

## Critical Reasoning

### A. Assumptions

- An assumption is merely an unstated (implied) premise.
- In logically correct arguments which contain an assumption, the premise + assumption = conclusion.
- An assumption bridges the gap between argument's stated premises and conclusion.
- Remember, since the assumption is an UNSTATED premise, any answer choice that comes from the passage to support your assumption is necessarily incorrect.
- For assumption questions, find the conclusion and determine which answer choice needs to be true for a conclusion to be valid. (It must be a statement that completely supports the conclusion)

#### CORRECT ANSWER CHOICES:

- Will be supporter or defender
- Supporters help to link unrelated information presented in the stimulus and fill logical gaps
- Defenders eliminate possibilities of weakness and attack to the stimulus/conclusion.

### B. Strengthen the Argument

Identify the conclusion—this is what you are trying to strengthen!

Find the logical gap and fix it with additional information. This is the ONLY type of GMAT question where additional information (outside of the question) can/should be used.

#### Correct answers to this question type will:

- Connect evidence with conclusion better
- Make conclusion stronger.
- Strengthen the evidence with new information (perhaps an assumption is needed to make the argument work)

### C. Weaken The Argument

To solve these questions, you first need to identify the premise and the conclusion. In this question type, we assume an answer choice presented to be true – even if it introduces new information (obviously, the information has to be relevant to the stimulus)

#### ANSWER CHOICE QUALIFICATION:

- Should rebuke the conclusion of the stimulus
- Answer choices are taken to be true, even if there is new information provided.
- Will either break down causality or show an obvious error in reasoning in formation of the conclusion

#### CORRECT ANSWER CHOICES:

- Will point out an obvious reason for the illogical conclusion
- Enumerate a wrong generalization
- Point out improper comparisons between two scenarios that the author assumed

### D. MUST BE TRUE/ INFERENCE/ MAIN

## POINT/CONCLUSION

Consider the evidence, draw a conclusion.

An inference is an extension of an argument, not a necessary part of it.

A valid inference is a conclusion, but not necessarily the conclusion, of a set of statements.

For inference questions, determine which answer choice must absolutely, positively be true based on what you've read.

- Pick the obvious answer choice.
- Avoid extreme answers (too strong or too weak)

### CORRECT ANSWER CHOICES:

- Restatement of the conclusion
- Combination of one or more premises
- Should be the main point of the stimulus, not just a premise (for Main Point questions-Repeat premises are wrong )

## E. Resolve the Paradox

To solve this type of question, look for a logically contradictory discrepancy.

- Often the correct answer will take a similar format (in terms of answer length or argument structure).

## F. Evaluate the Argument

-The question stem will likely use some form of the word "evaluate," "determine," or "useful / important to know."

-Find the conclusion and identify the main supporting premise. If you can articulate any gaps between the main premise and the conclusion, do so. Think of the conclusion as the author's hypothesis; your job is to find the answer choice that can test that hypothesis. The answers will provide a "whether or not" type of statement, indicating information that might or might not be so. The correct answer will be able to both slightly strengthen and slightly weaken the hypothesis, depending upon whether the information in that choice is true or is not true.

-Know what you're not trying to do as well. We're not trying to strengthen the conclusion or make it more likely that the author's hypothesis is correct.

## PRINCIPLES OF CR

### Inference VS Assumption

An inference is a conclusion that can be drawn based on one or more of the statements in the stimulus. An inference must be true based on something that you read.

An assumption is a missing but necessary piece of evidence. An assumption is something that must be true in order for the argument to be complete

### Numbers, Percentages

Watch for the distinction between NUMBERS and PERCENTAGES.

### Mimic the Reasoning

Follow same line of reasoning from the passage in the answer.

Eliminate the question stem detail to create a shorthand version of the argument structure.

- Question Stem: "If it rains, then I will stay at home today."
- Shorthand: "If A, then B."
- Answer: "If A, then B."

## 7 Principles of CR

1. Understand structure of argument. Identify premise (P), conclusion (C) and any unstated assumptions. Look for structural signpost words which mark P and C.
2. Preview question before reading passage.
3. Paraphrase passage's point or main idea using one verb "i.e., explain, criticize, compare, contrast".<sup>3</sup>
4. Judge argument's persuasiveness while reading actively.
5. Answer question being asked.
6. Paraphrase answer.
7. Keep SCOPE in mind. Moderate rather than strong words / qualifiers usually correct.

## Paraphrasing and Prephrasing

Paraphrasing

- Actively translate passages into your own words.
- Pretend you are explaining the information in a passage to a 10-year-old kid.

Pre phrasing

- Think about what form the correct answer will take.
- As you do more questions, you will begin to "guess" correctly, as you start to think as the test makers do.

## Irrelevant

Watch for irrelevant or overly strong answer choices in CR.

Stay within SCOPE and TONE of passage

## Negate (Counterattack)

For assumption questions, negate CR answer choice to see if the conclusion can survive

## Statistics

When an argument is based on statistics, it is usually assumed that the people polled are representative of the whole

## Questions Involving Surveys

Consider: Does the survey accurately represent the views of the whole group surveyed? Is there a statistics bait and switch?

## Scope Shifts

Be wary of scope shifts. Look for test makers' tricks:

- Sometimes a passage will begin with one group and draw a conclusion about another group. Similarly, a passage might have weak premises and then draw an overbroad conclusion.
- Other times the tone of the passage moves so far that the test taker is left wondering, "How did that conclusion come about?"