

Critical Reasoning (Paragraph Comprehension)

Q INTRODUCTION

Over the past ten years, Critical Reasoning (CR) questions have been a consistent presence in the CAT and other exams like XAT. The ability of the student to solve this question type depends on his/her ability to recognize and evaluate argumentative logic. The better you are at understanding arguments, the better you will be at questions related to critical reasoning. As a reader, you are likely to agree with the point that argumentation is essentially a social skill that depends on exposure and the logical ability to reason out, rather than on the knowledge of one particular language. Hence, doing well at CR questions depends more on your ability to reason out logically, than on your's specific knowledge of English.

This being so, CAT/MBA aspirants who consider themselves weak at the English section, should target these questions as possible scoring areas. Thus, strategically CR is one of the most important areas of the CAT exam.

A nice added benefit to preparing yourself for the critical reasoning questions on the CAT is that this preparation will also help you in your Management studies. Many of the techniques used to answer these test questions will come in handy when you are asked to do projects, case analyses and discussions in general.

Q WHAT IS CRITICAL REASONING?

The typical structure of CR questions is that of a short passage (mostly consisting of a single paragraph) followed by a question on the basis of the paragraph.

However, classifying them as short Reading Comprehension questions is not correct. They differ from Reading Comprehension in both the structuring of the passage and the types and variety of questions. The typical CR passage is anything between 50 words to 200 words long and necessarily contains an **argument**. As already mentioned in the chapter on Reading Skills Development, under Part I of this book, an argument will always have a **claim**, supported by **reasons/evidences**.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CRITICAL REASONING PASSAGE

While writing argumentatively, the author's principal objective is to persuade the reader about his/her point of view. A successfully presented argument convinces the reader about the author's point of view. In order to do so, not only does the author have to present his point of view, but he also needs to support it with reasons—after all, the reader needs to know why he should agree with the author's points of view. Hence, the author has to provide enough support for his point of view in order to convince the reader. These supports may be in the form of reasons or evidences. The **supports** of an argument are also called as the **premises** of the argument.

The structure of the argument is:

Because of **these** (reasons or facts), we should conclude **this** (claim/conclusion).

Consider the following examples:



(A) Abortion should not be allowed **because** we have no right to kill a human life.

The opposite argument for statement (A) would be:

(B) Abortion should be allowed **because** a woman has the right to decide what she wants to do with her body.


(C) Smoking and chewing of pan masala should be banned **because** they are harmful to the health of the consumer.

All the above arguments are in the form: "This because of that".


Supports of an Argument

The supports of an argument can be visualised as the foundations on the basis of which arguments are made. They are similar to the foundations of a building—the stronger the foundation, the stronger the building. Similarly, the stronger the support for an argument, the stronger the argument.

Consider the following passage that appeared in a newspaper editorial. The passage below has a claim supported by reasons.

 Flexitime, or flexibility of working hours, has become popular amongst corporates in recent times. (*This is the claim*). Many corporates have found that flexitime has several advantages. The most obvious advantage is less absenteeism. When employees can choose working hours that meet their needs, they are less likely to take time off. Another advantage of flexitime is more efficient use of the business office. The additional hours that a company is "open for business" often converts into higher productivity and greater profits. Besides giving employees a choice of their working hours, it allows them to exert more control over their working environment. This leads to increased job satisfaction and less employee turnover.

Similarly, there could be a passage having a claim supported by facts. (Please recollect that 'Facts' are statements/information that can be physically verified. They might prove to be true or false on verification.) Consider the following passage:


 Country X's relations with Country Y have varied from being stormy and incordial at times to being icy cold and impersonal at other times. There have been periods in the histories of the two countries when their relationships have been dictated by the military maneuvers around their borders—for instance the times preceding the 1945, the 1957 and the Kampaundril wars—while at other times, the relationship has been cold and impersonal at best due to Country X's constant refrain that Country Y has been instigating terrorism within its borders.

Let us now look at some additional points that you need to keep in mind while reading for the conclusion and the supports in a paragraph:

1. Try to identify the conclusion sentence/s within a paragraph. Many a time the conclusion sentence will be indicated by the use of signal words. While reading a CR paragraph, look for such words. Some of them are: *therefore, thus, hence, so, in conclusion, as a result of, in*

short, in sum, the point is.

 The consumption of tobacco is harmful to the health of the individual. Hence, smoking should be banned.

 The signal word hence at the beginning of the second sentence, indicates the oncoming conclusion.

2. If no conclusion or main claim is stated, you can construct it by finding the main question which the essay directly addresses.

Let us now work out a few examples in spotting Conclusions and Reasons.

Directions: For each of the arguments given below, write down the conclusion and the reasons.

1. If any government becomes tyrannical, then the people governed under that government have a right to revolt. The government of France has become tyrannical. Therefore, the people governed by the government of France have a right to revolt against it.

Conclusion:

Reasons:

2. I don't care how many acting awards Salim Khan has won. He simply has no sense of acting. He looks like a dud in whatever roles he plays. Be it a romantic, action or a dramatic role, he simply is not able to act.

Conclusion:

Reasons:

3. If you haven't tried our Pack and Chew's Pastry, you simply must. It's the best pastry in town. We make it the home made way. Besides, it's good because we use vitamin enriched materials.

Conclusion:

Reasons:

Having recognized that every Conclusion-Reason passage is composed of an argument supported by its set of reasons/facts, we need to look at two additional components which underlie every argument (Hence which are a part and parcel of every CR passage)—viz. **Assumptions and Inferences**.

What are Assumptions?

An *assumption* is the passage's "must have." In other words, if the assumption is not true, it follows that the conclusion is not true.

Assumptions can be defined as additional unstated evidence/information, which bridges the gap between the argument, its evidence presented and the conclusion. In other words, you can also look at assumptions as additional information that the author has assumed the reader already knows while reading the argument. It is best explained through an example.

Argument: Since, India's time zone is five and a half hours ahead of GMT, we can conclude that India is to the East of the United Kingdom.

The unstated assumption here is that if the time of a country is ahead of the GMT, it lies to the east of the United Kingdom. Another, unstated assumption here is that the United Kingdom follows the GMT.

The assumption is a support to the argument, which must be true. Else the argument will fall apart. It

the best case, the argument is seriously weakened if the assumption that the author assumes is false.

How do we spot assumptions?

In order to deduce assumptions in an argument, you need to look for holes in the argument. Try to identify a missing support that would have the effect of providing a missing support to the argument. The author's belief about an unstated assumption is that it need not be explicitly stated. He believes that his reader will automatically assume the missing assumption. Hence, he does not feel the need to write it explicitly in the passage.

In order to find the hole, ask yourself the following question:

Is the evidence/supporting logic explicitly presented in the argument sufficient so as to support the argument? Is any additional evidence/supporting logic necessary to justify the argument? If yes, an assumption has been made.

Once you have identified a hole, your next objective is to try to word the additional evidence/supporting logic that you need to assume for the argument to make sense. For this purpose, ask yourself the following question:

What additional evidence/supporting logic do I as a reader, need to assume for the argument to make sense?

The answer to the above question gives you a possible assumption. Before you accept that assumption, however, you might need to test whether your assumed assumption is valid or not. In order to do so, try to **deny or negate** the assumption.

What happens when you negate the assumption? Does it weaken your argument?

If yes, then your assumption is correct, i.e., in case the assumption is not true, then the argument makes no sense. Hence, you have a valid assumption.

If no, then the assumption you have identified is not correct, i.e., the argument continues to make sense even if the assumption is not true. In such a case, you should realise that your assumption is wrong.

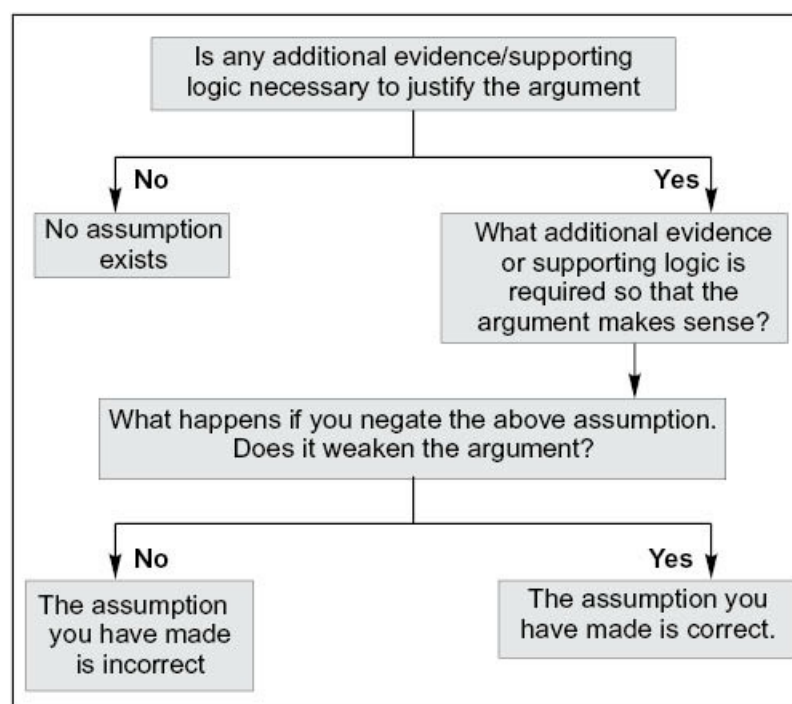


Fig. 5.1 Identifying an assumption in an argument

Let us now move on to the next issue—Inferences

What are Inferences?

An inference can be defined as an unstated extension of the argument. In other words, it can also be seen as an implied conclusion. The inference may be about the main point in the paragraph or it could be about a less central issue. This factor does not affect the fact that an inference is an implied conclusion.

The Cream of the Piece

Unlike assumptions which are the basis of the argument and hence, come before the argument, inferences come after the argument.

Figuratively speaking, imagine a 3 storey building as an argument. The assumptions can be seen as the foundation of the building. At the same time, an inference would be akin to the 4th storey of the building. While the building would not exist without a foundation, the shape and size of the 4th storey can be logically deduced from that of the third storey.

Further, unlike assumptions, which you have to find, an inference will show itself to you when you read the entire argument. Inferences emerge out of a combination of the statements in the paragraph. If all the statements in the passage are true, the inferences which emerge out of the combination of some or all of the statements must also be true.

The Cream of the Piece

The logic of an inference (or an implied conclusion) can be captured as follows:

If **A** (statement in a paragraph) and **B** (statement in the paragraph) are **true**, then **C** (inference or the implied conclusion) is automatically true.

Hence, in order to check whether the inference you have drawn is correct, try to deny the inference.

i.e. given that **A** and **B** are true, **C** need not be true.

If this logic can be justified, then the inference you might have drawn is incorrect. On the other hand, if this logic cannot be justified, then the inference is correct.

As a recap of this section, we would like to remind you that in order to be able to solve a CR question, you should be reading the CR paragraph with four basic objectives.

These are:

- (1) What is the claim/argument made by the author of the paragraph?
- (2) What are the supports the author is providing to the claim/argument?
- (3) What are the assumptions the author is making while making the claim/argument?
- (4) What unstated inferences/conclusions should you draw from the statements contained in the paragraph?

The principles elucidated above are principles associated with good reading of arguments. Initially, you will need to practice applying these principles consciously. Like any other activity, the more you apply these principles, the better you will become at them. You need to continue practicing these principles consciously till you feel that they have become a part of your reflexes. After that, all these principles will apply intuitively, i.e., you will be able to spot the claim, its supports, the assumptions as well as the inferences, as a reflex to the reading of the question. When you reach that stage, you

will realise that you have become good at solving CR questions.

We now move on to the typical question types asked under CR.

QUESTION TYPES IN CRITICAL REASONING

Critical reasoning questions will ask you to do any of the following:


- (1) Test for the strengthening of an argument with (a) additional evidence (b) additional reasons/arguments.
- (2) Test for the weakening of an argument with (a) additional evidence (b) additional reasons/arguments.
- (3) Identify an assumption.
- (4) Identify an inference.
- (5) Select the best concluding statement for a paragraph.
- (6) Summarise the argument.
- (7) Segregate relevant and irrelevant information.
- (8) Evaluate the method of the argument.
- (9) Identify the flaws/fallacies in an argument.
- (10) Identify Cause and Effect relationships.

Question type 1: The strengthening of an Argument

The claim of an argument is supported by reasons or evidences. In questions on strengthening of the argument, the question will ask you to select from amongst the four/five options, the one that strengthens the argument. Arguments can be strengthened in two ways: either through the introduction of some supporting evidence or the introduction of some supporting reasons. Hence, these questions might ask you to select an option that provides either supporting evidence or supporting reasons.

Besides, if we have an option that strengthens an assumption that is the key to the argument's claim, then that option will also strengthen the argument.


In a figurative sense, if you look at the argument as a building with supports, then supporting evidences/reasons provide us with additional supports to the claim of the question. In such questions, while evaluating the options, you should try to assess which option best supports the claim of the argument. The strengthening evidence/reason might be stronger/equal to/or weaker than the explicitly stated evidences/reasons in the argument. However, in order to find out the correct answer to such questions, you do not need to compare the quality of the support an option provides with respect to the explicitly stated supports. All you need to do is compare the respective options and try to see which option best supports the claim of the argument. By evaluating the relative strengths of the support provided to the claim of the argument, you can easily identify the correct option. The following question will make this question type clear to you.

 One of the most important and constructive reforms in National Politics has been the abolition of the post of State Ministers in the various departments.

Each of the following, if true, would strengthen the above argument, except

- (A) There are few, if any, specific duties or responsibilities assigned to the State Minister in any department.
- (B) A historian claimed that the post was "superfluous."

- (C) People of Cabinet Minister caliber normally refuse the post if offered a ministership in the guise of a state minister.
- (D) The office is used as a means of appeasing regional parties, by giving their MPs ministerial status and perks without giving them any significant responsibilities.

 The correct answer is B.


Question Type 2: The Weakening of an Argument

These questions are very similar to strengthening argument questions—the only difference being that they are on the other side of the fence. Similar to the strengthening of arguments, weakening of arguments can also be done by the introduction of additional evidence and/ or reasons that attack the basis of the claim of the argument.

After identifying the claim in an argument and the supports provided for the claim, you will need to evaluate each option for the degree to which it goes towards weakening the argument. The evidence/ reason that most/least seriously weakens, the supports of the argument's claim would be the answer (depending upon what you have been asked to identify).


In a figurative sense, the weakening evidence/reasons are like attacks on the pillars of the building—(i.e., they attack the supports of the argument's claim). Your judgment needs to tell you how serious the attack is.


Besides, if we have an option that weakens an assumption that is key to the argument's claim, then that option will also have the effect of weakening the argument. Let us look at a few examples that will make this question type clear to you:

 Before the arrival of a new trainer, the sales output in AMS Learning Systems Ltd. had been rising by 20% per year on the average over the past ten years. However, after new training innovations by the trainer (which included computerisation of training processes and reductions in the need for additional work force) annual sales output has only risen by 10% this year. It appears that Joe's innovations have caused the reduction in the annual growth rate.

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


- (A) The investment in computerisation has a provision for depreciation of the cost of the computers.
- (B) Increases in selling price did not follow increases in the cost of the inputs.
- (C) The innovations brought in by the new trainer were intended as long-term investments and not made for short-term profit growth.
- (D) General demand for the training provided by the company has declined.


 The correct answer is D.

 In the past, to run for one's country in the Asiad was the ultimate achievement of any athlete. Nowadays, an athlete's motives are more and more influenced by financial gain, and consequently, we do not see our best athletes in the Asiad, which is still only for amateurs.

Which of the following will most weaken the above conclusion?

- (A) The publicity and fame that can be achieved by competing in the Asiad makes the athletes who do so, more "marketable" by agents and potential sponsors. Thus, they can earn a lot of money even while retaining their amateur status.
- (B) The spirit of the Asiad places emphasis on participation rather than on the winning of the race.
- (C) A leading columnist recently argued on the basis of concrete evidence that our best Asiad athletes already receive enough in terms of promotions and sponsorships.
- (D) It has been suggested that professional athletes should be allowed to compete in the games.


 The correct answer is A.


 In these times of growing economic turbulence, unless new reserves are found soon, the world's supply of natural gases is being

depleted in such a way that with demand continuing to grow at the present rates, reserves will be exhausted by the year 2200 AD.

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


- (A) There has been a slowdown in the rate of increase in world demand for natural gases over the last decade, from 20% to 10%.
- (B) It has been known for many years that there are vast stocks of natural gases under Antarctica, which have yet to be economically exploited.
- (C) Electricity is being used increasingly in place of natural gases for many industrial and domestic uses.
- (D) None of the above.

 The correct answer is D.

 In accordance with their powers, many *zilla panchayats* are introducing chlorination of the drinking water provided to families through the water supply system. This follows the conclusion of 10 years of research that the process ensures that children and adults receive the required intake of fluoride that will strengthen teeth. The maximum level has been set at one part per million. However, there are many who object, claiming that chlorination removes freedom of choice.


Which of the following will weaken the claim of the proponents of chlorination?

- (A) Chlorination over a certain prescribed level has been shown to lead to a general weakening of teeth.
- (B) There is no record of the long-term effects of drinking chlorinated water on dental and general health.
- (C) In a study done at the grassroots level, it was found that some people to be affected by chlorination claim that they have not had sufficient opportunity to voice their views about the issue.
- (D) Water already contains natural chlorine.

 The correct answer is B.


Question Type 3: Identify an Assumption


We have already looked at assumptions in details. This question type asks you to identify the assumption in the paragraph. The following examples will make it clear to you:

 In response to the criticism about the methods used by his poll predicting agency, a leading psephologist Mannooy Toy, replied: “I realise there are some shortcomings to the questionnaire method that we have applied to do the survey. However, since we have ensured that we send a copy of the questionnaire to every home in each of the constituency where we have carried out our survey, we believe the results to be quite representative..... We think the numbers received are so large that it overcomes the lack of a scientific approach that might have crept into our survey.

The writer of the above statement makes which of the following assumptions?

- (A) A high proportion of the respondents who have received the questionnaire have replied to the same.
- (B) A majority of the voters in the constituency live in homes.
- (C) The method of data collection used by the agency is unscientific.
- (D) A large, absolute number of replies automatically guarantees the accuracy of the results.

 The correct answer is D.


 A recent survey by a leading NGO came to the following conclusion about donor psychology:


If you are interested in getting a good donation, you need to realise that donors are almost never disturbed by being asked for too much. In fact, the result is the opposite—they are flattered. Besides, if you ask for too much, the donor can always suggest a smaller amount. On the other hand, if you ask for too little, the donor is usually offended. A common reaction to being asked too little is “so that’s all he thinks I’m worth.”

The above statement assumes that

- (A) Donors are usually never asked for enough.
- (B) A good fund raiser will value the worth of the donor.
- (C) It is worth the gamble to ask for large donations.


(D) None of these.


 The correct answer is C.

 New age problems require new age solutions. Further new age problems arise with new age populations and new age technologies. In order to find solutions to these problems we need to build new age institutions as well as new age political, economic and social mechanisms. Yet, institutions and political and economic mechanisms grow slowly and die slowly. Hence, new age institutions should be given every chance of trying to achieve success in their objectives.

The argument above rests on which of the following assumptions:


- (A) New age institutions are needed because old institutions are inefficient.
- (B) New age institutions are created in order to solve existing problems.
- (C) Over a course of time, as an institution grows, it has chances of succeeding in its objectives.
- (D) None of these


 The correct answer is C.

 In its quest to go global, once an Indian company has established an extensive sales network in a foreign market and therefore, has achieved substantial sales, it seems that these markets should be treated in a very similar fashion to those in India. It is therefore only in those countries where only initial sales networks have been developed, where marketing methods will have to differ from the methods applied in India.

The above statement assumes that:


- (A) Sales networks can be the same in both foreign countries and in India.
- (B) Extensive sales networks are preferable to less developed ones.
- (C) The markets of some countries will develop faster than others.
- (D) None of these.


 The correct answer is B.

 The main monetary policy objective is to reduce substantially, the import surplus of the coming years while resuming economic growth. Realisation of this goal entails a marked structural change of the economy, which can be brought about by freezing the standard of living (per capita private consumption plus public services) and restricting investments that do not further exports.

The writer of the above policy assumes that:

- (A) Economic growth will lead to structural changes in the economy.
- (B) If people consume less, the economy grows.
- (C) In order to reduce import surplus investment needs to be restricted.
- (D) People should be persuaded to give up consumption in order to achieve the national good.

 The correct answer is B.


 The reason that is most commonly quoted for nationalisation of foreign companies is a change in governance. Nationalisation tends to cover a wide range of industries and is not selective to the country of ownership of the foreign company.

The above statement assumes that:

- (A) Some critical industries are more likely to be nationalised than others which might not be so critical.
- (B) The process of nationalisation is not limited to any particular industry or country.
- (C) Nationalisation of businesses is so widespread as to cause concern at the international level.
- (D) Sharing ownership with local nationals will forestall takeovers by foreign governments.


Question Type 4: Identify an Inference/Conclusion

We have already discussed inferences and conclusions in details. Questions related to these will ask you to spot the option that is/is not an inference or a conclusion that can be drawn from the details mentioned in the paragraph. Consider the following examples, which will clarify to you how questions about inferences are structured:

 A pill that can induce abortions in pregnant women has become available in Australia. The drug Antiperphrine, has proved more than 98.9% effective in tests conducted by a scientific team in Sydney. The drug is an anti hormone and disrupts pregnancy by blocking the implantation of a fertilized egg in the wall of the uterus. In Australia, the pill will be available to women who are upto 42 days late in their menstrual cycle. The company that manufactures the pill, states however, that the pill is not a “morning after” pill for use as a contraceptive.

Which of the following statements can be correctly deduced from the text above?


- (A) The drug Antiperphrine uses a new type of contraceptive method.
- (B) The drug Antiperphrine blocks egg production.
- (C) The drug Antiperphrine has the effect of termination of pregnancy.
- (D) The drug is only available in Australia.


 The correct answer is C.

One of the most important measures of a country’s trading strength is the measurement of its net exports. Net exports are defined as exports less imports. It is important since the figure measures the net effect of a nation’s trade in goods and services vis-a-vis the world. In 1998, the country’s net exports were 7 percent of its GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and in 2005, they were 14 percent.

If the information above is accurate, which of the following must be true?


- (A) If GDP was constant from 1998 to 2005, net exports were greater in 2005 than in 1998.
- (B) Exports were greater than imports in 2005, but not in 1998.
- (C) Exports doubled from 1998 to 2005.
- (D) In 1998, net exports were lower than in 2005.


 The correct answer is A.

 About 40 percent of urban Indian husbands think it is a good idea for wives with school age children to work outside the home. Only about ten percent of rural Indian husbands approve of the same. Every second urban Indian wife, and one in four rural Indian wives with school age children has a job outside her home.

If the information above is correct, which of the following can be inferred?


- (A) Rural Indian families have more children than urban Indian families.
- (B) Employment opportunities for urban Indian wives are greater than for rural Indian wives.
- (C) Urban Indian husbands have a less conservative attitude than rural Indian husbands.
- (D) Rural Indian husbands would seem to be less satisfied about working wives who have school age children than urban Indian husbands.

 The correct answer is D.

 Paro overslept. Therefore, she was late for school by the time she got ready. Hence, she did not eat her breakfast. As she realised that she was late for her school bus, she ran as fast as she could from her home to the bus stop and did not see a banana skin that was lying on the ground in her path. She slipped on the banana skin and fractured her leg. Some passersby took her to the hospital and while lying in bed she was visited by her friend Dhanno, who wanted to know why she had got up so late.

Which of the following conclusions can be made from the above passage?

- (A) Because Paro did not eat her breakfast, she broke her ankle.
- (B) Paro's friend visited her in the hospital because she wanted to know why she was in the hospital.
- (C) Paro did not notice the banana skin because she overslept.
- (D) Paro's fractured leg meant that she did not go to school that day.


 The correct answer is D.

A recent study on medicine addiction found out that there are principally three main factors that determine the risk of becoming dependant on or addicted to medicines. The first factor is the type of medicine, the second is the personality of the individual, and the third factor is controlled by the circumstances in which the medicine is taken. As a parallel example, we only need to look as far as alcohol. While it could be safely said that the majority of the adult population have taken alcohol, yet only a small proportion of these go on to get addicted to alcohol. Besides, it is well documented that many strong medicines that have been used for medical purposes have not caused the patient to become addicted.

However, the study found that people who took medicines for the heck of it were more likely to become dependent on the same. The dependence need not be restricted to the physiological side but may become psychological, although the effects are still essentially the same. People with psychopathic, immature or otherwise unstable personalities were shown to be at the greatest risk of becoming addicted.

Which of the following conclusions can be drawn from the text?

- (A) One becomes addicted to certain medicines only if one has a weak personality.
- (B) Taking medicines for the fun of it increases the possibility of becoming dependent on medicines.
- (C) Alcohol is a safe medicine since very few people become dependent on it.
- (D) Long-term use of certain drugs for medical purposes does not cause addiction.


 The correct answer is B.

 An advertisement for a leading racquet manufacturer made the following claim:

The last five Wimbledon men's single champions have all changed to Head's new tennis rackets—the only racket that uses genuine nano technology in its frame. In that case, isn't now the time to add power to your tennis strokes and to trade in your old racket for a Head?

Which of the following claims is not made and cannot be inferred from the above ad?

- (A) Frames strengthened by nano-technology are used only in Head's new rackets.
- (B) Nano technology strengthened frames make tennis rackets stronger and allow the player to make more powerful strokes.
- (C) Former Wimbledon champions know a great deal about tennis and their equipment.
- (D) Head tennis rackets helped the last five Wimbledon men's' singles champions achieve their status.

 The correct answer is D.

Question Type 5: Select the Best Concluding Statement of a Paragraph


In this type of question, a paragraph is given and four alternative concluding statements are given for the same. You are required to choose the option that best concludes the paragraph. These questions first made their appearance in the CAT 2005 examination and sparked huge debates amongst the student community about their answers.

The reason for the confusion was that when read normally, each of the four options for the concluding sentence, logically followed the material of the text in the paragraph. However, in these questions the key to deducing the one correct option is the ability to understand the author's opinion (Advanced Reading Skill 5 from Part I of this book.). Once you have identified the author's opinion, you can evaluate the options for the concluding sentence by trying to fit in the one option that made the most

‘concluding sense’ in the context of the author’s opinion about the topic.

By trying to fit the concluding sense of each option, we mean to say that you need to compare how each sentence concludes the argument, i.e., winds up the points made by the author and best conveys the author’s opinion about the topic.


Further, the concluding sentence also needs to be a conclusion of the paragraph. It should not leave the scope of further carrying the paragraph’s discussion forward. The following examples will help you understand this type of question:

 Complete the following paragraph with the most suitable sentence.

In order to boost sales of toys at times other than the peak sale time, toy-manufacturers take recourse to the use of several techniques. Some of these include promoting character toys from Bollywood and Hollywood movies or TV series. All these sets are marketed as “collectibles” for the young consumers. The collections within a family of Collectibles, however, never appear to be complete (especially to the parents). As soon as all the characters are acquired, the child then requires the associated gadgets and gizmos that are bundled into the collectible set. Thus parents go shopping for the “car,” the “home,” the “mobile home,” and even the “airplane” to ensure a happy homely environment for the toys. Ultimately, just as the elusive final piece of the series is attained, the manufacturer and promoter release the next series of “collectibles.”

The prime aim of the manufacturer and promoter is to ensure that


- (A) all children should be happy and no child can be happy without a complete series of toys.
- (B) as soon as one set is complete or almost complete, then the next one arrives on the scene.
- (C) children should be encouraged to complete their collections of toys.
- (D) sales need to be artificially bolstered throughout the year.


 The correct answer is D.

 Let us now look at the following examples from the CAT 2005:


Federer’s fifth grand slam win prompted a reporter to ask whether he was the best ever. Federer is certainly not lacking in confidence, but he wasn’t about to proclaim himself the best ever. “The best player of this generation, yes” he said, “But nowhere close to ever. Just look at the records that some guys have. I’m a minnow.” _____

- 1. His win against Agassi, a genius of the previous generation, contradicts that.
- 2. Sampras, the king of an earlier generation, was as humble.
- 3. He is more than a minnow to his contemporaries.
- 4. The difference between ‘the best of this generation’ and ‘the best ever’ is a matter of perception.

 The correct answer is 3. You need an answer that concludes the passage. While options 1 & 2 take the paragraph into a new direction, 4 is irrelevant in the context provided—it is too general in nature.

 Thus the end of knowledge and the closing of the frontier that it symbolizes is not a looming crisis at all, but merely one of many embarrassing fits of hubris in civilization’s long industry. In the end, it will pass away and be forgotten. Ours is not the first generation to struggle to understand the organizational laws of the frontier, deceive itself that it has succeeded, and go to its grave having failed.

- 1. One would be wise to be humble.
- 2. But we might be the first generation to actually reach the frontier.
- 3. But we might be the first generation to deal with the crisis.
- 4. However, this time the success is not illusory.

 Options 2 & 4 seem to indicate that we might have reached the frontier. But by its very definition, the frontier of knowledge can never be reached. Hence, you can eliminate these answers. Further, if you consider option 3, it talks about dealing with the crisis—which does not exist at all according to the first sentence of the paragraph. Thus, the correct answer is Option 1.



Most firms consider expert individuals to be too elitist, temperamental, egocentric, and difficult to work with. Force such people to collaborate on a high stakes project and they just might come to fisticuffs. Even the very notion of managing such a group seems unimaginable. So most organizations will fall into default mode, setting up project teams of people who get along nicely.

1. The result however is disastrous.
2. The result is mediocrity.
3. The result is the creation of experts who then become elitists.
4. Naturally, they drive innovations.

The paragraph clearly states that teams are formed on the basis of people's ability to get along with each other (rather than on their merit with respect to the task at hand). Obviously, this leads to a compromise in the quality of the work being performed. Hence, Option 4 is eliminated. Option 1 simply does not follow from the previous sentence since the word *however* indicates that the author should be contradicting his previous idea with this sentence. However, if you analyse the ideas in the last sentence of the paragraph and the Option 1, you will clearly see that there is no contrast between the two ideas.

Option 3 talks about an effect that is highly improbable in the context. Option 2 is perfect since you will expect mediocrity when you create a team on the basis of parameters other than ability.

The audiences for crosswords and sudoku, understandably, overlap greatly, but there are differences, too. A crossword attracts a more literary person, while sudoku appeals to a keenly logical mind. Some crossword enthusiasts turn up their noses at sudoku because they feel it lacks depth. A good crossword requires vocabulary, knowledge, mental flexibility and sometimes even a sense of humor to complete it. It touches numerous areas of life and provides an 'Aha!' or two along the way. _____

1. Sudoku, on the other hand, is just a logical exercise, each one similar to the last.
2. Sudoku, incidentally, is growing faster in popularity than crosswords even among the literate.
3. Sudoku, on the other hand, can be attempted and enjoyed even by children.
4. Sudoku, however, is not exciting in any sense of the term.

In order to solve the above question, you need to understand that you are looking for the option that best 'completes' the paragraph. The structural construct under which we reach the last sentence of the paragraph is that of a comparison between crosswords and sudokus. The author has shown a clear bias towards crosswords—and in fact is in the process of explaining his sentence '*Some crossword enthusiasts turn up their noses at sudoku because they feel it lacks depth.*' So obviously, after praising crosswords, he has to talk in a dark light about sudoku. Option 1 has the perfect fit under this structure. Although Option 4 is also negative in its construction, it is unlikely to be the answer because of the fact that it is too crude and direct—something that you cannot associate with the author's style of writing. Options 2 and 3 get eliminated because they are talking positively about sudokus—something that goes against our expectations of what the author is likely to convey.

Question Type 6: Questions that Ask You to Summarise an Argument

This is another important question type which has been regularly seen in the CAT and other top Management Entrance Exams. A **summary** is defined as the reduction of a large amount of information to its most important points. You need to remember the following points about summarising in order to be able to spot summaries effectively:

- (1) While achieving a reduction of the passage into its summary, care is taken to ensure that the main idea of the passage is properly communicated—i.e., there is no compromise or dilution of the sense of the main idea communicated by the passage while framing the summary. The summary might have the main idea stated in the original words of the author or in fresh words which will essentially convey the same meaning. This factor should always be kept in mind while solving summary based questions. Hence, recognising the main idea of the passage while reading the original text for the first time is extremely crucial for identifying the correct summary.

A good process to follow in trying to recognise the summary is to go back to the questions:

- Who or what is the original text talking about? (Answer: TOPIC of the text); and
- What is the main idea about the topic that is being conveyed by the original text? (Answer: MAIN IDEA of the text)

Then, you go on to the alternative summaries available and ask the same questions again with respect to the proposed summary.


- Who or what is the summary talking about? (Answer: TOPIC of the summary) and;
- What is the main idea about the topic that is being conveyed by the summary? (Answer: MAIN IDEA of the summary.)

For the correct option, the two answers that emerge out of these questions should be exactly the same as the two answers that emerged out of the original text.

- (2) Significant reduction from the original text to the summary is generally achieved by either condensing or removing altogether the supporting details in the passage. In many cases, it is not even necessary to mention some of the details presented in the original paragraph in order to write a good summary.
- (3) Very often, authors of texts repeat the main idea several times while writing. This is done to ensure that their main idea is hammered into the minds of the reader several times and in several ways so that the gaps (if any) in understanding the main idea may be removed.

Needless to say, in the summary, the main idea will be written only once—and **that too in one sentence only**. Any repetitions of ideas present in the original text are removed from the summary.


Consider the following example:

 Jaya and Devika are both successful women who are also members of a socially disadvantaged section of the society. Jaya has a firm belief in positive discrimination. By positive discrimination she believes that the negative discrimination that society has subjected her section of the society which can only be offset through reverse discrimination. She believes that if positions of economic, social and political eminence, power and honor are offered principally to historically disadvantaged sections of society, then these groups will begin to play a more significant role in society today.

Devika, on the other hand, feels that she has succeeded in her chosen field of work on her hard work and on her own merits. She thinks that the principle of positive discrimination is flawed since it will result in the lowering of standards and decreases competition between similarly qualified personnel who will expect to achieve positions because of their factors other than rather than their suitability for the particular position.

Which of the following best sums up Jaya's argument?

- (A) Positive discrimination will encourage more people to apply for jobs, previously unavailable to them.
- (B) Positive discrimination will give extra opportunities to socially disadvantaged sections of the society.
- (C) Quality and professionalism will improve because of the greater number of positions held by members of minority groups.
- (D) Positive discrimination will remove deep rooted prejudices against the weaker sections of society from the work arena.

 The correct answer is B.


The Question Type 7: Questions that Ask You to Identify the Relevance of the Argument

Relevant information questions are framed with the objective of testing the student's abilities to understand the main idea of the passage. The student is expected to test various options for their relevance to the arguments presented.

A relevant piece of information can be defined as something that affects the argument—either positively by strengthening it or negatively by weakening it. The degree to which the argument is affected in either direction is not a factor while testing the relevance of the information.

In some cases, information is relevant to the argument simply because it has the effect of either elaborating or explaining or expanding the main point.

Obviously, when the argument is not affected by the information provided in any way, it becomes irrelevant in the context of the text provided.

 Another way in which you will have to test the reasonableness of an argument is by linking the information to how it helps you judge an assumption in the argument. Does the information whose relevance you have to judge have any effect on how reasonable an assumption underlying the argument is? Does it make the assumption more valid and reasonable? Does it reduce the reasonableness of the assumption of the argument? If the answer to either of these is yes, then it automatically makes the information reasonable.

Consider the following example:


A service oriented company, Bharadwaj Inc., included in its annual balance sheet and P&L accounts presented to its shareholders at its AGM, the following note on its policy of accounting:

Fixed assets are stated in the consolidated balance sheet at cost minus accumulated depreciation and amortization. Depreciation is provided on all fixed assets, except land. This is done to reflect the true value of the asset. The writing off of their cost is done by using the Straight Line Method of depreciation over the estimated economically useful lives of the respective assets.

The cost of leasehold improvements, if any, is amortized over the term of the remaining number of years of the lease in equal annual installments.

Which of the following statements is relevant to, but not consistent with, the above accounting policy?

- (A) The economic useful life of land and buildings is assumed to be 40 years, and Bharadwaj Inc., therefore, employs a depreciation rate of 2.5% per annum.
- (B) Bharadwaj Inc. include in their plant, equipment whose historical cost is Rs. 1.5 crore. This is mentioned at its historical cost itself, even though this equipment is more than 10 years old and the depreciation rate on plant and machinery has been 1.5% for many years.
- (C) The company spent Rs. 30 lakh on improving a building, which is leased. The period of the lease was seven years, but the lease must be renewed in two years time. The company provided for amortization at 50% of the amount for this year.
- (D) None of these

 The correct answer is B.

Question Type 8: Questions that Ask You to Evaluate the Method of the Argument

Questions based on the method of the argument, ask the student to identify the technique applied by the author of the argument in order to make his argument, i.e., the logic for the support of the claim that the author is making.


Method questions are normally general about the entire argument, but can be sometimes specific about a part of the argument.

Some examples of the kinds of options the method based questions might give

- (1) The author argues from a small sample to a large population.
- (2) The author compares two parallel events and argues on the basis of parallels and contrasts.
- (3) The author uses an analogy to present his case.
- (4) The author transfers a cause and effect relationship from one field to another.
- (5) The author uses an appeal to popular opinion in order to make his point.
- (6) The author is making a prediction based on the evidence from events of the past.


- (7) The author attacks the opponent rather than attacking his argument.
- (8) The author discusses two diverse issues by comparing commonalities between them.
- (9) The author makes an extrapolation of a personal experience into a general case.
- (10) The author argues from the specific to the generic.
- (11) The author argues from the generic to the specific.

In order to solve questions based on Method, ask yourself how the author has reached the conclusion and in what context each part of the evidence is presented.

 A famous judge stated that if murder is a worse crime than blackmail and blackmail is a worse crime than theft, then murder is a much worse crime than theft.

Which is a correct analysis of the above argument?


- (A) A case operating in one situation will also be operative in another situation, if both situations are characterised in identical terms.
- (B) A case that operates under certain conditions will surely be operative in other situations in which the same conditions are present in a more acute form.
- (C) A case that clearly expresses the purpose it was meant to serve will also apply in other situations in which the identical purpose may be served.
- (D) None of the above.

 The correct answer is D.

Question Type 9: Questions that Ask You to Identify the Flaws/Fallacies in an Argument

Flaw based questions are similar to method based questions. The only difference is that unlike in the case of method questions where the validity of the argument does not matter, in flaw based questions, the validity of the argument matters. You need to identify whether there is an error in the entire argument or whether it is in a specific part of the argument.


Consider the following questions based on flaws/fallacies in an argument.

 Roma: The number of accidents on state and national highways this year in the state of Karnataka, where the speed limit was lowered to fifty kmph an hour two years ago, is clear evidence that speed restrictions rigorously enforced, make drivers more aware of the dangers of going too fast.

Aamir: Wrong. If you take a close look at the records it will show you that the number of accidents has been falling ever since the introduction of newer and stricter penalties for traffic rules violations, which happened two years before the lowering of the speed limit.


Which of the following best describes the weak point in Roma's statement upon which Aamir focuses?

- (A) The decrease in highway accidents may be a temporary phenomenon.
- (B) The evidence Roma cites comes only from one area.
- (C) No exact statistics for freeway accidents are given by Roma.
- (D) Roma fails to provide concrete evidence to prove a direct causative relationship between the cause and the effect.

 The correct answer is D.


Question Type 10: Questions that Ask You to Identify Cause-Effect Relationships

Cause-effect relationships are commonly used in all types of argumentations. We have studied this in detail under Reading Comprehension as well as under the chapter on Paragraph Jumbles. Questions of this type will ask you to spot/reason out causal relationships between diverse events/phenomena. Look at the following question in order to get a clearer picture of such questions:

 In India in 1990, there were, on an average 14 deaths at birth (infant mortality) per 1,00,000 population. By 2000 there were 11, and by 2001, 8. Today, there are 5 deaths at birth per 1,00,000 population, and it is anticipated that the downward trend will continue.

Each of the following, if true, would help account for this trend except:

- (A) Medical care is more widespread and available.
- (B) More effective birth control methods have been implemented.
- (C) The number of pediatricians per 10,000 population has increased.
- (D) Midwifery has declined in favor of doctors.

 The correct answer is D.

GENERAL APPROACH FOR SOLVING CRITICAL REASONING QUESTIONS

The Cream of the Piece

Step 1: Read the question stem first. This will help you to decide what you are going to be looking for in the paragraph when you read it for the first time.

Step 2: Next read the passage, identifying the claim, the supporting reasons/evidence, the assumptions inherent in the argument and the inferences that can be made from the argument.

Step 3: Pre-phrase your answer—Knowing what you are going to be looking for while reading the options is helpful in order to get the correct answer. Then, check the options to see which one best fits your opinion.

ELEMENTARY PRACTICE EXERCISE

1. The best movie showing in the country right now is *Black and Red* —it has been in the #1 position for three weeks.
 - How can we weaken this argument?
 - How can we strengthen this argument?
2. All mammals have red blood. Therefore, deers have red blood.
 - If so, what is the “missing step,” or “hidden assumption?”
3. The Education Minister has recently suggested that all people should go to school for at least 15 years. However, this argument is clearly wrong since the minister himself is educated only upto the sixth class.
 - How can we weaken this argument?
 - How can we strengthen this argument?
4. It is a well accepted fact that in order to raise your scores in the CAT, you should study and practice the question types in the test a lot. However, Motilal used this strategy and he did not get the score that he wanted. Therefore, this strategy is not helpful.
 - How can we weaken this argument?
 - How can we strengthen this argument?
5. It is a commonly known fact that most people do not obey traffic signals when they drive on the roads. Isn't it very often that you have noticed people disobey signals and get away scotfree? We can therefore conclude that the system of traffic signals is entirely useless.

- How can we weaken this argument?
 - How can we strengthen this argument?
6. Frozen water is less dense than liquid water. Therefore, frozen water will float in liquid water.
 - If so, what is the “missing step,” or “hidden assumption?”
 7. The President has recently suggested adding fluoride to all public water sources. This is obviously a bad idea since many of the former communist and fascist countries also added fluoride to all their public water sources.
 - How can we weaken this argument?
 - How can we strengthen this argument?
 8. Four hours ago I had a bad cold and headache, so I took six Dercold tablets. I still have the cold and the headache. Therefore, Dercold is a useless medicine.
 - How can we weaken this argument?
 - How can we strengthen this argument?
 9. In an attempt to increase sales, HTR Ltd. implemented a new customer service policy that required all sales representatives to address all prospective clients by name. Within three months of this step, sales had risen by over 25%, something that had never happened in the company’s history. The new policy was therefore a success.
 - How can we weaken this argument?
 - How can we strengthen this argument?
 10. It is obvious to everyone who can reason that Einstein could not have formulated the theory of relativity. It is a common fact that Einstein did not receive a passing grade in math class as a child.
 - What is the “missing step” or “hidden assumption” in this argument?
 - How can we weaken this argument?
 - How can we strengthen this argument?

PRACTICE EXERCISES

1. Oligopoly is the state where there are many competitors within a single market. The Pepsi Company realizes that its operations are in competitive industries.
Which of the following conclusions may be inferred from the above?
 - (a) Pepsi’s market is not oligopolistic.
 - (b) Monopoly is defined as one seller in a market.
 - (c) The Pepsi Company has a lot of domestic competition
 - (d) The Pepsi Company is operating in an oligopolistic market.
 - (e) Monopoly and oligopoly are similar markets.
2. People in a South African tribe have observed that heavy rains are usually preceded by claps of thunder. They are convinced that the heavy rains are somehow caused by the claps of thunder.

Which of the following, if true, would weaken the tribals' conviction?

- (a) The temperature must fall below 20 degrees Celsius for both heavy rains and claps of thunder to occur.
- (b) The presence of rain bearing clouds is the reason for the heavy rains as well as the claps of thunder.
- (c) The tribals of the particular tribe are unscientific people prone to superstitions.
- (d) It is as yet to be proved that claps of thunder precede and hence, cause heavy rains.
- (e) Claps of thunder actually cause heavy rains.

3. Professor Krithileshwar Jhamb argued that the method of evaluation for teachers, used at IIM Bangalore where students evaluated the teachers, was not a valid measure of teaching quality. Students should fill out questionnaires at the end of the term when the courses have been completed.

Which of the following, if true, provides support for Professor Jhamb's proposal?

- (a) Professor Jhamb received low ratings from a majority of his students.
 - (b) Under the present system, students were made to evaluate their teachers' mid term.
 - (c) Students at IIM Bangalore are not interested in evaluating their teachers.
 - (d) The institution should have more methods to evaluate teachers.
 - (e) A new proposal for methods of evaluation is being decided.
4. PM Manmohan Singh lobbied for the inclusion of India amongst the set of ASEAN countries. This would help develop and liberalize trade with countries such as Japan, China and other prominent members of the ASEAN group.

Each of the following, if true, could account for the above, except:

- (a) The PM is up for re-election and needs to show results.
 - (b) The PM's United Party Alliance had promised the creation of new jobs in the economy.
 - (c) The inclusion of India in the ASEAN would be a major achievement on the economic and political front for Manmohan Singh.
 - (d) Being a shrewd economist, Manmohan Singh realised that trade agreements with prominent nations of the ASEAN would definitely lead to an increase in the trade deficit of the country.
 - (e) The IMF would punish the PM for such a deal.
5. "If the islanders are doomed to have local self governance—and it is the islanders who have determined this—then they should be ready to bear the negative consequences of local self governance," said a British colonist as he left the shores of the island he was governing.

Which of the following, if true, would weaken his argument?

- (a) Local rulers are always more interested in the development of their country than foreign colonists.
- (b) Local self governance is not child's play.
- (c) The islanders are equally qualified and competent, if not more than the colonists, to run their own government.

- (d) A group of islanders were against the transfer of power.
 - (e) The islanders were not working to form their own government.
6. Amrinder Singh is no big catch for the Tongress Party in Uttam Pradesh. Even though he is the brother of the Chief Minister of the opposing Bhrasthwadi Party, he himself has no political clout and was not even important organizationally for his own party.

Which of the following statements is inconsistent with the above?

- (a) Amrinder Singh is the brother of the present Chief Minister of Uttam Pradesh.
 - (b) The Bhrasthwadi Party and the Tongress Party are political rivals.
 - (c) Amrinder Singh is being touted as the next leader of the Bhrasthwadi Party.
 - (d) Amrinder Singh has not been interested in politics.
 - (e) Amrinder Singh is not treated as very important by his own party men.
7. Stock market analyst Dhirubhai Mehta: “We believe that company’s stock will appreciate at 35% a year for the next 10–12 years. The company just became the leader in its industry and we expect its sales to continue to grow at 8% a year over this period.”

Investor: “But how can the stock’s price be expected to grow more quickly than the company’s underlying sales?”

Which of the following facts would best support the stock analyst?

- (a) The company’s expenses will be declining over the next 5 to 10 years.
 - (b) The company just won a patent on a new product.
 - (c) Company A’s stock is currently overvalued by a significant amount.
 - (d) The company’s industry peer group is expected to experience stock appreciation rates of 30% over the same time horizon.
 - (e) The company is expecting some losses in the coming season.
8. A car magazine report: ‘The average mileage in the small car market was found to be 18 kilometers per litre. The average mileage was calculated by taking cars of all manufacturers in the segment, filling them with 10 litres of fuel and driving them along the Mumbai-Pune expressway. However, for the Karuti, the mileage was 22 kilometers per litre. Clearly, if you want to buy a new car, you should buy the Karuti.’

Which of the following assumptions does the magazine make?

- (a) The reader is interested in buying a car.
 - (b) Mileage is the sole consideration for the readers of the magazine who intend to buy a car.
 - (c) No other car in the segment had a mileage better than the Karuti’s mileage.
 - (d) None of these.
 - (e) The readers might also look for other factors as comfort, etc.
9. For the above question, which of the following additional information makes the argument stronger?
- I. Petrol prices have touched the sky, and hence the reader should be primarily interested in saving on fuel costs while purchasing a new car.
 - II. Besides mileage, Karuti scored the best on 9 out of 10 performance indicators used by

the survey.

III. The article is titled—"Your first Car"

- (a) I and II
- (b) II and III
- (c) II only
- (d) All of these
- (e) None of these

10. Per-capita income in India last year was Rs 17,600. Real median income for female headed families was Rs. 38,000. Therefore, women wage-earners are paid more than the national average.

Which of the following would, if true, weaken the above conclusion?

- (a) Only a small proportion of the total wage earners are women family heads.
- (b) In 99 percent of the cases, families headed by a female included other wage-earners.
- (c) Average income is significantly different from median income.
- (d) All of these.
- (e) None of these

11. The head of the NCAER was quoted as saying that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) will go down next month because of a recent drop in the price of petrol and steel.

Which of the following cannot be inferred from the statement?

- (a) The cost of petrol and steel has gone down sharply.
- (b) Consumption of petrol and steel has gone up.
- (c) Petrol and steel are major items in the CPI.
- (d) The changes in the cost of petrol is reflected quickly in the CPI.

12. "There has been a high incidence of traffic accident related deaths last year." Hence, the chairman of the CBDT suggested that excise taxes on cars and automobiles should not be reduced as planned by the government.

Which of the above statements weakens the argument above?

- (a) Although there was a high incidence of traffic accident related deaths last year, it was not significantly higher than the previous years.
- (b) Compulsory insurance covered most physical damage to automobiles and property.
- (c) A Government of India report has shown that the demand for automobiles was highly inelastic.
- (d) It was found in a study that an inadequate road network accounted for 30% of the accidents last year.
- (e) Higher prices would definitely deter lawyers.

13. The Incandescent brand fruit juice claims to be the most original fruit juice available on the market today. To prove this claim, the company marketing Incandescent called 10 people and asked them about their thoughts on fruit juices available on the market today. Nine of them stated that they unequivocally drink Incandescent brand fruit juices on a regular basis because

it is closest to the taste of real fruits.

Which of the following would most weaken this argument?

- (a) The Incandescent brand fruit juice is highly addictive.
- (b) The 10 people called were related closely to top executives of the company.
- (c) Most people prefer cola drinks to fruit juices. Here, Incandescent is a poor third to Coke and Pepsi.
- (d) The 10 people were selected at random.
- (e) All of these

14. For the above question, which of the options actually strengthen the argument?

- (a) (a) and (b)
- (b) (c) and (d)
- (c) (d) only
- (d) (a) and (d)
- (e) (a), (b) and (d)

15. Chewing tobacco has many benefits. However, the primary benefits occur in the area of mental health. The habit originates in a search for contentment. The life expectancy of our people has increased greatly in recent years; it is possible that the relaxation and contentment and enjoyment produced by tobacco chewing has lengthened many lives. Hence, Chewing Tobacco is beneficial.

Which of the following, if true, would weaken the above conclusion?

- (a) The government earns millions of dollars from the sales of chewing tobaccos
- (b) The evidence cited in the statement covers only one example of the effects of tobacco chewing
- (c) There is as yet no statistical evidence to prove a link between chewing and longevity.
- (d) None of these.
- (e) Chewing tobacco satiates the longing in a person.

16. Which of the following if true would best support the above argument?

- (a) Chewing tobacco has proved to be less harmful than smoking.
- (b) In a survey of 100 people, it was found that people who chewed tobacco had longer lives than people who drank Pepsi.
- (c) A study conducted by the National Institute of Health Research found a link between chewing tobacco and longevity.
- (d) Chewing tobacco leads to happier individuals. Happiness is proven to be a cause for longevity.
- (e) None of these.

17. Many of the junk foods on the market today, doughnuts, burgers and pizza, have less nutrients than natural foods, which were dominant a decade or two ago. Many nutritionists claim that pizza and doughnuts give less nourishment than natural foods. A spokesman of a leading junk food Company—Pizza House —stated recently that an examination of grade-school students

shows less nutritional deficiency than in their parents' time. Hence, junk foods are not as bad as made out to be.

Which of the following, if true, would tend to strengthen the view of the spokesman?

- (a) Grade school children reported eating no breakfast at all.
- (b) Fewer junk foods were available to the parents.
- (c) Adults claim to eat junk foods as well as natural foods.
- (d) Both (b) and (c).
- (e) Only (a) and (c).

18. My neighbour, Mr. Kohli's dogs bark and howl every time he lets them outside. My class teacher told me that dogs tend to bark and howl when they see other dogs eating biscuits sitting in their owner's laps. I personally believe they bark and howl because they enjoy disrupting my meditations.

Which of the following can be inferred from the preceding passage?

- (a) Mr. Kohli lets out his dogs very often.
- (b) The dogs are always howling and barking to disturb neighbours.
- (c) The dogs enjoy being outside.
- (d) Mr. Kohli's dogs bark and howl whenever they are outside.
- (e) None of these.

19. The argument for liberalization which answers the worries of the left parties about the possible trade deficits created by the opening up of the Indian economy goes thus: 'In today's economic scenario, where there are many trading countries, the trade between two specific countries need not be balanced. The differing demands of goods and services and the differing productive capabilities of the same among different countries will cause a country like India to have trade deficits with some countries and surpluses with other countries. On the whole, the trade deficits and surpluses will balance out in order to give a trade balance'.

Which of the following conclusions best summarises the argument presented in the passage above?

- (a) Left parties need not worry about trade deficits in India since its trade will always be in balance even though it runs a deficit with a single country.
- (b) India's trade deficits and surpluses with other countries always balance out.
- (c) The left parties in India should not be concerned about India's trade deficits with specific countries because they will balance out in the long run.
- (d) None of these.
- (e) Only (a) and (b).

20. Most citizens are very conscientious about observing a law when they can see the reason behind it. For instance, there has been very little need to actively enforce the recently-implemented law that increased the penalty for godmen duping people of their money by playing with their emotions. This is because citizens are very conscientious about duping someone in the name of religion, as it leaves their religious gurus with a bad name.

Which of the following statements would the author of this passage be most likely to believe?

- (a) The increased penalty alone is a significant motivation for most citizens to obey the law.
- (b) There are still too many inconsiderate citizens in the society.
- (c) Godmen should not be allowed to play with the emotions of the people.
- (d) Society should make an effort to teach citizens the reasons for its laws.
- (e) People would be more likely to listen to genuine religious gurus than self proclaimed godmen.

21. Throughout the first decade of the 21st century, net increases in Indian direct investments in the Far East (funds outflows) exceeded net new Far East direct investment in India.

Each of the following, if true, could help to account for this trend except:

- (a) Land values in the Far East were increasing at a faster rate than in India.
- (b) Labour mobility was higher in India than in the Far East.
- (c) The cost of labour (wages) was consistently lower in the Far East than in India.
- (d) Corporate liquidity was lower in India than in the Far East.
- (e) Labour and land values were increasing at a faster rate in the Far East.

22. Inflation can only be fundamentally caused by two factors—Supply side factors and demand side factors. These factors are either reductions in the supply of goods and services or increases in demand due to either the increased availability of money or the reallocation of demand. Unless other compensating changes also occur, inflation is bound to result if either of this occurs. In economies prior to the introduction of banks (a pre banking economy) the quantity of money available, and hence, the level of demand, was equivalent to the quantity of gold available. If the statements above are true, then it is also true that in a pre banking economy

- (a) any inflation would be the result of reductions in the supply of goods and services.
- (b) if other factors in the economy are unchanged, increasing the quantity of gold available would lead to inflation.
- (c) if there is a reduction in the quantity of gold available, then, other things being equal, inflation would result.
- (d) Whatever changes in demand occur, there would be compensating changes in the supply of goods and services.
- (e) All of the above.

23. Which of the following best completes the argument below?

One effect of the FM radio was a collapse in the market for audio cassettes. Formerly, people had to buy audio cassettes in order to listen to their favorite music, but the advent of FM radio changed all that by ‘giving people music on tap’. Similarly, the introduction of crops genetically engineered to be resistant to pests will

- (a) increase the size of crop harvests.
- (b) increase the cost of seeds.
- (c) reduce demand for chemical pesticides.

(d) reduce the value of farmland.

(e) None of the above.

24. Most large retail stores of all goods and brands hold discount sales in the month of November. The original idea of price reduction campaigns in November became popular when it was realized that the sales of products would generally slow down following the Diwali rush, were it not for some incentive. The lack of demand could be solved by the simple solution of reducing prices.

There is now an increasing tendency among major chains of stores across the country to have their “November sales” begin before Diwali. The idea behind this trend is to endeavor to sell the maximum amount of stock at a profit, even if that may not be at the maximum profit.

Which of the following conclusions cannot be drawn from the above?

- (a) The incidence of “early” November sales results in lower holdings of stocks with the corollary of lower stock holding costs.
- (b) Demand is a function of price; as you lower price, demand increases.
- (c) Major stores seem to think it makes sense to have the November sales campaigns pre-Diwali.
- (d) The major department stores do not worry as much about profit maximisation as they do about sales maximisation.
- (e) A price cut offers an incentive to buy for the customs.

25. Of the world’s largest AIDS cases countries in 2010, three had the same share of world AIDS patients as they had in 2000. These three countries may serve as examples of countries that succeeded in holding steady their share of the AIDS disease.

Which of the following, if true, would most seriously undermine the idea that these countries serve as examples as described above?

- (a) Of the three countries, two had a much larger share of world AIDS incidence in 2000 than in 2010.
- (b) Countries should strive to reduce their share of the total AIDS patients in the world rather than try to hold it constant.
- (c) The three countries have different rates of population growth.
- (d) None of these.

26. In a famous experiment at the IISC campus, when a cat smelled milk, it salivated. In the experiment, a bell was rung whenever food was placed near the cat. After a number of trials, only the bell was rung, whereupon the cat would salivate even though no food was present. Such behaviour has been observed in other animals such as dogs, monkeys, etc. and is a vital input for training domesticated animals.

Which of the following conclusions may be drawn from the above experiment?

- (a) Cats and other animals can be easily tricked.
- (b) The ringing of a bell was associated with food in the mind of the Cat.
- (c) A conclusion cannot be reached on the basis of one experiment.
- (d) Two stimuli are stronger than one.

27. At a rally in the Moinul Haque Stadium, candidate Laloo exclaimed: "Nearly everyone at the rally is behind me. It looks like I am going to be elected."
- Which of the following statements, if true, best supports the above conclusion?
- (a) Laloo's opponent also appeared at the rally.
 - (b) The rally was attended by almost all the residents of Laloo's constituency.
 - (c) Laloo was never defeated in an election.
 - (d) Laloo was supported by the MLA.
 - (e) Laloo was an undesirable candidate.
28. Ram is a terrible driver. He has had at least five traffic violations in the past year.
- Which of the following can be said about the above claim?
- (a) This is an example of an argument that is directed against the person making an argument rather than the argument itself.
 - (b) The argument is fallacious because it contains an illegitimate parallelism.
 - (c) The above argument obtains its strength from a similarity of two compared situations.
 - (d) The argument is built upon an assumption that is not stated but is concealed.
29. Since the late 1970s, there has been a dramatic decline in the incidence of traditional childhood diseases such as chicken pox, in India. This decline has been accompanied by an increased incidence of scleroid malaria, a hitherto rare viral infection among children. Few adults, however, have been affected by the disease. Which of the following, if true, would best help to explain the increased incidence of scleroid malaria among children?
- (a) Hereditary factors determine in part, the degree to which a person is susceptible to the virus that causes scleroid malaria.
 - (b) The decrease in traditional childhood diseases and the accompanying increase in scleroid malaria have not been found in any other country.
 - (c) Children who contract chicken pox develop an immunity to the virus that causes scleroid malaria.
 - (d) None of these.
 - (e) Children who get a rubeolla infection don't get chicken pox.

Questions 30 and 31 are based on the following:

An annually conducted nationwide survey by a leading health research organization, shows a continuing marked decline in the use of illegal drugs like hashish and charas by high school seniors over the last five years.

30. In using the results of the survey described above, in order to make conclusions about illegal drug use in the teenage population as a whole, which of the following, if true, casts most doubt on the relevance of the survey results?
- (a) Because of cuts in funding, no survey of illegal drug use by high school seniors will be conducted next year.
 - (b) Another survey found an increase in the rate of smoking amongst the high school seniors.
 - (c) Illegal drug use by teenagers is highest in those areas of the country where teenagers are

least likely to stay in high school for their senior year.

- (d) The proportion of high school seniors who say that they strongly disapprove of illegal drug use has declined over the last three years.
 - (e) Both (a) and (c).
31. Which of the following, if true, would provide most support for concluding from the survey results described above that the use of illegal drugs by people below the age of 20 is declining?
- (a) Another survey found an increase in the rate of smoking amongst the high school seniors.
 - (b) In the past, high school seniors were consistently the population group most likely to use illegal drugs and most likely to use them heavily.
 - (c) The percentage of high school seniors who use illegal drugs is consistently very similar to the percentage of all people below the age of 20 who use illegal drugs.
 - (d) Both (b) and (c).
 - (e) All of (a), (b) and (c).
32. The local education authorities in India have recently issued a “prescribed” list of books that are approved for reading in schools by children aged between 5 and 11.
- A furor has arisen among many parents because an authoress by the name of Pooja Mehta, very popular with children, has been omitted from the said list. When asked to comment on the omission, the head of the committee that was responsible for preparing the list of books said that the books of Mrs Pooja Mehta have been omitted because “we thought they are of an inferior quality and do not sufficiently stimulate the children’s intellectual ability and not because they contain characters which are stereotypes or may show racial prejudice.”
- Which one of the following statements can be inferred from the above paragraph?
- (a) There was an opinion that Mrs Mehta’s books were omitted because they contained characters that were stereotypes or showed racial prejudice.
 - (b) The parents’ view is that Mrs Pooja Mehta’s books might have been left off the list because some of her characters were racist.
 - (c) Mrs Pooja Mehta was popular with children and parents because she included stereotype characters in her books.
 - (d) None of these.
 - (e) Mrs. Pooja Mehta’s speciality was the ability to write about racial prejudice.
33. All televisions emit sounds. And all radios emit sounds. Therefore, I conclude that all televisions are radios.
- The argument above is invalid because
- (a) the writer bases his argument on another argument that contains circular reasoning.
 - (b) the writer has illogically classified two disparate groups together when there is no relationship between them, except that they both have the same attribute.
 - (c) the writer has made a mistaken analogy between two dissimilar objects.
 - (d) the writer has failed to express his reasoning fully.

- (e) The writer has failed to express a relation between the two objects.
34. In elections in a democratic set up, the proper role of the press is to cover only those factors in the campaign which bear on the eventual outcome. Since the outcome is invariably a victory for the candidate of one of two major parties, the press should not cover the campaigns of candidates of minor parties. The argument above relies on which of the following assumption ?
- (a) It is unlikely that there will be more than three candidates in any given race.
 - (b) Candidates of minor parties will never win elections.
 - (c) The number of votes cast for a candidate of a minor party is not likely to affect the outcome of the contest between the candidates of the two major parties.
 - (d) Both (b) and (c).
 - (e) None of the above.
35. The daily journey from his home to his office takes Shyam on an average fifty five minutes by car. Shyam learns about a different route from a neighbour. This route is longer in distance, but will only take thirty five minutes on the average, because it contains stretches of roads where it is possible to drive at higher speeds. Shyam 's only consideration apart from the time factor, is the cost. He calculates that his car will consume 10% less gasoline if he takes the suggested new route. Shyam decides to take the new route for the next two weeks as an experiment.

If the above were the only considerations, which one of the following may have an effect on the decision Shyam has made?

- (a) Major road work is begun on the shorter distance route, which holds up traffic for an extra ten minutes. The project will take six months, but after it, the improvements will allow the journey to be made in half an hour less than at present.
 - (b) Re-routing of heavy vehicular traffic from the shorter route to a new route, is expected to reduce the amount of traffic to one third of the current levels
 - (c) Shyam finds a third route which is slightly longer than his old route, but shorter than the suggested route.
 - (d) Both (a) and (b).
 - (e) Shyam suffers from an eye problem which makes it difficult for him to drive longer distances.
36. The cost of housing in many urban parts of India has become so excessive that many young couples, with above-average salaries, can only afford small apartments. EMI and rent commitments are so huge that they cannot consider the possibility of starting a family since a new baby would probably mean either the mother or father giving up a well-paid position—something they can ill afford. The lack of or great cost of child-care facilities further precludes the return of both parents to work.
- Which of the following adjustments could practically be made to the situation described above which would allow young couples to improve their housing prospects?
- (a) Encourage couples to remain childless.

- (b) Encourage couples to have one child only.
 - (c) Encourage young couples to move to cheaper areas for living.
 - (d) None of these is likely to have an impact on the current situation.
 - (e) Both (a) and (c).
37. By the early 1990s, the services sector contributed approximately 20 percent of India's GDP. Still, no coherent system of rules, principles, and procedures exist to govern the service sector.
- Which of the following best summarises the argument?
- (a) Regulatory systems lag behind reality.
 - (b) A regulatory system ought to reflect the importance of the service sector.
 - (c) India's GDP was five times its service sector.
 - (d) None of these.
 - (e) The service sector contributes insignificantly to the GDP.
38. In 1980, Uttam Pradesh earned Rs. 17 million in tourist revenue. By 1990, tourist revenue doubled and in 2000, it reached the sum of Rs. 132 million.
- Each of the following, if true, may explain the trend in tourist revenue except:
- (a) The number of tourists has increased from 1940 to 1980.
 - (b) Average expenditure per tourist has increased.
 - (c) Average stay per tourist has increased.
 - (d) The number of total hotel rooms has increased.
 - (e) Only (a) and (b).
39. Following the massive earthquake in Gujarat, building rules in Gujarat required all apartment buildings constructed after 2002 to have earthquake resistant designs.
- From which of the following can the statement above be inferred?
- (a) Apartment buildings built after 2002 had to be earthquake resistant.
 - (b) All apartment buildings built in Gujarat after 2002 have to have earthquake resistant designs.
 - (c) Some apartment buildings constructed before 2002 had earthquake resistant designs.
 - (d) Both (a) and (b).
 - (e) Building rules require the buildings to have fixed number of floors.
40. In 1980, the average per capita telephone consumption in India was one telephone per hundred people. By 2005, the figure became one telephone per 8 people.
- Each of the following, if true, could explain this trend except:
- (a) The cost of owning telephones has gone down to one fifth of its earlier values.
 - (b) There has been a privatisation of the telecom sector in the 1990s.
 - (c) Getting a telephone connection has been simplified, and waiting lines have been eliminated.
 - (d) There has been an increase in affluence and disposable income amongst the country's

vast middle class.

(e) Only (a) and (b).

Answer Key

1. (d)	2. (b)	3. (b)	4. (d)
5. (c)	6. (c)	7. (a)	8. (b)
9. (c)	10. (d)	11. (b)	12. (c)
13. (b)	14. (c)	15. (c)	16. (c)
17. (b)	18. (d)	19. (d)	20. (d)
21. (d)	22. (b)	23. (c)	24. (a)
25. (b)	26. (b)	27. (b)	28. (d)
29. (c)	30. (c)	31. (c)	32. (a)
33. (b)	34. (d)	35. (a)	36. (c)
37. (b)	38. (d)	39. (b)	40. (b)