

Statement & Assumptions

INTRODUCTION

Assumptions are essential part of analytical reasoning. This is the reason why in various competitive examinations, examinees are asked to identify assumptions. In this chapter, we will see how to identify assumptions. Before we go ahead, we must have a look at a common format of the problem as it will give you a clear idea of the questions to be asked in the examination.

PROBLEM FORMAT (SAMPLE PROBLEM)

Directions: In every question given below a statement (or a passage) is followed by two assumptions number I & II. An assumption is something supposed or taken for granted. You have to consider the statement and the following assumptions and then decide which of the assumptions is implicit in the statement.

Mark answer:

- (a) If only assumption I is implicit.
- (b) If only assumption II is implicit.
- (c) If either assumption I or assumption II is implicit.
- (d) If neither of the assumption is implicit
- (e) If both the assumptions are implicit.

Statement: “A” television — the largest selling name with the largest range” — an advertisement.

Assumptions:

- I. There is a demand for televisions in the market.
- II. ‘A’ television is the only one with wide variations.

The given statement in the problem format is an advertisement. This is the one form of statement. But the statement may be in different forms like it can be in the form of a passage; in the form of a single line; in the form of a notice; in the form of an appeal; in any other different forms.

WHAT DOES AN ASSUMPTION MEAN?

Assumption is the hidden part of an argument. It does mean that an assumption is something which is assumed, supposed and taken for granted. In fact, when a person says something, he does not put everything into words and leaves some part unsaid as why does he ? so?

He does so because he takes this unsaid part for granted. In other words he thinks this unsaid part will be understood without saying and hence there is no need to put this (unsaid part) into words. It does mean this unsaid part is hidden in the given statement and this hidden part is called assumption. Let us

understand it in another way. Just remember your childhood days when you used to solve the given arithmetic problem without leaving any single step. But what you do today? Today your approach is totally different. Today you leave easier steps as you assume that the person who see your solution, is very much aware of these elementary operations. Therefore, this is an example of assumption.

To get the concept of assumption more clearly just suppose a thrilling one day international cricket match is going on between India and Australia. The Australian team has scored 300 runs but while chasing the score India has made 280 runs in 48 overs and now, the situation is India has to score 21 runs to win the match in remaining two overs. As Yuvraj Singh is batting, you tell your friend - "No need to worry as Yuvraj is a big hitter. India will definitely win the match". What do you find in this statement. In fact this statement has two parts:-

- (i) No need to worry as Yuvraj is a big hitter.
- (ii) India will win the match.

Now, this is the time to think over these two parts. How do you relate them? Obviously, by assuming that a big hitter may score 21 runs in the remaining two overs. Therefore, this is another example of assumption. The above statement can be written in three parts as follows:-

- (i) No need to worry as Yuvraj is a big hitter.
- (ii) A big hitter may score 21 runs in 2 overs (Hidden part/Assumption)
- (iii) So, India will win the match.

Let's get more ideas about assumption with some simple examples given below:-

EXAMPLE 1.

Statement: Of all the mobile sets manufactured in India 'M' brand has the largest sale.

Assumption: The sale of all the mobile sets manufactured in India is known.

Comment: The given assumption is valid. Here the statement makes a claim that of all the mobile sets manufactured in India, 'M' brand has the largest sale. In fact, without knowing sale figures may be rough data of all mobile brands manufactured in India, no such claim about M brand could be made. Hence, it must have been implicitly assumed in the given statement that sale figure of all brands is known.

EXAMPLE 2.

Statement: Virat is in great form and therefore, India is going to beat New Zealand in upcoming test series.

Assumption:

- I. Virat will give a good performance in upcoming series against New Zealand.
- II. Virat will score a triple century in the upcoming series against New Zealand.

Comment: Assumption I is valid as the statement says that Virat is in great form and therefore, India is going to beat New Zealand in the upcoming test series. It does mean that it is assumed in the statement that Virat will perform well in the upcoming test series against New Zealand and on the basis of that good performance India will beat New Zealand. But II is invalid because if Virat is in great form, that does not mean he will surely hit a triple century. He may or may not do so. Hence, assumption II is not hidden in the statement.

EXAMPLE 3.

Statement: The next meeting of the governing body of the society **X** will be held after one year.

Assumption: Institute **X** will remain in function after one year.

Comment: The given assumption is valid as we know that the common practice is to hold meetings of only those bodies that are functional. Hence, it does mean that the announcer must be assuming that the society will remain functional after one year.

EXAMPLE 4.

Statement: The student is too clever to fail in the examination.

Assumption: Very clever students do not fail in the examination.

Comment: This is a valid assumption. As per the given statement the student will not fail (This is an effect) as he / she is very clever (This is a cause). Clearly, it has been assumed in the statement that very clever students do not fail.

HOW DOES A SINGLE WORD OR PHRASE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

A. Definitive Words Cases:

Just consider the words like ‘all’, ‘only’, ‘best’, ‘strongest’, ‘certainly’, ‘definitely’, etc. These are some words that put a greater degree of emphasis or more weight on the sentence than some others. In fact, these words impart a kind of exclusiveness to the sentence and thereby reduce the scope / range of the sentence. In fact, some kind of certainty is associated with all these words. Let us consider the following examples:

EXAMPLE 5.

Statement: The crisis of onion has worsened and the government should make every effort to boost import of onion.

Assumption:

- I. Import is the best solution to avert the onion crisis.
- II. Import is a reasonably good solution to the onion crisis.
- III. Import is the only solution to overcome the onion crisis.
- IV. The onion crisis will definitely be averted by boosting import of onion.
- V. The onion crisis will probably be averted by boosting import of onion.

Comment: In the above mentioned example, the assumption II and V are valid. But I, III and IV are not valid. The reason is that there is use of definitive words (best, only and definitely) in case of I, III and IV. The given statement mentions a fact that crisis of onion has worsened and then makes a suggestion that imports of onion should be boosted. In fact the statement assumes that import should help to overcome onion crisis or that import is a good/ reasonably good solution to the onion crisis. But, there is no hint that import is the only solution/ best solution/a definitely effective solution.

Therefore, the example given above illustrates how a definitive word may give a different ‘tone’ to a sentence.

B. Cases of Conjunctions:

The words like ‘because’, ‘therefore’, ‘in spite of’, ‘despite’, ‘so’, ‘after’, ‘even’, ‘although’ ‘as’, ‘as a result of’ are some significant conjunctions. When a statement has two clauses and the clauses are connected by a conjunction, then

the nature of conjunction helps in detecting the assumption that the author suggests in his statement. Suppose 'x' is one clause of a sentence that mention an event (or fact/suggestion) and 'y' is the another clause of the same sentence which mentions another event (or fact/suggestion), than depending upon the conjunction, we can conclude the following assumption.

- (i) **x because/ as a result of y \Rightarrow It is assumed that 'y' leads to x.**

► **EXAMPLE 6.**

Statement: You will find improvement in your English after taking classes in institute M.

Valid Assumption: An institute may help in improving English.

- (ii) **x therefore/ hence y \Rightarrow It is assumed that 'x' leads to 'y'.**

► **EXAMPLE 7.**

Statement: Sachin Tendulkar has become the 1st man to score 50th test century, therefore all Indians must be feeling very proud on his achievement.

Valid Assumption: An achievement by a fellow countryman makes other citizens proud.

- (iii) **x even after/ despite/ in spite of y \Rightarrow It is assumed that usually x does not occurs when y occurs.**

► **EXAMPLE 8.**

Statement: There was a theft in the city mall last night inspite of the maximum security arrangement made by the police.

Valid Assumption: Maximum security arrangement is usually sufficient to prevent theft.

- (iv) **Not 'x' even after/ in spite of/ despite 'y' \Rightarrow It is assumed that usually x occurs when y does.**

► **EXAMPLE 9.**

Statement: There was no outbreak of any epidemic even after the continuous deposition of rain water for six days.

Valid Assumption: Deposition of rain water usually leads to epidemic.

C. Cases of Connotive Phrases:

Sometimes words used by the author are slightly indirect or unconventional. This is the reason you may miss the thing which the author wants to say. Such indirect or unconventional words are called connotative or connotive phrases. For example "It is true that" can be put / written as:

- (i) It can be claimed with reasonable degree of truth that...
- (ii) It would be correct to say that...
- (iii) Even the most sceptic of men would agree that....

Similarly, "It is false" is put / written by the author as :

- (i) It is baseless to say that ...
- (ii) It would be highly misleading to say that....
- (iii) Nothing could be farther from truth than...

Note: The role of connotative phrases is very limited in the questions asked because they are given so that they do not escape your eyes whenever one come across them.

Conditions for Invalidity of Assumptions:

(a) Restatement

If the given assumption is a restatement of the given statement, then the given statement will be invalid. In fact, in such case, same thing is put in different words.

» **EXAMPLE 10.**

Statement: Of all the computer brands, manufactured in India, brand M has the largest sale.

Invalid Assumption: No other brand of computer has as high a sale as brand M.

(b) Long-drawn Conclusion: If an assumption makes too far fetched logic or long drawn conclusion, then it will be considered as invalid assumption.

» **EXAMPLE 11.**

Statement: All teaching should be done in religious spirit as religious instruction leads to a curiosity for knowledge.

Invalid Assumption: Curious persons are good persons.

(c) Observation : It is slightly different from the restatement case. In such case, two of the trio (Subject, verb, predicate) are changed into negative that changes the appearance of the

sentence without changing its meaning.

» **EXAMPLE 12.**

Statement: Beauty is lovable.

Invalid Assumptions :

I Ugliness is not lovable

II Beauty is not hateable

(d) Conversion : When you study the chapter of syllogism, you see that statements are converted to get immediate inference. In fact, there are three standard cases of conversion:

(i) All M are N, converted into Some N are M.

(ii) Some M are N, converted into Some N are M.

(iii) No M are N, converted into No N are M

Points to be noted that given assumptions will be invalid if they are conversions of the given statements.

❑ **Shortcut Approach**

| Assumption will be implicit if | Assumption will not be implicit if |
|---|--|
| • it is in context of passage | • not in context of statement or passage |
| • it is not directly mentioned | • it is directly mentioned in the statement |
| • it is a mandatory factor condition for the statement to be correct. | • it is not an accepted fact or cannot be truly inferred |
| | • there is use of definitive words |
| Note : The assumption must follow all the above rules for it to be implicit. | • it is a restatement or a long-drawn conclusion or negative rephrasing or a converted syllogism form. |

| ebooks Reference | Page No. |
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| Practice Exercises with Hints & Solutions | – p-178-187 |
| Chapter Test | – c-53-54 |
| Past Solved Papers | |