

LSAT-Center.com: Sample LSAT Critical Reasoning Section

25 Questions / 35 Minutes

1. Lou observes that if flight 409 is canceled, then the manager could not possibly arrive in time for the meeting. But the flight was not canceled. Therefore, Lou concludes, the manager will certainly be on time. Evelyn replies that even if Lou's premises are true, his argument is fallacious. And therefore, she adds, the manager will not arrive on time after all.

Which of the following is the strongest thing that we can properly say about this discussion?

- A) Evelyn is mistaken in thinking Lou's argument to be fallacious, and so her own conclusion is unwarranted.
- B) Evelyn is right about Lou's argument, but nevertheless her own conclusion is unwarranted.
- C) Since Evelyn is right about Lou's argument, her own conclusion is well supported.
- D) Since Evelyn is mistaken about Lou's argument, her own conclusion must be false.
- E) Evelyn is right about Lou's argument, but nevertheless her own conclusion is false.

2. Sally has never received a violation from the Federal Aviation Administration during her 16-year flying career. Sally must be a great pilot.

Which of the following can be said about the reasoning above?

- A) The definitions of the terms create ambiguity.
- B) The argument uses circular reasoning.
- C) The argument works by analogy.
- D) The argument is built upon hidden assumptions.
- E) This is an example of an argument that is directed against the source of the claim rather than the claim itself.

3. The Japanese economic model created strong domestic industries through subsidies from its Ministry of Trade and by closing off competitive foreign firms to its domestic market. This strategy promised to help economic growth by incubating domestic industries. New Japanese industries could count on a known local demand and would be protected from competition by tariffs and other barriers. The program could reduce the amount of imports and therefore improve the nation's balance of trade.

Which of the following, based on the passage above, is a weakness in this economic strategy?

- A) A protectionist policy will create animosity among other nations.
- B) Fast growth of small industries will create a class of millionaires and increase the inequality of income.
- C) Subsidies and import constraints keep domestic prices high and impose a burden on consumers.
- D) Quotas are more regressive than tariffs.
- E) The demand for the products made by the incubated industries would not be known.

4. Historically, famines have generally been followed by periods of rising wages, because when a labor force is diminished, workers are more valuable in accordance with the law of supply and demand. The Irish potato famine of the 1840s is an exception; it resulted in the death or emigration of half of Ireland's population, but there was no significant rise in the average wages in Ireland in the following decade.

Which one of the following, if true, would LEAST contribute to an explanation of the exception to the generalization?

- (A) Improved medical care reduced the mortality rate among able-bodied adults in the decade following the famine to below prefamine levels.
- (B) Eviction policies of the landowners in Ireland were designed to force emigration of the elderly and infirm, who could not work, and to retain a high percentage of able-bodied workers.
- (C) Advances in technology increased the efficiency of industry and agriculture, and so allowed maintenance of economic output with less demand for labor.
- (D) The birth rate increased during the decade following the famine, and this compensated for much of the loss of population that was due to the famine.
- (E) England, which had political control of Ireland, legislated artificially low wages to provide English-owned industry and agriculture in Ireland with cheap labor.

5. Cars are safer than planes. Fifty percent of plane accidents result in death, while only one percent of car accidents result in death. Which of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the argument above?

- A) Planes are inspected more often than cars.
- B) The number of car accidents is several hundred thousand times higher than the number of plane accidents.
- C) Pilots never fly under the influence of alcohol, while car drivers often do.
- D) Plane accidents are usually the fault of air traffic controllers, not pilots.
- E) Planes carry more passengers than cars do.

6. The body of anyone infected by virus X will, after a week, produce antibodies to fight the virus; the antibodies will increase in number for the next year or so. There is now a test that reliably indicates how many antibodies are present in a person's body. If positive, this test can be used during the first year of infection to estimate to within a month how long that person has had the virus.

Which one of the following conclusions is best supported by the statements above?

- (A) Antibodies increase in number only until they have defeated the virus.
- (B) Without the test for antibodies, there is no way of establishing whether a person has virus X.
- (C) Antibodies are produced only for viral infections that cannot be fought by any other body defenses.
- (D) If a person remains infected by virus X indefinitely, there is no limit to the number of antibodies that can be present in the person's body.
- (E) Anyone infected by virus X will for a time fail to exhibit infection if tested by the antibody test.

7. Ever since I arrived at the college last week, I've been shocked by the poor behavior of the students. The student population is completely lacking in proper social skills. Which of the following, if true, would weaken the above conclusion?

- A) Students who are away from their parents often exhibit rude behavior.
- B) The college numbers over 50,000 students.
- C) The narrator is a student and has interacted with many students.
- D) Social skills should not be expected of college students.
- E) The narrator was reluctant to stay at the college.

8. Smoking in bed has long been the main cause of home fires. Despite a significant decline in cigarette smoking in the last two decades, there has been no comparable decline in the number of people killed in home fires.

Each one of the following statements, if true over the last two decades, helps to resolve the apparent discrepancy above EXCEPT:

- A) Compared to other types of home fires, home fires caused by smoking in bed usually cause relatively little damage before they are extinguished.
- B) Home fires caused by smoking in bed often break out after the home's occupants have fallen asleep.
- C) Smokers who smoke in bed tend to be heavy smokers who are less likely to quit smoking than are smokers who do not smoke in bed.
- D) An increasing number of people have been killed in home fires that started in the kitchen.
- E) Population densities have increased, with the result that one home fire can cause more deaths than in previous decades.

9. Mrs. Mason is gifted with psychic powers that enable her to foretell future events. In the past, Mrs. Mason has predicted such actual events as the election of President Clinton, the stock market crash of 1987, and the St. Louis Cardinals' 1982 World Series victory. These are just a few of Mrs. Mason's accurate predictions. The answer to which of the following questions would be most useful in evaluating the strength of the argument above?

- A) What percentage of Mrs. Mason's predictions has come true?
- B) Could the election of President Reagan have been predicted without the help of psychic powers?
- C) What is the actual mechanism by which Mrs. Mason's psychic powers are supposed to operate?
- D) How long before the events in question did Mrs. Mason make her accurate predictions?
- E) Do most scientists accept the idea that the power to predict the future through psychic means really exists?

10. An ingredient in coffee, known as RTC, has been found to inactivate common cold viruses in experiments. In previous experiments, researchers found that inactivated common cold viruses can convert healthy cells into cancer cells. It can be concluded that the use of coffee can cause cancer.

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

- A) Several teams of scientists performed the various experiments, and all of the teams had similar results.
- B) The carcinogenic effect of RTC could be neutralized by the other ingredients found in coffee.
- C) When RTC kills common cold viruses it weakens the immune system, and it might thus diminish the body's ability to fight other viruses, including viruses linked to cancers.
- D) If chemists modify the structure of RTC, RTC can be safely incorporated into medications to prevent the common cold.
- E) To lessen the undesirable side effects of chemotherapy, the use of coffee has been recommended for cancer patients who are free of the common cold virus.

11. Jack Bygrave is an executive at a major South African diamond company that produces 2% of the world's total annual diamond production. The CFO is anxious to maximize revenues and increase sales. Bygrave, however, believes that increased production would only drive down the world price of diamonds and lower revenues. Which of the following represents the logical flaw in Bygrave's reasoning?

- A) Jack connects the price of unrefined diamonds and the price of jewelry-quality diamonds.
- B) He assumes that production goals are similar to financial goals.
- C) He assumes that the supply produced by a single company can significantly alter the aggregate supply for the market.
- D) He assumes that seasonal and long term supply are proportional.
- E) He correlates long-term and short-term demand.

12. The crux of creativity resides in the ability to manufacture variations on a theme. If we look at the history of science, for instance, we see that every idea is built upon a thousand related ideas. Careful analysis leads us to understand that what we choose to call a new theme or a new discovery is itself always and without exception some sort of variation, on a deep level, of previous themes. If all of the statements in the passage are true, each of the following must also be true EXCEPT:

- A) A lack of ability to manufacture a variation on a previous theme connotes a lack of creativity
- B) No scientific idea is entirely independent of all other ideas.
- C) Careful analysis of a specific variation can reveal previous themes of which it is a variation.
- D) All great scientific discoverers have been able to manufacture a variation on a theme.
- E) Some new scientific discoveries do not represent, on a deep level, a variation on previous themes.

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

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

14. The editors of *Business Today* magazine conducted a poll of its readers regarding the proposed increase in the rate of income tax paid on profits from the sale of stocks. More than 60% of the readers opposed the proposed tax. The editors announced that the majority of Americans opposed any increase in the tax on profits from stock sales. Which one of the following statements, if true, would most weaken the editor's conclusion?

- A) Some readers of *Business Today* magazine are citizens of countries other than the United States.
- B) Decisions concerning the income tax laws are made by the Congress rather than directly by the people.
- C) Most of those who earn profits from stock sales are wealthy and can afford to pay higher taxes.
- D) The viewpoints of the vast majority of the readers of *Business Today* magazine differ from the views of most Americans.
- E) Not all readers of *Business Today* magazine responded to the editors' poll.

15. Several movie versions of Charles Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities* have been made. The original movie version made in 1939 is the best because it is closest in spirit to the original novel.

An underlying assumption of the argument above is that a movie based on a novel should:

- A) reflect the director's original interpretation of the main themes of the novel.
- B) accurately depict the time and place in which the novel is set.
- C) feature actors and actresses who closely resemble the characters in the novel both in body and spirit.
- D) faithfully render the details of the plot from the narrator's point of view.
- E) capture the true meaning and intention of the novel.

16. A study of a math program implemented in several pre-schools indicates that children who received the specialized Math Plus math education between the ages three and five had significantly higher math scores in 3rd and 4th grade than their classmates who did not receive this instruction. The proponents of the math argue that the introduction of this program for all children age three to five will significantly improve their chances for success in school.

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

- A) Most parents send their children to preschool for social development and do not have a clear idea about what types of education they want for their children.
- B) Cognitive abilities of 3- to 5-year-old children are constantly changing.
- C) The children in the pre-schools that were studied had previously been exposed to another math enrichment program.
- D) Children are not really interested in enrichment programs in preschool.
- E) The cost factor needs to be specified and established before a large scale program can be undertaken.

17. The symptoms of mental disorders are behavioral, cognitive, or emotional problems. Some patients with mental disorders can be effectively treated with psychotherapy, but it is now known that in some patients' mental disorders result from chemical imbalances affecting the brain. Thus, these patients can be effectively treated only with medication that will reduce or correct the imbalance.

The argument depends on assuming which one of the following?

- A) Treatment by psychotherapy can produce no effective reduction in or correction of chemical imbalances that cause mental disorders.
- B) Treatment with medication always shows faster results for patients with mental disorders than does treatment with psychotherapy
- C) Most mental disorders are not the result of chemical imbalances affecting the brain.
- D) Medication is always more effective in treating patients with mental disorders than is psychotherapy.
- E) Treatment with psychotherapy has no effect on mental disorders other than a reduction of the symptoms.

18. Dear Editor: I feel obliged to comment on the unfair review you published last week written by Robert Duxbury. Your readers should know that Mr. Duxbury recently published his own book that covered the same topic as my book, which you asked him to review. It is regrettable that Mr. Duxbury should feel the need to belittle a competing work in the hope of elevating his own book.

The author of the letter above makes her point by employing which method of argument?

- A) Attacking the motives of the author of the unfavorable review.
- B) Attacking the book on the same topic written by the author of the review.
- C) Contrasting her own book with that written by the author of the review.
- D) Questioning the judgment of the author of the unfavorable review.
- E) Stating that her book should not have been reviewed by the author of a competing work.

19. The government of Zunimagua has refused to schedule free elections, release political prisoners, or restore freedom of speech; therefore, no more financial aid from the United States should be provided to Zunimagua.

Which of the following is an assumption made in the argument above?

- A) Withdrawal of U.S. aid from Zunimagua will force a change in the policies of its government.
- B) The people of Zunimagua would be better off if their present despotic government were overthrown.
- C) The government of Zunimagua is dependent on continued U.S. aid for its existence.
- D) U.S. aid should be given only to countries willing to adopt policies in line with U.S. interests and goals.
- E) U.S. aid should be withdrawn from any country that refuses to operate its government along democratic lines.

20. Many people argue that the death penalty deters murder. However, the notorious killer Ned Grandy deliberately moved to a state that imposes the death penalty just before embarking on a series of ferocious murders. Thus, it seems clear that the existence of the death penalty does not serve as a deterrent to murder.

The argument above may best be characterized as:

- A) an appeal to emotion.
- B) a flawed analogy.
- C) a general conclusion based on a specific example.
- D) circular reasoning.
- E) an application of a general principle to a specific example.

21. Steve and JoAnne are both members of a certain club, though they are not speaking to each other and refuse to work with each other. Cecily, the club president, is appointing members to the fundraising committee, but she has resolved that she will not appoint anyone without his or her explicit consent. Steve tells Cecily, "I will not consent to appointment on that committee unless I know whether JoAnne is to be a member of it." And JoAnne says, "I will not consent to be a member of that committee unless I know whether Steve will be appointed to it."

If all three of these people stick by these resolutions, then:

- A) Neither of them can be appointed to the committee.
- B) The situation described in the scenario cannot arise, because it is inherently incoherent.
- C) They must either both be appointed or both be left out.
- D) The committee may finally have one of them, both of them, or neither of them as members.
- E) Either one of them can be appointed, but not both.

22. Russia's aggressive fishing in the prime fishing grounds of the Northern Pacific has led to a sharp decline in the populations of many fish and a general increase in the retail price of fish. This same pattern has occurred with far too many of our scarce vital natural resources, resulting in high prices for many products. It is likely then, that fish prices will continue to rise in the near future.

In making the argument above, the author relies on all of the following assumptions EXCEPT:

- A) The scarcity of fish is a determining factor in its price.
- B) The decline in the number of fish available will result in higher prices for fish in stores.
- C) There will not be any substantial decrease in other costs involved in the fishing process that could keep the price of fish from increasing.
- D) Fish populations will not recover in the near future.
- E) Fishing practices can substantially influence the demand for fish.

23. During the past year, Boz Corporation, a cigarette manufacturer, has engaged in a "corporate image" advertising campaign. One executive now urges that the advertising be extended for another year because profits have increased by 29% over the previous year. Another executive, however, is skeptical. She observes that the increases are typical for the industry over the past year, although none of their competitors have used corporate image advertising.

The most accurate way of summarizing the second executive's point would be:

- A) She argues that the effect may not really be due to its supposed cause because there has not been a sufficient lapse of time between the cause and the effect.
- B) She argues that the assignment of a cause for this effect is premature, because there is as yet no well-established theory of such interactions.
- C) She argues that corporate image advertising is unprofitable, since it has evidently benefited competitors as much as the corporation that paid for it.
- D) She knows that effective advertising requires a constant influx of new ideas and approaches, and she argues that one year of corporate image advertising is enough for awhile.
- E) She argues that the effect may not be due to its alleged cause since the same effect is found elsewhere without that cause.

24. The senate candidate expressed outrage that few judges have any background in technology, yet they try to resolve cases involving high tech companies. He stated that not one federal judge has a degree or any experience in computer technology. A promising response to this concern, arguing that things are not as bad as they might seem, could involve which of the following claims?

- A) Most of the public policy questions in this area are really about the morality and the value of scientific and technological developments. They do not require much technical understanding beyond that of a layperson.
- B) Computer scientists, by and large, have little interest in politics and public policy. It would be difficult to find scientists with the degree of commitment required for a serious contribution to the judicial system.
- C) There is a lack of people who are qualified in both technical and legal areas of expertise.
- D) There is very little opportunity for, and indeed little need for, technical expertise in the judicial branch. There is therefore almost no way for a technical specialist to rise through the ranks to a top-level position in government.
- E) The rewards of a life as a judge, in terms of both money and prestige, are not high enough to attract top-flight technical experts to this area.

25. There has been a sharp increase in the subscription prices of many professional and scholarly journals in the past seven years. Many publishers ascribe the necessity for these increases to the easy availability of photocopying facilities, which enable people simply to copy the articles they want rather than buying the journal. Which of the following, if it is true, would make this explanation more plausible?

- A) The great majority of professional and scholarly journals have a massive backlog of papers awaiting publication.
- B) Over the past five years there has been a substantial decline in the number of individual subscriptions to professional and scholarly journals, while library subscriptions have remained fairly stable.
- C) In the five years immediately preceding the price surge, there was a substantial decline in the number of individual subscriptions to professional and scholarly journals, while library subscriptions remained fairly stable.
- D) Many libraries have recently begun cutting back on subscriptions to professional and scholarly journals.
- E) In almost every field, several new professional and scholarly journals have begun publication in the past few years.

End of Test
[go to explanations](#)