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McGraw-Hill's Conquering GMAT Verbal and Writing

Douglas Pierce



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INTRODUCTION

What is the GMAT?

The Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) is a standardized test used by business school admissions offices to aid in evaluating your fitness for an MBA program. The GMAT, like any other standardized test, provides admissions officers with a convenient measuring stick with which they can quickly compare potential candidates of disparate backgrounds. Of course, the GMAT is not the only factor used in admissions; your work experience, recommendations, and undergraduate transcripts all play a role in admissions decisions.

Where Does the GMAT Come From?

The GMAT results from the collaboration of the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) and ACT, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping people “achieve education and workplace success.” ACT accomplishes this by providing tests to various organizations, so perhaps its definition of “helping” people is a little different from yours. In 2006, the GMAC ended its longstanding relationship with another testing company, ETS (Educational Testing Services, the creator of the SAT), and awarded its GMAT contract to ACT.

Basically, the GMAC decides what sort of skills and abilities it wants its applicants to have and then ACT develops test questions to assess those abilities. Although the company producing the test has changed, there hasn’t been much change in the content of the GMAT and there are unlikely to be any significant changes for the foreseeable future.

What is on the GMAT?

The GMAT tests certain mathematical, verbal, and analytical writing skills. The test doesn’t require any specialized knowledge and the content bears only a passing resemblance to the coursework you’ll do in business school. The GMAT is formatted as follows:

Analytical Writing Assessment, consisting of two 30-minute essays
One 75-minute **Quantitative** section, consisting of 37 questions
One 75-minute **Verbal** section, consisting of 41 questions

The essays require you to type your responses on a keyboard, while the quantitative and verbal sections are in multiple-choice format. Nine of the questions on the quantitative section and 11 of the questions on the verbal section will be experimental questions. Experimental questions are used for research purposes only and do not affect your score. You won't know which questions are experimental.

How is the GMAT Scored?

After completing the test, you'll receive two scores: one score for your essays and one for your performance on the multiple-choice portions. The essay score is on a scale of 0–6, while the math and verbal scores range 0–60. The math and verbal scores are then combined to generate an overall GMAT score, which is on a 200–800 scale. This combined score is the one most people refer to when they ask, "So what did you get on your GMAT?"

The mean combined score on the GMAT is 527; generally speaking, any score higher than 527 means that you've performed better than average on the test. Scores in the 600s on the GMAT will place you somewhere in the 70th to 91st percentiles, while scores above 700 place you in the top percentiles of test takers.

The McGraw-Hill Competitive Edge

As you well know, your GMAT score is important to your business school application. Considering the investment you'll be making in your future with your decision to pursue an MBA, you should seek every advantage possible. *McGraw-Hill's Conquering GMAT Verbal and Writing* gives you one such advantage. This book contains everything you need to know to master the verbal section of the GMAT. You'll learn all the content, all the techniques, and all the strategies you'll need to achieve a competitive score on the verbal portion of the GMAT.

Unlike other test preparation books, *McGraw-Hill's Conquering GMAT Verbal and Writing* provides you with an in-depth look at the content on the GMAT verbal section. Instead of focusing on simple tricks and strategies, you will learn to analyze the problems in order to truly understand each question. By developing your analytical skills, you'll sit down at the computer on test day confident that you know exactly how to approach the questions on the verbal section. That's the competitive edge you get from McGraw-Hill.

THE GMAT VERBAL SECTION

The verbal section of the GMAT gives you 75 minutes to answer 41 multiple-choice questions. The questions are designed to test your ability to comprehend written materials, evaluate arguments, and identify and correct grammatical errors. Your performance on the GMAT verbal section

will receive a scaled score of 0–60 which, along with your score on the math portion of the exam, is used to generate your final GMAT score.

Specifically, the GMAT verbal section contains the following question types:

Reading Comprehension: Reading Comprehension requires you to read a selection and then answer a number of questions about the content, tone, main idea, and structure of the passage.

Sentence Corrections: Sentence Correction questions present you with a sentence that may or may not contain a grammatical error. You'll have to select the choice that is free from mistakes and exhibits the greatest clarity and coherence.

Critical Reasoning: Critical Reasoning requires you to evaluate and understand the nature of various arguments, through identifying their conclusions, supporting evidence, and underlying assumptions.

The Analytical Writing Assessment

The GMAT Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA) requires you to write two essays, each within a 30-minute time frame. The AWA consists of two distinct essay tasks: Analysis of an Issue and Analysis of an Argument. Your essays will be scored on a six-point scale, with each essay evaluated twice. The score you receive on the AWA is not factored into your final GMAT score; after you complete the test, you will receive a total GMAT score on a scale of 200–800 and a separate AWA score on a scale of 0–6.

How is the Verbal Score Determined?

The GMAT is a Computer Adaptive Test (CAT). This means that the test adapts to your performance as you proceed. If you get a question wrong, the program “rewards” you with a harder question (some reward!). Wrong answers cause the program to give you easier questions. At the end of the test, the program calculates your score by taking three factors into account:

- the number of questions you answer
- the number of questions you get correct
- the difficulty of the question

It is important to recognize that all three of these factors contribute to your score. For example, a test taker who answers the first 25 questions correctly but runs out of time will certainly gain points by steadily increasing the difficulty level of the questions answered (remember, each question answered correctly increases the difficulty of the subsequent question), but will also lose points because she didn't answer all the questions. Similarly, a test taker who speeds through all the questions but ends up getting half of them wrong will earn some points for finishing the test but will lose points

for her mistakes and for working questions of a lower overall difficulty (the overall difficulty level of the questions will be lower since each incorrect response drives down the difficulty level of the next question).

Ideally, you should try to maximize all three scoring areas: answer as many questions as you can correctly, and as time winds down, be sure to finish the test, even if you end up guessing on the last few questions. More information on scoring will be provided in the Pacing chapter.

How Important is the Verbal Section?

In the simplest terms, the verbal section accounts for half of your total GMAT score, so it would be quite correct to say that the verbal section of the test is just as important as the math section—no more, no less. However, from a certain perspective, it is fair to say that, in some respects, your score on the verbal section is actually *more* important than your score on the math section. How so? Recall that the GMAT provides business school admissions officers with a standardized metric to compare applicants. Since business school applicants are a self-selected population and the backgrounds and skills of the members of that population tend to share a great many similarities, admissions officers look for traits and qualities that distinguish certain applicants from the rest. In short, anything that makes your application stand out is a potential benefit. Because many business school applicants have a strong background in math—the mean score on the math section of the exam is 35 (on a 0–60 scale)—a good score on the math section doesn’t make much of an impression. Even a score of 45 on the math portion only puts you in the 78th percentile. By contrast, the average verbal score is a 27. A verbal score of a 36 would put you in the 80th percentile, while a 45 is the 98th percentile—now that will really set your application apart! So, while it’s true that the verbal section accounts for half of your total GMAT score, the impact of your score *relative* to the other applicants with whom you’re competing can help make you a more attractive candidate to business schools.

Similar reasoning applies to the essays. The mean score on the AWA section is a 4.1, so a good score on this part of the test can elevate your application over another candidate’s with similar qualifications but less impressive essay marks.

Preparing for the Verbal Section

You can increase your verbal score on the GMAT with the right type of preparation. Although the Graduate Management Admissions Council (GMAC) claims that the GMAT measures certain skills “developed over a long period of time through education and work,” the GMAT, like any standardized test, relies on certain patterns and practices that can be mastered with the right guidance. Unfortunately, many test takers preparing for the GMAT spend the majority of their time working on the math portion of the test. Since math is more regimented and process oriented, the common thinking goes, it is more amenable to practice and improvement. The verbal

section is often treated as an afterthought; many test takers either dismiss it as “just reading,” or believe that there’s no help for their verbal scores. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Preparing for the verbal section involves three important steps:

- **Learn the Content:** Success on the GMAT verbal section begins with a thorough knowledge of the content on the test. In some cases, as with Reading Comprehension questions, you will be quite familiar with the content. Other questions, such as the Sentence Correction and Critical Reasoning questions, may have more unfamiliar content. Either way, learning the content gives you the opportunity to master all the necessary fundamentals.
- **Standardize Your Approach:** The GMAT tests the same things over and over again; that is the nature of a standardized test. As you prepare for the GMAT verbal portion, you’ll learn to standardize your approach to the questions. By developing a consistent method of attacking the questions, you will eliminate inefficient strategies and keep yourself focused on the task at hand. The more process oriented you become, the more manageable the verbal questions appear.
- **Understand the Test:** One key to any test is to understand what the test writer wants. The GMAT is no different. The people who write the GMAT have certain tendencies, including what sort of questions they ask, what sort of wrong answers they provide, and what criteria they use to create the “best” answer. Through practice and repetition, you’ll understand these patterns and can use them to maximize your score.

This book will help you improve in each of these three areas. After working through the material presented here and doing the practice problems, you’ll know the necessary content, have an efficient approach to the problems, and better understand what sort of answers the test writers are looking for.

Content vs. Strategy

Some test preparation books focus only on the content of the test. These books bombard you with grammar rules and math formulas with the hope that enough of the concepts will stick with you on test day and you’ll be able to correctly apply what you’ve learned to the test. Other books focus only on strategy, advising you on tricks and techniques that can maximize your score. Which approach is better? Truthfully, success on the GMAT requires familiarity with both the content *and* the strategy.

Consider two hypothetical test takers. Susan is a content whiz. She diligently studies grammar, logic, and mathematics. Jack is a master strategist. He’s learned how the test works and knows both what the test writers are trying to accomplish with their questions and what sort of traps and tricks they’ve set for the unwary. On test day, Susan finds that a lot of what she has learned is applicable to the test. However, she will invariably run across questions on which either her content knowledge fails her (*what is the rule for the subjunctive again?*) or on which she falls for one of the test’s trap

answers. Similarly, Jack discovers that he's able to get by on a number of questions with his knowledge of how the test works, but there are questions on which that sort of game plan only takes him so far.

The successful test taker has a firm grasp of the content backed up by a good understanding of how the test works. On test day, when your knowledge of the content of the test fails, you can fall back on strategy. Similarly, when test taking strategy doesn't help much, you can appeal to your knowledge of the content to find the best answer.

The "Best" Answer

On the GMAT verbal section, it sometimes appears that more than one of the answers could conceivably be the correct answer. While some of the answers may be tempting, your goal is to find the *best* answer, the one the test writers believe most fully answers the question. Finding the best answer requires you to put together the three skills mentioned above as well as to figure out why the remaining answer choices are incorrect. When practicing for the GMAT verbal section, don't stop at finding the right answer. Look at each of the four wrong answers and ask yourself what makes each of them incorrect. By developing a sense for bad answers on the GMAT, you can dramatically increase your odds of selecting good answers.

■ HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

McGraw-Hill's Conquering GMAT Verbal and Writing is divided into two main parts. The first part of the book deals with the content of the verbal section and with the strategies and techniques you will need to maximize your score. Here you'll find the information you need to know in order to succeed on the three types of GMAT verbal questions, and on the AWA. You will also find out how to apply targeted strategies to specific problems on the GMAT. The second part of the book provides you with ample practice problems on which to try out your skills. It may not be glamorous, but the more practice you do before you take the test, the better your score is likely to be. Provided, of course, you are practicing in the right way.

In order to maximize the value of this book, you must be sure to use the approaches and strategies presented. You will not get as much from the exercises if you do not attack them in the manner prescribed. Think of your GMAT preparation as akin to mastering a musical instrument or practicing a sport. You wouldn't practice your scales without using the proper fingerings or simply heave the ball at the basket without being aware of the correct footwork and body positioning, right? Neither should you do GMAT problems without using the correct approach. Take time to understand the content behind each question type. Then, master the process for attacking the question. Finally, analyze your answers, looking both at what went right and what went wrong on each question. Preparing for the GMAT verbal section takes time and discipline, but if you put the effort in, you will see results.



PART I

STRATEGIES FOR GMAT VERBAL AND WRITING

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CHAPTER 1

THE GMAT VERBAL SECTION

In this chapter, you will learn:

- The three types of questions that appear on the verbal section of the GMAT
- Basic strategies for solving GMAT verbal questions

BASIC STRATEGY FOR THE VERBAL SECTION

Before you learn the specific content and strategies for the GMAT verbal section, you should learn some basic strategies for these questions.

Question Types

On the verbal portion of the GMAT, it is fairly easy to identify the type of question you're working on. Sentence Corrections, Critical Reasoning questions, and Reading Comprehension passages all appear significantly different from each other, so there shouldn't be much confusion as to what strategies and approaches you should employ. However, your challenge will be to identify certain patterns and regularities within these three larger question types. It is important to be aware that while the individual words and specific details of particular questions will vary, the basic question tasks do not change much. Try to see individual questions not as unique occurrences but instead as examples of more general categories of questions. The GMAT is a standardized test, so the more patterns and regularities you can find, the easier it will be to figure out the best way to answer the question.

As you work through the practice problems in the book, pay close attention to the explanations provided. These explanations will help you see how the different questions and different variations within question types are part of a larger pattern. Recognition of these patterns can also help you pinpoint the kinds of questions that you need to work on, as well as the types of questions you have the greatest success with.

1	A	B	C	<u>D</u>	E
2	A	<u>B</u>	C	D	E
3	<u>A</u>	B	C	D	E
4	A	B	C	D	E
5	A	B	C	D	E
6	A	B	C	D	E
7	A	B	C	D	E

Figure 1.1

Process of Elimination

Because you are searching for the “best answer” on the verbal section, you must carefully compare each answer choice to the others and reject those choices that are worse than the others. In other words, use the process of elimination (POE). POE is one of the most important strategies to master on the verbal section of the test. It is not as useful to find wrong answers on the math portion of the test or to understand why the wrong answers to a math problem are wrong, but this careful evaluation of answer choices is an absolute necessity on the GMAT verbal section.

As you work the practice problems in this book, make POE an active part of your preparation. To mimic the testing conditions on the GMAT, use scratch paper when working the problems. Keep track of the answers you’ve eliminated, as shown in Figure 1.1.

Keep in mind that for POE to be effective, you must compare the answer choices to each other. Sometimes, an answer viewed in isolation may seem pretty good, but that doesn’t necessarily mean it is the best answer. Only by comparing an answer to another can you truly determine which one is better.

Check Every Choice

POE requires you to carefully read *every* answer choice. It may happen that as you evaluate the choices, you eliminate A, B, C, and D. That means only E is left and it must be correct, right? Wrong. Don’t just pick E because you’ve eliminated everything else; you may have eliminated the correct answer inadvertently (actually, in many cases the best answers are designed to be easy to eliminate or overlook). You must examine choice E and determine whether it truly is the best answer. If you find E lacking, then you have to go back to the choices you’ve eliminated and reevaluate them.

Or, it could be that you read choice A and are absolutely convinced it’s the right answer. But you can’t be sure of that unless you check the remaining choices. After all, choice A might be a good choice, but there is a possibility that one of the later choices is in fact the *best* choice. Thus, you must always check each choice on the verbal section.

Evaluating Answer Choices

Some answers on the GMAT are easy to dismiss. These choices are so obviously wrong that you can eliminate them fairly quickly. And sometimes, the best answer stands out so clearly from the rest of the options that you have no problem choosing it. But most of the time the choice will not be so clear cut. When evaluating answer choices on the test, there are a couple things to keep in mind. First, if you don't understand a choice, don't eliminate it! Mark it with a "?" and move on to the other choices. One advantage of a multiple-choice test is that you can spend your time working with the choices you are comfortable with. If, when working a question, you find answer choice C, for example, to be incomprehensible, move on to the other choices. If you can eliminate the remaining options, then you should choose C, even if you aren't quite sure what it means.

Second, sometimes the "best answer" doesn't necessarily stand out as the top choice. You might read a choice and not have an immediate sense of whether it is a good choice or a bad choice. Mark these choices with a "~" or a "/" to indicate that you don't love the choice, but you don't hate it either. Many times these bland choices turn out to be better than the others, so don't eliminate them just because they don't immediately leap off the page as the best answer.

Pacing

You'll have 75 minutes to complete 41 questions on the GMAT verbal section. A quick calculation tells you that you have slightly less than two minutes per question. However, pacing on the GMAT verbal section is not that simple. The question types, by their natures, require different amounts of time. Sentence Correction questions generally take the least amount of time, and Reading Comprehension questions take the most. Thus, it doesn't make sense to divide up the time on the test equally.

Additionally, the nature of the GMAT itself demands a more involved pacing strategy. Recall that the CAT format of the GMAT bases your final score on three criteria: the number of questions you get correct, the difficulty level of the questions, and the number of questions you complete. This scoring system has several consequences for pacing strategy.

Look at Figure 1.2. It shows the performance of two hypothetical test takers at the beginning of the GMAT. The first question of the test is always of average difficulty—about half the test takers should get it right and about half the test takers should get it wrong. Tester A, in this example, gets the first question correct and the program adapts by giving Tester A a harder question. Unfortunately, Tester B misses the first question. The GMAT responds by giving Tester B an easier question. From this point, you can see that the two test takers follow divergent paths. Tester A gets two more questions right and two wrong, for a total of three correct responses and two incorrect responses. Tester B gets another question wrong, and then goes on a streak, getting the next three questions right. After five questions, both testers have the same number of questions correct and the same number

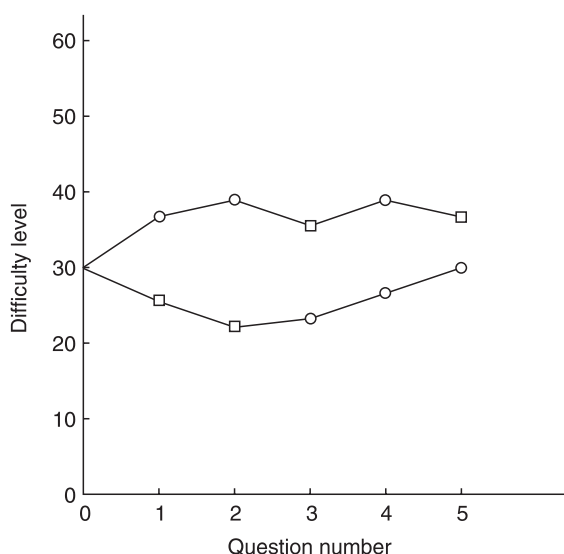


Figure 1.2 ○ = correct response; □ = incorrect response.

of questions incorrect, but Tester A's score is higher. Why? Because the difficulty level of the questions answered is a key factor. Answering questions correctly leads the computer to keep challenging you with harder and harder questions. If you miss a hard question, the program gives you a slightly easier question, but it can't penalize you too much because it expects you miss hard questions—that's why they're hard.

Missing questions causes the program to serve up easier questions. Getting an easier question correct obviously helps your score, but the program can't give you too much credit for getting an easier question right. And missing an easier question drops the difficulty level even lower, which means you'll get even less credit for getting these still easier questions correctly. The moral of the story is this: getting several questions correct in a row builds your score up and puts you in position such that when you do miss a question, your score doesn't suffer much. Getting a number of questions in a row incorrect digs you into a hole, from which you need to answer a number of questions correctly just to climb back to the difficulty level at which you started.

The Beginning of the Test Matters More Than the End

The first third of the GMAT verbal section has a greater effect on your score than the remaining two-thirds. This is for two reasons. First, in the early stages of the test, the GMAT program doesn't have much information on you as a test taker. Your score could range anywhere from a 0 to a 60. As you answer more and more questions, the program gathers more information about your abilities and begins to narrow in on your final GMAT score. Thus, in the early stages of the test, your score can vary over a much wider score range, which means your performance has a huge impact on your score. By the late stages of the test, the computer has limited the possible scoring ranges you can achieve, so even if you pull off a string of right or

wrong questions, the program won't boost or lower your score beyond certain parameters. Second, at the beginning of the test, you have an advantage because the computer starts you at the 50th percentile. That means you're already halfway up the scoring ladder. Getting a large number of the early questions right can push you into the top range of GMAT scores.

Accuracy vs. Speed

On any timed test, there is an inherent tension between working quickly and working accurately. Successful pacing on the GMAT requires a careful balance of these two ideas. Because the beginning of the test has such an effect on your score, you should focus on accuracy on the early portions of the test. By stringing together a number of correct responses and simultaneously avoiding runs of incorrect answers, you'll elevate your GMAT score. In the middle of the test, you'll need to gradually pick up speed as you work to finish the questions in the time allotted. At the end of the test, your goal is simply to make sure that you answer all of the questions, even if it means that you're just guessing on the last four or five questions.

Always Answer All the Questions

Because the GMAT also factors the number of questions you complete into your score, you must answer every question on the test. The last few questions in the section don't have much of an effect on your score; by that point in the test, the program has pretty much determined your score. If, for example, at the end of the test, the computer has put your GMAT verbal score somewhere between a 35 and a 36, guessing on the last few questions could potentially bump you up to the 36, but even if you don't get any of these questions correct, your score won't drop below 35. So while it may only represent a small boost to your score, make sure you finish the test.

Guessing

In a perfect world, you would know all the correct answers on the GMAT and never have to guess. But, unfortunately, this is not a perfect world. Thus, at some point on the GMAT you will almost certainly have to guess. You might be down to two choices on a Sentence Correction question and you can't figure out which one is better. Perhaps you can't make head or tails out of the convoluted wording on a Critical Reasoning question. Or you may be reaching the end of the test and, short on time, have to guess on the last few questions. But guessing on the GMAT doesn't have to mean giving up valuable points. Careful analysis of the answer choices and a good understanding of what type of answers the test writers prefer can help you increase your odds of guessing correctly on a question.

When working the questions in this book, try to answer each question—even if it means taking a guess—before checking the answers. Mark the

problems you guess on and keep track of your accuracy when guessing. Instead of becoming frustrated over the questions you've missed, use these problems as learning opportunities. Look at the credited response and compare it to your selection. What are the differences between the two choices? What makes the credited choice better than the one you selected? Asking yourself these types of questions as well as reading the explanations provided will not only help you find the best answer more consistently, but will also help you guess more wisely.

CHAPTER 2

SENTENCE CORRECTIONS: GRAMMAR BASICS

In this chapter, you will learn:

- The grammar rules most often tested in sentence correction questions
- An overview of basic grammar rules

Why Grammar?

Before launching into a discussion of nouns, verbs, pronouns, and clauses, you might ask yourself why the GMAT—a test designed to quantify your readiness for business school—even includes grammar questions. After all, you are not preparing to be a linguist or an English teacher, right? The Graduate Management Admissions Council, the governing body that oversees the content of the GMAT, states that the grammar portion of the test measures “three broad aspects of language proficiency:”

Correct Expression: A correctly written sentence follows all the rules of standard written English. These rules include subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, and verb tense, as well as structural elements such as parallelism, correct use of modifiers, and proper use of idiomatic expression.

Effective Expression: An effective sentence expresses its idea as clearly and concisely as possible while maintaining grammatical correctness. Effective sentences avoid ambiguity, redundancy, and unnecessarily complex constructions.

Proper Diction: Diction refers to the words appearing in a sentence. Words used in a sentence must be accurate, well chosen, and contextually appropriate.

According to the GMAC, successful business school candidates are more likely to excel in these areas, and such excellence will presumably translate into successful communication in the business world.

Regardless of the truth of that presupposition, the GMAT also aims to test the analytical abilities of potential business school students. Analysis involves separating an entity into its constituent parts, and grammar

questions offer the test writers a perfect way to gauge this ability. After all, in order to determine the grammatical correctness of a sentence, you must be able to break the sentence down into its parts and identify how the different parts of speech function together. Similarly, questions on the structure of a sentence and the effectiveness of the expression require you to understand the relationship between the different components in the sentence.

Grammar Analysis

Instead of viewing the grammar questions on the GMAT as dry exercises in obscure linguistic rules that you may neither be interested in nor even care to learn, view them as opportunities to exercise your analytical muscles. This perspective is important because it takes the emphasis away from the grammar rules and places it more properly on the sentences you'll be working with on the test. In fact, when it comes to the actual grammar rules you'll need to know for the test, you may be surprised to see how few rules are tested and how many of those rules you already know.

What Rules are Tested on the GMAT?

The English language contains hundreds and hundreds of grammatical rules, many of which you may be quite familiar with through your everyday usage, even if you might not be able to articulate the rule precisely. Fortunately, the GMAT tests very few of these rules—only about six major grammatical rules show up on the test. And because the GMAT is a standardized test that doesn't change much (or else it wouldn't be standardized), you can be assured that the writers of the test won't be adding additional rules to that list anytime soon.

The rules that are tested on the GMAT involve:

- **Subject/Verb Agreement:** The subject of the sentence must agree in number with the action it performs.
- **Pronouns:** A pronoun must not only agree in number with the noun it replaces, but it must also unambiguously refer to the noun it replaces.
- **Modifiers:** Modifying phrases must correctly modify the noun they refer to.
- **Verb Tense:** The verbs in a sentence should be consistent in their tenses, unless, of course, the meaning of the sentence requires otherwise.
- **Parallel Construction:** The parts of a sentence should be similarly constructed.
- **Idiomatic Expression:** Technically not a grammar rule, idiomatic expression relates to using the accepted forms of phrases.

Take a moment to study this list. It is not, on its surface, a very intimidating one. As stated previously, you may not be consciously aware of the rules underlying your speech and writing, but you surely are aware that it is incorrect to say “*Noah create a detailed plan,*” (verb tense error) or “*Isabella and Kim went shopping and she bought a necklace,*” (pronoun ambiguity error).

Simply stated, the rules tested on the GMAT are among the most basic grammatical principles. This underscores the point that the GMAT isn’t really testing grammar; after all, the test writers could design a really nasty test on a number of obscure and difficult rules. But they haven’t. Instead, the GMAT uses fairly *easy* concepts to create fairly *difficult* questions.

Basic Concepts, Difficult Questions

How is it that the GMAT could test such common rules and yet have such difficult questions? The short answer is that the test is designed to exploit certain thought processes and approaches that the “average” test taker is likely to use. Each GMAT administration contains a number of experimental questions. The test writers use these experimental questions to figure out how people react to certain questions and answer choices. Add this data to the information collected from the test takers’ responses to all the other questions on the tests administered practically worldwide and you can see that the creators of the test have a huge amount of insight into how test takers handle different questions.

From this immense sample of test-taker performances, the writers of the GMAT determine what types of grammatical errors people are likely to miss or overlook when they are reading a sentence. The writers also determine what types of incorrect answers are particularly enticing to test takers. This sort of knowledge allows the writers of the GMAT to author questions in such a way as to obscure the rule or concept being tested. Thus, you might be very comfortable with the concept of subject-verb agreement, but still get a question about that concept incorrect because you either did not identify the question as such or were lured into choosing one of the incorrect answers.

Defying Expectations

The GMAT is relying on you to perform up to its expectations of what a typical test taker will do. In general, the test makers expect that you will rely on your ear in order to answer grammar questions. Because many people have an intuitive understanding of grammar, they rely on how sentences “sound” in order to judge whether the sentence is correct. This method, while mostly reliable for native speakers of the language, is particularly subject to exploitation. Sometimes, grammatically correct expressions sound awkward, while incorrect formulations may sound fine.

The key to success on this portion of the GMAT, then, is to defy the expectations of the test writers. Instead of relying on how sentences sound,

you should work on analyzing sentences and understanding how the various parts of the sentence fit together. In order to do so, you need to explore sentences in a little more depth than most people are used to. What follows is by no means an exhaustive look at English grammar, but instead a thorough look at the types of rules tested on the GMAT and the analytical process by which you can break down sentences and truly understand how these concepts work.

GRAMMAR RULES

The Sentence

Let's begin analysis of grammar rules by considering the sentence. If you remember your elementary school days, you'll recall that in its simplest form, a sentence consists of a mere two parts: a subject and a verb. For example, all of the following are complete sentences:

Jim (subject) *walks* (verb).

Cats (subject) *purr* (verb).

Justice (subject) *prevails* (verb).

In these sentences, there's not much analysis to be done, but unfortunately, you won't see sentences like these on the GMAT. In order to complicate matters, the test writers will add certain elements to a sentence to make the subject and verb harder to find. These elements typically take the form of:

- **Prepositional Phrases:** Prepositions are, as their name suggests, words that indicate the position or relationship between nouns, verbs, and adjectives.
- **Modifiers:** A modifier is a word or phrase that describes or qualifies another word or phrase in the sentence.

The use of prepositional phrases and modifiers adds more detail to a sentence, but sometimes makes it more difficult to isolate the parts. Consider the following sentences:

After awakening from his afternoon nap, Jim walked aimlessly from room to room, searching for something to do.

Cats, like most members of the family Felidae, purr in order to express contentment or pleasure.

Despite the oftentimes egregious failings of the court system, justice, it was agreed by legal scholars, often prevailed in due time.

You've probably noticed that these sentences, despite adding a good deal more detail, are saying basically the same thing the three prior sentences did. The other parts of the sentences are modifiers and prepositional phrases. Those will be examined in more detail later.

► Drill 1

DIRECTIONS: Underline the subject and main verb in the following sentences. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

1. Some people fail to recognize the value of enjoying the small things in life.
2. Even after she was warned by the judge that her line of questioning was inadmissible, Smith persisted in mercilessly badgering the witness.
3. Seldom do so many fail so spectacularly in such a simple undertaking.
4. Rejecting any allegations of wrongdoing, the indicted Senator Meinhart vowed to continue his term.
5. Though the old saying claims otherwise, scientific studies have not demonstrated music's ability to soothe savage beasts.
6. As a rule of thumb, most businesses carry an inventory no greater than three months' worth of sales.
7. None of the proposed solutions to the problem addressed all the issues inherent in the crisis.
8. The advance of technology has led to computers that are so fast and so compact that experts wonder when the limits of computational efficiency will be reached.
9. Named after the industry that initially was their prime sponsor, soap operas debuted in the 1920s.
10. Thousands of onlookers, well-wishers, and assorted gawkers lined the boulevard outside the famous restaurant Chez Amee.

Analysis

Look over your work. Did you correctly identify the main subject and verb in each sentence? If not, you may need to refine your approach. A good first step would be to find the verb first. If you can identify the action that is taking place in the sentence, you can then ask yourself what noun is performing that action. Also, watch out for prepositional phrases. These are usually indicated by words such as *of*, *in*, and *to*. These phrases are major distractions when identifying subjects, so ignore them when breaking down the sentence.

Proficiency at identifying subjects and verbs will help you successfully analyze one of the major grammar rules tested on the GMAT, subject-verb agreement.

Subject-Verb Agreement, Part I

The rule for subject-verb agreement is one with which you are no doubt familiar. Singular subjects require singular verbs, while plural subjects require plural verbs. This rule is easy to work with when the subject and verb in the sentence are clear. For example, you should have no problem finding the error in the following sentences:

Stars recedes from the center of the universe.

Baseball players has to train.

The nineteenth century were an important time.

There is no question that these sentences are incorrect as written. However, once the test writers start adding modifiers and prepositional phrases to the sentences, the problems with subject-verb agreement may become harder to spot. Look at these sentences:

The stars, which appear motionless despite moving at a tremendous velocity, recedes from the center of the universe.

Baseball players and other athletes who train themselves to perform at high levels for short periods of time has to train their bodies to exert themselves in quick bursts.

The nineteenth century, which saw the refinement of such crucial literary forms as the novel, the short story, and the serial, were important in the evolution of literature.

Now that the subject and the verb are separated from each other it becomes somewhat tougher to spot the problems in subject-verb agreement. However, by analyzing the sentence and breaking it down to a subject and a verb, the error becomes apparent again.

► Drill 2

DIRECTIONS: For each of the following sentences, underline the subject and verb. Correct any errors in subject-verb agreement. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

1. Recently, enrollments of minority students in graduate level programs, including business and law school, has begun to decline after peaking in the late 1990s.
2. Of the potential candidates, many of whom have not previously run for office, none have the experience needed for the job.
3. Although children are reading more and more, experts in the educational field has been reluctant to proclaim the battle against illiteracy over.
4. A new survey conducted by the National Association of Retailers report that many consumers feel overwhelmed by the number of products available to them.
5. Developments in neuroscience is challenging long-held beliefs about how people process information during stressful situations.
6. Inequalities in the pay received by male and female employees perpetuate stereotypes about the value of an individual's work.
7. The eroded appearance of Mars' surface features cause many geologists, including the preeminent Dr. Bumguardner, to speculate that the planet was once covered with water.
8. Some cities, in an attempt to curb potentially dangerous greenhouse gas emissions, are expanding mass transit.
9. The early economy of the thirteen colonies were dependent on trade in the northern states and agriculture in the southern states.
10. The mere suggestion of improper actions, even if none have occurred, are enough to demand an investigation into the actions of Mayor Hanks.

Analysis

As you can see, the presence of modifiers and prepositional phrases may make matching the subject and verb more difficult. If you missed a few of these problems, try crossing out all the words and phrases that provide description. Leave only the nouns and the verbs, and then check for subject-verb agreement.

Subject-Verb Agreement, Part II

So far, the term “subject” has been used in the way most people think of the word—that is, as the main subject of the sentence. But some sentences have more than one verb and every verb in a sentence has a subject. In terms of analysis, your task is still the same. You must isolate the verbs and their subjects and ignore the modifiers and prepositional phrases that obscure the relationship between the subject and the verb. For example, in this sentence:

Developments in neuroscience are challenging long-held beliefs about how people process information during stressful situations.

There is a main subject, “developments,” and its verb, “are challenging.” But the prepositional phrase “about how people process information” also has a verb, “process.” The subject of this verb is “people.”

Common Mistakes

Now that you have worked with the basic idea of subject-verb agreement, you should look at some common mistakes many people make when working with subjects and verbs. These are:

- **Compound Subjects:** Compound subjects use conjunctions such as *and*, *neither...nor* and *either...or*. Singular subjects joined by the word *and* are always plural. When using *neither...nor* or *either...or*, the verb must agree with the noun closest to the verb.
- **Collective Nouns:** Collective nouns treat entities made up of many parts as a single unit, therefore, they are singular. Examples of collective nouns include: the jury, the corporation, and the team. Note that some words that end in “s” appear to be plural but are actually collective nouns. “Mathematics,” for example, is singular.
- **Indefinite Pronouns:** Indefinite pronouns refer to an unknown or unidentified person or thing. Indefinite pronouns include: everyone, anyone, anybody, everything, nothing, somebody, someone, and each. Most indefinite pronouns are singular. There are only a handful of plural indefinite pronouns. These are: both, few, many, and several. Some indefinite pronouns may be either singular or plural. These include: all, any, more, most, none, and some. These are singular when the noun they refer to is singular and plural when the noun they refer to is plural. For example: “All of the book was destroyed.” The pronoun “all” refers to “book,” which is singular, so it takes a singular verb.

► Drill 3

DIRECTIONS: For each verb, identify its subject and determine whether the subject and the verb agree. Correct any errors in subject-verb agreement. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

1. Neither Coach Randy nor the players feels responsible for the team's woeful winning percentage.
2. Most of the damage caused by Hurricane Laura was restricted to the low-lying areas of the town and to those parts of town that was near the water.
3. Mathematics are rarely listed among students' favorite subjects, but history and English is.
4. Each one of the attendees were provided with an itinerary for the meeting and a list of local restaurants in the area.
5. The House of Representatives are unlikely to pass the legislation in its current form because the minority leader is unwilling to compromise on the amendments contained in the bill.
6. In the early 1970s and 1980s, a majority of New York City's night clubs were packed with devotees of salsa, but the trendy nature of the craze and the changing demographics of the city was a factor in the dance's downfall.
7. Extensive clinical trials of vitamin C has shown that the substance has little to no effect in preventing the common cold.
8. Although the stagnant Canadian online retailing market puzzled economists for years, the reasons for its dry spell is suddenly apparent.
9. Among the amazing advances bioengineers have made is salmon that grow to market weight twice as fast as regular salmon and goats whose milk wards off infections.
10. Proposals for a manned mission to Mars, once ridiculed as a unfeasible, now appears to be very much within the realm of possibility.

Analysis

Keep your eyes open for typical subject-verb mistakes. As you've seen, the most common difficulty involves the use of prepositional phrases and modifiers to separate the subject and the verb. Once you've become adept at spotting those distracters, watch for tricky pronouns, compound subjects, and collective nouns.

Pronouns

You’ve seen how pronouns can cause problems when they don’t agree properly with the verb they take. But it gets worse. Pronouns on the GMAT can have the following errors:

- **Pronoun agreement errors:** Pronouns must not only agree with the verbs they take, but also with the nouns and other pronouns they replace.
- **Pronoun referent errors:** Pronouns must refer to a noun in the sentence. They must also clearly and unambiguously refer to only one noun.

Pronoun Agreement Errors

For purposes of agreement, it’s helpful to know which pronouns are singular and which are plural. See the following list.

Singular Pronouns	Plural Pronouns	Singular or Plural
everyone, anyone, someone, no one, anybody, everybody, somebody, everything, something, nothing, either, neither, much, each	few, many, both, several	all, more, most, some, none, any, less

When a pronoun can be either singular or plural, check the noun it refers to. If the noun is countable, such as “trees,” “books,” or “people,” then the pronoun is plural, as in the following sentence:

Most of the trees in the park are deciduous.

If the pronoun refers to a noun that isn’t countable, such as “energy,” “justice,” or “love,” then the pronoun is singular:

All of the energy leaves the room when Sheila enters.

Additionally, some pronouns must refer to specific classes of objects. These pronouns are:

- Which** refers to things
- Who** refers to people
- When** refers to times
- Where** refers to places

Pronoun Referent Errors

Pronoun referent errors typically occur when there is some ambiguity as to which noun the pronoun replaces. Which noun is the pronoun referring to in this sentence?

Many casual investors prefer certificates of deposit to risky stocks because they offer a more consistent return.

Logically, you may argue that the pronoun refers to “certificates of deposit” but, grammatically, the pronoun is ambiguous because “risky stocks” is also a plural noun to which the pronoun could possibly refer. Clear, concise writing—the kind preferred by ACT—avoids ambiguity whenever possible.

A rarer form of pronoun error occurs when the pronoun has no antecedent at all. Look at this sentence:

To do this, the executive argued, would require a tremendous outlay of resources.

In this sentence, the pronoun “this” doesn’t refer to any particular noun in the sentence. Try to spot some pronoun errors on your own now.

► **Drill 4**

DIRECTIONS: Underline pronouns in each of the sentences and check to see if they agree. Correct any pronoun referent errors. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

1. Nutritionists suggest a one-to-one ratio of polyunsaturated fat to saturated fat; it is suggested that the current ratio in Western diets is too low.
2. While many people think caffeine makes coffee taste bitter, chemists have found that a class of antioxidants in the beans is responsible for it.
3. Epidemiologists are concerned after finding the Marburg virus in a type of fruit bat; this is the first time it has been found in an animal other than a monkey.
4. Although the tyrannosaurus weighed more than six tons, scientists believe they could reach speeds of twenty five miles per hour.
5. None of the testimony offered by the witnesses was entirely convincing, but none of the evidence presented by the defense team effectively countered it.
6. Small objects fall to the earth from space all the time, but because most of the planet is covered in water one would not expect this to injure people.
7. A certain order of monks refuses to wash anything but their hands and feet because they believe that washing the body kills millions of harmless microbes.
8. The Astor family’s legacy lives on in the form of the many institutions and places that carry their name.
9. For years politicians have been attempting to prevent stores from selling violent video games to minors, but the courts say that they are protected by the First Amendment.
10. One of the major problems confronting practitioners of psychotherapy is its patient’s tendency to confuse feeling good with receiving good treatment.

Analysis

It is important to make a distinction between what the sentence logically conveys and what it grammatically states. Even in cases in which you feel that you understand precisely what the pronoun refers to, there may still be a grammatical problem with the pronoun. So focus instead on finding the pronoun and then figuring out if there are any other nouns it could potentially refer to, even if it doesn’t seem to make sense. Generally, correct answers on the GMAT will avoid pronoun ambiguity whenever possible.

Modifiers

Now that you have worked with identifying subjects, verbs, and pronouns, it's time to start working with other parts of the sentence. A modifier can be a single word, a phrase, or a clause, but in each case, the modifier serves to add information to the sentence. Here are some examples of single-word modifiers:

The tired (modifier) dog limped into the yard.

Marcel joyously (modifier) clapped his hands.

In the first example, the modifier describes the dog. Words that modify nouns are called adjectives. In the second example, the modifier describes an action. These words are called adverbs. It is helpful to recognize these words in sentences, although the GMAT does not test adjectives and adverbs extensively.

More often, you'll have to work with modifying phrases and clauses. A phrase is a group of grammatically linked words that do not express a complete thought—that is, a phrase does not contain a subject and a verb. The following are examples of phrases:

Turning off the television (phrase), Jones went to bed.

The children ran across the field (phrase).

Both of the phrases above function as modifiers because they add information to the sentence. The first phrase is called a participial phrase. A participle takes a verb and turns it into an adjective. In this example, the verb “to turn” is transformed into the participle “turning.” This phrase modifies the noun in the sentence, Jones. The second example employs a prepositional phrase. It modifies the verb “ran,” telling us where the children went. Comfort with participial phrases, and to a lesser extent, prepositional phrases, is important to your success on the GMAT.

► Drill 5

DIRECTIONS: Underline the modifying phrases in the sentences below. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

-
1. Scientists have identified an oxygen free dead zone off the coast of Texas.
 2. After reviewing the current literature, Dr. Gunderson concluded that elective surgery is seldom a good choice for patients.
 3. Concerns about the health of U.S. credit markets are clouding the outlooks for markets in Japan and China.
 4. Allowing users to access the Internet or take digital pictures, today's cell phones are more than just communication devices.
 5. The 42 satellites orbiting the Earth provide scientists with valuable data, but little thought has gone into what will happen when the satellites plummet to Earth.

6. In a disturbing trend, more and more people are ignoring jury summonses, plunging our nation's justice system into crisis.
7. Dramatically altering common perceptions, physicists now claim that black holes, rather than destroying matter, are instrumental in creating it.
8. Some universities, confronted by rising costs and declining enrollments, now charge more for tuition for certain degrees.
9. The city of Nancy is the artistic and intellectual capital of Lorraine, a portion of eastern France about 240 miles from Paris.
10. Surviving in an antiseptic environment, the bacteria found in hospitals are some of the most virulent and dangerous known to mankind.

Misplaced Modifiers

When using modifiers, you have some discretion about where to place them in the sentence. For example, you could say the following:

Marcel joyously clapped his hands.

But you could also say:

Marcel clapped his hands joyously.

Both sentences express the same meaning. However, in some cases, moving the modifier changes the meaning of the sentence or makes the meaning unclear. Consider this sentence:

The tired dog limped into the yard.

Now, move the modifier around like so:

The dog limped into the tired yard.

The meaning of the sentence has now changed (notwithstanding the issue of whether a yard can be “tired”). From this you can see that modifiers must be placed in such a way as to preserve the meaning of the sentence and avoid ambiguity. As a general guideline, a modifier should be as close as possible to the noun or verb modified. Modifiers that are positioned in such a way as to create either nonsensical meanings or ambiguous meanings are called misplaced modifiers.

Look at the following example:

Lori heard her parents discussing her curfew while pretending to be asleep.

What is this sentence trying to convey? Did Lori overhear her parents because *she* was pretending to be asleep? Or did Lori hear her parents converse while *they* were pretending to be asleep? Now, logically, you may say that the second interpretation doesn't make any sense. However, from a grammatical perspective, the modifier is used inappropriately. If you place the modifier closer to the noun modified, the sentence is clear:

While pretending to be asleep, Lori heard her parents discussing her curfew.

Clauses vs. Phrases

So far, you've been dealing with phrases, groups of words that lack either a subject or a verb. A group of words that contains both a subject and a verb is called a clause. The most basic form of clause is one you've been working with all along—the sentence. Any clause that can stand alone is called an independent clause. However, not all clauses can stand alone, as the following example shows:

The teacher told the class not to move (independent clause) when she left the room (dependent clause).

The dependent clause, “when she left the room,” could not stand alone as a sentence. Like modifying phrases, it is important that dependent clauses be used in a way that preserves the clarity of the sentence and prevents ambiguity. Consider:

The teacher told the class when she left the room not to move.

Now, the meaning of the sentence has changed, if only slightly. It is clear that modifiers, in whatever form they take, must be used carefully.

► ***Drill 6***

DIRECTIONS: Underline the modifiers in the sentences below. Rewrite any sentences in which the modifiers are misplaced. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

1. As a viable energy source, many debate the practicality of nuclear fusion.
2. Most people know in their diets that they should cut foods high in fat, but it is not always easy to do.
3. Once endangered, conservationists have succeeded in bringing the bald eagle population back up to self-sustaining numbers.
4. Although the injury seemed horrific, Zane suffered no ill effects after being poked with a stick in the eye.
5. The irate city councilman berated the newspaper in a letter published in yesterday's edition for the negative coverage of the scandal.
6. At the close of the day, the market rebounded nicely from its earlier woes.
7. Last week, the Senate approved a bill to punish currency manipulators over the objections of Treasury Secretary Voelkle.

8. Largely forgotten during the deregulation craze of the 1980s, power companies in California pioneered the concept of rate decoupling, disconnecting utilities sales from profits.
9. Video game designers, appealing to the largely unexploited adult market, are creating a new genre of “brain-training” games.
10. By quoting an annual percentage yield, the Truth in Savings Act requires financial institutions to advertise the interest rates they offer.

Analysis

Notice how the placement of the modifier affects the meaning of the sentence. In some instances, the meaning of the sentence is still apparent, but the placement of the modifier is clumsy or awkward. In other sentences, the misplaced modifier actually distorts or changes the meaning of the sentence. Make sure you ask yourself what noun the phrase is modifying, then place the phrase as close to that noun as possible.

Verb Tense

Verbs, as you know, express actions and have three basic tenses: past, present, and future. Each of the three tenses has four forms, or aspects, that indicate the nature of the action described by the verb. In the present tense, there are four forms:

- **Simple Present:** He jumps.
- **Present Progressive:** He is jumping.
- **Present Perfect:** He has jumped.
- **Present Perfect Progressive:** He has been jumping.

In the past tense, there are four forms:

- **Simple Past:** He jumped.
- **Past Progressive:** He was jumping.
- **Past Perfect:** He had jumped.
- **Past Perfect Progressive:** He had been jumping.

In the future tense, there are also four forms:

- **Simple Future:** He will jump.
- **Future Progressive:** He will be jumping.
- **Future Perfect:** He will have jumped.
- **Future Perfect Progressive:** He will have been jumping.

This seems like a lot of grammatical information, but fortunately the GMAT only focuses on a few of these tenses. You should be somewhat familiar with all of the tenses, but for the test, you'll need to be particularly comfortable with the simple tenses, the past perfect, and the present perfect.

► Drill 7

DIRECTIONS: Underline the verbs in the sentences below and write down their tenses. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

1. Marisa had planned to close her business at the end of the month, but the sudden increase in customers delayed her decision.
2. The president will be making an eleventh hour trip to the United Nations to try to salvage the peace plan.
3. Danica has been struggling to resolve her housing issues amicably, but the landlord of her building has been unresponsive.
4. Kalee has gone to great lengths to master all the grammar rules in the book.
5. Michaels told his boss that as of January, he will have been working at the company for over thirty years.
6. Janice had been going to the City Council meetings regularly, but her new work schedule prevented her from attending this month.
7. Technology advances at such a rate that today's newest gadget will be obsolete by tomorrow.
8. The proposed commercial development is going to anger many of the residents of the neighborhood.
9. Steve should have known the offer was too good to be true, but he desperately wanted to believe it was accurate.
10. After playing a series of sold out shows, the dance company will be leaving the city in May and will not return until next year.

Analysis

As these examples demonstrate, the correct verb tense is based on the context of the sentence. Sentences may contain one or more different tenses. In some sentences, all the verbs are in the same tense, but others switch between tenses as the meaning requires.

Verb Tense Errors

Verb tense errors occur in two ways. Sometimes, the wrong form of the verb is used in a sentence. For example, the following sentence uses the wrong form of the verb:

Steven had received good cell phone service all month.

This sentence uses the past perfect form of the verb (“had received”), but the sentence indicates that the action is continuing. The sentence should use the present perfect progressive tense:

Steven has been receiving good cell phone service all month.

Following is a discussion of the different tenses and when they should be used.

Present Tenses

The **simple present** tense is used to express present conditions (“It is raining”), habitual actions (“Chris jogs”), and general truths (“The earth revolves around the sun”). Use of the simple present implies that the precise beginning and the precise ending of the action is unknown or not relevant to the meaning of the sentence. When discussing works of art, the simple present tense is appropriate, as in the sentence “The *Mona Lisa* is perhaps DaVinci’s best known painting.”

The **present progressive** should be used when an ongoing action is currently in progress. Note the difference in meaning between the sentences “Joaquin paces the halls of his home” and “Joaquin is pacing the halls of his home.” The first sentence suggests that Joaquin’s action is one that is habitual, while the second one indicates that Joaquin is pacing the halls at this moment.

The **present perfect** tense is appropriate when an action occurred at some unspecified time in the past and continues up to the present time. For example, in the sentence “WINK, Inc. has not responded to the government’s repeated demands for the tax records” the tense indicates that the initial action (or non-action in this case) happened in the past and, up to this moment, the company still has not responded.

The **present perfect progressive**, like the progressive tense, emphasizes the continuing nature of the action. But unlike the present perfect, the action starts in the past. The present perfect progressive is useful in a sentence like “the roof has been leaking for three weeks now.” This means that not only was the roof leaking three weeks ago, it is still leaking now.

Past Tenses

The **simple past** describes a completed action in the past. The sentences “The man bit the dog,” and “the pilot landed the plane,” both use the simple past to indicate one completed action in the past.

The **past progressive** is used to indicate an ongoing action in the past. Although the past progressive can be used to express a single action, the past progressive is often used when an ongoing action in the past is interrupted by another action. “The pilot was landing the plane when the instrument panel went dark.”

The **past perfect** differs from the past progressive in that it describes a completed action in the past, rather than an ongoing one. Use the past perfect when a completed action occurs before another completed action in the past, as in the sentence “Dana arrived at the meeting an hour late, but the rest of the participants had already left.” Here, the sentence expresses the idea that the participant’s action of leaving was completed in the past *before* Dana’s arrival, which was also a completed action in the past.

The **past perfect progressive** is used when an ongoing action in the past was interrupted by another action that was also in the past. “The excited fans had been waiting outside for hours when the rock star finally arrived.” In this case, the action, waiting, was continuing up until the second action, the arrival, occurred.

Future Tenses

The **simple future** expresses an action that will take place after the time of the sentence. Examples include “the book will arrive tomorrow,” and “the race will begin at 6:00pm.”

The **future progressive** indicates an ongoing action in the future. “After six games on the road, the team will be playing its next ten games at home.” This sentence shows an action that is both ongoing and in the future.

The **future perfect** tense, like the other perfect tenses, is used when the action in the future is complete before another action. In the sentence “the businessman will have made a million dollars before he is thirty,” both actions are in the future. The first action will be completed before the second one occurs.

The **future perfect progressive** tense is very rare. It is used to express a continuing action that will be completed in the future. The sentence “I will have been thinking about the project for an entire month by the end of the week” uses the future perfect progressive tense. As you can see, it is a very awkward construction and is not typically used.

The Subjunctive Tense

One particularly intimidating, in name only perhaps, verb tense that shows up on the GMAT is the subjunctive tense. Although the phrase “subjunctive tense” can cause some grammar-phobes to huddle in a dark corner and weep, rest assured that the concept is not all that bad. The subjunctive tense is used in two very specific instances: when making a statement that is contrary to the current state of affairs (called a counterfactual) and when giving a command or order.

Counterfactuals are statements such as “If I were you, I’d pay careful attention to the material in this book.” Statements like this describe a situation that is not currently the case—namely, that I am not you. You can often recognize counterfactuals because they use the word “if” to introduce the initial clause. However, the word “if” is not necessary so long as the idea is clear. Counterfactuals must follow one of three forms:

1. *If clause + were + infinitive form of verb*

The infinitive form of the verb simply refers to the basic, unconjugated verb. “To win,” “to be,” and “to run” are examples of infinitive verbs.

Example: If the Phillies were to win the World Series, the team’s long-suffering fans would rejoice.

2. *If clause + past tense of verb*

Example: If the Phillies won the World Series, the team’s long-suffering fans would rejoice.

Both formulations are acceptable. The first form is more traditional and sounds a little strange, so watch out for it on the GMAT. Regardless of the form you use, make sure you do not use the word “would” in the initial “if” clause. It would be incorrect to say “If the Phillies would win...”

3. *If clause + adjective*

Example: If Bruce were rich, Vicki would marry him.

The second use of the subjunctive is when giving a command or order. For example, the sentence “Judge Webster ordered that the defendant be denied bail” describes a command given by the judge. The format for these sentences is:

“command word” + *that* + *infinitive verb* (without the “to” part)

Example: The principal required that all students wear appropriate clothing.

The command words you should look for include “ordered,” “mandated,” “required,” “commanded,” “demanded,” and others of this sort.

Verb Tense Errors, Continued

In addition to errors involving the correct tense of a verb, another common mistake is to change the verb tense when the sentence does not require it. The following sentence exhibits this error:

Sunil went to run an errand on his lunch break but finds himself stuck in line at the bank.

There is no reason to switch from the past tense (“went”) to the present tense (“finds”) in this sentence. Switching verb tenses without justification confuses the meaning of a sentence and also violates one of the next major grammatical principles tested on the GMAT, parallelism.

► **Drill 8**

DIRECTIONS: Underline the verbs in the sentences below. Determine whether the correct tense is employed and if not, correct the sentence. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

1. After finishing her appetizer, Lisa had decided not to eat at the restaurant.
2. The company will be planning a holiday party to reward its employees for their good work this quarter.
3. Conservationists fear the Bengal tiger will disappear if appropriate actions are not taken.
4. Despite the attention it has received, solar power had not captured the interest of enough people to offer a serious alternative to fossil fuels.
5. During his inspection, the carpenter discovered that termites had been eating away at the foundation of the house for years.
6. Over the last few years, Judge Elba Dean developed a reputation for being tough on prosecutors.
7. Prognosticators will think twice before predicting the end of civilization after the major let down that occurred when we reached the year 2000.
8. At the university, all matriculated students have been inoculated against measles, mumps, and rubella.
9. The public relations director announced that the CEO will have left the company by the beginning of the new year.
10. Jones had thought that jury duty would be exciting, but after serving he had found the process frustrating.

Parallelism

Simple sentences contain a single subject and a single verb. However, if all writing consisted of only simple sentences, there would not be any rhythm or flow to the words. Here's an example:

William Faulkner was a great writer. He wrote many books. He also wrote screenplays. Faulkner captured the Southern experience. He had a gift for dialogue. His books also had a sense of place. Faulkner is considered one of the best writers of his generation.

That is not the kind of writing you'd be interested in reading for any length of time. In order to break up the monotony, writers vary their sentence structures, using both simple and complex sentences. Compare this paragraph to the one above:

William Faulkner was a great writer, authoring both books and screenplays. With his gift for writing dialogue and his ability to create a sense of place, Faulkner captured the Southern experience and cemented his place as one of the best writers of his generation.

This paragraph is much better than the previous one. Complex sentences can join together more than one independent clause and feature one or more dependent clauses. However, when assembling a complex sentence, a writer must be careful to keep the various elements parallel to each other. Parallel structure means that clauses and phrases that serve the same role in a sentence must share the same form. Read the paragraph again, this time with some errors in parallelism:

William Faulkner was a great writer, authoring both books and he penned screenplays. With his gift for writing dialogue and he had the ability to create a sense of place, Faulkner captured the Southern experience and cementing his place as one of the best writers of his generation.

As you can see, mixing and matching different constructions destroys the writing. Thus, good writing maintains parallel structures.

Parallelism Errors

Parallelism errors occur most frequently in two situations: lists and comparisons. List errors appear in sentences like the following:

Although William "Captain" Kidd was executed for piracy, his exploits were less sensational and the booty he captured on sea trade was not as much as popularly believed.

In this sentence, the author describes Kidd's exploits by listing two attributes: they were less sensational and the booty he captured was not as much as popularly believed. However, the two items in the list are not parallel because the first item in the list, "less sensational," is made up of an adverb and an adjective, while the second part of the list, "the booty...was

not as much,” is a clause. To fix the error, both items in the list should have the same construction:

Although William “Captain” Kidd was executed for piracy, his exploits were less sensational and less lucrative than popularly believed.

Now, both descriptions of the exploits are in the same form and the sentence does not contain any parallelism errors.

List errors can also show up in sentences that detail a number of actions. Here’s an example:

The application process required individuals to take a test, write an essay, and also they must be interviewed by an alumnus.

This sentence lists three actions an applicant must take: take a test, write an essay, and they must be interviewed. As you can see, the third action in the list does not share the form of the first two. The list should read: take a test, write an essay, and *be interviewed*.

Comparison errors show up when the sentence uses words and phrases such as: less than, more than, just as, similar to, and like. Read this sentence:

Linguist Stephen Pinker views his discipline through an evolutionary perspective, much like Richard Dawkins.

What exactly is this sentence trying to communicate? Logically, it should state that Pinker views his discipline in a way similar to the way Dawkins *views his discipline*. But grammatically, the sentence seems to say that Pinker’s evolutionary perspective is like Richard Dawkins. Because you should not compare a perspective to a person, this is a faulty comparison. Whenever a sentence makes a comparison, make sure the two things being compared are the same. Consider:

Linguist Stephen Pinker views his discipline through an evolutionary perspective, just as Richard Dawkins does.

The comparison in this sentence is between how Pinker views his discipline and how Dawkins views his discipline. Thus, both parts of the comparison need a verb (notice the sentence also replaced the word “like” with “as.” That will be explained in the section on idioms).

► Drill 9

DIRECTIONS: In the following sentences, underline any comparisons and lists. Fix any errors you find in parallelism. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

1. Although scientists at the University of Copenhagen have succeeded in converting any type of blood into type O, they have yet to remove the molecular markers that lie on the surface of the blood cells and can be rejected by the patient's immune system.
2. Archeologists believe they have found the burial place of King Herod, ruler of Judea and known for the building of an impressive hilltop fortress at Masada.
3. People who get between six and eight hours of sleep a night report that they are more active, alert, and motivated than people with fewer than six hours of sleep.
4. Some critics view H.G. Wells' science fiction, unlike Jules Verne, as "soft" because it contains little actual science.
5. The Large Hadron Collider, a circular chamber over seventeen miles in circumference, will accelerate protons to 99.999 percent the speed of light and, scientists hope, generate new types of matter, uncover hidden dimensions, and recreations of events at the birth of the universe.
6. The ears of a mosquito are filled with roughly as many sensory cells as a human, despite the vast difference in the sizes of the two species.
7. Researchers are exploring the possibility of creating drugs tailored to the specific genome of a group or an individual's DNA.
8. Wildfires are not necessarily destructive to the environment; on the contrary, the fires clear out debris, preventing the accumulation of materials, and guarding against even more intense blazes.
9. A new report issued by the government showed that gains in income vastly outpaced spending in the month of June and inflation is decreasing.
10. Economists fear that without a substantial increase in the amount of contributions households make to their retirement funds, more than of third of them will not be able to live as well in retirement as today.

Analysis

Parallelism errors are an excellent opportunity to test your understanding of sentence structure. If you find yourself having trouble with this type of question, work on breaking down the sentence into its subject, verb, and modifiers. As you've seen, parallelism errors often occur with lists of verbs, so identifying the action in a sentence is crucial. Other types of parallelism errors occur in phrases, such as in comparisons. Try to isolate the comparison being made and check to see that both parts of the comparison have the same form.

Idioms

As mentioned previously, idioms are not grammatical rules in a strict sense, but rather commonly accepted phrases. Simply put, idioms are nothing more than the way certain concepts are expressed in English. For example, people typically say “get *in* the car” but “get *on* the bus.” If someone said to you “get in the bus,” you probably wouldn’t think twice, but the phrase “get on the car,” has a very different meaning from “get in the car.” In everyday usage, idioms are generally determined by consensus—the “correct” expression is the one that the majority of speakers use. On the GMAT, the correct expression is determined by the test writers. You may have no qualms telling your friends that you plan *on* attending their party. However, on the GMAT, such a construction would be incorrect; the proper idiom is plan *to*.

Idioms come in two main forms. The first involves the proper combination of prepositions and nouns, verbs and adjectives. Some examples of these idioms include “responsibility *to*,” “depend *on*,” and “different *from*.” The second type of idiom involves the construction of certain types of phrases. Following the word “neither” with “nor” is one example of such an idiomatic expression, as is using the construction “not only...but also...”

Of all the grammar topics tested on the GMAT, idioms can be the most maddening. They can be hard to spot and sometimes incorrect idioms sound fine, so if you’re not on the look out for them you might miss them. The best way to approach idioms is to become familiar with the most commonly tested ones. There is a list of these frequently tested idioms at the end of the chapter.

► Drill 10

DIRECTIONS: Underline the idioms in the following sentences and make any necessary corrections. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

-
1. Matt told Stephanie that he wasn’t feeling well, but he would try and make her party anyway.
 2. Although resembling an alligator in many respects, the crocodile is quite different than its freshwater loving cousin.
 3. The U.S. government calculates the number of households living in poverty by comparing the household incomes to the federal poverty line, a value determined with various factors.
 4. Because of the new legislation, many states have not only increased the number of tests required of students, but they have instituted measures of teacher proficiency.
 5. In the years leading up to the War of 1812, America and Britain disputed about Britain’s military support of Native American tribes.

- 6. Astronomers have recently discovered as many objects orbiting the giant planet Saturn that they are reconsidering the definition of what a moon is.
- 7. According to legend, Galileo dropped objects of various weights from the Leaning Tower of Pisa to see if they fell at different rates.
- 8. Just as reading *Moby Dick* provided Valerie with interesting facts about the whaling industry, reading *The Grapes of Wrath* gave her insight into the lives of migrant farmers.
- 9. Robotics technology has advanced to the point that certain robots can distinguish an individual’s voice over the background noise surrounding it.
- 10. Many historians consider John Adams to be one of the most underappreciated founding fathers.

Analysis

Idioms can be tough to spot. However, the skills you’ve worked on in this chapter can aid you. By breaking the sentence down into its parts, you can isolate the different phrases in the sentence. That ability, coupled with a familiarity with the idioms commonly tested on the GMAT, can help you succeed.

Grammar: Final Words

Ultimately, the grammar rules tested on the GMAT are not overly obscure or difficult. Many of the rules are ones you already know. What will determine your success on the GMAT, then, is not the rules per se, but your ability to analyze a sentence and break it down into its component parts. Continue to work on this skill—the good thing is, you can practice it wherever you find the written word. Breaking sentences down into their subjects, verbs, and modifiers will prepare you for the type of critical perspective you’ll need on Sentence Correction questions.

Answers to Drill 1

1.	subject: people	verb: fail
2.	subject: Smith	verb: persisted
3.	subject: many	verb: fail
4.	subject: Senator Meinhart	verb: vowed
5.	subject: studies	verb: have not demonstrated
6.	subject: businesses	verb: carry
7.	subject: none	verb: addressed
8.	subject: advance	verb: has led
9.	subject: soap operas	verb: debuted
10.	subject: thousands	verb: lined

Answers to Drill 2

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|--|
| 1. | subject: enrollments | correct verb: have begun |
| 2. | subject: none | correct verb: has |
| 3. | subject: experts | correct verb: have been |
| 4. | subject: survey | correct verb: reports |
| 5. | subject: developments | correct verb: are challenging |
| 6. | subject: inequalities | correct verb: perpetuate (no error) |
| 7. | subject: appearance | correct verb: causes |
| 8. | subject: cities | correct verb: are expanding (no error) |
| 9. | subject: economy | correct verb: was |
| 10. | subject: suggestion | correct verb: is |

Answers to Drill 3

1. Neither Coach Randy nor the *players* *feel* responsible for the team's woeful winning percentage.

When using "either...or" or "neither...nor," the verb agrees with the second noun in the list.

2. Most of the damage caused by Hurricane Laura was restricted to the low-lying areas of the town and to those *parts* of town that *were* near the water.

The verb "were" needs to agree with the subject "parts."

3. *Mathematics* *is* rarely listed among students' favorite subjects, but *History and English* *are*.

Mathematics is a collective noun and takes a singular verb. History and English, taken together, are plural.

4. *Each* one of the attendees *was* provided with an itinerary for the meeting and a list of local restaurants in the area.

The pronoun "each" is always singular.

5. The *House* of Representatives *is* unlikely to pass the legislation in its current form because the minority leader is unwilling to compromise on the amendments contained in the bill.

The House of Representatives is a collective noun and therefore singular.

6. In the early 1970s and 1980s, a *majority* of New York City's night clubs *was* packed with devotees of salsa, but the *trendy nature* of the craze and the *changing demographics* of the city *were* *factors* in the dance's downfall.

"Majority" is the subject and is singular. There were two factors in the dance's downfall, the trendy nature and the changing demographics, making the verb plural.

7. Extensive clinical *trials* of vitamin C *have* shown that the substance has little to no effect in preventing the common cold.

The subject is "trials," not vitamin C.

8. Although the stagnant Canadian online retailing market puzzled economists for years, the *reasons* for its dry spell *are* suddenly apparent.

“Reasons” is plural.

9. Among the amazing advances bioengineers have made *are salmon* that grow to market weight twice as fast as regular salmon and *goats* whose milk wards off infections.

Rearrange the sentence to clearly identify the subject and verb: Salmon...and goats...are among the amazing advances bioengineers have made.

10. *Proposals* for a manned mission to Mars, once ridiculed as unfeasible, now *appear* to be very much within the realm of possibility.

Ignore the prepositional phrases and modifiers separating the subject, “proposals,” from the verb “appear.”

Answers to Drill 4

1. Nutritionists suggest a one-to-one ratio of polyunsaturated fat to saturated fat; *nutritionists* have suggested that the current ratio in Western diets is too low.

The pronoun “it” in the original sentence has no clear referent.

2. While many people think caffeine makes coffee taste bitter, chemists have found that a class of antioxidants in the beans is responsible for *the bitterness*.

The pronoun “it” is ambiguous because it may refer to caffeine, the class, or the thing that makes coffee taste bitter.

3. Epidemiologists are concerned after finding the Marburg virus in a type of fruit bat; this is the first time *the virus* has been found in an animal other than a monkey.

“It” is ambiguous, as it may refer to the virus or the type of bat.

4. Although the tyrannosaurus weighed more than six tons, scientists believe *it* could reach speeds of twenty five miles per hour.

The tyrannosaurus is singular, so the pronoun “it” should be used. There are no other singular nouns in the sentence, so there is no referent problem.

5. None of the testimony offered by the witnesses was entirely convincing, but none of the evidence presented by the defense team effectively countered *the testimony*.

Testimony, evidence, and team are all singular nouns, which makes the pronoun “it” ambiguous.

6. Small objects fall to the earth from space all the time, but because most of the planet is covered in water one would not expect *these objects* to injure people.

The objects are plural, so the singular pronoun “this” does not agree with the noun it replaces.

7. *Monks of a certain order* refuse to wash anything but their hands and feet because they believe that washing the body kills millions of harmless microbes.

As originally written, the sentence has a problem with pronoun agreement because the subject, *order*, is singular. In order to make the sentence clear, the subject must be changed to *monks*.

8. The Astor family's legacy lives on in the form of the many institutions and places that carry *the family's* name.

The pronoun "their" has no clear referent because the subject of the sentence is "legacy," not "Astor family."

9. For years politicians have been attempting to prevent stores from selling violent video games to minors, but the courts say that *the games* are protected by the First Amendment.

This sentence has too many plural nouns—politicians, stores, games, courts—to use the plural pronoun "they" without creating ambiguity.

10. One of the major problems confronting practitioners of psychotherapy is *the patients'* tendency to confuse feeling good with receiving good treatment.

The original pronoun "its" has no clear referent; the only singular subject is "one of the problems" but that subject doesn't logically fit with "patients."

Answers to Drill 5

1. Scientists have identified an oxygen free dead zone *off the coast of Texas*.
2. *After reviewing the current literature*, Dr. Gunderson concluded that elective surgery is seldom a good choice *for patients*.
3. Concerns *about the health of U.S. credit markets* are clouding the outlooks *for markets in Japan and China*.
4. *Allowing users to access the Internet or take digital pictures*, today's cell phones are more than just communication devices.
5. The 42 satellites *orbiting the Earth* provide scientists with valuable data, but little thought has gone into what will happen when the satellites plummet *to Earth*.
6. *In a disturbing trend*, more and more people are ignoring jury summonses, *plunging our nation's justice system into crisis*.
7. *Dramatically altering common perceptions*, physicists now claim that black holes, *rather than destroying matter*, are instrumental in creating it.
8. Some universities, *confronted by rising costs and declining enrollments*, now charge more for tuition *for certain degrees*.
9. The city of Nancy is the artistic and intellectual capital of Lorraine, *a portion of eastern France about 240 miles from Paris*.
10. *Surviving in an antiseptic environment*, the bacteria *found in hospitals* are some of the most virulent and dangerous known to mankind.

Answers to Drill 6

1. Many debate the practicality of nuclear fusion *as a viable energy source*.
2. Most people know that they should cut foods high in fat *from their diets*, but it is not always easy to do.
3. Conservationists have succeeded in bringing the bald eagle population, *once endangered*, back up to self-sustaining numbers.
4. Although the injury seemed horrific, Zane suffered no ill effects after being poked *in the eye* with a stick.
5. *In a letter published in yesterday's newspaper*, the irate city councilman berated the newspaper for the negative coverage of the scandal.
6. Correct.
7. Last week, *over the objections of Treasury Secretary Voelkle*, the Senate approved a bill to punish currency manipulators.
8. Largely forgotten during the deregulation craze of the 1980s, *the concept of rate decoupling*, disconnecting utilities sales from profits, was pioneered by power companies in California.
9. Video game designers are creating a new genre of "brain-training" games, *appealing to the largely unexploited adult market*.
10. The Truth in Savings Act requires financial institutions to advertise the interest rates they offer *by quoting an annual percentage yield*.

Answers to Drill 7

1. verbs: had planned (past perfect), delayed (simple past)
2. verbs: will be making (future progressive)
3. verbs: has been struggling (present perfect progressive), has been (present perfect)
4. verbs: has gone (present perfect)
5. verbs: told (simple past), will have been working (future perfect progressive)
6. verbs: had been going (past perfect progressive), prevented (simple past)
7. verbs: advances (simple present), will be (simple future)
8. verbs: is going (present progressive)
9. verbs: should have known (present perfect), wanted (simple past), was (simple past)
10. verbs: will be leaving (future progressive), will not return (simple future)

Answers to Drill 8

1. After finishing her appetizer, Lisa *decided* not to eat at the restaurant.
The sentence should use the simple past because there is only one completed action. Note that the phrase "after finishing her appetizer" is not a verb; it is a modifying phrase.
2. The company *is planning* a holiday party to reward its employees for their good work this quarter.
The phrase "this quarter" indicates the action is taking place in the present. Since the action of planning is ongoing, use the present progressive tense.
3. Correct. The action will take place in the future, so the simple future tense is appropriate.

4. Despite the attention it has received, solar power *has not captured* the interest of enough people to offer a serious alternative to fossil fuels.

The clause in the beginning of the sentence correctly uses the present perfect tense, but the sentence incorrectly switches to the past perfect when discussing solar power. The sentence should remain in the present perfect.

5. During his inspection, the carpenter discovered that termites *have been eating* away at the foundation of the house for years.

The sentence uses the past perfect progressive tense, but nothing in the sentence indicates that the action of the termites was interrupted. Use the present perfect progressive tense instead to show that the action started in the past and is ongoing in the present.

6. Over the last few years, Judge Elba Dean *has developed* a reputation for being tough on prosecutors.

The action has been taking place over the last few years, so the simple past tense is wrong. The present perfect tense makes more sense.

7. Correct. The first action takes place in the future, while the simple past is fine for the other actions in the sentence.
8. Correct. The inoculations occurred in the past, but are still current into the present. The present perfect tense is correct.
9. Correct. Use the future perfect tense to indicate an action that will be completed by some time in the future.
10. Jones had thought that jury duty would be exciting, but after serving he *found* the process frustrating.

This sentence has two completed actions in the past, so the past perfect tense should be used for one of the verbs ("had thought") and the simple past for the other ("found").

Answers to Drill 9

1. Although scientists at the University of Copenhagen have succeeded in converting any type of blood into type O, they have yet to remove the molecular markers that lie on the surface of the blood cells and *trigger rejection* by the patient's immune system.

This sentence has a list. The molecular markers do two things: lie on the surface and trigger rejection.

2. Archeologists believe they have found the burial place of King Herod, ruler of Judea and *builder* of an impressive hilltop fortress at Masada.

The sentence should describe Herod two ways: as a ruler of Judea and a builder of a fortress.

3. People who get between six and eight hours of sleep a night report that they are more active, alert, and motivated than *people who get fewer than six hours of sleep*.

The sentence compares two groups of people: those who get between six and eight hours of sleep and those who get fewer than six hours of sleep.

4. Some critics view H.G. Wells' science fiction, unlike *that of* Jules Verne, as "soft" because it contains little actual science.

The comparison is between Wells' science fiction and Verne's science fiction.

5. The Large Hadron Collider, a circular chamber over seventeen miles in circumference, will accelerate protons to 99.999 percent the speed of light and, scientists hope, generate new types of matter, uncover hidden dimensions, and *recreate* events at the birth of the universe.

The list should consist of all verbs: generate, uncover, and recreate.

6. The ears of a mosquito are filled with roughly as many sensory cells as *the ears of* a human, despite the vast difference in the sizes of the two species.

Make sure the comparisons in a sentence are accurate. The comparison is between the ears of a mosquito and the ears of a human.

7. Researchers are exploring the possibility of creating drugs tailored to the specific genome of a group or *to* an individual's DNA.

When maintaining parallelism, it important to use the same prepositions. The drugs are tailored to the genome of a group or to an individual's DNA.

8. Wildfires are not necessarily destructive to the environment; on the contrary the fires clear out debris, preventing the accumulation of materials, and *guard* against even more intense blazes.

This one is tricky, but the actions attributed to the fires are to clear out debris and guard against more intense blazes. The participial phrase "preventing the accumulation of materials" is a modifier and not one of the actions in the list.

9. A new report issued by the government showed that gains in income vastly outpaced spending in the month of June and inflation *decreased*.

The report indicated two things: gains outpaced spending and inflation decreased.

10. Economists fear that without a substantial increase in the amount of contributions households make to their retirement funds, more than of third of them will not be able to live as well in retirement as *they do* today.

The comparison is between how they will live in retirement and how they live today. The second part of the comparison needs a verb to maintain parallelism.

Answers to Drill 10

1. The correct idiom is *try to*.
2. The correct idiom is *different from*.
3. The correct idiom is *determined by*.
4. The correct idiom is *not only...but also...*
5. The correct idiom is *disputed over*.
6. The correct idiom is *so...that*.
7. The correct idiom is *see whether*.
8. The correct idiom is *just as...so...*
9. The correct idiom is *distinguish...from...*
10. The correct idiom is *consider...(no preposition)*.

Idiom List

As promised, here is a list of idioms that are frequently tested on the GMAT:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • according to | • determined by |
| • appear to | • a dispute over |
| • as great as | • different from |
| • as good as, or better than | • in danger of |
| • attributed to | • not only...but also |
| • based on | • prohibit from |
| • because of | • rather than |
| • choose from | • regard as |
| • conclude that | • result of |
| • contribute to | • see...as |
| • a debate over | • subject to |
| • defined as | • think of...as |

CHAPTER 3

SENTENCE CORRECTION STRATEGY

In this chapter, you will learn:

- The basic information about the sentence correction questions in the verbal portion of the GMAT
- The best strategies for solving sentence correction questions

On the GMAT, about 15 of the 41 Verbal questions will be Sentence Corrections. These questions are designed to test “correctness and effectiveness of expression” and your control of “standard written English.” Sentence Correction questions look like this:

1. In an eleventh-hour compromise, Senate aides and White House staffers reached a deal on a controversial spending bill that contained a record increase in the Defense Department’s budget.
 - A. Senate aides and White House staffers reached a deal on a controversial spending bill that
 - B. Senate aides and White House staffers had reached a deal on a controversial spending bill which
 - C. A deal was reached by Senate aides and White House staffers for a controversial spending bill which
 - D. A deal was reached with Senate aides and White House staffers on a spending bill that was controversial and
 - E. Senate aides and White House staffers reaching a deal on a controversial spending bill

The directions read as follows:

The question presents a sentence, part of which or all of which is underlined. Beneath the sentence you will find five ways of phrasing the underlined part. The first of these repeats the original; the other four are different. If you think the original is best, choose the first answer; otherwise choose one of the others.

This question tests correctness and effectiveness of expression. In choosing your answer, follow the requirements of standard written English; that is, pay attention to grammar, choice of words, and sentence construction. Choose the answer that produces the most effective sentence; this answer should be clear and exact, without awkwardness, ambiguity, redundancy, or grammatical error.

To review these directions for subsequent questions of this type, click on HELP.

Familiarize yourself with these directions; you shouldn't have to continually refer to them on test day. Success on Sentence Corrections comes from two things:

- knowing and recognizing the most common grammatical errors tested
- knowing the phrases and constructions that the test writers consider “awkward” and “ineffective”

Fortunately, as a standardized test, the GMAT repeats a lot of the same patterns over and over. This means you only have to master a small body of knowledge—the Grammar Basics chapter in this book contains just about everything you need to know about grammar on the GMAT. You do have to work on recognizing the various ways in which the GMAT tests these rules though. However, through analysis of the Sentence Corrections in this chapter, you'll be well on your way to understanding the “correctness and effectiveness of expression” that the GMAT requires.

The best way to increase your success rate on Sentence Corrections is to follow a consistent approach to the questions. Oftentimes, especially under the stresses of test day, test takers approach the questions in a variety of ways, doing whatever “feels” right at the time. This is a bad strategy. Think about the top performers in any discipline that involves repeated actions. Does Tiger Woods alter his mechanics on every putt? Does Yo Yo Ma change the way he frets the notes on his cello with every performance? Of course not. The ability to consistently repeat the steps of a technique is a major component of their success.

On the GMAT, approach Sentence Corrections by using the following steps:

1. Read the entire sentence. You can't just read the underlined portion because you need to understand how the underlined portion functions in the sentence as a whole.
2. Attempt to identify an error in the sentence. There is an error in about 80 percent of the sentences you'll encounter on the GMAT, so the odds are there's a problem. When looking for errors, keep an eye out for the error types detailed in this chapter. If you find something that you think is an error but isn't one of the issues dealt with in this book, you may want to look for one of the more common GMAT grammar issues. Sometimes these “errors” aren't really errors at all—the test writers sometimes put in traps to catch unwary test takers.
3. Regardless of whether you find an error in the underlined portion, proceed to the answer choices. This is an important step. The underlined portion could be grammatically correct, but another choice may

express the ideas in the sentence more effectively. Or, you may have incorrectly assessed the sentence and found an error where there is none or failed to find a mistake when one exists. Only by analyzing the other choices can you be sure you've found the best answer.

4. After comparing the choices, pick the best answer. If you are down to two or three choices, compare the choices and look for reasons to eliminate them. These reasons could include grammatical errors, awkward constructions, or vague wording.

Now let's look at the major error types and learn how they are tested on Sentence Corrections.

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Chapter 2 detailed the various ways in which subject-verb errors may appear on the GMAT. Now, look at a question, complete with answer choices, and practice your approach:

1. Attempts to revitalize the educational system by instituting regular testing for students, performance-based funding for districts, and merit pay for teachers has not resulted in the gains in student performance predicted by policy makers.
 - A. has not resulted in the gains in student performance predicted by policy makers
 - B. has not resulted in the gains predicted by policy makers in student performance
 - C. have not resulted in the gains in student performance predicted by policy makers
 - D. have not brought the gains in student performances that are predicted by policy makers
 - E. have not, as predicted by policy makers, resulted in the gains by student performance

Did you spot the subject-verb agreement error? Analyze the sentence by finding the main subject and verb. The subject is "attempts"; however, the verb for this subject is "has not." Since "attempts" is plural, you need a plural verb, not a singular one. Once you've identified this error, you can eliminate choice A, which is exactly the same as the underlined portion, and choice B, which repeats the error. That leaves you with three more choices, all of which correct the original subject-verb agreement error. Which is best? A good rule of thumb when evaluating the answer choices is not to make any unnecessary changes. Answer choice C fixes the grammatical mistake and doesn't change anything else, which makes it an attractive choice. Still, you must consider the other options to make sure you've found the best answer. Choice D inappropriately uses the present tense "are predicted" when the rest of the sentence is in the past tense. Choice E changes the meaning of the sentence by making it seem as if the policy makers predicted that the changes would not result in gains in student performance. These issues make choice C the best answer.

► **Drill 1**

DIRECTIONS: In each of the following sentences, the underlined portion may contain an error of subject-verb agreement. Circle the letter of the answer choice that corrects the error. If there is no error, circle choice A. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

1. While many students of foreign languages start out with the best of intentions, many learners quickly discover that the effort involved in memorizing endless vocabulary words and doing countless drills are daunting.
 - A. the effort involved in memorizing endless vocabulary words and doing countless drills are daunting
 - B. the efforts involved in the memorizing of endless vocabulary words and doing countless drills are daunting
 - C. the effort involved with memorizing endless vocabulary words and in doing countless drills is daunting
 - D. the effort involved in the memorization of endless vocabulary words and doing countless drills is daunting
 - E. the effort involved in memorizing endless vocabulary words and in doing countless drills is daunting
2. With the advent of better imaging technologies and space-based telescopes, the number of planets discovered outside our solar system have steadily increased.
 - A. With the advent of better imaging technologies and space-based telescopes, the number of planets discovered outside our solar system have steadily increased
 - B. With the advent of better imaging technologies and space-based telescopes, the number of planets discovered outside our solar system has steadily increased
 - C. Steadily increasing due to the advent of better imaging technologies and space-based telescopes have been the number of planets discovered outside our solar system
 - D. Better imaging technologies and space-based telescopes have steadily increased the discovery of planets outside our solar system
 - E. The number of planets discovered outside our solar system are steadily increasing with the advent of better imaging telescopes and space-based telescopes
3. Environmentalists report that much of the increase in levels of dangerous mercury ingested by Americans is due to high concentrations of the element in tuna and other fish.
 - A. much of the increase in levels of dangerous mercury ingested by Americans is due to high concentrations
 - B. much of the increases in dangerous levels of mercury that Americans ingest are due to high concentrations
 - C. much of the dangerous increases in the level of mercury Americans ingest are due to a high concentration
 - D. many of the increase in dangerous levels of mercury ingested by Americans is due to high concentrations
 - E. many of the levels of increase in dangerous mercury ingested by Americans are due to a high concentration

4. Media analysts differ on the impact that news coverage has on the results of a presidential election, but all agree that the aggregate effect of choices by individual editors and journalists determine, to a large degree, the public's perception of a candidate.
- A. news coverage has on the results of a presidential election, but all agree that the aggregate effect of choices by individual editors and journalists determine, to a large degree, the public's perception of a candidate
 - B. news coverage have on the results of a presidential election, but all agree that the aggregate effect of individual choices of editors and journalists determine the public's perception of a candidate to a large degree
 - C. news coverage have on the results of a presidential election, but all agree that the individual choices of editors and journalists determine, to a large degree, the public's perception of a candidate
 - D. news coverage has on the results of a presidential election, but all agree that the aggregate effect of choices by individual editors and journalists determines, to a large degree, the public's perception of a candidate
 - E. news coverage has on the results of a presidential election, though all agree, to a large degree, that the aggregate effects of choices by individual editors and journalists determines the public's perception of a candidate
5. In certain emotionally charged cases, especially those involving domestic issues, defense lawyers realize that while the facts may be unfavorable for their clients, they may still win the case if the jury sympathize with the defendant's plight.
- A. defense lawyers realize that while the facts may be unfavorable for their clients, they may still win the case if the jury sympathize with the defendant's plight
 - B. the realization by defense lawyers is that the while the facts may be unfavorable towards their clients, they may still win the case if the jury sympathize with the plight of the defendant
 - C. defense lawyers realize that while the facts may be unfavorable to their client's case, they may still win if the jury sympathizes with the defendant's plight
 - D. defense lawyers realize that while the facts may be unfavorable towards their client, they may still win if the jury sympathizes with the defendant's plight
 - E. defense lawyers realize that although the facts may be unfavorable for their client, they might still win if the jury sympathizes with their plight

Analysis

Identifying subject-verb agreement errors depends heavily on your ability to isolate the subject and verb of a clause. On the GMAT, the subject and verb will frequently be separated by long-winded modifiers, so make sure you know which parts of the sentence are essential and which parts simply add more information. You also may have noticed that when you are stuck or unable to identify the error in your initial reading, you can use the answer choices to help you focus on the problem. As soon as you notice a change in verb form in the choices, break down the sentence and find the subject of that verb.

■ VERB TENSE

Verb tense errors do not appear quite as frequently as subject-verb agreement errors, but they still appear fairly often. The basic principle with verb tense issues is to keep the tenses in a sentence consistent and logical. The tense used should logically fit the sentence and there shouldn't be any change in verb tense unless the meaning of the sentence requires it. Here's an example:

2. The Circuit Judges Act of 1869 fixed the number of Supreme Court justices at nine, and the court has stayed at this number to this day.
 - A. fixed the number of Supreme Court justices at nine, and the court has stayed at this number to this day
 - B. fixed the number of Supreme Court justices at nine, and the court stayed at this number to this day
 - C. fixes the number of Supreme Court justices at nine, and the court has stayed at this number ever since
 - D. had fixed the number of Supreme Court justices at nine, and to this day that number has stayed
 - E. fixes the number of Supreme Court justices at nine, and the court stays at this number to this day

First analyze the sentence and figure out which verb tenses you need. The first verb “fixed” refers to an action that was completed in the past (the act took place in 1869). Such a situation calls for the simple past tense, which means choices C, D, and E should all be eliminated. The second verb “has stayed” refers to an action that started in the past and continues up to the present. That means you need to use the present perfect tense. Choice B uses the simple past, which is inappropriate. That makes choice A the best answer.

► Drill 2

DIRECTIONS: In each of the following sentences, the underlined portion may contain an error of verb tense. Circle the letter of the answer choice that corrects the error. If there is no error, circle choice A. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

1. When the compact disc first became commercially available, record companies packaged the discs in elaborate boxes because they feared consumers would have found the packaging of traditional records more appealing.
 - A. they feared consumers would have found the packaging of traditional records
 - B. they feared consumers will find the packaging of traditional records
 - C. the companies had feared consumers would have found the traditional record packaging
 - D. the companies feared that consumers would find the packaging of traditional records
 - E. the companies feared that consumers will find the traditional packaging of records

2. Industry had never faced so many new technologies at once as they had during the digital revolution of the 1990s.
- A. Industry had never faced so many new technologies at once as they had during the digital revolution of the 1990s
 - B. Industry has never faced so many new technologies at once as they have during the digital revolution of the 1990s
 - C. Industry has never faced as many new technologies at once as it has during the digital revolution of the 1990s
 - D. Industry had never faced as many new technologies at once as it did during the digital revolution of the 1990s
 - E. Industry had never faced so many new technologies at once as it did during the digital revolution of the 1990s
3. Although early novels first appeared as serials in newspapers and magazines, by the late eighteenth century they had been published as stand-alone books.
- A. by the late eighteenth century they had been published
 - B. by the late eighteenth century they were published
 - C. by the late eighteenth century they were being published
 - D. by the time of the late eighteenth century they were published
 - E. by the late eighteenth century, they were publishing them
4. Although the Constitution was written to provide states with ample autonomy, it does mandate that all states have a republican form of government.
- A. it does mandate that all states
 - B. it did mandate that all states should
 - C. it has mandated that all states
 - D. it mandates that all states will
 - E. it does mandate that all states must
5. The Paris Commune, which ruled Paris for about six weeks in 1871, granted women the right to vote and had abolished the practice of night work in Paris bakeries.
- A. had abolished the practice of night work in Paris bakeries
 - B. had abolished the practice of working nights in Paris bakeries
 - C. abolished the practice of night work in Paris bakeries
 - D. abolishing the practice of night work in the bakeries of Paris
 - E. abolishing the practice of working nights in the bakeries of Paris

Analysis

When looking for verb tense errors, pay close attention to words in the sentence that indicate time. For example, words such as “since,” “before,” “now,” “always,” and “once” can help you determine which tense is appropriate. Also, in general, the best answer on the GMAT keeps the tenses of the verbs consistent, so when in doubt, eliminate answer choices that mix and match the verbs.

PRONOUNS

Pronouns can be a bane to careless writers. While a pronoun can make a sentence less wordy or less repetitive by standing in for a noun, a pronoun can very easily cause confusion in a sentence or incorrectly refer to a noun other than the one it is supposed to replace. Because the GMAT loves to test pronouns, you should always view them in a sentence with suspicion. When you spot one, make sure that it correctly refers to the noun it replaces and that it clearly and unambiguously refers to the noun it replaces.

Here's an example:

1. In common usage, the word “rational” typically describes a reasonable or logical action, but in economics it is someone who attempts to maximize utility, even if that utility may be silly or trivial.
 - A. it is someone who attempts
 - B. it is an individual who tries to
 - C. they are individuals trying to
 - D. it refers to someone who attempts
 - E. it is a reference to a person who is attempting to

This sentence uses the pronoun “it,” so your first step is to figure out exactly what that pronoun refers to. According to the sentence, the pronoun refers to the “word ‘rational’.” That makes the underlined portion of the sentence illogical because a word can’t be “someone.” Eliminate choices A and B. Choice C uses the pronoun “they,” which is plural, although the noun it refers to is singular. Choice E is unnecessarily wordy, therefore choice D is the best answer.

► Drill 3

DIRECTIONS: In each of the following sentences, the underlined portion may contain a pronoun error. Circle the letter of the answer choice that corrects the error. If there is no error, circle choice A. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

1. The natural disaster was of such devastating magnitude that the country had no choice but to accept help from many other countries, including those with which they had less than friendly relations.
 - A. including those with which they had less than friendly relations
 - B. including those with which it had less than friendly relations
 - C. including the countries that they have unfriendly relations with
 - D. even the countries that they are unfriendly to
 - E. even from those countries that it has less friendly relations with
2. The bald eagle, once endangered, has made such a dramatic comeback that the government is considering removing them from the list of endangered species.
 - A. is considering removing them from the list of endangered species
 - B. had considered removing them from the endangered species list
 - C. considered removing it from the list of endangered species
 - D. is considering the removal of it from the list of endangered species
 - E. is considering removing the eagle from the list of endangered species

3. Studies show that smaller class size, dedicated teachers, and a safe environment are correlated with better academic performance, although this does not imply a causal connection.
- A. smaller class size, dedicated teachers, and a safe environment are correlated with better academic performance, although this does not imply
 - B. smaller class sizes, dedicated teachers and safe environments are correlated with better academic performance, although this does not imply
 - C. smaller class size, dedicated teachers, and a safe environment are correlated with better academic performance, although this correlation does not imply
 - D. small classes, teachers who are dedicated, and safe environments are correlated with better academic performance, although these do not imply
 - E. small class sizes, more dedicated teachers, and safe environments are correlated with better academic performance, although it does not imply
4. At one time, bison were the most numerous mammal species in North America and they could be seen in massive herds that stretched across the Great Plains.
- A. they could be seen in massive herds that stretched
 - B. they would be seen in massive herds stretching
 - C. it could be seen in massive herds that stretched
 - D. it could have been seen in massive herds stretching
 - E. it would have been seen in massive herds that stretched
5. In a controversial decision, the effects of which still reverberate today, the Supreme Court decided that in certain legal respects, a corporation has the same rights as does an individual and enabled them to donate money to politicians.
- A. and enabled them to donate money to politicians
 - B. and enabling them to donate money to politicians
 - C. and enabling it to donate money to politicians
 - D. and enabled it to donate money to politicians
 - E. and is able to donate money to politicians

Analysis

Improper use of pronouns can very easily mess up a sentence. You should always pay careful attention to pronouns in the answer choices. All other things being equal, if you are down to two choices and one uses a pronoun and the other doesn't, you're probably better off avoiding the pronoun. Overuse of pronouns creates vague sentences, which are bad both in real life and on the GMAT.

MISPLACED MODIFIERS

Like pronouns, modifiers can wreak havoc on the meaning of a sentence if not employed properly. A misplaced modifier is exactly what it sounds like: a phrase or word that is misplaced in the sentence so that it either modifies the wrong noun or does not clearly modify any noun. When you see a modifying word or phrase, analyze the sentence to figure out which noun it should be modifying, then choose the answer that places the modifier where it belongs. Here's an example:

1. With their ominous tone and unsettling depictions, Edward Gorey attracted a cult following with his illustrations.
 - A. Edward Gorey attracted a cult following with his illustrations
 - B. a cult following arose around Edward Gorey's illustrations
 - C. Edward Gorey's illustrations attracted a cult following
 - D. Edward Gorey was able to attract a cult following with his illustrations
 - E. a cult was attracted to the illustrations of Edward Gorey

The sentence begins with a modifying phrase which logically refers to Gorey's illustrations, not the man himself. The noun being modified should be as close as possible to the modifying phrase. The only answer choice that satisfies this requirement is choice C.

Modifiers don't always have to be in the beginning of the sentence, but they do have to be located next to the noun they modify.

► **Drill 4**

DIRECTIONS: In each of the following sentences, the underlined portion may contain a modifier error. Circle the letter of the answer choice that corrects the error. If there is no error, circle choice A. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

1. Although mentioned in Plato's dialogues, classical scholars believe that the legend of Atlantis actually dates from a much earlier time.
 - A. Although mentioned in Plato's dialogues
 - B. Despite being mentioned in Plato's dialogues
 - C. Having been mentioned in Plato's dialogues
 - D. Although receiving mention in Plato's dialogues
 - E. Although Plato mentioned it in his dialogues
2. Max Roach, already an accomplished drummer by the age of 10, played on one of the most influential jazz albums ever and with some of the art's greatest performers, considered by critics to be a turning point in recorded jazz.
 - A. played on one of the most influential jazz albums ever and with some of the art's greatest performers, considered by critics to be a turning point in recorded jazz
 - B. considered by critics to be a turning point in recorded jazz, played on many of the most influential jazz albums and with some of the art's greatest performers
 - C. played on one of the most influential jazz albums ever, considered by critics to be a turning point in recorded jazz, and with some of the art's greatest performers
 - D. played on one of the most influential jazz albums, considered as a turning point in recorded jazz by critics and with some of the art's greatest performers
 - E. played, considered by critics to be a turning point in recorded jazz, on one of the most influential jazz albums ever, and with some of the art's greatest performers

3. A borrower who cannot qualify for prime financing with a poor credit score should avoid sub-prime loans and instead work on rebuilding their credit.
- A. A borrower who cannot qualify for prime financing with a poor credit score should avoid subprime loans and instead work on rebuilding their credit
 - B. A borrower with a poor credit score who cannot qualify for prime financing should avoid subprime loans and instead work to rebuild his credit
 - C. A borrower with a poor credit score should work on rebuilding their credit instead of settling for a subprime loan
 - D. With a poor credit score, a borrower who cannot qualify for prime financing should avoid subprime loans, working instead on rebuilding credit
 - E. A borrower who cannot qualify for prime financing should avoid subprime loans and instead, with a poor credit score, work on rebuilding his credit
4. Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna, eldest daughter of Tsar Nicholas II, the last autocratic ruler of Russia, nursed wounded soldiers during World War I.
- A. Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna, eldest daughter of Tsar Nicholas II, the last autocratic ruler of Russia, nursed wounded soldiers during World War I.
 - B. Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna, a nurse of wounded soldiers during World War I, the eldest daughter of Tsar Nicholas II, who was the last autocratic ruler of Russia.
 - C. The eldest daughter of Tsar Nicholas II, Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna, the last autocratic ruler of Russia, nursed wounded soldiers during World War I.
 - D. During World War I, the eldest daughter of Tsar Nicholas II, the last autocratic ruler of Russia, Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna, nursed wounded soldiers.
 - E. Nursing wounded soldiers during World War I, Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna, the eldest daughter of the last autocratic ruler of Russia, Tsar Nicholas II.
5. Alternately called typhoons, hurricanes, and tropical depressions, meteorologists generally recognize six different factors contributing to cyclone formation.
- A. meteorologists generally recognize six different factors contributing to cyclone formation
 - B. cyclones, meteorologists recognize, form from the contribution of six different factors
 - C. cyclones form from the contribution of six different factors recognized by meteorologists
 - D. cyclones are formed, meteorologists recognize, from the contributions of six different factors
 - E. meteorologists are recognizing that cyclones are formed from the contributions of six different factors

Analysis

Misplaced modifiers often follow a similar pattern. Look for an initial phrase set off by a comma. If you see a sentence in that format, check it for modifier issues. Alternatively, you can analyze the answer choices and look for phrases that shift positions among the various choices. That can also tip you off to potential modifier issues. Once you spot a modifying phrase, it is then a matter of making sure it correctly modifies the appropriate noun.

PARALLELISM

Parallelism errors are rampant on the GMAT. They come in two varieties: lists and comparisons. Faulty comparisons are very similar to misplaced modifiers and may even be considered a subset of modifier errors. Here's an example of a faulty comparison:

1. Unlike the widespread recognition Charles Darwin has received for his theory of evolution, Alfred Russel Wallace, who independently discovered the theory, is mostly unknown among the populace.
 - A. Unlike the widespread recognition Charles Darwin has received for his theory of evolution,
 - B. Unlike Charles Darwin, who has received widespread recognition for his theory of evolution,
 - C. Unlike the widespread recognition achieved by Charles Darwin for this theory of evolution,
 - D. Unlike Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, which received widespread recognition,
 - E. Unlike Charles Darwin's widespread theory of evolution, for which he received recognition,

The format of this sentence is very similar to that of the sentences in the previous section. Here, the modifier in the beginning of the sentence is drawing a comparison, so you must ensure that the comparison is parallel; that is, the two things being compared are the same. The modifying phrase refers to the "widespread recognition" Darwin received, but after the comma, the comparison is completed with "Alfred Russel Wallace." Because you can't compare recognition to a person, this is called a faulty comparison. Choice B fixes this problem by changing the phrase so that the comparison is now between Charles Darwin, a person, and Alfred Russel Wallace, a person. Choice C has the same error as the original sentence, while choices D and E inappropriately compare Wallace to the theory of evolution.

A second type of parallelism error occurs when a sentence lists multiple actions, phrases, or clauses. Each of these component parts must follow the same format. Consider the following sentence:

2. Under the politician's ambitious new health plan, all citizens are required either to purchase health insurance with vouchers provided by the government or they may acquire health insurance through their employers.
 - A. or they may acquire health insurance
 - B. or they must acquire it
 - C. or they acquire it
 - D. or acquiring it
 - E. or to acquire it

The sentence lists two things citizens are required to do: purchase health insurance or acquire it from their employers. It violates parallelism to use

the pronoun “they” in the second item in the list, which means choices A, B, and C are all out. Choice D also violates parallel construction with the improper verb form “acquiring.” That leaves choice E, which perfectly maintains parallel structure with the first part of the list.

► **Drill 5**

DIRECTIONS: In each of the following sentences, the underlined portion may contain a parallelism error. Circle the letter of the answer choice that corrects the error. If there is no error, circle choice A. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

1. Black holes, collapsed stars whose massive gravitational pull traps even light, are invisible to telescopes but have been detected by sighting the swirling eddies of gas being swallowed by the black holes.
 - A. are invisible to telescopes but have been detected by sighting
 - B. is invisible to telescopes but detectable by sighting
 - C. are invisible to telescopes but detectable by the sight of
 - D. are invisible to telescopes but were detected by the sight of
 - E. is invisible to telescopes even though they can be detected by the sight of
2. In contrast to the bongo, which was invented in Latin America, West Africa is the home of the djembe, a large, single headed drum with a goblet shape.
 - A. West Africa is the home of the djembe
 - B. West Africa is home to the djembe
 - C. West Africa was the home of the djembe
 - D. the djembe originated in West Africa
 - E. the djembe has a home in West Africa
3. To the chagrin of those who favor nurture over nature as the origin of human behavior, none of the studies on poverty explain why some of the people who grew up in poverty can escape it, while so many others who do cannot.
 - A. while so many others who do cannot
 - B. while so many other people who did so do not
 - C. while so many others who did cannot
 - D. although so many people who did were not able to
 - E. although a great many people were not able to
4. Youth beauty pageants, in which contestants as young as five years old strut, sashay, and are preening themselves before a stable of judges, have aroused concern among child safety advocates.
 - A. as young as five years old strut, sashay, and are preening themselves before a stable of judges
 - B. so young as five years old strut and sashay and preen themselves in front of a stable of judges
 - C. as young as five years old strut, sashay, and preen in front of a stable of judges
 - D. as young as five years old are strutting, sashaying, and are preening themselves before a stable of judges
 - E. so young as five years old strut, sashay, and preen before a stable of judges

5. Einstein's great revelation was that a beam of light would not appear the same to an observer on a moving train as to a person watching from the tracks.
- A. as to a person
 - B. as it would to a person
 - C. as it would for a person
 - D. as a person would see it
 - E. as if a person would see it

Analysis

Spotting parallelism errors is mostly about being able to break down a sentence into its parts. Once you have the different phrases and clauses isolated, it's easier to see whether they maintain parallelism. In terms of patterns, you should be on the lookout for comparison words. Examples include "like," "unlike," "more than," "less than," and "just as." When you see these phrases, check for potential faulty comparisons. Additionally, look for conjunctions such as "and," "but," "yet," and "although." Conjunctions, by their very nature, join parts of the sentence together. These words indicate that you may have a list of items to keep parallel.

IDIOMS

Idioms are phrases that are peculiar to the language. In many cases, there is no justification for idioms; they are correct because they are correct. Idiom errors on the GMAT can be simultaneously the most frustrating and the most simplistic errors to deal with. These errors are frustrating because they mostly involve prepositions, tiny little words such as "on," "in," and "of" that often escape notice when you are analyzing a sentence. But idiom errors can be simple to deal with because there are no gray areas with idioms—they are either right or wrong (according to the test writers). If you know what the proper idiom is, it's often a simple matter to find the best answer.

Idiom errors can sometimes be hard to spot. Here's a sample sentence:

1. Of all the powerful dynasties in Europe, perhaps none was more influential as the Hapsburg dynasty that ruled Austria from 1282 until 1918.
- A. perhaps none was more influential as
 - B. possibly none is more influential as
 - C. it could be that none is as influential as
 - D. perhaps none were more influential than
 - E. perhaps none was more influential than

If you spot the idiom error in the sentence, you can quickly eliminate choices A, B, and C. The correct phrase should be "more...than," not "more....as." That leaves only two choices remaining. Choice D contains a subject verb agreement error, so that leaves choice E as the best answer. Of course, if you don't spot the idiom problem, you can look for other errors to help you eliminate choices. You could eliminate choices B and C because they use the present tense when the past tense is required. That would still leave you with choices A and E, however, so you will have to know the correct idiom to get this one right.

► **Drill 6**

DIRECTIONS: In each of the following sentences, the underlined portion may contain an idiom error. Circle the letter of the answer choice that corrects the error. If there is no error, circle choice A. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

1. Despite the growing world population, estimated at around 6 billion and growing every day, few economists believe the dire predictions of Thomas Malthus would come true.
 - A. estimated at around 6 billion and growing every day, few economists believe the dire predictions of Thomas Malthus would come true
 - B. estimated at around 6 billion people, growing every day, few economists believe the dire predictions of Thomas Malthus will come true
 - C. estimated to be about 6 billion people and growing every day, few economists believe the dire predictions of Thomas Malthus will come true
 - D. estimated to be around 6 billion and it grows every day, few economists believe the dire predictions of Thomas Malthus will come true
 - E. estimated at about 6 billion people that grows every day, few economists believe that the dire predictions of Thomas Malthus would be true

2. Some adults lack the enzyme that splits lactose into simple sugars and thus find it difficult to digest milk products.
 - A. into simple sugars and thus find it difficult to digest milk products
 - B. down to simple sugars and thus find it difficult to digest milk products
 - C. down to simple sugars and thus find difficulties in digesting milk products
 - D. into simple sugars and thus finds it difficult for digesting milk products
 - E. among simple sugars and thus finding it difficult to digest milk products

3. The effectiveness of a drug on a measurable variable, such as drowsiness, may depend on if the level for that variable is higher or lower at the time of the drug's administration.
 - A. if the level for that variable is higher or lower at the time of the drug's administration
 - B. if the level of that variable, higher or lower, is at the time of the drug's administration
 - C. the level of that variable at the time of the drug's administration
 - D. whether the level for the variable at the time of the drug's administration is high or low
 - E. whether the level of variables during the time of the administration of the drug is higher or lower

4. Doctors warn that those who are overweight have a danger to develop diabetes by the time they reach middle age.
- A. those who are overweight have a danger to develop diabetes by the time they reach middle age
 - B. those that are overweight are in danger of developing diabetes at the time they reach middle age
 - C. overweight people are in danger to develop diabetes by the time middle age is reached
 - D. overweight people are endangered by developing diabetes by the time they reach middle age
 - E. overweight people are in danger of developing diabetes by the time they reach middle age
5. Of the 85 political essays that comprise *The Federalist Papers*, it is certain that Hamilton wrote 51 of them, Madison, 14, and Jay, five; historians have a dispute about the authorship of the remaining fifteen.
- A. have a dispute about the authorship of
 - B. have a dispute with the authorship of
 - C. dispute about the authorship of
 - D. dispute the authorship of
 - E. are in dispute about the authorship of

Analysis

There is not much to analyze in idiom questions. Your best bet is to try to memorize the list of commonly tested idioms presented in the Grammar Basics chapter and be on the lookout for differences among the answer choices. Study that list and keep track of other idioms you find in the practice questions.

OTHER ERROR TYPES

Mastery of the previous major error types will be sufficient to answer most of the Sentence Correction questions on the GMAT. However, there are a few other errors that are tested once in a while.

Sentence Construction

On some GMAT questions, the sentence itself is faulty; that is, the sentence does not express a complete thought. A sentence that does not express a complete thought is called a fragment. Remember, a sentence, or an independent clause, has a subject and a verb and can stand alone. Dependent clauses may have a subject and a verb, but they cannot stand alone. Sometimes a Sentence Correction will string together dependent clauses or use sentence fragments in an attempt to confuse you. Here's an example:

1. Archaeobacteria, on the basis of their unique protein-like cell walls and distinctive biochemistry, thought to resemble some of the earliest forms of life.
- A. thought to resemble
 - B. are thought to resemble
 - C. some think they resemble
 - D. some think they are
 - E. it is thought that they resemble

This sentence has a subject, “archaebacteria,” but lacks a verb. Choice B fixes this problem by adding the verb “are.” Now the sentence reads “archaebacteria...are thought to resemble...” This expresses a complete thought. None of the other choices accomplish that goal.

Diction

Diction refers to word choice. Most of the changes you may have noticed in word choice in the various answer choices are inconsequential. For example, the answer choices for a given sentence may switch between “because of” and “due to.” The two phrases mean essentially the same thing and therefore, you can’t say that one is “better” than the other. However, in some cases, the word choices do have a significant grammatical effect. Frequently these choices involve adjectives and adverbs. Consider this sentence:

1. Scientists dream of one day creating armies of nanobots, tiny robots smaller than a cell, that can enter the human body and use their practical unlimited access to find and repair defects in bodily structures.
- A. practical unlimited access to find and repair defects

B. practical unlimited access to finding and repairing defects

C. practically unlimited access to find and repair defects

D. practically unlimited access for finding and repairing defects

E. practically unlimited access for finding defects and repairing them

Here, the shift between “practical” and “practically” is significant because the two words have different grammatical functions and meanings. “Practical” is an adjective and is used to describe nouns. But in choices A and B, “practical” describes the word “unlimited,” which is not a noun. “Practically” is an adverb and can modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. Thus, the correct word choice here is “practically.” Choices D and E use the unidiomatic phrase “access for,” which also alters the meaning of the sentence. That leaves choice C as the best choice.

Diction errors also occur involving quantity words and comparison words. Quantity words include “many,” “less,” “fewer,” “much,” etc. Certain quantities are countable, such as people, chairs, and pens. Other quantities are not countable, such as energy, excitement, and love. Whether a noun is countable or not determines which quantity word is appropriate. Table 3.1 shows the distinction:

Table 3.1

Countable	Not countable
Fewer	Less
Many	Much
Number	Amount, quantity

Table 3.2

For two items	For more than two items
Better	Best
Between	Among
Less	Least
More	Most

Similarly, comparison words differ based on the number of items being compared. A comparison between two items should use the word “between” and adjectives with the “-er” ending. When three or more objects are compared, use “among” and adjectives with “-est” ending. See Table 3.2.

Here’s a sample question:

2. School administrators face a peculiar challenge in their quest for cultural inclusiveness; official recognition of the growing amount of religious holidays means less days are spent in school.
- A. of the growing amount of religious holidays means less days are spent in school
 - B. for the growing number of religious holidays means less days are spent at school
 - C. for the increasing amount of religious holidays mean fewer days are spent in school
 - D. of the increasing number of religious holidays mean fewer days are spent in school
 - E. of the growing number of religious holidays means fewer days are spent in school

There are two diction errors to be aware of in this sentence. First, “holidays” is a countable noun, so you need to use the phrase “number of,” not “amount of.” Therefore, choices A and C can be eliminated. Second, “days” is also a countable noun, which means the correct word to use is “fewer.” Thus, choice B is eliminated. Choice D contains a subject verb agreement error because the subject of the verb “mean” is “recognition.” That leaves choice E as the best answer.

DEALING WITH TOUGH QUESTIONS

If you are struggling to identify an error in a Sentence Correction question or are stuck between two or three answer choices that all seem to be equally good (or bad, for that matter), all is not lost. The GMAT, as a standardized test, repeats certain patterns and tendencies over and over again. Awareness of these patterns can help you increase your odds of guessing correctly when your content knowledge fails you. As previously mentioned, getting a good score on the test involves mastering both the content on the test and the strategy involved with taking the test. Now that you’ve worked through the

content, look at some strategic tips that can potentially earn a few extra points on test day.

There May Not Be an Error: One common pitfall on Sentence Correction questions is to try to convince yourself there's an error in a sentence when there is in fact none. Approximately one-fifth (20%) of the sentences are correct as written. If none of the other choices look good, reconsider choice A.

Focus on What You Know: Oftentimes, test takers waste lots of time trying to figure out which answer choice is better when they do not fully know the underlying concepts at issue. For example, if you don't know the rule for "which" versus "that", there's no point in focusing on that issue in the answer choices and trying to figure out which one "sounds" better. Instead, look for definite errors, ones that you can clearly articulate and ones that follow patterns you know. If you find yourself obsessing over some difference in the choices that doesn't fall into one of the categories of errors laid out here, you're probably on the wrong track.

Let the Answer Choices Do the Work: The answer choices on a multiple-choice test are a wonderful resource. When you are stuck on a question, go to the answers and look for differences. Not all the changes in the choices are relevant; some differences don't matter, so focus on the differences that fit the rules you know.

Be Aggressive with Process of Elimination: If you are truly and genuinely stumped, staring at the answer choices will only waste valuable time. No grammar fairy will magically appear and point you to the correct answer. So your only strategy is to aggressively eliminate as many choices as you can, pick an answer and move on. Here are some guidelines for avoiding typical "bad" answers on Sentence Corrections:

1. Avoid awkward "-ing" constructions. GMAT test writers often use participles to create awkward sentences. In general, it's usually more concise and effective to say something like "the programs *enable* the students to learn rapidly," instead of "the programs are *enabling* the students to learn rapidly." Two of the worst culprits are "having" and "being," so when in doubt, eliminate choices with these words in them.
2. Avoid pronouns. If you are down to two choices, pick the one that uses fewer pronouns. Excessive pronoun use frequently leads to ambiguous or incorrect sentences, so play it safe.
3. Shorter answers are better. All other things being equal, the GMAT writers prefer answers that are as concise as possible. If you have two answers that seem to say the same thing and are both grammatically correct, pick the shorter answer.

4. Don't change the meaning of the sentence. Watch out for words and phrases that migrate haphazardly through the choices. If there's no reason to change something or move something around (that is, if there's no modifier error), then don't. For example, if the original sentence says "perilously close" and some choices change that phrase to "close to peril," avoid the choices that needlessly change the order of the words.

Remember, these are guidelines to use when you are stuck; they are not always indicative of the best answer on the test. Sometimes the correct answer is longer than the other choices. Sometimes the correct answer uses a lot of pronouns. However, these guidelines represent some of the more common characteristics of bad answers and are good guessing techniques.

Answers to Drill 1

1. **Answer: E.** The subject of the verb "are daunting" is "the work." "Work" is singular and requires a singular verb. Eliminate A and B. Choice C uses the unidiomatic "involved with," so eliminate it. Choice D does not maintain a parallel construction, because "memorization" is a noun and "doing" is a verb.
2. **Answer: B.** The subject of the sentence is "the number," which is singular. Thus, the verb "have increased" is correct. Eliminate A, C, and E, which also uses a plural verb. Answer D fixes the subject-verb error by changing to a plural subject, but it changes the meaning of the sentence by stating that the discovery of planets has increased, not the number of planets.
3. **Answer: A.** The subject of the verb "is due" is the word "much." "Much" is singular, so the verb agrees. The plural verbs in choices B and C are incorrect. The remaining choices use the word "many" instead of "much." But the word "many" should be used when the noun it refers to is plural, as in "many of the children are sick," so choices D and E are incorrect. Choice E also garbles the meaning of the sentence.
4. **Answer: D.** This sentence has a couple of subject-verb issues to deal with. The first involves "news coverage," which is singular. Eliminate B and C. The second subject-verb agreement issue is in the clause "effect...determine..." Since "effect" is singular, the verb should be "determines." That eliminates choice A. Choice E changes the subject to "effects," but also changes the verb to "determines," which is still incorrect.
5. **Answer: C.** Remember that collective nouns such as "the jury" are singular. That means the correct form is "the jury sympathizes." Therefore, choices A and B are incorrect. Choices D and E both use unidiomatic phrases—"unfavorable for" and "unfavorable towards"—and make the sentence illogical by stating that the facts are unfavorable to the client instead of the client's case. Choice E also has a pronoun error: "their plight" would refer to the plight of the lawyers, since "client" is singular.

Answers to Drill 2

1. **Answer: D.** The sentence is in the past tense, so choices B and E are definitely out because they use “will find,” which is future tense. Choices A and C use “would have found,” which is also not in the past tense. That leaves choice D.
2. **Answer: D.** The sentence makes it clear that it is referring to a past time, the 1990s. Thus, “has” is incorrect and choices B and C are out. Choice A uses the pronoun “they,” but “industry” is singular. Choice E uses the incorrect construction “so many...as.”
3. **Answer: B.** The original sentence uses the past perfect tense, but the past perfect is used when one action occurs before the other. It would be illogical for the second action in the sentence to occur before the first, so eliminate choice A. Choice D is unnecessarily wordy and choice C uses the awkward “were being” construction. Choice E uses a pronoun “they” that doesn’t refer to anything in the sentence.
4. **Answer: A.** This is an example of the pesky subjunctive verb tense. Recall that when a sentence follows the form of “mandates that...,” the verb must be in its infinitive form without the “to.” Thus, choice A is correct. Choice B uses the incorrect construction “should have,” while choice D and choice E inappropriately use “will have” and “must have.” Choice C violates the subjunctive form by using “has mandated that.”
5. **Answer: C.** The sentence lists two actions that the Paris Commune accomplished and both of them should be in the simple past tense to ensure parallelism. The only choice that is in the simple past is choice C.

Answers to Drill 3

1. **Answer: B.** The pronoun “they” should logically refer to “the country,” but country is singular. That means choices A, C, and D are wrong. Choice E uses the wrong tense; the sentence is in the past, so “has” is inappropriate.
2. **Answer: E.** The bald eagle is singular, so the use of “them” is incorrect. That rules out choices A and B. Choice C changes the verb into the past tense when the sentence requires the present tense. Although the pronoun in choice D is singular, the presence of other singular nouns in the sentence (“government” and “comeback”) creates a potential for ambiguity. Thus, choice E is the clearest and therefore best answer.
3. **Answer: C.** The pronoun “this” has no clear referent. Choice C fixes the problem by making it clear that “this correlation” does not imply causation. None of the other choices correctly address this pronoun problem.
4. **Answer: A.** This one is tricky, but “bison” is plural. “They” is therefore the correct pronoun, meaning choices C, D, and E are all wrong. Choice B uses “would” instead of “could,” thereby changing the meaning of the sentence.

5. **Answer E.** The “corporation” is a singular noun, so “them” does not agree. Choices A and Choice B are incorrect. For parallelism purposes, choice E is best because the clause reads “the corporation *has...and is...*” The other choices use the wrong verb form.

Answers to Drill 4

1. **Answer: E.** The modifying phrase logically refers to Atlantis, not classical scholars. Only choice E rectifies this error by adding the pronoun “it” to the modifying phrase and turning the phrase into a dependent clause.
2. **Answer: C.** The final modifier in the sentence “considered by critics...” belongs near the noun “jazz albums.” Only choices C and D put the modifier in the correct place, but choice D garbles the meaning of the sentence and uses the incorrect idiom “considered as.”
3. **Answer: B.** The phrase “with a poor credit score” rightly modifies the noun “borrower.” That eliminates choices A and E. Choice C uses the pronoun “their” when a singular pronoun is required. In choice D, the phrase “working instead on rebuilding credit” is awkwardly placed in the sentence.
4. **Answer: A.** Only choice A keeps the modifiers logically placed near the nouns they modify and expresses a complete thought. Choices B and E are not sentences, as they lack a main verb. Choice C improperly states that the Grand Duchess, not the Tsar, was the “last autocratic ruler.” In choice D, the modifier “eldest daughter...” is best placed closer to the Grand Duchess.
5. **Answer: D.** The first modifier must refer to cyclones, not meteorologists. Thus, choices A and E are incorrect. Logically, the meteorologists recognize how cyclones form, not cyclones themselves, as in choice B, or the factors in choice C.

Answers to Drill 5

1. **Answer: A.** Black holes, according to the sentence, have two characteristics: they are invisible but have been detected. These two forms are parallel. Choice B not only incorrectly uses “is” when “are” is required, but also violates parallelism because “detectable by sighting” lacks the verb form of the first clause. Choice E also contains the same subject-verb agreement error as B. Choice C also contains an error in parallel construction. Choice D unnecessarily changes the second verb to the past tense.
2. **Answer: D.** This sentence draws a comparison between the bongo and the djembe. Thus, choices A, B, and C are all incorrect because they place “West Africa” closest to the initial phrase. Choice E has an unnecessary change in the verb tense.

3. **Answer: C.** The contrast in this sentence is between “some of the people who grew up in poverty” who “can escape it,” and the “many others who do” and “cannot” escape it. Only choice C maintains parallelism in both verb tense and form. Choice A uses the present tense “do,” although the verb should match the past tense “grew up.” Instead of “cannot,” which is parallel to “can,” choice B uses “do not.” Both choice D and E use “were not able to” which isn’t parallel.
4. **Answer: C.** The contestants engage in three actions, all of which must be in the same form: strut, sashay, and preen. Only choice C maintains parallelism and uses the correct idiom “as young as” instead of the incorrect “so young as.”
5. **Answer: B.** The comparison here is how the light “would not appear the same” to an observer as it would to another observer. Choice A lacks the verb “would” and should be eliminated. Choice C violates parallelism by using the preposition “for” instead of “to” as in the first part of the comparison. Choices D and E add “see it” to the clause, which again violates parallelism.

Answers to Drill 6

1. **Answer: C.** The correct idiom is “estimate...to be.” That eliminates choices A and B. Choice D violates parallelism by using the construction “it grows every day.” Choice E improperly places the phrase “that grows every day” after people and uses the wrong verb tense (as did A).
2. **Answer: A.** There are two idioms here: “splits...into” and “difficult to...” Choice A uses them both correctly. In this context, “split...down” is unidiomatic, as is “difficult...for.”
3. **Answer: C.** Use “if” only when introducing a conditional statement, as in “if the drug is effective, then...” Use “whether” when indicating two possible outcomes, as in “it’s hard to determine whether the drug works.” This sentence requires neither idiom. Additionally, the phrase “level for” is unidiomatic in this sentence; “level of” is correct. Choice C is the simplest and clearest.
4. **Answer: E.** The correct idiom is “in danger of.” Choices B and D distort the meaning of the sentence.
5. **Answer: D.** When dispute is used as a noun, the idiom is “dispute over” an issue or “dispute with” another person. “Dispute about” is unidiomatic and it is illogical for historians to have a dispute “with the authorship” as in choice B.

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CHAPTER 4

READING AND THE GMAT

In this chapter, you will learn:

- The basic structure of reading comprehension passages in the verbal portion of the GMAT
- How to identify the main idea, purpose, and organization of reading comprehension passages

Before you flip ahead to the next section of the book, be aware that this chapter is not about teaching you how to read. Of course you know how to read—you're reading this book right now. But reading on the GMAT is not the same as the reading you may do in your leisure time. Typically, you don't have a clock ticking down in front of your face as you read, and even if for some reason you do, you probably don't have to pick an answer from among five cleverly worded choices.

One of the major problems test takers have on the reading portion of the GMAT is they attack the reading passages the same way they would any other reading assignment. And truth be told, the test writers are hoping that you fall into these predictable patterns. Reading Comprehension on the GMAT evaluates your ability to:

- **Understand words and statements:** Obviously, this is a key skill with Reading Comprehension. The test does not test vocabulary, but it does require you to understand certain specialized terms in context.
- **Understand logical relationships between points and concepts:** Questions may ask you to understand arguments and evaluate the relative importance of points and concepts in a passage.
- **Draw inferences from facts and statements:** On the GMAT, you will be asked to draw conclusions from the facts presented in the passage.

- **Understand and follow the development of quantitative concepts as they are presented in written material:** Some of the passages on the GMAT deal with quantitative issues and certain questions may require you to understand the underlying mathematical concepts. This isn't the math section, though, so you won't be required to actually do any math.

These reading skills are certainly necessary to success in the business world and chances are you have developed these skills sufficiently throughout your academic career. However, the way these skills are tested on the GMAT, particularly within the time constraints imposed, has a way of distorting your true abilities. In order to maximize your GMAT score, you'll need to approach Reading Comprehension from a new angle. You'll need to learn how to read *analytically*.

ANALYTICAL READING

Analytical reading involves breaking down reading passages into their component parts and understanding how these parts function individually and how they contribute to the entirety of the passage. Analytical reading allows you to quickly identify the following items:

- **Purpose:** Why did a writer compose a particular passage? What goal did he or she seek to accomplish by writing the piece? The answers to those questions comprise the purpose of a reading passage.
- **Organization:** How does the writer attempt to accomplish the purpose? What types of information are used in the passage and how is the passage organized? The answers to these questions will help you understand the structure of the passage.
- **Main Idea:** What is the passage's ultimate point? The purpose and the structure of the passage contribute to an understanding of its main idea.

GMAT READING PASSAGES

Reading passages on the GMAT will range from about 30 to 65 lines and contain about 250 to 450 words. Topics include the physical and biological sciences, the social sciences, arts and humanities, history, and business. You are not expected to have any previous familiarity with the topics, as each of the passages contains all the information you need to answer the questions. Below is a sample GMAT reading passage for you to use to practice your analytical reading skills.

Some researchers are now arguing that there is a third major principle of evolution. Scientists propose adding the principle of cooperation to the more traditionally accepted axioms of mutation and selection. Mutation and selection work on an individual level, (5) and may allow an organism to develop modifications that increase its genetic fitness. But only cooperation works on a grander level, allowing species to evolve to a new level of organization.

However, cooperation poses many challenges from an evolutionary theory perspective. One very troubling issue is how cooperation first (10) arose. By its very nature, cooperation involves a scenario in which one organism attains a benefit while another organism incurs the cost. What would possess an organism, whether a single celled protozoa or a multi-celled wolf, to sacrifice its own self-interest for the good of another? And, equally problematic from a theoretical perspec- (15) tive, how does cooperation continue to be evolutionarily successful when it is prone to exploitation by “free-riders?” For example, some bacteria species disperse enzymes that break down food, which all the bacteria in the colony are free to digest. Enzyme production consumes valuable resources, so it would make sense for one or (20) more of the microbes in the colony to let others do the work of disseminating the enzymes while still reaping the reward. This behavior should lead to a proliferation of non-cooperators, but it most certainly has not.

Biologists are looking to mathematics, particularly game theory (25) and graph theory, to help answer these questions and to gain a fuller understanding of the role of cooperation in evolution. One researcher has devised a simple equation that predicts when cooperation occurs. The equation simply and elegantly states that cooperation occurs when the benefit-to-cost ratio is higher than the average number of (30) neighboring organisms an individual interacts with. Another interesting revelation from mathematical investigations into cooperation centers on the role of reputation among the cooperators. Studies show that species that cooperate—including humans—have the ability to remember how certain individuals act in cooperative situations. (35) Those individuals that cooperate often tend to be rewarded, while those that cheat are shunned.

Fascinating, right? The passages you see on the GMAT are not created specifically for the test; rather, the passages are culled from academic publications, journals, and articles. The makers of the GMAT edit and arrange the pieces in the form you see on the test.

While you might not regularly peruse such publications, the fact that the GMAT uses these types of passages is to your advantage. The writing that appears on the GMAT follows fairly predictable patterns. You can expect to find an introductory paragraph detailing the basic topic of the essay, body paragraphs containing supporting details and evidence, and some form of conclusion. There’s only so much a writer can do within this framework.

By breaking a passage down into its component parts, you will be better able to analyze it.

The Introduction

The introduction is perhaps the most important part of the passage. It's where the writer lays out the most basic information in the passage. Namely, this information is *what* the passage is about and *why* the author thinks said topic is worth writing about. Look again at the introduction paragraph of the sample passage and take it apart, sentence by sentence.

Some researchers are now arguing that there is a third major principle of evolution. Scientists propose adding the principle of cooperation to the more traditionally accepted axioms of mutation and selection. Mutation and selection work on an individual level, (5) and may allow an organism to develop modifications that increase its genetic fitness. But only cooperation works on a grander level, allowing species to evolve to a new level of organization.

Right off the bat, the first sentence clues you in to the topic—evolution. Now, why is this topic important? It appears that scientists mentioned in the first sentence are claiming that there is a third major principle. In this case, the first sentence gives us just about everything we need to get a decent grasp of what the passage is going to be about. What about the rest of the sentences? These sentences provide some background information, mentioning the other two principles of evolution and indicating that the proposed third principle, cooperation, has some profound effects on species. From an analytical perspective, this information is not particularly useful at this stage. Remember, you're looking for the big picture: the main idea, the purpose, and the organization.

Think of analytical reading as a form of directed reading. You are reading for specific types of information. Once you find that information, you move on to find the next piece of information. As soon as you can gather the “what” and the “why” of the passage from the introduction, you can move on to the rest of the passage.

Body Paragraphs

Body paragraphs serve two major purposes: to further develop the author's main idea and to help achieve the author's purpose by providing supporting details, examples, and evidence. Body paragraphs contain a lot of important information, but they also contain a lot of facts and details that can confuse a casual reader. In order to avoid potential confusion, you must read body paragraphs analytically. This involves looking at the information in the paragraph and asking yourself how it furthers the main idea. Why did the

author include this piece of evidence or this example? The topic sentence of the body paragraph usually is one of the most important. Here's the topic sentence from the first body paragraph of the preceding passage:

However, cooperation poses many challenges from an evolutionary theory perspective.

How does this information further the main idea? You learned from the introduction that some scientists are arguing that cooperation should be added as a third major principle of evolution. This sentence indicates that there are some difficulties in incorporating cooperation into evolutionary theory. What does this sentence tell you about the author's purpose? At this point in the passage, it seems likely that the author's purpose has something to do with addressing the challenges involved with adding a new component to a theory. Without reading the rest of the passage, you may be unsure whether the author is trying to argue that the difficulties are insurmountable and that the new principle should not be added or that the difficulties are capable of being overcome. You'll figure that out as you continue reading analytically, but now you are extracting important pieces from the passage and figuring out how they fit together.

After analyzing the topic sentence, it's time to move on to the meat of the body paragraph. This portion of the paragraph is where many a reader gets bogged down, especially when reading passages on unfamiliar subjects. Instead of struggling to understand what an author is saying at this point, try to figure out why the author is bombarding you with all these facts and examples. Don't become enmeshed in the details; instead, focus on the sentences that "frame" the facts, evidence, and examples. Look at what the author says before and after the facts, but don't read the lines in between too deeply. Consider the first body paragraph from the sample passage:

However, cooperation poses many challenges from an evolutionary theory perspective. **One very troubling issue is how cooperation first arose.** By its very nature, cooperation involves a scenario in which one organism attains a benefit while another organism incurs
 (12) the cost. What would possess an organism, whether a single celled protozoa or a multi-celled wolf, to sacrifice its own self interest for the good of another? **And, equally problematic from a theoretical perspective, how does cooperation continue to be evolutionarily successful when it is prone to exploitation by "free-riders?"** For
 (17) example, some bacteria species disperse enzymes that break down food, which all the bacteria in the colony are free to digest. Enzyme production consumes valuable resources, so it would make sense for one or more of the microbes in the colony to let others do the work of disseminating the enzymes while still reaping the reward.
 (22) **This behavior should lead to a proliferation of non-cooperators, but it most certainly has not.**

The first two bolded sentences tell you the two problems with cooperation. The first bolded sentence is fairly easy to understand. The second bolded sentence is the real key. It provides you with the author's explanation for the facts that follow. Why does the author want to tell you about bacteria? Reading an example in isolation does nothing to help your understanding of the author's main idea and purpose—the example is important only insofar as it demonstrates the problem stated in the bolded sentence. In order to understand the author's agenda, we need to understand the context surrounding the example, not necessarily the example itself. Equally important is the sentence following that example. Writers know that readers make all sorts of judgments and interpretations and these views may not be what the author wants the reader to think. So a good writer doesn't leave things up to chance. Instead, a good writer tells the reader what he or she should think about the example just presented. The third bolded sentence provides the reader with the interpretation of the evidence that the author thinks is most appropriate to the purpose the author is trying to achieve.

Put this information together and see where you stand with the passage so far. Here are the key ideas that you have pulled from the passage:

1. Some researchers are now arguing that there is a third major principle of evolution—cooperation.
2. However, cooperation poses many challenges from an evolutionary theory perspective.
3. One challenge is how cooperation can be evolutionary successful.
4. Certain behaviors should lead to a proliferation of non-cooperators, but they haven't.

At this stage, you have a pretty good idea of the author's main idea. The purpose is still somewhat vague because you don't know if the author is going to resolve the difficulties or not. This brings you to the final paragraph. Read it again to see what the thrilling conclusion to the passage is.

Conclusions

Most writing of the sort you'll find on the GMAT has a conclusion paragraph that neatly summarizes the author's main point and helps resolve the purpose of the piece. Unfortunately, the passages on the GMAT are often heavily edited. This means that some of the passages you'll encounter won't have a proper conclusion. Still, the editors give you some indication of how ideas in the passage get wrapped up, even if that conclusion comes in one final sentence. When analyzing conclusion paragraphs on the GMAT, you may find they contain elements of body paragraphs. Treat these paragraphs exactly as you would body paragraphs and then ask yourself how the information the author includes resolves or explains the information presented

in the previous paragraphs. Here's the final paragraph of the sample passage:

Biologists are looking to mathematics, particularly game theory and graph theory, to help answer these questions and to gain a fuller understanding of the role of cooperation in evolution. One researcher has devised a simple equation that predicts when cooperation occurs.

(28) The equation simply and elegantly states that cooperation occurs when the benefit-to-cost ratio is higher than the average number of neighboring organisms an individual interacts with. Another interesting revelation from mathematical investigations into cooperation centers on the role of reputation among the cooperators. Studies

(33) show that species that cooperate—including humans—have the ability to remember how certain individuals act in cooperative situations. Those individuals that cooperate often tend to be rewarded, while those that cheat are shunned.

Once again, start with the topic sentence, always a valuable source of information. It says that biologists are using mathematics to help them understand cooperation. This gives you some resolution to the problems discussed above. Like the body paragraph above, this paragraph also presents evidence. You don't need to read this to understand the big picture. You do, however, want to read the end of the paragraph to see what the author's final word is. This is another key place of the passage to look when reading analytically. The final sentence of the passage is:

Those individuals that cooperate often tend to be rewarded, while those that cheat are shunned.

The question you must ask yourself is, in light of everything that came before, where does this final sentence leave you? Recall that the author stated one problem with cooperation was that theorists weren't sure how it could be evolutionary successful. This final sentence provides a potential answer to that problem by introducing a new consideration. Now, with all the major pieces of the passage analyzed, you have the following information:

1. Some researchers are now arguing that there is a third major principle of evolution—cooperation.
2. However, cooperation poses many challenges from an evolutionary theory perspective.
3. One challenge is how cooperation can be evolutionary successful.
4. Certain behaviors should lead to a proliferation of non-cooperators, but they haven't.
5. Biologists are using mathematics to gain a better understanding of cooperation in nature.
6. Studies reveal that cooperators tend to be rewarded, while cheaters are shunned.

Analysis

Through analytic reading, you've boiled a 350-word passage down to six major points. Now, you can figure out the big three—main idea, purpose, and organization. The main idea is that biologists are turning to mathematics to resolve some of the issues that are preventing cooperation from becoming a new major principle of evolution. Note that the main idea comes from integrating all parts of the passage. One common mistake is to confuse the information in the introduction with the main idea. If you said the main idea of the passage was that some researchers want to add cooperation as a major principle of evolution, you'd be missing all the information from the rest of the passage.

Now, why would the author write this passage? When thinking about the purpose, try to imagine what the potential audience for the passage would look like. This passage could be addressed to those who do not think cooperation is an important part of evolution, in which case the purpose might be to convince them that cooperation is important. However, that description doesn't account for the discussions of the problems involved with adding cooperation to the theory. So a better potential audience might be people skeptical about adding cooperation to the theory. With that audience in mind, the purpose might be to inform them that research is addressing the potential problems with incorporating a new element to a theory. This seems to account for more of the information in the passage. Just as you did with the main idea, you need to think about all parts of the passage when addressing the purpose.

The final part of your analysis is perhaps the easiest. How is the passage organized? Just go through, paragraph by paragraph, and see what the author does. The author starts by presenting a new idea (first paragraph), and then details potential difficulties with that idea (second paragraph). Finally, a possible way to investigate and perhaps solve the problems is offered (third paragraph). If you are having trouble figuring out the purpose, you may want to think about the organization. Because the author writes about problems and possible solutions, the purpose must have something to do with attempting to solve a problem.

► **Drill 1**

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage analytically, distilling the key information from each of the paragraphs. When you're done, write down the main idea, purpose, and organization.

The classical realist theory of international relations has long dominated both academic institutions and the American government. Even at the birth of the nation, early political thinkers such as Alexander Hamilton promoted a realist view of international relations (5) and sought to influence the actions of the government based on this perspective. While the classical realist school of international relations is not entirely homogeneous in nature, there are certain premises that all classical realists share.

The primary principle underlying classical realism is a concern (10) with issues of war and peace. Specifically, classical realists ask, what are the causes of war and what are the conditions of peace? The members of the classical realist school mainly attribute war and conflict to what is termed the security dilemma. In the absence of any prevailing global authority, each nation is required to address its own (15) security needs. However, each nation's quest for security—through military buildups, alliances, or territorial defenses—necessarily unsettles other nations. These nations react to feelings of insecurity by engaging in their own aggressive actions, which leads other nations to react similarly, perpetuating the cycle.

(20) It is important to note that for realists, unlike idealists or liberal internationalists, international conflict is a necessary consequence of the structural anarchy that nations find themselves in. Whereas other schools may see international conflict as the result of evil dictators, historical chance, flawed sociopolitical systems, or ignorance of world (25) affairs, classical realists see war as the logical result of a system that by its nature lacks a true central authority.

Hand in hand with this view of conflict as an inevitable condition of the global power structure is the realists' view of the nation as a unitary actor. Because classical realists see international relations as (30) a continuing struggle for dominance, the nation can not be viewed as a collection of individuals with disparate wants, goals, and ideologies. The realist view requires the formulation of a national interest, which in its simplest terms refers to the nation's ability to survive, maintain its security, and achieve some level of power relative to its (35) competitors.

Realism is not without its critics, many of whom challenge the premise that war is the natural condition of international relations or that there can be a truly national interest. However, the realist school of international relations continues to shape foreign policy because of (40) the successes it has had in describing real world interactions between nations.

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

2. What is the purpose of the passage?

3. How is the passage organized?

Analysis

From the first paragraph, you are reading to find the answer to two questions: what is the author writing about and why is it important? The first sentence once again provides you with answers to these questions. The topic is the classical realist school of international relations and it is important because it is the dominant theory in academic institutions and in government. Now see how the author furthers this discussion in the body paragraphs.

The first body paragraph provides the primary concern of the realist school: war and peace. The second body paragraph expands this idea by stating that realists see conflict as a natural part of international relations. The third paragraph adds another key idea to the realist school of thought, that of the unitary nation. So far, the author has provided you with an overview of the tenets of classical realist theory. What audience might this be addressed to? It seems like the author is writing for people unfamiliar with the classical realist school. But to what end?

The conclusion wraps things up by telling you that the realist school continues to prevail, despite its critics, because of the success it has had in describing real world events. Thus, from an analytical reading standpoint, the key parts of the passage are:

The classical realist theory of international relations has long dominated both academic institutions and the American government. Even at the birth of the nation, early political thinkers such as Alexander Hamilton promoted a realist view of international relations and sought to influence the actions of the government based on this perspective. While the classical realist school of international relations is not entirely homogeneous in nature, there are certain premises that all classical realists share.

- The primary principle underlying classical realism is a concern with issues of war and peace.** Specifically, classical realists ask, what are the causes of war and what are the conditions of peace? The members of the classical realist school mainly attribute war and conflict to what is termed the security dilemma. In the absence of any prevailing global authority, each nation is required to address its own security needs. However, each nation's quest for security—through military buildups, alliances, or territorial defenses—necessarily unsettles other nations. These nations react to feelings of insecurity by engaging in their own aggressive actions, which leads other nations to react similarly, perpetuating the cycle.
- It is important to note that for realists, unlike idealists or liberal internationalists, international conflict is a necessary consequence of the structural anarchy that nations find themselves in.** Whereas other schools may see international conflict as the result of evil dictators, historical chance, flawed sociopolitical systems, or ignorance of world affairs, classical realists see war as the logical result of a system that by its nature lacks a true central authority.
- Hand in hand with this view of conflict as an inevitable condition of the global power structure is the realists' view of the nation as a unitary actor.** Because classical realists see international relations as a continuing struggle for dominance, the nation can not be viewed as a collection of individuals with disparate wants, goals, and ideologies. The realist view requires the formulation of a national interest, which in its simplest terms refers to the nation's ability to survive, maintain its security, and achieve some level of power relative to its competitors.
- Realism is not without its critics, many of whom challenge the premise that war is the natural condition of international relations or that there can be a truly national interest. **However, the realist school of international relations continues to shape foreign policy because of the successes it has had in describing real world interactions between nations.**

Once again, you can encapsulate over 350 words into a handful of key statements. And, as expected, most of the crucial information comes at the beginning of each paragraph and at the end of the passage as a whole. Now you can put these big ideas together and answer the three key questions.

- What is the main idea of the passage?** The classical realist school sees conflict as the natural state of international affairs and continues to influence policy because of its successes in describing reality.
- What is the purpose of the passage?** To explain the main ideas of the classic realist school and account for its dominance.
- How is the passage organized?** The first paragraph introduces a concept, the next three paragraphs detail key parts of it, and the final one indicates a reason for the concept's continued use.

Purpose and Structure in Depth

Now that you know the basic idea behind analytic reading, you should look at two of the main components in greater detail. The author's purpose and the structure he or she uses in the passage go a long way towards helping you to figure out the main idea. Also, the purpose and structure are related—the structure of the passage helps the author achieve his or her purpose.

The Purpose

Passages on the GMAT typically exhibit a small range of possible purposes. The main types of purposes found on the GMAT are:

- **Explain:** These are simplest and most straightforward passages. The author is attempting to inform the reader about a certain topic. The author generally accomplishes this by simply detailing the major points of interest about the topic.
- **Evaluate:** These passages take a topic and then analyze its strengths or weaknesses. The author then comes to some conclusion about the subject.
- **Persuade:** Persuasive passages attempt to convince the reader of the necessity or value in some course of action. They typically contain a description of a problem or an issue and a discussion of why the proposed solution is appropriate.
- **Compare/Contrast:** In this type of passage, the author compares or contrasts two or more ideas about a subject. These passages typically overlap with the evaluate and persuade purposes, as the author often concludes that one of the ideas is superior to the others.

Each of these purposes has some structural elements commonly associated with it, and analyzing the structure can help you understand the purpose better. Here are some things to look for:

Explain: Structurally, explanatory passages follow a very straightforward pattern. The introduction provides the reader with the topic and perhaps some background information. Each body paragraph enumerates or details an aspect of the topic. The conclusion doesn't add much in the way of crucial information; usually it just adds more detail or summarizes what was said previously.

Evaluate: An evaluation passage typically starts out by framing the issue or subject under consideration. The body paragraphs then address strengths or weaknesses (or both) related to the issue. Look to the conclusion to find the author's final judgment on the topic.

Persuade: Persuasive passages are somewhat similar to evaluation passages in that both start out by introducing some issue under consideration. However, they differ in that the body paragraphs contain supporting evidence for a particular point of view or perhaps critiques of the opposing point of view. Whereas the evaluating author will generally strike a neutral tone, the persuasive author definitely has an agenda. The conclusion will make it clear which position the author supports.

Compare/Contrast: The introductions of these passages generally mention two or more theories, ideas, or points of view. The body paragraphs then compare these ideas, either by dealing with multiple issues in each paragraph or by devoting a paragraph to each main viewpoint. The conclusion may evaluate the opposing ideas or the author may end the passage without taking a strong stand on any one of the proposals.

Structure Clues

You've already learned how the structure of the passage can help you find the main idea and purpose. Additionally, paragraphs have their own internal structures. As you've seen, the topic sentences tend to be very important when reading analytically, as do the concluding sentences. The middles of paragraphs tend to contain details that you can skim through when reading analytically. However, there are times when important information is contained in the middle of a paragraph. Usually, the author indicates this key information by using certain words to alert the reader. As you skim through the middle parts of passages, keep your eyes out for "change of direction" words and phrases. These include: despite, however, although, yet, but, etc. When you see these words, devote some attention to the ideas presented at that point in the paragraph. Because these words indicate a contrast or change from what the author said before, they often presage an important shift in the author's argument or reasoning.

On the other hand, words and phrases such as "for example," "additionally," and "furthermore" typically indicate that the information following will simply continue the point or argument the author has previously made. When you see these words, you can quickly move past these parts of the paragraph and still grasp the big picture.

Finally, when reading analytically, look for words and phrases that emphasize the author's point. These include: consequently, and so, thus, in conclusion, therefore, etc. If you see one of these in a passage, you know that the information following will be important to the author's purpose and main idea.

► **Drill 2**

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passages analytically and answer the questions following each using the techniques presented in this chapter. For an additional challenge, try timing yourself. Limit yourself to no more than five minutes per passage. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

Geologists, volcanologists, and oceanographers had the rare opportunity to view the birth and death of an island. A ship captain, sailing through the South Pacific near the island of Tonga, suddenly found the ocean waters covered in a sand-like substance, pumice.

(5) On the horizon, a black pillar of smoke appeared, indicating a volcanic eruption. The captain radioed his find back to the mainland and soon researchers from around the globe were clustered around the new island.

Undersea volcano eruptions occur dozens of times a year, but

(10) scientists rarely are able to view them because the eruptions happen either in remote parts of the world or deep under the ocean. When a volcano spews lava up to the ocean’s surface, the molten rock pools together and hardens to form a landmass. However, in some cases, the volcano belches forth nothing more than a mixture of pumice, a

(15) porous, spongy form of volcanic glass, and ash. These pumice and ash islands spring up for short while and then are recaptured by the sea.

By the time researchers arrived at the new island, the land mass had been eroded to a mere fraction of its original size. The frequency and volume of the eruptions were not able to keep pace with the inces-

(20) sant pounding of the sea’s waves. Still, researchers were able to collect valuable data from the event. Most surprising, perhaps, was the biological impact of the new island. Months after the formation of the island, biologists found pumice rafts rife with barnacles, corals, algae, oysters, and tube worms washed up on the shores of Queensland,

(25) Australia, some 2,000 miles away.

1. What is the main point of the passage?

2. What is the structure of the passage?

3. What is the purpose of the passage?

After the end of World War II, a pervasive, but unfortunately fallacious, economic perspective took hold. Based on the United States' successful emergence from the Depression, the idea that war was good for an economy became fashionable. However, linking the (5) United States economic recovery with its entry into World War II is a prime example of flawed economic thinking.

Supporters of the war benefits economy theory hold that a country at war is a country with a booming economy. Industry must produce weapons, supplies, food, and clothing for the troops. The increased (10) production necessitates the hiring of more people, reducing unemployment. More employment means more money in the pockets of citizens, who are then likely to go out and spend that money, helping the retail sector of the economy. Retail shops experience an increase in business and may need to hire more workers, further reducing (15) unemployment and adding to the economic momentum. While this scenario sounds good in theory, it does not accurately represent what truly happens in a war time economy.

In reality, the government can fund a war in a combination of three ways. It can raise taxes, cut spending on other areas, or increase the (20) national debt. Each of these strategies has a negative impact on the economy. An increase in taxes takes money out of an individual's hands, leading to a reduction in consumer spending. Clearly, there is no net benefit to the economy in that case. Cutting spending in other areas has its costs as well, even if they are not as obvious. But any (25) reduction in government spending means the imposition of a greater burden on the benefactors of that government spending. Cutbacks in a particular program mean that the people who normally depend on that program now must spend more of their money to make up for the government cuts. This also takes money out of consumers' (30) hands and leaves the economy depressed. Of course, a government could go into debt during the war, but such a strategy simply means that at some point in the future, taxes must be increased or spending decreased. Plus, the interest on the debt must be paid as well.

1. What is the main point of the passage?

2. What is the structure of the passage?

3. What is the purpose of the passage?

While there is some agreement on the characteristics of academically gifted children, educational theorists have struggled to develop a satisfying definition of gifted students. Some of the more common attributes of gifted children include the ability to learn new

(5) things quickly and easily, a good memory, and a reading level often several grades above that of their peers. Gifted children also tend to become easily bored with routine or repetitive tasks and are more comfortable with abstract ideas and processes at an earlier age.

Beyond those commonalities, which not all child psychologists

(10) even agree on, the precise definition of a gifted performer varies. To some education specialists, a gifted child is one who scores above 130 on a standard IQ test, a score that puts the child in the top 2.5% of the population. However, a score on an IQ test may indicate something of a child's potential, but it does not always correlate with a child's

(15) achievement levels in school. Thus, some educators define gifted students as those whose academic achievement is roughly two grade levels higher than that of their age group.

Further complicating the issue are varying standards for gifted-

(20) ness among the different states and a rather vague federal definition of gifted children. According to the federal government, a gifted child shows "evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields..." By including creative, artistic, and leadership proficiency in the definition, the concept of a gifted child becomes more

(25) and more subjective.

In Canada, the definition of a gifted student makes explicit refer-

(30) ence to the fact that in many cases, a student may be exceptionally talented in one discipline, such as math or logic, and learning disabled in another. The variety of definitions in use for gifted students speaks to the difficulties inherent in fashioning neat labels for the undeniably complex human condition.

1. What is the main point of the passage?

2. What is the structure of the passage?

3. What is the purpose of the passage?

In the pantheon of great thinkers, Karl Marx certainly ranks as one of the most influential, even if it has been said that no thinker has ever had his words more badly misrepresented, by supporters and detractors alike, than Karl Marx. After Marx, no social discipline was
(5) safe from an assault by Marxist thinkers. However, while the views and insights brought to bear by Marxists have helped to illuminate relationships in some disciplines, the Marxist worldview has been less successful when applied to certain human interactions.

For example, Marxist perspectives on global power relations have
(10) been assailed by many critics. Because Marx himself was especially concerned with economics, his followers have tended to elevate economic concerns, including the class struggle and control over the means of production, over all other areas. Thus, when analyzing the balance of power on a global level, key concepts such as national-
(15) ism, security, and the state are virtually ignored by Marxist scholars. On a theoretical level, it may be useful to strip away these concepts to more closely examine certain other dynamics at work, but the Marxist view often fails to describe what actually happens in the real world. Consider the strong nationalism evident in Poland, even after
(20) generations of one-party Communist rule.

Also, the Marxist devotion to capitalism leads to simplifications on the world stage. Marxist political scientists typically refer to the “world capitalist system” when analyzing interactions among nations, but this definition has less and less relevance when applied to the
(25) variety of economies at work in the world. Where do countries with transitional or developing economies such as China, Russia, and North Korea fit into this schema? Ultimately, a Marxist view of global interactions sacrifices a great many crucial concepts at the altar of one overarching economic perspective. Some critics have likened such a
(30) view to an analysis of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* that neglects to discuss the protagonist and his motivations.

1. What is the main point of the passage?

2. What is the structure of the passage?

3. What is the purpose of the passage?

ANALYTICAL READING: THE FINAL WORD

Ultimately, the GMAT is a test of pattern recognition. While most people are used to finding patterns in numbers and other mathematical concepts, many fail to see that the verbal section has patterns of its own. As you've seen, reading passages on the GMAT follow fairly predictable templates. The first paragraph typically contains a wealth of important information, the body paragraphs and the conclusion slightly less so. By analyzing the passages in this chapter, you've learned how the components of a reading passage function in relation to the whole. This insight will be crucial to your success on the Reading Comprehension questions, as it will help you both in answering the questions and understanding the passage in a limited amount of time.

Answers to Drill 2

Analysis of Passage 1: This is a pretty straightforward passage. The first sentence clues you in to the topic and its relevance: an island formed by volcanic eruption, which is a rare occurrence. The first sentence of the second paragraph explains that scientists seldom get to view these events. You also may have noted that, towards the end of the first body paragraph, the author states that certain types of volcanic eruptions lead to temporary land masses. Even if you missed that part, the third paragraph makes it clear that the island eroded. The final sentence, though, indicates that there may still be interesting scientific avenues to explore. Here's a look at the key parts of the passage:

- Geologists, volcanologists, and oceanographers had the rare opportunity to view the birth and death of an island.** A ship captain, sailing through the South Pacific near the island of Tonga, suddenly found the ocean waters covered in a sand-like substance,
- (5) pumice. On the horizon, a black pillar of smoke appeared, indicating a volcanic eruption. The captain radioed his find back to the mainland and soon researchers from around the globe were clustered around the new island.
- Undersea volcano eruptions occur dozens of times a year, but**
- (10) **scientists rarely are able to view them because the eruptions happen either in remote parts of the world or deep under the ocean.** When a volcano spews lava up to the ocean's surface, the molten rock pools together and hardens to form a landmass.
- (15) **However, in some cases, the volcano belches forth nothing more than a mixture of pumice, a porous, spongy form of volcanic glass, and ash. These pumice and ash islands spring up for short while and then are recaptured by the sea.**
- By the time researchers arrived at the new island, the land mass had been eroded to a mere fraction of its original size.** The
- (20) frequency and volume of the eruptions were not able to keep pace with the incessant pounding of the sea's waves. Still, researchers were able to collect valuable data from the event. **Most surprising, perhaps, was the biological impact of the new island. Months after the formation of the island, biologists found pumice rafts rife with**
- (25) **barnacles, corals, algae, oysters, and tube worms washed up on the shores of Queensland, Australia, some 2,000 miles away.**

Putting all these parts together, you can see that the main idea is: volcanic eruptions can cause islands to form, although the new land mass may be only temporary. The purpose of the passage is to **explain** an event and its scientific significance. You can see this because the passage basically just provides the details of what happened. There are no competing views or controversies to be found. Structurally, the passage introduces the topic, provides some information on how islands are formed, and then explains the end result of this particular instance of island formation.

Analysis of Passage 2: From the very first sentence, passage 2 indicates that the author is going to take issue with a position. The introduction states that “a pervasive, but unfortunately fallacious, economic perspective took hold.” Later in the introduction, after the word “however,” the author argues that the idea presented is a “prime example of flawed economic thinking.” The second paragraph details the opposing side of the argument (the side the author is against). The end of the second paragraph indicates that the author is disagreeing with this interpretation, and the third paragraph gives the author’s take on what really happens during a war. The third paragraph contains a lot of detail, but you shouldn’t spend much time on it; the introduction already clued you in to the fact that the author does not believe war is good for the economy, so clearly this paragraph supports that argument. The final sentence doesn’t give you much—it just shows another way in which war can hurt the economy. From an analytical perspective, here are the important parts:

(5) **After the end of World War II, a pervasive, but unfortunately fallacious, economic perspective took hold.** Based on the United States’ successful emergence from the Depression, the idea that war was good for an economy became fashionable. **However, linking the United States economic recovery with its entry into World War II is a prime example of flawed economic thinking.**

(10) **Supporters of the war benefits economy theory hold that a country at war is a country with a booming economy.** Industry must produce weapons, supplies, food, and clothing for the troops. The increased production necessitates the hiring of more people, reducing unemployment. More employment means more money in the pockets of citizens, who are then likely to go out and spend that money, helping the retail sector of the economy. Retail shops experience an increase in business and may need to hire more workers, further reducing unemployment and adding to the economic momentum. (15) **While this scenario sounds good in theory, it does not accurately represent what truly happens in a war time economy.**

(20) **In reality, the government can fund a war in a combination of three ways.** It can raise taxes, cut spending on other areas, or increase the national debt. Each of these strategies has a negative impact on the economy. An increase in taxes takes money out of an individual’s hands, leading to a reduction in consumer spending. Clearly, there is no net benefit to the economy in that case. Cutting spending in other areas has its costs as well, even if (25) they are not as obvious. But any reduction in government spending means the imposition of a greater burden on the benefactors of that government spending. Cutbacks in a particular program mean that the

- (30) people who normally depend on that program now must spend more of their money to make up for the government cuts. This also takes money out of consumers' hands and leaves the economy depressed. Of course, a government could go into debt during the war, but such a strategy simply means that at some point in the future, taxes must be increased or spending decreased. **Plus, the interest on the debt must be paid as well.**

When you isolate these major ideas, you see that the main idea is: although it may appear that a war can boost the economy, in actuality, war has negative effects on the economy. The purpose here is to **persuade** the reader that a commonly held belief is incorrect. The author makes it clear that the belief is "fallacious." After that, the author lays out the common view and debunks it. Finally, the author states what actually occurs during a war time. These actions show that the author wants to argue against one view in favor of another. It would not be entirely incorrect to say that the author's purpose is also to evaluate the idea that war is good for the economy. However, since the author spends two paragraphs (the first and the third) arguing against the idea, the focus is more on persuading than evaluating. The structure of the passage is a statement of the author's viewpoint, a consideration of the opposing viewpoint, and finally evidence supporting the author's viewpoint.

Analysis of Passage 3: The first sentence of the passage mentions a difficult task—coming up with a definition for gifted children. However, the rest of the introduction fails to give an answer to the question of why this is a difficult issue. That's fine; just move on to the next paragraph. The second paragraph reiterates the idea that there is not a precise definition of a gifted performer. You may want to read a bit more of this paragraph to see what definitions are offered. The paragraph mentions two: IQ score and academic achievement. The next paragraph indicates a further complication: the varying definitions among the state and federal governments. By now, you have the basic gist of the passage, so you can skip through these other definitions. The conclusion gives yet another definition, and then ends by stating that perhaps people are too complex for simple definitions. Analytically, the passage breaks down as follows:

- (5) **While there is some agreement on the characteristics of academically gifted children, educational theorists have struggled to develop a satisfying definition of gifted students.** Some of the more common attributes of gifted children include the ability to learn new things quickly and easily, a good memory, and a reading level often several grades above that of their peers. Gifted children also tend to become easily bored with routine or repetitive tasks and are more comfortable with abstract ideas and processes at an earlier age.
- (10) **Beyond those commonalities, which not all child psychologists even agree on, the precise definition of a gifted performer varies.** To some education specialists, a gifted child is one who scores above 130 on a standard IQ test, a score that puts the child in the top 2.5% of the population. **However, a score on an IQ test**
- (15) **may indicate something of a child's potential, but it does not**

always correlate with a child's achievement levels in school. Thus, some educators define gifted students as those whose academic achievement is roughly two grade levels higher than that of their age group.

- (20) Further complicating the issue are varying standards for giftedness among the different states and a rather vague federal definition of gifted children. According to the federal government, a gifted child shows "evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields..." By including creative, artistic, and leadership proficiency in the definition, the concept of a gifted child becomes more and more subjective.

- (25) In Canada, the definition of a gifted student makes explicit reference to the fact that in many cases, a student may be exceptionally talented in one discipline, such as math or logic, and learning disabled in another. The variety of definitions in use for gifted students speaks to the difficulties inherent in fashioning neat labels for the undeniably complex human condition.

From this, you can gather that the main idea is: there are a number of ways of defining gifted children, but ultimately it may be too difficult to arrive at one satisfying definition. The purpose here is to **compare and contrast** several different views. As you can see, each paragraph brings up a new definition or consideration. The author is reporting the different perspectives, but is not explicitly evaluating them. Note the lack of value judgment words in the language of the passage. Also, the structure of the passage reinforces the notion that the purpose is to compare and contrast. The first paragraph lays out the issue, while the succeeding paragraphs present different views on the issue. At the end, the author doesn't endorse any particular view; the passage ends by indicating that perhaps none of the definitions is adequate.

Analysis of Passage 4: This passage contains a lot of information in the introduction. Keep your focus on figuring out what the passage is about and why that topic is important. At first, it may appear that the passage is going to be about Karl Marx. But the last line of the introduction is really the key. It states that the passage isn't really about Karl Marx per se; it is about how his disciples apply his ideas to different disciplines and the appropriateness of such a Marxist viewpoint. It is important to identify that statement because the next paragraph is devoted entirely to an example supporting the idea that a Marxist view isn't necessarily effective in certain areas of study. The third paragraph just gives more of the same; another example in which the Marxist view is inadequate. The final two sentences give an important insight into the

deficiencies of a Marxist analysis, namely how it ignores certain key features. Here's how the passage breaks down:

	In the pantheon of great thinkers, Karl Marx certainly ranks as one of the most influential, even if it has been said that no thinker has ever had his words more badly misrepresented, by supporters and detractors alike, than Karl Marx. After Marx, no social discipline
(5)	was safe from an assault by Marxist thinkers. However, while the views and insights brought to bear by Marxists have helped to illuminate relationships in some disciplines, the Marxist worldview has been less successful when applied to certain human interactions.
(10)	For example, Marxist perspectives on global power relations have been assailed by many critics. Because Marx himself was especially concerned with economics, his followers have tended to elevate economic concerns, including the class struggle and control over the means of production, over all other areas. Thus, when ana-
(15)	lyzing the balance of power on a global level, key concepts such as nationalism, security, and the state are virtually ignored by Marxist scholars. On a theoretical level, it may be useful to strip away these concepts to more closely examine certain other dynamics at work, but the Marxist view often fails to describe what actually happens
(20)	in the real world. Consider the strong nationalism evident in Poland, even after generations of one-party Communist rule.
	Also, the Marxist devotion to capitalism leads to simplifications on the world stage. Marxist political scientists typically refer to the "world capitalist system" when analyzing interactions among
(25)	nations, but this definition has less and less relevance when applied to the variety of economies at work in the world. Where do countries with transitional or developing economies such as China, Russia, and North Korea fit into this schema? Ultimately, a Marxist view of global interactions sacrifices a great many crucial concepts at the altar of one
(30)	overarching economic perspective. Some critics have likened such a view to an analysis of Shakespeare's <i>Hamlet</i> that neglects to discuss the protagonist and his motivations.

For this passage, the main idea is basically stated in the introduction. The main point of the passage is: Marxist analysis does not lend itself particularly well to certain disciplines. The author's purpose is to **evaluate** the usefulness of a certain type of analysis. Notice how the author critically discusses the topic and shows its weaknesses in the second and third paragraphs. The passage is structured as a critique of Marxist analysis, followed by examples of the problems found in certain types of Marxist analysis.

CHAPTER 5

READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGY

In this chapter, you will learn:

- The basic information about the reading comprehension questions in the verbal portion of the GMAT
- The best strategies for solving reading comprehension questions

There will be roughly 14 Reading Comprehension questions on the GMAT, divided among four separate passages of up to 350 words in length. The Reading Comprehension directions are as follows:

The questions in this group are based on the content of a passage. After reading the passage, choose the best answer to each question. Answer all the questions following the passage on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passage.

To review these directions for subsequent questions of this type, click on **HELP**.

The key part of these directions is the final sentence: answer all the questions following the passage on the basis of what is **stated** or **implied** in the passage. That basically means that the answer to every question is right on the screen in front of you. Answering Reading Comprehension questions is basically the same as taking an open-book test. And who doesn't like open-book tests?

However, the Reading Comprehension questions on the GMAT present an interesting challenge. On the one hand, the answer to every question is somewhere in the passage in front of you, so theoretically, with unlimited time, you could get all the questions correct. On the other hand, you don't have unlimited time; you have Sentence Corrections and Critical Reasoning questions to tackle as well. Thus, the challenge becomes finding the right balance between working quickly and working accurately.

By approaching the GMAT reading passages and questions in an analytical manner, you will be able to find that crucial balance between speed and accuracy. Here are the basic steps to follow:

1. **Read the Passage Analytically.** Do not read the entire passage word for word. There is more information in the passage than you need to answer the questions, so reading the entire passage is inefficient. Plus, you are on a time limit. Reading the passage doesn't increase your score—answering questions correctly does. Use the skills you learned in Chapter 4 to analyze the passage and find its organization, main idea, and purpose. Jot this information down on your scratch paper.
2. **Assess the Question.** This chapter details the six major types of Reading Comprehension questions. After you analyze the passage, assess the question and figure out what information you need to find in the passage.
3. **Use the Passage to Answer the Question.** Remember, the best answer to the question is based on the information in the passage. That means answering questions based on common sense or your outside knowledge is not allowed. Make sure you use information in the passage to support your answer.

Look at the process now in more detail. The first step is to analyze the passage for the big ideas: main idea, purpose, and organization. You've had a lot of practice with this skill in Chapter 4. Try it out on the following passage:

Because the very subject matter of anthropology is so volatile, it's no surprise that the discipline is frequently embroiled in controversy. Even when social commentators and outside observers fail to criticize the latest anthropological theory on human nature, the social science's own practitioners are often up in arms over some study or another. Consider Ekman's landmark study of human emotions in the 1960s.

At the time, the accepted movement in anthropology was relativism. In an effort to rid the discipline of accusations of bias, anthropologists attempted to study cultures as isolated systems. The norms, mores, and practices of each culture were analyzed only in terms of the internal consistency they possessed and any suggestion of judgment was met by howls of outrage by the anthropological establishment. Into this arena came Ekman with his startling heresy; emotions, argued Ekman, were not arbitrary cultural constructs but universal human traits. Ekman had spent years traveling the world, showing people around the globe photographs of other people expressing six basic emotions: happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, and surprise. Not one person studied by Ekman failed to recognize these emotions, whether the person in the photograph was

wearing the suit of a Western businessman or the tribal dress of the Fore foragers of New Guinea.

When Ekman presented his findings at an anthropological conference, he was denounced as a fascist and a racist. Some of his fellow (25) scientists even took his research to prove not that human emotions were universal but that the hegemony of Western culture was so complete that even the most far-flung peoples were socialized into the Western mindset. Ekman was shocked at the reaction. He thought his findings would be evidence of the brotherhood of man, not of the (30) subjugation of the world by the West. And yet, Ekman's conclusions have been replicated again and again and are now generally accepted in the anthropology community, which apparently is like its subject matter: quick to anger but perhaps slow to admit mistakes.

■ STEP 1: READ THE PASSAGE ANALYTICALLY

From your analysis of the passage, you should end up with some version of these key ideas:

1. Because the very subject matter of anthropology is so volatile, it's no surprise that the discipline is frequently embroiled in controversy.
2. Consider Ekman's landmark study of human emotions in the 1960s.
3. At the time, the accepted movement in anthropology was relativism.
4. When Ekman presented his findings at an anthropological conference, he was denounced as a fascist and a racist.
5. Ekman's conclusions have been replicated again and again and are now generally accepted in the anthropology community, which apparently is like its subject matter: quick to anger but perhaps slow to admit mistakes.

Of course, your answers may vary slightly, but these are the crucial concepts you need to understand the main idea, structure, and organization of the passage. Once you've found these important ideas, take a moment to articulate them in your own words.

The main idea is something similar to this: Ekman's experience shows how members of the anthropological community may initially react negatively to a new finding, but may eventually come to accept the finding. The author's purpose is to explain a characteristic of the members of a scientific field. And in terms of organization, the passage starts by presenting the author's view of a group of researchers and then illustrates this view with an example. Once you have a firm grasp of the passage, move on to the questions.

STEP 2: ASSESS THE QUESTION

On the GMAT, you'll be confronted with one question at a time. Although there are a variety of Reading Comprehension question types, remember that no matter the question, the answer is always based on the information in the passage. So while your strategy may vary slightly from question to question, the essential process remains the same.

The six Reading Comprehension question types are:

- main idea
- supporting idea
- inference
- applying information
- logical structure
- style and tone

Main Idea

These questions simply ask you to state the main idea. You should already have a decent idea of the main idea from your analytical reading. Main idea questions appear frequently and are often the first question you'll see with a passage. Typical main ideas questions look like the following:

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

Which one of the following statements accurately captures the central idea of the passage?

Of the following titles, which would be most appropriate for the contents of the passage?

The passage can best be described as which of the following?

Supporting Idea

These questions ask you to focus on the specific ideas and examples presented in the passage. Usually a reading passage will have one or two supporting idea questions per passage. Here's a sample of supporting idea questions:

According to the passage, the author believes which of the following about Ekman's study?

Which of the following statements best expresses the reaction of the anthropological community to Ekman's study?

According to the passage, current trends in anthropology just prior to Ekman's study are best characterized as

Inference

Inference questions are still based on the text, but instead of asking what the passage states directly, these questions ask you to figure out which

choice is implied by the information in the passage. Inference questions are also fairly common. On the GMAT, inferences are statements that must be true based on the facts. Don't stray too far from the information in the text. Inference questions are likely to use the following wording:

Based on the information in the passage, it can be reasonably inferred that Ekman would approve of which of the following research strategies?

The author of the passage would most likely agree with which of the following statements?

Based on the contents of the passage, it could be inferred that an anthropologist would be LEAST likely to agree with which of the following?

Applying Information

These questions are slightly more complex than the previous types. They require you to figure out what the passage states about a particular topic, and then apply that information to answer choices that contain new information. These questions do not appear as frequently as the previous three. Some possible questions of this type include:

Which of the following is most similar to the anthropological community's reaction to Ekman's study, as described in the passage?

The research study described in the passage would be most helpful to which of the following individuals?

The author's argument, as presented in the passage, is most similar to which of the following lines of reasoning?

Logical Structure

Supporting idea questions ask you to figure out what the passage says; logical structure questions ask you to figure out why the author used a particular example or how the parts of the passage fit together. Logical reasoning questions look like the following:

The second paragraph plays what role in the passage?

Why does the author mention "the suit of a Western businessman or the tribal dress of the Fore foragers of New Guinea"?

Which of the following most accurately describe the structure of the passage?

Tone

These are the rarest of questions on the GMAT. Tone refers to an author's feelings about the topic, but the passages on the GMAT tend to be

rather dry. When a passage does display some semblance of tone, the tone should be fairly mild. You won't find any angry rants or humorous stories on the GMAT. Tone questions generally take the following forms:

The author's attitude towards the anthropological community could be accurately described as

Which of the following best describes the tone of the passage?

Based on the statements in lines 1–6, which of the following could be inferred about the author's attitude towards the critics?

■ STEP 3: USE THE PASSAGE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION

This is the most important part of the strategy. Reading Comprehension questions are like open-book tests, but test takers still get the questions wrong. Why? Because under time pressure, most people either get careless or try to take shortcuts. You don't want to do either of those things. So instead of answering a question based on what you think you read or what you think you remember, take an extra moment to find the answer in the passage.

Of course, you don't want to waste time reading parts of the passage that aren't relevant to the question, so you need to figure out exactly where to look for the answer. Fortunately, each of the question types nudges you in the right direction; clues in the question basically tell you where to look for the right answer. Try out each of the question types and figure out where to look for the answer.

1. Which of the following most accurately expresses the main idea of the passage?
 - A. Despite an initial outcry over his work, Ekman was eventually vindicated by the scientific community for his research findings.
 - B. The anthropological community as a whole is characterized by rigidity and an unwillingness to accept new ideas.
 - C. Anthropologists take longer to accept controversial ideas about human nature than do scientists in other fields.
 - D. The anthropological community's reaction to certain heretical ideas may reflect a basic truth about the nature of the discipline.
 - E. Ekman's revolutionary study about the universality of human emotions caused a stir in the anthropological community that reverberates to this day.

Analysis

First assess the question. This is clearly a main idea question. In order to answer this type of question, first refer to the notes you took from your analytical reading. The answer to a main idea question should reflect the major points of the entire passage, not just one part. Focus on the beginning of the paragraphs and the final few sentences to get a sense of the big

picture; unless you see a word like “however,” “but,” or “although,” don’t look at the details contained in the body paragraphs.

Earlier, you gathered that the main idea was something like “Ekman’s experience shows how members of the anthropological community may initially react negatively to a new finding, but may eventually come to accept the finding.” Now look at the answer choices and see how well they match your take on the passage. Choice A focuses on Ekman, stating he was vindicated by the scientific community. But look back at the passage. Ekman and his experience is an example used by the author to support a statement about the anthropological community. So while choice A may discuss a part of the passage, it is not the main idea. Choice B makes a claim that is not supported by the passage. The author claims that the community eventually accepted Ekman’s new idea, although it caused controversy at first. Choice C compares anthropologists to scientists in other fields, but the passage makes no explicit comparison to other scientists. Now look at choice D. The best answer to main idea question encompasses all major parts of the passage. The first paragraph makes a claim about the nature of the anthropological community, the second and third paragraphs detail the reaction of the community, and the final sentence reiterates the author’s belief about the nature of the members of the anthropological community. Choice D is looking pretty good, but you must check the final answer. Choice E focuses on Ekman’s study, but it doesn’t mention anything about the nature of the anthropological community, a key idea in the passage. Furthermore, nothing in the passage supports the idea that the ideas “still reverberate to this day.” So it looks like choice D is best after all.

2. According to the passage, the results of Ekman’s study were
 - A. unequivocal in their support of Ekman’s thesis that there are certain emotions that are universally recognized
 - B. inconclusive, as they may have simply indicated the hegemony of Western culture rather than the universality of human emotions
 - C. invalid because Ekman only used pictures of Western businessmen and Fore tribesmen
 - D. inflammatory because Ekman’s personal biases influenced the results
 - E. limited because Ekman did not carry out enough research to properly draw the conclusion he reached

Analysis

This is a supporting detail question. It asks you to figure what the passage says about the results of Ekman’s study. For questions that ask about specific parts of the passage, your goal is to find the particular lines in which the author discusses the supporting idea asked about in the question. Your analytical reading should give you an understanding of the structure of the passage, which may help you figure out where to look for the answer. Alternatively, you can use the words in the question itself to aid you. The GMAT writers typically use specific words from the passage in the

question stem, so scan around the passage for something like “results of Ekman’s study.” The second paragraph would probably be the best place to look first because you know from your analysis that this paragraph details Ekman’s experience. At the end of the paragraph you will find the sentence “Not one person studied by Ekman failed to recognize these emotions, whether the person in the photograph was wearing the suit of a Western businessman or the tribal dress of the Fore foragers of New Guinea.” These lines contain the answer: the results showed that everyone Ekman studied was able to recognize the emotions pictured.

Now you have to find the answer choice that matches what the passage states. Choice A looks promising since it says that the results clearly supported Ekman’s thesis. Even if you think choice A is good, you still must look at the other answer choices; sometimes it’s easy to become enamored of a certain answer choice but there may be an even better answer. Choice B is incorrect because the passage doesn’t state that the results indicated Western hegemony. Some scientists argued that but the passage states that the conclusions have been replicated and are now accepted. There is nothing in the passage to support choice C. Choice D may look tempting because the results certainly were inflammatory. However, the passage doesn’t explicitly state that the results were controversial because of Ekman’s biases. Choice E is also not stated by the author. If anything, the passage indicates the opposite by saying that Ekman spent years traveling the world for his study. Thus, choice A turns out to be the best choice.

3. The passage suggests which of the following about anthropology?
- A. For much of the discipline’s history it was often charged with making racist assumptions about the value of other cultures’ practices.
 - B. The relativist approach is no longer employed by modern anthropologists.
 - C. At one time, anthropologists evaluated cultures based on a culture’s relationships to other cultures in the world.
 - D. Members of the anthropological community are more sensitive to accusations of bias than are the members of other disciplines.
 - E. Anthropologists believe that the prevalence of Western cultural norms represents a threat to indigenous peoples around the world.

Analysis

Any question that asks what the passage suggests or implies is an inference question. Inference questions tend to be slightly more difficult than supporting detail questions, even though they both ask you about the facts in the passage. One difficulty is that inference questions tend to be open-ended; from reading the question, it may not be obvious where exactly in the passage you should look for the answer. Another difficulty concerns the inference itself. An inference is not merely a guess or a hunch. Inferences on the GMAT need to be supported by the passage. Any choice that could be true or might be true just won’t cut it. This question requires you to

use the information in the passage to draw an inference about anthropology. Where should you look? Considering that the entire passage is about anthropology, it would be inefficient to read practically everything. When the question doesn't give you much help figuring out where to look, go to the answer choices. Take each choice one by one and see if you can prove it to be true based on the passage. For choice A, look at the parts of the passage that deal with accusations of racism. The last paragraph states some scientists accused Ekman of racism, but that doesn't help. The beginning of the second paragraph said anthropology had been accused of bias, but nothing supports the idea that these accusations occurred for "much of the discipline's history." So while this answer might be true, it's not an inference. Choice B is easier to find—relativism appears in the beginning of the second paragraph. But nowhere does the passage state that relativism is no longer practiced, so choice B can be eliminated. Now for choice C, look for the part of the passage that talks about how anthropologists used to evaluate cultures. The second paragraph is a good place to look because the beginning talks about judging other cultures. The passage states that anthropologists tried "to study cultures as isolated systems. The norms, mores, and practices of each culture were analyzed only in terms of the internal consistency they possessed." Since this was a change, it means that before, cultures were not studied as isolated systems or in terms of internal consistency. This makes choice C a good inference. Choice D is easy to eliminate because the passage doesn't compare anthropologists to other scientists. The final choice goes too far for an inference. In the passage, Western hegemony was mentioned by a "few" scientists. But that doesn't mean that anthropologists in general feel this way. Choice C is best.

4. Ekman's experiences with the anthropological community as detailed in the passage are most analogous to which of the following?
- A. an inventor who must discard hundreds of failed models before eventually discovering one that works
 - B. a scientist who withdraws his research after his colleagues attack the ethics of his experimental design
 - C. a literary critic who challenges the accepted practices of his discipline and ends up developing a new paradigm for textual analysis
 - D. a painter whose revolutionary work is met by opposition from his peers but eventually gains mainstream acceptance
 - E. an architect who proposes building a structure unlike any other but is forced to change his plans after his coworkers object

Analysis

Applying information questions may present you with new information in the answer choices, but the best answer is still based directly on the passage. These questions usually require a more involved process, as you must first refer to the passage and figure out what information you need, and then analyze the answer choices to find the one that matches the question task.

For this question, you need to first describe Ekman's experiences. Your strategic reading should have provided you with this information: Ekman presented controversial findings to the anthropological community and was met with scorn and disdain. But eventually, his results were accepted by the community. Now apply that basic scenario to the answer choices. The best one will closely match the general idea of what you read in the passage, although the specific details might differ. Choice A is wrong. Ekman did not present hundreds of findings to the anthropological community before gaining acceptance. Nor does the passage indicate that Ekman failed—his conclusions were controversial but correct. Choice B is also no good. Ekman was attacked by his colleagues, but he didn't withdraw his research. Choice C is close, but you must check the other choices. Choice D is good. Ekman's work is described as a "startling heresy" and is denounced and criticized by the anthropological community. But the passage states that the results were eventually accepted by the community. That makes choice D a pretty good match, and better than C since the passage doesn't state that Ekman challenged the accepted practices of his discipline. And his results didn't result in a "new paradigm." Choice E is incorrect because Ekman's work is not "unlike any other" and he did not change anything after his colleagues attacked him. Ultimately, D is the best choice.

5. The author states "At the time...was relativism," in the second paragraph in order to
- A. explain why the discipline was plagued by accusations of bias
 - B. support the criticisms of Ekman's work made by his colleagues
 - C. indicate a possible reason that Ekman's results were met with such outrage
 - D. describe an important moment in the evolution of the anthropological discipline
 - E. argue that if anthropologists wanted to be respected as scientists, they would need to revise their methods

Analysis

This is a logical structure question. Whereas supporting idea questions ask you to figure out what the passage says, these questions test your understanding of why an author includes certain information. In order to answer these questions, you must go back to the passage and look at the context in which the line or lines appear. Ask yourself why the author may have included the lines or what the lines contribute to the paragraph as a whole. Look at the second paragraph and think about the structure. The first few lines explain the state of anthropology at the time of Ekman's research. The author establishes that the discipline was dominated by relativism. The second half of the paragraph then describes Ekman's "startling heresy"—that emotions were universal. So the first part helps to establish why Ekman's results were so controversial. The lines don't explain why anthropology was accused of bias, as choice A states. Nor do they support the criticisms of Ekman's work. Choice C,

however, is accurate. Choice D doesn't make sense in the context of the passage. The author is detailing the effects of a particular finding, not the evolution of anthropology. Similarly, choice E has nothing to do with the purpose of the paragraph. Knowing the purpose of a passage or a paragraph is useful when answering logical structure questions. Answer choices that introduce information unrelated to the purpose will be incorrect.

6. The author's attitude toward the anthropological community's reaction to Ekman's work is best described as one of
 - A. anger at the community's shortsightedness
 - B. understanding of the community's character
 - C. disappointment at the community's treatment of Ekman
 - D. agreement with the community's righteous indignation
 - E. puzzlement at the community's eventual acceptance of Ekman's work

Analysis

Because the texts used on the GMAT are taken from academic publications, the passages rarely demonstrate strong tones. Most passages are more or less neutral in their treatment of subjects. However, when tone questions do appear, you must be sure that you find evidence in the passage for a particular tone. Don't rely on your "feelings" about a passage; you need to find concrete support. Also, because tone refers to the author's opinion of his or her subject, you can't just look at the examples presented in the passage. A passage could contain criticisms of a theory, but that doesn't mean the author's tone is negative. Evidence of tone comes not from the nature of the content of a passage but instead from what the author says about that content. For this question, you need to go back to the passage and find the parts in which the author talks about the community's reaction to Ekman's work. This information is in the last paragraph. The passage states that after Ekman presented his work, he was denounced as a racist and some interpreted his work as evidence of Western hegemony. But these lines only describe what the reaction was, not how the author feels about it. So keep looking. The last line gives an indication of how the author feels: the community is "like its subject matter: quick to anger but perhaps slow to admit mistakes." This is the information you need. Choice A describes the author's tone as angry but that is not supported by the passage. The anthropologists may have been angry, but the author isn't. Choice B is a pretty good match. The author acknowledges that anthropologists are like the people they study—they can get angry quickly but are slower to admit mistakes. There is nothing stronger in the author's tone than an acceptance of the character of the members of the discipline. Even though the author describes the negative reaction of the community, there are no indications of "disappointment" in the passage, so choice C is no good. The author certainly doesn't agree with the reaction of the community. The passage acknowledges the reaction, but doesn't indicate support for it, so choice D is wrong. And because the author indicates an understanding of

the community's reaction, the tone can't be puzzled as choice E states. Choice B is best.

ANALYZING WRONG ANSWERS

It may not be pleasant to hear, but the right answer to every Reading Comprehension is right there in front of you. So how do people get these questions wrong? One reason is mostly procedural. Test takers go about the questions in the wrong way, read too much of the passage, answer questions from memory, and don't look back at the passage to verify their answers. The second reason is slightly more nefarious. People miss reading questions because the wrong answers are cleverly designed to make you pick them. Each wrong answer is carefully designed to somehow entice you to pick it. Fortunately, these wrong answers, like everything on the GMAT, follow fairly predictable patterns. Recognition of these patterns can boost your score and help you on those questions on which you are uncertain of the best answer or working with a limited amount of time.

Here are some of the most common wrong answer patterns on the GMAT.

Right Words, Wrong Meaning

A favorite ploy of the GMAT test writers is to construct an answer choice that uses words and phrases from the passage but rearranges them so that the meaning is different from that of the passage. For example, suppose you are doing a supporting idea question and the part of the passage you refer to says this:

Although helium is one of the most common elements in the universe, it makes up only a small fraction of the Earth's composition. The element can be found in natural gas deposits as well as in the atmosphere, where it accounts for about five parts per million of the air. Because helium is so light, it is constantly escaping from the atmosphere and drifting into space.

Now, here's a question on that information:

1. The passage indicates that a major difference between the helium on Earth and in the universe is
 - A. the helium found in the Earth's atmosphere is lighter than the helium that occurs naturally
 - B. the helium composition of the Earth's atmosphere has a higher ratio of parts per million than does the helium composition of the universe
 - C. the relative scarcity of helium on the Earth when compared to its prevalence in the rest of the universe

Look at answer choices A and B. They use a lot of words and concepts from the passage but their meanings don't really correspond with the excerpt. Choice A takes an idea from the final sentence of the selection and spins it into a new meaning. The passage states that helium's lightness explains why it escapes the Earth's atmosphere. There's nothing about the helium in the universe being heavier. Choice B uses information about the ratio of helium in the atmosphere, but it gets the relationship wrong; the Earth has a smaller ratio, not a larger one. Both these choices use a lot of the key words from the passage, but the meanings they convey are very different from the original text. Choice C correctly states a relationship found in the passage. Notice how choice C avoids repeating certain phrases from the passage, using "relative scarcity" for "small fraction" and "prevalence" for "most common." Oftentimes, the best answer uses a lot of paraphrases of the information in the passage. Repeating words and phrases from the passage verbatim helps to make wrong choices more appealing because these answers remind you of the passage. Using paraphrases helps disguise the right answer. If you do not see a lot of words that remind you of the passage, you're more likely to breeze right by the right answer. The solution? Make sure you read each answer choice carefully. Go back to the passage and make sure both the passage and the answer really say what you think they say. And when in doubt, avoid answers that seem to quote the passage verbatim. These are frequently incorrect. This type of wrong answer appears most frequently on **supporting idea, inference, and logical structure questions**.

Going Too Far

On the GMAT, many wrong answers take information from the passage and then expand it far beyond what the author actually said. Answers that go too far frequently use absolute terms such as "always," "never," "impossible," "best," and "worst." These answers look like this:

2. The passage indicates that a major difference between the helium on Earth and in the universe is
 - D. that the helium on the Earth is only found in two areas, whereas it is found everywhere throughout the universe
 - E. that helium found on Earth is never stable but helium in the universe is

The passage states that helium "can be found in natural gas deposits as well as in the atmosphere," but that is not the same as saying that it is "only found in two areas," as choice D does. Similarly, saying that helium is the most common element in the universe, as the passage does, is not equivalent to saying helium is found "everywhere throughout the universe." Both statements take the information in the passage and expand on it. Similarly, the passage states that the helium in the Earth's atmosphere is "constantly escaping." Is that the same as saying that helium on Earth is "never stable?" No. The passage refers to the helium specifically found in

the atmosphere, while the answer choice discusses helium in general. Thus, it goes farther than the information in the passage and is incorrect. The best answer will say no more than what the passage says. When evaluating choices, moderation is the key. Choices that paint things in absolute terms are frequently incorrect. These incorrect answers appear most frequently on **supporting idea, inference, and tone** questions.

Doesn't Go Far Enough

On the other hand, some choices don't go far enough. The answers account for part of the information in the passage but leave out certain major details. For example, your analytical reading of a passage might reveal that the author mentions the following key points:

1. helium was first discovered in the sun by the French astronomer Pierre Janssen
2. helium is one of the most common elements in the universe, although it makes up only a small part of the Earth's composition
3. in the universe, helium is one of the primary components of stars
4. helium is used primarily to maintain proper pressure in rocket fuel tanks and in certain types of industrial welding

From this analysis, the main idea is to provide details about helium and explain its role in the universe and on Earth. Now, here's a main idea question:

3. The primary purpose of the passage is to
 - A. explain the role of helium in aerospace and industrial endeavors
 - B. discuss the discovery of helium and its place in stellar dynamics
 - C. provide information on helium's role in both the universe and on Earth

Two of these choices are partly correct, but they don't go far enough. Choice A only accounts for the last part of the passage, while choice B only discusses the first part. Choice C is the best answer because it is broad enough to account for the entire passage. When you find yourself down to two or three answers that all seem pretty good, look for the choice that accounts for more of the information in the passage. Make sure you choose an answer that fully encompasses the key points of the passage. Answers that don't go far enough frequently show up on **main idea** and **applying information** questions.

Doesn't Answer the Question

These trap answers can be especially tricky because the answer choice is in fact true based on the information in the passage. Unfortunately, it doesn't answer the question asked. These answers prey on test takers who don't take the time to understand the question before returning to

the passage, so make sure you know exactly what the question wants you to find before you start reading information in the passage. Here's an example:

However, cooperation poses many challenges from an evolutionary theory perspective. One very troubling issue is how cooperation first arose. By its very nature, cooperation involves a scenario in which one organism attains a benefit while another organism incurs the cost. What would possess an organism, whether a single celled protozoa or a multi-celled wolf, to sacrifice its own self interest for the good of another?

4. The author mentions the “single-celled protozoa” and the “multi-celled wolf” in order to
 - A. demonstrate the troubling nature of cooperation in evolutionary theory
 - B. show how cooperation involves a benefit to one organism and a cost to another
 - C. indicate that the problem of cooperation remains regardless of the biological complexity of an organism

If you didn't take a moment to understand what the question asks, you may find yourself falling for choice A or B. Certainly, the passage does state that cooperation is a troubling problem in evolutionary theory, but is that why the author mentions a protozoa and a wolf? Not likely. The same reasoning applies to choice B. It is true that cooperation involves a benefit and a cost, but that doesn't have anything to do with the wolf and the protozoa. Choice C is the best answer because it is both supported by the passage and it answers the question. The author states that it is unclear how cooperation arose and then questions what organism, from a protozoa to a wolf, would sacrifice itself for the benefit of another. Like many of the other trap answers on the GMAT, these wrong answers depend on you rushing through the question. Make sure you work at a pace comfortable enough to work the questions accurately. Remember that the early questions count more, so spending a little extra time to get a question correct in the beginning can result in a significant payoff. Look for these traps on **supporting idea, logical structure, and inference** questions.

Quotes the Wrong Part of the Passage

These answers combine the worst features of some of the other common wrong answers. Like “right words, wrong meaning” answers, they make conspicuous use of words and phrases from the passage. And like “doesn't answer the question” answers, they may contain true statements. However, what distinguishes these answers is they quote information from a part of the passage that isn't relevant to the question being asked. Here are

parts of two paragraphs from a reading passage, followed by a question demonstrating this type of trap answer:

For example, some species of bacteria disperse enzymes that break down food, which all the bacteria in the colony are free to digest. Enzyme production consumes valuable resources, so it would make sense for one or more of the microbes in the colony to let others do
(5) the work of disseminating the enzymes while still reaping the reward. This behavior should lead to a proliferation of non-cooperators, but it most certainly has not.

Biologists are looking to mathematics, particularly game theory and graph theory, to help answer these questions and to gain a fuller
(10) understanding of the role of cooperation in evolution. One researcher has devised a simple equation that predicts when cooperation occurs. The equation simply and elegantly states that cooperation occurs when the benefit-to-cost ratio is higher than the average number of neighboring organisms an individual interacts with. Another inter-
(15) esting revelation from mathematical investigations into cooperation centers on the role of reputation among the cooperators.

5. The discussion of the bacteria species in lines 1–5 indicates
- A. the benefit-to-cost ratio to a microbe involved in enzyme production does not exceed the average number of bacteria in the colony
 - B. the bacteria producing the enzymes that aid the colony have a higher than average reputation among the other members of the colony
 - C. cooperation should encourage the rise of organisms that maximize their own benefits at the expense of others

The key to avoiding the traps here is making sure you know what the question is asking and where in the passage you should look for the answer. The question deals with the discussion of the bacteria species in lines 1–5; more often than not, the correct answer to a supporting idea question is based on a handful of lines, usually no more than 10. So look first for the answer within those lines. If you read more than you need to answer the question, you may fall for the trap answers. Choice A tries to bring the “benefit-to-cost” ratio into the discussion of bacteria. But this information comes from a different part of the passage. It may be true that the equation mentioned in this part of the passage can predict cooperation, but the author’s discussion of the bacteria doesn’t indicate that this is the correct explanation in this case. Choice A quotes the wrong part of the passage and is therefore incorrect. Choice B does the same thing. The test writers want you to try to make connections between pieces of information in the passage where none exist. There is nothing in the discussion of bacteria to indicate anything about reputation. This choice brings in information from another

part of the passage that simply isn't relevant here. Unless the question specifically asks you to connect different parts of the passage together, don't. Choice C directly refers to the discussion of bacteria. The author states that "this behavior should lead to a proliferation of non-cooperators," which is basically what the answer choice indicates. More often than not, the best answer simply reports what the author says. Beware answer choices that try to link together information from different parts of the passage. If a question is asking you about lines 12–16 and the answer choice mentions information found in lines 25–28, it's most likely wrong. Watch for these errors particularly on **supporting idea** and **inference** questions.

■ READING COMPREHENSION PACING

Your verbal section will have four reading passages, each with 3–4 questions. Generally, you will see a reading passage during each quarter of the test, that is, one passage for every 10 questions on the test. Of all the questions on the test, the Reading Comprehension questions are the ones on which more time spent generally results in a higher accuracy rate. After all, the answer to the question is somewhere in the passage. With more time, you have more of a chance to find the right answer. Also, because the wrong answers are constructed to sound convincing, spending more time reading them carefully can mean the difference between selecting the right answer and selecting a trap. Everyone reads and processes information at a different pace, so you'll have to refine your reading approach to find just the right pacing strategy for you. A good approach is to time yourself as you do a reading passage. See how long it takes to answer the questions and then check your accuracy. If you miss two or more questions, you need to slow down and make sure you're applying the lessons in this chapter. If you get the questions correct, try another passage and shave a minute off your time. See if you can maintain your accuracy with less time. If you start missing questions, increase the time slightly and try again. By repeating this procedure a few times, you should be able to narrow in on a range of times that work for you on reading passages. For example, you may find that you can do a passage and get all the questions right in 12 minutes. But when you do a passage in 10 minutes, your accuracy suffers. So you know that spending about 11 minutes on a passage works best for you.

Now, once you have this baseline, you can modify it slightly based on where you are in the verbal section. The first passage is the most important, so you may want to give yourself about 12–13 minutes on it to ensure you get the questions right. The last passage isn't as important and you may find yourself pinched for time, so perhaps you'll give yourself about 8 minutes, knowing that you'll miss some questions.

Reading Comprehension requires lots of practice. Even though reading is the most basic skill tested on the GMAT, that doesn't mean you can skip out on putting in the required work.

► **Drill 1 – Untimed**

DIRECTIONS: Read each of the sample passages and answer the questions about them. This drill is untimed so that you can focus on the strategies detailed in this chapter. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

The classical realist theory of international relations has long dominated both academic institutions and the American government. Even at the birth of the nation, early political thinkers, such as Alexander Hamilton, promoted a realist view of international relations and sought to influence the actions of the government based on this perspective. While the classical realist school of international relations is not entirely homogeneous in nature, there are certain premises that all classical realists share.

The primary principle underlying classical realism is a concern with issues of war and peace. Specifically, classical realists ask, what are the causes of war and what are the conditions of peace? The members of the classical realist school mainly attribute war and conflict to what is termed the security dilemma. In the absence of any prevailing global authority, each nation is required to address its own security needs. However, each nation's quest for security—through military buildups, alliances, or territorial defenses—necessarily unsettles other nations. These nations react to feelings of insecurity by engaging in their own aggressive actions, which leads other nations to react similarly, perpetuating the cycle.

It is important to note that for realists, unlike idealists or liberal internationalists, international conflict is a necessary consequence of the structural anarchy that nations find themselves in. Whereas other schools may see international conflict as the result of evil dictators, historical chance, flawed sociopolitical systems, or ignorance of world affairs, classical realists see war as the logical result of a system that by its nature lacks a true central authority.

Hand in hand with this view of conflict as an inevitable condition of the global power structure is the realists' view of the nation as a unitary actor. Because classical realists see international relations as a continuing struggle for dominance, the nation can not be viewed as a collection of individuals with disparate wants, goals, and ideologies. The realist view requires the formulation of a national interest, which in its simplest terms refers to the nation's ability to survive, maintain its security, and achieve some level of power relative to its competitors.

Realism is not without its critics, many of whom challenge the premise that war is the natural condition of international relations or that there can be a truly national interest. However, the realist school of international relations continues to shape foreign policy because of the successes it has had in describing real world interactions between nations.

1. It can be inferred from the passage that members of the classical realist school would be LEAST likely to support
 - A. an international policy based on building a strong military force to deter threats
 - B. an international policy that seeks to reduce threats of war by providing humanitarian aid to potential aggressor countries
 - C. a domestic policy that attempts to unify the nation's citizens behind a common cause
 - D. a domestic policy that allocates a majority of the country's budget for defense spending
 - E. an international policy based on joining a common defense contract with other nations
2. Which of the following, if true, would best support the classical realist theory of international conflict as it is described in the passage?
 - A. Some countries ruled by dictators maintain peaceful relations with their neighbors.
 - B. Despite the presence of a world superpower, many countries continue to fight wars with their neighbors.
 - C. War has existed from the beginning of recorded history.
 - D. After the nations of the world form an authoritative world court, wars decrease dramatically.
 - E. Some countries are able to capture territories from other countries without fear of international consequences.
3. According to the passage, the formation of a national interest serves what function in the classical realist theory of war and peace?
 - A. It is a convenience used by theorists to describe national interests where none exist.
 - B. It provides the necessary justification for the classical realist view of a continuous global power struggle.
 - C. It is less important to the theory than is the idea of the nation as a unitary actor.
 - D. It is a description of the policies used by world leaders to convince their citizens that war is necessary.
 - E. It is the part of the theory that receives the most criticism from opponents.
4. The author most likely regards the classical realist theory of international relations with
 - A. general apathy
 - B. skeptical dismissal
 - C. veiled disapproval
 - D. glowing approval
 - E. qualified acceptance

After the end of World War II, a pervasive, but unfortunately fallacious, economic perspective took hold. Based on the United States' successful emergence from the Depression, the idea that war was good for an economy became fashionable. However, linking the

(5) United States economic recovery with its entry into World War II is a prime example of flawed economic thinking.

Supporters of the war benefits economy theory hold that a country at war is a country with a booming economy. Industry must produce weapons, supplies, food, and clothing for the troops. The increased

(10) production necessitates the hiring of more people, reducing unemployment. More employment means more money in the pockets of citizens, who are then likely to go out and spend that money, helping the retail sector of the economy. Retail shops experience an increase in business and may need to hire more workers, further reducing

(15) unemployment and adding to the economic momentum. While this scenario sounds good in theory, it does not accurately represent what truly happens in a war time economy.

In reality, the government can fund a war in a combination of three ways. It can raise taxes, cut spending on other areas, or increase

(20) the national debt. Each of these strategies has a negative impact on the economy. An increase in taxes takes money out of an individual's hands, leading to a reduction in consumer spending. Clearly, there is no net benefit to the economy in that case. Cutting spending in other areas has its costs as well, even if they are not as obvi-

(25) ous. Any reduction in government spending means the imposition of a greater burden on the benefactors of that government spending. Cutbacks in a particular program mean that the people who normally depend on that program now must spend more of their money to make up for the government cuts. This also takes money out

(30) of consumers' hands and leaves the economy depressed. Of course, a government could go into debt during the war, but such a strategy simply means that at some point in the future, taxes must be increased or spending decreased. Plus, the interest on the debt must be paid as well.

1. The "pervasive...economic perspective" mentioned in line 1 took hold because
 - A. observers took the appearance of one phenomenon with another to indicate that one caused the other
 - B. the U.S. would not have emerged from the Depression had it not entered World War II
 - C. the booming economy during wartime created thousands of jobs in the U.S.
 - D. most people are not trained to think in economic terms
 - E. economists confused an event that was necessary for an outcome to occur with one that is merely sufficient to bring about that outcome

2. Which of the following situations best mirrors the effect that cutting spending in government programs has, as detailed in the passage?
 - A. Government cutbacks on public works maintenance lead to a deterioration of roads, which creates more work for private construction firms.
 - B. A decrease in the federal education budget causes certain schools to close, which forces families to send their children to schools that are farther away.
 - C. A federal decrease in unemployment payments causes some individuals who would otherwise remain on unemployment to seek jobs.
 - D. Government cuts in housing subsidies results in fewer houses being built.
 - E. A reduction in the federal spending on food safety inspections leads to a rash of illnesses and an increase in the amount of money spent on medicine.
3. The passage implies which of the following about a government that funds a war by increasing the national debt?
 - A. It is no worse off than it would be funding a war by cutting spending or increasing taxes.
 - B. The initial costs it incurs are less than with the other two methods, but the future costs are greater.
 - C. It must increase taxes in order to pay off the interest on the debt.
 - D. If the government does not increase taxes or decrease spending, its economy will not recover.
 - E. It receives a net benefit to the economy greater than it would achieve with either of the other two methods.
4. The second paragraph of the passage performs which of the following functions?
 - A. It describes the common economic benefits of a wartime economy.
 - B. It provides the background information necessary to understand the information in the third paragraph.
 - C. It explains what happened to the United States' economy during World War II.
 - D. It presents a possible objection to the author's main thesis.
 - E. It helps explain why individuals might hold the viewpoint presented in the first paragraph.

- In the pantheon of great thinkers, Karl Marx certainly ranks as one of the most influential, even if it has been said that no thinker has ever had his words more badly misrepresented, by supporters and detractors alike, than Karl Marx. After Marx, no social
- (5) discipline was safe from an assault by Marxist thinkers. However, while the views and insights brought to bear by Marxists have helped to illuminate relationships in some disciplines, the Marxist worldview has been less successful when applied to certain human interactions.
- (10) For example, Marxist perspectives on global power relations have been assailed by many critics. Because Marx himself was especially concerned with economics, his followers have tended to elevate economic concerns, including the class struggle and control over the means of production, over all other areas. Thus, when analyzing the
- (15) balance of power on a global level, key concepts such as nationalism, security, and the state are virtually ignored by Marxist scholars. On a theoretical level, it may be useful to strip away these concepts to more closely examine certain other dynamics at work, but the Marxist view often fails to describe what actually happens in the real world. Con-
- (20) sider the strong nationalism evident in Poland, even after generations of one-party Communist rule.
- Also, the Marxist devotion to capitalism leads to simplifications on the world stage. Marxist political scientists typically refer to the “world capitalist system” when analyzing interactions among nations,
- (25) but this definition has less and less relevance when applied to the variety of economies at work in the world. Where do countries with transitional or developing economies such as China, Russia, and North Korea fit into this schema? Ultimately, a Marxist view of global interactions sacrifices a great many crucial concepts at the altar of one
- (30) overarching economic perspective. Some critics have likened such a view to an analysis of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* that neglects to discuss the protagonist and his motivations.

1. The passage suggests which of the following about Karl Marx?
 - A. Marx has had more influence on more disciplines than has any other thinker.
 - B. He focused too much of his efforts on economic issues.
 - C. Some believe the meaning of his work has been distorted to support a variety of views.
 - D. Marx launched an assault on the social sciences.
 - E. Marx’s views have been less than successful in describing economic relationships.

2. The author of the passage most probably discusses Poland in order to
 - A. refute an argument about the viability of Communism as an economic system
 - B. highlight an example of a country in which Communism has failed to take hold
 - C. demonstrate how theoretical descriptions of nationalism conform to real world examples
 - D. provide an illustration of a deficiency in the viewpoint held by certain scholars
 - E. prove that Marxist scholars have been unable to accurately describe the real world
3. The passage suggests that the author would be most likely to agree with which of the following statements?
 - A. Global power relations are too complex to be effectively explained in terms of a single variable.
 - B. The Marxist view of global relations should be abandoned because of its failures to accurately describe the world.
 - C. The economies of China, Russia, and Korea will eventually transition to fully fledged capitalism.
 - D. Marx's followers have misrepresented his work in an effort to apply his economic ideas to a global setting.
 - E. Any view of global relationships must include concepts of nationalism, security, and the state in order to accurately describe the world.
4. As used in the passage, the phrase "world capitalist system" most likely refers to
 - A. an effort by capitalist countries to attempt to dominate world markets
 - B. a fully integrated global economy
 - C. a homogeneity among the economies of the countries of the world
 - D. a system that fails to take into account developing or transitional economies
 - E. a Marxist critique of the global class struggle

► Drill 2 – Timed

DIRECTIONS: Read each of the sample passages and answer the questions about them. This drill is timed so that you can find out where your comfort level lies. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

Currently the focus of research into artificial intelligence (AI) is on relatively limited applications, including guiding airplanes and missiles, understanding language, detecting credit card fraud, and diagnosing medical conditions from electrocardiograms. While these
(5) avenues certainly contain promise for commercial and industrial interests, the populace at large typically is more interested in a slightly less consequential application of AI. In 1997, Deep Blue, a chess playing computer program, defeated grand master Gary Kasparov in a tournament, marking the first time a computer was able to best a
(10) human world champion.

But these more “frivolous” applications of AI are actually valuable indicators of the state of technology. Computer engineers are constantly reviving and reinventing the programming algorithms in an effort to make computers think more like people do. And the
(15) exponential increases in processing and storage technology are allowing artificial intelligence researchers to greatly increase the power of AI programs while simultaneously reducing the size and computing needs of the machines. For example, the Deep Blue program required 256 specialized processors to analyze the millions
(20) and millions of combinations of moves. Each of these processors was about one hundred times faster than a standard home computer, which means Deep Blue was about 25,600 times faster than a 1997 personal computer.

Only five years later, in 2002, AI engineers unleashed a new chess
(25) playing program, Deep Fritz. Deep Fritz played Vladimir Kramnik, the highest ranked chess player in the world, to a draw, but this result was anything but a failure to the AI community. Whereas Deep Blue required 256 processors to achieve its victory, Deep Fritz had a mere eight. Deep Blue could analyze 200 million moves per second,
(30) but Deep Fritz could deal with only 2.5 million. Yet Deep Fritz’s chess playing abilities more closely resemble those of a person. Deep Blue was able to defeat Kasparov by brute strength alone, calculating millions of possible moves and counter moves. Deep Fritz played Kramnik to a draw by using advanced pattern recognition skills,
(35) which allowed it to be competitive despite considering fewer move combinations.

1. The main idea of the passage is that
 - A. computer chess programs will soon be able to defeat any human challenger
 - B. computer chess programs are now being designed to be more efficient and perform fewer calculations
 - C. certain applications of AI technology provide insight into advances in the field
 - D. the public pays too much attention to frivolous applications of AI technology
 - E. the Deep Fritz chess program is more successful than the Deep Blue program
2. According to the passage, the AI community did not view Deep Fritz's draw as a failure because
 - A. Kramnik was a higher ranked chess player than Kasparov and was thus harder to defeat
 - B. researchers did not expect Deep Fritz to win because it only had eight processors
 - C. Deep Fritz's performance suggested that programmers were approaching one of their goals
 - D. Deep Blue's victory had already proven that a computer could beat a grand champion in chess
 - E. human players had five years to adapt to competing against chess programs
3. The author implies that human chess players
 - A. will not lose to Deep Fritz
 - B. will soon be unable to defeat most computer chess programs
 - C. are not able to analyze possible move combinations when playing chess
 - D. rely on pattern recognition skills when playing chess
 - E. could potentially beat Deep Fritz but not Deep Blue
4. The primary purpose of the passage is to
 - A. contrast the abilities of two computer programs
 - B. encourage researchers to pursue more serious inquiries
 - C. detail the state of research in a particular field
 - D. compare human chess players to computer chess programs
 - E. challenge a long-held assumption about AI

- In response to the increasing environmental damage wrought by poachers, authorities placed a ban on ivory in the 1980s. Although the ban resulted in an initial decrease in the sale and trade of illegal ivory and a concurrent increase in the elephant population, more pressing
- (5) needs caused most Western nations to withdraw funding for poaching prevention programs. Without significant financial support, poorer countries were unable to effectively combat poachers. The resulting explosion in the ivory trade has seen prices increase to nearly 10 times the \$45 per pound price at the beginning of the decade.
- (10) Unfortunately, the countries with the worst poaching problems have also tended to be the ones least able to combat the problem due to unstable political systems, corruption, lack of comprehensive enforcement programs, or some combination of all these factors. One primary hindrance to better enforcement of the ivory ban came from
- (15) an inability to definitively identify the country of origin of illegal ivory. Countries used this uncertainty to avoid responsibility for curbing illegal poaching in their territories by attempting to blame other countries for the oversights in enforcement. Now, though, zoologists have perfected a new DNA identification system. First, scientists gathered
- (20) genetic data from the population of African elephants, an arduous effort that ultimately resulted in a detailed DNA-based map of the distribution of African elephants. Then, the researchers developed a method to extract DNA evidence from ivory, allowing them to match the ivory with elephant populations on the map. Zoologists hope this
- (25) new method will pinpoint the exact origin of poached ivory and force countries to accept their responsibility in enforcing the ban.

1. The passage suggests which of the following about the ivory ban?
- A. It has been mostly unsuccessful in reducing the trade of illegal ivory.
 - B. It will be successful now that the DNA-based map has been developed.
 - C. Western countries will increase their funding of the program now that countries are forced to take responsibility for the poaching occurring within their borders.
 - D. Western monetary support was a major factor in its success.
 - E. It will continue to be ineffective unless the problems of political corruption are solved.

2. The response of the countries with the worst poaching problems to the situation was most analogous to
 - A. a criminal who argues that it is not he but one of his accomplices who is guilty of a crime
 - B. a tax evader who uses deceptive accounting practices to hide her income from auditors
 - C. a white collar criminal who believes that his actions are not a crime because no one has been hurt
 - D. an embezzler who steals from her company by pilfering small amounts of money over a long period of time
 - E. a con artist who convinces his victim that it is in the victim's best interest to help him
3. The passage suggests which of the following about the DNA-based map created by zoologists?
 - A. The map is able to pinpoint the exact elephant from which poached ivory was obtained.
 - B. Its assemblage involved a great deal of work on the part of the researchers.
 - C. Its creation will force countries to accept responsibility for the ivory poached from within their borders.
 - D. It allows zoologists to keep track of the migration patterns of African elephants.
 - E. It must be updated constantly to account for changes in elephant populations.
4. The passage is chiefly concerned with
 - A. exposing the weaknesses of the ivory ban
 - B. criticizing countries for failing to accept responsibility for the proliferation of poachers
 - C. pleading with Western countries to reinstitute financing for the ivory ban
 - D. advocating a course of action for countries with poaching problems
 - E. detailing a way to overcome a problem that has lessened the effectiveness of the ivory ban

On the whole, the American population has very little taste for income redistribution as economic policy. Beginning in the 1930s, public opinion polls have rarely shown strong support for income redistribution; during times of economic hardship, the percentage of (5) Americans in favor of such a system has barely crested 50 percent. Similarly, Americans have been reluctant to press for a limit on the profits of big corporations, with less than a third of those polled in the 20 year span between 1950 and 1970 favoring such a policy.

Even during the Depression, the populace was reluctant to (10) embrace income redistribution as a solution to the country's woes. In 1939, over 60 percent of respondents indicated that the government should not increase taxes on the wealthy and an overwhelming majority—over 80 percent—rejected the idea of the government confiscating wealth. Clearly, the American spirit of Lockean liberalism (15) and rugged individualism runs deep. It appears that most people are content to trust income distribution to the private market.

Of course, while overall support for income distribution remains low on average, there are some significant differences in levels of support based on income levels. As expected, those in the lowest (20) income bracket demonstrate the strongest support for employment and income maintenance programs. However, contrary to expectations, these differences in support were not largest during the volatile economic times of the 1930s and 1940s. Rather, the documented differences in support based on income have been relatively stable over (25) time. On the whole, political scientists have noticed anywhere from a 22 percent to 34 percent difference between the opinions of those classified as “prosperous” and those classified as “poor” on the question of income redistribution.

1. The main point made by the passage is that
 - A. The American spirit of Lockean liberalism is primarily responsible for the population's rejection of income redistribution.
 - B. Despite some variations in support based on income levels, the American population on the whole views income redistribution policies with disfavor, even during times of economic hardship.
 - C. Although polls have indicated some variation in response level, on the whole, less than 50 percent of Americans support income redistribution.
 - D. Poll results on government income redistribution policies have remained stable over time, even during periods of economic hardship.
 - E. Income redistribution is not viewed as the solution to economic difficulties by the majority of American citizens.

2. The passage states that differences in support for governmental income redistribution policies
 - A. defied expectations by showing that those in lower income brackets had less support for these programs than those in higher income brackets
 - B. vary greatly depending the income level of respondents and the economic conditions at the time the poll is taken
 - C. are not, for the most part, significantly affected by outside influences
 - D. are not significantly different due to the American ideal of rugged individualism
 - E. are based solely on differences in the income levels of respondents
3. Which of the following can be inferred from the passage?
 - I. During the Depression, a smaller percentage of Americans supported raising taxes than supported government confiscation of wealth
 - II. Today, about a third of Americans support limits on corporate profits
 - III. Before 1930, a majority of Americans supported income distribution
 - A. none
 - B. I only
 - C. I and II only
 - D. I and III only
 - E. I, II, and III
4. An assumption underlying the author's assertion in the second paragraph is that
 - A. the private market is the best way to distribute income in an economy
 - B. Americans had never experienced economic hardships as severe as those experienced during the Great Depression
 - C. Lockean liberalism and rugged individualism entail a reliance on private markets for income distribution
 - D. the government had no intentions of confiscating property during the Great Depression
 - E. income redistribution would be insufficient to solve the country's economic woes during the Great Depression

Answers to Drill 1**Passage 1**

1. **Answer: B.** This is an inference question. Because the entire passage details the classical realist school of thought, your best bet is to start with the answers. Look at each answer choice and see if you can find support for it in the passage. Because this question asks you to find the choice realists would LEAST likely support, the answers with supporting evidence are the wrong answers. Choices A and D are supported by the passage because the second paragraph states that classical realists believe that every nation must take care of its own security needs and that war is a constant threat. Choice C is supported because the fourth paragraph discusses the formulation of a national interest. Choice E is okay as well because the second paragraph states that “alliances” are one way nations can address their security concerns. That leaves choice B as the correct answer. The third paragraph states that realists do not believe wars can be attributed to “flawed sociopolitical systems,” so trying to increase security by sending humanitarian aid would probably not be supported by classical realists.
2. **Answer: D.** This is an apply information question. In order to answer it, you must first go to the passage to understand the theory of conflict. This information is found in the second paragraph: “In the absence of any prevailing global authority, each nation is required to address its own security needs.” Next, you have to figure out which choice best supports this view. Choice A doesn’t do much. The classical realist school isn’t concerned with the actions of dictators. Choice B seems to hurt the theory. It states that there is a prevailing global authority and yet conflict continues. Choice C just states that war is a persistent problem, but it doesn’t address the causes of it, so this choice doesn’t necessarily support the theory. Choice D does support the theory because it shows that the presence of a global authority reduces war. Remember, the realist view argued that the lack of a global authority led to war, so the presence of a global authority should reduce war. That is what choice D states. Choice E doesn’t address the causes of war or the presence of a global authority.
3. **Answer: B.** This is a supporting idea question. Go back to the part of the passage that discusses “national interest.” The answer to this question is in the fourth paragraph, where the author states “Because classical realists see international relations as a continuing struggle for dominance, the nation can not be viewed as a collection of individuals with disparate wants, goals, and ideologies. The realist view requires the formulation of a national interest...” Thus, in order for the theory to work, there must be the idea of a national interest. This is what choice B states. Choices A and D are not supported. Choice C is not close enough, since there is no mention of relative importance. Choice E has a similar problem; the passage says it receives criticism, but doesn’t say “most.”
4. **Answer: E.** This is a tone question. Some tone questions require you to consider the passage as a whole, while some ask about a specific part. This is a more general tone question. The passage describes the classical realist view and the author ends by stating that the theory has had “successes” in describing relations in the world. Thus, the tone must be somewhat positive. That leaves only choices D and E as possibilities. Between the two, choice D is too strong. Passages on the GMAT rarely if ever will contain “glowing approval” for their topics.

Passage 2

1. **Answer: A.** This is a supporting idea question. The question tells you exactly where to look to find the answer: the first few lines of the passage. The passage states “Based on the United States’ successful emergence from the Depression, the idea that war was good for an economy became fashionable. However, linking the United States economic recovery with its entry into World War II is a prime example of flawed economic thinking.” This means that people incorrectly believed that entrance into war and economic recovery were linked. Choice A states this. Choices B, D, and E are not stated at all in the passage. Choice C quotes the wrong part of the passage and doesn’t answer the question.
2. **Answer: E.** This is an apply information question. You have to see what the passage says about cutting spending, then match that information with one of the answers. According to the passage, “Cutbacks in a particular program mean that the people who normally depend on that program now must spend more of their money to make up for the government cuts.” Answer choice E matches this. Cutbacks in food safety inspection lead to illnesses and people have to spend money they would otherwise not have to in order to compensate. Choice A seems to indicate private construction companies would benefit from the cutbacks, which is not what the passage says. Choice B is close, but it doesn’t say that sending the children to a different school costs people more money. Choice C also seems to detail a potential benefit. Choice D says fewer houses are built but it doesn’t indicate how people have to spend more money to compensate.
3. **Answer: B.** This is an inference question. You can find the answer in the final paragraph, where the author says “Of course, a government could go into debt during the war, but such a strategy simply means that at some point in the future, taxes must be increased or spending decreased. Plus, the interest on the debt must be paid as well.” Choice A is the opposite of what the passage states—going into debt means not only will the government have to deal with the problems associated with increasing taxes or cutting spending, but it must also pay the interest on the debt. Choice B is a better answer. In the short term, the government doesn’t have the problems associated with the other two solutions, but must face those problems, plus interest payments, in the future. Choice C goes too far because it is not clear that a government “must” increase taxes. The passage says spending could be decreased. Choice D makes an extreme and unsupported claim because the author doesn’t say the economy “will not recover” unless certain actions are taken. Choice E is similar to A and is incorrect based on the information in the passage.
4. **Answer: E.** This is a logical structure question. The second paragraph describes why people might believe war is good for an economy. Choice A doesn’t work because the paragraph doesn’t describes what happens during a war, it describe what happens in “theory.” Choice B is incorrect because the information is not “necessary” to understand the third paragraph. Choice C is no good because the paragraph isn’t even about the US economy. Choice D doesn’t work because the author isn’t describing an objection; he is describing what people believe happens during war.

Passage 3

1. **Answer: C.** This is an inference question. The answer is in the first paragraph, where the author discusses Marx. The author says “it has been said that no thinker has ever had his words more badly misrepresented, by supporters and detractors alike, than Karl Marx.” This supports choice C. Choice A is a trap that goes too far. There is a difference between saying someone is “one of the most influential” and “the most influential.” Choice B is not a valid inference. Nothing in the passage suggests Marx spent “too much” time on economics, just that he was “especially concerned” with it. Choice D is incorrect because the passage states that “Marx’s followers” launched an assault, not Marx. Choice E uses some of the right words, but gets the meaning wrong. Marx’s views have been less than successful in describing global relations, not economics.
2. **Answer: D.** This is a logical structure question. Why, it asks, does the author mention Poland? The answer lies in these lines: “On a theoretical level, it may be useful to strip away these concepts to more closely examine certain other dynamics at work, but the Marxist view often fails to describe what actually happens in the real world. Consider the strong nationalism evident in Poland, even after generations of one party Communist rule.” Poland is an example of how the Marxist view “fails to describe what actually happens in the real world,” which is what choice D says. Choices A and B are wrong because the purpose is not to discuss Communism. Choice C is the opposite of what the passage says. Choice E goes too far because the example doesn’t necessarily prove anything.
3. **Answer: A.** This is an inference question. Use the answer choices to guide your reading. The passage mentions the “simplifications” of the Marxist view and says “Ultimately, a Marxist view of global interactions sacrifices a great many crucial concepts at the altar of one overarching economic perspective.” This supports choice A. Choices B and E both go too far; the author may not agree with the Marxist view but never says it should be abandoned. And while the passage calls nationalism, security, and the state “key concepts,” the passage doesn’t say they “must” be included. There is no support for choice C because the author doesn’t discuss what will happen in the future. Choice D uses a lot of words from the passage but the meaning is incorrect.
4. **Answer: C.** This is a supporting idea question. The phrase is used in the final paragraph. The author says the world capitalist system “has less and less relevance when applied to the variety of economies at work in the world.” So the phrase must apply to a system that does not have a lot of variety. Choice C matches this description. Choices A and B are not supported by the passage. The Marxist scholars have failed to account for transitional economies, not the system itself, so choice D is a clever trap answer. Choice E quotes the wrong part of the passage and is not supported by the passage.

Answers to Drill 2**Passage 1**

1. **Answer: C.** This is a main idea question. The first paragraph introduces the topic, which is AI applications. The second paragraph indicates that the “frivolous” chess programs provide a marker of the current state of AI technology. The final paragraph supports this by giving technical details of a recent AI application. Choice C is the best match for the passage. The other answer choices don’t go far enough; they detail parts of the passage but not its entire scope.
2. **Answer: C.** This is a supporting idea question. The answer is primarily in the third paragraph, in which the author states “But Deep Fritz’s chess playing abilities more closely resemble those of a person.” One of the goals of the AI researchers, as stated in the second paragraph, is to “make computers think more like people do,” so Deep Fritz’s performance was indicative of a more human-like approach. Choice A is not stated in the paragraph, while choice B is a good example of a choice with the right words but with the wrong meaning. Nothing in the passage supports choice D or choice E.
3. **Answer: D.** This is an inference question. In order to answer this question, you need to find the part of the passage that discusses how human chess players play. While this information is not stated directly, the third paragraph is the key. The passage compares Deep Blue to Deep Fritz and states that Deep Fritz plays chess more like a human does. While Deep Blue uses its tremendous calculating ability, Deep Fritz relies on “advanced pattern recognition skills.” If Deep Fritz uses these abilities and plays like a person does, then the inference is that human chess players use pattern recognition, as choice D states. Choice A is not implied by the passage; it might be true but it is not an inference. Choice B goes too far because the passage only talks about two programs, not “most” chess programs. Choice C is not supported by the passage, nor is choice E—all you know for sure is that one person tied Deep Fritz and one person lost to Deep Blue, but you can’t say in general how human chess players will perform.
4. **Answer: C.** This is a main idea question. To answer a primary purpose question, think about why the author would write a particular passage. This passage is designed to explain how chess programs reveal the state of AI technology. Choice C best captures this purpose. Choice A does not go far enough. The chess programs are examples of a larger point about AI—they are not the primary purpose. Choice B is off base because the focus isn’t on what researchers should pursue. Choice D is similar to choice A in that it focuses on a detail but misses the larger point. There is no long-held assumption mentioned, so choice E is out of scope.

Passage 2

1. **Answer: D.** This is an inference question. Look for the answer in the beginning of the passage, where the ivory ban is first introduced. The passage states “Although the ban resulted in an initial decrease in the sale and trade of illegal ivory and a concurrent increase in the elephant population, more pressing needs caused most Western nations to withdraw funding for poaching prevention programs. Without significant financial support, poorer countries were unable to effectively combat poachers.” Thus, choice D is best. Choice A goes too far because the passage states that the ban was successful at first. Choice B isn’t necessarily true, so it cannot be an inference. Choice C is not stated or implied; there is no prediction of what Western countries will do. Choice E goes beyond the scope of the passage—no mention of future outcomes is discussed.
2. **Answer: A.** This is an apply information question. The beginning of the second paragraph contains the relevant information. According to the author, “Countries used this uncertainty to avoid responsibility for curbing illegal poaching in their territories by attempting to blame other countries for the oversights in enforcement.” Now, find the answer that shows an attempt to shift blame. Only choice A matches.
3. **Answer: B.** This is an inference question. Read the lines about the DNA-based map in the second half of the final paragraph. It states “First, scientists gathered genetic data from the population of African elephants, an arduous effort that ultimately resulted in a detailed DNA-based map of the distribution of African elephants.” The author uses the word “arduous” to describe the effort, so choice B is a valid inference. Choice A goes too far because the map allows the researchers to track populations, but not individual elephants. Choice C is not necessarily true. Choice D and E might be true but are not supported by information in the passage.
4. **Answer: E.** This is a main idea question. The first part of the passage explains why the ivory ban has become less effective, while the second part shows that there is a potential solution to the problems with the ban. Choice E states this. Choice A only discusses half of the passage, so it doesn’t go far enough. The primary point is not to criticize countries, so choice B is incorrect. Funding issues are not the main purpose, making choice C also incorrect. Choice D has the wrong tone because the author is simply describing the plan, not “advocating” it.

Passage 3

1. **Answer: B.** This is a main idea question. The big idea in the first paragraph is that Americans don’t support income redistribution. The second paragraph adds that this view held even during the Great Depression, while the third paragraph indicates that there is some difference in views based on income level, but these differences are relatively stable. Choice A is not the main idea because the author does not assert that Lockean liberalism is the primary cause. Choice C says that polls indicate “variation in response level,” but the passage mentions variation in support level. Choice D only mentions one aspect of the passage. Choice E is also slightly too narrow.

2. **Answer: C.** This is a supporting idea question. The question asks about “differences” in support, so look in the last paragraph. The author states “However, contrary to expectations, these differences in support were not largest during the volatile economic times of the 1930s and 1940s. Rather, the documented differences in support based on income have been relatively stable over time.” If the differences are stable over time, they are not significantly affected by outside influences, making choice C correct. Choice A is wrong because the differences were contrary to expectations because they did not vary with the economic conditions, not because of income levels. Choice B is the opposite of what the passage says. Choice D quotes the wrong part of the passage and makes an assertion that is not stated in the passage. Choice E is too strong because it states that differences are based “solely” on income.
3. **Answer: A.** This is an inference question. None of the statements are true, although each of them is cleverly worded to make you believe they are. The first statement reverses the relationship in the passage. During the Depression, around 60 percent of the people were against tax increases, which means about 40 percent supported them or had no opinion, while 80 percent were opposed to government confiscation of property, meaning 20 percent supported it or had no opinion. Thus, a larger percentage supported raising taxes. The passage only gives data from 1950 to 1970 on corporate profits, so you can’t infer what people think today. And no information is provided on opinions previous to 1930. Thus, none of the statements can be properly inferred.
4. **Answer: C.** This is an apply information question. An assumption is necessary to tie an argument together. In the second paragraph, the author holds that “the American spirit of Lockean liberalism and rugged individualism runs deep. It appears that most people are content to trust income distribution to the private market.” If the author is arguing that most people trust the market because of their spirit of Lockean liberalism and rugged individualism, then the assumption must be choice C, that there is a connection between the two. The other choices are not relevant to the author’s argument.

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CHAPTER 6

CRITICAL REASONING

In Chapter 4, you learned

- The basic structure of critical reasoning questions in the verbal portion of the GMAT
- The structure of arguments on the GMAT

In the previous chapter, you learned how to read analytically. You should know how to break down a reading passage into its essential components and figure out exactly what the author is trying to say (the main idea), why the author is saying it (the purpose), and how the author went about saying it (the structure). The analytical reading process is focused on comprehension—the goal is to figure out what information the author is conveying. Now, you are ready to look at another kind of GMAT reading task: Critical Reasoning.

Unlike Reading Comprehension, which only requires you to understand the words the author writes, Critical Reasoning requires you to not only understand the author's point, but also to explore and evaluate the logical consistency of what the author states. Thus, it is a two-step process. On the GMAT, you'll sometimes be asked to apply critical reasoning skills to the reading comprehension passages you encounter, but more often, critical reasoning skills are tested on arguments.

WHAT IS AN ARGUMENT?

On the GMAT, an argument is not a screaming match between two or more people. Instead, it is a set of statements consisting of a **conclusion**, or main point, and **premises**, or supporting facts. A simple argument looks something like this:

Horacio believes that investing in *McGraw-Hill's Conquering GMAT Verbal and Writing* is a good idea. Horacio believes this because on average, students who prepare for the GMAT score higher on the test than students who do not.

In order to work with arguments on the GMAT, you need to first break them down into their component pieces: conclusion and premises.

The Conclusion

The conclusion is the most important part of the argument. Simply put, the conclusion is why the argument exists. A conclusion is a viewpoint or opinion that the argument is structured to support. Conclusions come in many different forms, but in general, a good way to think about conclusions is that they are:

- An **opinion** about the world, as in “Joe believes 8 hours of sleep a night is optimal.”
- An **interpretation** of a study or set of facts. For example, “From the study, researchers conclude that drinking diet soda is no healthier than drinking regular soda.”
- A **prescription** for a future course of action, such as “In order to maximize profits, Conway Inc. should expand into the widget market.”

In the sample argument, the conclusion is “...investing in *McGraw-Hill’s Conquering GMAT Verbal and Writing* is a good idea.” This statement is Horacio’s opinion about the situation; other people are free to disagree with this statement. Fortunately, the argument contains a fact that may convince these doubters that Horacio’s opinion is correct. This fact is called a premise.

The Premise

A famous politician once said “Everyone is entitled to his own opinions, but not his own facts.” Arguments use facts, which are, for the purposes of the GMAT, indisputable, to support conclusions, which as previously stated, are matters of opinion. The premise of a GMAT argument usually appears in the form of:

- A **fact**, such as “acid rain occurs when sulfur dioxides and nitrogen oxides are absorbed by rain clouds.”
- A **poll** or **study**. For example, “Studies show that 33 percent of respondents prefer Brand X to all other brands.”
- A **reason** or **justification**, as in “Most people seek to reduce stress and maximize pleasure.”

In Horacio’s argument, the premise is “on average, students who prepare for the GMAT score higher on the test than students who do not.” This is a fact, presumably arrived at by a study or survey of test takers. It is not subject to dispute and must be taken at face value.

► **Drill 1**

DIRECTIONS: Analyze the following arguments. Underline the conclusion and premise(s) in each of them. Answers are at the end of this chapter.

1. The music industry's claim that illegal downloads of music cost it tens of millions of dollars is greatly exaggerated. Most of the people who illegally download music are sampling tracks from compact discs that they later plan to purchase.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

2. The mayor of Capitol City argues that a new proposal to charge motorists who drive into the downtown area will reduce congestion. A similar program instituted in Newton resulted in a 27 percent decrease in the number of cars on the road during rush hour.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

3. After retirement, many former members of Congress take lucrative jobs in the lobbying industry to exploit their extensive government contacts. A new law proposed by the Senate would forbid former legislators from taking jobs in the lobbying industry for one year after they leave Congress. However, many analysts contend that the measure will do little to end the revolving door system that exists between government and the lobbying industry.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

4. Five years ago, education professionals introduced “Baby Geniuses,” a line of instructional videos aimed at toddlers, with the idea that the videos would positively affect the intellectual development of the children who watched them. However, after studying the academic performance of the children who viewed the videos regularly, researchers found that children who used the videos had a smaller vocabulary than those who did not. The researchers concluded that the “Baby Genius” videos do not have a positive effect on academic development.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

5. Journalist: The country needs a nationwide shield law to protect journalists from court imposed demands to reveal their sources. Without such a law, whistleblowers are less likely to bring their accusations to journalists, which compromises the public's right to know.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

6. Critics of "paranormal" phenomena such as extra sensory perception (ESP) and telekinesis are quick to dismiss documented reports of such activity as hoaxes or scandals. However, there is at least one good reason to believe that ESP and other paranormal abilities exist; to date, no scientific study has ever been able to prove that these phenomena do not exist.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

7. **Nutritionist:** Weight gain and weight loss are simple mathematical calculations. Foods contain calories, which are a measure of the energy stored in the food. If you take in more calories than you expend, you'll gain weight. Similarly, using more energy than you've acquired through eating results in weight loss. Thus, the best way to lose weight is not necessarily to cut certain foods out of your diet; instead, increase your activity levels to burn more of the calories you bring in.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

8. Before 1974, a baseball pitcher who seriously injured the ligament in his throwing arm was unlikely to ever return to his former ability, and many never pitched again. But in 1974, a new surgery was developed that allowed doctors to take a ligament from another part of the body and use it to replace the damaged arm ligament. Pitchers who undergo this surgery oftentimes return to the field throwing harder than they did before the surgery. For this reason, the surgery should be considered an artificial performance enhancement and be banned from the sport.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

9. Astronomers have discovered giant clouds of plasma in space that demonstrate some remarkable capabilities. These clouds form into twisted, helix-like shapes, divide into smaller clouds, and even “evolve” into new shapes. In fact, some argue that these clouds should be considered a form of inorganic life.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

10. Consumer Advocate: Customer service in the airline industry is at an all time low. Although ticket sales are at a 10-year high, more flights are being delayed or cancelled than ever before, leading to legions of frustrated customers. The airline industry will not address these issues as long as it continues to sell tickets at a record pace. So the only solution to these issues is a boycott of air travel.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Analysis

Some arguments are simple in their structure. They have nothing more than a premise and a conclusion. Others may have more than one premise or contain background information that does not directly support the conclusion. On the GMAT, it is important to filter out this non-essential information. One good strategy when analyzing arguments is to try to find the conclusion first. As you've seen, the conclusion is a debatable point, usually containing an opinion or words like "should," "will," or "must." Once you've found the conclusion, ask yourself what reasoning or evidence the argument provides to support this assertion. The answer to that question is the premise. Most of the time the premise is a simple factual statement, such as a statistic, a study, or a survey. Other times, the premise is a reason or justification that is stated as if it were a fact, as in question 10 of Drill 1.

The Assumption

So far, you have looked at the parts of an argument, but haven't done much in the way of critically evaluating these arguments. While it would be nice if you could simply live and let live and allow everyone to hold their opinions without challenge, that sort of attitude won't cut it in the business world or on the GMAT. As previously mentioned, conclusions are debatable points, but engaging in a protracted back and forth of "I'm right and you're wrong," won't have much value (nor will it impress your business school professors or colleagues). And premises are facts, so you can't really dispute them. So instead of arguing about the conclusion or disputing the premises, you need to critique the link between the conclusion and the premise. This missing link is called the assumption and every argument on the GMAT has one (or more).

Consider this argument:

All dogs are mammals. Billy is a dog. Therefore, Billy is a mammal.

No matter how contrary of a person you are, you have to admit that there's no real way to dispute this conclusion. The argument is airtight because the link between the conclusion and the premise is perfect; there are no gaps in the argument to dispute. But arguments on the GMAT are not this perfect. Instead, they contain a gap in the reasoning. Look at this argument:

All dogs are mammals. Billy is a mammal. Therefore, Billy is a dog.

Is this argument indisputable? Definitely not. The link between the conclusion and the premise is not perfect—there is a gap in the logic. Stating that all dogs are mammals is not the same as saying all mammals are dogs. However, the conclusion assumes that to be the case. If you accept the

assumption, then you would accept the validity of the argument. If you reject the assumption, then you must reject the conclusion.

Finding Assumptions

To find an argument's assumptions, you must first break the argument down into its conclusion and premise. After you do that, you want to look for the gap or missing link in the argument. For example:

Jollyland Toys recently announced a recall of over 10 million toys after discovering that the product in question was covered with lead paint. Health experts warned that children playing with the toy could experience nerve damage and even mental impairment.

Premise: The toys were covered in lead paint.

Conclusion: Children playing with the toy could experience nerve damage and mental impairment.

What is the argument assuming about the link between the premise and the conclusion? It must be that lead paint causes nerve damage and mental impairment. Notice that nowhere in the argument is this link stated as a fact. Thus, when evaluating the argument, you must consider how convincing you find this assumption. Assumptions on the GMAT generally take the form of:

- A **shift** in the terms or concepts used in the premise and in the conclusion. For example, the premise might state that “people who take Hartrax have fewer heart attacks than those who don’t,” but the conclusion might state “therefore, taking Hartrax keeps you healthy.” There is a shift from “fewer heart attacks” to “healthy.” An assumption is necessary to link these two ideas together.
- A **similarity** between the ideas, terms, and concepts in the premise and those in the conclusion. If the premise states that “Forty percent of respondents to a study indicated a preference for Zonix cell phones” and the conclusion maintains that “forty percent of the people nationwide prefer Zonix,” the argument is assuming a similarity between the people in the study and the population at large.
- A **causal connection** between the premise and the conclusion. An argument that has a premise of “people who eat breakfast in the morning are three times more likely to take naps in the afternoon,” and a conclusion of “therefore, eating breakfast makes one tired,” is assuming that eating causes tiredness.

► **Drill 2**

DIRECTIONS: Look back at the arguments you dissected in Drill 1 and think of their assumptions. Answers are at the end of this chapter.

1. The music industry’s claim that illegal downloads of music cost it tens of millions of dollars is greatly exaggerated. Most of the people who illegally download music are sampling tracks from compact discs that they later plan to purchase.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

2. The mayor of Capitol City argues that a new proposal to charge motorists who drive into the downtown area will reduce congestion. A similar program instituted in Newton resulted in a 27 percent decrease in the number of cars on the road during rush hour.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

3. After retirement, many former members of Congress take lucrative jobs in the lobbying industry to exploit their extensive government contacts. A new law proposed by the Senate would forbid former legislators from taking jobs in the lobbying industry for one year after they leave Congress. However, many analysts contend that the measure will do little to end the revolving door system that exists between government and the lobbying industry.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

4. Five years ago, education professionals introduced “Baby Geniuses,” a line of instructional videos aimed at toddlers, with the idea that the videos would positively affect the intellectual development of the children who watched them. However, after studying the academic performance of the children who viewed the videos regularly, researchers found that children who used the videos had a smaller vocabulary than those who did not. The researchers concluded that the “Baby Genius” videos do not have a positive effect on academic development.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

5. Journalist: The country needs a nationwide shield law to protect journalists from court imposed demands to reveal their sources. Without such a law, whistleblowers are less likely to bring their accusations to journalists, which compromises the public’s right to know.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

6. Critics of “paranormal” phenomena such as extra sensory perception (ESP) and telekinesis are quick to dismiss documented reports of such activity as hoaxes or scandals. However, there is at least one good reason to believe that ESP and other paranormal abilities exist; to date, no scientific study has ever been able to prove that these phenomena do not exist.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

7. Nutritionist: Weight gain and weight loss are simple mathematical calculations. Foods contain calories, which are a measure of the energy stored in the food. If you take in more calories than you expend, you’ll gain weight. Similarly, using more energy than you’ve acquired through eating results in weight loss. Thus, the best way to lose weight is not necessarily to cut certain foods out of your diet; instead, increase your activity levels to burn more of the calories you bring in.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

8. Before 1974, a baseball pitcher who seriously injured the ligament in his throwing arm was unlikely to ever return to his former ability, and many never pitched again. But in 1974, a new surgery was developed that allowed doctors to take a ligament from another part of the body and use it to replace the damaged arm ligament. Pitchers who undergo this surgery oftentimes return to the field throwing harder than they did before the surgery. For this reason, the surgery should be considered an artificial performance enhancement and be banned from the sport.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

9. Astronomers have discovered giant clouds of plasma in space that demonstrate some remarkable capabilities. These clouds form into twisted, helix-like shapes, divide into smaller clouds, and even “evolve” into new shapes. In fact, some argue that these clouds should be considered a form of inorganic life.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

10. **Consumer Advocate:** Customer service in the airline industry is at an all time low. Although ticket sales are at a 10-year high, more flights are being delayed or cancelled than ever before, leading to legions of frustrated customers. The airline industry will not address these issues as long as it continues to sell tickets at a record pace. So the only solution to these issues is a boycott of air travel.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

Analysis

In many cases, assumptions are nothing more than explicit links between the premise and the conclusion. You don't have to strain your brain thinking of elaborate logical connections between the premise and the conclusion. And you've also probably noticed that in some cases, the assumptions in an argument are pretty strong. That's fine; it just indicates that the argument is fairly sound. When you learn how to actually attack questions on the GMAT, you'll see how attacking or supporting the assumption affects the argument.

COMMON ARGUMENT PATTERNS

Many of the arguments on the GMAT follow quite predictable patterns. Learn to recognize these patterns and you'll have an easier time analyzing arguments and figuring out the best answer on the test. The four most common argument patterns on the GMAT are:

- **Causal Arguments:** These arguments seek to establish that because two things are correlated, one must cause the other.
- **Sampling Arguments:** In a sampling argument, a conclusion is reached about a large population on the basis of a limited sample.
- **Analogy Arguments:** An analogy is a comparison. An analogy argument uses a comparison between two things to reach its conclusion.
- **Numbers Arguments:** As the old saying goes, there are lies, damn lies, and statistics. Numbers arguments use percents, averages, proportions, ratios, and other numbers to reach their conclusions.

Here's a breakdown of how the above arguments look in abstract terms:

CAUSAL ARGUMENTS

A causal argument takes the following form:

Premise: The premise states that factors x and y occur together or are correlated with each other.

Conclusion: The conclusion states that because x and y are correlated, one causes the other to occur or that one factor depends on the other.

Assumption: Causal arguments assume that there is a causal relationship between the factors, that there are no other causes, and that the cause and effect relationship is not reversed, i.e., the argument states that x causes y when in fact y causes x .

For example:

Carolyn took an aspirin for her headache and, though her headache went away, her stomach began to ache. Clearly, the aspirin gave her a stomachache.

For this argument, the premises are (1) Carolyn had a headache (2) Carolyn took an aspirin (3) Carolyn got a stomachache. The conclusion is that the aspirin caused the stomachache. The argument assumes that this was not just a coincidence and that there was no other cause for her stomachache. Perhaps Carolyn washed down the aspirin with orange juice and the citric acid is what upset her stomach...

■ SAMPLING ARGUMENTS

Here's a sampling argument, in general terms:

Premise: A survey or sample is taken from a subpopulation.

Conclusion: The results of the survey or sample are extended to the population as a whole.

Assumption: Sampling arguments assume that the sample is representative. That is, the sample accurately mirrors the larger population.

For example:

A poll of Ryan's class revealed that the students overwhelmingly preferred chocolate to other flavors of ice cream. Chocolate must be the most popular flavor in the school.

For this argument, the premise is that Ryan's class prefers chocolate ice cream. The conclusion is that chocolate is the most popular flavor in the school. The argument assumes that Ryan's class is a representative sample of the entire school. Perhaps Ryan's class has only 10 students in a vanilla-loving school of 300...

■ ANALOGY ARGUMENTS

Analogy arguments follow this basic format:

Premise: A fact or statement is given about x .

Conclusion: The fact about x is used to draw a conclusion about y .

Assumption: x and y are similar enough to draw a valid comparison; what is true of x is also true of y .

For example:

Britt had weight-loss surgery and has lost 100 pounds. Andy should have the surgery too since he wants to lose weight.

For this argument, the premises are (1) Britt had weight-loss surgery and lost 100 pounds (2) Andy wants to lose weight. The conclusion is that Andy should have the surgery too. The argument assumes that what worked for Britt will work for Andy. Perhaps Andy is in poor health and would not even survive the surgery...

■ NUMBERS ARGUMENTS

This is what a numbers argument looks like:

Premise: The premise gives an average, ratio, percent, or other numerical relationship about a population.

Conclusion: The conclusion uses the statistic in the premise to make a conclusion about the total population in question.

Assumption: The statistics actually indicate the relationship the conclusion is maintaining.

For example:

Last year only 60 percent of the students at Preston College were enrolled in a math class. This year, 80 percent are enrolled in a math class. Clearly, math classes are more popular this year.

For this argument, the premises are (1) last year 60 percent were enrolled in math, (2) this year 80 percent are enrolled in math. The conclusion is that math classes are more popular this year. The argument assumes that the percentages accurately reflect the actual numbers. Perhaps there are fewer total students this year. If there were 800 total students last year (60 percent of 800 = 480 enrolled in math) and this year there are only 600 total students, then 80 percent of 600 is still 480 enrolled in math!

► **Drill 3**

DIRECTIONS: Break the following arguments down into conclusion, premises, and assumptions and look for common argument patterns. Answers are at the end of this chapter.

1. In the Middle Ages, the average height of a European male was around five feet eight inches. Today, the average height of a European male is around five feet ten inches, a marginal increase. So there must be a greater number of people taller than five foot eight in Europe today than there was in the Middle Ages.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

Argument type: _____

2. Last year, Sussex County spent over \$30 million on major renovations and improvements to its water and sewage treatment plant. Health officials reported a marked decrease in the presence of a certain type of intestinal parasite among the citizens of Sussex County. Thus, it must be that improvements in water treatment have helped to eradicate the parasite.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

Argument type: _____

3. Art Critic: I object to the museum’s display of these cabinets as works of art. Although they are elaborately decorated, they are simply pieces of furniture. The chairs and tables in my house are not considered art, so neither should these cabinets be treated as such.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

Argument type: _____

4. In a recent experiment, two groups of test subjects were asked to administer electric shocks to volunteers. Although the shocks were harmless, both groups were told the volunteer would be harmed by the shock. One of the test groups was ordered to administer the shocks by a person posing as a scientist, while the other group was ordered to deliver the shocks by a researcher posing as a nonscientist. The group ordered to administer the shock by the scientist was four times more likely to follow the orders than was the other group. This indicates that people are more likely to respond to an authority figure, even when the authority figure orders them to engage in an action that may harm others.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

Argument type: _____

5. About 58,000 American troops were killed during the entire US involvement in the Vietnam War, a period of about 10 years. However, from 1968 to 1972, the murder rate in the US was about 8.0 per 100,000 people. With a population of about 210 million, there were almost 80,000 murders in the US during those four years. Thus, it could be argued that it was just as dangerous to live in the US as it was to serve in Vietnam.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

Argument type: _____

6. Researchers trained six adult chimpanzees to use a treadmill. Three of the chimpanzees were trained to use the treadmills on all four legs, while the other three were taught to use the treadmills by standing upright. The researchers measured the amount of energy expended by the chimps as they used the treadmills. The primates that walked upright on two legs conserved more energy than the ones that walked on all fours. Researchers concluded that early human ancestors developed a bipedal gait to save energy as well.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

Argument type: _____

7. **Politician:** The economy is stagnant, and consumer spending is down. In order to stimulate the economy and increase consumer spending, we must lower income tax rates, which will put more money into the hands of consumers.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

Argument type: _____

8. Paleontologists have recently unearthed a new bird fossil, *Confuciusornis*. This fossil dates from about 153 million years ago and is notable because it is the first bird fossil that has a beak instead of teeth. From this find, paleontologists conclude that all bird species older than 160 million years had teeth.

Premise: _____

Conclusion: _____

Assumption: _____

Argument type: _____

Answers to Drill 1

1. **Premise:** Most of the people who illegally download music are sampling tracks from compact discs that they later plan to purchase.

Conclusion: The music industry's claim that illegal downloads of music cost it tens of millions of dollars is greatly exaggerated.

2. **Premise:** A similar program instituted in Newton resulted in a 27 percent decrease in the number of cars on the road during rush hour.

Conclusion: The new proposal to charge motorists who drive into the downtown area will reduce congestion.

3. **Premise:** (1) After retirement, many former members of Congress take lucrative jobs in the lobbying industry to exploit their extensive government contacts. (2) A new law proposed by the Senate would forbid former legislators from taking jobs in the lobbying industry for one year after they leave Congress.

Conclusion: The measure will do little to end the revolving door system that exists between government and the lobbying industry.

4. **Premise:** Researchers found that children who used the videos had a smaller vocabulary than those who did not.

Conclusion: The researchers concluded that the "Baby Genius" videos do not have a positive effect on academic development.

5. **Premise:** Without such a law, whistleblowers are less likely to bring their accusations to journalists, which compromises the public's right to know.

Conclusion: The country needs a nationwide shield law to protect journalists from court imposed demands to reveal their sources.

6. **Premise:** No scientific study has ever been able to prove that these phenomena do not exist.

Conclusion: There is at least one good reason to believe that ESP and other paranormal abilities exist.

7. **Premise:** (1) If you take in more calories than you expend, you'll gain weight. (2) Similarly, using more energy than you've acquired through eating results in weight loss.

Conclusion: The best way to lose weight is not necessarily to cut certain foods out of your diet; instead, increase your activity levels to burn more of the calories you bring in.

8. **Premise:** Pitchers who undergo this surgery oftentimes return to the field throwing harder than they did before the surgery.

Conclusion: The surgery should be considered an artificial performance enhancement and be banned from the sport.

9. **Premise:** These clouds form into twisted, helix-like shapes, divide into smaller clouds, and even "evolve" into new shapes.

Conclusion: These clouds should be considered a form of inorganic life.

10. **Premise:** The airline industry will not address these issues as long as it continues to sell tickets at a record pace.

Conclusion: The only solution to these issues is a boycott of air travel.

Answers to Drill 2

1. **Premise:** Most of the people who illegally download music are sampling tracks from compact discs that they later plan to purchase.

Conclusion: The music industry's claim that illegal downloads of music cost it tens of millions of dollars is greatly exaggerated.

Assumption: Illegal downloads by people who plan on buying compact discs do not cost the music industry tens of millions of dollars.

2. **Premise:** A similar program instituted in Newton resulted in a 27 percent decrease in the number of cars on the road during rush hour.

Conclusion: The new proposal to charge motorists who drive into the downtown area will reduce congestion.

Assumption: A plan that reduces congestion in Newton will have similar results in Capitol City.

3. **Premise:** (1) After retirement, many former members of Congress take lucrative jobs in the lobbying industry to exploit their extensive government contacts. (2) A new law proposed by the Senate would forbid former legislators from taking jobs in the lobbying industry for one year after they leave Congress.

Conclusion: The measure will do little to end the revolving door system that exists between government and the lobbying industry.

Assumption: A one year prohibition on lobbying will not deter congressmen from taking jobs in the lobbying industry.

4. **Premise:** Researchers found that children who used the videos had a smaller vocabulary than those who did not.

Conclusion: The researchers concluded that the "Baby Genius" videos do not have a positive effect on academic development.

Assumption: Having a smaller vocabulary means there was no positive effect on academic development.

5. **Premise:** Without such a law, whistleblowers are less likely to bring their accusations to journalists, which compromises the public's right to know.

Conclusion: The country needs a nationwide shield law to protect journalists from court imposed demands to reveal their sources.

Assumption: The public's right to know is compromised when courts demand that journalists reveal their sources.

6. **Premise:** No scientific study has ever been able to prove that these phenomena do not exist.

Conclusion: There is at least one good reason to believe that ESP and other paranormal abilities exist.

Assumption: A lack of evidence for a phenomenon is reason to believe it exists.

7. **Premise:** (1) If you take in more calories than you expend, you'll gain weight. (2) Similarly, using more energy than you've acquired through eating results in weight loss.

Conclusion: The best way to lose weight is not necessarily to cut certain foods out of your diet; instead, increase your activity levels to burn more of the calories you bring in.

Assumption: People who are trying to lose weight are able to increase their activity levels.

8. **Premise:** Pitchers who undergo this surgery oftentimes return to the field throwing harder than they did before the surgery.

Conclusion: The surgery should be considered an artificial performance enhancement and be banned from the sport.

Assumption: The surgery is responsible for the pitcher's increase in velocity.

9. **Premise:** These clouds form into twisted, helix-like shapes, divide into smaller clouds, and even "evolve" into new shapes.

Conclusion: These clouds should be considered a form of inorganic life.

Assumption: The abilities to form certain shapes, divide, and evolve are signs of inorganic life.

10. **Premise:** The airline industry will not address these issues as long as it continues to sell tickets at a record pace.

Conclusion: The only solution to these issues is a boycott of air travel.

Assumption: No other course of action will result in a change in the airline industry's service record.

Answers to Drill 3

1. **Premise:** (1) In the Middle Ages, the average height of a European male was around five feet eight inches. (2) Today, the average height of a European male is around five feet 10 inches, a marginal increase.

Conclusion: There must be a greater number of people taller than five foot eight in Europe today than there was in the Middle Ages.

Assumption: A higher average height means there are more people of a certain height.

Argument type: This is a numbers argument. Many numbers arguments appear quite convincing at first, but tread carefully. Without knowing the total population numbers for modern Europe and medieval Europe, you cannot definitely conclude that there are more people of a certain height just from knowing the average.

2. **Premise:** (1) Last year, Sussex County spent over \$30 million on major renovations and improvements to its water and sewage treatment plant. (2) Health officials reported a marked decrease in the presence of a certain type of intestinal parasite among the citizens of Sussex County.

Conclusion: It must be that improvements in water treatment have helped to eradicate the parasite.

Assumption: Improvements in water quality caused a decrease in the incidence of parasitic infestation.

Argument type: This is a classic causal argument. Two things that merely occur together are treated as if one directly leads to the other. But could it be possible that some other, third factor accounts for the decrease in intestinal parasites?

3. **Premise:** The chairs and tables in the critic's house are not works of art.

Conclusion: Cabinets should not be treated as works of art.

Assumption: There is a valid comparison between the cabinets in the exhibit and the furniture in the critic's house.

Argument type: This argument relies on an analogy. If the furniture is not art, then the cabinets must not be. However, it may be that there are substantial differences between the furniture and the cabinets.

4. **Premise:** The group ordered to administer the shock by the scientist was four times more likely to follow the orders than was the other group.

Conclusion: People are more likely to respond to an authority figure, even when the authority figure orders them to engage in an action that may harm others.

Assumption: The results obtained in the experiment are applicable to the population at large.

Argument type: Although it might not seem so at first, this is a sampling argument. Notice how the premise is restricted to two groups in an experiment, but the conclusion is about people in general. The groups in the study may have certain characteristics that make them more or less susceptible to following orders. If so, it would invalidate the conclusion.

5. **Premise:** (1) About 58,000 American troops were killed during the entire US involvement in the Vietnam War. (2) There were almost 80,000 murders in the US during those four years

Conclusion: It was just as dangerous to live in the US as it was to serve in Vietnam.

Assumption: The total number of deaths indicates the danger level an individual is exposed to.

Argument type: This is a prime example of how to twist numbers in an argument. Comparing the total number of deaths is disingenuous. A better argument would consider the death rate as a percentage of populations, based on the population of soldiers and the population of American citizens.

6. **Premise:** The primates that walked upright on two legs conserved more energy than the ones that walked on all fours.

Conclusion: Researchers concluded that early human ancestors developed a bipedal gait to save energy as well.

Assumption: What is true of modern day chimps is also true of early human ancestors.

Argument type: The premise concerns chimps, but the conclusion is about human ancestors. That's an analogy argument.

7. **Premise:** Lowering income tax rates will put more money into the hands of consumers.

Conclusion: In order to stimulate the economy and increase consumer spending, we must lower income tax rates.

Assumption: Having more money leads to increased spending.

Argument type: This is a causal argument. It assumes that giving citizens more money causes them to spend more. But that might not be the case. Maybe lower taxes will lead people to save more money.

8. **Premise:** This fossil dates from about 153 million years ago and is notable because it is the first bird fossil that has a beak instead of teeth

Conclusion: Paleontologists conclude that all bird species older than 160 million years had teeth.

Assumption: The current fossil record is representative of all bird species.

Argument type: This one is deceptive, but it is in fact a sampling argument. The sample in this case is made up of the bird fossil, while the conclusion is about all bird species older than the fossil. But perhaps the fossil record is not complete and therefore not representative of all bird species.

CHAPTER 7

CRITICAL REASONING STRATEGY

In this chapter, you will learn:

- The basic information about the critical reasoning questions in the verbal portion of the GMAT.
- The best strategies for solving critical reasoning questions.

Critical Reasoning questions may be the most difficult questions on the GMAT because they are probably the questions most unfamiliar to test takers. Reading Comprehension questions and Sentence Corrections test concepts that you work with on a daily basis, but Critical Reasoning questions involve a particular way of looking at and analyzing arguments that you probably have not encountered before. Although most people use critical thinking and reasoning skills in their daily lives, Critical Reasoning questions on the GMAT test these skills using the conventions of formal logic, a discipline alien to many test takers. As you learned in Chapter 6, these questions involve a short—typically 50 words or so—argument (called, in test-writer jargon, the “stimulus”), followed by a question and five answer choices. There will be about 12 Critical Reasoning questions on the GMAT. The instructions for these questions read as follows:

For this question, select the best of the answer choices given.

To review these directions for subsequent questions of this type, click on **HELP**.

Clearly, these instructions are not very helpful. What exactly is the best answer? The Sentence Corrections and Reading Comprehension directions give you a decent idea of what constitutes the best answer, but these instructions don't. The instructions also don't provide you with much guidance on how exactly you are to approach these questions. Well, fortunately, you can learn these things in this chapter.

■ HOW TO APPROACH CRITICAL REASONING QUESTIONS

The instructions to the Critical Reasoning questions are vague because there are a variety of question types on the GMAT and a variety of “best” answers. Your approach to the argument given and your evaluation of the answer choices should depend on the type of question you are asked. Thus, your first step on a Critical Reasoning question is always to read the question. Once you know what the question task is, you can analyze the argument for the pertinent information. As you practice these questions, you’ll notice certain patterns occurring again and again, which will help you begin to predict what the best answer will look like for any given question. After you have a sense of the correct answer, you can attack the answer choices and find the best choice. To summarize, your approach to critical reasoning should be as follows:

1. Read the question first and determine the question task.
2. Critically read the passage based on the question task.
3. Formulate a correct answer to the question.
4. Attack the answer choices until only one choice remains.

Critical Reasoning Reading

It is imperative that you make a clear distinction between the reading approach you take on Reading Comprehension questions and the reading approach necessary for Critical Reasoning questions. For Reading Comprehension, you read analytically, looking for big picture ideas. But for Critical Reasoning questions, you need to read *critically*, paying careful attention to the specific wording used in the argument. Different approaches are dictated somewhat by the question tasks, but also by the differences in length. Reading Comprehension passages are up to seven times longer than Critical Reasoning passages and contain a good deal of information that is not relevant to the question. Critical Reasoning passages are shorter, and while some of the information contained isn’t relevant to the question, most of it is. Plus, the right answer can sometimes hinge on the use of a very particular word in the passage, so careful reading is a must.

Additionally, for the most part, your critical reading of argument passages will entail breaking the arguments down to their premises and conclusions. Make sure you’ve worked through Chapter 6 and feel comfortable with the process detailed there before you attack the questions in this chapter.

■ THE QUESTION TYPES

There are about eight different Critical Reasoning question types on the GMAT. Some of these question types are more common than others, but

you'll want to familiarize yourself with all types to be prepared for anything the GMAT might throw at you. The question types are as follows:

Assumption Questions

These questions test you on the basics of argument construction. The assumption is a statement that is necessary to connect the premises and the conclusion. Assumptions are never explicitly stated in the argument. Assumption questions typically have the following wording:

- Which of the following is an assumption that enables the conclusion to be properly drawn?
- The argument above relies on which of the following presuppositions?
- The argument's conclusion logically depends on which of the following?
- Which of the following is an assumption made in drawing the conclusion above?

Weaken Questions

Weaken questions ask you to attack an argument. You do this on the GMAT by attacking the assumptions underlying the argument. Weaken questions often use the following wording:

- Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the conclusion above?
- Opponents of the plan would most likely cite which one of the following as a criticism of the proposal?
- Which of the following undermines the argument above?
- Which of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the author's conclusion?

Strengthen Questions

The opposite of a weaken question, strengthen questions ask you to help out the argument. You do this by adding information to support the assumption. Strengthen questions may be phrased as follows:

- Which of the following, if true, would most bolster the argument above?
- Which additional pieces of evidence would best support the conclusion above?
- The author's conclusion would be most strengthened if it were found that
- Which of the following, if true, provides the strongest support for the argument above?

Inference Questions

Inference questions ask you to figure out what must be true if the statements in the argument are true. Sometimes inferences come from relatively

minor bits of information in the argument; other times, the inference is derived from the entire structure of the argument. Inference questions use the following question stems:

- If the statements above are true, which of the following must be true?
- Which of the following conclusions is most supported by the statements above?
- Which of the following can be properly inferred from the statements above?
- Which of the following best completes the passage above?

Structure Questions

These questions ask you to figure out how the argument is put together or what role a particular statement plays in the argument structure. Structure questions may resemble the following:

- The bolded phrases play which of the following roles in the argument?
- The argument as a whole is structured to lead to which of the following conclusions?
- In the passage, the author develops the argument by which of the following strategies?
- The marketing executive responds to the CFO's argument by

Resolve/Explain The Discrepancy

Some arguments on the GMAT present a paradoxical situation. Your goal is to find the answer choice that best explains or resolves the contradiction in the argument. These questions use wording similar to the following:

- Which of the following, if true, would best explain the discrepancy above?
- Which of the following, if true, best accounts for the apparent contradiction above?
- The paradox above would be resolved if which of the following were true?

Evaluate the Argument

These questions ask you to evaluate an argument by examining the strength or weakness of its assumptions. You'll have to ask yourself what type of additional information would be useful in judging the argument. The question stems for these questions frequently resemble the following:

- Which piece of additional information would be most useful in evaluating the argument?
- The answer to which of the following questions would be most useful in evaluating the validity of the argument's conclusion?
- Which of the following investigations would be most likely to yield significant information about the hypothesis above?

Parallel Reasoning

This type of question asks you to match the reasoning used in the argument with the reasoning used in the answer choices. Questions of this type may use the following wording:

- Which of the following is most similar to the reasoning pattern used above?
- The reasoning in the argument above most closely matches which of the following?
- The flaw in the argument above most closely parallels which of the following?

COMMON QUESTION TYPES

On the GMAT, the most common question types are assumption, weaken, strengthen, and inference. Assumption, weaken, and strengthen questions are closely related in terms of your approach, so it makes sense to begin with those:

1. While the Internet has dramatically increased people's ability to communicate with each other, the increasing use of electronic mail and instant messaging has had a detrimental effect on children's social development. The hours spent communicating over a computer are hours in which children are not interacting with other people on a face-to-face basis.

The argument above relies on which of the following assumptions?

- A. Time spent playing quietly alone or reading books has not been shown to affect the social development of children.
- B. Most children choose to spend their time communicating via electronic mail and instant messaging.
- C. Face-to-face interactions with other people are an important part of a child's social development.
- D. Social skills are best acquired through first-hand experience, not through formal training.
- E. The computer and typing skills a child learns while using the Internet to communicate do not contribute significantly to a child's development.

Analysis

Read the question stem first and identify the question as an assumption question. When you read the argument on an assumption question, your goal is to find the premise and the conclusion. You should note these down on your scratch paper, like so:

Premise: The hours spent communicating over a computer are hours in which children are not interacting with other people on a face-to-face basis.

Conclusion: The increasing use of electronic mail and instant messaging has had a detrimental effect on children's social development.

Once you have found the conclusion and the premise, your goal is to try to figure out, in your own words, what the necessary assumption is. Remember, the assumption links the conclusion and the premise together. In this case, you need to find a link between the author's claim that electronic communication is "detrimental" to a child's social development and the premise that time spent on the computer detracts from time spent "interacting with other people on a face-to-face basis." So you should look for an answer choice that states something along the lines of "interacting with other people on a face-to-face basis is a necessary part of social development." It is important that you always try to generate your own answer before looking at the answer choices provided. Otherwise, you'll have to rely on the GMAT's answer choices and as you know from your work on Reading Comprehension, the wrong answers are designed to distract you from the best answer. If you come up with your own answer first, it's easier to discard wrong answers and avoid traps.

Now go to the answer choices. Choice A is not very close to what you're looking for. In fact, it's not relevant to the argument at all. This argument is trying to argue that using the computer to communicate harms a child's social development, so other activities that a child may or may not engage in are not the issue. Choice B is also irrelevant. The assumption should bring together the premise and the conclusion. All this choice does is tell you that a lot of children prefer to use the computer to communicate. It has nothing to do with the social development part of the argument. However, choice C is exactly what you need. It links the two parts of the argument together and provides the necessary connection between the premise and the conclusion. Even though choice C is good, you should still look at the other choices to verify that C is in fact the best answer. Choice D is not an assumption of the argument. It details how social skills are acquired, but doesn't address the connection between electronic communication and harm to a child's social development. Nor is choice E relevant to the argument. The other benefits or costs of electronic communication are not part of the argument. So in fact, choice C is the best answer.

Now try this question:

2. Many low income families lack health insurance and must rely on either government programs or costly trips to a hospital emergency room to meet their health needs. A politician proposes to remedy this problem by offering low income families a significant rebate on their income tax. The rebate must be used by families to purchase private health insurance. The politician argues that this proposal will ensure that all low income families have private insurance.

Which of the following, if true, most seriously calls into question the viability of the politician's proposal?

- A. Some private health insurance plans are too expensive for a low income family to afford even after receiving the tax rebate.
- B. Health experts believe that it is more economical to spend money on preventive care rather than to treat health issues after they develop.
- C. The cost to government incurred by offering the tax rebate must be offset by raising taxes on other citizens.
- D. Most low income families that lack health care do not file income tax returns because they make so little money.
- E. Low income families pay income tax at a lower rate than any other income bracket.

Analysis

The question stem indicates that you are to weaken the argument. Weaken questions require you to follow the same initial approach as you did on the assumption questions. So let's analyze this argument for its premise and conclusion and jot them down. You should have something like this:

Premise: Low income families will get a significant rebate on their income tax to use to purchase private health insurance.

Conclusion: The politician's proposal will ensure that all low income families have private insurance.

Now, you need the assumption. When looking for assumptions, pay close attention to the exact wording used in the argument. Notice that the conclusion states that "all" low income families will have insurance. The premise says that low income families will get a rebate on their income tax to help pay for this insurance, so you need to connect the income tax plan with the conclusion that all families will have insurance. Thus, the assumption is something along the lines of "all low income families will get the income tax rebate." At this point, you have all the essentials from the argument. In order to answer the question, you need to think about a way to attack the assumption. One obvious possibility is to find an answer that questions whether all families will truly benefit from the income tax plan. Once you have some sense of what the right answer should look like, you can attack the answer choices.

Choice A hurts the argument somewhat, but it's not the best answer. Although it's problematic that there are some plans a low income family can't afford, the answer doesn't imply that there are no affordable plans. Besides, the argument just contends that all families will have insurance; it doesn't specify the quality of the insurance. So choice A doesn't hurt the argument enough. Choice B is irrelevant to the argument. The issue of preventative care has nothing to do with the politician's plan, so eliminate this choice. Choice C presents a potential downside to the plan, but it doesn't actually call into question the politician's proposal. The conclusion is simply that all low income families will be insured; the politician doesn't argue that there will no other costs to the program. Choice D does significantly

weaken the argument. The politician wants you to believe that all families will have insurance as a result of the tax rebate program, but this choice tells you that many of these families do not file their income taxes. If the taxes aren't filed, they can't get the rebate or afford health insurance. Check choice E just to be sure, but the rate at which low income families pay taxes is irrelevant to the question of whether all families will have health insurance.

Here's another question:

3. In its yearly review of MBA programs, an independent evaluator gave Smith Business School a dismal ranking in its student satisfaction category. In order to increase student satisfaction and its national ranking, Smith Business School has decided to spend over \$50 million upgrading its facilities, including its library, classroom space, and lounge areas.

Which of the following, if true, provides the strongest reason to expect that Smith Business School's proposal will be successful in increasing its ranking?

- A. The student satisfaction category encompasses a number of subjective factors, including value, quality of faculty, and facilities.
- B. Yearly program rankings are an important factor in attracting the best candidates to a school.
- C. Smith Business School has already secured the \$50 million needed to upgrade its facilities.
- D. The students surveyed for the business school rankings indicated that the number and diversity of courses offered at a school was a large component of student satisfaction.
- E. The students at Smith School that were surveyed for the rankings indicated that they were extremely happy with the quality of instruction, price, and diversity of courses at the school.

Analysis

First, note that the question stem asks you to support or strengthen the argument. Like weaken questions, strengthen questions require you to first break down the argument and find the premise, conclusion, and assumption. Then, think about a way to make the argument better by supporting the assumption. The premise and conclusion are:

Premise: Smith Business School received a low ranking on student satisfaction in an annual evaluation.

Conclusion: Spending \$50 million on facilities will help Smith increase its student satisfaction rating.

For this argument to work, you need an assumption that connects Smith's low student ranking and its proposal to increase it by spending money upgrading facilities. The assumption is something along the lines of

“upgrading student facilities will have a strong effect on student satisfaction.” To strengthen this argument, you need an answer choice that provides some information that increases the validity of the assumption.

The first choice doesn’t do much to help the argument. It merely states that a number of factors contribute to the student satisfaction score. But it doesn’t make it any more likely that upgrading facilities leads to higher student satisfaction scores. Choice B may be true, but it’s not relevant to the argument. It doesn’t say anything about a connection between upgrading facilities and increasing student satisfaction scores. Choice C isn’t the best choice either. While it is helpful to know that Smith has the money for the improvements, you need a choice that suggests that the improvements will help its student satisfaction rankings. Choice D actually hurts the argument; if the number and diversity of courses is a large part of the student satisfaction score, then upgrading its facilities probably won’t help Smith too much. That leaves choice E, the best answer. Choice E strengthens the argument by indicating that the students at Smith are happy with the other aspects of the school. If they are already happy with these aspects, it is more likely that upgrading the facilities will increase their satisfaction. Thus, this choice supports the assumption.

Wrong Answers: Assumption, Weaken, and Strengthen Questions

You may have noticed a common thread among the incorrect answers on the questions in this section. By and large, incorrect answers to these questions fall outside the scope of the conclusion and the premises. These answer choices introduce information that doesn’t deal directly with the argument at hand. Usually, these choices are tangentially related to the argument, but they fail to address the relationship between the premise and the conclusion. Therefore, it is imperative to analyze these questions and make sure you find the conclusion and the premises. Even if you have trouble finding the assumption, having the conclusion and the premise in front of you can help you eliminate answers. However, even answers that seem to address the conclusion or the premise can still be flawed. Here are the common wrong answer patterns on assumption, strengthen, and weaken questions:

Scope

As previously mentioned, these are the most common wrong answers. On assumption questions, answer choices that add new information—that is, information that is not part of the premise or the conclusion—are wrong. On strengthen and weaken questions, new information is allowable, but it still must be relevant to the premise and conclusion of the argument.

Not Far Enough

On weaken and strengthen questions, some choices are relevant to the argument, but don't do enough to strengthen or weaken the argument. On strengthen and weaken questions (but not assumption questions), avoid answers that use terms like "some" or "a few." The more evidence you can gather, the better your attempt to weaken or strengthen the argument, so choices that use words like "most," and "many" are better. Also, make sure the answer choice does enough to weaken or strengthen the argument on its own. For example, if an answer choice simply states "some insurance plans are expensive" and you find yourself adding things to the answer choice ("Well, if some insurance plans are too expensive that means some families can't afford them which means that some of them won't have insurance...") then you're doing too much work.

Opposite

Oftentimes, the GMAT writers will include answer choices that do the opposite of the question task. On assumption and strengthen questions, make sure you eliminate any choices that weaken the argument. Similarly, on weaken questions, eliminate those choices that support the argument.

Try applying what you've learned in the following drill. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

► Drill 1

1. A researcher studying lawyers found that, on average, lawyers took more classes in philosophy as undergraduates than did members of other professions. The research surmised that students who take philosophy classes are more likely to become lawyers.

Which of the following, if true, most seriously undermines the researcher's conclusion?

- A. Many undergraduates who indicate that they intend to pursue a legal career are told by their advisers to take a philosophy course.
- B. During a trial, lawyers use their knowledge of philosophical arguments to attempt to influence the jury.
- C. Not all students who take philosophy classes as undergraduates become lawyers.
- D. Lawyers are also more likely to have taken classes in public speaking and political science than are members of other professions.
- E. The lawyers studied by the researcher indicated that taking philosophy courses gave them important insight into rhetoric and arguments.

2. It has been over 30 years since a manned mission to the moon. But now, scientists are planning to place a research station on the south pole of the moon to gather data on the moon's seismic activity and weather patterns. The research station will be completed and launched in two years, so humans will once again walk on the moon.

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

- A. The information gathered by the lunar research station could also be acquired by placing a satellite into orbit over the moon.
- B. The lunar research instruments are part of a module that will be launched into space and parachute onto the moon's surface.
- C. Advances in technology have reduced the chances of a space flight disaster to half of the levels they were 30 years ago.
- D. The instruments on the lunar research station are so complex that a human technician is required to fix them if they malfunction.
- E. Although the research station will use solar power, researchers expect that the instruments will operate for no more than five years.

3. The city council of Greenville has passed a new law in an effort to relieve the city's overworked sanitation department. Businesses in Greenville have taken to depositing their trash in the bins provided for the public litter. By quickly overfilling these trash cans with commercial waste, the practice forces the sanitation department to work overtime in order to clear them. The new law, however, imposes a \$250 fine on any business caught placing its trash in public receptacles.

The argument above relies on which of the following assumptions?

- A. The public will not place litter in bins already overflowing with waste from businesses.
- B. The sanitation department does have enough workers to empty the trash bins in a timely fashion.
- C. The amount of the fine and the risk of getting caught are sufficiently high enough to deter business owners from using public trash bins.
- D. Clearing out public trash receptacles is the sanitation department's most important job.
- E. Businesses typically pay private companies to remove the excessive amount of trash they generate.

4. Iridium, a hard, whitish metal similar to platinum, is extremely rare on Earth. Extremely high concentrations of iridium on Earth result from only two scenarios: massive volcanic eruptions that release iridium from deep within the Earth and meteorites that shower down on Earth from space. When scientists found concentrations of iridium 30 times higher than normal in rock stratum from 65 million years ago, they concluded that a massive meteor or comet hit the Earth and caused the massive extinction of the dinosaurs.

Which of the following, if true, most strongly supports the scientist's conclusion?

- A. Volcanoes massive enough to generate high concentrations of iridium are very rare.
- B. Massive volcanic eruptions occurred frequently 80 million years ago.
- C. Most scientists support the hypothesis that a cosmic impact wiped out the dinosaurs.
- D. The massive extinction that occurred 70 million years ago killed not only the dinosaurs but also 70 percent of all life on Earth.
- E. A comet struck the earth some 120 million years ago, but no widespread extinction occurred.

5. President: My opponents are arguing that my recent tax increase is responsible for our slumping economy. However, they are clearly mistaken. When their party was in power 12 years ago, they raised taxes and the economy did not suffer.

Which of the following, if true, casts the most doubt on the president's assertion?

- A. The current tax increase is smaller than the tax increase enacted 12 years ago.
- B. Over half the population supported the tax increase 12 years ago but only a third support the current increase.
- C. Most economic indicators show the current state of the economy to be similar to the state of the economy 12 years ago.
- D. Twelve years ago a housing boom offset any negative impact the tax increase had on the economy.
- E. The president's party has only been in power for two years after 12 years of opposition control of the government.

6. Biologists suspect that feathers are modified scales. Ancient reptiles developed feathers as a way to insulate their bodies from the cold and regulate their body temperatures. However, many of these early feathered reptiles were unable to fly. Thus, today's flightless birds probably developed their feathers as a way to manage their body temperatures.

The argument above relies on which of the following assumptions?

- A. A characteristic developed for a particular ability does not remain after that ability is lost.
- B. Some animals that are able to fly lack feathers.
- C. Feathered dinosaurs that were able to fly also used their feathers to regulate body temperature.
- D. Today's flightless birds are direct descendants of feathered reptiles.
- E. Without the ability to regulate their body temperature, flightless birds will go extinct.

COMMON ARGUMENT PATTERNS, REVISITED

In Chapter 6, you learned the basic formats for causal, sampling, analogy, and numbers arguments. Here's how to weaken or strengthen those argument types:

Causal Arguments

- **Assumptions:** There is a causal relationship between the factors; there are no other causes; the cause and effect relationship is not reversed, i.e., the argument states that x causes y when in fact y causes x .
- **To Strengthen:** Rule out alternate causes; show that the cause and effect relationship is not reversed.
- **To Weaken:** Introduce an alternate cause; show that the cause and effect are reversed; indicate that the events are merely correlated.

Sampling Arguments

- **Assumption:** The sample is representative and accurately mirrors the larger population.
- **To Strengthen:** Show that the sample represents the population at large; indicate that the sample population lacks any characteristics that would bias the results.
- **To Weaken:** Show that the sample does not represent the population; find evidence that there is reason to believe the sample is biased.

Analogy Arguments

- **Assumption:** x and y are similar enough to draw a valid comparison; what is true of x is also true of y .
- **To Strengthen:** Show that the two things being compared are similar. Indicate there are no significant differences in the characteristics of the two things being compared.
- **To Weaken:** Show that the two things being compared differ in some significant way.

Numbers Arguments

- **Assumption:** The statistics actually indicate the relationship the conclusion claims.
- **To Strengthen:** Indicate that a change in proportion, percentage, average, or other relationship demonstrates a similar change in the real values of the argument; when numbers are used to make a comparison, show that the totals being compared are the same.
- **To Weaken:** Indicate that there can be a change in proportion, percentage, average, or other relationship and yet the real totals are unaffected or are changed in the opposite direction; show that comparisons involving numbers come from different totals.

INFERENCE QUESTIONS

Inference questions also appear frequently on the GMAT, but they require a totally different approach from that used on assumption, weaken, and strengthen questions. Although some inference questions may present you with an argument with a premise and a conclusion, some are simply collections of premises. For these questions, you do **not** have to break the argument down into premise and conclusion and you do not have to find the assumption. To do so would be a waste of your time and time is a valuable commodity on the GMAT. Instead, approach these questions like inference questions on Reading Comprehension. Read the argument to get a general idea of what information it contains, then take each answer choice and see if you can prove it using information from the passage. You don't have to try to generate your own answer for these questions because you won't know for sure what sort of inference the test writers will want you to draw. Here's an example:

4. When police pull over a driver suspected of operating a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, they often request that the driver submit to a breathalyzer test, which determines the driver's blood alcohol content by measuring the alcohol in the driver's breath. If the driver agrees to the test and it indicates a blood alcohol level higher than the law allows, this evidence leads to a charge of driving while under the influence. However, in many states, refusal to submit to a breathalyzer test is itself a crime.

The statements above most strongly support which of the following conclusions?

- A. In many states, a failed breathalyzer test results in a harsher sentence than does the refusal to submit to the test.
- B. A driver pulled over on suspicion of driving under the influence will be charged with a crime.
- C. Some breathalyzer tests indicate that a driver's blood alcohol content is above the legal limit when it is in fact not.

- D. All drivers pulled over on suspicion of driving under the influence are asked to submit to a breathalyzer test.
- E. In some states, a driver whose blood alcohol content is above the legal limit and who is pulled over by the police may be charged with a crime whether the driver submits to a breathalyzer test or not.

Analysis

If the answer choices are supported by the argument, this must be an inference question. Read the argument to get the lay of the land, but don't break it down to a premise and conclusion. Instead, after you read the argument, look at each answer choice and see if there is any evidence in the passage to support that choice. Choice A discusses the sentences a driver may receive. Although this answer could be true, the passage does not support it, so it must be eliminated. Choice D goes too far; the passage states that officers "often" request a test, but this is not the same as saying they always request it. The validity of the test is not discussed, so choice C is out of scope. Choice B also goes too far. There is nothing in the passage to indicate that any driver pulled over will be charged. The driver could pass the test or the officer could decide not to administer it and let the driver off with a warning. Either way, this choice is incorrect. That leaves choice E, which is a valid inference. The argument says that in many states, refusal to submit is a crime. Thus, a driver with a blood alcohol level above the legal limit may be charged whether he submits (and is found to have a level above the limit) or refuses (and is charged with refusing a breathalyzer). Note that the answer doesn't say the driver definitely will be charged, which is not a proper conclusion from the facts given.

Here's another type of inference question:

5. Neither a sharp intellect nor a willingness to work hard, by itself, guarantees a student's success in college. Both are required because students with sharp intellects can be overwhelmed by the amount of work they take on and students with a willingness to work hard may take classes that are too difficult for them. Thus, the proper measure of a student's ability to do well in college is the ability to_____.

Which of the following best completes the passage above?

- A. select a schedule of classes that is not too difficult and has a manageable amount of work
- B. work harder at classes that are more difficult
- C. choose easy classes regardless of the amount of work required for them
- D. avoid classes that are too difficult or too lengthy
- E. take difficult classes that involve little to no work

Analysis

This type of question is also an inference. The best answer is the choice that follows logically from the premises stated. Treat these questions the same way as you would a regular inference question. Use the facts in the passage to justify one of the answer choices. Choice A is the best answer here because the passage states that both intellect and a willingness to work are required for success in college. Having just one of these qualities is not sufficient. Choice A follows logically because a student who takes classes that are not too difficult and have a manageable amount of work satisfies both criteria. Choice B does not follow from the argument. The argument states that working hard at difficult classes isn't sufficient. The same problem surfaces in choice C, as the argument states that a student can be overwhelmed by the work in a class. Choice D adds another element, class length, which is not relevant. Choice E is also wrong based on the passage because it might lead to success for a student with a sharp intellect but not for one with just a willingness to work hard.

Wrong Answers: Inference Questions

You've already seen some examples of what can go wrong on an inference question. Here's a recap of the common wrong answers on these questions:

Not Mentioned

The correct answer to an inference question must be based on the passage. Choices that bring in new information or information not mentioned in the passage are wrong. Do not depart from the scope of the passage.

Goes Too Far

Watch for answer choices that go too far. These choices usually contain words such as "all," "always," "most," "every," "none," "never" and other strong words. Before you choose one of these answers make sure the passage truly supports such extreme wording.

Could be True

Some wrong answers could be true, but these answers don't meet the standard of proof. They seem plausible, but the passage doesn't provide enough information to prove them. Make sure the answer choice you pick **must** be true based on the passage.

Try this drill to practice inference questions. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

► **Drill 2**

1. In order for a country to maintain diplomatic relations with another country, a country must disavow or deny certain objectionable practices, even though all parties know for a fact that the activities took place and were sanctioned by the government. Failure to follow this protocol results in a diplomatic crisis. Recently, Country Z captured a spy plane from Country X in its sovereign territory, a major offense. Country X quickly announced that the plane was engaging in routine flight drills and had accidentally entered Country Z's airspace.

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

- A. Country Z will now begin sending spy planes into Country X's territory.
- B. Country Z will immediately suspend diplomatic relations with Country X.
- C. Diplomatic relations between Country Z and Country X will most likely continue as normal.
- D. The plane from Country X was not engaged in spying.
- E. Country Z believed Country X's explanation for the plane's presence in its airspace.

2. Married professionals have more money to spend on discretionary purchases than do single professionals with comparable incomes because some of the income used for housing and entertainment costs by single professionals can be used by married professionals for other purchases.

Which of the following inferences is best supported by the statement made above?

- A. Married professionals spend more money on discretionary purchases than do single professionals.
- B. Married professionals have smaller housing and entertainment costs than do single professionals.
- C. Couples that live together but are not married have more money to spend on discretionary purchases than do single professionals.
- D. The median income for married professionals is higher than that of single professionals.
- E. Housing and entertainment costs account for the largest proportion of a single professional's expenditures.

3. Marketer: Your product has a very specific appeal. Customers who buy Luxuria brand suits have the sense that they are buying a product tailored especially for them. Thus, I strongly object to your company's plan to purchase advertising time during the year's most watched sporting event because_____.

Which of the following best completes the passage above?

- A. customers who buy Luxuria brand suits do not typically watch sporting events
- B. appealing to a large segment of the population will harm your brand's allure
- C. most people tuned into the sporting event do not want to purchase a Luxuria suit
- D. the cost of the advertisement is not likely to justify the increase in sales
- E. an advertisement cannot capture the uniqueness of a Luxuria suit

4. Many people complain that not enough citizens of the country vote. Voting, they point out, is a simple act and it gives people the opportunity to directly affect the government so there is no reason for people not to vote. But economists point out that voting does have costs: time spent at the polls and money spent on transportation. The economic benefits achieved by voting are so negligible that the cost is never worth it.

If the economists' statements are true, than it must also be true that

- A. Less than half of the country's citizens vote in any given election.
- B. Citizens are more likely to vote when the polling station is on their way to work or school.
- C. Voting does not allow citizens to directly affect the government.
- D. Citizens do not vote because they do not feel that their efforts will be rewarded.
- E. If a citizen does vote, it must be because of some non-economic benefit.

5. Any test that has a probability of success less than 100 hundred percent leaves a researcher open to various types of errors. In one type of error, a test with some probability of success less than 100 percent has a chance of missing the true result equal to 100 percent minus the test's percentage chance of success.

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

- A. If a test has a chance of success less than 100 percent it should not be used by a researcher.
- B. There are no tests that have a success rate of 100 percent.
- C. Researchers should use tests susceptible to error only when no perfectly reliable test is available.
- D. If a test with a 95 percent chance of success indicates a negative result, there is a 5 percent chance the actual result is positive.
- E. If a test with a 95 percent chance of success indicates a positive result, there is a 5 percent chance the test should have indicated a negative result.

LESS COMMON QUESTION TYPES

The following question types appear less frequently on the GMAT, but since you never know what questions will show up on your particular GMAT, you should be prepared for them all. These questions are not necessarily easier or harder, they are just less common.

Structure Questions

Structure questions test your knowledge of the parts of an argument and how they function together. Here's an example:

1. Many corporations are resistant to environmental regulations because they feel that implementing the technology necessary to follow the regulations will result in increased costs and decreased profits. However, many of the new technologies developed to protect the environment result in increased efficiency and a substantial saving on energy costs that will outweigh any initial costs associated with installing the new technologies.

The argument as a whole is structured to lead to which of the following conclusions?

- A. There is little economic justification for a corporation to resist implementing the technology necessary to uphold environmental regulations.
- B. The economic costs of following environmental regulations are minor because the regulations are rarely enforced.
- C. New technologies are more environmentally friendly than the older technologies used by most corporations.
- D. Corporations that fail to follow environmental regulations will face fines and other sanctions.
- E. There is no disadvantage to installing new technology in order to follow environmental regulations.

Analysis

The question asks what the conclusion of the argument is. This type of question is somewhat similar to an inference question in that the best answer follows from the premises of the argument. This argument has the following premises:

(1) Corporations are resistant to environmental regulations because they feel that implementing the technology necessary to follow the regulations will result in increased costs and decreased profits.

(2) Many of the new technologies developed to protect the environment result in increased efficiency and a substantial saving on energy costs that will outweigh any initial costs associated with installing the new technologies.

What conclusion follows from these premises? Choice A seems a likely answer. If the benefits of the new technology outweigh any costs associated with it, then economic justifications are less convincing. The premises don't lead to choice B because they don't discuss enforcement of the regulations. Choices C and D are also not related to the premises of the argument, while choice E goes too far. There could be other, non-economic disadvantages to installing the technology.

Another version of this question type uses bold-faced statements, like so:

2. For over half a century, agricultural engineers have been using radiation to generate mutations in crops, developing valuable new varieties of plants such as red grapefruits, disease-resistant cocoa, and premium quality barley for whiskey. However, **due to the public's widespread fear of radiation and negative associations with the word "mutant,"** the practice of inducing mutations with radiation has been largely kept from the public's view to avoid controversy.

The bold-faced statement plays which of the following roles in the argument?

- A. It is an assumption underlying the decision for keeping the use of radiation in crop development out of the public's view.
- B. It is the main conclusion the author is attempting to justify.
- C. It is a possible explanation for the course of action taken in the argument.
- D. It is a subsidiary conclusion that must be accepted in order to accept the main conclusion.
- E. It is a premise that undermines the conclusion the argument is attempting to reach.

Analysis

Questions of this sort test your ability to identify how the particular parts of an argument fit together. The good thing about these questions is that there are only two major parts of an argument to worry about—premises and conclusions. Assumptions, you will recall, are unstated, so the bold-faced portion cannot be an assumption. When attacking these questions, first break them down into premise and conclusion. This argument has the following parts:

Premise: The public is afraid of radiation and has negative associations with the word "mutant."

Conclusion: Keeping the practice of mutating crops with radiation a secret from the public avoids controversy.

From this analysis, it is clear that the bold-faced portion of the argument is the premise. That eliminates choices A, B, and D. While choice E correctly identifies the bold-faced portion as a premise, it does not undermine the conclusion. Therefore, choice E is wrong. That leaves choice C as the best answer.

Resolve/Explain the Discrepancy

Resolve/Explain questions are somewhat odd in that they do not follow the typical argument pattern. They may or may not have a conclusion, but they always contain a set of competing or contradictory premises. Your goal is first to identify those premises, and then to find an answer that explains or resolves the discrepancy. Take a look at this example:

1. Worldwide demand for corn has remained flat for the past five years, as has the production and the price of corn. Yet, last year, corn growers reported a 15 percent increase in profits over the previous year's level.

Which of the following statements, if true, would most resolve the discrepancy outlined above?

- A. Many countries are pursuing alternative fuel plans based on ethanol, a corn based alcohol.
- B. Demand for wheat, barley, and rice has also remained flat for the past five years.
- C. There are fewer family farms and more large corporate farms today than there were five years ago.
- D. A new machine allows corn growers to cut harvesting time by a third and save money on expensive labor costs.
- E. Some corn produced in the last year has not been sold and has gone to waste.

Analysis

The strategy for resolve/explain questions differs from other strategies. What you need to do on these questions is figure out what information is in conflict. On this question, that is easy to do because the passage contains only two premises. They are:

1. Worldwide demand for corn has remained flat for the past five years, as has the production and the price of corn.
2. Corn growers reported a 15 percent increase in profits over the previous year's level.

As you can see, there seems to be a discrepancy. How can it be that demand, production, and price have remained flat but profit has increased? On some resolve/explain questions you may be able to generate your own answer to the dilemma, but it isn't necessary. The answer you come up with may explain the problem but not match the explanation the GMAT test writers invented. As with inference questions, much of your work must be done with the answer choices. You need to find a choice that explains how both of the premises can be true. New information is allowed, so don't eliminate answers that bring in factors or explanations that are not part of the

original argument. Choice A only tells you that countries are pursuing fuel plans based on ethanol, which comes from corn. But this doesn't resolve the paradox because the argument states that demand remains flat. It doesn't matter what the demand is for, whether it's food or fuel. Choice B doesn't affect the dilemma at all. Choice C gives details on the nature of the corn growers, but doesn't explain the rise in profit. Don't try to make an answer work by adding information to it. You may be tempted to think that larger corporate farms have lower costs and therefore make more profit, but the answer doesn't state this—take the wording of the choice at face value. Choice D does explain the discrepancy. Demand, production, and profit could remain flat and profit could increase if the corn farmers were able to save money on production costs. Choice D states that the growers saved money on labor costs, which would explain the rise in profits. Choice E also does not explain the discrepancy. Again, you may start thinking about this choice and try to come up with a reason why wasted corn could result in higher profits, but that's too much work. The best answer should do most of the heavy lifting for you, as choice D does.

Evaluate the Argument

Evaluate the argument questions occupy a gray area between strengthen and weaken questions. You are not asked to strengthen or weaken the argument, but to think about the type of information you would need to have in order to do so. In most cases, the information you need to evaluate an argument has to do with the assumption of the argument. Look at the following example:

1. Politicians sometimes use focus groups to help them arrive at popular policy positions. A staffer will assemble a group of citizens and ask the members of the group about their feelings on a particular issue. The politician will then base his or her position on the consensus opinion of the focus group.

The answer to which of the following questions would be most useful in evaluating the value of focus groups to a politician?

- A. Are the members of the focus group well informed about the policy issues in question?
- B. Are the members of the focus group a representative sample of the voters in the politician's district?
- C. Does the politician agree with the policy position supported by the focus group?
- D. Does the focus group know that its responses are being used to help a politician develop a policy position?
- E. Does the focus group support the politician that is relying on its opinions?

Analysis

To answer this question, you must first find its conclusion, premise, and assumption. Here are the conclusion and premise:

Premise: The politician bases his or her opinion on the consensus opinion of the focus group.

Conclusion: A focus group can help a politician arrive at a popular policy position.

This argument relies on a key assumption. The necessary link is that the consensus opinion of the focus group is going to be a popular policy position. So, to evaluate this argument, it would be useful to have some information to that effect. Choice A does not address this issue. Even if you knew whether the members of the group were well informed about the policy, you wouldn't know whether it would result in a popular policy position. Choice B addresses the assumption. If the consensus group was a representative sample of voters, then it is more likely that the conclusion is true. But, if the group was not representative, you would be less likely to accept the conclusion. Choice C is out of scope because it doesn't matter if the politician agrees—it just matters if the position is a popular one. Choice D might have some value if you assume that the group members' knowledge might affect their opinions, but that reasoning is going too far beyond what the choice actually states. Choice E is also out of scope because the point of the focus group is to find a popular opinion for the politician to support; the group's feelings about the politician are inconsequential.

Parallel the Reasoning

This is a very rare type of question that can be a huge drag on your time. Why? Because you have to analyze *six* arguments! That's right, six arguments for the price of one. To solve these questions, you'll first have to break down the original argument into its conclusion and premise. Then you will have to break down each answer choice into its conclusion and premise. Finally, you will choose the answer choice that best matches the pattern of the original argument. That's a lot of work! Fortunately, you aren't likely to see more than one of these questions on the GMAT. Here is an example:

1. Juliette is likely a world-class figure skater. Like most world-class figure skaters, Juliette has been skating since she was very young. In fact, it is almost impossible to become a world-class figure without having started skating at a very young age. Most people who are not world-class figure skaters start skating much later in life.

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

- A. Most professional basketball players are taller than average. In fact, most people who are not taller than average are not professional basketball players. Billy is not a professional basketball player so he must not be taller than average.
- B. Diana devotes over 20 hours a week to playing golf, as do most professional golfers. It is difficult to become a professional golfer playing any less than 20 hours a week. So Diana is probably a professional golfer.
- C. Left-handed bowlers make up more than 30 percent of the world's top bowlers, a percentage more than double the percentage of the population at large. Sam is left handed, so he is probably one of the world's top bowlers.
- D. Some of the best hitters in baseball have vision better than 20/20, the standard vision score of the population. In fact, some of these players have vision scores of 20/10. Perry has a vision score better than 20/20 so he must play baseball.
- E. Yvette is most definitely a champion swimmer. After all, she can hold her breath for almost two minutes and she has mastered all the main strokes. Very few people possess both these characteristics. In fact, only champion swimmers have both.

Analysis

The first step is to analyze the original argument. Break it down into its conclusion and premise:

Premise: Like most world-class figure skaters, Juliette has been skating since a very young age.

Conclusion: Juliette is likely a world-class figure skater.

Now, think about the basic pattern of the argument. In general terms, what is the structure of the argument? The reasoning is something along the lines of: *Most members of group X have quality Y. This individual has quality Y. There, the individual is a member of group X.* After you've stated the basic argument structure in your own words, begin dissecting the answer choices. Here's a breakdown:

- A. *Most members of group X have quality Y. This individual is not a member of group X, so he does not have quality Y.* This is not the same pattern, so eliminate it.
- B. *This individual has quality Y. Most members of group X have quality Y, so this individual is a member of group X.* This is the same pattern. Keep it.
- C. *Individuals with quality Y make up a certain proportion of group X. This individual has quality Y so he is probably a member of group X.* This argument pattern does not quite match, and does not match as well as choice B, so eliminate it.

- D. *Some members of group X have quality Y. This individual has quality Y, so he is a member of group Z.* This choice is wrong. Notice that the first group is “best hitters” but the second group is just baseball players.
- E. *This individual is a member of group X. This individual has qualities A and B and only members of group X have qualities A and B.* This also doesn’t quite match. The original argument doesn’t discuss two qualities.

As you can see, these questions require a lot of time and effort. If you’re stuck or pressed for time, you can sometimes get away with just studying the conclusions of the answer choices and eliminating those choices that deviate from the conclusion of the argument.

► **Drill 3**

DIRECTIONS: Circle the correct answers to the questions below. Answers appear at the end of this chapter.

1. For many years, black holes were merely theoretical constructs, predicted by physics but thought to be beyond the capabilities of science to observe because they are so dense that nothing, not even light, can escape their immense gravitational pull. However, scientists recently announced that a black hole has been detected at the center of the galaxy.

Which of the following, if true, most helps to explain the situation above?

- A. Even though theory predicted the existence of black holes, many scientists remained skeptical about their existence.
- B. Telescope technology has advanced considerably since black holes were predicted and scientists can now see objects hundreds of millions of light years away.
- C. As matter is drawn in by the black hole’s immense gravitational pull, it is super heated and gives off a burst of visible energy.
- D. Black holes are not as dense as the initial theory predicted them to be.
- E. The black hole at the center of the galaxy is many times larger than the black holes predicted by theory.

2. Ethicist: **Surely there can be no doubt that animals suffer.** Simply observe the reactions of animals when subjected to various pain causing procedures. Since all humans agree that bad things should be avoided and most agree that pain is bad, **there is no compelling reason to subject animals to any sort of scientific experimentation.**

The bolded phrases play which of the following roles in the argument above?

- A. The first statement is a scientific fact offered to support the conclusion reached in the second statement.
- B. The second statement offers the ethicists main conclusion while the first statement is a baseless emotional appeal.
- C. The second statement is the conclusion the argument is structured to lead to while the first statement contains unimportant information.
- D. The second statement is the argument's main conclusion while the first statement contains a subsidiary conclusion.
- E. The first statement is a conclusion that the second statement is designed to undermine.

3. Male and female mosquitoes both feed on fruit nectar and juice, but only the female mosquito engages in haematophagy, or as it is more commonly known, blood drinking. Female mosquitoes have developed abilities to ensure they locate their prey, relying on an acute sense of smell and the ability to detect body heat. The female's special diet is necessitated by the mosquito's need for protein to aid in the development of its eggs.

The information above is structured to lead to which of the following conclusions?

- A. Male mosquitoes lack the ability to detect body heat.
- B. Male mosquitoes occasionally engage in haematophagy even though they do not require a special diet.
- C. The female mosquito's sense of smell is more highly developed than the male's sense of smell.
- D. A diet consisting solely of nectar and fruit juice would be insufficient to sustain the mosquito population.
- E. Female mosquitoes do not consume as much nectar and fruit juice as do male mosquitoes.

4. The present leadership in government will not endorse any action that harms labor unions, which provide the government with its largest number of supporters. Recently, the state legislature has proposed a change to workplace regulations, so it is apparent that the government leadership will not support the new regulations.

To evaluate the logic of the argument above, it would be most beneficial to know

- A. whether the new regulations have an adverse effect on members of labor unions
- B. whether any unions might benefit from the new workplace regulations
- C. whether the state legislature needs leadership's support to pass the new regulations
- D. whether the labor unions have publicly spoken out against the proposed regulations
- E. whether the state legislature knows whether the new regulations will be harmful to unions

5. Many people dislike being criticized by others, so a frequent response to criticism is to impugn the critic's own behavior. This response is foolish, though, because the critic's own behavior has little bearing on the validity of the critique being offered.

The reasoning in the argument above most closely parallels which of the following?

- A. If someone is a smoker, it is foolish for that person to argue that smoking is unhealthy. If the individual truly believed that smoking was unhealthy, he or she would not smoke.
- B. It would be foolish to criticize a philosopher's argument that free will doesn't exist simply because the philosopher acts as if there is free will.
- C. In a situation where both parties are at fault, it would be foolish to admit wrongdoing first because neither party has the moral high ground.
- D. It is silly to get upset when an individual lies to you. Everybody lies at some point or another, so there is no reason to get upset over such a common failing.
- E. A critic should not attack a person for a fault the critic himself possesses. To do so would be foolish because it would reveal the critic as a hypocrite.

Answers to Drill 1

1. **Answer: A.** This is a weaken question. Here are the conclusion and premise:

Premise: On average, lawyers took more classes in philosophy as undergraduates than did members of other professions.

Conclusion: Students who take philosophy classes are more likely to become lawyers.

By concluding that students who take philosophy classes are more likely to become lawyers, their argument is assuming a causal link between taking the class and becoming a lawyer. You can weaken a causal argument by showing there is some other cause or by demonstrating that the cause and effect relationship is reversed. Choice A weakens the argument by indicating that the students first indicated a desire to become a lawyer, and then took the philosophy class. So instead of the class causing a student to be a lawyer, wanting to be a lawyer caused the student to take the class. Choice B is irrelevant to the argument, as the choice says nothing about the connection between taking the class and becoming a lawyer. Choice C doesn't weaken the argument enough; the argument doesn't claim that all students who take philosophy classes become lawyers, so the fact that some don't doesn't hurt the argument. Neither choice D nor choice E has much to do with the argument.

2. **Answer: B.** This is a weaken question. The conclusion and the premises are:

Premises: Scientists are planning to place a research station on the south pole of the moon to gather data on the moon's seismic activity and weather patterns; the research station will be completed and launched in two years.

Conclusion: Humans will once again walk on the moon.

This argument assumes that placing a research station on the moon's south pole will require a person to walk on the moon. So you should find an answer that attacks this assumption. Choice B indicates that the research station can be launched to the moon and parachute down, so it doesn't need a person to land on the moon in order to set it up. Choice A is not relevant because it doesn't address the connection between the research station and walking on the moon. If anything, choices C and D make it more likely that humans will walk on the moon, not less likely. Choice E is not relevant to the argument.

3. **Answer: C.** This is an assumption question. The conclusion and the premise are:

Premise: Businesses caught putting trash in public bins will be fined \$250.

Conclusion: The new law will relieve the city's overworked sanitation department.

In order for this law to truly reduce the work done by the sanitation department, you must assume that the fine or the threat of the fine will be sufficient to stop businesses from putting trash in the bins. If that assumption isn't true, then the argument falls apart. Choice C states this assumption. Choice A is not part of the argument, which deals with the businesses' actions, not the public's. Choice B adds new information that is not part of the argument so eliminate it. It does not matter if cleaning out the public bins is the department's most important job, so choice D is irrelevant. Choice E also adds new information that isn't necessary to the argument.

4. **Answer: B.** This is a strengthen question. Its conclusion and premises are:

Premises: (1) Extremely high concentrations of iridium on Earth result from only two scenarios: massive volcanic eruptions that release iridium from deep within the Earth and meteorites that shower down on Earth from space. (2) Scientists found concentrations of iridium 30 times higher than normal in rock stratum from 65 million years ago.

Conclusion: A massive meteor or comet hit the Earth and caused the mass extinction of the dinosaurs.

According to the premises, there are two possible causes of high iridium levels. But the conclusion states that one of the causes—a meteor—was definitely the culprit. So the assumption must be that there was not a volcanic eruption that caused the extinction. Once again, you have a causal argument, but now you are going to strengthen it. In order to do so, you should look for answers that rule out other possible causes. Choice B strengthens the argument by showing that volcanic eruptions occurred frequently before the extinction, but the dinosaurs continued to live. Thus, it is unlikely that the extinction was caused by a volcano and more likely that a meteor caused it. Choice A doesn't go far enough. Even if the volcanoes are rare, the extinction could have been caused by just one eruption. Choice C doesn't strengthen the argument. Other scientists' support of the hypothesis doesn't address the connection between the conclusion and the premise. Choice D has nothing to do with the argument, while choice E weakens the argument by indicating that a previous comet strike did not lead to an extinction.

5. **Answer: D.** This is a weaken question. The conclusion and premise are:

Premise: A tax increase 12 years ago didn't lead to an economic slump.

Conclusion: The president's opponents are mistaken when they blame the economic slump on the tax increase.

This argument follows two common patterns. First, it assumes there is a causal connection between tax increases and the state of the economy. Second, the argument attempts to draw a comparison between the current situation and the situation 12 years ago. One way to attack an analogy argument is to show that the two things being compared are not similar. Choice D does this by indicating that another factor offset the negative effects of the tax increase on the economy. Thus, it is more likely that the president's opponents are correct. Choice A is incorrect because the issue is whether the tax increase is hurting the economy, not the size of the increase. Similarly, public support for the tax increase has nothing to do with its effect on the economy, so choice B is out of scope. Choice C strengthens the argument by indicating that economics conditions were the same 12 years ago. If conditions were the same and a tax increase didn't hurt the economy, it's likely that an increase now wouldn't either. Choice E is not within the scope of the argument because time in office is not at issue.

6. **Answer: A.** This is an assumption question. Its conclusion and premises are:

Premises: (1) Ancient reptiles developed feathers as a way to insulate their bodies from the cold and regulate their body temperatures. (2) Many of these early feathered reptiles were unable to fly.

Conclusion: Today's flightless birds probably developed their feathers as a way to manage their body temperatures.

This argument uses the fact that many early feathered reptiles were unable to fly to conclude that flightless birds developed their feathers for the same reason. But it must be assuming that the feathers did not develop for some other reason. Perhaps the feathers developed first for flight, but the birds eventually lost that ability. Choice A correctly states the assumption of the argument because it indicates that the flightless birds did not develop the feathers for an ability that they now no longer have. Choice B does not address the link between the feathers of flightless birds and the feathers of reptiles. Choice C doesn't deal with flightless birds at all, so it cannot be correct. Choice D may be true, but it is not an assumption of the argument. The argument is only concluding why the flightless birds developed their feathers, not where they came from. Choice E is new information and not part of the argument.

Answers to Drill 2

1. **Answer: C.** The argument states that countries engage in objectionable practices but must follow a certain protocol in order to maintain diplomatic relations. In this case, Country X committed an objectionable act, but denied it was spying, thus following diplomatic protocol. The best answer is choice C, which indicates that diplomatic relations will continue as normal. There is no information to support choice A. Choice B is contradicted by the passage. Choices D and E may or may not be true based on the passage, but cannot be proved.
2. **Answer: B.** If some of the money spent on housing and entertainment by single professionals can be used by married professionals for other purposes and married professionals have more money to spend on discretionary funds, then the proper inference is that single professionals spend more on these areas than do married professionals. Choice B is thus the best answer. Choice A is a clever trap. The argument simply states that married couples have more money to spend, not that they do spend more. No mention is made of unmarried couples living together, so choice C is out of scope. The median income is irrelevant and the passage compares professionals with comparable incomes, so choice D is out of scope. Nothing in the passage provides information on the proportion of expenditures so choice E is not a valid inference.
3. **Answer: B.** The marketer contends that the product “has a very specific appeal” and that “customers who buy Luxuria brand suits have the sense that they are buying a product tailored especially for them.” Thus, the marketer would object to advertising the product to a large audience because it would contradict the product’s appeal, as choice B states. The remaining choices may or may not be true but don’t necessarily follow from the argument.
4. **Answer: E.** According to the economists’ argument, “the economic benefits achieved by voting are so negligible that the cost is never worth it.” If the economic benefit is never worth the cost, there must be some other reason people vote. Choice E states this. The proportion of voters is not mentioned, so choice A is out of scope. Choice B may seem tempting, since this might lessen transportations costs, but it is not a necessary inference. Choice C is contradicted by the passage and choice D is not necessarily true based on the information in the passage.
5. **Answer: D.** The passage states that a test with a less than 100 percent chance of success will misinterpret the actual situation with a chance equal to 100 percent minus the success rate of a test. Thus, a test with a 95 percent chance of success has a 100 percent to 95 percent = 5 percent chance of misrepresenting reality. Choice D is thus supported by the passage. Choices A and C are not inferences because the argument doesn’t say what actions “should” be taken. Choice B is not supported by the passage and choice E misstates what the passage says; there is a 5 percent chance the result is wrong, not a 5 percent chance the test should have indicated something else.

Answers to Drill 3

1. **Answer: C.** This is a resolve/explain question. First, find the two contradictory facts in the argument. Fact 1 is that black holes were “thought to be beyond the capabilities of science to observe because they are so dense that nothing, not even light, can escape their immense gravitational pull.” But fact 2 states that “scientists recently announced that a black hole has been detected at the center of the galaxy.” Ask yourself, “How could it be that scientists detected something that is so dense not even light can escape its pull?” The best answer will resolve this paradox. Choice A does not resolve the discrepancy. It only states that scientists are skeptical of the existence of black holes, which does nothing to explain how one could be detected. Choice B might be tempting, but it doesn’t resolve the issue. If the black holes do not allow light to escape, even the strongest telescope could not see them. Choice C is the best answer. The scientists are not observing the black hole directly; rather, they observe the “visible energy” of the matter being drawn into the hole. This explains how they can detect an object that is unobservable. Choice D presents a possible solution but it requires an assumption. If black holes aren’t as dense as predicted, perhaps light can escape them. Unfortunately, the answer choice doesn’t say that light can escape these less dense objects. If you have to add more information to the answer choice, it is not the correct answer. Choice E doesn’t help either. Even though the black hole is large, it still should be unobservable since no light escapes it.
2. **Answer: D.** This is a structure question. Some arguments contain more than one conclusion. This isn’t a common feature on the GMAT but it is something to be aware of. The main thrust of the passage is:

Premise: All humans agree that bad things should be avoided and most agree that pain is bad.

Conclusion: There is no compelling reason to subject animals to any sort of scientific experimentation.

Now use process of elimination on the answer choices. You should eliminate choice E because nothing in the argument undermines anything else. Choice A is incorrect because the first bolded phrase is not a “scientific fact.” Nor is it a baseless emotional appeal as choice B states. The second sentence in the argument provides support for the first statement. Choice C doesn’t make sense because all parts of the argument are relevant. That leaves choice D as the best choice.

3. **Answer: D.** This is another structure question, although these questions may be considered inference questions as well. In either case, the best answer will be supported by the premises of the argument. In this argument, the premises are:

1. Male and female mosquitoes both feed on nectar and fruit juice, but only the female mosquito engages in blood drinking.
2. Female mosquitoes have developed abilities to ensure they locate their prey.
3. The female's special diet is necessitated by the mosquito's need for protein to aid in the development of its eggs.

Which conclusion is supported by these facts? Not choice A because the facts are mostly about female mosquitoes. Plus, simply stating that the female can detect body heat does not imply that the male cannot. Choice B is directly contradicted by the premises. Choice C may be true, but the argument does not prove such a statement. There is no evidence comparing the male and female sense of smell. Choice D is the best fit because the premises lead naturally to this conclusion. Male mosquitoes do not drink blood, but females do to "aid in the development of its eggs." If nectar and fruit juice were sufficient alone, why would the female need blood? Choice E is similar to choice C; it may be true, but there is not enough information to prove it since no facts are offered about the relative consumption levels of males and females.

4. **Answer: A.** This is an evaluate the argument question. First, find the premise and the conclusion of the argument:

Premise: The present leadership in government will not endorse any action that harms labor unions.

Conclusion: It is apparent that the government leadership will not support the new regulations.

Now, think about the assumption necessary in this argument. The premise states that the government will not endorse any "harmful" actions, so you must assume that the new regulations are harmful to unions. The right answer will address this assumption, as choice A does. If the new regulations did have an adverse effect, then it is likely the government would not support them. If they did not, it is less likely. Thus, choice A is useful for evaluating the argument. Choice B is close, but premise is that the government will not endorse "any action that harms labor unions." So even if one or two unions benefit, the government still wouldn't endorse an action that harmed unions. Thus, choice B isn't useful for evaluating the argument because it doesn't address the assumption. The remaining choices are all irrelevant to the argument. Choice D is out of scope since it doesn't matter if the unions have spoken out on the policies. Leadership support is out of scope in choice C. Choice E addresses what the legislature does or does not know, which is also out of scope.

5. **Answer: B.** This is a parallel the reasoning question. You need to understand how the argument works first, so find the premise and the conclusion. They are:

Premise: The critic's own behavior has little bearing on the validity of the critique being offered.

Conclusion: It is foolish to respond to criticism by impugning the critic's behavior.

In general terms, what is the argument's pattern? Basically this argument boils down to *don't reject a critique because of the critic's behavior*. Now, let's try to match that with the answer choices.

- A.** This argument breaks down to *don't criticize something if you engage in it*. This is not the same argument because it focuses on the person doing the critique instead of the person responding to the critique, so eliminate it.
- B.** This the best choice. It says *don't criticize the philosopher's argument simply because the philosopher's actions may be inconsistent with it*.
- C.** This argument basically states *if both parties are equally at fault, don't be the first to admit a mistake*. That is not very close to the original argument at all.
- D.** This is somewhat close, but the basic pattern is *don't get upset at an action that everybody does*. That's not quite the same, though, as ignoring or rejecting an individual's critique because of his or her actions.
- E.** This choice has the same problem as choice A, in that it focuses on what the critic is doing, not how to respond to the critic.

CHAPTER 8

THE ANALYTICAL WRITING ASSESSMENT

The Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA) portion of the GMAT requires you to write two essays: Analysis of an Issue and Analysis of an Argument. You'll have 30 minutes to write each essay and the essays are always the first part of your GMAT. The AWA essays tend to be neglected by many test takers, many of whom focus their efforts on the math and verbal sections. However, this strategy may hurt your business school application.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE AWA?

It is true that your AWA essay score is not as important as your composite math and verbal score on the GMAT to business school admissions officers. However, a poor score on the AWA can certainly send up a red flag. After all, the AWA essays are not simply testing your ability to write. Writing is certainly an important skill in the business world, but you don't have to be an accomplished writer to do well at business. The AWA tests your ability to think, and as the name of the section implies, your ability to think analytically. So a low score on this section may indicate a weakness not only in writing ability but also in analytical ability. Plus, a great score on the AWA can only be another positive thing on your application and it may distinguish you from another applicant with a similar composite score.

HOW IS THE AWA SCORED?

Each of your AWA essays is scored on a scale of 0 to 6. Two graders will read your work and assign it a score, with scores of 6 awarded to the top essays and scores of 0 reserved for essays written on topics other than the one assigned or written in gibberish. The scores of the graders will be averaged to arrive at a final AWA score. The graders spend about 2 minutes reading your essays and one of the graders is—no joke—a computer. The test writers have developed a computer program that evaluates your essays based on predetermined criteria. If the computer's grade and the human's

grade differ by more than a point, a second human grader is brought in to resolve the discrepancy.

The AWA graders are looking for an essay that:

- explores ideas and develops a position on the issue with insightful reasons and/or examples
- is clearly well written
- demonstrates superior control of language, including diction and syntactic variety
- demonstrates superior facility with the conventions (grammar, usage, and mechanics) of standard written English but may have minor flaws

■ HOW TO SCORE WELL ON THE AWA

The guidelines above basically translate into: write a good essay. The first point is crucial. In order to score well, you need to have a position on the issue. No waffling allowed. Furthermore, you need to support your position with appropriate reasons and examples. There's nothing worse to a GMAT grader than an unsubstantiated conclusion. Your essay also needs to be well written, in the sense that it is organized, coherent, and free from major errors in English usage.

When writing your AWA essays, your main directive should be to consider your audience. GMAT graders (the human ones at least) are going to be somewhat dazed after reading hundreds of essays on the same topic. You should strive to make these poor souls' job as easy as possible. If you give them an essay that is on topic, well-organized, and easy to read, then they are more likely to reward you with a strong score.

Fortunately, much of the work you've done in this book can help your essay. Your analysis of Reading Comprehension passages provides insights into how to organize and develop an essay. The Critical Reasoning section shows you how premises, conclusions, and assumptions work for an argument. And Sentence Corrections make you aware of common grammatical errors. Your task is to put those skills to work on your AWA essays.

The two essays are different tasks with different directions, but they have much in common. Be sure to read this entire chapter for specific instruction on each essay task. The following information applies to both essays.

■ THREE MAJOR KEYS TO GOOD AWA ESSAYS

The three biggest contributors to a strong AWA score are:

- organization
- support
- syntactical clarity

Organization

Essays that are well organized are, first and foremost, easy to read. That's important because you don't want to make the grader's job any more taxing than it already is and poorly organized essays are hard to follow. Additionally, a clearly organized argument is easy to follow. Since the graders are looking at your analytical abilities, it helps if they can follow your argument. If your organization is unclear, your argument is also likely to come across as unclear.

A properly organized essay contains an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Additionally, each paragraph has its own organizational structure that presents the information in it in a logical way.

Support

Your work on Critical Reasoning introduced you to premises, the facts or reasons given to support a conclusion. Your essay needs to contain some sort of supporting evidence, whether it be statistics, facts, or logical justifications. Without proper support, your essay will not be able to effectively develop a position on an issue.

Syntactical Clarity

Syntax is a fancy word for how you organize words into sentences. Clear sentences have good syntax, while garbled sentences have bad syntax. Your primary goal on the AWA is to write prose that is clear and easy to understand. Save the bombast for your creative writing circle. Remember, your grader has likely read hundreds of essays before yours, so he or she might be disinclined to untangle a confusing sentence and figure out exactly what you are trying to say. On the GMAT, it's better to write clearly and simply than to overreach and risk writing sentences that may be more complex but harder to understand.

OTHER FACTORS THAT MAY AFFECT YOUR SCORE

In addition to the major points mentioned in the scoring guidelines above, there are a few other characteristics that may affect your essay score. It is important to note that GMAT graders are reading your essay in a fairly short amount of time and thus are not going over it with a fine-toothed comb. Nor are the graders given any sort of rubric by which to add or subtract points from your score. That is, there is no rule that states "deduct .5 points for every 3 grammatical errors in the essay." Instead, the graders are assessing your essay holistically—they are gauging its overall effectiveness. Still, there are a few little things that may stand out to a grader and influence your score.

Length

In general, longer essays tend to receive higher scores than shorter essays. A long essay conveys a few things to grader: you have a lot of insight into

the topic and you are able to address numerous issues relevant to the discussion. These abilities are likely to impress a grader. On the other hand, a long essay can also convey the message that you like to ramble incoherently and are unable to organize and prioritize your thoughts. Long essays that are effectively organized, use clear language, and contain strong support will probably score better than short essays that do the same. But the length of an essay that fails to appropriately address the big three elements won't count for much. To put it simply, write the longest good essay that you can.

Impressive Examples

When supporting your argument, you're going to have to come up with examples that help illustrate the point you're trying to prove. Since test takers have a mere 30 minutes to write these essays and won't know the topic beforehand, the graders are used to seeing a lot of hypothetical examples. The way to make your essay stand out and boost your score is to use real, not hypothetical, examples. If you can add relevant facts, statistics, and case studies to your essay, you'll distinguish yourself as an informed and worldly business school candidate. Of course, the clincher is that the examples you use have to be relevant to the topic at hand and contribute to your main point, so you can't just pad your essay with whatever random facts you happen to remember on test day.

Vocabulary

Although the AWA is not about the caliber of your writing, it doesn't hurt to throw in a few impressive vocabulary words. However, only use words you actually know. An astute grader who reads the sentence "There is no doubt that this sedulous argument suffers from many flaws" may grimace at your inappropriate word choice without any consequences but a preponderance of these errors may negatively impact your score. Also, try to make sure that you only use words that you can spell correctly. While spelling is not one of the criteria the graders use (it is understood that your essay is basically a first draft and will have a few mistakes) nothing screams red flag like reading "One primery objection with this position is the underlieing assumption." A few spelling errors are okay, but a mass of them may hurt your score.

Sentence Variety

Even though your essay will be graded by a computer, that doesn't give you permission to write like a machine. Bland sentences that repetitively use the same structure and word choice will not impress the grader. Give your essay a little boost by trying to use a variety of sentence structures. Look back at the kinds of sentences found on the Sentence Correction, Reading Comprehension and Critical Reasoning sections and try to incorporate some of those styles into your writing. Make a conscious effort to mix up

your word choice a little. Try not to use the same verb in two sentences in a row. For example, if you write “One problem is that the argument assumes...” in one sentence, your next sentence could say “Additionally, the argument presupposes...” instead of repeating “assumes.”

Typing

The word processing feature used for the AWA is quite rudimentary. You’ll have basic keyboard functions, plus three other features: cut, paste, and undo. These functions work exactly as they do on your computer. You can cut text from a portion of your essay and paste it in at a different point. Or you can use undo to delete your typing. Sadly, there is no spell check or grammar check feature.

Unfortunately, the AWA favors good typists. Not only does the limited time necessitate a fairly fast typing speed, but longer essays also tend to score better and too many typos can hurt your score. Of course, in this day of email and text messaging, more and more people are accomplished at typing, but if you are not one of those people, it wouldn’t hurt to do a little typing practice before test day. Yes, it is a bit silly to have to practice typing just to take a standardized test, but you’re working towards a bigger goal—business school—and every little bit helps.

ANALYSIS OF AN ISSUE STRATEGY

In the words of the GMAT test writers, the Analysis of an Issue essay tests your ability to “explore the complexities of an issue or opinion and, if appropriate, to take a position that is informed by your understanding of those complexities.” The specific directions for the task are as follows:

In this section, you will need to analyze the issue presented and explain your views on it. There is no “correct” answer. Instead, you should consider various perspectives as you develop your own position on the issue.

Take a few minutes to think about the issue and plan a response before you begin writing. Be sure to organize your ideas and develop them fully, but leave time to reread your response and make any revisions that you think necessary.

Scores will take into account how well you—

- organize, develop, and express your ideas about the issue presented
- provide relevant supporting reasons and examples
- control the elements of standard written English

There are some important points to take from these directions and scoring criteria. The key words and phrases are: “various perspectives,” “develop your own position,” “organize your ideas” and “provide relevant supporting reasons and examples.” Make sure you hit all these big points and you will rack up a great score on the AWA.

Here are the steps to success:

- read the prompt
- brainstorm reasons/examples and pick a thesis
- outline your essay
- write
- proofread

■ READ THE PROMPT

Obviously, this must be your first step. The prompt provides the issue that you need to explore. Some prompts make a simple declarative statement, such as:

“A corporation’s responsibility is only to its shareholders, not to society at large.”

Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the opinion expressed above. Support your point of view with reasons and/or examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Other prompts present an issue with two options. Here’s an example:

“Many people believe that success in an endeavor is defined by the final product. Others feel that it is not the final product, but the process that defines success.”

Which definition of success do you subscribe to? Why? Develop your position by citing reasons and/or examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

In either case, the goal is the same: read the prompt and figure out the central issue. Jot this central issue down on your scratch paper, as well as important concepts from the prompt. For example, for the first prompt, you might write down the following:

Issue: Where does the corporation’s responsibility lie?

Key concepts: Corporate responsibility, society vs. shareholders, role of corporation in larger society

For the second prompt, your initial notes might look like this:

Issue: What’s the best definition of success?

Key concepts: End product vs. process; value of learning and experience; importance of quality product/goal met.

Your work on this first step gets you grounded for the essay ahead. After reading the prompt, you should understand exactly what the issue is and also what some of the crucial concepts related to that issue are.

BRAINSTORM REASONS/EXAMPLES AND PICK A THESIS

This step is where most of the heavy lifting gets done. Once you know what point you want to prove and what examples you will use to prove it, the essay will basically write itself. Thus, *make sure you spend adequate time on this step*. Pre-planning before you start writing is of the utmost importance. If you start writing without thinking through the issue or planning the structure of your essay, you run the risk of writing a muddled essay. Or, you might write yourself into a corner and find yourself with no time left and an essay that doesn't say what you want it to say. So take the time to brainstorm some examples and pick a thesis.

After you've written down the central issue and the key concepts, make a "pro" and "con" column on your scratch paper. Start thinking of reasons for both agreeing with and disagreeing with the prompt (or for choosing one option or another). Continue working with the first prompt for the rest of this chapter. Here's what you should have so far:

Issue: Where does the corporation's responsibility lie?

Key concepts: Corporate responsibility, society vs. shareholders, role of corporation in larger society.

Now make a "pro" and "con" list of examples and reasons. The issue prompts are designed so that there are compelling arguments for both sides and of course, there is no "right" answer. For this argument, the "pro" side is that a corporation is responsible only to its shareholders. The "con" side is that a corporation has a responsibility not only to its shareholders but also to society. After brainstorming, you may come up with the following:

Pro	Con
1. Corporations exist to make money	1. Corporations couldn't function without society
2. Shareholders have invested in the corporation and deserve a return	2. Giving back to society helps corporations
3. By benefiting shareholders, corporations fulfill their obligations to society at large	

Now comes the tough part: coming up with some examples that support or illustrate these reasons. Good supporting examples can be the difference between a score of a four and a five or of a five and a six, so it's worth spending a little time trying to generate them. For this topic, numerous examples abound: corporations such as Google, Enron, Apple, and Wal-Mart could illustrate a variety of points about corporate responsibility. On other topics, you may find yourself struggling to find appropriate examples. Don't spend more than a few minutes on this part because you can still write a good essay without specific examples. At the same time, all the AWA essay topics are available (either online or in practice materials published by the GMAT writers) so a few hours spent compiling a list of examples in a variety of fields might pay off on test day.

After you have some reasons and examples for the “pro” and “con” sides, take a step back and appraise the situation. Which side has more evidence and more compelling arguments? For which position will you have an easier time writing an essay? Both of these considerations are important. You don’t have to actually believe the position you write about; sometimes, you may disagree with the prompt, but find it easier to come up with examples and reasons for the other side of the argument. Simply choose whichever thesis allows you to write the strongest essay. In this case, perhaps you find the “con” side easier to argue. You can find a lot of examples of corporations that are successful and that give back to society, and you might also have some examples of profit-driven companies that have ended up in bad situations.

Your thesis needs to do two things. First, it should state which position you take. Second, it should state why you believe this position is correct. Take a moment to jot your thesis down on your scratch paper. It should look something like this:

Thesis: Corporations should not make shareholders their primary responsibility because they can reap greater benefits by being a productive part of society.

Now that you have a thesis, you can outline the basic structure of your essay.

■ OUTLINE YOUR ESSAY

You don’t have to outline your essay in great detail, but you should note the general direction your essay will take. For this step, you want to figure out which reasons and examples will make the strongest points and how you want to arrange these points. In the “write” step there will be more detail about how to organize your essay and what sort of information to include, but for now it’s sufficient to say that the essay needs to have an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The introduction and conclusion of your essay will be fairly straightforward, so you should focus your time on figuring out how the body paragraphs will look. Most importantly, you need to consider how to incorporate the *opposing side* of the argument (the side you are *not* defending) into your essay. As you saw in the directions, the graders want to see that you’ve considered ‘various perspectives’ on the issue.

Take a moment to lay out the plan of your essay. A typical outline will look like this:

1. introduction
2. body 1: “pro” side of the argument
 - corporations exist to make money
 - shareholders have invested in the corporation
3. body 2: “con” side of the argument
 - corporations couldn’t function without society
4. body 3: “con” side, continued
 - giving back to society helps corporations
5. conclusion

This is the most basic essay outline, but it’s not the only one. Some other suggested templates will appear later in this section of the chapter.

WRITE

The writing part of the essay should really be the easiest part. If you’ve come up with some reasons and examples and have a thesis, you’re ready to go. Most people who have trouble “writing” actually don’t have difficulty with writing *per se*; they have trouble writing because they don’t know what exactly they are trying to say. But if you’ve completed the previous steps, you should know more or less what it is you want to say about the topic. Also, in 30 minutes, you’re not expected to produce a piece of enduring literature. Your writing just has to convey to the grader what your position is on the issue and why. Nothing fancy is required. After writing a few practice essays, you’ll find that the basic elements of introduction, body, and conclusion paragraphs are always the same. The only thing that changes is the particular details they contain. Look at each type of paragraph in detail and figure out what major elements it should contain.

Introduction Paragraphs

Introduction paragraphs set the tone for your entire essay. First impressions are important, especially when the GMAT graders are reading each essay in about two minutes. You want to show the grader right off the bat that you understand the issue and have analyzed it sufficiently. To that end, your introduction paragraph needs to contain the following elements:

- an initial treatment of the issue
- a brief overview of arguments on both sides of the issue
- a thesis statement

Initial Treatment of the Issue

Start your essay by establishing the central issue in question. Do not simply restate the prompt verbatim; give your own take on the subject matter. If possible, try to start your essay with an interesting, attention-getting device (a “hook”) to grab the reader’s interest. A fact, statistic, quote, or brief anecdote does the job quite nicely. If you can’t think of anything interesting, just launch into the topic. For example, your initial treatment of the issue might look like this:

- In 2001, the spectacular rise and equally disastrous fall of Enron brought an important issue to the forefront of the public consciousness. Does a corporation owe its primary responsibility to its shareholders or must it balance its quest for profits with an awareness of its role in society?

This example uses a nice reference to frame the issue, which is introduced in the second line. Try it on your own. Using the same topic, write the first two or three lines of your essay:

Overview of the Arguments

Once you’ve established the issue, briefly lay out the opposing and supporting arguments. You’re not going to go into a lot of detail here—that’s what the body paragraphs are for. Instead, you want to let the grader know that you are aware of the complexities of the argument. Here’s how you might do that:

- In 2001, the spectacular rise and equally disastrous fall of Enron brought an important issue to the forefront of the public consciousness. Does a corporation owe its primary responsibility to its shareholders or must it balance its quest for profits with an awareness of its role in society? There are those who argue that a corporation’s primary responsibility must be to its shareholders. After all, they reason, a corporation’s sole function is to make money and everything follows from this function. But, the other side argues, a corporation can only function as a part of the larger society that makes it possible. Now you try:

Thesis Statement

Once you've given the grader a taste of the various perspectives on the issue, it's time to present your position on the issue. You may use the first person, as in "I believe..." although some feel that writing in the third person gives an essay a more professional feel. Either way, you must make it clear to the grader which side you will be defending in your essay. For example:

- In 2001, the spectacular rise and equally disastrous fall of Enron brought an important issue to the forefront of the public consciousness. Does a corporation owe its primary responsibility to its shareholders or must it balance its quest for profits with an awareness of its role in society? There are those who argue that a corporation's primary responsibility must be to its shareholders. After all, they reason, a corporation's sole function is to make money and everything follows from this function. But, the other side argues, a corporation can only function as a part of the larger society that makes it possible. That fact alone makes it clear that corporations cannot have a primary responsibility to shareholders alone. While it is undeniable that corporations exist to make money, they could not do so without society. Thus, the corporation's primary responsibility should not be to its shareholders.

Make sure you give the grader some idea of *why* you've chosen one side over the other. In this case, it is the line "While it is undeniable that corporations exist to make money, they could not do so without society." This justification should tie together your analyses in the forthcoming body paragraphs.

Write your thesis below:

Body Paragraphs

Now that you've established the topic and your position on it, it is time to support your thesis with reasons and examples. You'll do this in two ways. First, you must marshal supporting evidence and justifications for your belief. Second, you should demonstrate why the opposing evidence is insufficient or unconvincing. For each, your body paragraphs will need to have the following components:

- a topic/transition sentence
- an explanation of the reason/example
- an explicit discussion of how the reason/example relates to the thesis

Topic/Transition Sentence

The first sentence of each of your body paragraphs needs to do two things. First and foremost, it needs to introduce the reason/example that you are going to discuss. Secondly, it should connect the information in the paragraph with what came before. Using transitions improves the flow of your essay and helps the reader follow your argument. Here's an example of the topic/transition sentence for the first body paragraph. Recall from the outline that this body paragraph is going to look at the opposing side of the argument.

- Those who believe the corporation's primary responsibility is to the shareholder offer some compelling arguments.

This sentence refers back to the introduction by echoing the concepts in the first paragraph. It also makes it clear that the purpose of this paragraph is to examine the arguments of the "pro" side of the argument. Your next body paragraph might begin with a sentence such as:

- While the arguments for corporate responsibility to shareholders are less than convincing, there are many valid reasons for believing corporate responsibility lies elsewhere. One major reason is that corporations cannot function without society.

Like the previous example, this is a good way to start a body paragraph. It ties the discussion back to the preceding paragraph and then indicates the focus of the paragraph at hand.

Explanation of Reason/Example

Next, explain to the reader what the primary reasons for your position are. Provide as much detail as is necessary to make your point, but beware of rambling. Generally, three or four sentences should be sufficient. You only have 30 minutes, so make your point and move on. Here's an example:

- While the arguments for corporate responsibility to shareholders are less than convincing, there are many valid reasons for believing corporate responsibility lies elsewhere. One major reason is that corporations cannot function without society. The society provides the corporation with tools for its success. Local governments provide tax breaks and land for construction. The community furnishes the company with employees and in many cases, customers for its products. In addition, the infrastructure of the society allows the corporation to transport its product.

Take another one of the reasons (or another one you've come up with) and write the first two parts of a body paragraph.

Relate Back to Thesis

After you’ve detailed your reasons and perhaps provided an example, you need to place the information in context by tying it back to your thesis statement. It’s important to have your thesis written down on your scratch paper so you can easily refer to it. Every piece of information in your essay should contribute in some way to your thesis. If it doesn’t, it doesn’t belong in the essay. For example:

- While the arguments for corporate responsibility to shareholders are less than convincing, there are many valid reasons for believing corporate responsibility lies elsewhere. One major reason is that corporations cannot function without society. The society provides the corporation with tools for its success. Local governments provide tax breaks and land for construction. The community furnishes the company with employees and in many cases, customers for its products. In addition, the infrastructure of the society allows the corporation to transport its product. Since corporations depend so heavily on society, they cannot neglect their responsibility to it. To do so opens corporations up to censure, sanction, or worse. But acknowledging their debt to society allows corporations to continue to make profits and meet their shareholders’ needs.

Basically, you can’t just leave your example or your reasons hanging at the end of the paragraph. Use a sentence or two to tell the grader how your reasoning supports your thesis.

Write a complete body paragraph with the components outlined above:

The Conclusion

A conclusion has only one major function, but it is an important one: it summarizes your position on the issue. Although a concluding paragraph does not add anything substantial to the development of your position, it is very important to have one. A conclusion neatly ties up your argument and gives your essay a sense of completeness. Without a conclusion, an essay can sometimes seem to run out of steam or end abruptly. Both can

negatively affect your score. The conclusion doesn't have to be very long. A few final thoughts will suffice, like so:

- Ultimately, corporate profits are an important part of any corporation's well-being. But this fact does not imply that a corporation's primary responsibility is to make money for its shareholders. Such a single-minded pursuit of profit can have disastrous consequences for a corporation. Without paying sufficient attention to the larger society that nurtures it, a corporation may find itself out of business—making no profit at all.

PROOFREAD

Before you leave your essay, spend one or two minutes proofreading your essay. Make sure you have all the necessary parts of your essay and the examples you meant to use. Make sure your essay is free from grammatical and spelling errors. Correct any typographical errors. Doing these things will clean up the overall appearance of your essay and can only positively affect your score.

► *Drill 1*

Do this drill under timed conditions, typing your essay on a word-processing program, just as you would on the real GMAT. Do not be tempted to use the spell check and grammar check features. You have 30 minutes to complete the essay. Remember, take the first five minutes to examine the topic, choose a position, and write an outline of your essay.

“True leaders lead by example. A leader who commits any kind of personal indiscretion should be removed from his or her position.”

Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the opinion stated above. Support your views with reasons and/or examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Analysis

One of the best ways to improve your writing is to compare it to examples of top scoring papers. Here's an essay that would get a 6 on the AWA.

- In today's voyeuristic society, people are obsessed with the downfall of public figures, especially powerful ones. One of the more enticing dramas is that of the disgraced politician or business leader whose questionable personal conduct becomes the object of intense scrutiny. But these morality tales beg the question of whether a leader's personal failings are enough to disqualify him or her from a position of power. One side of the argument holds that any personal misconduct makes one unfit to lead, while others believe that a good leader need not be perfect. It is my position that a good leader's personal failings do not hinder one from being a true leader, provided the leader's response to the misconduct shows leadership.

- Many of those who argue that leaders should be removed after committing an indiscretion believe that the very act of doing something wrong disqualifies one from leadership. They point to the example of disgraced president Richard Nixon as a prime example of this line of reasoning. During his re-election campaign—an election that most polls indicated he would win handily—Nixon ordered his operatives to break into the Democratic headquarters at the Watergate Hotel. They were caught, and eventually the investigation led all the way to the top, to Nixon himself. Nixon's actions caused the American people to lose faith in him and without the faith of the people, Nixon was unable to lead. Convincing as this argument may appear, it is not the whole story. It was not necessarily Nixon's misconduct that jeopardized his leadership, it was the way he handled it.
- A true leader demonstrates leadership even in his darkest moments, a lesson not heeded by Nixon. If a leader acknowledges the mistake, asks for forgiveness, and learns a lesson from the act, his leadership abilities remain intact. After his impeachment trial, a contrite Bill Clinton appealed to the American people for forgiveness. Although Clinton had engaged in an extramarital affair with a White House intern, a morally improper action, his response to the scandal allowed him to transcend his actions. By acknowledging his wrongful deeds and asking the American people to forgive him, Clinton demonstrated leadership in his handling of the situation. After the scandal, his approval ratings rebounded and he finished his term with the continued support of the American people. Clinton's behavior demonstrates that a leader can have personal faults and still lead; what matters is how the leader deals with the crisis.
- Nixon and Clinton present two starkly different scenarios. In both, a leader commits a grave personal indiscretion. But in one case, Nixon's, the leader loses the trust placed in him by his constituents and in the other, the leader maintains his influence and good standing. The difference is in how each man handled the scandal. A leader who demonstrates leadership through and through will always be qualified to lead, even in his darkest hour.

This essay meets all the criteria for a top score. The author takes a clear position in the first paragraph: "It is my position that a good leader's personal failings do not hinder one from being a true leader, provided the leader's response to the misconduct shows leadership." This thesis is explored through the use of two examples: Nixon and Clinton. The author considers both sides of the issue and shows why a leader's response to a crisis is the deciding factor. The essay is well organized and focused, with no extraneous information or digressions. The writing is good, shows a variety of sentence structures and decent vocabulary.

Compare your essay to this response and to the criteria established in this chapter for a top essay. Of course, your essay may vary in a number of significant ways from the example, but it should develop a position, consider various perspectives, support a position with appropriate reasons and examples, be well organized, and demonstrate a command of standard English.

OTHER STRUCTURES

The basic structure used in the essay above is:

- introduction
- body 1: “pro” side of the argument
- body 2: “con” side of the argument
- conclusion

But that is not the only way to organize an essay. You may find that format restrictive, or perhaps another format more comfortable. For example, you might try the following structure:

- introduction
- body 1: first argument for “pro” side
- refute “pro” argument with argument for “con” side
- body 2: second argument for “pro” side
- Refute “pro” argument with argument for “con” side
- conclusion

This structure allows you to interweave the arguments for both sides, almost like a debate. Or you could mix things up a bit with this structure:

- introduction
- body 1: argument for “pro” side
- body 2: argument for “pro” side
- body 3: argument for “con” side
- body 4: argument for “con” side
- conclusion: evaluate both sides and arrive at thesis

This structure is a bit harder to pull off but has the advantage of being relatively uncommon. Graders tend to reward essays that move beyond the basic intro-body-conclusion structure, provided of course, that the essays are effective.

The point is that there are many ways to format your essay. As long as you accomplish the major tasks of the assignment, you will get a good score on the AWA.

ANALYSIS OF AN ARGUMENT STRATEGY

While the Analysis of an Issue task measures your ability to create your own argument, the Analysis of an Argument essay measures your ability to evaluate someone else’s argument. In the words of the test writers, the argument essay tests “your ability to formulate an appropriate and constructive critique of a specific conclusion based upon a specific line of thinking.”

The specific directions for the Analysis of an Argument essay are:

In this section, you will be asked to write a critique of the argument presented. *You are not asked to present your own views on the subject.*

Take a few minutes to evaluate the argument and plan a response before you begin writing. Be sure to leave enough time to reread your response and make any revisions that you think are necessary.

Scores will reflect how well you—

- organize, develop, and express your ideas about the argument presented
- provide relevant supporting reasons and examples
- control the elements of standard written English

There are two key points in these directions; “evaluate the argument,” and most importantly (it’s so important the directions place it in italics), “*do not present your own views on the subject!*” Some test takers end up basically writing an analysis of an issue essay when they are supposed to be writing an analysis of an argument essay. Your job here is simply to evaluate and critique the argument presented, not offer your own position on the subject. If you do not answer the question appropriately, you can say goodbye to a good score.

The steps for the Analysis of an Argument essay are somewhat similar to the steps for Analysis of an Issue:

- evaluate the argument
- brainstorm assumptions
- outline your essay
- write
- proofread

EVALUATE THE ARGUMENT

The Analysis of an Argument task presents you with a passage exactly like the passages found on Critical Reasoning questions. Your first task is to break the argument down into its conclusion and premises. Here is a sample prompt:

The following appeared as an editorial in a major newspaper:

“U.S. opposition to immigration is hurting our economy. Historically, the U.S economy has transitioned from an agricultural to a manufacturing to a service-based one. Now, the economy is increasingly becoming a high tech, knowledge-based economy. The workforce is becoming more educated and more highly skilled. A continuous influx of immigrants is filling positions in agricultural, manufacturing, and service sectors of the economy. Without immigrant labor, the Industrial Revolution would not have reshaped America. Similarly, without immigrant labor, the Knowledge Revolution will not achieve its true economic impact.”

Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument. In your discussion, be sure to analyze the line of reasoning and the use of evidence in the argument. For example, you may need to consider what questionable assumptions underlie the thinking and what alternative explanations or counterexamples might weaken the conclusion. You can also discuss what sort of evidence would strengthen or refute the argument, what changes in the argument would make it more logically sound, and what, if anything, would help you better evaluate its conclusion.

As you can see, the instructions for the prompt are quite extensive. But they basically ask you to do tasks that you should be familiar with from Critical Reasoning questions: consider assumptions, evaluate the argument, weaken or strengthen the conclusion. In order to accomplish these tasks, you need to first find the conclusion and premises of the argument and jot them down on your scratch paper:

Premises: (1) The economy is increasingly becoming a high tech, knowledge-based economy; (2) The workforce is becoming more educated and more highly skilled; (3) Without immigrant labor, the Industrial Revolution would not have reshaped America; (4) A continuous influx of immigrants is filling positions in the agricultural, manufacturing, and service sectors of the economy.

Conclusion: U.S. opposition to immigration is hurting our economy; without immigrant labor, the Knowledge Revolution will not achieve its true economic impact.

Once you have the conclusion and the premises, the next step is to find the assumptions underlying the argument.

■ BRAINSTORM ASSUMPTIONS

These arguments are usually full of holes, even more so than Critical Reasoning arguments. You should be able to find two or three major assumptions necessary to make the conclusion work. Look for the common argument patterns: causal, sampling, and analogy. Some of the assumptions in this argument are:

- what was true of the Industrial Revolution will be true of the Knowledge Revolution
- immigrants will continue to take jobs in the agricultural, manufacturing, and service sectors
- a high tech knowledge-based economy is aided by the influx of immigrants

Of course, there may be others, but you only need two or three good assumptions to construct your essay. Now that you have the major assumptions, you can plan the general format of your essay.

■ OUTLINE YOUR ESSAY

Once you have laid out the assumptions of the argument, you need to evaluate the strength of these assumptions. Since your task is to evaluate and critique the logic of the argument, you must consider how viable these assumptions are. Generally, the arguments on the GMAT are poorly reasoned, so you should basically be looking for reasons the assumptions fail to lead to the conclusion. Think about ways you could weaken and strengthen the argument. A typical essay plan looks like this:

1. Introduction: Describe the premise and conclusion of the argument.
2. Body 1: Detail first assumption; explain problems with it and how to weaken/strengthen the argument.
3. Body 2: Repeat for second assumption.
4. Body 3: Repeat for third assumption.
5. Conclusion: Give final evaluation of the validity of the argument.

This is the most basic format for the argument essay, but there are others. More will be described at the end of this section.

■ WRITE

The writing process on the argument essay is in some ways a little easier than that of the issue essay. Because the focus of this essay is the logic of the argument, there is no need for creative prose. Instead, you are merely presenting the flaws of the given argument in an objective fashion. Your delivery on the argument essay can be straightforward and simple and you can still get a great score, provided your analysis is sound. Following is what each paragraph needs to contain.

Introduction Paragraph

Your introduction paragraph needs to lay out the basic parts of the argument and let the reader know what the purpose of the essay is. Your introduction should have these elements:

- a statement of the conclusion
- a statement of the premises
- a statement of the essay's purpose

State the Conclusion and Premise

Your first goal is to let the grader know that you understand the basic parts of an argument. To that end, you should identify the argument's conclusion and the premises that support it. Here's a sample:

- The editorial concludes that opposition to immigration will hurt the U.S. economy by stifling the potential of the Knowledge Revolution. The author presents several premises to support this conclusion. The first is that the U.S. economy is becoming more and more dependent on technology. The second is that the workforce is also changing, becoming more educated and highly skilled. The final premise is that immigration was necessary to an earlier economic revolution in the United States.

For this part of the essay, you don't have to do anything more than list what the argument states. Remember, you are not to give your opinions or views on the issue. You are only to analyze the argument's logic.

State the Essay's Purpose

This is basically the same as providing the grader with your thesis. The major difference is that your thesis on argument essays is almost always going to be the same. Your goal for this essay is to evaluate the argument and decide how valid the author's line of reasoning is. Since these arguments are bad, your thesis should be that the argument does not have a well-supported conclusion. You should also mention that there are several assumptions underlying the argument. Here's an example:

- The editorial concludes that opposition to immigration will hurt the U.S. economy by stifling the potential of the Knowledge Revolution. The author presents several premises to support this conclusion. The first is that the U.S. economy is becoming more and more dependent on technology. The second is that the workforce is also changing, becoming more educated and highly skilled. The final premise is that immigration was necessary to an earlier economic revolution in the United States. However, the editorial's conclusion does not follow logically from the premises offered because there are several questionable assumptions underlying the argument.

Write your own introduction, using the argument below:

The following appeared in a business magazine:

“Excite Inc. was the leading developer of both home video game systems and the software used on the systems. But after almost ten years of unchallenged dominance over the market, Excite Inc. was dislodged from its perch by GameTech. GameTech focused its resources on developing a superior game system and left the software development to other companies. This model demonstrates that it is better for a company to do one thing extremely well instead of doing a few things moderately well.”

Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument...

Body Paragraphs

The body paragraphs of an argument essay should describe the assumptions necessary to the argument and then critique them. A good critique should reveal the weaknesses of the assumptions and also show how the argument could be strengthened. Argument essays do not require specific examples and in many cases, specific examples would be inappropriate. Focus instead on dissecting the logic of the given argument. A body paragraph should have the following components:

- a description of an assumption
- an explanation of the weaknesses of the assumption
- an evaluation of the conclusion in light of the assumption

Describe the Assumption

First, explain to the grader what the assumption is and why this assumption is necessary to the argument. An example follows:

- The first assumption necessary to this argument is that a proper analogy exists between the events of the Industrial Revolution and the current situation of the U.S. economy. If the Industrial Revolution is not comparable to the Knowledge Revolution, one of the author's major premises is undercut.

Once you've described the necessity of the assumption, your next goal is to explain why the assumption is questionable or flawed. Before you do that, try out this first step on the GameTech argument for which you wrote an introduction.

Explain the Weaknesses of the Assumption

After detailing the assumption, point out the flaws or problems with it. Think of how you weakened arguments on Critical Reasoning questions.

Many of the techniques that you used on those questions are applicable to this essay. Here's an example:

- The first assumption necessary to this argument is that a proper analogy exists between the events of the Industrial Revolution and the current situation of the U.S. economy. If the Industrial Revolution is not comparable to the Knowledge Revolution, one of the author's major premises is undercut. One major flaw with this assumption is that much has changed since the late nineteenth century, when the Industrial Revolution occurred, and today. It would be unlikely that the economic conditions then are comparable to those of today. Furthermore, the qualities of the immigrants themselves are not the same as they were in the past. These major differences make the assumption that the past is similar to the future an unlikely one.

Try this step out by adding a couple of lines to the body paragraph you started writing for the GameTech argument:

Evaluate the Conclusion

Once you've analyzed the assumption, re-evaluate the author's conclusion in light of this new information. Since you're exposing the flaws in the argument, your evaluation should state that the conclusion is weakened. However, in order to boost your score, you should try to mention some facts or evidence the author could cite to fix the flaw and strengthen the conclusion. Consider the following example:

- The first assumption necessary to this argument is that a proper analogy exists between the events of the Industrial Revolution and the current situation of the U.S. economy. If the Industrial Revolution is not comparable to the Knowledge Revolution, one of the author's major premises is undercut. One major flaw with this assumption is that much has changed since the late nineteenth century, when the Industrial Revolution occurred, and today. It would be unlikely that the economic conditions then are comparable to those of today. Furthermore, the qualities of the immigrants themselves are not the same as they were in the past. These major differences make the assumption that the past is similar to the future an unlikely one. This assumption makes the author's conclusion a weak one. If the author could demonstrate that conditions during the Industrial Revolution mirrored those of today, the argument would be strengthened.

Continue with this same format for the other two body paragraphs.

Evaluate the conclusion and try to strengthen the argument by adding a couple of lines to the body paragraph you have been composing for the GameTech argument:

Conclusion Paragraph

The conclusion paragraph of an argument essay doesn’t need to do much, but as with the issue essay, you need to have one. All you have to do is make a final evaluation of the soundness of the argument, like so:

- Because the argument includes several questionable assumptions, the conclusion does not logically follow from the premise. The author makes unwarranted assumptions about the similarity of different time periods and motivations and influence of immigrants in the U.S. economy. In order to make the argument more convincing, the author has to address these flaws.

Write a conclusion for the GameTech argument:

 PROOFREAD

Before you leave your essay, spend one or two minutes proofreading your essay. Make sure you have all the necessary parts of your essay and that your essay is free from grammatical and spelling errors. Correct any typographical errors. Doing these things will clean up the overall appearance of your essay and can only positively affect your score.

OTHER STRUCTURES

The Analysis of an Argument essay has a little less room for variation in structure. The basic structure gets the job done efficiently and effectively. A variation on the basic theme dedicates one body paragraph to weakening the argument and one to strengthening the argument:

1. Introduction: Describe the premises, conclusion, and assumptions of the argument.
2. Body 1: Weaken the argument by attacking the assumptions.
3. Body 2: Strengthen the argument by bolstering the assumptions.
4. Conclusion: Present final evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the argument.

Another variation goes right to the assumptions in the argument:

1. Body 1: Detail first assumption; explain problems with it and how to weaken/strengthen the argument.
2. Body 2: Repeat for second assumption.
3. Body 3: Repeat for third assumption.
4. Conclusion: Evaluate the strength of the argument based on the assumptions.

As with the Analysis of an Issue essay, the structure of the essay is not the primary concern; the primary concern is to analyze the argument and demonstrate your ability to critique the logic of a line of reasoning. As long as your essay is easy to follow and addresses the major concerns of the assignment, you'll get a good score on this essay.

► **Drill 2**

Do this drill under timed conditions, typing your essay on a word-processing program, just as you would on the real GMAT. Do not be tempted to use the spell check and grammar check features. You have 30 minutes to complete the essay. Remember, take the first five minutes to evaluate the argument, find the assumptions, and write an outline of your essay.

The following appeared in a magazine advertisement:

"If you want to lose weight and improve your health, the PowerFlex weight machine is the best solution. Diets are ineffective because fad diets force you to stop eating the foods you love and are hard to stick with. But the PowerFlex machine allows you to develop more muscle. Muscle takes more calories to maintain than fat, so you can keep eating the foods you love and lose weight. Plus, studies show that people with a higher muscle mass have lower cholesterol and fewer heart problems than those with lower muscle mass."

Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument. In your discussion, be sure to analyze the line of reasoning and the use of evidence in the argument. For example, you may need to consider what questionable assumptions underlie the thinking and what alternative explanations or

counterexamples might weaken the conclusion. You can also discuss what sort of evidence would strengthen or refute the argument, what changes in the argument would make it more logically sound, and what, if anything, would help you better evaluate its conclusion.

Analysis

Take a look at a top scoring essay. Read through this essay and notice how it evaluates and critiques the argument in question.

- The advertisement concludes that the PowerFlex machine is the best way to lose weight and improve health. The advertisement offers three main premises to support this conclusion. The first is that fad diets are difficult to stick to. The second related premise is that muscle burns more calories than fat and the final premise is that studies show people with higher muscle mass have lower cholesterol and fewer heart problems than others. Although the argument may appear convincing, it relies on several assumptions of questionable validity.
- One major assumption made by the argument is that fad diets are the only type of diets that people use to lose weight. In reaching its conclusion that the PowerFlex machine is the best way to lose weight, the argument asserts that “fad diets” are hard to stick to. But the argument fails to consider that not all people who diet are on fad diets. There may be other diets that are effective that do not involve sacrificing the foods people love. Because the argument fails to account for this assumption, its conclusion is called into question. The advertisement needs to demonstrate that all diets, not just fad diets, are inferior to the PowerFlex machine in order to bolster the conclusion.
- A second major assumption centers on the PowerFlex’s approach of increasing muscle mass. The advertisement assumes that people who want to lose weight and have better health want to increase their muscle mass. This assumption is not necessarily true, as there may be people, such as the elderly, that want to achieve these goals but not by increasing muscle mass. Also, the argument further assumes that using the PowerFlex machine regimen is easier to stick to than following a diet. It may be harder for people to use the machine than to restrict their caloric intake. The weakness of these assumptions severely diminishes the argument’s conclusion. Without demonstrating that increasing muscle mass is in fact an achievable goal desired by people who wish to lose weight and become healthier, the argument falters.
- A final problem with the argument is that it presupposes a causal link between increased muscle mass and lower cholesterol and fewer heart problems. The premise simply states that these qualities are correlated, but there is no evidence that one causes the other. It could be that a third factor, such as diet, is the cause of the lower cholesterol levels. The advertisement needs to establish that there is a definite causal link between the factors discussed or else the conclusion is questionable.
- Overall, the advertisement’s conclusion is not adequately supported by its premises. The argument requires the reader to accept too many questionable assumptions. The advertisement must do a better job addressing the flaws in the argument in order to make the conclusion more convincing.

This essay contains all the necessary elements for a top score. It effectively identifies the major parts of the argument. Further, it details the major assumptions necessary to the argument and explains why those assumptions are questionable. Lastly, it shows ways in which the argument could be strengthened and additional information the author could provide to fix the problems. Compare your essay to this sample and see how well your essay addresses the main components of the argument task. Make sure you identify the parts of the argument, detail the major assumptions in the argument, show the weaknesses of the assumptions, and provide ways to strengthen the argument.



PART II

PRACTICE GMAT VERBAL SECTIONS

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PRACTICE SECTIONS

Congratulations! You've worked hard to develop a more consistent, analytical approach to the GMAT Verbal section and master the strategies necessary to improve your score. The last step is to apply your new techniques to practice questions so you can refine your approach and work on weak areas.

This section contains three diagnostic verbal sections. Like the real GMAT, each section contains 41 questions that represent the distribution of Sentence Correction, Reading Comprehension, and Critical Reasoning questions on the actual exam. Each section will contain AWA essay topics as well. Give yourself 75 minutes to complete the multiple-choice portion of the section and 30 minutes for each essay. After you finish the test, evaluate your performance. Make sure to read the explanations that accompany the tests, even for the questions you got right. There are also sample responses to the essays so you can compare your essays to top-scoring models.

An answer sheet is provided for each practice section. Mark your answers for the multiple choice portion on the answer sheet. For the AWA essays, write your responses on separate sheets of paper.

Instructions for each type of verbal question appear after the answer sheet. Feel free to refer back to these instructions at any time, though by now you probably know them fairly well.

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ANSWER SHEET

PRACTICE GMAT VERBAL SECTION 1

Answer Sheet

1 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	12 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	23 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	34 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
2 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	13 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	24 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	35 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
3 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	14 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	25 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	36 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
4 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	15 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	26 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	37 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
5 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	16 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	27 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	38 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
6 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	17 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	28 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	39 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
7 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	18 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	29 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	40 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
8 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	19 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	30 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	41 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
9 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	20 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	31 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	
10 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	21 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	32 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	
11 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	22 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	33 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	

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PRACTICE GMAT VERBAL SECTION 1

■ MULTIPLE CHOICE PORTION: 41 QUESTIONS, 75 MINUTES

Directions

Sentence Correction The question presents a sentence, part of which or all of which is underlined. Beneath the sentence you will find five ways of phrasing the underlined part. The first of these repeats the original; the other four are different. If you think the original is best, choose the first answer; otherwise choose one of the others.

This question tests correctness and effectiveness of expression. In choosing your answer, follow the requirements of standard written English; that is, pay attention to grammar, choice of words, and sentence construction. Choose the answer that produces the most effective sentence; this answer should be clear and exact, without awkwardness, ambiguity, redundancy, or grammatical error.

Critical Reasoning For these questions, select the best of the answer choices given.

Reading Comprehension The questions in this group are based on the content of a passage. After reading the passage, choose the best answer to each question. Answer all the questions following the passage on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passage.

1. Due to recent budget constraints, Mercy Hospital is being forced to eliminate 10 percent of its x-ray technicians, the employees responsible for ensuring proper x-rays, adjusting and fixing equipments, and processing clerical reports. The administrators have decided that to preserve the hospital's standards of expert care, the technicians who take the longest time, on average, to fulfill their duties will be the ones let go.

Which of the following, if true, most seriously calls into question the administrators' criterion for choosing which workers to release?

- A. If the technicians at Mercy Hospitals are let go, they will be able to find jobs at other local hospitals.
 - B. The most complicated and time-consuming x-ray procedures are assigned to the most experienced and qualified x-ray technicians.
 - C. Surgeons cannot proceed with surgery until the results of the x-rays are processed.
 - D. The cost of an x-ray at Mercy Hospital is no higher than the cost of x rays at other local hospitals.
 - E. X-ray technicians make up a smaller proportion of the hospital staff than do nurses.
2. Unlike the streets of New York City, which were arranged in a grid to facilitate commerce, Washington, D.C. was planned to emphasize the various monuments and symbols of the country.
- A. the streets of New York City, which were arranged in a grid to facilitate commerce, Washington, D.C. was planned
 - B. New York City's streets, which were arranged as a grid to facilitate commerce, Washington, D.C. was planned
 - C. the streets of New York City, which was arranged as a grid facilitating commerce, Washington, D.C. was planned
 - D. New York City, in which the streets were arranged in a grid to facilitate commerce, Washington, D.C. was planned
 - E. New York City, which had streets arranged in a grid that facilitated commerce, the streets of Washington, D.C. were planned
3. According to anthropologists, early religious beliefs were probably not borne of a desire to seek comfort after death but was more likely to begin as a way to explain the mysterious phenomenon of the natural world.
- A. was more likely to begin as a way
 - B. were more likely a way
 - C. began most likely as a way
 - D. were more likely to have begun as a way
 - E. began, more than likely, as a way

Questions 4–7 are based on the following passage.

Western analytical philosophy has contributed two major elements to the theory of the political good. It is unfortunate that the value of the first element, personalism, has been diluted by its close association with the second element, valuational solipsism.

- (5) Personalism was developed in response to the belief that nations, states, religions, or any other corporate entity have interests that transcend the interests of the individuals that comprise them. The central tenet of personalism, therefore, is that institutions are good or bad insofar as they are good or bad for the individuals that are affected
- (10) by them. Institutions are not good, for example, because they preserve the nation's culture or because they protect the natural world, unless preserving the nation's culture or protecting the natural world is good for the individual. As a philosophical assumption, personalism is most useful in countering arguments for practices that harm
- (15) individuals in the name of "the greater good," or the "society at large." The personalist credo basically states that when it comes to interests, there are no interests but human interests.

- However, an excessive devotion to the theory of personalism may lead one to fall into the trap of valuational solipsism. The word
- (20) solipsism derives from the Latin for "lone self" and the theory of valuational solipsism takes the isolated individual as the sole judge of value. The problem with this viewpoint is obvious. By using the individual as the measure of the good, valuational solipsism neglects to consider the whole range of social values that are part of the political
- (25) experience. These values include citizenship, status, and community, none of which can exist without reference to other individuals. Instead, political theories are based entirely on non-social values such as happiness, material welfare, and utility, which are not dependent on interactions with others. Such a view obscures a fundamental
- (30) quality of the political good.

4. The primary purpose of the passage is to

- A. compare and contrast two important theories of the good in political philosophy
- B. defend a theory of the political good based on personalism from the attacks of valuational solipsists
- C. argue that an acceptance of personalism necessarily leads to an endorsement of valuational solipsism as well
- D. evaluate the impact that two major ideas have on the theory of good in political philosophy
- E. reject the theory of valuational solipsism as an appropriate way to arrive at the definition of the political good

5. The passage suggests that a follower of personalism would be most likely to reject which one of the following policies?
- A. A union head decrees that all members must strike when the union strikes because it increases the power of the union.
 - B. A politician intends to lower taxes on the middle class to put more of the workers' money back into their hands.
 - C. A school decides to abandon its uniform standards after the student body votes against them.
 - D. The owner of a company decides to cancel the company insurance policy in order to increase his profit.
 - E. The head of a religious institution announces that its members no longer have to give part of their incomes to the church.
6. According to the passage, the author objects to which aspect of valuational solipsism?
- A. Adherents of it are less likely to recognize the contributions of personalism.
 - B. It includes values such as happiness, material welfare, and utility.
 - C. It fails to consider essential elements of the political good.
 - D. It places too much value on the individual at the expense of the institution.
 - E. It justifies policies that cause harm to individuals for the sake of the greater good.
7. According to the passage, the primary value of the personalist assumption is
- A. it refutes the belief that institutions have interests that transcend the interests of individuals
 - B. it serves as a counterbalance to the excessive nature of valuational solipsism
 - C. it demonstrates that institutions are incapable of being good or bad
 - D. it aids in preserving a nation's culture
 - E. it provides an effective rejoinder to certain types of justifications

8. Telex Mobile Phone Corporation had experienced three straight years of declining market share before its CEO decided to restructure the company. The customer service department was reorganized and given a larger budget and a new management team was brought in to increase the customer experience. After a year under the new structure, Telex's market share has begun to increase, vindicating the CEO's decision.

In order to evaluate whether the increase in market share was due to the CEO's decision, it would be most useful to know which of the following:

- A. What portion of the mobile phone market is now controlled by Telex Corporation?
 - B. Have Telex's competitors restructured their companies as well?
 - C. Was the decision to bring in a new management team part of the CEO's plan?
 - D. Do surveys of Telex's former customers show that most of them were dissatisfied with the service they received?
 - E. Has Telex launched an advertising campaign promoting its new customer service department?
9. The Supreme Court has ruled that universities must allow the armed forces to recruit on campus unless they want to risk losing federal funding.
- A. must allow the armed forces to recruit on campus unless they want to risk losing federal funding
 - B. should allow the armed forces to recruit on their campuses unless they want to risk losing their federal funding
 - C. should allow armed forces recruitment on campus or else they will lose their federal funding
 - D. must allow the armed forces to recruit on its campus in order to not risk a loss of federal funding
 - E. must allow the armed forces to recruit on campus or else risk losing federal funding
10. The personal computer has been hailed as one of the greatest inventions of the twentieth century. Business people can produce documents, track purchases and inventory, and access files all at the click of a mouse. And yet, people are no more productive today than they were in the days of typewriters, adding machines, and file cabinets.

Which of the following, if true, best explains the discrepancy outlined above?

- A. It takes longer to teach a person how to use a computer than it does to teach a person how to use a typewriter.
- B. Studies show that today's workers perform more redundant and unnecessary tasks than did workers of previous generations.
- C. Some industries still use adding machines and file cabinets, as well as computers.
- D. There are many jobs in the workplace that will never be able to be performed by a computer.
- E. Workers today work, on average, the same number of hours per week as did workers from earlier generations.

11. The percentage of students with grade point averages higher than 3.0 in the English department is higher than the percentage in any other department. However, the percentage of students with grade point averages higher than 3.5 is highest in the Physics department.

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

- A. The percentage of students with grade point averages higher than 3.7 is higher in the Physics department than it is in the English department.
 - B. The English department has the second highest percentage of students with grade point averages higher than 3.5.
 - C. Some students in the English department have grade point averages higher than 3.0 but lower than 3.5.
 - D. The English department has more total students than does the Physics department.
 - E. The average grade point average of the Physics department is higher than the average grade point average of the English department.
12. **Despite recent efforts by the Winter Games commission to grow the sport, the proportion of athletes interested in taking up bobsledding have not risen much in the past few years.**
- A. the proportion of athletes interested in taking up bobsledding have not risen much in the past few years
 - B. the proportion of athletes interested in taking up bobsledding have not risen considerably over the past few years
 - C. still the proportion of athletes interested in taking up bobsledding has yet to rise much over the past few years
 - D. still the proportion of athletes interested in, and taking up, bobsledding has not risen much in the past few years
 - E. the proportion of the athletes interested in taking up bobsledding has not risen much in the past few years

Questions 13–15 are based on the following passage.

One of the most peculiar living creatures known to biologists is the bdelloid rotifer. This microscopic creature has a host of properties, from the surprising to the truly bizarre. Bdelloid rotifers can live in any type of fresh water, from hot springs near the Dead Sea to (5) partially frozen ponds on Antarctica. These creatures are surprisingly resilient; when their watery homes freeze up or dry out, the rotifers enter into a state of suspended animation. When in this state, rotifers can withstand temperatures as low as one degree above absolute zero, the temperature of the void of space, for over an hour. The suspended (10) rotifers are picked up by wind currents and are blown about the globe. When they land in a suitable home, the rotifers re-animate and return to their primary business—eating bacteria and producing new rotifers. The rotifers reproduce so rapidly that a single organism could fill a medium-sized lake with its descendants in about two (15) months.

Strangely, there are no male bdelloid rotifers. Or if there are, biologists have never discovered them. There are over five hundred species of bdelloid rotifers and not one of them has any male members. As may be expected, there is little variation in the rotifer (20) genome. Biologists have found that certain genes may differ in individual rotifers by as much as 30 percent. From this variation and the known rate of mutation in the rotifer genome, biologists conclude that the rotifers gave up sex between 40 and 80 million years ago.

13. The passage implies which of the following about male rotifers?

- A. There have never been male rotifers.
- B. Male rotifers, if discovered, would have more variation in their genome than do females.
- C. It is possible that male rotifers exist.
- D. Male rotifers existed 40 million years ago.
- E. Male rotifers have a higher rate of mutation than females do.

14. According to the passage, a rotifer might be found in all of the following locations EXCEPT

- A. a thermal pool
- B. outer space
- C. the atmosphere
- D. a dried up puddle
- E. an iceberg

15. The passage implies which of the following about the state of suspended animation used by the rotifers?
- A. Rotifers are oblivious to their outside surroundings when in the state of suspended animation.
 - B. A rotifer in a state of suspended animation can survive indefinitely.
 - C. Rotifers do not enter a state of suspended animation unless their homes freeze up or dry out.
 - D. Rotifers enter the state of suspended animation when they want to move to a more desirable habitat.
 - E. Rotifers in a state of suspended animation have some ability to sense the conditions of the environment around them.
16. After it became clear that the poll tax had been disenfranchising thousands of poor and minority voters, the practice was declared unconstitutional.
- A. After it became clear that the poll tax had been disenfranchising thousands of poor and minority voters, the practice was declared unconstitutional.
 - B. After becoming clear that the poll tax was disenfranchising thousands of voters, mostly poor and minority, the practice was declared unconstitutional.
 - C. After it had become clear that the poll tax disenfranchised thousands of mostly poor and minority voters, the practice was declared as unconstitutional.
 - D. Once it had become clear that the poll tax had been disenfranchising thousands of poor and minority voters, it was declared to be unconstitutional.
 - E. Once it was clear that the poll tax had disenfranchised thousands of voters, poor and minority, the practice was declared unconstitutional.

17. The environmentally harmful emissions of cars can be reduced in two ways. One way is to replace gasoline with a cleaner burning fuel, such as ethanol or gasohol. The second way is to use a hybrid engine that is powered by both electricity and combustion. Hybrid engines emit less pollution than do clean burning fuels, so an individual driving a hybrid car benefits the environment the most.

The argument above depends on which of the following assumptions?

- A. Individuals have the option of choosing between hybrid cars and cleaner burning fuels.
 - B. Over the lifetime of the car, the cost of using cleaner burning fuels is more than the cost of buying a hybrid car.
 - C. The beneficial effect to the environment of using both a hybrid car and cleaner burning fuel is no greater than using a hybrid car alone.
 - D. People have an incentive to reduce environmentally harmful emissions.
 - E. There is no way to completely eliminate the environmentally harmful emissions of cars.
18. Cognitive scientists argue that the ability to recognize oneself in a mirror—an ability limited to humans, apes, and perhaps to dolphins as well—is an indication of self-awareness.
- A. the ability to recognize oneself in a mirror—an ability limited to humans, apes, and perhaps to dolphins as well—is an indication of
 - B. the ability to recognize oneself in a mirror—an ability limited to humans, apes, and perhaps dolphins—is an indication of
 - C. the ability to recognize themselves in a mirror—an ability limited to humans, apes, and perhaps to dolphins as well—is an indication for
 - D. recognizing oneself in a mirror, as do humans, apes, and perhaps dolphins as well, is an indicator for
 - E. recognition of oneself in a mirror—an ability limited to humans, apes, and dolphins perhaps—is used as an indicator for

19. Pirated copies of movies, compact discs and books have long plagued the producers of such goods. Unauthorized and illegal copies of movies, compact discs, and books cost the industry billions of dollars each year. Recently, the government has decided to redouble its efforts to curb the illegal distribution of pirated materials, although it has angered the publishing industry by not increasing its efforts to stop pirated books.

Which of the following, if true, most strongly supports the government's decision not to increase its efforts to stop pirated books?

- A. No other industries are angered by the government's decision.
 - B. Books cost more to print and distribute than do movies or compact discs.
 - C. Much of the illegal activity the government is attempting to stop takes place overseas.
 - D. Because of the cost involved in printing books, most pirates convert books to digital formats stored on compact discs before selling them.
 - E. Book publishing brings in a smaller amount of revenue than do either the movie or music industry.
20. Historians of film have traced the first appearance of the "pie in the face" gag to a 1913 short called *A Noise From The Deep*; famed comedian Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle is credited with bringing the routine to the screen.
- A. have traced the first appearance of the "pie in the face" gag to a 1913 short called *A Noise From The Deep*
 - B. have traced to a short called *A Noise From The Deep* in 1913 the first appearance of the "pie in the face" gag
 - C. has traced the first appearance of the "pie in the face" gag to *A Noise From The Deep*, a short from 1913
 - D. has traced the "pie in the face" gag's first appearance to a short in 1913, *A Noise From The Deep*
 - E. have traced the "pie in the face" gag to its first appearance in a 1913 short, *A Noise From The Deep*

21. According to the American College of Preventive Medicine, mandatory seat-belt use laws increase seat belt wearing from about 15 percent to 45 percent and there is a reduction in mortality and serious injury as well.
- A. mandatory seat-belt use laws increase seat belt wearing from about 15 percent to 45 percent and there is a reduction in mortality and serious injury as well
 - B. mandatory seat-belt use laws increase the wearing of seat belts to 45 percent from about 15 percent and reduce mortality and serious injury as well
 - C. mandatory seat-belt use laws increase seat belt usage by anywhere from 15 percent to 45 percent and reduce mortality and serious injury
 - D. mandatory seat-belt use laws results in an increase in the wearing of seat belts by 15 percent to 45 percent and in a decrease in mortality and in serious injury
 - E. mandatory seat-belt use laws both increases the wearing of seat belts by 15 to 45 percent and decreases mortality and serious injury

Questions 22–25 are based on the following passage.

Economists have long recognized a persistent and unfounded belief among the population which has come to be known as the anti-foreign bias. As a result of this bias, most people systematically underestimate the economic benefits of interactions with foreign
(5) nations. Some psychologists believe that this bias is rooted in a natural distrust of the “other,” while others believe that a form of folk wisdom, seemingly in accord with common sense but nonetheless incorrect, explains the bias. This wisdom asserts that in any transaction there is a winner and a loser and any foreign nation that wants to
(10) engage in trade must be doing so because it seeks its own advantage. But nothing could be further from truth.

No less an authority than Adam Smith, one of the fathers of the modern free market system, spoke glowingly of foreign trade in his influential treatise *Wealth of Nations*. “What is prudence in
(15) the conduct of every private family, can scarce be folly in a great kingdom,” said Smith. His point is simple. A baker trades his bread to the cobbler for shoes and both men benefit from the trade because of the value of specialization. The same principle works for nations. Even more startling, a basic economic theorem, the
(20) Law of Comparative Advantage, states that mutually beneficial trade is possible even if one nation is less productive than the other. Suppose a citizen of Country X can produce either 10 computers or five bushels of wheat and a citizen of Country Y can produce either three computers or two bushels of wheat. If one citizen
(25) from Country X switches from producing wheat to computers and three citizens from Country Y switch from producing computers to wheat, there is a net gain of one computer and one bushel of wheat.

22. The passage is primarily concerned with which of the following?

- A. Arguing for an increase in trade with foreign nations.
- B. Providing a historical context for a long-standing belief.
- C. Demonstrating the fallacy of a particular way of thinking.
- D. Illustrating an economic principle through an example.
- E. Describing Adam Smith’s contributions to the theory of trade.

23. The author most likely mentions the “baker” and the “cobbler” in order to
- A. provide a concrete illustration of an economic principle
 - B. discuss the types of goods available during Adam Smith’s time
 - C. evaluate an example used in Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*
 - D. show that all trade is based on specialization
 - E. give a real world example of the importance of foreign trade
24. The author most probably uses the word “startling” in reference to the Law of Comparative Advantage because
- A. it is surprising that the general public is unaware of the Law of Comparative Advantage
 - B. the Law proves that all foreign trade is mutually beneficial
 - C. it is puzzling that no one before Adam Smith thought of the Law
 - D. the Law of Comparative Advantage holds even when there is an imbalance in the capabilities of the nations
 - E. most countries do not consider the Law of Comparative Advantage when devising their trade policies
25. As it is described in the passage, which of the following most closely resembles “folk wisdom?”
- A. A farmer decides that it is going to rain after scanning the sky for dark clouds.
 - B. A child asks his parents why the sky is blue and the parents reply “because it is.”
 - C. A driver believes taking local roads instead of the highway will allow her to reach her destination faster because there will be less traffic on the local roads.
 - D. A person spends 10 dollars on lottery tickets every week because he believes that “someone has to win.”
 - E. A mother tells her child to put on a jacket so he won’t catch cold, even though colds are caused by viruses.
26. In the past few years, there has been a significant decline in the public’s consumption of trans fat, a particularly unhealthy type of unsaturated fat. This decrease coincides with a public health campaign to encourage healthier eating habits. Therefore, the decline in consumption of trans fat must be due to the effects of the health campaign.

Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the conclusion reached above?

- A. The food producers who used the most trans fat in their products recently switched to a different type of fat because it is cheaper.
- B. On average, people today consume less trans fat than did people a few years ago.
- C. Most trans fat consumed by the public is created by industry to give products a longer shelf life.
- D. People who consume large amounts of trans fat have a higher risk of coronary heart disease.
- E. The health campaign required food producers to list the amount of trans fat in each of their products.

27. Some historians believe that in terms of historical progression, the democratic ideal is the final stage. They argue that democracy has defeated all other competing ideologies and that there will be no further advances. But these historians have not considered that it is impossible to know for certain that progress had ended when one is still part of that progression.

The argument as a whole is structured to lead to which of the following conclusions?

- A. The democratic ideal is not the final stage of historical progression.
 - B. A new ideology will eventually overtake democracy in the progression of historical movements.
 - C. The idea that democracy is the final stage in a historical progression is not true.
 - D. No other ideology will arise to challenge democracy.
 - E. It is impossible to know whether the democratic ideal is the final stage of a historical progression.
28. Both intellectual property lawyers and research firms are waiting with great interest for the legal outcome of the debate on if corporations will be allowed to file patents for certain genetic sequences they discover.
- A. are waiting with great interest for the legal outcome of the debate on if corporations will be allowed to file patents for certain genetic sequences they discover
 - B. are waiting with the greatest interest for the legal outcome of the debate on if corporations should be allowed to file patents for certain genetic sequences discovered by them
 - C. have been waiting with great interest for the legal outcome of the debate on whether corporations will be allowed to file patents for the genetic sequences they have discovered
 - D. are waiting with great interest for the legal outcome of the debate on whether corporations will be allowed to file patents for certain genetic sequences the corporations discover
 - E. have been waiting with great interest to see the legal outcome of the debate of whether corporations would be allowed to file patents for the discovery of certain genetic sequences

29. Taxpayer: It is unfair to fund the new school initiative by raising property taxes. Many of the homeowners in the community do not have school age children, so they are being forced to pay for something that gives them no benefit.

Mayor: Your reasoning is flawed. The city pays for road repair and construction, which you benefit from, with the tax dollars contributed by all citizens, even those who don't drive.

The mayor responds to the taxpayer by

- A. providing a counterexample to the taxpayer's objection
 - B. attacking the taxpayer's understanding of the relationship between higher taxes and the new school initiative
 - C. questioning the taxpayer's assumption that only taxpayers without children think the tax increase is unfair
 - D. indicating that the taxpayer has inappropriately characterized the tax proposal as "unfair"
 - E. demonstrating that the taxpayer has not objected to other tax increases
30. While some social scientists bemoan the public's apparent lack of knowledge about current political issues, others see it as benefiting to the political process because only the informed voters are weighing in on the controversies.
- A. as benefiting to the political process
 - B. as benefiting of the political process
 - C. like a benefit to the political process
 - D. to be a benefit to the political process
 - E. as a benefit to the political process
31. Like compact discs, which have increased in storage capacity over the years, the technology used for digital video discs has allowed more and more data to be squeezed onto smaller spaces.
- A. Like compact discs, which have increased in storage capacity over the years, the technology used for digital video discs has allowed more and more data to be squeezed onto smaller spaces
 - B. As with compact discs, which have increased their storage capacity over the years, digital video discs has allowed more and more data to be squeezed into smaller spaces
 - C. As it has with compact discs, increasing their storage capacity over the years, the technology used for digital video discs have allowed more and more data to be squeezed into smaller spaces
 - D. Like compact discs, which have increased in storage capacity over the years, digital video discs have more and more data squeezed into smaller spaces
 - E. Like that of compact discs, which has increased in storage capacity over the years, the technology used for digital video discs has allowed more and more data to be squeezed onto a smaller space

32. New cars are being equipped with collision avoidance systems consisting of radar devices that provide drivers constant information about the proximity of other cars and objects. When the car gets too close to another car or a stationary object, the system applies the brakes and locks the seat belts. Widespread implementation of these systems will significantly reduce the number of car accidents.

The argument above relies on which of the following assumptions?

- A. The collision avoidance system will only prevent accidents involving cars that are both equipped with the system.
 - B. Most accidents the collision system prevents would involve careless drivers.
 - C. Even very attentive drivers cause some accidents.
 - D. The collision avoidance system will not otherwise affect the performance of the car.
 - E. There are not a significant numbers of accidents that must be avoided by not engaging the car's brakes.
33. **Ethicist:** There is no such thing as pure altruism. **Most people would like to believe that they are being selfless when they assist others, but in actuality, their actions are designed solely to benefit themselves.** People who perform so called altruistic acts are really satisfying their personal need for attention or glory.

The bolded phrases in the argument play which of the following roles in the argument?

- A. The first phrase supports the conclusion reached in the second phrase.
- B. The first phrase contains the ethicist's conclusion, while the second phrase provides a justification for this view.
- C. The first phrase is an assumption necessary to accept the truth of the second phrase.
- D. The second phrase provides the author's main conclusion and the first phrase explains the key term in the argument.
- E. The second phrase presents a conclusion that the first phrase challenges.

Questions 34–36 are based on the following passage.

Many new small businesses fail because they try to be everything to everybody. Such a strategy leads to a diffusion of critical resources and an inability to target a viable market. Instead, small businesses should seek to narrow their potential markets down to manageable
(5) sizes.

The first step in this process is to identify the distinguishing characteristics of the market in question. These characteristics include, but are not limited to, the needs of the customers, the degree to which those needs are being met, the demographics of the customers,
(10) and their geographic location. Additional research is necessary on the size of the market, the amount of money the market spends per year on products or services similar to those of the new business, and the forecasted growth of the market. Small businesses should also take into account the trends and potential changes that may impact
(15) their primary markets. They should also identify characteristics of secondary markets that may affect the primary market.

After identifying the proper market, a new small business should then attempt to calculate the percent of the market share it intends to capture and outline precisely how it intends to do so. Once there is
(20) an estimate of the potential market share, a small business should consider its pricing and gross margin targets. Finally, the small business should focus on strategies to reach the market. These could include radio and television broadcasts, publications, or any other type of source that has influence with the primary market.

34. The author would most likely agree that

- A. large businesses are better able to handle varied markets than are small businesses
- B. small businesses that fail do so because of their inability to target a viable market
- C. it is more important for a small business to target a viable market than to preserve critical resources
- D. no small business can be everything to everybody
- E. some small business owners pursue strategies detrimental to their economic interests

- 35. Which of the following can be inferred from the author's discussion of primary markets?**
- A. Small businesses should focus most of their efforts on gathering information about their primary markets.
 - B. Small businesses should not neglect to investigate features of markets other than the one in which they intend to operate.
 - C. It is difficult for a small business to capture a portion of the market when other companies have already established themselves in that market.
 - D. Without a media strategy, a small business will be unable to reach its primary market.
 - E. The most important characteristics of the primary market are the wants, needs, and demographics of the customers in it.
- 36. The organization of the passage is best described as**
- A. a prediction followed by advice on how to ensure that prediction comes true
 - B. a recommendation followed by a description of the actions necessary to heed it
 - C. a warning followed by a list of the steps needed to avoid an outcome
 - D. a conclusion supported by a number of premises
 - E. a command followed by a series of actions needed to implement it
- 37. Many non-profit companies pay their employees a wage significantly lower than the wage earned by employees doing comparable work in the for profit sector. A director of a non-profit company argued that the pay scale was justified because working at a non-profit company provides employees with valuable workplace experience.**
- Which of the following, if true, seriously weakens the explanation offered by the director?**
- A. Directors of non-profit companies earned salaries comparable to those of directors in the for profit industry.
 - B. Some employees at non-profit companies believe they are doing a service for society.
 - C. Most of the employees in the non-profit industry have worked there for more than five years.
 - D. After working in the non-profit sector for many years, some employees earn wages higher than those earned by some employees in the for profit sector.
 - E. Non-profit companies often provide services that for profit companies will not.

38. **Changes in the nature of both the workforce and the workplace mean that the once popular dream of working for the same company for twenty years, a reward of a gold watch, and retirement on a pension is fading.**
- A. mean that the once popular dream of working for the same company for twenty years, a reward of a gold watch, and retirement on
 - B. mean that the once popular dream of working for the same company for twenty years, being rewarded by a gold watch, and retirement on
 - C. mean that the once popular dream of working for the same company for twenty years, receiving a gold watch as a reward, and then retiring with
 - D. mean that the once popular dream that working for the same company for twenty years, and a reward of a gold watch, and a retirement on
 - E. mean that the dream, once popular, of working for the same company for twenty years, having a gold watch as a reward, and being able to retire on
39. **Increasing automation makes economic growth possible and raises standards of living. It also frees up people's time and allows them to pursue more leisure activities. However, automation also results in a proliferation of low-skill jobs as ever more complex tasks become automated. Because a person's sense of satisfaction in his or job is based on the level of skill needed for the job, increased automation_____.**
- Which of the following most logically completes the argument above?**
- A. will result in more and more people being unsatisfied with their jobs.
 - B. will not increase people's average level of happiness.
 - C. will cause people to become unsatisfied with their leisure activities.
 - D. will eliminate most people's jobs.
 - E. will cause a decrease in the quality of products.

40. Evidence from archeology, including stone tools, spearheads, and elaborate burial sites, indicate that the Neanderthals occupied Europe until extinction around 25,000 years ago, perhaps even coexisting and competing with modern humans.
- A. indicate that the Neanderthals occupied Europe until extinction around 25,000 years ago
 - B. indicates that the Neanderthals occupied Europe until their extinction around 25,000 years ago
 - C. indicates that until they went extinct the Neanderthals occupied Europe around 25,000 years ago
 - D. indicate that the extinction of the Neanderthals that occupied Europe 25,000 years ago
 - E. indicate that 25,000 years ago, the Neanderthals that occupied Europe went extinct
41. One of the largest and most difficult engineering projects ever undertaken, the Panama Canal cut the 14,000 mile trip from New York to San Francisco by sea to only 6,000 miles.
- A. the Panama Canal cut the 14,000 mile trip from New York to San Francisco by sea to only 6,000 miles
 - B. the Panama Canal cuts the 14,000 mile trip from New York to San Francisco by sea down to only 6,000 miles
 - C. the construction of the Panama Canal allows ships to cut the 14,000 mile trip from New York to San Francisco down to only 6,000 miles
 - D. the construction of the Panama Canal cut down the trip by sea from New York to San Francisco from 14,000 to 6,000 miles
 - E. the Panama Canal has cut from 14,000 miles down to 6,000 miles the trip by sea to San Francisco from New York

END OF THE MULTIPLE CHOICE PORTION.

ANALYTICAL WRITING PORTION: 2 ESSAYS, 30 MINUTES EACH

Analysis of an Issue: 30 minutes

In this section, you will need to analyze the issue presented and explain your views on it. There is no “correct” answer. Instead, you should consider various perspectives as you develop your own position on the issue.

Take a few minutes to think about the issue and plan a response before you begin writing. Be sure to organize your ideas and develop them fully, but leave time to reread your response and make any revisions that you think necessary.

Read the statement and the instructions that follow it and then make any notes that will help you plan your response.

“The greatest good is achieved when the largest number of people is happiest.”

To what extent to you agree or disagree with the opinion expressed above? Develop your position with reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Analysis of an Argument: 30 minutes

In this section, you will be asked to write a critique of the argument presented. *You are not asked to present your own views on the subject.*

Take a few minutes to evaluate the argument and plan a response before you begin writing. Be sure to leave enough time to reread your response and make any revisions that you think are necessary.

Read the statement and the instructions that follow it, and then make any notes that will help you plan your response.

The following appeared as part of the editorial of a major newspaper:

“Critics of the mayor’s plan to require mandatory testing of second, fifth, and eighth graders got a wake up call when the school district released the results of its district wide math tests. The school board reported that this year, over 78 percent of eighth graders passed the math exam, as compared to a mere 60 percent of eighth graders who passed the test when the plan was implemented four years ago. Clearly, these results show that the mayor’s plan is resulting in better performance for our schools.”

Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument. In your discussion, be sure to analyze the line of reasoning and the use of evidence in the argument. For example, you may need to consider what questionable assumptions underlie the thinking and what alternative explanations or counterexamples might weaken the conclusion. You can also discuss what sort of evidence would strengthen or refute the argument, what changes in the argument would make it more logically sound, and what, if anything, would help you better evaluate its conclusion.

END OF THE ANALYTICAL WRITING PORTION.

PRACTICE GMAT VERBAL SECTION 2

Answer Sheet

1 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	12 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	23 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	34 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
2 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	13 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	24 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	35 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
3 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	14 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	25 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	36 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
4 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	15 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	26 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	37 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
5 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	16 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	27 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	38 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
6 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	17 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	28 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	39 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
7 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	18 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	29 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	40 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
8 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	19 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	30 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	41 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
9 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	20 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	31 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	
10 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	21 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	32 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	
11 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	22 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	33 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	

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PRACTICE GMAT VERBAL

SECTION 2

■ MULTIPLE CHOICE PORTION: 41 QUESTIONS, 75 MINUTES

Directions

Sentence Correction The question presents a sentence, part of which or all of which is underlined. Beneath the sentence you will find five ways of phrasing the underlined part. The first of these repeats the original; the other four are different. If you think the original is best, choose the first answer; otherwise choose one of the others.

This question tests correctness and effectiveness of expression. In choosing your answer, follow the requirements of standard written English; that is, pay attention to grammar, choice of words, and sentence construction. Choose the answer that produces the most effective sentence; this answer should be clear and exact, without awkwardness, ambiguity, redundancy, or grammatical error.

Critical Reasoning For these questions, select the best of the answer choices given.

Reading Comprehension The questions in this group are based on the content of a passage. After reading the passage, choose the best answer to each question. Answer all the questions following the passage on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passage.

1. The No Child Left Behind Act requires states release the results of the yearly tests used to gauge student performance.
 - A. release
 - B. will also release
 - C. to release
 - D. must release
 - E. must eventually release

Questions 2–5 are based on the following passage.

Some people maintain that the whole of medieval society can be explained by the relationship between lord and vassal. But while much of Europe was divided into fiefs, the very lands from which the word feudalism derives, there were parts of the
(5) continent that did not fit so nice a definition. In fact, much of Italy, Spain, and southern France were not “feudal” in this sense.

Still, contractual obligations based on land ownership did define much of the social interaction of the period. Corporations, such as
(10) they were in this time, might be lords or vassals or both. For example, a monastery might be the lord to the tenant who resides in one of the manor houses on the monastery grounds, while at the same time the monastery pays its homage to the king. There was much room in the medieval system for ambiguities, but the exchange of
(15) obligations between superior and inferior was the key element of the society.

As the feudal system increased in scope, new social structures emerged to help maintain the convoluted networks of relationships required by feudalism. In order to justify the continued extraction
(20) of resources from the peasants, the kings and lords had to provide security. This exchange led to both the aristocracies that would come to control Europe for centuries to come and the rise of a dedicated warrior class, whose militaristic tendencies would be partly responsible for the years and years of warfare that would wrack Europe.
(25) Counterbalancing this, though, was the tradition of courtly behavior and romantic love that would not have arisen without the fighting class.

While the lives of the vassals were not to be envied, it would be remiss to think that medieval kings led luxurious lives. The
(30) great kings of early Europe had more freedom, but that freedom was tempered by the paucity of options available. There was not much more to do than eat, sleep, pray, hunt, and watch over the estate.

2. The primary purpose of the passage is to

- A. critique the position of those who believe medieval Europe was defined entirely by the feudal system
- B. compare and contrast medieval European social structures with modern ones
- C. describe the social conditions prevalent under the feudal system
- D. discuss the historical conditions that led to years of European warfare
- E. detail the daily lives of typical medieval citizens

3. Each of the following aspects of the feudal system is mentioned in the passage EXCEPT
- A. responsibilities based on land ownership
 - B. simultaneous occupation of roles
 - C. complicated societal relationships
 - D. pastimes of vassals
 - E. early form of taxation
4. It can be inferred from the author's discussion of kings in the passage that
- A. most medieval kings were highly religious
 - B. medieval kings were no freer than the vassals that served them
 - C. medieval kings provided their vassals with protection in exchange for material goods
 - D. kings were partly responsible for the wars that wracked Europe
 - E. medieval kings paid homage to no one
5. The author uses the term "feudal" in the first paragraph most probably to emphasize that
- A. social relations in Italy, Spain, and southern France were not based on obligations and land ownership
 - B. the word feudal has many different derivations
 - C. certain parts of Europe need a different word to define the social interactions that took place in them
 - D. Italy, Spain, and southern France did not have kings
 - E. although certain parts of the continent were not divided into fiefdoms, a system of obligations still existed
6. The Colorado beetle originally fed on a particular type of plant. However, after the potato was introduced into the beetle's habitat, female Colorado beetles began laying their eggs on the underside of the leaves of the potato plant. After about two weeks, the eggs hatch and the larvae begin feeding on the leaves, oftentimes devastating the potato crop. Most efforts to control the Colorado beetle are directed at using pesticides to kill the larvae.

Which of the following, if true, most strongly supports the view that controlling the Colorado beetle by using pesticides to kill its larvae is NOT advisable?

- A. Colorado beetles have many natural predators.
- B. Once mature, the Colorado beetle is no longer a threat to the potato crop.
- C. Because the Colorado beetle reproduces so rapidly, it quickly develops a resistance to toxins.
- D. Farmers would have to apply the pesticides numerous times during the growing season.
- E. Some of the Colorado beetle larvae will not be destroyed by the pesticide.

7. **In the experiment, the subjects will try and guess the symbol on the back of a card held up by a researcher so that they can test the validity of extrasensory perception.**
- A. and guess the symbol on the back of a card held up by a researcher so that they can test
 - B. and guess the symbol in the back of a card held up by a researcher and in doing so testing
 - C. guessing the symbol on the back of a card held up by a researcher so that they will test
 - D. to guess the symbol on the back of a card being held up by a researcher so that they test
 - E. to guess the symbol on the back of a card held up by a researcher in order to test
8. **Some firms offer all their employees partial ownership of the company in the form of stocks because it is believed employees will be more productive when they have a stake in the company's fortunes. Last year, employees at an electronics manufacturing company that offered stock were found to be 10 percent more productive than the average worker in the industry.**

Which of the following statements, if true, would provide the strongest counter to an argument that offering partial ownership increases productivity?

- A. Employees at an automobile plant with a similar program showed similar increases in productivity.
- B. Companies that offer partial ownership to their employees tend to bring in less revenue than companies that do not.
- C. Not all employees are interested in acquiring stock in the company they work for.
- D. Last year, the electronics manufacturing company replaced its production machinery with state of the art technology.
- E. Employees at the electronics manufacturing firm make slightly more than the industry average in wages.

9. Typically, crickets are solitary insects. In fact, often crickets will kill and eat other crickets in their territory. Yet, scientists have observed huge communities of crickets migrating to new homes.

Which of the following hypotheses best explains the contrast described above?

- A. Some crickets will not kill other crickets in their territories.
 - B. Crickets migrate to new homes when predators or changing environmental conditions force them to leave.
 - C. Ants, wasps, and termites are all social insects that move in large groups.
 - D. The female cricket is more aggressive than the male cricket.
 - E. A single cricket's risk of being eaten by a predator is lessened when traveling in a large group.
10. There is no real conflict between nature and nurture; most biologists agree that the environment not only shapes the growth of an individual, but it also affects the expression of the individual's genes.
- A. not only shapes the growth of an individual, but it also affects
 - B. does shape the growth of an individual, but it also affects
 - C. is shaping the growth of an individual, it also affects
 - D. not only shapes the growth of an individual, but also affecting
 - E. is shaping the growth of an individual and it is also affecting
11. The proposal to increase bus services in Bellaville is ridiculous. The streets are already so congested that adding more buses will only exacerbate the traffic problem. Passengers who ride these new buses can expect an even longer commute.

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

- A. Studies have shown that increased bus service does not necessarily reduce traffic congestion.
- B. When Smithville increased its bus service last year, many citizens supported the plan.
- C. In order to pay for the new buses, Bellaville will have to cut spending in other areas.
- D. In most cities, not all buses that are in service at any given time are filled to at least 75 percent capacity.
- E. Many commuters who drive in Bellaville would take public transportation if more services were available.

12. Originally derived from British common law, the legal notion of “in loco parentis,” holds that schools and other educational institutions take on some of the responsibilities and functions of a parent, so that they act as a guardian to the children under their care.
- A. so that they act as a guardian to the children under their care
 - B. so that they act like a guardian for the children under their care
 - C. acting as a guardian to the children under their care
 - D. and acting as a guardian for the children under its care
 - E. so acting like a guardian of the children under their care

Questions 13-15 are based on the following passage.

- Feminism is an essentially pluralist movement. Early historians of the feminist movement claim that the movement was borne from the experiences of every woman who has resisted or tried to resist domination. From this proposition, three major premises follow.
- (5) First, feminism places great importance on subjective experience. This implies that much of feminist theory is inductive, moving from the particularities of an individual’s perception of the world to general statements about the nature of the world. Second, feminism is not easily reducible to generalities. The diversity of viewpoints incor-
- (10) porated into the movement resists systematization, but the difficulty of forming a coherent whole from the parts of the theory should be viewed as detrimental. Third, feminism attempts to transform the personal into the political. The individual’s experiences of gender domination transcend the typical boundaries that divide the public
- (15) and private sphere. Predictably, feminist political theory assumes the intermingling of these domains.

- Differences among feminist theories arise from two major sources. The first is from the differences inherent in various interpretations of events and the second is from the differences in the nature and
- (20) character of experiences. Varieties of interpretations led to the establishment of several major schools of feminist thought, including liberal feminists, radical feminists, and socialist feminists, while the diversity of experiences accounts for the cultural feminist, psycho-analytic feminist, and black feminist movements. These experiential
- (25) movements should not be seen as complete, for as the feminist ethos takes root in other countries with different traditions, new theoretical perspectives will develop.

13. The passage is primarily concerned with
- A. evaluating a theory
 - B. tracing the history of a movement
 - C. suggesting the likely progression of an idea
 - D. describing a perspective
 - E. rejecting a criticism

14. Which of the following would most undermine the author's conclusion in the final paragraph?
- A. Although the traditions in other countries may differ, the experiences of women in those countries are fairly similar.
 - B. The societal structure of some countries will make it difficult for feminism to take hold.
 - C. Most feminist scholars identify themselves with interpretation-based schools of feminism.
 - D. Because women's experiences in society are always changing, so too will the theoretical perspectives gained from them.
 - E. Many other countries already have the seeds of a feminist movement.
15. The author implies which of the following about feminism?
- A. It offers a systematic and coherent view of the world.
 - B. Its primary characteristic is its rejection of male hierarchical structures.
 - C. It seeks to intertwine the political and theoretical worlds.
 - D. It values diversity.
 - E. It uses the experiences of women to attempt to transform the world.
16. Now that the ice in the Arctic Circle is melting, Canadian officials are asserting sovereignty over the Northwest Passage because they fear that if they do not claim it, their regional security will always be threatened.
- A. if they do not claim it, their regional security will always be threatened
 - B. without a claim, their regional security is threatened
 - C. their regional security will always be threatened unless they claim it
 - D. without it, their regional security would always be threatened
 - E. their regional security would always be threatened without a claim to it
17. His disagreement with Thomas Hobbes' assumption that man's nature was inherently evil led John Locke in 1689 to propose a theory of government where people were motivated by a desire to cooperate and not fear.
- A. where people were motivated by a desire to cooperate and not fear
 - B. where people were motivated by a desire for cooperation and not for fear
 - C. where people were motivated by a desire for cooperation and were not by fear
 - D. in which a desire for cooperation was motivating people, not fear
 - E. in which people were motivated by a desire for cooperation and not by fear

18. Relationship specialists contend that how much a couple fights is a viable indicator of the strength of a relationship. Couples that fight more tend to stay together for shorter periods of time. Therefore, a couple that typically fights for two or more hours is likely to break up.

Which of the following indicates a flaw in the reasoning above?

- A. How much a couple fights is not the same as how long a couple fights.
 - B. Some couples that fight a lot have long relationships.
 - C. It is possible for a couple to fight for more than two hours and not break up.
 - D. The phrase “viable indicator” does not indicate how likely a couple is to break up.
 - E. Frequency of fighting is only one gauge of a relationship’s strength.
19. City planners are stressing public transportation as a means to reducing environmental pollution and calling for the creation of more subways and light rail systems.
- A. to reducing environmental pollution and calling for
 - B. to environmental pollution reduction and calling for
 - C. of reducing environmental pollution and call for
 - D. of reducing environmental pollution a call for
 - E. of a reduction in environmental pollution and a call for
20. After the stock market of Country X crashed, the president took to the airwaves to claim that the crash occurred due to the foolish lending practices of mortgage companies. The president argued that the companies issued too many high risk loans and had to default on many of them, leading to the crash.

Which of the following investigations, if it could be carried out, would be most useful in an evaluation of the president of Country X’s claim?

- A. figuring out the average amount of the loans the mortgage companies defaulted on
- B. attempting to predict the most likely date of the country’s economic recovery
- C. calculating exactly how many high risk loans were issued by the mortgage companies
- D. analyzing the effects of comparable loan defaults in other countries with economies similar to Country X’s
- E. comparing the effects of the crash on the mortgage companies to the effects on the individuals who received the loans

21. Cheetahs run faster than do elk. But since lions run faster than hyenas do, it must be true that cheetahs are faster than hyenas.

Which of the following statements, if inserted into the argument, makes the argument logically correct?

- A. Elk run faster than do lions.
 - B. Lions run faster than do elk.
 - C. Hyenas run faster than do elk.
 - D. Lions run faster than do cheetahs.
 - E. Cheetahs are faster than most animals.
22. Unlike etiquette or other social skills, many people are not willing to admit to the degree in which they need to work on their listening skills.
- A. Unlike etiquette or other social skills, many people are not willing to admit to the degree in which they need to work on their listening skills
 - B. Unlike etiquette or other social skills, which many people are willing to admit they lack, they need to work on their listening skills
 - C. Unlike etiquette or social skills, listening skills make people unwilling to admit the degree they need to work on them
 - D. Many people, recognizing that they need to work on their etiquette or other social skills, are not willing to admit they need work on their listening skills
 - E. Many people have an unwillingness to admit to the degree in which they need to work on their listening skills, unlike etiquette or other social skills
23. Every year, there are thousands of reports of mysterious flashing lights in the night sky that distracts pilots and induce them to veer from their flight path.
- A. distracts pilots, induce them to veer from their flight path
 - B. distracts pilots, inducing them to veer from their flight path
 - C. distracts pilots and induces them to veer from their flight paths
 - D. distract pilots, inducing them to veer from their flight path
 - E. distract pilots and induce them to veer from their flight paths

Questions 24–27 are based on the following passage.

Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto’s lasting contribution to economic theory is his notion of Pareto optimality. Pareto’s concept attempts to provide a theoretical understanding of the rather abstract concept of desirability. Pareto’s desirability criterion holds that the
(5) state of world X is better than world Y if no one is worse off in Y than X and at least one member of world X is better off in X. Movement from one state to the other is termed “Pareto-desirable.”

Pareto-desirability as a norm has three important characteristics. The Pareto-desirable state is a consequentialist theory because it eval-
(10) uates the world based on the state of the world at some given time. All institutions, actions, and policies are judged to be desirable based on the effect such thing has on the world. Furthermore, Pareto desirable states are personal, in the sense that moral goodness is defined as some better state for some person (even if it is a single person, as
(15) long as everyone else is no worse off). Finally, goodness is defined in terms of a person’s particular preferences; an individual is better off when achieving more of his or her preferences.

Pareto-desirability overlaps somewhat with the philosophical theory of utilitarianism, which states that what is best is what causes
(20) the most people to be happy. Where Pareto-desirability breaks ranks, however, is in its ranking of the alternative worlds. Utilitarianism considers and ranks all possible worlds, good and bad, but the Pareto criterion ranks only those alternatives in which one’s preference satisfaction is higher. Thus, comparisons between situations
(25) in which some people are better off and some worse off are not possible with the Pareto system. Of course, Pareto desirability is not a practical tool for use in the real world. Economists mainly use the Pareto criterion when analyzing systems on a theoretical level.

- 24. It can be inferred from the passage that economist theorists**
- A.** regard Pareto desirability as little more than an abstract tool
 - B.** continue to use the concept of Pareto desirability
 - C.** disagree with the philosophical theory of utilitarianism
 - D.** believe that consequentialism is the most appropriate way to view economic policies
 - E.** do not believe the concept of moral goodness is useful in economics

25. The author most probably stated “Of course, Pareto-desirability... world,” (lines 26–27) in order to emphasize that
- A. it is not practical to evaluate only situations in which people are better off because in the real world someone is always worse off as the result of a policy
 - B. Pareto desirability has a limited use to economists and is only applicable when analyzing monetary systems
 - C. utilitarianism has more application to the real world because it considers all possible worlds
 - D. Pareto-desirability can only be used as a theoretical tool because no true alternative worlds exist
 - E. the Pareto criterion would be more useful if theorists could find a way to use it to compare situations in which some people are better off and some worse off
26. Which of the following statements provides the most logical continuation of the ideas expressed in the last paragraph of the passage?
- A. When examining the way the world actually is, however, economists use utilitarianism.
 - B. Due to its considerable shortcomings, Pareto-desirability will likely diminish in importance in economic theory.
 - C. By examining the rules behind particular policies instead of the policies themselves, economists can determine the properties of the system that created them.
 - D. All three characteristics of Pareto-desirability are important to economists.
 - E. Until a more practical tool is developed, Pareto-desirability will continue to be economists’ prime way of understanding the world.
27. The primary purpose of the passage is to
- A. argue for the elevation of utilitarianism over Pareto-desirability in economic theory
 - B. evaluate the usefulness of the Pareto criterion to practical problems in economics
 - C. provide examples of some ways that economists attempt to conceptualize abstract concepts
 - D. suggest a revision to the predominant mode of economic thinking is called for
 - E. summarize a number of important features of a prevailing economic idea

28. On June 21st , 1788, the New Hampshire state legislature voted to ratify the Constitution, raising to 9 the number of states that supported the document and making it the law of the land.
- A. raising to 9 the number of states that supported the document and making it
 - B. becoming the 9th state to support the document and making the Constitution
 - C. which raised to 9 the number of states supporting the document and making it
 - D. which raised up to 9 the number of states that supported the document and made the Constitution
 - E. becoming the 9th state supporting the document and making it
29. Many scholars deride sociology as a “soft science,” because its subject matter is not as susceptible to scientific truths as the subject matter of the “hard sciences”: chemistry, physics, and biology. However, sociology is science just as much as chemistry, biology, and physics because it follows the scientific method of using controlled experiments to test falsifiable hypotheses.

The conclusion above relies on which of the following assumptions?

- A. If the subject matter of a field of study is not susceptible to scientific proof it is not a “hard” science.
- B. All fields of study that follow the scientific method are justifiably described as science.
- C. Any field of study that does not follow the scientific method is properly deemed a “soft science.”
- D. Because sociology uses the scientific method, it follows that its subject matter is susceptible to scientific truths.
- E. Since sociology uses controlled experiments to test falsifiable hypotheses it is a “hard science.”

30. Pollination is the process by which plants reproduce themselves. During pollination, pollen grains must be transferred to the stigma, the end part of the plant's reproductive organs. Some plants reproduce with abiotic pollination, meaning they spread their pollen grains without the assistance of insects or birds. Biotic pollinators require insects or birds to carry pollen from plant to plant. Plants have developed characteristics such as brightly colored petals and sweet tasting nectars to attract these creatures.

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

- A. More plants reproduce by biotic pollination than by abiotic pollination.
 - B. Plants that reproduce abiotically rely on gusts of wind to carry their pollen grains.
 - C. Insects and birds are not aware that they are being used to transfer the pollen grains of plants.
 - D. Either birds or insects do not see exclusively in black and white.
 - E. Without insects and birds, plants would go extinct.
31. Mystics and nature-lovers, the huge stone structures of Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England have been attributed as the works of the Druids, although there is no evidence of that.
- A. the huge stone structures of Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England have been attributed as the works of the Druids, although there is no evidence of that
 - B. although there is no evidence of it, the huge stone structures of Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England have been attributed as the works of the Druids
 - C. the Druids were thought to have built the huge stone structures of Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England, although there is no evidence they did
 - D. the huge stone structures of Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England have been attributed to the work of the Druids, although without evidence
 - E. without evidence, the huge stone structures of Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England have been attributed to the works of the Druids

32. Steve: New regulations imposed by the government are going to stifle growth in the mining industry. The new regulations will cause mine owners to have to spend millions of dollars to bring their operations into compliance. The money spent on these upgrades means there is less money to pay workers and therefore a decrease in the amount of mining work done.

Jane: But the money spent upgrading the mines will make them safer. Increased safety measures mean that fewer miners are injured and they are able to spend more time on the job and less time on medical leave.

Jane responds to Steve by _____

- A. indicating that Steve lacks any evidence for his claim
 - B. disputing the accuracy of the facts Steve presents for his conclusion
 - C. suggesting that Steve has not fully considered all the ramifications of the policy he objects to
 - D. accepting Steve's conclusion while at the same time introducing a new consideration
 - E. agreeing with Steve's primary conclusion but disputing his secondary conclusion
33. **Despite the concerns of some social conservatives, the family of today is not at risk, but in fact, looks much like those of earlier generations.**
- A. much like those of earlier generations
 - B. as much like those of earlier generations
 - C. just as those of earlier generations did
 - D. much as those of earlier generations
 - E. much as it did in earlier generations
34. **Surrounded by mountains and deserts, Iran has seen the arrival and departure of many cultures, all of which have contributed many essential elements to Persian art.**
- A. has seen the arrival and departure of many cultures, all of which have contributed
 - B. has seen the arrival and departure of many cultures, all of which had contributed
 - C. had seen many cultures arrive and depart, each of which has contributed
 - D. had seen the arriving and departing of many cultures, each of which has contributed
 - E. has seen many cultures arrive and depart, each of which have contributed

Questions 35–37 are based on the following passage.

The great French moralists presented many of their musings on human nature in the form of maxims, pithy statements of general truths or principles. These maxims often contained a clever twist, used by the moralists to draw attention to the complexity of the
(5) human psyche. Maxims attempt to emphasize one particular part of human nature or human experience, one that is often contrary to the received wisdom of the culture. The French moralists often stated their maxims as a universal truth for maximum effect; the true point of the maxim, however, was to act as a counterpoint to popular
(10) opinion.

A maxim and its contrary might both be true, or more precisely, sometimes true. Consider the maxim, “we have not the strength to follow our reason all the way,” and its contrary, “we have not the reason to follow our strength all the way.” Both state-
(15) ments are true enough to warrant a spirited defense, depending, of course, on the perspectives of the reader. However, the moralists were not interested in synthesizing these contrary positions into one law. Rather, they wished to show the deficiencies of conventional wisdom.

35. The author suggests that the French moralists

- A. wrote a number of books on morality
- B. were more interested in being descriptive than prescriptive
- C. did not believe that their maxims were true
- D. were upset with the received wisdom of their culture
- E. found the human psyche easy to understand

36. According to the information in the passage, the contrary of the maxim “one may forgive an infidelity, but not forget it,” would most likely be

- A. “one may forget an infidelity, but not forgive it”
- B. “to forget is human, to forgive divine”
- C. “all things may be forgiven except not being forgiven”
- D. “fidelity means being true to everyone but oneself”
- E. “there is no better feeling than to forgive oneself”

37. The author of the passage would most likely agree with which of the following statements about maxims?

- A. maxims are universal laws
- B. the lesson of a maxim is subjective
- C. the French moralists wrote the best maxims
- D. maxims and their contraries are always true
- E. maxims are not effective unless they critique cultural norms

38. A finance magazine conducted a year long study of investment strategies. The magazine asked financial planners from five prestigious companies to each select a portfolio of investments, the return on which the magazine tracked over the year. Additionally, the magazine selected its own portfolio at random and tracked its return. At the end of the year, the random investment portfolio outperformed each of the expert's investment picks. Thus, there is no benefit to hiring financial planners for help in investing.

Which of the following, if true, casts the most doubt on the validity of the conclusion drawn above?

- A. The financial planners selected for the study are regarded as some of the top experts in their field.
 - B. Most financial planners select investment portfolios designed to mature over a long period of time.
 - C. The randomly selected investment portfolio included some of the same investments chosen by the experts.
 - D. The magazine's portfolio returns were only slightly higher than the returns of the financial planners.'
 - E. Most investments decisions begin to pay off after one year.
39. Which of the following best completes the passage below?
According to neoclassical economics, people have rational preferences which can be ordered based on their value, or utility, to the individual. All people act to maximize utility and are assumed to make decisions based on full information. Businesses, on the other hand, seek to maximize profits. If these premises are true _____
- A. People do not engage in irrational actions.
 - B. Businesses do not order their preferences based on value.
 - C. A business that seeks to maximize its profits should address the rational preferences of individuals.
 - D. The utility of a preference is based on the amount of profit it brings an individual or business.
 - E. The goals of businesses and individuals are incompatible.
40. Even though the money spent on foreign aid amounts to a sum lower than 5 percent of the total federal budget, most polls indicate a significant portion of the population wants to cut back on aid.
- A. amounts to a sum lower
 - B. amounts to less
 - C. has amounted to lower
 - D. amounted to less
 - E. has amounted to less

41. It is certain that the Neanderthal could speak. Paleontologists have found a Neanderthal skeleton with a hyoid bone virtually identical to hyoid bones in humans. The hyoid bone is a small bone that connects the tongue and the larynx and allows a wider range of tongue and laryngeal movements.

The pattern of reasoning in the argument above is most closely matched by which of the following?

- A. Most animals have eyes. Thus, the new species of fish just discovered must have eyes.
- B. People are able to live in most climates on earth. The discovery of a skeleton in the Arctic indicates that some people are not able to live in all climates.
- C. Cattle have four chambered stomachs that allow them to eat hard to digest plant fibers. This recently discovered mammal has a four chambered stomach, so it must eat plant fibers.
- D. Plants use photosynthesis to manufacture food by absorbing the light of the sun. Therefore, any plant that has existed uses photosynthesis to eat.
- E. No snakes have legs. Because the bones discovered by scientists have legs, they are not the bones of a snake.

END OF THE MULTIPLE CHOICE PORTION.

ANALYTICAL WRITING PORTION: 2 ESSAYS, 30 MINUTES EACH

Analysis of an Issue: 30 minutes

In this section, you will need to analyze the issue presented and explain your views on it. There is no “correct” answer. Instead, you should consider various perspectives as you develop your own position on the issue.

Take a few minutes to think about the issue and plan a response before you begin writing. Be sure to organize your ideas and develop them fully, but leave time to reread your response and make any revisions that you think necessary.

Read the statement and the instructions that follow it and then make any notes that will help you plan your response.

“Human culture is reaching a breaking point. Either science or religion must ultimately win out.”

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the opinion expressed above? Develop your position with reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Analysis of an Argument: 30 minutes

In this section, you will be asked to write a critique of the argument presented. *You are not asked to present your own views on the subject.*

Take a few minutes to evaluate the argument and plan a response before you begin writing. Be sure to leave enough time to reread your response and make any revisions that you think are necessary.

Read the statement and the instructions that follow it, and then make any notes that will help you plan your response.

The following appeared as part of the editorial of a major newspaper:

“Fifty years ago, our country led the world in technological innovation and engineering prowess. In recent years, however, we have slipped to the middle of the pack. The countries that have overtaken us have longer school days, year round schooling, and free university education. Clearly, if we wish to return to the top of the economic ladder, we must improve our educational system.”

Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument. In your discussion, be sure to analyze the line of reasoning and the use of evidence in the argument. For example, you may need to consider what questionable assumptions underlie the thinking and what alternative explanations or counterexamples might weaken the conclusion. You can also discuss what sort of evidence would strengthen or refute the argument, what changes in the argument would make it more logically sound, and what, if anything, would help you better evaluate its conclusion.

END OF THE ANALYTICAL WRITING PORTION.

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 ANSWER SHEET

PRACTICE GMAT VERBAL SECTION 3

Answer Sheet

1 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	12 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	23 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	34 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
2 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	13 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	24 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	35 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
3 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	14 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	25 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	36 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
4 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	15 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	26 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	37 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
5 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	16 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	27 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	38 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
6 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	17 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	28 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	39 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
7 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	18 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	29 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	40 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
8 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	19 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	30 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	41 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
9 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	20 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	31 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	
10 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	21 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	32 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	
11 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	22 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	33 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E	

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PRACTICE GMAT VERBAL

SECTION 3

■ MULTIPLE CHOICE PORTION: 41 QUESTIONS, 75 MINUTES

Directions

Sentence Correction The question presents a sentence, part of which or all of which is underlined. Beneath the sentence you will find five ways of phrasing the underlined part. The first of these repeats the original; the other four are different. If you think the original is best, choose the first answer; otherwise choose one of the others.

This question tests correctness and effectiveness of expression. In choosing your answer, follow the requirements of standard written English; that is, pay attention to grammar, choice of words, and sentence construction. Choose the answer that produces the most effective sentence; this answer should be clear and exact, without awkwardness, ambiguity, redundancy, or grammatical error.

Critical Reasoning For these questions, select the best of the answer choices given.

Reading Comprehension The questions in this group are based on the content of a passage. After reading the passage, choose the best answer to each question. Answer all the questions following the passage on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passage.

Questions 1–4 are based on the following passage.

Newton's surprising success at developing the laws of motion, as well as the development and refinement of other physical laws, led to the idea of scientific determinism. The first expression of this principle was in the beginning of the nineteenth century by Laplace,
(5) a French scientist. Laplace argued that if one knew the position and velocity of all the particles in the universe at a given time, the laws of physics would be able to predict the future state of the universe.

Scientific determinism held sway over a great many scientists
(10) until the early twentieth century, when the quantum mechanics revolution occurred. Quantum mechanics introduced the world to the idea of the uncertainty principle, which stated that it was impossible to accurately measure both the position and the velocity of a particle at one time. Because Laplace's omniscience could never
(15) occur, even in theory, the principle of scientific determinism was thrown into doubt. However, quantum mechanics does allow for a reduced form of scientific determinism. Even though physicists are unable to know precisely where a particle is and what its velocity is, they can determine certain probabilities about its position
(20) and velocity. These probabilities are called wave functions. By use of a formula known as the Schrodinger equation, a scientist with the wave function of a particle at a given time can calculate the particle's future wave function. These calculations can give the particle's position or velocity, but not both. Thus, the physicist is
(25) in possession of exactly half of the information needed to satisfy Laplace's view of determinism. Unfortunately, under modern physics theories, that is far as any researcher can go in predicting the future.

1. **The passage suggests that if scientific determinism were true**
 - A. scientists would, in theory, be able to predict the future
 - B. all the particles in the universe would have a measurable position and velocity
 - C. the theory of quantum mechanics would be false
 - D. Schrodinger's equation could be used to calculate any particle's position
 - E. the quantum mechanics revolution would not have occurred
2. **According to the passage, wave functions**
 - A. allow scientists to determine the position and velocity of a particle
 - B. are determined by the Schrodinger equation
 - C. provide a range of possible locations and velocities for a particle
 - D. allow a scientist to calculate the future state of the universe
 - E. threw the proposition of scientific determinism into doubt

3. Which of the following best describes the organization of the passage?
- A. A paradox is introduced, competing explanations are offered, and a final resolution is reached.
 - B. Two opposing theories are introduced, critiqued, and reconciled.
 - C. An idea is introduced, its validity is questioned, and its application qualified.
 - D. A theory is introduced, its mathematical basis is examined, and it is rejected.
 - E. An argument is made, an objection to it is detailed, and the argument is revised.
4. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's conclusion in the passage's final sentence?
- A. Some physicists believe quantum mechanics will eventually be discarded in favor of a new theory.
 - B. Physicists still use Newton's laws of motion to calculate the velocities and positions of planets and stars.
 - C. Even if the position and velocity of a particle were known, predicting the future would be impossible because there are too many other variables to calculate.
 - D. There is little to no chance that the modern theory of quantum mechanics will be overturned by another theory.
 - E. No scientists are pursuing studies in the field of determinism.
5. Of all the factors that affect a child's development, maybe none is more important as the parent's involvement and interest in the child's activities.
- A. maybe none is more important as
 - B. it could be that none is more important as
 - C. perhaps there is nothing more important as
 - D. maybe nothing was as important as
 - E. perhaps none is as important as
6. Diabetes, a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin, continues to frustrate researchers seeking the cause of the ailment.
- A. continues to frustrate researchers seeking
 - B. continue to frustrate researchers who seek
 - C. has continued to frustrate researchers who are seeking
 - D. are continuing to be frustrating to researchers seeking
 - E. have continued to frustrate those researchers who seek

7. Social science researchers recognize the futility of measuring honesty by administering surveys. A questionnaire that asks respondents to report how often they are truthful is bound to underestimate the frequency of dishonesty because_____.

Which of the following best completes the passage above?

- A. some dishonest individuals responding to the questionnaire might be dishonest about the frequency of their dishonesty
 - B. some honest individuals may feel guilty about incidents in which they have been dishonest
 - C. some people who are very infrequently dishonest may report on the questionnaire that they are frequently dishonest
 - D. some dishonest people who respond to the questionnaire will honestly report how frequently they are dishonest
 - E. some people who do not take the survey are likely to be more dishonest than those who do
8. In the beginning of the twentieth century, when America had only 8,000 cars and 144 miles of paved roads, the brake on an automobile resembled a horse buggy: a simple padded stick applied to the wheel.
- A. the brake on an automobile resembled a horse buggy
 - B. the brake on an automobile resembles a horse buggy
 - C. an automobile's brake resembled a horse buggy
 - D. the brake on an automobile resembled that of a horse buggy
 - E. the brake on an automobile and on a horse buggy resembled each other
9. Patients who suffer from high levels of LDL cholesterol are at risk of heart disease and heart attacks. Patients can lower their levels of LDL cholesterol through lifestyle changes and drug treatment. Lifestyle changes can lower cholesterol levels and are necessary to maintain healthy cholesterol levels, although some patients with the highest levels of cholesterol must undergo drug treatment to bring their cholesterol to a manageable level.

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

- A. Individuals who do not have the highest level of LDL cholesterol should not undergo drug treatment.
- B. Lifestyle changes do not lower levels of LDL cholesterol as drastically as does drug treatment.
- C. The only ways of lowering LDL cholesterol are through lifestyle changes and drug treatment.
- D. Individuals with high levels of LDL cholesterol cannot maintain healthy cholesterol levels through drug treatment alone.
- E. Only lifestyle changes are necessary to treat patients who do not have the highest levels of LDL cholesterol.

10. One possible solution to the problem of traffic congestion is to establish special bus routes from the suburbs to the major business and commercial centers of a city. These buses would make limited stops and travel in traffic lanes designated solely for their use and so provide fast and efficient travel options to citizens.

Which of the following, if true, would proponents of the plan outlined above most reasonably cite as evidence for the soundness of the plan?

- A. Many people claim to enjoy the comfort and independence offered by their automobiles.
 - B. Studies show that over half of the automobile traffic on city streets consists of commuters entering the city for work or to shop.
 - C. Many cities lack viable public transportation networks.
 - D. Maintenance and upkeep of streets and roads accounts for a large portion of any city's budget.
 - E. Much of the traffic in any given city results from the influx of tourists and sight-seers.
11. While a corporation is entitled to take special deductions on taxes, they generally take the same deductions of a sole proprietorship when calculating their taxable income.
- A. they generally take the same deductions of a sole proprietorship when calculating their taxable income
 - B. they generally take deductions similar to those of a sole proprietorship when calculating their taxable income
 - C. they, in general, take deductions similar to those of a sole proprietorship when they calculate their taxable income
 - D. it generally takes the same deductions of a sole proprietorship when it calculates its taxable income
 - E. it generally takes the same deductions as does a sole proprietorship when calculating taxable income

12. Since City X passed a regulation requiring fast food restaurants to post the caloric content of their food in prominent places, total revenue at the city's fast food restaurants has decreased 10 percent. Clearly, City X's regulation has encouraged people to eat healthier food.

Which of the following, if true, casts the most doubt on the conclusion drawn above?

- A. The average price of meal at a fast food restaurant in City X has decreased by 5 percent.
- B. City X passed the regulation in response to a nation wide obesity epidemic.
- C. After the regulations were passed, a number of City X's fast food restaurants closed down and moved their operations to locations outside the city.
- D. The population of City X has remained unchanged since the passing of the regulation.
- E. Surveys show that many citizens of City X do not approve of the new regulations.

Questions 13–15 are based on the following passage.

One of the first indications of a distinctive American character came in 1782 with the publication of *Letters From An American Farmer*. In it, a French settler observed that Americans tended to demonstrate a higher level of personal initiative and self-reliance than
(5) Europeans and generally had little regard for social rank.

This viewpoint of the American character is steeped in the philosophical tradition of the Enlightenment, and the typical American quickly became typecast throughout Europe as an emancipated, enlightened individual, taking from his surroundings the necessary
(10) social and material resources to ensure his happiness. This idealized portrait of the American citizen corresponded nicely with the concept of a rational, self-interested individual put forth by Adam Smith and other political economists. The American personality was the Economic personality, most comfortable in the world of free markets,
(15) of trade and hard work.

To the Europeans, Benjamin Franklin—or at least their mythologized conception of Franklin—best represented the American character. Here, according to the Europeans, was both the embodiment of Enlightenment principles, scientist, inventor, statesman,
(20) philosopher, and economist, and the symbol of the American spirit, rational, enterprising, and pragmatic. Franklin was viewed with such admiration by the Europeans that a virtual cult of personality arose around him.

- 13. The primary purpose of the passage is to**
- A. comment on the origin and nature of a national personality type
 - B. demonstrate why Benjamin Franklin was so admired by the French
 - C. argue that the idea of an American character is a myth
 - D. recount the historical and philosophical contributions of Americans in Europe
 - E. provide a psychological profile of a specific individual
- 14. The passage suggests which of the following about the Europeans?**
- A. Europeans lacked personal initiative and self-reliance.
 - B. Europeans admired Americans because of the American's rational, self-interested nature.
 - C. The European conception of the American character might not entirely conform to reality.
 - D. Europeans placed a high value on the works of Adam Smith and other political economists.
 - E. To the Europeans, no individual better embodied the ideas of the Enlightenment than Benjamin Franklin did.
- 15. As it is presented in the passage, which of the following best exemplifies the American personality?**
- A. An aristocrat who diligently keeps abreast of all the fashionable new trends in society.
 - B. A pious, hardworking farmer who takes care of his family and remains humble.
 - C. A cunning statesman who uses his knowledge of human nature to manipulate friends and foes.
 - D. An absent minded inventor whose brilliant discoveries are counter balanced by his lack of common sense.
 - E. A self-made man whose efforts help him create a successful shipping company.
- 16. Like the hysteria that accompanied Elvis's television debut, the Beatles created an uproar when the band arrived in America.**
- A. Like the hysteria that accompanied Elvis's television debut
 - B. As with the hysteria accompanying Elvis's television debut
 - C. Like the television debut of Elvis, which created hysteria
 - D. As it was with the television debut of Elvis, creating hysteria
 - E. Like Elvis, whose television debut was accompanied by hysteria

17. Cold blooded animals, such as snakes, lizards, and salamanders, have developed a variety of mechanisms which keep their body temperatures at a comfortable level.
- A. which keep
 - B. to keep
 - C. that keep
 - D. which kept
 - E. in order to keep

18. A researcher discovered that people with higher incidences of physical illness also tend to be prone to depression. From this, the researcher concluding that being sick physically contributes to being sick mentally.

The researcher's conclusion relies on which of the following assumptions?

- A. People who are rarely physically ill have fewer mental health issues.
 - B. Physical illness and mental illness have the same detrimental effects on a person.
 - C. People who are often depressed are more likely to develop serious physical ailments.
 - D. Depression does not weaken a person's immune system and make one more susceptible to physical illness.
 - E. It is easier to treat physical illnesses than it is to treat mental illnesses.
19. Aware of the potential danger of unsecured ports, the Government Accountability Office has outlined the major challenges to implementing enhanced security, including generating a set of standards that define a secure port, and to determine the amounts and sources of funding for improvements.
- A. including generating a set of standards that define a secure port, and to determine
 - B. including to generate a set of standards that define what a secure port is, and to determine
 - C. including generating a set of standards that define a secure port, and determining
 - D. generated a set of standards that define a secure port, and has determined
 - E. including generating a set of standards that define a secure port, determining

20. Most biologists agree that evolution takes place extremely slowly, with species requiring millions and millions of years to accumulate enough small changes to gradually transform into new ones. For the first 4 billion years of Earth's history, the only species known were bacteria, plankton, and algae. But the fossil record indicates that during a brief 30 million year span known as the Cambrian explosion, the eventual lineages of all major animal groups alive today appeared.

Which of the following, if true, provides at least a partial explanation for the discrepancy outlined above?

- A. The fossil record only represents a small portion of the species alive at any given time.
 - B. The fossil record indicates a number of major extinction events in Earth's history.
 - C. Some of the lineages found in the fossil record of the Cambrian explosion are no longer alive today.
 - D. Bacteria, plankton, and algae leave little evidence in the fossil record because of their physical structures.
 - E. The fossil record indicates a large diversity in the plant species inhabiting the Earth during the Cambrian explosion.
21. Tech Corp. and Electronics Inc. are competitors in the home computer market. Both manufacture and sell the same type of high speed processor. Employee benefits and wages make up 30 percent of the cost of manufacturing the processors at both corporations. Tech Corp. believes it can gain an advantage over Electronics Inc. by spending less money on employee benefits.

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

- A. Manufacturers of high speed computer processors compete in a highly specialized industry.
- B. Tech Corp is able to attract quality employees because of its benefits package and without quality employees the quality of its product will suffer.
- C. Electronics Inc. has taken away 15 percent of Tech Corp's business over the last few years.
- D. Tech Corp has a better benefits package than Electronics Inc.
- E. Tech Corp and Electronics Inc. employ more people than any other industry in their respective cities.

22. **Scientists have developed a vast network of seismographs that monitor earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and powerful explosions throughout the world to facilitate disaster response, scientific research, and global security.**
- A. have developed a vast network of seismographs that monitor earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and powerful explosions
 - B. have developed a vast network of seismographs so that they can monitor earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and powerful explosions
 - C. monitor earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and powerful explosions throughout the world with a vast network of seismographs that they have developed
 - D. monitor earthquakes, as well as volcanic eruptions and powerful explosions, with a vast network of seismographs throughout the world that they have developed
 - E. have developed a vast network that monitors earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and powerful explosions throughout the world with seismographs
23. **Unlike the United States, French workers have a 35 hour work week imposed by law on large firms.**
- A. Unlike the United States, French workers have a 35 hour work week imposed by law on large firms
 - B. Unlike workers in the United States, French workers enjoy a 35 hour work week, which was imposed by law on large firms
 - C. Unlike those in the United States, the workers in France have imposed by law a 35 hour work week on large firms
 - D. In France, unlike the United States, the workers have imposed a 35 hour work week by law on large firms
 - E. In France the workers, unlike the United States, have a 35 hour work week, which was imposed by law on large firms

Questions 24–27 are based on the following passage.

The insanity defense in legal proceedings follows from the assumption that the great majority of people freely choose to follow the law. However, some individuals—those determined to be lacking in the appropriate mental capacities—are unable to
(5) choose to follow the law. This scenario presents a conundrum for legal theorists. If someone is truly unable to follow the law, is it just to imprison him and punish him for something he did involuntarily?

Insanity as a legal defense traces back to a case in 1843, when
(10) a man named Daniel M’Naghten attempted to assassinate the British Prime Minister. M’Naghten’s lawyers claimed that the would-be assassin was being persecuted and was driven to commit the crime. Prosecutors argued that in order to plan and execute the assassination, M’Naghten must have been in a rational state of mind. After
(15) several experts testified that M’Naghten was insane, he was found not guilty by reason of insanity, touching off a spirited legal discussion on the merits of the insanity plea. From these deliberations emerged what became known as the M’Naghten test, by which jurors were asked to judge the sanity of a defendant based on two questions.
(20) First, did the defendant know what he was doing when he committed the crime? And second, did the defendant understand that his actions were wrong? Jurors were instructed in all cases to presume the defendant was sane and only acquit on the basis of the insanity if “it was clearly proved that the accused was laboring under such a
(25) defect of reason as not to know the nature and quality of the act he was doing, or if he did know it, that he did not know what he was doing was wrong.”

Later versions of the M’Naghten test included an addendum that stated in cases in which the accused knew his actions were wrong, he
(30) could be acquitted if the jury determined he acted on the basis of an irresistible impulse. The implication was that some mental illnesses are so powerful that they cause people to act in ways that they know are wrong.

24. The passage is primarily concerned with evaluating

- A. the accuracy of the jury’s verdict in the M’Naghten trial
- B. the criteria used to determine whether a defendant is insane
- C. the relation between mental illness and crime
- D. the legal theories and assumptions behind the presumption of sanity in a defendant
- E. whether it is just to imprison the legally insane who commit crimes

25. According to the original version of the M’Naghten test, a jury
- A. should not construe the defendant’s ability to follow a rational plan as evidence of sanity
 - B. should not consider mitigating factors when sentencing the defendant
 - C. should evaluate how rational the defendant’s planning of the crime appeared
 - D. should acquit a defendant who satisfies one, but not necessarily both, of the criteria for legal insanity
 - E. should only acquit a defendant who is both unaware of his actions and does not understand they are wrong
26. The author of the passage would most likely agree that
- A. It is difficult to reconcile traditional notions of justice with certain conceptions of mental illness.
 - B. Jurors should always presume a defendant is sane unless otherwise directed by the judge.
 - C. There are no mental illnesses that cause people to act in ways that they know are wrong and yet are powerless to resist.
 - D. The M’Naghten test will continue to evolve as more research is done on the nature of mental illnesses.
 - E. A person who is acquitted of a crime by reason of insanity is still responsible for his actions.
27. In the last paragraph, the author is primarily concerned with
- A. summarizing the previous arguments about the M’Naghten test
 - B. presenting an evaluation of the usefulness of the M’Naghten test
 - C. detailing a more recent revision to the M’Naghten test
 - D. exposing the absurdity of using the M’Naghten test
 - E. suggesting a paradox inherent in the M’Naghten test
28. The Mayan people subsisted on a diet primarily consisting of maize, squash, beans, and peppers, but incorporated both meat from animals they hunted and fished.
- A. but incorporated both meat from animals they hunted and fished
 - B. and also had incorporated the meat from animals they hunted and fished
 - C. even though they incorporated meat from animals they hunted and fished for as well
 - D. although they also incorporated meat from hunting and fishing
 - E. but incorporating the meat from animals they hunted and fished for

29. Over the next 30 years, the number of people aged 65 and older will double, while the number of adults under age 65 will increase by less than 15 percent. In addition to those demographic changes, costs per enrollee in federal health care programs are likely to continue growing much faster than inflation. These pressures will cause federal spending for health care programs to increase by more than two-thirds as a share of the economy.

If the statements above are all true, which of the following can properly be inferred on the basis of them?

- A. Federal spending on health care programs currently accounts for less than one-third of the government's spending.
 - B. Over a 30 year period, costs per enrollee in federal health care programs must grow faster than inflation.
 - C. Currently, people 35 years of age or older make up a larger proportion of the population than do people under 35 years of age.
 - D. Countries with a larger proportion of citizens over 65 often have crippling health care costs.
 - E. Countries with younger populations spend less than two-thirds of their budgets on federal health care programs.
30. The city's transit union is contemplating a strike in order to coerce the mayor into accepting its workers' demands for a new contract. However, union leaders are aware that a lack of public support for the union can decrease their leverages in negotiations.

The answer to which of the following questions would be LEAST relevant to the transit union's consideration of whether to strike or not?

- A. Does a significant portion of the city's population believe the union's current contract is unfair?
 - B. Would the transit strike severely inconvenience a great many of the city's people?
 - C. Have previous strikes by the city's transit workers been supported by the city's residents?
 - D. Do the residents of the city hold the mayor in high regard?
 - E. Has the mayor clearly outlined the city's position on the new contract?
31. Medical malpractice suits can be difficult to prosecute because often there is a lack of another doctor to testify against the defendant.
- A. there is a lack of another doctor to testify against
 - B. they lack some other doctor's testimony against
 - C. other doctors refuse to testify against
 - D. another doctor will have refused to testify against
 - E. a lack of another doctor's testimony against

32. **Graduate School Admissions Officer:** An applicant's undergraduate transcript is a vital part of the application for graduate school. Not only can we evaluate the strength of a student's course load, we can determine whether the student is truly focused on academics.

Which of the following is an assumption upon which the argument depends?

- A. Undergraduate transcripts are the most important part of a graduate application.
 - B. Without an undergraduate transcript, an applicant for graduate school cannot be properly evaluated.
 - C. Students with higher undergraduate grade point averages are more likely to be admitted to graduate programs.
 - D. A student's prior performance is a valid indicator of current academic dedication.
 - E. The strength of a student's course load is a more important indicator of graduate school success than is the student's focus on academics.
33. **A major technological advance, the Mars rovers employ an innovative three-layered solar panel array which can absorb more sunlight and provide more power than the typical single layer panel.**
- A. A major technological advance, the Mars rovers employ an innovative three-layered solar panel array which can absorb more sunlight and provide more power than the typical single layer panel
 - B. A major technological advance, the Mars rovers employ an innovative three-layered solar panel array that will absorb more sunlight and provide more power than the typical single layer panel.
 - C. The Mars rovers, a major technological advance, employ an innovative three-layered solar panel array that can absorb more sunlight and provide more power than what the typical single layer panel is able to provide.
 - D. The Mars rovers employ an innovative three-layered solar panel array, a major technological advance, that can absorb more sunlight and provide more power than the typical single layer panel can.
 - E. The Mars rovers employ an innovative major technological advance, that is the three layered solar panel array which can absorb more sunlight and provide more power than the typical single layer panel.

34. Studies indicate that love may be an essential component of human happiness and well being. Among couples married for 40 or more years, the death of one spouse is followed by the death of the other in 12 to 18 months on average. From this, researchers conclude that once widowed after a long marriage, many people lack a reason to go on.

Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the study's conclusion?

- A. Most people who have been married for 40 years are of an advanced age.
 - B. The life expectancy of unmarried individuals is, on average, the same as that of married individuals.
 - C. Some unmarried individuals live much longer than do married individuals.
 - D. Some people who commit suicide indicate they did so because their love for another was unreturned.
 - E. The individuals in the study who died after the 12 to 18 month period suffered from no serious physical illnesses.
35. **Consumer Advocate:** Your company continues to advertise its product as "all natural" and "organic" despite the fact that you feed your livestock grain laced with growth hormone. This practice indicates your willingness to deceive your customers.

Company Representative: Because we have a long history of manufacturing excellent products, customers trust our brand and the strategies we use to market it.

The company representative's response to the consumer advocate's charge is flawed because it

- A. assumes without justification that a long history of manufacturing excellent products leads consumers to trust a company
- B. fails to address whether the company's practices are intended to deceive its customers
- C. does not mention other marketing strategies employed by the company
- D. simply rejects the consumer advocate's argument without providing any reason to do so
- E. treats the consumer advocate's assertion that using terms such as "all natural" and "organic" as inconsistent with manufacturing quality products

Questions 36–38 are based on the following passage.

The myth of the noble savage has long dominated the social sciences. According to this myth, man in his natural state lived in perfect harmony with both his fellow men and with nature. It is only the corrupting specter of modernity, with its capitalistic rat-race and
(5) exploitative mindset, that leads to war and destruction. While somewhat reassuring as a theory of human nature, the fact of the matter is that the noble savage has not ever existed.

Consider the extinction of the moa bird, an ostrich-like species indigenous to New Zealand ranging in size from 3 to 10 feet tall and
(10) weighing from 40 to 500 pounds. The last moa bird died roughly 800 hundred years ago, after inhabiting New Zealand for hundreds of thousands of years. It was not a climatic calamity that wiped the birds out. Nor was it a new disease or a catastrophic event such as a volcanic eruption. The moa went extinct a mere 200 years after the
(15) arrival of the Polynesian Maoris.

Defenders of the noble savage myth may argue that the Maoris were not responsible for hunting the moa to extinction, but the evidence suggests otherwise. Carbon dating of moa birds shows conclusively that all known species of moa were present when the
(20) Maori arrived in New Zealand. And most striking, archeologists have uncovered Maori sites containing between 100 to 500 thousand moa skeletons, roughly 10 times the number of moa living at any one time. The Maori did not live in peaceful harmony with the environment; instead, they engaged in full-scale genocide of
(25) the moa.

36. The primary purpose of the passage is to

- A. argue for the conservation of endangered species
- B. debunk a misconception
- C. describe Maori hunting practices
- D. criticize the imposition of modernity on other cultures
- E. question the impact of man on animal extinctions

37. The discovery of the moa skeletons suggests that

- A. the Maori not only ate the moa but used their bones in certain rituals
- B. the moa were the primary staple of the Maori diet
- C. the moa had no other predators besides the Maori
- D. Maori society had advanced burial rituals
- E. the Maori had been hunting the moa for many generations

38. The author most likely mentions “climatic calamity...volcanic eruption,” (lines 12–14) in order to
- A. rule out possible natural causes of the moa extinction
 - B. cite common explanations for animal extinctions
 - C. suggest that extinctions are an inevitable part of biological history
 - D. argue that the moa was resistant to most diseases and natural disasters
 - E. mock those who hold to the belief of the noble savage
39. In recent years a controversy has developed around the lucrative textbook publishing market as students question if textbooks should be as expensive as they are and professors wonder over their accuracy.
- A. as students question if textbooks should be as expensive as they are and professors wonder over their accuracy
 - B. as students question the expense and professors wonder about the accuracy of textbooks
 - C. where students question whether textbooks should be as expensive as they are and professors wonder whether they are accurate
 - D. where students are questioning if textbooks should be as expensive as they are while professors wonder if they are accurate
 - E. as students are questioning whether textbooks must be as expensive as they are and professors wonder about their accuracy
40. Faced with repeated crippling budget deficits, the state legislature had no choice but to pass a law mandating that the governor submit a balanced budget.
- A. had no choice but to pass a law mandating that the governor submit
 - B. has no choice but to pass a law mandating that the governor must submit
 - C. had no choice except to pass a law mandating that the governor should submit
 - D. was left with no choice except passing a law mandating the governor to submit
 - E. has no choice but to pass a law mandating that the governor has to submit

- 41. Most popular bands make most of their money on merchandising rather than on record sales. One band, the Turtles, has decided that the best way to increase its profits is to release new records very rarely and spend much of its time touring.**

Which of the following, if true, best supports the conclusion reached above?

- A.** Fans of the band will not discontinue attending concerts and buying band merchandise if the band does not frequently release new material.
- B.** The Turtles are one of the top selling bands in the country.
- C.** Tours are the best ways of exposing fans to new band merchandise.
- D.** Changes in the way music is distributed electronically allow bands to save money on record production.
- E.** Industry analysts predict a slight decrease in the average price of concert tickets this year.

END OF THE MULTIPLE CHOICE PORTION.

ANALYTICAL WRITING PORTION: 2 ESSAYS, 30 MINUTES EACH

Analysis of an Issue: 30 minutes

In this section, you will need to analyze the issue presented and explain your views on it. There is no “correct” answer. Instead, you should consider various perspectives as you develop your own position on the issue.

Take a few minutes to think about the issue and plan a response before you begin writing. Be sure to organize your ideas and develop them fully, but leave time to reread your response and make any revisions that you think necessary.

Read the statement and the instructions that follow it and then make any notes that will help you plan your response.

“One can not understand human nature without interacting with other people as much as possible.”

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the opinion expressed above? Develop your position with reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Analysis of an Argument: 30 minutes

In this section, you will be asked to write a critique of the argument presented. *You are not asked to present your own views on the subject.*

Take a few minutes to evaluate the argument and plan a response before you begin writing. Be sure to leave enough time to reread your response and make any revisions that you think are necessary.

Read the statement and the instructions that follow it, and then make any notes that will help you plan your response.

The following appeared as part of the business plan for a health center:

“After we introduced martial arts and dance classes, our members used the health center 15 percent more than they had previously. Therefore, in order to increase membership, we should continue to add more of these ‘non-traditional’ programs, including meditation classes, rock climbing, and yoga. Being the only center to offer these programs will elevate us over our competitors.”

Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument. In your discussion, be sure to analyze the line of reasoning and the use of evidence in the argument. For example, you may need to consider what questionable assumptions underlie the thinking and what alternative explanations or counterexamples might weaken the conclusion. You can also discuss what sort of evidence would strengthen or refute the argument, what changes in the argument would make it more logically sound, and what, if anything, would help you better evaluate its conclusion.

END OF THE ANALYTICAL WRITING PORTION.

PRACTICE GMAT VERBAL

SECTION 1: ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

■ ANSWER KEY

1. B	15. E	29. A
2. D	16. A	30. E
3. B	17. C	31. D
4. D	18. B	32. E
5. A	19. D	33. B
6. C	20. A	34. E
7. E	21. C	35. B
8. D	22. C	36. B
9. E	23. A	37. C
10. B	24. D	38. C
11. C	25. E	39. A
12. E	26. A	40. B
13. C	27. E	41. C
14. B	28. D	

■ EVALUATING YOUR SCORE

Calculate the number of correct answers, and then consult the following chart:

Number Correct:	35–41	Excellent
	31–34	Above Average
	22–30	Average
	0–21	Below Average

EXPLANATIONS

1. Answer: B. This is a weaken question. Here are the conclusion and premise:

Premise: Mercy Hospital is being forced to eliminate 10 percent of its x-ray technicians and needs to preserve its standards of expert care

Conclusion: The technicians who take the longest time, on average, to fulfill their duties will be the ones let go.

This argument assumes that the technicians who take the longest to do their jobs are not the ones preserving the hospital's standards of expert care. You want to weaken this question, so the right answer will attack this assumption. Choice B does this by showing that the most difficult jobs, which take the longest to complete, go to the best technicians. The other choices do not attack the link between the technicians to be let go and the expert standards of the hospital.

2. Answer: D. The sentence as written contains a faulty comparison because the "streets of New York City" cannot be compared to "Washington, D.C." Only choice D fixes this problem.

3. Answer: B. This sentence has an error in subject-verb agreement. The subject "beliefs" is plural, so choice A can be eliminated. Choice A is also not parallel. The construction should be "early religious beliefs were not...but were..." Choices C and E are not parallel and can be eliminated. Choice D fixes the verb, but is awkward and wordy.

4. Answer: D. In order to answer this question, actively read the passage, focusing on the major points. The introduction gives you the following information:

Western analytical philosophy has contributed two major elements to the theory of the political good. It is unfortunate that the value of the first element, personalism, has been diluted by its close association with the second element, valuational solipsism

The next paragraph discusses personalism and states that it is "useful" in some ways. The final paragraph talks about valuational solipsism and states that it "obscures" the fundamental nature of the political good.

Choice D is the best match for these points. Choice A is wrong because the two elements are part of the theory of the good, not separate theories. Choice B is wrong because there are no "attacks" from valuational solipsism. Choice C goes too far; the passage says that the two elements can occur together, but not that they "necessarily" go together. Choice E is too narrow because it only addresses the final paragraph.

5. Answer: A. This is a supporting idea question. The passage says that personalism "basically states that when it comes to interests, there are no interests but human interests." Thus, choice A is correct because a personalist wouldn't believe that an action increases the strength of a "union." Choices B, C, D and E all consider the interests of individuals, so a personalist would probably agree with them.

6. Answer: C. This is a supporting idea question. The answer is found in the third paragraph. The author states that “solipsism neglects to consider the whole range of social values that are part of the political experience,” and that “such a view obscures a fundamental quality of the political good.” Choice A is not stated in the passage. Choice B is true of valuatinal solipsism, but it’s not what the author objects to. Rather, the passage objects to how those values are applied. Choice D is not stated and choice E is contradicted by the passage.

7. Answer: E. This is a supporting idea question. Look in the second paragraph for the answer: “personalism is most useful in countering arguments for practices that harm individuals in the name of ‘the greater good,’ or the ‘society at large.’” Choices A, B, and C go too far; these ideas are not mentioned in the passage. Choice D is the opposite of what the passage states. Choice E is correct—personalism counters certain arguments.

8. Answer: D. This is an evaluate the argument question. The conclusion and the premise are:

Premise: The customer service department was reorganized and given a larger budget and a new management team was brought in to increase the customer experience.

Conclusion: The CEO’s decision is responsible for the increase in market share.

This is a causal argument and it assumes that the better customer experience directly led to the increase in market share. In order to evaluate it, find the choice that discusses the likelihood of this assumption. Choice D does so. If the previous customers were unhappy with the customer service, it makes it more likely that fixing the problem brought them back or attracted new customers. If the previous customers had no complaints about customer service, it is less likely that addressing that problem would increase market share.

9. Answer: E. The original sentence uses the ambiguous pronoun “they,” which could refer to either universities or armed forces. Eliminate any choices that contain it. Choice D has a different pronoun error, using “its” to refer to the plural “universities.”

10. Answer: B. This is a resolve/explain the discrepancy question. The conflict is here:

- business people can produce documents, track purchases and inventory, and access files all at the click of a mouse
- people are no more productive today than they were in the days of typewriters, adding machines, and file cabinets

The best answer will explain how both these facts can be true. Choice A is not good enough because even if training times were longer, people should be more productive once they learn how to use computers. Choice B explains that people perform more redundant tasks now, which would explain why their productivity hasn’t increased. Choices C and D are irrelevant to the problem, while choice E only talks about the hours worked, not how productive workers are.

11. Answer: C. This is an inference question. The facts state that the English department has the highest *percentage* of students with grade point averages above 3.0, while the Physics department has the highest *percentage* of students above 3.5. But you don't know anything about students higher than 3.7. The Physics department could have nearly all of its students between 3.5 and 3.69 and only a few higher than 3.7. So choice A is not necessarily true. Since no other departments are mentioned it is not clear that choice B is true. Choice C must be true because the English department has the highest percentage above 3.0, but not the highest percentage above 3.5, so it must have students between those two numbers. Because you only know percentages, you can't infer anything about the totals or averages, so choices D and E are out.

12. Answer: E. The sentence as written has a subject-verb agreement error. The subject is "proportion" which is singular. Eliminate choices A and B since they use "have." Choice C awkwardly uses the words "still" and "yet" when the original sentence already uses "despite" to indicate the relationship between the first and second part of the sentence. Choice D also uses the word "still" and changes the meaning of the sentence.

13. Answer: C. This is an inference question. Male rotifers are mentioned in the final passage. The author says "strangely, there are no male bdelloid rotifers. Or if there are, biologists have never discovered them." This implies that males may exist and remain undiscovered. Choice A goes too far. Choice B makes a connection that is not implied in the passage. Choice D could be true but is not necessarily true, while nothing in the passage supports choice E.

14. Answer: B. This is a supporting idea question. The only difference is that the right answer is NOT mentioned in the passage. The first paragraph states "Bdelloid rotifers can live in any type of fresh water, from hot springs near the Dead Sea to partially frozen ponds on Antarctica," and "when their watery homes freeze up or dry out, the rotifers enter into a state of suspended animation." Choice A matches the hot springs, so eliminate it. A dried-up puddle and an iceberg match up with "watery homes...dry out" and "partially frozen ponds on Antarctica," so choices D and E are out. The passage also indicates that "the suspended rotifers are picked up by wind currents and are blown about the globe," which corresponds to choice C. The author mentions space to show that rotifers can survive extreme cold, but does not say that rotifers are found there.

15. Answer: E. This is an inference question. The lines that contain the answer are "when their watery homes freeze up or dry out, the rotifers enter into a state of suspended animation. When in this state, rotifers can withstand temperatures as low as one degree above absolute zero, the temperature of the void of space, for over an hour. The suspended rotifers are picked up by wind currents and are blown about the globe. When they land in a suitable home, the rotifers reanimate..." If the rotifers reanimate when they land in a suitable home, they must have some ability to sense the outside conditions. Choice A is opposite of what the passage states. Choice B is not supported by the passage. Choice C goes too far beyond what the passage states. There may be other reasons rotifers enter suspended animation. Choice D implies that rotifers choose to enter suspended animation, but that is not stated either.

16. Answer: A. The sentence is correct as written. Choices C and D use the unidiomatic expressions “declare...as” and “declare...to be.” Choices B and E awkwardly place the modifier “poor and minority.”

17. Answer: C. This is an assumption question. The conclusion and premise are:

Premise: Hybrid engines emit less pollution than do clean burning fuels.

Conclusion: An individual driving a hybrid car benefits the environment the most.

This argument relies on the assumption that because hybrid engines emit less pollution, use of them benefits the environment the “most.” Choice C is correct because it shows that that combination of the hybrid and the cleaner fuels does not have a greater effect than the hybrid alone. Choice A is not necessary to the argument because the argument is not about what individuals will do or can do; the conclusion is about the effect on the environment. The cost of the options is also not part of the argument, so choice B is out of scope. Choice D is not addressed in the argument’s conclusion or premise, so it cannot be the assumption. Choice E is irrelevant to the argument.

18. Answer: B. The correct idiom is “indicator of” or “indication of...” so eliminate choices C, D, and E. Choice B better maintains parallelism in the list: humans, apes, and perhaps dolphins.

19. Answer: D. This is a strengthen question. The conclusion and the premise are:

Premise: The government is not increasing its efforts to stop pirated books.

Conclusion: Redoubling its efforts will help to curb the illegal distribution of pirated materials.

The question asks you to support the government’s decision. How could it be that it will try to stop illegal distribution but will not focus on pirated books? The assumption is that focusing on pirated books will not help curb illegal distribution, so you need an answer choice that provides more evidence of this viewpoint. The other industries’ reactions are not at issue, so choice A is out of scope. Choice B is also irrelevant since it has nothing to do with the government’s plan. The location of the activity doesn’t impact the decision either, so choice C is out of scope. Choice D is best because it states that the pirates convert books to compact discs so the government doesn’t need to focus on books to curb illegal distribution. Choice E has nothing to do with the plan.

20. Answer: A. The sentence as written is correct. The subject of the sentence is “historians,” so the verb must be plural. That eliminates choices C and D. Choice B has an unclear use of modifiers—the historians have traced “the appearance,” not “to a short.” Choice E also has an unclear modifier when it says “traced...to its first appearance in a 1913 short,” which makes it sound as if the gap appeared in other shorts in 1913.

21. Answer: C. The subject “laws” is plural, so choices D and E can be eliminated because they use singular verbs. Choice A can be eliminated since “laws increase” is not parallel to “there is a reduction.” Choice C is clearer than B and uses “seat belt usage” instead of the awkward “wearing of seat belts.”

22. Answer: C. This is a main idea question. An active reading of the passage reveals the following major points:

(1) Economists have long recognized a persistent and unfounded belief among the population which has come to be known as the anti-foreign bias.

(2) No less an authority than Adam Smith, one of the fathers of the modern free market system, spoke glowingly of foreign trade in his influential treatise *Wealth of Nations*.

(3) Even more startling, a basic economic theorem, the Law of Comparative Advantage, states that mutually beneficial trade is possible even if one nation is less productive than the other.

With these key points, the author shows that foreign trade can be a mutually beneficial exchange despite the belief of the population. The passage is not arguing for an increase in trade, so choice A is out. The historical context—Adam Smith—refutes the belief of the population, so eliminate choice B. Choice D is too narrow. The reason the author illustrates the economic principle is to show the fallacy of the belief. Choice E is also too narrow because it only focuses on Adam Smith.

23. Answer: A. This is a logical structure question. It asks how certain information fits into the larger framework of the passage. The author uses the examples after giving Smith’s quote and writing “His point is simple. A baker trades his bread to the cobbler for shoes and both men benefit from the trade because of the value of specialization.” Thus, the baker and the cobbler illustrate the point made by Smith. Choice B does not reflect the purpose of the lines. The purpose is not to evaluate Smith’s book, meaning choice C is incorrect. Choice D uses extreme language and choice E is incorrect because the lines are not a “real world example of foreign trade.”

24. Answer: D. This is a supporting idea question. Return to the part of the passage where the author uses the word “startling.” The passage says “Even more startling, a basic economic theorem, the Law of Comparative Advantage, states that mutually beneficial trade is possible even if one nation is less productive than the other.” Thus, it is startling that trade is possible when one nation is more productive than the other, as choice D states. None of the other choices are supported.

25. Answer: E. This is an apply information question. First, read the passage and see what it says about “folk wisdom.” This information is in the first paragraph: folk wisdom is “seemingly in accord with common sense but nonetheless incorrect.” Choice A is wrong because it is correct that darkening clouds can indicate rain. Choice B doesn’t match the part about being “in accord with common sense” because the parents give a nonsensical answer. Choice C is in accord with common sense but isn’t necessarily incorrect. Choice D is similar in that it is correct that “someone has to win.” That leaves choice E. Although it makes common sense that the child should put on a jacket not to “catch cold,” colds are caused by viruses. So it is incorrect to believe a jacket could stop a virus.

26. Answer: A. This is a weaken question. The conclusion and the premises are:

Premises: There has been a significant decline in the public's consumption of trans fat; this decrease coincides with a public health campaign to encourage healthier eating habits.

Conclusion: The decline in consumption of trans fat must be due to the effects of the health campaign.

This is a typical causal argument. Because the two events are correlated with each other, the argument has concluded that one caused the other. The major assumption is that there is no other cause. Since your task is to weaken the argument, look for another cause. Choice A provides one by indicating that food producers, not the health campaign, caused the decline. None of the other choices present an alternative cause.

27. Answer: E. This is a structure question. Find the premises:

Premises: Some historians believe that in terms of historical progression, the democratic ideal is the final stage; it is impossible to know for certain that progress had ended when one is still part of that progression.

The best answer will follow from these facts. Choice A does not follow. It could be true but the argument doesn't support this choice. Nor does choice B follow from the argument. Choice C goes too far; the premise is simply that it's impossible to know for certain. Choice D is not supported by the argument. Choice E follows from the premises. If historians believe democracy is the final stage but it is impossible to know when progress has ended, then it is impossible to know whether democracy is the final stage.

28. Answer: D. When there are two possible outcomes, use the word "whether." Use "if" only when making a conditional statement ("if I study hard, my GMAT score will improve"). That eliminates choices A and B. Choice C changes the tense and uses the ambiguous pronoun "they." Choice E also changes the tense and uses "would" when the future tense is appropriate.

29. Answer: A. This is a structure question. Analyze both arguments:

Taxpayer:

Premise: Many of the homeowners in the community do not have school age children; they are being forced to pay for something that gives them no benefit.

Conclusion: It is unfair to fund the new school initiative by raising property taxes.

Mayor:

Premise: The city pays for road repair and construction, which you benefit from, with the tax dollars contributed by all citizens, even those who don't drive.

Conclusion: It is not unfair to fund the school initiative by raising property taxes.

This type of question asks how the argument as a whole functions. In this case, the mayor refutes the taxpayer's argument by providing an example of a similar situation that the taxpayer does not object to. Choice A is the best description of this reasoning. The other choices don't match the strategy used by the mayor.

30. Answer: E. There are two idioms at work here. The first is "see...as," which means that choices C and D are incorrect. The second is "benefit...to," which eliminates choice B. Choice E is more parallel than A because the public's "lack of knowledge" is seen as "a benefit."

31. Answer: D. The original sentence has a faulty comparison between "compact discs" and "the technology..." Eliminate choice A. Choice B has a subject-verb agreement error with "discs has." You should also use "as" to compare noun and verb phrases. Choice C has a few errors, but the most obvious is the subject-verb error with "technology...have." Choice E has a misplaced modifier because it appears as if the "technology" of compact discs, not the discs, has increased in storage capacity over the years.

32. Answer: E. This is an assumption question. Find the conclusion and premise:

Premise: When the car gets too close to another car or a stationary object, the system applies the brakes and locks the seat belts.

Conclusion: Widespread implementation of these systems will significantly reduce the number of car accidents.

In order for this argument to work, one must assume that a system that applies the brakes of the car reduces accidents. This is what choice E states, that there are not a lot of accidents that must be avoided in ways other than applying the brakes. No other choice connects the premise to the conclusion.

33. Answer: B. This is a structure question. Find the conclusion and the premise:

Premise: People who perform so-called altruistic acts are really satisfying their personal need for attention or glory.

Conclusion: There is no such thing as pure altruism.

Thus, the first statement is the conclusion and the second is the premise, or justification, as choice B states.

34. Answer: E. This is an inference question. Because the question doesn't provide any information on where to find the answer, look at the choices instead. Choice A directs you to the first paragraph, but there is no evidence that large businesses can handle varied markets, only that small ones typically can't. Choice B goes too far. The passage states that the inability to target a market is a reason that businesses fail, but not the only reason. There is no value assigned to the two qualities in the first paragraph, so choice C is not supported. Choice D is too extreme; it is possible that such a business exists. Choice E is best because the author says that "Many new small businesses fail because they try to be everything to everybody. This strategy leads to a diffusion of critical resources and an inability to target a viable market." This implies that some business owners follow strategies that result in their businesses failing.

35. Answer: B. This is an inference question. Look for the part of the passage that discusses “primary markets.” This is in the second paragraph: “Small businesses should also take into account the trends and potential changes that may impact their primary markets. They should also identify characteristics of secondary markets that may affect the primary market.” These lines state that secondary markets may impact the primary markets and that small businesses should investigate them. Choice B states this. Choice A is too extreme because the passage doesn’t say that “most” of the efforts should be on gathering information. Choice E has the same problem; nothing supports the use of the word “most.” The other choices are not supported by the passage.

36. Answer: B. This is a logical structure question. You have to look at how the passage develops. The first paragraph states that small businesses “should seek to narrow their potential markets down to manageable size.” This is a recommendation. The rest of the passage describes the actions necessary to follow that recommendation. This is what choice B states. The first paragraph is not a prediction, which eliminates choice A. Nor is it a warning, which eliminates choice C. Nor is it a “command,” which eliminates choice E. Choice D is way off base.

37. Answer: C. This is a weaken question. The conclusion and premise are:

Premise: Working at a non-profit company provides employees with valuable workplace experience.

Conclusion: That the pay scale was justified.

This argument relies on the assumption that the experience gained at a workplace justifies low pay. You want to weaken the argument, so you should find a choice that breaks this link and shows that the gain in experience doesn’t justify low pay. The director’s pay is not the issue, so choice A is out of scope. The motivations of the employees mentioned in choice B are not important, so eliminate it. Choice C weakens the argument by showing that most employees already have experience, so the pay scale is not justified. Choice D might show a possible benefit of working at a non-profit, but it doesn’t go far enough because only “some” workers are affected. Plus, it doesn’t address the link between experience and pay. Choice E is irrelevant to the argument.

38. Answer: C. This sentence is expressing the progression of actions in a dream: working for a company for 20 years, getting a gold watch, and then retiring. Choices A and D are not parallel, so eliminate them. Choice C avoids the awkward “being” and “having” used in the other two choices.

39. Answer: A. This is a structure question. Here are the premises:

Premises: (1) Increasing automation makes economic growth possible and raises standards of living.

(2) It frees up people’s time and allows them to pursue more leisure activities.

(3) Automation results in a proliferation of low-skill jobs as ever more complex tasks become automated.

(4) A person’s sense of satisfaction in his or job is based on the level of skill needed for the job.

The best answer will follow logically from these premises. If automation results in a proliferation of low-skill jobs and people’s sense of satisfaction is based on the level of skill needed for the job, then choice A follows: as automation increases, more and more people will be unsatisfied with their jobs. Happiness is not the issue as choice B states. The argument doesn’t say that people will be unsatisfied with their leisure activities, as choice C states. Choice D isn’t necessarily true; the premises only say that highly skilled jobs will become more automated. Nothing in the argument supports choice E.

40. Answer: B. The subject of the sentence is “evidence,” which requires a singular verb. That leaves only choices B and C. Choice C moves the phrase “until they went extinct,” which should be next to the phrase it modifies, “25,000 years ago” to make the meaning of the sentence clear.

41. Answer: C. This one is a bit tricky. Technically, you can’t say the “Panama Canal” is one of the “largest and most difficult engineering projects,” so there is a misplaced modifier. Instead, the “construction of the Panama Canal” is appropriate. That leaves choices C and D. Choice D is wrong because the “construction” isn’t what “cut down” the trip. Choice C is clear in that the construction allowed ships “to cut down” the trip.

Analysis of an Issue Sample Response

Topic: “The greatest good is achieved when the largest number of people is happiest.”

To what extent to you agree or disagree with the opinion expressed above? Develop your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observation, or reading.

- Philosophers have concerned themselves with the question “what is good” since the beginning of human history. There are many different conceptions of the good, but the one that makes the most sense is the one that states the greatest good results when the largest number of people is happiest.
- The truth of this statement is most obvious when one considers various negations of it. No one would reasonably argue that the greatest good is achieved when the smallest number of people is happiest. That reasoning would justify dictatorships and other authoritarian regimes in which a few people reap all the rewards and the masses live in poverty and misery. Nor would it make sense to state that the greatest good is achieved when the largest number of people is not happiest. This also is an untenable position. How could the greatest good result when the majority of people are not happy? If the majority of the people are not happy, then surely something is wrong.
- Since the statement cannot be effectively negated, that only leaves us to argue about the degree to which the statement is correct. Let's first consider the statement the greatest good is achieved when a large number of people is happiest. The ambiguity of the term “large” makes the statement open to questioning. How large is the group of people that are unhappy? If this group of unhappy people is sufficiently large, it would be remiss to call this situation the “greatest good.” For example, during pre-Civil War America, it could be argued that a large number of people were at their happiest, but a large number, the slaves, were most definitely not. This situation demonstrates that merely having a large number of people at their happiest is insufficient to bring the greatest good.
- We could also change the degree of happiness involved and say that the greatest good is achieved when the largest number of people is somewhat happy. However, why stop there? If we are truly seeking the greatest good, we should seek to maximize both the number of people and the degree of happiness. When these qualities both reach maximum levels, the greatest good will be achieved.

Analysis of an Argument Sample Response

Topic: The following appeared as part of the editorial of a major newspaper:

“Critics of the mayor’s plan to require mandatory testing of second, fifth, and eighth graders got a wake up call when the school district released the results of its district wide math tests. The school board reported that this year, over 78% percent of eighth graders passed the math exam, as compared to a mere 60% of eighth graders who passed the test when the plan was implemented four years ago. Clearly, these results show that the mayor’s plan is resulting in better performance for our schools.”

Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument.

- The editorial concludes that the mayor’s plan is resulting in better performance for the city’s schools. The editors reach this conclusion by citing the fact that over 78% of the city’s eighth graders passed the math exam, as opposed to 60% of eighth graders who passed the exam four years ago. Unfortunately, the editor’s conclusion does not follow logically from the premises offered.
- First, the argument makes a huge assumption when it contends that the plan has resulted in “better performance for our schools” based on the eighth grade math results. In order for this to hold, one must equate better math results with better performance. But the argument fails to mention how students performed on tests in other subject areas or how students in the other grades fared. Without more data on the student performance in a variety of subjects and grades, it is illogical to claim that there has been an increase in the school performance.
- Even if the author were to provide this evidence, the argument relies on another major assumption. It assumes that the plan has caused the increased performance. However, there could be alternative causes for the increase in performance. The schools could have hired new teachers or that year’s eighth graders could have been particularly gifted or the test might have easier than past tests. Because there are a variety of possible causes of the score increase, it is incorrect to claim that the mayor’s plan “is resulting” in better performance.
- These glaring problems make the editorial’s conclusion invalid. More evidence is required if the editors wish to support their claim about the effects of the mayor’s plan.

PRACTICE GMAT VERBAL

SECTION 2: ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

ANSWER KEY

1. C	15. D	29. B
2. C	16. B	30. D
3. D	17. E	31. C
4. C	18. A	32. C
5. E	19. A	33. E
6. C	20. D	34. A
7. E	21. A	35. B
8. D	22. D	36. A
9. E	23. E	37. B
10. A	24. B	38. B
11. E	25. A	39. C
12. C	26. C	40. B
13. D	27. E	41. C
14. A	28. B	

EVALUATING YOUR SCORE

Calculate the number of correct answers, and then consult the following chart:

Number Correct:	35–41	Excellent
	31–34	Above Average
	22–30	Average
	0–21	Below Average

EXPLANATIONS

1. Answer: C. The correct idiom in this case is “requires...to (verb).” No other form is correct.

2. Answer: C. Analytical reading will reveal the following major points in the passage:

(1) Some people maintain that the whole of medieval society can be explained by the relationship between lord and vassal.

(2) Still, contractual obligations based on land ownership did define much of the social interaction of the period.

(3) As the feudal system increased in scope, new social structures emerged to help maintain the convoluted networks of relationships required by feudalism.

(4) While the lives of the vassals were not to be envied, it would be remiss to think that medieval kings led luxurious lives.

(5) There was not much more to do than eat, sleep, pray, hunt, and watch over the estate.

Clearly, the main thrust of this passage is to detail elements of the feudal system. Choice A sounds good, but is too narrow of an answer, based only on the first line of the passage. Choice B is incorrect because there is no comparison to modern systems. Choice D refers to a minor detail in one of the paragraphs. Choice E is not mentioned; the passage mentions the daily lives of kings in the final passage, but that hardly makes the “primary purpose” of the passage about “typical medieval citizens.”

3. Answer: D. For an EXCEPT question, go right to the answers and look for evidence of each in the passage. Choice A is mentioned in the second paragraph: “contractual obligations based on land ownership did define much of the social interaction of the period.” Choice B is also mentioned in the second paragraph—“a monastery might be the lord to the tenant...while at the same time the monastery pays its homage...” The third paragraph introduces the “convoluted networks of relationships” mentioned in choice C. And the early taxation of choice E is in the line “In order to justify the continued extraction of resources from the peasant...” The daily pastimes of kings are mentioned, but not those of vassals.

4. Answer: C. The answer to this inference question is found in the second paragraph. Use the word “kings” to help you find the answer. The passage states, “In order to justify the continued extraction of resources from the peasants, the kings and lords had to provide security,” justifying choice C. Choice A is not an inference; just because the passage states that kings prayed does not imply that they were “highly” religious. Choice B is contradicted by the passage, which states that kings had “more freedom.” Choice D goes beyond the information in the passage and choice E is not supported by the passage.

5. Answer: E. The question directs you to the first paragraph. The author states, “while much of Europe was divided into fiefs, the very lands from which the word feudalism derives, there were parts of the continent that did not fit so nice a definition. In fact, much of Italy, Spain, and southern France were not ‘feudal’ in this sense.” This indicates that these parts of Europe were not feudal in the sense of being divided into fiefs. The next line states, “Still, contractual obligations based on land ownership did define much of the social interaction of the period.” This indicates that these parts may have been feudal in another sense. Choice A is the opposite of what the author is implying. Nothing in the passage supports choice B. Choice C is not implied by the author and the author does not comment on the rulers of the lands as in choice D.

6. Answer: C. This is a weaken question, although it doesn’t follow the typical format. The conclusion is built into the question, while the argument itself lists a number of premises. Still, once you get the hang of the basic patterns, these oddball questions shouldn’t be any more difficult. The argument you have to weaken breaks down to:

Premise: Pesticides kill the larvae.

Conclusion: It’s advisable to control the beetles with pesticides.

The assumption here is that killing the larvae with pesticides will control the beetle. You need to weaken that link. Choice C does so by saying that the beetles will adapt and develop a resistance to toxins. Choice A doesn’t really address the argument. Choice B also does nothing to the argument. Choice D does not weaken the argument much, if at all, and neither does choice E.

7. Answer: E. The sentence as written contains an idiom error, “try and,” and an ambiguous pronoun “they.” Only choice E uses the correct idiom, “try to” and eliminates the pronoun.

8. Answer: D. This is a weaken question. The conclusion and the premise are:

Premise: Employees at an electronics manufacturing company that offered stock were found to be 10 percent more productive than the average worker in the industry.

Conclusion: Offering partial ownership increases productivity.

This is a typical causal argument. But the mere correlation between an increase in productivity and a stock plan does not mean that one event caused the other. To weaken this argument, find an alternative cause. Choice D provides another cause—new equipment. Choice A does the opposite of the question task by strengthening the argument. Choices B and C do not affect the causal relationship in the argument. Choice E may appear to offer another reason for the productivity increase, but it is not as good of an answer as choice D because the higher wages may themselves be caused by the increased production.

9. Answer: E. This is resolve/explain the discrepancy question. The contradiction is that

- crickets are solitary insects that often kill and eat other crickets in their territory
- scientists have observed huge communities of crickets migrating to new homes

The best answer will explain how this paradox exists. Choice A doesn't go far enough. It may explain why some crickets are not aggressive, but not all the facts in the passage. Choice B explains why the crickets migrate but not why they don't attack each other. Choice C is irrelevant to the discussion. Choice D would be helpful but the argument doesn't specify what the sex of the migrating crickets is, so this choice isn't the best answer. Choice E is the best because it shows that the crickets gain a survival advantage by traveling in large groups.

10. Answer: A. The sentence is correct as written. A popular idiomatic expression on the GMAT is "not only...but also," which is employed here. The sentence also is parallel, correctly using "shapes" and "affects," to describe the environment.

11. Answer: E. This is a weaken question. Here are the conclusion and premise:

Premise: The streets are already so congested that adding more buses will only exacerbate the traffic problem.

Conclusion: The proposal to increase bus service in Bellaville is ridiculous.

The assumption is that increasing the bus service will cause an increase in traffic congestion. To weaken this argument, find an answer that breaks the link between the increased bus service and increased traffic congestion. Choice E does this by showing that commuters who currently drive would take the bus instead of driving, thus reducing the number of cars on the road. Choice A strengthens the argument. Choices B and C are immaterial to the argument. Choice D doesn't necessary break the link between bus service and congestion.

12. Answer: C. The sentence as written is awkward and illogically uses the conjunction "so that..." to introduce the final clause. Because the clause describes a verb phrase, use "as" instead of "like." Choice D inappropriately uses the pronoun "its" when its referent is plural.

13. Answer: D. Use the analytical reading strategies you learned to find the following key points:

- (1) Feminism is an essentially pluralist movement.
- (2) Early historians of the feminist movement claim that the movement was borne from the experiences of every woman who has resisted or tried to resist domination.
- (3) Differences among feminist theories arise from two major sources.
- (4) These experiential movements should not be seen as complete, for as the feminist ethos takes root in other countries with different traditions, new theoretical perspectives will develop.

Each of these major ideas contributes to a description of the theory, as choice D states. There is no evaluation, as choice A states, because the author doesn't state strengths or weaknesses. The passage does not discuss the history of feminism, so choice B is wrong. Choice C refers to only the last sentence of the passage, but does not encompass the entire passage. No criticism is stated or rejected, so choice E is incorrect.

14. Answer: A. This is an applying information question that requires you to analyze the author's argument. The conclusion of the final paragraph is "as the feminist ethos takes root in other countries with different traditions, new theoretical perspectives will develop." This conclusion is based on the "diversity of experiences" mentioned in the previous lines. In order to weaken the argument, attack the idea that the different traditions in other countries leads to a diversity of experiences in the women of those countries. Choice A does this. If the experiences of women are similar, no new theoretical perspectives will develop. None of the other choices address this argument.

15. Answer: D. This inference question is answered in the first paragraph. The first sentence calls feminism a "pluralist" movement and states it values "subjective experiences." Thus, choice D is supported. Choice A is the opposite of the passage states. Choice B is not stated in the passage, so regardless of whether this statement is true in the "real" world, it is not the correct answer. Choice C misstates the passage; the first paragraph states that feminism seeks to intertwine the "political" and "personal" worlds. Nothing in the passage supports the idea that feminism is attempting to "transform" the world, so choice E is not correct.

16. Answer: B. The "it" in the original sentence is ambiguous; none of the other choices fix this error. Choices D and E also incorrectly change verb tenses.

17. Answer: E. Only use the pronoun "where" when referring to locations; otherwise, use "in which." In order to maintain parallelism, the preposition "by" should be used for both "cooperation" and "fear."

18. Answer: A. This is basically an assumption question. Remember, the quality of an argument is based on the quality of its assumptions. A flawed argument has one or more flawed assumptions underlying it. The conclusion and premise of the argument are:

Premise: Couples that fight more tend to stay together for shorter periods of time.

Conclusion: A couple that typically fights for two or more hours is likely to break up.

This argument has a large gap in it. The conclusion is about the *duration* of fights, while the premise is about the *frequency* of fights. Thus, the assumption must be that these concepts are basically the same. This is exactly what choice A states. None of the other choices address this flaw.

19. Answer: A. The sentence is correct as written. The planners are performing two actions: "stressing..." and "calling..." The verbs are parallel. The correct idiom is "means to," not "means of."

20. Answer: D. This is an evaluate the argument question. Here are the conclusion and premise:

Premise: The companies issued too many high risk loans and had to default on many of them.

Conclusion: The crash occurred due to the foolish lending practices of mortgage companies.

The argument relies on a causal assumption. In order to evaluate this argument, you need to investigate the causal link between defaulted loans and economic recession. Choice A does not address this link. Choice B is not related to the argument at all. Choice C would not help evaluate the causal link. Choice D would help because if other countries with similar economies had the same loan issue and experienced recessions, it would make the link more likely. If these countries did not experience recessions, it would weaken the link. Choice E looks at the effects on individuals, not on the economy as a whole.

21. Answer: A. This is basically an inference question. Which of the statements in the choices is necessary to make the conclusion true? It may be helpful to diagram the relationships in the argument:

Cheetah > elk

Lions > hyenas

Cheetah > hyenas

The best answer will allow the conclusion to be properly drawn. Inserting choice A into the argument gives the following:

Cheetah > elk > lions > hyenas

This clearly shows that the conclusion cheetah > hyenas is true. None of the other choices make this necessarily true.

22. Answer: D. The original sentence contains a faulty comparison because it compares social skills and etiquette to “many people.” Eliminate choice A. Choices B and C are plagued by ambiguous pronouns, and B also has a faulty comparison. Choice E is awkward and unclear.

23. Answer: E. As written, the sentence contains a subject-verb agreement error. The subject “lights” needs a plural verb, so A, B, and C are incorrect. Choice D incorrectly uses “flight path,” instead of the plural form.

24. Answer: B. Use the phrase “economic theorists” to find the answer to this inference question. The first sentence mentions “economic theory” which is a good place to look. Here, the author calls Pareto’s idea a “lasting contribution.” This implies it is still in use and makes choice B correct. Choice A indicates that theorists do not hold the idea in high regard which is contrary to the passage. Choice C brings in information from another part of the passage that is not relevant here. Choice D and choice E have no support in the passage and also use information from other parts of the passage that is not appropriate.

25. Answer: A. The question refers you to the last sentence of the passage. Begin reading a few lines before the line reference, “Utilitarianism considers and ranks all possible worlds, good and bad, but the Pareto criterion ranks only those alternatives in which one’s preference satisfaction is higher. Thus, comparisons between situations in which some people are better off and some worse off are not possible with the Pareto system. Of course, Pareto desirability is not a practical tool for use in the real world.” Because the Pareto criterion only applies to situations in which people are better off, the author states that it is not a practical tool. Choice A reflects this failing of the concept. Choice B is wrong because the passage doesn’t state that Pareto desirability is “only useful” in analyzing monetary systems. The author is not emphasizing a point about utilitarianism, but rather about Pareto desirability, so choice C is incorrect. Choice D is not supported by the passage. Choice E goes far beyond what the passage states.

26. Answer: C. This is an odd type of applying information question that shows up every once in a while on the GMAT. Still, like all Reading Comprehension questions, the best answer will be based on the information in the passage. The last paragraphs states that Pareto desirability is not a practical tool, but that theorists use it to study systems on a theoretical level. Choice C continues this idea to show that the theorists don’t look at actual policies (which is a practical consideration) but instead at the rules behind them (a more theoretical consideration). Choice A doesn’t work because the passage doesn’t state or imply that economists use utilitarianism; it merely contrasts it with Pareto desirability. Choice B goes against the passage, which states that the concept is a “lasting contribution.” Choice D refers back to the second paragraph and would not logically appear at the end of the passage. Choice E is wrong because it states that Pareto desirability is the “prime way” of understanding the world, although the passage states that it is used for theoretical investigations only.

27. Answer: E. The major points of the passage are:

(1) Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto’s lasting contribution to economic theory is his notion of Pareto optimality.

(2) Pareto-desirability as a norm has three important characteristics.

(3) Pareto-desirability overlaps somewhat with the philosophical theory of utilitarianism, which states that what is best is what causes the most people to be happy.

(4) Economists mainly use the Pareto criterion when analyzing systems on a theoretical level.

The passage mainly details important aspects and applications of an economic concept. Choice E is the best reflection of this. The author is not arguing for the elevation of utilitarianism; the passage only makes a comparison with Pareto desirability. Thus, choice A is wrong. Choice B is incorrect because the concept is not used for “practical problems.” Choice C is wrong because the passage only discusses one way, not multiple “ways.” The author is not calling for a revision, making choice D incorrect.

28. Answer: B. The sentence uses the ambiguous pronoun “it” and the awkward phrase “raising to 9.” Choices C and E also use “it.” Choice D uses the pronoun “which”, making it appear as if the Constitution is doing the raising.

29. Answer: B. This is an assumption question. The conclusion and the premise are:

Premise: Sociology follows the scientific method of using controlled experiments to test falsifiable hypotheses.

Conclusion: Sociology is science just as much as chemistry, biology, and physics are.

The assumption necessary to this argument brings together the information in the conclusion and the premise. The argument claims that sociology is science because it follows the scientific method, so the assumption must be that following the scientific method is all something needs to be called science. Choice B says this. No other choice addresses the link between conclusion and premise.

30. Answer: D. This is an inference question. Nothing in the argument gives the relative numbers of biotic and abiotic reproducing plants, so choice A is not a proper inference. The argument doesn't discuss choice B or choice C, so they are not possible inferences. The argument states that biotic pollinators "require insects or birds to carry pollen from plant to plant. Plants have developed characteristics such as brightly colored petals and sweet tasting nectars to attract these creatures." Thus, if plants developed brightly colored petals to attract insects and birds, at least one of the groups must be able to see color, as choice D indicates. Choice E goes too far—biotic pollinators might go extinct, but not all plants.

31. Answer: C. This sentence contains a misplaced modifier, because "huge stone structures" are not "mystics and nature lovers." The noun modified is the "Druids" and only choice C places it in the correct position.

32. Answer: C. This is a structure question. The question requires you to figure out how Jane's argument works. Find the conclusion and premise of both arguments:

Steve:

Premise: Money spent on these upgrades means there is less money to pay workers and therefore a decrease in the amount of mining work done.

Conclusion: New regulations imposed by the government are going to stifle growth in the mining industry.

Jane:

Premises: The money spent upgrading the mines will make them safer; increased safety measures mean that fewer miners are injured and they are able to spend more time on the job and less time on medical leave.

Conclusion: Regulations imposed by the government are not going to stifle growth.

In responding to Steve, Jane points out another consequence of spending money on following the regulations. She does not claim that Steve has no evidence, as choice A says. She accepts Steve's fact that money will be spent on complying with the regulations, so choice B is wrong. Choice C is a good description of Jane's response. Choices D and E are incorrect because Jane does not accept Steve's conclusion.

33. Answer: E. This sentence is attempting to draw a comparison between the family of today and the family of earlier generations. The family is singular, so "those" is incorrect. Eliminate A, B, and D. Choice C misplaced the verb "did," changing the meaning of the sentence.

34. Answer: A. The tenses in the sentence are correct as written. The past perfect tense in choices B, C, and D is incorrect. Choice E contains a subject-verb agreement error at "each...have."

35. Answer: B. This is an inference question. Look for the parts of the passage that refer to the "moralists." The answer is found in the final sentence: "the moralists were not interested in synthesizing these contrary positions into one law. Rather, they wished to show the deficiencies of conventional wisdom." Thus, the moralists wanted to point out (describe) problems, not provide (prescribe) "laws." Nothing in the passage discusses the number of books written, so eliminate choice A. Choice C refers to a part of the passage that does not apply to the moralists, but rather to the author's analysis of the maxims. Nothing supports choices D and E.

36. Answer: A. This applying information question asks you to figure out what a "contrary" maxim is. The example provided is "we have not the strength to follow our reason all the way," and its contrary, "we have not the reason to follow our strength all the way." The contrary of the maxim "one may forgive an infidelity, but not forget it," must be choice A, then. The other choices do not follow the example of a contrary provided in the passage.

37. Answer: B. In order to answer this inference question, look at each choice and try to find support for it in the passage. Choice A is a distortion of the passage, which states that the moralists phrased their maxims as universal for "effect." But this doesn't mean that the author believes that maxims are universal laws. Choice B is supported when the author states "depending, of course, on the perspectives of the reader." Choice C goes too far, especially since the author does not compare the French moralists to any other writers. Choice D also goes too far. The author states that maxims are "sometimes true." The author does not mention the information in choice E.

38. Answer: B. This is a weaken question. The conclusion and premise are:

Premise: The random investment portfolio outperformed each of the expert's investment picks.

Conclusion: There is no benefit to hiring financial planners for help in investing.

For this argument to work, you have to assume that the results of the experiment show that there is “no benefit” to hiring investors. The right answer will indicate that there is a benefit, despite these results. Choice A appears to strengthen the argument because if the experts selected are some of the best and they were beat by random picks, it would support the conclusion. Choice B weakens the argument because it indicates that looking at the performance at the end of the year isn’t a good indicator of the strength of the investments. Choice C doesn’t affect the conclusion. Choice D doesn’t weaken the argument; it supports the idea that random investing outperformed the experts. Choice E doesn’t even mention the financial planners.

39. Answer: C. This is an inference question. The best answer will be supported by the information in the argument. The facts of the argument are:

1. People have rational preferences which can be ordered based on their value, or utility, to the individual.
2. All people act to maximize utility and are assumed to make decisions based on full information.
3. Businesses seek to maximize profits.

Based on these facts, choice C makes the most sense because it shows that in order for businesses to reach the goal presented in premise #3, they must take into account premises #1 and #2. The other choices are not supported by the facts in the argument.

40. Answer: B. There is no need to change the tense of the verb as choices C, D, and E do. “Less” is appropriate because it is the object of the preposition “to.”

41. Answer: C. This is a parallel the reasoning argument. State how the argument works in general terms. The argument goes something like this: Because two things (humans and Neanderthals) share the same structural design (hyoid bone), they must also share the same abilities (speech). The answer choices look like this:

A. This doesn’t match because it argues that a class (animals) has a characteristic (eyes) so therefore a member of that class (fish) must have the same characteristic.

B. This is not a match because it argues that members of a species (humans) can live in most places, but not all.

C. This is a match. The two entities (cows and new species) have the same structure (four chambered stomach). Because of this, it is concluded that they have the same ability (digest plants).

D. This doesn’t match because it argues that if a species has certain ability, all members have always had that ability.

E. This isn’t a match. It argues that a species lacks a characteristic. A new animal with that characteristic is not part of the species.

Analysis of an Issue Sample Response

Topic: “Human culture is reaching a breaking point. Either science or religion must ultimately win out.”

To what extent to you agree or disagree with the opinion expressed above? Develop your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observation, or reading.

- The idea that science and religion are waging a constant battle for supremacy is a persistent one. Unfortunately, the tenacity of this view does not make it a correct one. Despite some notable skirmishes between science and religion, there is no reason to believe that the two cannot coexist peacefully.
- For much of human history, science and religion were inextricably linked. Early people explained natural phenomena in terms of the actions of the gods, linking volcanic eruptions and sudden storms to divine manifestations. In some cultures, such as the Mayan, the priests were also the scientists. Mayan priests were able to figure out the motions of the heavenly bodies and use this knowledge to demonstrate their favored status among the gods. And for a long time, the members of monasteries and other religious orders, because of their literacy, preserved and maintained the scientific knowledge of their cultures.
- It was not until Galileo proved that the Earth was not the center of the universe that science and religion first clashed. Although the Catholic Church stubbornly refused to accept Galileo’s findings and forced him to recant, this incident does not imply a natural antagonism between science and religion. If anything, it merely shows humankind’s natural resistance to change and the difficulty of discarding entrenched views. Of course, today, there is no dispute about Earth’s place in the universe and all major religions have peaceably incorporated this scientific truth into their faiths.
- In recent times, the controversy over evolution has rekindled the idea that science and religion are incompatible. However, this dispute is mainly driven by a small subset of religious people. Most major religions accept the theory of religion and see no conflict between it and their beliefs in a divine creator.
- These two incidents may make it appear that science and religion are at odds, but that view denies the hundreds of years of peaceful coexistence. Religion and science address fundamentally different questions about the human experience. Science tells us how things work and religion helps us figure out why. Both perspectives are important for people, so religion and science will both continue to have major impacts.

Analysis of an Argument Sample Response

Topic: The following appeared as part of the editorial of a major newspaper:

“Fifty years ago, our country led the world in technological innovation and engineering prowess. In recent years, however, we have slipped to the middle of the pack. The countries that have overtaken us have longer school days, year round schooling, and free university education. Clearly, if we wish to return to the top of the economic ladder, we must improve our educational system.”

- This argument contends that an improvement to the educational system is necessary to return to the top of the economic ladder. The author believes this to be true because other countries have longer school days, year round schooling, and free university education. This argument fails to consider several possible flaws in its logic.
- First, the author assumes that there is a causal link between a country's educational system and its economic standing. While this is a plausible assumption, it is not necessarily true. The author must do more to establish the causal link between the two in order to make the argument better. Second, the author assumes that leading the world in technological innovation and engineering will return the country to the top of the economic ladder. However, it may be the case that the world economy has shifted greatly and success in other industries is required to reach the top of the economic ladder. Third, the author believes that longer school days, year round schooling and free university education constitute an improvement in the educational system. This is a major assumption, because simply having longer school days and free education is of no help if the quality of the education is poor.
- Because the author fails to address these major assumptions in the argument, the conclusion is not properly drawn. More evidence is needed to support the conclusion.

PRACTICE GMAT VERBAL

SECTION 3: ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

ANSWER KEY

1. A	15. E	29. C
2. C	16. E	30. E
3. C	17. B	31. C
4. D	18. D	32. D
5. E	19. C	33. D
6. A	20. A	34. E
7. A	21. B	35. B
8. D	22. A	36. B
9. D	23. B	37. E
10. B	24. B	38. A
11. E	25. D	39. B
12. C	26. A	40. A
13. A	27. C	41. A
14. C	28. D	

EVALUATING YOUR SCORE

Calculate the number of correct answers, and then consult the following chart:

Number Correct:	35–41	Excellent
	31–34	Above Average
	22–30	Average
	0–21	Below Average

EXPLANATIONS

1. Answer: A. The end of the first paragraph states that “if one knew the position and velocity of all the particles in the universe at a given time, the laws of physics would be able to predict the future state of the universe.” Thus, if scientific determinism were true, scientists in theory could predict the future. The passage says choice B is not true because of the uncertainty principle, but it does not imply that this fact would be true if determinism were also true. Choice C is not necessarily true; if scientific determinism were true, it would mean scientists could predict the future in theory, even if practically there were no way to do it. Choice D is not correct because the equations have nothing to do with determinism. Choice E is also not necessarily true for reasons similar to those discussed for choice C.

2. Answer: C. The relevant part of the passage is here: “Even though physicists are unable to know precisely where a particle is and what its velocity is, they can determine certain probabilities about its position and velocity. These probabilities are called wave functions.” Since wave functions are probabilities, they present a range of possibilities, as choice C states. Choice A is contradicted by the passage. Choice B is incorrect based on the information in the passage. Choice D is wrong because wave functions only allow scientists to figure out a probability, not the future state. Choice E is wrong because the passage states that the uncertainty principle threw determinism into doubt.

3. Answer: C. To answer this question, use your analytical reading skills to find the progression of the ideas. The first part of the paragraph introduces the idea of scientific determinism. Next, the passage states that the principle was thrown into doubt. Finally, the passage indicates that physicists can reach half of the requirements for determinism but no more. That matches choice C best.

4. Answer: D. This is an apply the information question. It is similar to a Critical Reasoning strengthen question. The author’s conclusion and premise are:

Premise: Quantum mechanics introduced the world to the idea of the uncertainty principle, which stated that it was impossible to accurately measure both the position and the velocity of a particle at one time.

Conclusion: Under modern physics theories, exactly half of the information needed to satisfy determinism is available and that is as far as any researcher can go in predicting the future.

This argument relies on the assumption that quantum mechanics is correct and that scientists will never be able to accurately measure both the position and velocity of a particle. Choice D strengthens the argument by indicating quantum mechanics is in fact correct in its assertions of uncertainty. Choice A would weaken the argument by indicating that perhaps quantum mechanics is wrong. Choice B is irrelevant because the argument hinges on quantum mechanics. Choice C does not address the author’s argument. It introduces another barrier to predicting the future, but is not relevant to the conclusion and premise in the passage. Choice E has no bearing on the argument as well.

5. Answer: E. The sentence as written contains an idiom error. The appropriate construction is either “as important as,” or “more important than.” Choices A, B, and C all contain this idiom error. Choice D changes the tense of the verb.

6. Answer: A. The sentence is correct as written. Diabetes is a collective noun and is therefore singular, so choices with plural verbs are incorrect. This eliminates choices B, D, and E. Choice C is awkward and redundant.

7. Answer: A. This question requires you to evaluate the argument and select the answer choice that would best support the conclusion that the questionnaire is “bound to underestimate the frequency of dishonesty.” Choice A correctly indicates a reason why the study would underestimate the frequency of dishonesty. Choice B does not indicate whether the survey results will be underestimated because of the guilt felt by honest individuals. Choice C would lead to an overestimate of frequency, while Choice D would indicate the questionnaire is somewhat accurate. Choice E is not relevant.

8. Answer: D. This sentence contains a faulty comparison. The sentence should compare the brake of an automobile to the brake of a horse buggy. Choices A, B, and C all contain this faulty comparison. Choice E is wordy and awkward.

9. Answer: D. This is an inference question. The argument states that “lifestyle changes are necessary to maintain healthy cholesterol levels.” Thus, drug treatment alone is not sufficient to maintain healthy levels and choice D is correct. The argument doesn’t address choice A. No comparison is made between the levels of reduction of the two treatments, so choice B is wrong. Choice C is not supported since the argument simply states that lifestyle changes and drug treatments are ways in which people “can” lower their LDL levels; that’s not the same as saying they are the only ways to lower them. Choice E is not supported by the passage.

10. Answer: B. This is a strengthen question. Find the choice that supports the plan outlined in the argument. The conclusion and premise are:

Premise: These buses would make limited stops and travel in traffic lanes designated solely for their use and so provide fast and efficient travel options to citizens.

Conclusion: A solution to the problem of traffic congestion is to establish special bus routes from the suburbs to the major business and commercial centers of a city.

The assumption here is that providing fast and efficient travel options from the suburbs to the city’s business and commercial centers will reduce congestion. Choice B strengthens the argument by showing that much of the traffic on city streets is made up of people traveling to the city to shop or go to work. Choice A would present a reason against the plan. Choice C does not affect the strategy either way. Choice D is irrelevant to the argument and choice E undermines the plan because it states that much of the traffic results from tourists, not people commuting from the suburbs.

11. Answer: E. The original sentence uses the pronoun “they” to refer to “a corporation.” A singular pronoun is required, so choices A, B, and C are wrong. Choice D uses the unidiomatic “deductions of...” and redundantly repeats the pronoun “it.”

12. Answer: C. This is a weaken question. The conclusion and the premises are:

Premise: Since City X passed a regulation requiring fast food restaurants to post the caloric content of their food in prominent places, total revenue at the city's fast food restaurants have decreased 10 percent.

Conclusion: City X's regulation has encouraged people to eat healthier food.

The assumption here is that the decrease in revenue was caused by the regulations and the desire to eat healthier. To weaken this argument, look for an alternative cause for the decrease. Choice C provides this by showing that revenues are down because there are fewer restaurants in the city. Choice A doesn't weaken the argument because it would seem to indicate that fewer people are eating at the restaurants even though the food is cheaper. Choice B is irrelevant to the causal link in the argument. Choice D does not weaken the argument because it says nothing about the number of people eating at fast food restaurants, just the population as a whole. Whether the citizens approve of the regulations or not has no bearing on whether the regulations affect their eating habits, so choice E is out of scope.

13. Answer: A. The main purpose of the passage is embodied in the following points from the reading:

(1) One of the first indications of a distinctive American character came in 1782.

(2) This viewpoint of the American character is steeped in the philosophical tradition of the Enlightenment.

(3) To the Europeans, Benjamin Franklin—or at least their mythologized conception of Franklin—best represented the American character.

The author's purpose is to describe and comment on the American character, as choice A states. Benjamin Franklin is used as an example, but is not the main purpose of the passage, so choice B is wrong. The author is not arguing that the idea is a myth as choice C states. Choice D is not supported at all by the passage. Choice E is wrong because the passage discusses a general type, not a specific individual.

14. Answer: C. This is an inference question. Scan the passage for the various mentions of "Europeans." The third paragraph mentions their "mythologized conception of Franklin," while the second paragraph discusses their "idealized portrait" of the American character. These references support choice C. Although the Americans were thought to possess a higher degree of initiative and self-reliance, the passage does not imply that Europeans lacked these qualities as choice A states. The passage states that Europeans admired Franklin, but not Americans in general, eliminating choice B. Nothing supports the information in choice D and choice E goes too far beyond the information in the passage.

15. Answer: E. This is an apply the information question. First, go to the passage and find the description of the “American personality.” This appears at the end of the second paragraph: “most comfortable in the world of free markets, of trade and hard work.” Next, find the choice that matches this description. Choice A definitely does not because it says nothing of hard work, trade, or markets. Choice B is tempting, but the American personality in the passage is not “pious” or “humble.” Choice C is wrong; although Franklin was a statesman, nothing supports the idea that he “manipulates” people. Choice D is also incorrect. The American is described as rational and pragmatic, not lacking in common sense. Choice E is best because the individual used hard work to achieve success in shipping, which involves trade and markets.

16. Answer: E. In the original sentence, the initial modifier compares “hysteria” to “the Beatles.” In order to fix this error, you need to compare the Beatles to Elvis. The only choice that does this is choice E.

17. Answer: B. The word “which” should be used only for a non-essential clause; in this sentence, the clause after “which” is essential to the meaning of the sentence. That means choices A and D are wrong. Choice C has a plural verb, “keep,” although the subject is the singular “variety.” Choice E uses the unidiomatic “developed...in order to...” when “developed...to” is better.

18. Answer: D. This is an assumption question. Look at the conclusion and the premise:

Premise: People with higher incidences of physical illness also tend to be prone to depression.

Conclusion: Being sick physically contributes to being sick mentally.

For this argument to work, the researcher must assume that the causality lies with physical illness. It is not the case that depression leads to more physical illness. This assumption is expressed in choice D. The argument is not about people who are rarely ill, so choice A is out of scope. The effects of the illnesses are not part of the argument, so choice B is also out of scope. Choice C introduces the idea of “serious” ailments, but the argument does not specify the severity of the illnesses. Treatment is not relevant to the argument, eliminating choice E.

19. Answer: C. The original sentence contains an error in parallel construction. The major challenges outlined include “generating...standards,” and “to determine the amounts...,” so choice A is wrong. Choice B uses the awkward construction “including to generate.” Choice D changes the meaning of the sentence, making it seem as if the office has “outlined,” “generated...,” and “has determined...” Additionally, these actions are also not parallel. Choice E needs a conjunction after “port.”

20. Answer: A. This is a resolve/explain the discrepancy question. There are two major points in conflict:

- evolution takes place extremely slowly and for the first 4 billion years of Earth’s history, the only species known were bacteria, plankton, and algae
- during a brief 30 million span known as the Cambrian explosion, the eventual lineages of all major animal groups alive today appeared

The issue you must address is how evolution could operate so slowly and yet the fossil record indicates an “explosion” of species in a short period of time. Choice A provides an explanation by showing that the fossil record is incomplete. Thus, the species could have been around for a much longer time and not be captured in the fossil record. The extinction events in choice B would not explain the sudden appearance of species. It doesn’t matter that some of the lineages are extinct, as choice C states, because the situation you’re trying to explain involves the speed of evolution. Choice D has nothing to do with the time period over which species developed. The plants in choice E are not relevant to the paradox.

21. Answer: B. This is a weaken question. The conclusion and the premise are:

Premise: Employee benefits and wages make up 30 percent of the cost of manufacturing the processors at both corporations.

Conclusion: Tech Corp. believes it can gain an advantage over Electronics Inc. by spending less money on employee benefits.

This argument relies on the assumption that cutting employee benefits will result in an advantage over a competitor. In order to weaken this argument, find the answer that states such an advantage will not materialize. Choice B shows that a cut in benefits will result in a lower caliber of employee and a lower quality product, which will not give the company an advantage. Choice A is irrelevant to the argument. Choice C simply gives a reason why Tech Corp might seek an advantage, but it doesn’t weaken the argument. Choice D does not address the issue of a competitive advantage. Choice E does not state how Tech Corp’s plan will not result in a competitive advantage.

22. Answer: A. The sentence is correct as written. Choices B and C use the ambiguous and unnecessary pronoun “they.” Choice D inappropriately places the modifier “they have developed” after the noun “world.” Choice E moves “seismographs” from the noun it modifies, “network.”

23. Answer: B. The sentence requires a comparison between workers in the United States and workers in France. Choices A and E are therefore incorrect. Choices C and D change the meaning of the sentence by making it appear as if the workers imposed the law.

24. Answer: B. An analytical reading of the passage reveals the following key points:

- (1) The insanity defense in legal proceedings follows from the assumption that the great majority of people freely choose to follow the law.
- (2) This scenario presents a conundrum for legal theorists.
- (3) Insanity as a legal defense traces back to a case in 1843.
- (4) Jurors were asked to judge the sanity of a defendant based on two questions.
- (5) Later versions of the M’Naghten test included an addendum that stated in cases in which the accused knew his actions were wrong, he could be acquitted if the jury determined he acted on the basis of an irresistible impulse.

From these key points, it is evident that the author is discussing the criteria used in determining whether a defendant is legally insane, as choice B indicates. The passage does not evaluate the accuracy of the verdict in the trial as choice A states. Choice C is far too broad to be the best answer. Choice D is incorrect because the focus is on finding a defendant insane, not presuming sanity. Choice E is mentioned in the first paragraph but is not the primary purpose of the passage.

25. Answer: D. To answer this question, return to the second paragraph and read carefully about the M’Naghten test. The passage states that a jury should acquit on the basis of the insanity if “it was clearly proved that the accused was laboring under such a defect of reason as not to know the nature and quality of the act he was doing, *or* if he did know it, that he did not know what he was doing what was wrong.” Thus, satisfaction of either one of the criteria is sufficient for acquittal. This makes choice D correct. No information is given on what other evidence the jury should consider, so choice A is wrong. Choice B is not correct because nowhere in the passage does it say that the jury “sentences” the defendant. Choice C is also not mentioned, while choice E is the opposite of what the passage states.

26. Answer: A. On some open-ended questions like this, it is easier to find wrong answers and eliminate them until you’re left with the right choice. Focus on the answer choices that contain words or ideas that are easy to locate in the passage. Choice B is discussed in the second paragraph, which states “Jurors were instructed in all cases to presume the defendant was sane,” but nothing is mentioned about a judge’s instructions to do otherwise, so this choice is wrong. Choice C comes from the final paragraph, yet there is no information on the author’s opinion of irresistible impulses. Choice D also appears to be based on the final paragraph, but the author doesn’t state anything to support the idea that the test will “continue” to change. Nothing in the passage discusses responsibility, so choice E is not supported. That leaves choice A. In the first paragraph, the author calls the insanity plea a “conundrum” and says “If someone is truly unable to follow the law, is it just to imprison them and punish them for something they did involuntarily?”

27. Answer: C. This is a logical structure question. The last paragraph presents an “addendum” to the traditional M’Naghten test. Choice C is therefore the best answer. Choice A is wrong because no arguments are summarized and choice B is wrong because the usefulness of the test is not evaluated. The author does not believe the test is absurd, making choice D incorrect. No paradox is revealed in the final paragraph, so choice E is not correct.

28. Answer: D. The sentence contains a logical contrast between the food the Mayan “primarily” ate and the food that made up the rest of their diet. This requires a contrasting conjunction, which eliminates choice B. Choice A uses the modifier “both” on the noun meat when it should modify animals. Choice C is wordy and awkward. Choice E is not parallel—“incorporating” needs to match “subsisted.”

29. Answer: C. This is an inference question. Choice A is not true; the last sentence merely states that in 30 years, spending will increase by more than two-thirds as a share of the economy. That is not the same as saying it currently is at one-third. Choice B goes too far because nothing supports the idea that the costs must increase. Choice C is correct. If in 30 years, the population of people aged 65 or older will double, there must currently be more people 35 years or older in the population. Choices D and E both make inferences about “countries” when the argument only concerns itself with one situation.

30. Answer: E. This is an evaluate the argument question. In this case, the correct answer is the choice that has the least bearing on the assumptions in the argument. For this argument, the assumption is that a transit strike will not decrease public support for the union. The answer to choice A is relevant because it would indicate whether the public is on the union’s side. Choice B is relevant because if the strike inconveniences a large number of people, public support of the union would decrease. The answer to choice C would help the union gauge the likely public reaction to a strike. And the answer to choice D would indicate whether the public is more likely to side with the mayor or the union. The answer to the question in choice E would not affect the union’s plans.

31. Answer: C. The underlined portion is awkward and unidiomatic. Choice B uses the pronoun “they” incorrectly because the only noun it could refer to is “malpractice suits,” but that wouldn’t make sense. Choice D incorrectly switches the tense. Choice E is a sentence fragment.

32. Answer: D. This is an assumption question. The conclusion and the premise are:

Premise: Not only can we evaluate the strength of a student’s course load, we can determine whether the student is truly focused on academics.

Conclusion: An applicant’s undergraduate transcript is a vital part of the application for graduate school.

The best choice must make the connection between the information provided by an undergraduate transcript and that information’s relevance to a graduate school application. Choice D makes this link by assuming that an undergraduate transcript reflects the applicant’s current devotion to academic pursuits. The argument does not assume transcripts are the most important part, as choice A does. Nor does it assume that without a transcript there is no way to evaluate a candidate, so choice B is wrong. The argument does not discuss the relative admittance rate of different students, so the information in choice C is not necessary to the argument. The factors in choice E are not ranked in the argument.

33. Answer: D. The original sentence contains a misplaced modifier, as the “advance” refers to the “innovative three paneled array,” not the rover. Choice B repeats this error and also adds in a subject verb agreement error (“employs”). Choice C uses the modifier in the wrong spot and uses the unidiomatic and non-parallel construction “what the typical...” Choice E is wordy and awkward.

34. Answer: E. This is a strengthen question. The conclusion and premise are:

Premise: Among couples married for 40 or more years, the death of one spouse is followed by the death of the other in 12 to 18 months on average.

Conclusion: Love may be an essential component to human happiness and well being.

This argument assumes that the death of the widows was triggered by a lack of love in their life after the death of their spouses. The best answer will lend additional support to this assumption. Choice E does so by indicating that the individuals were in relatively good health, making it more likely that they did die from a broken heart. Choice A would weaken the argument by indicating that perhaps the people died not because they were lonely but because they were already of an advanced age. Unmarried individuals are not relevant to the argument, so choices B and C are out of scope. The argument only says that love is essential; it doesn’t specify whether that love has to be returned, so choice D doesn’t help the argument.

35. Answer: B. This is a reasoning question. Your goal is to figure out why the representative’s response to the advocate is flawed. The advocate’s conclusion is that the company is willing to deceive its customers, yet the representative’s response does not address this charge at all. Thus, choice B is the best match. Choice A is not the flaw in the representative’s response. It is a reasonable assumption, but the choice doesn’t address the company’s motives. Choice C is not a description of the representative’s argument. The representative does provide some evidence, even if it is not necessarily relevant to the advocate’s argument, so choice D is wrong. Choice E does not describe a flaw in the representative’s reasoning because the argument does not address the link between the terms and a quality product.

36. Answer: B. The passage states the following:

- (1) The myth of the noble savage has long dominated the social sciences.
- (2) While somewhat reassuring as a theory of human nature, the fact of the matter is that the noble savage has not ever existed.
- (3) Consider the extinction of the moa bird.
- (4) The Maori did not live in peaceful harmony with the environment; instead, they engaged in full-scale genocide of the moa.

The passage is structured to debunk a viewpoint by using a specific example. Thus, choice B is best. The focus is not on endangered species, so choice A is incorrect. Maori hunting practices are not the focus, so eliminate choice C. The author does not criticize modernity as choice D states. The purpose is not to question man’s impact on extinctions—the author quite clearly describes the impact, so choice E is wrong.

37. Answer: E. This is an inference question. According to the passage, the sites contained “between 100 to 500 thousand moa skeletons, roughly ten times the number of moa living at any one time.” If there were more skeletons than moa alive at one time, the killing of the moa must have occurred over many generations to allow the population to replenish somewhat. This is what choice E states. Choice A is out of scope because no information suggests the bones were used in any rituals. The diet of the Maori is not detailed, so choice B is not a proper inference. The passage does not state whether the moa was prey to any other species, so choice C is also not a valid inference. The passage doesn’t say the skeletons were “buried,” simply discovered, so choice D is not supported.

38. Answer: A. This is a logical structure question, asking you to figure out why an author includes information. Go back to the lines cited and read for the context in which the information is placed. In the passage, the author states “The last moa bird died roughly 800 hundred years ago, after inhabiting New Zealand for hundreds of thousands of years. It was not a climatic calamity that wiped the birds out. Nor was it a new disease or a catastrophic event such as a volcanic eruption. The moa went extinct a mere two hundred years after the arrival of the Polynesian Maoris.” These lines establish that the moa existed in New Zealand for a long time, and then died out after the arrival of the Maoris. Thus, the purpose of the lines cited is to show that it is unlikely that any other cause led to the extinction of the birds, as choice A states. Choice B is partially correct, but it is not as good as choice A because it doesn’t explain why the author cites these explanations. Choice C does not follow from the author’s purpose of showing humankind’s destructive nature. Choice D is not supported by the passage; it simply states that these events did not cause the extinction, not that moa was somehow immune to these causes. Choice E goes too far in its tone.

39. Answer: B. The original sentences contains an idiom error, “question if,” and an ambiguous pronoun “they.” In choices C and D, “where” is used incorrectly; “where” should only be used when referring to locations. Choice E is not parallel and repeats the pronoun error of the original sentence.

40. Answer: A. The sentence as written contains the correct use of the subjunctive tense: the law “mandates that” the governor “submit” a balanced budget. No other form is correct. Choice B uses the wrong verb tense and incorrectly uses the subjunctive form, as does choice C. Choice D is awkward and uses “passing” when “to pass” is required. Choice E contains an incorrect use of the subjunctive.

41. Answer: A. This is a strengthen question. Find the conclusion and premise:

Premise: Most popular bands make most of their money on merchandising rather than on record sales.

Conclusion: The best way to increase its profits is to release new records very rarely and spend much of its time touring.

This argument assumes that spending most of its time touring will allow a band to continue to make money on merchandising. The best answer will support this assumption. Choice A does this by stating that the fans of the band won’t stop buying the merchandise if the band rarely releases new material. Choice B may be a positive thing, but it doesn’t support the argument. Choice C is close, but not as good as A since it doesn’t address the fact that the band will be rarely releasing new material. Choice D is irrelevant to the argument while choice E weakens the argument slightly.

Analysis of an Issue Sample Response

Topic: “One can not understand human nature without interacting with other people as much as possible.”

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the opinion expressed above? Develop your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observation, or reading.

- There are many ways of knowing. Some prefer to learn from scientific inquiry, developing hypotheses, devising experiments, and testing theories. Others learn by analysis, weighing evidence, considering logical arguments, and deliberating. And still others learn by experience, preferring to put themselves in the middle of the thing they are trying to understand. When it comes to human nature, the best way to understand it is to experience it by interacting with other people as much as possible.
- Classical philosophers such as Socrates and Plato believed that the way to know things was through philosophical inquiries. Socrates was known for his technique of questioning everything his students offered as a way of discovering the nature of the beliefs held by his pupils. Plato believed that there existed a world of pure forms outside of the material world; this world could be accessed and understood only through rational thought and logic. However wise and gifted these philosophers may have been, their insights are limited by their lack of interaction with their subject matter.
- Simply thinking about a subject may provide useful insights into it, but one must actually investigate those insights to see if they're true. For much of the history of the world, people were isolated. Cultures held certain beliefs about other cultures, oftentimes thinking of the outsiders as more brutal or less civilized than themselves. It is only through actual interactions, though, that these erroneous beliefs can be changed. For example, for a long time Japan closed itself off from the rest of the world. This led to stereotypes and misconceptions on the part of the Japanese and the rest of the world. Only after Admiral Perry reached the shores of Japan and opened up trade with the nations could the US and Japan begin learning about each other and understanding each other's wants, needs, and motivations.
- Human nature is a complex and variable phenomenon. And perhaps one truism of human nature is a distrust and fear of the unknown. If an individual truly wants to understand human nature, one must overcome these fears and interact with the people around him.

Analysis of an Argument Sample Response

Topic: The following appeared as part of the business plan for a health center:

“After introducing martial arts and dance classes, our members used the health center 15 percent more than they had previously. Therefore, in order to increase membership, we should continue to add more of these “non-traditional” programs, including meditation classes, rock climbing, and yoga. Being the only center to offer these programs will elevate us over our competitors.”

- The health center wrongly believes that adding a number of new, non-traditional programs will increase its membership and elevate it over its competitors. This conclusion is wrongly derived from the facts offered.
- The first fact cited by the health center is that after introducing martial arts and dance classes, member use of the health center increased by 15 percent. From this premise, management concludes adding new programs will increase membership. This conclusion involves two faulty assumptions. The first is that an increase in the use of the center by current members will translate into a gain in new members. However, the argument presents no evidence to believe this assumption is justified. Secondly, the facts cited presume that the increase in member use was caused by the new programs. This is not a forgone conclusion, though, as some other factor may have contributed to the increase, which may have simply coincided with the introduction of the new programs. If the new programs did not cause the increase in use, it is unlikely that adding other programs will lead to an increase in members.
- The other questionable part of the argument involves the center’s conclusion that adding meditation classes, yoga, and rock climbing will have the same presumed effect as the martial arts and dance classes. Perhaps there is a fair amount of interest in the dance and martial arts classes but little to no interest in the other classes. Also, the argument assumes that there would be no negative effects of the new classes. It could be that many of the members of the health center value the simplicity of the programs offered and will leave after the new programs are offered. Or, adding the new programs could shift resources from other aspects of the center that will result in a loss of customers.
- Ultimately, the center’s argument is not convincing. There are simply too many flawed assumptions in its reasoning.