

# GMAT Prep

## Critical Reasoning 3



# Critical Reasoning 3

**Topics: Flawed Reasoning/Parallel Reasoning/Method of Reasoning/Complete the Argument**

## **Flawed Reasoning**

- The question stem almost always contains a form of the word “flaw” or “fallacy”.
- The correct answer will be related to an assumption, but the correction should indicate why it is flawed.
- Unlike “Weaken the Conclusion” questions, which present a new piece of information, “Flawed Reasoning” questions attack the logic applied in the Argument.



# Critical Reasoning 3

1. Consumer health advocate: Your candy company adds caffeine to your chocolate candy bars so that each one delivers a specified amount of caffeine. Since caffeine is highly addictive, this indicates that you intend to keep your customers addicted.

Candy manufacturer: Our manufacturing process results in there being less caffeine in each chocolate candy bar than in the unprocessed cacao beans from which the chocolate is made.

**The candy manufacturer's response is flawed as a refutation of the consumer health advocate's argument because it**

- A. fails to address the issue of whether the level of caffeine in the candy bars sold by the manufacturer is enough to keep people addicted
- B. assumes without warrant that all unprocessed cacao beans contain a uniform amount of caffeine
- C. does not specify exactly how caffeine is lost in the manufacturing process
- D. treats the consumer health advocate's argument as though it were about each candy bar rather than about the manufacturer's candy in general
- E. merely contradicts the consumer health advocate's conclusion without giving any reason to believe that the advocate's reasoning is unsound



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2. From the perspective of long-term survival, it was best for peasants in Czarist Russia to be weak. If they were strong, they would have been enlisted into the Czar's army against their will. Soldiers' lives were not highly valued by their commanders, and the bitter conditions and violent wars they endured led to a much shorter life span.

**What is the logical flaw presented in the argument?**

- A. It assumes, without justification, that the only factor helping weak peasants survive longer was the fact that they were not enlisted into the army.
- B. It overlooks the possibility that there were peasants of intermediate strength who enjoyed survival benefits greater than those of either the strong or the weak.
- C. It assumes, without justification, that all strong peasants and all weak peasants of the time faced the same prospects in life.
- D. It overlooks the possibility that strong peasants were often targeted and killed by the local aristocracy for fear that they might lead a peasant uprising.
- E. The argument takes for granted that smart peasants knew how to make themselves appear weak when the army recruiters came through town.



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**3. Jorge:** You won't be able to write well about the rock music of the 1960s, since you were just an infant then. Rock music of the 1960s was created by and for people who were then in their teens and early twenties.

**Ruth:** Your reasoning is absurd. There are living writers who write well about ancient Roman culture, even though those writers are obviously not a part of ancient Roman culture. Why should my youth alone prevent me from writing well about the music of a period as recent as the 1960s?

**Ruth responds to Jorge's criticism by**

- A. challenging his claim that she was not in her teens or early twenties during the 1960s
- B. clarifying a definition of popular culture that is left implicit in Jorge's argument
- C. using the example of classical culture in order to legitimize contemporary culture as an object worthy of serious consideration
- D. offering an analogy to counter an unstated assumption of Jorge's argument
- E. casting doubt on her opponent's qualification to make judgments about popular culture



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4. **Anne:** Halley's Comet, now in a part of its orbit relatively far from the Sun, recently flared brightly enough to be seen by telescope. No comet has ever been observed to flare so far from the Sun before, so such a flare must be highly unusual.

**Sue:** Nonsense. Usually, no one bothers to try to observe comets when they are so far from the Sun. This flare was observed only because an observatory was tracking Halley's Comet very carefully.

**Sue challenges Anne's reasoning by**

- A. pointing out that Anne's use of the term "observed" is excessively vague
- B. drawing attention to an inconsistency between two of Anne's claims
- C. presenting evidence that directly contradicts Anne's evidence
- D. offering an alternative explanation for the evidence Anne cites
- E. undermining some of Anne's evidence while agreeing with her conclusion



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5. Cotrell is, at best, able to write magazine articles of average quality. The most compelling pieces of evidence for this are those few of the numerous articles submitted by Cotrell that are superior, since Cotrell, who is incapable of writing an article that is better than average, must obviously have plagiarized superior ones.

**The argument is most vulnerable to criticism on which one of the following grounds?**

- A. It simply ignores the existence of potential counterevidence.
- B. It generalizes from atypical occurrences.
- C. It presupposes what it seeks to establish.
- D. It relies on the judgment of experts in a matter to which their expertise is irrelevant.
- E. It infers limits on ability from a few isolated lapses in performance.



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## Method of Reasoning

- Most of these questions offer two competing points of view and ask us how one person responds to the argument made by the other.
- A minority of these will instead offer just one point of view and ask us how the author of that argument develops his or her point of view.





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6. **Sania:** The newest workers in the workforce are the most effective digital marketing employees because they are more likely to use social networking websites and tools themselves.

**Carlos:** But effective digital marketing also requires very technical expertise, such as search engine optimization, that is best learned on the job via prolonged exposure and instruction.

**Carlos responds to Sania by:**

- A. demonstrating that Sania's conclusion is based upon evidence that is not relevant to the given situation
- B. questioning the accuracy of the evidence presented by Sania in support of her conclusion
- C. reinforcing Sania's argument by contributing an additional piece of evidence in support of her conclusion
- D. pointing out differences in the qualifications desired by different employers seeking digital marketing employees
- E. providing an additional piece of evidence that undermines a portion of Sania's claim



# Critical Reasoning 3

7. Most scholars agree that King Alfred (A.D 849 - 899) personally translated a number of Latin texts into Old English. One historian contends that Alfred also personally penned his own law code, arguing that the numerous differences between the language of the law code and Alfred's translation of Latin texts are outweighed by the even more numerous similarities. Linguistic similarities, however, are what one expects in texts from the same language, the same time, and the same region. Apart from Alfred's surviving translation and law code, there are only two other extant works from the same dialect and milieu, so it is risky to assume here that linguistic similarities point to common authorship.

**The passage above proceeds by**

- A. providing examples that underscore another argument's conclusion.
- B. questioning the plausibility of an assumption on which another argument depends.
- C. showing that a principle if generally applied would have anomalous consequences.
- D. showing that the premises of another argument are mutually inconsistent.
- E. using argument by analogy to undermine a principle implicit in another argument.



# Critical Reasoning 3

8. Garbage in this neighborhood probably will not be collected until Thursday this week. Garbage is usually collected here on Wednesdays, and the garbage collectors in this city are extremely reliable. However, Monday was a public holiday, and after a public holiday that falls on a Monday, garbage throughout the city is supposed to be collected one day later than usual.

**The argument proceeds by**

- A. treating several pieces of irrelevant evidence as though they provide support for the conclusion
- B. indirectly establishing that one thing is likely to occur by directly ruling out all of the alternative possibilities
- C. providing information that allows the application of a general rule to a specific case
- D. generalizing about all actions of a certain kind on the basis of a description of one such action
- E. treating something that is probable as though it were inevitable



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**9. Jane:** Professor Harper's ideas for modifying the design of guitars are of no value because there is no general agreement among musicians as to what a guitar should sound like and, consequently, no widely accepted basis for evaluating the merits of a guitar's sound.

**Mark:** What's more, Harper's ideas have had enough time to be adopted if they really resulted in superior sound. It took only ten years for the Torres design for guitars to be almost universally adopted because of the improvement it makes in tonal quality.

**Which one of the following most accurately describes the relationship between Jane's argument and Mark's argument?**

- A. Mark's argument shows how a weakness in Jane's argument can be overcome.
- B. Mark's argument has a premise in common with Jane's argument,
- C. Mark and Jane use similar techniques to argue for different conclusions.
- D. Mark's argument restates Jane's argument in other terms.
- E. Mark's argument and Jane's argument are based on conflicting suppositions



# Critical Reasoning 3

## Parallel Reasoning

- Such questions ask you to look for the answer choice that has the closest logical structure as the argument in the question, but with NEW TERMS.
- Each answer choice is its own argument, as opposed to an assumption, inference, or flaw.
- The question stem will contain phrases like “parallel reasoning,” “most similar reasoning,” “exemplifies,” etc. One of the lengthier types of questions.

**Note:** Any option that mimics the theme of the original argument but does not follow a similar logical structure is a wrong option.



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10. It is true that it is against international law to provide aid to certain countries that are building nuclear programs. But, if Russian companies do not provide aid, companies in other countries will.

**Which of the following is most like the argument above in its logical structure?**

- A. It is true that it is against U.S. policy to negotiate with kidnappers. But if the United States wants to prevent loss of life it must negotiate in some cases.
- B. It is true that it is illegal to sell diamonds that originate in certain countries. But there is a long tradition in Russia of stockpiling diamonds.
- C. It is true that it is illegal for an attorney to participate in a transaction in which an apparent conflict of interest exists. But, if the facts are examined carefully, it can clearly be seen that no actual conflict of interest exists in the defendant's case.
- D. It is true that it is against the law to steal cars. But someone else certainly would have stolen that car if the defendant had not done so first.
- E. It is true that company policy forbids managers from making personal loans to employees without advance clearance from at least one vice president. But many managers have disobeyed this policy.



# Critical Reasoning 3

11. A bullet train travels in excess of 150 miles per hour. Therefore, if a train travels slower than 150 miles per hour, it is not a bullet train.

**Which of the following most closely parallels the reasoning used in the argument above?**

A. An orange ripens only on the vine. If it ripens on the vine, then it is not an orange.

B. Newspapers are often read by more than one person. Therefore, magazines are also likely to be read by more than one person.

C. An earthquake of 5.0 or above on the Richter scale causes massive damage. If there is not massive damage, then the earthquake did not attain a 5.0 or above.

D. A supersonic plane travels at speeds in excess of Mach 1. If it is not supersonic, then it will travel at speeds below Mach 1.

E. Fluoride generally prevents cavities. If there are no cavities, then there was no fluoride used.



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12. No one in the French department to which Professor Alban belongs is allowed to teach more than one introductory level class in any one term, Moreover, the only language classes being taught next term are advanced ones. So, it is untrue that both of the French classes Professor Alban will be teaching next term will be introductory-level classes.

**The pattern of reasoning displayed in the argument above is most closely paralleled by that in which one of the following arguments?**

- A. The Morrison Building will be fully occupied by May and since if a building is occupied by May the new tax rates apply to it, the Morrison Building will be taxed according to the new rates.
- B. The revised tax code does not apply at all to buildings built before 1900, and only the first section of the revised code applies to buildings built between 1900 and 1920, so the revised code does not apply to the Norton Building, since it was built in 1873.
- C. All property on Overton Road will be reassessed for tax purposes by the end of the year and the Elnor Company headquarters is on Overton Road, so Elnor's property taxes will be higher next year
- D. New buildings that include public space are exempt from city taxes for two years and all new buildings in the city's Alton district are exempt for five years, so the building with the large public space that was recently completed will not be subject to city taxes next year.
- E. Since according to a recent statute, a building that is exempt from property taxes is charged for city water at a special rate, and hospitals are exempt from property taxes, Founder's Hospital will be charged for city water at the special rate.





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13. An independent audit found no indication of tax avoidance on the part of the firm in the firm's accounts; therefore, no such problem exists.

**The questionable reasoning in the argument above is most closely paralleled by that in which one of the following?**

- A. The plan for the introduction of the new product has been unmodified so far; therefore, it will not be modified in the future.
- B. The overall budget for the projects has been exceeded by a large amount; therefore, at least one of the projects has exceeded its budget by a large amount.
- C. A compilation of the best student essays of the year includes no essays on current events; therefore, students have become apathetic toward current events.
- D. A survey of schools in the district found no school without a need for building repair; therefore, the education provided to students in the district is substandard
- E. An examination of the index of the book found no listing for the most prominent critic of the theory the book advocates; therefore, the book fails to refer to that critic.



# Critical Reasoning 3

## Complete the Argument

- “Complete the Argument” is a structure for writing the argument itself, any other question type could be written using this structure.
- In most of these problems, the last sentence contains a conclusion followed by the word “since” or “because” and a blank.
- In these cases, the arguments ask us to find some kind of a premise that will support the claim given in the same sentence.
- However, other question types, such as Inference or Parallel Reasoning, can also be written in this form.



# Critical Reasoning 3

## 14. Which of the following best completes the passage below?

At a recent conference on environmental threats to the North Sea, most participating countries favored uniform controls on the quality of effluents, whether or not specific environmental damage could be attributed to a particular source of effluent. What must, of course, be shown, in order to avoid excessively restrictive controls, is that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. any uniform controls that are adopted are likely to be implemented without delay
- B. any substance to be made subject to controls can actually cause environmental damage
- C. the countries favoring uniform controls are those generating the largest quantities of effluents
- D. all of any given pollutant that is to be controlled actually reaches the North Sea at present
- E. environmental damage already inflicted on the North Sea is reversible



# Critical Reasoning 3

**15. Which of the following best completes the passage below?**

Established companies concentrate on defending what they already have. Consequently, they tend not to be innovative themselves and tend to underestimate the effects of the innovations of others. The clearest example of this defensive strategy is the fact that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. ballpoint pens and soft-tip markers have eliminated the traditional market for fountain pens, clearing the way for the marketing of fountain pens as luxury or prestige items
- B. a highly successful automobile was introduced by the same company that had earlier introduced a model that had been a dismal failure
- C. a once-successful manufacturer of slide rules reacted to the introduction of electronic calculators by trying to make better slide rules
- D. one of the first models of modern accounting machines, designed for use in the banking industry, was purchased by a public library as well as by banks
- E. the inventor of a commonly used anesthetic did not intend the product to be used by dentists, who currently account for almost the entire market for that drug



# Critical Reasoning 3

**16. Which of the following best completes the passage below?**

Manufacturers are now required to make all cigarette lighters child-resistant by equipping them with safety levers. But this change is unlikely to result in a significant reduction in the number of fires caused by children playing with lighters because children given the opportunity can figure out how to work the safety levers and \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the addition of the safety levers has made lighters more expensive than they were before the requirement was instituted
- B. approximately 5,000 fires per year have been attributed to children playing with lighters before the safety levers were required
- C. many of the fires started by young children are quickly detected and extinguished by their parents
- D. unlike child-resistant lighters, lighters that are not child-resistant can be operated by children as young as two years old
- E. adults are more likely to leave child-resistant lighters than non-child-resistant lighters in places that are accessible to children



# Critical Reasoning 3

## 17. Which of the following best completes the passage below?

The more worried investors are about losing their money, the more they will demand a high potential return on their investment; great risks must be offset by the chance of great rewards. This principle is the fundamental one in determining interest rates, and it is illustrated by the fact that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. successful investors are distinguished by an ability to make very risky investments without worrying about their money
- B. at any one time, a commercial bank will have a single rate of interest that it will expect all of its individual borrowers to pay
- C. in times of high inflation, the interest paid to depositors by banks can actually be below the rate of inflation
- D. lenders receive higher interest rates on unsecured loans than on loans backed by collateral
- E. the potential return on investment in a new company is typically lower than the potential return on investment in a well-established company



# Critical Reasoning 3

**18. Which of the following would, if true, most logically complete the argument?**

According to a study, after a week of high-altitude living, twenty men had slimmed down. The men, middle-aged residents of low-altitude areas, had been taken to a research station at 2,650 meters (8,694 feet) above sea level. They had unrestricted access to food and were forbidden vigorous exercise, yet they lost an average of 1.5 kilograms (3.3 pounds) during their one-week stay. Clearly, the lower availability of oxygen at higher altitudes, or hypobaric hypoxia, can be said to have caused the weight loss, since \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. a decrease in oxygen intake has been shown to depress appetite
- B. the men all participated in the same kinds of exercise during their stay
- C. the foods available to the men had fewer calories than the foods they usually ate
- D. exercise at higher altitudes is more difficult than exercise at lower altitudes is
- E. several weeks after returning home, the men still weighed less than they had before the study



# Critical Reasoning 3

19. In emerging economies in Africa and other regions, large foreign banks that were set up during the colonial era have long played a major economic role. These institutions have tended to confine their business to the wealthier of banks' potential customers. But development of these countries' economies requires financing of the small businesses that dominate their manufacturing, farming, and services sectors. So economic growth will be likely to occur if local banks take on this portion of the financial services markets, since \_\_\_\_\_.

**Which of the following completions would produce the strongest argument?**

- A. local banks tend not to strive as much as large foreign banks to diversify their investments
- B. small farming and manufacturing businesses contribute to economic growth if they obtain adequate investment capital
- C. large foreign banks in emerging economies could, with local employees and appropriate local consultation, profitably expand their business to less wealthy clients
- D. some small businesses are among the wealthier customers of foreign banks in emerging economies
- E. local banks in emerging economies tend to be less risk-averse than foreign banks





# Critical Reasoning 3

**20. Which of the following would most logically complete the passage?**

Exporters in Country X are facing lower revenues due to a shortage of the large metal shipping containers in which they send their goods by sea to other countries. Fewer containers arrive in Country X due to reductions in imports. This has meant lost orders, costly delays, and a scramble for alternatives, such as air freight, all of which are costlier. Moreover, the revenues of exporters in Country X will probably continue to decline in the near future. This is because other countries are likely to find it increasingly unprofitable to export their goods to Country X, and because\_\_\_\_\_.

- A. production of shipping containers in Country X is growing rapidly as a response to the shortage
- B. shipping companies are willing to move containers from country to country only when the containers are full
- C. the cost of shipping alternatives such as air freight is likely to stabilize in the near future
- D. consumers in Country X are purchasing more products than ever before
- E. the worldwide demand for goods made in Country X has only recently begun to rise after a long decline



# Critical Reasoning 3

**21. Which of the following, if true, most logically completes the argument?**

Political theorist: Even with the best spies, area experts, and satellite surveillance, foreign policy assessments can still lack important information. In such circumstances intuitive judgment is vital. A national leader with such judgment can make good decisions about foreign policy even when current information is incomplete, since \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the central reason for failure in foreign policy decision making is the absence of critical information
- B. those leaders whose foreign policy decisions have been highly ranked have also been found to have good intuitive judgment
- C. both intuitive judgment and good information are required for sound decision making
- D. good foreign policy decisions often lead to improved methods of gathering information
- E. intuitive judgment can produce good decisions based on past experience, even when there are important gaps in current information



# Critical Reasoning 3

**22. Which of the following most logically completes the passage?**

Leptin, a protein occurring naturally in the blood, appears to regulate how much fat the body carries by speeding up the metabolism and decreasing the appetite when the body has too much fat. Mice that do not naturally produce leptin have more fat than other mice, but lose fat rapidly when they are given leptin injections. Unfortunately, however, leptin cannot be used as a dietary supplement to control fat, since \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the digestive system breaks down proteins before they can enter the bloodstream
- B. there are pharmaceuticals already available that can contribute to weight loss by speeding up the metabolism
- C. people with unusually low levels of leptin in their blood tend to have a high percentage of body fat
- D. the mice that do not naturally produce leptin were from a specially bred strain of mice
- E. mice whose bodies did produce leptin also lost some of their body fat when given leptin injections



# Critical Reasoning 3

**23. Which of the following most logically completes the passage?**

Most bicycle helmets provide good protection for the top and back of the head, but little or no protection for the temple regions on the sides of the head. A study of head injuries resulting from bicycle accidents showed that a large proportion were caused by blows to the temple area. Therefore, if bicycle helmets protected this area, the risk of serious head injury in bicycle accidents would be greatly reduced, especially since \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. among the bicyclists included in the study's sample of head injuries, only a very small proportion had been wearing a helmet at the time of their accident
- B. even those bicyclists who regularly wear helmets have a poor understanding of the degree and kind of protection that helmets afford
- C. a helmet that included protection for the temples would have to be somewhat larger and heavier than current helmets
- D. the bone in the temple area is relatively thin and impacts in that area are thus very likely to cause brain injury
- E. bicyclists generally land on their arm or shoulder when they fall to the side, which reduces the likelihood of severe impacts on the side of the head



# Critical Reasoning 3

**24. Activist:** Food producers irradiate food in order to prolong its shelf life. Five animal studies were recently conducted to investigate whether this process alters food in a way that could be dangerous to people who eat it. The studies concluded that irradiated food is safe for humans to eat. However, because these studies were subsequently found by a panel of independent scientists to be seriously flawed in their methodology, it follows that irradiated food is not safe for human consumption.

**The reasoning in the activist's argument is flawed because that argument**

- A. treats a failure to prove a claim as constituting proof of the denial of that claim
- B. treats methodological flaws in past studies as proof that it is currently not possible to devise methodologically adequate alternatives
- C. fails to consider the possibility that even a study whose methodology has no serious flaws nonetheless might provide only weak support for its conclusion
- D. fails to consider the possibility that what is safe for animals might not always be safe for human beings
- E. fails to establish that the independent scientists know more about food irradiation than do the people who produced the five studies



# Critical Reasoning 3

**25. Highway Official:** When resurfacing our concrete bridges, we should use electrically conductive concrete (ECC) rather than standard concrete. In the winter, ECC can be heated by passing an electric current through it, thereby preventing ice buildup. The cost of the electricity needed is substantially lower than the cost of the deicing salt we currently use.

**Taxpayer:** But ECC is vastly more expensive than standard concrete, so your proposal is probably not justifiable on economic grounds.

**Which of the following, if true, could best be used by the highway official to support the official's proposal in the face of the taxpayer's objection?**

- A. The use of deicing salt causes corrosion of reinforcing steel in concrete bridge decks and damage to the concrete itself, thereby considerably shortening the useful life of concrete bridges.
- B. Severe icing conditions can cause power outages and slow down the work of emergency crews trying to get power restored.
- C. In weather conditions conducive to icing, ice generally forms on the concrete surfaces of bridges well before it forms on parts of the roadway that go over solid ground.
- D. Aside from its potential use for deicing bridges, ECC might also be an effective means of keeping other concrete structures such as parking garages and airport runways ice free.
- E. If ECC were to be used for a bridge surface, the electric current would be turned on only at times at which ice was likely to form.



# Critical Reasoning 3

26. Seemingly inconsequential changes in sea temperature due to global warming eventually result in declines in fish and seabird populations. A rise of just two degrees prevents the vertical mixing of seawater from different strata. This restricts the availability of upwelling nutrients to phytoplankton. Since zooplankton, which feed upon phytoplankton, feed the rest of the food chain, the declines are inevitable.

**Which one of the following most accurately describes the role played in the argument by the statement that zooplankton feed upon phytoplankton?**

- A. It is a hypothesis supported by the fact that phytoplankton feed on upwelling nutrients.
- B. It is intended to provide an example of the ways in which the vertical mixing of seawater affects feeding habits.
- C. It helps show how global temperature changes affect larger sea animals indirectly.
- D. It is offered as one reason that global warming must be curtailed.
- E. It is offered in support of the idea that global warming poses a threat to all organisms.



# Critical Reasoning 3

## Home Assignment

Critical Reasoning 3	Book 1	Class Questions Home Assignment	Revise Class Questions Solve and Review 25 questions	~ 60 minutes	26 Qs 25 Qs
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*Thank you*