

Classic Flaw Challenge Explanation 20.4.18

First, translate.

Dobson: So some historians think that the people who built this stone circle in Britain thousands of years ago knew about celestial events. They say this because two of the stones point to the position of the sun at sunrise on the spring equinox. But there are a lot of stones in the ring so the chances that two of them will point to something significant is high. Therefore, the people who build the stone circle didn't know about celestial events.

Possibility \neq Certainty, anyone? Just because this evidence doesn't *prove* that the people knew about celestial events doesn't mean they necessarily didn't know. When you figure out that the evidence doesn't prove your claim, you're supposed to suspend judgment, not assume the opposite is true. The stimulus' conclusion assumed the opposite. That's why it's flawed.

LOOPHOLE

What if Possibility \neq Certainty?

Now we see it's a Classic Flaw question, and we're armed with our flaw in hand. Let's go find Possibility \neq Certainty in the answer choices.

- A)** *So failure to prove a claim is taken as evidence that the claim is false. **A** is Possibility \neq Certainty! The stone placement didn't prove that the people knew about celestial events for sure, so the author assumed they did not know about said events. **A** is the essence of Possibility \neq Certainty and a provable correct answer.*
- B)** *So the conclusion contradicts some of the premises. There's no contradiction in the stimulus. If contradiction is ever the right answer, it will be super blatant. You'll be able to point to textual evidence in the stimulus that shows exactly how two things are contradicting one another. That's not what we see in **B**, so it's not provable.*
- C)** *So statements that prove Dobson's conclusion are treated like they just give some support. **C** is the shadow universe version of Possibility \neq Certainty. It says the stimulus is actually proving its conclusion (didn't happen), but acting like it didn't. Like false modesty. First off, this isn't a classic flaw. Second off, it's word soup designed to trick you into thinking you found another Possibility \neq Certainty answer choice so you panic. In reality, **C** is not what happened in the stimulus; it's not provable.*
- D)** *So an opinion is treated like it's a fact. There aren't any opinions that are treated like facts in this stimulus. The only opinions (the "Some historians claim..." first sentence and the conclusion) are treated as opinions. The rest of the stimulus is presented as fact and treated as such. **D** is not connected to what happened in the stimulus; it's not provable.*
- E)** *So Dobson relies on using a term in two different ways. **E** is referring to Equivocation, which did not happen in this stimulus. **E** isn't provable.*

A is the correct answer. It tells us there's a Possibility \neq Certainty classic flaw going on, which is exactly what we wanted to find.