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PART I- CRITICAL REASONING

Critical Reasoning questions evaluate a test taker's ability to understand, analyze, criticize, and complete arguments. The arguments are contained in short passages taken from a variety of sources, including letters to the editor, speeches, advertisements, newspaper articles and editorials, informal discussions and conversations, as well as articles in the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences .

Most Critical Reasoning questions focus on arguments, which are sets of statements that present evidence and draw a conclusion on the basis of that evidence. These arguments are generally short and self-contained.

Usually arguments have two very important parts; the first part is often called the evidence (sometimes also referred to as 'premise'), the second part is called the conclusion.

The force of the evidence often decides the force of the argument; also, the reasoning involved in the argument brings out the persuasiveness of the argument. We weaken the argument by finding flaws in the reasoning used by the author, or by finding some weakness in the evidence presented. Likewise, we strengthen the argument by supporting the reasoning involved in the argument, or by finding additional strengths in the evidence provided by the author.

Consider this basic example:

Rakesh is well-qualified, and the hiring committee is very familiar with his work. Therefore, he will probably receive a job offer.

This is a simple argument. Two pieces of evidence are presented.

The first evidence is: *Rakesh is well-qualified.*

The second evidence is: *The hiring committee is very familiar with his work.*

These are the premises of the argument. These premises are offered in support of the view that Rakesh will probably receive a job offer. This is the conclusion of the argument.

Let's look at a second case:

Computer Whiz is a well-respected magazine with a large readership, so its product endorsements carry a lot of weight in the computer electronics marketplace. The X2000 display monitor was recently endorsed by Computer Whiz. It is therefore likely that sales of the X2000 monitor will increase dramatically.

In this argument, information about the magazine's reputation and large readership serves as a basis for reaching an intermediate, or subsidiary, conclusion: that its endorsements are very influential in the marketplace. This intermediate conclusion in conjunction with a premise that reports that the X2000 was recently endorsed by the magazine provides the grounds for the prediction of an increase in sales. This prediction is the main, or overall, conclusion of the argument.

In short, an argument may not always have one conclusion only. It is quite possible that an argument might have one main conclusion along with a subsidiary or an intermediate conclusion, which in turn could be of some use in strengthening or weakening the argument. The example discussed above is one such example.

Identifying the parts of an argument:

An argument can be analyzed by identifying its various parts and the roles that those parts play. The most basic parts of an argument are premises and conclusions. As we have already seen, an argument may have one or more intermediate conclusions in addition to its overall conclusion.

Premises come in a variety of forms. Some premises are ***specific matters of fact, some are definitions, and others are broad principles or generalizations***. What all premises have in common is that they are put forward as true without support (THE PREMISE IS PRESUMED TRUE; ONE MUST NEVER QUESTION OR DOUBT THE PREMISE). That is, there is no attempt within the argument to prove or justify them. In contrast, a conclusion is not simply asserted. A conclusion is presented as being justified by certain premises. Thus, the conclusion

of an argument is open to the challenge that it is not adequately supported by the premises. (Premises, of course, can also be challenged, on grounds such as factual accuracy, but such challenges are not matters of logic.)

One thing to remember about premises and conclusions is that they can come in any order. Premises are presented in support of a conclusion, but this does not mean that premises always precede the conclusion. A conclusion may be at the beginning, middle, or end of an argument.

Consider the following examples:

Nishant is far more skillful than Pritam is at securing the kind of financial support the Volunteers for Literacy Program needs, and Nishant does not have Pritam's propensity for alienating the program's most dedicated volunteers. Therefore, the Volunteers for Literacy Program would benefit if Nishant took Pritam's place as director.

Nishant is far more skillful than Pritam is at securing the kind of financial support the Volunteers for Literacy Program needs. Therefore, the program would benefit if Nishant took Pritam's place as director, especially since Nishant does not have Pritam's propensity for alienating the program's most dedicated volunteers.

The Volunteers for Literacy Program would benefit if Nishant takes Pritam's place as director, since Nishant is far more skillful than Pritam is at securing the kind of financial support the program needs and Nishant does not have Pritam's propensity for alienating the program's most dedicated volunteers.

These three examples all present the same argument. In each example, the conclusion is that the Volunteers for Literacy Program would benefit if Nishant took Pritam's place as director, and this conclusion is supported by the same two premises. But each example expresses the argument in a different way, with the conclusion appearing in the final, middle, and initial position, respectively. It is important, then, to focus on the role each statement plays in the argument as a whole. Position within the argument simply doesn't matter.

Another thing to keep in mind is the presence of indicator words that mark the roles that statements play in arguments. For example, "therefore" often precedes a conclusion; it is a common conclusion indicator. So are "thus," "hence," "consequently," "it follows that," "it can be concluded that," and various others.

Similarly, premises are often preceded by indicator words, the most typical being "since" and "because." However, do not rely uncritically on these indicator words. They can be misleading, especially in the case of complex arguments, which might contain one or more subarguments. There is no completely mechanical way of identifying the roles that various statements play within an argument.

It is worth noting that people, in making arguments, often do not confine themselves to presenting just the conclusion and the statements that support it. Likewise, the short arguments in Critical Reasoning questions often include statements that are neither premises nor conclusions. This includes statements that indicate the motivation for making the argument, statements that convey background information, and statements that identify the position the argument comes out against. So don't assume that everything that is not part of the argument's conclusion must be functioning as support for that conclusion.

How the argument goes:

Once you have identified the premises and the conclusion, the next step is to get clear about exactly how the argument is meant to go; that is, how the grounds offered for the conclusion are actually supposed to bear on the conclusion. Understanding how an argument goes is a crucial step in answering many questions that appear on the GMAT or GRE. This includes questions that ask you to identify a reasoning technique used within an argument, questions that require you to match the pattern of reasoning used in two separate arguments, and of a variety of other question types.

Determining how an argument goes involves discerning how the premises are supposed to support the overall conclusion. Consider, for example, the argument presented earlier about the Volunteers for Literacy Program, which concludes that the program would benefit if Nishant took Pritam's place as director. Two considerations in support of this conclusion are offered: one asserting Nishant's superiority in securing financial support and the other charging that Pritam is more prone to alienating dedicated volunteers. These two considerations are both relevant to the conclusion since, all other things being equal, a program benefits from having a director who is both better at fund-raising and less likely to alienate volunteers. Each of these considerations provides some support for the conclusion, and the

support provided by one is completely independent of the support provided by the other.

In other arguments, the way in which premises support a conclusion can be much more complex. Consider this example:

The years 1917, 1937, 1956, 1968, 1979, and 1990 are all notable for the occurrence of both popular uprisings and near-maximum sunspot activity. During heavy sunspot activity, there is a sharp rise in positively charged ions in the air people breathe, and positively charged ions are known to make people anxious and irritable. Therefore, it is likely that sunspot activity has actually been a factor in triggering popular uprisings.

The conclusion of this argument, signaled by "Therefore," is that it is likely that sunspot activity has been a factor in triggering popular uprisings. There are three premises. The first tells us about specific years in which both heavy sunspot activity and popular uprisings occurred.

The other two are generalizations: that there is a sharp rise in positively charged ions in the air during heavy sunspot activity, and that positively charged ions make people anxious and irritable.

So how does this argument go? The first premise provides some direct support for the conclusion, but this support is very weak, circumstantial evidence. The second and third premises do not support the conclusion directly, but only in conjunction with each other. If these two premises are true, they work together to establish that sunspots are a causal factor in increased irritability. Notice that there is still no link between sunspots and popular uprisings. There is some plausibility; however, to the idea that increased irritability makes popular uprisings more likely, and the argument tacitly assumes that this is in fact so. If we make this assumption then, we can see the connection between sunspot activity and popular uprisings. This greatly enhances the evidence that the first premise provides.

Question about how the argument goes:

Your test may include questions that ask you about how an argument proceeds overall, or about the logical role played by a particular part of an argument, or about the logical move one participant in a dialogue makes in responding to the other.

Understanding how the relevant argument goes puts you in a position to answer these questions. Three examples are briefly discussed below.

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Example 1:

Red squirrels are known to make holes in the bark of sugar maple trees and to consume the trees' sap. Since sugar maple sap is essentially water with a small concentration of sugar, the squirrels almost certainly are after either water or sugar. Water is easily available from other sources in places where maple trees grow, so the squirrels would not go to the trouble of chewing holes in trees just to get water. Therefore, they are probably after the sugar.

The question based on this argument is simply: *The argument proceeds by*

The conclusion of this argument is quite easy to identify: red squirrels, in making holes in the bark of sugar maple trees, are probably after the sugar contained in the trees' sap. The argument arrives at this conclusion by first noting that since maple tree sap is essentially just water and sugar, the squirrels must be after either the one or the other. The argument goes on to reject the idea that it is the water that the squirrels are after, on the grounds that water is readily available for less effort where maple trees grow. Once you have figured out how the argument goes, you're ready to check the answer choices to find the best characterization of the argument's reasoning.

In this particular case, the best characterization is:

rejecting a possible alternative explanation for an observed phenomenon

This is not the only way to describe how the argument proceeds, and it may not be the description you would have given. But it is an accurate characterization and is thus the correct answer. So keep in mind when checking the answer choices that the correct answer may be just one of several acceptable ways of putting things.

Example 2:

In order to determine automobile insurance premiums for a driver, insurance companies calculate various risk factors; as the risk factors increase, so does the premium. Certain factors, such as the driver's age and past accident history, play an important role in these calculations. Yet these premiums should also increase with the frequency with which a person drives. After all, a person's chance of being involved in a mishap increases in proportion to the number of times that person drives

The question based on this argument is:

The claim that insurance premiums should increase as the frequency with which a driver drives increases plays which one of the following roles in the argument?

The first step in determining how this argument goes is identifying the conclusion. To do this, find the position for which the argument offers support. The short phrase "after all" at the beginning of the fourth sentence indicates that the statement that follows functions as a premise. This premise essentially says that the frequency with which a person drives is a factor in their risk of being involved in a traffic accident. We know from the first sentence that risk factors matter in determining a driver's automobile insurance premiums: as certain risk factors increase, the premium increases. Putting all of this together, we see that the argument is constructed to support the position stated in the third sentence: "... these premiums should also increase with the frequency with which the person drives."

So the claim that insurance premiums should increase as the frequency with which a driver drives increases is the conclusion of the argument. That is its role in the argument. The answer choice that expresses this, in some way or other, is the correct one.

A point to consider:

Arguments vary widely in their strength, that is, in the extent to which their conclusions are justified by their premises. In the extreme case-the case of a "deductively valid" (i.e., conclusive) argument-the truth of the conclusion is completely guaranteed by the truth of the premises. In other words, anyone who accepts those premises is thereby committed to accepting the conclusion. In most cases, however, the relationship of the premises to the conclusion is less strict: the premises provide some grounds for accepting the conclusion, but these grounds are not airtight. In other words, someone might accept all of the premises of such an argument yet still be logically justified in not accepting its conclusion.

Identifying the main conclusion of an argument:

Some questions present you with an argument and ask you to identify its main conclusion. In questions of this kind, the conclusion is actually drawn in the argument, but it is often stated somewhat indirectly and it is sometimes not signaled by any of the standard conclusion indicator words such as "therefore" or "thus." To identify the conclusion, therefore, you also need to look at what the statements in the argument mean, and how they are related to each other. Look for a position that the argument as a whole is trying to establish, and rule out any statements that, either directly or indirectly, give reasons for that position. You should also eliminate statements that merely establish a context or supply background information.

An Example:

Journalist: Obviously, though some animals are purely carnivorous, none would survive without plants. But the dependence is mutual. Many plant species would never have come to be had there been no animals to pollinate, fertilize, and broadcast their seeds. Also, plants' photosynthetic activity would deplete the carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere were it not constantly being replenished by the exhalation of animals, engine fumes, and smoke from fires, many set by human beings.

The question asks:

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the journalist's argument?

So, how do you tackle this question? First, read the argument through. You might immediately recognize that the argument is of a familiar sort. The argument is directed toward a position that has two sides to it: a very straightforward one that is simply asserted and a less obvious one that the argument goes to some trouble to establish. The first sentence presents the straightforward side of the position being argued for. The second sentence states the entire position. The third and fourth sentences make the case for the less obvious side of the position.

Suppose that after reading the argument you are not sure exactly how it goes. What do you do then? It might be helpful to go through the argument statement by statement and ask about each statement in turn, "Does this statement receive support from some other statement?" If so, the statement is either a subsidiary conclusion drawn to support the main conclusion or it is itself the main conclusion. If the statement does not receive support from anything else in the argument, ask whether it provides support for some other statement. If it does, it's a premise of the argument, and whatever statement it provides support for is either the main conclusion or a subsidiary conclusion.

In the journalist's argument, the first statement does not receive support from anything else that is said in the argument. It does, however, provide support for the second statement by establishing one side of the dependence that the second statement refers to. So the second statement is a candidate for being the main conclusion of the argument. If you go on to analyze the third and fourth statements, you'll find that neither receives any support from anything else in the argument and that each independently supports the second statement by establishing the other side

of the mutual dependence. Since everything else in the argument goes toward supporting the second statement, it is clear that the second statement expresses the main conclusion of the argument.

The second statement states the main conclusion in a somewhat abbreviated way in that it doesn't spell out what is meant by "dependence." But having worked through the argument, we can recognize that the following is an accurate statement of the conclusion:

Just as animals are dependent on plants for their survival, plants are dependent on animals for theirs.

The incorrect answer choices often restate a premise or part of a premise. For example, the following incorrect answer is a partial restatement of the fourth sentence of the journalist's argument:

Human activity is part of what prevents plants from depleting the oxygen in Earth's atmosphere on which plants and animals alike depend.

Other incorrect answer choices may state something that can be inferred from statements in the argument but that is not the argument's main conclusion. Here is an example of this, based on the journalist's argument:

The chemical composition of Earth and its atmosphere depends, at least to some extent, on the existence and activities of the animals that populate Earth.

Some points to consider:

- If there is a "thus" or "therefore" in the argument, do not assume that these words introduce the main conclusion of the argument. They often indicate a subsidiary conclusion rather than the main conclusion.
- With questions that ask you to identify the main conclusion, it is generally possible to form a fairly precise idea of what the correct answer will be like before considering the answer choices. Doing so makes it possible to select the correct answer very efficiently. You should also try to get a precise idea of the main conclusion, because some of the incorrect answer choices may be only slightly inaccurate. For example, if the actual conclusion is that something is likely to be true, an incorrect answer choice may say that it is definitely true. This choice is incorrect because it goes beyond the actual conclusion.

Matching patterns of reasoning in an argument:

There is another kind of question that tests your ability to determine how an argument goes. It begins with an argument and then asks you to choose one argument from among the answer choices that is most similar in its reasoning to the initial (or reference) argument. The questions themselves are worded in a variety of ways, including:

The pattern of reasoning in which of the following arguments is most similar to that in the argument above?

Which one of the following arguments is most similar in its reasoning to the argument above?

You don't need to come up with a verbal description of the pattern of reasoning in order to answer these questions. All you need is a solid intuitive grasp of the logical structure of the reference argument: what its conclusion is, and how the premises fit together to support the conclusion.

These questions are asking for a match in logical structure, that is, the way the premises fit together to support the conclusion. So do not pay any attention to similarity or dissimilarity in subject matter, or to background material that is not part of the premises or the conclusion. Nor should you concern yourself with anything about the particular way the argument is laid out, such as the order in which the premises and the conclusion are presented.

An Example

All known deposits of the mineral tanzanite are in Tanzania. Therefore, because Javed collects only tanzanite stones, he is unlikely ever to collect a stone not originally from Tanzania

The question asks:

Which one of the following is most similar in its reasoning to the argument above?

So what is the structure of the reasoning in the reference argument? There are two premises, the one about tanzanite deposits and the one about Javed's collecting habits. And there is a conclusion: Javed is unlikely ever to collect a stone not originally from Tanzania. Note that the conclusion merely says that something is unlikely, not that it will definitely not happen. The conclusion is probably qualified in this way because the premise about tanzanite deposits speaks only about the known deposits of that mineral, thereby leaving open the possibility that there are undiscovered tanzanite deposits outside of Tanzania.

But also note that the argument is a fairly strong one. The premises give a reasonable basis for accepting the conclusion: if the premises are true, the only way in which Javed would ever collect a stone that is not originally from Tanzania is if tanzanite is someday discovered outside of Tanzania or if he begins to collect some different type of stone in the future. The next step is to check the answer choices and to find the one with the same pattern of reasoning.

So let's try this answer choice:

Frogs are the only animals known to live in the lagoon on Andaman Island. The diet of the owls on Andaman Island consists of nothing but frogs from the island. Therefore, the owls are unlikely ever to eat an animal that lives outside the lagoon.

Does this follow the same pattern of reasoning as the argument about tanzanite? The conclusion has the right shape: it says that something is unlikely ever to happen, just as the conclusion of the reference argument does. In addition, this argument, like the reference argument, has a premise that limits itself to speaking about what is known to be true, thereby leaving open the possibility of cases unlike those now known.

Plus, the second premise is exclusionary in nature: where the reference argument uses "only," this argument says "nothing but." So there are a number of resemblances between important parts of the two arguments.

However, whereas the reference argument is fairly strong, this argument is seriously flawed. Notice that the two premises do not rule out the possibility that there are frogs on Andaman Island that do not live in the lagoon. So there seems to be a strong possibility that the owls on Andaman Island eat frogs that aren't from the lagoon. The conclusion of this argument thus receives little or no support from the premises. If the reasoning in this argument were closely parallel to that in the reference argument, its premises would provide similarly strong support for its conclusion. So this answer choice cannot be correct.

Let's try another one of the answer choices:

The only frogs yet discovered on Andaman Island live in the lagoon. The diet of all the owls on Andaman Island consists entirely of frogs on the island, so the owls will probably never eat an animal that lives outside the lagoon.

Here, too, the conclusion has the right shape: it says that something is unlikely ever to happen. In addition, this argument has a premise that limits itself to speaking about what is known to be the case. Plus, the second premise is exclusionary in nature.

In this case, the premises provide support for the conclusion in just the same way that the premises in the reference argument do for the conclusion of that argument. This argument can be paraphrased in a way that is parallel to the reference argument: All known frogs on Andaman Island live in the lagoon. Andaman Island owls eat only frogs. It is therefore unlikely that an owl on Andaman Island will ever eat an animal that does not live in the lagoon. Thus, the pattern of reasoning in the two arguments is essentially the same.

Many Logical Reasoning questions test your ability to determine what is supported by a body of available evidence. These questions ask you to pick one statement that can in some way or another be inferred from the available evidence. So, in effect, you are asked to distinguish between positions that are supported by the information that you have been given and positions that are not supported by that information. These questions come in a variety of forms.

With these questions, you are looking for something that is guaranteed to be true by the information you have been given. That is, the correct answer will be a statement that must be true if the given information is true. Incorrect answer choices may receive some support from the information but that support will be inconclusive. In other words, an incorrect answer choice could be false even if the information provided is true.

Identifying a Position that is conclusively established by information provided:

Some questions test your ability to identify what follows logically from certain evidence or information. For these questions, you will be presented with information that provides conclusive support for one of the answer choices. Typical wordings for these questions include:

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

Which one of the following logically follows from the statements above?

With these questions, you are looking for something that is guaranteed to be true by the information you have been given. That is, the correct answer will be a statement that must be true if the given information is true. Incorrect answer choices may receive some support from the information but that support will be inconclusive. In other words, an incorrect answer choice could be false even if the information provided is true.

An Example

Any sale item that is purchased can be returned for store credit but not for a refund of the purchase price. Every home appliance and every piece of gardening equipment is on sale along with selected construction tools.

The question asks:

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

Notice that the statements have a common element: they talk about sale items. This common element allows you to combine bits of information to draw conclusions. For example, since all home appliances are sale items, you could conclude that any home appliance that is purchased can be returned for store credit. Because several conclusions like this can be drawn from these statements, you cannot determine the correct answer without reading the answer choices. So you need to go through the answer choices to find one that must be true if the statements are true.

One choice reads:

No piece of gardening equipment is returnable for a refund.

We are told that every piece of gardening equipment is a sale item and sale items are not returnable for a refund. So it must be true that gardening equipment is not returnable for a refund. This is the correct answer choice.

For the sake of comparison, consider another answer choice:

Some construction tools are not returnable for store credit.

To rule out this answer choice, you need to see that it does not have to be true if the statements in the passage are true. It obviously doesn't have to be true for construction tools that are on sale-the statements guarantee that those construction tools are returnable for store credit. As for the rest of the construction tools, those that aren't on sale, nothing indicates that they are not returnable for store credit. Based on what the statements say, it is possible, and even likely, that these tools are returnable for store credit. The answer choice is therefore incorrect.

In this example, you were given a set of statements that do not seem to be designed to lead to any particular conclusion. It was up to you to determine the implications of those statements. In other cases, however, the information may appear to be designed to lead the reader to a specific unstated conclusion. In such cases, the correct answer could be the unstated conclusion, if it logically follows from the information provided, or it could be some other statement that logically follows from that information.

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Some points to consider

- For some claim to logically follow from certain information, that information has to guarantee that the claim is true. It isn't enough for the information to strongly support the claim; it has to conclusively establish the claim.
- Incorrect answers to questions about what logically follows can be claims that receive some support from the information but that nevertheless could be false even though all of the information is correct.
- Answer choices are often incorrect because they take things one step beyond what the evidence supports. They might make claims that are too sweeping; for example, they might say "all" when the evidence supports only a "most" statement. Or where a statement about what "is likely to be" is warranted, an incorrect answer choice might say "is." Or where a statement about "all known cases" is warranted, an incorrect answer choice might say "all cases."
- Remember that a modest or limited claim can be a correct answer even if the information also supports a stronger claim. If the information supports drawing the conclusion that there will be a festival in every month, then it also supports the conclusion that there will be a festival in June.

Identifying a Position Supported by Information provided:

Some questions ask you to identify a position that is supported by a body of evidence, but not supported conclusively. These questions might be worded as follows:

Which one of the following is most strongly supported by the information above?

Which one of the following can most reasonably be concluded on the basis of the information above?

The statements above, if true, most strongly support which one of the following?

For these questions, you will generally not be presented with an argument, but merely with some pieces of information. Your task is to evaluate that information and distinguish between the answer choices that receive strong support from that information (the correct answer) and answer choices that receive no significant support (the incorrect answer choices).

An Example:

Consider the following pieces of information:

People should avoid taking the antacid calcium carbonate in doses larger than half a gram, for despite its capacity to neutralize stomach acids, calcium carbonate can increase the calcium level in the blood and thus impair kidney function. Moreover, just half a gram of it can stimulate the production of gastrin, a stomach hormone that triggers acid secretion

You are asked,

Which one of the following is most strongly supported by the information above?

With questions of this kind you shouldn't expect the correct answer to follow in a strict logical sense from the information, but you should expect the information to provide a strong justification for the correct answer. When you begin work on a question of this sort, you should note any obvious interconnections among the facts given, but there is no point in formulating a precise prediction of what the correct answer will look like. A sensible approach is to read the passage carefully, and make a mental note of any implications that you spot. Then go on to consider each answer choice in turn and determine whether that answer choice gets any support from the information you have been given.

Let's follow this approach with the question above. Reading the passage, you find that a certain antacid is described as having the obvious intended effect of neutralizing stomach acid but as also having adverse side effects if the dosage is too high. One of these adverse effects results in impaired kidney function and other results in acid secretion in the stomach.

There is a suggestion in the passage that doses exceeding half a gram are necessary for the first effect to be triggered to any serious extent. The passage also suggests that doses of half a gram or more will trigger the second effect. No other implications of this passage stand out. At this point, it is probably a good idea to consider each answer choice in turn.

One answer choice is:

Doses of calcium carbonate smaller than half a gram can reduce stomach acid more effectively than much larger doses do.

Is this choice supported by the information? The passage does give reasons as to why this might be true. It tells us that doses of half a gram or more can

stimulate the production of a stomach hormone that triggers acid secretion. This hormone might counteract any extra acid-neutralization that comes from additional calcium carbonate over and above a half-gram dose; but then again it might not. Perhaps the extra calcium carbonate neutralizes more stomach acid than it triggers. For this reason, this answer choice is not strongly supported by the information.

Another answer choice is:

Half a gram of calcium carbonate can causally contribute to both the secretion and the neutralization of stomach acids.

Is there support for this choice in the information provided? We have noted that at half a gram the secretion of acid in the stomach is triggered. The passage mentions the drug's "capacity to neutralize stomach acids," strongly suggesting that some acid-neutralizing effect occurs at any dosage level. So there is strong support in the passage for both parts of this answer choice.

Some points to consider:

- In answering questions dealing with support for conclusions, base your judgment about whether or not a particular answer choice is supported strictly on the information that is explicitly provided in the passage. If the passage concerns a subject matter with which you are familiar, ignore any information you might have about the subject that goes beyond what you have been told.
- Keep in mind that the support for the correct answer does not have to involve all of the information provided. For instance, in the example about calcium carbonate, an adverse effect on the kidneys is mentioned, but this information plays no role in the support for the correct answer.

Identifying Points on Which Disputants Hold Conflicting Views

You may also encounter questions involving two speakers where the first speaker puts forward a position and the second responds to that position. You will then be asked something like:

The main point at issue between Sarah and Paul is whether

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the point at issue between Juan and Michiko?

On the basis of their statements, Winchell and Trent are committed to disagreeing over whether

An Example:

Mary: Computers will make more information available to ordinary people than was ever available before, thus making it easier for them to acquire knowledge without consulting experts.

Joyce: As more knowledge became available in previous centuries, the need for specialists to synthesize and explain it to nonspecialists increased. So computers will probably create a greater dependency on experts.

The question asks,

The dialogue most strongly supports the claim that Mary and Joyce disagree with each other about whether

In answering questions of this kind, you may find it useful to read the dialogue closely enough to form a clear mental picture of each person's stance and then go on to the answer choices.

Now consider this answer choice:

computers will make more information available to ordinary people

Does what Joyce and Mary say show that they disagree about this? Mary straightforwardly says that computers will make more information available to ordinary people. But what about Joyce? She predicts that computers: will create a greater dependency on experts because of a historical trend of an increasing dependency on experts whenever more knowledge becomes available to ordinary people. So she seems to assume that computers will make more information become available to ordinary people. So she probably agrees with Mary on this point.

dependency on computers will increase with the increase of knowledge

Nothing either Mary or Joyce says commits either of them to a particular view on this position. This is because neither of them explicitly discusses the issue of people's dependency on computers. But there is certainly no indication at all that they hold opposing views on whether dependency on computers will increase with the increase of knowledge.

Finally, consider the third answer choice:

computers will increase the need for ordinary people seeking knowledge to turn to experts

Based on what she says, Mary straightforwardly disagrees with this claim. Computers, she says, will make it easier for ordinary people to acquire knowledge without consulting experts. Joyce, on the other hand, concludes that computers will create a greater dependency on experts. The precedent from past centuries that she cites in support of this conclusion makes it clear that nonspecialists—that is, ordinary people—will depend more on experts when knowledge increases. So Mary and Joyce disagree on whether the need for ordinary people to turn to experts will be increased by computers.

Some points to consider:

The evidence that two speakers disagree about a particular point always comes from what they explicitly say. Sometimes there is a direct conflict between something that one of the speakers says and something that the other speaker says. The phrasing of the question indicates that you should be looking for a direct conflict when it says something straightforward like "Max and Nina disagree over whether." At other times the point of disagreement must be inferred from the explicit positions that the speakers take. The phrasing of the question will indicate that this inference needs to be made. For example, a question like "The dialogue provides the most support for the claim that Nikisha and Helen disagree over whether" does not suggest that they disagree explicitly, only that there is some evidence that they disagree.

- Do not try to derive a speaker's likely position on a topic from a psychological stereotype. It may be true that a speaker who takes a certain position would be the kind of person who would likely hold certain other positions as well, but you should not rely on this sort of association. Rely only on what a speaker explicitly says and on what can be properly inferred from that.
- The incorrect answer choices are not necessarily positions that the two speakers can be shown to agree on. In many cases, the views of at least one of the speakers on a given position cannot be determined from what has been said.

Necessary Conditions and Sufficient Conditions:

Suppose you read the following conditions:

You don't deserve praise for something unless you did it deliberately.

Tom deliberately left the door unlocked

Does it follow from these statements that Tom deserves praise for leaving the door unlocked? You can probably see that this doesn't follow. The first statement says that you have to do something deliberately in order to deserve praise for doing it. It doesn't say that any time you do something deliberately you thereby deserve praise for doing it. So the mere fact that Tom did something deliberately is not enough to bring us to the conclusion that Tom deserves praise for doing it.

To put it in a slightly more technical way, the first statement expresses a necessary condition. Doing something deliberately is a necessary condition for deserving praise for doing it. In Logical Reasoning questions, it can be very important to recognize whether something expresses a necessary condition or whether it expresses what is called a sufficient condition. If the first statement had said "If you do something deliberately then you deserve praise for doing it," it would be saying that doing something deliberately is a sufficient condition for deserving praise for doing it.

In the example above, it is fairly easy to see that the first statement expresses a necessary condition and not a sufficient condition. This may be because it would be quite strange to say that doing something deliberately is a sufficient condition for deserving praise. That would imply that you deserve praise for anything you do deliberately, even if it is an immoral or criminal act. But the content of a statement doesn't always help you determine whether it expresses a necessary condition or a sufficient condition. For this reason, it pays to devote very close attention to the precise wording of any statements that express conditions. And it pays to have a clear idea in your mind about how statements that express necessary conditions function in arguments and about how statements that express sufficient conditions function in arguments. There are many ways to express a necessary condition. The necessary condition above could have been stated just as accurately in several different ways, including:

You deserve praise for something only if you did it deliberately.

You don't deserve praise for something if you didn't do it deliberately.

To deserve praise for something, you must have done it deliberately.

If you think carefully about these statements, you should see that they all mean the same thing. And you can see that none of them says that doing something deliberately is a sufficient condition for deserving praise.

Sufficient conditions can also be expressed in several different ways:

If it rains, the sidewalks get wet.

Rain is all it takes to get the sidewalks wet.

The sidewalks get wet whenever it rains.

These statements each tell us that rain is a sufficient condition for the sidewalks getting wet. It is sufficient, because rain is all that it takes to make the sidewalks wet. But notice that these statements do not say that rain is the only thing that makes the sidewalks wet. They do not rule out the possibility that the sidewalks can get wet from melting snow or from being sprayed with a garden hose. So these statements do not express necessary conditions for wet sidewalks, only sufficient conditions.

How Necessary Conditions Work In Inferences:

We've already noted one thing about basing inferences on statements that express necessary conditions, such as

N: *You deserve praise for something only if you did it deliberately.*

If we are also given a case that satisfies the necessary condition, such as:

Tom deliberately left the door unlocked

we cannot legitimately draw an inference. Specifically, the conclusion that Tom deserves praise for leaving the door unlocked does not follow.

Statements that express necessary conditions can play a part in legitimate inferences, of course, but only in combination with the right sort of information. Suppose that in addition to statement N we are told

Tom deserves praise for leaving the door unlocked.

This allows us to conclude that Tom deliberately left the door unlocked. Since statement N says that you have to do something deliberately in order to deserve praise for doing it, Tom must have deliberately left the door unlocked if he deserves praise for what he did.

Or, suppose that in addition to statement N we are told

Tom did not leave the door unlocked deliberately.

This allows us to conclude that Tom does not deserve praise for leaving the door unlocked. This follows because statement N insists that only deliberate

actions deserve praise, and because we are told clearly that Tom's action is not deliberate.

So in general, when you have a statement that expresses a necessary condition, it allows you to infer something in just two cases: (1) you can infer from knowing that the necessary condition is not met that the thing it is the necessary condition for does not occur; (2) you can infer that the necessary condition is met from knowing that the thing it is the necessary condition for occurs.

How Sufficient Conditions Works In Inferences?

Statements that express sufficient conditions can also serve as a basis for inferences. Let's revisit one of the earlier statements of a sufficient condition:

S: *If it rains, the sidewalks get wet*

If we are told that the sufficient condition is satisfied (i.e., told that it is raining), then we can legitimately draw the inference that the sidewalks are getting wet. This should be quite obvious. We can also draw another conclusion from a statement of a sufficient condition, provided that we have the right sort of additional information. Suppose that in addition to statement S we are told that the sidewalks did not get wet. Since the sidewalks get wet whenever it rains, we can conclude with complete confidence that it didn't rain.

Though it may sometimes seem that there are other ways to draw an inference from a statement of a sufficient condition, there are none. Suppose that in addition to statement S, we are told that the sidewalks are wet. Can we legitimately conclude that it rained? No, because statement S does not rule out the possibility that something other than rain, such as melting snow, can make the sidewalks wet. Or suppose that in addition to statement S, we are told that it didn't rain. Can we legitimately conclude that the sidewalks did not get wet? Again no, and for the same reason: statement S does not rule out the possibility that something other than rain can make the sidewalks wet.

Understanding the impact of additional information:

The GMAT or GRE typically includes several questions that test your ability to see how additional facts bear on an argument. These questions may focus on facts that strengthen an argument, they may focus on facts that weaken the argument, or they may merely ask what additional information, if it were

available, would be useful in evaluating the strength of the argument. Typical wordings of such questions are:

Which one of the following, if true, most strengthens the argument?

Which one of the following, if true, most weakens the argument?

In order to evaluate the argument, which one of the following would it be most useful to determine?

When the qualifier "if true" appears in this kind of question, it tells you not to be concerned about the actual truth of the answer choices. Instead, you should consider each answer choice as though it were true. Also, consider each answer choice independently of the others, since it is not necessarily the case that the answer choices can all be true together.

Questions of this kind are based on arguments that-like most real-life arguments-have premises that provide some grounds for accepting the conclusion, but that fall short of being decisive arguments in favor of the conclusion. For an argument like this, it is possible for additional evidence to make the argument stronger or weaker. For example, consider the following argument:

A survey of oil-refinery workers who work with MBTE, an ingredient currently used in some smog-reducing gasolines, found an alarming incidence of complaints about headaches, fatigue, and shortness of breath. Since gasoline containing MBTE will soon be widely used, we can expect an increased incidence of headaches, fatigue, and shortness of breath.

The incidence of complaints about headaches, fatigue, and shortness of breath among oil-refinery employees who work with MBTE is, on the face of it, evidence for the conclusion that widespread use of gasoline containing MBTE will make headaches, fatigue, and shortness of breath more common.

However, additional information could, depending on what this information is, make the argument stronger or weaker.

For example, suppose it is true that most oil-refinery workers who do not work with MBTE also have a very high incidence of headaches, fatigue, and shortness of breath. This would provide evidence that it is not MBTE but some other factor that is primarily responsible for these symptoms. But if we have evidence that something other than MBTE is causing these symptoms, then the argument provides only very weak support, if any, for its conclusion. That

is, the argument's original premises, when combined with the additional information, make a much weaker case for the argument's conclusion than those premises did alone. In other words, the new information has made the argument weaker.

Of course, different additional evidence would make the argument stronger. For example, suppose that gasoline containing MBTE has already been introduced in a few metropolitan areas, and since it was first introduced, those areas have reported increased complaints about headaches, fatigue, and shortness of breath. This would provide evidence that when MBTE is used as a gasoline additive, it increases the incidence of these symptoms not just among refinery workers who work closely with it but also among the general public. So we now have evidence that is more directly relevant to the argument's conclusion. Thus, we now have a stronger case for the argument's conclusion; in other words, the new evidence has made the argument stronger.

We have seen that when new information makes an argument stronger, that information, together with the argument's original premises, makes a stronger case for the argument's conclusion than do the original premises alone. There are several ways in which this could work. The additional information could eliminate an obvious weak spot in the original argument. Alternatively, there may be no obvious weak spot in the original argument; the case for the argument may simply become even stronger with the addition of the new evidence. In some cases, the additional information will be something that helps establish the argument's conclusion but only when combined with the argument's existing premises. In other cases, the new information will provide a different line of reasoning in addition to that provided by the original premises. The information that strengthens the argument about MBTE is an example of something that provides a different line of reasoning for the conclusion. In still other cases, the additional information will strengthen the argument by ruling out something that would have weakened the argument. And of course, additional information may weaken an argument in corresponding ways.

An Example:

Consider this argument:

A recent study reveals that television advertising does not significantly affect children's preferences for breakfast cereals. The study compared two groups of children. One group had watched no television, and the other group had watched average amounts of television and its advertising. Both groups strongly preferred the sugary cereals heavily advertised on television.

The conclusion of the argument is that television advertising does not significantly affect children's preferences for breakfast cereals. As evidence for this conclusion, the argument presents the results of a study comparing two groups of children: the study found that children in both groups—those who watched no television and those who watched average amounts of television and its advertising—strongly preferred the sugary cereals heavily advertised on television. On the face of it, the study results do seem to provide some support, although not conclusive support, for the argument's conclusion; if television advertising did significantly affect children's preferences, then we'd expect the children who watched television to have different preferences than the children who didn't watch television.

Here is the question:

Which one of the following statements, if true, most weakens the argument?

Let's consider an answer choice:

Most of the children in the group that had watched television were already familiar with the advertisements for these cereals.

Does this information weaken the argument? It suggests that even if the television advertising influenced the preferences of the children who watched television, this influence occurred some time ago. But this does not really imply anything about whether the advertising did influence the children's preferences. So the information provided by this answer choice neither strengthens nor weakens the argument.

Let's consider another answer choice:

Both groups rejected cereals low in sugar even when these cereals were heavily advertised on television.

This information may well be relevant to the argument's conclusion since it suggests that if a cereal is unappealing to children, then even a great deal of television advertising will not change the children's preferences. But this would provide additional evidence in favor of the argument's conclusion that

television advertising does not significantly affect children's cereal preferences. So this answer choice strengthens the argument rather than weakens it.

Tip: In questions that ask what weakens an argument, often one or more incorrect answer choices will provide evidence that strengthens the argument (or vice versa in the case of questions that ask for a strengthener). By the time you've read several answer choices, it is easy to forget what the question is asking for and pick an answer choice because it is clearly relevant-even though it's the opposite of what the question is asking for. It is important to keep the question clearly in mind in order to guard against making this kind of mistake. Consider a third answer choice, then:

The preferences of children who do not watch television advertising are influenced by the preferences of children who watch the advertising.

How does this information affect the argument? Well, the reason originally offered for the conclusion is that the two groups of children do not differ in their preferences.

But if the preferences of the children who do not watch television advertising are influenced by the preferences of those who do watch it, then the fact that the two groups do not differ in their preferences provides little, if any, reason to think that none of the children's preferences were affected by television advertising. After all, it could well be that the preferences of the children who watched television were strongly influenced by the advertising, and these children's preferences in turn strongly influenced the preferences of those who did not watch television, with the result that the two groups had the same preferences. So when combined with the additional information, the argument's original premises make a much weaker case for the argument's conclusion than they did alone. Thus, this is the correct answer.

More points to consider:

The additional pieces of information that weaken an argument generally do not challenge the truth of the argument's explicit premises. They are pieces of information that call into question whether the conclusion is strongly supported by those premises.

- Keep in mind that additional information may strengthen (or weaken) an argument only to a small extent or it may do so to a large extent. When the question asks for a strengthener, an answer choice will be correct even if it strengthens the argument only slightly, provided that none of the other answer choices strengthen the argument significantly. On the other hand, if one answer choice strengthens the argument a great deal, then answer choices that strengthen only slightly are incorrect. For most questions that ask for weakeners, the correct answer will weaken the argument to some extent, but the premises will still provide some support for the conclusion. However, for some of these questions, the correct answer will eliminate all or almost all of the argument's original strength.

Beware of answer choices that are relevant to the general subject matter, but not relevant to the way the argument supports its conclusion. A weakener or strengthener must affect the support for the conclusion. For example, consider the argument about gasoline containing MBTE. Suppose that adding MBTE to gasoline dramatically increased the price of gasoline. This information would be relevant if the argument's conclusion were broader, for example, if it concluded that gasoline containing MBTE should be widely used. Since the argument, however, is narrowly focused on whether widespread use of gasoline containing MBTE will increase the incidence of headaches, fatigue, and shortness of breath, the increased cost resulting from adding MBTE to gasoline is irrelevant and thus would neither strengthen nor weaken the argument.

- Similarly, for new information to weaken an argument, it must reduce the support that the premises provide for the conclusion. A fact may have negative connotations in the context of an argument but do nothing to weaken that argument. For example, consider the argument about television advertising and cereal preferences. Suppose that children who watch average amounts of television, unlike children who watch no television, do not get enough exercise. This would clearly be a negative aspect of watching television. But it doesn't weaken the support that the argument provides for the conclusion that television advertising does not significantly affect children's preferences for breakfast cereal.

Assumptions:

The Critical Reasoning section typically includes several questions that test your ability to identify assumptions of arguments. An assumption of an argument plays a role in establishing the conclusion. However, unlike a premise, an assumption is not something that the arguer explicitly asserts to be true; an assumption is instead just treated as true for the purposes of the argument.

Although assumptions can be stated explicitly in an argument, Critical Reasoning questions that ask about assumptions ask only about unstated assumptions. Unstated (or tacit) assumptions can figure only in arguments that are not entirely complete, that is, in arguments in which some of the things required to establish the conclusion are left unstated. There is thus at least one significant gap in such an argument.

Assumptions relate to the gaps in an argument in two different ways. An assumption is a sufficient one if adding it to the argument's premises would produce a conclusive argument, that is, an argument with no gaps in its support for the conclusion. An assumption is a necessary one if it is something that must be true in order for the argument to succeed. It is possible for an assumption to be both necessary and sufficient.

Sufficient Assumptions:

Typical wordings of questions that ask you to identify sufficient assumptions are:

Which one of the following, if assumed, enables the conclusion of the argument to be properly drawn?

The conclusion follows logically from the premises if which one of the following is assumed?

An Example:

Vague laws set vague limits on people's freedom, which makes it impossible for them to know for certain whether their actions are legal. Thus, under vague laws people cannot feel secure

The question you're asked about this argument is:

The conclusion follows logically if which one of the following is assumed?

In order to approach this question, you first have to identify the conclusion of the argument and the premises offered in its support. In this case, the

conclusion is signaled by the conclusion indicator "thus" and reads "... under vague laws people cannot feel secure." Two considerations are explicitly presented in support of this conclusion. First, that vague laws set vague limits on people's freedom, and second, that having vague limits set on their freedom makes it impossible for people to know for certain whether their actions are legal. Note that the premises, though they tell us certain things about vague laws, make no explicit reference to whether people feel secure, and not feeling secure is what the conclusion is about. For the conclusion to follow logically, this gap has to be bridged.

At this point, you are ready to look at the answer choices. Here are two of them:

(A) People can feel secure only if they know for certain whether their actions are legal.

(B) If people know for certain whether their actions are legal, they can feel secure.

Your task is to identify the answer choice that together with the premises you've been given, will provide conclusive support for the conclusion.

So is (A) that answer choice? The explicit premises of the argument tell you that under vague laws people cannot know for certain whether their actions are legal. (A) tells you that if people do not know for certain whether their actions are legal, they cannot feel secure. So putting the explicit premises and (A) together, you can infer that under vague laws people cannot feel secure. And this is, in fact, the conclusion of the argument. So the conclusion follows logically if (A) is assumed.

Now, let's consider why assuming (B) is not sufficient to ensure that the argument's conclusion follows logically. (B) tells us about one circumstance in which people can feel secure. However, the argument's conclusion will not follow logically without the right kind of information about the circumstances in which people cannot feel secure. (B) does not give us any such information directly. Moreover, we cannot infer such information from what (B) does tell us. After all, it's perfectly compatible with (B) that people can feel secure in some circumstances in addition to the one (B) describes.

For example, perhaps people can feel secure if they know for certain that they will not be prosecuted for their actions. Thus, since (B) tells us nothing about

circumstances in which people cannot feel secure, it has nothing to contribute to reaching the argument's conclusion that people cannot feel secure under vague laws.

Some points to consider:

- In answering sufficient assumption questions, you need to find a link between the stated premises and the conclusion. Try to determine from the explicit parts of the argument what logical work that link needs to do. Finally, look among the answer choices for one that can do that logical work and that, taken along with the explicit premises, allows the conclusion to be properly inferred.
- In trying to figure out what logical work the link needs to do, don't get too specific. For example, what can be said about the logical work required of the link in the argument about vague laws analyzed above? It has to link something that has been explicitly connected with vague laws to an inability to feel secure. But there are two things like that: vague limits on people's freedom, and the impossibility of knowing for certain whether one's actions are legal. What this means is that answer choice (A) was not the only possible sufficient assumption here. An equally acceptable sufficient assumption would have been, "People cannot feel secure if they have vague limits on their freedom." So don't approach the answer choices with too specific a view of what you're looking for.
- When trying to identify a sufficient assumption, keep in mind that the correct answer must, when added to the argument's explicit premises, result in a conclusive argument; that is, in an argument that fully establishes its conclusion (provided that the explicit premises and the added assumption are all true).

Necessary Assumptions:

Typical wordings of questions that ask you to identify necessary assumptions include the following:

The argument relies on assuming which one of the following?

The argument depends on the assumption that

Which one of the following is an assumption required by the argument?

Questions about necessary assumptions refer to arguments that, while not completely spelled out, do present a comprehensible case for accepting their

conclusion on the strength of evidence explicitly presented. But if you look closely at the grounds offered for the conclusion and at the conclusion itself, you find that the evidence explicitly presented falls short of establishing the conclusion. That is, there is at least one significant gap in the argument.

Example 1

Since Mayor Drabble always repays her political debts as soon as possible, she will almost certainly appoint Lee to be the new head of the arts commission. Lee has wanted that job for a long time, and Drabble owes Lee a lot for his support in the last election.

As far as its explicit premises go, this argument leaves important matters unresolved. In order for the argument to show that Lee is the likely appointee, there can't be anyone else to whom Drabble has owed such a large and long-standing political debt and for whom this appointment would be adequate repayment. This idea of there being no one ahead of Lee in line is the sort of unstated but indispensable link in the support for the conclusion that we mean when we speak of a necessary assumption of an argument. It can readily be shown that the assumption sketched above is in fact indispensable to the argument. Suppose the situation were otherwise and there were a person to whom Mayor Drabble owed a political debt that is of longer standing than her debt to Lee, and suppose further that the appointment could reasonably be viewed as paying off that debt. In this hypothetical circumstance, the fact that Mayor Drabble always repays her political debts as soon as possible would no longer point to Lee as the likely choice for the appointment. In fact, the argument above would fail. If the argument is to succeed, there cannot be another, better-positioned candidate for the appointment. And the argument depends on the assumption that there isn't any better positioned candidate.

A Test for Necessary Assumptions

Necessary assumption questions, then, require you to identify tacit assumptions. The method for testing necessary assumptions that was introduced above in analyzing Mayor Drabble's situation is quite generally applicable, and for good reason. A necessary assumption is an indispensable link in the support for the conclusion of an argument. Therefore, an argument will be ineffective if a necessary assumption is deemed to be false. This points to a useful test: to see whether an answer choice is a necessary assumption, suppose that what is stated in that answer choice is false. If

under those circumstances the premises of the argument fail to support the conclusion, the answer choice being evaluated is a necessary assumption.

Example 2

The test for necessary assumptions can be used with the following argument:

Advertisement: Attention pond owners! Ninety-eight percent of mosquito larvae in a pond die within minutes after the pond has been treated with BTI. Yet BTI is not toxic to fish, birds, animals, plants, or beneficial insects. So by using BTI regularly to destroy their larvae, you can greatly reduce populations of pesky mosquitoes that hatch in your pond, and can do so without diminishing the populations of fish, frogs, or beneficial insects in and around the pond.

The question asks:

Which one of the following is an assumption on which the argument depends?

Before you look for a necessary assumption, you need to get clear about the structure of the argument. The conclusion is that regular applications of BTI in a pond can, without reducing populations of assorted pond life, greatly reduce the numbers of mosquitoes that emerge from the pond. The evidence is that BTI kills almost all of the mosquito larvae in the pond, but does not kill (or even harm) other pond life.

The case that the argument makes for its conclusion is straightforward. Applications of BTI, by killing mosquito larvae, prevent the adult mosquito population from being replenished, but they have no direct effect on the other populations. So the argument concludes that, of the populations under consideration, only the mosquito populations will decline.

The first answer choice reads:

The most effective way to control the numbers of mosquitoes in a given area is to destroy the mosquito larvae in that area.

Now we apply the test for necessary assumptions by asking whether the argument would fail if this answer choice were false. That is, would it fail if the destruction of mosquito larvae were not 'the most effective way to control the numbers of mosquitoes? Definitely not. For one thing, the argument is not concerned with mosquito control alone, but speaks to a dual purpose, that of controlling mosquitoes while leaving other creatures unaffected. So the potential existence of any mosquito-control regimen, however effective, that did not spare other pond creatures would be beside the point. For another thing, the argument merely concludes that the use of BTI works, not that it works better than all other methods. So the denial of this

answer choice does not interfere with the support that the conclusion receives from the evidence presented. But if this answer choice were a necessary assumption, denying it would interfere with that support.

Now consider a second answer choice:

The fish, frogs, and beneficial insects in and around a pond-owner's pond do not depend on mosquito larvae as an important source of food.

Applying the test, we ask whether the argument would fail if this answer choice were false (that is, if these creatures did depend on mosquito larvae for food). Yes it would; after all, if the use of BTI means that fish, frogs, and so forth will be deprived of a food that is important for them (mosquito larvae), then there is no reason to conclude that these creatures will survive in undiminished numbers. So denying the answer choice under consideration would cause the argument to fail; we have found a necessary assumption.

Some points to consider:

- As you can see from the characterization of necessary assumptions given above, they are (unstated) constituents of arguments. Whether or not the author of the argument had a particular assumption in mind is not relevant to the issue. It is important to remember that identifying necessary assumptions is a matter of logically analyzing the structure of an argument, not a matter of guessing the beliefs of the arguer.
- For the purpose of identifying a necessary assumption, it is not necessary or even useful to evaluate whether that assumption is actually true, or how likely it is to be true. Identifying an assumption is a matter of probing the structure of an argument and recognizing hidden parts of that structure.
- An argument may have more than one necessary assumption. For example, the argument in Example 2 ignores the fact that a small proportion of mosquito larvae in a pond are not killed by BTI. But if there is a genetic basis for their not being killed, one might imagine that regular applications of BTI in a given pond will make it more and more likely that the mosquitoes left to breed with one another will be BTI-resistant ones that will likely produce BTI-resistant offspring. This population of BTI-resistant mosquitoes might then grow, without being kept in check by further applications of BTI, contrary to the drift of the argument. So the argument also depends on assuming that the two percent of mosquito larvae

not killed by an initial application of BTI do not constitute an initial breeding pool for a BTI-resistant population of mosquitoes.

An argument can thus have more than one necessary assumption. Of course, only one of them will appear among the answer choices. But the one that does appear may not be one that occurred to you when you analyzed the argument. So it is a good idea not to prejudge what the correct answer will be. Instead, keep an open mind and examine each of the answer choices in turn.

As indicated above, an argument may have more than one gap. Any one necessary assumption will address only one such gap. Moreover, a necessary assumption will often address only some aspects of a gap. In Example 2, the gap addressed by the necessary assumption-The fish, frogs, and beneficial insects in and around a pond-owner's pond do not depend on mosquito larvae as an important source of food-is, broadly speaking, that BTI does not kill the fish, frogs, and beneficial insects indirectly. But food deprivation is not the only way that BTI might kill those creatures indirectly. For example, as the mosquito larvae killed by applications of BTI decay, they might harm fish, frogs, and beneficial insects. So do not reject an answer choice as a necessary assumption merely on the grounds that the argument, even if you make that necessary assumption, is still not a strong argument.

Some Logical Reasoning questions test your ability to apply general rules and principles and to understand their use. These questions can involve the use of principles in arguments, or they can involve applying principles to actions or states of affairs.

Principles are broad guidelines concerning what kinds of actions, judgments, policies, and so on are appropriate. Most principles spell out the range of situations to which they apply. Within that range of situations, principles often serve to justify the transition from claims about what is the case to conclusions regarding what should be done.

There are several kinds of questions involving principles. You may be given a principle and be asked which action conforms to it, or which judgment it justifies, or which argument relies on it. Alternatively, the question may present a judgment, decision, or argument and ask which principle is appealed to in making that judgment, decision, or argument. Logical Reasoning questions may also involve principles in various other ways. For example, a question could ask

which action violates a principle. You may also see Logical Reasoning items that ask you to recognize two situations as involving the same underlying principle, where that principle is not stated.

Flaws in Arguments

The Logical Reasoning section includes a number of questions that ask you to identify a flaw of reasoning that has been committed in an argument. Questions of this kind are worded in a variety of ways. Here are some examples:

The reasoning in the argument is flawed because the argument

The argument commits which one of the following errors of reasoning?

The argument's reasoning is questionable because the argument fails to rule out the possibility that

The reasoning above is most vulnerable to criticism on the grounds that it

Test questions about flawed reasoning require you to recognize in what way an argument is defective in its reasoning. They will not require you to decide whether or not the argument is flawed. That judgment is already made and is expressed in the wording of the question. Your task is to recognize which one of the answer choices describes an error of reasoning that the argument makes.

When an argument is flawed, the argument exemplifies poor reasoning. This is reasoning in which the premises may appear to provide support for the conclusion but actually provide little or no real support. Poor reasoning of this sort can be detected by examining the argument itself, without considering any factual issues that aren't mentioned in the argument.

Example 1:

Physicist: The claim that low-temperature nuclear fusion can be achieved entirely by chemical means is based on chemical experiments in which the measurements and calculations are inaccurate.

Chemist: But your challenge is ineffectual, since you are simply jealous at the thought that chemists might have solved a problem that physicists have been unable to solve.

Here is the question that is based on this exchange:

Which one of the following is the strongest criticism of the chemist's response to the physicist's challenge?

Before looking at the answer choices, briefly consider what appears to be wrong with the chemist's response. Notice that the chemist claims that the physicist's

challenge is ineffectual but doesn't actually engage the substance of the physicist's challenge. Instead, the chemist accuses the physicist of professional jealousy and dismisses the physicist's challenge purely on that basis. But there is no reason to think that a challenge, even if it is fueled by jealousy, cannot be on target. So the chemist's response can rightly be criticized for getting personal."

Now consider two of the answer choices. One of them reads,

It fails to establish that perfect accuracy of measurements and calculations is possible.

This statement is certainly true about the chemist's response. The chemist does not establish that perfect accuracy is possible. But this is not a good criticism of the chemist's response because it is entirely beside the point. Establishing that perfect accuracy is possible would have, if anything damaged the chemist's position. So the chemist's response cannot be legitimately criticized for failing to establish this.

Another answer choice reads,

It is directed against the proponent of a claim rather than against the claim itself

This criticism goes to the heart of what is wrong with the chemist's response. The chemist dismisses the physicist's challenge because of the physicist's alleged motives for making it and never actually discusses the merits of the challenge itself. It is directed against the person rather than against the position.

In this example, the chemist's response is clearly irrelevant to the substance of the physicist's claim. The argument that the chemist presents seems more like a rhetorical ploy than a serious argument. Many arguments are flawed in much less dramatic ways, however. They may contain only a small logical lapse that undermines the integrity of the argument, like the following two examples.

Example 2:

Morris High School has introduced a policy designed to improve the working conditions of its new teachers. As a result of this policy, only one-quarter of all part-time teachers now quit during their first year. However, a third of all full-time teachers now quit during their first year. Thus, more full-time than part-time teachers at Morris now quit during their first year

Notice that the argument uses proportions to indicate the degree to which first-year teachers are quitting. It says that one-quarter of part-time first-year teachers

quit and that one-third of full-time first-year teachers quit. The conclusion of the argument is not expressed in terms of proportions, however, but in terms of a comparison between quantities: more full-timers than part-timers quit during their first year.

Your task is to accurately complete the following statement:

The argument's reasoning is questionable because the argument fails to rule out the possibility that

Note that we are looking for a possibility that needs to be ruled out in order for the conclusion to be well supported. So let's consider one of the answer choices:
before the new policy was instituted, more part-time than full-time teachers at Morris High School used to quit during their first year

How would the argument be affected by this information? It tells us something about the way things were before the new policy went into effect, but it doesn't shed much light on the effects of the new policy. And there is no way to infer anything about how many part-time and full-time teachers are quitting now, after the policy was instituted. So this information has no effect on the support for the conclusion, and there would be no reason for the argument to rule it out. Failing to rule it out, then, would not make the reasoning questionable.

Let's go on to consider another answer choice:

Morris High School employs more new part-time teachers than new full-time teachers

So how would the argument be affected if there were more new part-time teachers than new full time teachers? If there were more new part-timers than full-timers, then one-quarter of the new part-timers could outnumber one-third of the new full-timers. So it could be true that more part-timers than full-timers quit during their first year. Since the argument concludes that more full-timers than part-timers quit in their first year, this possibility needs to be ruled out in order for the conclusion to be well supported. Thus, this choice is the correct answer.

Example 3

If Blankenship Enterprises has to switch suppliers in the middle of a large production run, the company will not show a profit for the year. Therefore, if Blankenship Enterprises in fact turns out to show no profit for the year, it will

also turn out to be true that the company had to switch suppliers during a large production run.

The question asks:

The reasoning in the argument is most vulnerable to criticism on which one of the following grounds?

This question tells you that you should be looking for a problem with the argument. When you analyze the argument, you can identify the problem if you recognize that there may well be other reasons for not showing a profit besides having to switch suppliers in the middle of a large production run. This points to a major oversight in the argument. At this point, you are ready to review the answer choices.

One answer choice says:

The argument is a circular argument made up of an opening claim followed by a conclusion that merely paraphrases that claim.

This gives a general account of an argument flaw, but close inspection shows that the Blankenship argument does not have this flaw. That argument's conclusion says something quite different from what was said in the argument's premise. The conclusion says "If there is no profit, then there was a switch in suppliers." The premise is superficially similar, but it says "If there is a switch in suppliers, then there will be no profit." So this answer choice is not a legitimate criticism.

Another answer choice reads:

The argument fails to establish that a condition under which a phenomenon is said to occur is the only condition under which that phenomenon occurs.

This is the correct answer. The argument could only succeed if it showed that switching suppliers in the middle of a large production run is the only condition under which the company will show no profit for the year. But the argument fails to establish this point. Note that this answer choice points out what is wrong with this particular argument using general terms that could cover many different arguments.

Some points to consider:

For this type of question, there is no need to decide whether the argument is flawed. You are told that there is a flawed pattern of reasoning underlying the argument. It is sometimes useful however, to determine whether or not an argument in an answer choice is flawed. If such an argument is not flawed, it

cannot be the correct answer, because it will not be a relevant match for the reference argument.

Remember that, although you need to get a reasonably clear fix on the kind of reasoning error committed in the reference argument, you do not need to come up with a precise formulation of that error. Since you are not asked to put your understanding of the reasoning error into words, all you need is a solid intuitive grasp of where the reasoning goes wrong.

With this type of question, you look for the argument that most closely matches the reference argument in terms of its flawed reasoning. So other similarities with the reference argument, such as in the way the argument is expressed or in its subject matter, are irrelevant. Two arguments can be expressed in different ways, or be about very different things, even though they exhibit the same pattern of reasoning.

Explanations:

Some of the questions in the Critical Reasoning section require you to identify a potential explanation for some state of affairs that is described to you. Broadly speaking, these questions come in two types: one in which you need to find an explanation for one particular situation, and another in which you need to explain how two seemingly conflicting elements of a given situation can be true.

In the first sort of case, the phenomenon to be explained will merely be something that one would not ordinarily expect, the kind of thing that makes people say, "There must be an explanation for this." Imagine, for example, that it is discovered that domestic cats with purely gray coats are, on average, significantly heavier than those with multicolored coats. A fact like this calls for an explanation. The wording of a corresponding question would be along the lines of:

Which one of the following, if true, most helps to explain the difference in average weights?

In the second sort of case, the phenomenon to be explained is more complex. You are not simply presented with one fact that seems to require an explanation. Rather, you are presented with statements that appear to conflict with one another, and your task is to identify the answer choice that most helps to resolve this apparent discrepancy.

That is, you are to select an answer choice that explains not just one or the other of the apparently conflicting elements but explains how they can both be true. With this sort of question, the passage might say, for example, that people spend much less time reading today than they did 50 years ago, and yet many more books are sold per year now than were sold 50 years ago. A typical wording for this sort of question is:

Which one of the following, if true, most helps to resolve the apparent discrepancy in the information given above?

Example 1:

The situation that follows seems to call for an explanation. In this case, a software production company's decision to refrain from prosecuting people who illegally copy its program raises questions regarding the company's reasons.

The company that produces XYZ, a computer spreadsheet program, estimates that millions of illegally reproduced copies of XYZ are being used. If legally purchased, this number of copies would have generated millions of dollars in sales for the company, yet despite a company-wide effort to boost sales, the company has not taken available legal measures to prosecute those who have copied the program illegally.

The question that is based on this situation reads as follows:

Which one of the following, if true, most helps to explain why the company has not taken available legal measures?

Incorrect answer choices such as

XYZ is very difficult to copy illegally, because a sophisticated anti copying mechanism in the program must first be disabled.

do nothing to help us understand the company's decision. They may, however, be relevant to some aspect of the situation. The answer choice above, for example, does suggest that those who do the illegal copying are knowledgeable about computers and computer software, but it doesn't throw any light on the company's decision not to prosecute.

The correct answer,

Many people who purchase a software program like XYZ are willing to purchase that program only after they have already used it.

on the other hand, does suggest a reason for the company to tolerate the use of illegal copies of its program: those copies happen to serve as effective marketing aids in

many cases and lead to legal sales of the program. The company may think that it has more to lose than to gain from going to court in order to stop the illegal copying. At the very least the correct answer tells us that there is a disadvantage for the company in stopping the illegal copying, and this helps to explain why no legal measures are taken.

Example 2:

Of the five bill collectors at Apex Collection Agency, Mr. Young has the highest rate of unsuccessful collections. Yet Mr. Young is the best bill collector on the agency's staff?

This situation has an air of paradox. It seems clear that a superior ability to bring a collection effort to a successful conclusion is what makes one bill collector better than another. So how can Mr. Young, who has the lowest rate of successful collections, be the best bill collector? This is the focus of the question that goes along with this situation:

Which one of the following, if true, most helps to resolve the apparent discrepancy?

Consider the following answer choice:

Mr. Young's rate of collections per year has remained fairly steady in the last few years.

This gives us information that is pertinent to Mr. Young's performance as a bill collector. But it gives us no reason to think that Mr. Young could be the best bill collector at the agency despite having the lowest collection rate. It only gives us more reason to think Mr. Young is a poor bill collector, because it allows us to infer that his collection rate has been low for years.

Now consider another choice:

Mr. Young is assigned the majority of the most difficult cases at the agency.

This gives us reason to think more highly of Mr. Young's ability as a bill collector, because it makes sense to assign the most difficult cases to Mr. Young if he is very good at collecting bills. And if his rate of success is relatively low, this is not really a surprise, because his cases tend to be more difficult. So this answer makes it clear how two facts that seemed to be difficult to reconcile with one another can in fact both be true. This resolves the apparent discrepancy in a satisfying way.

Some points to consider:

The correct answers to these questions do not generally offer complete and detailed explanations. Rather, they present crucial information that plays an important part within an adequate explanation.

- Pay close attention to what you are asked to explain. In the case of simple explanations of a particular factual matter, the wording of the question will direct you specifically to the fact to be explained. In the case of explanations that resolve an apparent conflict, however, it is generally up to you to develop a clear picture of that conflict.
- In most cases, there is more than one way to explain a set of facts or resolve an apparent conflict. So it is generally not a good idea to work out several explanatory stories in your head before examining the answer choices. Go to the answer choices instead and, for each choice, determine whether it helps to explain or resolve the situation
- Note that these questions are qualified by the expression "if true." This indicates that you do not have to be concerned about the actual truth of the answer choices. Simply consider each answer choice as though it were true.

Critical Reasoning Practice Problems (All are from LSAT)

1. There is no mystery as to why figurative painting revived in the late 1970s. People want to look at recognizable images. Sorting out art theories reflected in abstract paintings is no substitute for the sense of empathy that comes from looking at a realistic painting of a figure in a landscape. Perhaps members of the art-viewing public resented abstract art because they felt that its lack of realistic subject matter was a rejection of the viewers and their world.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main point of the passage?

- (A) Abstract paintings often include shapes or forms that are suggestive of real objects or emotions.
- (B) The art-viewing public wished to see traditional subjects treated in a nontraditional manner.
- (C) Paintings that depict a recognizable physical world rather than the emotional world of the artist's life require more artistic talent to create.
- (D) The general public is unable to understand the theories on which abstract

painting is based.

(E) The artistic preferences of the art-viewing public stimulated the revival.

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Answer: E

2. Some legislators refuse to commit public funds for new scientific research if they cannot be assured that the research will contribute to the public welfare. Such a position ignores the lessons of experience. Many important contributions to the public welfare that resulted from scientific research were never predicted as potential outcomes of that research. Suppose that a scientist in the early twentieth century had applied for public funds to study molds: who would have predicted that such research would lead to the discovery of antibiotics—one of the greatest contributions ever made to the public welfare?

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main point of the argument?

- (A) The committal of public funds for new scientific research will ensure that the public welfare will be enhanced.
- (B) If it were possible to predict the general outcome of a new scientific research effort, then legislators would not refuse to commit public funds for that effort.
- (C) Scientific discoveries that have contributed to the public welfare would have occurred sooner if public funds had been committed to the research that generated those discoveries.
- (D) In order to ensure that scientific research is directed toward contributing to the public welfare, legislators must commit public funds to new scientific research
- (E) Lack of guarantees that new scientific research will contribute to the public welfare is not sufficient reason for legislators to refuse to commit public funds to new scientific research.

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Answer: E

3. Balance is particularly important when reporting the background of civil wars and conflicts. Facts must not be deliberately manipulated to show one party in a favorable light, and the views of each side should be fairly represented. This concept of balance, however, does not justify concealing or glossing over basic injustices in an effort to be even-handed. If all the media were to adopt such a perverse interpretation of balanced reporting, the public would be given a picture of a world where each party in every conflict had an equal measure of justice on its side, contrary to our experience of life and, indeed, our common sense.

Which one of the following best expresses the main point of the argument?

- (A) Balanced reporting presents the public with a picture of the world in which all sides to a conflict have equal justification.
- (B) Balanced reporting requires impartially revealing injustices where they occur no less than fairly presenting the views of each party in a conflict.
- (C) Our experience of life shows that there are indeed cases in which conflicts arise because of an injustice, with one party clearly in the wrong.
- (D) Common sense tells us that balance is especially needed when reporting the background of civil wars and conflicts.
- (E) Balanced reporting is an ideal that cannot be realized, because judgments of balance are necessarily subjective.

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Answer: B

4. That long-term cigarette smoking can lead to health problems including cancer and lung disease is a scientifically well-established fact. Contrary to what many people seem to believe, however, it is not necessary to deny this fact in order to reject the view that tobacco companies should be held either morally or legally responsible for the poor health of smokers. After all, excessive consumption of candy undeniably leads to such health problems as tooth decay, but no one seriously believes that candy eaters who get cavities should be able to sue candy manufacturers.

The main point of the argument is that

- (A) no one should feel it necessary to deny the scientifically well-established fact that long-term cigarette smoking can lead to health problems
- (B) people who get cavities should not be able to sue candy manufacturers
- (C) the fact that smokers' health problems can be caused by their smoking is not enough to justify holding tobacco companies either legally or morally responsible for those problems
- (D) excessive consumption of candy will lead to health problems just as surely as long-term cigarette smoking will
- (E) if candy manufacturers were held responsible for tooth decay among candy eaters then tobacco companies should also be held responsible for health problems suffered by smokers

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Answer: C

5. It is probably within the reach of human technology to make the climate of Mars inhabitable. It might be several centuries before people could live there, even with breathing apparatuses, but some of the world's great temples and cathedrals took centuries to build. Research efforts now are justified if there is even a chance of making another planet inhabitable. Besides, the intellectual exercise of understanding how the Martian atmosphere might be changed could help in understanding atmospheric changes inadvertently triggered by human activity on Earth.

The main point of the argument is that

- (A) it is probably technologically possible for humankind to alter the climate of Mars
- (B) it would take several centuries to make Mars even marginally inhabitable
- (C) making Mars inhabitable is an effort comparable to building a great temple or cathedral
- (D) research efforts aimed at discovering how to change the climate of Mars are justified
- (E) efforts to change the climate of Mars could facilitate understanding of the

Earth's climate

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Answer: D

6. Since multinational grain companies operate so as to maximize profits, they cannot be relied to initiate economic changes that would reform the world's food-distribution system. Although it is true that the actions of multinational companies sometimes do result in such economic change, this result is incidental, arising not from the desire for reform but from the desire to maximize profits. The maximization of profits normally depends on a stable economic environment, one that discourages change.

The main point of the argument is that

- (A) the maximization of profits depends on a stable economic environment
- (B) when economic change accompanies business activity, that change is initiated by concern for the profit motive
- (C) multinational grain companies operates so as to maximize profits
- (D) the world's current food-distribution system is not in need of reform
- (E) multinational grain companies cannot be relied on to initiate reform of the world's food-distribution system

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Answer: E

7. A report on the likely effects of current levels of air pollutions on forest growth in North America concluded that, since nitrogen is necessary nutrient for optimal plant growth, the nitrogen deposited on forest soil as result of air pollution probably benefits eastern forests. However, European soil scientists have found that in forests saturated with sulfate and nitrate, tress begin to die when the nitrogen deposited exceeds the amount of nitrogen absorbed by the forest system. Since this finding is likely to apply to forests everywhere, large areas of eastern forests of North America are, undoubtedly, already being

affected adversely.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main point of the passage?

- (A) The implication of the report cited is that the amount of nitrogen reaching eastern forests by way of polluted air is approximately what those forests need for optimal growth.
- (B) If large areas of eastern forests were increasingly saturated with sulfate and nitrate, the capacity of those forest systems for absorbing nitrogen would also increase.
- (C) The type of analysis used by European soil scientists does not necessarily apply to eastern forests of North America.
- (D) The eastern forests are the only forests of North America currently affected by polluted air.
- (E) Contrary to the report cited, the nitrogen pollution now in the air is more likely to cause trees to die in eastern forests than to benefit them.

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Answer: E

8. Those who support the continued reading and performance of Shakespeare's plays maintain that in England appreciation for his work has always extended beyond educated elites and that ever since Shakespeare's own time his plays have always been known and loved by comparatively uneducated people. Skepticism about this claim is borne out by examining early eighteen-century editions of the plays. These books, with their fine paper and good bindings, must have been far beyond the reach of people of ordinary means.

The main point of the argument is to

- (A) suggest that knowledge of Shakespeare's play is a suitable criterion for distinguishing the educated elite from other members of English society
- (B) provide evidence that at some time in the past appreciation for Shakespeare's play was confined to educated elites
- (C) prove that early eighteenth-century appreciation for Shakespeare's works

rested on aspects of the works that are less appreciated today

(D) demonstrate that since Shakespeare's time the people who have known and loved his work have all been members of educated elites

(E) confirm the skepticism of the educated elite concerning the worth of Shakespeare's plays

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Answer: B

9. The frequently expressed view that written constitutions are inherently more liberal than unwritten ones is false. No written constitution is more than a paper with words on it until those words are both interpreted and applied. Properly understood, then, a constitution is the sum of those procedures through which the power of the state is legitimately exercised and limited. Therefore, even a written constitution becomes a liberal constitution only when it is interpreted and applied in a liberal way.

The main point of the argument above is that

(A) written constitutions are no more inherently liberal than are unwritten constitutions

(B) the idea of a written constitution, properly understood, is inherently self-contradictory

(C) unwritten constitutions are less subject to misinterpretation than are constitutions that have been written down

(D) liberal constitutions are extremely difficult to preserve

(E) there are criteria for evaluating the interpretation and application of a constitution

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Answer: A

10. Most people are indignant at the suggestion that they are not reliable authorities about their real wants. Such self-knowledge, however, is not the

easiest kind of knowledge to acquire. Indeed, acquiring it often requires hard and even potentially risky work. To avoid such effort, people unconsciously convince themselves that they want what society says they should want.

The main point of the argument is that

- (A) acquiring self-knowledge can be risky
- (B) knowledge of what one really wants is not as desirable as it is usually thought to be
- (C) people cannot really want what they should want
- (D) people usually avoid making difficult decisions
- (E) people are not necessarily reliable authorities about what they really want

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Answer: E

11. The vision test for obtaining a driver's license should not be limited to measuring the adequacy of vision in daylight conditions, as is the current practice. Many people whose daylight vision is adequate have night vision that is inadequate for safe night driving. Most car accidents occur at night, and inadequate vision plays a role in 80 percent of these accidents.

The main point of the argument is that

- (A) the vision test for obtaining a driver's license should measure the adequacy of vision in night conditions
- (B) inadequate vision does not play a role in most of the accidents that occur in daylight
- (C) most drivers who have adequate vision in daylight conditions also have adequate vision in night conditions
- (O) inadequate vision is the primary factor in the majority of car accidents that occur at night

(E) the current vision test for obtaining a driver's license ensures that most licensed drivers have adequate vision for night driving

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Answer: A

12. A famous artist once claimed that all great art imitates nature. If this claim is correct, then any music that is great art would imitate nature. But while some music may imitate ocean waves or the galloping of horses, for example, most great music imitates nothing at all.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main point of the argument?

- (A) Music is inferior to the other arts.
- (B) Either the artist's claim is incorrect, or most great music is not great art.
- (C) Like some great music, some great painting and sculpture may fail to imitate nature.
- (D) Some elements of nature cannot be represented adequately by great art.
- (E) Sounds that do not imitate nature are not great music.

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Answer: B

13. When politicians resort to personal attacks, many editorialists criticize these attacks but most voters pay them scant attention. Everyone knows such attacks will end after election day, and politicians can be excused for mudslinging. Political commentators, however, cannot be. Political commentators should be engaged in sustained and serious debate about ideas and policies. In such a context, personal attacks on opponents serve not to beat those opponents but to cut off the debate.

Which one of the following most accurately states the main point of the argument?

- (A) Personal attacks on opponents serve a useful purpose for politicians.
- (B) Political commentators should not resort to personal attacks on their opponents.
- (C) Editorialists are right to criticize politicians who resort to personal attacks on their opponents.
- (D) The purpose of serious debate about ideas and policies is to counteract the effect of personal attacks by politicians.
- (E) Voters should be concerned about the personal attacks politicians make on each other.

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Answer: B

14. Most people who ride bicycles for pleasure do not ride until the warm weather of spring and summery arrives. Yet it is probably more effective to advertise bicycles earlier in the year. Most bicycles are purchased in the spring, but once shoppers are ready to shop for a bicycle, they usually have already decided which brand and model of bicycle they will purchase. By then it is generally too late to induce them to change their minds.

The main point of the argument is that

- (A) bicycle advertisements are probably more effective if they appear before the arrival of warm spring weather
- (B) most bicycle purchasers decide on the brand and model of bicycle that they will buy before beginning to shop for a bicycle
- (C) more bicycles are purchased in the spring than at any other time of year
- (D) in general, once a bicycle purchaser has decided which bicycle he or she intends to purchase, it is difficult to bring about a change in that decision

(E) spring and summer are the time of year in which bicycle riding as a leisure activity is most popular

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Answer: A

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15. The terms “sex” and “gender” are often used interchangeably. But “sex” more properly refers to biological differences of male and female, while “gender” refers to society’s construction of a system that identifies what is masculine and feminine. Unlike the set of characteristics defining biological sex, the set of traits that are associated with gender does not sort people into two nonoverlapping groups. The traits characterize people in a complex way, so that a person may have both “masculine” and “feminine” traits.

Which one of the following statements best expresses a main point of the argument?

- (A) Distinctions based on gender are frequently arbitrary.
- (B) Gender traits are not determined at birth.
- (C) Masculine gender traits are highly correlated with maleness.
- (D) The terms “sex” and “gender” are not properly interchangeable.
- (E) Society rather than the individual decides what is considered proper behavior.

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Answer: D

16. For years scientists have been scanning the skies in the hope of finding life on other planets. But in spite of the ever-increasing sophistication of the equipment they employ, some of it costing hundreds of millions of dollars, not the first shred of evidence of such life has been forthcoming. And there is no reason to think that these scientists will be any more successful in the future, no matter how much money is invested in the search. The dream of finding extraterrestrial life is destined to remain a dream as science’s experience up to this point should indicate.

Which one of the following most accurately states the main point of the argument?

- (A) There is no reason to believe that life exists on other planets.
- (B) The equipment that scientists employ is not as sophisticated as it should be.
- (C) Scientists searching for extraterrestrial life will not find it.
- (D) Only if scientists had already found evidence of life on other planets would

continued search be justified.

- (E) We should not spend money on sophisticated equipment to aid in the search for extraterrestrial life.

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Answer: C

17. The authors of a recent article examined warnings of an impending wave of extinctions of animal species within the next 100 years. These authors say that no evidence exists to support the idea that the rate of extinction of animal species is now accelerating. They are wrong, however. Consider only the data on fishes: 40 species and subspecies of North American fishes have vanished in the twentieth century, 13 between 1900 and 1950, and 27 since 1950.

Which one of the following is the main point of the argument?

- (A) There is evidence that the rate of extinction of animal species is accelerating.
(B) The future rate of extinction of animal species cannot be determined from available evidence.
(C) The rate of extinction of North American fishes is parallel to the rate of extinction of all animal species taken together.
(D) Forty species and subspecies of North American fishes have vanished in the twentieth century.
(E) A substantial number of fish species are in danger of imminent extinction.

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Answer: A

18. Generations of European-history students have been taught that a political assassination caused the First World War. Without some qualification, however, this teaching is bound to mislead, since the war would not have happened without the treaties and alliances that were already in effect and the military force that was already amassed. These were the deeper causes of the war, whereas the assassination was a cause only in a trivial sense. It was like

the individual spark that happens to ignite a conflagration that was, in the prevailing conditions, inevitable.

Which one of the following most accurately restates the main point of the passage?

- (A) The assassination did not cause the war, since the assassination was only the last in a chain of events leading up to the war, each of which had equal claim to being called its “cause.”
- (B) The war was destined to happen, since the course of history up to that point could not have been altered.
- (C) Though the statement that the assassination caused the war is true, the term “cause” more fundamentally applies to the conditions that made it possible for that event to start the war.
- (D) If the assassination had occurred when it did but less military force had at that time been amassed, then the war’s outbreak might have been considerably delayed or the war might not have occurred at all.
- (E) Although the conditions prevailing at the time the war started made war inevitable, if the war had not been triggered by the assassination it would not have taken the course with which students of history are familiar.

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Answer: C

19. Taxpayer: For the last ten years, Metro City’s bridge-maintenance budget of \$1 million annually has been a prime example of fiscal irresponsibility. In a well-run bridge program, the city would spend \$15 million a year on maintenance, which would prevent severe deterioration, thus limiting capital expenses for needed bridge reconstruction to \$10 million. However, as a result of its attempt to economize, the city is now faced with spending \$400 million over two years on emergency reconstruction of its bridges.

The main point of the taxpayer’s argument is that Metro City

- (A) should have budgeted substantially more money for maintenance of its bridges

(B) would have had a well-run bridge program if it had spent more money for reconstruction of its bridges

(C) is spending more than it needs to on maintenance of its bridges

(D) is economizing on its bridge program to save money in case of emergencies

(E) has bridges that are more expensive to maintain than they were to build

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Answer: A

20. It is well known that many species adapt to their environment, but it is usually assumed that only the most highly evolved species alter their environment in ways that aid their own survival. However, this characteristic is actually quite common. Certain species of plankton, for example, generate a gas that is converted in the atmosphere into particles of sulfate. These particles cause water vapor to condense, thus forming clouds. Indeed, the formation of clouds over the ocean largely depends on the presence of these particles. More cloud cover means more sunlight is reflected, and so the Earth absorbs less heat. Thus plankton cause the surface of the Earth to be cooler and this benefits the plankton.

Of the following, which one most accurately expresses the main point of the argument?

(A) The Earth would be far warmer than it is now if certain species of plankton became extinct.

(B) By altering their environment in ways that improve their chances of survival, certain species of plankton benefit the Earth as a whole.

(C) Improving their own chances of survival by altering the environment is not limited to the most highly evolved species.

(D) The extent of the cloud cover over the oceans is largely determined by the quantity of plankton in those oceans.

(E) Species such as plankton alter the environment in ways that are less detrimental to the wellbeing of other species than are the alterations to the environment made by more highly evolved species.

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Answer: C

21. Some judges complain about statutes that specify mandatory minimum sentences for criminal offenses. These legal restrictions, they complain, are too mechanical and prevent judges from deciding when a given individual can or cannot be rehabilitated. But that is precisely why mandatory minimum sentences are necessary. History amply demonstrates that when people are free to use their own judgment they invariably believe themselves to act wisely when in fact they are often arbitrary and irrational. There is no reason to think that judges are an exception to this rule.

Which one of the following sentences most accurately expresses the main point of the passage?

- (A) People believe that they have good judgment but never do.
- (B) Mandatory minimum sentences are too mechanical and reduce judicial discretion.
- (C) Judges should be free to exercise their own judgment.
- (D) Judges are often arbitrary and irrational.
- (E) Mandatory minimum sentences are needed to help prevent judicial arbitrariness.

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Answer: E

22. The current theory about earthquakes holds that they are caused by adjoining plates of rock sliding past each other; the plates are pressed together until powerful forces overcome the resistance. As plausible as this may sound, at least one thing remains mysterious on this theory. The overcoming of such resistance should create enormous amounts of heat. But so far no increases in temperature unrelated to weather have been detected following earthquakes.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main point of the argument?

- (A) No increases in temperature have been detected following earthquakes.
- (B) The current theory does not fully explain earthquake data.
- (C) No one will ever be sure what the true cause of earthquakes is.
- (D) Earthquakes produce enormous amounts of heat that have so far gone undetected.
- (E) Contrary to the current theory, earthquakes are not caused by adjoining plates of rock sliding past one another.

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Answer: B

23. It is difficult to keep deep wounds free of bacteria. Even strong antibiotics fail to kill the bacteria that live in such wounds. However, many physicians have succeeded in eliminating bacteria from deep wounds by packing the wound with a sweet substance like sugar.

Which one of the following, if true, most helps to explain why treating deep wounds with sugar as described above is successful?

- (A) Bacteria that live in deep wounds thrive in a moist environment, and sugar has a dehydrating effect.
- (B) Sugar that is nearly pure is readily available for use in medical treatments.
- (C) Many kinds of bacteria can use sugar as a nutrient and will reproduce rapidly when sugar is available to them.
- (D) Some foods that contain sugar can weaken the effects of certain antibiotics.
- (E) Strong antibiotics were developed only recently, but the use of sugar as a treatment for wounds dates back to ancient times.

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Answer: A

24. Early in this century, Alfred Wegener developed the concept of continental drift. His ideas were rejected vehemently because he postulated no identifiable

force strong enough to make the continents move. We have come to accept Wegener's theory, not because we have pinpointed such a force, but because new instruments have finally allowed continental movement to be confirmed by observation.

The passage best illustrates which one of the following statements about science?

- (A) The aim of science is to define the manifold of nature within the terms of a single harmonious theory.
- (B) In accepting a mathematical description of nature, science has become far more accurate at identifying underlying forces.
- (C) The paradox of science is that every improvement in its measuring instruments seems to make adequate theories harder to work out.
- (D) Science, employing statistics and the laws of probability, is concerned not with the single event but with mass behavior.
- (E) When the events a theory postulates are detected, the theory is accepted even without an explanation of how those events are brought about

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Answer: E

25. Water vapor evaporated from the ocean contains a greater proportion of oxygen-16 and a smaller proportion of the heavier oxygen-18 than does seawater. Normally, this phenomenon has no effect on the overall composition of the ocean, because evaporated seawater returns to the ocean through precipitation. During an ice age, however, a large amount of precipitation falls on ice caps, where it is trapped as ice.

Which one of the following conclusions about a typical ice age is most strongly supported by the statements above?

- (A) The proportions of oxygen-16 and oxygen-18 are the same in vapor from seawater as in the seawater itself.
- (B) The concentration of oxygen-18 in seawater is increased.
- (C) Rain and snow contain relatively more oxygen-16 than they do in interglacial periods.
- (D) During the ice age, more of the Earth's precipitation falls over land than falls

over the ocean.

- (E) The composition of seawater changes more slowly than it does in interglacial periods.

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Answer: B

26. The term “pit bull” does not designate a breed of dog, as do the terms “German shepherd” and “poodle.” It is like the terms “Seeing-Eye dog” and “police dog,” which designate dogs according to what they do. If you take two German shepherds and place them side by side, you cannot tell by appearance alone which is the police dog and which is the Seeing-Eye dog.

Which one of the following is the main point of the passage?

- (A) German shepherds can be pit bulls.
(B) Pit bulls can be distinguished from other kinds of dogs by appearance alone.
(C) A dog is a pit bull because of what it does, not because of its breed.
(D) German shepherds can function both as police dogs and as Seeing-Eye dogs.
(E) Some breeds of dogs cannot be distinguished from other breeds of dogs by appearance alone.

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Answer: C

27. Historically, monetary systems have developed only in population centers with marketplaces. Through the fourth century B.C. Mesopotamian cities engaged in trade, but had never had marketplaces. By that period, however, Greek cities all had marketplaces, or agorae. The Greek cities’ agorae were centrally located and goods were traded there either for money or for commodities.

If all of the statements in the passage are true, then which one of the following must also be true?

- (A) In the fourth century B.C. Greek cities were the only population centers with monetary systems.
(B) The development of monetary systems has historically led to the

development of marketplaces.

- (C) In the fourth century B.C. the Greeks and the Mesopotamians traded with each other.
- (D) After the fourth century B.C. Mesopotamian cities had marketplaces and monetary systems.
- (E) The Mesopotamian cities of the fourth century B.C. did not have monetary systems.

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Answer: E

28. As symbols of the freedom of the wilderness, bald eagles have the unique capacity to inspire people and foster in them a sympathetic attitude toward the needs of other threatened species. Clearly, without that sympathy and the political will it engenders, the needs of more obscure species will go unmet. The conservation needs of many obscure species can only be met by beginning with the conservation of this symbolic species, the bald eagle.

Which one of the following is the main point of the passage as a whole?

- (A) Because bald eagles symbolize freedom, conservation efforts should be concentrated on them rather than on other, more obscure species.
- (B) The conservation of bald eagles is the first necessary step in conserving other endangered species.
- (C) Without increased public sympathy for conservation, the needs of many symbolic species will go unmet.
- (D) People's love of the wilderness can be used to engender political support for conservation efforts.
- (E) Other threatened species do not inspire people or foster sympathy as much as do bald eagles.

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Answer: B

29. The efficiency of microwave ovens in destroying the harmful bacteria

frequently found in common foods is diminished by the presence of salt in the food being cooked. When heated in a microwave oven, the interior of unsalted food reaches temperatures high enough to kill bacteria that cause food poisoning, but the interior of salted food does not. Scientists theorize that salt effectively blocks the microwaves from heating the interior.

Which one of the following conclusions is most supported by the information above?

- (A) The kinds of bacteria that cause food poisoning are more likely to be found on the exterior of food than in the interior of food.
- (B) The incidence of serious food poisoning would be significantly reduced if microwave ovens were not used by consumers to cook or reheat food.
- (C) The addition of salt to food that has been cooked or reheated in a microwave oven can increase the danger of food poisoning.
- (D) The danger of food poisoning can be lessened if salt is not used to prepare foods that are to be cooked in a microwave oven.
- (E) Salt is the primary cause of food poisoning resulting from food that is heated in microwave ovens.

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Answer: D

30. Something must be done to ease traffic congestion. In traditional small towns, people used to work and shop in the same town in which they lived; but now that stores and workplaces are located far away from residential areas, people cannot avoid traveling long distances each day. Traffic congestion is so heavy on all roads that, even on major highways where the maximum speed limit is 55 miles per hour, the actual speed averages only 35 miles per hour.

Which one of the following proposals is most supported by the statements above?

- (A) The maximum speed limit on major highways should be increased.
- (B) People who now travel on major highways should be encouraged to travel on secondary roads instead.
- (C) Residents of the remaining traditional small towns should be encouraged to

move to the suburbs.

(D) Drivers who travel well below the maximum speed limit on major highways should be fined.

(E) New businesses should be encouraged to locate closer to where their workers would live

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Answer: E

31. Because of the recent transformation of the market. Quore, Inc., must increase productivity, 10 percent over the course of the next two years, or it will certainly go bankrupt. In fact, however, Quore's production structure is such that if a 10 percent productivity increase is possible, then a 20 percent increase is attainable.

If the statements above are true, which one of the following must on the basis of them also be true?

(A) It is only Quore's production structure that makes it possible for Quore to survive the transformation of the market.

(B) Quore will not go bankrupt if it achieves a productivity increase of 20 percent over the next two years.

(C) If the market had not been transformed, Quore would have required no productivity increase in order to avoid bankruptcy.

(D) Because of the transformation of the market, Quore will achieve a productivity increase of 10 percent over the next two years.

(E) If a 20 percent productivity increase is unattainable for Quore, then it must go bankrupt.

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Answer: E

32. The United States government generally tries to protect valuable natural resources. But one resource has been ignored for too long. In the United States, each bushel of corn produced might result in the loss of as much as two

bushels of topsoil. Moreover, in the last 100 years, the topsoil in many states, which once was about fourteen inches thick, has been eroded to only six or eight inches. Nonetheless, federal expenditures for nationwide soil conservation programs have remained at ridiculously low levels. Total federal expenditures for nationwide soil conservation programs have been less than the allocations of some individual states.

Which one of the following best expresses the main point of the argument?

- (A) Corn is not a cost-effective product and substitutes should be found where possible.
- (B) A layer of topsoil only six to eight inches thick cannot support the continued cultivation of corn.
- (C) Soil conservation is a responsibility of the federal government, not the states.
- (D) The federal government's expenditures for soil conservation in the various states have been inequitable.
- (E) The federal government should spend much more on soil conservation than it has been spending.

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Answer: E

PART II- READING COMPREHENSION

How to approach reading comprehension passages:

The Reading Comprehension section is intended to assess your ability to read, with understanding and insight, passages comparable in terms of level of language and complexity to materials you are likely to have to deal with in the study of business or science. The passages are selected so that they can be adequately understood simply on the basis of what they say; you won't need any specialized prior knowledge to understand Reading Comprehension passages. Any technical terms that you need to understand to answer the questions are explained in the passages and all of the questions can be answered on the basis of information given in the passages.

Typically, a passage has a single main point. Sometimes the main point of a passage is to present a controversial position and either attack or defend it. Sometimes it is to

examine and critique someone else's view. Sometimes it is to explain a puzzling phenomenon. Sometimes it is to give an accurate historical account of some important development. All passages will present a number of considerations that are relevant to the main point of the passage; the roles these considerations play are largely determined by the nature of that main point.

So how should you approach a Reading Comprehension passage? The single most important thing is to get clear about the main thrust of the passage: what is the passage mainly trying to get across to the reader? Occasionally a passage will contain a particular sentence that explicitly states the main point. Even when there is such a statement, however, it does not necessarily come at the beginning of the passage; it could occur anywhere in the passage. More often, a passage will just present its position, critique, account, or explanation and rely on the reader to see where the passage is going. So what you should do as you work through a passage is read attentively, but at the same time you should be aware that it is not necessary to absorb and retain all of the descriptive detail that the author presents along the way. Try to remain focused on the main business of the passage, because the entire passage is organized around that. Without a clear sense of what the passage is about, you are likely to make mistakes about the relative significance of the various subsidiary points that the passage raises in support of its central point.

Importance of Paragraphs and Transition words:

Shifts in focus and perspective occur frequently in Reading Comprehension passages. A passage might shift from one concern to another, from the particular to the general, from a positive view of a topic to a negative one, or from one person to another. To get a solid grasp of how a given passage works, you must be aware of what the different ideas presented in the passage are and, more importantly, how the ideas relate to one another.

A reader therefore needs to track the ideas presented by the author and the nature of the transition from one to another in order to grasp the significance, within the passage as a whole, of what is being said at any given point in the passage.

One feature of passages that can be extremely helpful in determining exactly how they work is their division into paragraphs. Paragraphs tend to have a relatively

narrow focus and often play well-defined roles within the passage as a whole. So, for example, when an author switches from citing support for a position to defending the position against a challenge, the switch is typically marked by starting a new paragraph. Consequently, by asking yourself what each paragraph does you can put together a fairly accurate picture of the structure of the passage as a whole.

Still, not all shifts in focus or perspective coincide, with the transition from one paragraph to the next; one or more shifts might occur within a given paragraph, or conversely, two or more paragraphs might share the same basic focus.

Another useful indicator of significant shifts in Reading Comprehension passages is the use of words or phrases such as "however," "nevertheless," "on the other hand," "by contrast," "and yet," and others. If you pay close attention to these sorts of signals, they will help orient you to what the significant parts of the passage are, and they will alert you to when a significant shift in focus or perspective is taking place. Incidentally, authors often provide helpful signals of continuity as well as shifts; continuity is frequently signaled by means of words or phrases like "for example," "by the same token," "furthermore," "in the same vein," "moreover," "similarly," and others.

One final caution about understanding the author's point of view: many times authors compare competing positions or theories and ultimately endorse one position or theory over its competitors. A common technique used by authors in this type of passage is to present the ideas they ultimately intend to reject in the best light possible, at least initially. One advantage of this approach is that criticisms are much more damaging if they work against an idea that has been presented in its strongest form; another advantage is that an author who takes pains to be as fair and evenhanded as possible to his or her opponents gains greatly in credibility. But what this means for you is that it can be quite difficult to follow such passages if you do not monitor the author's stance very carefully. When the author of a passage presents an opponent's point of view in the best light possible, it can appear to the unwary reader that the author endorses a position that he or she actually rejects. All of the techniques discussed above so far in this section can help you keep oriented to where the author actually stands in passages like these.

Should we read the question first?

Some of you may be wondering at this point about a commonly hear piece of advice—that you should read the question first, and only then turn to the passage. You should, of course, feel free to try this strategy and use it if you find it helpful. It is our opinion, however, that most people will find this strategy to be unhelpful. There are several reasons for this.

First, all of the questions associated with GMAT/GRE/CAT passages fit into standard question types—questions that ask for the main point or main purpose of the passage, questions that ask what the author would agree or disagree with, questions that ask what can be inferred from the information given in the passage, and so on. We will say more about these and other question types in the sections that follow. Through study and practice, you can familiarize yourself with the types of questions that are typically written for an LSAT passage. You will then be able to anticipate what many of the questions will look like without having to spend your valuable time reading them before you read the passage.

Of course, some of the questions that follow a given passage might not look exactly like others of the same type; some even appear to be quite unique. But even in these cases, you will probably still gain very little from reading the questions first: it takes work to remember the question as you read the passage, and your mental energy is probably better spent on simply trying to comprehend the passage. As we have discussed already, GRE/GMAT/ CAT reading passages can be quite difficult, involving sophisticated ideas and complex relationships. Answering the questions correctly requires you to get a firm grasp of the big picture in the passage. If you read everything in the passage with an eye to answering questions about particular details rather than with full attention to the thrust of the passage as a whole, you can easily miss the point of the passage, and you run the risk of failing to grasp what the author agrees and disagrees with as well. So though you might do well on the questions that ask you about those details, you might very well increase your chances of getting other questions in the set wrong.

Finally, it is important to remember that time is of the essence. You can read the questions before you read the passages, but you still have to read the question again when you are ready to answer them (you won't remember precisely what every question asks). Assume for the sake of argument that it takes roughly five seconds to

read each question without reading the responses. That adds up more than two minutes just to read the questions in a single Reading Comprehension section. If you read them twice, you double that to more than four minutes.

How to Approach Reading Comprehension Questions:

After reading through the passage once, you should turn to the questions. At this point you will probably have a fairly good sense of what the passage as a whole is trying to say, how the passage is organized, and roughly where in the passage specific points are made or particular facts are mentioned. But even if you do not feel all that confident of your understanding of the passage, you should proceed to the questions anyway rather than rereading the whole passage. In most cases, the first question in a set will ask you about the main point or the main purpose of a passage.

If you don't think you have a handle on the passage, you might be able to recognize the main point or purpose of the passage when you see it, and answering this first question will in turn help orient you to the passage as a whole and to the questions that follow.

Either way, you should not feel that you need to remember the passage in great detail in order to begin working on the questions. For example, a passage might talk about two theoretical accounts of the rationale for incarceration, rehabilitative and punitive, and provide detail, even important detail, about both. In reading this passage, you should try to develop a clear sense of the difference between the two accounts and a general sense of where each is discussed. But there would be no point in trying to commit all of the detail in the passage to memory. First, not everything—not even every important thing—in the passage is going to be asked about. Second, if you have a general idea of the structure of the passage and of where its key elements are located, it is easy to check on the relevant details by rereading just portions of the passage. In fact, even if you are fairly confident that you remember everything you need to answer a particular question, it usually is a good idea to confirm your answer by checking the relevant portions of the passage anyway. Only if you have absolutely no doubt about the answer to a question is it advisable to respond without consulting the passage at least briefly.

When you read the questions, you should carefully attend to how each question is worded. Many questions contain detail that is intended to direct you to the relevant information in the passage. For example, one passage in the June 2000 LSAT discussed the conflict between philosophers who subscribe to a traditional, subjective approach to studying the mind and philosophers who support a new "objectivist" approach. According to the passage, the "subjectivists" believe that the mind should be explored by means of investigating individual subjective experiences such as consciousness, pain, emotions, and the like; "objectivists" find this approach outdated, however, and they believe the study of the mind should be limited to "hard" data such as the transmission of nerve impulses in the brain. One question in this set asks,

According to the passage, subjectivists advance which one of the following claims to support their claim that objectivism is faulty?

The first thing this question tells you is that the correct response will be a claim attributed in the passage to the subjectivists. Other claims in the passage are attributed to the objectivists, and the author also makes a few claims of his or her own; obviously, none of these can be the correct answer. Moreover, the question tells you that the correct answer must be the claim made by the subjectivists as part of their argument that objectivism is faulty. At this point most test takers will recall that the views of subjectivists regarding the problems with objectivism are described in the first half of the passage, and more specifically, in the second paragraph. A quick glance at that portion of the passage will enable you to identify the correct response.

In this case, the views being asked about are not the author's view, but many questions do in fact focus on what the author says, believes, or might agree with. At the same time, as we noted above, authors of passages used in the LSAT often mention other people as making claims, presenting evidence, holding beliefs, or taking positions about whatever it is that the question is asking about. Again, it is important to pay very close attention to whether a question focuses on the views or claims of the author, or those of another person or group discussed by the author. There is one additional piece of advice that applies to all Reading Comprehension questions: in general, even if you are fairly sure you have found the correct answer, you should probably take at least a quick look at any answer choices that you have

not already eliminated. Incorrect answer choices are often partially correct, and as a result incorrect choices can sometimes appear to be correct when you first read them. Sometimes, a consideration of the full set of answer choices will lead you to reject a wrong answer that you initially thought to be correct.

How to deal with Main Idea and Primary Purpose of the Passage kind of Questions:

As we said earlier, the first question in most Reading Comprehension sets will ask you to identify the statement that best expresses the central idea, main idea, or the main point that the passage as a whole is designed to convey. These questions come in three main varieties. A few will take the following form: "Which one of the following most accurately summarizes the contents of the passage?" As the question implies, you should try to identify the response that summarizes the passage most accurately.

The thing to remember about questions like this is that the correct response will be the one that covers the important material in the passage most completely. That is not to say that the correct answer is necessarily the longest one, but it does mean that the correct answer will be most inclusive of the major steps in the discussion in the passage. The thing to keep in mind is that for questions that ask for the best summary of the passage, the correct answer will be the most comprehensive and inclusive of the steps taken in the passage. This variant of main idea questions is fairly rare, however. We use them infrequently, and you may not encounter any when you take the test.

The second, and by far most common, variant asks you to identify the main point, main idea, or central idea of the passage. Rather than asking you to identify the answer that summarizes the passage the best, these questions ask you to identify the idea or point that is at the heart of the passage. The important thing to know about these questions is that they have a much narrower focus than summary questions do. To answer them correctly, you have to be able to recognize what is the most important idea that the passage is trying to establish, the idea to which all other ideas in the passage are subordinated.

The third variant offers five potential titles for the passage and asks you to identify the answer that would be the best title. This variant is related to the main point/main idea question inasmuch as the best title will be the one that touches most directly on the central idea or point of the passage. These questions are also relatively rare. If

you come across one, focus on finding the title that contains the content you would expect to see in a standard statement of the main idea of the passage.

One important thing to know about main idea or main point questions is that an answer choice that captures something that is true about the passage is still not necessarily the correct answer. For one thing, that answer choice may also say something that is not true about the passage,

in which case it cannot be, on the whole, taken as correctly expressing the main idea of the passage. On the other hand, an answer choice may even be accurate in its entirety in stating something said in the passage, but be about something that is only a side issue in the passage rather than the main idea of the passage.

It is also worth noting that there is more than one way of saying what the main idea of a passage is; as a result, you may not find an answer choice that expresses the main point the way you would have put it. But if you have a good grasp of the passage, the correct answer should come closer to the way you would put it than the other responses do. What this means, however/ is that the advice we mentioned earlier-namely, that you should check all the answer choices before moving on to the next question-is especially important for main point questions. As you review all the answer choices, keep in mind that each of the incorrect answer choices will either say something about the passage that is simply false or will describe something that is in the passage and might even contribute to establishing the main point but is not itself that main point. And again, the correct answer will be the only answer choice that is both entirely accurate in its statement of what is in the passage and on target in terms of hitting on the most important idea in the passage.

In addition to questions about the main point/ which deal with the content that the passage is intended to convey, there is another kind of question that deals with the function of the passage as a whole. This kind of question asks about the way the author proceeds in developing the main

idea; that is, they are questions about how the passage is structured. Such questions ask how the passage proceeds/or how the passage is organized, or what the passage is primarily meant to convey, or what the primary purpose of the passage is. For example, a passage might present a puzzling phenomenon and offer an explanation for it. Or it might contrast two opposing views and develop a case for preferring one to the other. Or it might summarize the history of a scientific dispute. The answer choices for questions of this sort won't track every twist and turn of the author's

development of the main point but will instead be very broad characterizations of the way the main point is developed. So don't be concerned if the correct answer seems to contain very little detail. The incorrect answer choices will be at a similar level of generality but will clearly fail to capture how the passage as a whole is organized. An incorrect answer choice might describe something that goes on in a portion of the passage or it might not fit anything about the passage at all. In any event, thought it will not get at the main structural blueprint of the passage as a whole.

Note that questions about the structure or organization of the author's text are not all concerned with the passage as a whole. Occasionally there are questions that ask you about the organization of a single paragraph. To answer these, it is a good idea to reread the specific paragraph that the question asks about.

Questions on what the passage says or implies:

For each Reading Comprehension passage, you will be asked questions about the various ideas conveyed by the passage. These questions can range from very basic and straightforward questions (what does the passage say, literally?) to more sophisticated questions (what does the author imply without saying it explicitly?) to quite complex and advanced questions (what can be inferred from evidence presented in the passage, independently of whether or not the author intended the implication?). We will discuss all of these types of questions/ starting with those at the basic end of the spectrum.

Perhaps the most basic component of Reading Comprehension is simply that of grasping what the text says on a literal level, and some Reading Comprehension questions are designed to make sure that you have processed the passage accurately at this fundamental level. Questions that assess this skill might ask, "Which one of the following is stated in the passage?", "The author says which one of the following about X?", "The passage asserts which one of the following regarding X?", "According to the passage, what is true about X?", or something similar. Even though these questions are fairly straightforward, the correct answer will not be an exact word-for-word repetition of something stated in the passage; it will however, typically consist of a very close paraphrase of some part of the passage.

The idea is that you should be able to identify not the exact wording of something said in the passage/ but rather the gist of it. For example, one of the questions following a passage about muralism, a Mexican artistic movement, reads

Which one of the following does the author explicitly identify as a characteristic of Mexican mural art?

- (A) Its subject matter consisted primarily of current events.*
- (B) It could be viewed outdoors only ...*
- (C) It used the same techniques as are used in easel painting.*
- (D) It exhibited remarkable stylistic uniformity.*
- (E) It was intended to be viewed from more than one angle*

In the passage the author asserts that the muralists' works "were designed to be viewable from many different vantage points." The correct answer is therefore (E), "It was intended to be viewed from more than one angle." Notice that the correct answer is a fairly close paraphrase of what the author had stated in the passage.

A similar example occurs after a passage that says at one point, "the lower regions of the Earth's mantle have roughly the same composition as meteorites." The question reads,

According to the passage, the lower regions of the Earth's mantle are characterized by

- (A) a composition similar to that of meteorites*
- (B) the absence of elements found in rocks on the Earth's crust*
- (C) a greater stability than that of the upper regions*
- (D) the presence of large amounts of carbon dioxide*
- (E) a uniformly lower density than that of the upper regions*

The correct answer is (A), "a composition similar to that of meteorites." Again, the phrase "similar to" is a straightforward equivalent of "roughly the same as."

Recognition of what the author says is all that is required in this question; there is no need for any significant interpretation. Questions like this one might seem unexpectedly easy, especially to test takers for whom Reading Comprehension is a relative strength. Don't be put off by how easy such questions might seem, however, and in particular, don't assume that some sort of trick must be lurking in such easy-seeming questions. Just remember that some LSAT questions are designed to test fairly basic skills, and are therefore necessarily easy.

Of course, the process of reading also typically depends on skills that are considerably more advanced than this basic skill of comprehension of the literal content of a text and other Reading Comprehension questions are designed to test these skills. Any complex piece of writing conveys much more to the attentive reader

than what it explicitly states. Authors rely on this, and without having to think about it, readers typically process texts at the level of what they convey implicitly as well as at the level of what they say explicitly. In some cases, much of what a writer leaves out and relies on the reader to supply is subject matter knowledge that the writer assumes the reader to possess. This is especially true when the writer and the intended readers are all thoroughly familiar with the same specialized subject matter: articles in professional journals are good examples of texts that rely on this sort of shared knowledge. It is important to note, however, that the LSAT does not presuppose any specialized subject matter knowledge, so none of the questions in it test this kind of specialized reading.

There are, however, many other types of information that a writer leaves out and relies on the reader to supply: things whose inclusion in the reader's comprehension of a text is supported by what the text does explicitly state. Suppose, for example, that a writer states, "The closing of the factory caused additional damage to a regional economy already experiencing high employment." In saying this, the writer has not explicitly said that the closing of the factory occurred before the additional damage to the regional economy, but a reader who fails to understand that the closing preceded the damage has probably failed to understand the sentence as a whole. In fact, it is probably safe to say that a reader who lacks the ability to supply such inferences cannot be said to understand what he or she reads in general.

There are a variety of Reading Comprehension questions that assess this ability. For example, you might be asked what can be inferred from a passage or from some specific portion of the passage, what the passage suggests or indicates about some particular matter addressed explicitly in the passage, or what, according to the passage, is true of some particular matter.

Other questions might ask about what a passage conveys or implies about people's beliefs—for example, "It can most reasonably be inferred that the author would agree with which one of the following statements?" or "It can be inferred from the passage that the author most clearly holds which one of the following views?" or "It can be inferred from the passage that Ellison most dearly holds which one of the following views regarding an audience's relationship to works of art?" or "Given the information in the passage, the author is LEAST likely to believe which one of the following?" In approaching such questions, you need to pay close attention to specifically whose beliefs the question asks about. The incorrect

answer choices will often be beliefs held by people other than those that the question is about.

What the correct answers to all such questions have in common-whether the questions ask about beliefs or about information-is that they are justified by something that is explicitly stated in the passage. Sometimes this may be no more than a single sentence; on the other hand, sometimes you may have to pull together information from various parts of the passage to identify the correct answer. In some cases, locating the part of the passage that justifies an inference is straightforward. In other cases, the relevant justifying information might not be where one would most naturally expect to find it. In still other cases, there is no single part of the passage that contains all the relevant justifying information.

Questions also vary widely in how closely the correct answers match the part of the passage that justifies them. Sometimes, the correct answer does not go much beyond a slight rephrasing of the explicit content of the passage.

For example, one passage discusses Richard A. Posner's critique of the law-and-literature movement, a movement that advocates the use of "techniques of literary analysis for the purpose of interpreting laws and in the reciprocal use of legal analysis for interpreting literary texts." One question for this passage asks:

The passage suggests that Posner regards legal practitioners as using an approach to interpreting law that

- (A) *eschews discovery of multiple meanings*
- (B) *employs techniques like deconstruction*
- (C) *interprets laws in light of varying community standards*
- (D) *is informed by the positions of literary critics*
- (E) *de-emphasizes the social relevance of the legal tradition*

The correct answer is (A), "eschews discovery of multiple meanings." What the passage explicitly says is that Posner asserts that "legal Interpretation is aimed at discovering a single meaning." The reasoning involved in answering this question is quite straightforward: the passage does not come right out and say that Posner believes that legal practitioners eschew discovery of multiple meanings, but on the other hand it does not take much work to see that "eschew[ing] the discovery of multiple meanings" is the flip side of "to" aim at discovering a single meaning." If you can remember the relevant part of the passage or find it quickly, you will find this question and others like it to be quite easy.

Other questions involve identifying the implicit ideas underlying a particular assertion made in a passage. In such cases, the connection between what the passage says and what the correct answer says is often less direct than in the last example, though the connection may still be somewhat easy to see. For example, after a passage concerning harmful bacteria that attack crops, one question reads:

It can be inferred from the passage that crop rotation can increase yields in part because

(A) moving crop plants around makes them hardier and more resistant to disease

*(B) the number of *Pseudomonas fluorescens* bacteria in the soil usually increases when crops are rotated*

(C) the roots of many crop plants produce compounds that are antagonistic to phytopathogens harmful to other crop plants

(D) the presence of phytopathogenic bacteria is responsible for the majority of plant diseases

(E) phytopathogens typically attack some plant species but find other species to be unsuitable host

The correct answer is (E), "phytopathogens typically attack some plant species but find other species to be unsuitable hosts." The support for this answer is found in the first paragraph, where the author states:

Cultivation of a single crop on a given tract of land leads eventually to decreased yields. One reason for this is that harmful bacterial phytopathogens, organisms parasitic on plant hosts, increase in the soil surrounding plant roots. The problem can be cured by crop rotation, denying the pathogens a suitable host for a period of time.

Note that the passage says that crop rotation denies pathogens a suitable host for a period of time, but it does not provide an explanation as to why that strategy would work. It is left to the reader to fill in the gap by inferring what the relevant explanation is—namely, because crop rotation involves planting different crops in succession, and because pathogens that attack particular plants typically find other plants to be unsuitable hosts. This idea is not actually stated in the passage; it is instead an implicit assumption. In other words, this is a case in which the reader has to supply missing information in order to fully understand what the author says. Some of you may have found that you supplied the missing information so quickly and so automatically that it hardly seemed like you drew an inference at all; as a

result, you might think it odd that the question asks what can be inferred from the passage. But do not be thrown off if filling the relevant gap required little conscious effort for you. First, what was automatic and effortless for you may in fact require conscious effort on the part of other test takers. Second, questions like this one are designed to test your skill at high-level reading, and part of what defines that skill is the ability to supply relevant presuppositions when the author relies on you to do so. In short, even if, in your subjective experience of this question, the inference was so automatic that it seemed that little or no actual reasoning was required, logically speaking, you still had to draw an inference. This is a genuine skill that this type of Reading Comprehension question is designed to test.

Of course, there are questions in which the connection between the correct answer and the part of the passage that supports it is not so close. The following question involves a relatively large inference to get from the passage to the correct answer. A second question associated with the passage on Posner and the law-and-literature movement reads:

According to the passage, Posner argues that legal analysis is not generally useful in interpreting literature because

- (A) use of the law in literature is generally of a quite different nature than use of the law in legal practice*
- (B) law is rarely used to convey important ideas in literature*
- (C) lawyers do not have enough literary training to analyze literature competently*
- (D) legal interpretations of literature tend to focus on legal issues to the exclusion of other important elements*
- (E) legal interpretations are only relevant to contemporary literature*

The correct answer is (A), "use of the law in literature is generally of a quite different nature than use of the law in legal practice."

Here is the part of the passage that supports this answer:

Critiquing the movement's assumption that lawyers can offer special insights into literature that deals with legal matters, Posner points out that writers of literature use the law loosely to convey a particular idea, or as a metaphor for the workings of the society envisioned in their fiction. Legal questions per se, about which a lawyer might instruct readers, are seldom at issue in literature.

According to Posner, therefore, lawyers can be expected to be helpful about specific technical legal questions, but detailed analysis of technical legal questions is rarely at

issue when the law is invoked, as it typically is in literature, to convey an idea or serve as a metaphor. So for Posner the law as it figures in legal practice is very different from the law as it figures in literature.

The correct answer, then, is justified by the text of the passage but is by no means a simple restatement of anything that is actually said there. A certain amount of interpretation is required to arrive at this answer.

Similarly, the following is an example of the more typical case of questions that ask what can be inferred from, or what is suggested by, the passage. The question asks: *It can be inferred from the passage that the author's view of Watteau's works differs most significantly from that of most late-nineteenth-century Watteau admirers in which one of the following ways?*

The correct answer is:

In contrast to most late-nineteenth-century Watteau admirers, the author finds it misleading to see Watteau's work as accurately reflecting social reality

There is no statement of precisely this point anywhere in the passage. There are two points in this answer, and they have to be established separately. The first of these points is that most late-nineteenth-century Watteau admirers saw Watteau's work as accurately reflecting social reality. The clearest statement of this position comes in the first paragraph, in which we are told that nineteenth-century writers accepted as genuine the image Watteau had presented of his age (the early eighteenth century). Underscoring this point, the first paragraph ends with the statement that by 1884, the bicentenary of Watteau's birth; it was standard practice for biographers to refer to him as "the personification of the witty and amiable eighteenth century."

The second point contained in the correct answer is that the author does not see Watteau's work as accurately reflecting social reality. Watteau's work is characterized as lyrical and charming, and the century that it portrays as witty and amiable. But the author tells us in the second paragraph that the eighteenth century's first decades, the period of Watteau's artistic activity, were "fairly calamitous ones." The author goes on to say that the year of Watteau's first Paris successes was marked by military defeat and a disastrous famine. For this question, then, justifying the correct answer requires you to identify as relevant, and then put together, various pieces of information that in the passage are interspersed among other pieces of information that have no bearing on the specific question asked.

One final comment on the general category of question we have been discussing in this section. We have been making a distinction between recognizing a paraphrase of something said in the passage and answering questions that require some interpretation or inference. But it may have occurred to some of you that this line can get quite blurry, especially if the paraphrase looks quite different from the original, or the inference seems fairly obvious. For example, think back to the question about crop rotation we discussed earlier. This question asks what can be inferred from the passage, and the correct answer is indeed an inference inasmuch as it is not stated explicitly, but is rather left implicit in the relevant part of the passage. But on the other hand, the implication is not really very far from the surface of the passage; as a result, identifying it may seem unexpectedly easy to some people. As this example shows, it can be risky to judge answer choices by whether they are easier (or harder) than you expect the correct answer to be. The important thing to remember is that, whatever form the relationship between the passage and the correct answer takes, the correct answer is always the only answer choice that is truly supported by the passage. The incorrect answer choices might appear to be right at first glance, but they will always be found on closer inspection to have something about them that is wrong. Perhaps they are not really supported by the passage, or perhaps they even contradict the passage. As with all Reading Comprehension questions, you should judge the answer choices in questions about what the passage says or implies only by whether or not they are supported by the passage.

Questions that expect an answer based on the context or hidden meaning:

Another skill a good reader brings to a text is the ability to interpret words and phrases not just as a dictionary would define them, but in a more specific sense identifiable from the way in which the author is using them in the particular text. In a given text, words and phrases do not appear in isolation but are embedded in the context of a narrative, an argument, an explanation, and so on. What this wider context does, among other things, is clarify ambiguous expressions, narrow the meaning of vague expressions, or supply a definition for idiosyncratic uses of an expression.

Accordingly, the Reading Comprehension section typically contains questions that test the reading skill of ascertaining the contextually appropriate meanings of words

and phrases. In some cases, this task is not very involved. For example, in a passage concerned with offshore oil production, the second paragraph ends by saying:
researchers have discovered that because the swirl of its impeller separates gas out from the oil that normally accompanies it, significant reductions in head can occur as it [a centrifugal pump} operates.

One of the questions following this passage reads:

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Which one of the following phrases, if substituted for the word "head" in line 47, would *LEAST* change the meaning of the sentence?

- (A) *the flow of the crude inside the pump*
- (B) *the volume of oil inside the pump*
- (C) *the volume of gas inside the pump*
- (D) *the speed of the impeller moving the crude*
- (E) *the pressure inside of the pump*

The word "head" is used here in a specialized sense not accessible to the ordinary reader. But the attentive reader of the passage at issue would have noticed that the previous paragraph ended with this sentence:

This surge in gas content causes loss of "head," or pressure inside a pump, with the result that a pump can no longer impart enough energy to transport the crude mixture through the pipeline and to the shore.

In other words, the precise sense in which the word "head" is used in this passage in connection with the operation of pumps has been explicitly clarified. Accordingly, the answer to the question that deals with the meaning of the word "head" here is the pressure inside of the pump," or (E).

There are cases where contextual clarification is not as clear cut. Take as an example the opening sentence of the passage about the French painter Watteau:

Late-nineteenth-century books about the French artist Watteau (1684 -1721) betray a curious blind spot: more than any single artist before or since, Watteau provided his age with an influential image of itself and nineteenth-century writers accepted this image as genuine.

One of the questions about this passage reads as follows:

The phrase "curious blind spot" (lines2-3 can best be interpreted as referring to which one of the following?

- (A) *some biographers' persistent inability to appreciate what the author considers a particularly admirable quality*
- (B) *certain writers' surprising lack of awareness of what the author considers an obvious discrepancy*
- (C) *some writers' willful refusal to evaluate properly what the author considers a valuable source of information about the past*
- (D) *an inexplicable tendency on the part of some writers to undervalue an artist whom the author considers extremely influential*

(E) a marked bias in favor of a certain painter and a concomitant prejudice against contemporaries the author considers equally talented

The correct answer turns out to be (B), "certain writers' surprising lack of awareness of what the author considers an obvious discrepancy" You can see that the sentence in which the phrase "curious blind spot" actually appears does not provide nearly enough information to establish the correctness of this answer. No obvious discrepancy is revealed in that sentence, and also no indication that anyone was unaware of this discrepancy. All that can be inferred from the opening sentence of the passage is that the blind spot has to do with nineteenth-century writers accepting as genuine the image Watteau had provided of his age. It is not until we find, at the end of the first paragraph, a nineteenth-century description of Watteau as "the personification of the witty and amiable eighteenth century" that we can tell that the image that Watteau has provided was overwhelmingly positive. In the second paragraph we are told that "The eighteenth century's first decades, the period of [Watteau's] artistic creativity, were fairly calamitous ones." So here the "obvious discrepancy" is finally revealed. Given its obviousness, the fact that late-nineteenth-century writers were evidently not aware of it can reasonably be seen as surprising, or, curious." Notice, however, that a phrase that is introduced in the first sentence of the passage cannot be given the fully specific sense intended for it by the author until the end of the second paragraph has been reached.

A skilled reader has to be able to cope with the fact that writers, even good writers, do not make explicit why they say certain things in certain places. The reader has to be able to extract the function that certain expressions, phrases, sentences, or even paragraphs, have in the context of a larger piece of writing. Sometimes the writer does use conventional cues to guide the reader in how to take what is being said. Such cues, though conventional, can be quite subtle. A good reader picks up on those cues and uses them in interpreting the piece of text to which they are relevant.

An example of a textual connection not made explicit at all occurs in the following lengthy excerpt from a passage about women medical practitioners in the Middle Ages. First, a little background to place the excerpt in context: it begins with the phrase, "This common practice," which refers back to a practice discussed earlier in the same paragraph. According to the author, the typical practice among historians

studying the Middle Ages is to take the term "woman medical practitioner," whenever it appears in medieval records, to mean "midwife."

The relevant excerpt, then, reads:

This common practice obscures the fact that, although women were not represented on all levels of medicine equally, they were represented in a variety of specialties throughout the broad medical community. A reliable study by Wickersheimer and Jacquart documents that, of 7,647 medical practitioners in France during the twelfth through fifteenth centuries, 121 were women; of these, only 44 were identified as midwives, while the rest practiced as physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, barbers, and other healers.

There is no explicit statement in this passage of why the author chooses to cite the study by Wickersheimer and Jacquart. The sentence about that study simply follows the one preceding it. The reader is not specifically told how to connect the information in that sentence with information presented either earlier or later. For a skilled reader though, the connection is obvious: the study presents scholarly, documented support for a claim that is made in the preceding sentence, namely that women were represented in a variety of specialties throughout the broad medical community.

So for a question that asks:

The author refers to the study by Wickersheimer and Jacquart in order to

(A) demonstrate that numerous medical specialties were recognized in Western Europe during the

Middle Ages

(B) demonstrate that women are often underrepresented in studies of medieval medical practitioners

(C) prove that midwives were officially recognized as members of the medical community during the Middle Ages

(D) prove that midwives were only a part of a larger community of women medical practitioners during the

Middle Ages

(E) prove that the existence of the midwives can be documented in Western Europe as early as the twelfth century

the correct answer is (D),

prove that midwives were only a part of a larger community of women medical practitioners during the Middle Ages

This is so even though the author has not said anything like "As proof of this, the study by Wickersheimer and Jacquart may be cited." It is probably safe to say that a reader who does not make this connection on his or her own did not comprehend this part of the passage. For such a reader, the author's reference to the study by Wickersheimer and Jacquart will probably appear to come of out nowhere.

Now consider an example of a question that requires you to understand the way an author uses subtle cues to indicate the function of a piece of text. The passage on which the question is based reads, in part:

Critics have long been puzzled by the inner contradictions of major characters in John Webster's tragedies. ... The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle implied that such contradictions are virtually essential to the tragic personality, and yet critics keep coming back to this element of inconsistency as though it were an eccentric feature of Webster's own tragic vision.

This question asks:

The author's allusion to Aristotle's view of tragedy in lines 11-13 serves which one of the following functions in the passage?

(A) It introduces a commonly held view of Webster's tragedies that the author plans to defend.

(B) It supports the author's suggestion that Webster's conception of tragedy is not idiosyncratic.

(C) It provides an example of an approach to Webster's tragedies that the author criticizes.

(D) It establishes the similarity between classical and modern approaches to tragedy.

(E) It supports the author's assertion that Elizabethan tragedy cannot be fully understood without the help of recent scholarship

The correct answer is (B), "It supports the author's suggestion that Webster's conception of tragedy is not idiosyncratic." The author's allusion to Aristotle's view of tragedy introduces the idea that a vision of tragedy similar to Webster's can be traced back to the ancient Greeks. So Webster's view cannot be regarded as idiosyncratic unless the critics are essentially prepared to dismiss Aristotle's view as unimportant. But what the author does is let Aristotle's view stand as authoritative by using it to

portray the critics as wrongheaded. What the author says is that the critics view the element of inconsistency in 'Webster's characters If as though it were" eccentric. By using the phrase "as though it were" the author suggests that the critics are wrong. The author further says that the critics "keep coming back" to this element, thereby signaling a certain impatience with the stubbornness with which the critics hold on to their mistaken view. And the author says " and yet", thereby signaling that the critics hold on to their mistaken view in the face of dear evidence to the contrary, provided by Aristotle.

To understand how this type of question works, note that the author provides a variety of cues to indicate to the reader that the allusion to Aristotle is introduced to support the position, endorsed by the author, that Webster's conception of tragedy is not idiosyncratic. The cues are recognizable, but they are relatively subtle. There is no explicit statement of the author's position or of how the allusion to Aristotle bears on it.

In approaching questions about what the author's purpose is in using a certain word, phrase, or sentence, remember that, unless that word, phrase, or sentence left you puzzled, you probably already understood the author's purpose as you made your way through the passage. The process involved here is essential and often subtle, but good readers typically exercise this skill automatically and unconsciously. One conclusion to be drawn from this fact is that you should not look for far-fetched interpretations of what the author's purpose was. Most probably the purpose that you automatically supplied in the process of reading is the correct one. If you were not able to appreciate immediately what the purpose of using a particular word, phrase, or sentence was, reread the immediate context. In a well-written text, the author generally supplies all the cues you need to understand the purpose of any part of the text right around that text. An author is not likely to hide hints as to the purpose of a particular choice of word two or three paragraphs away. A close reading of the immediate context will usually reveal what the author's purpose was.

Questions that require the recognition of analogous pattern:

One way for a reader to demonstrate an understanding of a fact pattern that is presented in a text (or of the way someone has made a case for a position) is by recognizing another fact pattern (or argument) as structurally similar. Questions that test this ability are typically included in the Reading Comprehension section.

Questions of this kind will direct you to something specific in the text and ask you to find something similar to it among the answer choices. The relevant part of the passage can be characterized insightfully in general terms, and this characterization has to fit the correct answer as well. What sorts of general terms? Typically, things of the following sort:

- One thing is a cause of another.
- One thing is a subset of another.
- One thing is mistaken for another.
- Some type of behavior is irresponsible.
- Something falls short of a particular standard.
- An action has consequences that are the opposite of those intended.

These examples are given only to illustrate roughly the kind of similarity that you will typically be looking for. They are not meant to suggest that you should first try to restate what is going on in the passage in such terms. What is crucial is a clear understanding of the relevant part of the passage. You don't need an explicit formulation; in fact, attempting to come up with such an explicit formulation may be a waste of your time.

To see what is involved here, let us consider a very simple case first. The question asks,

Which one of the following is most closely analogous to the error the author believes historians make when they equate the term "woman medical practitioner" with "midwife"?

- (A) equating pear with apple
- (B) equating science with biology
- (C) equating supervisor with subordinate
- (D) equating member with nonmember
- (E) equating instructor with trainee

As we saw earlier when we considered another question from this set, the author asserts that historians do in fact equate the term "woman medical practitioner," whenever they encounter it in medieval records, with "midwife." But the wording of the question further alerts us to the fact that historians who equate the two terms are committing a particular kind of error. The author's account of this error is presented in the following words: "This common practice obscures the fact that, although

women were not represented on all levels of medicine equally, they were represented in a variety of specialties throughout the broad medical community." The author elaborates on this by saying that in a study of medical practitioners that included 121 women, only 44 of those women were midwives, whereas the rest practiced as physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, barbers, and other healers. So the error, stated in general terms, lies in equating a category with one of its subcategories. What you are asked to do is select the answer choice that presents the same error.

The correct answer is (B), "equating science with biology." Someone who equates science with biology would be ignoring the fact that the category of science includes many subcategories in addition to biology. Such a person would commit an error analogous to the one that the author believes historians make.

Notice that not everything about (B) is closely analogous to the historians' equating of woman medical practitioners with midwives. For example, the terms equated in (B) refer to academic subjects and not to people. On the other hand, the terms equated in (C) and (E) do refer to people, just as do those equated by the historians. So why does the similarity in terms of people being referred to not matter? Because it is no part of what makes the historians' practice an error that they happen to be talking about people.

When you focus on finding errors analogous to the historians' error, you find that none of answer choices (A), (C), (D), and (E) make such an error. They all do make an error, and it happens to be the same kind of error in each case. They all equate terms, neither of which includes the other, whereas the historians equate terms, one of which---but only one of which---includes the other. What the historians get wrong is that they fail to see that not all woman medical practitioners were midwives, even though all midwives were medical practitioners.

By contrast, what (A), for example, gets wrong in equating pears with apples is that it lumps together two categories, neither of which includes the other even partially.

Now let's look at a more complex example. In a passage concerned with certain interactions between the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Oneida tribe of Wisconsin, we are told that the Oneida were offered a one-time lump-sum payment of \$60,000 in lieu of the \$0.52 annuity guaranteed in perpetuity to each member of the tribe under the Canandaigua Treaty. We are then further informed that

The offer of a lump-sum payment was unanimously opposed by the Oneida delegates, who saw that changing the terms of a treaty might jeopardize the many pending land claims based upon the treaty.

There is a question that is based on this rejection of the lump-sum offer and which reads as follows:

Which one of the following situations most closely parallels that of the Oneida delegates in refusing to accept a lump-sum payment of \$60,000?

(A) A university offers a student a four-year scholarship with the stipulation that the student not accept any outside employment; the student refuses the offer and attends a different school because the amount of the scholarship would not have covered living expenses.

(B) A company seeking to reduce its payroll obligations offers an employee a large bonus if he will accept early retirement; the employee refuses because he does not want to compromise an outstanding worker's compensation suit.

(C) Parents of a teenager offer to pay her at the end of the month for performing weekly chores rather than paying her on a weekly basis; the teenager refuses because she has a number of financial obligations that she must meet early in the month.

(D) A car dealer offers a customer a \$500 cash payment for buying a new car: the customer refuses because she does not want to pay taxes on the amount, and requests instead that her monthly payments be reduced by a proportionate amount.

(E) A landlord offers a tenant several months rent-free in exchange for the tenant's agreeing not to demand that her apartment be painted every two years, as is required by the lease; the tenant refuses because she would have spent her own time painting the apartment.

What precisely is the situation of the Oneida delegates in refusing the lump-sum payment? It is an action (refusing the offer) that is motivated by a specific reason, namely concern that not taking that action might have undesirable legal ramifications. This is a rather broad characterization of the situation in which the Oneida delegates find themselves, but it turns out to be a description that applies equally well to the correct answer, and only to the correct answer. The correct answer is (B), if a company seeking to reduce its payroll obligations offers an employee a large bonus if he will accept early retirement; the employee refuses because he does

not want to compromise an outstanding worker's compensation suit." What is parallel is the reason why an otherwise generous-seeming offer is refused.

Notice that there are some clear differences between the situation of the Oneida delegates and that of the employee. For example, in one case it is delegates refusing on behalf of a large group that would be affected by that decision, and in the other case a single individual refuses on his own behalf alone. But this difference plays no role in selecting the correct answer, even though it

might be seen as a significant difference between the two situations. First, the fact that this important decision affecting the Oneida people as a whole was made by Oneida delegates, although mentioned in the passage, is not given any prominence anywhere in the passage.

What the passage does focus on, in discussing the refusal of the lump-sum offer, is the reasons the delegates had for their refusal. So as the passage presents the situation, the reasons for the refusal are the central feature of the situation, and for another situation to be parallel, it would have to be parallel in this respect. Only the correct answer meets this requirement. Moreover, notice that all of the answer choices are like the correct answer in focusing on an individual, which means that it is not the case that any of the incorrect answers are more parallel to the passage even in this regard.

In fact, any scenario that is analogous or parallel to another one has to be different in some ways. Otherwise it would be identical to the first scenario, and not just analogous to it. So it is important to keep in mind that the correct answer to this type of question will be the one that is most closely parallel or most analogous or most similar to something discussed in the passage, even though it will necessarily be dissimilar in many respects.

Questions about the author's attitude and tone:

Authors write things for a variety of reasons. They may just write to report, simply putting down what they take to be the facts, giving no indication of their own feelings, either positive or negative, about those facts. Or they may set down what someone else has reported as fact, without giving any indication of how that person feels about them or how they themselves feel about them. But often authors write with other purposes in mind. For example, they may write to persuade the reader of the merits of some position, in which case they typically write in such a way that the reader can tell that they have positive feelings with respect to that position. By

contrast, they may write to warn the reader that a view has no merit, in which case they often make evaluative comments that allow the reader to infer what their attitude toward the matter is. Thus, one feature of a text that careful readers pay attention to is whether the author, by taking a certain tone, or by certain word choices, betrays any attitude other than bland neutrality toward the material he or she is presenting. Also of interest is whether any of the people mentioned by the author in the passage are presented as having any particular attitude toward anything that figures in the passage. These things are potentially important in evaluating what has been read. For example, if an author's attitude is one of boundless enthusiasm, a careful reader might take what that author says with a grain of salt.

In the Reading Comprehension section, you will encounter questions that ask directly about what the author's attitude is, or the attitude of people that the author discusses. Another kind of question may ask you to consider words or phrases that appear in the passage and to identify those that indicate the attitude of the author, or of people mentioned in the passage, toward some specific thing that is discussed in the passage.

When you are dealing with a question that asks directly about attitude, you should assess the passage with an eye to whether it contains indicators of tone or evaluative terms. For example, sometimes an initially positive tone is tempered later by an expression of reservations; or an initially rather dismissive tone might be moderated later by a grudging admission of something worthwhile. The description of the author's attitude overall will reflect this and you should choose among the answer choices accordingly. An example will illustrate this point. The question reads:

The attitude of the author of the passage toward Breen and Innes's study can best be described as one of

- (A) *condescending dismissal*
- (B) *wholehearted acceptance*
- (C) *contentious challenge*
- (D) *qualified approval*
- (E) *sincere puzzlement*

The correct answer is (D), "qualified approval." The first reference to Breen and Innes occurs early in the passage, in the sentence

In Myne Owne Ground, T. H. Breen and Stephen Innes contribute significantly to a recent, welcome shift from a white-centered to a black-centered inquiry into the role of African Americans in the American colonial period.

The word "welcome" indicates approval, and since Breen and Innes are said to have significantly contributed to something that is welcome, the approval extends to them and their study. But this is not the only sign of the author's attitude. Much later in the passage, the author says that Breen and Innes "underemphasize much evidence that customary law, only gradually embodied in statutory law, was closing in on free African Americans well before the 1670's...". The verb "underemphasize" expresses a criticism of Breen and Innes' work, and so the approval indicated by "welcome" can no longer be regarded as unqualified. The correct answer, "qualified approval," does justice to both expressions of the author's attitude.

Questions about the significance of additional information:

Good readers read critically. That is to say, as they read the particular case an author makes for taking a certain position; they do not just passively take in what is on the page. Rather, they evaluate the plausibility, coherence, and strength of the claims and arguments advanced by the author. As they go along, they evaluate the strength of the author's case. They may think of objections to the way an author supports a position. Alternatively, they may think of things that the author hasn't mentioned that would have strengthened the author's case. Or they may think of questions to which they don't know the answer but that would be relevant questions to raise.

The test does not require you to think up considerations that would either strengthen or undercut the case an author has made for a position, but it includes questions that require you to recognize such considerations. You will be asked to determine whether new information strengthens or weakens a particular argument made in the passage. Often, the question will use the words **strengthen** or **weaken** themselves. But questions might also use analogous expressions such as to support, bolster, or reinforce a given claim or position; or to undermine, challenge, or call into question a given claim or position.

The following is an example of how a question might be phrased that requires you to recognize a difficulty with an explanation that has been proposed:

Which one of the following, if true; would most seriously undermine the explanation proposed by the author in the third paragraph?

(A) A number of songbird species related to the canary have a shorter life span than the canary and do not experience neurogenesis.

(B) The brain size of several types of airborne birds with life spans similar to those of canaries has been shown to vary according to a two-year cycle of neurogenesis.

(C) Several species of airborne birds similar to canaries in size are known to have brains that are substantially heavier than the canary's brain.

(D) Individual canaries that have larger-than-average repertoires of songs tend to have better developed muscles for flying.

(E) Individual canaries with smaller and lighter brains than the average tend to retain a smaller-than-average repertoire of songs

Notice that the proviso "if true" means that you are told to treat each answer choice as if it is true, at least for the purposes of this question. You do not have to concern yourself with whether it is actually true. The explanation in the third paragraph to which the question refers is an explanation of a phenomenon called neurogenesis (the growth of new neurons) that has been observed in canaries:

A possible explanation for this continual replacement of nerve cells may have to do with the canary's relatively long life span and the requirements of flight. Its brain would have to be substantially larger and heavier than might be feasible for flying if it had to carry all the brain cells needed to process and retain all the information gathered over a lifetime.

In other words, neurogenesis is held to be explained by the hypothesized need to keep the canaries' brains small and light so that the birds can fly. This explanation would have to be abandoned, or at least greatly modified, if the correct answer, (C), were true: "Several species of airborne birds similar to canaries in size are known to have brains that are substantially heavier than the canary's brain." In other words, assuming that this answer choice is true, it seems unlikely that canaries would have any difficulty flying even if their brains were a good bit heavier than they are. In that case, the requirements of flight would not appear to be what dictates the small brain size in canaries and thus could not be invoked to explain neurogenesis, the mechanism by which canary brains are kept small.

In this example, the explanation depended on a certain supposition's being true. The additional information suggests that this supposition might well not be true. In other questions that ask about what would weaken or strengthen something in the passage, the additional information given in the correct answer might be related to the

passage in other ways. For example, the additional information might suggest that something is true that would have been predicted given what the passage says, thereby strengthening the case made in the passage. Or it might tell you that something that would have been predicted given what the passage says doesn't, or isn't likely to, happen, in which case the argument advanced in the passage would be weakened. Or it might suggest that a generalization that the passage relied on does not hold up in the particular case under consideration. Or it might suggest that a claim made in the passage is unlikely to be true.

What you have to keep in mind is that what you're looking for is information that has an impact on the plausibility of the position, explanation, claim, evidence, and so on that the question specifically asks you about. It is not enough that a piece of information is about something that the passage is concerned with or even about the particular thing that the question is about.

The correct answer has to have a real effect on the strength of the position being asked about.

On the other hand, the correct answer does not have to conclusively establish or definitively refute the position being asked about. Given that these questions ask about what would strengthen or weaken something said in the passage, it is enough for the correct answer to increase (for strengthen questions) or decrease (for weaken questions) the likelihood that the argument or position in question is right.

Reading Comprehension Passages for Practice (All Questions are designed by Brijesh Pandey)

Passage 1

Language is an artificial means of establishing unanimity and transferring thought from one mind to another. Every symbol or phrase, like every gesture, throws the observer into an attitude to which a certain idea corresponded in the speaker; to fall exactly into the speaker's attitude is exactly to understand. Every impediment to contagion and imitation in expression is an impediment to comprehension. For this reason language, like all art, becomes pale with years; words and figures of speech lose their contagious and suggestive power; the feeling they once expressed can no longer be restored by their repetition. Even the most inspired verse, which boasts not without a relative justification to be immortal, becomes in the course of ages a scarcely legible hieroglyphic; the language it was written in dies, a learned education and an imaginative

effort are requisite to catch even a vestige of its original force. Nothing is so irrevocable as mind.

Unsure the ebb and flood of thought,

The moon comes back, the spirit not.

There is, however, a wholly different and far more positive method of reading the mind, or what in a metaphorical sense is called by that name. This method is to read character. Any object with which we are familiar teaches us to divine its habits; slight indications, which we should be at a loss to enumerate separately, betray what changes are going on and what promptings are simmering in the organism. Hence the expression of a face or figure; hence the traces of habit and passion visible in a man and that indescribable something about him which inspires confidence or mistrust. The gift of reading character is partly instinctive, partly a result of experience; it may amount to foresight and is directed not upon consciousness but upon past or eventual action. Habits and passions, however, have metaphorical psychic names, names indicating dispositions rather than particular acts (a disposition being mythically represented as a sort of wakeful and haunting genius waiting to whisper suggestions in a man's ear). We may accordingly delude ourselves into imagining that a pose or a manner which really indicates habit indicates feeling instead. In truth the feeling involved, if conceived at all, is conceived most vaguely, and is only a sort of reverberation or penumbra surrounding the pictured activities.

1. Which of the following is not stated or implied in the passage?
 - a. The gift of reading character is partly based on experience.
 - b. Language becomes pale with years
 - c. Language is an artificial means of transferring thoughts
 - d. The original force of a language, once it dies, cannot be deciphered.

Answer Key: d

Solution: The author in the last sentence of the first paragraph has clearly stated the possibility of deciphering the original force of language even after it has died. Option a, b and c are clearly stated in the passage.

2. What does the underlined phrase ‘scarcely legible hieroglyphic’ mean?
- a. The Egyptian writings on the walls of the pyramids
 - b. A complicated writing style
 - c. A language that cannot be read
 - d. A language that has been deliberately encrypted.

Answer Key: c

Solution: A hieroglyphic may not always refer to Egyptian writing. It could also mean something that is difficult to understand. A goes out. There is no hint of deliberate encryption, hence that too goes out. We are not talking about style but of understanding of the language. C is the best choice

3. What is the tone of the author?
- a. Critical
 - b. Analytical
 - c. Prophetic
 - d. Scholarly

Answer Key: b

Solution: Since the author is not criticising, the tone cannot be critical; besides, there is not a word in the passage that reflects criticism. The author is explaining or analysing the relevance of language over a period of time. Prophetic means predictive, but this is out of context and hence goes out. We can mark scholarly only when the author is dealing with a subject or topic that is academic in character. The author’s philosophical inclination towards a very general concept such as language shows that he is not dissecting a scholarly subject.

4. The author is least likely to believe in which of the following?
- a. An art work that remains immortal.
 - b. The possibility of evaluating peoples character instinctively
 - c. The impossibility of developing a language that outlasts all ages and all times.
 - d. All of the above

Answer Key: a

Solution: The writer has nowhere mentioned the possibility of developing a language. He is likely to believe in statement c. Statement b is explicitly stated in the passage. The author in the first paragraph says that art becomes pale with the passage of time.

5. In the context of the passage, which of the following best replaces the underlined word 'irrevocable'?
- a. Intelligible
 - b. Immutable
 - c. Immaculate
 - d. Irretrievable

Answer Key: d

Solution: Irrevocable means something that cannot be recovered or changed. Intelligible means something that can be understood. Immutable means something that cannot be destroyed. Immaculate means pure and perfect. Irretrievable is a synonym of irrevocable.

Passage 2

In Emile Durkheim's view, educational systems reflect underlying changes in society because the systems are a construct built by society, which naturally seeks to reproduce its collectively held values, beliefs, norms, and conditions through its

institutions. Thus, as time unfolds, educational systems come to contain the imprint of past stages in the development of society, as each epoch leaves its imprint on the system. By uncovering these imprints and analyzing them, the development of a society can be reconstructed from the educational system.

The reflection of such changes, however, would not be possible if educational systems were not mirrors of society, albeit on a miniature scale. Changes in society manifest themselves in the educational system because it is constructed by society's members to, in Durkheim's words, "express their needs." In short, society constructs its educational system to promote and reproduce its ideal of what a human should be, especially of what a human being should be as a part of society. In this way, the educational system also becomes a "constraint," a term that Durkheim uses in the sense of "cultural determination and the influence of socialization." For Durkheim, education becomes a constraint, Steven Lukes explains, "when certain socially given ideas and values are internalized by individuals who thereby acquire certain beliefs, wants and feelings and act in certain ways." Lukes quotes Durkheim as saying that education is thus "a continuous effort to impose on the child ways of seeing, feeling and acting at which he would not have arrived spontaneously."

1. According to the passage, which of the following is true about educational system and its relationship to society?
 - a. Educational system reflects the society's beliefs, values and norms and its economic conditions.
 - b. Educational system expresses the needs of society
 - c. Educational system smothers the spontaneity of a child
 - d. All of the above

Answer Key: b

Solution: The last statement says, "Education is a continuous effort to impose on the child ways of seeing, feeling and acting at which he would not have arrived spontaneously". It doesn't mean it is smothering or suffocating the spontaneity of children. The line says 'arriving at something spontaneously', and not 'spontaneity' as a trait or a characteristic. Statement A goes out because 'economic conditions' are nowhere stated in the passage. Since two options go out, D cannot be the answer. B is the correct choice

2. About educational system, which of the following can be inferred from the above passage?

- a. Emile Durkheim played a very important role in moulding the values and beliefs of society's educational system in his time.
- b. The values and the beliefs of the past epochs are mirrored in the educational system of all ages.
- c. Society imposes on the child ways of seeing, feeling and acting at which he would not have arrived spontaneously.
- d. None of the above

Answer Key: C

Solution: The passage discusses the impact of society's values and beliefs on the educational system of its time. Emile Durkheim is the authority the author has used in the passage while discussing society's impact on its educational system. A goes out. The values and beliefs of one epoch are reflected in the educational system of that epoch and not all epochs. B goes out. Since society influences educational system, and since educational system influences a child's ways of seeing, feeling and acting, we can definitely infer statement C.

3. While discussing the relationship between society and its impact on its educational system, which of the following is the assumption of the author of the passage?
- a. All great societies' educational system reflect the values and the beliefs of their time
 - b. The educational system of a particular society does not influence the values and beliefs of that society.
 - c. It is possible for a child to arrive at the fountain of knowledge spontaneously and without any assistance
 - d. Only educational systems reflect the values, beliefs, norms and conditions of society.

Answer Key: b

Solution: The passage and the question both are concerned with the influence that society has on its educational system. According the author, it is society that influences educational system and not vice versa. The author's statement can be true only when he assumes that the reverse impact is not possible. So long as the author assumes option b his argument is valid. Option a is out of scope because it speaks of 'great societies', which has not been discussed in the passage. Option C is correct but not concerned with the question; the question is on: the

relationship between society and its impact on its educational system. Statement D may not always be the assumption for the author's argument to stand. There could many other things that reflect the values and beliefs of society and educational system could be one of them. The author's argument would still be valid.

4. In the context of the passage, which of the following words would replace the word 'epoch' as underlined in the above passage?
- Era
 - Ages
 - Aeons
 - Times

Answer Key: a

Solution: 'epoch' is singular. All the options except 'a' are plural. They grammatically replace the underlined word.

5. Which of the following has the author used while discussing the central theme of the passage?
- An analogy
 - An authority
 - An underlying principle
 - A statistical tool

Answer Key: b

Solution: The author has used none of the above except option b. He continuously quotes Durkheim to support his central thesis.

Passage 3

Green politics is a political ideology that aims to create an ecologically sustainable society rooted in environmentalism, social justice, and grassroots democracy. It began taking shape in the western world in the 1970s; since then Green parties have developed and established themselves in many countries across the globe, and have achieved some electoral success.

The political term *Green*, a translation of the German *Grün*, was coined by die Grünen, a Green party formed in the late 1970s. The term *political ecology* is sometimes used in Europe and in academic circles, but in the latter has come to represent an interdisciplinary field of study.

Supporters of Green politics, called Greens (with a capital 'G'), share many ideas with the ecology, conservation, environmentalism, feminism, and peace movements. In addition to democracy and ecological issues, green politics is concerned with civil liberties, social justice, nonviolence, sometimes variants of localism and tends to support social progressivism. The party's platform is largely considered left in the political spectrum.

The Green ideology has connections with various other ecocentric political ideologies; including ecosocialism, ecoanarchism, and ecofeminism, but to what extent these can be seen as forms of Green politics is a matter of debate.

As the left-wing 'Green' (i.e. capital 'G') political philosophy developed, there also came into separate existence unrelated and polar opposite movements on the right that include ecological components such as green conservatism, eco-capitalism and even ecofascism.

Adherents to green politics tend to consider it to be part of a 'higher' worldview and not simply a political ideology. Green politics draws its ethical stance from a variety of sources, from the values of indigenous peoples, to the ethics of Gandhi, Spinoza and Uexküll. These people influenced green thought in their advocacy of long-term "seventh generation" foresight, and on the personal responsibility of every individual to make moral choices.

Of course, unease about adverse consequences of human actions on nature predates the modern concept of "environmentalism". Social commentators as far apart as ancient Rome and China complained of air, water and noise pollution.

The philosophical roots of environmentalism can be traced back to enlightenment thinkers such as Rousseau in France and, later, the author and naturalist Thoreau in America. Organised environmentalism began in late 19th Century Europe and the United States as a reaction to the Industrial Revolution with its emphasis on unbridled economic expansion.

"Green politics" first began as conservation and preservation movements, such as the Sierra Club, founded in San Francisco in 1892.

Left-green platforms of the form that make up the green parties today draw terminology from the science of ecology, and policy from environmentalism, ecology, feminism, pacifism, anarchism, libertarian socialism, social democracy, eco-socialism, and social ecology. In the 1970s, as these movements grew in influence, green politics arose as a new philosophy which synthesized their goals. The Green

Party political movement is not to be confused with the unrelated fact that in some far-right and fascist parties, nationalism has on occasion been tied into a sort of green politics which promotes environmentalism as a form of pride in the "motherland" according a minority of authors.

1. Which of the following about Green Politics can be inferred from the passage?
 - A. The ideology of Green Politics is not likely to be in tune with the ideology of the members of the right wing political parties.
 - B. Ecofeminism is just a political ideology.
 - C. Green politics traces its origin to the middle ages.
 - D. Green politics draws its ethical stance from Gandhi and Spinoza.

Answer Key: A

Solution: D goes out because it is directly stated in the passage. Inferences are to be drawn from a given premise or premises. There is no fact in the passage that implies C; it too goes out. B goes out because the question is about Green Politics and not Ecofeminism. A is best choice because Green Politics' platform is largely considered left in the political spectrum.

2. Which of the following statements is/are true according to the passage?
 - I. Green politics supports social progressivism
 - II. Adherents of Green politics combine the principles of capitalism and feminism
 - III. Green party political movement is directly related to nationalism
 - A. Both I and II
 - B. Only I
 - C. All of the above
 - D. Only I and III

Answer Key: B

Solution: Statement I is stated in the passage. The second last sentence of the third paragraph states this. The last paragraph of the passage refutes the third statement. Statement II is nowhere stated in the passage. B is the right choice.

3. What does the author mean by the statement: "The Green Party's platform is largely considered left in the political spectrum"?
 - A. The Green party is very conservative and adopts reactionary measures.
 - B. The Green party is not very much admired by the Capitalists and Industrialists

- C. The Green parties usually advocate liberal radical measures to achieve equality and well-being.
- D. The Green parties sit on the left hand side of the speaker of the Senate.

Answer Key: C

Solution: Left and Right are often used in Politics and refer to Political Ideology. The Left are the people and groups who advocate liberal, often radical measures to effect change in the established order, especially in politics, usually to achieve the equality, freedom, and well-being of the common citizens of a state. The Right on the other hand are the people and groups who advocate the adoption of conservative or reactionary measures, especially in government and politics. Option C is the right answer. The others are neither stated nor implied.

4. The author is most likely to agree with which of the following.
- A. Green politics focuses on unbridled economic expansion
 - B. Ecofeminism is a form of Green politics
 - C. Green politics incorporates the philosophy of environmentalism
 - D. The first Green party was formed in Germany

Answer Key: C

Solution: Environmentalism, which was a reaction to Industrial Revolution, has influenced Green Politics. A is, then, an impossibility. The author is definitely not certain about whether ecofeminism is a form of Green Politics or not; he says, 'to what extent it can be considered as a form of Green politics is a matter of debate'. B can be ruled out. C is stated in the first two lines of the last paragraph. There is no information in the passage about the first green party. The passage provides information about the origin of the term and about the origin of Green Politics.

5. Which of the following best describes tone of the passage?
- A. Critical and biased
 - B. Objective and explanatory
 - C. Adulatory but cautious
 - D. Enthusiastic but sceptical

Answer Key: B

Solution: The author in the passage has nowhere criticised Green Politics or the Ideology of Green Politics. A can be ruled out. There is neither caution nor

scepticism in the passage. The author is plainly describing and explaining Green politics, its origin and the key philosophical elements. Option B is the best choice.

Passage 4

MOST, who have written on the emotions and on the manner of human life, seem to have dealt not with natural things which follow the universal laws of nature, but with things which are outside the sphere of nature: they seem to have conceived man in nature as a kingdom within a kingdom. For they believe that man disturbs rather than follows the order of nature, and that he has absolute power over his actions, and is not determined by anything else than himself. They then attribute the cause of human weakness and inconstancy not to the universal power of nature, but to some defect or other in human nature, wherefore they deplore, ridicule, despise, or, what is most common of all, abuse it: and he that can carp in the most eloquent or acute manner at the weakness of the human mind is held by his fellows as almost divine.

Yet excellent men have not been wanting (to whose labour and industry I feel myself much indebted) who have written excellently in great quantity on the right manner of life, and left to men counsels full of wisdom: yet no one has yet determined, as far as I know, the nature and force of the emotions and what the mind can do in opposition to them for their constraint. I know that the most illustrious Descartes, although he also believed that the human mind had absolute power over its actions, endeavoured to explain the human emotions through their first causes, and to show at the same time the way in which the mind could have complete control over the emotions: but, in my opinion, he showed nothing but the greatness and ingenuity of his intellect, as I shall show in its proper place. For I wish to revert to those who prefer rather to abuse and ridicule the emotions and actions of men than to understand them.

It will doubtless seem most strange to these that I should attempt to treat on the vices and failings of men in a geometrical manner, and should wish to demonstrate with sure reasoning those things which they cry out against as opposed to reason, as vain, absurd, and disgusting. My argument, however, is this. Nothing happens in nature which can be attributed to a defect of it: for nature is always the same, and its virtue and power of acting is everywhere one and the same, that is, the laws and rules of nature according to which all things are made and changed from one form into another, are everywhere and always the same, and therefore there must be one and

the same way of understanding the nature of all things, that is, by means of the universal laws and rules of nature. Therefore such emotions as hate, anger, envy, etc., considered in themselves, follow from the same necessity and virtue of nature as other particular things: and therefore they acknowledge certain causes through which they are understood, and have certain properties equally worthy of our knowledge as the properties of any other thing, the contemplation alone of which delights us. And so I shall treat of the nature and force of the emotions, and the power of the mind over them, in the same manner as I treated of God and the mind in the previous parts, and I shall regard human actions and appetites exactly as if I were dealing with lines, planes, and bodies.

1. On what point does the author of the passage differ from other 'excellent' men?
 - A. While the author believes that man does not disturb the order of nature, the others believe that it is man that disturbs the order of nature
 - B. While the author believes that the man has absolute power over his actions, the others do not.
 - C. While the author believes that whatever happens in nature can be attributed to the defect of it, the others do not.
 - D. While the author conceives man in nature as a kingdom within a kingdom, the others do not

Answer Key: C

Solution: The first paragraph has the clue to the options A, B and D. Options A, B and D do not state the author's opinion but of others' who have written on the emotions and on the manner of human life. The second sentence of the last paragraph has the clue to option C, and hence it is the right answer.

2. Which of the following best describes the tone of the passage?
 - A. Critical and Discriminating
 - B. Critical and Analytical
 - C. Censorious and Pompous
 - D. Scathing and bitter

Answer Key: B

Solution: The author in the passage has criticised others, and , in the course of the criticism, analyses the universal laws of nature their relationships with the human mind and human actions. There is no discrimination, pomposity or bitterness in

the passage. These tones are rather extreme and we don't have any evidence of extremity in the passage.

3. Which of the following best replaces the term 'ingenuity' as highlighted in the passage?

- A. Ineptitude
- B. Banality
- C. Cunningness
- D. Inventiveness

Answer Key: D

Solution: All the other options are Antonyms and, therefore, cannot replace the underlined word.

4. If at all the author has to continue the passage, what would be his point of discussion?

- A. In what ways the human mind is governed by the universal laws of nature
- B. The nature of God and the nature of the human mind
- C. The natural laws of the universe and the moral laws of the human mind
- D. The great men and the methods they used to control the human mind.

Answer Key: A

Solution: Option B has already been stated in the last paragraph and has been discussed as suggested by the author. The passage is concerned with natural and universal laws and not with great men or moral laws/morality. On these grounds option C and option D can be eliminated. A is the best choice because it is in tune with the passage and will smoothly take over from the last paragraph.

5. The passage is most likely to have been plucked from which of the following sources

- A. An Editorial of a newspaper
- B. An Essay on the Philosophy of Nature and the human mind
- C. Dialogue of a Play
- D. A Holy Scripture

Answer Key: B

Solution: Though 'A Holy Scripture' is a very tempting option, it is too broad, and it may not always be concerned with the Universal laws of nature and the human mind. B is the best choice and it has those elements which are discussed in the passage. The rest are irrelevant.

Passage 5

In *Democracy in America*, published in 1835, Tocqueville wrote of the New World and its burgeoning democratic order. Observing from the perspective of a detached social scientist, Tocqueville wrote of his travels through America in the early 19th century when the market revolution, Western expansion, and Jacksonian democracy were radically transforming the fabric of American life.

One purpose of writing *Democracy in America*, according to Joshua Kaplan, was to help the people of France get a better understanding of their position between a fading aristocratic order and an emerging democratic order, and to help them sort out the confusion. Tocqueville saw democracy as an equation that balanced liberty and equality, concern for the individual as well as for the community.

Tocqueville was an ardent supporter of liberty. He wrote "I have a passionate love for liberty, law, and respect for rights", he wrote. "I am neither of the revolutionary party nor of the conservative...Liberty is my foremost passion." He wrote of "Political Consequences of the Social State of the Anglo-Americans" by saying "But one also finds in the human heart a depraved taste for equality, which impels the weak to want to bring the strong down to their level, and which reduces men to preferring equality in servitude to inequality in freedom".

He continues to comment on equality by saying "Furthermore, when citizens are all almost equal, it becomes difficult for them to defend their independence against the aggressions of power. As none of them is strong enough to fight alone with advantage, the only guarantee of liberty is for everyone to combine forces. But such a combination is not always in evidence."

The above is often misquoted as a slavery quote due to previous translations of the French text. The most recent translation from Arthur Goldhammer in 2004 translates the meaning to be as stated above. Examples of misquoted sources are numerous on the internet; the text does not contain the words "Americans were so enamored by equality" anywhere.

Tocqueville explicitly cites inequality as being incentive for poor to become rich, and notes that it is not often two generations within a family maintain success, and that it is inheritance laws that split and eventually break apart someone's estate that cause a constant cycle of churn between the poor and rich, thereby over generations making

the poor rich and rich poor. He cites protective laws in France at the time that protected an estate from being split apart amongst heirs, thereby preserving wealth and preventing a churn of wealth such as was perceived by him in 1835 within the United States of America.

1. What does the author mean by the term ‘detached social scientist’ as used for Tocqueville?

- A. Tocqueville was very passionate about his work
- B. Tocqueville was a disinterested observer
- C. Tocqueville was not very much attached to his work
- D. Tocqueville’s statements are inconsistent with the reality around him.

Answer Key: B

Solution: Here in the context of the passage ‘detached’ means ‘objective’ or ‘neutral’. Option C is the exact opposite of the intended meaning. If ‘Tocqueville’ was objective and neutral, then how can he be passionate? Option A too goes out. Choice B is the answer because ‘disinterested’ and ‘detached’ mean the same thing.

2. Which of the following correctly points out the author’s attitude towards Tocqueville?

- A. Critical and Disparaging
- B. Objective and unbiased
- C. Skeptical and Reserved
- D. Adulatory and Euphoric

Answer Key: C

Solution: In the whole passage, we nowhere see any hint of criticism, euphoria or skepticism. C is the best choice. The author is just stating the facts about Tocqueville and his book *Democracy in America*.

3. What is the main purpose of the author?

- A. To discuss Tocqueville’s personality and his contribution to American Democracy.
- B. To discuss Tocqueville’s book *Democracy of America* and the role it played in the American Revolution
- C. To discuss Tocqueville’s book *Democracy of America* and explain his understanding of Equality and Liberty

D. To discuss the historical causes that inspired Tocqueville's *Democracy of America*.

Answer Key: C

Solution: Option A: goes out because the author is not discussing Tocqueville's personality.

Option B: Nowhere in the passage we come across hints that suggest the book played any role in the American Revolution. Option D: 'Historical causes' is out of place. C is the best choice because the passage discusses Tocqueville's book and his views on Liberty and Equality.

4. Which of the following is not true in the context of the passage?
- A. Democracy balances Liberty and Equality
 - B. Tocqueville was an American
 - C. When citizens are equal, it is difficult for them to defend themselves against an aggressor.
 - D. Inequality can be an incentive for the poor to become rich.

Answer Key: B

Solution: All are stated or implied in the passage. B is neither stated nor implied. Tocqueville went to America as a traveler. We can see this in the second line of the first paragraph.

5. Which of the following is Tocqueville least likely to be?
- A. Social Scientist
 - B. Politician
 - C. Lawyer
 - D. Novelist

Answer Key: D

Solution: The passage discusses political scenario through a legal framework. We have no hint for option D and hence it can be eliminated.

Passage 6

OF the passions with which the mind of man is agitated, it may be observed, that they naturally hasten towards their own extinction, by inciting and quickening the attainment of their objects. Thus fear urges our flight, and desire animates our progress; and if there are some which perhaps may be indulged till they outgrow the

good appropriated to their satisfaction, as it is frequently observed of avarice and ambition, yet their immediate tendency is to some means of happiness really existing, and generally within the prospect. The miser always imagines that there is a certain sum that will fill his heart to the brim; and every ambitious man, like King Pyrrhus, has an acquisition in his thoughts that is to terminate his labours, after which he shall pass the rest of his life in ease or gaiety, in repose or devotion.

Sorrow is perhaps the only affection of the breast that can be excepted from this general remark, and it therefore deserves the particular attention of those who have assumed the arduous province of preserving the balance of the mental constitution. The passions are diseases indeed, but they necessarily direct us to their proper cure. A man at once feels the pain and knows the medicine, to which he is carried with greater haste as the evil which requires it is more excruciating, and cures himself by unerring instinct, as the wounded stags of Crete are related by Ælian to have recourse to vulnerary herbs. But for sorrow there is no remedy provided by nature; it is often occasioned by accidents irreparable, and dwells upon objects that have lost or changed their existence; it required what it cannot hope, that the laws of the universe should be repealed; that the dead should return, or the past should be recalled.

Sorrow is not that regret for negligence or error which may animate us to future care or activity, or that repentance of crimes for which, however irrevocable, our Creator has promised to accept it as an atonement; the pain which arises from these causes has very salutary effects, and is every hour extenuating itself by the reparation of those miscarriages that produce it. Sorrow is properly that state of the mind in which our desires are fixed upon the past, without looking forward to the future, an incessant wish that something were otherwise than it has been, a tormenting and harassing want of some enjoyment or possession which we have lost, which no endeavours can possibly regain. Into such anguish many have sunk upon some sudden diminution of their fortune, an unexpected blast of their reputation, or the loss of children or of friends. They have suffered all sensibility of pleasure to be destroyed by a single blow, have given up forever the hopes of substituting any other object in the room of that which they lament, resigned their lives to gloom and despondency, and worn themselves out in unavailing misery.

1. The author of the above passage is least likely to be a

- A. Philosopher
- B. Religious Preacher
- C. Psychologist
- D. Historian

Ans: D

Solution: The tone and the subject matter of the passage suggest that the author is in an introspective mood. He is analysing sorrow and the effect it has on an individual. He could be a philosopher or a psychologist; the former deals with morality, the latter with the mind. A Religious preacher is likely to borrow from both. We have little evidence of history in the passage, and D therefore is the best choice.

2. According to the author, how is sorrow different from other passions?

- A. It does not hasten towards its own extinction
- B. It is the most inferior of all our passions
- C. It does not equally affect us all
- D. It is not a passion at all

Ans: A

Solution: The second paragraph of the passage says 'sorrow can be excepted from this general remark'. This general remark is mentioned in the first line of the first paragraph. The rest are nowhere mentioned or implied in the passage.

3. Which of the following causes of sorrow is not mentioned in the passage by the author?

- A. It can be caused by irreparable accidents
- B. It can be caused by the death of a dear one
- C. It can be caused by the will of Providence
- D. It can be caused by objects that have changed their existence

Ans: C

Solution: The last two sentences of the second paragraph mention all the causes except C, which is not stated anywhere in the passage.

4. In the lines, ' the pain which arises from these causes has very salutary effects, and is every hour extenuating itself by the reparation of those miscarriages that produce it' , the underlined words mean:

- A. Harmful, Mitigating
- B. Beneficial, Destructive
- C. Beneficial, Mitigating
- D. Harmful, Moderating

Ans: C

Solution: This is a straight vocabulary question. Salutory means beneficial and extenuating means mitigating or to reduce the strength of.

5. The author of the passage is most likely to agree with:
- A. In Sorrow our desires are fixed upon the future
 - B. Sorrow's effects on the mind are beneficial
 - C. Passions are not like diseases that can be easily cured
 - D. The passions never direct us to their proper cure

Ans: B

Solution: The author in the last paragraph mentions 'the pain arising from such causes have a salutary effect'. This straightaway makes option B the best choice. The rest are opposite to what is stated in the passage.

Passage 7

O soft embalmer of the still midnight,
 Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,
 Our gloom-pleas'd eyes, embower'd from the light,
 Enshaded in forgetfulness divine:
 O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close
 In midst of this thine hymn my willing eyes,
 Or wait the "Amen," ere thy poppy throws
 Around my bed its lulling charities.
 Then save me, or the passed day will shine
 Upon my pillow, breeding many woes,—
 Save me from curious Conscience, that still lords

Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole;

Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards,

And seal the hushed Casket of my Soul.

1. The 'soft embalmer of the still midnight' refers to:

- A. The moon
- B. Sleep
- C. Dreams
- D. The stars

Ans: B

Explanation: The clue to the correct answer lies in the expression 'O soothest Sleep!', and the poet refers to sleep as the one that closes our gloom pleased eyes with fingers soft and benign. Option B, therefore, is the right answer.

2. The 'hushed casket of my soul' refers to:

- A. The body
- B. The coffin in which a dead body is placed.
- C. The graveyard
- D. The sensual pleasures

Ans: A

Explanation: Casket means 'coffin' or a box for holding something.

Figuratively speaking, the body is the casket of the soul; our body is the box that holds the soul. 'Hushed casket of the soul' therefore refers to 'The body'.

3. The poet in the above passage wishes for:

- A. Love
- B. Good health

C. Death

D. Long life

Ans: C

Explanation: The word 'seal' in the expression 'seal the hushed casket of my soul' points at the poet's desire for death.

4. Which of the following most accurately reflects the tone of the author?

A. Enthusiastic

B. Dejected

C. Hopeful

D. Objective

Ans: B

Explanation: The poet is melancholic and sad. The desire for death while he is asleep points to the fact that he is neither hopeful nor enthusiastic. Dejected, which means depressed or low in spirits, is therefore the right answer.

5. Which of the following is a suitable title for the passage?

A. Love and Hope

B. Life and Death

C. Sleep and Dreams

D. Sleep and Death

Ans: D

Explanation: In the poem, the poet wishes for death; hence option A and B go out. The central idea of the poem is 'the poet's desire for death'. D is the right choice.

Passage 8

Truths of the physical order may possess much external significance, but internal significance they have none. The latter is the privilege of intellectual and moral truths, which are concerned with the objectivation of the will in its highest stages, whereas physical truths are concerned with it in its lowest.

For example, if we could establish the truth of what up till now is only a conjecture, namely, that it is the action of the sun which produces thermoelectricity at the equator; that this produces terrestrial magnetism; and that this magnetism, again, is the cause of the *aurora borealis*, these would be truths externally of great, but internally of little, significance. On the other hand, examples of internal significance are furnished by all great and true philosophical systems; by the catastrophe of every good tragedy; nay, even by the observation of human conduct in the extreme manifestations of its morality and immorality, of its good and its evil character. For all these are expressions of that reality which takes outward shape as the world, and which, in the highest stages of its objectivation, proclaims its innermost nature.

To say that the world has only a physical and not a moral significance is the greatest and most pernicious of all errors, the fundamental blunder, the real perversity of mind and temper; and, at bottom, it is doubtless the tendency which faith personifies as Anti-Christ. Nevertheless, in spite of all religions—and they are systems which one and all maintain the opposite, and seek to establish it in their mythical way—this fundamental error never becomes quite extinct, but raises its head from time to time afresh, until universal indignation compels it to hide itself once more.

Yet, however certain we may feel of the moral significance of life and the world, to explain and illustrate it, and to resolve the contradiction between this significance and the world as it is, form a task of great difficulty; so great, indeed, as to make it possible that it has remained for me to exhibit the true and only genuine and sound basis of morality everywhere and at all times effective, together with the results to which it leads. The actual facts of morality are too much on my side for me to fear that my theory can ever be replaced or upset by any other.

1. Which of the following accurately reflects the tone of the passage

- A. Arrogant and Defensive
- B. Confident and Aggressive
- C. Apprehensive and Speculative
- D. Boring and Dull

Ans: B

Explanation: A writer cannot be both Arrogant and Defensive at the same time. The author's assertiveness in the first paragraph shows he is confident and aggressive.

2. What does the author DOES NOT mean by the term 'conjecture' in the passage underlined above?

- A. Hypothesis
- B. Speculation
- C. Truth
- D. Presumption

Ans: C

Explanation: Conjecture means guess. A, B and D all are synonyms. The right answer is truth, which is the exact opposite of conjecture.

3. The author is most likely to agree with which of the following statements:

- A. The truths of the moral and the physical order complement each other
- B. All great and true philosophical systems are full of examples of external significance
- C. All great and true philosophical systems are full of examples of internal significance
- D. The truths of the moral and the physical order are independent of each other

Ans: C

Explanation: The fifth line of the second paragraph has the clue to option C. The others are nowhere mentioned in the passage.

4. To the Author, which of the following would be of highest importance?

- A. Newton's laws of motion
- B. Einstein's theory of Relativity
- C. The moral principle that governs a man's good and evil conduct
- D. Scientific Research on 'The Origin of the Universe'

Ans: C

Explanation: The author gives importance to moral truths and not the physical ones. Hence he would always choose C, The moral principle that governs a man's good and evil conduct, over the others.

5. The passage is most likely to have been extracted from:

- A. A Science Journal
- B. A Newspaper Report
- C. A Historical novel
- D. A Philosophical Treatise

Ans: D

Explanation: The passage is on philosophy, and the author speaks about the superiority of moral truths. Therefore A goes out. There is no trace of history, and hence this too can be eliminated. The article lacks the objectivity of a newspaper report and hence this too can be eliminated.

Passage 9

The pelvic splanchnic nerves, S2-4, work in tandem to innervate the pelvic viscera. Unlike in the cranium, where one PSN was in charge of one particular

tissue or region, for the most part the pelvic splanchnics each contribute fibers to pelvic viscera by first traveling to one or more plexuses before being dispersed to the target tissue. These plexuses are composed of mixed autonomic nerve fibers (PSN and SN) and include the vesical, prostatic, rectal, uterovaginal, and inferior hypogastric plexus. The preganglionic neurons in the neurons do not synapse in named ganglion as in the cranium but rather in the walls of the tissues or organs that they innervate. The fiber paths are variable and each individual's autonomic nervous system in the pelvis is unique. The visceral tissues in the pelvis that the PSN control include: urinary bladder, ureters, urinary sphincter, anal sphincter, uterus, prostate, glands, vagina and penis. Unconsciously, the PSN will cause peristaltic movements of the ureters helping to move urine from the kidneys into the bladder and move feces down the intestinal tract and upon necessity, the PSN will assist excreting urine from the bladder or defecation. Stimulation of the PSN will cause the detrusor muscle (urinary bladder wall) to contract and simultaneously relax the internal sphincter urethrae muscle to relax allowing void of urine. Also, PSN stimulation to the internal anal sphincter will relax this muscle and allow defecation. There are other skeletal muscles involved with these processes but the PSN play a huge role in **continence**.

Another role that the PSN play in the pelvis is in sexual activity. In males, the cavernous nerves from the prostatic plexus stimulate smooth muscle in the fibrous trabeculae of the coiled helicine arteries to relax and allow blood to fill the corpora cavernosum and the corpus spongiosum of the penis, making it rigid to prepare for sexual activity. Upon emission of ejaculate, the sympathetics participate and cause peristalsis of the ductus deferens and closure of the internal urethral sphincter to prevent semen from entering the bladder. At the same time, parasympathetics cause peristalsis of the urethral muscle, and the pudendal nerve causes contraction of the bulbospongiosus (skeletal muscle is not via PSN), to forcibly emit the semen. During remission the penis becomes flaccid again. In the female, there is erectile tissue analogous to the male yet less substantial that plays a large role in sexual stimulation. The PSN cause release of secretions in the female that decrease friction. Also in the female, the parasympathetics innervate the fallopian tubes, which helps peristaltic contractions and movement of the oocyte to the

uterus for implantation. The secretions from the female genital tract aids in semen migration. The PSN (and SN to a lesser extent) play a huge role in reproduction.

1. In which of the following the PSN does not play any role?
 - a. Supplying the blood to the vital parts of the brain
 - b. In Reproduction
 - c. In Defecation
 - d. It plays role in all of the above

Answer Key: a

Explanation: PSN does not play any role in supplying the blood to the brain; it is nowhere mentioned in the paragraph. This eliminates option D. Option A is the right choice.

2. The word 'continence' found at the end of the first paragraph refers to which of the following?
 - a. Moderation
 - b. Partial or complete abstention from sexual activity
 - c. Voluntary control over urinary and fecal discharge
 - d. Asceticism

Answer Key: c

Explanation: The word continence has all the above meanings, but we should mark the one which is relevant to the discussion in the passage. The line immediately before the one that has the word 'continence' speaks about urine discharge and that makes option c the right answer as it is relevant to the subject matter of the passage.

3. Which of the following prevents the semen from entering the bladder?
 - a. Cavernous nerves
 - b. Parasympathetic nerves
 - c. The bulbospongiosus
 - d. The preganglionic neurons

Answer Key: b

Explanation: This is a factual question. The answer to this question is found in the last few lines of the first paragraph.

Passage 10

Whether Chaos or Order lay at the beginning of things is a question once much debated in the schools but afterward long in abeyance, not so much because it had been solved as because one party had been silenced by social pressure. The question is bound to recur in an age when observation and **dialectic** again freely confront each other. Naturalists look back to chaos since they observe everything growing from seeds and shifting its character in regeneration. The order now established in the world may be traced back to a situation in which it did not appear. Dialecticians, on the other hand, refute this presumption by urging that every collocation of things must have been preceded by another collocation in itself no less definite and precise; and further that some principle of transition or continuity must always have obtained, else successive states would stand in no relation to one another, notably not in the relation of cause and effect, expressed in a natural law, which is presupposed in this instance. Potentialities are dispositions, and a disposition involves an order, as does also the passage from any specific potentiality into act. Thus the world, we are told, must always have possessed a structure.

The two views may perhaps be reconciled if we take each with a qualification. Chaos doubtless has existed and will return—nay, it reigns now, very likely, in the remoter and inmost parts of the universe—if by chaos we understand a nature containing none of the objects we are wont to distinguish, a nature such that human life and human thought would be impossible in its bosom; but this nature must be presumed to have an order, an order directly importing, if the tendency of its movement be taken into account, all the complexities and beauties, all the sense and reason which exist now. Order is accordingly continual; but only when order means not a specific arrangement, favourable to a given form of life, but any arrangement whatsoever. The process by which an arrangement which is essentially unstable gradually shifts cannot be said to aim at every stage which at any moment it involves. For the process passes beyond. It presently abolishes all the forms which may have arrested attention and generated love; its initial energy defeats every purpose which we may fondly attribute to it. Nor is it here necessary to remind ourselves that to call results their own causes is always preposterous; for in this case even the mythical sense which might be attached to such language is

inapplicable. Here the process, taken in the gross, does not, even by mechanical necessity, support the value which is supposed to guide it. That value is realised for a moment only; so that if we impute to Cronos any intent to beget his children we must also impute to him an intent to devour them.

1. As highlighted in the passage, the word 'dialectic' could most likely mean which of the following?
 - a. The art or practice of arriving at the truth by experimentation.
 - b. The art or practice of arriving at the truth by the exchange of logical arguments.
 - c. The art or practice of arriving at the truth by empirical methods
 - d. The art or practice of arriving at the truth by moral instructions

Answer Key: b

Explanation: This is a vocabulary question. Dialectic means the art or practice of arriving at the truth by the exchange of logical arguments.

2. The author of the passage is most likely not to be a
 - a. Scientist
 - b. Astronomer
 - c. Philosopher
 - d. Historian

Answer Key: d

Explanation: The passage has a philosophical theme and talks about the beginning of things, order and chaos. This topic could be discussed by a scientist, an astronomer or a philosopher. Since the passage has little or no trace of history, the author is least likely to be a historian.

3. Which of the following is the tone of the author of the passage?
 - a. Analytical
 - b. Descriptive
 - c. Critical
 - d. Objective

Answer Key: a

Explanation: The author is not objective because he is giving his own opinion and perspective in the passage. There is not a hint of criticism in the passage; so option d and c go out. Descriptive passages do not have arguments. Option

‘a’ is the best choice because the author is explaining and arguing on a particular idea.

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