice does use one of the important terms—"less complex"—it doesn't offer any support for the conclusion. Remember, the correct assumption will support, or strengthen, the conclusion.
- (B) This initially seemed like a promising answer. The proper procedure in this situation would be to mark this answer choice as possible, and view the other answer choices. After comparing this choice to (C), you will see that this was not as strong an answer choice. Once we view this answer choice as part of the argument, it becomes much clearer that this is not the assumption. In order to draw the conclusion that they should get less complex tasks and be paid less, it is not necessary to assume that the new employees are being paid more because of their complex tasks.
- (C) * This choice is more concise. The argument assumes that the new employees are not up to doing the complex tasks; hence, they should be given less complex tasks and be paid less.

- (D) Who cares about Barnes? This is off the subject. The correct assumption needs to focus on the complexity of duties and the level of pay.
- (E) Who cares about other companies? This is off the subject.

29/01/06

(E)

Make a conclusion

What is the most logical recommendation based on the facts?

Health professionals are concerned about cholesterol. The more cholesterol in the blood, the higher the risk of a heart attack. Heart attacks are the leading cause of death. These three factors can influence the cholesterol level in the blood.

The first and third sentences are irrelevant for making the conclusion. It is normal for the argument to include superfluous information that slows the reader down and creates confusion. So, what can be properly inferred? There are many possible inferences. One can infer that people should pay attention to their cholesterol levels, or that people should not smoke, etc. Keep an open mind when reading the answer choices; the credited choice may focus on a different issue than you did.

- (A) This one is picky. The argument says that the “more” cholesterol in the blood the “higher” the risk. This does not support a conclusion that a “low” level of cholesterol leads to a “low” risk.
- (B) The argument never tries to quantify how much risk comes with smoking. The argument merely highlights smoking as a factor that influences cholesterol level.
- (C) The argument never even discussed diet, so it would be unsupported to conclude that diet is the “primary” cause of death. Watch out for red-flag words like “primary”.
- (D) The argument never rules out the possibility that smoking does other things that might influence heart disease.
- (E) * This is logically reasonable and does not contradict common sense. You would not be surprised to hear this summary at the end of a speech that contained these facts. Each of these three behaviors can be changed, thus lowering the cholesterol level and reducing the risk of heart attack.

29/01/07

(A)

Identify the flaw in the reasoning

One common type of flaw is for the argument to simply overlook something.

Debbie does a card trick where she finds the card in the deck. The skeptic conducted three tests. First, Debbie was videotaped, and no sleight of hand was detected. Second, the skeptic supplied a new deck (to prevent Debbie from using a marked deck). Third, the skeptic chose the card (to prevent Debbie from colluding with a “volunteer”). Debbie found the correct card each time. Thus, concluded the skeptic, she did not use any of these three tricks to select the correct card.

The flaw is pretty obvious. Debbie could use any of these tricks, as long as she uses them at the correct time. For example, she could fool the skeptic if she uses a marked deck in the first test, and sleight of hand in the second and third tests.

- (A) * Yes. Debbie simply used the technique that would not be detected by whatever test the skeptic was using at that time.
- (B) This choice only addresses one of the three tricks she might use.
- (C) The skeptic did actually consider that Debbie was using both of these tricks.
- (D) Although the skeptic did fail to consider that she used some other technique, this failure is not a weakness of the skeptic’s conclusion, because the skeptic merely concluded that she did not use one of these three techniques.
- (E) Although the skeptic did fail to consider that she was just lucky, this failure is not a weakness of the skeptic’s conclusion, because the skeptic concluded that she did not use one of these three techniques.

29/01/08

(D)

Make a conclusion

What is the most logical recommendation based on the facts?

Some say that carbohydrates are a good substitute for fatty foods. This is wrong. A high intake of carbohydrates causes more insulin, which creates more energy and/or body fat.

This is the low-carbohydrate diet argument. Focus on the third sentence. If one eats carbohydrates, insulin will result, which will result in more body fat (if it isn't used for energy).

- (A) No. Notice how the superfluous facts are used to muddy the waters. We are interested in low-carbohydrate, not low-fat.
- (B) This choice is totally mixed-up.
- (C) This choice is marginally better but is still not correct. If this choice said that people should not consume a high level of carbohydrates and fats, then it would be a reasonable recommendation.
- (D) * This choice is the closest to a logical recommendation. Notice that this choice presumes that a person can't burn the energy that is produced.
- (E) This choice is logically incorrect. If a person does not produce much insulin then he or she would lose weight.

29/01/09

(D)

A and B disagree about which point?

A and B disagree about which point questions always come after a two-speaker argument. Sometimes it will be the sole question, but just as often it is one of two questions associated with a two-speaker argument. You want to identify what fact the two speakers disagree about.

Jean concludes that they should add a low-cost model. This conclusion is based on Jean's understanding that the competitors sell more units at \$700-800 and her belief that the company could continue to increase overall sales by continuing to dominate the high-end market while also selling the low-end models. Tracy disagrees (predictably). She says that overall sales would be hurt because the competitors in the high-end market would now be on an equal footing with them.

- (A) "Greater potential for profits" is a red-flag word. When we examine the passage, we see that neither of them discussed profits. They discussed overall sales.
- (B) This is essentially Jean's argument: "Let's capture a new market segment." But Tracy focuses on overall sales. Tracy doesn't disagree that more customers could be sold the cheaper product, so she may even concede this issue. Anyway, it is not the point at issue.
- (C) Neither of them argues that the company will extend its dominance into the low-cost market.
- (D) * Yes, Tracy argues that instead of increasing sales, this proposal would hurt sales. Instead of continuing to dominate the market segment, Tracy argues that the competitors would be placed on an equal footing.
- (E) Neither of them addresses this issue.

29/01/10

(D)

Resolve the apparent contradiction

In this question type, you are faced with a paradox. How can these two apparently contradictory facts both be true?

The facts are lengthy. Symptoms appear after 60 days. In the test, half received a placebo and the other half received the vaccine. Some people in each group got symptoms. But the vaccine prevents infection (and thus symptoms).

So how can people who got the effective vaccine still get infected (and get the symptoms)? This is very puzzling.

- (A) If anything, this would deepen the mystery, because it rules out one reason why the placebo group may have gotten symptoms.
- (B) The exact numbers of each group is unimportant. Some people from each group got the symptoms.

- (C) That the placebo group was initially healthier does not explain why both groups had symptoms.
- (D) * Yes. If the vaccinated people had been infected prior to vaccination, then this would explain how they could get the vaccine and still get the symptoms. There was a 60-day delay.
- (E) Difference in recovery times doesn't explain why they got the symptoms in the first place.

29/01/11

(C)

Make a conclusion

For “main point” questions, the conclusion has been already made, simply restate it.

It is well known that species adapt to their environment. It is assumed that only highly evolved species alter their environment for their own benefit. *However*, it is not just highly evolved species that do it.

Look at the example of the plankton.

If you had pre-read the question stem, you would have known to look for the conclusion of the argument, thereby avoiding the need to read the entire section about the plankton, which was merely an illustrative example.

- (A) This is certainly a true and logical inference that can be made based on the facts. But Earth warming is not the main point of the argument; it is secondary issue.
- (B) The argument never said the plankton benefited the rest of the planet, unless one assumes that cooling the earth benefits the planet, but there is no factual support for this in the argument.
- (C) * This choice covers both aspects of the argument. It mentions highly evolved animals altering their environment and makes it clear that less-highly evolved animals can do the same.
- (D) The argument never tells us how much of the cloud cover is due to the plankton.
- (E) This choice is meant to appeal to the ardent environmentalist. This choice deals with entirely different issues than the argument.

29/01/12

(D)

Argument structure

Find the key terms in the answer choices and compare them to the argument.

It is assumed that only highly-evolved species alter their environment in ways that benefit them. Actually, many species do this. Plankton are an example. They generate a gas that eventually leads to a cooler planet, which benefits the plankton.

The structure of this argument is straightforward. There is a belief held by many people. This belief is incorrect. This is one example of why the belief is incorrect.

- (A) This choice has it backward. The general principle is debunked; it doesn't justify a claim. Many answer choices in argument structure questions use roundabout language to make the choice seem sophisticated and, the test-maker hopes, appear correct.
- (B) There were no allusions to a controversial phenomenon.
- (C) There was no reference to “certain processes”, and only one case was mentioned, so “cases” is incorrect.
- (D) * A position is being challenged (that only highly-evolved species alter environment) using a counterexample (plankton) to show that the position is wrong.
- (E) There was a detailed example (the discussion of the plankton), but there was no discussion of any strategies.

29/01/13

(E)

Parallel Reasoning

In this question the correct answer choice will not match the pattern of the argument.

The most important thing they should do is A. No matter how good B, C, and D are, none of these matter if you don't achieve A.

This is a quirky question. Normally, we are looking for the answer choice that has the most similar pattern. In this question, we are looking for the answer choice with the LEAST similar pattern. This is actually

much easier to do. Simply eliminate each answer choice as you read it. Four of them are going to look pretty similar, so the one that sticks out is the one to pick.

- (A) This choice is somewhat similar, but it doesn't seem to be a perfect match, because it only has three elements whereas the initial argument had four elements. As you read the other choices you will see that they too only have three elements, so it ends up not being an issue. You probably could have left this one as a possibility and compared it to (E) before making a final decision.
- (B) This choice has a pretty similar pattern. It has the overriding element and two secondary elements.
- (C) See (B).
- (D) See (B).
- (E) * This choice does not have the same pattern. It contains the first element. But then, instead of saying that the secondary elements are unimportant if the first element is not satisfied, this choice talks about why it is important to achieve the first element.

29/01/14

(A)

Identify the flaw in the reasoning

One type of flaw is when the argument confuses necessary and sufficient preconditions.

After 1:45 A.M., it would have been too dark. Before this time, there would be a lot of light. The robbery happened between 1:15 and 1:30 A.M. Thus, there was enough light for Klein to make a reliable identification.

What is the flaw? We know the robbery took place before 1:30 A.M., and so there should be plenty of light. The conclusion is faulty, because it assumes that simply because there could have been enough light, then there must have been enough light.

- (A) This isn't something the prosecutor overlooked. The prosecutor established the time of the robbery.
- (B) Although this obviously would weaken the conclusion if true, it fails to address the issue of the amount of light.
- (C) Although this could be true, it doesn't show why this conclusion is weak.
- (D) This one is getting closer. It does address the issue of the adequacy of the light for identifying the robber. But it wasn't the doctor who made the conclusion about the adequacy of the light; it was the prosecutor.
- (E) * This would undercut the conclusion of the prosecutor. If there were clouds, this would reduce the light, and there might not be enough light to make a reliable identification, despite the full moon. A full moon may not provide sufficient light if it is a cloudy night. This question was very similar to a weakening the conclusion question.

29/01/15

(A)

Identify the assumption

The correct assumption provides the missing link that connects the facts and the conclusion.

This argument is long but not overly complex. Mountain sickness is common, easy to recover from, and caused by a shortage of oxygen. Edema is rare, bad, and can be caused by a shortage of oxygen. The two have similar symptoms. Thus, edema is especially dangerous at high altitudes.

The assumption is not immediately obvious. Work through each of the facts once or twice and ask yourself what must be assumed in order to conclude that edema is especially dangerous. If you can't put your finger on the assumption yet, look at the answer choices for guidance.

- (A) * This looks interesting. You would want to mark this as a possibility and check your other options. After eliminating the other four choices as unsuitable you are left with this one. Why is this the proper assumption? Read the argument again and insert this choice in front of the conclusion. Both of these maladies are/can be caused by shortage of oxygen. They both have similar symptoms. (Assumption: The treatment for them is different.) Thus, edema is especially dangerous at high altitudes. Now it makes sense. If the treatment for both maladies is the same (presumably administering additional oxygen), then it would not matter whether a climber had edema or mountain sickness. The climber would get the same treatment either way.

- (B) This is merely an additional, and unnecessary, detail.
- (C) This merely adds more facts about edema.
- (D) This is totally off the subject. A proper assumption will incorporate the concepts mentioned in the facts. This choice introduces new information and new concepts.
- (E) This choice basically restates a fact from the first sentence and amplifies that fact.

29/01/16

(B)

Strengthen or weaken the argument

To weaken the argument the new information in the choice must undercut an unstated assumption.

We can learn about how a culture lived by looking at its language. This language had words for cold things like “snow”, but no word for “sea”. Thus, these people must have lived in a cold climate and not near a sea or ocean.

When an argument draws a conclusion, there are many assumptions that have been made. When we are weakening a conclusion, we want to see new information that contradicts one of those assumptions.

- (A) Since a fish can also come from a river or lake, this would not weaken the argument that there was no sea.
- (B) * An assumption of the argument is that the culture should have a word for “sea”. This new information means that assumption is no longer valid, thus weakening the conclusion.
- (C) This would strengthen the argument, not weaken it.
- (D) This is a “So what?” choice. This new information is irrelevant.
- (E) See (D).

29/01/17

(A)

Identify the flaw in the reasoning

One common type of flaw is for the argument to simply overlook something.

The columnist concludes that it is impossible to have definite evidence that nuclear exposure led to increased cancer rates. This conclusion is based on the fact that for a particular case of cancer, there are many possible causes.

Why is this conclusion weak? Although one person’s cancer can have different causes, in a large population it should be possible to factor out other causes so as to isolate the effect of nuclear exposure.

- (A) * Yes. The argument is that since we can’t definitively know the cause of one person’s cancer, we can’t know if a specific factor can increase cancer rates for a population. It should be easy to compile statistics of populations exposed to nuclear radiation and those that are not.
- (B) The argument did not confuse cause and effect.
- (C) No particular case of cancer was discussed. You can eliminate factually incorrect choices.
- (D) The argument actually overemphasizes the other possible causes of cancer, so as to discount the possible effect of nuclear exposure.
- (E) The argument does not conclude that nuclear exposure does not cause cancer. The argument does not conclude that the causal connection is false; it merely says that the cause cannot be proven.

29/01/18

(C)

Make a conclusion

Connect the chain of facts to make a deductive conclusion.

Some PCM are RCI. All RCI are HSFI. No PCM is LS. Many PCM is WS.

You must be very careful when connecting these facts. The precise language can trip you up very easily. It is very easy to misunderstand what people are in what groups. You may want to use a Venn diagram (the kind of diagram with the overlapping circles), but this can cause as many problems as it solves. You could try to deduce the possible permutations, but that would be a waste of time. Instead, compare each answer choice against the premises and look for a mismatch. Modifiers like “some” and “none” are the pivotal points in the answer choices.

- (A) This choice is wrong because there could be people with a financial interest who are not on the committee. Since we have no information about these people, it is equally likely that they are in, or not in, the construction industry.
- (B) Similar to (A), this choice discusses people who have a financial interest. These people may or may not be on the committee. If they are not on the committee, then we have no information about where they might live.
- (C) Again, this choice discusses people with a significant financial interest. The argument only mentioned one sub-set of this group, those who are on the committee. Since there may be people with a significant financial interest who are not on the committee, we don't know anything about them. So they may or may not work in the suburbs.
- (D) This choice discusses committee members. That is a good start. It specifies those who represent the construction industry. This turns out to be unimportant. For the committee as a whole, many of them work in the suburbs. So we cannot say if some of the construction members work in the suburbs or not.
- (E) * Some persons with a financial interest (which includes all the committee members representing the construction industry) do not live in the suburbs. The argument told us that no one on the committee (including the construction people) lives in the suburbs. So although some non-committee people with a financial interest may in fact live in the suburbs, none of the committee members with a financial interest live in the suburbs.

29/01/19

(A)

Identify the assumption

The correct assumption provides the missing link that connects the facts and the conclusion.

The facts are as follows. The manager decided when to close the old one and open the new one. The manager says he is not responsible for lost business due to the contractor not finishing on time. Therefore, the manager is to blame, because he was aware of the contractor's typical delays and should have planned around them.

In order to hold the manager responsible as the conclusion recommends, one must first assume that the manager is required to make allowances for the contractor's known unreliability.

- (A) * Yes. If the manager is not required to take foreseeable problems into account, then the conclusion would be faulty.
- (B) This is the converse of the assumption.
- (C) Although this, if assumed, would also make the manager at fault, it would do so for a different reason than the one discussed.
- (D) First, this is factually wrong; the manager does not directly supervise a contractor. Second, it does nothing to bolster the conclusion, since the conclusion deals with planning for contingencies.
- (E) First, this choice is too broad. Second, the argument says the contractor shares some of the blame.

29/01/20

(B)

Identify the assumption

The correct assumption provides the missing link that connects the facts and the conclusion.

The price of a full-fare ticket is the same as it was a year ago. Today, 90 percent of the tickets are discount and 10 percent are full-fare. Last year, it was 50 percent each. Therefore, on average, people pay less today than they did last year.

This is a variation on the classic LSAT technique where the argument discusses percentages, then shifts and discusses absolute numbers. The missing link we need is information that allows us to transition from the facts to the conclusion. We know full-fare tickets are the same price. We know that more people use discount tickets now. (Then we must assume something.) Therefore, people pay less now. The only variable that remains is the price of the discount tickets. In order to conclude that people are paying less now, we have to assume that the discount tickets did not get more expensive.

- (A) "Level of service" is off the subject.
- (B) * If we assume this, the conclusion makes sense.

- (C) This choice restates a fact.
- (D) This one looks initially interesting. Upon further consideration, you realize that the facts discussed the percentage of tickets sold, so it doesn't matter how many tickets were sold.
- (E) This choice goes off the subject by discussing changing criteria.

29/01/21

(C)

Make a conclusion

Which answer choice would the author of the argument agree with?

The government claims it is safe, and so the fear of accidents is groundless. The government claims that limiting financial liability is to protect it from threat of bankruptcy. The government admits that unlimited liability is a threat only if there is an injury caused by an accident. Therefore, the fear of accidents is justified.

This question has a tricky question stem. The question stem specifies that it is looking for a conclusion that takes into account the editor's description of the government's position. Focusing on the specific scope of the answer choice will help you find the correct answer.

- (A) Is the government's claim false? Our initial reaction is to think that the claim of safety is false. Did the question stem ask if the claim of safety was false? No, the question stem focused on the government's position toward this issue. The position toward the issue is not the same thing as the underlying truth or falsity of the safety issue. We can't automatically say that the plants are unsafe just because the government is taking acts to limit the liability in case the plants are not safe. Maybe the plants are totally safe and the government is just covering its bases.
- (B) * This choice is better than (A). This choice does a better job of summing up the argument. The argument discusses how the government says the plants are safe, but it acts as if they are not. Thus, the government's position is inconsistent with its acts.
- (C) The government was pretty honest about why it was limiting the liability of the plants, and the question stem tells you to assume this fact is truthful.
- (D) This contradicts the argument.
- (E) If you sit back and think about it, there could be a serious health threat posed by an accident.

29/01/22

(B)

Strengthen or weaken the argument

When an unstated assumption of the argument is established as true this strengthens the argument.

The government says the plants are safe. It contends that the act of limiting the liability of the plants is only to protect them from the threat of bankruptcy. The government says unlimited liability is a threat only if claims can be made and that claims can be made only if there is an injury. Therefore, the public should fear the plants.

A new principle, like new information that strengthens the conclusion, must address an assumption that the conclusion relied on. We need an answer choice that links the act of limiting liability to the likelihood of a real threat.

- (A) The government claims the plants are safe, not unsafe.
- (B) No one will stand to benefit if something bad happens.
- (C) The argument never indicated that the financial health of the plants was linked to the likelihood of an accident happening.
- (D) * This choice is deliberately vague. Before working on it, try to eliminate other answer choices. After you have eliminated the other four choices, this is the only one left. Try plugging in the facts of the argument into this choice. The government makes unsupported claims (that plants are safe), but it does not act (by giving plants limited liability) to prevent a situation (bankruptcy of the plants), unless there is a real danger that the situation (bankruptcy) will arise (due to an accident that causes injury).
- (E) The argument is not trying to justify the acts of the government; it is trying to argue that people should distrust what the government says.

29/01/23

(B)

Parallel Reasoning

Find the flaw in the argument, and then find the same flaw in the answer choices.

She says, as someone who does X, that she knows that no one who does X likes Y. And, since most people who do X are Z, at least some of the people who like Y are not Z.

It is always more difficult to understand an argument when the logic is flawed. Because it is flawed, it is difficult to understand, since our first instinct is to force it to make sense. This time, instead of focusing on the flaw in the argument, focus on the overall pattern, especially the first line of each answer choice.

- (A) Ralph is a biologist. To adhere to the pattern, he needs to know something about other biologists, not about an animal.
- (B) * This works. Franz, as someone who does X (is a father), knows of no one who does X (is a father) that wants Y (children to eat candy). And, since most X (fathers) are Z (adults), at least some of the people who want Y (children to eat candy) are not Z (adults). There are slight differences between this choice and the argument, but the basic pattern is imitated. You will notice that most of the words are exactly the same. This kind of similarity is typical in parallel reasoning.
- (C) Yuri is a connoisseur. In order to follow the pattern, Yuri should know something about other connoisseurs.
- (D) Xi is a photographer. As such he would have to know something about other photographers.
- (E) Betty is an executive. She knows that no executives like to pay taxes. Since most executives are honest, at least some people who like to pay taxes are honest. If this choice had said “not honest” at the end of the final sentence, then it would have had the same pattern.

29/01/24

(B)

Strengthen or weaken the argument

To weaken the argument, the new information in the choice must undercut an unstated assumption.

Annual emissions tests are done. At emissions tests, cars are tested while idling. They test tail-pipe emissions.

There is not an explicit conclusion in this argument, so we know this question will be a little unusual. What new fact would show why the current process is ineffectual? Information that addresses the fact that the cars are idling when the test takes place would be helpful. Alternatively, look for information that focuses on the annual timeframe or the measurement being taken from the tail pipe.

- (A) This is the first of the “So what?” choices. This new information is not even relevant to the argument.
- (B) It is getting boring to say “So what?” For the sake of variety let’s say, “Who cares?”
- (C) * This choice actually contains the word “idling”, which is a good start. If this new information is true, then the current settings help cars pass the emissions test but result in high levels of pollution.
- (D) This choice has a neutral effect; it does not make any difference if this is true.
- (E) Since the argument covers all cars, it doesn’t matter if there is a difference between old and new cars.

29/01/25

(B)

Resolve the apparent contradiction

With EXCEPT questions, four of the answer choices should sound pretty reasonable. The remaining (credited) answer choice will appear awkward and may actually deepen the mystery.

The Tasmanians were separated from the Australians 10,000 years ago. Two thousand years later, there were significant differences between them.

What could have caused this? Remember, you want the choice that does not explain why they are different.

- (A) This would explain why the two peoples were so different. The Tasmanians stopped doing these things, and the Australians continued.

- (B) * This choice does not explain why, two thousand years later, the two people were so different. It would actually deepen the mystery if the Tasmanians had invented these tools yet no longer used them.
- (C) This would explain why the Tasmanians didn't know of these tools; the Polynesians only went to Australia.
- (D) This would explain why the Tasmanians didn't know of these tools; the Australians invented them later.
- (E) This would explain why the Tasmanians didn't know of these tools; the northern Australians invented them and presumably passed the knowledge to other Australians after the land bridge disappeared.

Prep Test 29

(16–23)

2**2****2****2****2****2****Overview of Reading Comprehension**

Many LSAT students find the reading comprehension section of the test to be daunting. The two most common complaints are that there is not enough time to finish all four passages and that the dense subject matter is difficult to fully comprehend. These concerns are valid, but the LSAT is a standardized test, and as such, it has the same difficulty level from one test to the next. Never is one test significantly more difficult than another. This is also true for the reading comprehension section.

You will always see four passages with five to eight questions each for a total of approximately 26 or 27 questions. Typically, two passages cover social science topics (law, government, history, etc.), one covers a humanities topic (book review, discussion of a particular genre of art, analysis of one musician's impact on his field, etc.), and one covers a natural science topic (hormones in plants, volcano formation, evolution of a specific trait in an animal, etc.).

It is very common for one of the four passages to be fairly straightforward, two of them to be slightly more challenging, and one to be rather difficult. Although there is no required order of difficulty—the first passage could be the hardest one and the last could be the easiest one—often the final passage is the most difficult. The passages normally consist of three to five paragraphs with a total of 50–60 lines per passage. There is always one central theme or main idea that is developed throughout the passage.

There are specific question types that are tested in every passage—main idea questions (which ask for the big picture of the passage), explicit detail questions (which ask for specific text references), and inference questions (which ask you to make an inference based on the facts stated in the passage). By taking advantage of the consistent way that the reading comprehension passage and questions are presented, you can optimize your performance on this section.

General Strategy

There are certain strategies that make reading comprehension much more manageable. Some students prefer to read the questions before reading the passage so that they know what things will be tested. Try this for one or two tests and see if it works for you. Whether or not you read the questions first, you should try to summarize the passage as you read it. Focus specifically on the main idea, what each paragraph contributes to that main idea, and any keywords. Keywords are words quoted in an answer choice or words that indicate a transition—"however", "for example", "thus", etc. Also, always go back to the text and find the specific line or lines that justify your answers. Don't select an answer choice based on what you think you read.

Every author has one main idea that they are trying to get across. At least one question will ask you to summarize the main idea. Even questions that don't specifically ask for the main idea will often reflect the tone and language of that main idea. Normally, that author presents the main idea in the first paragraph and then uses the subsequent paragraphs to develop that main idea. Since most passages are organized in this way, you should be on the lookout for the main idea as you start a passage. The main idea is also often summarized at the end of the passage, so look for it there as well. Identifying the main idea helps you understand how the parts of the passage fit together and what the author is trying to accomplish.

Most reading comprehension passages have three or four paragraphs. Some students jot down a few descriptive words in the margin next to each paragraph. This serves two functions. First, it helps you see how the passage is organized. Second, it helps you locate the relevant information when you need it. Many students find it difficult to relocate relevant text, because they do not utilize this strategy. It only requires a few seconds to write down the topic of each paragraph. Often the first sentence of the paragraph is a topic sentence, and the rest of the paragraph is extra information. Since much of the passage is filler, being able to quickly relocate the text needed to answer the questions helps you sift through the unimportant filler material without wasting time. Every second saved helps.

Keywords appear in every reading comprehension passage. Words like "however", "but", "yet", "although", "thus", and "for example" are classic keywords. In particular, look for keywords at the start of a sentence, immediately followed by a comma. A sentence that begins with "However" is a dead giveaway that the author is going to make an important point. Keywords are an easy way to distinguish important

text from unimportant text, and it is also very common that the line or two following such a keyword will answer one of the questions. Most passages contain two to four important keywords, and you should circle them when you see them for easy reference later. Remember, most of the information in the passage is not necessary for answering questions, so don't underline too much. Focus on the main idea and the topic of each paragraph, as well as the keywords, and you will have everything you need to attack the questions with confidence.

After you finish a reading comprehension section, don't just file it away and forget it. To increase your reading skills for this kind of writing, you should read the passages several times so that you learn how they are constructed and organized. Before long, you will learn to comprehend the passage as you read it.

Overview of the entire section

This reading comprehension section is a little tougher than average. None of the passages are "user friendly", and two of them have only two paragraphs, which is rare. Aside from the second passage, none of them are about topics that are familiar to most students. Also, most students find long paragraphs, like those in the third and fourth passages, confusing and hard to manage. However, take note that the passage topics fit the standard breakdown described above—two social science (Native American language and the effect of medieval law on women), one humanities (artists and how they may predict social or political change), and one natural science (how the platypus uses its bill to find prey). Even difficult reading comprehension sections are predictable.

Overview of the first passage— Painters pre–World War I and how they foresaw political and social change.

This passage is a humanities passage, but a fairly straightforward one in most respects. The language is not overly difficult, and the organization is clear. This is a classic reading comprehension passage. The author presents the notion that certain painters were able to anticipate social and political changes before they happened, but then questions the validity of that position. Until the third paragraph the author’s position is unclear, but you should always wait until the author makes his or her point known. Don’t assume that just because an author presents a particular idea that they agree with it—sometimes (as is the case here) the author presents an idea so that he or she can refute it later. Notice how the second paragraph says that these artists are “credited” with prescience. The author does not think this; someone else does, so be careful. The author clearly presents the main idea in the third paragraph that while these artists may have been ahead of their time stylistically, they were not concerned with social and political issues in their art. It is unusual to have the main idea not appear until the third paragraph, but the LSAT does not always follow the same exact patterns. Let’s move on to the questions.

1. **Main Idea**—This is a classic main idea question. It is very direct, asking you to state the central theme of the passage. Look out for answers that are too narrow (focusing on only one part of the overall theme) or too broad (focusing on the correct topic but going beyond what is discussed in the passage).

Both of these can be wrong answers on this question type.

- (A) This answer captures the idea that certain pre–World War I painters were innovative in style, but it says nothing about the social and political aspects that are discussed throughout the passage. Also, there was nothing in the passage about the common desires of those European painters. If something was never mentioned, it obviously cannot be the main idea.
- (B) * This answer hits the nail on the head. The European painters may have developed new ways of expressing themselves through their art, but they did not really predict social and political changes. The keyword “But” in line 30 and the lines that follow clearly express the main idea. This is an excellent example of how a keyword precedes the correct answer.
- (C) This is a classic half-correct, half-wrong answer. The European painters did come up with new means of artistic expression, but the author very clearly states that they did not actually predict social and political changes. Half wrong means no credit.
- (D) Beware of extreme language in answer choices. The word “incapable” is unlikely to appear in a correct answer. Furthermore, this passage did not say that art couldn’t express a vision of the future, but rather that the artists in question were not especially concerned with the future.
- (E) Again, the word “impossible” is extreme, and thus this is very unlikely to be correct. This choice is much like (D)—it distorts the author’s main point about why the European artists did not actually anticipate social and political upheaval.

2. **Inference**—This is a particular type of inference question, the line reference. When directed to a line number, always read a few lines before and a few lines after to learn the context. Lines 22-23 tell you what this art critic thinks. This critic goes so far as to say that it is exactly the prophetic value of these artworks that makes them interesting. Even though this is contrary to the main point, you must answer the question asked. Some reading comprehension questions try to trick you by asking about the opinion of someone other than the author. For this question, you want an answer choice that says that the European painters, pre–World War I, *did* anticipate social and political change.

- (A) This answer makes an irrelevant comparison between two different groups of artists. The author never said this. Beware of answers that contain aspects of the passage, but then make statements about them that have nothing to do with the author’s point.
- (B) Again, there is no real discussion of the unique skill of these artists. The point is that they just weren’t terribly interested in social and political reform. This is another answer that simply does not fit with what is stated in the passage.
- (C) This is a tricky choice. The author might agree with this statement, but the critic mentioned in lines 19-20 would not. This is a classic wrong answer. Think about what you are being asked in every question.

- (D) * This critic does think that the artists predicted the political changes to come, so this is the correct answer. Notice that this is the only choice that mentions politics, which is within the scope of the passage. Correct answers should use the same terms that appear in the passage, especially those that are part of the main idea.
- (E) Some answers come from left field. This choice has nothing to do with what is discussed in the passage, a clear indication that it cannot be correct!

3. **Detail**—When a question starts with “According to the passage” or “According to the author”, it is an explicit detail question. The test maker wants you to spit back a specific piece of text. The correct answer should be repeated almost verbatim from the passage.

- (A) This answer contradicts the main point. The author tells you that these artists were NOT interested in politics, but rather coming up with a more “realistic” style. Having a firm grasp of the main idea makes it easy to eliminate this kind of answer choice.
- (B) Like (A), this contradicts the passage. According to the author, Picasso and Braque were worried about new ways to express themselves, not social change.
- (C) There was no mention of the idea that the innovations of these painters were pure luck. Again, an answer choice is wrong if it discusses something that was never discussed in the passage.
- (D) * Note the “for example” keyword in line 34. The lines that follow clearly state that these painters wanted to create a more realistic vision of reality. Answer choice (D) paraphrases lines 38–42, which is exactly what you want in an explicit detail question.
- (E) Another left-field answer choice. Nowhere in the third paragraph does the author discuss the formal aspects of the work of Picasso and Braque. Thus, this cannot be the correct response.

4. **Inference**—This is another type of inference question. This question asks you to determine why the author has included a particular example. Look at where Delacroix appears in the passage. The fourth paragraph supports the author’s contention that the painters were not really trying to predict social and political change. The correct answer choice should say something similar.

- (A) This choice has the order reversed from the passage (innovations precede social and political change), and the author does not agree with that point anyway. You should be very quick to eliminate answer choices like this.
- (B) * Notice that even though this question is not a main idea question, the correct answer stays true to the main idea. If you see an answer choice that sums up the main idea, it is almost certainly the credited choice. Indeed, this is exactly why the author mentioned Delacroix, as a counterpoint.
- (C) The author mentioned Delacroix as an example of an artist who did *not* predict changes that were still to come, but who merely adjusted to changes that were already coming into being.
- (D) This choice makes no mention of political or social change, and it raises a point that is totally outside the scope of the passage. Do not waste time giving this type of choice too much thought.
- (E) The idea is not that the artists themselves can adapt to social or political change. This is a distortion of different ideas from the passage. Just because an answer choice mentions things that were in the passage does not mean it is correct. This is why you should always refer back to the text to justify your answer.

5. **Miscellaneous/Organization**—Every so often you will get a question that is concerned with how the passage is organized and not with any specific point. The first two paragraphs present the notion that pre–World War I painters did foresee social and political change, and the third and fourth paragraphs refute that idea.

- (A) * This describes the organization of the passage perfectly. The author puts forth the notion and then gives an alternative interpretation followed by a supporting example. The first paragraph introduced the notion that artists somehow anticipate the future. The second paragraph mentions one interpretation, the third paragraph pours cold water on the idea that artists predict changes or attempt to reform society, and the fourth paragraph discussed Delacroix as an example of an artist capturing the essence of a change that was already underway.
- (B) This answer choice is wide of the mark. It fails to mention that the theory was refuted.

- (C) The author does not present common criticisms—he gives his own view on the matter and does not dismiss that view, but rather defends it.
- (D) Again, the author has a clear point, and he does not dismiss his own interpretation; he dismisses the interpretation presented in the first two paragraphs.
- (E) There is no discussion of trying to recreate the situation described in the passage. This is yet another left-field answer choice that you should quickly eliminate.

6. **Detail**—The trick to this question is to remember that the correct answer is the EXCEPTION. Read the question stem carefully. Find what the author did not talk about, or what contradicts the passage.

- (A) The author clearly discussed these points at the end of the third paragraph.
- (B) Again, this is what the author thinks about the artists discussed.
- (C) The innovation of these painters is what the third paragraph is all about!
- (D) The second paragraph discusses how these painters anticipated subsequent developments in the arts.
- (E) * This answer contradicts the main idea of the passage. Since this is an EXCEPT question, that makes this a perfect choice.

7. **Inference**—When you are asked about the author’s opinion, you are being asked to infer what the author would think. This author is most impressed with the stylistic innovations of the painters. The correct answer should reflect that idea.

- (A) This answer choice contradicts the author’s central premise.
- (B) Like choice (A), some art critics might agree with this idea but the author would not.
- (C) This choice is a bit tricky. The author does talk about how painters like Picasso and Braque were concerned with representation, but he does not appear to necessarily value that trait in them. It is presented more as an observation.
- (D) Once again, this creates a false notion that the painters themselves adjusted to social conditions as opposed to anticipating social changes. Either way, the author does not agree with that sentiment.
- (E) * The value of the keyword is proven yet again. The lines that follow the “But” in line 30 indicate the author’s opinion that the exceptional aesthetic innovations are what these painters should really be admired for. This choice is consistent with the main idea. Correct answers tend to be very consistent.

Overview of the second passage—How North American tribes have attempted to teach their traditional languages to younger tribe members.

Like the first passage, this passage is a little abstract, but otherwise it is well organized. The main idea is presented immediately—certain tribal communities are trying to find ways to maintain their traditional languages, even as those languages are influenced by the majority culture. Subsequent paragraphs shed more light on the means they are using to preserve their traditional languages, as well as some obstacles they face. Most students find shorter paragraphs like these easier to dissect than paragraphs with twenty lines or more. Remember to create a clear impression of how each paragraph supports or furthers the main idea. This helps you see the overall structure and how the author develops the key points. Here, the desire to preserve traditional languages is set forth in the first paragraph, and the need to teach those languages to younger tribe members is discussed in the second paragraph. The third and fourth paragraphs outline the obstacles of trying to write down a language that is primarily oral and of dealing with varying dialects when doing this. The final paragraph weighs in on the arguments both for and against this practice. As a side note, Native American culture and tradition is a popular topic on the LSAT, so of the four passages this one may have been the most familiar, at least after you have taken a lot of LSATs.

8. **Main idea**—This is the classic main idea question. At least one question in every passage will either ask for the main idea or for the author’s primary purpose, which is very closely related to the main idea. That is just one reason why you want to clearly understand the main idea as soon as you can. In this passage, the main idea is that certain North American tribal communities are trying to preserve their traditional languages despite the challenges. The correct answer should reflect both ideas.

- (A) This is a classic wrong answer. It captures the point of the third and fourth paragraphs, but it doesn’t make any mention of the fact that these tribes want to preserve their traditional languages. An answer that only focuses on one part of the passage cannot be correct. You will almost always see one such answer choice for a main idea question.
- (B) Too broad! The passage concerns maintaining traditional languages, not how preservation affects holding on to the broader tribal culture. Wrong answers that exceed the scope of the passage are common.
- (C) This choice takes the different ideas presented in the passage and distorts them. The tribes are not responding to doubts about the value of preserving oral forms of culture. The author says that they believe in that value, and if anything, Western influence is presented as an impediment to achieving that goal.
- (D) * This fits perfectly with the overall flow and theme of the passage. The tribes believe in the value of maintaining their traditional languages. Despite the challenges, they are trying to teach those languages to their younger members in order to preserve them. This choice encapsulates how all the paragraphs fit together to create the central theme.
- (E) While oral and written forms are discussed as having some key differences, the author never says anything about an inherent contradiction between them. Remember, if a particular idea was never discussed in the passage, an answer choice that includes that idea must be wrong.

9. **Detail**—“According to the passage” is the classic phrasing of a detail question. Where did the author talk about formally teaching a traditional language? In the second paragraph the author states that formal teaching requires documenting the language’s grammar through analysis and classification of linguistic structures.

- (A) * Bingo! Notice how the language of this correct answer is taken almost verbatim from lines 15–17. That is exactly what you will see with correct answers for explicit detail questions.
- (B) This is a tricky choice. The author does talk about documenting the grammar of the language, but creating the grammatical hierarchy comes after analysis and classification of the linguistic structure, so it is not the first step.
- (C) This is another tricky choice like (B). Determining appropriate teaching methods is one step in the process, but it is not the FIRST step! Make sure you read the question stem very carefully, because if you don’t, you will fall for a tricky answer choice like this one!

- (D) This is a classic wrong answer. This is one of the challenges presented in the third paragraph, whereas the correct answer to this question has to come from the second paragraph. Look out for choices that mention things that are from the wrong paragraph.
- (E) There is some discussion of spelling and syntax, but again this comes long after the first step is presented at the opening of the second paragraph.

10. **Inference**—The “most likely agree” question type is a kind of inference. Notice, the question does not ask what the author would agree with, but rather what the people who hold the view given in lines 51–54 would agree with. Asking about someone other than the author is just one way the test-maker tricks the unwary student. You are looking for an answer choice that the author probably would NOT agree with! Be careful. Those lines state that oral traditions have been passed on for generations and thus there is no need to write them down. The inference is that they have lasted this long without being translated to written form, so they will probably continue to last.

- (A) * Since these traditional languages have been transmitted orally since their origins, they are likely to survive even if not converted to written form. This is exactly what lines 51–54 imply.
- (B) Be careful. This is what the defenders of the practice of writing things down would say, not the people referenced in lines 51–54.
- (C) This may be true, but it is simply not the point of the lines referenced in the question. Just because something is true does not make it the correct answer!
- (D) The passage is focused specifically on language, not the much broader topic of tribal customs in general. A good answer should be within the scope of the passage.
- (E) Some of the people discussed in the passage may agree with this position, but not the ones who are mentioned in lines 51–54.

11. **Inference**—This question is a good example of why you must read the question very carefully. Here you are asked which of the scenarios is least compatible with the traditional language preservation, as it is discussed in the passage. Look for an answer that contradicts what is stated.

- (A) Some tribes do feel that more focus on oral culture is one way to maintain their traditional languages. Even though others see more value in writing things down, this answer is compatible with part of the passage.
- (B) This is a close paraphrase of what is stated in the second paragraph. Formal teaching would involve some arrangement of grammatical structures, from simple ones to the more complex ones, according to lines 18–19.
- (C) * The majority culture is presented as a hindrance to preserving traditional language, so incorporating words from that majority culture is not compatible with traditional language preservation.
- (D) Lines 20–22 clearly state that appropriate teaching methods are a concern in the formal teaching of traditional languages.
- (E) This choice is a little tricky. Deciding what dialect to teach is presented as an obstacle in the fourth paragraph, but it is an obstacle that must be dealt with if effective teaching of traditional language is to take place. It makes sense there would be deliberation as to which dialect is taught.

12. **Miscellaneous/Organization**—Many passages include an organizational question that focuses on the structure of the whole passage or the purpose of a particular paragraph. The author discusses the desire to preserve traditional languages in the first paragraph, talks about how such an effort would proceed through formal teaching in the second paragraph, presents obstacles to that preservation in the next two paragraphs, and finally counters one opposing view to the means of preservation presented.

- (A) This answer has the order of the passage wrong. The solution is proposed prior to the discussion of the obstacles, not after, as this choice suggests.
- (B) Close, but not quite. First, there is only one solution presented, not “solutions” plural. Second, there is no discussion of an alternative method of implementing only one of those solutions.
- (C) * This question was easily handled if you took the time to map out how each paragraph furthers the main idea. This answer matches the paragraph breakdown and order listed above.

- (D) There is no mention of the obstacles discussed in the third and fourth paragraphs, and the author never talks about similar problems.
- (E) Benefits and drawbacks of the proposed solution are not addressed; only the obstacles to the solution are!

13. **Inference**—This is a whammy of a question! First, you must focus on the Utes of lines 38–42, who may or may not agree with the author, and second, it is an EXCEPT question; so the correct answer will either be something that was never mentioned or that contradicts the passage. How confusing. The Utes chose not to standardize their language (line 39), so look for a choice that contradicts that idea.

- (A) The conclusion of the fourth paragraph states that the methods used by the Utes worked, so they would agree that standardization is sometimes unnecessary.
- (B) * The Utes chose NOT to standardize their language, and they were successful in teaching it to even elementary school children, so they would not agree that written languages should reflect one standard dialect.
- (C) Lines 45–47 tell you that the Utes did not follow rigorous standardization but that this worked for them, so they would agree that traditional languages can be taught this way.
- (D) This is exactly what is stated in lines 40–42.
- (E) Line 47 says that not standardizing made sense for this community. Clearly the community's needs are a factor in deciding whether or not a language should be standardized.

14. **Inference**—Questions about the author's attitude are another common type of inference question. How does the author feel about written and oral forms matching exactly? Go to the passage. The end of the third paragraph clearly states that no written language has ever fully satisfied such a stringent requirement.

- (A) * While extreme language is seldom correct in reading comprehension, this is a case where it is okay, because the author uses extreme language in the end of the third paragraph where this issue is discussed. Lines 31–35 are very similar to this answer.
- (B) This is a bit of a distortion. The author doesn't seem to think that an exact match is possible, but he doesn't go so far as to say that it shouldn't even be considered.
- (C) This is another tricky choice. The author said it is desirable that every sound has a written equivalent, but that this has never been fully achieved. So the author does not think it is realistically attainable.
- (D) Way outside the scope. The passage does not discuss most languages, only the traditional languages of certain North American tribes.
- (E) Even further outside the scope! There is absolutely nothing in the passage about the benevolence of the motives behind an attempt to match written and oral languages.

15. **Inference**—This is an especially difficult question because there is no real clue as to where in the passage you should look for an answer. Compare each answer choice to both the main idea and the points raised in other questions and work by process of elimination.

- (A) The passage makes it clear that it is often hard to create a true correspondence between spoken sounds and written symbols, and, if anything, this is presented as an obstacle to preserving traditional language.
- (B) * Remember that the conclusion of the passage often paraphrases the main idea. Meeting the needs of the community and tribal culture are very important to those who want to preserve traditional language. Even the fourth paragraph suggests that the Utes were successful, in part, because they focused on the needs of their particular community.
- (C) This is a distortion. Focusing on appropriate methods is important, once a tribe has decided to formally teach its traditional language. The methods are not really a factor in the actual decision to preserve language orally or in writing.
- (D) This choice directly contradicts the idea of arranging grammatical information in sequence from simplest to most complex, as stated in lines 17–19.

- (E) Again, this contradicts the passage. The majority culture is presented as an impediment to preserving traditional language. Many incorrect answers on the LSAT contradict the information in the passage; keep an eye out for such choices so that you can eliminate them quickly.

Overview of the third passage—How the platypus uses its bill to locate prey underwater.

It is easy to be intimidated by science passages, with their technical language and dense subject matter. Yet there is no requirement that the science passage be difficult. Some are straightforward and have no scientific terms. Unfortunately, that is not the case here! This is probably the most difficult of the four passages in this section for a few reasons. First, as science passages go, it is chock-a-block full of terms like “mechanoreceptors” and “neocortex”. Second, each paragraph is over 25 lines long, which makes it easy to lose focus. On a tough passage like this, it is critical that you use the reading strategies. Keep in mind the main idea and hone in on the keywords. Most of the scientific terminology is put there to confuse you, but the key issues are stated in plain English. The keyword “however” in line 4 sets up the main idea that the platypus uses its bill to locate prey underwater. This sentence contains few unusual words. The keyword “but” in line 26 sets up the second paragraph—how the platypus locates prey at a distance. Two scientists are discussed, so differentiate what Bohringer says from the points raised by Scheich. Bohringer’s main thesis is that the bill of the platypus is its primary sensory organ, while Scheich hypothesizes that this is the case because the platypus somehow uses its bill to respond to electric fields produced by its prey. They do not disagree with each other. On a final note, authors in science passages typically do not inject their own opinion. Instead, they tell you what the scientific community generally believes or what has been shown by a particular study.

16. **Main idea**—Primary purpose questions are a close relative of regular main idea questions. These questions essentially ask what the author is trying to accomplish, as opposed to the main thesis they are trying to present. Here, the author is primarily trying to present recent scientific findings that explain how the platypus uses its bill to locate prey underwater.

- (A) Once again, this is a classic wrong answer. This is the purpose of the second paragraph, but it doesn’t encompass the function of the first paragraph. It is simply too narrow to be correct, and it also does not mention the bill of the platypus, which is clearly the focus of the passage.
- (B) * Right on the money! This choice fits the tone and topic of the passage perfectly, since the entire passage focuses on the studies of Bohringer and Scheich and what the studies indicate about the function of the platypus’s bill.
- (C) Much like (A), this is too narrow, only talking about Bohringer even though the entire second paragraph is devoted to Scheich.
- (D) The exact opposite of (C)! The second paragraph is all about the contributions of Scheich, but the work of Bohringer in the first paragraph is just as important.
- (E) Way too narrow! The pores on the bill of the platypus are discussed, but that is not the primary purpose of the passage.

17. **Main idea**—The standard main idea question. The central theme is that the platypus uses its bill to locate its prey, and it locates prey at a distance through recognition of electrical impulses.

- (A) This is true, but it’s not the main idea. Yet another example of being too narrow—this is the point of the first paragraph, but it says nothing about the second paragraph.
- (B) * Even if you had trouble following this passage, this question was easy if you paid attention to the keywords. This is exactly what lines 5-6 state after the keyword “however” in line 4!
- (C) True, but too narrow, as Scheich’s study is equally valuable to what we know about how the platypus uses its bill to locate its prey.
- (D) Also true, but also too narrow. The bill of the platypus does contain sensitive nerve endings, but the point is that it uses that sensitivity to find its prey.
- (E) Just like (D), this is the conclusion presented at the end of the passage, but it is only part of the broader discussion of how the bill of the platypus is critical to locating its prey.

18. **Detail**—Go to the part of the first paragraph where this aspect of Bohringer’s study is discussed. Lines 23-24 tell you that the signal travels by way of the fifth cranial nerve to the neocortex and then on to the motor cortex. Well, of course it does—now that you put it that way.

- (A) Electoreceptors send nerve impulses to the brain, according to line 15, but it is not stated that it is the electoreceptors that send the impulse to the fifth cranial nerve.

- (B) Like (A), the snapping movement of the bill occurs after the nerve impulse leaves the motor cortex, not before.
- (C) This is a distortion. All of these elements are part of the process, but the mechanoreceptors do not send the nerve impulse to the electroreceptors. Be careful of answers that mention things that are in the passage but create relationships that were not mentioned.
- (D) The passage tells you that the platypus has pores on its bill, but nowhere is it mentioned that the platypus opens those pores before a nerve impulse reaches the motor cortex.
- (E) * This is exactly what is stated in lines 23-24. Even in a difficult science passage like this, the correct answer to an explicit detail question should paraphrase a specific line of text.

19. **Miscellaneous/Organization**—This is a tough organizational question that essentially asks you to draw an analogy to something in the passage. Here, Scheich tried to trigger with a battery the event that caused the bill of the platypus to detect the electric field produced by its prey. Essentially, Scheich tried to determine if the platypus really did respond to the electric field of its prey by presenting a similar kind of electric field, so the correct answer should demonstrate the same kind of experimental methodology.

- (A) Scheich did not use decoy shrimp. He used an inanimate object (the battery) to simulate the stimulus presented by the prey of the platypus.
- (B) This is similar to (A). This experiment uses a tape of the animals' cries, which is the same stimulus that is being tested.
- (C) * Just like Scheich's experiment, this one uses an object that is not the animals' prey but creates a similar stimulus to see if that is how the animal locates its prey. The heat-seeking object is like the battery used by Scheich.
- (D) Replicas are no different than the decoys used in answer choice (A). They are not analogous to the battery used by Scheich.
- (E) There is nothing in the passage to suggest that the platypus is attracted to its prey by any kind of bait. The electric field is what draws the platypus to its prey, so this too is not analogous.

20. **Inference**—Where is patrolling behavior discussed? At the beginning of the second paragraph. This might be unclear at first, because it is not called patrolling behavior until line 43. It is the behavior when the platypus swims along until it encounters prey. The whole point of the second paragraph is that the platypus responds to electric fields produced by its prey. Look for a choice that says this.

- (A) The patrolling behavior occurs as the platypus is trying to find prey. Capturing that prey occurs later.
- (B) This is a clever distortion. The passage states that the platypus distinguishes its prey from other objects on the bottom of the body of water, but not that it distinguishes one type of prey from another.
- (C) * Many correct answers include key terms from the appropriate paragraph. The entire second paragraph is about electric fields produced by the prey, so this choice is consistent with the topic of the relevant paragraph, as a good answer choice should be.
- (D) The mechanoreceptors are not even discussed in the second paragraph, so this choice cannot be correct.
- (E) The platypus uses the electric field produced by its prey to locate that prey, not its scent.

21. **Miscellaneous/Organization**—This is another classic organizational question. How is the passage organized? The first paragraph lays out the work of Bohringer that shows that the platypus uses its bill to locate its prey. The second paragraph lays out the work of Scheich that shows how the platypus uses the electric field produced by its prey to do it.

- (A) This is close, but not quite correct. The idea that the platypus uses its bill to locate its prey is not a hypothesis. In fact, line 6 refers to this as a conclusion made by biologists. This is a choice that you might not eliminate right away, but after examining choice (B), you see that (B) is clearly better.
- (B) * This is exactly what is going on. The conclusion is presented in line 6, and then the supporting studies of Bohringer and Scheich are discussed.

- (C) Much like (A), this is not a thesis; it has already been concluded. Furthermore, the position is not defended with an argument, but rather with concrete examples and studies.
- (D) There are no opposing views. Some science passages present two different approaches to a phenomenon, but not this one.
- (E) It is not a theory; it is a conclusion, and at no point is it amended. If anything, it is further clarified in light of the work of Bohringer and Scheich.

Overview of the fourth passage—The lack of records indicating how medieval English law actually affected women.

Almost every reading comprehension section includes one passage about the law. This one is a little tougher than most because it focuses on ancient law and it consists of just two paragraphs. Also, it is more about how the law affected women (more specifically, how little study actually exists) than it is about the law itself. This passage suggests that there are very few records detailing the specific impact of medieval English law on women, and even an analysis of the scant records that exist is unlikely to shed much light on the subject. The author seems to lament this fact. There is an undercurrent of frustration that such an approach has not been utilized more widely. The author does, however, seem to understand why this situation has occurred, both due to the difficulty of obtaining relevant documentation and the challenge of taking anything from these sources if they were successfully obtained. Further, the author blames historians—who have only considered women in the law from a legal viewpoint and not from the women’s perspective—for the lack of information on the subject. The main idea is that we really know very little about the effect of medieval English law on the lives of women.

22. **Inference**—What the author believes about a particular subject is a classic type of inference question. Try to pre-phrase your answer. Clearly, this author does not think the sources are very useful. Hence, you should look for a negative answer choice.

- (A) The point of the passage is that these sources shed little or no light on how medieval law affected women. This choice contradicts both the passage and the attitude of the author.
- (B) This is a faulty comparison. The author is not fond of either source, and at no point does the author indicate that one is preferable to the other.
- (C) This is tricky. These sources do lack relevance, but they are not relevant to a focus on women. The author suggests that the nineteenth century historians are overly concerned with legal institutions and ideas and not concerned enough with their impact on women.
- (D) * This choice has the correct negative tone (they provide relatively little information), and it is entirely consistent with the main idea. Notice as well that this is one of only two choices that specifically mention women!
- (E) Wrong tone. The author doesn’t think these sources are valuable to those few historians who are actually interested in women’s legal history, so this choice contradicts the passage.

23. **Miscellaneous/Organization**—We have seen earlier questions that asked about the organization of the passage as a whole, but this question is only concerned with the first paragraph. In it, the author begins by saying that there is little documentation that conveys the true impact of medieval English law on women, then the author points out how serious this problem is because even though there is source material to help understand how the law was intended to affect women, that material does not answer the bigger question of how the law actually affected those women. Finally, the author suggests a single way that this problem could be addressed. Look for a choice that says there is a problem or deficiency.

- (A) There is no mention of preparations for a particular kind of study.
- (B) This choice starts off correct, but there is no taxonomy of relevant questions presented in the first paragraph.
- (C) Totally off base. No specific example is given, and no prediction is made as to the future of this type of analysis of the true impact of the law on women.
- (D) * This captures the main point that there is a deficiency when it comes to the kind of legal analysis favored by the author, and it also incorporates the point made at the end of the first paragraph that only quantitative studies of large numbers of cases could correct the deficiency.
- (E) The first paragraph is not solely about the limitations of the available resources. It specifically addresses that this is a problem, as it pertains to truly examining at the impact of the law on women in medieval England.

24. **Detail**—When you are given a specific line reference, read a few preceding lines and the few lines that follow. The quantitative studies mentioned in line 25 are presented by the author as the only way that we

could even guess at the true impact of the law in medieval England on the lives of women. If you start at line 20 and go to the end of the first paragraph, you should have the relevant text to answer the question.

- (A) The author is not concerned with the intentions of the lawmakers; the author wants to know how the laws actually affected women.
- (B) There is no discussion about the hidden motives of the lawmakers in lines 20–27, so this cannot be correct.
- (C) Again, this contradicts the true interest of the author. The author wants to know how the law impacted women, not how that law relates to modern institutions.
- (D) * Perfect! Notice how this choice pretty much summarizes the main concern of the author, and that it is exactly what is raised in lines 20–24.
- (E) The author is not concerned with categorizing medieval documents, and this choice makes no mention of the law at all.

25. **Detail**—Again, go back to the first paragraph and find where these sources are discussed. The author does say in lines 9–15 that these sources could answer the question of how the law was intended to affect women or thought to affect them, but not how it actually affected them, which the court records help answer.

- (A) * This is exactly what is stated in lines 9–15. Yet again, you see consistency between the language of the passage and the language of the correct answer on a detail question.
- (B) The author says in lines 20–22 that these sources did not adequately address the overall effectiveness of English law or its specific statutes aimed only at women.
- (C) Much like (B), this is an issue that is not adequately addressed by these sources.
- (D) This is a classic wrong answer. There is absolutely no mention of male relatives in the passage. Something that is never mentioned cannot be a correct answer!
- (E) The author states in lines 23–25 that this question is not sufficiently addressed by the sources in question.

26. **Inference**—Questions that ask how an author is using a particular example are inference questions. The relevant scholarship mentioned in lines 37–38 refers to the author’s concern about why so few studies about the actual impact of the law on women have been conducted, and this refers back to the quantitative studies mentioned at the end of the first paragraph.

- (A) The passage makes no mention of linguistic studies. Some choices might sound good, but if they have no bearing on the main idea or central theme, they are unlikely to be correct.
- (B) Editing and publication are issues discussed in the second paragraph, but these are not the scholarly works referenced by the author. Notice as well that women are not mentioned in this choice, so it also fails the scope test.
- (C) * This is a perfect summary of lines 25–36, and it is very closely tied to the main idea!
- (D) The author is not concerned with the intentions of the lawmakers, but rather how the laws actually affected women.
- (E) There is no discussion of reviews of existing literature. This choice, like many wrong answers, is outside the scope of the passage.

27. **Inference**—What does the author think is the main reason that we know so little about women’s legal history? This question is a perfect example of the power of keywords. The “but” in line 36 precedes the statement that few historians have wanted to write anything about women’s legal history. It is very common for correct answers to appear in the few lines of text that follow a keyword!

- (A) * This is exactly what the author says in lines 39–41. The author uses the rest of the second paragraph to drive this point home.
- (B) While linguistic and practical difficulties are partially to blame for the lack of information about women’s legal history, the author clearly states that the primary culprit is the focus most historians choose (line 45).
- (C) It is not the reliance on the part of modern historians on any particular source that is the problem, but rather their entire approach to women’s legal history.

- (D) Another left-field answer choice. The passage never mentions this view at all!
- (E) This is a tricky choice. The author does say that the lack of such studies is part of the problem, but it is not the factor most responsible for the current deficiencies. The biggest factor is the approach of the historians, as mentioned in lines 39–41.

PrepTest 29

(24–27)

3**3****3****3****3****3**

A review of analytical reasoning

The most important strategy for the puzzle games is to use the correct diagram. This is the best way—and usually the only way—to keep the members correctly organized. More than 95 percent of the LSAT puzzle sets can be answered using a diagram, and most puzzles are virtually impossible to answer without using a diagram. The second vital strategy is to become adept at discovering the extra conclusions; they are the keys that unlock a puzzle. Other strategies include using the correct series of steps to make sure you efficiently and correctly summarize each rule and using good bookkeeping so as to avoid overlooking a crucial rule. If you have time, read every answer choice. If your diagram is correct, there can never be two correct answers. Finally, there is the rule violator answer elimination technique, which is a great way to avoid diagramming certain questions.

There are four main puzzle types. They are the line, the matrix, the multiple line, and the subset. There are three minor puzzle types: heavier than lines, networks, and organization charts. Finally, there are hybrid possibilities, which combine elements of two puzzle types. Don't let the variations faze you. If you can do the four major puzzle types, you can do any puzzle. Make sure that you excel at simple line problems and multiple line problems. In recent years, the LSAT has tested these two types of diagrams more than all of the others combined.

Just as with the reading comprehension section, you should skim all four games to see which has the most questions and also to determine what kind of diagrams will be used for each one. Start with the easier puzzles, especially if you have trouble completing this section.

Question Set Difficulty:

In the past several years the LSAT has begun to test fewer types of puzzles; specifically, it has focused on line diagrams. PrepTest 29 is in keeping with that trend. The first two puzzles of this set are multiple lines, and the last two puzzles are greater-than-less-than puzzles.

Overview of puzzle set #1—Accountant bills

Start by determining which diagram is appropriate. There are seven bills to be paid over a two-day period. Fortunately, the first rule tells us that either three or four of the bills will be paid on Wednesday. So we will have a three/four setup or a four/three setup. The parentheses () indicate where a member may be, but is not required to be. Depicted below are two possible ways to diagram this information. (Figure 1)

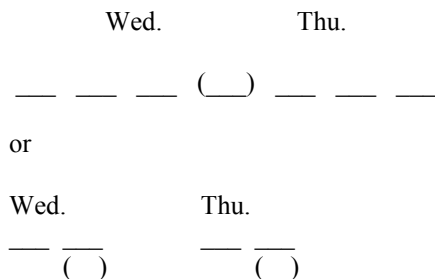


Fig. 1

Rule 1: three/four, or four/three

Rule 2: 1≠5 or 1/5

Rule 3: 2 is on Thu.

Rule 4: 4 = 7

Rule 5: If 6 on Wed., then 7 on Thu.

Before going to the questions, take a closer look at the rules. Rules 2, 3, and 4 are fairly straightforward. For rule 3, you should place bill 2 on Thursday. Once you do that, you can cross off rule 3, since you have placed it on the diagram. (Figure 2) How might you depict rule 2? Since bills 1 and 5 must be on different days, then one of them must be on Thursday and the other must be on Wednesday. We don't know which one is when, so we depict this on the diagram using the probability slash on both days. (Figure 2) Rule 4 can't be easily diagrammed yet, so leave it alone. Rule 5 requires a closer look. Rule 5 does not say 6 must be on Wednesday. It only says that *if* 6 is on Wednesday, then bill 7 is on Thursday. Use the one-way arrow like that in figure 2, or if you find this notation confusing, just put a star or other mark by rule 5 so that you know that you haven't drawn it on the diagram yet.

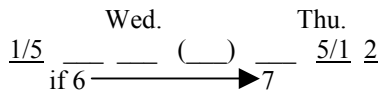


Fig. 2

At this point, you may want to move to the questions, or you may prefer to try to squeeze a bit more information out of the rules, i.e. check for warranted conclusions. Look at rules 4 and 5. For example, if 6 is on Wednesday, then 7 will be required to be on Thursday, which will subsequently require 4 to be on Thursday. On the other hand, if 6 is on Thursday, then there would not be enough spaces for 7 and 4 on Thursday, so they must be on Wednesday. This means that 6 and 7 cannot be on the same day. The mutually exclusive nature of 6 and 7 is depicted using the probability slash. It would create too much of a mess to also include bill 4 with 7 on the diagram, so leave it off. (Figure 3)

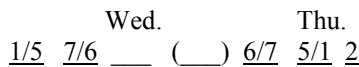


Fig. 3

By now, you are probably thinking, "I can't spend this much time analyzing the rules before I even start the questions!" You will make up the time by answering questions more quickly and accurately. Remember, the key to most questions is to find the relationships that are not explicitly stated. You will see that questions 3, 4, and 5 can be solved easily, if you understand the relationships. If you are not good at seeing these unstated relationships, start the questions and WATCH for the relationships to emerge as you work through the problems. Now you are ready to start the questions.

1. Usually—but not this time—the quickest way to answer the first question in the set is to use rule violator answer elimination. This time, draw the four/three setup. What is the only way you can have four bills on Wednesday? By putting bill 7 (and thus bill 4) on Wednesday. Bill 3 must now be on Wednesday. We don't know where bills 1 and 5 are. (Figure 4)

- (A) This is easy to eliminate, since bill 6 must be on Thursday.
- (B) See (A).
- (C) Bill 2 is always on Thursday, per rule 3. We don't need to check for 4 or 7, because they are present in the three remaining answer choices.
- (D) * This is one of the two possibilities shown in figure 4.
- (E) Bill 6 is on Thursday; see (A).

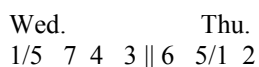


Fig. 4

2. There are a few ways you could start this problem. You could look at the correct answer choice in question 1 for some clues. An even easier way would be to look at your initial diagram or the rules and see that bill 2 is never on Wednesday. This eliminates choices (D) and (E). Now we need to be a little more creative. Notice that bills 1 and 5 are both possible for Wednesday. This means that any answer choice that doesn't contain both 1 and 5 is incorrect. This eliminates choices (A) and (B).

- (A) This contains bill 5, but not bill 1.
- (B) This contains bill 1, but not bill 5
- (C) * This is the only choice left after we eliminated the other four, so there is no need to check if it is correct, since we know the others are not.
- (D) This contains bill 2.
- (E) See (D).

3. Since we know bill 2 is always on Thursday, all we need to do is place bill 6 on Wednesday. Once we do that, then rule 5 requires that we place bill 7 (and thus rule 4) on Thursday. There is only one space left for bill 3, so we have a nearly complete diagram. (Figure 5) Bills 1 and 5 are interchangeable.

- (A) * Consulting our diagram, we see that this is true. Let's just check the other choices to be sure we did not overlook anything.
- (B) This isn't true.
- (C) Bill 1 (and bill 5) can be paid either day, so this is not a must be true answer.
- (D) The diagram shows bills 2 and 3 on different days.
- (E) See (C).

Wed.		Thu.
<u>1/5</u>	<u>6</u> <u>3</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>5/1</u> <u>2</u>

Fig. 5

4. As luck would have it, we can use the diagram from the previous question to answer this one. As you will find out, you can sometimes use previous correct answer choices to answer later questions. How convenient.

- (A) Consulting figure 5, we see that bill 1 (and bill 5) are allowed on either day. So this would never be a good answer choice for a must be true question.
- (B) * This is true; bill 3 must be on Wednesday.
- (C) Bill 4 must be with 7, and 7 must be on Thursday, since bill 6 is on Wednesday.
- (D) See (A).
- (E) See (C).

5. Go back to the initial diagram and plug bill 4 into Thursday. Thus, bill 7 must also be on Thursday. We have now filled four spaces on Thursday, so Wednesday must have three spaces. Only bills 6 and 3 are left, so place them on Wednesday. (Figure 6)

- (A) Per rule 2, bills 1 and 5 are paid on different days.
- (B) * This is a possibility. Bill 7 must be on Thursday, and bill 1 may be Thursday.
- (C) Bill 3 is on Wednesday
- (D) See (C).
- (E) Consulting the diagram, bill 6 is on Wednesday.

Wed.		Thu.
<u>1/5</u>	<u>6</u> <u>3</u>	<u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>5/1</u> <u>2</u>

Fig. 6

6. This question is a bit more difficult, because it doesn't give us any new information. Sometimes for must be true questions your initial diagram will help you eliminate choices. Sometimes you can also use correct answer choices from previous questions to eliminate choices. Unfortunately, these five answer choices all employ "if" language. This means you must invest the time to work through each answer choice. Before doing that, scan the answer choices to see which ones can be quickly eliminated.

- (A) We know that bill 2 is always paid on Thursday, so the real question is: Can bill 3 ever be paid on Thursday? Looking at our previous correct answer choices, we don't see bill 3 on Thursday, so chances are good that bill 3 cannot be on Thursday. But, as it turns out, when we diagram this, we see that 3 can be on Thursday, so bill 3 is not required to be on Wednesday. (Figure 7)
- (B) Consider bill 1. We know that bill 1 and bill 5 are interchangeable, so we can never say that bill 1 must be on a certain day.
- (C) * Consulting our previous work in figures 5 and 6, we see bill 4 on Thursday and bill 3 on Wednesday. And if we think about it, we know that if bill 4 is on Thursday, then so must 7. There is no more space left on Thursday, so bill 3 would have to be on Wednesday.
- (D) Consult figure 4.
- (E) Consult figure 4.

Wed.		Thu.
<u>1/5</u>	<u>7</u> <u>4</u>	<u>3</u> <u>6</u> <u>5/1</u> <u>2</u>

Fig. 7

Overview of puzzle set #2—Mannequin outfits

What diagram will work? This puzzle requires a little more creativity. We are told there are two mannequins: one wears four items and the other wears three. Let's use a multiple line diagram, but on a vertical axis. Rules 2, 3, and 4 are easy to diagram. What about rule 1? We know that the mannequins can wear one or two colors. So mannequin #1 can wear red, or red plus one other color. The same analysis applies to mannequin #2: it can wear navy, or navy and one other color. (Figure 1)

	R or R+1 #1	N or N+1 #2
Hat- diff color	—	—
Jacket-	—	—
Skirt-	—	<u>Navy</u>
Tie-	<u>Red</u>	<u>-X-</u>

Fig. 1

Rule 1: Don't wear all three colors. (So must wear one or two colors.)

Rule 2: Hat is different than jacket.

Rule 3: #2 wears Navy skirt.

Rule 4: #1 wears tie (which is red).

Are there any warranted conclusions we can make? Well, since rule 2 requires that the hat and the jacket be different colors, then each mannequin must wear at least two colors. We need to modify rule 1 to say that each mannequin wears exactly two colors. Therefore, for mannequin #2, either the jacket or the hat will be navy. For mannequin #1, either the jacket or the hat will be red. It probably isn't worth writing this on our diagram, so let's go directly to the questions.

7. Use each rule to eliminate one answer choice.
 - (A) This choice violates rule 1, by putting three colors on a single mannequin.
 - (B) This choice violates rule 2, by putting the same color hat and jacket on a mannequin.
 - (C) This choice violates rule 3, by putting a yellow skirt on mannequin #2.
 - (D) * This choice is correct.
 - (E) This choice violates rule 4, by not putting a red tie on mannequin #1. Also, rule 2 is violated, because mannequin #1 has the same color hat and jacket.

8. This one will take more work than the last one. It probably isn't necessary to create a diagram for each of the answer choices. Just consult your rules and the partial diagram.
 - (A) Putting a navy jacket and yellow skirt on mannequin #1 would give it three colors, violating rule 1.
 - (B) Putting a red hat and a red jacket on a mannequin violates rule 2.
 - (C) If mannequin #1 wears only one red item (the red tie), then it would need to wear three more items of one other color—yellow, for example—but the hat and jacket can't be the same color, per rule 2.
 - (D) See (C).
 - (E) * Since we eliminated the other four choices, this is probably correct. You can double-check this choice by doing the diagram, or you can assume it is correct and move on. If you do the diagram, you will see that mannequin #2 must wear a navy skirt and one other navy item. The third item could be yellow.

9. Take the new information and draw a diagram. (Figure 2) Follow along with the arrows. Since mannequin #1 now wears a navy jacket, its hat must be a different color. Its hat must be red, because mannequin #1 is now limited to two colors, red and navy. Mannequin #1 must also wear either a red or navy skirt, but since the navy skirt is already being used, it must wear the red skirt. Now look at mannequin #2. We know it must wear navy plus one other color, yellow or red. So it must wear a navy, red, or yellow jacket. But since the navy jacket is already being used, it must wear the red or yellow jacket. Since the hat must be a different color than the jacket, the hat must be navy.

(A) Consult the diagram. Mannequin #1 is limited to red and navy.

(B) See (A).

(C) Consult the diagram. Mannequin #2 is limited to a navy hat.

(D) See (C).

(E) * This is possible.

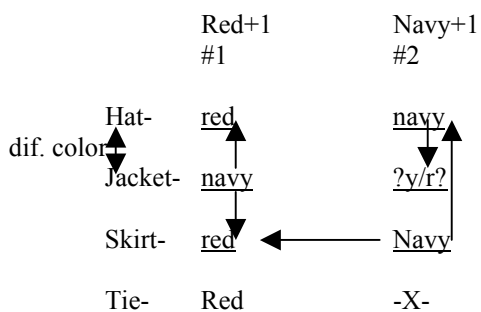


Fig. 2

10. If all four red items are worn, then mannequin #1 will wear three red items and one item of a different color, and mannequin #2 will wear one red item and two navy items. We know this is so, because mannequin #2 must wear one red item and two navy items, due to the effect of rule 2. That means mannequin #1 must wear the remaining three red items. But which ones? Consult the diagram. Mannequin #2 is limited to red and navy. To use the remaining three red items, mannequin #1 must wear a red tie, a red skirt, and either a red hat or a red skirt. (Figure 3)

(A) While this could be true, it is not required. Mannequin #1 could wear a red, yellow, or navy hat.

(B) Again, this could be true, but it is not required.

(C) This is a possibility, but not a requirement.

(D) This is a possibility, but not a requirement.

(E) * True, as we can see in the diagram, mannequin #2 does not wear yellow.

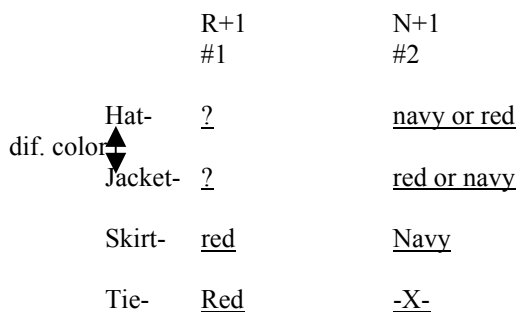


Fig. 3

11. This is pretty similar to the previous question. If mannequin #2 wears the red jacket, then mannequin #2 is limited to navy and red as its two colors, and will thus wear a navy hat. Now that mannequin #2 is

wearing these two items, they are unavailable to mannequin #1. The current possibilities are diagrammed in figure 4.

	R+1	N+1
	#1	#2
	Hat- <u>R or Y</u> navy	<u>navy</u>
dif. color	Jacket- <u>N or Y</u> red	<u>red</u>
	Skirt- <u>Y or R</u>	<u>Navy</u>
	Tie- <u>Red</u>	<u>-X-</u>

Fig. 4

- (A) Mannequin #1 cannot wear a navy hat, because mannequin #2 must wear the navy hat.
 (B) * Mannequin #1 can only have a red or yellow hat, since mannequin #2 has the navy hat. Since mannequin #1 wears exactly two colors, you know that mannequin #1 must wear a red or yellow jacket. However, since mannequin #2 has the red jacket, mannequin #1 must wear the yellow jacket. Therefore, mannequin #1 must wear the red hat.
 (C) See (B).
 (D) The diagram shows us that the skirt may be yellow or red.
 (E) See (D).

12. Perform a similar analysis to that of the previous question. Mannequin #1 cannot wear three yellows, because this would conflict with rule 2. So mannequin #1 must wear two yellow items, and mannequin #2 must wear one yellow item, either the hat or the jacket. Mannequin #1 must also wear either a yellow hat or a yellow jacket. But suppose, for example, mannequin #1 wears the yellow hat and red jacket, and mannequin #2 wears the navy hat and yellow jacket. Then there is still the matter of the third yellow item—the yellow skirt. Since mannequin #2 is already wearing the navy skirt, then mannequin #1 must wear the yellow skirt. (Figure 5)

	R+1	N+1
	#1	#2
	Hat- <u>yellow or red</u>	<u>navy or yellow</u>
dif. color	Jacket- <u>red or yellow</u>	<u>yellow or navy</u>
	Skirt- <u>yellow</u>	<u>Navy</u>
	Tie- <u>Red</u>	<u>-X-</u>

Fig. 5

- (A) Mannequin #1 must wear a red or yellow jacket.
 (B) * True, mannequin #1 may wear the yellow jacket.
 (C) No, it must wear the red skirt.
 (D) No, it must wear a navy or yellow hat.
 (E) No, it must wear a navy or yellow jacket.

13. This one is difficult. Start with the diagram. Draw a line connecting mannequin #1's skirt and mannequin #2's jacket. Then experiment. Let's start by making mannequin #2's jacket navy. This would then mean that mannequin #1's skirt should be navy. But this is not allowed, since the navy skirt has

already been used. So now let's make mannequin #2's jacket red. (Figure 6) This would make mannequin #1's skirt red. Now, working upward, what color could mannequin #1's jacket be? It can't be red, since the red jacket is already being used. So it can be yellow or navy. Since the hat must be a different color than the jacket, red is our only option. Turning to mannequin #2, since the jacket is red, the hat must be navy. We now have enough information to eliminate answer choices (A), (B), and (D).

	R+1	N+1
	#1	#2
	Hat- <u>red</u>	<u>navy</u>
dif. color	Jacket- <u>y or n</u>	<u>red</u>
	Skirt- <u>red</u>	<u>Navy</u>
	Tie- <u>Red</u>	<u>-X-</u>

Fig. 6

Now we can try the yellow jacket on mannequin #2. (Figure 7) Again we see that mannequin #2 must have a navy hat, (C)*.

	R+1	N+1
	#1	#2
	Hat- <u>yellow</u>	<u>navy</u>
dif. color	Jacket- <u>red</u>	<u>yellow</u>
	Skirt- <u>yellow</u>	<u>Navy</u>
	Tie- <u>Red</u>	<u>-X-</u>

Fig. 7

Overview of puzzle set #3—Language awards

What diagram will work? You will need to use a greater-than-less-than line. The greater-than-less-than concept is relatively simple, but the execution of this particular diagram is somewhat difficult. In order to make any progress with this puzzle, you must combine the rules in order to get usable information. We can combine rules 2–5 into a fairly cohesive block of members. This block will be vital to solving the questions. To understand why, look at where J is in the block. It is to the right of H, F, L, and K (though they are not necessarily in that order). Since J is to the right of four members, the earliest J can appear is the fifth position. Once we have the cohesive block, we can apply the combined information to the diagram, and we will be able to see where certain members cannot be. (Figure 1) Knowing where a member cannot be placed is just as valuable as knowing where a member can or must be placed. We will still need to do more work when we get to the questions, but this diagram gives us a great start. Move to the questions.

Rule 1: G is not 1st.

Rule 2: $H < K$

Rule 3: $L < J$

Rule 4: $\underline{F} \underline{H} / \underline{H} \underline{F}$ (or $\underline{H} / \underline{F}$)

Rule 5: $\underline{K} \underline{L} / \underline{L} \underline{K}$ (or $\underline{L} / \underline{K}$)

Combination of rules 2–5: $H/F < L/K < J$

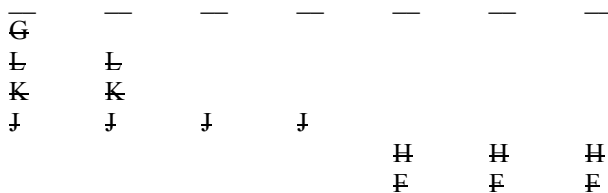


Fig. 1

14. Since all of these answer choices focus on where the members are in relation to another member, the line diagram in figure 1 will not help; it shows where the members cannot be. Instead, look at the combination of rules 2–5, because that shows where five of the members are in relation to each other.

- (A) * Yes, we can look at the combination rule and see that F is before L and K, and L and K are both before J.
- (B) S is a free agent. Because S is a free agent, there are no restrictions that require S to be before or after any other member.
- (C) This could be true, but it is not a must be true. It is very easy to create a diagram where G comes after K.
- (D) See (B).
- (E) See (B).

15. Take the information and plug it into the diagram. Pay special attention to the rule that F must be next to H but can be before or after H. Looking at the fifth space, we see that F is never permitted there, so F must be in the third space. Since H is fourth, L/K must now be fifth and six, and J must be seventh. Going in the other direction, only spaces one and two are left, and G cannot be in space one; so G must be in space two. This leaves space one for S. (Figure 2)

- (A) F must be third.
- (B) G must be second.
- (C) J must be seventh
- (D) K may be fifth, but it may be sixth.
- (E) * True, S is first.

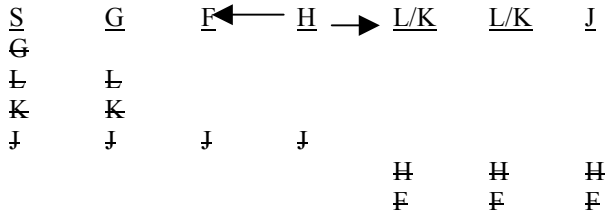


Fig. 2

16. Four of these choices are false, so simply plug in the new information about G. Since G is third, there appear to be two basic options, either place H/F before G in spaces one and two, or place them after G in spaces four and five. But when we check this, we see that we are not permitted to place H/F in spaces four and five, because if we did then L/K would be in spaces six and seven, but there would be no space for J. We learned this when we did the initial analysis. So we have determined that H/F are in spaces one and two. Turn to the other block, L/K. If L/K are in spaces four and five, then J has the option of being in space six or seven. If L/K are in spaces five and six, then J must be in space seven. So—no matter what—either L or K is on space five. This effect of L and K is called “occupancy overlapping”. You will see it happen in many puzzles. Let’s graph everything we know so far. We don’t know where S is. (Figure 3)

Combination of rules 2–5: $H/F < L/K < J$

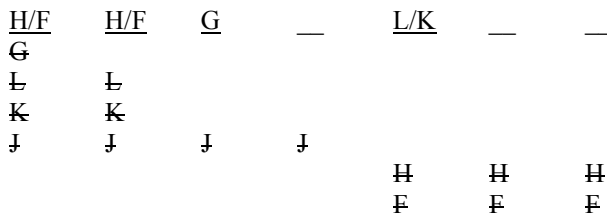


Fig. 3

- (A) We see that H and F must be in first or second.
- (B) The fifth space is already filled with L or K.
- (C) * This is possible.
- (D) The second space is filled with H or F.
- (E) See (B).

17. Since this question does not add new information, we should be able to answer it by consulting our initial diagram. (Figure 1) Alternatively, if you failed to make the initial warranted conclusions about J and so you needed to solve this manually, you should start with the middle numbers, i.e. fourth, fifth, or sixth. Checking for third and seventh will not help you, since the correct answer is not normally at the extreme ends of the range.

- (A) See (C).
- (B) See (C).
- (C) * The initial diagram shows that the fifth space is the earliest J can appear.
- (D) See (C).
- (E) See (C).

18. This will be a time-consuming question because four of the answer choices are possible and only one is not. If you typically run out of time, you should consider skipping EXCEPT questions. There is no sure-fire shortcut to solve EXCEPT questions, and they can become very frustrating. You may need to do a great many permutations in order to find the correct answer. We do know that S must not be used in one of the first five spaces, but that doesn’t narrow things down much. The best strategy is to focus on the most

restricted members—in this case the blocks—and concentrate on the spaces required to accommodate the blocks, with an S tacked on behind J.

- (A) * G can't be first, and F (and H) can't be later than fourth, so let's try G on second, F on third, and thus H on fourth. We get: _ G F H _ _ . Now place J and S. We know that J may only be sixth or seventh. But if J were sixth, that would prevent us from placing the L/K block, so J can't be sixth and must be seventh. This allows L/K to occupy spaces five and six, which means S—the free agent—is the only one that remains to fill space one. But that is not permitted by the new rule. The new rule is that S is supposed to be after J. So we have found the answer choice that cannot be true.
- (B) J is allowed to be on five, six, or seven; so let's make it easy and place S as far to the right as possible on space seven and then place J on six. This places G on five. Are we still able to place our two blocks, L/K and H/K? Yes, here is the setup: H/F H/F L/K L/K G J S.
- (C) If H is immediately before L, then we have a block of four letters, FHLK. Turning our attention back to choice (B), we see that it is possible to have this setup.
- (D) If we slightly modify the setup we used in answer choice (B), we see that this is a possible setup: F H L K J G S.
- (E) If we slightly modify the setup we used in (D), we see this is possible: F H L K J S G.

19. This is also a tough one. To avoid doing too much work, focus on the block of letters: F/H < L/K. The correct answer will mention these members and create new links that solidify their positions. The answer choices will still require a great deal of work; this cannot be avoided.

- (A) If F is before G, F could be in space two or three. Fixing the positions of L and K relative to each other does not tell us where they must be.
- (B) Fixing the positions of F and H relative to each other does not tell us where they must be. Fixing K and H relative to each other doesn't help either. We have a block of FHKL, but it could be anywhere, as long as J appears fifth, sixth, or seventh, and G is not first.
- (C) This fixes the positions a little more definitely: HFLKJ??. But G or S can occupy spaces six or seven. Or S can be first.
- (D) * This one is correct. When you make the GFH block, you see that because G may not be in space one, F is only permitted in space three or four. Working from the other end, J may only be in space six or seven and the block is KLJ. The only way to accommodate both blocks is to place S in space one to make SGFHKLJ.
- (E) Making the new block we get FHGKLJ. The problem is that S may appear before F, immediately before G, immediately before J, or after J.

Overview of puzzle set #4—Piano classes

Unfortunately, things do not get any easier in this puzzle. This puzzle requires a great deal of consolidation of the rules, and there are several items to keep track of. Start with the occupancy issues. We are told there are six total classes and nine total students. Thus, three students will be leftover who must be placed in a class with another student. So far, this can't be diagrammed. Now incorporate rule 1. We are told that I and L are one class. That means there are now two leftover students. Rule 2 tells us that P and two more students form one class. Now we are getting somewhere. We have six classes, four of the classes have one student, one class has two students (I and L), and one class has three students (P and two more students). To create the diagram, we also need to figure out the order of the members—as much as is possible. Look to rule 4. G is after I, but before P. Now it gets trickier. G is a female, and rule 3 tells us that K is the first female (but not the first student). So we can combine rule 4 and rule 3. This is becoming complicated, so consult the diagram. (Figure 1) The only remaining question is whether the sixth class is held after P, or held prior to the class that is prior to K. Since we don't know the answer, use parentheses () to hold a place. Looking at the partial diagram, it becomes clearer that the partial block of K, I, L, G, and P will be important, since this order must be maintained. Return to rule 3, which places K prior to the other females, including H. We now know that H must be after K, which means H is either with P, or it forms its own class after P's class (if there is one). Let's indicate—using a negative H (\bar{H})—that H cannot be in the one or two classes prior to K. Rule 5 places O after G, so O is either with P or forms its own class after P, if there is one. Finally, note that the free agents are N and S.

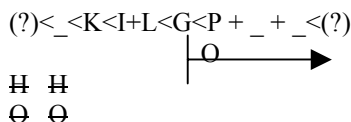


Fig. 1

Rule 1: I+L

Rule 2: P+ _ + _

Rule 3: K < all females (I&G&H)

Rule 4: I < G < P

Rule 5: G < O

20. Start by consulting the graph and eliminating those students that cannot attend the first class. We see that the females—G, H, K, I—cannot. Also, G, L, and P cannot attend the first class. Additionally, O cannot attend the first class. The only choices that remain are S and N. But what if you didn't make the correct initial diagram, how could you have solved this question? Simply work through the answer choices.

- (A) H cannot be in the first class because H is a female, and K must be the first female.
- (B) L is linked to I. I is a female, and K must be the first female, so L cannot be before K.
- (C) O must come after G.
- (D) P must come after G.
- (E) * S is a free agent and so is more likely than the restricted members to be in a given class, including the first class. S is a male and so can be prior to K.

21. There is an easy way and a hard way to do this question. The easy way was to have made the initial diagram correctly and then simply count the class spaces. Don't forget to account for the possible class that comes either at the very beginning or the very end. If you count correctly, you see that G can only be in the fourth or fifth class. On the other hand, if you did this question the hard way, you must use a partial initial diagram and eliminate your way to an answer. You can see that four of the five choices contain "fourth", so the safe bet is that "fourth" will be in the correct answer, don't bother to check for it.

- (A) * Whether you counted the spaces or you eliminated choices to get to the correct answer, you were left with (A).

- (B) Can G be sixth? You know there are six total classes, and you know, from rule 4, that G must be before P, so G simply cannot be sixth. Since you now know G cannot be sixth, this allows you to eliminate any answer choice that contains “sixth”.
- (C) Can G be second? Rule 4 tells us G must be after I, and rule 3 tells us I (a female) must be after K. That puts at least two classes prior to G, so G cannot be in the second class. Use this new insight to eliminate any answer choices that contain “second”.
- (D) See (B). Also, this choice does not contain “fourth”.
- (E) See (C).

22. We know P has two companions. The best way to start this question is to eliminate answer choices that are clearly wrong. Then we can do more analysis if necessary.

- (A) G cannot be with P. G must be earlier than P.
- (B) * These two look initially promising. S (a free agent) and H (a female) must be with P or must be the class after P (if any). Check the other choices.
- (C) K must come prior to P. (Figure 1)
- (D) L must come prior to P. (Figure 1)
- (E) N and S are both free agents, so this looks promising at first. But what if we do put N and S with P? Where will we put O and H? Since neither O (which must be later than G) nor H (a female) can fill the class (or classes) prior to K, we need N, S, or both, to do the job.

23. Building on what we learned in the previous question and using the new information provided in this question, we know that O must now be in the class after P. Diagram the possibilities. (Figure 2) H must now be with P, and either N or S must be with P, while the other one must be prior to K.

$N/S < K < I + L < G < P + H + N/S < O$

H
O

Fig. 2

- (A) G is in the fourth class.
- (B) H must be with P, in the fifth class.
- (C) I must be in the third class.
- (D) * N could be in the fifth class.
- (E) S must be in the first or fifth class.

24. Aarrgh, just when you get a puzzle figured out, they pull this trick. All you can do is patiently re-work all the conditions to reflect this change. Since the initial diagram is no longer valid you must start from scratch. The problem here is that O may be before or after IL. It is probably easiest to just draw it both ways. (Figure 3) We can see that there is only one place left for H, and that is with P.

$_ < K < O < IL < G < P + _ + _$
 $_ < K < IL < O < G < P + _ + _$
 H

- (A) In both permutations K must be second.
- (B) Either IL or O must be third.
- (C) See (B).
- (D) G must always be fifth.
- (E) * The only class left for H is the sixth class, with P.

Prep Test 29

(28–35)

4**4****4****4****4****4**

29/04/01

(D)

Strengthen or weaken the argument

What new fact will explain why the conclusion is true?

Benzene gasoline causes cancer. Methanol gasoline causes cancer. Therefore, there is no benefit from switching from benzene to methanol.

The assumption is obvious. The conclusion assumes that the two chemicals are equally bad in all respects.

Find the new information that weakens the conclusion, thereby strengthening the environmentalists.

- (A) This is immaterial; it discusses a different kind of fuel.
- (B) It is nice that they are doing research, but it sheds no new light on these two types of fuel.
- (C) This choice discusses all types of fuel and its local economies, it has no effect on the argument.
- (D) * If the methanol gasoline is less harmful to human health, this would be a reason to switch to it.
- (E) This choice is almost correct. It discusses the two types of fuel. But the argument focused on cancer risk, so there is no context in which to weigh this new evidence about pollution.

29/04/02

(A)

Argument structure

Find the key terms in the answer choices and compare them to the argument.

The argument discusses homelessness due to a lack of affordable housing. It says profit motive is not to blame. Investors will invest in housing if there is a profit to be made. It is unrealistic to expect otherwise. The question focuses on the role played by the first line. The first line concedes that homelessness is, in part, due to lack of affordable housing. The role it plays is to concede a problem and point to one cause of the problem but to also indicate that this cause is, perhaps, a minor one.

- (A) * Yes. The first line does limit the application of this argument (about profit motive not being to blame) to a part of the problem (of homelessness that arises from lack of affordable housing).
- (B) No. This choice is the opposite of what the phrase accomplished. The phrase leads one to believe that lack of affordable housing is a minor cause of homelessness.
- (C) The phrase serves a limiting role. It is not evidence.
- (D) This choice is meaningless.
- (E) Nowhere in the argument is a possible solution mentioned.

29/04/03

(A)

Make a conclusion

Which answer choice would the author of the argument agree with?

Physical education should teach people to practice healthy lifestyles as they age. The focus on competitive sports in school alienates most of the less competitive kids. These kids think they are unathletic, so they don't exercise enough.

Based on these facts, a logical recommendation is that schools should not focus on competitive sports.

- (A) * This is pretty close to the tentative conclusion.
- (B) The argument did not say that "most" students turn away from sports. It said that "most" of the uncompetitive students turn away from sports. Since the uncompetitive students are only a subset of the total student population, this choice is not likely to be true.
- (C) This choice goes beyond any information in the argument. We don't know what the talented students do.
- (D) "Mental aspects" is a totally new subject.
- (E) This choice, has the right tenor, but the argument focused on teaching students to pursue active lifestyles and the role of competitive sports in driving those students away from an active lifestyle.

29/04/04

(B)

Identify the assumption

The correct assumption provides the missing link that connects the facts and the conclusion.

Non-mainstream opinions are rarely present in talk shows. They must capture the widest possible audience, so they air shows that appeal to a large number of people. Therefore, the opinions are bland and innocuous.

It is unusual to have two assumption questions based on a single argument, as is the case here. But arguments can, and often do, contain more than one assumption. This is why, in an assumption question, you do not want to commit yourself to an answer choice until you have reviewed them all. One obvious assumption of this argument is that the mainstream opinions are bland.

- (A) This choice does not add anything useful to the argument. Focus on the words “cannot agree”, “which elements”, and “most disturbing”. These terms are not related to the central aspects of the argument, which are “opinion” and “blandness”.
- (B) * This certainly is an assumption. The whole argument is that shows broadcast bland opinions in order to capture the largest audience. An underlying assumption is that at least some people will not watch the shows if the opinions are not bland. The use of “controversial and disturbing” in this choice may have given you pause, but after checking the other choices, you will find that this one is superior.
- (C) This information would have no effect on the argument.
- (D) Since the argument only addresses talk shows, this information is off the subject.
- (E) Although this information might provide some additional support to the conclusion, it is not necessary to assume this in order to draw the conclusion. Hopefully, the mention of “different stations” caught your eye, since it is unrelated to the issues at hand.

29/04/05

(B)

Identify the assumption

The correct assumption provides the missing link that connects the facts and the conclusion.

Non-mainstream opinions are rarely present in talk shows. They must capture the widest possible audience, so they air shows that appeal to a large number of people. Therefore, the opinions are bland and innocuous.

It is unusual to have two assumption questions based on a single argument, as is the case here. But arguments can, and often do, contain more than one assumption. This is why, in an assumption question, you do not want to commit yourself to an answer choice until you have reviewed them all. As mentioned in the previous question, an obvious assumption of this argument is that the mainstream opinions are bland.

- (A) It is not necessary to assume that the executives lack an opinion, since it is market forces that drive the process.
- (B) * This is a basic assumption that must be believed in order to make the conclusion logical.
- (C) Although this would strengthen the conclusion somewhat, it is not a necessary conclusion.
- (D) It does not matter if viewers are prepared to argue.
- (E) Similar to (A), it is the market forces, not the executives’ opinions, that result in bland programming.

29/04/06

(E)

Make a conclusion

For “main point” questions, the conclusion has been already made, simply restate it.

Judges complain that mandatory minimum sentencing rules prevent them from deciding who can be rehabilitated and who can’t. That is why mandatory minimum sentences are necessary. History has shown that people using their own judgment think they are acting wisely, when often they are irrational. Judges are no exception.

The argument favors mandatory minimum sentences, and it provides a reason why—mandatory minimums prevent irrational results.

- (A) This choice holds some initial appeal, but it addresses only the issue of people not having good judgment. It ignores the issue of the sentencing rules. Also, this choice misstates the facts. The argument said people are “often” arbitrary. This choice says people “never” use good judgment.
- (B) The author is happy that the sentencing rules are mechanical.
- (C) This contradicts what the author concluded.
- (D) Judges are as arbitrary and irrational as the general population. This was a stated fact.
- (E) * This choice sums up the third sentence of the argument.

29/04/07

(C)

Strengthen or weaken the argument

When an unstated assumption of the argument is declared to be true, it strengthens the argument. The wildflower is headed for extinction. It can be crossbred with a domestic flower to produce a hybrid. The hybrid will be different. Hybrids are the only way to prevent total loss of the wildflower. Therefore, the domestic flower should be introduced in the wildflower’s range.

A major assumption of this argument is that the hybrids are an acceptable compromise.

- (A) The argument concludes that we should accept a (presumably) lesser flower. So this choice is wrong.
- (B) In the argument, the original organism does not survive; it is not merely that it is “less vigorous”.
- (C) * This would support the breeding of hybrids, since partial preservation is better than none.
- (D) The argument did not discuss “destroying” competing organisms.
- (E) The argument did not advocate protecting the flower at the expense of another organism.

29/04/08

(D)

Identify the assumption

To understand the argument it is sometimes necessary to ignore superfluous information.

The wildflower is headed for extinction. It can be crossbred with a domestic flower to produce a hybrid. The hybrid will be different. Hybrids are the only way to prevent total loss of the wildflower. Therefore, the domestic flower should be introduced in the wildflower’s range.

It is most difficult to find the assumption when the argument appears logically sound. When this happens, read the answer choices with an open mind. Sometimes the assumption is so natural to make that you make the assumption without realizing it.

- (A) Does it matter if the wildflower currently reproduces using seeds? No, this does not have any bearing on the issue.
- (B) While this extra bit of information about the daisy adds to our overall knowledge, it is not a necessary assumption.
- (C) It is not necessary to assume that the flower will *expand* its range in order to conclude the domestic flower should be introduced to prevent total loss of the wildflower’s range.
- (D) * Ah-ha! If the hybrids were not able to propagate, then the wildflower would die off. So it is necessary to assume (as all of us would assume) that the hybrids could reproduce. On reflection, this is similar to the mule, which is the offspring of a horse and a donkey, and mules cannot reproduce.
- (E) This is additional, superfluous information. It is not necessary to assume this about daisies in order to arrive at the conclusion.

29/04/09

(D)

Strengthen or weaken the argument

To weaken the argument the new information in the choice must undercut an unstated assumption.

Oil heating usage fell 40 percent. Many people switched to natural gas. Switching to natural gas requires buying new equipment. Therefore, a significant switch back to oil is unlikely. The important factors are cost of the fuel, which is an ongoing maintenance cost, and cost of the equipment, which is an upfront cost. Make sure to select an answer that addresses these.

- (A) This would make the conclusion stronger, not weaker. If the cost of natural gas is about the same, and the natural gas equipment is now cheaper, this would not give people a reason to switch to oil.
- (B) If oil is about the same price (as when people began to stop using it), then this would not motivate a switch. If natural gas equipment is more expensive, this would not result in people moving away from using gas, since they already have the equipment.
- (C) The price of gas equipment will have no effect on whether people who are using gas will switch to oil. Also, it is meaningless to say that oil prices have fallen to 1970 levels, since we don't know if that means oil is cheap or expensive.
- (D) * If there is very little up-front cost to switch to oil, and oil is now cheaper than gas, it is likely that people will switch to oil.
- (E) See (C).

29/04/10

(C)

Parallel Reasoning

The correct answer choice will match the pattern of the argument.

Parents should not necessarily do what experts recommend. After all, the parents know what works best with their kids.

The correct answer will say that the person should not necessarily do what an expert says, because the person can make a decision based on their specific situation.

- (A) This choice is not even close. It does not mention an individual. It does not mention experts. It does not mention an expert musician knowing best what needs to be done.
- (B) This choice is better, but not great. This choice says experts should be (somewhat) ignored if the experts do not consider all the factors when making a recommendation.
- (C) * This choice is correct. It is analogous. The individual in the situation should not necessarily heed the advice of experts who are experts in general, but not experts in this specific situation.
- (D) This choice somewhat contradicts the argument.
- (E) This choice says one should not follow the advice of society. Society is not the same as experts.

29/04/11

(B)

Strengthen or weaken the argument

When an unstated assumption of the argument is established as true this strengthens the argument.

When the dolphins are told to do something creative, they do two different activities. This is not due to training. Dolphins are capable of higher thought.

A good strengthening answer choice might rule out the possibility that the dolphins aren't just doing these things they have learned. If they did a third new activity, this would strengthen the conclusion.

- (A) Dolphins, not mammals, are the focus. Brain structure is irrelevant.
- (B) * If the dolphins did something completely new and different, then it is more likely that they are communicating with each other and planning what to do.
- (C) Incentives are not mentioned or alluded to. This is a "So what?" choice. Of course the dolphins are given incentives. No animal does anything without an incentive.
- (D) This would not strengthen the argument. It is simply superfluous information.
- (E) This is somewhat interesting, but we can eliminate it using editing techniques. This might be a good time to review the editing techniques you can use for strengthening and weakening questions. Plug the text of this answer choice in front of the conclusion. Read the entire argument a second time. Now do the same thing with the correct answer choice. It is clear that (B) is relevant to the argument, while (E) is not.

29/04/12

(A)

Make a conclusion

What is the most logical recommendation based on the facts?

Drivers with many points and who are convicted of an offense should be punished by jail or re-education. Re-education should be given only if they can be made more responsible. It is almost impossible to make drivers with many points more responsible.

Therefore...send them to jail. The argument says these drivers should be punished in one of two ways. It then goes on to rule out the second punishment from most of these drivers, leaving only the first punishment available.

- (A) * This choice is the proper recommendation. For anyone who has committed these offenses, they must be sent to jail, since the alternative punishment is inappropriate.
- (B) This contradicts the facts. The facts say that these drivers cannot be made responsible.
- (C) It is not that the re-education is not harsh enough; it is that it is not effective.
- (D) Since this choice deals with a different kind of person (one who does not have a serious offense), we don't have any facts telling us what to do with them.
- (E) See (D).

29/04/13

(B)

A and B disagree about which point?

There is always at least one logical reasoning question that doesn't make sense.

This was a very difficult question. The plant manager lists several facts and comes to the conclusion that the new process will cost much yet bring no profit. The supervisor agrees with this overall conclusion. (This is unusual for this question type.) The supervisor then identifies one fact that he does not agree with the supervisor about. The supervisor says the closed furnaces are fuel-efficient. So what fact does he disagree with?

- (A) The supervisor does not debate how much sulfur dioxide is released, so he concedes it is true.
- (B) * This one was tricky. The plant manager said it "costs more to run", because the metal must be cooled before being moved to the next furnace and then re-heated. The supervisor says that the furnaces are extremely fuel efficient, so presumably the supervisor is saying that it would not cost as much to re-heat the metal as the manager thinks. The test-makers require us to make a pretty big inference to get this far.
- (C) They both agreed that the new process should not be adopted.
- (D) The second speaker said it would be more fuel-efficient, while the first speaker never addressed this.
- (E) This one seems to be saying the same thing as choice (B). So why is it not the correct answer? Because it is too narrowly focused. It addresses only the issue of the cost of cooling and re-heating. Choice (B) more broadly focuses on the whole process. This is an almost invisible distinction. On every LSAT test, at least one logical reasoning question is like this one. The difference between the correct and incorrect answers is all but imperceptible. It could be that the question is merely poorly written and thus confusing, but it is more likely that the test-makers deliberately use at least one question that virtually no one will know the answer to.

29/04/14

(A)

Identify the flaw in the reasoning

One common type of flaw is for the argument to simply overlook something.

The new process requires replacing the furnaces and moving the copper in solid, not liquid, form. The new process costs more to run. Therefore, the new process will cost much, but not bring more profit.

This jumbled argument is difficult to sort out. The important issue is that the conclusion discusses profit, while the facts discuss costs. The two are logically related, but that doesn't mean that a logical error can't sneak in.

- (A) * Yes. The overall conclusion (the process will cost much, but bring no profit) is about a net effect, but this is based solely on evidence about some of the factors (the cost to run increases because of the need to be reheated), which contribute to the net effect.
- (B) Authority of the plant manager is not an issue.
- (C) The overall conclusion is about profit, so the conclusion does not repeat the evidence, which is about the costs.
- (D) There was no mention of the evidence being only probably true.
- (E) While there was an extraneous fact about reducing the sulfur dioxide emissions, that is not the flaw of the argument.

29/04/15

(D)

Argument structure

Try to see the “big picture” of the argument structure. Ignore the details of the argument.

The argument states, “Ambiguity inspires interpretation.” An example of this is discussed in detail.

The question focuses on the role played by the first line. What is the first line? Is it a fact? A contradiction? A conclusion? The first line is a conclusion.

- (A) The first line is the conclusion. The rest of the argument supports the conclusion.
- (B) No. The quote is the illustration.
- (C) The first line was not “ambiguous.” It was emphatic.
- (D) * Yes. This is a roundabout way of saying that the first line is a conclusion. Still not sure? Insert “therefore” in front of the first line and move it to the end of the argument. That makes it easier to see that it is a conclusion.
- (E) There is no “difficulty” that the argument attempts to solve.

29/04/16

(D)

A and B disagree about which point?

A and B disagree about which point questions always come after a two-speaker argument. Identify the fact the two speakers disagree about. If only one of the speakers mentions the fact, then it cannot be the correct answer.

Franklin says it is inconsistent to pay sports stars more than Nobel laureates. He bases this on the fact that both have rare talents and work hard. Tomeka disagrees, because sports stars make a great deal of money for their employers.

- (A) Neither of them discusses how seriously either group should be taken.
- (B) Franklin never said laureates should be paid more than stars.
- (C) Tomeka does not dispute that both groups work hard.
- (D) * Yes. Tomeka thinks there is a rationale for paying stars more—they bring in a great deal of revenue for their employers. Franklin thinks that as long as both groups work hard and have rare talents, then there should not be such a large pay disparity.
- (E) Neither of them discusses social contributions.

29/04/17

(D)

Identify the assumption

The correct assumption provides the missing link that connects the facts and the conclusion.

There is little correlation between a witnesses’ accuracy and their confidence. Factors can change their confidence without changing their accuracy. Therefore, police don’t allow lineups where witnesses can hear each other.

There is obviously a gap in the argument, but it is difficult to determine what the gap is. It should mention lineups and confidence. Read the answer choices with an open mind.

- (A) * Obviously the confidence of a witness could be influenced by what they hear others say. But is this a necessary assumption? Check the other answer choices to see what is on offer. After

- reviewing them, this choice is the only one that is on point. It must be that this is one of those factors that can change (in this case increase) a witnesses' confidence, without making them more accurate.
- (B) We are not concerned with how many suspects are in the lineup. We care about how many witnesses view the lineup together.
 - (C) Although this is probably true, it is beside the point since it doesn't concern confidence.
 - (D) This choice has a negative view of the police's motives, but that is not why it is wrong. It is wrong because testimony is not an issue.
 - (E) Similar to (C), this is not a necessary assumption.

29/04/18

(A)

Identify the flaw in the reasoning

You are told that the flaw exists, so you know it is there, even when it is not obvious.

The conclusion is that all actions are motivated by self-interest. For example, the act of helping someone can be motivated by hopes of a reward or other personal gain.

The flaw is very subtle. The conclusion is very broad. The conclusion says that *all* actions are motivated by self-interest, but the argument only gives one example. If a conclusion is going to be this broad, it would be nice if it had a bit more in the way of support.

- (A) Although a shift in terminology can be an argument flaw, in this argument, the term "self-interest" did not change in meaning.
- (B) * Yes. The example helps prove the conclusion, but it doesn't, by itself, prove the conclusion.
- (C) The meaning of these two terms is pretty obvious.
- (D) While we should always watch out for necessary and sufficient mix-ups, there was not one here.
- (E) There was no appeal to emotion in this argument.

29/04/19

(B)

Resolve the apparent contradiction

With EXCEPT questions, four of the answer choices should sound logical and appear to mesh with the argument. The remaining (credited) answer choice will appear awkward and may actually deepen the mystery.

From mid-80s to mid-90s, there were mergers. This significantly undermined job security. Surprisingly, perceptions of job security didn't change much from 1984 to 1994.

Make sure you understand the facts. About the same number of people in 1984 (which, presumably, is prior to the mid-80s) and in 1994 felt their job was secure, even after all the layoffs. Four of the answer choices will make it clear why this survey result is not illogical; one choice will not.

- (A) Okay, if the survey mostly covered small companies, which were not affected by mergers, then the mergers would not make the employees feel less secure.
- (B) * This really does not fit the argument in any way. It certainly doesn't address the stable statistic.
- (C) Let's see. If, by 1984, everybody knew layoffs were on the horizon, this would be reflected in the survey results in 1984. So the 1984 survey results showed that people were already factoring the coming layoffs into their opinions. Whereas, ten years later, people were more used to the layoffs.
- (D) This one is a bit more difficult. If all the layoffs were done by 1985, then, by 1994, the people being surveyed would not feel particularly insecure, since the layoffs took place nine years later.
- (E) If, in the 1995 survey, everyone was generally more optimistic than they were in 1984, this would explain why 55% would feel secure, even after a decade of layoffs. They had a rosier outlook.

29/04/20

(B)

Strengthen or weaken the argument

With EXCEPT questions four choices strengthen the conclusion and one has a neutral effect, is off the subject, or weakens the conclusion.

Amphibian populations are falling. The ozone layer has been thinning for 50 years. Ozone blocks the UV rays that damage genes. Amphibians don't have much protection from the UV rays. Therefore, the primary cause of the population decline is the thinning ozone.

There are many new facts that one could add that strengthen the conclusion (four of them are listed below), so don't waste time trying to think of them.

- (A) * This information would not strengthen the conclusion; it would have a neutral effect. It is always difficult with EXCEPT questions when the correct answer is the first choice, but after you eliminated the other choices you were left with only one option.
- (B) If this were true, it would help establish that amphibians are suffering disproportionately due to their lack of UV protection.
- (C) By showing that populations fare worse in areas with thin ozone, this choice buttresses the conclusion.
- (D) This choice rules out the possibility that a loss of habitat is the real reason for the decline.
- (E) This choice helps link the time frame of the ozone thinning to the time frame of the population decline.

29/04/21

(C)

Parallel Reasoning

Find the flaw in the argument, and then find the same flaw in the answer choices.

Many W are C. Most C are F. Therefore, at least one W is F.

The flaw is that the W may be a C or may not be a C. Even if a W is a C, it may not be an F.

Look especially closely at the first modifier in each of the answer choices. This will eliminate two of the answer choices.

- (A) "All" is incorrect. We want an answer choice that is not so definite.
- (B) The first part of this choice is okay because it introduces two elements, but then it goes on to introduce two new elements: "saints" and "ability to articulate". The argument only had three elements: W, C, and F.
- (C) * This one varied the order a little bit and used slightly different language, but it does have the same pattern. Some P are M. Some M are D. Therefore, some P are D. It does not matter that the argument says "most" and this choice says "some". Both adjectives are indefinite.
- (D) This choice uses an if/then pattern, which is not the pattern of the argument.
- (E) This choice is attractive because it almost follows the pattern and uses some of the same words. The italicized words show where this choice differs from the argument. Many V favor TB. *No one* (should be replaced with "most") who favors TB is OST. Therefore, at least one V is *not* (should be deleted) OST.

29/04/22

(C)

Make a conclusion

Which answer choice would the author of the argument agree with?

The music does not necessarily reveal Bach's attitude. People think artists create art in order to express their feelings. Some artists do. Master artists like Bach never do.

The first half of the argument is unnecessary filler information. Since the question stem asks which of the following cannot be true, look for a choice that contradicts the conclusion.

- (A) The argument never stated what Bach really felt about the end of the year. Maybe he liked it; maybe he didn't. At any rate, this could be true.
- (B) This could be true. The argument said he never created his art to express his feelings.

- (C) * The conclusion covered all art, not just one kind. So Bach never created any art in order to express his own feelings.
- (D) Maybe this is true; and maybe it is not. This choice uses “most”. In a cannot be true question that contains no percentages or numbers, you should not select a comparative answer choice.
- (E) See (D).

29/04/23

(E)

Make a conclusion

Make a generalization that is based on the facts.

The light from quasars requires 500 million years to reach the earth. To be so bright, they must burn at the same level as 90 billion suns. If something burns at this level, then it can't be older than 100 million years. Therefore...the quasars we now see have already burned-out.

- (A) The mention of 1963 was meant to distract you.
- (B) The facts never indicated when the light began to arrive, but it is a safe bet that it began arriving long before 1963.
- (C) This choice misunderstands the relation of brightness to distance. If the thing is much closer to the Earth, then it does not need to produce as much light in order to appear as bright as a quasar.
- (D) This choice identifies the fact that quasars can't last more than 100 million years. But longevity is irrelevant to how far away the thing is from Earth.
- (E) * True. The light from the quasars that we can see today started coming toward Earth 500 million years ago, but those quasars burned out after only 100 million years.

29/04/24

(B)

Strengthen or weaken the argument

To weaken the argument the new information in the choice must undercut an unstated assumption.

Records show that premature babies have lower weights. They also show that mothers who had adequate prenatal care were less likely to have a low weight baby. Therefore, prenatal care decreases the risk of a low weight baby.

Whenever the conclusion delves into cause and effect, you want to be on the watch for a correlation error. Maybe, in this case, the two things are not related, rather, it is simply a coincidence. Or maybe the type of mother that seeks and receives adequate prenatal care is the type that does other things that result in fewer low-weight babies—two effects resulting from the same cause.

- (A) Because this choice uses “many”, we can eliminate it for being imprecise.
- (B) * This choice is somewhat circuitous, but it does weaken the conclusion. If mothers who give birth prematurely (and hence are more likely to have a low-weight baby) are classified as not having prenatal care whenever the truth is not known, then there will be some mothers of low weight babies who are categorized as having not received prenatal care, even though they actually did. This new information undercuts the assumption that the records accurately reflect the truth.
- (C) This has some of the correct language, but since the conclusion specifies low-weight babies, this choice has no effect on the conclusion.
- (D) Because this choice uses “some” we can eliminate it.
- (E) This is almost a repeat of the argument. It does not undercut an assumption.

29/04/25

(E)

Identify the flaw in the reasoning

The most common type of flaw is when the argument simply overlooks something.

Performance evaluations allow professionals to consult any references they need. Therefore, students should be allowed to look at their textbooks during exams.

The obvious flaw is that students and professionals are not the same, and, presumably, their evaluations serve different purposes.

- (A) The examples cited are sufficient to support the generalization.
- (B) Increasing test scores was not an issue.
- (C) Who cares that the professionals once had to take exams as students? This does not undermine the argument.
- (D) “Years of study” is a non-issue.
- (E) * Yes. Maybe professional evaluations are meant to test their ability to solve a real-world problem, while student exams are meant to test a student’s retention of information.

